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Source: *Gesta*, Vol. 54, No. 2 (September 2015), pp. 195-218

Published by: The University of Chicago Press on behalf of the International Center of Medieval Art

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/681954>

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Lofty Sculpture: Flying Buttress Decoration and Ecclesiastical Authority

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Abstract

The monumental standing figures on the outer side of the flying buttress piers at Chartres Cathedral ushered in a new form of buttress decoration. Subsequently, the majority of large Gothic churches constructed in northern France used this type of decoration on their buttresses, sometimes translating the figures to positions above or below the flyer head. Today most of this buttress sculpture is heavily damaged, making the identification of specific programs difficult or impossible. The comparison of several examples, however, allows us to identify general trends. The earliest examples at Chartres Cathedral, Reims Cathedral, and the basilica of Saint-Quentin emphasize episcopal and liturgical imagery, in which the figures suggest a procession. While the specific iconography of these programs differs, they consistently underscore the authority of the church and its bishop through the presentation of pastoral or administrative roles. After the initial development of flying buttress sculpture in the first half of the thirteenth century, it became a common feature of cathedrals and other major churches constructed during the Middle Ages in France.

Sometime around the year 1200, masons working at Chartres began constructing the flying buttresses of the cathedral's nave (Fig. 1).¹ These buttresses are remarkable in many respects, not least because a radial arcade connects their two lower arches. This unprecedented characteristic visually links the flyers to the rose window on the cathedral's west front. Numerous modern scholars have commented on the innovation of the Chartrian buttresses, and studies of medieval architecture frequently cite them as the first instance in which a master mason fully exploited the possibilities of flying buttresses and aesthetically integrated them into the overall building design.² An equally innovative but less remarked-on feature of these flying buttresses is that their uprights contain niches for monumental sculpture. Five of the niches possess their early thirteenth-century figures. Like many other aspects of Chartres Cathedral, this use of monumental sculpture on buttresses had a lasting impact on medieval French architecture, and it subsequently became a common feature on the exterior of many cathedrals and other great churches.³

This research was funded in part by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation/American Council of Learned Societies. I would like to thank the editors and anonymous reviewers of *Gesta* as well as Michael Davis, Jay Diehl, Ellen Shortell, Marvin Trachtenberg, Erik Thunø, Shannon Wearing, and Carla Yanni for their helpful and productive comments at various stages of this research.

1. The chronology of Chartres has been much debated. Jan van der Meulen, "Histoire de la construction de la cathédrale Notre-Dame de Chartres après 1194," *Bulletin de la Société archéologique d'Eure-et-Loir, Mémoires* 23 (1965): 81–126; Paul Frankl, "The Chronology of Chartres Cathedral," *Art Bulletin* 39, no. 1 (1957): 33–47; idem, "Reconsiderations on the Chronology of Chartres Cathedral," *Art Bulletin* 43, no. 1 (1961): 51–58; Anne Prache, "Observations sur la construction de la cathédrale de Chartres au XIII^e siècle," *Bulletin de la Société nationale des antiquaires de France* (1992): 327–34; Brigitte Kurmann-Schwarz and Peter Kurmann, *Chartres: la cathédrale*, trans. Thomas de Kayser (Saint-Léger-Vauban: Zodiaque, 2001), 119–22; and Andrew Tallon, "La structure de la cathédrale de Chartres," in *Chartres: construire et restaurer la cathédrale; XI^e–XXI^e s.*, ed. Arnaud Timbert (Villeneuve d'Ascq: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2014), 239–57.

2. Examples include Otto von Simson, *The Gothic Cathedral: Origins of Gothic Architecture and the Medieval Concept of Order* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1956), 203–4; Paul Frankl, *Gothic Architecture*, rev. Paul Crossley (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 87; Carl F. Barnes Jr., "The Cathedral of Chartres and the Architect of Soissons," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 22, no. 2 (1963): 63–74, at 63–64; Philip Ball, *Universe of Stone: A Biography of Chartres Cathedral* (New York: Harper, 2008), 225; and Jean Bony, *French Gothic Architecture of the 12th and 13th Centuries* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 235.

3. The term *great church* comes from Christopher Wilson, *The Gothic Cathedral: The Architecture of the Great Church, 1130–1530* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1990), 7, where he defines it as a category of churches created to serve affluent ecclesiastical bodies and notable for design and opulence.

Gesta v54n2 (Fall 2015).

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Figure 1. Chartres, cathedral of Notre-Dame, north nave showing figural sculpture in the buttress uprights (photo: author).

Despite a long and extensive record of use, the history of buttress sculpture—its prevalence, development, and iconography—remains largely unexplored. It is unclear whether the various surviving programs form a coherent group in terms of subject or theme. These topics form the basis of the present paper, which focuses on the early sets of buttress sculpture at Chartres Cathedral, Reims Cathedral, and the collegiate church of Saint-Quentin. These three cases exemplify the heterogeneity of the genre, both in terms of iconography and in the relationship of the sculptures to the buttressing itself. While remaining mindful of this diversity, I nevertheless suggest some underlying affinities among the programs, particularly in regard to their shared emphasis on ecclesiastical hegemony through the representation of liturgical practice and church hierarchy. Whereas such themes might be obvious general concerns for any program of cathedral sculpture, it is notable that they are repeated in these ensembles at the expense of biblical or hagiographic narrative, Christology, or Marian cycles, all subjects commonly found in medieval ecclesiastical architecture. Selected examples of other ensembles

of buttress sculpture further indicate that later programs developed the ecclesiastical motifs first seen at Chartres, Reims, and Saint-Quentin. Finally, at some sites, such as Reims, the buttress sculpture works in conjunction with the stained glass to accentuate the shared theme of episcopal power.

Buttress sculpture constitutes a problematic source material. In many cases the niches in buttress piers or those that top flyer heads are empty. In the absence of graphic or textual documentation, it is often unclear whether the sculptures are lost or were never completed. In those cases where sculpture survives, either in situ or otherwise, it is often heavily eroded as a result of centuries of direct exposure to the elements. The condition of the sculptures hampers efforts at iconographic and stylistic analysis, and the observations offered in this paper are accordingly tentative. While it might be possible to determine that a figure represents a bishop, for example, it is generally the case that the bishop remains anonymous. Many of the arguments presented here remain frustratingly speculative owing to the poor state of preservation, and they await confirmation based on the discovery or identification of

additional source material. Despite the difficulties presented by the sources, it is clear that these sculptures were highly visible features of exterior church decoration, created and installed at great expense. As such, they constituted a major component of the building's iconographic program. Studying them enriches our understanding of architectural sculpture in its varied forms and placements. The examination that follows provides an initial, albeit incomplete, catalogue of extant buttress sculpture and offers preliminary suggestions about its meaning that I hope will prompt further research.

The Earliest Large-Scale Figural Sculpture on Flying Buttresses: Chartres Cathedral

Flying buttresses emerged in western Europe in the middle of the twelfth century in and around the Paris basin.⁴ The majority of these early experiments were devoid of significant sculptural embellishment. Surviving examples of decorative carving primarily take the form of ornamental moldings, architectonic articulations such as columns, or small-scale motifs. For example, a chevron molding ran along the top of the twelfth-century flyers of Notre-Dame in Paris, and small-scale caryatids adorn the flyer heads at Laon Cathedral.⁵ Large-scale figures did not appear on flying buttress ensembles until the early thirteenth century.

While early flying buttresses are generally unembellished, the spur buttresses of the fourteenth-century choir of Verdun

4. The origins and early history of flying buttresses in France remain a hotly debated topic. On this question, see E. Lefèvre-Pontalis, "L'origine des arcs-boutants," in *Congrès archéologique de France, 82nd session, 1919, Paris* (Paris: Picard, 1920), 367–96; Kenneth John Conant, *Carolingian and Romanesque Architecture, 800 to 1200* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1959), 218–19; idem, *Cluny: les églises et la maison du chef d'ordre* (Mâcon: Protat, 1968), 110, 113; John Fitchen, *The Construction of Gothic Cathedrals: A Study of Medieval Vault Erection* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), appendix L; Anne Prache, "Les arcs-boutants au XIIe siècle," *Gesta* 15, nos. 1–2 (1976): 31–42; John James, "Evidence for Flying Buttresses before 1180," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 51, no. 3 (1992): 261–87; Stephen Murray, "Notre-Dame of Paris and the Anticipation of Gothic," *Art Bulletin* 80, no. 2 (1998): 229–53; David Stanley, "The Original Buttressing of Abbot Suger's Chevet at the Abbey of Saint-Denis," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 65, no. 3 (2006): 334–55; Andrew Tallon, "Experiments in Gothic Structure" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2007); and Arnaud Timbert, "L'abbatiale de Cluny III et l'architecture gothique: hypothèses sur les conséquences de l'accident de 1126," *Annales de Bourgogne* 78, no. 3 (2006): 255–76.

5. Iliana Kasarska, "Le décor sculpté figuré du chœur primitif de la cathédrale de Laon (vers 1155): vestige d'une chapelle d'axe," *Histoire de l'art* 57 (2005): 43–54; and eadem, *La sculpture de la façade de la cathédrale de Laon: eschatologie et humanisme* (Paris: Picard, 2008), 167–69.

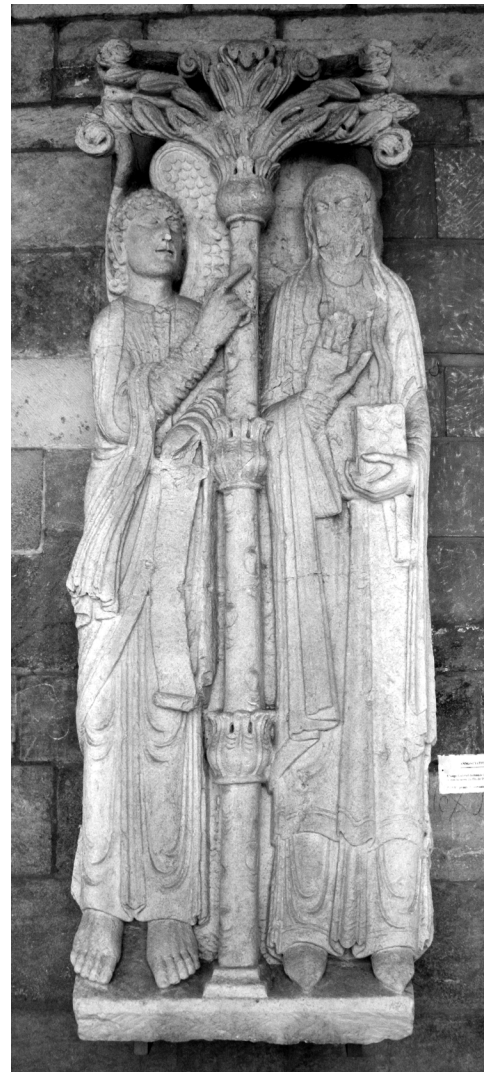


Figure 2. Verdun, cathedral of Notre-Dame, relief of the Annunciation, ca. 1180–1200, reused on choir buttresses, fourteenth century (photo: © Fab5669, Wikimedia Commons).

Cathedral exceptionally displayed reused twelfth-century reliefs. The reliefs were moved to the cloister after their restoration in 1998 (Fig. 2). The sculptures, dated about 1180–1200,⁶ measure approximately 2 meters in height, comparable to the later buttress sculptures of angels installed at the cathedral of

6. Paul Williamson, *Gothic Sculpture, 1140–1300* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 72. In his earlier study of the carvings, Norbert Müller-Dietrich proposed a dating before 1147. Müller-Dietrich, *Die romanische Skulptur in Lothringen* (Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1968), 52–78. On the cathedral of Verdun, see also Hubert Collin, "La cathédrale Notre-Dame de Verdun," in *Congrès archéologique de France, 149th session, 1991, Trois-Evêchés et l'ancien duché de Bar* (Paris: Société Française d'Archéologie, 1995), 403–29.

Notre-Dame in Reims that are 2.5–3.25 meters high.⁷ Unlike the single figures at Reims and those on other thirteenth-century buttresses, however, three of the Verdun reliefs illustrate narrative scenes from the Old and New Testaments: Cain and Abel, the Annunciation, and the Temptation. The final Verdun sculpture depicts a standing bishop wearing a miter, holding a crosier and a book, and making a gesture of blessing, all features seen on later buttress figures. Although it might be tempting to view the Verdun reliefs as the earliest large-scale buttress sculpture, it is unclear whether their fourteenth-century placement derived from the earlier twelfth-century building or reflected contemporaneous decorative practices.⁸ Given the exceptional nature of the Verdun reliefs for the twelfth century, the latter possibility seems more plausible. These reliefs likely demonstrate the pervasiveness of a High Gothic exterior motif rather than its nascence two centuries earlier.

The earliest surviving secure instance of large-scale figures decorating a buttress ensemble in France is the aforementioned program at Chartres Cathedral (Figs. 1, 3–5).⁹ On the north side of the nave, each of the five buttress uprights contains a niche topped by a trefoil arch, under which stands a figure clad in ecclesiastical regalia. The sculptures likely formed part of the early plans for the building's reconstruction after the fire of 1194, placing them in the first decade of the thirteenth century. These figures were probably the earliest large-scale sculpture of the post-1194 campaign, predating

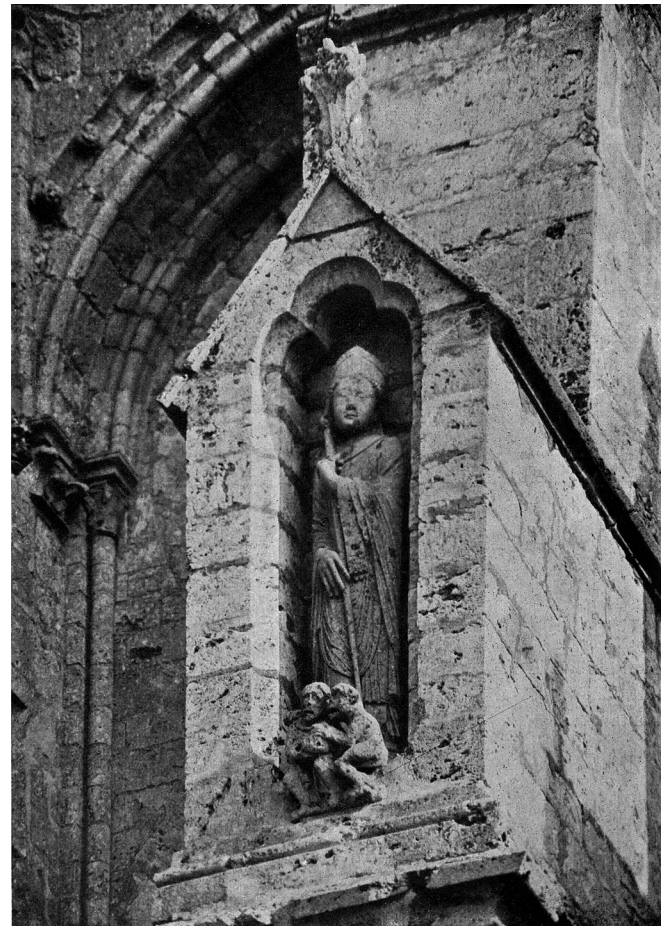


Figure 3. Chartres, cathedral of Notre-Dame, north nave, bishop figure holding a pastoral staff, first decade of thirteenth century, photograph before 1909 (photo: Margaret S. Marriage and Ernest Marriage, *The Sculptures of Chartres Cathedral* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1909], 95, pl. 41, reprinted with the permission of Cambridge University Press).

7. William W. Clark, "Reims Cathedral in the Portfolio of Villard de Honnecourt," in *Villard's Legacy: Studies in Medieval Technology, Science, and Art in Memory of Jean Gimpel*, ed. Marie-Thérèse Zenner (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), 23–51, at 30n14; and Müller-Dietrich, *Die romanische Skulptur in Lothringen*, 54.

8. Williamson, *Gothic Sculpture*, 72n27; and Müller-Dietrich, *Die romanische Skulptur in Lothringen*, 54. Müller-Dietrich argues that the narrative reliefs crowned the tops of the spur buttresses of the Romanesque choir. Williamson, disagreeing with this reconstruction based on the incomplete nature of the group depicting Old Testament prefigurations of the New Testament, implies that the complete program would have had more sculptures than there were buttresses. Müller-Dietrich does not include the bishop relief among those on the Romanesque buttresses, saying only that it came from an unidentified context.

9. It is worth noting that the flying buttresses of the Chartres nave are also the earliest examples of the so-called openwork variety, in which the flyer proper consists of a tracery screen instead of the earlier and more conservative solid arch. The presence of monumental sculpture on the buttresses may thus be part of a more general interest in further aestheticizing the buttressing of the cathedral. Robert Bork, Robert Mark, and Stephen Murray, "The Openwork Flying Buttresses of Amiens Cathedral: 'Postmodern Gothic' and the Limits of Structural Rationalism," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 56, no. 4 (1997): 478–93.

the central portal of the north transept.¹⁰ Of the five figures, the middle and easternmost statues are the best preserved, retaining some details on their hands and faces. The remaining three statues are heavily weathered, although nineteenth- and early twentieth-century photographs document slightly better states and preserve some now-lost details.¹¹

10. Frankl, "Chronology of Chartres Cathedral," 34; idem, "Reconsiderations," 57; Marcel Aubert, *La sculpture française au début de l'époque gothique, 1140–1225* (Florence: Pantheon, 1929), 85; and Louis Grodecki, "À propos de la sculpture française autour de 1200," *Bulletin monumental* 115, no. 2 (1957): 119–26, at 125–26. Frankl suggested ("Reconsiderations," 57) that masons planned the niches from the outset but that the sculptures were only installed in 1210–16.

11. Charenton-le-Pont, Médiathèque de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine, photographs MH0062939, 43LE03784, and MH0013718.

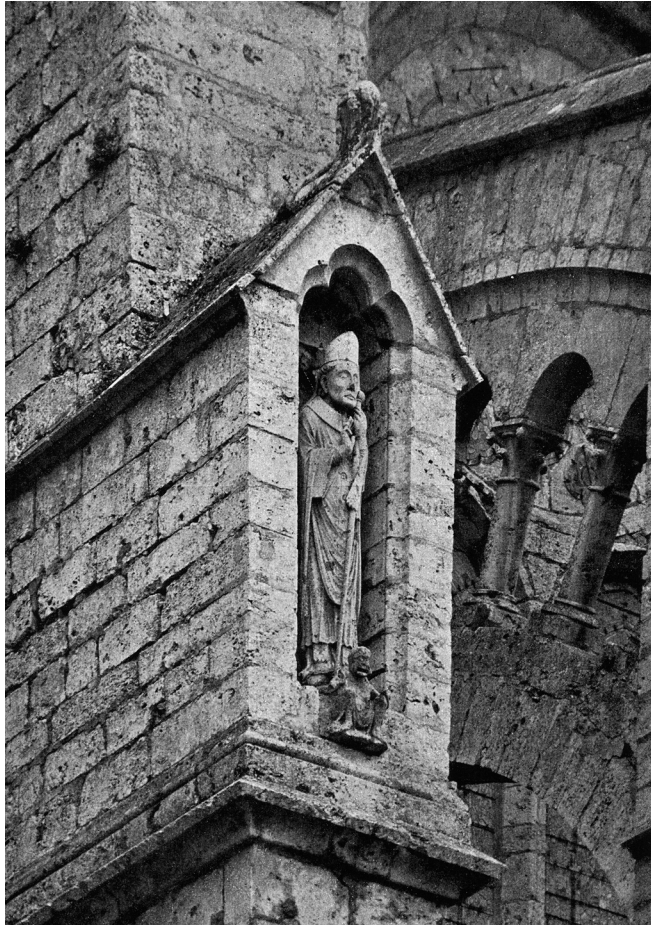


Figure 4. Chartres, cathedral of Notre-Dame, north nave, bishop figure holding a pastoral staff, first decade of thirteenth century, photograph before 1909 (photo: Margaret S. Marriage and Ernest Marriage, *The Sculptures of Chartres Cathedral* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1909], 97, pl. 42, reprinted with the permission of Cambridge University Press).

There are identical trefoil niches along the south flank of Chartres Cathedral, but the figures that inhabit them date to a restoration of 1865.¹² The uprights of the western sides of the north and south transepts also contain niches. The uniformity of the nave and western transept niches suggests that the twelfth-century designers intended the sculptural program to run around the exterior of the cathedral. The flying buttresses

See also Margaret S. Marriage and Ernest Marriage, *The Sculptures of Chartres Cathedral* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1909), pls. 40–42.

12. Marcel Joseph Bulteau, *Monographie de la cathédrale de Chartres*, 2nd ed. (Chartres: Salleret, 1887), 2:268–69. For documents relating to the restorations of 1865, including receipts to Fromanger and Chenillon for their new sculptures, see F19 7680, Archives nationales de France, Paris; and V55, Archives départementales d'Eure-et-Loir, Chartres.

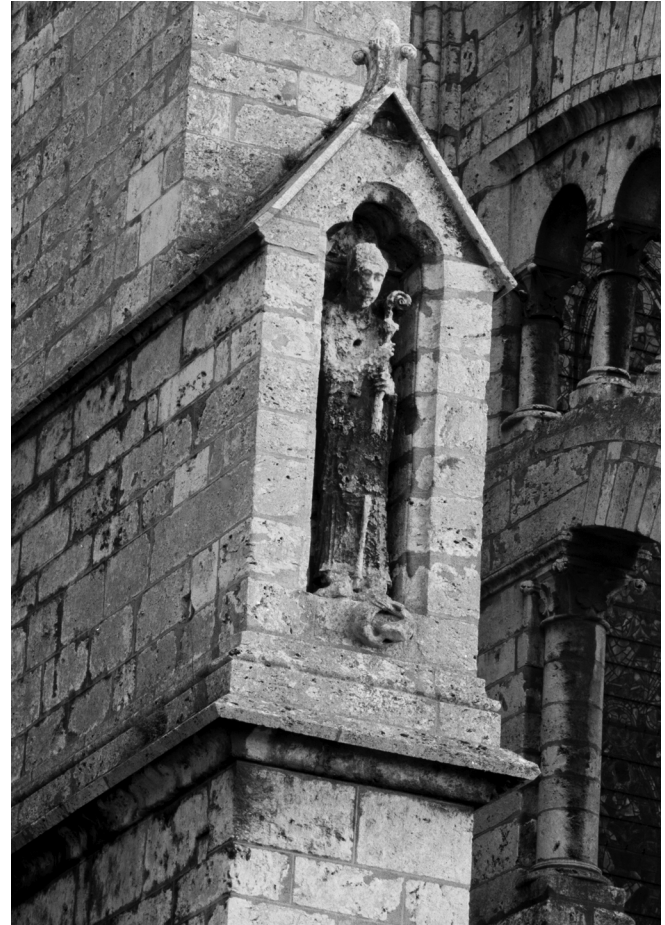


Figure 5. Chartres, cathedral of Notre-Dame, north nave, bishop figure holding a pastoral staff, first decade of thirteenth century, photograph from 1959 (photo: FotoMarburg/Art Resource, NY).

of the east end (ca. 1250), which generally lighten and refine the pattern of the nave, replace the niches with tabernacles.¹³ Today the tabernacles are either empty or contain a stout column, but given the pattern of the western portions of the cathedral, it is possible that the builders once planned figural sculptures for the tabernacles as well. If so, carved figures would have circumscribed the upper exterior of the cathedral.

13. On the dating of the superstructure of the chevet, see, most recently, Tallon, “La structure de la cathédrale de Chartres,” 244–49; Claudine Lautier, “Restaurations récentes à la cathédrale de Chartres et nouvelles recherches,” *Bulletin monumental* 169, no. 1 (2011): 3–11; van der Meulen, “Notre-Dame de Chartres après 1194,” 104; and Kurmann-Schwarz and Kurmann, *Chartres*, 119–22. Paul Frankl (“Chronology of Chartres Cathedral,” 35) suggested that the design of the tabernacles and the niches both date to about 1196, whatever their date of construction. If true, the contemporaneity of their design would lend weight to the idea that the planners intended to place sculptures in the tabernacles as well.

An Interpretation of the Chartres Buttress Sculptures

As is the case for most exterior architectural sculpture, the Chartres figures have suffered significant damage, but enough original material and historical documentation exist to permit some general statements about the program. All five of the northern figures are of a consistent type: a single figure per niche stands erect, oriented frontally with parallel legs. The bodies are rigid, although the heads tilt slightly down or to the side. Each wears a miter, carries a pastoral staff, and wears ecclesiastical garments. Although all the figures are similar, the sculptor(s) varied hand positions and facial features to endow them with a limited individuality. Each one stands above and behind a *marmoset*, a subsidiary sculpture consisting of one or two small figures. One of these subsidiary figures once held a money bag, visible in early twentieth-century photographs. Marcel Bulteau interpreted this figure as a symbol of avarice, reading the full image as Judas holding a bag of silver and caressing a demon (Fig. 3). Bulteau further suggested that other *marmosets* also depicted vices, which stood in opposition to the virtues practiced by the bishops.¹⁴ Although he did not specify which figures he had in mind, he may have been referring to the squatting and kneeling humanoids that appear at the feet of two other churchmen (Fig. 4). Other *marmosets* on the north side may have depicted large, monstrous faces, similar in form to the restored sculptures along the south nave, but in their present condition a secure identification is impossible (Fig. 5). While the contorted forms and awkward positions of the monsters and demons in the *marmosets* evoke malevolent forces and may be physical reflections of spiritual deformity, they do not correspond in number, either in their present arrangement or in the total number of niches, to the traditional seven vices.¹⁵

14. Bulteau, *Monographie de la cathédrale de Chartres*, 133. Bulteau's claim was repeated by numerous other scholars, including Aubert, *La sculpture française*, 85.

15. The virtues and vices quatrefoils on the west facade of Amiens Cathedral depict a total of twelve vices, so the number of niches does not necessarily preclude Bulteau's interpretation. Additionally, Bulteau (*Monographie de la cathédrale de Chartres*, 133) did not insist that all the subsidiary figures represented particular vices but that "Souvent ces sculptures placées aux pieds des statues sont de simples jeux d'imagination comme s'en permettent souvent les artistes" (Often these sculptures placed at the feet of the statues are simple fantasies like those artists often permit themselves). It seems strange, however, that the sculptures would alternately carry prescribed iconographic messages and be under the total control of the sculptors. Aubert (*La sculpture française*, 85) implies that each of the grotesques represents an individual vice. On the use of monsters in ecclesiastical decoration, see Thomas E. A. Dale, "Monsters, Corporeal Deformities, and Phantasms in the Cloister

Nevertheless, even in the absence of specific meanings, they can stand for the triumph of the bishops over evil in general, much like the *Beau Dieu* at Amiens that shows Christ trampling on a snake and a lion (1225–35).

While the miters and pastoral staffs indicate the ecclesiastical rank of the principal buttress figures, signifying their status as bishops or abbots, their precise identification remains ambiguous. Bulteau interpreted them as donors.¹⁶ This suggestion is problematic given that only two bishops, Renaud de Mouçon (r. 1183–1217) and Gauthier (r. 1219–34), oversaw the late twelfth- and thirteenth-century construction at Chartres. It is unlikely that bishops from other dioceses or local abbots would have donated major portions of the cathedral fabric. Moreover, it was the cathedral canons, not the bishops, who paid for most of the rebuilding.¹⁷ Yet while the chapter was a formidable political entity, both bishops who reigned during the reconstruction also wielded considerable power and influence, and, as Jane Welch Williams argued for the stained glass, the iconographic program likely reflects the interests of both bishops and canons.¹⁸

It is tempting to understand the figures as illustrious bishops in the history of Chartres, such as St. Lubin (r. 549–51) and Ivo of Chartres (r. 1090–1116). Along with such similarly distinguished figures as St. Solennis (a contemporary of Clovis) and Fulbert of Chartres (d. 1028/29), these individuals continued to play a role in the institutional memory of the cathedral chapter and in the town more generally. Indeed, the sculptural and stained-glass programs at Chartres feature at least three of its canonized bishops, SS. Solennis, Lubin, and Caletric (d. 567). The obituaries of the cathedral and nearby

of St-Michel-de-Cuxa," *Art Bulletin* 83, no. 3 (2001): 402–36, at 403. Finally, each side of the nave has five buttresses, with an additional two buttresses on the western side of each transept arm. Thus, it is possible that each of the seven vices was to appear twice, once along the north side and once along the south side, although this interpretation leaves the buttressing of the choir unaccounted for and presumes that a separate visual program was imagined for the choir at a very early date.

16. Bulteau, *Monographie de la cathédrale de Chartres*, 133.

17. Jane Welch Williams, *Bread, Wine, and Money: The Windows of the Trades at Chartres Cathedral* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 32–36. On the wealth and economic influence of the canons in the thirteenth century and their influence on the construction of the cathedral, see A. Chédeville, *Chartres et ses campagnes, XIe–XIIIe s.* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1973), 491–92, 509–19. In contradistinction to the rising prosperity of the canons, the bishops received a more or less fixed income. Achille Luchaire, *La société française au temps de Philippe-Auguste* (Paris: Hachette, 1909), 156. Gauthier's significant personal debt further underscores the disparity between the financial means of the two parties. E. de Lépinos and Lucien Merlet, eds., *Cartulaire de Notre-Dame de Chartres* (Chartres: Garnier, 1862), 2:127–29, no. 278, dated 1234.

18. Williams, *Bread, Wine, and Money*, 35–36.

abbey of Saint-Père-en-Vallée (now Saint-Pierre) memorialized deceased bishops of the diocese, ensuring their continued commemoration.¹⁹ Canonized Chartrian bishops also featured prominently in the local liturgical calendar. In the thirteenth century, for example, feasts for St. Lubin were held on 14 March and 16 September to celebrate the anniversaries of his death and his episcopal ordination, respectively.²⁰ It is possible that the buttress figures represent specific former bishops or possibly bishop-saints of Chartres, although this must remain speculative in the absence of inscriptions or identifying attributes. None of the statues is nimbed, or at least the haloes do not survive, but this is not necessarily conclusive.

The buttress bishops all stand rigidly upright with little indication of movement beyond a slight tilt of the head. Their ecclesiastical robes mask the majority of their anatomy and obscure their joints, transforming each body into a veritable pillar. The repeated vertical lines used to indicate the draping of their albs and chasubles heighten the figures' stability and balance. Their erectness and general lack of motion find parallels with twelfth- and early thirteenth-century statue-columns, including those of the Royal Portal at Chartres, where the human figures on the jambs take on an architectonic quality. Like them, the bishops display a similar, if less pronounced, manipulation of the body into a stable cylindrical form. It is even possible that the columns in the tabernacles of the choir buttresses represent a de-anthropomorphization of the nave pattern, further emphasizing the statues' visual connection to columns. Both the buttress sculptures and the statue-columns thus refer to the architectural forms that they decorate, the purpose of which is to sustain and brace the building itself.

The visual parallel drawn between the bishop statues and the bracing elements of the flying buttresses echoes biblical metaphors for the Universal Church that describe it as a construction made from "living stones" (*lapidem vivum*, 1 Peter 2:4–6). This metaphor appears in the Bible in several variations. For example, the Epistle to the Ephesians 2:19–21 relates, "Now therefore you are no more strangers and foreigners; but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and the domestics of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone

[*angulari lapide*]:²¹ in whom all the building, being framed together, groweth up into a holy temple in the Lord."²² In both 1 Peter and Ephesians, members of the Church join with Christ as building components to form the body of a holy temple. This architectural metaphor appears again in Revelation 21:14, "And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them, the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb." The idea of apostolic support takes a more literal form in the passage from Revelation, where the names of the apostles are placed on the physical supports of the envisioned heavenly city. This passage does not discuss the apostles as people but emphasizes instead the architectonic element of the foundation stones, connected to the apostles through their inscribed names.

In the fourth century St. Jerome linked the passages from 1 Peter and Ephesians, asserting that the Church is composed of the living stones of the faithful held together by the keystone of Christ. This idea became a common metaphor in ecclesiastical writing.²³ Hugh of Saint-Victor (1096–1141) made several references in his *De sacramentis* to the Church as the "multitude of the faithful" (*multitudo fidelium*).²⁴ In the same text he says that the Church "is the house of God constructed of living stones, where Christ has been placed as the cornerstone."²⁵ The authors of many Latin liturgical handbooks written between 1120 and 1290 relate the supports of the Church specifically to bishops, who succeeded the apostles and assumed many of their prerogatives.²⁶ In his *De gemma*

21. *Lapis angularis* can also be translated as "keystone." Although keystones and cornerstones have different purposes in built architecture, in terms of metaphor the centrality of the stone to the stability of the building is surely the salient point.

22. All translations are from the Douay-Reims online edition of *The Holy Bible, with Revisions and Footnotes by Bishop Richard Challoner* (Baltimore: Murphy, 1899), at www.drbo.org.

23. Jerome, *Commentariorum in Epistolam ad Ephesios*, in *Patrologiae Cursus Completus: Series Latina*, ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris: Garnier, 1884) (hereafter Migne, *PL*), 26: cols. 506B–508B.

24. Hugh of Saint-Victor, *De sacramentis christiane fidei*, ed. Rainer Berndt (Münster: Aschendorff, 2008), 2.2.2, 2.5.1; and *On the Sacraments of the Christian Faith*, trans. Roy J. Deferrari (Cambridge, MA: Medieval Academy of America, 1951), 255, 279.

25. "Sed et ipsa ecclesia ex multitudine fidelium in unum congregata domus dei est uiuis lapidibus constructa ubi christus fundamentum angulare positus est." Hugh of Saint-Victor, *De sacramentis christiane fidei*, 2.5.1; English trans., Deferrari, *On the Sacraments*, 279.

26. On the use of architectural language in Latin liturgical handbooks, see Christiania Whitehead, "'Columnae . . . sunt episcopi. Pavimentum . . . est vulgus': The Symbolic Translation of Ecclesiastical Architecture in Latin Liturgical Handbooks of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries," *Medieval Translator* 8 (2003): 29–38. Whitehead argues that the twelfth- and thirteenth-century liturgical handbooks differ from earlier ecclesiastical exegeses of

19. Émile Molinier, *Obituaires de la province de Sens*, vol. 2, *Diocèse de Chartres* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1906).

20. Chartres, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 1058, ca. 1230, published by Yves Delaporte as *L'ordinaire chartrain du XIIIe siècle* (Chartres: Société Archéologique d'Eure-et-Loir, 1953), 177, 199. Several canonized bishops of Chartres had feast days celebrated in the town. For example, St. Solennis's feast was celebrated on 24 September, St. Caletric's on 7 October, and St. Anianus's on 7 December.

animae, Honorius Augustodunensis (1080–1154) wrote of bishops as the columns that support the building, world leaders as the beams that join it, and soldiers as the roof tiles that protect it.²⁷ In another of Honorius's works, *Expositio in cantica canticorum*, he described the city of God, saying that the columns that support the house are the apostles and their successors, the bishops.²⁸ Bruno of Segni (ca. 1048–1123) similarly wrote, "this church, constructed from wood and stones, refers to the Church itself, which is built from living stones. Its stones are joined and united not with lime but with charity. Its foundation is Christ. Its doors are the apostles. The bishops and doctors are the columns of the church, on which each stone glows more brightly the more faithful and upright it is."²⁹ Sicardus of Cremona (ca. 1155–1215) and William Durandus (ca. 1230–1296) echoed Bruno, speaking of bishops as the columns that support the church. Many other authors voiced similar sentiments.³⁰

the Temple and tabernacle by relating sacred architecture to the laity instead of to grades within the ecclesiastical hierarchy. While the authors do integrate the laity, as Whitehead suggests, they nevertheless continue to refer to ecclesiastical roles as well. See also eadem, *Castles of the Mind: A Study of Medieval Architectural Allegory* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003), 49–60. The architectural metaphor discussed here is one of many such figures of speech used by twelfth- and thirteenth-century preachers. Jean Longère, *Oeuvres oratoires de maîtres parisiens au XIIe siècle: étude historique et doctrinale*, 2 vols. (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1975).

27. "Columnae, quae domum fulciunt, sunt episcopi, qui machinam Ecclesiae vitae rectitudine in alta suspendunt. Trabes, quae domum jungunt, sunt saeculi principes, qui ecclesiam continendo muniunt. Tegulae tecti, quae imbrem a domo repellunt, sunt milites, qui Ecclesiam a paganis et hostibus protegunt." Honorius Augustodunensis, *Gemma animae*, in Migne, PL 172 (1895): col. 586B.

28. Honorius Augustodunensis, *Expositio in cantica canticorum*, in *ibid.*, col. 407D.

29. "haec ecclesia ex lignis, lapidibusque constructa, eam Ecclesiam designat, quae ex vivis lapidibus aedificatur; cujus lapides non calce, sed charitate junguntur et uniuntur; cujus fundamentum Christus est; cujus portae apostoli sunt; cujus columnae episcopi sunt et doctores, in quo unusquisque lapis tanto amplius rutilat, quanto fidelior et melior est." Bruno Astensis, *De sacramentis ecclesiae, mysteriis atque ecclesiasticis ritibus*, in Migne, PL 165 (1854): col. 1092B. My translation alters the structure of the final clauses to maintain the agreement of *quo* with *ecclesia*.

30. Pierre de Roissy, chancellor of Chartres in the early thirteenth century, wrote in the *Manuale de mysteriis ecclesiae* that "the columns of the building represent the doctors of the church; the towers, the prelates and preachers." V. L. Kennedy, "The Handbook of Master Peter Chancellor of Chartres," *Mediaeval Studies* 5, no. 1 (1943): 1–38, at 7; and Victor Mortet and Paul Deschamps, *Recueil de textes relatifs à l'histoire de l'architecture et à la condition des architectes en France, au Moyen-Âge*, vol. 2, *XIe–XIIIe siècles* (Paris: Édition du Comité des Travaux Historiques et Scientifiques, 1995),

The metaphor of the Universal Church as a construction of living stones appears in a variety of other artistic and architectural contexts. In one of the only surviving contemporary accounts of medieval architectural construction, Abbot Suger (1081–1151) applied this textual metaphor to the two rows of columns in his new apse at Saint-Denis:

The *midst* of the edifice, however, was suddenly raised aloft by twelve columns representing the number of the Twelve Apostles and, secondarily, by as many columns in the side-aisles signifying the number of the [minor] Prophets, according to the Apostle who buildeth spiritually. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, says he, but fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone which joins one wall to the other; in Whom all the building—whether spiritual or material—groweth unto one holy temple in the Lord.³¹

In this passage Suger drew directly on the imagery from Ephesians that tells how the building grows from the body of the faithful, with Christ as its cornerstone. Following the pattern of St. Jerome, Suger also integrated the idea of the living Church with that of apostolic support, pointedly connecting the columns to the apostles and noting that the living stones of the faithful rest on the foundations of the apostles and prophets. Suger's use of the metaphor does not differ much in conception from that of Bruno, Sicardus, or Durandus, although it is remarkable in describing a specific physical building instead of a generic, abstract church to express ecclesiological ideals.

Although Saint-Denis' apse columns did not feature figural representations of apostles and prophets, such explicit visual representations can be found in other contexts, including the central portal of the south porch at Chartres, where jamb statues of apostles flank a trumeau figure of Christ, and at the Sainte-Chapelle, where statues of the apostles decorate the piers of the upper chapel.³² Peter Low has also argued convincingly that the main portal at Sainte-Madeleine in Vézelay (1104–32) conflated a representation of Pentecost with Ephe-

186. Other authors of Latin liturgical handbooks include Prevostin of Cremona, Innocent III, and John Beleth.

31. Erwin Panofsky, trans. and ed., *Abbot Suger on the Abbey Church of St.-Denis and Its Art Treasures*, ed. Gerda Panofsky-Soergel, 2nd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 105.

32. For a discussion of apostles and columns in medieval churches, see John Onians, *Bearers of Meaning: The Classical Orders in Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 74–90.

sians 2:11–22, visually depicting the architectural metaphors of Christ as keystone and the faithful as constituent members of the Church fabric.³³ Like the Vézelay tympanum and apostle statues at the Sainte-Chapelle, the bishop figures on the Chartres flying buttresses illustrate the conception of the Church spiritually upheld by its bishops, who derive their authority from apostolic succession. In presenting bishops as part of the building's support system, the buttress sculptures along the exterior of the nave work within a larger semiotic field as part of a recurring visual motif that represents a common textual metaphor. The Chartres buttress sculptures thus manifest a familiar ecclesiological allegory for the community of faithful for whom the building was constructed, and in so doing they stress the connection between the Church as institution and the church as physical structure. At Chartres, however, artists adapted this metaphor, already prominent in the visual arts, to the new structural realities of thirteenth-century architectural practice, placing the bishop figures not only on columns but also on the relatively new forms of the load-bearing flying buttress piers.

After its debut on the flying buttress ensembles at Chartres, monumental buttress sculpture was included in many great churches. The chevets of Reims Cathedral and the collegiate church of Saint-Quentin were among the next projects constructed with this decoration. In both cases, the sculptural arrangement follows the general pattern established at Chartres, with individual standing figures associated with each buttress, although the location of their attachment varies. The buttress statues on the chevet of Reims, installed as early as 1215, predate those at Saint-Quentin, where the hemicycle clerestory was not completed until the 1240s.³⁴ In the 1240s and 1250s

artists extended the program of flying buttress sculpture along the north and south sides of the nave of Reims.³⁵

The Buttress Sculptures at Reims Cathedral

The chevet of Reims is likely the immediate successor of the pattern at Chartres, following it by less than a decade. Reims doubles the ranks of sculpture, displaying two rows of monumental figures on its buttresses (Fig. 6). The lower series, located on the buttresses of the radiating chapels, depicts Christ accompanied by eleven angels. These figures appear both on spur buttresses and on buttress piers supporting flyer arches (Fig. 7). The slightly later upper series (ca. 1230) adorns the top of the buttress uprights and features only angels.³⁶ The upper angels inhabit aediculae with trefoil arches over their outer openings, perhaps in imitation of the trefoil niches of the Chartres nave. Also like their Chartrian predecessors, both upper and lower sculptures present uniformly frontal, standing figures. A third register of sculpture atop the heads of the flyer arches comprises atlantes that fictively support the cornice (ca. 1230). Although they may have been inspired by large-scale buttress sculpture or the caryatids at Laon, the size, iconography, and relationship of these figures to the architecture distinguish them from the lower rows of angels and call to mind so-called marginal imagery, such as the corbel heads that adorn the cathedral throughout.

The two levels of angel sculptures on the outer faces of the buttresses differ in technique and iconography. The lower series is in high relief, with baldachins integrated into the cornice, whereas the upper series consists of ostensibly free-standing figures set off from the backs of the aediculae. Even though each buttress upright received an aedicula and an angel, only twelve of the sixteen buttresses below the chapel cornice have a sculpted figure: the four southern buttress piers of the chevet do not bear any sculpture at the level of the radiating chapels. The upper program continues along the nave, whereas the lower program exists only on the chevet. In addition, Christ appears only in the lower program; the upper zone consists exclusively of angels in the chevet and nave, with kings in comparable aediculae around the transepts.³⁷

33. Peter Low, "You Who Once Were Far Off": Enlivening Scripture in the Main Portal at Vézelay," *Art Bulletin* 85, no. 3 (2003): 469–89. Many other studies similarly discuss the visual representation of the idea of the living Church. Erik Thunø, *The Apse Mosaic in Early Medieval Rome: Time, Network, and Repetition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 69–72, 159–64; idem, "Living Stones' of Jerusalem: The Triumphal Arch Mosaic of Santa Prassede in Rome," in *Visual Constructs of Jerusalem*, ed. Bianca Kühnel, Galit Noga-Banai, and Hanna Vorholt (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014), 223–30; idem, *Image and Relic: Mediating the Sacred in Early Medieval Rome* (Rome: L'Erma de Bretschneider, 2002), 65–70; Herbert L. Kessler and Johanna Zacharias, *Rome 1300: On the Path of the Pilgrim* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 114; Robert Deshman, "The Imagery of the Living Ecclesia and the English Monastic Reform," in *Sources of Anglo-Saxon Culture*, ed. Paul E. Szarmach with Virginia Darrow Oggins (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 1986), 261–82; and Andrew Tallon, "An Architecture of Perfection," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 72, no. 4 (2013): 530–54.

34. Ellen Shortell, "The Choir of Saint-Quentin: Gothic Structure, Power, and Cult" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2000),

233. On the dating of the Reims statues, see Teresa G. Frisch, "The Twelve Choir Statues of the Cathedral at Reims: Their Stylistic and Chronological Relation to the Sculpture of the North Transept and of the West Façade," *Art Bulletin* 42, no. 1 (1960): 1–24; and Willibald Sauerländer, *Gothic Sculpture in France, 1140–1270*, trans. Janet Sondheimer (New York: Abrams, 1972), 484–85.

35. Sauerländer, *Gothic Sculpture in France*, 487.

36. Ibid., 485.

37. The kings appear in aediculae set into large buttresses that do not support flyers.

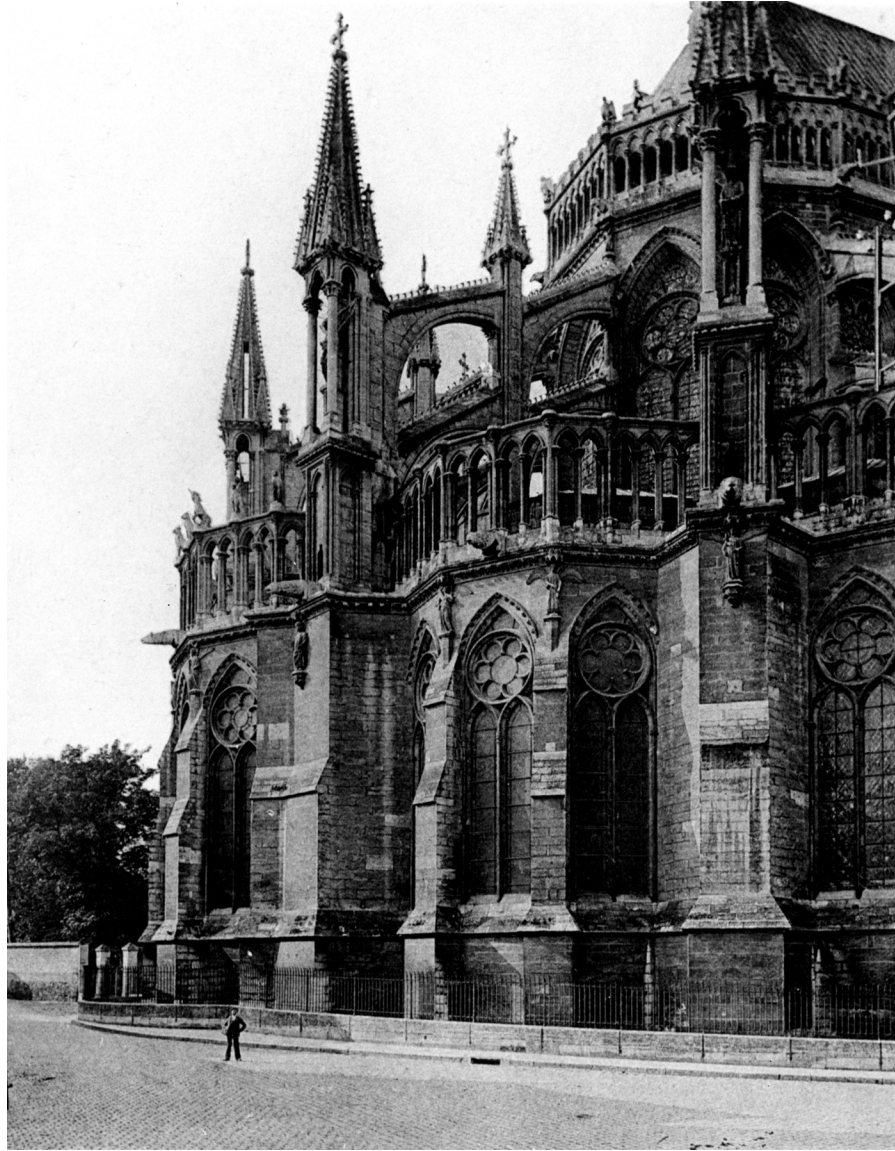


Figure 6. Reims, cathedral of Notre-Dame, chevet from the northeast, 1211, photograph before 1914 (photo: Foto Marburg/Art Resource, NY).

The buttress sculpture at Reims is by far the best studied of all such cycles.³⁸ Basing their conclusions on the figures'

38. Frisch, "Twelve Choir Statues"; William W. Clark, "Reading Reims, I: The Sculptures on the Chapel Buttresses," *Gesta* 39, no. 2 (2000): 135–45; Peter Kurmann and Brigitte Kurmann-Schwarz, "La sculpture: le triomphe de l'église de Reims," in *Reims*, ed. Thierry Jordan (Strasbourg: Nuée Bleue, 2010), 175–229; Richard Hamann-MacLean, "Die Kathedrale von Reims: Bildwelt und Stilbildung," *Marburger Jahrbuch für Kunstwissenschaft* 20 (1981): 21–54; William M. Hinkle, *The Portal of the Saints of Reims Cathedral: A Study in Mediaeval Iconography* (New York: College Art Association of America, 1965), 50–52; Louis Bréhier, *La cathédrale de Reims: une oeuvre française* (Paris: Laurens, 1920), 111–12; Patrick Demouy, *Notre-Dame de Reims: la cathédrale royale* (Paris: Éditions du Centurion, 1986),

attributes, most modern scholars interpret the lower series of figures—Christ and eleven angels—as a procession. Each of these figures carries one or two objects, frequently ones closely related to the liturgy. Christ holds an ornate book, possibly the Gospels. Two of the angels also carry books, one large and open, perhaps the Bible, and the other small and closed, potentially a Psalter or ordinary. Three angels swing censers, one with a horn and two in combination with an incense bowl (Fig. 8). Two angels carry floral maces, one holds a processional cross and scroll, and one has a water bucket and

80; and idem, *Reims: la cathédrale* (Saint-Léger-Vaudan: Zodiaque, 2000), 212–14.

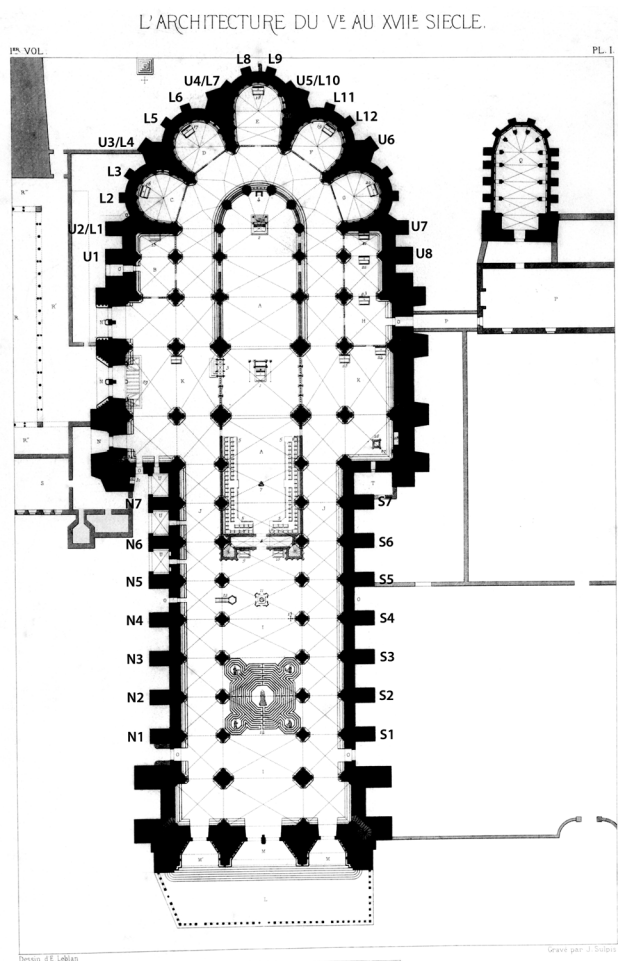


Figure 7. Reims, cathedral of Notre-Dame, plan showing location and numbering of buttress sculptures: N = north nave tabernacle figures, S = south nave tabernacle figures, U = chevet tabernacle figures, L = figures on the buttresses of the radiating chapels (plan: Eugène Leblan, in Jules Gailhabaud, *L'architecture du Ve au XVIIe siècle et les arts qui en dépendent: la sculpture, la peinture murale, la peinture sur verre, la ferronnerie, etc.* [Paris: Morel, 1858], 1: pl. 1, with numbering by author).

aspergillum. The final two angels hold, with covered hands, a gabled reliquary or tabernacle and a crown (Fig. 9). That these last two angels hold their objects in a cloth and do not touch them directly suggests that the items are reliquaries.³⁹

Many of the objects held by these lower figures were carried in liturgical and religious processions. For example, consecration ceremonies incorporated two extramural processions:

39. For identification of the lower angels' attributes, see Clark, "Reading Reims," 137. It is possible that the crown might be connected to Heavenly Jerusalem, as is the case for the angels in the spandrels of the blind arcade at the Sainte-Chapelle, although in the palace chapel the angels do not cover their hands.

in the first the bishop splashed the church walls with holy water (bucket, aspergillum), and in the second the relics were processed around the building (gabled reliquary/tabernacle, crown).⁴⁰ While a precise liturgical reading based on the specific combination of items depicted at Reims remains elusive, it seems likely that the group of sculptures evokes religious activity. It is also very plausible that, as William Clark suggested, the interpretation of the sculptures was flexible and changed with the liturgical year and historical circumstances.⁴¹ In other words, rather than presenting one particular ceremony, the angelic group might instead represent a generalized readiness for liturgical action that could reflect whatever procession happened to pass below them on a given day.

While there is general agreement that the lower series of sculptures on the Reims chevet represents some kind of processional action, even if its type remains a matter of debate, this consensus does not extend to the interpretation of the tabernacle angels above. Modern scholars often discuss the two levels of angels separately, implicitly or explicitly proposing that they belong to different iconographic programs.⁴² Louis Bréhier's analysis of 1920 provides an especially evocative illustration of scholarly preference for the lower sculptures.⁴³ Bréhier suggested that the statues placed on the exterior of the radiating chapels were performing the Divine Liturgy. He referred to the two angels holding the sun and the moon, which often accompany the scene of the Crucifixion. These attributes, however, are held not by the lower angels on the chapel buttresses but by two of the angels in the tabernacles of the buttresses along the south nave—figures that

40. On consecration rites, see Dominique Iogna-Prat, *La Maison Dieu: une histoire monumentale de l'Église au Moyen-Âge, v. 800–v. 1200* (Paris: Seuil, 2006); and Irénée Henri Dalmais et al., *Principles of the Liturgy*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1987), 218–25.

41. Clark, "Reading Reims," 141.

42. Peter Kurmann has argued that all thirty-three angels represent the guardians of Heavenly Jerusalem. Kurmann, "Le Couronnement de la Vierge du grand portail de Reims: clef du système iconographique de la cathédrale des sacres," in *De l'art comme mystagogie: iconographie du Jugement dernier et des fins dernières à l'époque gothique; actes du Colloque de la Fondation Hardt tenu à Genève du 13 au 16 février 1994*, ed. Yves Christe (Poitiers: Université de Poitiers, 1996), 95–104, at 97–98. A similar argument appears in an article by Willibald Sauerländer, although he limits his interpretation to the eight tabernacle angels of the choir: Sauerländer, "Integrated Fragments and the Unintegrated Whole: Scattered Examples from Reims, Strasbourg, Chartres, and Naumburg," in *Artistic Integration in Gothic Buildings*, ed. Virginia Chieffo Raguin, Kathryn Brush, and Peter Draper (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 153–66, at 157–58.

43. Bréhier, *La cathédrale de Reims*, 111–12.

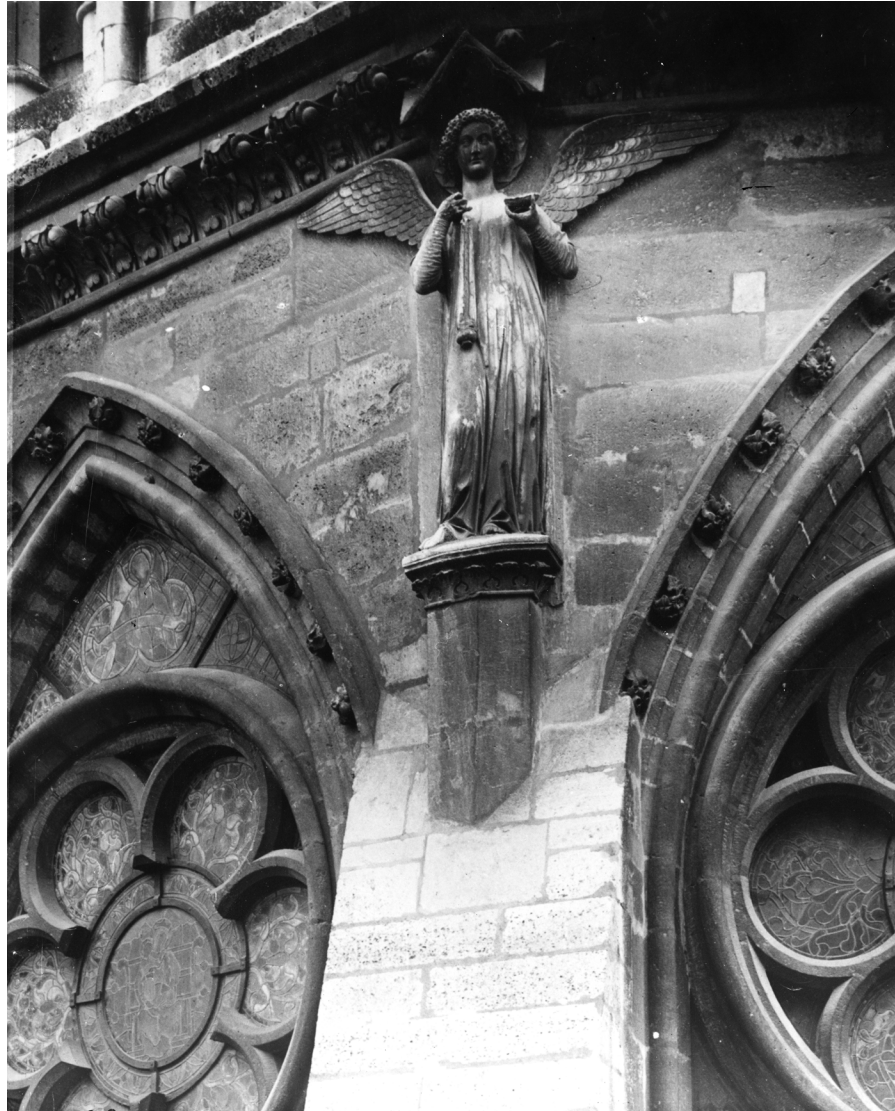


Figure 8. Reims, cathedral of Notre-Dame, figure L9, angel holding a censer and a bowl (photo: FotoMarburg/Art Resource, NY).

otherwise go unmentioned.⁴⁴ Bréhier's discussion of the exterior sculpture thus incorporates details from both levels of angels but attributes them all to the lower figures. Such a conflation underscores the tension between the general scholarly focus on the sculpture of the chapel buttresses and the iconographic connection between those statues and their brethren in the tabernacles above.

The current interpretation of the upper-level figures is that they depict guardian angels akin to those guarding the

gates of Heavenly Jerusalem in Revelation 21:12.⁴⁵ To be sure, by virtue of their very presence the angels project a general watchfulness and security. Nevertheless, the number of aedicula angels—eight in the choir and seven more on each side of the nave—does not accord numerically with the twelve gates

44. Clark ("Reading Reims," 137) noted that the sun and the moon are not among the attributes of the sculptures on the buttresses of the radiating chapels, but he made no comment about their presence among the tabernacle angels.

45. Kurmann and Kurmann-Schwartz, "La sculpture," 216; Clark, "Reading Reims," 139; Sauerländer, "Integrated Fragments," 157; Hamann-MacLean, "Die Kathedrale von Reims," 44; Demouy, *Notre-Dame de Reims*, 44, 80, 95; and idem, *Reims: la cathédrale*, 212–14. Demouy sees the two programs as related through the image of celestial Jerusalem, but he does not explicitly extend the idea of procession to the upper angels, which he views as protectors. Kurmann offered an alternative hypothesis in which both levels of angels represent a heavenly guard.



Figure 9. Reims, cathedral of Notre-Dame, figure L10, angel holding a crown (photo: FotoMarburg/Art Resource, NY).

of the heavenly city.⁴⁶ The addition of the lower eleven angels makes a total of thirty-three, a symbolically important number, but it does not account for the figure of Christ.⁴⁷ However, this numeric divergence from John's Apocalypse may not have posed an obstacle for the majority of viewers, for whom counting was not necessarily a priority.⁴⁸

46. Representations of Heavenly Jerusalem vary in their number of gates, although the number twelve, in accordance with the book of Revelation, is the most common. For example, New York, Morgan Library and Museum (hereafter Morgan Library), MS M.240, fol. 5v, depicts the celestial city with six gates, and MS M.484, fol. 113r, has thirteen gates. Frisch ("Twelve Choir Statues") makes no mention of the tabernacle angels.

47. Clark, "Reading Reims," 139.

48. Compare, for instance, the representation of sixteen apostles in the clerestory hemicycle at Saint-Père in Chartres. Meredith Parsons Lillich, *The Stained Glass of Saint-Père de Chartres* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1978), 95–98.

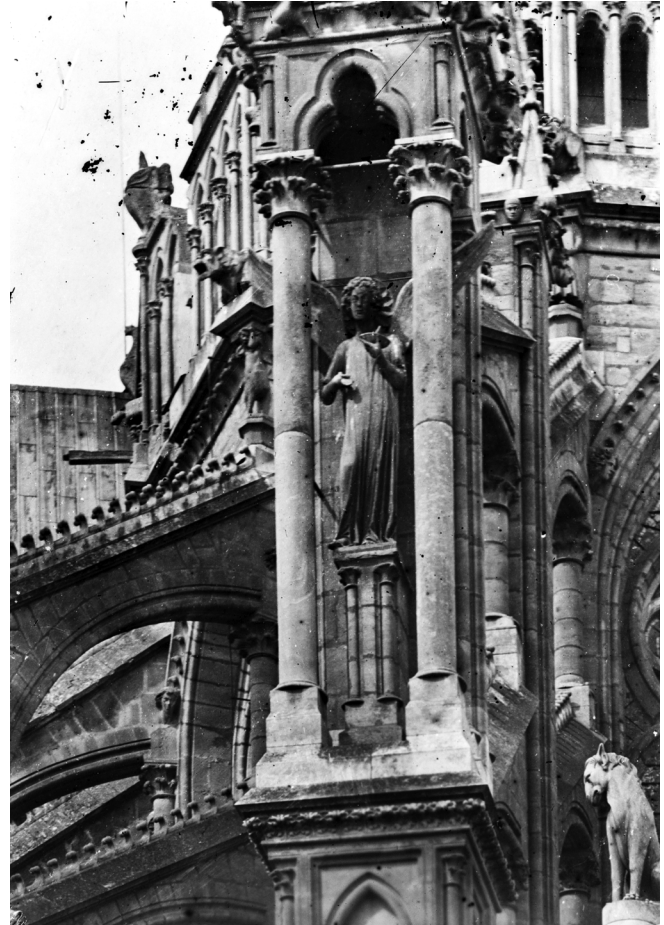


Figure 10. Reims, cathedral of Notre-Dame, figure U5, angel holding a censer and bowl, photograph before 1914 (photo: FotoMarburg/Art Resource, NY).

The technical differences between the two levels of angels at Reims mentioned above may have prompted their separation in modern scholarship. Despite these differences, there are enough similarities between the two registers to warrant an integrated reading. Both levels represent an angelic host depicted as frontally facing, monumental figures based on the model of Chartres, and several of the angels on the two levels carry the same attributes.⁴⁹ An upper angel in the choir at position U5 holds a censer and a bowl, repeating the utensils borne by two lower figures, L9 and L12 (Figs. 8, 10).⁵⁰ Other shared attributes include horns (N4, L8), banners (S1, L4, L6), and books (N5, S7, L1, L2, L7) (Figs. 11–12). Three of the upper angels hold a chalice (U3, N1, S4), a liturgical vessel not carried by any of the figures at the level of the radiating

49. In several cases, for example U7 and U8, the attributes are too heavily damaged to identify.

50. U6 also holds a censer but does not carry a bowl.



Figure 11. Reims, cathedral of Notre-Dame, figure N4, angel holding a horn, photograph before 1914 (photo: FotoMarburg/Art Resource, NY).

chapels. Additionally, many of the upper angels along the south nave carry objects related to the Passion. The angel in position S5 holds what have been identified as the bread and sponge, objects used to symbolize Christ's Passion since the Carolingian period.⁵¹ The chalice also appears in association

51. For identification of objects, see the notes on FotoMarburg photograph LA 783/11. On the symbolism and history of the



Figure 12. Reims, cathedral of Notre-Dame, figure S7, angel holding a book, photograph before 1914 (photo: FotoMarburg/Art Resource, NY).

with the Passion instruments, catching the blood that spills from Christ's wounds.⁵² Angels S2 and S3 hold the moon and the sun, respectively.⁵³ These celestial bodies also appear regularly in images of the Crucifixion, reflecting such Gospel accounts as Luke 23:44–45, and, like the instruments of the Passion, symbolize Christ's victory on the cross.⁵⁴ As objects closely associated with Christ's suffering, some of which came

instruments of the Passion, see Gertrud Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art*, vol. 2, *The Passion of Christ*, trans. Janet Seligman (Greenwich, CT: New York Graphic Society, 1972), 184–98.

52. For example, the chalice appears among the instruments of the Passion in the Hours of the Life of St. Marguerite (Troyes, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 1905, fol. 207v) and in the initial *D* in a book of hours of about 1470 (Morgan Library, MS M.152, fol. 12r). See also Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art*, 188.

53. Kurmann and Kurmann-Schwarz ("La sculpture," 213) identified this object as a sundial.

54. Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art*, 109.

into direct contact with his body or blood, these attributes, and especially the chalice and the sponge, are comparable in spirit to the reliquaries held in the hands of some of the lower angels. Thus, if the objects held by the lower sculptures indicate that the group represents a procession, this interpretation should be extended to the upper figures as well.

One might argue that the presence of the sponge and other objects closely associated with the Passion among the tabernacle angels' attributes imbues the latter with a strong protective message. After all, the *arma Christi* were weapons used in the defense against sin. The presence of the sponge in particular might thus evoke the idea of guardian angels, especially those angels that flank the throne of Christ in some Last Judgment images.⁵⁵ However, the Passion objects are only some of the attributes of the tabernacle angels. Others, including the book and the censer-and-bowl combination, are not typically counted among them. Indeed, even though several angels are now missing their attributes, there is no clear evidence that some of the most commonly depicted Passion instruments (the crown of thorns, nails, scourges) were ever among them. It is also worth noting that the angelic guardians of Heavenly Jerusalem are often shown wielding traditional weapons, which the tabernacle angels do not hold.⁵⁶ Moreover, while the instruments of the Passion were frequently depicted in Last Judgment scenes, they were fundamentally linked to the Crucifixion and Christ's sacrifice, memorialized in the Eucharistic sacrifice of the Mass. It is most likely that, in this context, the sponge and chalice extend the liturgical message of the lower angels through the Crucifixion and thereby to the Eucharist.

Given the parallels between the two levels of sculptures, the series at Reims probably constitutes a unified or closely related ensemble, the upper angels acting as an amplification of the lower procession and contributing to a sense of ceremonial richness. In other words, the angels' attributes suggest that they all participate in a shared activity. This interpretation does not negate a possible protective role or detract from the ecclesiological message that asserts the authority of the Church and its prelates. Assuming that the gabled tabernacle and crown indeed represent reliquaries, their inclusion in the program similarly conveys the protections and privileges of the Church, which were closely linked to its relics and to its

function as a site for the performance of the Eucharistic and other liturgies. The significance of the protective role of these objects would have been reinforced by their repeated use in consecration processions, implying that the same power employed in the protection and status of the church's consecration was manifest permanently in its sculpture. In fact, it is possible that the angels reflect a desire to make a more explicit connection to the celestial realm than was possible with the representation of bishops or bishop-saints, as at Chartres. The close iconographic similitude of all thirty-three angels indicates that their significance lies in their totality rather than their individuality.

Buttress Sculpture at the Collegiate Church of Saint-Quentin

The placement of the sculptures at Saint-Quentin differs from that at Chartres and Reims.⁵⁷ Instead of adorning the outer edges of buttress piers or uprights, the figures appear on the clerestory wall of the chevet. Each of the six sculptures stands just above a flyer head, using as its base the volute at the flyer's juncture with the clerestory wall. Although at first glance their position seems to differentiate them from the earlier models, the standing sculptures at Saint-Quentin have essentially just displaced the Reims atlantes. Revealingly, a sketch of Reims Cathedral by Villard de Honnecourt depicts a configuration similar to that at the collegiate church (Fig. 13). Villard did not include the buttress uprights and therefore could not depict the angels as they appeared at the time, but he did draw summary sketches of angels with outstretched wings in the spandrels between the clerestory windows. In essence, he transposed the upper aedicula angels from the buttress piers to the clerestory walls.⁵⁸ The designer of the Saint-Quentin chevet made a comparable translation when he placed monumental figures atop the flyer heads instead of on the buttress uprights.⁵⁹ Villard and the Saint-Quentin master

57. On Saint-Quentin, see Shortell, "Saint-Quentin."

58. Richard Hamann-MacLean argued that the Villard drawing represented an earlier design of the nave elevation. Hamann-MacLean and Ise Schüssler, *Die Kathedrale von Reims* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1993), 1:1, 146–77. In contrast, William Clark ("Reims Cathedral in the Portfolio," 30) suggested that the drawing represents Villard's impression of the building, adjusted from reality according to his experience and interests.

59. Some scholars have attributed the choir of Saint-Quentin to Villard. Pierre Bénard, *Collégiale de Saint-Quentin: renseignements pour servir à l'histoire de cette église* (Paris: Librairie Centrale d'Architecture, 1867), 1–18; and Hans R. Hahnloser, *Villard de Honnecourt: kritische Gesamtausgabe des Bauhüttenbuches ms. fr 19093 der Pariser Nationalbibliothek* (Vienna: Schroll, 1935), 73–76, 234–37. More recent scholarship suggests that Villard was not a practicing architect but, rather, an architecture enthusiast.

55. This motif dates back at least to the sixth century, as documented by the apse mosaic of the church of San Michele in Africisco in Ravenna, dated 545/46, now part of the Skulpturensammlung und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst of the Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin. Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art*, 186.

56. An example is Morgan Library, MS M.1038, fol. 1v, *Pèlerinage de la vie humaine* (second quarter of fourteenth century), where the guardian angel wields a sword.

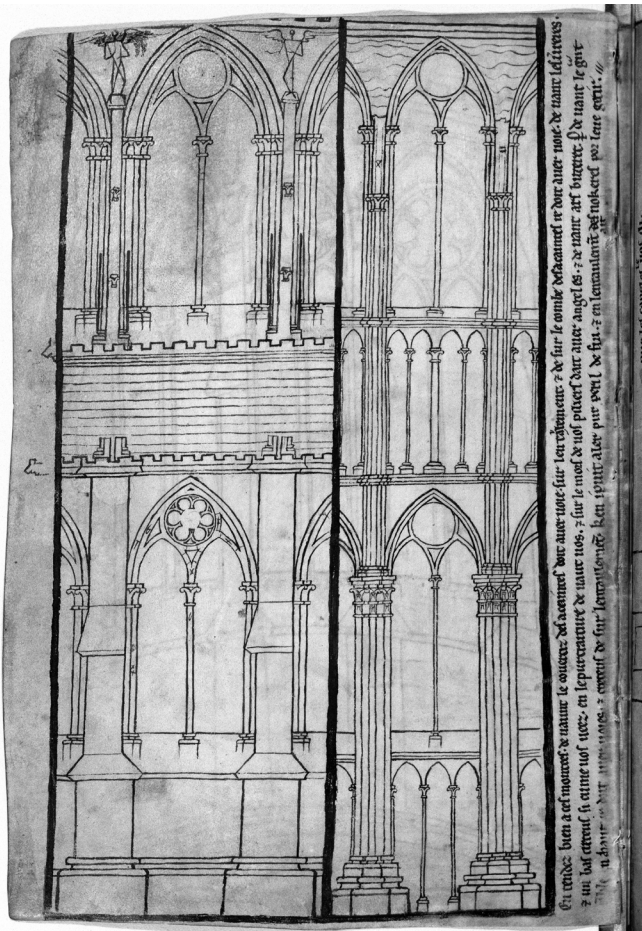


Figure 13. Villard de Honnecourt, interior and exterior elevation of the cathedral at Reims, 1230s, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS fr. 19093 (photo: © BnF, Dist. RMN–Grand Palais/Art Resource, NY).

may have similarly, and perhaps independently, conflated the standing angels with the crouching atlantes that surmount the flyer heads at Reims, possibly misremembering the details of that building. Alternatively, they may have fused the upper and lower levels of the Reims angels in their minds, erroneously merging the high position of the upper series with the

Robert Branner, "Villard de Honnecourt, Reims, and the Origin of Gothic Architectural Drawing," *Gazette des beaux-arts*, ser. 6, 61, no. 1130 (1963): 129–46; Clark, "Reims Cathedral in the Portfolio," 50; James S. Ackerman, "Villard de Honnecourt's Drawings of Reims Cathedral: A Study in Architectural Representation," *Artibus et Historiae* 18, no. 35 (1997): 41–49, at 42; Carl F. Barnes Jr., *The Portfolio of Villard de Honnecourt* (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Fr 19093): A New Critical Edition and Color Facsimile (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), esp. 225–26; and Roland Bechmann, "Villard de Honnecourt," in *Dictionnaire encyclopédique du Moyen Âge*, ed. André Vauchez with Catherine Vincent (Paris: Cerf, 1997), 2:1589–90.

lower series' closer association with an outer wall. In either case, the angelic iconography was likely inspired by Reims, with which the collegiate church shares a number of other characteristics.⁶⁰

The Saint-Quentin figures are in particularly poor condition, but pre-1920 photographs and drawings document some of the sculptures in an earlier and more complete state. They show three robed figures: one plucks the strings of a small harp, another holds a closed book, and a third carries a different stringed instrument, probably a viol or fiddle (Fig. 14).⁶¹ The other three figures are not included in these documents. The caption on one of the photographs identifies the sculptures as "les moines musiciens,"⁶² but the representation of monks with musical instruments was extremely rare in thirteenth-century France, and it is more likely that the statues actually represent angels.⁶³ No trace of wings survives, and the extant graphic evidence is ambiguous on this point. In one photograph the figure holding the viol has what might be the stump of a wing, but it is not present in the drawing of the same figure, and the documents fail to show a similar vestige on any of the other figures. Nevertheless, in the Middle Ages the identification of angels was not dependent on the presence of wings.⁶⁴ None of the documents unearthed

60. Similarities between Saint-Quentin and Reims Cathedral include the use of deep polygonal radiating chapels, the hemicycle piers, and the triforium. On the relation of the Saint-Quentin choir to other High Gothic churches, see Shortell, "Saint-Quentin," 175–235; and Pierre M. L. Hélot, *La basilique de Saint-Quentin et l'architecture du Moyen Âge* (Paris: Picard, 1967), 58–62.

61. Charenton-le-Pont, Médiathèque de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine, photographs MH0055514 and MH0110252, plans d'édifice de l'Ainse, Saint-Quentin, vue de la partie haute du chevet by Louis-François Bruyère.

62. Charenton-le-Pont, Médiathèque de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine, photograph MH0055514. In his nineteenth-century description, Ferdinand Guilhermy identified each of the figures as angels; see Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France (hereafter BnF), MS nouv. acq. fr. 6108, fol. 313r, papiers archéologiques du baron de Guilhermy, notes sur diverses localités de la France.

63. Examples of the depiction of monks with instruments include images of Anthony the Great with a bell and marginal images of monks that frequently invert social norms and thus are very different from the monumental sculpture of the Saint-Quentin chevet.

64. Wingless musician angels appear, for example, in Stockholm, Nationalmuseum, MS B2286, fol. 42v, 1290–99; the Death of the Virgin triptych housed at Amiens, Bibliothèque de la Ville, 1315–30; the book of hours Morgan Library, MS M.1000, fol. 148v, with angels tolling bells for the unbelievers confounded, ca. 1420; and the Hours of Claude Molé, Morgan Library, MS M.356, fol. 64v, ca. 1500. Earlier examples of wingless angels not carrying instruments include two on the tympanum of the main portal of the church of Montceaux-l'Étoile (twelfth century) and a statue currently housed at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, acc. no. A.20-1929 (second half of the twelfth century).



Figure 14. Saint-Quentin, collegiate church, chevet, detail of angel figures, photograph before 1920 (photo: © Ministère de la Culture/ Médiathèque du Patrimoine, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais/Art Resource, NY).

to date shows or discusses a Christ figure at Saint-Quentin, but a description by the seventeenth-century canon Quentin de la Fons notes, "In the turning bays of the choir, outside, below the entablature . . . are large figures of angels and other similar things."⁶⁵ This statement suggests that the program may have included saints or other holy beings, although it is frustratingly vague. In addition to the clerestory angels, the two buttress uprights at the junction of the choir and transept each carry a sculpture of a crowned male, possibly an Old Testament king, on their outer edge. The kings might be the "other similar things" under the entablature of the clerestory wall observed by de la Fons, although because they appear only twice, and not contiguously, they are visually distinct from the angel series. It seems more likely that de la Fons was referring only to the sculptures on the upper part of the clerestory wall.

Interpretation of the Saint-Quentin figures is particularly difficult given their damaged state and the limited quantity of graphic or textual documentation. If the three documented figures are representative of the group as a whole, however, and if the attributes they hold can be understood as indicators of their meaning, as I argued for the sculptures at Reims, then it is likely that they, too, represent a procession. I would like to suggest that the musical instruments carried by the Saint-Quentin angels draw on contemporary practices.⁶⁶ Underpinning this interpretation is the fact that while musical instruments did not play a significant role in interior liturgy during the Middle Ages, jongleurs and musicians frequently accompanied extramural rituals, particularly processions and mystery plays.⁶⁷ Reinhold Hammerstein posited that the procession of angels could imply their song, although he stated that such processions occurred only from the fourteenth century on and primarily in Byzantium.⁶⁸ The Saint-Quentin

buttress sculptures indicate that this motif was more widespread.

Evidence for the liturgical use of musical instruments appears in the *Roman du Saint-Michel* (ca. 1160) by Guillaume de Saint-Pair, which purportedly describes the dedication of the sanctuary by Aubert, bishop of Avranches. According to Guillaume, jongleurs accompanied a procession to the abbey church performing *lais* (lyrical narrative poems written in octosyllabic couplets) and sonnets with flutes, trumpets, and other instruments.⁶⁹ Although the *Roman* describes an eighth-century event, it more likely reflects twelfth-century religious celebrations, particularly one in honor of St. Michael known to have involved jongleurs.⁷⁰ The earliest surviving liturgical book at Saint-Quentin dates to the fifteenth century, but the nineteenth-century antiquarian Dom Grenier documented fourteenth-century Mardi Gras contests that incorporated instruments.⁷¹ Trumpets and drums signaled the start of the celebrations, which included a *messe en musique*, and the following day the celebrants entered the church accompanied by trumpets. Although these events were not strictly liturgical, Grenier's description clearly notes the use of instruments in celebrations with strong religious components.

Images of processions, such as those depicting King David transporting the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem, often include participants playing musical instruments akin to the description by Guillaume. Just such a scene appears in the Morgan Picture Bible (ca. 1244–54), in which trumpeters accompany the procession.⁷² Similarly, a *Vita Christi* illuminated about 1190 illustrates musicians playing a harp and a lute,⁷³ and a fourteenth-century missal and hours pictures King David and several other participants playing various stringed instruments.⁷⁴ A later image in the now-destroyed

65. Quentin de la Fons, *Extraits originaux d'un manuscrit de Quentin de la Fons intitulé "Histoire particulière de l'Église de Saint-Quentin"*, ed. Charles Gomart (Paris: Didron, 1854), 1:44: "A l'entour du chœur, en-dehors, au-dessous de l'entablement qui fait cette galerie, sont de grandes figures d'anges et d'autres choses semblables." De la Fons's description is at odds with that of Guilhermy (BnF, MS nouv. acq. fr. 6108, fol. 313r), who states that all six figures are angels.

66. Oliver Huck, "The Music of the Angels in Fourteenth- and Early Fifteenth-Century Music," *Musica Disciplina* 53 (2003–8): 99–119.

67. Recent work by Max Harris suggests that there may have been exceptional instances in which musical instruments were incorporated into the liturgy. Such instances appear to be linked particularly to popular celebrations. Harris, *Sacred Folly: A New History of the Feast of Fools* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011), 117–18, 161–62.

68. Reinhold Hammerstein, *Die Musik der Engel: Untersuchungen zur Musikanschauung des Mittelalters* (Bern: Francke, 1962), 203–4; 193–257 for images of musical angels more generally.

69. "Cil juleor, la ou il vunt, Tuit lor vieles traits unt; Laiz et sonnez vunt vielant. . . . Cors et boisines et fresteals et fleütes et chalemeals." Guillaume de Saint-Pair, *Le Roman du Mont-Saint-Michel (XIIe siècle)*, ed. Catherine Bougy (Caen: Presses Universitaires de Caen, 2009), 1:767–69, 781–82; and Edmund A. Bowles, "Musical Instruments in the Medieval Corpus Christi Procession," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 17, no. 3 (1964): 251–60, at 256.

70. Edmond René Labande, "Les pèlerinages au Mont Saint-Michel pendant le Moyen Âge," in *Millénaire monastique du Mont Saint-Michel*, vol. 3, *Culte de Saint Michel et pèlerinages au Mont*, ed. Marcel Baudot (Paris: Lethielleux, 1971), 242.

71. Dom Grenier, "Notes Compiled by Dom Grenier, Picardie 14, Notes et documents relatifs à la liturgie, l'histoire, les superstitions, jeux, mystères, mœurs et usages de la Picardie." BnF, coll. Picardie, fols. 79r–79v. I thank Ellen Shortell for making me aware of this source.

72. Morgan Library, MS M.638, fol. 39v.

73. Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum, MS 101, fol. 14.

74. BnF, MS lat. 757, fol. 147r.



Figure 15. *Procession through Paris*, copy of a fifteenth-century miniature from the *Missel de Jouvenel des Ursins* showing the *Maison des Piliers*, *place de Grève*, and part of the *Cité* (photo: Gianni Dagli Orti/The Art Archive at Art Resource, NY).

fifteenth-century *Missel de Jouvenel des Ursins* showed musicians accompanying a procession of the host as it traversed the *place de Grève* in Paris—an example of musical accompaniment in medieval ritual rather than as imagined for past or biblical events (Fig. 15).⁷⁵

Descriptions of ceremony and liturgical pomp further suggest that musicians and singers sometimes took on the guise of angels when accompanying major processions or participating in sacred dramas. For example, Jean Froissart wrote of musicians dressed as angels surrounding the Trinity in a play enacted above the gates of Saint-Denis on the occasion of Queen Isabella's entry into the city in 1389: "[A] castle had been set up, as at the first gate, and a heaven full of stars with a representation of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, sitting there in majesty. In this heaven young choirboys

dressed as angels were singing very sweetly."⁷⁶ Musician angels also appear in contemporaneous art, often as part of angelic orchestras in images of sacred events associated with the Virgin. These heavenly ensembles indicated the glory of heaven even as they reflected the instrumentation of earthly processions.⁷⁷

The musical angels of the Saint-Quentin choir buttresses almost certainly represent a celestial orchestra meant to evoke the heavens. Inevitably, the sculptors drew on earthly models when imagining the divine, depicting terrestrial instruments and ceremonies. Since musicians frequently took part in processions, the musical instruments held by the two documented Saint-Quentin angels serve a role similar to that of the liturgical instruments carried by the Reims angels and speak to the implied progress of the figures. The program's connection to liturgical performance is further suggested by the inclusion of a book, perhaps a Psalter or ordinary, which places the music within a specifically religious context.

The Relationship of the Programs at Chartres, Reims, and Saint-Quentin

Examination of these three early sites with buttress sculpture indicates that the Chartres program presented an ecclesiological metaphor of the Universal Church, whereas the Reims and Saint-Quentin programs stressed liturgical action. They may appear to be iconographically distinct, but these seemingly disparate emphases actually coalesce through their relation to the episcopal office. Although the angel program at Reims does not represent bishops directly, it memorializes the ceremonial actions by which bishops exercised their authority; the generalized representation of liturgy presented by the angels acts as a proxy for the bishop, who supports the Church through his words and life (*verbo et vita*).⁷⁸ Furthermore, the presence of the bishop at Reims may be reinforced

76. "[E]t là avoit ung chastel ordonné sicomme à la première porte et ung ciel nué et tout estellé très-richement, et par figure Dieu séant en sa majesté, le Père, le Fils et le Saint-Esperit, et là dedens ce ciel jeunes enfans de coer, lesquels chantoient moult doucement en fourme d'angèles, laquelle chose on veoit et ouoit moult volentiers." Jean Froissart, *Oeuvres de Froissart: Chroniques*, ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove (Osnabrück: Biblio-Verlag, 1967), 14:9. Translation from Jean Froissart, *Chronicles*, ed. and trans. Geoffrey Brereton (London: Penguin Books, 1978), 353. On the distinction in the use of instruments between liturgical drama and open-air mystery plays, see W. L. Smoldon, "Medieval Church Drama and the Use of Musical Instruments," *Musical Times* 103, no. 1438 (1962): 836–40.

77. Emanuel Winternitz, "On Angel Concerts in the 15th Century: A Critical Approach to Realism and Symbolism in Sacred Painting," *Musical Quarterly* 49, no. 4 (1963): 450–63, at 458.

78. Sicard of Cremona, *Episcopi mitrale seu de officiis ecclesiasticis summa*, in Migne, *PL* 213 (1855): col. 22B.

75. Comparable examples showing a contemporary procession that includes musicians are the scene of the translation of relics on the tomb of Peter Martyr in the church of Sant'Eustorgio, Milan (1339), and the procession of Charles VII of France in the *Cronaca della Napoli Aragonese*, Morgan Library, MS M.801, fol. 113r.

through the figure of Christ, who leads his angelic entourage in their implied procession around the church and thereby performs episcopal duties.⁷⁹ Because Saint-Quentin was a collegiate church rather than a cathedral, the angelic performance would have referred to the pastoral duties of the dean, who exercised his office through liturgy. As administrative officials of the diocese, the deans of Saint-Quentin served ecclesiastical functions roughly comparable to those of bishops. Finally, at Reims and Saint-Quentin the theme of episcopal authority implied by the figures resonates with the iconography of the clerestory hemicycle windows, which depict, respectively, the archbishop and ten suffragan bishops of the diocese or the “apostles of Picardy.”⁸⁰ It is possible that the bishops in the stained glass at Reims are arranged in the order established for a council held at Saint-Quentin in 1231.⁸¹ Together, the glass and sculpture reinforce and amplify the dual pastoral and administrative roles of the Church leaders.⁸² At Reims, site of the coronation of French kings, the ecclesiological message was further elaborated through the representation of kings in niches on the transepts, thereby integrating them into the story of salvation and casting Reims as a new Rome.⁸³

79. Margot Fassler noted introit trope texts for Chartres Cathedral that present the bishop as a type of Christ. Fassler, “Liturgy and Sacred History in the Twelfth-Century Tympana at Chartres,” *Art Bulletin* 75, no. 3 (1993): 499–520, at 506.

80. Ellen M. Shortell, “Dismembering Saint Quentin: Gothic Architecture and the Display of Relics,” *Gesta* 36, no. 1 (1997): 32–47. Sauerländer (“Integrated Fragments,” 157–58) and Kurmann (“Le Couronnement de la Vierge,” 97–98) previously suggested such a correspondence for Reims based on the identification of the tabernacle angels as the guardians of the gates of Heavenly Jerusalem. The axial window at Le Mans Cathedral depicts two bishops below scenes of the Virgin and the Crucifixion.

81. Robert Branner, “Historical Aspects of the Reconstruction of Reims Cathedral, 1210–1241,” *Speculum* 36, no. 1 (1961): 23–37, at 26n15.

82. The stained glass at Chartres Cathedral does not include a comparable representation of diocese either in the hemicycle or in the clerestory windows of the nave. The nave clerestory windows do contain several images of bishops and apostles, with at least three images of sainted bishops of Chartres appearing in the lancets and oculi of the south clerestory, the windows located closest to the medieval buttress sculpture. The prevalence of apostolic and episcopal imagery in the clerestory windows might suggest some correspondence between the stained glass and exterior sculptures, although the nave clerestory also includes several saints who were not bishops, two deacons, and two lancets depicting biblical narratives.

83. Peter Kurmann, “‘Et angeli tui custodiant muros eius’: un cycle de statues méconnu au transept sud de Notre-Dame de Rouen; modèle ou reflet du cortège des anges de Reims?,” in “*Tout le temps du veneour est sanz oyseuseté*”: *mélanges offerts à Yves Christe pour*

Buttress Sculpture in Later Building Projects

Monumental standing figures continued to adorn buttress piers in the second half of the thirteenth century. Another early cycle of angel figures appears on the buttress piers of the south transept of Rouen Cathedral (consecrated 1237). Only four of these statues survived the late fourteenth-century Rayonnant modifications, but, like the angels at Saint-Quentin, they were influenced by the buttress sculpture at Reims.⁸⁴ The Rouen angels carry scrolls rather than the musical and liturgical instruments seen at Reims and Saint-Quentin, and the flying buttresses along the nave feature alternating large-scale sculptures of archbishops and crowned figures, possibly dukes of Normandy (Fig. 16), that are more reminiscent of Chartres.⁸⁵ The archbishops, all wearing the pallium, most likely represent local archbishop-saints whose cults the cathedral clergy was actively promoting around the time that the sculptures were installed.⁸⁶ The inclusion of the pallium is significant; its use by archbishops was largely restricted to great feasts, when it symbolized the pastoral care of their metropolitan province. Similarly, statues surrounding the choir of Beauvais Cathedral (begun 1225), today damaged beyond secure identification, have been interpreted as depictions of St. Lucien, the apocryphal first bishop of Beauvais, and his companions, following a nineteenth-century description by Antoine Gilbert.⁸⁷ The Beauvais program also displays similarities to the arrangement at Saint-Quentin, with the statues placed on the clerestory wall between the heads of the upper and lower flyers, and also to that at Reims, with St. Lucien at the head of an assemblage like Christ as the leader of his angelic host.

The uniting of support and ceremony through buttress sculpture may have been especially clear at Beauvais, if the account by Gilbert is correct. Although the current state of the sculptures does not permit confirmation, they seem to

son 65ème anniversaire par ses amis, ses collègues, ses élèves, ed. Christine Hediger (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 113–24, at 115–16.

84. *Ibid.*, 116–18, notes some additional comparable cycles in Spain, particularly at Burgos and Cuenca.

85. The Rouen figures were added at the same time as the nave chapels in the thirteenth century. Markus Schlicht, *La cathédrale de Rouen vers 1300: portail des libraires, portail de la Calende, chapelle de la Vierge; un chantier majeur de la fin du Moyen Âge* (Caen: Société des Antiquaires de Normandie, 2005), 341–45.

86. *Ibid.*, 341.

87. A. P. M. Gilbert, *Notice historique et descriptive de l'église cathédrale de Saint-Pierre de Beauvais* (Beauvais: Moisand et Dupont-Diot, 1829), 9; and Stephen Murray, *Beauvais Cathedral: Architecture of Transcendence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 53.



Figure 16. Rouen, cathedral of Notre-Dame, north nave showing buttress sculpture (photo: author).

combine the liturgical actions of the Reims and Saint-Quentin programs with the representation of bishop-saints seen at Chartres. If this is accurate, Beauvais would be a noteworthy case of buttress sculpture making visible the importance of the bishop's office. Here, too, the hemicycle glass presents a complementary program of apostles and their saintly successors, with a focus on those of particular significance to the diocese.⁸⁸

Bayeux Cathedral also partially preserves the sculpture of its flying buttresses, especially those of the chevet (1230–

45).⁸⁹ It has two levels of buttress sculpture: one at the top of the buttress uprights and the other surmounting the flyer heads where they meet the clerestory wall. All of the lower sculptures are nineteenth-century replacements based on fragments now housed in the cathedral lapidary.⁹⁰ The only thirteenth-century figure that survives in situ is the sole statue

88. Michael W. Cothren, *Picturing the Celestial City: The Medieval Stained Glass of Beauvais Cathedral* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 111–12.

89. The nested V-folds of the surviving fragments now in the lapidary at Bayeux suggest a thirteenth-century date. Jacques Thirion, "La cathédrale de Bayeux," in *Congrès archéologique de France, 132nd session, 1974, Bessin et Pays d'Auge* (Paris: Société Française d'Archéologie, 1978), 240–85, at 274.

90. In many cases the restorers completed the damaged sculptures with plaster additions and used the resulting composite figures as models for new stone copies.

currently on the upper level, above the westernmost flyer of the south side. All of the other upper niches are empty.

Even though the majority of the Bayeux sculptures currently installed are modern replacements, their basic iconography predates the restoration work.⁹¹ The thirteenth-century fragments generally comprise the lower torsos and upper legs of bishops, identifiable by their garments.⁹² As restored, the bishops carry books, chalices, and pastoral staffs. The two figures on either side of the chevet towers wear the galero and can thus be identified as either cardinals or members of the clergy.⁹³ One of their heads is preserved in the Musée d'art et d'histoire Baron Gérard in Bayeux.⁹⁴ The surviving upper-level figure probably represents a saint holding a book; a companion figure is also located in the museum. Finally, the lapidary contains two partial sculptures of the Virgin and Child that served as the model for the present statues on the buttresses on either side of the axial chapel. The southern Virgin and Child appears in an 1825 engraving representing the cathedral, and a nineteenth-century photograph shows the same statue before the restorations of the 1890s (Fig. 17).⁹⁵

91. Victor Ruprich-Robert mentioned the sculptures in a report of 1849, stating that "les contreforts dans les pinnacles, et les murs au droit des arcs-boutants étaient ornée des statues de grandeur naturelle qu'ont disparu presque entièrement, dans le chevet il en rest encore quelques unes admirablement sculpté et d'autant plus précieuses qu'elles sont devenues rares." Paris, Archives nationales, F19 7628. The restoration of the chevet came only several decades after this report. A "Devis estimatif des travaux" (estimate of work) for 1893 notes the restoration of the sculpture of the eighth and ninth buttress piers of the north side of the chevet, including the replacement of their heads, carried out by J. A. Corbel. Paris, Archives nationales, F19 7631.

92. One of the figures holds a scroll and might be a prophet, although it is worth noting that one of the angels at Reims also holds a scroll, as do the angels on the buttress piers of Rouen. In the absence of other prophet figures, I am hesitant to confirm this identification. Thirion, "La cathédrale de Bayeux," 272.

93. The galero has been in use for more than a thousand years. Although typically associated today with cardinals, other members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, including priests and prelates, may use this type of headgear in colors appropriate to their rank. Pope Innocent IV first granted cardinals the red galero at the first council of Lyons, in 1245, so its particular association with cardinals would have been introduced only toward the very end of the creation of the Bayeux chevet sculptures. James-Charles Noonan Jr., *The Church Visible: The Ceremonial Life and Protocol of the Roman Catholic Church* (New York: Viking, 1996), 191.

94. Inv. no. A0773.

95. Charenton-le-Pont, Médiathèque de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine, photograph 3033, anonymous, chevet of Bayeux Cathedral, ca. 1880; and BnF, Éstampes, VA-14, tome 1a, engraving; microfilm H113603, vue extérieure de la cathédrale by Nicholas Marie Joseph Chapuy.

The restored Bayeux figures stand on corbels in the form of grotesque faces, an arrangement comparable to that at Chartres. The majority are placed between flanking columns and under architectural canopies in a shallow recess along the outer buttress edge. The buttress uprights directly behind the stair turrets have statues on either side, instead of on the front. Empty corbels and canopies that once held sculpture also appear along the nave, and some of these bear the remnants of heads or haloes. As with the programs previously discussed, it seems likely that the Bayeux buttress figures represent saints and bishop-saints of local importance. It is notable that the Virgin and Child appear at the head of this holy crowd, on the two buttress uprights flanking the axial chapel.⁹⁶ In light of the proposed interpretation of Chartres, it is tempting to read the group as a celestial gathering of holy figures led by the Virgin, a symbol of Ecclesia, the institutional Church.

The examples discussed thus far might provide a general pattern for numerous churches where sculptures are missing or were never completed. For example, Pierre Audigier (1659–1744), a canon of the cathedral of Clermont-Ferrand, documented the presence of similar sculptures in the chevet, but no trace of those figures survives today.⁹⁷ Similarly, platforms and gables on the buttress piers between the radiating chapels at Notre-Dame de l'Épine (chapels begun 1509) suggest that monumental figures once inhabited its buttress piers, thus extending the practice well past the thirteenth century.⁹⁸ In several cases nineteenth-century sculptures fill

96. A Virgin and Child sculpture also appears above one of the buttresses of the axial chapel at Le Mans Cathedral.

97. Pierre Audigier, "Histoire de la ville de Clermont en Auvergne," BnF, Département des Manuscrits, MS fr. 11485, fol. 108v. Audigier relates that the flyers "repoussent les voûtes travaillées avec beaucoup de soin surtout aux extrémités où ils présentent des niches dans lesquelles on a placé la statue du saint auquel est dédiée la chapelle qui est au dessous." In the absence of images of the sculptures, it is impossible to verify the identity of the figures as posited by Audigier. I am somewhat skeptical that they would depict the saints to whom the chapels are dedicated, as the flyers appear between the chapels and not directly above them. It is worth noting that two of the Clermont choir chapels were dedicated to local bishop-saints, Austremoine and Bonet. It is therefore possible that Audigier noted the presence of bishop figures on the buttresses. A third chapel is dedicated to St. Arthème, a bishop of Sens. Whether or not the buttress figures represented the dedicatory saints of the chapels, it is very likely that they included at least some bishops, as in the programs at Chartres, Rouen, Beauvais, and Bayeux.

98. Luc Benoist, *Notre-Dame de l'Épine* (Paris: Laurens, 1933), 63. L'Épine shares many similarities with Reims Cathedral, and the placement of the sculptures on the lower portion of the buttress piers of the radiating chapels at L'Épine may look back to the lower level of sculptures on the Reims chevet.



Figure 17. Bayeux, cathedral of Notre-Dame, chevet, photograph of ca. 1880 (photo: © Ministère de la Culture/Médiathèque du Patrimoine, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais/Art Resource, NY).

buttress niches, like those in the fifteenth-century buttresses along the south nave of Notre-Dame in Louviers.⁹⁹

Where buttress sculptures survive, they generally follow the basic precedent instituted at Chartres, with single standing figures arranged along the inner or outer face of the support. The figures stand stiffly with slightly tilted heads that sometimes look down, presumably at the observers below.

99. François Verdier, "L'église paroissiale Notre-Dame de Louviers," in *Congrès archéologique de France, 138th session, 1980, Évrecin et Lieuvin, Pays d'Ouche* (Paris: Société Française d'Archéologie, 1983), 9–28, at 26.

Usually the figures carry an ecclesiastical attribute or instrument. More often than not, the buttress programs include representations of bishops or archbishops, sometimes interspersed with other saints or holy figures. Within these general rules, however, there is a great deal of variety not only in the types of figures represented (for example, the possible presence of cardinals at Bayeux) but also in the relation of the sculpture to the buttress itself. When attached to the buttress upright, the sculptures are often in niches or tabernacles near its top, but when attached to the clerestory wall, the sculptures might appear below the flyer head, as at Beauvais; above it, as at Bayeux; or in line with the flyer but attached

to the cornice or balustrade of the building, as at Le Mans Cathedral. Variety in the genre of buttress sculpture thus offers a potentially fruitful area for further exploration, despite the poor condition of much of the source material.

Conclusions

Although they stress different aspects of the administrative offices, the buttress sculptures of Chartres Cathedral, Reims Cathedral, and the collegiate church of Saint-Quentin all reflect the authority, position, and duties of the bishop or local ecclesiastical head. By either representing his liturgical duties or visualizing his place in the architectonic metaphor of the living Church, these sculptural programs bridged the divide between the physically constructed building and the Church as a community of faithful united in prayer. By linking the liturgical function of the building with its architecture, the sculptures serve as a visual indication of the building's ultimate purpose. It therefore makes sense that the sculptures on the buttress piers of the radiating chapels at Reims would serve as instructions for later ceremonies, as Clark argued.

In representing the authority of the church's principal administrator, the sculptures also indicated the influence of a town's main church on the lives of the townspeople. These monumental buttress sculptures appear on the very churches that controlled the major processions of the liturgical year. It was these churches that dictated the patterns of important celebrations; they could even require the participation of local parish churches. Saint-Quentin, for example, imposed fines on parishes that acted in defiance of its instructions.¹⁰⁰

100. De la Fons, *Extraits originaux*, 1:254.

The representation of liturgical activity on the exterior of these churches may also serve to advertise the authority of the institution vis-à-vis other local churches. This theme of authority acts not only through the actions of the figures but also through the appearance of bishops or, in the case of Reims, the figure of Christ, from whom bishops receive their influence in the apostolic tradition.

In representing divine or sanctified figures (angels, bishop-saints, or archbishop-saints), the buttress sculptures transform the terrestrial actions of bishops and clergy into celestial celebrations, calling to mind the adoring praise offered to Christ in heaven. The sculptures thereby form a bridge between the earthly and heavenly spheres, connecting acts of prayer and worship to their ultimate reward. By encircling the church on the flying buttresses, the figures of bishops and angels call attention to the sacred ground of the church that the bishop himself had set aside for God in the act of consecration. The representations of blessed figures further the link between the space of the church and the heavenly city, marking it as a place of special privilege. This connection to the celestial realm reinforces both the function of the building and the nature of the church's authority. Finally, as visualizations of the living Church constructed by and of its faithful, the buttress sculptures relate the structure back to its viewers, who can imagine themselves as its building blocks. The statues of angels and bishops are linked with other sculptural decoration, around portals and across facades, which frequently depicts saints, apostles, and prophets, all of whom were understood by medieval theologians as part of the supporting framework for the Universal Church. In this way, the architectural decoration of the exterior building represented an idealized image of the community that it served.