30 HEADS

3 0   H E A D S

Stone heads from the 12th to the 15th century

SAM FOGG

Introduction

Although severed from the body and their medieval environment, the thirty stone heads in this exhibition provoke a powerful reaction as they warrant us an intimate connection with the past. The individuality of these heads is articulated largely through expression and emotion, which in turn echo those medieval philosophies that saw the head as an indicator of rationality, intelligence and identity. The skill of medieval craftsmen is evident in the softly modelled flesh and vivid facial features, in the wild locks of hair, and in the exaggerated displays of emotion captured in stone. Originating from a variety of contexts and ranging from the 12th to the 15th century, the intrigue and beauty of these sculptures are a testament to the allure that they possess as objects - one of the reasons for their survival in museums and private collections today.

Some of the heads in this exhibition came from jamb figures that flanked portals, which would have ushered visitors into churches with their monumentality and their imposing expressions. Breaking out of their niches and communicating with one another across real space, jamb figures were able to displace viewers and draw them into their sacred dialogue. Whether religious or royal, these large figures on the exteriors of cathedrals were created for didactic purposes. Patrons used such statues to inspire particular political or religious beliefs in their subjects by linking themselves with venerated rulers of the past and by installing images of themselves in places of importance. Statues of kings in such public settings not only enacted the presence of the king in a symbolic way but were often proxies for his presence in a physical sense – oaths were sworn and judgments were performed in front of these stone portraits.

During various waves of iconoclasm or revolutionary destruction, however, these sculpted heads began to be understood as a threat. Such sentiment was subsequently coupled with the beheading of statues as symbols of monarchy – at the height of the French Revolution, for example, Louis XVI was decapitated on the same day as the statue of the Carolingian King Lothair which once decorated the church of Saint-Remi in Reims. Defacing and decapitating these figures meant removing the power to remember them and taking away their authority – it was destructive as much as it was symbolic. This act crucially anonymised the body because with the absence of the head, the figure lost its identity.

Apart from the heads of kings and saints, other sculptures in this exhibition would have been found in the marginal, shadowy spaces of churches and abbeys, surprising the wondering eyes of the churchgoers with foolish sneers, pained screams and animalistic physiognomies. To the distress of reformers, such as Bernard of Clairvaux, these sculpted heads were not only disturbing but also highly entertaining.

As Bernard wrote in his Apologia in 1125: 'in cloisters, where the brothers are reading, what is the point of this ridiculous monstrosity, this shapely misshapenness, this misshapen shapeliness? In one place you see many bodies under a single head, in another several heads on a single body. In short, so many and so marvelous are the various shapes surrounding us that it is more pleasant to read the marble than the books!'

These fantastic figures would have appeared out of the darkness, from corners and crevices in the cathedral, their grimacing faces demonstrating their absurdity while entertaining their viewers. Sculptures such as these would have enlivened the stone, yet they themselves were trapped within it – forever supporting the weight of the building on their heads and reminding the viewer of their fate, should their mind wander further.

The stylistic evolution in the 12th and 13th centuries from abstraction to naturalism was thought to have been practiced in these margins, where sculptors had more freedom to experiment with forms. Idealism gave way to disfigured bodies and dramatic expressions in order to create figures with a heightened presence and the power to move. This commanding presence was revered but also feared - although the sculpted head was created to be looked at, it had the unnerving ability to look back. With the absence of their original context, the stone heads in this exhibition stand as a testament to the damage that has occurred to medieval monuments over the centuries. More importantly, however, they affirm our persistent fascination with the sculpted head as an object.

Jana Gajdošová

1. Green Man with a Moustache

France, Vendée, Maillezais
First half of the 12th century
23 x 29 x 20cm; limestone

Condition:
The sculpture has suffered some surface damage on account of its age and since it was removed from its architectural environment.

Provenance:
Bought in the 1960s by the medieval sculpture scholar, George Zarnecki.

Description:
A limestone Romanesque head of a bald man cradled by large acanthus leaves. The head can be categorised as a Green Man – a head which is made out of or surrounded by leaves. The chunky stylised beard and tubular moustache are contrasted by a small mouth and a large bald head. Added to this are rounded cheeks and striking almond-shaped eyes. The arresting stare of this sculpture is complemented by the outlines around the eyes and by abstract wrinkles on the forehead.

The commanding character of this Romanesque Green Man was already recognised by George Zarnecki, a Romanesque sculpture expert, who bought the piece for his collection from an inn keeper in France in the 1960s. The Green Man once probably decorated either the exterior of a church façade or a frieze that ran along a church exterior.It is also highly possible that the head was located on the interior of a church because Green Man masks are commonly found as bosses in the aisles of churches or in the cloisters of monastic complexes. When Zarnecki bought the sculpture, however, it was already detached. He identified the Green Man as originating from one of two Romanesque structures in the town of Maillezais. The first of the two buildings is a large abbey, which was built in the 11th century and altered extensively in the 12th century. It was then raised to a cathedral in the 16th century before being severely damaged in the second half of the 16th century during the wars of religions. Although this abbey now stands as a ruin, it served as the primary example, both architecturally and sculpturally, for the region of Vendée. The second church in this centre is the parish church of St Nicolas (see fig. 1).

Several sculptures from St Nicholas still survive and their style, particularly the stylised hair and wrinkles, the large bulging eyes and the small mouths all find parallels with the Green Man under question. Framed by foliage, this head has a particularly intense stare and can also be compared stylistically to other sculpture in the area, such as that on the church of Saint Nicolas de Brem (fig. 2). Although the sculpture on the façade of this building predate our sculpture, the large bald head of a man with a tubular moustache in the lower left corner of

1. Fig, Grotesque heads and Green Man, Church of St Nicholas , France, Vendée, Maillezais, 12th century

Fig. 2,
St Nicholas de Brem
France
Vendée
Brem-sur-Mer
11th century

the pediment above the door has a particularly related form (fig. 2).

The iconography of the Green Man evolved as a Christian symbol, and it became popular with the naturalistic representation of foliage in the Romanesque and Gothic periods. Such sculptures represent both the dark side of the natural world and the fascination that people in the Middle Ages had with the types of hybrids that exist in that world. As most marginal imagery, however, the iconography of the Green Man combined pagan traditions with the medieval interest in representing the natural world. It also showcased the imagination and skill of medieval sculptors.

Related Literature:
René Crozet, L'Art roman en Saintonge, Paris 1971
Dillange, Michel. Vendée Romane: Bas Poitou Roman. Zodiaque, 1976.
Lady Raglan. 'The "Green Man" in Church Architecture.' In Folklore Vol. 50, No. 1 (March, 1939), pp. 45-57.
Malê, Emil. The Gothic Image: Religious Art in France in the Thirteenth-Century. Icon: 1978.

1. Green Man with a Moustache

2. A corbel of a man with a moustache

South western France, Poitou-Charentes region
First half of the 12th century
*25 x 17 x 37 cm; limestone*

The sculpture has suffered some surface damage. The lead from the pupils has been lost.

Provenance:
Private collection, Belgium

A corbel carved with the head of a man with cat-like features and a long curling moustache. The figure has an oval face with a cleft chin, pointed ears, and wide oval eyes whose pupils were once filled with lead, of which the residue or perhaps the fixing mortar remains. The figure has a long straight nose, a downturned mouth and a long thin moustache which leads around onto either cheek scrolling at the end. This is part moustache, part whisker and part foliage ensuing as it does right out of the nostrils. A carved edge across the forehead give the face a mask-like appearance.

This head was once probably a part of a corbel table on the exterior of a Romanesque church. The mask-like appearance, the shape of the eyes, the carving of the mouth and the long nose are all reminiscent of another corbel with a man's face at Castle Schupf at Oberschüpf of the late twelfth century (Boxberg, Main-Tauber-Kreis) Baden-Württemberg now in Karlsruhe, Badisches Landesmuseum (inv. no. C6100/01; illustrated in Eva Zimmerman, Die mittelalterlichen Bildwerke in Hlz, Stein, Ton und Bronze mit ausgewählten Beispielen der Bauskulptur,Karlsruhe, 1985,cat. 7, pp. 40-41).
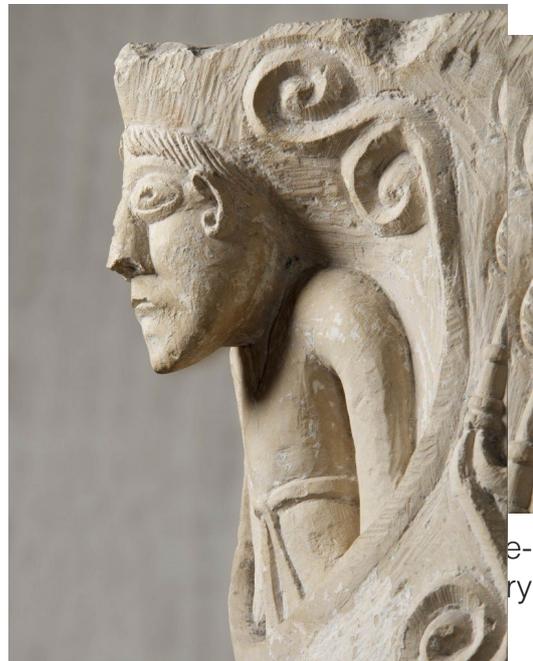
The localization to southwestern France, is however much more convincing when the particular stylistic tendencies of this sculpture are considered. A capital depicting a markedly similar head extending from two conjoined feline bodies is preserved in the Romanesque church of Genouillé, in the Poitou-Charentes region of South-western France (fig. 1). A more striking example from the Poitiers area is the capital from Saint-Hilaire-le-Grand (fig. 2). Although slightly earlier in style, the capital features the same confidently sharp carving, a

Fig.
lions
Poito

Fig. 1, Anthropomorphic human-headed lions, Second third 12th century ,France, Poitou-Charentes, church of Genouillé

pointed chin, large eyes with drilled pupils, a sharply styled nose and decorative scrolls in the same shape as the moustache on our sculpture. The similarities would support such a localisation for the present piece, which nevertheless remains a remarkable, rare, and significant survival.

Related Literature:
Dillange, Michel. Vendée Romane: Bas Poitou Roman. Zodiaque, 1976.

3. A Compound Capital with Heads

France, Southern France
First half of the 12th century
25 x 30 x 32cm; limestone

The capital suffered almost complete damage on its two sides. The two sides that survive also have damage to the foliage, to the scrolls and surface damage to the faces.

Provenance:
Private Collection, France

Description:
A compound capital with two heads and a Greek key pattern. Despite its damage, the capital is representative of the creative architectural decoration that would have once existed in monastic or ecclesiastical buildings in Romanesque France. On account of its size and its slender base, this capital probably decorated a small colonette, which was a part of a double capital, possibly in a cloister setting (see fig. 1).

The capital meander band (Greek key) at the top is interrupted on both of the surviving sides by heads. The heads have stylised straight hair

Fig. 1
Reconstruction of a cloister using capitals
France
Second half of the 12th century
MET 25.120.92

Fig. 2
Capital with heads
France
Second half of the 12th century
MET 25.120.120

which is split down the centre. Both have flat facial features and large eyes with drilled pupils. One of the heads is more complete with an abstracted nose and a small mouth. The other head has damage to the lower part of its face, yet its hair is decorated by a narrow diadem. The heads are flanked by scrolls, which spring from the centre of the capital. Below them are three rows of acanthus leaves, carved using a drill.

The stylistic tendencies of this capital are consistent with capitals from Southern France, made in the first half of the 12th century. The use of the compound capital – where a Corinthian form is combined with scrolls and other creatures - can be found

Fig. 4
Capital with head and Greek key
France, Toulouse
c. 1120 – 40
Musée des Augustins, Toulouse

Fig. 3
Capital with Heads and monsters (exterior and interior)
France, Poitiers, St. Hilaire-le-Grand church
11th century

in many Romanesque buildings in the region, such as those capitals now found in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (fig. 2). The combination of abstracted heads and foliated forms, in both the MET example and in our capital, also has a long tradition in Southern France, and an early example can be found on the exterior of St Hilaire-le-Grand in Poitiers (fig. 3).

A particularly interesting feature of this sculpture is the decorative band of meander which is set atop the capital. The meander pattern has a long tradition dating to antiquity and is commonly associated with Greek and Roman buildings. The survival of ancient buildings in Southern France is a reason for the persistence of this pattern in Medieval buildings of this area. One example can be found on two capitals, now in the Augustine Museum in Toulouse (fig. 4 and 5). Thought to come from the cathedral, the two capitals show a distinct familiarity with this design as the pattern is set within a three dimensional format and is much more elaborate than our example.

Fig. 5
Capital with Foliage and Greek Key
France, Toulouse
Beginning of the 12th century
Musée des Augustins, Toulouse

Related Literature:

Berne, Caroline. Sculptures romanes. Musée des Augustins: Toulouse, 1998.
Dillange, Michel. Vendée Romane: Bas Poitou Roman. Zodiaque, 1976.

3. A compound capital with heads

3. A compound capital with heads

4.Double headed corbel
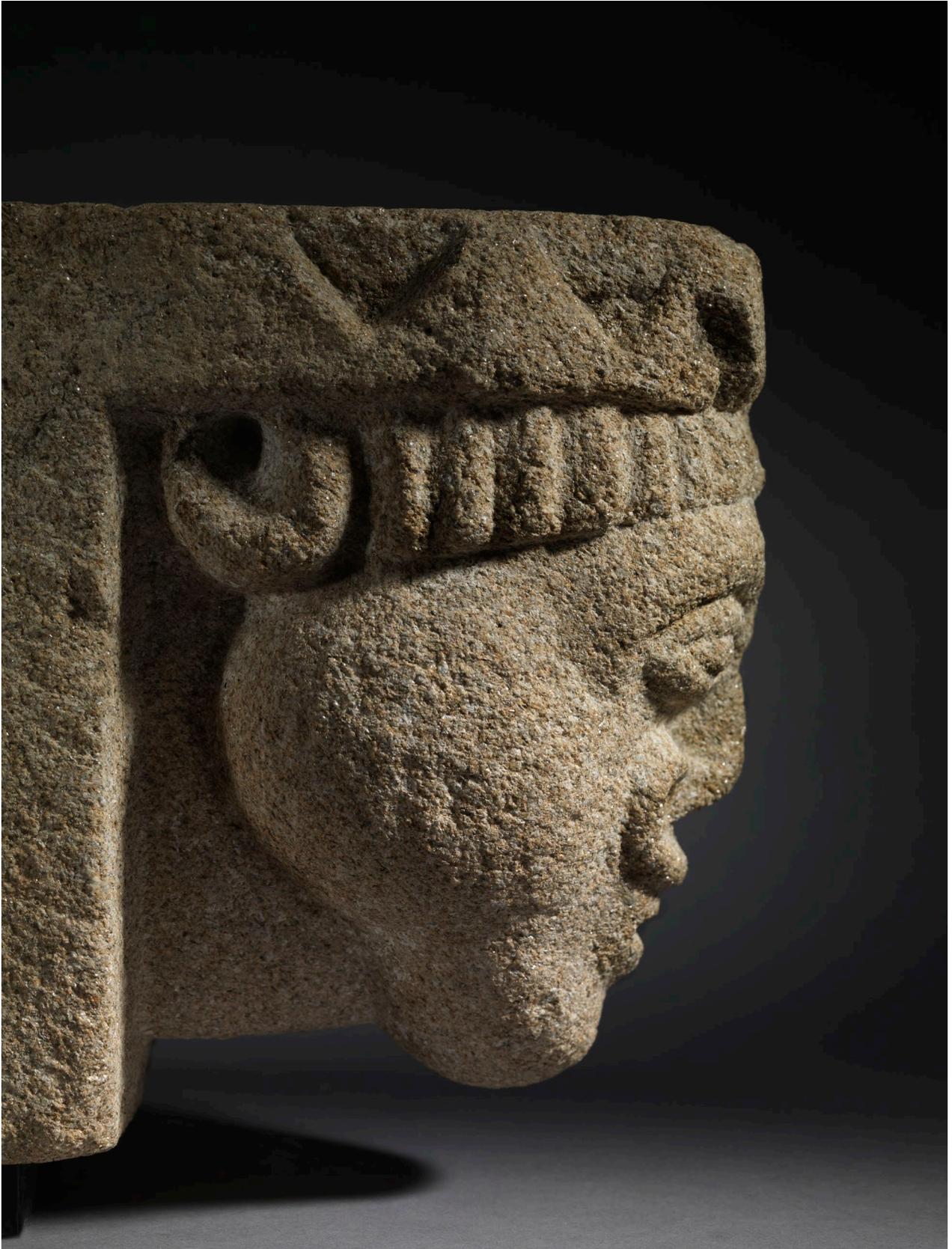
France, Brittany
12th century
19 x 35 x 14.5 cm; granite

The sculpture has suffered some surface weathering, damage to one head.

Richard Wiseman collection, UK

A two sided corbel with monks heads on either side. On one side there is a fabulous face of a monk with a huge grin. The nose is also very large as are the eyes which are roughly excavated. The monk has short cropped hair in the style of a tonsure. The edge of the corbel forms a frieze with a zig-zag pattern running around it. There is another monk's head on the other side with oval eyes. Unfortunately the lower part of the head from the tip of the nose downwards has been lost.

Geological analysis reveals the stone to be a fine-grained granite from the south of Brittany from around Quimperlé, Lorient, Vannes and Pontivy, stone from quarries active in the twelfth century. The abstracted grimace of this head and the large facial features can be compared to a number of 12th century sculptures, such as a corbel from the V&A (fig. 1). The influences between the early Norman sculpture in England and that of Normandy and Brittany are also apparent in this example.

Related Literature:
Cahn, W and L. Seidel, Romanesque Sculpture in American Collections, 1: New England Museums, New York, 1979.

Fig. 1
Corbel
England
c. 1150
V&A A.4-1946

4. Double headed corbel

4. Double headed corbel

5. A Corbel head of a Queen

South-western France, Angoulême
First half of the 12th century

34 x 21.5 x 44 cm; limestone

Description
A corbel head of a crowned female figure with a stern and powerful expression. This remarkable survival has elegant curls of hair that emerge from under her tripartite crown and fall down around her face. The crown has incisions around its top edges and has small round shapes around its bottom edge, imitating precious stones. Her heart-shaped face is defined by bulging eyes, a long nose and pursed lips. These characteristics together with her thin face suggest a mature woman, emphasizing her authority and wisdom. The corbel head is rounded at the top and the block of stone behind it projects far into the wall which once supported it.

This imposing crowned female head once served as an important architectural member of a lavishly decorated church in western France. Its form and the size of the block which it is attached to suggest that the head was not only decorative but that it would have been structurally important – perhaps carrying a shaft.

After a scientific analysis, it was found that the limestone reveals a white, resistant compound composed of detrital rock made up of shell debris, a type of stone found exclusively in a quarry in Angoumois to the west of Angoulême. Situated between Bordeaux and Poitiers in southwestern France, Angoulême is the capital of the Charentes (region of Poitou-Charentes) and was an important centre responsible for the spread of Romanesque architecture and sculpture throughout western France. It is particularly its Cathedral (dedicated to Saint Peter), which was built in a Byzantine-Romanesque style during the eleventh and twelfth centuries that bears striking similarities. Although its west façade suffered much destruction and bad restoration, the head of the figure of an apostle with a book is a good comparison to our head when its almond shaped eyes, the flat long nose and the pursed lips are compared (see fig. 2). In addition, the hair of the sculptures on this façade falls around their

Figure 1
Capital with the Sacrifice of Cain and Abel
France, Aquitaine, Agen
c. 1125

4. Double ended corbel with monks' heads

heads in thick defined curls just as the hair on our sculpture.

Other Romanesque sites situated between Bieul-sur-Autise and Angoulême, such as Civray, show similar sculpted decoration on their facades, as do the related abbeys at Montmorillon and Pérignac, further affirming the stylistic rooting of the present corbel in that region. It has also been suggested that the head might come from the Romanesque Abbey of St.-Vincent at Nieul-sur-Autise which was founded in 1068 and was accorded royal status in the twelfth century by Queen Eleanor of Acquitaine who was born in Nieul in 1122. The abbey suffered considerable damage in the French Revolution and little of its sculpture remains in situ, but this head of a crowned female figure might be one of its lost features.

Related Literature:
Cahn, W and L. Seidel, Romanesque Sculpture in American Collections, 1: New England Museums, New York, 1979.

Figure 2
Sculptures from the West Facade of Cathedral of Angouleme
c. 1128

6. A bust of a King

Southern France
1130 - 1140
41 x 35 x 12cm; limestone,

Condition:
Damage around the centre of the face, a small hole in the niche in which the bust stands has been filled in during restoration.

Provenance:
Private collection, North Italy, 1965-70;
private collection, South Germany until 1980

A relief of a king positioned frontally and placed in a curved niche. The king's crown extends just beyond the rim of the niche in which he stands. The crown is topped by three rectangular merlons and is elaborately carved with a swirling vine tendril whose offshoots end in half palmettes. The head of the statue has slight damage to the centre of the face, most notably the nose, which is most likely of a revolutionary or of an iconoclastic nature. The figure has strikingly large almond shaped eyes with drilled pupils. The king's hair is composed of a border of abstract curls along the bottom of the crown and his beard is decorated by diagonal striations. He wears a tunic fastened on the side by a pin and holds his right hand up to his chest. The carving of the details, such as the foliate decoration or the striations of the beard, clearly points to a sculptor possessing refined skills.

Fig. 1
Head of David from jamb of Porte Sainte-Anne in Notre Dame
France, Paris
c. 1145
MET (38.180)
29.7 × 21.1 × 21.3 cm

Discussion:
From at least the early 12th century, it was common to incorporate sculpted figures of both Old Testament kings and historical royal figures on door jambs and tympana, and such figures populate many of the surviving facades of Gothic and Romanesque cathedrals in France. In and around Paris, Old Testaments kings were featured above portals as galleries of kings or flanking doorways as jamb figures. Some of the most celebrated examples are the jamb figures from the abbey of St Denis or the gallery of kings from Notre Dame Cathedral (see fig. 1). At this time, many of these kings started to be sculpted with more contemporary fashions, and although they represented ancient kings, they resembled contemporary rulers. This trend was on par with the birth of the Gothic style which drew inspiration

from the natural world and from its surroundings.

In southern France, large figures flanking doors were incorporated into the Romanesque style, which prevailed much longer here, from the beginning of the 12th century. In churches such as St Trophime in Arles or the Abbey of St Gilles, large reliefs of Old and New Testament figures flanked doorways on flat sections of walls rather than on jambs (see fig. 2). They were often sculpted in relief and subordinate to the architecture that they occupied. Our figure of a king fits in well with this trend as it is sculpted in relief and as it would have most probably been a part of a series of figures on a church façade. The location of the king in a shallow rounded niche, its crown butting up closely against the rim of the niche, finds several parallels in southern France. Most notable are the two figures of Solomon and Sheba from the portal of Notre Dame de la Daurade whose crowns also touch the curve of the niche in which they stand (see fig. 5).
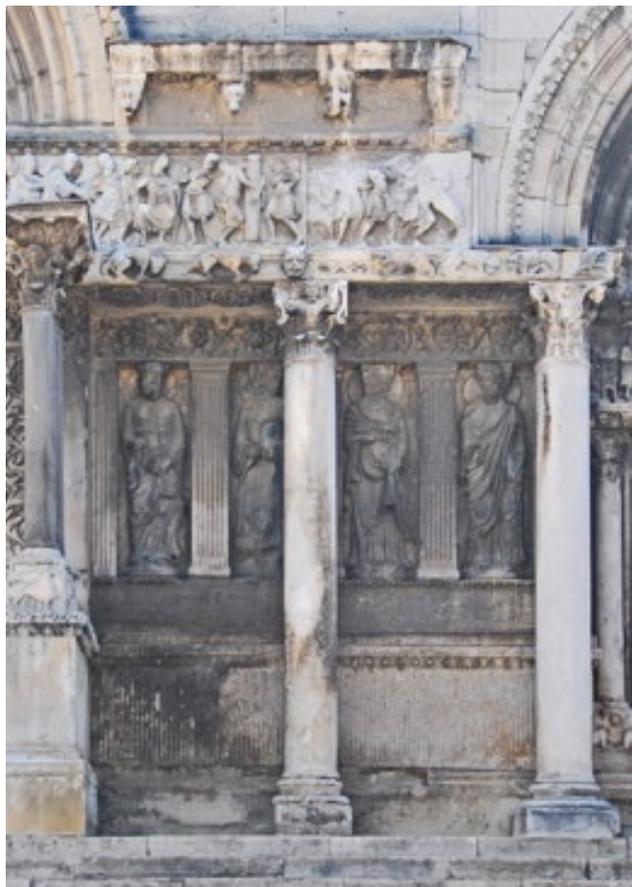
Fig. 2
Façade of the Abbey of St Gilles
France, St Gilles
c. 1120-60

Stylistically, the striking gaze of the sculpture, the shallow rounded niche and its stern expression are evocative of the Romanesque style from the southern part of France. The scrolling foliate decoration on the crown is very similar to the types of designs that we find in the region of Toulouse, such as the double capital from the Metropolitan Museum of Art (see fig. 3). The abstracted flatness of the figure, its large almond shape eyes with drilled pupils and its striated hair can also be compared to the sculptures of apostles that flank the door of the abbey of St Gilles, generally dated to the middle of the 12th century (see fig. 4). The slightly earlier style of our figure suggests that it predates these by about a decade or two.

Fig. 3
Double capital
France, Toulouse region
Mid 12th century
MET (1928 (28.81)
38.7 x 49.5 x 29.8 cm

Related Literature:
Little, Charles. Set in Stone: The Face in Medieval Sculpture. The Metropolitan Museum of Art: New York, 2006.

Fig. 4
Portal figure
France, St Gilles
c. 1120 - 60

Fig. 5
Solomon and Sheba from the portal of Notre Dame de la Daurade
France, Toulouse
c. 1165 – 1175
Musee des Augustins, Toulouse (Ra 452C, cat. Me 66)

7. Corner head with a moustache and acanthus leaves

France, North-central France
c. 1140 - 1150
limestone; 27 x 46 x 31 cm

Condition:
The sculpture has suffered some minor surface damage and some damage along its periphery as it was once attached to a building.

A head of a bearded man positioned between large acanthus leaves that form an arch above his forehead. The head has small rounded lozenge shaped eyes, a modest nose and a moustache resembling whiskers. Both the moustache and the beard of the head are highly stylised. The spheroid shape of the head is dictated by the corner stone from which this piece was carved and embraces a chin that characteristically merges with the neck. The two scrolled leaves below the large arch are asymmetrically placed, while the acanthus on either side of the corbel is highly abstracted.
This particular piece was either a part of a capital that topped a corner column inside a church or a corner corbel on the exterior corbel table of a church.

Discussion:
Stylistically, this leafy head can be compared to the carving in churches such as Autun Cathedral and Abbey of Sainte-Marie-Madeleine at Vézelay (see fig. 1). On both sites, we encounter the work of a sculptor named Gislebertus (active 1125 – 1145), who famously signed the tympanum of Autun Cathedral with the words Gislebertus hoc fecit (Gislebertus made this). At Autun Cathedral, the round-faced figures with small rounded eyes and noses, stylised hair and fleshy necks are analogous with our corner head. Similar sculpture, with the same type of fleshy necks that link with the chin, the small eyes with undrilled pupils, hair patterned with lines, and large acanthus foliage can also be found at Vézelay (fig. 1).

Fig. 1
Two scenes from the Life of Noah
France, Vézelay,Abbey of
Sainte-Marie-Madeleine
c. 1140 - 50

Simultaneously, many sculptors that worked on these two churches went on to work on smaller parish churches in the region, where a similar style

can be encountered. Amongst these is Perrecy les forges, just south of Autun, which was built at about the same time as Autun, c. 1130 – 1180s (fig. 2). The sculptures here are slightly bulkier but still possess an analogous style to those made in Autun and Vézelay. Moreover, the positioning of heads into smooth corner grooves and the stylisation of the foliage at this church is particularly striking when compared to the presently discussed sculpture. Another smaller site, between Autun and Never is the church of Avril-sur-Loire, which has a series of bulky capitals carved in its crypt (fig. 3). It is the style of these capitals and the techniques used to represents facial features that are particularly close to our example.

Fig. 2
Corner corbels with heads and acanthus leaves
France, Paray le monial church
c. 1140s

All of these sculptures, including our capital, represent the height of Romanesque sculpture in this region of France. At the same time, they illustrate the way that masons and sculptors in this area moved from site to site, leaving their signature styles and their actual signatures at these sites in order to build themselves into the collective memory of the sacred buildings that they worked on.

Related Literature:
Grivot, Denis. Twelfth Century Sculpture in the Cathedral of Autun. Colmar-Ingersheim, 1980.
Oursel, Raymond. Bourgogne Romane. Zodiaque, 1974.
Dupout, Jean. Nivernais Bourbonnais Roman. Zodiaque, 1976.
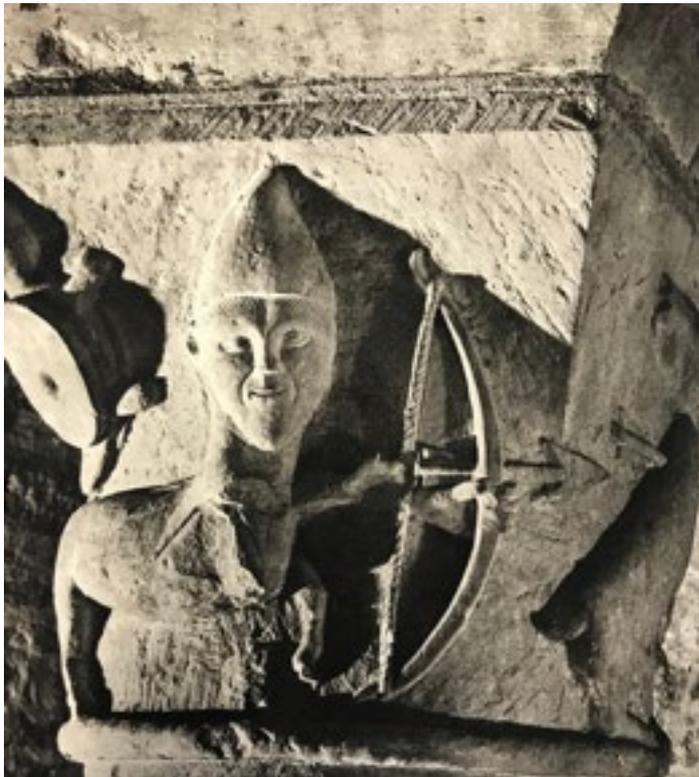
Fig. 3
Capital from the Crypt of the Parish church at Avril-sur-Loire
France, Avril-sur-Loire
c. 1140

8. Early Gothic Head

France, Ile-de-France or Oise
c. 1160s
20.5 x 13 x 13.5 cm; limestone

Condition:
The head has suffered from some general surface weathering as it would have once decorated the exterior of a church or a cloister. It has also been broken from a larger statue, a reason for some minor damage to its facial features.

Provenance:
Private Collection, France.

Fig. 1
Heads from the Façade of Saint Denis
France, Île-de-France, Paris
c. 1135 – 1140
The Walters Art Museum (27.21); Cluny Museum

Description:
An early Gothic head, carved in the round, with a rigid expression and skilfully stylised hair. The style of this sculpture is representative of the transition between Romanesque and Gothic, and can be directly linked to some of the most experimental and influential sculpture from this time in the Ile-de-France.

The sculpture has striated hair which is divided into individual strands that curl gently at the bottom. A long lock of hair on either side of the head twists and tucks behind the ears. Large almond shaped eyes, with carved irises and drilled pupils, are framed by eyebrows that link up with the elegant lines of the nose. The two tubular strands of the moustache frame the mouth and meet at the bottom of the pointed beard. The sculpture has a thick, column-like, neck. This neck as well as the size of the head suggest that it could have been a jamb figure on the exterior of a smaller doorway, such as a cloister entrance.

Stylistically, this early Gothic head is visibly linked to sculptures from churches in the vicinity of Paris credited with the birth of Gothic, such as St Denis, Notre Dame in Paris and Senlis Cathedral. It was in this region, in the middle of the 12th century, that figures with three dimensional forms were placed on either side of the portals to welcome visitors into the sacred spaces that they decorated. The Biblical scenes on the tympana of churches also started to focus on the humanity of Christ. Hand in hand with these changes was also a new-found interest in naturalism and a

Fig. 3
Head of a Bearded Man
France, Île-de-France, Mantes, Notre Dame
c. 1180

step away from abstraction. Although this head still possesses the other-worldly gaze of Romanesque sculptures, it illustrates the characteristics of the new Gothic style. It is carved in the round and emphasis has clearly been placed on depicting the bone structure and the facial features more naturally.

The categorisation of this head amongst the very important early Gothic group of sculptures is best illustrated by comparing it with the Head of an Old Testament King from Saint Denis (fig. 1). Although the St Denis head is much larger than our object, the oval shape of the face as well as the style of its hair, with one strand twisted and tucked behind the ear, is extremely similar to the present example. The way that the bottom of the hair gathers in a continuous curl at the back of the neck and the way that the beard is divided into strands and also separated from the cheek by a continuous line also finds parallels with our examples. Other comparable sculpture can be found in great churches just outside of Paris, which were obviously influenced by the new style developing in Paris. The overall depiction of the facial features, the profile of the head and a new step towards naturalism is especially evident in those sculptures made for Senlis Cathedral in c. 1160-70 and Mantes Cathedral in c. 1180 (see fig. 2 - 3).

The identification of this particular piece is difficult as the head survives with no headdress or attributes. We can speculate, however, that the head represented an apostle or an Old Testament prophet, who would have once been identifiable by the attribute that he held. Flanking a small portal, the head would have once welcomed visitors into a sacred space with its stern expression and its other-worldly gaze.

Related literature:
Brouillette, D. and A. Erlande-Brandenburg. Senlis, un moment de la sculpture gothique, dans La sauvegarde de Senlis, n°s 45-46 (1977).
Sauerländer, Willibald. Gothic Sculpture in France 1140 - 1270. H.N. Ambrams, 1972.
Williamson, Paul. Gothic Sculpture 1140 – 1300. Yale University Press, 1995.
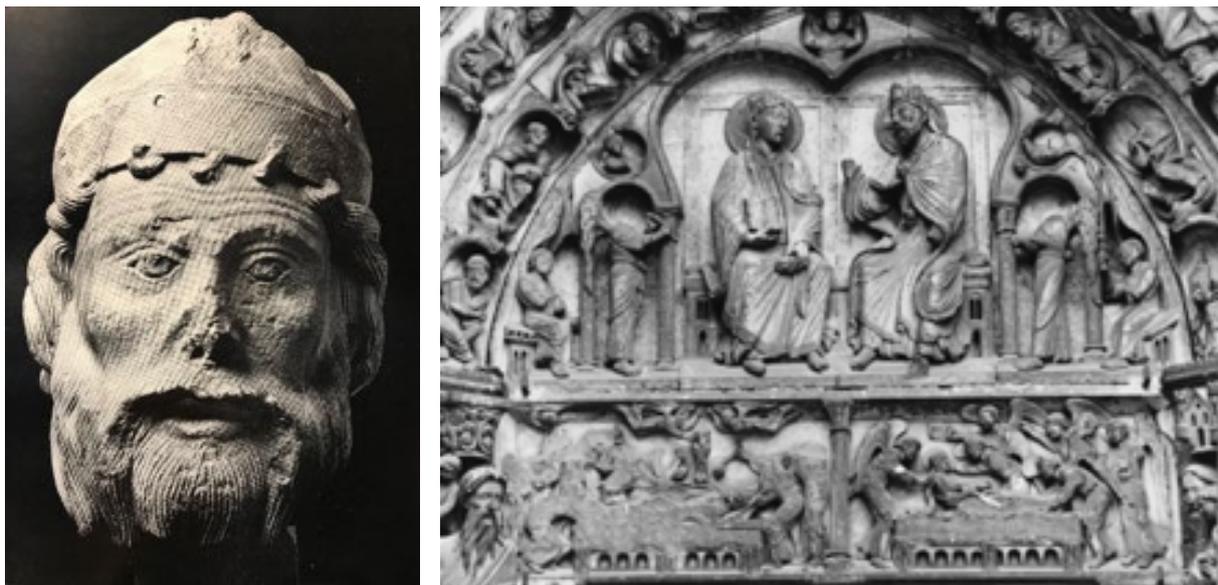
Fig. 2
Head and Typanum from the Façade of Senlis Cathedral
France, Île-de-France, Senlis
c. 1160-1170
Musee du Haubergier, Senlis

9.Janus
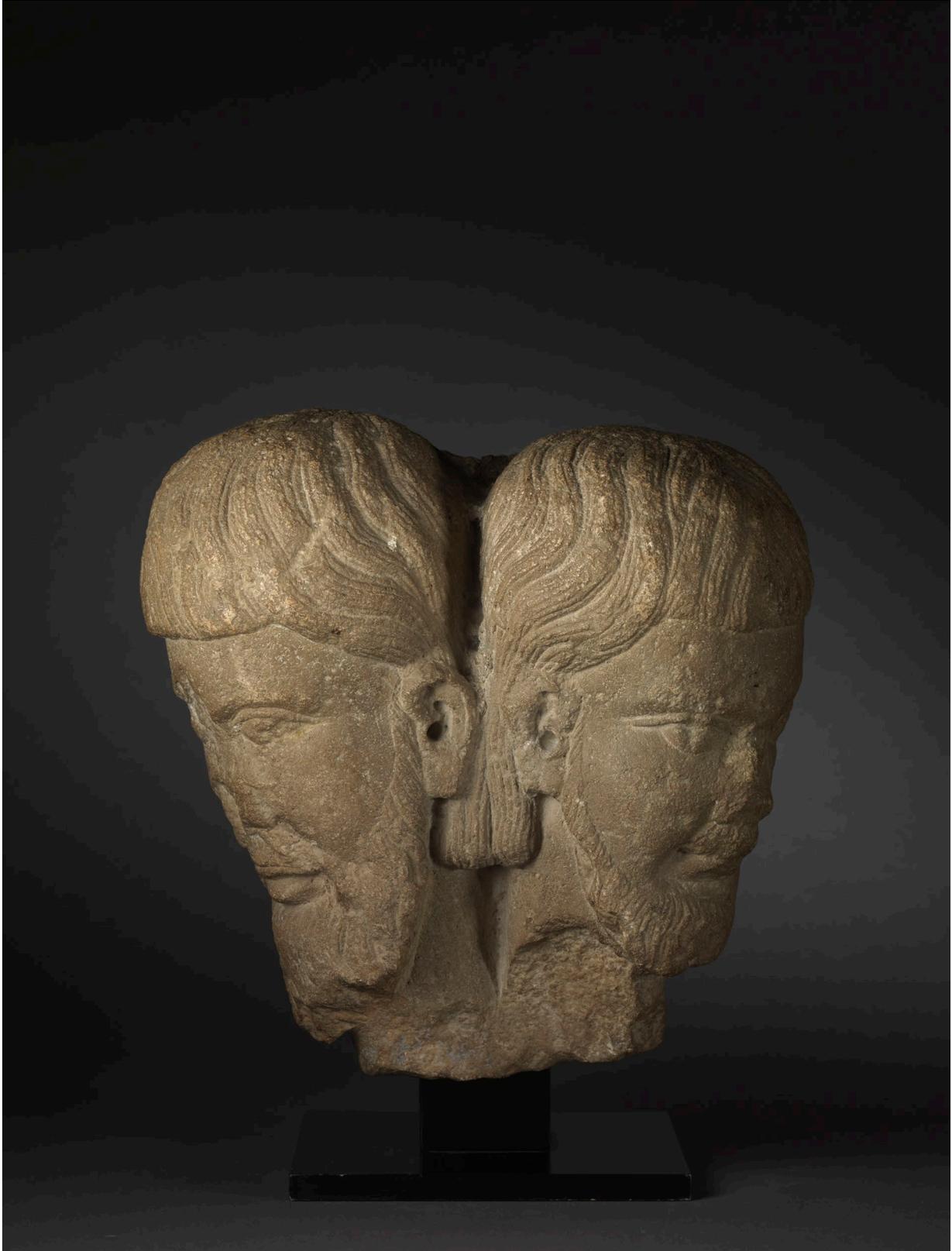
Italy, Tuscany or Lombardy
c. 1160-1170
25 x 23.5 x 20 cm; coarse-grained white 'crinoidal' limestone, close in structure to a white marble

Discussion:
The double-head of a figure of Janus or January personified. There are two heads which, though almost carved in the round, are clearly part of a relief as due to the protrusion of stone at the back. Both figures are bearded, the one on the left with a longer beard than that on the right. The carving is very crisp, with hair and beard falling into clearly defined locks and, within them, fine lines delineating the hair itself. Characteristic of the hair is the way in which the locks come to an abrupt end as they reach the forehead and just below the ears. The eyes have an upper lid defined with two lines and the figures both have rather large lips. A secondary use for the sculpture is revealed by the presence an iron pin in the centre at the top and the remains of mortar around it and in the crevasse between the two heads, indicating that they were later attached to something else, perhaps inserted into a wall, a common reuse of medieval stone carving. Stylistically the carving can broadly be dated between 1140 and 1170, and is most likely c. 1160-1170.

This figure was most likely within a scene showing the Labour of the Month of January, normally feasting. We can identify it as the double-headed Janus because the heads are too close together to allow for two pairs of shoulders as one would expect from two separate figures. They cannot therefore be jamb figures as one would not expect to find such a figure depicted alone in a niche. The stone protruding at the back of the heads supports this as it indicates that they were once attached to a larger ensemble, and were not free-standing figures in the round. The angle of their heads seems to preclude the figures from representing apostles in a Tympanum as, as such, one would expect them to be facing the same direction with one slightly behind the other, see for example the heads of Two Apostles, from a Tympanum, of a similar date, now in Paris, Musée du Louvre (inv. no. RF518; published in Françoise Baron, Musée du Louvre, Sculpture Française I Moyen Âge, Paris, 1996, p. 64). They cannot be part of a capital as their heads are carved on top. Other subjects one might consider include Gemini but normally one would expect this zodiac sign to be personified with two figures and the present work would be rather large for such a figure as typically the signs of the Zodiaque were represented on the voussior. Another is the Ages of Man and yet normally one would expect three figures here, and though one has a longer beard, there are no other signs of differing age and besides, this iconography did not become popular until the late Middle Ages.

The stone is quite specific and there are no examples of its exact type from medieval quarries in France. And though not the specific type, limestone which is close to marble in structure, like that of the present work, can be found in the Pyrenean region particularly Toulouse, Moissac and Souillac. However, in addition to the variance in the exact stone type, the subject matter and elements of the carving style point elsewhere and are comparable to carving on the main portal of the Pieve di Santa Maria in Arezzo where, in the vault of the portal, the Labours of the Month are depicted, including a scene of feasting for January showing the double headed figure of Janus on the right. This figure has similarly described hair the ends of which end abruptly in in the characteristic way of the present work. Otherwise the carving is flatter and different in its conception however the similarities are hard to ignore. The Arezzo carving is actually signed by a sculptor called Marchionne who may have come from Arezzo but shows clear signs of influence from Lombardy, active around 1216. The present work may have been part of the earlier tradition either in Lombardy or Tuscany which later influenced the work of Marchionne.

Related Literature:
Cahn, W and L. Seidel, Romanesque Sculpture in American Collections, 1: New England Museums, New York, 1979.

10. Marble head

Italy, Tuscany
Third quarter 12th century
20 x 14 x 14 cm; grey-veined white marble

Condition:
Broken at the neck, holes made with the use of a drill, eyes filled with lead, small losses include part of nose and chin, black marks and some abrasion from years of weathering.

Provenance:
Barbier-Mueller Collection, Geneva

This striking head of a man is carved in a style characteristic of Tuscany in the third quarter of the twelfth century. The hair is carved with extensive passages of drill work. On account of the hairstyle, it has been suggested that this is the head of a woman. This may well be true and without finding more of the monument from which it came it is difficult to be certain either way. The head is rather flat at the back and has large eyes and a prominent chin.
The pupils are coloured with a leaded fill. The head is carved in the round and is broken at the neck, and thus may derive from a full figure. The size of the head suggests that this figure may have been on a marble church monument or on a small portal, such as that of a baptistery.

Discussion:
Stylistically, the head can be compared to figures that originate from Tuscany, such as the Column Statue of St Hilary of Galeata or the Seated Figure from Tuscany (see fig. 1 – 2). In both of these examples, the large almond shaped eyes, abstractly flat facial features, and drilled pupils find parallels with our sculpture. Although abstracted, Italian Romanesque heads generally emphasise their connection to the Classical past – the solemn stare and idealised features, as well as the general shape of the head, can be linked directly to classical models that the sculptors were able to study.

From a material point of view, one of the characteristic features of this head is the way in which the hair is rendered with passages of drill holes. In most carving traditions, the drill is only used at a preliminary stage of the carving. Here, however, the carving is left un-chiselled, the drill holes left as an intentional part of

Fig. 1
Column Statue of St Hilary of Galeata
Northern Italy
c. 1170
MET 08.175.9

the finished piece. This is a technique which was popular in Tuscany. It can for example be found on a marble relief depicting Samson and the Lion from the inner façade of the Cathedral of Lucca of c. 1220, now in Lucca, Museo Civico (H. Decker, Romanesque Art in Italy, London, 1958, cat. 52, p. 53). The lion's mane of the Lucca piece is drilled in a similar manner to the hair of the present work. In addition the figure of Samson has a head of a similar shape to the present work with a prominent chin and large holes for the eyes. Unlike those of the present head however, Samson's eyes have not been filled with lead. The drill-work technique can be found again on the stylobate lion from Tuscany of the second half of the twelfth century, in Boston, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum (Walter Cahn and Linda Seidel, Romanesque Sculpture in American Collections, 1: New England Museums, New York, 1979, fig. 78, no. 7, p. 85), and on a pair of stylobate lions supporting the lectern at Pescia (Mario Salmi, Romanesque Sculpture in Tuscany, Florence, 1928, fig. 172, p. LI, and W. Biehl, Toskanische Plastik des frühen und hohen Mittelalters, Leipzig, 1926, pls. 141 and 58a and b).

Related Literature:
Cahn, W and L. Seidel, Romanesque Sculpture in American Collections, 1: New England Museums, New York, 1979.
Decker, H. Romanesque Art in Italy, London, 1958.

Fig. 2
Master of Santa Maria de la Bianca
Seated Figure
Italy, Tuscany, Lucca?
End of the 12th century
MET 47.101.19

10. Marble head

10. Marble head

11. Head of a man

France, Île-de-France
c. 1250
28 x 22 x 24 cm; limestone

The head has suffered some damage to the neck and the protruding features, such as the nose and the hair as it has been broken from a larger figure. The surface of the stone suffered from weathering. Some minor restoration to the nose and upper lip. The stone was tested in 2010 and localised to the Oise region, north of Paris.

Provenance:
USA, Private Collection (before 2000)
London, Private Collection

Description:

A monumental stone head sculpted in the round with a clean-shaven face and delicate facial features. Short wavy hair falls around the crown of the head, while slightly longer strands gather around the figure's ears - a characteristic feature of French sculpture from the 13th century. The physiognomy of the sculpture is also related to sculpture from this time period as his facial features are concentrated in the centre of his face and include small, pursed lips and very elegantly carved almond shaped eyes which give the figure a calm expression. The ears of the figure are exposed and deeply carved. The figure twists its neck slightly, suggesting that it was interacting with another sculpture on the façade which it once decorated.

Fig. 1
The Annunciation and Visitation Scene from the West Front of Reims Cathedral
France, Reims
c. 1230 - 50

Discussion

This monumental male head in all probability once decorated the exterior of a great church, where it would have been a part of a large statue. The fact that the head is carved in the round and that it twists its neck to the side suggests that it may have been a jamb figure – a large figure that would have stood in front of a column, flanking a doorway of a Gothic church. Jamb figures often protruded out of their niches in order to engage in a dialogue with another figure. This type of elegant dynamism

was characteristic of sculpture from the first half of the 13th century, which broke free of its architectural settings and started to enact biblical scenes across real space. One of the best examples of this are the sculptures from the west façade of Reims cathedral, which twist their necks and gesture to one another (see fig. 1).

Based on the stone analysis done in 2010, the material from which the head is carved was found to be Lutetian limestone, also dubbed 'Paris stone', which originates in the Oise region, north of Paris. Although the stone was quarried north of Paris, most Gothic monuments in Paris and north of the city are sculpted out of this creamy grey stone. The style of the facial features also points to a localisation to the Ile-de-France as they compare with many sculptures from the region from the first half of the 13th century. One example is a female head from the Cluny Museum (fig. 2), which has the same the fleshy cheeks, small mouth and almond shaped eyes. The flatly carved eyes

Fig. 2
Female Head from the North Transept Portal of Notre Dame Cathedral
France, Paris
c. 1240
Cluny Museum
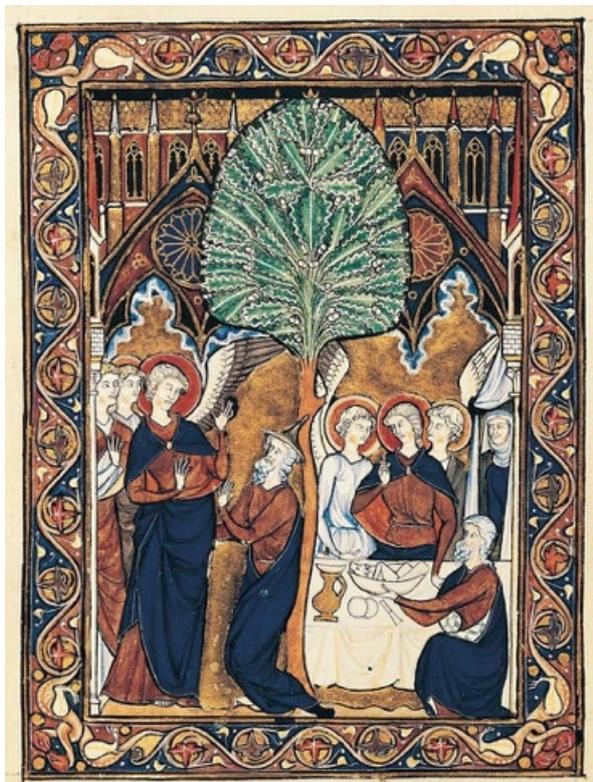
Fig. 3
Psalter of St Louis
France, Paris
1250s
Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Latin 10525

are a particularly interesting comparison because their treatment on both sculptures recalls the delicately outlined simplistic facial features that are also present in manuscript illuminations and wall paintings made in Paris around the middle of the 13th century (see fig. 3). The idealised antique character of the sculpture with its clean-shaven face is also analogous to the face of a youth from Saint-Denis (see fig. 4). The delicately carved droopy eyelids, small lips and deeply carved ears of both this example and the present sculpture exemplify one of the most creative periods in French medieval art – a period that was associated with the reign of Louis IX and defined by elegant carving, opulent surfaces, and a courtly lifestyle.

Literature:

Williamson, Paul. Gothic Sculpture 1140 – 1300. Yale University Press: New Haven, 1995. Sauerländer, Willibald. Gothic Sculpture in France: 1140 – 1270. H.N. Abrams, 1973.

Fig. 4
Head of a Youth
France, Île-de-France
c. 1230 – 1250
17.5 x 17.3 x 12.5 cm
Metropolitan Museum of Art (inv. 2002.211)

11. Head of a man

12. Head of a Bearded King

France, Ile-de-France
c. 1250
26.5 x 19 x 18.5 cm; Lutetian limestone quarried in the vicinity of Paris.

Condition:
Damage to the crown, the nose and hair, and generalised weathering to the stone.

Provenance:
Private collection, Paris

A limestone head of a king carved at three-quarter life size. The head looks slightly to our right with pinched eyes set close to a crisply carved nasal ridge, their upper lids delineated with deep incised lines. The mouth is narrow and the cheek bones broad and pronounced. He wears a steep-sided crown above a full head of hair that falls to the level of his neck and partially covers his ears. His beard and moustache are carved in loosely curling clumps of hair that extend below the jawline. They cast deep shadows

Fig. 1
King Childebert from the trumeau of the refectory portal of Saint-Germain-des-Pres
France, Paris (now in the Louvre)
1239-1244

onto the figure's neck and the high collar of what must represent a courtly tunic or mantelot, its thick form suggestive of velvet or fur.

This imposing head of a king may once have decorated the portal of a Gothic church. On account of its relatively small size, it probably belonged to a figure in a tympanum scene; however, it is also possible

Fig. 2
Head of a King
France, Paris
c. 1230-35
Metropolitan Museum of Art

that it belonged to a jamb figure in a smaller church. It was common during the Middle Ages to incorporate sculpted figures of both Old Testament kings and historical royal figures on door jambs and tympana, and such figures populate many of the surviving facades of French Gothic cathedrals. A related figure type showing King Childebert, originally carved for the trumeau of the refectory portal of Saint-Germain-des-Pres in Paris now survives in the musée du Louvre (fig. 1). The patterns of damage on our head indicate that it was likely removed from a similar setting during a period of iconoclasm.

Stylistically, our sculpture is very similar to sculptures from the 1240s and 1250s from the Île-de-France. Its almond-shaped eyes, bony facial structure, and subtle wavy hair recall what Émile Mâle called the 'chinless faces' of Parisian Rayonnant sculpture. Although our sculpture is slightly rougher in finish, a close parallel can be drawn to the head of a king now at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, carved around 1240 for a Parisian setting (fig. 2). The embellishment of the head with corkscrew curls along the forehead and the mid-length length hair was especially fashionable in this centre during the 1240s. The loose S-shaped curls of the hair and the beard are very similar. When we look at the profiles of the two figures, it is apparent that the carving of the hair, as well as the general proportions and the treatment of the facial features are especially comparable (see fig. 3). The present sculpture, with its royal iconography and characteristic treatment, thus represents a rare survival from the height of French Gothic sculpture.

Related literature:
Sauerländer, Willibald. Gothic Sculpture in France 1140 - 1270. H.N. Ambrams, 1972
Williamson, Paul. Gothic Sculpture 1140 – 1300. Yale University Press, 1995

Fig. 3
Comparison between our Head of a Bearded King and the Head of a King from the MET

12. Head of a bearded King

13. A corbel of a king

A Corbel Head of a King
Central France
c. 1260 - 1280
24.5 x 58 x 40cm; limestone

Condition:
Minor surface damage on the sculpture on account from being detached from its original setting. Some damages to the crown and to the tip of the nose.

Provenance:
Private collection, France.

Description:
A corbel head of a king with an elaborately carved crown. A delicate polygonal stringcourse tops the head of this corner corbel. The arms and legs of the figure are folded behind his head, while his body disappears into the stone. The elaborate crown covers half of the king's forehead and is supported by his large ears. The king has small rounded eyes, outlined by almond shaped eyelids. His wide nose is connected to his round cheeks, and his full lips are atop a stylised, short beard.

This massive corbel would have once decorated the corner of a church, supporting either ribs or shafts. Stylistically, the head of the king – especially the small almond shaped eyes and the wide nose – can be compared to sculpture from the middle of the 13th century from Central France. Although looking to the elegance of Parisian examples, this facial type still retains some of the exaggerated features characteristic of this region, such as the small protruding eyes and the round faces. This style can be compared to those French examples of the same period such as the head of a king from the MET or the head of a young man from the Walters Art Gallery (fig. 1 – 2). The round face and prominent lips of the MET king with his small almond shaped eyes are particularly analogous to our corbel. Similarly, the exaggerated facial features of the corbel, such as the wide nose, can also be compared to another marble sculpture of a king from the MET (see fig. 3). Although this marble sculpture is of a later date, it clearly shows that the characteristically overstated features have been retained by sculpture in this part of France.

Scientific analysis, completed by Annie Blanc in 2010, has revealed that the stone comes from Central France.

Related Literature:
Williamson, Paul. Gothic Sculpture 1140 – 1300. Yale University Press: New Haven, 1995. Sauerländer, Willibald. Gothic Sculpture in France: 1140 – 1270. H.N. Abrams, 1973.

Fig. 1
Head of a King
France, Mantes
c. 1230
MET 29. 100. 29

Fig. 3
Marble Figures of a King
France
c. 1330 – 50
MET 17.190.387

Fig. 2
Head from a House
France, Rheims
c. 1250
The Walter Art Gallery 27.398

14. A crocket capital with a head
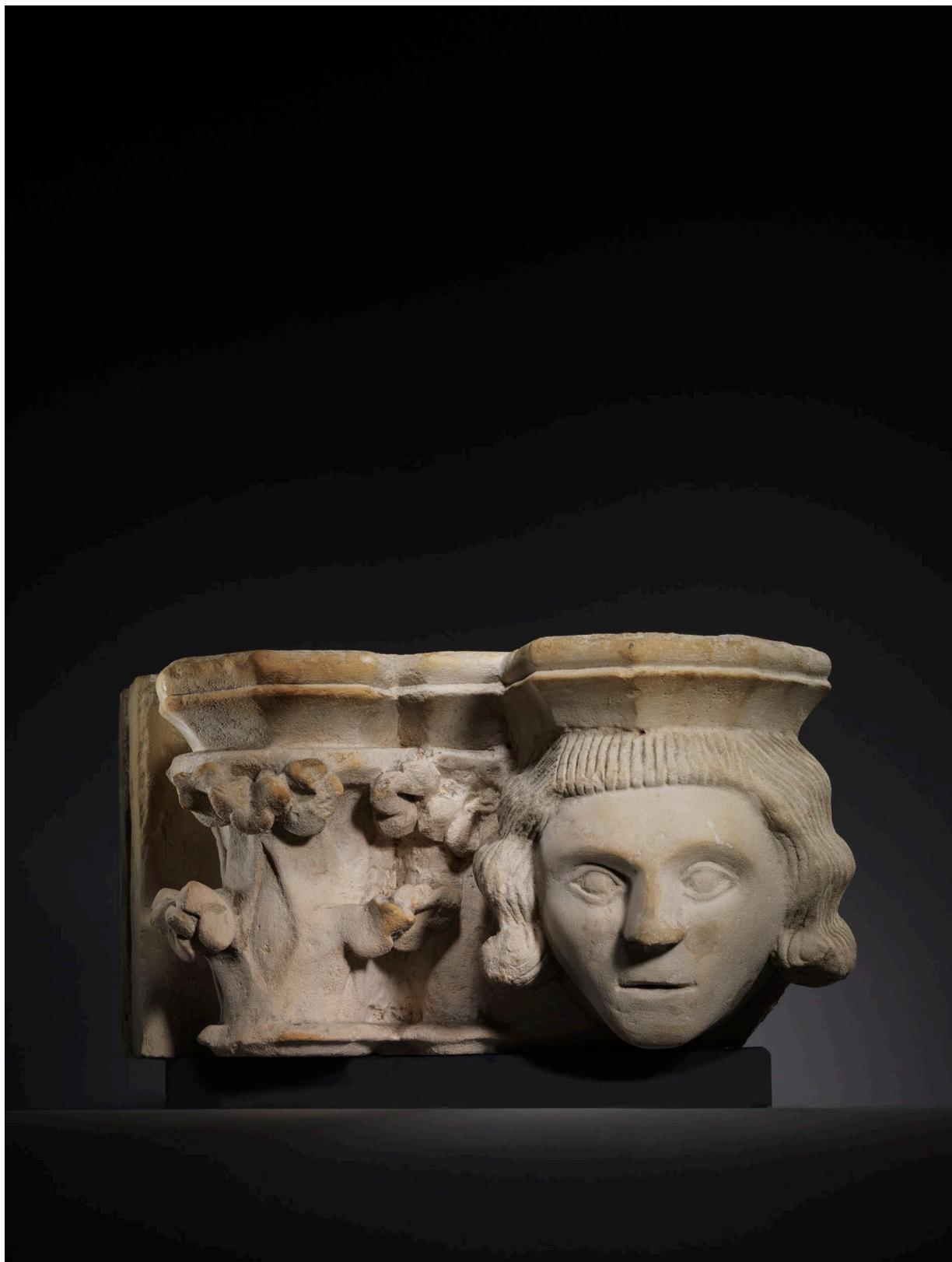
France, Burgundy, the Priory of Moutiers Saint-Jean
c. 1225 - 1250
20 x 42.5 x 22.5 cm; fine-grained white limestone

A carved corbel-capital probably from the destroyed Cluniac priory of Moutiers Saint Jean, near Dijon. It is composed of a capital on the left, decorated with deeply undercut crockets, and a corbel with a carved head on the right. This architectural element would have come from a carved doorway or window and would have carried a pointed arch. The capital would have supported a column below it and a voussoir above whilst the corbel would have supported the innermost voussoir. The base of the capital has a very small diameter which would have been repeated in the column below. This relationship between the slender shaft and the capital base is characteristic of architectural carving from Moutiers Saint Jean.

This carving relates closely to group of twenty-five existing sculptures, now in a number of American museum collections (see fig. 1 – 3), which recent scholarship have demonstrated are from the priory of Moutiers Saint Jean (Jill Meredith, 'Romancing the Stone: Resolving Some Provenance Mysteries of the Brummer Collection at Duke University', Gesta, International Centre of Medieval Art, vol. XXXIII/I, 1994, pp. 38-46). Moutiers Saint Jean suffered severe damage during the Wars of Religion and the French Revolution. In 1797 the surviving remains of the monastery were sold into private hands.

The present carving can be closely compared to another piece from the group, a corbel-capital with a carved head, in Washington, Duke University, Brummer Collection of Medieval Art (fig. 2;). Like ours, the Brummer piece is composed of a combination of capitals and a corbel, it has similar mouldings, and its capitals have very narrow bases. Like ours, it also has deeply undercut foliage decorating the capitals and a head carved beneath the corbel, which is also very similar stylistically.

The largest and best-known piece from the existing Moutiers group is the doorway in New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Cloisters Collection (fig. 1). The Cloisters' doorway has similarly combined capitals and half-capitals with slender bases which are supported by equally slender shafts. The carving of the facial features, such as the more rounded eyes, the stylised hair, and the small mouth also find parallels with our sculpture.

The closed crockets on the present capital, however, suggests that the sculpture could be dated earlier than the Duke University capital discussed above and that a date in the first half of the 13th century is more appropriate. Parallels between this sculpture

and another sculpture, also associated with the Mountiers group and dated to 1225 – 1250, are striking when the carving of the eyes, the stylised hair and the 'v' shaped face is considered. The similarity of the stone and carving style of the capital in the present work and the pieces that have been associate with Mounters Saint Jean further indicate that this might be another piece from the ruined abbey.

Fig. 1
Clothar
France, Burgundy, the Priory of Moutiers Saint-Jean
c. 1250
Metropolitan Museum of Art (32.147)

Related literature:
Set in Stone: the Face in Medieval Sculpture, ed. Charles T. Little, New York.

Peter Barnet and Nancy Wu, The Cloisters: Medieval Art and Architecture, New York, 2005.

Jill Meredith, 'Romancing the Stone: Resolving Some Provenance Mysteries of the Brummer Collection at Duke University', Gesta, International Centre of Medieval Art, vol. XXXIII/I, 1994, pp. 38-46.

Fig. 2
Foliate Capital with Head
France, Burgundy, Abbey of Mountiers-Saint-Jean
Last third of the 13th century
Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University, Durham, North Carolina (Brummer Collection: 1966.256)

Fig. 3
Foliate Capital with Head
France, Burgundy, Abbey of Mountiers-Saint-Jean
1225-1250
Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University, Durham, North Carolina (Brummer Collection: 1966.168)

15. A corbel of a winged creature

A corbel of a winged creature
Southern France, Midi-Pyrénées
Mid-13th century

53 x 38 x 58 cm; travertine

Some losses, and general surface weathering. Some restoration to the jaw.

Provenance:
Private Collection, France

A corbel decorated with a winged male creature beneath polygonal mouldings. This corbel is one of two - one being asymmetrical and so likely to be placed at the angle of a wall whilst this one is symmetrical and thus likely decorated the middle of a wall. The creature wears a hat and protrudes his face out towards the viewer. It is the face that takes precedence here as the body is hidden in the dark cornice behind the head. The facial features are elegantly carved, with almond shaped eyes, a small mouth and a triangular nose.

Fig. 1
Corbel head of a woman
France, Caylus
Mid 13th century

The corbel is datable to the second or third quarter of the thirteenth century. Several parallels can be drawn with similar works from the Midi-Pyrénées region of southern France from around the same date. A carved head from a house at Caylus, (Tarn-et-Garonne), for instance, has remarkably similar carved eyes and eye sockets to our figures (fig. 1) and several of the heads ornamenting the façades of the gothic houses at Cordes (Tarn), especially the Maisons du Grand Fauconnier, du Grand Veneur and Grand Ecuyer also relate to our corbels (Pradalier-Schlumberger, 1998, pp. 190-200). These are dated by Pradalier-Schlumberger to the second half of the thirteenth century. It seems that our corbels may have been produced in the same milieu around the same period, sometime around the mid-century.

Related Literature:

M. Pradalier-Schlumberger, Toulouse et le Languedoc: la sculpture gothique (XIIIe-XIVe siècles), Toulouse 1998

15. Corbel of a winged creature

16. A grimacing stone head

England
14th century
26.5 x 16.5 x 21 cm; limestone

The head has suffered general surface damage throughout due to weathering as it probably decorated the exterior of a church.

Provenance:
Private collection, Alsace

Discussion:
A label stop or architectural ornament in the form of a human head. Forceful and expressive carving delineates the deep wrinkles of the forehead and eye sockets, while the nose and mouth are contorted into a grimace, exposing a row of regular teeth framed by full, ovoid lips. The eyes and mouth are reinforced with drill holes.

The roughly carved almond shaped eyes and blocky head suggest that this sculpture had been made for a small parish church sometime in the 14th century. Although deliberately abstracted, the sculptor of the head clearly demonstrates a knowledge of human physiognomy. Visually arresting and forcefully immediate expressions of the medieval sculptor's art, figurative grotesques of this type can be found scattered over the surfaces of many English churches. Acting both as apotropaic guardians of the community who would have used the church, and demonic visions of the fantastical netherworlds inhabiting the dreams and margins of medieval life and faith, they afford the modern viewer 'mental time travel of the most tangible form.' The emphatic grimace and the presence of drill holes symmetrically spaced in the mouth are aspects of English grotesque carving influenced by the earlier Celtic history of the country. See in this respect L. and J. Laing's Art of the Celts; from 700 BC to the Celtic Revival, London, 1992.

Related Literature:
Benton, J.R. Holy Terrors; Gargoyles on Medieval Buildings, 1997.
Benton, J. R. Medieval Mischief: Wit and Humour in the Art of the Middle Ages, 2004.
Camille, M. Image on the Edge: the Margins of Medieval Art, 1992.
Gardner, A. A handbook of English medieval sculpture, Cambridge, 1937.
Sheridan, R. and A. Ross, Grotesques and Gargoyles: Paganism in the Medieval

17. A small marble head of a female saint

France, Ile-de-France
c. 1350
17 x 15.5 x 9 cm; marble

Condition:
The head has minor surface damage on the nose and the chin as well as on the left and right side, where the veil meets the hair. These breaks are a result of being removed from a large monument .

Provenance:
Private collection, France.

Description:
A small marble head covered with a delicate veil and a wimple. The veil, which resembles the headdress of a nun, suggests that the identity of this figure may be a female saint. The veil covers both the forehead and the neck of the figure, exposing a few strands of hair on either side of the face. The almond-shaped eyes, which slant down slightly, are framed by two elegant lines that connect the structure of the nose with the eyebrows. The head has rounded cheeks, a small chin and a small delicate mouth. The sculpture is completely flat on the back.

The size, flatness of the reverse and the material of this head suggest that it was probably once a part of a relief. This relief may have been a tomb monument or some other marble furnishing inside of a church.

Discussion:
Although it is difficult to speculate about the identity of this figure, it probably represents a female saint on account of the headdress, which illustrates the figure's modesty. Portraying female saints in this way was common in the 14th century, when Biblical saints were often represented wearing contemporary clothing. This clothing, however, was modest enough to stand as an example of the figure's purity. One example of this is the statue of Veronice from Écouis, which wears her veil in a very similar manner to our head (fig. 2).

The facial features of this sculpture are also analogous of 14th century French sculpture –

Fig. 1
Head of the Virgin
France, Ile-de-France
c. 1340
Private Collection

Fig. 3
Virgin and Child
14th century
France
MET 17.190.717

they combine the elegance of French Gothic stylisation with the softness of Italian Renaissance works. These characteristics include a soft, unmoving gaze, a small mouth with a slight smile, a small nose with connected brows and almond shaped eyes. A similar treatment of forms can also be found in the marble head of the Virgin, which has the same dramatic waves, almond shaped eyes, and fleshy face as our piece (fig. 1). The sculptor of this head may also be looking to the work of Jean Pépin de Huy, especially when the head is compared with his marble tomb effigy of Jean de Bourgogne (see fig. 4).

Although the sculptures obviously reflect mid-century Parisian work, the somewhat idiosyncratic facial type, with the slanted almond shaped eyes, perhaps indicates a regional workshop, active in the Ile-de-France, which produced its own distinctive interpretations of the prevailing Parisian style. This is obvious in other works, such as in the abovementioned statue of Veronica, which is clearly looking to Paris but which reinterprets certain forms with a different style – most notable the eyes. Another example is found in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, where a statue of the Virgin and Child are sculpted with all the ingredients of Parisian 14th century sculpture, yet they have their own particular character (fig. 3).

Fig. 2
Sculpture of Veronica
France, Écouis, Notre Dame
First half of the 14th century

Fig. 4
Jean Pépin de Huy (active de 1311 - 1329)
Effigy head of Jean de Bourgogne
France
c. 1315
Musée des Beaux-Arts de Besançon

Related Literature:
Little, Charles T. Set in Stone: The Face in Medieval Sculpture. The Metropolitan Museum of Art: New York, 2007.
Grandmontagne, M. and Kunz, T. Skulptur um 1300 zwischen Paris und Köln. Michael Imhof Verlag: Berlin,

18. Head of a bishop

France, central France
Mid 14th century

33 x 32 x 28 cm; limestone

Damage to the forehead, mitre, nose and mouth which reveal that this head was violently separated from its original context, probably as a result of iconoclasm.

Provenance:
Segarra Collection, Barcelona

A limestone head of a bishop with an ornately carved mitre. Despite damage to the bishop's face, the elaborate mitre, the realistically carved flesh and the tight curls testify to the high quality of this sculpture. The sculpture probably represents a saintly bishop, such as Éloi. The size of the head suggests that it was once a part of a large figure which stood in a monumental setting, such as a church portal.

The sculpture is carved in the round. A decorative band circles the lower edge of the mitre, travelling along the diagonal edges and vertically down the centre. This band is decorated with semi-circles and raised diamond shapes. Two triangular spaces at the front of the mitre are filled with pointed trefoils and two sashes fall on top of the hair in the back. The mitre sits atop the bishop's full head of hair, which has been carved into tight curls that cover the tops of his ears and fall to cheekbone level. The bishop has almond shaped eyes which protrude slightly, with deep incisions creating shadows in the corners and under his lower eyelids. His face is broad and fleshy with a square jaw and slightly parted full lips.

Fig. 5
Saint Eloi
North-eastern France
Mid Fourteenth Century

Fig 3.
Head of an Apostle
France
Early Fourteenth Century
The Art institute of Chicago

Stylistically, the bishop's broad fleshy face, tight curls and bulging eyes find close parallels with French sculpture from the middle of the 14th century (figs. 1 – 2). Particularly similar facial types can be found in the Head of the Pons de Polignac from c. 1340 and the head of an angel from the Boston Museum of Fine Art. Although the first sculpture is cut from

marble, the facial type as well as the carving of the hair are analogous with our bishop. The definition and shape of the cheekbones and finely sculpted curls of this sculpture can also be compared to the head of an apostle from the Art Institute of Chicago (fig. 3).

In order to reimagine the original sculpture, this head can also be compared with a figure of a bishop in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (fig. 4). Dated to the second half of the 14th century, the statue also has tight short curls, rounded eyes and a broad face. Moreover, the mitre of our bishop shares the same general form as the mitre of the sculpture of St Eloi from the Iowa Museum, which has an ornamental band with additional decoration in the two central triangles (fig. 5).

Despite being violently separated form its original environment, this sculpture and its ornate mitre and skilfully sculpted curls of hair are clues to the remarkable church that this statue must have once decorated.

Fig. 1
Head of the Pons de Polignac (d. 1335)
France, Brioude church (destroyed during the French revolution)
c. 1340
Crozaties museum in Puy-en-velay
27 cm (h)

Related literature:
Gillerman, Dorothy. Gothic Sculpture in America, II: The Museums of the Midwest. Brepols: Turnhout, 2001.
Little, Charles T. Set in Stone: The Face in Medieval Sculpture. The Metropolitan Museum of Art: New York, 2007.

Fig. 2
Head of an Angel
France
Second half of the 14th century
Boston Museum of Fine Art 19.797

18. Head of a bishop

19. Head of a Prophet

Germany, Rheinland-Pfalz
c. 1340 - 1350
34 x 25 x 21.5 cm; Limestone

A life-sized head of an elderly man with a thick beard, heavy curls of hair and a Jewish cap. His facial features include pursed lips, a pointed chin, shallow cheeks and a deeply furrowed brow. The head was once probably a part of a façade of a parish church or a cathedral. The aged break on the head's right side suggests that the figure was once turning to the side and interacting with another figure in its proximity.

Probably an Old Testament figure, such as a prophet, the minimal restoration and good condition of this head is a testament to the fact that it was probably in a covered space such as a porch. Its dynamic and communicative nature suggests that it was a part of a larger scene, perhaps on a tympanum. Despite its large size, the head's Germanic origin would not rule out a tympanum position since Gothic figures in tympanum scenes tend to be larger in Germany than those in France. However, the fact that this sculpture may have surmounted a statue-column could also not be ruled out, especially as Gothic jamb figures often interacted with figures in their proximity across real space.

Fig 1.
Head of an Apostle
Upper, Rhineland, Strasbourg
c. 1300
The Metropolitan Museum of Art
30cm; sandstone

Fig. 2
Prophet figure
Germany, Nuremberg, St Moritz (destroyed in 1945)
c. 1355

The style of this sculpture, especially its heavy curls and its prominent beard, derives from Rheinland-Pfalz. Sculptures of this type can be traced back to Strasbourg, which by the end of the 13th century was already developing its own regional style. Although the late 13th century sculptures of Strasbourg Cathedral are influenced by Parisian works, they are famous for their combination of French and German elements (see fig. 1). This particular head, however, finds parallels with mid-14th century

sculpture connected to the work of the so-called 'Rottweiler Schule,' which was active under the reign of Emperor Ludwig of Bavaria. Although little is not known about this particular workshop, they are associated with buildings which feature some of the most experimental styles of the Middle Ages, such as the Liebfrauenkirche in Oberwesel, and reach as far as St Moritz in Nüremberg (see fig. 2). The south portal tympanum of the Frauenkirche in Esslingen, also associated with this workshop, finds the closest parallels to our sculpture (see figs. 3 – 4). The protruding chin, rounded forehead, heavy curls, exaggerated facial features and upturned nose of our sculpture can be found especially in the figures of the Nativity Scene of this tympanum (see fig. 4). It is particularly the figure of Joseph, who turns his head dramatically to his left, that is sculpted in a very similar manner – the tight yet voluminous curls, the exaggerated expression and the facial features correspond with our sculpture.
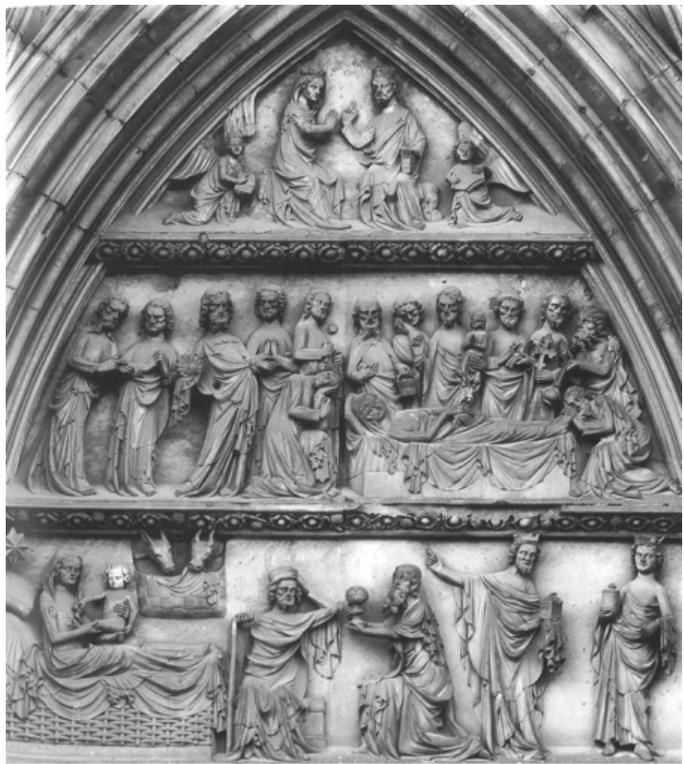

Fig. 3
Prophet figure
Germany, Nuremberg, St Moritz (destroyed in 1945)
c. 1355

Since the various revolutions and wars caused much turmoil to this area, many fragments from those buildings in turn ended up in museums and private collections. This head is one of those examples and a testament to the extremely experimental style of this region, combining the exaggerated expressions of Germanic sculptures with the elegance of French Gothic sculptures.

Related literature:

Charles T. Little. Set in Stone: The Face in Medieval Sculpture. Metropolitan Museum of Art: New York, 2006.
Robert Suckale. Die Holkunst Kaister Ludwigs des Bayern. Hirmer Verlag: Munich, 1993.

Fig. 4
A detail of the Nativity from the South Portal from Esslinen
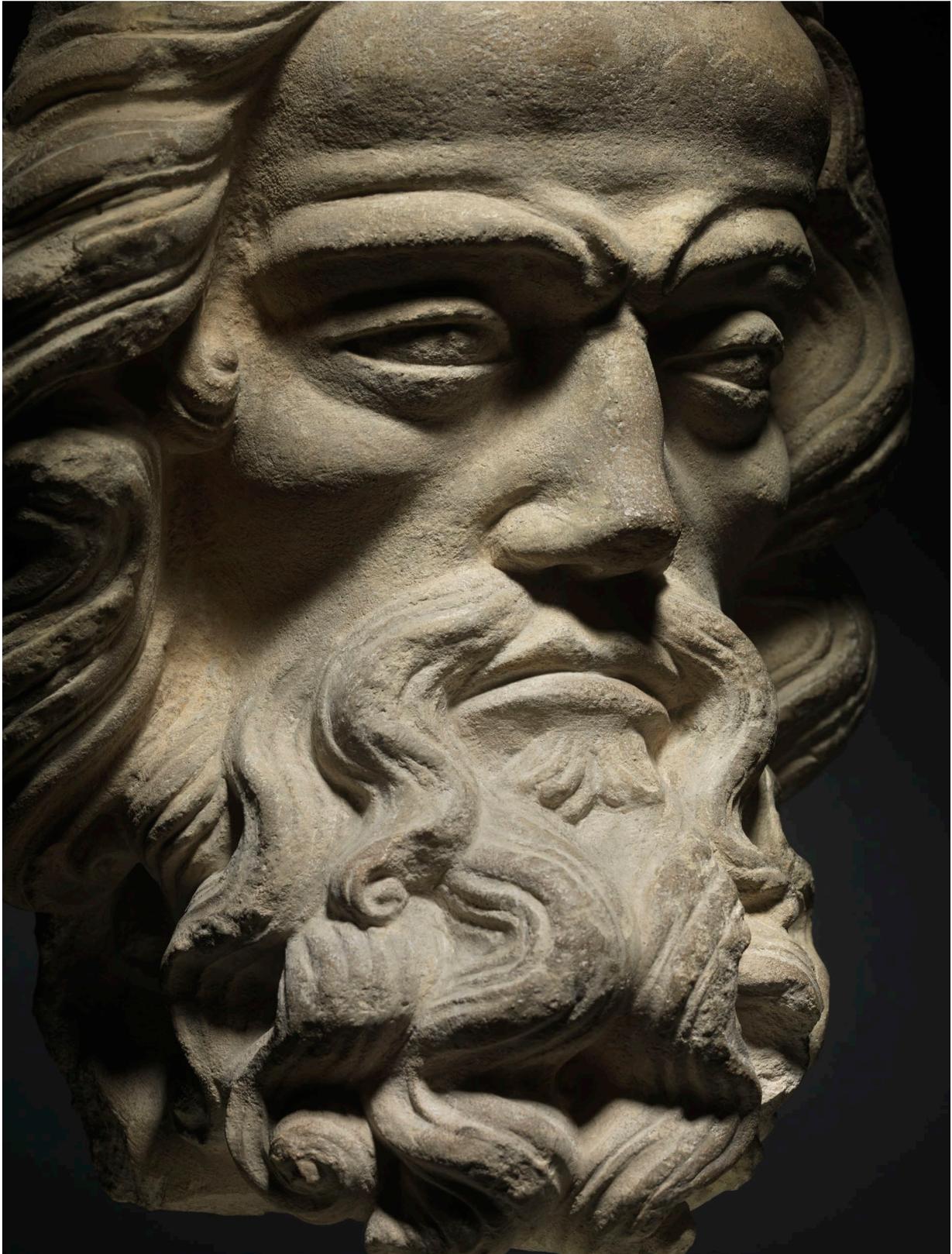
19. Head of a prophet

20. A grotesque cephalic label stop

England, Staffordshire
c. 1380-1420
24.2 x 18 x 16.5 cm; grey sandstone

Discussion:
A sandstone label stop in the form of a grotesque head surmounted by a vaulted plume with a central scrolling acanthus leaf. The brows, eyes, and crisp-ridged nose of the figure are boldly carved, and framed by striated locks of matted hair falling down either side of the head.

Visually arresting and forcefully immediate expressions of the medieval sculptor's art, figurative grotesques of this type can be found scattered over the surfaces of many English churches. Acting both as apotropaic guardians of the community who would have used the church, and demonic visions of the fantastical netherworlds inhabiting the dreams and margins of medieval life and faith, they afford the modern viewer 'mental time travel of the most tangible form.'

While grotesques of this type are difficult to localise precisely, the style of the carving is arguably influenced by the earlier Celtic history of the country and comparisons can be drawn to the grotesques of Kilpeck, Herefordshire, in particular. See in this respect L. and J. Laing's Art of the Celts; from 700 BC to the Celtic Revival, London, 1992. However, the present fragment's stone type, its provenance history, and the stylistic treatment of its vaulted ornament, all help to localise it to the Staffordshire region of mid-western England some miles north of Kilpeck. Similar carvings can be found at the ruined abbey of Croxden 32 miles from Tamworth. It was a large and imposing foundation established in the late 12th century by Cistercian Monks and dissolved in 1537. This or another site of similar importance and status would be entirely fitting contexts for such carved ornament, intended to guard over the monastic community.

20. a grotesque cephalic label stop

21. Bust of an Apostle

Spain, Aragon
c. 1420 - 40
43 x 42 x 22 cm; limestone with traces of polychromy

Condition:
The bust has suffered surface damage, losses to the top of its head, to its hat, and to its protruding features, such as the nose and the hair, possibly as a result of iconoclasm. Right eye restored.

Provenance:
Private Collection, Spain, Tarazzona, 1988

Description:
A bust of an apostle, possibly St James, with a long beard and dramatic curls. Although fragmentary, the skilful carving, stern expression and style of the large heavy curls categorises this bust amongst the most interesting sculptures made in Spain around the year 1400. The size of the sculpture and its weathered surface suggest that the figure to which it once belonged would have stood on the exterior of a church, possible as a part of a large group of apostles.

The bust has a rigid posture and a serious facial expression. It has a low gaze, a small mouth and long hair that curls dramatically with the help of drill holes to accentuate the deeply carved shadows. The cord that hangs on either side of the face and the broken hat suggest that the identity of this saint may be St James, who often wears a pilgrim's hat fastened around the neck by a cord. The apostle also wears a thick chain around his neck and has a decorated hem running across his breast. There are remnants of polychromy suggesting that his cape may have been blue.

Fig. 1
Barlotomeu de Rubio
Head of an Angel
c. 1370s
Spain, Lleida
MNAC/MAC 9875

Discussion:
On the one hand, the style of this bust with its rigid stance, its abstract forms and its monumentality is reminiscent of much earlier sculpture from great churches in France and Italy. Still, the downturned gaze, the delicate carving of the beard and the details of the chain around the neck show close affinity with the International style, pushing the dating to around 1400. The Spanish origin of the bust helps to explain this combination of styles because Spain clung on to its sculptural and architectural conservatism much longer than continental patrons did. There was a certain resistance to Gothic in Spain and when the style did arrive, Spanish artists and patrons chose those characteristics of Gothic that they deemed appropriate while merging them with their own traditions.

The French and Italian influences evident in this sculpture came to Spain in the 14th

century, and one of the most important artists in Aragon to merge them with local traditions was Jaume Cascalls. The tightly bound large curls and heavy beard of Saint Anthony Abbot are especially striking as they show clearly some of the origins of the style that is adopted by this region from the middle of the 14th century. Our sculpture can be compared to the followers of this pioneering sculptor, such as Jordi de Deu, as well as to those sculptors working in the region in the second half of the 14th century (fig. 2). The particular elongated facial type with wrinkles in the corners of the eyes and the rich style of the curls is especially comparable to those sculptors working in Lleida, such as Barlotomeu de Rubio and Jordi Safont. Rubio's angel by from the MNAC collection is a wonderful comparison as is the head of St Peter from Lleida Cathedral (fig. 1 and 4). The other apostles from Lleida cathedral, which now only exist in a fragmentary state, are also particularly striking comparisons to our head of an apostle (fig. 5).

Related literature:
Cornudella, R., Fava, C., Macias, G. Gothic Art in the MNAC collections. Lunwerg: Madrid, 2011.
Azcárate, J. Arte gótico en España. Catedra: Madrid, 1990.
Williamson, Paul. Gothic Sculpture, 1140 – 1300. Yale University Press: New Haven, 1995.

Fig. 3
Jaume Cascalls
Saint Anthony the Abbot
Spain, Figuera, Poblet
c. 1360
now in MNAC/MAC 24086
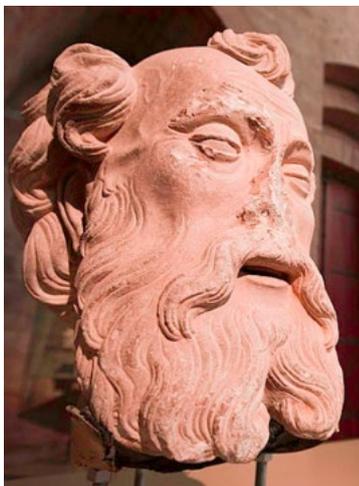
Fig. 4
Saint Peter from Lleida
Cathedral
Spain, Lleida
Second half of the 14th
century
Now in the Lleida Diocesan Museum

Fig. 5
St Thomas
Spain, Lleida, Lleida Cathedral Gate
c. 1440
Lleida Museum

21. Bust of an apostle

22. Bust of a bearded prophet

Northern France, possibly Champagne
c. 1400
29 x 26.5 x 16 cm; limestone

Some surface damage and nose restored.

Provenance:
According to a paper label pasted on the underside of an old oak base, formerly in the collection of Marcel Lesaffre, Moussey, Aube, November 1988;
Private collection, Aube

Discussion:
A bust-length limestone figure identifiable from his cloth cap, simple draped mantle, and long beard as a prophet, his head turned subtly on his shoulders so as to look to our right. His eyes are framed by sagging eyelids and a furrowed, wrinkled brow, indicative of his prophet's status as a man of advanced years, while his hair springs from the crown of his head and falls down either side of his temples to an equal length just under the ears.

So little French sculpture of this date has been preserved that a precise localisation for this remarkably rare and significant survival is extremely difficult. The twentieth-century provenance of the object in the Aube region of Champagne, Northern France, does not alone offer concrete evidence for its localisation to that area, but a somewhat compelling parallel can be made to a figure of Saint Paul tentatively localised to the nearby region of Burgundy and formerly in the collection of Jacqueline Boccador, Paris (Fig. 1), although it is far more stolid and lumpen in character than our figure. Also similarly related in stylistic terms, however, are the limestone figures of the Beau Pilier on the façade of Amiens cathedral, carved at the behest of Cardinal Jean de la Grange between 1376 and 1380 (for which see Pierre Pradel, 'L'auteur des statues du "Beau Pilier" de la cathédrale d'Amiens', in Recueil Clovis Brunel, Part 2 (1955), pp. 390-396). The treatment of the eyes and the grave brow line are particularly

Fig. 1
Saint Paul
Rheno-Burgundian artist (?)
Before 1400
120cm; limestone
Formerly collection of Jacqueline Boccador

comparable between our figure and that of Bureau de La Rivière (Fig. 2). It is believed that, like the Boccador Saint Paul, the Beau Pilier group were carved by a Franco-Flemish sculptor, and for many years it was assumed that they must have been executed by André Beauneveu, the famed court sculptor of Jean de Berry. In fact, while this has now been disproved, imagery created by Beauneveu for the duke also bears comparison, and like the Beau Pilier commission helps us in offering an unusually firm date range within which the present figure can be placed with some confidence. The style of his cap and his general wizened demeanour is especially evocative of a series of seated prophets, and their accompanying figurative marginalia, in a psalter executed by André Beauneveu and his workshop shortly after the artist's appointment to Jean de Berry's court in 1386 (Fig. 3). The known movement of artists south from the Low Countries may help to explain the spread of influences uniting the Beau Pilier figures with works produced in Bourges, as well as those from the Aube and Burgundian regions to the east. That our artist was active on one of these routes, perhaps travelling south like Beauneveu to seek

Fig. 2
Bureau de La Rivière (plaster cast)
Franco-Flemish artist active in Amiens
c. 1376-80
Amiens, Cathedral of Notre-Dame, Beau Pilier

work at the royal courts of France, is a tantalising possibility to consider. Nevertheless, the present figure's re-emergence to scholarly attention is of the utmost significance for our study of late fourteenth-century sculpture in Northern France, and it can be placed with absolute surety amongst the finest surviving works of its type, with few more skilfully or sensitively composed examples that could diminish our appreciation of its impact and quality.

Fig. 3a-b
André Beauneveu
Two figures, Malachi and Hosea, from the Psalter of Jean de Berry
c. 1386-1390
Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Ms fr. 13091, ff. 21v, 15v

22. Bust of a bearded prophet

23.Peeping Man

England
14th century
12 x 53 x 23 cm; limestone

Condition:
The sculpture is in good condition apart from the breaks on the back of the stone resulting from the separation between the piece and its original setting.

Provenance:
Richard Wiseman collection

Published:
Wiseman, Richard. Forty Medieval Carvings from the Collection of Richard Wiseman. 2004.

Discussion:
A corner sculpture with a man emerging out of the stone using his small arms to push his body out. The bends of his arms suggest that the positioning of his body is such because he is looking down at the crowd below him. He wears a headdress that wraps around his round head. The carving of the face is abstract but the figure has almond shaped eyes, a flat nose and articulated lips, which are split at the top and slightly open. His body positioning and facial expression, with an open mouth and staring eyes, suggest curiosity but also nativity.

This little man would have probably been positioned high up on the interior of a church, watching the masses below and hardly ever being noticed. On account of the simplicity of the carving, it is equally possible that he was, in fact, beyond the range of human sight. Many medieval sculptures would have existed in places that were too far for individuals to see – or at the least too far for the sculptures to be clearly visible. This little carving is akin to many of the mischievous individuals highlighted by J.R. Benton's *Medieval Mischief: Wit and Humour in the Art of the Middle Ages* as visual puns perpetrated by the sculptors. He notes that 'the interplay created between sculpture and architecture involves an element of surprise, since we are not accustomed to seeing figures of stone behaving as if they are animate and able to engage in the activities shown.' Some of the best analogous examples of figures who watch the visitors below are the two people who peer out from behind the archivolt of the tympanum of Ste-Foy in Conques and the figures from the Maison Tavel in Geneva (see fig. 1 – 2). In both of these examples, as in our sculpture, the relationship between the sculpture and the viewer has been inverted as the sculptures are now watching the viewer.

At the same time, such figures represent the kind of playful marginalia present on the edges of manuscripts or on the edges of buildings – lurking in the shadows and peering out of corners (see fig. 4). These types of characters would have revealed themselves to the wandering eye, often deterring the viewer by their naive or scary

Fig. 1
Ste-Foy Tympanum figure
France, Conques, Ste-Foy
12th century
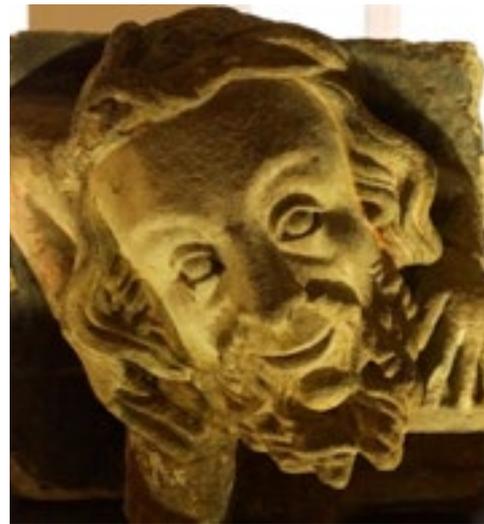
Fig. 2
Figure of a Peeping Man
Switzerland, Geneva, Maison Tavel
14th century

facial expressions. Much like gargoyles and corbel figures, these sculptures in the margins would have presented the viewer with a stark contrast to the serious and iconographically clear biblical scenes that were at the centre of the church. Michael Camille called these types of images a 'side-show' and pointed out how these 'disordered fragments of human personalities stuck onto the edges of the Heavenly Jerusalem, disrupted our notion of the cathedral as a "Bible in stone", since they refer to no biblical personage or text.' On account of the abstract carving, such sculptures are not meant to deceive with realism but rather to amuse a wondering eye, and this amusement is especially effective when the interplay is between sculpture and

architecture. Many of the sculptures get stuck in architecture and try to pry themselves out, leaving only their heads and hands visible to the viewer (fig. 3).

Related Literature:
Camille, Michael. Image on the Edge: The Margins of Medieval Art. Reaction Books, 1992.
Wiseman, Richard. Forty Medieval Carvings from the Collection of Richard Wiseman. London, 2004.

Fig. 3
A man stuck in the pulpitum
England, Southwell Minster
14th century

Fig. 4
Label stops from the All Saints Church
North Wales, Gresford
15th century

24. Mischievous gargoyle pulling a face

England, Leicestershire
14th – 15th century

34 x 40 x 71 cm, limestone

Condition:
Surface worn through years of weathering, losses on right elbow and left knee.

Provenance:
Richard Wiseman Collection, UK

Description:
A fantastic gargoyle shown scratching its head and pulling its mouth into a contorted grimace. Identifiable as male from his forked beard, he has a squat figure, a rounded belly and shortened limbs, as well as large bulbous eyes with exaggerated wrinkles of skin around them, a wide nose, and small hands in proportion to his huge head. Typical of most gargoyles his mouth is open – to great visual effect – which gives him the appearance of shock. The underlying function of this action is of course as a downspout, since a channel

Fig. 2
Mouth-puller
France, Matha
15th century

gouged along the length of the back and ending in the opening at the gargoyle's mouth allowed water to drain away from the cathedral or church's masonry. Projecting horizontally out from the building, it would have loomed over passers-by below as if defying gravity. The meaning of figures like ours and their inclusion in great numbers on medieval churches is likely to have been at least in part intended to ward off evil, yet its appearance when rainwater emanated from its mouth would have been highly charged with playfulness and humour.

Studies of medieval gargoyles discuss the iconography of mouth-pulling at length, noting that its meaning could be anything from apotropaic to sexual innuendo. Examples of mouth-pullers can be found on corbels, on bosses, and even decorating columns throughout England and France (fig. 1 – 2). An especially early example is the mouth puller from Lincoln cathedral (fig. 1), which shows that these figures may have derived from depictions of tooth ailments. There are numerous further examples including an English corbel showing a man pulling his mouth from both sides, now in London, Victoria and Albert Museum (illustrated in Paul Williamson, Catalogue of Romanesque Sculpture. Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 1983, cat. 40, p. 88).

Fig. 1
A bearded man face puller
England, Lincoln Cathedral
c. 1290

Related Literature:
Richard Wiseman, Forty medieval carvings from the collection of Richard Wiseman, London, 2004.
M. Camille, Image on the Edge: the Margins of Medieval Art, 1992.
J. R. Benton, Medieval Mischief: Wit and Humour in the Art of the Middle Ages, 2004.
R. Sheridan and A. Ross, Grotesques and Gargoyles: Paganism in the Medieval Church, 1975.

25. Head of the virgin

Central France
Second half 15th century
limestone; 49 x 34 x 34 cm

Surface damage on account of being lost from a large figure. The damage affected the nose, the upper eyelids, the right side of her upper lip and the chin. Some of the damages to the facial features have been restored and the surface of the Virgin's complexion was cleaned at some point in the past.

Provenance:
Private Collection, London 1960s

Description:
A head of the Virgin with a delicately modelled face, whose captivating low gaze is one of her most characteristic features. The sculpture is representative of the beautiful female heads produced in France from the middle of the 15th century, which combined the softness of Italian Renaissance sculpture with the elegance of French Gothic sculpture. Her detached expression indicates her purity yet also denotes a kind of the elegant indifference present in the portraits of contemporary women of the time.

Fig. 1
Head of Mary Magdalene
Languedoc
c. 1475

The sharply defined facial features of the sculpture, including a small mouth, a delicate nose and high eyebrows, are softened by a fleshy round face. Her head is covered by a thick veil, made up of two layers, that frames her face. Her eyebrows are finely carved to reveal individual hairs. The eyes of the Virgin are heavy lidded, giving an impression of virtue and modesty. She has a small mouth with full lips that are gently pursed and create a pocket of shadow above her chin which is soft and pointed. The Virgin's hair is visible under the veil, chiseled into fine waves. The back of her head is flattened suggesting that she once stood against a wall or vertical surface. The Virgin may have been a part of a monumental Pieta scene.

Discussion:
Formally and stylistically, this figure draws on mid and late 15th century sculpture in central and southern France. The high eyebrows, low gaze, and pursed lips are especially analogous

Fig. 2
Virgin and Child
France, Lorraine
15th century
MET 26.63.3

Fig. 3
Pieta from Rodelle (left) and Pieta from Albi (right)
France, Southern France, Rodelle (church of St Tarcisse) and Albi (church of St Salvi)
Late 15th century

to both the sculpture that clearly draw on the high Gothic tradition, but also on those sculptures that look to Italian examples. The Head of Mary Magdalene from Languedoc as well as the Virgin from the Metropolitan Museum of Art share the same high forehead and downcast eyes, as well as their similarly defined and slightly pointed chins (fig 1 and 2). The distinctive detail of our Virgin's eyes, with her heavier top lids and her sweet girlish face can be compared particularly well with those Virgins originating from the South of France, such as the two Pietas from Rodelle and Albi (fig. 3). Our Virgin also bears a striking affinity to two fragmentary heads from the Museé Denon (fig.4). Although the group that these fragments would have belonged to has been destroyed in the 18th century, their accentuated eyebrows with individualized hairs, heavy eyelids and general form of the facial features can be closely compared to our head of the Virgin. While these two heads confirm our speculation that the head under discussion derives from the same region, they also testify to the international style of Gothic and the close ties between artists in the 15th century.

The soft girlish appearance of our Virgin also reflects those trends in late Gothic art, where more intimate scenes involving Biblical characters began to appear - shifting the perspective from Mary as an Empress of Heaven to her as the devoted mother. As a result of this, more sculptures of the Virgin in Late Gothic art show her in a simple dress with a veil as opposed to a crown. This humanist conception of Mary gained even greater traction in the 15th century, when Italian Renaissance art started to permeate Northern Europe. Our statue falls into this category as it depicts Mary in

a simple headdress with averted eyes and a gentle countenance. Still, however, the Virgin's status as a heavenly figure is emphasized by her other-worldly beauty and by her graceful expression.

Literature:
Forsyth, W. The Pieta in French Late Gothic Sculpture: Regional Variations. Metropolitan Museum of Art: New York, 1995.

Müller, Theodor. Sculpture in the Netherlands, Germany, France and Spain: 1400-1500. Ed. Nikolaus Pevsner. Penguin: Harmondsworth, 1966.

Fig. 4
Two Heads from a Lamentation Group
France, Verdun-sur-le-Doubs
15th century
Musee Denon (Camp, P. Les Imageurs Bourguinons de la fin du Moyen Age, 1990)
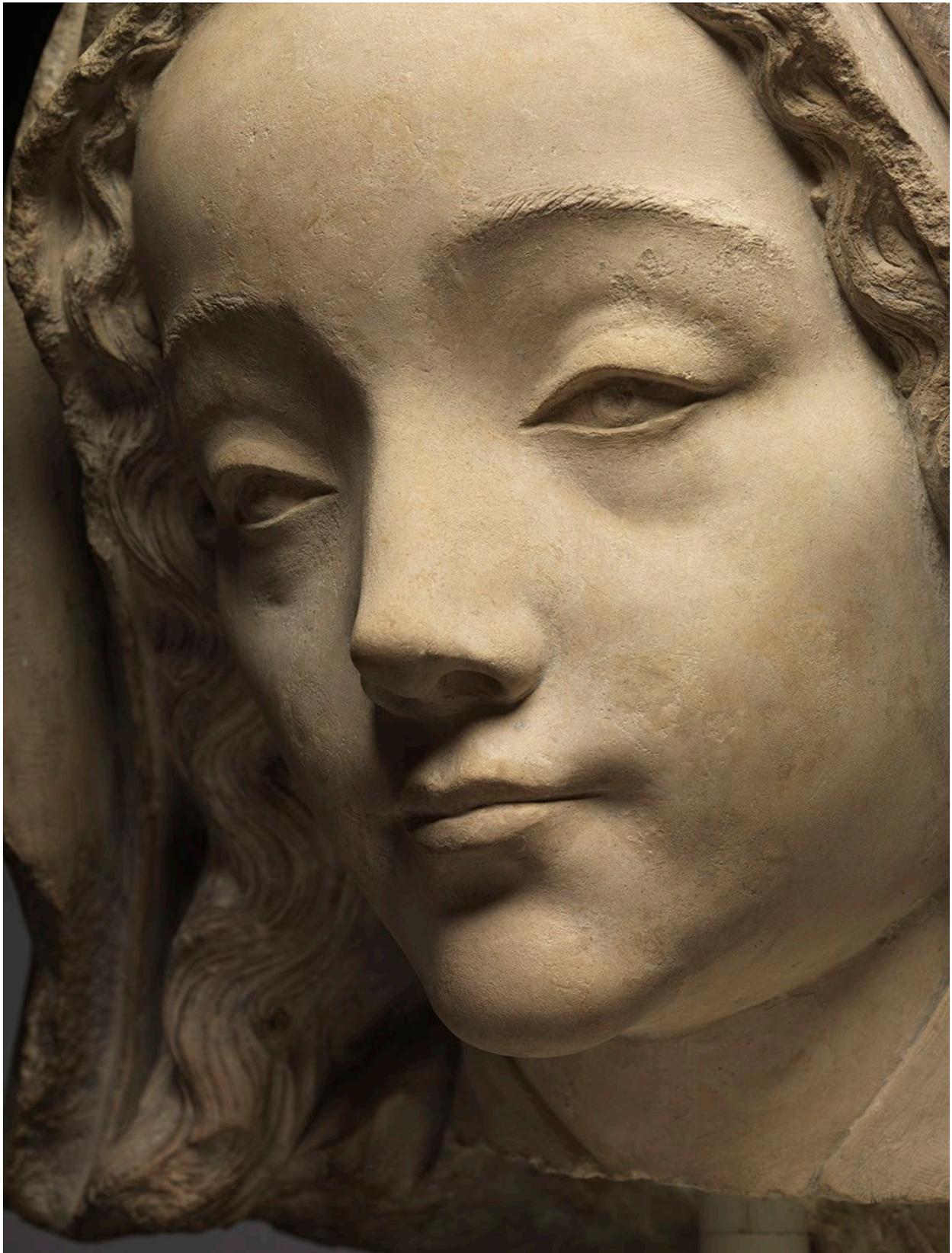
25. Head of the virgin

26. Bust of a female saint

France, Burgundy
1460-1500
52 x 46 x 23 cm; limestone

Some areas of surface abrasion, with loses to nose,mouth and top of the head.

Provenance:
Private Collection, France.

Desription:
A relief bust of a woman, probably one of the three Marys or a female saint, from an Entombment group. The figure wears a veil and a wimple, with the drapery elegantly covering her head, neck and shoulders.The hem of her cloak is carved to suggest a row of buttons and embroidered decoration. She has a downcast gaze, heavy eyelids and a sad facial expression. Her round face is articulated by fleshy cheeks, a small nose and pursed lips.

Large scale Entombments and Pietas with multiple figures became popular devotional monuments in the second half of the fifteenth century, carved for churches through Burgundy and Languedoc. An early example is the group carved by a disciple of Jean de la Huerta, c. 1460, in the Côte-d'Or, Dijon, Hôpital du Saint-Esprait (Jacqueline Boccador, Statuaire Médiévale en France de 1400 à 1530, France, 1974, I, fig. 289, p.277). Another is the Entombment group in relief, from Allier, Souvigny, in the Church of Saint-Peter and Saint-Paul, c. 1480-90, carved in a Burgundian-Languedocian workshop (Boccador, 1974, II, fig. 81, p.76).

The closest stylistic comparison, however, is the Entombment group made by the so-called Maître de Chaource, active in the late 15th and early 16th century (fig. 1). The rounded facial types, with sad expressions and elaborate veils, are all reminiscent of our relief. Whist depicting a Biblical scene which shows Christ and his followers in the most human way, the figures in these scenes still embody the elegance of Gothic sculpture – young idealised faces, rich dresses and an excess of fabrics.

Related Literature:
Jacqueline Boccador, Statuaire Médiévale en France de 1400 à 1530, France: 1974.

Fig. 1
Maître de Chaource
Two Holy Women from an Entombment Group
France, Chaorce
c. 1500 – 1515
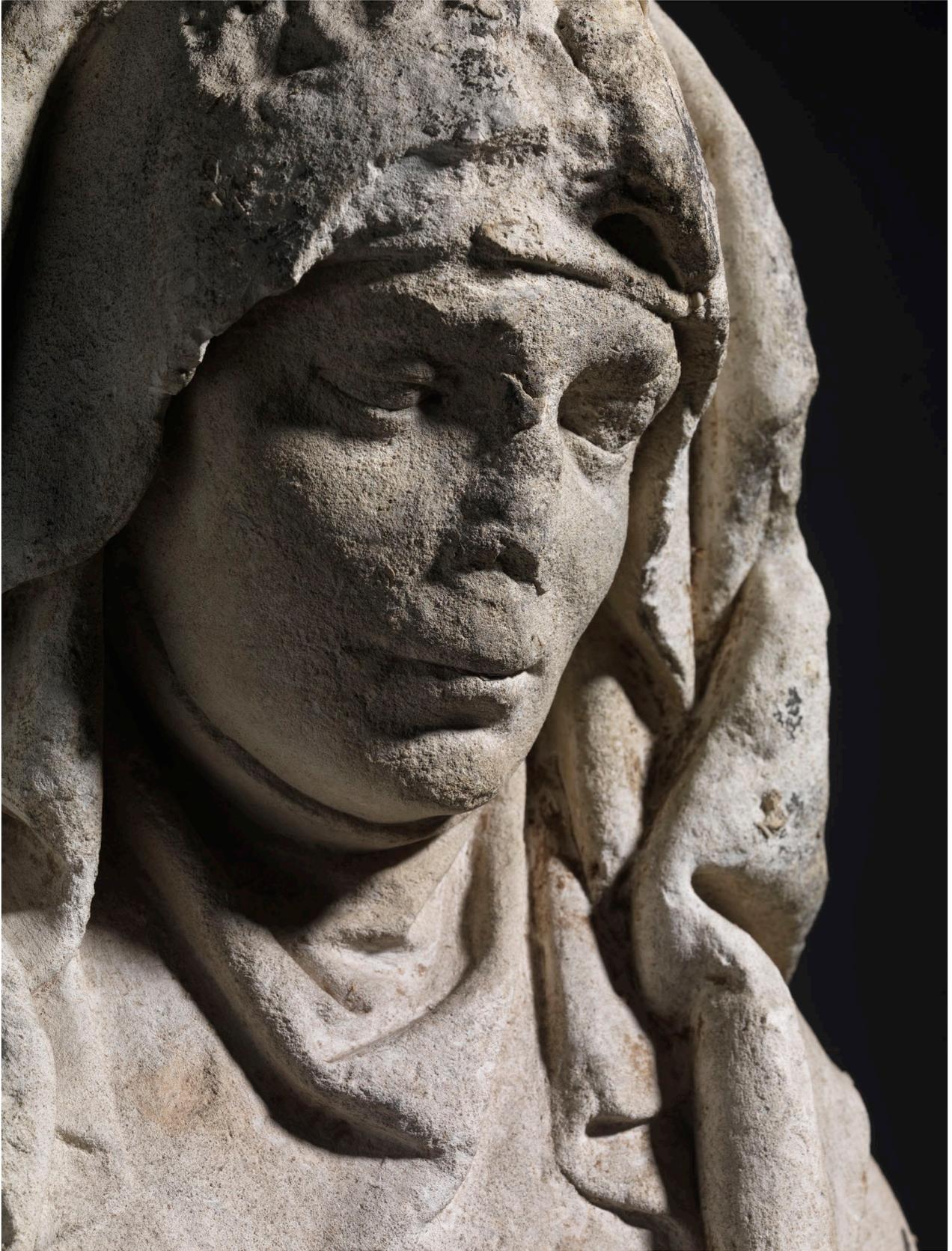
26. Bust of a female saint

27. Head of Balthasar

France, Ile-de-France
c. 1480
28 x 25 x 25.5 cm; limestone

Condition:
The head has suffered overall surface damage due to weathering, no polychromy survives. The back of the turban is damaged, probably indicating its original position in a niche. The nose is lost and partially restored.

Provenance:
Private Collection, UK

Description:
A head of a man with an elaborate turban. On account of the shaven face and the large turban, this head can be identified as Balthasar, attesting to the rarity of this work as not many large-scale sculptures of this Biblical king survive. It is possible that this head was once a part of a monumental portal sculpture group enacting the Adoration of the Magi.

Fig. 1
Figure of St Susanne
France, Chantelle
c. 1500
Musée du Louvre

Fig. 2
Figure of a Woman from the Deposition
France, Burgundy, Yonne, Chapelle de l'hôpital de Tonnerre
1454

The turban of this figure is its most striking feature as it envelops the head completely, sitting heavily on top of it while another piece of fabric wraps around the turban and under the chin of the figure. The complexity of this fabric crown is further accentuated by the layers within it, which are emphasised by tightly sculpted folds of drapery. With this turban, the sculptor demonstrated his knowledge and skills in portraying such

elaborate headdresses. Hiding beneath the turban, the head has a round face with full lips and heavy eyelids. His large ears can be seen in the spaces between the fabric and his face.

The characteristic sculpting of the zig-zagging drapery folds of the turban as well as the downcast gaze of the figure allows us to draw comparisons with other sculptures from the 15th century. Ruth Mellinkoff notes that the turban 'appears as a multivalent headdress in the visual arts to characterise the exotic foreigner…distant in time, distant in place, or distant in customs or religious beliefs. Fanciful and elaborately designed, turbans appear on the Magi, Old Testament Jews, Ishmaelites, Saracens, pagans, and pious and virtuous New Testament Jews.' Although a rare feature, the turban that Balthasar wears can also be compared to turbans and elaborate headdresses that are depicted more frequently in the 15th century both on men and women participating in Biblical scenes (figs. 1-3). In the figure of St Susanne and the Burgundian holy woman, similar drapery folds and similar facial features, especially the downcast gaze, can easily find parallels with the present figure. The turban also gained popularity after the conquest of Christian Constantinople in 1453. A drawing by Albrecht Dürer shows this interest in elaborate headdresses from the near east (fig. 4). Such headdresses were thus no longer reserved for Biblical figures but started to be worn by wealthy men and women in Northern Europe.

The localisation of this sculpture to the Ile-de-France can be established not only by stylistic accounts but also by a scientific analysis undertaken by Annie Blanc in 2010 which determined that the limestone originates from north of Paris.

Related Literature:
Mellinkoff, Ruth. Outcasts: Signs of Otherness in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages (California Studies in the History of Art. University of California Press, 1994.

Fig. 3
Joseph of Arimathea
France, Amiens, St German-l'Ecossais
c. 1500

Fig. 4
Albrecht Dürer (1471 –1528)
The Turkish Couple
c. 1496
Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin

27. Head of Balthasar

28. Head of a Man with a Foolish Grin

England
15th century
24 x 32 x 18 cm; limestone

Condition:
Surface damage throughout due to weathering, losses to nose.

Description:
A corbel showing the head of a man grinning. The sculpted head sits in the curve created by the corbel table, which extends beyond the head. Two masses of chunky, unkept hair frame the round head with its large downward slanting eyes and rounded cheeks. The curves of the nose meet with the lines of the large grinning mouth, which is opened slightly exposing pronounced teeth with large gaps, giving the head a foolish expression.

From the shape of the corbel, its size and weathered state, it can easily be discerned that this head would have once formed part of a corbel table decorating the exterior

Fig. 1
Gargoyle
England, Adderbury, St Mary's church
Late 14th/ early 15th century

of a church. The head can be compared to many other gargoyles and grotesques from England such as a dragon in Adderbury or the head of a demon from a private collection (figs. 1 – 2). The first example can particularly be compared to our grinning man by the large gaps between his exposed teeth and by the bold, abstract carving of the stone. Although surviving in a better condition, the large downward slanting eyes and blank facial expression of the head of a demon are comparable to our corbel.

Fig. 2
Head of a demon
England, South-west England
c. 15th century
Private Collection, London.

All three of these examples are testament to the medieval fascination in depicting not only the beautiful but also the ugly, the disformed and the grotesque. While humorous to us today, such imagery had an instructive purpose as it was meant to symbolise stupidity and ignorance, thus intending to deflect the viewer from similar behaviour.

Related Literature:
M. Camille, Image on the Edge: The Margins of Medieval Art. Reaction Books: New York, 1992.
Benton, Janetta. Medieval Mischief: Wit and Humour in the Art of the Middle Ages. Sutton Publishing: Stroud, 2004.
Sheridan, R. and A. Ross. Grotesques and Gargoyles: Paganism in the Medieval Church, 1975.

29. Two corbels with faces

England
Late 15th century

14 x 9.5 x 29cm and 15x10.5x30cm, granular limestone,

Provenance:
Private Collection, UK

Condition:
Surfaces considerably abraded as a result of weathering causing a lack of articulation on the face of the stone.

Description:
Two corbels with carved faces, one with rounded eyebrows and a broad nose, smiling slightly. The hair on this corbel is articulated with abstracted wavy lines that decorate the sides of the head. The second corbel has a long narrow nose and a beard. Both of the corbels have characteristically aged looking faces.

These pieces can be compared to English stone carving traditions where derogative characters such a fool or a Jew are deliberately rendered in a humorous way to signify their lower status in medieval society. It is this touch of caricature which raises them from the commonplace to the realm of inspired art. Figures of Jews are often portrayed with a long face, a beard and a collar - bearing a certain resemblance to Tudor fashions, thus placing this corbel in the 15th century. More generally, the long faces and sharp facial features of these two corbels can also be compared to other late 15th century English sculpture, such as the row of kings of the York choir screen (fig. 1). Although an extremely different kind of work, the tendency to sculpt narrow, long faces with sharp facial features and pointed beards can be recognised in both of these works.

The heavily weathered surfaces reveal their original position, perhaps decorating door jambs or at the end of roof beams protruding above the exterior wall of a house or parish church.

Related Literature:
Camille, Michael. Image on the Edge: The Margins of Medieval Art. Reaction Books: New York, 1992.

Fig. 1
King from the York Minster Choir Screen
England, York, York Minster
Late 15th century

Benton, Janetta. Medieval Mischief: Wit and Humour in the Art of the Middle Ages. Sutton Publishing: Stroud, 2004.
Sheridan, R. and A. Ross. Grotesques and Gargoyles: Paganism in the Medieval Church, 1975.

29. Two corbels with faces

30. Head of a bearded man

France, Bourgogne
Early 16th century

15 x 17.3 x 17 cm; polychromed limestone

A small head of a bearded man with surviving early polychrome. The figure furrows his brows and opens his mouth as if to speak. The alarm in his expression is articulated not only by his tense forehead but also by his twisted mouth. His hair is fashioned into small ringlets that terminate at his brow. The short beard of the figure follows a similar format in that it is also composed of tight curls. His large blue eyes are framed by fine wrinkled and look beyond the viewer. A part of the figure's outstretched neck also survives.

Fig. 2
Saint Peter
France, Dole, Collegiate church of Notre Dame
c.1500

Discussion:

This small sculpture was once probably a part of a larger ensemble of figures that formed a narrative group, evident by the lively expression of the figure. The scene may have been a part of a large stone altarpiece, a choir screen or some other monumental structure. The surviving polychrome on the sculpture suggests that the figure would have been on the interior of a church.

Stylistically, the figure can be compared to early 16th century French sculpture, which combines Italian Renaissance naturalism with stylistic borrowings from Gothic France. The hair of our figure finds close parallels with the figure of St Sebastian from Pagny-la-Ville (fig. 1). The gathering and style of the ringlets of hair along the forehead of St. Sebastian is a close comparison to that of our figure. The form of this head, with

Fig. 3
Jean Guilhomet
Saint Peter
France, Bourbonnais
Early 16th century
Paris, Louvre RF 1159

its tight curls and its short beard, draws particularly from late medieval sculptures in central France. Examples of this include the St Peter from Dole (fig. 2) and the St Peter from Bourbonnais (fig. 3). The latter figure, sculpted by Jean Guilhomet, with its furrowed brows and its concerned expression is extremely analogous to our head of a bearded man. The stylistic analogies are also supported by the material used here, as the creamy limestone of this sculpture is consistent with Tonnerre limestone known to have been used in Burgundy throughout the Middle Ages.

Fig 1
Saint Sebastian
France, Pagny-la-Ville
Early 16th century

30. Head of a bearded man

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