“Tears of Compunction”
French Gothic Ivories in Devotional Practice

by
Sarah M. Guérin

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Art
University of Toronto

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Abstract

This dissertation presents a new perspective on the function of objects in late-medieval devotional practice through a study of the so-called Soissons group of thirteenth-century French Gothic ivories. These ivory diptychs were sophisticated tools constructed to guide the user through various spiritual exercises that led to prayer. The hitherto unexplained increase in the availability of ivory in mid-thirteenth-century France is accounted for by an alteration in the trade routes that brought elephant tusks from the Swahili coast of Africa to northern Europe: a newly-opened passage through the Straits of Gibraltar allowed a small amount of luxury goods to be shipped together with bulk materials necessary to the northern textile industries. The increasing supply required a revision of the structure of the thirteenth-century craft of ivory. The Soissons group, the first ivory diptychs fashioned during this time of growth in ivory markets, is subdivided into two sections. An itinerant master who traveled throughout the Picard region between 1235 and 1270 crafted the first group. Concurrently, three separate Parisian artists produced the second group, based on a Picard model. This dissertation redates all the ivories substantially earlier than previously thought, conclusions which were attained through stylistic analysis. The dense Passion iconography shaped the diptychs’ function in private
devotion. The narrative encouraged the viewer to practice a number of spiritual exercises—reading, memorization and compunction—analogous to the three reasons for allowing images in the Christian Church, the *triplex ratio*. The Passion diptych format introduced with these objects was immensely popular throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and its conservation over time underscored its effectiveness. The small differences in iconography and composition among the seven Soissons diptychs, however, were subtle modifications to adjust to different audiences and to hone the objects’ efficacy as tools for prayer.
Acknowledgements

The individuals and institutions that deserve thanks for their intellectual, practical, monetary and emotional support throughout this project are countless and the following attempt to enumerate them will no doubt miss important contributors. To those I have inadvertently overlooked, I hope they will accept my heartfelt thanks nonetheless.

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The considerable amount of travel needed to examine each and every item of the “Soissons” group of ivories in addition to numerous other collections of ivories was made possible through additional funding. The University of Toronto School of Graduate Studies and the Robert Deshman Travel Grant from the Department of Art allowed me to criss-cross Europe for four months in 2006. In 2007, the Frieberg Travel Grant from the Canadian Friends of the Hermitage Society facilitated several weeks in St. Petersburg working with the little known collections of French Gothic ivories in the Hermitage’s collection. For their indispensable help in arranging this trip, my thanks go to Professor
Ken Bartlett of the University of Toronto and to Mr. Robert Kaszanits, President and CEO of The State Hermitage Museum Foundation of Canada.

The many curators and administrators at the numerous museums and collections that kindly granted me access to their collections all deserve sincere thanks. I will mention first, and the closest to home, the Art Gallery of Ontario, which now houses the superb Kenneth Thomson Collection. It was here that I first “cut my teeth” on Gothic ivories under the supportive and watchful eye of Christina Corsiglia. My thanks go too, in more recent years, to Michael Parke-Taylor and Christine Kralik. At institutions south of the border, I would like to thank Patricia J. Whitesides at the Toledo Museum of Art, Ohio; Holger Klein at the Cleveland Museum of Art; Alan Darr and Brian Gallagher from the Detroit Institute of the Arts; Christina Nielsen at the Art Institute of Chicago; Griff Mann formerly at the Walters Art Museum; Rachel U. Tassone at the Williams College Museum of Art; Christopher Newth at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Alan Chong at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum; Eric Zafran of the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, Connecticut; last, and certainly not least, Charles Little and Peter Barnet at the Metropolitan Museum of Art who have been warmly welcoming, have offered me unprecedented access to the Met’s collections, and have been tremendously supportive in my choice to specialize in Gothic ivories.

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Introduction

Item alias yconam sive ymaginem, totam de ebore, pulcrum, integram, factam de tribus tabulis, et in media tabula sunt tria tabernacula parva, et in summum est salvator ad iudicium; sub eo est crucifixus cum duabus ymaginibus iuxta eum; et in fine est beata Virgo cum filio et duobus angelis iuxta eam in tabernaculis suis; et in aliis duabus tabulis est in qualibet unum tabernaculum et due ymagines designates legem antiquam et novam; et in fine est ex una parte Sanctus Petrus, et in alis Sanctus Paulus. Et in stipite sunt IIII foramina in quibus videtur fuisse pes vel aliud laboritum in quo stabat, et est involuta in panno lineo. Et habet tecam de corio.

Item: another icon or image, all of ivory, beautiful, integral, and composed of three panels. In the central panel are three small tabernacles, and in the uppermost is Christ in Judgment; under that is the Crucifixion with two figures next to him; and in the bottom is the blessed Virgin with her son and two angels next to her in their own tabernacles. On the other two panels are, as it were, one tabernacle with two figures designating the old and the new law. And in the bottom one is Saint Peter and in the other Saint Paul. And on the base are four holes in which seem to be feet or another type of work on which it stands, and it is wrapped in a linen cloth. It has a sheath of leather.¹

This inventory text is the first written evidence documenting a prodigious group of ivories carved in Northern France during the second third of the thirteenth century. The item described, situated in the Perugian Papal treasure by 1311 and perhaps already part of Boniface VIII’s collection in 1295,² unfortunately no longer exists, though a close

² Although the description is less precise, making a certain attribution difficult, item number 711 from the 1295 inventory of Boniface VIII may refer to the same object. “Item, unam aliam iconam de ebore in cujus medio est Crucifixus et super eum imago majestatis sedentis et sub eo imago Virginis cum Filio, et alie imagines (Item: one other icon of ivory in which the middle is the Crucifixion and above it is an image of a seated Majestà and under it is an image of the Virgin with Child, and other figures).” Emile Molinier, Inventaire du Trésor du Saint Siège sous Boniface VIII (1295) (Paris: Bibliothèque de l’Ecole des Chartres, 1888), Chapter 38.
sibling is now in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Plate 4). The lengthy Papal inventories, briefly describing dozens of ivories, reinforce several twentieth-century assumptions about ivory objects from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries: it is difficult to imagine the objects listed as existing in a context different from the famous twentieth-century collections, such as that of E. and M. Kofler-Truniger in Lucerne (Fig. I–1). The Papal documents represent a preliminary stage in the afterlives of ivories as “treasured” pieces existing within a larger collection. Too often, the category of “Gothic ivories” calls to mind vitrines packed with small statuettes, diptychs, triptychs and polyptychs that seem to share a limited iconographic and stylistic vocabulary. The image conjured in our mind’s eye by the papal inventory is, therefore, predicated upon museum installations and the cabinets of private collectors. That is to say, contemporary opinion has relegated Gothic ivories to aggregate commonality, collected for undifferentiated aesthetic delight and material value.

In this thesis, however, I attempt to paint an entirely different picture—one that focuses more precisely on the original creators and owners of such thirteenth-century ivories, especially those objects related to the triptych in the Papal treasure. These objects, long referred to by scholars as the “Soissons” group, were in fact the first ivory diptychs and triptychs to be made in Northern Europe since the late antique period: they were unique and precious objects at the time of their manufacture. Even today this group is striking, the diptychs standing at 30 cm high, with each panel measuring approximately 12 cm wide. In each case, a distinctive narrative of Christ’s Passion unfolds across both panels, framed and articulated by an ornate Rayonnant Gothic frame (Plates 1, 3, 8, 20–

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3 The Victoria and Albert triptych displays iconography almost identical to the Papal triptych. The only exception is that the figures of Peter and Paul are replaced by scenes of the Adoration and the Presentation.
22). That the format inaugurated by the “Soissons” group had become ubiquitous by the
time of Pope Clement V’s inventory half a century later speaks to the compelling nature
of these first models; ensuing prolific emulation denotes the exceptional popularity of
these ivories. Instead of considering such objects as only “one among many” in a
collector’s cabinet, I probe the practical function these items performed in an individual’s
life prior to achieving the status of collectible items. Specifically, I investigate how the
diptychs from the “Soissons” group were used in the intimate arena of private prayer.

This study is not the first to attempt to re-imagine how images were used to
enhance an individual’s spiritual life in the Middle Ages. In general two types of images,
with the two modes of devotion they engender, have received the most scholarly
attention. The first I will call the iconic mode, because both the image type and the mode
of devotion are closely linked to Byzantine icons, as has been carefully delineated by
Hans Belting in his seminal books on the topic.⁴ In brief summary, the image represented
is a “portrait” of the deity or saint that acts as a direct conduit to the divine. Theoretically,
there are various methods for an image to accomplish this: it may be a miraculous image
not made by human hands (an acheiropoieton), a touch relic (vera icona/Veronica), or a
copy of either of these.⁵ It may also have participated in the lingering tenets of emperor
worship. Even the more sophisticated and less superstitious theorizing of icons that
flowed out of the iconoclastic councils of Byzantium (730–87), which slowly seeped into

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Western discourses through various channels, posited that depictions of Christ’s human nature also necessarily included his divine nature, and therefore veneration offered to the image was truly offered to the Godhead: the prototype actively participated with the image.\(^6\) Though the technical interpretation of this tenet shifted over the years,\(^7\) the lived experience of this belief remained constant insofar as the contemplating believer supposed that the image established a direct line of communication with the deity.\(^8\) This type of image use, in either the public or the private sphere,\(^9\) was primarily tied to the pictorial form of the icon or portrait. The dense cinematic narrative presented on the “Soissons” diptychs does not appear tailored to this type of devotional attention.\(^10\) Thus, despite the extensive scholarly attention lavished on this mode of image theory—both in

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\(^9\) For a study examining the transformation of public imagery when it is privatized, and the alterations this makes to the reciprocal dynamic between devotee and picture/deity, see Jens T. Wollesen, *Hasten to my Aid and Counsel... The Answers of the Pictures: Private Devotional Panel Painting in Italy around 1300* (New York, Ottawa and Toronto: Legas Publishing, 2005).

\(^10\) David Freedberg, however, does argue for the continued inherence of image and prototype in narrative images as well as in iconic ones. See David Freedberg, “Holy Images and Other Images,” in *The Art of Interpreting*, ed. Susan C. Scott (University Park, PA: Dept. of Art History, Pennsylvania State University, 1995), 69–87.
contemporary scholarship and in the Middle Ages—11—the answer to the function of the ivory diptychs, in my opinion, does not lie along this line of inquiry.

A second category of image function is more helpful for investigating the “Soissons” diptychs, and this is a category literally known as devotional images, or Andachtsbilder. The use of an image to focus or aid devotional practice has long been a topic of interest to art historians.12 Rather than a particular pictorial form, this category was traditionally defined by a series of iconographic motifs: the imago pietatis (Ecce homo), the Vesperbild (Pietà), or the Johannesgruppe, to name only a few. These iconographies, as Sixten Ringbom pointed out, tend to be moments from longer narratives excerpted to isolate the emotional potential they offer for contemplation.13

Rudolph Berliner offered a more synthetic definition that suggests the actual function of

11 As I discuss in Chapter 4, it is through the process of distinguishing the proper modes of veneration due to an image that the scholastics find themselves dealing with image theory. After long philosophical discussions of latrícia and dulía, a brief mention is usually made of the triplex ratio, or the three other reasons images are to be allowed in the church, and so it is usually appended as an afterthought.


the image: an *Andachtsbilder* is “abbreviated in form and plurisignate in content.” In other words, it is a simple image able to refer not only to its original narrative context, but also a plurality of theological debates and associated narrative moments. A successful *Andachtsbilder* condenses a large amount of symbolic material into a single, simple image. A close examination of such an object, together with a hypothetical reading of how it was used in devotional practice, can clarify this point.

The Visitation Group now at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and originally from a Dominican convent in Constance shows the tender encounter between the Virgin Mary and her cousin Elizabeth (Fig. 1–2). Both women are miraculously with child, a fact innovatively highlighted by the insertion of two rock crystals at the womb of each woman. The cousins greet each other with clasped hands, while Elizabeth has laid Mary’s left hand on her bosom to register the excitement of the child within her, for the unborn John the Baptist has recognized in his future cousin the Savior: “For behold, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy.” The rock crystals make visible the *in utero* protagonists of the narrative and effectively isolate the precise moment of recognition from the longer narrative of the Infancy or even of the Visitation. The particular moment of joy, emotional recognition, and transformation that take place in that intimate exchange is the true subject presented to the viewer for contemplation. Yet this explicit reading is only the beginning of the exegetical possibilities offered for contemplation by this *Andachtsbild*. This aspect of the Visitation reminds the viewer of Christ’s Baptism, thirty years later, when John the

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16 Luke 1: 44. All Biblical translations are taken from the Douai-Rheims Bible.
Baptist again recognized his cousin Jesus as the Son of God (Matthew 3:14). Thus John the Baptist, as the last of the prophets, also signifies the inherent typological relationship between Old Testament and New Testament, between the old law and the new faith. The tender moment of recognition at the Visitation is actually the beginning of a new era.

The significance of the rock crystal itself suggests further interpretations, not least of which is Mary’s own words at the Visitation in response to Elizabeth’s greeting: “My soul doth magnify the Lord” (Luke 1:46). This text was familiar to the medieval viewer, not only from its biblical context, but also as the popular liturgical prayer and hymn, the Magnificat. Furthermore, at this point in time, the material of rock crystal was most familiar to users as a component in reliquaries and monstrances, where the transparent material offered, as it were, a window to the divine. One example is a fourteenth-century reliquary from Braunschweig that incorporates a tenth-century crystal from Fatimid Egypt to allow visual access to the tooth of John the Baptist (Fig. I–3). The rock crystals, therefore, do not simply signify the unborn Christ and John the Baptist in their mother’s wombs, but they also suggest an inter-visual link between Mary and Elizabeth and reliquaries: the shared material suggests an interpretation of the holy women’s role as analogous to a reliquary that holds, protects, frames, and displays sacred substances. In this way, the Visitation group refers to the whole exegetical tradition familiar to viewers through the more traditional imagery of the Throne of Wisdom:

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17 For a tentative explanation of the inclusion of rock crystal in monstrances and reliquaries at this time, see Michael Camille, “Before the Gaze: The Internal Senses and Late Medieval Practices of Seeing,” in Visuality Before and Beyond the Renaissance: Seeing as Others Saw, ed. Robert S. Nelson (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 197–223, esp. 204–208. See also Caroline Walker Bynum, The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200–1336 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 202–03. Of course, the rock crystal is not only a window to the divine but magnifies it as well. I thank Professor Linda Safran for underlining this metaphor.
18 Chicago, Art Institute of Chicago, silver gilt and crystal, 40.6 cm. Gift of Kate S. Buckingham, 1938.1957.
during her pregnancy, Mary’s human body was like a throne for the second person of the Trinity, the Logos, Wisdom itself. Jeffrey Hamburger has, furthermore, identified a text from the Abbey of Katharinenthal that plays with the vocabulary of the sumptuous arts to describe a visionary experience: “There also appeared the immaculate womb of the glorious Virgin, as transparent as the purest crystal, through which her internal organs, penetrated and filled with divinity, shone brightly, just as gold, wrapped in a silk of various colors, shines through crystal.” As Hamburger stresses, the text demonstrates how the richness of visual metaphors, absorbed through extended contemplation on the material image, were internalized and imaginatively incorporated into an individual’s spiritual experience.

The Andachtsbild is, therefore, a multivalent symbol that deftly reminds the viewer of a number of exegetical strains he, or more likely in this case she, can follow while formulating her (or his) prayers. This mode of image function correlates very well with the “Soissons” diptychs and Harvey Stahl provided a preliminary reading of the diptychs following this interpretive paradigm. Yet the dense narrative structure present on the “Soissons” diptychs multiplies the complexity of the Andachtsbilder model, and calls for a more complex paradigm. What benefits come from the proliferation of the

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22 The narrative density, especially of the Passion, could be said to have reached its apogee in the fifteenth century. See James Marrow, *Passion Iconography in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages and*
number of devotional scenes in one object? Does a multi-scened object engender a different type or quality of devotion? Furthermore, how does prayer with an object compare to or contrast with textual prayer? How exactly is the proliferation of devotional images compatible with the age-old criterion of imageless prayer?

Finally, the use of Andachtsbilder—especially among the laity—flourished throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The example of the Visitation group, circa 1310, is usually seen as an early example of the genre. Accordingly, the majority of scholarship up to this point has focused on this later period. Yet the roots of the genre are planted firmly in the thirteenth century and are, in fact, coeval with the revival of ivory carving as a sculptural form. The association of the ivory medium with devotional practice extends beyond mere contemporaneity and the ivory diptychs of the “Soissons” group are some of the first objects purposefully designed for devotional use. The first “Soissons” diptychs were produced as devotional objects for ecclesiastical elites. The explicit markers of ecclesiastical patronage, however, diminish in the later examples, suggesting that the patronage of the objects spread to other sections of society. This pattern also suggests that the use of the ivory diptychs proceeded from ecclesiastic to non-ecclesiastic populations. The interpretative framework that I invoke is the monastic lectio divina, a way of life in which spirituality is actively, routinely, and perhaps even mundanely, practiced through various exercises rather than being characterized by sudden moments of mystical revelation. Considering the experiential dimension of how

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23 One paradigmatic example is Henk van Os, *The Art of Devotion in the Late Middle Ages in Europe, 1300–1500* (London: Merrell Holberton, 1994).

an individual approached, consumed and digested the imagery on devotional objects explores a different dimension of private spirituality in the Middle Ages than has been reconstructed previously, since much scholarship has been focused heretofore on the notion of mystical visions, their solicitation and the representations thereof. Put simply, I wish to explore what people did with devotional objects rather than focus on the pictorial representations of a hoped-for but rarely attained goal.

Prior to dealing with the question of how the diptychs of the “Soissons” group functioned as aids to private prayer, however, the place of the “Soissons” group of ivories within material and economic history of the thirteenth century must be firmly established. My investigation thus begins with a general consideration of the socio-economic status of ivory in the mid-thirteenth century, a critical but hitherto seldom-studied question. In the twelfth century there was a well-documented scarcity of elephant tusks in Northern Europe: access to the fine material was extremely limited and therefore only a handful of items were fashioned from it. The majority of “ivory” objects from twelfth-century northern Europe were in fact made of such indigenous substitute materials as walrus tusk, whalebone, and animal bone. The situation in the first third of the thirteenth century continued this pattern. Yet, around the year 1240, for a reason not yet adequately addressed in the scholarship, the supply of elephant ivory to northern Europe was restored and many objects came to be fashioned from the exotic material. What was the reason for this new influx, and how was this change reflected in the trade routes? To


25 “For the devotion shown to images, mysticism was always the ultimate ideal in the background.” Belting, Likeness and Presence, 411.
solve this enigma, the commercial chain that stretched from the southeastern coast of Africa, to the centers of production in northern Europe is reconstructed to identify at which point on the complex network a shift occurred to change so drastically the supply of ivory.

The second half of the first chapter addresses a set of questions concerning the social implications of the sudden availability of a much-desired and previously prohibitively expensive material. How much did ivory actually cost and how did it compare with other luxury media? Who was charged with carving the material? What were the customs and practices of those artisans at the moment when ivory suddenly became available? This last point is of great interest, for the surviving guild regulations established by the Parisian provost Etienne de Boileau in the 1260s provide precious details on the subject, enriching our picture considerably. Additional questions arise which are more speculative in nature. How would the craft of ivory have changed between the 1240s and the 1260s? Was the situation in the provinces different from that in the capital? How exactly was an ivory tusk to be carved, especially if the artisan lacked experience and training in the handling of that material? These questions form the balance of the first chapter, sketching out the material circumstances from which the “Soissons” group emerged.

Chapter two begins with a thorough historiographic investigation of the “Soissons” group itself. As will become clear, this group is in fact a heterogeneous one. Its diversity stems from the fact that Raymond Koechlin, the early twentieth-century scholar of Gothic ivories responsible for identifying the “Soissons” group, based his classification system on iconographic and decorative motifs rather than on the identity of
artistic hands. In the generations following Koechlin, his classification system has been criticized and many scholars have suggested alternative attributions, specifically in regard to the “Soissons” group. Forgoing Koechlin’s reliance on decorative schemes and iconography, recent scholarship relies primarily on style criticism or connoisseurship for new attributions. The methodology of stylistic analysis, however, requires serious theoretical reevaluation if it is to be employed—as it must be in the case of Gothic ivories, the large majority of which lack any sort of documentary evidence—in an art historical study of the twenty-first century. In fact, the taxonomic work necessary for the close study of Gothic ivories has, for historiographic reasons, discouraged scholars from seriously engaging with this body of material. The remainder of the second chapter, therefore, consists of a theoretical re-evaluation of the methodology of connoisseurship, taking into account the various criticisms leveled at the practice throughout the second half of the twentieth century and suggesting new principles that can help rehabilitate it as a philosophically sound methodological tool.

The third chapter consists of an activation of these methodological principles, using the “Soissons” group as a case study. Building on the preliminary conclusions of previous scholars while narrowing considerably the geographic and chronological time span, I conclude that the “Soissons” group consists in fact of two sets of objects. The first comprises approximately twenty items (Plates 1–19) produced by a single artisan who seems to have been an itinerant artist employed throughout the northern region of Picardy. I label him the Picard Master and conclude that he was active from about the 1240s to the 1270s. The second grouping (Plates 20–24), however, was not made by a single hand, but by several different artisans over a time span of some twenty years. It is
united, however, by the fact that all pieces were produced in the French capital, Paris. Owing to the scarcity of documentary sources, the transference of the formal and iconographic model from Picardy to Paris cannot be discussed in terms of patronage or the movement of artisans or artifacts; instead, the most productive available framework for analyzing the continuing influence of the Picard diptychs is their function as devotional objects.

This is the topic taken up in the remaining three chapters. Chapter four discusses in close detail the Hermitage diptych (Plate 1) and its close relatives (Plates 2 and 3). I begin with an exhaustive discussion of the dense Passion iconography present on the Hermitage diptych. Some of the idiosyncratic textual sources and compositional choices, in addition to other pieces of fragmentary evidence available for the Picard group, lead to the conclusion that the Hermitage diptych was fashioned for an elite cleric and not a member of the laity, as has long been assumed for many ivory diptychs. The ensuing section considers how such an individual would comprehend and approach the Hermitage diptych. I use two complementary frameworks to structure my analysis: the *triplex ratio*, or the three reasons that images are allowed by the church, which stem from the writings of Gregory the Great, namely education, compunction and recollection, and the surprisingly similar spiritual exercises that comprise the tradition of *lectio divinia*, or as Mary Carruthers has termed it, monastic orthopraxis. This hermeneutic structure reveals that the Hermitage diptych is in fact a multilayered and polysemous tool that aids the devotee in several different and complementary spiritual exercises.

That two near-copies of the Hermitage diptych are still extant—the single leaf from the Salting Collection (Plate 2) and the diptych now in the Wallace Collection,
London (Plate 3)—is evidence of the success of the Hermitage model. Any physical transformations of these two diptychs, most notably the Wallace diptych being carved from significantly narrower panels, were to compensate for material contingencies and were not alterations to the functional aspects of the diptych. Given that, based on convincing stylistic criteria, the Wallace diptych may date up to fifteen years later than the Hermitage diptych, this is a resoundingly positive endorsement of the latter’s usefulness as a tool for prayer.

Chapter five examines another diptych from the Picard group that, however, deviates significantly from the Hermitage model and introduces a number of innovations that enhance the experience of prayer. The diptych now in the Vatican collection (Plate 8) includes an Infancy narrative on the left panel parallel to an abbreviated Passion narrative on the right leaf. A clear typological relationship is established between the two cycles which introduces an added layer of complexity to the spiritual exercises enjoined by the diptych. The patron or artisan planning the Vatican diptych thus identified and enhanced the most successful aspects of the Hermitage diptych and relinquished other characteristics less essential to the ultimate goal of prayer.

The final chapter examines the functional aspects of the Parisian branch of the “Soissons” group. Although stylistically disparate, these three diptychs are united through their formal configuration and through similar iconographic additions. The Walters-Cluny diptych (Plate 20), which only slightly postdates the Hermitage diptych and is closest to the Picard diptychs iconographically and compositionally, nevertheless introduces the characteristic Parisian features. The narrative of Christ’s Passion begins at the bottom-left-hand corner and snakes up the three registers following the
boustrophedon pattern, reading left-to-right on the bottom register, right-to-left in the middle, and returning to left-to-right across the top. Moreover, whereas the end of the Passion story on the Picard diptychs consistently shows Christ’s Harrowing of Hell, the Walters-Cluny diptych ends with the *Noli me tangere*. The interpretive tradition concerning this episode, recounted in the exegetical compilations of the day, was that Mary Magdalene was forbidden from touching the resurrected Christ because she believed only in his human nature and not in his divinity. The inclusion, therefore, of the *Noli me tangere* as the last episode on an object designed for use in prayer—ideally an inwardly spiritual practice rather than a bodily one—encourages the user to “see spiritually” rather than with bodily eyes. The iconographic alteration is supported by the formal modification: the narrative literally “raises up” the eyes, reminding the viewer in yet another way to move from the material images before his eyes towards spiritual images beyond them.

The Soissons and Berlin diptychs (Plates 21 and 22)—both dating to the 1260s and sharing almost identical iconography—introduce another innovation to the Walters-Cluny diptych: they condense each episode from the Passion into an almost emblematic portrayal that can be contained under one arch of the micro-architectural frame. The compartmentalization of the episodes results, on the one hand, in an impoverishment of details in the individual scenes that may be considered detrimental to the function of the diptych, but, on the other hand, the consequent emblematization allows for an almost infinite number of dualistic relationships to be established between individual scenes, considerably augmenting the devotional potential of the diptych. The grid-like arrangement of the scenes allows the viewer to construct a matrix of interconnected
hermeneutical relationships among the different moments of Christ’s Passion. The web of relations and resonances the viewer attaches to the narrative depicted on the Soissons and Berlin diptychs renders their format more effective in inspiring and sustaining prayer.

The conclusion assesses the information gathered through close analysis of the “Soissons” group in light of a broader historical context. I return to the question of the use of images within a prayer tradition that is ideally aniconic, discussing some key examples from the twelfth century that inform the conventions of the thirteenth. I reaffirm that in the thirteenth century, images were intended to be prayed with not to: devotional images were designed as aids for the spiritual exercises and were not expected to accompany the devotee to contemplative union. Images, primarily mental ones, were always considered to be veils, imperfectly mediating the divine essence. Nevertheless, images did do other things rather well—namely teach, elicit emotions, and form memories, the three items of the triplex ratio and three things indispensable for training the mind to pray properly. It is for these three reasons images were allowed in the Church.

The iconography and composition, as well as some provenance information, suggest that the Picard group was produced for elite clerics. Not all clerics, however, were monastics, and one might question why I have used monastic orthopraxis to discuss a group of objects not necessarily produced for the cloister. The pastoral reforms, which were initiated in the late twelfth century and continued throughout the thirteenth, focused on the dissemination of monastic norms of education and prayer to non-cloistered clergy, namely canons and parish priests. Canons were a segment of the population with a high level of education, a religious vocation, and a command of sufficient financial resources,
thus making them the ideal audience for the Picard diptychs. The evidence for and implications of such a hypothesis are explored further in the conclusion. The slightly later group of Parisian diptychs eliminated the elements that in the Picard group suggested a specifically clerical audience: the result is that the Parisian diptychs cannot be attributed to a particular group of society, other than the broadly wealthy, educated and pious. The diptychs change from being objects tailored to a specific audience to being instruments for practicing private devotion that a wider public could use. This trajectory further parallels the history of pastoral reforms that drove much ecclesiastical policy in the thirteenth century. Although the reforms initially focused on the improvement of education for canons and parish priests, their ultimate goal was the betterment of the Christian life of the population as a whole. Instrumental in both phases of the pastoral reforms were the renowned schools of Paris that were a hub for European theologians and ecclesiastics. Exactly what role the Parisian diptychs may have played in the pastoral reforms is considered in the second half of the conclusion.

By delineating the material, economic, social, religious and spiritual contexts for which the “Soissons” ivories were produced and in which they were received, the contemporary historian can approach the originally private and intimate relationship between object and user that contradicts the assumptions conventionally held concerning Gothic ivories: that they were undifferentiated aesthetic objects, collected en masse, and sequestered in vitrines. The extended close observation and consideration of the objects’ material, iconography and composition unveiled the original function played by the ivory diptychs in private prayer and meditation. When considered in tandem with the broader historical context of the thirteenth century, a plausible narrative for the ivories’
production, reception, use and influence can be posited from the tusks’ journey from
southeastern Africa to Northern France, through the purchasing, conceptualization, and
carving of the first diptych, to the use of that diptych and finally the begetting of
subsequent generations of ivory diptychs. In what follows, the diptychs of the “Soissons”
group are re-animated, taken down from the walls or out of their vitrines and replaced
back in the hands of the thirteenth century.
Chapter 1  
Economic and Material History of Ivory in the Thirteenth Century

For the art of ivory carving to take place, the raw material itself must be present. The full impact of this basic principle has not been sufficiently absorbed into the scholarship on French Gothic ivories and such a consideration is completely absent from the treatment of the “Soissons” group of ivories. Although many have noted that there was a dearth of the material in northern Europe in the eleventh and twelfth centuries followed by a surplus in the fourteenth century, the practical accommodations that markets, patrons and artisans made to the varying supply has not inflected the interpretation of Gothic ivories, especially those works produced in the first half of the thirteenth century as the ivory supply began to swell.\(^1\) The first “Soissons” ivories date precisely to the period in the 1230s and 1240s when elephant tusks appeared on the French market in significant numbers (Plates 1 and 4).\(^2\) The cause of the influx of elephant ivory in France in the mid-thirteenth century was due to complex networks of political and mercantile relationships stretching from the interior of southeast Africa, through the Indian Ocean, via the Red Sea, into the Mediterranean and finally to northern Europe. This web of intercultural relations, although explored in detail for other periods,\(^3\)

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2. For a detailed discussion of the dating of the “Soissons” group, see Chapter 3.

has not been charted for the thirteenth century. Neither has a tangible explanation for the rather sudden increase in ivory availability around 1240 been offered.

The first chapter of this study of a particular group of ivories, the “Soissons” group, therefore, begins with a description of the biological characteristics of elephants and their tusks, including their natural habitats. After delineating the geographical domain of the animals, I move towards an exploration of the trade routes and relationships that brought ivory from the interior of southeast Africa to northern Europe. This global journey will be broken into two trajectories. First the travels from the Swahili coast of eastern Africa, into the Indian Ocean, the Red Sea and finally to Egypt will be followed. From Egypt, at the edge of the Mediterranean, the second portion of the trip will be examined, especially the new Atlantic route through the Straits of Gibraltar.

Charting the voyage across the globe highlights the accumulation of costs that affected the final price of the tusks once they arrived in the North: the actual price of ivories in the mid-thirteenth century can be estimated based on a few precious records from inventories and archives. The evidence for the price of ivory in northern Europe will be analyzed in the fourth section of this chapter. The impact of the newly available material on patronage, guild structures, and workshop practice concludes the examination of the material culture from which the “Soissons” ivories emerged.

1. The Elephant and the Morphology of Ivory

Ivory tusks are the elongated upper incisors of various species of elephants, composed of a collagen-infused material called dentine.\(^4\) The ivory used in thirteenth-century France was from the African Savannah elephant, *Loxodonta africana africana*, and not from the smaller African forest elephant, *Loxodonta africana cyclotis*, nor from the Asian elephant from the Indian subcontinent, *Elephas maximus*.\(^5\) The identification of the species is based on the enormous size of the ivories available in France: many pieces are over 11 cm in diameter, which is the maximum size of Indian tusks, and thus offers a threshold measurement by which ivories can be tentatively localized.\(^6\) African forest

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\(^6\) Cutler, *Craft of Ivory*, 27–29, convincingly dismisses the two traditional arguments against the 11 cm guideline for determining African versus Indian ivory. First it has been argued that tusks over 11 cm in diameter may in fact be preserved mammoth tusks (the last members of the mammoth genus died out 4,500 years ago) and not African ivory. There is no evidence for trade in mammoth tusks in the ancient or medieval world, so this objection is pure fantasy. (For the differentiation between mammoth and elephant tusks, see note 12). Second, several medieval treatises—for example Theophilus—suggest methods for softening ivory and bone to bend and model it. This procedure, however, is only effective with thin veneering approximately 1 mm thick, as modern scientific attempts have replicated. Kenneth D. S. Lapatin, “Pheidias ἔλεφαντομορφός,” *American Journal of Archaeology* 101 (1997): 663–682. I thank Anthony Cutler for bringing this reference to my attention. See also Anthony Cutler, “The Making of the Justinian Diptychs,” *Byzantium* 54 (1984): 81.

A recent experiment analyzing elephantine DNA in historical ivories to ascertain whether it is of Asian (*Elephas maximus*) or African (*Loxodonta africana*) origin was conducted by Anthony Cutler and Anders Götherström. The Gothic statuette tested, an Apostle from the Metropolitan Museum of Art (17.190.196), showed polymorphisms that led the authors to conclude the ivory was Asian. Given, however, the extremely small sample size of one statuette, the experimental nature of the protocol, the unknown provenance of the statuette under question, and the small number of polymorphic sites assayed (four, two of which were fixed in both species), this data will not seriously inflect the following study. It remains, however, a possibility that a small amount of Asian ivory did join the African ivory imported en mass to Europe in the thirteenth century. See also note 63 below. Anthony Cutler and Anders Götherström, “African or Asian? DNA Analysis of Byzantine and Western Medieval Ivories,” in *Elfenbein und Artenschutz/Ivory and Species Conservation. Proceedings of INCENTIVS – Meetings (2004-2007)* (Bonn: Bundesamt für Naturschutz, 2008), 73–80.
elephant ivory is generally thinner and straighter than the Savannah elephant ivory.  

In the Late Antique period there was a third species or subspecies of African elephant in North Africa. This population, however, was extinct probably by the late sixth century as a result of the demands of both the ivory trade and the elephant’s role as a war machine both in and out of the amphitheatre. 

The tusks of the African Savannah elephant can measure up to 3.75 m in length and can weigh up to 100 kg. Although the average weight of an African elephant tusk today is between 20–45 kg, the average historical weight was heavier, perhaps 45–60 kg. Elephantine tusks are composed of three distinct tissues: dentine, cementum (husk

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7 Because the establishment of the African forest elephant as a separate species is relatively recent, data are not available as to the normal perimeters of the forest elephant’s tusks.


9 The largest recorded weight and measurement of an African elephant tusk is 102.7 kg and 3.26 m. Shoshani, “The African Elephant and its Environment,” 48. See also *The Carver’s Art*, 1. Al’Mas’udi (896–956) lauded the enormous elephants tusks—up to 150 kg (!) each—to be found on the eastern coast of Africa. This weight, however, should be understood as a literary hyperbole. Al’Mas’udi, *Les Prairies d’Or*, trans. Barbier de Meynard and Pavet de Courteille, ed. Charles Pellat, 5 vols. (Paris, Société Asiatique, 1962), vol. 1, 7–9.

10 The current average weight cannot be seen as representative of the historical average weight as poaching has been shown to have decreased significantly the average weight of tusks in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. See *The African Elephant* (Nairobi: United Nations Environment Programme, 1989), 4–8. The primary reason that average tusk weights have declined so drastically is that elephant populations are not allowed to mature and poachers take increasingly younger animals. Ahmed (d. 1974), a Kenyan bull elephant who managed to live to the respectable age of fifty-five and died of natural causes, displayed tusks that weighed 67 kg and were 3.25 m long. Assuming that Ahmed was genetically well endowed, 60 kg seems like a reasonable average for tusks when elephants are allowed to mature fully. See Shoshani, “The African Elephant and its Environment,” 48.

Chau Ju-Kua (a.k.a. Zhao Rugua), a superintendent of maritime trade during the Chinese Song dynasty (960–1279), wrote *Description of the Barbarous People* (*Zhufan zhi*) in 1226. In this text he compiled older evidence and added new observations from returning sailors. He noted that elephant tusks from Arab traders (which, as discussed below, ultimately came from East Africa) were better than the more local Asian ivory. The Arab tusks are “straight and of a clear white color and show a pattern of delicate streaks,” and weigh from fifty to a hundred catties. The pre-colonial (before 1858) Chinese mercantile catty weighed 601.1 grams, making the tusks approximately 30–60 kg. See Friedrich Hirth and W. W. Rockhill, ed. and trans., *Chau Ju-Kua: His Work on the Chinese and Arab Trade in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries, entitled Chu-fan-chi (Description of the Barbarous Peoples)* (St. Petersburg: Printing Office of the Imperial Academy of Sciences, 1911. Reprint Taipei: Literature House, Ltd., 1965), 232; and Horace Doursther, *Dictionnaire universel des poids et mesures anciens et modernes* (Brussels: M. Hayez, Imprimeur de l’Académie Royal, 1840), 92–93.
or bark) and the pulp cavity and nerve canal (Fig. 1–1).

The pulp and cementum comprise about 40% of the mass of the tusk, and the remaining 60% is dentine. The tusk grows outwards from the inner pulp cavity, and therefore the newest and softest material—that most conducive for carving—is directly adjacent to the pulp cavity while the oldest and driest material is located at the tip and the outer edges of the tusk. This yearly growth pattern yields an elliptical pattern of concentric arcs, a diagnostic characteristic of elephant ivory. The amount of growth, dependent largely on nutrition, averages 17 cm a year for African Savannah elephants. The distinctive delicate diagonal grid pattern or “engine turning” of the ivory is due to the physiology of the tusk: protein tubules or canaliculi radiate outwards from the pulp and nerve canal to bring nourishment to the dentine. The angular trajectory of the tubules gives elephant ivory, versus walrus and other types of tusks, its characteristic grain (Fig. 1–2).

2. The Trade Routes: Africa, the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea

The long and arduous journey that brought elephant tusks from their point of origin in eastern Africa to the markets of northern France augmented the price and the prestige of ivory. The following discussion focuses on minute elements of this journey,

11 Cutler, Craft of Ivory, 1–7; The Carver’s Art, 1–2.
12 Cutler, Craft of Ivory, 3.
13 Cutler, Craft of Ivory, 7. The concentric arcs, otherwise known as Schreger lines, are further used today to distinguish mammoth from elephant ivory. If the angle between Schreger lines is greater than 115 degrees this indicates elephant ivory and if they are less than 90 degrees the material is mammoth ivory. Edgard O. Espinoa and Mary-Jacque Mann, Identification Guide for Ivory and Ivory Substitutes (Washington, DC: World Wildlife Fund, 1991), 10–11.
16 Cutler, Craft of Ivory, 7; The Carver’s Art, 1–2; Espinoa and Mann, Identification Guide for Ivory, 9. The engine turning pattern is unique to Proboscidea species, therefore walrus, pig, and hippopotamus tusks lack this feature. See also Jeheskel Shoshani, ed., Elephants (New York: Checkmark Books, 2000), 71.
details that were not accessible to the original audiences of the objects carved from these tusks. The information presented here, therefore, could not have informed the original reception and appreciation of the ivory diptychs and triptychs in the “Soissons” group. The general sense of rareness and exceptionality of ivory, however, did influence the medieval audience’s response to ivory and the interpretation of its significance. The most prominent and widely available textual source in the Middle Ages that discusses ivory is the Bible, which supplemented the dim conception of the actual trade routes.

For the most part, the biblical citations are poetic evocations of ivory as one of many luxurious materials. Two references, however, offer a more concrete idea of the provenance of the material. Ezekiel describes the vigorous trading activity of Tyre and relates it to the city’s inevitable apocalyptic fate. One trading partner is the Dedan, identified by modern scholars as the city of Rhodes: “The men of Dedan were thy merchants: many islands were the traffic of thy hand, they exchanged for thy price teeth of ivory and ebony.” Furthermore, the court of King Solomon also had an abundant supply of ivory—recall Solomon’s ivory throne—that was imported from Tharis (or Tarshish in modern translations), which is either Tarsus or Carthage according to Augustine. Placed within the context of foreign trade in luxurious materials, even if the exact lands were never precisely identified in the Middle Ages, these passages create an indelible aura of international, foreign splendor of which ivory as a material is an

17 Ezekiel 27:15. “Filii Dadan negotiatores tui insulae multae negotiatio manus tuae dentes eburneos et hebeninos commutaverunt in pretio tuo.”
18 2 Chronicles 9: 21. “For the king’s ships went to Tharis with the servants of Hiram, once in three years: and they brought thence gold and silver, and ivory, and apes and peacocks.” (Siquidem naves regis ibant in Tharsis cum servis Hiram semel in annis tribus et deferebant inde aurum et argentum et ebur et simias et pavos.) Augustine provides this explanation in the Enarratione in Psalmos XLVII, Migne PL 36.536.
essential part. These biblical texts reinforced the foreign nature of ivory and emphasized its far-off provenance.

A second exegetical tradition is slightly more fantastic: based on Genesis 2:10–14,19 it was suggested that imported luxury and aromatic goods actually originated in the earthly paradise and flowed out into the world on the four rivers, one of which, the “Geon,” was identified with the Nile in the first century.20 Jean de Joinville (1224–1317), biographer of Louis IX and chronicler of the Crusades, reiterated this interpretation in his

*Histoire de Saint Louis* (1309):

Before this river enters Egypt, the people who usually do such work cast their nets of an evening into the water and let them lie outspread. When morning comes, they find in their nets such things as are sold by weight and imported into Egypt, as for instance ginger, rhubarb, aloes, and cinnamon. It is said that these things come from the earthly Paradise, for in that heavenly place the wind blows down trees just as it does the dry wood in the forests of our own land, and the dry wood from the trees in Paradise that thus falls into the river is sold to us by the merchants in this country [i.e. Egypt].21

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19 “And a river went out of the place of pleasure to water paradise, which from thence is divided into four heads. The name of the one is Phison: that is it which compasses all the land of Hevilath, where gold grows. And the gold of that land is very good: there is found bdellium, and the onyx stone. And the name of the second river is Gehon: the same is it that compasses all the land of Ethiopia. And the name of the third river is Tigris: the same passes along by the Assyrians. And the fourth river is Euphrates.”


21 “Avant que li fluns entre en Egypte, les gens qui ont acoustumei à ce faire, gientent lour roys desliées parmi le flum au soir; et quant ce vient au matin, si treuvent en lour royz cel avoir de poiz que l’on aporte en ceste terre, c’est à savoir gingimbre, rubarbe, lignaloece et cinele. Et dit l’on que ces choses viennent de Paradis terrester; que li venz abat des arbres qui sont en Paradis, aussi comme li venz abat en la forest en cest pais le bois sec; et ce qui vheit dou bois sec ou flum, nous vendent li marcheant en ce paiz. L’yaue dou flum est de tel nature, que quant nous la pendiens (en poz de terre blans que l’en fait ou paiz) aus cordes de nos paveillons, l’yaue devenoit ou chaut dou jour aussi froide comme de fonteinne.” Jean de Joinville,
As will be discussed below, ivory was indeed one of the goods sold by weight, imported into Egypt, and sold to foreign merchants. Such a paradisiacal origin myth, current in the thirteenth century, undoubtedly cast its shadowy mystique on the origin of ivory, thereby enhancing its prestige in the western European market. Therefore, although neither the thirteenth-century French customer seeking an ivory diptych nor the artisan carving a tusk into an end product were aware of the details revealed in the following discussion, they were nevertheless sensitive to the rarity and perhaps even the exotic nature of the medium, an appreciation colored by biblical texts and mythical origins in the gardens of earthly paradise.

The actual and much more circuitous route that brought ivory from the eastern coast of Africa, to northern France inevitably contributed to its final cost (Map 1–1), limiting the buyers and owners of ivory to the upper echelons of society. The economic axiom that cost is regulated by supply and demand illustrates how the price of ivory, and therefore its availability to various sections of society, was determined by the trade routes that carried elephant tusks 16,000 km over land and sea to the markets of France. Furthermore, understanding the path that ivory took to reach France through three continents, three oceans and innumerable countries underlines the political and commercial interconnectedness of the global economies in the thirteenth century.

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In the ancient and medieval worlds, the nucleus of the ivory trade was the eastern coast of Africa, an area that capitalized on its ideal position with regard to the Indian Ocean monsoon-driven trade routes (Map 1–2). The dominant participants in the international trade routes were the ancestors of the Swahili, an African society with a mercantile economy. The Swahili were one of many varied but interdependent groups who occupied a narrow strip of land along the eastern African coast from Mogadishu to Kilwa, approximately 10 km wide and 2,400 km long. The *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea*, written by an anonymous Greek merchant sailor who recorded the naval trading routes of the first century A.D., is the earliest text recording the ancestors of the Swahili on the east coast of Africa. Throughout the Middle Ages, the ancestors of the Swahili filled the cultural niche of the savvy urban businessmen who orchestrated the redistribution of

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24 The monsoon winds and currents of the Indian Ocean are seasonal and reverse their direction every six months: December to March the prevailing wind is northeasterly, leading from the African coast to the Persian Gulf and the western coast of India; from April to November it is southwesterly, enabling the return trip; Philip D. Curtin et al., *African History* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1978), 153.

25 Swahili is a northeastern Bantu language whose vocabulary is characterized by many loan words from Arabic and other foreign tongues. The peoples who speak this language also share an urban, mercantile, literate and Islamic history. Although some scholars object to the use of the linguistic term Swahili to designate the ancestors of the modern inhabitants of the East African coastal regions, the lack of an alternative necessitates its use. Graham Connah, *African Civilizations: Pre-colonial Cities and States in Tropical Africa, an Archaeological Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 151–52.

Because the Swahili practice Islam, in the past it had been assumed that the society and the people were transplanted from the Arabian Peninsula. Mark Horton and others have recently proved, based on continuities in the archaeological record, that the early indigenous African cultures modified their behavior over centuries to optimize their position as trade partners. The adoption of the religion of their main business contacts was just one means of accomplishing this end. The Swahili’s hybrid culture was a result of their occupation of a liminal space between the primarily Islamic Indian Ocean and indigenous African cultures. See Mark Horton, *Shanga: The Archaeology of a Muslim Trading Community on the Coast of East Africa* (London: The British Institute in East Africa, 1996), 1–4. The Swahili still populate the East African coast today and, although they share linguistic and cultural ties, they are distributed across four African countries, southern Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania and Mozambique, as well as on the off-shore islands of this stretch of coast: Pemba, Zanzibar, Mafia, the Comoro islands and northern Madagascar.


27 Although the *Periplus* is widely accepted as evidence in the scholarship for the presence of the Proto-Swahili on the coast as early as the first century, no archaeological site of such an early date has been excavated. No site has yet been shown to be earlier than the sixth century, and the majority of excavated centers begin in the eighth or ninth centuries. Horton, *Shanga*, 407.
goods among African and international cultural groups: the traditional model of Africa supplying exotic raw materials and receiving industrial utilitarian commodities in return does not accurately reflect the complex economic and social patterns developed and reinforced by trade relationships on the African continent and across the Indian Ocean. Though modern scholarship on the Swahili tends to differentiate only between prehistoric/pre-colonial and colonial models of international trade, this study strives, when possible, to consider only the specific thirteenth-century status.

There were two significant elephant reservoirs that supplied medieval international demand for ivory: the source closest to the eastern coast was in modern-day Kenya and a second, slightly farther afield, was in southern Mozambique and Zimbabwe (the Zimbabwe plateau and the Limpopo river basin), both of which are now protected wildlife reserves (Map 1–2). Throughout the Middle Ages, Swahili traders developed a variety of mercantile relationships with pastoralists, foragers and agriculturalists with whom they shared the coastal lands. The pastoralists, foragers and agriculturalists extended their territory into the adjacent river valleys and plains that had access to the elephant populations. No trade, however, was unilateral. Interdependent groups supported one another with commodities that complemented their subsistence structures. Foragers exchanged elephant tusks and other products (honey, wax, large cat skins, rhinoceros horns, etc.) with Swahili merchants for shells and items manufactured by Swahili artisans specifically for inland trade, including glass beads, metal knives,

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28 For a detailed map of contemporary African wildlife reserves see Karl Gröning, Elephants: A Cultural and Natural History (Cologne: Königmann, 1999), 463.
29 Cf. Horton, “The Swahili Corridor,” 92; here Horton insinuates that trading networks were simple and unilateral: i.e., foragers traded with pastoralists, pastoralists with agriculturalists, and agriculturalists with Swahili merchants. Not surprisingly, these groups were interdependent and autonomous and would deal with whomever supplied their current needs.
arrowheads, spears and jewelry. In turn, foragers exchanged similar goods with pastoralist and agriculturalist neighbors for dairy and cereal items, respectively, to supplement their diet. Although it seems that this multilateral trade made Swahili merchants competitors with other local groups for the luxury goods, this was only superficially so: the agriculturalists and pastoralists were primarily interested in the luxury goods not for their own consumption, but for use as a trade commodity, so that they could in turn obtain Swahili-manufactured goods (beads, metalwork, cloth, etc.). Moreover, recent scholarship has shown that the Swahili economy contributed more to the local interdependent subsistence structures with its manufacturing sector than by its participation in international trade networks. The Swahili, the cultural group whose niche in East African society was mediating the commercial relationships with foreign merchants, obtained ivory tusks directly from their neighboring cultural groups with whom they participated in vigorous trade. The flourishing local trade between the coast

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31 Pastoralists carried out little agricultural cultivation and traded their cattle, sheep and goats with their agricultural neighbors for grain and cloth. Groups who specialized in agriculture focused on rice, plantains, millet and sorghum. Many agriculturalists supplemented their own diets with hunted animals, and therefore obtained their own supply of luxury materials for trade with Swahili merchants in exchange for beads, textiles and iron tools. Kusimba, *The Rise and Fall of Swahili States*, 83.

Some sources suggest that foragers were required to give one of every two tusks found to pastoralist “overlords” as protection payments. See C. W. Hobley for the nineteenth-century evidence for this view: “Upon a Visit to Tsavo and the Taita Highlands,” *The Geographical Journal*, 5 (1895): 546; and see Horton, “The Swahili Corridor,” 92 for his unproblematized incorporation of this material into prehistoric cultures. See also Sibel B. Kusimba and Chapurukha M. Kusimba for a critique of the common practice of incorporating modern evidence into the study of pre-colonial Africa: “Comparing Prehistoric and Historic Hunter-Gatherer Mobility in Southern Kenya,” in *East African Archaeology: Foragers, Potters, Smiths and Traders*, ed. C. M. Kusimba and S. B. Kusimba (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 2003), 1–18.
and the interior was a necessary means of redistributing essential goods characteristic to each distinct cultural group—pastoralist, agriculturalist, foragers and the Swahili manufacturing sector. Although the luxury goods were included in this vibrant network, they were not its primary motivation.

The second elephant population, farther south and much farther inland from the Swahili coast, necessitated a more elaborate trading network. The southerly elephant territories in the Zimbabwe plateau and the Limpopo river valley were populated with Bantu-speaking agriculturalists who supplemented their diet through fishing and hunting.33 Between the eleventh to fourteenth centuries the Limpopo river valley was unified as the Kingdom of Mapungubwe, having its capital at Mapungubwe from the mid-eleventh until the late thirteenth century when it moved, due to environmental constraints, to the site of Great Zimbabwe.34 Many sites from this flourishing kingdom, which has left massive stone structures and exquisite gold work, have been excavated and therefore offer a clearer picture of the place of ivory in material culture.35 Excavations at Mapungubwe uncovered extensive remains of raw, unfinished and finished ivory

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33 Kusimba, *The Rise and Fall of Swahili States*, 84.
35 Elizabeth A. Voigt, *Mapungubwe: An Archaeozoological Interpretation of an Iron Age Community* (Pretoria: The Transvaal Museum, 1983). The Mapungubwe culture is also known as the Leopard’s Kopje culture. Three main archaeological sites, in addition to Mapungubwe itself, that contribute to Voigt’s analysis are known as K2, Schroda and Leopard’s Kopje B. See Voigt for a full bibliography.
products. The dominant finished products are ivory armbands, the diameters of which are between 6 cm and 12 cm. Other vestiges include ivory chips—presumably from the removal of the exterior bark from the tusk—a large cross-section of tusk trimmed of its bark, and a large solid tusk tip. The ivory armbands are particularly suited to the morphology of the midsection of the tusk where the nerve canal makes the tusk naturally hollow. Because the number of ivory chips found at Mapungubwe is commensurate with the level of production of armbands, and the tusk tip was not trimmed in any way either, it can be deduced that the Mapungubwe craftsmen first cut the tusks into cross sections and then removed the cementum or bark prior to shaping the armbands. Tusks that continued on through the trade networks to enter the international market were, therefore, shipped unaltered, with the cementum intact. This observation has a direct implication on the ultimate price of ivory, because less of the material purchased at the final destination was suitable for carving. In other words, a certain percentage of the ivory bought in France needed to be trimmed away and discarded before carving of the actual object could begin. As any savvy shopper knows, throwing away a portion of a product bought by weight increases the cost of the material ultimately preserved and enjoyed.

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38 Voigt, *Mapungubwe*, 77–79.
40 A simple example is the buying of bananas. If a pound of bananas costs fifty cents, but I must throw-away half a pound of banana peel to enjoy half a pound of fruit, the fruit itself is actually worth a dollar a pound.
Although a few signs of foreign trade have been uncovered at Mapungubwe and at the slightly later site of Great Zimbabwe, the luxury goods of the region were most likely assembled for trade at seasonal trading posts downriver, closer to the coast.\textsuperscript{41} One such site, Chibuene, was intermittently occupied between the eighth and the thirteenth centuries.\textsuperscript{42} Significant amounts of foreign pottery were found at this site, including Persian glazed wares and Indian plain unglazed vessels, as well as pottery characteristic of such Swahili sites further north on the eastern coast as Kilwa and Manda: these finds attest to a thriving long-distance trade network.\textsuperscript{43} The system worked as follows: the raw goods, predominantly ivory and gold, were transported downstream from Mapungubwe and later Great Zimbabwe by the Bantu speakers of the Limpopo river valley and Zimbabwe plateau to coastal trading sites with natural harbors. Swahili merchants from the mercantile centre’s further north—Mombasa, Mafia, Kilwa, Pemba island, Shanga on Pate Island, Manda, Zanzibar and Mozambique—traveled south along the coast in \textit{mtepe}—the traditional sewn sailing vessels of African teak lashed with coconut-husk rope—that were flexible enough to navigate the shallow, coral-infested waters in the Mozambique channel.\textsuperscript{44} In these boats, Swahili merchants brought a number of commodities to trade with the merchants from the Limpopo valley and Zimbabwe.

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{43} Sinclair, “Chibuene,” 152–53.
\textsuperscript{44} A. H. J. Prins, “The \textit{Mtepe} of Lamu, Mombasa and the Zanzibar Sea,” \textit{Paideuma} 28 (1982): 85–100. The \textit{mtepe} were extremely well suited to navigating shallow coastal waters, and less well adapted for the open sea. The Persian and Arab merchants did not venture this far south down the coast as the southwest monsoon winds and currents stopped at 17 degrees south latitude—midpoint on the Mozambique channel—and therefore different ships and sailing skills were needed to navigate the coastal waters. For the implications of the monsoon on trade patterns, see William Kirk, “The N.E. Monsoon and Some Aspects of African History,” \textit{The Journal of African History} 3 (1962): 263–267; Ross E. Dunn, \textit{The Adventures of Ibn Battuta: A Muslim Traveller of the 14\textsuperscript{th} Century} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 118.
\end{footnotes}
plateau: locally produced goods—such as beads,\textsuperscript{45} cowry shells (used as currency),\textsuperscript{46} local pottery,\textsuperscript{47} cotton and silk textiles,\textsuperscript{48} and salt—\textsuperscript{49} as well as Persian and Chinese pottery and foreign cloth,\textsuperscript{50} beads,\textsuperscript{51} and currency, which they traded for ivory and gold.\textsuperscript{52} No evidence of either of these commodities was found at Chibuene, a fact that strengthens the deduction that tusks were brought to this port town and exchanged for goods without being locally consumed. Swahili merchants loaded the goods back into their \textit{mtepe} and returned up the coast to the urban mercantile centers.

The sophisticated, stratified culture of these Swahili coastal cities resulted from a complex economic system based on a diversification of labor tailored to international trade routes. It is an important fact that although Swahili were united by language and culture, the Swahili cities were never unified as a state or an empire, but rather functioned as independent city-states. Powerful merchant families dominated the social sphere and if there was a king or sultan he was often a merchant himself.\textsuperscript{53} Merchant

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{46} Connah, \textit{African Civilisations}, 157. Connah also suggests locally produced coconut rope and wine that would not have left their trace in the archaeological record.
\item \textsuperscript{47} Sinclair, “Chibuene,” 162–63.
\item \textsuperscript{48} Chittick, \textit{Kilwa}, 238. Numerous spindle whorls were found at Kilwa, attesting to a thriving textile industry throughout its history. Several lightweight examples suggest the more delicate production of silk.
\item \textsuperscript{49} Chittick, “An Early Salt Working Site on the Tanzanian Coast,” 151–53.
\item \textsuperscript{50} Chau Ju-Kua noted that the people of Zanzibar (Ts’ong-pa) characteristically wear “blue foreign cotton stuffs” and that Arab and Southern Indian merchants bring shiploads of white cotton, porcelain, copper and red cotton to trade with the people for ivory and rhinoceros horn. Hirth and Rockhill, \textit{Chau Ju-Kua}, 126.
\item \textsuperscript{52} Because of the longer distance, the trade between the Swahili and Shashe-Limpopo area likely specialized in these luxury goods and was not subsistence based, as was the Swahili’s trade with local neighbors in the north.
\item \textsuperscript{53} Yakut ibn ’Abd Allah (1179–1229), an Arab geographer who composed his \textit{Geographical Dictionary} in the early thirteenth century, wrote of Mogadishu: “They have no kings, but their affairs are regulated by elders according to their customs. When a merchant goes to them, he must stay with one of them who will
\end{itemize}
families acted as corporations, arranging for import, storage, and redistribution of goods as well as orchestrating sensitive financial arrangements necessary for international trade.\textsuperscript{54} Business relationships were closely tied to personal and family allegiances, and when blood kinship was not a possibility (as in international trade) familial ties were forged directly through the marriage of daughters\textsuperscript{55} or established ritually through ceremonies where a foreign merchant was incorporated formally into a clan.\textsuperscript{56} Ibn Battuta, the Tangerine theologian and traveler of the second quarter of the fourteenth century, records such a sponsoring ritual when he landed in Mogadishu:

When a vessel reaches the port, it is met by \textit{sumbuqs}, which are small boats, in each of which are a number of young men, each carrying a covered dish containing food. He presents this to one of the merchants on the ship saying “This is my guest,” and all the other do the same. Each merchant on disembarking goes only to the house of the young man who is his host… The host then sells his goods for him and buys for him, and if anyone buys anything from him at too low a price or sells to him in the absence of his host, the sale is regarded by them as invalid.\textsuperscript{57}

\textsuperscript{55} Middleton, \textit{The World of the Swahili}, 22.
\textsuperscript{56} Middleton, \textit{The World of the Swahili}, 22. Duan Chengshi, a ninth-century Chinese travel writer, recounts that “if Possu (Persian) merchants wish to go into the country, they collect around them several thousand men and present them with strips of cloth. All, whether young or old, draw blood and swear an oath, and only then do they trade their goods;” translated in J. J. L. Duyvendak, \textit{China’s Discovery of Africa} (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1949), 13–14.
\textsuperscript{57} Hamilton A. R. Gibb, trans., \textit{Travels of Ibn Battuta in Asia and Africa, 1325–1354} (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1929), 110–111. It is important to remember that Ibn Battuta only committed his experiences to writing (and at that, through dictation) years after his voyages. His accounts must be approached critically. With the landing in Mogadishu, however, there is no reason to doubt the episode.
Incorporation into a family clan insured the foreign merchant’s security—of his cargo and his person—and also guaranteed the city’s reputation as a safe harbor for commercial activities.

The spread of Islam along the eastern coast of Africa in the ninth and tenth centuries stabilized trading relationships with merchants from the Arabian Peninsula. Sharia law offered an “international” law around the rim of the Indian Ocean, standardizing transactions and creating a common culture that encouraged both trade and consumption.\(^{58}\) Archaeological analysis has revealed that the indigenous populations gradually converted to Islam, evidence that supersedes the previous hypothesis that the Swahili were Arab immigrants to the east coast.\(^{59}\) From at least the early ninth century on Shanga, an island in the Lamu archipelago on the coast of modern Kenya, an elite portion of the society were practicing Muslims—as is demonstrated by the small mosque structure and the locally minted coins bearing Arabic names.\(^{60}\) Each generation thereafter gradually enlarged the mosque, until the first stone structure was built in the early eleventh century.\(^{61}\)

Despite the steady stream of ivory that passed through Swahili cities as attested by numerous historical sources,\(^{62}\) archaeological excavations have unearthed little

\(^{58}\) In no way do I mean to suggest that there was “one” Islamic culture. Shared law, language, and religion, however, did establish a basis of commonality among trading partners that facilitated intercultural communication. Dunn, *The Adventures of Ibn Battuta*, 117. See also K. N. Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean: An Economic History from the Rise of Islam to 1750* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 18–21.


\(^{60}\) Horton, *Shanga*, 421.


\(^{62}\) “The land of Po-pa-li is in the south-western Ocean… The products of this country are ivory and ambergris,” Tuan Ch’eng-Shih (ninth century); in G. S. P. Freeman-Grenville, *The East African coast; select documents from the first to the earlier nineteenth century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), 8. “It is from this country (the land of Zanj) that come elephant tusks weighing fifty pounds and more. They usually go to Oman, and from there are sent to China and India. This is the chief trade route, and if it were not so,
evidence of its presence. Unlike rock crystal, another luxury item from central Africa important to trade routes, for which evidence of its working was found at Shanga, no medieval evidence of ivory working has been found in Swahili cities. The few ivory objects discovered were fully finished and it is possible that they were carved elsewhere, either inland, as is the case with some bangle fragments, or overseas, as is the case with an ivory knife handle and a thirteenth-century gaming piece.

Political and mercantile allegiances of the Swahili coastal people determined the supply of high-quality African ivory to the rest of the world. In the eighth and ninth centuries it was traders from the Persian Gulf, departing from Siraf and Sohar, who dominated the Indian Ocean routes and who were the major commercial partners of the Swahili. Sailors from the Persian Gulf accumulated luxury goods (gold, ivory, ambergris, and tortoise-shells), timber and slaves from the African coast: the latter two were destined for local use and the luxury goods were traded in China for oriental spices to satisfy the extravagant tastes of the Abbasid Caliphate. The Zanj slave rebellion of

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63 Rock crystal beads were found at Shanga from eleventh-century levels as well as waste lumps. The beads were probably made from “cut offs” from larger pieces that were trimmed before being sent to Cairo. Significant enough numbers of waste beads were found to attest to a thriving, if low-level, craft practice. Mark Horton and John M. F. Middleton, The Swahili: The Social Landscape of a Mercantile Society (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 80; Horton, Shanga, 332.

64 See also Chau Ju-Kua (1226) at note 10.

65 Horton, Shanga, 414.

66 See also Chau Ju-Kua (1226) at note 10. The highly ornate knife handle, with remains of the iron blade still embedded, was found in the Period I (mid-ninth to eleventh century) deposits of Manda: Chittick, Manda, 218. The dome-shaped gaming piece was found at Kilwa: Chittick, Kilwa, 434 and Plate 165d (Fig.1–3). This can be compared with medieval Egyptian gaming pieces in the British Museum which are also lathe turned and decorated with drill marks (Fig. 1–4): O. M. Dalton, Catalogue of the Ivory Carvings of the Christian Era (London: British Museum, 1909), no. 602.

67 Horton and Middleton, The Swahili, 73–76; Horton, “The Swahili Corridor,” 89. Even though the Far East enjoyed its own supply of ivory from Asian elephants, African ivory was certainly one of the luxury products imported into China, as the Chinese demand for ivory far surpassed the supply the Asian elephant provided (as the tusks are generally smaller on the Asian elephant and only the males of the species produce tusks). See W. Heyd, Histoire du Commerce du Levant au Moyen Âge, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Otto
868–883—during which enslaved Africans on the Arabian Peninsula forcefully liberated themselves and formed armies that sacked and pillaged southern Iraq and laid siege to Baghdad in 883 before they were slaughtered by mercenaries hired by the Abbasid Caliphate—deterred trade between the Persian Gulf and the eastern African coast in the late ninth and tenth centuries. A diminished, although not altogether discontinued, trade with the Persian Gulf created a vacuum where another powerful trading partner might enter.

A new market developed for the riches of East Africa with the founding of the Fatimid Caliphate in Northern Africa and Egypt. Although only a relatively short distance apart geographically, treacherous waterways had hitherto discouraged intense trade between Egypt and the eastern coast of Africa. Indian Ocean monsoon winds strongly favored a clockwise route from the Swahili coast to Persia and India rather than a counter-clockwise entry into the Red Sea (Maps 1–1 and 1–3). Furthermore, the Red Sea itself was extremely dangerous, plaguing sailors with irregular currents, dangerous coral reefs and shoals (shallow sand banks difficult to see while navigating), and whose shores offer only the coastal barrenness of the Saharan-Arabian desert for much of the

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Harrassowitz, 1923), vol. 2, 629–30. The importance of ivory imports to China is further attested to by the government’s control of its importation and sale. Ivory was subjected to clearance duties three times the average. Chu Yu, from the P’ing-chou k’o-t’an (1118–19) as translated by Hirth and Rockhill, Chau Ju-Kua, 21.

The Shiite Fatimid Caliphate was founded in the Maghrib in 909 (proclaimed in 910), with their capital at first in Qayrawan (in modern-day Tunisia). In 969, after having conquered Egypt, Cairo was established as the dynasty’s capital. The Fatimids ruled northern Africa, Egypt and many parts of the Levant until 1171, when Saladin, the last of the wazirs, ended the dynasty. For a detailed summary of Fatimid history, see Paul E. Walker, *Exploring an Islamic Empire: Fatimid History and Its Sources* (London: The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2002), 17–90.

route. Archaeological evidence argues, nevertheless, that direct and intense trade did occur between the Fatimid and the Swahili traders of eastern Africa during the tenth and eleventh centuries. Fatimid dinars were found in the Mtambwe hoard from the Swahili coast, dating at the latest to 1066. Furthermore, a new type of building construction common in Red Sea settlements, using carved and dried *Porites* coral, is recorded along the East African coast as early as 920, suggesting cultural as well as economic ties between the two regions. Fatimid merchants were mainly interested in the Swahili’s supply of gold, ivory and rock crystal, the latter renowned for its exceptional levels of clarity, but whose geological supply was exhausted around the mid-eleventh century. The Fatimid access to East African ivory contributed not only to a flourishing of Egyptian ivory carving in the tenth and eleventh centuries, but also, as Egypt was the gateway to the Mediterranean, to a similar blossoming in Byzantium, the Ottonian Empire, Norman Sicily and Al-Andalus.

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The steadiness of the trade routes eventually succumbed to the political volatility of the era: the Fatimid Kingdom was significantly weakened in 1060s when the northwestern provinces seceded to become their own Sunni state and Egypt experienced what are known as the “Days of Trouble.” After a century of control by military wazirs, the dynasty ended in 1171 when the last wazir, Saladin, retained control after the last Caliph’s death. The lack of political stability in the eleventh and twelfth centuries diminished, but did not extinguish, international trade. This disruption affected the availability of ivory in Europe in the late eleventh and twelfth centuries, causing the often-noted scarcity of elephant tusks throughout this period. What changed in the mid-thirteenth century to encourage the shipping of ivory to northern Europe in increasingly large numbers? Part of the answer lies in the shorter relay system of trade that developed during the period of instability in Egypt. It is this system that remained in place throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries when ivory once again streamed into the ports of northern Europe.

The mercantile system soon adapted to the political instability at the end of the Fatimid period by developing shorter interconnecting regional trade networks to replace the long uni-directional ocean voyages (Map 1–3). This new system encouraged the development of trading hubs, and the city of Aden, in modern-day Yemen, which

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77 Horton and Middleton, *The Swahili*, 80; for the period of instability caused by economic decline, famine, plague and political disorder in Fatimid Egypt and the resulting seizure of power by military factions of the government, see Walker, *Exploring an Islamic Empire*, 62–68.
78 Walker, *Exploring an Islamic Empire*, 84–90.
79 Horton and Middleton, *The Swahili*, 80. Substantial evidence for this fact is offered by the Cairo Geniza, which has preserved a large assortment of documents relevant to the Indian Ocean trade routes. Most interesting is that in this period, the sending and receiving addresses of letters reflects this network quite well: no letter goes from Egypt to India, instead only from Egypt to Arabia, or Arabia to India. The same goes for the opposite direction: all letters from northwestern Africa, Spain and the Mediterranean stop in Egypt and none are addressed to further on in the Indian Ocean. See S. D. Goitein, “Letters and Documents on the India Trade in Medieval Times,” in *Studies in Islamic History and Institutions* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1966), 333.
dominated the narrows of Bab al-Mandeb—the entrance to the Red Sea—rose to unprecedented prominence as an entrepôt for African, Indian and Persian merchants. In response to changing realities of the international trade networks, the Swahili took a more active role in the Indian Ocean trade, attested to in the thirteenth century by the presence of *ntepe* in the ports of Aden that had sailed from Mogadishu, Kilwa and Madagascar. At the same time, foreign ships still plied the eastern coast of Africa, as attested by Ibn Battuta who traveled from Aden to Mogadishu and then Kilwa on an Arab *dhaw*. The main goods Aden merchants brought to East Africa were luxury household items for coastal consumption—Chinese celadon pottery, silk, cotton, books, paper, glassware, and the distinctive black-on-yellow pottery. The quantity of the latter in the material record of East African cities, especially during the years 1250–1350, attests to increased contact with the southern Arabian peninsula.

Aden, a well-fortified and precariously perched port city, was extensively described in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries by Arab travelers and traders who docked at its harbors. The picture they paint is of a thriving mercantile centre with large

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80 Ibn Al-Majawir, writing in 1232–33, described the sailing prowess of the Swahili: “From Aden to Mogadishu is one *mawsim* (a voyage not needing landfall), from Mogadishu to Kilwa is a second *mawsim*, and from Kilwa to Madagascar is a third *mawsim*. This people (Swahili?) used to combine the three *mawsims* into one. A boat made its way from Madagascar to Aden (directly) by this route in the year 626 (1228–1229); it sailed from Madagascar aiming for Kilwa but made its landfall at Aden.” Translation in J. Spencer Trimingham, “The Arab Geographers and the East African Coast,” in *East Africa and the Orient: Cultural Syntheses in Pre-Colonial Times*, ed. H. Neville Chittick and Robert I. Rotberg (New York: Africana Publishing Company, 1975), 125.


84 The most comprehensive recent account of Aden as a mercantile centre, consulting all of the primary sources, is: Roxani Eleni Margariti, *Aden and the Indian Ocean Trade: 150 Years in the Life of a Medieval Arabian Port* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007).
quarters of the city populated by Indian, Chinese and Southeast Asian merchants. Many
documents chronicle the flourishing merchant economy of Aden: most notably
government records of import and export taxes, which will be analyzed below. These
enumerate the spices and luxury goods imported from the East and available for sale in
the city’s markets. In the twelfth century, Al-Idrisi noted specifically that elephant tusks
were one of the many commodities available in Aden. The thirteenth-century Persian
merchant and travel writer Ahmad Ibn al-Mugawir, who visited Yemen between 1213
and 1230, recounts in great detail the procedure for an arriving merchant vessel. The ship
was intercepted in the harbor by small port boats carrying custom officials who boarded
the vessels, recording the incoming merchandise for taxation purposes and registering the
merchants and sailors for the extent of their visit. This process could take as long as three
days, although the crew and traders were allowed to disembark at the end of the first
day. As many as five different taxes were levied on imported goods, although al-
Mugawir did note that goods destined for re-export were exempt from these taxes. The

85 Muhammad al-Idrisi, an Arab geographer and cartographer in the Sicilian court of Roger II (1099–
1165), records these foreign presences in the South Arabian city. Pierre-Amédée Jaubert, trans., La
86 “The city of Aden is small but renowned for its seaport, from where leaves ships destined for Pakistan,
India and China. Merchandise is brought from this last country such as iron, saber blades from Damascus,
shagreen leather [highly grained leather from donkeys, horses or the rump of a mule], musk, aloes woods,
horse saddles, earthenware jars, pepper—fragrant and non-fragrant, coconuts, hernout [a type of perfumed
seed], cardamom, cinnamon, galanga, mace, myrobolans [“Indian gooseberries,” an edible fruit of a palm
tree], ebony, tortoise-shell, camphor, nutmeg, cloves, cubeb pepper [a peppercorn from the isle of Java,
similar to black pepper], various plant clothes and tissues [cottons and linens] and also rich and velveteen
clothes, teeth of elephants [ivory], tin, rotang palms, and other reeds, as well as the major part of bitter
aloes destined for commerce.” My translation from the French, La Géographie d’Edrisi, I,51. It must be
remembered that Al’Idrisi’s confusion about the provenance of various commodities (that the ivory comes
from China) stemmed from the fact that he did not travel himself, but was a geographer at the Norman
Sicilian Court who composed his text based on existing sources.
and Taxes,” in Studies in the Medieval History of the Yemen and South Arabia, Variorum Collected Studies
al’Daftar al-Muzaffari, a book of custom regulations written under the second Rasulid sultan circa 1295, recorded six different types of ivory that were taxed. Ivory was differentiated based on destination: India, Egypt, the Dahlak archipelago off the Eritrean coast in the Red Sea, and inland Yemen. The ivory going to India was measured and charged based on the bahar, which equaled 217.8 kg, and was charged 6 ¼ dinar 4 fils. Shipments to other destinations were assessed by the 20 ratl, which equaled 16.25 kg, and were charged between 3 5/6 dinar and 1 15/24 dinar 2 fils per 20 ratl depending on export location. The size of the Indian shipment, one bahar, equals four to seven average-sized tusks (30–60 kg), but the small size of the unit of measure for ivory bound for Egypt and the Red Sea demands explanation. Either the tusks were cut into standardized sections 20 ratl each—an extremely unlikely option as many ivory objects

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commodity</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Provenance or Destination</th>
<th>Total tax</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ivory (‘aj hall)</td>
<td>bahar</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>6 ¼ dinar 4 fils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivory (‘aj daqq)</td>
<td>bahar</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>6 dinar 4 fils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivory (‘aj)</td>
<td>20 ratl</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>3 5/6 dinar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivory (‘aj)</td>
<td>20 ratl</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>3 7/8 dinar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivory (‘aj)</td>
<td>20 ratl</td>
<td>Dahlak</td>
<td>2 13/24 dinar 1 fils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivory (‘aj)</td>
<td>20 ratl</td>
<td>‘Athhar</td>
<td>1 13/24 dinar 2 fils</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 dinar = gold coin weighing approximately 4.25 g
1 qirat = silver coin (2/3 silver 1/3 copper) weighing approximately 0.2 gr
1 fils = copper coin

90 This ivory was undoubtedly also ultimately destined for Egypt. The Geniza documents record a shipment of spices that stopped in Badi’, Dahlak, Nizala, Suwakin, and finally in ‘Aydhab. See Margariti, 136.

91 The bahar—a popular unit of measure in the Indian Ocean trade routes—is difficult to quantify as there were different bahar for each type of good. A sixteenth-century Portuguese trading treatise records that the bahar for cinnamon, fine aloe wood, ivory, sandalwood, Chinese camphor, walrus teeth, wax, sulphur, and tin weighed 217.8 kg. See Walther Hinz, Islamische Masse und Gewichte: Umgerechnet ins Metrische System (Leiden: Brill, 1955), 8–9.

92 The ratl is also difficult to estimate, but this time because each centre maintained a different standard. The Arabian standard in the thirteenth century was 1 ratl = 812.5 g; whereas in Egypt the ratl was almost half the weight at 437.5 g. Hinz was able to ascertain the weight of the ratl based on extant archaeological standard weights for each geographical region. Naturally, I have used the Arabian Peninsula standard in my calculation. See Hinz, Islamische Masse und Gewichte, 28–29.

93 See above, page 4 and note 10.
from this period are clearly fashioned from full or almost full tusks⁹⁴—or 20 ratl was simply the basic unit from which the taxes for the actual weight of the shipment were calculated.⁹⁵ The larger unit of measure (bahr versus ratl), however, does imply that the volume of trade with India far surpassed that with the Red Sea, a fact also reflected in the relative amount of taxes. Tariffs levied on ivory bound for India were ten times less than that destined for the Red Sea trade. The low taxes indicate both a government initiative to stimulate the more profitable eastward-bound Indian trading routes and reflect the larger market for ivory in the East.⁹⁶

The perceived value of ivory can be determined through a comparison of the Rasulid taxes levied on ivory versus those imposed on other commodities, although, as has already been observed, the taxes can vary dramatically depending on the goods’ destination.⁹⁷ The amount of tax levied on ivory marks it as a luxury material: ivory was

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⁹⁴ The extremely large Virgin and Child at the Musée Cluny, Paris (Cl. 1954), is a perfect example. She stands at over a half meter tall (52 cm) and the base is 16.5 cm in diameter (Fig. 1–6). This size and girth must represent at least half or more of a good-sized tusk (Fig. 1–7). There were undoubtedly some smaller pieces of tusks available at market as deduced from the archaeological finds at Mapungubwe.

⁹⁵ Simple arithmetic equations such as this are often discussed in mercantile manuals, such as Pegolotti (Evans, xlv–l) and an early fourteenth-century Venetian manuscript, the Zibaldone da Canal. John E. Dotson, intro. and trans., Merchant Culture in Fourteenth-Century Venice: the Zibaldone da Canal (Binghamton, NY: Medieval & Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1994), 31–42.

⁹⁶ See note 68 for the consumption of ivory in India and China.

⁹⁷ See note 68 for the consumption of ivory in India and China.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commodity</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Destination</th>
<th>Total tax</th>
<th>Tax dinar/kg</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dates</td>
<td>1 bahar</td>
<td>Shahr, Kish</td>
<td>2 qirat 2 fils</td>
<td>0.00086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sili Cinnamon</td>
<td>1 bahar</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>2 dinar</td>
<td>0.0092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ginger</td>
<td>1 bahar</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>3 dinar 5 qirat 4 fils</td>
<td>0.015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cinnamon</td>
<td>1 bahar</td>
<td>Malabar</td>
<td>3 7/12 dinar 3 fils</td>
<td>0.016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pepper</td>
<td>1 bahar</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>8 5/6 dinar</td>
<td>0.041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cloves</td>
<td>10 mann</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>15 dinar 2 qirat 2 fils</td>
<td>1.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saffron</td>
<td>1 mann</td>
<td>Kish</td>
<td>1 5/6 dinar 4 fils</td>
<td>2.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aromatics and medicinal—consumable</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Frankincense</td>
<td>1 bahar</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 7/8 dinar 2 fils</td>
<td>0.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dragon’s Blood</td>
<td>1 bahar</td>
<td>Abyssinia</td>
<td>7 dinar 3 fils</td>
<td>0.032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camphor</td>
<td>1 mann</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>16 13/24 dinar</td>
<td>20.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-consumable materials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ebony</td>
<td>10 bahar</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>6 1/6 dinar 1 qirat</td>
<td>0.003</td>
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</table>
taxed twice as much as the most expensive varieties of cinnamon and ginger, while the
fees charged on the more heavily taxed Red Sea bound ivory compare well with those
imposed on tortoise-shells. The levy on ebony and frankincense was only about one tenth
of the amount exacted from the India-bound ivory, while the taxes imposed on saffron,
cloves and silks are a whole order of magnitude greater.\(^9^8\) Ivory, however, was not
bought, sold, or taxed in small amounts like saffron or cloves, and part of the appeal of
ivory was its size.\(^9^9\) Practically, the expense per tusk of ivory was equal to the purchase
of a *mann* of camphor, the second most expensive commodity on the Rasulid tax list.\(^1^0^0\)
All of these luxury goods are further distinguished from such subsistence commodities as
rice, quinoa, wheat, and dates which are charged only in *qirats* and *fils*, the silver and

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Ivory</em> (<em>aj daqqa</em>)</td>
<td>bahar</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>6 dinar 4 fils</td>
<td>0.029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ivory</em> (<em>aj</em>)</td>
<td>20 ratl</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>3 5/6 dinar</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Tortoise-shell</em></td>
<td>10 mann</td>
<td>India, Kish</td>
<td>2 1/3 dinar 2 fils</td>
<td>0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Silk textiles</em></td>
<td>10 mann</td>
<td>India, Kish</td>
<td>13 3/4 dinar 5 qirat 3 fils</td>
<td>1.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 dinar = gold coin weighing approximately 4.25 g
1 qirat = silver coin (2/3 silver 1/3 copper) weighing approximately 0.2 g
1 fils = copper coin

For full chart, see al-Shamrookh, “The Commerce and Trade of the Rasulids in the Yemen,” App. I.

\(^9^8\) Commodities ranked according to amount of tax levied, calculated as dinar/kg.

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<tr>
<td><em>Cinnamon</em></td>
<td>0.016</td>
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\textbf{Indian ivory} 0.029

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<tr>
<td><em>Dragon’s Blood</em></td>
<td>0.032</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Pepper</em></td>
<td>0.041</td>
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\textbf{Red Sea ivory} 0.24

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<td>1.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Cloves</em></td>
<td>1.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Saffron</em></td>
<td>2.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Camphor</em></td>
<td>20.35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^9^9\) Chau Ju-Kua prefers the larger tusks from the *Ta-shi* (Arabs) rather than the smaller tusks that come
from closer to home. Friedrich and Rockhill, \textit{Chau Ju-Kua}, 232.

\(^1^0^0\) One tusk of 30–60 kg would be charged 0.87–1.74 dinar for export to India, and 7.2–14.4 dinar for
export to the Red Sea. The most highly taxed commodity on the Rasulid tax list is, by several orders of
magnitude, horses, which are charged 75 1/2 dinar for export and 50 dinar for import.
copper currency of much lower value. Ivory, whether destined for India or the Red Sea, was considered a high-end and expensive luxury in thirteenth-century Aden.

As an entrepôt, Aden’s location was necessary as well as strategic (Map 1–3). The ocean-going dhow and mtepe were unsuitable for the dangerously shallow waters of the Red Sea. In Aden, even if the merchandise did not change hands, it certainly did change ships, and the Indian, Persian and African merchants would frequently accompany their goods aboard smaller vessels, such as felucca or sambuk for the voyage to the Egyptian markets.101 Most shipments departed directly from the protected ports of Aden, although this entailed navigating the treacherous narrows of Bab-el-Mandeb. To avoid these perilous straits, some merchants chose to take their goods by overland caravan—though safer, a slower and more costly alternative—to Zabid on the other side of the tip of the Arabian Peninsula.102 Merchant ships entering the Red Sea had as an almost exclusive destination the Nile valley. This necessitated that the goods be unloaded and transferred by caravan through the Nubian Desert to the Nile, where they could be re-loaded onto barges for the last leg of their journey to the markets of Cairo.103 The southern Egyptian town of ’Aydhab seems to have been the most popular Red Sea port, whose location across the sea from Mecca served the additional purpose of a pilgrimage port.104 Historical sources attest to two destinations on the Nile for the caravans leaving

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'Aydhab: Kous (‘Qus) and Aswan. At either outpost, the merchandise and the traders were transferred from the camel caravan onto a river barge that continued its voyage downstream to the markets of Cairo.\(^{105}\)

That Cairo was the main commercial centre of Egypt in the Fatimid (969–1250) and Mamluk (1250–1517) periods is thoroughly attested by the Cairo Geniza documents.\(^{106}\) Early Islamic political powers tended to avoid the founding of governmental and commercial cities on vulnerable coasts, especially those facing the Christian-dominated Mediterranean Sea.\(^{107}\) Accordingly, the Abbasids founded Fustat (later, under the Fatimids, Old Cairo) in A.D. 750 at four to six days travel inland from Alexandria.\(^{108}\) The main advantage Fustat/Cairo had over Alexandria was its prime

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\(^{105}\) In the fourteenth century there is evidence that ivory was given directly to the Mamluk sultan in Cairo as tribute, rather than arrive in Cairo via the “free-market” Indian Ocean trade routes. The Bedouin of Upper Egypt (southern Egypt) were required to send 80 slaves, 800 camels and 30 Qantar of ivory—around 1350 kg or between twenty-two and forty-five tusks—to Cairo to affirm their allegiance to the Mamluks. These caravans traveled overland rather than by sea. From where exactly the ivory came is open to question. The Bedouin could not have hunted the ivory themselves, as the northern African elephant had become extinct in late antiquity; see Cutler, *Craft of Ivory*, 23–24. More likely is that the Bedouin confiscated (or stole) the ivory from caravans traveling through their territory (likely between the Red Sea and the Nile). Sabhi Y. Labib, *Handelsgeschichte Ägyptens im Spätmittelalter* (1171–1517) (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1965), 87–89. Such a large tribute easily affected the international supply of ivory and may, Labib suggests, account for the surfeit of ivory in Europe in the fourteenth century.


\(^{108}\) At different points in the history of Cairo, different neighborhoods assumed administrative and commercial precedence and, *pars pro toto*, the city was known by the name of the dominant quarter. See Wladyslaw Kubiak, *Al-Fustat: Foundations and Early Urban Development* (Cairo: American University in
location on the forks of the Nile. Goods were easily unpacked here from the barges, stockpiled, and sold so that they could continue along one of the tributaries of the Nile to the coast at Damietta, Rosetta, or Alexandria. Alexandria, however, is not directly located on one of the tributaries and the last stage of the journey had to be made either by an artificial canal, which functioned only when the Nile was high, or by caravan.\textsuperscript{109} The trip to Alexandria from Cairo took an average of five or six days.\textsuperscript{110}

Alexandria was the chief port of Egypt, continuing in this role from antiquity, but the main markets, fairs, and financial transactions took place in Cairo where the goods arrived from the Red Sea via the Nile as the Geniza documents amply illustrate.\textsuperscript{111} That is not to say that there were no markets in Alexandria—it was the second largest market in Egypt and it was the primary one for specific commodities, such as raw silk.\textsuperscript{112} The prices, however, were generally significantly higher in Alexandria than they were in Cairo\textsuperscript{113} and supplies of basic items often ran short due to the fact that the main merchant warehouses were in Cairo.\textsuperscript{114} Unfortunately, the Geniza documents do not mention the

\textsuperscript{109} Even though it seems more commodious, several documents from the Geniza warn colleagues and family about the dangers of the canal from pirates, crooked government officials and sickness. It also appears that the canal was not an option for shipping in dry years. In these years, heavy merchandise was sent along the coast by ship to Rosetta where it could easily gain access to the Nile. Goitein, \textit{A Mediterranean Society}, vol. 1, 298–99.

\textsuperscript{110} There was, however, an express postal service, “the flying courier,” which is recorded to have made the round-trip from Cairo to Alexandria in seven days. Goitein, \textit{A Mediterranean Society}, vol. 1, 298–99; Udovitch, “Medieval Alexandria,” 282.


\textsuperscript{112} Udovitch, “Medieval Alexandria,” 280; Goitein, \textit{A Mediterranean Society}, vol. 1, 223.

\textsuperscript{113} Goitein discusses comparative prices of various commodities represented by the Geniza documents in \textit{A Mediterranean Society}, vol.1, 218–29.

\textsuperscript{114} A late eleventh-century merchant in Alexandria writes to a colleague in Fustat: “Please take note that neither pepper, cinnamon, nor ginger are available in Alexandria. If you have any of these commodities then keep them, for the Byzantine merchants are keen solely on them.” Udovitch, “Medieval Alexandria,” 279; Cambridge University Library, T.S. 12, fol. 369v, ll. 9–16. See also Fischel, “The Spice Trade in Mamluk Egypt,” 163.
trade in ivory that undoubtedly flowed through Cairo and Alexandria throughout the Fatimid (909–1141), Ayyubid (1171–1250) and Mamluk (1250–1517) periods. Goitein noted similar lacunae for such major commodities as timber, grains, slaves and beasts of burden,\(^\text{115}\) likely due to the non-statistically representative contents of by the Geniza documents.\(^\text{116}\) Iron, a major import item throughout the Fatimid and Mamluk periods, is similarly not mentioned in the Geniza documents.\(^\text{117}\) If a commodity as important as iron escaped documentation in the Geniza documents, the absence of ivory need not be alarming.

The mercantile handbook written by the fourteenth-century Italian merchant Francesco Pegolotti, suggests a second explanation for why ivory is conspicuously absent from much archival material.\(^\text{118}\) In *La Pratica della Mercatura*, Pegolotti included *denti di liofante* in an annotated list of spices at the end of his document: if elephant tusks were classified under the rubric of spices by the Egyptian merchants represented in the Geniza, then with every mention of “spices,” ivory may have been present along with the ginger, cinnamon and pepper.\(^\text{119}\) This “ivory as spice” argument gains further validity when the

\(^{115}\) Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, vol. 1, 211.

\(^{116}\) Goitein is quite insistent that the Geniza documents are not an “archive” in the traditional sense—they are not the chance survival of a broad range of documents but were preferentially selected from the correspondences of particularly observant Jewish merchants (i.e., those who believed that all texts—because of the possibility that they may contain the name of God—ought to be ritually disposed of, not just sacred texts). Therefore, the lack of any documentation of the ivory trade could simply be a result of the fact that the handful of traders whose records were preserved simply did not participate in this niche market. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, vol. 1, 7–9.

\(^{117}\) Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, vol. 1, 60.


\(^{119}\) Pegolotti, “Nomini di Spezierie,” 293–297. Goitein also notes, in one merchant’s archive of commodities, a category of merchandise that can be loosely labeled as “materials,” which included beads, “pomegranate” strings, coral, cowry shells, lapis lazuli and tortoise-shell. Ivory, therefore, also could have been included in a shipment of “precious materials.” Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, vol.1, 154.

The Venetian trade manual of the second half of the fourteenth century also includes ivory in a list of goods at the end of the document, but the Venetian list is labeled *Cognoscimento de splezie et alter merze* (Recognizing Spices and other Goods). Ivory is described as “Dente de liofante vuol esser grossi e
pharmacological use of ivory is considered: in 1147, Wibald, Abbot of Stavelot, Corvey and Monte Cassino, counseled his friend suffering from a cold to use the remedy *diacalamentis*, a concoction made of garden-variety herbs, which would do just as nicely as the more expensive *diamargariton*, which, he states, is a powdered mixture of pearl, cloves, cinnamon, galanga, aloes, nutmeg, ginger, ivory, and camphor, among other substances.\(^{120}\) The doctor Jean de Saint-Amand (1233–1303) testified to ivory’s continued use as a pharmaceutical in thirteenth-century Paris when he included it among a list of ingredients for remedies.\(^{121}\) The medicinal character of ivory, in the Galenic sense, was noted by Jacques de Vitry in his *Historia Orientalis* (circa 1215) when he explained that ivory was an essentially cold substance, so cold, in fact, that it would extinguish fires.\(^{122}\) Although further evidence is certainly needed before we can confidently conclude that shipments of ivory were disguised under the category of spices, given the close conceptual association of ivory to spices in Pegolotti’s account, in Abbot Wibald’s recipe, in Jean de Saint-Amand’s pharmaceutical treatise and the Galenic


\(^{122}\) “Si sunt de froide nature, dont il avert que li yvoires qui est fais de lor os est frois et blans, car se li yvoires est mis desous et li dras desus, et puis li feus, il n’ardera point, mais par la nature de la froidor de l’yvoire estaint li feus” (These [elephants] are of a cold nature, so it is that the ivories which are made from their bones, are cold and white, so that if the ivories are put below and a cloth above, and if it is put in a fire, it will not burn, but by nature of the coldness of the ivory, it will extinguish the fire). Claude Buridant, ed. and trans. *La Traduction de l’Historia Orientalis de Jacques de Vitry* (Paris: Klinksvieck, 1986), 139. *Historia Orientalis* is the second of three books in the *Historia Hierosolimitana*. For the broad reception this text enjoyed throughout the thirteenth century, see Jessalynn Bird, “The Historia Orientalis of Jacques de Vitry: Visual and Written Commentaries as Evidence of a Text’s Audience, Reception, and Utilization,” *Essays in Medieval Studies* 20 (2003): 56–74.
qualities attributed to ivory by Jacques de Vitry, an interim hypothesis placing ivory under the heading of spices can be advanced.

To summarize thus far, the trade routes that brought ivory to northern France in the thirteenth century began in southeast Africa. The elephant tusks were collected by pastoralist, forager, and agriculturalist groups who exchanged them with each other and with the coastal Swahili for goods to supplement their diet (salt, grains and vegetables), pottery, and for luxury items (beads, imported textiles). In the thirteenth century, Swahili merchants conducted trade at home and in Aden, the mercantile entrepôt between the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea. The Swahili sailors brought their goods (ivory, gold, rock-crystal, tortoise-shell and ambergris) to the world markets in Aden, while also conducting business with foreign merchants at home. In exchange, the Swahili merchants purchased predominantly luxury household items, such as Chinese celadon pottery, silk, cotton, books, paper, glassware and the Yemeni black-on-yellow pottery. Ivory tusks were purchased in Aden by mercantile corporations that specialized in importing eastern items—predominantly spices, aromatics, and textiles—for the Mediterranean-oriented markets in Cairo and Alexandria. Merchandise purchased in Aden was transported by boat to the Red Sea port, ‘Aydhab, where it was taken by caravan to either ‘Qus or Aswan on the Nile. From there, it was a short journey to Cairo by barge, where the primary markets were located, and thence to Alexandria, the main Mediterranean port, by canal or caravan.

Once ivory reached the Mediterranean-oriented markets of Egypt, the mechanisms of trade are well known and need not be examined further here (Map 1–
The question that demands our attention in the next section is why was there an influx of ivory in northern Europe in the mid-thirteenth century? The power and influence of the Fatimids’ far-reaching trade networks stimulated the eleventh-century blossoming of ivory carving in many centers across the Mediterranean. Trade in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, however, was characterized by individual mercantile corporations in both the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean. There is ample evidence of ivory’s availability in other centers in the Mediterranean in the twelfth century—during which time it was extremely scarce in northern Europe. The Salerno ivories, Siculo-Arabic boxes and oliphants are just a few examples of the availability, if not abundance, of ivory in the twelfth-century Mediterranean. Why, then, did ivory not come to northern Europe in the twelfth century? And what changed circa 1240 to bring an increasing amount of the material to the continent? The extreme veneration with which ivory was treated when any piece of the material did arrive in northern Europe in the twelfth century is evidenced by the uniformly sacral nature of the few objects produced: croziers, appliqué plaques for reliquaries and portable altars, crosses, and crucifixes.

What economic shift occurred among the mercantile powers of the Mediterranean in the second quarter of the thirteenth century that brought unprecedented amounts of ivory to the shores of northern Europe?

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3. The Mediterranean and the Route to France

In whichever Egyptian city the ivory merchants did business, the cargo likely sailed from Alexandria, but to where? Who bought the ivory in Egypt, and what were their trade connections? Raymond Koechlin suggested, and Danielle Gaborit-Chopin reiterated, that it was merchants from northern Europe who made the trip by boat to Alexandria and returned directly home with their cargo.126 Koechlin cited evidence from the *Grant Coutumier de Normandie*, but a brief analysis of this document reveals that it cannot support this conclusion. The *Grant Coutumier* is a written record of the oral customary laws of Normandy. The formal written record became necessary when, in 1204, Normandy was subsumed into the territories controlled by the French crown during the reign of Philippe Augustus: in order to make the legal transition as smooth as possible the traditional customs were recorded so that the Parisian administrators—who were familiar with a different customary law—could implement the Norman variants when necessary.127 The first extant manuscript of the Norman customary law, called the *Très ancienne coutumier de Normandie*, is almost contemporary with Normandy’s secession to the French crown, that is, from the first years of the thirteenth century.128 This very early thirteenth-century date (circa 1200) is quite different from the late thirteenth-century date of the *Grant coutumier de Normandie*, which was a rewriting of the *Très ancienne coutumier* around 1266–1300. The much earlier date of the *Très ancienne coutumier* makes Koechlin’s argument problematic: the laws record the late twelfth-

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century traditions and do not reflect a new influx of ivory in the Channel in the last third of the thirteenth century, as Koechlin had presumed.

In both the Grant coutumier and in the Très ancienne coutumier ivory is mentioned under the heading of wereq or verisco—meaning items that wash up on shore after a shipwreck. Wereq, which includes ivory along with such other luxury materials as silver and gold, local furs, silk and animals associated with the nobility, ought to be given over to the local duke or lord if found on the shore. Except for silk—the Latin pannos sericos (Chinese cloth) underlines its eastern provenance—these are local materials, and the presence of elephant ivory on such a list gives pause. The item rohal or rohallum, which occurs next in the list after ivory, probably denotes whalebone or narwhal tusk. The linking of these two items and the extremely local

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129 Wereq is Old French and verisco Latin.
130 “Il distrent del wereq que se nef est decepee, si que nus n’en eschape qui sa(c)he dire qui les choses estoient qui son venues a wereq, lid us en doit avoir l’or e l’argent, e l’ivuirre, e le rohal, e le vair, e le gris, e les piaus sebelines, e les dras de soie, le trossel lié, les destriers, e les frans chiens, les frans oisius, e les ostoirs, e les faucons. Se aucuns prant aucune chose del wereq e il ne le dit a la justice aizk que il li soit demandez, li plez en apartient au duc. Toutes les autres choses apartient as barons en qui terre li wereq arrive.” Tardif, Coutumiers de Normandie, vol. 2, 53–54. “De verisco dixerunt quod naufragium, de quo nullus evadit qui sciat dicere cujus hominis fuerit, illud est veriscum, et de eo Dux debet habere aurum et argentums, ebur et rohallum, carium, grisum sine fibulis, sabelinas et pannos sericos, trossellum ligatum, dextrarios, francos canes et aves, acciptites, nisos et falcones. Si quis de verisco aliquid cepiter et non dixerit justicie, antequam ab eo exigatur, placitum exinde ad Ducem pertinet; reliqua vero de verisco baronum sunt in quorum terries applicuerint” (Tardif, Coutumiers de Normandie, vol. 1, 61–62.
131 The silk industry in France was only established under Louis XI (1461–83). Silk might have come to Normandy from various eastern sources, not necessarily China. See John Munro, The Dictionary of the Middle Ages, ed. Joseph Strayer et al. (New York: Macmillan, 1988), s.v. “Silk.”
132 In both the Latin and the Old French versions the list is grouped by types of material: the types of animals are kept together, the types of furs, and the precious metals. Therefore, the proximity in the list alone is an indication of their commonality.
133 Rohal or rohallum has received several contradictory glosses. The term is close to the modern French word rohart, which means walrus ivory and is derived from the ancient Scandinavian (Norse) word for walrus, Hrosshvar: “horse (hross) whale (hvair).” Larousse Dictionnaire de la langue française, s.v. rohart.

The Old Norse term for whale, rorvaldr, from which the genus of baleen whales, the rorquals, also derives its name, has also been suggested as an etymological precedent. Rohal would therefore connote whalebone. See Walter W. Skeat, ed., The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, 2nd ed., 7 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1899), vol. 5, 166–67; and Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. rorqual. Whalebone was occasionally used as an elephant ivory substitute in northern Europe when the African material was
nature of this list strongly suggest that the ivuirre or ebur referred to in the Coutumier is not elephant ivory at all but morse (walrus) ivory—a popular and locally available material in northern France and Normandy in the twelfth century and throughout the Middle Ages.\(^{134}\)

A further piece of legal evidence from the archives of Normandy supports the conclusion that the ivory referred to in the Coutumier is walrus and not elephant. An undated document, assigned on paleographical evidence to the end of the twelfth or early thirteenth century, mentions ivory (yvoire) as an item exempt from the customs of Rouen.\(^{135}\) Ivory is included in the list of chincherie, other small, miscellaneous items not covered in the above categories: wax that comes with its honey, gravel, ivory, walrus hides (as long as the beast died naturally), black tar, striped woolen cloth, mussels and clou (which could be either nails or cloves). The presence of exotic and rare elephant

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\(^{134}\) Numerous objects of walrus ivory survive from throughout the Middle Ages. A few examples are pectoral cross and a group of four elders of the Apocalypse made at the monastery of Saint-Bertin near St. Omer (Pas-de-Calais) at the end of the eleventh century are morse ivory. Gaborit-Chopin, Ivoires médiévaux, nos. 231 and 232a–d. The splendid Cloisters Cross is another superlative example of the use of walrus ivory, this time in twelfth-century England. See Elizabeth C. Parker and Charles T. Little, The Cloisters Cross: Its Art and Meaning (New York: Harvey Miller, 1994).

ivory among this curious list of odds and ends would be surprising indeed. Its enumeration beside walrus hides strongly hints that it is walrus and not elephant ivory that is intended by this document.

The *Coutumier de Normandie* and related Norman documents do not support the theory that that ivory was shipped directly from the Mediterranean to northern France, yet the hypothesis must not be abandoned altogether. Although there were several thriving Mediterranean ports on the southern coast of France—namely Marseilles, Montpellier, and, after 1244, Aigues-Mortes (Map 1–5)—there is no evidence of ivory, nor of the ivory trade in southern France either in the documentary record or as extant objects.136 Even though a handful of ivory objects were carved in this region during the eleventh and twelfth centuries,137 such production is completely absent in the next two centuries when ivory carving thrived in the northern regions. The dearth of any trace of ivory in southern France and even in central France throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries strongly suggests that raw ivory was simply not available there during this time.

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137 A mid-twelfth-century crozier from Arles (Trésor de Saint-Trophime) and an eleventh-century comb from Auch (Musée du Gers) only highlight the total lack of ivory products in Provence in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. See Gaborit-Chopin, *Ivoires du Moyen Age*, no. 161; and *France romane*, no. 209. These are localized to southern France primarily by find-site and secondarily through stylistic analysis. There were, furthermore, numerous Roman and late antique ivories in various church treasuries. For example, the famous Barberini plaque at the Louvre (OA 9063) was in Aix-en-Provence until the seventeenth century. Gaborit-Chopin, *Ivoires médiévaux*, no. 9. An ivory belt buckle, made in Provence before 543, was kept in the treasury of the Church of Saint-Blaise in Arles from the ninth century until the Revolution. It is now in Arles at the Musée de l’Arles Antique. See Gaborit-Chopin, *Ivoires du Moyen Age*, no. 36. The presence of these objects bar the argument that the Provençal were simply not interested in carving ivory because they had no indigenous tradition. Clearly the material held the same prestige in meridional France as it did in the north.
period, even though the Provençal ports were intimately connected to the Mediterranean trade routes.

The locations where elephant ivory was carved in the first half of the thirteenth century, where there is positive proof of its commercial availability, are Picardy,\(^{138}\) Denmark,\(^{139}\) the Meuse valley,\(^{140}\) and northern Germany.\(^{141}\) These localizations are based on both stylistic analysis and find sites.\(^{142}\) All of these are coastal regions abutting the Atlantic, the English Channel or the North Sea, which promotes the conclusion that ivory was shipped by sea from Alexandria through the Straits of Gibraltar, and northward along the coasts of Spain and France until it reached the northern countries (Map 1–5). This deduction, however, begs many explanations. Why was ivory not available in Provence yet offered for sale in the north?\(^{143}\) Why was ivory rare in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, and why did its availability increase steadily throughout the thirteenth century?

Pegolotti, the fourteenth-century Italian merchant, recorded an invaluable clue for tracing the ivory trade routes in the thirteenth century. He noted that, in addition to

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141 Hamburg, Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe (1893:199; Fig. 1–19). A closely related Virgin and Child Enthroned was destroyed in WWII. Formerly Berlin, Kaiser Friedrich Museum. See *Images in Ivory*, fig. 1b.

142 See Chapter 2 for a discussion of the technique for localizing ivories.

143 Koechlin also noted the lack of Gothic ivories in southern France; *Ivoires gothiques français*, vol. 1, 18.
Alexandria, Famagusta (Cyprus) and Acre (Palestine), denti di liofante were also available for sale in Majorca. As the largest of the Balearic Islands which command the Straits of Gibraltar, mention of ivory available for sale in Majorca is strong evidence that ivory was shipped through this Catalanian-controlled port towards the Atlantic, and further offers the solution to the question of the caesura in the supplies of ivory to northern Europe in the twelfth century (Maps 1–4 and 1–5). The Balearic Islands controlled access to the Straits of Gibraltar, and whoever ruled these islands commanded a key corridor of the international trade routes. The Straits, which link the Mediterranean and the Atlantic oceans, strongly favor eastern voyages. The Atlantic waters have a lower salt content due to slower evaporation rates than the Mediterranean. The waters of the Atlantic are therefore lighter than the Mediterranean waters; in addition, the basin of the Mediterranean is lower than that of the Atlantic. The combination of these factors results in the abnormal situation where the colder Atlantic waters flow above the warm Mediterranean back-flow (Fig. 1–5; Map 1–5). The strong eastern current is supported by a predominantly eastward-blowing wind, a so-called “westerly.” Both conditions naturally privilege sea traffic from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean and strongly discourage the return trip. Indeed the western voyage is near impossible for ships relying solely on sails and requires the extra oar power provided by galleys. Further discouragement for European merchant sailors lay in the fact that even if a ship successfully maneuvered the difficult passage, it emerged into hostile waters populated

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144 As well as denti di liofante in Majorca, Pegolotti also includes avorio d’ogni ragione (ivory from every region). Pegolotti, La Pratica della Mercatura, 123.
146 Lewis, “Northern European Sea Power,” 140.
with ships from Cadiz, Seville or the Algarve.\textsuperscript{147} There was, therefore, little to recommend the risky venture to wary investors.\textsuperscript{148}

The political, if not the environmental, situation changed when King James I of Aragon conquered Majorca in 1229 and Menorca in 1231. James I established the kingdom of Majorca, a vassal kingdom of Catalonia, which consisted of the Balearic Islands, Montpellier and Roussillon. The barren and mountainous islands did not offer much in the way of primary resources and the main revenue source for the new kingdom was mercantile exchange. At first trade on the islands was dominated by the Genoese, who maintained generous trading rights obtained from the previous Islamic rulers,\textsuperscript{149} but slowly native Majorcan merchants also came to prominence. The Genoese, with their large and powerful oar-powered galleys, almost immediately resumed their trading voyages across the Straits of Gibraltar. At first their destinations were nearby ports, Seville, Anfa (modern-day Casablanca), and other ports along the western coast of Morocco,\textsuperscript{150} but the advantages of the northern voyage soon came to their attention. The Genoese had long been involved with the lucrative northern markets, especially the Champagne fairs, but the mode of transport was overland, through the Alps: a long and

\textsuperscript{147} Lewis, “Northern European Sea Power,” 140–141. David Abulafia notes that the Genoese signed a trade treaty with the Islamic ruler of Majorca in 1181, allowing some ships safe passage through the straits of Gibraltar. The destination of these merchant vessels was generally the Maghrib or more specifically Morocco. David Abulafia, \textit{A Mediterranean Emporium: The Catalan kingdom of Majorca} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 108–109.

\textsuperscript{148} The Genoese did see sufficient compensation in the twelfth century for this difficult voyage, when they frequently traveled to northwestern Africa in search of gold. See Lewis, “Northern European Sea Power,” 146–47.

\textsuperscript{149} As early as 1230 the Genoese merchant Andrea Caffaro was petitioning to recover trading rights granted by the former Islamic government. By 1233, a Genoese quarter was established in the Ciutat de Majorca. Abulafia, \textit{A Mediterranean Emporium}, 112–13.

\textsuperscript{150} The itinerary Genoa–Majorca–Morocco was well established by the 1240s. Abulafia, \textit{A Mediterranean Emporium}, 109.
arduous caravan journey. The Genoese were particularly interested in this trade with the northern countries, as they owned several alum mines in Byzantium, Spain and North Africa. Alum is a color fixative that was used extensively in medieval cloth industries. Flanders, northern France and England were renowned for their production of wool and textiles and Genoa was keen to supply them with all the alum they required. There were well-established overland routes from Genoa to Flanders and traffic flowed in both directions, often meeting at the renowned fairs of Champagne. Thirteenth-century Genoese commercial records list hundreds of “outremont” merchants doing business in Genoa; the bulk of this business was in textiles but some transactions include such luxury commodities as spices, jewels, and precious metals. The origin—Egyptian markets and ultimately further east—and luxurious nature of these objects coincide with those of ivory, suggesting that it too could have been traded in early thirteenth-century Genoa. Overland caravan shipments easily account for the trickle of ivory that arrived in

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153 Alum permitted non-fast dyes such as madder (red) and weld (yellow) to form a permanent chemical union with wool fibers. See *Medieval Science, Technology, and Medicine: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Thomas F. Glick, Steven John Livesey, Faith Wallis (New York: Routledge, 2005), s.v. Alum; and Charles Singer, *The Earliest Chemical Industry: An Essay in the Historical Relations of Economics & Technology Illustrated from the Alum Trade* (London: Folio Society, 1948).


155 As with the trade records in Egypt, either the records of ivory trade have not survived or ivory was included under the general heading of “spices” or “luxury materials.”
northern Europe prior to the 1240s and the fact that these tusks were carried on carts or donkeys is reflected in the general smaller size of Gothic ivories before 1240.\textsuperscript{156}

The vast amount of alum required in northern Europe to sustain the textile industry was unwieldy to transport by caravan. Furthermore, overland caravans from Genoa to northern Europe were managed and run by separate corporations. These couriers, the so-called \textit{Vectuarii}, were small companies, separate from the highly successful merchants involved in the Mediterranean sea-trade. The large seafaring companies, however, no longer wanted to deal with small-middlemen \textit{Vectuarii} who cut into their profit margin. An alternative sea route to the markets of northern Europe would eliminate both the overland transport costs and also allow for much larger shipments of alum.\textsuperscript{157}

A solution, therefore, presented itself with the opening of the Straits of Gibraltar when the Genoese could easily enter the Atlantic (Map 1–5). The further innovations of the box-compass and portolan charts in this period enabled the Genoese galleys, sturdy enough to withstand the high seas, to stray from the coast and bypass the Bay of Gascony, shortening the voyage to northern France and Flanders significantly.\textsuperscript{158} Even with the additional crew needed to man the oars, the galleys could transport a

\textsuperscript{156} Even the large Virgins from the Vierge Ourscamp group (Paris, Musée du Petit Palais, SL 70.821; Paris Musée national du Moyen Age-Thermes et hôtel de Cluny, Cl.498; St. Petersburg, Hermitage, φ 33) only reach 36 cm as compared to the 41 cm of the Sainte-Chapelle Virgin and Child (Paris, Louvre OA 57) and the 52 cm of the Baroux Virgin and Child (Paris, Musée national du Moyen Age-Thermes et hôtel de Cluny, inv. 1954). Other than the Ourscamp group, pre-1240 objects rarely reach over 15 cm. Take, for example, the Hamburg Virgin and Child (Hamburg, Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, 1893.199) who stands 11.8 cm (Fig. 1–19) and a very petite Virgin and Child (Princeton University, Art Museum, 49.120) is merely 5.6 cm tall.

\textsuperscript{157} Face, “Symon de Gualterio,” 75–77.

considerable amount of alum, between 50,000–75,000 kg of cargo.159 With the majority of that weight being alum and with a small percentage being luxury goods (pepper, spices, jewels, silks and ivory), the profits would have been substantial and worth the circuitous route.160 If five percent of the total cargo consisted of luxury goods (2,500 kg–3,750 kg), and only five percent of that was ivory, then each Genoese galley could still have carried four to six elephant tusks to northern shores.

Although the first notarial documentation concerning the Genoese Mediterranean-North Atlantic voyage only dates from 1277,161 there is ample evidence that the trade route was active before that point. In the early 1240s, a large amount of Flemish and northern French cloth from Arras, Ypres, Ghent and St. Omer was sold in Majorca to merchants who transported the material to eastern Mediterranean ports.162 Although it is conceivable that the cloth came through river courses from the Champagne fairs to a Provençal port (Aigue-Mortes, Montpellier or Marseilles) and then overseas to Majorca, this route does not make economic sense. There would have been no real advantage to bringing wares to market in Majorca when they could easily be sold to the same sea-

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159 That is, between 1000 and 1500 cantaria of merchandise, where each cantar weighs approximately 50 kg (essentially the Arabic quintal). López, “Majorcans and Genoese on the North Sea Route,” 1169 n.1. For an in depth discussion of galleys, see Georges Jehel, Les Génois en Méditerranée Occidentale (fin XIème–début XIVème siècle): Ébauche d’une stratégie pour un empire (Amiens: Centre d’Histoire des Sociétés, Université de Picardie, 1996), 247–50.
160 López, “Majorcans and Genoese on the North Sea Route,” 1169.
161 The document, dated April 17, 1277, is a contract for two mariners to take a shipment of goods (unfortunately not enumerated) to Flanders, for a payment of 15 livre 40 soldi. Doehaerd, Les Relations Commerciales, vol. 3, 744–45, no. 1334. Another Genoese notarial document records a business transaction from spring of 1274 of the loan of a large sum for a business venture to Majorca and beyond, “wherever beyond God would lead for the best.” Abulafia, A Mediterranean Emporium, 192.
faring merchants in the Provençal ports. It seems likely, therefore, that these shipments of cloth came overseas from the North Atlantic to Majorca directly.\footnote{In 1237 Majorcan goods, coney (rabbit) skins \textit{de Meligres}, were purchased for the London royal court. Whether these came overland as Abulafia suggests or overseas as I believe remains to be decided. London Public Records Office, c. 54/48 (\textit{Calendar of Close Rolls} Henry III, 1234–37, 479). Quoted in Abulafia, \textit{A Mediterranean Emporium}, 194.}

Ivory and spices, therefore, piggybacked on the bulk shipping routes that sustained the textile trade between the Mediterranean and the North Atlantic.\footnote{The notion of “high-class ballast” has been suggested especially for the pottery trade between Northern Italian commercial centers and the Eastern Mediterranean. Abulafia explored the relationship between Pisa and Tunisia particularly: Pisan merchants filled their ships on the outward voyage with bulky grain to sell in Tunisian ports. The objects they in turn purchased for the return trip, skins, wool, dried fruit and salt, could not fill their ships. Pottery—relatively heavy and bulky—was a welcomed addition to the return consignment. See David Abulafia, “The Pisan Bacini and the Medieval Mediterranean Economy: A Historian’s Viewpoint,” in \textit{Papers in Italian Archaeology IV: The Cambridge Conference}, ed. Caroline Malone and Simon Stoddart (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 1985), 287–302, esp. 294; and H. Blake, “The Bacini of North Italy,” in \textit{La Céramique médiévale en Méditerranée occidentale, Xe–Xve siècles} (Paris: Centre National de Recherche Scientifique, 1980), 93–111, esp. 101.} It is no small coincidence that the locations that produced high-quality textiles correspond exactly to the areas that carved ivory in the early thirteenth century: the Meuse region, northern France and England. A burgeoning economy in the northern textile centers provided the disposable income to purchase foreign luxury goods, even those as expensive as ivory. By the 1290s, many of the Genoese merchants made regular yearly voyages to England, northern France and Flanders, explaining the increased availability of ivory in these centers.\footnote{Abulafia, \textit{A Mediterranean Emporium}, 105.} The profitability of this trading route was so high that other Italian merchant mariners, namely Venetians and Florentines, were plying the Atlantic routes by the turn of the fourteenth century, further increasing the supply of ivory and decreasing its cost.\footnote{For evidence of the Venetian trading routes in the second half of the fourteenth century, see \textit{Tarifà zoë Noticia dy Pexi e Muxure di Luogi e Tere che s’adovra Marcadantia per el Mondo} (Venice: Premiate Officine Grafiche Carlo Ferrari, 1925). It seems at this point ivory was purchased directly in Alexandria (see page 28), where it should ideally be \textit{grossi e blanqui e ben saldi} (big, white and quite solid). The trade}
The last leg of ivory’s journey from Alexandria to northern Europe, therefore, took place courtesy of Italian merchants, at first Genoese and then others. From Egypt, the elephant tusks—whole with the husk intact—were brought to Genoa or Majorca for storage until they could travel with a small quantity of other precious goods and a large shipment of alum destined for the textile industries of the North. From the Balearic Islands, a galley would be rowed through the Straits of Gibraltar and then sail along the western coast of Spain, cutting across the Bay of Gascony to the English Channel and the North Sea. The increased supply of ivory in northern Europe echoes precisely the increasing frequency of these Mediterranean Atlantic voyages: prior to the first Majorcan evidence in the 1240s there is very little elephant ivory available in the north. What little did exist was likely brought overland from Genoa by caravan, also following the textile trade routes. The textile industry in northern Europe created the capital that enabled merchants to trade their luxury textiles for imported materials, such as ivory, thus encouraging a thriving mercantile relationship between northern Europe and the Mediterranean.167

4. Ivory as a Commodity in Northern Europe

With the question regarding of the inconsistent supply of ivory in northern Europe during the thirteenth century having been answered, our attention can now turn to the implications these fluctuations had on the facture of ivories in France and northern

Europe. The varying availability of ivory coupled with the erratic monetary environment in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries make generalizations across this period ill advised.\textsuperscript{168} The tendency in the scholarship, however, has been to apply information from documents retroactively—the vast majority of documentary evidence about the French commerce in ivory comes from the fourteenth century, a time when ivory was at its maximum availability and at maximum demand. Furthermore, several French monetary crises toward the end of the thirteenth century make any extrapolations from fourteenth-century information even more difficult.\textsuperscript{169} There have been several studies that assemble and analyze this information,\textsuperscript{170} but they have largely concentrated on the fourteenth century. It is, however, methodologically hazardous to read fourteenth-century evidence back into the thirteenth century. The present study limits itself to the consideration of thirteenth-century material, with a strong preference for the second third of the thirteenth century when the commerce of ivory was transformed by the tide of elephant tusks that arrived on northern shores in Genoese ships.

Ivory arrived in northern Europe—Flanders, England, and the northern coasts of France and Germany—on mercantile ships and was traded for either finished textiles or raw wool. What did the merchant do with his recently acquired elephant tusks (or portion thereof)? The traditional assumption was that the merchant sold his precious cargo to sculptors or carvers directly and these tradesmen would work the material into a finished


product and then sell it for a profit. Though workers of ivory stockpiled their chosen medium in the fourteenth century—Jean de Marville, a sculptor in the employ of Philip the Bold of Burgundy, obtained twenty-six pounds of ivory from Jean Girart, a Parisian tabletier, who kept the material in store—there is no evidence, nor is it likely, that carvers or imagiers did so in the thirteenth century. In fact, one very useful piece of documentary evidence from the 1251–53 accounts of the Queen of England, Eleanor of Provence, states that three and a half pounds of ivory were purchased for thirteen sous and five deniers to be made into images by the hand of Richard Scriptoris. Several important conclusions can be inferred from this source. First, in the mid-thirteenth century, it was the patron of the final work who purchased or otherwise received the raw ivory; ivory was simply too expensive to be purchased by craftsmen. Similarly, goldsmiths would not purchase outright the material they fashioned, for the patron would supply the artisan with the raw material or the funds with which it could be purchased. An approximate cost of ivory in English currency can be calculated from the information provided in the account: 1 kg of ivory was worth approximately 11 sous. For comparison, Eleanor of Provence bought two Romance manuscripts in 1252–53, one for

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174 The calculation is based on the fact that several different pounds were in use in England at this time, with the long pound used for precious materials, such as gold, silver, and spices. It seems probable that ivory, since it was included in spice shipments (alum too was considered a spice), would have been weighed using the same measurement: 1 long pound = 349.92 g. See Ronald Edward Zupko, A Dictionary of English Weights and Measures From Anglo-Saxon Times to the Nineteenth Century (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1968), s.v. pound.
35 sous and the other for 10 sous. An average-sized tusk, therefore, would cost between 16 ½ and 33 livres, depending on its size. For comparison, Henry III’s normal yearly wage for his chaplains and his manor keepers in the mid-thirteenth century was 20 livres, and a peasant’s yearly rent in 1251 was merely 1 livre. The 1259–60 household accounts for Henry III—recording the purchase of victuals for the English court, not including expenditures from the exchequer’s office such as the luxury goods we have been examining—reveal the daily expenditures on provisions to be approximately 20.54 livres, and the yearly total 7,499 livres 8 sous 5 deniers.

Ivory was an expensive material in mid-thirteenth century England, and even a small portion of a tusk, about a tenth to a twentieth, equaled the price of a manuscript. A whole tusk equaled the yearly wages of a well-employed man of court. When compared to the other sumptuary arts, however, such as gold chalice purchased in 1251 for 5 livres and 5 sous, a dozen silver cups bought in 1250 for 12 livres, 8 sous and 4 deniers, and an imported red samite cloak purchased in 1251 for 12 livres, 18 sous, and 4

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176 As calculated above, the average tusk in the thirteenth century was probably between 45 and 60 kg. These employees were well remunerated, and many lesser professions received a much lower yearly salary. Calendar of the Liberate Rolls, vol. 3, 304, 302 and passim. For example, in 1251, Henry III’s surgeon at Kempton received only 10 livres as his yearly wage. Calendar of Liberate Rolls, vol. 3, 348. In 1251 the court was looking for a chaplain for the Queen’s chapel in Haveringe whose yearly stipend was to be merely 50 sous (presumably, though, the poor chap could find additional employment). Calendar of Liberate Rolls, vol. 3, 342.


deniers,\textsuperscript{182} the 13 sous 5 deniers paid for 3.5 lbs of ivory does not seem overly extravagatant. It must be considered, however, that this price is for the raw material only and not the final product: the ivory was not yet made into an image. It can be deduced from the Liberate entry for a golden chalice that fifty-five percent of the total cost was for William de Gloucester’s labor on the chalice.\textsuperscript{183} To obtain a comparable price for the hypothetical cost of a finished ivory statuette, an extra fifty-five percent should be added to the 13 sous 5 deniers to account for the craftsman’s labor. The total amount is 1 livre 9 sous and 10 deniers.\textsuperscript{184} This theoretical amount for a finished statuette is comparable to the price of one of the silver cups, or one-fifth the price of the golden chalice or one-twelfth the price of the samite cloak. These comparisons do not suggest that ivory was the highest expense, but it should nevertheless be recalled that these comparisons are based on only 3.5 tow pounds (1.22 kg) of ivory, which would produce only a rather diminutive statuette approximately 10 cm in height.\textsuperscript{185} A larger work of the dimensions of the Barroux Virgin and Child (Fig. 1–6; 52 cm), the Sainte-Chapelle Virgin (41 cm), or the Saint-Denis Madonna (34.8 cm), may have cost approximately as much as 7 livres 9 sous 2 deniers, which surpasses the price of gold work and would certainly equal the

\textsuperscript{182} \textit{Calendar of Liberate Rolls}, vol. 3, 338.

\textsuperscript{183} “Liberate to William de Gloucester 111. 4s. 8d., being 60s for work on a golden chalice, 45s. for the gold thereof, weighing 5s. 2d., and for a silver chain therefore, 5s. for repair of crystal candlesticks, and 3 ½ marks for a clasp sent of the king’s gift for a cope belonging to the church of Salisbury” (\textit{Calendar of Liberate Rolls}, vol. 3, 334). The total cost for the chalice is 110 sous (or 5 livres 10 deniers), and if 60 sous of that is for labor and 50 sous for materials, 55% of the total cost is for labor.

\textsuperscript{184} If 13 sous 5 denier = 0.45x; then x = 1 livre 9 sous 10 deniers.

\textsuperscript{185} This calculation is based on 9 cm for the diameter of the base of the ivory (the Davillier Virgin’s base diameter is 9.5, the Chicago Virgin’s approximate base diameter is 9 cm, and both of these statuettes are carved using the full circumference of the tusk and date from 1240–50). The density of ivory is 1.83–1.93 g/cm\textsuperscript{3}. The height is calculated with the assumption that the tusk is closer to a cylinder than a cone. Because my calculations cannot take into account the natural narrowing of the tusk, they are somewhat conservative. With these parameters, therefore, the height of the statuette would be 9.93 cm–10.64 cm. These dimensions are not unlike those of the 1220 Hamburg Enthroned Virgin and Child (Hamburg, Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe) of 11.8 cm x 8.4 cm. This statuette may be from either England or North Germany. \textit{Images in Ivory}, no. 1.
cost of an elaborately decorated imported textile. The use of ivory as an artistic medium was, therefore, not exclusively limited to the wealthiest royalty; especially in smaller proportions, it was also affordable to the lower nobility and affluent mercantile classes.

Who exactly bought Eleanor’s three and a half pounds of ivory from the internationally connected merchant who imported the material? Fortunately, due to the extraordinarily rich financial records from the reign of Henry III, the Queen’s favorite merchant-purveyor is known: Deutatus Willelmi.¹⁸⁶ Willelmi, a Florentine by birth, began working for Eleanor of Provence in the 1250s and continued into the 1280s. Presumably the purchase proceeded as follows: the Queen identified the need for a statuette,¹⁸⁷ and communicated this desire to Willelmi. Perhaps she made a specific request for ivory, or perhaps Eleanor simply wanted some type of sumptuous material for the statuette. Willelmi purchased the material from the merchant and received the funds from the exchequer in exchange for the material.¹⁸⁸

In addition to financial and mercantile information, the citation from Queen Eleanor’s account book gives further evidence for reconstructing of the craft of ivory in the thirteenth century: “ad faciendos imagines ad opus regine per manus Ricardi Scriptoris.” First, the raw ivory was destined for the making of images, either in the round or in relief, and not for ornamenting furniture, making knife handles, etc. Second, the phrasing of “ad opus regine” indicates either that the resulting image was intended

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¹⁸⁷ Perhaps for the royal wedding of Princess Margaret to Alexander III of Scotland in 1251 when the chapel at the Scottish Palace was refurbished by the Queen; see Kent Lancaster, “Henry III, Westminster Abbey, and the Court School of Illumination,” in *Seven Studies in Medieval English History and Other Historical Essays presented to Harold S. Snellgrove*, ed. Richard H. Bowers (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 1983), 88.
¹⁸⁸ This system is delineated by Lancaster in regards to Henry III’s main purveyor, Adam de Bassing. Lancaster highlights Adam’s role in interpreting and actualizing the King’s manifold requests. See R. Kent Lancaster, “Artists, Suppliers and Clerks: The Human Factors in the Art Patronage of King Henry III,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 35 (1972): 81–107, esp. 86–90.
for the personal collection of the Queen and not destined for a religious foundation, or that the Queen delineated the specifications for carving of the image, probably the iconography. The latter translation concurs with similar evidence about Henry III’s patronage patterns. In 1243, the King commissioned an embroidered standard for Westminster Abbey from his favorite embroiderer, Mabel. The King gave certain specifications about the material and iconography—ruby samite, adorned with gold images of the Virgin and Saint John. The composition and design, however, were left to the discretion of Mabel, who “would know best how to see them.” There is a close precedent, therefore, for the royal patron to request actively certain aspects of the work. The *imaginés* were, therefore, to be made “*ad opus regine,*” to the specifications of the Queen. The final extrapolation that can be made from Eleanor of Provence’s accounts regards the hand of the craftsman. *Ricardi Scriptoris* is to carve the ivory into an image. His surname perhaps suggests that Richard worked in the Queen’s scriptorium: in 1245 “Richard the Clerk” was awarded a tun of wine by King Henry III for his good service. Although training in various media was the norm in the Middle Ages, and it is possible

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189 The Latin preposition *ad* can denote either a literal spatial movement or a figurative purposive movement for the noun it modifies.
192 Calendar of the Liberate Rolls, Vol. III (1245–1251), 34. Lancaster also discussed the figure of William of Gloucester who was Henry III’s goldsmith for many years, but was also concurrently employed as (and referred to as) a clerk; Lancaster, “Artists, Suppliers and Clerks,” 90–96.
193 Thagmar writes in the Vita of Bernward of Hildesheim that he received education in the writing and illumination of manuscripts and in metalwork and the setting (carving?) of gemstones. Thagmar, *Vita Bernwardi: Das Leben des Bischofs Bernward von Hildesheim* (Hildesheim: Bernward, 1993), chapter 1, 15. Leo of Ostia, writing about monastic life at Monte Cassino in the late eleventh century, noted that monks were trained not only in laying mosaics, but also in silver, bronze, iron and glass work in addition to ivory, wood, alabaster and stone carving; Leo of Ostia, “The Chronicle of Monte Cassino,” in *A Documentary History of Art: The Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. Elizabeth Gilmore Holt and trans. Herbert Bloch, 2 vols. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday Anchor, 1957), vol. 1, 12, §27. The metalworker Theophilus, probably writing in twelfth-century Saxony, demonstrated more than a passing familiarity with
that an illuminator/scribe was charged to carve the prized ivory, surnames were ambiguous signifiers in the thirteenth century, as sometimes they designated the father or grandfather’s trade, not the individual’s. When the supply of ivory was low in the early thirteenth century, however, it is unreasonable to assume that there were ivory specialists (ivoiriers) as there were in the fourteenth century. When a patron obtained ivory and wished to have it carved, therefore, s/he would approach an artisan with suitable experience in other media to work the material. Whether or not Ricardi Scriptoris was a scribe/illuminator, it is highly unlikely that he was exclusively an ivory carver.

Further substantiation that in the mid-thirteenth century there were no artisans who were ivory specialists comes from the Livre des Métiers, written towards the end of Louis IX’s reign (1260–70) by the Parisian provost, Etienne de Boileau. Boileau notes

many other media, such as glass blowing, ivory and bone carving, and indeed even wall painting and manuscript illumination: Theophilus, The Various Arts (De diversis artibus), trans. C. R. Dodwell (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961).

194 The confluence of writer/illuminator/ivory carver is a common theme in scholarship concerning Carolingian, Ottonian and Romanesque ivory carvings, although little documentary evidence has been offered to substantiate stylistic observations. The most pertinent sources are: Adolph Goldschmidt, Die Elfenbeinskulpturen aus der Zeit der karolingischen und sächsischen Kaiser, 4 vols. (Berlin: Bruno Cassirer, 1914–1926), vols. 1 and 2; Gaborit-Chopin, Ivoires du Moyen Age, 46; Amy L. Vandersall, “The Relationship of Sculptors and Painters in the Court School of Charles the Bald,” Gesta 15 (1976): 201–10. 195 See Sears, “Ivory and Ivory Workers,” 26, for a discussion of the difficulty of using surnames to deduce trades.


197 Etienne de Boileau, Règlements sur les Arts et Métiers de Paris, rédigés au XIIIe siècle, et connus sous le nom du Livre des Métiers d’Etienne Boileau; Publiés pour la Première fois en entier, d’après les Manuscrits de la Bibliothèque du Roi et des Archives du Royaume..., ed. G. B. Depping (Paris: Imprimeur de Crapelet, 1837). The early copy of this manuscript is Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS fr. 24069, from late thirteenth-century Paris. This was a working manuscript of Boileau’s regulations kept at the Châtelot and it was updated periodically over approximately a century. See also Anna Maria Cust, The Ivory Workers of the Middle Ages (London: George Bell and Sons, 1902); Raymond Koechlin, “L’Ivoirerie
that there are seven guilds authorized to work in ivory: painters and carvers of images (paintres et tailleurs d’ymages), carvers of images and crucifixes (Ymagiers Tailleurs et ceux qui taillent cruchefis), makers of writing tablets (tabletiers), knifé-handle carvers (couteliers feseureurs de manches or enmancheeurs), bead makers (patenostriers), comb and lantern makers (pingniers-lanterniers), and dice makers (deiciers). The guild of painters and carvers of images are authorized to work in “all manner of wood, stone, bone, ivory and all types of paint good and true,” while carvers of images and crucifixes specialize in bone, ivory and wood, though “all other materials can be used as long as the carver is familiar with the trade.” The same artisans, therefore, carved wood, stone, ivory, bone and any other suitable material. Although

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198 Boileau, Régemens sur les Arts, Titre LXII.
199 Boileau, Régemens sur les Arts, Titre LXI.
200 Boileau, Régemens sur les Arts, Titre LXVIII. Few writing tablets are extant from the thirteenth century, and these tend to be in wood. See Elisabeth Lalou, ed., Les tablettes à écrire de l’antiquité à l’époque modern (Turnhout: Brepols, 1992) and Elisabeth Lalou, Les comptes sur tablettes de cire de Jean Sarrazin, chambellan de saint Louis (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003). There are many such items preserved from the fourteenth century, frequently with carved decoration. See, for example, Images in Ivory, nos. 40 and 61.
201 Boileau, Régemens sur les Arts, Titre XVII. There is one example, however, of Jehan de Tournai, a coutelier, who was upgraded to the profession of ymagier, enmancheur from the 1299 to the 1300 tax rolls: Sears, “Ivory and Ivory Workers,” 27.
203 Boileau, Régemens sur les Arts, Titre LXVII.
204 Boileau, Régemens sur les Arts, Titre LXXI. These last five trades will not be examined further, as they are concerned with producing specific objects that do not impinge directly on our investigation. For these more mundane objects that are often not included in exhibitions of medieval art, see La tabletterie gallo-romaine et médiévale: Une histoire d’os (Paris: Les musées de la Ville de Paris, Musée Carnavalet, 1989).
205 Boileau, Régemens sur les Arts, Titre LXII.1: “Et puet ouver de toutes manieres de fust, de pierre, de os, de yvoire, et de toutes manieres de paintures bones et leaus.”
206 Boileau, Régemens sur les Arts, Titre LXII.1: “On face d’os, d’yvoire, de fust et de toute autre maniere d’estoffe, quele que ele soit, estre le puet franchement, pour tant que il sache le mestier.”
scholars have recognized the plurality of media a single carver could work, there has been a reticence to accept that ivory carvers and stone carvers could have been the same individuals, even though one of the guilds states this explicitly and the other implicitly (toute autre maniere d’estoffe). This reticence is based primarily on the similarity of the tools used by modern ivory carvers to those used by wood carvers. Yet the hardness of ivory, three on the Mohs scale, is equivalent to calcites, namely limestone, and suggests that dexterity in one material would greatly facilitate the carving of the other.

It is reasonable to conclude, therefore, especially for the early and mid-thirteenth century when there were not yet “ivory specialists,” that the patron simply sought a highly skilled carver, whether he was accustomed to working in wood or stone.

Few pieces of visual evidence have been assembled to corroborate the facts presented in the textual sources that indicate that sculptors who worked ivory also produced objects in different media. The most frequently cited case is a late thirteenth-century wooden Virgin and Child (Fig. 1–8) said to have come from Wargnies (Somme) in the nineteenth century, which is remarkably similar—though not identical—to an ivory Virgin of the same period now in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam (Fig. 1–9). The

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208 Shoshani, Elephants, 72. The Mohs scale is a comparative field test for determining hardness. Each material on the scale will scratch that of a lower Mohs value, i.e., a topaz (8) will scratch an amethyst (7). Whether the sculptors employed in the carving of large-scale monumental cathedral sculpture were identical to the ymageurs-tailleurs who worked in stone is a question that deserves further investigation.
209 Paul Williamson also explores the medieval sculptor’s relationship to different media in “Symbiosis across Scale: Gothic Ivories and Sculpture in Stone and Wood in the Thirteenth Century,” in Images in Ivory, 39–45.
210 The Vierge Wargnies is Paris, Louvre RF 1449 (H: 1.16 m). See L’Art au temps des rois maudits: Philippe le Bel et ses fils, 1285–1328, ed. Danielle Gaborit-Chopin and Jean-René Gaborit (Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1998), no. 18. For the Rijksmuseum Madonna (22 cm), see Roland Koekkoek, Gotische Ivooren in het Catharijneconvent (Utrecht: De Walburg Pers, 1987), 28–29 and Koechlin, Ivories gothiques français, vol. 2, no. 98. A third, even smaller (19 cm), statuette from this same group was in the collection of the Baron of Béthune, Belgium (Fig. 1–10); see Koechlin, Ivories gothiques français, vol. 2,
Italian sculptor Giovanni Pisano, renowned for his masterful sculptures in marble, executed at least three works in ivory, dating from the last third of the thirteenth century. Further scholarship will undoubtedly establish other connections: is the relationship between a mutilated limestone enthroned Virgin and Child at Saint-Germer-de-Fly (Fig. 1–11) closely enough related to the seated ivory Madonna from the “block-style” group in the Art Institute of Chicago (Fig. 1–12) to identify the same hand? Few objects in bone have survived that are comparable in form and function to the ivory statuettes, diptychs and triptychs, as the less expensive material seems to have been reserved for more utilitarian objects. One noteworthy exception, however, is a miniature triptych now in the Williams College Museum of Art (Williamstown, MA) (Fig. 1–13). Although Richard Randall suggested that it might be a workshop model or an unfinished test piece, the remnants of significant traces of polychromy testify that this object was intended as a finished piece, though probably destined for a less affluent customer.

5. Inside the Thirteenth-Century Ivory Workshop

There are, nevertheless, aspects unique to the art of ivory carving that impinge directly on the morphology of the final product, giving objects carved in the medium a

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214 Richard Randall, The Golden Age of Ivory: Gothic Carvings in North American Collections (New York: Hudson Hills Press, 1993), no. 37. Randall suggested that this triptych was part of the “Soissons” group; however, it clearly is not related to any of the “Soissons” ivories, neither from Paris nor Picardy, in its style, format, or iconography.
distinct character. African elephant tusks, as discussed above, show a strong, lengthwise curve and are hollow for about one third of their length due to the nerve cavity. There are three basic forms of ivory objects—panels (diptychs, triptychs, mirror backs, and combs), statuettes, and oliphants (or other hollow, circular containers such as pyxes and situlae)—all of which are taken from the tusk in a different manner (Fig. 1–14). Eleanor of Provence’s purchase of 3.5 lbs of ivory (1.22 kg) indicates that it was possible to acquire only a portion of a tusk: 1.22 kg is only one-thirtieth of a smaller tusk. This choice of a specific amount of ivory suggests that Eleanor envisioned a specific end product prior to the actual purchase. Different sections of the tusk enabled different types of carving. Oliphants, pyxes and situlae take advantage of the conical bore naturally caused by the nerve core: three or four centimeters of dentine are left around the hollow core to form cylindrical objects. Statuettes comprise mainly the solid and high quality upper portion of the tusk (Fig. 1–1). In order to achieve a larger size, however, the lower section of the tusk with the nerve core cavity must be employed, thus the bases of large ivory statuettes are often hollow. An extreme example is the Barroux Virgin and Child, circa 1250, who stands over half a meter tall (Figs. 1–6 and 1–7). The base of the Virgin incorporates the entire nerve cavity, leaving a hole approximately 5–6 cm in diameter in the centre of the base. The Virgin utilizes the whole girth of the tusk and little of the cementum has been removed from the perimeter. This approach to making statuettes was frequently employed in thirteenth-century ivory statuettes, even though it does not take advantage of the best-quality ivory located at the center of the tusk, closest the nerve canal. Instead

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215 For the carving, and all other aspects, of the oliphant see Shalem, The Oliphant, esp. 38–49.
217 Practiced ivory craftsmen tended to prefer the interior side of the tusk for carving, that is, the material closer to the nerve core. This ivory, which is younger and fresher than the dentine closer to the
the outer carved surface used the drier and more friable ivory. The carver of the Walters Art Museum’s seated block-style Virgin and Child, circa 1230, made a similar mistake (Fig. 1–15). Examination of the reverse of the statuette reveals the curved indentation of the nerve cavity: the finest ivory was ignored while the drier surface material was carved. These maladroit choices highlight the fact that the carvers responsible for statuettes from the first half of the thirteenth century were unfamiliar with the specific characteristics of ivory morphology and simply continued craft practices learned for other media.

In the fourteenth century, a new method of exploiting tusks to make large statuettes was developed as craftsmen gained experience in carving ivory. Large tusks were split in half lengthwise—including the area with the nerve pulp—so that two statuettes could be carved from the thickest part of the tusk. The width and depth provided by this new technique privileged the iconography of the seated Madonna and Child so that the indentation of the nerve canal was disguised between the Virgin’s knees. An excellent example of this type is at the Victoria and Albert Museum (Fig. 1–16), which is flat when observed laterally. This new method enabled the artisan to exploit the interior dentine may indeed explain why so many statuettes of this type are still extant.

Although it is possible to cut panels from many areas of the elephant’s tusk, Gothic ivory carvers preferred to use dentine from above the nerve canal, where the

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218 Baltimore, Walters Art Museum (71.235). Randall, Masterpieces of Ivory from the Walters, no. 262.
quality was the highest and the largest possible panels were obtained. Panels were always cut with the long axis parallel to the lengthwise grain of the tusk. Thirteenth-century ivory carvers, like their Byzantine and Late Antique predecessors, carved ivory with the grain.\(^{220}\) Although it is possible for panels to be taken from the material that surrounds the nerve cavity in the bottom third of the tusk,\(^{221}\) all of the panels from the “Soissons” group are taken from the very centre of the tusk, above the nerve cavity, in order to extract the ivory of highest quality and of largest size.\(^{222}\) Narrower panels were taken from the same location in the tusk, and then cut in half (Plate 13).\(^{223}\) The panels of the “Soissons” group are all approximately 1 cm in thickness: a dimension that remains relatively consistent across Late Antique, Byzantine and most Gothic ivory relief carving.\(^{224}\) There is no consistency, however, in the “Soissons” group as to whether the panels were carved with the grain running up or down, so there does not seem to have

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\(^{220}\) Cutler, *Craft of Ivory*, 42; Cutler, *Hand of the Master*, 79–82. This is a consistent aspect of Gothic ivory carving that, as Cutler pointed out, remained a constant of the craft practice regardless of the era. Cutler, *Hand of the Master*, 81–82. Furthermore, as Cutler noted for Byzantine ivory carving, when this rule is not followed it is reasonable to suspect the authenticity of a work.

\(^{221}\) This ivory is of lesser quality, drier and more friable.

\(^{222}\) The position of where the panels were excised is obvious from an analysis of the back of the diptychs: in all of the Picard group the attenuated nerve canal can be seen, curving out of one panel, into the next, and then back into the first towards the top of the panels, most notably on the back of the Hermitage diptych (Plate 1b). This feature is not noted on the Parisian panels. On the back of the Walters panel (Plate 20b), however, granules mark the periphery of the nerve canal. It seems that the Walters and Cluny panels were taken from just either side of the nerve canal, and not including the nerve canal proper. Although this wasted a certain amount of ivory, when the tusk is flawed, as this one certainly was, perhaps it was an attempt to maximize the usable ivory.

\(^{223}\) The small central panel of a triptych, Brussels, Musée de la Cinquantenaire, shows remnants of the bark and the more friable ivory from the periphery only on the left hand side of the panel (most visible on the back, therefore, on the right). The elliptical arcs that mark the centre of the tusk are seen off-centre toward the right hand side of the panel (left on the back).

\(^{224}\) Cutler, *Craft of Ivory*, 44–45; Cutler notes that few Byzantine ivory plaques exceed 11 mm or are thinner than 7 mm. Some notable exceptions are the very thick—and as a result very deeply carved—luxury ivory panels. One Gothic example is the diptych now separated between the Toledo Museum of Art, Ohio (1950.301) and the Louvre (OA 11097). These panels are almost 2 cm in thickness and reveal the physiology of the tusk in the curvature at the rear of the panel and through their chamfered outer corners. See Images in Ivory, nos. 22 and 23; and Gaborit-Chopin, *Ivoires médiévaux*, no. 122. The Barberini plaque (OA 9063), also at the Louvre, is similarly abnormally thick—2.8 cm—a characteristic Cutler notes obviously points to a sumptuous object. See Anthony Cutler, “The Making of the Justinian Diptychs,” 75–115; and Gaborit-Chopin, *Ivoires médiévaux*, no. 9.
been a workshop preference for one of the two choices (see Plate 20b downwards and Plate 3b upwards).\(^\text{225}\) Whichever option is chosen remains consistent within a work, such that both panels of a diptych will be carved in the same direction. Finally, the three diptychs from the “Soissons” group demonstrate the particular attributes of tusks and how these affected production:\(^\text{226}\) these diptychs have semicircular insets glued along the curved side of the tusk to square the panel (Plates 20 to 22).\(^\text{227}\) When the backs of the panels are examined, cementum can be seen at the top and bottom of the outer edges of the panels, but the mid-section shows no sign of the outer layer of the bark. The whole extent of the inner, curved side of the tusk was used—the cementum is continuous along its edge—and an arc-shaped inset was attached with small ivory dowels and animal glue.\(^\text{228}\) The Walters-Cluny diptych approaches this whole “operation” literally and humorously: “stitch marks” are “sewn” on either side of the divide to conceptually unify the panel (Plate 20b).

Anthony Cutler has outlined the procedure and the tools needed for carving ivories in the Byzantine period and I have found no evidence that Gothic ivory carving contradicts this formula.\(^\text{229}\) The tusks were first cleaned of their bark with an adze-like

\(^{225}\) This accords with Cutler’s observations of Byzantine plaques; *Hand of the Master*, 88–89.

\(^{226}\) The Soissons diptych, the Berlin diptych and the Walters/Cluny diptych.

\(^{227}\) A similar accommodation was made in the plaques of an exceptionally large Byzantine diptych in the Bode Museum, Berlin. See Cutler *Hand of the Master*, figs. 3, 81, and 84.

\(^{228}\) The inset on the Walters panel is a nineteenth-century restoration that closely replicates the original structure and configuration. Whether or not the “stitch marks” were part of the original conception of the panel is difficult to determine.

\(^{229}\) Cutler, *Craft of Ivory*; Cutler, *Hand of the Master*, 94–152. For the consistency of craft practice over the millennia, see Cutler, *Hand of the Master*, 81–82. See also Archer St. Clair, *Carving as Craft: Palatine East and the Greco-Roman Bone and Ivory Carving Tradition* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003) for an extremely detailed discussion of Classical ivory carving techniques. These observations, however, are less applicable to Gothic ivory carving because of the drastically different objects being produced and also the Classical reliance on lathes and turning.
The prepared tusk was then sawed into smaller portions as needed: transversely first, then longitudinally for panels. The basic design for the object was sketched directly onto the prepared ivory, likely with reference to a model or preparatory drawings. The twelfth-century artisan Theophilus described covering ivory with chalk and then drawing the desired composition onto it with lead. This method of planning the composition directly on the ivory surface is consistent with other forms of Gothic carving in other media. The general outlines of the composition (both figures and frame) were then lightly incised on the surface of the ivory, not unlike a scribe ruling his page. Evidence of this practice can be seen on the Soissons diptych: some of the register and frame lines continued to the edge of the panel and were not completely polished away (Fig. 1–17). The next step in the carving process was the rough blocking-out of forms and the removal of excess material to prepare the ground.

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230 This stage is illustrated in a Byzantine hunting manual: Venice, Biblioteca Marciana, cod. gr. Z.479, fol. 39r. See Cutler, Craft of Ivory, 38, fig. 37.
232 Theophilus, Chapter XCII. Theophilus prescribes the same method: “When carving bone, first trim a piece of it to the size you want, and then spread chalk over it. Draw the figures with lead according to your wishes, and score the outlines with a sharp tracer (cum gracili ferro) so that they are quite clear. Then with various chisels (ferris) cut the grounds as deeply as you wish and according to your ability and skill carve the figures or anything else you want.” (Sculpturus os, primum forma tabulam cujus magnitudinis volueris, et superponens cremat, pertrahe cum plumbo imagines secundum libitum, atque cum gracili ferro designa tractus ut appareat; deinde cum diversis ferris fode campos quam profunde volueris, et sic demum ingenium et scientiam tuam sculpte imagines, vel aliud quod libuerit.) Trans. Cutler, Hand of the Master, 101. Text Theophilus, De diversis artibus: seu Diversarum artium schedula, ed. R. Hendrie (London: J. Murray, 1847), 382. Several fourteenth-century terra-cotta “prints” from molds of “Parisian”-style ivories were unearthed in the Scheldt river in Belgium (Boston, Museum of Fine Art) and excavated from the outskirts of Liège (Liège, Musée Curtius). These terra-cotta models record the general iconography and composition of an ivory plaque, but are not fine enough to have communicated precise details of carving style. Randall suggests that these were either workshop models to perpetuate consistent compositions in one atelier or were models that were sent from France abroad to spread the popular French style of ivories. See Randall, Masterpieces of Ivory from the Walters, 180–81.
234 Cutler, Hand of the Master, 101–02.
235 The ground of the ivories is frequently quite thin, approximately 2–3 mm. See Cutler, Hand of the Master, 104–105.
was done with a straightedge chisel and then smoothed with a rasp.\textsuperscript{236} For the “Soissons” diptychs, with their complex architectural frames executed in low relief and the figural scenes in high relief, only the negative space surrounding the figures was blocked out. The balance of the carving was completed with a variety of fine chisels, picks and drills.\textsuperscript{237} The “Soissons” ivories show consummate skill in their carving with extensive use of undercutting and “Kerbschnitt,”\textsuperscript{238} which bring vitality and verisimilitude to the exquisite miniature world depicted, although the simpler mode of carving, cutting the figures perpendicular to the ground, was also employed.\textsuperscript{239} The finished product was polished with oil and a fine abrasive.\textsuperscript{240} As in Byzantine carving, the highly polished surface focuses the viewer’s attention on significant aspects of the relief and rarely incorporates the ground.\textsuperscript{241} Polishing was a time-consuming and intensive task that separates luxury objects from utilitarian ones, and it is not incidental that many small and roughly carved fourteenth-century ivory objects are almost matte to the eye whereas many large thirteenth-century objects are practically luminescent with their high level of polish.

\textsuperscript{236} Cutler, \textit{Craft of Ivory}, 44. Theophilus also mentions the use of chisels and files in the working of ivory, see Chapter XCI.
\textsuperscript{237} Cutler, \textit{Hand of the Master}, 120–40. Gaborit-Chopin lists gouges, chisels, engraving tools, rasps, files and stilettos as implements in the ivory worker’s toolbox. The use of a drill for decorative elements is a characteristic of the “Soissons” group; this tool is used consistently for the trefoil decoration in the architectural spandrels and occasionally for architectural items inside the narrative itself (as on the sepulcher on the Soissons diptych).
\textsuperscript{238} Cutler used this German word to differentiate between full undercutting, where the sculptural form is completely detached from the underlying ground, and a deep, curved cut that evacuates an oblique space beneath the figure to suggest detachment. Cutler, \textit{Hand of the Master}, 111–12.
\textsuperscript{239} For a full discussion of these three techniques see Cutler, \textit{Hand of the Master}, 110–19.
\textsuperscript{240} Cutler, \textit{Craft of Ivory}, 50; Theophilus suggests shave-grass cuttings (asperella aequabis) and linen to polish the ivory piece and finishing the work with walnut oil (\textit{nucis oleo}). See Theophilus, \textit{De diversis artibus}, Chapter XCIII.
\textsuperscript{241} Cutler’s discussion of polishing and its significance in Byzantine ivory carving is itself masterful. The observation that differential highlighting subverts and complicates the established planar order of the panel is particularly insightful: “Instead of a simple binary opposition between salience and recession, he created a complex set of visual signals that connects the planes he (the artist) had established at an earlier stage in his work” (\textit{Hand of the Master}, 143).
The question of the existence and extent of polychrome on Gothic ivories has been largely answered by several scientific studies executed by Juliette Levy, A. Cascio and Bernard Guineau.\textsuperscript{242} It is evident that paint was indeed applied to ivory in the Gothic period and it ranged from the subtle to the ostentatious.\textsuperscript{243} The thirteenth-century guild of “\textit{paintres et taillières ymagiers}” supports the argument that the polychromy was coeval with carving; in many cases both are part of the original conception of the work. Yet the Parisian evidence should not unduly color our understanding of ivory production in the northern provinces: there is no consistent evidence of polychromy on the group of ivory panels from Picardy.\textsuperscript{244} Coupled with evidence from the early fourteenth century of Jean le Scelleur being paid to “illuminate” the mirror of Mahaut of Artois,\textsuperscript{245} it remains a strong possibility that the application of color to ivories was a step executed after the piece left the ivory carver’s workshop.

The question of ateliers and workshops has, since Koechlin, been a persistent one in Gothic ivory scholarship. Anthony Cutler has argued that there were no workshops but only isolated masters for Byzantine ivories, both Late Antique and tenth and eleventh

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{243} A contemporary comparison is between the Coronation of the Virgin group (OA 58, 3921, 3922) at the Louvre and the Sainte-Chapelle Virgin and Child statue (OA 57) in the same museum. See Gaborit-Chopin, \textit{Ivoires médiévaux}, nos. 99 and 100.
\item \textsuperscript{244} See Chapter 3.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
century. His arguments are based on the fact that the amount of labor required to finish a work was not beyond the capabilities of a single individual to complete within a reasonable amount of time. Furthermore, in all of Cutler’s extensive examinations of Byzantine ivory carving, he has not found conclusive evidence that more than one hand worked on one piece. Boileau’s *Livre des métiers* elucidates the extent to which ymagiers actually ran a workshop. The ymagiers tailleurs could take only one apprentice at a time; a second apprentice could only be taken once the first had been in his service for at least seven years. The master could also have his children (only from lawful marriages) or the children of his wife work in the atelier, in addition to as many valets and laborers (ouvriers) as he would like. The painters and carvers of images enjoyed much more lenient regulations: they could employ as many valets and apprentices as they pleased. What is the implication of these regulations on the carving of ivory in the thirteenth century? And what was the division of labor in such a populous workshop?

Many tasks, such as cleaning the husk and sectioning the tusk into manageable segments, are appropriate for less skilled laborers to complete. Roland Koekkoek suggested that once the master had finished the figural carving on an object, the

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247 “II. Nus ne puet ne ne doit el mestier devant dit prendre ne avoir que un aprentiz, ne ne le puet prendre a mains de VIII anz de service et a IIII livres de Parisis que li mestres doit avoir, ou a X anz de service sans argent; mès plus argent et plus service puet il bien prendre, se avoir le puet. III. Li mestre qui a pris son aprentiz, si tost comme li aprenti a acompliz ses VII anz, il puet prendre l autre aprentiz, a quel terme que il ait prins le premier.” Boileau, *Règlements sur les Arts*, Titre LXI.

248 “IV. Chascun mestre du mestier devant dit puet, avec l’aprentiz priz, prendre en la maniere desus devisée ses enfanz et les enfanz sa feme, nez de loiau mariagio tant seulement. VI. Li mestre du mestier devant dit pueent avoir tant vallez et ouvriers coume il leur plaist.” Boileau, *Règlements sur les Arts*, Titre LXI.

249 “II. Quiconques est Ymagiers Paintres a Paris, il puet avoir tant de vallès et de aprentiz comme il li plaist, et ouvrer de nuiz quant mestier li est.” Boileau, *Règlements sur les Arts*, Titre LXII.
apprentice would begin to work on the architectural details.\textsuperscript{250} The example Koekkoek cites for this hypothesis, in fact, is the Soissons diptych (Plate 21), which he believes has poorly executed architectural details in comparison to the quality of the figural carving. What is poor about the carving, in Koekkoek’s opinion, are the angled and uneven verticals. Yet instead of being the result of a clumsy apprentice, the tilted vertical alignment was a carefully planned decision on behalf of the master to accommodate the curve of the tusk. The bays ever so slightly diminish in width in the upper registers to conceal the narrow end of the panel. The architectural details were, therefore, not mere afterthoughts of the composition but integral to the conception of the work as a whole. The limited number of apprentices and the lack of formal evidence (discernment of separate hands in the figural carving) suggests that any apprentice’s role was limited to preparatory and finishing stages, but that the actual figural and architectural carving was left to the hand of the master.

Finally, it has been assumed that ivory carvers were stationary artists, that they had a permanent workshop in a particular city and that this is where they produced the ivory carvings. Yet the artisan who is responsible for at least some of the “Soissons” group cannot be firmly associated with any specific town or city: what little provenance information there is suggests that he was active in various towns throughout the departments of the Picard region. The most suggestive example is the knop carved for an eleventh-century crozier whose entire provenance history is known in detail (Plate 7, Fig. 1–18).\textsuperscript{251} The crozier, the so-called “Crozier of Saint Yves de Chartres,” was apparently


\textsuperscript{251} The knop, with depictions of the apostles Peter, Paul, James and Bartholomew, is now in Antwerp, Musée Mayer van den Bergh, inv. 440. The crozier to which it was once attached is now in Florence, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, inv. 44 C. Jean-Baptist Carrand (1792–1871) found the tenth-century knop
made for the saint who, before he became Bishop of Chartres, was the well-loved Abbot of the Abbey of Saint-Quentin in Beauvais. His crozier was kept at Saint-Quentin as a relic until the French Revolution (1790), when it was moved to Beauvais Cathedral for safe-keeping after the dissolution of the monasteries. The crozier with its Gothic knop remained there only briefly; it was in the collection of the Count Saint-Morys, circa 1805, and soon after entered the art market. This information allows several deductions to be made concerning the commissioning of ivory objects: it is highly improbable that the monks of Saint-Quentin would have sent the precious relic away to a workshop in another city to be fitted for a knop. Nevertheless the knop fits perfectly, meaning that the artisan had the object at hand when fashioning the new attachment. The ivory carver undoubtedly traveled to Beauvais to complete the commission. Whether he had a permanent workshop in another town and traveled only for this project or was a completely itinerant artisan arriving in a city and peddling his skills is unknown.

now attached to the Bargello crozier near Beauvais in the mid-nineteenth century to replace the Gothic knop he had removed. Rohault de Fleury, La Messe. Etudes Archéologiques, 8 vols. (Paris: Librarie des Imprimeries Réunies, 1889), vol. 8, 88.
255 Nor is it likely that the artisan’s permanent workshop was located in Beauvais, because there are no other extant works of Gothic ivory with a Beauvais provenance. The central panel of a triptych now in Abbeville, Musée Boucher-de-Perthes, 1891.88.852, came from the collection of a local parish priest in 1857, and so likely comes from the northern Picard region. Another central panel of a triptych in the Courtauld Gallery, London (O.1966.GP.13) was most likely purchased by Thomas Gambier-Perry (1816–88) while traveling through northern France 1851–59. Dennis Farr, Thomas Gambier Parry as Artist and Collector (London: Courtauld Institute Galleries, University of London, 1993), 58.
6. Conclusions

Ivory’s lengthy journey across three continents, two seas and two oceans, from the hinterland of the East African Coast to the ivory carving centers in northern France made it a costly and luxurious imported item. Even if the final European owners were ignorant of the details of the voyage outlined above, the exoticism attached to ivory as a commodity would influence their reception of the object, particularly in the thirteenth century since ivory had been so rare in the twelfth century. The distant origins and elite status of ivory also influenced its commissioning and carving. Although little thirteenth-century documentary evidence for local French ivory transactions survives, we are nevertheless able to glean the contours of the market from this minimal evidence, which is markedly different than the more fully developed trade in the fourteenth century. As a precious material, ivory was purchased by the patron who then summoned a suitable artisan to complete the work. This artisan was not always himself a professional sculptor, but an individual more generally skilled in the arts, such as an illuminator or a calligraphist. Even if he were a sculptor, his primary medium would have been wood or stone. The patron would set the general iconography or theme of the work and leave the specific details of the composition to the artisan. The leading role of the patron in the thirteenth century in purchasing and commissioning objects distinguishes the function of thirteenth-century ivories from those produced in the fourteenth century, where a purely market economy of on-spec production was the norm. The clearly differentiated stages of production—cleaning, sectioning, drawing, blocking out, carving of the figures and architectural details, polishing and polychromy—allowed apprentices to familiarize themselves with the material by accomplishing several tasks before tackling the actual
carving of figures and architecture. This first chapter has thus traced the material history of the “Soissons” group ivories, from the living elephant in southeast Africa to the workshop practices of thirteenth-century artisans. With the economic context having been delineated, the particular history of the objects in the “Soissons” group can now be examined in detail.
Chapter 2

Historiography and the Question of Connoisseurship

Before proceeding from the general consideration of the economics of ivory exchange and carving to a specific analysis of one particular group of ivories, the “Soissons” group, it is necessary to examine the preceding scholarship on the subject to determine which propositions are sound and which cannot be maintained in the present study. The first half of this chapter is a detailed survey of the scholarship on the “Soissons” group, from its first positing to the present day. The methodology of choice in the historiography is connoisseurship, the only tool available for the dating of Gothic ivories when there is a complete lack of external sources: there are neither inventory citations, descriptive accounts, signatures, colophons, contracts nor records of commissions to inform us about the dating and origin of the “Soissons” ivories. To anchor the ivories in their original historical context, it is necessary to employ connoisseurship. This practice, however, has fallen out of favour in recent years and a theoretical justification must be offered for the results of the project to withstand scrutiny.

This chapter begins with an analysis of the historiography of the Soissons group of ivories in which connoisseurship plays a central role. The second half of the chapter establishes philosophical grounds for the practice of connoisseurship, a task that requires serious reflection on several premises often taken for granted in the discipline of art history. The criticisms posed by postmodern thought regarding stylistic development are acknowledged and considered. My project, and the discipline of art history as a whole, must emerge from the debilitating mode of methodological scepticism and establish
reasonable parameters for scholarly practice. I endeavour to accomplish this by offering a precise definition of style and by exploring style’s connection to society: is the relationship between society and style merely metonymic, or is there an etiological correlation? How does a culture engender change or modifications in a style?

Theoretically, connoisseurship exploits the etiological connection between style and society to determine the date and place of origin. Once a plausible explanation for the linking of a style to the society that produced it is posited, the practice of connoisseurship can be examined on the basis of this causal link between style and society. Because the method for attributing an object has traditionally been veiled in mystery and intuitionism, it is imperative to formulate stringent guidelines for a responsible practice of connoisseurship. Although in the field they are often considered synonyms, I refer to the rationally delineated practice of connoisseurship as “stylistic analysis.”

1. Historiography

Raymond Koechlin (1860–1931) was the first to consider the “Soissons” group as one of his “Quelques ateliers d’ivoireiers Français aux XIIIe et XIVe siècles.”¹ In this and in his later definitive work, Les ivoires gothiques français, Koechlin sought to

establish a comprehensive system to classify the corpus of French gothic ivories. The end product relied primarily on format and iconography to establish different types of ivories. “L’atelier du diptyque dit de Soissons” was named after a diptych said to have come from the treasury of Saint-Jean-des-Vignes in Soissons, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (Plate 21). The dense narrative of Christ’s Passion and the rayonnant Gothic architectural frame are the most prominent characteristics of the Soissons diptych that Koechlin used to define the group as a whole. As the earliest group of Gothic diptychs, he assumed “l’atelier du diptyque dit de Soissons” was from Paris, the centre of ivory production in the thirteenth century and where Koechlin placed all of the best ivories. Koechlin dated the various ateliers based on monumental comparanda, as he believed that miniature ivories were principally a derivative art form, reiterating the innovations of architecture and monumental sculpture. Chronologies were established within ateliers by giving temporal priority to the high-quality “masterpieces” and then assuming that second-rate items were later productions. Koechlin established a late


4 Koechlin serendipitously recorded a valuable piece of oral history. The papers of the Webb collection recorded that the ivory came from the dioceses of Soissons, and in 1909, M. Blanchard, a member of the antiquarian society in Soissons, still claimed that the diptych was stolen from Saint-Jean-des-Vignes during the revolution: “Nous n’avons ici aucun document écrit prouvant que l’ivoire est de Saint-Jean, mais, depuis un grand nombre d’années, c’était une tradition de notre société. Nos premiers membres (de la Société archéologique) avaient connu les dernier Joannistes mort à Soissons.” Koechlin, Ivoires gothiques français, vol. 2, no. 38.
thirteenth-century date for the “Soissons” group by comparing the micro-architectural elements to manuscript painting, retables, and architectural decoration. According to Koechlin, the earliest works from the “Soissons atelier” were influenced by, and thus twenty to thirty years later than, the Saint Louis Psalter (1253–70) (Fig. 2–1), the retable from Mareuil-en-Brie (1300–50) (Fig. 2–2), and the north transept portal of Notre-Dame de Paris (circa 1250) (Fig. 2–3). The balance of the works that Koechlin attributed to this atelier is dated based on the degree of degeneration of style in comparison to the first works. The more awkward and roughly hewn objects, therefore, are assigned to the beginning of the fourteenth century.

Koechlin’s *Ivoires gothiques français* was initially well received by French, German and English scholars. His ateliers and his method for grouping and analyzing them were readily accepted in several subsequent works. Otto Pelka’s study of the material, aimed at a more general public, summarized Koechlin’s monumental work in German. Many collection catalogues were published soon after Koechlin’s oeuvre, and

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7 Koechlin likened the “nail head” decorations on the gables of the group to those that are found on the jambs of the north door of Notre-Dame de Paris; Koechlin, *Ivoires gothiques français*, vol. 1, 75 n. 5. Both the northern and southern transept portals are dated through an inscription on the base of the south transept portal of 1258, in commemoration of Jean de Chelles. It is assumed that Jean de Chelles was therefore the architect of the north transept, which was largely completed at his death in 1258. The north transept is therefore dated circa 1250. See Alain Erlande-Brandenburg, *Notre-Dame de Paris*, trans. John Goodman (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1997), 159.
8 The new systemization in the approach to works in ivory is especially noteworthy when compared with the informal and disorganized presentations that were the norm prior to Koechlin’s work: a prime example is Alfred Maskell, *Ivories* (London: The Connoisseur’s Library, 1905).
all demonstrate a heavy reliance on his findings, especially with reference to the so-called “Soissons” group.¹⁰

Although he is still frequently cited and deeply respected as a pioneer in the field, Koechlin’s methodology for establishing the hypothetical ateliers has been widely criticized. Louis Grodecki published *Ivoires français* soon after the second World War and he amended several of Koechlin’s groups.¹¹ Concerning “l’atelier de la diptyque dit de Soissons,” he observed such heterogeneity that not only did he question the idea of a single atelier but he also doubted a uniform French provenance for the group. Grodecki identified a core set of diptychs and triptychs in the “Soissons” group that are sufficiently stylistically related such that they could be attributed to the same atelier: the Hermitage diptych (Plate 1), the Salting leaf (Plate 2), the Vatican diptych (Plate 8) and the Lyon triptych (Plate 9). Realistic figural proportions and a remarkable agility and liveliness of the figures are analogous to the so-called “nervous style” miniatures of late thirteenth-century Parisian manuscripts;¹² therefore, Grodecki concludes that the workshop’s location was probably in Paris.¹³ As for the rest of the objects that Koechlin placed in the “Soissons” group, Grodecki classified them as later imitations of the Parisian type, copied in the provinces or abroad. For example, the diptych from the Instituto de

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¹² Grodecki does not mention specific manuscript examples for the “nervous” style; Grodecki, *Ivoires français*, 91.

Valencia de Don Juan in Madrid is likely a Spanish copy (Fig. 2–4),\(^4\) and Grodecki thought that the diptych in the Wallace Collection (Plate 3) came from Germany.\(^5\)

Grodecki’s division of the “Soissons” group into two main categories, those that are stylistically related and originate in the same atelier and those that copied the originals in other geographic locations, is a more accurate view of the “Soissons” group and is closer to current scholarly views. Grodecki leaves unanswered questions as to precisely which objects are stylistically related and where the original atelier and secondary workshops were located. Although certainly closer to the truth than Kechlin’s idealized view of one atelier with progressively less-able copyists, Grodecki’s method is still flawed by the notion that “les plus belles pièces doivent sortir d’un même atelier.”\(^6\) Why could the copies not be just as “beautiful” as the originals? What makes the Wallace diptych German and the Hermitage diptych French, even though their iconography and figural style are identical and their micro-architectural frames very similar? Grodecki’s division must be tempered with an understanding of workshop practice,\(^7\) regional styles, carving technique, and an attitude that does not necessarily assume that a copy is less than its model.

Kechlin and Grodecki both assumed a Parisian origin for the “Soissons” group, but this origin is no longer taken for granted in contemporary scholarship. As early as the

\(^{14}\) Present location unknown. Kechlin, *Ivoires gothiques français*, vol. 2, no. 44.

\(^{15}\) Grodecki, *Ivoires français*, 91.

\(^{16}\) Grodecki, *Ivoires français*, 90.

\(^{17}\) For example, Richard H. Randall has discussed a bone triptych (Williams College Museum of Art, Williamstown, 78.2.3) of relatively low quality. This does not, however, necessitate a late date. Instead, Randall considers the possible affluence of the patron/buyer (or lack thereof) and the possibility of it being a workshop model; Richard H. Randall, *The Golden Age of Ivory: Gothic Carvings in North American Collections* (New York: Hudson Hill Press, 1993), cat. no. 37. See also Roland Koekkoek for a discussion of workshop practices, including the financial risk of using the expensive material for producing carved ivories on spec; Roland Koekkoek, *Gotische Ivoren in het Catharijneconvent* (Utrecht: De Walburg Pers, 1987), 26–27.
end of the nineteenth century, several scholars suggested an Italian origin for the
“Soissons” ivories. Alfred Darcel haphazardly suggested an Italian origin for the diptych
now at the Hermitage (Plate 1), 18 and Alexandre Schnütgen’s 1888 notice on the Salting
leaf (Plate 2) recommended an Italian origin for some members of the “Soissons” group
based on the figures’ loose similarity to the antique. 19 The Victoria and Albert triptych
(Plate 4) was called Italian by both Charles Pillet and Jules Labarté, although no
justifications were offered for either object. 20 Emile and Auguste Molinier both agreed
that the Metropolitan triptych (Plate 19), then in the Spitzer collection, was of Italian
origin. 21 Forty years later, D. D. Egbert offered a more convincing argument for a
northern Italian affiliation for some copies of the “Soissons” group. 22 Egbert began his
article with a close stylistic analysis of the idiosyncrasies of accepted Italian ivory and
bone carving, most notably works from the Embriachi workshops. Since these were
works in which the carvers were not attempting to imitate French forms, the inherently
Italian “mannerisms” manifested themselves more clearly. 23 The characteristics of
northern Italian ivory carving, Egbert notes, are as follows: regular, corrugated, vertical

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19 Schnütgen, “Italienische Diptychon-Tafel von Elfenbein,” 321–324. This localization was repeated by
John Westwood, A Descriptive Catalogue of the Fictile Ivories in the South Kensington Museum (London:
Chapman and Halls, 1876), 407.
20 Pillet’s catalogue for the Soltykoff Collection even suggested a specifically Neapolitan origin; Charles
Pillet, Catalogue des objets d’art et de haute curiosité composant la célèbre collection du Prince Soltykoff
(Paris: Hôtel Drout, 1861), no. 236; Labarté, Histoire des Arts industriels, Planche XX.
21 Auguste Molinier and Frédéric Spitzer, La collection Spitzer: antiquité, moyen-âge, renaissance. Tome I
Les Ivoires (Paris: Maison Quantin, 1890), no. 63; Emile Molinier, Catalogue des objets d’art et de
haute curiosité, antiques, du moyen-âge & de la renaissance, composant l’important et précieuse
collection Spitzer, dont la vente publique aura lieu à Paris... 1893 (Paris: Impr. de l’art, 1893), no. 98;
Emile Molinier, Histoire Générale des Arts, 189. Even Koechlin leaned towards an Italian origin for the
Metropolitan triptych in the Gazette des Beaux-Arts article: Koechlin, “Quelques ateliers d’ivoiriers,” 379.
He rescinded this opinion in the 1924 catalogue entry; Koechlin, Ivoires gothiques français, vol. 2, no. 52.
22 Donald Drew Egbert, “North Italian Gothic Ivories in the Museo Cristiano of the Vatican Library,” Art
23 Egbert, “North Italian Gothic Ivories,” 171.
folds that break sharply at the ground; a deep, slashing carving technique; sharp and jutting jaws; protruding eyeballs with drill marks or slits; and tall, thin figures with tiny heads.24 Once these Italian qualities were identified, connoisseurs could more easily recognize an earlier Italian work that was imitating a French model. Egbert suggested that the unconscious traits persisted even when the artisan copied a foreign form. The example Egbert employed to demonstrate his theory is an ivory diptych from the Vatican collections (A 86; Fig. 2–5). He determined, based on the crude and sharp carving technique of the ivory and on the long bodies with small heads,25 that this diptych is a northern Italian work that copied the iconography of a “Soissons” diptych.26

Charles R. Morey took Egbert’s conclusions further and suggested a northern Italian origin for the core pieces of the “Soissons” group, which he re-labeled the “Vatican diptych atelier.”27 The “Vatican diptych atelier” consists of all the ivories listed by Koechlin in the “Soissons” atelier, except for the Soissons and Berlin diptychs (Plates 21 and 22) and the Walters, British Museum and Baboin leaves (Plates 20, 23, and 24).28 The Italian localization for the “Vatican diptych group” stems from four types of arguments: stylistic (based on Egbert’s characteristics), physical, iconographic, and decorative. The physical argument concerns the hinge marks extant on the Vatican diptych and the two central panels of small triptychs in Cleveland and Abbeville (Plates

24 Egbert, “North Italian Gothic Ivories,” 172 and 174.
17 and 18). Morey claimed that the narrow hinge marks left on the Vatican diptych (Plate 8) are non-functional imitations of the usual French diagonal hinges, cut from the back instead of the front of the panel.\textsuperscript{29} The Cleveland and Abbeville panels have wire hinge marks that Morey rightly noted are more characteristic of Italian diptychs than French.\textsuperscript{30} The iconographic evidence that Morey indicated for an Italian origin of the ivories are slight variations on the French representation of the Nativity and the Epiphany—the second Magus is beardless rather than the third and the Virgin holds the Christ child instead of laying him in his manger.\textsuperscript{31} The architectural decoration of the Vatican diptych seemed to Morey to be especially reminiscent of Italianate forms, for example the baldacchino of Sta. Cecilia in Trastevere, Rome.\textsuperscript{32} Furthermore, he likened the foliate decoration present on the Madrid and St. Louis ivories (Figs. 2–4; 2–6) to the acanthus decorations in Italian Gothic manuscript illumination.\textsuperscript{33}

The stylistic, iconographic and decorative arguments put forth by Egbert and Morey were criticized by Paul Williamson in his examination of Italian Gothic ivories.\textsuperscript{34} Except for a few exceptional cases, Williamson rejected all stylistic and iconographic

\textsuperscript{29} Morey, “Italian Gothic Ivories,” 184. Indeed, the Vatican diptych’s hinge marks are abnormal, but their present state is due to a trimming of the ivory panels at a time significantly later than their production, probably to mount the diptych onto a book cover: the inner edges of the diptych measure 0.4 cm as opposed to 0.6 cm on the outer edges and the back of the panel is heavily, deeply and regularly scratched to enhance the efficacy of an adhesive.

\textsuperscript{30} Wire hinges are composed of a loop of wire threaded through a drilled hole on each panel, entering diagonally from the inner corner of the panel and exiting approximately a centimeter away from the inner edge on the back of the panel. The two wire loops are intertwined and then fixed on the back of the panel. Morey, “Italian Gothic Ivories,” 188. For a lengthier discussion of French versus Italian hinges, see Victor M. Schmidt, \textit{Painted Piety: Panel Paintings for Personal Devotion in Tuscany, 1250–1400} (Florence: Centro Di, 2005), 37–44. A painted diptych by Benedetto di Bindo in the Philadelphia Museum of Art, John G. Johnson Collection, preserves its original wire hinges and is illustrated in Schmidt, \textit{Painted Piety}, 55, figs. 40 and 41.

\textsuperscript{31} Morey, “Italian Gothic Ivories,” 184 and 188. Morey also cites the presence of Peter and Paul on the Metropolitan triptych as distinctive of Italian iconography.

\textsuperscript{32} Morey, “Italian Gothic Ivories,” 184.

\textsuperscript{33} Morey, “Italian Gothic Ivories,” 184.

attributions of “French” Gothic ivories to Italy because of the dearth of textual evidence regarding Italian ivory workmanship in the thirteenth century—there are no inventory citations labeling Gothic ivories as Italian, nor is there any contemporary evidence that ivory workshops existed in Italy. Therefore, ivory pieces obviously in the French style cannot, in Williamson’s opinion, be attributed to Italy unless significant documentary evidence should appear to justify such attributions. In his view, all members of the “Soissons” group should be considered French until data to the contrary are presented.35

Yet Morey’s separation of the “Soissons” ivories into two groups was based on careful and thoughtful observations and the “Soissons” group can no longer be considered a homogenous group of objects from a single artistic centre. Danielle Gaborit-Chopin also identified two separate ateliers within the “Soissons” group and was the first to suggest a northern French origin for some of the “Soissons” ivories.36 Gaborit-Chopin acknowledged a late thirteenth-century Parisian workshop centered on the Soissons and Berlin diptychs (Plates 21 and 22).37 Justifications for this attribution were amplified in the exhibition catalogue for L’art au temps des rois maudits, where Gaborit-Chopin reiterated Koechlin’s rapprochement of these two diptychs to the Saint Louis Psalter (1258–1270) (Fig. 2–1)38 and posited an intra-medium comparison of the Soissons diptych with the ivory triptych from the former church of Saint-Sulpice du Tarn (Fig. 2–

35 A corollary to this statement would be that ivories should not be assigned to provincial centers outside of Paris, as there is little documentary evidence that workshops existed outside Paris. Williamson corroborated this extrapolation in a personal communication, May 2006.
37 Gaborit-Chopin, Ivoires du Moyen Age, 143–44.
In her opinion, this triptych showed the same softly modeled bodies and the same heightened attention to idiom details as the Soissons diptych, suggesting to Gaborit-Chopin a Parisian provenance.

The second atelier that Gaborit-Chopin delineated in *Ivoires du Moyen Age* is formed around the Vatican diptych and is analogous to Koechlin’s “first works” group. Gaborit-Chopin located this workshop in northern France based on stylistic similarities to the Christ in Majesty formerly on the façade of Thérouanne Cathedral (Fig. 2–8), the polyptych of Floreffe (circa 1254) (Fig. 2–9), a plaque of Saint Bartholomew at the British Museum (Fig. 2–10), and the roll of Saint Eloi (Fig. 2–11), a manuscript illuminated in mid-thirteenth-century Noyon. The *Art au temps des rois maudits* catalogue entry offered further stylistic comparisons between the hypothetical northern French atelier and contemporary manuscript illumination, specifically the Psalter-Hours of Yolande de Soissons and the *Somme le Roi* of Jeanne d’Eu (Figs. 2–12 and 2–13).

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43 London, British Museum (MLA 1906, 7-17, 1 and 2). *Un trésor gothique*, no. 22.
Charles Little has discussed the localization of the “Soissons” group in greater detail in a paper presented for the *Art au temps des rois maudits* exhibition. He reaffirmed Gaborit-Chopin’s theory of a northern French workshop, adding a wooden statue to the monumental comparanda for the northern French ivories (Fig. 2–14). The facial features and hairstyle of this wooden Saint Amand are indeed quite close to those of the Christ enthroned on the Lyon triptych (Plate 9), and the geometric fold style of Saint Amand’s cloak resonates with the embedded chevrons that appear on the standing Virgin and Child in the lower register of the Lyon triptych.

The most recent publication on the “Soissons” group is an encyclopedia entry by Danielle Gaborit-Chopin for *The Dictionary of Art.* Three, instead of two, workshops are briefly outlined: one around the Soissons and Walters/Cluny diptychs (Plates 20 and 21), probably situated in Paris; another Parisian workshop for the Berlin diptych (Plate 22); and the much-discussed northern French atelier, to which Gaborit-Chopin adds a crozier knop from Antwerp (Plate 7). The bifurcation of the Parisian atelier is presumably based on stylistic comparisons, but examples are not offered. This very brief “state-of-the-question” encyclopedia entry raises two problems. First, Gaborit-Chopin continues to rely on conceptions of quality to determine chronology. Second, many

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46 Little, “L’art de l’ivoire au temps de Philippe le Bel,” 81.

47 Little, “L’art de l’ivoire au temps de Philippe le Bel,” 82; Lille, Musée des Beaux-Arts (SA 168), northern French (Lille or Saint-Omer), 1260–70; oak, 177 cm. See Didier, “A propos de quelques sculptures françaises,” 87–88, fig. 25.


49 Antwerp, Museum Mayer van den Bergh, (inv. no. 440).

50 “The higher-quality members of the group can be dated between 1250 and 1280, but some pieces, such as the Berlin Diptych, could have been carved at the end of the century.” Gaborit-Chopin, “Gothic Ivories: The ‘Soissons’ group.” See Anthony Cutler for an enlightened discussion of quality; Anthony Cutler, *The
triptychs and some diptychs are not addressed in Gaborit-Chopin’s brief overview. The little diptych in St. Louis (Fig. 2–6), for example, has not figured prominently in any of these discussions, and the diptych in the Wallace collection (Plate 3) has likewise fallen by the wayside. Including these objects in the discussion will clarify our understanding of the so-called “Soissons” group.

The premises that I accept from the scholarship are the following: that the “Soissons group” can actually be divided into two distinct groups, one from Paris and one from northern France. The Parisian group is composed of a number of diptychs that share many similarities (narrative pattern, iconography, facture) but were not carved by the same artist. The northern group comprises the Hermitage, Wallace and Vatican diptychs and the Salting leaf, in addition to a large number of triptychs, small polyptychs and a crozier knob. These objects were carved by the same hand or small atelier and show a wide variation of iconography and narrative disposition. I will question, however, the specific dates offered by previous scholars and attempt to offer more convincing analyses for the localization of certain pieces.

Existing scholarship has not fully answered basic questions concerning the dating and localization of the “Soissons” group. These questions must be answered before proceeding with an analysis of the diptych’s role in devotional practice, the ultimate goal of this study. The lack of evidence from external sources, however, renders this

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52 This is probably because the experts cannot agree among themselves to which group it should belong. In a letter from Richard H. Randall to Judith Mann of the Saint Louis Art Museum dated February 4, 1992, Randall states: “The Soissons diptych is superb, and very interesting. Gaborit-Chopin would like it to be Paris, but the rest of us prefer northern France for the entire group”; Saint Louis Art Museum Object Files (183:1928). This likely explains Randall’s as Paris or North France. Richard Randall, The Golden Age of Ivory: Gothic Carvings in North American Collections (New York: Hudson Hills Press, 1993), no. 49.
undertaking difficult: there are no inventory citations, descriptive accounts, signatures, colophons, contracts or records of commissions to inform us about the “Soissons” ivories. The only methodological tool that can be applied to determine the original cultural contexts of the ivories, to anchor them historically, is connoisseurship. As outlined above, stylistic discourse dominates both the past and present scholarship on this group. As connoisseurship determines the most basic foundations of the current study—where and when the ivories were produced and initially used—a theoretical justification of the practice is offered here to shore up the foundations of the whole project.

2. A Note on Postmodern Skepticism

The “postmodern condition” is partially responsible for the discipline-wide disenchantment with the discourses of style and connoisseurship. Jean-François Lyotard aptly defined the postmodern position as “an incredulity towards meta-narratives.”\(^{53}\) The particular meta-narrative at stake for art history is the developmental paradigm imposed on stylistic progression: birth, growth, maturity and decline.\(^{54}\) This prescribed trajectory,


like the constructed narrative patterns identified in historical texts, was identified, at best, as being a highly mediated and manicured interpretation of the past with little basis in historical reality. The subjective decisions an (art) historian makes in selecting the story s/he wishes to tell or in selecting the details to be included or excluded has more to do with the social/economic/political situation of the modern historian than the past events being studied.

The awareness of the artificial quality of narrative patterns led to the realization that this pattern could no longer be propagated—in both contemporary art practice and in scholarly art history. For academics, the pressing question that Hans Belting addressed was how art history as a discipline could proceed without relying on obsolete modes of narration. Two procedural solutions have gained widespread acceptance in the field. First, the discipline has focused on case studies or monographs that offer close readings and in-depth analyses of single monuments. By limiting the scope of the study it is no longer necessary to situate the object a) in a larger narrative of “art” or b) in the development of a style. The principal focus of the case study has instead become the

social and economic conditions that formed and shaped the production of the object. The second mode of confronting the criticisms of postmodern thought has been a keen academic interest in the historiography of art history.\textsuperscript{58} By analyzing and contextualizing art historical texts to uncover their biases and partisan views, a distillation of the older generation of art historians’ works can ensue, separating felicitous observations from malignant ideologies.

These solutions avoid the main problem brought to light by postmodern skepticism: how to address and discuss the fact that change and development occur in art? How is art to be examined diachronically without imposing preconceived narrative structures on the past? Belting ignored this larger question, assuming it could simply be avoided through the synchronic focus on contextualized case studies. Yet if an object is not dated through external sources—textual or scientific—its proper context cannot be established. A context-less artifact cannot be the subject of a contextual study. Must undated objects, like many of the ivories, therefore be excluded from the discourse of art history? Clearly this stance is not reasonable.\textsuperscript{59} Fortunately, a teleologically driven chronology is not the only possible one. Through an examination of the ontology of style, the mechanisms for stylistic change can also be explored. Linking style to a culture’s changing requirements for the practical function of art, whether that be political, religious or economic, proposes a diachronic progression. Yet in opposition to the master

\textsuperscript{58} Elizabeth Sears, “Functions of Historiography,” (paper presented at the annual meeting of the College Art Association, New York, NY, February 15, 2007 in a session entitled “The Status of Interpretation in Art History”). Some art historians denounced the possibility of performing any true art historical analyses again, leaving historiography as the only acceptable form of art writing; see Donald Preziosi, \textit{Rethinking Art History: Meditations on a Coy Science} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989) and for a critique of this view see Moxey, \textit{The Practice of Theory}, 6–8.

\textsuperscript{59} John Pope-Hennessy rightly balked at this suggestion, stating that no matter how flawed connoisseurship may be, it is worse to construct a history of art based solely on externally documented works. John Pope-Hennessy, “Connoisseurship,” in \textit{The Study and Criticism of Italian Sculpture} (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1980), 36.
narratives of the past, this progression’s contours are dictated by the ideology of the
culture and not by the constructed narratives previously imposed upon stylistic change.⁶⁰

3. Style

Style is a description of a polythetic⁶¹ set of similar but varying attributes in a
group of artifacts, the presence of which can only be explained by the history of
the artifacts, namely, common descent from an archaeologically identifiable
artifact-production system in a particular state or states.⁶²

The word “style” is used to identify a set of characteristics in a group of objects—not
every object must share every feature to belong to the group—and these characteristics
are causally linked to the society that made them. While a stylistic group shares a number
of morphological characteristics, not all members of the group share all characteristics.
The threshold number of attributes an object must have in order to be included in the
group is high, but there is no precise number. The morphological attributes are a product
of their manufacture, thus providing the historical link that enables attributions.

Furthermore, a sufficient level of similarity must be determined relative to each grouping

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⁶¹ Polythetic: Involving or sharing a number of common characteristics of a group or class, none of them essential for membership of the group or class in question. Oxford English Dictionary, 2006, s.v.
“polythetic.”
because the attributes or characteristics cannot be identical from one work to the next.\textsuperscript{63} The stringency of the polythetic threshold and the level of similarity are proportional to the accuracy of the historical origin.

The advantage of this definition of style is that it does not limit the actor engendering the style to an individual or to a society, but succeeds in describing the broad phenomenon and allowing a variety of causes to be identified. Although scholarship historically has not differentiated sufficiently between individual style and period or group style,\textsuperscript{64} it is quite clear that individual and period style are two aspects, at opposite ends of the spectrum, of the same phenomenon. Style—individual, group, regional or period—is a response to society’s desired criteria for image production, what Michael Baxandall calls a charge.\textsuperscript{65} Each society’s charge contains certain expectations of what functions or ends an image or an art object ought to perform or fulfill.\textsuperscript{66} These

\textsuperscript{63} The classic example of stylistic similarity is handwriting: my signature is not identical each time I inscribe it, but there is a high enough level of consistency that it is said to be the “same” signature. For a critique of the notion of similarity, see Nelson Goodman, “Seven Strictures on Similarity,” in \textit{Experience and Theory}, ed. Lawrence Foster and John W. Swanson (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1970), 19–29.


\textsuperscript{66} Baxandall, following the \textit{triplex ratio}, defines the charge for medieval religious pictures as being (1) to expound religious matter clearly, (2) to move the soul, and (3) to make the whole memorable. Baxandall, \textit{Patterns of Intention}, 43–44. Clearly these are derived from the Gregorian dictum later reiterated by Aquinas. See Michael Camille, “The Gregorian Definition Revisited: Writing and the Medieval Image,” in \textit{L’image: functions et usages des images dans l’Occident médiéval: Actes du 6e International Workshop on Medieval Societies, Centro Ettore Majorana (Erice, Sicile, 17–23 octobre 1992)}, ed. Jérôme Baschet and
expectations, and the challenges they pose, establish the extreme limits of the stylistic possibilities for that society and result in the period style. Regions, schools and individuals address the problems posed by the charge and offer solutions to it in idiomatic ways, each offering an increasingly apt strategy. Occasionally an artist or group of artists proposes a solution that itself establishes new limits, for example, mimesis as a means to render images more poignant. These solutions, as Jonathan Gilmore suggests, impose internal limits on the formal development of the group that accepts the solution as part of their “brief”—Baxandall’s word for an artist/artisan’s particular strategy to a charge. For example, a group of artists accepting linear perspective as the best means to improve art’s affective qualities eventually exhausted the solution as the mathematical construct reached its internal limits. In addition to a group or individual brief, each particular situation establishes further challenges requiring solutions. A patron will make certain requests that impose additional limitations on the artist/artisan’s production: a certain number of saints must be depicted, the panel must fit into a small chapel, or the funds available for a commission are limited.


67 See also Gilmore, Life of a Style, for a successful integration of Baxandall’s brief with the troubling question of development in the history of art.

68 Leonard B. Meyer suggested the term “strategy” to designate individual solutions to “laws” or “rules” of a style. Meyer’s theory of style was directed towards music composition and its formulations are too universalizing and inflexible to be adopted in this study. Leonard B. Meyer, “Toward a Theory of Style,” in Concept of Style, 3–44.

69 Gilmore, Life of a Style, 38–74.

70 Gilmore explains that the assumption of one viewpoint for linear perspective is necessarily an oversimplification of binocular vision, leading to a number of distortions when the technique is stretched to its limits in large compositions. Gilmore, Life of a Style, 62–65.

71 This model also functions when a patron is not present and an artist produces works on his/her own volition. See, for example, both Baxandall, Patterns of Intention, 47–58 and Gilmore, Life of a Style, 38–47 discussions of Picasso.
Style—period and individual—is thus a response to a historically determined charge and brief. The contextual specificity of the brief engenders style with its etiological qualities: the causal link between cultural brief and style makes the deduction from style back to society possible. Art of one period and one place, because it is responding to the same visual requirements, tends to share similar morphological characteristics. By far the greatest force in determining the style of an object is the artist/artisan’s inherited visual tradition, so logically this should be examined first. Innovations are actually relatively rare, a fact that raises several important questions: Why did an artist/artisan choose to make a work in a certain way? What are the forces that drove him/her to produce works according to a certain fashion? Especially for the high Middle Ages, did the selected style bear ideological weight? Was it intentionally communicative of anything? If so, what?

There is great stability in a society’s visual tradition that inevitably determines how an artist/artisan produces a work. Conservatism of form is maintained in societies due to a variety of factors, not the least of which is a genuine emotional attachment to traditional forms. The traditions of visual culture are transmitted both actively and passively. Active training is accomplished through apprenticeships and codified

72 Although the history of art, which privileges innovative artistic genius and the avant-garde, does not properly convey this impression. For example, see Richard Wollheim, “Pictorial Style: Two Views,” in Concept of Style, 129–48.


instruction in the manufacture of objects. Informal training, on the other hand, is the accumulated lifetime experience of looking at cultural products: manuscripts in the monastery’s library, tombs in the parish cemetery, sculpture and frescoes in the cathedral, simply carved knife handles, tapestries at court and in the church, etc. The contemporary stylistic idiom—that most likely to be replicated by any artist/artisan—is an amalgam of the technical contingencies of the medium and the visual heritage of the locale. These factors are included in, and to some degree dictated by, the artist/artisan’s brief.\footnote{In commissioning a work, a patron is investing in that artist/artisan/workshop’s particular style. Baxandall, \textit{Patterns of Intention}, 42–45.} Stylistic change does undoubtedly happen, yet it is only against the background of tradition, the status quo, that innovation can register as such. Furthermore, even when an innovation does occur, it does so only in a limited number of ways. A totally inventive work would be incomprehensible and useless to its audience: even an “avant-garde” piece must be grounded in tradition.\footnote{Ackerman, “Style,” 166–67.} There are two broad categories in which an artist/artisan can be innovative. The first is through the incorporation of an established visual referent into the work, which I will term, following Marvin Trachtenberg, historicism.\footnote{Much of Trachtenberg’s article on “Medieval Modernism” is quite compelling and he has rightly identified two major trends in artistic production. What is troubling is his insistence that new innovations are necessarily “anti-historicist” and concerned with creating new forms for the sake of glorifying the present and breaking with the past, although the only evidence that he offers to substantiate such a claim are rhetorical descriptions of Gothic architecture: the pointed arch as a “broken arch,” concatenated pillars as “imprisoning the central column… in a modernist cage,” and flying buttresses as an “exploded” exterior “scattered to the winds.” Trachtenberg, “Suger’s Miracles,” 188–9. Nor are any arguments offered for the sudden shift towards anti-historicist thought to explain why Abbot Suger would suddenly embrace such radical anti-historicist tendencies. In fact, scholarship has recently suggested that the innovative plan in the chevet of Saint-Denis was itself an attempt at historicism; see Eric C. Fernie, “Suger’s ‘Completion’ of Saint-Denis,” in \textit{Artistic Integration in Gothic Buildings}, ed. Virginia Chieffo Raguin, Kathryn Brush and Peter Draper (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 84–91; and Bruno Klein, “Conventia et cohaerentia antiques et novi operas: ancient and new in the debut of the architecture gothique,” in Pierre, lumière, couleur: \textit{Etudes d'histoire de l'art au Moyen Age en l'honneur d’Anne Prache}, ed. Fabienne Joubert et Dany Sandron (Paris: Presses de l’Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 1999), 19–32. Robert}
Historicism is the purposeful quotation of a visual element from an older work with the intention of creating a conceptual link with that work and the circumstances of its production (patron, owner, dedication, etc.).\textsuperscript{78} Incorporating a stylistic element from a historical work as an index allows for the assimilation of the prestige associated with the quoted monument.\textsuperscript{79} The mechanics of historicism are based on the assumption that stylistic characteristics hold the possibility of being signs, but only after the first manifestation establishes the semiotic link between the style and the concept/referent.\textsuperscript{80} In other words, a morphological trait is essentially meaningless until it has been employed and “read” in its context.\textsuperscript{81} It is only once the sign has been actively read and


\textsuperscript{81} Baxandall, \textit{Patterns of Intention}, 58–62.

\textsuperscript{80} The Saussurian linguistic model clarifies this relationship and defines how and when a style can carry meaning and how it can become a sign. A sign is defined as an arbitrary relation between a signifier (visual unit) and a signified (concept), which together are indexical to the referent, the object in the real world. Ferdinand de Saussure, \textit{Course in General Linguistics}, trans. Roy Harris (London: Duckworth, 1983), 65–70. For a discussion of semiotics applied to the visual arts see Mieke Bal and Norman Bryson, “Semiotics and Art History,” \textit{Art Bulletin} 73 (1991): 174–208; Alex Potts, “Sign,” in \textit{Critical Terms for Art History}, 20–34 and Davis, “Style and History in Art History,” 27–28.

\textsuperscript{81} The arbitrary nature of the stylistic sign is almost always upheld—several examples will be discussed below. Irene J. Winter offered an example in Mesopotamian royal sculpture where a new style adopted “affective” qualities. The Northwest Palace of Assurnasipal II inaugurated a new style of heavy muscled figures. The style echoes the text inscribed on the low relief figures that enumerated the king’s attributes, specifically his strength, authority and power. The style literally illustrates the traits of the king. Winter’s example is convincing due to the close text-image relationship and the absence of such a close relationship would make the conclusion tenuous: Irene J. Winter, “The Affective Properties of Styles: An Inquiry into Analytical Process and the Inscripton of Meaning in Art History,” in \textit{Picturing Art, Producing Science}, ed. Caroline A. Jones and Peter Galison (London: Routledge, 1998), 66–73.
interpreted that the process of signification is complete and the stylistic trait becomes indexical.82

If truly new styles are not semiotically meaningful, as opposed to historicist quotations, what is the motivation behind the creation of new forms? The main force for the innovation of new stylistic elements is a change in the brief, be it technical or ideological.83 The notion that technology drives stylistic change was one of the earliest explanations of stylistic development84 and indeed accurately reflects many instances of stylistic modification. Material, functional and technological considerations form a major part of an artist/artisan’s brief.85 A more efficient approach or a refinement of a procedure potentially changes the morphology of the object, thus changing the style.86

This approach has often been championed in the scholarship concerning Gothic architecture,87 for the refinement in the utilization of certain architectural elements

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85 Baxandall, Patterns of Intention, 32–35.
86 The most masterful delineation of this notion is Gottfried Semper, Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts; or, Practical Aesthetics (1860), trans. Harry Francis Mallgrave and Michael Robinson (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2000); for a succinct summary see page 107. Recent scholarship emphasizes that Semper was not a materialist himself; and artistic creativity was to be the subject of the third, unpublished, volume of Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts. Mari Hvattum, Gottfried Semper and the Problem of Historicism (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 108. See also Boas, Primitive Art, 144–82.
87 Since architecture is inherently non-figurative and scholarship on the topic necessarily concentrated on the two main issues of function and style rather than iconography and representation, many studies of the development of style have been concerned particularly with architecture. See J. Mordaunt Crook, “Style in Architecture: the Historical Origins of the Dilemma,” in The Question of Style in Philosophy and the Arts, 70–88.
rapidly resulted in a vastly different architectural vocabulary. For example, Jean Bony deftly enumerated the various technological and ideological aspects of the specific brief that led to the particular construction of the chevet at Saint-Denis. The genesis of Gothic architecture was a technical innovation to harmonize Norman engineering practice with aesthetic expectations of the Ile-de-France audience. Whether or not Bony’s narrative fully reveals the influences that shaped the emergence of Gothic architecture, the paradigm of offering a technical solution to a culturally proposed problem accurately reflects the dominant process through which innovation can occur. A further corollary to this theory is that the momentum of technological improvements is sometimes accelerated by external demands, such as economic requirements or social prestige.

In general, therefore, artistic creativity lies in the presentation of a successful strategy to a challenge in the charge or brief, whether that be a technical or an ideological problem, or both. An artist/artisan does not create the problems to which s/he responds,

90 Norman master masons, for whom quadripartite vaults were part of their brief—a structural feature that necessitated thick and strong walls for counter-support—were charged with building a number of churches in the Ile-de-France. The dominant taste in Ile-de-France, however, was for thin proportions and light walls, made possible by the use of the bay system. The technical challenge faced by the Norman master masons was to incorporate the Ile-de-France expectation of lightness into their brief. Part of the Normans’ solution was the incorporation of pointed arches, common in Burgundian architecture of the time, which reduced the force from the vaults by twenty percent, thereby allowing for thinner walls. Bony, “La genèse de l’architecture gothique,” 12–13.
but has the ability to craft an innovative and imaginative solution to the challenge posed in the brief. The style of an artifact is linked both to the society and to the artist that created it. The etiological connection, therefore, can be plied in reverse to identify both the artist and the society that made an undocumented object—hence justifying the practice of connoisseurship.

In sum, style is a polythetic set of morphological qualities that have etiological properties. The physical characteristics of the art object are etiological and can be linked to their time and place of origin because of the charge or brief that engendered their production. The charge, on the societal level, and the brief, on the individual level, are a set of expectations of what the society or the individual desires from art objects. The artist/artisan responds to these demands with a particular strategy. The majority of the time the strategy is composed of traditional tactics—the wheel is not reinvented each time—but the artist/artisan can creatively address the brief by introducing new morphological characteristics. The motivations behind innovation are twofold: the first is historicist, where visual motifs are incorporated from old or ancient objects to associate the new object with the prestige of the old one, the second is development driven by an ideological, theoretical or mechanical challenge in the brief. As changes in style are so closely linked to the society that produced them, the bond can be used as a diagnostic tool in connoisseurship to establish the original context of production and reception for a work of art. Therefore, the stylistic characteristics of the “Soissons” diptychs are a response to the particular moment of their manufacture: the morphology of the object is a direct reaction to a set of culturally determined specifications (the brief). Going backwards from one of the “Soissons” ivories to the society that produced it is a
theoretical possibility because there is an etiological link to that particular moment and place. The practical method for doing so, connoisseurship or stylistic analysis, can thus be addressed in the final section of this chapter.

4. Connoisseurship and Stylistic Analysis

Connoisseurship and stylistic analysis are virtually synonymous: both refer to the method in which an artifact’s spatial and temporal points of origin are inferred through the stylistic characteristics of the object. I will, however, make a clear differentiation between the terms based on the process through which this information is obtained. An apologia will be offered for connoisseurship, the foundations of which have been routinely attacked in the scholarship of the past half-century. Stylistic analysis will be put forth as a corrective, more stringent methodology that regularizes the practice of connoisseurship, thereby avoiding the unverifiable intuitive leaps for which connoisseurship has been heavily criticized.

Max Friedländer described the instinctive moment of connoisseurship as “a purely emotional sense of conviction com[ing] into play, and push[ing] itself in the place of terse deduction. Perhaps every verdict formulated on grounds of style criticism is nothing but a supposition; perhaps only probability may be arrived at along this path.”

This excerpt, from Friedländer’s reflective work On Art and Connoisseurship, offers a frank appraisal of the practice of connoisseurship as he experienced it, emphasizing the non-cognitive and merely probable nature of his assertions and fully admitting that the

93 Max J. Friedländer, On Art and Connoisseurship, trans. Tancred Borenius (Boston: Beacon Press, 1960), 172–73. He describes further: “A picture is shown to me. I glance at it, and declare it to be a work by Memling, without having proceeded to an examination of its full complexity of artistic form. This inner certainty can only be gained from the impression of the whole, never from an analysis of the visible forms” (173).
“object characteristics,” such as signatures, documentary evidence and Morellian details, are marshaled by the connoisseur to bolster the attribution only after the initial intuitive leap.\(^{94}\) The ineffable moment of emotional conviction has elicited sharp criticism because of the philosophically un-verifiable nature of the method,\(^{95}\) and the mystery surrounding this intuitive process has led to charges of both elitism\(^ {96}\) and extortion.\(^ {97}\) Whereas Friedländer humbly and carefully acknowledged the uncertain character of his intuitive hypotheses, the hubris of many other connoisseurs has stifled discussions intended to

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\(^{94}\) Friedländer emphasizes the secondary role of documentary evidence as only reinforcing the original intuitive leap in the chapter “On the Objective Criteria of Authorship,” in On Art and Connoisseurship, 163–171.

\(^{95}\) The non-cognitive moment of intuition is clearly linked to Immanuel Kant’s category of aesthetic judgment. Richard Offner most explicitly incorporated Kant’s thought into his “Outline of a Theory of Method,” but the ghost of Kant hovers behind Friedländer’s account as well. Richard Offner, “An Outline of a Theory of Method,” in Studies in Florentine Painting: The Fourteenth Century (New York: Frederic Fairchild Sherman, 1927), 127–36; Hayden Maginnis, “Richard Offner and the Ineffable: A Problem in Connoisseurship,” in A Discerning Eye: Essays on Early Italian Painting by Richard Offner, ed. Andrew Ladis (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 21–34. The evocation of Kant to justify connoisseurship, though, is superficial. The Critique of Judgement is concerned with aesthetic judgments or judgments of taste which are neither fully subjective nor fully objective. Connoisseurship, at least under the rubrics of this study, concerns objective and (at least hypothetically) empirically verifiable statements: either this object is from 1290, or it is not; that painting was executed by Memling, or it was not. Therefore, although the Critique of Judgement seems to offer an explanation for the moment of intuition experience by connoisseurs, another model must be sought. Immanuel Kant, The Critique of Judgement, trans. James Creed Meredith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964). See also Christian Helmut Wenzel, An Introduction to Kant’s Aesthetics: Core Concepts and Problems (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005) and Salim Kemal, Kant’s Aesthetic Theory: An Introduction (London: Macmillan, 1992).


\(^{97}\) Clearly, the case of Bernard Berenson, and his “Faustian” arrangement with the American dealer Joseph Duveen was detrimental to the reputation of connoisseurship in the twentieth-century. Berenson received a full twenty-five percent cut from Duveen on paintings he favorably authenticated. Meyer Schapiro, “Mr. Berenson’s Values,” Encounter 8 (1961): 57–65; Colin Simpson, Artful Partners: Bernard Berenson and Joseph Duveen (New York: Macmillan, 1986); Karen Lang, “Encountering the Object,” in The Lure of the Object, 135–156. For a more general view of the public’s opinion of the role of connoisseurs and experts in the art market, “questionable if not mischievous” (131), see Flaminia Gennari Santori, The Melancholy of Masterpieces: Old Master Paintings in America 1900–1914 (Milan: 5 Continents Editions, 2003), 123–32.
elucidate the practice. In order to re-establish the credibility of the indispensable practice of connoisseurship and to offer a solid foundation for the discipline of art history, the intuitive flash must be unpacked and demystified.

Friedländer again offers guidance: “This [attributive] decision from feeling depends upon comparison, but not so much upon the recollection of such and such an authenticated signed or universally accepted work, as rather on an unconscious comparison of the picture to be ascribed with an ideal picture in my imagination.” As an ideal picture in one’s imagination is clearly not accessible for external scrutiny or verification, the connoisseur’s initial impression has the appearance of being a subjective and perhaps illogical decision. The connoisseur must work backwards from his/her instinctual attribution—the unconscious comparison of the object with his/her ideal picture—to consciously explicate the specific comparisons with actual firmly attributed works. This exercise of closely describing the comparisons is the practice of stylistic analysis.

Giovanni Morelli’s method of scientific connoisseurship was an attempt to augment the precision of attributions and to demystify the connoisseur’s moment of

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100 Friedländer 173–74, my emphasis.
101 David Carrier mistakes all close descriptions of works of art as “connoisseurship” or attributive, whereas there is a marked difference between descriptions with the aim of establishing features that indicate the chronological and geographical point of origin (etiological), and descriptions that enhance interpretations (i.e., Clement Greenberg and Rosalind Krauss). David Carrier, “In Praise of Connoisseurship,” The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism 61 (2003): 159–69.
102 There has been a very positive reassessment of Morelli’s contribution to both the practice of connoisseurship and the foundations of the discipline of art history. For a very good biography and discussion of Morelli’s formative education, see Jaynie Anderson, “Giovanni Morelli et sa définition de la
intuition. Morelli recorded his theoretical principles in *Kunstkritische Studien über italienische Malerei* (1890). The literary form of the text—a dialogue—reinforces the idea that connoisseurship is a skill to be learned, not a natural, inborn gift. Scientific connoisseurship is based on the close “study of the works of art themselves” and the careful and detailed descriptions of both the known and unknown works. Morelli is


Morelli was not the first art writer to attempt a rationalization of connoisseurship. Jonathan Richardson (1665–1745) wrote a creative, if unfortunately not very influential, treatise that emphasized the learnable nature of connoisseurship. The only inherent skill necessary to becoming a connoisseur, Richardson stated, was the capacity to think clearly and to reason correctly. Relying heavily on the English philosopher John Locke, reason is defined as intrinsically comparative, distinguishing one idea from another and delineating their differences. Connoisseurship, therefore, is a rational, not intuitive, process, where the object at hand is compared to the accumulated mental pictures of styles stored in one’s mind: “We compare the work under consideration with the Idea we have of the Manner of such a Master, and perceive the Similitude” (I, 107–8). A very similar view will be articulated below. Jonathan Richardson, *Two Discourses (1719)* (Menston, UK: Scolar Press, 1972). Carol Gibson-Wood, “Jonathan Richardson and the Rationalization of Connoisseurship,” *Art History* 7 (1984): 38–56; C. Gibson-Wood, *Studies in the Theory of Connoisseurship from Vasari to Morelli* (New York: Garland, 1988); C. Gibson-Wood, *Jonathan Richardson: Art Theorist of the English Enlightenment* (New Haven: Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, Yale University Press, 2000). A recent article on the reception of Morelli’s technique in the twentieth century was kindly brought to my attention by Jens T. Wollesen after the completion of this passage: Johanna Vakkeri, “Giovanni Morelli’s ‘Scientific’ Method of attribution and its reinterpretations from the 1960s until the 1990s,” *Konsthistorisk Tidskrift* 70 (2001): 46–54. Vakkeri bases her analysis on many of the same sources and her conclusions parallel my own.


Kenneth M. Sayre discusses the platonic dialogue in the context of its ability to present several sides of an argument in order to lead the reader/student to think through the problem themselves and to learn from the discussion presented. See Kenneth M. Sayre, *Plato’s Literary Garden: How to Read a Platonic Dialogue* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 1–32.

Morelli, *Italian Painters*, 20–23: “I feel convinced that, with application and perseverance, a man of ability may attain to a good deal.” Morelli furthermore denounced at length the privileging of documents, art historical tradition (i.e., Vasari) and signatures over the study of the picture itself, *Italian Painters*, 23–32.
most widely recognized for his “characteristic forms” (die charakteristischen Formen) that were to be used in connoisseurship.\textsuperscript{107} These included, most notably, hands, ears, fingernails, noses and nostrils, in addition to the drapery, landscape and the particular array of colors more traditionally relied upon for attributions. These mundane details were to be used primarily for the differentiation of artists from the same school (master and pupil or original and copy, for example) where the time-honored methods based on general impressions had so often failed. In order to aid those not yet well versed in his method, Morelli included diagrams of the characteristic forms to illustrate the often-technical descriptions of the distinctive features of the organ in question and to make clear the morphological discrepancies among artists’ forms.\textsuperscript{108}

The steps of Morelli’s method involve, first, a general impression of a work of art that identifies the school to which the work belongs.\textsuperscript{109} In order to make finer distinctions, the connoisseur must next rely on the characteristic forms of the artist. S/he must be able to recall an artist’s characteristic forms, gleaned from the study of firmly attributed works of art. Morelli’s method, therefore, does not differ greatly from the traditions of connoisseurship that preceded him, except insofar as he strove to sharpen the acuity of the general impressions by citing specific, characteristic morphological forms indexical to the artist’s habits of expression. The value of Morelli’s method of “scientific connoisseurship” lies not in its close emphasis on iconographically insignificant details

\textsuperscript{107} Morelli, \textit{Italian Painters}, 35. Nowhere in “Principles and Methods” does Morelli use the term \textit{Grundformen}, for which he is so often quoted, but only the more simple \textit{Formen}. The term \textit{Grundformen} only appears in the footnote under the two famous plates of comparative woodcuts in which hands and ears by Tuscan artists are illustrated. The term \textit{Grundformen} is likely so popular in English scholarship because this is one of the few German terms that the translator, Constance Ffoulkes, included (77–78; 98–99 in original text).

\textsuperscript{108} The purpose of Morelli’s woodcuts and drawings were and are a topic of much debate and argument. Clearly derived from his scientific background in comparative anatomy, the woodcuts were denigrated in his day as evidence for his amateurish interest in details. Anderson, “Giovanni Morelli,” 49–50.

\textsuperscript{109} See also Berenson, “Rudiments of Connoisseurship,” 111–148.
that would not readily have been copied, but more so in the meticulous descriptions—
both written and drawn—of these characteristics. It was Morelli’s ability to communicate
to an audience precisely what he was looking at and what he was seeing that made
“scientific connoisseurship” convincing, verifiable and pedagogically effective. The close
descriptions and the diagrams verbally and physically manifested the mental comparisons
on which Morelli based his attributions and in so doing he proffered the evidence by
which the audience could accept the attribution’s “truth-value.” This articulation of
the process of connoisseurship, not necessarily the peculiar attention allotted to earlobes
and nostrils, was his important contribution toward “scientific connoisseurship.”

Morelli’s detailed descriptions that constitute “scientific connoisseurship”
enabled a discourse about style and highlighted the fact that seeing is not a universally
shared experience: not everyone sees the same thing when looking at the same object,
especially amateurs and novices. Morelli’s system emphasized the fact that looking
and seeing are subjective experiences, but subjective experiences that can be guided and
altered through communication. When examining a painting, one might not at first

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110 Richard Wollheim did not quite understand the role that Morelli’s illustrative woodcuts had in the
process of connoisseurship. Instead of studying and memorizing known works of an artist, Wollheim
thought that Morelli was advocating memorizing the woodcuts themselves as evidence of characteristic
forms (or, even more absurdly, simply holding up the woodcuts as a direct comparison with the unknown
painting). Morelli never suggests such a practice. Wollheim, “Giovanni Morelli and the Origins of
Scientific Connoisseurship,” 194–201. Hayden Maginnis clarified Wollheim’s misunderstanding and
further posited the potential role of perceptual psychology in the understanding of connoisseurship. Hayden
Maginnis, “The Role of Perceptual Learning in Connoisseurship: Morelli, Berenson, and Beyond,” Art

111 Indeed, David Phillips relates how even an expert’s experience of viewing a work can be highly
variable as a result of the individual’s mental state and physical comfort or discomfort. See David Phillips,

112 Hayden Maginnis highlighted the importance of descriptive explanation in the practice and teaching of
connoisseurship, which he illustrated through reference to perceptual psychology. Evidence mobilized from
two studies of eye movement revealed how the physical activity of the eye changed drastically when the
viewer was given specific descriptions to follow or specific criteria to answer. Humans look differently—
therefore, see differently—when asked different questions or when given different perceptual tasks. Eye
movement across the image and time spent on particular characteristics and details of the picture were
perceive the artist’s characteristic forms, but if they are pointed out and described, one
can easily see them. Guided seeing, or learning to look as a connoisseur does, has been
criticized for simply perpetuating a taxonomic system completely external to the objects
at hand, imposing rather than describing characteristics in a work. Yet in the same
fashion that historians must rely on the conventions of the written word to convey and
reconstruct the past, the indexical relationship between the language used to describe an
object’s style and the morphological aspects of the objects themselves must
fundamentally be trusted, even if probed critically. A verbal description of the
morphology of an object has the ability to delineate sufficiently the actual form of the
object. For if this relationship between the symbolic world of language and reality is
dismissed, not only are the foundations of connoisseurship dismantled, but the basis for
the use of language and of communication in general is deconstructed. Therefore, as
much as any linguistic system ultimately represents the Real, stylistic descriptions
represent actual features in an object.

dependent on the tasks set by the examiner. Education and guided looking had a measurable effect on
at Pictures (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1935); Alfred L. Yarbus, Eye Movements and Vision

113 The subjective phenomenon of seeing has been thoroughly discussed in aesthetic literature, most
notably by Arthur C. Danto, “Content and Causation,” in Transfiguration of the Commonplace: A
Philosophy of Art (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 33–53. See also Nelson Goodman,
Languages of Art: An Approach to a Theory of Symbols (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1976); Richard

114 “Stylistic attribution has little bearing on anything other than the discourse of style to which it belongs.”
Michael Shanks, Classical Archaeology of Greece: Experiences of the Discipline (London: Routledge,
1996), 36.

115 Neer, “Connoisseurship and the Stakes of Style,” 15–26. Neer’s discussion is very closely based on
1958), 193–99: “If I have exhausted the justifications I have reached bedrock, and my spade is turned.
Then I am inclined to say: ‘This is simply what I do’” (Wittgenstein, §217, p. 85; quoted in Neer,
“Connoisseurship and the Stakes of Style,” 22).
Detailed descriptions of the stylistic features on which an attribution is made, therefore, publicize the logic of connoisseurship, making the process of intuitive comparisons accessible for discussion, agreement or disagreement. Verbal descriptions are part of the criteria of the more intelligible process of stylistic analysis versus the taciturn process of intuitive connoisseurship.

The goal of Morelli’s scientific connoisseurship was to identify a particular artist or school for an anonymous painting. The connoisseurship of Gothic ivories, however, presents a different problem: the pressing concern is the identification of the correct historical context. This is where the narratological or teleological concerns of the postmodernists impinge directly on the practice of connoisseurship—especially the connoisseurship of medieval art. Instead of working with a set number of masters and their workshops—trying to decipher if the painting is by Rembrandt or one of his many pupils—to which the connoisseur can put forth a yes or a no answer, medieval art historians operate with a chronology of objects where the answers are more likely “earlier” and “later.” These temporal judgments are often, as Whitney Davis pointed out, based on preconceived notions of stylistic development: earlier equals more naïve, later equals more naturalistic, for example. In order to avoid these biased and subjective assumptions, an outline of stylistic developments based solely on works dated and localized by non-stylistic means should be constructed. Stylistic trends emerge from

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118 In the scholarship on Gothic ivories, the assumptions are actually the opposite: earlier is better and later is degenerate.
this chronological compilation that allow for the interstitial spaces to be hypothetically roughed-in: like the children’s game of connect-the-dots, the stylistic gaps between monuments can only be “penciled in.” The dated works will define the stylistic trajectory, not the art historian’s preconceived assumptions.

In order to make an attribution, therefore, an unknown object, one of the Soissons ivories, is compared to the externally dated works. It is imperative, though, that once an attribution has taken place it not be used for further stylistic analyses: basing stylistic comparisons on objects themselves not securely dated through non-stylistic means leads to a diluting and weakening of the system of stylistic analysis.119

Two types of non-stylistic or external evidence correlate objects with their historical context: textual and scientific. Textual evidence, whether in the form of extrinsic documents or inscriptions on the work itself, cannot be unproblematically accepted as evidence. The text’s authenticity must be probed by connoisseurs of the written word: paleographers and philologists.120 The integrity of the text in relation to the object must also be examined critically to ensure that the proper connection has been made. For example, notoriously vague inventories often require additional documentary evidence to establish if the reference is indeed to the object under consideration.121

Scientific evidence, often viewed as a panacea for issues of authentication and

121 Berenson, “Rudiments of Connoisseurship,” 111–16.
attribution, must also be scrutinized and carefully considered. The most frequently applied scientific dating method for medieval ivories is carbon-14 dating. In the case of ivory, however, the results are often inaccurate because of a low carbon context. Furthermore, carbon-14 dating necessitates a rather large sample, a sometimes-impractical demand on small-scale ivories. At best, the data obtained through radiocarbon dating narrows the time span to within a century. This technique, therefore, is most successfully employed with medieval ivories to prove whether or not they are truly medieval or in fact modern forgeries.

In conclusion, stylistic analysis is the method through which a connoisseur’s intuitive impressions are delineated rationally through detailed descriptions of comparisons of the unknown object with works dated and localized through non-stylistic means. The verbally communicated description and comparison endows the connoisseur’s statement with truth-value—it becomes a statement that can either be right or wrong because it manifests its process of deliberation, allowing it to be critically considered by others. Stylistic comparisons, when convincing, have the ability to both place the object within its temporal and geographic milieu and identify the individual artist, workshop, or society that produced it. The comparandum itself must be dated and

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123 Kelly Holder, “The Vindication of a Controversial Early Thirteenth-Century Vierge Ouvrante in the Walters Art Gallery,” *The Journal of the Walters Art Gallery* 55/56 (1997/1998): 101–21 and Elizabeth C. Parker and Charles T. Little, *The Cloisters Cross: Its Art and Meaning* (New York: Harvey Miller, 1994), 19–20. Radiocarbon dating is not a silver bullet to identify modern forgeries because old ivory can easily be obtained and carved. See Sam Fogg, *An Album of Medieval Art* (London: Paul Holberton Publishing, 2007), 10 and no. 8. Furthermore, many tests on fully accepted medieval ivories have shown that occasionally the ivory is much older than the carving. This is likely due to the fact that even if the ivory was bought recently, the African suppliers of the international market could have found the tusk of an elephant who died centuries before. Alternatively, the elephant tusk could have been stored in a church treasury for generations before finally being carved, or it could have languished in a storehouse in one of the many entrepôts along the lengthy route between south eastern Africa and northern France.
localized based on non-stylistic criteria in order to avoid circular arguments and teleological assumptions. If the preceding guidelines for stylistic analysis are rigorously followed, the resulting information can be considered as true as any other rationally deduced fact. My interpretation of the “Soissons” ivories within their particular historic, religious, economic, and political milieus, identified through stylistic analysis, thus rests on a methodologically sound foundation.
Chapter 3
Stylistic Analysis of the “Soissons” Group

Stylistic analysis is the only tool at our disposal for the dating and localization of the “Soissons” group of ivories. The investigation of this methodological tool provided in Chapter 2 vindicates its use in this study, provided that a number of regulations are followed. This chapter, while abiding by these rules, will attempt to refine previous scholarly efforts at dating and localizing the rather large and heterogeneous assemblage of ivory objects known as the “Soissons” group. I follow earlier scholarship in identifying two distinct groups within this larger set, the Picard group and the Parisian group. The Picard group is named after the department in northern France, which is the smallest territorial area that can be identified for the production of the first group of ivories. This group was made by the same workshop and likely by the same master, whom I call the Picard master, perhaps with the help of a limited number of apprentices. The second subset, the Parisian group, comprises three diptychs that were made by three separate Parisian artists. A precise date for each ivory is offered. With the date, locale, and some of the circumstances for the manufacturing of the ivories having been determined, the last three chapters place the Picard and Parisian ivories within their social, textual, and devotional contexts.

1. The Picard Group

The portion of the “Soissons” group whose suggested origin is northern France, is characterized by diptychs whose narratives flow from top to bottom and left to right. This criterion isolates two diptychs, one at the Hermitage Museum (Plate 1) and another in the
Wallace Collection (Plate 3), and a single remaining leaf formerly in the Salting Collection (Plate 2).\textsuperscript{1} In addition to using the same narrative direction, these diptychs share a common type of micro-architectural frame and figural style. The frames consist of a row of tall gables across the top register, filled with tracered rose windows and, in some cases, drilled trefoil and quatrefoil decorations. The gables, adorned with “nail-headed” crockets, surmount an arcade of pointed arches with inset trefoil cusps. The spandrels are intact,\textsuperscript{2} save for drilled trefoil decorations, and stepped moldings articulate the architectural elements:\textsuperscript{3} these structural details are consistent features of this group. Decorative towers once flanked the gables on all of the diptychs, but they are now missing from both the Hermitage and Salting pieces.\textsuperscript{4} Turrets are still present on the Wallace diptych, though in a seriously damaged state.\textsuperscript{5} These extant towers are delicate, two-tiered crenellated towers with double lancet windows at each level.\textsuperscript{6} The lower three registers of the diptychs are topped with a different configuration of architectural details arranged around an ogee arcade identical to that on the upper register. The arches spring

\textsuperscript{1} St. Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum (In. Nr. Φ 45); London, Wallace Collection (S246); London, Victoria and Albert Museum (A. 546–1910). This last piece will be referred to as the Salting leaf to avoid confusion with other objects from the Victoria and Albert Museum.

\textsuperscript{2} The spandrels are not ajouré or pierced, as they are in the Parisian group.

\textsuperscript{3} Stepped molding lines the underside of the gable, the pointed arch and the trefoil cusp.

\textsuperscript{4} Examination of the Salting leaf indicates that the towers have broken off and the stubs then roughly planed, as the interstitial spaces are not smoothly finished: the indents remaining from the bottoms of what would have been double lancet windows on the towers are still visible. The attachment of the towers on the Hermitage diptych is quite different. There are holes between each of the gables where the towers (as well as the right corner of the right leaf) would have been attached with an ivory peg and glue.

\textsuperscript{5} Only the rightmost tower on the left-hand leaf of the Wallace diptych is fully intact. The towers at the outer edges of both leaves are completely missing, but double peg-holes are present, and some even have remnants of wooden pegs. The Salting leaf shows the same attachment mechanism at its upper right-hand corner, which is now cut at an oblique angle with both pegs holes and extensive cross-hatching (to facilitate the adhesiveness of a natural glue). The tower and the corner of the diptych were made of a separate piece of ivory to compensate for the curvature of the elephant tusk and to achieve a larger panel.

\textsuperscript{6} Original and extant towers are present on the Victoria and Albert triptych, the Lyon triptych, and the Vatican diptych. Fragmentary evidence of towers remains on the Pierpont Morgan panel, the Cloisters panel, and the Meyer van den Bergh triptych. The small Abbeville and Cleveland triptych panels never had towers.
from abstract foliated capitals and sometimes rest on columns, for example, on the Hermitage diptych between Synagoga from the Deposition, or in the Flagellation on the Salting leaf. Short, low relief, single-storied towers with double or single lancets stand between the pointed arches, resting on a base adorned with rope-like decoration. The space between the towers is filled with a rounded- or a pointed-arch arcade and, in some cases, is roofed by rope or cross-hatched decoration.\(^7\) This complex and specific architectural program allows several other objects to be included in this group from northern France, not just the diptychs with a narrative that flows from top-to-bottom and left-to-right: the Vatican diptych (Plate 8);\(^8\) a unique object that was the knop of a Romanesque crozier, now in Antwerp (Plate 7);\(^9\) and several large- and small-scale triptychs, including the extraordinary example at the Victoria and Albert (Plate 4) and the triptych with painted wings at the Lyon Musée des Beaux-Arts (Plate 9).\(^10\)

Since Koechlin, these objects have been considered the key members of the so-called “Soissons” group and therefore have been the subject of many stylistic analyses.\(^11\) Comparisons proposed in the literature must be reassessed to determine whether the comparanda meet the standard of rigorousness proposed for the current study as outlined in Chapter 2—namely, that the comparison must be made with an object dated by a method other than stylistic analysis. Once the previous comparanda have been assessed, further comparisons will localize the group and help date the heterogeneous objects within this family of objects.

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\(^7\) The Hermitage diptych has no decorative frieze above the arcade and the Salting has rope decoration. The majority of the other pieces have cross-hatched decoration.

\(^8\) Rome, Vatican Museums (A. 82).

\(^9\) Antwerp, Musée Mayer van den Bergh (inv. no. 440).

\(^10\) London, Victoria and Albert Museum (175.1866); and Lyon, Musée des Beaux-Arts (inv. nr. 42).

\(^11\) See historiography in Chapter 2.
Koechlin cited two types of comparanda in his analyses of the “Soissons” group: sculpture and illuminated manuscripts. Based on their relatively small size and on their iconography similar to the “Soissons” ivories, Koechlin identified two sculpted stone retabes as being models or precedents for the ivories (Figs. 2–2; 3–1). These works do not, however, offer sufficiently convincing stylistic comparisons with the ivories to warrant serious consideration in the current study. For example, the former retable from Mareuil-en-Brie (1300–50) depicts many scenes from the Life of Christ, including his Passion, and it is surrounded by an elaborate Gothic architectural frame. Each scene is isolated by a gable with double-inset pointed-trefoil arches and separated with full columns. The figural style is radically different from that of the “Soissons” ivories, as a comparison of the scenes of the Flagellation show: the Mareuil-en-Brie heads are round and wide, their hairlines starting almost at the crown of the head; and the drapery is composed of an abundance of curvilinear swags of material. The vertical folds are depicted through shallow grooves in the wood, rather than the deeply corrugated folds characteristic of the ivories.

On a larger scale are two jubés that Koechlin remarked upon in conjunction with the “Soissons” group: one from the Bourges Cathedral (Fig. 3–25) and another from the

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13 The Bourges jubé will be discussed at length below in conjunction with the Walters-Cluny diptych.
parish church in Le-Bourget-du-Lac, Savoy (Fig. 3–2). Koechlin considered the larger limestone sculptures iconographic sources for the ivory carvers but not stylistic comparisons for dating. The Bourges jubé, however, will feature prominently as a major comparandum for the Walters-Cluny diptych.

The tympanum from the Portail de la Calende, the south transept portal of Rouen Cathedral (Fig. 3–3), is a monumental sculptural comparison frequently cited by Koechlin and others as an iconographical source for the “Soissons” diptychs. It depicts the narrative of the Passion of Christ in three dense registers mediated by a miniature architectural frame, and it portrays scenes and compositions similar to those characteristic of the “Soissons” group. The tympanum, however, can now be dated to the last decades of the thirteenth century, which suggests that it either was contemporary with or post-dated the ivory diptychs. Recent scholarship, in fact, proposes that the diptychs might have served as models for the portal’s unique composition. Furthermore, though the iconography of the Passion narrative is analogous to that depicted on the diptychs of the “Soissons” group, the Rouen portal does not offer a convincing comparison with the ivories stylistically. The drapery of the Rouen portal

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16 The north transept portal of Rouen Cathedral, the Portail des Librairies, was requested by the canons in 1281 (Rouen, Bibliothèque Municipal MS 1193, nr. 347, fol. 94–94v), and the Chapel of the Virgin is recorded as being functional in 1302, thus signifying the end of the campaign (Rouen, Archives Départemental G 857). Harmut Krohm, following the accepted position on this matter, sees the south transept portal, the Portail de la Calende, as contemporary with the north transept portal based on stylistic characteristics. Harmut Krohm, “Die Skulptur der Querhausfassaden an der Kathedrale von Rouen,” Aachener Kunsthblätter XL (1971): 51–56.

17 Williamson, Gothic Sculpture, 169.
describes a number of smooth crescent folds (for example John the Evangelist at the Crucifixion)—a trait characteristic of carving circa 1300—with sharp profiles that fall at times to curvilinear hems (for example, the Apostle at the left of the Entombment). The figure’s tall proportions with small heads are reminiscent of the ivories, but the bony rendering of flesh is antithetical to the softly rounded bodies on the ivories. The Portail de la Calende at Rouen cannot be used as a stylistic comparison for the “Soissons” group.

Koechlin’s second source of comparative material for the “Soissons” group was manuscript illumination and his interest lay primarily in the micro-architectural frames surrounding the miniatures, for example in the third Evangeliary of the Sainte-Chapelle (1260–70; Fig. 3–4) and the Saint Louis Psalter (Fig. 2–1). Although the frames of these two manuscripts are similar in conception to the Hermitage and Wallace diptychs (Plates 1 and 3), they are not exact architectural matches, and should be considered as expressions of a general fashion popular in French culture without necessitating the same locale or an exact chronological placement. Koechlin did posit a similarity of figural style with the illuminations of the third Sainte-Chapelle Evangeliary, enumerating the long and noble figures, large simple drapery folds, and slightly smiling faces with “beautiful” curly hair. These comments, however, lack specificity and are inadequate for the purpose of precise localization and dating. The elegant and tall proportions of the figures, whose head-to-torso ratio is approximately 1: 5 as compared with 1: 4.5 on the Hermitage

diptych and the Salting leaf (Plate 2), is nevertheless a reflection of the general fashion in
the mid-thirteenth century. The same can be said of the large and simple folds of the
block style drapery: this stylistic feature was used ubiquitously in northern French
manuscript illumination from the 1230s and well into the fourteenth century. The only
conclusion that Koechlin’s comparison between the “Soissons” ivories and the Third
Evangeliary of the Sainte-Chapelle may admit is that the “Soissons” ivories are from the
northern portion of France—including Ile-de-France, Oise, Picardy, Pas-de-Calais,
Normandy and Champagne—and that they are probably from the mid-thirteenth century.
As one purpose of this study is to assign a much more specific date and place of origin
for the “Soissons” ivories, more precise stylistic characteristics must be sought.

Most scholars following Koechlin have recognized that the core members of the
“Soissons” group could not have come from Paris and have sought an alternative place of
origin. Neither Egbert’s nor Morey’s assessment of the group—both inserted the
Hermitage diptych and related ivories from the “Soissons” group into a northern Italian
ccontext—gained widespread approval. More apposite was Danielle Gaborit-Chopin’s
postulation of northern France—rather than Ile-de-France—as the place of origin for the
ivories grouped around the Hermitage diptych (Plate 1). Gaborit-Chopin offered
numerous comparisons to substantiate her hypothesis, drawing on illuminated
manuscripts, metalwork and monumental sculpture to form and substantiate her
argument, many of these comparisons have become nearly canonical in the literature.
Yet Gaborit-Chopin included these comparanda to make a more general point: that the

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21 Jean Wirth, La Datation de la Sculpture Médiévale (Geneva: Droz, 2004), 116–19.
22 Danielle Gaborit-Chopin, Jvoires du Moyen Age (Fribourg: Office du livre, 1978), 143–45.
23 L’Art au temps des rois maudits: Philippe le Bel et ses fils, 1285–1328, ed. Danielle Gaborit-Chopin and
ivories came from the northern regions of France (Picardie, Pas-de-Calais, Nord-Pas-de-Calais) and the western parts of Belgium (Hainaut, Namur), rather than Paris or Île-de-France. She never postulated an exact locale for the origin of the ivories. A careful re-examination of the comparative material offered by Gaborit-Chopin in 1978 and 1998 is necessary to establish whether or not any of the objects present sufficient similarity with the ivory diptychs and triptychs to suggest a place of origin for the group.

The most frequently reiterated stylistic comparison from northern France is the Grand Dieu from the former Cathedral of Thérouanne (Fig. 2–8). The general disposition of the group, composed of a seated Christ and kneeling John the Evangelist and Virgin Mary, is reminiscent of the seated Christ in Judgment on the upper register of both the Vatican diptych and the Victoria and Albert triptych (Fig. 3–5). Gaborit-Chopin’s main point of comparison is the grave and serious air of Christ the Judge in both the monumental and miniature compositions. More specifically, the hourglass-shaped heads, rendered by sunken cheeks between prominent cheek and jawbones, of the Grand Dieu and the other sculptural heads from Thérouanne echo the face of the adult Christ on the Wallace diptych and the Victoria and Albert triptych (Plates 3 and 4). Yet other details of the Thérouanne group are not commensurate with those on the ivories and do not indicate that they share a place of origin, even if the differences in scale and

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material are taken into consideration. In the Thérouanne group, Christ’s arms are held close to his body with his palms facing outwards. His mantle is draped loosely around his left elbow and falls across his lap, underneath the other end of his mantle which falls into a small V-fold with two strong folds running diagonally across the front of his knees. In contrast, both representations of Christ in Judgment on the ivories show Christ’s mantle draped over his arm and chest, falling high on his lap and relaxing into the characteristic deep-V fold between his knees, angling slightly to the left. The depiction of Christ’s torso in the two works is as dissimilar as the drapery: the Thérouanne Christ has definite pectorals, nipples and ribs, while Christ on the Vatican diptych has a distinctively long notched sternum that culminates in a prominent collarbone. Though the Grand Dieu of Thérouanne is suggestive of a generally northern French origin for the ivories, the comparison is not sufficient to propose that the ivories also came from this former bishopric.

The second category of comparisons offered by Gaborit-Chopin is engraved metalwork plaques, specifically the back of the polyptych of Floreffe (Fig. 2–9), a plaque in the British Museum depicting Bartholomew (Fig. 2–10), and the backs of the reliquaries from Montreuil-sur-Mer (Fig. 3–6). The “submerged bas-relief” technique of these engraved metalwork plaques was developed in the early thirteenth century in the Meuse-Sambre region and was popularized by the workshop of Hugo d’Oignies; the use

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26 The Grand Dieu is 220 cm tall and of oolitic limestone, while the miniature Christ in Judgment on the Victoria and Albert ivory triptych is only 4.2 cm tall. Sauerländer, Gothic Sculpture in France, 468.
27 Paris, Musée du Louvre (OA 5552). Gaborit-Chopin, Ivoires du Moyen Age, 145; L’Art au temps des rois maudits, no. 82.
28 London, British Museum (MLA 1906, 7–17, 1 and 2). Gaborit-Chopin, Ivoires du Moyen Age, 145; L’Art au temps des rois maudits, no. 82.
29 Montreuil-sur-Mer, Church of Saint-Saulve, originally in the Abbey of Sainte-Austreberthe. The two reliquaries are nearly identical. L’Art au temps des rois maudits, no. 82.
of the technique itself signals an origin in the Meuse regions or northern France.\textsuperscript{30} The polyptych from the Abbey of Floreffe in the diocese of Liège can be securely dated to after 1254 based on a niello inscription on the interior central panel.\textsuperscript{31} Though the polyptych was probably produced in or near Floreffe, such a large commission likely employed artisans from both Paris and the Meuse region.\textsuperscript{32} The slender and elongated proportions on the metalwork plaques together with the large geometric folds in the drapery echo the dispositions of the miniature figures on the ivories. Yet the particulars of the representation of the Crucified Christ’s torso—the proliferation of sharply rendered ribs and the elaborated solar plexus—are quite far from the more softly modelled torsos on the ivories. The fullness of the garments and the massed broken folds at the feet of some figures also do not compare particularly well with the ivories. The British Museum plaque\textsuperscript{33} and the backs of the reliquaries from Montreuil-sur-Mer\textsuperscript{34} are of the same technique and from the same area—northern France or the Sambre and Meuse regions. The tall figures with small heads dressed in sharply geometric robes certainly employ the same artistic vocabulary as that used on the diptychs and triptychs, which strongly supports a provenance in northern France or the Sambre-Meuse for the


\textsuperscript{31} The reliquary contains a fragment of the True Cross that was received by Abbot Weric from Baldwin IX of Flanders (\textit{Catalogus abbatum Floreffientium}) in 1204. The reliquary was commissioned by Abbot Pierre de la Chapelle soon after the cross fragment bled miraculously in 1254. The niello inscription records this miraculous effusion of blood: HEC CRUX QUO(E) LUXIT NOBIS/ BIS SAGUINE FLUXIT/ QUAM SCIO QUOD TINXIT/ CRISTI CRUOR AC BENEDIXIT. \textit{Art and the Courts}, no. 39; \textit{Un trésor gothique: La châsse de Nivelles}, ed. Vivienne Huchard (Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1996), no. 13. \textit{Les premiers retables}, no. 10.

\textsuperscript{32} \textit{Art and the Courts}, no. 39; \textit{Un trésor gothique}, no. 13.

\textsuperscript{33} Northern France or southern Netherlands, 1250–1300. \textit{Un trésor gothique}, no. 22; \textit{Art and the Courts}, no. 43.

\textsuperscript{34} Northern France, circa 1275. \textit{Un trésor gothique}, no. 20; \textit{Art and the Courts}, no 42.
ivories. The significant differences in the representation of the human body and the handling of the drapery on the engraved metalwork examples, however, do not encourage a precise localization.

Lastly, Gaborit-Chopin cited manuscript illuminations comparanda for the northern group of ivory diptychs and triptychs. Most interesting is a fragment from the roll of Saint Eloi that depicts two scenes from the life of the goldsmith saint (Fig. 2–11). The familiar elongated figures sporting geometrically arrayed drapery find close analogies on the ivory relief panels: in the right panel of the roll fragment, where Saint Eloi cures a paralytic, his robes are articulated with strongly linear forms that branch out into regulated tight folds. The verticality of the folds accentuates the disproportionately tall figure and endows him with an upward movement that enhances his miraculous healing of the crippled man. A similar approach to fold style, with strongly vertical lines forking at acute angles, is seen on Nicodemus at the Deposition on the Wallace diptych (Plate 3). Saint Eloi extinguishing the fire on the left-hand side of the parchment

35 *L’Art au temps des rois maudits*, no. 82. Gaborit-Chopin added two less convincing manuscript comparanda to her analysis: the Psalter-Hours of Yolande de Soissons (Fig. 2–12) and a fourteenth-century *La Somme le Roi* made for a Madame Jeanne d’Eu (Fig. 2–13). The similarity of these two works to the “Soissons” ivories lies merely in the presence of elaborate architectural frames, which are much more complex than those on the ivories and so do not furnish further evidence for localizing the group. For the Psalter-Hours of Yolande de Soissons (New York, Pierpont Morgan Library MS 729, Amiens, 1280–1290), see *L’Art au temps des rois maudits*, no. 202; Karen Gould, *The Psalter and Hours of Yolande de Soissons* (Cambridge: Medieval Academy of America, 1978); and Roger Wieck, *Painted Prayers* (New York: George Braziller, 1997), no. 1. For *La Somme le Roi* (Paris, Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal, MS 6329, Picardy (Amiens?), 1311), see *L’Art au temps des rois maudits*, no. 204.

36 Only a fragment of this roll now survives: Paris, Musée Carnavalet (D 7075). A fairly accurate copy was published in the mid-nineteenth century before the majority of the deterioration of the roll: Achille Peigné-Delacourt, “Les Miracles de saint Eloi,” *Mémoires de la Société académique de l’Oise* IV (1859): 1–28. The parchment of this horizontally arrayed scroll is extraordinarily rough and thick, and the illuminations are simple line drawings with light washes of color—material evidence that suggested to Robert Branner that the roll might be a set of preparatory drawings for a monumental picture cycle, a fresco cycle or a tapestry. The work was probably commissioned by the Noyon abbey of Saint-Eloi in the mid-thirteenth century, when the Abbey was undergoing extensive rejuvenation of both the cult of their patron saint and the fabric of the monastery. Robert Branner, “Le rouleau de saint Eloi,” *L’Information d’histoire de l’art* 12.2 (1967): 55–73; and Melanie Holcomb, *Pen and Parchment: Drawing in the Middle Ages* (New Haven: The Metropolitan Museum of Art and Yale University Press, 2009), no. 40.
fragment also shares the same fold arrangement: the saint has his mantle gathered in his hand and has pulled the robe into deeply inset polygonal folds that mark a lively rhythm down his body. Such inset folds are frequently seen on the ivories, for example on the Victoria and Albert triptych (Plate 4)—the kneeling bishop in the lower register, and the censing and trumpeting angels in the lower and upper registers. The relationship between the style of the two dimensional representation of figures on the Roll of Saint Eloi and the three-dimensional forms on the ivories is strikingly close and the similarity suggests that the ivories hail from the more southerly regions of Oise, Somme or Aisne, which compose the department of Picardy, rather than north eastern French-Flanders or far north Pas-de-Calais.

The Grand Dieu of Thérouanne, the metalwork plaques, and the Roll of Saint Eloi all demonstrate northern French stylistic currents, but they have quite disparate places of origin: Thérouanne, Noyon, and the Meuse region. The Hermitage, Vatican and Wallace diptychs, the Salting leaf, and the numerous other triptychs were certainly fashioned in this northern French mode, but the wide range of localizations does not help us isolate a single place of origin for the ivories. In a more recent study, Gaborit-Chopin posited an intra-medium comparison between the northern ivory diptychs and triptychs and a group of ivory Virgin and Child statuettes assembled around the Davillier Virgin at the Louvre (Figs. 3–7, 3–8, and 3–9). The argument is based on a small statuette in the Hermitage referred to as the St. Petersburg Madonna (Plate 5), actually the central part of a

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37 Paris, Musée du Louvre (OA 2742); Danielle Gaborit-Chopin, Ivoires médiévaux: Ve–XVe siècle (Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 2003), no. 94; and Danielle Gaborit-Chopin, “Paris ou Amiens? Le groupe de la Vierge Davillier,” in Études d’histoire de l’art offertes à Jacques Thirion, ed. Alain Erlande-Brandenburg, et al. (Paris: Ecole des chartes, 2001), 85–98. The other two statuettes are a standing Virgin and Child at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (209-1867; Fig. 3–8) and an enthroned Virgin and Child in the treasury of the church of Unienville, Aube (Fig. 3–9). The Unienville Virgin is recorded to come from Bologne-sur-Mer and a priest brought the statuette to Unienville in the nineteenth century. Koechlin, Ivoires gothiques français, vol. 2, no. 23.
polyptych, which combines the plastic features of the Davillier Virgin with a micro-architectural frame similar to those on the northern “Soissons” ivory reliefs. The polyptych thus forms a reliable stylistic link between the two corpora of objects, the relief panels and the statuettes in the round. Another high relief of the Virgin and Child not mentioned in Gaborit-Chopin’s text must be included in the analysis of the St. Petersburg Madonna: a full polyptych, formerly in the St. Petersburg Museum of Decorative Arts, and now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, as part of the Lehman Collection (Plate 6). These two Madonna and Child statuettes share the Rayonnant frame of pierced gables, stepped moulding, and flanking towers displayed by the Hermitage and Wallace diptychs (Plates 1 and 3). The deep-V “block style” drapery on the Virgin’s lap, the serpentine massing of drapery on the socle, the Christ Child’s frontally turned seated position, blessing with his right hand, and the Virgin’s simply folded and flared veil, revealing her carefully carved locks of hair framing a perfectly oval face, all correspond closely to the Davillier Virgin. The comparison is so persuasive that Gaborit-Chopin argues for the St. Petersburg Madonna originating in the same


39 New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art (Lehman 1975.1.1553). This object had been considered lost for some time; indeed, Marta Kryjanovskaia was unsure about its whereabouts in 1994; Kryjanovskaia, “Ein gotisches Elfenbeinrelief,” 9. Morey listed it in 1936 (Fig. 3–10) as still being in Leningrad and included it in the “Atelier of the Vatican diptych”; Charles Rufus Morey, Gli Oggetti di Avorio e di Osso del Museo Sacro Vaticano (Vatican: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1936), 27, fig. 20; Koechlin, Ivoires gothiques français, vol. 2, no. 56. A catalogue entry after the piece had entered the Metropolitan Museum’s collection also failed to make the connection, although much earlier provenance information is delineated; Songs of Glory: Medieval Art from 900–1500, ed. David Mickenberg (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Museum of Art, 1985), no. 90. It is most likely that the Russian state sold the polyptych in the 1930s, when many western European objects in the Hermitage from the former Basilewsky Collection were sold: see Paul Williamson, “The collecting of medieval works of art,” in The Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection: Medieval sculpture and works of art, ed. Paul Williamson (London: Sotheby’s Publications, 1987), 12.
workshop as the Davillier Virgin, a conclusion that must be extended to the Lehman polyptych.

The search for the origin of the Davillier group led Gaborit-Chopin to re-examine the early thirteenth-century Virgin and Child statuettes assembled into a group by William Monroe (Figs. 1–12, 1–15, and 3–11 to 3–13). Based on the nascent forms of the block style present in some of these statuettes, especially the seated Virgin and Child at the Walters (Fig. 1–15), Monroe posited that the objects were produced by the same sculptors who experimented with and developed the block style on the archivolt figures on the west façade of Amiens cathedral (Fig. 3–14), as work progressed in the 1230s and 1240s. Willibald Sauerländer suggested that the Amiens worksite privileged the development of the block style because the new style efficiently dealt with the unprecedented number of sculpted figures required for the west façade (162 archivolt figures in the central portal alone); the block style was a more efficient means of carving figures than the more detailed Muldenfaltenstil hitherto used. Barbara Abou-El-Haj has more recently suggested that the block style and many other aspects of the

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40 Gaborit-Chopin, “Paris ou Amiens?” 91.
42 Monroe, “A French Gothic Ivory,” 22. Stephen Murray studied the dating of the sculpture of the west façade of Amiens and concluded preliminarily (as a more detailed and exact analysis had to wait until the central portal has been fully cleaned) that the central portal was the last to receive its sculpture, shortly after the north portal (Saint Firmin, circa 1230), thus from around 1240. Stephen Murray, Notre-Dame Cathedral of Amiens: The Power of Change in Gothic (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 98. Even though Dany Sandron’s recent work on Amiens was written after the cleaning of the central portal, he does not attempt to clarify or substantiate the chronology of the sculpture on the west façade; Dany Sandron, Amiens: La cathédrale (Paris: Zodiaque, 2004), 136.
43 Sauerländer, Gothic Sculpture in France, 56–58; Monroe, “A French Gothic Ivory,” 10; Wirth, Datation, reaffirms this hypothesis, 117–23.
characteristically dry Amiens style were cost-saving measures to meet a more limited budget.\textsuperscript{44} Gaborit-Chopin accepted Monroe’s interpretation of the block-style Virgins (Figs. 1–15 and 3–11 to 3–13) having a Picard provenance, although she did modify Monroe’s dating of the geometric-style Virgins, such as the Walters seated Madonna and Child (Fig. 1–15), making the more sharply hewed ivory statuettes circa 1235.\textsuperscript{45} The Davillier Virgin (Fig. 3–7), Gaborit-Chopin suggested, is even closer in conception to the voussoir figures at Amiens than the geometric- and block-style groups because the full and deep folds are less rigid.\textsuperscript{46} She thus proposed that the Davillier Virgin is contemporary with the Amiens archivolt figures, which, taking into consideration the most recent documentary evidence about the Amiens building project, localizes the Davillier Virgin and her sisters, including the St. Petersburg and Lehman Virgins, to Amiens, circa 1240.\textsuperscript{47}

A stronger association, however, can be made between the sculptor of the Davillier Virgin group and the carvers of the Amiens archivolt figures: given the extraordinary similarity between the two figures, it is reasonable to suggest that the carver of the ivory figures was one of the Amiens workshop members. The full oval faces

\textsuperscript{44} Other cost-saving initiatives were the standardization of block sizes, advanced engineering to use less stone, idealized and simplified facial types on the jamb statues (especially in comparison to contemporary work at Reims), and the use of the drill for detailing hair. Barbara Abou-El-Haj, “Building and Decorating at Reims and Amiens,” in \textit{Studien zur Geschichte der Europäischen Skulptur im 12./13. Jahrhundert}, ed. Herbert Beck and Kerstin Hengevoss-Dürkop, 2 vols. (Frankfurt-am-Main: Henrich Verlag, 1994), vol. 1, 763–76 and vol. 2, 508–19.

\textsuperscript{45} Gaborit-Chopin, “Paris ou Amiens?” does not attempt to reconcile Sauerländer’s functional theorem for the development of the block style at Amiens with an earlier date for the geometric-style Virgins. However, given that the archivolts on the central portal were the last to be completed on the west façade at Amiens, the sculptors were clearly experimenting with alternatives to the \textit{Muldenfaltenstil} on the lateral portals of the Coronation and of Saint Firmin. The geometric-style Virgins could have been produced (probably by a different hand than the Davillier Virgin group) while the sculptors were working on the archivolts for the lateral portals.

\textsuperscript{46} Gaborit-Chopin, “Paris ou Amiens?” 96.

\textsuperscript{47} Gaborit-Chopin, “Paris ou Amiens?” 98.
of both the ivory and limestone figures have a small nose with a wide bridge that forms a continuous curve with the eyebrow ridge. The almond-shaped eyes are fuller on top than on the bottom, with the upper lid delineated by a strong incision that sweeps up at the outer edge. The under-eye area is puffy, more so on the inner edge to suggest the cheekbone structure. Similarly, laugh lines frame the firmly set mouth and the chin is fleshy and rounded. The faces are framed with geometrically rendered sigma curls kept under a thin yet stiff and substantial veil. The fold style is less uniform between the ivory and the limestone figures, yet nevertheless they share basic principles. Material sits on the top of the knees in thickly-folded piles, that, as they fall, form large beak folds between the knees of the seated figures, breaking sharply in one or two places. The ample material masses on the socles, chutes of drapery breaking several times in a zigzag before melting onto the floor.

Although the stylistic similarities between the archivolt figures and the ivory statuettes are remarkably close, they are not identical. Willibald Sauerländer, Roland Recht, and Jean Wirth have all suggested that large and complex workshops, such as that active at Amiens cathedral, were led by one chief master responsible for establishing a unified “look” for the monument. Homogeneity was further encouraged by having many hands work on the same piece: assembly-line style, each carver would be responsible for replicating the same characteristic details from statue to statue, resulting in a unified style emerging from a number of hands.48 Thus, the Davillier Virgin, which by all indications

was the product of one hand rather than many, would not be identical to the carvings on the west façade of Amiens that are the product of workshop practice. There is sufficient stylistic similarity between the hand that carved the ivory Virgin and the architectural sculptures from the west façade, however, to propose that one of the artisans from the Amiens workshop was responsible for carving the Davillier Madonna.

The cross-media attribution should not be surprising. As discussed in Chapter 1 and worth reiterating here, there were no specialist ivory carvers in the thirteenth century. This is especially true for the mid thirteenth century when the supply of ivory was gradually being replenished in northern France. The guild regulations of Etienne de Boileau from the 1260s clearly note in a number of cases that ymagiers were defined by their technique and not by the medium in which they worked: carvers of images were allowed to work in wood, stone, ivory and bone. Although it may seem counter-intuitive, the difference in scale between the ivory statuettes and the “monumental” archivolt figures is not substantial: the Davillier Virgin is 22 cm tall and the archivolt figures from the central portal of the west façade at Amiens are approximately 50 cm tall. Furthermore, the hardness of ivory is equivalent to that of limestone, supporting the notion that dexterity in the latter would lend aptitude to carve the former. Neither the difference in medium between limestone and ivory sculpture nor the presumed difference in scale between “decorative” and “monumental” sculpture pose obstructions for identifying the carver of the Davillier Virgin with one of the masters working on the Amiens façade.

49 See discussion at the end of Chapter 1 arguing against large workshops mass-producing ivories, especially in the thirteenth century.
50 See discussion in Chapter 1, 52.
If, therefore, the ivory carver was a sculptor working at Amiens, the likelihood that he remained there after the completion of the façade sculpture is slim. Perhaps the carver, having discovered his ability to work in this increasingly more available medium, retired from architectural sculpture and dedicated himself to finer carving in ivory and possibly in other materials. The number of objects that can be traced to his hand suggests this to be so. Given the provenance information for the knop of the crozier of Yves-de-Chartres from Beauvais, the master seems to have been an itinerant craftsmen, travelling from town to town on commission. I prefer, therefore, to call this master the Picard Master and the objects grouped around the Hermitage diptych the Picard ivories. Using a regional designation rather than the city of Amiens to identify the craftsman and the objects acknowledges that the artisan enjoyed a certain freedom of movement that did not limit him to the one municipality where he was previously employed.

The seated Virgin and Child on the bottom register of the Victoria and Albert triptych (Plate 4 and detail Fig. 3–16) and on the bottom register of the left panel of the Vatican diptych (Plate 8) can be compared directly with the statuettes in the Davillier group to strengthen the argument for a Picard origin of the relief diptychs and triptychs as well as the St. Petersburg and Lehman polyptychs (Plates 5 and 6). Gaborit-Chopin associated the polyptychs with the “Soissons” diptychs and triptych solely on the basis of their similar architectural framework, but the stylistic similarity between the two groups of objects does not end there. The important stylistic correspondences were made by comparing the polyptychs and the Davillier Virgin, but those same stylistic features are readily identifiable in the relief carvings as well. The Virgin in the Victoria and Albert

51 Gaborit-Chopin, “Paris ou Amiens?” 91.
triptych and the Vatican diptych possess the same sharp, deep-V, block-style drapery on the Virgin’s lap as the Davillier Virgin, while the St. Petersburg V-folds are rounder. The Virgin’s perfectly oval face on all of the objects under consideration is framed with shoulder-length sigma-shaped locks swathed in a veil, folded back once and stiffly standing away from her face. The Christ Child performs the same actions on all four ivories: he holds a globe in his left hand and blesses with his right. The only difference is that in the Victoria and Albert example Christ turns toward his Mother and she lowers her head slightly toward him—a more intimate and personal interaction. The Child on the Vatican diptych stands, an iconographic difference discussed in Chapter 5. The only characteristic that the Victoria and Albert Virgin does not share with the other two is the serpentine massing of drapery on the socle: here the diagonally cut mantle swoops evenly to the left without massing at the Virgin’s feet. Based on such close comparisons, it is reasonable to assert that the low-relief diptychs and triptychs, the high-relief polyptychs, and the Davillier Virgin and Child and her “sisters” were all produced in the region of Picardy in the second third of the thirteenth century and were carved by the same Picard Master.

The developmental paradigm sketched above—the movement from the Muldenfaltenstil to a geometric, proto-block style and ending with a soft but stiffly draped block style—was pragmatic and not ideological. Sauerländer proposed, and Monroe and Wirth reiterated, that the large and deep folds of the block style were easier to carve than the numerous tight and shallow pleats that characterized the Muldenfaltenstil. Faced with the inordinately large sculptural program at Amiens, the carvers developed a more efficient method of fashioning sculptural forms. Soon this
method was accepted for larger and more important sculpture at other worksites. Either the master masons gradually grew accustomed to the new look or, as Wirth suggested, the younger sculptors, who trained in the block style at Amiens, eventually received more important contracts and maintained the same style.\textsuperscript{52} The change in drapery form from \textit{Muldenfaltenstil} to block style offers a chronological spectrum within which to measure the various pieces of this large group of ivory diptychs, triptychs and polypytchs and allows for the establishment of a relative temporal sequence within the group. Drapery evidence can be corroborated with other formal observations connected to the changing representations of the Crucifixion, as charted by Paul Thoby, and of the Virgin and Child, as delineated by Robert Suckale. By referencing popular compositional motifs that refer to objects with dates established through non-stylistic means, an internal chronology an be established within the group of ivory statuettes, diptychs and triptychs.

The first set of ivories to emerge from the Picard atelier consisted of the large diptychs depicting the Passion of Christ. The Hermitage diptych and Salting leaf (Plates 1 and 2) where each register is measured out with four double arches, seem to precede the Wallace diptych (Plate 3), where each register is divided by three unequal double pointed-trefoil arches. Adam and Eve at the Harrowing of Hell on the Hermitage diptych wear loincloths that are arranged not in the block style, like those of Christ and the thieves at the Crucifixion, but in shallow and tight folds, remnants of the \textit{Muldenfaltenstil}. Furthermore, the loincloths of the two thieves on the Hermitage diptych are extremely stiff and basket-like; their square waist-bands and roughly corrugated folds are indicative of an experimental new style, while those worn by the thieves on the

Wallace diptych are the smoother and more form-fitting versions, although these are still composed of narrow and parallel folds. In contrast, the thieves on the Victoria and Albert triptych (Plate 4) wear simplified versions of Christ’s horizontally draped, block-style loincloth. Based on the evidence of minor carryovers from the older method of depicting clothes, the Hermitage and Salting ivories can be dated before the Victoria and Albert triptych, which places them at approximately 1235. The Wallace diptych, with its more fluid fold style, would then be later, in the 1240s.

The Victoria and Albert triptych, along with the Lehman and St. Petersburg polyptychs (Plates 4, 5, 6), can be dated to circa 1240 through comparison with the Davillier Virgin at the Louvre and the vousoir sculptures on the central portal of the Amiens west façade. The crozier knop with the four Apostles in Antwerp should also be placed in the decade 1240–50 (Plate 7). The Apostles’ tunics share the strongly corrugated folds of the Victoria and Albert triptych: the deep, parallel vertical folds are most visible and characteristic on John at the Crucifixion, whose mantle is diagonally draped in a manner similar to Paul and James the Greater on the knop. The looping folds above Bartholomew’s belt are entirely analogous to those seen on the Wallace diptych (Plate 3), for example on the soldiers at the Flagellation. The hairstyles of the four Apostles are similar combinations of two smooth undulations along the sides of the faces with tightly curled beards, like the hair found on many figures of the Victoria and Albert triptych, although the application of texture is not as regular: wider waves are seen on the

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53 Antwerp, Musée Mayer van den Bergh (inv. 440): 7.9 x 3.0 x 2.1 cm. This knop was attached to the eleventh-century crozier that apparently belonged to Yves de Chartres, former Abbot of Saint-Quentin in Beauvais. After the Revolution, the crozier and knop were kept in the Beauvais Cathedral treasury until 1802, at the latest. The crozier, together with the thirteenth-century knop, was in several prominent collections in the nineteenth century until Jean-Baptist Carrand separated the two objects when he found a “better,” tenth-century knop for the crozier, also in Beauvais. The knop was sold soon afterwards to C. Michelli, whose whole collection was bought by the Antwerp collector Mayer van den Bergh in 1898. See Gaborit-Chopin, *Ivoires du Moyen Age*, no. 159.
thieves at the Crucifixion and taut curls are seen on the donor bishop. Therefore, through the similarity of drapery patterns and hairstyles, the crozier knop, although an entirely different object type, is certainly from the same period as the Victoria and Albert triptych, 1240–1250.

The next objects to be grouped chronologically are four triptychs: the triptych with painted wings in Lyon, the central panel of a triptych at the Cloisters, another central panel at the Courtauld Institute Galleries, and the central panel of a smaller triptych in Brussels (Plates 9, 10, 12 and 13). The main unifying characteristics of these four objects, other than their similar layout in two tripartite registers, is the presence of the Virgin and Child in the centre of the lower register, flanked by two candle-holding angels (Fig. 3–14). The Virgin is crowned—like the seated versions on the Victoria and Albert triptych and the polyptychs—over a short veil, folded once. She stands in stark contrapposto with the weight on her left leg her hip jutting out to support the Christ Child. The Child wraps his arm behind the Virgin’s neck in a loving embrace, while the Mother and Child gaze into each other’s eyes. Christ holds an orb in his right hand and Mary holds a flower (Lyon) or a ball (Cloisters and Courtauld) in her free hand. Most noteworthy, on the Lyon triptych and the Cloisters and Brussels panels, is the Virgin’s tightly pulled mantle, strongly defining the perpendicular angle of her right arm, stretched horizontally across her body and falling in loosely inset block-folds down her leg. The hem cuts diagonally across the bottom of her tunic, whose sloping, parallel folds are no longer the straight corrugated folds seen on the Victoria and Albert triptych (Plate 4), but instead accentuate the contrapposto stance. These characteristics and this outline—the smooth curve of the contrapposto interrupted by the abruptly protruding
elbow—are modelled after the *Vierge Dorée* of Amiens, circa 1250 (Fig. 3–18). The early date for this monumental Virgin was suggested by Robert Suckale and Dieter Kimpel based on evidence that the Virgin was not originally destined for the south transept portal—obvious because of the lack of Marian iconography in the portal, which focuses on Saint Honoratus, and because of the Virgin’s significantly oversized socle, too big for the niche in the trumeau. This highly venerated depiction of the Virgin and Child, evidenced by the gold leaf covering, traces of which remain today, was quickly imitated for public and private devotion in other locales: a metalwork statuette of the Virgin and Child from the Châsse de Saint Romain made around 1255 (Fig. 3–19), for example, has the same silhouette and intimate attitude between Mother and Child as the *Vierge Dorée*. The imitation of the type of the *Vierge Dorée* on the Lyon triptych, the Cloisters, Brussels and Courtauld panels implies that they are posterior to the creation of their prototype, and therefore should be dated 1250–1260.

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54 This statue, formerly on the south transept portal of Amiens cathedral, now stands against the southwest transept pillar in the crossing of the church. It was moved there after restoration work, around 2000.


57 Rouen, Cathedral Treasure. Robert Suckale has proposed this early date both in his thesis and in his review of the *l’Art au temps des rois maudits* show in 2000: he bases such an early dating on analogous tall and thin proportions of the statuettes with the archivolt statues on the west portal of Reims circa 1253.


58 Williamson, “Symbiosis Across Scale,” 41–43. Philip Verdier employed a similar methodology in his study of the Lyon triptych, but compared it with the large ivory Virgins of Saint-Denis and the Sainte-Chapelle, which suggested to him a slightly later date. Verdier also acknowledged the triptych’s analogy with the monumental Virgin of Notre-Dame de Paris (1250s), which led him to suggest quite a wide date
A second morphological detail on the Cloisters and Brussels panels substantiates the 1250–1260 dating based on the *Vierge Dorée* prototype and suggests that two more works be included in this time period. Christ on the upper register of the Cloisters panel (Fig. 3–20) is shown hanging from the cross with his right leg bent, crossing his left, so that his feet overlap to enable their piercing with one nail. The configuration of one leg bent with the knee externally turned, but the second leg straight with the knee facing forward, is an innovation noted by Paul Thoby in his thorough analysis of Crucifixion compositions. He established a chronology of morphologies of the crucified Christ based on examination of firmly dated representations of the Crucifixion in all media.\(^\text{59}\) One of the first works to display this new arrangement of Christ’s legs on the cross is the polyptych of Floreffe (Fig. 2–9), dated on documentary evidence to shortly after 1254.\(^\text{60}\) The Meuse origin for the metalwork polyptych suggests that the motif was known to artists in northern France in this time period. The configuration of Christ’s legs links the Vatican diptych (Plate 8) and the Pierpont Morgan panel (Plate 11) to the Lyon triptych and the Cloisters and Courtauld panels, forming a group of objects from the decade 1250–60.

Scholars seized the opportunity offered by the unique form of the Lyon triptych (Plate 9), whose wings were painted instead of carved, to date the ivory through a technical and stylistic analysis of the polychromy. Scientific examinations determined

\(^{59}\) The analysis, as it is strict in considering dated prototypes, is biased toward manuscript illumination, but it does also includes metalwork, ivory carving, monumental stone carving and stained glass windows. Paul Thoby, *Le crucifix des origines au concile de Trente: Etude iconographique* (Nantes: A. Bellanger, 1959). For a list of dated Crucifixions in the thirteenth century, see page 158.

\(^{60}\) Paris, Musée du Louvre (OA 5552). *L’Art au temps des rois maudits*, no. 82. For history, see note 31.

Two pieces of evidence make such a conclusion unlikely, however. The first is the inconsistent remains of polychromy on the Picard ivories.\footnote{Charles T. Little offers a precise example for stylistic comparison: an Annunciation from a Psalter in the British Library (MS 2.A.iii, fol. 8v) from Hainault, circa 1280; Charles T. Little, “L’art de l’ivoire au temps de Philippe le Bel: renouveau et tradition,” in 1300... L’Art au temps de Philippe le Bel: Actes du colloque international Galeries nationales du Grand Palais, ed. Danielle Gaborit-Chopin and François Avril (Paris: Ecole du Louvre, 2001), 75–88, esp. 82. Grave paintings recently discovered in the cathedral of Bruges are quite close to the scenes painted on the ivories: the monochrome ground is broken with strong black outlines that taper and intersect to denote drapery patterns. The grave paintings offer a precisely dated comparison for the Lyon triptych, as the tomb was for an individual who died in 1295. See M. de Munck-Manderyck and H. de Witte, “Onder het hoogkoor van de Brugge O.-L.-Vrouwkerk,” Open deur 12 (1980): 58–62.} If the atelier or artist who carved the ivories was also responsible for their painting, there should be a more consistent pattern of extant polychrome. Secondly, the scientific evidence only implies that the polychrome is medieval, not that the ivory was painted in the same locale where the carving was executed. An ivory booklet in the Linsky Collection (Fig. 3–21),

\footnote{Among the “Soissons” ivories, only a few objects have remnants of original polychromy: the Lyon triptych, the Abbeville panel (gilding on the cross of the Crucifixion), the Pierpont Morgan panel (red and blue highlights on the architecture and on the interior of some figures’ robes), the Cleveland panel (light blue pigment in the architectural details). The other works from the Amiens group either have blatantly modern polychromy (the Salting leaf and the Vatican diptych) or none at all (the Wallace diptych, the Victoria and Albert triptych, the Cloisters panel, and the Meyer van den Bergh triptych). The traces of polychromy on the Hermitage diptych (blue on the interior of robes, red highlights in the architecture) are probably the remains of a modern repainting of the original schema.}
composed of an analogous combination of carved and painted imagery, was carved and painted at different times and in separate locations: the ivory carving in northern France, circa 1300 and the painting in the Lake Constance region around 1320. The Linsky booklet provides evidence that the carving and painting of ivory could and did take place at different moments and in different locales. It is reasonable to conclude, therefore, that the carved portion of the Lyon triptych dates from 1250–60 and is from the Picard region, while the painting on the leaves is from the fifty to seventy years later and was perhaps done in a different locale.

Including the Vatican diptych and Pierpont Morgan panel in the time period between 1250 and 1260 introduces another development in the fold style. Jean Wirth summarized the progression of the block style in the second half of the thirteenth century as proceeding from deep V-folds, to polygonal folds, to the gently curving swaths that characterize French sculpture from the turn of the fourteenth century. The polygonal folds are easily recognizable on the candle-bearing angels in the lower register of the Pierpont Morgan panel—the apex of the V-folds on the same angels on the Lyon triptych have multiplied in the ample mantle pulled across the angels’ bodies (Fig. 3–22). This fashion of arraying the drapery is only used on the angels, while V-folds are still used in the Virgin’s mantle and tight and narrow folds are present on the thieves’ loincloths.


65 This analysis roughly agrees with Verdier, who argued that the Infancy scenes painted on the wings of the Lyon triptych were imitations of the metalwork triptychs and polyptychs that were so popular at the end of the thirteenth and the early fourteenth centuries. He thus posited a fifty- to seventy-year gap between the carving and the painting of the triptych; Verdier, “Triptyque d’ivoire,” 25–30.

66 A developmental paradigm consciously based on dated exemplars. Wirth, Datation, 188.
Similarly, the Vatican diptych displays a rich combination of fold styles (Plate 8). The deeply corrugated parallel folds on Nicodemus at the Deposition in the Vatican diptych are comparable to those seen on the Wallace diptych and the crozier knop. Christ the Judge at the top of the right panel and Mary of the Adoration at the bottom of the left panel of the Vatican diptych both have the deep-V folds. The Virgin of the Crucifixion and John at the Deposition on the Vatican plaque have polygonal folds, which proves that when new fold styles developed they were tentatively integrated into the extant representational lexicon rather than supplanting the existing stylistic vocabulary.

The next generation of the Picard group is composed entirely of smaller scale triptychs,\(^67\) two central panels in Abbeville and Cleveland (Plates 17 and 18),\(^68\) and two full triptychs, one at the Mayer van den Bergh Museum (Plate 14),\(^69\) and another formerly in the Kofler-Truniger collection (Plate 15).\(^70\) The main unifying feature of this group is the representation of the Virgin and Child on the lower registers: her countenance and silhouette are quite different from those ivories that relied on the Amiens \textit{Vierge Dorée}. Here the Virgin does not have a crown but instead humbly wears a

\begin{itemize}
\item \textit{Sizes range from H: 13.2 cm and L: 6.6 cm (Kofler-Truniger) to H: 12.2 cm and L: 7.2 cm (Cleveland). The manner of depicting eyes in all of these objects is quite consistent: the simplified “slit-eye” is used in all four triptychs. This mode of depiction takes over from the more complex almond eyes and drilled pupils of the previous generation.}
\item Antwerp, Musée Mayer van den Bergh (inv. 437). Koechlin, \textit{Ivoires gothiques français}, vol. 2, no. 54.
\item Formerly Lucerne, the Kofler-Truniger collection (S.56); Koechlin, \textit{Ivoires gothiques français}, vol. 2, no. 53. As the present location of this object is unknown, I have been unable to study this triptych in person. Therefore, the following judgments regarding this object are merely preliminary. Another two triptychs whose present locations are unknown, Koechlin, \textit{Ivoires gothiques français}, vol. 2, nos. 45 and 57, probably also belong to this same generation of the Picard group. As even less information is available about them, they cannot be included in this analysis.
\end{itemize}
shoulder-length veil. The intimate relationship between Mother and Child is preserved and is even intensified in the Cleveland panel where Mary no longer holds an object, but rests her right hand on the Child’s lap. Suckale notes that representations of the Virgin without a crown are relatively rare in the second half of the thirteenth century, but two notable versions, also in ivory and from northern France, are extant. The first is a Virgin and Child statuette now in Zwettl, Austria (Fig. 3–23), firmly dated to the middle of the thirteenth century when Abbot Boluslaw (1248–59) of the Cistercian monastery is recorded as having brought the statuette back from northern France (de superioribus partibus Francie). The Zwettl Virgin and Child can confidently be dated to the 1250s based on this rare piece of documentary evidence. The second example—closer still to the form of the Virgin on the triptychs—is another statuette, Notre-Dame of Groeninghe, still venerated today in the church of Saint Michel in Courtrai, Belgium (Fig. 3–24). It is said that she was given in 1285 by Pope Honorius IV to Beatrice of Brabant, countess of Flanders, although this piece of popular history remains to be substantiated. The Virgin’s countenance and the marked polygonal folds strongly suggest a date in the late

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71 Only in the Kofler-Truniger triptych does the Child still preserve the more formal action of benediction, rather than reaching for his Mother.
72 The same iconography appears on a limestone statue of the Virgin and Child from Saint-Germer-de-Fly now Beauvais, Musée départemental de l’Oise, inv. nr. 25.1.
73 Suckale noted that although exceedingly rare (though this seems to be overstating the case), the uncrowned Virgin signified that the work was made under Byzantine influence (!). Suckale, “Studien zu Stilbildung,” 158.
74 The Abbey’s Stiftungsbuch, dated 1311 (FRA II/3,142), records: “De imagine autem eburneae beate Maria Virginis florioso que in Zvetelensi monasterio diligencius conservatur et summon altari beate Virginis in festivitatibus supponitur, scendum quod eamdem imaginem Bouslaus abbas de superioribus partibus Francie cum alis reliquis attulerit…” Koechlin 1924, no. 62; Suckale 1970, 105; Die Kuenringer: Das Werden des Landes Niederösterreich (Zwettl: Österreichisches Museum für Volkskunde, 1981), nos. 174 (Stiftungsbuch) and 216 (ivory statuette); and Charles T. Little, “Gothic Ivory Carving in Germany,” in Images in Ivory, 80–93, esp. 82. The unusually large head of this statuette—fashioned from a separate piece of ivory and perhaps a restoration—is certainly a characteristic not reflected in the representations on the triptychs.
1250s, regardless of when the statuette came to Courtrai. Notre-Dame de Groeninghe makes an especially convincing comparison when considered with the Virgin on the Abbeville panel (Plate 17): the Virgin’s short veil touches her shoulder where the mantle, which is pulled taut by the Virgin’s right arm, begins. Mary gathers her mantle in her left hand underneath the Christ Child and the strong horizontal pull causes deep, inset polygonal folds along the Virgin’s right leg. The comparison with these two examples and the firm dating of the Zwettl Virgin suggest a date for the group of small triptychs from the 1250s to the mid-1260s, when this form and stance of the Virgin was popular.

This date range is further substantiated by the continued use of the straight and bent knees in the representation of the Crucifixion, as discussed above, which also supports a date for these objects after the mid-1250s.

The two smaller central triptych panels in Abbeville and Cleveland (Plate 17 and 18)—with dimensions approximately 12.5 x 7 cm—share many attributes: they both depict on the upper level the Crucifixion with Longinus and Stephaton and in the lower register the Virgin and Child, flanked by two candle-bearing angels. The “pitched-roof” panel is crowned with large leafy crockets that are not seen on any of the other low-relief works but are present on the Lehman polyptych (Plate 6). The Cleveland panel also shares one further structural similarity with the wings of the Lehman polyptych: these are the only two objects in the Picard group that have gables surmounting the ogival arches

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76 The Courtrai Virgin is probably from Paris; Suckale, “Studien zu Stilbildung,” 147. Little disagrees with such an early dating, and would like to see her dated to 1270–1290, in keeping with the date proposed by her oral history; Little, “Art de l’ivoire,” 77.

on the lower registers, both of which are ornamented with slightly longer nail-head
crocks. Furthermore, both the Abbeville and Cleveland panels have wire hinges and not
book hinges—in fact, remnants of metal wire are embedded in two of the holes on the
Abbeville panel.78 Wire hinges, generally, were typical of Italian production in the
thirteenth century, while book hinges were the expected form of attachment in multi
panelled French products.79 However this anomaly does not require that the origin of
these two panels be Italian, as the continuity in style, iconography and format with the
other products from Amiens make it extremely unlikely that the Abbeville and Cleveland
panels come from elsewhere.80 Perhaps the smaller holes required for the wire hinges
were more conducive to the smaller panels: the circular holes are half the size of the
incision required for book hinges.

The last item of the Picard group to be analyzed is the small triptych now at the
Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (Plate 19).81 The central panel of the triptych

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78 Wire hinges describes a system of attachment where a wire is bent into a loop and the two ends are
inserted diagonally into the panel. The protruding ends are bent back on the reverse of the panels. Book or
plate hinges describe a technique of attachment whereby small folded metal plates are inserted into a
diagonal slot and secured into place with a wooden or ivory peg. The two sides of the hinge are attached by
interlacing the knuckles and securing with a metal pin. For a thorough discussion of panel hinging, see
Victor M. Schmidt, *Painted Piety: Panel Paintings for Personal Devotion in Tuscany, 1250–1400*
(Florence: Centro Di, 2005), 38–39.
80 Charles Morey cited the evidence of the wire hinges on the Cleveland and Abbeville panels to support
his argument for placing the Picard atelier somewhere in northern Italy; Charles Rufus Morey, “Italian
Gothic Ivories,” in *Medieval Studies in Memory of A. K. Porter*, ed. Wilhelm R. W. Koehler (Freeport, NY:
Books for Libraries Press, 1939), 181–91, esp. 188. The Cleveland panel has no provenance before the
twentieth century. The Abbeville panel, on the other hand, was donated to the Musée Boucher-de-Perthes
in 1857 (then called the Musée Pontieu) by the M. l’Abbé Dergny. The fact that the piece was in the hands
of a French clergy member in the mid-nineteenth century strongly suggests that the object was previously
in a French parish church collection (or perhaps the Abbé’s private collection after the Revolution) and the
Abbé was donating it to the local community museum for safekeeping. This very local provenance argues
strongly against a foreign origin.
81 Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (17.190.279a–e).
shares the dimensions of the Abbeville and Cleveland plaques,\textsuperscript{82} and also shares their large and leafy crockets. The iconography of the plaque is slightly different, with John and Mary observing the Crucifixion from separate niches rather than Stephanon and Longinus within the same arch. The wings represent Ecclesia and Synagoga on the upper registers and Peter and Paul in the lower registers. Unlike the Abbeville and Cleveland plaques that had wire hinges, the Metropolitan triptych currently has silver book hinges, although these are clearly modern.\textsuperscript{83} It has long been suggested that this triptych is of Italian origin,\textsuperscript{84} and Morey used the iconography of Peter and Paul as one of his main pieces of evidence for an Italian origin for the whole “Soissons” group.\textsuperscript{85} Several other disconcerting aspects of the Metropolitan triptych, which have also led to its being labelled as nineteenth-century,\textsuperscript{86} are the petite dimensions of the Virgin on the lower register in comparison to the flanking Peter and Paul and the bizarrely extravagant

\textsuperscript{82} The Metropolitan triptych is 12.9 cm high and 6.75 cm wide, while the Abbeville and Cleveland plaques are approximately 12.5 cm x 7 cm.

\textsuperscript{83} The extant hinges lack the ivory peg to keep the plates in place, which is not consistent with medieval French book hinges. Minute evidence of the holes left from wire hinges can be seen on the bottom right-hand hinge on the central panel—a semi-circular projection can be noted. The same holds for the lower hinge on the left-hand wing. Putty is also observed when the sides of the triptych are examined, although the back of the triptych looks quite clean.


\textsuperscript{85} Morey, “Italian Gothic Ivories,” 188.

\textsuperscript{86} A report in the Metropolitan Museum’s files, accessed in March 2006, unequivocally states that the Metropolitan triptych is a nineteenth-century forgery. It was probably written by Joseph Breck, the curator of the Metropolitan Museum’s Department of Decorative Arts from 1917 to 1932, who was responsible for the first catalogue and exhibition of the Pierpont Morgan collection in 1925 from which the Metropolitan triptych was excluded. His opinion is based on the elaborate base and pinnacles (now removed), the lack of patina on the internal surfaces, a hard and mechanical carving style, the proportion of the figures, and the “stove-pipe” Gothic-revival style of the architecture. Although Breck mentioned the possibility of an Italian origin, he refrained from such a conclusion unless convincing parallels in Italian sculpture were found. Metropolitan Museum of Art Object Files (MMA 1917.190.279a–e). The triptych was rehabilitated by James Rorimer on January 19, 1935. Charles T. Little, the current curator, supports the object’s authenticity; Little, “Art de l’ivoire,” 82–83.
architectural frieze on the central panel. The upper register sits on an uneven ground-line: the Crucifixion is elevated above the niches housing Mary and John and is separated by double columns that are repeated in the lower register. Only the knop from Beauvais shares double columns with the Metropolitan triptych. An abbreviated plain rounded arcade of only two and a half arches sits above the side niches of the upper register, an anomaly given the range of architectural details apparent on the other ivories. Although the architectural frieze of the lower register is more consistent with other works in the Picard group, several features here are also unique: the double towers of unequal height on either side of the Virgin’s niche and the single drill-hole decoration that fills the spandrels between the angels’ arches and the architectural frieze. Furthermore, the construction of the panel do not conform to other works in the Picard group. The three towers—now removed because they are agreed to be modern—were supported by three bases between the towers and pinnacles of the central panel: these bases are not additions. 87 This indicates that even if the recently removed additions are modern, such towers were planned for the triptych from its origin. Similar bases for the towers are only found on the now-lost Waterton triptych (Plate 16). 88 The most recent catalogue entry suggested that the Metropolitan triptych was a nineteenth-century pastiche of medieval and contemporary components, the central panel being authentically thirteenth century with modern wings. 89 Such pastiches were a common practice among art dealers at the turn of the century, and Fédéric Spitzer, the dealer in whose collection the triptych was

87 The towers and base that were once attached to the triptych were recently removed as they were deemed to be nineteenth-century interventions. Indeed, the base and towers are not shown in the 1890 catalogue of the Spitzer collection, although they are present in the 1893 sale catalogue.

88 Koechlin, Ivoires gothiques français, vol. 2, no. 45. The present location of this triptych is unknown, so the authenticity and construction of this piece cannot be determined.

found in the late nineteenth century, was notorious for tampering with medieval objects in this manner. Nevertheless, even if the base and pinnacles are nineteenth-century additions, it is not reasonable to further dismantle the Metropolitan triptych in this fashion: the patina on the outside and inside of the central panel and wings is entirely consistent. The uniform carving style, facial types and fold style on all three panels do not support the proposal that six centuries separate their production. Given its anomalies compared with the balance of the Picard group, further evidence must be found before a firm conclusion can be reached regarding the dating of the Metropolitan triptych.

2. The Paris Group

The main feature that distinguishes the Parisian objects from the Picard group is the narrative direction of the diptychs—they read from bottom to top in a boustrophedon pattern. This criterion isolates three diptychs (Walters-Cluny, Soissons, and Berlin

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90 Yvonne Hackenbroch, “Reinhold Vasters, Goldsmith,” Metropolitan Museum Journal 19 (1984–85): 171–72. The Spitzer catalogues state that the triptych was owned by M. Boy before it came to Spitzer’s collection; Molinier and Spitzer, La collection Spitzer, no. 63; E. Molinier, Catalogue précieuse collection Spitzer, no. 98. Even though M. Boy exhibited parts of his collection at the 1900 Exposition Universelle and was sold at auction in 1905 after his death, there is no external corroborating evidence that the triptych was ever in his collection; Exposition Universelle de 1900: Catalogue officiel illustré de l’exposition rétrospective de l’art français dès origines à 1800 (Paris: Lemercier, 1900); and Collection de feu M. Boy. Catalogue des objets d’art et de haute curiosité de l’antiquité, du Moyen Age et de la Renaissance, 15–24 mai 1905 (Paris: Gallerie Georges Petit, 1905). The lack of firm provenance prior to the Spitzer collection casts further doubt on the triptych’s authenticity.

91 A pastiche from the former Spitzer collection is examined in the Images in Ivory catalogue, and the nineteenth-century carving is significantly different from the fourteenth-century exemplar: Images in Ivory, no. 89.

92 Walters/Cluny diptych is composed of a left panel in Baltimore, the Walters Art Museum (71.157) and a fragment of a right panel in the Musée national du Moyen Age–Thermes et hôtel de Cluny (cl. 417). Although Emile Molinier suggested the relationship between these two pieces in 1896, their relation was ignored by subsequent scholarship including Koechlin. In 1969, Richard Randall definitively proved that the separated pieces came from the same work; E. Molinier, Histoire Générale des Arts Appliqués, 190 n.1; Richard H. Randall, “A Passion Diptych,” Bulletin of the Walters Art Gallery 21.7 (April 1969): i–iii; Images in Ivory, nos. 10 and 11.
diptychs\textsuperscript{94}, a pierced panel in the British Museum,\textsuperscript{95} and a lost panel, similar in style to the British Museum panel but not \textit{ajouré}, that was in the Kofler-Truniger Collection (Plates 20 to 24).\textsuperscript{96} The St. Louis diptych (Fig. 2–6)\textsuperscript{97} is also included in this cluster as it shows the same narrative direction, but it is a later reproduction of the Parisian diptychs. Stylistically it is associated with a triptych of the Nativity in Madrid (Fig. 2–4),\textsuperscript{98} and these two objects clearly come from a separate atelier whose production should be dated to the beginning of the fourteenth century and is so heterogeneous that it will not be included in this study.

The boustrophedon narrative is not the only similarity shared by these five works. Each panel is separated into three registers articulated by three pointed arches inset with trefoils, which are crowned with nail-head crocketed gables separated by towers.\textsuperscript{99} The moldings are chamfered, not stepped as in the Picard workshop, and the trefoil arches are undercut and pierced. Furthermore, all of the panels from Paris show some modifications of small tusks to produce large panels. Curved additions are bonded to the concave portion of the tusk to attain a much larger rectilinear panel (H: 33 cm L: 13 cm) than the smaller tusks would otherwise allow (Fig. 3–49, cf. Plates 21b and 22b). The British Museum panel (Plate 23), which is ten centimeters shorter than the diptychs, used to have a small ivory addition only on the upper left-hand corner of the plaque, but it has since been lost. Finally, the iconography of the Parisian works is different from those of

\textsuperscript{93} London, Victoria and Albert Museum (A. 211-1865).
\textsuperscript{94} Berlin, Bode Museum (Skulptursammlung 623 and 624).
\textsuperscript{95} London, British Museum (Dalton 281).
\textsuperscript{96} Lucerne, Kofler-Truniger Collection (S 71). It was previously in the Baboin Collection, Lyon.
\textsuperscript{97} St. Louis, Saint Louis Art Museum (123:1928).
\textsuperscript{98} Koechlin, \textit{Ivoires gothiques français}, vol. 2, no. 44.
\textsuperscript{99} The panel formerly in the Kofler-Truniger Collection is an exception and is instead divided into four registers with four gables per level. As the present location of this work is unknown and significant questions remain about its authenticity, it is not included in the present study.
Picardy, particularly in the inclusion of the Resurrection and several post-Resurrection scenes, the significance of which will be analyzed in Chapter 6.

The historiography of the “Soissons” group has habitually regarded the objects here identified as Parisian as being lesser and later works from the “Soissons atelier,” and therefore fewer stylistic analyses have been based on their specific characteristics. There are, however, several notable exceptions. C. R. Morey rightly grouped the Parisian group of ivories together based on the shared characteristics just enumerated. The architectural details of the Walters panel and the Soissons diptych—namely the gables and little towers crowning the panels—evoked for Morey the façade sculpture of Bourges Cathedral (Fig. 3–25) and the north transept of Notre-Dame, Paris (Fig. 2–3). Richard H. Randall placed the Walters-Cluny and the Soissons diptychs at the head of the “Soissons” family of ivories in the generation following the Saint Louis Psalter (1253–70) (Fig. 2–1) and the Gospels of the Sainte-Chapelle (circa 1245) (Fig. 3–4) based primarily on the architectural frames. Hartmut Krohm posited the Berlin diptych (Plate 22) as the oldest item of the group and said it was the model for the rest of the “Soissons” ivories. Krohm’s reasoning was based on the simplified architecture of the Berlin

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100 Koechlin “Quelques ateliers d’ivoiriers français,” 374–376; Koechlin, Ivoires gothiques français, vol. 1, 73 and vol. 2, no. 38; Gaborit-Chopin, Ivoires du Moyen Age, 143–44; L’Art au temps des rois maudits, no. 82.
102 Morey, “Italian Gothic Ivories,” 184.
103 Saint Louis Psalter, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS lat. 10525.
104 There are three Evangeliaries from the Sainte-Chapelle: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS lat. 8892 (vols. 1–3 circa 1230, vol. 4 1241–48); Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS lat. 9455 (1239–48); and Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS lat. 17326 (circa 1260–70; Fig. 3–4; see also Chapter 3, n. 104). The manuscripts are dated based on a combination of stylistic evidence, calendar information and inventory citations. The generation after these works is therefore the 1260s. See Trésor de la Sainte-Chapelle, nos. 35–37.
106 Meisterwerke aus Elfenbein der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin, ed. Harmut Krohm and Arne Effenberger (Berlin: Preußischer Kulturbestitz, 1999), no. 36.
diptych, which he believed pre-dated the Rayonnant micro-architecture of the Saint Louis Psalter (1253–1270). Although the Berlin diptych’s architectural decoration is simpler than the Soissons diptych, Krohm considered the composition and expressive presence of its figures far superior; he concluded that it must be older than the other objects from the workshop, and suggested a date around 1250.

Despite these arguments, the Parisian group must be seen as slightly posterior to the diptychs of the Picard group. This is only logical if, as discussed above, the block style was developed by stonemasons at Amiens and then spread to other workshops. The Hermitage and Salting ivories were contemporary with the first use of the block style in the Amiens archivolts. The first use of the new block style as the principal style on a work of monumental sculpture was on the jubé of Bourges, finished before 1237 (Figs. 3–29; 3–31). Koechlin frequently drew attention to the resemblance of the Bourges jubé to the “Soissons” group, and it remains such a compelling stylistic comparison that the first diptychs from Paris must be considered contemporary with it. Even though a date in the late 1230s or around 1240 is significantly earlier than that previously posited for any of the ivories in the Paris group, this is still slightly later than the circa 1235 date proposed for the Hermitage and Salting ivories, the first pieces of the Picard group.

Scholars unanimously agree that the Bourges jubé is the product of a Parisian sculptor who traveled to Bourges to carve its figural program. Although previously

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107 Wirth, Datation, 116–123.
108 Wirth, Datation, 119.
110 Fabienne Joubert concludes that the architectural format of the Bourges jubé follows closely the design principles of the cathedral itself, and therefore the Bourges architectural team must have been responsible for its plan. The sculptor is unequivocally Parisian. Fabienne Joubert, Le Jubé de Bourges. Exposition-
dated to the mid- to late thirteenth century due to its refined and mature block style, the 
Bourges jubé is now firmly dated by documentary evidence from 1237 that discusses the 
extinguishing of candles on top of it.  

The jubé belongs to a group of Parisian works 
that include the Apostles from the Sainte-Chapelle (Fig. 3–26), Adam from the interior 
façade of the south transept portal of Notre-Dame de Paris (Fig. 3–27), the fragment of 
the jubé from Notre-Dame de Paris (Fig. 3–28), and the sculptures of the central portal 
of the west façade at Bourges (Fig. 3–25). Alain Erlande-Brandenburg identified such 
unity of style between the Sainte-Chapelle sculptures and those from the Bourges jubé 
that he suggested the two works came from the same hand. The jubé itself offers 
eraldic evidence for its association with a Parisian milieu, as the coats of arms of Castile 
and France are painted in gold on the reverse of the verre-églomisé tiles decorating its

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112 Paris, Musée national du Moyen Age–Thermes et hôtel de Cluny, Melancholic Apostle (cl. 18665), Saint John (cl. 18666), Aechphalic Apostle (cl. 18664), and the Ancient Philosopher Apostle (cl. 18667), all 1241–1248.
114 Fragment of the Harrowing of Hell. Paris, Musée du Louvre (RF991), circa 1260.
115 Robert Branner stated that although the construction on the west façade took place from 1228 to 1230, the sculpture (dated by style alone) was only added in 1255–1265, after the end of the nave construction; Robert Branner, The Cathedral of Bourges and Its Place in Gothic Architecture, ed. Shirley Prager Branner (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989), 58–67. The current view on the matter is that the sculpture on the west façade was added while the construction of the rest of the nave was being completed, around 1240–1250; Tania Bayard, “Bourges Cathedral: The West Portals,” Ph.D. Dissertation, Columbia University, 1968; Jean-Yves Ribault, Un chef-d’oeuvre gothique: La cathédrale de Bourges (Paris: Editions Anthese, 1995), 120–123. Cesare Gnudi labeled these works with the problematic term “Gothic Classicism”; Cesare Gnudi, “Le jubé de Bourges et l’apogée du ‘Classicisme’ dans la sculpture de l’Île-de-France au milieu du XIIe siècle,” Revue de l’art 3 (1969): 18–36.
background (Figs. 3–30; 3–31). Blanche of Castile acted as regent of France from 1226–34 until her son Louis IX came of age. The presence on the jubé of the same heraldic symbols that appeared profusely in the decoration and windows of the Sainte-Chapelle suggests some level of royal patronage for the Bourges jubé, yet documentary evidence has not yet materialized to reinforce this link.

The Walters-Cluny diptych (Plate 20) shows a remarkable similarity to the Bourges jubé, more than either the Soissons or the Berlin diptychs, particularly in the block-style drapery. Mary at the Deposition from the jubé (Fig. 3–32) shows parallel folds below the belt positioned low on the waist, above which the material gathers in near-perpendicular folds. The garment gently curves as it flows downwards to emphasize her inclination towards Christ and to define her legs, breaking once at the ground line. This matches quite well with the Christ from the Arrest on the Walters ivory, despite the substantial difference in size (Fig. 3–33). Fewer folds articulate Christ’s skirt, and the detailed folds above the belt are less well-defined. Judas from the Arrest on the Bourges jubé displays the same principles as the Judas from the Betrayal on the Walters piece (Figs. 3–33; 3–34): the draped mantle breaks into irregular beak-folds that finish in a serpentine line over a tunic of parallel, corrugated folds. The short knee-length, pointed-hemmed tunics that many soldiers wear is also shared between monuments—in the Crucifixion, the Arrest, the Carrying of the Cross and the Flagellation from the Walters-Cluny diptych (Figs. 3–33; 3–35) and at the Crucifixion of the jubé (Fig. 3–31). A detached head of Christ from the Bourges jubé finds its miniature double in the Christ from the Arrest on the Walters panel (Figs. 3–36 and 3–37). Both faces share the same

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118 Ribault also notes that the Castile castles and the French fleur-de-lys also appear in the borders of two lancet windows of the nave (fourth bay of the south side). Ribault, “Le Jubé de Bourges,” 114.
type of beard formation, with large separate curls suggesting a full beard, and two prominent curls on either side of the mouth define the moustache. A single ringlet over the forehead distinguishes Christ from the other characters. The very comparable scenes of the Hell’s Mouth at the Harrowing of Hell offers two nearly identical pairs of nudes (Figs. 3–38 and 3–39) whose large, rounded buttocks stand on thick and firm thighs, joined at the hip and groin with a simply delineated “V”. A rounded lower abdomen protrudes and is punctuated with a well-formed navel. Full arms with curved biceps and forearms result in a plump crease at the elbow.

Several features other than the carving style further signal a close relationship between the Walters-Cluny diptych and the Bourges jubé. The architectural setting of the jubé is composed of a pointed-arch arcade with inset and ajouré trefoil arches, characteristics that the Parisian diptychs also share (Figs. 3–29; 3–40).\textsuperscript{119} The most notable difference, of course, is that the jubé’s narrative content runs in a continuous frieze above the architectural base rather than inside the arcaded space as in the diptychs. But in both cases the ground line is embellished with a smaller foliate frieze.\textsuperscript{120} Both monuments share similarly dense, almost cinematic, Passion narratives, although the unfortunate losses sustained by the jubé do not allow for an exact compositional comparison.\textsuperscript{121} Noteworthy is the inclusion in both monuments Judas’s Betrayal to the High Priest and Judas’s Receiving the Thirty Pieces of Silver. Finally, the intense, jewel-

\textsuperscript{119} Ribault, “Le Jubé de Bourges,” 114.
\textsuperscript{120} Ribault’s reconstruction does not show the organic frieze, but fragments do exist. Joubert includes two friezes in her reconstruction, one above and one below the narrative. Bourges has both ferns (ombellifères) and maple leaves, while both the Soissons and the Walters-Cluny diptych has maple-leaf friezes. Ribault, “Le Jubé de Bourges,” 180; Joubert, Le Jubé de Bourges, 38–39.
\textsuperscript{121} A reconsideration of Joubert’s reconstruction of the jubé with the iconographical program of the ivories in mind might prove fruitful. It would suggest, in fact, that the missing scenes are the Suicide of Judas, Christ being led to Pilate (for which more space must be left), Pilate washing his Hands (?), and the Noli me tangere.
like tones of the ivory’s original polychromy\textsuperscript{122} participate in the same aesthetic of luxurious ostentation as the glass cabochons and polychromy on the jubé.\textsuperscript{123} The astonishing level of similarity in iconography, architectural frame and especially style between the Bourges jubé and the Walters-Cluny diptych proves that these two monuments emerged from the same cultural milieu. The Walters-Cluny diptych must therefore be dated to circa 1240 and be localized to Paris, to which the sculptor returned after the Bourges commission to work on the Apostles of the Sainte-Chapelle.\textsuperscript{124} While it is possible that the Walters-Cluny diptych was actually carved in Bourges, there is no other example of ivory carving that can be localized to Bourges and no evidence of ivory trade in this centre. This renders Paris the most likely place of origin for the Walters-Cluny diptych. As with the Picard group, circa 1240 is significantly earlier than the date proposed by previous scholarship. The Walters-Cluny diptych, however, is the only piece from the Parisian group that warrants such an early dating, as the Berlin and Soissons diptychs are sufficiently different both in their style and iconography to merit a separate examination to establish their proper cultural context.

It is in the iconography, and not the style, that the influence of the Picard group (Plate 1) on the Walters-Cluny diptych can be ascertained (Plate 20). When compared to the Soissons and Berlin diptychs (Plates 21 and 22), it is evident that there is a different source of iconography. The Walters-Cluny diptych lacks the extensive post-Resurrection

\textsuperscript{122} A few traces of polychrome remain on the heavily damaged Cluny fragment (notably traces of blue and green within the architectural details), which does not seem to have been repainted at a later date. The Walters panel has extensive remains of polychrome, likely a more recent repainting roughly following the original scheme, including gilded hair, a blue background, and blue and red highlights in the architecture. For the polychromy of Gothic ivories, see Gaborit-Chopin, “Polychrome Decoration.”


\textsuperscript{124} Erlande-Brandenburg, “Le jubé de Bourges.”
scenes that the Soissons and Berlin diptychs share: the Apparition to the Three Marys, Doubting Thomas, Ascension and Pentecost. In fact the selection of scenes and the figural composition of the Walters-Cluny diptych, although not a precise copy, recalls quite closely the episodes represented on the Picard diptychs and their manner of representation. The Walters-Cluny diptych shows a tendency towards static and staged compositions, extending over numerous bays, that recalls the immobile compositions of the Picard diptychs rather than the flowing and quick-paced narrative of the Berlin and Soissons diptychs where almost every scene is represented under one arch and scenes overlap and roll into the next. These distinctions are best shown through a comparison of the representations of the Crucifixion. On the Picard diptychs (Plates 1, 3, 8), the scene of the Crucifixion exploits a full register filled with standing witnesses as well as the two thieves. On the other hand, the representation of the Crucifixion on the Soissons and Berlin diptychs is a relatively brief affair (Plates 21, 22): Christ flanked by the two thieves is limited to one bay of the register. The slightly leftward leaning countenances of Christ and the thieves continue the momentum of the narrative vigorously dictated by the bent-over Christ in the Carrying of the Cross and Christ’s sloping body in the Deposition. The Crucifixion on the Walters-Cluny diptych also extends across three bays and has precisely the same figures as the Wallace diptych. Furthermore, the Walters-Cluny diptych represents Longinus not in the active stance of piercing Christ’s side, but in the

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125 The Hermitage diptych has no fewer then nine figures witnessing the Crucifixion, including, from left to right, the Virgin Mary with two other Marys, the good thief, Longinus adoring, Stephaton with the sponge, the bad thief, an Apostle, and John the Evangelist. The other Picard diptychs select their characters from this roster.

126 Although the right-most bay of the composition was formerly part of the Cluny fragment, half of it is now missing (the bad thief is lost). The last bay would have depicted the bad thief as well as a mourning John the Evangelist who remains (see digital reconstruction, Fig. 6–1). The separation of a scene across two panels is also observed on several ivories from the Picard group (the Wallace diptych, and the Victoria and Albert triptych). Such breaks are impossible with the more abbreviated rendering on the Soissons and Berlin diptychs.
pose of worshiping the Crucified Christ, which is shown on all of the Picard diptychs and the Pierpont Morgan panel, thereby further strengthening the iconographic link that the Walters-Cluny diptych shares with the ivory works from Picardy.

Richard Randall noted this similarity of iconography, and it led him to include the Walters-Cluny diptych with the Picard group rather than to localize it to Paris with the Berlin and Soissons diptychs. Contrary to Randall’s opinion, the true significance of these iconographic observations is that the creator of the Walters-Cluny diptych likely had an ivory of the Picard group as his model and was emulating its composition and innovative form while making alterations in the style and iconography to tailor it to the tastes of Ile-de-France. For example, details represented on the Picard diptychs are not shown on the Walters-Cluny diptych: Synagoga and Ecclesia are absent from the Deposition and John the Baptist does not introduce the Harrowing of Hell. Thus a series of adaptations accompanied the imitation of the Picard diptychs in a Parisian workshop, signaling a different milieu and audience for the Walters-Cluny diptych. The modifications were made on five levels: iconography, composition, figural style, architectural style, and narrative direction.

The Soissons diptych (Plate 21) has most recently been dated to circa 1280 and Danielle Gaborit-Chopin has published an extensive stylistic analysis to support this date. The majority of her comparisons concern the “Soissons group,” specifically those that are now attributed to the Picard region, with few comments devoted to the Soissons

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128 The Walters-Cluny diptych’s representation of the Entombment and its use of two scenes to depict the Betrayal of Judas also indicate a shared iconographic tradition with the Picard ivories.
129 Images in Ivory, nos. 10 and 11.
130 These modifications will be analyzed in Chapter 6, and their implications fully fleshed out in the Conclusion.
131 L’Art au temps des rois maudits, no. 82.
diptych. Gaborit-Chopin noted that the decorative arches and gables recall the technique of architecture-as-frame used in the Saint Louis Psalter (Paris 1258–1270) (Fig. 2–1). The figures are more monumental and stockier than those found in the Walters-Cluny diptych or any other piece from the “Soissons group.” In her opinion, the characters’ rectangular faces are dour and serious, while, on the other hand, the drapery on the Soissons diptych is more inventive and supple than on the Picard ivories. Its ample and shallowly modeled folds rarely repeat themselves. This attention to surface area extends both to the modeling of flesh—the bodies on the Soissons diptych are plump yet well defined—and to the rich number of recherché details. Two details in particular afforded Gaborit-Chopin an opportunity to date the Soissons diptych: the meticulously knotted loincloth of the good thief and the perfectly bald head of a soldier at the Arrest. Both details reappear on Parisian ivories from around 1300: the former on a triptych leaf of the Crucifixion in the Wallace collection (Fig. 3–41) and the latter on the triptych from Saint-Sulpice-du-Tarn (Fig. 2–7). Based only on the second comparison, Gaborit-Chopin placed the Soissons diptych at the end of the thirteenth century, 1280–1300.

This stylistic analysis betrays several methodological problems. The monuments Gaborit-Chopin used to ascertain the date of the Soissons diptych were not themselves firmly dated: the triptych of Saint-Sulpice-du-Tarn is assigned a date around 1300 purely

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134 Paris, Musée national du Moyen Age–Thermes et hôtel de Cluny (cl. 13101).
on the basis of unpersuasive comparisons and unsubstantiated opinion,\textsuperscript{135} not archival or written evidence. Basing her analysis on iconographic motifs while ignoring the stylistic characteristics she herself enumerates—the micro-architectural similarity the Soissons diptych shares with the Saint Louis Psalter, which has a much earlier and firmer date, the full drapery style and the rounded, fleshy bodies—weakens the argument considerably.

Finally, the details of the knotted loincloth and the bald soldier are present much earlier than the 1300 date Gaborit-Chopin proposes: meticulous representations of the loincloth, for example, are already present in the Morgan Picture Bible, 1244–54 (Figs. 3–42 and 3–43).\textsuperscript{136} Therefore, the date of 1280–1300 for the Soissons diptych based on this criterion should not be accepted. Instead, convincing and dated comparisons for the stylistic characteristics described by Gaborit-Chopin must be found.

The monumental and fleshy bodies of the figures on the Soissons diptych recall several works of stone sculpture and manuscript illumination from Paris in 1260–70. Chief among these is the exquisite Adam, formerly on the reverse façade of the south

\textsuperscript{135} The only firmly dated monument that Danielle Gaborit-Chopin uses to dates the triptych is the metalwork Crucifixion from the Châsse de Nivelles (dated through documentary evidence to 1272, see Un trésor gothique, 166 and fig. 5), which she compares with the Crucified Christ on the upper register of the triptych. To my eye this is not at all convincing. Furthermore, she concludes that the triptych also shares many stylistic traits with ivory carving of the fourteenth century, making 1272 too early, which leads her to propose a circa 1300 date: L’Art au temps des rois maudits, no. 85. See also Gaborit-Chopin, Ivoires du Moyen Age, 207. Viviane Huchard dated the Saint-Sulpice triptych much earlier, around 1280, and more in line with the comparison with the Châsse de Nivelles: Un trésor gothique, no. 43.

\textsuperscript{136} New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M.638, fols. 12v, 18r, and 38v. Based on the extensive bellicose iconography present in the Picture Bible, the manuscript is dated to the decade preceding Louis IX’s commencement of his first Crusade in 1254. S. C. Cockerell and M. R. James, A Book of Old Testament Illustrations of the Middle of the Thirteenth Century sent by Cardinal Bernard Maciejowski to Shah ’Abbas the Great, King of Persia (Cambridge: Roxburghe Club, 1927); more recently, The Book of Kings: Art, War and the Morgan Library’s Medieval Picture Bible, ed. William Noel and Daniel Weiss (London: Third Millennium Publishing; Baltimore: The Walters Art Museum, 2002); and Colum Hourihane, ed., Between the Picture and the Word: Manuscript Studies from the Index of Christian Art (Princeton: Index of Christian Art, 2005), see esp. articles by William Voelkle, Anne-Marie Bouché, and Alison Stones.
transept portal of Notre-Dame de Paris (Fig. 3–27).  

The dating of this monument to the 1260s is based on the inscription that runs along the foundation of the southern transept portal, which Pierre de Montreuil had carved to commemorate the death of his predecessor, Jean de Chelles, in 1258. The standard interpretation of this rare piece of documentation is that Jean de Chelles was the architect for the majority of the north transept, largely completed at the time of his death in 1258. The south transept, and thus the interior façade decoration of this section, was directed by Pierre de Montreuil and dated after 1258.

The softly muscled body of Adam exhibits anatomical details that recall classical sculpture, especially the rounded biceps and triceps of Adam’s right arm and the well-articulated torso with sharply delineated sternum, ribs and a slightly protruding stomach. These characteristics compare well with the corpulent torso of the Crucified Christ on the Soissons diptych (Fig. 3–41). Christ’s rotund abdomen, deeply incised sternum and muscular arms recall the representation of the male nude as the Adam of Notre-Dame and suggest a contemporaneity of production.

The Martyrology of Saint-Germain-des-Près, 1267–1278 (Fig. 3–45), shares the same round and fleshy figures as the Soissons diptych and the Adam from Notre-

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140 Adam’s left arm is a nineteenth-century alteration. See Erlande-Brandenburg, “L’Adam du Musée de Cluny,” 84–85.

Dame de Paris. Moreover, the clothed figures in the manuscript allow for comparisons of the drapery styles in the two monuments. The toiling workers of August (fol. 64r) have the same brawny arms as the Crucified Christ of the Soissons ivory, as well as the protruding abdomen of the profile torsos of the Resurrected Christ and Adam in the Harrowing of Hell. The Gemini twins of the month of May (fol. 49r) share sharply delineated sternums with the crucified figures on the Soissons diptych as well as with the Adam from Notre-Dame. The Labors of the Months in the Martyrology offer several comparisons with the garment style of the Soissons diptych. The laborers’ knee-length clothes are quite similar to those of the soldiers on the ivory: the Harvester of June (fol. 54v) wears his skirt pulled and tucked into his belt, leaving a pointed end dangling at his calf and forming a deep, rounded fold in his lap. The soldier behind Christ as he is being led to Pilate in the Soissons ivory shows the same arrangement of drapery, albeit with more angular folds. Other soldiers on the ivory sport the same garment arranged in similar ways and seen from different angles. For example, the bald soldier at the Arrest seen in profile has tucked his skirt into the back of his belt to reveal his under-tunic; the meticulous detail of the hem sticks out at his back. The man working the fields in July (fol. 59v) has a V-notch in the collar of his tunic, another detail shown on many of the Soissons figures’ garments—on the bottom register almost all figures display this element. The close similarity of the garment and figural details on the Soissons diptych

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142 Martyrology must date after 1267, as the architect Pierre de Montreuil appears in the obituary on fol. 143r, yet before 1278 when the Abbot Gérard de Moret, mentioned on fol. 132r, resigned; L’Art au temps des rois maudits, no. 180. Complete illuminations of this manuscript, see the online catalogue of the Bibliothèque nationale, MANDRAGORE: http://mandragore.bnf.fr/html/accueil.html.

142 See Wirth, Datation, 76–81, for a discussion of the wisdom and folly of dating analyses based on garment styles. Undoubtedly some of the comparisons will follow from the working-class attire that both the soldiers and the laborers wear, and indicate a recording of a fashion in the real world, not an artistic trope. The similarity remains striking nonetheless, more so because of the shared interest in recording the details of the everyday than because of changing fashions in laborers’ clothing.
and in the illuminations of the Martyrology suggest that the two objects were produced at the same place and time, Paris circa 1270.

Based on its resemblances to the Adam figure from the interior of Notre-Dame de Paris and the Martyrology of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, the Soissons diptych can, therefore, be securely dated to 1260–70, and not 1280–1300 as Gaborit-Chopin had proposed. This dating is preferable to Gaborit-Chopin’s theory because of its reliance primarily on monuments themselves dated through documentary evidence, and thus does not propagate a circular dating system.

There has been little attempt by scholars to link the relief carving of the Soissons diptych to ivory statuettes in the round. Certainly such comparisons are challenging as the size and depth of relief are significantly different in each format, but the use of ivory demands a consideration of other contemporary objects in the same medium. An ivory corpus in Berlin offers a striking comparison with many aspects of the Soissons diptych (Fig. 3–46).\footnote{Berlin, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Skulptursammlung (inv. Nr. 27/72). \textit{Meisterwerke aus Elfenbein}, no. 37.} The Crucified Christ on the diptych shares numerous characteristics with the Berlin corpus: the realistically modeled and lightly undulating body of Christ, with slightly flexed legs, crossed ankles and a long perizonium covering only one knee.\footnote{These details persuaded Paul Thoby to assign the Berlin corpus a circa 1270 date as the iconographic characteristics are a mixture between mid-thirteenth century and turn of the fourteenth century; Thoby, \textit{Le Crucifix}, 29, Pl. CCXI (see note 59). Hartmut Krohm arrived at a similar conclusion through comparison with the ivory Deposition Group at the Louvre (OA 3935; Paris 1260–1270 based on stylistic comparisons with undated monuments; Gaborit-Chopin, \textit{Ivoires médiévaux}, no. 103); \textit{Meisterwerk aus Elfenbein}, no. 37. Neither of these dating analyses is linked to documentary evidence, and they therefore remain purely conjectural. I argue, therefore, that the likeness the Berlin Corpus shares with the Soissons diptych—now been dated through comparison with monuments that are firmly dated—offers stronger proof for a 1260–70 date.} Both torsos of Christ show the same deep incisions delineating the sternum, and a distended abdomen with clear creases in the upper section of the stomach, with the navel
set in the centre of the lower section. A comparison of the turned Resurrected Christ and the Adam of the Harrowing of Hell on the Soissons diptych with the profile view of the Berlin corpus reveals a unified conception of bodily form. Furthermore, the beard formation on the Berlin corpus is entirely consistent with that on the Soissons diptych: two long curls on the outer edges of Christ’s upper lip are joined by two shorter curls underneath the mouth, with straighter locks along the jaw line to form a full beard. The noses on the Soissons diptych and the Berlin corpus share a particularly wide bridge, and their sunken eye sockets are marked by a long slit for the eye lid. The number and quality of similarities between the Soissons diptych and the Berlin Corpus are so striking that these works should be considered contemporary with each other and by the same hand.

The Berlin diptych (Plate 22) has received less attention in the literature than the Soissons or the Walters-Cluny diptychs, mainly due to its significantly different architectural frame, which led Koechlin to disparagingly describe it as deplorably limp and negligible. The Berlin decorative structure is indeed much simpler than the Walters-Cluny or Soissons diptychs: the gables sport large fern-like crockets, rather than the diminutive nail-head ones on the Soissons and Walters-Cluny examples; there is no tympanum to adorn with rose windows and trefoil cutouts; the simple, squat towers that alternate with the gables are smooth with no lancets, bricks, or crenellations; and the foliate frieze is entirely missing. The two most recent statements on the object assign it to drastically different places in the “Soissons group.” The entry in the Grove Dictionary of

145 Clearly the eye slit is meant to denote a dead Christ in the Berlin Corpus, while slit eyes are used on the Soissons diptych to indicate both opened and closed eyes.
146 Koechlin, Ivoires gothiques français, vol. 1, 84.
Art, by Gaborit-Chopin,\textsuperscript{147} reiterates the traditional judgment that the Berlin diptych was carved towards 1300 because of its less sophisticated architectural frame. Harmut Krohm introduced a radically different interpretation, commendable in its re-evaluation of the architecture of the Berlin diptych, which focused instead on the highly expressive and elegant figural style. Krohm read the Berlin diptych’s architecture as simplified and “proto-Rayonnant” rather than degenerated and mannered. Both Gaborit-Chopin and Krohm interpreted the architectural dissimilarity between the Soissons and Berlin diptychs as signifying a temporal difference: the simplified architecture on the Berlin ivory makes it either earlier or later than the Soissons diptych. Yet a reassessment of the dating analysis elucidated above for the Soissons diptych demonstrates that the Berlin diptych must be contemporary with the Soissons diptych rather than significantly prior or subsequent to it.

Iconographically and compositionally the Berlin diptych is almost identical to the Soissons diptych, a fact that has led scholars to claim that one object is a copy of the other. Minor and creative differences, though, do exist, suggesting that each version is a different interpretation of the same model rather than a more- or less-able copy of the other. For example, in the Berlin diptych (Plate 22), the positions of Adam and Eve at the Harrowing of Hell are reversed, allowing for an extremely lifelike representation of Eve to step out of the Hell’s mouth first, bending her knee and holding her hands, clasped in prayer, up to her Savior. Extraordinary, too, are the soldiers at the Arrest, whose upraised and flailing arms convey the violence and immediacy of their act. The humility and vulnerability of Christ, fully naked at the Flagellation, is a striking alternative to the more

\textsuperscript{147} Danielle Gaborit-Chopin, \textit{The Dictionary of Art} (New York: Grove’s Dictionaries, 1996), s.v. “Gothic Ivories, The ‘Soissons’ group.”
traditional depiction of this scene on the Soissons diptych. In spite of the differences, many of the anatomical, sartorial, and carving details that made the dating of the Soissons diptych possible are present in the Berlin diptych.

It is not only the simplified architecture and the more animated compositions that differentiate the Berlin from the Soissons diptych, but the figural and fold styles are leaner variations of the full, rounded styles of the Soissons diptych. The tall proportions are significantly different from the stouter ones of Soissons: the ratio of head to body is 1:4 on the Soissons diptych and approximately 1:5 on the Berlin. Although the repertoire of hairstyles is similar on both works, the Berlin locks are consistently longer and curlier, especially on Christ and the Apostles where the tresses often rest on the shoulders. The folds, while still working in the block-style idiom, are sharper and carved in a higher relief than those on the Soissons diptych. The Berlin diptych has more deep beak-folds than the Soissons one, which tends to flatten the folds: compare the Apostle to the left of the Ascension on the Berlin diptych with the first Mary in Christ’s Appearance before the Three Marys. Further, on the Berlin diptych, brittle and razor-sharp edges of garments— for example the High Priest’s robe in the Betrayal of Judas—fracture the picture plane, giving the Berlin example a more delicate air than the Soissons diptych.

For all of their differences, Berlin’s similarities with the Soissons diptych must also be enumerated to form a convincing argument about their contemporaneous dating. The defined muscles, delineated ribs and accentuated sternum of the Adam of Notre-Dame de Paris (circa 1260) (Fig. 3–28), which earlier were compared to the Soissons diptych, are also found on the nude figures in the Berlin diptych, although the nudes there are significantly thinner, leaner and more delicate. The laborers’ clothes in the
Martyrology of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, circa 1270 (Fig. 3–45), analogous with some of the soldiers’ garments on the Soissons diptych, also offer convincing comparisons for the garments in the Berlin diptych: the man working the July fields (fol. 59v) wears a simple tunic, tied at the waist, with an asymmetrical hemline forming a strong point with a slit in the centre. Such a garment is seen on many of the soldiers of the lower register of the Berlin diptych, at the Arrest, Leading Christ to Pilate, and the Flagellation. The representation of the workers stripped for their hot work in the August fields (fol. 64v) and the Gemini twins (fol. 49r) are comparable to the realistically depicted nudes on the Berlin diptych—the Crucified Christ and thieves, and the vigorously Resurrected Christ.

The “Royal Psalter group” of illuminated manuscripts offers an analogous situation in another medium that will help to clarify the relationship between the Berlin and Soissons diptychs. The manuscripts in the Royal Psalter group share iconographic, compositional and stylistic similarities, yet they also show disparate figural proportions and architectural styles. The Royal Psalter group, as defined by Robert Branner, is a subsection of the larger “Sainte-Chapelle group” and is centered on the two Psalters produced for Louis IX and his daughter Isabella. One of the most celebrated manuscripts produced in France in this era, the Saint Louis Psalter, produced in Paris

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148 The Royal Psalter group was identified by Branner, *Manuscript Painting*, 132–137.
149 Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS 300. Branner argues that Fitzwilliam MS 300 did not belong to Isabelle of France, Louis IX’s sister, for several reasons. First, the Psalter contains the arms of Champagne and Navarre which would have been meaningless to Louis IX’s sister, but quite pertinent to Isabella, Louis IX’s daughter, who married Thibaut of Champagne, King of Navarre, in 1258. Second, Isabelle of France entered a convent of Poor Clares in 1255 and a personal prayer book produced for her in the late 1250s or 1260s would certainly have made reference to her Franciscan vows, including, for example, a Franciscan calendar or hours; Branner, *Manuscript Painting*, 133. Stella Panayotova champions the older attribution to Louis IX’s sister Isabelle of France for the manuscript, citing the lack of the arms of Provence, the mother of Isabella being Marguerite of Provence, as barring the possibility that Isabella, the King’s daughter, could have been the owner; *The Cambridge Illuminations*, no. 72. I agree with Branner, as the simultaneous production of the two Royal Psalters would make sense if they were both made in commemoration of Isabella’s (Louis IX’s daughter) marriage, and then both the Saint Louis Psalter and the Isabelle Psalter could be dated 1258–70, with a preference for the earlier portion of this date span.
between 1258 and 1270, is also the most frequently cited parallel for the micro-architectural frames of the “Soissons” group and its eponymous diptych (Fig. 2–1). Krohm interpreted the lack of such an elaborate frame in the Berlin diptych as evidence that the Berlin diptych predated the Saint Louis Psalter and the Soissons and Walters-Cluny diptychs, whose architecture is so reminiscent of the royal manuscript’s illuminations. The Saint Louis Psalter is most convincing as a figural comparison with the Berlin diptych and not as a comparison with the decorative micro-architectural framework that is nearly ubiquitous in this era. The thin and elegant figures of the Saint Louis Psalter, with willowy arms and dancing feet, offer the most compelling resemblance to the slender and expressive bodies of the Berlin diptych. The conception of the naked human body in the Saint Louis Psalter shows the same awareness found in the ivory diptychs and the Martyrology of Saint-Germain-des-Prés: for example, the hanged baker from the tale of Joseph (fol. 21v; Gen. 4:1–23) and the man suffering from boils from Exodus (fol. 31v; Ex. 9:8–12). Furthermore, the nudes in the Psalter show the same attenuated sensibility as in the Berlin diptych. The hanged baker’s back is meticulously rendered (fol. 21v), with protruding shoulder blades, rib cage and curving spine—details also present in the exquisite Eve in the Berlin diptych, whose weight is

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151 Koechlin, Ivoires gothiques français, vol. 1, 80; Williamson, “Symbiosis Across Scale,” 45; L’Art au temps des rois maudits, no. 82.

152 Meisterwerke aus Elfenbein, no. 36.

153 The figures of the Saint Louis Psalter also show a head-to-body ratio of 1:5.
placed on her right foot, her spine curving and following the direction of her upraised hands imploring Christ’s mercy. The plague of boils on the Egyptians (fol. 31v) is represented by a nearly naked man with painfully swollen pustules. Yet, aside from his protruding sores, he also demonstrates the artist’s keen awareness of the human form that resonates with several figures on the Berlin diptych. The figures of the Resurrected Christ and Christ at the Harrowing of Hell both have narrow, sloping shoulders accentuated with a subtle collarbone and delineated sternum. The upper arms are defined with rounded shoulder joints, triceps and biceps, leading to narrow wrists and small, detailed hands. This description also applies to the man plagued with boils, whose similarly undulating and rhythmic muscles are marred only by the signs of the sixth plague. The Berlin diptych, therefore, can be said to emerge from the same milieu as the Saint Louis Psalter: Paris from 1258–70. This dating would make the Berlin diptych contemporary with, or perhaps marginally earlier than, the Soissons diptych.

The relationship between the Berlin and Soissons diptychs can be further probed through analogy to the two manuscripts with which they were compared. Both the Martyrology of Saint-Germain-des-Prés and the Saint Louis Psalter are members of the Royal Psalter group, despite the Martyrology’s corpulent figures versus the slender ones of the Psalter. Branner notes that the similarly rounded heads and heavily painted drapery are sufficient to place them in the same group. Yet Branner adopted a cautionary tone in designating these related manuscripts as a “group” and not as the unified output of a single artist’s hand or even a workshop. The Parisian ivory diptychs offer a parallel situation: a single hand cannot be identified for the Soissons and Berlin ivories, but

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sufficient stylistic and iconographic similarities exist to posit that the carvers involved were closely associated with each other.

The last item to be discussed in this Paris group is an openwork, or ajouré, panel in the British Museum (Plate 23). This exceptional pierced object is not the right leaf of a diptych, as is often assumed, but more likely an ivory carved to be inset into a book cover. The lace-like quality of the ajouré work makes it too delicate to be conceived of as a stand-alone object, and originally it must have been intended to be placed over a layer of richly colored velvet, brocade, or metalwork. The iconography of the panel, which follows the Soissons-Berlin type quite closely, suggests that it was the front cover of a book, which would correspond to the right leaf of a diptych when opened and viewed from the back. In this arrangement, the British Museum panel and its lost

156 This is suggested by the thin and delicate state of the panel, only 0.4 cm thick, less than half the thickness of the other panels from the Parisian group. Furthermore, there are no traces of hinging on the edge of the panel that would suggest it was ever attached to a missing mate.
157 I am aware that this is a problematic assertion, not only because no other ivory panels from book covers survive from the thirteenth century, but because there are no other thirteenth-century pierced ivories. Furthermore, a well-known group of nineteenth-century forgeries of Gothic ivories are characteristically ajouré, a fact which has cast aspersions on all other openwork ivories, even if they are of significantly different styles; J. Leeuwenberg, “Early Nineteenth-century Gothic Ivories,” Aachner Kunstblätter 39 (1969): 111–148. The ajouré status of the British Museum piece can be understood as an economic decision: an examination of the reverse of the panel shows that it is severely “pockmarked” with “pearls” or excrement material that occasionally form close to the pulp of an ivory tusk. I believe the carver of the British Museum panel purposefully chose the pierced technique to mask a section of the ivory tusk of inferior quality, an inventive use of an otherwise defective piece of expensive raw material. See Anthony Cutler, The Hand of the Master: Craftsmanship, Ivory, and Society in Byzantium (9th–11th centuries) (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 45–54.
158 Such an arrangement is also seen on an, albeit much later, sixteenth-century book cover from Saint-Denis (Paris, Musée du Louvre, MR 416; Fig. 3–46). A fourteenth-century French diptych was arranged so that its right-hand leaf was placed on the front cover and its left-hand leaf placed on the back cover so that they would read properly when the book was opened; Gaborit-Chopin, Ivoires médiévaux, no. 205; Le Trésor de Saint-Denis, no. 60. John Lowden has also proposed a similar arrangement for early Christian ivory book covers; John Lowden, “The Word Made Visible: The Exterior of Early Christian Book as Visual Argument,” in The Early Christian Book, ed. Linda Safran and William E. Kingshirn (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 13–47.
partner would read in the expected manner, that is, from bottom to top in the boustrophedon manner. The only iconographic differences between the Soissons and Berlin diptychs and the British Museum panel is the inclusion of the Buffeting of Christ in the bottom register—an inclusion that necessitated the moving of Pilate Washing his Hands to the first compartment at the bottom left—and presumably in the lost left panel a conflation of the Arrest and the Leading of Christ before Pilate and/or the omission of Judas Hanged. Other than this alteration in the narrative sequence, the British Museum panel remains quite faithful to the Soissons-Berlin iconographic type, simply abbreviating and simplifying the compositions when they are too crowded to allow for the ajouré work. A comparison of the Depositions in the Soissons diptych and the British Museum panel demonstrates this abbreviation of the composition: Mary and John have been evicted from the scene in favor of a less cramped composition.

The architectural frame of the British Museum panel places it at a median point between the decorativeness of the Walters-Cluny and Soissons diptych and the austere and simplified Berlin diptych. The gables are interspersed with crenellated turrets with pointed roofs and double lancet windows. The gables themselves are adorned with small, fern-like crockets, and the tympanum is pierced with quatrefoil details, and each has an inset trefoil arch with ajouré cusps and chamfered moldings. From the ledge separating each register hangs a pierced zigzag ornament that finds no comparison among other works of the Parisian group. The fern-like crockets, although slightly smaller than in the Berlin diptych, associate it with the latter, while the more towers and quatrefoils bring it closer to the Soissons diptych. The British Museum piece therefore embodies a continuum between previously conceived opposites and enables one to think of the Berlin
and Soissons diptychs as a group rather than as two unique pieces that share iconography. Finally, the level upper edge of the British Museum panel offers further evidence that the object performed a function different from the diptychs, whose upper gables and towers are unsupported and freestanding. The rectilinear frame around the reliure panel would facilitate its insertion into the book cover, conforming to the expected shape of ivory panels used to adorn books.

Regarding the dating of the British Museum panel, the published scholarship tends to place it at the beginning of the fourteenth century based solely on its unsophisticated architecture and ostensibly less-competent figural execution, and not on a stylistic comparison with a dated object. Many stylistic features, though, are identical to the Soissons diptych—the wide and flat fold style, the corpulent nudes, the manner of rendering hair, and the figural proportion (1:4)—and would lead us to date the British Museum panel closer to the Soissons diptych, in the decade 1260–70. Yet the grimacing fat faces of the soldiers manifest the tendency toward caricatures that began towards the end of the thirteenth century, and which can plainly be seen in manuscript illumination, for example the Livre de Madame Marie, 1285–90 (Fig. 3–48). The presence of this later development argues against the British Museum panel being contemporary with the Soissons diptych, therefore a date in the following decade, 1270–80, is judicious.

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159 In 1905, Koechlin had posited a date as late as the mid-fourteenth century for the British Museum panel, but softened his view in *Ivoires gothiques français* to the beginning of the fourteenth century, a view that Dalton shared; Koechlin, “Quelques ateliers d’ivoiriers,” 378; Dalton, *Catalogue of the Ivory Carvings*, no. 281; Koechlin, *Ivoires gothiques français*, no. 58.

3. Conclusions

The group of ivories formerly designated as the “Soissons” group should be divided into two categories. The first is the set of eighteen ivory diptychs, triptychs, polyptychs and a knop that can be attributed to an artisan working in what is now the Picard region of France, in the second third of the thirteenth century (1235–60). This ivory carver, who either worked on the archivolt figures of the Amiens Cathedral or was closely acquainted with the work there, transcribed the newly developed and efficient block-style of carving onto ivories. The gradual refinement of the block-style on the relief diptychs and triptychs gives an internally coherent development that, in addition to externally dated compositional motifs, allows an ordering of the artisan’s oeuvre. In summary, the dates are:

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<tr>
<th>Object</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hermitage diptych</td>
<td>circa 1235</td>
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<tr>
<td>Salting leaf</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Petersburg polyptych panel</td>
<td>circa 1240</td>
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<td>Lehman polyptych</td>
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<tr>
<td>Victoria and Albert triptych</td>
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<td>Crozier knop</td>
<td>1240–50</td>
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<td>Wallace diptych</td>
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<td>Vatican diptych</td>
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<td>Pierpont Morgan panel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lyon triptych</td>
<td>1250–60</td>
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<td>Cloisters panel</td>
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<td>Courtauld panel</td>
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<td>Brussels panel</td>
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<td>Mayer van den Bergh triptych</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kofler-Truniger triptych</td>
<td>1255–60</td>
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<td>Abbeville panel</td>
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<td>Cleveland panel</td>
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The remaining ivories from the “Soissons” group, namely the Soissons diptych itself, the Walters-Cluny diptych, the Berlin diptych and the British Museum ajouré panel, can be localized to Paris but cannot be attributed to the same hand. Instead the hypothetical association of the artists who made them can be imagined as similar to the artists of the “Royal Psalter group” of illuminators posited by Robert Branner. The close quarters of the Parisian illuminators working on royal commissions, Branner posited, led to close stylistic similarities among artists. The carvers of the Berlin and Soissons diptychs in particular, who seemed to have used the same model, were certainly contemporaries but chose to emphasize different aspects of the current fashion. The Walters-Cluny diptych, which is the most distant from the other Parisian ivories iconographically, is the earliest of the group and the programmer or artist seems to have had a Picard exemplar at his disposal for the planning of the iconography and compositions. The artist’s carving style, of both the architecture and the figures, is all his own. A summary of the Parisian ivories is as follows:

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<tr>
<td>Walters-Cluny</td>
<td>circa 1240</td>
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<tr>
<td>Soissons diptych</td>
<td>1260–70</td>
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<tr>
<td>Berlin diptych</td>
<td>1260–70</td>
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<tr>
<td>British Museum plaque</td>
<td>1270–80</td>
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</tbody>
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With the specific dates and places of origin for the ivories of the Picard and Parisian groups having been identified, the cultural context that enabled their manufacture can be examined in greater detail.
Chapter 4
The Hermitage Diptych, Iconography and Meditative Prayer

For the medieval viewer of the Picard or the Parisian ivory diptychs, it was the “what” rather than the “how” of the depictions that mattered most: the iconography rather than the style was of primary importance. A close reading of the iconography presented on these two groups of ivories is, therefore, the next step in their analysis. The iconographic and compositional similarities shared among the diptychs in both the Picard and the Parisian groups are the traits that first led Koechlin to classify these objects together as the “Soissons” group, yet the particularly dense representation of the scenes of the Passion on these ivories has received little attention in its own right.\(^1\) In the next three chapters, the iconography, textual sources and narrative techniques employed by the programmers\(^2\) of the Parisian and Picard diptychs will be examined in greater detail, aspects that further anchor the diptychs within their cultural and social milieus. From “what” was depicted we will turn to the question of why, or to what end? The function of the Hermitage diptych within the context of meditative prayer is the subject of the second half of this chapter. The role of images in thirteenth-century society in general will be considered briefly, and the particular role images played in private prayer and devotion

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1 Harvey Stahl’s creative and compelling article on this topic in fact inspired the present study. Unfortunately, several flaws stemming from imprecise dating and localization of the ivories marred Stahl’s analysis. The assumption that the diptych now in St. Louis preceded the Walters-Cluny and Hermitage diptychs misled Stahl’s conception of the permutations of the “Soissons” group iconography over time. Harvey Stahl, “Narrative Structure and Content in Some Gothic Ivories of the Life of Christ,” in Images in Ivory: Precious Objects of the Gothic Age, ed. Peter Barnet (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 94–114.

2 As will become clear throughout the close analysis of the iconography of the Passion, an iconographer, designer or concepteur was active in the conceptualization and planning of the Picard and Parisian diptychs (a topic further explored in the Conclusion). For a discussion of the various modes of “authority” in the production of medieval art, see Jill Caskey, “Whodunnit? Patronage, the Canon, and the Problematics of Agency in Romanesque and Gothic Art,” in A Companion to Medieval Art: Romanesque and Gothic in Northern Europe, ed. Conrad Rudolph (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 2008), 193–212.
on the Hermitage diptych will be explored. Before launching into a text-heavy examination of the iconography and function of the Hermitage diptych, it is worthwhile first to delimit my methodological approach in relating texts to images and to explain how I conceive of their interdependence.

1. Text and Image

All of the “Soissons” diptychs depict scenes related and described in written texts. Ultimately, the source for imagery of the Passion of Christ are the canonical Gospel narratives, but throughout the Middle Ages this ur-text was interpreted and mediated by a number of apocryphal elaborations, commentaries, glosses, devotional texts, and legendary materials. In the following iconographic description, I show that many such texts had an impact on both the Picard and the Parisian ivory diptychs. Yet this investigation, and any iconographic analysis, begs the question of the relationship between text and image. 3 Too often images are seen as mere illustrations of a pre-existing text: the written version is considered primary while the visual version is secondary. This simplistic view of the relationship between text and image is implausible for the Picard or the Parisian diptychs because no written text presents an identical or even similar amalgamation of episodes and details. Instead, the iconographers of the diptychs were compilers in their own right, drawing from various written, oral or visual sources to

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compose original versions of the Passion narrative for the ivory diptychs. Compilatio was one of the compositional techniques suggested by the authors of the Ars Poetica. These treatises on rhetoric were written in the Scholastic environment of the twelfth- and thirteenth-century universities and offered a set of rules and methods for organizing arguments. The Ars Poetica instructed authors how to articulate sometimes-repetitive source material in innovative ways to formulate a variety of works. Compilatio consisted of the re-organization of pre-existing narrative material to exemplify a chosen theme. Placing the material in a new context or arrangement generated a new interpretation: compilation was a respected mode of creation. The “author” of the iconographic program on the diptychs—the iconographer—drew freely and imaginatively from all available source material to compose an appropriate Passion cycle to fit the desired function of the ivory diptychs.

What source material did the iconographer have at his disposal for the composition of the diptychs’ iconography? Because we lack specific knowledge about

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4 On this point I agree with what Paula Mae Carns has proposed regarding fourteenth-century ivory caskets with scenes from various Romances. However, Carns suggests for the fourteenth-century caskets that the Master of the workshop was also the iconographer, but, as discussed in Chapter 1, the thirteenth-century atelier, being a hundred years earlier than Carns’ fourteenth-century box workshop, likely followed a different structure. I believe the iconographers of the Picard and Parisian diptychs were separate from the carvers. See Paula Mae Carns, “Compilatio in Ivory: The Composite Casket in the Metropolitan Museum,” Gesta 44 (2005): 69–88; and for the ivory casket workshops see Paula Mae Shoppe, “Reading Romances: The Production and Reception of French Gothic Ivories in the Context of Late Medieval Literary Practices” (Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2000), 18–45.

5 For the original Ars Poetica texts see Edmund Faral, Les arts poétiques du XIIe et du XIIIe siècles: recherches et documents sur la technique littéraire au Moyen Age (Paris: Bibliothèque de l’Ecole des Hautes Etudes, 1962). Alyce Jordan is primarily responsible for introducing the Ars Poetica as a tool for accessing the thirteenth-century “period eye.” She has successfully proposed that the narrative stained glass at the Sainte-Chapelle was programmed under the influence of the rhetorical strategies presented in the Ars Poetica; Alyce Jordan, Visualizing Kingship in the Windows of the Sainte-Chapelle (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002).

the education and intellectual formation of the designer, the pool of textual material must be limited to works widely available in northern France. To borrow Michael Baxandall’s phrase, I wish to reconstruct part of the “period eye” of the thirteenth century. In other words, what were the commonly held conceptions and assumptions about the Passion that informed both the production and reception of the ivory diptychs? To establish this, I examine the “lowest common denominator” of the intellectual community to which the diptychs belonged—only those works that were easily accessible both intellectually and materially. Furthermore, I do not want to propose that the programmer literally had this material to hand when composing the iconography. Rather, my presumption is that these were the general preconceptions the iconographer was working with and that he brought to bear on the imagery. Whether the iconographer read the source text in the manuscript at school, heard the theological interpretations in sermons, or saw a jongleur perform a new tale is ultimately irrelevant to our investigation. The designer himself may have been unaware from what source he had gleaned a certain interpretation, and the viewer was probably equally unconscious of the specific textual source of the images he saw. Yet, the fact remains that the simplest way for the modern historian to recover the shared thirteenth-century understanding of the Passion of Christ is to consult written texts. The sources I consider beyond the Bible and the liturgy, therefore, were common in cathedral-school education and were broadly disseminated. Peter Comestor’s *Historia Scholastica*, a Latin concordance of the Bible with exegetical, legendary and even grammatical commentaries, was the set textbook in the thirteenth century for the

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introductory biblical studies course in both the cathedral schools and at the University in Paris. The *Glossa Ordinaria* is a similar Scholastic text compiled in Laon over the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. It assembled the most popular interpretations from the Church Fathers into an easily referenced source that remained indispensable throughout the Middle Ages. Both of these annotated forms of the Bible provided source material for sermonizing in the thirteenth century. The *Pseudo-Gospel of Nicodemus*, a sixth-century apocrypha, was immensely popular throughout western medieval Europe as attested by the hundreds of extant manuscripts in Latin as well as Old French. In addition to these Latin sources, I also consider several vernacular texts in Old French and Picard, most prominently the *Passion des Jongleurs*, which were performed publicly throughout northern France. The oral dissemination of these texts justifies their use despite the limited manuscript distribution. I consider all of these texts not necessarily as “sources” of the Passion iconography found on the ivory diptychs, but as parallel manifestations of a shared conception of sacred history. These popular and widely

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12 The relationship between medieval art and drama in modern scholarship has been fraught and deserves an additional note. Too often one medium has been used merely as a tool for the analysis of the other. This instrumental use of either visual art or drama ignores the complex issues of representation on each side of the equation: it assumes that the visual artists were attempting to record verbatim what they witnessed at
disseminated texts therefore aid in the reconstruction of the medieval viewer’s cumulative conception of the Passion of Christ, essentially allowing the modern historian to approach the medieval viewer’s hermeneutical position when presented with the carved diptychs.

Ivory objects with scenes from the Life and Passion of Christ survive from every period of Christian art and an enumeration of all of the various ivory items bearing Christological scenes is far beyond the scope of this work. A survey of the major catalogues of Late Antique, Early Christian, Byzantine, Carolingian, Ottonian and Romanesque ivories evinces the rich variety many Christian cultures employed to depict the same canonical stories. It is worth noting, however, that the iconographies of both the Picard and the Parisian “Soissons” ivories are unique: there is no iconographic source for their particular Passion narrative on earlier ivory objects. This is not to say that the iconographers of the first Gothic diptychs were not perhaps inspired by one of these historic or antique ivories. It is significant, however, that with venerable older ivories at his disposition, the “author” of the Gothic diptychs did not follow their iconography, but...
chose to make his own compilation. To the best of my knowledge, there is no single source for the Passion program on the Picard or the Parisian diptychs. The iconographer compiled an original narrative, drawing inspiration from several disparate sources, though all were widely available in northern France in the thirteenth century.

2. Iconography of the Hermitage Diptych

The early date assigned to the Hermitage diptych (circa 1235; Plate 1) based on stylistic characteristics is reflected in its iconographic program: it displays the largest number of details supplementary to the narrative of Christ’s Passion. The other diptychs from the Picard group present minor to major deviations from this composition and, therefore, the narrative carved on the Hermitage diptych acts as the prototype for the Picard group’s iconography in this analysis. Subsequent alterations to the Hermitage template must be considered as purposeful modifications to this original schema. These alterations and their resultant significance to the users of the subsequent diptychs will be analyzed at the end of this chapter and in Chapter 5.

The Hermitage diptych, reading from top to bottom and from left to right across both leaves, begins in the upper left-hand corner with four scenes about Judas’s betrayal of Christ. The first scene, neatly contained within one arch, depicts an older and a younger man. The older man, who stands sideways with his back to the frame, is bearded, has long-flowing locks and wears a floor-length tunic with a mantle draped over his left shoulder. This coiffure and ensemble is reserved throughout the diptych to signal the apostles: here we must assume that it is Judas, one of the twelve apostles, who is represented. The other man, depicted as beardless and with short, chin-length hair, is
shown in a knee-length tunic cinched at the waist and with a cloak held across his shoulders by a delicate thong. Precisely which moment from Christ’s Passion this first scene depicts is unclear. While the current opinion, following Koechlin, is that it represents “Judas tempted” to betray Christ, to what text it refers exactly is less than evident.\(^\text{15}\) The story of Judas’s betrayal is told in the synoptic Gospels, where Judas briefly discusses his impending betrayal with the priests and magistrates before agreeing on the blood price.\(^\text{16}\) The clean-shaven man with a short tunic does not, however, fit the description of a High Priest or magistrate,\(^\text{17}\) though the iconography on fourteenth-century copies of the Picard diptychs adjusted the representation of this scene to show Judas conversing with a respectable-looking High Priest or magistrate. In these later diptychs, Judas then received the silver from another respectably dressed High Priest in the second scene.\(^\text{18}\) Was this a correction by later carvers of an iconographic ambiguity or mistake? Or was the textual referent to which the representation alluded no longer current.

\(^{15}\) Charles Pilet and Eugène Escribe, *Catalogue des Objets d’Art et de Haut Curiosité... qui composent les Collections de feu M. le Comte de Pourtalès-Gorgier et dont la vente aura lieu... le lundi 6 Février 1865* (Paris: Hôtel, rue Tronchet, 1865), no. 1515, suggested that the scene represents Christ announcing to his apostles that one of them was to betray him. This interpretation, however, is not consistent with the way the Picard master consistently chose to depict Christ and his apostles: the man in the short tunic is clearly marked as different from the apostles. Alfred Darcel and John Westwood both suggested Judas speaking with the Jewish High Priest, a scene that takes place just prior to Judas receiving the thirty pieces of silver. This proposition certainly makes chronological sense, but it is difficult to reconcile the dapper-looking young man with the designation of High Priest, especially given the more stately representation of the High Priest giving Judas the thirty pieces of silver in the following niche. Alfred Darcel, *Collection Basilewsky: Catalogue Raisonné* (Paris: A. Morel et Cie, 1874), no. 100; John O. Westwood, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Fictile Ivories in the South Kensington Museum* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1876), 407. Finally Koechlin simply suggested that the scene represented “Judas tenté,” without further elaborating on this iconographical designation. Raymond Koechlin, *Les ivoires gothiques français*, 3 vols. (Paris: Auguste Picard, 1924), vol. 2, no. 34. The Index of Christian Art has accepted this label without question.

\(^{16}\) Matthew 26: 14–15; Mark 14: 10–11; Luke 22: 4. All English quotations from the Bible are taken from the Douay-Rheims translation of the Vulgate text and all Latin citations from Jerome’s Vulgate.

\(^{17}\) The only other figures sporting a short tunic on the Hermitage diptych are soldiers and servants, making it unlikely that the jauntily clad figure was meant to represent a political or religious leader.

\(^{18}\) Rome, Vatican Museum, A86; Detroit, Detroit Institute for the Arts, 42.138–139.
such that the later carver wished to make the iconography conform to the canonical sources?

This second interpretation is perhaps closer to the truth, as revealed by *La Passion des Jongleurs*, a thirteenth-century vernacular narrative poem in rhyming couplets. Many aspects of the *Passion des Jongleurs* highlight its performative qualities, suggesting that this vernacular concordance of the Passion narrative was widely known throughout northern France in the mid-thirteenth century through oral dissemination. The iconographer of the Hermitage diptych could have drawn from this oral alternative to the written Gospels for his iconography. Instead of the High Priest and magistrates of the Gospel texts, in the *Passion des Jongleurs* Judas betrays Christ to the Jewish princes and people: “Aux princes vint et a la gent/ Qui Dieu n’amoient de noient.” One of these secular individuals of undefined age accords much better with the representation of the

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19 In keeping with the oral nature of the poem, Anne Perry suggested that the text may have been composed as early as the end of the twelfth century, although the version Perry edited, from Geffroi de Paris’s *Bible des sept estaz du monde* (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS fr. 1526, fol. 92r–126r), dates to 1243. Anne Joubert Amari Perry, ed. and trans., *La Passion des Jongleurs: Texte établi d’après la Bible des sept estaz du monde de Geffroi de Paris* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1981), 18 and 93–96.

20 Perry notes that the oral performance of the *Passion des Jongleurs* is strongly suggested by the number of interventions the author/jongleur makes in the text, like calling and addressing the audience, formulas of presentation, exclamations, affirmations of verity, allusions to sources of authenticity, and didactic digressions. All of these tropes have been analyzed as characteristic of oral texts. See Minette Grunmann, “Narrative Voices in Old French epic and Romance, Exemplified by La Chanson de Guillaume, Galeran de Bretagne and Guillaume de Dole,” *Romance Philology* 29 (1975): 201–09. The *Passion des Jongleurs* was intended to be read aloud, with the actor enlivening the text by changing his voice to differentiate between narration and dialogue and between one character and another. Perry, *Passion des Jongleurs*, 21; Maurice Delhouille, “Les Chansons de geste et le livre,” in *La Technique littéraire des chansons de geste. Actes du Colloque de Liège, Septembre 1957* (Paris: Société d’Édition “Les Belles Lettres,” 1959), 295–407, esp. 334–35. Furthermore, the *Passion des Jongleurs* exists in a total of twenty-seven manuscripts, suggesting that in addition to dissemination through oral performances, the written text itself was rather broadly distributed. Perry, *Passion des Jongleurs*, 18 n. 6.

21 Li traires plu ne demeure,  The traitor kept silent no longer,  Eina s’entrome meisme l’eure;  He went out that same hour;  Aus princes vint et a la gent  He went to the princes and the people  Qui Dieu n’amoient de noient.  Who did not love God.  “Dites moi,” fet il, “a deliver,  “Tell me,” he said, “to deliver him,  Que me dorze se je vous livre  What would you give me if I bring  Mon seigneur que vous haëz tant?”  My Lord whom you hate so much?”  (*Passion des Jongleurs*, ll. 179–185)  (My translation)
clean-shaven man in the short tunic depicted on the Hermitage diptych. The more secular “Jewish princes and people” of the Passion des Jongleurs were gradually edited out of the later Passion narrative poems, which parallels the adjustment of the iconography of later copies of the Picard Passion diptychs.\(^{22}\)

Both Judas and the young man are shown gesticulating vigorously toward the Arrest at the end of the register. Their gestures clearly indicate the subject of their conversation and also serve as a signpost for the viewer of the diptych: Judas stands in profile with his back to the frame and points to the right, the direction of the narrative. The young man reiterates this direction with his right hand while his left languidly points downwards. These hand gestures, therefore, perform two functions: they both signify the subject of the men’s discourse and also instruct the viewer to begin examining the visual narrative at this point and to “read” it from left to right and from top to bottom. The use of pointing hands to signal the beginning of the narrative is common to all the Picard and Parisian diptychs except for the Berlin diptych. On the Soissons diptych (Plate 21), where the Betrayal and the Receipt of the Thirty Pieces of Silver are conflated into one scene, the High Priest stands in profile and Judas points adamantly over his left shoulder.

The second scene on the Hermitage diptych, contained neatly within the second arch, represents Judas receiving the Thirty Pieces of Silver.\(^{23}\) Judas’s portrayal is

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\(^{22}\) In the fourteenth-century Livre de la Passion, Judas conspires instead with the canonical magistrates, “mestres de la loy.” Grace Frank, Le Livre de la Passion: poème narratif du XIVe siècle (Paris: Champion, 1930), l. 321. In the 1470 Passion de Biardi (one of the two versions of the so-called Passion d’Autun), Judas’s collaborators are described simply as Jews. Grace Frank, La Passion d’Autun (Paris: Société des Anciens Textes Français, 1934), l. 299.

consistent with the first scene while the man giving Judas the blood money sports a full beard and has long curly hair that falls to his shoulders. He wears a floor-length tunic and a waist-length mantle with a hood. A conspicuously large and ornate moneybag dangles from this man’s belt, signifying the greed that the thirteenth-century audience believed led Judas to betray his teacher. This interpretation is stated explicitly in the popular biblical commentary *Historia Scholastica*, written by Peter Comestor in the mid-twelfth century and a common textbook in thirteenth-century schools.24

The last two niches on this first register encompass the claustrophobic representation of the Arrest of Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane, a composition that centers on Judas’s unfaithful kiss.25 Following the Gospel texts quite closely, the scene includes the secondary narrative of Peter cutting off the ear of the High Priest’s servant, Malchus: the precise moment represented occurs seconds after Peter has sliced off Malchus’s ear and just prior to the miracle of Christ healing it. The intermediary stage in the narrative between the two acts is filled with the echo of Christ’s admonishment: “Put up thy sword into the scabbard. The chalice which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?”26 The soldiers and servants who accompany Judas are distinguished from the

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24 “Because by chance Judas heard that the Lord was to die in three days and he thought the Lord would be detained in death [i.e., not be resurrected], Judas wanted the imminent death to be lucrative for him, and thence he sought the opportunity to betray him without turmoil. Those thirty *denari* were worth three hundred *usuales*, and Judas wanted to be compensated for the loss of the ointment.” (Forte, quia, cum audierat Dominum tertia die moriturum, et putavit eum in morte detineri, mortem imminenter sibi lucrativam fieri voluit, et exinde quaerabant opportunitatem tradendi eum sine turbis. Illi triginta denarii valebant trecentos usuales, et ita volebat Judas recompensare unguenti perditionem.) Petrus Comestor, *Historia Scholastica*, Passio Christi (Migne PL 198.1614d). All English translations of the Comestor’s text are my own. The ointment the Comestor refers to is the spikenard the repentant prostitute/Mary Magdalene poured on Christ’s head during the supper at Bethany (Matthew 26: 6–14; Mark 14: 3–9; John 12: 3–8). Although the proximity of the anointing scene where Judas criticizes the waste of expensive ointments to Judas’s betrayal implies causality in the Gospels, the compilers and annotators of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries explicitly stated that the betrayal of Christ was driven by Judas’s greed to have his share of the wasted ointment’s worth.


26 John 18: 11.
apostles by their knee-length tunics and their variety of hats. The final episode in this short cycle dealing with the betrayal of Judas is his suicide. An unusual detail provided by the text of Acts is depicted on the Picard diptych: the text tells of Judas’s entrails rupturing forth from his abdomen as he hanged himself.\textsuperscript{27} For the thirteenth-century audience, this act of despair and self-destruction was the moment when Judas was irrevocably damned: hitherto his deeds were necessary for the salvation of humankind and so did not condemn Judas. The tree on which Judas is hanged brackets the narration of Judas’s tale, closing the story of betrayal and giving visual pause before the continuation of the Passion events.

Following the immensely popular sixth-century \textit{Pseudo-Gospel of Nicodemus} rather than the canonical Gospels,\textsuperscript{28} Jesus is shown being led directly into the forecourt of Pontius Pilate instead of to the High Priest Caiphas or to King Herod.\textsuperscript{29} In contrast to the complex route that takes Christ from one authority’s house to another in the canonical books, the \textit{Pseudo-Gospel of Nicodemus} conveniently begins its narrative with Christ before Pilate.\textsuperscript{30} The discussions and disputes that take place there are further condensed

\textsuperscript{27} Acts 1:18.
\textsuperscript{29} In Matthew, Christ is first led to Caiphas the High Priest (26:57) and then to the Governor Pontius Pilate (27:2). Mark tells of Jesus taken before the High Priest, priests and scribes (14:53) and subsequently to Pontius Pilate (15:1). The Gospel of Luke recounts a more complex itinerary, with Christ first taken before the High Priest’s house (22:54), then before Pilate (23:1) who decided that the matter is really of King Herod’s concern and sends Christ to him (23:7), but Herod simply mocks Christ and sends him back to Pilate for the final sentencing (23:11). John’s Gospel takes Jesus first to the High Priest Caiphas’ father-in-law, Annas (18:13), then to Caiphas himself (18:24) and finally into the forecourt of Pilate (18:28).
\textsuperscript{30} \textit{Pseudo-Gospel of Nicodemus}, I.1. Certainly a reliance on the Pseudo-Gospel is not absolutely necessary here because starting in the forecourt of Pilate is a rather straightforward simplification of the canonical Gospels. Yet given that the Pseudo-Gospel was clearly consulted for other iconographic idiosyncrasies on the Hermitage diptych, it seems plausible that the iconographer of the Hermitage diptych drew from this source text for the Pilate scene as well.
in the Hermitage diptych, summarized into pointed and directed gazes shared between the main protagonists. The dialogic structure, where in the texts the Jews accuse Christ of something and then Pilate asks Jesus if it is so, can be clearly inferred from the two soldiers at the front of the crowd who aggressively face Pilate. Pilate, with his inquisitive gaze, redirects our attention back to the reticent Christ who communicates his silence through crossed hands and slight backwards lean. Closure to the scene is achieved with Pilate’s cruel sentence at the insistence of the priests: Christ is to be crucified. Pilate is, however, doubtful about the justice of his judgment and publicly washes his hands of any guilt associated with his decree.  

The second register begins with the Flagellation of Christ before he was taken to be crucified. The account of the Flagellation in the Gospels offers many details that are omitted in the Hermitage diptych: the crown of thorns, the purple cloak, and the mock genuflection. The exclusion of these details, often depicted in contemporary Italian and Netherlandish art, focuses the viewer’s attention on the undiluted representation of violence and suffering. The arcing rhythm of the soldier’s upraised arms denotes the brutal force used to scourge Christ, emphasizing this moment as the beginning of Christ’s salvific suffering. The aggressively raised arm of the soldier in the next scene, Christ Carrying the Cross to Golgotha, links the two episodes formally and thematically. The

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33 See Anne Derbes’s discussion of the complex iconography of the mocking of Christ in duecento Italian painting. Anne Derbes, Picturing the Passion in Late Medieval Italy: Narrative Painting, Franciscan Ideologies and the Levant (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 94–112.
34 This composition of the Flagellation, with Christ tied to a column flanked on either side by two tormentors, is the standard representation of this scene in the thirteenth century. James Marrow discusses later violent elaborations on Flagellation imagery in Netherlandish Passion treatises and art. James Marrow, Passion Iconography in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance: A Study of the Transformation of Sacred Metaphor into Descriptive Narrative (Kortrijk: Van Ghemert Publishing Company, 1979), 134–41.
Hermitage ivory does not include Simon of Cyrene, who carried the Cross for Christ in Matthew and Mark, nor the crowds and the women who followed Christ weeping as recounted in Luke.\textsuperscript{36} The compact composition follows the succinct formula of John’s Gospel,\textsuperscript{37} which was the popular iconographic representation of the scene in northern Europe after the turn of the twelfth century.\textsuperscript{38} The swaying rhythm of the figures in this register ushers the viewer’s attention quickly through these two scenes despite Christ’s and the soldier’s backwards glances—against the narrative flow—that attempt to stall the inevitable narrative progress signified by Christ’s Cross transgressing the boundary of the frame.

The quick narrative pace—with each scene presented in at most two arches—comes to a halt on the right leaf with the static presentation of the Crucifixion occupying the entire register: no fewer than nine individuals are depicted as witnessing or rejecting Christ’s sacrifice. In its general contours, the representation of the scene follows the conventional iconography of the time. From left to right, the figures represented are Mary of Cleophas and Mary Magdalene supporting the Virgin Mary, the good thief,\textsuperscript{39} Longinus

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\textsuperscript{37} “And bearing his own cross, he went forth to that place which is called Calvary, but in Hebrew Golgotha” (John 19: 17).

\textsuperscript{38} Ute Ulrich-Schede concluded that the iconography of the Carrying of the Cross with Simon of Cyrene was abandoned in favor of Christ carrying it himself because of the sermons preached circa 1095 by Urban II to elicit support of the Crusade. Urban II exhorted the faithful to follow Christ’s words: “If any man will come after me, let him... take up his cross, and follow me” (Matthew 16: 24), a text linked to John’s solitary version of the Way to Calvary since Origen. The spread of the new iconography was linked to the spread of Crusading fervor. Ute Ulrich-Schede, \textit{Das Andachtsbild des kreuztragenden Christus in der deutschen Kunst von den Anfängen bis zum Beginn des 16. Jahrhunderts: eine ikonographische Untersuchung} (Munich: UNI-Druck, 1968), 12–13. Anne Derbes further substantiates this argument by pointing out that all of the earliest representations of John’s version of the Carrying of the Cross were in monuments commissioned by individuals closely associated with Urban II. Derbes, \textit{Picturing the Passion}, 121–23. Since this iconography was standard in northern Europe by the thirteenth century, no special significance can be ascribed to this iconographic choice on the Hermitage diptych.

\textsuperscript{39} Luke 23: 39-43. Matthew 27: 38, 44 and John 19:18 mention the thieves but do not elaborate on their dialogue. The \textit{Pseudo-Gospel of Nicodemus} provides the names of the two thieves, Dismas and Gestas, but does not add to the narrative details presented in the Gospels (10.1).
the soldier/centurion who pierced Christ’s side, Christ on the Cross as *Christus patiens*, the soldier with the sponge known as Stephaton, the bad thief, an unnamed disciple, and John the Evangelist. There are, however, a few anomalous or curious details that deserve to be examined in greater depth.

At the far left of the composition Mary of Cleophas and Mary Magdalene support the Virgin Mary as she swoons from pain at seeing her beloved son crucified on the Cross. The Virgin’s swooning stance, not described in the Gospels, refers to the exegetical tradition of Mary’s suffering at the foot of the Cross, which received extensive theological, poetic and iconographic elaboration in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The Virgin Mary’s painful reaction at seeing her son executed was expressed in several texts of the *Planctus beatae Mariae*, the most popular of which was known as the *Quis dabit* and was circulated under the name of Bernard of Clairvaux but was actually penned by the north Italian monk Oglerius of Tridino around 1205. The tradition of the

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41 The soldier who offered the dying Christ vinegar infused with the bitter herb hyssop on a sponge. Matthew 27: 34; Mark 15: 35–36; Luke 23: 36–37; John 19: 28–30. This individual is sometimes called Stephaton in iconography, although no reliable source for this name exists from the Middle Ages, and it remains unknown how and when he obtained this name. Schiller, *Iconography*, vol. 2, 89.

42 John 19: 25.


Complaint of the Virgin both likens and contrasts Christ’s joyous birth and infancy with his present gruesome death: the physical pain of childbirth—which Mary reportedly did not suffer at the Nativity but at the Crucifixion—and the emotional anguish she feels both participate in the redemption of humankind. On the Hermitage diptych, Mary’s artfully arranged arms signal both the emotional pain in her heart—as foretold by Simeon at the Presentation—and also the physical pain of childbirth she experiences in her womb. The Virgin’s swoon not only makes reference to the postponed pain of parturition, thus calling to mind the Incarnation, but also, through the clear parallelism in the Quis dabit between Christ’s actual death on the Cross and the Virgin’s death-like state through compassio, the Crucifixion. Her doubly significant swoon encapsulates the history of redemption, from the Incarnation to the Crucifixion.

Berrigan (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1988), 102–17. The Quis dabit, and the other Planctus texts, were frequently incorporated into longer Passion narratives in both Latin and in various vernaculars. A version of the Planctus was incorporated into the Passion des Jongleurs, II. 1750–2137. Interestingly, several Planctus texts were paired with versions of the Pseudo-Gospel of Nicodemus, both in Latin and in various vernaculars. Twenty-two manuscripts in which the Latin versions of the Pseudo-Gospel of Nicodemus appear also contain a Planctus text, their dates ranging from the mid-thirteenth century to the mid-fifteenth; Izy dorczyk, Manuscripts of the Evangelium Nicodemi. Five versions of the so-called Complaint/Gospel from the British Isles are in existence, two in Anglo-Norman and three in Middle English. This text is a compilation of the Passion narrative (including a Planctus) and the Pseudo-Gospel of Nicodemus. See C. William Marx and Jeanne F. Drennan, ed., The Middle English Prose Complaint of Our Lady and Gospel of Nicodemus, Middle English Texts 19 (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1987); and Kathryn A. Smith, “The Neville of Hornby Hours and the Design of Literate Devotion,” Art Bulletin 81 (1999): 72–92.

45 The Quis dabii states: “Now, Virgin, you repay with interest what you borrowed from nature in giving birth. You did not feel pain in bearing your son; you suffered a thousand times more in the dying of your son.” (Nunc soluis, virgo, cum vsura quodin partu mutuasti a natura. Dolorem pariendo filium non sensisti; milies replicatum, filio moriente, passa fuisti.) Text and translation in Bestul, Texts of the Passion, 176–77. See also Neff, “Pain of Compassio,” 257–62.

46 Fulton, From Judgment to Passion, 204–43.


48 “She stood there; he hung on the cross. Rather, her living soul grew pale as she lay prostrate. Dying, she lived; and living, she died.” (Ista stabat, hic pendebat. Immo ista strata iacens pallebat anima viuens. Viuebat moriens, et viuens moriebatur.) Text and translation in Bestul, Texts of the Passion, 176–77.
John the Evangelist stands at the far right of the Crucifixion composition and cradles his head in his palm, connoting his emotional suffering and sadness: 49 like Mary, John, the apostle whom Jesus loved, experienced deep emotional pain at seeing his beloved teacher so brutally crucified. The *Quis dabit* developed this parallel at length. John’s presence, furthermore, completes the adoption dialogue recounted in John’s Gospel: Christ says to Mary, “Woman behold thy son,” and to John “Behold thy mother.” 51 The book John clasps in his veiled hand signifies his presence as witness at the Crucifixion, regardless of the pain he endured. The book represents the yet-to-be written Gospel in which John records his true and faithful witnessing of the Crucifixion. John writes of himself in his Gospel: “And he that saw it, has given testimony, and his testimony is true.” 52 The figure of John seamlessly weaves together aspects from two narrative traditions, the Gospels and the *Qui dabit*, to create a richer representation of the Crucifixion.

The purpose of including the swooning Mary and the weeping John at the Crucifixion, additions inspired by the emotionally laden textual tradition of the *Quis*


50 “Those two beloved ones did not stop pouring out tears. Those two martyrs were silent, and could not even speak for sorrow. Those two virgins heard Christ speaking in a hoarse and half-dead voice, and they saw him dying little by little… They wept bitterly because they were bitterly grief-stricken, for the sword of Christ had pierced the souls of both of them. The cruel sword had pierced: it killed both of them cruelly.” (Ili duo dilecti semper lacrimas fundere non cessabant. Tacebant isti martyres ambo, et pre dolore immo loqui non poterant. Isti virgins duo Christum audiebant voce rauca, et semiuia loquentem, et ipsum videbant paulatim moriementem… amare flebant, quia amare dolebant. Nam gladius Christi animas utriusque transibat. Transibat seueus, seue perimebat utrumque.)” Text and translation in Bestul, *Texts of the Passion*, 174–75.


"dabit, was to elicit an emotional response from the viewer of the Hermitage diptych. The viewer feels pathos for the Virgin and the beloved apostle who suffer because her son and his teacher, respectively, suffers. The viewer more easily understands these sentiments because they are based on ordinary human relationships that have parallels in lived reality. Commiseration is more easily attained through this similarity. In this way, the viewer is able to enter emotionally into the scene of the Crucifixion, turn his attention towards the Crucifix and learn to weep and to suffer with John and Mary, because it is the viewer’s savior who hangs from the Cross. The viewer also shares an intimate and personal relationship with Jesus that ought to inspire deep and moving pathos equivalent to that shared by Mary and John. The text of the *Quis dabit* iterates the reaction the viewer is to yearn for in response to the Crucifixion imagery: “O would that that sorrow might cleave to my innards every day as it clung to yours!”53 The iconographer of the Hermitage diptych thus gradually draws the viewer into an emotional relationship with the representation of the Crucifixion not, as would later be the case, by gruesome violent imagery, but through the representation of Mary and John’s emotional affliction.54 At the edges of the composition, the Virgin’s and the Evangelist’s pathetic stances entice the viewer to enter into their inner suffering, to imitate it, and thus inhabit that same psychological space. Mary and John orient the viewer’s emotional attention towards the suffering Christ and draw him or her into a deeper and more emotional contemplation of the Crucified God. The paired presence of the Evangelist and the Virgin in the next two scenes, the Deposition and the Entombment, should be interpreted in the same manner: their mourning presences are portals of entry for the viewer to begin devotion.

54 For the more violent representation of the Passion, see Marrow, *Passion Iconography*, 1979.
In the Crucifixion composition, Longinus stands directly to the left of Christ, and his unusual representation demands interpretation. Longinus is the personage created by the conflation of the soldier who pierced Christ’s side with the lance and the centurion who was converted at seeing the miracles upon Jesus’ death, saying, “Indeed, this man was the son of God.”\textsuperscript{55} The \textit{Pseudo-Gospel of Nicodemus} names the soldier who pierced Christ’s side (10.1), but does not conflate the soldier with the converted centurion (11.2).\textsuperscript{56} Early in the exegetical tradition surrounding the character Longinus, probably due to an over-interpretation of the Latin text, the myth developed that the soldier was, in fact, blind. When the water and blood flowed from Christ’s side, the legend goes, some entered Longinus’s eyes and he was cured of his blindness.\textsuperscript{57} On the Hermitage ivory, Longinus is represented neither as a centurion nor a soldier—that is, with a short tunic as in the Arrest or Flagellation—but rather is shown as a distinguished and mature gentleman. He wears a full-length \textit{surcotte} with tapered sleeves and a close-fitting dome-like cap similar to the one Pilate wears in the upper register. He also sports a full beard. This appearance, which the thirteenth-century viewer would interpret as typically upper class,\textsuperscript{58} signals the non-canonical elaboration of Longinus’s story in the vernacular

\textsuperscript{55} For the soldier with the lance see John 19:34. For the centurion see: Matthew 27:54; Mark 15:39; Luke 23:47. For a complete examination of all aspects of the Longinus story and myth, see Rose Jeffries Peebles, \textit{The Legend of Longinus in Ecclesiastical Tradition and in English Literature, and its Connection with the Grail} (Baltimore: J. H. Furst Company, 1911).
\textsuperscript{56} Peebles notes that the name Longinus derives from the Greek word for lance, \textit{λογιζων}, as it appears in John 19:34. Peebles, \textit{Legend of Longinus}, 29.
\textsuperscript{57} John 19:34–35 reads: “34. Sed unus militum lancea latus eis aperuit et continuo exivit sanguis et aqua, 35. Et qui videt, testimonium perhibuit et verum est testimonium eius.” It is possible to read verse 35 as dependent on the soldier, i.e., “and that one (the soldier) saw,” as a transformation of his previously blind state. The passage is usually translated as “And he that saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true,” referring to the evangelist himself. See Peebles, \textit{Legend of Longinus}, 38. Petrus Comestor reiterates the interpretation of Longinus being cured of blindness when the holy water and blood touched his eyes. \textit{Historia Scholastica}, Cap. 179 (Migne \textit{PL}, 198.1634a).
\textsuperscript{58} A long and tailored \textit{surcotte} was the basic garment of the upper classes in the thirteenth century. Joan Evans, \textit{Dress in Mediaeval France} (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), 14–15.
narratives of Christ’s Passion. In the Passion des Jongleurs, Longinus was a rich blind man of two hundred years who, hearing of Christ’s Crucifixion and being familiar with his healing powers, rushed to witness the event. At the foot of the Cross, Longinus demanded a spear and with it pierced Christ’s side. He then collected with his hands the holy blood and water that poured out of Christ’s wound and anointed his eyes. Longinus’s blindness was miraculously cured and the elderly man cried out in thanks. With his dying breath, Jesus forgave Longinus’s sins.

In later Passion narratives, Longinus’s intention in piercing Christ’s side became a vengeful retribution, because earlier Jesus had refused to cure his blindness. Yet despite his malicious intentions, Christ nevertheless cured Longinus in these texts and forgave his sins. This is why the Longinus myth was so compelling to the thirteenth-century viewer: regardless of past transgressions and present intentions, Christ forgives sins and saves souls. These pious hopes are expressed clearly in the Passion des Jongleurs:

Si face il toz nos pechiez,          Do so with all our sins,
Et les nouveaux et tos les viez,    The new ones as well as the old,
Seignor. (1724–26)                 O Lord. (my translation)

60 See Appendix I.
61 For example the Livre de la Passion, ll.1904–1918.
The apocryphal elaboration of the history of Longinus presents a compelling model for the forgiveness of sins and the promise of everlasting life that is attainable for normal, sinful individuals in addition to Jesus’ select disciples.

For all of the narrative accretions to the figure of Longinus, in the Hermitage diptych he neither holds his characteristic lance nor gestures to his cured eyes, his two most prominent attributes. Instead, he simply stands to Christ’s right, grasps his hands in prayer, and gazes reverentially into his Savior’s face. The precise moment depicted is Longinus’s veneration after his healing and absolution. In this particular guise, stripped of all attributes, Longinus becomes a generalized portrait of a devout participant in the Crucifixion, one whom the viewer may easily emulate. The effect of imitating Longinus’s comparatively cool stance of veneration is quite different from the path of *compassio* offered through following Mary and John. Longinus’s relationship to Christ, being less intimate, reflects the generalized state of humanity rather than the chosen Mother and beloved friend. Longinus shared no special relationship with Christ; in fact the later versions of the tale emphasize that he was an enemy of Christ. His veneration of Christ is based on the eschatological promise that Jesus offers. Longinus, therefore, much more closely replicates the status of the thirteenth-century viewer, who could not know Jesus the man personally. Regardless of personal relationships, Christ nevertheless saved Longinus, and the user of the Hermitage diptych must hope for salvation through Christ.

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62 These details are included on other Picard ivories: the Vatican diptych (Plate 8) clearly shows a well-dressed Longinus holding the lance, while on the Victoria and Albert triptych (Plate 4) Longinus both holds his lance and touches his eyes. The second of four full-page illuminations of the Crucifixion in the so-called Psalter-Hours of Yolande de Soissons (Amiens, late thirteenth century; New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS M. 729, fol. 332v; Fig. 4–1) depicts Longinus as a wealthy gentleman who holds the lance and touches his eye with a ostentatiously bloody finger. See Karen Gould, *The Psalter and Hours of Yolande of Soissons* (Cambridge, MA: The Mediaeval Academy of America, 1978), fig. 35. A Psalter-Hours now in Brussels includes the same characteristics in the depiction of Longinus (Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, MS 9391, fol. 164r). For a reproduction, see Jeffery F. Hamburger, *The Rothschild Canticles: Art and Mysticism in Flanders and the Rhineland circa 1300* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), fig. 139.
based on the same principles. The emotional path offered through emulation of John and Mary and the doctrinally motivated model of veneration through Longinus present two complementary modes of devotion to the Crucifixion. The privileged position of Longinus, standing under Christ’s right arm, almost as if protected by it, and grazing Christ’s arm with the tips of his fingers—Longinus is the only character to have direct contact with the crucified body of Christ—accentuates the mode of devotion he represents. Longinus’s closeness to Christ forms a stark opposition to Mary and John’s remote position at the edges of the frame. The composition of the Crucifixion scene, therefore, gives Longinus’s doctrinally oriented veneration precedence over the emotionally driven *compassio* represented by Mary and John.63 The preference for intellectual or theologically based modes of veneration is a theme repeated throughout the remaining Passion compositions. The implications of this preference will be explicated in the following section when the devotional context of the Hermitage diptych is considered in detail.

The next scene depicted on the Hermitage diptych is the Descent of Christ’s body from the Cross. Although the Deposition received only passing attention in the Gospels,64 the Byzantine tradition developed the iconography of the scene.65 Joseph of Arimathea, 

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63 The emphasis on doctrinal mysteries rather than emotional response is reiterated with the addition of Synagoga and Ecclesia at the Deposition.
65 Schiller, *Iconography*, vol. 2, 164–68. The iconographic tradition in turn influenced more elaborate textual receipts. The *Passion des Jongleurs*, for example, gives an exact description of the iconography:

Blanches touailles aporta
Dont il le cors envelopa.
Après li ont les clous sachiez,
.i. des .i. mains et un des piez.
Joseph l’embraça par les flanz
Dont encore couroit i sanz.
De la croiz l’ont a terre mis
Pour ce que bien fust sepeliz. (ll.3499–3506) [Joseph of Arimathea] brought white linens
With which he wrapped the body.
After, they removed the nails
Two from the two hands and one from the feet.
Joseph embraced Jesus by his flanks
Where blood still ran.
From the cross they placed him on the ground
So that he could be well buried. (My translation)
who had received permission from Pontius Pilate to remove the body and bury it, is shown embracing the limp body of Christ. Joseph, who is described in the Gospels as a noble counselor and a rich man,\textsuperscript{66} is dressed in garments similar to Longinus: a heavy full-length *surcotte* with tapered sleeves and a close-fitting dome-like cap. Nicodemus, the Pharisee who came to Jesus at night in John 3: 1–21, has already freed Christ’s hands and is working to remove the nails from his feet with a large set of pincers. The Virgin Mary grasps and kisses Christ’s right hand, and on the right John the Evangelist offers up his Gospel book to Christ as faithful testimony as he did at the Crucifixion.

To the extreme left of the composition stands the allegorical figure of Ecclesia, the personification of the Christian Church, crowned, holding a miniature chapel and brandishing a lance. At the right of the Deposition stands Synagoga, personification of the Jewish Faith and the Old Law, whose broken lance, buckling legs, falling crown and forgotten tablets of the Law all denote her vanquished state. Synagoga is also blindfolded as a symbol of her inability or unwillingness to recognize the new covenant of Christ’s sacrifice.\textsuperscript{67} Her alienation from Christ and the New Law is manifested through a column that separates her from Christ, his attendants and Ecclesia. Although Ecclesia and Synagoga are often included at Crucifixion scenes since the Carolingian era,\textsuperscript{68} their presence at the Deposition is extremely rare.\textsuperscript{69}

\textsuperscript{66} Matthew 27: 57; Mark 15: 43.

\textsuperscript{67} The specific imagery of the blindfolded and de-crowned Synagoga was borrowed from Lamentations 5: 16–17, “The crown is fallen from our head; woe to us, because we have sinned. Therefore is our heart sorrowful, therefore are our eyes become dim.”

According to the Church Fathers, Ecclesia was born when the blood and water flowed from Christ’s side at the Crucifixion. These fluids stand for the Eucharist and, by synecdoche, for all the holy sacraments, which themselves constitute the Christian Church.\textsuperscript{69} The inclusion of Ecclesia at the Crucifixion encapsulates this line of exegetical reasoning.\textsuperscript{70} Synagoga was represented in the Carolingian period as the symbolic figure from whom Ecclesia inherited her authority and dominion, and the “traditio” scene was often represented drawing on imperial iconography.\textsuperscript{71} A more negative interpretation of this translation of power was expressed in the dialogue between Ecclesia and Synagoga entitled the Altercatio.\textsuperscript{72} Attributed to Augustine throughout the Middle Ages, but more likely written in the ninth century, the Altercatio emphasized the domination of the


\textsuperscript{69} The Salting Leaf (Plate 2) and the Wallace diptych (Plate 3) also show Synagoga and Ecclesia at the Deposition, while the Victoria and Albert Triptych (Plate 4) follows tradition more closely and places the allegorical figures at the Crucifixion. The Deposition plaque by Benedetto Antelami in Parma Cathedral (1148) includes Synagoga and Ecclesia to the left and right of Christ. See Gianni Capelli, \textit{Benedetto Antelami: La “Deposizione” del Duomo di Parma} (Parma: Luigi Battei, 1975). The exquisite ivory Deposition Group at the Louvre (OA 3935 and 9443; Fig. 4–2) includes a statuette of Ecclesia so presumably a statuette of Synagoga was lost along with that of Saint John. The date of this group, circa 1260, significantly postdates the Hermitage diptych but attests to the popularity of this composition among French ivory carvers. See Danielle Gaborit-Chopin, “Nicodème travesti: La Descent de Croix d’ivoire du Louvre,” \textit{Revue de l’art} 81 (1988): 31–46.

\textsuperscript{70} Augustine, in his homily on the Wedding at Cana (\textit{In Joann. IX. 10}), formulated the metaphorical birth of Ecclesia from the side of Christ as a parallel to Eve having been born from the side of Adam: “Adam slept so that Eve could come to be; Christ died so that the church (Ecclesia) could come to be. Eve came to be from the sleeping Adam’s side; the lance ran through the dead Christ’s side so that the sacraments could flow out which formed Ecclesia.” (Dormit Adam ut fiat Eva; moritur Christus ut fiat Ecclesia. Dormiunt Adae fit Eva de latere (Gen. 11: 21): mortuo Christo lancea percutitur latus (Joann., XIX:34) ut profuam sacramenta quibus formetur Ecclesia.) (Migne PL 35:1463). See Ferber, “Crucifixion Iconography,” 325; and S. Tromp, “De nativitate ecclesiae ex corde iesu in cruce,” \textit{Gregorianum} 13 (1932): 500. Augustine’s gloss was used in the Old French Moralized Bible (Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Codex Vindobonensis 2554, fol. 1v Bb). The roundel depicting the Creation of Eve is annotated with a roundel showing God pulling Ecclesia from the side of the Crucified Christ: “That God makes Adam sleep signifies the Father who makes the Son sleep on the Cross. Eve, who issued from Adam's side, signifies the Holy Church, which issued from the side of Jesus Christ crowned with twelve graces.”

\textsuperscript{71} Schiller, \textit{Iconography}, vol. 2, 107. The sacramental role of Ecclesia was at first highlighted by her collecting the Eucharistic blood in a liturgical chalice.


\textsuperscript{73} Migne \textit{PL} 42.1131–39. Seiferth, \textit{Synagogue and Church}, 22–25.
Christian Church over the Jewish Laws and employed strong discriminatory language. The *Altercatio* was reiterated many times throughout the Middle Ages, in both academic and popular forums. Additionally, a dialogue between Synagoga and Ecclesia based on the *Altercatio* was incorporated into the French Passion plays, by the mid-fourteenth century at the latest. In the Passion mysteries, the characters of Church and Synagogue enter onto the stage after the Crucifixion and before the Deposition, their cue being the blood and water flowing from Christ’s side: a connection to Ecclesia’s sacramental derivation. The Hermitage diptych, however, cannot be interpreted as an illustration of an earlier version of this fourteenth-century Passion play. Instead, the drama demonstrates the connectivity that existed in the medieval viewer’s mind between the ideas of Synagoga and Ecclesia and both the Crucifixion and the Deposition. Because Synagoga and Ecclesia are inserted as a transition between the Crucifixion and the Deposition in the Passion of Sainte-Geneviève, they have a logical, if atypical, place at the Deposition. Furthermore, their presence, on both the Hermitage ivory and in the Passion plays, serves to emphasize the sacramental and liturgical aspects of the events at Golgotha.

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75 A visual parallel to the transitional position of Synagoga and Ecclesia in the Passion of Sainte-Geneviève appears in the Psalter of Blanche of Castile. This Psalter (Paris, Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS 1186, fol. 24; Paris, 1223–26; Fig. 4–3) shows the Crucifixion and the Deposition in two vertically aligned roundels. Linking these two roundels are two half roundels filled with depictions of Synagoga and Ecclesia. With this arrangement, Synagoga and Ecclesia seem to participate in both the Crucifixion and the Deposition. See Henry Martin, *Le Psautier de Saint Louis et de Blanche de Castile* (Paris: Berthaud frères, 1909); and Robert Branner, *Manuscript Painting in Paris during the Reign of Saint Louis* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 30–31.
The Deposition itself received an explicitly Eucharistic interpretation in the Middle Ages: Joseph of Arimathea’s handling of Christ’s body at the Deposition was akin to the priest’s elevation of the Body of Christ in the mass. This reading of the Descent from the Cross, presented in several contemporary liturgical tracts, compounds the sacramental reading suggested by the presence of Synagoga and Ecclesia. Joseph of Arimathea’s privileged position at the Deposition is like Longinus’s at the Crucifixion: not only are they dressed in a similar manner, but their preferred position at Christ’s right hand also makes them the focus of the two compositions. Joseph’s highly intimate embrace of Jesus’ body—while gazing up into his face, Joseph even allows Christ’s head to rest on his forehead—overshadows John and Mary’s lamenting roles at the Deposition. Unlike Longinus at the Crucifixion, however, the central role of Joseph does not encourage a certain type of devotional attitude. Instead, Joseph, as a type of a priest performing his sacramental duties, stimulates reflection on liturgical rituals. This

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76 Jean d’Avranches, in his Tractatus de officiis ecclesiasticis (circa 1065), compared the removal of Christ’s body from the cross with the elevation of the Eucharist and the deposition of the Lord’s body in the sepulcher with the return of the host to the altar: “Per diaconum Joseph exprimitur, per sacerdotem Nicodemus, per elevationem de altari hostiae, deposito Christi de Cruce; per depositionem iterum in altari, sepultura Christi.” René Delamare, Le De officiis ecclesiasticis de Jean d’Avranches, archevêque de Rouen (1067–1079) (Paris: A. Picard, 1923); Migne PL 147.36. Unlike the elevation of the Eucharist with the words of consecration, which was a relatively new addition to the ritual in the thirteenth century, the elevation of the Eucharist at the doxology at the end of Nobis quoque peccatoribus (Per ipsum, et cum ipso, et in ipso) was an ancient portion of the mass. See Theodor Klauser, A Short History of the Western Liturgy: An Account and Some Reflections, trans. John Halliburton, 2nd ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1979), 66; and Jean-Claude Schmitt, La raison des gestes dans l’Occident medieval (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1990), 331. Although Jean d’Avranches’s text did not enjoy a broad dissemination (Delamare, De officiis ecclesiasticis, xxxi–xxxiii), the analogy between the elevation of the Eucharist and Christ’s Deposition from the Cross is reiterated in two popular liturgical treatises of the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries: Sicard of Cremona’s Mitrale seu de officiis ecclesiasticis summa (Migne PL 213.134b–c) and William Durandus’s Rationale Divinorum Officiorum (CC 140, Ch. 46, ¶ 22). The sacramental and Eucharistic overtones of the Deposition are highlighted by the contemporary Tabernacle of Cherves (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 17.190.735; Fig. 4–4), where the Deposition takes center stage rather than the expected Crucifixion. See Marie-Madeleine Gauthier, “Du tabernacle au retable: Une innovation limousine vers 1230,” Revue de l’art 40/41 (1978): 23–42; and Enamels of Limoges, 1100–1350 (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art and Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1996), no. 98.

77 The level of intimacy depicted is in no way dictated by contemporary iconographic traditions. See, for example, a group of Limoges appliqué plaques (Fig. 4–5: 1240–50) where Joseph gingerly holds Christ’s hand (Bern, Abegg Stiftung). See Enamels of Limoges, 1100–1350, no. 120, fig. 120a.
sacramental and liturgical emphasis strongly suggests, therefore, that the original intended viewer of the Hermitage diptych was an ordained member of the clergy, capable of performing the sacraments, and not a monastic or a member of the laity. The priestly viewer would self-identify with Joseph, as he was encouraged to do in liturgical tracts, and imaginatively embody Joseph’s unique corporeal access to Christ that reflects his own intimate relationship with the Eucharist. This *imitatio* would in turn reflect on the priest’s liturgical actions and enrich the understanding of his own performance of the transubstantiation.

The liturgical and sacramental themes are continued on the right panel of the third register, which depicts the anointment and entombment of Christ’s body.\(^{78}\) Joseph of Arimathea presides over and conspicuously anoints Christ’s body with unguents from a rounded vial.\(^{79}\) He is flanked on either side by John the Evangelist and the Virgin Mary: they continue their emotionally charged reflections, while observing the preparation of Christ’s body over Joseph’s shoulder. John and Mary are secondary observers to Joseph’s primary active participation in the scene. At either end of the sepulcher, two apostles grasp the burial cloth in order to lower Christ’s body into the tomb.\(^{80}\) The symmetrical arrangement purposefully emphasizes Joseph and his ministrations to Christ’s body, continuing the liturgical and sacramental themes articulated in the Deposition.\(^{81}\) Both the


\(^{79}\) The *Passion des Jongleurs* specifies that Nicodemus had brought the ointment, which weighed close to one hundred pounds, and that it was a mixture of myrrh and incense (*Passion des Jongleurs*, ll. 3507–3512).

\(^{80}\) The identity of these assistants is not indicated in any Passion text.

\(^{81}\) This symmetrical composition was by no means the standard mode of representing the Entombment in thirteenth-century northern France. See, for example, the so-called Katherine Psalter (New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M. 97, fol. 19r. Thérouanne, circa 1260–70), which achieves a similar prominence for Joseph of Arimathea through different compositional means: Joseph is placed in front of Christ’s sepulcher, and so is “closest” to the viewer.
Glossa ordinaria and Petrus Comestor’s Historia Scholastica offer a liturgical reading of Christ’s Entombment: as Jesus was wrapped in a clean cloth by Joseph, who with a pure mind received his body, so too does the Church insist on pure and undyed linens, not silk or tinted cloth, for the celebration of the sacrifice upon the altar. Furthermore, the tomb itself is depicted as an elaborate marble altar-like structure with decorative lancets and three quatrefoils, rather than as the rough, rock-hewn monument explicitly described in the Gospels, although John simply mentions a new sepulcher. This alternative tomb type was based directly on Christ’s tomb in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, which received new marble revetments at the turn of the twelfth century. Three round apertures along the side allowed pilgrims to venerate the original sepulcher by touching and kissing it directly, and this formation was itself modeled on western European thaumaturgical precedents. In addition to the new form of the Holy Sepulcher being incorporated into western iconography, it also influenced the design of altars; a reference calculated to strengthen the symbolic resonance between the physical body of Jesus, who lay in the sepulcher, and the metaphysical manifestation of the body of Christ in the Eucharist, which lies on the altar. Few altars from the mid-thirteenth century are extant, but an example from Moulins-Engilbert, Burgundy (Fig. 4–6), displays trefoil decoration similar to the tomb on the Hermitage diptych. By using a tomb type that had

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82 “In syndone munda Jesum involvit, qui pura mente eum suscipit. Hinc etiam mos Ecclesiae habet, ut sacrificium altaris non serico, non panno tinto, sed puro lineo celebretur” Glossa ordinaria, Migne PL 114.349c. “Et quia in simplici sindone involutum est corpus Jesu, instituit Silvester papa, ut sacrificium altaris in lineo tantum panno celebretur” Historia Scholastica, Migne PL 198.1634b.
86 Moulins-Engilbert, Burgundy: Monument Historique PM58000322. Altars that date to the mid-thirteenth century are extremely rare, not surprising given the numerous liturgical reforms since that date, Vatican II probably being the most detrimental to liturgical furniture.
allusions to both the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem and to contemporary altars, the iconographer of the Hermitage diptych continued the Eucharistic and sacramental overtones established at the Deposition.\footnote{As Hans Belting has expounded with so many other aspects of Passion imagery, there was symbolic fluidity between almost every aspect of Christ’s death and the liturgical commemoration thereof in the Eucharist. Belting, \textit{Image and Its Public}, 65–90.}

The bottom and final register of the Hermitage diptych presents two scenes. On the left leaf are the three women arriving at the sepulcher on Easter morning,\footnote{The Gospels are not in accordance about the number of women, nor who they were. Matthew names only two women, Mary Magdalene and the “other” Mary (28:1). Mark lists three women, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Salome (16:1). Luke enumerates the same Marys, the Magdalene and the mother of James, in addition to Joanna (24:10).} wrapped chastely in heavy mantles and carrying urns with sweet spices to anoint Christ’s body.\footnote{Matthew 28: 1–8; Mark 16: 1–8; Luke 24: 1–10.} When they reach the tomb, however, they find the soldiers fast asleep, the sepulcher open and empty. Perched at the far left of the sarcophagus is an angel who announces that Christ has indeed risen as foretold: “He is not here, for he is risen, as he said. Come, and see the place where the Lord was laid.” The burial shroud that has been carelessly tossed aside and droops over the edge of the tomb serves to highlight its emptiness.

The last scene on the Hermitage diptych actually comprises the last arch of the left leaf and the whole bottom register of the right leaf. It is a portrayal of Christ’s triumphant Harrowing of Hell, in which he grasps an ornate cross-staff in his right hand and pulls Adam and Eve—modestly wrapped in loincloths—from the ferociously toothed Hell’s mouth. The textual source for the Harrowing of Hell is not in the canonical Bible, but in the \textit{Pseudo-Gospel of Nicodemus}.\footnote{\textit{Pseudo-Gospel of Nicodemus}, 18.1–27.4. For the western Medieval iconographic tradition, see Schiller, \textit{Ikonographie}, vol. 3, 56–62.} The Mouth of Hell, however, is an iconographic invention of the tenth-century Anglo-Saxon reforms and quickly became
part of the standard Western representation of this episode. From the left leaf a figure keenly observes the episode and sports the curly hair and beard associated with the apostles elsewhere on the Hermitage diptych. He does not wear their characteristic mantle, however, but a sleeveless surcotte over his tunic. He has been consistently identified in the literature as John the Baptist who, according to the *Pseudo-Gospel of Nicodemus*, prophesied Christ’s arrival in Hades just as he had on earth. Like Longinus at the Crucifixion, however, John the Baptist on the Hermitage diptych lacks his usual attributes of a hair shirt or a Lamb of God roundel, making his identity somewhat ambiguous. On the Wallace diptych (Plate 3), however, John’s surcotte is lightly textured to suggest it is made of hair, clearly indicating that the carver of the Picard ivories intended this figure to represent John the Baptist. Yet, as with Longinus, the ambiguity

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92 *Pseudo-Gospel of Nicodemus*, 18.3. John the Baptist is frequently represented in the Byzantine iconography of the Harrowing of Hell, but he is accompanied by the other Old Testament figures of David and Solomon, Abel, etc. For the Byzantine Anastasis tradition, see Schiller, *Ikonographie*, vol. 3, 47–56. Twenty years after the iconographer of the Picard diptychs included John the Baptist at the Descent into Limbo, the prophetic figures at the Harrowing of Hell were popularized in Jacobus de Voragine’s *Golden Legend* (circa 1265) It is likely this text that influenced the incorporation of this unusual motif into the Codex Gisela on folio 70v. Granger Ryan and Helmut Ripperger, ed. and trans., *The Golden Legend of Jacobus de Voragine* (London: Longmans Green, 1941). Judith H. Oliver, *Singing with Angels: Liturgy, Music and Art in the Gradual of Gisela von Kerssenbrock* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 138–39. At least one other art historian, however, was puzzled by this iconography on the Hermitage diptych: Alexander Schnütgen suggested that the figure was meant to represent the patron of the diptych. Alexander Schnütgen, “Italienische Dipychon-Tafel von Elfenbein, Anfang XIV Jahrhunderts” *Zeitschrift für Christliche Kunst* 1 (1888): 321–324.

93 John the Baptist’s typical attribute is his hair shirt: “And the same John had his garment of camels’ hair, and a leather girdle about his loins: and his meat was locusts and wild honey” (Matthew 3: 4). A roughly contemporary Psalter-Hours (New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS M. 153; Fig. 4–7), probably made in Paris between 1228 and 1234 (based on the Calendar) and soon taken to England, includes John the Baptist in the Harrowing of Hell on folio 23r. Here John’s identity is explicit as he wears a highly textured (green) surcotte, is haloed, and holds a black disc with a representation of a Lamb, manifesting his words from John 1: 29: “Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world.”

94 Remembering that the carver was most likely not the iconographer: the relationship between the two individuals is pursued in the Conclusion. Later copies of the Picard ivories also ensured that the tunic of this observing figure was highly textured, indicating that later makers and users of the ivories understood this figure to be John the Baptist. See for example a diptych with scenes from Christ’s Passion in Toronto, Art Gallery of Ontario, Thomson Collection, 29099 (Fig. 4–8). See *Medieval Ivories and Works of Art: The
on the Hermitage diptych may be the very objective. The sleeveless surcotte was an item of contemporary fashion. The figure of John the Baptist is meant to engage the contemporary user of the Hermitage diptych, inviting him to become personally involved in the event of Christ’s Descent into Limbo. John the Baptist’s role in the Harrowing of Hell, as it was in the Gospels, was to prophesy and preach the coming of Christ. The user of the Hermitage diptych, as was suggested by the interpretations of the Deposition and Entombment, was likely a priest. An important part of his ministry was preaching and preparing his flock for death and final judgment. The individuated faces that occupy the mouth of Hell emphasize the importance of continual mindfulness of the possibility of eternal damnation, and, therefore, the importance of preaching it (Fig. 4–9). A woman, prodded by a demon, wears a headdress of the latest fashion. An elderly man under the other devil’s foot has a remarkably wrinkled brow and prominent laugh-lines around his mouth. His coif—standard headgear for a thirteenth-century man—also signals him as a contemporary. The au courant representations lend urgency to the episode: the Harrowing of Hell is not depicted as an incident that took place hundreds of year before, but rather, the salvation of souls is represented as an event that takes place today, in the current moment. John the Baptist and the priestly viewer foretell, observe, contemplate and preach the salvation offered by Christ and accomplished by his bodily sacrifice.

The narrative structure of the Hermitage diptych, therefore, encourages the viewer to proceed through the diptych chronologically: top to bottom and left to right like texts

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96 Her “pill-box”—shaped hat sits on top of her crespinette-secured hair and her chin is tied with a very fashionable barbette. Norris, *Medieval Costume*, 177–79.

written in the Roman alphabet. The gesticulating hands at the upper left-hand corner signal the start of the cycle and the wedge-shaped Hell-mouth concludes the composition. The narrative presents a fairly complete summary of the events leading up to Christ's redemption of humanity at the Harrowing of Hell. Initially the pace is hasty, with three episodes per leaf on the top register, which then slows to two scenes on the left leaf of the second register—a narrative effect enhanced by the number of characters who look backwards, against the chronological flow. The remaining scenes are depicted as one episode per leaf, allowing a more static, hieratic presentation of the monumental events of the Crucifixion, Deposition, Entombment, the Women at the Tomb and the Harrowing of Hell. It is at these less diachronically focused points in the narrative where characters are introduced that encourage a more focused contemplation of the scene. The Virgin Mary and John the Evangelist are present in three of these episodes as mourning pendants. They call to the viewer’s mind the *compassio* the Virgin and John suffered under the Cross, and, through the presentation of emotional responses to the Passion, urge the viewer to emulate their passionate reaction to the events depicted. But Mary and John are consistently peripheral in the Passion scenes and take a passive, though emotive, role. Centre stage and very active, however, are men consistently dressed in a long and heavy *surcotte* with a semicircular hat. Longinus at the Crucifixion and Joseph of Arimathea at the Deposition and Entombment are characters who are not primarily involved emotionally with the episodes, but are, rather, active agents who are doctrinally and liturgically engaged with the implications of the scenes depicted. Longinus, with his privileged position touching Christ, represents the hope of salvation through faith. Joseph, executing his priestly functions, recalls the daily commemoration of Christ's
sacrifice through the Eucharist—a reading strengthened by the unusual presence of Synagoga and Ecclesia at the Deposition. The ambiguity of John the Baptist, whose predicatory role at the Harrowing of Hell as in the Gospels mirrors a priest’s daily responsibility, offers another prominent figure with whom an ecclesiastic could identify.

The prominent and active roles of Longinus, Joseph of Arimathea and John the Baptist strongly suggest that the original viewer for whom the Hermitage diptych was intended was an ordained priest. It is a priest who would identify best with the doctrinal, liturgical and preaching roles distinguished in the Hermitage diptych as appropriate for emulation. An original priestly viewer, furthermore, helps clarify the alternative iconography for the first scene on the diptych, where Judas betrays Christ not to a Jewish High Priest, but to a Prince of the Jews. The alternative version offered by the *Passion des Jongleurs* lessens uncomfortable allusions linking a clergyman with an individual implicated in the Betrayal of Christ.

The Hermitage diptych, therefore, is constructed to allow a variety of experiences for the viewer who closely considers its imagery. Three modes in particular have been highlighted by the iconographic analysis: (1) The chronological retelling of the Gospel story of Christ's Passion, (2) the visual presentation of complex exegetical interpretations, and (3) *compassio*, or the affective response to images. Furthermore, the privileged position of the priestly figures in poses of veneration or active ministry prescribes an active response altogether different from the affective reaction modeled by Mary and John. These modes are not autonomous or contradictory, but together present a cohesive spiritual itinerary when activated in the context of private meditation and prayer.
Explicating the stages and objectives of the three modes is the goal of the following section.

3. Meditation, Compunction and Prayer in the Hermitage Diptych

Three uses for images were sanctioned in the treatises of the thirteenth-century Parisian Scholastics, namely education, recollection and compunction. These principles are unmistakably derived from Gregory the Great’s influential second letter to Serenus, Bishop of Marseilles (600), but neither their continuing relevance to a thirteenth-century audience nor their relationship to thirteenth-century devotional practice has been sufficiently explored.98 The thirteenth-century Scholastic discourse on the proper use of images stemmed from Book III, Distinction IX of Peter Lombard’s *Sententiae in IV Libris Distinctae*, which explores whether Christ’s human nature is to be adored with his divine nature.99 Although the Lombard himself does not integrate the question of the proper use or veneration of images into his argument,100 as early as Alexander of Hales (1223–27), the first Parisian master to “read” the *Sentences* as the set text in his theology course, the status and proper use of images is introduced as a corollary to the


100 Contrary to Kessler in “Gregory the Great,” 153 and 165 n. 30.
consideration of the human nature of Christ. 101 Albert the Great (1245–48) and
Bonaventure (1250–57) also included a consideration of religious images at this juncture
in their glosses on Peter Lombard. 102 The consistent insertion of image theory into the
discussion of Christ’s Incarnation in commentaries on Peter Lombard’s texts, therefore,
suggests two points: (1) that it was a standard part of the “curriculum” to discuss image
theory in the Parisian theology course, and (2) that image theory was considered as an
offshoot of incarnational theology. Therefore, although it is not stated explicitly in the
Scholastic texts, the implicit ramification of this persistent analogy between the
Incarnation and images resides in the shared exemplification of the notion of the visible
being inextricably linked to the invisible, and consequently of the visible offering access
to the invisible. The Lombard hints at this aspect with a quotation from the recently
translated work by John of Damascus concerning the dual nature or Christ, 103 which he
summarizes thus: “These words intimate that the humanity of Christ is adored together
with the Word through one adoration.” 104 The visible humanity of Christ is indelibly
associated with his divine nature. This association between the seen and the unseen is the

101 Alexander of Hales, Glossa in Quatuor Libros Sententiarum Petri Lombardi, ed. Collegium S.
Bonaventurae, 4 vols. (Florence: Quaracchi, 1954), vol. 3, 108–110. For the broader academic context at
the Parisian schools, see Monika Asztalos, “The Faculty of Theology,” in A History of the University in
102 Albert the Great, “Super Sententiarum,” in Opera omnia: ex editione lugdunensi religiose castigata, ed.
August and Emile Borgnet, 38 vols. (Paris: Ludovicum Vivès, 1890–99), vol. 28, 173–74; Bonaventura,
“Quaestiones super IV libros Sententiarum Petri Lombardi,” in Opera Omnia, ed. A. C. Peltier, 10 vols.
(Paris: Ludovicus Vivès, Bibliopola Editor, 1865), vol. 4, 202–04.
103 The Byzantine iconodule writer par excellence, John of Damascus (676–749), was translated from
Greek into Latin by Burgundio da Pisa around 1150. It is interesting that the Sentences, written soon after
the translation, incorporated not the Damascene’s image theory but his incarnational theology. Naturally,
the two realms were inviolately linked in Byzantine iconophilic discourse. Kessler, “Gregory the Great,”
153.
104 “His verbis insinuari videtur Christi humanitatem una adoratione cum Verbo esse adorandum”
conceptual bridge that inspired the Lombard’s thirteenth-century commentators to include a discussion of image theory at this point in the text.

Thomas Aquinas, building on his predecessor’s commentaries in his own Scriptum super sententis Magistri Petri Lombardi (1256–59), reiterated Gregory the Great’s dicta and codified image theory for the rest of the Middle Ages in the so-called triplex ratio:

There are, however, three reasons for the institution of images in the Church.

First, for the instruction of rustic folk (rudium), who might learn from them just as others do from books. Second, so that the mystery of the Incarnation and the examples of great saints may be in our memory while being represented daily before our eyes. Third, for the arousing of affective devotion, which is incited more effectively by things seen than by things heard.  

Even though Aquinas’s version was taught and committed to vellum in the years 1256–59, his pithy formulation reflects a standard “nugget” of knowledge habitually introduced at this point in the theology syllabus. The oral dissemination through lectures of the

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106 Kessler, “Gregory the Great,” 152, notes that the neat formula stems from Honorius Augustodunensis, Gemma animae, ch. 132: “Ob tres autem causas fit pictura: primo, quia est laicorum litteratura; secundo, ut domus tali decoro ornetur; tertio, ut priorium vita in memoriam revocetur. (For three reasons however, there are pictures: first, because they are the writings of the laity; second, so that the house [of the Lord] may be ornamented with such decorations; and third, so that the life of the most high may be recalled to memory)” (Migne PL 172.586c). The second reason, ornamentation, is not, however, commensurate with Aquinas’s affective devotion. Nevertheless, three reasons for the use of pictures seem to have been commonplace. This observation is corroborated by the very similar formula in Bonaventure’s text, and also by the insertion of the triplex ratio as almost an a posteriori to Aquinas’s solution. In neither treatise does the triplex ratio develop naturally out of the master’s argument. In both Aquinas and Bonaventure the
threefold justification of images was certainly much broader than the manuscript evidence suggests, although this was not negligible.\textsuperscript{107} Both the iconographer and the user of the Hermitage diptych were, therefore, most likely conversant in these basic principles of image theory because of their place in the introductory theology course at the Parisian schools. The \textit{triplex ratio}, although not exclusively applicable to objects intended for personal use,\textsuperscript{108} would likely have influenced the iconographer’s composition and the user’s expectations of the Hermitage diptych.

The \textit{triplex ratio} can be interpreted as offering a map or set of guidelines for the use of pictures in meditative devotion. Education, recollection and compunction represent three ways in which images can help the viewer achieve a prayerful state that roughly parallels the spiritual exercises prescribed to contemplatives.\textsuperscript{109} Analyzing the \textit{triplex ratio} within the context of what Mary Carruthers has called “monastic orthopraxis” reveals an alternative understanding of devotional images that breaks free from the consideration of images begins with the notion of \textit{transitus}, where the veneration offered to the image is transferred to the divine. Traditional iconoclastic arguments are offered that counter the notion of \textit{transitus}. The \textit{triplex ratio} is introduced as part of the solution, but it does not properly “counter” the \textit{sed contra} iconoclastic statement; rather, it introduces principles obviously refined from the writings of Gregory the Great. Other, usually numbered, counter arguments to the iconoclastic statements are offered in addition. The \textit{triplex ratio}, therefore, seems to be the traditional justification for the presence of images in churches: so traditional, in fact, that the authority of Gregory the Great is not even cited to substantiate the statement, while Augustine, John of Damascus, and even Horace are mentioned by name.


\textsuperscript{108} There is obviously no textual evidence that the \textit{triplex ratio} was intended partially or exclusively for personal imagery—indeed Gregory’s original formulation was an argument for monumental wall paintings. Interpreting the \textit{triplex ratio} in the context of personal imagery is just one way it might have been understood in the thirteenth century.

dominant categories offered by modern scholarship that analyze devotional experience primarily in terms of exceptionalism, namely visionary experience or mysticism.\textsuperscript{110}

Derived from the ancient Greek schools of philosophy and incorporated into Christian thought as early as the second century, spiritual exercises refer to the practice of training one’s mind to eliminate external distractions (from the demands of society to the continuous internal dialogue) to achieve greater levels of concentration.\textsuperscript{111} The training of the mind in this way was called meditatio, or meditation, throughout the Middle Ages.\textsuperscript{112} In the Christian context, the ultimate object of concentration was God. The ideal state of being and the end to which all monastics strived, and indeed the way many commentators described heaven, was the continual, uninterrupted contemplation of God, or contemplatio. This was neither easy to attain nor likely to happen in earthly life. Nevertheless, striving to achieve this state of almost athletic mindfulness was the ultimate goal of spiritual exercises. A more attainable goal was a brief and fleeting but intense mental absorption with God, through prayer, or, to use the medieval terminology, oratio.\textsuperscript{113} Mary Carruthers has recently demonstrated the extent to which spiritual exercises formed the center of monastic life throughout the Middle Ages: the tenets absorbed from Hellenistic philosophy in the second century were still central to the daily


\textsuperscript{113} “\textit{Oratio}, properly speaking, took place when the spirit, without the intermediary of words borrowed from any text, spoke with God and was united with God.” Leclercq, “Ways of Prayer,” 417.
life of thirteenth-century monks.\textsuperscript{114} The \textit{triplex ratio} for the presence of images in a Christian context in fact accords very well with the various stages of the spiritual exercises that make up “monastic orthopraxis.” The following discussion will illustrate how, in the context of the Hermitage diptych, images can help an individual prepare for and practice \textit{oratio}.

“For a picture is displayed in churches on this account, in order that those who do not know letters may at least read by seeing on the walls what they are unable to read in books” so said Gregory the Great in his first letter to the iconoclastic bishop Serenus of Marseilles (599).\textsuperscript{115} By studying depictions of sacred history, one may learn the tenets of Christian faith just as one does in books.\textsuperscript{116} For Gregory, the principal audience for images was the recently converted congregation at Marseilles who were ignorant of the Christian faith and also illiterate.\textsuperscript{117} Thirteenth-century Scholastic commentators shied away from the specific term “illiterate” (\textit{idiota} or \textit{illiterati}) and indicated instead simple folk (\textit{simplicis rustici}) and laity (\textit{laici}) as the beneficiaries of didactic images.\textsuperscript{118} The eductive model of image use can certainly apply to the Hermitage diptych: it re-presents

\textsuperscript{114} Carruthers, \textit{Craft of Thought}, 3–6. John Cassian (360–435), a monastic from southern France who traveled to Egypt to study the ways of life and prayer of the Egyptian desert fathers, records his observations in the Institutions and the Conferences: the first dealt with external aspects of monastic life and the second with the interior experience, namely prayer. In the \textit{Rule of Saint Benedict}, the seminal text of western monasticism, Benedict names the Conferences specifically as one of the edificatory texts to be read daily after supper (\textit{Rule of Saint Benedict}, Chapter 42). The continuous importance throughout western monasticism of the desert Fathers’ spiritual exercises is indubitable.

\textsuperscript{115} Chazelle, “Pictures, Books and the Illiterate,” 139. CCSL 140A, 873. “Idcirco enim picture in ecclesiis adhibetur, ut hi qui litteras nesciunt saltem in parietibus uidendo legant, quae legere in codicibus non ualent.”


\textsuperscript{118} Kessler, “Gregory the Great,” 158.
the events of Christ’s Passion in images rather than in words. It is certainly plausible to imagine someone learning the tale of Christ’s betrayal, torture, crucifixion and resurrection from these images: the scenes are neatly delineated, the personages and their actions clearly legible, and the narrative entirely orthodox. However, an individual pious enough to commission (or to have commissioned for him) an innovative, sophisticated and costly ivory with scenes of the Passion of Christ would most certainly have been familiar with the depicted events and was not learning them for the first time. For the original viewer and user of the Hermitage diptych, therefore, the purpose of seeing images of Christ was unlikely to be primarily educational.

Reading, or lectio, in the context of spiritual exercises was not solely about learning the stories recounted in texts: many books were read and reread as the basic material with which to begin practicing meditation. Intensive reading was training for meditation. The very physical act of reading in the Middle Ages, when it was habitually performed aloud to incorporate the tactile, oral, and visual qualities of the text, was meant to focus attention. The first step in meditation is to be able to read a text without losing concentration: performing the text aloud is an immense aid in this. In this same way, the carved depiction of the Passion of Christ presents episodes on which the user can focus and practice meditation. The exquisite carving, high relief, minute details and clearly compartmentalized scenes engage the viewer’s attention and help him devote all

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119 The most evocative description of a devotional object also being used pedagogically is outlined in Kathryn Smith’s analysis of the Neville of Hornby Hours; Kathryn Smith, “The Neville of Hornby Hours and the Design of Literate Devotion,” Art Bulletin 81 (1999): 72–92.
120 I would not, however, discount such a possibility for subsequent users and owners of the Hermitage diptych.
122 Leclercq, Love of Learning, 15–16; see also Paul Henry Saenger, Space between Words: The Origins of Silent Reading (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997).
attention to the scene depicted. The scene of Christ before Pilate constitutes an excellent example. It is clearly defined within three arches in the upper right-hand corner of the Hermitage diptych. Judas’s suicide is excluded from the composition to the left by the substantial tree trunk. The numerous and compressed figures demand that the viewer look closely at the scene, all the more so to decipher their various facial expressions. The complex interweaving of arms and limbs further draws the viewer into the scene to distinguish who is grasping whom. Curious details—such as the halo-like protuberance behind Christ’s head—force the viewer to delve into his or her knowledge of the episode for an explanation: in this case, it is a torch placed here to remind the viewer that the scene occurs at night. The sharply directed glances among the soldiers, Pilate and Christ recall the dialogues reported by the evangelists. Finally, Pilate washing his hands introduces a chronological complexity to the scene that encourages the viewer to focus on the whole episode, replay it in his or her mind from beginning to end, and think through each moment sequentially. The active looking that the Hermitage diptych demands encourages the viewer to focus and to concentrate intensely on the scenes depicted, just as active reading does for texts. Therefore, in the context of spiritual exercises, images could be used as texts were: to practice the development of mental concentration and deep focus. These were components essential to the more advanced steps of meditatio and oratio.

The second justification of images that Aquinas offers in the triplex ratio was “so that the mystery of the incarnation and the examples of great saints may be in our memory (memoria nostra) while being represented daily before our eyes.”

memory work different from simply learning the narratives represented? What place does memoria have in spiritual exercises? Aquinas stresses that it is the mystery of the Incarnation and the examples of the great saints—both abstract concepts—that are held in the memory, not a “mental image” of the picture. It is the interpretation and significance of the image that is to be memorized, not the physical composition itself. The emphasis on hermeneutics evokes Mary Carruthers’s two monumental studies on mnemonic technique in the Middle Ages, in which she has emphasized the ancillary role memory played to the composition of prayers, or oratio. In the education of a young monastic, once the scriptures have been learned by heart, itself an exercise in meditation and concentration, the monk erects upon this textual foundation the superstructure of interpretation. The types of interpretation included are the various senses of scripture (literal, allegorical/typological, tropological, and anagogical), doctrinal and theological implications of the texts, folk tales and legends, as well as other inter-textual associations based on homophony, etymologies, and shared metaphors. To each separate episode in scripture a number of interpretations were linked, attached or “built up.” In this way, a memory structure was built that could accommodate all types of information “indexed” according to the scriptural passage or episode. Memoria is essential to oratio because a complex and well-stocked memory supplies the raw material that can be formed into prayers. Constructing an organized “treasury” for the exegetical riches of scriptural

125 Carruthers, Craft of Thought, 30; Carruthers, Book of Memory, 80–107, and Carruthers’s translation of Hugh of Saint-Victor’s “De Tribus Maximis Circumstantiis Gestorum,” in Book of Memory, 261–66.
126 Carruthers, Craft of Thought, 30.
127 Carruthers, Craft of Thought, 10–14, see also below.
interpretation was an essential and demanding spiritual exercise that was a vital step prior to engaging in oratio.

The scenes of Christ’s Passion presented on the Hermitage diptych were not only accommodating to such memory work, but encouraged it. The interpretive complexity of several scenes, including the Crucifixion and the Deposition, make reference to a panoply of exegetical associations. Iconographic surpluses, details not needed for the basic narrative, are included to signal particular strands of interpretation. An example is the presence of the swooning Mary at the Crucifixion. The Virgin cogently fits into the basic narrative of the Crucifixion, based on John 19:25–27. Her mannered pose and hand arrangement—not delineated by the Gospel text—signify a whole theological discourse of co-suffering and co-redemption that is “cross-referenced” with the narratives and interpretation of Christ’s Nativity and Incarnation. The Virgin’s chiastic hands and swooning pose do not teach the Marian doctrines, but offer a sort of hyper-link to interpretations already familiar to the viewer. Therefore, in addition to concentrating and meditating on the episodes presented, the user of the Hermitage diptych was encouraged to recall the hermeneutical complexity linked to each scene in his memory by actively engaging with the numerous details present in the depiction. The surplus iconographic details included in the Hermitage diptych are idiosyncratic rather than encyclopedic; in other words, not all of the potential interpretations presented in the Historia Scholastica or the Glossa Ordinaria are represented by iconographic peculiarities. The iconographer consciously tailored the catena—the chains of hermeneutical associations—128 for the intended viewer identified above as a prelate. The compositional structure and

128 Carruthers, Book of Memory, 5–6.
iconography privilege and encourage certain avenues of interpretation above others. In the case of the Hermitage diptych, the sacramental and liturgical are encouraged more than eschatological or tropological ones.

Thus far, the first two articles of the *triplex ratio* have engaged the intellectual faculties of the mind. Looking at the Hermitage diptych can (1) teach the literal interpretation of the Passion of Christ, (2) to train the mind to concentrate on one point in the narrative, strengthening its ability to block out the exterior world, and (3) remind the viewer of particular strains of interpretation attached to the episodes represented and encourage him to rehearse those exegetical arguments in his mind. The mind and the intellect are heavily engaged in these spiritual exercises facilitated by the Hermitage diptych. The third element of the *triplex ratio*, and an essential part of monastic orthopraxis, is the preparation of the soul for prayer, a step that requires a separate type of spiritual exercise.

The third rationale for images asserts that they are “for the arousing of affective devotion (*devotionis affectum*), which is incited more effectively by things seen than by things heard.” Or, as Bonaventure explained it:

Images were introduced because affect is slow. Namely so that men, who are not stirred to devotion in these things that Christ suffered for us while those ones (the Jews) received gold, at least can be stirred when they discern the same things in sculptures and pictures, as if they were present to corporeal eyes.

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130 “Propter affectus tarditatem similiter introductae sunt, videlicet ut homines, qui non excitantur ad devotionem in his, quae pro nobis Christus gessit, dum illa aure precipiunt, saltem excitentur, dum eadem in sculptures et picturis, tanquam praesentia, oculis corporeis cernunt.” Bonaventure, vol. 4, 204.
The impact a visual representation makes on our emotions is much greater than a written or oral presentation of the same subject matter. Yet what role does an emotional or affective response have in monastic practice? What benefit is there to being “stirred?” A passionate response may even seem contrary to a rigorous practice of focused concentration. Much recent scholarship has revealed the essential role compassion and contrition had in the penitential system and the sacrament of confession.\textsuperscript{131} Although this use of images—especially images of the Passion of Christ—to solicit contrition dominated the function of images in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, in the thirteenth century, when the decree of yearly confession instituted by Lateran IV (1215) gradually gained wider prominence, images with affective potential simultaneously participated in the older system of monastic spiritual exercises, specifically in what was called compunction or affliction.\textsuperscript{132}

Recently, Mary Carruthers elucidated the medical benefits of crying in the context of medieval spiritual exercises.\textsuperscript{133} She suggested that the gift of tears or compunction is, in fact, a necessary preliminary step to the monastic spiritual exercises. *Afflictio*, the state of affliction, must precede both *meditatio* and *oratio*.\textsuperscript{134} Although *meditatio*, the reading of and rumination upon sacred texts, and *oratio*, the “composition” of prayer in the

\textsuperscript{132} I do not wish to put too fine a point on this distinction: many writers in the early Middle Ages might not have distinguished between contrition and compunction. The essential difference, for my purposes, is that contrition is oriented towards the penitential rite of the forgiveness of sins. To a certain extent, tears of contrition participate in an exchange economy between authentic repentance and forgiveness. Compunction, on the other hand, is not immediately end-oriented. It is one of the many spiritual exercises that prepare the mind and the soul for full contemplation of God. Sandra McEntire also sought to establish a differentiation between these two categories of spiritual tears. Sandra J. McEntire, *The Doctrine of Compunction in Medieval England: Holy Tears* (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellon Press, 1990), 7–10.
\textsuperscript{134} Carruthers, “Affliction and Reading,” 4.
reader’s mind, have received much scholarly attention in recent publications.\textsuperscript{135} afflictio—compunction—has scarcely been noted in the contemporary scholarship on monastic spiritual exercises. Before complex intellectual thought—either synthetic or analytic—could be undertaken, a period of intense psychological discomfort was first needed to stimulate the estimative faculties. Illustrative of this position is a passage from Evagrius, a fourth-century desert father: “At the beginning of prayer, force yourself to tears and compunction, so that your prayer may become more fruitful.”\textsuperscript{136} Why do tears make the composition of prayers more productive? As Carruthers discovered, the physiological explanation for this rather arcane notion lies in the balancing of the Galenic humors. Overly intellective and dispassionate brains are cold, dry and hard, while tears are hot and moist: a soft and warm environment is the ideal for creative “recollection” and composition.\textsuperscript{137} Tears, which can be elicited through a number of exercises, prepare the ideal physiological conditions in the brain for productive prayer.\textsuperscript{138} Many great thinkers of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were said to have incorporated this aspect of monastic practice into their daily lives: Bernard Gui writes in his biography of Aquinas that he “never set himself to study or argue a point, or lecture or write or dictate without first having recourse inwardly to prayer—but with tears—for the understanding

\begin{enumerate}
\item Carruthers, “Affliction and Reading,” 9–10. I use the term recollection in context of Carruthers’s other works, see especially \textit{Craft of Thought}, 10–14.
\item For a particular use of the word soften (\textit{mitigare}) in this context, see the sixth-century Latin desert father Fulgentius: “Necessarium est ut frequenti oratione et jugi cordis compunctione mitigetur.” (It is necessary that one be softened by frequent prayer and continual compunction of heart.) Migne \textit{PL} 65.339 and translation from McEntire, \textit{Doctrine of Compunction}, 73.
\end{enumerate}
and the words required by the subject.”139 Tears of compunction were, therefore, a necessary part of the process of internal prayer and contemplation and were a part of monastic orthopraxis that may seem illogical and idiosyncratic to the modern sensibility.140

While the medical explication of tears is intriguing and the physiological reasoning may indeed lie at the root of the doctrine of compunction, tears were also understood, more widely, as preliminary spiritual exercises because the moment of emotional pain turns the heart towards God: compunction is a moment of conversion.141 Emotional pain is a spur urging the soul to reorient itself towards God’s will and to deepen its spiritual exercises. It is within this paradigm that Gregory the Great described compunction in the *Moria on Job*:

> Sometimes, even if the lashes of the whip seem to have stopped outside, he [God] inflicts wounds on the inside, striking the hardness of our heart by the desire that he gives for him. But, by striking, he cures, because in piercing us with the dart, he makes us fear, he returns us to the sense of the right… If the soul is struck by the darts of God’s love, it is wounded in its most intimate place by a feeling of

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140 See the introduction of Carruthers, *Craft of Thought*, for a discussion of monastic orthopraxis and the inheritance of a monastic “craft of thought” that persisted from the early church fathers through to the thirteenth century, 1–6.

affection, it burns with a desire for contemplation and, in an astonishing manner, its wound gives it life.\textsuperscript{142}

Tears of compunction, in addition to literally softening the heart, ignite love and desire in the heart. The renewed ardor for God that emerges from pain refocuses mental attention and revives the efforts in the more intellectual spiritual exercises of meditation and prayer.

The desert fathers prescribed a variety of spiritual exercises specifically designed to bring tears to the eyes and thus to bring the soul to the state of compunction. John Cassian (360–435) recommended four in particular in his \textit{Conferences}: reminiscence of past sins, yearning for heavenly things, fear of judgment and damnation, and contemplation of the sins of others.\textsuperscript{143} The iconography of the Hermitage diptych offers several opportunities for consideration of these things, though not in a systematic manner.\textsuperscript{144} The lengthy Judas narrative allows the viewer both to contemplate Judas’s sins and to reflect on his own similar past transgressions: greed, betrayal, pride, and self-affliction are all illustrated. Whether it is Judas’s sins or the viewer’s sins that are called to mind, compunction and tears are successfully aroused by these episodes. The last


\textsuperscript{143} See McEntire, \textit{Doctrine of Compunction}, discussion and translation of this passage, 45–46. For the original text, see Johannes Cassianus, \textit{Conclations}, ed. M. Petschenig, Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum vol. 13 (Vienna: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1886), 274–76.

\textsuperscript{144} Obviously, I do not wish to imply that the Hermitage or any other diptych is a literal illustration of the texts of Cassian. Rather, the exercises prescribed for eliciting tears—fully incorporated into monastic culture—can help explain the choices made by the Hermitage diptych iconographer.
scene—the Harrowing of Hell—performs a similar purpose. A terrifying Hell-mouth is presented with mischievous demons tormenting figures in contemporary dress: the punishment for unredeemed sins is vividly portrayed as is Christ’s active role in saving humanity from that wretchedness. The specific compositional details—the contemporary garb, the clear delimitation of saved and damned, and the depictions of the tortures of hell—are tailored to afflict a thirteenth-century viewer. Proper consideration of past sins and fear of punishment at the end of time as depicted in the Hermitage diptych ought to stir any viewer to tears of compunction.

Several elements of the Hermitage diptych, therefore, conform to the desert fathers’ prescriptions for initiating compunction. Several other emotionally charged scenes—most notably the Flagellation and the Carrying of the Cross—fall outside of the fourth-century instructions for eliciting tears, but fall squarely within a tradition of devotional fixation on the bodily Passion of Christ, a theme that gained increased currency in the eleventh and twelfth centuries and reached a plateau of popularity in the late thirteenth century that would continue to the end of the Middle Ages. Although it became a dominant strand in devotional literature in the thirteenth century, the contemplation of Christ’s suffering had long been part of Christian spiritual practice. Hrabanus Maurus (d. 856), writing at the court of Charlemagne, extolled the virtues of contemplating the Passion of Christ:

So that therefore you may be able to comprehend in some measure… the length, breadth, height, and depth of the mystery of the holy cross and the Lord’s

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145 Rachel Fulton has recently explored the reasons for this shift, but her conclusions need not concern us here, for, whatever the impetus for the origins of this theme, a devotional practice focusing on the Passion of Christ to elicit tears and compunction was commonplace by the early thirteenth century. Fulton, From Judgment to Passion, 60–106.
passion… understand the weight of the words which have been said: because, with God’s help, they will prepare the soul to have devotion in prayer, consolation in trouble, and revelation in contemplation; you will know not only what has been given to us by God, but also the one who was given for us. Let fire therefore be kindled in this meditation, even if you simply meditate on these things according to the letter.\textsuperscript{146}

Meditation on the suffering of Christ prepares the soul for fruitful prayer and brings the soul to compunction just as effectively as reflection on past sins or the final judgment.

All are methods to soften the heart and prepare the soul for meditation. The anonymous author of \textit{De meditatione passionis Christi per septem diei horas libellus} (circa 1250) demonstrates that these notions were current in the thirteenth century:

Furthermore, it is necessary that you think in some way on those things (i.e., the Passion) in your contemplation, as if you were present at that time when he suffered. And so you will have yourself lamenting (\textit{dolendo}), and also if you have the suffering Lord (in) your heart and (in) your eyes, so the same Lord will be present and he will accept your prayer.\textsuperscript{147}

\textsuperscript{146} Hrabanus Maurus from his \textit{Opusculum de passione Domini}, Chapter 1, as translated in Fulton, \textit{From Judgment to Passion}, 154. Original text Migne \textit{PL} 112.1425.

\textsuperscript{147} “Necessarium etiam esse, ut aliquando ista cogites in contemplatione tua, ac si praesens tum temporis fuisses, quando passus fuit. Et ita te habeas in dolendo, ac si Dominum tuum coram oculis tuis haberes patientem, et ita ipse Dominus praesens erit, et accipiet tua vota.” Migne \textit{PL} 94.562. Attributed to Bede throughout the later Middle Ages, this meditation on the Passion of Christ was structured according to the seven liturgical hours. Influential for both the compiler of the Short Hours of the Cross and the Pseudo-Bonaventure who penned the \textit{Meditationes vitae Christi}, this text, surprisingly, has not been studied extensively. Current opinion ascribes it to the mid-thirteenth century—probably a Franciscan author. See Marrow, \textit{Passion Iconography}, 12; Richard Kieckhefer, “Major Currents in Late Medieval Devotion,” in \textit{Christian Spirituality: High Middle Ages and Reformation}, ed. Jill Rait (New York: Crossroad, 1987), 75–108, esp. 86–87; Derbes, \textit{Picturing the Passion}, 22 and 193–94 n. 65; and Smith, “Neville of Hornby Hours,” 90 n. 13.
Reading, seeing and visualizing the violent and bloody events of Christ’s Passion as part of a program of spiritual exercise elicits in the viewer an emotional response accompanied by tears: how can the viewer (or reader) not experience profound emotion when witnessing a fellow human being—never mind one’s God—tortured so brutally? The lamenting that ensues, as both the anonymous author of the Meditatioes and Hrabanus Maurus explain, is a preparatory step for prayer. Attention to the suffering of Christ brings the viewer to a state of compunction that softens the heart and refocuses the viewer’s intention in refining his or her spiritual practice.

The register depicting the Flagellation and the Carrying of the Cross on the Hermitage diptych best exemplifies the iconographer’s focused attempt to elicit compunction based on the suffering of Christ. The upraised whips and arms of the soldiers emphatically communicate the brutality with which Christ was treated. The physical torment he suffered is exacerbated by the mocking words or spittle that exits from the mouth of the soldier who prepares to hit Christ with his left hand. Christ’s quiet and gentle response in both scenes is further construed to elicit our compassion. At the Flagellation, Christ gazes into the middle distance, meekly and humbly accepting the punishment meted out. His demeanor is more pitiful at the Carrying of the Cross: Christ looks back beseechingly at the soldier abusing him, eyebrows gently raised in emotional preparation for yet another blow. The stoicism Christ manifested before Pilate previously and at the Flagellation is crumbling, his loss of control manifested by his right foot slipping off and falling below the ground line. His misplaced foot is the first sign of a stumble. The particular narrative details of the Flagellation and the Carrying of the Cross
are not only present to engage the viewer’s undivided attention but to engender tears of compassion for Christ’s suffering and to prepare the viewer’s soul for prayer.

As noted above, compared to other images of Christ’s Passion from the late-thirteenth century, the suffering of Christ is relatively understated. For example, the Flagellation from the Picture Book of Madame Marie (Hainaut, circa 1280; Fig. 4–10) follows the same three-person, symmetrical composition as the Hermitage diptych Flagellation,\textsuperscript{148} but the differences are vast. The vigor with which the soldiers attack Christ in the manuscript illumination is conveyed by the extreme torque of their bodies. The soldier to the right is turned a full 180 degrees to develop momentum. In addition, Christ’s body is displayed with equally enhanced vulnerability to the more savage beating. His hands are tied well above his head, laying bare his beautifully delineated ribs. The ferocity of the blows cause Christ to lose his balance; he seems to be in the midst of falling to the right, his legs grasping and chafing at the column, his feet in mid-air. His furrowed brow and pleading gaze are directed to the soldier on the right, begging for leniency. The extent of Christ’s torture before this moment is clearly manifested by the profuse number of bleeding wounds riddling his torso and legs. The Flagellation from the Picture Book of Madame Marie creates a compelling comparison with the Hermitage diptych, differences of medium aside, by highlighting the fact that even though some scenes on the Hermitage diptych were composed to capitalize on the emotive potential of the scene, the extent to which this was exploited to elicit tears was much less than it would be in future generations.

This investigation into the role of an emotive response within the context of spiritual exercises thus explains Aquinas’s statement in the *triplex ratio*, that images are available in a Christian context “for the arousing of affective devotion (*devotionis affectum*).” An emotive response, particularly the response of tears, is beneficial for the development of a disciplined practice of *meditatio* and *oratio* because tears physiologically softened the cold and analytical mind to allow for creativity in prayer, and sadness, guilt and compassion are painful emotions that lead to compunction, a moment of conversion towards God. Compunction, like the physiological effect of tears, readies the soul for a more intense meditation and helps the soul approach a state of contemplation. Including episodes to elicit tears from the viewer with a variety of methods was clearly one of the criteria the iconographer considered while planning the iconography of the Hermitage diptych.

Although compunction is an essential component of the spiritual exercises, it is not the end goal. *Oratio* is the objective of spiritual exercises, and the Hermitage diptych aids the viewer with this as well. It is useful for the twenty-first-century scholar to review the experience of prayer for a thirteenth-century individual. Not merely the recitation of pre-written texts, *oratio* can be said to begin only when the scripted text is left behind. Such written prayers, as the Our Father, the Psalms, or the Hours of the Virgin are tools that, when used with a properly conditioned mind and soul, inspire the spirit to

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150 Rachel Fulton has explored the problems modern historians have when conceiving or imagining medieval prayer. Her elucidation greatly informs this discussion. Fulton, “Praying with Anselm,” 700–33. The historian, however, can never fully apprehend a subjective psychological experience.

151 Jean Leclercq gives the following definition of true monastic prayer: “*Oratio*, properly speaking, took place when the spirit, without the intermediary of words borrowed from any text, spoke with God and was united with God” (Leclercq, “Ways of Prayer,” 417).
flow through accumulated memory stores on a topic inspired by the written text. True prayer, oratio, was the active construction of “thoughts about God.” Texts—and, I argue, images—were only useful insofar as they inspired and instigated this particular form of devotional creativity. Anselm of Canterbury, in a set of instructions included as a preface to his collection of prayers written in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, described this mental progression away from the page as follows:

The purpose of the prayers and meditations that follow is to stir up the mind of the reader to love or fear of God, or to self-examination. They are not to be read in a turmoil, but quietly, not skimmed or hurried through, but taken a little at a time, with deep and thoughtful meditation. The reader should not trouble about reading the whole of any of them, but only as much as, by God’s help, he finds useful in stirring up his spirit to pray, or as much as he likes. Nor is it necessary for him always to begin at the beginning, but wherever he pleases. With this in mind the sections are divided into paragraphs, so that the reader can begin and leave off wherever he chooses; in this way he will not get bored with too much material but will be able to ponder more deeply those things that make him want to pray.

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152 Carruthers, Craft of Thought; Fulton, From Judgment to Passion.
153 This is Anselm’s prologue to a collection of prayers he wrote and compiled for Countess Matilda. “Meditationes seu orationes quae subscriptae sunt, quoniam ad excitandam legentis mentem ad Dei amorem vel timorem, seu ad suimet discussionem editae sunt, non sunt legendae in tumultu, sed in quiete, nec velociter, sed paulatim, cum intenta et morosa meditazione. Nec debet intendere lector ut quamlibet illarum totam perlegat; sed quantum sentit, Deo adjuvante, sibi valere ad accendendum affectum orandi, vel quantum illum delectat. Nec nescesse habet aliquam semper a principio incipere, sed ubi magis illi placuerit. Ad hoc enim ipsum paragraphis sunt distinctae, ut ubi elegerit incipiat vel desinat, ne prolixitas aut frequens ejusdem loci repetitio generet fastidium; sed potius aliquem inde colligat lector, propter quod factae sunt, pietatis affectum.” Migne PL 158.709a–b. English translation: Benedicita Ward, The Prayers and Meditations of Saint Anselm, with the Proslogion (Harmondsworth: Penguin Classics, 1973), 89. See also Fulton, “Praying with Anselm,” 708–10; and Carruthers, Craft of Thought, 103.
The written prayer is intended to be entirely utilitarian. Anselm first prescribes the demeanor with which to approach the text: a prayer is to be read slowly and purposefully, with quiet attention. Practicing this attitude was the goal of the daily reading of scripture, which practiced the slow mastication of texts to focus and calm the mind. A mind thus prepared should approach a written prayer with the purpose of initiating a concentrated flow of thoughts about God, of stirring up the mind (ad excitandam mentem). It is not necessary to read the whole prayer from beginning to end; this may, in fact, be boring and distract the mind from its prayerful purpose. Instead, short sections or paragraphs should be excerpted that inspire the reader’s mind and trigger the sought-after spiritual response, oratio.

Rachel Fulton provides a concrete example of what the experience of oratio would have been like for a twelfth-century nun at the double monastery of Admont: the specificity of her example enables Fulton to incorporate multi-media aspects into her explication. Pertinent fragments of Admont’s liturgy (antiphons, refrains, etc.), texts written for the monastery, illuminated manuscripts (both for the communal liturgy and for private use) possessed by the community, and passages from scriptural and apocryphal sources form the content of the anonymous nun’s prayer. The words of Anselm’s written prayer led the nun on a particular path (ductus) through her memory stores, conjuring not only phrases, appellations, and images, but also word-less and image-less knowledge about the subject of her devotion: the Virgin Mary, for example. Furthermore, what makes Anselm’s prayers especially useful is their non-linear format: “the reader can begin and leave off wherever he chooses.” This way, when the flow of

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associational thoughts breaks off, when inspiration runs dry, the nun may easily and quickly return to the written prayer and start reading again (without the text demanding that she follow it sequentially) until another phrase stirs her mind to prayer. The nun is able to oscillate between the written prayer and her mental prayer, her oratio, quite easily. A good written prayer, or any useful prayer tool, would incorporate these two main qualities: effective inspiration of a path through the user’s memory stores and discrete sections cogent even when read non-sequentially.

Nothing dictates that the tools for prayer could not be visual as well as textual. In particular, the Hermitage diptych possesses both of the essential components to be a successful instrument for eliciting prayer. The preceding iconographic analysis demonstrated that the representation of the Passion of Christ on the Hermitage diptych resonates with numerous examples of contemporary exegesis. Any one of these theological points could stimulate a pious journey through the user’s memories—similar to but not limited by the textual sources. The clearly delimited, compartmentalized structure makes re-engagement with the narrative effortless once the path of prayer has exhausted itself. The user of the Hermitage diptych can easily find the spot where he or she left off and become re-absorbed by another detail in the same scene. For example, a

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155 Complex images in monastic manuscripts have been shown by many scholars to participate in the rhetorical duc tus of prayer. I cite only a few studies: Michelle Brown, The Lindisfarne Gospels: Society, Spirituality and the Scribe (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003); Martin Werner, “The Cross-Carpet Page in the Book of Durrow: The Cult of the True Cross, Adomnan, and Iona,” Art Bulletin 72 (1990): 174–223; Jennifer O’Reilly, “The Book of Kells, folio 114r: a Mystery Revealed Yet Concealed,” in The Age of Migrating Ideas: Early Medieval Art in Northern Britain and Ireland, ed. R. Michael Spearman and John Higgitt (Edinburgh: The Museums, 1993), 106–114. I would like to advance the distinction, however, that in their original conception, the complex images present in these manuscripts were records of a particular prayer path rather than constructed to lead a viewer toward an original oratio. That is not to say that subsequent users of an elaborate cross carpet page in the Book of Durrow could not compose an original mental prayer in response to the image: rather, that the formal contents of the image were not chosen and constructed with this purpose in mind. These images are records of prayer more than tools for eliciting the experience of prayer.
user following the complex *ductus* inspired by the representation of Longinus at the Crucifixion could quickly be re-inspired to prayer by his pendant, the soldier who offers the sponge, with this prayer perhaps concentrating on the dichotomous reactions to Christ crucified. Alternatively, instead of re-engaging with the same scene of the Crucifixion, the user’s attention could be grasped by visual similarities with other figures (the similar costumes of Nicodemus or Pilate, the similar hand gestures of John the Baptist or Mary at the Entombment) or with figures in similar compositional positions (e.g., *ad dextram Christi*: Mary, the Good Thief, or Ecclesia). It is this facility of re-engagement and the ability to creatively re-inspire prayer that is the Hermitage diptych’s key feature.

Furthermore, as will be discussed further in Chapter 5, it is precisely this characteristic that is isolated and developed in the subsequent generations of the Picard and Parisian diptychs.

In conclusion, the Hermitage diptych was designed with a specific function in mind: it was an instrument to be used in the composition of prayers. The *triplex ratio*, which seems to have been consistently taught as part of the Parisian theology curriculum in the commentary on Peter Lombard’s *Sentences*, outlines the three principal ways in which an image can be used for prayer in the western Church. This three-fold justification offered by the *triplex ratio* mirrors the spiritual exercises prescribed in monastic orthopraxis for the cultivation of prayer. The first rationale is that rustic folk may learn from images as others do from books. Given, however, that the Hermitage diptych is a luxury good made of rare and expensive ivory, it can hardly be said to be destined for rustic folk. Instead, the commissioner and user of the Hermitage diptych must have been a wealthy individual and probably already quite learned. The first article
of the *triplex ratio*, in drawing a comparison between pictures and books, can be interpreted to suggest that images were not solely intended as sources for teaching the basic narrative of the Passion of Christ, but also, like reading was, used as an aid in practicing concentration: an important spiritual exercise. Training the mind to concentrate intensely is an essential initial spiritual exercise on the path to prayer.

Second, images are useful because they introduce the abstract concepts represented in images to our memory. Developing deep, complex, and organized memory stores was a vital step in preparing to compose prayers, as the material stored in the memory was to be drawn upon when formulating a prayer. The Hermitage diptych is particularly attuned to this process as its iconography leads the viewer in particular directions—the sacramental exegesis on Ecclesia and Synagoga, the swoon of the Virgin at the Crucifixion, or the presence of John the Baptist. Deciphering these exegetical links forges a route in the viewer’s memory that can be easily accessed when he begins to pray. With his mind having been thus prepared, through exercises of concentration and meditation, the third principle of the *triplex ratio*, which deals with the soul, is invoked. This state of affective devotion occurs when the viewer has been brought to tears by one of a number of spiritual exercises: through the reflection upon his or her own past sins or the sins of others; through the consideration of the Last Judgment; or through meditation on the Passion of Christ. The Hermitage diptych offers ample opportunities for all of these methods of conjuring compunction. Tears of compunction are a necessary step in preparing the soul for prayer because hot and humid tears soften the cold and dry, overly cerebral mind, preparing fertile soil for the cultivation of prayer. Even if this Galenic rationalization for the necessity of tears is set aside, bringing the soul to a state of
emotional fervor, full of repentance, sorrow, and longing for God, is clearly an advantageous state in which to approach communication with God.

There are numerous ways images can participate in spiritual exercises that prepare the mind and the soul for prayer. The Hermitage diptych could also act as a tool during the act of praying itself, in a manner parallel to written prayers. Anselm of Canterbury instructed the reader of his newly penned prayers as to their ideal use: he or she was to approach the prayer in a proper mindset, with the written prayer only being heeded until the reader is inspired to begin the composition of his or her own mental prayer. Only once the inspiration for that prayer has run out (the memory stores on that particular strain of thought having been exhausted) should the reader return to the written prayer. The Hermitage diptych works efficiently in this task as well, as it can inspire the composition of mental prayers and the viewer can readily re-engage with the imagery when a particular strand of prayer has come to a close. Augmenting the diptych’s potential to inspire extemporaneous mental prayer and clarifying the diptych’s composition to enhance the viewer’s ability to re-engage with the iconography once his or her prayer has ended are the ways in which subsequent modifications to the Hermitage diptych format will be made. These modifications, exemplified by other Picard diptychs in the Wallace and Vatican collections and by the Parisian Soissons and Berlin diptychs, are the subject of the last two chapters.

4. Reiterations of the Hermitage Diptych: The Salting Leaf and the Wallace diptych

Before analyzing the major changes made to the Hermitage diptych in later iterations, the two near copies of the Hermitage diptych deserve to be considered. The
Salting Leaf (Plate 2), essentially identical to the left wing of the Hermitage diptych, dates to the same time period as the Hermitage ivory, that is circa 1235.\footnote{As determined by stylistic analysis in Chapter 3.} The Wallace diptych (Plate 3), which dates slightly, probably the mid-1240s, although following the same basic iconographic template, differs from the Hermitage in its composition. These changes, however, were not refinements of the functional aspect of the Passion diptych as a tool for prayer, but were alterations to the format undertaken to accommodate an ivory panel taken from a narrower tusk. The emendations on the Wallace diptych were made to preserve, not augment, the already successful qualities of the Hermitage diptych formula. The carver of the Picard diptychs sought to preserve the prayer tool’s overall efficacy.

The Salting leaf (Plate 2) is carved into a panel with dimensions that closely replicate those of the Hermitage diptych and also resembles the latter’s left leaf iconographically and stylistically.\footnote{The dimensions of the Hermitage diptych panels are: H: 32.4 cm; L: 12.5 cm; W: 0.925 cm. The Salting leaf’s dimensions are: H: 32.23; L: 12.3; W: 1.1.} No substantial changes were necessary to copy the Hermitage diptych onto this new support and the few differences are inconsequential (one of the soldiers at the Arrest is missing his hat) or the result of careless copying (the carver has omitted Ecclesia’s crown). A minor improvement was introduced into the scene of the Three Women at the Tomb with an extra column that emphasizes the angel’s ontological as well as physical separation from the women. The lack of significant iconographic changes in the Salting leaf suggests that the lost right leaf would have followed the Hermitage diptych just as closely.

The attentive copying of the Hermitage diptych on the Salting leaf does not, however, point to the essentially unimaginative spirit of the Picard master. Within the interpretive context of a functional object—and the foregoing analysis has conclusively
demonstrated that the Hermitage diptych performed its role as a tool for prayer admirably—copying instead suggests that the artisan has a successful model not requiring alteration. The object already functions well in its intended context—prayer—and indeed it would be foolish to tamper with such a successful formula.

The scenes represented on the Wallace diptych (Plate 3; 1240–50) are quite similar to those on the Hermitage diptych, yet it differs significantly. Two separate modifications were made in the Wallace diptych: the first is a shift from four to three arches per register, and the second is an abridgment of narrative details in some scenes. The formal differences on the Wallace diptych are not the result of an improvement on the function of the Hermitage diptych, but rather an emendation made to accommodate a different panel shape.

The most striking modification on the Wallace diptych is the shift from a quadripartite to a tripartite division of the registers. Instead of the four equal arches that measure-off the narrative compartments in the Hermitage diptych, the figures on the Wallace diptych are arranged within a wide central space flanked by two narrower side arches. This compositional choice was made necessary by the smaller tusk from which the Wallace diptych was fabricated: the Wallace panels are two centimeters narrower than the Hermitage panels.158 The different framing structure increased clarity in the centrally planned episodes, such as the Crucifixion and the Deposition, but decreased the visual legibility of compartments with several narrative episodes. In the Deposition, the

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158 The Hermitage diptych leaves both measure 12.5 cm wide, which, given the curvature of the tusk, is nearly the whole width of the tusk (as can be ascertained from an examination of the reverse of the plaques). The Wallace diptych leaves, however, are 10.5 cm wide (H: 31 cm; W: 1.1 cm). Even though the edges cannot be examined because of the nineteenth-century brackets, the visible hinge marks on the back of the plaques and the panels’ symmetry suggest that the plaques have not been excessively trimmed and their present format accurately reflects their original state.
threefold arrangement accentuates the intimate embrace between Christ and Joseph of Arimathea and allows their stature to grow to almost fill the height of the register, giving these principal personae of the episode pride of place. The large trefoil arch beautifully frames and echoes Christ’s curved back and his drooping head resting on Joseph’s. This enlargement of the central group has ramifications for the balance of the composition: the overall enlargement of scale has squeezed Synagoga onto the right leaf. On the Hermitage diptych Synagoga was already separated from the central figures by a column and this separation on the Wallace diptych is further heightened by her exile to the next panel. The whole composition of the Deposition is clarified: the dominant players of Christ and Joseph are placed centrally, and the attendant figures (Mary, Nicodemus, John and Ecclesia) are arranged comfortably under the remaining two side arches. The compositional and conceptual unity and the resultant rejection of Synagoga all heighten the sacramental exegetical nuances suggested by the joining of the Synagoga and Ecclesia to the Deposition. The placement of Synagoga on the opposite leaf, however, has a negative effect on the arrangement of the Entombment. Compressed under two arches, Joseph of Arimathea’s extravagant priestly ministering of Christ’s body on the Hermitage diptych has been simplified on the Wallace diptych and the scene loses some of its liturgical overtones. The tripartite scheme, therefore, enhances the interpretative thrust of some episodes but diminishes those of others.

The second iconographic change on the Wallace diptych is the simplified composition of the Crucifixion. This change, too, is likely related to the narrower panels on the Wallace diptych. The Virgin Mary stands alone to the left of the composition, without the other women to support her. She stands fully upright and does not falter at
all: the only trace of her emotional suffering is her hand resting over her heart. Curiously, Mary holds what seems like a book in her right hand. This attribute likens Mary to John the Evangelist, who still stands at the right of the composition: their mirrored poses act to further recall the adoption of John by Mary in the Gospel of John.\textsuperscript{159} By minimizing the attention drawn to Mary’s \textit{compassio} at the Crucifixion, other narrative details are emphasized, especially the unusual representation of Longinus.

Given the smaller panels with which the Picard master had to work, several changes were made to the Wallace diptych to amend the Hermitage iconographic program for the narrower space. Because these changes are rather subtle and seem to stem from the change in raw materials available to the carver, few conclusions as to the refinement of the Wallace diptych as a tool for prayer can be made. However, it must be noted that all of the emendations made to the diptych preserve its clarity and legibility. An essential part of the diptych’s function in private devotion was the easy parsing of the scenes so that the user, when emerging from interior prayer composition, could quickly re-engage with the narrative at whichever point seems pleasing at that moment.

Preserving the compositional coherence of the narrative on narrower panels required the master of the Picard diptychs to amend the formula presented on the Hermitage diptych.

Both the Salting leaf and the Wallace diptych are testament to the successful format that the Hermitage diptych presents for use in private prayer. Copying, in this case, is evidence of an extremely successful format, not of monotonous reproduction. Furthermore, the Picard master has shown an acute awareness of preserving a major functional aspect of the Passion diptych format—legibility—when adapting the format to

\textsuperscript{159} John 19: 26–27.
a smaller panel size in the Wallace diptych. The final two chapters examine the
remaining Picard diptych, the Vatican diptych, and the Parisian diptychs, which, although
inspired by the Hermitage diptych model, introduce significant modifications to the
original schema.
5. Appendix: Translation of the Legend of Longinus


En icel tens que ce fu fet,
Dont ci vous ai conté le plet,
Enz en Jerusalem estoit
Uns hom qui goute ne vëoit.
Longis estoit cil apelez,
.i. C. anz avoit bien passez;
Moult estoit vieuz et de lonc tens,
Tout iert son chief chanuz et blans.
Quant il oï cele novele,
Enz en
Jerusalem estoit
Truly in Jerusalem there was
A man who could not see a drop.
Longinus this man was called,
200 years he had lived well;
And had been old for a long time,
All of his hair was greying and white.
When he heard this news,
He called one of his Jews to him.

“Maine moi,” fet il, “a cel roi”
—that one responded to him: “and I consent to it”—

“Qui la est en cele croiz mis
Et est apelez Jhesucrisz.”
De riens nel volt cil contredire,
Que riches hom estoit li sires.
Tost le prent par la main senestre,
Einz n’i ala querant la destre.
Isnelement s’en vont endoi,
Que il vouloit vëoir cel roi.
Quant il vindrent pres de la gent,
“Sire,” fet cil, “a moi entent:
Ci a grant gent de la cite,
Moult grant peuple i a asemblé,
Hommes et fames et enfanz,
Moult en i a petiz et granz.
Ilec escoutent la merveille
Envers qui riens ne s’apareille.”
“Que chaut?” fet il, “gel sai tres bien;
Ne leiront ja por nule rien,
Qu’il ne me facent voie assez,
Tant que je iere outre passez.”
Ainsi comme il le dit si font,
Andui outre passé s’en sont.
Quant il furent outre passé,
Longis a un pou escouté.
Les auquans a oï parler,
Et moulte grant doleurer demener.
Et il plusieur estoient lié
De ce qu’il ont cruéfïé.
Il demanda lors une lance,
Que moulte estoit de grant puissance.
Ele li fu tust aportée,
Que elle estoit toute aprestée.
Uns des Juïs sous la mamelle
De Jhesucrist mist la lemelle.
Longis par grant vertu l’enpaint,
Sachiez de fi, pas ne s’en faint.
Seigniez de cest saintisme cors,
Sanc et eve en issi hors;
Tout aval la hanche li cort,
Tresque aus .ii. mains li sanc cort.
A ses euz tret andui ses mains,
Lors fu et clerveant et sains.

Enellepas merci cria,
Et Jhesucrit li pardonna.
Si face il toz nos pechiez,
Et les nouveaus et tos les viez,
Seignor.
(1624–1726)

Longinus stopped to listen a bit.
Some people in the crowd were speaking,
And did so with very great suffering.
And several of them were attached
To him whom they had crucified.
He asked, therefore, for a lance
which was truly very strong.
It was soon brought to him,
So that it was totally prepared.
One of the Jews under the breast
Of Jesus Christ put the blade.
Longinus with great virtue impaled him,
Knowing to do it, and not to be weak.
Bleeding from this most saintly body,
Blood and water issued forth;
All along the shaft it ran,
All the way to the two hands the blood ran.
He brought his two hands to his eyes,
Which were rendered clear-seeing and healthy.
Immediately he cried his thanks,
And Jesus Christ pardoned him.
Do so soon with our sins too,
The new ones as well as the old,
O Lord.
(my translation)
Chapter 5
The Vatican Diptych

1. Iconography of the Vatican Diptych: Infancy and Passion

The ivory now in the Vatican Museums (1250–60; Plate 8) is the only diptych from the Picard group that combines scenes from Christ’s Infancy with those of his Passion. The Infancy narrative occupies the right leaf and the Passion fills the left of the diptych.  

Unlike the Hermitage, Salting and Wallace ivories (Plates 1–3), the Vatican diptych does not read across both panels from left to right, nor does it flow sequentially from top to bottom. The alterations made to both the narrative flow and the iconography are significant improvements on the Hermitage diptych in terms of functional efficacy. Both of these major adjustments were made to augment the Vatican diptych’s potential as an aid in private prayer. Before these can be examined, however, the compositions and iconography of the Vatican diptych must be described and identified. Like the Wallace diptych, the Vatican diptych is tripartite in organization rather than equally divided into a four-part arcade as are the Hermitage diptych and Salting leaf. This decision was likely made for the same reason as for the Wallace diptych: the panels of the Vatican diptych were even narrower than the Wallace panels prior to their trimming.  

The effects of this choice due to the size of the panel will be considered below.

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1 Although the official photo received from the Vatican displays the now unhinged diptych with the Passion scenes on the left and the Infancy on the right, this is clearly incorrect as the damage from the hinges was trimmed from along the inner edges at some point (at least 2 mm have been trimmed from the inner sides). Plate 8 has been digitally corrected and shows the panels in the proper original order. The trimming was probably executed at the same time as the heavy scoring on the back of the diptych: both of these modifications were likely realized to attach the diptych to a book cover, but when this happened cannot presently be determined. The full dimensions of each leaf of the Vatican diptych are H: 30.5 cm; L: 9.8 cm; W: 1.15 cm.

2 The Vatican panels now measure a mere 9.8 cm in length. As discussed in the previous note, the panels were trimmed at some point in their history. For the lateral edges to be equal (as they are approximately on
Sequentially, the narrative of the Infancy begins on the second register of the left leaf with the Annunciation to the Virgin Mary. The Angel Gabriel is shown with his back to the edge of the frame, his left wing in fact overlapping the perimeter of the diptych. He points with an extremely elongated index finger beyond Mary to the Nativity to the right. His pointing finger and the scroll held in his right hand suggest the text from the Gospel of Luke: “Behold, you shall conceive in your womb, and shall bring forth a son; and you shall call his name Jesus.” Mary receives the message with a look of surprise and trepidation: her mouth is shown gaping in wonder. Though her face communicates shock, her assent to God’s will is communicated through her right hand, upraised with an open palm. In her left arm she holds a book: probably a reference both to her Magnificat (Luke 1: 46–55), a text that enjoyed an extensive liturgical life apart from the Gospels, and also to the thorough knowledge of scripture that prepared Mary to house Wisdom itself. The balance of the frame gives a conventional portrayal of the Nativity. Mary is shown half-reclining on a draped couch, cradling the baby Jesus in her arms. Following Luke’s text, the Christ child is tightly wrapped in swaddling clothes. In

the Hermitage diptych), the panels probably measured approximately an extra 2 mm, giving an original length of 10 cm. Even accounting for the trimming, the Vatican panels were originally quite narrow.


7 Schiller, *Iconography*, vol. 1, 42. This interpretation follows the fourth- or fifth-century Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew: “No one could be found who was better instructed than she (Mary) in wisdom and the law of God, who was more skilled in singing the songs of David.” Accordingly, Mary is often depicted in the midst of reading the Psalms when the angel Gabriel arrives. Alternatively, the book Mary holds could be a reference to the Old Testament prophecies of the coming of the Messiah, e.g., Isaiah 7: 14.

the background are the heads of the ox and the ass eating from the manger adorned with a blind lancet window. An elderly Joseph, his age signaled by his cane, sits opposite Mary on a lancet-windowed bench. Joseph raises his right hand in praise and adoration; a gesture that mirrors Mary’s at the Annunciation and which elegantly brackets the scene, signaling to the viewer that the narrative does not continue across the gutter on to the next panel.

The composition of the Annunciation scene follows very closely that of Judas Tempted in the upper left-hand corner of the Hermitage diptych and it fulfills the same function: the gesticulating hands instruct the viewer to commence “reading” at this point. Every register below the Annunciation begins with such a pointing figure. On the third level Herod commands the Massacre of the Innocents with a similar motion, and on the bottom register the youngest of the Magi points toward the seated Virgin, his extremely extended index finger missing Mary’s veil by a sliver. This semiotic signal common to beginning of the bottom three registers emphasizes the non-sequential disposition of the diptych: scenes from the Nativity are paired with scenes from the Passion. The arrangement of the episodes does not follow the narrative flow presented in the Gospel or apocryphal texts. Instead, the order of the diptych is dictated by a typological arrangement across the two panels. The explicit instruction given by the pointing fingers at the beginnings of the registers encourages the viewer to consider the horizontal relationships between the Nativity and the Passion rather than concentrate on the chronological order of either the Nativity or the Passion alone.

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9 The ox and the ass are not mentioned in the Gospels but are from the Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew (Ch. 14) as the fulfillment of the Old Testament scripture Isaiah 1: 3, “The ox knows his owner, and the ass his master’s crib.” This motif was incorporated into the traditional iconography as early as the fourth century. See Schiller, Iconography, vol. 1, 54–61.
The emphasis on typologically paired scenes arranged horizontally is augmented by the non-chronological arrangement of the Nativity scenes. After the Annunciation and the Nativity, the next scene expected would be the Adoration of the Magi. Instead, the iconographer of the Vatican diptych has inserted the Massacre of the Innocents and the Flight into Egypt. Disturbing the “natural” narrative order indicates to the viewer another organizational paradigm, in this case is typological. The Massacre of the Innocents and the Flight into Egypt are rare scenes on Gothic ivories. To the far right King Herod commands the killing of all male children under two years of age: his seated posture and the gloves he grasps in his left hand signal his verbal order and his authority. Emphasizing matters further, Herod points directly to a soldier implementing his decree. Clad in the contemporary garb of light chain mail, the soldier brutally kills a naked male child, his sex prominently displayed because the soldier holds him up by his leg. The gruesome scene is partially hidden behind the rump of the donkey that carries the Virgin and the young Christ Child—emphatically no longer a newborn baby, but a toddler—away from danger and towards Egypt. To the far right, Joseph leads the donkey by a bridle and carries an impromptu traveling sack over his shoulder. The arrangement of the register reverses the sequence presented in the Gospel: in Luke, Herod orders the massacre, Joseph is warned in a dream and leaves for safety, and then

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10 Matthew 2: 2–12.
12 There are only a few other such representations, including the Dijon pyx (K231); another pyx at the Hermitage (K 269); the English tabernacle at the Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh (56.3.1); and a writing tablet at the Louvre (K498). A three-dimensional statuette, now in the Musée de l'Hôtel Sandelin, St. Omer (no 1920), of the Mary with the Christ Child wrapped in swaddling clothes, surely once formed part of an altarpiece ensemble. See Gaborit-Chopin, Ivoires du Moyen Age, no. 213. It is much more common on the Picard ivories and Gothic ivories in general to show the Presentation of Christ in the Temple: i.e., the Victoria and Albert triptych, the Lehman polyptych, the Kofler-Truniger triptych, the Courtauld panel, and the Mayer van den Bergh triptych.
the massacre occurs. Yet representing the Massacre before the Flight foregrounds the causality of the episode: it was necessary for the Holy Family to leave Israel because of Herod’s rage.

The last episode from the Infancy cycle is the Adoration of the Magi. The depiction of the Adoration follows the conventional iconography of the mid-thirteenth century, with the Virgin seated in the center and the Magi arranged decorously on either side. Christ, following artistic convention, stands on the Virgin’s left knee and is represented as slightly older than in the Flight. His assured, upright stance recalls the previous representational tradition of Mary as the Sedes sapientiae or the throne of wisdom. Despite the less hieratic and more naturalistic depictions of the Virgin and Child in the thirteenth century, the theological interpretation of Mary as the bearer of the Logos incarnate still resonated with mid-thirteenth audiences. Furthermore, the increasing size of the Christ child from the Nativity, to the Flight and the Adoration, belies the non-sequential order of representation. Depicting Christ as growing older offers the semblance of narrative development. Christ’s gradual aging in the three vertically aligned representations is an attempt to naturalize the non-sequential order of the program. Therefore, at the same time as the iconographer of the Vatican diptych was constructing the non-narrative typological pairings across the register—which were important enough to disrupt the sequential unfolding of the Infancy narrative—he also

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15 Matthew 2: 11; Schiller, Iconography, vol. 1, 106–09.
17 Jeffrey Hamburger noted that a very similar representation of the Virgin and Child in the Rothschild Canticles (Fig. 5–1; Thérouanne, circa 1300; folio 61r) was placed opposite the text “Come over to me, all ye that desire me and be filled with my fruits,” i.e., wisdom. He also regards the particular iconography of the standing Christ child to refer particularly to the interpretive tradition of the Sedes sapientiae. Jeffrey Hamburger, The Rothschild Canticles: Art and Mysticism in Flanders and the Rhineland circa 1300 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 100–101.
tailored the images so that, at least on casual viewing, the non-chronological layout seems correct.

The iconographies of the three Passion scenes that comprise the majority of the right leaf of the Vatican diptych are closely modeled on the Hermitage diptych and only the alterations to this formula will be noted. Though several of the modifications were made to accommodate the narrower pictorial field of the Vatican diptych compared to both the Hermitage and the Wallace diptychs, the majority of the adjustments serve to augment its devotional potential.

The Crucifixion in the second register is accordingly simpler than that on the Wallace diptych, the two thieves have been omitted entirely. Mary and John stand at the far edges of the composition, John’s stance consistent with the Hermitage formula while Mary’s has changed substantially. The Virgin holds her right hand upraised with an open palm, precisely mirroring her position in the Annunciation on the left panel. As it did in that scene, the open palm connotes assent and acquiescence. At the Crucifixion Mary accepts not the mystery of the Incarnation, but rather, as her left hand against her heart indicates, the pain and grief she experiences as a mother watching her son’s death as a necessary part of redemption.18 Mary’s similar posture at the Annunciation and the Crucifixion signals the reciprocity between two essential moments in the history of redemption, a hermeneutical structure that permeates the whole of the Vatican diptych.

The second purposeful adaptation to the Crucifixion scene is the alteration of Longinus’s attributes and demeanor. Although still garbed in the heavy surcotte and

semi-circular hat that referred to contemporary secular augmentations of the legend. Longinus no longer touches Christ, nor does he pray with thanksgiving for his cure from blindness. Instead, he is depicted in the midst of piercing Christ’s side, though the thin ivory lance and Longinus’s left hand are now missing. Longinus has, therefore, not yet received redemption. This iconographic shift necessitates an interpretive change as well. The peculiar depiction of Longinus on the Hermitage diptych was an essential clue to the identification of the original user of the Hermitage diptych as a member of the clergy. Because on the Vatican diptych Longinus no longer occupies a prominent, privileged position, this interpretation must be nuanced. Though an alternative original owner cannot yet be posited on such meager evidence, I shall return to this question once the rest of the evidence has been considered.

The Crucifixion scene on the Vatican diptych is the only one within the Picard group that includes the titulus on the Cross. A narrative detail recounted by all four Evangelists, the titulus reportedly read “Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews,” in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. Although the little polychromy on the Vatican diptych that remains is not thirteenth century, the abbreviated Latin inscription INRI was probably originally painted on the titulus. The inclusion of the titulus on the Vatican diptych aptly unites two of the adjacent scenes with the Crucifixion. “Jesus of Nazareth” refers plainly to Christ’s human incarnation, thus further strengthening the link among the Annunciation,

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19 See Chapter 4.
21 The extant remains of polychromy are brown, grey, bluish-green, red and dark yellow. Aside from red, none of these are among the colors commonly used to ornament Gothic ivories. Bernard Guineau, “La polychromie des ivoires médiévaux,” Bulletin de la Société Nationale des Antiquaires de France (1996): 188–210; Danielle Gaborit-Chopin, “Polychrome Decoration of Gothic Ivories,” in Images in Ivory, 46–60. A polyptych now at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (140-1866), retains its original polychromy and has the titulus inscription written in black pigment.
Nativity, and Crucifixion, all on the second register. “King of the Jews,” the second half of the epithet, is best illustrated by the enthroned Christ who sits in judgment depicted above the Crucifixion. Furthermore, the actual king of the Jews, Herod, is depicted in the frame diagonally below the Crucifixion. Herod ordered the Massacre of the Innocents because he heard a prophecy about the new king, and it was King Herod’s eponymous son who participated in the Crucifixion, another parallel to the Massacre of the Innocents. The connection between King Herod and the Crucifixion is strengthened by Herod’s long and prominent index finger which points both to the soldier carrying out his order and beyond, to the Crucifixion. The inclusion of the titulus on the Vatican diptych—unique among the Picard ivories—therefore greatly augments the typological and exegetical relationships among the individual scenes presented on the Vatican diptych.

The composition of the Deposition, which fills the second-lowest register of the right Vatican leaf, is close to that on the Wallace diptych, though Christ and Joseph of Arimathea do not tower over the other characters to fill the full vertical height of the central archway. Mary and Joseph of Arimathea attend to Christ as expected, while Ecclesia and John the Evangelist stand in the outer archways. Synagoga, who in the Wallace diptych occupied the first arch of the opposite leaf, has been completely omitted from this composition. Was this a mistake? Was it a formal and compositional decision brought about by the Picard master or the designer of the Vatican diptych following the

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22 Matthew 2: 2.
Wallace diptych iconography, or was the omission of Synagoga a purposeful choice that resonated with the iconographic program? The latter can be shown to be the case, but in order to investigate Ecclesia’s particular role in the iconographic program, it is necessary to finish outlining that program.

The last Passion scene on the Vatican diptych is the Entombment of Christ. The scene follows the composition of the Hermitage diptych, which also fills the whole register. The priest Joseph of Arimathea anoints Christ’s body with an expansive gesture framed by the central arch. The ample negative space around Joseph emphasizes his importance and heightens the sacramental nature of his role. The Virgin Mary and John the Evangelist observe Joseph’s ministrations carefully while two other apostles lower Christ into his altar-like tomb. A careful comparison with the Hermitage diptych reveals that although the composition is quite close, on the Vatican diptych John and Mary have been moved much closer to the two attendant apostles. This redistribution of space further emphasizes Joseph’s prominence and makes his act of anointment the focal point of the scene.

The top registers of both panels of the Vatican diptych represent scenes of triumph and glory that are not part of either the Infancy or the Passion narratives per se. The iconography of both the Coronation of the Virgin on the left panel and the Last Judgment on the right evoke models from contemporary monumental sculpture. In the

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24 Koechlin subscribed to this hypothesis, attributing the loss of Synagoga as a result of simply copying the Wallace diptych iconography. Raymond Koechlin, “Quelques ateliers d’ivoiriers français aux XIIIe et XIVe siècles” Gazette des Beaux-Arts 34 (1905): 361–379.
25 Paul Williamson, “Symbiosis Across Scale: Gothic Ivories and Sculpture in Stone and Wood in the Thirteenth Century,” in Images in Ivory, 39–45. The contemporary diptych at the Cloisters (Fig. 5–2; MMA Cloisters 1970.324.7a-b) has remarkably similar iconography and much of the scholarship around this diptych has focused on the fact that it closely emulates monumental programs. As Henk van Os noted, however, owning this imagery in miniature form rather than viewing it publicly on a large scale unquestionably changes the significance of the imagery. Henk van Os, The Art of Devotion in the Late
Last Judgment Christ sits frontally on a low bench gazing intently out at the viewer. He is draped with a mantle that reveals his heroically naked chest marked with the wounds of the Passion. The bared and scarred body of Christ summarizes the scenes of the Passion depicted on the balance of the right leaf. Two angels stand to either side of the composition: the angel to the left holds the Cross and the one on the right three nails and Longinus’s lance. The instruments of the Passion they hold, a mnemonic summary of the events of the Passion, are also the insignia of Christ’s Second Coming. Christ’s gestures manifest his role as Judge: his perpendicular right hand signifies the saved and his drooping left alludes to the damned. On either side of the imposing Judge, John the Evangelist and the Virgin Mary petition Christ on behalf of humankind. Because both Mary and John are continuously present in every other scene on that leaf, sharing in Christ’s suffering through compassion, they have both earned the privilege to petition on behalf of the faithful at the Last Judgment. Their special intercessory status at the Last


Though Christe suggests that ivories lacking an explicit representation of the resurrection of the dead or of the separation of the saved and the damned should be called depictions of the Second Coming rather than of the Last Judgment, in the case of the Vatican diptych, I think the explicitly arranged hands warrants the designation of Last Judgment. Christe, Jugements Derniers, 344.

This “Western form” of the Byzantine “Deesis” originated, it seems, in Suger’s western portal at Saint-Denis (1137), and is an extension of the merging of Crucifixion and Last Judgment themes, Mary and John
Judgment is recalled in the popular prayer *O Intemerata*, frequently included in Psalters and Books of Hours in this period. The Coronation of the Virgin on the left “crows” the Infancy cycle and depicts Christ and Mary *synthronos*, that is, sharing a single seat. Christ, already wearing his crown and holding a book in his left hand, blesses his Virgin Mother with his right hand. She, in turn, faces her son and clasps her hands in prayer. An angel descends from a cloud in the arcade above to place a magnificent crown on Mary’s head. On either side are two genuflecting angels holding candles and two standing angels, whose pressed hands denote their adoration of the Queen of Heaven. The standing angel to the left faces outward, but his head is cocked slightly to the left so that he can glance at the Coronation to the right. The angel to the right looks squarely out at the viewer, a potent invitation for the viewer to join the angels in their adoration. The direct eye contact of the eager angel compels the viewer to linger over this scene longer than the others, inviting the viewer to slowly disentangle the complex theological strands intertwined within this imagery. The iconography of the Coronation of the Virgin represents a complex nexus of theological

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30 “O duae gemmæ caelestis, Maria, et Ioannes. O duo luminaria divinitus ante Deum lucentia, vestris radiis scelerum meorum effugate nubila. Vos enim estis illi duo, in quibus Deus Pater per Filium suum specialiter aedificavit sibi domum et in quibus ipse Filius Dei unigenitus ob sincerissimae virginitatis meritum, dilectionis suae confirmavit privilegium in cruce pendens, uni vestrum ita dicens: Mulier ecce filius tuus: deinde ad alium: Ecce mater tua.” (O jewels of the heavens, Mary and John, two divine lamps shining before God, dispel the gloom of my faults with your radiance. Be the two upon whom God the Father, through his own Son, specially built his own house, and be the two in whom the only Son of God the Father, as the reward of you most sincere virginity confirmed this as his special privilege, thus saying to you, as he was hanging on the cross ‘Woman, behold thy son,’ and then to the other, ‘Behold thy mother.’) For text, translation, and contextualization, see Roger Wieck, *Time Sanctified: The Book of Hours in Medieval Art and Life* (New York: George Braziller, 1988), 94–96, and 164.
developments stemming from allegorical interpretations of Old Testament texts, which, in effect, summarizes the Virgin’s role in salvation history: the story depicted on the rest of the diptych.

An event not narrated in any canonical or apocryphal text,\(^\text{31}\) the iconography of the Coronation of the Virgin depends instead on developments in Marian theology and exegesis, especially as related to various Old Testament passages.\(^\text{32}\) It is the text of the Song of Songs 4:8 that provides the theme of the actual coronation itself: “Come from Lebanon, my spouse, come from Lebanon, come: you shall be crowned from the top of Amana, from the top of Sanir and Hermon, from the dens of the lions, from the mountains of the leopards.”\(^\text{33}\) The aggregation of interpretations that lie between this scriptural passage and the iconography of the Coronation of the Virgin is the result of centuries of biblical commentary. The Song of Songs, a sensual love song, was interpreted by Jewish and early Christian Patristic commentators as an allegorical


expression of God’s love for his people, whether Israel or the Church. In the twelfth century, Rupert of Deutz and Honorious Augustodunensis based their interpretation of the amorous relationship in the Canticles on the relationship between God the Father and the Virgin Mary. Mary was the beautiful spouse of her beloved bridegroom, God; the fruit of their chaste union was Jesus, God the Son. Rather than negate the God-Church interpretation, Rupert’s and Honorious’s interpretations layered the God-Mary reading onto the previous exegetical tradition, accumulating various interconnected resonances among numerous other texts. When considered in conjunction with the interpretation of other texts with nuptial metaphors—including the Marriage of the Lamb to the Heavenly Jerusalem (Apocalypse 19 and 21); Paul’s Epistle (Ephesians 5: 23–30) which describes a conjugal relationship as akin to that between Christ and his Church; the betrothed princess of Psalm 44 who shares her husband’s throne; and even the first couple, Adam and Eve (Genesis 2: 21–25), considered an allegory of Christ and Ecclesia—the rich allusions and connotations inherent in the Coronation are gradually unraveled. The Coronation of the Virgin does not refer to one of these texts or interpretations specifically; rather, it refers to all of them simultaneously. The woman seated at Christ’s

35 “Previously, we have edited a work divided into seven books for the honor of Our Lady Mary, perpetually virginal, who truly is the spouse of the eternal Friend, that is to say God the Father, no less spouse and mother of the Son of the same God the Father. (Edidimus olim opusculum de isis canticorum Canticis distinctum septem libellis ad honorem Dominae nostrae sanctae Mariae perpetuae Virginis quae vera Sponsa principaliter amici est aeterni, scilicet Dei patris, sponsa nihilominus et mater Fili ejusdem Dei Patris.)” De Glorificatione trinitatis et processione Sancti Spiritus, Migne PL 169.155c; Thérel, Triomphe de la Vierge-Eglise, 142 for French translation.
36 The exegetical tradition that informs the Coronation of the Virgin has been elucidated by Marie-Louise Thérel in Triomphe de la Vierge-Eglise, and reiterating every nuance of her superb scholarship serves no purpose. It suffices, instead, to indicate that Thérel’s 350 pages of dense and heavily annotated text only begins to capture the complexity of the iconography of the Coronation of the Virgin. Indeed, complexity is in fact the point. See also Fulton, From Judgment to Passion, 249–52; and Schiller, Ikonographie, vol. 4, 84–89.
right hand is not to be identified exclusively with his human mother, Mary: she is instead a symbol that distills and condenses all of these various personae and personifications into one image, one point of access.

The conflation of Maria-Ecclesia in the Coronation furthermore coordinates the two leaves of the Vatican diptych, providing a key to unify the diptych’s program: the ecclesiology of eschatology. Mary’s role in facilitating and mediating access to Christ in the Infancy and Passion scenes symbolizes the Church’s role in mediating access to salvation. This theme was prevalent in the thirteenth century, appearing in cathedral façade programs and indeed in the names of churches themselves.

Once this hermeneutic context has been deciphered, each individual scene adopts another layer of interpretation. In the Incarnation/Infancy scenes, Mary-Ecclesia humbly accepts the mission to bring Christ to the world, she nurtures and protects Christ, and provides a suitable context through which Christ can be worshiped. More specifically, because the presence of the older Christ in the Adoration of the Magi has already led us to regard Mary as the Throne of Solomon and the Throne of Wisdom, she can now be read as symbolizing not only the throne but the Temple of Solomon as a whole, which was a popular type of the Christian Church itself. Although perhaps liable to be seen as

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39 This parallelism and conflation of imagery is suggested by Daniel Weiss, “Architectural Symbolism and the Decoration of the Ste.-Chapelle,” Art Bulletin 77 (1995): 308–320, esp. 316. A similar exegesis is presented in the Moralized Bibles, for example Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Codex Vindobonensis 2554, fols. 50r and 50v (Fig. 5–3) reproduced with translation of texts in Gerald B. Guest, Bible Moralisée (London: Harvey Miller Publishers, 1995), 130–31. See also Véronique Germanier, “L’Ecclesia comme Sponsa Christi dans les Bibles moralisées de la première moitié du XIIIe siècle,” Arte
circular reasoning today, this type of rhetorical path is crucial to the cultivation of meditative prayer. The Passion scenes also benefit from the ecclesiastical interpretive framework. For example, the sacramental overtones of the Deposition—fully outlined in the iconographic description of the Hermitage diptych—fit perfectly into the structure. The Eucharistic ritual evoked by Joseph of Arimathea carefully anointing Christ’s body on an altar-like tomb is consonant with the message that the Church is the privileged intermediary between God and the faithful.

Iconographic changes to the Crucifixion scene can also be seen in reference to the ecclesiology of eschatology. Naturally some choices were based on the narrower panel size, such as the omission of the two thieves, but others, such as depicting Longinus actively impaling Christ’s side instead of venerating him in thanksgiving, as shown on the Wallace and Hermitage diptychs, is not necessitated by spatial constraints. The role of worship and acclamation has shifted from Longinus to Mary. At the Crucifixion, the Virgin is both suffering labor pains postponed from the Nativity, a point emphasized by their direct juxtaposition, and attending to the birthing of Christ’s new spouse, Ecclesia, who was “born” from the blood that flowed from Christ’s side.41 Showing Longinus in the midst of piercing Christ’s side focuses the composition on diachronic aspects of the scene, most notably the birth of Ecclesia from Christ’s wound. Highlighting Mary’s pain of childbirth in conjunction with the painful birth of Ecclesia reiterates the theme of the Church and the Virgin’s parallel and congruent roles.

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41 For Mary suffering the pains of parturition at the Crucifixion, see discussion in Chapter 4, 168–69; and for the Virgin as witness to the birth of Ecclesia, see Thérel, Triomphe de la Vierge-Eglise, 155–56.
Finally, the most notable iconographic anomaly on the Vatican diptych is Ecclesia’s presence at the Crucifixion without her standard counterpart, Synagoga. Within the hermeneutical construct elaborated, however, the choice to omit Synagoga is completely rational. Without her, the theme of the *Altercatio* and the triumph of the New Law over the Old is completely lost;\(^4\) instead, the stress is on the shared polysemous identity between the Virgin Mary and Ecclesia, both chaste mother-brides to God. The shifting of attention away from Synagoga versus Ecclesia to focus on Mary-Ecclesia does not diminish the liturgical overtones discerned in the Hermitage diptych composition that served as a model for the Vatican ivory. In fact, the more evident ecclesiological context of the Vatican ivory strengthens the sacramental interpretation of the Passion scenes noted in the analysis of the Hermitage diptych.

Given the strong emphasis on the theme of Maria-Ecclesia in the Vatican diptych, it is worth considering who the potential owner of the diptych may have been. The reasons for suggesting that the original owner of the Hermitage diptych was an ecclesiastic were the emphases on sacramental and liturgical motifs in several compositions of the Passion scenes. In the Vatican diptych, these are maintained or heightened. The Coronation of the Virgin provides an unambiguous reference to ecclesiastical mores. I would posit, therefore, that like the Hermitage diptych, the Victoria and Albert triptych, and the crozier knop, the Vatican diptych was also made for an ecclesiastical recipient whose sacral duties the iconography reflects.

The purpose of delineating some of the exegetical strains that contributed to the iconography of the Coronation is to demonstrate how the narrative structure of the

\(^{4}\) See Chapter 4, 177–78.
Vatican diptych differs from that of the Hermitage diptych and its closely related siblings, the Wallace diptych and the Salting Leaf. The program of the Vatican diptych has shifted substantially from the chronological narrative of Christ’s passion presented on the Hermitage diptych. The unified thematic program on the Vatican diptych necessitates a different mode of reception on the part of the viewer/user. The Vatican diptych is a second-generation model of the devotional diptych, and its more sophisticated iconographic structure encourages a type of devotional practice slightly different from the Hermitage diptych model. The next section explores how the Vatican diptych would have functioned in an individual’s spiritual exercises.

2. The Vatican Diptych and Dialogic Meditation

In the previous chapter, I delineated how the three reasons scholastic authors offered for the use of images in Christian worship, the *triplex ratio*, could be harmonized by various stages of monastic spiritual exercise, thus outlining the function of images in specifically private prayer and devotion. The Vatican diptych effects these steps differently from the Hermitage diptych. The dense chronological and sequential narrative of the Passion on the Hermitage diptych has been renounced in favor of a typological structure. The Vatican diptych is, therefore, less well suited for teaching or learning the Gospel stories—a function, it has already been argued, that was not an essential aspect of the devotional diptychs. Detailed presentation of scenes to promote focused attention and concentration on these episodes as an exercise in building attentiveness, however, is as important in the Vatican diptych as it was in the Hermitage diptych. The most significant shift is the weight given to complex exegesis to the detriment of episodes with powerful
affective potential. All of the scenes identified in the Hermitage diptych as being specially designed to elicit an emotional response—the Judas account, the Flagellation, the Carrying of the Cross, and the Harrowing of Hell with contemporary figures tortured by devils—have been edited out of the Vatican diptych. Is this to say that tears and compunction were no longer deemed a necessary step toward contemplation for the intended user of the Vatican diptych? Rather than reducing affective imagery, we might say that the iconographer of the Vatican diptych augmented the exegetical content and thus reduced the space for more emotionally wrought content. Amplifying interpretive content increased the diptych’s usefulness in the second spiritual exercise, *memoria*, and in the practice of prayer itself.

The extensive layers of interpretation that can be built up from each episode illustrated on the Vatican diptych, especially the Coronation of the Virgin (which, it should be stressed, must be learned from an exterior source—the interpretations are not self-evident in the iconography), prepares in the user’s mind a complex array of interconnections and cross-references that can be activated during prayer. The most innovative alteration on the Vatican diptych is the vertical and binary distribution of the scenes. The iconographer shaped the program to fit the diptych itself: the program of the Vatican diptych, much more than the Hermitage diptych and its copies, maximizes the significative potential of the paired-panel form. The left leaf with Infancy scenes and the right leaf with Passion scenes, both crowned by theophanies, establish a typological relationship between the two cycles. The most obvious to our modern eyes is the juxtaposition of the Annunciation and Nativity with the Crucifixion: the Incarnation was

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43 Many scenes depicted on the Vatican diptych are emotionally compelling—most notably the Massacre of the Innocents—and the viewer/user of the diptych could still initiate an emotional response in contemplation of these scenes.
a necessary step for Salvation. If the Word had never “become flesh,” then the whole history of redemption would have been impossible. This dichotomous relationship instantly establishes a rich path for prayerful composition and the various details that unify the frames visually (glances, hand gestures) provide fuel for prolonged absorption with this devotional topic.

Similar typological relationships can be recognized in the bottom register, which depicts the Adoration of the Magi and the Entombment. The anointing of Christ’s body with luxurious unguents was foreshadowed by the Magi’s gift of myrrh,44 a substance explicitly mentioned as one of the embalming spices brought by Nicodemus.45 The large vessel in Joseph of Arimathea’s hand recalls the ornate vases held by the Magus to the far left. Furthermore, the Eucharistic overtones discerned in the Vatican diptych’s Deposition composition—largely because of the prominent role given to the ministering Joseph, and because of the altar-like tomb—activate Eucharistic readings of the Adoration. The gifts the Magi offer were frequently construed as prefigurations of the gifts of bread, wine and money the faithful gave to the Church prior to the Eucharistic ceremony.46 And the Sedes sapientiae itself was linked to the Eucharist through a furniture-based analogy with the body of Christ on the altar—an interpretation underscored by the vertical alignment of the enthroned Virgin and Child with the

44 Matthew 2:11.
45 “And Nicodemus also came (he who at the first came to Jesus by night,) bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight.” John 19: 39.
46 This analogy was made particularly evident in twelfth-century France when a liturgical play was introduced during the offertory hymn and three clerics emulated the Magi in bringing bread, wine and money to a Sedes sapientiae figure on or near the altar. See Elizabeth Saxon, The Eucharist in Romanesque France: Iconography and Theology (Woodbridge, UK: The Boydell Press, 2006), 167. See also Jane Welch Williams, Bread, Wine & Money: The Windows of the Trades at Chartres Cathedral (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 55–56.
emphatically altar-like manger above. Therefore, the juxtaposition of the Adoration and the Entombment furnishes the user of the Vatican diptych numerous avenues for pious contemplation, more so than when each scene is considered separately.

Another narrative juxtaposition is the Massacre of the Innocents and the Flight into Egypt with the Deposition. As noted above, the sequential order of the Infancy scenes has been altered to enable this pairing, as well as that of the Adoration with the Entombment. What consonances is the extremely unusual juxtaposition between the Flight into Egypt and the Deposition with Ecclesia meant to elicit?48

The Glossa Ordinaria offers the key to the unconventional pairing of these two scenes and their significance reinforces the thematic integrity of the Vatican diptych.49 The Glossa author states that “Joseph [on the Flight into Egypt] is a prefiguration of Christ with his mother, that is the faith of Christ and the Church, being carried to the gentiles [and] leaving behind Herod, that is the infidelity of the Jews.”50 The Flight into Egypt is a metaphor for the traditio of faith from the Jews to the Gentile, a theme traditionally expressed by the representation of Synagoga and Ecclesia at the Crucifixion or Deposition:51 hence their conjunction on the Vatican diptych. Interestingly, the two scenes complement each other asymmetrically: Egypt, which signifies the Gentiles, is not represented in the Infancy episode, though Herod personifies the Jews; only Ecclesia is

48 To the best of my knowledge, the Massacre and Flight are not represented together on any other medieval monument. Alexa Sand explores a similar example of iconographic difficulty that was introduced for the purpose of enriching devotional practice in her article “Vision, Devotion and Difficulty in the Psalter Hours ‘of Yolande of Soissons,’” Art Bulletin 87 (2005): 6–23.
49 For the important role the Glossa played in the Cathedral schools, see Chapter 4, 180.
51 Chapter 4, 176–78.
depicted at the Deposition, but not Synagoga. The neighbors complete each other’s lacunae. The text of the Glossa, which would be triggered in the mind of the educated viewer, furthermore equates the Virgin Mary explicitly with Ecclesia, emphasizing the Church’s prominence in the adjacent episode and reinforcing the reading of the Coronation of the Virgin above. This arcane juxtaposition of the Flight and the Deposition demands extensive cogitation on behalf of the user of the Vatican diptych. Once the thematic parallel is unlocked, however, the topic carves a prolific path for prayer composition through the user’s memory stores.

Changing the compositional format of the Vatican diptych from a sequential unfolding of the Passion narrative across both panels to a vertical arrangement of scenes following a typological program significantly enriches the devotional potential of the diptych. Multiple new ducti of prayer are suggested by the juxtaposition of scenes that were not available when the arrangement was chronological. The Infancy-Passion pairings also enhance the diptych’s potential for quickly re-engaging the viewer when a particular ductus has ended. For example, the viewer may have been composing a mental prayer based on the Crucifixion. Once he has exhausted the devotional possibilities of this scene, the Nativity and the Annunciation, directly adjacent, could help the user add to his prayer new layers of significance regarding the implications of the Incarnation. This binary format, moreover, is reflected in the very form of the diptych, making the two-paneled structure itself significant and reminding the viewer of the mystical union of opposites that constitutes much of Christian dogma: Virgin birth; a King crucified; God made man; life-giving death. Perhaps the typological format activates the devotional
potential in the diptych form itself, causing the user to meditate on the metaphorical potential of two objects (two panels) becoming one (a diptych).

The Vatican diptych represents the most sophisticated development of the Picard diptychs. It is a devotional tool with a refined ability to induce prayerful composition in the viewer and maximizes the full potential of its binary form. The Hermitage diptych and its closest copies were produced with a clerical recipient in mind. Was the Vatican diptych composed for a similar client? The depiction of Longinus at the Crucifixion (shown in the Hermitage diptych to have a particularly sacramental and eschatological resonance), the Eucharistic and sacramental weight of Ecclesia at the Deposition, the privileged and central role allotted to the priestly Joseph of Arimathea at the Deposition and the Entombment are all preserved on the Vatican diptych, suggesting that a user of a similar background was intended. The complex exegetical themes focusing on the Church and the sacraments and the meditative emphasis on the role of Ecclesia in salvation were seemingly constructed for an ecclesiastic of substantial erudition.

Although the diptych cannot be attested in the Vatican collections earlier than the nineteenth century, its presence there hints at an ecclesiastic provenance. The target audience, therefore, for all of the Picard diptychs were elite clerical circles. The iconographic and compositional evidence dovetails with the provenance information that Danielle Gaborit-Chopin discovered regarding the Meyer van den Bergh crozier knop (Plate 7), also fashioned by the Picard master: it was made for the eleventh-century crozier of Yves de Chartres and kept throughout the Middle Ages in the monastery of Saint Quentin he founded in Beauvais.  

52 Gaborit-Chopin, *Ivoires du Moyen Age*, no. 159.
(Plate 4) twice represents a bishop. At the Adoration he joins the three Kings in offering homage to the Christ Child and is distinguished by his mitre, crozier, and maniple. As a member of the elect at the Last Judgment, the bishop wears only his mitre. The conspicuous presence of the bishop on this triptych make it extremely unlikely that it was originally intended for someone other than an elite cleric. A close, though no longer extant, sibling to the Victoria and Albert triptych was described in the Perugian papal treasury in 1311. Being part of the Papal treasure at such an early date offers additional evidence for the Picard Master’s relationship with ecclesiastical circles.

The Picard Master seems to have specialized in fashioning objects intended for and probably commissioned by wealthy and high-ranking members of the ecclesiastical world. These individuals enjoyed the financial resources, educational background and spiritual formation necessary to use the Picard diptychs as devotional objects. The next chapter examines the diffusion of the Picard Passion diptychs to Paris, where the three diptychs produced in the French capital between 1245 and 1270 would find a different audience. Although many aspects of form and iconography remain consistent between the Picard and Passion diptychs—so consistent, in fact, that a direct model-copy relationship must be posited in some cases—the idiosyncratic aspects of the Picard diptychs that permitted the identification of ecclesiastic users are completely absent. The broader implication of this finding has on medieval religion and spirituality will be examined in the Conclusion.

53 For full text, see Introduction, 1.
Chapter 6
The Paris Group: The Refinement of a Tool

The Walters-Cluny, Soissons and Berlin diptychs, easily distinguishable from the Picard ivories by their boustrophedon narrative style, are a different sort of “copy” of the Picard Passion diptychs. In Chapter 4 the two close copies of the Hermitage diptych were shown to have made emendations to the prototypical formula only to preserve legibility and functionality given a smaller surface. The Vatican diptych, while emanating from the same tradition, introduced a number of augmentations to enhance the functionality of the devotional diptych. All of these objects were fashioned by the same Picard Master and his involvement undoubtedly underlies much of the continuity. The Parisian diptychs, on the other hand, were carved in the Capetian capital by three different artists: the Walters-Cluny diptych around 1240, very soon after the Hermitage diptych, the Berlin diptych in the 1260s, and the Soissons diptych towards the end of that decade. Analyzing the relationships among these objects based on their iconographic, compositional, and formal similarities is the goal of this Chapter, while the Conclusion that follows will consider the social relationships that may have engendered such a homogenous group of objects over a twenty-year time span and across the territories of northern France.

1. The Walters-Cluny Diptych—Between Picardy and Paris

The iconography of the damaged diptych now separated between the leaf at the Walters Art Museum and the fragment at Musée national du Moyen Age–Thermes et
hôtel de Cluny can be more or less fully reconstructed (Fig. 6–1; Plate 20).¹ The extant episodes on this ivory, which I refer to as the Walters-Cluny diptych, are so similar to the Picard Passion diptych iconography that it is clear that the Parisian carver of the Walters-Cluny diptych was working from a Picard diptych model. The early date of the Walters-Cluny diptych, established in relationship to the Bourges jubé as around 1240, makes it contemporary with the large Passion diptychs in the Picard group: the Hermitage, Salting, and Wallace ivories. The carver or iconographer of the Walters-Cluny diptych did not reproduce the Picard model verbatim, but altered it in several significant ways. The following section on the Walters-Cluny diptych will explain why I posit a close relationship between this first Parisian diptych and those from Picardy; the iconographic and compositional differences between the Hermitage and Walters-Cluny diptychs will be enumerated and the effect these changes had on the devotional potential of the diptych will be discussed; the formal changes made to the panel’s disposition will be harmonized with its one iconographic addition to understand the changed devotional function of the diptych.

The dimensions of the Walters panel and, we must assume the original dimensions of the Cluny fragment, were the largest of any of the remaining “Soissons” diptychs, if only marginally bigger than the Hermitage diptych.² The tusk from which the Walters-Cluny diptych was cut, however, was neither as large as nor the same high quality as the tusks available to the Picard Master. As the back of the Walters panel plainly shows, this tusk was riddled with “pearls” or excrescent materials, flaws that mar

² The Walters panel dimensions are: H: 32.7 cm; L: 12.9 cm; W: 0.8 cm. The Hermitage diptych measurements are: H: 32.4 cm; L: 12.5 cm; W: 0.925 cm.
some ivory tusks. In addition, the reverse of the Walters panel also reveals that it is a composite plaque; it is not a solid piece of ivory (Plate 20a; Fig. 3–49). A crescent-shaped section has been inserted to compensate for the natural curvature of the tusk and to replicate a large panel size. The artificial alteration of the panel size is the first indication that the carver of the Walters-Cluny was emulating a prototype: if the carver did not have some external standard, then why would he have gone to the trouble of tampering with the tusk’s natural shape? To highlight the unusual nature of this modification, it is sufficient to note that other than the three Parisian Passion ivories (Walters-Cluny, Soissons and Berlin), no other thirteenth- or fourteenth-century ivory panel from France that I have examined or that has been published is a composite panel. The carver of the Walters-Cluny panel, therefore, must have had a Picard diptych in mind or at hand when he conceived the Walters-Cluny diptych as he went to great lengths to fabricate an equally impressive panel.

Two extremely rare iconographic features from the Picard ivories have been transferred to the Walters-Cluny diptych: the peculiar representation of Judas’s betrayal and the elderly Longinus. The bottom left-hand corner depicts Judas discussing his impending denouncement with a young-looking man, presumably one of the Jews from the Passion des Jongleurs. To my knowledge, this iconography is unique to the Picard diptychs and is very strong evidence that the Walters-Cluny carver was emulating a sibling of the Hermitage diptych. Longinus is dressed in contemporary robes with the

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4 See discussion of the Hermitage diptych.
5 Even the Bourges jubé, which shares many architectural, stylistic, and iconographic similarities with the Walters-Cluny diptych, depicts the Jew as a respectably dressed man rather than a jaunty youth, as on the
fashionable detail of a slit along the armhole that allows the wearer to change from a sleeved to a sleeveless garment. Furthermore, as in the Picard diptychs, Longinus is shown in prayerful observation of the crucified Christ and not in the act of puncturing Christ’s side (Fig. 3–35). Although the elderly Longinus shown in thanksgiving, derived from the version of events narrated in the Passion des Jongleurs, has greater iconographic currency than the youthful Jew at the Betrayal, the motif is still rather rare. The replication of these two iconographic details suggests that the artisan who created the Walters-Cluny diptych had a Picard Passion ivory in mind.

Not every iconographic idiosyncrasy represented on the Picard diptychs was replicated on the Walters-Cluny ivory. The unusual inclusion of Synagoga and Ecclesia at the Deposition has been edited out, as has John the Baptist’s presence at the Harrowing of Hell. It could be argued that these innovative scenes were confusing and the Walters-Cluny iconographer or carver did not understand their iconographic import. The presence of Synagoga and Ecclesia at the Deposition on the Picard diptychs enhanced the programmatic complexity of the Passion narrative, injecting sacramental and ecclesiastic nuances into the traditional narrative. I would suggest that these elements were eliminated not because of an urge to simplify the iconography, but because the iconographer had a different programmatic intention. In order to discern the details of this new program, all the alterations the Walters-Cluny designer made to the Picard Passion diptych formula must be identified and analyzed.

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6 This particular style of sleeved garment may have been identified as a garde-corps or a hérigaut. Margaret Scott, Medieval Dress & Fashion (London: The British Library, 2007), 64.

7 Although half of the scene of the Harrowing of Hell is missing from the Cluny fragment, the amount of space left on the register does not allow for two figures to fit into this space.
Although in its general characteristics the Walters-Cluny diptych resembles the Passion ivories by the Picard Master, there are several important differences. The architectural frame on the Parisian diptychs is manifestly more complex than on the Picard diptychs. Every register is now crowned with full gables, towers and lancet-window friezes rather than only the top register. Each leaf of the Walters-Cluny diptych is constructed in a threefold pattern, with three registers (versus four registers in the Picard ivories) and three arches in turn dividing each register. The arches are of equal width, evenly measuring out the rhythm of the narrative. This contrasts with the asymmetrical arrangement of the tripartite Vatican and Wallace diptychs, where wider central arch was privileged. The architecture thus divides the two Parisian leaves into eighteen uniform arches, a much smaller narrative space than the thirty-two arches of the Hermitage diptych. The result is a generally much more compressed narrative, where scenes that were allowed to fill four arches or more on the Hermitage diptych, are squeezed under one or two arches. In other words, a distinct choice was made to cede a large percentage of the ivory’s surface to architectural ornament instead of to narrative elaboration. The full devotional potential of the innovative three-fold structure was not reached in the Walters-Cluny diptych, however, but was attained in the second generation of Parisian diptychs, the Soissons and Berlin diptychs.

The second important alteration made by the Walters-Cluny iconographer was to change the direction in which the Passion narrative flows. Instead of commencing at the top left-hand corner and reading from left to right and top to bottom, the narrative begins

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8 The iconographic role of the elaborate micro-architectural frame is a topic that will not be explored here, although it certainly merits serious consideration. I hope in the future to deal with this problem in depth. Meanwhile, see François Bucher, “Micro-Architecture as the ‘Idea’ of Gothic Theory and Style,” Gesta 15 (1976): 71–89; and Harvey Stahl, Picturing Kingship: History and Painting in the Psalter of Saint Louis (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007), esp. 83–89.
with Judas’s betrayal at the lower left-hand corner. As on the Hermitage diptychs, the animatedly pointed hands of Judas and the Jew signal to the viewer that this is the beginning of the story. The narrative continues across the “gutter” between the two panels to the right-hand leaf (now damaged) with Judas’s suicide, Christ led before Pilate, and Pilate washing his hands. The next scene, the Flagellation, was found directly above the latter, as can be discerned through the traces of a soldier’s whip that are seen on the springing of the arches. The narrative on the second register flows from the Flagellation at the far right of the register to the left. The following scene, the Crucifixion, is separated, somewhat awkwardly, across both panels. The register ends with a rather compressed depiction of the Deposition constricted under one arch. The narrative continues directly above with the Entombment. Like the bottom register, the top reads from left to right: from the Entombment, to the Women at the Tomb, the Harrowing of Hell and finally ending with the Noli me tangere, an episode not depicted on the Picard ivories. The snaking pattern of the narrative is known as a boustrophedon pattern. This term literally refers to the path an ox takes when plowing a field: an ox begins the next row from the end of the first, zigzagging back and forth across the pasture. All of the “Soissons group” Paris diptychs share this feature. The bottom-to-top boustrophedon narrative order and the addition of the Noli me tangere together suggest that a new interpretive paradigm was introduced with the Walters-Cluny diptych.

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9 There is no reason to postulate that the iconography here deviated from either the Picard diptych narrative on which it was modeled or from the Soissons and Berlin diptychs that were in turn based on the Walters-Cluny diptych.

The only iconographic addition in the Walters-Cluny diptych is the very last scene on the top register: the *Noli me tangere*. Mary Magdalene can clearly be seen on the edge of the Cluny fragment, veiled and kneeling. She has fallen to her knees as she realizes that the man she thought was the gardener is actually her beloved teacher, Jesus. Mary Magdalene’s right arm has broken away, but it must have reached precariously close to Christ, prompting the words, “Do not touch me, for I am not yet ascended to my Father.” In the Soissons diptych (Plate 21), which also shows the *Noli me tangere*, Christ’s hand nearly grazes Mary’s fingertips, a visual play on his verbal proscription. It is now impossible to tell whether the Magdalene hazarded such an illicit touch on the Walters-Cluny diptych or if, as on the Berlin diptych, she was forcefully separated by a tree. No trace of Christ is left on the Cluny fragment, yet there is sufficient space vertically to presume that Christ extended a protective gesture of blessing over Mary’s head, as he does on the Soissons diptych.

The inclusion of the *Noli me tangere* shifts the focus of the Passion narrative. By closing the narrative at a different point, the iconographer has chosen to change the ideological emphasis of the story. Instead of ending the diptych with a scene of redemption from eternal damnation—the Harrowing of Hell was a scene chosen to elicit fear and compunction from the thirteenth-century viewer—the iconographer concludes with a privileged moment of revelation after the Resurrection. How does the exegetical understanding of the *Noli me tangere* scene inform the thematic program of the diptych as a whole? How does a different terminus affect the reception of the whole narrative?

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12 John 20: 17.
The traditional reading of the *Noli me tangere* scene, as abridged in both Petrus Comestor’s *Historia Scholastica* and the *Glosa Ordinaria*, emphasized that Mary Magdalene loved and respected Christ as a human being: she did not yet realize he was God. In order for Mary Magdalene, the *apostola apostolorum*, and the rest of the apostles to fully understand Jesus as the divine Son of God, he had to ascend to the Father, thus removing himself from view of the “eyes of the body” and becoming visible only with the “eyes of the spirit.” Petrus Comestor briefly summarizes this exegetical position:

[When] Jesus said: “Touch me not. For I have not yet ascended to my Father,”
understand in your heart as if he said: He whom you seek is dead, you do not merit to touch the living [body]. That is to say, he whom you thought to be a cadaver taken away, [is] not [these things, but is] the Son equal to the Father.
“But go and tell my brothers: I have ascended to my Father, and your Father, my God and your God.” That is to say, [the time when] they will see me ascend is near.

In other words, Mary Magdalene was concerned only with the human side of Jesus, with her teacher whom she knew and loved, not with the divine nature of his resurrected body. It was not until Jesus ascended to God the Father and removed himself from the sight of

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13 For the wide-spread influence of these texts, see Chapter 4.
14 The most comprehensive exposition of this iconography remains Robert Deshman, “Another Look at the Disappearing Christ: Corporeal and Spiritual Vision in Early Medieval Images,” *Art Bulletin* 79 (1997): 518–46, esp. 537 for the *Noli me tangere* discussion. Although Deshman is concerned with Anglo-Saxon images of the eleventh century, his reading, based mainly on patristic sources, was still relevant for the thirteenth century.
the apostles and the Magdalene that they were fully able to comprehend that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. While Mary Magdalene only venerated Jesus’ human nature, she could not touch his resurrected body.

In Robert Deshman’s masterful discussion of the various iconographies dealing with this theme—in addition to the *Noli me tangere* he also addressed the Ascension, Doubting Thomas, and Pentecost—he illustrated how these images engage the viewer in a discourse about Augustinian visuality.\(^{16}\) The human Jesus with whom the apostles interacted every day was perceived with bodily sight; the divine nature of Jesus the Son of God is only visible with the eyes of faith or spiritual vision. The apostles, Mary Magdalene, and ultimately the viewer, in order to fully recognize Christ the Savior, must learn to look at Jesus with spiritual eyes and see the higher reality beyond material appearances.

This lesson, implicit in the *Noli me tangere* scene, inflects the iconography of the Passion on the balance of the Walters-Cluny diptych. The presence of the *Noli me tangere* at the end of the cycle prompts the viewer to ponder the represented scenes not with the eyes of the body (whether that entailed a focus on the artistic representation actually before him or her or a focus on the physical life of Christ), but with eyes of faith. Thus in addition to illustrating the Gospel events, the represented scenes should be probed for their deeper allegorical, theological and eschatological meanings. In other

\(^{16}\) Deshman quoted Augustine’s explication of the Ascension from *De Trinitate*: “It was necessary that the form of the slave [i.e., his human form; cf. Phil. 2:7] should be taken away from their sight, for gazing upon it they thought that Christ was only that which they saw… But his Ascension to the Father meant that he should be looked upon as he is, the equal to the Father, so that there at last they should see the vision which suffices for us. (Formam servi accipiens, sicut Filium. Oportebat ergo ut auferretur ab oculis eorum forma servi, quam intuentes, hoc solum esse Christum putabant quod videbant… propterea me oportet ire ad Patrem, quia dum me ita videtis, ex hoc quod videtis, aestimatis quia minor sum, atque ita circa creaturam susceptumque habitum occupati, equalitatem quam cum Patre habeo non intelligitis.)” *De Trinitate* Lix.18. Migne *PL* 42.833. Stephen McKenna, trans., *The Trinity* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1963), 27–28, as quoted in Deshman, “Disappearing Christ,” 533.
words, the inclusion of the *Noli me tangere* is a signpost to remind the viewer to turn his or her attention toward the spiritual significance of the scenes represented: the viewer should turn toward heaven, that is, to focus inwardly and begin internal prayers.

The narrative structure that begins at the bottom of the diptych and meanders upwards is itself a metaphor for this injunction to “turn your eyes toward heaven.” The boustrophedon pattern—which encourages the eye to follow a continuous path from the bottom to the top—enhances this reading. In following the Passion narrative, the viewer’s eyes are led literally and metaphorically upwards, reminding the viewer that he or she must contemplate the spiritual meaning behind the represented scenes. Both the narrative structure of the Walters-Cluny diptych and the iconography of the *Noli me tangere* prompt the viewer of the diptych to look metaphorically upwards towards heaven.

In comparison to the Picard Passion diptychs, how does the Walters-Cluny diptych function as a tool in devotional practice? How do the changes in format and iconography alter the experience of praying with an ivory diptych? Does it facilitate the spiritual exercises that correspond with the *triplex ratio* as well as the Hermitage diptych did? Is the new format of the Walters-Cluny diptych as efficient a tool as the Hermitage diptych for stimulating and supporting prayer? To answer these questions, this last section reviews the different ways in which the Walters-Cluny diptych could have been used in the spiritual exercises.

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17 Florens Deuchler suggested that boustrophedon patterns were often chosen to given a portion of the narrative, the “backwards” portion, a negative overtone. Following this premise would suggest that the most violent scenes of Christ’s Passion, the Flagellation, Carrying the Cross, the Crucifixion, and the Deposition, were arrayed “backwards” to highlight their negative character. Given the eschatologically positive nature of these events, especially the Crucifixion, I do not see this interpretation in effect in the Walters-Cluny diptych, nor in the Soissons or Berlin diptychs. Deuchler, “Boustrophédon,” 251–58.
The first element of the *triplex ratio*, the ability to teach the basic Gospel narratives or help the viewer hone his or her skills of mental concentration is compromised on the Walters-Cluny diptych. The cramped compositions with as many as five or six figures compressed under one arch seriously hamper the legibility of some scenes. Although the general iconography is intelligible—the Deposition is still clearly just that—the nuanced sophistication of the Picard diptychs is lacking: glances no longer communicate dialogues, hand gestures lack their poetic reciprocity, and faces are bereft of expressive detail. Altogether, there are fewer minute features to retain the viewer’s attention for an extended period of time. This observation may in part be due to the worn state of the Walters panel and the seriously damaged condition of the Cluny fragment; it may not accurately reflect the original quality of the carving. Nevertheless, the compositions are simpler than in the Picard diptychs and do not demand the same quality or quantity of close looking.

The second component of the *triplex ratio* is the memorization of theological content so that the material is readily available for the composition of prayers. The less-detailed representations of the Passion narrative on the Walters-Cluny diptych allow the viewer more freedom as to which exegetical interpretations he or she would associate with each scene. On the Hermitage diptych definite hermeneutical paths were indicated through the compositions and minute iconographic details, but on the Walters-Cluny diptych the iconography is much more generic and therefore open to whichever interpretation the viewer wishes to associate it with. For example, the Deposition on the Hermitage diptych was given a particularly liturgical and sacramental slant with the inclusion of Synagoga and Ecclesia. This reading of the Deposition in turn inflected the
Entombment positioned directly opposite, privileging a Eucharistic interpretation of Joseph’s ministrations. The iconography of the Walters-Cluny diptych is not limited in its hermeneutical possibilities in the same way. The user of the diptych is neither encouraged nor restricted by the depicted iconography as to which exegetical aspects he or she is to attach to each scene. This iconographic openness could be construed either as an improvement or a limitation, depending on the disposition of the user. Whether an improvement or a hindrance to the devotional tool, the open-ended iconography impairs the historian’s ability to discern a particular class of individual for whom the object was made, and no conclusions can be reached about whether that individual was a prelate, a monastic, a layperson, or even male or female. Yet this in itself is significant, as a more generalized iconography suggests that the act of prayer the diptych was meant to support was appropriate for a general audience, and not necessarily limited to the monastic elite.

The third spiritual exercise in which the images could readily participate was the solicitation of tears of compunction. The scenes in the Picard Passion diptychs that most successfully elicited tears of remorse or of compassion were the Flagellation, the Carrying of the Cross, the Judas cycle and the Harrowing of Hell. As these scenes have remained in the Parisian epigones, and many of the details that made them particularly effective (e.g., the contemporary thirteenth-century fashions of the damned in the Hell-mouth) have also been retained, the Walters-Cluny diptych is as efficacious as the Hermitage diptych at provoking tears to ready the viewer’s soul for prayer.

The addition of the *Noli me tangere* to the Picard model changes the devotional dynamic of the Paris diptychs. Although the Hermitage diptych’s complex iconography demands unpacking because of its difficulty—itself an invitation to turn inwards to
prayer and contemplation—it does not contain a scene that explicitly manifests the shift from seeing with the eyes of the body to understanding through spiritual vision. In other words, the Walters-Cluny diptych signals the theological depth and devotional potential of its iconographic program to its users in a direct manner; the addition of a single scene thematizes the relationship between their material representations and the spiritual significance of those scenes. On the Hermitage diptych, some scenes are presented in a manner that made them more appropriate for extensive discursive contemplation; not every episode could inspire prayer with equal effectiveness. The Walters-Cluny diptych, in abbreviating and condensing much of the iconography, tends towards a more evenly measured disposition of the scenes, giving equal weight to each scene. The Noli me tangere, at the end of a meandering path, reminds the diptych user that each scene has the potential to inspire an inward journey of spiritual interpretation: prayer.

A second criterion for an effective devotional tool is that it quickly and efficiently re-engages the viewer back into prayer. The Hermitage diptych does so by presenting numerous potential avenues for prayerful digression in each scene: the user, having exhausted the path suggested by one character in a scene, could easily proceed to contemplate another individual’s role in the episode. The user of the Hermitage diptych could be inspired to contemplate a figure: in a similar position in the adjacent scene; horizontally or vertically related; holding an analogous attribute, etc. The Walters-Cluny diptych offers some similar opportunities for re-engagement, though perhaps less efficiently. The less detailed carving, especially of the faces, bars much of the psychological engagement with the characters that is so compelling on the Picard diptychs. The more chaotic organization of the layout—due primarily to the compression
to three registers instead of four—confuses the internal relations among scenes. For
example, in the Hermitage diptych there is a clear similarity between the Crucifixion and
the Deposition and figures in similar positions in each scene can be compared and
contrasted. On the Walters-Cluny diptych, the Crucifixion is given three full arches while
the Deposition is squeezed underneath one. The drastically different spatial composition
does not inspire reciprocity between the two episodes; rather, it encourages much longer
focus on the Crucifixion at the expense of every other scene. In spite of these formal
weaknesses in re-engaging the viewer, especially when compared to the Hermitage
diptych, the Walters-Cluny ivory is still an effective tool for inspiring prayer and the user
could always be stimulated to begin a second round of prayer composition by simply
choosing another episode on which to meditate.

On the whole, however, the Walters-Cluny diptych seems a less successful tool
for use in spiritual exercises and prayer. The carving style is less precise and less inviting
for the eye to engage with and the artisan has included fewer details of each scene to
capture the viewer’s interest and attention. Constricting the narrative space to three
registers instead of four results in a compression of many scenes to the point where they
seem emblematic rather than narrative; this is especially clear in the Deposition and the
Three Women at the Tomb, where numerous figures are awkwardly arranged in a limited
space. Another result of the diminished narrative space is a reduction of the “difficult”
iconographic material, which, on the Hermitage diptych, is ideal material for the viewer
to cogitate and meditate upon. This alteration, however, could be construed as an
advantage; the type of exegesis attached to each scene is unlimited and the composition
does not privilege a particular line of interpretation as the Hermitage diptych did. The
Walters-Cluny iconography is less definitive and is open to whichever direction of exegetical reasoning or allegorical readings the viewer wishes to impose on the material. The need for some sort of spiritual or allegorical layer—to practice storing away particular interpretations in the viewer’s memory—is continuously recalled by the iconography of the *Noli me tangere* which thematizes the dichotomy between bodily and spiritual vision. The unrestricted interpretation of the Passion narrative and the iconographic reminder that all scenes are potential loci for hermeneutic exercise are characteristics that the Walters-Cluny diptych bequeathed to the next generation of devotional diptychs.

Finally, the open interpretive framework of the Walters-Cluny diptych signals a wider possible audience for the Walters-Cluny diptych than was identified for the Hermitage diptych. With the latter, idiosyncratic scenes and their exegetical readings suggested that the original intended user was a high-level ecclesiastic. Some of these aspects have been retained and some have been discarded: most notably, the highly unusual Synagoga and Ecclesia and John the Baptist at the Descent into Limbo have been omitted on the Walters-Cluny diptych. Without the more limiting iconographic elements, the intended viewer of the Walters-Cluny diptych cannot be determined.

Another point to consider at this juncture is the model-copy relationship the Walters-Cluny diptych shares with the Picard Passion diptychs. If we assume that the Picard Passion diptych was in the possession of an ecclesiastic of substantial means, the commissioner of the Walters-Cluny diptych would, at the very least, need to be of similar social standing to be able to observe the model diptych, especially given the intimate nature of private prayer. Another possibility is that the commissioner of the Walters-
Cluny diptych was himself an owner of a Picard diptych; nothing would convince someone of the efficacy of a prayer aid more than having used it himself. I imagine here something like the situation of the patronage of the *Bibles moralisées*, though not necessarily in a royal context. John Lowden has suggested that the first *Bible moralisée*, the so-called Old French Vienna 2554, was commissioned by/for Queen Blanche of Castile in the early 1220s. As at least the owner of the first of these complex manuscripts, Blanche was also likely to be the commissioner of the two subsequent *Bibles moralisées*: the Latin Vienna 1179, which she probably had made for her husband, Louis VIII, perhaps to commemorate his coronation in 1223 and the even more ambitious three-volume Toledo manuscript, made for her son, Louis IX, who succeeded his father in 1226. In this case, the original owner of the innovative object, the moralized Bible, was so convinced of the effectiveness of the form of the object that she orchestrated the production of two other versions, adapted and augmented to fit the recipient’s personal needs. I imagine that an original owner of a Picard diptych commissioned the Walters-Cluny diptych for a friend, family member, or spiritual charge. Presumably it was possible for the carver of the Walters-Cluny diptych to have made an exact copy of the Picard Passion diptych, but he did not. Instead, the commissioner introduced a certain number of didactic alterations to tailor the object to the devotions of the intended user, deleting the sacramental and ecclesiastic emphasis but

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18 Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, MS 2554. John Lowden, *The Making of the Bibles Moralisées*, 2 vols. (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), vol. 1, 50–54. Lowden does not believe it possible to distinguish between whether Blanche was the patron or the intended recipient, or even both, of the manuscript.

19 Toledo, Tesoro del Catedral, Biblia de San Luis and New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS M 240. Lowden, *Making of the Bibles Moralisées*, 132–37. The 1284 will of Alfonso X, King of Castile and Léon, describes a Bible “in three volumes, illustrated, which King Louis of France gave to us (*e lo otre en tres libros estoriada que nos dio el rey Luis de Francia).” In this case, the suggestion that Louis IX was the original recipient of the manuscript is based on documentation and not solely circumstantial evidence.
including the *Noli me tangere* as an aide-mémoire to encourage the user to strive for a spiritual understanding of the episodes depicted. One can imagine the commissioner explaining this exegetical topos to the intended recipient of the diptych. The intended user was likely someone to whom the commissioner was giving spiritual direction in some capacity. This person could have belonged to a number of different communities in the thirteenth century. He or she could have been another cleric, or a monk or a nun benefitting from further shepherding by an older member of the community.\(^{21}\) It is also possible that the commissioner was the private chaplain of an aristocrat, male or female, with a particularly advanced devotional practice.\(^{22}\) It is worth reiterating, however, that the iconography of the Walters-Cluny diptych cannot help us distinguish among these possible recipients because it abandoned the directed program of the Picard Passion diptychs for a more generalized and universal spiritual message. It is impossible to prove, and hazardous to guess, whether it was a lay or a religious individual who originally used the Walters-Cluny diptych; the generalized iconography was appropriate for both populations.

Unlike the very successful Picard Passion diptych formula that was reiterated many times, there are no known direct copies of the Walters-Cluny diptych and it is the only member of the “Soissons” group that is completely unique. The next generation of

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\(^{21}\) These mentoring relationships were intrinsic to the spiritual life of the cloister. The Rule of Saint Benedict stated that a senior monk be appointed to each novice, Chapter 58. For the reciprocal relationship between female and male monastics, see Fiona Griffiths, “The Cross and the *Cura monialium*: Robert of Arbrissel, John the Evangelist, and the Pastoral Care of Women in the Age of Reform,” *Speculum* 83 (2008): 303–330.

\(^{22}\) Although some may see in the addition of the *Noli me tangere* a signal that the iconography was tailored for a female recipient, I do not believe that this iconography necessarily carries with it gendered connotations. For a critique of gendered readings of religious imagery see Caroline Walker Bynum, “Jesus as Mother and Abbot as Mother: Some Themes in Twelfth-Century Cistercian Writing,” in *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 110–66; and Magdalena Elizabeth Carrasco, “The Imagery of the Magdalen in Christina of Markyate’s Psalter (St. Albans Psalter),” *Gesta* 38 (1999): 67–80.
Parisian diptychs, the Berlin and the Soissons ivories, are clearly inspired by the Walters-Cluny diptych, adopting several of its innovations and capitalizing on the new devotional potential. Unfortunately it is not possible to posit how exactly this took place: were the two artisans who carved the Berlin and the Soissons ivories apprentices in the Walters-Cluny workshop? Did they see the Walters-Cluny diptych at a later time? Were there intervening, but now lost, examples? In the next section, however, the composition and function of the Soissons and Berlin diptychs will be analyzed and compared.

2. Iconography of the Soissons and Berlin diptychs

In Chapter 3, the Soissons and Berlin diptychs (Plates 21 and 22) were dated and localized, based on stylistic comparisons, to Paris in the 1260s, with the Berlin diptych tending towards the earlier half of the decade and the Soissons diptych the latter half. Two different artists made the diptychs, yet, despite their many differences, they nonetheless share numerous stylistic affinities. I suggested that the carvers’ close relationship could be compared with a loose association that Robert Branner called the Royal Psalter Group, a circle of manuscript illuminators who shared ideas, inspiration, and stylistic traits while retaining their distinctive individual styles. The Soissons and Berlin diptychs are related in a similar manner.

The Parisian Walters-Cluny ivory clearly influenced the Soissons and Berlin diptychs: the composite fabrication of the panels (Fig. 3–49), their 3 x 3 architectural divisions, the bottom-to-top boustrophedon narrative pattern, and the closeness of the Passion iconographies are too similar to have been chosen by chance. Yet it is quite

23 See Chapter 3, 130–43.
possible that one or more lost intermediaries stand between the Walters-Cluny diptych and the Berlin and Soissons ivories and, in fact, I propose that they do copy a lost transitional diptych (Fig. 6–2). This lost model likely had rayonnant architectural friezes crowning each register, and followed the same Passion and post-Resurrection iconography as the Soissons and Berlin diptychs. It dated perhaps to the 1250s. This solution elegantly accommodates both the unusual similarity of the Soissons and Berlin diptych and their drastic difference in style, architecture, and narrative details. Yet, because there is no sense in “crying over spilt milk,” as it were, the lost intermediary between the Walters-Cluny diptych and the Soissons and Berlin ivories will not be invoked frequently in the following iconographic analysis. Many of the significant innovations in the devotional functionality of the Soissons and Berlin diptychs must be, however, attributed to this lost predecessor. In order to circumvent this difficulty, when discussing the function of these diptychs in the practice of prayer, I will refer to the Soissons-Berlin diptych type. As the following analysis is concerned with the shared iconography and arrangement of the Soissons and Berlin diptychs, the two works will be considered in tandem although divergences will be noted and compared appropriately.

The Soissons and Berlin diptychs share the same iconography, although the composition of separate scenes sometimes diverges surprisingly. The major difference between the Walters-Cluny diptych and the Soissons-Berlin type is the isolation of each scene within its own architectural niche. The Berlin ivory further emphasizes this segregation by including a full column at the springing of each arch. The one-to-one correspondence of arch and episode establish a regular and even rhythm to the narrative.

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flow. In the Soissons diptych, smooth transitions between scenes give the narrative a sense of stately progression, while in the Berlin diptych the resulting rhythm is staccato due to the sharp delineations of the columns. A second consequence of the one-to-one ratio of narrative scene to architectural space is that several episodes are drastically abbreviated (e.g., the Crucifixion), leaving ample room for additional post-Resurrection incidents. A total of five additional episodes have been added to the Soissons and Berlin diptychs, shifting the narrative’s focus away from the Passion towards the experience of a Christian in the world after Christ’s bodily departure. Further implications of the one-scene-per-arch arrangement will be considered in the last section.

Both the Soissons and the Berlin diptychs begin at the lower left with Judas receiving the thirty pieces of silver from the High Priest. The ambiguous scene of Judas discussing his betrayal, included on the Walters-Cluny diptych and all of the Picard Passion ivories, is here omitted. The Soissons diptych shows the High Priest standing with his back to the frame, holding an elaborate money lender’s bag—the detail of the extra side pouches for different currencies hanging from the sides of the purse were unmistakable for the thirteenth-century viewer. 25 He gives the silver to Judas, who receives the coins in his left hand. With his right arm Judas reaches over his left shoulder and points to the Arrest depicted under the next arch. Although less emphatic than the gesticulating figures that signaled the beginning of a narrative in the Picard diptychs, Judas’s pointing hand clearly fulfills the same function. The Berlin diptych artisan chose a different composition for the scene of Judas’s Betrayal, one that gives no indication of narrative direction. Judas is shown in profile with his back against the first column, while

25 See for example an extant example from Bruges (Fig. 6-3) (Bruges, Stadsarcheif, cat. 152).
the high priest stands opposite delivering the thirty pieces of silver. The High Priest’s arms are open wide and conspicuously held in a circle. Although it may seem like a small detail, this is one of the compositional changes that strongly suggests there was a lost intermediary that the Soissons and Berlin artisans independently emulated. It seems extremely unlikely that if the Soissons carver or iconographer were following the Berlin diptych he would have reverted to the Picard convention autonomously.

The Arrest, when compared to the Walters-Cluny and Picard precedents, is dramatically scaled down and simplified. Judas and Jesus are shown, flanked on either side by a menacing soldier for a total of four rather than eight figures. The arrangements of the figures in both the Soissons and Berlin diptychs are innovative accommodations to the abbreviated architectural space. Given the clearly delineated niches in the Berlin diptych, the Berlin carver chose to extend his composition vertically rather than laterally: the soldier to the left reaches over Judas’s head to violently grab Christ’s hair and the bald soldier to the right stands on tip-toe—balancing himself on the restricting column itself—to leverage a blow onto Jesus’ head. The Soissons artist, having more freedom to extend his composition horizontally, accommodated the soldier to the right by squeezing him under the springing of the arch. Crouched down and leering up into Christ’s face, this soldier seems eminently more threatening than the balletic soldier on the Berlin diptych. Such innovative solutions to the particular compositional difficulties of each diptych are manifested in almost every episode portrayed on the Soissons and Berlin diptychs. Richly detailed interpersonal interaction and carefully calculated bodily presence in space are features that enliven the carvings, drawing the viewer into the representational space in order to imaginatively flesh out the abbreviated episodes.
The last scene on the bottom register of the left leaf is Judas’s suicide. The conflation of the first two scenes of Judas’s betrayal allows the Judas cycle to be confined to one three-arched field rather than extending across the gutter to the next panel as on the Picard ivories and presumably on the Walters-Cluny diptych (Fig. 6–1). Limiting the Judas cycle to one clearly defined unit of narrative space gives the Soissons and Berlin ivories a tighter thematic organization.

The right portion of the bottom register comprises three scenes. On both the Soissons and the Berlin diptych it is the only place where the one episode per arch rule is broken, though the significance of this is hard to discern. Christ led into the forecourt of Pilate occupies the first arch. On the Soissons diptych, the movement and momentum are represented through the second soldier already inhabiting the next niche where Pilate washes his hands. The implied translocation and the overlapping of figures successfully communicate the sense of motion essential to the iconography. The Berlin diptych, however, compresses these two episodes in one and a half arches to accommodate an extra mysterious figure. Christ is led—more submissively, as the rope around his neck reveals—towards the forecourt of Pilate. The young boy who helps Pilate wash his hands reaches across the column delineating the two niches. The boy holds one end of the towel with which Pilate, standing in the second niche, dries his hands. Pilate only occupies one third of the space with the other two thirds being occupied by a tall soldier holding a battle-axe in his right hand and Christ’s garments in his left. The soldier is

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26 James Marrow notes that the particular iconography of the rope around Christ’s neck refers to Isaiah 53:7: “He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and shall be dumb as a lamb before his shearer, and he shall not open his mouth.” This passage was already held to refer to Christ’s Passion in Acts 8: 32–35 and was recited as the Epistle for the Mass on Wednesday of Holy Week. James Marrow, Passion Iconography in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance: A Study of the Transformation of Sacred Metaphor into Descriptive Narrative (Kortrijk: Van Ghemmert, 1979), 96–99.
turned to observe Jesus being whipped by two soldiers in the next space, thus making him part of the Flagellation scene. Although there is no explicit evidence for this figure in the Gospels, popular commentaries, vernacular elaborations, or in any apocrypha, the answer as to why he is included on the Berlin diptych lies in another unusual aspect of the Berlin Flagellation: Christ’s nakedness. At the very latest by the fourteenth century, it was generally accepted that Christ was stripped before the Flagellation. The third soldier, holding garments stripped from Christ’s body only moments before, forces the viewer to reenact an additional scene from Christ’s Passion in his or her mind.

The narrative continues, following the boustrophedon pattern, directly above the Flagellation at the far right of the middle register. In both the Berlin and Soissons diptychs, the Carrying of the Cross begins the second register. The soldier who accompanies Christ holds a hammer, which clearly anticipates the nailing of Christ’s hands and feet to the Cross. Again, this minute detail prompts the viewer to complete the narrative between one scene and the next, imaginatively creating a smooth segue between discrete episodes.

27 Schiller notes that observers at the Flagellation became common in fourteenth-century Italy following Duccio’s Maestà. These were meant to represent the Jews, whom Pilate wished to placate with a brutal flagellation rather than the Crucifixion. As the observing figure seems to be a Roman soldier, this interpretation does not readily inform the unknown figure on the Berlin diptych. Schiller, Iconography, vol. 2, 68.
29 Although the text of the Holkham Bible does not refer to the stripping, the Meditationes vitae Christi, circa 1350, describes it directly: “The Lord is therefore stripped and bound to a column and scourged in various ways. He stands naked before them all, in youthful grace and shamefacedness, beautiful in form above the sons of men, and sustains the harsh and grievous scourges on His innocent, tender, pure, and lovely flesh.” Isa Ragusa and Rosalie B. Green, ed. and trans., Meditations on the Life of Christ: An Illustrated Manuscript of the Fourteenth Century (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), 328. For the new, mid-fourteenth century date of the Meditationes, see Holly Flora and Arianna Pecorini Cignoni, “Requirements of Devout Contemplation: Text and Image for the Poor Clares in Trecento Pisa,” Gesta 45 (2006): 61–76.
30 The stripping of Christ before the Flagellation is explicitly depicted on a ivory polyptych in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 17.190.205 (Fig. 6–4).
The Crucifixion occupies the central bay on the right panel and is quite abbreviated on the Soissons and Berlin diptychs when compared to the Picard and Walters-Cluny ivories. In the Soissons and Berlin examples, Christ on the Cross clearly dominates the centre of the scene, flanked by the two thieves strapped to their shorter crosses. The Good Thief to Christ’s right looks up into his Savior’s face, representing his words of conversion and affirmation of Jesus’ divinity. The Bad Thief manifests his rejection and disbelief by turning his face away and averting his gaze. Even without the addition of props or attributes, the succinct composition the Soissons and Berlin carvers chose evokes through the characters’ expressive countenances a deeper comprehension of the Passion story. Although the compelling images of Longinus, Stephaton, and Mary’s compassio have been omitted, the artists exploit the narrative potential of the two figures that remain.

The Deposition, with Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus, Mary and John the Evangelist, is compressed under one arch in both the Soissons and Berlin diptychs. In the Berlin diptych, the lithe figures share the space more comfortably and John, with his arm around the column to the right, seems to be just stepping into the scene. On the Soissons diptych, the more corpulent figures are uncomfortably confined: there are no voids between them and each character presses against the body of Christ. The result is not so much claustrophobic as an exceedingly intimate experience of the Deposition.

Continuing across the gutter of the diptych to the next panel, the Entombment follows the Deposition. Also constricted under one arch, the tomb is extremely attenuated and the horizontally laid body of Christ is shortened accordingly. Only Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus and another apostle attend to the anointment of Christ’s body.
The following scene, the Resurrection, is unique to these two diptychs among the “Soissons” group. The mystery of the precise moment of Jesus’ Resurrection was not described in the Gospels, as the narrative is limited to the events witnessed by the apostles and disciples. As early as the fourth century, however, visual forays were made into the unreported realm, perhaps inspired by Apocryphal gospels. The iconographic tradition to which the Resurrection on the Berlin and Soissons diptychs belongs, in which Christ is shown stepping out of his sarcophagus-like tomb on his own accord, was developed in the eleventh century in northern Europe. By the thirteenth century this iconography had entered the standard repertoire of Passion iconography in northern France. On the Berlin diptych, Christ is shown vigorously stepping out of his tomb, his right leg raised perpendicular to his body to climb out. His body is vividly animated by the strong contrapposto needed to swing his limb over the edge of the sarcophagus. He holds the cross-staff in his left hand and with his right gestures to the viewer with a sign of blessing. This is a vigorous and active resurrected Christ. The three soldiers, unconscious “as dead men” from the shock of the Resurrection, lie in front of the tomb. On the Soissons diptych Christ is slightly less spirited, sitting on the edge of the tomb and swinging his legs over the edge, using his cross-staff for leverage—the force of this flexes his well-defined biceps. Christ again looks out to the viewer, making eye contact and opening his right hand in blessing. Christ’s shroud has fallen away from his waist,

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31 Schiller notes that the Pseudo-Gospel of Peter (circa 150 A.D.) was a source for some of the early Resurrection imagery. Schiller, *Ikonographie*, vol. 3, 71. The ivory plaque now in Munich, Bayerisches Nationalmuseum (MA. 157; circa 400) is one such early representation where Christ is aided in his ascent by the hand of God the father (Fig. 6–5). Wolfgang Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten der Spätantik und des frühen Mittelalters* (Mainz: Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum, 1952), no. 110; Danielle Gaborit-Chopin, *Ivoires du Moyen Age* (Fribourg: Office du livre, 1978), no. 15.


33 Matthew 28:4.
revealing his groin and this tantalizing detail forces the viewer to contemplate the theological implications of the Resurrection of all of Jesus’ humanity.  

The closing scene of the central register is the Harrowing of Hell. The Soissons diptych presents a diminutive Hell-mouth from which an eager-looking Adam and Eve emerge with the help of the triumphant Christ. For purchase, Christ leans on his cross-staff with his left arm and hoists Adam from the gaping maw as the flames of damnation lick his derrière. On the Berlin diptych, this episode is depicted in far more unconventional terms: Eve, shown from behind, has already stepped one foot out of the Hell-mouth and, with her weight on this leg, reaches up with her hands pressed in prayer and head thrown back to gaze at her Savior. The twist this movement necessitates is communicated realistically through her clearly articulated spine and her curly locks dangling over her right shoulder. Christ, however, pays little attention to the dance-like petition of Eve, but rather concentrates his efforts fully on Adam, making strong eye contact with him and grasping his hand over Eve’s head. Is Eve praying for forgiveness or in thanksgiving for salvation already received? Does Christ heed her supplication? Upon closer inspection, as Christ grasps Adam’s hand he also pushes Eve’s shoulder, giving her the last bit of momentum to fully exit the mouth of Hell. The highly detailed visual structure only gradually unfolds with close looking and long inspection. To fully decipher the scene the viewer must actively participate in reconstructing the logic of such minutiae as glances and tensed muscles. The level of detail very successfully engages the viewer in an active and imaginative reconstruction of the sacred narrative.

Unlike the Picard ivories, the Harrowing of Hell is not the last scene on the Soissons-Berlin type diptychs. As discussed with regard to the Walters-Cluny diptych, changing the ending alters the narrative arc and sense of the narrative as a whole. Humanity’s salvation from death is not the ultimate culmination of the narrative: it is only the mid-point. The six scenes on the top register of the Soissons and Berlin diptychs explore the relationship that can exist between humans and Christ after the Resurrection, the contours of which are as appropriate for the apostles as they are for the thirteenth-century Christian using the diptych in private devotions. The commentary on seeing and not seeing Christ provided by the six scenes across the top of the Soissons and Berlin diptychs outlines the ways one can believe in Christ without having known him in the flesh.

Directly above the Harrowing of Hell is the representation of the Three Women at the Tomb. The Berlin diptych depicts the angel sitting on the edge of the sepulcher, holding an ornate staff in his right hand and pointing into the empty tomb with his left. The three women fill the rest of the composition and their stances express a variety of states of fear and mourning: the woman to the far left crouches to examine the interior of the tomb; the middle woman stares agape at the angel, cradling her cheek in her hand, seemingly confused by the situation; the woman closest to the angel in fact almost does not heed him at all. She stands facing the viewer frontally, her hand on her chest expressing reverence and sorrow at the empty tomb. By contrast, on the Soissons diptych, a very merry angel sits to the left of the composition, straddling the sepulcher. He points down, in between his legs, into the empty tomb with his left hand, embodying his words:
“He is risen, he is not here, behold the place where they laid him.”35 With his right hand, the angel plays with the thong securing his mantle and gazes upwards, presumably towards heaven. Again the three women embody a variety of reactions to the angel’s news. The one closest to the angel, whose profile face is the only part visible, gazes at him beseechingly. The woman to the far left is bent double, nearly falling into the empty tomb, searching for her Lord. The middle woman faces directly out to the viewer, her right hand raised in the classical gesture of astonishment while she holds the funeral shroud in the crook of her arm. Her direct gaze, which addresses the viewer explicitly, implores us to join the women in contemplation of the empty tomb. These two women, one on the Soissons and one on the Berlin diptych, embody the message brought by the angel: tell the disciples that Christ is risen and that they should go to Galilee to await his return36—and implicate the viewer in this message. The viewer is thus cast as an apostle also receiving the good news, coming to terms with the Resurrection, and preparing him or herself for the second coming. Just as the prominently pointing hands in the scenes of Judas’s betrayal signaled to the viewer that the narrative began at that point, the women addressing the viewer inform him or her that at this point the narrative involves them personally. It is as if the narrator of the Soissons-Berlin–type diptych suddenly shifted from a third-person narrative to a second-person address.

On the Soissons diptych, in order to fit all figures under one arcade at the Visit to the Tomb, the rear of the stooped woman protrudes into the next scene, the Noli me tangere, abutting the figure of Mary Magdalene. Could this stooped woman also be the Magdalene? She is, after all, the only one of the three women to carry the Magdalene’s

traditional attribute of the jar of ointment,37 and Mary Magdalene is the only woman mentioned at the tomb in all four Gospels. If so, the sense of movement and speed this composition conveys is incredibly poignant. She has seemingly pivoted on her heel and quickly sunk to her knees. This movement, in fact, is reflected in the text of John’s Gospel: “They [the angels] say to her: Woman, why do you weep? She said to them: Because they have taken away my Lord; and I know not where they have laid him. When she had thus said, she turned herself back (conversa est retrorsum), and saw Jesus standing.”38 The close repetition and overlapping forms of the two women would be an apt representation of the surprise and shock the Magdalene must have felt at the appearance of her departed teacher.

In the Noli me tangere on the Soissons diptych, Mary’s compact and contained form is perfectly framed and delineated by Christ’s body. He stands, leaning slightly forward and raising his right hand in blessing over Mary’s head. His left arm, held close to his body to catch the hem of his tunic in the crook of his elbow, places his open palm a hair’s breadth away from Mary’s praying hands. Christ’s hand nearly grazes Mary’s little finger. Such intimacy and familiarity exist in direct contradiction and tension with the words Christ utters: Noli me tangere, touch me not.39 The Berlin diptych’s representation of Christ’s appearance to the Magdalene could not be more different: here a large overgrown tree fills the space between the Magdalene and her Lord. The representation of a tree itself refers to a strain of exegesis that likened the repentant sinner, Mary

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38 “Dicunt ei illi mulier quid ploras dicit eis quia tulerunt Dominum meum et nescio ubi posuerunt eum. Haec cum dixisset conversa est retrorsum et videt lesum stantem.” John 20: 13–14, my emphasis. In John’s Gospel, Mary Magdalene is the only woman present at the tomb; Peter and the apostle whom Jesus loved (John) have just left. There are two angels in John’s version.
Magdalene, with the first sinner, Eve, who from a tree brought sin to mankind. It is only fitting that Mary Magdalene, equally a sinner, should bring man knowledge of redemption, “from” a tree. The Magdalene’s flowing long hair—a persistent attribute of female sinners throughout the Middle Ages—furthers the parallel between Eve and the Magdalene. The verdant obstacle offers no opportunity for Mary to touch Christ, further juxtaposing the plucking of the fruit with sin and restraint with salvation. The conflicting tension created in the Soissons composition is, therefore, completely lacking on the Berlin diptych. The immediate experience of the Magdalene is allegorized and placed within the context of the history of salvation itself.

The next scene on the top register represents Jesus Appearing before the three Women. Both diptychs show the three women clustered to the left and Christ standing to the right. Christ holds a cross-staff in one hand, and with his other he offers a sign of greeting and blessing to the women, embodying what he said in the Gospel account, “All hail.” It must be this exact moment that is depicted, as Matthew recounts that once the women recognized their teacher, they “took hold of his feet and adored him.” The Soissons diptych shows the woman in the foreground raising both hands with her palms facing forward, a sign of reception and acknowledgement. The women’s ability to touch Christ, while Mary Magdalene was forbidden to touch her teacher, was understood in exegetical texts to be due to the fact that while Mary Magdalene only believed in Christ’s

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40 This parallel is explicitly mentioned in the Glossa Ordinaria commentary on the Noli me tangere episode, though specifically on her role as apostola apostolorum: “Venit Maria Magdalene annuntians discipulis, quia vidit Dominum, etc. Ibi culpa abscinditur undet processit. Mulier mortem viro propinavit, modo mulier vitam nuntiat viris, et quae tunc verba serpentis modo narrat verba vivificatoris, ac si ipsis rebus dicat Deus: De qua manu illatus est potus mortis, de ipsa suscipite potum vitae.” Migne PL 114.423b.
42 Matthew 28: 9.
43 Matthew 28: 9.
Resurrection insofar as he was human, the three women believed in his divinity.\textsuperscript{44} The woman in the background of the Soissons diptych, however, wears a pinched and pensive look on her face. She seems to be carefully assessing the incredible situation and is slow to offer her acceptance of the miracle. The variety of facial expressions explicitly addresses the phenomenon of the dawning of faith, rather than static conviction.

The Incredulity of Thomas, a scene popular on Carolingian, Ottonian and Romanesque ivories, is extremely rare on Gothic ivories,\textsuperscript{45} and only ivories closely related to the Soissons-Berlin type diptychs represent this episode.\textsuperscript{46} John is the only Gospel that relates this episode and it is worth reproducing the original text as it contains an interesting ambiguity:

Now Thomas, one of the twelve, who is called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him: We have seen the Lord. But he said to them: Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said: Peace be to you. Then he said to Thomas: Put in thy finger hither, and see my hands; and bring hither thy hand, and put it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing.

\textsuperscript{44} “Et tenuerunt. Superius dictum est clauso exisse monumento, ut immortale corpus intelligeres: hic tenentur pedes, ut veram carnem comprobes. Et quia tantam visionem tremebant, primum pellit timor: Nolite timere, ut mente placida possint audire quae dicuntur. Istae tenent pedes quae adorant resuscitatum: sed illa quae nesciebat adhuc resurrexisse Filium Dei, audit merito: Noli me tangere, nondum enim ascendit ad Patrem meum (Joan XX).” Migne \textit{PL} 114.177d–178a. See also Deshman, “Disappearing Christ,” 537.


\textsuperscript{46} St. Louis, St. Louis Art Museum. 123:1928; London, British Museum (Dalton 281).
Thomas answered, and said to him: My Lord, and my God. Jesus said to him:

Because thou hast seen me, Thomas, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed.\(^{47}\)

Thomas, in his moment of disbelief, states that he will not accept the Resurrection of Christ until he puts his finger into the holes in Jesus’ hands and his side. When Christ finally does appear before Thomas, the Lord offers him just this opportunity. The text, however, does not relate whether or not Thomas actually touched the Lord’s wounds. It only recounts that Thomas responded to him immediately with credence. Did Thomas put his fingers in the wounds? Jesus only says, “Because you have seen me, Thomas,” not “Because you have touched me, Thomas.” When the text is closely examined, one cannot arrive at a conclusive answer.\(^{48}\) Yet the iconographic tradition consistently depicts Thomas inserting his hands into the wounds of Christ. What is of particular interest for the discussion of the Soissons and Berlin diptychs is that the latter chooses to follow the


\(^{48}\) The *Glossa Ordinaria* in fact highlighted this ambiguity, but decided that “seeing” is a general word for all of the senses and could denote touching: “*Quia vidisti me, Thoma, credidisti*. Non ait tetigisti, sed vidisti: quia visus quodam modo generalis sensus est qui de alii quatuor dici solet. Forsitan non fuit ausus tangere; sed aspiciendo tantum, seu etiam tangendo credit.” Migne *PL* 114.424a. The *Historia Scholastica* more strongly states that in this case seeing means touching, Migne *PL* 198.1641d–42a. More recent biblical scholarship still argues this point. Glenn Most is strongly in favor of the interpretation that Thomas did not touch Christ’s wounds. Glenn Most, *Doubting Thomas* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 57–62. The opposite view is maintained, however, by Alexander Murray, *Doubting Thomas in Medieval Exegesis and Art* (Rome: Unione Internazionale degli Istituti di Archeologia, Storia e Storica dell’arte in Roma, 2006). Interestingly, it seems to me, Murray came to his conclusion more on account of the iconographic tradition than from textual analysis.
literal reading of the biblical text and the former the iconographic tradition that consistently does show Thomas touching Christ’s side.\textsuperscript{49}

The Berlin diptych represents Christ standing to the right of the composition as he grasps his cross-staff in his left hand. He is dressed only in a cloth loosely wrapped around his hips and draped over his left arm. Christ’s naked and muscular torso emphatically proclaims his very real and fleshy body. His right arm, bent at the elbow, is shifted away from his torso to reveal the side wound. Although this may at one time have been indicated by paint, today there is no evidence of the wound. The apostle Thomas genuflects before Christ at the left side of the niche and supports his crouched position with his left hand pressed to his knee. His right arm is fully extended, and his index finger points firmly towards the place where Jesus’ side wound must be. His finger does not touch but is in fact millimeters away from Christ’s resurrected flesh, a fact emphasized by the carver who completely undercut Thomas’s right hand so that it hovers above Christ’s arm, not actually touching it. Thomas’s expression is of deep concentration and his gaze is firmly directed towards the telling wound. Jesus, however, looks down at Thomas with an enigmatic smile. This smile softens the harsh words of the Gospel, “Blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed” (John 20: 29), and lovingly accepts the human weakness Thomas has displayed through his incredulity. A third figure, presumably another apostle, observes the scene from the background.

The composition of Doubting Thomas on the Soissons diptych diverges in several ways from the Berlin version. Although it may seem like a small adjustment, the observing apostle, instead of standing in the background, stands in the foreground on the

same plane as Thomas and Christ, thereby compressing the space between the two protagonists and creating a greater sense of intimacy in the scene. Jesus stands to the right of the niche and is garbed only in a cloth simply folded around his waist and tenuously held in place by being draped over the crook of his left arm. The palm of Christ’s left hand is held open in a gesture of greeting and blessing and in his right hand he holds a tall cross-staff, grasping its shaft towards the top so that he may reach his arm up and over the head of Thomas, almost encompassing him in his embrace. Thomas, down on both knees at his master’s feet, reaches directly up with his body almost parallel to Christ’s. At Thomas’s shoulder the angle gradually lessens, bringing Thomas’s hand directly over Jesus’ chest: Thomas’s index finger is vigorously extended, pointing up to Christ’s chest wound. The composition not only allows Thomas’s finger to touch the wound, but for his whole hand to lie on Christ’s resurrected flesh.

That the Soissons and Berlin carvers have chosen such radically different interpretations of the Doubting Thomas scene augments the different depictions of the *Noli me tangere*, where the Berlin carver also chose a version that privileges the act of not touching while the Soissons diptych problematizes the negative injunction by showing Christ himself almost touching the Magdalene. The effect that these divergent representations have on the post-Resurrection program as a whole will be fully analyzed after a brief discussion of the last two scenes on the Soissons and Berlin diptych, the Ascension and the Pentecost.

The Ascension is briefly mentioned at the end of the Gospels of Mark and Luke, but the Acts of the Apostles presents a much longer account.⁵⁰ Pentecost, or the Descent

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of the Holy Spirit, is described exclusively in Acts.\textsuperscript{51} Both of the diptychs follow a very traditional iconography for these two episodes marking the end of Christ’s physical life on earth. For the Ascension, apostles are shown looking towards the sky with their hands raised in awe and in prayer. Christ’s feet—encased in clouds on the Soissons diptych—are shown suspended in mid-air from the upper portion of the trefoil arch.\textsuperscript{52} The Berlin diptych has managed to represent four apostles in two planes while only two apostles fill the space on the Soissons diptych. The Pentecost receives an equally standard depiction: a group of three apostles sits looking up to the heavens. They see not the flames described in the biblical text, but a dove descending from heaven. The dove as symbol of the Holy Spirit derives from the evangelists themselves, as the Holy Spirit who descended at Christ’s Baptism is described “as a dove.”\textsuperscript{53}

All of the scenes depicted on the top register of the Soissons-Berlin–type diptychs thematize sight and belief in the post-Resurrection world. In the Walters-Cluny diptych the addition of the \textit{Noli me tangere} introduced this motif into the Passion cycle. The presence of the one post-Resurrection scene reflected the reception of the whole Passion cycle: the contrast between bodily sight and spiritual sight stimulates viewers to approach the representations of Christ’s Passion “spiritually,” that is, allegorically. Just as Christ’s human nature veiled his divine nature, therefore, so too do the short-hand iconographic symbols veil a spiritual, mystical, or theological reading. In the Walters-Cluny diptych, the \textit{Noli me tangere} cues the viewer to see beyond the represented images to engage with

\textsuperscript{51} Acts 2: 1–4 recounts the Descent of the Spirit itself, while the rest of the chapter is concerned with the events immediately follow (the speaking in tongues and Peter’s resulting sermon).

\textsuperscript{52} The so-called “disappearing Christ” iconography that Deshman discussed in his article on post-Resurrection iconography. The choice to include particularly this version of the Ascension on the Soissons-Berlin type diptychs, although fairly common by the thirteenth century, nevertheless further supports our borrowing of Deshman’s reading for these objects.

\textsuperscript{53} Matthew 3: 16; Mark 1: 10; Luke 3: 22; John 1: 32.
the deeper meaning of the events depicted. Although this reading certainly holds in the Soissons-Berlin–type diptychs, the proliferation of post-Resurrection episodes demands a deeper engagement with the themes of seeing, touching, and believing. The arrangement of these scenes follows the sequential order of the Gospel texts and additionally offers a progression through the various levels of interaction and belief that the apostles enjoyed after Christ’s Resurrection. These scenes offer a sort of spiritual manual for the thirteenth-century Christian on the nature of faith. The post-Resurrection narrative conveys the message “Blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed.”

The Three Women at the Tomb begin this progression. They did not see the risen Christ, only the angel and the empty tomb. The angel tells them that “Jesus who was crucified,” i.e., the human Christ, has risen and is no longer there. The women believe the angel and go to tell the apostles (and implicitly the viewer as well). Their belief is, therefore, in the risen human Jesus, not in his divine nature. Mary Magdalen at the Noli me tangere, the next scene, is able to see Christ but not touch him, because, as the commentary suggests, she believed only in the resurrection of Christ’s humanity, not his divinity. Her experience is superior to that of the three women in that she has been privileged to behold the Resurrected flesh, but her faith is again limited to the flesh-and-blood Jesus having returned, not his divine presence. When Christ appeared to the three women on the road, however, since they already believed in the resurrected human Christ when the angel told them, they were prepared to believe that Jesus was in fact the Christ. Their dawning belief in his divinity is emphasized by the Berlin and Soissons

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54 John 20: 29.
iconographies. The different states of conviction shown on the faces of the women make the subject of the episode actually the process and experience of epiphany.

Thomas, not having witnessed Christ’s first post-Resurrection appearance to the apostles, initially refused to believe in both the fleshly resurrection and Christ’s divinity. When confronted with both the presence of Jesus and the command to touch his victorious wounds, Thomas proclaimed his faith not only in Jesus’ resurrection from the dead, but also his divinity: “My Lord and my God.” In order to experience the same level of faith, the other apostles needed first to have Christ’s humanity taken from them at the Ascension. The particular representation of the “Disappearing Christ” emphasizes the dual nature of Christ: Jesus’ feet are the only body parts seen, which symbolize his earthly existence, while his head, representing of his divinity, is not visible to the assembled apostles.56 It is only with the arrival of the Holy Spirit, depicted on the Berlin and Soissons diptychs in the form of a dove, that every apostle’s complete faith in the dual nature of Christ, both fully human and fully divine, is born.

Christians of the post-apostolic world—the thirteenth-century viewer among them—live in the post-Pentecostal world, where faith in the dual nature of Jesus the Lord is possible even if not easily attained. Jesus said to Thomas after his epiphany: “Because you have seen me, Thomas, you have believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed.”57 In other words, blessed are the post-apostolic Christians who believe both in the human life of Jesus as well as in his divine nature without having seen with their bodily eyes the resurrected Christ. By presenting various moments of recognition, belief, and conversion on the top register of the Soissons and Berlin diptychs, the viewer

56 Deshman, “Disappearing Christ,” 534.
57 John 20:29.
is given both positive and negative models for emulation while being reminded that his or her faith is more estimable because of the lack of physical validation by actual interaction with the Resurrected Christ.

Thus the Soissons and Berlin diptychs offer viewers the Gospel narratives of the Passion and the post-Resurrection cycle of Christ. The post-Resurrection cycle is chosen to present a developmental paradigm of belief in the dual nature of Christ that aided the thirteenth-century viewer to cement his or her faith in both the human and divine aspects of Christ’s mission on earth. A further mode of reading presents itself when considering the formal properties of the diptychs, the efficacy of which is considered in the following section where the augmented devotional potential of the Soissons-Berlin–type diptychs over the imperfect Walters-Cluny model is examined.

3. The Soissons and Berlin Diptychs: Matrices for Initiating Prayer

In order to consider the efficacy of the Soissons-Berlin–type diptychs in the practice of spiritual exercises and in private prayer, the *triplex ratio* and the criteria for successful prayer tools will be invoked one last time. Images, the *triplex ratio* stated, should help the faithful in three ways: as reading does, the images should teach the basic narratives of the Gospels and help powers of concentration and meditation; they should encourage the memorization of biblical exegesis and interpretation; and finally they should elicit an emotional response in the viewer that readies the soul as well as the mind for prayer.

The Soissons-Berlin–type diptych offers several improvements over the Walters-Cluny diptych in the first. The detailed carving, rich narrative detail, and minute
variations from the standard iconography presented on the Soissons and Berlin diptychs masterfully encourage absorbed attention. The emblematic nature of the one-episode-per-arch formula, which limited the impact of the Walters-Cluny diptych, is maximized by focusing on transitional moments that effectively force the viewer’s mind to complete past and future details. Hence, the hammer held by the soldier in the Carrying of the Cross on both the Soissons and Berlin diptychs completes the narrative between this scene and the next, the Crucifixion, by encouraging the viewer to imagine the nailing of Christ to the Cross and the raising of the Cross in his or her mind’s eye. Similarly, the depiction of Christ’s appearance to the three women on the top register where each of the women manifests a different level of conviction demonstrates the process of conversion to believing in the fully human and divine Christ. That the women are shown standing rather than kneeling and touching Christ’s feet motivates the viewer to imaginatively complete the Gospel narrative. Even with scenes that do not inspire this diachronic reading, the Soissons and Berlin carvers imbued the episodes with many compositional details that arrest the viewer’s attention. The careful regard given to Christ’s magnificent body at the Resurrection in both the Berlin and Soissons diptych—very different and innovative in each—draws the viewer into the moment represented. The Soissons-Berlin-type is much more successful than the Walters-Cluny diptych at relating the full Gospel narrative, even if some of that narration is completed by the viewer.

The Walters-Cluny diptych introduced the Noli me tangere episode and thus encouraged the viewer to see the balance of the diptych with both “bodily” and “spiritual” eyes. In other words, the subject of the Noli me tangere influenced the interpretation of the rest of the scenes on the diptych. The viewer was urged to adopt
allegorical readings of each of the scenes in addition to the literal readings. This hermeneutic paradigm emphasized that there was a deeper significance to every episode on the diptych and not just those that presented challenging iconography, as on the Picard Passion diptychs. Every scene on the diptych became, therefore, a potential locus for attaching a complex catena of exegetical thought. This exegetical content could later be used when the same episode has initiated prayer in the reader’s mind and soul. The Soissons-Berlin–type furthers this interpretive system. The post-Resurrection narrative has been expanded from the *Noli me tangere* to a whole third of the diptych, strengthening the lesson of spiritual versus bodily seeing. The user of the Soissons-Berlin–type diptych can attach a chain of exegetical thought to each scene presented. Furthermore, because each episode has been contained to one arch, the Soissons-Berlin–type accommodates four more scenes than the Walters-Cluny diptych and this offers four more loci for anchoring the viewer’s memorization efforts. Finally, the clear geometrical grid that this one-to-one correspondence creates is a more organized memory “machine” for storing and accessing information. This matrix is an intelligible format for the memorization work that is necessary to prepare for prayer composition.

The third preparatory exercise for prayer is the soliciting of emotional conversion called compunction. This mode is not overly emphasized on the Soissons-Berlin–type diptychs, though many of the brutal scenes of the Passion do elicit compassion and sorrow in the viewer. The scenes on the Picard and Walters-Cluny diptychs that especially stimulated the viewer to reflect on his or her own sins—the extensive Judas cycle and the contemporary characters at the Harrowing of Hell—have been decreased or eliminated, respectively. As with the Vatican diptych, the diminished prominence of
compunction should not be seen as a denigration of its value as an essential step in preparing the soul for prayer. Rather, it should be interpreted as the result of the choice the Soissons-Berlin–type designer made in programming the diptych format. In order to keep each scene to one register the heavily populated Hell-mouth had to be simplified. The same logic applies to the reduction of the Judas cycle. In order to keep the tale of Judas’s betrayal to one leaf’s register, the cycle had to be compressed to three scenes from four. Though this offers the viewer less “space” to contemplate his or her own contemporary betrayals, it provides room for an extra post-Resurrection narrative scene to be added at the end of the diptych, which in turn allows the viewer to develop a whole different chain of meditative content more useful in actual prayer itself.

The two criteria for effective tools for prayer, identified by analyzing Anselm’s instructions for the use of his written prayer exemplars, are (1) that it is successful at inspiring the user to compose his or her own prayers and (2) that once a path of prayer has been exhausted, the tool quickly re-inspires the user back into a prayerful state. The Soissons and Berlin diptychs both successfully accomplish these criteria. Each discrete episode has the ability to initiate prayer, especially if the user has dutifully constructed sufficient memory stores associated with each of the clearly defined scenes. The depth of detail, praised above for enabling prolonged meditation and concentration, is also an efficient trigger for, in the words of Anselm, “stirring up the spirit to pray.”

Furthermore, the generic and emblematic iconography of each scene does not privilege any scene above the others, thereby allowing each episode to be as compelling as the next for prayer. Leveling the symbolic value of each scene, rather than elevating three or four,

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58 One sad little face can be discerned under the flames that lick Adam’s buttock on the Soissons diptych.
enables each episode equally to inspire the viewer to prayer. The engaging and inspiring compositions of the Soissons-Berlin–type diptychs efficaciously arouse prayer in the viewer’s heart while the uniform symbolic weight given to each episode multiplies the number of scenes that inspire the viewer.

In terms of re-engaging the viewer quickly when he or she finishes a path of prayer, the Soissons and Berlin diptychs are quite effective. The grid-like arrangement of the episodes, isolating each under one arch, is an orderly framework that permits the user quickly to find the spot where he or she left off. The self-evident structure recalls Anselm’s textual divisions: “the sections are divided into paragraphs, so that the reader can begin and leave off wherever he chooses.” The user can promptly resume the narrative where he or she left off, continuing his or her meditation until inspired again by the iconography to independent prayer. The innovation of the matrix arrangement emphasizes a non-sequential digestion of the narratives and analogous placement on either panel suggests a relationship between the scenes. The symmetrical position of the Resurrection and the Crucifixion on the center of the left and right plaques is an obvious juxtaposition; the brutal and ignominious death was necessary before the glorious and triumphant return. This duality is one of the central tenets of Christian faith and is an obvious correlation.60 The *Noli me tangere* is paired in a similar way with the Ascension, each scene occupying the central niche on the upper register. Given the exegetical history of both of these scenes, as outlined above, they jointly comment on the need for conversion away from the earthly Christ to the heavenly Christ. One or two “easy” or suggestive examples establish a pattern of potential correlation between the panels. The

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majority of paired scenes present juxtapositions whose logic is opaque and difficult to
discern. As noted above, this difficulty is precisely the aim of a successful devotional
object. It is a puzzle for the user to chew over, to unpack, to cogitate on. What exactly is
the relationship between the Arrest and Pilate Washing his Hands? Is it to highlight the
culpability in Christ’s death? Is it commentary upon who was at fault, the Romans or the
Jews? Why compare the Carrying of the Cross with the Harrowing of Hell? The burden
Christ carried was for the redemption of our sins and our salvation from death. Could the
reading be deeper than that? The “solutions” to the iconographic problems are not as
important as the process of prayerful thought that brings the viewer to that conclusion.
The process requires that the devotional user sort through his or her memorized
exegetical interpretations to find the allegorical parallel that reflects the compositional
parallel on the ivory. Suggesting that symmetrically displayed scenes present theological
analogies or fruitful juxtapositions incites the user of the diptych to find a synergetic
solution and this creative process is itself a form of prayer.

Like the Walters-Cluny diptych, the iconography on the Soissons-Berlin–type
diptych is not specific or arcane. Whereas the Picard diptychs seem to have been tailored
for an audience of educated churchmen who had privileged access to the Eucharist and
other sacraments, the Passion iconography on the Soissons and Berlin diptychs is generic
and universal. It is appropriate for all educated Christians, whatever their status as
religious or lay. The hypothetical model-copy transmission posited for the Walters-Cluny
diptych—namely, that an ecclesiastic commissioned the Walters-Cluny diptych after a
Picard diptych model for a spiritual ward, and that the alterations made were to enhance
their spiritual exercises—is applicable for the Soissons-Berlin–type diptychs. The main
iconographic amendment to the Soissons-Berlin diptych type was the elaboration of the post-Resurrection narrative from the single Noli me tangere to encompass most of the upper register. By focusing on the life of Christ’s disciples after the Resurrection, the Soissons-Berlin diptychs thematize the problem of knowing Christ without having enjoyed personal contact with the divine. Although an appropriate theme for contemplation by all Christians who live in the post-Ascension world, this may have been particularly compelling for devout Christians still living in the world, as it were, and not enjoying a life consecrated exclusively to prayer and meditation. This possibility notwithstanding, the intended ownership of the Soissons-Berlin diptychs cannot at this time be known. Yet, as suggested for the Walters-Cluny diptych, the fact that the iconography of the Soissons and Berlin diptychs is more universal bespeaks a dissemination of the tools for the spiritual exercises, and thus presumably of the exercises themselves, from an ecclesiastical elite to the broader population.

In summary, the Soissons-Berlin–type diptych is the most versatile devotional tool of all of the ivories examined in this study. The intricately wrought and compellingly detailed narratives instantly absorb the viewer and focus his or her attention. The eighteen scenes represent four more scenes than the Walter-Cluny diptych and six more than the Picard Passion diptychs; and each extra scene offers an additional locus for meditative memorization and extra instigation for prayer. The emblematic compositions, simplified to be contained under one arch, do not prescribe a single exegetical path that must be taken. The viewer is free to attach whichever interpretative stance he or she wishes to each of the canonical scenes. This makes the Soissons-Berlin–type diptych a more flexible tool for prayer appropriate for a wide variety of audiences.
The iconography, composition and devotional function of the seven diptychs of the Picard and Parisian groups have revealed that the innovative form of the ivory diptych, presumably introduced with the Hermitage diptych, enjoyed great success as a devotional tool. Based on the iconography and on the minimal provenance evidence available, I have suggested that the Picard ivories were intended for ecclesiastical users. None of the limiting characteristics are preserved on the Parisian diptychs, thus suggesting that a broader audience, perhaps even a lay one, was intended for these three diptychs. The following chapter considers this information in concert with the stylistic analysis from Chapter 3 and the economic information from Chapter 1 to suggest for whom the various diptychs might have been intended, who commissioned them, and what the commissioner’s relationship was with the Picard Master and the three Parisian carvers. Combining the conclusions from the three sections of the study provides a surprisingly complete picture of the production and use of the “Soissons” diptychs.
Conclusion
A Historical Contextualization

The mention of thirteenth-century France typically conjures fleeting images of the high Gothic cathedrals of Amiens, Reims, and Beauvais. These monuments of stone were financed by the successful textile industries that transformed northern France in the thirteenth century, powered by the natural landscape. The Somme, the Oise and their tributaries not only provided power through mills and a stable water source for industrial processes, but the rivers also linked the cities to an expanding trade network that brought a steady supply of raw materials and developed an international export market for local products. Revenue from the export of textiles generated unprecedented capital in the region, underwriting a number of ecclesiastical building projects. The motivation to build these Gothic cathedrals came not primarily from the mercantile elite but from the Church. The new structures were intended as the visible manifestation of internal reform movements that sought to equate the Church, as pure and beneficent intercessor, with the Virgin Mary—hence the proliferation of dedications to Notre-Dame in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The same socio-economic forces that engendered the building of the great Rayonnant cathedrals lay behind another characteristic, though lesser-known, thirteenth-century product: the ivory diptych. The conclusions offered by the three modes of investigation performed in this work must now be considered together: the material and economic conditions that brought ivory to northern France in the second third of the

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2 Henry Kraus, *Gold was the Mortar: The Economics of Cathedral Building* (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979). Financial means were not the only factor contributing to the explosion of building in northern France in the thirteenth century. James identified the ready availability of high-quality limestone as the determining factor for building many thirteenth century structures. Many churches and cathedrals, however, were not built close to optimal limestone deposits and needed to ship the material from the quarry—a costly endeavor. See John James, “An Investigation into the Uneven Distribution of Early Gothic Churches in the Paris Basin, 1140-1240,” *Art Bulletin* 66 (1984): 15–46.
thirteenth century; the stylistic localization and dating of the group; and finally the findings of the close iconographic reading of the diptychs and their re-contextualization as tools for enabling devotional practice in the thirteenth century. Combing these three viewpoints demonstrates that, like the contemporary Gothic cathedrals, the diptychs were the product of economic, social and religious factors that converged in mid-thirteenth-century northern France.

The Picard group of ivories originated in the city of Amiens, although given the diffuse provenance information of the objects it is likely that the carver became an itinerant artisan, carrying his skills where needed. The ivory diptychs with scenes of the Passion were related to a number of ivory statuettes of the Virgin and Child (Figs. 3–7 and 3–8), which in turn were associated with the archivolt carvings of the central portal of the western façade of Amiens Cathedral (Fig. 3–12). Based on strong stylistic similarities, I propose that the two groups of ivory objects—the statuettes and the relief panels—were carved by the same hand, one of the sculptors at work on the limestone archivolt figures: the Picard Master. Can this precise localization of the production of the first object, the Hermitage diptych, in Amiens circa 1235 be correlated with the economic, iconographic and functional information garnered from the other chapters? The identities and roles of the commissioners, patrons or recipients of the diptychs can indeed be deduced, offering a hypothetical reconstruction of how the first diptychs came to be. Furthermore, the internal chronology of stylistic development within the group of ivories can also be mapped onto interpersonal relationships that encouraged the replication and modification of the Hermitage diptych throughout Picardy and in the French capital, Paris, over a span of thirty years.
The economic prosperity of medieval Amiens is well documented as a result of scholarship on the construction of the cathedral in the thirteenth century. Textile manufacture and dye processing were the main industries that established Amiens as the most prosperous town north of Paris. Both industries exploited Amiens’s natural geographic setting at the confluence of the Avre and Somme to develop water mills to power these industries. In the thirteenth century, Amiens was largely ruled by a commune. The citizens of Amiens had liberated themselves from their bellicose overlord, Count Enguerrand de Coucy, in the years 1113–17, with the instrumental help of the bishop and the king. Furthermore, between 1185 and 1223, Philip Augustus subsumed all of Picardy, including Amiens, under royal control. The monarchy, represented at Amiens by a bailiff, was concerned primarily with cases of high justice, while quotidian matters were the jurisdiction of the commune, an arrangement that engendered a high level of autonomy and entrepreneurship. Because of Amiens’s communal statute, the mercantile sectors of society enjoyed increased self-determination and prosperity that the bishop and the cathedral chapter were happy to support. For example, the two groups worked together on several municipal projects other than the cathedral, including the building of ports on the Somme. Some of the products imported at these ports included


5 Murray, Notre-Dame, Cathedral of Amiens, 24; Robert Fossier, Histoire de la Picardie (Toulouse: Privat, 1974), 170–75.

wool from England and Ponthieu for the looms of Amiens, as well as such foodstuffs as pepper, salt, fish, cereals, wine, honey, oil and apples. The deep blue dye from woad was a primary export: the rich fields around Amiens were ideal for the cultivation of the plant, and the newly installed water mills in the industrial suburbs to the north of Amiens facilitated the purification process to yield the dye. Woad dye was exported in great quantity, mostly to the other textile regions in northern Europe, England and Flanders, and also was used at home in local production; a fine woolen cloth known as *Miensa* or *Mensa* (“from Amiens”) was available at Italian markets in the twelfth century. An essential component in this dying process to help fabrics retain pigment was the fixative alum. This mineral, mined and refined around the Black Sea and in north Africa, allows non-fast dyes, such as red madder or yellow weld, to bond permanently with wool. It is one of the products recorded as being imported into the river ports of Amiens. As demonstrated in Chapter 1, the international market for alum pushed the Genoese merchants to brave a new shipping route; instead of bringing their freight overland through the Alps—the slowest and most expensive mode of transportation—the Genoese developed the route through the straits of Gibraltar, around Spain and the Bay of Gascony to the English Channel. The Genoese oar-powered galleys and the newly

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9 For example, an account from the Genoa archives from October 1, 1216: “Ego Gualterius de Besençono Confiteor me accepiisse a te Baldoine de Turre de Arraz petias XVIII pannorum de Mensa…” Renée Doejaerd, *Les relations commerciales entre Gênes, la Belgique et l’Outremont d’après les Archives notariales génoises aux XIIIe et XIVe siècles*, 5 vols. (Brussels: Palais des Académies, 1941), vol. 2, no. 370; Murray, *Notre-Dame, Cathedral of Amiens*, 22;
developed box compass facilitated this ambitious ocean voyage.\textsuperscript{11} The large ocean-going vessels were able to transport greater amounts of alum to northern Europe in addition to a select number of luxury items. I have proposed that ivory tusks were one of the luxury items that piggybacked on the new alum shipping routes. Therefore, Amiens’s connection through the waterways of the Somme to the international textile markets, to which the ivory trade was bound, offers economic substantiation for the stylistic argument that the Picard ivories originated in this town.

The commercial and economic circumstances at Amiens suggest how an ivory tusk could arrive at one of the river ports in the 1230s. But who bought the ivory? Who arranged for the carver working on the portal sculpture of the cathedral, the Picard Master, to carve it into a diptych with scenes of the Passion of Christ? Were the buyer and the commissioner the same person? Where did the commissioner, the \textit{conceputeur}, get the idea to make such an unusual object when there were no contemporary diptychs being made of wood or of precious metals? Based on evidence provided by the household accounts of the Queen of England, Eleanor of Provence, I calculated the relative price of ivory; in England in 1251 an average-sized tusk, weighing between 45–60 kg, would have cost between 16½ and 33 livres. For comparison, in the same year, one of the chaplains of Henry III, King of England, made 20 livres per annum,\textsuperscript{12} and 12 livres, 18 sous, and 4 deniers purchased an imported red samite cloak for the royal household.\textsuperscript{13} It is not possible to extrapolate from this data an exact price for an ivory tusk in Amiens twenty years earlier: it was a different country with a different currency. Several broader conclusions can nevertheless be drawn. Considering the exponential increase in the

\textsuperscript{11} See Chapter 1, 36–42.
\textsuperscript{12} See Chapter 1, 45.
\textsuperscript{13} Chapter 1, 47.
supply of ivory throughout these decades, a twenty-year difference presumably meant a higher price in the 1230s than the 1250s. Which Amiens citizens could have paid these almost prohibitively high prices in the 1230s? Although a crown territory since Philip Augustus gradually annexed Picardy between 1185 and 1223, the monarchy’s local role at Amiens was characteristically arm’s-length and there is little suggestion of royal involvement in artistic patronage. The other sectors of society that may have enjoyed enough wealth to make such an expensive purchase were the powerful bourgeoisie of the commune and the canons of the cathedral. Individuals from both groups were plausibly in a position to acquire the ivory.

After the fire of 1218, reconstruction began on the Cathedral of Amiens, a project that required a significant investment of funds by both the chapter and the city. The basic funding for the building certainly came from the regular income of the bishop and cathedral chapter: besides the expected earnings from land holdings, the cathedral enjoyed a special tax on manufactured goods and produce that flowed along the Somme. Nevertheless, evidence of vigorous, and successful, fundraising for the new cathedral exists in the 1220s and by 1233 investment revenues for the chapter had increased sufficiently for the canons of the chapter to award themselves a raise, despite the enormous cost of building the cathedral.

Throughout the period of building at Amiens, prominent members of the commune made large, important donations to fund

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15 Murray, *Notre-Dame, Cathedral of Amiens*, 26 and 186 n. 90.
the church fabric.\textsuperscript{17} Both the canons and the bourgeoisie thus enjoyed enough disposable income in the 1230s to purchase an elephant tusk.

One scenario that can be imagined is that a wealthy merchant of the Amiens commune might have donated an ivory tusk to the cathedral, just as his compatriots and colleagues donated cash, buildings, or land to “Notre-Dame.” He may have spotted a strange object among an incoming barge’s wares—an elephant tusk—and, impressed by its size and artistic promise, purchased it, or simply traded his goods for it, with the intent of beautifying the new cathedral with a statuette made of the sumptuous material.\textsuperscript{18} The cathedral canons, upon receiving such a rare gift, likely approached one of the many ymagiers working on the cathedral façade and asked him to carve a monumental Virgin and Child, such as the Davillier Virgin or the standing Virgin and Child now at the Victoria and Albert Museum (Figs. 3–7 and 3–8).\textsuperscript{19} The remainder of the ivory might have been allotted to the dean or to one of the canons to do with it as he pleased. It would have been this canon who conceived of the devotional diptych.

Another plausible situation is that a member of the cathedral chapter purchased the tusk, or part of it, with his own private funds. The majority of the canons at Amiens came from elite regional families and did not renounce their aristocratic lifestyle.\textsuperscript{20} At Amiens, the canons were “secular” as opposed to regular, meaning they did not live a

\textsuperscript{17} See Durand, \textit{Monographie}, vol. 1, 18, 117–19
\textsuperscript{18} To my mind it is highly unlikely that members of the commune would have intended for their gift of a tusk to result in a devotional diptych, even if a member of the chapter were responsible for designing its iconography.
\textsuperscript{19} To be sure, neither of these statuettes have a provenance history that suggests they were in the Amiens Cathedral treasury. The large panels of the Hermitage diptych are taken from the center of the tusk, above the nerve pulp—the thin nerve core however is visible on the back on the right panel—therefore, towards the upper tip of the tusk, the narrower end, and the diameter was still 12.5 cm: this was an enormous tusk. There would have been ample material for a statuette the size of the Davillier or the Victoria and Albert examples.
common life in a convent but instead owned private residences in the cathedral quarter, collected independent incomes from their prebends and liturgical duties, and also likely inherited significant beneficences from their families. With no vow of poverty, the canons were free to spend their earnings as they pleased. Although exact numbers for the canons’ yearly income are not available, in 1276 Pope Nicholas III gave the bishop of Amiens, Guillaume de Mâcon, permission to split several of the prebends at Amiens because the canons were too wealthy.\textsuperscript{21} The purchase of ivory by a canon would have transpired differently from the somewhat spontaneous purchase possible for the merchant: the canon was not actively involved in the mercantile economy and he would not have been at the docks to peruse incoming merchandise. Perhaps one of the merchants, less munificent than the one imagined above, purchased the elephant tusk as an investment and peddled it to the habitual consumers of high-quality goods, the wealthy canons. The canon would have made a more conscious decision to purchase the luxury material; he likely would have had the ivory diptych in mind when he bought the raw material.

Whichever scenario accounts for the acquisition of the ivory, the “conceputeur” and the original user of the diptych likely would have been a canon of the cathedral. This premise is based on the conclusions formulated in Chapter 4 that the iconography of the Hermitage diptych was composed for an individual who could practice the sacraments, namely a priest. The evidence for this was the privileged position of Longinus and Joseph of Arimathea in the scenes of the Crucifixion, Deposition, and Entombment. Both men are dressed in long and heavy surcottes with semi-circular hats, contemporary styles that starkly distinguish them from the archaizing, mantle-wearing apostles. Longinus’s

\footnote{Newman, \textit{Personnel}, 6.}
atypical depiction as an elderly gentleman, derived from the vernacular Passion plays, highlights the essential role of the sacraments in salvation. The unusual presence of Synagoga and Ecclesia at the Deposition further emphasizes the sacramental theme, while the prominent focus on Joseph of Arimathea at both the Deposition and the Entombment accentuates the Eucharistic overtones of these episodes. The extremely rare depiction of John the Baptist at the Harrowing of Hell, although he wears substantially different garb from the “priestly” Longinus and Joseph, seems to stress the contemporary need to predicate—in both senses, “to foretell” and “to say aloud,” i.e., “to preach”—the saving actions of Christ and the tortures of Hell. Finally, an iconographic idiosyncrasy unique to the Picard diptychs is the depiction of the man to whom Judas betrayed Christ not as a High Priest, but as a secular official. This follows the thirteenth-century Picard Passion play, *La Passion des Jongleurs*, where Judas betrays Christ not to a High Priest but “Aux princes vint et a la gent/ Qui Dieu n’amoient de noient.” The unusual variant allowed the commissioner of the Hermitage diptych to extricate clerics from the unfortunate situation of having colluded to kill Jesus. The iconographic reading suggests that the original user of the Hermitage diptych, and the iconographically similar Salting leaf and Wallace diptych, was a priest. Furthermore, explanations for the iconographic problems were found in exegetical concordances frequently used in the Parisian schools, most notably the *Historia scholastica* by Peter the Comestor, which was a popular textbook, and the *Glossa Ordinaria*, the principal concordance for scholastics. These texts, erudite but not esoteric by any means, suggest that the programmer of the Hermitage diptych was formally educated but not an academic by profession.
Thus far, the evidence identifies a commissioner and user of the Hermitage diptych who was an ordained priest formally educated at a fairly high level, a description that matches the profile of a canon of Amiens cathedral. The canons, priests by definition, were responsible for liturgical life at the cathedral as well as at several other parishes in Amiens.\textsuperscript{22} Since Carolingian times, the cathedral housed a school to provide local parish priests of the diocese a basic education,\textsuperscript{23} although the school never reached the heights of renown other cathedral schools did in the twelfth century. In 1218, however, the mission for education was reaffirmed when Bishop Evrard de Fouilloy raised the post of \textit{magister scolarum} to the rank of dignitary (to join the dean, the two archdeacons, and provost).\textsuperscript{24} The first canon recorded to have held this role was a Master Bernard who was the \textit{scolasticus} of Amiens in 1222 and had been described as \textit{Magister} already in 1215. From 1224 to his death in 1243, Master Bernard also held the post of archdeacon of Ponthieu and was granted permission to be absent from the chapter in 1228, \textit{causa studiorum}, likely to pursue further studies in Paris.\textsuperscript{25} Several other prominent members of the chapter were masters: Jacques d’Abbeville (dean 1230–38); Aléaume de Neuilly (dean 1248–53; 1237 mentioned as clerk); and Bernard de Maisnières (dean 1253; \textit{Magister scolasticus} 1237; cellarer 1236).\textsuperscript{26} Two other canons, active in the Amiens chapter in the first half of the thirteenth century, deserve mention: Arnoul de la Pierre (canon 1221; Bishop 1237–47) and his maternal half-brother Richard de Fournival (canon 1238; Chancellor, 1241–60). Arnoul de la Pierre was the son of

\textsuperscript{22} Newman, \textit{Personnel}, 6.

\textsuperscript{23} Ronald Hubscher, \textit{Histoire d’Amiens} (Toulouse: Privat, 1986), 72. Eight prebends at Saint Nicolas, a parish church in Amiens, were set aside for students coming to study at the cathedral school.

\textsuperscript{24} Newman, \textit{Personnel}, 6.


\textsuperscript{26} Newman, \textit{Personnel}, 16–19; 36–39. The dates and titles given are necessarily only those mentioned in the archives. Many would have been active at the Amiens chapter earlier than their first appearance in the documents because they would need to enjoy a certain amount of seniority to sign charters, etc.
Elisabeth de Petra, whose second husband, Master Roger de Fournival, was physician to Philip Augustus. Richard de Fournival, Arnoul’s junior by about ten years, was the son of Elisabeth’s second union. Richard is known today primarily as a vernacular author, penning an erotic and satirical Bestiaire de l’amour in his early years, and a more serious bibliographic work, Bibliomomie, in later life. Although the Fournival family had roots in Amiens, the half-brothers were probably raised in Paris and attended the universities there as young men. Any of these men, though little of their biographies are known, offers a compelling possibility for the commissioner and user of the Hermitage diptych. Richard de Fournival, with his special interest in the vernacular literature of Picardy, has particular potential given the Hermitage programmer’s references to the Passion des Jongleurs.

The formal education these canons received illuminates another aspect of the ivory diptychs: their function as devotional objects. A framework for analyzing the devotional function of the diptychs was constructed around the monastic lectio divina. When the tripex ratio of the Scholastics is read against the various spiritual exercises lectio divina entailed, images can be seen to aid and stimulate prayer in a number of

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30 Paris, “Richard de Fournival,” 34.
ways. This system, however, assumes that the designer of the Hermitage diptych had a fairly sophisticated knowledge of the aims and goals of monastic orthopraxis, which seems to suggest that the designer was a monk in addition to being a priest. The regular canons, or Augustinians, were just such an order: they were priests who lived a cloistered and communal life following the rule of Saint Augustine. Regular canons had the responsibility to perform the sacraments and liturgical hours, as the secular canons did, and in addition they lived a communal life with vows of poverty and obedience. Although the canons at Amiens were secular canons who lived in separate houses in the cathedral precinct and enjoyed substantial wealth from their family inheritance and prebends, it would be an oversimplification to say that simply because they did not live communally these canons were ignorant of “monastic” forms of prayer. That the secular canons were conversant in monastic orthopraxis is especially true for those who received an advanced education at the Parisian universities. Starting in the late twelfth century, there was increased attention paid to the education of the secular clergy—including the canons and the parish priests—as part of what are now referred to as the

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32 During the height of the Gregorian reform, the canons at Amiens who wished to live a common life were separated from the cathedral chapter. In 1073 a group of cathedral canons joined the Augustinian abbey Saint-Martin-aux-Jumeaux (founded 1060) and in 1085 a second group of canons founded the Abbey of Saint-Acheul. See Hubscher, Histoire d’Amiens, 72.

pastoral reforms. 34 Although many dictates of the Third Lateran Council of 1179 introduced this concern with pastoral care, the Fourth Council of 1215 is widely accepted as the fulcrum of this reform movement. 35 The ultimate aim of regulating the education and behavior of the secular clergy was to improve the spiritual guidance priests could in turn offer the laity and thus strengthen the faith of the whole Christian community. 36 The Paris school of theology was one of the main arenas in which this pedagogical reform of the clergy took place. 37

Implicit in the university’s teachings was the dissemination of the practice of monastic lectio divina. Peter the Chanter (d. 1197) outlined the activities of the theologian and the goal of the student of theology as reading (lectio), disputing (disputatio), and preaching (predicatio). 38 The first step, lectio, was equal to the monastic

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34 André Vauchez, in a convenient, though simplistic, overview of the period notes that while the main concern of the Christian Church in eleventh- and twelfth-century Europe were the Gregorian reforms that focused on a revitalization of the monastic communities, the late twelfth through fourteenth centuries were concerned with similar reforms applied to the body of the church itself, most notably the cura monialium. This pastoral movement was enacted in two phases. The first was to raise the level of education of the secular clergy, a task that occupied the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries. It was for the fourteenth century to disseminate this increased standardization of knowledge to the laity in a broader program of catechism as the second phase of pastoral reform. André Vauchez, The Laity in the Middle Ages: Religious Beliefs and Devotional Practices, trans. Margery J. Schneider (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993), 95–106. See also Ronald N. Swanson, Religion and Devotion in Europe, c. 1215–c. 1515 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 43–71; and Leonard E. Boyle, “The Fourth Lateran Council and Manuals of Popular Theology,” in The Popular Literature of Medieval England, ed. Thomas J. Heffernan (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1985), 30–43.

35 For text and translations of the councils, see Norman P. Tanner, ed., Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils, 2 vols. (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1990), Lateran III vol. 1, 211–225; Lateran IV vol. 1, 230–71. The Fourth Lateran Council, in its twenty-first constitution, instituted that all Christians must confess to their parish priest and take the Eucharist at least once a year: the first time an individual and regular interaction between the pastor and the members of his flock was directly prescribed.


37 For further information on the pastoral program at the universities, see Joseph Goering, William de Montibus (c. 1140–1213): The Schools and the Literature of Pastoral Care (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1992); and Franco Morenzoni, Des Écoles aux Paroisses: Thomas de Chobham et la promotion de la prédication au début du XIIe siècle (Paris: Institute d’Études Augustiniennes, 1995).

ruminations on the sacred texts, which, as we have seen, was the foundation of prayer. The scholarly pursuits of *disputatio* and *predicatio* share the same essential foundation as *meditatio* and *contemplatio*. The in-depth study of scripture that theological study at the universities entailed both enriched the students’ interior spiritual life and prepared them for careers as successful preachers and confessors. The emphasis on disseminating the practice of monastic prayer at the universities was explicitly stated by a handful of treatises that emanated from the Paris schools just at this time. For example, Peter the Chanter wrote a treatise specifically on the practice of prayer itself, *De oratione*, though his work focuses primarily on the physical aspects of professional prayer, namely the postures to be assumed during prayer. This treatise nevertheless demonstrates an effort to communicate aspects of monastic prayer life to a broader, though literate and latinate, audience who did not live their life in the cloister. The canons at Amiens, especially the well-educated masters, would have been familiar with and likely practiced the *lectio divina* in their private spiritual life.

The designer of the Hermitage diptych was most likely one of the Amiènois masters, a canon who had studied in Paris. Such a man had the education required to design such a sophisticated object, the sacramental duties to compose and reflect on the liturgical references in the iconography, and presumably a religious vocation sufficient to practice the monastic spiritual exercises daily. The case of Richard de Fournival

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41 The canons named above are merely representative. Other men of a similar profile were also likely present in the chapter in the 1230s, but their names and identities have been lost to history. It is tempting to think that the designer of the Hermitage diptych was explicitly not among these more politically oriented men as he focused his energies on interior development.
furthermore demonstrates that some canons were interested in vernacular literature, thereby clarifying the unique iconography borrowed from the Picard *Passion des Jongleurs*.

With the likely candidates for the commissioning of the Hermitage diptych having been identified, it is still unclear why the canon would choose to make an ivory diptych. To the best of my knowledge, there are no extant two-paneled objects produced in wood, stone or precious metals from France in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, so conceiving the first Gothic diptychs in ivory was not simply a matter of emulating a type present in other media. There were, however, numerous examples of ancient ivory diptychs preserved in cathedral and abbey treasuries throughout France, many of which were reemployed or reused in the thirteenth century. Some prominent examples include the consular diptych of Anastasius that was in the treasury of the Cathedral of Bourges (Fig. 7–1). The famous Symmachi and Nicomachi diptych panels were mounted as doors to a reliquary in the Benedictine Abbey of Montier-en-Der in the thirteenth century (Figs. 7–2 and 7–3). Pierre de Corbeil, the archbishop of Sens (d. 1222), mounted the diptych of Dionysus and Selene onto a book cover for a manuscript in Sens Cathedral. Similarly, the consular diptych of Philoxenus from Saint-Corneille de Compiègne retains

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44 Sens, Bibliothèque municipale, ms. 46. See Delbrueck, *Consulardiptychen*, no. 61; Danielle Gaborit-Chopin, *Ivoires du Moyen Age* (Fribourg: Office du livre, 1978), no. 22; and Byzance, no. 10.
remnants of a thirteenth-century binding. The tall and narrow dimensions of these late antique diptychs are reminiscent of the Picard diptych shape, even if the proportions are, to a large extent, dictated by elephant tusk morphology. Though consular diptychs were originally hinged together, the orientation of the carving was outwards, away from the person holding the diptych, rather than inwards like the Picard diptychs, addressing the viewer when he opened the panels and protected the carving when the diptych is closed. The outward-facing, or extroverted, late antique diptychs functionally had more in common with books and book covers—hence their frequent incorporation into these works over the centuries. The late antique consular diptychs do not seem to be the models that inspired the Picard diptychs.

Byzantine ivory diptychs, dating from the ninth to the eleventh centuries, do face inward and Charles Little has suggested that these were the prototypes for the Gothic versions. However, although a number of Byzantine triptychs are known to have been in French cathedral treasuries—the Borradaille triptych, for example, was said to be in the Reims cathedral treasury until the Revolution—few Byzantine diptych can be traced to medieval French collections. One exception is the diptych from Treasury of Chambéry Cathedral (Fig. 7–4). It belongs to a group of diptychs (Figs. 7–4; 7–5; 7–6) whose origin has been variously attributed to either Venice or the Latin Holy Land in the

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47 The many Carolingian and Romanesque ivory panels were almost exclusively made to decorate treasure bindings and even when two panels were conceived together, they were never hinged. Furthermore, the size of ivory panels from the early Middle Ages are, because of a restricted supply of ivory, generally of quite small size, not the tall and narrow format characteristic to both the late antique and the Picard diptychs.
twelfth or thirteenth centuries, but has most recently been reattributed to eleventh-century Constantinople. These diptychs, like other Byzantine exemplars, are tall and narrow plaques hinged together so that when opened the carved imagery faces the viewer.

Furthermore, two of the three diptychs depict narrative scenes from the Life of Christ. The Chambéry diptych presents ten scenes from the life of Christ arranged around a centrally placed Virgin and Child on the left leaf and the Ascension on the right. At the bottom are two registers filled with hieratically presented saints framed by arcades and roundels. In addition to formal and iconographic similarities, the provenance history of the Chambéry diptych offers a compelling framework for imagining how a Byzantine diptych influenced the canon who conceived the Picard diptychs. According to an eighteenth-century account, the diptych was donated to the Hospitallers house in Echelles at its foundation in 1260 by its patroness, Beatrice of Savoy (1205–67). Beatrice was the wife of Count Raymond Béranger of Provence and mother of Eleanor of Provence,

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51 The other two diptychs are in the Warsaw National Museum and a Paris private collection. Jannic Durand suggested a Venetian origin in *Byzance*, no. 174. The Crusader states were proposed by Catherine Jolivet-Lévy, “A New Ivory Diptych and Two Related Pieces,” in *Interactions: Artistic Exchange between the Eastern and Western Worlds in the Medieval Period*, ed. Colum Hourihane (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press and the Index of Christian Art, 2007), 106–19. Both arguments were based on stylistic and iconographic observations. Most recently Anthony Cutler has refuted these two suggestions with evidence derived from facture, epigraphy, iconography and cultural history. Cutler proposes that until further evidence is presented, the diptychs should be considered as Constantinopolitan of the eleventh century, in line with the majority of Byzantine ivory carving. Anthony Cutler, “Mistaken Novelty: Problems of Ivory Carving in the Christian East (12th and 13th centuries),” *Bulstyn Historii Sztuki* 70 (2008): 269–284. I thank Prof. Anthony Cutler for bringing this article to my attention.

52 The diptych from a Parisian private collection may also have an unspecified French provenance, as the owner indicated that it might have come from the south of France. Jolivet-Lévy, “A New Ivory Diptych,” 107.

53 The item was described in an inventory of 1575 as “24. Item une table esburine faictes a plusieurs personagies de lancien et moderne testement avec son estuy de cuyr.” The diptych is additionally noted in the 1496 inventory. In 1793, Joseph de Maistre described in detail the diptych’s iconography, leaving no doubt as to its identity, and recorded that the diptych was a gift from Beatrice in the thirteenth century. A. Perrin, *Le Trésor de la Chapelle du Château des Echelles, commanderie de St. Jean de Jérusalem. Inventaires inédits du XVIIe siècle*. Miscellanea di storia italiana, 3rd ser. 34 (1896), 100–102. *Byzance*, no. 174. H: 28 cm; L: 12.7 cm. Though not identical, these dimensions are remarkably close to the Picard diptychs, for example the Hermitage ivory (H: 32.4 cm; L: 12.5 cm).
Queen of England, and Marguerite of Provence, Queen of France. Even though it is unlikely that a canon from Amiens would have had access to an object in the possession of Louis IX’s mother-in-law, that the social milieu of the highest nobility had an interest in collecting and possessing such Byzantine objects and thought it appropriate to donate such objects to religious foundations illustrates a general context in which a canon from Amiens could have observed a Byzantine ivory diptych. The flow of Byzantine objects to northern Europe in the thirteenth century is a well-documented phenomenon, both from the sack of Constantinople by the Fourth Crusade in 1204 and from diplomatic gifts between the Latin rulers of Byzantium and their extended families and home institutions throughout northern France and the Low Countries. Furthermore, given the relative frequency of traffic between northern France, the Holy Land, and Latin-controlled areas in Byzantium, it is also possible that one of the canons at Amiens had traveled to the East or personally knew someone who had. It is well known that returning Crusaders frequently brought with them treasures and mementos from their life abroad: Jacques de Vitry, Bishop of Acre from 1216 to 1228, though he never returned in an official capacity

56 Master Jean d’Abbeville, dean at Amiens from 1218–26, was a regent of theology in Paris and was previously a canon at Saint-Wulfran’s in Abbeville. He became archbishop of Besançon in 1225 and in 1227 was nominated as patriarch of Constantinople, but instead became a cardinal in 1227. Stephen Murray and others credit Jean d’Abbeville with planning the sculptural program of Amiens Cathedral. Murray, Notre-Dame, Cathedral of Amiens, 121.
to the Oignies priory where he was a canon in his youth, nevertheless bequeathed to that foundation all of his belongings at his death in 1240.\textsuperscript{57} Given, therefore, the cosmopolitan nature of the aristocratic culture of northern France during the thirteenth century, it seems that the Amiens canon was inspired by a Byzantine ivory diptych when he decided on the ivory diptych format for his devotional object.

To summarize thus far, I have suggested that the Hermitage diptych was carved in Amiens by a sculptor who was also working on the Cathedral façade. This sculptor, our Picard Master, was chosen to carve a piece of ivory by one of the canons of the Cathedral. The canon either received the raw ivory as a donation to the church fabric or had purchased the material with the express intention of carving a devotional diptych. The canons at Amiens came from the wealthy landed aristocracy of the region, were fairly well educated, some even being masters of theology, and as secular canons enjoyed the autonomy to make personal commissions and purchases. The canon likely chose the unusual diptych form because he was inspired by a Byzantine diptych. The canon’s formal theological education at the Parisian schools, in addition to the burgeoning local vernacular literatures, furnished him with a wealth of exegetical material on which he could draw to formulate the Passion iconography of the Hermitage diptych. With his plan—perhaps sketched on a wax tablet or even on parchment—and the raw ivory in hand, the canon approached one of the 

\textit{ymagiers} working on the portal sculptures and commissioned him to carve the Hermitage diptych.

\textsuperscript{57} This precious trove of material is now kept by Les Soeurs de Notre-Dame in Namur. Edoardo Formigoni, “Jacques de Vitry et le prieuré d’Oignies,” in \textit{Autour de Hugo d’Oignies}, ed. Robert Didier and Jacques Toussaint (Namur: Société Archéologique de Namur, 2003), 37–43. For donations from Jacques’s time in Acre, see nos. 15, 23 a–f, 24, 27, and 30. An interesting comparison for the Picard diptychs is the lasting influence the importation of a Crusader double-cross reliquary had on crosses produced in the workshop of Hugo d’Oignies throughout the thirteenth century.
This scenario accounts for each of the practical steps of commissioning this first Gothic ivory diptych, the one now at the Hermitage. Yet the desire for such an object has not been addressed. Why would a canon want a visual tool for prayer, in the first place? Why did he translate into pictorial form and into a material object the textually based spiritual exercises inherent in the tradition of *lectio divina*? Indeed, the canon at Amiens, a well-educated cleric, was precisely the type of individual explicitly identified as *not* needing to rely on images to elicit prayer. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153) is often cited as the prelate most opposed to the use of art for spiritual ends, and Bernard’s sermons on the Song of Songs are often used to support the claim that religious should cast aside images. Sermon 20, *On the Three Modes of Loving*, addresses this issue directly:

The soul at prayer should have before it a sacred image [*sacra imago*] of the God-man, in his birth or infancy or as he was teaching, or dying, or rising, or ascending. Whatever form it takes, this image must bind the soul with the love of virtue and expel carnal vices, eliminate temptations and quiet desires. I think this is the principal reason why the invisible God willed to be seen in the flesh and to converse with men, who are unable to love in any other way, by first drawing them to the salutary love of his humanity, and then to a spiritual love.\(^5^9\)

\(^{58}\) Conrad Rudolph, *The “Things of Greater Importance”: Bernard of Clairvaux’s Apologia and the Medieval Attitude Toward Art* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990). Rudolph points out that Bernard focuses his criticism of monastic art on the excesses of liturgical arts to encourage pilgrimages. Even if these excesses were to be tolerated in the secular churches of bishops, monks ought not be involved in this particularly lavish “economy” of salvation.

\(^{59}\) “Adstat oranti Hominis Dei sacra imago, aut nascentis, aut lactantis, aut docentis, aut morientis, aut resurgentis, aut ascendentes; et quidquid tale occurret, vel stringat necesse est animum in amore virtutum, vel carnis extudet vitia, fuget illecebras, desideria sedet. Hanc ego arbor praeceptum invisibili Deo fuisse causam, quod voluit in carne videri et cum hominibus homo conversaro, ut carnalium videlicet, qui nisi carnaliter amare non poterant, cunctas primo asaua carnis salutarem amorem affectiones retraheret, atque ita gradatim ad amorem perduceret spiritualem.” *Sermones super Cantica Canticorum*, XX.6. Migne *PL*
Here the sacred image, *sacra imago*, is a mental image, a phantasm, and not a physical or material image. A picture in the mind’s eye is useful in that it can stir the soul to compunction. Literally imagining God or Christ in this way is only a partial understanding of God’s true essence, for any circumscription, whether verbal or visual, is merely a fragmentary understanding of the unsayable nature of God. Bernard communicates this unequivocally in another sermon: “You have not yet put yourself at a distance, unless you succeed in flying with purity of mind beyond the phantasms [*phantasmata]* that press in from every side.” In using the technical term *phantasmata* rather than the more ambiguous term *imago*, Bernard is perfectly clear that he means mental images are to be discarded. He makes no reference to physical pictures. The banishing of mental images has been an essential step of mystical ascent since the writings of Plato and was quickly incorporated into Christian thought through Plotinus and the Pseudo-Dionysius. Any comprehensible symbol—verbal or visual—used to

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This quote has featured strongly in the scholarship on the use of images (physical ones) in prayer and devotion. For example, see Sixten Ringbom, “Devotional Images and Imaginative Devotions: Notes on the Place of Art in Late Medieval Private Piety,” *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 73 (1969): 159-70, esp. 163; Jeffrey Hamburger, “The Visual and the Visionary: The Image in Late Medieval Monastic Devotions,” in *The Visual and the Visionary: Art and Female Spirituality in Late Medieval Germany* (New York: Zone Books, 1998), 111–48, esp. 121.


64 This movement can perhaps be most easily characterized through Augustine’s three modes of seeing. Augustine differentiated among corporeal seeing, that of our sight in the physical world; spiritual seeing, the internal imaging/imagining of things, states or abstract ideas through metaphorical use of the shapes of the external world; and intellectual seeing, which abandons the phantasms of spiritual seeing in favor of
mediate God’s essence is necessarily a veil, for it obscures as much as it transmits. The difficulty of achieving this ultimate imageless contemplation is underscored elsewhere by Bernard when he says “If you cannot yet grasp the naked truth, is it not worthwhile to possess it wrapped in a veil?” Yet it must be stressed that while banishing images of God from the mind was an expected step on the apophatic path to contemplation, the usefulness of images (physical or mental) as a practical tool for initiating prayer or contemplative ascent is not the issue under consideration.

Images as tools for prayer for the religious elite were not proscribed when used correctly: the rich tradition of monastic art strongly attests this fact. A proponent for the use of images in the spiritual exercises was Hugh of Saint-Victor (1096–1141), and his Mystic Ark is perhaps the best example of this. Although the image of the Mystic Ark


1 Cor 13: 11–12. “When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child. But, when I became a man, I put away the things of a child. We see now through a glass in a dark manner; but then face to face. Now I know in part; but then I shall know even as I am known.” (Cum essem parvulus loquebar ut parvulus sapiebam ut parvulus cogitabam ut parvulus. quando factus sum vir evacuavi quae erant parvuli. videmus nunc per speculum in enigmatue tunc autem facie ad faciem. nunc cognosco ex parte tunc autem cognoscam sic ut cognitus sum.)


68 Conrad Rudolph, “‘First I Find the Center Point’: Reading the Text of Hugh of Saint Victor’s The Mystic Ark,” Transactions of the American Philosophical Society 94.4 (2004); Patrice Sicard, Diagrammes médiévaux et exégèse visuelle: le Libellus de Formatione Arche de Hugues de Saint-Victor (Turnhout: Brepols, 1993); Grover Zinn, “Mandala Symbolism and Use in the Mysticism of Hugh of Saint Victor,”
no longer exists—in fact the question of its original existence is a point of much
scholarly debate—Conrad Rudolph has produced a reconstruction based on the two
detailed textual descriptions of this image (Fig. 7–7). The first text, *Libellus de
Formatione Arche*, seems to be a *reportatio* of a lecture given by Hugh of Saint-Victor
describing the layout of the drawing. In other words, Hugh did not pen the text directly,
but a student or secretary recorded his oral presentation of the material more or less
accurately. The second treatise that concerns the Mystic Ark, *De arca Noe*, offers a
complex reading and interpretation of the central portion of the Mystic Ark diagram that
outlines the contemplative ascent. The whole drawing was a detailed exercise in
cosmography that represented not only the geography of the world and God’s
relationship to it, but also the progression of sacred history and the path of contemplative
ascent. The purpose of this unusual picture was to synthesize a whole system of
knowledge into a clearly organized and hierarchical system for easy storage and access in
one’s mind: “I depict it as an object, so that you learn outwardly what you ought to do
inwardly, and so that, once you imprint the form of this example in your heart, you will

Images, 400–1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 243–46; and Mary Carruthers and Jan
M. Ziolkowski, ed., *The Medieval Craft of Memory: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures* (Philadelphia:

Mary Carruthers firmly holds that the image was never fully rendered anywhere but in Hugh’s mind and
in the mind of his students, although she proceeds to counsel contemporary readers to follow Hugh’s
instructions and to sketch out the material. Rudolph and Sicard believe that the Ark was depicted on a large
scale—necessary to include all of the minute detail—as an aid to Hugh’s lectures at Saint Victor. Zinn
believed that it was an actual image that ought be internalized in the process of learning its content, thus
taking seriously Hugh’s words: “Once you imprint the form of this example in your heart, you will be glad
that the house of God has been built inside of you” *De Archa Noe* IV.IX; Zinn 1972, 334–35. Hugh
explicitly says that the Ark is not an end in itself but is a visual framework for how one should internalize
all of the material presented. When this task has been completed, the exterior image is no longer necessary.

This is Conrad Rudolph’s interpretation of the problematic the text of the Mystic Ark. See Ruldoph,
“First I Find the Center Point,” 9–31.

Both texts are newly edited by Patrice Sicard as Hugonis de Sancto Victore, *De Archa Noe et Libellus de
Noah’s Ark,” is provided in Carruthers and Ziolkowski, *Medieval Craft of Memory*, 45–70.
be glad that the house of God has been built inside of you.”72 The physical image was a precursor to the mental one. That the Mystic Ark was likely used as part of the curriculum of the school of Saint Victor, which the numerous manuscript copies suggests was emulated elsewhere, emphasizes the diagram’s success as a tool for assimilating knowledge.73 The purpose of internalizing such a vast amount of knowledge would not only serve the Victorine students well in their career as scholars, preachers, and teachers, but it would also help them compose their interior spiritual life and aid in prayer.74

Embedded at the center of this visual compendium of worldly knowledge is the Ark of Noah, which in the description we are told extends into the third dimension.75 Hugh, in both texts, took great pains to relate how three dimensions are to be understood from the representation on the two-dimensional plane: “…but this could not be represented on a plane.”76 It is no coincidence that the central “three-dimensional” ark is the ideogram for the contemplative’s ascent to God. The perspectival representation of the three-dimensional ark is a key for the abandonment of images (both mental and physical) themselves: just as two dimensions do not do justice to the three dimensions of the ark, so too are images—both physical and mental—insufficient for the act of prayer and for the understanding of God. In other words, pictures, diagrams and images help the

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75 Libellus de Formatione Arche, 1.82–85. “Hoc facto, si nosse cupis quomodo hec figura formam arche representet, intellige quasi de illa zona que per medium latitudinem arche pretenditur fiat columnna quadrata equilatera in medio arche erecta.” “Then, if you are curious how this drawing represents the shape of the Ark, understand that an equilateral column is raised up in the Ark from the band that goes through the middle of the Ark’s width.” Trans. Carruthers and Ziolkowski 47.
mind approach God but must ultimately be abandoned as inadequate for the representation or understanding of God himself.

The example of the Mystical Ark of Hugh of Saint-Victor, which can be dated to the second quarter of the twelfth century, demonstrates the use, possibilities, and limits of images for the spiritual purposes of an educated cleric in the twelfth century. What is more compelling is that the penchant for teaching with images did not end with Hugh. His intellectual successor and student was Richard of Saint Victor (d.1173), whose commentary on the book of Ezekiel, Lezechielis ad litteram, was concerned primarily with a reading of Ezekiel’s vision of the Temple and included illustrations that were an integral part of the exegesis. Together with the literal mode of biblical study promoted by the Victorines, the Abbey sanctioned an actively pictorial mode of spiritual life and theological study. The influence of the Abbey of Saint Victor on the general non-specialist population grew in the thirteenth century. As the University of Paris slowly became a formal institution in the early thirteenth century, the canons of Saint Victor officially became the principal confessors and spiritual advisors of the students enrolled at its schools. Marshall Crossnoe has recently argued that throughout the thirteenth century, Saint Victor remained a center for the pastoral education of regular canons. It is in these two capacities—as primary confessors to the Parisian students and as a proto-

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77 Rudolph, “First I Find the Center Point,” 1; Sicard, Diagrammes Médiévaux, 11.
seminary for Victorines—that the Abbey of Saint Victor promulgated its particular version of spirituality, orthopraxis and the use of images.

The hypothetical canon at Amiens who became a theology master at the Paris schools thus had good reason to commission an ivory diptych with scenes of the Passion of Christ as an aid for spiritual practices. As a student at Paris, he would have received regular spiritual direction at an abbey, Saint-Victor, whose intellectual inheritance included the most sophisticated pictorial thinkers of the era. Making this connection between the Picard diptychs and the Victorine images is not meant to elide the obvious differences between the two bodies of work. Instead I wish to highlight the persistence of the Victorine tradition of thinking and praying with and through images, not based on any sort of formal similarity but on the tendency to seriously consider the intellectual and spiritual uses of pictures. The canon’s formative education at Paris instilled within him the inherited tradition of monastic *lectio divina* and his spiritual advisor and confessor at Saint-Victor reinforced for him the utility of images for memory work and prayer practice.

The circumstances surrounding the origin of the Hermitage diptych have been more or less clarified: the artist, the purchasing of the ivory, the models for the ivory diptych, and the inspiration for a pictorial tool for prayer. The Hermitage diptych, however, is just the first of the Picard ivories and the progenitor, as it were, of the Parisian diptychs. The replication and dissemination of the Gothic diptych form remains to be considered. At this point there are two “authors” involved in the production of the Hermitage diptych: the artist (the Picard Master) and the *conceputeur* and patron (the
Amiènois canon). Both individuals likely played significant roles in the propagation and dissemination of the innovative diptych form.

The stylistic analysis of the Salting Leaf (Plate 2) indicated that it was contemporary with the Hermitage diptych and therefore it should be considered within the same context, namely the chapter of Amiens Cathedral. The Hermitage diptych was probably made for the concepteur canon himself. Soon after he may have decided to commission a second diptych, the Salting leaf, for a companion in the chapter or perhaps for a visiting dignitary. It must have been earmarked for an individual with a métier similar to the canon and a comparable educational background for the rarefied iconography and the spiritual exercises to be comprehensible, as there are almost no changes made to the diptych. An identical copy was naturally suited to someone in an identical walk of life. Alternatively, a colleague in the chapter may have observed the Hermitage diptych and, impressed by its novelty and efficacy, he might have commissioned the Picard Master to carve him a diptych as well. In either case, the negligible temporal gap between the Salting and Hermitage ivories makes visualizing the genesis of the Salting diptych fairly straightforward.82

The situation for the Wallace and Vatican diptychs, however, is more complex. The Wallace diptych (Plate 3) dates from ten to fifteen years after the Hermitage and Salting diptychs and is roughly contemporary with the knop made for the crozier of Saint-Yves-de-Chartres kept at the Abbey of Saint-Quentin in Beauvais until the French Revolution (Plate 7 and Fig. 1–18). Consequently, the context for the production of the Wallace diptych is substantially different from that outlined in Amiens. The knop fits

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82 Advances in molecular technologies may one day be able to clarify whether the Salting leaf comes from the same tusk as the Hermitage diptych. At present, the abraded state of the Salting leaf does not allow for conclusions based on the morphology of the panel to clarify this question.
perfectly onto Saint-Quentin’s crozier, which indicates that the Picard Master traveled to Beauvais, for it is extremely unlikely that the canons of Saint-Quentin would send away their precious relic. The itinerant nature of the Picard Master raises several questions regarding the production of the Wallace and Vatican diptychs (Plates 3 and 8), which date to the 1240s and 1250s respectively. The first concerns the purchase of the ivory itself. After his experience in Amiens, the Picard Master may have begun to work exclusively in ivory and perhaps purchased tusks himself. Although this required a significant investment of resources, he may have realized that with the rising supply of and demand for ivory it could be a lucrative venture. Alternatively, the Picard Master may have continued to rely on patrons to purchase the raw ivory that he would then carve. As his business remained in the northern textile-producing regions where there was a steady importation of alum, and therefore ivory, this is a strong possibility. The latter scenario became the norm in the fourteenth century, although that does not necessarily mean this was the case in the thirteenth.  

The Picard Master somehow must have conserved the Passion iconography devised by the Amiens canon and transferred it independently. The level of iconographic consistency over a long time span requires some form of permanent record: a two-dimensional drawing on parchment, a model in terra cotta such as those found in the Scheldt River in Belgium, or a bone version for workshop purposes. These permanent

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84 The terra cotta models are “prints” made from casts of a large ivory casket that was in the treasury of Saint Sernin, Toulouse, and today is in the Musée Paul-Dupuy, Toulouse (Koechlin 1924, vol. 2, no. 821). The five terra cotta models are now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. See Richard Randall, “Gothic
records of the program would have allowed the Picard Master to continue to employ the same compositions and themes without the finished ivory objects close at hand. Employed by the regular canons of Saint-Quentin to fashion the knop of the crozier, the Picard Master may have discussed with the canons the possibility of commissioning a devotional object and may have shown an interested canon his model of the Hermitage diptych. 86 Perhaps one of the Augustinians of Saint Quentin knew the Amiènois canon, given that the two foundations were only 65 km apart. Is it possible that traffic between the two bishoprics was particularly frequent because both were simultaneously engaged in massive cathedral building projects?87 Whatever the circumstances for the commissioning of the Wallace diptych, the only certainty is that few compositional adjustments were made to the Passion format—the only alterations were to accommodate the narrower panels and do not significantly alter the devotional potential of the diptych.

The same does not, however, hold true for the Vatican diptych (Plate 8), made in the early 1250s by the same Picard Master. The unique typological pairing of the Infancy and Passion narratives, coupled with the inclusion of the Coronation of the Virgin and the Last Judgment, requires that the Picard Master was again working with a theologically trained programmer. None of the ivories produced in this period has a secure provenance, so little can be posited about where the production might have taken place. Given the

85 Richard Randall suggested that a bone triptych in the Williams College Museum of Art (78.2.3) was such a workshop model. He proposes, in fact, that it was related to the “Soissons” group, a suggestion that does not stand up to scrutiny. Richard Randall, The Golden Age of Ivory: Gothic Carvings in North American Collections (New York: Hudson Hills Press, 1993), no. 37. Keeping an ivory model of the diptych would have been far too expensive, however.
86 Pierre Durvin, Histoire de la préfecture de l’Oise, ancienne abbaye de Saint-Quentin de Beauvais (Beauvais: Imprimerie centrale administrative, 1979).
hitherto consistent involvement of the Picard Master with the canons and the continuing strictures of theological formation coupled with substantial purchasing power, the likelihood that the Vatican diptych was also designed by and created for a canon is exceptionally high. It should be noted, furthermore, that the unmistakable theme of the Vatican diptych, the indispensable role of Mary-Ecclesia in salvation, is the same as that presented on many of the new cathedrals’ portal programs, for example Notre-Dame of Paris and of Amiens. It seems reasonable, therefore, that the commissioner and user of the Vatican diptych was someone personally invested in the aggrandizement of the institutional Church in thirteenth-century French society.

The four diptychs carved by the Picard Master were designed by canons for their own or a colleague’s personal devotional use. It is unclear whether it was the canon at Amiens who promulgated the diptych form through his network of colleagues and acquaintances or if the Picard Master promoted the new form in the other northern cities to which he traveled. Only new provenance evidence would clarify the precise relationships among the users of the subsequent Picard diptychs. The three diptychs produced in Paris present a separate set of circumstances because they do not involve the participation of the Picard Master; in fact, among the three diptychs there are three different hands. The mode of transmission in the Parisian context, therefore, is through the user and commissioner and not the magier.

In Chapter 6 a stemma was proposed to describe the relationships among the three Parisian diptychs with scenes from the Passion of Christ and the Picard diptychs (Fig. 6–

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2). The first Parisian diptych, the Walters-Cluny diptych (circa 1240; Plate 20), must have been conceived with a Picard diptych to hand. Walters-Cluny is made of composite panels so that the height and breadth approximate those of the Picard diptychs. If the ivory carver was not striving for a very particular format, he almost certainly would have determined his panel size based on the dimensions of the tusk. Several of the idiosyncratic iconographies present on the Picard diptych are copied onto the Walters-Cluny ivory, namely the aristocratic-looking “Prince” of the Jews rather than a High Priest at Judas’s Betrayal and an older, well-dressed Longinus at the Crucifixion. How, then, did a Picard model find its way to Paris to serve as the model for the Walters-Cluny diptych?

If the designer of the first Picard diptych was one of the secular canons at Amiens Cathedral who received a formal education in theology at Paris, a concrete mode of transmission from Picardy to Paris can be suggested. Master Bernard, archdeacon of Ponthieu present at Amiens from 1224 to his death in 1243, a canon whose profile matches perfectly with the presumed concepteur of the Hermitage diptych was given leave from the cloister in 1228, causa studiorum.89 Since Master Bernard is designated in the charters as early as 1215 as Magister and was in charge of the Amiens cathedral school from 1222–24, he probably went to Paris either to teach or to engage in advanced studies. Like Master Bernard, many other canons of the chapter must have traveled to Paris for the sake of education or for political and ecclesiastical affairs, for short or long periods of time. One of the canons who possessed a Picard diptych, either the original designer of the diptychs or perhaps the owner of the slightly later Salting diptych, must have traveled to Paris around 1240 with his devotional object in hand. The answer to how

a Picard diptych came to Paris is quite simple: someone brought it there. For whom and under what circumstances the Walters-Cluny diptych was made is more difficult to answer.

Iconographic analysis revealed that several of the specifically liturgical and sacramental elements of the Picard Passion ivories were omitted from the Walters-Cluny diptych, namely Synagoga and Ecclesia and John the Baptist at the Harrowing of Hell. The exclusion of these scenes weakens the argument that these objects were created for someone engaged in the sacramental duties of the Church. The only restriction in considering the intended user of the Walters-Cluny diptych is the preciousness of the material. In Chapter 6 I suggested that the least complicated explanation for the commissioning of the Walters-Cluny diptych was that the owner and user of a Picard diptych, familiar with the devotional function of the object, commissioned the Walters-Cluny diptych and introduced a number of didactic alterations to the original form to tailor it to the devotional needs of the new user. This entailed omitting the explicit sacramental and ecclesiastic emphases of the Picard program because the Walters-Cluny user was not a cleric. Who, then, was the intended user? The two significant modifications made to the Walters-Cluny diptych—the addition of the Noli me tangere scene as an aide-mémoire to encourage the user to strive for a spiritual understanding of the episodes and the alteration of the narrative direction to read from the bottom to the top in a serpentine pattern to lead the eyes upwards and metaphorically towards heaven—suggest that the commissioner thought the intended user needed guidance or supervision for the proper use of the diptych as a devotional tool. The Picard diptychs contain no reminders to abandon bodily sight in favor of spiritual sight. The didactic flavor of these
additions suggest, albeit tentatively, that the relationship between the Amiens canon who owned the Picard diptych and the intended user of the Walters-Cluny was one of teacher and student, advisor and advisee, confessor and penitent, or some combination thereof.

The commissioning of the Berlin and the Soissons diptychs must have been an analogous situation. Produced in Paris in the early and late 1260s, respectively, these two diptychs represent a later recension of the Walters-Cluny diptych. Given their extremely similar iconography, however, I propose that there must have been an intermediary, now lost, diptych between the Soissons and Berlin diptychs and the Walters-Cluny diptych; this would account for the remarkable affinities between them while simultaneously allowing for their iconographic and compositional differences. The format of the Soissons-Berlin–type diptych builds on the innovations of the Walters-Cluny diptych, perhaps introduced by a spiritual advisor who was modifying the Picard model for a lay audience in order to refine and maximize their devotional potential. This situation of fine-tuning the function of the diptychs suggests that the person commissioning the Soissons and Berlin diptychs was intimately aware of how the objects functioned within the spiritual exercises. The commissioner and designer was either a user of a similar diptych or a spiritual advisor familiar with the inherent capacities of the diptych.

The relationships among the Paris diptychs is clarified by examining the parallel circumstance of multiple “editions” of an innovative and unusual object commissioned over a number of years: the Moralized Bibles and the instrumental role played by Blanche of Castile. Blanche’s confessor and spiritual advisor likely gave her the first Moralized Bible. Impressed with the format, over time Blanche commissioned several
new copies for close family with the help of new programmers. Each Bible was amended and adjusted for its new recipient. The three Paris diptychs may be hypothetically related in a similar fashion. A canon of Amiens traveled to Paris with his ivory devotional diptych, while there, whether as part of his official business or not, he acted as a confessor and/or spiritual advisor and thought an ivory diptych would help this individual in his or her prayers. The canon, perhaps with his own money or with that of his pupil, bought the raw ivory in the markets of Paris and took the tusk he found there—smaller and of inferior quality than those found at markets in the north—to a sculptor at a Parisian workshop to carve. The canon explained to the craftsman what he wanted done, both by showing him the Picard example (which he had brought with him for his own private devotions) and by suggesting the alterations. The Walters-Cluny diptych is the result of this transaction. The Amiens canon took the diptych back to his pupil and showed him or her how the object could be used. To be sure that the pupil understood the proper function of the diptych and that the images thereon were meant to stimulate prayer, not be an end point in themselves, the canon emphasized the interpretation of the *Noli me tangere*. Pleased with the effectiveness of his or her diptych in devotional practice, the new owner of the Walters-Cluny diptych was likely involved in the commissioning of the other diptychs. If a layman or laywoman, the diptychs may have been produced for his or her children once their spiritual lives had matured. If a monastic, female or male, perhaps she or he had reached the requisite maturity to become a spiritual advisor/confessor her- or himself, and the diptychs were commissioned for her or his spiritual children in the cloister. In either case, the owner of the Walters-Cluny diptych would have been well equipped to suggest the alterations and amendments to the diptych
format after years of living and praying with the object, especially since the modifications to the Soissons-Berlin–type diptychs are elaborations on the innovative inclusion of the *Noli me tangere* in the Walters-Cluny rather than the introduction of an entirely new theological concept.

The intended recipients of the Parisian diptychs are difficult to identify due to the lack of delimiting iconographic characteristics. Yet the fact that they are not necessarily members of the religious elite and may in fact be laity is itself pertinent. That members of the general population—albeit wealthy and well educated ones—were practicing a form of *lectio divina* with the aid of a spiritual advisor indicates the broader societal movement of pastoral reform and the promotion of lay piety. The Parisian diptychs offer a view of the capabilities and religious aptitude of the laity: the intellectual rigor demanded by these more “general” diptychs is equal to, yet different from, that required by the Picard diptychs, indicating that generalization and dissemination did not mean a reduced theoretical standard. The level of engagement required by the (potentially lay) users of the Parisian diptychs was equal to that of the diptychs made earlier for the university-educated canons. The main difference between the Picard model and the Soissons-Berlin model is that the catena of devotional thoughts are less prescribed in the Soissons-Berlin diptychs: the user of the Soissons diptych, for example, is not guided by arcane iconography to a particular exegetical interpretation and contemplation of the scenes presented. Instead, the Soissons user is free to attach any relevant exegesis to each carefully delineated episode, constructing a self-curated compendium of glosses organized by and accessible through the diptych itself. The grid-like structure of the
diptych encourages the user to ruminate on the connections between the scenes, however apposite or incongruous they may be.

This exceptionally active engagement with the diptych, with exegesis, and with prayer itself belies the view that members of the laity only prayed superficially—a view based primarily on textual information from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, for which significantly more information exists, in particular critiques of devotional practice by Reformation writers.90 The ivory diptychs were, to be sure, elite objects destined for elite audiences: a small segment of the population not considered in the broad parochial reforms of the thirteenth century. The educational treatises penned by the pastoral reformers of the thirteenth century tend to focus on the lowest common denominator of religious education, where learning the Our Father, the Hail Mary, the Creed or the Ten Commandment were the major concerns.91 The Parisian diptychs depicting scenes of the Passion demonstrate that a much more erudite Christianity was possible among lay communities in the thirteenth century.

The future popularity of ivory diptychs with scenes of the Passion is inherent in the introduction of the Picard diptychs to Paris. Like the Book of Hours, whose popularity the diptychs foreshadow, the pious intentions of the commissioners and users

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were doubtlessly admixed with desires for luxury and display. Although we have not dwelt on the fact, the conscious choice of expensive ivory for the construction of the diptychs a priori bespeaks a certain ostentation and conspicuous consumption and surely contributed to the format’s currency over the hundred and fifty years after the creation of the Picard diptychs. This study, however, has tried to access the impetus for the genesis of the Gothic ivory diptych form before its period of popular appeal, and this impetus is the development of a tool for prayer. Social mimesis certainly contributed to the propagation of the Passion diptych form and, in the fourteenth century, may even have overshadowed its original purpose as a devotional tool, but at its inception these motivations were less relevant.

In conclusion, it is worth returning to the theme with which we opened this study. The close study of this group of ivory Passion diptychs has reanimated objects too often flattened and aestheticized in the contemporary museum context. Reconstructing the economic and commercial significance of the material of ivory itself in the thirteenth century emphasized that the ivory diptychs were fashioned of a rare medium at the moment of its renewed availability in northern Europe. Furthermore, the economic study proved that the ivory trade was inextricably linked with the textile industry of northern Europe, clarifying the dynamic that brought this precious material to the North. The stylistic analysis identified the temporal and geographic origin of the various objects, providing a preliminary sketch of the development of the objects, their geographic

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migration, and the relationships among various pieces. The Hermitage diptych (circa 1235, Picardy) was proposed as the earliest of the group and this identification enables us to analyze the gradual adjustments to this initial format over time with the rest of the Picard ivories and in a different geographic location with the three Parisian diptychs. The formal and iconographic reading of the diptychs, informed by the tradition of monastic lectio divina, delineated the precise function of the diptychs for educated individuals of the thirteenth century. Furthermore, a sacramental theme identified in the Picard diptychs suggested, in addition to the level of erudition required to decipher and use the diptych, an original user who was likely a canon. Together with the stylistic analysis, this allows us to deduce that the concepteur of the Hermitage diptych was one of the university-educated secular canons of Amiens cathedral: such an individual had the education, the spiritual formation, and the financial means to commission such a sophisticated object. The iconography and the little provenance information we have suggest that the other Picard diptychs were made for canons who shared the same social network. The Paris diptychs, however, lack the particular iconographic and compositional markers that signal a clerical patron and therefore would have been appropriate for a broader, though equally educated, audience, perhaps even a lay audience. The dissemination of the formal prayer practices from a religious elite to the broader population parallels the pastoral reforms that occupied the Church in the thirteenth century. The first step of the reforms entailed a focus on the standardization of education and spiritual formation of the clergy. The University of Paris concentrated on the teaching of exegesis and theology while the canons of Saint Victor, at this time the official confessors to the Paris student population, devoted themselves to the students’ interior lives. I suggest that the Abbey of Saint-
Victor, with its particular tradition of instrumental images, may have played a key role in inspiring the *conceputeur* of the Hermitage diptych to make a pictorial tool for prayer in the first place. The possibility that the sophisticated Parisian diptychs were intended for members of the lay population illustrates the second half of the missions of the pastoral reforms: that the increased education of the clergy would enable them to better guide their flock and to foster a deeper piety among the laity.

Studying the so-called “Soissons” diptychs from a number of methodological perspectives has succeeded not only in reanimating the objects themselves, recovering their origin and subsequent use in the spiritual life of thirteenth century individuals, but also has shed light on the primary ecclesiastic concern of the thirteenth century, pastoral reform. Finally, carefully examining the ivory diptychs with scenes of the Passion of Christ has revealed the refined and pluralistic ways in which the object aided in the practice of spiritual exercises, which offers a model for understanding the increased practice of private devotion in the thirteenth century and demonstrates that, rather than incongruously arising *ex nihilo*, the devotional fervor of the laity in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries stemmed from the dissemination, but not necessarily the adulteration, of a previously recondite tradition.
A Catalogue of the “Soissons” Ivories

Plate 1  Hermitage Diptych
St. Petersburg, The State Hermitage Museum (Φ 45)
H: 32.4 cm  L: 12.5 cm  W: 9.15–9.35 mm
Amiens, circa 1235

Iconography:
Reads top to bottom, left to right across both panels.
The betrayal of Judas, Judas receiving the Thirty pieces of Silver, the Arrest with Peter and Malachus, the Suicide of Judas, Christ being led before Pilate, Pilate washing his Hands, the Flagellation, the Carrying of the Cross, Crucifixion with Adoring Longinus, Stephaton holding the Sponge, Two Thieves, Three Marys, John the Evangelist, and another mourning figure, Deposition with Synagoga to the left and Ecclesia to the right, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea pulling out the nails, the Entombment with Mary, Saint John, Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, and another apostle, the Three Women at the Empty Tomb, John the Baptist and the Harrowing of Hell with Adam and Eve being rescued from the Hell’s Mouth with Devils.

Provenance:
Collection of the Count of Pourtalès-Gorgier (1865 Sale Catalogue, no. 1515)
A. P. Basilewsky Collection (Darcel, cat. no. 11, pl. XVII)
State Hermitage Museum purchased the Basilewsky Collection in 1884

Select Bibliography:
Catalogue des Objets d’Art et de Haut Curiosité... qui composent les Collections de feu M. le Comte de Pourtalès-Gorgier et dont la vente aura lieu... le lundi 6 Février 1865, (Paris: Hôtel, rue Tronchet, 1865), no. 1515.

Plate 2  Salting Leaf, left panel of a diptych.
London, Victoria and Albert Museum (A 546-1910)
H: 32.3 cm  L: 12.3 cm  W: 11 mm
Amiens or Picardy, circa 1235
**Iconography:**
Reads top to bottom, left to right. Right panel missing.
The betrayal of Judas; Judas receiving the Thirty pieces of Silver; the Arrest with Peter and Malachus. The Flagellation; the Carrying of the Cross. Deposition with Synagoga to the left and Ecclesia to the right, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea pulling out the nails. The Three Women at the Empty Tomb.

**Provenance:**
Collection of Sir Andrew Fountaine, London (1676–1740)
Sale by heirs: London, Christie, Mason and Woods (1884 Sale Catalogue, no. 529)
Collection of Professor C. Hermann (Sale 1888, Herren H. Lempertz Söhne, Köln; Catalogue, no. 249)
Collection of George Salting, London
Bequeathed to Victoria and Albert Museum in 1910

**Select Bibliography:**
*Catalogue of the Celebrated Fountaine Collection of Majolica... Carving in Ivory, Horn, Stone and Rock crystal... Removed from Narford Hall, Norfolk (London: Messrs. Christie, Mason and Woods, 1884), no. 529.*
Raymond Koechlin, *Les ivoires gothiques français*, no. 36, pl. XIV.

**Plate 3 Wallace Diptych**
London, Wallace Art Gallery (S. 246)
H: 31 cm  L: 10.5 cm (each leaf)  W: 11 mm
Picardy, 1240–1250

**Iconography:**
Reads top to bottom, left to right across both panels.
The betrayal of Judas; Judas receiving the Thirty pieces of Silver; the Arrest with Peter and Malchus; the Suicide of Judas; Christ being led before Pilate; Pilate washing his Hands; the Flagellation; the Carrying of the Cross; Crucifixion with Adoring Longinus, Stephaton holding the Sponge, Two Thieves, Virgin Mary and John the Evangelist; the Deposition with Ecclesia to the right, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea pulling out the nails, and Synagoga across gutter; the Entombment with Mary, Saint John, Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, and another apostle; the Three Women at the Empty Tomb; John the Baptist and the Harrowing of Hell with Adam and Eve being rescued from the Hell’s Mouth with Devils.
Provenance:
Wallace collection donated by Lady Wallace to the United Kingdom in 1897

Select Bibliography:
Raymond Koechlin, *Les ivoires gothiques français*, no. 35.

Plate 4 Victoria and Albert Triptych
Victoria and Albert Museum, London (175.1866)
H: 19.9 cm  L: open 21.3 cm, closed 10.7 cm, wings 5.2 cm (each)  W: centre 11 mm, wings 9 mm, closed 21 mm
Picardy, 1240–1250

Iconography:
Bottom to top, incorporating central and side panels.
Bottom: Adoration of the Magi, with three Magi on the left panel, seated crowned Mary and Christ Child with a bishop kneeling in adoration, flanked by two angels holding thuribles. Right panel presentation at the Temple.
Middle: Crucifixion with Longinus, Stephaton, two thieves on central panel, Synagoga and Mary on the left panel and John the Evangelist and Ecclesia on the right panel.
Top: Christ in Majesty with Crowned Virgin Mary to the left and John the Evangelist to the right. Two angels on either side with instruments of the Passion (Cross, nails, and lance). Left panel trumpet-blowing angel with the blessed including bishop. Right panel, trumpet-blowing angel with Hell’s Mouth.

Provenance:
Collection of Prince Petr Soltykoff, Paris (1861 Sale Catalogue, no. 236)
Collection of Frédéric Spitzer, Paris (according to Labarté 1864)
Collection of John Webb, London (according to Koechlin 1924)
Collection of George H. Morland, London 1866 (Sale Catalogue, Christie’s May 9, 1866, no. 207: Lugt 29120)
Purchased by South Kensington Museum in 1866

Select Bibliography:


Raymond Koechlin, *Les ivoires gothiques français*, no. 43, pl. XVII.¹


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**Plate 5**  
**St. Petersburg Madonna, central panel of a polyptych**

St. Petersburg, The State Hermitage Museum (inv. no. 3225)

H: 9.3 cm  L: 4.7 cm  W: 2.2 cm

Picardy, circa 1240

**Iconography:**
Crowned Virgin and Child seated on a bench. The Child holds a sphere in his left hand and blesses with two fingers with his right hand.

**Provenance:**
Collection Baron Alexander Stieglitz, St. Petersburg (according to Kube 1925, purchased in Vienna 1886)

Baron Stieglitz founded the Stieglitz Museum at the Stieglitz School of Applied Arts in St. Petersburg (acc. no. 6735, no catalogue)

Stieglitz Museum merged with the State Hermitage Museum in 1917–18

**Select Bibliography:**
Alfred Nikolaevich Kube, *Carved Ivories*, no. 69.


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¹ Koechlin made a mistake in his provenance information. Debruge-Duménil nr. 149 is not the V&A triptych, but corresponds instead to Soltykov nr. 138.
Plate 6  Lehman Polyptych
New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art (1975.1.1553)
Central plaque: H: 9.5 cm  L: 4.1 cm  W: 27 mm
Side wings, from left to right: (1) H: 9.0 cm  L: 1.9 cm  W: 4 mm (2) H: 8.9 cm  L: 2.2 cm  W: 4.5 mm (3) H: 8.95 cm  L: 2.2 cm  W: 5 mm (4) H: 9 cm  L: 2.0 cm  W: 4.5 mm
Picardy, circa 1250

Iconography:
Central Panel: Seated Virgin and Child, Virgin crowned and holding a sphere in her right hand. Christ Child holding a sphere in his left hand and blessing with two fingers with his right.
Wings (top to bottom, left to right): Annunciation, Visitation, Nativity, Adoration of the Magi (Virgin and Child central panel), and Presentation in the Temple.

Provenance:
Collection of Count Shuwaloff, St. Petersburg
Museum of the Society for the Promotion of the Arts, St. Petersburg (Catalogue 1904, no. 71)
Museum of the Society for the Promotion of the Arts merged with State Hermitage Museum in 1919 (Kube 1925, no. 88)
One of the works of art sold by the Russian State in 1930s²
Jacques Seligmann, New York
Collection of Mrs. Henry Walters, Baltimore Maryland (Sale, Parke Bernet Galleries New York 1941, lot 1051)
Collection of Robert Lehman, New York
Donated to Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1975

Select Bibliography:
Raymond Koechlin, Les ivoires gothiques français, no. 56.
Alfred Nikolaevich Kube, Carved Ivories, no. 88.
David Mickenberg, Songs of Glory: Medieval Art from 900 to 1500 (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Museum of Art, 1985), no. 90.

Plate 7  Knop of the crosier of Yves de Chartres.
Antwerp, Musée Mayer van den Bergh (inv. 440)
H: 7.9 cm  L: 3 cm  W: 2.1 cm
Picardy, 1240–1250

Iconography:
Saints Paul, Peter, Bartholomew, and James the Major.

² “Breaking up the Hermitage,” The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs 59 (1931): 323.
Provenance:
Treasury of the Abbey of Saint-Quentin of Beauvais, before 1790
Treasury of the Cathedral Saint-Etienne, Beauvais (Cambry 1803)
Collection of M. le Chevalier de Saint-Morys, Beauvais (Lenoir 1821)⁴
Collection of M. Rogier, Paris (Willemin 1839) (Sale catalogue, Hôtel Drout, Paris, January 27, 1842, no. 45)
Collection of Jean-Baptiste Carrand (1792–1871), Lyon and Paris
Collection of Louis Carrand (1827–1888), Paris, Nice, Pisa and Florence⁵
Knop separated from crosier head by 1876⁶
Collection of Carlo Micheli, Paris (de Coo, no. 189; Louis Carrand sold several items privately to Micheli in 1880s)
Mayer van den Bergh bought Micheli Collection in 1898
Museum Mayer van den Bergh, Antwerp founded in 1901

Select Bibliography:

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³ Archives Départementales de l’Oise, Q2 1331. Biens nationaux, 4 mai 1790: “Une crosse d’yvoirre avec son baton en bois ouvrage, et une chasuble rouge qui ont servi à saint Yves.”
⁵ Crosier head donated with the rest of Louis Carrand’s collection to the Bargello Museum, Florence, upon his death in 1888. The 10th century knop presently on the Crosier of Yves-de-Chartres was purchased by Louis Carrand around Beauvais (De Fleury 1889).
Plate 8  Vatican Diptych
Rome, Vatican Museums (A. 82)
H: 30.5 cm  L: 9.8 cm W: 1.15 cm
Picardy, 1250–1260

Iconography:
Left leaf—Top to Bottom: Coronation of the Virgin; Annunciation and Nativity; Massacre of the Innocents and Flight into Egypt; Adoration of the Magi.
Right leaf—Top to Bottom: Christ in Majesty with Virgin Mary to the left and John the Evangelist to the right. Two angels on either side with instruments of the Passion (Cross, nails, and lance); Crucifixion with Longinus and Mary to the left and Stephaton and John the Evangelist to the right; Deposition with Ecclesia and Mary to the left of the Cross, Joseph of Arimathea removing Christ from the Cross, Nicodemus removing the nails from Christ’s feet, and John the Evangelist to the right; Entombment with Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus and another Apostle, John the Evangelist and Mary.

Provenance:
Museum of the Vatican Libraries, now incorporated into the Vatican Museum

Select Bibliography:
Raymond Koechlin, Les ivoires gothiques français, pl. XIV, no. 37.
Charles Rufus Morey, Gli Oggetti di Avorio, vol. 1, A 82.
Danielle Gaborit-Chopin, Ivoires du moyen-âge, no. 214.

Plate 9  Lyon Triptych
Lyon, Musée des Beaux-Arts (inv. nr. 422)
H: 18.7 cm  L: center 10.1 cm, wings 5.0 cm, W: center 18 mm, wings 3 mm
Picardy, 1250–1260

Iconography:
Center panel (carved): Top: Christ in Majesty, flanked by two angels holding the instruments of the Passion (Cross, nails, and lance with standard). Bottom: Crowned, standing Virgin and Child flanked by two candle-holding angels. Virgin holds a rose and the Child holds a sphere in left hand and embraces Virgin’s neck with right.
Wings (painted, top to bottom and left to right): Annunciation and Visitation; Nativity; Adoration of the Magi; Presentation in the Temple. Four bust-length orant angels in the pinnacles.

Provenance:
Collection of Jacques-Antoine Lambert, Lyon (1770–1850)
Bequeathed to Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lyon

Select Bibliography:

Plate 10  Cloisters Panel, central panel of a triptych.
New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Cloisters Collection (1970.324.6)
H: 16.8 cm  L: 10.2 cm  W: 10 mm
Picardy, 1250–1260

Iconography:
Top: Crucifixion with Longinus and Mary to the left and Stephaton and John the Evangelist to the right.
Bottom: Standing Virgin and Child. The crowned Virgin holds a sphere in her right hand. The Christ child holds a sphere in his left hand and wraps his right around his mother’s neck. Two candle-holding angels stand to either side.

Provenance:
Collection of Hermann Sax, Vienna (Sale Catalogue 1893, no. 121)
Collection of Emile Weinberger, Vienna (Sale Catalogue, Glückselig 1929, no. 256)
Bondy Collection, Vienna (according to Schnitzler, Volbach and Bloch)
Leopold Blumka Gallery, New York (according to Schnitzler, Volbach and Bloch)
Collection of Ernst and Marta Kofler-Truniger, Lucerne (after 1945) 7
Private sale in 1970 to Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Cloisters, New York

Select Bibliography:
Raymond Koechlin, *Ivoires gothiques français*, pl. XIX, no. 47.

7 Ernst Günther Grimme, in his introduction to the 1965 catalogue in *Aachner Kunstblattter*, notes that the Kofler-Truniger collection was assembled in a short twenty years, therefore indicating a post-war date for the beginning of the acquisitions.
Plate 11 Pierpont Morgan Panel, central panel of a triptych.

New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, (17.190.276)
H: 17.9 cm  L: 9.85 cm  W: 8.5 mm
Picardy, 1250–1260

Iconography:
Top: Crucifixion with Longinus and Stephaton, and two thieves.
Bottom: Standing Virgin and Child, both Mary and Christ hold spheres in their right and left hands respectively. Christ holds Mary’s neck with his right hand. Two candle-holding angels flank them.

Provenance:
Oscar Hainauer Collection, Berlin (Sale Catalogue, Bode 1897, no. 143)
Georges Hoentschel Collection, Paris (Pératé no. 35)
John Pierpont Morgan, Sr., London and New York (Purchased from Hoentschel in a private sale brokered by Jacques Seligmann in 1912)8
John Pierpont Morgan, Jr. donated a portion his father’s collection to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1917

Select Bibliography:
Wilhelm Bode, Die Sammlung Oscar Hainauer. The Collection of Oscar Hainauer (Berlin: W. Büxenstein, 1897), no. 143.
André Pératé, Collection Georges Hoentschel: Ivoires, Orfèvrerie Religieuse, Pierres (Paris: Librarie Centrale des Beaux-Arts, 1911), pl. XXVIII, no. 35.
Raymond Koechlin, Ivoires gothiques français, no. 49.

Plate 12  Courtauld Panel, central panel of a triptych.
London, Courtauld Institute Galleries (O.1966.GP.13)
H: 16.6 cm  L: 12.8 cm
Picardy, 1250–1260

Iconography:
Top: Christ in Majesty, with a crowned Virgin and John the Evangelist kneeling on either side. Two angels stand to the right and left holding the instruments of the Passion (Cross, nails, and lance).
Bottom: Standing Virgin and Child. The crowned Virgin holds a sphere in her right hand. The Christ child holds a sphere in his left hand and wraps his right around his mother’s neck. To the left is one of the three Magi, continuing an Adoration of the Magi from the lost left wing. To the right are Joseph and Mary with the Christ child, facing to the right, continuing the Presentation in the Temple from the lost right wing.

Provenance:
Collection of Gambier-Perry, London (1860 Inventory, Gothic Ivory no. 4; Chaffer’s Inventory 1875, no. 13)
Gambier-Perry Collection donated to the Courtauld Institute Galleries, London in 1966

Select Bibliography:

Plate 13  Brussels Panel, central panel of a triptych
Brussels, Musée de la Cinquantenaire (inv. V 388)
H: 16.8 cm  L: 5.4 cm  W: 19 mm
Picardy, 1250–1260

Iconography:
Roundel in gable: Head of Christ (Sainte Face)
Top: Crucifixion with the Virgin and Saint John
Bottom: Standing Virgin and Child between two candle bearing angels. The crowned Virgin holds a flower in her right hand, the Christ child holds his mother’s neck with his right hand and holds a sphere with his left.

Provenance:
Collection of Gustave Vermeersch, Brussels
Bequeathed to Musée des Arts Décoratif/ Musées Royaux d’Art et d’Histoire/Musée de la Cinquantenaire, Brussels in 1911
Select Bibliography:
*L’Art français aux Musées royaux d’art et d’histoire* (Brussels: Europalia, 1975), no. 50.

**Plate 14**  
**Mayer van den Bergh Triptych.**
Antwerp, Musée Mayer van den Bergh, (inv. 437)
H: 13.1 cm  L: centre 6 cm, left 2.8 cm, right 3 cm W: centre 6 mm, wings 4 mm
Picardy, 1255–1260

**Iconography:**
Top: Coronation of the Virgin, with candle-holding angels, two female saints holding books, and two thurible-holding angels on either side.
Bottom: Standing Virgin and Child, with the Virgin holding a sphere in her right hand and the Christ child holding a sphere in his left hand while wrapping his right around his mother’s neck. On the left wing are the three Magi. On the right wing is the Presentation at the Temple.

**Provenance:**
Louis Fidel Debruge-Duménil, Paris (Sale 1839–40, n. 44; Lugt 15279)
Carlo Micheli Collection, Paris (de Coo, no. 175)
Mayer van den Bergh, Antwerp purchased Micheli Collection in 1898
Museum Mayer van den Bergh founded in 1901

Select Bibliography:
Raymond Koechlin, *Ivoires gothiques français*, no. 54.

**Plate 15**  
**Kofler-Truniger Triptych.**
Current location unknown. Formerly Lucerne, Kofler-Truniger Collection (S 56)
H: 13.4 cm  L: 13.4 cm (from Koechlin)
Picardy, 1255–1260

**Iconography:**
Top: Coronation of the Virgin, with candle-holding angels, two female saints holding palms, and two thurible-holding angels on either side.
Bottom: Standing Virgin and Child, with the Virgin holding a sphere in her right hand and the Christ child holding a sphere in his left hand while wrapping his right around his mother’s neck. On the left wing are the three Magi. On the right wing is the Presentation at the Temple.
Provenance:
Karl zu Eltz Collection, Eltville (Frankfurt 1875)
Collection of Ernst and Marta Kofler-Truniger, Lucerne (after 1945)\(^9\)
Present location unknown

Select Bibliography:
*Historische Ausstellung kunstgewerblicher Erzeugnisse zu Frankfurt am Main 1875* (Frankfurt-am-Main: Keller, 1877), pl. 18.
Raymond Koechlin, *Ivoires gothiques français*, no. 53.
Hermann Schnitzler, Fritz Volbach and Peter Bloch. *Skulpturen ... Kofler-Truniger*, S 56.

**Plate 16 Waterton Triptych**
Current location unknown. Formerly Walton Hall, Wakefield, West Yorkshire.
H: 12.7 cm  L: 11.0 cm (from Koechlin)
Picardy, 1255–1260 (?)

Iconography:
Top: Crucifixion with Mary and John the Evangelist. On the left and right panels, respectively, are Ecclesia and Synagoga.
Bottom: Standing Virgin and Child between two candle-holding angels. In the wings are two female saints, holding palms in one hand and an undefined object in the other.

Provenance:
Collection of Charles Waterton, (June 3, 1782– May 27, 1865)

Select Bibliography:
Raymond Koechlin, *Ivoires gothiques français*, pl. XIX, no. 45.

**Plate 17 Abbeville Panel, central panel of a triptych**
Abbeville, Musée Boucher-de-Perthes (1891.88.852)
H: 12.6 cm  L: 7.0 cm  W: 9 mm
Picardy, 1255–1260

Iconography:
Top: Crucifixion with Longinus and Stephaton.
Bottom: Standing Virgin and Child, flanked by two candle-holding angels. The Christ Child holds his mother’s neck with right hand.

Provenance:
Collection of M. l’Abbé Dergny
Donated to the Musée du Ponthieu, Abbeville, October 9, 1857.

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\(^9\) Ernst Günther Grimme, in his introduction to the 1965 catalogue in *Aachner Kunstblätter*, notes that the Kofler-Truniger collection was assembled in a short twenty years, therefore indicating a post-war date for the beginning of the acquisitions.
Musée du Ponthieu merged with Musée d’Abbeville in 1954 to form the Musée Boucher-de-Perthes.

Bibliography:
Raymond Koechlin, *Ivoires gothiques français*, no. 50.

**Plate 18 Cleveland Panel, central panel of a triptych**

Cleveland, The Cleveland Museum of Art (29.437)

H: 12.8 cm  L: 7.7 cm  W: 14 mm

Picardy, 1255–1260

**Iconography:**
Top: Crucifixion with Longinus and Stephaton.
Bottom: Standing Virgin and Child, flanked by two candle-holding angels. The Christ Child holds his mother’s neck with right hand and a sphere in his left. The Virgin rests her right hand on the Child’s lap.

**Provenance:**
Purchased from Durlacher Brothers, London 1929 with funds from the J. H. Wade Fund

**Select Bibliography:**


**Plate 19 Metropolitan Triptych**

New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art (17.190.279a-e)

H: 12.9 cm  L: open 13.7 cm, closed 6.75 cm  W: centre 11 mm, wings 7 mm

Picardy, 1255–1260 (?)

**Iconography:**
Top: Crucifixion with Mary and John the Evangelist. Ecclesia and Synagoga on the left and right wings, respectively.
Bottom: Standing Virgin and Child, flanked by two candle-holding angels. The crowned Virgin holds a rose in her right hand. The Christ child embraces her with his right hand and holds a sphere in his left. On the left wing is Saint Paul, and on the right is Saint Peter.

**Provenance:**
Collection of M. Boy, Paris¹⁰
Collection of Frederick Spitzer, Paris (1890 Catalogue, no. 98; 1893 Sale, no. 98)
Collection of John Pierpont Morgan, Sr., New York and London (purchased at 1893 sale)

¹⁰ Beside the Spitzer catalogues, there is no corroborating evidence for this provenance information.
John Pierpont Morgan, Jr., donated a portion his father’s collection to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1917

Select Bibliography:
Emile Molinier, Catalogue des objets d'art et de haute curiosité, antiques, du moyen-âge & de la renaissance, composant l'importante et précieuse collection Spitzer, dont la vente publique aura lieu à Paris... 1893. Paris: Impr. de l'art, 1893, no. 98.
Raymond Koechlin, Ivoires gothiques français, pl. XX, no. 52.

Plate 20  Walters-Cluny Diptych
Left panel Baltimore, Walters Art Museum (71.157)
H: 32.7 cm  L: 12.9 cm W: 8 mm
Fragment of right panel, Paris, Musée national du Moyen Age–Thermes et hôtel de Cluny (Cl. 417)
H: 18.8 cm  L: 8.0 cm  W: 10 mm
Paris, circa 1240

Iconography:
Reads bottom to top in boustrophedon.
The betrayal of Judas; Judas receiving the Thirty pieces of Silver; the Arrest of Christ. (The Suicide of Judas; Christ being led before Pilate; Pilate washing his Hands.) The Flagellation; the Carrying of the Cross; Crucifixion with Adoring Longinus, Stephaton holding the Sponge, Two Thieves (one missing), Mary and John the Evangelist; Deposition with Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus, Mary and John the Evangelist. The Entombment with Mary, John the Evangelist, Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, and another apostle, the Three Women at the Empty Tomb. The Harrowing of Hell with Adam and Eve being rescued from the Hell’s Mouth, Noli me tangere.

Provenance:
Walters Panel
Collection of Frederick Spitzer, Paris (1890 Catalogue, no. 43; 1893 Sale, no. 78)
Not sold at 1893 auction and inherited by Mme. La Baronne Coche de la Ferte and Mme. Augustin Rey de Villette (Sale 1929, Anderson Galleries no. 544)
Collection of Henry Walters, Baltimore
Walters Art Museum founded in 1931
Cluny Fragment
Collection de Alexandre du Sommerard (1779–1842) (1843 Inventory, no. 1062)
Alexandre du Sommerard donated his Collection to the nation in 1843.

Select Bibliography:
Alexandre du Sommerard, Catalogue et Description de Objets d’Art... (Paris: Hôtel de
Cluny, 1883), no. 1062.
Auguste Molinier and Frédéric Spitzer. La collection Spitzer 1890, no. 43.
Raymond Koechlin, Ivoires gothiques français, nos. 40 and 42.
(21.7).
Richard H. Randall, Masterpieces of Ivory from the Walters Art Gallery (New York:
Hudson Hills Press in association with the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, 1985),
no. 266.
Alain Erlande-Brandenburg, Guide to the Collections. Musée national du Moyen Age
Peter Barnet, ed., Images in Ivory: Precious Objects of the Gothic Age (Princeton:
Princeton University Press, 1997), nos. 10 and 11.

Plate 21  Soissons Diptych
London and Albert Museum (A. 211-1865)
H: 31.9 cm  L: 11.35 cm  W: 10 mm
Paris, 1260–1270

Iconography:
Read from bottom to top in boustrophedon, beginning at the lower left hand corner.
Judas receives the thirty pieces of silver, the Arrest of Christ, the Suicide of Judas; Christ
led before Pilate, Pilate washes his Hands, the Flagellation; the Carrying of the Cross, the
Crucifixion with two Thieves, the Deposition with Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus,
Mary and John the Evangelist; the Entombment with Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus,
and another Apostle, the Resurrection, the Harrowing of Hell with Adam and Eve; the
Three Marys at the Empty Tomb, Noli me Tangere; Christ appearing to the Three Marys,
Doubting Thomas, the Ascension and Pentecost.

Provenance:
Before 1793, said to have been in the Treasury of the Abbey of Saint-Jean-des-Vignes,
Soissons (Didron 1861; Koechlin 1924)11
South Kensington Museum purchased from Webb in 1865

11 Danielle Gaborit-Chopin 1998 notes that the Treasury was sacked in 1567 by the Calvinists, therefore it
is unlikely that the diptych was part of their collection in the thirteenth century.
Select Bibliography:
William Maskell, Ancient and Medieval Ivories in the South Kensington Museum, 42–44.
Alfred Maskell, Ivories, pl. XXXII, 163.
Raymond Koechlin, Les ivoires gothiques français, pl. XV, no. 38.

Plate 22 Berlin Diptych
Berlin, Bode Museum, Skulptursammlung (623 & 624)
H: 32.7 cm  L: 12.5 cm  W: 8–10 mm
Paris, 1260–1270

Iconography:
Read from bottom to top in boustrophedon, beginning at the lower left hand corner.
Judas receives the thirty pieces of silver, the Arrest of Christ, the Suicide of Judas; Christ led before Pilate, Pilate washes his Hands, the Flagellation and an additional ax-carrying soldier; the Carrying of the Cross, the Crucifixion with two Thieves, the Deposition with Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus, Mary and John the Evangelist; the Entombment with Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus, and another Apostle, the Resurrection, the Harrowing of Hell with Adam and Eve; the Three Marys at the Empty Tomb, Noli me Tangere; Christ appearing to the Three Marys, Doubting Thomas, the Ascension and Pentecost.

Provenance:
Purchased in 1845 for the Royal Kunstkammer, Berlin
The Royal Kunstkammer became the Kaiser Freidrich Museum in 1875
1883 Wilhelm von Bode founded the Skulptursammlung
1897 collection moved to the newly opened Kaiser-Friedrich Museum
2000 the Skulptursammlung was merged with the Museum of Byzantine Art as the Bode Museum

Select Bibliography:
J. O. Westwood, Fictile Ivories, no. 873.
Wilhelm Bode, Ausstellung von Kunstwerken, 66.


**Plate 23**  
**British Museum Plaque, right leaf of a diptych, or front book cover.**  
London, British Museum (56.6-23.43)  
H: 22.6 cm  L: 12.9 cm  W: 4 mm  
Paris, 1280–1290

**Iconography:**  
Read from bottom to top in boustrophedon, beginning at the lower left hand corner.  
Pilate Washing his Hands, the Buffeting of Christ, the Flagellation. The Carrying of the Cross, the Crucifixion with two Thieves, the Deposition with Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus. Doubting Thomas, the Ascension and Pentecost.

**Provenance:**  
Maskell Collection, London (before 1856)  
1856 Maskell donated his collection to the British Museum, London  

**Select Bibliography:**  

**Plate 24**  
**Baboin Leaf, left panel of a diptych**  
Formerly Lucerne, Kofler-Truniger Collection (S 71)  
Current location unknown  
H: 21.7 cm  L: 10.3 cm (Koechlin)

**Iconography:**  
Judas receiving the Thirty pieces of Silver, Two Soldiers, The Arrest of Christ, the Suicide of Judas. One thief from the Crucifixion, the Deposition with Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus, Mary and John the Evangelist, the Entombment with Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus, and another Apostle; the Resurrection, the Women at the Tomb; Ascension, Pentecost.
Provenance:
Collection of Julius Heinrich Wilhelm Campe (1846–1909), Hamburg
Collection Paul (according to Schnitzler, Volbach and Block; Kat. Nr. 558)
Collection of Emile Baboin, Lyon (after 1912)
Kolfer-Truniger Collection, Lucerne (until 1970s)

Select Bibliography:
Raymond Koechlin, Les ivoires gothiques français, pl. XXII, no. 57.
Hermann Schnitzler, Fritz Volbach and Peter Bloch. Skulpturen... Sammlung E. und M. Kofler-Truniger, S 71.
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—, and Eugène Escribe. *Catalogue des Objets d’Art et de Haut Curiosité... qui composent les Collections de feu M. le Comte de Pourtalès-Gorgier et dont la vente aura lieu... le lundi 6 Février 1865*. Paris: Hôtel, rue Tronchet, 1865.


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