



Bourges south portal W-SR3(d)

1128

## Master Félix, the traveller (1107-1143)

1128

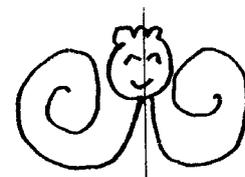
The range of his work tells me that Félix was a great traveller, seldom staying in one place for long. He preferred spiral vines that end in small leaves, and with long stalk-like fronds that project off the spirals. Animals are enfolded in the vines, often in pairs. In an unusual detail their tails merge into the branches, allowing one organic form to transform into another [r1]. Animal heads may fill the upper corner with a pair of vines that drop vertically from the mouth [r2]. In some cases these two vines merge into one, like the tails. Vines and fronds may also come out of the ears. Heads or berries may be placed at the centres of the whorls [r3].

Little leaves on long stems stick out from the spirals like flippers or lollipops, not seeming to grow out of the branches, but just added. The side branches emerge from sockets that do not cut across the main branch which expands to allow the lateral stems to emerge.

All the Félix spirals are centred on the flat faces of the block, and not on the corners [r2]. They have two or more turns leading to the centre, and are thus designed to visually hold your attention at the middle of the capital [r3], whereas in the work of a close companion, Grégoire, the centre seems almost incidental as the richer detailing leads your eye out of the circle [r4]. The comparatively two-dimensional curl on Félix's tri-partite leaf in the centre holds your gaze, while the three sharp corners in Grégoire's thrust your attention outwards.

The Félix designs are soft, with a deceptively easy flow. He was altogether a creative and whimsical carver and took great care over his detailing, as may be examined in the feathers of the bird [r1]. Little was gained when I tried to isolate the shapes of his fronds as they are mainly heron-type with regularly spaced tips. Leaves seem to have interested him a lot less than other elements.

I shall describe this master's work first with thumbnails of his variety of spiral forms, then the heads inside the spirals and under the corners of the imposts, and third with two devices he used to integrate the designs.



Bourges south portal W-SR3(d)

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Bourges south portal W-SR2(d)

1128

*The spiral and its centre*

Félix used spirals on capitals, imposts and archivolts, though the range of designs is not great. They have one and a half turns, or thereabouts, and if the vine comes from above the central leaf turns upwards, or if from below the leaf looks down. The leaf is simple, with three or four tips, and the leading tip is turned backwards [previous page].

The layouts are tightly controlled, so there is little unoccupied space. His desire to fill the whole surface may be why from the earliest at Angers he added lateral fronds [r1]. They grow outwards from the spiral passing either over or under the vine, like the spokes of a wheel. There are usually four of these to each spiral. Over time they gradually increased in width, became less spoke-like, and the tips were turned back in the heron manner.

The vine is rarely decorated with more than parallel grooves. Sockets are used only occasionally, and without consistency. The earliest are from the later 1110s and have simple spirals. These include the north range of the cloister at Saint-Aubin in Angers, and a little earlier the aisle and clerestory of the Etampes nave, the choir of the little priory outside Chartres, Saint-Martin-au-Val, and the Lavillettertre west portal. Lateral fronds pass over and under the vines, and end in a simple terminals. The lobes are scooped, without veins. As time passed the centre of the whorl became more dominant to lead the eye inwards. The designs are tentative and uncertain: obviously the work of an inexperienced young man, yet with considerable artistic merit.

In the next section we will examine the use of heads in the centre of the whorl instead of leaves. The photos are displayed in date-order on this and the next page.



Angers, Saint-Aubin cloister, north range 1120



Etampes ND, nave WS2(a) 1109



Saint-Martin-du-Val choir E2e(a) 1117



Villers-Saint-Paul impost W-wR1 stage 1 1108



Etampes nave aisle WS3(a) 1109



Etampes nave clerestory WN2(c) 1110



Saint-Leu-d'Esserent narthex (w) 1110



Lavillettertre west door impost 1117



Lavillettertre west door 1117



Saint-Martin-des-Champs EeC(d) 1123



Ivry-la-Bataille drip with simple socket 1124



Saint-Loup-de-Naud W-wL2 impost 1125

DRAFT



Sacra di San Michele, undercroft right panel 1127



Bourges south portal W-sR3(d) 1128



Chef-du-Pont En2 1129



Saint-Martin-des-Champs As4+Rn(a) 1130



Dunfermline cathedral south door 1131



Aulnay-sur-Bois WN2(a) 1132



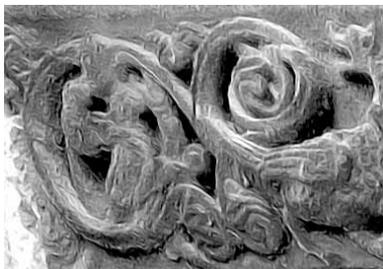
Sens cathedral An1(d) 1133



Carrières-Saint-Denis retable (Louvre) 1132



Vermenton W.cl1 impost 1133



Le Mans W-s impost, left face 1134



Saint-Denis-en-France Xs3ne(a) 1135



Dijon, Musée Archéologique, ex cloister 1140



Rochester cathedral W-wR5 impost 1141



Saint-Denis ambulatory As2nw(a) 1142



Châlons, Notre-Dame south porch impost 1143



Châlons, Notre-Dame nave pier 1142

*Heads in the centre and under corners.*

Replacing the leaf in the centre of a whorl with a head occurred after working at the Sacra di San Michele. The head is usually protected by a close-fitting hood of foliage following the curve of the vines. It is a tender holding, almost vulnerable in its closeness. The merging qualities found in some capitals are present as there is no neck to support the head as it grows out of the end of the vine. Over time the heads developed in variety and character, but the essential holding and protecting qualities remained. The Saint-Denis impost has the same little ball at the end of the tip as in Saint-Martin, but was not used thereafter [b1]. As before, the photographs the seven campaigns have been arranged in chronology order.



Sacra di San Michele xS-sL4 1127



Saint-Denis W.cR impost 1132



Le Mans south portal W-sL5 1134



Angers drip mould, detail W.c^R3 1134



Chartres portal drip W.cL^ (replaced) 1141



Saint-Denis ambulatory As2nw(a) 1142



Chalons, Notre-Dame south portal W-sR5 1143

The situation is different where the head has been placed under an impost as they are exposed on both sides. They reflect the function of the capital in providing an upward support for the impost by setting the hair into strongly vertical sharp-pointed tufts. The startled expression add vitality.

When these 24 campaigns are arranged in date-order there is a gradual and definable improvement in technique and artistic acumen, meaning there are few differences save in those aspects we would attribute to maturity. Ears are often sharp-pointed, the features are bulbous, the hair wavy and the eyes staring under deeply chiselled brows. The ears are particularly prominent and the noses carved with considerable sensitivity.

Those before 1110 have fairly elementary layouts with no attempt until Villers-Saint-Paul to relate form to function [b1]. The design at Saint-Loup is relatively thin and unformed compared to the complexity and intricate fluidity of Châlons.



Saint-Martin-au-Val choir 1107



Etampes nave WN2sw(c) 1110



Villers-Saint-Paul west portal stage 1 1108



Saint-Leu-d'Esserent X(gw) 1115



Angers, Saint-Aubin cloister 1120



Lavilletterre west portal W.cR3 (worn) 1117



Saint-Loup-de-Naud W.cL impost 1125



Bourges south portal W-sR3(d) 1128



Chef-du-Pont EN2(a) 1129



Chef-du-Pont ES2(a) 1129



Dunfermline south door 1131



Aulnay-sur-Bois WN2(a) 1132



Til-Châtel nave WN1(a) 1133



Vermenton W.cL1 1133



Sens cathedral choir dado 1133



San Domingo de Calzada choir window 1137



Dijon, Musée Archéologique, ex cloister 1138



Cluny museum 1140



Châlons-en-Champagne, south porch W-sR6 1143



Châlons-en-Champagne, west porch W.cR1 1143



Loches porch X-sL2 1148



Berzy-le-Sec apse WN1s 1155



Trie-Château narthex portal W-wCr4 1164

*Two devices, holding and merging*

Félix was a hugger. He carved people grasping or holding onto the vines in symmetrical arrangements. The first would have been in the Etampes nave, an enormous stone that was, in a way, too large to comprehend for a man who had been working on normal-sized capitals, so that fronds and vines meander in poorly-coordinated festoons [r1]. The leaves are on plates and point upwards from a vine that descends. He was still learning.

The man at Etampes does not physically hold the vines with his hands, but just hugs them to his chest. In the Le Mans nave from a little later the design is busier yet more coherent, and the figure has been placed in the centre of the block to hold the tendrils to the corner crockets [r2].

Saint-Martin-des-Champs has the next example, admittedly in a restored capital with little of the original [r3]. I credit it to Félix from the hug. There are also a number of similar poses among the aisle capitals of Saint-Germain-des-Prés that were carved in the manner required by the lead mason, possibly Jérôme, as I have discussed in the piece on The Duke [r4].

He also hugged the birds in one of the colonnettes in the Saint-Denis portal, BB in the Musée de Cluny [b1]. Not only does the man embrace the birds, but in another characteristic, their tails merge into the sprouts that return to support the man. The plumage on the birds is like the bird in the Bourges capital and the Le Mans dragon. The collar was a rare device. It is all very tender. Indeed, softness is an ever-present quality in his work.

He possibly carved one of the colonnettes in the west portal at Chartres [b2]. The side tendrils emerge from sockets, the leaves are simple with little impact on the design, and the bird's neck wraps around the tendril.

The foliage changed from austere at Etampes, to busy at Le Mans and to florid and more floppy at Saint-Martin until at Saint-Germain he seems to have enthusiastically accepted the full abundance that characterised all the product of that workshop. Thus a number of campaigns can be linked through this one device, and as they include figures may lead to other carvings that Félix may have achieved.



Etampes nave WN2(a) 1108



Le Mans nave Ws2(a) 1112



Saint-Martin AN4+L(a) recarved 1130



Saint-Germain-des-Prés An1w(a) 1142

Saint-Denis west portal shaft (Cluny BB) 1132

Chartres colonnette group 1 W.cR2b 1138



**The earlier works (1107-1120)**

1107

By starting this analysis with the earliest works we can follow the evolution of his style unfolding naturally. Where before I have begun with mature carvings and used the characteristics unearthed there to identify the more distant past, this time I decided not to do that because there is a great deal of figurative sculpture involved that needs to be displayed within its own stylistic sequence alongside that of the capitals. This is why I have begun this piece by setting out the varieties of spirals, heads and hugs that make up a large art of his dossier.

The earliest I can find are raw yet complex. The tendrils are not arranged in a simple way with considerable intricacy yet without real order. Félix has not yet developed that capacity. one in the Saint-Martin-au-Val choir may be his earliest with a lugubrious face and a spiral on the side that is typical of much later work [r1]. The rearing dogs to the right are on another stone. The two levels of Etampes nave seem much more open, possibly because he was faced with enormous blocks and had insufficient skill to apply his normal much smaller template to something so large [b2].

The Le Mans nave walls fall into an even more complex stage. Even though the stone is coarse-grained he has turned the vine into a space-filler leaving nothing empty: perhaps a reaction to the paucity of Etampes?



Saint-Martin-au-Val choir 1107



Villers-Saint-Paul west portal stage 1 1108

1109



Etampes nave aisle WS3(a) 1109



Etampes nave clerestory WN2(c) 1110



Le Mans nave Ws3(a) 1112

1113

I would slip into here the uncertain possibility that he worked in the retro-choir of Romsey Abbey in England. He worked in England in later years with some similar motifs, but from the uncertainty in the designs I would be happier dating these from an earlier trip.

One group of capitals carry suggestions of his favourite detailing. Were they carved by him or did they inspire some of his later work? The tips of the upper leaf are framed with a plate and have turned-back scrolls at the end, as in Bourges [r1]. There is an animal hanging in the corner of the block carved with considerable detail in the fur, and framed in the same type of foliage [b1], and on the other face a pair of fronds tied with a collar with tips spread across a berry [b2]. On another capital there is a single vine lying across the body of the lion [b3]. These all have a French feel about them, but were they by a young Félix?



Romsey Abbey England, retro-choir ES1se(a) 1113



Romsey Abbey, England, retro-choir EN1s(a) corner, left face and EC3(a). 1113

1113

In addition, around the Abbess's Door on the south side there are two capitals that could have been by Félix [r1]. One has spirals and the other has a dog's head with big ears and curled-back vines [b1,2]. This door gave access to a cloister that has been destroyed, but if Félix had carved there it would have given him enough work to make the journey worthwhile.

If we refer to his work in France to help date these carvings in England, I suggest they lie before the Saint-Leu-d'Esserent narthex and the Lavilletterte portal, that is, before 1115. Say 1113 or earlier.



Romsey Abbey WS1-sL2 1113



Romsey Abbey WS1-sR1 1113



Romsey Abbey, Abbess's Door 1113

1115

Romsey would have been followed by the gallery of the westwork at Saint-Leu-d'Esserent where he carved a single impost over one of the external windows [r2] and possibly one capital on the inside [r3]. It has long fronds that turn back and under the stem, and a rather chaotic flow in the tendrils like Le Mans. The chaos was not to be curbed until he met up with men with more control over their work at Saint-Aubin five years later.

Just afterwards, by my assessment, Félix carved one of the capitals in the west portal of Lavilletterte [b1]. It has his turned back-and-under leaf as in Saint-Leu (arrow). I could not find anything of his in the interior unless he carved three that have long-frond foliage and turned-back arrangements and blocky heads not unlike those in the Etampes clerestory [b2].

The general arrangement is also like one in the aisle level at Etampes [b3]. Fronds in both are long and sumptuous, on long stalks, and the branches swing across the surface in a similar manner.

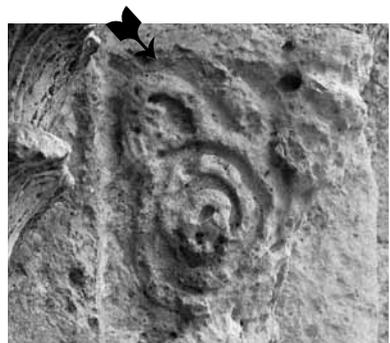


Saint-Leu-d'Esserent X(gw) 1115



Saint-Leu-d'Esserent XN1s(g) 1115

1117



Lavilletterte west portal W.cR3 (worn) 1117



Lavilletterte west portal W.cR3 (worn) 1117



Etampes nave WN2(a) 1108

1116

In Saint-Leu and Etampes the vines wander, crossing over and ending in fan-like leaves with turned tips. In Jumièges there is one in the west end of the nave gallery at Jumièges that has the leaves and tendrils of Félix [r5]. Two other capitals with birds woven into his vines could, from comparison with later examples, also have been his [b next page].

The bulk of the nave is usually dated somewhat earlier, though there is evidence for later work on the eastern piers of the nave. If by Félix, these would have been carved around the same time as Lavilletterte, say 1116. The fronds have curled tips on plates, there are no sockets and the leaves and birds are threaded through the vines. The wings are shield-like with a stiffness not found in later work.



Jumièges west nave gallery W9-wR(g) 1116

1116



Jumièges WN1s(a)



Jumièges WN1s(a)

1116

1120

There is a more complex yet more controlled and more mature arrangement in the north range of the cloister of Saint-Aubin in Angers [b3]. As he tightened the whorls the movement of the birds grows in energy and forcefulness. The legs are spread-eagled, the wings point upwards as if he had just landed and the beak is thrust into the corner vine, an aggressive move that we will meet later in Bourges and possibly Souillac. Fronds are long and have curled tips, the wings are plastered onto the body, and rest on plates.

Two nearby capitals have the same circularity in the vines and fronds. They look more like long off-shoots rather than any foliage we would see in nature [b]. This is very stylised work where pattern is more important than verisimilitude. The fronds turn back on themselves in a device that was much more fully developed in the Bourges jambs [page after next].



Angers, Aubin cloister

1120



Angers, Saint-Aubin cloister entry

1120



Angers, Saint-Aubin cloister entry

1120



Angers, Saint-Aubin cloister entry

1120

A long-eared head on the corner of one is a little more regular in layout. The tips of the fronds turn over the vine like the hands in the clinging figures [r3,4]. The vines are decorated with tiny dentils in all these capitals [r2,4].

The head has twin vines descending from the mouth that curl down and to the side. They form whorls, a little like the Duke. The importance of the centre of the block is down-played by minimising the size of any leaf that sits there. The spaces between the vines is filled with long fronds. All these elements were present in the Saint-Aubin cloister.

The curls of hair look like a hat, the long fronds have pointed tips and rest on a plate. The tendrils are decorated with parallel lines and balls. The fronds that tuck around the vines look like the fingers of a hand, with the same feeling of 'gripping' as used in the hugs [b4].

In the Chapter House entry he probably carved the dragon in the lower voussoir [b next page]. The way the tail morphs into a head with prominent ears, the line and dot decoration along the tail, the shield-like wings all suggest Félix. The upper part of the thorax is made up of segmented plates



Angers, Saint-Aubin cloister

1120



Angers, Saint-Aubin cloister

1120

DRAFT

just like those across the body of the gryphons at Beauvais. These elements are different to those by Jérôme where tails twist but do not morph.<sup>ICMA 04.</sup>



Angers, Saint-Aubin cloister lower arch L6 1120

One other voussoir could have been by Félix, with the vines emerging from mouth and ears [b]. The simple foliage, the decoration along spines and vines, and the fronds crossing under the tendrils all suggest him, as does the up-turned snout, and the plate under the leaf.



Angers, Saint-Aubin lower arch Lf 1120

Nearby there is a door into the refectory [r1]. The arches over the door have three rows of highly decorated voussoirs. The two lions about to munch the dog have up-turned snouts formed from a curve that appears in much of his work [b]. It is a large 'S' curve that sweeps back on itself and the radius is subtly reduced as it does so. It is present tentatively in the vines at Jumièges, and more confidently in the chapter house entry. Here, in the refectory, he seems to have used it with aplomb, and may be followed along the back and under the chest of the lions. It also defines the snout and runs from lower lips to tip of the nose [r2]. Is not the grip of the lions just another way of holding?

All his life such curves and complex spiral tendrils were an integral part of his designs, albeit often executed with considerable subtlety.



Angers Saint-Aubin refectory door right 1121



Angers, Saint-Aubin refectory door, apex inner arch 1121



Angers, Saint-Aubin refectory door inner arch

DRAFT

At the apex of the middle voussoir immediately above the lions a lamb stands flanked by incense-bearing angels [b]. Notice the same pronounced curves along the back-neck and chest-neck of the lamb [r1]. The angels are, by comparison to those Jérôme carved over one of the chapter house windows. Those by Félix are two-dimensional with much simpler wings and without the dynamism in the Jérôme carving.<sup>ICMA 04.</sup>

On the right of the door there is another rinceau capital in the Félix manner with a worn, almost indecipherable head on the corner [r2]. This door is not often visible to the public but many elements seem to be in his manner. As a leading hand in the sculpture Félix had the 'right' to carve one of the capitals, so one has to ask which of the other capital carvers made which of the other archivolts?

From the advance in Félix's carving manner and details I would place the refectory door after the work he accomplished in the cloister openings into the chapter house, that is around 1121. He worked here for quite a long time with a team that included Jérôme, Grégoire, Willow and the Duke Master.



Angers, Saint-Aubin refectory door middle arch



Angers, Saint-Aubin refectory door R2 1121



Angers, Saint-Aubin refectory door, apex middle arch 1121

### 1122 *Growing skills in the Paris Basin (1122-1125)*

A little later Félix carved one capital in the eastern chapel dado of Saint-Martin-des-Champs, also working with the same group of carvers as well as Long-Leaf and Gripple [r3]. Fronds branch off the main stems with only nominal sockets, which in time become a more definite feature. He continued to embellish the outer tip of the fronds with little balls. The fronds sit on plates or on mirror images of themselves. The arrangement of the whorls is orderly, though not the descending branches that are held together with collars, an idea that would be dispensed with from here on.

In the next year Félix may have worked on the north door at Saint-Etienne in Beauvais [r4]. There is an effaced king in the centre of the tympanum who holds on to the vines in just the same way as those on the previous pages [next page]. If he had carved the tympanum he may have been the senior man on the job. It has familiar triple-tipped foliage emerging out of the tendrils and the same circles of vines as in Angers. The stiff right foot stepping over the frond was repeated in many other places over the years, right up to Notre-Dame in Châlons. See the large illustration in v.4:85.

At this early stage in his career the figures are rigid and monumental in character, but the heads are too



Beauvais, Saint-Etienne Wn-n tympanum 1124



Saint-Martin-des-Champs E(d) 1122



Beauvais, Saint-Etienne Wn-n tympanum 1124

1122

1123

damaged to note more than the overall form [r2]. The single vine that crosses the body of the gryphon is typical, as are the paired whorls just above the thorax. The king's crown has little whorls on it as in the giant heads at the base of the Bourges jamb [b1, see page 18]. His feet are hidden behind the legs of the dragons, unlike the figures in Etampes and Le Mans where the firmly planted legs strongly support the design.

From his characteristics discussed earlier, he would have carved the outer row of archivolts above the tympanum, because the animal's tails morph into vines, their bodies are symmetrically paired across the block and the elongated fronds with pointed tips sit on plates [b2].

Grégoire and the SS Master also worked there, one on a capital and the other on the first row of archivolts. From the design of the fronds and the plate under it his chronology suggests that Beauvais would be close to the Saint-Martin dado, in the early 20s. The doorway lies below the aisle capitals and was built before this end of the nave was vaulted in the 1140s.

Félix may also have carved the outer left capital of the doorway with the wandering tendrils [b3].

I will have better pix in May

1123



Beauvais, Saint-Etienne Wn-n tympanum 1124



Beauvais Saint-Etienne Wn-n outer archivolt 1124



Beauvais, Etienne Wn-nL3

1124

From here was engaged on the portals of Ivry-la-Bataille and Saint-Loup-de-Naud where, as in Beauvais, he continued to work with Grégoire.



Socket between branches

This may be where he decided to develop sockets into features. Those at Ivry are simple, being little more than a change in thickness as the minor vine emerges from the major [r2]. But in later works the grooves are like two strands of rope. They are emphasised and lie across the vine that curves towards the centre, rather than crossing the major tendril that connects the spirals [left].



Ivry drip with simple socket 1124

1125

In the porch at Saint-Loup-de-Naud the fronds are more radial, and seem freer, yet the head on the corner holds the design together [r3]. The double tendrils descend vertically from the mouth, the ears are long and the thin fronds are on stalks of uniform thickness.

In order to maintain the chronological sequence I will refer to some figure sculpture that Félix may have carved while at Saint-Loup, but with the understanding that it is only as more examples accumulate over the next few pages that the connections will become clearer. I repeat that identifying sculpture is not my major aim in these pieces, but suggestions are included to broaden the connections.

One column-figure has features that become characteristic in later work [r1 next page]. She has a little fold of cloth between the left arm and the chest, and the braids seem attached to the neck so that they move in a soft and natural way across the body, turning sideways to pass the arms. The fingers of the right hand are excessively long. The folds in the cloth are arranged in a simple way even though they are densely packed. The head



Saint-Loup-de-Naud west portal L impost 1124

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1124

has the drilled nostrils and beautifully formed eye socket of the lions, with equally spaced double lines around the eye, and with slight yet accurate rounding of the eyeball at the edges [r2].

Immediately above this statue there are two figures in the archivolt and lintel with similar characteristics [b]. The arrangement of clothing is similar, the angel has the wings of Saint-Aubin with feathers in defined layers framed along the top edge [r3] and the apostle has exceptionally long fingers. Not much to go on, especially as the general form can be found elsewhere.



Saint-Loup-de-Naud archivolt L\*1 1125



Saint-Loup-de-Naud lintel L1 1125



Saint-Loup-de-Naud L2 column figure 1125



Saint-Loup-de-Naud L2 column figure head 1125

There are two capitals immediately underneath with birds entangled in the vines, long fronds with turned tips, dentils along the vine and collars [b]. The collars are in the style of Jérôme, who was a companion on this job. Indeed, Félix seems to have learned a great deal from Jérôme while working with him as the quality of his workmanship has improved considerably since Angers four years earlier. He was probably in his mid-30s at this time.

The upturned head of the gryphon with its open mouth, and the curve from the nose to the forehead, the sharply-pointed ears, drilled nostrils and



Saint-Loup-de-Naud west portal W.cl.2,3 1125



Angers, Saint-Aubin refectory door, apex middle

DRAFT

the beautifully formed eyes are like the lions at Angers [b].

I do not for one moment think that someone as competent as Félix would have restricted his practice to impostes and capitals, though it is through these initial contacts that we most readily recognise him.



Heads compared at Saint-Loup and Saint-Aubin refectory

***Félix the traveller***

In searching western Europe for works by the masters of the Paris Basin I have found their characteristics across a wide area. I worked on the principle that any piece that looked different from the regional manner could indicate an itinerant sculptor. This way the qualities of Félix’s *œuvre* stand out because they do not exist in the local sculptural repertoires.

After years of searching I found a number scattered over a wide area of Europe, which is why I came to believe that Félix was a travelling man. He may have been called from afar because he was good, or maybe he was driven by his own dissatisfaction or vulnerability, but for whatever reason he travelled over 8,000 kilometres during his life, calculated on the shortest routes [r1]. He travelled more than Grégoire, and seems to have left work in Scotland, Burgundy, in Spain and Provence that, with working stops on the way, may have taken many years in travel time alone.

I believe a reasonable chronology can be established from the way his designs became more rigorous and mellifluous in time, and the forms more varied with increasing emphasis on people and animals.

From the rather callow work of his earlier years he gradually learned three crucial things during his travels: how to set out his designs with geometric order, the value of including people and animals in a formal way, and how to combine these in vital and dynamic arrangements.

Having already mentioned fifteen earlier campaigns up to the Saint-Loup-de-Naud porch, I will continue to address the later buildings in date-order [r2]. They will skip around from country to country because that is what the internal chronology of this master requires.

It is likely that after Saint-Loup he and Grégoire travelled together to the south, possibly for some years. Both of them seem to have worked on the undercroft at the Sacra di San Michele. This mountain-top retreat hovers over the most accessible pass into Italy, the Monginevro. Here, or on the way, he teamed up with André and Palmier.

From these four men, and possibly most significantly from the Italian carver Nicholaus who signed one of the stones at the Sacra, Félix learned about the formal placement of figures, how to match pairs and to maintain centrality, and how to free up these figures within the structural matrix created by the vines.



Travels of Master Félix 1107-1143

**List of early campaigns**

1107	Saint-Martin-au-Val	choir aisle
1108	Villers-Saint-Paul	west portal stage I
1109	Etampes Notre-Dame	nave aisle
1110	Etampes Notre-Dame	nave clerestory
1112	Le Mans	nave walls
1113	Romsey	choir, south door
1115	Saint-Leu-d’Esserent	narthex gallery
1116	Jumièges	nave gallery
1117	Lavilletterre	west portal
1120	Angers, Aubin cloister	north range
1121	Angers, Aubin refectory	doorway
1122	Saint-Martin-des-Champs	chapel dado
1123	Beauvais, Saint-Etienne	north door
1124	Ivry-la-Bataille	portal
1125	Saint-Loup-de-Naud	west porch

DRAFT

1127

Félix may have helped on the lower stone in the left jamb, the one signed by Nicolaus. He may have been asked to carve one of the whorls with a dog's head in the centre [r1]. This may have been where his penchant for placing heads in the centre of whorls began. It is surrounded by his usual fronds emerging out of sockets that slip under the adjacent vine, and with tips hooking back onto it. I suggest he worked on or applied the finishing touches to only parts of this stone because the bouquets in the middle of some spirals are not in his manner

The opposite jamb included work by Grégoire. Working on four jobs and travelling together would have developed a close personal relationship between these two men. The fact that Grégoire concentrated on figurative sculpture rather than carving capitals would have had an effect on Félix.

On other parts of the same stone there are the long-stalked berries he later used in his Bourges jambs, and then almost everywhere from here on [b right arrow]. There are little fronds that grow out of sockets with tips clinging on to the edges of a tendril [left arrow]. The sockets have two ridges that cut across the main vine.



Sacra di San Michele, detail right panel 1127



Sacra di San Michele, undercroft right panel signed by Nicholaus 1127

The bird entangled in a vine is not particularly different from the one in the Saint-Loup capital carved a couple of years earlier, with the square-cut tail, layered wings and careful detailing in the head [r2].

In the little dog notice the curves along the back, the long toes of the paw and the detailing in the eye and shaped from the same curves in the Saint-Aubin lamb [b]. The neck is caught in a vine that ends in a heron leaf turned underneath and over to grip. The ribs are clearly marked as in earlier animals, the berries are on long stalks and the upper layer of fur is set out in clearly delineated tufts.

I suppose there is a possibility that Félix was Nicholaus, except that the latter appears to have firmly established antecedents in Lombardy, whereas Félix has his roots in northern France.



Saint-Loup-de-Naud west portal W.c.13 1125



Sacra di San Michele, undercroft right panel 1127



Angers, Saint-Aubin refectory door middle arch 1120

DRAFT

1128

**Teamwork in the Bourges south portal jambs**

Not everybody specialised. In every building the plain ashlar had to be carved by somebody. It is my impression that, except perhaps for the most talented and well-renowned carvers, everybody shared in carving all the stones, be they for walling, bases, ribs or capitals. The Laon gallery certainly suggests this [v.6:ch.12].

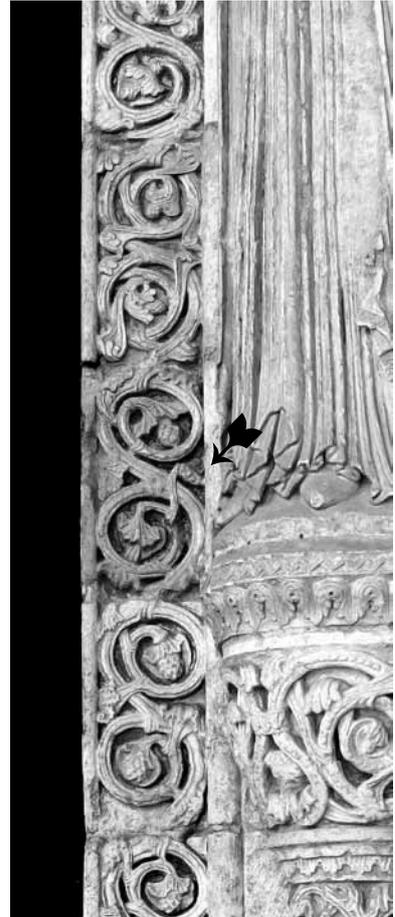
Bourges provides an insight into working methods as we can examine the way a large crew approached one common design element: the door jambs of the south portal [r1].

There are fourteen stones with repeated patterns of a double spiral vine finishing with a leaf or acorn in the centre, and with small fronds that fill the spaces in between. At the joints between the blocks the vines are arranged to meet each other, a little like the children’s game, ‘head, body, legs’.

I worked out from his other work that the template was determined by Grégoire. The details suggest that the work was divided among four groups of men, each controlled by a different carver. For example, one has four offshoots to each branch, and another has three or less. The former are more densely packed, whereas the foliage on the latter is more articulated, and even drilled. Some have strongly-cupped leaves that taper towards the branch placed in pairs, with their tips facing outwards while others are cupped inwards. This group is discussed in v.6:\*

By comparing the minor detailing with the character of his work elsewhere one group of four may be assigned to Félix at the time that he carved a nearby capital [r2]. In one of his stones, the lowest on the left jamb, the vine emerges from a head with upstarting hair [b1].

The leaves are the simplest of the four carvers, the petals under the acorns are turned back at the tips and are regular in outline, there are only two or three fronds emerging from each spiral and the projecting stalks are long and thin, and bent in the middle so the berry looks like a lollypop [arrows b1.3]. This characteristic berry was used in the left embrasure impost at Saint-Loup and the Sacra [r].



Bourges south door jambs, Félix’s marked by arrow



Saint-Loup-de-Naud L3-2 impost 1125



Bourges south porch W-sR3(d) 1128

Bourges south porch door jambs L1, L4 and L2



DRAFT

1128

I am also intrigued by the possibility that he may have carved this stately figure in the left archivolt jamb, and if so was he also the carver of one of my favourite knights in the archivolt of the Châteaudun south portal [b]?

Powerful, square figures and faces, finely carved lips, deeply drilled noses, stolid. There are creases above the nose and lips, firm jaws, and bodies that are longer than the legs. The form of the body is visible under the clothing. The character of the woman is dreamy, the knight uncertain, reflecting an inner mood not often found in sculpture of this period. Félix seems comfortable with frontal figures that stand exposed to life. Fingers are long, the nose drilled, lips characterful and full, especially the lower lip.

Ears were not particularly important, and set higher in the head than low. The clothes are delineated with single grooves, as in the Saint-Loup Emma Thompson figure [b3]. There and at Bourges the cloth is tucked behind the forearm to emphasise the separation of the limbs and the soft curves of the wimple hugs the neck and breast, just as the fold of cloth over the left arm continues as a ridge to the elbow.



Bourges south porch W-sL^1

1139



Châteaudun south portal W-sL^3

1133



Saint-Loup-de-Naud south column figure L2 1125

At Bourges there are two archivolt figures that could have been carved by Félix well before Chartres [b1,2]. They have rounded bodies, but with unusual postures that suggest a movement caught in the instant. Long fingers, clear-cut and individual heads, extra loops of cloth and unusual hairdos.

The body, though truncated, has a sensitive corporeality missing elsewhere among the archivolts. Both wings are framed within a ridge of feathers along the top edges.

The joins in both stones at the midriff are marked by arrows, and the crude vestments suggests that the lower blocks were carved by a different mason.



Bourges south porch archivolt L^3

1128



Bourges south porch archivolt R^3

1128

1124

Knowing that Félix had worked at Ivry some four years earlier, I went looking among the badly damaged archivolt statues still in place and was struck by this one on the left side [r1]. The posture of the angel is realistic, particularly the way he pulled his clothing up over the knee. There is also a fold of cloth under the arm pulled up against the stomach [b2].

Perhaps also this angel [b1]. He is more static in posture, but the complex folds of the cloth fall in a real manner and emphasise the outline of the limbs. He gives the impression that he is walking off the cloud and into the portal.



Ivry, left archivolt detail L^4 1124



Ivry, left archivolt detail 1124



Ivry, left archivolt 1124

Chef-du-Pont is in Normandy. It has a small rib-vaulted apse with two large capitals on which he used a template that was an expanded version of Saint-Martin [b1,2]. The detailing of one of them is taut and less plastic, suggesting that it may have been carried out by an assistant [b3].

1129



Chef-du-Pont EN2(a) 1123



Chef-du-Pont EN2(a) 1123



Chef-du-Pont ES2(a) 1123

The whole gang from Bourges returned to Paris to carve some of the capitals in the aisles of Saint-Martin-des-Champs. There is a spiral capital in south aisle with a triple bouquet in the centre rather than the single frond used at Bourges and Chef, but in other respects contains all his mannerisms [b1]. The second capital is also ascribable to him since it is an adaptation of Chef [b2]. The third is narrower and designed like the last, but for the large pine cone that occurs nowhere else [b3]. All designs were influenced by the 'instruction to share foliate details' <sup>ICMA-05:14</sup>.

1130



Saint-Martin-des-Champs AS4+R(a) 1130



Saint-Martin-des-Champs AN1+L(a) 1130



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