

ICMA Master Carvers Series

A resource for discussion and information.

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18 Rameau the Weaver (1103-1143)

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The capitals discussed here may be examined in larger format in vols. 3-5 of *The Ark of God*, and when completed and professionally edited these studies will be published in volumes 6 and 7.

This is number 18 of an on-going series describing Early Gothic carving masters for discussion and comments

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Paris, Sainte-Geneviève (Musée de Cluny)



Angers cathedral, west portal drip R4.

Rameau the Weaver (1103-1143)

I now have enough works by Rameau to follow an evolutionary path from very undisciplined work in the Nouvion tower to carving of stunning complexity and competence along the Loire. From the earliest capitals it may be hard to believe that he was embarking on what was to be an illustrious career. Without the steps in between, these connections would have remained hidden, but with them we have an opportunity to follow the possible life over a forty-year career.

The two works above would have been more than twenty years apart. The intermediate carvings that show each step in his development link the large stone from Sainte-Geneviève to the smaller drip mould in the cathedral of Angers. Whereas we might sustain doubts, one being grandly impressive and the other intimate in detail, the evidence lies in the works in between.

There is, of course, a possibility that they were developmental stages of a team where more than one individual was involved, yet if so the importance of these identifications for the chronology of the team remains. Personally, I find the traits sufficiently individual that it is hard not to value most of this sculpture, both foliate and figurative, as the product of a single hand.

Characteristics of the Rameau style

The designs dance across the surface, playing in gavottes and minuets like a musical score. There is a playful happiness, an easy inconsequentiality in this work. The loose arrangement of the tendrils, the placement of fronds, the diminished importance of the corners, and the use of little trefoil leaves. Indeed, the latter became one hallmark in his early years.

Tendrils that lap over and under one another is a rare device in the north and is one of the primary identifications for Rameau [r1]. It is more common in other regions such as Aquitaine and Italy. The difficulty in carving overlapping vines lies in the changes to surface planes. Unless the vines have little thickness, the one that goes under will push the upper one outwards, creating a bulge and an emphasis that affects the feel of the design. The locations of the overlaps assume some importance and required a specific approach to the arrangement that posed more difficulties than when the vines were all on the one plane.

Rameau had a limited number of designs. His major one, which he continued all through his life, I would define as a loose or slightly chaotic weave combined with occasional symmetry. Where he used an axis of symmetry, it was invariably drawn from the corner of the impost, rather than in the more common manner down the face of the block [r2,3].

This arrangement has the advantage of anchoring the design even where the faces are of different lengths. Tendrils could cross over each other and fronds be placed at whim as it pleased him while retaining some a sense of control within the whimsicality.

In his early years a number were arranged without symmetry, but entirely from a visual balance [r1,2]. Between them lie a series that show the consistent evolution of motifs, such as vines and figures, that are bent around the corner. The aliveness of the arrangement comes from the apparent chaos, the denial of symmetry being in opposition to the passion of that age for perfection [r3].

The Urcel narthex, Sainte-Geneviève and the Fontevraud nave show a different kind of order where there is symmetry around the vertical corner and some almost straight tendrils on the faces [b]. The vines were assembled from straight and curved sections around very approximate axes in the corner and mid-face. The fronds were arranged more for convenience than for any axiality, showing that in the design the vines were the primary consideration, and the rest was made to fit as best it could.

Over the years his work became more dense, the fronds more packed in order to fill the spaces between the vines. There is a gradual movement



Etampes Notre-Dame nave aisle



Saint-Martin-des-Champs (d)



Saint-Denis ambulatory



Urcel porch



Paris, Sainte-Geneviève (Musée de Cluny)



Fontevraud WN5

towards increasing flamboyance. Having created a way of arranging his elements in a more dense and compact manner, he moved on to greater intricacy, more subtle planes and recessions and more variety in the fronds. The cutting became deeper and this intensified the shadows, which in turn made it possible to further concentrate the elements without losing the integrity of the forms. They ask you to enjoy the diversity and playfulness without demanding analysis, more like a walk in the countryside than a discourse.

Visual depth was created in many ways, the most important being overlapping vines. In time he laid leaves over one another and led them around and over arms and legs so that every living thing was in movement from inside the capital as well as from side to side.

Throughout all these forms vines cross one another. Weaving was a way of interlocking elements, a way of welding different forms into one. Most of the fronds emerge from the ends of the tendrils rather than being on short stalks. Both the vines and other elements were kept separate from one another, with distinct outlines while gradually closing the gaps between them. The lobes emerge from the ends of the tendrils rather than having their own stalks and with almost no mark to distinguish stalk from leaf.

Lobes were invariably scooped, though there may be a delicately decorated rib down the centre [r1]. He often used this triplet-leaf with curled bangs on each side, reminiscent of a certain 1940s hair style.

He had an enormous range of leaves. I have selected below a few from just one campaign, in the nave of Etampes. The range is amazing. None of these were exclusive motifs as others also used them. Indeed, the sources for most of these leaves can be found in the work of his companions, suggesting he was in the early years of his life an inveterate copyist. Yet few are dead copies, but changed to suit his own concepts and preferences.

Occasionally Rameau used collars to bind the vines, and in later work it was large and loose, like a necklace [r2].



Triplet frond from Etampes nave



Bruyères-et-Montbérault E(c)



Variety of fronds taken from Etampes nave

The earliest carvings (1102-1110)

I think the first I can accede to Rameau is a pair that sit in the western door of Vert-la-Gravelle just to the south of Reims. The heads have a rough-hewn simplicity, with wavering tendrils and knobby terminals. There is no elegance here, though not much should be expected from such a coarse granite-like material.



Vert-la-Gravelle west door

1103



Vert-la-Gravelle west door

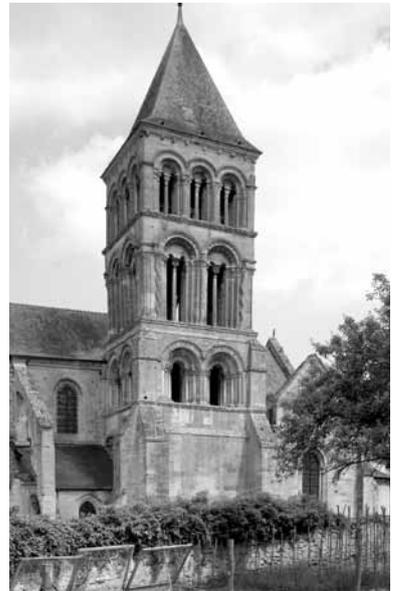


Vert-la-Gravelle west door

He may have worked on the lowest level of the tower of Nouvion-le-Vineux, just to the south of Laon [b]. He was to visit this area a number of times over the years, at Soissons, Urcel and Bruyères, which suggests that the north-eastern region may have been his home.

Nouvion is particularly crude, with heavy decoration on the tendrils and a jerkiness in carving the outlines that is far from pleasant. The capitals have overlapping vines encasing tri-lobed fronds which emerge from the ends of the branches. The designs have his combination of order and disorder. The heads are not unlike Vert-la-Gravelle.

He has no skill in completing the design on the side faces, but stops one off where most convenient and doubling another back onto itself so the inconvenient end disappears under another [b2]. Yet he is experimenting here with both the wandering vines and the spirals of later years.



Nouvion-le-Vineux tower

1104



Nouvion-le-Vineux tower level 1



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Nouvion-le-Vineux tower level 1



A little while later he worked on the porch at Urcel in the same region, with some fine capitals that amazingly survived the bombardments of 1918, though many were badly damaged. This group includes work by Héron and others. The two capitals by Rameau have crossed tendrils with one major vine probably derived from the curve of a cushion capital. The small fronds were placed in a random manner to fill the spaces rather than being organised from any geometric principle.



Urcel porch, rebuilt and capitals reused in 1920s

1105



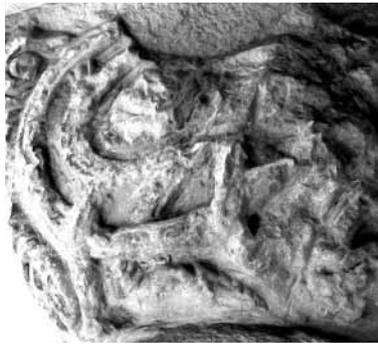
Urcel porch



Urcel porch



Urcel porch



Urcel porch



Urcel porch

1106

While in the area carved one of the small capitals in what remains of the nave wall of Notre-Dame-de-Soissons. It is very like Urcel, except for longer leaves that are previewing a later manner [r]. This is a small capital in which the tendrils cross one another at the corner as in the later work at Foulanges and the fronds roll upwards as in Etampes. In short, it is a typical Rameau work.

Now comes a most interesting episode. He may also have worked at Martinvaast at the western end of Normandy just south of Cherbourg. He may still have been in training at this time [b]. I single out this distant building not only from the characteristics of the meandering undisciplined design, but also from the rarity of rinceau designs in western Normandy from this period. There are exceptions at Fécamp, Bernay and Cerisy-la-Forêt, but these are well to the east.

I would posit the possibility that he travelled to Cherbourg from the Soissonaise by boat, perhaps carry stone from the local quarries. He would have been following the river systems down to Paris and through Rouen into The Channel. This would have been a wonderful educational trip for a young man.

The Martinvaast capitals are just about the only ones in La Manche with overlapping vines, excepting nearby Tollevaast where the vines also wander, but were not carved by Rameau. The chaotic arrangement indicates an early date, yet three capitals have achieved a casual symmetry at the corners. I



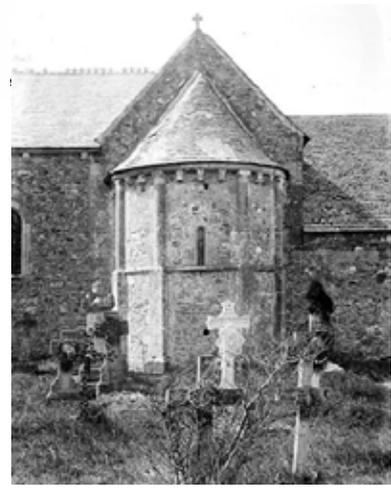
Soissons, Notre-Dame window remains of nave

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1107

place them in this period because the unkept arrangements are more typical of his earlier work, and lack the more suave layouts of his next jobs [b].

One might argue for a later date from the presence of rib vaults, yet they were crudely constructed. The ribs are bent, the junctions with the boss are irregular, extremely so, and the profiles are massive and quite consistent with a date in the first decade of the century. This of course, presumes that you accept my somewhat terse argument in volume 3 of *The Ark* that the first rib vaults were built along the Aisne river in northern France in the 1080s [v.3:39-42].



Martinvaast apse



Martinvaast apse capitals

In the nave of Le Mans there are two that may have been carved by Rameau. One has crude heads, crossed vines with little terminals and a wandering wind-blown quality very like Martinvaast [b]. This is why I place it afterwards, while on his way home on a journey that took him south of Paris. The central head has arms attached (though no legs) which stretch across vines coming from its mouth. Indeed, a quite skilled confusion. It follows one I have already mentioned by the young Félix, but not as clear-cut nor as skilled, especially in such a hard stone [r].^{ICMA #10.}

There is another that may also have been Rameau's with large-headed creatures on the corners and stiff tendrils on the sides [b+].

1108



Le Mans cathedral nave walls Ws3(a)



Le Mans cathedral nave walls Ws3(a)



Le Mans nave walls Ws2(a)



Le Mans cathedral nave walls Wn7(a)



Le Mans cathedral nave walls Wn7(a)

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In the aisle of the nave of the Notre-Dame-d'Etampes Rameau would have carved a couple of stones in the enormous WS2 capital. Two photos have been overlapped at the corner to give a clear view of each face [b]. The arrangement is more coordinated than Foulangues, the leaves varied and not yet dominating the vines. They grow out of a vase on the corner.



Etampes, Notre-Dame nave aisle WS2se(a)

Nearly every leaf is unique. Some have curled buttons on the tips, some turn up, some are floppy and hang over the vines like washing. Geometric order in which the shape and position of every element is controlled by a formal template, is nonexistent, a trait that would follow him for life. At a time when the value of using the tools of geometry in layouts was increasing, Rameau went against the tide. Though he would match arrangements on either side of an axis, such as on the corner here, the precise placement was always made freehand and by eye. Indeed, the main vine on the right rises to the top and turns down and under, whereas the vine on the left follows an S-curve. The fronds then meander as convenient.

Another on the other face of the same pier is a tighter version of the same elements and motifs [r]. The fronds are individual, with no resemblance to any real leaf, but each is totally itself. I have illustrated some of them earlier on page 4.

As usual, detailing in any team would have been influenced by fellow workers. In Etampes Rameau affected some of Héron's motifs, as in the use of plates under the leaves and expanding fronds. He did in one instance carve a leaf to grip a vine with turn-back tips in the Héron-Gripple manner, marked by arrows. It was a unique attempt to bind the elements together and was not used again. Instead, he continued to contain the freely arranged fronds within the curved enclosures of the tendrils.

What distinguishes the Héron and Gripple capitals from Rameau's? Both have a tight organisation of the elements within well-defined frames, Nothing wanders, and all junctions have sockets. See the Héron jamb panels at Bourges [b3] and one capital in the south porch [b1], and the Gripple capital in the Bury nave [b2]. There is no mistaking their templates, though some of the fronds were interchangeable. Rameau and some other carvers used fronds from a common pool of motifs.



Le Mans nave walls Ws2w(a)



Heron-leaf detail at Bourges south



Bury WS2n(a) second campaign in the south



Bourges south jamb panel L3

To the Oise (1110-11)

The crossing and adjacent northern aisle at Foulanges show detailing and wandering freehand interlacing like Etampes. The designs are softer with no straight edges to conflict with the constant movement of the curves. This would have been his first with a figure, a stiff frontally facing angel with hands grasping the vines on each side, a variation on the head and arms at Le Mans [r2]. The weaving of the tendrils across the body stayed with him throughout his life.

The crossing at Foulanges is, for the purpose of chronology, of particular value as both the Duke and the SS Master were here, as well as Faceter and one of the Apple Masters. Together these six masters worked on over a hundred campaigns in other buildings through which their developments can be followed and their interrelated connections ordered chronologically. This has indicated a date between 1111 and 1113 for the crossing. To follow the individual arguments please refer to the pieces on each of these masters, especially the first two.

Rameau's designs are not just wriggles, as with the Duke [r3], but with overlaps. Comparison shows that the former tend to fill space with a trend to symmetry, whereas the 'power' of the crossing vines in the latter 'throw' the design to the side, destabilising it. Also, the uppermost part of the capital has been left flush with the astragal, and rounded over the decoration. This occurs in some capitals by other masters in this campaign, showing how ideas would be shared.



Foulanges crossing WS1ne(a)



Foulanges crossing WS1n(a)



Foulanges crossing WS1s(a) by The Duke



Saint-Vaast-lès-Mello WS2(c) Group 2



Foulanges NE2(a)



Foulanges WS1nw(a)

While in the area he worked on a very small campaign in Saint-Vaast-lès-Mello, being just the upper capitals in one bay of the nave [r4]. The west front had already been finished, and this was helping to fill in the gap between the two. At this time he began to develop larger and more interesting leaves with more well-defined lobes that opened with a wide-spread action. The process began in Foulanges and in the Etampes choir and came over the years to flower in Sainte-Geneviève.

When he moved south to Etampes he may have carved one capital in the choir of Saint-Martin-au-Val, just outside the walls of Chartres [r]. The crockets used first at Le Mans were placed in the corners, and afterwards never used again. In a similar way the entwined foliage with small leaves was packed into a confined space.

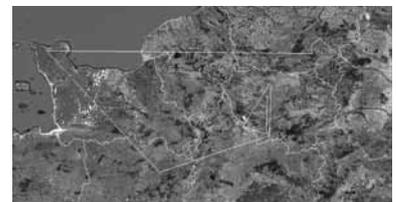


Saint-Martin-au-Val choir



Saint-Martin-au-Val choir

The map of his journey so far may seem somewhat excessive, ranging from one side of France to the other to suit a few capitals near Cherbourg and a long return trip [r6]. However, I can only plead that this is how it works out.



Journey from Nouvion to Paris

1110

1111

1112
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The Etampes clerestory and Sainte-Genève (1113-14)

The same qualities of Rameau’s *œuvre* emerge in the Etampes choir clerestory, though with thicker and coarser detailing. This was in part because the stone being used was denser and harder to work, so the chisel made only slight impressions on a most obdurate material. We only have to compare his capital in the nave [b3] with one on the corner in the choir clerestory to see the connections and the differences [b1,2]. There may have been only a year or so between these two campaigns.

Differences in the quarries do not disguise the curves, collars and varied fronds of Rameau. The lobes have his oft-used nodules at the tips of the leaves, the fronds are curled with a splayed explosive quality like the *stigmata* [b], and are connected with meandering tendrils that overlay and intersect each other. The motifs are crammed close together, too close



Etampes choir EN3w(c) corner view



Etampes choir EN3w(c) left face



Etampes nave WN2(a) for comparison

for comfort. Yet a wayward symmetry seems to be emerging at the corners, albeit freehand, that suggests he was learning as he went along. The fan of fronds were being broken up and multi-lobed leaves emerged instead. Invention would have made it much easier to fill in the corners rather than covering the whole surface by stretching the fans. What stands out with this group is their remarkable diversity.

We would not be amiss in asking whether these could not have been by a number of men, yet I was not surprised when I attributed them all to Rameau from the fronds, the nodules on the ends of the lobes, the collars and the subtle diagonality in the arrangement on adjacent faces. The leaves on plates were used in the nave aisles, as were the little ‘jars’ from which two of the vines emerge.

The development during these years was that symmetry was creeping in, either symmetrically around the corner with each face doing the best it could to fit within what was available, or symmetrically across the face leaving the corners to sort out matters as best they could. He continued further exploration into symmetry over the next decade



Etampes choir EN2sw(c)



Etampes choir EN2sw(c)



Etampes choir ES2e(c)



Etampes choir EN2e(c)

1113

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His design parameters are clearly visible in one of his mid-life works, the remnants of two capitals in Sainte-Geneviève in the Musée de Cluny [b]. The vines were assembled from straight and curved sections around very approximate axes of symmetry in the corners and mid-faces.

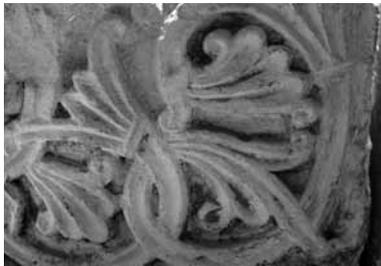
The arrangement is mature yet fluid. The wandering vines intersect and cut across the bodies. Collars were added where the tendrils became fronds, and especially at each end of a frond the lobes have rounded terminals. Between the elements the cutting is deep. There is only minimal symmetry and berries fill any spaces left over. The foliage has an explosive quality as the lobes open up, fanning outwards as in Boscherville and the Etampes choir. They are intensely rich and convoluted, and though easy to draw it is hard to find a more than superficial logic behind the design.

In the five years since the nave at Etampes, Rameau's skills have hatched into a major force.



Paris, Sainte-Geneviève

1114



Paris, Sainte-Geneviève (Musée de Cluny)



Paris, Sainte-Geneviève (Musée de Cluny)



Paris, Sainte-Geneviève (Musée de Cluny)



Paris, Sainte-Geneviève (Musée de Cluny)



Paris, Sainte-Geneviève (Musée de Cluny)



Paris, Sainte-Geneviève (Musée de Cluny)

This was the last use of the *stigmata* leaf as he transformed it into a more coherent and realistic form that he could continue to use. As with animals, the wholeness of the stone block was more important than any imposed order.



Paris, Sainte-Geneviève (Musée de Cluny)



Paris, Sainte-Geneviève (Musée de Cluny)

The figures of the twins are hefty and large-shouldered with fairly prominent heads [b]. There is no stiffness in these bodies and, like the

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tendrils, the arms and legs overlap and link. The hair is like a wig with an outward curve where the curls meet the bulge of the temple. The eyebrows are undercut as is the chin under the lower lip. Though more sophisticated than Bannière's, they are still massive and unmoving.



Paris, Sainte-Geneviève (Musée de Cluny)



Paris, Sainte-Geneviève (Musée de Cluny)

I should say a word here about his animals. Their bodily reality was invariably treated with great respect, yet the figures contain no inner power and they make no apparent effort [b1,2]. Compare them to work by Félix some years later [b3,4] to appreciate the sensuousness, the visible effort expressed in movement and the deep empathy that the sculptor had with his subjects. These qualities are apparent in the work of Rameau, though not with the same vigour, whereas they are utterly absent in the figures at Avrechy of his older companion, Bannière.



Paris, Sainte-Geneviève (Musée de Cluny)



Paris, Sainte-Geneviève (Musée de Cluny)



Châlons, Notre-Dame south porch, figures by Félix.



Fay, Creil and Jumièges (1115-17)

Rameau probably carved the densely complicated arrangement over the entry into the nave of Fay-Saint-Quentin, probably just after Bourges around 1130. The round arch, as in Angers and the Beauvais north portal, shows how both modes remained popular over many decades.



Fay-Saint-Quentin W.sl



Fay St-Quentin nave entry W.sl

1115

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At Saint-Evremonde in Creil there is one lone capital among the remnants saved from the destruction of this lovely church [b]. There are heads under the corners, the wandering vines right are very close to those in the Saint-Martin dado and the crossed vines in the centre of the block may have been his first essay in finding a way to control the meanders. Without the further guidance we would obtain from an intact building, the place of this work in his *œuvre* is hard to determine.

1116



Creil, Saint-Evremond



Creil, Saint-Evremond



Creil, Collegiale Saint-Evremond, photo in the Archives du Patrimoine files of destroyed nave.

In the western end of the gallery in the ninth bay of the nave of Jumièges there is one capital that is characteristic of Rameau at this period. The design has partial symmetry with overlapping vines terminating in long leaves with fan-like spread of lobes. The lobes emerge from the ends of the tendrils rather than having their own stalks and with almost no mark to distinguish stalk from leaf. The flanking tips are sharply offset with rounded terminals that bend backwards. The straight crossed vine distracts from the larger curved ones that overlay them. This will be softened in time.

There is another with a rampant animal climbing a tree that could also have been by Rameau. The foliage, especially under the animal, is similar, His work was developing in a more sophisticated manner, especially when compared to Urceol or Etampes.

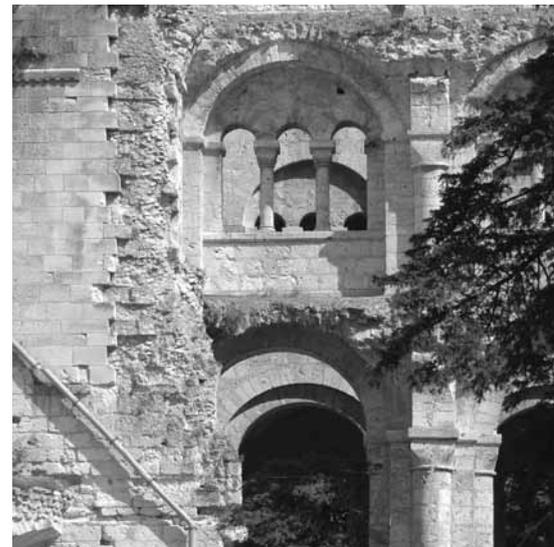
1117



Jumièges nave gallery W9-wR(g)



Jumièges nave (a)



Jumièges nave gallery

In the map of the journeys I have placed together those into Normandy to work on Jumièges and Boscherville as much from convenience as from style. Though they together respect a general movement in one stylistic journey, We could be more flexible about whether this was one trip or two. Concerning Saint-Aubin in Angers, there is no such flexibility as the characteristics impose this long journey on a large group of men on a two-week walk of over 200 kilometres from Paris.

In the map of his journeys throughout his life there were some very long hikes, though not particularly unusual [r]. I have looked a little for anything he might have done along those routes, but have found only those discussed here. I have at times altered the order to suit sites close to one another.



Journey Paris to Jumièges, Angers and back

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The stigmata leaf interlude

There was a short period when he introduced a new style of foliage at Saint-Martin-de-Boscherville. He split open the lobes of the fronds so they were more like spread-eagled fingers, like the flower of a *magnolia stigmata* [r1]. I looked to see where this influence may have come from, and examining all those who worked with him at Boscherville, Bannière’s work stood out. Bannière had been developing a similar idea in his own way for some years. It was an effective element in adding liveliness to the design, and was particularly effective when used with curved and sharp-pointed tips [r2]. I think this is where Rameau may have taken up the idea, but without the sharpened tips [b]. Instead he curled the ends of his fronds [r4].

1118



Saint-Martin-de-Boscherville south



Saint-Martin-de-Boscherville south



Saint-Martin-de-Boscherville south



Saint-Martin-de-Boscherville south

The capital at Saint-Martin is huge. It was placed on the centre of the south side, opposite an equally unfinished and equally large capital on the north side by Bannière. The stone has been covered with intersecting loops and wandering tendrils and with most unusually a huge spider’s web on the north face. The fact that both ere unfinished and on opposite sides of the transept suggests they were carved at the same time. One has to presume some external event or celebration that forced them to erect the stone before it could be completed. It was not an isolated incident, but occurring in two such prominent and enormous stones suggests a more general fact, that stones would not be finished in situ, and that once they left the shed they would not be touched again.

The building is usually dated to after 1113 when the Benedictines took over, [??] and though this is pretty skimpy evidence, such a starting date would fit into Rameau’s chronology in which the transept capitals would be located around ***1117. He continued to explore this idea for the next three or four years.

There is one other building with capitals in the same vein. It is the small church of Avrechy, which is more than 100 kilometres away. Both Rameau and Bannière carved capitals there [r1]. The latter was by then an old man at the end of his career, and his sequence helps to date these stones to around ***1118. It has usually been dated much later from its fine rib vaults. It seems paradoxical that Boscherville should have had groin vaults when this parish church had the more sophisticated ribs. One possibility is



Saint-Martin-de-Boscherville north



Saint-Martin-de-Boscherville north (a) Bannière



Saint-Martin-de-Boscherville transept to south



Avrechy apse

DRAFT

that the decision for the type of vaulting may have lain with the abbot in the former and with the master mason in the latter. One may have insisted on simplicity where the other was a more innovative builder. After all, rib vaults had been around for over thirty years at this time, which was long enough to create a body of skill but not long enough to have become the accepted mode.

Both masters used the same double-hook arrangement to the fronds [b]. They look almost identical. In the capital on the previous page the wandering vines, the filling of the spaces and the vase on the left from which the vines grow suggest Rameau more than Bannière. Also the figures in [r] are stiff, frontal, and rigid whereas Rameau's are lithe and mobile.

Bannière's leaves are like Rameau's, and here the latter was over-fashioning his leaf into unreal forms, in a sense competing with the older man.

1119



Avrechy apse ES2nw(a), left by Bannière, right by Rameau



Avrechy apse ES1e(a) by Bannière

As we find his layouts becoming denser, I would consider one capital in the choir of Château-Landun, which would have been at about the same time as the choir clerestory in Etampes [r]. The stone used was much finer in grain, so there is none of the crudeness in the elements or detailing. The leaves are longer than usual and hang without stalks, and this manner of detailing is not Bannière's. Yet the corner symmetry, the use of little inserts like the berry under the corner and the growth of the tendrils out of the base are in his manner. They have been assembled in *The Ark*, and are astringent, even mechanical, in appearance [v.4***].

Château-Landun is the only place in the north with this group of capitals. As a group they are unlike any other. I think that, as in **** and Saint-Martin-des-Champs directions were given to the men on how the carving was to look. I suggest he may have been following directions from the master in charge and produced a design in keeping with the general character of the other capitals.

The head in the centre is similar to that at Etampes [b]. It is mask-like, the fronds emerge from any part of the head, and the rounded lips are most unusual.

1120



Château-Landun choir EN1n



Etampes choir EN2sw(c) detail



Château-Landun EN1n detail

DRAFT

Often in his early work Rameau grew the vines out of a jar or some similar base: Avrechy, Saint-Vaast-lès-Mello, Château-Landun, Etampes in both the nave and choir and the Angers Saint-Aubin cloister. It became a more common concept in the next generation, but was quite rare at this time. Vines have a beginning in the earth, and it was a logical move.

In later work, after 1120, the vines grow out of fronds or the tendrils evolve from within the frame of the capital, obvious in all later work. This means that there was less wandering and more organisation.



Avrechy apse ES2nw(a)



Angers, Saint-Aubin north cloister 1120



Etampes Notre-Dame nave WS2(a)



Chateau-Landun choir EN1n



Etampes choir EN2e(c)



Saint-Vaast-lès-Mello WS2(c) Group 2

The cloister of Saint-Aubin in Angers (1121)

Nearly every capital in the southern extension of the Saint-Aubin cloister at Angers has vines, no matter who the carver. They are laid out in spirals or chaotically. I have so far identified Félix, Grégoire, Gripple, Héron and both The Duke and the SS Master among these stones. They formed a group of young men who were to play a vital role in the Ile-de-France in the years to come. Their presence together at this time may turn out to have been very important for the development of sculpture in the Paris Basin, for this is where many northern carvers met men from the south.

In the 1120s the general level of sculpture from south of the Loire was more skilled than that of the north, an imbalance that was rectified over the next decade. Saint-Aubin may have played a key role in this process. Overlapping tendrils were more popular in the south, though this seems to have had little influence on the men I mentioned. However, the mixture of ideas fermenting and being shared in this workshop has made it a little difficult to identify Rameau with clarity. Yet I believe I have found him in the capitals, the imposts and in the voussoirs of the Chapter House entry.

Most of the capitals were designed around spirals, one on each face, with Etampes-like foliage filling the spaces. The freely floating fronds have been better organised, and the way they pass over and under the vines suggests further influence from Héron and Gripple. However, Rameau did not use sockets, which was a common motif for the others. The three of them may have travelled down from Etampes together. Spirals was a common theme in the cloister, and Rameau may have been drawn to it from discussion with the others. Construction schedule discussed in ICMA #5.



Angers, Saint-Aubin north cloister

ID R A F T

The dog running through the vines is beautifully organised, and could have been by Grégoire but for the disorganisation of the overlapping vines and the tail wrapped around one tendril, as well as the pattern on the shaft on the left that was carved on the same piece of stone.

1121



Angers, Saint-Aubin north cloister



Angers, Saint-Aubin north cloister



Angers, Saint-Aubin north cloister



Angers, Saint-Aubin north cloister



Angers, Saint-Aubin north cloister



Angers, Saint-Aubin north cloister

There are other capitals at Saint-Aubin that have similar meandering vines and small fronds. I illustrate one as a comparison next to a fine example of Rameau's [r]. The one on the right lacks the little baubles at the tips of the fronds and the arrangement of the vines is too chaotic to have been by Rameau. They are almost bare of leaves, and the branches look bent and broken, as if it was winter. There is an astringent quality about them, for the foliage has been reduced to almost nothing and the entwining tendrils form the major design.



Angers, Saint-Aubin north cloister

DRAFT

There is one other capital I would credit to Rameau from the organisation and foliage [r]. It looks a bit like the birds that Félix carved inside spirals, but without the spirals.¹¹ Rameau's vines arise out of a jug-like base and the bird has one leg raised as in an earlier animal at Jumièges [back two pages].

As the work progressed above the capitals to the imposts there was a marked improvement in his techniques [b]. From its nature the impost is a long thin stone that lends itself to a continuous repetitive designs. The weaving vines were readily created into symmetrical arrangements from the shape of the stone. He made particular emphasis on the corners, just as his axes on capitals lay through the corners. Within the woven pockets the placement and selection of the fronds is still free. He was still experimenting with leaves and collars from others.



Angers, Saint-Aubin north cloister



Angers, Saint-Aubin cloister impost



Angers, Saint-Aubin cloister impost



Angers, Saint-Aubin cloister impost



Angers, Saint-Aubin cloister, Chapter House entry

The situation was similar in the voussoirs of the Chapter House entry arch [r]. This consists of two rows of intricately carved voussoirs, mostly in abstract patterns. I suggest you turn to pages 8-10 in the section on the

Gripple Master for a discussion of the construction schedule for this cloister and the relationship between this campaign to the right of the door and the older work to the left. The voussoirs themselves are extremely varied, and will be described in more detail in another part.

Three stones may have been by Rameau [b]. The woven tendrils are like those in the impostes. The fronds are small, almost pert, with sharpened or baubled ends. The vines are decorated, every bit of space has been filled and the forms are freely arranged without the use of tools or templates to maintain any similarity on either side of the axes. There are no sockets, and only nominal symmetry.



Angers, Aubin upper arch Ua



Angers, Aubin upper arch Ud



Angers, Aubin upper arch Uw

The entry into the refectory is set apart from the cloister and may have been carved at the same time, particularly as the same carvers were employed [b]. This capital may have been by Rameau from the foliage and the freehand layout [r]. The symmetry lies both on the corner and on the face. As in the Etampes choir, is more apparent than real, for the foliage is arranged differently on each side of the paired central vines.

One cause for doubt is the use of the *énchanré*. It suits the design, but was not used anywhere else at Saint-Aubin. Nor was it used in any other building by this master, though it was being used by confederates, until his work in the Saint-Denis narthex and later work south of the Loire.



Anger, Saint-Aubin refectory door



Angers, Saint-Aubin refectory door

Return to the north (1122-)

Afterwards Rameau worked on Saint-Martin-des-Champs with many of the men he had travelled with to Angers [b]. It seems that, as a group, they went to the next engagement. Having such an unusual number of identified masters at both places, some with clear evolutionary time-lines, has helped to determine a fairly precise date of around 1122.



Etampes, Notre-Dame nave aisle WS2(a)



Saint-Martin-des-Champs E(d)



Saint-Martin-des-Champs E(d)

There is one capital in the axial chapel dado. It is a more complex yet softer version of Etampes [r]. It should be said that apparently ill-organised layouts like these were extremely rare by the 1120s. Nearly every other carver has, by this time, accepted the value of geometry and found ways to use it to control arrangement. In this, Rameau is an exception, though the apparent chaos is deceptive for the layouts are, on examination, sophisticated attempts to achieve his aims freehand, without other forms of control.

In the analysis of the construction schedule in ICMA #9:4-7 on *The Duke* I suggested a long and complex program starting around 1119 and not completed until 1138. In further studies of the capitals I believe this date should be advanced a little so that those carved in campaign 3 and 4 coincide with the matching style of capitals in Saint-Denis. I will set this out in more detail on a later page when we consider the work of the 1130s.

Saint-Etienne in Beauvais

The north portal was an integral part of the construction of the north wall of the nave aisle. Though much has been replaced, the remaining masonry shows that at the time of building the coursing was continuous from the portal to the east side of transept. The portal was therefore designed and built with the aisle wall, not later.

From the fifth wall pier to the crossing the coursing is remarkably consistent, though there is a step in the ashlar immediately to the west of the door around course 9, which confirms (as we know from the design of the capitals) that the capitals over piers 2-5 capitals were from a later campaign to those over the first pier from the crossing. The vault in the first bay has rectangular ribs and was started with the later capitals to the west (and its window), and finished in next campaign.

This is relevant to this discussion because the top of portal arch is at the same level as the interior impost. Therefore the portal dates the rest of this wall, its capitals and its vaults, and *vice-versa*. I have already discussed the possibility that Félix and Grégoire worked here after being in Angers, and it looks like Rameau was a companion. Their time-lines suggest the early 1120s.

On the portal Rameau seems to have carved the voussoirs of the second archivolt. The encasing stonework has been restored, but within that most



Beauvais Saint-Etienne W-n

1122

D I R A F T

of the sculpture is original. The voussoirs have his three-pointed fronds with curled ends [b1], the vines cross over each other without collars [r] and the dogs have up-turned nose, pointed ears and a tooth-studded mouth [b2]. He filled the space behind the head with a frond, like a support [arrows].

The dogs are connected to one another by intersecting vines. These bind design elements that would otherwise be isolated. The device became increasingly popular over the following thirty years. Rameau may have had a hand in employing this motif in the Saint-Denis west front a decade later. It was a common idea in manuscripts, and though used often in later years, Beauvais may have been the first northern example in a formal portal.

1123



Beauvais Saint-Etienne W-n^A



Beauvais Saint-Etienne W-n^A



Beauvais Saint-Etienne W-n^C1

It was normal for a carver to leave his mar on one of the capitals. I will attempt to set this out in detail by linking the capitals of the Saint-Denis portals with recognisable foliage in the jambs and archivolts. For the moment it is enough to consider the three remaining original capitals at Beauvais. If the replacements were carved in sympathy with the originals none of them could have been by Rameau. One with the dog is most likely by Grégoire, and this with the relatively crude overlapping vines may have been Rameau.



Beauvais Saint-Etienne W-s^C3



Beauvais Saint-Etienne W-nL3 by Rameau



Beauvais Saint-Etienne W-nR1 by Grégoire

Five jobs in the north-east (1124-1128)

In the nave of Dammery one of the west portal capitals is like one at Creil, with a head on the corner and threaded tendrils coming from the mouth [b3]. There is corner symmetry, of a sort. Fronds spread out of the vine, triplet fronds, and so on. MORE

I have grouped the following together because they are geographically located in the north-east region, and this minimises his travel.



Dammery west door W.cR2

DIRA 4

Rameau was following the same principles is another in the north-west crossing pier of Notre-Dame-en-Vaux in Châlons-en-Champagne [b]. The curves are generous and intricate, and the flow around the block has a freedom that is only restrained by the heads on each corner, as in Martinvaast. Unlike the latter that looks like a skull, these have large mouths and wig-like hair.

These are the last filled with wandering lines. Though there are setting-out axes at the corners and the mid-face, there remained a certain level of undisciplined freedom. From here on he strove to maintain a greater control, though the delightful free-hand positioning of fronds would remain with him always.

1125



Châlons-en-Champagne Notre-Dame WS1s(a)



Châlons-en-Champagne Notre-Dame WS1s(a)

The Cerseuil crossing would have been built about this time [b]. The thickets of vines were becoming more dense and intricate, with some sense of order maintained by placing the crossed tendrils in the centre of the block. This was the case with much carving after the Etampes clerestory and was part of an ongoing process of building control while maintaining a lighter touch.



Cerseuil WN crossing pier

1126



Cerseuil crossing



Cerseuil crossing

He returned to Urcel after some fifteen years to work on the apse and crossing. Three capitals have the same entwined tendrils as Creil and Saint-Martin, with the same small leaves and curled arrangements. Both Aviateur and the SS Master kept him company and help confirm the chronology.

1127
D R A F T



Urcel crossing WN1s



Urcel crossing EN1w



Urcel ase AS1(c)

Bruyères-et-Montbérault is near Urcel. Rameau carved three, perhaps four, stones in the choir [b]. The level of control was increasing as the years passed, but there is a nervous, almost frenetic compaction of more leaves and vines than a stone of this size should be reasonably asked to accommodate. The designs are more symmetrical and the crossed vines are held by loose collars, the up-turned fronds are part of his inventory. MERGE There is a drift towards symmetry in these capitals. The variety in his work can be seen in the originality of the elements and layouts, and in the continuing development of ideas and skills.

There is one stone with a circular layout that I had rather tentatively, and incorrectly I now believe, ascribed to Gripple [r1]. At that time I had not identified the unique qualities of the Rameau leaves, nor his love of overlapping branches and dense layouts. Two more capitals would also have been his [b].



Bruyères-et-Montbérault choir clerestory

1128



Bruyères-et-Montbérault choir clerestory



Bruyères-et-Montbérault choir clerestory

These two modes in his repertoire have been present since he was last in the area twenty years earlier: The curved vines looped across the face and those tied with horizontal members. The design on the left is a bit like the nearby and contemporary apse in Urcel, while that on the right harks back to its much earlier west porch [r]. Both are nominally symmetrical. Elements are still freewheeling in whatever joyous mood takes him.



Urcel apse



Urcel porch

Adjoining on a separate stone not by Rameau [b] there are a couple of wild creatures like griffins. They are frightening and overbearing, grip onto the edge of the astragal and stare down at you with venom. They reflect almost contemporary work on the nave of Urcel.

The capital on the far left with a sturdy figure encased in vines has the manner of Rameau from some years earlier, yet with his way of detailing fronds. This may have been an apprentice, for the surface is too worn to distinguish the more refined level of carving he had developed since Avrechy, seven or eight years earlier. He was often working with



Bruyères-et-Montbérault choir clerestory

DRAFT

masters who were far more skilled than he, and no doubt learned from them.

One reason I advance this date for Bruyères is that an adjacent stone has two climbing figures that are unmistakably by Grégoire [b1]. Compare the firm buttocks and energetic thighs working their way through the thicket of branches with one of the colonnettes in the Chartres west front [b2]. There would be less than a decade between them.



Bruyères-et-Montbérault choir clerestory



Chartres colonnette W.nL

A hypothetical story

We need to be careful of the movement of the masters between sites, for it would be unreasonable to have a man in Lombardy then in Bourges and then in the next campaign in Lombardy. Where places are close together I have tended to gather them together. Thus I have clumped Rameau's work in the northeast into one journey, and similarly gathered one group of Grégoire's in southern France and Italy into another.

I earlier wrote in the piece on the Bourges jambs that there were two campaigns and that Grégoire worked in the lower stones and Rameau on the upper in a later campaign. There would have been a gap of time in between. But here I contend that both masters worked together and apart on two jobs 200 plus kilometres from one another? How do we reconcile these various campaigns into a valid historical narrative?

In 1126-28 Rameau was working in the Aisne and Marne area in Dammery, Cerseuil, Notre-Dame-en-Vaux and the choir of Urcel. During these same years Grégoire was working in Nonantola and Modena in Lombardy, and at the Sacra di San Michele on the modern border with France. While making his way back to Paris he turned up at Bourges where he created the lower jambs panels.

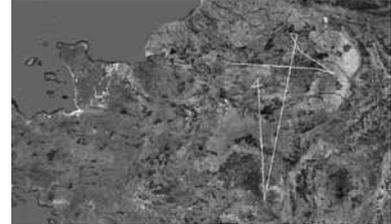
The piece on Grégoire is still pending, though you may remember the short draft on who made decisions in the colonnettes at Chartres that was placed on the web in July last year in ICMA #17.

Work stopped at Bourges about level with the south portal statue supports, at which point Grégoire left the site and travelled north towards Laon. On the way he carved one capital at Bruyères, where he met Rameau. Did he tell Rameau of the big job at Bourges with the exciting new *Maistas* portal, and had he urged him to go down there for the upper stage of the

jambes? Whatever passed between them Grégoire then went on his way to Paris and his next task to help carve the portal statues of Saint-Denis that began around 1129/30.

Meanwhile Rameau travelled south in time to carve one of the jamb panels for the Bourges south porch. He may have stayed on to work on the archivolts before returning home to the Ile-de-France for the upper parts of the Saint-Denis portals and the windows on the inside. By this time Grégoire had left Saint-Denis and moved well south to Saintes and a second visit to La Daurade. This seems a valid and all-too-human story that could explain what may have happened.

I have set out Rameau's journey in the northeast and from Bruyères to Bourges [r]. The trip down would have taken a fortnight if he did not stop on the way and walked with his tools over his shoulder. I surmise that on a journey like this he would have looked out for occasional work on the way, carving an odd capital or something for private entertainment to pay for board and lodging. In this case the journey could have taken many months, who knows until we find remnants of his manner in some churches in between.



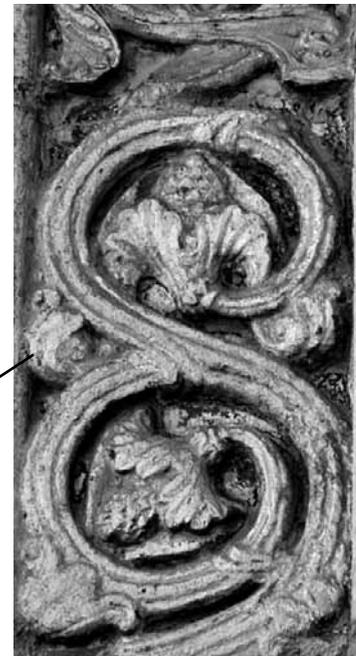
Journey to north-east, Bourges and Paris

The quick trip to Bourges (1129)

From the triplet leaf I suspect that Rameau may have taken Grégoire's advice and moved south in time to work on the portal jambes [b,r]. This leaf had been one motif among many others that he had employed for the previous twenty years. It is very different to the work Felix carved in the same jambes, though he also used the triplet frond.

Doing only one stone suggests he did not travel down with Félix and Héron, but sauntered in on his own while the second campaign was in progress. It is a very individual piece, though there are sockets, possibly because everyone else was using them [r]. The bouquet are large and assertive, as in his later drip moulds in the Angers cathedral.

The Héron group was working on the archivolts in the same campaign as they were carving the upper jamb stones. The archivolts were built up of many voussoirs, usually two per figure. There is one stone in the inner



Bourges south portal jamb R5



Bourges south portal

1129

DRAFT

right arch that could be his, the upper half of the angel with the head and wings [b]. The angel wears a wig that sprouts out of the brow. He also has foppish fingers bent in the way they point like his *stigmata* leaves. The under lip hangs over.

These qualities are found in later sculptural pieces. This is not much to go on, but were it correct it implies there may have been more voussours by the Héron group, but none that can be individually assigned. To do that Rameau and the others would have had to carve motifs in the piece that we could recognise as we have already recorded in the Saint-Denis and Chartres archivolts.

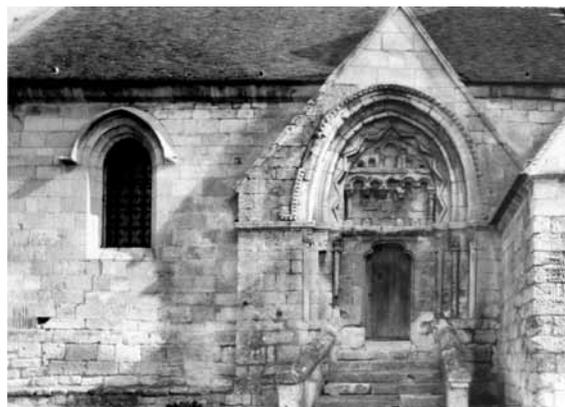


Bourges south R^c3



Bourges south R^c3

The south portal at Saint-Vaast-lès-Mello with its curious arcaded tympanum may have been next [b]. There is one capital with knotted vines, worn fronds at the base and corner symmetry, and another adjoining it with corner fronds [b]. The decoration along the tendrils is different and the first may have been by an assistant, both from the use of the drill and the heavy-handed layout.



Saint-Vaast-lès-Mello south portal



Saint-Vaast-lès-Mello south portal W-sR2



Saint-Vaast-lès-Mello south portal W-sR3

1130

DRAFT

Saint-Denis (1132-33)

His work does not appear in the western embrasures or in the capitals of the Saint-Denis portals. Even though he may have been in the area he was not asked to do any carved work on this part of the abbey. I guess he may have been fully occupied with Saint-Martin.

However I strongly suspect he may also have been working on the archivolts, and while there he would have been available for the occasional capital on the interior. There are a number I would comfortably ascribe to him. One lies in the aisle windows [r]. It is worth examining the complexity in some detail, bewildering as it may appear at first sight.

Symmetry down the corner axis lies more in the observance than in the detail. The leaves on either side of the central collar are different (one is long and pointed, the other is spiral), the fan-shaped fronds springing out at the top are different on each side, and one hides under the adjacent leaf while the other juts forward. There are only a couple of leaf-forms and the animals interact by lightly biting each other, playfully.

There is one other on this level, foliate only, that could be his [b2]. Though worn we can see the crossed tendrils, fronds not overlapping but filling the spaces and corner symmetry. They are very like, and probably at the same time as, his work at Saint-Martin [b1 and pages ***]. No two capitals are the same, and nor should we expect anything different here. Nevertheless, the arrangement and selection of motifs is very personal. And remember, there are almost no other capitals in the Paris Basin from this time with vines that cross over.

There is also one in the clerestory windows that open into the lower level of the tower [b3]. It has the same qualities plus a couple of berries and decorated vines not used since Bruyères and Châlons.



Saint-Denis external window XN1-nL(aw)

1132



Saint-Martin-des-Champs EN1w



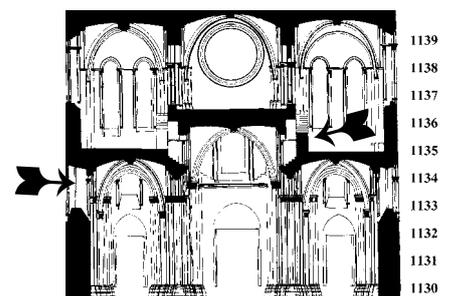
Saint-Denis XS2-sRa(aw)



Saint-Denis XN2-nL(cw)

Where he worked in the windows was also the level of the aisle vaults. It is marked by the arrow on the left [r]. By my estimate this would have been around 1134. The capital in the clerestory opening on the other side is also marked by an arrow. It could have taken considerably more than a year to reach that level.

The lower capitals coincide with the uppermost stones of the central portal that included the erection of the last sculpture in the archivolts and the rib vaults to the aisles on the inside. They all used the *énchancre*.



Saint-Denis section through narthex

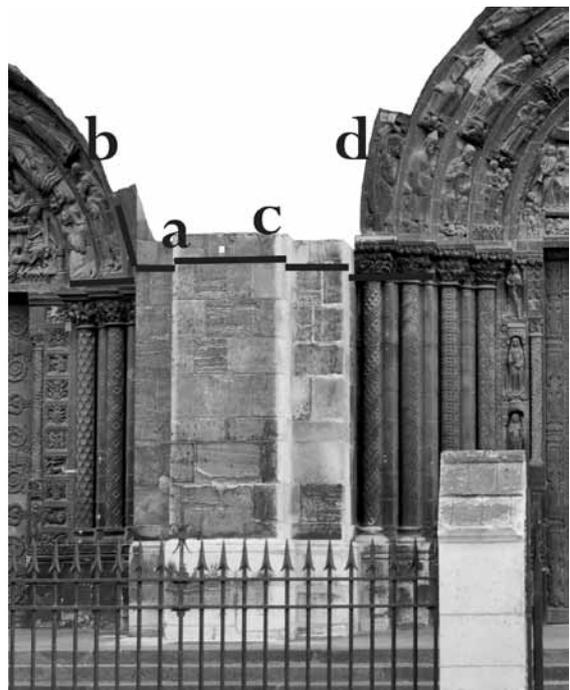
DRAFT

It is important we understand the stages in the construction of the three portals, for this has an impact on the order in which the many stones were carved. Seeing it completed one has the impression that it is a singular thing, whereas during construction it was a process involving many discrete parts each of which relied on the prior erection of some other parts. The diagram shows how the section between the central and north portals may have looked at this stage [b,r].

The impostos on the side portals are two courses lower than those of the centre, marked by the line 'a'. The line lies above the impost of the north portal and below the capitals of the centre. This meant that while the central capitals and impostos were being placed the masons could get on with the erection of the tympani and archivolts of the lateral portals 'b'. The time needed to erect the central tympanum and each of the multitude of small stones that make up the archivolts forced the builder the pause work on the ashlar piers between them, marked 'c'.



Saint-Denis west front showing location of construction detail



Saint-Denis portal construction detail

After placing the capitals and impostos in the centre nothing more could be placed on 'c' until, at the very least, the lowest voussoirs of all four archivolts of the central portal had been placed. This was delicate work. Raising 'c' much further would have interfered with the workmen. The pier above 'c' would have been among the last parts to have been erected.

This shows that the fourth row of central archivolts 'd' would not have been placed until the lateral portal had been completed. Only then could the ashlar of the pier that was needed to stabilise the arches be raised above 'c'. This would have been the last act in the erection of the portal, and would have been followed by the plain walling on each side and the flanking windows into which were set some of Rameau's capitals.

The erection of these stones may have taken many months. It may have been at this point that Rameau joined the teams that were carving the inner archivolts. However, as we had similar situations at Saint-Loup, Angers and Chartres, I could argue that most of the sculptors may have left the site while the erection was still going on, being too expensive to keep on the payroll, and that only a few remained to complete the last stones at the apex and those of the fourth row.

This may be when the decision was made to bind the figures together with interlacing vines [r1].



Saint-Denis west central portal



Saint-Denis west portal W.cR^d2

Rameau may have taken a part in that decision is from his connection to a similar motif at Saint-Etienne in Beauvais. I ascribe some of the individual stones used to compile these figures to him from the fine foliage emerging from the entwined tendrils. No doubt there were collaborators and assistants, but the use of vines without branches, with only small twigs holding the fronds, the lack of sockets that was normal in most other rinceau work in the north, and the curlicues in the terminals of the fronds are all Rameau characteristics [r].



Saint-Denis west portal W.c^d6

I refer of course to the stone on the right side of the apex [b1]. That on the left would appear to have been by another carver. One of the fronds has the triple lobes and curled ends found in earlier work [right arrow b1], and the over-large curlicue on the frond [left arrow].

1133



Saint-Denis, central door, apex of outermost archivolt

The figures are set within a Tree of Jesse, prefiguring the great archivolts of later churches like Senlis where the tree is used to bind the figures together. The use of lengthwise figures in the archivolts is unusual among northern portals at this time, but was normal practice in the south. It is a fair guess that a master who had worked in the south may have brought the concept north with him. This would not have been Rameau, for he had not visited the Saintogne, as far as I can see, but indicates the connections with southern masters.

Among the other voussoirs of the outer archivolt we can see Rameau in some of the leaves and fronds [r]. Small ends curled up quite sharply, bent to fill as much of the space as possible with only two leaf forms being used [b2]. The other work at Saint-Denis dates his arrival on the job to 1132, from the analysis on page 29 of Master Félix, in the *Master Carvers Series*.



Saint-Denis west portal W.cR^d4



Saint-Denis west portal W.cR^d1

DRAFT

The ambulatory capitals at Saint-Martin-des-Champs (1131-1134)

During the same period that he was working at Saint-Denis he was also engaged on some of the later campaigns at Saint-Martin-des-Champs. There are possibly eight capitals by Rameau, five in campaign 4 and three from campaign 6 a few years later [b]. They have entwined vines, well-framed fronds, smallish leaves, collars and occasional nodules, all closely compacted. Some are formally and axially designed, and a couple designed freely without structure. I find no noticeable change in his manner over those years.

Saint-Martin should not be thought of as a single design. Many templates were used for each pier, for the frames around the windows and so on. I have been into one aspect of this before, so the profusion of dates for the capitals should not come as a surprise.^{note} Because there was a trend to greater symmetry at this time I would be prepared to consider that two recarved capitals could have been by Rameau if they have been based on similarly precisely organised originals and if the originals were somewhat less well detailed than these from the nineteenth century [b1,2].

As in other places, there was some sharing of leaves and arrangements between the masters, for Rameau used the three-foil fronds of Héron and the



Saint-Martin-des-Champs AS4n(a) Group 4

1131



Saint-Martin An4(a) and An1+(a) restored from Group 4

Saint-Martin-des-Champs AS4+(a) and EN1w(a) from Group 4

1134



Saint-Martin-des-Champs axial chapel exterior from Group 6

intricate tangles of Knotter. Many have eccentric twists in the corner axes or overlaps that throw the 'weight' of the design to one side.

Under the central vaults of the axial chapel there is one with a leaning figure with long curly hair and flanking gryphons [r]. The arrangement is not symmetrical and the small fronds at the ends of the tendrils are like those in earlier work.

One of the symmetrical capitals is like Bruyères, while others are like some in the upper openings of the Saint-Denis narthex, suggesting that the capitals at Saint-Martin were contemporary with those at Saint-Denis, in the earlier 1130s. Indeed, the complexity of all the capitals at this level has the same 'feeling' for elements and arrangements as the major collection in the Saint-Denis narthex, which leads me to suggest that the two great



Saint-Martin-des-Champs An(a) CAMP 6 1134

D R A F T

collections of capitals were being carved at the same time, between 1132 and 1136. With many other carvers Rameau transferred from one job to the other according to the needs of the contractors. *There will be a separate chapter on the capitals and the construction campaigns of Saint-Martin.*

The schedule in ICMA #9 has been modified after revisiting Saint-Martin in May, 2011. The construction process was complex in the early years, probably for financial reasons they could not set out the footings and pier plinths in one or two campaigns. Instead twelve were needed. These are marked in the third column on the chart as “piers A” etc. Without trying to determine which were represented by A-L, but merely recognising that every separate plan implied a separate master, the earliest moment for constructing the southwest corner would have been with eight piers in place, and even that would have been awkward.

The simplest description would be that the outer walls of the eastern chapel were first, followed in some uncertain order by the other walls. This took a number of campaigns from the use of square and circular buttresses and differing plan forms for the chapels, both polygonal and round. Erection in the vertical plane was also complicated as the forms change partway up, mostly at the level of the window arches. Further comment would be futile as the surface masonry of the external walls has been replaced.

Internally the southwest corner of the aisle is less decorated and has unique framing arches, whereas all the others have large roll moulds. The junctions of the arches on the piers show that this was the first corner to be erected. On the other hand, the northwest corner appears to be the most sophisticated and was probably the last part. There are small tucks and bobs in the arches all round the ambulatory that suggest an anti-clockwise erection process.

The order of placement of the ambulatory capitals was ES1 and 2 with the first arcade arches, then the other arcade piers all round to the north at the lower level, and inner aisles started with the roll profile. There were changes to the details of this profile suggesting a number of templates. The middle row would have been next (with no capitals on aisle side) and the northwest corner. The paradoxical situation posed by the two unusual SS capitals in this corner and in the clerestory was considered in *The Duke*.

In the three bays of the axial chapel the number of levels of capitals can be bewildering. If we call the aisle capitals as being on course 0, then the outer aisle on the north is on course 3 at (a+), and this is close to the level of the eastern windows (aw). At the entry to the chapel these have extra thick imposts and crude junctions to the chapel walls, and are on course 6. The capitals of the uppermost arch from the choir are on course 8. **As the clerestory could not be built until this was in place work on completing the main vessel was considerably delayed.**

This means that the carving of the capitals can be arranged into groups, though some may have been carved before they were needed. These groups are numbered in the fourth column of the chart.

The complexities produced by the slow work in setting out the piers have been omitted from the chart, though they were taken into account in the three columns in *The Duke*. Rather than complicating this discussion I have left it out of here, though I have paused various parts of the work to allow other parts to catch up.

Construction schedule

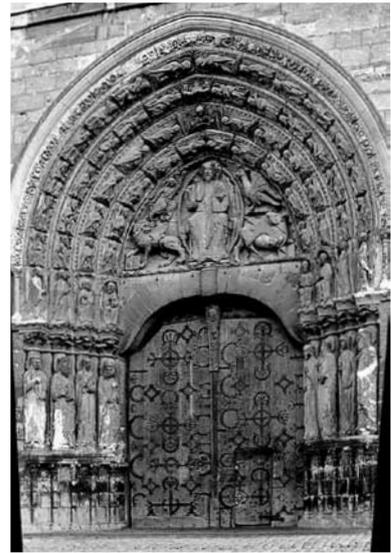
| | | | | |
|----------------------------------|------|---------|-----------------------|---|
| completion | 1140 | | | |
| high vaults and roof | 1139 | | | ribs 5 |
| clerestory walls | 1138 | | | ribs 4 |
| axial vaults and roof | 1137 | | chapel roof | ribs 3 |
| axial chapel caps (a5) | 1136 | 7 | ambulatory roof | ribs 2 arches 5 |
| arches first axial bay (a6) | 1135 | 6 | capitals (a+) | ribs 1 arches 4 |
| EN1(a) with ES1(c+) | 1134 | 5 | capitals (a) impost 3 | high roof arches 3 |
| north aisle | 1133 | 4 | capitals (a) impost 2 | capitals (c) arches 2 |
| south aisle and (c-) caps | 1132 | 3 | capitals (a) impost 1 | arches 1 |
| perimeter aisle piers (a3) | 1131 | | | |
| many designs to aisle arches | 1130 | Piers L | | |
| other arcade piers, inner aisles | 1129 | Piers K | 2 | capitals (aw) n wall capitals external |
| ES1-2(a), first arcade arches | 1128 | Piers J | | |
| SW corner (a) | 1127 | Piers G | | |
| axial window arches | 1126 | Piers F | | |
| axial walls to (aw) | 1125 | Piers E | | external walls |
| axial chapel 3 bays walls | 1124 | Piers D | | external walls |
| | 1123 | piers C | | lateral wall footings chapel window sills |
| | 1122 | piers B | 1 | axial dado arcade capitals (d) |
| | 1121 | piers A | | chapel wall footings |
| | 1120 | | | |

DIRAFT

Travels to the south: Angers, Cunault and Fontevraud

Saint-Denis was probably followed by the drip moulding around the outside of the west portal of Angers cathedral [r]. The construction process was similar to what I have just described for Saint-Denis. Most of the sculpture of the portal would have been carved before erection, and most of the carvers would have moved away while it was being erected. The drip mould was the last part of the work sculpted to the one design by a number of men.

The design consists of long curved stones with a head in the centre framed by S-shaped vines. The curves are not unlike the Bourges south porch jambs from some ten years before, though far more sophisticated [b1]. The ends of each spiral terminate in large highly imaginative bouquets that were carved with great care [b2].



Anger cathedral, west portal

1135



Anger cathedral, west portal drip R4.



Bourges south R5

1

The character and quality of the carving in the drip mould is very different to the rest of the portal. It is more detailed, more flamboyant and extremely beautiful. It is, I believe, more in the character of contemporary work from the Paris Basin, and in particular includes some stones clearly identifiable to Félix and Grégoire among others. There are fifteen stones in the drip, and I think one of them may have been by Rameau [b].

It is R4 and has details that are in his work elsewhere: the rinceau vines overlap, they do not have sockets at the joins, have little baubles at the tips of the fronds and the heads wear wigs. The foliage is very varied, from long fronds to bunched ones under the head. This may not be much to go on, I admit. As in the jambs of Bourges where stones were being carved by different workers to a common pattern, the identities are much more uncertain than where we may be following the template-maker himself.



Anger cathedral, west portal drip R4.

DIRAFT

The head is particularly interesting [r]. The photo was taken from the side, and like all these close-ups the photo-op was made possible from the generosity of Daniel Prigent. It shows considerable skill in its forming. The chubby features, the tender lips to a lightly open mouth and the curves of the cheeks where they fold into the eye are all that is left.

The lips are interesting and unusual, for the lower pouts downwards, it is curved at the centre and tucked back up at the sides. Another like this stands out. It is in the north door of the west front of Chartres cathedral the second lintel has four angels carved onto two stones [b1]. That on the left has similar rounded features and the same lips [r2]. This should be compared to the stone on the right by a different hand, I believe that was André, where the mouth is almost rectangular and the lips relatively uninteresting [r3]. If Rameau had carved the stone at Angers, then he also carved the lintel at Chartres a couple of years later.



Anger cathedral, west portal drip L5



Chartres, north portal lintels



Chartres, north portal second lintel left stone



Chartres, north portal second lintel right stone

1136

At Cunault just south of the Loire the designs were gradually becoming denser and the variety of leaves even more varied [r]. Some fronds are fan-shaped as in earlier work, some are thinner and smaller. There is a wild quality in the vines, while every element has been pushed together and has thus lost the spaciousness so apparent in the earliest work. He had not reverted to the earlier practice of emphasising the corners with crockets, rather they are notable for their absence, being replaced by heads or the upper curls of the tendrils as in Saint-Denis [b]. Symmetry is arranged on the corner, only rarely on the face, and became more important in later work, but was seldom quite perfect. The foliage and arrangement is not dissimilar to Bruyères [b3]. From the pervading sense of irreverence in his work I think such imperfections were intentional, for they just missed the absolute perfection so sought after in other men's work, like a sort of under-cover revolutionary.



Cunault choir



Cunault choir



Cunault choir



Bruyères-et-Montbérault choir En2sw(c)

Continuing along the Loire Rameau may have arrived at the Abbey of Fontevraud. This was an enormous undertaking, and one would expect it to have been well-funded. The nave has a number of Rameau-like capitals carved during the earlier rather than the later campaigns. I provide the photos to a large scale as, like Angers, this church lies outside the Paris Basin and was not included in *The Ark*.

I was at first attracted to this entwined capital in the eastern nave, and was then drawn to the possibilities elsewhere [r]. The thicker weaving in these two are close in their density to Fay-Saint-Quentin and the upper windows at Saint-Denis. The foliage is as usual varied and complex. However, there are many stones here with woven tendrils, it being a more habitual mode in the south, and we could be dealing with a totally different group of carvers. If not, I would be open to the possibility that he stayed here on more than one occasion or for a couple of years on this occasion.



Fontevraud Abbey



1137



Fontevraud Abbey



Fontevraud Abbey

1138



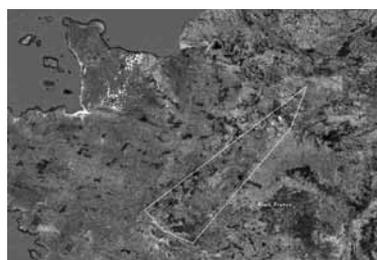
Fontevraud Abbey



Fontevraud Abbey

Other carvers made a prolific use of figures and identification can get lost between noticing similar layouts and traits, and the natural borrowing and cross-influences normal in a large workshop.

The journey to these three towns was a long one, but once there all three were within reasonable walking distance. Maybe he was so well favoured by this time that he could afford a horse to make travel easier. From Saint-Martin-des-Champs to Angers would have been some 300 kilometres by track and road, so it would have been logical to stay in the area for a while.



Journey Saint-Denis to the Loire and back

A long stay at Chartres and return to Saint-Denis (1139-42)

In the Chartres portals there are a number of colonnettes that could have been by Rameau, with intricate vines that cross in alternating ways. As was so often the case, a number of carvers were involved, possibly working under his direction. The basic rinceau arrangement had already been determined by the capo-master, and this constrained the individual inputs of every carver, no matter how he interpreted that direction.

In one [b1] the vines cross over and under, and in between are tied with a collar and with laterally spread little fronds. It is a short stone, and though the top has been broken we can see that it was carved for this height and position. It may therefore have been carved in campaign 7 just before the historiated capitals were placed, for this was the moment when the height of the portal was known (*See discussion on the portal in chapter ****)

The vines grow out of a collar at the base. In the next turn they are tied with vertical collars set at ninety degrees to the first. The fronds fill the spaces as convenient. It is confusing, yet that may be what the master intended. He deliberately broke the regularity of the patterns that everyone else had used and contrived a level of uncertainty within apparent order.

Together the vines and the fronds have the same 'feel' as one of the impostes in the Saint-Aubin cloister in Angers, though more than fifteen years earlier. The fronds are placed in pairs and have similar upturned ends.

1139



Chartres west portal W.nR2t Group 2



Angers, Saint-Aubin south cloister impost



Chartres west portal W.cL3b Group 2

There is a longer one with the same weave but only horizontal collars and with longer fronds. It is more regular, and may have been by an assistant who did not comply with his master's complexities, which were more subtle with contrary elements to disguise its simplicity. In this Rameau was an interesting man!

There is another that I might link with him [next page]. It is on right embrasure of the north portal, and on the outer edge. Considering erection order this could easily have been carved in Group 2 rather than Group 1 with the others on the north further towards the door. There are hanging animals and very work figures entwined in the vines, and extremely long hanging

DRAFT

fronds. We know he was creative in his use of fronds from Etampes onwards, and may well have been experimenting with larger units, especially after carving with the group that worked on the Angers drips.

This does illustrate the extremely dynamic interaction between teams at a workshop and their lack of ‘ownership’ of any motif. Templates



Chartres west portal W.nR3b Group 2



Chartres west portal W.nR3b Group 2



Chartres west portal W.nR3b Group 2

were personal, and may have been jealously held, but decoration seems to have been much looser, part of a common pool of available resources.

One colonnette in the south portal has a doubled-up monkey and a squatting figure with hair leading to curls [r]. It has been restored. As it is by the south door it may have been later than those in the north, but because it was shortened at the top to fit into the space it could have been left over from an earlier campaign, and so could have been carved at any time. I am inclined to place it in Group 2.

All these four could have been carved by Rameau or his assistants to his general direction. For the moment I will leave this as a substantially open question.



Chartres west portal W.sL2t Group 3



Chartres west portal W.sL2t Group 3

1124

D R A F T

I mentioned earlier that Rameau may have carved the left panel in the upper lintel of the Ascension Portal [r]. In *Gesta* in 1986 I showed that the adjustments in the lintel were to accommodate the misalignment of the bases some years earlier. This misalignment had not been noticed at the time that the lower lintel was carved, possibly because there was too much scaffolding in the way. The solution was clever and effective, so much so that it had remained unnoticed.

The lintel with the four harkening angels is made from two stones. The two angels on the right were, I believe, by Héron, those on the left by Rameau, mainly from the extraordinary and most unusual form of the lower lip [b1,2]. There is a marvellous sweeping elegance in the posture of these two angels, and they are so skilfully executed that I would expect to find other sculpture by this master, besides the archivolts of Saint-Denis and the drip mould at Angers.

In the *Gesta* article I noted the five campaigns required for the carving of the upper part of the portals. In that scenario Rameau's work would have been in campaign 4. The analysis in *The Ark* [v.4:331 *et seq.*] and in **** suggests a date of 1140.



Chartres, north portal



Chartres, north portal second lintel left stone



Chartres, north portal second lintel left stone

There is a soft flowing quality in his sculpture, as in his vines and foliage. The hands are relaxed, with no sharp knuckles. The billowing cloth on the left hangs delicately and as if it was weightless. The differences with Héron's are subtle and need close scrutiny to clarify. They cannot be compared to Bourges of Saint-Denis as each figure is assembled from a number of stones, and there is no certainty that Rameau would have carved any with hands.



Chartres, north portal second lintel left stone

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This is how the campaigns for the Royal Portal work out based on the carvers examined so far. They are named below, though by no means do they exhaust the numbers involved. You will notice that I have made no connections with carvers for most of the colonnettes in the central door, and only lightly referred to the masters for the column-statues and the tympani. Naturally the distribution of work and the dates are tentative, but not far off reality. All of the portal is, of course, after that of Saint-Denis, as most scholars will aver.

Campaigns in the western portals

| | | | |
|------|------------|----------------------------|--|
| 1136 | Campaign 3 | W.s Nativity lintel | Félix |
| 1137 | Campaign 4 | W.s Presentation lintel | -- |
| 1138 | Campaign 5 | W.n column statues | Palmier ++ |
| 1139 | Campaign 6 | colonnettes group 1 | Apple, Duchess, Félix, Grégoire, Gripple, Héron, Jérôme, Rameau, SS and Willow |
| | | W.n lower lintel | -- |
| | | lower side archivolts | Duchess, Grégoire, Rameau ++ |
| 1140 | Campaign 7 | W.s column statues | Jérôme ++ |
| | | colonnettes group 2 | Rameau, SS ++ |
| | | W.n angel lintel | Héron, Rameau |
| 1141 | Campaign 8 | W.c column statues | Félix, Jérôme ++ |
| | | colonnettes group 3 | Duke, ++ |
| | | historiated capitals | -- |
| | | tympani | Félix, Gripple ++ |
| | | upper archivolts | Apple ++ |
| | | portal drip | Apple, Félix, Grégoire, Gripple, Héron. |

This illustrates the chronological precision that is possible when sculpting styles are combined with toichological analysis and a feeling for the construction time required for the carving and for each level of the work.

During this same campaign there could have been more work for those two men. One looks at once among the adjacent archivolts, marked with the smaller rectangle. The king in Spring has completely different lips [b3], with a double upward-pointing crease under the nose. The Reaper in the next stone is more likely to have been by Rameau from a general stillness, more than anything else [b2]. All very tentative,

However, I suspect he stayed in Chartres from 1139 to the time he went to Saint-Denis in 1142.



Chartres, north portal



Chartres, north portal second archivolt, bottom



Chartres, north portal first archivolt, bottom

Once the Chartres sculpture had been erected Rameau seems to have left the site and moved back to Saint-Denis to help on the choir. He would now have been well into his 50s. There are three capitals that could have been his, one of which has been replaced [b]. There are no sockets (save in the replacement), varied fronds fill the spaces and grow from the ends of the tendrils, and so on.

1142

D R A F T



Saint-Denis ambulatory As3nw(a) recent



Saint-Denis ambulatory An2C-C1(a)



Saint-Denis ambulatory As3C-R1

1143

Probably in the next year this may have been followed by a stint on the aisle capitals in Saint-Laumer in Blois (begun 1138) which are more like those at Saint-Denis than anywhere else. I think, in fact, that the best likelihood is that Blois was carved by an associate-cum-student who began with his master's schema in his training but gradually moved more onto his own.



Blois, Saint-Laumer ambulatory



Blois, Saint-Laumer ambulatory

List of works and a tentative chronology

I find almost 70 campaigns in which the Comet, Bannière and the Facet Master worked with one another or with Rameau, The Duke, Gripple and the SS Master. The connections help to tie these campaigns to individual time lines and through them to a more global chronology. Dates have been annualised as usual.

Approximate dates - locations - campaigns

| | | |
|-------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1103 | Vert-la-Gravelle | west |
| 1104 | Nouvion-le-Vineau | tower 1 |
| 1105 | Urcel | porch |
| 1106 | Soissons, Notre-Dame | nave windows (aw) |
| 1107 | Martinvaast | apse |
| 1108 | Le Mans, cathedral | nave walls |
| 1109 | Etampes, Notre-Dame | nave (a) |
| 1110 | Foulangues | w crossing |
| 1111 | Saint-Vaast-lès-Mello | nave 3 |
| 1112 | Saint-Martin-au-Val | choir (a) |
| 1113 | Etampes, Notre-Dame | choir (c+) |
| 1114 | Paris, Sainte-Geneviève | Cluny museum |
| 1115 | Fay-Saint-Quentin | nave entry |
| 1116 | Creil, Saint-Evremond | oddments |
| 1117 | Jumièges | nave gallery |
| 1118 | Saint-Martin-d-Boscherville | north |
| 1119 | Avrechy | apse |
| 1120 | Château-Landun | choir |
| 1121 | Angers, Saint-Aubin | cloister south range |
| 1122 | Saint-Martin-des-Champs | choir (d) |
| 1123 | Beauvais, Saint-Etienne | north door |
| 1124 | Dammery | west door |
| 1125 | Châlons, Notre-Dame | crossing WS1 |
| 1126 | Cerseuil | crossing |
| 1127 | Urcel | east (a) |
| 1128 | Bruyères-et-Montbérault | choir (c) |
| 1129 | Bourges cathedral | south jambs campaign 2 |
| 1130 | Saint-Vaast-lès-Mello | south door |
| 1131 | Saint-Martin-des-Champs | ambulatory, campaign 3b |
| 1132 | Saint-Denis | west portal stage 3 |
| 1133 | Saint-Denis | narthex upper windows |
| 1134 | Saint-Martin-des-Champs | axial chapel campaign 6 |
| 1135 | Angers cathedral | west portal drip |
| 1136 | Cunault | choir |
| 1137+ | Fontevraud Abbey | west nave |
| 1139 | Chartres | colonnets group 2 |
| 1140+ | Chartres | north second lintel |
| 1142 | Saint-Denis | ambulatory walls |
| 1143 | Blois, Saint-Laumer | choir ambulatory ?? |

*All campaigns by Rameau
in approximate date order*

(1103-1143)



Vert-la-Gravelle west door



Nouvion tower level 1



Soissons Notre-Dame



Urcel porch



Martinvaast apse



Le Mans cathedral nave walls



Etampes. Notre-Dame nave aisle



Saint-Martin-au-Val choir



Foulangues crossing

1111



Saint-Vaast-lès-Mello nave



Etampes. Notre-Dame choir clerestory



Paris, Sainte-Geneviève (Musée de Cluny)

1



Fay-Saint-Quentin nave door



Creil, Saint-Evremond



Jumièges nave gallery



Boscherville, Saint-Martin north



Avrechy apse



Château-Landun choir

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Angers, Saint-Aubin north cloister



Angers, Saint-Aubin cloister impost



Saint-Martin-des-Champs chapel dado



Beauvais, Saint-Etienne north door



Dammery west door



Châlons Notre-Dame crossing



Cerseuil crossing



Urcel crossing



Bruyères-et-Montbérault choir



Bourges south portal jamb



Saint-Vaast-lès-Mello south



Saint-Martin-des-Champs ambulatory



Saint-Denis external window



Saint-Denis clerestory window



Saint-Martin-des-Champs chapel vaults



Anger cathedral, west portal drip



Cunault choir



Fontevraud WN5



Chartres colonnette



Saint-Denis ambulatory

1128

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