

# ICMA Master Carvers Series

These are drafts for vols. 6 and 7 of *The Ark of God*.

*A resource for discussion and information.*

Though copyright is retained by John James, the ICMA has his permission to place this material on its website. All photos were taken by John and Hilary James. Comments and conversations are more than welcome gothic@johnjames.com.au.

## **25 Laon gallery - Gamma and the Fabrice team**

**John James**

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

2	The Laon gallery	16	Capitals Fabrice carved elsewhere after Laon (1161-1175)
2	Master Gamma (1145-1179)	19	Capitals Fabrice carved before Laon (1140-1161)
3	The classical forms of Gamma	26	Capitals Franck carved in other parts of Laon
7	Gamma in Notre-Dame and later work (1170-79)	26	Capitals Lazare carved elsewhere (1147-1174)
10	Gamma's ambulatory campaign in Orbais (1159)	31	Summary and Conclusions
13	The Laon gallery: Fabrice, Franck and Serge (1161)	32	Chronology for Gamma and associated carvers

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 25 of an on-going series describing Early Gothic carving masters for discussion and comment***

1	Introduction to the carvers.
2	The SS Master (1097-1143)
3	Distinguishing the Rinceau Carvers
4	Master Jérôme and the Saint-Denis chevet (1120-1146)
5	The Gripple Master (1102-1138) and the history of Bury and the Saint-Aubin cloister
6	GrippleSon and the Crusader Recession (1148-1172)
7	Palmier, master and carver and the building of Notre-Dame-d'Etampes (1123-1164)
8	Construction Timetables
9	The Duke Master and Saint-Martin-des-Champs (1101-1145)
10	Master Félix, the traveller (1107-1143)
11	Who made decisions in the Grégoire team? The colonnettes at Chartres (1138)
12	The Comet Master (1075-1110)
13	The Facet Master and the story of Mogneville (1089-1123)
14	The Bannière Master (1075-1120)
15	Master Victoire, and sharing at Saint-Loup-de-Naud (1108-1143)
16	The Old Duke (1082-1108)
17	The jamb panels of the Bourges south porch (1128)
18	Rameau the Weaver (1103-1145) and Saint-Martin-des-Champs
19	Time to carve
20	The capitals of the Laon cathedral choir gallery (1164) - PART 1
21	Laon Gallery and the Cog Masters (1160-1180)
22	A summary of results from the Laon cathedral gallery
23	The Recognition: A rite of passage?
24	Laon gallery – Cyprian and Hugues (1139-1170)
25	Laon gallery – Gamma (1152-1179) and the Fabrice team
26	Laon gallery – the Nazaire group (1139-1175)
27	Strapper the Intricate (1135-1179)
28	Strap-X, the original (1086-1127)
29	Master Victoire, an addendum (1108-1168)



Typical capital by Gamma: the Isse apse, plastered

### ***The Laon gallery - Gamma and the Fabrice Team***

In order to describe the unique templates carved by the Fabrice group in the Laon gallery I need to start with Master Gamma on another site altogether. It was Gamma who introduced Fabrice to the idea of interlocking straps while working at Orbais. Fabrice improved on the idea at Laon, where he shared it with three other men. Gamma did not work on the gallery. None of the others used the strap motif after Laon whose later use and further adaptation of the strap motif can be followed. Since he continued with that motif elsewhere I have presumed he had introduced it at Laon. Fabrice now joins the SS Master and the Cog-Master in sharing his template with others.

### ***Master Gamma (1145-1179)***

The carver Gamma created a steady stream of work over almost three decades, though he was not employed on the Laon gallery. I recognised his work as being from the same simple template. It was like separate pairs of overlapping straps in the shape of the Greek letter gamma with a generous curve between the verticals [r1]. Between each pair there is a split extending all the way to the astragal.

At Orbais-l'Abbaye he shared his template with five other carvers, none of whom seem to have used anything like this before, and with the exception of Fabrice none used it again. Fabrice adapted the Gamma straps into a more sophisticated and intricate version that gave every element a verticality that Gamma lacked [r2].

Fabrice then worked in the Laon gallery where he introduced his new template, and shared this with three other carvers: Franck, Lazare and Serge. I can find no evidence that any of them had used a strap-like template before nor continued with it anywhere else, though a couple of them did use it on other levels at Laon.

This evidence raises some crucial issues for the historian. Does this tell us that a man may share his template in one place and campaign, and not in another? That it can be transmitted and may be changed? Or could it mean that a design remained the property of the designer unless he formed



Double gamma-like straps in the above capital



Fabrice 4 capitals in ES5 pier

a condign team to use it? Does it suggest that carvers were not wedded to 'their' template and could be persuaded, or even eager to, take on those of others, and do so even if they were exceptionally gifted?

We have already seen this situation among the Cog Masters and in earlier studies. The Fabrice group at Laon is the clearest so far, and the only one to this date where we can follow something of its antecedents into the Copying-Gamma team at Orbais.

This study highlights the difference between a regular conservative carver like Gamma who kept to the same formula for a working life, and creative innovators like Franck who restyled whatever they took up. It also makes mockery of trying to use templates on their own to identify the more innovative and unconventional carvers. I can already see that much more penetrating and subtle skills will be needed from here on to make sense of the data on such people.

### *The classical forms of Gamma*

Gamma designed with an appealing simplicity. He used clean curves between the paired crossings straps and a thin gap between the pairs that continued down to the astragal. They are consistent in form and detailing, mature rather than clever, with clear geometry and beautifully articulated members.

In the Fossoy apse and in Epieds, in Boullarre and Isse he exercised the fullness of his new style [b]. Where Strapper used flat straps, these are lightly curved in section, often with the hint of a ridge up the centre.

He continued with the occasional use of the *énchancre*. As the latter is not found in Fossoy or Boullarre, but is at Epieds, Isse and Orbais, I have placed these three a little later than the first two. Yet there is no *énchancre* in Provins, nor in much of the work after Laon. I concluded that this detail would give no indication of possible carving order. An interesting motif, but useless for chronology.

There is a uniformity in these designs that would be wearisome if they were not so attractive. I have gone by the feel for the designs rather than changes to details, of which there are not any, to suggest that Orbais and Isse were the last of this group.



Fossoy

1156



Boullarre

1157



Boullarre

1157



Epieds S3ne



Epieds S3e

1152

DIRASIT  
1154

1156

I would include among these the small south chapel at Baulne-en-Brie, where he was with an assistant who drilled along the edges of the straps [r]. The chapel adjoined an earlier apse that was replaced quite a few years later.

Some straps are curved in section with a slight ridge up the centre and some are flat. The Fossoy and Epied capitals have both, Boullarre also. Orbais and Baulne are solely flat. The three-fingered terminals in Epieds are the same as those in Baulne, and the ball-like terminals of Boullarre are like those in Provins. The non-linear connections between these elements suggest that both types of straps and all the different terminals were variations from the one carver.



Baulne-en-Brie Es2(a)



Baulne-en-Brie WS1s(a)

In Orbais-l'Abbaye he helped carve the dado arcades [r] (though I am looking at the possibility that it was carved a decade earlier), and from there he possibly took a side trip to Provins while waiting until it was time to return to carve the aisle capitals and vaults. There is one capital in the triforium at Saint-Quirace that follows the Gamma template, and two others with bulky terminals following a similar basic idea, and I will argue on page 21 they were both by Lazare who was already showing the influence of the Gamma arrangement [b].

There is no sign of the revolution of the 70s in the capitals at any level of the choir, so I would agree with de Maillé that work was begun in the mid-1150s and reached the level of the triforium just before 1160.<sup>n</sup>

1155



Orbais ES3(d)

1158



Provins, Saint-Quirace EN2(t) by Gamma



Provins, Saint-Quirace AS2(t) by Lazare

1159

His return to Orbais to carve aisle capitals in the ambulatory is the reason he is in this story [r]. Fourteen capitals are in his manner carved by a number of men, and the possible influence he exerted on a group of exceptional carvers will be discussed in more detail on page 9. Some of these men were shortly afterwards going to assemble in the Laon gallery as the Fabrice team.

The designs at Isse are the most perfect of all [b]. These capitals have a classic simplicity and a natural sense of balance between straps and terminals, an enormous feeling of confidence and a striking loveliness in the curves. All seems sumptuous yet restrained. Nothing is too strong, nothing too weak. The height of the bottom panel from which everything stems feels just right. It is a balanced concept. All have the *énchangré*.



Orbais-l'Abbaye As2C(a)

IDIRACT 1160



Isse ES2nw



Isse ES2n



Isse ES2ne

The edges are a little thicker at Isse than before, which is why I placed them later than the others, and before his work in the Laon triforium where the edges are raised.

1160

The east wall at Isse is some seven courses higher than the vault capitals, and so a little later [r]. Only one of the window capitals is by Gamma [b]. Note that the split has closed, to be replaced with a crease. The sides of the impostes are splayed parallel to the inclined jambs of the windows, a somewhat unusual concept at that time, and perhaps a harbinger of the octagonal capital.

The Isse windows were being built about the same time as the Laon gallery, and as the distance between Laon and Isse is over a hundred kilometres, I have presumed that the whole of that church, with the windows, was completed before he moved to Laon to work on the triforium.



Isse apse eastern window E-e(aw)



Isse apse

1163

Though Gamma did not work on the Laon gallery he was taken on for the next level, for there is one characteristic capital in the triforium [r2]. The edges to the straps are lightly raised and the terminals are intricate. They have small *énchanrés* so that the upper edge of the cone peeps out at the top.

At the same time he would have carved a very large one in the clerestory only a few courses above that. The SE3 capital in the clerestory is in the same style as the one in the triforium [b].



Laon triforium EN3(t)

1164



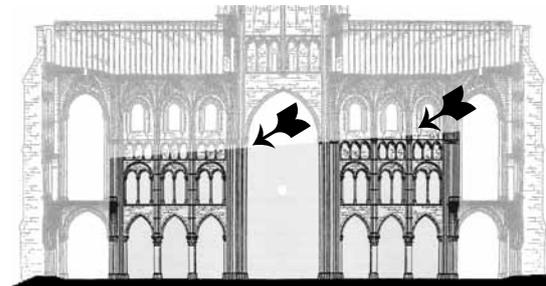
Laon clerestory SE3(c)



Laon triforium and clerestory

For Gamma to have been able to carve a capital in the triforium and one in the clerestory needs an understanding of the one construction issue that continued throughout the history of the cathedral. There was a tilt in the ground under the transepts so that the south was almost three metres higher than the north. This meant that, as in the gallery, the triforium on the north side of the nave would have been less advanced than that of the south transept. In the vertical plane they are separated by the arches over the triforium, the soffit over the walkway and the strong course above that [r3]. The tilt explains this discrepancy, and why a capital in the clerestory could be carved about the same time as one in the level below. The location of the two capitals are marked by arrows in the cross-section through the transepts [r4].

The detailing of the upthrusting tips in the clerestory capital is closer



Section through the Laon transept.

1160

to work by Fabrice, and could be mistaken for him but for the way the pairs of straps are separated by a split that goes down to the astragal. It still looks like Fabrice, though the fingers on the fronds are more rounded and the straps more three-dimensional. It looks like the template was being updated again. It seems balanced that Gamma was open to being strongly influenced by the man he had himself influenced in Orbais. We will come to that story in a moment, in which Gamma's template was used by Fabrice in Orbais, and here just a couple of years later Fabrice's detailing has an impact on Gamma's capital.

1160

The straps arranged in pairs in the west front at Guyencourt identifies the work as Gamma's [r]. The raised edges place it about the same time-frame as the Laon triforium/clerestory, and the sharply tipped terminals may have been inspired while working at Laon.

1163

Gamma's design in the Glennes apse is more emphatic than any others by him, no doubt under the influence of Igor the Mad [r].<sup>ICMA #21</sup> The little triangular marks under the junction were a new device. The grinning toothy head would also have been his from the form of the fronds above it. The adjacent foliate may have been by one of the other Laon masters, Noël or Pierre.



Guyencourt west door



Glennes apse ES1ne. Both stones by Gamma, adjacent capital probably Noël or Pierre



Glennes SC-eL by ?? and R by Gamma

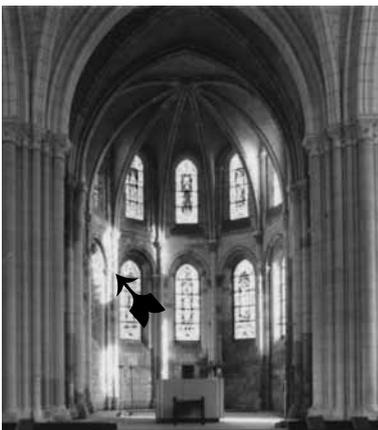


1164

There are two capitals at Guignicourt, a little town halfway between Laon and Reims. It is among the lower apse windows, with the same detailing, but slightly more upward pointing terminals [b]. Being a smaller capital in plan there is a greater openness under the corner, which he has graced with a crease. There was a small change in the template, for the split between the paired straps has been removed. This became normal in later work.

1164

DRAFT



Guignicourt apse (aw)



Guignicourt apse (aw)

1163

About the same time he carved one small capital in the Paris, Notre-Dame ambulatory [b2]. This has only one split, which is why I place it just after Glennes, and before the next two where there are no splits at all. It is next to a more elaborate and larger strap capital by Séverin.<sup>ICMA#\*\*\*\*</sup>

1166

Except for these two small jobs and a distant side-trip to Paris Gamma may have stayed on at Laon cathedral for a number of years, for I find nothing else by him from this time, and in the clerestory he did carve one of the capitals alongside the window on the north side [b3].

1168

From here on the template has his modified form, for the splits have been dropped and instead they have straps join along the bottom with only creases to make the transition.

Mons-en-Laonnais, close down the hill from the cathedral, was about this time [r]. Again no splits, but a simple paired arrangement. He never took up the more elaborate arrangements of Fabrice nor the complexity of Strapper. This may have been followed by the porch at Hermonville [b]. Only one of the delicately carved capitals in the porch shows signs of the 1170s revolution, and I would therefore estimate they were carved around 1168 or 69. They too have no splits, and the straps have developed a thinness that is almost austere. See discussion of 1170s transformation in v.1:35-8.

1169



Hermonville porch



Hermonville porch



Paris, Notre-Dame En3sw(a)



Laon choir clerestory window EN3(cw)



Mons-en-Laonnais apse En2(a)

1168

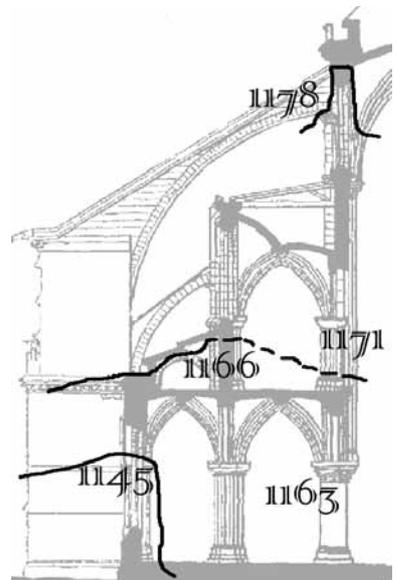
### *Gamma in Notre-Dame and later work (1170-1179)*

He returned to Paris to carve two capitals in the choir gallery that may have been around 1170 [r]. The tips are both down- and up-turned as in earlier work. I have discussed the complexities in the study on Marcel, though I need to revisit the Paris gallery to understand it more, and hope to do so in May 2013.

Caroline Bruzelius suggested that there were a number of campaigns in the gallery from changes to the wall piers.<sup>9</sup> I concur, and would go further from the evidence in the profiles of all the elements, not just the piers, that there were about five campaigns, perhaps more. She would be right in thinking that the south corner pier with its rectangular section reflected a simultaneous decision to start a similar section in the western piers of the crossing.

A more complex picture emerges when we delve further into the torus moulds, the many different dimensions for the wall and pier shafts and the vaulting profiles. Work proceeded from the north transept corner to the south, slowly. I think that the carving of the capitals proceeded in the same manner. This needs checking on site.

I am interested in this delay, because it suggests that for some reason funding dribbled in slowly during these five or six years, which I tentatively calculate were between 1166 and 1172. The section shows the possible dates for the construction of the eastern wall [r]. Perhaps the delay had



Section through eastern wall Paris, Notre-Dame

1169 something to do with Louis VII's costly support of Henry II's sons against their father that could have drained the royal treasury or affected trade down the Seine, until he broke up the coalition in 1174.



Paris, Notre-Dame choir gallery ES4w(g)



Paris, Notre-Dame choir gallery

1171 In Noyon cathedral Gamma carved one small capital in the dado arcade of the north transept and a double capital on a pier of the choir gallery [b]. I have discussed the complex construction schedule at Noyon elsewhere, and suggested dates of 1171 and 1173 for these two parts.<sup>ICMA#08</sup> The split between the straps is not present in these works.



Noyon cathedral choir gallery piers



Noyon north transept dado

1173 In between these two campaigns at Noyon he may have carved a couple of large capitals in nearby Thiescourt [b]. The split has been replaced by flat unarticulated leaves, as was becoming fashionable at that time, and may be found in other capitals in the church, arrow.



Thiescourt ES1n



Thiescourt ES1w



Thiescourt apse and crossing

1172 He returned to Laon to work on the nave this time, at the gallery level. There is no other carver among all those in any discussion on straps who would have done them, and the dates are determined by the construction order. They would have been carved in 1178 or 1179 [b1].

In the rebuilding of the Saint-Remi nave additional shafts were placed over the earlier piers that were intended to carry the high vaults [r]. The

DRAFT

1178

capitals support the *en délit* shafts up the face of the wall, arrow. All these capitals except this by Gamma [b2] are early foliates that I estimated from the proportion with small leaves pasted onto formal designs indicates they would have been carved just before 1180. v.1:246-8.



Noyon WNS(a)



Noyon N(t)



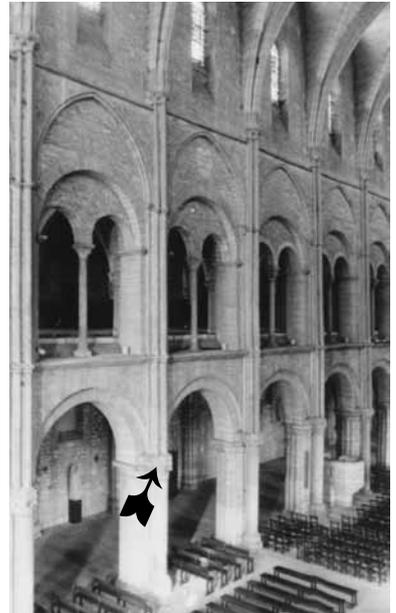
Noyon Wn1(g)

In the six-year period between the Noyon gallery piers and Saint-Remi he may have done lone stints at Noyon and Laon, and at Saint-Quentin not far away.

As far as I can tell, these were the last carvings by this master.



Saint-Quentin west porch



Saint-Remi interior, arrow marks shaft by Gamma



Laon nave gallery Ws4(g)

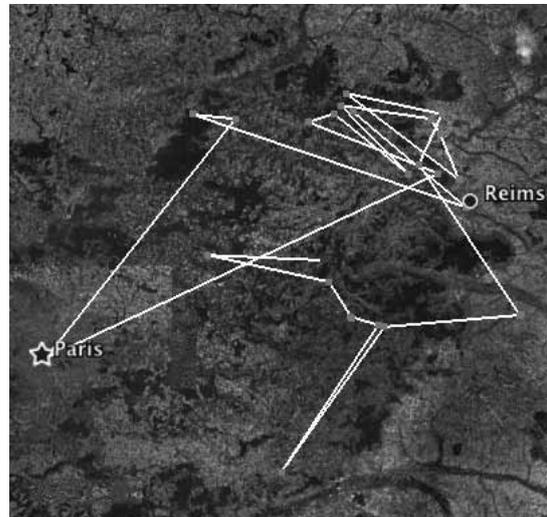


Saint-Remi aisle level nave pier shafts

1179

I presume that when not carving capitals Gamma was doing what any other mason did, which was to carve ashlar for the walls and the more detailed stones required for window reveals and vaults. He was one of many, appreciated no doubt, but with no special qualifications or attributes.

Gamma seems to have been a local Laonnaise man. His travels were on the whole restricted to the small region between Laon and Reims. At first during the 1150s this was north of the Brie with a trip to Provins between the Orbais dado and aisle capitals. This was followed by Isse to the east and thereafter he concentrated on the area to the north [r]. The exceptions were a long trip to Paris with a return to Noyon and nearby Thiescourt around 1170, and a return to his main locality, possibly near his home somewhere between Saint-Remi and Laon. His repertoire stretched across almost thirty years, and so he may have been near fifty on his last recognisable job. His later work lacks the precision of the earlier carvings, and suggests his eyesight may have been failing.



Where Gamma worked - Paris and Reims are marked. Noyon and Thiescourt are on the upper left, Orbais and Provins at the bottom.

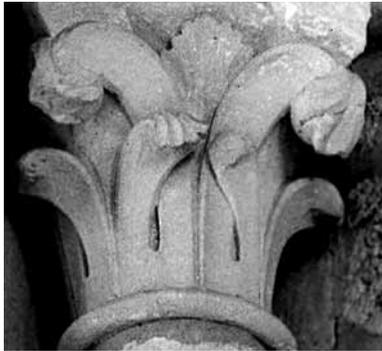
*Gamma's ambulatory campaign in Orbais (1159)*

1159

There are two small capitals under the Orbais-l'Abbaye ambulatory vaults that I would attribute to Gamma [b] It is noteworthy that there are fourteen other gamma-style capitals along the Orbais walls, but the detailing and feel of the designs is not the same as Gamma's, and I will argue they were executed by other men.



Orbais axial chapel



Orbais E3ws(a) by Gamma



Orbais As2C(a) by Gamma

There is one that uses the Gamma template with straps in pairs separated by a split, but with enormous almost rectangular terminals [b1]. These are carved from three lobes separated by drilled holes and with deeply gouged spines. The design of the Eugène capital at Laon is very different, but not the terminals. Could this have been Eugène's interpretation of the Gamma template?



Orbais Es1nen(a)



Laon gallery ES4se(g) by Eugène



Laon gallery ES4ses(g) terminal by Eugène

Another group of six capitals based on the Gamma template has uncharacteristic flattened straps and terminals that point up and out [b]. In other respects he followed the paired Gamma-strap template. I have not found any other designs like this in the Paris Basin, with the possible exception of the Ventelay crossing [b3].



Orbais Es3e(a)



Orbais ES3w(a) and Es2nw(a)



Ventelay WS1nw

And then there are a number that link more directly with the Laon gallery. In one the middle terminals point up while those under the corners point down [b1]. The straps are arranged in the Gamma manner, though where there should be a split under the corner the arrow marks there is only a crease. The terminals are like those used by Lazare in the Laon gallery, if less complicated [b2]. This may be where Lazare acquired a taste for straps.



Orbais Es1ne(a)



Laon gallery NE3(g) by Lazare

In two capitals both sets of terminals thrust upwards with a nicely balanced set of curves that swing backwards at the tips. Berries on tall stalks fill the splits under the corners [b1,2]. These could have been by Fabrice who carved a similar arrangement in the gallery piers, but used an additional pair of fronds instead of the berry. [b3].

The correspondence is not so clear that I can unequivocally say these were by this master or that. I do believe that the basic template was Gamma's. But the association of these ideas with Fabrice or with Franck or Lazare is not as clear. I have searched at length to find viable correlations,



Orbais ECN1se(a)



Orbais E3s(a)



Laon gallery in ES5 pier by Fabrice

and I can say only that these are the best I can do, even with the advantage of possessing all the sculpture of one type. Even allowing for massive losses over the centuries, we have enough in most cases to show how ideas evolved and how one personal trait can be followed across a variety of carvings, except for occasions like this where a man used another's template rather than his own, thus muddying the trail.

I decided Fabrice was the designer, though I could just as easily have chosen Franck or Lazare, being a matter of open choice that was conditioned as much by feel as by motif. Though there is this capital at Laon by Franck with similar fronds and a berry as in Orbais [r]. In the end, this discussion will have little effect on the final argument.



Laon gallery ES5wnw(g) by Franck

However, one of the Orbais capitals may have been by Franck. It is highly decorated and combines foliate elements and corner crockets with straps [b1]. But there are no splits. It is the only one in this group with a continuous base that changed the Gamma template into one much closer to Franck's at Laon [b2]. To add richness he inserted leaves, berries and crockets, whereas in Laon he added more straps and leaflets at the bottom. Was the continuous base the first step in creating the template used at Laon?



Orbais EC2s(a)



Laon gallery ES6w(g) by Franck

There is another with long-fingered upward pointing tips with the full Gamma design including splits on both sides [b1]. This is a simple, almost plain capital with one vein along the strap that makes it look a little like Serge's at Laon [b2].



Orbais Es2(a)



Laon gallery NE3sws(g) by Serge

To summarise, the Gamma design was used in the same manner in all earlier and all later campaigns. Only at Orbais was it used by a multitude of carvers, most of whom proceeded immediately on to Laon. These latter were Fabrice, Lazare, Franck and Serge.

If these relationships can be sustained, then we may have met at Orbais the entire gang that used the more sophisticated strap design at Laon, a design that is a far cry from the simpler straps by Strapper [r]. I will attempt to detail the transition from Orbais to Laon in a moment.

This particular motif with straps that are linked along the bottom and with tips pointing upwards does not occur in any other building in the Paris Basin, except in the work of the Fabrice group in the Laon gallery. It may be reasonable to deduce that the carving in both places was close in time. More significantly, I believe this implies some sort of formal relationship between Gamma and the other carvers who used his template, as there was in Laon between the four members of the Fabrice team.

Rather than requiring some formal relationship, Chris Henige offered the



Laon gallery Es10n(g) by Strapper

explanation that at Orbais Gamma may have simply roughed out fourteen blocks before needing for some reason to move on. The hardest part would be setting out and getting from the cube to what essentially looks like a capital, after which the details could have been left to the others. Perhaps Gamma was in a hurry to get somewhere else, and happy to leave his associates to finish them off.

However, the Gamma template used by all these crews at Orbais is very clear: paired straps joined at the base with a well-defined split between each pair, as in one by Lazare [r1]. Those of this crew who then went to Laon abandoned the split by connecting the straps along the bottom of the capital, and enriched it by making the straps thinner and inserting an additional pair of straps underneath the corner terminals [r2].

The designs in Orbais of those who took on the Gamma template are in a process of evolution. They were not yet fixed as personal signatures, but were adaptations of a man's personal style within the form of another. This raises hair-raising problems for the researcher, for a man's *œuvre* can only be constructed if there is some consistency over time. I will show that we can trace Franck from Orbais to Laon, Guignicourt and Lagery, but then he stopped using straps. How do we pick him up next? And how can we identify him in earlier carving? When faced with really creative men who do not hold to working in the one manner all their lives, our investigations as researchers is more difficult, but undoubtedly richer if we can pull it off.

### ***The Laon gallery: Fabrice, Franck, Lazare and Serge (1161)***

Now, having set the historic scene, we can proceed to examine these four carvers in the Laon gallery. All four carved according to the same template. It was originally a Gamma design that had been modified in important ways. I have chosen Fabrice as the chief designer, and illustrate a typical capital [r3]. The band above the astragal has been widened and there are six straps on the face instead of the more typical four, with many upward pointing fronds that cross over and turn back with double-curvature. The long and thin ribbons create a powerful vertical movement that irresistibly draws us into the extreme verticality of the tips.

Terminals are formed with the tenderest finger tips that either lightly touch or turn away from each other. Most leaves have three tips with the lowest one short, while the leader is extended into a long pointing finger. Every element emphasises upward movement. There is a great deal of undercutting to throw these dancing elements into strong relief.

It says a lot for the flexibility and interchangeability between the men in this team that minor detailing - such as a gash or herringbone up the spine, a central leaf or a terminal at the top, and rounded or sharper edges to the straps - could be left to personal choice.

The complex design that was created went far beyond anything Gamma may have envisaged, with a level of smoothness and sophistication he never achieved. The template required careful and exact workmanship, with rigorously controlled symmetry around middle and corner axes, and the most careful undercutting to preserve the sharp edges without losing any of the delicate curves. I believe they are among the finest examples of sculpture to be found anywhere. They may only be capitals, but they command our deepest respect and, might one add, adoration.

There are enough small variations in the template to distinguish four individuals. I will introduce them and then deal with what I can find of their background and later projects.



Orbais Es1ne(a) by Lazare



Laon gallery NE3(g) by Lazare



Laon gallery in ES5 pier by Fabrice

These illustrations may help to distinguish the seven carvers at Laon with strap-like schemes. Four follow one mode with a continuous base and six straps to the face [r,b]. They may be divided into two templates that are distinctly different. Those by Franck and Fabrice have lateral pairs that support the corner terminals, whereas those by Lazare and Serge have them turned inwards. The central pair in the first rises higher, with the tips touching the abacus, while in the second it sits snugly under the other tips with an empty space left above them. The other major difference is that the terminals under the corners are turned over and under in the first, and simply hang in the second.

Fabrice carved all his capitals on the inside of the ES5 pier, which is one of those that were rebuilt in the reconstruction of the choir. Franck carved all except one of his on the exposed shafts that would be seen from below. This one was, I believe, misplaced when the piers were re-erected as it has no correspondence with any adjoining piers, but was needed to complete the symmetry in the ES5 piers.<sup>See discussion in ICMA #20:13.</sup>



Laon gallery ES6w by Franck



Laon gallery ES5sw by Fabrice



Laon gallery NE3se by Lazare



Laon gallery NE3s by Serge

The other three are significantly different in the way they handled the straps and terminals. Auguste used eight straps on two capitals with continuous incisions along them, not unlike Serge but with massively heavier terminals and a very different way to overlap the straps [b1]. Séverin had only four straps on a single capital, but inserted berries like Franck had used at Orbais [b2]. Strapper also had four on a single capital in an otherwise austere design [b3]. All have continuous bases. Each will be discussed in detail elsewhere.

Now we can discuss each of the four major carvers, in turn.



Laon gallery SE3s(g) by Auguste



Laon gallery ES1ne(g) by Séverin



Laon gallery Es10n(g) by Strapper

**FABRICE** carved four capitals in the ES5 pier. I calculate this would have taken him a bit less than forty days [r]. I have used the strong upwardness of the central fronds and the thinness of the members, as well as the lack of leaflets under the corners, to separate his work from Franck's, whom we will describe next. From these details I have singled out his work in other places, starting on page 16.



Fabrice 4 capitals in ES5 pier

The details show some resemblance to a more intricate and deeply decorated shaft-cap at ES3+ [r2]. The lobes of the fronds are more carefully carved, but the arrangements are otherwise so similar it is hard not to see the same hand, even if assistants completed the finer details such as the way the junctions are finished off with lines or Y-like scoops.

The terminals hang and have a berry in the centre encased in a drooping pair of fronds. Placed above them on each side is a backward-arching leaf with the same circular movement as in the other terminals. The foliage is deeply undercut. It is an extraordinary motif [b3].



Laon gallery ES3+ by Fabrice



Laon gallery ES3+ by Fabrice terminal detail

FRANCK carved four capitals on the ES5 pier, one in ES6 and one shaft-cap ES1+, being the work of about sixty days. All the terminals point upward [r]. The process of enrichment was important to him: in Orbais he added berries on stalks between the splits and at Laon he added tiny fern-like fronds under the corners. They slip under and ‘support’ the corner terminal, a unique move that enriches yet complicated the workmanship. They are ingenious and form a movement counter to the central fronds while the upward points neatly balance the returning tips of the terminal. It is a clever design with good massing and strong contrapuntal movements. ES5s [b1] shows the bare bones of the design, without decoration to fronds or ferns. This highly mobile and pure form needed only decoration to be almost exactly like the ES1+ shaft-cap [b2]. Yet I cannot help but think that Lazare had a hand in it.

I have not been able to identify other work in the north by this carver, with the possible exception of a small campaign in Paris where he continued with the plain version, without the tiny fronds but with the knobbly double buds in the corners. I presume that he had lost interest in the strap design.



Laon gallery ES5s by Franck



Laon gallery ES6w by Franck



Laon gallery ES1+ by Franck

In Franck’s smaller capitals the particular vertical qualities of his carving stand out. Note that one of his small capitals includes a berry on a stalk, an idea that was eschewed at Laon (except in the Fabrice terminal) but emerged in other work by him, as we shall see.



Laon gallery three capitals by Franck ES5ene, ES5e and ES5wnw

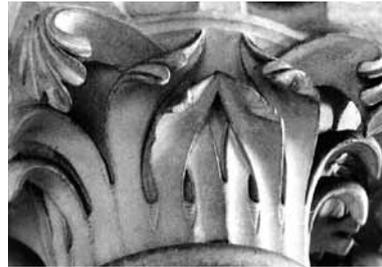
**SERGE carved five capitals** all in the NE3 pier, taking almost forty days. In four of them the veins are fully articulated. Many of the leaves are small, and have only three fronds [b1].

The terminals point downwards, the central pair are not as tall as the others, the fronds are finished without lobes and the uppermost curves hump upwards. The minor detailing at the junctions between each stalk are different, with those in the more elaborate capitals consisting of three little creases while in the more plainly finished the creases are contained within a triangle [b2]. The template is almost the same as Lazare, though not easy to distinguish. There is nothing else in this manner in other buildings.



Serge NE3n

3x Z



Joël to the Serge template NE3e

3x Z

**LAZARE carved four capitals** on inside of the NE3 pier over about thirty days [r]. In them the crocket terminals point down, the fronds are turned in and very rounded. The strong vertical thrust on the lower leaves is set against the hanging terminals. There is no decoration save the scotia under the circular top of the cone.

I have taken this particular combination of vertical lower elements and drooping upper corners as the hallmark of this carver. Under this definition I have attributed most of the other examples of this template to Lazare.

From here on I will set out the major work done elsewhere by Fabrice, followed by the very few in this mode by Franck and Lazare. The major differences are that Fabrice used upward pointing terminals with stretched tips while Lazare employed compact multi-layered terminals.



Lazare 4 inside capitals on NE3 pier

### *Capitals Fabrice carved elsewhere after Laon (1161-1175)*

For reference I repeat one of the capitals Fabrice carved in the Laon gallery [r]. In the nearby window reveal he probably also carved two small capitals [b]. They are as neatly finished and as delicate as those on the interior, though more worn, and there are less straps. He is readily recognisable from the composition, and from the hallmark terminals with a rapidly rising centre. The central straps start at a higher level than the others. Its design is almost identical to the window capital at Isse and would have been close in time.



Laon gallery in ES5 pier by Fabrice



Laon gallery En3L(gw) by Fabrice

1159

On pages 9-11 I had described how, in the ambulatory at Orbais, Gamma influenced five other carvers to experiment with his template, and suggested that Fabrice was one of them [r]. He was again with Gamma in the little church of Isse, somewhat to the east of Orbais, working on the arches over the windows. Among the eight capitals, four inside and four out, one was by Gamma [page 5], and one by Fabrice [b1]. The design has a continuous base, and all the fronds point upwards. The window capitals being some seven courses above those Gamma carved for the vaults there would have been some time between them.



Orbais AcN1

1160



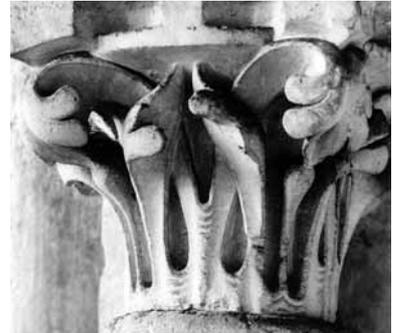
Isse window capital E-e(aw) by Fabrice



Isse apse

1163

Returning to Laon Fabrice carved one capital in the triforium level, even to the grooved lines under the junction and up-turned pointed central terminals [r]. He carved two more capitals further along the triforium that are more complicated, with additional straps and a berry on a stalk [b]. The earlier template was rapidly being updated into a new one. The fingers and tips were becoming more rounded, and the straps more three-dimensional. Terminals are hanging as well as being vertical, ends are turning into more leaf-like forms and in one capital he increased the number of straps from six to eight. The continuous connection along the bottom remained, as does the *énchanré*.



Laon choir triforium EN4(t)



Laon transept triforium NE2(t)



Laon choir triforium EN1(t)



Laon choir triforium EN4a(t)

At the same time he carved one clerestory capital on the north side of the choir [r]. The central fronds now have little leaflets, and is integrated more fully into the corners. It was probably carved at the same time as that in the north triforium for the same reason that Gamma was able to carved in both levels at once: The tilt across the site. This was the last work he did at Laon.

As the added richness in the clerestory capital shows, the design was changing. If this was because of a short stint in Glennes that was only 24 kilometres away (see next item) it would show that a carver could visit a nearby workshop while engaged on a major project, apparently just to help out when specialist carving was required.



Laon choir clerestory EN2(c)

1164

At Glennes Fabrice carved three little capitals in the apse. They have the sharpness and refinement of his work at Laon and seem very close in time. Igor the Mad was carving some of the larger capitals, and I think that the slightly frantic quality of Fabrice's designs here was affected by Igor's craziness.<sup>ICMA Cog Masters</sup> Underneath lies the same structure as the Laon gallery. The terminals under the corners are the most indicative elements, being turned down and back as in the cathedral. The berry on a full-length stalk is an oft-used motif. The middle layer of fronds were turned downwards, as would be done in the next couple of jobs. If this conjecture is right, then Igor added an element of fantasy to Fabrice's *œuvre*, and this is reflected in the more complex design of capitals at Laon, including that in the clerestory.

At some time, most probably just after working on the Laon triforium, he did some work in the chapels of the nearby church of Guignicourt, only a day's walk away [r]. Though badly damaged, the elements that link him with Laon are the six straps, the raised start to the central pair, the triangular indents underneath and the 'extra' element, in this case a little leaf. All are marked with arrows. Close examination shows the crossed ribbons, and the curves that join them, and the intricate complexity we would expect from him. The design looks forward to his later capital in the Laon clerestory than the gallery. It shows the direction his ideas were moving.



Glennes AN2



Glennes SC-sl

1162



Guignicourt ES2sw(a)



Guignicourt ES2sw(a) by Fabrice

1165

A trip west and he appears in the renovated Villeneuve-sur-Verberie not far from Senlis [r], and than a little further in the ambulatory chapels of Saint-Leu-d'Esserent after a twenty-year pause [next page]. Another twenty years were to pass before the ambulatory drum piers were carved, suggesting they missed out on much of the finding available at that time.

1165  
DRAFT



Saint-Leu-d'Esserent choir AS2C(a)



Saint-Leu-d'Esserent choir AS1C(a)



Villeneuve-sur-Verberie EN1

1166

In the ruined abbey of Val-Crézien Fabrice may have carved this small capital on one of the remaining piers, with the berry held by two pointed fronds [r]. Similarly with two almost contemporary stones in the Saint-Remi dado [b].



Saint-Remi ambulatory (d)



Saint-Remi ambulatory (d)



Val-Crézien S3

1168

The Chars nave clerestory was completed just before 1170 [r2]. The design reverts to an older pattern with more complicated elements, too many for a small stone. Perhaps he was showing off. Perhaps he was recalling his past in a time of great change. This was a tumultuous period in the artistic world. The intricate formal designs were during the 1170s giving way to much simpler arrangements with more realistic foliage. This process would have been unsettling to some men, and the apparent incoherence in these two capitals suggests that Fabrice was affected in this way, trying to reconcile the motifs he was well versed in to the new paradigm.



Chars WN2sw(c)

1168

1170

In the same vein I could consider one on the north side of the Notre-Dame gallery in Paris [b3]. The capitals on this wall were carved earlier than those on the south.

These attributions lack some of the solidity of earlier investigations. I have not taken travel into account, and by this chronology he was tripping from one side of France to the other without any coherence. I will have to come back to most in this changing period of the 1170s. I gather it was deeply unsettling for most artists with strange result while they adapted.



Paris, Notre-Dame choir gallery En3s(g)

1172

Another of these unsettling designs is in the Lavannes choir from the early 1170s with a similar collection of elements as the Paris gallery [r]. There are similarities to the older Fabrice designs, such as the multitude of elements, the straps, and the shell-like fronds. The date has been estimated from the proportion of formal and foliate capitals.<sup>v.1:186-189.</sup>

There are also two strap capitals with up-turned fronds and delicate detailing in the Bruyères-et-Montbérault south transept dado that may also have been by Fabrice. They do not fit into any other man's *œuvre*, least of all from this period.<sup>[v.1:110-111]</sup>

Yet the years around 1170 are full of very original works in which men were experimenting with the new mode from within the manner of the old. Times were changing and called upon great levels of creativity from creative men.



Lavannes ES2(c)

DIRACT



Bruyères-et-Montbérault South (d)



Bruyères-et-Montbérault South (d)



Bruyères-et-Montbérault South (d)

### *Capitals Fabrice carved before Laon (1140-1161)*

To establish the connections between the Fabrice early capitals I need to present them backwards in time. The Laon gallery and the two closest in time have already been discussed [b]. The key elements are ribbons that are linked at the bottom, vertical tips mixed with those that hang, and occasionally berries on tall stalks.

1160



Orbais AcN1



Isse window capital E-e(aw)



Laon gallery in ES5 pier by Fabrice

With the limited data surviving that we have collected in the Thesaurus, and considering how men were sharing templates in Orbais and Laon, it is not possible to distinguish clever and creative men as clearly as we might with the more conventional carvers, such as Faceter and the Duke. Nevertheless, when all the capitals of a period are assembled, as in *The Ark*, certain designs stand out as being different to their neighbours and with elements that have some consanguinity with definable design strands.

This very creativity makes it increasingly difficult to follow him the further we are from Laon. He is not conventional, following the one template all his working life, like Strapper, Faceter and others I have already discussed. He was a creative man who sought originality.

Ventelay has more upthrusting elements, and would seem to fit into a program before Orbais [r]. In this group of capitals there is an upward movement, especially in the tips, a gathering of fronds and their stalks in groups, and occasional enfolding of berries.

From documentary evidence that relates to Senlis cathedral the ambulatory and aisle capitals would have been carved between 1157 and 1158. The earlier ones were in the apse, and while it was built rapidly the toichological evidence indicates that work progressed from east to west. During that time there was a development in the Fabrice details.

The small but exquisite capitals in the nave have the verticalized tips of Laon [b]. The fronds overlap and much is made of the open loop where one stalk is attached to the other.

1158



Ventelay AS2 by Fabrice

1157



Senlis cathedral s9se(a)



Senlis cathedral s9-sR(a-)

DRAFT

1156

Just prior to them there are a number in the choir with significant differences. I refer in particular to the small capital adjoining the axial chapel [r]. It is in many ways like Orbais except that the leading tips are finished with little baubles [b1]. It is like Laon with a combination of vertical fronds and those that turn down [b2]. These connections along with the general verticality in the arrangement, suggest these were also by Fabrice. In addition I would point to the love of complexity that comes from the contrapuntal movement of opposing fronds and the tension created between rising and falling lobes. Indeed, the whole approach to design heightens ones sense of tension by contrasting the plain lower sections with the more complex upper zone.



Senlis cathedral As2Cr(a)



Laon gallery in ES5 pier by Fabrice



Laon gallery in ES5 pier by Fabrice

Earlier work, as we will see, is more like this capital from the Senlis choir than later work. I think we can get an inkling of what set him up for such a development: possibly an interaction with GrippleSon.<sup>#06</sup> Alongside the doorway on the south the Fabrice capital is next to one with very strong vertical tips [r]. This is better seen from a different angle [b1]. The tips are especially elongated creating an uplift that reinforces the movement in the veins on the stalks. In the panels under the column figures in the west portal there are similar stretched fronds.

I think we can argue that GrippleSon influenced Fabrice into a new direction with a concept that profoundly affected his feeling for form and movement. He embraced it with enthusiasm as can be seen in the magnificent design in the Laon gallery.



Senlis cathedral s9-s(a-) by GrippleSon and Fabrice

1157



Senlis cathedral s9-sL(a-)



Senlis cathedral portal W.cL4(d)

I would hazard that these two highly original capitals in Senlis may perhaps have been by Fabrice. The complexity that we will find in his earlier work, the baubles and the counterpoint are all indicative.

DRAFT



Senlis cathedral As2nw(a)



Senlis cathedral An3sw(a)

Two capitals in the nave aisle in Coulonges-Cohan fit this format [b]. They have the little baubles on the tips the simple lower half contrasted with the complex upper. This is not a strap design as there is no overlapping. The fronds and their stalks simply rise from the base. I would place this before he met GrippleSon, and therefore before Senlis.

1155



Coulonges-Cohan WS3ne(a) by Fabrice



Coulonges-Cohan WN5(a) by Fabrice

However, the use of baubles may themselves have been an aberration, for as I work back in time I found that the vertical fronds placed in contrast to others are found in other earlier buildings.

1155

In the Sens ambulatory I would credit two capitals to Fabrice. One is large and arranged in two layers [b1]. This would have been the largest he had carved up to this moment, and is set out as if it were two small designs laid on top of one another. There is a small one in the ambulatory with the same design [b2].

In addition there are two small capitals, identical to one another, in the apse at Bazoches [b3].

1154



Sens cathedral ambulatory EN5s(a)



Sens cathedral ambulatory An1se(a)



Bazoches east ES1 and SE2

I have not traced him further during the 50s, but when we come to the work before the Crusade there is a large collection of works that I would attribute to Fabrice.

At Saint-Germer-de-Fly he was working alongside Lazare. I have earlier suggested that this was one of the few sites where construction continued during the financial stringencies that came with this military adventure. I have put this stage of construction into the 1146-1150 period.

DIRAFT



Saint-Germer-de-Fly Ws1(a)



Saint-Germer-de-Fly Ws1(a)

1144

The Champeaux crossing capitals have connections to many other buildings from the 40s (see in particular Cyprian, page 5), and I would place the upper capitals shortly before 1145 [r]. This has all the elements we expect of him except counterpoint. All fronds stretch into the sky. Was this reflecting the mood of religious hope that was being stirred at that time? Fanciful, perhaps, though possible. Otherwise, I would estimate that this was a young man trying out variations to get to a more dynamically upward movement.

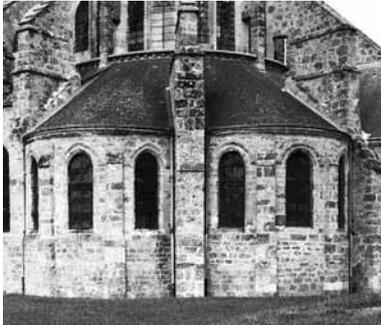


Champeaux EN1s(c)

In the same vein I would consider the lower courses at Orbais-l'Abbaye. One in the dado has strongly uplifted fronds, pointed into the corners, and with a berry on a long stalk in the middle, all set over a very plain lower zone [b2]. I am coming more and more to the opinion that the Orbais chapels were begun before the Crusade: an open question.

The Gamma capital could have been carved at that time. As far as I can tell from the coursed stonework, though the surfaces are rough, the projecting flyer buttresses were added after the walls had been completed. Such an early date needs more confirmation from the other capitals in the dado arcade, and I am far from convinced on this one.

1145



Orbais choir from south-east.



Orbais dado ES3(d)

There are three small carvings in the outer embrasures of the choir windows at Saint-Denis. These are much closer to his later manner in complexity and contrast. Particularly compare with those in the Sens choir. However there are elements in these capitals that are strange, the sharply-pointed tripartite leaf at the bottom of one and the flat frieze of fronds along the base of the other.

1143



Saint-Denis choir chapel windows, exterior. First by Fabrice, and two in his manner by ??

Was this another Recognition? On the inside of the chapel walls the capitals are set somewhat lower and would have been a little earlier in carving. Altogether, there are ten carved in this manner, though there are differences in detailing. No other master had his design used in so many capitals in Saint-Denis. In the choir the average is three per man. I illustrate them on the next page, but I would suggest that this was where his peers saluted Fabrice's skill and training with a Recognition. <sup>See #23.</sup>



Saint-Denis ambulatory An3C-Cm by Fabrice

1142



Saint-Denis ambulatory An2C-Rr by ??



Saint-Denis ambulatory An2C-L1 by Arum



Saint-Denis ambulatory As2C-cR by Arum



Saint-Denis ambulatory As3C-R by ??



Saint-Denis ambulatory AcC-R by ??



Saint-Denis ambulatory An3C-L1 by Fabrice

The Fabrice characteristics here are: Leaflet lobe fingertips furl round partly or completely to touch the other side of the same leaf's fingertips, enclosing a hollow space or making a cobra nape like medallion. There is a feeling of delicacy and gracefulness in the form of the carving. The strongly grooved silverbeet-like stems have elongated eyeholes.

Among these ten capitals three would have been by Fabrice, for they have all his details. Two are by Arum, who I have not yet taken further. Five are by carvers I have not yet identified, and as they were working to Fabrice's design I may never locate them. Their names are noted in the captions.

There are also two capitals in the 'Crosby' Apostle Relief that have his flair: swirling forms, baubles on the tips, occasional berries and fronds set against each other [b]. The carving order in Jérôme, the SS Master and Willow all place this work earlier than the choir, and these capitals may have been Fabrice's apprentice work.

1138



Saint-Denis Apostle Relief by Fabrice



Saint-Denis Apostle Relief by Fabrice

Le Ferté-Alais is certainly a work from before the Crusade, and a number of capitals under the apse vaults carry the same strongly vertical quality in the fronds, the same multilevel complexity, and fronds set in and under others while the stalks run parallel to each other [r]. As in Saint-Denis one pair of fronds laps across the top and meet over a very sharp-pointed pair under the corner. The arrangement is composed of opposites, upward thrusting in the centre, down-turned overlapping from the sides and tips gripping under the corner.



La Ferté-Alais ES1(c)

IDIRAFIT

I think that the capitals in the apse would have been shortly before Saint-Denis, and here we can follow this master's development. If Champeaux represents his ideas just before the Crusade, then EN2 in La Ferté-Alais may have been the last carved in that campaign [b3]. Stylistically we can regress in steps of simplification, in which case ES1 may have been the first [b1].



La Ferté-Alais three capitals probably by Fabrice WS1sw(c), ES2ne(c) and EN2(c)

There is one very large capital on the crossing that may have been his, with extremely long simple grooved stalks and lots going on in the upper region [b1]. The baubles are very noticeable in the middle and the horizontal fronds under the corner. Another may have been an adjacent capital [b2].



La Ferté-Alais ES1n(c)

La Ferté-Alais ES1ne(c)

La Ferté-Alais ES2ne(c)

Though Betz looks like it has a smooth polished finish without grooves, much of the detail has been obscured under plaster. The berry on a rather crude stalk is matched by one lying within a carapace in La Ferté, and the tumbling upper fronds were placed antagonistically to the berry and plates underneath. Bear in mind that in locating a carver's first esquisse there has to be a level of uncertainty, for he would have been following what he was being taught while being in the process of evolving his own identity. I do not find it improbable that Fabrice's first work was at Betz, a precursor to his later love of the complex so well displayed at Laon.



Betz apse EN1se,ese

**List of campaigns by Fabrice**

1140	Betz	apse
1141	La Ferté-Alais	apse
1142	Saint-Denis	choir E(a) walls
1144	Champeaux	crossing (c)
1145	Orbais-l'Abbaye	choir (d)
1148	Saint-Germer-de-Fly	nave (a)
1151	Bazoches	apse
1155	Sens cathedral	choir walls (a)
1156	Coulonges-Cohan	nave (a)
1157	Senlis cathedral	west walls (a)
1158	Ventelay	east, south
1159	Orbais-l'Abbaye	choir (a)
1160	Isse	east (aw)
1161	Laon cathedral	choir (g)
1161	Laon cathedral	choir (gw)
1162	Guignicourt	south chapel
1162	Saint-Leu-d'Esserent	choir (a) walls
1162	Villeneuve-sur-Verberie	apse
1163	Laon cathedral	choir (t)
1163	Laon cathedral	choir south (c)
1164	Glennes	east, north
1164	Laon cathedral	choir north (c)
1165	Guignicourt	apse (aw)
1166	Saint-Remi	choir (d)
1168	Val-Créten	east (c)
1168	Paris, Notre-Dame	choir (g) stage II
1168	Chars	nave (c)
1169	Voulton	aisles
1169	Saint-Remi	choir (aw)
1172	Lavannes	east (a)
1175	Bruyères-et-Montbérault	south (d)

1141

1139  
DRAFT

**Capitals Franck carved in other parts of Laon**

1159

I have assumed that it was Fabrice and not Franck who continued to carve at Laon after the gallery was completed. The two templates being almost identical the only logic behind this is that Franck added the little leaflets at the bottom and Fabrice did not. I think he may have carved one in Orbais with balls under the central fronds, and not particularly indicative as it is found in the capitals of nine masters in the Laon gallery [r1].

There is one capital in the triforium that could have been by Franck [r2]. It is in the south transept, which would have followed the tilt in construction and been built before the norther end of the gallery had been finished. The little leaflets have become more strap-like, arrow. They cross in front of a corner stalk which has turned into branches with leaves on the end. He was no longer interested in straps.

The large terminal has a berry in the centre held by the 'hands' of the encasing leaves and with upturned fronds on each side [b3]. Though the capital in the triforium has been re-carved, we can presume, as elsewhere in the cathedral, that replacements were kept reasonably true to the original. It is in the manner of the shaft-cap by Fabrice [b1,2]. It is not as deeply cut as we would expect from Fabrice but it has his arrangement.



Orbais EC2s(a)



Laon south triforium SE1c(t)

1161



Laon gallery ES3+ by Fabrice



Laon gallery ES3+(g) terminal



Laon south triforium SE1c(t) terminal

This is confusing. Though the little leaflets rising from the astragal are in Franck's mode the large terminal is in Fabrice's. Motifs would be shared between sculptors so that either of them could have designed the terminal. Even carved by different men if they had some expertise in a particular element. I would think that this would have been less common in carving small items like capitals, but at Laon where men of experience were working to a non-personal design they may well have shared out the carving of key elements, or it may have been created out of discussion among team members.

**Capitals Lazare carved elsewhere (1147-1174)**

Following his earlier work has been difficult, though a few capitals stand out. I will list these with short comments. A fuller examination must wait on my looking at all the capitals of this type. Saint-Germer-de-Fly

1166  
DIRACT



Saint-Germer-de-Fly An2



Saint-Germer-de-Fly WN1



Saint-Germer-de-Fly WN1

may have been the first, carved I think while the Crusade was on. Saint-Germer may have been a place of refuge for many masons deprived of funds to support the military. The low vaults over the aisles may reflect the economics of this period.

The construction program at Sens was complex only in so far as the east progressed most rapidly, and the western bays were brought more slowly. The junction was on an incline so that at every level the lower bays were more ahead than those above. Thus, these aisle capitals from the first bays of what is today the nave were being carved at much the same time as those in the choir clerestory [b].

1152



Sens cathedral nave aisle Ws3(a)



Sens cathedral nave aisle Ws3(a)



Sens cathedral nave aisle WN1s(a)

He may have remained in Sens for the next few years until the triforium and clerestory was ready to erect over these same bays [b]. The terminals are slightly lighter in the later work.

1155



Sens cathedral nave triforium WS1(t)



Sens cathedral nave triforium WS2(t)



Sens cathedral nave triforium WN1(c)

The decreasing weightiness in the terminals is apparent in the northern nave at Montmartre [b]. The unaccented lower section remains, but as in Laon the terminals are both upwards and downwards. Other parts of the north aisle are from forty years earlier, and the break in construction is indicated by the changes to the impostes which show that piers 4 and 5 on the north side had been left incomplete over this time.

1156



Montmartre WN5nw(a)



Montmartre WN4(a)



Ventelay WS1nw

By the time he visited Ventelay the terminals had become even lighter and more vertical. This small capital on the west side of the crossing is almost next to one carved by Fabrice [r]. The small width of the stone compelled Lazare to squeeze the fronds and their sharp points into a narrower format than usual.

IDIR5AIFT  
1157

As I suggested on page 4, these two capitals in the Provins Saint-Quirace triforium were carved by Lazare after he had met Gamma. The approach of both men was similar, Lazare crossing fronds over each other with bulbous terminals while Gamma constrained the intersections within the form of a pair of straps.

1158



Provins, Saint-Quirace AS2(t)



Provins, Saint-Quirace AN1(t)



Senlis WS(g)

In the same time-frame he did a little work on the gallery level of Senlis cathedral [r1]. Just one capital, but exactly the format he had used before. Two layers or horizontal zones, large terminals with upward pointing tips and a little 3-D in the way the upper stalks emerge behind the lower.

1159

His one capital at Orbais would have been next in which he used the strap-and-split detailing of Gamma [r2]. I had earlier described Gamma's influence on Lazare and Fabrice at Orbais, and seeing his contribution in Provins I would think he was in no way averse to altering his template in the Gamma manner. In the campaign that followed on the Laon gallery he took the strap motif and melded it into his earlier arrangements in the most elegant manner [b].



Orbais Es1ne(a)

1161



Laon gallery, inside capitals on NE3 pier by Lazare



Laon gallery ES5s Lazare+Franck

At La Ferté-Alais the north chapel was added onto the earlier crossing. The capitals suggest this was done after Laon, the upturned terminals being so close to his most intricate stone in the gallery, ES5s.

DIRACT 1162



La Ferté-Alais NCc



La Ferté-Alais NC2



Ferte-Alais NCa(a)

11163

There are strong elements of his design preferences in one of the gigantic capitals at Paris in the Notre-Dame ambulatory [r]. The bulbous forms fitted in perfectly with the design standards that Nazaire may have established for the cathedral piers. He embellished the detailing of fronds and plates, without over-forcing the power of the terminals. This was an unusual reticence, as we can see in his contemporary work on the small capitals on the south wall of Saint-Julien-le-Pauvre, on the opposite side of the Seine [b].



Paris, Notre-Dame EN5+(a)

The doubled terminals, one under the other, each tapering upwards and appearing to support the corners, with elements that are linked across the base, and the upturned ends and typical of Lazare. In these small stones we see a man of complex ingenuity gradually moving his designs away from those at Laon to even more intricate arrangements.

I will need to pursue the huge problem of the large capitals in the Notre-Dame choir, many reflecting the style of Lazare's. Nearly all of them have the same flavour, being bulky, smooth finished with only minor foliate flourishes. As in Saint-Martin-des-Champs there seems to have been a common policy at work here. Seeking out the individuals will be tricky.

11164



Paris, Saint-Julien s1ne(a), s1sw(a) and s3(a)

Paris, Saint-Julien EN1(a)

11164

The south side aisle at Gournay-en-Bray had been erected just before the First Crusade. The north side was erected seventy years later, more than a lifetime. Lazare created this large capital by multiplying the number of standard elements and with an unusual falling frond in the corner [r].



Gournay-en-Bray north choir EN2e(a)

Moving eastward again he participated in the second campaign at Voulton on the first aisle capitals and the fourth campaign to carve those in the apse clerestory [b]. From this construction order I suggest the aisles were carved even before he went to Laon, the clerestory after being in Paris.

11165



Voulton S1se(a)



Voulton S2(c)

DRAFT

1166

Afterwards he moved further to the east to work on the dado arcade at Saint-Remi [r]. There are other connections between the architecture of the cathedral and that of the Abbey, and maybe he travelled with a team of men to start the new work there. The fronds emerge from the astragal with a vertical stance, they do not rise and bend, as in capitals by Léonard, but shoot up like fireworks before falling over.

1167

He may have stayed on at Saint-Remi after working on the dado to carve the aisle window capitals [r]. Two layers of projections with plain surfaces underneath to support the energetic elements above.



Saint-Remi aisle window Es3L(aw)



Saint-Rem1 choir (d)

The edges are now deeper and sharper, as can be seen in the next campaign he worked on at Voulton, the middle aisle bays of the nave with stalks rising straight up from the astragal, and the tips bending upwards in the middle and outwards under the corners [b].

1169



Voulton N4(a)



Voulton S6w(a)

Two capitals at Notre-Dame are magnificent in their plasticity and strength [b]. The are part of what I believe to have been the later campaigns in the Paris gallery, some years after those on the north wall. The arrangement may reflect both the 'style' of Notre-Dame and the changing design models in this period. This is especially apparent in the large leaves added along the bottom, unintegrated into the design, but rather placed on as if stripped off a nearby tree.

I am now gathering a great deal of information on the changes of the 1170s and the steps older carvers trained in the formal manner took to accommodate themselves to the new style. I hope to pursue this shortly.

1170



Paris, Notre-Dame choir gallery ES1+(g)



Paris, Notre-Dame choir gallery NE1+(g)

Grisy-les-Plâtres was not far to the north. There was greater emphasis on the upturning tips at this time, though Grisy could easily have been carved before the two at Notre-Dame [b1].

#### List of campaigns by Lazare

1147	Saint-Germer-de-Fly	E wall (a)
1148	Saint-Germer-de-Fly	nave (a)
1152	Sens cathedral	nave (a) 1-4
1155	Sens cathedral	choir (t,c) 1-7
1156	Montmartre	nave N1-5(a)
1157	Ventelay	east, south
1158	Provins, Saint-Quirace	choir triforium
1159	Orbais-l.Abbaye	choir (a)
1160	Senlis cathedral	gallery
1161	Laon cathedral	choir (g)
1162	La Ferté-Alais	north chapel
1163	Laon cathedral	choir (t)
1163	Paris, Notre-Dame	choir piers
1164	Paris, St-Julien-le-Pauvre	south wall
1164	Gournay-en-Bray	choir N(a)
1165	Voulton	apse a-1(c)
1166	Saint-Remi	choir (d)
1168	Saint-Remi	choir (aw)
1169	Voulton	aisles 3-6(a)
1170	Paris, Notre-Dame	choir (g) IV
1171	Grisy-les-Plâtres	crossing (a)
1174	Viry-Châtillon	east 1



Grisy-les-Plâtres WN1

1174

Lastly one small capital in the apse of Viry-Châtillon, a small town to the south of Paris [b2]. All the elements are recognisable as Lazare's.

### ***Summary and conclusions.***

The Gamma template used by all these at Orbais is very clear: paired straps joined at the base with a well-defined split between each pair. Those of this crew who then went to Laon abandoned the split by connecting the straps along the bottom of the capital, and enriched it by making them thinner and adding an additional pair of straps underneath the corner terminals.

I have nominated Fabrice as the designer of the template used at Laon.

The curious sharing of templates among a group of highly skilled carvers in both Orbais and Laon is analysed in "23 - The Recognition: A rite of passage?"

Serge, and possibly Franck, have left no further traces of themselves in the Paris Basin. Independence and creativity are the marks of a craftsman, as is the capacity to work with skill and dedication under the direction of others. In this manner they carved with the Fabrice template while at Laon, and explored different directions when on their own.

Lazare and Fabrice both worked with Gamma in Orbais and then took his concept with them to Laon to develop a new template in the process. Lazare remained loyal to it while at Laon, but after that imbued the elements with a bulkiness more in line with the artistic development of the Parisis than the Soissonaise. Fabrice continued with the design and developed it in new ways. The directions taken by the others we do not know.

Laon shows how one man's template could be used consistently in every capital of the one campaign, and then serially modified over the ensuing years until there was virtually nothing left of the original. The way it was modified suggests a creative and distinguished team. We are dealing with innovators, not the ordinary workmen who stood by the template they first learned or inherited, but men of such originality that the prospect of repeating a template from job to job did not apparently occur to them.

This raises hair-raising problems for the researcher, for the dots can only be connected with some confidence if we have access to a sufficiently large *œuvre* of a man. Though we can trace a reasonable body of work to Fabrice and Lazare, what of Franck or Serge? We can follow the former from Orbais to Laon, Guignicourt and Lagery, but then he stopped using straps. How do we pick him up next? And how can we identify him in earlier carving? When faced with really creative men who do not hold to working in the one manner all their lives, our investigations become more difficult, but undoubtedly richer if we can pull it off.

Thus we can attempt to follow one man's creativity across a number of years, not necessarily by logically necessary steps, but with sufficient evidence to suspect one artistic mind at work,



Viry-Châtillon apse EN1sw

## Chronology for Gamma and associated carvers

1140	Betz	apse		Fabrice
1141	La Ferté-Alais	apse		Fabrice
1142	Saint-Denis	E(a) walls		Fabrice
1143	Saint-Denis	E(aw)		
1144	Champeaux	crossing (c)		Fabrice
1145	Orbais-l'Abbaye	choir (d)	Gamma	Fabrice
<i>Second Crusade called</i>				
1147	Saint-Germer-de-Fly	E wall (a)		Lazare
1148	Saint-Germer-de-Fly	nave (a)		Lazare Fabrice
1151	Bazoches	apse		Fabrice
1152	Fossoy	east	Gamma	
1153	Boullarre	east (v), nave (s)n	Gamma	
1154	Sens cathedral	nave (a) 1-4		Lazare
1154	Epieds	east	Gamma	
1155	Sens cathedral	choir walls (a)		Fabrice
1156	Montmartre	nave north (a)		Lazare
1156	Coulonges-Cohan	nave (a)		Fabrice
1156	Baulne-en-Brie	south	Gamma	
1156	Senlis Cathedral	chapels (a)		Fabrice
1157	Senlis cathedral	nave (a)		Fabrice
1158	Ventelay	east, south		Lazare Fabrice
1158	Provins, Saint-Quirace	choir triforium	Gamma	Lazare
1158	Sens cathedral	choir (t,c) 1-7		Lazare
1159	Orbais-l'Abbaye	choir (a)	Gamma	Lazare Fabrice
1159	Senlis cathedral	gallery		Lazare
1160	Isse	east (aw)	Gamma	Fabrice
1160	Isse	east	Gamma	
1161	Laon cathedral	choir (g)		Lazare Fabrice
1161	Laon cathedral	choir (gw)		Fabrice
1162	La Ferté-Alais	north chapel		Lazare
1162	Guignicourt	south chapel		Fabrice
1162	Guyencourt	nave, west door	Gamma	
1162	Verneuil-sur-Seine	nave (a)	Gamma	
1162	Paris, Notre-Dame	choir walls	Gamma	
1163	Laon cathedral	choir (t)	Gamma	Lazare Fabrice
1163	Paris, Notre-Dame	choir piers		Lazare
1163	Laon cathedral	choir S(c)	Gamma	Fabrice
1163	Glennes	south	Gamma	
1164	Paris, St-Julien-le-Pauvre	south wall		Lazare
1164	Gournay-en-Bray	choir N(a)		Lazare
1164	Glennes	east, north	Gamma	Fabrice
1164	Laon cathedral	choir N(c)	Gamma	Fabrice
1165	Saint-Leu-d'Esserent	choir (a) walls		Fabrice
1165	Villeneuve-sur-Verberie	apse		Fabrice
1165	Voulton	choir a-1(c)		Lazare
1165	Guignicourt	apse (aw)	Gamma	Fabrice
1166	Saint-Remi	choir (d)		Lazare Fabrice
1166	Laon cathedral	choir (cw)	Gamma	
1168	Val-Crétien	east (c)		Fabrice
1168	Paris, Notre-Dame	choir (g) II		Fabrice
1168	Chars	nave (c)		Fabrice
1168	Mons-en-Laonnais	apse (a)	Gamma	
1169	Voulton	aisles 3-n5 -s6(a)		Lazare Fabrice
1169	Saint-Remi	choir (aw)		Lazare
1169	Hermonville	porch	Gamma	
1170	Paris, Notre-Dame	choir (g) IV	Gamma	Lazare
1171	Grisy-les-Plâtres	apse, crossing (a)e		Lazare
1171	Noyon cathedral	north (d)	Gamma	
1172	Lavannes	east (a)		Fabrice
1172	Thiescourt	apse, crossing	Gamma	
1173	Noyon cathedral	choir (g) piers	Gamma	
1174	Viry-Châtillon	east 1		Lazare
1174	Noyon cathedral	nave n1-3(g)	Gamma	
1175	Bruyères-et-Montbérault	south (d)		Fabrice
1176	Noyon cathedral	nave 5-8(a)	Gamma	
1178	Saint-Remi	nave (a+)	Gamma	
1178	Noyon cathedral	north (t)	Gamma	
1179	Laon cathedral	w1-3(g)	Gamma	
1179	Saint-Quentin	west porch	Gamma	