The Shrine System: Votive Culture and Cult Sculpture, Enshrining Space in 11th to 13th Century France

Kristen N. Racaniello
CUNY Hunter College

How does access to this work benefit you? Let us know!
Follow this and additional works at: http://academicworks.cuny.edu/hc_sas_etds

Part of the Ancient, Medieval, Renaissance and Baroque Art and Architecture Commons, Medieval Studies Commons, Metal and Jewelry Arts Commons, and the Painting Commons

Recommended Citation
http://academicworks.cuny.edu/hc_sas_etds/148

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Hunter College at CUNY Academic Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in School of Arts & Sciences Theses by an authorized administrator of CUNY Academic Works. For more information, please contact AcademicWorks@cuny.edu.
The Shrine System:
Votive Culture and Cult Sculpture
Enshrining Space in 11th to 13th century France

By

Kristen Racaniello

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts Art History, Hunter College
The City University of New York

Spring 2017

Thesis Sponsor:

May 1, 2017
Date
Cynthia Hahn
Signature

May 2, 2017
Date
Hendrik Dey
Signature of Second Reader
Table of Contents

Acknowledgements
List of Illustrations

Introduction: Shrine Theory

Chapter 1. The Cult Statue: Identity and the Saintly Image
   I. Foundations in late Ottonian and Romanesque statuary
   II. Cult Statues and Depictions of the Virgin Mary
   III. The Body and Material Existence in the Shrine
   IV. Votives Around the Cult Statue: Proliferation, Dissemination, Occupation

Chapter 2. The Votive System
   I. Votives and Their Interactions with Reliquaries
   II. Votive Materiality
   III. Constructing the Votive Canon: The Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis

Chapter 3. Shrine as Performative Environment: An Economy of Space
   I. Enshrinement and Repetitive Likenesses: The Multiple Persons of Mary
   II. Chartres: Three Sedes Sapientiae Figures, Supported by Marian Multiples

Conclusion
   I. Sainte Foy
   II. The Shrine System

Bibliography
Illustrations

1
10
44
73
111
120
130
Acknowledgements

This research was partially supported by the Kossak Travel Grant and I would like to thank Evelyn Kossak, who made my travel to Conques possible. Without my experience with the cult statue of Sainte Foy and the town of Conques, this research would have been impossible.

I would like to thank Dr. Cynthia Hahn for her generous, diligent, and thorough editing of my work, and for her advice and guidance throughout this process. Her insight has been invaluable in the formation of this final paper, and in my knowledge of and research on cult statues and reliquaries.

I am immensely grateful to my second reader, Dr. Hendrik Dey, especially for his comments and direction on the earlier versions of my thesis, which helped to encourage me to address issues with the votive complex and the spatial relationship between votive objects and cult images.

Finally, I thank Dr. Ittai Weinryb for his aid in my research on votive objects.

List of Illustrations


Fig. 5: Notre Dame de Claviers, 12th century, church of Saint Barthelemy, Moussage, France. Available From: http://laurejo.canalblog.com/archives/2012/11/06/25487873.html (accessed May 5, 2017).


Fig. 10: Wing section of the high altar of St. Wolfgang in Pipping, c. 1480, Munich, Germany. Accessed From: http://votiveinteriors.commons.bgc.bard.edu (accessed May 5, 2017).

Fig. 12: *Notre dame Du Port*, 12th century, Clermont-Ferrand, France. Available From: Flickr Commons, [https://www.flickr.com/photos/15558803@N06/2836682622](https://www.flickr.com/photos/15558803@N06/2836682622) (accessed May 5, 2017).


Fig. 15: Chartres cathedral South Portal tympanum with the central image of Mary in the *Sedes Sapientiae* pose. 12th century, Chartres, France. Available From: [http://employees.oneonta.edu/](http://employees.oneonta.edu/) (accessed May 5, 2017).

Fig. 16: Life of Christ window, in Notre Dame de Chartres, c. 1220, Chartres, France. Available From: [https://www.pinterest.com](https://www.pinterest.com) (accessed May 5, 2017).


Fig. 18a: *Last Judgement Tympanum*, c. 1050-1130, in Conques, France. Photograph by author, 2016.

Fig. 18b: *Last Judgement Tympanum*, c. 1050-1130 in Conques, France. Photograph by author, 2016.
Introduction: 
Shrine Theory

“Arguments about the status of images became a central element of... Christianity. From the defenders of traditional Roman religion to the Neoplatonists, from the exponents of theurgy to the practitioners of syncretism, all insisted on the role of images in enabling men and women to perceive and grasp the divine.”

—David Freedberg

Often considered the essential manifestation of worldly existence, matter has been a subject of continuing concern for Christian theologians. Even more so, the reproduction and glorification of material through images and objects was, as David Freedberg rightly points out, a divisive subject among the early Christian Fathers. Christianity maintained that divine existence was an immaterial state and thus believed that a renunciation of worldly matter was paramount to leading a spiritually fulfilled life. Out of this extended theological conflict was developed the complex system of Christian materiality which linked the attributes of physical matter to immaterial concepts. A “working theory” of Christian materiality was a product of the desire, both popular and ecclesiastic, to physically “perceive and grasp the divine.”

Through this understanding of what matter might mean and how it might function, images became a working response to the immateriality of the divine.

In this thesis I will argue for the crucial role of votive offerings in Christian material understanding. I will demonstrate how the power of Christian cult images of the Romanesque and Gothic era was reinforced and even created by votive offerings. These objects, often

2 Ibid.
overlooked or taken for granted as secondary appendages to the focal point of a cult shrine, perform a vital function as witnesses of an image’s material ability to become a conduit for the immaterial divine. Votive objects are inextricably linked to the cult identity to which they are devoted. Therefore, they cannot be fully discussed without a deeper exploration of the cult audience and image they live by and within. Although it can be demonstrated that Christian votive culture found its origins in European pagan Roman practices, which often focused on sites of naturalia shrines, the Christian Church relocated these practices to an institutionalized setting. The eventual acceptance of institutionalized votive culture into Christianity is therefore best demonstrated through an analysis of pilgrimage churches and the promotion of votive dedications within them.

The purposes of this inquiry will be to gain a deeper understanding of the social relations that allowed for the development of a functional shrine system. This paper will focus specifically on the performative function of Christian votive objects and the cult statues of the “special dead,” the saints, and the means whereby votives contributed to and maintained the cultic shrine system in eleventh and twelfth century France and Europe. I will conclude with an analysis of

---

3 “Early Christendom was confronted with an existing custom that proved ineradicable. Not that its eradication was pursued in any great earnestness by the Church authorities: the wording of the string of admonitions issued in the first few centuries of the Christian era make that clear. The worried clergy focused in general not so much on votive gifts themselves as on the fact that they were dedicated in the wrong places—t o trees, springs, and even to idols, following ancient custom.” in Chapter 7, “The Structure of Reciprocity: the Variety of Votive Gifts,” in Hugo van der Velden, The Donor's Image: Gerard Loyet and the Votive Portraits of Charles the Bold, (2000), 192.

4 The “very special dead” is the title of chapter four in Peter Brown’s book The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity, University of Chicago Press (2015), 69. Sally Crawford also uses this term in her article “Votive Deposition, Religion, and the Anglo-Saxon Furnished Burial Ritual,” which is a particularly apt description of how the saints may have felt to those first encountering them. In her article Crawford speaks of churches being built over the buried bodies of saints, such as that at St. Albans in England, but she does not go into further detail in pursuit of the enshrining of the sacred body which is so characteristic of medieval Roman Christianity. The term “special dead” has come to be used by many scholars to describe the status of the Saints and articulate their earthly origins and quasi-ancestor status, as well as emphasize their bodily material relics.
the contrasting relationship between the north and south of France through a case study of the pilgrimage churches at Chartres and Conques and the development and maintenance of their corresponding cult shrines.

I will begin with some definitions and clarifications of the notion of the shrine and its impact. The site of the shrine is a place of convergence; the singularity of multiple publics. The intermingling of many different social systems within one physical space which produced expansive cultural customs that are constituted in many individual, personal experiences.

Scholars of contemporary history and theory have argued that the public sphere did not exist in the Medieval period. I would put forth an argument through this paper that the Medieval public sphere was a conglomerate public, made up of collected individual experiences with public opinion expressed not in written media, but through objects and images. The shrine system is sustained and created by these participatory public objects and actions.

Shrine is defined in the dictionary as “a place regarded as holy because of its associations with a divinity or a sacred person or relic, marked by a building or other construction,” “a casket containing sacred relics; a reliquary,” or “a niche or enclosure containing a religious statue or other object.” Etymologically the word is related to the german word Schrein. My use of

---

5 See: Jurgen Habermas, trans. Sara Lennox, and Frank Lennox. "The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article (1964)." New German Critique, no. 3 (1974): 49. doi:10.2307/487737. Habermas states that “There is no indication European society of the High middle ages possessed a public sphere as a unique realm distinct from the private sphere... at that time there existed (only) a public representation of power (p. 50).” I do not disagree that power was, and still is, displayed publicly. However, I argue that the eruption of local cults of saints by popular demand, or the formation of votive shrine sites en mass meets Habermas’ own definition which states that “the public sphere comes into being in every conversation in which private individuals assemble to form a public body (p. 49).” And also see: Michael Warner, "Publics and Counterpublics." Public Culture 14, no. 1 (2002): 49-90. doi:10.1215/08992363-14-1-49.

6 J. A. Simpson, E. Weiner, and Michael Proffitt. Oxford English Dictionary. Oxford: Clarendon Press, (1993). A fourth definition is given stating that a shrine is also “a place associated with or containing memorabilia of a particular revered person or thing.” I include this definition only in notes because it is related most strongly to
‘shrine’ in this paper is a deliberate attempt to problematize the space of the holy. A shrine is multiplicitous: it is the reliquary, and the apse, and the entire space of the church interior and exterior. It is a space that is delineated clearly and sufficiently by its performative associations with the holy. Such associations are created not only by the interaction of cult images with the actions of devotees and by the replication and movement of the cult image itself, but also by the continuing proliferation of votive objects as witnesses to the spiritual power of the focal cult image, as well as the replication of the cult image itself.\(^7\) In short, a shrine is an atmosphere and the functioning holiness, the miraculous nature, of the site as created and perpetuated by the system that breathes its air.

The Medieval shrine was first of all a site of witness. Cynthia Hahn has suggested that the shrine was responsible for providing devotees visible evidence of a saint’s ability to perform miracles, and that “things seen” were the primary evidence of a shrine as a functional space.\(^8\) Under such a regime, votive devotions often go unmentioned but are essential. Votives are objects that testify as individual witnesses; each providing a lasting physical surrogate for a miraculous action or prayerful encounter. Out of all of the components of the shrine system, votive objects have received the least attention in previous studies.

A full historical understanding of a medieval shrine cannot be complete without investigating the votive objects that were such an important part of the system that provided secular votive offerings left at memorial sites rather than religious sites. Although this is relevant to a broader discussion of votive offerings, it is outside the scope of this paper.

\(^7\) This is in contrast to Walter Benjamin’s ideas about the copy. He argues that replication destroys the image; I would argue that it defines its success and transforms it into a new object. I will bring up issues of aura, as it relates to Benjamin’s theories shortly. He believes that the original object has an indexical “aura;” I do not dispute this view, but propose that through replication, the aura of the original object is enhanced rather than diminished.

validation to the active shrine space. First, I must define what I mean by “votive” as this is a frequently and diversely used term whose definition has bearing on how we are to interpret medieval interactions with cult objects.

For many years, the study of votives suffered as an ill-defined interdisciplinary field, approached as a topic that lived somewhere between art history and archeology. Votive studies still reside in this murky space between disciplines today because votives themselves defy an easy categorization. They are fluid objects spanning time, space, and culture. They can be permanent or ephemeral and they are not attached to a particular materiality. Votive objects are as unique as the individual who dedicates them, yet they are also as homogenous as each culture allows. Thus the historiography of votives is a challenging and fascinating narrative, by necessity breaking historical boundaries and spanning the early modern to contemporary periods.

The German academic Aby Warburg was the first to delve into the study of votive objects from an art historical perspective. Despite his relatively small number of publications, Warburg’s research represents a groundbreaking method of inquiry; he is remembered in history as the inventor of the study of iconography.9 He did not have the benefit of pre-existing scholarship on the history of art and instead worked primarily from primary source objects and actions to generate his ideas.10 One other early art historian, Julius von Schlosser, also published

9 See chapter 15 by Marion G. Müller, “Iconography and Iconology as a Visual Method and Approach,” in The SAGE Handbook of Visual Research Methods, (2011), 283-297. Müller states here that “Iconography... (was) originally devised in the context of sixteenth century art collecting to categorize the particular visual motifs of paintings, (it) was first modernized by the art and cultural historian Aby M. Warburg (1866-1929) at the beginning of the twentieth century. It was further refined... and popularized by Erwin Panofsky. p. 283.”
10 Warburg was well known for his ethnographic studies that directly involved him in “primary source actions.”
on votives. More than one hundred years later, in 2007, Georges Didi-Huberman wrote “Ex-Voto: Image, Organ, Time.” This study is the first to oppose the tendency of academics to relegate votives to a subsidiary status. Didi-Huberman argues instead that they operate as a “material resemblance, in which the symbolic and the iconic are irreducibly contaminated by indexical contact.” Medieval votives, however, were not extensively studied as objects with aesthetic value until 2013 when an American scholar, Fredrika H. Jacobs, published a detailed art historical account of votive objects; Votive Panels and Popular Piety in Early Modern Italy. It should also be noted, however, that Jacob’s work was somewhat dependent on that of Richard Trexler and Hans Belting. Since the publication of Jacobs’ text in 2013, there has been a virtual explosion of research and publications on the visual impact of votive objects in late medieval culture.

Among votives, paintings and prints are the most likely to have been studied and continue in popularity as a subject of study for art historians because they provide datable data points and particular insights into Catholicism. Paintings not only provide art historians easy

11 “With the notable exception of Julius von Schlosser and Aby Warburg, ex-votos have long been disregarded by art historians (p. 76).” Michele Bacci, “Italian Ex-Votos and Pro-Anima Images in the Late Middle Ages: Iconic vs. Narrative Ex-Votos in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance,” (2009).
13 Ibid.
See also: Claudia Selheim, "Votivgaben mit medizinischen Motiven aus Neuzeit und Gegenwart." (1990). p. 34-37. In this paper Selheim gives a succinct account of the history of votives from the early Christian period to the present.
16 For examples of the many scholars dealing with votive painting, see: Aby Warburg, “The Art of Portraiture and the Florentine Bourgeoisie,” in The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity: Contributions to the Cultural History of the
access for writing about votive objects, but they are also easy to conceptualize of as art objects. It is votives in other media that cause consternation especially regarding issues of classification, and as a result, votives are largely unexplored in art historical scholarship. Scholars do not know whether to classify them as objects in the fine arts, decorative arts, folk arts, or even outsider arts.

Moreover, it is sometimes difficult to even be certain of the continuing existence of a votive item. Votives are often repurposed for new uses by the monks or abbot of a monastery. Some objects are intended to be used up, for example wax, oil, or food substances, but other objects are repurposed or spoliated and incorporated into a new object entirely. The resulting objects may present almost insuperable difficulties for study: they are not only multivalent in meaning but may be used in a multitude of ways and serve many different audiences, even people from all over the world. Such adaptability makes such objects hard to categorize, but at the same time means that they have the possibility of playing a fundamental role in shaping diverse cultures outside their own. With such remarkable possibilities, votives cannot continue to be relegated to a class of secondary importance.

Even the scholars who study votives sometimes seem unaware of their potential. According to Fredrika Jacobs, votives are “produced by and large for consumers of modest means by unnamed artisans with negligible artistic skills and, it appears, scant concern for the
endurance of a work… theft, war and even liturgical reforms aimed at ridding sites of popular objects, which some viewed as mundane things.”\textsuperscript{18} Jacobs is not wrong in this assessment, but it carries an unfairly negative tone.

Part of the problem is the classification of votives as “popular.”\textsuperscript{19} It is true that the manufacture of votives usually falls within the general understanding of the making of popular art, but it does so in two distinctly different ways. In a first mode, votive offerings might evince a marked and unmediated sense of sincerity because they were made by the (non-skilled) devotees themselves. Alternately those objects made through more skilled and conventional techniques by craftsmen who created these objects as a source of revenue were removed from the life of the object after its sale and were much less personal in their reference.\textsuperscript{20} It is undeniable that votives are used across cultures and social classes, as is emphasized by the use of the word “popular” and their variety is unavoidable. The nature of this variety, however, means that few votives survive far beyond the death of the devotee, and many die before their past owner, although the death of the object to a medieval audience was really a transformation into a new form of life.\textsuperscript{21} Matter, to the medieval mind, was never truly dead.

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{19} Fredrika H. Jacobs, \textit{Votive Panels and Popular Piety in Early Modern Italy}. 14.
\textsuperscript{20} Votives have a “do it yourself,” personal agency involved in their production. This self-making mentality potentially cuts out the intermediary of the Church and expresses a self-valuing ideology which exists irrespective of an earthly intermediary (clergy) between devotee and divine intercessor. The ability of votives to be fabricated by anyone makes them a powerful object for leveling the social playing field in religion. This takes away religious authorities’ exclusive ability to communicate with the divine and distributes that power, through objects, to the laity.
\textsuperscript{21} The death of an object is the death of its form. Wax figurines given to a shrine as votive offerings for example, are regularly melted down and reused by the keepers of the shrine. Their material does not die; it is simply transformed into a new use. However this leads to a loss of the form-content of the votive object, and hence a loss of all past associations of the form: the form’s life. The only thing retained by the repurposed votive wax are the properties of the material itself.
\end{flushleft}
In developing the interactions of the votive and the cult object, this thesis will proceed in a step by step format. Chapter 1 will consist of a discussion of the use of cult statues, especially in the two sites with which we are concerned; beginning with Sainte Foy at Conques, and moving into considerations of Marian cult statues in the form of Sedes Sapientiae, one of which may have been created at Chartres as early as the late eleventh century. Chapter 2 will build an image of the role of votive objects in creating an active shrine space, and Chapter 3, the final chapter, will then examine the shrine system as a unified entity. I hope to outline a relationship between the shrine systems of the north and south of France through an examination of Sainte Foy at Conques and the cult paraphernalia of Chartres, two very special expressions of shrine culture.
Chapter 1

The Cult Statue:  
Identity and the Saintly Image  
I. Foundations in late Ottonian and Romanesque statuary

The shrine system is made up of three basic components: a cultic focal point (in our case, the cult statue), objects of attestation (votive dedications), and an enshrining environment (the medieval cathedral, apse space, chapel, cemetery areas, etc.). This discussion of the shrine as an atmospheric phenomenon based on both ephemeral and concrete objects and actions will begin with those objects most traditionally associated with the sudden flourishing of local pilgrimage cults in the late tenth century: cult statues and reliquaries.

A cult statue is a unique object. Although there are specific characteristics that govern their creation, no two are the same. Indeed, the individual nature of these statues becomes a part of the identity of the shrine and the geography around them. A cult statue is by no means just an image of a saint; it is an image of a saint associated with a specific place and with specific powers. When the body of a saint became a relic, it was often divided up and disseminated to different places, in part to increase the power of the saint. This resulted in independent cults dedicated to the same saint but in different permutations, thus creating separate entities out of the original whole.²² Each of these body parts had once participated in the saint’s acquisition of  

divine grace and therefore were equally worthy of veneration. Cult statues developed out of the early Christian relic cults, specifically out of the portable reliquary. Close proximity and contact with the sacred was greatly desired by medieval peoples, thus aiding in the proliferation of relics and in the development of a standard iconography of cult statues.

The origins of cult statues are perhaps found in the historical development of the reliquary, from the entombment of the whole body of a martyr or saint in an altar to the body’s fragmentation into portable reliquaries. Cult statues began to appear in Europe in the tenth century; these early cult statues are reliquaries containing relic fragments. Full figure cult statues began to appear about one hundred years after the appearance of the first body-part reliquary in France, that of Saint Maurice, which was commissioned between the years of 879-887 by the King of Provence. Only after a specific iconography of the cult statue developed were relics no longer needed to signify that the statue could become a conduit of communication with the divine. This could instead be communicated by the association of the exterior material of the statue with heavenly material and with divine communication. Early cult statues of the late

And also: Christopher S. Wood, “The Votive Scenario,” 214. Here Wood talks about the different permutations of the Saint in different locales as various “avatars” of the saint’s being.
23 By the year 787 and the Second Council of Nicaea relics were required to consecrate an altar. We will return to a discussion of the placement of relics within altars in Chapter II as this has great bearing over the acceptance and institutionalization of votive offerings in the Church. Caroline Walker Bynum and Paula Gerson. "Body-Part Reliquaries and Body Parts in the Middle Ages." Gesta Vol. 36, no. 1 (1997), 3. Also see: John Crook, The Architectural setting of the Cult of Saints in the Early Christian West c. 300-c. 1200. Clarendon Press, (2000).
26 The significance of the material of the Heavenly Jerusalem and its application to cult statues will be explored in further sections. For more information on this material association see: Ellert Dahl, “Heavenly Images: The Statue of St. Foy of Conques and the Signification of the Medieval ‘Cult Image’ in the West,” Acta Ad Archaeologiam et Artium Historian Pertinentia. (1978), 182.
Ottonian and Romanesque periods display a few particular characteristics which, taken collectively, create this unique group of sculpture. They are figurative works with a frontal pose, an erect head-position, and large, open eyes; the exterior of the figure was often encrusted with gems and covered in gold.27

The cult statue of Sainte Foy, today found in the treasury of the Abbey Church of Sainte Foy, is a remarkable sculpture from the end of the tenth century (See Fig. 1). It is one of the oldest medieval cult statues to survive to the present and is the oldest freestanding, full figure medieval statue known today. The cult statue of Sainte Foy rises to just over 85 cm in height.28

Composed of gold and silver-gilt over a wooden core, the encrusted gems and cameos, the hands, and the crown are all of various dates because they were given as dedications to Sainte Foy over time and some of them replaced earlier additions that were lost due to theft or damage.29

Bernard of Angers tells us the details of these additions in the book of miracles he compiled on Sainte Foy while in Conques, known as the Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis. Toward the beginning of the first book Bernard states that among the treasury at Conques, “the most outstanding of the ornaments then was the splendid image... it [the splendid image of the cult statue of Sainte Foy] would be considered one of the poorer ornaments [in the Abbey treasury] if

29 Lawrence Nees, *Early Medieval Art*, Oxford University Press, (2002), 227. Nees notes that Sainte Foy is 850 mm in height. It is also worth noting that the later additions to the statue may have replaced older versions due to the reuse of material by the clergy, when necessitated by economic hardship. The gems or cameos could be deaccessioned from her statue if necessary, although this would certainly be a last resort for the monks of Conques.
it had not been reshaped anew and renovated into a better figure.”  

This suggests that the surface of the cult statue was a living display of devotion; it was malleable and open to the social imposition of new objects which marked significant events in the lives of the devotees and the cult statue itself.

*Sainte Foy* appears to have a sentient presence. The head tilts back slightly giving the large, oversize eyes a sense of regarding a non-space which lies between the viewer and the sky. *Sainte Foy* stares out above the heads of those who behold her, denying them eye contact, but forever appearing aware of their presence. This is a common attribute of early cult statues. Cynthia Hahn has noted that the eyes of reliquary heads are always highlighted in some manner, most effectively through the use of “inset ivory, agate, or enamel, to give a sense that the saint actually regards the petitioner.”

*Foy’s* hands perform the opposite function to her eyes; rather than appearing aloof, the hands project into the viewer’s space, creating an accessible avenue into her world. Hands in cult statues often communicate a gesture of blessing, yet here *Sainte Foy’s* hands are not communicating benediction but clasping two vials that are held out to the devotee who might stand before her. The hands were remade in gold in the 16th century, perhaps replaced due to damage, or possibly because more material had become available to fabricate new appendages for the aging and interactive statue. The need to replace these hands speaks to the use-wear on the sculpture itself. From Bernard’s testimony in the early eleventh century, to the addition of


the hands in the sixteenth century, it is clear that the cult statue of Sainte Foy required constant material attention due to performative interactions with her devotees which may have caused damage to the statue’s delicate surfaces. This is a testament to the strength of the votive culture that surrounded, and indeed created, Sainte Foy. While the statue’s surface may have been degraded by interaction, it was also built up through the addition of votive gifts of antique cameos, jewels, and precious metals. The fingers of its hands are all unusually separated, perhaps to receive votive rings upon them, a topic which will be further addressed at the end of Chapter 2.

The wildly popular cult image of Sainte Foy is not only a sculpture; but of course also a reliquary. Not all cult statues from the early Romanesque period are reliquaries but most have hidden compartments or are figures with the potential to host sacred paraphernalia or mediate divine will. The relic in Sainte Foy is essential to its functioning according to the Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis. Bernard of Angers writes of the cult statue being carried to a council with other relics, a custom he points out as a custom “of that province,” implying that such a public council with relics was an unusual event elsewhere in France. He notes that there were other cult statues there, including the “golden majesty of Saint Marius, confessor and bishop, and Saint Amans.” The ability to transform into a medium of divine desire is crucial to cult statues; they are a singularity that provides a means for devotees to channel their faith through a focal point, or vice-versa, a means for the saint to make direct earthly contact.

33 Pamela Sheingorn, trans. The Book of St. Foy. University of Pennsylvania Press, USA (1995). In the sections of the book written by Bernard of Angers, the relics of Sainte Foy are mentioned with less frequency than they are in the following books which were written by local monks of Conques.
34 Ibid., 98. Bernard is writing the miracles of Sainte Foy to Bishop Fulbert of Chartres, and so any reference to the normal state of things refers back to his and Fulbert’s past experiences with relics, cult statues, and votives in the North of France.
35 Ibid.
Sainte Foy is a perfect example of the importance of the individuality of the cult statue. The majesty of her image and her miraculous power was so great that the little mountain town that hosted her statue and cult shrine, Conques, became a main southern stop for pilgrims on the route to Santiago de Compostela. We will revisit Sainte Foy in the next two chapters as this statue is of such great significance to the history of votive culture and is the focus of an extended narrative that may even have come to influence the development of the northern shrine system at Chartres.

There are a few other cult statues that remain relatively intact today which follow the iconographic formatting of Sainte Foy, and are of particular relevance to the discussion of cult statues and their role as conduits of votive communication, although they are from later periods than Sainte Foy. The Golden Madonna of Essen is the second oldest free standing medieval sculpture with gold leaf (Fig. 2). It is the earliest known statue of Mary in the round, and indicates the beginnings of the Marian cults focused on a cult image. The Golden Madonna of Essen was created in the 980’s and was covered with many gems and filigree that do not survive to the present. The exterior gold leaf covers a linden-wood core that is 70 cm high. The bodies of the Golden Madonna of Essen and Sainte Foy both support the idea that these sculptures were adorned with gems and precious stones that were given as votive gifts, most now missing on the body of the Golden Madonna but still present and visible on Sainte Foy.

However, the Golden Madonna of Essen is still sometimes adorned with the detachable votive

36 Ibid.
crown gifted to her by Otto III in 993. The right hand of the Virgin holds an orb studded with some of the remaining original tenth century gems while the left clasps the shoulder of the child in her lap.

The eyes in the round face of the Essen statue stare invitingly and innocently into empty space; they do not gaze at the viewer, the child in her lap, or at any particular object. Instead, the Virgin appears open and receptive, present, and yet far away in her thoughts. These eyes again, like those of Foy, assert an agency that negates what the devotee knows—that the statue is an “inert thing,” made of earthly materials without human consciousness. The eyes prepare the devotee. They fill the statue with an agency that opens the viewer to the possibility that the saint may actually use this image to conduct divine miracles.

The reliquary of Saint Baudime, of a slightly later date, is another critical comparanda and example of a Christian cult statue. Along with Sainte Foy, it is one of the few remaining statues of the Romanesque period that has been in continuous use since its making sometime between 1146 and 1178. It is 73 cm in height and has a copper-gilt exterior over a walnut core,

---

39 See: Birgitta Faulk, “Essener Krone” In Gold vor Schwarz. Der Essener Domschatz auf Zollverein, edited by Birgitta Falk, Exhibition Catalog 2008. Klartext Verlag, Essen (2008), 92-93. Also see: Alfred Pothmann. “Der Essener Kirchenschatz aus der Frühzeit der Stiftsgeschichte.” In: Herrschaft, Bildung und Gebet. Gründung und Anfänge des Frauenstifts Essen. Klartext, Essen (2000), 135-153. The exact date of the dedication of the Childhood crown of Otto III is disputed, however, it is known that he made a visit to the Abbey of Essen at Candlemas in 993, and is recorded as having made two significant donations on that day by local historians. The crown is still placed on the statue of the Virgin on Candlemas today, which suggests that this is a cultural memory of the gifting of the crown that has become institutionalized by ritual action.


with ivory and horn inclusions (Fig. 3). The arresting statue is covered in empty bezels where gems were once set. These gems, like the gems of Sainte Foy and the Golden Madonna of Essen, were probably given as votive offerings and attached by artisans under the direction of the clergy of the church of Saint Nectaire. This sculpture depicts Saint Baudime only from the waist up, with his hands open, thus this statue must be classified somewhere between the full-body and the head reliquaries. The disproportionately large hands of Baudime are in significant positions; the right makes a gesture of benediction with two fingers together pointing skyward, while the left is held palm-side out with the index finger touching the thumb in a gesture that may have signified perfection. The bust was made as a reliquary container for Saint Baudime’s blood.

The cult statue of Baudime was accompanied at the church of St. Nectaire by a wooden cult statue of the Virgin Mary enthroned with a young Jesus on her lap. A cult statue similar to the Saint Baudime reliquary is the Saint Caesarius reliquary. This work consists of a walnut core, covered in silver with copper repousse work, glass cabochons,

43 See Cynthia Hahn, “Body-Part Reliquaries,” in Strange Beauty: Issues in the Making and Meaning of Reliquaries 400-circa 1204, Pennsylvania State University Press, (2012), pp. 117. Hahn states that “Before the thirteenth century it is difficult to distinguish a clearly defined type of head reliquary.” She also notes that Brigitta Faulk included half-length figures and busts under the category “head reliquary (p. 120),” and she introduces the term “faciality,” or the uncanny sense of presence of the head and body reliquary.
44 Martina Bagnoli, Holger A. Klein, C. Griffith Mann, and James Robinson, ed., “Catalogue,” Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics, and Devotion in Medieval Europe, Yale University Press (2010), 192. The first inventory of Saint Nectaire to include the reliquary of Saint Baudime is dated to 1462, where a vial of the Saint’s blood is recorded, but no relics have actually been recorded inside of the bust since at least 1871. Unusually for such a figurative reliquary, there is no record of the statue having contained the skull of the saint, as is the case with the cult statue of Sainte Foy, and with most surviving examples from south central France.
filigree, sapphires, amethysts, painted enamels and some polychromy.\textsuperscript{46} The \textit{Saint Caesarius} cult statue rises a few centimeters above the golden majesty of \textit{Sainte Foy} reaching approximately 91 cm in height.\textsuperscript{47} Made in the twelfth century, it is a late example of this type of golden Romanesque statuary. The body-part relics contained within Saint Caesarius include teeth and a portion of a skull. The inscription on the interior of the door reads: "hic est caput sancti csarii areltensis episcopi," meaning roughly, “here is the head of Saint Caesarius, bishop of Arles.”\textsuperscript{48} \textit{Caesarius} has the same forward head position, wide eyes, and large emphatic hands that are seen in the aforementioned cult statues. His oversized right hand is in exactly the same position as the hand of Baudime in the \textit{Saint Baudime} statue. The directness of the gaze and head position confronts the viewer in a manner that will be largely absent from the works discussed in the following section on statues of the Virgin and Child.

Any discussion of the nature of cult statues and iconoclasm in medieval Europe must account for the issues raised in the \textit{Libri Carolini}, the moralizing treaty on images. It has been suggested that Bernard of Angers, the author of the \textit{Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis} which chronicles the miracles of \textit{Sainte Foy}, was highly influenced by the \textit{Libri Carolini}. He gives us a clear understanding of the influence of such ideas in northern France as he is shocked by what he presumes to be an idolatrous practice when he travels south and witnesses the performance of cult veneration. Although the \textit{Libri Carolini} was a court document that did not travel widely


\textsuperscript{48} \*All latin translations my own. See also: http://www.gen-roms.de/html/Produkte/Buecher/Genea-Lex_Bd3-Liste.html}
itself, its sentiment was circulated throughout northern France through the rhetoric of the clergy. It condemned icons while simultaneously promoting the “cult of relics as a vehicle of spirituality.”

Bernard’s encounter with the cult practices of the south took place in Conques, where he came into contact with the cult of Sainte Foy and specifically her cult statue. However, of great interest to art historians, following his encounter he altered his previously rigid position on the prohibition of images after being convinced of the benevolent power of images by the statue of Sainte Foy. He describes the image to his companion Witbert and gives a material justification for her power. He states that her “brilliant gold evidently symbolizes the light of spiritual grace,” a grace that the bodies of the saints are described as having in the book of Revelations upon their resurrection. Ellert Dahl has pointed out that Bernard spoke of the four jewels of Sainte Foy’s crown as the four cardinal virtues and that the jewels of a saint’s image were often used to describe the virtues of the saint at this time. This further emphasizes the valuable materiality of each object incorporated into a sculpture and harkens back to the enumeration of attributes in lapidaries of the same period. In Sainte Foy Bernard sees the future of the resurrected body, the earthly manifestation of the Heavenly Jerusalem.

The Libri Carolini was presented to the Council of Frankfurt in 794, and was probably completed shortly before that in 793 by Theodulf of Orleans. This document is a record of the

51 Ibid.
52 Ann Freeman “Carolingian Orthodoxy and the Fate of the Libri Carolini.” Viator Vol. 16 (1985), 65. Freeman also argues convincingly that Theodulf of Orleans is the original author of the Libri Carolini, made in
negative reaction in the Western Roman Empire to a mistranslation of the transcript of the
Second Council of Nicaea, that helped to end the long period of Byzantine Iconoclasm. This
mistranslation gave the impression that Eastern Christian iconodules believed that images should
be adored in the same way that God was to be adored. This was not the belief held by the
Byzantine iconodules, rather, they believed and argued for the same idea that Bernard expounded
on after his encounter with the statue of *Sainte Foy* in Conques; that is, that images of divine
figures could “serve as spiritual channels, carrying acts of worship and prayers repeated before
them to those they represented.” The cult image was not to be adored, but venerated as a
conduit of devotional communication.

Thiofrid of Echternach penned one of the most compelling theological treaties which
promoted the veneration of relics and condoned the use of majestic earthly materials known as
the *Flores epytaphii sanctorum*. He even compares the relics of saints to the Eucharist

...knowing that man cannot see and touch rotten flesh without being nauseated, he
hid his body and blood in the bread and wine, to which men are accustomed.
Similarly, he persuaded the sons of the Church to conceal and shelter the relics of
the saint’s happy flesh in gold and the most precious materials so that they will
not be horrified by looking at a cruel and bloody thing.

Here the dichotomy between carnal and spiritual sight is contrasted, with the earthly material “to
which men are accustomed” allowing for insight into the spiritual world of the Heavenly
Jerusalem through physical gold and gems. This use of material served to “activate the ‘minds’

---

Charlemagne’s name, with various clerics as commentators and editors, in her paper “Theodulf of Orleans and the

21 (1986), 164-165.

54 Ibid; 164.

“eye” through generating, not a naturalistic portrait, but a vision of the sacred.\(^5^6\) The creation of these cult statues and their continued existence attests to the desire for a material connection with the divine, and to the need for a physical focal point in the shrine.

### II. Cult Statues and Depictions of the Virgin Mary

A second wave of medieval cult statues began to develop in the middle of the Romanesque period in France and Germany and were strikingly different in their origins from those gold and gem-studded statues of local saints which were so unique and representative of distinctly different identities in the South France. These later Romanesque cult statues were usually made in wood and in that material further emphasize iconographic and performative issues pertinent to our discussion below of the development of the shrine system, votives, agency, and proliferation. The previously discussed sculptures with metal exteriors all contain wooden cores, and so the difference between the two types of cult statues is not so much a question of craftsmanship, but of material meaning and use.\(^5^7\)


\(^5^7\) This is not to say that the experience of a wooden exterior by a devotee is the same as the experience of a shining metal one; it is instead an attempt to note that the similarity of the core to the exterior in metal coated sculptures is an indication that patrons may have aspired to eventually coat the wooden sculptures in gold leaf or copper. Wooden sculptures of the Romanesque period almost always carried some form of polychromy, transforming the wood via pigment rather than through the metallic transformation of a full body coat of metal-leaf. Polychrome also sometimes contained decorative traces of gold leaf, which blurs the boundaries further between the gilded sculptures and the wooden ones. The choice of what type of sculpture to make therefore most likely came down to an economic decision rather than a decision of genera.
There are over two hundred Romanesque sculptures in the round in wood that survive to this day from France and Germany. The most famous and numerous sculptures are *Sedes Sapientiae* images of the Virgin Mary that have been preserved due to the popularity of the cult of the Virgin, known in their various forms as the Marian cults. Although little discussed, the popular appearance of cult statues of the Virgin in the Romanesque period has its origins in the Ottonian era. The combination of a growing interest in the creation of statues of local saints and the burgeoning of interest in Mary in the liturgy during the Ottonian period led to the creation of a standard iconography of Marian *Sedes Sapientiae* figures and the enhanced position of Mary in the liturgy even resulted in the clergy using these statues for liturgical reenactments of the adoration of the Magi. The statues would have been placed on the altar during Epiphany, participating in the *Officium Stellae*, and gifts would be presented to the Virgin and Child in mimicry of the gifts of the Magi. Cult statues involved in this performance “would have received the homage and offerings of the high clerics dressed as kings in the realistic dramatization which preceded the drama of the mass itself at the Feast of Epiphany.”

This reenactment is important to our purposes for two reasons. First, it reinforced the public knowledge that gifted objects were permissible, even desirable, as dedications to the Virgin. Second, it represented the notion that these were gifts could trigger a chain of communication with Mary, the most effective intercessor with Christ. The wide extent and

---

62 Ibid., 217.
popularity of the cult of the Virgin may be due to the importance of votive dedication and the increasing need to justify votive practices to Church authorities, particularly in the north of France. Mary, as the Mother of God and the holiest of saints, was the perfect subject for arguments about the centrality of veneration to spiritual life.

Such uses of cult statues present a vivid argument against the iconoclasm of the earlier middle ages. The core of the objection to votive culture found in the Libri Carolini stemmed from a fear of pagan image worship. The Christian approach rejected Roman pagan materiality through the modification and combination of the anti-materialist ideas of the Jews and the cynics.\footnote{See: Paul Rhodes Eddy, "Jesus as Diogenes? Reflections on the Cynic Jesus Thesis." Journal of Biblical Literature Vol. 115, No. 3, (1996), pp. 449-469. In this article Eddy presents the current scholarly works stating that Jesus of Nazareth was of the cynic disposition and argues against it. He believes that Jesus was in fact a sage, influenced by Jewish wisdom. He sites Jesus’ use of the parable, a form of rhetoric unknown to hellenistic cynics, as evidence that Jesus was not influenced by hellenistic modes of thought. Eddy’s article is a good starting point for anyone interested in the founding principals of Christianity and in Jesus as a philosopher.} In Christianity the body is a thing that is meant to be transcended, not glorified. Given that the cult image could perform either of these functions— it could elevate the mind or it could debase it— cult images were a source of fear and controversy throughout the medieval period.

Standing images of the Virgin Mary in wood first began to appear in France by the tenth century in the province of Auvergne, with the earliest recorded mention of one in the cathedral of Clermont in 946. This statue was made of wood but coated with “fine gold,” and it contained some of the earthly relics of the Virgin Mary.\footnote{Margaret B. Freeman, “A Romanesque Virgin from Autun,” The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin, New Series, Vol. 8, No. 4 (Dec., 1949), 112.} Most of the full figure statues used as cult images are not from the tenth century, as sculpture in the round was rare at that time, but date to the late eleventh and twelfth centuries (Sainte Foy (fig. 1) and the Golden Madonna of Essen (fig. 2) are the surviving exceptions to this rule). The 1100’s saw the rise of the Sedes Sapientiae
Madonna, or the “throne of wisdom” in cult imagery. This appellation alludes to literary descriptions of the Virgin Mary in which she has been described as the “throne of the new Solomon,” the “seat of the Most High, the seat on which our Lord sits, who governs the universe,” and as having “in her hands... the Eternal and her knees become a throne sublime.” She is depicted as the basis of Christ’s life and divinity, the vessel of Christian enlightenment.

A surviving Sedes Sapientiae in wood can be found in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Made in walnut with polychromy, tin relief, and linen, it is but one example of a sculpture in the round from Auvergne, and was made around the year 1175 (fig. 4). The statue is about 80 cm tall, ten centimeters taller than the Golden Madonna of Essen that was made almost 200 years earlier. The eyes of this sculpture are much softer than the wide eyes of the golden late Ottonian and early Romanesque cult statues, yet they display the same quality of otherness that is projected from all of the previously discussed cult figures. They stare into a non-space and appear both present and absent from the space and time of the viewer. The figure’s large hands do not reach out but instead hold the smaller figure of Christ gently and protectively. It is easy to become lost in the seemingly infinite ripples of the fabric of Mary’s dress. The lines of the ripples both draw the eye inward and out into space, enabling the devotee to enter into a meditative state through their contemplation. This beautifully carved wooden

65 Ibid.
66 See the Met collections, Accession number: 16.32.194a, b. Access to information on this sculpture is available on the Met website at: https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/16.32.194/
67 From the evidence of the wooden sedes sapientiae figures, it appears that polychrome sculpture in the round in wood became more and more popular over time, while gold-leaf covered cult statues went out of fashion, possibly due to monetary restraints.
The figure has two rectangular cavities, one on the chest and the other on the back of the sculpture that may have once contained relics; although that cannot be confirmed.\textsuperscript{68}

The \textit{Notre Dame de Claviers} is a similar sculpture with much of its polychrome paint still remaining over it (Fig. 5).\textsuperscript{69} Unlike the \textit{Sedes Sapientiae} at the Met, this statue still resides in a Christian context at the Romanesque church of \textit{Saint Barthelemy} in Moussage (in the Cantal district of France). This beautiful statue emphasizes certain characteristics when paired with the Met’s \textit{Sedes Sapientiae}. The Christ child in both statues does not appear to be a child but instead is a miniature adult, suggesting that Mary is the seat of his wisdom rather than only a vessel for his birth. The color of the two statues is also strikingly similar. They wear blue robes (made from ultramarine pigment) with gold trimming, while the figure of Christ originally wore a maroon or red vestment, although on the Met \textit{Sedes Sapientiae} the pigment has mostly worn away.\textsuperscript{70} The flesh of the Met figure was painted with lead white and vermilion pigment. The worn, damaged sections of these statues and others like them, such as the \textit{Aubusson Virgin and Child}, the \textit{Virgin and Child d’Usson} in the Musée d’Art Roger Quilliot, and the Montvianeix Madonna, suggests that these statues were used in processions and possibly other activities, such as the performance of the Epiphany play, as suggested by Ilene Haering Forsyth.\textsuperscript{71} “Throughout

\textsuperscript{68} The rectangle of wood on the Virgin’s chest is held in place by a dowel, and the twelfth century pigment and linen over it suggest that the statue was made with the plug in the figure’s chest. Lucretia Kargère has suggested that this addition to the sculpture was made in order to “conceal a sizable defect, such as a knot or the beginnings of the long longitudinal crack that formed in this area.” “Twelfth-Century French Polychrome Sculpture in The Metropolitan Museum of Art: Materials and Techniques.” \textit{Metropolitan Museum Studies in Art, Science, and Technology} Vol. 1 (2010), 64. I disagree with this statement, although it is a possible motivation behind the rectangle. It seems likely, given the hollow nature of the statues’ cavity, that a relic was inserted inside this space.


\textsuperscript{70} Ibid; 60.

the Late Middle Ages, worshipers did not generally encounter reliquaries and shrines as isolated artistic objects. Rather, reliquaries formed part of processions and liturgical and para-liturgical ceremonies. They also played roles in more intimate forms of devotional practice." These private devotional practices include the votive communication between devotee and saint through the focal cult statue.

III. The Body and Material Existence in the Shrine

Despite the emphasis on Mary’s agency, her body in all of these sculptures is used as a vessel. It is a physical container for relics, but it is also a vessel for the divine spirit. The body is performing a social role in the votive exchange system that requires it to be both a physical thing and an idea of a thing simultaneously. The coexistence of the body of the saint as physical and non-physical; as a representation of a saint, and a container of that saint’s earthly body, speaks to the fact that the body had no conceptual standard. Even within “discourse communities” ideas about the body were conflicted as seen in the sharp disagreement between Galenic and Aristotelian ideas about the importance of the female seed in reproduction.

Despite this, it seems clear that there was a predominant view that the body was a container for the spirit and for life. This could mean that both the body was a tool for power because of its status as a vessel in the medieval period, and that containers therefore frequently took on bodily qualities. The ability of the body to be a container is also predicated on the

---

medieval idea that identity is both tied to and separate from it. The human body as an identity container largely asks questions concerning individuality and the spatiotemporal continuity of this identity. If the body is gone, can the identity exist independently of it? What if the body is radically altered, what if the identity (the spirit or the soul) is transferred into something else? In late medieval Europe the answers to these questions lay in the social relations between the object and the body. One resolution of the problem of body and spirit is predicated on the raising of the dead on judgement day. This promise of the future reconstitution of the body with the soul on judgement day speaks to medieval Christians desire for an eventual resolution of body and soul, thus emphasizing the interconnectivity of body to soul in medieval Christian philosophy which stemmed from Platonic ideas connecting morality to physical form.

Platonic ideas also influenced Saint Augustine; the scholar who shaped much of the philosophy of the medieval period.\(^{74}\) The belief in a metaphysical interrelation between forms and the spirit that pervades Plato’s writing shows through in Augustine’s own ideas.\(^{75}\) Saint Augustine used his *Confessions* as a way to document his life and spiritual explorations and framed them as an extended prayer to God. Through this format he shows how the microcosm of

---


The work of Plato was well known to French Romanesque scholars through neo-Platonic thinkers and was disseminated into popular thought through sermons and visual culture. His writing in *Republic* generates an image of the individual as a microcosm of society. This microcosm acts as a reflection of the macrocosmic society, world, and universe, and has an exterior that mirrors the interior virtues and vices.

\(^{75}\) Metaphysics is also directly related to the way that people perceived relationships in the world before Kant in the 1800’s. This has a direct bearing on the way that votives and cult images were perceived, how people interacted with them, and how they interacted with and created each other. Indeed I would (and do) argue that Metaphysics still shape our perceptions of ourselves and the world around us through our opposition to or sympathy with ideas of universality.
his experience reflects a greater universal unity. Augustine created a divide between the physical-sensible and the spiritual (inaccessible)-intelligible. This dualism fits into a larger hierarchical cosmology where the highest state of being is the ultimate form of unity. This unity progressively breaks down until it reaches the world of sensible, isolated, material objects. Yet these objects can prompt the observer to aspire to higher forms of unity and ideas. Therefore while the material form is lowly, it is also a means of attaining a higher understanding of the spirit and participates in the chain of communication between the earthly and divine hierarchies. This is, in effect, a medieval understanding of Plato’s theory of forms.

We can already see the influence of Plato in some of the earliest Christian philosophy, namely in the work of Plotinus, the third century philosopher who developed the concept of the One who was the embodiment of the best form, the “Good form,” from which all else stemmed, and who paved the way for later philosophers such as Augustine or Pseudo Dionysius. On the use of material, Pseudo Dionysius stated that “forms, even those drawn from the lowliest matter, can be used, not unfittingly, with regard to heavenly beings.” He says that matter is not itself evil, but that disorder is the root of evil, and therefore unity is the root of Good, and matter performs the function of upholding higher things.

Understanding these early views on material form is essential to understanding the medieval body. The soul is inextricably linked to the earthly body; it can only be discovered by

---

79 Ibid., 93.
humans through sensory perception. Belief in the eventual reconstitution of the body on judgement day upholds this link of the soul with specific matter; in the case of the saints, the soul is linked directly to their earthly relics. Yet the body and soul are also segregated; the soul is a distinct entity with its own timeline of events separate from and longer than the events of the body.

If we return to our principal concern, we might argue that cult statues are both bodies and objects. The medieval Christian cult statue was almost always a container of relics, and so it physically contains bodies or material scraps related to a body. It is also an image, usually of a whole figure, that encases the fragmented form and alludes to the wholeness of the bodily form in heaven. This completeness of the exterior thus in some sense alludes to the eventual reconstitution of the interior fragmented body on judgement day.

The body of the devotee before the cult image also finds its place in the Augustinian understanding of the body and the hierarchy of being. The prostrated body came into contact with the ground during prayer, supplication, and vowing acts that accompanied the dedication of votive objects. This performance of devotion had, at the same time, a complex relationship to the devotee’s psychological transcendence over the material world— it both added to and took away from any possible transcendent status. For example, in performing acts that caused pain or physical awareness, the devotee had to acknowledge his or her own existence as a physical object and not as a transcendent, divinely disembodied form of sentience. Yet at the same time

80 This reading of the body is strongly influenced by thing theory, which was largely developed by Bill Brown in A sense of things: the object matter of American literature. University of Chicago Press, (2003). In this Brown delves into an idea first presented by Heidegger and states that we (as humans) do not notice objects unless they are malfunctioning. The malfunction of the human body here makes one aware of presence on earth. Malfunction is a
these acts promote the transcendence of material because they require concentration and commitment to performance. Bodily manipulation within cult ritual requires perseverance despite physical impediments. Ultimately such performance furthers a belief in one’s ability to transcend the material world. This type of votive dedication of the body was promoted at Chartres, for example, through the legend of the ‘cult of carts,’ immortalized in the stained glass of the Miracles of the Virgin window on the south side of the nave (fig. 6). In this narrative, men, women, and children of all social classes voluntarily hitched themselves to carts to do service to the Virgin during the rebuilding of the west façade in 1144. The carts were then blessed by the priests of Chartres. The bodies of the devotees in the two Cult of Cart side roundels of the Miracles of the Virgin window strain forward under the weight of the carts. The central, bottom roundel continues this narrative, with bent bodies surrounding a pedestal topped by what might be a cult image or even a reliquary. Above, a symmetrical figure of the Virgin

core aspect of votive dedication; an event must malfunction in order for a votive to be required. The votive acts as the sublimation of the event malfunction; it is a mechanism of coping, healing, and gratitude.


83 The central roundel possibly contains a depiction of the reliquary of the sancta camisia. This reliquary has a detachable center which has the same trefoil shape that is depicted within the doors of the cabinet structure atop the pedestal that the figures surround in poses of prayer and prostration in the glass window. It is the attitudes of these figures that most suggests that this might be a reliquary; and it is possible that this is the reliquary of the sancta camisia, but simply depicted within a protective casing that obscures most of the reliquary from view.
and the Christ Child is flanked by two angels in a pose reminiscent of the *Sedes Sapientae* type. The votive offering of labor in these images both abases the devotees as well as rewards them.

For medieval philosophers, heaven is a place without material bodies; yet paradoxically heaven is the concept at the core of the presentation of the body in the cult image. The saint who communicates through the image is presented and perceived as currently residing in heaven. A cult statue alludes to this heavenly residence through the choices of material—gold, silver, and gems—used to create the exterior skin of the figure. The saint, however, retains contact on earth through the cult image because that image contains a remnant of his or her material form.

In the case of Romanesque *Sedes Sapientiae* figures, although the materiality of the wood core of the object was subsumed by the exterior color, wood plays a key part in the understanding of the object as a whole. Wood allowed for the statue to participate in rituals because it was light enough to be carried. It may also have represented the natural world in turn being covered by the material of the otherworldly: pigments, gems, and gold, silver, or copper. These materials were alien to daily life; they are not colors encountered in large quantities naturally but are harvested and processed in order to become refined pigments, gems, or metals. They represent the medieval audience’s conception of the pure colors of heaven in part because they have been distilled into pure materials.84 Dominic Janes has observed that for medieval scholars and the early Christian Fathers “the purest dyes’ are the most humble and the most

---

holy, who know that they are only virtuous through the action of Grace.”

The purity of materials employed for devotional art was of great concern to medieval audiences.

Gold exists in a state which allows for constant reflection, unlike any other metal. Saint Augustine used the image of gold purified in a furnace in his sermons and spoke of the purity of gold, even though he was hesitant to use such imagery in his treatises. This recalls the association with purity found in the description of the heavenly Jerusalem: “the city is pure gold, like unto clear glass.” Other metals too were associated with a state of unearthly purity as found in the Psalms which state that “the words of the Lord are pure words, as silver tried in the furnace.”

Silver was a different matter than gold. It was a pure material only in theory, as it required constant attention in order not to revert back to its natural blackened state. Herbert Kessler has suggested that “restoring tarnished metal, either by burnishing or applying new foil, repeated the original votive act, with the result that polished silver served de facto as evidence of successive devotion.” Devotional touching and interaction with cult objects was encouraged by the very materiality of silver because it would naturally burnish the surface.

The act of covering the wooden core with paint— as in the Sedes Sapientiae examples in Section II— or with gilding— as in the late Ottonian and Romanesque statues from the south of France enumerated in Section I— transcends the natural material and the physicality of the object through alluding to the attributes of the Heavenly Jerusalem. As the home of the saints, 

88 Psalms 12:6 from the New International Version of the Bible.
The Heavenly Jerusalem is described in the book of Revelations as a real city which is made of gold, gems, and crystals. It is illuminated by the “Glory of God,” and the wall surrounding it is of “jasper, and the city is pure gold, like unto clear glass.”

The foundations of this Jasper city wall are made of precious stones; sapphire, chalcedony, emerald, sardonyx, sardius, chryslyte, beryl, topaz, chrysoprasus, jacinth, amethyst. The material manifestation of this city is perhaps meant to be a metaphor for experiences which are unattainable for the human being in earthly form, but they are extremely important descriptions for understanding the medieval Christian interaction with the materiality of the object. The colors of the gems and minerals evoke images of the city of God, and gold is the material manifestation of the sensual experience of the heavenly city. The splendor of these majestic objects recalls the future splendor awaiting the faithful after death.

The layers of contained material and ideas enmeshed in cult statues, and indeed in the larger structure of the shrine system, could be said to reflect early Christian ideas about the layering of the hierarchy of being. Votive objects left as offerings proliferate individually around the cult image, which itself alludes to the Heavenly Jerusalem. We can imagine that medieval devotees might have been intuitively, if not made explicitly, aware of their presence within a social hierarchy that stretched from lowly earthly reality to the Divine state of existence.

---

91 Revelation 21:19-20 from the New International Version of the Bible: “The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, the fifth onyx, the sixth ruby, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth turquoise, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst.”
when participating in the shrine system. The process of devotion required sensory awareness of
the body, and hence the earthly state of being. Prostration, genuflection, and other forms of
devotional bodily manipulation brought the devotee into contact with the earth, forcing them to
be lower than the cult image toward which they directed their veneration, and equating them, by
proximity, to the earth and material existence. Votives shared this association through their
material proliferation. Institutionally desirable votives, namely wax, light, metal, or precious
stones, had a materiality that either equated them with the body, and therefore earthly material
(as I will argue is the case with wax) or equated them with the heavenly and therefore multiplied
the glory of the cult image (as I have argued was the case with gold, silver, and gems). Votive
recycling was encouraged by these latter materials which could be physically attached to cult
images and actively glorify them, as seen in the example of Sainte Foy (fig. 1). The
intermediary in this hierarchy then, was the cult statue itself. Material, yet pure, this object
served as a preparatory reminder of the glories of heaven. This container enshrines an interior,
material truth; the relic. Even in later cult statues which lacked interior relics, the implication of
the hierarchy was still clear because the materials which composed the cult statue suggested the
heavenly. These later cult statues often directly depicted high social status; crowns, scepters, or
even the globus cruciger became attributes of cult figures and reinforced the notion of a divine
class system. Finally, all of these layers served to make the devotee aware of the presence of an
immaterial hierarchy of being in which the souls of saints were conceivably manifest in the
Heavenly Jerusalem while God remained imperceivable and highest above all.

Unity was viewed as central to Divine goodness by early Christian theologians,
particularly by Plotinus who developed the concept of the One. For Plotinus, all sensible
objects, all of existence, are aspects of the One, which is at once beyond number yet also the
source which makes all number and order possible. This reflects the hierarchical system I have just outlined above, yet in reverse. For Plotinus, the One, or God, was unknowable, inconceivable, and in everything. The One was perceptible only through the objects that one could sense. The multiplication of objects, number, served as proof of the expansiveness of the One and became part of the divine order. Plotinus believed that intelligible substance itself was “number and melody.” Even in this early theology, the material world and one’s interaction with it served as proof of a divine order.

The ideas presented by Plotinus, Pseudo Dionysius, and Augustine influenced the ideas of the clergy who were responsible for the development of the institutionalized shrine system. The shrine system generated a dramatic visual and material promise that a Divine hierarchical system existed and worked in the earthly world and the heavenly realm. Lay people of all classes as well as the clergy had access to this system and could interact with and experience it working, either through witnessing the shrine, or, more rarely, through witnessing or participating in miracles performed by the saint of the shrine.

In this system, the votive object represents the lowliest state. Just as in Plato’s Republic, the lowliest state is the social state of hoi polloi, the largest and lowest class of society. Votive objects are popular objects. They each act as a stand-in for the individual devotee and as a perpetual expression of that person’s faith for as long as they exist before the cult image. But these popular, ritual objects did not come without criticism. They were often subject to the

95 Ibid., 118-119.
While alluding to Plato’s mathematically harmonious making of the world, Plotinus suggests that “the soul is number and melody, since intelligible substance itself is number and melody (p. 118).”
disapproving eye of iconoclastic authorities. The dominance of votive culture even through iconoclastic periods and its endurance to the present displays the popularity of the ritual and its necessity as a mechanism for a sense of personal agency within a devotee’s life. The shrine system as a whole, in turn, reflects the system of earthly society and the divine hierarchy and allows for earthly negotiations with the sacred through the moderating cult image.

IV. Votives Around the Cult Statue: Proliferation, Dissemination, Occupation

By nature of their popularity, votive objects propagate at a rapid pace in shrines that are “working;” they proliferate before a cult image that is believed to intervene in the lives of dedicated followers by performing miracles. The multiplication of votive objects and the forms they take reflect both the individuality and the homogeneity of the devotee population. The tendency of votives to copy and replicate forms that “work,” that is, forms that are believed to be desirable to the saint and therefore perpetuate that saint’s favor towards the devotee, will be investigated in Chapter 3 through an examination of the medieval notion of copying.

But here we can discuss the way in which votives acted as witnesses to the power of a saint. Their proliferation within a shrine attested to that shrine’s power. Although much later in date than the objects we are discussing, the woodcut by Michael Ostendorfer of the Pilgrimage to the New Church at Regensburg made around the year 1519 perfectly captures the tone of votive action and pictures the objects that surround cult images and fabricate their aura of power (Fig. 7). Investigating the print may suggest something about earlier shrines and their activation through performance.
The cult image is replicated four times in the print. The “real,” or original image is shown deep within the church, obscured by a sea of the heads of devotee pilgrims who have come to pay homage to the miraculous *Schöne Maria*. An image of the veiled Madonna that hangs as a tapestry from the bell tower, and the image of the Madonna held on a waving flag at the head of a procession which is beginning to disappear behind the church both add repetitions of her image. The fourth image of the Virgin and child is seen closest to the viewer in the foreground space of the print. This *Madonna and Child* is different from the other three; this is a cult statue and the Virgin wears a crown rather than a veil, and holds a staff. On a plinth in the yard in front of the church the space in front of the statue provides an area for performance—collapsing and prostrated devotees join those approaching on hand and knee. There is a possible fifth representation of the Madonna and child in the image; a hypothesis which I shall return to shortly.

The bodily actions represented in the *Pilgrimage to the New Church at Regensburg* would be categorized by Hugo van der Velden as votive “acts.” The culture of pilgrimage joined to the culture of votives creates a social exchange of obligation, supplication, and thanks. Two men on the left near the entrance to the church are depicted barefoot and wearing hair-shirts with their hands held out in front of them in a traditional position of prayer. The figures in various modes of prostration in the foreground are engaged in devotional gestures through the submission of their bodies. All of the other figures of people are in a procession, a communal movement towards and around the venerated cult image.

---

In this print we also see the evidence of ephemeral materials given as non-utilitarian offerings; giant candles that grow progressively in height and weight held by the devotees in the procession are seen on the right hand side of the print. Various votive dedications hang from the rafters of the porch of the church. There are many tools and implements: baskets, scythes, pitchforks and shoes, but there are also what appear to be dedications of cast body parts. Burning candles have been inserted into the monolithic plinth of the sculpted Madonna and Child in the foreground.

Replication and proliferation are central to the Pilgrimage to the New Church at Regensburg image. There is a proliferation of bodily form, of objects and materials. There are also the images of the Madonna and Child figures. One is the depiction of the “real” Schöne Maria inside the church. The others are duplicates, replicas, or copies of this initial miraculous image. The tapestry that hangs from the bell tower is far removed from the pilgrims and serves to prepare the crowd for the image inside; but none of the depicted crowd seem interested in it. A second image on the flag seems to be the rallying point for a group that is going away from the shrine; they carry pointed staffs and could possibly be going off to crusade, rallied by the miraculous image and the rhetoric of the impassioned sermons given inside the church near the image.

The fourth is a fascinating case of the copy. It is a Madonna and Child, just as the Schöne Maria is, yet it is also entirely different. Here, the Virgin is not depicted in a humbled, veiled state, but shown wearing a crown and holding an elaborate staff. Her image in the round has attracted supplicants who act out great gestures of humility and devotion before her, in a way that the packed masses of pilgrim devotees inside the church, before the “original” miraculous image, cannot. The crowned Virgin hints at the gold and gem studded reliquary cult statues of
the Romanesque period, especially the *Golden Madonna of Essen* (Fig. 2). Both the Essen cult statue and the Regensburg statue have long flowing robes, hold the Christ Child in their left arm, and hold an object signifying their power in their right hand.

For the *Madonna of Essen*, this object is an orb, as such performing a similar role to orbs that appear in Carolingian and Ottonian illuminations, representing either the *Mundus* or a *globus cruciger*. In the Regensburg print, the Madonna statue reinforces her power, she also holds a long staff associated with earthly rule. This subtle shift between the two statues of the Virgin is also evident in their head gear; the *Golden Madonna of Essen* wore votive crown but only during special processions, such as the Purification of the Virgin, while the Regensburg statue is adorned with a permanent crown upon her head. The gold and gems of the Essen Virgin that were an allegorical representation of the Heavenly Jerusalem have here been eliminated but the figure herself is transformed into an image of majesty on earth.

In sum, the cult statue of the Virgin in the Regensburg print is clothed differently than the three other images of the Virgin in the print; she wears a crown rather than a veil, and she holds a staff. Furthermore, the statue is on a plinth in the yard in front of the church, where there is enough room for the fainting, prostrated devotees to approach on hand and knee. She holds the Christ child on the left side of her body, and the staff on her right. Although standing, rather than seated, this statue recalls a type represented by an earlier sculpture from Regensburg, the *Enthroned Virgin and Child* c. 1280 in Regensburg, Germany (Fig. 8). The polychromed wooden statue is shorter (at 128cm, just over two

---

101 The majesty of the sculpture here becomes directly linked with social hierarchy and monarchical motifs rather than with the Heavenly Jerusalem.
102 See the Met collections, Acc. No. 16.32.183
feet) than the Virgin depicted in the print would have been but the iconographical similarities indicate that they are the same type. The Schöne Maria from 1280 holds Christ on her left side, she wears long, sweeping robes, and she is crowned in victory; these are the same characteristics as the statue of the Virgin in the print. Unlike the print, however, the Schöne Maria is missing her right arm, and we do not know what gesture she made with it or what she held in her hand. The Christ child in her lap holds an orb of power. As similar types the two sculptures performed similar cult functions, although they are clearly different statues. Acts like those depicted around the statue in the Pilgrimage to Regensburg print might very well have occurred around this Enthroned Virgin and Child.

Among the people performing devotional acts around the sculpture in the print there is a veiled mother who gently holds her child on the right side of her body, as the other three images of the Schöne Maria do. This reiterates the representation of the Madonna, as a possible “real” repetition of the image, the peasant woman holds her child, modeling her actions on those of the Virgin and seated before the image, making a strong statement about performative possibilities.

Collectively, this woodcut gives the viewer a wide experience of the possibilities of the “real;” is the real image the mother in the flesh? The miraculous image? The rallying standard under which the crowds go off to war? The image in the church? Or the cult statue that exists outside of the interior shrine area and church authority? We should also recall that the print that supplies this scene full of action and evidence is itself a copy. Such layers of reproduction and proliferation are one more example of the medieval understanding of Neo-Platonic hierarchies, discussed above, levels and ontologies that mediate between this world and the cosmos, from flesh to divine.

More specifically, in this print votive objects and actions create layers of devotion around the cult image which perpetuate more images enabling further votive acts and objects to form and interact with one another. The church is surrounded by a snaking line of processing pilgrims who give a wide berth to

For further information see the Met website at: http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/463785
the figures who lie prostrate, encircling the majestic Madonna and Child. There is no way to know how faithful or fanciful Michael Ostendorfer was in his representation of the Pilgrimage to the New Church at Regensburg. Yet it seems not to be a depiction of one instance of time, but of many personal, individual moments compiled by the artist into one grand image of votive action.

The Pilgrimage to the New Church at Regensburg although the most suggestive, is not the only representation of a shrine in action. Other prints speak to the interaction of cult image, devotee, and votive object, including the hand colored woodcut of Saint Anthony from the south of Germany made around the year 1450 (Fig. 9).103

This image depicts a shrine in the southeast of France housing Saint Anthony’s relics that acted as a conduit for numerous healing miracles. The relics of the Egyptian saint appeared in the Dauphiné in the eleventh century, where they were placed inside of a cult statue that generated “a shrine cult with wide fame,” bringing pilgrims and votive offerings from both local and foreign devotees.104 Saint Anthony allows us to glimpse the shrine system in action in the south of France, and once again suggests that the devotional manipulation of the body before the cult image may have played a significant role in the veneration of saints. The print shows devotees in the act of handing their offerings to a hierarchically enlarged enthroned figure of Saint Anthony who is identified by his attributes: the tau topped staff he holds, the pig, and the book in his lap. From left to right, the devotees present various objects to the image of Saint Anthony: a bearded man stands and holds out a cross while his companion holds out a small, praying figurine. Below them a man with a pilgrim-badge studded hat and a bell on his waist motions towards his heart as he walks with a crutch toward the cult statue; beside him a woman

---

104 Ibid., 207.
with an enlarged hand kneels on the ground and touches the rim of Saint Anthony’s clothing. In
the bottom right hand corner of the print, another man lies on the ground with a crutch beside
him, while above a figure in armor holds out a rooster and a woman devoutly prays behind him.
Most interestingly, at the top of the woodcut, a bar crosses the breadth of the woodcut and from
it dangle hands and feet, wax votive offerings of body parts that have been healed by Saint
Anthony.\textsuperscript{105}

This print is significant in its similarities to as well as its differences from the \textit{Pilgrimage
to the New Church at Regensburg}. Although we see only one cult figure of Saint Anthony, we
see actions parallel to those surrounding the cult statue of Mary in the \textit{Regensburg} print. These
two prints begin to give us a sense of the etiquette prevailing in medieval shrine sites and also
indicate that the etiquette for cult statues was distinct from the expectations of devotional actions
surrounding other types of cult images. We can see this in many other votive prints of this time
such as the image by Hans Weiditz, \textit{St. Anthony the Hermit hanging votives on a Church wall} or
the booklet title page of the \textit{Pilgrimage to the Virgin of Altötting}, made in Nurnberg in 1497.\textsuperscript{106}

In sum, although the cult statue was a source of controversy and as well as loyalty in
Romanesque Europe it generated specific sorts of responses of great interest to the historian.
The cult statue provided devotees with a focal point for their faith and a means for their acts of
piety and devotion to be communicated to the intended recipient. It was a conduit of veneration,

\textsuperscript{105} Ibid. Wood interestingly notes of this image that “the pilgrim is an object in the eyes of other pilgrims, no less so
than the displayed wax body parts...the pilgrims perform the power of the saint (p. 207).”
\textsuperscript{106} Ibid. see Fig. 8 Sebald Behem, \textit{St. Anthony}, ca. 1522, and see Fig. 4, \textit{Pilgrimage to the Virgin of Altötting},
Woodcut, frontispiece to Jakob Issickemer, \textit{Das buchlein der zuflucht zu Maria der muter gottes in alten Oding},
(Nuremburg 1497).
Also for the \textit{Refuge to Maria} print see: Philip M. Soergel, \textit{Wondrous in His Saints: Counter-Reformation
Propaganda in Bavaria}, University of California Press, (1993). Fig. 1, “Title page of Jacob Isseckemer's 1497
Altötting miracle book, The Little Book of Mary, God's Mother's Refuge in Altötting.”
a two-way channel that communicated both the words of the supplicant and the miraculous actions of the saint between heaven and earth. The systematic approach to the development of the shrine that began in the late Ottonian and Romanesque period and later flourished in the Gothic was predicated on the belief that cult objects would become focal points of veneration because they worked as channels of communication with the divine. That system was sustained by votive objects brought by both local and foreign pilgrims. Belief in the ability of a saint to interact sensorially with devotees through the cult statue was the very basis of the desire to travel to and stand within these shrines, becoming both a witness to the sacred, but also to be witnessed by the sacred. The cult statue is a translation of the immaterial divine into material form and allowed for the clergy to make arguments that material manifestations of thanks and desires were permissible objects to place before cult images thus expanding medieval votive culture into an institutional setting. This exchange forms a symbiotic relationship; votive objects need a cult image to exist, and the cult statue needs votive offerings as reassurances of its power.
Chapter 2

The Votive System

I. Votives and Their Interactions with Reliquaries

Votive dedications are a product of cult practices. In medieval Europe, these dedicated offerings centered around the cult of saints and acted as a means of direct communication with heavenly beings. Most importantly, votive objects manifest a dialogue between the devotee and the saint.\(^\text{107}\) This communication was mediated by the cult image that acted as a point of contact for the saint on earth. We have addressed the development and status of the cult statue in the previous chapter. This chapter will begin to unpack the complex objects that surrounded cult statues and generated an economy of exchange within the shrine. We will return to cult statues again during an examination of the work of the northern author, Bernard of Angers, who recorded the votives found within the southern French shrine of Conques, where the cult statue of \textit{Sainte Foy} (\textit{fig. 1}) was housed. Before speaking about the cathedral as an enshrining space there are many aspects of the third category of the shrine system – votive objects – that must be briefly addressed.

Votives are “thank offerings.” They are given as a public display of a vow of dedication and a manifestation of thanks for a miracle performed. As David Freedberg states in \textit{The Power of Images}, votive gifts were

\(^{107}\) That a votive is a visualization of “a dialogue of devotion between a supplicant and his or her chosen saint” is an idea taken from the work of Fredrika H. Jacobs in her chapter “Tavolette Votive: Form, Function, Context,” in \textit{Votive Panels and Popular Piety in Early Modern Italy}, (2013), 23. The word “dialogue” in relation to votives is a particularly apt description because it points out that the devotee and the saint are both in communication with one another; the saint speaks to the supplicant through objects, visions, and actions, and the devotee speaks to them through objects, words, and actions.
...how one made public one’s gratitude to God, and it was felt to be the most straightforward and direct way of doing so. And, in a sense, it absolved one of further demonstrating one’s thanks. [It] remained as a perpetual record of gratitude: [whereas] prayers of thanks would always be transient; one would have to renew them; and if one were rich, one would ensure their renewal after death.108

In describing votives as “thank offerings” Freedberg additionally describes the nature of votive objects as entities whose function is tied to their duration. Although Freedberg’s definition of votives as public dedications specifically excludes the private act of prayer, and indeed is almost formulated in opposition to the category of “prayer,” I believe that prayer is also type of votive offering— continuous with the category of prayer as a devotional act.

Surely, prayer must be categorized with the most ephemeral of votives as it consists only of action and performance. Nevertheless prayer, together with ritual, is the most commonly given gift of devotion even if it is the shortest lived. In contrast to Freedburg, Van der Velden provides a much more complete vision of votive offerings. He classifies prayer as belonging to the group of votive “acts” or human bodily manipulations including prayers, fasting, tattooing, and shaving as among the most obvious and widely practiced of these.109 Other votives that he discusses are object-based dedications. These can be subdivided further into “utilitarian” and “non-utilitarian” functions. Monetary or property donations to a shrine, liturgical vessels, or objects given in dedication to perpetuate the wellbeing of the clergy are all functional, utilitarian

109 Hugo van der Velden, *The Donor’s Image: Gerard Loyet and the Votive Portraits of Charles the Bold* trans. Beverly Jackson, Turnhout: Brepols, (2000), p. 213. See this work for a list of scholars who have discussed the difficulty of this task.

An example of a sustained bodily manipulation made during the medieval period that is also well documented is the act of tonsuring the head; cutting or shaving part or all of the hair from the scalp. This was common among the clergy. It is a practice still quite common today among many religions, from Buddhism to Islam. Gifting hair as a votive object is one point where direct bodily and object oriented votives cross over.
objects. Van der Velden finally creates the sub-categories “honorary,” “oblation,” and “consumptive” as general guides for understanding utilitarian votives. The dominant examples of non-utilitarian votives are candles, incense, sanctuary decoration, paintings, and sculptures. Above all, Hugo van der Velden emphasizes that votives fall into two basic categories; the first is bodily dedications (human actions) and the second, object dedications (physical manifestations), and both of these categories have a range of material permanence. The boundaries between categories is often indeterminate and flexible because the needs of the people and objects involved in the act of dedication and thanks often necessitate the combination of multiple approaches to votive gifting or the creation of multivalent objects. Nevertheless, these two votive categories are both crucial to understanding the Medieval shrine for it is both a place for depositing objects and an event site.

Furthermore, I would argue that these objects and actions all perform as a fluid mass, generating an aura of power around a cult image, as well as perpetuating the vitality of the shrine. Cult images acted as a point of contact for the saint associated with them; in a sense they functioned as receivers and concentrated focal points of transmissions from heaven in a system of intercession. As noted above, the cult statue of Sainte Foy is the earliest surviving example of a medieval full-figure, free-standing cult image in France (Fig. 1).\footnote{The cult image of Saint Foy originally dates to the ninth century, however, I have identified it here as a “cult image of the eleventh century” because this was the time when the cult of Ste. Foy truly began to flourish and she became the subject of an outpouring of physical votive gifts and pilgrimages.} Cult images like Sainte Foy were, in part, able to act as ‘receivers’ because they contained relics, an indexical trace of
the saint’s life on earth, as Bernard of Angers and the other authors are careful to specify in his writing in the *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis*.\(^{111}\)

Relics were often deposited inside of cult statues, particularly within early cult statues (although audiences may not have been aware of exceptions) and therefore form the powerful but invisible center of shrine activity.\(^{112}\) It should be noted that a cult statue does not necessarily require relics in order to “work (ie. perform miracles)” but belief in their presence certainly motivated the inclinations of visiting devotees because the relics connect the heavenly saint to the earthly image through a concrete manifestation.

Before we understand the function and status of votives we need to further explore the nature of the reliquary and its setting, especially the altar, and the origin of holy space in Christian devotion. The development of the veneration of saintly relics was mirrored, especially in the early Christian period, by parallel practices of collecting portable, earthy materials such as dust, oil, or water from the holy land and these practices reveal important aspects of early shrine practice and the designation of holy spaces. These verifying materials are collectively referred to in early texts as *eulogiae*, meaning simply “blessings.”\(^{113}\) The motivation for such practices is a desire to be near the miraculous, to experience tangible evidence of the existence of the divine,

\(^{111}\) The word “relic” appears exactly 20 times in the *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis*. See Pamela Sheingorn, *The Book of St. Foy* (1995), pp.: 37, 52, 69, 79, 98, 102, 121, 124, 138, 140, 145, 171, 195, 203, 220, 237, 248, 269, 270, 273. Exactly half of these references occur in books one and two, which have been credited to Bernard of Angers, although he died just before finishing the second book. This means that, conservatively, we can attribute half of the references to relics to Bernard. This shows that relics were equally important to the local authors understanding of the function of *Sainte Foy* as they were to Bernard.

\(^{112}\) The perception of the need for the presence of relics within cult statues and the effect that this had on the proliferation of cult statues (as seen in *Sedes Sapientiae* figures) is not a well explored topic; the fluctuation between miraculously “working” images and objects and reliquaries which housed (or were believed to have housed) relics is a subject which requires future study.

and to solicit divine favor as we have discussed regarding later medieval shrines. *Eulogiae* are relics of site rather than relics of the body. They act as conduits of divinity through the events of a site. For example, water from the Jordan river might be collected for its curative powers, as it is the site of the event of Christ’s baptism.

*Eulogiae* attest to the importance of site in Christianity. This is surely related to the antique practice of establishing shrines based on *naturalia*, a subject that we will return to in the final chapter during a discussion of the development of a shrine system at Chartres. Attachment to specific natural locations and a belief in their ability to conduct manifestations of divine favor is rooted in ancient beliefs in the power of nature and matter to connect with the otherworldly.114

In the later middle ages, miracles came to convey the power of God through the apparatus of the saint’s relic remains, rather than through the unadorned site. The relic was thought to carry the *virtus* of a saint or Christ himself. The *virtus* was understood to mean both literally the virtue, but also the power of the saint; it encapsulates the saint’s essence.115 It is this essence that is contained within the relic, and is enshrined and amplified by the reliquary. As we will argue, it is further transmitted to and increased by surrounding votive dedications and actions that are housed within the shrine area. It is the shrine complex which allows the reliquary or cult image to become a container charged with the power to transmit “Divine” will.

The reliquary, indeed, becomes a miniature version of a shrine through the relic housed inside of it. Like the larger enshrining environment, the reliquary both hides, protects, and reveals sanctity. The shrine was defined in the introductory chapter in part as “a casket

114 A further example of Christian reluctance to entirely abandon Pagan *naturalia* sites will be examined in the miraculous well of Chartres in Chapter three.

containing sacred relics; a reliquary.”116 If reliquaries are highly animate objects, containers and receivers, frequently made with doors, drawers, or window that are potentially charged but rarely opened, the viewer’s awareness of the potential ability gives the object its energy.117 The reliquary becomes the skin of the relic, fused to it for all believers; the reliquary essentially makes the relic into an object worthy of veneration rather than an exposed body part or other piece of extraneous matter. In essence, the physical container lends power to the material inside. Thiofrid of Echternach clarified this perspective around the year 1100, when he argued that the reliquary container beautifies and gives purity to what otherwise may be considered “disgusting or repulsive” by the unlearned eye.118

Moreover, as above, the reliquary or cult statue must exist within a social setting in which it is contextualized and understood, namely the shrine. It must have a sanctified resting place, whether that resting place is on the altar inside a cathedral or between the trees of a temporary

116 J. A. Simpson, E. Weiner, and Michael Proffitt. Oxford English Dictionary. Oxford: Clarendon Press, (1993). A fourth definition is given stating that a shrine is also “a place associated with or containing memorabilia of a particular revered person or thing.” I include this definition only in notes because it is related most strongly to secular votive offerings left at memorial sites rather than religious sites. Although this is relevant to a broader discussion of votive offerings, it is outside the scope of this paper.

117 The idea of the potential energy of the object is best understood through Aristotle’s theory of potentiality, discussed in Metaphysics. Potentiality (dunamis) is not just the power to produce a change but also the capacity to be in a different and more completed state. Aristotle sets up potentiality as the opposite of actuality. They are related as “someone waking is to someone sleeping, as someone seeing is to a sighted person with his eyes closed, as that which has been shaped out of some matter is to the matter from which it has been shaped” (1048b1–3). See the online Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy at: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-metaphysics/#ActPot

As Charles Freeman notes “Each cathedral had its own high altar with relics already encased within it. They would not be visible and only a limited number of pilgrims would be able to come close.” Holy Bones, Holy Dust. Yale University Press, (2012), p. 109. This indicates that relics were not only physically inaccessible to the majority of people, but that they were often imperceptible to all bodily senses. This depravation of any indication of the relic to the senses creates a faith based environment in which the relic can only exist within an imagined faith-based space. Cynthia Hahn also states that “Reliquaries made in the western medieval world (typically)... holds its relic tightly and invisibly, inaccessible to either devout or skeptical eyes.” in “What Do Reliquaries Do For Relics?,” Numen Vol. 57, No. 3/4 Relics in Comparative Perspective, (2010), 287.

118 Julia H. M. Smith, “Portable Christianity; Relics in the Medieval West (c. 700-1200).” Raleigh Lecture on History, (2010), 156.

“As Thiofrid of Echternacht explained, they (reliquaries) gave allegorical form to the purity of mind and body of the denizens of heaven.”
outdoor shrine during public performances.\textsuperscript{119} It must also have an audience, without which any cult object has no power or significance.\textsuperscript{120}

The larger the audience the more authentication that the audience provides for the high status of the object. The reliquary must be surrounded with ritualized actions that demonstrate devotion to the identity associated with the reliquary and that enable individual immersion through imaginative narrative and communication with the saint. This “surrounding” is what ultimately creates the aura of the saint. The relic is not hidden, it is amplified by being distanced from the viewer and encased in material with both economic and iconographic value. It is these relations between objects, actions, and people that creates the aura of power surrounding saintly relics.\textsuperscript{121}

We should be reminded that Reliquaries literally do not stand apart from the shrine system. They are very often made out of or added to by materials and objects given as votive

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{119} See Pamela Sheingorn, trans. The Book of St. Foy, 199: “They asked Bernard to give the Abbot the leafy branches of a forest from which they would build a pavilion suitable for (the reliquary of) Sainte Foy.” We know from this and other books of Miracles similar to this that public displays of reliquaries and cult statues in nature were not an uncommon occurrence in the 11th-15th centuries.
\textsuperscript{120} “Without some form of recognition, a relic is merely bone, dust, or scraps of cloth. An audience is essential. Its attention authenticates the relic.” Cynthia Hahn, “What Do Reliquaries Do For Relics?,” 291. This statement speaks to my previous writing about the necessity of re-contextualizing the votive object as a votive rather than as artwork today. The loss of context takes away the previous power of the object.
\textsuperscript{121} It might be helpful to consider Walter Benjamin's concept of the “aura” in considering my use of it throughout this paper. I will quote extensively here from Benjamin's “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” Harry Zohn, trans., Random House, (2005, originally published 1936): “The concept of aura... may usefully be illustrated with reference to... the unique phenomenon of a distance... If, while resting on a summer afternoon, you follow with your eyes a mountain range on the horizon or a branch which casts its shadow over you, you experience the aura of those mountains, of that branch... Uniqueness and permanence are as closely linked in the latter (the far away original) as are transitoriness and reproducibility in the former (the close-up reproduction). To pry an object from its shell, to destroy its aura, is the mark of a perception whose “sense of the universal equality of things” has increased to such a degree that it extracts it even from a unique object by means of reproduction.” I am using the term “aura” to refer to this sense of power in the original. In the authentic object; in the case of the cult of saints, the “authentic object” is the relic, the indexical mark, of the saint. For Benjamin this “aura” is created by remaining distant despite a spacial proximity. The relic remains remote within the reliquary and remains sheathed in layers of impenetrable space and power that generate the aura of the saint.
\end{flushright}
offerings. A striking example of this interrelatedness of reliquary and votive comes from the very moment of the origins of the Gothic style, the rebuilding of the abbey church of St. Denis, completed in 1144. Its revolutionary renovation was inspired by a desire to accommodate the rising number of pilgrims coming to pay homage to relics held in the crypt. Abbot Suger decorated the renovated building lavishly “in honor of the sacred bodies of the patron saints.”

Speaking of the golden altar frontal in the upper choir of St. Denis, Suger states that through dedications he gained access to a

...multifarious wealth of precious gems, hyacinths, rubies, sapphires, emeralds and topazes, and also an array of different large pearls for setting in shrines and altars... You could see how kings, princes, and many outstanding men, following our example, took the rings off the fingers of their hands and ordered, out of love for the Holy Martyrs, that the gold, stones, and precious pearls of the rings be put into that panel. Similarly archbishops and bishops deposited there the very rings of their investiture as though in a place of safety, and offered them devoutly to God and His Saints.

In this example we see that votive dedications of rings and precious gems are given to the saints and are in fact here incorporated into the sacred container. The votives collectively become the altar frontal that is in turn the reliquary container and the focus of ritual and devotion, therefore, a conglomerate object.

Notably, among the stones of the rings given as votives for the altar were seals, their markings still visible to the naked eye today. Abbot Suger knew that seal gems were themselves imbued with connotations of power through their explicit representation of social status.

122 Erwin Panofsky, ed. trans., Abbot Suger on the Abbey Church of St. Denis and its Treasures, Princeton, (1946, revised 1979), 87-9. Excerpts from the writing of Abbot Suger is also available online at http://www.learn.columbia.edu/ma/htm/ms/ma_ms_gloss_abbot_sugar.htm

123 Ibid.
Embedding them into the fabric of the altar added a new layer of power in which the power of the saint is physically supported by the power of the highest orders of French medieval social structure. It was also a way of providing the altar frontal with discreet donor “portraits,” as the family seal would enable each donor to be identified. Votive objects displaying distinctive family or societal status were similarly added to cult statues in much the same way as they were on the altar frontal at Saint Denis, as can be seen on the body of Sainte Foy (fig. 1). We may speculate that they were used in like fashion on the now empty surfaces of the Golden Madonna of Essen and Saint Baudime (fig. 2 and 3). In this sense, the reliquary is not only made up of its votives, but also constitutes itself as the center of its societal network.

In some sense, one could argue that medieval reliquaries originated in altars, as the example from St. Denis attests. Such an origin speaks to their ability to enable saintly actions and miracles. The altar is the center of Christian ritual worship and thus the center of most Christian sites. It stands for sacrifice as do the saints in their reiteration of Christ’s sacrifice. Furthermore, the altar is encapsulated by the architectural space of the church which acts as a second skin to the altar, to the reliquary, and to the cult. The development of medieval Christian votive ritual is heavily reliant upon these principals of enshrinement: the hiding and revealing of sanctity. The sacred is at once enclosed and displayed by layers of permeable matter.

Medieval belief in the altar as a key element of the mysteries of Christian ritual is reflected in some of the earliest Christian literature. Questions of the altar and the Eucharist are

124 See Philippe Buc, “Conversion of Objects: Suger of Saint-Denis and Meinwerk of Paderborn,” Viator 28 (1997), 115, where Buc suggests that there is a tripartite display of power in this altar frontal, in which the holy martyrs first receive tribute through episcopal insignias of power, then through seal gems of the secular aristocracy, then in the “viler and authority-less product of popular negotium,” by which Buc refers to the fact that Suger bought some of the gold and gems from other monks, albeit for a far lower price than market standards would suggest.
also central to an understanding of medieval materiality and its interaction with the divine. In his letter to the Magnesians, Ignatius of Antioch speaks of Jesus Christ as “the one altar, the one Jesus Christ, who came forth from one Father, while still remaining one with him.”¹²⁵ In this instance, the unity of the existence of the relic and the reliquary is conceived of and enabled by the unity of Jesus Christ and his link with God as presented by the altar.

We may turn to Thomas Aquinas, who although writing later than much of what we are considering, gives a clear view of the complexities of the high medieval understanding of the act of transubstantiation. In the seventy-fifth question of his *Summa Theologiae* which addresses the Eucharist, Aquinas reiterates that the presence of Christ within the Eucharist is a real physical presence saying that it is there “invisibly and by the power of the spirit.”¹²⁶ To support his assertion that the body of Christ is physically present within the Eucharist, and yet transformed, Aquinas cites Augustine as arguing that the flesh of the Eucharist is not the “sort of flesh which is sliced from a carcass,” but flesh “enlivened by the spirit.”¹²⁷ Thomas Aquinas goes on to clarify that

the body of Christ is not in the sacrament in the same way as a body is in a place. For the dimensions of a body in a place are commensurate with the dimensions of the place it is in. But Christ’s body is in the sacrament in a special way which is


These sentiments are repeated and expanded on by later theologians, such as Eusebius, and derive, in part, from the mysterious act of transubstantiation which takes place on the altar. Literalist texts, such as the twelfth century *Stella Clericorum*, take this unity of God with the one altar a step further and suggest that the Priest in fact becomes the father of God through transubstantiation. Writing such as that found in the *Stella Clericorum* would be considered radical and even heretical by most twelfth century theologians, however this attribution of power to the altar because it was a space of miraculous transformation was a widely accepted view at this time.


¹²⁷ Ibid.
proper to this sacrament. That is why we say that the body of Christ is on different altars, not as in different places but as in the sacrament. These statements suggest that issues of place, or site, and material were challenging questions for the thirteenth century theologian, wrestling with how the divine physically communicated and interfaced with the earthly world. Nevertheless, it is clear that the altar was the space upon which this transformation took place. As such, it allowed for the creation of, in some sense, ‘bodily relics’ of Christ through the act of transubstantiation. This connection with the body of Christ was reinforced through the interment of the relics within the altar space (or in some rare cases, hosts). Perhaps these relics helped to reaffirm the physical presence of Christ on the altar, or perhaps they aided in the development of an understanding of invisible, yet physically present sanctity. This belief in the ability of Christ to exist simultaneously as both physical and divine matter is the foundation of medieval Christians’ concepts of fluid materiality.

II. Votive Materiality

Matter existed in a mundane state of being, yet through its attributes it could take on otherworldly, even heavenly, qualities, as discussed at the beginning of the introductory chapter. Votive objects acted as interlocutors at the lowest channel of communication in the divine social hierarchy; they essentially became a perpetual witness before the sanctified cult image, extending the devotee’s dialogue with their chosen saint and reaffirming the power of that saint to be an intercessor between the devotee and God. The votive object had to be able to simultaneously fulfill the needs of the devotee and of the saint, necessitating that the votive gift

128 Ibid.
be able to change status easily between action and material. Dedications of a particular type of material had to take into account the materiality of the votive and its juxtaposition with the material of the cult image. The fluidity of material is most vividly embodied in the properties of the most common votive gift: wax (candles are still the most common votive objects dedicated today).\textsuperscript{129}

The materiality of votive offerings lies at the heart of their long standing absence in art historical inquiries, but it is a quality that demands discussion. The materials of votives are many and each has a specific meaning and motivation behind its dedication. Votives can be made out of any material; iron, bronze, paint, wood, plastic, paper, etc.; votive dedications are limited only by the imagination of the devotee and the perceived desires of the saint to whom the object is gifted. With such an egalitarian approach to materials, why did the candle come to the fore of votive gifting?

Wax as a material was essential to medieval life. It was used to seal food, to strengthen thread and bowstrings for archers, to seal iron, bronze, and wood, to lubricate leather or metal armor, or as a tool for note-taking via the wax writing tablet. Despite this variety of uses, before the invention of electricity the primary use of wax was as a source of light. It seems fitting that the insistently present materiality of wax, coupled with the ephemeral and intangible nature of light embodies the duality of Christ’s simultaneous existence as both physical and divine, immaterial matter. The candle is perhaps the most suitable votive offering because it was

\textsuperscript{129} The ephemeral nature of this material, its indexical qualities, and its association with craft has in the past prevented many scholars from undertaking any kind of serious aesthetic or art historical inquiry involving objects made from it. Candles have become so associated with votive dedication that “votive candles” are sold as a category in stores, although this category is more associated with home decor than with ritual expressions of faith.
composed of both earthly and sacred material. Wax was the earthly component of this dual object. It was practical and utilitarian, and its material properties involving similitude were perfectly suited to the desires of devotees. Let us not forget that lit candles flicker as well, adding the element of movement; consequently they ‘activate’ a shrine.

A fascinating late medieval depiction of votive waxes functioning as objects of witnessing in the shrine system is found in a wing of the St. Wolfgang altar in Pipping, which was completed around the year 1480 (fig. 1). Pilgrims are depicted in a processional line rounding the side of a Gothic church building. Through the grate we can see the shrine altar. The unusual yellow objects are unbleached beeswax sculptures, deposited in various positions throughout and around the shrine. According to Lenz Kriss-Rettenbeck this painting also contains the only late medieval depiction of wooden votive objects. The subject of the votive sculptures are varied. We can see hands, feet, and full figure waxes; there is even a circular disc that looks very similar to contemporary votive breasts, and the shading on the center of the disk subtlety suggests an areola. A man with a bandaged leg sits prominently in the foreground with his hands held before him in a typical depiction of prayer. Upon closer examination of this figure we can see that he holds one of these beeswax votives; it dangles from a string that he grasps in his hand. This votive is in the shape of a leg, suggesting that he is praying for his

131 Ibid.
132 The votive objects are recognizable as beeswax because of the warm, unbleached yellow tone they are depicted with. The other common medieval candle material, tallow, is a much lighter, whiter material which does not lend itself as well to sculpture. Therefore, most sculptural medieval candles, especially when depicted in a bright yellow hue, can safely be identified as beeswax candles. Beeswax also had sacred connotations because of the association
wounded leg to be healed and will deposit the votive limb there at the shrine as a surrogate for his own limb.

Aside from the wax and wood hands, feet, and figures, we also can see irregular, twisted yellow shapes. There is one near the seated man’s feet, two on the wall of the shrine, and one that has been placed on the threshold between the interior of the shrine and the exterior where it rests on the iron grate. Two of these objects have orange tails attached to them, suggesting that they are in fact lit candles. In the throng of pilgrims there is a woman with a black eye patch who also appears to be holding a candle as she processes forward with the crowd. Before discussing the inherent material qualities of wax, we turn to the primary gift provided by wax, that is, light.

The gift of light has been an essential part of votive dedication throughout Christian history. There is a command twice repeated in the Bible that provides evidence of the practice of dedicating light from before the time of Christ: Leviticus 24:2-3: “Command the Israelites to bring you clear oil of pressed olives for the light so that the lamps may be kept burning continually... Aaron is to tend the lamps before the Lord from evening till morning, continually. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come.”

A very similar wording is found in Exodus 27:20-21: “Command the Israelites to bring you clear oil of pressed olives for the light so that the lamps may be kept burning. In the tent of meeting, outside the curtain that shields the ark of the covenant law, Aaron and his sons are to keep the lamps burning before the Lord from evening till morning. This is to be a lasting ordinance among the Israelites for the generations to

______________________________

of bees with purity, and would therefore be a more suitable material for a votive offering than tallow, which was not associated with purity.

come.”134 The key action required here is to keep oil lamps burning near the altar throughout the night.

Keeping a light near the altar became a central element of medieval Christian practice. It also became one of the most common votive offerings at shrine sites. As the popularity of relics increased, so too did the presence of candles on altars beside them.135 In the life of St. Radegund Fortunatus described a practice in the sixth century of a person lighting a candle or several candles that equaled their own height; this was called “measuring to.”136

Pilgrims often made vows to the saints that they would light a candle or present a wax image at a shrine. Many pilgrims offered candles ‘measured’ to the length of an afflicted person’s body... Throughout Europe, giant candles were given as votive offerings to protect cities.137 Candles that were constructed for this purpose can be seen painted in the wing of the St. Wolfgang altar in Pipping (Fig. 10). Their braided form suggests that the string wicks of these candles were used as instruments to measure the length of a devotee’s body. The long wicks would then have been dipped in wax and braided into a more compact, portable form.

Light is used to demarcate a sacred space, as noted by Charles Connick in his observations about the Stained glass of Chartres Cathedral, specifically the window in the south ambulatory known as the Notre Dame de la Belle Verrière (See Fig. 11). He states that it “had

136 Venantius Fortunatus, Vita sanctae Radegundis 1. 32. “Goda, a secular girl... continued to be ill, made a candle of her own hight, by the Lord’s mercy, in the name of the holy woman [Radegund]... by its benefit, the chills were banished.” p. 374.
candles before it to mark it as a shrine.”¹³⁸ This is a fascinating case where the material of light is itself transformed into both a cult image and a shrine at the same time, while votive dedications of light perpetuate the glory of the image through the multiplication of it’s physical attributes: the projecting, colored light of stained glass. The stained glass of Chartres will be further explored in chapter three during a focused examination of Notre Dame de Chartres as a shrine.

It is the ‘problematic’ of wax that accounts, in large part, for the tremendous gap in the historiography of votive objects.¹³⁹ Georges Didi-Huberman suggests that in the historiography of wax the very material is seen as anti-valuable. He quotes Erwin Panofsky who stated that wax was a material “between two states.”¹⁴⁰ For Didi-Huberman, wax is both lacking and excessive. It is lacking because it degrades, “slips away;” serves as a reminder of death. It is excessive because it “goes too far where resemblance is concerned... it adapts plastically to the slightest creases in the plaster molds in which it is cast; it is able to capture all varieties, all the differences in texture. But to them it adds an excess so subtle... [that it] ultimately ruins any notion of style and even any authentic realism.”¹⁴¹ This excessiveness causes an “uneasiness because it oversteps the boundary” of the viewers expectations of the made object, as noted by E. H. Gombrich.¹⁴² In his terms this is noted as the “symbolism” of the object. It is more akin to the

¹³⁸ Charles J. Connick, “"LaBelleVerrière" of Infinite Variety.” *The American Magazine of Art* Vol. 24, no. 3 (1932), 179.
¹³⁹ It is also their classification as “popular,” rather than elite objects that accounts for the lag in scholarly inquiries into votives.
¹⁴¹ Ibid., 155-156.
similitude of Foucault; the viewer fears wax because of its uncanny ability to resemble exactly.\textsuperscript{143}

Even if materials were useful to the Church and eminently recyclable, as in the case of wax, still church authorities found votives undesirable.\textsuperscript{144} They proliferated and filled space. Nevertheless, in addition to providing usable materials, votive objects generate pilgrimage, bringing outside revenue to small towns and areas that may not receive economic stimulation otherwise. This revenue was ultimately attractive to church authorities and therefore helped to create an environment of tacit acceptance of votive culture.

Authorities’ feelings toward votive objects varied regionally, but their usefulness to the economic function of the church generally ensured their continued acceptance. It is clear, as we will see in the following chapter discussing Chartres and Conques, that documents clearly record an acceptance of votives in both southern and northern France in the twelfth century. This shift may have occurred because it became clear that promoting votive culture actually brought valuable revenue to the expensively expanding pilgrimage churches of the period. Gothic cathedrals would have been an impossibility without votive revenue. In the case of Chartres, in particular, economic motivations for condoning a cult and shrine system—although clearly contrary to the iconoclastic sensibilities generated in the north of France by issues that are represented by the \textit{Libri Carolini}—may have been behind the appearance of a cult statue in the cathedral’s crypt.


\textsuperscript{144} For information about the contemporary rejection of votives and collecting see: Catrien Notermans, and Willy Jansen. "Ex-votos in Lourdes: Contested Materiality of Miraculous Healings." \textit{Material Religion} Vol. 7, no. 2 (2011), 168-192. “Officials have to alternate between resisting and tolerating people’s healing experiences, so they often show an ambiguous attitude towards miracles in general, and ex-votos in particular (p.171).”
Because they are not fully welcomed by Church authorities, votive objects are often destroyed. They routinely exist in the historical record only as texts but this literature can still serve as a starting point in reconstructing the history of *matériel éphémère*. In his essay on wax, Georges Didi-Huberman asks: “does the disappearance of an object exempt us from writing its history?” Didi-Huberman wants to excavate these ephemeral objects, but seems reluctant to develop a methodology that allows him to do so because he believes this reconstruction would be outside the scope of previous art history. This reconstruction is possible. It cannot be a reconstruction that is achieved through traditional formal or iconographic analysis, but must be a resurrection of motivation combined with materiality. Through exploring these two key components of the votive object we can achieve a sense of each object’s significance and function.

III. Constructing the Votive Canon: The *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis*

One invaluable and unique record of the votive culture of a still surviving saint’s shrine can be found in Bernard of Angers text *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis*, that is, the *Book of the Miracles of Saint Faith*. In this book, Bernard selected and recorded his experiences as he traveled from his post in Chartres in the north of France and documented his observation of the shrine of Sainte Foy in Conques, a village in the south of France, beginning this endeavor as

early as the year 1013. The monks of Conques were highly aware of and promoted a votive culture because it inspired the pilgrimage and devotion of others outside of Conques. Monks and lay people alike were more than willing to tell Bernard of Angers stories that he could spread throughout the north of France, specifically to skeptics in the town of Chartres and especially Bishop Fulbert, a topic that we will return to in the third chapter. Pamela Sheingorn, the English translator of the Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis has noted that “though Bernard was cognizant of the monk’s [of Conques] own interests, his real audience, seems to have been the clerics of northern France, whom he names in the last chapter of book one.”

This first book of miracles is explicitly dedicated to Bishop Fulbert at the outset, stating: “the beginning of the book of miracles of holy and most blessed Foy... to the holiest and most learned of men, Fulbert, bishop of Chartres, Bernard, the least of teachers, sends a gift of supreme blessedness.”

Bernard’s stories provide a somewhat skewed vision of the votive culture of Sainte Foy because he focuses on those which were beneficial for the monks and townspeople. They are also mediated by Bernard’s role as editor; he may have excluded votive devotions which he thought would appear inappropriate to the more conservative northerners of France. After Bernard’s death an (anonymous) monk from Conques picked up the challenge of recording the miracles of Sainte Foy (so it would seem to have been a successful project). This author

---

149 In particular, he may have excluded votives that might appear unacceptable to Fulbert of Chartres, whom Bernard was targeting as the ideal audience of his book.
150 In the introductory chapter of The Book of Sainte Foy Pamela Sheingorn writes that “The prologue to book three clearly announces the death of Bernard and a change of authorship. It appears that the monk-author of book three had Bernard’s notes in hand and used them to write up some of the stories Bernard had collected…book four seems
wrote book three some time between 1020 and 1050, although scholars have suggested that it is most likely that the monk wrote book three immediately following Bernard’s death in 1020.\textsuperscript{151} The final section of the \textit{Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis} was compiled by multiple authors around 1050, each writing only a few miracle stories all of which are packed with classical references that Pamela Sheingorn notes were likely made to impress the author’s peers.\textsuperscript{152}

As he tells the story, Bernard was slowly won over by the cult of Sainte Foy (fig. 1). His slow acceptance and hesitation in believing the stories of the townspeople of Conques is used as evidence of his discerning eye and his unwillingness to be duped by idolatry. At the time, the northern audience to whom he wrote were still heavily influenced by arguments such as those of the \textit{Libri Carolini}, and Bernard could only have made such a pro-veneration argument through a skeptical and critical lens.

However, it is clear that Bernard was also aware of the economic benefits that the vibrant votive culture surrounding Sainte Foy had brought to Conques. He wrote to Bishop Fulbert just before the disastrous fire of 1020, that destroyed the cathedral at Chartres emphasizing the value of objects that were left as votive dedications at Conques— this may have been a subtle suggestion to Bishop Fulbert that the institutionalization of a shrine system and the promotion of a votive culture at Chartres could bring similar benefits.\textsuperscript{153} It is no surprise, therefore, that the

to have been written around the middle of the eleventh century, and several authors drafted its stylistically diverse chapters (p. 25).”


\textsuperscript{153} Although the exact date is unknown, Bernard of Angers wrote the first two books of the \textit{Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis} between 1013 and 1020, and died around the year 1020. Although he most likely never found out about the fire at Chartres in 1020, the cathedral had been struck by a consuming fire once before in 962. Bernard
votives mentioned in the sections of the book written by Bernard are almost exclusively of
greater material value to the community in Conques than one would expect, and there is a great
uniformity of object type in Bernard’s writing: candles, jewelry (and other gold decorative
objects), and iron chains. These are votive offerings that the clergy may have wanted people to
donate because they were recyclable materials, were useful to the life of the monastery, and
could participate in the economy of the shrine. There are a few notable exceptions to this rule-
of-recycling, that occur in the later stories not mediated by Bernard, but recorded by locals of
Conques.

During the highpoint of pilgrimage to Sainte Foy’s cult image in the 11th and 12th
century, a profusion of chains and iron bedecked her church and acted as reassurance objects and
one of the primary categories of votives offered to her.154 Today, the catholic church recognizes
St. Leonard as the patron saint of prisoners and has assigned him shackles as his official defining
attribute, but this clear attribution was not recognized in the medieval period.155 Foy was an
important regional resource representing the release of prisoners.

In seeking patron saints for their churches in the eighth century (for an area such as
France and northern Europe which were lacking in martys), monks sought saints that could

---

154 Reassurance objects in the sense that their presence and proliferation reassured audiences of the power of Sainte
Foy and her ability to perform miracles.
155 An image of a saint or Christ must be “like” or “of” them in the sense that it could be recognizable to the
medieval audience. Portraiture would have been ineffectual and thus attributes were employed for this function.
The attribute of a saint is the object which they are associated with and depicted as or with in standard images.
Caroline Walker Bynum states that “representing is not a matter of mimesis, although it can be a matter of
reproduction (in Walter Benjamin’s sense) or recombination,” in her chapter “Visual Matter,” in Christian
address local needs. A mass “translation” of relics was the answer, although *furta sacra* was also an alternative.\textsuperscript{156} In the 10th and 11th centuries this region of France was subject to a renegade aristocracy that wreaked havoc upon a helpless peasant class and the clergy. The disintegrating Carolingian empire and persistent Viking and Muslim invasions tore apart the remnants of Carolingian political authority and order. A struggling nobility used the state of anarchy to gain power over new lands and people through violence and the domination of other old noble families. This shifting power geography resulted in a network of mini-nations all insulated within the domain of the latest ruling families.\textsuperscript{157} With the warrior nobility in a state of constant private warfare, the south of France was plagued by frequent and unjustifiable imprisonments. Sainte Foy came to the rescue.

*Sainte Foy* was especially powerful as an enforcer of the Peace of God and as a protector of pilgrims and monks (fig. 1). Foy was known to smite anyone who attempted to bring harm to her statue or to the people who lived on her land or were faithful to her. Pierre-André Sigal argues that Foy’s killing, blinding, or maiming of individuals “who attacked her statue, her monastery, or properties served as a deterrent to would-be aggressors.”\textsuperscript{158} There were many observed and recorded processions of the cult statue of *Sainte Foy* in Conques. These were

\textsuperscript{156} See: Patrick Geary, “The Saint and the Shrine: The Pilgrim’s Goal in the Middle Ages,” in P. Geary, *Living with the Dead in the Middle Ages*, Ithaca, (1994), who argues that pilgrimage became localized and the translation of relics began with frequency due to the power of the Franks and the christianization of northern Europe and Gaul which demanded miraculous occurrences to take place in a local which was accessible to everyone, and not just the ultra-rich who could afford to spend years on a pilgrimage to the holy lands. For more information on the translation of relics see Geary’s *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey (1990).


demonstrations of faith, but they were also opportunities to demonstrate the power of the cult statue and to display her formidable wrath to the enemies of Conques:

A crowded assembly of men and women gathered... it could easily be seen that she [Sainte Foy] was the equal of Paul and even of Peter... she performs miracles in the manner of the apostles, she is adorned with the glory of the martyrs, she participates fully in the great joyfulness of confessors, and she is among the company of the virgins.159

It was into this atmosphere that Bernard of Angers began to observe the powerful sway of the statue of *Sainte Foy* over the people and lands surrounding Conques. Sainte Foy was believed to provide relief to imprisoned people. Her miracle stories documented by both Bernard and local authors catalogue numerous instances of prisoners being released from their bondage, and there are seven specific mentions of these bonds being physically carried to Conques and given as votive offerings to Sainte Foy in the *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis*.160 In the first miracle, Sainte Foy appears and encourages the man to escape multiple times, giving him useful council. When the man escapes, he travels directly to Conques where,

the populace of Conques has never seen anything more delightful than this shining example of a noble man with the lofty stature of a very handsome body, bearing a heavy mass of iron on his shoulders rushing forward to the saint... the man deposited his burden there; the hostile load which he carried on his neck... he gave to freedom.161

The second instance of a votive offering given by a freed prisoner in the miracles of Sainte Foy states that, “finally the freed man... arrived in Conques... the joyful man returned home, but his bonds... he left behind in witness of the miracle.”162 This statement is of particular importance in the consideration of the function of votive objects. The bonds are a “witness” to

162 Ibid, 2:6; p. 129.
the miracle; they are participants in the validation of the saint’s power in-and-of-themselves. The shackles are evidence that a miraculous event has occurred and that the saint has the power to bestow miracles on the deserving devotee.

The third and fourth miracles that state that chains were given to the cult statue of Sainte Foy tell the story of prisoners presenting their votive offerings of chains, fetters, and a collar to Sainte Foy. Bernard of Angers died after writing the second book, and the third book containing these two miracle stories was written shortly after the year 1020 by a monk of Conques.

The last three examples of chains being offered to Sainte Foy appear in the fourth book which was authored by several writers around the middle of the eleventh century. The change in authorship accompanies a shift in the votives described in the book. This shift displays the difference between the use of votives in the north and south of France in the eleventh century. The north valued votives that were recyclable and that could be reused by the church. These objects were specifically desired by clergy, such as, it would seem, Fulbert of Chartres, for their functional value and Bernard was aware and included narratives involving these desirable materials. The people of the south of France preferred votives of the strongest and strangest objects, because they would best reinforce the diversity and strength of Sainte Foy’s power—provide the best witnesses—in a time when the south greatly needed unity and peace.

Jewelry was a major category of the votive offerings given to Foy. Sainte Foy “repeatedly encourages the faithful to use her statue as a vehicle to demonstrate their devotion. Several times [in the miracle stories] the saint appears to individuals in dreams, demanding their

\[163\] Ibid, 3:4; p. 149. and 3:15; p. 164.
There are nine mentions in the Book of Sainte Foy of votive dedications of jewelry, and five of these were made by Bernard in his first book, suggesting that he saw the devotion of jewelry as a fitting votive offering to record and report to his contemporaries in the north of France. Giving away jewelry as a votive was a public display of the rejection of worldly materiality that also benefitted the church through the material’s reuse. Jewelry was also a sign of the social status of the devotee which could then be displayed upon the surface of the object to which it was gifted (as noted in the case of the altar at Saint-Denis). Bernard records that Sainte Foy wanted jewels to adorn her statue, just as Abbot Suger wanted the gems of nobles to adorn the altar frontal at Saint-Denis.

The hands of Sainte Foy have been replaced due to damage; and there are many examples of hand reliquaries with finger damage. I speculate that this damage is due to easiest means of ornamentation of a cult statue—the placing of votives on hands and fingers. This would have immediately fulfilled Sainte Foy’s expressed desire to be “adorned” by the jewelry of her devotees. It is clear from the documentation in the Book of Sainte Foy that the cult statue was carried in processions and used as an object that took an active role in the performance of veneration. She was not as removed from her followers as she is today, and one result was that she was actively interacted with and physically venerated through the bestowal of gifts directly upon her body.

166 Today the cult statue of Sainte Foy is in the Treasury museum at Conques and resides within a vitrine that prevents any unapproved physical interaction with her, as necessitated by contemporary means of conservation.
It should be noted, however, that the reliquary statue of Sainte Foy is designed to receive gifts. The hands are attached to the body in an outstretched position. The pose serves a symbolic purpose but it is also a design which ensures that the sculpture may receive rings and bracelets and other votive dedications from hand-to-hand. The reliquary statue is a functional object that performed (and still performs) religious actions.

This is always true of reliquaries, even non-figurative ones. Perhaps more clearly perceived in non-figurative reliquaries, because they do not take a form which has non-functional connotations in today’s understanding of objects. Function and utility are always an issue for reliquaries.

For twenty-first century viewers, body-part reliquaries are easy to divorce from their past functions. They are more “sculptural” than constructed for use. However, the attempt to create a body to enshrine and encase a body part rather than a traditional container or vessel is not just an artistic and sculptural decision, and its significance deserves our attention. The use of a bodily form to contain the body promoted an empathetic view of the Saint among devotees. The body shaped reliquary is not only powerful, majestic, and heavenly, it is also a conduit for the living spiritual force, the sentient perception, of the saint. It also can ‘ask’ for gifts, in the case of Foy, with her hands. Bernard of Angers emphasizes the interactive, sympathetic effect that Sainte Foy had on her devotees which prompted them to gift recyclable votive objects of great value to her.

Finally, there are four votive offerings given to Sainte Foy that are not candles, jewelry, or iron chains. The mention of votives differing from the standard canon created by Bernard of

\[167\] Which it has certainly received over the years. See in particular Cynthia Hahn’s work and her book Strange Beauty: Issues in the Making and Meaning of Reliquaries 400-circa 1204, Pennsylvania State University Press, (2012).
Angers begin in the fourth book of the Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis. The first is found in the eighth miracle of book four and states that “he [the antagonist of the narrative who had held the devotee captive] saw his own chessboard which Raymond had carried off to Conques [stolen] offered to the holy virgin as evidence of the miracle [of the prisoner’s release]!” The second record of an unusual votive is found in the miracle related immediately after that of the chessboard: “a long time afterward he offered this lance to the holy virgin [ie., Sainte Foy] in witness of the miracle and to the present day it is used for displaying all kind of banners.” The next two miracle stories containing mentions of votive objects outside of the canon established by Bernard come much later in the book, in the miracles that were compiled over time by separate authors. The first of these later two miracles states that “His mother suggested the gift of a simple beast of burden, a donkey.” While the second reads, “Offer her the linen cloth that had shrouded his dead body and the hand coverings we call guantos (gloves) in the peasant language... the winding-sheet hangs in front of the holy image as a sign of the miracle to this day.”

The objects listed as votive offerings in these four narratives are: a chessboard, a lance, a live donkey, a burial shroud, and gloves. This is hardly a tame assortment of recyclable and easily manageable objects. Instead, these four narratives speak to the individuality and diversity of votives. They come from a motivation of sincerity, rather than of regulation. A chessboard and a lance both signify the high social status of the devotee. The lance was even used to display

168 4:8, p. 195.
169 Ibid., 4:9; p. 197.
171 Ibid., V:1; p. 228.
172 Ibid., L:6; p. 260.
banners in the church after its dedication. This speaks to the difference between the local peoples use of votive dedications and the perspective that Bernard brought to these objects from his background in the north of France; Bernard sought to record votives that were easy to categorize and control as small, portable, recyclable objects, while the local authors recorded objects that were socially significant and displayed the power and wealth of Sainte Foy.

The gift of the donkey is certainly useful, but also and even more significantly, it signified the foolishness of the demon that had possessed the man who dedicated the donkey. As the end of the miracle states, “there is no doubt that through the gift of a foolish animal that which is most foolish of all was driven out.”173 The acceptance of the significance of a votive offering by the community of Conques necessitates a collective knowledge of the events, the individual narrative of the devotee. This is different from the miracles recorded by Bernard, in which the objects dedicated can allow the audience to interpret what kind of miracle may have occurred. In these later narratives, any non-local audience would need explanations for the chess board, the lance, the donkey, or the gloves because they would have been unfamiliar with the stories. They could not interpret the origins of these objects as was possible with the chains or jewelry, and so maintaining unusual votives such as the lance or chessboard requires more investment by the community in the specific oral repetition of these stories.

The fourth mention of an unusual offering in the miracle with the gift of the gloves and the shroud speaks to one of the most important aspects of votive offerings; its presence before the cult image as a physical witness to a miracle. Although a very simple offering at first glance, the burial shroud is perhaps the most important object of witness that could be placed before the

173 Ibid., V:1; p. 228.
shrine of Sainte Foy because it affirms her ability to perform the most powerful miracle of all: bringing the dead back to life, an act that Christ himself was only recorded as performing twice. The offering, in this case the burial shroud of a boy who was resurrected miraculously by Sainte Foy, stands in as reassurance of the power of the saint. It makes a strong statement about the power of the reliquary to transmit the dialogue of the devotee and the saint between two worlds.

In sum, recyclable votives add to the wealth of the site, votives that persist act as witnesses to the saints’ power, and even the simple the proliferation of votives physically represent the proliferation of miracles. Ultimately the filling of a saint’s shrine with votive objects speaks to that saint’s willingness to listen and take action for their devotees; the votive object speaks to the sympathy of a saint in heaven for those who remain on earth.

---

174 Christ once resurrected the son of a widow and once resurrected Jairus’ daughter.
Chapter 3

Shrine as Performative Environment: An Economy of Space

From the prints and paintings of votive dedications around shrines that we discussed in the previous two chapters we can glean a sense of what the experience of late Romanesque and Gothic shrine activity may have been like. We have also seen from the example of the *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis* that there was a clear difference between the objects that the clergy preferred to receive as votive dedications, and the objects that were considered acceptable and powerful by popular opinion. Bernard of Angers preferred to record recyclable materials such as metals or wax, while the local authors included more unusual dedications with specific, personal meanings attached to them. We have also seen that popular devotion in the shrine system in the north of France was more highly regulated by clergy than in the south. This chapter will consider the materials discussed in Chapters one and two with regard to their context; that is, within the space of the Church.

I. Enshrinement and Repetitive Likenesses: The Multiple Persons of Mary

Given that context is so important to the shrine, it is appropriate that we consider the Marian cult statues discussed in Chapter one within more specific contexts. A rich example of such a figure is the cult figure of the Virgin Mary that resided in the crypt at Chartres and gave a ‘face’ to the preeminent relics of the Virgin that were kept there— the chemise of the Virgin.
As we will see, a *Sedes Sapientiae* figure of the Virgin Mary was often accompanied by corresponding tympanum relief carvings. Once again, multiple images of Mary are both copies and a new presentation of her to the viewer. The accumulation of these images in the mind of devotees formed the imagined picture of the cult saint. In effect, I propose that the imagined persona of Mary as a heavenly being, was formed and produced by multiple encounters with her images and narratives.

We have seen that although, for example, each *Sedes Sapientiae* statue is similar in pose and content, presenting itself as a sculpture of two seated figures of differing sizes, the child upon the lap of his mother, each of the iterations of these sculptures is entirely unique. They are different in their precise rendering of Mary and Christ’s features, in the fall of the drapery and in the characteristics of the Solomonic throne on which the figures rest.

This presents a problem that scholars of the medieval have contended with for decades: how is the medieval conception of the copy different from our postindustrial ideas about replication? I would respond to this problem by noting that the medieval experience of and interaction with objects and images was intensely personal and yet paradoxically considered to be universal. Standard attributes were ascribed to a subject, yet the broad sweep of these attributes allowed for individual and regional variations.

The medieval notion of the copy differs from the contemporary idea of a faithful reproduction. Objects are not copies, but variations on a theme; this is the typical Western medieval conception of copying.\(^{175}\) The idea of true replication was impossible. This can be applied to reliquaries, cult images, and votives as well. Medieval people’s fluid relationship with

the concept of the original, completeness, and the copy meant that the image of the Virgin was represented in multiple places throughout Europe but understood to be a singular entity. She was at once the same person and a separate figure from all of her other representations. Similarly, her relics can be divided infinitely but remain just as powerful as the initial whole. Locale played a great role in this differentiation as disparate relics became associated with a particular reliquary or cult statue that became a part of the identity of each particular place. This led to the need for pilgrimages to multiple places even when more than one contained the relics of the same saint. The concept of image making in the medieval West was not one of portraiture but of types; a saint, a soul, a king, and so forth. A saintly type in addition to their specific locale inevitably led to a new type; an individual saint associated with individual powers.

Richard Krautheimer tackled a different facet of this issue in his article “Iconography of Mediaeval Architecture;” the seminal text on the medieval notion of the copy. This argument maintains its validity on account of its examination of the universal principals of medieval copying. It states that the medieval copy replicated only certain attributes of a known thing. Krautheimer writes that the “inexactness in reproducing the particular shape of a definite architectural form... seems to be one of the outstanding elements in the relation of copy and original in mediaeval architecture.” One example he examines is the replication of buildings that were thought of as “copies” of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. He cites the Holy Sepulcher at Paderborn, St. Michael’s at Fulda, the Holy Sepulchre at Cambridge, and the

__________________________

Lanleff Rotunda near Caen as major cases of replication. We know that these structures were intended to be “ad similitudinem s. Jerosolimitane ecclesie.” They are repeating the architecture of the Anastasis Rotunda, the circular ambulatory that is part of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem which creates a processional space above and around the tomb of Christ. The Rotunda is only a section of the building, the culminating architecture of the basilica of the Holy Sepulchre and the most recognizable feature of the building. Krautheimer concludes his argument by stating that the medieval copy rests on the replication of known numbers and geometric patterns. He examines the possibility that copies of the Holy Sepulchre may have drawn from sources closer to home, such as baptistries, because of the relation of baptism to resurrection (Anastasis).

“In any mediaeval copy, the model has been broken up into its single elements; a selection of them has been made and the selected parts have been rearranged, possibly under the influence of related structures.” This statement concludes that a combination of symbolic and numerical replication is all that is needed for a medieval copy. Krautheimer’s argument does not discuss the nuances of the differences between each copy. It does not take into account regional shifts, craft changes from workshop to workshop, or from patron to patron. This is not to say that Krautheimer is unaware of the differences among the architectural structures he examines. To the contrary, he lists numerous differences between

---

179 This particular statement was made by Bishop Meinwerk of Paderborn about the building of the Holy Sepulcher in Paderborn. However, his words are relevant to the general sentiment towards these European Holy Sepulcher recreations. See: Ibid., p. 4.

180 Ibid., p. 8. Another example Krautheimer uses in his argument is the significance of the cross shape in architectural planning. In the year 382 St. Ambrose stated that the cross shape of his church of the Holy Apostles in Milan symbolized the victory of Christ and his cross. This sentiment was repeated throughout the medieval period. Krautheimer seems vexed that it “does not seem to matter greatly which particular cross shape was meant, wether it was a basilica plan...the T-cross...or a Greek cross.”

181 Ibid., p. 28.

182 Ibid., p. 32.
copies but gives no explanation for these differences other than his statement arguing that these variations are a product of fluid thinking that does not contain objects as set articles within the world. These differences are significant. They deserve to be examined and the question still remains to be answered; what is the significance of each? What has changed from place to place, building to building, object to object? I will leave others to answer these questions but now I turn to the question of copies within a cult context.

Geographic separation was not required to create a medieval copy. Copies are also found within a singular space. Each replication is the same, yet also different—a new presentation of ‘topic’ or persona that constructs different and diverse connections with the viewer with each encounter. The copy is a multiplication of attributes, each suggesting a slightly different version of the same essential being. This is the case with the image of Mary in the Sedes Sapientiae pose. Each wooden version of Mary we discussed above is a copy of an idea of her, and each presents a unique conception of her person. We will see that these statues are replicated in other media as well: in stone relief carvings, in paint, even in pilgrimage badges.

Experiencing copies in an Ecclesiastical setting.

Tympanum relief sculpture was the first of a series of images that medieval Christians would encounter upon entering a church. It served as a way to direct the thoughts of the faithful to a particular topic of rumination and to prepare them for the sacred interior space. This decoration forms the skin of the church; it is the projection of interior values and presence through manifestation in exterior physiognomy.¹⁸³

¹⁸³ This is in keeping with Plato’s views on beauty as an exterior character of interior goodness. These beliefs were upheld by later medieval scholars and permeated through Christian culture in this way.
The tympana of many medieval churches carry *Sedes Sapientiae* figures with accompanying *Adoration of the Magi* scenes. The south portal tympanum of the Romanesque Basilica of Notre-Dame du Port in Clermont-Ferrand carries a stunning example of a *Sedes Sapientiae* with an *Adoration of the Magi* scene (Fig. 12).\(^{184}\) The remains of this carving provide insight into the workings of the image in the late medieval period. Much of the original pigment is visible on the relief sculpture and the scene directs the eye inwards, towards the top register where God sits enthroned, flanked by seraphim depicted with six wings. Directly beneath him is an architectural component that covers an altar with an arch and what appears to be a hanging lamp. To the right of the altar in the lower register is a depiction of the Baptism of Christ, indicated by the presence of an angel. Finally, to the left is the depiction of the Magi bringing gifts to an enthroned Mary with the Christ child upon her lap.

It is notable that in this image Jesus is not depicted in a crib or separate from Mary, he is not depicted in swaddling clothes, and he is larger than an infant would normally be. These are all typical of depictions of Christ in the *Sedes Sapientiae* pose because his figure is not that of Christ as a Child, but of Christ as in some sense, a fully mature being. He is both part of, dependent on, and separate from Mary. At Clermont-Ferrand there are three Magi and three horses, but no human servants depicted, as in later Renaissance images of the *Adoration*.\(^{185}\) How


\(^{185}\) Depictions of the Magi have gone through a vast number of permutations over time. Although today it is generally accepted that there were three Magi, this was not the case in early Christian understandings of them and there is no mention of their number in Matthew 2. They were later given the names Melchior, Balthazar, and Caspar, and identified as saints around the time of Saint Augustine. Their image is controversial as they came “from the East,” and scholars today have focused on their racially motivated depictions from the later middle ages to the present. For more information see: Paul HD. Kaplan, "Black Africans in Hohenstaufen Iconography," *Gesta* (1987), 29-36; Walter S. Gibson, *The Rise of the Black Magus in Western Art*. (1987), pp. 322-324; Paul HD. Kaplan,
could medieval artists and patrons justify the pairing of the image of a grown Christ with an image of the *Adoration of the Magi* when, according to the biblical story, the Magi appear to Christ just eight days after his birth?\(^{186}\)

Ilene Haering Forsyth proposes an answer to this question by relating the image of the Magi on the church exterior to the Mass and to Romanesque Epiphany plays. The narrative of the biblical Magi would be acted out in these performances; the epiphany served as the verification of Jesus as a divine being through the witnessing of the Magi. Furthermore, there is evidence that the cult statue of the Madonna and Child would have participated in the *Officium Stellae* celebrated at Epiphany. The image of the *Sedes Sapientiae* sculpture on the tympanum in Clermont-Ferrand then, may be a direct reference to these Epiphany plays which were acted out within the space of the church. It is a permanent reminder of an ephemeral, annual action. This might be seen as a public witnessing, a ‘copy’ of the acknowledgement of Christ as the son of God and a ‘copy’ of the cyclical performance within the church and even across the Mediterranean. For medieval people, the annual cycle of ritual performances became a cyclical re-‘copying’ of biblical events. For those viewers who did not connect the tympanum sculpture with the epiphany play, the pose of the central *Sedes Sapientiae* figures would still recall the pose of other cult statues, while preparing the viewer to encounter the version of Mary that they might meet inside of Notre-Dame du Port.

I would argue that the narrative of the Magi and the Epiphany is a constructed memory, embedded into the cultural memory of the audience through reenactment and visual stimulations,

---

both performative and object-oriented.\textsuperscript{187} The cult statue involved in this performance “would have received the homage and offerings of the high clerics dressed as kings in the realistic dramatization which preceded the drama of the mass itself at the Feast of Epiphany.”\textsuperscript{188} Although without further knowledge we cannot be sure that these offerings were true votive offerings, the mere action of observing an authority figure depositing gifts in front of the statue would have reinforced the pilgrim or devotee’s desire to do so.

One might even argue that all such images on church exteriors were intended to reinforce pilgrim’s gifting inclinations to the cult statue within the church. The Magi are presented in this scene as the first noteworthy pilgrims, who come to recognize Christ as king and present him with gifts of gratitude and recognition for the miracle of his coming. That action is then paralleled by pilgrim devotees who come as witnesses to the miraculous power of God. The sudden appearance of \textit{Adoration of the Magi} images with cult statues on churches attests to a shifting attitude among church authorities who were recognizing the need for a votive economy and who in part promoted it through this particular visual motif. This provides another possible motivation for why pairings of the \textit{Adoration of the Magi} and \textit{Sedes Sapientiae} statues were depicted on the tympanum carvings of pilgrimage churches.

On the south portal tympanum in Clermont-Ferrand Mary is carved sitting upon an elaborate throne with two levels of arched architectural supports resembling both a throne chair and the arched halls and clerestory of a Romanesque church’s nave. The ripples of the fabric of her dress are much deeper and finer than the folds of the Magi’s clothing, and they appear

particularly deep on her chest. On her lap, Jesus’s missing arm once extended out to the front Magus, accepting the gift that the figure held out to him. Both Mary and Jesus are very carefully observed. Mary’s large hands encircle the young Christ and seem to contain bones, muscles and tendons in a remarkably life-like way. This emphasis on the size of Mary’s hands highlight her agency; her ability to perform actions within the spiritual world.

This figure can be compared to a tenth-century illumination of the *Golden Majesty of Clermont-Ferrand* found in MS 145, Fol 130v (Fig. 13). Forsyth has suggested a direct link between the manuscript image documenting the *Golden Majesty* and the scene of the *Adoration of the Magi with Virgin and Child* and suggested that the relief carving may be a depiction of the now lost golden cult statue that once resided inside of the Romanesque building, its memory surviving only in the image in MS 145. Forsyth has noted many other cases where relief carvings of *Adoration of the Magi* images are paired with tympanum carvings of the *Virgin and Child* looking remarkably like cult sculptures in the *Sedes Sapientiae* pose. She states that these images are found, notably, in the remaining Romanesque portal tympanum of Pompierre-Saint-Martin and on the retable of St. Elisabeth’s church in Marburg. I have found relief sculptures of *Sedes Sapientiae* with *Adoration of the Magi* figures from the Romanesque period in one of the images sculpted by Gislebertus at Autun Cathedral, and in the south portal of the Abbey Church of Ste. Madeleine at Vezelay.

191 This is by no means a comprehensive list of architectural representations of cult statues of Mary in France.
I would like to return to the manuscript image and the relief sculpture at Clermont-Ferrand. The illumination of the cult statue is named as such by a label in the manuscript that identifies it as the *Golden Majesty of Clermont-Ferrand*. It was most likely a wooden figure plated in gold, similar to the sculpture of *Sainte Foy* or the *Golden Madonna of Essen*. It was made for the Bishop Stephen II around the year 946, making it a contemporary of the *Golden Madonna of Essen*. The illumination is actually a marginal drawing which accompanies a long text describing the statue. This text indicates that the statue was “seated on a golden throne decorated with gems,” just as are *Sainte Foy* and the *Golden Madonna of Essen*. The description on the manuscript pages does not correspond to the tympanum directly; the sketch lacks the ciborium and the drapery in the lower frontal half of the Virgin is indistinct. This indicates that the manuscript artist drew the image not directly from the *Golden Majesty of Clermont-Ferrand* itself, but instead from a standard iconography of the Virgin and child or perhaps from the tympanum’s depiction of the statue. Perhaps the *Golden Majesty* statue was not connected to a ciborium, but was a separate figure that could be placed under or removed from it. This would explain how it could be depicted separately from the ciborium by a local scribe writing in a manuscript, yet also why it would be depicted with a ciborium in tympanum imagery that was made for viewers who were both locals and foreigners. Local people might have experienced the figure being moved about and used performatively, while foreigners would probably first encounter the Golden Majesty under the ciborium on the altar. This difference in depiction does not correspond to the tympanum directly; the sketch lacks the ciborium and the drapery in the lower frontal half of the Virgin is indistinct. This indicates that the manuscript artist drew the image not directly from the *Golden Majesty of Clermont-Ferrand* itself, but instead from a standard iconography of the Virgin and child or perhaps from the tympanum’s depiction of the statue. Perhaps the *Golden Majesty* statue was not connected to a ciborium, but was a separate figure that could be placed under or removed from it. This would explain how it could be depicted separately from the ciborium by a local scribe writing in a manuscript, yet also why it would be depicted with a ciborium in tympanum imagery that was made for viewers who were both locals and foreigners. Local people might have experienced the figure being moved about and used performatively, while foreigners would probably first encounter the Golden Majesty under the ciborium on the altar. This difference in depiction does not correspond to the tympanum directly; the sketch lacks the ciborium and the drapery in the lower frontal half of the Virgin is indistinct. This indicates that the manuscript artist drew the image not directly from the *Golden Majesty of Clermont-Ferrand* itself, but instead from a standard iconography of the Virgin and child or perhaps from the tympanum’s depiction of the statue. Perhaps the *Golden Majesty* statue was not connected to a ciborium, but was a separate figure that could be placed under or removed from it. This would explain how it could be depicted separately from the ciborium by a local scribe writing in a manuscript, yet also why it would be depicted with a ciborium in tympanum imagery that was made for viewers who were both locals and foreigners. Local people might have experienced the figure being moved about and used performatively, while foreigners would probably first encounter the Golden Majesty under the ciborium on the altar. This difference in depiction does not correspond to the tympanum directly; the sketch lacks the ciborium and the drapery in the lower frontal half of the Virgin is indistinct. This indicates that the manuscript artist drew the image not directly from the *Golden Majesty of Clermont-Ferrand* itself, but instead from a standard iconography of the Virgin and child or perhaps from the tympanum’s depiction of the statue. Perhaps the *Golden Majesty* statue was not connected to a ciborium, but was a separate figure that could be placed under or removed from it. This would explain how it could be depicted separately from the ciborium by a local scribe writing in a manuscript, yet also why it would be depicted with a ciborium in tympanum imagery that was made for viewers who were both locals and foreigners. Local people might have experienced the figure being moved about and used performatively, while foreigners would probably first encounter the Golden Majesty under the ciborium on the altar. This difference in depiction does not correspond to the tympanum directly; the sketch lacks the ciborium and the drapery in the lower frontal half of the Virgin is indistinct. This indicates that the manuscript artist drew the image not directly from the *Golden Majesty of Clermont-Ferrand* itself, but instead from a standard iconography of the Virgin and child or perhaps from the tympanum’s depiction of the statue. Perhaps the *Golden Majesty* statue was not connected to a ciborium, but was a separate figure that could be placed under or removed from it. This would explain how it could be depicted separately from the ciborium by a local scribe writing in a manuscript, yet also why it would be depicted with a ciborium in tympanum imagery that was made for viewers who were both locals and foreigners. Local people might have experienced the figure being moved about and used performatively, while foreigners would probably first encounter the Golden Majesty under the ciborium on the altar. This difference in depiction does not correspond to the tympanum directly; the sketch lacks the ciborium and the drapery in the lower frontal half of the Virgin is indistinct. This indicates that the manuscript artist drew the image not directly from the *Golden Majesty of Clermont-Ferrand* itself, but instead from a standard iconography of the Virgin and child or perhaps from the tympanum’s depiction of the statue. Perhaps the *Golden Majesty* statue was not connected to a ciborium, but was a separate figure that could be placed under or removed from it. This would explain how it could be depicted separately from the ciborium by a local scribe writing in a manuscript, yet also why it would be depicted with a ciborium in tympanum imagery that was made for viewers who were both locals and foreigners. Local people might have experienced the figure being moved about and used performatively, while foreigners would probably first encounter the Golden Majesty under the ciborium on the altar. This difference in depiction 

192 Ibid; 218.
193 Ibid. Forsyth suggests that the blurring of the drapery is a confusion of frontal and profile views, which is seen in images where the artist wanted Mary to maintain her enthronement, but also wanted her to be turned to the side to receive gifts; it was seen, in other words, in *Adoration of the Magi* images. The depiction of the Virgin in the relief sculpture at Clermont-Ferrand faces to the side to receive gifts from the Magi, while the Virgin and Child in the manuscript illumination face in toward the text, as if receiving the words that are inscribed beside them.
not mean that the two descriptions are replicating separate things; they both reference the *Golden Majesty* but in different states of use.

In entering the church, the devotee would gaze upon the relief carving on the south portal. I am not arguing that the exterior relief sculpture exactly resembled the cult statue of the *Golden Majesty of Clermont-Ferrand* which awaited the devotee inside. Nevertheless, the tympanum acted as a preparatory image as well as a standard for bodily performance and gesture when in the presence of the Virgin and Child.

Performance can emphasize actions, rules, or narrative events through gesture.\(^{194}\) The use of fixed gesture in imagery has the potential to project the connotations of a performance involving this gesture to the viewer, thus creating a future memory of an event. Artworks that emphasize gesture therefore have the unique ability to project the ephemeral, fleeting moment of performance forward through time and space. The relief sculpture of the Virgin at Clermont-Ferrand (fig. 12) is almost identical (in a formal, contemporary sense) to an existing wooden statue, the *Notre-Dame la Brune* from the neighboring area of Saint Pourçain-sur-Sioule. The formal similarities of the two artworks are striking; the work of the drapery, the forward position of the bodies, especially the position of the Christ child, and the arcaded thrones, are nearly identical.\(^{195}\)

For medieval peoples, encounters with replication were usually few and far between, with the exception of the proliferation of votive objects of similar shape and subject. Yet even these were varied and different. Mold cast objects still had to be reworked and retained the traces of

\[^{195}\text{Ilene Haering Forsyth “Magi and Majesty: A Study of Romanesque Sculpture and Liturgical Drama,” } \textit{The Art Bulletin} \text{Vol. 50 no. 3, (1968), 219.}\]
the craftsman's hand. Each image was unique; the copy was not a replication of the original but a new presentation of the idea of the subject. In the case of *Sedes Sapientiae* statues, each was a different version of Mary, capable of performing different miracles to greater or lesser effect than the other sculptural conduits of the imagined true Mary in heaven.

It is highly improbable that the images on the architectural relief sculptures discussed here would have been recognized by all devotees as images of a cult statue. However, rather than attempt to press this point I will instead present an alternative; images in architectural relief similar to the formal pose of cult figures drew parallels between the exterior images encountered by pilgrims and the image of the cult’s true focus of veneration within the church. For a pilgrim traveling along any of the various routes through France and Spain to Santiago de Compostella, the repetition of similar images might also have allowed the devotee to draw parallels between cult objects and images from separate places through triggering past and projected memories of their encounters with comparable imagery. Despite the precise and mathematical notion of medieval copying put forward by Krautheimer, I would argue that the human mind recognizes patterns and similarities in visual matter instinctually.  

The pilgrimage routes acted as conduits for iconographic experimentation; perhaps the *Sedes Sapientiae* in stone relief on a church exterior did not resemble the cult image inside of that church, but the cult image of another church which pilgrims may have already passed through. Furthermore, the Magi held “a particular attraction for pilgrims because their own journey from the east to the stable at

196 “Pattern Recognition” is a widely accepted theory that proposes that animals have the innate gift of connecting sensory information from an exterior stimulus with information that is recalled from memory. See: Michael W. Eysenck; Mark T. Keane *Cognitive Psychology: A Student’s Handbook*, 4th ed. Hove; Philadelphia; New York: Taylor & Francis, (2003), 83-117.
Bethlehem was the first Christian pilgrimage.”197 In these images, the pilgrim can see themselves journeying to the specific shrine, the locale, of each individual manifestation of Mary with the Christ child just as the Magi did.

Drawing connections to other places through copying was a common action taken by clerical communities seeking to expand the number of pilgrims traveling to their own locale.198 The relief sculpture presents an image to the pilgrim devotee (who themselves come from a “far away” land) and gives them a rule of conduct. It is proper for the Magi to bring gifts when they travel to Bethlehem to witness Jesus in his youthful majesty, and it is proper that the pilgrim should do so as well. There is no stated justification for the gifts of the Magi in the Bible; they give because they choose to do so on account of the majesty of Christ and following social conventions.199

The cult statue reimagined in stone relief is a preparatory image that provides the audience with a suggestion of what may be inside the church. It sets the stage for the ecstatic veneration and devotional ritual practices that will occur around the cult statue. The Adoration of the Magi imagery performs exactly the function laid out in the Libri Carolini as the only purpose of imagery in Christian ritual: the depiction of good deeds presented in visual form to the laity for their edification and imitation.200 It instructs the laity on how to act before the cult image, (even if the writer of the Libri Carolini would not have approved of the latter). The low

______________________________

199 Yet the rules of gifting culture would suggest that the Magi, being the first to gift the “King of the Jews” would and should expect his favor in return due to regular gifting obligations. For more information on gifting culture see: Marcel Mauss, "The Gift," trans. I. Cunnison. Cohen & West. London (1925).
relief gives way to a sculpture in the round displaying the Virgin and child in a manifestation on the same physical level as the medieval viewer. Sculpture in the round was an anomaly before and still a rarity during the Romanesque period and it would have been highly effective culmination of the process and a means of creating a bond between the Saint and the devotee.

II. Chartres: Three Sedes Sapientiae Figures, Supported by Marian Multiples

Thus far we have discussed the origins of medieval cult statues, the development of local cults and votive culture in the south of France and the opposition to it from the north, and the development, proliferation and variation of cult images of Mary. Sainte Foy (fig. 1) and the Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis have allowed us to gain some insight into the specific function of the cult shrine in the south of France and the promotion and sustenance of a shrine system by both local authorities and through the support of Bernard of Angers. Bearing in mind the iconography of the Sedes Sapientiae figures, the use of votives in the shrine as objects of communication and economy, and the place of Bernard of Angers as a mediator between the shrine cultures of the north and south of France, I would now like to move into an exploration of the northern shrine space of Chartres, beginning with an examination of Chartres’ cult of the Virgin.

The incorporation of votive dedications into the institutional framework of Notre Dame de Chartres displays the tolerance and gradual acceptance by the Bishop and clergymen of the popular desire of medieval peoples to communicate directly with the saints and God. The four major feast days of the Virgin drew crowds of pilgrims from across all Christendom each year.
Feast day fairs also drew merchants who would set up both outside and inside the basilica of the Church, thereby avoiding taxes that were levied on those vendors who set up beyond the church area. These stalls, although seemingly insignificant, can be seen as central to the history of votive practice at Chartres and, as we will see, to the display of votive devotion found in the stained glass in the Cathedral. According to Otto von Simson, the main source of merchant revenue, particularly during the festival of the Nativity, were the “religious souvenirs and devotional objects purchased by pilgrims in very considerable quantities... these devotional objects were most often small leaden images of Our Lady or of the Sacred Tunic.” Some of these objects must have made their way home with pilgrims, yet some of them must also have made their way to the altar of the Virgin inside the Cathedral. How did this system of veneration come to be such a wildly popular movement in Chartres, generating a cult culture that involved ritual performances of dedication contrary to the regulations stipulated in the Libri Carolini? In search of an answer to this question, the program of Notre Dame de Chartres will be examined, beginning with the western tympana, moving inward to an examination of the repeated motif of the Sedes Sapientiae in the stained glass, and finally ending with Bishop Fulbert and the possibility of a cult statue at Chartres.

---

201 The exception to this rule were the wine vendors, who would set up in the crypt of the cathedral, as they could avoid the taxes on those outside the church, yet could also avoid the taxes levied by the Count of Chartres on those vendors in the squares outside the cathedral. See: M.J. Bulteau, Monographie de la Cathédrale de Chartres, Second Edition, three volumes. Chartres, Vol. 1, (1887), 118.

The Romanesque church of Notre Dame burnt to the ground in 1194, leaving only the West façade standing (Fig. 14). The most sacred relic of the town, the tunic of the Virgin Mary, was believed to be lost. The *Miracula Beate Mariae Virginis in Carnotensi ecclesia facta* was written in 1210 by a cleric of Chartres during the rebuilding process. The document not only gives us insight into the strange reappearance of the Sacred Tunic, it also is responsible for most of what we know about the great fire that destroyed much of Chartres in 1194. The Sacred Tunic escaped the fire by being swiftly removed to the cathedral crypt a location that was the source of miraculous events and possibly the wooden *Sedes Sapientiae* cult statue. But before we address the possibility that such an image existed at Chartres, we must turn to an investigation into the tymapana over the entrances to the great cathedral.

It seems prudent to begin an analysis of the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Chartres in the way that a devotee would experience an interaction with this architectural zone: from the exterior of the building, inward, up to the main altar and the apse behind, and down into the crypt. The exterior of Chartres cathedral is a skyline-dominating monolith, and was even more so in the time just after it’s resurrection following the Great Fire of 1194. The great Romanesque façade of the church is an imposing entity that would have risen above the clamorous street vendors and their tents, above the heads of pilgrims and towns people with the two Romanesque towers, each

---

completed around 1155, swelling up into the sky. As one approached the westwerk of the building the three portals came into view and the beautiful jamb and tympanum carving along with them. This would have been a memorable first sight for the medieval and the modern pilgrim. For medieval peoples following the fire in 1194, this façade would have carried the established Romanesque aesthetic sentiments into a new era, contrasting this slightly older model, built under Bishop Fulbert, with the new Gothic architecture.

The relief sculpture on the south portal tympanum of the west façade is of particular significance to our discussion of the performance of votive devotion at Chartres. The vast majority of pilgrims to Chartres are, by definition, outsiders. Many of these outsiders, and indeed, possibly those townspeople who had gone on pilgrimage to the cathedral of Clermont-Ferrand in Auvergne or any of the other sites containing Sedes Sapientiae cult statues of Mary would perhaps recognize the central figure in the south portal as a depiction of the Virgin in this familiar pose (Fig. 15).

Unity and order are emphasized by the symmetry of the south tympanum composition. Christ is seated on the Virgin’s lap and set in a frontal facing position. This is a departure from the early cult statue of the Golden Madonna of Essen (fig. 2) where the Christ child is shifted to the left side of the Virgin’s lap, but perfectly in line with the iconography of the contemporaneous Romanesque Sedes Sapientiae figures we have discussed (fig. 4, 5). A major difference in the depiction of the Virgin and Child at Chartres from the Sedes Sapientiae sculptures of the mid-twelfth century is found in the head gear of the figures; the cult statues are veiled, while the figure of the Virgin at Chartres was carved with a crown. This does not mean

205 The two towers would have both been Romanesque at the time that they were made, however one was later modified to the Flamboyant Gothic style.
that the cult statues were never crowned; we know that the *Golden Madonna of Essen* was crowned during special celebrations and processions with the votive crown of Otto III.\(^{206}\)

Therefore, the lack of a crown on these figures today does not necessarily mean that they were never adorned with one on special occasions. The figure of the Virgin wears a delicately carved, long dress that is reminiscent of the rippling, intricate lines of the walnut wood of the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s *Sedes Sapientiae* statue (fig. 4).\(^{207}\)

In the tympanum, both the Virgin and Christ’s heads are framed from behind by a circular halo, rather than a full body mandorla, like that in the central tympanum figure of the second coming of Christ. The three tympana of the west façade of Chartres cathedral all have a central figure; the south depicts the Virgin and Child, the central has the second coming of Christ, and the north tympanum may be a depiction of Christ in his pre-Incarnation form.\(^{208}\) The Virgin stands out among these three in part because she has the most negative space surrounding her. She seems more like an object than do the others which appear as figures embedded in narrative communication with the viewer. The Virgin assumes the pose of the *Sedes Sapientiae* cult statues and thus a direct line is drawn between from her figure in this tympanum, finished in

---


\(^{207}\) The Metropolitan Museum of Art has two *Sedes Sapientiae* figures from the Auvergne, both made of walnut wood with pigment and dating to around the year 1150. These figures are presented in exactly the same pose, with a centrally placed Christ child on their lap, the right hand clutching his stomach protectively and the left securing his legs. This is also the same pose as the Notre Dame de Claviers (fig. 5). The Met statue that is depicted in this paper is no. 16.32.194a, b while the other is 67.153.

\(^{208}\) Margot Fassler has argued that this figure is of Christ in his pre-Incarnation form in "Liturgy and Sacred History in the Twelfth-Century Tympana at Chartres," *Art Bull.*, LXXV, (1993), 499-520. Other scholars contend that it is an Ascension figure. See: P. Faucheux, "Le sens du travaill au portail royal de Chartres," *Notre-Dame de Chartres*, vol. 3 no.13, (1972), 6-10.

For more information on this and the entire building of Chartres cathedral see the excellent online resource created by Stephen Murray “mapping gothic” at: [http://mappinggothic.org/building/1107](http://mappinggothic.org/building/1107)
1145, to the cult statues of Auvergne and many other regions of France where this particular type of statue was flourishing in the mid-twelfth century.

A recognition of the type would have conveyed important information to the pilgrim. First, it would have signaled that the church is dedicated to the Virgin, that it is a church of “Our Lady.” The main figures of the central and north portal relief sculptures are both depictions of Jesus, and hence the Virgin is elevated to the same hierarchical position as Christ himself. Moreover, she is Christ’s origin, bears the possibility of his life and divinity, and is literally the “seat of [his] knowledge.” Second, it would have marked the church not only as being dedicated to the Virgin, but also as a prime center of her cult. She has been impressed into one of the three central positions, beside Christ as the Judge of the world. Third, the type would have connected this image to other images of the Sedes Sapientiae along the pilgrimage routes. Her figure is the first thing that pilgrims encounter as they gaze at the West façade of Notre Dame de Chartres and this would have built their anticipation of the experience of Mary within the church. The tympanum Sedes Sapientiae carving is a preparatory image for the interior venerable image.

In addition to the cult image, the pilgrim would have garnered other information about the Virgin’s life and cult from the carvings of the façade. The capitals of the west facade of Chartres also contain the first major narrative depiction of the life of the Virgin Mary in France. Continuously wrapping the capital ‘frieze’ one sees scenes of Anna and Joachim, the bathing of the Virgin, the walk to the Temple, the betrothal, the Annunciation, Visitation, the Nativity, the

Adoration of the Magi, and the Flight into Egypt. Therefore, unlike Clermont-Ferrand, at Chartres Mary as Sedes Sapientiae is separated from the image of the Adoration of the Magi. Laura Spitzer has signaled the importance of this difference. The separation of narrative from cult image creates a different strategy of presentation. The three tympanum of the west façade feature a central figure with a symmetrical surrounding composition. They are orderly, stationary, and easy to read. In contrast the capitols present themselves as a narrative frieze of many dimensions— they highlight concerns such as psychology, emotion, the perils of infertility, family, and children. Rather than present dogma, the frieze corresponds to the preoccupations of the “Lady of Chartres” as expressed in contemporaneous writings, namely in the Miracles de Notre Dame de Chartres and in the Vielle Chronique. In the Miracles, the most common reason for a devotee to seek the aid of the Lady of Chartres was the need of a cure, or a request for the resurrection of a loved one after an accidental death. According to Spitzer “one fifth of the total verses present [in the Miracles] concerned mothers praying for their children.” A similar narrative cycle is repeated on the interior of the church in the windows of the Cathedral. The life of Mary is not, of course, the only subject treated in the stained glass narratives that fill the interior architecture of Chartres Cathedral, but it plays a significant part.

François Jules Doublet de Boistribault categorized the windows into those that were labeled or named, those with coats of arms and those that were recognizable by subject. Of those with recognizable subject de Boistribault further classified by allegorical content, legendary

211 Ibid.
212 Ibid.; 142.
subjects, “whole compositions,” “sacred and isolated subjects,” and profane subjects. Out of the twenty-five sacred and isolated subjects three are female saints: Sainte Solein, Sainte Mary of Egypt, and Sainte Foy. The category of allegorical subjects refers to the remembrance of lay donors and guilds whom contemporaneous chronicles and historians remember for their donations of stone for rebuilding the church after the disastrous fire and for the donation of their skills to honor and enrich the church. The significance of these windows to an examination of the history of offerings cannot be understated: these windows encourage the devotee in the church to give, because through giving these people “de toutes classes, [et] de toutes les conditions” were immortalized as devout figures. They encourage a continuity of gifting through their presence on the interior architectural skin of the church.

Of particular interest in these windows which Doublet de Boisthibault identifies as “allegorical” many figures are depicted holding coins made of gold, reminding viewers of their generosity and significant contributions to the rebuilding of the church. Gold coins were rare in the medieval period, but not unheard of. The standard coins of circulation were made of silver


Ibid, 484-85.

“Lisez les chroniqueurs, les historiens contemporains, tous s’accordent à reconnaître que chacun s’empressait de donner la pierre pour la reconstruction du temple... Ce temps était aussi celui des corporations d’artisans, lesquels tenaient à honneur d’enrichir l’église de leurs offrandes.” de Boisthibault then goes on to list the historical figures on the “glass” of Chartres Cathedral as: “d’artisans, d’ouvriers et de marchands, en travail, parmi lesquels on distingue: un tisserand en travail, des corroyeurs ou parcheminiers, des laboureurs, des changeurs d’or, des banquiers, un houcher, des marchands pelletiers, des sellières, un tourner à l’ouvrage, des maréchaux-ferrants, des charpentiers, des cordonniers, des marchands drapiers, des vanniers ou marchands de paniers, un vigneron, des marchands de poison, etc.” These windows have been the subject of many scholarly inquiries, notably by Jane Welch Williams in Bread, Wine, and Money: the Windows of the Trades at Chartres Cathedral, University of Chicago Press (1993).


“Il y avait quelque chose tenant au prodige, à voir cette multitude d’hommes et de femmes de toutes les classes, de toutes les conditions, travaillant avec ardeur à cette arche sainte: ouvriers improvisés par la foi, veillant et couchant autour de l’église, adreeant au Créateur leurs voeux et leurs pieux cantiques!”
alloy or copper, and gold was known mostly through “international exchanges” of golden Muslim *dinar*.216 These golden *dinar* were first copied in Christian Spain in the eleventh century. If gold was scarce as coinage, why was it used exclusively in the images of coins on the windows of Chartres Cathedral? Gold coinage was associated with honorific payment in the medieval period. “Payments in gold coins had symbolic value, associated... with the gifts of the Magi to the Christ child and also the Queen of Sheba’s gift to Solomon. Hence, gold was the quintessential means of respectful oblation.”217 The use of gold coins in these windows shows that the gifts were not a simple exchange of everyday currency; they were honorable gifts, signifying a special occasion of giving.

Gold coins are also found in the two painted glass depictions of the *Adoration of the Magi*.218 The two scenes arguably depict *Sedes Sapientiae* figures receiving the gifts of the Magi. There are the four windows that survive from the Romanesque work before the great fire in 1194: the three west windows and the *Notre Dame de la Belle Verrière* (fig. 11).219 The *Life of Christ* window on the West facade carries one of the scenes of Magi presenting coins painted to resemble Muslim *dinars* to the Virgin (Fig. 16). This implies both that the Magi are from a far away land, but also that they participate in the same economy of exchange in which the viewer operates. The coins are painted with a kufic inscription that can be identified as that of an

217 Ibid.; 118.
218 Ibid.
Almoravid coin of the twelfth century.\textsuperscript{220} Directly above this image of the Magi, three parallel figures are carrying tall candle sticks toward the central image of the Presentation at the Temple that parallels the Virgin and Child below. This iconographic pairing encourages votive offerings of candles to the larger stained glass figure of the Virgin and Child, the \textit{Notre Dame de la Belle Verrière}, another instance of preparatory imagery on the transitional zone of the westwerk; this image would be seen from within but also from outside on the church façade.

The second instance of a \textit{Sedes Sapientiae} figure of Mary and Christ in Chartres Cathedral is the \textit{Notre Dame de la Belle Verrière}.\textsuperscript{221} This stained glass window includes votive offerings, but does so in a very different way from a previously examined cult statue, that of \textit{Sainte Foy}. The cult statue of \textit{Sainte Foy} has votive inclusions of gifted jewelry, gems, and metal directly attached to her statue, instead the \textit{Belle Verrière} window both includes depictions of votive offerings and through its very material includes the votive gift of light. As with the \textit{Golden Madonna of Essen} (fig. 2), the Regensburg \textit{Enthroned Virgin and Child} (fig. 7) from 1280, and the \textit{Sedes Sapientiae} figure in the south tympanum of Chartres (fig. 15), the Virgin in the \textit{Notre Dame de la Belle Verrière} is depicted wearing a votive crown, which was dedicated to the Abbey church of Saint Denis by Charles the Bald.\textsuperscript{222} This crown would have been displayed,

\textsuperscript{220} Jane Welch Williams, \textit{Bread, Wine, and Money: the Windows of the Trades at Chartres Cathedral}, p. 118. The Kufic script on these coins was only discovered in 1975 when the window was removed for restoration as they were barely visible from the cathedral floor.

\textsuperscript{221} I refer to this as the second \textit{Sedes Sapientiae} statue because it is the first image of direct cultic veneration associated with the Virgin in Chartres while the first \textit{Sedes Sapientiae} figure on the tympanum exterior is a preparatory image of the Virgin. It is a destination image, an image that would be sought out by devotees, rather than happened upon. The two other possible \textit{Sedes Sapientiae} images that are accompanied by \textit{Adoration of the Magi} scenes are not destination images, but images furthering the narrative of the Virgin’s life. They repeat the pose and meaning of the \textit{Sedes Sapientiae}, but are secondary replications that further suggest that the viewer mirror the actions of the Magi in gifting the \textit{Sedes Sapientiae}.

lauded, and witnessed by devotees some of whom undoubtedly brought word of the crown back to Chartres.

The glass image of the virgin long maintained a cult status. A document from around the year 1137 mentions that Bernard the Sacristan had left his “peddlers stall” to the Notre Dame de la Belle Verrière. Given that this stall which resided outside the Cathedral doors sold devotional objects, possibly for use as votives inside, and that the person holding the office of Sacristan was in charge of such stalls, we can conclude that Bernard the Sacristan wanted to ensure that the money from that stall would allow him to fulfill his duties. The office of Sacristan required him to “imagin Beate-Marie de Vitrea hoc servitium faciat illuminando lampadem de oleo et de cereis, sicut ordinatum est.” The ending of this passage is the most interesting, for it states that lighting oil lamps and candles before the image of the Blessed Mary of the Stained Glass Window is an established (ordinatum) practice. Gifting of light to the window was already established by the year 1137, even before the renovations that made the Cathedral of Chartres into the great Gothic structure that we know today. This traces the roots of votive practice at least to the origins of the image of the Belle Verrière.

In a sense then, the offering of candles to the stained glass cult image of the Belle Verrière, perpetuates and emphasizes the sacred light of her image. Furthermore, it is in imagery that was added to the surviving window that we can detect a fully articulated presentation of the the shrine setting and votive culture relevant to the Belle Verrière.

It is unknown if the Regensburg Enthroned Virgin and Child wears a votive crown; it is later in date than the three other examples and may have by that time been playing off of these earlier types.


First, it should be noted that only the core ‘cult image’ of the Virgin survived the fire. The main *Sedes Sapientiae* figure of the stained glass window was mentioned in a document from 1137 and may originally “have been near the main altar of the church before the fire of 1194, perhaps forming the apex of the view down the nave toward the apse.” The image was rescued from the great fire in 1194 and “arranged in its present setting by a thirteenth century master.” In a way, it is spolia, recontextualized by the community within the new Gothic interior of the church, and presented as an object of great antiquity, framed by supporting angels, an enshrining architecture, and the holy spirit. The history of this window is confirmed by the resetting of it within an iconographic ground that both promotes votive dedication and confirms that a system of earthly communication with the divine through this image is possible. The *Notre Dame de la Belle Verrière* has since experienced multiple renovations and conservation efforts, with additional pigmentations and cleanings as late as the 1970’s and again in 2006. Despite this continual upkeep, the central figure remains mostly unaltered.

The surrounding glass frame allowed the re-installment of the surviving cult image into the enlarged Gothic lancet window space along the aisles of the choir. Among the added elements are flanking angels, the architecture above her head, and the narrative scenes below. Originally the archangels Gabriel and Michael were depicted leaning toward the Virgin, but

---

228 However, minor damage to the faces of the Virgin and Christ did require restoration in the 19th century. See: Colette Manhes-Deremble, and Jean-Paul Deremble, *Les vitraux narratifs de la cathédrale de Chartres: étude iconographique*. Le Léopard d'or, (1993).
these two figures were replaced by the kneeling angels holding censors and candles during the 1220 setting of the virgin into the lancet window. Additional narratives were also added that featured the *Wedding at Cana* and the *Temptation of Christ*.231

Directly above the Virgin’s head we see a dove and architectural components. As the holy spirit, the dove, emerges from within the architecture diving downwards, toward the *Sedes Sapientiae* figure, from its beak brilliant blue beams stream directly to the Virgin’s halo. One might understand this both as a confirmation of the strength of extramission vision (the outgoing forces of species) as well as a transmission of power from a Trinitarian force (the dove image includes a cruciform halo). The dove seems to be transmitting light to Mary, implying not only a confirmation of power but also a chain of communication, and the ability of the holy spirit to inhabit and ‘converse’ with Mary. I would propose that this animation and empowerment of the image is a forceful indication of the votive chain of communication of which this miraculous image is capable. I would add that all of this is set within a depiction of enshrining architecture, implying that the events unfolding are taking place within a shrine setting.


Paul Frankl notes that these angels are kneeling, not leaning in as the figures of the archangels were, in "The Chronology of the Stained Glass in Chartres Cathedral." *The Art Bulletin* Vol. 45, no. 4 (1963), 319.


232 The blue of the light shafts matches the blue of the Virgin's chemise. This blue was made through a very specific technique that involved the introduction of large quantities of air during the glass-making process. This technique was not used in the later additions from 1220 on wards. Therefore this blue is likely original. See: Margot E. Fassler, “The Virgin and the Tabernacle,” in *The Virgin of Chartres: Making History through Liturgy and the Arts*, Yale University Press (2010), 217.
In addition to the dove above her, the seated Madonna and Child figure is graced with the addition of six flanking angels; the two central figures carry candles while two on top and two on the bottom swing censors. These images of angels were later additions, added after her re-installment in the new, Gothic Cathedral. The inclusion of supporting angels helped to fit her image into the enlarged Gothic window space. Through the censors and candles the angels both ‘activate’ the senses and communicate to the viewer that candles and incense are acceptable gifts to leave with the image of the Virgin.

Given that the windows of Chartres exist and function in the more conservative northern shrine system, rather than the southern one, these items are depictions of idealized votive gifts because they are utilitarian. Just as Bernard of Angers chose to record votive offerings at Conques which were recyclable, compact, and easy to explain, so this window encourages offerings that are immediately useful in the glorification of the image of the Virgin and that are unconnected to individual social status. Votive offerings are encouraged by this window; but only offerings of utilitarian objects. Therefore, the fact that the addition of the gifting imagery occurred long after Bernard’s death in 1020 and the death of Bishop Fulbert in 1028 nevertheless, indicates Bernard’s lasting influence in what I would characterize as a new acceptance of votive culture at Chartres in this and subsequent centuries.

The history of the \textit{Notre Dame de la Belle Verrière} is intimately tied to the enshrining architecture of Chartres cathedral itself and the history of the glass of the Cathedral. The body of the figure of Mary in the \textit{Belle Verrière} is a radiant blue, made possible through the use of a new technique that involved the introduction of large quantities of air during the glass-making

\footnote{Paul Frankl, "The Chronology of the Stained Glass in Chartres Cathedral." \textit{The Art Bulletin} Vol. 45, no. 4 (1963), 301.}
process. This has the dual effect not only of emphasizing her chemise, the sacred relic of the Virgin preserved at Chartres, but also of creating “an oval mandorla” around the Christ child. The body of the virgin literally swallows Christ in light. He is surrounded by her body, living within its containing lines, framed, yet also projected and articulated by it.

The windows in Chartres are intermediate zones, at once interior and exterior. The *Notre Dame de la Belle Verrière* forms both the enshrining skin of the shrine and the central focus of cult veneration. It is evidence of the intense association of Mary’s body with a vessel: she not only contains and transforms Christ, but she also contains and transforms light itself and serves as part of the ‘skin’ of the cathedral.

In that the Virgin is gifted light in the form of candles, and is made of light, it is important that we understand that light itself is a medieval ‘medium’ to be appreciated. The medium of light of course could not be more important, it both allowed sight but also enabled medieval people to conceptualize Heaven as a material similar to light; light gave the divine a more concrete conceptual presence. One could not imagine a more abstract and yet more desirable votive gift. We find evidence both in texts and objects of its ‘gifting.’ For example, on the bronze doors of the Church of St. Denis Abbot Suger inscribed these lines:

The noble work is bright, but, being nobly bright, the work
Should brighten the minds, allowing them to travel through
the lights
  To the true light, where Christ is the true door.
The golden door defines how it is imminent in these things.
The dull mind rises to the truth through material things,
And is resurrected from its former submersion when the

---

235 Ibid., 218.
light is seen.  

This passage reflects the sentiment toward light around the time of the installation of the Romanesque stained-glass windows at Chartres. Suger declares that reflected light from bronze should “brighten the minds” and bring the viewer to the “true light.” For the dull mind, according to Abbot Suger, light is a resurrection from materiality. He believes that light is of another type of mater, but that it might lead one to a contemplation of the “true light,” a non-material substance. Indeed, the true light must be a reference to the material of the Heavenly Jerusalem or to Christ himself. Light is temporary and transient, but also necessary. It exemplifies the desire for utilitarian votives; at once glorifying and giving aid through illumination, votive light was a popular gift for the cult of Mary at Chartres.

The cult of Mary has been approached as a universal phenomena in past scholarship. Yet it is clear that the “Lady of Chartres” took on her own local meanings as well. We noted above that the majority of devotees reported in the Miracles de Notre Dame de Chartres are rural peasant mothers from the surrounding area, but yet other local associations of the Virgin at Chartres cannot be ignored. According to tradition, Chartres was a pagan cultic site long before its conversion to Christianity. The site of the cathedral once had a statue inscribed “Virgo Paritura,” that was alleged to be from before the birth of Christ. Finally, as Laura Spitzer points out, the area surrounding Chartres is known to have had pre-Christian water cults, and there was in fact a miraculous well in the crypt of Chartres cathedral known as the Sanctus-Locus-Fortium.

Whether the existence of this miraculous well actually constitutes direct evidence of the continuity of pagan water cults throughout the medieval period is moot. What is clear is that this miraculous well was associated with the Virgin Mary and a cult image of the *Sedes Sapientiae*. Chapter two discussed medieval notions of the female body, as a vessel, a container of the sacred. This local version of Mary, the “Lady of Chartres” is both a replication of the universal Mary and a presentation of a uniquely local figure.

It is metaphorically fitting to understand the Chartres Cathedral of “Notre Dame” as the container, the vessel for a miraculous fount. In this sense, its interior essence is moving and living, bringing miracles and cures to those who are able to enter. Similarly, the cult image doubles and reinforces these meanings. It is a container for sanctity, as the church is a container for the sacred. Moreover, the vessel-like status of both containers relates them to medieval conceptions of the body and reinforces the conceptualization of the Church as the body of Christianity. Those within the church are within the body of Christianity; they are insiders of the culture, protected, and nurtured by the power of the rituals therein.

The miraculous crypt-well is significant for more than metaphorical reasons: it may have been associated with a third *Sedes Sapientiae* of Chartres: a wooden cult statue made in the 12th century. Margot Fassler writes that

we have no sure evidence that Chartres Cathedral possessed such a statue at this period [the twelfth century], or, if it did, that it had become a significant cult object by the mid-twelfth century. Modern scholars have presented a narrative that places an eleventh or twelfth century wooden statue of the *Sedes Sapientiae* near the Well of the Brave Saints... but [this] story deriv[es] from later Chartrain historians.240

---

Despite the doubts of historians, there is concrete visual evidence that a Sedes Sapientiae statue existed in Chartres by the early thirteenth century—on pilgrim’s badges. The imagery on these badges are significant to our discussion of the wooden Sedes Sapientiae figure because they contain an image of the Virgin and Child, in her traditional pose, carried on a litter by two figures, supplemented with two additional kneeling figures (Fig. 17).241 The golden coins found in the windows at Chartres, discussed above, are also replicated on these pilgrim badges that have been dredged from the Seine surrounding a depiction of the holy chemise.242 These pilgrim badges are significant, because they are certainly an example of the “devotional objects” peddled in stalls outside the church (such as the one owned by Bernard the Sacristan). Furthermore, they represent the image of the “Lady of Chartres” that visiting pilgrims would take away with them, in part creating and in part replicating the memory of their personal cognitive mapping of the shrine of Chartres. “The cognitive map preserves the object-to-object relations of the real world independently of any change in perspective resulting from an altered location...by superimposing body centered self-to-object relations over the stored object-to-object relations, continuous positional updating takes place.”243 The devotee at Chartres would be constantly perceiving of their spatial relationship to the objects that make up the shrine system at Chartres,

241 Jane Welch Williams, Bread, Wine, and Money: the Windows of the Trades at Chartres Cathedral. 119. See plate 139, and for a slightly later pilgrim badge also containing the Sedes Sapientiae figure, see plate 140. Also see E. Jane Burns article which suggests that the sancta camisia may actually be Saracen in origin: “Saracen Silk and the Virgin’s "Chemise": Cultural Crossing in Cloth.” Speculum Vol. 81, no. 2 (2006), 367. Figure 1. Burns notes in this article that the “chemisettes” pilgrim badges took on an almost apotropaic quality (p. 366).

242 Françoise Perrot and Michael Dhenin collaborated to verify this hypothesis and published it in “L’or des Rois Mâges: vitrail de la cathédrale de Chartres (XIIe s.),” Bulletin de la société françaises de numismatique, no. 5, (1985), 641–45.

See also: Jane Welch Williams, Bread, Wine, and Money: the Windows of the Trades at Chartres Cathedral. 117-119.

and would store that information as a memory. ‘Visual working memory’ is primarily concerned with effectively representing the most relevant features of the visual world.\textsuperscript{244} “Representation in the visual subsystem seems to be based on the relatively robust retention of a small number of distinct basic features (e.g. color, shape, orientation) that are independently stored in a set of parallel feature-specific stores.”\textsuperscript{245} Visual memory uses these basic features to recall other ‘linked objects’ which have the same set of stored features. Thus, the pilgrim badge from Chartres could be used by the devotee as an initiate of the cognitive map of Chartres, which is both a real memory and a constructed map of the space; this particular badge would emphasize memories of the repeated \textit{Sedes Sapientiae} figures at Chartres.

I would emphasize that the figure on the pilgrim badge is not the figure on the tympanum relief, she is not the \textit{Notre Dame de La Belle Verrière} or any other stained glass Virgin and child precisely because she is depicted in the process of being carried. The figure must be a three dimensional wooden figure, like those \textit{Sedes Sapientiae} from the Auvergne that were discussed previously.\textsuperscript{246} This final image, the image of continuity for the pilgrim, depicts performative acts related to the processions that would have occurred on the four feast days of the Virgin; the point in time when pilgrim traffic was highest. The possessor of this object would be reminded not only of the cult figure but also of the action of the feast day procession, and would remember the town and the spaces of the cult through this active image.

\textsuperscript{245} Ibid., also, see Repovš and Baddeley’s conclusion.
\textsuperscript{246} It is safe to assume that the statue was made out of wood, as this made the statue easier to carry in processions. This use of material has been noted by Ilene Haering Forsyth in ‘Magi and Majesty: A Study of Romanesque Sculpture and Liturgical Drama.”
On the obverse side of the coin is an image of another litter supported by two figures and this time the figures gaze directly ahead rather than out toward the viewer. As above, this litter carries the *chemise* of the Virgin, Chartres most important relic, and it contained a simple rendering of what appears to be a reliquary *chasse* which quite literally houses and mobilizes the relic in an architectural setting. The two processions on this coin are equally important, as they are given the same amount of space on the obverse and reverse of the badge, yet they also suggest different levels of viewer involvement. The two figures on the side of the chemise are distant, uninvolved in the viewer’s act of looking. In contrast to this, the six figures on the side of the cult statue all stare out directly at the viewer, engaging them and allowing them to participate in an exchange of awareness. Once more, one might argue that the cult figure is a participatory object while here the reliquary *chasse* is more distant and even unapproachable.

Jane Welch Williams suggests that the figures at the bottom of the cult figure “kneel at the Virgin’s feet” but I believe that they are doing more than that. The arms of these two figures are out stretched, touching the very hem of the Virgin’s robe. The position of these figures suggests tactile interaction with the very part of the Virgin promoted by the cult of her *chemise* and by the iconographic program of the church, as seen in the striking blue halo created by her dress in the *Notre Dame de la Belle Verrière*. The woodcut of *Saint Anthony* discussed above, depicted a woman performing this same action; she kneels on the ground and touches the rim of the clothing of Saint Anthony’s cult figure (*Fig. 8*). In similar fashion, this pilgrim badge depicts devotees reaching out to touch the sacred figure of the *Sedes Sapientiae* cult statue, an indication that this type of participation was not only condoned, but promoted by church authorities, such as the Sacristan who was in charge of the making and sale of these type of objects. Just as significantly, the pilgrim badge does not promote touching or interaction with the more distant
and historic reliquary. Once again it seems that this suggests that the creation of the wooden *Sedes Sapientiae* cult statue was intended specifically for tactile interaction via processions and devotional touching.

It is significant that the likely appearance of a cult statue at Chartres occurred in the late eleventh or early twelfth century, as this is the time immediately following the life and correspondence between Bishop Fulbert and Bernard of Angers. A copy of the *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis* would probably have been in the possession of the new Bishop of Chartres, Bishop Thierry. Could the fire in 1020 have inspired the clergy of Chartres to further invest in the development of the cult of Mary to generate a larger pilgrimage audience and a greater influx of utilitarian material through the promotion of votive culture and devotion to the Virgin?

The practices of the cathedral of Chartres underwent many significant shifts during the era of Bishop Fulbert. He was unafraid to promote Mary as a central figure of cult veneration, as seen in the blossoming Marian cult at Chartres during his life and immediately following his death. Fulbert lived at the time that a new life of the Virgin, the *Libellus de Nativitate Sanctae Mariae*, composed around the year 1000, was written. Margot Fassler has argued that Fulbert “may have written it himself [or] one of the capable students from his school, Bernard of Angers or the cantor Sigo, are other possible authors.” This apocryphal work was first used at Chartres during Fulbert’s lifetime, and he may have referenced it during his powerful sermons that often

---

incorporated explorations of Mary’s lineage. Bishop Fulbert and, by extension, Bernard of Angers, were responsible for laying the foundations for the Marian cult at Chartres and for opening the clerical community to votive practices and the establishment of a shrine system at Chartres.

In the previous section it was argued that reliquaries have a potential energy. Viewers are aware of the presence of the relic, but its inaccessibility charges the containing object with powers of potential. This same phenomenon can be assumed to apply to all objects of cultic veneration; the Sedes Sapientiae wooden statues, the Notre Dame de la Belle Verrière, even the containing architectural body of the church. The reliquary becomes the skin of the relic, fused to it for all believers; the reliquary essentially makes the relic into an object worthy of veneration rather than an exposed body part or other piece of extraneous matter. In turn, the physical container lends power to the material inside. In the case of these three images, the architectural skin displaying the first image prepares the viewer for their experience of the miraculous images within the Church; gifting imagery on the interior walls via the stained glass windows replicates the version of Mary to whom they are encouraged to bring gifts. Finally, the Sedes Sapientiae at

249 Ibid., 81-106.
250 The idea of the potential energy of the object is best understood through Aristotle’s theory of potentiality, discussed in Metaphysics. Potentiality (dunamis) is not just the power to produce a change but also the capacity to be in a different and more completed state. Aristotle sets up potentiality as the opposite of actuality. They are related as “someone waking is to someone sleeping, as someone seeing is to a sighted person with his eyes closed, as that which has been shaped out of some matter is to the matter from which it has been shaped” (1048b1–3). See the online Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy at: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-metaphysics/#ActPot
251 As Charles Freeman notes “Each cathedral had its own high altar with relics already encased within it. They would not be visible and only a limited number of pilgrims would be able to come close.” Holy Bones, Holy Dust. Yale University Press, (2012), 109. This indicates that relics were not only physically inaccessible to the majority of people, but that they were often imperceptible to all bodily senses. This deprivation of any indication of the relic to the senses creates a faith based environment in which the relic can only exist within an imagined faith-based space. Cynthia Hahn also states that “Reliquaries made in the western medieval world (typically)... holds its relic tightly and invisibly, inaccessible to either devout or skeptical eyes,” in “What Do Reliquaries Do For Relics?,” Numen Vol. 57, No. 3/4 Relics in Comparative Perspective, (2010), 287.
the heart and core of the cathedral, near its still-living spring is positioned as the devotee’s goal. The badges allow the pilgrim devotee to take away with them a small reminder of her miraculous power and of their participation in her veneration.

Such layering and copying of images, as we have seen above, all contribute to the development of a system of enshrining that is self-sustaining. The existence of the cult image triggers a desire for interaction in the devotee which is physically manifested in votive offerings. Gifted objects encourage others to interact with the cult image because they attest that the saint has the ability to work through the cult image. Accumulation encourages further votive dedications, and encourages the clergy to proliferate copies of the cult image which further reinforce the power and significance of the original cult image. Once initiated, the system by which the cult shrine is made perpetuates itself as long as the cult image continues to “work” for devotees. This was the environment that so impressed Bernard of Angers when he encountered the cult of Sainte Foy and about which he wrote to the Bishop of Chartres with such admiration and eventual approval. We must imagine that the Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis was a force upon the attitude of the northern clergy especially in the development of the shrine system and the appearance of a Marian cult statue at Chartres.

The origin of Bernard of Anger’s interest in the virgin martyr Foy is not in Conques but in Chartres. He relates that “during the time when I was at Chartres... I often visited the little church of the martyr Sainte Foy located outside the walls of the city.” Bernard then states that the miracles he has related in his writings are true and that he was not gullible in writing them down, but listened with a perceptive ear. He ends the introductory letter to the Liber

Miraculorum Sancte Fidis with a request that Fulbert “come here, not so much to pray as to gain knowledge through experience.” 253

We cannot be sure of when the wooden Sedes Sapientiae figure first appeared in the Cathedral of Chartres, or if it appeared at all in the twelfth century. 254 We know that Bernard of Angers himself attests that there was no Marian statue in the Cathedral of Chartres in the early eleventh century. We do not know exactly when a cult statue in the Sedes Sapientiae pose appeared in the crypt of Chartres Cathedral. But we can be sure that the writing of Bernard of Angers reached Bishop Fulbert in the eleventh century and that the miracles recorded by Bernard were targeted specifically toward Fulbert to change his mind about the miraculous abilities of Sainte Foy’s relics and cult statue that they had both previously dismissed as “worthless fiction” because it was promoted by “common people.” 255 Yet we know that “scholars have long assumed that the wooden statue of the Virgin burned during the [French] revolution was a twelfth century Sedes Sapientiae and that the present day statue in the crypt is a copy of that original; other statues found locally are also described as copies of the Sedes at Chartres.” 256

From this we know that scholars have long thought that the cult statue in Chartres was a twelfth century creation, placing it shortly after the arrival of the writing of Bernard in Chartres. Perhaps his writing had it’s intended effect of reversing Fulbert and the local communities' views toward cult statuary. The Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis may have galvanized the desire of the church

253Ibid.; 41.
255 Ibid.; 39.
authorities in Chartres to create or strengthen a votive shrine system of their own that revolved around a cult statue of equal power to that found in Conques. The placement of this statue near a known ancient healing site, the *Sanctus-Locus-Fortium*, is evidence of the clergy’s desire for it to produce miraculous events, but also of their lack of certainty in the cult statue’s ability to do so.\(^{257}\)

\(^{257}\) By placing the cult statue of the Virgin in Chartres near an ancient source of miraculous healing, the people of Chartres could conflate the miracles normally attributed to the waters with the healing miracles of the Virgin. Interestingly, the *Liber sancti Jacobi* mentions the fountain next to the doors of the Abbey Church in Conques stating that the waters are of “admirable virtues.” There are various Romanesque fountains around the town of Conques, attesting to the importance of free running water, but also to the sacred nature of the material itself.
Conclusion

I. Sainte Foy

In concluding, and bearing the shrine system at Chartres in mind, I would like to turn back to an examination of the cult statue and shrine system of Sainte Foy in Conques. Fredrika Jacobs notes that “without exception, early modern votive panel paintings include a likeness, a portrait if you will, of a cultic shrine’s titular saint.”\(^{258}\) We have seen this to be true of Romanesque cult statues and votive objects. Birgitta Falk refers to these cult statues as “Buildnisreliquiare,” or “portrait reliquaries.”\(^{259}\) This does not refer to portraits in the traditional sense of likeness, but to the ability of the statue to convey the person of the saint. Sainte Foy is a statue of a particular saint, yet the statue head of Foy is actually an ancient Roman mask of a man’s face, a portrait of a different sort that tells the audience of Foy about her origins as a late antique martyr (Fig. 1). This mask displays the face of Foy not as her own face, but as the face of her history. Cynthia Hahn suggests that this reliquary and others like it provide portraits of a type; the saint in the Heavenly Jerusalem.\(^{260}\)

Sainte Foy was often gifted jewelry; it is likely that the gems and stones on the body of Sainte Foy were recycled votives; given in thanks for a miracle performed for a devotee, they now attest to her power of intercession through their incorporation into the perception of her


heavenly majesty. This is confirmed by Bernard of Angers who states that “They [devotees] also made innumerable, lavish contributions in gold and silver, and also of precious stones... And this is the reason that few people are left in this whole region who have a precious ring or brooch or armbands or hairpins, or anything of this kind, because Sainte Foy, either by simple entreaty or with bold threats, wrested away these same things.”

The body of the cult statue of Sainte Foy represents the multiplication of her devotees and her miracles directly on it. The gems accrued on her statue’s body were collected by the same method as the gems on the altar frontal at Saint Denis; through votive dedications, coercion, and exchange. Her shrine was at once the alcove and altar, the church, her body, and the votive objects that supported and proliferated her narrative and power.

Today, Sainte Foy has been institutionalized as part of the Trésor de Conques in a converted wing of the old cloisters. A visual memory of her participation in the church and the votive shackles noted by Bernard in the Liber Miraculorum de Sancte Fidis as once hanging before the cult statue and over the altar appear within an impressive relief carving of the Last Judgement; a reminder of the eventual physical resurrection of all humanity (Fig. 18 a, b).

This tympana does not carry an image of the Virgin and Child, as so many relief carvings outside of Romanesque churches do, nor does it contain any of the fascinating Adoration of the Magi imagery that was discussed above. Instead, on the left side of this tympana is a captivating

262 It is in the south wing of the cloisters. The Trésor was moved there in 1911, according to the local historian of Conques. It is not owned by the church cult because it became the property of the commune in 1905, although the works in the Trésor are not museum pieces even though they have been considered historical monuments by the French government since 1895.
263 “Bernard found this church quite impressive, not least for the abundance of iron grillwork made from chains and fetters brought to Sainte Foy as offerings of thanks from prisoners whom she freed.” Pamela Sheingorn, trans. “Introduction,” The Book of St. Foy. 17.
deviation from standard *Last Judgement* iconography; a depiction of Sainte Foy kneeling in prayer before the hand of god with a representation of her throne and an interior of a church behind her.\(^{264}\)

The image of Sainte Foy in the tympanum is of the heavenly saint and not of her statue because it is clear that the figure has gotten up to move to speak with God, an action that her statue could only perform miraculously, and there is no record of such a miraculous vision or occurrence (*Fig. 18b*). Despite this depiction of Foy as an embodied saint, the carved figure also directly references the cult statue of *Sainte Foy* because of her placement next to the altar on a throne. The scene directly below the figure of Sainte Foy is a depiction of the Heavenly Jerusalem, the place where she is believed to currently reside, along with all the other saints and God.\(^{265}\)

The figures in the Heavenly Jerusalem all hold *things*; they are all possessors of objects of great material value in the medieval period; books, chalices, scrolls (or possibly candles); two angels place flowers upon God’s lap, who is seated in the center of the image. All of these objects are materials that could be given as votive offerings, and it is significant to our study of votive performance that the saints are shown with these goods in the Heavenly Jerusalem. This suggests that materials can be transported to the other world.

The allusion to the Heavenly Jerusalem and the inclusion of worldly objects of high material value would draw parallels between the image of the tympanum and the majestic, gold and gem covered statue of *Sainte Foy* that was within the church; or rather, it would prepare the

\(^{264}\) “Standard” *Last Judgement* iconography at this time has usually been judged in relation to the roughly contemporaneous relief carving of the *Last Judgement* tympanum at the Cathedral of Saint-Lazare, Autun, France by the artist (or artists) Gislebertus, which was completed around 1146.

viewer to connect the statue of the Sainte with the materiality of the Heavenly Jerusalem. It also
draws parallels between earthly objects and Heavenly saints; objects are shown to be a means of
communication with the saints. They give an earthly devotee the opportunity to contact and even
speak with the saint. Communication is directly referenced above the scene of the Heavenly
Jerusalem where Sainte Foy kneels down with her hands clasped as the giant hand of God
reaches down and touches her head. Behind her is her empty throne, the altar, and dangling
votive chains. The message of the scene is clear to the viewer: leaving votive dedications will
prompt Sainte Foy to communicate with God for you.

The Abbey church was remade to accommodate the rising tide of pilgrims making their
way to Conques, usually while on the route to Santiago de Compostella in Spain. Pilgrimage is a
fascinating phenomena that would not exist without a belief in the importance of particular
locales to religious worship. Locale is central to the construction of the shrine system. Votive
dedications cannot be given just anywhere; they must correspond to a specific site for a specific
reason.

The study of a shrine, the place where a cult image exists, is an attempt to create the
biography of a site.266 The entire composition of the Last Judgement tympanum alludes to the
source of this importance of locale in Christianity; resurrection. Not just any resurrection, but
the resurrection of Sainte Foy. In the tympanum carving, directly next to the image of Foy
kneeling and also above the Heavenly Jerusalem there is an image of three figures rising up from
coffins with intact, human bodies. The juxtaposition of this imagery to the saint communing
with God is a well thought out and intentional move by the designer of the carving. It connects

this saint, with whom the devotee may commune inside the actual church before the altar, with the resurrection and reconstitution of the body. Sainte Foy’s relics, her body, are contained at this site, and thus she shall be resurrected in Conques with all the glory and grace of the Heavenly Jerusalem displayed in manifest, earthly form.

Votives provide evidence of an event. They attest to the ability of a saint to perform miracles, yet they also attest to the presence of the saint in a particular locale. This justifies the belief that the saint will be able to rise again through God’s miraculous power, that is manifest in them, and that their resurrection will occur in the place that they have been tied to through their relics and their performance of divine miracles. Foy will be revived in Conques, and the tympanum relief serves as a reminder of that. She will be revived there in the last judgement because it is the place where parts of her body physically reside.

“Medieval religious devotion was not a universally or solely private activity that was in some way opposite to the public, structured religiosity of the church’s liturgy.” Conversely, votives are a public display of a practice that the church desired to control, but simply could not, and has not been able to regulate. Devotion is performative and performance requires audience; the devotee is never alone, for they are in the presence of their saint and God. Yet the physical conglomeration of votive objects erase identity and make this public practice anonymous. There is intimate individuality in the solidity of the object group. There is a conscious individual decision to publicly display ones’ devotion through gifting votive objects to a saint. Votives are

also a function of a collective awareness and memory. “Social memory” is a function of the narratives promoted by and displayed in visual and sensory culture.\footnote{Paul Connerton, \textit{How Societies Remember}, Cambridge University Press, (1989).}

Cult statues, reliquaries, objects of veneration; these are all visual objects that portray autonomous power and a distinct personality and identity that allows them to stand alone as art objects.\footnote{Megan Holmes notes that “visual artists contributed to the enshrinement of miraculous images and to the decoration of the sanctuaries built to house them.” Megan Holmes, "Miraculous Images in Renaissance Florence." \textit{Art History}, Vol. 34, no. 3 (2011), pp. 432-465. (This article was published before Holmes’ eponymous book in 2013).} Yet the power and sacred authority of these statues and images is entirely contextual. When viewed in relation to the shrine that surrounds them, they immerse the audience in a multi-sensory experience. At the heart of objects such as the cult statue of \textit{Sainte Foy} or the \textit{Notre Dame de la Belle Verrière} are the motivations, spaces, and perhaps most importantly, the devotees and votive objects that have allowed them to exist and thrive in the shrine system.

\section*{II. The Shrine System}

Votives create a closed circuit of community and economic exchange. The votive matter involved in this exchange is not just recycled but in a reciprocal relationship with the cult environment. The proliferation of votive objects before a cult image performs the same function as a devoted audience or population; they each verify the power of the idea or authority associated with them. The reuse of votive material perpetuates the cult, while its existence as a votive object gives physical manifestation to the power of the saint. Whether the votives accumulate into a wall of paintings, are melted down, or are incorporated into the cult object,
they continue to play a role in the social exchange between Heaven and Earth; thereby providing devotees with a sense of personal agency: that is, the sense that one has the ability to personally influence the actions taken by divine authorities. Depicting performances of votive devotion and votive objects, as seen in the tympana of Conques (fig. 18a, b), or in the Notre Dame de la Belle Verrière at Chartres (fig. 11), help to establish an institutional canon of acceptable votive gifts within the shrine system. Votive objects are liminal; they live between two systems of social exchange, bridging the gap between the worldly and divine. The power of the miraculous saintly image cannot exist without the support and creation of votive dedications.

The shrine system is based on the votive exchange, yet it is also larger than and encompassing of that system. It includes all visual and performative imagery; the personal, private moments spent between the devotee and their saint, but also the mass devotional practices of religious festivals and ritual. A shrine creates a narrative space that is cognitively mapped and then reinterpreted via this internalized spatial memory that can be manipulated through the repetition of recognizable motifs. Replication comes in many forms in the shrine. These forms are remembered and confused, they become memories and expectations in the perceptive viewer. The shrine system is clearly laid out for the new audience member on the exterior shrine-skin of the tympanum space through the depiction of votive object gifting, communication, and miraculous exchange. In Romanesque and, later, Gothic pilgrimage churches devoted to Mary this manifests itself in the pairing of Adoration of the Magi scenes with Sedes Sapientiae figures. In Conques, this depiction is made explicit through the direct

rendering of the votive system and a shrine space with the altar, votive chains, the throne of the
cult statue, the saint in Heaven herself, and the hand of God communing with the saint. In the
*Pilgrimage to the New Church at Regensburg* print, the shrine system is made explicit through
the rendering of the actions of votive performance (*Fig. 7*).

The *Notre Dame de la Belle Verrière* and the imagined wooden *Sedes Sapientiae* statue at
Chartres correlate to the exterior statue and interior image seen in the *Pilgrimage to the New
Church at Regensburg* print. They were both necessary to the formation of a self-perpetuating
shrine system. The self-sustaining economy of devotion seen in the print and in the history of
Chartres would be impossible without the balance of both a performative statue that enabled
devotees direct, tactile access to their patron saint, and a stagnant image before which devotees
could contemplate, pray, and refine their personal relationship with that saint. The multiplication
and replication of that image of the saint did not hinder the miraculous power of the original
object, but instead served to spread awareness of the power of the saint's cult and of the
miraculous attributes associated with that saint.

On some occasions spontaneous and popular, at other times regulated and institutional,
the medieval shrine consisted of a system of veneration. It is made of three basic components: a
focal point of veneration, dedicated objects, and an enshrining environment. This enshrining
environment at once conceals and reveals, projects the object of veneration, and creates
anticipation for it. This is clearly displayed in the examples we have just examined and is true of
all others as well. A shrine is a system of layering. The multiplication of devotional references
creates spaces that lead the pilgrim to interact with the space and the cult in very particular ways.
Restrictions to and permissions for interaction with cult iconography reinforces and strengthens
the status of that object. This interaction manifests in the performance of bodily manipulations
and in the materiality of the objects gifted. Bernard of Angers was won over by the power and
majesty of Sainte Foy, as he testified in his letter to Bishop Fulbert. Following Bernard and
Fulbert’s dialogue, the systematic development of a Marian shrine at Chartres may have been a
lasting result of their rhetoric concerning Sainte Foy, their acceptance of votive gifting, and their
admission of performative cult veneration. Understanding the shrine as a system can allow
future scholars to better interrogate the means of its development and the cases where there may
have been a particular figure behind its growth.


— De Civitate Dei published by Nicolas Jenson, Morgan Library PML 310, (1475).


— “Medieval Head Reliquaries of the Massif Central.” PhD. diss., Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, (1990), 87.


Collins, Kristen Mary, *Visualizing Mary: Innovation and exegesis in Ottonian manuscript illumination*, The University of Texas at Austin, ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, (2007), viii.


Freeman, Ann “Carolingian Orthodoxy and the Fate of the *Libri Carolini,*” *Viator* Vol. 16 (1985), 65.


Kriss-Rettenbeck, Lenz, Ex voto: Zeichen, Bild und Abbild im christlichen Votivbrauchtum Zurich: Atlantis, (1972), 76.


Thiofrid of Echternach, Folres Epytaphii Sanctorum, 2.3.84-92, CCCM 133:39.


Venantius Fortunatus, *Vita sanctae Radegundis* 1. 32.


Fig. 1: reliquary of Sainte Foy, 10th century, Conques, France. Treasury, Sainte-Foy, Conques, France.
Fig. 3: Saint Baudime reliquary
wood, gilding, ivory, c. 1146, Marie de saint-Nectaire, France.
Available From: Medievalists.net,
Fig. 4: Virgin and Child in Majesty, or, Sedes Sapientiae, c. 1175, France. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. From: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, [http://www.metmuseum.org](http://www.metmuseum.org) (accessed May 5, 2017).
Fig. 5: Notre Dame de Claviers, 12th century, in the church of Saint Barthelemy in Moussage, France. Available From: http://laurejo.canalblog.com/archives/2012/11/06/25487873.html (accessed May 5, 2017).
Fig. 6: Miracles of the Virgin window, with a depiction of the “cult of carts,” c.1220 Chartres Cathedral nave, France. Available From: ARTstor, http://www.artstor.org (accessed May 5, 2017).
Fig. 9: Saint Anthony, woodcut
Fig. 10: Section of the wing of the high altar of St. Wolfgang in Pipping near Munich, Germany c. 1480. Accessed From: http://votiveinteriors.commons.bgc.bard.edu (accessed May 5, 2017).
Here we can see the angels with sensors on the bottom and top sides, the angels with candles in the central sides, as well as the enshrining architecture above the central Sedes Sapientiae figure.
Fig. 12: Notre dame Du Port, Sedes Sapientiae and Adoration of the Magi Tympanum, 12th century, Clermont-Ferrand, France. Available From: Flickr Commons, https://www.flickr.com/photos/15558803@N06/2836682622 (accessed May 5, 2017).
Fig. 13: Enthroned Virgin and Child, “Visio monachi Rodberti,” Ms 145, fol. 130v.
Clermont, France, 10th or 11th century. Available From: French Ministry of Culture,
http://www.culture.gouv.fr/documentation/enlumine/fr/BM/clermont-ferrand_049-02.htm
**Fig. 14:** The west façade of Notre Dame de Chartres. c. 1155 CE. Available From: ARTstor, [http://www.artstor.org](http://www.artstor.org) (accessed May 5, 2017).

This view gives a sense of the cathedral’s immense height and power as a landmark and as the centerpiece of the town around which most social and economic activity took place in the medieval period.
**Fig. 15:** Chartres cathedral South Portal tympanum with the central image of Mary in the *Sedes Sapientiae* pose. 12th century. Available From: [http://employees.oneonta.edu/](http://employees.oneonta.edu/) (accessed May 5, 2017).
Fig. 16: Life of Christ window, in Notre Dame de Chartres. Available From: https://www.pinterest.com (accessed May 5, 2017).

Featuring a depiction of Magi presenting coins to the Virgin on the lower left hand side. Above, there is a depiction of three parallel figures with candle offerings being carried to the central Presentation at the Temple scene. West façade, 12th c.
Fig. 17: Rendering of a pilgrim’s token of Chartres, early 13th century, Chartres, France. From: Jane Welch Williams, Bread, Wine, and Money: The Windows of the Trades at Chartres Cathedral, University of Chicago Press (1993). See plate 139.

Dredged from the bottom of the Seine.
Fig. 18a: Last Judgement Tympanum in Conques, France. c. 1050-1130. Photograph by author, 2016.
Here we can see a depiction of Sainte Foy as an embodied saint bowing down before the hand of God. Behind her is her throne, resembling the throne of her cult statue (Fig. 1) and above this throne votive shackles hang from a rod that spans the width of the arch.