

# THE ROMANESQUE SCULPTURE OF MOISSAC

## PART I (2)\*

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### THE TYMPANUM

**T**HE first Romanesque art of Moissac appears in numerous capitals, some decorated with religious subjects. Larger reliefs are of single figures. The whole recalls an illuminated Bible in which the miniatures of each book are preceded by a full-page figure of the author. Initials are fancifully wrought with beasts and flowers as on some of the capitals.

In the tympanum of the south portal (Figs. 92, 93) the sculpture of Moissac becomes truly monumental. It is placed above the level of the eye, and is so large as to dominate the entire entrance. It is a gigantic semicircular relief, five meters and sixty-eight centimeters in diameter, framed by a slightly pointed archivolt in three orders. Its great mass is supported by a magnificently ornamented lintel, a sculptured trumeau, and two doorposts of cusped profile, on which are carved figures of Peter and the prophet Isaiah. The portal is sheltered by a salient barrel-vaulted porch, decorated on its lower inner walls with reliefs representing incidents from the Infancy of Christ, the story of Lazarus and Dives, and the Punishment of Avarice and Unchastity. On the exterior of this porch, which is attached to the south wall of the western tower of the church, the figures of the abbot Roger (1115-1131) and St. Benedict (?) have been set above engaged columns.

In its grouping and concentration of sculpture the porch is comparable in enterprise to an arch of triumph. The tympanum alone is a work of architecture, for twenty-eight blocks of stone were brought together to form its surface. That so shortly after the reëmergence of figure carving in stone, such great monuments were attempted, testifies to the rapidity of development and the unhampered ambitions of monastic builders in the presence of new means and new powers.

On the tympanum, about a central group of a gigantic crowned Christ enthroned in majesty with the four symbols of the evangelists and two seraphim, are placed the four-and-twenty elders bearing chalices and various stringed instruments (Figs 93-106). These verses of the fourth and fifth chapters of the apocalyptic vision of John are almost literally rendered.

Revelations iv, 2 . . . and behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.

3. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone; and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like to an emerald.

\*For the first installment of this study see *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. XIII, No. 3.

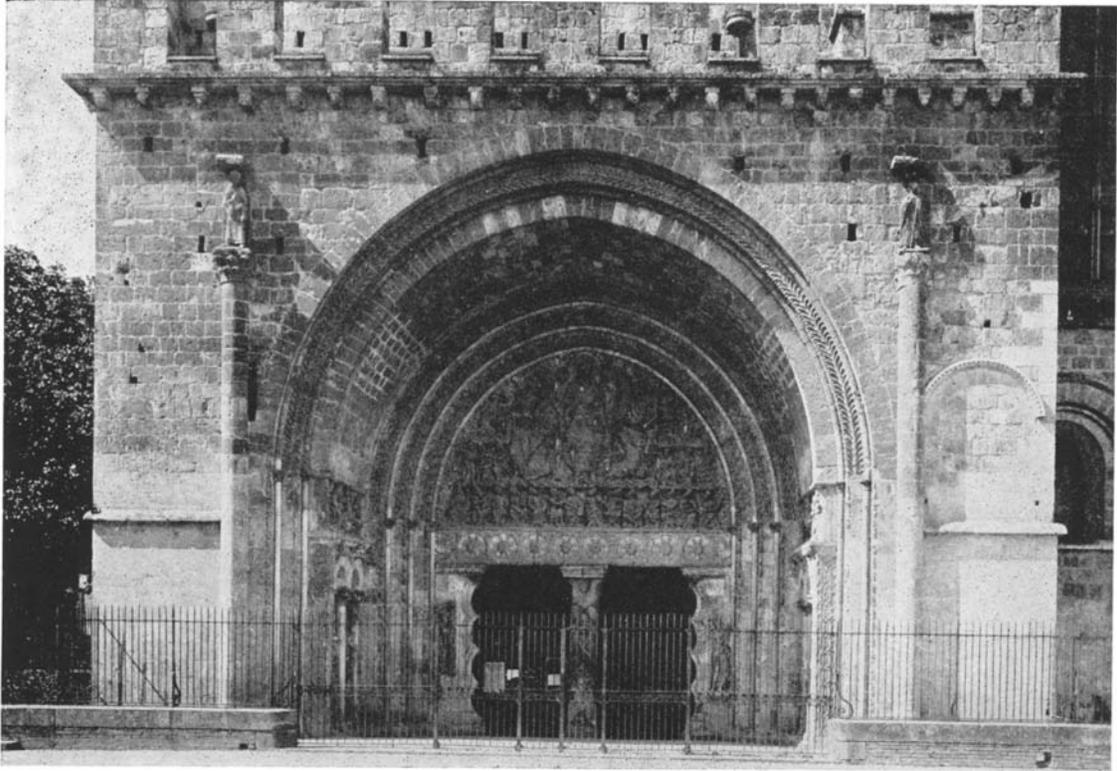


FIG. 92—*Moissac, Church: South Porch of Narthex*

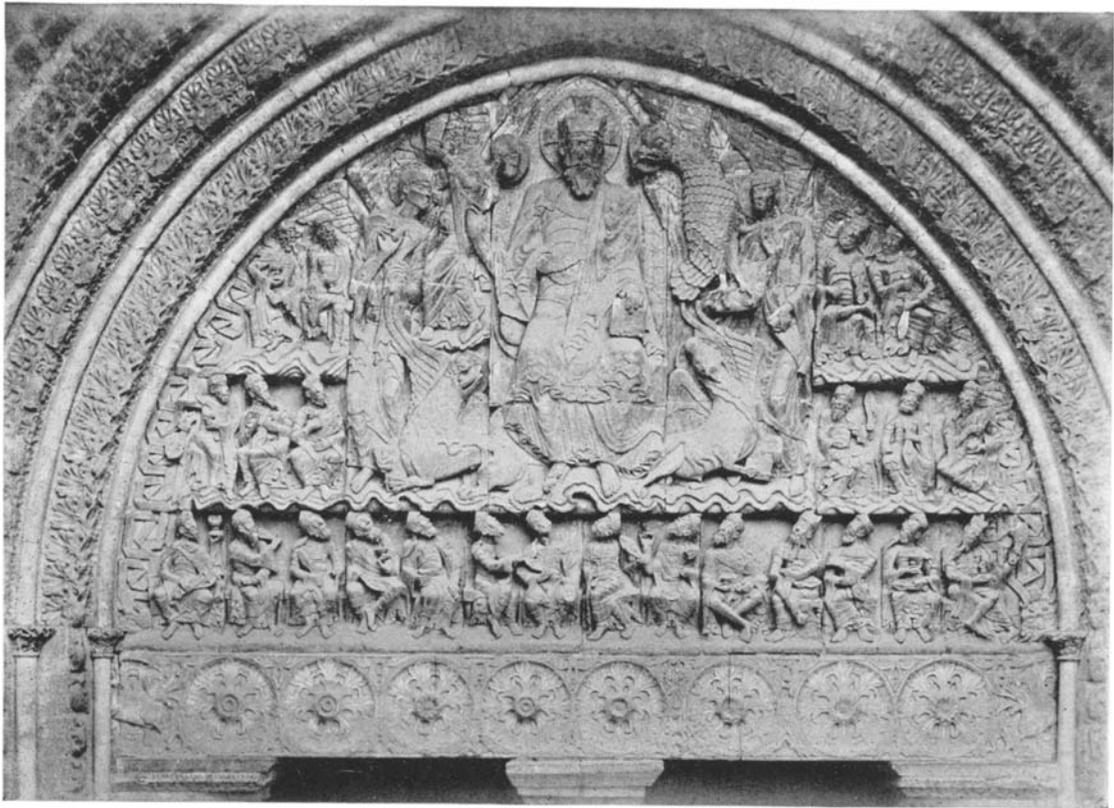


FIG. 93—*Moissac, Church: Tympanum of South Porch*

4. And round about the throne were four and twenty seats; and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. . . .

6. And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind.

7. And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle. . . .

v, 1. And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the back side, sealed with seven seals.

8. . . . and four and twenty elders . . . , having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of the saints. . . .

The tympanum does not render a specific line of the apocalyptic text but a characteristic and impressive moment of the vision. It omits the "lightnings and thunderings and voices" and the "seven lamps of fire burning before the throne;" and although the elders are given instruments and phials, they do not kneel before the lamb, as in the verse which describes them, "having everyone of them harps and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of saints." The two angels with scrolls are likewise abstracted from their immediate context (Rev. v, 2, mentions one angel, and v, 11, "ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands"), and with their six wings are the seraphim of Isaiah's vision (Isaiah vi, 2), not John's. Unlike the text of Revelation, Christ blesses with His right hand and holds the sealed book in His left, while the four beasts, whose evangelistic symbolism is absent from John, are given the books a later tradition ascribed to them. The crown and cross nimbus of Christ are also additions to the original vision. The symbols have not the six wings or the many eyes a literal rendering would demand (Rev. iv, 8), but only two wings, in departure from both John and Ezekiel. Their arrangement about the throne follows the order of the heads of Ezekiel's tetramorph rather than the text of John.

With all these modifications of the vision, the tympanum is yet wonderfully in accord with it. A simple hierarchical conception of the apocalyptic numbers is expressed in its design. The central and largest figure is the one God; next in magnitude are the two seraphim; then follow the four symbolic beasts, and smallest and most removed from Christ are the twenty-four elders in three rows. The symbolic beauty of this conception, which is unique in the iconography of the theme, will be apparent from a confrontation with some ancient traditional version like the great mosaic of St. Paul's in Rome.<sup>9</sup> Here only the bust of Christ is represented in a large medallion, above tiny angels; the symbols fly in a vast heaven beside Him, while the elders, grouped in two unequal rows of twelve, are tall figures, as large as the object of their veneration.

Beside this theological contrast of magnitude and number, the abstract elements of design, the symmetry, and proliferation of energetically opposed animated lines, enforce the vision and acquire a religious content, and the numerous details of terrestrial ornament

98. Venturi *Storia dell' arte italiana*, I, fig. 79.

and distinctions, unmentioned in the text, contribute to the reality of heavenly splendor. The meander ribbon, issuing from the jaws of monsters, bounds the whole vision, and is lost under the wings of the seraphim and symbols, like the heaven of some primitive cosmogony.

The attribution of repose to only one figure in the whole tympanum, the seated Christ, Who is placed in the center of the field, and the surrounding of this dominating center with large figures in most energetic movement, are conceived in the very spirit of apocalyptic imagery. The concentration of the heads of the numerous little elders on the central figure of Christ produces an effect of peripheral waves of excitement reaching out to the corners of the tympanum. Ten of the elders sit with legs crossed; the others acquire a similar animation by the contrasts of limbs and instruments. The wavy lines of the sea of glass, the meandering ribbon under the archivolt, and the dense, serried feathers of the many wings contribute further to the restlessness of the whole. The focus is maintained throughout, and all the details revolve about Christ. Even the sea of glass halts for a moment before His feet; the amplitude of the wave is noticeably greater here in acknowledgment of the common center.

The thirty-one figures are symmetrically distributed in contrasting directions. In the center is the vertical Christ; around Him the circle of symbolic beasts flanked by the two seraphim; and beside and below them, in horizontal bands, are the seated elders. The zoning of the latter parallels the lintel, so that the frieze of rosettes seems a part of the figure composition, and a great cross is thereby created, of the vertical Christ and the trumeau, and these bands of elders and the lintel. The side doorposts further prolong the verticals of the seraphim and oppose the horizontal bands above by their contrasting divisions; while their scalloped contours flank the trumeau just as the similar curves of the symbols accost the central figure of Christ.

This architectural composition is stressed by the distinct isolation of all the elements. The elders are grouped as separate individuals in clear alignment. The encroachments of one figure on another are only peripheral and never obscure the latter. The high relief of the wavy borders of the horizontal zones provides a definite boundary of the groups of elders; and the difference of scale between Christ, the symbols and the seraphim, creates an equally effective segregation.

The distribution of the figures and the zoning of groups of elders do not correspond strictly to any underlying architectural divisions. The appearance of molded frames between the bands of elders is a sculptured contrivance rather than an actual jointing. Likewise, the central group of Christ and the symbols is independent of the structure of the tympanum, and is composed on several slabs on which figures have been carved without much attention to the joints. It was inevitable that these should to some extent correspond to the figures, but the latter are not determined by them. Whatever appearance of architectonic order the tympanum produces is the result of an independent design which has a decorative regularity and a symmetry to a large extent self-evolved. This conception of tympanum design must be distinguished from that of Chartres and of Gothic portals, in which each group corresponds to an architectural division of the registers of the lintel and the upper lunette. It accords with the latter only in so far as the use of numerous slabs, as in a mosaic composition, imposed some system or economy on the sculptor and demanded that he avoid the extension of one figure on two slabs as much as possible. Hence the

smaller elders are carved singly or in groups of two upon single blocks of stone; but the larger Christ and the adjoining figures are cut by the joints of several slabs. Compare this with Chartres, where each voussoir has its own figure or self-contained ornament and the main figures of the tympana, like Christ and the Virgin, are carved on single blocks of stone.

Within the symmetrical design and simple arrangement of its numerous parts, the tympanum includes irregularities which are manifestly planned, but not apparent without close examination. These irregularities are not the variations inevitable in human workmanship, to which in sentimental reaction from machinery people attribute an absolute aesthetic worth, but genuine distortions of a sequence or a canonical geometric form. They produce expressive contrasts and exciting interruptions, in accord with the restless animation of the tympanum as a whole. Thus the lines below the uppermost band of elders are not only wavy and discontinuous; they are not even strictly parallel. The even number of figures on the lowest zone and the symmetry of the whole tympanum precluded an elder directly beneath Christ. Such a figure would have detracted from the exclusive centrality of the latter and given too great a prominence to the vertical axis in a primarily radial and concentric scheme. Yet the sculptor, with a fine feeling for the exigency of the design, and in avoidance of a static precision, has arranged the heads of the four elders beneath Christ in an asymmetrical series, so that one is nearer to the axis than the other (Figs. 93, 104). The parallel rather than divergent diagonals of the instruments confirm this asymmetry, and produce a conflict of directions within the group of four.

This deviation from the expected symmetry is as shrewdly sustained in the lintel, where there is likewise no single central unit but a juncture of rosettes at a point to the left of the axis of the tympanum and the central division of the row of elders. This slight preponderance of the right side of the lintel is perhaps designed to balance the arm of Christ extended at the left. But the shifting of the axes is a corollary of a more general movement in the design of the whole.

Just as the ten rosettes are not distributed with equal intervals, the heads of the elders show a similar casualness in their arrangement, which appears rhythmical and necessary when more closely observed. If we number as 1 to 8 (from left to right) the separate slabs on which the lower zone of elders is carved, we see that the head of the inner figure of 4 is farther from the axis than the opposed head on 5; and in consequence, the interval between the two heads on 4 is less than on 5; the inner head of 3 is, in contrasting interval, farther from the axis than the corresponding head on 6, and its distance from its mate is less than in 6. On each side there is one interposition of a chalice in a wide interval. But these two chalices are not symmetrical; one is in the extreme left block, the other in the fifth, near the center of the whole zone. If the bosses of the heads are considered single plastic units of equal magnitude and salience, and the chalices, minor masses, then the pattern of bump and hollow is hardly as regular as the general orderliness of the tympanum would lead us to expect. On the zone above there are two groups of three elders (Figs. 98, 99). On the left they are arranged: two, large interval, one; on the right the three are separated by two large intervals.

In the symmetrical central group of Christ, the symbols, and the seraphim the dynamic character of the coördination is especially apparent. The seven heads form an elliptical figure of horizontal major axis in contrast to the dominant vertical Christ and in closer accord with the shape of the tympanum. The wings of the lion have been turned upward to connect

his head with the left seraph, a modification of the symmetry of the two lower beasts, which adds wonderfully to their energetic movement. In contrast to the flexed arm of the left seraph, the left arm of the other seraph is designed to complete the ellipse of the heads. The implied figure is not really an ellipse, but a more irregular form, since the heads of the seraphim are nearer to the upper than to the lower symbols. The bull's head is higher than the lion's, the eagle's higher than the man's, and in consequence these four heads determine diagonal, not vertical or horizontal lines. The glance of the lower beasts is not directed toward Christ, but in powerful intensification of the movement of the geometrically ordered tympanum forms a great X with the crossing point beneath the convergent symmetrical beard of Christ. There is an obvious multiplication of parallel diagonals, like the horns and wing of the bull and the wavy lines on his back, which accent the same intersecting scheme. It is further complicated by the diagonal draperies on the body of Christ.

Even Christ (Fig. 94), the one figure in the relief that is entirely frontal, is asymmetrical in the benedictional gesture of his raised right hand, in the contrasting arrangement of the folds of the two shoulders, and in the great sweep of drapery at the left ankle, unduplicated on the right. This drapery is the immediate counterpart of the arched back of the bull, from which it seems to diverge, and opposes in its curve the right arm of Christ and the enveloping folds. By means of these diagonally contrasted elements, the figure of Christ, although solidly enthroned, acquires some of the restlessness of the surrounding forms. There is also an element of strain or inner tension due to the sloping thighs and legs, which form a zigzag line with the diverging feet. The inclined throne, as a plane diagonal to the common wall, is a corresponding *motif* in relief.

How consciously such forms were sought and turned to the common end appears in the tail of the bull (Fig. 96), which sweeps upward with the lower edge of Christ's robe and with the long fold that issues from under the jeweled edge of the mantle (and also with the bull's hind leg and his back, and even the sea of glass) and then suddenly drops, diverging in four radial, curved locks, like the fan-shaped folds to the left. The lion's tail describes an analogous curve; but the symmetry of these tails is disturbed by the rhythmical opposition of the ends, the one pointing upward, the other down (Fig. 97). Such intensity of linear design is sustained throughout, and collaborates with oppositions of relief to stir the more rigid geometrical framework of the whole. We have only to examine a small portion of relief, like the hind leg and flank of the lion, to perceive the excited, vigorous movement of the well-ordered forms. The symmetry and zoning appear for a moment as elements of the vision, or simple devices of order in architectural design, rather than an essential pervasive scheme.

It is characteristic of the style that the individual figures cannot be reduced to a banded or symmetrical design like the tympanum itself. This is sufficiently clear in the animals, in the symbol of Matthew, and in the elongated light zigzag postures of the seraphim. Even the smaller elders are as complex in design. Although the heads are fixed on a common point, the bodies have a wonderfully varied and independent life, which maintains the movement of the tympanum in every block. There are no two elders who sit alike or whose garments are similarly arranged. The patterned zigzags of falling draperies are continually varied and attest to the ingenious fancy of the sculptor. The heads, also, show this in their tilted poses, in the diversity of hair, beards, and crowns. The instruments and chalices



FIG. 94—*Christ and the Four Symbols*

*Moissac, Church: Details of Tympanum*



FIG. 95—*Symbol of Matthew*



FIG. 96—Symbols of John and Luke; the Right Seraph  
Moissac, Church: Details of Tympanum



FIG. 97—Symbols of Matthew and Mark; the Left Seraph  
Moissac, Church: Details of Tympanum

furnish additional *motifs* capable of as great variety though similarly shaped; because, raised or lowered, held horizontally or diagonally, in the right or left hand, they form essential parts of unique conceptions of each figure. Those who are seated at the outer edge and touch upon the archivolt have an additional source of rhythmic complexity. A thick ribbon frames the tympanum. Its irregular, beaded meander is in lower relief than the figures which at times overlap it, but it moves with them, and their sharp angles of limb and instrument are contrived to parallel its winding form.

A study of the two elders seated opposite each other in the upper of the two zones adjoining the seraphim (Figs. 98, 99) will reveal to us much of the sculptor's intention and his method of design. They are symmetrical with respect to the figure of Christ, and are unusual among the figures of the tympanum in that their postures are so similar despite the constant variation of the corresponding units of the two sides of the relief. They are seated in repose, with the right leg placed across the left in an impossible horizontality. In both figures the left leg is perfectly straight, in vigorous architectural contrast to the supported limb. This post and lintel construction is further sustained by the vertical instruments of the two elders, and the lines of the torsos and draperies. The arms likewise preserve as straight a line as possible, and if slightly curved, nevertheless do not cross the torso. The heads alone offer a prominent contrast to this rectangular scaffolding, for they are turned to the figure of Christ between them.

The very repetition of the crossing of legs is an asymmetrical *motif*, for the same leg is crossed in the two figures, instead of the parts corresponding in a symmetrical composition. If both instruments are held in stiff verticality, one is suspended from the horizontal limb, the other is raised above it. The left figure bears a chalice in his left hand, the other elder, with his right, draws a bow across the erect viol. The right elder has a short beard that forms a broad fringe across his jaw; the left elder's beard is long and stringy, with locks falling upon the breast and shoulders. The crowns, too, are contrasted—round in the one, polygonal in the other. There are also effective differences in costume and the disposition of the folds which are apparent in the photographs, and require little comment. I must mention, however, those apparently descriptive details of the two figures which reconcile these differences and attach the divergent forms to the common framework. Such are the curved lines of the mantle of the left elder, enclosing the banded folds of the breast, and the straight lines of the same garment falling from the right leg behind the suspended instrument. In the other figure the same function is fulfilled by the viol and the curved bow, now mutilated, which produce a similar play of curves across the torso, and the vertical fall of drapery from the horizontal leg, accented by a jeweled border, in counterpart to the suspended instrument of the other figure. A close study of the movements of the figures, the wings, and the folds, which as representations of real objects are strange and quaintly elaborate, reveals in them an impassioned logicity of decorative directions. Each line reëchoes or answers its neighbor, and the mutual interest of these figures in the vision is corroborated in the relation of their smallest lines.<sup>99</sup>

The symmetry of these two figures is restless, although they are not in motion and express no inner disturbance, because their forms have been designed in sustained opposition. Even in those figures that are ostensibly moved by the vision of God and sit

99. A similar analysis could be made of the two adjoining elders at the ends of the upper row.

uneasily or cross their legs, the effect of animation is primarily an unnaturalistic contrivance of the sculptor, and derives more from the fantastic, but formulated, manipulation of lines than from the observation of excited human movements in nature.

The *contrapposto* observed in the capitals of the cloister is raised to a higher power on the tympanum by the forceful contrast of more numerous elements. The wonderful elders seated at the edges of the tympanum will illustrate this clearly (Figs. 100, 101). In these figures the movement of the head toward Christ is opposed by the arms or legs, as if the whole figure did not participate in the vision and the head were suddenly distracted from another object. Yet by these opposed movements, the apocalyptic expression of the tympanum is considerably heightened, and the excitement of the whole transmitted to every corner. The gesture which binds the elders to Christ is in fact part of an independent zigzag or *contrapposto* scheme. In the lower right figure (Fig. 100) the arms and thighs are carried to the right in contrast to the head, but the instrument is raised in opposition to this movement, and the left leg crossed with a similar intention. By a radical distortion of the ankle the right foot is turned to form a diagonal converging towards the left. The beard is prolonged as a braided band parallel to the viol, the left leg, and the right foot. This Romanesque *contrapposto* is distinguished from the spiral torsion of Renaissance art in that (among other things) the pliable parts of the body—the torso and neck—preserve an independent rigidity, the larger form is zigzag rather than curved, the opposed movements are usually in planes parallel to the background, and the contrasted elements are divided or terminated by intricate, winding, and broken lines. In the Romanesque works the balance is unplastic, unmassive, linear. There is no equilibrium of weights but a balance of directions in a single plane which is not designed to produce an ultimate repose. Instead of a redistribution of masses by which the body is relaxed, the sculptor has designed a scheme of opposed movements by which the limbs are uniformly strained and tense. In the two seraphim (Figs. 96, 97) the parallel bending of the legs balances the turn of the head, but this balance is an uneasy, restless posture that cannot be maintained. The knees are strained, and the legs fixed in a movement away from the rest of the figure. In the elder at the extreme right of the middle row (Fig. 101), the crossed feet form an unstable, unsupported mass. In the corresponding figure on the left the instrument is suspended diagonally, outside the main body mass. Observe how even in such small details as the position of the hand grasping the chalice, the sculptor has sometimes chosen an abstract and difficult articulation. In the middle zone of the left side of the tympanum (Fig. 98) the second elder holds the cup suspended between two fingers, not at the base but the upper bowl. The elder at the extreme right of the same zone (Fig. 101) has twisted his arm in order to grasp the chalice with the thumb outward.

On the tympanum the body is only one element in the equilibrium of the figure. It is part of a larger scheme in which the drapery and instruments have a considerable rôle. In the outer elder of the upper left zone, the body is bent diagonally from left to right, and the draperies suspended from his left arm and the parallel instrument, now destroyed, maintain the balance of the figure (Fig. 98). But even with this coördination of lines the result is less a stabilized movement of parts than a restless crossing of lines. I have already mentioned the extended instruments of other elders (Fig. 100) which, in balancing the turn of the head and legs, create an additional strain. The very overlapping of such figures with the meandering ribbon (Figs. 100, 101) is a reflection of the same character

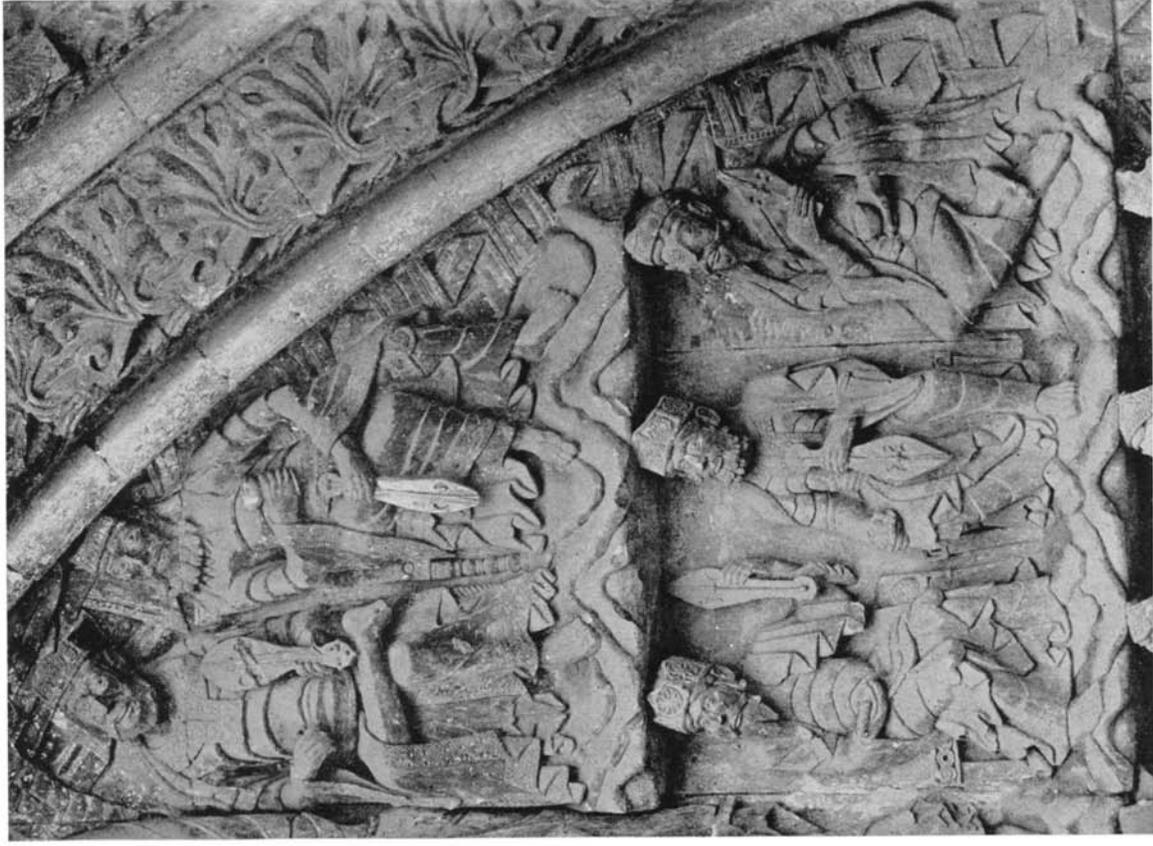


FIG. 99—Elders of Upper Right Rows  
*Moissac, Church: Details of Tympanum*

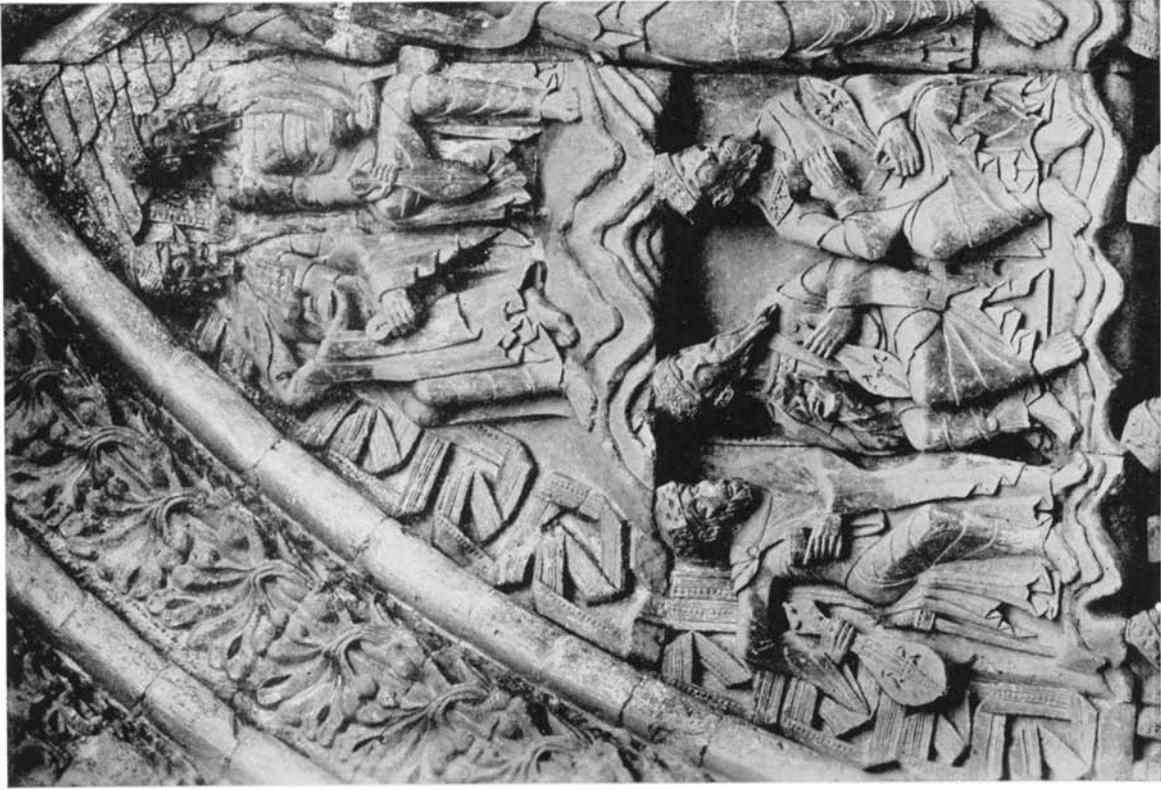


FIG. 98—Elders of Upper Left Rows

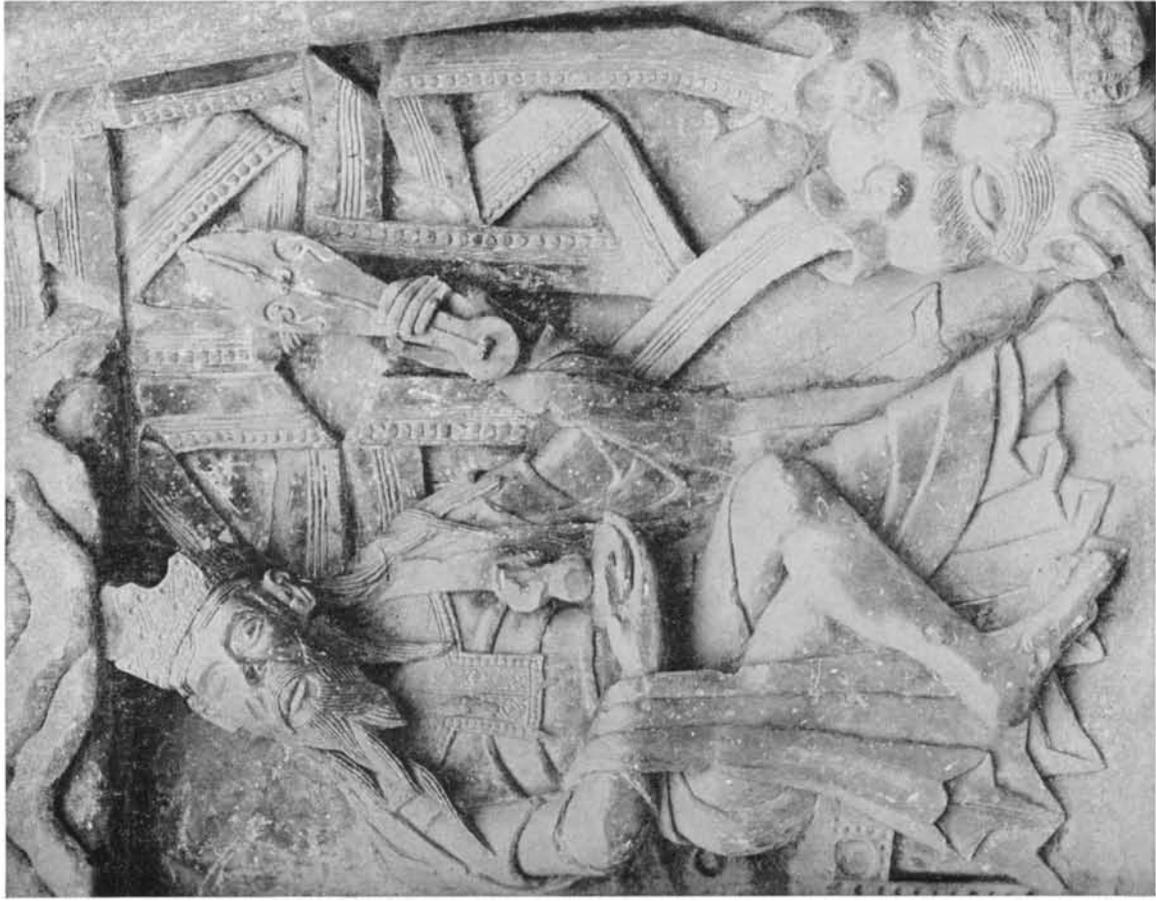


FIG. 100—Elder at Right End of Lowest Row  
Moissac, Church: Details of Tympanum



FIG. 101—Elder at Right End of Middle Row  
Moissac, Church: Details of Tympanum

of the style. Where such external lines do not enter to oppose or play with the body forms, the edges of the garment are broken in meandering pleats which produce a similar end. The body is rarely isolated as a self-contained, balanced mass, but is usually a dominant angular structure in a more complex system of nervous lines.

Even this dominant structure is subordinate to a linear surface design, despite its high relief and apparent plastic strength. There are numerous planes diagonal or perpendicular to the background, but they are limited to the individual figures and are never prolonged to modify the spatial form of the whole. They are not conceived as directions proceeding from the outer surface of the tympanum toward the background, but as the indispensable outward projection of a figure placed against a wall. We shall grasp this character of the figure more clearly when we have examined the space of the tympanum as a whole.

The apocalyptic vision is rendered on the tympanum rather than in it. The space of the literary conception is compressed into the architectural limits defined by the enclosing arch of the relief and the impenetrable Romanesque wall. The sculptor does not attempt to suggest an expanse wider than the portal or deeper than the thickness of the stone. If the elders and symbols circle about Christ, it is in one plane; they can step neither behind nor before Him.<sup>100</sup> They are the stones placed above or beside, none more salient than the other, to form a peculiar sculptured wall.

This archaic equality of projection is essential to the formal unity and the architectural setting, and is hardly perceived as a contradiction of the vision. Yet, just as the symmetry of the whole group includes the greatest asymmetry in its members, the apparently flat surface composition unites figures that are all so deeply cut as to constitute separate free statues in the round. Regarded from the side, the elders seem an array of men seated on a narrow ledge, rather than applied or engraved upon a wall (Fig. 103). The heads of some of them are even detached from the background, the necks undercut, and the arms and instruments free, except at one or two points. This new boldness in carving accounts in part for the destruction of projecting members and accessories.

But the contrast of figure and deep neutral background is so regular and organized that the seated elder, a statue in the round, with fully articulated, asymmetrical body, appears as a "*motif*," a flat unit repeated with decorative effect, as in the cloister capitals.

Each figure occupies a little less than the full depth demanded by his position. But since behind each figure we behold a common wall, and since no two figures overlap, the represented space appears to be limited to the depth of the elders' seats. The variety of movement achieved within this narrow space confirms its actuality. Yet the subordination of this movement to a total conception constructed primarily in line, in which each elder is a unit of a large surface composition, provokes our attention before the individual spaces described above.

For how arbitrary are the seating of the elders and the structure of the whole vision! The figures are superposed on narrow platforms so that those below can see only the heels of those above, and the object of the whole is only barely visible to the elders. In the Roman mosaic of the vision in S. Paolo fuori le mura the elders are ranged in two rows of which the upper figures are partly concealed by the lower and appear to be behind them. But

100. The text describes the elders as seated in a circle about Christ—in *circuitu sedis*. This spatial conception, which was observed by mediaeval commentators and

interpreted mystically, has been projected vertically on the wall of the tympanum. For its iconographic history, see Part II.

within the more extended depth of the earlier work there is an even less realistic coördination; for if the figures are turned towards Christ, their heads face the spectator. In Moissac, they are all turned to behold Christ, but they can hardly see Him for lack of space to turn in and a plausible viewpoint.

In this respect the tympanum is as archaic as the cloister capitals, in which the figures are also of relatively high relief and of equal salience, even if less boldly undercut. Whatever overlapping of figures appears in the tympanum is limited to their extremities, so that no one is in lower relief than another. The wings of the lion and bull cover parts of the seraphim's legs, but the bodies of the latter are as salient as the beasts', and no greater depth is effected by the overlapping.

Even the platforms on which the figures are placed are not strictly horizontal planes, but sloping surfaces, analogous to the astragals of the cloister. Their projection is, of course, more considerable, like a narrow stage, but still not sufficient to permit the full extension of the thighs of a seated figure. The thigh is therefore seen in profile, or is placed at an angle to the wall. But in the few figures whose legs are extended at right angles to the wall, the thighs are necessarily foreshortened, precisely as in the exceptions on the cloister capitals, and in contemporary drawings. The sculptor has tried to give the legs of Christ their full extension by inclining the lap as if the figure were seated on a sloping surface or were drawing His legs underneath the throne. A similar distortion is practiced in the sloping upper surface of some of the chairs of the elders (Figs. 99, 104). We recognize in it the survival of the more archaic vertical planes of the chairs and tables of the cloister.

Though their heads are turned at various angles the figures retain a characteristic axis, which reveals the underlying archaism of the whole conception. In only one figure are the shoulders not in strict frontality (Fig. 104). It is true that they cross their legs and extend their arms. But these movements are uniformly restrained and do not modify the simple block of the whole. They suggest in no way the penetration of the background wall, or a complete freedom of gesture. In no figure is the axis of the torso a curved line.

In the one elder whose shoulders are perpendicular to the background, the torso stiffly sustains this position (Fig. 104). The transition from the upper to lower body is therefore unreal. We may observe here how the more sophisticated conceptions of movement, when they appear in an archaic art, are transformed into schematic representations as arbitrary as the most primitive rendering of a figure at rest. The limbs are treated as separate units and combined in disregard of the complex torsion of connecting parts, which alone makes these movements possible.

That the movements of such figures were conceived on a flat surface appears from the extension of the instruments and from the peculiar distorted positions adopted in order to cross the legs and turn the body in parallel planes (Figs. 100, 101). If they generate no spatial design despite their twisted and restless postures, their limited movements in depth are nevertheless essential to the quality of the tympanum as a whole. The tympanum is so densely filled with irregular solids that hardly a smooth clear surface is visible in the entire work. The endless complication of radial and zigzag lines is paralleled to some extent by the play of projecting limbs. The cross-section of the tympanum at any level is of an extreme complexity and offers analogies to the overlapping and involvement of shorter lines in plane. How this circulation of forms within the limited depth of the relief was deliberately designed may be seen in the outer garment of the elder in the lower right



FIG. 102—*Under Surface of Lintel*



FIG. 103—*Elders of Bottom Row*



FIG. 104—*Elders of Bottom Row*  
*Moissac, Church: Details of Lintel and Tympanum*

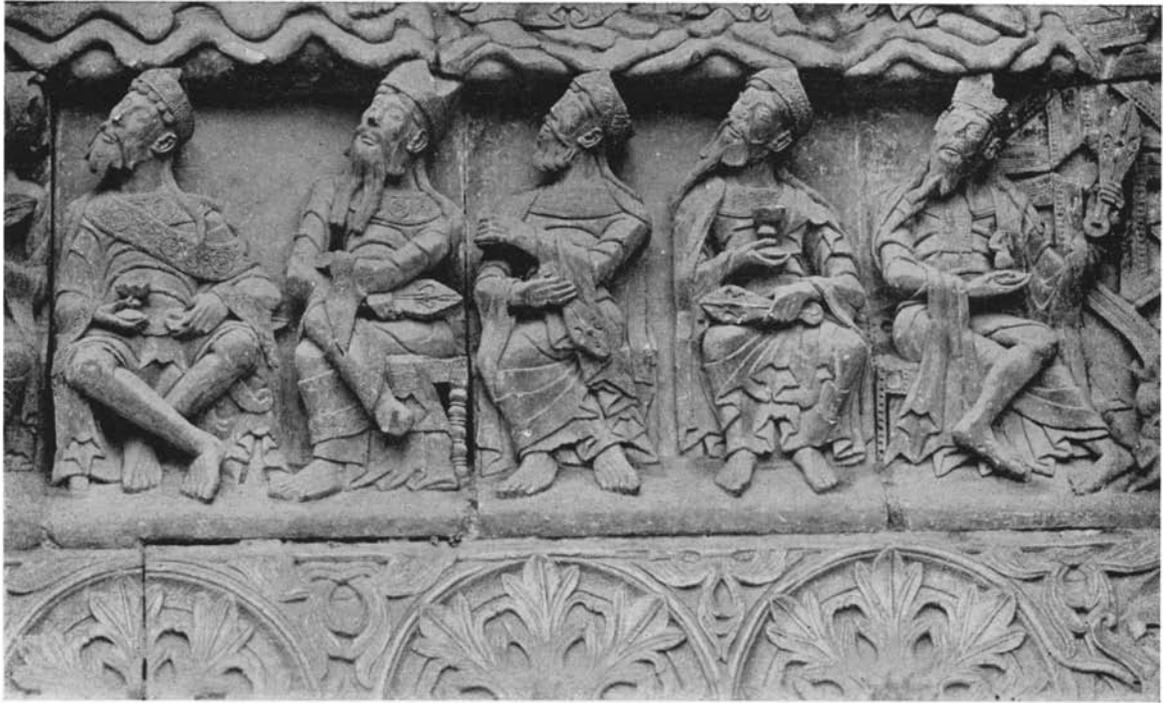


FIG. 105—*Elders of Lowest Row*



FIG. 106—*Elders of Lowest Row*  
*Moissac, Church: Details of Tympanum*

corner of the tympanum (Fig. 100). It passes behind the right shoulder, under the upper arm, across the forearm and right thigh, and behind the left foot. It is coiled in depth and interlaced with the body like the fantastic beard of the same figure. In the elder above him (Fig. 101) the mantle issues from behind the back through a triangle formed by the flexed arm, as through a knot, and falls behind the right foot, which by a similar design, is twisted around the left leg.

There are several figures in whom the contrast of limbs, although still subordinate to a linear surface design, implies the emergence of a more plastic and spatial relief. This is apparent in the two elders at the left end of the middle row, whose legs are turned towards each other (Fig. 98). In the outer figure the overlapping of the arms, the instrument, and the winding ribbon produces an active recession of forms in space, which is confirmed, by the diagonal projection of the right thigh and the inclination of the head and crown. The mantle asserts its spatial character in its inclination from the projecting knee to the right shoulder and in its draping of the left arm.

Yet even in these figures the contrasting limbs are designed primarily on a common surface as directions or lines, to which the necessary realization of the individual form of each part gave a more spatial character. The diagonal projection of the legs in both elders was first conceived as a diagonal movement in plane. The shoulders and torso remain parallel to the background, and the feet are brought forward to the same plane, though the thighs are at a marked angle to the surface. It is noteworthy that in no instance is a leg bent sharply backward in depth, but in many figures it is inclined diagonally, parallel to the surface (Fig. 96).<sup>101</sup>

The figure of the angel symbolizing Matthew includes the typical distortions resulting from the embodiment of intense movement, designed in a single plane, in figures carved in the round, with an archaic prejudice toward distinct forms, generalized representation, and parallel planes (Fig. 95). His pose suggests a body placed in depth perpendicular or diagonal to the surface of the tympanum; in fact, the prominence of his belly with its rounded contour is distinctly that of a figure in profile. Likewise, the outline of his left shoulder, which has been foreshortened, belongs to a profile position. But if we regard the other shoulder we shall see that it does not extend into the wall in the expected direction; it is parallel to the background like the shoulders of Christ and the seated elders. The whole figure is in consequence distorted; but from this arbitrary manipulation results a greater energy of movement. The limbs appear to be all the less restrained. These positions are not really impossible, but they may be achieved in actuality only with effort, and are precariously sustained. Such also is the crossing of the angel's legs. The feet are brought to the same plane of the foreground instead of standing one behind the other. We perceive this at once as the necessary accompaniment of the twisting of the shoulders and the crossing of the arms. The head and hands are opposed above like the two feet below, as the terminations of the diagonals of a great X which underlies this figure. The extended arm of Christ adds another diagonal to the whole scheme. In accord with this intensity of gesture, the contours of the figure are wavy and zigzag. We have only to follow the outline of the upper part of the figure, the lifted book, the arm, shoulder, and head and compare it with that of the left side, of the projecting leg, the belly and the mantle edge, to see that

101. There is a slight bending of the legs of the seraphim.

the effect of energy and movement depends not on the posture alone, but on the play of body and drapery contours as well. The shapes of adjacent objects also contribute to this movement of a single figure. The extended arm of Christ has already been mentioned; observe also the feathers of the wing above the angel's head, the nimbus, and the curved line of the starred mandorla which rises from behind it.

We see from this analysis that the distortion of the body arises from a linear design rather than from plastic preoccupations. To cross the limbs so energetically as to produce an X and a related zigzag silhouette and maintain at the same time the clearer and more characteristic views of the parts of the body required an inconsistency of articulation which hardly deterred a sculptor to whom the form of the whole body was a pliable expressive linear aggregate of separate limbs.

The persistence of an archaic system of forms is apparent in the inconsistent directions of the glance and the turn of the head. Because of the universal attraction to Christ we interpret each eye as directed toward Him. But in most of the elders, and especially those at the ends, the inclination of the head has only a symbolical and compositional reference to Christ. The eyeballs themselves are perfectly smooth or have an iris or pupil incised at the center of the eye. If the glance were prolonged as a line perpendicular to the horizontal axis of the eyeballs, it would fall in most cases, not on the figure of Christ, but outside the tympanum, far before Him.

This apparent contradiction of the intended glance and the turn of the head is a modern inference from assumptions foreign to the Romanesque sculptor. The composition was designed in one plane and the turn of the head *represents* a movement on the surface of the tympanum, and not in a space, around or within it, unformulated and unimagined by the sculptor. The figures appear to us isolated, freely moving three-dimensional objects, but although they are such in substance, they were not entirely such in the thought of the artist. The glance was for him, not a direction in three-dimensional space, but like other large movements, a line on the plane surface of the image. A strictly frontal figure like Christ can therefore have no glance; it would presuppose a space outside the image. To determine the intended glance of the Romanesque figures of the tympanum, we should draw lines in the plane of the latter, continuing the horizontal axis of the eyes. They would then converge approximately to the head of Christ.

If the sculptor admitted the necessary profile views of the heads of the elders directly beneath Christ (Fig. 104), it was not simply because this turn alone was plausible, or more consistent with a spaceless conception than another posture, like that of the Byzantine and Gothic shepherds who look up frontally to see the angels. It is motivated also by the dynamic (and, in a sense, kinematic) concentration on Christ achieved by a progressively effected coincidence of the posture and the glance; it conforms to the central position of these heads beneath Christ, and their symmetrical opposition beneath the divergent feet of the latter. Since the gaze of a figure is defined by the prolongation of the horizontal axis of the eye, or a line in the plane of the tympanum perpendicular to the vertical axis of the face, a head, directly beneath Christ, could see Him only if turned in a horizontal profile.<sup>102</sup>

102. For an analogous turn of the head in a figure looking directly upwards, see Lauer, *Les enluminures romanes de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, Paris, 1926, pl. XXXII

—a miniature of the mid-eleventh century from St.-Germain-des-Prés (B. N. lat. 11550).

In a later sculpture of the same magnitude, the outer figures would be turned in the sharpest profile and the more central individuals would maintain a three-quarter or frontal position. For since the heads are carved in the round, the spectator from his central viewpoint would see the peripheral profile heads in three-quarters, unless the profile were radically accentuated. In Moissac, however, each figure is carved as if seen from a point directly opposite; and is bound up with the whole by a linear and surface, not spatial, design. The insistent representation of twenty-four profiles would have been repugnant to a sculptor dedicated to a clearer expansion of known surfaces, and would have, besides, over-accented the subordination to Christ in a field of which each corner has also a private activity. Such a consistent profiling would also have produced an inevitable movement in depth in each figure, and commanded either a profile body, in contradiction of the primarily parallel relief planes of the whole, or a violent contrast in each figure of the profile head and frontal body.

The profile heads of several figures in the lowest zone are significant of a considerable elasticity or variability in the style. They indicate that the sculptor was not rigidly committed to a necessary archaic method, but, as in the capitals of the cloister, employed more developed forms (perhaps invented in the process of design). This is verified by the diversity of eye forms in the elders, which include a range from the most archaic smooth, unincised, unexpressive eyeball to an eye in which the iris is a concavity slightly off *both* axes of the eyeball. In several elders (Fig. 101), this concavity becomes, because of the inclination of the head, the locus of an active glance, like the more impressionistically modeled eyes of a later art. Only its lack of a consistent spatial relation with the figure of Christ forbids us to identify this conception of the eye with a naturalistic rendering of a glance. Naturalistic details and individuals were sooner created than naturalistic groups.

A marked development in representation is apparent in other parts of the figure beside the eye, and corresponds to the greater complexity of relief and linear design in the tympanum as compared with the cloister capitals. The proportions are still arbitrary, ranging from the superhuman height of Christ and the angels to the dwarfed figures of some of the elders, but they imply a freer choice and a greater knowledge of actual shapes than in the earlier works. For the heads are no longer the preponderant mass that was observed in the cloister; if the elders appear so short, it is partly because of the hierarchal distinctions implied in the proportions of the various figures of the tympanum, partly because of the exigencies of spacing, as well as the persistence of the original archaism. The larger scale of the whole work permitted a greater relief and a more detailed rendering of familiar forms.

The structure of the limbs emerges more clearly from beneath the drapery than in the cloister, though still simplified. The swelling of the calf, the contour of the ankle and foot are finely observed (Fig. 100), and utilized as important lines of the composition of a figure. The jointing has become looser, so that less distortion results from the movements of hand and foot, and the fingers are bent with greater freedom. No hand in the cloister reveals such precise observation as the left hand of Christ, clasping the book (Fig. 94). On the right wrist there are faint traces of a ridging that correspond to the tendon structure, unobserved in the cloister. Instead of the few conventional positions of the hand admitted in the cloister, the sculptor has produced a great variety, including some distorted hands of unarchaic complexity. The feet likewise show a more refined observation and increased knowledge. Less mobile than the hands, they were sooner copied with an effect of complete accuracy.

The greatest verity was sought in the reproduction of surface ornament, such as the jeweled borders of the garments, the *cabochons* of the crowns, and the embroidered rosettes of the cushion and cloth behind the figure of Christ. These are of an incredible minuteness and fidelity, in contrast to the broad chiseling of the other surfaces. Such exactitude was already visible in the earlier works of the cloister, and is not surprising in an art which reduces organic forms to decorative combinations. In reproducing this ornament the sculptor was engaged not so much in the imitation of nature as in the repetition of a familiar ornamental *motif* in stone.

The musical instruments are an excellent example of this kind of realistic representation which is simply the reproduction of an object, itself a work of contemporary art. The sculptor fashioned the instrument in stone in its actual dimension and detail, as did the original craftsman in wood. It offered no problem of adjustment to scale or perspective, for it was carved in the round and sometimes even detached from the background. The stone was sufficiently thick to permit a full reproduction without need of foreshortening. The forms were easy to render, since they were essentially Romanesque creations. From these sculptured instruments it is possible to reconstruct precisely the instrumentation of the period. Not only have the surfaces been carefully copied, but the strings are separately inventoried, and in one case a bow has been introduced. Such literalness is nevertheless not unartistic. The positions of the instruments, their angles with respect to the seated and variously turned figures, are finely determined. But even the instruments themselves are beautiful and we must concede an aesthetic intention in the precise reproduction of shapes so graceful.

In the modeling of the larger body masses, like the torso and legs, the sculptor reduced the whole variety of surface articulation to a few broad planes. Such is the construction of the figure of Christ, Who is divided into several sharply contrasted surfaces, all quite flat, on which numerous folds are inscribed. The richness of surface is primarily linear rather than plastic. Even the rounding of the legs and the hollow of the lap are sacrificed to this impressive architectural severity of the figure. A single broad plane defines the upper legs and lap, another joins the lower legs, in disregard of the concave surface that ordinarily appears between them on so close-fitting a garment.

Of this quadrature of the body structure, the beautiful elder who sits at the extreme left in the middle row is a powerful example (Fig. 98). The thigh and leg have become prismatic blocks; their planes are contrasted like those of the crown of the elder and the sides of his stringed instrument.

The heads of the figures are squared in the manner of archaic Greek sculpture. The contrast of the planes of brow and eyes, of the sides of the nose, of cheeks and jaws, is so sharp that the stereotomic character of the work is brought into striking relief. The head has the appearance of quarried stone, and the features seem hewn rather than chiseled. This vigorous construction of the head accents the symmetry of the features. On a wall less sheltered from the sun these heads would invite a more interesting light and shade with abrupt transitions and clearly outlined shadows. The division of planes accords with the conception of drawing, which delineates geometrically correct features, arches the brows high above the eyes, and isolates the parts distinctly to assure perfect clarity.

Not the head alone, but the more complex structure of crown, head, and beard, constitutes the sculptural unit. These are united as the separate parts of a building in three

dimensions, three superposed storeys, each unlike the other, with clear lines of demarcation. The addition of crown and beard suggests a wonderful variety of plastic combinations. In each head the disposition of hair and crown has a characteristic plan that is uniquely related to the facial structure.

On the crowns, small *cabochons* and filigree *motifs* form an applied surface ornament which rarely modifies the structure or contour of the crown. But the beards are in themselves ornamental patterns, formed by the repetition and symmetrical grouping of locks and curls and the parallel striation of individual hairs, as in the more primitive figures of the cloister piers. But on the tympanum, the sculptor, with greater freedom in the use of radial and wavy lines, has produced more varied combinations in the effort to distinguish the hair and beard of each of the twenty-four elders. The rich variety of beard and hair seems deliberately cultivated, like the arbitrary breaks and pleatings of the garments and their jeweled borders, rather than a simple imitation of contemporary manners. The elaborateness of the hair recalls classic descriptions of the customs of the Germanic peoples and the earlier Celts.<sup>103</sup> But it is doubtful that the finely combed, long hair, beards, and moustaches of the Romanesque tympanum are simply imitation of a historical practice. The braiding of the hair and beard of one elder (Fig. 100) is known earlier in Irish art<sup>104</sup> and in Romanesque sculptures in Toulouse,<sup>105</sup> Saint-Antonin,<sup>106</sup> Verona,<sup>107</sup> Silos,<sup>108</sup> Chartres,<sup>109</sup> and Leon.<sup>110</sup> But these examples are so exceptional that we must regard the form, whether found in life or in art, as an artistic *motif*, an assimilation of the wavy, mingled strands of hair to a familiar mediaeval ornament. This is especially apparent in the Irish examples which are associated with borders of intricate interlaced bands. Likewise, the spiral locks of the beard of Christ recall the palmette designs of impostes in the cloister. The use of braided and more pronounced radial patterns on the tympanum, as distinguished from the simpler, though equally ornamental hair forms of the cloister, corresponds to the heightened linear complexity and movement in the former.

Even though the features have been much more closely observed in the tympanum, the absence of facial expression is almost as marked here as in the cloister. The various combinations of hair do not conceal from us the uniform impersonality of the elders. The excitement of the figures in an apocalyptic experience is hardly indicated by their features. Except for the smile of the Matthew symbol and the left seraph, the heads are utterly impassive. It is remarkable that this peculiar smile should alone among all possible expressions of the face precede the others in both Romanesque and archaic Greek sculpture. The Greek archaeologists have sometimes questioned the meaning of this

103. Barrière-Flavy, *Les arts industriels des peuples barbares de la Gaule*, Toulouse, Privat, 1901, I, pp. 75-80. The native Celt-Iberic population are often beardless in the Roman reliefs—cf. Déchelette, *Manuel d'archéologie préhistorique*, II, *Archéologie celtique ou protohistorique*, pt. 3, Paris, 1914, p. 1582; and Éperandieu, *Recueil des bas-reliefs de la Gaule romaine*, 9 vols., 1907-1928, *passim*.

104. Cf. Saint-Gall ms. 51—Beissel, *Geschichte der Evangelienbücher*, Freiburg i. Br., 1906, fig. 33. For examples in Irish sculpture, see H. S. Crawford, *Handbook of Carved Ornament from Irish Monuments of the Christian Period*, Dublin, 1926, pl. L.

105. Porter, *Romanesque Sculpture of the Pilgrimage Roads*, Boston, 1923, ills. 434, 435.

106. *Ibid.*, fig. 359.

107. R. Hamann, *Deutsche und französische Kunst im Mittelalter*, I, 1923, fig. 107. A similar treatment of the hair in a figure in the Duomo of Ferrara—*ibid.*, fig. 104.

108. Porter, *Spanish Romanesque Sculpture*, New York, 1928, I, pl. 35.

109. E. Houvet, *La cathédrale de Chartres, Portail Royal*, pls. 18, 26.

110. Porter, *Romanesque Sculpture of the Pilgrimage Roads*, ill. 697. There is an example in S. Clemente, Santiago—a figure of a prophet in the style of Master Mateo.

expression and have even doubted that it was designed to represent a smile. But in Moissac it is probably a sign of beatitude or joy before God; in later scenes of the Last Judgment it appears in unmistakable emphasis upon the faces of the blessed.<sup>111</sup>

I do not believe that it is simply a religious expression, just as it would be wrong to explain the impassivity of the elders as a consciously constructed image of their dignified attention to Christ or of their changeless nature. The very presence of this smile in archaic Greek sculpture and in early arts in China and Central America, which otherwise maintained a common impassivity, calls for another, if only complementary explanation. The more usual absence of facial expression is readily intelligible in the archaic context of plastically simple forms which are compounded of the durable and familiar aspects of objects. That the smile does occur in Moissac is less strange when we observe its limitation to a few figures and its innocence of realistic description. It is a simple curvature of the mouth rather than the revision of the whole face in emotion. Is the smile perhaps the archaic type of all facial expression, the most generalized and contagious form of facial excitement? And is the happiness of the angels in Moissac a theological *motif* congenial to a sculptor who was for the first time preoccupied with the representation of feeling, just as in late arts incidents of extreme suffering are a chosen matter for realistic reproduction? When the wounded soldiers of Aegina grimace with pain, the mouth is turned up as in the contrary archaic smile.

For the expressive effect of the whole tympanum the introduction of special meanings in the faces of so many little figures would have been a superfluous and distracting effort. We have seen that the common excitement is transmitted in a much more subtle and striking manner by purely abstract means. Of these, the elaboration of drapery forms deserves a special description. From the inanimate garments the sculptor derived more numerous and more intricate patterns of movement than from the human figure. In the design of the tympanum the figures are indeed skeletons which without their draperies would possess some articulation but hardly their present intensity.

The complication of drapery forms was inevitable in an expressive linear style which had for its chief subject matter the clothed human figure, and which was associated with an ornament of traditional linear complexity. In an art which rarely represented facial expressions, limited gesture to a few conventional movements, and conceived nude forms only in rare religious contexts, the greatest possibilities of expression, of surface enrichment and of linear design lay in the garment. The most complex drapery forms, the most exaggerated movement of folds, are significantly found in those schools of Romanesque art which betray their dynamic end in the extraordinary elongation of the figures and their unstable postures. But in Auvergne and Tuscany, where the garments cling more closely to the figure and are less intricate, the figures are unusually squat and lethargic.

The rendering of a fluent, mobile object like drapery hardly seems upon first thought a subject matter of an art as archaic as the sculpture of Moissac. But the process which simplifies the nude body and selects clear positions and monumental groupings also orders

111. As in the Last Judgment of the portal of Bourges cathedral. In the legend of Turkill, the hero, passing through Paradise observed that "Adam was smiling with one eye and weeping with the other; smiling at the thought of those of his descendants who would find

eternal life, and weeping at the thought of those destined to damnation." (From M. P. Asin, *Islam and the Divine Comedy*, London, 1926, p. 200.) The individual expressions are realistically observed, but their symmetrical, conceptual, unorganic combination is an archaic *motif*.

the succession of folds in parallel or concentric surfaces. If these retain, in spite of the archaic treatment, the mobile quality of actual garments and, in fact, an even more extreme activity, it is because the processes of representation are in this style subordinate to an essentially dynamic expressive end. In the following analysis, we shall see that the drapery forms of the tympanum are unplastic linear abstractions of a geometric character, and that the great freedom and energy of movement spring from the arbitrary combination of simple stereotypes, in many ways unlike the forms of actual folds. The same folds in the Gothic period have a corresponding Gothic style and accord with the increasing naturalism and informality in the conception of the whole figure.

In the drapery of a Gothic or more recent sculpture, single folds are inseparable from the whole; they are more plastic than the Romanesque and mingle in such a way that whatever their patterning and linear organization they are perceived at once as parts of a common structure. We can trace no groove without observing the influence of neighboring forms on its expansion and movement; its origin is usually indefinite or vague. On the early Romanesque figures, folds may be more readily isolated, despite their apparent complexity. The entire pleating of the lower edges constitutes a system independent of the upper portion; while the single grooves on the torso and legs are separate, unplastic elements attached to the garment like the buttons or fringes on a modern dress. The drapery resembles in this respect the forms of the figure itself. Just as eyes, nose, and lips are separate elements compounded to form the whole, so the folds are distinguishable entities on the costume, no matter how involved and contrasted.<sup>112</sup> This point, which appears obvious, is worth making since it confirms the pervasive character of the processes of representation and the style, whether occupied with animate or inanimate things.

The costume of the tympanum figures consists of the following pieces—a long, undecorated undergarment that falls to the ankles, a tunic reaching to a point just below the knees, usually bordered at the collar and lower edge with inlaid jewelry, and a simple mantle, only rarely buckled. Not one figure wears shoes. All but the two seraphim and the symbols are crowned. The crowns are not of one form, but round, square, polygonal, and are adorned with a variety of lozenge and simple foliate patterns. The elders are variously clothed; some wear all three garments, others only two, and on several we can detect but one robe. The ornaments likewise vary, both in their distribution on the collars and other borders and in the very *motifs* employed. The system of design is uniform and traditional. It consists of the repetition, in alignment, of one *motif*, or of two in alternation. The lozenge and the rosette are most common, while the simple bead or pearl is the usual filling of the interspaces. The high relief of some lozenges, the circumscribed circles, the carving of facets on both lozenge and circular units, point to the imitation of actual *cabochons*. Filigree technique appears in the beaded borders of some rosettes and in the beads attached to long fine filaments.

The variety of costume is especially interesting to us since it is not commanded by iconographic distinctions. It is an arbitrary subject matter which reflects at the same time a realistic predilection for diversity and a style that multiplies oppositions. It is in turn a source of surface variations and formal contrasts.

In the figures of the tympanum we are hardly aware of distinct robes, but of numberless pleats, folds, borders, broken edges, and overlapping planes of cloth, at first difficult to

112. In the early Romanesque sculptures of Moissac the folds are primarily pleats, in later art, creases.

disentangle. There are no clearly exposed, undivided surfaces on the garments. But this seeming chaos of drapery includes only a few types of pleats and breaks. These are entirely arbitrary schematizations of actual folds, multiplied without exact reference to an existing model for enrichment of sculptural surface and line.

On the tympanum the bare incised line common in the most primitive arts is exceptional and subordinate. It appears on the sleeves of some of the elders as a decorated border or as a rendering of a particular texture, sometimes as a faint wrinkle at the elbow joint. Its ornamental function is apparent also in the figures of Christ and the Matthew symbol as a line accompanying a more plastic or salient parallel fold.

Instead, the double fold already described in the reliefs and capitals of the cloister is more commonly used. It is limited, however, to the figures of Christ, the seraphim, and the symbol of Matthew. Sometimes it is repeated in simple concentric loops or radial curves, as on the arms of the seraphim; sometimes two groups of such lines, proceeding from opposite sides of a limb or garment, interlock in alternation. This device was familiar in later classic art; it arose from the stylization of the great, deep-grooved folds of a suspended classical garment. It occurs, for example, on the Victories of the podium of the Arch of Constantine and on numerous figures in the province of Gaul.<sup>113</sup> But in Moissac, the classic subordination of these lines has been carried even further; they are only superficial modifications of the actual surface of the figures; their repetition constitutes a secondary ornament beside the more powerful lines of the legs and torso.

The figures are swathed in their tunics as if bandaged by rolls of heavy cloth. The torsos are divided by concentric or parallel lines formed by the contours of these superposed bands. A similar banding covers the arms and legs, but here the lines are often radial. The garment is of so thick a cloth that the outline of a limb is stepped or broken by the succession of overlapping bands. On the central figures of the tympanum a finely incised line accompanies such folds. On the thigh of the Matthew symbol this incision is doubled. The alternate interlocking of two systems of adjacent concentric folds, such as occurs in the double folds, is also applied to these prominent lines between the legs of the right seraph.

The forms described thus far determine for the most part curved lines and concentric groups. They are the forms of draperies fixed to the body and inscribed on its surface, and hence limited to simple lines, whether curved or straight. They are not the most effective devices of movement employed on the tympanum, but their restless character is evident in two peculiarities of their application. They are designed perpendicular to the axis of the limb which they cover, and hence are opposed to its general form. We will grasp this effect more readily if we imagine a column banded with horizontal rings instead of flutings parallel to its axis. Imagine the corresponding Greek figures with the folds of their garments, not falling in easy verticals, but grooved horizontally about their bodies. In the second place, by the overlapping of such bands of cloth in concentric shells, the large simplified expanse of the leg or torso becomes broken and incomplete, like a telescoped object. The surface loses its definiteness, and although hardly modeled, is perceived as a composite of numerous minor surfaces. Thus an animated plastic effect is achieved with a minimum of relief. The device remains archaic in the similarity of these bands and in their regular succession.

113. *Ésperandieu, Recueil*, II, p. 309, no. 411.

These folds are too subordinate to the human figure to have suggested possibilities of intense linear interplay to a sculptor little concerned with anatomical truth and plastic variety. Wherever the garment is only partially attached to the figure so that at least one of its ends hangs freely, the design acquires a remarkable richness from the elaboration of the consequent broken contour. The independence of anatomical constraint does not imply an unrestrained fancy. On the contrary, the shape of a hanging bit of drapery is singularly conventional and is limited to as few forms as the ornament of prehistoric pottery. But these forms occur in such a variety of situations that the poverty of *motif* is hardly apparent.

Suspended drapery never falls here as one broad mass. It is subdivided by numerous parallel or radial pleats, all equally flat. The pleats are pressed so close to one another that no arris confronts the spectator. But in contradiction of this piling up of flat, almost parallel pleats, their lower contours form larger angles than their superimposed surfaces, as if the edge of the garment were diagonal rather than horizontal.

This is an archaic device, analogous to the vertical surfaces of the tables and seats of the cloister capitals and the peculiar polygonal terminations of the garments of the apostles. The lower edges are very definitely exposed as if they were parts of a system of pleats forming angles of forty-five degrees. In the cloister this same convention was apparent—sometimes, as in the east gallery, even more arbitrarily applied. It is also familiar in the early sculptures of Greece and China.<sup>114</sup>

In this contour the artist tries to reveal the full expansion of folds, of which the main surface is partly concealed, and to make the overlapping of drapery entirely clear. The edge is defined by ascending and descending, less frequently horizontal, sequences of meandering and zigzag lines. The excitement of well distributed, alternately advancing and receding lines, unequally accented by relief and shadow, is heightened by the play of the verticals they terminate. The simplest zigzag is of perfectly straight lines, all diagonal. The angle ranges from ninety degrees to very acute openings.

Often the pleating is more dense and intricate; the tucked surface is brought far under the outer layer, and meander patterns of extremely narrow interval are produced by the lower edges. Not content with the simple regularity of the common zigzag, the sculptor breaks each of its lines in two, forming an inner obtuse angle, as if the pleats were folded in the center. Although the pleat remains as flat as before, its broken lower contour suggests an equally broken surface. But it is primarily an enrichment of line that is sought in this device, although the more complex form may well have been of remote realistic origin.

Beside these fan-shaped pleatings, a symmetrical form analogous to the peculiar polygonal patterning of the lower edge of the garments in the cloister is frequently employed on the tympanum. It may be defined as a symmetrical system of pleats of which the lower contours ascend diagonally to the central fold. The folds between Christ's legs are a clear example of this form. The border of his outer tunic has been disposed to produce two such groups of zigzags.

In several elders such contours are independent of lengthy pleats but terminate a small bell-like structure at the ankle, attached to the main body of the garment by a thin pleat or even a knot (Fig. 105-left).

114. Lechat, *Au musée de l'acropole d'Athènes*, Paris, 1903, fig. 29; K. With, *Die asiatische Plastik*, pl. 27.

At the left ankle of Christ such a fold is monstrously expanded and exaggerated without a clear motivation in the form of the garment or the movement of the figure. The long wavy fold that attaches the fan-like pleats to the tunic is difficult to explain. This stem appears to be a ribbon or loose end of clothing projecting from an invisible undergarment. It is based upon a more intelligible model, of which the parts have been combined without exact reference to their original relation. In classic and Carolingian art, on garments rendered as if blown by the wind, a long diagonal fold terminated in a domical structure that flew behind.<sup>115</sup> The diagonal was the index of the swiftness of the movement; the smaller its angle with the ground the greater the velocity and the current which provoked the fold at its end. The figure of Christ bearing a long cross in the canons of the Gospels of Saint-Médard-de-Soissons is a clear illustration of the original type.<sup>116</sup> In Moissac the connection of the terminal structure with the central portion of the tunic has been misunderstood. It is attached to the end of the garment, yet the copied diagonal fold is added to connect the blown portion with the unmoved central part to which neither belongs.

There is another inconsistent but necessary detail in the drapery of Christ which is a traditional survival of an ancient, misunderstood form. A hanging fold across the torso, passing under the drapery of the right arm, is a remnant of the sash formed in late classic art by the disposition of the mantle across the waist and abdomen. In classic figures the folds that covered the right arm emerged from under this sash as on the tympanum. The Christ of the mosaic of Santa Pudenziana in Rome is an illustration of the prototype of the Romanesque figure.<sup>117</sup> Here the mantle thrown across the body is no slight suspended band but a broad sash that covers the under-tunic. As in Moissac the earlier Christ of the mosaic is enthroned and extends his right hand in a similar benediction. Although the original function of this bit of drapery has been lost in the sculpture, the artist has distinguished it clearly from the adjoining folds. He has accented its continuity with the extended arm in the very interception of the opposed concentric, convex lines of the torso, and hence its anaxial or eccentric participation in the symmetrical scheme of the curves of the lion and the bull. By these oppositions the axial figure of Christ in the center of the encircling group becomes even more unstable, more active.

The simplicity of the linear devices described above has its counterpart in the character of the modeling or relief of the garments. The obvious definiteness of the single contours, which is called by a just metaphor, "geometrical," is matched by the relative regularity of the larger surfaces. The garment envelopes the body faithfully without any plastic self-assertion. The multiplication of pleats does not alter the surface of the limbs but determines a slightly thicker shell at certain points. If the drapery modifies the underlying body structure at all, it is in the sense of a tectonic simplification which creates one broad plane across the legs to cover the hollow ordinarily between them. On this plane the folds are superposed, each quite flat, or incised. Where the folds hang or fall outside the figure they are attached to a chair or background wall or form a surface parallel to the latter. Even in those pleats which are slightly diagonal to the wall, as at the left ankle of Christ, the separate surfaces are flat, and there is little or no contrast with curved forms, and no irregular flow. The

115. Reinach, *Repertoire de reliefs Grecs et Romains*, Paris, 1909, I, pp. 223, 224 (Phigaleia); Éspérandieu, *Recueil*, IV, p. 201.

116. A. Boinet, *La miniature carolingienne*, Paris, 1913, pl. 20.

117. Van Berchem and Clouzot, *Mosaiques chrétiennes*, Geneva, 1924, fig. 66.

profiles or sections of folds illustrate the archaic character of the relief. True relief is measured not by the absolute depth of cutting but by the depth represented and by the variety of section of boss and hollow. In the tympanum the relief is less the result of modeling or shaping of surfaces than of the superposition of similar layers on a projecting mass. The extension of limbs carries with it the salience of the garment and its suspended folds; but these are themselves unarticulated and show no tensions or movement in a third dimension, independent of the structure beneath them. The whole effect is of great massy surfaces with intricately cut boundaries and a network of lines.

There is a departure from the vigorous application of this conception in the shallow fluting of some vertical folds, and in the corrugation of broad surfaces, like the torso, by grooves zigzag in profile. But the very stylization of these departures shows how well established is the linear rather than plastic notion of drapery. Even in the few folds of curved rather than zigzag or meander contour, the surfaces retain the simplicity of the others. The relief of the garments is fundamentally no different from that of a pressed pleated ribbon. This is the more evident in the figures seated near the frame adjoining the fine meander border.

Hence the draperies invite almost no contrast of light and shade except along contours. This is precisely the plastic character of the undraped primitive figure. The contours of drapery at Moissac are often undercut, lifted above the background, but the raised surfaces are hardly articulated in a third dimension. The drapery design is, therefore, as far as modeling is concerned, in no opposition to the principles governing the high relief and vigorous salience of the bodies. Where it covers them, the drapery is a simple shell, richly adorned by concentric or radial lines, and where it leaves the bodies it forms in turn a flat body in low relief, treated like them.

The multiplication of parallel surfaces, however unplastic, remains a striking feature of the relief of the tympanum. It suggests the unsuccessful effort to attain a varied plastic form by the addition of unplastic elements, like unextended points arranged to form a theoretical line. But this is not really the function of such an accumulation of layers of relief. Its evident effect has already been observed in the description of the ring-like folds of the legs and torso, which produce an active contrast of lines and a disturbance of the larger surface. By the overlapping of pleats a similarly, if not more intensely, restless surface is produced despite the flatness of the whole. The larger planes seem to be covered by irregular shreds, like the surface of an object intricately wrapped innumerable times.

The ornamented borders of the garments are important parts of the drapery design. They provide a surface roughened, pitted, minutely grooved, and bossed, in contrast to the flat areas of the garment. Originally these jeweled bands were painted, like the rest of the tympanum, and this contrast must have been reënforced by color. How the drapery design was affected by the polychromy we can no longer say, for no large tympanum has preserved its original color intact. At Conques, where the fading color is still visible, the tones are so blond and light, so delicate, that they are little more than surface decoration; no plastic accentuation is intended, and not even a strong pattern results. I think it is not improbable that on the tympanum of Moissac the crowns and all other metallic details were gilded; that the undergarments and mantles were distinguished by contrasting tones; that the background itself was painted and entered more prominently into the design.

The prominence of this jeweled detail is indicative of the primitive character of the art, not because barbaric taste for richness is reflected, but because the effect of a colorful or rich relief is demanded from applied surface detail and ornament rather than from plastic variation. In later art it is by furrowing deeply and chiseling the body and the garments to yield an endless play of boss and hollow that a diversified surface is obtained. The use of jeweled detail in broad flat bands is in a sense anti-plastic. This is especially apparent in Byzantine painting in those figures of monarchs and angels who are laden with richly ornamented garments. In them the modeling of the limbs and folds, which is common in other figures, even of the same works, is less evident.

It is clear from this inventory of the details of the drapery of the tympanum that although they include all the elements of drapery form present in the cloister they are closest as a group to the capitals of the south gallery. In the latter were observed the same proliferation of folds, the swathing of the body in numerous pleats, and the jeweled detail. The edges of garments are often broken into meandering lines like those of the tympanum. Like the latter, they are predominantly angular, and sometimes extend beyond the outlines of the body as if blown by the wind. In the elders, the incised double fold is rarely employed although it is visible on the garments of the taller figures of the tympanum. The chief differences between the drapery style of the portal and that of the south gallery are in the relation of the unit or small detail to the whole figure and in the richness of effect. On the tympanum the cutting of the folds is more vigorous and powerful; the contours are more vivacious and irregular, and the whole surface is more diversified by the pleating than on the capitals. The banding of the torso is never as prominent on the latter as in the tympanum. The extension of this concentric banding to the legs does not occur in the cloister.

\* \* \*

A few words must be devoted, finally, to the animals, that are carved no less beautifully than the human figures. Taken from the tympanum, and viewed separately (Figs. 96, 97), these three beasts would be regarded as supreme masterpieces of animal representation, comparable to archaic Greek and Chinese sculptures. The lion and the bull are a single conception. For such a combination of elasticity and power we must turn to the monstrous lions discovered in Southern China by the Ségalen Mission.<sup>118</sup> So intense is their concentration on the figure of Christ that the twist of the head motivates the entire body; the legs are reduced to puny projections.

The sculpturing of the bodies shows the same contrast of broad chiseling and finely observed detail as the human figures. This is especially clear in the heads, which are rendered in a powerful and original manner, unlike any familiar beasts. The lion's head was an especial delight to the artist, who lavished a scrupulous attention on it, in his effort to make this imagined beast credible by the amount of recognizable detail. The eye has been carved with greater care than that of any human figure; the iris has been incised, the corners of the eye deepened, and the lids clearly demarcated. In a like manner, the muzzle and brows have been most solicitously described. I have already mentioned the grand movements of the tails and wings of the animals. The eagle alone is inactive, but the contrasted directions of his head and body create an effect of restlessness, intensified

118. O. Siren, *La sculpture chinoise du V<sup>e</sup> au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Van Oest, Paris and Brussels, 1925, pls. 3-11.

by the tense clutching of his scroll, which is wound spirally. The carving of the imbricated feathers is of a subtle perfection in its variation of the same unit by the simplest means.

The position of the eagle involves a radical twisting of his head, for both the head and body are in profile but turned in opposite directions. This fact is not admitted by the sculptor, who has represented the difficult movement without any indication of strain or distortion. Is this contrast of the head and body of the eagle an intended parallel to the corresponding figure of the symbol of Matthew, who is subject to a similar torsion? For their contours have a related upper and lower projection toward Christ and a similar intervening hollow. But even the lion has been shaped into an analogous construction: the head is violently turned, contrary to the movement of the body, while a great wing rises from his neck, extended like the arms and the book of the symbol of Matthew.

#### THE LINTEL

The tympanum rests on a great lintel, of a decoration no less radiant than the figures above. It is 5.68 meters long and .76 wide, and is composed of three horizontal slabs of Pyrenees marble, reinforced in the rear by other slabs to sustain the great mass of the tympanum. On its outer surface is carved a frieze of ten huge rosettes encircled by a cable which issues from the jaws of curly-snouted monsters at the two ends (Figs. 93, 105, 106).<sup>119</sup>

The three blocks are not of identical size or shape, and are so cut that the symmetrical inner jointings are stepped to ensure a more secure fitting and a better distribution of the weight.<sup>120</sup>

The unit rosette *motif* consists of eight leaves of acanthus form radiating from a central circular knob or petaled flower. Except in two instances, the leaves are symmetrically disposed with respect to the axes of the slab. The leaf is not the familiar soft or spiky classic form, but a peculiar stylized version that approaches in some details the conventionalized palmette. A radial five-lobed structure, with curled or arched lower lobes, rises from a symmetrical two-lobed stalk as from a vase. On each side the two inferior lobes of the leaf are tangent to those of the neighboring leaves, and together with them enclose two eyelets, as in the classic Corinthian capital—the inner, tall, ovoid, and deep-cut; the outer, broad, crescent, and shallow. Each lobe is bisected by a ridge or vein issuing radially from the central axial ridge of the whole leaf. The lobes are otherwise smooth and regular, and with the exception of the curled ones, symmetrical and tongue-like in shape.

In the triangular surfaces between the large rosettes are also carved acanthus leaves. But these are stylized to resemble trilobed half-palmettes or the profile acanthus of late Roman *rincaux*. They are grouped, four in a triangle, and issue from an acanthus wrapping at its base, like a great plant with four waving leaves. Two leaves diverge horizontally, the others vertically, in a symmetrical pattern.

At the tangent point of two rosettes the encircling cable passes through a narrow sheath. But the sixth, seventh, and eighth rosettes (counting from left to right) are not tangent. They are separated by mascarons—chinless monsters like the Chinese Tao-Tieh—through whose heads the cable moves. Between the sixth and seventh the interspace is

119. The two outer rosettes are cut unequally by the edges of the lintel.

120. This stepping is perhaps a stylistic element in the

technique. Its exaggeration in Islamic art (joggled lintels) may throw light on the stylistic function of the practice in France.

sufficiently great to permit the insertion of a heavy fruit and blossom *motif* common in Quercy and Limousin.<sup>121</sup>

The effect of this beautiful frieze is one of intense and sustained movement because of the continued radiation. Not only the main rosette *motif* but the subordinate fillings of the interspaces are radially composed. The simple alignment of the whole in horizontal order contrasts with the richness of small centrifugal details. But even these, when observed closely, form the elements of simpler circular schemes. For the design is not only of the repeated rosettes and their prominent central knobs, but the hollows between the lobes produce flower-like patterns. Thus each rosette is a system of concentric circular *motifs*, issuing in widening ripples from the petaled knob. This diffusion of the general structure in every detail gives the whole a liveliness and sculptural richness akin to the tympanum above. And as in the figure sculpture, the apparent regularity of the whole is modified in places by delicate departures from the expected spacing and forms. The even number of rosettes, the variety of knob structure, petaled in five rosettes and simply ridged concentrically in three, the inequalities of interspacing, the anaxial position of two rosettes,<sup>122</sup> the unequal projection of the monsters at the ends, the spiral grooving of the cable of the three left rosettes and the smooth surface on the others—all these are not accidents of hand labor, but designed, since the variations of the left side are balanced by contraries on the right, while the common details are too finely executed to permit a judgment of carelessness or incompleteness.

More remarkable than the linear design and division of the lintel is the character of its relief. Each rosette is a concave surface, like a shallow circular dish set within a wall. The leaves are curved in plane, and the central knob is flush with the flat outer surface of the frieze. Examined more closely, the rosette is not the dish, but its decoration in extremely low relief. Such a style of carving is unique. It cannot be compared directly with the imitation of a wall encrusted with faience dishes, like the façade of the town house of Saint-Antonin, near Moissac. Such a wall is itself uncarved, whereas in Moissac the interspaces are also ornamented, and the central knob is flush with them. The outer plane of the lintel is subordinate to the concave themes. In ordinary relief the chief *motif* is salient from the uniform background plane or is contrasted with the dark shapes of deeply cut interspaces. Sometimes two or more patterns of unequal salience constitute the ornament on a common background, but they are both flat or parallel in plane. In Moissac the distinction between foreground and background is perturbed by the inverted modeling of the frieze. We seem to look into the mold of a more familiar band. By these concavities is achieved a plastic effect with the least assertion of relief. Compare this method with the relief of the tympanum on which the figures, almost detached from the wall, have only a superficially plastic surface. They are alike in the contrast of the relief of the larger units with the subordinate flat details. But the lintel is foreign to the style of the tympanum. Even as a mold of a more obvious form, the lintel is not analogous to the reliefs above, or to the ornament that frames the tympanum. The densely expanded foliate forms in the lowest possible relief, as well as the emphasis on a concavity, itself shallow, seem to be inconsistent with the massive projection of the figures. The thick vegetation of the archivolt is a more evident decorative analogue of the tympanum relief.

121. In Beaulieu, Martel, Souillac, Cahors and the manuscripts of Limoges.

122. The fourth and seventh from the left.

The lintel is an un-Romanesque element in the portal, yet is apparently in place and participates in the design of the whole. It might even be said that its un-Romanesque characters are essential to its accord with the whole, and that its discrepant relief is a contribution to an energetically contrasted animated scheme. A more positive and direct congruence in the radial design has already been observed; the concavities serve the same end in promoting a movement between the central knob and the circumference of each rosette.

A lintel of flat rosettes would be insignificant beneath the tympanum; not only would a plastic accent be lacking, but the radial design of the leaves would be lost in the dense all-over patterning of the band. A lintel of convex giant rosettes would be plastically intrusive beneath the row of seated elders, and disturb the iconographic hierarchy of the portal. The radial leaves would be less effectively centrifugal, as in an inverted flower. Granted the pattern of rosettes, the existing relief is the most proper to the forms of the tympanum. It is, in fact, anticipated on the latter in the great diversity of rosette ornaments embroidered on the garments of the figures.

When we examine the undersurface of the lintel (Fig. 102) we understand more readily the un-Romanesque character of the main design. For this lower surface, which has been frequently cited but never reproduced, is carved with an earlier ornament, and betrays in its style a hand of the seventh century A. D. It consists of a narrow band of acanthus and vine *rinceaux*, bordered by geometrical spiral scrolls, the whole so low in relief and of such delicate execution that its details are barely visible. The vine pattern occupies the two eastern blocks, the acanthus, the western. Anglès was mistaken in writing that the three blocks did not always belong together because of the difference in the ornament of the lower surface.<sup>123</sup> For the three bands are of identical breadth and their borders agree perfectly. If on one band the vine replaces the acanthus, their styles are identical. It is only the abrupt transition from one to the other that justifies the inference that although originally parts of one frieze, they have been reemployed with the omission of some intermediate strip.

The lintel consists of reemployed ancient blocks of which the original style of ornament has been maintained not only in the decorated surfaces preserved, but in those more recently carved. We shall see later, in the discussion of the history of the forms, that a similar block in the museum of Cahors, undoubtedly of the early Christian-Merovingian period, includes also such rosettes, and that both derive from more ancient Roman types.<sup>124</sup> This fact, of the retrospective copying of ancient art, might have been inferred without knowledge of the models from the character of the ornament itself, which in relief and *motif* is un-Romanesque, and distinct from the surrounding capitals and moldings.

The lintel has a more general interest for the interpretation of historic arts. It is often presupposed that the unity of a work—and the tympanum and lintel are a single work—involves the formal analogy of its parts, and that only those foreign elements are incorporated in a style which are exactly divisible by the whole. But the lintel, which is obviously in harmony with the tympanum, involves quite different principles of relief. There is no question that the art of the seventh century is in style distinct from the

123. *L'abbaye de Moissac*, Paris, Laurens, 1910, pp. 28, 29.

124. See Part III of this work. I discussed the history of the lintel and the relation of its ornament to earlier arts

in a paper read at the meeting of the College Art Association in December, 1928, and summarized in *Parnassus*-I, 3, March, 1929, pp. 22, 23.

Romanesque, yet in this work, the literal imitation of the earlier style, reproduced with a verisimilitude which has misled scholars to suppose the whole work an ancient piece,<sup>125</sup> is consistent with the surrounding Romanesque things. We learn from this example that the analogy of elements in a work of art is not necessarily pervasive or complete, and that stylistically unlike forms may coexist within a coherent style. The relations between forms are more crucial and determinative than the form types themselves. Hence the possible absorption of the most remote arts in the Romanesque, without the effect of an eclectic or unintegrated style. The judgment of unintegration is a perception of imperfectly coördinated, not of incongruous, elements.

I must mention, however—if merely to exclude the argument that the lintel is in its entire decoration a reemployed work—the distinctly Romanesque details in its carving. If the carving were ancient, its coherence with the Romanesque tympanum would be even more miraculous, and would lead us to suspect an enormous extrapolation in the theory that unity or the quality of a work inheres in all its details because of the integrated thought or perception of its maker. We have only to place the two corner beasts beside the lower symbolic animals of the vision to see that they are thoroughly Romanesque in type, although flattened to accord with the subtle relief of the lintel. The disproportionately small legs, and the flat thighs pressed close to the body, recur in them; while the deeply sunken eyes and prominent frontal ridges are precisely as in the lion of St. Mark. But there is even better evidence that the same hand carved tympanum and lintel. The monstrous head in the lower left corner of the tympanum (Fig. 93) from whose jaws issues the meander ribbon, is an almost exact replica, in both shape and function, of the head of the left monster of the lintel. Both have the peculiar curled snouts that suggest the elephant. Nor can it be said in possible reply that the tympanum master copied the already existent lintel in carving such details, for they are unknown in this form in earlier art, although ultimately based on ancient traditions. There are still other indications of the unity of the two works. The two mascarón heads serving as interspaces reproduce exactly the head on the lower right of the tympanum (Fig. 100). They reappear also in the narthex on a console block and are carved on the intricately ornamented outer jambs of the south porch. The fruit and blossoms issuing from the jaws of the left mascarón of the lintel have their exact parallels in sculptures at Beaulieu, Souillac, Cahors, and Martel, all products of the school which produced the portal of Moissac.

There are also elementary considerations of design which refute the hypothesis. The ornament of the ends is perfectly adapted to its position. The repeated rosettes and knobs are like the elders aligned on the zone above, while the density of the carved ornament, filling the surface completely, and its circular, radial design recall the central group of the tympanum. The lintel is conceived in such harmony with the tympanum that they must have been planned as parts of one scheme of decoration.

#### THE RELIEFS OF THE PORCH

As in the cloister capitals we observed the style of the pier reliefs in a narrative context, so the corresponding manner of the later sculptors of Moissac is visible in the reliefs of the inner walls of the porch (Figs. 107-122).

125. Cf. Rupin, *op. cit.*, p. 331.

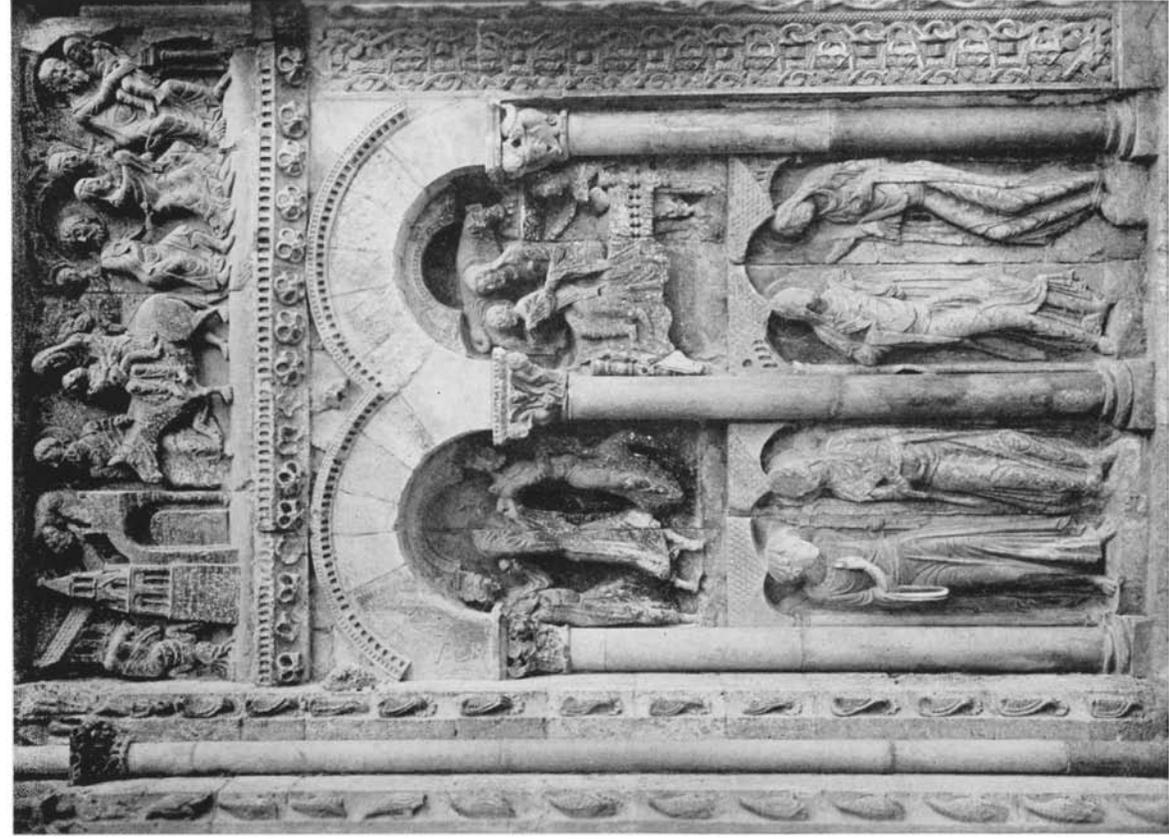


FIG. 107—East Inner Wall of Porch

*Moissac, Church: Sculptures on Walls of Porch*

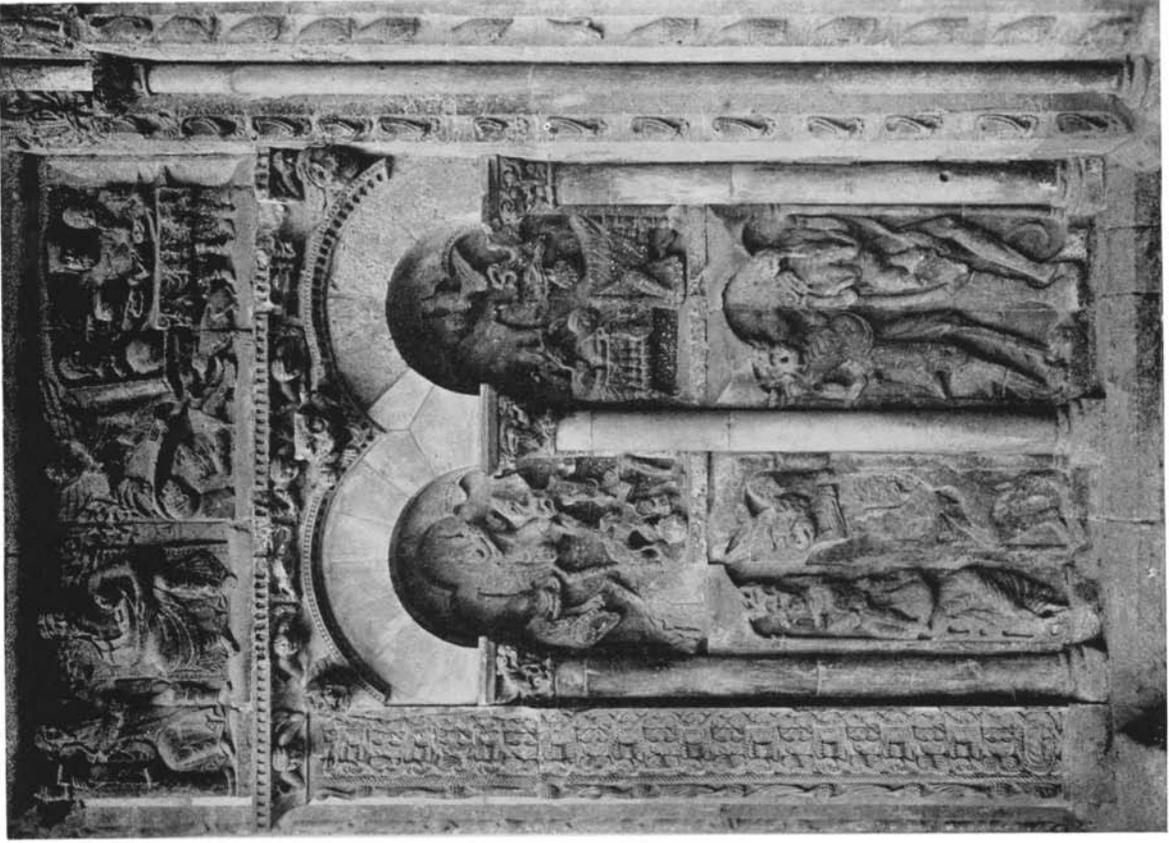


FIG. 108—West Inner Wall of Porch

*Moissac, Church: Sculptures on Walls of Porch*



FIG. 109—*Annunciation*



FIG. 110—*Visitation*

*Moissac, Church: Details of East Wall of Porch*

Their style has long been recognized as more recent than that of the tympanum, but the differences are so slight that the two works cannot be far apart in date. The sculptures of the jambs and trumeau which sustain the tympanum belong to the same period as the porch.

On the east wall are scenes from the Infancy of Christ; on the west, the parable of Lazarus and Dives and the punishment of Avarice and Female Unchastity. Little capitals with figures, tormented in the flames by demons or attacked by monsters, paraphrase the Last Judgment (Fig. 125). On the east jamb which supports the lintel is carved Isaiah with a scroll prophecying the virgin birth. On the corresponding west jamb, near the reliefs of the parable and the punishments, is Peter, the patron of the abbey, with the keys of heaven. The intermediate trumeau is sculptured with two unlimbed figures of uncertain name. The western figure is bald and has a wrinkled brow like Paul in the cloister and in reliefs at Silos and Arles. The other bears a scroll instead of a book, and is probably a prophet, corresponding to Isaiah, like the similar figures in Lombard churches.

The abbot, Roger (1115-1131), is represented on the exterior south wall of the porch, high up on an engaged column (Fig. 137). Another figure, in monastic dress—possibly St. Benedict—stands on a similar column on the other side of the arch (Fig. 135). On the crenellations above the porch are enwalled two figures blowing horns, like watchmen of the fortified church (Fig. 140). The cornice beneath them, crowning the porch, is carried by sculptured modillions, of which several are modern substitutions.

The reliefs of the porch are not arranged in simple alignment or superposition, but a special architecture, independent of the structure of the wall is applied to it to frame the reliefs (Figs. 107, 108). They agree in this respect with the sculptures of Poitou, Angoumois, and Saintonge, which are similarly set under arcatures applied to the surface of the wall. But they differ from them in the extension of one scene (the Magi) under two arches, and the superposition of two under a single arch. The independence of architecture and sculpture is already visible in the tympanum, which is composed of separate blocks applied to the wall, and offers no strict correspondence of the figures and the blocks as in Gothic portals.<sup>126</sup> The designer of the porch not only disregards the character of the wall in the applied members, but even the latter in the distribution of the sculptures between them.<sup>127</sup> This is hardly the unity of structure and decoration which a sentimental aesthetic theory has called the essential character of mediaeval architecture, in distinction from the Renaissance and baroque styles. Actually, the combination of architectural elements on these walls is nearer to the baroque in principle, and we might number the Romanesque among the early styles in which investigation detects analogies to baroque art.

126. The second Magus is cut vertically by the joint of two vertical slabs (Fig. 111). The reliefs were carved and set in place before the enclosing architecture was erected. This is a variation of the usual method, which has been little noticed in discussions of the techniques of sculpture *avant* and *après la pose*. The hand of the first Magus is obscured by the central capital, and on the adjoining relief (Fig. 112) the head of the ass projects into the very haunch of the arch, which has been specially cut to admit this head.

In the capitals of the porch, in distinction from those of the cloister, there is no longer a limiting structure of

volute, consoles, and central triangular frame (Fig. 125). Their carving constitutes a circular relief, without a division into four clear surfaces, and is so deeply cut that the background is hardly apparent and the figures cannot be regarded as a *decoration* of the capital.

127. Even the arcaded bays of the side walls are not strictly symmetrical or regular, but are consciously designed to produce an alternation of unequal parts (Figs. 107, 108). On the east wall, the south bay is the broader, on the west wall, the north. Each bay is divided into four slabs, two above and two below—but slabs of unequal breadth, arranged in symmetrical alternation.

The columns framing the superposed reliefs have the character of a giant order since they enclose two rows of minor arches and colonnettes. In Romanesque churches, like Saint-Sernin in Toulouse, the bays of the nave have a related elevation, with great shafts rising to the base molding of the barrel vault, and enclosing two superposed arches. But in Moissac the columns themselves carry a dominant arch, and the vault springs from a tall frieze placed above it like an attic story.

The paneling of the inner walls of the porch is designed in a free, asymmetrical manner. The arched fields are framed on one side (south) by vertical bands of richly carved ornament, on the other by the slender colonnettes of the portal which have a greater height than the carved bands; and above, by large friezes sculptured with iconographic scenes. There is no podium below. Not only is the frame of the arched fields varied on all four sides, but the internal divisions of the fields are not maintained or acknowledged in the bounding areas by either moldings or ornament. The whole surface of the inner walls of the porch appears therefore very crowded and irregular; the axis of the symmetrical sculptured panels does not coincide with the vertical axis of the entire wall; and no common background is visible behind this accumulation of sculptures, friezes, and architectural frames.

The arbitrariness of the architecture may be illustrated by the following details. The arches are bordered by a semicircular molding strip, intercepted at the sides by the outer jambs of the portal and the vertical friezes that terminate the walls of the porch. A cornice surmounts the arches, although a horizontal frieze is placed above it. It rests on the busts of caryatids with uplifted hands, while in the spandrels of the arches are carved salient heads in imitation of water spouts or modillions, here functionless. To lend some architectural necessity to the subdivision of the arcatures into upper and lower panels, trefoils, reposing on slender, barely visible colonnettes, are inscribed within the semicircular arches.

The moldings do not coincide with those of the tympanum. The barrel vault of the porch springs from the torus above the upper horizontal friezes, at a level higher than the capitals of the tympanum archivolt, while the cornice beneath the friezes is higher than the crown moldings of the trumeau and the supporting walls of the portal. Except for the base moldings common to the portal and the walls of the porch, the horizontal lines of the two are discontinuous. At Beaulieu the horizontals of porch and portal are coincident; but the porch of Cahors is in this respect disposed more like that of Moissac. Although the porch and tympanum of Moissac are not contemporary, it is doubtful that the discontinuity proceeds from the difference of time alone or even serves to indicate the fact. The alternation of horizontals is too well sustained to be an accident of labor.

The asymmetry of the architecture of the side walls, in shifting the axis towards the portal, subordinates their sculptures to the tympanum and relates them more closely to the figures of the jambs. Had the column stood in the center of the wall, it would have imposed a corresponding center on the crowning frieze, which is by its very nature, with its horizontal sequence of narrative themes, an unsymmetrical member. And it would thereby have given the inner walls of the porch an isolated, self-sufficient, centralized character inconsistent with the religious and plastic priority of the tympanum.

The salient cornice diminishes the apparent height of the sculptured surface and thereby subordinates it again to the tympanum, which by the same device, produces an impression of even greater height. The isolation of a frieze above the reliefs of the side walls corresponds

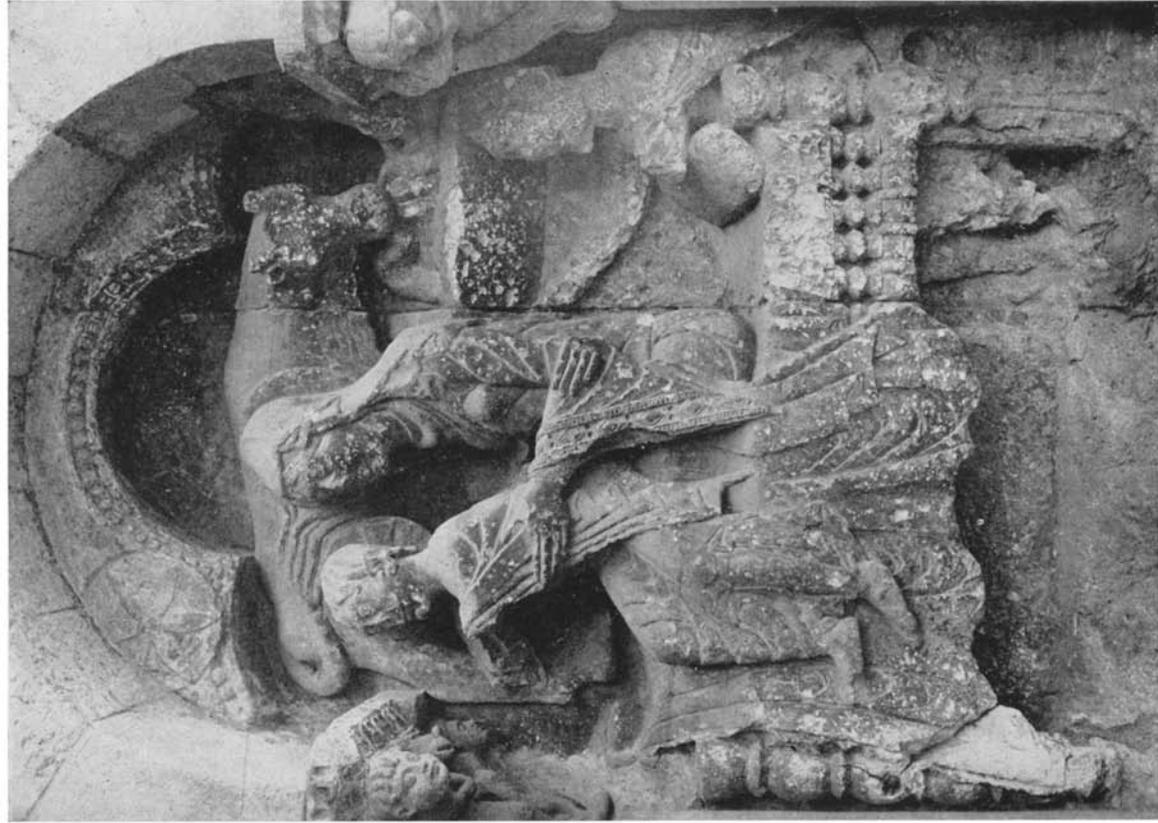


FIG. 112—Adoration of the Magi—Holy Family, Ox, and Ass

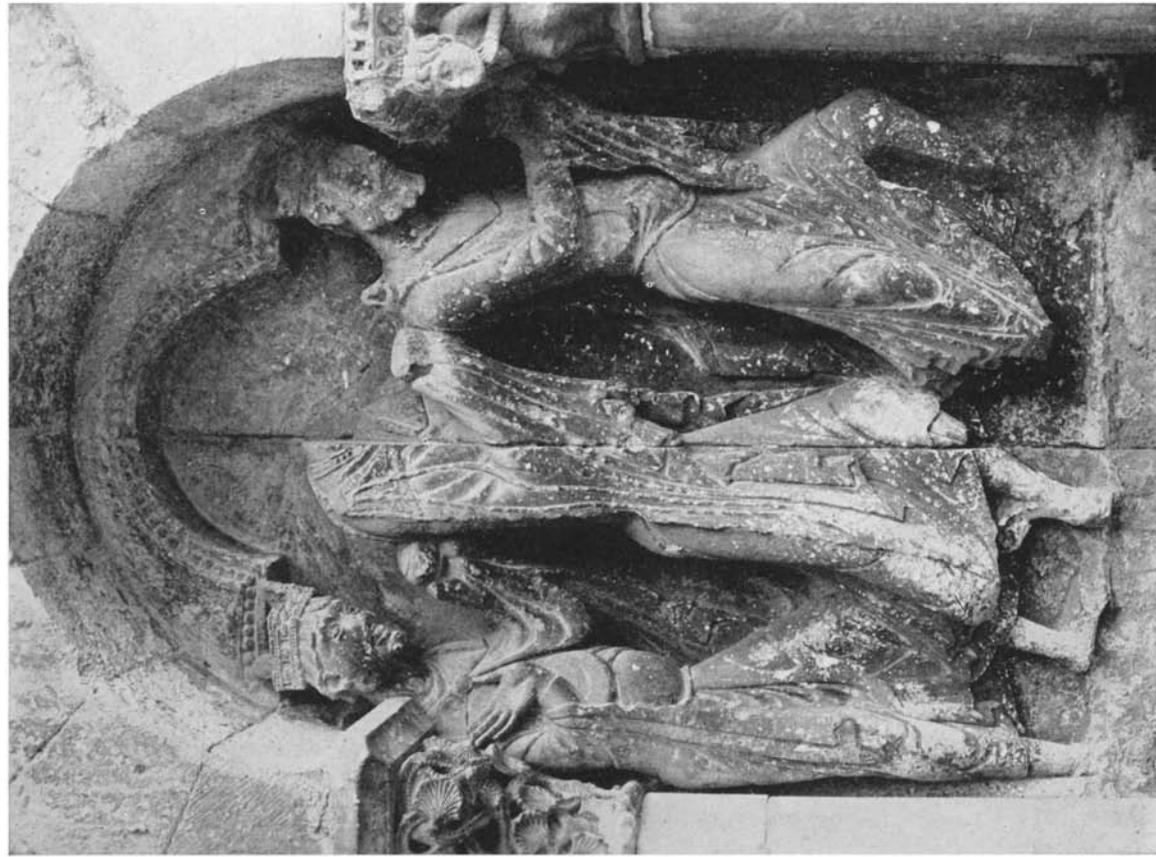


FIG. 111—Adoration of the Magi—the Magi  
Moissac, Church: Details of East Wall of Porch

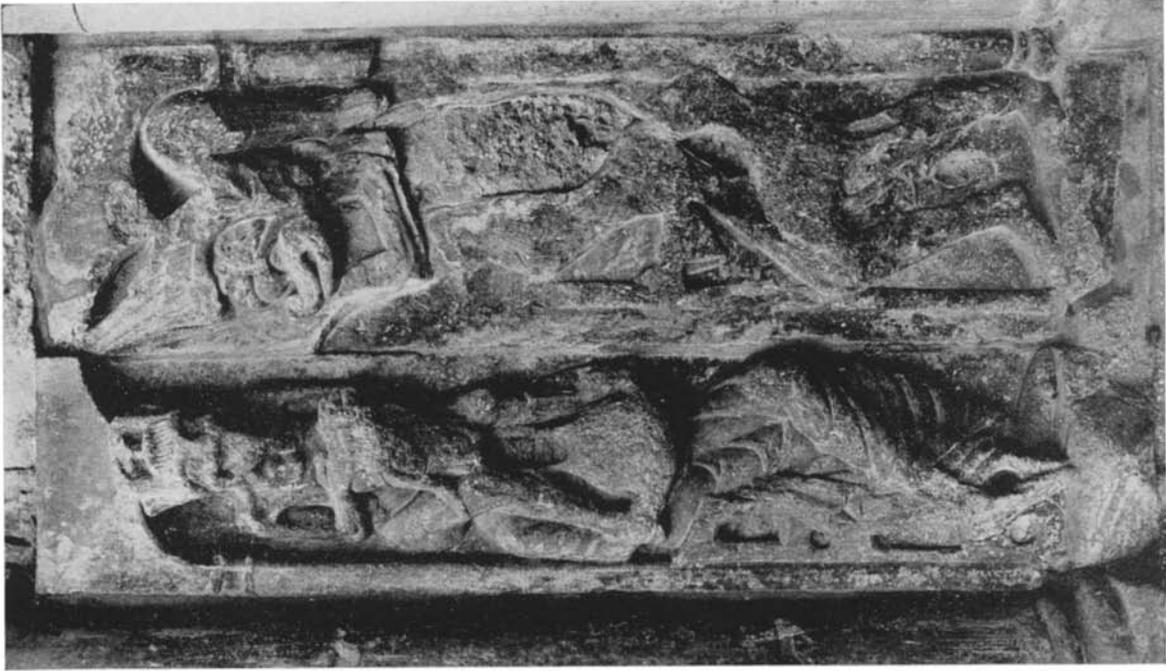


FIG. 113—*The Punishment of Avarice*

*Moissac, Church: Details of West Wall of Porch*



FIG. 114—*The Punishment of Unchastity*

to the clear horizontal bands of the elders and the rosettes, and its contrast with the vertical panels below maintains the contrast of the elders and the lintel with the trumeau and jambs of the portal.

The superimposed friezes also offer to our perception of static forces a more solid support than a pair of arches on tall slender colonnettes. By a similar calculation the arches are of rectangular section and unmolded, in active contrast to the richness of surface carving everywhere apparent. If the architectural framework of the reliefs is a free composition, imposed upon the wall, its design is well adapted to the sculptural whole of the porch and the portal and is consistent in character.

The sculptures of each side of the porch do not unite to form one great relief like the tympanum; nor are the main contours sufficiently distinct to determine a single scheme dominating the whole work. But we will see presently that an effort was made to transcend the barriers of separate subject matter and architectural frames by a common movement and related forms.

The reliefs diminish in height in ascending order. At the same time they broaden, so that the central panels, which are united into a single broad relief either by the subject (Adoration of the Magi) or the common design (the death of Dives and his punishment), mediate between the tall vertical panels below and the single horizontal friezes above. The arches within the scenes of the Presentation, the idols of Heliopolis, and the banquet of Dives unite the horizontal friezes more intimately with the arcaded reliefs below.

The reliefs, moreover, are not on the same plane. The lowest figures (Annunciation, Visitation, Luxuria) stand under trefoiled arches which form the edges of a sloping roof structure. On the eastern reliefs this roof is realistically covered with carved slate or tile imbrications.<sup>128</sup>

The panels above are set more deeply under the large arches and the flat, molded trefoils. We can more readily appreciate this recession in observing the relation of the roof above the figure of Unchastity to the ground plane of the scene of Dives' death above it.

With this diminution in the height of the ascending reliefs their figures change in proportions. The most elongated and slender are in the lower panels, the squattest, in the upper horizontal scenes.<sup>129</sup> On the east wall this graduation of scale corresponds to the iconographic order of incidents. For the lowest scenes are the earliest (Annunciation and Visitation) and those of the upper frieze the last of the cycle (Flight into Egypt). On the west wall, however, the story of Lazarus and Dives begins on the frieze above, and terminates below in the central panels. On the lowest band are represented the Punishment of Avarice and Unchastity.

128. These scales led de Lasteyrie to suppose that the slabs were reemployed lids of Early Christian sarcophagi. But in this he was mistaken, for not only do their dimensions disagree with those of the early sarcophagi of the region, but the units of imbrication are also considerably smaller than in the latter. In their tongue-like, rather than semicircular, form they resemble the scaly slats on the gables of Aquitaine churches. The imbrications are carved on only four of the twelve slanting surfaces above the trefoils, and in one case (the Visitation) they adjoin the representation of arched windows and oculi. These show clearly enough that the imbricated ornament is

designed to represent a roof top and is not a remnant of the original decoration of a reemployed slab.

129. The great contrast in the sizes of the different figures of the same relief in Romanesque sculpture (Moissac, Vézelay, Autun) is an analogy in surface composition to the baroque exaggeration of perspective diminutions and the frequent placing of a large figure in the immediate foreground and a very small one behind him. Such baroque contrasts are not merely the result of a scientific perspective, but are designed to produce a violent and immediate opposition of associated objects and a precipitate movement in space.

Whether this contrast in the sequence of incidents is a necessary correlate of an asymmetrical architecture and restless animated figures or the consequence of iconographic data is difficult to decide.<sup>130</sup> For the episodic parable of Lazarus and Dives could hardly be fitted into the two lowest panels, which were reserved for twin groups of opposed elongated figures. There are further contrasts and irregularities in the sequence of action which suggest an aimlessness of composition surprising in Romanesque art. But analysis will reveal an underlying order and necessity.

In the horizontal frieze of the east wall the incidents of the Presentation in the Temple and the Flight into Egypt seem to form a continuous narrative (Figs. 107, 117-119). But this sequence does not move in a single direction; if we attempted without knowledge of the texts represented to determine the order of events and the relation of certain figures to each other we should be very much puzzled. The Presentation, the first in order of time, moves from left to right; but the Flight moves in the opposite direction. At the extreme left of the panel is the city of Heliopolis with its falling idols. The successive incidents diverge from a common center; and with a perfect adroitness in dramatic arrangement the artist has placed between the two scenes a figure common to them, and pointing in both directions. This is Joseph, who lags behind the Procession to the Temple, and turns his head in response to an angel who urges him to flee to Egypt (Fig. 119). The position of the angel is itself noteworthy. The curve of his suspended body unites the two incidents. Of his symmetrical wings, one points towards Egypt, the other towards Jerusalem, and each occupies another slab of the frieze.<sup>131</sup> The center implied in this division of the scenes is to the right of the column below and does not correspond to the midpoint of the frieze. But the direction of the Flight is opposed to that of the Magi below, and the Presentation is in corresponding opposition to the Holy Family. This restless chiasmic symmetry of detached groups is a typical mediaeval form, especially evident in ornament and color.

In reliefs of the Magi and the Annunciation and Visitation, below this frieze (Figs. 109-112), the order of scenes is unequivocally from left to right as in Western script. But on the west wall the direction is reversed. The banquet of Dives is represented at the right; the beggar lies at the left, is carried to heaven by an angel and reposes in the bosom of Abraham at the end of the frieze (Figs. 108, 120, 121). In the central panels, the death of the rich man is at the right and his subsequent punishment at the left (Figs. 115, 116). In the lowest reliefs, of Unchastity and Avarice, which have no narrative connection, a sequence cannot be abstracted; but the scenes, together, form a symmetrical group.

The contrast of the iconographic sequence on the two walls is, in an architectural sense, a symmetrical form. It is occasioned by the common relation of both walls to the portal; we will grasp it more clearly if we imagine an open book in which the words of the right page run from left to right, and those of the left page from right to left.

The sequences described are not always the dominant movements of the forms. The horizontal directions are primarily iconographic and textual; the design of the larger reliefs of the porch is still close to the most archaic works of the cloister in the symmetry

130. In the sculptures of the façade of Ripoll, in Catalonia, the scenes move from left to right in superposed rows until the uppermost, in which the direction is reversed.

131. Each of the four slabs of the frieze is designed as a balanced relief. The joint which divides the angel's body falls along the ass's tail, but although this is the central jointing of the frieze, the true vertical mid-line corresponds to the back of the mounted Virgin.

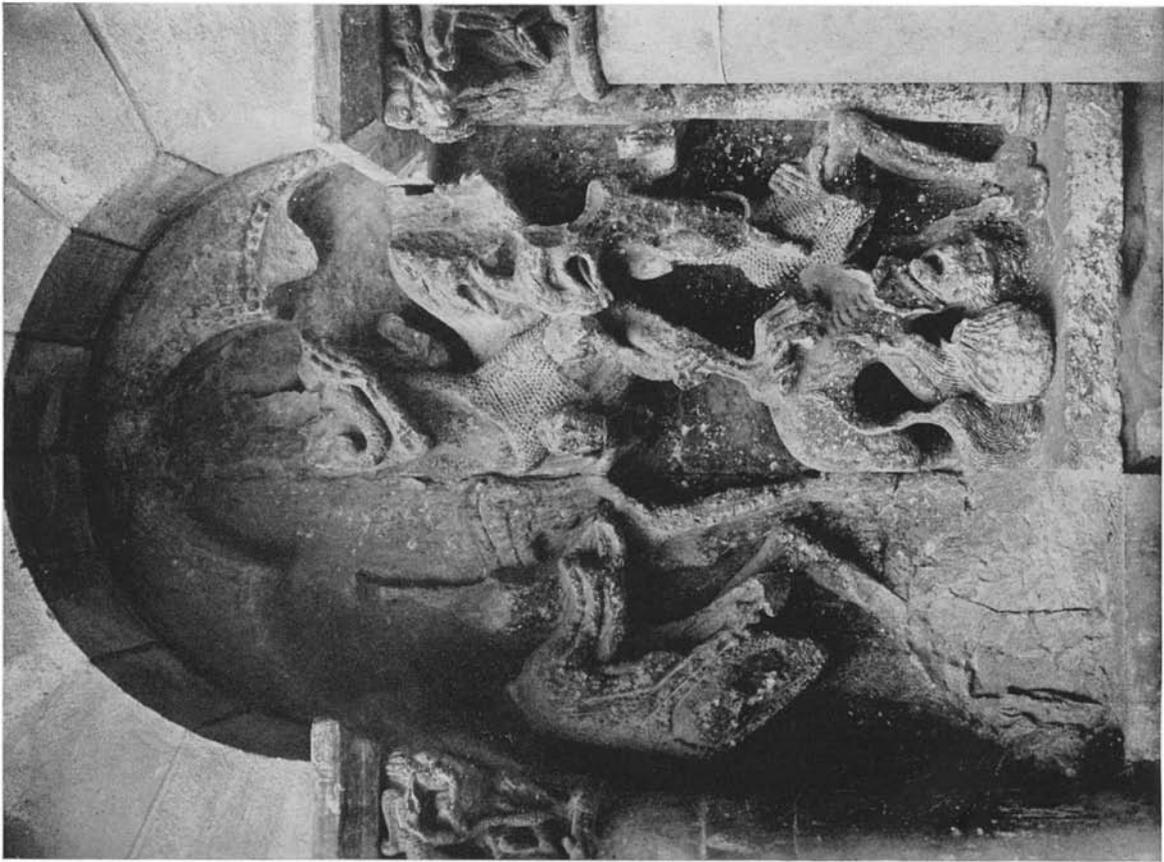


FIG. 115—*Hell Scene: Punishment of Avarice and Unchastity*



FIG. 116—*Death of Dives*

*Moissac, Church: Details of West Wall of Porch*



FIG. 117—*Fall of the Idols of Heliopolis*



FIG. 118—*Presentation in the Temple*



FIG. 119—*Annunciation to Joseph and Flight into Egypt*  
*Moissac, Church: Details of East Wall of Porch*

or isolation of scenes and even contradicts the general succession in some details. Such a symmetry was inevitable in the Annunciation and the Visitation, or in the figures of Unchastity and the demon (Fig. 114). In the adjoining mutilated relief of the miser and the beggar, a devil, perched on the shoulders of the seated miser, prolongs the mass at the right in symmetrical opposition to the standing beggar (Fig. 113).

On the other hand, it should be observed that the legs of the demon and the unchaste woman, who form a balanced symmetrical group, have a common movement towards the right (north) in contrast to the iconographic succession of scenes on the wall. By this means, perhaps, the group is opposed to the Punishment of Avarice, in which the only moving figure, the beggar, is turned to the left (south). But on the relief of the Annunciation on the east wall (Fig. 109) both figures move towards the right (south), in contrast to the corresponding demon and the unchaste woman and in accord with the iconographic procession from left to right. In these panels, the opposition of the turned heads and gestures modifies the simple parallelism, of the movements of the limbs. It is apparent that the iconographic succession does not determine uniquely the directions and order of forms, but, as in the cloister, a more fundamental style of expression and design controls the distribution of scenes.

On the east wall, the Adoration of the Magi (Figs. 111, 112) is divided into two equal parts by the central column and the similar arches. A common wavy vertical contour unites the figures of the two groups. The Magi are not simply three equal figures in alignment, but the central is the tallest, and stands under the highest lobe of the common trefoil, so that even here there is a distinction of central, axial, and lateral despite the direction of the Magi's movement and their common significance. In the Holy Family the Virgin is centralized, and the inequality of the Child and Joseph compensated by the introduction of the ox's head at the right.

The symmetry of such groups is primarily architectural or decorative; it has little expressive purpose as in the tympanum and certain capitals of the cloister. It is a means of ordering a group, but does not impose a rigid form or correspondence on every detail. In this respect the later sculptures of Moissac approach Gothic composition. In the opposite reliefs of the death and punishment of Dives (Figs. 115, 116) a similar underlying formality of grouping may be observed in the agitated and varied movements of men and demons. But this formality is less apparent here than in the cloister or the tympanum. A more complex disorder is organized. The separate groups are extraordinarily restless, and correspond in the zigzag and wavy movements of the forms to the asymmetrical, irregular architecture, and to the highly emotional and dramatic conception of the subjects. Whole incidents are presented with a genre-like familiarity, and imaginative symbolical groups, like the punishments of vices, have the concreteness and episodic variety of an actual experience.

We can no longer judge of the character of the Annunciation, which had been mutilated and was restored by a modern sculptor without understanding of Romanesque style; but in the Visitation is preserved for us a magnificent pantomime unparalleled in Romanesque representations of the scene (Fig. 110). Instead of the usual embrace of the two women, in which a sculptor of the cloister found a pattern of rigid lines, like the letter M (Fig. 68), or the traditional type of Elizabeth and Mary standing calmly separated in simple contemplation of each other, the sculptor of the porch has, by deep sympathy and

by response to the dramatic force of every flexion of the body, composed a new scene, in which the tender excitement of the meeting and mutual revelation is reflected in the gestures and in the strange elongated zigzags of the pregnant women. This deliberate staccato rhythm is refined by numerous delicate lines formed by draperies of such thinness that the women appear most tenderly clothed and their bodies spiritual. One raises the edge of her veil or shawl to disclose a single breast in sign of motherhood; the left breast is covered by the hand turned palm outward in communication. The other woman inclines her head and indicates through the delicate cloth the swelling breast and nipple. The hands of both are thin and bony and the slender wrists are striated with the ridges of tendons.

Despite the mutilation of the faces, which probably had little expression, the feelings are adequately symbolized in the gestures and the structure of the bodies. Yet the simple zigzag of the limbs is not uniquely determined by the narrative, but carries also an expression independent of the meaning of the figures, and common to scenes that represent other subjects.

What could be more remote from the group described than the punishment of Unchastity? The figure of the loose woman tortured by toads and serpents (Fig. 114) has the posture of the Virgin of the Annunciation, and the horrible demon who pursues her repeats the gestures and flexions of the left figure of the Visitation. But the legs of the demon parallel the legs of the woman as if they marched in a common procession. It is the elements of design and the typical forms that are the same in the two scenes. The wholes are different; and in the wholes are expressed the specific character of each subject, but with a common accent which is that of the entire portal, and is imposed on no matter what incident or figure.

The death of the rich man is an enclosed picture in a modern sense, with a literal reproduction of the deathbed (Fig. 116). The haggard Dives is thinner, more bony than at his banquet table—his head resting on an inclined pillow, his scrawny breast uncovered, the body under a pleated blanket. And his mourning wife kneels at the bedside just as the beggar Lazarus lay beside the table. The demons who descend to take his soul are described with an atrocious veracity. In the adjoining panel (Fig. 115) they trample upon his fallen body, weighted by the moneybag, and ride upon a miserable woman with hanging breasts who emerges from the background in the middle of the field. By the almost chaotic, salient, curved and angular, swarming masses throughout this sculpture, the ferocious destruction and turbulence of the story are wonderfully expressed. But the effect inheres also in the completeness and detailed—even accurate—articulation of the monstrous demons. The extraordinary reality of such horrible, fantastic figures composed of diverse animals—yet assimilated to a human structure—is a correlate of the unexpected precision with which the Romanesque sculptors of the porch have represented on the capitals and modillions various morbid and deformed human heads. In the spandrel above the western reliefs (Fig. 124) is a leering old woman, with open, toothless mouth, stringy neck muscles and flying, disarranged hair. Her eyes are barely open, as in extreme old age; her tongue lies weakly in the bottom of her mouth. Another head is of a goitrous woman grimacing in half-witted complacency (Fig. 108—right).

These types are not suggested by an iconographic assignment and must therefore express an individual interest of the sculptor. But they are so common in French Romanesque art, especially in the decoration of modillions (Figs. 138-140), that they can hardly be



FIG. 120—*Lazarus and Dives*



FIG. 121—*Lazarus in Abraham's Bosom*  
*Moissac, Church: Details of West Wall of Porch*



FIG. 123—Head of St. Peter (Detail of Fig. 120)  
*Moissac, Church: Details of East Wall of Porch and West Jamb of Portal*

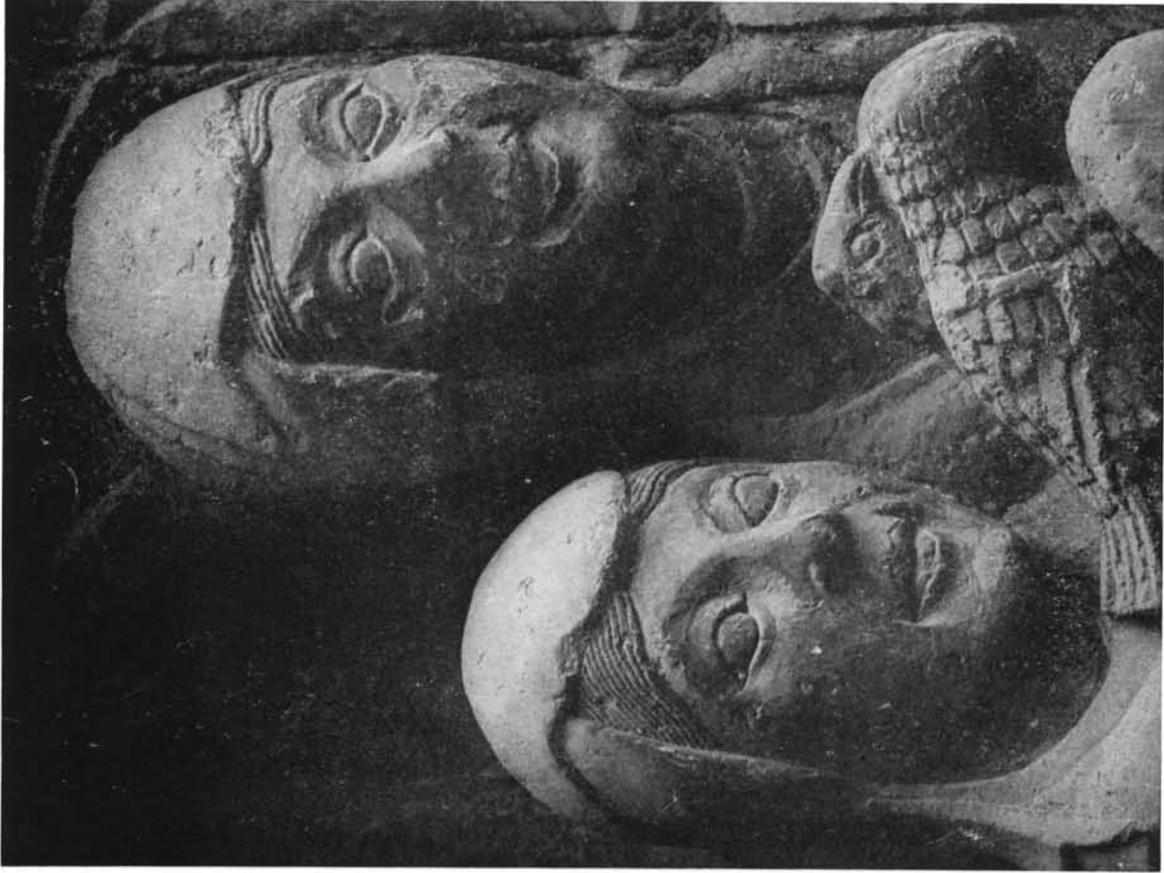


FIG. 122—Mary and Anna (Detail of Fig. 118)  
*Moissac, Church: Details of East Wall of Porch and West Jamb of Portal*

attributed to the curiosity of a single sculptor, but must embody a more widely diffused interest. They are especially strange in an art which, in its monumental religious compositions, employs the most generalized forms and abstract geometrical combinations. Regarded in the light of the monstrous in other primitive arts, this contrast of abstraction and realism is less astonishing. The process of abstraction in Romanesque art involves an audacious distortion of ideal and symbolic figures for expressive ends; in the exact representation of monstrous, already deformed, human heads, this energy of expression was directly attained. The extremes of realism and abstraction have a common arbitrariness. The position of the deformed heads in the decoration of a wall reflects their independence of an ideal or symbolic beauty. They are individuals who, in themselves, constitute the entire form of an ignoble architectural member—a corbel or modillion—which is a common subservient element of construction, whereas the tympanum is a unique monument within the monument, an image of heaven erected above the entrance to the church.

The fantasy of Romanesque sculptors was more prolific in the creation of types of evil and violence than beatitude. On the capital from which spring the two western arches we may see the combination of demonic and human in an iconographic theme (Fig. 125). The punishment of the damned is represented here. I suppose it is the association of this capital with the other scenes of punishment which misled de Lasteyrie to describe the sculptures of the portal as a Last Judgment. A nude man and woman with bowed, repentant, suffering heads, are tied by a rope held by an appalling devil. His whole body, from head to claws, is covered with thick scales. He has the curled snout of the monster on the lintel and a long, corrugated tongue, which licks the tail of another nude demon. The latter is smooth-skinned but no less frightful in the knotted muscles, the tail ending in a serpent's head, and his own wolfish head with forked bristling hairs. He devours the left arm of a woman. In all these minutely rendered demons and human figures the forms and surfaces contribute to a common agitation. They resemble in this respect the composition of more ideal figures.

\* \* \*

In the sculptures of the porch the construction of space undergoes a marked change from the methods of the cloister. Not only is space deepened by the overlapping of whole figures and by great differences of relief, but horizontal planes and architectural accessories are employed to realize this more extended depth. The upper surfaces of the beds of the Virgin and the dying rich man are rendered as horizontal planes (Figs. 112, 116). Only in the table of the feasting scene (Fig. 120) and in the pillow of Dives does a slight inclination recall the earlier archaic distortion. The feet of standing figures are more firmly planted on the deep base molding of each panel (but the slightly sloping surface of some of these bases (Fig. 114) indicates the persistence of the earlier conception). In the Adoration of the Magi, a column which separates the Magi from the Virgin and Christ stands in front of the field of relief rather than in it, while the main arches and subordinate trefoils, in lower relief than the figures, define a foreground and background architecture in space (Figs. 111, 112).

The cloister capital with the same subject (Fig. 58) provides material for the comparative study of the change in representation in this short period. In the porch the space has been complicated by the addition of Joseph and the animals, with their overlapping masses and

higher relief. The proportions of human beings and beasts are still arbitrary. The small size of the ox cannot be attributed to the sculptor's desire to suggest a great depth by a perspective diminution. Something of the superposition of the Magi's horses on the cloister capital survives in the placing of the ox and ass above the figures, although the traditional iconography of the Nativity assigned them to a similar position. The ox standing without support contradicts the framework of ground and background in the rest of the relief. Of the ass, the head alone is rendered; and this head is visible only if we regard the sculpture from the left. For it is carved in the spring of the arch and is partly concealed by the projecting capital.<sup>132</sup> This peculiar negation of the architectural frame makes the latter a part of the scene, but so inexplicable a part in its contradiction of the spatial unity that we must regard the penetration of the frame by the ass as an iconographic and technical convenience and as a correlate of the arbitrary, irregular architecture and the naïve realism of the whole, rather than the affirmation of an open, more extensive space. But this peculiarity is worth noting, for it is by such exigencies that more consistent spatial forms are later suggested.

More significant are the numerous overlappings that lead us in well ordered sequence to the background. At the bottom of the relief are the legs of the Child, the bed cover, a fragment of the underlying sheet, the bed itself, and finally between these and the wall, the legs of Joseph and his seat. In the upper half the depth is more vigorously indicated, for the body of the ox extends behind the Virgin and Christ, while his head is sharply turned, almost *en face*, and brought forward to a more prominent plane. The great thickness of the relief slab<sup>133</sup> permits a deep modeling of the profile torso and heads of figures which are practically detached from the background, as on the tympanum. The left arm of Joseph, which was extended to reach the Virgin's elbow, was completely freed from the wall, and has been broken. In the tympanum, however, such consistent choice of the profile of a torso is almost entirely lacking. It is limited there to one or two elders.

The representation of profiles is still archaic in that it depends on a thick slab which admits a carving of the remote side of the head in the round. The profile is not a perspective projection but the side of a head carved like a statue, with the whole face quite visible. The sculptor wishes to reproduce, as far as possible, the entire surface of an object, and to render his work equally intelligible from several points of view. Hence, the lower parts of the body are nowhere in strict profile. No two legs are permitted to overlap completely as in a perfectly profiled figure in nature. The axes of the legs deviate from the torso to produce a distinct view of each limb. The shoulders of the Magi are not perpendicular to the background as the strict profile of their heads and their movement would suggest, but are turned at an angle. Otherwise, it would be necessary to foreshorten in order to compress the breadth of the shoulders within the narrower depth of relief; and foreshortening is still undeveloped in these early sculptures. The haloes are always carved flat against the wall and set behind the heads of the figures as if carried on the remoter shoulder or applied to the concealed side of the face—a convention that persists up to the early Renaissance period. In a similar way, suspended or flying draperies, covering no part of the figure, are never represented perpendicular to the wall, but are expanded on a parallel plane.

132. See note 126 above. The head is carved *in the slab*, which projects into the space enclosed by the arch, and also into the arch.

133. More than fifteen centimeters. Cf. the four or five centimeters of the reliefs of the cloister.



FIG. 124—*Corbel in Form of Old Woman's Head*



FIG. 125—*Capital with Hell Scene*  
*Moissac, Church: Details of West Wall of Porch*



FIG. 126—*View from Interior of Narthex*



FIG. 127—*Capital of Narthex  
Moissac, Church: Details of Narthex*



FIG. 128—*Toulouse, Musée des Augustins: Romanesque Capital*

The observations made concerning the relief of the Magi apply equally to all the others. In the death of Dives we see a similar arrangement of figures in front of and behind a bed (Fig. 116). Only here the pictorial unity is better established, for the group is self-contained and independent of the adjoining relief of the punishment. The kneeling wife before the bed and the horizontal plane of the reclining Dives are as effective in creating depth as the corresponding group on the opposite wall. The interception of the lower bodies of the demons by the bed, of the wings of one demon by the right frame, of the angel by clouds and the lobes of the trefoil arch, suggests a further space behind these figures. In the adjacent relief (Fig. 115) the nude bust of the unchaste woman emerges from the wall like a console ornament without indication of the rest of the figure. In the feast of Dives (Fig. 120) only the upper body of the servant is seen under an archway, while the body of the Virgin in the Presentation is partly obscured by Anna and Simeon (Fig. 118).

With all these approaches to a construction of space, it is nevertheless clear that the concept of a unified space in which the figures act, bend, cross and meet, is foreign to the sculptor. This is especially obvious in the upper horizontal reliefs, in which several figures remote from each other in time and place are grouped together as if in one scene. The continuous method does not preclude the organization of a common space, as is apparent from Roman and Renaissance landscapes. But in Moissac the figures move before—or, rather, across—a varying background; on the same band we see Heliopolis and Jerusalem, or the interior of Dives' house and the tree of Paradise. If the feet of the recumbent Lazarus and the dogs who lick his wounds are in the house of Dives, the beggar's head is already under the tree of Paradise (Fig. 108).

Even within a single scene, like the Banquet of Dives, despite the common architecture, each figure moves in a private space, not consistently related to the larger planes of the whole (Fig. 120). Thus the servant, who seems to emerge from behind the table, is, with respect to the arch, nearer to us than Dives, whom he serves. This composite character of the whole space—the independent construction of each figure in depth—is better illustrated in the Presentation of Christ in the Temple (Fig. 118). Simeon and Joseph are carved under arches; while the two women stand in front of them in a foreground plane. But so far is the sculptor from the conception of the space as distinct in shape like any receptacle that he has contradicted the implied succession of planes for plastic convenience. One arm of the Virgin extends from behind Simeon, who with respect to the common architectural background is behind the Virgin. By an even more remarkable inversion the nearest figure, Anna, is the shortest, and the most remote one, of Simeon, the tallest. This slightly inverted perspective is to be distinguished from that of ancient Oriental and Early Christian art, which sometimes placed large figures above the smaller ones, and aimed to render concrete the differences in power or significance. In these earlier arts the inversion had spatial significance because the position in an upper part of a scene denoted depth as well as a superior importance. In Moissac the difference of height is not hierarchal, or purely a perspective device, but, as has already been observed, it is a consistent element in an art which promotes contrasts in the effort to produce an endless movement and expression of excited energies. When we follow the rhythmical undulations of the contours of the figures in the scene discussed we arrive at the different heads without surprise at their inequality; its arbitrariness is dissolved in the pervasive movement to which the whole has been submitted.

Small details of the architecture further reveal the character of the style. The two arches of the Presentation are of unequal span, and are not realized with the same completeness. The larger arch, at the right, is carried by capitals, whereas the other has no visible supports. The construction is lost behind the figures, and even where an unsculptured surface might admit some indication of the column or base (as between the feet of Simeon and the Virgin), it is not represented. In the spandrels, a central turret is flanked by two rectangular buildings, which ramp along the arches. Their windows are slightly diagonal, as if voussoirs of the turning arches. But more interesting is the interception of the buildings by the upper frame of the relief. The former seem to disappear under the heavy molding and to pass beyond. That this was designed rather than simply the result of material factors is evident from the successive shortening of the windows as they approach the frame and the adaptation of the whole group of buildings and the larger arches to the narrow surface under the frame. The intersection has an obvious spatial effect but it is also part of an untectonic composition in which such contrasts and overlappings are exciting elements.

In the single enclosed scenes, on the other hand, the architectural frames furnish indications of foreground and background and define the limits of action. Various movements and overlapping confirm the depth therein created. But a consistent and plausible construction is lacking. In the relief of the Magi the animals are incredibly situated, while the ground plane does not accord in its depth with the space suggested above it. The same contradiction appears in the Death of Dives. The depth is not uniformly realized or extensive, and the space therefore lacks a clear configuration. The persistence of a more primitive zoned perspective is not assimilated by a single high viewpoint.

An approach to an enclosed or uniform space is evident in several details. The trefoil arches of the lower panels are not flat, but salient in plan, and support a gabled roof of three sloping sides, which converge toward the vertical axis of the panel. The figures beneath seem to stand under a sloping canopy. A similar, but more significant, touch appears on the right side of the feast of Dives (Fig. 120), in the chamfered vertical border converging toward the scene. Had another such wall been placed on the left, the whole interior would have been clearly defined and a symmetrical box-like space, a uniformly deep receptacle of the other masses, would have resulted. But this solution, which implies a conception of space as an ideal form and artistic means, was not to come until much later, in the Gothic period.

Foreshortening is likewise more apparent than actual. The horizontal and vertical planes perpendicular to the wall are reproduced in their full depth rather than foreshortened. Lines converging toward a central point in the background are unknown. It was possible to arrange the folds of the bed so that they produced an effect of recession by means of their linear design alone. But this was not admitted by the sculptor, although a matter of everyday observation. In the roof frame of the Visitation the convergence of the gable walls is contradicted by the absence of foreshortening in the receding windows. It is obvious that the sculptor conceived of all planes as equally distinct relief surfaces. Just as he turned to the side and carved the less visible surface of a head as if it were a statue in the round, he rendered with equal fidelity to fact, rather than perspective vision, the sides of buildings. In the city of Heliopolis (Fig. 117), which by its scale is a symbol of a city rather than a true background of the idols, the doorway (so small that the figures even by

stooping could not enter it) is carved on a vertical plane perpendicular to the background, and is invisible except to the approaching family. It is cut in the very thickness of the relief. In the house of Dives a similar surface is slightly inclined, so that it appears foreshortened to the spectator, although itself carved without foreshortening (Fig. 120).

That the sculptor had some awareness of linear perspective is evident in his treatment of the left building of Heliopolis (Fig. 117). Having observed the convergence of the roof and ground lines of such structures, he has rendered the walls, windows, and roof as inclining toward the ground, and has shown another side of the building at a much less obtuse angle than appears in the buildings of the cloister. But his representation is so far from accurate that we think of the inclination as the result less of a recession into depth than of a peculiar diagonal ground. In addition, the proportioning of the idols takes away all suggestion of verity from the perspective of the architecture.

Still another means of creating the effect of space is approached by the sculptor. To confirm the full solidity of the Magi's bodies, of which some parts are completely invisible, the inner sides of their mantles, which envelope these inaccessible parts, are extended in very low relief across the background wall, so that they cast no shadow (Fig. 111). In the same way the star of the Magi (unlike the star in the cloister) is a barely visible petaled form on the trefoil arch above the Child (Fig. 112), while on the opposite wall the tree of Paradise (Figs. 108, 120) is carved in very slight salience as if far behind the figures. In these three examples the minimizing of relief is not occasioned by the thinness of the object alone or by other overlapping surfaces, but an attempt is made to suggest a remoter plane or location by a limited salience and modeling.

The image of Heliopolis includes an extraordinary representation of an interior (Fig. 117). In many mediaeval and even early Renaissance paintings the front wall of a house is removed so that we may follow the action from within. In Moissac by a more complex dissection of the building, the anterior column and voussoirs of an arch seen in profile have been omitted, as in a cross-section in modern architectural drawing.

We may conclude from this study of the representation of groups of figures in Moissac that neither in the most archaic capitals of the cloister nor in the more elaborate and fully realized figures of the porch is there a clear abstraction of an enclosing space in which the figures move. But there is, on the other hand, an approach to the separate elements of such a space, manifest in the more realistic rendering of individual figures. The space is never presupposed as in later art, and we cannot, therefore, explain the various distortions and illogicalities of the works in Moissac as tentative solutions of a difficult problem or the attempts by an inferior culture to represent a complex idea. Actually, the idea of a regular, cubical space in art is very simple, but it is remote from the style of this period which coördinates separate figures in surface arabesques of very intricate design. The iconography demanded some grouping in depth, which was furthered by a greater skill in representation. But the depth resulted from the construction of separate figures and accessories one by one. Most important for the later development is the gradual affirmation of horizontal planes and the construction of architectural frames so salient that the relief seems sunken and its figures more deeply set within. But beyond such devices the depth is achieved, not by representation (i. e., foreshortening), but by a scale reproduction of the actual mass of the object.

\* \* \*

In the construction and surface of this mass the sculptures of the porch have been developed beyond the tympanum, in the direction already intimated in the change from the styles of the cloister to that of the tympanum. The figures are still further isolated from the background, and are more plastic, not merely in the sense that their relief is higher, but that the bodies are more richly modeled and the surfaces of drapery more deeply and complexly grooved. The figures stand, bend, and turn more freely within their narrow space. If they are still limited by a rigid conception of the axes, they are nevertheless much freer than in the cloister and tympanum.

The change is not uniform or equally evident in all the sculptures of the porch, for two distinct hands were at work on them. The development beyond the style of the tympanum is more evident in the large reliefs than in the upper horizontal friezes. The latter are the works of another master with a distinct character, apparent not only in the form and design of his panels but in the very type and expression of his figures. The individual heads and drapery forms reproduce with a considerable fidelity the *motifs* of the tympanum. The patriarch Abraham (Fig. 121) has the long beard and the flowing locks of Christ, and like Him is seated frontally on a great cushioned throne (Fig. 94). His halo is richly jeweled, and the lower edges of his garment are broken by two flaring fan-like pleatings, as on the figure of Christ in the tympanum. The heads of the angels are close replicas of the symbol of Matthew. The ass of the Flight (Fig. 107) is short-legged like the lion and the bull (Figs. 96, 97). The details of drapery are too obviously like those of the elders to require an extensive comparison. But the following differences may be noted. The multiplication of pleats and breaks is less elaborate in the friezes than in the tympanum, and also far less imaginative in line. The lower folds of Christ and Abraham illustrate the difference very clearly. With the exception of two examples, on the leg of the Infant in the Presentation, the doubled fold is absent from the upper zone of reliefs. But this fold was only infrequently applied on the tympanum itself, and mainly on the taller figures. There is one detail of costume that is unknown in the earlier work. The collars of Dives (Fig. 120) and the Infant Christ in the Flight into Egypt (Fig. 119) are fastened under the chin and folded at the sides to form lapels.

The modeling of the heads and the bodies, though apparently as on the tympanum, produces softer, more rounded surfaces, and lacks the sharp meeting of planes which accents the quadrature of surfaces in the earlier sculpture (Fig. 122).

In the scene of the Presentation the heads are carved with a peculiar expression of excitement that does not appear in the reliefs below. The brows are lifted high, the eyes are wide open and the mouth turned at the corners in a faint smile. In the head of Joseph the effect is one of anxiety, in the others, of joy (Figs. 118, 122). In all of them the resemblance to the eager Matthew symbol of the tympanum is evident. The bent legs of the figures and the curved or zigzag contours only increase the effect of excitement. The opposite relief of Lazarus and Dives is calmer, and the figures less agitated. There the vertical and horizontal scaffolding of the design accords with the placidity of facial expression (Fig. 120). It is only in the group of the recumbent Lazarus and the angel, which departs from the regular scheme of the adjoining figures in its diagonal lines, that we find something of the gesture and facial movement of the Presentation.

The shortness of these figures is not an obvious peculiarity of the style as one might suppose from the contrast with the elongated Magi and Virgin below. A similar difference

of proportions is visible in the lower row of elders and the seraphim under similar conditions of design within a single work. The sculptors have in each case freely adapted the figures to the height of the relief. A similar duality in canons of proportions of small and large figures has been demonstrated in other schools of French Romanesque sculpture by Laran.<sup>134</sup> But in the upper friezes of the porch the figures are not merely short because of the scale and the horizontal surface, but they have clumsier, heavier bodies than the corresponding elders. The squatness of the figures pertains also to the domestic and genre realism of the sculptor, just as the elongation of Christ and the seraphim on the tympanum is a religious dignity, formally accentuated in a style of intense, imaginative linear movement. In the scenes of banqueting on the capitals of the cloister no figure is represented actually eating, with the food at the mouth, like the rich wife in the upper frieze of the porch (Fig. 120). She recalls Germanic art of the later Middle Ages.<sup>135</sup> Nor is Lazarus in the cloister (Fig. 54) so clearly a dying beggar as the clumsy, sore-covered figure in the porch.<sup>136</sup>

The master of the larger porch reliefs was a more skillful and original artist. He derives as obviously as his associate from the art of the tympanum master. But he has modified the style of the latter much more freely. His figures are even more slender and elongated, their garments of thinner stuff, the folds arranged in more novel combinations, the heads modeled in greater detail. There is likewise in the work of this master a greater freedom in the movements of the figures. A comparison of the two figures of the Visitation with the two seraphim of the vision, who are so similar in pose, will make clear the difference between the style of the tympanum and its later development on the porch. The marble material of the Visitation may be a factor in the greater delicacy of its surfaces; but this is something we cannot decide. Whereas in the tympanum all folds are lines inscribed on flat, or broad, smoothly rounded surfaces, and regular pleatings are repeated in simple ornamental schemes, more plastic forms appear on these figures of the porch. The sleeves of the two women are casual, ungeometric pouches, broken by irregular folds. The section of the latter varies from fold to fold and is segmental rather than rectilinear. Likewise, the concentric alternating lap folds which copy those of the right seraph are incised on a deeper concave surface. The double-incised forms are employed as on the tympanum, but are less insistently concentric and prominent. The zigzag and meander contours of drapery, while they repeat the forms of the tympanum, are smaller in proportion to the

134. Laran (*Revue Archéologique*, 1907, pp. 436-450; 1908, pp. 331-358; 1909, pp. 75-93, 216-249) showed by the application of anthropometric statistical methods to the study of the proportions of a large number of Romanesque figures that within any school of French Romanesque sculpture there exist two sets of proportions, one for large figures and another for small. He verified the apparent stylistic homogeneity of certain distinct groups (Languedoc, Burgundy, Auvergne) in proving that this homogeneity varied according to the mean deviation of the proportions of the figures of the group. His measurements of Moissac are not reliable for statistical overages, since of the more than two hundred figures of the cloister and the fifty or more of the portal we are not told which were selected for comparison. The elders of the tympanum and the figures of the cloister capitals are included as small

figures and their proportions averaged, although this smallness is relative and the elders are three to four times as large as those of the capitals. The factors of time and style were also neglected by Laran, who averaged, as of one school, the regional works of different style and period. But these errors of method, while they discredit the tabulation for Languedoc, are less apparent in the treatment of other regions. Measurement of all the capitals in Moissac would probably confirm Laran's general conclusions, although it might alter his specific figures.

135. Cf. the figures of the apostles in the sculpture of the Last Supper in the cathedral of Naumburg (c. 1245?), reproduced by Panofsky, *Deutsche Plastik des XI. bis dem XIII. Jahrhunderts*, pl. 93.

136. Note especially the leper's bell on the porch.

whole figure, and in places, like the lower edges of a garment, are more closely serried. On the abdomens of the two figures are small rippling grooves, that appear also on the Joseph and Simeon of the Presentation (Fig. 118). They are unknown on the tympanum, but are suggested there by a more prominent and vigorous furrowing of the belly folds of the upper elder next to the right seraph (Figs. 96, 99).

Another detail of the style of the tympanum that is more extensively used on the porch is the flying, fan-like fold attached to a long curved stem, as at the left leg of Christ (Fig. 94). On the porch it appears in the garments of the Magi, flattened against the wall, and on Isaiah, Peter, and Elizabeth (Figs. 110, 129, 131). In the last the lower edge of the tunic is broken by a smooth domical fold with patterned, zigzag opening, as in several of the elders. But it differs from the latter's in the position between the feet and in the isolation of the fold from any stem.

There is one fold on the later figures of which there is no intimation in the tympanum. On the right leg of Peter (Fig. 129) and the left of Isaiah (Fig. 131), above the knee, are incised two lines forming an angle of forty-five degrees. On Isaiah's leg it is repeated to form a chevron pattern. The same convention occurs also on the three Magi (Fig. 111).

The modeling of the figures refines and elaborates the forms of the tympanum. This is especially apparent in the hands, which are more delicate, and in the wrists, of which the tendons are indicated by slight striations. For the vigorous and clearly blocked-out forms of the vision are substituted more delicate and flowing surfaces. Compare the head of Peter (Fig. 123) with that of any figure on the tympanum, and the greater search for surface variety and movement in the details of the first will be apparent. The sculptor has renounced the elaborate locks and beards of the tympanum; but while retaining the archaic system of parallel striations and repeated locks of hair, he has introduced more curvilinear forms. The moustache is not formed as before by hairs parallel to its long contours, but by spiral cable lines. Spiral and crocket terminations already appear in the tympanum, but in the porch they are more common and less regular.

In the nude figure of the unchaste woman (Fig. 114) we may judge of the change in the sculpture of Moissac since the carving of the cloister capitals. The expressive contrast of the movements of her head and legs has already been observed on the capitals. But if the earlier sculptors exaggerated the shortness of the figure, the later artist has increased elongation to inhuman proportions. He has extended his observation to numerous details which escaped his predecessor, and created a nude female figure so elaborate in contour and surface beside the simpler nudes of the cloister, and so unforgettably expressive, despite its Romanesque nudity, that were it not in its present context we should not readily suppose it a work of the earlier twelfth century. A similar nude figure of Luxuria at Charlieu also seems strangely precocious at this time in its massive articulation and fluent contours. In Moissac the Romanesque character is evident in the thoroughly symmetrical torso of this twisted figure, her parallel raised hands and pendant breasts, and the regular design of the suckling serpents. At the base of this vigorous plastic structure, the toad, who devours her sexual parts, is enclosed by her thighs and the hanging bodies of the serpents, which unit with the torso to form a beautiful symmetrical scheme of fluent lines and bosses. The head is mutilated, but enough remains for us to observe that the sculptor produced features appropriate to the theme and achieved an extraordinary realism. The inclined head and the wavy locks spread out upon the breast and shoulders are in themselves an impressive sculpture.



FIG. 131—*Isaiah on East Jamb*



FIG. 130—*Trumeau*  
*Moissac, Church: Details of Portal*

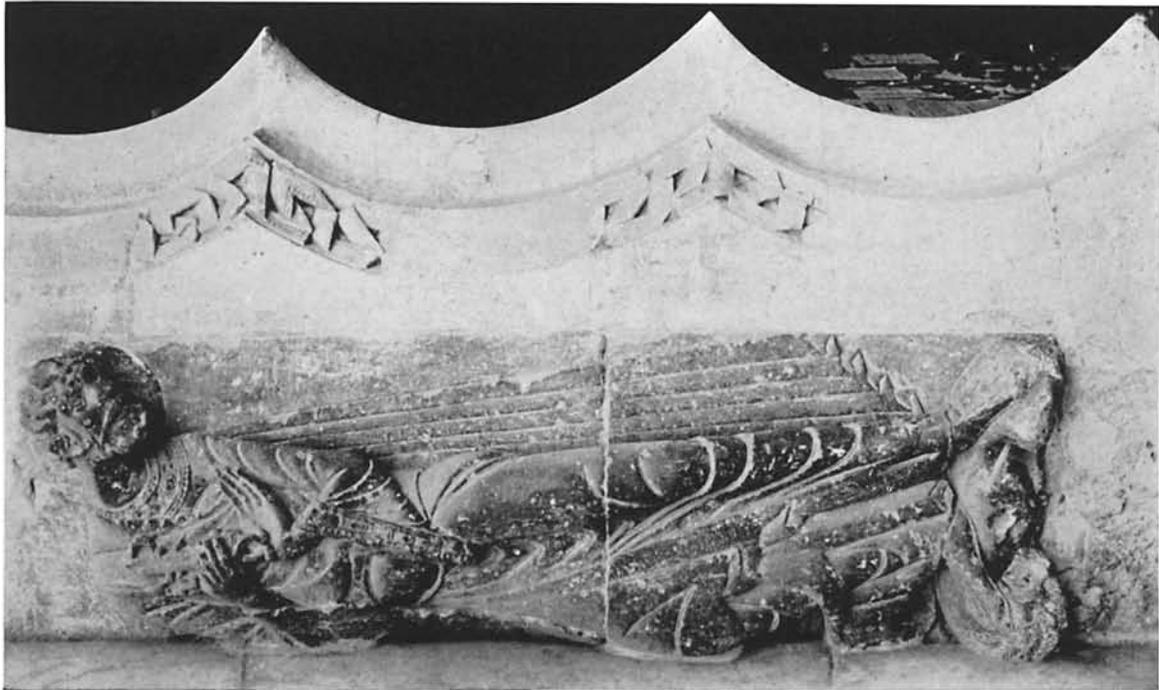


FIG. 129—*St. Peter on West Jamb*



FIG. 132—A Prophet



FIG. 133—Head of St. Paul  
Moissac, Church: Details of Trumeau



FIG. 134—St. Paul

## THE DOORPOSTS

The hand of the same master appears also in the figures of Peter and Isaiah on the walls which support the tympanum (Figs. 129, 131). They are of almost identical size but are placed at unequal distances from the ground and the scalloped edges of the jambs. Peter is higher than Isaiah, but not so close to the door. This inequality is consistent with the unequal breadth of the jambs and of the two doorways, and implies an irregular, asymmetrical relation of the figures to the adjoining cusps. That these irregularities were consciously designed is evident from the measurements of the figures and the surrounding architecture. For the left jamb and doorway are together equal to the right jamb and doorway, which are respectively smaller and larger than the corresponding parts on the other side.<sup>136a</sup> There can be no question, then, considering especially the precise equality of the two halves of the portal and the structural identity of the halves, that the alternating variations were preconceived, and were conscious stylistic elements rather than purely technical devices.

The extremities of the figures correspond to no moldings or prominent architectural divisions. They are thoroughly unarchitectural applications, independent of the structure of the wall. There are, however, in the contours of the two figures some analogies to the scalloped profile of the jambs, but these contours are involved with contrasting lines and are subordinate to diagonal schemes. It is characteristic of the style that the contour of Peter's right side, which is a symmetrical counterpart, not repetition, of the scalloped jamb, should be attached to a vertical colonnette. In one sense the architecture may be considered subordinate to the sculpture, since the abnormal profile of the jamb is justified by the movement of the figures rather than the figures by the jamb.<sup>137</sup> Their aesthetic effect and specific religious expression presuppose this plastic autonomy. On the west portal of Chartres the elongation of the ancestors of Christ is a human paraphrase of slender architectural verticals though not determined by them; in Moissac, the elongated Peter is an unstable figure without an axis or a frame.

This Peter is an ascetic in no way expressive of the Roman authority embodied in his name. The lion on which he treads is hardly observable beneath his feet. The keys are sculptured to form the letters of his monogram, but the tapering left hand is raised palm outward beside it in more humble deference and in contrasting diagonal movement. His left leg is a harsh diagonal of unexpected rigidity, which is accented by the hanging mantle folds, that seem ruled mechanically on the stone. The head, almost wrenched from the shoulders in its violent inclination towards the doorway, forms a contrasting diagonal,

136a. The measurements above the base moldings are: left jamb, .87 m., left doorway, 1.61 m., trumeau, .72 m., right doorway, 1.67 m., right jamb, .81 m. The height of Peter is 1.54 m. (including the lion at his feet), of Isaiah, with his larger pedestal, 1.66 m., and the breadths of their slabs, respectively .46 m. and .43 m.

137. The scalloping of the jambs, which appears in other churches of Southwestern France (see Part III), should be distinguished from the polylobed arches of Romanesque and Islamic art. For whereas the individual scallops of the latter have a clear analogy to the elastic arched form of the whole, the scalloping of the jambs produces a line in active contrast with the rigid verticals

of the jambs. It is a distinctly more restless, broken form, which an academic classicist taste has always found reprehensible in mediaeval art. By the application of such scalloping to a jamb beside a trumeau (less prominently scalloped in Moissac) the doorway becomes an asymmetrical architectural unit without the affirmation of static support inherent in the common lintel-and-post construction. On the contrary, the doorposts in Moissac are animated members, of which the movement is accented by the pleated ribbon meandering on the inner edges (Fig. 129). The slender colonnettes engaged to these narrow sides of the jambs are also lobed and broken, in contradiction of the very nature of the columnar member.

while both movements are resumed in the zigzag of the bent right leg on the other side. This opposition of limbs is the underlying *motif* which makes the figure so intensely expressive. The extreme slenderness of Peter, the tenuous, precariously balanced figure, the striving of the parts to move in different directions, the head one way, the legs another, the hands and arms in similar conflict, are all relevant to one idea, apparent in the head itself. But the head (Fig. 123) really shows less of the gauntness and ascetic nature, the painfully achieved, almost reluctant, spiritual submission that we infer from the whole. And it may be said that here the expression of the character is lodged primarily in the forms.

Comparison of the saint and the left seraph on the tympanum (Fig. 97) will make clearer the nature of the forms of Peter which contribute to his powerful expressiveness. In the seraph the similar gestures and elongations are of quite different effect, for the contrast is not so thoroughly sustained. His bent legs are parallel to each other. In Peter the right is bent, the left is extended stiffly in the opposite direction, and the feet are parted in further contrast; whereas in the seraph only one foot is carved, so that less opposition of line is possible. The lion's book and paws at this point only parallel the legs of the seraph and prolong their movement. The wings of the beast sweep across the field, connecting the lines of the seraph's body with other figures. But Peter is isolated, independent of others who might diminish the forcefulness of his own gestures, or reduce them to parts of a larger scheme. In the seraph there is a dominating inclination or turn of the figure toward Christ; but in Peter two directions struggle for dominance, the head and upper body towards the doorway or axis of the portal, the legs away from it. A long pleat flies from between the legs and issues in a suspended fold, outside the body contour, on the column which bounds the movement of the figure on the left. The bend of Peter's head, as already observed, is violent and agonized as if the muscles of the neck were stretched by this gesture. The head looks down rather than directly beyond like the seraph's.<sup>138</sup>

The difference between the two conceptions may be illustrated in the surfaces of the figures. In the seraph the limbs are equally salient. In Peter this simple treatment of the relief is only slightly modified, but with great effect. Whereas the section of the seraph's body is at almost all levels a symmetrical contour, in Peter it is more bulging or convex, in some places at the left, in others at the right. The knees are not in equal relief. Even the lion under Peter's feet projects farther at the left than the right. The greatest recession towards the background is at the waist. A similar effect is visible on the excited angel of Matthew in the tympanum.

In the figure of Isaiah, on the other jamb, the forms are essentially the same. But the contrasting directions of the head and the legs are the simple Romanesque formula of the cloister and the porch, without the inspired exaggeration of Peter. Isaiah's legs are turned toward the reliefs of the porch which fulfill the prophecy inscribed on his scroll; but his head is turned away from the scroll and the reliefs. This division is not an expression of a conflict within the man, but is a purely formal conception that we have already observed in other contexts, with an expressive force independent of the iconography itself. In

138. The strong, square cutting of the seraph's head reappears in Peter (Fig. 123), but in the latter the chief facial planes meet in a line parallel to the elongated axis of the head, and not perpendicular to it, as on the tym-

panum. Peter's hair is wavy and restless and falls low upon the brow in the conventional manner of the cloister and tympanum.

Isaiah the suspended scroll is a vertical band which indicates the norm from which this less animated figure bends. Perhaps the precise iconographic function, evident in the large inscription, and the proximity of the themes of the Virgin, limited the possible movement of the figure. In Souillac the marvellous Isaiah, carved by a sculptor of the same school, carries a great scroll inscribed only with his name. Perhaps it was also for the sake of Peter, the patron of Moissac, that the prophet was restrained and his movement limited to a conventional form. The unequal breadth of the two jambs and the compensatory inequality of the doorways imply some difference or contrast of the corresponding figures. This contrast, whatever its exact motive, confirms the "baroque" character of the later sculptures of the porch.

In the miniature figures of Peter and Paul who surmount the vertical bands of plants and birds on the beveled jambs framing the outer eastern colonnette, the contrast is even more explicit and quaint (Fig. 136). In chiasmic opposition to the larger Peter of the left doorpost and Paul on the west side of the trumeau, the little Paul is seated on the left jamb, whereas Peter sits inverted on the right. I have been taught that such petty irregularities of design were a superstitious concession to the evil eye, which detested nothing so much as a perfect craftsman. But in this instance contrast has become a rule, and in the literal inversion of the patron saint the assistant sculptor has with one stroke appeased the devil and carried to a perfect but absurd conclusion the conscious formulation of his master's style.<sup>139</sup>

#### THE TRUMEAU

I did not describe the trumeau after the lintel, despite their architectural connection, because its sculpture is not a part of the original design. That a trumeau always stood here is evident from the structure of the tympanum and the lintel; but that the present one was sculptured at the same time as the stones above, is less likely. Its carving is probably even later than the figures of the jambs and the side walls of the porch. The divergence from the rest of the portal may be seen not only in the style of its figured and animal decoration, but in the moldings and foliate ornament as well.

The section of the side jambs is fifty-three centimeters in depth, of the trumeau, forty-nine. Their profiles also differ (Fig. 126). In both trumeau and jambs a festooned, or lobed, colonnette is engaged to the sides facing the entrance-ways. On the trumeau it is segmental, and set between angular prismatic moldings that form a zigzag interrupted by the central colonnette; on the jambs it is of semicircular section and is placed on a flat band with outer chamfers. The trumeau has five scallops on each side, the jambs but four.<sup>140</sup> Their base moldings are also different.<sup>141</sup> The original impost of the trumeau has been replaced in recent times by an uncarved block of limestone unlike the marble of the block below. The capitals of the engaged colonnettes have been preserved and show a structure and foliate ornament resembling the capitals of the Romanesque windows of the

139. A philosophical Frenchman discovered in the succession of ascending animals on these jambs—fish, bird, quadruped, and St. Peter—a Romanesque anticipation of the theory of evolution. See the *Bulletin de l'Association Française pour l'Avancement des Sciences et Arts de Montauban*, 1902.

140. The scallops increase in span as they ascend. This produces a more dynamic succession and at the same

time a more harmonious transition to the lintel. Note also that the scalloping is in contrast to the circular rosettes of the trumeau rather than concentric with them.

141. The colonnettes of the doorposts have a flatter, deeper scotia than those of the trumeau. It may be asked also to what extent these differences were consciously sought to maintain the general aesthetic character of the slightly earlier design.

church and several of the adjoining tower, but in contrast to the deeply undercut plant and animal forms of the other capitals of the porch and the portal.

The trumeau was already singled out for special admiration in the fourteenth century. The abbot Aymeric de Peyrac then wrote that this stone and the marble font of the cloister (now destroyed) were "reputed the most beautiful, and the most subtly wrought, and were said to have been brought here with great cost and labor and even supposed to have been made miraculously rather than by a man, especially a simple abbot."<sup>142</sup>

It is a marble monolith, 3.52 meters in height and about .72 in width. On its outer face are carved three superposed couples of crossed animals (Fig. 130). They are lion and lioness, contrary to the common description of them as male alone. The outer animal is always a lioness, alternating in direction from group to group. The beasts are mounted on each other's haunches, while their tails, distinguished by a smooth carrot-like termination in the female and by a similar form with a pebbled surface and a hooked end and lobed calyx envelope in the male, are interlaced between them on a background of acanthus rosettes.

On the sides of the trumeau are the elongated figures of Paul and a bearded prophet, engaged to curved colonnettes which terminate in a palmette capital on one side and an acanthus capital on the other (Figs. 132-134). The prophet stands with legs crossed, Paul with a simpler bending of the limbs. They are compressed within the narrow frame formed by the fore and rear parts of the animals and the back of the pillar, festooned like the jambs beside it. A series of imbricated semicircular scales, which Aymeric thought was the signature of the abbot Ansqutilius (1085-1115), decorates the back.

The sculptures are unarchitectural, and betray no effort to accent the static function of the pillar. But this indifference to physical structure is consistent with the form of the trumeau, since the latter has itself been designed without regard to the expression of its function, and even contradicts it. It contains hardly a vertical line. Its contours are scalloped both in elevation and plan; the colonnettes of its narrow sides are curved behind the figures engaged to them. The diagonal crossing of the lions throws the plastic accent on recurrent heads and legs along the broken edges of the trumeau. The vertical axis becomes plastically subordinate, even negative, with the addition of circular rosettes behind the beasts. The very placing of the figures, on the less visible narrow sides, is also significant of the unarchitectonic character of the style. But the positive energy and movement of the tympanum and porch, which imply these willful asymmetries, these irregular forms and contrasts of the trumeau, are less apparent in the latter.

Mâle has remarked of the animals that they are more Assyrian than the Assyrian lions themselves.<sup>143</sup> They are inferior copies of the symbol of Mark on the tympanum. They

142. ". . . quidem lapis fontis marmoreus et lapis medius portalis, inter ceteros lapides harum precium, reputantur pulcherrima magnitudine et subtili artificio fuisse constructi, et cum magnis sumptibus asportati et labore; ymo potius extimantur miraculose ibidem fuisse [constructi], quod opere hominis, maxime unius simplicis abbatis." Chronicle, f. 160 vo., col. 1, Rupin, *op. cit.*, p. 66, n. 2. On the marble font, see above, note 68.

143. Aymeric called them leopards, and observed the existence of a similar sculptured beast in the portal of a priory of Moissac in Cénac (near Périgueux), built by the

abbot Anquêtél (1085-1115). The church survives, but without trace of such a sculpture. That it was a lion to the sculptor and not a leopard appears from the close resemblance to the lion of Mark in the tympanum. [The identification of these two species in the Middle Ages is well illustrated in a manuscript of the twelfth century from La Charité (diocese of Besançon) now in the British Museum (Add. Ms. 15603); on f. 113 vo. marginal drawings of two very similar beasts are labelled *leo* and *lipar*.] The text of Aymeric reads . . . "perlegi fundacionem dicti prioratus [Cénac] per scripturas antiquas, et reperi quod ipse Asquili-



FIG. 135—*St. Benedict (?)*  
*on West Column*



FIG. 136—*Peter and Paul* below Spring of Archivolt of  
*Tympanum*  
*Moissac, Church: Details of Portal and Exterior of Porch*



FIG. 137—*Abbot Roger (1115-1131)*  
*on East Column*



FIG. 138—*Modillions of West Tower*



FIG. 139—*Modillions of West Tower*



FIG. 140—*Cornice and Crenellations of South Wall of South Porch  
Moissac, Church: Details of Exterior*

have the same peculiar muzzles, worried brows, short legs, and conventionalized locks of hair but lack the energy and powerful modeling of their original. Their caterpillar bodies are surcharged with the repeated ornamental details which formed a simple fringe in the tympanum. In this fantastic, though not untraditional rearrangement of the usual portal lions, they have lost their ferocity. The threat of their animal bodies is diminished by the methodical involvement with each other, by the knotting of their tails, and the attachment to disks of foliage. The force of the diagonal movement of the beasts has been dissipated into a simple pattern and neutralized by their vertical arrangement. Lions are more effectively crossed on a capital of the narthex, where the contours of the beasts are sharply isolated and intersect in rigorous correspondence with the enclosing volutes (Fig. 127).

The rosettes carved on the outer surface of the pillar, as backgrounds of the crossed animals, are weak imitations of the forms of the lintel. The interspaces have been left bare, the cable omitted, the central knob treated like a button without the crispness or variety of the original, and the leaves themselves have been reduced to smaller, softer patterns, consisting of five spoon-grooved lobes. The eyelets are no longer effective in the design.

In the figures of the trumeau there is an analogous dilution of the powerful forms of the tympanum. They are even more slender than the figures of the porch, but their elongation is no longer a *motif* of excitement and intense diagonal contrasts. It is an elegant proportion in figures whose movements are languid, almost indolent, versions of their prototypes.<sup>144</sup> A similar change is evident in the smoothly undulating surfaces of the heads and beards and the boneless hands (Fig. 133). The draperies have the thinness of certain Renaissance costumes. The doubled fold has been abandoned for more plastic, delicate forms.

If the figures are not adapted to a caryatid function or designed in columnar forms, they are hardly troubled by the jagged, constraining structure in which they have been embedded. In neither figure does the compression between cusped edges and lions correspond to an inward involvement or sustained constriction and conflict of forms, or even the abstraction of vertical themes. They suggest certain kings, with legs crossed, engaged to the columns of St.-Denis and Chartres, more than their own prototypes in Aquitaine. Only the unarchitectural design of the trumeau has concealed this similarity.

#### THE ABBOT ROGER AND "ST. BENEDICT"

These two figures, placed high upon the capitals of columns engaged to the south wall of the porch, are themselves independent of the latter (Figs. 135, 137). They are not carved in the wall or even in a salient block which forms an essential part of it, as we might suppose from the engagement of the column, but are almost detached in high relief on a thick slab set into the wall subsequent to the construction of the latter. The immediate background is, in fact, cut (like a flat pilaster) in slight salience from the wall. This private relief background illustrates at the same time the independence of architecture already

*nus, seu ejus contemplacione et procuracione et secundum formam operis ecclesie patet, quod ipse fecerit quia de similibus operis et sculturis videtur esse artificiatum, et in portali dicte ecclesie de Senaco est quidem leopardus, sicut in portali ecclesie Moyssiacy sculptus.*" Chronicle, f. 159 vo., col. 2, f. 160 ro, col. 1, and Rupin, *op. cit.*, p. 69, n. 9.

144. Paul has the posture of the seraphim of the tympanum; the prophet is similar to the Isaiah in Souillac, and more remotely to the angel of Matthew in the tympanum.

analyzed in the sculptures below, and also the persistence of an earlier method of relief even in figures which by their salience suggest a complete detachment from the background. The two figures exist in a space more emphatically constructed than any we have seen below. Their feet are firmly planted on a deep, horizontal ground, and are exaggerated in mass and flatness, as if to underline the newly achieved stance in space. In the trumeau, the feet of the prophet (Fig. 132) are still suspended in the archaic manner of the cloister, and on the jambs, Isaiah stands upon a sloping ledge (Fig. 131). Another horizontal surface confirms the depth of the figures on the columns; it is the slab above their heads, which was probably designed to protect them, but serves also to define the depth or projection of the stage on which they stand. In the description of the capitals of the cloister an analogous effect was observed in the projecting console above the head of Nebuchadnezzar (Fig. 23); but there the salience was very slight and the corresponding ground plane still undeveloped.

The postures of the two figures also imply a development of spatial forms. By their religious office and significance they are bound to a frontal position and an ideal repose, like the abbot Durand in the cloister (Fig. 4), but the abbot Roger looks up to the left and the head and shoulders of St. Benedict are turned towards the right, although their glance has no perceptible object. If we compare them with the opposed apostles on a single pier of the cloister (Figs. 5, 6) whose heads are turned to each other, we see that the more recent figures are less bound to the wall and that their arms, if parallel to the latter, are less constrained by this archaic procedure. The immobility of the two men contrasts with the figures of the tympanum, as if by this liberation of the mass, all the energy of line had been sacrificed. But this iconographic immobility is distinct from the stiffness of the cloister, which was an unnatural, imposed rigidity, whereas Benedict stands humbly with an ascetic quietude and detachment, and the physically mediocre Roger, in his massive pyramidal costume, has an air of energy and assertion. They are portraits of contemporary monastic figures of the contemplative and active life.

The domination of the mass of the figures is a further development of the style of the porch. Instead of a complicated course of pleatings at the edges of the costume, the sculptor has accented the larger, plastic undulation of the mass of the garment about the legs. In Benedict the folds are simpler, softer, more natural forms; the sleeves are deeply hollowed to expose the ends of an inner garment. The contours of both figures have been simplified and rounded to produce a clearer, more definite solid.

Despite this simplification and immobility, the characters of the earlier style persist to some degree in the two figures. Roger is placed to the left of the slab rather than in the exact center, like Durand, and his name, BEATuS ROTgERIUS ABBAS is inscribed at the right. If he wears the symmetrical costume of an abbot, it is no longer disposed in its ideal or typical order but is stirred by an accidental asymmetry of the parts. The turn of the abbot's head is contrary to the inclination of his staff. The authoritative hand is not rigidly parallel to the background like his predecessor's but is bent back in a more natural gesture. The ascending diagonal lines of his costume are crossed by other angular forms. Large, vigorous pleats are placed asymmetrically on the lower edge. In Roger we see a realistic asymmetry imposed on an iconographically symmetrical object, as in Durand a natural symmetry was reproduced with an effect of abstract ornamental involvement.

Benedict is a slightly taller, more slender figure than Roger, but no more closely related to the earlier reliefs of the porch. The two figures are so different in expression that it is difficult at first to see their common authorship. This difference attests the development of the style which could conceive such personal interpretations of a historical and an almost contemporary figure.

There are no figures below quite like them, but their stylistic character suggests either a later work of the master of the horizontal friezes of the porch or of a sculptor closely related to him. The more recent date is evident in purely material details like the relation of the slabs of these figures to the surrounding wall, as well as in the plastic development of the figures. The modeling and perspective of the hands and sleeves of Benedict is of a naturalism beyond that of the lower porch reliefs. The inscription beside Roger has larger, rounder, more plastic letters than the inscription of Isaiah (Fig. 131). The forms of A and R are especially noteworthy in their suggestion of early Gothic majuscules.