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King Dagobert, the saint, and royal salvation: the shrine of Saint-Denis and propaganda production (850-1319 C.E.)

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KING DAGOBERT, THE SAINT, AND ROYAL SALVATION:

THE SHRINE OF SAINT-DENIS

AND PROPAGANDA PRODUCTION (850 – 1319 C.E.)

by

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PH.D. THESIS

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ABSTRACT

By the early fourteenth century, the royal basilica of Saint-Denis had become the most visible sign of the union between the rule of secular kings and the enduring French church. Two notable abbots had been entrusted as regents for the throne, many of the abbots of the Carolingian period had been lay abbots and local nobles, and the basilica had claimed the right to bury the kings of France for centuries. However, the success of the abbey in creating the privileges they enjoyed has obscured the work needed to claim these rights. Powerful abbots in the course of the history of Saint-Denis used the tools they had to construct an argument to the kings; that in Saint-Denis alone did the kings have the best hope of finding salvation. Only St.-Denis himself could guarantee that a king, who may be stained with sins of a different nature than those of ordinary people, would gain heaven.

By the mid-ninth century, Abbot Hilduin of Saint-Denis had composed a consolidated account of the life of the saint he served. In his hands, Denis became the early convert of Paul and first bishop of Athens, author of two essential early Christian visionary accounts, first bishop and missionary to Gaul, and the martyred bishop of Paris. Scholarship on Hilduin's *vitae* has picked apart his sources, noted where he created references wholesale and ignored the discrepancies in the time line, in order to create the most important and international of saints. What has been less well noted is the creation of another kind of *vitae*, this one commissioned from Hilduin's pupil Hincmar, who was later to take on the role of archbishop of Rheims Cathedral. The *Gesta Dagoberti regis*, composed around the same time as Hilduin's *Post beatam et salutiferam*, created the myth of the *roi fondateur* which was to serve the purposes of the abbey well in later centuries.

Dagobert I became the founding king of the abbey, despite evidence that he did little other than decorate the shrine of the eighth century and be buried there. In the *Gesta Dagoberti regis*,

Hincmar wove together some of the chronicle accounts of the Merovingian king with miraculous visions and deeds of St.-Denis to construct a powerful argument for royal patronage of the abbey. Dagobert thus discovered the abandoned shrine, constructed a new building, designated it a monastery and funded it lavishly, then had himself buried there. He was the exemplar for later kings, and the abbots of Saint-Denis utilized the ninth century account of Dagobert as they struggled to retain the loyalty of the kings and made a bid to be the official necropolis for Frankish royalty.

Over the course of five centuries, the tale of the founding king grew, as such stories do. Each expansion of Dagobert's biography, and by extension, the biography of the abbey, came during points of stress between the kings and the royal basilica. For while the monks of the abbey may have believed, by the eleventh century, that the bodies of the kings belonged in their church, the royal family at times had other ideas. As newer competing institutions offered advantages not available at Saint-Denis for those buried on their sites, the monks produced new and enhanced accounts of the founding king and the benefits of taking St.-Denis as the patron.

This dissertation begins with the fundamental question: why was King Dagobert so conspicuously present in the production of art and Dionysian symbolism? Covering the mid-ninth century through the year of 1319, the best answer must be that the abbey believed the story of this otherwise obscure Merovingian king served them well in promoting their site as the proper final resting place for the kings. In the process, Saint-Denis became the most enduring and powerful religious institutions of medieval France, garnering a reputation as a site for miraculous healing and the becoming the foundation for the claims of legitimacy made by the ruling houses of France. So successful was this campaign that, during the French Revolution, Saint-Denis was stripped of the bones of the royal dead and partially demolished. It is worth noting, however, that at its

foundation, Saint-Denis was only one of several abbeys founded by kings, and was one of many that housed the royal dead. Its rise to prominence was not foreordained; it was carefully constructed, gradually, over the course of centuries. King Dagobert was one of the essential elements used to gain ascendancy and lay claim to the bodies of the kings.

PUBLIC ABSTRACT

By the early fourteenth century, the royal basilica of Saint-Denis had become the most visible sign of the union between the rule of secular kings and the enduring French church. Two notable abbots had been entrusted as regents for the throne, many of the abbots of the Carolingian period had been lay abbots and local nobles, and the basilica had claimed the right to bury the kings of France for centuries. However, the success of the abbey in creating the privileges they enjoyed has obscured the work needed to claim these rights. Powerful abbots in the course of the history of Saint-Denis used the tools they had to construct an argument to the kings; that in Saint-Denis alone did the kings have the best hope of finding salvation. Only St.-Denis himself could guarantee that a king, who may be stained with sins of a different nature than those of ordinary people, would gain heaven.

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Denis was only one of several abbeys founded by kings, and was one of many that housed the royal dead. Its rise to prominence was not foreordained; it was carefully constructed, gradually, over the course of centuries. King Dagobert was one of the essential elements used to gain ascendancy.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS :

ABoll.	*Analecta Bollandiana*
Astron.	Astronomer, *Anonymi Vita Hludovici Pii*, ed. MGH. SS. ii, 607-648.
BÉCh.	*Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes*
BHL	*Bibliothèca Hagiographica latina antiquae et mediae aetatis (Subsidia Hagiographica,* 6, 12, Brussels, 1898-1911).
MA	*Le Moyan Âge*
Mabillon, *AOSB*	J. Mabillon, *Acta Sanctorum Ordinis Sancti Benedicti in saeculorum classes distributa*, 9 vols. (Paris, 1668-1701).
MGH	*Monumenta Germaniae Historica*
AA.	*Auctores Antiquissimi*, (Berlin, 1877-)
DMerov.	*Diplomata regum Francorum e stirpe merovingica et maiorum domus e stirpe Arnulforum*, ed. K. Pertz (Hannover, 1872).
SRG	*Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum in usum scolarum ex Monumentis Germaniae Historicis separatim editi* (Hannover, 1840-)
SRM	*Scriptores Rerum Merovingicarum* (Hannover, 1840-)
SS	*Scriptorum tomus*
Mirac.	*Miracula*
Pat. Lat.	*Patrilogia Latina.*
RHÉF	*Revue d'Histoire de l'Église de France*

Introduction: Le bon roi Dagobert

Le bon roi Dagobert
Craignait d'aller en enfer ;
Le grand saint Éloi
Lui dit : Ô mon roi !
Je crois bien, ma foi
Que vous irez tout droit.
C'est vrai, lui dit le roi,
Ne veux-tu pas prier pour moi ?

(The good king Dagobert
feared to go to hell.
The great saint Éloi
said to him, "Oh my king!
I believe truly, upon my faith,
That you will go the right way."
"It's true," the king said to him,
"Don't you want to pray for me?")

Quand Dagobert mourut,
Le diable aussitôt accourut;
Le grand saint Éloi
Lui dit : Ô mon roi !
Satan va passer,
Faut vous confesser.
Hélas, lui dit le roi,
Ne pourrais-tu mourir pour moi ?

(When Dagobert died,
the devil ran up right away.
The great saint Éloi
said to him,"Oh my king!
Satan will pass you by
should you confess."
"Alas!" the king said to him,
"Couldn't you die for me?")

"Le bon roi Dagobert"
18th century French folksong

Dagobert died in 639 C.E., most likely in the shrine of Saint-Denis. While his military exploits in life were overshadowed by later Frankish kings, the accounts of his life constructed in Saint-Denis championed Dagobert as an exemplar for the royal families, particularly in the manner of his death. Between the ninth and fourteenth centuries, the details of his story shifted, and gathered accretions which emphasized the Merovingian king's generosity and financial support of the shrine, and the importance of Saint-Denis in the history of the kingdom. With each new account detailing the history of the saint, the authors in the abbey stressed different aspects of the king's life and the interventions of the divine, making France a holy land ruled by a king uniquely positioned in the Christian world. The Dagobertian stories created over multiple centuries sparked interest in the abbey, both among the royal families and the pious Christians who might come to

seek blessings and cures. With each new iteration and accretion, it has been possible to discern points of anxiety and vulnerability in regards to the abbey's position in France.

Therefore, Good king Dagobert (Dagobert I, c. 603-639) was a fool and a sinner; or, contrariwise, he was a wise and able king. History has remembered him as the last Merovingian ruler of the Franks capable of centralizing power over both Austrasia and Neustria, the two Frankish kingdoms. He has been credited with having founded the royal basilica of Saint-Denis, was the first king buried there, and has become known as the first member of the ruling house of the Franks to claim the saint of that abbey, Denis or Dionysius, as his patron saint. He became the symbol of the connections and, indeed, the interdependence between the three royal houses of medieval France and representatives of divine approval. As such, Dagobert provided a symbol durable enough that the song above, "Le bon roy Dagobert", was composed in the early 18th century to express anti-royalist sympathies and satirize the hand-in-glove relationship between representatives of the church – who often served as apologists for the excesses and vanities of the kings – and the monarchy. That song was later revived by opponents of Napoleon's reign when he crowned himself in Notre-Dame on the throne of Dagobert. As a symbol of royal and divine power united in a single man, Dagobert endured.

The development and expansion of the Dagobertian cult centered in the royal abbey of Saint-Denis, and as Dionysian influence grew in the Ile-de-France, the monks promoted both the passion tale of the saint and the story of the union between the Frankish kings and the shrine. Enhancement of the king's biography occurred during critical periods in the history of the region or at points when the monks of the basilica felt most vulnerable, fearing their influence with the kings was on the wane. This dissertation addresses those points at which the biography of Dagobert was written, promoted through artistic productions, or expanded to include new aspects

which would enhance the status of the saint. I will focus upon seminal periods; namely the mid-ninth century, when the *Gesta Dagoberti regis* was commissioned by Emperor Louis the Pious; the expansion of the abbey church during the twelfth century under Abbot Suger and his successors; the thirteenth century tomb construction program; the late thirteenth century disputes over the divided interment of the royal family; and the fourteenth century dynastic crisis before the ascension of Philip V to the throne in 1317. At each point, the monks of Saint-Denis turned to a myth promoted as history, one which made the kings valuable patrons of the shrine, but which similarly placed them into a position of vassalage to the saint himself. This notion, that the kings were simultaneously puissant and powerless in light of the divine, became the central message of Saint-Denis to the kings and, by extension, to the Frankish people. For the monks, the biography of King Dagobert was one of their most important tools, and he developed in the Dionysian biographies, Dagobert was a progenitor of the notion of the sacred rule of kings.

This dissertation addresses key moments in the relationship between the royal houses of France – the Merovingians, Carolingians, and Capetians – and the propaganda created in the basilica of Saint-Denis designed to maintain or advance the privileges the monks and abbots had come to believe were their natural rights. Most of the conflicts between the kings and the abbots concerned the prerogative claimed by Saint-Denis; the right to bury the dead, which was precisely why Dagobert's biography became such a powerful tale for the shrine. Possession of the bodies of dead kings became, by the thirteenth century, the means of attracting pilgrims and patrons. Each royal body was a renewed assertion that future kings needed to rest next to their fathers and grandfathers, if they wished for the continuation of their dynastic line. To attain that end, the abbey required arguments that linked the power of the kings to the support of the basilica, and the salvation of the kings to the divine patronage of St.-Denis himself.

Although the kings have traditionally been crowned in Rheims cathedral, most of the royal bones rested in the abbey church of Saint-Denis, and those royal corpses have been the most visible symbol of legitimacy and rule for each successive house to claim the throne. The monks of the abbey, willing accomplices so long as they received the benefits of royal patronage, funding, and further bodies to enshrine in the necropolis, nevertheless found themselves by the twelfth century fighting a war of propaganda against the kings as rulers turned to newer, more fashionable cults, or chose to patronize abbeys they or immediate family members had founded. At critical points in their campaigns to obtain and retain the bodies of kings, the monks of Saint-Denis used an arsenal of propaganda to bolster what they claimed were their "natural rights" in regard to the dispensation of royal corpses. As can be deduced from the building campaigns and the composition of new chronicles purporting to present the true history of the royal houses of France, the conversation between king and monks – although typically cordial on the surface – nevertheless resulted in the production of propagandistic materials at key points in their relationship between the ninth and early fourteenth centuries. The kings used the abbey of Saint-Denis in a quest to construct for themselves an unassailable image of divinely sanctioned, even grandiose, rule, while the abbey sought to produce reminders that, regardless of how extensive the claims made by the rulers of the Franks, their best hope for salvation would lie in the disposal of their remains in the abbey.

The kings were not the sole audience for the stories centering on Dagobert and the abbey. When he engaged in reconstructions of Saint-Denis, Abbot Suger (c. 1081-1151) cited the need for the work on the eastern section of the church to accommodate the masses of pilgrims who would crowd the nave on high festival days. In *De institutiones,* Suger claimed that "…on special days such as the feast of the blessed Denis … when the narrowness of the place forced women to

run to the altar on the heads of men as on a pavement with great anguish and confusion."[1] In the consideration of indirect evidence for popular pilgrimage, Conant has cited the development in the twelfth century, among multiple abbeys and shrine, of architecture designed to move crowds close to and away from the holy relics so many wished to see.[2] These characteristic features included "…grand scale, long, aisled naves, large transepts, and ambulatory-style east ends."[3] Reconstruction of the abbey of Saint-Denis, which commenced in the mid-twelfth century, adopted these elements in a manner which demonstrates both the complexities of mass pilgrimage and the popularity of the site. For the monks and abbots of the thirteenth century, material produced to educate secular audiences required an emphasis on both the royal court to encourage generous alms and to the pilgrims who would come to visit. The dual quality of presumed audiences required different sorts of symbols, stories, and methods for dissemination.

The first step in establishing Dagobertian propaganda began in the 9th century, not in the seventh, when King Dagobert invested some of his wealth into the expansion and decoration of the shrine. Credited with having built a new structure, evidence from the foundations of the abbey show that Dagobert shored up the older structure and may have widened it to a degree, but did not build a new one.[4] Similarly, the Merovingian king received the credit for having designated Saint-Denis a monastic institution, when documentation from the reign of one of his sons, Clovis II, have indicated that the abbey's foundation occurred after the death of Dagobert. However, as Dagobert was the first king to be buried in Saint-Denis, the monks rested their claims to the royal bodies

[1] Suger, *De institutione,* Chapter XXV.
[2] Kenneth Conant, *Carolingian and Romanesque architecture, 800-1200,* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Books, 1978), 91-103.
[3] J. Stopford, "Some Approaches to the Archaeology of Christian Pilgrimage," *World Archaeology,* Vol. 26, No. 1, Archaeology of Pilgrimage, (Jun., 1994), 57.
[4] For analysis on the foundations of the abbey of Saint-Denis, see the work of Sumner Crosby, *The Royal Abbey of Saint-Denis: from its beginnings to the Death of Suger, 475-1151,* (New Haven and London; Yale University Press, 1987), particularly pages 13-50.

upon his example, and expanded their arguments to include salvation and divine patronage of the proper king. In the process, the details provided by early chronicle accounts on the history of the Merovingian kings were altered or omitted utterly to create a more sympathetic figure who could be worthy of the grace bestowed upon him by his patron saint. His quarrels with his half-brother, his military exploits, and his multiple marriages were carefully excised, leaving only the barest mention of scandals to explain his particular need for divine intervention.

The second step in the establishment of burial rights of the abbey of Saint-Denis, and the attendant expansion of the story of Dagobert, began during the early 12th century, as Dionysian abbots Adam and Suger countered the loss of significant members of the Capetian dynasty. As first Philip I then Louis VII chose alternate sites for interment, Suger returned to the tale of Dagobert to resurrect the myth and thereby persuade future kings to follow in those footsteps. At the same point, Suger needed to counter the resistance of the monks in his own abbey who protested at the prospect of removing the last vestiges of the ancient shrine believed to have been consecrated by Christ himself. Faced by these two competing problems – mollifying the monks while glorifying the abbey in a way designed to appeal to royal vanity - Suger did not commission a new manuscript account of the life of Dagobert. Instead, he created and promoted the story of the Merovingian king through the use of powerful symbols of royal power and divine patronage. Despite his influence with the king, Suger was not able to persuade Louis VII to place his remains in the abbey church, but later Capetians were swayed enough by the arguments for a centralized royal burial place that both Philip II and his heir, Louis VIII, took burial in the royal basilica for granted at their deaths in the early thirteenth century.

New pressures upon the abbey of Saint-Denis developed as the establishment of novel monastic orders who competed for royal funding and promotion reduced royal bequests and might

have undermined the claims made by the more conservative Benedictine house. In response, the abbey took advantage of the kings' desires to create a site on which to rest claims of privilege and dynasty to expand the nave of the church and construct a royal necropolis. The abbey constructed more than a dozen above ground sepulchers for kings and queens important both to the Capetians and the monks. The royal inhabitants thus treated received visibility in the nave of the church, complete with effigies. This period in Dionysian promotion came with an upsurge in interest in the Carolingian past, as Philip II claimed the title of the New Charlemagne.[5] By the mid-thirteenth century, the monks had established a special tomb dedicated to the memory of King Dagobert in a visible section of the nave, and commissioned a new book which recounted the passion of St.-Denis and the founding of the abbey by Dagobert.

The tomb project of the mid-thirteenth century must also be read in the light of the conspicuous preference of Louis IX for the newer mendicant orders. The arguments of the secular clergy in the regions of Paris, particularly the canons of Notre-Dame, pitted priests and theologians of the university against the Franciscans and Dominicans. The king preferred the religious styles of the mendicants, who preached vigorously and promoted the ideals of apostolic poverty. Regardless of Louis' personal preference for spiritual expression, and despite a flirtation with the idea of abandoning the throne for a friar's habit or burial in a Cistercian abbey of his own founding, Louis at last chose burial in Saint-Denis.

[5] Interest in the stories centering on Charlemagne ebbed and flowed in the medieval period, but the signs of a revival of accounts focused on his life appear pronounced in the first decades of the thirteenth century, particularly after the Battle of Bouvines in 1215. For analysis, see Gabrielle Spiegel, "Pseudo-Turpin, the crisis of the aristocracy and the beginnings of vernacular historiography in France," *Journal of Medieval History,* Vol. 12, Issue 3, 1986, 207-223; also Spiegel, "The Reditus Regni ad Stirpem Karoli Magni: A New Look," *French Historical Studies,* Vol. 7, No. 2, (Autumn, 1971), 145-174. These questions are more fully addressed in three of this dissertation.

By the late thirteenth century, the relationship between the abbey and the contentious king, Philip the Fair, flared into hostility as the monks and king disputed the final placement of significant royal remains. While Philip did not question the importance of burial in the shrine, he nevertheless pressured the abbot and the pope to permit him to remove significant portions of his grandfather's bones from the shrine for placement in Sainte-Chapelle next to his royal palace. In 1306, as the king attended the ritual which would remove most of Louis IX's bones from the abbey, he conferred with the abbot Gilles of Pontoise and was persuaded to fund the creation of a new manuscript for his library. The book that resulted was a compilation of all the forms of royalist propaganda that had been created within the basilica. Combining the *vitae* of St.-Denis, the royal biographies of specific kings, the *Grandes Chroniques de France,* the history of the shrine, and miracle accounts, the *Vie de St.-Denis* (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, ms. fr. 2090-2092) became the culmination of all the documents and myths collected and housed in the abbey over the course of five centuries. To add to its luster, this document contained 77 individual illustrations. Though Philip the Fair died before the manuscript was completed, and royal payments seem to have stopped with his death, the abbot of Saint-Denis completed the document and presented it to Philip's second successor on the throne, his son Philip of Poitier or Philip V two years after his ascension to the throne. This book dedicated more individual quires and illuminations to the deeds and exploits of Dagobert than to any other single king; even Charlemagne, Charles the Bald, Philip II, and Philip the Fair himself received less attention and fewer pages.

Royal burial in the late thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries was often marked by divided interment, as those wealthy and powerful enough would elect to have their bodies separated and placed in two or three alternate sites. The decision to be buried in multiple places began as a

necessary response to the problems arising when an individual died far from his or her preferred grave site, but became a pious hope to multiply the masses and prayers for the dead. Newer institutions, such as those established by the mendicant orders, encouraged the royal family to entrust the hearts and entrails with them, knowing that with these bodies would come generous payments for the reciting of masses. The abbots of Saint-Denis feared the wholesale desertion of the shrine for newer sites, and in the book they prepared for Philip the Fair, they provided new illustrations promoting the power of the conventional royal patron and the proper form of funeral for a king. In these images, Dagobert played a central role.

The use of medieval chronicle accounts has not been without danger or difficulty. The documents have not conformed easily to the standards of truthful and unvarnished narrative we might wish to see in historical accounts. Although the histories of the Middle Ages attracted the interests of scholars beginning in the nineteenth century, chronicles elicited little in the way of serious consideration until the 1970s. Rife with purpose rather than information, the authors of royal chronicles wed the narratives to meaning and theology. In her work on royal genealogy, Gabrielle Spiegel listed the host of shortcomings in historiography, including:

> …its philosophical alliance with theology, which evacuated from history its human purpose and meaning; its literary alliance with rhetoric, which made it inimical to the pursuit of truth; its exemplarist and stereotypical use of historical events and persons for moral teaching, denying them what a modern historian would consider their historicity, their relationship to a historical context; its concern with experience, custom, and repetition, rather than reason, individuality, and process; even its absence from the curriculum of medieval pedagogy which meant, as V. H. Galbraith once remarked, that the serious study of history in the Middle Ages was "nobody's business". …In short, medieval historiography, by all critical odds, is inauthentic,

> unscientific, unreliable, ahistorical, irrational, borderline illiterate, and, worse yet, unprofessional.[6]

All these things have been accurate descriptions, no doubt, and the composition of the medieval chronicle tradition has left modern readers of the accounts wary of the source. However, consideration of the purposes that drove these ahistorical accounts can yield a surprising degree of information on the stresses, the alliances, and the shifting sands of power in a long dialogue between the royal European houses and the monasteries that served as repositories of memory.

The Dionysian chronicles have long been mined for historical relevance, but stymied by the proliferation of myth-making, exaggeration, and royalist apology in these manuscripts, the inclusion of exalted claims of Trojan ancestry, divine sanction, and miraculous interventions has been read as indications of the gullibility of actors in the past, and the chronicle accounts were dismissed as irrelevant.[7] According to Gabrielle Spiegel, medieval scholarship in the 1960s regarded the chronicles largely through the lens of positivism, and any element which could not be proven or established as "true" became problematized; use of the Dionysian chronicle accounts seemed a dangerous act if one wished to determine verifiable facts. When outlining the status of research into the Dionysian chronicles, she wrote that much of the perceived difficulty in understanding these manuscripts lay in the realistic tenor of the authorial voice, which simultaneously declared the legitimacy of one line of kings and events of their reign, but placed those events within a mythological landscape populated with miraculous interventions. Discerning what, in a positivist light, could be verifiable and therefore real, troubled those seeking a better understanding of the medieval past.[8] Rejecting the limitations of positivism, Spiegel instead

[6] Gabrielle Spiegel, "Genealogy: Form and Function in Medieval Historical Narrative," *History and Theory*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (Feb., 1983), 43-44.
[7] Gabrielle Spiegel, *The Past as Text: the Theory and Practice of Medieval Historiography*, (Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore and London), 1997, pp. xi-xxii.
[8] Ibid, p. xii.

sought to find a way to see that the "past itself constituted an ideological structure of argument, one that sought legitimacy from the borrowed authority of history understood as a putatively real, though highly permeable and fragile, tradition, hence an artifact of historiography."[9] History, then, to both the authors of the chronicle accounts and their readers, became fertile ground in which to cast the underpinnings of an otherwise delicate contemporary platform for power and authority. For to those seeking new arenas in which to invest power, innovation would always be the enemy, yet innovation was simultaneously imperative were the kings and the government of the French to expand, prosper, and retain power. In the words of Joseph Strayer, the Capetians in the thirteenth century were required to "invent the France which they claimed to rule… they had to expand the idea of France to make it match the expansion of their own power."[10] Presedents, once invented or discovered, could become a tool with which kings created royal bureaucracies, established rights and privileges for themselves, and developed rights with the force of custom which could be made binding with the proper documents. These customs, though, cut both ways; for every act of royalist support extracted from the abbey of Saint-Denis in the form of altered, edited, or frankly forged documentation, the kings bound themselves more closely to that basilica. During periods when the kings were wont to forget their debts to the abbey, the abbots sought to remind them through the commissioning of new works, new structures, and new manuscripts.

The monks of Saint-Denis, for their part, stood to gain much from the inter-reliance of abbey and kings, and when one traces the rise of Dionysian influence over the royal lines from the 9th century to the 14th, it has become clear that the denizens of the basilica used falsified and altered

[9] Ibid.
[10] Joseph Strayer, "France: the Holy Land, the Chosen People and the Most Christian King," Theodore K. Rabb and Jerrold E. Siegel, ed., *Action and Conviction in Early Modern Eurpoe: Essays in Honor of E.R. Harbison*, (Princeton: 1966), p. 5.

documents to justify their centrality in the life of the kingdom. It has been easy to look at the rise of Saint-Denis in the twelfth century under Suger and presume that the influence of the abbey was natural, given their placement and early wealth; what has been less easy to see has been how they manipulated the assets they possessed in the form of early royal burials and rare documents to justify the importance of the shrine. Over the course of several centuries, Saint-Denis gradually became the repository of memory for the crown, but in the ninth century, Saint-Denis was one of many royal monasteries established in the Merovingian era, all of which claimed special rights and prerogatives.[11] The part played by the abbots and monks as advisors and regents for the kings, and as the guardians of royal memory, has come into focus as they relied more and more heavily upon the documents and stories constructed in those earlier eras. The abbey church was eventually established as the royal necropolis of France, a literal ground of memory for the kings of the Franks. When Philip the Fair visited the nave of the abbey church in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, he could and did survey the ranks of funerary monuments dedicated to those kings who had come before him, and saw there a state program for advancement, continuity within and between royal houses, and a template for the future. The monks, in turn, created monuments designed for the royal eye; the kings might commission new shrines, books, works of history, and art if they were persuaded that doing so would both improve their standing in the kingdom and retain the support of the powerful monks and abbots.

From an analysis of the accounts of Dagobert that have appeared between the mid-9th century and the early 14th, much was at stake for the abbots and monks of Saint-Denis. With the exception of the original account of the life of the Merovingian king, all manuscripts and artistic

[11] For an analysis of the part played by Saint-Denis in the Merovingian and early Carolingian eras, see below, chapter 1 of this dissertation.

productions that made reference to him as a singular ruler were produced either in or for the monks of Saint-Denis. Each new production of Dagobertian material has demonstrated the anxiety of the members of the abbey as they faced new challeges to what they believed to have been their rights. Therefore, they created new rituals to venerate his memory, constructed new manuscripts to expand knowledge of his life, and embroidered his biography to support their claims of primacy. In doing so, they seem to have been making an argument, a long and complex one, aimed at the kings. Dagobert was to be the model for their relationship with the abbey, and failure to follow his example could be disastrous, or so the monks wished to convince the kings. For their part, the kings sought the support of this venerable institution.

Therefore, to introduce the principal character in the chronicle accounts, it is worthwhile at this point to recount the bare outlines of the tale of King Dagobert (c. 603-639). His primary accomplishments included expanding territorial control over large portions of and maintaining it against external incursions. To do so, he fought against rivals for the throne and, with a little dash of murder and a lot of intimidation, Dagobert crushed them. Most accounts of his reign – particularly the Merovingian chronicles – have stated that he was the last successful and powerful ruler of his line, and his heirs gradually declined in competence and ruthlessness, until at last deposed by Pepin the Short in 751.

The story that interested the monks only rested lightly on the historical figure of Dagobert. The ninth century account began conventionally with the parentage of the prince, followed by his tutelage by one of the leading lights of the Frankish church in the 7th century. As a young man, Dagobert hunted in the woods north-west of Paris with friends and discovered an abandoned and forgotten shrine. Later, having angered his father Chlotharius II, Dagobert hid in the shrine and received a vision. He met the unknown saint buried in the shrine, who promised him unspecified

aid in return for the prince's promise to enrich and elevate his grave to its appropriate level. When Chlotharius found his son, the king and prince patched up their relationship, the saint's intervention in this reconciliation having been implied, and Dagobert eventually succeeded his father as the king. According to the Dionysian accounts, the king built a new shrine to house the relics of the saint and, in the process of translating the remains, learned that he had discovered the body of the first bishop of Paris, St.-Denis, and his companions, Rusticius and Eleutherius. The abbey church he built for them was rich and glittering with silver and gems in fulfilment of the king's promise. In time, Dagobert grew ill, and had himself transported to Saint-Denis, perhaps in the hopes of a miraculous healing. He died there instead. On the night of the king's death, a hermit who lived on an island in the Mediterranean witnessed the king's resurrection and ascension into heaven, with the aid of the most important Gallic saints, St.-Denis, Martin, and Maurice. Although other chronicle accounts did make note of Dagobert's generosity to the shrine and adoption of St.-Denis as his patron, sources for the remaining details that predate the 9th century account have not been located. In fact, some of the events in this account have contradicted alternate tales of the shrine's rise to visibility in the 7th century, and conflicted with the *vitae* of rival saints local to the area of Paris. To the monks of Saint-Denis, though, the events of the tale of Dagobert were nearly as important as the *vitae* of the saint himself, and beginning in the thirteenth century, written accounts of the saint's life also included Dagobert's biography.

Dagobert became an important aspect of the exchange of propaganda between the kings and the monks. His likeness and significant events linking him to the abbey can be found in the church itself and in works produced in the basilica and presented to the kings. His example – the first king buried in the church and a generous patron who gilded the early shrine and dedicated considerable wealth to the early shrine – made him both patron of the site and a client of the saint.

Later kings would turn to the venerable abbey and use the battle standard housed there as their own, donate their remains to the collection in the nave, and even use it as a coronation site. The justification for these roles in the Frankish kingdoms rested largely upon the role played by Dagobert in the Dionysian mythology constructed and presented for public consumption.

The account written for a royal audience must be balanced by the propagandistic material which was composed for a wider audience. As pious Christians engaged upon travel to sacred sites, seeking novelty, entertainment, blessings, and miraculous healings, Saint-Denis sought to engage them, intrigue them, and gather them to the shrine where they would enhance the popularity of the saint while leaving their alms for the monks. Upon their departure, or so the monks and abbots hoped, pilgrims would spread the stories which would advertise the cult of the saint and the centrality of the shrine to new audiences, resulting in yet more pilgrims. The story of the founding king, and the royal bodies resting in the nave of the abbey church, wove together church and state in ways no other monastic institution could.

The mission of the Dionysian abbots and monks between the ninth and early fourteenth centuries, laid out in the manuscripts they produced and in the symbolic artifacts they displayed, was always to lay out justifications for royal burials in their church. By the beginning of the thirteenth century, they could claim more bodies from the Frankish ruling houses than any other institution. Their success in this venture has tended to obscure their efforts in building these arguments, as by the year 1200, the kings regularly bequeathed their remains to the abbey. Yet those successes came with effort and expense by the abbey, and an examination of the historical records has demonstrated that the Dionysian monks and abbots were required to create new and more powerful arguments to successive rulers to ensure they would receive those royal bodies.

Chapter 1:

The Cult of St.-Denis and Royal Patronage: from the origins to the abbey of Hilduin

The first account of the life of Dagobert (c. 603-639), the last powerful Merovingian king, which became the source for all later accounts, can be tentatively dated to the mid-ninth century, and it was constructed in or around the abbey of Saint-Denis. While the material in the document largely recounted events previously collected in other chronicle accounts on the lives of the Merovingian kings, most notably the *Chronicle of the Pseudo-Fredegar*[12] and the *Liber Historiae Francorum* [13] by Gregory of Tours, it was constructed in the early ninth century to address political and ecclesiastical issues germane to that era. The *Gesta Domini Dagoberti Regis*[14] wove together an account of the life of the Merovingian king with carefully highlighted miracles in order to argue for the primacy of the royal basilica, the construction of which had been dated to the reign of Dagobert, and the centrality of the saint's support in creating and maintaining royal authority over the Frankish peoples. How and why this document was written, and an analysis of the material found in the *Gesta*, has been the subject of this chapter. Political necessities concerning the Emperor Louis the Pious demanded that he shift his spiritual allegiance from the cult of St. Peter in Rome to a site closer to hand. While many royal establishments would have been available to him, Louis selected St.-Denis as his patron saint and dedicated his youngest son Charles to the veneration of the abbey. However, to rise to the level necessary to receive royal support and veneration, the abbey needed a saint with an international reputation. St.-Denis the saint and Saint-Denis the monastery had to be bolstered and enhanced to provide a more attractive and powerful

[12] *Fredegar*, IV *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores Rerum Merovingicarum* (Hannover, 1840-) (Hereafter *MGH SRM* II,) 147 and 150.
[13] *Liber Historiæ Francorum* 43, *MGH SRM* II, 314.
[14] *Gesta Dagoberti I Regis Francorum* 13, *MGH SRM*. II, 404.

image if the emperor were to center his reign there. Thus, beginning around 835, in harness with Abbot Hilduin of Saint-Denis (c. 775-840) and his most important pupil Hincmar (806-882), Louis embarked upon the creation of a corpus of documentation that would enhance both his and the saint's reputation. The *Gesta Dagoberti regis,* one of the manuscripts created at Saint-Denis as part of this propaganda campaign, served both emperor and abbey; in this work, the saints created a particular and binding partnership with a young prince and, in exchange for his promise to enhance and decorate their shrine, they offered him political support, the throne, and – as an implication in the manuscript - at the end of his life, salvation. King and saint worked in harness for parallel goals. The model thus created of a ruler sanctified by a divine patronage reflected the special pressures of Louis' later reign and would, in later centuries, be revived as abbots face new challenges in maintaining the interest and support of the kings.

To more fully understand the documentary arguments made by the monks of Saint-Denis for the kings of the Franks, it will be necessary to outline the historical context in which many of these manuscripts appeared, whether those constructed in the abbey of Saint-Denis or the cathedral of Reims. Taken together, the *Gesta*, the *Miracula Sancti Dionysii*[15], and the *Post beatam et Gloriosam,*[16] with Abbot Hilduin's work, the *Post beatam et salutiferam,*[17] formed a nest of arguments both bolstering ecclesiastical claims to primacy and support for the Frankish kings. All were written in the mid- to late-ninth century in the Ile-de-France: taken separately, they were individual arguments on the importance of a saint or a king of a previous era; together, they were

[15] J. Mabillon, *Acta Sanctorum Ordinis Sancti Benedicti in saeculorum classes distributa*, 9 vols. (Paris, 1668-1701). *Acta Sanctorum ordinis Sancti Benedicti* saec. iii, 343-364. (Hereafter, Mabillon, *AOSB,* saec. iii.)
[16] *Bibliothèca Hagiographica latina antiquae et mediae aetatis (Subsidia Hagiographica*, 6, 12, Brussels, 1898-1911) 2178. (Hereafter, BHL)
[17] BHL 2175-6.

a formidable testimony to the goals of the Carolingian church and the basis of later Capetian claims to primacy.

The abbey served by Hilduin was not foreordained to become the most recognized, the most powerful, of abbeys located in the Ile-de-France. As a cult and as a powerful institution, Saint-Denis required creation and careful enhancement; although Hilduin was a powerful resource and created essential propaganda for his abbey and his king, the template he used began not in the ninth century, but in the sixth. Unfortunately, identifying the roots of the Dionysian cult has never been easy or completely certain. While we have accounts of the first bishop of Paris which seem to have come from the fifth century, the oldest surviving manuscripts were from the eighth and ninth centuries. The likelihood that the tales were edited and expanded in the intervening centuries is high.

Just as incomplete has been our knowledge of the early Merovingian basilica and its place in the hearts of the Merovingian kings. In his summary of the placement of the early basilica in relation to the royal court, Sumner Crosby argued that the site of the structure along a great north road situated close to the Seine permitted travel and communication between Paris and the village identified as the site of the shrine, Catuliacum.[18] Although Clovis (466-511) established his own shrine for burial at the site now occupied by the Pantheon, the basilica constructed in the fifth or sixth century eventually became the privileged site for royal interment.[19] Saint-German-des-Pres was established by Clovis' son Childebert (496-588) for his own family's burial.[20] These closer sites might have resulted in a preference for constructions on the south bank of the Seine, rather

[18] Sumner Crosby, *The Royal Abbey of Saint-Denis; from its beginnings to the death of Suger, 475-1151,* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press,1987), p. 5.
[19] On Clovis' burial site, see May Viellard-Troïekouroff et al., "Les Anciennes églises suburbaines de Paris (IVe – Xe siècles), " *Paris et Ile-de-France ; Mémoires publies par le Fédération des Sociétés Historiques et Archéologiques de Paris et de I'lle-de-France* 11, (1960) ; 165-188 .
[20] See Patrick Périn, "Saint-Germain-des-Prés, première nécropole des rois de France," *Médiévales,* no. 31, La Mort des Grands : (Ve-XIIe Siècles) (Automne 1996), 29-36 ; Viellard- Troïekouroff, ibid, p. 89-114.

than for a basilica several miles to the north, even if the road was a good one. However, archaeological excavations and a consideration of documentary evidence on the early Merovingians seems to indicate that, although Paris was their favored governmental center, the kings developed palaces to the north and west of the city.[21] Two such sites, one favored by Dagobert and another by his father Clothar, would have been within easy range of the shrine dedicated to St.-Denis, and early accounts of miracles would have reached the royal court, and evidence that the Merovingian kings reserved a special degree of reverence for the saint appears in some of the oldest preserved French charters. In 625, St.-Denis was mentioned as being the special patron of Clothar II,[22] and evidence of royal and noble burials in the shrine can be dated to before 580.[23] The most powerful kings of the Merovingian dynasty, Clothar II, Dagobert I, and Clovis II, all chose the shrine for their tombs. Those burials, in later centuries, would become the justification for the burials of other members of the Merovingian family.

The oldest document mentioning St.-Denis, the first bishop of Paris and holy martyr, which is a credible reference is the *Liber Historiae Francorum* [24] by Gregory of Tours (538-594). In his work on the early Christian communities of Gaul, Gregory lists several bishops dispatched from

[21] For a summary of the palace architecture in the suburbs of Paris, see Michel Roblin, *Le Terroir de Paris aux époques gallo-romaine et franque ; Peuplement et défrichement dans le Cavités du Paris (Seine, Seine-et Oisèle),* (Paris : J. Picard, 1971) pp. 202-291. The sites include palace structures to the north, west, and east of the city, no doubt in order that the royal court could take advantage of plentiful hunting and fishing. Crosby also notes that the court in the Merovingian period was, by necessity, peripatetic in order to not outstrip the regional food supplies. Crosby, *Royal Abbey of St.-Denis,* p. 9.

[22] The document is preserved in the Archives Nationales de Paris, K1, no. 7, and has been discussed in Philippe Lauer and Charles Samaran's work, *Les diplômes originaux des Merovingiennes, Fac-similes protypiques avec notices et transcriptions,* (Paris: 1908), p. 4; also Levillain, "Un diplôme merovingien de protection royale en faveur de Saint-Denis," *Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des chartes,* vol. 72 (Janvier – Avril 1911), 233-244. Levillain disputes the identification of the charter in question as having originated during the reign of Dagobert; the diplomatic language opening the charter is improper for that king's court. However, the use of papyrus for the document would limit how late the charter could be, thus Levillain places it within the likely reign of either Clovis II, the son of Dagobert, or Chlotharius III, both in the late seventh century.

[23] On the burial of Dagobert in 580, infant son of Chilperic and Fredegonde, and on the burial of Queen Arnegonde in Saint-Denis approximately 50 years earlier, see Edouard Salin, "Les Tombes gallo-romaines (fouilles de janvier et février, 1957)," *Mémoires de l'Institute Nationale de France Académie des Inscriptiones et Belles-Lettres*, 44, (1960), p. 192.

[24] Gregory of Tours, *Liber Historiae Francorum,* I, 30 (ed. Arndt, *MGH, SRM* I), 47-48.

Rome to preach, all during the consulate of Decius and Gratus in the third century C.E. Denis, first bishop of Paris is noted there as having endured much torment before execution. The dating of Denis' martyrdom, therefore, would be between the years of 249-251 A.D., not the first century as was later claimed by Dionysian biographers.[25] This Denis, then, was not the Areopagite, was not a convert of Paul, and the cult that formed around his grave cannot be dated any earlier than 260 A.D. Furthermore, none of the verifiable mid-century manuscripts that mention Denis make note of any companions in death; the addition of both Rusticius and Eleutherius was a later imposition into the story.[26]

The site of Denis' martyrdom has been similarly problematic. Although the *Vitae Genevefa*[27] asserted that the bishop met his death in the village of Catuliacum, and this location remained a fixed detail in all the variant manuscripts of her life produced between the sixth century and the ninth centuries, the tradition that Denis died either on the summit or at the foot of the hill known as Montmartre has become a standard element in his biography.[28] The association of the hill of Montmartre with the execution site of Denis was among the details established by Hilduin in his ninth century passion. However, early documentary evidence designated Catuliacum as the site of Denis' death. This village has been identified as having occupied the region now defined by the village of Saint-Denis.[29] The charters of Clovis II of 654 repeated the claim that Catuliacum was the site of his execution,[30] and a later charter from the reign of Pepin the Short of 768[31] noteed that the bishop and his fellow martyrs were buried near the place they met their deaths. Given this

[25] For a thorough analysis of this point, see Sumner Crosby, *The Abbey of St.-Denis:* 3-33.
[26] Ibid, 33-34.
[27] *Quanta veneration et amore dilexit Catulacensum vicum, in quo sanctus Dionisius et passus et sepultus est. Vitae Genevefa*, *MGH SRM* iii, 221, line 17.
[28] The identification of the hill of Montmartre as the execution site of the bishop and his companions comes from Hilduin's work, the *Post Beatam et Salutiferam.*
[29] Crosby, *Abbey of St.-Denis,* 37.
[30] *Charter of Clovis II*, 654, ed. Pertz, *MGH*, Dip. I, 19)
[31] *Charter of Thierry IV*, 724, ed. Pertz, *MGH*, Dip. I, 82.

evidence, what can argued with any certainty is that Denis, sent as one of seven missionaries to Gaul in the mid-third century, established himself in the area that would one day be Paris and met his death in 249-251. Members of the congregation he had gathered rescued his body and buried it just outside the village. This grave, in later centuries, became the focus of localized reverence and, over time, received the kind of royal attention and funding necessary to make the shrine into an international institution.

The Denis served by Hilduin in the ninth century, therefore, was partially the product of earlier biographers. While he was identified as the first Christian bishop of the region of Paris, this alone would not have gained him more than a local cult following. In order to grow beyond this basic structure, the story of the saint required embellishments. The earliest account of the saint, the document known as the *Gloriosae* from the incipit, may have had sixth century roots, but the oldest extant versions of the manuscript was a production of the eighth century, and the tale of the bishop in this document diverged from the accounts found in the work of Gregory of Tours and other early histories.[32] The *Gloriosae* offered a considerably earlier date for the martyrdom of Denis, and claimed that the bishop had been commissioned by Clement I (d. 99), the first successor to Peter in Rome, to convert the people of Paris in the first century A.D. The martyrs' bodies were preserved by an unidentified Roman matron who buried them in a field near their place of execution.[33] The *Gloriosae* includeed no mention of the saint's post-execution miracle, in which he picked up his head and, singing hymns, walked approximately 6 miles to the

[32] *Gloriosae* or the *Ancient Passio of Sts. Denis, Rusticius, and Eleutherius*, *BHL* 2171. Levillain has argued that the placement of the names of Rusticius and Eleutherius in the opening sections of the document points toward an early construction, as the conspicuous mention of the companions to Denis would not be necessary were they accepted details within existing passions. Levillain, *Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Chartes*, 1921, 23. However, Crosby has argued that the copies from the eighth century utilize titles and the order of names in these documents would demonstrate a late eighth fourth century addition to the document, as the honorifics coincide with the diplomatics of that later age. Crosby, *Abbey of St.-Denis*, 34.

[33] For more thorough analysis of the documents, see Gabrielle Speigel, "The Cult of Saint Denis and Capetian kingship," *Journal of medieval history*, vol. 1, issue 1, 1975, 43-69; also Crosby, *Abbey of St.-Denis*, 29-33.

site of his eventual shrine. Nor was Denis a former resident of Athens or a prominent convert of St. Paul. The addition of the early dating for his martyrdom, however, received extensive elaboration and documentation by later authors, who sought to fill in the gaps of his early life by associating him with important trends, events, and personages.

The gravesite of Denis similarly experienced decoration and enhancement between the first basilica, credited to the intervention of St. Genevieve, and the abbey church constructed in the 8th century. No documentary evidence has been found establishing a building constructed over the site of Denis' grave before Genevieve's shrine, and the existence of multiple graves which would include his companions doesn't appear until the accounts of the ninth century. However, the *Vitae Genovefae* offered some evidence that a local reputation for Denis existed prior to the first building.[34] In her *vitae*, Genevieve expressed a desire to build over the grave of a saint who had already established a reputation through miracles for the people in the district. Later, when she pressed the priests of Paris to find a way to pay for the construction of a shrine, St.-Denis was given the credit for the discovery of the lime kilns in the woods north of the city, as later, Denis provided the drinks needed by the workmen as they built the basilica.[35]

The basilica of Genevieve would have been a simple structure, and in the sixth century, the building could not be considered a monastic institution. If any individuals had been attached to the shrine for the maintenance of the structure and for the performance of holy rituals, no record has been found. According to archaeological findings of the 20th century, the first shrine was likely little more than stones or rubble held together with mortar and a roof of wood. In his investigation of the site, Sumner Crosby described Genevieve's shrine as likely consisting of a rounded eastern end holding the sepulcher of the saint, a western portal at the end of the long nave, but the building

[34] *Vitae Genovefae*, 18-20, *MGH SRM* iii, 222-224.
[35] Ibid.

would have lacked a transcept. Before the apse, the builders would have constructed an altar attached to the tomb of the saint. No mention in the early texts was made of a crypt. The *Vitae Elegii* of the seventh century noted only one tomb in the shrine, which confirmed the theory that Denis' companions were the product of a later era.[36] The original shrine would most likely have included only one door, aligned to the west, and no transept arms.[37]

Although the shrine was little more than an elevated grave marker with an altar attached, evidence from the *Chronicle of Fredegar*, written within 25 years of the death of Dagobert, seemed to indicate a local reputation for the saint, particularly for those seeking refuge from persecution or oppression. Duke Aiginan of Gascony, fearing repercussions from a dispute with Dagobert, fled to the shrine and sent messengers from Saint-Denis to the king to plead for mercy. He received his clemency after swearing an oath of fealty on the relics of the shrine.[38] Saint-Denis had gained the reputation as a place of sanctuary as early as the seventh century.

While Dagobert has been conventionally credited with having built a new shrine in which to house the relics of the saint, evidence that two shrines once existed in Saint-Denis – an earlier version, torn down by Dagobert, and his more elaborate structure – has not been found. Documentary evidence of his building campaign seems to indicate that while he was responsible for decorating and enhancing the shrine, most likely expanding it, he did not rebuild it, nor did he institute a monastic order at Saint-Denis.[39] Dagobert cannot be credited as having instigated public reverence for the saint within the royal family either; according to Gregory of Tours, the son of

[36] *Vitae Elegii*, *MGH SRM* i, chapter 4, 388.
[37] Crosby, *Abbey of St.-Denis*, 65-73.
[38] *Chronicle of Fredegar*, IV, *MGH SRM* ii, chapter IV, 78.
[39] Fredegar notes that Dagobert utilized the skills of St. Elegius to gild the shrine, providing precious gems and metal for the construction of altar cloths and canopies, and for the establishment of a golden cross to hang behind the altar. *Chronicle of Fredegar*, V, *MGH SRM* ii, chapter V, 161. See also the *Vitae Elegii*, *MGH SRM* ii, chapter I, line 32, 388.

Chilperic and Fredegonde – also named Dagobert – received burial in the shrine in 580.[40] The grave site of Queen Aregund (c. 515-580), wife of Clothar I (c. 497-561), has also been located with some degree of certainty in the abbey.[41] Conspicuous burials of members of the royal household, even if they were not rulers themselves, would have raised the profile of the shine in the vicinity and, eventually gained the attention of rulers seeking divine patrons.

The abbey Hilduin would have known was not the rustic rural shrine of Genevieve, nor was it the grand church of Suger. Hilduin would have headed up the structure commissioned by one of his predecessors, Fulrad (c. 710-784) who had been the abbot under the early Carolingians. Whereas the shrine and abbey church that had been expanded and enhanced by Dagobert had been primarily constructed of loose rubble and stone mortared by lime, the abbey church of Fulrad gained greater stability and gravitas with the placement of columns and the use of stronger building materials. The basilica had by then gained the privilege of several prominent royal burials: Dagobert began the process at his death in the mid-7th century, and he was followed by several other Merovingian kings. Just as critical to its later success, the abbey was chosen for burial by both Charles Martel (d. 741) and his most important son, Pepin (d. 758), and during his abbacy, Fulrad carefully cultivated the line of the Major Domo of the Franks. Royal burials at the abbey between the death of Dagobert and that of Charles the Bald could not be taken as a right or even as a tradition; kings and queens tended to favor those institutions which they had founded or supported through benefices and grants.[42] Under Fulrad, though, the abbey – which had been one

[40] Gregory of Tours, *Liber Historiae Francorum*, V, 34.
[41] Noble, Thomas F. X. *From Roman Provinces to Medieval Kingdoms*, (New York and London: Routledge, 2006), 159.
[42] The early Merovingian rulers preferred burial in abbeys located more centrally, and the first royal necropolis was Saint-German-de-Pres, on the outskirts of Paris. Périn, "Saint-Germain-des-Prés, première nécropole des rois de France," *Médiévales*, no. 31, La Mort des Grands : (Ve-XIIe Siècles) (Automne 1996), 29-36.

of many royal abbeys housing one of several national saints – would become the premier site of interment for the kings and their family members, and for those who aspired to greatness.

Abbot Fulrad of Saint-Denis ruled over an actual abbey, due in no small part to the conspicuous generosity of the Merovingian kings. Dagobert, his father Clothar, and his principal heir Clovis II had all donated properties to the abbey in their time, and both Dagobert and Clovis had chosen the shrine as the site for their burials. According to the *Gesta Dagoberti regis*, the king also offered a charter establishing an annual fair at the abbey, to coincide with the feast day of St.-Denis in early October.[43] Even more important to the growing influence of the abbey, Clovis II (c. 637-658) approved its independence from the bishop of Paris in 653, and royal immunity was provided by Queen Bathilde (626-680) in the name of her son Clothaire III (652-673) around 657.[44] The charter of independence granted by Bishop Landri of Paris (d. 661) provided a degree of freedom to the abbot and the monks, who would be able to administer their own lands and properties, gather rents, and manage their own affairs without oversight from Paris. The royal immunity granted (most likely) by Queen Bathild prevented direct control by the royal family over the properties claimed by the abbey, which made the abbey into a royal fisc, a right which resulted in the avoidance of many of the responsibilities of membership in a feudal society. These rights included "judicial rights over the inhabitants, collections of all public revenues, freedom from the rights of officials to hold courts or to seize witnesses, to levy taxes, or to exercise the rights of *gite*

[43] The annual fair, confirmed in the charters recorded by the heirs of Dagobert, would have commenced annually on October 9th and continued for seven weeks. The abbey would have received a share of the income from the fair, and would have benefitted tremendously from the increased pilgrim traffic. See the *Charter of Chilperic III*, 709, ed Lauer and Samaran, *Les diplômés originaux des Merovingiens*, 1908, no. 31; the *Charter of Pepin the Short*, ed. Muhlbacher, *MGH* Dip. Kar., I, no. 12, 17. Although the above charters can be dated to the later reigns of Carolingian monarchs, they confirm privileges accorded the abbey during the Merovingian period. For the original privilege of the fair conferred during the reign of Dagobert, see *Gesta Dagoberti regis*, *MGH SRM* iii, chapter 33, 413.

[44] Although the original charter of independence issued under Clovis II has been lost, enough information confirming its existence and the parameters of its powers have been confirmed by other sources, including the *Charter of Clovis II*, 654, ed. Pertz, *MGH* Dip I, 119-20; the *charter of Thierry* IV, 724, ed. Havet, *Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Chartes*, 1890, p. 60-61; and the *charter of Pepin the Short*, 763, ed. Muhlbacher, *MGH* Dipl. Kar., I, 34.

or procuration"[45] These privileges and grants, assembled under the Merovingians, permitted the abbey a degree of prosperity and independent collection of wealth making it among the premier abbeys of the day.[46] The abbots were able to hold to this position of power and wealth, even in the years leading up to the dissolution of the Merovingian line of kings, despite the general atmosphere of chaos and violence in the Frankish kingdoms during the period.

Although Saint-Denis clearly hosted a monastic organization by the late part of the seventh century, what that organization would have been is hard to determine. The Charter of Dagobert I from 628 may support the argument that a religious community had coalesced around the shrine, the exact wording of the text being: *ad memoratum clerum vel pauperum ipsius sancti loci substantium,*[47] but Saint-Denis was not a true monastic institution in the reign of Dagobert. His son Clovis II and his wife Balthild imposed the rule of Colombano-Benedict in 650, and only at that point could one consider Saint-Denis to have become a monastic institution.[48] The abbey rule designated by Clovis II and Balthild did not apply equally to the secular clergy who performed the offices of the shrine, and the regular brothers, and the abbey in the seventh century may not have entirely adopted the new rule.[49]

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[45] Crosby, *The Abbey of St.-Denis*, 61.

[46] For a list of what has been determined of the royal gifts and the possessions of the abbey in the seventh century, see Crosby, ibid, 57. According to the chronicle of Fredegar, the generosity of Dagobert toward the abbey was astonishing to the Frankish people of the day, a point which later justified the claims that it was he, not his heirs, who was the founder of the abbey. *Tante opes ab eadem et villas et possessions multas per plurema loca ibique sunt conlate, ut miraretur a plurimis. Chronicle of Fredegar, MGH SRM* II, ed. Krusch, chapter 79, 161.

[47] Although this charter has been categorized as a possible later forgery, Pertz has argued that it can be more confidently dated at least to the reign of Dagobert's heir Clovis II and may reflect benefits granted to Saint-Denis under Dagobert, but lacking confirmation in written form until a later point. For additional commentary on the dating of this charter, see J. Havet, *Oevres* I, (Paris: E. Leroux,1896), 247-260. See *Charter of Dagobert I*, ed. Pertz, *MGH*, Dip. I, Diplomata Spuria, no. 23, 139-140; also Sumner Crosby, *The Abbey of St.-Denis, 475-1122*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1942), 53-57.

[48] *Vitae Sancti Bathildis*, chapter 9, ed. Krusch, *MGH SRM* ii, 493.

[49] The division between secular and regular clergy in Saint-Denis was established under the charter of Clovis II (see above note 47), which imposed the rule of Benedict upon the monks inhabiting the basilica. The numbers who lived in the abbey cannot be determined with any degree of certainty.

This abbey, then, which enjoyed royal and popular support, was the beneficiary of an important regional fair and secondary fairs held at other points of the year, and which had gained a significant degree of independence from the local bishop, further consolidated power and influence as a result of Fulrad's support for Pepin in the mid-8th century. On July 28th, 754, Pepin the Short with his two sons, Carloman and Charles, were crowned by the pope in Saint-Denis.[50] This event, as the mayors of the palace supplanted the last of the Merovingian heirs to the throne, was in part set in motion by Fulrad of Saint-Denis. According to the chronicle of Eigenhard, Fulrad and others were part of the commission sent to Pope Stephen (c.715-757) to sound out the possibility of his support.[51] In 753, Pope Stephen concurred, traveling to the Ile-de-France in the summer of 754 to cement his alliance with the Frankish kings. Pepin the Short determined that at his death, he should be buried in the abbey (Charles Martel, his father had been interred in the abbey in 741), he requested that he be buried in the main doorway entrance with his face to the ground – a sign of penance for the deeds of his father.[52] Indeed, in 754, documents maintained by Saint-Denis indicate that Pepin was present in the church when he designated his eventual burial site. During the reign of Pepin's son Charlemagne, although the center of the kingdom shifted both east and south, the king was nevertheless present at the dedication of the new basilica as re-constructed by Fulrad in 775.[53] The construction of this new building, which would have resulted in the tearing down of older sections of the nave, has been tentatively dated to the end of the reign of Pepin who, according to Suger, chose his grave site while present in the abbey for the coronation.[54] The church built by Fulrad would haee been closer to the design recognizable today

[50] For a summary of this event, see Levillain, "L'Avènement de la Dynastie Carolingienne," *Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Chartes*, 1933, 15-295.
[51] Eginhard, *Annales*, ed. Migne, *Pat. Lat.*, CIV, 374.
[52] Suger notes this request in *de Administratione*, XXV, ed. Albert Lecoy de La Marche, (Paris: Mme ve J. Renouard, 1867), 187.
[53] See Crosby for description of this ceremony, *Abbey of St.-Denis*, 77.
[54] See the *Charter of Pepin the Short*, note 33.

as the high gothic church, though lacking many of the architectural features it would gain under Suger in the twelfth century. Based on the archaeological findings of Violet-le-Duc (1814-1879), the apse of the church gained sub-chapels, the transept arms which had been built in the tenth century, became more pronounced, and the nave – which had boasted two aisles since the seventh century – gained height and width.[55] The extraordinary expansion of the church and, indeed, of the abbey itself, was testimony to the relationship that developed between the king and the abbot. Fulrad not only capitalized upon the high profile burials of first Charles Martel, then his son Pepin, but he also linked the fortunes of the new royal family to the status of the abbey. Although other monasteries and shrines benefitted greatly from the wealth and generosity of kings, none gained the power and influence which Dionysian abbots were to wield in later centuries. This was the foundation Hilduin, the clever propagandist and counselor to kings, enhanced.

The fortunes of the Carolingian kings following Charlemagne were not as blessed as those of Pepin and his first heir. Although Louis the Pious inherited an empire that stretched over vast distances, even as he received the throne, the west felt the first waves of Viking invasions and assaults. Louis, in addition to having to find ways to quell invasions from the west and south, also fought back rebellions from his eldest sons. In the wake of the disruption of a normalized rule, Louis turned to the abbey of Saint-Denis to aid him in making a claim for legitimacy.

In 830 C.E., Louis faced the first of several rebellions of his sons, primarily Lothair (795 – 855 C.E.) and his younger brother Pepin (797- 838 C.E.). Lothair and Pepin's anger toward their father had been spurred by the inclusion of a younger brother into the inherited division of the empire; Louis' youngest son, Charles (823-877), received a considerable share of properties from

[55] For a more thorough exploration of what is known of the Carolingian church, see Crosby, pp. 86-164; Viollet-le-Duc, *Dictionnaire de l'architecture raisonne*, IX (1868), 226-230.

his father, who had nullified the *Ordinatio imperii*[56], the document which had laid out a plan for orderly succession drawn up in 817. The relationship between Hilduin (775-840 C.E.), the abbot of Saint-Denis, and Louis suffered in the wake of this rebellion, as Hilduin and Hincmar (806-882 C.E.), his most famous pupil, had supported Lothair's cause. As he did with other nobles upon regaining the throne, Louis banished both Hilduin and Hincmar temporarily. Prior to that point, Hilduin had controlled not just the abbey of Saint-Denis, but the other prestigious abbeys of Merovingian France: St.-Germain-des-Pres, and the abbeys of Soissons and St. Medard.[57] These establishments all offered wealth, prestige, and access to the royal court, dependent as it was upon the skills and spiritual guidance of educated prelates. Despite his support for Lothair, Hilduin had returned to control Saint-Denis by 832, though there is no evidence he established himself again in St.-Germain-des-Pres.[58]

In order to understand the legacy of the monastery of Saint-Denis, one must first trace the documentary evidence regarding its primitive roots and the edifice of mythology that had already been established before Hilduin took office. As has been outlined previously, the grave of St.-Denis was not lost, and attracted some degree of local veneration between the death of the saint in the mid-third century and the construction of the first basilica in the sixth. However, no record of the cult was made until after the *Vitae Genovefae*. The first *vitae* of St.-Denis appeared in the work known as the *Gloriosae* from the incipit, or the ancient *Passio of Saints Dionysius, Rusticius, and Eleutherius*, written between 485 and 520.[59] This tale concerned only the mission to Gaul by

[56] MGH. Capit. i, no. 136, pp. 270-3; J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, (Clarendon Press, 1983), 231.
[57] J. Mabillon, *De re diplomatica* libri IV, (Paris: 1681), 514, no. lxvii; BM no. 857.
[58] J. F. Bohmer, E. Muhlbacher, *Regesta imperii*, I, Die regesten des Kaiserreichs unter den Karolingern, (Innsbruch, 1908); referenced from Brown, "Politics and Patronage at the Abbey of St.-Denis," (PhD. Dissertation, University of Oxford, Michaelmas Term, 1989), 51.
[59] *MGH Auct. Ant.* 4, 2 (1885) pp. 101-105; *AA ss* Oct IV, (1780) 925-928; Migne *PL* 88, cols. 577-584. See R. J. Loenertz, "La Légende parisienne de S. Denys l'Areopagite, sa genèse et son premier témoin," *ABoll*, 69 (1951) 217-221. For further analysis of the *Gloriosae*, see L. Levillain, "Etudes sur l'abbaye de Saint-Denis à l'époque

the bishop and his companions, and is the first document to mention the inclusion of Rusticius and Eleutherius, though the application of titles to those names waited for later accounts. The significant details of the story later to emerge, such as the connection to the Areopagite and the identity of the bishop as a cephalophoric saint, are absent in this manuscript; instead of claiming his severed head before walking to the eventual site of his shrine, the bishop's body was fished from the Seine by supporters and buried nearby. This early account was later bolstered by the composition of a more elaborate tale; Pope Clement (d. 99 C.E.), first successor to Peter, dispatched Denis to Gaul in the *Post beatam et gloriosam*,[60] and the bishop had been the convert of St. Paul from the Acts of the Apostles. This Denis is martyred by orders of the emperor Domitian at the end of the first century C.E., then travels from the site of his beheading to the eventual site of his shrine. The *post beatam* was written considerably later than the *Gloriosae*, there is no consensus on the actual dating of the document.[61] Although Levillain proposed a date between the late ninth and early tenth century,[62] the most recent evidence on the composition of this document places its *terminus post quem* at 834 C.E., the end of a period during which the Frankish bishops, convened by Louis the Pious, created documents supporting their use of images

merovingienne," BECh 82 (1921) 5-117. Also David Luscombe, "Denis the pseudo-Areopagite in the Middle Ages from Hilduin to Lorenzo Valla," *Falschungen im Mittelalter*, Internationaler Kongreß der Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Munchen, 16.-19, Sept. 1986. Ed. Wolfram SETZ (Schriften der Monumenta Germaniae Historica 33, 1-4), vol 1, 1988, 133-152.

[60] *AA SS* Oct. IV (1780) 792 -794, 796-797 ("Acta fabulose").

[61] Loenertz, "La légende parisienne," 217-221. These bishops used as part of their argument a letter they claimed had been written by Denis to John the Evangelist and the *Celestial Hierarchy*, credited to the bishop. As further support for their position, they claimed Denis had been sent to Gaul by Clement, the first bishop of Rome after Peter, and indirectly connect Denis with the Areopagite of Athens. These connections were further bolstered by the presentation, in 827, of a codex of the writings of Denis the Areopagite to Louis the Pious, which he then presented to the abbey of Saint-Denis for translation. See Gian Domenico Mansi, et. al., *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, 14, (1769), cols. 463-474. Also R. Roques, "Denys le Pseudo-Areopagite, Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastique" 14 (1960) cols. 265-310, and Paul Lehmann, *Erforshung des Mittelalters* 2 (1959) 124. Also Loenertz, " La legende parisienne," *Analecta Bollandiana* 69 (1951) 217-221.

[62] Levillain, "Etudes sur l'abbaye de Saint-Denis," 30, 51-58.

in the Latin church.[63] Hilduin was already the abbot of Saint-Denis, having entered that position in 817, and his involvement in the composing of the *Post beatam et gloriosam* is likely. If Loenertz and Luscombe are correct in dating the *Post beatam et gloriosam* to the early ninth century, it joins with a number of other biographies and documents constructed during this period to bolster the royal and ecclesiastical claims to prominence and influence in the western world. However, the most important version of the life of St.-Denis came later in the tenancy of Hilduin as abbot, and was rooted in the rebellion of Louis' sons.

In 833, a contingent of his foes forced Louis the Pious from his throne, and before a synod presided over by Ebbo of Rheims (775-851), he was formally deposed from power in favor of his son, Lothair.[64] Louis' surrender to his sons' forces had been supported, and perhaps even authored, by Pope Gregory IV (c. 795-844), and his defeat occurred when his military forces melted away. It must have been particularly humiliating to Louis, as the date of his defeat came on the feast day of St. Peter, as both Charlemagne and Louis had notably devoted themselves to the first pope as their personal patron saint. Although Louis was officially deposed in favor of his eldest son, the ritual of humiliation he endured at Soissons angered enough of the Frankish nobility that Lothair was driven to take refuge in Burgundy and Louis was returned to the throne.[65] When Louis first assumed the throne in 814, he had been crowned in Aachen and been formally invested by Pope

[63] According to Loenertz, the convocation of bishops in the ninth century were given the task of justifying the use of imagery in the Western Christian church, and used the writing of the Areopagite to do so. Loenertz, "La legende parisienne," 217-221.

[64] Peter Godman and Roger Collins (eds.) *Charlemagne's Heir: New Perspectives on the Reign of Louis the Pious (814–840)*. Oxford and New York: Clarendon Press, 1990. Booker, Courtney M. *Past Convictions: The Penance of Louis the Pious and the Decline of the Carolingians*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009.

[65] While the decision of the Louis' younger sons to change sides after October of 833 may have been the result of Lothair's ritual humiliation of his father, more likely they were disappointed that Lothair intended to return to the stipulations of the *Ordinatio imperii* of 817, a land division that would largely benefit the principal heir with no further rewards for them. See *Epistola Agobardi*, nos. 15-6, ed. *MGH*. *Epistola* V, 223-8, and *Liber pro filiis* ed. *MGH. SS*, xv, 274-9. Also *Exauctoratio Hludowici* ed. *MGH*. Capit. ii, no. 197, 51-5. For an alternate view on the motivations of the younger sons of Louis, see François-Louis Ganshof, *The Carolingians and the Frankish Monarchy*, (Ithica, N.Y.; Cornelll University Press, 1971).

Stephen V in Rheims three years later; his reinvestment ceremony took place on March 1, 834 in the royal basilica of Saint-Denis. The pope was not present at this ceremony.[66] The shift in emphasis from east to west, from Aachen to Saint-Denis, became significant in the Carolingian determination to make St.-Denis and his shrine on the Ile-de-France the centerpiece of their spiritual claims to rule. In choosing Saint-Denis for this ritual, Louis returned to the beginning of his own family's claim to the throne.

Prior to the events which ousted Louis from the throne in 833, the royal line had greatly favored St. Peter; a patronage which had resulted in a significant number of bequests and gifts by both Charlemagne and his father, Pepin the Short. Both kings had favored the abbey of Saint-Denis, with Pepin having arranged for his eventual burial there, but the basilica had not received a share of wealth greater than any other shrine or abbey in the Ile-de-France. What's more, to St. Peter was accorded the credit for promoting Pepin's claim to the throne through the person of Pope Zachary in 751, although the plans for his usurpation had been managed by Fulrad and his coronation occurred in the basilica. Charlemagne commended his supporters to the person of the first pope, St. Peter, after his coronation in Rome in 800.[67] Louis continued the conspicuous generosity of his father toward Rome in the first years of his reign, dispatching the "greatest part of Charlemagne's wealth to Rome as an offering for the shrine of S. Peter: *maximam partem thesauri misit Romam temporibus beati Leonis papae.*"[68] The relationship between Louis and the papacy and, by extension, St. Peter, continued in the early years of the emperor's reign, as Pope

[66] For Lothar's point of view, see *Epistola Agobardi*, nos. 15-16, ed. *MGH*. EP. V, 223-8, and *Liber pro filiis* ed. *MGH*. SS. Xv, 274-9. Louis' second coronation, see *BM*. 926k-o. On the second coronation of Louis in Saint-Denis, see Astronomer, *Anonymi Vitae Hludovici Pii*, ed. *MGH* SRM ii, c. 55-56, 641-2. Compare this coronation ceremony with that which had taken place for Pepin the Short, who was not far from the mind of Louis as he stood before the new altar.

[67] *Annales Regni Francorum*, ed. F. Kurze (*MGH*. SRG Hannover, 1895), a. 800, 112.

[68] See Gilles Brown, "Politics and Patronage" 113.

Stephen IV (c. 770-817) commanded the people of Rome to consider Louis their king before traveling to Rheims where he crowned Louis the successor to Charlemagne in 816.[69] While in Frankish lands, Pope Stephen extracted vows of support and service from the new emperor which were to mirror those sworn to by his father and grandfather before him.

Like Pepin and Charlemagne before him, Louis would have been expected to be a man of St. Peter for the remainder of his reign. Instead, Louis commended his youngest son Charles to the patronage of St.-Denis and, after his restoration to the throne in 833, shifted allegiance to the Frankish saint and first bishop of Paris.[70] In 833, documents of the court and abbey show a change in emphasis; Abbot Hilduin of Saint-Denis received a reference as the "Abbot of the monastery of the prince of the Apostles and of Ss. Dionysius, Rusticus and Eleutherius,"[71] a title not used before that time or after. This period, around 833, corresponds with a collaboration between the abbot and the emperor, one which would result in the construction of new shrines in the abbey and the acquisition of relics of St. Peter from Rome.[72] As a codicil to his *Post beatam et salutiferam*, the life of St-Denis attributed to Hilduin, the abbot attached a document known as the *Gesta Stephani*.[73] This work, set in 754 when Pope Stephen II consecrated Pepin as king of the Franks, asserts that the pope had placed a pallium and keys, the symbols of apostolic authority, onto the altar of Saint-Denis. He furthermore took with him specific relics of Denis for future placement in an altar in Rome. The account of the *Gesta Stephanii* was clearly an invention by Hilduin, but

[69] Ibid.
[70] Brown reports that, prior to 833, Louis showed no conspicuous generosity toward the traditional Frankish saints, such as Martin or Denis. He has identified only three possible donations to the abbey of Saint-Denis. See Brown, 314; especially notes 2-5.
[71] Ed. *MGH*. Conc. i, no. 53, p. 689 lines 32-4, and Bouquet, *recueil*, vi, 579B.
[72] The *Gesta Stephanii*, attributed to Hilduin, asserts that the abbey church received specific and important Petrine relics from the pope, namely the pallium and clavi Sancti Petri, and that he then returned to Rome with relics of St.-Denis. *MGH. SS*. xv, 3;
[73] *MGH SS* 15, 1, (1887) p. 2-3. Reviewed in Levillain, "Le Moyen Age", 2eme serie 20 (1929) 85-95.

this document served both Louis and Hilduin as they strove to elevate the importance of the shrine. Denis became not just another local martyr, but one who was the apostle to all of Gaul and, by extension, the west. Soon after the appearance of this account, Hilduin received the title conferring upon him the status of an abbot of an apostolic shrine, and at a time when Louis desperately needed such ecclesiastical support. Although Louis was buried in the cathedral in Metz, his son Charles the Bald was eventually interred in the royal basilica, and eventually gained credit as the second royal founder of abbey in light of his significant and generous patronage of the basilica.

It is in light of these political events that one must reconsider the compilation of a dossier on St.-Denis which would conflate the works and lives of individuals who lived in entirely different eras, while also promoting the saint from a local bishop to one of international notoriety. The letter of 834 sent from the court of Emperor Louis to Abbot Hilduin which requested an account of the patron saint of the Merovingian house did not specify what materials should be included. It should, however, be read in light of an earlier request from Louis the Pious to the abbot to compile a volume which would document the receipt of the relics of St. Peter and dedication of an altar to the apostle. The letter further requested the combination of material on the liturgy of Saint-Denis, which Louis wished combinted with material on the cult of the saint and St.-Denis' *vitae*. Around 827, Louis also requested that Hilduin receive Greek copies of the *Celestial Hierarchy* and *Mystical Treatises*, both believed to have been written by Dionysius, for translation.[74] This material was no doubt intended to bolster Louis' claim that, just as he was divested of power by a representative of St. Peter on earth (who possessed the power to bind and loose), he was reinstated to power by Peter himself, before an altar dedicated to the saint and invested with his relics. The

[74] See Astron., *Anonymi Vitae Hludovici Pii*, ed. *MGH SS*. ii, 327, lines 17ff. According to David Luscombe, the transference of these books from east to west corresponded with a period in which the Frankish and Greek churches deliberated over the issue of images of the divine. See. Luscombe, "Denis the pseudo-Areopagite," 133-152.

newly translated mystical visions of the Areopagite would augment the importance and relevance of the saint in the western lands of the Franks. This dossier, combined with the Greek texts, would serve the purpose of promoting Louis' legitimacy on the throne, but he did not immediately abandon the centrality of Peter as his royal patron. In light of later interactions between the abbot and the embattled emperor, the local saint with an international base of importance eventually took precedence over the cult of St. Peter.

The letter from Hilduin in response to Louis' requests demonstrated the most important aspects of the account the abbot had authored.[75] According to Hilduin's letter, dated to 840 C.E., he complied with the emperor's wishes and included material in the dossier which would make the connection between the Athenian bishop and convert of St. Paul, the founder of the Frankish church in Gaul, and the mystic and author of early Christian texts. Although it may seem that the compilation of these three distinct individuals was the work of a masterful and manipulative forger, intent upon garnering the permanent patronage of the throne for his shrine, the letter from Louis to Hilduin requesting this dossier be compiled and disseminated would seem to belie that claim.[76] Louis' request refered directly to the *libris ab eo patrio sermone concriptis et auctoritatis nostrae iussione ac tuo sagaci studio… in nostram linguam explicates.*[77] Hilduin's reasons for complying with Louis' request were apparent; the abbot would construct an account promoting a saint of regional appeal to one with an international standing, who would also be considered the founder of the first Christian church of Gaul and an early convert of St. Paul. By constructing and publicizing his account of Dionysius, Hilduin would become an abbot of tremendous standing in

[75] The contents of Louis' letter can be found in *BHL* 2173, ed MGH 327-35.
[76] Louis' letter is preserved in *BHL* 2172, ed. *MGH* ep. v, 325-7.
[77] Ed. cit., 327, lines 6-8.

the Ile-de-France. [78] Louis' reasons for a consolidated account of the life of Denis were similarly transparent. Divested of the support of the most important of the international saints, he would develop and expand the claims of St.-Denis to the point that Denis would rival the power of Peter. Louis and Hilduin would take a regionally well-known saint and elevate him to international status and significance. While these two powerful and clever men had very different reasons for the elevation of the saint, their partnership in this venture succeeded far better than either could have dreamed.

The new version of the life of Denis, known as the *Post beatam et salutiferam,*[79] utilized a falsified document which links the first bishop and missionary to Gaul with the first bishop of Athens. This connection, which bestowed an international element to the story, became a central step in understanding Hilduin's goals as he wrote it. The *Post beatam et salutiferam* would be the first account which linked all three parts of the saint together, using elements of both the *Gloriosae* and the *Post beatam et gloriosam* together with some of the works attributed to Denis and only first available to the west after 827.[80] In his work on the St.-Denis legend, Luscombe stated that "…when Louis presented this codex to the abbey of Saint-Denis, it must have been clear to many of those involved in the discussions that the Greeks were thinking that Denis the Areopagite, the convert of St. Paul, had travelled from the east to the west and had ended his days on earth as the victim of persecution in Gaul."[81] In his letter to Hilduin composed before the composition of the *Post beatam et salutiferam*, Louis outlined his reasons for asserting the Athenian and Roman

[78] See R.J. Loenertz, "La legend parisienne de S. Denys l'Areopagite, sa genèse et son premier témoin", *ABoll*, 69 (1951), 217-221. See Luscombe, p. 138. Hilduin, *Exsultavit cor meum, MGH* Epp. 5, 329. 11.20-25, 331 1.5. Also see Levillain, *Etudes sur l'abbaye de Saint-Denis a époque mérovingienne, BÉCh* 82 (1921) 33-34; *MGH SS* rer. Merov. 1,1 (1937-1951, 23.
[79] *BHL* 2175-6.
[80] Luscombe, "Denis the Areopagite," 136.
[81] Luscombe, ibid, 136-137.

connections of the saint, arguing that attributions made by Bede – who had written that Denis was the first bishop of Corinth – and Gregory of Tours – who identified the Louis dating of Denis' martyrdom to a later point in Christian history – were incorrect[82] As Luscombe stated, "By representing pope Clement as having raised Denis to the status of apostle of all Gaul, the Frankish church could both reaffirm its Roman origins and also find its central focus in the abbey where its first bishop lay buried."[83] Hilduin was also the author of the account that Denis had been executed at Montmartre before carrying his head to the site of his eventual grave. The cephalophore was not an unknown trope in the ninth century, but the addition of this post mortem miracle raised the status of the saint beyond that of most of his rivals.

The decision to use Saint-Denis as the spiritual home for dynastic ambitions for the Carolingians became a way to establish that family as having been chosen for their roles. In his letter to Hilduin, Louis marked the importance of Dagobert as a model for all kings. Louis' letter stated that Dagobert *qui eundem pretiosimum Christi martirem veneratus non mediocriter fuerat* had been preserved from damnation by a *divina et celebris ostensio.*[84] The saint who had famously intervened in the elevation of Dagobert to the throne had transferred his patronage to a new line of kings; Frankish kings, but of a different family. The emperor furthermore credited his restoration to the throne to the intervention of St.-Denis, and Louis requested the compilation of a group of documents meant to enhance the reputation of the saint and, by extension, his own. The message was blunt: Frankish kings who venerated St-Denis properly would go straight to heaven, and by implication the rest of the Merovingians after Dagobert were lost.[85] The lines in Louis' letter

[82] Hilduin, *Exsultavit cor meum*, *MGH* epp. 5, 329, 11.20-25, 331 1.5. Also Migne *PL* 106, cols. 15C, 17C.
[83] Luscombe, ibid, 136.
[84] *MGH* ep. v, pp. 325-7, esp. 326 lines 6-10.
[85] MGH ep. V, 326, lines 6-10.

extolling the virtues of St-Denis must have been included to promote the saint and the embattled king's own claims to rule. The tradition holding that Dagobert had discovered the shrine and raised it to the status of royal basilica must have already been present in the dialogue on the saint and his shrine. What cannot be proven is what the precise details regarding this discovery might have been. While Hilduin cannot be accused of having made up the connection between Dagobert and Saint-Denis from whole cloth, he may have constructed a story about the connection between the king and the saint to serve his own political ends and persuade the king he served to royally promote the shrine.

The account of the life of Dagobert was composed in either 834 or 835 C.E., although the circumstances remain unclear. The *Gesta Domini Dagoberti I regis* must have been written under Hilduin's direction, but his motives for doing so have remained unclear.[86] Current argument makes Hincmar the most likely source of this work, as it can be dated to roughly the same period as the writing of the *Miracula Sancti Dionysii*, the first two volumes of which were finished around 835. Luscombe and Levillain have argued that the *Gesta* was constructed no earlier than 835 C.E.[87] This manuscript, according to Luscombe, was directed in its creation around that year by Louis the Pious, who met with Abbot Hilduin of Saint-Denis and his protégé Hincmar to consult on the composing of yet another document, known as the *Miracula Sancti Dionysii*.[88] This manuscript, which is fragmentary, was likely written by Hincmar under the direction of Hilduin while the

[86] Levillain offered the most important commentary on the *Gesta Domini Dagoberti regis*, and has argued that this document, along with the *Revelatio Gesta Stephanii*, were the product of the abbey of Saint-Denis. He further has asserted that the *Gesta Domini Dagoberti regis* may have been the work of Hincmar, Hilduin's pupil, while he lived in Saint-Denis. See Luscombe, "Denis the Pseudo-Areopagite", 140; Levillain outlines the stylistic comparisons between the author of the *Gesta Dagoberti* and both the *Miracula Sancti Dionysii* and the *Vitae Remigii* to support his argument that Hincmar wrote some or all of these works. As the attribution of the *Miracula Sancti Dionysii* and the *Vitae Remigii* have been securely established, his argument seems reasonable. Levillain, "Etudes", 58-116.

[87] See Levillain, "Etudes", p. 58-116; Luscombe, "Denis the Pseudo-Areopagite," 140.

[88] BHL 2193-2202, and supplement 2202. Comments by Luchaire, "Note additionnelle aux études sur quelques manuscrits de Rome et de Paris," in *bibliothèque de la faculté des lettres*, (de l'Université de Paris), t. XIII, 3.

former resided in Saint-Denis.[89] At the presentation of the *Miracula*, Louis directed Hincmar to write the *Gesta*[90] to fill in the remainder of the story. The *Miracula* included an account of the first shrines established over the graves of Denis and his companions, but no note was made of the connection between the shrine and King Dagobert.[91] In the account of Dagobert's life, despite the centrality of the saint to the king, the *Gesta* mentioned Denis only as a secondary part in the overall life of the king; even more importantly, the earlier accounts of the foundation of the shrine and the abbey on the site of Saint-Denis have been reduced in order to accord more importance to the patronage of Dagobert and, to a lesser extent, his father Clotarius II. Neither of the oldest copies of the *Gesta Dagoberti regis* remained in the library of Saint-Denis; the oldest extant manuscript has been dated to the ninth century, and resided in the abbey of Saint-Bertin, while another copy of the account remained in the library of Rheims.[92] The *Vitae Remegii*, the ninth century account of the life of St. Remi, has been attributed to Hincmar during the time he served as archbishop, and comparisons of the prose found in that text and the *Gesta* indicate that entire passages were lifted and reused by the author. That, in combination with some tell-tale prose styles and flourishes, has led to the attribution of the *Gesta* to the pen of Hincmar.[93]

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[89] Luscombe asserts that the *Miracula*, which details miracles attributed to St.-Denis and was constructed in three parts, was written at the request of a monk called Samuel. Luscombe further argued that Hincmar was the author of the first two parts, but the third – which provides miracles dated after 817 – was written by an as yet unknown monk of the monastery. See Luscombe, "Denis the Pseudo-Areopagite," 140;

[90] Luscombe asserts that the *Miracula* was shown to Louis at Thionville in 835, and around then, Louis ordered that Hincmar should write the *Gesta*. See Luscombe, "Denis the Pseudo-Areopagite," 140; also Levillain, "études sur l'abbaye de Saint-Denis à l'époque merovingienne," *Bibliothèque de l'école des chartes*, 1921, vol. 82, 59.

[91] The *Miracula*, written in three volumes, addresses primarily miraculous interventions of the saint, and is loosely arranged in a chronological order. While Levillain and Luscombe assert positively that the first two volumes were the work of Hincmar while he was still at Saint-Denis, the last volume, which covers events until after the death of Hilduin in 840, would have been composed by an as yet unidentified author. See Levillain, "études sur l'abbaye de Saint-Denis, 59.

[92] Levillain, "études sur l'abbaye de Saint-Denis," 59.

[93] Levillain cites the inclusion of some of the "preoccupations of the author" found in both texts, along with statements in the biography of Hincmar written after his death, which he claims serve as "une signature d'Hincmar au bas des *Gesta Dagoberti*." Ibid, 94.

If Hincmar was the author of the *Gesta* and the miracle accounts of St.-Denis, then his motives as he composed this account matter. Hincmar was a prolific author and advisor in the court of Charles the Bald (823-877) in his later career, and much of the work he produced has been accepted as Carolingian apologia in the century after Pepin usurped the throne. When he wrote the history of the founder of his own institution, St. Remi, Hincmar invested that person with a wholly created event which served to establish the power and legitimacy of the first line of Frankish kings, the Merovingians. Hincmar looked backward to the baptism of Clovis I, and claimed that Remi received an ampulle of holy oil, one which never ran dry, which he then used to consecrate the Frankish king. This act, which conferred a sacred legitimacy upon what had been otherwise a brutal and violent Germanic war leader, has been used since as the sign of divine approval toward the kings of France and their actions on earth; before Hincmar's account, no such myth existed.[94] Hincmar, as an intellectual and advisor to the court of Charles the Bald, would have felt little pressure to justify the rule of a king centuries dead and a dynasty supplanted by the ruler he served unless doing so would redound in a way intended to promote the rights of the Carolingian line and of the cathedral he served. The choice to look to the past for an act intended to emphasize the rights of the current rulers of France may be read as a sign of the desire of those kings to repair an image of usurpation. The act of consecration, performed at the coronation of every king of the Carolingian dynasty after the production of the *Vitae Remegii,* involved the use of that same vial of holy oil; the ritual established as having commenced with an act of divine approbation and miraculous intervention in the selection of a king serves multiple and resonating

[94] See Ralph E. Giesey, "Juristic Basis of Dynastic Right to the French Throne," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, New Series, Vol. 51, no. 5, 1961, 4. Also Marc Bloch, *Les rois thaumaturges: étude sur le caractère surnaturel attribué a la puissance royale, particulièrement en France et en Angleterre*, (Strasbourg), 1924. Hincmar's work on the life of St. Remi began in a period when he was also attempting to create a degree of primacy for the cathedral of Reims, and should be considered in the light of those conflicts of the later 9th century.

purposes. Firstly, it established that God takes an interest in the Frankish people, and is concerned for the choice of appropriate and godly rulers. Secondly, by sending the oil, God indicated that this person and only this person has received His approval. That act of blessing in the form of holy oil was not, by nature, dynastic; as God chose one king, He can and might choose another not of the same family. This, indeed, is the argument utilized by Hincmar in support of his own royal masters; as God once chose Clovis to rule over the Franks, he then chose Pepin when the line of Clovis failed and no longer produced godly heirs. In doing so, as Giesey argued, Hincmar also "…put the church in the central position as the ordainer of kings, exalted Hincmar's position as episcopal successor to the original king-maker, St. Remi, and also by reason of equating the basis of Merovingian and Carolingian royal legitimacy covered over the naked usurpation of power that had occurred."[95] Once written into the official account of the life of St. Remi, the myth of the holy ampule of oil became an accepted part of the tale of Clovis, and the kings of France would rest part of their claims to legitimacy upon the ritual act described by Hincmar.

When he wrote the *Gesta Domini Dagoberti regis*,[96] Hincmar's motives were less clear than they had been when he authored the *Vitae Remegii*. When he constructed this document, he was still at Saint-Denis; the *Vitae Remegii* was the product of his time as the archbishop of Rheims. Hincmar's account of that king is the earliest surviving, and his sources for the king's life are obscure. Saint-Denis has preserved some of the diplomas and charters attributed to the reign of Dagobert, particularly those which support their claims to royal benefices received from the king's hand, but many of the details of the king's life and reign can only be found in the chronicle of the

[95] Giesey, 4.
[96] Ed. *MGH, SRM* ii, 396-425.

Pseudo-Fredegar, the *Vitae Arnulfi*, and a chapter in the *Liber historiae Francorum*.[97] In uniting these pieces, Hincmar injected into Dagobert's life an argument which was to resonate with future monks and abbots of Saint-Denis: Dagobert became the exemplar of the penitent king.

Dagobert's life as it appeared in the *Gesta* would not have been atypical for a Germanic prince. The outline of the biography followed the traditional narrative by placing the young man's rearing into the hands of Bishop Arnulfi of Metz, who would have provided religious instruction.[98] The *Gesta* spent little time in describing the king through generalized rhetorical flourishes, except to state that "This was the son named Dagobert, who was born from Queen Bertedrude, who succeeded his father both in diligent industry and powers."[99] Dagobert received at least a nominal education in Christianity, and his potency as a future ruler of the warlike Frankish peoples was evident from birth. His father Clotharius II, who had managed in his reign to draw together and rule the majority of the Frankish kingdoms, including both Neustria and Austrasia, would eventually leave these lands divided into the hands of two potential heirs. In this version of the life of the Merovingian king, Dagobert became the destined ruler of all the Frankish lands through the intervention of the divine, and was so from birth.

Although the *Gesta* credited Genevieve with having worked on the early shrine, she was noted in this story as having reconstructed the building, rather than having ordered the construction of the first structure. Since her death, the shrine of Saint-Denis had lain neglected and in ruins.[100]

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[97] Levillain, "Etudes," 74. He quotes the study by Krusch in the *Forschungen zur deutschen Geschichte*, t.VI, 1886, 163-191; the conclusions of this work can be found in the preface to the edition of *MGH SRM* ii, 396.

[98] *Hic denique in annis puerilibus positus, traditus est a genitore venerabili ac sanctissimo Arnulfo Mettensium urbis episcopo, ut eum secundum suam sapientiam enutriret eique tramitem christianae religionis ostenderet atque eius custos et baiulus esset. MGH RSM* ii, 401, line 16.

[99] *Huic fuit filius nomine Dagobertus, quem ex Bertedrude regina susceperat, qui patri succederet et industria dignus, et viribus. MGH SRM* ii, 401, line 15.

[100] The vitae of St. Genevieve records the reconstruction of the shrine in the sixth century, and she was credited in the *Gesta Domini Dagoberti Regis* with having established a small shrine above the bodies of the saints. *Vitae Genovefae, MGH SRM* iii, 215-238; *Gesta Domini Dagoberti Regis, MGH SRM ii*, chap. 3, 402, line 7.

When Dagobert and his unidentified companions pursued a stag into the village known as Catuliacum, they accidentally found the shrine that had, according to the *Gesta*, been erected through the patronage of Catulla, a Roman matron who had been converted by Dionysius and had met her own martyrdom.[101] When the deer took refuge inside the ruins, Dagobert sent the dogs toward it to roust the animal out. Yet they could not; the dogs couldn't pass beyond the lintel of the shrine, and the prince himself dismounted to discover the stag comfortably seated upon the sepulcher just visible in the rubble. Dagobert was struck with the beauty of that spot and thereafter, "no place was sweeter or more pleasant to Dagobert."[102] Hincmar claims that the identity of the saint buried there was unknown to the people of Dagobert's time; to preserve the bodies, Catulla had hidden the names of the saints and disguised them in the official accounts, and their fame had been lost except among the surrounding villagers.

Years later, when Dagobert found himself in a dispute with his choleric father Clothar II (584-629), he chose to return to the spot. Clothar pursued his son to exact vengeance on behalf of one of his own close companions, Duke Sadregisilius, whom Dagobert had whipped and barbered. The duke had not accorded the prince the respect and dignity he deserved, and when he refused the cup passed to him at Dagobert's table, an act of disrespect, the prince became incensed and ordered the nobleman punished.[103] Dagobert's crime was all the more egregious as his father had chosen Sadregisilius, the Duke of Aquitaine, as his tutor. When he heard of his father's anger, Dagobert fled the court and found himself in the vicinity of the unknown shrine; like the stag he had hunted, he took refuge inside the building. He fell asleep in the tomb, and received a visitation

[101] *MGH SRM* ii, chapt. 2, 401, line 19.
[102] *MGH SRM* ii, chapt. 4, 402, line 20 *Et ut vere fatear, ut ex gestis postmodum claruit, nullus Dagoberto locus aut dulcior, aut jucundior fuit.*
[103] According to the *gesta Dagoberti*, Sadregisilius was a commoner who had been raised to noble status by Clothar in order to serve as tutor to Dagobert. The prince perceived this elevation as an insult to his own royal dignity, and sought ways to remove the man as his tutor. *MGH SRM* ii, chapt. 6.

by three men clad in shining white. After identifying themselves as the unknown occupants of that shrine, they offered Dagobert a deal: "But because you see that the vileness of our tomb obscured our fame, if you promise to go forth adorned with the memory of us, then we can free you from these straits, and in all things, with God's help, offer you aid."[104] With this promise, the saints agreed to assist Dagobert out of the difficulty with his father.

Clearly, the saints in this vision offered Dagobert aid; Clothar sent his men at arms to the shrine – the text claimed he dispatched a thousand of them – but none could enter the building. Miraculously, they found the air in their bodies choked off, and they returned to their king without the prince. A second contingent from Clothar was served similarly, and eventually the king was forced to dismount and confront Dagobert inside the shrine alone. The king was amazed by the change in his son who danced with the revelation he had received in his dream. Father and son reconciled, and both pledged to enrich the shrine.[105] Yet the message related in the text seems to promise more than immediate succor; if Dagobert were to rebuild the shrine, he would need the power and wealth of the throne.

Dagobert was not the only potential heir at this point in his life, and much of the remainder of his biography recounts his wars against his half-brother who also claimed the right to rule.[106] One could, though, read the statement above as offering more than just immediate aid in a minor dispute with his father. The saints could have been striking a bargain with the prince: we make

[104]*Sed quia famam nostram sepulturae quam vides et domus hujus vilitas obscuravit: si memoriam nostri te ornatum ire promittis, hac te possumus… liberare (ab) angustia, et in cunctis auxiliante Deo praestare suffragium. MGH SRM* chapt. 9, 403, line 37.

[105] *MGH SRM* chapt. 10.

[106] Both the *Chronicle of Fredegar* and *Gesta Domini Dagoberti Regis* reported that Dagobert had been made king over Austrasia by Clothar when that region demanded its own king, but as his brother Hairbertus had similarly been named king over other regions now comprising France, war between them was likely inevitable and the outcome uncertain at this point in the prince's biography. Eventually, Dagobert defeated his half-brother and, according to Fredegar who was more critical of the Merovingian king than was Hincmar, also murdered his nephew. *Chronicle of Fredegar,* IV, 57, *MGH SRM* ii, 149.

you king if you pledge allegiance to us once you gain the throne. Even more important for subsequent royal rulers would have been the final clause: that they would be able, in all things, with the help of God, to aid him, though the question of in what manner was left vague. This was a pledge of divine patronage, and offered to a king before he came into power, by beings who were at that point proving their puissance. Just as importantly, it can be read as a statement to the kings that these saints would be capable and willing to promote the salvation of rulers, standing with them in the final moments to make their case to God himself. Indeed, later versions of the life of Dagobert, and the material outlining the vision of the hermit John, make that promise more explicit. This is the claim on which all subsequent rights made by the shrine of Saint-Denis would rest: a king who offered the saints here the status they merit received in return their aid, both in gaining the throne and in making a path to heaven.

Following this triumphant point in the text, the *Gesta* outlined the battles fought and won (or lost), the marriages, and the treaties, yet the longest single passage in the middle section of the text addressed the most important business of the *Gesta* – the decoration of the shrine for the saints and the enrichment of their tomb. The account laid out the donations carefully: so much money set aside from the taxes paid out of Marseilles would go for candles; another sum would be paid each year to the shrine with the intention that it would be used to support the poor; wagons and carts used to transport goods to the shrine would be exempt from taxation in those regions through which they must travel. The *Gesta* also described a payment made by the king himself:

> To give more generously to the poor, he sent, on the kalends of every September, another 100 pounds, ordering that this money be placed in the gazophile (an offering urn) together with the offerings, in the hope that Our Lord would reward him for it after death, and he decreed that his sons, and all who would succeed him, would continue to place, on the specified day, the designated sum of money in the gazophile, and that no one should ever remove any of it, but it all should be distributed to the poor. Thus this

> money and the offerings and other alms that good people put in it, would comfort and support the poor and the pilgrims forever. [107]

This act, in which a king designates a specific shrine to receive a significant amount of the wealth of his kingdom, was included to serve as precedent for all future kings. The gift of a generous amount of money paid directly to the shrine, in the company of the wealth already poured upon the saints' tombs, established the centrality of this relationship and the necessity of a continued interdependence between king and divine patrons.

Several chapters of the *Gesta* had concerned the disputes between the two principal heirs to Clotarius' realms. Hairbertus, the younger half-brother of Dagobert, received a portion of the lands once ruled by their father. In the *Gesta*, Dagobert did not wait until he had the control over all the Frankish lands to establish the new shrine for the saints. According to his biography,

> As you have heard, king Dagobert held his father's kingdom by the will of Our Lord. Among other things that he did that are praiseworthy, he did one that should remain in men's memories forever. He did not forget the vow and the promise he had made to the martyr saint Denis and to his companions, but he came to the place where the holy bodies lay, and had the earth opened. He had them dig deep enough to find the coffins and the letters written on them that gave the names of those who lay within them. He had them taken out, with great devotion, and brought to another place on the same street, where they still lie, in the year of the Incarnation 630, on the tenth of the kalends of May.[108]

[107] *MGH RSM* ii, chapt. 17, 409, line 19. Later descriptions of the early shrine would note the addition of the gazophile attached to the front of the altar, for the sake of alms to be distributed to the poor.

[108] *Dagobertus denique Deo annuente regnum paternum retinens, inter alia quae laudabiliter gessit, memor voti jam dicti, accessit ad supra memoratum locum; et sicut in somnis praemonitus fuerat, sanctorum martyrum Dionysii Rustici et Eleutherii corpora requirens, digesta eorum in sarcophagis nomina reperit, quae et in alium ejusdem vici locum summa cum veneratione x Kalends. MGH SRM* ii chapter 17 line 1. Also *Ipsi autem centum solidi non alibi, nisi in omnibus distribuerentus pauperibus, nullusque hoc praesumeret abstrahere, se quandiu regnum consisteret a regibus succedentibus suo tempore in praedicto gazophylocio inferrentur, ut de ipsa collation, et quod Dominus ab aliis hominibus ibidem voluiset adhuc augeri, pauperes et peregrine exinde valerent per inconvulsa tempora recreari. MGH SRM* ii chapter 14.

The dispute with his brother Hairbertus can be dated to the year of their father's death in 629. Clotarius' realm had been separated between his heirs, and Hairbertus claimed part of the kingdom which included Aquitaine. Therefore, the work Dagobert did on the shrine occurred while he still contended with his half-brother, perhaps even before the death of Clothar. On the relationship between Clothar and his younger son Hairbertus, the *Gesta* remained silent. Within the realm of the narrative, the gilding of the saints' shrine and the donation of land and rents was the fulfilment of Dagobert's promise to the previously unknown saints. Performing this act was therefore a bid to cinch the deal, and prove himself the one chosen by God to claim the entire kingdom.

As a political move, the decision to ornament a basilica in the lands north of Paris, which Dagobert had determined as his center of power, during the years he disputed with Hairbertus was a clever act. Both Clothar and Dagobert had already connected themselves to the shrine and the memory of the saints entombed there.[109] The claim that the identities of the saints buried there was a mystery until they were excavated was dubious, as the abbey preserved lists of bequests provided by both Clotar and his elder son before the death of the king, and other rulers had similarly donated to the shrine.[110] As noted previously, two members of the royal family had chosen the shrine for their own burial sites. In the *Gesta*, the move to adopt the basilica as the beneficiary of conspicuous generosity was an act of political utility disguised as an act of piety. When Dagobert chose to expand and enhance the abbey of a Gallic saint, a bishop who had been sent to the region to convert not the Franks, but the people the Franks had conquered, the would-be king claimed the legitimacy of a traditional saint through their signs and symbols. The timing

[109] To Chlothar II, Denis was the *peculiaris patronus noster*. *MGH. SRM* ii, no. 10, 13.
[110] Charters providing financial support to the shrine date back to 619 C.E., before the reign of Dagobert. See K.-H. Debus, "Studien zur merowingischen Urkunden und Briefen", in *Archiv fur Diplomatik* 13, (1967), no. 1 11-17 and 86-88. A charter dated to 654 notes an earlier bequest by Merovingians before Dagobert and Clothar II. See M*GH D Merov*. No. 19, p. 19.

of this act reflects a degree of either confidence or trepidation; surely, as he contended with Hairbertus, he would need all the friends he could find, both spiritual and material. Contemporary sources, including Fredegar, determined that the basilica was rebuilt in 630 C.E. Hairbertus died in 632; although the *Gesta* does not provide a cause of death, Fredegar claimed that Dagobert's co-ruler was assassinated.[111]

The question of the foundation of the abbey, along with the claim that the shrine had been neglected and abandoned, does not accord with earlier narratives on the cult of St.-Denis. The *Vitae Sancti Genovefae* is the earliest known record of any building over the grave of the saint.[112] In her *vitae*, the site of the burial of the three sainted martyrs had been well known; the *vitae* includes references to miraculous events that occurred around the grave of the martyr, and her biography credits the saint with having had a hand in collecting materials needed for the shrine.

The claim that Genevieve, not a royal patron, commissioned the first basilica over the body of the saints was repeated in the *Gesta*, when that account first notes the interaction between Dagobert and the shrine.[113] According to the *Gesta*, the first shrine dates to the first century, soon after the death of the saint. It was built by Catulla, a Roman matron converted by the bishop, who had hidden the names of the individuals interred there, as she feared the bodies would suffer desecration by the Roman authorities. The grave site, according to the *Gesta*, had become a place for notable miracles, and attracted the veneration of Genevieve, who didn't build the first shrine over the graves, but had rebuilt an older one. The basilica she erected over the bishop was a "most humble chapel", and by the descriptions of the materials used, would have been made from stone,

[111] Fredegar, IV, 60, *MGH SRM*, ii, 151
[112] *Acta Sanctorum*, Jan. 3rd, 137-154, chapter IV, lines 13-19; also *MGH*, SRM 3:204-38, ed. Bruno Krusch.
[113] *MGH SRM* ii, chapt. 3, 402, line 2.

mortar, and wood.[114] The claim that the saints were forgotten and the site abandoned in the century or so between the construction of the first basilica and the reconstruction by Dagobert and Clothar II was a rhetorical device rather than an accurate description of the cult of St.-Denis. Yet in the *Gesta*, the author states that *Sic incomparabilis thesaurus diu latuit, nec praeter famam locus ille quidquam habebat conspicuum.*[115] Catulla had moved to hide the identity of the saints, and the saints were still unknown in the time of the Merovingian kings, despite the intervening centuries and the notation of a cult during the first Frankish Christian king.

The *Gesta* states that Dagobert not only enhanced the shrine, but that he built a new structure entirely. The document outlined the cost of the new construction, for "He had rich caskets made, adorned with pure gold and precious jewels; he had a church built, as fine as possible, and although the interior he had made was remarkably beautiful, it was not enough for him, but he covered the apse within which the bodies of the martyrs were buried to be venerated marvelously with the purest silver."[116] Description of the ornamentation in this passage demonstrated both his generosity and his willingness to follow through on his promises to the saints. Yet the documentary evidence from Fredegar, Gregory of Tours, and the *vitae Genovefae* conflicted with this claim; according to them, Dagobert did not build a new shrine, as was claimed in the *Gesta*, but decorated the existing shrine. Nor was he the founder of the monastery.

The myth of Dagobert, the royal founder, became a powerful claim. In the *Gesta*, St.-Denis became the patron of the royal house of the Franks, but more than that, Denis became the king-maker. Dagobert was chosen by the saints, or perhaps the saints simply knew the young prince

[114] *AS* Jan. 3rd, chapter IV, lines 19-20.
[115] *MGH SRM* ii, chapt. 3, 401, line 33.
[116] *Et quamvis ecclesiam, quam ipse a fundamine construxerat, intrinsecus miro decore fabricaverit, foris quoque desuper absidiam illam, infra quam veneranda martyrum corpora tumulaverat, ut plenius devoti animi expleret desiderium, ex argento purissimo mirifice cooperuit. MGH SRM* chapt. 17, 402, line 24.

would become the sole heir to the Frankish kingdoms, but the scene in which they acknowledged the prince and promise him divine support in return for a richer and more notable shrine became the centerpiece of the tale for the monks. Leaning on the monastery would become the best route to claiming the kingdom, particularly for those whose right to the throne had been challenged.

The chronicle accounts of the Merovingian and early Carolingian periods did not note the connection between Dagobert and the abbey of Saint-Denis. The 9th century account, the *Miracula*,[117] only provided miracle tales attributed to the saint, some of which predated Dagobert and provided further evidence that the shrine experienced a regional reputation in the century between the construction of the basilica in the 6th century and the promotion of the cult by Dagobert and his heirs. The deliberate establishment of a myth in which an individual king took action to create and promote a regional cult, built a new basilica, imposed a monastic rule upon those housed at the shrine, and then received burial in that institution, became a more powerful argument than what actually seemed to have happened. After his execution, the saint was buried somewhere in the vicinity of present day Saint-Denis, but no building over his tomb existed until the sixth century when Genevieve pressured local authorities to build one. The shrine of the fifth century would have been humble – perhaps stone mortared into place with a wooden roof. As part of his move to consolidate public opinion behind his claim to the undivided throne, Dagobert chose to invest a considerable amount of money into decorating the shrine as a visible sign of his devotion. However, according to Hilduin, the shrine had been forgotten and neglected, the names of the saints lost. Dagobert saved the memory of those in the sepulchers and received their divine aid in

[117] The *Miracula* is divided into sections, each purporting to offer miracles performed by the saint during the reigns of individual Frankish kings. *Miracula sancti dionysii*, *Acta Sanctorum ordinis Sancti Benedicti*, saec. III, 343-364.

his bid to rule. Dagobert became the king because he was always meant to be king, but also as a result of his piety and generosity toward those individual saints.

Accounts of Dagobert's life that did not originate in the abbey of Saint-Denis were less forgiving of the king. Not only was he a kin-slayer; Dagobert engaged in sexual licentiousness. Initially married to Gormantrude, a sister to his father's second wife, Dagobert set that marriage aside when it produced no children. Soon after, he Nanthilde as his wife, a woman who may have been a servant of the bedchamber, but just as likely was the sister of Landegiselus, a powerful nobleman in the region.[118] In his second marriage, he fathered his most important heir, Clovis II (c. 637-658). In addition to these two women, he also married Ragnetrude, Wulfegundis, and Bertechidis. Fredegar stated that "the king surrendered himself to limitless debauchery, having three queens and mistresses beyond number."[119] Despite the white-washing in the Carolingian era, the Merovingian ruler that emerges from these early texts is not a man who would inspire later rulers, constrained by Christian dogma, to follow in his footsteps. He was most notable for managing to expand the lands he could claim to rule and handing over a more-or-less united kingdom to his heirs. His path to power, and his debaucheries once he attained power, would not have earned him a place in a Christian heaven.

Dagobert died by the time he was 37 or 38. The ailment that killed him was likely dysentery, as reported by the Pseudo-Fredegar,[120] though it was not mentioned specifically in the *Gesta*. At the onset of his illness, Dagobert ordered that he be taken to the abbey church; he may

[118] In the *Gesta*, Nanthilde donated several villages and their rents to the basilica in the name of her husband after his death. Her deeds of generosity toward monastic institutions may be a strong indicator that she was of a noble family herself, and not a servant at the time of her marriage. The *Gesta* states that Dagobert abandoned his first wife Gomentrude for sterility. *Gesta Dagoberti*, *MGH SRM* II, 408; *Fredegard*, IV, 58, *MGH* SRM II, 50.
[119]Fredegar, IV, 60, *MGH SS rer Merov II*, 151.
[120] Fredegar, IV, 60, *MGH SS rer Merov II*, 153.

have chosen to go there in the hopes of a miraculous cure, as the relics had developed a reputation for helping the sick and dying; or, knowing he was about to die, may have wished to go to the shrine to die near the saints and the shrine, in a final attempt at pious penitence.[121] When he perceived his death was imminent, he called for his wife Nanthilde and son to attend him. He died with two young sons: Clovis, about 4 at the time, became the ruler of Neustria and Burgundy with his mother Nanthilde. His son Sigibert III remained in Austrasia under the guidance of the mayor of the palace, Pippin.[122] Dagobert was the last Merovingian ruler to control the entirety of the Frankish kingdoms, and he is remembered as the last effective king of his line.

The remainder of the tale takes a turn into the more fantastical. After his death, Ansoaldus, an envoy of the Pictish church, stopped on his way back from Sicily on an island notable for being the retreat of a hermit named John. This individual, who had become famous for his visions, asked the legate about the customs and habits of Dagobert, king of the Franks. Asked why, John explained that, one recent day, as he was retiring to bed exhausted from his vigils, he was approached in his bedchamber by a venerable man in white who admonished him to wake and arise in order to beg for divine clemency for the soul of Dagobert, King of the Franks, because he had breathed out his spirit that day. Not far from his room, he saw a small boat filled with foul spirits who were engaged in binding the king, lashing him, and dragging him toward a nearby volcano. The king in the boat cried out piteously to the divine martyrs Dionysius and Maurice and the confessor St. Martin, for aid. As John watched, the sky split open and there, ranked amid the clouds, were men adorned in snowy white garments of surpassing beauty. Trembling, John asked who they were. They replied that they were those who had been called for aid by Dagobert -

[121] *Gesta Dagoberti*, *MGH SRM*. ii, 404.
[122] Fredegar, IV, 87, *MGH SRM* ii, 164

Dionysius, Maurice, and Martin. Then, swiftly attacking the enemies of humanity, they freed the soul which had been pained with lashes and threats, lifting it to the heavens singing, "Happy are those whom you have selected and taken, O Lord, to dwell in your palaces. We shall be completed in your good house, sacred is your temple, marvelous in justice."[123] This set of events, set as it is in a semi-mythological world, stands in stark contrast with the accounting of Dagobert's life previously recounted. Such miraculous events, housed as they are within a comparatively realistic narrative, appear out of place. Yet, as Spiegel stated, "…medieval chronicles tend to employ a realistic style but to include as morally serious 'content' a vast range of material systematically excluded from the precincts of modern historical realism: miracles, resurrections, saints, myths, and visions *inter alia*."[124] Although the author had previously provided miraculous events in the life of the king, this section stands out as most fantastic. To anchor this account, the author of the *Gesta* claimed that Ansoaldus visited the shrine of Saint-Denis and recounted the tale to St. Ouen. All later versions of the life of Dagobert include the story of his struggles in the boat, but the *Miracula* does not include any such vision.

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[123] *Igitur cognito de Galliis qua de causa missus fuisset, rogat senex ut Dagoberti regis Francorum sibi mores studiumque exponat. Quod cum ille diligente fecisset, senex addidit quod dum quadam die, ut pote jam fractus aetate et fatigatus vigiliis, quieti paululum indulsisset, accessisse ad se virum quemdam canitie venerandum, seque expergefactum admonuisse, quatenus propere surgeret, et pro Dagoberti regis Francorum anima divinam clementiam exoraret, eo quod ipso die spiritum exhalasset. Quod dum facere maturaret, apparuisse sibi haud procul in pelago teterrimos spiritus vinctum regem Dagobertum in lembo per spatium maris agitantes, atque ad Vulcania loca, inflictis insuper verberibus, trahentes, ipsumque Dagobertum beatos Dionysium et Mauricium martyres, et sanctissimum confessorem Martinum ad sui liberationem continuis vocibus flagitantem. Nec mora intonuisse coelum, fulminaque per procellas disjecta, interque ea repente apparuisse praecellentissimos viros niveis comptos vestibus, seque tremefactum ex eis quaesisse quinam essent. Illosque respondisse, quos Dagobertus in adjutorium vocaverat, Dionysium scilicet et Mauricium ac Martinum esse, ut eum eruptum in sinu Abrahae collocarent. Itaque hostes humani generis velociter insequentes, animam quam verberibus minisque vexabant exemptam ad aethera secum levasse canentes, « Beatus quem elegisti et assumpsisti, Domine, inhabitabit in atriis tuis. Replebimus in bonis domus tue, sanctum est templum tuum, mirabile in aequitate. Haec in memorata charta inter alia ferebantur, quae non tam verisimilia quam verissima, ut arbitror, videri possunt. Quoniam idem rex cum et alias longe lateque ecclesias ditasset, tum praecipue horum copiosissime locupletavit. Unde et eorum post mortem flagitabat auxiium, quos prae caeteris e dilexisse meminerat. MGM SRM* ii, chapt. 44, 421-2.

[124] Gabrielle Spiegel, *The Past as Text; the theory and practice of medieval historiography*, (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), xii.

The intervention of the saints and the salvation of the king serve an important purpose in this text and, from its inclusion in every other account of Dagobert's life composed afterward, the story continued to resonate over the next several centuries. Although the author of the *Gesta* didn't dwell upon the failings of the king, emphasizing his military conquests and his generosity toward the shrines of the saints, he did include enough material to make plain that Dagobert had reason to fear for the status of his soul. He died within the walls of the abbey and was the first king of France to be buried there; he donated a great deal of property and rents to the abbey, and demonstrated a conventional piety; yet in the end, none of this would be sufficient on its own to gain salvation.[125] Only the saints could save the king; when he first encountered them, they promised that, in return for the enrichment of their shrine and the promotion of their names, they would aid him in all things. When Dagobert offered lavish donations to the abbey, when he rebuilt it and gilded it using the skills of his own goldsmith, the *Gesta* implies that he did so in the hopes of divine aid at the time of his death. None of his pious actions alone could save him, only divine and supernatural assistance. The saints had made him a king, and at his death, they conveyed his sinful soul to heaven. This lesson is the most important of the text – even kings must tremble at the onset of death, for only those who had merited the assistance of these then particular Frankish saints would thereby gain heaven.

The *Gesta* thus contains material largely copied out from either Fredegar or Gregory of Tours. For the most part, it is a work of a historical biography, but it credits the Merovingian king with the founding of the abbey, the construction of a new building, the promotion of the saint's cult, and the enrichment of the abbey. As outlined above, Dagobert had been notable in his

[125] For lists of his bequests and the descriptions of his generosity as he gilded the shrine, see *MGH SRM* ii, particularly chapter 14 and 17.

generosity toward the shrine, and he had donated considerable properties and accorded important rights to the shrine. Remembering Dagobert as the founder of the abbey, then, became more of a simplification of the actual story than a complete fabrication. To the historical outlines of the tale, Hincmar added two general miracle accounts which would be used to propel the idea that the link between kings and the basilica was of divine origin and that kings could depend upon the saint for aid after death. No sources for these miracle accounts have been found that could have been sources for Hincmar's tale. The story of Dagobert's salvation was not included in the *Miracula Sancti Dionysii*, also written by Hincmar, though all future versions of Dagobert's life include this story and the story of the stag hunt. However, aspects of the story may have been tailored specifically to appeal to the royal patron of these manuscripts, Louis and his son Charles.

The *Gesta Dagoberti regis* as recorded in the mid-ninth century contains 51 chapters. Of those chapters, most are concerned with significant battles against the Saxons and against his half-brother Hairbertus, his marriages and heirs, and his interactions with the abbey. No fewer than five chapters detail the costs of decorations he ordered for the shrine of Saint-Denis, the costs of maintenance (including the price of the oil to light the lamps in the church), and the construction of a magnificent gazophile to hold what the monks hoped would become a traditional act of devotion by the kings – the gift of gold generous enough to fill the vessel.[126] The heart of this biography of the Merovingian king rests in the devotion of Dagobert to the shrine, and the rewards that accrued as a result. Written as Louis reclaimed his throne and worked to limit the damage to his reputation and authority, the argument that this abbey and no other serves as a solid foundation for legitimacy must have been persuasive. If one links together the most important intellectual

[126] See above, note 111. *MGH SRM* ii chapter 14.

constructions of the abbey of Saint-Denis between 830 and the death of Hilduin in 840, the *Gesta Dagoberti regis* becomes part of an overall tapestry useful to both monastery and king. The saint, in the *Post beatam et salutiferam*, is an individual of international standing and importance, whose martyrdom in Paris becomes a turning point in the Christianization of Gaul. When kings recognize the saint's power and influence, they gain the rewards of his support for their reigns and, at their deaths, can claim a site in the church near the relics of the holy martyrs.

At the heart of the early chapters of the story is the problem of an intergenerational feud, one between a royal father and son, which is eventually resolved within the shrine and with the intervention of the saint. The disputes between half-brothers over the division of the realm would resonate with both Louis and his youngest son, Charles. St.-Denis served three purposes in this tale: he offers salvation for an individual royal soul, he promised divine aid in the conflict dividing father and son, and he assured Dagobert of his success in claiming the contested throne of his father. In the tale, Dagobert and Clothar came together in their determination to rebuild the shrine and honor the saints; in the conflict of the 9th century which pitted Louis against three of his sons, the saint served to confirm and strengthen the claims of Charles to the Frankish throne. As St.-Denis promised that he would support Dagobert "in all things", that heir to the Merovingian line succeeded and found his place in the sun. Dagobert solidified his connection with the abbey and its saint through burial in the church. Similarly, Charles the Bald was the first of the Carolingian kings to receive burial in the abbey; an act which would therefore guarantee him personal salvation and the support of the saint for his descendants.

If the intent of the author of the *Gesta* had been to persuade the kings to be buried in the abbey as a matter of tradition, that goal eluded the monks until after the ascension of the Capetian line. Charles the Bald found a place in the abbey church, but many of his heirs chose alternate

burial sites. The emphases in the *Gesta* more likely concerned the necessity of royal patronage of the abbey, and personal commitment to the saints of that venerable institution. They made careful note of each donation, each decoration, and the materials used to gild the interior. The claim to become the royal necropolis for France did not become an established right until the eleventh century, and only in the process of contestation did the monks and abbots make clear what they believed was their own.

In reviewing the history of the basilica of Saint-Denis and the documentary evidence surrounding it, a few things have become clear. Although the basilica was well positioned to become an important support for the Merovingian kings, being located close to the political center of the kingdoms, the primacy of the shrine was not guaranteed. Other local and regional saints might well have become the central and defining spiritual home for the Frankish kings. Nothing made Saint-Denis stand out as superior to the shrines of St. Maurice, St. Martin or even St. Genevieve. However, once Dagobert had determined to champion Denis as his own particular patron, and once he chose that site for burial, the shrine gradually became the traditional center of royal allegiance – even if the monks had to invent the tradition.

The ninth century goals of Hilduin and Hincmar, along with their royal patron Louis, made the abbey into an international focus of attention and admiration. Hilduin commanded an abbey wealthier than most, thanks to the charter of independence and the annual fair held outside its walls that dated back to the reigns of Dagobert and his immediate heirs. By promoting the royal ideal of monastic burial and conspicuous generosity to the shrine, Hilduin positioned the abbey to withstand the chaos of the Ile-de-France in the late 9th and 10th centuries, as the heirs of Charlemagne and the Robertian dukes of Paris squabbled over territory and power. Saint-Denis,

already a traditional holding associated with the king, would be traded among those who would be king during the years that followed Hilduin's tenancy, until the abbots again found solid ground with the Capetians.

Chapter 2:
The Monastery of Saint-Denis and the Royal Bodies: a practice becames a right

In 1108, King Philip I of the Frankish kingdoms died. Before his death, Philip had determined that his body would not be interred in the abbey of Saint-Denis with his father and grandfather but would be placed in St.-Benoît-Sur-Loire. When Abbot Suger (c. 1081-1151) wrote about the burial of Philip in his work *de Administratione* after the king's death, Suger provided an explanation: the king, he asserted, did not feel himself worthy to be laid to rest alongside his more noble ancestors. "They carried the body in a great procession to the noble monastery of St-Benoît-sur-Loire, where King Philip wished to be buried; there are those who say they heard from his own mouth that he deliberately chose not to be buried among his royal ancestors in the church of Saint-Denis because he had not treated that church as well as they had, and because among so many noble kings his own tomb would not have counted for much."[127] Suger suggested in this statement that burial in the church of Saint-Denis had been expected for the kings; that only misdeeds and lack of ostentatious royal support for the abbey would disqualify a ruler for a resting place among the noble rulers of the Franks. For a royal burial in the royal basilica, a king must be worthy. In making this argument, Suger "turned a custom into a natural law,"[128] maintaining not that the abbey had an absolute right to be the necropolis of the royal family, but that the kings must merit this most high and noble location for burial. Placement in the abbey was a privilege, not a right for the kings, an argument which made the choice to be interred in the abbey a superior one only the most worthy could achieve. Suger's argument on the right of the abbey to the bodies of the kings was the first expression of this position in Dionysian literature. It would not be the last.

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[127] *Oeuvres complètes de Suger*, ed. Albert Lecoy de la Marche, (Paris : Mme. Ve J. Renouard, 1867), 47f.
[128]For more on this point, see Georgia Wright, "A Royal Tomb Program in the Reign of St. Louis," *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 56, No. 2, Medieval Issue (Jun. 1974), 224-243.

Hilduin and Hincmar, working with Louis the Pious, had created an abbey that could claim to be in possession of the relics of an international saint, a leading intellectual light of the early Christian era, and the founder of the Gallic church. Louis had needed the abbey to be more than a shrine of local or regional veneration; having lost access to his spiritual patron of St. Peter in Rome, the emperor needed St.-Denis to be as powerful and persuasive and large as possible. Hincmar and Hilduin created the documentation necessary to promote their saint to one who could be a royal patron neither Louis nor his son Charles would consider a demotion. In this goal, they were wildly successful. Suger, working in a very different political context, wished to create a sense of royal obligation to the basilica. For Abbot Suger, dedication and generosity toward the abbey would not be enough; the kings of the Franks should consider St.-Denis to be their conventional patron and the basilica to be their eventual resting place. The kings should be buried in the abbey as a matter of course, and any other choice would have to be justified; thus his oblique criticism of Philip I, who he claimed felt unworthy to join the other royal bodies in the nave. However, Suger's argument that the abbey of Saint-Denis was the obvious and necessary choice for royal interment conflicted with the kings' own sense of merit and devotion to alternate sites, particularly in the face of new monastic orders which seemed to promise more dedication to the salvation of their souls and more conspicuous public placement of their graves. Suger's response was to carefully select and utilize symbolic structures and artistic measures intended to persuade the kings that Saint-Denis should be their destination at death. Among his symbolic persuasions, the use of Dagobertian imagery stood out as he utilized the mythical tales of the Merovingian king to unify the Capetians with the basilica.

In the early 12th century, in light of Philip's defection, Abbot Suger claimed that the bodies of the kings belonged to the abbey of Saint-Denis; a remarkable argument belied by the actual

record of royal burials in the basilica. Although the abbey in 1100 could claim more royal burials than any other single institution in the Frankish lands, Saint-Denis could not boast an absolute right as many former kings had been buried elsewhere. Among the Merovingians, Saint-Denis could certainly point toward the tomb of Dagobert and his immediate successor, Clovis II, who died in 657 or 658. Clovis' son Clothar III (d. 673) joined his father and grandfather in the basilica, but his brother Childeric (d. 675) and later heirs, like Theuderic III (d. 691) received alternate burials in proximity to other family members. Among the Carolingians, the burial record of Saint-Denis was similarly incomplete. Charlemagne died in 814, and received an ornate burial in the cathedral of Aachen. Louis the Pious was interred in Metz Cathedral in 840, despite his conspicuous dedication to Saint-Denis. The most important of the Carolingians placed in the Saint-Denis was Charles the Bald, whose generosity to the shrine garnered him the appellation of a royal founder of the monastery after his interment in 877. His son Louis II was buried in Compiege Abbey in 879; Louis' eldest son Louis III (d. 882) was buried in Saint-Denis as was his half-brother and successor Carloman II (d. 884). The last Carolingian kings found placement outside the abbey.

The reasons for the alternate burial sites for the late Carolingians was straight forward; after the deaths of Louis III and Carloman II, the ruling family of the Franks did not control the territory that included Saint-Denis.[129] The Robertian family, the progenitors of the later Capetian line of kings, expanded their territorial control over large sections of Frankish lands and, by the defeat of Charles III in 923, the Carolingians could not pretend to claim the abbey as their burial

[129] According to Koziol, the later Carolingian rulers did not control the area around Saint-Denis, which explains their absence in the nave of the basilica. "…it's not that Saint-Denis didn't want that monopoly; it's not that it wasn't considered the privileged resting place of the West Frankish dynasty. It's that the last Carolingians didn't control it and couldn't be buried there, forcing them to create an alternative memorial center at Saint-Remi." Geoffrey Koziol, "Is Robert I in hell? The diploma for Saint-Denis and the mind of a rebel king, *Early Medieval Europe*, (July 7, 2006), 248.

site. Thus among the Robertians, Odo (d. 898), who had succeeded Charles III, arranged to be placed near the sepulcher of Charles the Bald, and the grandson of Robert I, Hugh the Great, and his son Hugh Capet, also found a spot in the basilica. The choices made by Odo, Hugh the Great (d. 956), and Hugh Capet may have been connected with royal ambitions, but these individuals had been lay abbots of Saint-Denis, and the abbey had been their own traditional family sepulcher.

In the years between the death of Charles the Bald and the usurpation of Hugh Capet in 957, most of those claiming the abbacy of Saint-Denis were lay abbots and members of the royal household, if not kings themselves. The interdependence of the basilica and the kings was strengthened and confirmed in this process, and during the last decades of the Carolingian reign, Saint-Denis became a prize that conferred legitimacy on competing claims to rule. However, the wealth of the abbey cost the basilica its independence from the crown, as during this period, the lay abbots were often either local lords or kings themselves, who would use the treasure of Saint-Denis as part of their own royal funding. The most important example of the tug-of-war between rival rulers and the royal abbey occurred in 922 when Robert I (866-923 C.E.) claimed the throne and opposed Charles III (879-929 C.E.), who was among the last of the Carolingian heirs. During the hiatus in the action between the forces, Robert issued a diploma from Saint-Denis. As both lay abbot and heir to his brother Odo (859-898), who had briefly been king, Robert dedicated significant amounts of land and wealth to the abbey, and asserted that he did this both because he was the rightful king and because he believed that doing so would gain him the support of the saints.[130] His claim rested on the arguments made in previous generations – the claim that the saints of the abbey of Saint-Denis were the kingmakers, and he, Robert, would be made king by

[130] Recueil Robert Ier, ed. Dufour, no. 1, pp. 6-9 (25 Jan. 923, at Saint-Denis; also found in the Livre des privileges, AN LL 1156, fol. 54.) The diploma was edited and analyzed, see Rolf Grosse, "Remarques sur les cartulaires de Saint-Denis," *Les Cartulaires: actes de la table ronde organisée par l'Ecole nationale des chartes et le G.D.R. 121 du C.N.R.s.* (Paris, 1993), 279-89.

grace of their influence and power.[131] His conspicuous act of generosity highlighted his claim to rule, while also insisting that his generosity would compel the saints of the shrine to support his cause. In other words, Robert would be king because he gave extravagantly to the abbey – the act of a true king – and he gave to the abbey because that is what kings do.[132]

Despite military success, Robert I died in battle against the forces of Charles in 923. After this point, successors to the throne mimicked Robert and used the abbey and its income from the annual fairs and properties to support their reigns. When Hugh Capet, grandson of Robert I, took the throne in 987, he resigned as lay abbot and surrendered direct control over the abbey. However, his connection to the abbey of Saint-Denis was not lessened by this abdication; the abbey in which the bones of other kings and many of the Robertian house lay in Saint-Denis, and in 996, Hugh Capet added his body to those of his predecessors. His immediate heir, Robert II (972-1031), joined him in the nave, as did Robert's heir Henry I (1008-1060). The traditional resting spot of the Robertians coincided with the burial site for earlier lines of kings, as the Robertians also held the title of the dukes of Paris and controlled the Vexin, where Saint-Denis lay. Their traditional family mortuary site was the same as the site used by some of the Carolingians and the Merovingians, and in the decades after the death of Hugh Capet, the monks could take for granted their role as the guardians over the bodies of the kings.

The move to reinforce Saint-Denis as a site confirming royal legitimacy in symbolic form began in the twelfth century, just before the tenancy of Abbot Suger. Suger was determined to

[131] Koziol, "Is Robert I in Hell?", 247.

[132] In the charter issued by Robert, the would-be king states that, after his victory over Charles, he will be able to return the battle standard to Saint-Denis. Koziol, ""Is Robert I in Hell?: 247. He cites Karl Werner, "Gauzlin von Saint-Denis und die west-frankische Reichsteilung von Amiens (880), *Deutsches Archiv 35*, (1979), 395-462, reprinted in *Von Frankenreich zur Entfaltung Deutschlands und Frankreichs*, (Sigmaringen : Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1984), 157-224. On the dispute between Charles and Robert, see See Auguste Eckel, *Charles le Simple*, (Paris: E. Bouillon, 1899) and Yves Sassier, *Hughes Capet: naissance d'une dynastie*, (Paris: Fayard, 1987).

reconstruct the crumbling basilica and make it a more glorious place for the worship of the saints. In the 23rd year of his abbacy, according to Suger, the monks of the basilica begged him to write about the work he had embarked upon since succeeding Abbot Adam in 1121. In *De Administratione*, Suger fulfilled their request as he outlined how he took the squat, dark, and crumbling abbey church of Fulrad and expanded it, illuminated it, and embellished it according to the principals of his faith and the engineering possibilities newly available in the twelfth century.[133]

Yet even as he embarked upon this project, the Ile-de-France and the early Capetian kings struggled to create and maintain order, authority, and status. Robert II the Pious (996-1031) reportedly had to arrive at a convocation of nobles in an ox cart, while they rode on magnificent horses.[134] The offices that governed France were largely held by members of powerful noble families, who resisted efforts to bring them to heel. Even the papacy was largely unable to curb the will of the Franks; in 1092, Philip I abandoned his first wife for Bertrade of Monfort (c. 1070-1117), the countess of Anjou. In response, the papacy and the French clergy excommunicated him, giving support to his rivals for power. By his death in 1108, Philip had largely lost all authority to rule in the lands he theoretically governed, and his heir by his first wife, Berthe (c. 1055-1093), Louis VI (1081-1137), has been largely credited with restoring royal power.[135]

More importantly to the monks of Saint-Denis, Philip I jeopardized the importance of the basilica by designating St. Remi as his special patron, then failed to return the royal regalia which had traditionally been housed in Saint-Denis to be used during coronations in Rheims Cathedral. When Philip then resolved to be buried in Saint-Benoît-Sur-Loire, Abbot Adam organized an

[133] Suger, *de Administratione*, 24, ed. Leroy de la Marche, 186.
[134] Achille Luchaire, *Les Premiers Capetiens (987-1137) ; Histoire de France depuis les origines jusqu'à la Révolution*, ed. Ernest Lavisse (Paris : 1901), 2.
[135] There are many biographical accounts of Philip I and Louis VI. For this, I have consulted Luchaire, *Histoire de France depuis les origines jusqu'à la Révolution*, part 2, 144-79.

elaborate anniversary celebration in honor of Dagobert.[136] No certain dates can be established for the first performance of this ceremony, but it is possible to provide a range of dates. As Suger was known to have had a hand in writing the service, and he was the secretary and confessor to Abbot Adam around 1106, we must assume that the ceremony was written around this point. It was performed by Adam at least once before the death of Philip I in 1108, thus we must presume an implementation date between those two years. While Suger and Abbot Adam were not responsible for creating the mythologized account of the reign, death, and salvation of Dagobert, they were willing to utilize the biography written of the king more than a century previously. This anniversary celebration was later repeated by Abbot Suger, who wrote a liturgical ceremony designed for annual use in honor of the Merovingian king, drew up the act of foundation,[137] and performed the rituals before the death of Louis VI in 1137.[138] The service followed standard protocol for anniversary services performed in the abbey on behalf of abbots and saints, but this was the first such ceremony written in memory of a king.[139]

According to Suger, the service was first performed under the rule of Abbot Adam (d. 1122), yet the earliest surviving account was written by Suger. Abbot Suger was a noted and successful forger when the need suited him, and it is possible that when he dated the services as having begun under the auspices of his predecessor, he did so to provide a longer precedent for the ritual. Barroux noted the absence of several basic protocols, and the insertion of other elements

[136] Wright, "A Royal Tomb Program in the Reign of St. Louis," 160, particularly note 16. Robert Barroux provides the full Latin text of the ceremony in his article, "L'anniversaire de la mort de Dagobert à Saint- Denis," *Bulletin philologique et historique du comité e travaux historiques et scientifiques,* 1942-43, 131-151 and see 145.
[137] See Barroux, pp. 131-51, esp. 141, and Wright, p. 160. Also Brigitte Bedos-Rezak, "Suger and the symbolism of royal power: the seal of Louis VII", *Abbot Suger and Saint-Denis: a symposium*, trans. Gabrielle Spiegel, (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art), 1986, 98.
[138] Suger continued the practice of an anniversary for Dagobert through his reign, and added a second mass for the soul of Louis VI first performed before his death in 1137. As Suger had hoped, Louis dutifully took his place in the nave of the abbey church. Suger, *Oeuvre completes de Suger,* 326-31.
[139] Special ritual services for Charles the Bald began most likely under Suger. Until the anniversary mass for Dagobert, only saints and abbots warranted individualized ceremonies. See Barroux, 133.

typically not found in charters of this type, yet argues that the omissions and insertions are not significant enough to signal a forgery. Most notably, the document lacks some of the signatures one would expect to find in the text, and those that remain are irregular. Yet the charter can be found in the white cartulary of Saint-Denis precisely in the section where one would expect to find it – among other similar documents from the twelfth century pertaining to new rights, privileges, and dignities accorded to the abbey during the tenancies of Suger and Adam. Although the format of the diplomatics is not standard for the period, they are consistent with other documents known to have been written by Suger.[140] Barroux asserted that the omissions are more likely the result of scribal error than forgery. Furthermore, the date range of 1106-1108 is likely, as this was a critical period in the relationship between the abbey and the kings, and marks the beginning of the earnest efforts to use Dagobert as a means to sway the royal house.[141]

The charter for the commemoration of Dagobert outlined the items needed for the service and the ritual protocols. As established in the text, the ceremony was to be performed as if for Noel or Pentecost, and included the use of multiple chanters, deacons, an elaborate choir, and various richly decorated objects intended to illuminate and impress. The chief deacon then would read the hours of King Dagobert – a text since lost – while the bells tolled for the death of a king.[142]

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[140] Barroux notes similarities in the addresses found in a commemoration service instituted by Suger in honor of Charles the Bald, the most important Carolingian monarch buried in Saint-Denis. Although the first commemoration service was commissioned by Adam, Suger followed the pattern to create a service for Charles. These two monarchs were considered in the twelfth century and beyond as the founders of the abbey for their conspicuous generosity to the shrine and for the rights accorded the basilica in their reigns. Barroux, 133.

[141] Georgia Wright asserts that the original service of commemoration for Dagobert occurred in 1109, after the death of Philip I, and uses the work of Barroux to support this claim. Barroux, however, clearly argues that the service must have been commissioned and performed for the first time before the death of Philip, and proposes the date of 1106-1108 as most likely. His reasoning is similar to that sketched out above. He also cites the difficulty in composing such a text after 1109 and the death of Philip, as England and France had entered again into hostilities and the abbey became the site of international negotiations. For Wright's argument, see Wright, "A Royal Tomb Program in the Reign of St. Louis," 224. See also Barroux, 145-146.

[142] Barroux notes that the existence of a liturgy dedicated to a lay person is highly unusual at this time, and a strong indication of the importance of this ritual to the royal abbey. He furthermore asserted that the format of the ritual service, modeled on the two most important services in the liturgical calendar, indicate that this was a ceremony intended to be notable, impressive, and important. Ibid. Rasmussen concurs with Barroux, noting that Kings Dagobert

Afterward, the monks would perform mass, ending with the ritual censing of the grave of Dagobert. The service, which required the use of a number of splendid ceremonial objects,[143] demanded a great deal of expense; Suger determined that the income from the territory of Berneville should be used to cover the costs, which included an elaborate meal afterward for the monks, ecclesiastical visitors, and perhaps – though this remains unstated – royal witnesses.[144] A partial list of the inventory of Saint-Denis as established in the thirteenth century included a number of items used specifically for the service for the dead performed on behalf of both Dagobert and Charles the Bald.[145] Specific attire, symbolic items, and the use of designated liturgies had all been set aside to commemorate the two founders of the abbey, and these services would have drawn a sizeable number of people to the abbey as witnesses.

From the details listed in the establishment charter, the anniversary of Dagobert's death became a method in which the monks asserted the primacy of this abbey to the Capetians in the

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and Louis VI both received ceremonies which including the reading of their vitae, "…in which they are celebrated as heroes or canonized saints, a rare occurrence in liturgical history." see Niels Krogh Rasmussen, O.P., "The Liturgy at Saint-Denis: A Preliminary Study," *Abbot Suger and Saint-Denis: A Symposium*, ed. Paula Lieber Gerson, (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art), 1986, 44.

[143] The text is not clear on whether the objects designated for use in the service were already held by the abbey or required the creation or purchase. If they were already part of the impressive collection of liturgical vessels and objects owned by the monastery, the texts fail to indicate when and how they would have been used. Barroux, pp. 145-146; also Rasmussen, 44.

[144] Before he became abbot of Saint-Denis, Suger had been made provost over the territory of Berneville, which was held by the abbey at this time. According to his *Institutiones*, Suger had managed to increase its value while he managed the region. Barroux, 144; Bournazel notes that Suger received control over Berneville early in his monastic career, adding the prévôté of Toury to it soon after. When asked to defend Toury against incursions by Hugh, lord of Le Puiser, Suger ordered the construction of a tower and organized a local militia. Thus Saint-Denis, despite its principal mission as a monastic center and royal basilica, received service from local vassals and commanded a small military order. Eric Bournazel, "Suger and the Capetians," *Abbot Suger and Saint-Denis: A Symposium*, ed. Paula Lieber Gerson, (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art), 1986, 55.

[145] The *cappa nigra*, a cope worn by an almoner, priestly acolytes, the abbot, and sometimes for those singing the responsory, was listed in the ordinary of Saint-Denis in 1234 as set aside for the performance of services for the souls of Dagobert (January 19) and Charles the Bald (October 6th), the two founders of the abbey. During processions for the Rogation Days before the Ascension and for the Greater Litany, the ordinary specified the use of an item called the *Lance Regis Dagoberti*, which otherwise is not described. The lancea should not be confused with the scepter de Dagobert, which is used for different ceremonies. See Edward Foley, "The treasure of St.-Denis according to the inventory of 1234," *The Review Benedictine*, Vol. 105, issue 1-2, (Paris: Bibliothèque Mazarin, 1995), 175. These items would continue to keep the memory of the founder kings alive and associated with the abbey.

face of the more popular and current upstarts. Novelty, although appealing in all cultures, could be construed as potentially dangerous and even damning, and the monks under Adam, Suger, and their successors, sought to impress upon the Capetians the perils of their choices. Precedents possessed the reverberating power of tradition, particularly in the middle ages, and as the sacred chants filled the abbey church, the monks asserted their right to preferment above all foundations, particularly as the site for royal burials. In regards to the propaganda campaigns waged by the Capetians of the thirteenth century, Joseph Stayer would argue that the kings would have to "invent the France which they claimed to rule… they had to expand the idea of France to make it match the expansion of their own power."[146] This expansion could only have happened once the royal abbey - centerpiece of their assertions of a sacred rule - had established itself as the site of national salvation, one which offered both devotion to antiquity and authenticity while expanding the ideals regarding sacred art and architecture.

The anniversary mass for Dagobert demonstrated several essential aspects in the relationship between kings and the royal abbey. The first is that after the early twelfth century, the monks had to fear the possibility that newer establishments might eclipse their claims to primacy. Indeed, when Louis VII died in 1180, he ordered that he be buried in the Cistercian abbey of Barbeaux, an institution he had founded and which could promise him the kind of ecclesiastical concern for the state of his soul which the monks of Saint-Denis did not emphasize. Barbeaux lured him when they offered the king the right to establish an elaborate and costly

[146] Joseph Strayer, "France: the Holy Land, the Chosen People and the Most Christian King," Theodore K. Rabb and Jerrold E. Siegel, ed., *Action and Conviction in Early Modern Europe: Essays in Honor of E.R. Harbison*, (Princeton: 1966), p. 5.

tomb.[147] In contrast, Saint-Denis under Suger and his immediate successors refused to move the bodies of those buried beneath the floor, and the monks seem to have lost track of a number of their royal inmates.[148] Although Suger did place an engraved marker over the grave of Louis VI,[149] the brief history of the Frankish kings written by the monk Rigord in the early 13th century only provides precise locations for Pepin the Short, Charles the Bald, Dagobert, and Charles Martel. All these individuals and their burial sites were listed in earlier accounts, and no names of additional kings were included in Rigord's work.[150]

The second important issue faced by Suger and his successors was the extraordinary number of burials in the abbey, restricting by necessity the placement of more kings. The abbey nave during the abbacy of Suger did not undergo expansion and restoration, though clearly he had intended that it should. As a result, much of the nave was honeycombed with burials beneath the stones of the floor, and included the bodies of kings, royal family members, abbots, and bishops. The greatest concentration of burials centered on the matutinal altar, situated midway down the nave from the main altar, and it was here that the monks buried Charles the Bald in 877. Later work in the abbey seems to indicate that this section of the nave, more so than any other, attracted more lay burials than the rest of the basilica. The burials would have included not only the kings

[147] On the burial of Louis VII, see Victor Mortet and Paul Deschamps, *Recueil des textes relatifs à l'histoire de l'architecture*, II, Paris, 1929, 34. Wright notes that the monks of Barbeaux, a Cistercian abbey, limited burial to only kings, queens, and bishops, which made this site an exclusive location attractive to the kings. Although Suger had been regent to Louis VII, the king was added to the necrology of the entire order – obliging on-going masses for his soul – once he had been interred in Barbeaux. This sort of attention to the spiritual needs and egos of the kings was not part of the service offered in Saint-Denis at this time. See Wright, "A Royal Tomb Program," 231.

[148] When Louis VI requested interment between the matutinal and main altars, the monks were chagrined to realize the area was too full to permit accommodate him. When they attempted to dig before the matutinal altar, they again found too many bodies in the way, and Suger notes they even accidentally disinterred Carloman. Against all hope, Suger recorded they found just enough room in the spot originally chosen and placed Louis there. *Oeuvres complètes de Suger*, 47f. Event also noted in Wright, 229.

[149] Ferdinand de Guilhermy, *Inscriptions de la France du Ve au XVIIIe siècle: Ancien diocèse de Paris*, II, Paris, 1873, 149.

[150] Soissons, Bibl. Mun. 129, fols. 130r-137v. For the summary, see Delaborde, "Notice sur les ouvrages et sur la vie de Rigord," *Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Chartes*, XLV, 1884, 599-605.

themselves, but wives and royal children who died young, along with important abbots and members of local noble families. This concentration of the dead caused the monks concern; Rigord described the abbey's attempt to bury Louis VI near Charles' burial site, only to accidentally dig up Charles Martel instead.[151] In his biography of Louis, Suger stated clearly that "both law and custom forbade the moving of a king's body," so at the king's death, the monks managed to find a spot just large enough to bury Louis near the grave of Charles the Bald without moving any previous tenants.[152]

Since Suger resisted the translation of bodies and the imposition of raised tombs inside the royal abbey,[153] the monks feared the loss of more prestigious burials from future kings. Failure to maintain a clear sense of location for the royal dead would not have made the prospect of burial in the abbey appealing to kings who were increasingly hungry for adulation and reassurance. Among those identifiable and known to the monks, the resting place of Dagobert stands out. Clearly from the descriptions of the commemoration ceremony performed in his honor, the monks never lost his grave site.

When Suger began to draw up plans to tear down the western portals of Saint-Denis and rebuild them, he encountered an unexpected degree of resistance from the monks of the royal basilica. He noted in *de Administratione* that the monks of the abbey believed that, in tearing down that section of the nave, Suger would be destroying the last vestiges of the church built by Dagobert and consecrated by Christ himself, thus committing an act of sacrilege.[154] The sacrilege imputed to him by the monks didn't stop his construction plans. When Suger finished with the work on the

[151] Ibid.
[152] *Oeuvres complètes de Suger*, p. 326-31; also Peter Lex, *Das kirchliche Begrabnisrecht*, Regensburg, 1904, 59f ; cited in Georgia Wright, "A Royal Tomb Program," 230, note 18.
[153] Wright, "A Royal Tomb Program," 229.
[154] Suger, *de Administratione*, 29, Lecoy de la Marche, ed., *Œuvres*, 191 ; Panovsky, ed., Suger, 50-51.

western portals, he tore down eastern section of the nave, anticipating that the expansion and decoration of the abbey he had already completed would make the remainder of the basilica look old, dark, and outdated. He had planned to renovate the nave of Saint-Denis, but his death in 1155 put the remainder of the construction plans on hold until the 13th century. The resistence he encountered as he planned to demolish the old walls of the shrine were a brief sticking point, so in order to put the qualms of the monks at the abbey and, perhaps, the royal family, to rest, Suger embarked upon a secondary program; he engaged in deliberate and thoughtful use and manipulation of legends and artistic symbols to promote his goals.

In *de Administratione*, Suger addressed the existence of the mystical consecration of Saint-Denis, and his reference to this myth was the earliest written evidence of the story. He wrote of the consecration event as if his anticipated readers would have known the story themselves; the fame of the abbey at that time may well have made such a myth a commonly told tale of the basilica both in the surrounding region and as far as the king's court. The story of the miraculous consecration did not appear either in the *Gesta Dagoberti regis* or the *Miracula Sancti Dionysii* of the 9th century. The earliest manuscripts that included the story were copies of the twelfth century story; lacking the original, we can only guess at the oral account.[155]

Without the twelfth century manuscripts, two separate version of the tale have survived, with multiple copies of one in the archives. The outline of the story from these documents is roughly the same, although some variation in word choices and stress exists. A leper, afflicted with a skin disease called "elephantitis" in the documents, either bribed or begged the watchmen

[155]Charles Liebman provided edited copies of two versions of the tale: the first can be found in Paris, BnF ms. lat. 976 which appears in the *Vitae et actus Sancti Dionysii* of the thirteenth century. The second version of the consecration of Saint-Denis can be found in four copies of a lost earlier manuscript dated to the thirteenth century; these are copies of the 12th century documents, not the originals. These manuscripts are catalogued as: Paris, BnF ms lat. 5345, fo 21v – 23v ; Paris, BnF ms. lat. 12710 fo 68v-69v; Paris, BnF n.a. ms. lat. 1509 249b – 260a ; and Paris, Bibl. de l'Arsenal, ms. 1030, fo 27r – 28v. Liebman, "La Consécration Légendaire de la Basilique de Saint-Denis," *Le Moyen Age*, (Bruxelles, De Boeck & Larcier), 1935, 253-264.

of the basilica to allow him to spend the night in the shrine. The date was given as the sixth kalends of March, the night before the official consecration of the new basilica in the reign of Dagobert. The unnamed leper found a place in the shrine and curled up to sleep; the watchmen remained outside the building. In the night, as if in a dream, he awakened to find the shrine filled with an indescribable light, *ut multorum cereorum splendor illi jubari cederet, utpote quam sol divinus suo jubare illustrasset*[156]. From his hiding spot, the leper watched to see Christ, with an entourage of the apostles Peter and Paul, along with the saints Denis, Rusticus and Eleutherius, who all came through a window near the altar. Christ performed the service of the Eucharist, and the offices of the dedication of the church, marking the wall with the sign of the cross. When he finished the rituals, he turned to the leper and told him to go to the bishops and the king to tell them the shrine had been blessed. The leper, who showed little fear during this meeting (he was described as "undaunted"), asked Jesus why they should believe him, a poor man and a deformed one. Christ then placed hands on the face of the man, wrapped hands around his head, and pulls the deformed skin completely off his body. The flesh, thus removed, he then placed on a rock nearby, and Jesus told the man to go and show them this, if the court should doubt.

In the remainder of the tale, the leper persuaded the watchmen outside to take him to the king, and Dagobert agreed to follow the leper back to the shrine. The removed skin had been placed on a rock, and the author described it as retaining entirely the shape and features of the leper. "Indeed, in order that the truth might be disclosed, the outlines of the members of his head, I say thus of his ears and of the eyelids, of the mouth and of the nostrils, they remained withered in place."[157] The court marveled, even the king, who had not been inclined to believe a poor

[156] *Vitae et actus sancti Dionysii*, Paris, BNF ms. lat. 976, ed. Charles Liebman, "La consécration légendaire," 260.
[157] *Ut enim verum fatear, liniamenta menbrorum capitis : aurium, dico, et palpebrarum, oris et narium, ita suis in locis manebant inmarcida….* Ibid.

pilgrim. The skin of the leper, although soft, had hardened into a hollow shell, maintaining the shape and form of the head. Having heard the story of the pilgrim, the bishops and the king became satisfied that the dedication ritual had been performed, and the service that had been scheduled for later that day was cancelled.

The miraculous dedication of the shrine shares some characteristics with one of the events recorded in Hilduin's version of the life of St.-Denis, the *post-beatam et salutaferam.*[158] In the passion of the saint, after the bishop and his companions had been arrested and imprisoned, they were visited by Christ who performed the Eucharist service for them the night before their executions. While the mystical consecration story may have been based in part upon this section of the *post beatam*, by Suger's abbacy, it had taken on a new form.

The consecration of the shrine of Saint-Denis became one of the high festival days of the basilica, and its date of Feb. 24th marked the beginning of the winter fair known as the Foire de la Saint-Mathias.[159] All the Dionysian fairs coincided with significant dates in the calendar of the shrine. The Foire de la Saint-Denis, established by Dagobert, began on October 9th continued for 7 weeks until Nov. 30th.[160] Charles the Bald has been given credit for founding The Foire du Lendit, which began the second week of June after the Feast of Saint John.[161] The least important of the three fairs is the Foire de la Saint-Mathias, which began on the date of the consecration of the basilica. The association of the miraculous consecration with the winter fair would not have been accidental. The Foire de la Saint Mathias was the least lucrative and celebrated of the three,

[158] See the discussion of the *Post beatam* of Hilduin in chapter 1.
[159] For analysis of the documents pertaining to the Dionysian fairs, see Levillain, *Bibliothèque de L'Ecole des chartes,* 91, (1930), 7-9.
[160] The fair in late fall held at Saint-Denis received some description in the *Gesta Dagoberti regis*, where the festival became a place for winter goods to be traded, such as wine and honey in exchange for furs and cloth. The abbey took a percentage of all sales during the 7 week fair, income that would not be taxable or available for use by the bishop once the abbey received its charter of independence. See above, chapter 1, note. 33.
[161] Despite the tradition of the fair, Levillain has demonstrated that the fair only dates from the end of the ninth century. See Levillain, *Bibliothèque de L'Ecole des Chartes*, 91, (1930), 11, 14.

but as it corresponded with the traditional date of consecration, pilgrim traffic would have been somewhat driven by the patronage of the fair and vice versa. Although the inception of the two larger fairs – the Foire de St.-Denis and the Foire de Lendit – have been established as having begun in the 7th and 9th centuries respectively, no documentations on the first year for the Foire de la St. Mathias have been preserved. However, what can be determined is that the date of the consecration of the basilica was not the dedication date for the shrine of Dagobert's construction, but is the date when Fulrad held the service to consecrate the shrine in 775.[162] The *terminus post quam* for the establishment of the fair must be set at that date; Liebman argues that the fair most likely began in the eleventh century.[163]

The original version of the mystical consecration may have correctly attributed the event to the reign of Charlemagne, who attended the dedication ceremony in 775, but clearly by the abbacy of Suger, the miracle had been moved back in time to the reign of Dagobert. By connecting this event to the original founder of the monastery, the monks linked the construction of the basilica to its most ancient origins, adding a level of antiquity and authenticity to the event, which must have resulted in a greater degree of enthusiasm for the anniversary and for the fair.

For Suger, though, the story became an impediment to his plans. The account of the 13th century notes that Christ not only performed the ceremony of Eucharist that night, but blessed the building when he laid hands upon the stones and marked them with a sign of the cross. This laying on of hands carried more weight, particularly when performed by Christ himself, than a mere

[162] Liebman states that the date associated with the translation of the relics from the old shrine of St. Genevieve to the new basilica constructed by Dagobert had been established in the *Gesta Dagobert regis* and other documents as falling on April 22nd. Liebman, "Le consécration légendaire," 255, see note 1. Liebman cites Levillain, who argued that the story of the miraculous consecration "d'attiser la ferveur des foules qui assistaient à la fêtes commémorative de la dédicace," Levillain, *Etudes sur l'abbaye de Saint-Denis à l'époque merovingienne, Les documents d'histoire économique,* in *Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des chartes,* t, XCI (1930), 9.

[163] Liebman, "Le consécration légendaire," see note 1, p. 254 ; also Levillain, *Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Chartes,* 91, (1930), 8, no. 2.

consecration ceremony. The section of the basilica believed, in the mid-twelfth century, to have been established by Dagobert and thus blessed by Christ, was located on the east end of the nave, close to the altar where the holy relics would have been housed. Although Suger removed the western portal and the eastern nave between 1122 and 1151, archaeological research into the history of the building seem to indicate that he left some of the older stretches of the east end intact, perhaps only shoring them up for stability. When Suger finally moved to rebuild the eastern apse, he wisely chose to not replace the walls he believed established by Dagobert, but to enclose them and incorporate them.[164] (fig. 1) The 11th century monks who claimed the abbey had been blessed by Christ himself constructed an argument that harkens to the Christian tradition of apostolic succession, one in which the bishops, the popes, and all members of ecclesiastical hierarchy, could claim authority through an unbroken line of direct contact with Jesus. This is not, however, quite the same assertion, as the mystical consecration of the shrine connects the abbey directly with Christ. The physical presence of the Savior in the shrine had been emphasized – Jesus was there in the body, not as a non-corporeal vision. In this miracle tale, Christ first performed the Eucharist service, an act emphasizing the literal imposition of the body and blood of Jesus in the wafer and wine – a feat which, although first recorded in the *Post beatam et salutaferam* of Hilduin, still strikes one as odd and contradictory. After Eucharist, he blessed the shrine using his very corporeal hands, touching the walls, inscribing them with the sign of the cross. With the leper, he first gently touches the face of the deformed man, then encircles his head with his hands before lifting off the diseased skin. All these details emphasize the physicality of the Christ. According to Nichols, "If the church itself underwent the laying on of the hands by Christ, it is not a case of apostolic succession – which implies distance and mediation – but of benefitting from direct contact with

[164] Stephen Nichols, "Sense of the Imagination: Pseudo-Dionysius, Suger, and St.-Denis," *Romanistisches Jahrbuch* 61, 226-228.

Christ, which places the church on the same footing as the disciples themselves."[165] Men might claim an increasingly indirect physical association with Christ, who instilled his authority into his apostles before sending them into the world; Saint-Denis, however, received a direct blessing and consecration by Christ, and the proof came from the testimony of the least regarded and lowest of witnesses.

In order to persuade the brothers of the church to accept the prospect of demolition in the oldest sections of the nave, Suger may have sought another way to incorporate Dagobertian imagery into the basilica as a form of appeasement. This move would also be a symbolic link between the abbey church and the royal family, representing the basilica's argument that the physical presence of the kings belonged in Saint-Denis, whether dead or alive. However, Abbot Suger rejected all requests to move the bodies of previous kings to accommodate new burials, arguing that to do so would be against law and custom,[166] and he rejected the notion of permitting more elaborate and visible tombs for the kings. In part, these rules established by the venerable abbot may have contributed to the decision of Louis VII to be buried outside the abbey.

At some point in the 12th century, the abbey established a statue of Dagobert to be placed in the nave.[167] The statue may have been commissioned by Suger before his death, or it may have been an addition to the nave by Suger's successor. The statue, once believed lost with many other royal images, was rediscovered in a storage chamber of the abbey. (fig 2) That fragment has been positively identified as the same as the statue sketched by Montfaucon in the early eighteenth century.[168] (fig 3) In the image by Montfaucon, a bearded king, dressed in flowing robes, has been

[165] Nichols, "Sense of the Imagination," 228.
[166] *Oeuvres complètes de Suger*, 148.
[167] Wright argues that the twelfth century statue, which she dates to approximately 1160, must have originally rested in a place of great prominence. Wright, 229.
[168] Montfaucon is the best source for representations of statuary and artwork depicting the royal lines of France which still existed in his time. In his description of the statue and its placement in the abbey, Montfaucon wrote that it was "près d la porte en entrant à gauche, u on l'a appliquée contre le mur, mas fort élevée; apparemment pour la garantir

seated with his feet resting upon lions – a standard symbol of power and rule. The drawing by Montfaucon, though stylized in a manner common to the eighteenth century, offered the image of a king seated in state. Positive identification of the sculpture fragment as being the same as the statue sketched by Montfaucon depends in large part upon the line of cloak and robe in both representations. Note in the sketch the rounded collar of the king which rests on his right shoulder, then depends gracefully down his back before flowing into his lap. On his left, the cloak covers roughly half his torso, bordered by a broad band of fabric, perhaps leather attached with a broach. The folds of the cloak fall diagonally across his breast, only to rise up at the far side toward his shoulder. In the fragment, the arms of the king seem to have been truncated just past the shoulders, as the sketch shows Dagobert with arms stretched out to either side, perhaps resting upon the arms of a throne in a manner which seems both formal and natural. Montfaucon neglected to extend his image to include hands, perhaps because they no longer were attached to the statue, but before their loss, they were likely holding symbols of royal power. Apparently, the statue of Dagobert placed inside the abbey had been carved in the round, which indicates that it would have originally rested in a place of honor far enough away from any wall to justify the carving of the king's back. In Montfaucon's image, the line of the king's cloak on the right, as it slides behind his shoulder only to reappear upon his lap, would seem to be a sign of that three dimensional quality. The complexity of Dagobert's image would have necessitated a great deal of monetary outlay by the monks, who then placed the statue in a position where it could be seen. By the time Montfaucon collected his sketches, he noted that the king's statue had been placed on a high pedestal, out of reach, and against a wall. He supposed that this might be as the piece had suffered damage in the

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des accidens qui l'avoient déjà fort endommagée." Bernard de Montfaucon, *A collection of regal and ecclesiastical antiquities of France, in upwards of three hundred large folio copper plates. ... representing ... the kings, queens*, (London : printed for W. Innys; J. and P. Knapton; and R. Manby and H. S. Cox), 1750,162.

past,[169] another indication that the statue may once have rested in a position of prominence, perhaps near the pilgrims' path.

In her analysis of this piece, Georgia Wright argued that this statue, which she dated to roughly 1160, may have been commissioned around the time the monks demolished the last vestige of the abbey attributed to Dagobert's construction. This reconstruction, begun by Suger, would not be completed in his lifetime, and Wright did not note whether she believed the sculpture of Dagobert to have been ordered by Suger or by his successor.[170] In her view, this work would have been an act of recompense, an artistic apology toward the king who had ordered the abbey's construction and whose work was being supplanted by a new architectural style. According to Anne Lombard-Jourdan, the statue of Dagobert was meant to invoke the symbol of the founder of the abbey – a role which Dagobert did not merit but had been awarded in the documents constructed by Hilduin and Hincmar. She claims that "A place was made near the door which would connect the interior of the cloister with the southern arm of the transept. Thus, when the monks entered the church, passing the statue of their founder would be mandatory."[171] In grateful memorial to the king who founded the abbey, and as recompense for demolishing part of the building credited to him, Suger and the monks commissioned the statue of the king for placement near the door used by monks as they entered the nave.[172] It might serve in that capacity as a reminder to the monks to pray for their founder. In dating the large and early statue of Dagobert to the abbacy of Suger, Lombard-Jordan referenced two similar statues of seated kings known to

[169] Montfaucon, 162.
[170] In his text outlining the work on the abbey, Suger did not mention the commissioning of a statue of Dagobert. This is not presumptive proof that he had no hand in the work, but as the piece would have been expensive, one could presume that, had he envisioned this work, he would have taken credit for it.
[171] *Il la fit placer près de la porte qui faisait communiquer l'intérieur du cloitre avec le bras méridional du transept. Ainsi, lorsque les moines se rendaient à l'eglise, ils passaient obligatoirement devant la statue de leur « fondateur. »* Anne Lombard Jourdan, "L'invention du « roi fondateur » à paris au XIIe siècle : de l'obligation morale au thème sculptural," *Bibliothèque d l'école des chartes*, Vol. 155, No. 2 (June-December 1997), 6
[172] Ibid, 7.

have been commissioned by the archbishop of Reims, Eudes, who reigned in the abbey from 1118-1151, his death corresponding to the same year as Suger's.[173] These two statues are of Louis IV d'Outremer (936-954) and Lothaire (954-986), and although smaller than the statue of Dagobert, reflect many of the elements found in the Saint-Denis sculpture.[174] As the dating of those statues has been established through documentation maintained in Reims, stylistic likenesses between the sculpture of Dagobert and Louis IV and Lothaire may point toward an earlier date of commissioning for the Dionysian statue.

Before considering possible meanings of this sculpture, one must consider a companion piece alleged to be Dagobert which sat inside the cloister. (fig. 4) This later sculpture of Dagobert was commissioned for the abbey around the time of the last major building campaign in 1245, but destroyed at some point after Montfaucon sketched it.[175] Dagobert sat on a throne with lions below his feet. His hair style, crown, and robe all correspond to royal images more easily datable, such as those of Louis IX and his immediate family. To either side, he has gained companion figures, most likely intended to represent his sons, Clovis II and Siegebert III. These two additional figures were smaller than Dagobert and sculpted as young men with beards. This was Dagobert as father, both of the nation and of a continuing line of kings. The statue stressed lineal continuity and fertility. When sketched by Montfaucon, this piece retained hands, and the king held both scepter and glove, symbols of mastery and rule.

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[173] Lombard Jourdan, "L'invention," 7 See Montfaucon, *Les monumens…* t. I, pl. XXX, fig. 4 and 5; Anne Prache, *Les monuments funéraires des Carolingiens élevés à Saint-Rémi de Reims au XIIe siècle,* in *Revue de l'art,* no. C. 1969, p. 68-76 ; also Willibald Sauerlander believed that these two statues were constructed in the Ile-de-France between 1140-1150 ; *La sculpture gothique en France, 1140-1270,* trad. Par J. Chavy, Paris, 1972, 76.

[174] See Lombard Jourdan, "L'invention," for a more thorough analysis of the connection between the statues of Lothair and Louis IV.

[175] Wright dates this piece to roughly 1245 based upon an analysis of the garments, the placement of the figures, the hairstyle, and other features which show a similarity to pieces found in other locations and dated to roughly this period. Wright, 229.

The statues of the mid-twelfth and thirteenth centuries lacked notable symbols of piety or penance in the representations of the king. Dagobert held the symbols of power in both representations, not those of devotion, and the postures of the king are anything but humble. These statues invoked the symbol of king, not simply a specific king. Although Dagobert was the mythical founder of the abbey, he was invoked here less as a pious king and more as the representative of sanctified rule. Additionally, during the reign of the Merovingians, including that of Dagobert, the kings accepted the oaths of fealty inside the abbey, seated in front of the altar, in a ritual which blended the secular and the sacred while determining the continued prosperity of the Frankish lands.[176] To ensure that the Capetians fully grasped the necessity of using Saint-Denis as the holy seat of their temporal power, and to remind them of the historic ties between kings and abbey, Suger reinforced this point during his tenancy as regent over the young Louis VII.

The later image, that of Dagobert and his sons, had been placed within the cloister of Saint-Denis. Although destroyed in 1751, the cloister was during its use a repository for some of the more beautiful sculptures housed within Saint-Denis. Fragments of this building which have been preserved include the only still intact column sculpture of an unknown king from the basilica, and elaborately carved Corinthian capitals. The image of Dagobert and his sons is unique; no source on the cloisters of Saint-Denis mentioned the existence of a free-standing statue of any other royal individual in that site. The sketch by Montfaucon is the only source for this piece of artwork, and he was not clear upon the placement of the image when he sketched it, nor did he include its dimensions or materials.[177] The sketch did not clearly indicate whether the statue was a bas relief

[176] See below for Suger's claim of this ritual during the reigns of Merovingian and Carolingian kings.
[177] In the text accompanying his drawings, his only concession to these details is that the statue was placed "in the newest section of the cloister of Saint-Denis," while the kings' columns could be found in the oldest section. These

or a free-standing piece; there is no indication of whether, like the 12th century piece, Dagobert was carved in the round or whether this statue was intended to rest flush against the wall. In his description of the statue, Montfaucon stated that the image of Clovis II lacked a beard, as the future king of Neustria would have been a child at the death of his father; Sigebert, who was still young but older than Clovis, was sculpted with a beard.[178] Without details on its size and placement, speculation on its prominence in the cloister is impossible, yet its placement there must have been significant to the monks.[179] If Wright was correct in dating this artwork to the mid-thirteenth century, as the attire of the figures would seem to support, the commissioning of the statue would have occurred during the period of royal tomb construction and the widening of the nave in the abbey church. This period corresponded with the decades in which the Capetian kings finally received that which they wished; a prominent and visible presence in the church in the form of above-ground tombs.[180]

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columns, unlike the image of Dagobert, were, according to Montfaucon, flat and lacking in detail. See Montfaucon, 163.

[178]" Clovis encore enfant losque son pere mourut, est represente sans barbe, mais avec toute sa talle. Sigebert fort jeune, mais plus age que Clovis, a de la barbe." Montfaucon, 164.

[179] This point is still largely unclear. Cloisters constructed or decorated in the twelfth or thirteenth centuries could be plain, as in the case of Cistercian monasteries, or ornate, as seems to have been true for Saint-Denis. Some images in medieval cloisters could be intended to instruct, as was the case in those places adopting images of the Fasting St. Nicholas, who, as an infant, turned away from his mother's breast regularly. Such injunctions could be a reminder to the brothers to adopt a similarly ascetic sensibility. Other images could indicate the general purpose of that section of the cloister, as in the case of pillars carved near the door to the refectory which demonstrate monks receiving discipline, or representations of Mary washing the feet of Christ found near wells. Given the idiosyncratic nature of cloister imagery, it would be difficult to reconstruct the meaning placed upon the carving of Merovingian kings upon the pillars of the cloister, unless these were meant to remind the monks of the important support the abbey received from the first line of kings. Montfaucon did not mention other images of royalty in the cloister, only the Merovingian. See Leon Pressouyre, "St. Bernard to St. Francis: Monastic Ideals and Iconographic Programs in the Cloister," *Gesta*, Vol. 12, No. ½ (1973), 71-92.

[180] The cloister of Saint-Denis was renowned as among the most beautiful of such buildings in France, yet little of it survives. In the Musée des Moyen Ages in Paris, a single free-standing king's pillar believed to have once occupied a place in the cloisters remains. Montfaucon included a few sketches of the capitals of the pillars in the cloister, which were ornate and connected to other pillars by carved traceries. The drawing of the Dagobert statue is the only other piece remaining, and Montfaucon did not indicate whether this was an isolated or unusual piece or one of many. Montfaucon does describe kings' columns in the oldest section of the cloister of Saint-Denis, similar to that surviving in the Cluny museum. A number of these kings show a nimbus around their heads, a feature not found on ether statue of Dagobert. Montfaucon, 58

The statues of Dagobert which eventually graced the nave of Saint-Denis and its cloister were never merely tools of propaganda. These statues, along with the images of other kings constructed between 1150 and 1250, served a higher purpose. Panofsky has famously and controversially argued that Suger's vision encompassed specific neo-Platonist theories of light and illumination which turned his new architecture into a material reflection of a greater and divine reality to come.[181] Grover Zinn argued that Suger was influenced by the theology of Hugh of St. Victoire (c. 1096-1141)) who wrote extensively on the use of the material to achieve immaterial truths. The created world, in Victorine theology, was a poor reflection of the greater truth, and flawed human minds only see it dimly. He asserted that Suger adopted the idea that Truth can be approached when manifested in the material, just as Christ himself clothed himself in physical form to demonstrate to mortal beings the truth of eternal life.[182] Other scholars asserted that Suger's theoretical argument on light owed more to pseudo-Augustinian ideas than to Dionysian.[183] While an absolute determination of which form of neo-Platonic thought was most influential for Suger cannot be made, and is likely not a relevant point for Suger's work, his own writings made clear that he believed his work in the reconstruction of Saint-Denis served a purpose more profound than art for art's sake. Suger wrote,

> …when – out of my delight in the beauty of the house of God – the loveliness of the many-colored gems has called me away from external cares, and worthy meditation has induced me to reflect, transferring that which is material to that which is immaterial, on the diversity of the sacred virtues: then it seems to me that I see myself dwelling . . . in some strange region of the universe which neither exists entirely in the slime of the earth nor entirely in the purity of Heaven; and that, by the grace of God, I can be transported from this inferior to that higher world in an anagogical manner. [184]

[181] Suger, *Abbot Suger on the Abbey Church of St.-Denis and its art treasures* / edited, translated, and annotated by Erwin Panofsky, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press), 1979, xiii.
[182]Grover Zinn, "Abbot Suger and Saint-Denis; theology and the Pseudo-Dionysian tradition / a symposium", (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1986), 33-40.
[183] See Conrad Rudolf, *Artistic Change at St.-Denis: Abbot Suger's Program and the Early Twentieth Century Controversy over Art*, (Princeton University Press), 1990.
[184]. Suger, *Abbot Suger on the Abbey Church of St.-Denis and its art treasures* / xiii.

Art and architecture should communicate, inspire, even provide a glimpse into that reality that waits beyond the veil, and Suger was aware of how his design would be admired and replicated. Yet we cannot argue on Suger's behalf that he believed that the interior of Saint-Denis was a model in miniature of the divine realm; in his work analyzing gothic architecture and theology, Eric Inglis wrote, "Suger's analysis of beauty's effects relies on an Augustinian Neo-Platonism, according to which physical form emanates from a higher spiritual form; it is this connection which permits anagogical movement from the material to the immaterial plane."[185] Herbert Kessler elaborated on this connection between the material expression of the artist and perceptions of the immaterial plane. He argued that images, in so much as they captured the essential beauty and order of heaven itself, then expressed the truth at the core of the divine promise. Artistic works therefore were capable of "…mediating between this world and the next," and could "…provide a privileged means of communication with personages believed to be living in a world beyond the sensory one."[186] These works of human hands were inspired and directed by the Holy Spirit, and were therefore charged with the abilities needed for "…stirring the emotions, speaking, converting, and healing."[187] Thus, to Suger, the beauty of the construct could inspire and provide a tantalizing glimpse of the reality to come.[188] Artifacts could also change the hearts and minds of those still on the material plane, if they were directed as God and his agents most desired.

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[185] Eric Inglis, "Gothic Architecture and a Scholastic: Jean de Jandun's 'Tractatus de laudibus Parisius' (1323)", *Gesta*, vol. 42, no. 1, 2003, 72.
[186] Herbert Kessler, "On the state of medieval art," *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 70, no. 2, 1988, 184.
[187] Ibid.
[188] Peter Kidson, however, argued in opposition to the Panofsky theory of Suger, asserting that the abbot – although an able administrator, gifted self-promoter, and skilled patron of the arts – was not necessarily a theologian. He would have certainly been familiar with the works of the Pseudo-Dionysius, whose influence Panofsky determined in his landmark analyses, but to claim that Suger wished to translate the neo-Platonic Dionysian ideals into architecture would require a considerable stretch. Rather, Kidson attributes the architectural beauty of Suger's Saint-Denis to the skill, imagination, and engineering of an unknown artisan, who would have taken the vision of Suger and translated it into physical reality. According to Kidson, were Suger to have wished to invest Dionysian symbolism and theology into the architecture of his abbey church, signs of that project would appear in his writing on the subject; namely in his *De administratione*. It is here that the passage quoted above, in which Suger borrows terminology from the

Suger also commissioned the carvings of kings on what is now the Valois portal on the western door to the abbey church. In this series, the kings approached the saints enthroned above the door, each held items intended to designate their identity, and did so in a manner meant to convey their humility and duty to St.-Denis and his companions. Among the limited number of illustrious rulers – Charlemagne, Charles the Bald, Hugh Capet, and of course, the kings Suger served during his time as abbot – Dagobert held an equal place. The inclusion of this otherwise obscure king remained a sign to the kings of Suger's time and those who would follow – if they wished to attain salvation, as did Dagobert, they too would court the aid and love of the saints of this abbey. Like the kings carved in stone, they would approach with reverence, knowing their place in the hierarchy of divine order, and place their treasures before the altar.

As previously mentioned, Suger and his immediate successors, no longer troubled by iconoclastic concerns, placed the aforementioned statue of the Merovingian king on display inside the abbey. Where Suger had refused the rulers of the Franks the right to establish tombs to their own memory, he or his successor established a statue to the memory of a long dead ruler of a defunct line of kings. Dagobert sat, enthroned in power, in a place of visibility, not as a mere sop to the original commissioner of the royal abbey, but as a signpost pointing contemporary kings toward a higher truth. Just as the images of Judgment above the tympanum, the gold panels upon the door depicting Christ's incarnation, death, and resurrection, and the Biblical stories of the patriarchs and the apostles were intended to point toward God's essential truths, Dagobert came to

theologians, appears. Yet this is the most profound point the abbot reached in his description and analysis of the building and of light metaphysics. Kidson argues that the "metaphor of light was built into the ordinary Christian perception of the world, and had become part of the stock and trade of everyone who ever preached a sermon," then names Suger a kind of "diluted Platonist". The abbot's panegyric on the beauties of light filtering into the church would have conducted the soul to see heaven moved down to earth, rather than transporting the soul to heaven. Saint-Denis became, for the abbot and many others, a foretaste of heaven. At no point did Suger offer a more direct and irrefutable connection to the works of the Pseudo-Dionysius, as Panofsky asserted he did. See Peter Kidson, "Panofsky, Suger, and St.-Denis," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes,* Vol. 50, (1987), 1-17.

stand in for the truth that connected sacral and secular powers. Only through the veneration of the Gallic saints would the kings of the Franks prosper; only through the veneration of these saints would the land of the Franks become the holy kingdom God determined it would be. Dagobert, to the monks, stood in the gap between the kings and the saints. His tale – the founding of the abbey, its decoration and beautification, his death and redemption – were conflated into the image of the king enthroned with the symbols of power and seated in the abbey he endowed so richly. Although Suger rejected royal appeals to erect monuments to their vanity, his successors approved and, more importantly, paid for the construction of a monument to the kings in general to stand in a prominent spot in the abbey. Dagobert came to stand for all the kings, both as a warning and an exemplar.

Notable as abbot of Saint-Denis and as the founder of the new gothic style of architecture, Suger has also been remembered as royal advisor and regent. While supervising the rearing of Louis VII (c. 1120-1180), Suger must have impressed him with the power and authority of St.-Denis, and the necessity of linking royal legitimacy with religious sanction. When he ordered the redesign of the Great Royal Seal, Louis VII chose to incorporate a Dionysian symbol into the image; a symbol which Suger vigorously asserted was both ancient and traditional. The seal of the kings of France, although once marked by a profile of the king crowned in laurel, as Roman coins had been, shifted during the Capetian dynasty to an image of the king seated in state with the symbols of power.[189] While the seals of Philip I and his heir Louis VI display the kings seated on a chair with the head and feet of lions, it is most likely that these images followed the stylistic

[189] Both Frankish and German rulers of the 11th century initially adopted profiles of the kings for both royal seals and coinage, in a manner reminiscent of the Roman emperors. The shift toward a monarch in state began in the late 10th century for the Frankish kings, following the forms first adopted by Otto III. See Brigitte Bedos-Rezak, "Suger and the symbolism of royal power: the seal of Louis VII", particularly 96-97.

format of the throne of Lothair depicted in his psalter, dated to the mid-9th century.[190] Philip I created a seal in which the royal figure sits upon a chair decorated with the head and feet of lions, similar to the seals used by other rulers of the tenth and eleventh centuries (fig 5); his son, Louis VII, altered the outline of the chair in a way intended to resemble that chair identified by Suger as the Throne of Dagobert,[191] which the abbot had ordered reconstructed and redesigned. (fig. 6) This chair possessed an unmistakable outline; its legs formed an X pattern in front and back, while the arms of the chair ended in the heads of lions. (fig. 7) In *Administrationes,* Suger solemnly asserted that this was the very seat on which legendary King Dagobert had received homage from the great lords of the Frankish peoples;[192] in this seat, the kings should again sit to receive oaths of fealty. Bedos-Rezak has argued that "in taking note of this ancient, lapsed custom, Suger was furthering his struggle against Reims over prerogatives: he sought to locate at Saint-Denis an important phase in the first years of the king's reign, namely, the recognition of royal suzerainty by the high-ranking vassals."[193] Although Suger's claim was the earliest made claiming this prerogative, later kings would use the throne when asserting their rights and during coronation services.[194]

The chair designated as the Fauteuil de Dagobert may have been a chair mentioned in the *Vitae Eligii* of the eighth century, noted in that account as *sed et tectum throni altaris axibus operuit argenteis.* In this tale, St. Eloi received just enough gold to craft a single throne from

[190] Psalter of Lothair, ca. 845. (British Library, ms. Add. 37768, fol. 4r). Image referenced in Bedos Rezak, 96. Fig. 3.
[191] Bedos-Rezak, ibid.
[192] *Nec minus nobilem gloriosi regis Dagoberti cathedram, in que, ut perhibere solet antiquitas, reges Francorum, suscepto regni imperio, ad suscipienda optimatum suorum hominia primum sedere consueverant, tum pro tanti excelentia officii, tum etiam pro operis ipsius precio, antiquatam et disruptam refici fecimus.* Suger, *Oevres complètes,* (P), 203.
[193] Bedos-Rezak, "Suger," 98.
[194] Late references to the throne in use include mention of Napoleon, who used it for his coronation ritual, and for the presentation of the Cross of Honor to French officers. Sumner Crosby, *The Royal Abbey of Saint-Denis;* 43.

Dagobert's father, Clothar II. Instead of one throne, Eloi made two.[195] The throne attributed to Dagobert could have been that used by Lothair in the ninth century,[196] as his seat in his psalter shows a chair with legs carved like the heads of lions.[197] Regardless of its origins, the throne in question seems to have been the product of ninth century artisans, although one cannot rule out an earlier construction date due to the extensive work on the throne performed in later centuries.[198] Whether Dagobert had sat in that chair or not didn't matter; the Capetian kings would.

When Suger claimed this throne had belonged to King Dagobert, he made an argument that the kings performed an important ritual event early in their reigns inside the nave of the church. The chair itself may have been portable; the construction of the legs allowed the throne to be folded, although we have no evidence that the chair was removed from the abbey in the 12th or 13th centuries.[199] Today, the throne demonstrates a mélange of styles and eras, from Carolingian to Capetian, which would prevent a more definitive dating. (fig. 8) Suger, though, must have considered this chair a powerful symbol with which to further connect the kings to the abbey, binding them to patronage and support.

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[195] The tale of Eloi constructing multiple golden thrones for Clothar later appeared in artwork and liturgy, although the chairs had become golden saddles. See William Forsyth, *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, New Series, Vol. 4, No. 5 (Jan. 1946), 143-144.

[196] See above, note 63.

[197] Jean Hubert and W. F. Volbach, *The Carolingian Empire*, trans. By James Emmons and Stuart Gilbert, (London: Thames & Hudson, 1970), 285, fig 296. Bedos-Rezak rejects this association, as the throne in the psalter of Lothaire lacks the cross pattern of the legs, and is more likely to be a generic model for thrones similar to those found on the seals of William the Conqueror, and meant to resemble the throne of Solomon, described in the bible as having the heads of lions on either side. Bedos-Rezak, 97.

[198] Although consensus places the construction of the throne in the Carolingian workshops around Saint-Denis, the question of original provenance and commission have remained unresolved. See Peter Lasko, *Ars Sacra, 800-1200*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 20-21; also see Crosby, *The Royal Abbey of Saint-Denis*, 43.

[199] Sumner Crosby argues that the design of the throne, which utilized a structure in the leg design reminiscent of Roman objects, may well have been in continual use at least since the ninth century, if not before, necessitating the reconstruction in the twelfth century. He further argued that the kings of Merovingian and Carolingian houses, more noted for a peripatetic court than the later Capetians, could have folded up the chair and taken it with them. See Crosby, *The Royal Abbey of Saint-Denis*, 43. Although no record from Saint-Denis notes when the chair was placed there, it must have been in the abbey by the 12th century, and was certainly still part of the treasury in the early eighteenth century, when Felibien noted it. Michel Félibien, *Histoire de l'abbey royale de Saint-Denys en France*, (Paris : F. Leonard, 1706), 545.

If solely located in the abbey of Saint-Denis, the throne of Dagobert would not have been as immediately persuasive as Suger would have wished. The influence he was able to use over the dauphin, later Louis VII, also resulted in the creation of a new form of royal seal. The seal of the king confirms the authority and power he claims to rule his lands, administer justice, and retain power over his vassals. Of all forms of symbolic propaganda used by medieval kings, the royal seal was the most public and visible, as it would be affixed to any royal document and used as proof of the legitimacy of the text. When Louis VII chose to redesign the seal in a manner that incorporated the outline of the throne of Dagobert, he did so to reinforce his own legitimacy and that of his line of kings by grounding his right to rule upon the abbey where the venerable remains of his ancestors rested. As Bedos-Rezak argued, "To invoke Dagobert was to recall the royal foundation of Saint-Denis and to demonstrate to his royal successors the fidelity they owed the abbey. To place Louis VII on the "throne of Dagobert," preserved at Saint-Denis, was similarly to affirm, by means of the seal image, the bond uniting monarch and monastery."[200] The symbols he used both strengthened the claims of Saint-Denis as the spiritual center of royal power and bypassed that line of kings his predecessors had supplanted, thus confirming his rights to rule.

The choice to associate the throne with a nearly mythical founder must be considered in light of the mystical consecration, also attributed to Dagobert's reign. There, as has been noted, the monks of Saint-Denis asserted that the date of Christ's appearance corresponded with the Merovingian period rather than the church reconstructed by Fulrad in the 9th century. The association of both the abbey and the throne to the earliest period of the basilica further separated the historical events and personages from the present day of Suger's era, adding a luster of venerable age and sanctity to both. The question is, which came first? The discovery of the

[200] Bedos-Rezak, "Suger and the symbolism of royal power," p. 96.

dilapidated chair in the storehouse, or the perceived need of additional items of ceremonial value to assert Dionysian primacy? Although one cannot determine this question, the decision to "find" and rehabilitate a throne of ancient use resonated in an era when other religious institutions battled over claims to important thrones. The throne of Charlemagne rested in Aachen with his body, and the chair of Charles the Bald was already known to have found a central place in the Vatican by the eleventh century.[201] Kessler notes briefly the use of thrones in disputes between religious rivals for power. "A ninth-century ivory clad chair brought to Rome for the coronation of the Carolingian emperor Charles the Bald, it was adopted for papal ceremonies in the eleventh century. Then, during the course of the twelfth century, it was promoted as an apostolic 'relic' – the *cattedra Petri* – and was used as a weapon in the battle for superiority (and pilgrims) between the Vatican canons and the Lateran."[202] In context, when Suger decided to designate the chair as the throne of Dagobert, he attributed ancient credentials to the seat which predated its construction and created a symbolic weapon in a bid for spiritual and temporal primacy. Suger merely followed established precedents which allowed artifacts of unknown date and manufacture to become items with a more glorious pedigree.

Suger may also have been deliberately pointing toward the role Saint-Denis played in supporting claimants to the throne. As other kings or would-be kings had argued, the individual who ruled the kingdom was the one chosen by God through his most dear Frankish saints – Denis and his companions. When he selected Dagobert as the original inhabitant of the chair, Suger did so to make a powerful statement about the link between royal destiny and the abbey; kings rule when they court and retain the support of this most important of abbeys, and just as importantly, their sons rule after them.

[201] Kessler, 175.
[202] ibid

When Suger designated Dagobert as the original inhabitant of this throne, he may have been responding to a generalized perception that the Capetians were usurpers to the French throne. The legitimacy of their claim to rule, though presumably established in the generations since the coronation of Hugh Capet in 987 C.E., should not have been at issue. Suger might have chosen another Carolingian as the owner of the chair, but when he bypassed that line altogether, seeking out a Merovingian king instead, he used the history of the royal lines as part of his propaganda. Like the Capetians, the Carolingians supplanted the last weak members of the preceding dynasty in order to take the throne; they, too, were usurpers. The Merovingian line, on the other hand, was that founded by the first Christian Frankish monarch, Clovis, and the dynasty that – according to Hincmar of Rheims – had been chosen for a dramatic show of divine approval. When God sent a dove holding an ampulle of holy oil to St. Remi during the coronation ceremony of Clovis, he sanctified the royal house of France and the descendants of the first Christian king. The Carolingians and Capetians would all receive the blessing of that oil as well, in attempts to make claims to that same divine approbation. When Suger offered them the seat of a king from the original ruling dynasty, he struck upon a powerful need to prove a legitimate right to sit on that throne.

Despite his best efforts, Louis VII, who had shown considerable dedication to the shrine of Saint-Denis, chose to be buried in Barbeaux. Clearly, the propaganda used by Suger and his monks had not been as effective as would be needed to continue to court the dedication of the sophisticated, wealthy, and nervous Capetians. Suger and his successors placed the king, in the form of the first royal founder, in the heart of the nave and in the cloister; the positioning of the statue of Dagobert in the nave would have been a reminder that the king is bound to the abbey. Suger was successful in incorporating Dagobertian imagery into the royal seals of the 12th century

kings, even if Saint-Denis lost the right to inter both Philip I and his grandson, Louis VI. In order to regain and retain the rights claimed by the abbots of the royal basilica to inter the kings, the successors to Suger would need to expand the presence of kings in the nave, finish the reconstruction planned during Suger's administration, and play upon the vanity and the fear of the royal family. Although the thirteenth century has been remembered as a time when Saint-Denis and the Capetian monarchs came increasingly to link their ambitions, the monks were never entirely secure in their claims to the royal bodies.

The art and architectural projects of Saint-Denis during the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries were still, given what was to come, conservative in nature. Under Suger and his immediate successors, the abbey was redesigned and restructured to accommodate not only new ideas about the design of holy space made manifest by engineering breakthroughs, but to serve a fundamental and essential function for the monks; the glorification of the saint they served and the continuation of the rights they believed their abbey should enjoy. Suger asserted that the abbey possessed the natural right to possess and inter the bodies of the kings by dint of history and precedents, despite the decisions made by two Capetians to rest elsewhere, but refused to grant them the favors they sought in the form of prominent, visible, and expansive burials inside the nave of the church. By the early thirteenth century, his stance on the translation of bodies from beneath the floor of the church to accommodate further royal interments had to be ameliorated if the basilica were to continue as the official cemetery of the kings. Despite the losses of two royal bodies, the abbey enthroned a mythical king in the nave, and emphasized the ancient association of abbey and kings through the introduction of a throne, and the reproduction of that chair of state in royal seals.

Chapter 3:
The Tomb Project of the mid-thirteenth century: King Louis IX, and the challenge of the mendicant orders

The Abbey of Saint-Denis, under previous Capetian kings, had lost ground to newer religious foundations, particularly the Cistercians, who had convinced Louis VII to be buried in the abbey he founded for them. Sensitive to the possibility that future kings would choose to found new royal burial sites, the monks of Saint-Denis appealed not just to the salvific abilities of their saints, but to the vanity of the Capetians. Between 1190 and 1218, the abbey gave permission for the construction of the first raised tomb inside the church, one which would eventually house the body of Philip II.[203] His tomb, which was to be constructed of metal (listed in later descriptions as both silver and gold), would include an effigy and representations of his funeral and attendants.[204] This elaborate structure had been originally intended for placement near the grave of Charles the Bald, but had to be moved to rest closer to the tomb of Dagobert.[205] The nave, from this account, was too crowded with the royal dead to accommodate more of them easily. Suger's admonitions to avoid the translation of bodies had to be set aside to make room for more burials if the abbey wished to assert its rights as the royal necropolis.

Suger, in the twelfth century, had used his access to the Capetian kings to make a play for their support and patronage. His administration of the royal basilica was bracketed by the defection first of Philip I, just before he became abbot, and then by Louis VII, who had been raised in Saint-

[203] See Wright, "A Royal Tomb Program at Saint-Denis," p. 231. She has determined the time of these negotiations as occurring between the first and second will of Philip II. The first did not address the details of his burial, but the second firmly establishes Saint-Denis as his choice, and mentions some of the details of his burials. She cites *Florilegium testamentorm*, ed. Gunther Wolf, (Heidelberg), 1956, 29-33 and 34.
[204] This tomb has long been lost, and no drawings of it have survived. See Wright, 231.
[205] Philip II had desired a site proximate to Charles the Bald which was impossible to accommodate. His desire to rest closer to the Carolingian monarch must be read as a symptom of the early thirteenth-century veneration of all things Carolingian, including the tomb of Charles the Bald. "*Richieri gesta senoniensis ecclesia*," *MGH SS* xxv, Hanover, 1880, 296.

Denis. In light of his failure to produce an unshakable loyalty to the shrine, the monks and abbots who succeeded him had to develop alternate forms of persuasion. The first gesture of that sort, addressed in the previous chapter, would have been the statue of Dagobert placed in the abbey in the mid-twelfth century – possibly commissioned by Suger, but possibly not erected in the nave until after the abbot's death. The tomb project of the mid-thirteenth century would be a continuation of the organization of the abbey around the likenesses of the royal family, but this project seemed to have coincided with a serendipitous increase in public interest in the burial sites of the kings and in the history of the Frankish throne. In the light of concerns about the dedication of Louis IX to the traditional burial site of his kin and the loss of much of his financial support, the abbots of Saint-Denis created new Dagobertian imagery intended to create both a popular appeal to pilgrims and cement the loyalty of the Capetians.

Beginning in the early 13th century, the abbots and monks of the royal abbey moved to expand the potential burial grounds for the kings, remove lesser mortals from crypts beneath the floors, and construct elaborate and costly tombs for a select group of kings while reserving room for future royal burials. That the monks and abbots did so should not be a surprise; the continued dominance over the burial of the kings and the royal memory demanded that they make this change or lose ground to newer institutions. However, upon determining to expand the nave and create royal sepulchers, the monks also invested in new and unique methods to package and promote their long-standing position of power and influence with the royal family specifically, and with the rising tide of pilgrims more generally. The consequence of their desire to make the abbey more appealing as a burial site for the kings became an ambitious reconstruction of the nave, the selective production of above ground tombs for specific members of the three lines of kings, and

the creation of a *vitae* of not just the saint, but of the abbey itself. In both the tomb construction program and the writing of the abbey's history, the monks promoted the tale of Dagobert as a means to persuade and promote the ideal of secular and sacred union found in the abbey of Saint-Denis. The updated role of Dagobert in the abbey's propaganda outreach became more complex than the previous iteration under the *Gesta* of the ninth century; as more traditional forms of funding for the abbey dried up in the thirteenth century, the monks looked to alternate sources for financial support. Thus they promoted the colorful tale of the first royal convert of the saint to encourage popular pilgrimage among the noble families and ordinary Christian Franks through a retelling of the shrine's history. Dagobert had to not merely be a tool of persuasion to the kings, but a symbol of devotion which could play to the populace already crowding the nave around the saint's day of October 9th.

In her work on medieval historiography, Gabrielle Spiegel has reminded contemporary medievalists of both the limitations and possibilities of investigations into this primary material. The thirteenth century was a period of remarkable inventiveness and experimentation with historical models, and the number of manuscripts and artistic representations of historical figures proliferated. New forms of political commentary, based upon historical accounts often of dubious history, developed and gained appreciative audiences. History was mined by royal apologists to justify innovation and change. Nowhere was this process more evident or more important to the royal family than at Saint-Denis. As Marc Bloch argued in his work on the medieval period, "The very authority that was ascribed to tradition favored the change. For every act, especially if it was repeated three or four times, was likely to be transformed into a precedent – even if in the first instance it had been exceptional or even frankly unlawful."[206] Spiegel goes further with her

[206] Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society*, translated L.A. Manyon, (Chicago, 1965), I, 114.

analysis of political utility, arguing that, although the government "…originated in the divine will of God, (it) functioned at His behest and strove to do His bidding,"[207] the institution that resulted from the claim that rule manifests from God alone created a decidedly ahistorical body. God's will, believed to be universal and unchanging, did not permit innovation or flexibility – characteristics desperately required by the royal governments forming in the thirteenth century. The task of inventing a past that could be used by contemporary kings and their governments fell to the historiographers of the period. In the center of royal historiography, the Dionysian monks served the kings not only through the production of manuscript accounts of past kings, but through the incorporation and enhancement of the image of an idealized and perfected ruler rooted in symbol and image. This image of an ideal king who embodied secular rule and was the chosen of God could serve both the monks and the royal family; in order to prove the divine approval of a ruler, the kings must act as kings do toward the abbey, giving generously in life and bequeathing their bodies to the shrine after death. When the kings challenged the reciprocity of this unspoken arrangement, as they did in the twelfth century and threatened to do in the thirteenth, the monks responded by remaking the already ancient abbey church into the stage for dynastic ambitions. In doing so, they also made the nave of the church a wonder and curiosity, enhancing pilgrimage to the shrine and to the gravesites of the Frankish kings. Just as the kings were required to do, the abbots of Saint-Denis worked to mine the documents of previous centuries to create a precedent they wished to promote, even if those links were fragmentary or accidental.

Although Louis VIII eventually found burial in the abbey, including a metalwork tomb complete with effigy, the nave could not accommodate more burials without substantial expansion

[207] Gabrielle Spiegel, "Political Utility in Medieval Historiography: A Sketch," *History and Theory*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (Oct., 1975), 315.

and the translation of lesser bodies to places in the crypt.[208] The necessity of creating more room for future burials, while simultaneously catering to the dynastic and military ambitions of the Capetians, resulted in the reconstruction of Saint-Denis in the mid-thirteenth century. Louis' tomb, which he inhabited after his death in 1226, became a significant symbol for his descendants, despite his short time on the throne. The marriage between Philip II and his first wife, Isabelle of Hainault (1170-1190) was hailed at the time as the marital union between the Carolingian and Capetian houses. Isabelle's father, Count Baldwin V of Hainault, claimed descent from Charlemagne through a fictional daughter, but this claim was little investigated in the day.[209] The heir to the throne produced by this marriage, Louis VIII, became the living symbol of the union of the two royal houses. During the tomb reconstruction procedure in Saint-Denis, begun by Abbot Odo of Clermont and completed around 1264 by a successor, Abbot Matthew of Vendôme (d. 1286), four pairs of Carolingians and Merovingians found a place of honor on the south side of the nave, and four pairs of Capetians on the north side. In the center crossing, the raised tombs of Philip II and his son, Louis VIII, rested side by side in expensive metal work sepulchers. The cost of this display, which stressed the legitimacy and longevity of the reigning houses of the Franks, seems to have been entirely borne by the abbey rather than by the kings, as no sign of royal payments for such a project have been found in the records of Louis IX, who reigned during this period.[210] Certainly, the decision of Louis IX to endow the Abbey of Royaumont in 1228, then to

[208] See Georgia Wright, "A Royal Tomb Program," 224-243.
[209] For the records of Isabelle of Hainault's genealogy, see *Historiae regnum francorum* in *Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France*, XII, ed. Religieux benedictins de la congregation de S. Maur, 1781, 220. Despite ample evidence that Philip II was also descended from Carolingian roots, his son became the living symbol of the link between the houses. Evidence of the importance of that connection can be found in the *Gesta Ludovici Octavi* in the *Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France*, XVII, ed. M. J. J. Brial, 1878, 302.
[210] References to Louis' involvement in the payment for translations has been assumed in the past, as with the work of Alain Erlande-Brandenburg, "Le tombeau de saint Louis," *Bulletin de la societe nationale des antiquaries de France*, 1970, 222-229. However, it may be that the assumption that the king would have been present during the translation of royal remains was later interpreted as payment for the reconstructions. Georgia Wright stated that the financial records of this period lack any notation of payment to the basilica for the tombs, but as the records for this

bury his own family there, contributed to the urgency of this project.[211] Ample evidence remains from the reign of Louis IX to indicate that he was less marked than his predecessors in support toward more traditional religious institutions, particularly the secular churches. In 1255, disputes between the mendicants and the secular orders of the church in Paris exploded when William of Saint-Amour of the theological school, among others, condemned Louis' preferences for the new orders and, in 1256, delivered a harshly critical sermon on Louis' attire, spiritual excesses, and behavior.[212] Saint-Amour criticized the king who chose to wear simple garb, thus diminishing the status and reputation of the throne, gave marked preferment in court to the poor without fully examining the case, and for attending prayers six times daily as if he were a monk himself. Expressing his support for Louis in the dispute with Saint-Amour, Pope Alexander IV (1185-1261) dispatched a letter in which he praised the king's support for the newer mendicant orders.[213] Further proof of Louis' devotion to the mendicant orders and to Citeaux has relied upon his

period are scant, we cannot accept absence of evidence as a sign of no financial support from the crown for the tomb project. Wright, "Royal Tomb Project," 225.

[211] Georgia Wright analyzed the symbolic references found in the effigies and tombs of the young children of St.-Louis, buried in Royaumont, and of Louis' heir Prince Louis, who died in 1260. These mortuary scenes demonstrate a great degree of piety and humility, the children – regardless of their age at death – depicted in simple attire, often surrounded by conventional signs of religiosity. The royal dead of Saint-Denis, by comparison, may have been placed recumbent upon their sepulchers, but their poses often appear as if the dead were stepping forward rather than lying down. They hold specters and orbs, or fold their hands quietly. Few pray. The emphasis in Royaumont on piety and humility would have been appealing to the king, who notably once considered relinquishing the throne to take up the habit of a Franciscan, and who relied upon the advice of his Dominican confessor. In comparison, the royal tombs of Saint-Denis stress rule and authority. See Wright, "A Royal Tomb Project in the Reign of St.-Louis," 223-230.

[212] In a pamphlet titled *A Brief Tract On the Dangers of Our Times* produced in 1255-1256, William of Saint-Amour criticized Louis for living as a friar would: wearing poor clothing, rising to hear mass 6 times per day, and favoring the poor in royal courts without, he claimed, hearing the case. He followed up his criticisms in a sermon delivered on June 4, 1256. Louis' response to the first was to appeal to the papacy; his actions after the sermon led to the eventual excommunication and banishment of William of Saint-Amour. William Jordan, "Persona et Gesta: The Image and Deeds of the Thirteenth-Century Capetians, 2, the Case of Saint Louis," *Viator* (0083-5897) vol. 19, 1988, 209 – 217. For evidence of popular criticism, see E. Faral, "Les Responsiones de Guillaume de Saint-Amour," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen-âge*, XXV-XXVI (1950-51), 337-94. For material on the disputes between the secular masters and the mendicants, see *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, ed. H. Denifle and A. Chatelain, I, (Paris, 1889), 288, 308, 321, and 315. Lester Little, "Saint Louis' Involvement with the Friars," *Church History*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (Jun. 1964), 146.

[213] *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, ed. H. Denifle, (Paris, 1889), I, 363, No. 315. Cited in M. Cecilia Gaposchkin, "The King of France and the Queen of Heaven: The Iconography of the Porte Rouge of Notre Dame of Paris," *Gesta*, vol. 39, No. 1 (2000), 67, see note 85.

patronage of building campaigns and his decision to bury his children with the Cistercian order. He requested annual masses be said for his soul at Citeaux, three from every monk, and received a further 30,000 masses from the Dominicans.[214] However, while his support for secular institutions may have dwindled, Louis maintained a public and verifiable devotion toward Saint-Denis, where he most notably performed rituals of vassalage annually, offering up additional alms to the shrine for the years he missed during crusade.[215] Despite these deeds, the monks of Saint-Denis may have been nervous as the king prepared alternate burial sites for his children, particularly given his generous financial support of the Cistercian monastery of Royaumont and his public embrace of newer religious orders, most commonly those of the Franciscan and Dominicans.[216]

Abbot Odo of Clermont (1229-1245) began the expansion of the nave of Saint-Denis in 1231, and Crosby, in his work upon the thirteenth century abbey, concluded that the design of the nave indicates that royal burial was uppermost on the mind of the abbot. In his proposal to the

[214] Guillaume de Saint-Pathus, *Receuil des Historiens des Gaules et de la France*, XX, 81. Also A. Dimier, *Saint Louis et Citeaux*, (Paris, 1954) 76-81; Lester Little, "Saint Louis's involvement with the Friars," 125-148.

[215] Louis IX seems to have accepted the fiction, promoted in the *Pseudo-Turpin chronicle* that Charlemagne had asserted that the crown of France existed as a vassal to the abbey of Saint-Denis. Thus, Charlemagne performed acts of vassalage at the abbey; he was the first to present the four bezants of gold on the altar and declare that he received the throne in fief from God and the holy martyrs buried there. The document went further, also stating that the abbot of Saint-Denis was the Primate of the nation, and should confirm the election of bishops and abbots. Louis IX, despite his preference for the mendicant orders, gave support to these claims by performing the act of vassalage and confirming the importance of the shrine, though the more extensive claims to primacy were never widely accepted. Louis IX came to the shrine in both 1248 and 1254 to perform acts of obeisance, and appointed Matthew of Vendôme regent during his second crusade in 1270. See Robert Barroux, "L'abbe Suger et la vassalite du Vexin en 1124," *Le Moyen age*, LXIV, 1958, 1-26 ; Sumner Crosby, *The Abbey of Saint-Denis*, (New Haven; 1942); Wright, "The Royal Tomb Program at Saint-Denis," 226. Louis' acts confirming the supremacy of the abbey church were at odds with his marked preference for the Dominican and Franciscan orders, but may have been the result of his desire to maintain conservative religious values in matters of state. Other sources note his declining financial support of the abbey, even as he increased his payments to newer orders such as the Cistercians.

[216] The relationship between Louis IX and the mendicant orders has been well documented. Where Capetian kings might once have turned to the abbots of Saint-Denis for advice and semi-official roles in the government, Louis turned instead of a battery of Dominican and Franciscan advisors such as Odo Rigaud, a Franciscan who became the archbishop of Rouen and, at times, negotiated treaties for the king. See Eudes Rigaud, *Registrum Visitationem archiepiscopi rothomagensis*, ed. Theodose Bonnin, (Rouen, 1832), pp. 29-, 402, 420-21. Also Joseph Strayer, *The Administration of Normandy Under Saint Louis*, (Cambridge, MS; 1932), 93 and 27; and Lester Little, "Saint Louis," 138.

royal family, Odo convinced them to permit the construction on the grounds of the precarious condition of the church, not just to allow further burials.[217] Among his most important acts, Odo removed the bodies of prominent abbots buried in the nave, most likely in order to promise these sites to kings.[218] The separation of the three royal houses of Franks in the abbey, with the first two supplanted lines placed on the south of the nave and the current line of kings on the north, demonstrate that uppermost on the minds of the monks was the question of continuity for the abbey. The display of the sepulchers with their pairs of royal effigies would demonstrate the long-standing rights of the abbey to claim and house the royal dead, and the costly tombs prove their ability to do so in a suitably rich and ostentatious manner. The configuration of the nave under Odo Clermont and Matthew of Vendôme served both kings and abbey; in providing the visible and lavish tombs in the center of the nave, the monks offered a tempting setting for any king who wished to cement his legacy and promote his likeness to future generations. In Saint-Denis, he would be among an elite regiment of former kings, organized in a centralized site, and would gain from their reflected status. On the basis of this precedent, later Capetian kings were able to make a case for the rearrangement of the royal bodies in the nave.[219]

The construction of elaborate and expensive tombs for the former kings of France demonstrated the desire of Saint-Denis to continue to appeal to the royal family and persuade them to accept burial in the abbey as a matter of course. According to monastic accounts, the monks of the abbey received permission from Louis IX to begin a search through the foundation of the

[217] Sumner Crosby, *L'abbaye royale de Saint-Denis*, p. 61. Wright, "A Royal Tomb Program in the Reign of St.-Louis," 225.
[218] Wright, 232.
[219] In the late 13th century, Philip the Fair notably rearranged the bodies of the preceding royal families in the nave of the church. The disposition of the tombs in the nave under Philip IV and his successors seemed to have demonstrated less an interest in proving legitimacy and more toward promoting the cult of the newly canonized Louis IX. See below, chapter 4.

church for royal remains.[220] The tombs they built during this period joined those already placed in the nave directly before the main altar, namely those of Philip Augustus and Louis VIII. The tombs of these two kings, described in the brief account of Guillaume de Nangis as wrought from silver and gold, served as a bridge to connect the tombs of the Carolingians and Merovingians.[221] Originally situated in a tomb behind the matutinal altar, Charles the Bald suffered translation during this period to a position at the west end of the nave, in the center of the monks' choir. His tomb, made of brass, was decorated with elaborate scenes from his funeral around the sides.[222] The new location would then anchor the burials in the nave, as would be befitting for an emperor also credited as the secondary royal founder of the abbey and a one-time lay abbot.

The placement of the three metal tombs – those of Louis VIII, Philip Augustus, and Charles the Bald – is the key to understanding the intent of the monks as they laid out this design. Beginning in the late twelfth century, a document housed in the library of Saint-Denis took a degree of importance for primarily the nobility of the Flemish counties. This manuscript, known as the *Reditus regni ad stirpem Karoli Magni*, recounted the tale of Charlemagne's apocryphal campaign south of the Pyrenees, previously recounted in the Song of Roland.[223] This manuscript

[220] See Elizabeth Brown, "Burying and Unburying the Kings of France," *The Monarchy of Capetian France and Royal Ceremonial*, (Variorum, Great Britain), 1991, 244.

[221] Ibid. Also see *Chronique Latine de Guillaume de Nangis de 1113 à 1300*, ed. H. Geraud, (Paris, 1843), I, 232f. Wright also notes this brief chronicle, and poses the possibility that Nangis, a monk in Saint-Denis in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, may have composed this section of the account to aid the monks in correctly identifying the royal burials for pilgrims and tourists. See Wright, 225.

[222] The elaborate metalwork tombs of the kings once in Saint-Denis no longer exist. Richer of Senones described the tomb in his chronicle of 1254-1264 would seem to date the placement of the structure to around 1240, an early period in the reconstruction of the nave, although the original tomb was much older. In his effigy, Charles appears as both king and lay abbot of the monastery, and although he carried symbols of secular power, the Gaignieres sketch of the tomb shows him in pontifical garb. "*richieri gesta senoniensis ecclesiae*," MGH SS, xxv, 269; Joseph de Laborde, *Layettes du Tresor des Chartes*, Paris, 1875, III, No. 4340. For the sketch of the tomb, Gaignieres, Bible. Nat. Estampes Pe 5,3.

[223] Much work has been done on the Pseudo-Turpin chronicle, the Regni reditus ad stirpem Karoli Magnus. For information on the genesis of these texts and commentary, see Ian Short, "The Pseudo-Turpin chronicle: some unnoticed versions and their sources", *Medium aevum* 38: 1-22; Short, "A note on the Pseudo-Turpin translations of Nicolas of Senlis and William of Briane, *Zeitschrift fur romanische Philologic* 86: 525-32; *La traduction du Pseudo-Turpin du manuscript Vatican Regina 624, edition avec introduction, notes et glossaire; Historiae Karoli Magni et Rotholandi*, ed. Claude Buridant, (Geneve: Droz, 1976); *An anonymous Old French translation of the Pseudo-Turpin*

experienced translations six separate times approximately between 1190 and 1250, most of them in the northern counties and among the Flemish noble houses. Among other things, the Pseudo-Turpin included the *reditus* or Valerian prophecy, which found a new audience among literate French speakers in the mid-thirteenth century as it seemed to promise an end to the Capetian line after seven generations; therefore, the thinking goes, the Capetians would move to shore up arguments that they could claim direct descent from Charlemagne and his heirs.[224] However, as the *reditus* prophecy was first noted before the reign of Philip II, and as Philip was heralded as the union between the Capetian and Carolingian houses at his birth, the likelihood that the Valerian clause was used to delegitimize the Capetian line seems unlikely.[225] Philip II, proclaimed in his lifetime as the direct heir to the glory of Charlemagne, seemed to have made an effort to expand the kingdom he had inherited until it rivaled the lands claimed by Charles the Bald. Contemporary accounts of his life and reign make specific mention of his association with the Charlemagne; his speech before the Battle of Bouvines reminded his troops that they were the descendants of the Trojans and "heirs of the powerful Charles, of Roland and the brave Oliver", before he led them under the Oriflamme, established in his father's reign as the battle standard carried by Charlemagne in the Song of Roland.[226] Philip's son, Louis VIII, extended the claims of his father,

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Chronicle: a critical edition of the text contained in Bibliothèque Nationale MSS fr. 2137 and 17203 and incorporated by Philippe Mouskes in his Chronique rimee, ed. Ronald N. Walpole, (Cambridge, MA: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1979); Gabrielle Spiegel, "The Pseudo-Turpin, the crisis of the aristocracy and the beginnings of vernacular historiography in France," *Journal of Medieval History*, vol. 12, issue 3, 207-223; Spiegel, "The Reditus Regnum ad Stirpem Karoli Magni: a New Look," *French Historical Studies*, vol. 7, no. 2, (Autumn, 1971), 145-174.

[224] In her work on the Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle, Spiegel has argued that this prose form of the Song of Roland served both royalist and anti-Capetian purposes. By the late twelfth century, a copy of the Pseudo-Turpin had been sought out and translated into the vernacular by first one, then several other Flemish lords, with the height of translation occurring after the Battle of Bouvines, which had proven disastrous for the Flemish counts. For her work on the subject, see Spiegel, "The Reditus Regni ad Stirpem," pp. 145-174; and "Geneology: Form and Function in Medieval Historical Narrative," *History and Theory*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (Feb. 1983), pp. 143-53.

[225] Spiegel is careful to point out that the *reditus* prophecy began circulation after the birth of Philip II, proclaimed as the return of a new Charlemagne. For the Capetians, then, the Valerian prophecy may have been an attempt to reclaim the glories of the past for the present, rather than an attempt to stave off arguments regarding legitimacy. Spiegel, "The Reditus Regni ad Stirpem Karoli Magni," p. 163

[226] Le Breton, *Philippidos*, (Cygneae : 1657), chap. 21.

and he had been proclaimed the son not of one, but of two parents who claimed Carolingian blood.[227] Standing in for Charlemagne himself, buried in Aachen, Charles the Bald received a position in isolation at the far western end; a spot which emphasized his importance to the claims made in this reconstruction and to the ambitions of the Capetians.

This tomb project was not merely intended to look backward toward the glories of the past, nor was it likely to be just a visual attempt to bolster the legitimacy of the Capetian rule. By the reign of Louis IX, the Capetians had claimed the throne for nearly three hundred years, and if they had not felt the necessity to legitimize their corporate right to rule in the twelfth century, that need must have been even more remote in the thirteenth. Louis the IX was a pious ruler, but he was not an insecure king. Nor were his father and grandfather. In consideration of the Carolingian fever that swept through the court of Philip and Louis VIII, it should be no surprise that the tomb project of Saint-Denis demonstrates an emphasis on the glorious rulers of the past – Charles the Bald – and associate those with the victories of the current monarch and line of kings – Philip II and Louis VIII. Therefore, rather than interpret the placement of his tomb between the Capetians and Carolingians as an attempt to assert legitimacy – an issue that did not seem to concern Philip II or his immediate heir – we might instead agree with Spiegel that the references to Charlemagne found in the nave and the tomb structures were actually messages to his successors.[228] The arrangement of the tombs – Charles the Bald at the western end, the Capetian bridges between houses closer to the eastern, and all other tombs placed between them – denotes the monk's decision to emphasize the unity of the whole; the three lineages were there united, anchored by the premier Carolingian

[227] Philip II at birth was quickly linked to a blood tie with Charlemagne. Le Breton, *Philippidos*, *Oeuvres de Rigord*, II, 3. Gilles of Paris lauded the birth with a poem titled *Carolinus*, and later linked the king and his son Louis VIII to Charlemagne in his works. *Carolinus*, Brial, ed., RHF, XVII, 297. Pope Innocent III stressed the Carolingian descent of Philip in his decretal *Novit Ille*. Brial, ed., RHF, XIX, 458.

[228] Spiegel stressed her arguments on this point in several articles, most notably in "The Reditus Regni ad Stirpem," esp. p. 163.

found in the Ile-de-France. The placement of his tomb became an address to future kings, not an appeal to the past or an attempt to wipe out the stain of usurpation. If Philip II was the embodiment of Carolingian qualities and military skill, as the special connection to Charles the Bald would seem to suggest, his tomb in Saint-Denis symbolized a call to arms for all the Capetians who followed him.

The tomb project of the thirteenth century created a stage on which the Capetians could project their dynastic, militaristic, and quasi-divine claims. For the monks of the abbey, this work served as an argument for the continued use of Saint-Denis as the royal sepulcher and as the setting to demonstrate the duration of the union between the abbey and the throne. Given the triumph of the entombment of Philip and Louis, one must wonder why the monks believed their prerogatives were under attack. After all, Philip II had held the coronation ceremony for his wife, Isabelle of Hainault in the abbey. Both Philip II and his son, Louis VIII, had been interred with little doubt on their eventual resting place. A case can be made that the Abbot Odo saw the possibility of abandonment of older and more conventional abbeys as newer orders gained adherents, popularity, and grand endowments.

Investigations into the correspondence and disputes between the powerful abbots of the thirteenth century seem to demonstrate a fundamental fear that newer monastic models – the Cistercians, and the mendicant orders of the Friars Minor and the Order of Preachers - had gained royal ears and were making the case that the salvation of the kings and of the kingdom rested with them, not with older and more conventional orders. These monastic organizations, along with the leprosaria,[229] received growing shares of charitable donations in the thirteenth century, money

[229] See Carole Rawcliffe, who wrote on the spread of leprosaria in medieval Europe beginning in the twelfth century. Her work has focused on England, but can be generalized to other areas as well. Rawcliffe, *Leprosy in Medieval England*, (Woodbridge, UK, 2006), 106.

which once would have gone to abbeys like Saint-Denis or to secular institutions. William Jordon, in his investigation into the finances of royal abbeys such as Saint-Denis and Westminster, argued that the papal ruling on the foundation of new orders originating in the Fourth Lateran council of 1215 sought to control the proliferation of new organizations, but left the possibility that this ruling could be superseded by one of his successors.[230] In 1274, the Council of Lyons attempted to strengthen the ban, but asserted that orders established before 1215, those that could prove that they had been so, would be allowed to continue.[231] Houses such as those of the Cistercians, Premonstratensians, and Carthusians benefitted from charitable giving, while older Benedictine houses such as Saint-Denis saw the levels of donations fall. In his investigation of Louis' capital donations, Lester Little noted that "…he was the principal benefactor of the Franciscan convents at Paris, Rouen, Jaffa, and Compiegne, of the Dominican convents at Rouen, Macon, Jaffa, Compiegne, Beziers, Carcassonne, and Caen."[232] The effect of this extraordinary degree of royal benefaction affected older organizations, particularly those, such as Saint-Denis, which had relied primarily on the generosity of the kings. In his research on monastic funding in the thirteenth century, William Jordon wrote that "The mendicants' absorption of largesse probably had a greater impact on the old Benedictine abbeys, many of which were in towns, since the friars' convents were almost universally urban as well."[233] In addition to the mendicant orders, the monks also contended with the Beguine movement, but a considerable amount of the money once deposited in monasteries for the salvation of the soul were being siphoned off to fund crusades, an increasingly popular act of devotion in the thirteenth century. During the crusade of Louis IX,

[230] Innocent III (1198-1216) wrote in Canon 13 "Lest too great a diversity of religious orders lead to grave confusion in the Church of God, we strictly forbid anyone in the future to found a new order, but whoever should wish to enter an order, let him choose one already approved." *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils,* ed. Norman Tanner, 2 vols., (London; 1990; and Washington, D.C., 1990), I:242-243.
[231] *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils,* I:326-327.
[232] Lester Little, "Saint Louis' Involvement with the Friars,"134.
[233] William Jordon, "The Anger of the Abbots," *The Catholic Historical Review,* vol. 96, no. 2, (April 2010), 222.

from 1248 to 1254, Jordon notes that "…expenditures not only for public works but also for building and glazing campaigns for churches almost completely dried up in Northern France in the need to redeploy resources to raising the army and securing its transport to the eastern Mediterranean for that expedition."[234] Declining devotional bequests were not the most important blow to the ambitions of the Saint-Denis. Among other claims upon aristocratic and royal generosity to the abbeys, Jordan noted the shifts in laws regarding *mortmain*, both in England and France, which sought to restrict the passage of lands and income from the living hand of an individual into the dead hand of religious orders. He wrote that "when the lord granted a fief to a layman, he did so knowing that sometime in the future on the death of the tenant he, (the lord) or his heir would collect relief (basically an inheritance tax). …Typically, lords could not exercise these and similar rights over lands that churches held of them because the Church never died and was never a minor."[235] The loss of generous bequests from the royal family and, presumably, from noble families as well, must have shaken the confidence of the abbey, and they took two notable steps toward regaining their importance and renewing the financial support they needed. They turned toward the lucrative benefits of mass pilgrimage – a step we must infer from the creation of materials intended for a public audience – touting the unique offerings found in Saint-Denis, and they enhanced their arguments toward the royal family with new structures in the abbey – most notably the sepulchers of the kings.

The first sign that the monks may have had to serve as tour guides to the royal burials in the shrine can be inferred from the early thirteenth century work of the Dionysian monk Rigord,

[234] Jordan, "Anger of the Abbots," 223.
[235] Jordan, *A Tale of Two Monasteries; Westminster and Saint-Denis in the Thirteenth Century*, (Princeton, 2009), p. 178; Jordan, "The Anger of the Abbots", 225.

who was able to produce accurate descriptions of the resting place of the most important royal dead.[236] A few decades later, a curious illustrated manuscript provides some insight into the status of Dagobertian and Dionysian mythology in this period even while the document itself remains a cypher. This book, in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, ms NAF 1098, commonly referenced as the *Vie et histoire de Sancti Dionysii*, has been identified by Delisle as having been composed after 1233 but most likely before 1250, and it was housed solely in the library of Saint-Denis with no additional copies having been identified. Its composition can be dated as much of the material in the third section of the manuscript can first be found in a document known as the *Vitae et Actus Beati Dionysii,* which recounts the life of the saint and his miracles, and a brief outline of the history of the abbey and the royal line.[237] The *Vitae et Actus* can be confidently dated to the year of the death of Philip II,[238] and the *Vie et histoire* repeats the material found in the earlier document, but was translated into French with a separate quire of illustrations. Containing 67 pages, the book was modest in size and scope, and had been separated into three parts. The first section of the manuscript offered only prose written in vernacular French, with light abbreviation and few errors requiring scribal correction. This section of the document contained only decorated capitals at the beginning of each chapter. The second part of the book held 30 color images which cover the most important events in the life of the saint and the history of the abbey; these illustrations were driven by the contents of the first section of the manuscript, with each page of illustration covering the events outlined in one chapter of the preceding text.

[236] Rigord's work, dated to the late twelfth century, identifies the graves of only the most notable of royal dead: Charles the Bald, Charles Martel, Pippin I, Dagobert, and a few others. Most of the tombs in the abbey had not be buried with any means of identification or any clear plan on placement, and attempts at new burials in the abbey in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries often resulted in the discovery of otherwise lost bodies. Soissons, Bibl. Mun. 129, fols. 130r-137v. For the summary, see Delaborde, "Notice sur les ouvrages et sur la vie de Rigord," *Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Chartes,* XLV, 1884, 599-605.

[237] Paris, BnF ms. lat., 2447 and Paris, BnF ms. lat. 1509. The text of these manuscripts was edited and published by Charles Liebman in *Etudes sur la vie en prose de Saint Denis,* (Geneva, N.Y., The W.F. Humphrey Press Inc., 1942).

[238] See Charles Liebman, *Etudes,* 187ff.

The final section of the book was dedicated to liturgical material, based largely upon the contents of the *Vitae et actus beati Dionysii*,[239] which had included the encomium of Michael the Syncellus added to the ninth century *vitae* by Hilduin in his expanded life of the saint. None of the prayers found in section three received illustration. The 30 images included in the manuscript were described by Delisle as having …*un apparence assez grosiere*[240], and given the poor quality of some of them, in addition to the occasional awkwardness of composition and style, this is not an unfair assessment. The images were rendered in a limited color palette, using predominantly red, blue, and yellow. Few of the full page illustrations involve a single image or situation; most were two panel pages with an event represented in the upper and lower registers, while a few events required four panels rather than two. In most cases, the relationship between the events represented on the same page could have been deduced, as the actors were identical and each panel involved a continuation of the story; in others, the link between them must be interpreted, as was the case in the images portraying separate events and unique actors. In some cases, the events represented would be difficult to discern were the captions not included, and the captions appeared in alternating red and blue rhymed Latin couplets both above and below the illustrations. Some illustrations, particularly those found in the final chapters of the document, showed a degree of what must have been deliberate abuse. Some faces have been partially or entirely erased or smudged badly. The dating of this damage is unknown, and little motive can be discerned in the choice of figures so mistreated. Most of the figures that suffered vandalism were either kings or representations of Christ, but as the timing of these acts cannot be determined, little can be made of the choice of subjects for mutilation. The body of the manuscript, which outlined the stories of

[239] See Elizabeth Brown, "Paris and Paradise; the View from Saint-Denis," *The Four Modes of Seeing: Approaches to Medieval Imagery in Honor of Madeline Harrison Caviness,* Ed. Evelyn Staudinger Lane, Elizabeth Carson Pastan and Ellen M. Shortell, (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 443-444.
[240] Liebman, *Etudes*, 187ff.

the saint and his shrine, has been separated from the images, which may mean the two parts of the manuscript were composed separately and combined at a later point. None of the 30 images in the manuscript shared a quire with the text. In the illustrated section of the document, two pages of images faced each other, but the artwork appears only on one side of each sheet of parchment. The next two pages were left blank, and the illustrations can be clearly seen bleeding through the parchment. While the body of the manuscript bore illustrated capitals and the chapter headings were in Latin, the prose that follows was in French vernacular.

This book, the *Vie et histoire de Saint Denys,* became the first illustrated document on the passion of the saint, and much of its persuasive appeal rested upon the images found in its pages. While these illustrations were not as sophisticated as those which would be produced later in the century to accompany historiographic accounts, they were nevertheless powerful and convincing pieces of propaganda, substituting the persuasion of prose and sermons for more easily digestible depictions of history. The opening image of the book placed the story of Dionysius at the very beginning of the Christian era; however, rather than the crucifixion, the *Vie et histoire* provided an illustration of the ascension of Christ in the top register of the first page, followed on the lower register with the first glimpse of St. Paul preaching and teaching. (fig. 9) As Dionysius the Areopagite was alleged to have been converted by Paul himself, and as Hilduin's expanded *vitae* of the saint included a considerable amount of material on the argument that led to this conversion, the focus on Paul in the initial sections of the book reminded the readers of the international importance of the first bishop of Paris. Much of the material on the life of St-Denis was sourced directly from Hilduin, and the composers of this manuscript reiterated the falsified and largely accepted first century timeline promoted by the ninth century accounts. In image six of the document, the upper register recorded the death of the Virgin Mary, whom Dionysius was alleged

to have visited on a trip to Jerusalem. In the lower register, the saint met with Pope Clement I, who sent him with his companions to Paris to convert the Gauls. (Fig. 10) In placing St.-Denis in these locations with these notable first century figures, the author of the manuscript produced a powerful argument for the legitimacy of the early timeline.

After having dedicated most of the text to the life and passion of the saint, the book jumped ahead several hundred years to explain the connection between the abbey and the royal family. This section of the manuscript laid out the purpose of the book – to make a compelling argument regarding the centrality of the abbey of Saint-Denis in the history of the Frankish lines of kings. The account of the life of Dagobert found in the *Vie et histoire*, largely taken from the *Gesta Dagoberti regis* of the ninth century, served to construct a bridge between not just the saint and the kings, but the shrine and burial site of the saint and that of most kings who followed Dagobert. The history of Dagobert's interaction with the shrine required eight pages of illustrations, many divided into two or four panels. Those pages with multiple scenes typically offer events which occurred in quick succession, or involving the same actors.

The first page including Dagobert was among the more surprising of images found in this manuscript. With the exception of two pages dedicated to Marian imagery, all the illustrations included events found either in Hilduin's *Vitae Sancti Dionysii* or in the *Gesta Dagoberti regis*, and the actors on the page were always either the king, the saint, or people who were associated with the saint. As an example, Hilduin's account of the passion flows directly into the events leading up to the construction of the first shrine, having attributed the burials of Dionysius, Rusticius, and Eleutherius, along with early Christian converts Larcia and Lisbius, to a fictitious Roman matron, Catulla. The presentation of the characters and their deeds in graphic illustrations would serve to promote the ancient origin story of Saint-Denis. Typical of most of the work of

the illustrator of this text, when the page was divided into panels, the events involved similar circumstances or a continuation of the story with identifiable actors. This pattern does not hold for the first image containing Dagobert and the discovery of the shrine.

The 21st image in the *Vie et histoire* concerned two events, only one of which pertained to the shrine of the saint. (Fig. 11) In the upper register, the illustrator offered the coronation and baptism of Clovis, while below, Dagobert rode to the hunt with his companions. The conflation of these events, separated by roughly a century, served as a bridge between the ancient and sacred history of the saint and his followers, and the later interaction between the holy and the royal. In the upper register, Clovis received the blessing of St. Remi as a dove delivered the ampule of holy oil; below, his descendant chased the stag just before discovering the shrine. In privileging these two kings and two events, the illustrations seemed to argue for the remembrance of the Merovingian royal line, one which had been supplanted centuries before, but it also became a reminder that the line of Frankish kings had been chosen by God to rule, which would have held for both the Carolingians and the succeeding Capetians. As God chose the king, in their persons, secular and sacred power were intertwined. As much of the power of the Dagobertian tale was derived from the argument that the saint, in his power as intercessor, made the prince into a king through the bargain they struck, the non-dynastic argument inherent in the Clovis baptismal scene would seem odd.

The remainder of the Dagobert sequence in this document covered the most important events of his life and reign, and little here would be unusual. (fig. 12) Having once introduced young Dagobert at the hunt in Image 22, the illustrator added to the representation of the hunt on the following page. Image 23 involved the same actors in the upper register as appeared in the lower panel of image 22 – the young prince, one companion still with the hunting horn, and the

dogs, while the stag rests on the sepulcher. The ruined shrine appeared here as a suggested outline recognizable as a holy place by the inclusion of a censor hung from the ceiling. The hunting dogs in image 23 could not enter the shrine and, accordingly, their snouts did not penetrate into the doorway of the structure.

The lower panel of the 23 page of images avoided the question of the dispute between Dagobert and his tutor, Sadregisilius, making this first significant omission from the *Gesta* of Hincmar. Anything that might have reflected badly on Dagobert, whether the assault on his tutor, the disputes with his half-brother, or the multiple wives and concubines, has been ignored in this manuscript. After he was attacked and barbered at the prince's order, Sadregisilius could be found kneeling in supplication before Clothar in the lower register. The caption claimed that the duke, disturbed by his treatment, complained to the king.[241] While the duke appeared in this illustration as a moderately barbered man, none of the other figures on this page sported an obvious beard. Successive images of Clothar as he began the hunt for Dagobert showed him without beard, marking him an adolescent, and his hair was more reminiscent of a thirteenth century king than a seventh. Nowhere in this document were the Merovingians, with the exception of Sadrigisilius, shown with notable facial hair. While this beardless depiction of the royal family might have been the result of the use of figures found in pattern books of this era, which would rely upon standardized forms for illustration, the absence of facial hair for the kings has read in an odd manner, particularly when Sadrigisilius complained of the involuntary barbering he suffered. To the right of this tableau, Dagobert beccame the one taking refuge in the shrine. Like the stag above, he rested on the sepulcher with his head on his own arm. The illustrator's decision to place both

[241] *Hic Sadrigesillum barbe tonsure molestat; Quod Dagobertus eam secuit regi manifestat.* Ibid, fol. 51 v.

these events on the same page made the parallel plain; the royal stag and Dagobert were both hunted, both in fear for their lives, and find the shrine a convenient and powerful refuge.

The following pages illustrated the hunt for the young prince and the meeting between Dagobert and the saints, followed by his reconciliation with Clothar. In the upper register of image 24, the king ordered his servants track down his son; below, they return without the prince, protesting that they could in no way enter the place where Dagobert has hidden.[242] On the next page, which would have faced the previous images in the bound book, the illustrators presented the vision Dagobert received while sleeping in the shrine. The mitered former bishop, holding crozier and leading the tonsured priest and deacon, stood at the doorway of the shrine as the prince slept. Denis was joined with Sts. Rusticius and Eleutherius, identified here by their tonsures and halos. The posture of the prince here was nearly identical to that in image 23, Dagobert was partially curled into the small space and rested on the sepulcher. (fig. 13) The lower register has been divided into two panels. In the first, Clothar has tracked down his son with the assistance of those servants who were not able to enter the shrine. Once inside the ruined building, the saints defused the anger of the king, as Dagobert stepped forward to offer a kiss of peace to his father, signaling the end of their feud.[243] The miracle promised in his vision was not spelled out in this version of the prince's vision, which in the *Gesta* had been that the shrine be elevated to the status worthy of the saint. Here, the prince was filled with peace and wellbeing (presumably by the saints), and his willingness to greet his father with an embrace was enough to defuse Clothar's anger.

[242] *Ad regem redeunt famuli dicuntque repertum/ et non posse tamen contingere se Dagobertum;/ Nullo posse modo loca se testantur adire/ Que Dagobertus habet ; furit ille, nec imperat ire.* Paris, BnF ms. NAF 1098, fol. 53 v.
[243] *Rex sequitur natum Clotarius; infremit ira;/ sed reprimit votum sanctorum gratia mira/ hec admirantur qui regem concomitantur/ deposito genitor ira fervore minacis,/ ingreditur; nato dat amoris et oscula pacis.* BnF ms NAF 1098, fol. 54.

The *Vie et histoire* was also the first illuminated version of the history of the saint which included an illustration of the mystical consecration of the shrine.[244] Image 26 (fig. 14) has been split into four separate panels. On the upper left, Clothar prayed in the shrine, having been converted to a singular reverence to the saints there by the events in the previous illustration. The next panel provided evidence of Dagobert's coronation, and he appeared in this image much as those of his father – enthroned and crowned, holding a naked blade in his hand as a symbol of his power. The lower two registers recorded the translation of the bodies to the new shrine built by Dagobert, with the popular approval of the clergy awaiting the arrival of the saints inside the shrine. The building in which the clerics have gathered has been illustrated as more elaborate than any previous structure found in the manuscript. The architectural lines of previous illustrations have been minimal, reduced to mostly a door and a lintel, with hanging censors over the sepulcher to denote the site as a holy shrine. In image 26, the building gained crenellations on the roofline, and these markings became more elaborate in later illustrations of the shrine. The illustrator memorialized the fiction that Dagobert had constructed a wholly new structure for the saints, rather than merely expanding and enhancing the building erected in the sixth century. The 27th page of images, (fig. 15) which opened on the upper right with the new king summoning the bishops for the consecration of the shrine the next morning while, on the upper right, inside the more elaborate shrine, a pilgrim knelt before the shrine to pray to the saints. This was the leprous man who first received note as the witness to the miraculous consecration. The lower register recorded the consecration itself – Christ and the angels arrived in the shrine and he raised his hand in blessing; on the right, Jesus lifted the diseased skin of the leper from his shoulders to place on a rock nearby. The top two scenes in image 28 continued the story, as the leper petitioned Dagobert in his court

[244] For an outline of the dating of the first thirteenth century manuscripts that included the mystical consecration of Saint-Denis, see above, chapter 2.

and the king returned to confirm the pilgrim's story with the bishops of Gaul in his wake. (fig. 16) On the left, the pilgrim knelt before the king, who raised a hand while he listens; on the right, the pilgrim knelt again before the figure of his own face, showing signs of leprosy, stood on a rock near the altar. A young and beardless Dagobert raised his hands in wonder, while his entourage of bishops witnessed the scene behind him. The blighted head of the pilgrim has been enlarged in this image, perhaps to permit a greater degree of detail, but as this illustration has suffered vandalism, much of the detail has been spoiled. As the former head of the pilgrim also appeared here static, even frozen and inhuman, it may have been modeled on illustrations that included the busts of famous personages which would have been included in histories.

The final sequence of images in this manuscript addressed the death and salvation of Dagobert. (Fig. 16) In the lower panel of image 28, the king rested within a canopied bed. Above him, a group of counselors and courtiers mourned his passing. The two most recognizable faces may have been intended to depict Dagobert's surviving sons, Sigebert and Clovis II, though nothing in the captions would indicate that. All the gathered mourners and witnesses were secular individuals – none show tonsures or ecclesiastical garb. Below this panel, the king received honors from the assembled clerics of his kingdom, his funeral having taken place within the royal basilica. The tale of the king's death continued in image 29. (Fig. 17) Although the tale addressed the vision of John the Hermit, he never directly appeared in any of the illustrations. The events in this sequence were vigorous and violent. The king's soul cowered in the bottom of the boat while the beast-headed demons, too powerful to be contained even by the frame of the image, scourge him. One demon poled the boat along from the back. In the next scene the saints, led by the martyred bishop Denis, removed the king from the grip of the demons, the man behind him holding up a cross. The size of the king's soul varied between panels; in the first, his body would be comparable

to those of the demons who persecuted him; as he was assisted from the boat, he became of a height with the saints who have rescued him. In the lower left, the saints lifted the diminished and child-like soul of the king toward the waiting angels, two of whom held censors above the scene as Dagobert rose up in a cloth toward the sky. The caption identified the saints involved in the rescue – they were Denis, Martin, and St. Maur, the three premier Gallic saints of the early church.[245] The final panel emphasized the legitimacy of this vision with Ansoaldus dictating John's tale to St. Ouen, who diligently wrote down his account. The image privileged the act of witnessing; Ansoaldus as papal legate offered the first person account of the king's salvation to a known and respected member of the abbey, even though at the time, the abbey was not an abbey, and the account attributed to the pen of St. Ouen has not been preserved, if it ever existed. Here, the manuscript account of Dagobert's death and the intervention of the saints persuaded the audience to set aside any degree of skepticism on these events, and offered them the act of witnessing themselves, through the use of images depicting the miracle.

As the earliest manuscript offering images on the history of the abbey and the first that combined the tale of the king and the passion of the saint, the *Vie et histoire* served to conflate these two accounts, despite a significant gap of time. The book confidently projected Hilduin's tripartite identity for the saint, adopted the earliest timeline for the mission of Dionysius to Paris, and offered up primarily the miracles associated with the founding of the abbey. This became one tale, not two, housed in the same binding, making this a kind of biography for the shrine itself. If used to educate and elucidate the throngs of pilgrims crowding the abbey, the images themselves would have served to prove the events, particularly as many of those events would have occurred in or near the abbey. It was a decidedly pro-royalist document, as anything which may have

[245] *Rex clamat sanctosque vocat, sanctique miserti Mauricius, Dyonisius, et Martinus sunt Dagobert*. Paris, BnF ms NAF 1098, fol. 57, verso.

reflected poorly on Dagobert has been elided or ignored. More than that, though, it was a pro-Dionysian account, one which promoted a carefully delineated structure of power, patronage, and the importance of veneration to the saint and his shrine. The narrative of the *Vie et histoire* demonstrated those aspects of medieval historiography which have troubled modern readers; the willingness on the part of the author to accept without tampering the tales of previous generations, privileging them without criticism or skepticism. Gabrielle Spiegel, in her criticism of these sorts of sources, argued that "Facing the past, the medieval chronicler viewed himself essentially as a faithful conveyor of the written record and his text as a vehicle for transmitting segments of past texts conjoined. He was above all… a compiler, cloaking his authorial persona behind the authoritative works of others, with which he tampered only at great moral risk."[246] This was the heart of the reason to include an image of Ansoaldus with St. Ouen; it was the privileging of the witness, even if at a remove, while the caption of the image restated the claim of an eyewitness account. With the conflation of saint's *vitae* and the first royal patronage, the inclusion without question of the mystical consecration tale, the author of the *Vie et histoire* provided the abbey with a powerful call to popular devotion.

Here are the miracles that occurred during Dagobert's rise to power, during his early reign, and after his death. Certain aspects of the story which had been important to the ninth century author of the *Gesta* have been elided or edited out, most notably the bargain between the king and the saint. The *Gesta* account was clear; if the king agrees to promote the saints and decorate the shrine as they merit, the saints will support him "in all things". The *Gesta* had been composed to address questions of legitimacy and rule that had arisen during the contentious reign of Louis the Pious; no such concern appears in this manuscript. In fact, the needs of the king and the royal

[246] Spiegel, "Genealogy: Form and Function in Medieval Historical Narrative," *History and Theory,* Vol. 22, No. 1, (Feb., 1983), 45.

family have not been privileged. By failing to stress this bargain, the author of the book made an appeal to the principal audience for the document: the ordinary Christian, many of them pilgrims, thronging the shrine.

At its heart, the *Vie et histoire* promoted the centrality of the shrine to the history of the Frankish people, not solely to the kings. The tale of the mystical consecration of the abbey became an anti-clerical point and a deeply populist one. In the illustration, Dagobert arrived to bear witness to the pilgrim's claims, the bishops stood mute, as the consecration by Christ made their role in the blessing of the shrine unnecessary. The leper pilgrim who received the miraculous healing by Christ himself offered the real possibility of similar divine interventions to contemporary pilgrims. Even though the last vestiges of Dagobert's shrine would have been removed by the mid-1230s, as the monks renovated the nave, they could still stand where the leper had as he witnessed the entrance of the holy host and imagine themselves in his place. As Saint-Denis enjoyed a popular reputation as a place of divine healing, the promotion of the mystical consecration tale must be considered as an advertisement for the services of the abbey to the people. Thus the *Vie et histoire* served a dual purpose; evidence of the rise and popularity of the Frankish kings and a subsequent increase in pilgrim traffic in Saint-Denis. The limited guide to the kings' graves by the monk Rigord would have been supplanted by this new account, particularly as the pilgrims would have been able to see for themselves the new sepulchers of the kings increasingly dotting the nave. Additionally, the *vie et histoire* manuscript elided many of the events found in the earlier 9th century account to make the tale more streamlined for a new audience. The lengthy debates between the learned pagan Dionysius of Athens and the apostle Paul have been reduced to a single page of persuasion. Although the document referenced early Christian works attributed to St.-Denis, details of the contents of these visionary accounts were not included in the *Vie et histoire*,

only an illustration in which Dionysius receives the divine inspiration for his work. References to less savory aspects of Dagobert's life and reign have been ignored. Included among the miracles associated with the basilica in the reign of Dagobert was the tale of the mystical consecration – an event which bypassed the king and ecclesiastical elite and would appeal instead to the rising tide of populism within the body of the church itself. This was a populist document, one which would have been crowd-pleasing, focusing on the dramatic life and passion of the saint, and the three miracles alleged to have occurred in the life of the king connected to the shrine.

The tomb project in Saint-Denis, began under Odo of Clermont and finished by Matthew of Vendôme, would have been completed around 1260. When the reconstruction ended, the monks had arranged for the display of sepulchers around the abbey according to their relationship to the ruling Capetian household. In the center, Philip II and Louis VIII held places of honor. These monarchs would be joined eventually by Louis IX and Philip III, though a later shuffling of the tombs ordered by Philip the Fair altered the original structure. This sequence of tomb construction resulted in the creation of sixteen tomb structures, all intended to highlight the historical importance of royal burial and bolster Capetian claims to the glories of their Carolingian past.

Of the tombs established in the nave of Saint-Denis, Dagobert's demonstrated a very different type of message, one which may have encoded a reminder or a warning to the royal family. Not merely content to offer an effigy of the long dead king, the monks of Saint-Denis chose to represent the most dramatic and, for them, important sequence of events in the interaction between the Merovingian king and his patron saint. Georgia Wright dated the tomb of Dagobert, situated on the south side of the main altar, to the reconstruction of the 1240s begun by Odo of

Clermont, rather than a later date toward the 1260s. Her arguments for dating Dagobert's tomb as she did rested upon comparisons between the standing figures found on either side of the bas relief panels forming the central tale of the tomb and images known to have been erected in Notre-Dame, Chartres, and Bourges, whose dates are no longer contested.[247] Whether a product of the program to establish effigies in the nave, which began during the reign of Louis IX, or part of the earlier and extensive reconstruction of the nave begun in the 1230s, the tomb of the royal founder of the abbey stoof apart from the rest of the effigies constructed in the thirteenth century, both in its composition and its placement.

The tomb of Dagobert of the thirteenth century demonstrated similar forms of composition and style as bas relief pieces known to have been made around the same period and found elsewhere in the Ile-de-France. Between the period of 1260 and 1270, the canons of Notre Dame de Paris commissioned a reconstruction of the cathedral which included the addition of a door to be used by the canons when entering the building to perform mass.[248] This decade also corresponded with a period when the secular church found support and access to King Louis IX in significant decline, a trend that can be traced from his youth. As previously noted, Louis had made no secret of his preference for the mendicant orders, and the abbots and priests of older orders found themselves increasingly separated from the ear of the king. One of the confessors for Louis' wife, Queen Marguerite, stated in his letters that the king so favored the mendicant orders that "…in brief, Louis bore the largest part of the expenses of the Franciscans and Dominicans in Paris

[247] For her full analysis, which is only tangentially relevant to this article, see Wright, "Royal Tomb Program at Saint-Denis," particularly 232-236.

[248] Little literature on the Porte Rouge door of Notre Dame is available, but those who have studied it tend to concur on the dating of the carvings. M. Aubert dated the portal to a point prior to the death of Louis IX in 1270, claiming the likely sculptor was Pierre de Montreuil, in *Notre-Dame de Paris: sa place dans l'histoire de l'architecture du XIIe au XIVe siècle*, (Paris, H. Laurens: 1920), 142. Sauerlander has argued that the Porte Rouge dates the work to around 1260, see *Gothic Sculptures in France*, (New York; H.N. Abrams, 1973) 490. Cecilia Gaposchkin is more vague, placing the commissioning and placement of the carving between 1260 and 1274. "The King of France and the Queen of Heaven," 59.

and in other nearby places."[249] Dominicans served as his emissaries to Constantinople to retrieve the crown of thorns,[250] and the archbishop of Rouen, Eudes Rigaud (d. 1275), a Franciscan, seemed to have been a frequent choice to attend upon Louis and his family, even offering a mass in Saint-Denis in 1258 on the anniversary of the death of the king's father, Louis VIII.[251] To the members of the established church, the bishops, abbots, and canons who had once enjoyed liberal access to the royal family and court, the preferences of the king and his family for the newly established orders would have been alarming, particularly as the funding they had once considered their own drained into other coffers.

The reconstruction of Notre-Dame de Paris in the mid-thirteenth century resulted in, among other things, the creation of a new door through which the canons of the cathedral would enter for mass known as the Porte Rouge. In their construction of this new entrance, the canons commissioned imagery for the tympanum which would include the image of a supplicating Mary in the role of the church, flanked on either side by kneeling royal figures in prayer. In her work on the Porte Rouge, Cecile Gaposchkin has argued that these images were intended to make a statement regarding the excessive financial and political support of King Louis IX for the mendicant orders, at the expense of the older secular churches.[252] The secular church, trusted with the commission of praying for the souls of the people, suffered financial set-backs in Louis' reign, and nowhere more seriously than at Notre Dame, a secular church established in the back yard of the royal palace which nonetheless was supplanted when Louis built his own private chapel connected to the palace. Sainte-Chapelle, where Louis housed the relics from the crown of thorns,

[249] M. Aron, *Un animateur de la juenesse au 13e siècle: vie, voyages du bx Jourdain de Saxe,* (Paris, 1930), p. 158. Also cited in Lester Little, "Saint Louis' Involvement with the Friars," *Church History*, Vol. 33, No. 2, (Jun. 1964), 125.
[250] *Recueil des Historiens des Gaulles et de la France,* XXIII, 150.
[251] Eudes Rigaud, *Registrum,* 420-21.
[252] C. Gasposchkin, "The King of France and the Queen of Heaven," 58-72.

became, according to Gaposchkin, "…a rival sacred space which was the exclusive domain of the crown, specifically independent of the cathedral."[253] Coming as it did in the wake of works from theologians of Paris, most notably those of Vincent of Beauvais (c. 1190-1264) and Guibert of Tournai (fl. 1254), who argued that the …*corpus reipublicae mysticum*, which had as its head the king and was an entity separate from the *corpus ecclesiae mysticum*…[254] members of the secular church feared the repercussions of the king's devotion to the new preaching branches of the church. If the king was, indeed, free from the necessity to turn to the secular church as advocate and intermediary, but could instead advocate for himself in his role as head of the New Jerusalem, the established church in France would need to look to ways to curb the king's ambitions. Thus the tympanum, established between 1260 and 1270, would have been a statement of the ideal relation between church and crown; the kneeling crowned heads of state, whether intended to represent Louis and his wife Marguerite, could be any and all crowned heads of state, who must turn to the secular church to advocate on their behalf. The figures above the Porte Rouge would have been a statement of the ideal situation, one where the king and his family turn piously to the church for counseling and salvation, rather than establish a competing chapel staffed by members of the new mendicant orders.

Georgia Wright has argued that the tomb of Dagobert found in Saint-Denis must be most confidently dated to a period between 1245 and 1255, though the commission may have been as early as 1235.[255] The design of this tomb was highly original. (fig. 18 and 19) This funerary emblem dthe story of Dagobert's salvation, stressing the centrality of hermit John's vision and the

[253] Ibid, 66.
[254] Ibid.
[255] Wright argued that the carving, particularly of the folds of clothing seen in the supporting figures of Nanthilde and Clovis II, demonstrate the same degree of confidence and control as found in similar figures solidly dated to earlier in the century, particularly that of the Angel Gabriel of the south transept portal of Saint-Denis, which was part of the reconstruction project of 1231-1240. See Wright, "A Royal Tomb Program," 231.

puissance of the French saints, particularly Denis and Martin, as intercessors for the soul of the king. The tomb was architectural in design. Nanthild and Clovis stood either side of the main panels as both columns to support the upper registers, and silent witnesses to the proceedings. Here, Clovis II appeared as a young man, not the child seen in the statue in the cloister, though still beardless – perhaps to indicate his age and the necessity of a regency after Dagobert's death. Nanthild, the favored wife of the king, held a book in one hand; Clovis retained a chest, perhaps a reliquary. They stood upon plinths, similar to the kings' pillars found in the cloister, with a canopy above. Arrayed upon the canopy, the sculptor presented six angelic forms, all witnesses to the events of the king's death and resurrection. At the summit of the tomb, saints Martin and Denis knelt in supplication before Christ, they in profile while he turned toward the viewer, one hand held up in blessing and the other holding a book. The bottom of the tomb presented Dagobert, resting uncomfortably and stiffly on his side, hands pressed together in prayer, and gazing directly back at the viewer. The center of the tomb told the story of the death of the king and his miraculous resurrection.

The sequence of events was intended to be read from bottom to top, from left to right, and separate event appears in an individual panel. Hermit John, the holy man whose testimony provided evidence of Dagobert's salvation, appeared only in the first of these vignettes. In the left section of the bottom panel, John had taken to his bed after his long vigil, only to be roused by St.-Denis, crowned with bishop's miter and holding his crosier. The saint bent above the sleeping man, bidding him rise and witness the events outside the window. To the right of the hermit, the king stood inside a small craft. Although naked, his crown and hair style would be typical for depictions of a king in the mid-thirteenth century. Around him, demons crowded into the boat in an attitude of celebration; one played a horn while beating a tambour, another reached toward the

prayerful king as though to embrace him. Three demons waited to enter the boat still – two seemed to push the vessel away from the shore while a third, smaller and more juvenile than the others, pulled at the front.

In the panel above, the situation has changed. Two mitered figures – Saints Maurice and Denis - stood to the left of the boat to assist the king while St. Martin cast the demons into the water. One took his arm while another supported him as he is pulled off balance – one demon still retained his left hand and resists, dragging the king back into the boat. The other demons, more concerned with their own safety jostled each other to flee out the back of the vessel; they turned comical faces toward the viewer as they scramble to escape Martin who has entered the boat and struck at them with a staff. One demon has already dived into the waters, only his goat-like tail and hooves remained visible above the waves. Behind the saints, two archangels waited upon to perform their offices in aid to the king.

In the final panel of the tomb, Dagobert rose to his reward. The saints have placed Dagobert into a canopy, each taking one end of the fabric. The king stood inside this new vessel, his left hip hitched naturalistically a little to the left side, still in an attitude of prayer. To either side of the bishops, the angels have knelt; each saint has two of the host in attendance, one each carrying a candlestick and a censor. As the soul of the king was lifted toward the heavens, more angels holding triumphant horns sounded his arrival, and the heavens opened to receive him.

The effigy of Dagobert appeared in this composition at the base of the tomb. He rests on his side, eyes open, with his hands folded in prayer. In her analysis of this tomb, Georgia Wright argued that the position was intended to express a message to those who might see this piece of art. She stated that "…this uncomfortable pose suggests that the King still solicits the prayers of

the monks and still needs the power of the relics in the altar to save his soul."[256] The tomb of Dagobert, as designed in the mid-thirteenth century, was placed on the site of his historical burial – on the south side of the main altar, near the steps leading to the holy relics of the saints. This position would have the king facing the saints, directing his prayers toward them. Wright may be correct in her interpretation of the king's position, but if the viewer was expected to read the position of the king as a supplication for additional prayers, one must ask why Dagobert, clearly having been rescued by the saints hundreds of years previously, would need the aid of contemporary viewers. However, an alternate interpretation might be that those who visited the abbey would be invited to mimic the king, not pray for him. After all, if the images depicted in the bas relief were accurate, Dagobert rests comfortably in heaven with the Frankish saints, and would need no contemporary intervention. Although Dagobert is safely resting in the afterlife, those who stood before his grave would not be so assured; the tomb could serve as a guide, a reminder, and a promise – those who would offer their homage to Denis and the other Frankish saints could be assured of salvation. If the tomb had been completed in the 1240s, as Wright proposed, its placement in the abbey would have corresponded with the announcement by Louis XI to embark upon crusade, a decision which would have made the monks of Saint-Denis fear the loss of yet another royal body in the nave.

Yet if placed into context, as the monks scrambled to produce highly visible and expensive sepulcher structures for not only the current line of kings, but for a full 16 other rulers, and as they began to see the tide of royal benefices and alms moving toward newer institutions and the pockets of mendicant orders, this tomb took on a different meaning. By 1245, Louis had begun to show a marked preference for the Franciscans, Dominicans the Cistercian order, and institutions like

[256] Wright, 236.

Saint-Denis, while still receiving some degree of royal benefice, had to compete for the money the monks believed should be theirs. Additionally, as Louis had established the abbey of Royaumont, paid for large numbers of masses to be said for his soul and the souls of his family, and placed his minor children there at their deaths, they may have feared being supplanted as the royal necropolis by Louis and, in turn, his heirs.

Like the book constructed for public viewership, the *Vie et histoire*, the tomb told a story about the relationship between the king and the royal abbey. In his time of greatest need, Dagobert called out to the most important saints of the Gauls who had the power to effectively advocate for the salvation of the king. In the uppermost register, in the tympanum, the saints knelt in supplication to Christ himself, and Dagobert just below was raised to the heavens. These events, the tomb grants, occurred in the past. Dagobert was long dead, and long since established among the saved, regardless of his deeds in life. The message here was for the current king, one who would turn away from the traditional saints of the Franks and adopt a new form of patronage, bypassing older seats of power established in the abbeys of the Frankish lands. As Dagobert turned toward the relics of the saints, so should contemporary kings. Only these saints had the power to redeem a king, no matter how grievous his sins. Like the tympanum on the Porte Rouge, this piece made a statement about what was ideal given what seemed to be real. To persuade, the monks emphasized a miracle account from the *Gesta* which was not particularly flattering to the kings; Dagobert required intervention to gain salvation. As Louis had proven sensitive toward the question of the status of his soul, the monks must have believed the expense of constructing this elaborate tomb would assist them in maintaining influence with the king. No matter the number of masses intoned for his soul in Citeaux, the traditional patron saint of the Frankish royal houses

would be the only one to win salvation for the kings. Unlike the *vie et histoire*, this Dagobertian imagery was meant primary to persuade the royal family, most particularly Louis IX.

The tomb of Dagobert held the distinction of being the only such structure in Saint-Denis that offered images illustrating a story. The kings and queens whose likenesses filled the nave largely laid in repose, symbols of power and rule surrounding them. Unlike the effigy of Dagobert, who turned in prayer toward the shrine, the other kings and queens rested their hands at their sides, or pressed them to a chest. No other prayed. They were effigies of the royal family in death. Dagobert was frozen in time in a moment of piety.

Given this strong statement to Louis and the royal family, one must ask how successful the monks were in gaining Louis' attention and promoting their claims as the royal necropolis. Although we cannot be certain what, exactly, persuaded the king, there can be little doubt that he intended to be buried in the abbey when he left on his second crusade in 1270, and he demonstrated some marks of preferment toward the basilica before he left. The placement of gold offerings on the altar in emulation of Charlemagne seemed to argue an understanding between the king and the monks, and when he prepared to embark on his second crusade, he chose Matthew of Vendôme as his regent. Some of Louis' change of heart may have been determined after the dispute between secular clergy and mendicants exploded between 1254 and 1256, when William of Saint-Amour criticized the king for his excessive zeal and pious behavior, which many believed was unbecoming to the image of a king. In adjusting his lifestyle in the wake of such rebukes, Louis condemned the messenger, but may have heard the message well enough to moderate his preference for mendicants and Cistercians in his governance and, perhaps, in his choice of burial site. Although there is no sign after 1256 that Louis returned to the secular church or the more traditional monastic orders for advice and the ministration of his soul, he did accept the necessity

of royal burial in the nave of Saint-Denis and established the abbot of that institution as his regent. Perhaps the king maintained his own personal attachment to the new orders as a man, but recognized the necessity of a public embrace of more conservative religious institutions as a king.

When Louis IX died on crusade in 1270, his entourage made arrangements to return his body for burial Saint-Denis, as stipulated in the king's will. At least in this respect, the propaganda of the monks and the skill of the artisans persuaded the king to be buried with his kin. In fact, all the remaining Capetian kings embraced the necessity of a Dionysian funeral. Taken as an absolute – the kings will be buried in Saint-Denis – this can be considered a triumph. All of Suger's direct access and influence with the court had not succeeded as well. Though we cannot credit this success wholly to Dagobertian imagery, the use of the story of the first royal convert to the shrine was certainly emphasized in the first half of the thirteenth century. Just as importantly, the abbey church had embraced the public appeal of the royal tombs in a way that allowed them to circulate the history of the basilica more widely, with a very likely gain of influence and funding from pilgrimage. They used the ninth century story of Dagobert carefully, editing out the reasons for his near damnation, while maintaining the miracles at the heart of the story – the discovery of the shrine, the bargain between saint and king, the mystical consecration, and the salvation of the king. If the monks had wished to merely emphasize the union between king and abbey, his tomb might have offered images from the deal struck Dagobert and Denis; one could imagine a stained glass tutorial on the event, or a tomb which offered the story of the stag hunt and the reunion of the prince and his father, stressing the role played by the saint as kingmaker. Instead, the focus on Dagobert's death stressed the necessity of Dionysian burial, the puissance of the saints found there, and the salvific powers of Denis and the Gallic saints.

The thirteenth century also saw that the monks of the royal basilica turned toward supporting popular veneration, and perhaps they promoted the shrine more widely as a place of miraculous healing. Suger had argued for the expansion of the shrine to accommodate the crowds that thronged the structure on the saint's day, but with the completion of the royal sepulchers and the rising tide of royal popularity after the battle of Bouvines, the monks may have begun to realize the lucrative aspect of pilgrims and their alms to the church. The new royal tombs were designed to awe those who saw them, and that would include not just the royal family. If Saint-Denis likewise experienced an increase in visitation by noble families who either counted their descent from Charles the Bald or from legendary knights who attended Charlemagne, the construction of didactic material for the abbey would serve to promote the glories of the royal dead and the necropolis they inhabited.

Although the Capetians never again challenged the natural right of the basilica to bury kings, the question of the disposition of the recent royal dead became a flashpoint between the monks and kings in later decades. In order to prevent the loss of status as the royal necropolis of France in an age when the Capetians embraced bodily division and multiple burials, the monks would turn again to the question of Dagobert as a persuader. The disputes of the late thirteenth century eventually gave rise to the most important of gothic manuscripts produced in the abbey, the culmination of centuries of document production among the Dionysian monks and abbots.

Chapter 4:
Death, the division of the body, and the royal necropolis:
The Genesis of the *Vie de St.-Denis*.

Louis IX died in the Holy Land in 1270. His first crusade began in 1248, and Louis had returned to Paris in 1254. In that year, the king performed ritual acts of vassalage to Saint-Denis by placing four bezants of gold on the altar of the church for each year he had been absent. By his acts, Louis made it clear that he had accepted the Dionysian fiction which made the Saint-Denis the liege of the royal house of France, and directly linked his own royal prerogatives to the power of the shrine. Upon announcing that he would depart again on crusade in 1270, the monks feared greatly that Louis would die in foreign land and they would lose the right to his royal burial. This fear was realized when the king died near Carthage, months away from the abbey, later in that year. Louis had previously stipulated that he intended to be buried in the Saint-Denis – a point which demonstrates the effectiveness of the abbey's redesign and tomb construction program – but only if he died within a reasonable distance of the shrine and in territory that was not yet Christian.[257]

To accommodate the wishes of Louis, and to prevent his burial in heathen lands, the king's companions chose to first remove his viscera, then boil his body to separate the bones and the flesh. His heart and entrails went to his brother, Charles I of Anjou, who later buried them in Monreale.[258] Once returned to France, Louis IX was interred with all due obsequies in the abbey

[257] In the wake of Louis' death, some of his royal biography would be reimagined to promote the idea that he was a generous and frequent benefactor of the shrine of Saint-Denis, despite evidence of the decline in royal grants to many of the older monastic orders during his reign. Instead, his heirs would often be reminded of the piety of Louis IX and his generosity toward the royal basilica, acts they were supposed to emulate. Brown, Elizabeth A. R., "Death and the Human Body in the Later Middle Ages: the Legislation of Boniface VIII on the Division of the Corpse," *The Monarchy of Capetian France and Royal Ceremonial*, (Variorum, Great Britain), 1991, 231.

[258] Letronne, "Sur l'authenticité d'une lettre de Thibaud, roi de Navarre, relative à la mort de saint Louis," *Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des chartes (*BEC) 5 (1843-1844), 106-107, 109, 116-117 : Natalis de Wailly, "Examen critique de la vie de saint Louis par Geoffroy de Beaulieu," ibid. 15.2 (1845) 416, 434-436.

of Saint-Denis, as he had intended.[259] This precedent, the division of the bodies for interment in multiple sites, became the preferred method of burial within the royal houses of the Franks. Between the death of Louis IX and the bull of Boniface VIII condemning such bodily divisions, nearly every member of the Capetian royal household had their bodies divided at death, and donated portions to the abbeys and churches they preferred, and despite the strongly worded rejection of this practice, the royal family of France continued in this vein after 1299.[260] The decision to separate body parts for multiple burials speaks to a degree of spiritual insecurity among the later Capetians. While Louis IX requested a burial at Saint-Denis, his instructions to his companions did not indicate that he foresaw a divided interment. While many other Capetians also found divided burials a necessity, given a death far from their desired resting places, the last decades of the thirteenth century saw a trend among the royals to donate body parts in their wills to separate institutions. Many of these donations provided organs to newer monastic orders; just as the Capetians of the twelfth century, notably Louis VII, favored the Cistercians, the later Capetians preferred the churches established by the Dominican orders.[261]

In the light of the new fashion to separate and bury bodies in different religious institutions, the abbey of Saint-Denis found itself fighting not merely to claim the royal dead, as this privilege was not significantly questioned after the passing of Louis IX, but for the continued right to house

[259] The funeral of Louis IX was not without incident. When the royal family, including his heir Philip III and grandson, who was to be Philip IV, processed from Paris to Saint-Denis, they included in their entourage the bishop of Paris, who wore his bishop's regalia. As the abbot of Saint-Denis had been granted, by ancient authority, precedence over any bishop, Matthew of Vendôme closed the doors of the basilica to the funeral procession and would not allow entry until such time as Bishop Etienne Tempier and the other bishops of France divested. See Guillaume de Nangis, HF, 20-468-9; Langlois, *Regne de Philippe III*, (Paris, Hachette et cie, 1887), pp. 54-5; Jordan, "The Anger of the Abbots," p. 231; Jordan, *A Tale of Two Monasteries*, 137.

[260] Boniface VIII issued the bull, *Detestande feritatis*, in 1299. In this document, he insisted upon the barbarity of bodily division, and proclaimed this act an impious act violating common decency. For the full text, see *Les registres de Boniface VIII*, ed. Georges Digard et al., Bibliothèque des Ecoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, ser. 2, 4 (Paris 1884-1939), no. 3409. For analysis of this bull and the points of conflict between Boniface and Philip the Fair on the issue of bodily division, see Brown, "Death and the Human Body", 231-270. However, despite the papal disapproval for the division of the body, divided burials continued to be practiced in the French court afterward.

[261] See above, chapter 3 of this dissertation.

the most important parts of the body in their necropolis. The body after death was not a spiritually neutral object; each part received assigned values, ranging from the viscera and the flesh to the skull and more highly coveted organs like the heart. The receipt of even a part of the royal corpse by a monastery or religious shrine could boost pilgrim visitation and increase financial support from the family, who would pay for annual masses for their dead and fund new chapels. When, however, the heirs to the crown disputed with the stipulations of the will and withheld or alienated part of the body for their own purposes, the monks of Saint-Denis feared they were again losing ground to other institutions. The insecurity of the monks in the wake of the death of Philip III and Philip IV demonstrate the reasons for the production of a work of art which would work to solidify the shaky relations between the crown and the abbey in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century. This work, typically titled the *Vie de St.-Denis* (Paris, BnF ms. Fr 2090-2092, and Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, ms. fr. 13836) would eventually present the royal family with expanded and powerful versions of every important pro-Dionysian and royalist manuscript that had been produced prior to the first decades of the fourteenth century. Notably, the account of the reign of Dagobert dominated the section of the material which provided the biography of the royal line and demonstrated again the centrality of Dagobertian imagery to the monastery in their appeal to the royal family.

On the surface, the royal family remaining at the death of Louis IX were conventionally pious, and conventionally dedicated to the conservative shrine of Saint-Denis. When Louis IX died in Tunis in 1270, his desire to be interred in Saint-Denis had been cemented in his will and reinforced by some of his statements in life.[262] Although his will stated that his main concern was

[262] Some of Louis IX's statements as king seemed to indicate that he believed only kings should receive burial in Saint-Denis. He further stated his preference for burial in a Christian land: *Ossa sacra corporis ejus ex voluntate*

to lie in sacred ground, his body to be transported if he died in a non-Christian kingdom, his marked preference was for the royal basilica.[263] Clearly, some of the arguments made to the king before his departure on his second crusade had been successful as, despite the fears of the monks at the basilica, Louis did not propose to be buried next to his own minor children in Royaumont. After learning of the king's death, the abbot of Saint-Denis at this time, Matthew of Vendôme (d. 1271), anticipated the receipt of the king's remains for burial in the royal abbey. The bones were carried back by his advisors and the army to the Ile-de-France, with the expectation of burying them with the previous Capetian kings.[264] When the body finally reached the abbey and was received by Abbot Matthew, he would inter only the bones. The far more important element of the royal body, the heart, had been alienated by the funeral procession and given to the king's brother. Once laid to rest in the abbey, Louis IX received a tomb placed alongside the sepulchers of his father, Louis XIII, and grandfather, Philip II, as the most important members of the Capetian line. All three received preferential placement in the center of the nave.

In the case of Louis IX, the decision to divide his body for burial in separate locations was purely practical. The corpse, no matter how potentially holy, would not survive the long trip north from Carthage. When other members of the royal family similarly chose a divided burial, their reasons for doing so had more to do with a desire to multiply their spiritual benefits than for convenience. This division of bodies, which became a hallmark of burial procedures for the late

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domini regis novi Philippi debuimus nos, et quidam alii ad hoc electi, statim post obitum ejus in Francia reportare, videlicet in ecclesia beati Dionysii, ubi elegerat sepulturam, si in terra christianitati nondum acquisita ipsum, Domino disponente eveniret; *Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France,* ed. Martin Bouquet et al., 24 vols. (Paris, 1738-1904), 20 :24, chap. 46. See Alain Erlande-Brandenburg, *Le Roi est mort; Etude sur les funérailles, les sépultures et les tombeaux des rois de France jusqu'à la fin du XIIIe siècle,* (Bibliothèque de la Société française d'archéologie, 7 ; Geneva, 1975), 23-24.

[263] Comments made on his deathbed seem to confirm the king's wishes to be buried in Saint-Denis, though his will had been more ambiguous. Realizing the likelihood of dying on crusade, the king had specified that he should be transported to Saint-Denis only if he would otherwise be buried in non-Christian lands. Geoffrey of Beaulieu, in *Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France,* ed. Martin Bouquet et al., (Paris 1738-1904), 20.24 chapter 46.

[264] Jordan, "The Anger of the Abbots", 231.

Capetians and early Valois, was intended to not only show favor to the institutions endowed during the lives of those individuals, but to multiply the prayers said on behalf of the departed royals. The bones of Louis IX received burial in Saint-Denis after his death in 1270, and by all accounts, he received a magnificent tomb adjoining those of his father, Louis VIII, and grandfather, Philip II, in the transept before the altar.[265] The final disposition of his bones, though, became a point of animus for the abbey, and Louis' canonization in 1297 made possession of the principal sections of his body a point of contention with Philip IV. To understand the growing conflict between Philip and the royal basilica, we must first consider the events surrounding the interment of his father and the king's actions early in his reign.

The trend of bodily division did not begin with Louis IX, though he was the first of the Frankish kings to be treated so post-mortem. Louis' mother, Blanche of Castile, died in 1252 and stipulated that her body be buried in the Cistercian abbey of Maubuisson, but her heart go to the Cistercian house of Lys. Although she was buried intact at her death, the abbess of Lys finally claimed the queen's heart in 1253.[266] Jeanne of Chatillon (d. 1291), daughter-in-law to Louis IX, ordered that she be divided, with her body to rest with the Franciscans and her heart with the Dominicans, "so that she might profit from the prayers of the two orders".[267] Her pious wish, to increase the number of people who might pray for her soul, became a common theme for later Capetians.

This practice of multiple burial sites was not entirely new in the late 13th century; the first recorded occurrences were not among the Capetians, but were practices begun in northern Europe as early as the tenth century. Charles the Bald had famously been pickled in wine when he died

[265] For an analysis and reconstruction of the tomb of Louis IX, see Wright, "The Tomb of Saint Louis," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, Vol. 34 (1971), 65-82.
[266] Alain Erlande-Brandenburg, *Le Roi est mort*, 23-24.
[267] Andre Duchesne, *Histoire de la maison de Castillon sur Marne* (Paris 1621), preuves 72-82.

while crossing the Alps, his entrails removed and buried separately. His first burial was in Nantua, but at the persuasion of a vision by a Dionysian monk, he was disinterred and transported to Saint-Denis seven years after his death.[268] Other prominent individuals, such as Emperor Otto I who died in 973, and Bishop Gerdag of Hildesheim, who died in 992, were similarly eviscerated and dismembered, if not boiled.[269] All the individuals in question, prior to the thirteenth century, were treated so to allow for burial far from the site of their deaths; transportation of the dead over great distances could be difficult if not distasteful. Yet the custom developed, by the twelfth century, into a full endorsement by the royal families of many areas of Europe to divide their bodies for burial, citing reasons which were less practical. When Richard I of England died in 1199, He instructed that his heart be buried in Rouen with his grandfather, his brain, blood, and entrails in Charroux, and his body with his mother, father, and sister in Fontevrault.[270] English royals of the thirteenth century embraced the practice, with both kings and queens promising body parts after death to significant abbeys and cathedrals during their travels in life.[271] For the Capetians of the thirteenth century, the final resting place for the bones seemed to be accepted as Saint-Denis, but they would alienate organs to sites which called to them as spiritual sanctuaries. The desire to multiply the prayers of the monks and friars speaks to either an intimate desire for connection to favorite holy sites or to a profound concern for the future dispensation of their souls.

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[268] Alain Erlande-Brandenburg, *Le roi est mort*, 28, 73 ; *Les grandes chroniques de France* (GCF), ed. Jules Viard, 10 vols, Publications de la Société de l'histoire de France, 395, 401, 404, (Paris 1920-1953), 4.245-247.
[269] Brown, "Death and the Human Body," *Viator*, vol. 12, 1981, 226.
[270] Charles Bradford, *Heart Burial*, (London, Allen & Unwin Ltd; 1933), p. 22, 67-96; John Hardyng, *The Chronicle of John Hardyng*, ed. Henry Ellis, (London, 1812), 268.
[271] Most notable include Henri III of England, d. 1272, who was buried in Westminster Abbey but gave his heart to Fontevrault to be with his mother; Edward I and Eleanor of Castile were buried in Lincoln Cathedral, the London church of the Dominicans, and Westminster Abbey. F.M. Powicke, *King Henry III and the Lord Edward: The Community of the Realm in the Thirteenth Century*, 2 vols. (Oxford 1947), 1.197; Joseph Hunter, "On the Death of Eleanor of Castile, Consort of King Edward the First, and the Honours Paid to her Memory, *Archaeologia* 29 (1842) 186.

That the royal family would choose the Dominican and Cistercian orders for this honor raised new red flags for the Dionysian monks. Of those Dominican interments, the most controversial of them involved the burial of Philip III (1245-1285). Like his father Louis IX, Philip died while returning from his crusade in Aragon. As he was far from his own preferred place of interment – stipulated in his will as Saint-Denis – his corpse was also eviscerated and boiled.[272] The viscera and flesh thus removed stayed in Narbonne, where he had died, and received burial in the cathedral. The bones of the king would be buried in Saint-Denis, but his heart would receive separate treatment. Philip IV, in attendance at his father's death, acceded to the wishes of his own Dominican confessor, Nicholas of Gorran (1232-1295), and arranged to bury that organ in the Dominican church in Paris.[273] The decision to separate the heart from the bones sparked a protest among prelates and barons, then a debate among the masters of theology in Paris in 1286.

The main point at stake was not the division of the body, for which there had been ample precedent in cases when the deceased was far from home, but the slight to the abbey of Saint-Denis and the alteration of the king's wishes expressed in his will. In the quodlibitals of Henri of Ghent, Godefroid of Fontaines, and Gervais of Mont-Saint-Eloi of Easter 1256, the theologians laid out the argument in opposition to the king. Each of them denounced the mendicant orders, which they decried as "pretentious", and rejected the claim that a divided burial would multiply the prayers and aid the soul in salvation.[274] Henri of Ghent argued specifically for bodily burial intact, as

[272] See Brown, "Authority, Family, and the Dead," *French Historical Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 4, (Autumn, 1990), p. 867; Brown, "Death," p. 235-6; Brown, "The Prince is Father of the King: The Character and Childhood of Philip IV of France," *Mediaeval Studies* 49, (1987), 284 n. 4.
[273] Erlande-Brandenburg, *Le roi*,p. 173 ; also Pierre Pradel, "Un Relief provenant du tombeau des « chairs » du roi Philippe III au Musée de Narbonne ," *Revue archéologique* (1964) , 35-38.
[274] For the work on these arguments, see Glorieux, *La Litterature*, 1:87-93, 133-134, 149-151; Georges de Lagarde, "La Philosophie sociale d'Henri de Gand et de Godefroid de Fontaines," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et litteraire du Moyen Age* 18 (1943-45), 73-76 ; Steven Marrone, *Truth and Scientific Knowledge in the Thought of Henry of Ghent*, (Speculum Anniversary Monographs, 11; Cambridge, MA, 1985), 1-11.

"…one member cannot rise unless joined to the others."[275] Thus, humans should strive to be buried whole, particularly in proximity to their family members. This argument, for the family grouping of the deceased, speaks to the strong claims made by the abbey of Saint-Denis to the royal dead. In addition, Godefroid argued that the division of the body at death is revulsive, inhuman, and atrocious, though he allowed that the reunification of the body at resurrection was perfectly within the power of the divine.[276] The argument did not end with the statements made by the theologians in 1286. In 1290, the issue of bodily division was addressed by Benedict Caetani, the future Boniface VIII, who upheld the mendicants' rights provided by Pope Martin IV in 1281. As the arguments marshalled against the divided burial were largely propelled by the mendicant orders, who seemed to see this prospect as the only means they would have to gain wealthier and higher profile burials in their new institutions, Caetani's rebuke of the secular arguments served to further embolden the demands made by the Dominicans for body parts. Godefroid, in a later response on this controversy, rejected the friars' argument that the separation of body parts would redound to the advantage of the soul. In 1286, the theologian rebuked those who chose divided burial without rational reason (i.e. death far from the place of preferred interment), and that the practice rejected God's plan which united all body parts in a manner described as akin to the unity of the body of Christ. To increase prayers for the soul, he advocated that the wealthy could use their own goods to purchase prayers, and the poor could rely on intercessions from other Christians.[277] Preferably, the dead should be buried intact.

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[275] Henri of Ghent, *Quodlibet IX*, 230-31, ed. Macken, 232-33.

[276] "*Cum corpus entitatem et unitatem habeat ex aggregation suarum partium, sicut separation partium est contra bonum naturae, ita velle illas separari nisi ob aliquam necessitatem videtur esse contra bonum moris. Unde sicut in esse naturae constitutum est cum omnibus membris et sic etiam resurget, ita videtur quod rationalis voluntas uniuscuiusque debeat esse ut quanto melius fieri potuerit, in unitate conserrvetur, et ad resurrectionem disponatur, licet virtus divina quantumcumque dispersa possit recolligere et reunire*. Godefroid of Fontaines, *Les Quatre premiers Quodlibets,* ed. Maurice de Wulf and Auguste Pelzer (Les Philosophes belges, Textes et études, 2 ; Louvain, 1904), 29 ; Brown, "Authority, Family, and the Dead", 819, n.58.

[277] Godefroid of Fontaines, *Le Huitieme Quodlibet,* 95.

More importantly, as Henri of Ghent argued, only the pope himself can alter the codicils of a will. Pointing directly toward the deeds of Philip IV as he prepared to inter his father, Henri described the king's actions at the death of his father. According to his account, Philip had intended to bury his father's entrails with a Dominican church near the site of the king's death. When the seculars of that city begged for reconsideration, Philip IV gave way and established those body parts in the cathedral, but agreed to bury the heart in a Dominican church in Paris.[278] Still according to Henry, the monks of Saint-Denis loudly protested this decision, but were forced to accept the king's promise and buried only the bones of Philip III. Henry of Ghent furthermore criticized both the monks of the abbey, who had accepted the reduced remains of the kings, and the friars who buried the heart; of the former, he argued that if the monks continued to allow partial burials, they might eventually forfeit the claim to be the royal necropolis as individuals might choose to be buried entirely with the friars. The theologian argued that the monks had a duty to demand the return of Philip III's heart, and the friars were morally bound to restore it to the abbey.[279] Although Henry of Ghent's decision to champion the monks of Saint-Denis would have confirmed the greatest fears of the abbey, his works nevertheless changed nothing.

The angry rhetoric of the masters of Paris, aimed as they were primarily at the king, also served as a rebuke to the mendicant orders, who often benefitted from the decision of the nobility to bury body parts with them. Given the extraordinary level of hostility that had developed between the secular clergy and the mendicant orders, the argument over the disposition of royal bodies should not surprise.[280] During the reign of Louis IX, the king accepted the necessity of conventional burial in the Royal Necropolis of France, yet privately he embraced the ideals of

[278] Henry of Ghent, *Avrea quodlibeta*, ed. M. Vitalis Zvccolii Patarini, (Venice 1613), fols. 104-6v; cited in Brown, "Death and the Human Body," 235, note. 53.
[279] Henry of Ghent, 105.
[280] For a summary of the arguments between the seculars and the mendicants, see chapter 3.

apostolic poverty promoted by the Dominican and Franciscan orders. This separation of the public duties of kingship and the private desires of the individual man who sat on the throne created a caustic environment between the religious orders – the secular and the mendicant – and with the royal family. In addition, the lines drawn between these groups might shift, given the political winds of the era. The Bishop Caetani who supported the mendicants' claims to divided burial, reversed himself as Pope Boniface VIII, issuing the famous bull titled *Detestande feritatis* in 1299, which rejected the practice in forceful terms. Decrying the division of bodies abhorrent and detestable, Boniface VIII declared these burial practices to be invalid and even illegal, stating at one point in the document that, given the separation of body parts, neither of Philip's parents should have been allowed burial in the church.[281] Although he did not address the theological issues raised in 1285 and 1286 among the Parisian masters, his rejection of piecemeal burials was more profound when reissued in September 1299, as it accompanied the release of the bull *Super cathedram*, which alarmed the mendicants of Paris in its support for the secular cause.[282] This bull, which had originally been expected to support the cause of the friars, instead rejected the rights of the mendicant orders to preach, hear confessions, and bury the dead.[283]

The bull of Boniface was timed in a peculiar manner. While the relationship between the king and the pope deteriorated in the first decade of the fourteenth century, Boniface had been an ally as Philip IV sought canonization for his grandfather, which was approved in August of 1297.[284] Boniface set the celebration for the canonization for May 7, 1298, and at a point after

[281] Brown, "Death and the Human Body," 247.
[282] The text of Boniface's bull, dated 27 September 1299, can be found in *Les registres de Boniface VIII*, ed. Georges Digard et al., Bibliothèque des Ecoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, ser. 2, 4 (Paris 1884-1939), no. 3409 ; also Caesar Baronius and Odoricus Raynaldus, *annales ecclesiastici*, 34 vol. (Lucca 1738-1756) 1299, no. 36.
[283] *Aliquid de corporibus quorumcunque potentium morientium sibimet vendicabant, more canum cadaveribus assistentium, ubi quisque suam particulam avide consumendam expectat. Chronica monasterii S. Albani,* ed. Henry T. Riley, 2 vols, roll series 28 (London 1863-1876), vol. 3.129.
[284] For an outline of the canonization of St. Louis, see Louis Carolus-Barre, *Les enquêtes pour la canonization de saint Louis*, in *Revue d'histoire de l'église de France*, 57, no. 158 (1971), 19-29. Boniface used the impending canonization

this announcement, Philip declared his intention to move the bones of his father from the abbey to a place in his private chapel of Sainte-Chapelle. The king requested endorsement of his plans from Boniface during the time between the negotiations of the treaty with England and its final approval, making the pope's agreement to the translation of relics more likely.[285] In his response, Boniface stated that he was aware of the imminent removal of the relics to Sainte-Chapelle, rather than endorsing the king's decision outright and, on July 7 1298, the pope forbade the monks to resist.[286] When Philip encountered resistance, he chose to set aside his claims to the relics, while nevertheless preserving the bulls according him the right to the translation.[287] Therefore, on August 25th, 1298, the relics of St. Louis were removed from his tomb, carried to an area outside the abbey protected by a canopy, then ceremonially returned to the church by Philip and his brothers to be placed into the reliquary prepared for the king.[288] Despite papal indulgences granted to those who visited Saint-Denis for the veneration of the new saint, or perhaps because of them, the monks of the royal abbey continued to thwart Philip's demands for the bones, particularly the skull of his grandfather. As relations with the pope deteriorated, particularly in the wake of *Detestande feritatis*, Philip's demands on the abbey went into abeyance. After the death of Boniface in 1303, Philip still did not pressure for the bones, as Benedict IX (1240-1304) signaled his willingness to antagonize the king when he excommunicated the king's agent Guillaume de

during his negotiations between Philip the Fair and Edward of England in the months leading up to the announcement. See *Les Registres de Boniface VIII*, no. 2301, dated 7 Feb. 1297. The above letter cited in Brown, "Philippe le Bel and the Remains of St. Louis," *Gazelle des beaux-arts*, vol. 95, issue 1336-1337, 1980, 180, note 2.

[285] See Robert Fawtier, *L'Europe occidentale de 1270 à 1380*, t. VI of *Histoire du Moyen Age*, ed. Gustave Glotz (Paris, 1940), 323-324 ; Brown, "Philippe le Bel," 175.

[286] A. Vidier, *Le trésor de la Sainte-Chapelle*, in *Mémoires de la Société de l'histoire de Paris*, XXXVI (1909), 268-269.

[287] Michel Felibien, *Histoire*, 256-262.

[288] This event was first recorded in Joinville in *Historiae Francorum*, XX 303-304. Also noted by Etienne Oroux, *Histoire ecclésiastique de la cour de France*, I, (Paris, 1776), 373 and 374.

Nogaret for his involvement in the imprisonment and abuse of the Boniface.[289] Only with the election of Pope Clement V in 1305 did Philip see a way to press his claim against the monks. When attending the coronation of the new pope in Lyon in November of 1305, the king received permission to claim the head and a rib from the reliquary in Saint-Denis. The next year, Pope Clement issued indulgences for those attending the translation ceremony that would move St. Louis to Sainte-Chapelle.[290] The abbot of Saint-Denis, Renaud Giffard (d. 1304), had led the monks in resistance to the king's claim, but with his death, the new abbot, Gilles of Pontoise (abbot 1304-1326), signaled his willingness to accede to the king's demands and surrender the relics.[291]

While other kings may have chosen to found and endow new monasteries, even bury members of their families there, and while they may have opted to have parts of their remains interred in separate institutions, only Philip IV publicly and acrimoniously antagonized the monks of the abbey. The monks of Saint-Denis during the reign of Louis IX chose to reconstruct the nave of the abbey to accommodate the expansive burials of the kings; during the reign of Philip IV, he imposed his own structure upon the bodies of his predecessors in order to emphasize the legitimacy of his reign and the spiritual sanction and connection between him and his recently canonized grandfather. Clearly, the relationship between the king and the basilica altered under the reign of Philip the Fair.

In the wake of the controversy surrounding the burial of Philip III, the theologians initially convinced Philip the Fair to arrange to be buried undivided, next to the bones of his father. His first will, dated 1288, reflects the controversies of that decade, and Philip set his burial site as the

[289] Martin Bouquet, *Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France,* vols. Xx-xxiii ; *Annales regis Edwardi primi in Rishanger*, 483-491.
[290] *Chronique de Guillaume de Nangis*, I 350, 353-354.
[291] Although the abbot was willing to surrender this point, the monks of the abbey still regarded the translation as a violation of their rights. This point was stressed in the continuation of the chronicle of Guillame de Nangis, I, 354.

royal basilica. He did not request the division of his body in this will.[292] When Boniface VIII died in 1303, Philip requested special dispensation from his successor, Benedict XI, for relief, but the new pope would only agree to bodily division in extreme conditions, such as existed for Philip III and Louis IX, who died far from the Ile-de-France.[293] Philip's will of 1311 determined that his heart would be buried in the Dominican church of St. Louis at Poissy, which he had founded in honor of his grandfather, and his bones in Saint-Denis, which reflected the right that had been granted by Pope Celestine V, who had succeeded Benedict XI by 1306. This new privilege, which gave the king the right to divide his body by any means he wished and buried in whole or in party in as many sites as he might specify, allowed Philip to determine, in his will of 1311, to designate the Dominican church of Poissy as the resting spot for his heart though, in a deliberate attempt to placate the Dionysian monks, he ordered the re-arrangement of the royal tombs in the abbey in order to accommodate his own burial.

The decision to reorganize the royal tombs in the basilica was undoubtedly that of Philip the Fair. In the wake of his success in claiming the greatest portion of St. Louis' remains, Dionysian accounts of the events of 1306 include a claim that the king ordered the translation of two Carolingian bodies from their original site on the north wall to accommodate the bodies of Philip III and his wife, Isabelle of Aragon.[294] In their place and in that of Louis IX's tomb, Philip IV wished to have his own sepulcher established. His decisions in regards to the bodies of his predecessors demonstrates that, for Philip IV, the foundation of his claim to rule did not rest upon the legitimacy of the Capetian succession or his direct descent from the Carolingian line of kings.

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[292] For analysis of Philip's wills, see Brown, "Death and the Human Body", p. 241; cf Archives Nationale, J 403 no. 12.

[293] Philip's will of 1288 listed his desire to be buried intact in Saint-Denis. See Brown, "Death and the Human Body," p. 241, note 81.

[294] Leopold Delisle, "Documents parisiens de la Bibliothèque de Berne," *Mémoires de la Société de l'histoire de Paris et de l'Île-de-France*, 23 (1846), 255. On the movement of tombs, see Andrew Lewis, *Royal Succession in Capetian France : Studies on Familial Order and the State*, Harvard Historical Studies 100, (Cambridge, 1981), 142-144.

For Philip, the association with a recently canonized member of his family would be the justification for his reign and for his actions while on the throne. The relics he claimed from the abbey in 1306 would largely come to rest in the private royal chapel established by Louis IX, while some fragments would be housed inside his own Palais du Justice. Philip's move to associate himself directly and consistently with St. Louis became his most closely held argument and governing principal. For Philip IV, the history of his family would be mutable and could be manipulated to suit his political purposes.

The manuscript commonly referenced as the *Vie de St.-Denis*, housed in four volumes in Paris, BnF ms. fr. 2090-2092 and Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, ms lat. 13836, is largely agreed to have been commissioned by Philip the Fair in 1306. The dedicatory letter in Paris, BnF ms. fr. 2090 identified the abbot at the dedication of the manuscript as Gilles of Pontoise, who claimed the abbacy in 1304.[295] The author of the manuscript itself has been established as Yves de Saint-Denis, an otherwise obscure monk of the abbey.[296] Funding for the manuscript mostly likely came from the king, as from the beginning, the book was intended to be masterful and beautiful; however, as the royal accounts from that year provide no description that could be construed as the commissioning of this book, royal financial support can only be inferred rather

[295] The original work on the dedicatory letter in BnF Ms. Fr. 2090 established the authorship as Gilles of Pontoise, the abbot of Saint-Denis in 1304. Delisle asserted that the manuscript was initially intended for Philip IV, but presented to his second son and heir, Philip V, after his coronation. *Quante etiam dilectionis zelo in prefatum martyrem gloriosum Dyonisium ejusdem vestri plissimi progenitoris inardescebat animus, instans eijus et devota insinuavit petitio, qua librum de istius, gloriosi athlete Domini gestis et miraculis sibi scribi voluit,…, ut iam pie recordationis progenitor vester mortuus sit, et quasi non mortuus, dum in vobis non solum nomine sed dignitate et devotione filium sibi similem derelequit.* Delisle, *Notices et extraits,* XXI, pt. 2, 1865, 250ff.

[296] While initial investigators of the manuscript asserted authorship of Gilles of Pontoise himself, later work on the dedicatory letter in Paris, BnF ms. fr. 2090 has revealed that the author was Yves. For a summary of the argument, see Charlotte Lacaze, *The Vie de St.-Denis Manuscript,* (Garland Publishing, Inc., New York, 1979), 4-5.

than proven.[297] What, precisely, the king expected from this manuscript, and whether it met his needs, cannot be determined, as neither the abbot nor the king himself have left evidence in the historical record.If commis sioned in 1306, a point at which Philip was most certainly in the basilica, funding the production of the manuscript may have been an attempt to placate the monks as he removed the relics of his sainted grandfather. It may also have been proposed by the abbot, a request which might serve to demonstrate the continued Dionysian support and favor toward the irascible king.

Regardless of what had been arranged in 1306 between abbot and king, the manuscript was not presented until 1319, five years after the death of Philip the Fair. In the opening illumination, Gilles de Pontoise knelt before Philip V (c. 1292 – 1322) to present the book, which in this image had been bound into a single volume. (Fig. 21) The banderole above these figures identified them as Egidius Abbas and Rex Philippus and, as the final chapters of the chronicle accounts included in manuscript BnF lat. 13836 include the death of Philip IV and Louis X, followed by the death of his infant son John, the identification of Philip V as the recipient of the volume can be established.

The manuscript the *Vie de St.-Denis* had been written in three sections, in order to do honor to both the Trinity and the three martyrs of Gaul – Rusticius, Eleuthyrius, and Dionysius – in an elegant Latin hand common to rich manuscripts constructed in the Ile-de-France during the early 14th century. According to the introductory material, part one of the document contains information on the early life of the saint: his education in the best schools of the Roman Empire, the arrival of St. Paul in Athens, and the conversion of Dionysius by the apostle. Part two continued the story of the saint after he had been consecrated the first bishop of Athens, followed

[297] The royal accounts of this time have been published. See *Recueil des Historiens de la France*, (Documents financiers II, II and IV – 1285-1328), eds. Robert Fawtier and François Maillard, (Paris, 1956-1961). However, internal clues in the production of the document may establish how far the royal funds extended, as the manuscript demonstrates a significant decline in the scope of illuminations in later sections.

by a brief summary of his visionary works – the *Mystical Treatises* and the *Celestial Hierarchy* – as well as his journey to Rome where he presented himself to Pope Clement. This volume finished with the martyrdom of St. Dionysius and a few of his posthumous miracles. The third volume is often called the Chronicle of Kings or *res gestae,* and is the history of the king of the Franks and the interaction between the saint and royal houses of France.

Paris, BnF ms. fr. 2090 – 2092 today contains only the first two parts of the manuscript. Moreover, rather than being contained in a single volume, as when initially presented, the material has been separated into three (or, actually four) individual codices. The original third section, the *res gestae* of the kings, was removed from the original manuscript, though at present, scholars do not know when this occurred. According to an entry discovered by Delisle in the earliest catalogue of the royal library dated 1373, only two of the segments remained there at the end of the fourteenth century.[298] These two sections received a French translation intercalated into the Latin, probably within ten years of the original presentation date.[299] The reasons for this translationclear; some scholars, notably Bossuat, have asserted that Philippe V commissioned the translation, and indeed, Lacaze's analysis of the single historiated and many ornamented initials in the translated segments bears out a strong claim to a translation constructed in the 1320s, a time when one can reasonably assume the royal household retained the manuscript.[300] Delisle initially argued that the French translation was added to the Latin text as a recognition of the inability of the royal court, or of Philippe V himself, to read the Latin.[301] Others, including Lacaze, have asserted that the translation was added to the text later, possibly after the death of Philip V and ascension of his

[298] Delisle, *Notices et extraits,* XXI, pt. 2, 1865, 251.
[299] For a reasonable summary of the arguments regarding the timing of the translation and the separation of the manuscript, see Lacaze's discussion in *The Vie de St. Denis Manuscript,* 75-81.
[300] Lacaze, 81.
[301] Delisle, *Notices et extraits,* XXI, 254.

brother, Charles IV, who reigned from 1322 to 1328. A French translation could have been added to the manuscript as a means of solidifying the legitimate claims to the throne by either brother, although the concern may have been more acute for Philip, who some believed hastened the death of his infant nephew, John I, in order to take the throne. If the French had been added after 1328, under the auspices of the first Valois king, Philip VI, who took the throne after a brief regency and reigned until 1350, the point of legitimacy many have been central to the decision to translate the text, particularly those sections belonging to the *res gestae*. Another answer to this riddle may be that members of the king's entourage had access to his personal library. Manuscripts could have been loaned, particularly given the strong claims to legitimacy contained within the document and the arguments concerning the support of the royal patron saint for Philip's ascension to the throne in 1317. If someone of Philip's court had inadequate Latin to parse the story, he may have requested translation; a similar motivation may have moved his uncle and eventual heir, Philip VI of the house of Valois. These translated segments were, in most cases, bound into separate quires, and then added after the original Latin material had been assembled and bound together. By intercalating this new material, the manuscript exceeded its original binding, necessitating the separation of the material into several volumes.[302] Parts one through three of the *Vie* would have shared a binding which can be glimpsed in the presentation illustration found in BnF ms. fr. 2090, as Abbot Gilles lifts the book toward his sovereign. After translation, only the first two sections remained together.

[302] Again, see Lacaze for an analysis of the folios and the quire gatherings. According to her codicological analysis, the translation of parts one and two of the text required 206 folios. The material originally contained in Paris, BnF ms. lat. 13836, the formerly lost chronicle, would likely have required 215 folios, if one uses the grisaille version of the manuscript as the model. Lacaze, 81-83.

The strongest evidence for a later intercalation of the French translation has come from an analysis of the quires themselves.[303] In the text, a segment of Latin will be closely followed by the French translation, but typically, a quire would not end at a point convenient to the narrative. Thus, the narrative was broken up, with the translated material often awkwardly added to the manuscript at inconvenient points, but only covering that material which had been addressed in the preceding Latin. In other cases, separate sheets of French were added between folios of Latin, allowing for a regular alteration between the two languages; this method of intercalation being most notable in BnF ms. fr. 2091. A third, and very rare, method of intercalation occured in BnF ms. fr. 2092, in which the scribe spliced a single sheet of parchment together along a beveled edge in a manner that would allow both French and Latin material to coexist on the same page. Finally, ghostly images of decorated miniatures appear on the facing pages of Latin text which have been separated from that image by intervening pages in French, indicating a previous binding which placed text and image together for a period of at least a few years. Had the addition of the French material occurred when the manuscript was initially bound, these facing-page images would not have occurred as they have.[304]

The first two sections of the *Vie*, consisting of the early life and theology of St. Denis, along with his martyrdom, could still be found in the royal libraries at the end of the fourteenth century. An inventory of manuscript, dated 1373, described it as "La vie Saint Denys et la vie de XLVI autres saints, bien ystoriée à chemise de toile",[305] and a later inventory, prepared for Charles VI (1368 – 1422), found it there still in 1411.[306] Yet in the next inventory, dated 1414 - 1415, it

[303] In her work on the subject, Lacaze provides charts demonstrating the codicology of the presentation copy of the manuscript, but the ghostly images caused by the illuminations on facing pages offers strong evidence for the original composition of the manuscript. Lacaze, 37-55.
[304] The codicology of BnF fr. Ms. 2090-2092 has been established by Lacaze, ibid.
[305] Gilles Mallet, *Inventaire ou catalogues des livres de l'ancienne bibliothèque du Louvre, fait en l'année* 1373, ed. Josephe Ignace Van Praet, Paris, 1836, p. 36, no. 155.
[306] Delisle, *Recherches sur la librairie de Chalres V*,I, Paris 1907, 30-31.

appeared on a list of books removed from the library for unspecified reasons.[307] While its whereabouts for the next half a century were uncertain, it was housed in the library of Jeanne de Laval, Queen of Anjou (1433 – 1498), a relative of the royal house of France, in the late fifteenth century. Evidence of her ownership can be found in the addition of her personal coat of arms on fol. 111v of BnF ms. fr. 2092.[308] After her death in 1498, her manuscripts moved to the chapter of St. Tugal in Laval, Brittany, where they were to be used by the women of the Laval family while in residence.[309] The *Vie* was mostly likely among these documents.

In 1662, the manuscript, separated from one volume into three, entered a royal library again as a gift from Count Hippoythe de Béthune to Louis XIV (1638 – 1715). By this time, it had acquired a reddish leather binding stamped with the donor's coat of arms, a cover it retains today. While the transferal of the document into the hands of the Laval family has not yet been traced, Lacaze argued that the manuscript, retained in a private collection for the use of the Laval women, might not have been returned to the church collection, and thus suffered private sale at some point in the late seventeenth century.[310] Once returned to the private library of the French royal house, the manuscript remained there until the libraries became part of the Paris Bibliothèque Nationale, at which point it was catalogued as Paris, BnF ms. fr. 2090-2092. The original third section of the manuscript, which had been removed most likely at the time the document received a translation and binding, was catalogued as BnF lat 13836, and contains the chronicle of kings.

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[307] Delisle, *Recherche sur la Librairie de Charles V*, I, 136 – 137.
[308] Identification of Queen Jeanne's coat of arms was made by Bertrand de Broussillon, who found an identical shield in a Psalter that once belonged to Jeanne de Laval. De Broussillon, *La Maison de Laval, 1020 – 1605*, I, Paris, 1895, 9.
[309] Victor Leroquais, *Les psautiers manuscrits latins des bibliothèques publiques de France*, II, Macon, 1940 – 1941, no. 385.
[310] Egbert argues that the book may have been acquired by an earlier member of the Béthune family who served in Brittany and was a collector of rare manuscripts. However Lacaze, who discovered a marital connection between the two families, asserts that the document either came into the hands of the Béthume family through inheritance or was sold to Hippolyte. See Egbert, *On the Bridges of Medieval Paris; a record of early fourteenth century life*, Princeton, 1974; Lacaze, 84.

Paris, BnF ms. lat. 13836 was confirmed by Delaborde as the lost third volume of the *Vie de St. Denis* in 1884.[311] This document, damaged and fragmentary in its current edition, possessed only chapters 57 – 168 of the original material, the first third having been lost at some point after it was separated from the original binding. The first several quires of the manuscript show a considerable degree of wear and are damaged, though much of the material remains legible. As the aforementioned inventory of the royal library, conducted in 1373, failed to mention it, the document must have been removed before that date, though its location after that point remains unclear. The current binding of the book could accommodate only those folios still remaining to the manuscript, which indicated that it was rebound after the book had been damaged.

The lack of scholarly interest in this manuscript might be the result of its fragmentary condition, but more likely, this disinterest can be traced to the far inferior artistic merits of the volume. The *res gestae* currently possesses only one full page illustration, and that one has been damaged, although roundels interspersed throughout depict individual kings or events corresponding to those presented on the same page. Much of the material concerned the genealogy of the royal house, and utilized the chronicle accounts created in Saint-Denis, including the *Grande Chroniques de France.* The text is rich in illustrated capitals and beautifully decorated initials, but the expansive and often magnificent paintings of the first two sections of the text – 77 in all – cannot be found in this manuscript. The first page of this damaged manuscript now contains the only remaining full page illustration. However, even though it is dark, stained, and difficult to discern, this image is a depiction of the death of King Dagobert. If additional images of this quality were ever included in the *res gestae*, they have since been destroyed or removed.

[311] H. Delaborde, "Le procès," *Memoires de la Societe de l'Histoire de Paris et de l'Ile-de-France,* XI, 1884, 353.

Like the first two sections of the *Vie*, the Chronicle of Kings received a translation into the vernacular, mostly likely also in the fourteenth century. Unlike the rest of the original manuscript, in which new quires were primarily intercalated among the Latin, the *res gestae* translations appeared as marginal glosses on the borders of each page. The French hand, which is an as-yet unverified mid-fourteenth century script, is small and challenging, and the translations into French are often awkward and too literal for easy reading. Much of the material offered in the larger Latin on the interior of the page had to be severely abridged in the French to accommodate the central ideas. Yet despite these limitations, the anonymous scribe managed to line his gloss carefully and little of the translated material required correction. The additions and corrections that do appear on the upper and lower margins seem to be in a much later hand, most likely dating from the fifteenth century, the point at which the manuscript received its current binding. If, as seems likely, the translations of the two volumes occurred under the auspices of either Philippe V or his heir, Charles IV (1298 – 1328), the scribe in question would have been employed in the royal household.

The condition of this manuscript can most likely be linked to the use it suffered during its time in the court. The first two sections of the *Vie de St-Denis*, concerning the deeds of the saint in life and his theological writings, may have offered little of interest to a busy and sophisticated Parisian court. As an ostentatious sign of wealth and power, on the other hand, the *Vie* could serve a prince well. The third segment, intimately concerned with the history of the royal line, might have been more useful to a king, particularly once separated from the remainder of the material into a codex less unwieldy. This part of the original manuscript offered not only flattering accounts of the history of the Frankish royal houses, but elaborate geneaologies which could be used to claim connections between the three ruling familes. Although the histories of most of his immediate predecessors have suffered abridgement in the *res gestae*, the unforeseen deaths of both

brother and infant nephew received a full accounting, and may have been included to offer Philip V additional evidence in light of early challenges to his reign. Therefore, had this text been kept closer to hand, the damage it sustained during years of careless handling might be more understandable, particularly if the quires were only loosely stitched together and unbound.

The provenance of Paris BnF. ms. fr. 13836 has been largely untraceable. Although Egbert identified it in a catalogue of manuscripts held by Chancellor Pierre Séguier (1588 – 1672), no one has developed a rational theory for his ownership. Upon the death of the Chancellor, the Chronicle of Kings passed into the hands of his grandson, the Duc de Coislin (fl. 1685 – 1686), who left the document to the monastery of Saint-Germaine-des-Près. After the revolution, the document entered the national library.[312]

Of the three manuscripts identified with the early fourteenth century presentation to Philip V, by far the most interesting and least studied has been Paris, BnF ms. lat. 5286. This document, first noticed by Delisle and tentatively identified as a copy of the presentation volume, was possibly produced by the same atelier at nearly the same time as the more elaborate book.[313] Since then, scholars have debated the timing of the creation of this manuscript.[314] Some, including Lacaze, asserted that this manuscript was not a copy of the more elaborate presentation copy, but intended to serve as a draft.

The provenance of the *grisaille* manuscript which contained the whole of the *Vie de Saint-Denis* has been less complicated than that of the other manuscripts mentioned previously. Delaborde found mention of a conflict in the first decade of the fifteenth century between the abbey

[312] Egbert, *On the Bridges*, 85, n. 14.
[313] See Delisle, *Notices et extraits*, XXI, part 2, 1865, 258
[314] The book was still noted as a *grisaille* copy in *idem, Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Chartes,* XXXVIII, 1877, 455; and by Liebman, *Moyen Age,* XLV,1935, 252.

of Saint-Denis and the canons of Notre Dame in which the prize would be the head of the patron saint of France.[315] To support their claim, the monks of Saint-Denis referenced a text maintained in their own library and known as *epistola Abbatis Egidii ad regem Fancorum Philippus directa super passion Sanctissimi Dionysii*. This document was undoubtedly the *grisaille* manuscript now known as Paris, BnF ms. lat. 5286, as it opens with these words. The monks of the royal abbey supported their claims to the relic by pointing to the tale of the martyr's passion, which ended when he finally deposited his severed head at the later site of the abbey. By the end of the fifteenth century, the book had been placed into the hands of Jean Budé, who established his library between 1481 and 1488 and whose coat of arms is still present on the edges of the pages.[316] By the seventeenth century, it had become the property of Cardinal Mazarin, and a notion from the first printed catalogue of the royal library from 1744 indicated that the manuscript entered that collection in 1688; the catalogue referenced it as *codex membranaceus, olim Mazarineus*.[317] Once the royal library was nationalized after the revolution, the text received the catalogue code of BnF ms. lat. 5286

The contents of this manuscript offer the best evidence of its place in the history of the *Vie de St.-Denis.* Unlike the now fragmented presentation copy, currently bound into four separate volumes, the *grisaille* manuscript remained whole and undivided. All three original sections of the story – the early life of the martyr, his passion and death in Gaul, the mystical writings credited to the Pseudo-Areopagite, and the Chronicle of Kings – are present in this text. While differences between the manuscripts existed, the nature of those differences have not as yet served to either

[315] H. Delaborde, "Le procès," *Mémoires de la Société de l'Histoire de Paris et de l'Ile de France,* XI, 1884, p. 353.
[316] Omont, Henry, "Notice sur les collections de manuscrits de Jean et Guillaume Budé," *Bulletin de la Société de l'histoire de Paris et de l'Ile de France,* XII, 1885, 101.
[317] *Catalogus Codicum Bibliothecae Regiae* (Pars Tertia, Tomus Quartus), Paris, 1744, 69, and Delisle, *Cabinet des Manuscrits,* I, 263, 266, 270.

identify BnF ms. lat. 5286 as having been constructed before the presentation volume or confirm that it is a copy.

In her work with both the presentation copy and the *grisaille* manuscript, Lacaze asserted that the latter text must be a draft edition of the more elaborate and formal book. Arguments on the genesis of BnF ms. lat. 5286 have hinged on two issues: the evidence presented by the illustrations in the two sets of documents, and the existence of textual corrections and amendations in the *grisaille* document which appear in the presentation text.

According to her analysis of the *grisaille* manuscript, Lacaze identified 217 folios, and parts I and II possess pen and ink versions of all the illustrations found in BnF ms. fr. 2090-2092, with several intriguing additions, although some illustrations differ markedly from those found in the more elaborate document. For example, although BnF ms. fr. 2090 offered an illustration conflating the crucifixion of Christ with the notation of an unexplained eclipse by eastern scholars, BnF ms. lat. 5286 possessed a full page illustration of the crucifixion instead. Lacaze has argued that this conflation of two images has been more common when a draft edition was used to compile a finalized version.[318] In addition, Part III of the *grisaille* manuscript, which corresponded to the *res gestae*, possessed miniatures throughout the text, in addition to a wealth of full-page images covering the history of the Frankish kings through events following the death of Charles Martel; the final full page illustration in BnF ms. fr. 13836 presented to the king covers the first of two planned images on the reserrection of Dagobert. Therefore, BnF ms. lat. 5286 held more illustrations than the document presented to Philip V, which may also be a strong indication of a draft edition. Many of the illustrations in the *grisaille* were not completed; bandaroles left empty,

[318] Lacaze argues that the process of conflation privileges the argument that the grisaille was a draft, as the combining of multiple images into one is more often seen when the illustrator is drafting than copying. See Charlotte Lacaze, *The Vie de St.-Denis manuscript*, 361.

captions not added to the bottom of the page, and details that would have been filled in for the presentation document have been left out. In some cases, notes made for the illustrator are visible on these pages, and have been badly rubbed out or left as they were.[319] These signs seem to point toward the creation of the *grisaille* manuscript before or concurrent with the document eventually presented to Philip V; had the author and the illustrator been operating to enhance or correct the document which constituted such a powerful message to the king, a draft would have made some degree of sense. As Philip the Fair must have died while the atelier was busy constructing the *res gestae* section of the *grisaille* copy, the illustrations ended with the vision of Pope Stephen on the fate of Charles Martel, a subject addressed several quires after the presentation document dropped full page illustrations. (fig. 20) The *grisaille* text, whose production would have been further along than the more elaborate presentation copy, had already received illustrations which carry the story of the kings of France into the reign of the Carolingians, although many remained unfinished. When work on BnF ms. fr. 2090-2092 resumed after the coronation of Philip V in 1317, the abbey picked up the cost of the book, and chose not to include the elaborate images which were present in the *grisaille* text, but not in the presentation copy. If the *grisaille* manuscript were truly a copy of the presentation image, it would be difficult to explain images not present in the more elaborate version. Were this manuscript the draft of a carefully planned and executed presentation manuscript designed for the royal court, the atelier may well have been taxed with the necessity of creating a draft copy; editing, along with the alterations of style and content believed necessary by the abbot, could then be performed using the draft in order to produce a more perfect text to offer the king.

[319] Lacaze cites such corrections as missing identifications in banderole texts, alterations in the names of cities, and erasures in multiple folios, which are not present in the presentation edition. Lacaze, 359.

The *grisaille* manuscript shows signs of proofreading and small editing changes throughout; a scribal hand similar but not identical to that which wrote the main body of the text has made emendations and corrections, at times adding a more graceful Latin construction to the text. These corrections were the best evidence that the main body of the text was produced in the same atelier at roughly the same time. The presentation copy, on the other hand, shows signs of fewer scribal Latin hands – perhaps as many as three, but more likely two – and only occasionally has a word been lined out. This degree of care and neatness would have been more possible if the scribes had copyed an existing model, less possible were they composing a new text. However this cannot be taken as proof of a draft copy.

Paris, BnF ms. lat. 13836, the Chronicle of Kings, once part of the presentation manuscript, is considerably shorter than the material found in BnF ms. lat. 5286. The abridgement of the material, which favored the Capetian line, would be reasonable were the former manuscript the copy rather than the latter. Had the *grisaille* copy been made using the presentation manuscript as its model, one would not expect to find elaborations and expansions on the material. If, therefore, the *grisaille* manuscript was indeed a draft edition, a careful examination of those points of commonality and divergence would be rewarding, particularly in light of the political and religious shifts developing in France during the time these texts were composed. When one sees omissions between the *grisaille* edition and the presentation copy, these changes might be significant.

However, one might equally argue that the *grisaille* manuscript would have been too expensive and too careful a production to be a mere draft, particularly as practice copies or drafts were not a common feature of manuscript production in the early fourteenth century. Although the illustrations in the *grisaille* text were composed with ink and ink washes, they nevertheless demonstrate a delicacy of artistry and sophistication which would be unlikely were this merely a

draft of the more elaborate presentation text. The Bibliotheque Nationale tentatively lists the artwork found in this manuscript as having originated in the workshop of Jean Pucelle (c. 1300-1334), the notable illustrator of manuscripts such as the *Hours of Jeanne D'Evereaux*. Whether this attribution was the result of the fame of Pucelle and his notable skill in this format seen in other confirmed works or a recognition of the obvious skill of the artist of the *grisaille* is unclear, but the association is a flattering one. While the artwork found in BnF ms. lat. 5286 was produced by a master of the form, the argument that Pucelle copied the manuscript presented to the court at some point before the division of the book into three parts at the bequest of the abbey is difficult to prove, particularly as BnF lat. 5286 contained images not found in the manuscript presented in 1319. If BnF lat. 5286 were a copy of the completed *Vie de St.-Denis*, commissioned for use by the abbey, records of payment for the document have not survived. In addition, the timing of the copy seems somewhat doubtful. Pucelle would have been a child when the presentation copy was commissioned by Philip IV, as the illustrator's tentative birth year has been established as around 1300. The *Vie de St.-Denis* was presented to Philip V in 1319, the division of the manuscript would have occurred between 1319 and the death of Philip's younger brother Charles in 1328. Scholarship has pegged the most likely copy date, if the manuscript was copied by Pucelle, before 1323 when he was known to have been at work on the *Hours of Jeanne d'Evreaux*, as the *grisaille* document is not as advanced in the use of perspective or color.[320] If ms. lat. 5286 had been a copy, and if it were illustrated by Pucelle creating reasonably faithful versions of the illustrations found in the more elaborate presentation document, he would have had to have been attached to the court during this time, but commissioned by the abbey of Saint-Denis, who owned the *grisaille*

[320] On questions of color palatte and stylistic technique, see Pascale Charron, "Color, grisaille and pictorial techniques in works by Jean Pucelle," *Innovation and collaboration in manuscript painting*, ed. Anna Russakoff, (Harvey Mills: NY, NY, 2013), 91-110.

manuscript until the late 15th century. All of this is supposition, and impossible, lacking suitable financial documentation, to prove.

It may have been that Pucelle was not involved in the copy of the manuscript, but another talented illustrator, operating in a style similar to that of the better known master. A great deal of debate since the attribution of the *Hours of Jeanne d'Evreaux* has centered on how to identify works of Pucelle, and whether he was solely responsible for their creation or whether books attributed to his atelier demonstrate the work of many hands.[321] Whether he would have been attached to the atelier commissioned by the abbey to create the full color illustrations, or whether he would have been hired by the monks to work on the *grisaille* in the monastery, cannot be determined. What is clear, however, is that the illustrations found in BnF ms. lat. 5286 demonstrate a mastery of this form, a degree of sophistication and subtlety at odds with the often more formal and rigid poses and expressions found in BnF ms. fr. 2090-2092, and care that speaks to expense, time, and labor. None of these aspects would lead one to believe that the *grisaille* manuscript is a draft.

BnF ms. lat. 5286 followed the same pattern and order of material some with significant changes. The first full page and full color illustration from the presentation copy depicted Abbot Gilles of Pontoise at the court of Philip V on the Ile-de-la-Cité. In the presentation image, Gilles knelt before the king, the background has been richly painted and detailed, and nothing in the

[321] Delisle first identified Pucelle as the illustrator of the Hours of Jeanne d'Evreaux in his work *Les Heures dites de Jeane Pucelle, Manuscrit de la collection de M. le Baron Maurice de Rothschild*, (Paris, 1910); also see Leopold Delisle, *Recherches sur la librairie de Charles V* (Paris 1907). This attribution was first questioned by Blum in "Jean Pucelle et la miniature parisienne," *Scriptorium* 3 (1949), 211. Also see Jeffrey Hamburger, "The Waddesdon Psalter and the Shop of Jean Pucelle," *Zeitschrift fur Kunstgeschichte* 44 (1981), 243-257; François Avril, "Manuscrits", "Bible de Robert de Billyng", "Heures de Jeanne d'Evreux," "Breviare de Belleville," Gautier de Coincy, Miracles de Notre-Dame," in *Les Fastes du Gothique, Le siècle de Charles V*, Exhibition catalogue, Paris, Galeries Nationales du Grand-Palais, Oct. 1981-February 1982, 276-282 ; 291-296.

illustration would set it out of place for a book constructed in the early fourteenth century for a wealthy and exclusive audience. (fig. 21) The *grisaille* manuscript, by contrast, showed signs of accretions, some of which could not have happened within the same century. The presentation image from the *grisaille* text included Abbot Gilles, King Philip V, and the architectural details familiar to anyone who had the most passing familiarity with the presentation text, yet some details would be out of place. (fig. 22) In the color image from the presentation copy, a monk knelt with Gilles – most likely the author of the text, Yves of Saint-Denis. Behind them stood another figure whose status was not as obvious. His clothing might make him another member of the abbot's entourage, yet unlike the others, he has no tonsure. Nor does he wear a hat of any sort. In the image from the *grisaille* text, the same man is there, but the details of his head gear would be incongruous for the early fourteenth century. He wore a form of chaperon, a man's headdress commonly used in France and the Low Countries in the fifteenth century.[322]

To recap, the arguments that BnF ms. lat. 5286 were a draft would ignore the absence of other examples of draft editions from the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. If this document were a draft, the association with Pucelle must be cast into doubt, as he would have been too young to be involved in the construction of a book commissioned in 1306 with illustration work ending in 1314 when the book was set aside. However, the manuscript shows strong signs of having been edited with an eye toward improvements in the finalized version, and the illustrations continued long past the point when they had stopped in the presentation document. Furthermore, the use of *grisaille* in this manuscript by an unknown hand which predated any other

[322]Current arguments regarding later accretions to the grisaille manuscript center around its acquisition by Jean Bude in the late fifteenth century. Most significantly, this document received an entirely new quire with illustrations in pen and ink by an unknown hand which tell the story of the salvation of Charles the Bald. Three entirely new illustrations highlight this story, all of which are undeniably late fifteenth century. Possibly, upon acquiring the manuscript, Bude requested additional materials and the completion of some of the original images, although motivations for doing so are unclear. See Lacaze, 356.

known document using this technique further cast an early dating into doubt. If this manuscript were a copy, and if it were made in or at the request of the court after the *Vie de St.-Denis* were presented to Philip V, the attribution of the illustrations to Pucelle could be more likely, though it is just as possible that the illustrations were copied by a skilled member of his atelier and not the master himself. To justify the argument that the *grisaille* document was a copy, one must also consider the reasons for the artist to have composed new images to continue the story of the Frankish kings through the death of Charles Martel, but discontinued at that point, leaving many of the earlier illustrations incomplete. Furthermore, no records exist that would prove that the monks of Saint-Denis commissioned the copying of the presentation manuscript for their own purposes, although they clearly possessed the book into the fifteenth century.

Given the contradictory nature of the evidence regarding the *grisaille* edition, it is impossible to conclusively assert that the book was either a draft or a copy. Although the materials were comparatively poor, the text included corrections later included in the presentation text, and the book was more extensive than the presentation copy, yet the quality of the images would lead any reasonable individual to conclude that the book could not have been made as a scratch copy. The abbey maintained this manuscript of the *Vie de St.-Denis* through the end of the fifteenth century, and while some of the illustrations seem incomplete in comparison with comparable images in the presentation manuscript, they were nevertheless detailed, careful, and show no signs of emendation which would speak to the document being used as a draft.

Regardless of its relationship to the presentation manuscript, BnF ms. lat. 5286 can be used as a guide to the lost material once included in the *res gestae*. The opening chapters of the chronicle material in the *grisaille* establish that each king, beginning with the mythical Pharamond and the Trojans, would receive some form of biographical material complete with an illustration.

These chapters were necessarily short, and illustrations appeared in decorated roundels rather than full page illuminations. The events of the fall of Troy appeared only minor and crowded in comparison with later pages of artwork, an indication that the events in these pages were less significant to both the monks and the intended royal audience. The second part of the manuscript, that which would correspond to BnF ms. fr. 2092, provided illustrations of events which immediately followed the death of Denis and his companions, and the first shrine's construction; the first intended full page illustration of the chronicle section of the document corresponded to the construction of the shrine by St. Genevieve in the sixth century. The first Merovingian kings, including Clovis, received light treatment, although the baptism of the king appeared in a full page illustration. The next several kings, including Dagobert's father Clothar II, received no elaboration in illustration.

Once the chronicle reached the timeline of Dagobert, the manuscript devoted 67 separate pages to both the outline of the story and the illustrations, though stories associated with his youth fall into the section dedicated to his father, Clothar II. Without the missing material once included in BnF ms. lat. 13836, we cannot be certain that the *res gestae* presented in 1319 would have followed the same layout, but given the similarities between BnF ms. lat. 5286 and BnF ms. fr. 13836 in sections both manuscripts retain, one might assume that they would have been close to one another. The section on King Dagobert laid out a pattern that would be followed in the *grisaille* manuscript for the rest of the monarchs; the first page on a king would include material on his parentage, along with miniatures of the kings enthroned, often with siblings similarly addressed. Typically, these pages showed separate columns for each individual, and the columns originated in the rondel, depicting the king in mature years. The section of the *res gestae* that opened the Dagobert biography provided his parentage and a brief list of his siblings, including,

where known, the location of their graves. This material appeared at the beginning of the section dedicated to the reign of Clothar II, though little of it addresses his deeds. Missing from his biography were details of his military campaigns and information on his various marriages, though the genealogy included the names of several of Dagobert's siblings, including Hairbertus, his half-brother. Hairbertus received a brief mention as part of Dagobert's family, although other chroniclers claim he was executed by Dagobert. The genealogy of Clothar was the first full listing found in the *grisaille* version of the *res gestae*, and established the pattern for all further such pages. (fig. 23) This material was immediately followed with a longer account of Dagobert's childhood, including the claim that he was instructed in Christian virtue by Bishop Arnulph of Metz, with the implication that he was taught to read by the bishop in the illustration that followed. In all, the section of the manuscript on Dagobert included in the Clothar chapters and in the chapter dedicated to Dagobert's reign comprised 67 pages. Interspersed within the biography of the king, Yves included several pages of miracle accounts which occurred during the reign of Dagobert; this became the pattern in the remainder of the document.

The *res gestae* of the *Vie de St.-Denis* is a unique document. In this section of the manuscript, the author included not only the genealogical material on the royal families, including younger siblings, but accounts of miracles the monks had gathered which were attributed to the reign of each king. These miracle stories were mined primarily from the *Miracula Sancti Dionysii* compiled around 1233 and housed in the abbey.[323] In the section on Dagobert's reign, the miracle tales comprised six separate pages, none of which received illumination. This pattern remained constant through the remainder of the document; genealogical material, followed by the principal deeds of the king, and miracle tales. Interactions with the abbey by a king were, of course, given

[323] Paris, BnF ms. lat. 2447 and BnF naf 1309.

primary importance. The final chapter in the *res gestae*, both the *grisaille* and the presentation document, was a reduced version of the Mirror for Princes, most likely conforming to the piece presented to Philip the Fair in his youth by his tutor, Gilles of Rome (c. 1243-1316). This material follows the outline of the final events leading up to the coronation of Philip V, including the death of both his brother Louis X in 1317 and the death of Louis' infant son John I in the same year. In constructing the *Vie de St.-Denis* and the new version of the chronicle of kings, Yves of St.-Denis included all the most important, most persuasive, and most relevant materials which might enhance the glory of the royal basilica.

From the evidence of the *grisaille* manuscript, the monks had intended to provide full page illuminations throughout the *res gestae*; illustrations in the *grisaille* document continue through events which occurred after the death of Charles Martel, and included a vision confirming his damnation. In the presentation copy of the manuscript, ms. fr. 13836, the last full page illumination addressed the second in the sequence on the salvation of King Dagobert, in which the hermit John witnessed the torture of the king's soul by a boat filled with demons. It is my conclusion that production on both manuscripts went into abeyance after the death of Philip the Fair in 1314, and did not recommence until Philip V had assumed the throne. Part of the evidence to this point could be found in the dedicatory letter written by Gilles to Philip. In this letter, a Philippus Rex was mentioned as the patron of the document, which could mean either Philip IV or V, but no mention of Louis X. Secondarily, at the death of Philip the Fair, either the funding to produce the manuscript dried up, or the monks ceased work on the book for the time being. At that point, in ms. fr. 13836, the full color illuminations would have been complete or nearly so through the principal material on Dagobert; in ms. lat. 5836, the pages had been laid out beforehand for

illustrations and written accounts. Neither manuscript includes blank pages after the point illuminations cease which would speak to intentions for later pages of images.

Unlike the manuscript of the mid-thirteenth century, the *Vie et histoire sancti Dionysii*, this book was not intended for a large audience. Populism can be found in sections of the document, though a general rejection of the powers of the bishops was more common. In Paris, BnF ms. naf 1098, Dagobert's role in the tale of the abbey is less central to the overall story, and with the exception of the claim that he built a new shrine for the saints, his generosity and royal patronage plays only a small part. In the *grisaille* version of the *Vie de St.-Denis*, the only manuscript that retained the deathbed scene of Dagobert, the author emphasized the generosity of the king, and the caption beneath this illustration included reference to the more valuable properties he donated to the abbey. More importantly, the verses in Latin included beneath the presentation image clearly demonstrated that the audience for the manuscript was royal and limited.[324]

> The patron's deeds, made manifest, are given to the king
> In the present book, which he should commit to mind:
> His birth, his career, his conversion, his teachings, and then
> The trials of his martyrdom. After this his true miracles,
> And then the acts of king and kingdom you can see
> And after the text, perceive the care of the painter.
> The verses, subjoined, should all be seen in order.
> Thus the book will truly be able to teach every person
> The things written in it, God helping (in BnF lat. 5286, God teaching)

The intention of the monkish author was to instruct the king in the centrality of the abbey of Saint-Denis and the saint they venerate. The book wove together the biography of the saint in life and

[324] *Patroni gesta regi dantur manifesta/ Libro presenti quem debet trader menti/ Ortus, desursus, conversio, dogmata, rursus/ Martirij genera, post hec miracula vera./Actus regales inde videre vales/ Et post scripturam pircotir percipe curam/ Versus subiuncti videantur in ordine cuncti/ Sic poterit vere liber quemcumque docere/ Hec que sunt in eo scripta iuvante.* BnF ms français 2090, fol. 4v.

the life of the kingdom afterward, with strong indications that the prosperity of the one will enhance the prosperity of the other.

The account of the life of King Dagobert that appeared in BnF lat. 5286 retained nearly all the material written by Hincmar in the ninth century. In the *Gesta Dagoberti regis*, Hincmar included three chapters outlining important military campaigns in which both Dagobert and Clothar II participated, but Yves of Saint-Denis did not include these sections of the *Gesta*. Also absent were any references to Dagobert's several wives and concubines, other than the Nanthild, the mother of the most important of the king's heirs, Clovis II. Hairbertus and his claims to one of the Frankish kingdoms only received address in the genealogical material that opened both the Chlotharius section and that of Dagobert. Other than recognizing that he had once claimed Aquitaine, the manuscript only listed the location of his burial, which was not in Saint-Denis. BnF ms. lat 5286 has included the story of the miraculous consecration, along with the story of the leper who witnessed it. Once this section of the story closes, the manuscript then offered thirteen pages without illumination which provide miracle tales which occurred after the dedication of the shrine. The biography of Dagobert ends in both the *grisaille* version and the presentation account with several pages which offered some degree of argument on the nature of the king's salvation. Here, the author rejected the claim that the king was rescued from hell; instead, he was removed from the threat of purgatorial fires, which share the same heat and intensity of those of hell, but which would have been less permanent. In addition, he claimed that the mercies of God cannot be predicted and, while scripture may argue that those damned may not be restored, the will of the divine cannot be limited or fully understood.[325] The soul of the king went to God, proclaimed the

[325] *Ei dei ergo catholice erit contrarium dicere Dagoberti spiritum iam demonibus traditum inde fuisse cuiuscumque sancti precibus liberatum. Verumptamen dei vidicia iusta et occulta incomprehensibilia comprehendere aut de eis diffinire quis poterit.* BnF ms fr. 13836, fol. 1, 2v.

manuscript; this was the principal message of this section of the Dagobertian saga. These arguments were not present in the *Gesta Dagoberti regis,* and did not appear in Paris, BnF ms. naf 1098 circa 1233.

The illustrations of the life of Dagobert that were included in the *grisaille* manuscript revealed the course of the claim connecting the royal founder king with the abbey. In the first illuminated page in the section outlining the reign of Dagobert's father, Clothar delegated the education of Dagobert to Bishop Arnulfi, with special attention to be paid to the teaching of morals. (fig. 24) The bishop taught the prince that through virtue, he will enjoy peace. The composition of the illustration followed the model established in the material found in the material covering the passion of St.-Denis and his companions; in the upper 2/3 of the register, the king stood in a representation of the court in Paris and instructs the bishop and tonsured members of his clerical staff. The king and Prince Dagobert both wore clothing decorated with the fleurs de lis of France, while Arnulphi attire was plain. The bishop also received a halo in this illustration. On the right side of the register, a seated bishop instructed the prince, also seated, who held a book. The bishop's left hand curled over the lower end of the banderole – a detail of interaction which will be repeated in later pages of illustration. In the lower third of the illustration, the image included another bridge scene. the bridge images of Paris appeared most prominently in the section of the manuscript outlining Dionysius' mission to Paris, his imprisonment, torture, and execution, and were not included in any surviving illustration in the incomplete ms. fr. 13836. The lower register of this image repeated many of the themes found in earlier sections of both ms. lat. 5286 and ms. fr. 2092. On the left side, a man braced his head while he counts coins; a women to his right held a hunting bird, possibly a falcon. Below, an empty boat sat on the water with fish and eels swimming underneath. In comparison with other bridge images, this page seemed unfinished;

arches which, in other sections, would hold figures intended to comment upon the events in the upper register, were not presented here, and neither were the doorways filled in or shaded. The boat may have been intended to hold a fisherman. The two individuals on the bridges were sketchy and indistinct, not as finished as the figures found in the second section of the manuscript.

The image of the child Dagobert, his tutor, and his father, which shared a page with a bridge scene, was one of several such illustrations found in the manuscript, appearing here, in the scene depicting the humbling of Sadrigisilius, and beneath the coronation image for Dagobert. None of these illustrations have been noted previously. In order to better understand what may have been the visual argument of this illustration, we will need to consider the analysis of the bridge scenes found in BnF ms. fr. 2092.

The bridge images of Paris have attracted a considerable degree of attention from art historians, offering as they do evidence for the daily lives and routines of average Parisians in the early fourteenth century. Analysis of the images and their meaning in the manuscript have differed considerably.[326] Here, the modern viewer can get a glimpse of great medieval water mills, (fig. 25), men at arms on patrol along the walls, carpenters and stone masons, ladies having their hair dressed, goldsmiths and traveling entertainers. Charlotte Lacaze has proposed that artistic versions of a prosperous and sophisticated city were intended as a flattering reflection of Capetian rule, and

[326] A brief summary of the scholarly works addressing the bridge images in BnF Ms. Fr. 2092 would include the following: Elizabeth A. R. Brown, "Paris and Paradise: The View from Saint-Denis," *The Four Modes of Seeing: Approaches to Medieval Imagery in Honor of Madeline Harrison Caviness*, ed. Evelyn Staudinger Lane, Elizabeth Carson Paslan, and Ellen M. Shortill, (Ashgate: Burlington, VT, 2009), 420-461; Virginia Egbert, *On the Bridges of Mediaeval Paris: A Record of Early Fourteenth-Century Life*, (Princeton, 1974); for probably artists of the manuscript, see Lacaze, "Parisius – Paradisius, an Aspect of the Vie de St.Denis Manuscript of 1317", *Marsyas: Studies in the History of Art*, 16 (1972-73), 60-66; Charles Liebman, *Etude sur la vie en prose de Saint Denis*, (Geneva, NY., 1972); Camille Serchuk, "Paris and the Rhetoric of Town Praise in the 'Vie de St.-Denis' Manuscript (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, ms. fr. 2090-2092), *The Journal of the Walters Art Gallery*, Vol. 57, Place and Culture in Northern Art (1999), pp. 35-47; Léopold Delisle, "Notice sur un recueil historique présente à Philippe le Long par Gilles de Pontoise, abbé de Saint-Denis," *Notices et extraits des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque impérial et autres bibliothèques*, 21, part 2, (1865), 249-65.

rejected the idea that the bridge images were simply anecdotal. Instead, she argueed that "…the manuscript is to our knowledge the first in French medieval art to express a political idea in terms of contemporary life rather than through biblical parallels." She goes on to state that "… these generic scenes were indeed planned to carry an important iconographical message directly related to the patron for whom the manuscript was originally prepared, Philip IV of France."[327] Here are no penitent masses, no sick or weak individuals seeking the comfort of the saint. When the artist included representations of beggars, they were idealized and alms handed to them by the more affluent served to assuage guilt and demonstrate the prosperity of the citizens who could afford to support them, not take the rulers of the nation to task.

In her analysis of the images in this section of the *Vie*, Lacaze referenced a work by John of Jandun, a member of the arts faculty who taught at the College de Navarre, titled *Tractatus de Laudibus Parisius,* which was composed in 1323. Jandun, who had been an intimate of Gilles of Pontoise, the abbot of Saint-Denis during the production of the *Vie* manuscript, lived in Paris during the reign of Philip the Fair and was familiar with the French court. In the *Tractatus de Laudibus Parisius,* according to Lacaze, "John's praise could not better describe what we see had he personally provided the program for the illuminators."[328] Parisius, with letters rearranged, becomes Paradisius, and Lacaze further argued that the inhabitants of Paris of the fourteenth century would have been familiar with this form of civic flattery. She quoted an anonymous letter written to Jandun in which the author asserted that "being in Paris meant living; whereas being elsewhere meant only vegetating."[329] To further support her claims, both the individuals depicted

[327] Charlotte Lacaze, "Parisius-Paradisus," 70. Lacaze cites the work of Le Roux de Lincy and L.M. Tisserand, *Paris et ses Historiens,* 9.
[328] Lacaze, "Parisius, Paradisius," 65.
[329] Ibid, 66.

at the bottom of the frame and those preaching, converting, discoursing, arguing, suffering, and torturing, were attired as fourteenth century Parisians. The images asserted, quite powerfully, that the spiritual events of the past were not of the past, but affected human souls continually. The Parisians of the fourteenth century co-existed with both those who both found the ministry of St.-Denis and his companions persuasive and those who tortured and persecuted them. As Christ suffered and died annually, so too did the saints and, as they did, the everyday life of the city rolled on. As a piece with the notion of the cyclical Christian calendar, in which the great deeds of past heroes and saints were celebrated and remembered, the images served to remind the king that the wealth and status of Paris and its people were dependent upon the acts of its original patron saint and first bishop of the city.[330]

In contrast to Lacaze, the commentary of other authors would make the bridge scenes merely extensions of the well-known bas-en-page phenomenon of medieval manuscripts or, at best, that they related to the upper images, but without strong or direct meaning. Egbert claimed that these images "commemorated" the city of Paris, depicting "ordinary people engaged in their daily occupations and amusements,"[331] but continued by denying that they conveyed any overarching meaning in reference to the upper panels. Michael Camille noted the odd disparity between the serious subject in the upper register, and he described them as a "…social survey of the very heart of medieval Paris."[332] Camille Serchuk asserted that while the bridge images did relate to the upper registers, they were not intended to offer an allegorical message.[333] In general, the consensus of these scholars seems to be that, while interesting and enlightening on the daily

[330] This argument is most forcefully make by Michael Camille, who argued that "…the inclusion of the poor may be understood as evidence that the depicted society is rich enough to support them through surplus." Camille, *Image on the Edge, the margins of medieval art, (London, UK; Reaktion Books, 1992)* 31.
[331] Virginia Egbert, *On the Bridges of Mediaeval Paris,* 21.
[332] Michael Camille, *Image on the Edge*, 128-132.
[333] Camille Serchuk, "Paris and the Rhetoric of Town Praise," 42.

life of Parisians in the fourteenth century, the figures that pranced and primped and argued and danced on these pages were not central or relevant to the message of the upper register.

The images planned and executed in the presentation copy of the *Vie de St.-Denis* were intended for Philip the Fair, not his son. Therefore, we must consider what these images express to the court of a worldly and sophisticated king. Could they, as Lacaze argued, have been intended to show the king a flattering reflection of his own prosperous rule? Despite the difficulties and deprivations faced by many other areas of Philip IV's realm, the Ile-de-France only gained in wealth and influence during his reign. The images here, where trade and intellectual endeavors flourish, where luxury abounds, where spirituality in the form of monkish figures promenades next to mercantile activities, could be meant to demonstrate to Philip the manifestations of his actions as king in the physical realm. In contrast to Lacaze, Elizabeth Brown has proposed that these images are just as likely to be veiled criticisms of the king. In his realm, as the saint perpetually suffers and dies, his citizens were concerned less with the status of their souls than with the state of their purses. In bizarre juxtapositions, as St.-Denis and his companions endured scourging and a mini-crucifixion, the people of Paris continued on their business. In her work on the images found in the first two sections of the book, Camille Serchuk argued that these images in which the worldly activities on the bridges of Paris were intended to be a "come-to-Jesus" message; the images of luxurious lives enjoyed by the Parisians which share the same page as the suffering of the saints conveys an attitude of condemnation. In a caption below one of the bridge scenes, Yves of Saint-Denis wrote, "Oh, how vain, how foolish, what vainglory…But what is the value of earthly pleasures when those who glorify them will be given over to torments and tears?"[334] So

[334] *O quam vana, o quam stulta, o quam fallax gloriatio… Sed et carnalium deliciarum petulantia quid proficit quia quantum unusquisque in deliciis fuerit gloriatus tantum tormenti sibi dabitur atque luctus."* BnF Ms. fr. 2091., f. 94v. Translation by Serchuk, "Paris and the Rhetoric of Town Praise in the '*Vie de St.Denis,*" 41, see note 29.

are the Parisians before the arrival of St.-Denis, yet the images on the page showed contemporary citizens of the city. While this could be attributed to the artistic conventions of the day, it is unlikely that the artists of Saint-Denis would have included these remarkable figures dressed in the height of modern French fashion were they not intended to convey a message; just as the Parisians did in the past, so the contemporary Parisians needed the salvific efforts of the saint and his shrine to continue to shine as a beacon. As Serchuk argued, "…the *Vie de St. Denis* sought to remind the king in both text and image of the great riches of his kingdom and the importance of spiritual dependence on the patronage of St. Denis. After all, as saintly intercessor, St. Denis provided a spiritual connection between the realms of heaven and earth; he built a bridge, if you will, between God and France."[335] Were the king to fail in his duties to the saint and to his people, all of France would suffer and the prosperity of these images would be a lie.

Contrary to the arguments of Egbert, Camille, and Serchuk, Elizabeth Brown and Logemann have argued that the images in question are more than entertaining and were intended to provide a further message to the reader. She asserted that the union of Latin verse below each illustration, combined with the illustration above, made an argument to the king regarding duty to God, saint, and kingdom. Consider the Latin stances found below the presentation image in BnF ms. fr. 2090[336], which asserted that the king should reflect equally on the illustrations and the message in the accompanying text. For Yves of Saint-Denis, the illuminations were not just for the sake of decoration, but to aid the reader in understanding the text. He emphasized this point in the sentences that follow the illustration of the Celestial Hierarchy, where he stated:

> But lest the things expressed here concerning the spiritual beings of heaven be unclear to readers, the orders of the same beings subject to the one and triune God

[335] Ibid, 44.
[336] Brown, "Paris and Paradise," 426.

> are portrayed on the next page to the best of the artist's ability, so that what cannot be understood in words will in part at least be apprehended through picture, which is the way we have proceeded in this work. For often the souls of those who are not moved by words are roused to yearn for the heavenly by pictures.[337]

Cornelia Logemann similarly argued that the symbolic duties of the Parisians in the lower register were intended to make the viewer stop and ponder the relationships between their actions and the dramatic story of the saint above. As an example, she cited the scene in which fishermen haul up their nets while, above, Denis entered the city gates, as a reference to Christ's words to Simon and Andrew who would be the "fishers of men".[338] (fig. 26) On other pages, the Parisians elevated a chalice when Jesus offers Denis and his companions holy Eucharist, and the mill wheels of the Seine ground below the scene in which Denis was presented with the heads of his executed followers. (fig. 25) To summarize Brown's argument, "…these illustrations make inescapably clear they dynamic involvement and participation of the Parisians in the redemptive work that Denis and his companions wrought for them."[339]

Given the consistency in the types of activities depicted in the bridge scenes, it is difficult to image that the illustrator would have included these details for amusement or decoration alone. The more nuanced and symbolic stances espoused by Logemann, Lacaze, and Brown have been convincing, and the figures in the lower register were meant to comment on some aspect of the events above. King Clothar commended a young Dagobert to the bishop for instruction, both of

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[337] *Verum ne de celi spiritibus hic inserta sint legentibus minus clara eorundem spirituum uni et trino deo subiectorum. Ordines in sequenti pagina secundum possibilitatem artificis depinguntur. Ut que non patent pluribus in scriptura. Pro parte saltem pateant in pictura. Quem modum in hoc opera conseruamus. Nam plerumque quos scriptura non reficit. Ad supernorum desiderium per picturas eorum animus inardescat.* BnF ms. Fr. 2090, fol. 132v. Translation provided in Brown, "Paris and Paradise," 430.

[338] Logemann, "Heilsraume-Lebensraume. Vom Martyrium des heiligen Dionysius und einem paradiesischen Paris, (Paris, BN, ms. fr. 2090-92, ms. lat. 13836)," *Mahrburger Jahrbuch fur Kunstwissenschaft* 30 (2003), 60; cited in Brown, "Paris and Paradise", 430.

[339] Brown, "Paris and Paradise," 240.

the royals garbed in distinctively royal attire. The trappings of court and wealth are all about them, enhanced by the elaborate architectural details which form the frame of the image. In the banderole caressed by Arnulphi, the artist asserts that the goal of the prince's education was to instill virtue. Lest the reader miss the meanings of the bishop's words, virtue would mean rejecting the worldly values portrayed in the lower, principally that of greed and pride. The wealth of the man counting his coins brought him no joy. The woman holding a hunting falcon demonstrated pride and power, particularly in birth and status. If additional figures had been intended for this illumination, perhaps other vices would have been included. If Brown and Lacaze were correct in their assertions regarding the bridge figures, this page would argue that Dagobert most needed to guard against temptation. The text of the *Chronicle of the Kings* was silent upon Dagobert's manifest failings; the illustration that accompanied his tutelage is not.

After detailing the education and upbringing of the young prince, the chronicle account turned to the familiar representations of the stag hunt which first exposed the prince to the ruined shrine. This illustration, along with all the remaining full page images in the manuscript, should be read from the lower register to the upper. Thus, Dagobert and his companions left the walls of Paris on the left side of the frame to hunt. (fig. 27) The prince blew a horn while retainers flushed out a stag from the underbrush. In the lower panel, the hunting dogs, two initially, were relaxed at the point before they catch the scent of the deer. In the upper register, the dogs stretched to pursue the stag while the prince, still blowing a horn, encouraged his horse to speed. They were deeper in the woods at this point; the trees above them contained birds and are wilder, denser, than in the lower register. The stag ran through the woods, the dogs fast behind him, while the retainers and the prince gave chase. The next pair of illustrations continued the hunt, as the retainers fired arrows at the stag, and miss, and the deer dove into the ruins of the shrine. (fig. 28) Above,

Dagobert and his companions arrived at the shrine, and the prince listened to his huntsmen who pointed out the location of their quarry. At the feet of the retainers, the dogs turned back to their master, confused by their inability to enter the shrine.

Among the more striking aspects of these two pages of illustration is the level of detail found within them. These images cannot be compared to the incomplete *res gestae* of BnF ms. fr. 13836, as these pages have been lost. The use of pencil and plain ink here has freed the illustrator to include unique glosses that would not be found in the full color plates of BnF ms. r. 2090-2092. For example, the huntsmen who were on foot during this scene were not generic individuals. One of them was balding, but the fringe of hair around his scalp was long and somewhat wild. The other huntsman sported a crooked nose, possibly intended to look as if it had been broken at one time. Faces possessed a degree of both individuality and emotional response, details captured by this fine technique. Behind the prince, his companion similarly had a unique profile, with a decidedly snubbed nose. The stag they hunted has been rendered in a degree of dimensionality lacking in earlier version of the scene; each one of his divided toes appeared here, and the arc of his antlers mimics the curving and stylized trees through which he ran. The dogs used on the hunt were also distinct; in the panel in which Dagobert was informed that the dogs cannot enter the shrine after the deer, they turned their heads toward the prince. One was a mastiff hound, three were some sort of more conventional hunting dogs, and one may have been a short version of an Irish deerhound, complete with a long and shaggy coat. The illustrator made the trees above them curled and rounded, filled with the life of birds and acorns hanging from the oak trees. The shrine used by the deer is hardly a ruin. The roof was intact, and one end displayed a metalwork cross. In all, these illustrations were masterful, confident, and the work of an artist in command over his or her medium, demonstrating great care and creativity.

The tale of Dagobert and the shrine continued with the account of his conflict with his tutor, Sadrigisilius, who had been appointed by Clothar. The dispute between these two, the prince and the duke, centered on the lack of respect Dagobert received from the older man. Sadrigisilius, according to the *Gesta Dagoberti regis*, sneered at the prince while ingratiating himself with the king, and Dagobert feared that his tutor would replace him in the line of succession. The animosity between the two of them came to a head at a dinner hosted by Dagobert while Clothar was on a hunting expedition. At that event, Dagobert sent his cup to the duke three separate times. Had Sadrigisilius drunk from it, he would be accepting his role as a client of the prince, and signaled his support. Instead, he refused. Dagobert took this as a sign of scorn, and ordered the older man whipped and barbered at the dinner.

In the illustration of these events, the manuscript offered another lower register bridge scene, indicating that the dinner took place in Paris. (fig. 29) In the upper register, on the left, a courtly prince offered a metal cup to the glowering duke. Sadrigisilius held the cup while Dagobert gestured to him to drink. Behind Dagobert, a smiling woman looked on while a servant knelt before the table. In the larger right panel, Dagobert ordered his retainers to beat Sadrigisilius while another took scissors to his beard. One servant kicked at the duke, while others raised their fists above his head. Within the lower panel, the artist has rendered three figures on the bridges. The far left individual seemed to be the same as the man who appeared below the representation of Dagobert's tutoring with Arnulphus. He sat before a table heaped with coins, again cradling his head in his palm. To the right, an artisan pounded upon his anvil, hammer raised. On the far right, in the only window on that side to receive detailing, a woman sat and contemplated her face in a mirror. This illustration was not as incomplete as that under Dagobert's education scene, but the commentary on the principal scene above was less obvious. The blacksmith with his hammer and

anvil echo the raised fists above the head of Sadrigisilius, the repetition of a kind of violence is clear. However, the blacksmith could be a metaphor for the kind of violence needed to shape raw matter into objects of use and beauty, thus indicating that Dagobert needed to employ his retainers to reject the overweening pride of his tutor. If the other two figures were intended to be criticisms of Dagobert's actions, they may have been a continuation on the theme of pride; just as likely, they were meant to comment upon the vanity of the duke, who would not humble himself enough to take the cup from his prince. The caption below placed the blame upon the duke, not the prince, and states *Hinc Sadrigesilium ducem que spreverat illum/ ut prius expectus iuvenis fuerat Dagobertus/ Verberibus trade facit ac barbam sibi radi.*[340] Clearly, the prince here must act to lessen the pride of the duke, who scorned him, and therefore merited both the beating and the barbering.

Following the arc of the story, the next several illustrations outlined the conflict between the king and his son, made possible, by the implication of the manuscript, by the intervention of the saint. In the first, the duke Sadrigisilius knelt before Clothar with the remains of his beard in one hand, begging for revenge, while Dagobert took refuge in the shrine. (fig. 30) In the upper register of this scene, the king sent out his men at arms to seize the prince and return him to face justice, only to learn that they were not able to enter the shrine. To illustrate the inability of the soldiers to enter the shrine, the horses in the upper right register turned beseeching eyes toward their handler, who whipped them to drive them into the door of the structure. In the next panel, a sleeping Dagobert was visited by Saints Denis, Eleutherius, and Rusticius, who offered him their deal. Above, the prince agreed with their offer – decorate their shrine and they will support him. (fig. 31) His acceptance of the bargain with the saints appeared in the form of a banderole that

[340] Paris, BnF ms lat 5286, vol. 139r.

straddles his body, the prince writing the words with a pair of pencils. The dispute was resolved in the next illustration as the king, surrounded by dogs, horse, and men at arms, ordered them to enter the shrine and remove his son. (fig. 32) Unable to do so, they turned with worried expressions to Clothar, while the young prince waited with an air of boredom and impatience on the graves. Above, father and son embraced and make peace, and the king confirmed Dagobert's pledge to enrich the shrine.

The images which outlined the story of the mystical consecration were expanded versions of those found in the Paris, BnF ms. naf 1098, and this section of the manuscript provided the strongest arguments for the popularity of the shrine with the Frankish people. The section opened with translation of the relics, which were removed from the primitive graves shown in earlier images and placed into elaborately worked reliquaries, items which resembled the architecture of the high Gothic era. Dagobert and an unnamed individual stood above the newly opened tombs, having just learned the names of the saints buried in the shrine. (fig. 33) After an image in which Dagobert sent out invitations to the bishops for the consecration, the manuscript turned to the vision of the leper. (fig. 34) In the lower register, pious individuals pressed to enter the new shrine. The doorkeeper, who held the key to the door, stands in their way. Inside the structure, the leper crouched behind the altar and watched as the holy entourage entered the shrine. Before the altar, shrouded in a royal drape, angels swung censors while Christ, lounging on a stone structure, instructed them in their duties. Behind Jesus, Peter – holding the keys to the kingdom – and Paul – who was the Sword of the Spirit – watch. Dionysius and his companions were nearly lost in the composition, as the image must divide space between the events outside and the ritual inside. In the upper register, all five saints were fully present; Paul had both book and sword, Dionysius, Rusticius, and Eleutherius remained at the back of the group, while Christ blessed and

consecrated the shrine. In the rear, the watchful leper raised his hands in amazement as the sacred light of the holy company filled the shrine. The next page of illustration has the leper, kneeling before the company, directed to become a witness to the king. (fig. 35) Above, Christ lifted the diseased skin from the shoulders of the pilgrim while the entourage craned to watch.

The final illustration in this section of the manuscript focused on the interaction between king and pilgrim, as the former leper travelled to the court of Dagobert to bear witness to the consecration of the shrine. (fig. 36) When ordered to perform this duty by Christ, the pilgrim asked why he should be believed, and was told that the skin removed from him and placed on a plinth would serve that duty. Once he reaches the court, the pilgrim must first talk his way past the men at arms guarding the king and, once within the court, persuade a skeptical Dagobert of the events he had witnessed. The king here appeared with his entourage of bishops, who express doubt, particularly since the duty they were to perform the next day in the official consecration would be, according to the account, cancelled. When the king and his bishops arrived back at the shrine, and as they listened to the details of the pilgrim's account, people outside the abbey pressed for admittance. The pilgrim, visually distinct from his clothing, pointed toward the skin placed on a plinth and the window through which the holy host had entered.

These illustrations and the story that accompany them offered the strongest argument to the king of the continued and fervent popularity of the abbey among ordinary Christian souls. The *Vie et histoire Sancti Dionysii* focused almost entirely upon the vision of the pilgrim and testimony to the court; this version provided multiple images of the pilgrim and the crowds that would fill the shrine on anniversary dates, such as the saint's death day of October 9th and the consecration date of the shrine, etc. In the eleventh century, Abbot Suger had argued that the nave required reconstruction on the grounds that the press of people demanding entrance was great enough to

make movement through the eastern section of the church hazardous. General popularity among the Frankish people would benefit of kings; the nave had become the public site for the history of the kings and, by extension, the kingdom, after the tomb construction project of the thirteenth century.

In *res gestae*, Yves of Saint-Denis expanded upon the eighth century account of the life of Dagobert with details which were intended to emphasize the royal patronage and financial support the king provided to Saint-Denis, such as the miraculous consecration of the shrine. As previously noted, the mystical consecration story began to circulate in the tenth century, but did not receive written treatment until the thirteenth.[341] While the thirteenth century document told the story of the pilgrim in only 2 images, the fourteenth century Vie de St.-Denis required six pages. (fig. 34 through 39) In the last of the images, the illustrator stresses the immediate popularity of the shrine, as the people crowd into the nave to hear of the consecration and to receive a sermon from the abbot. The illustrations stress specific points: as the original account of the miraculous consecration asserts, demand for access to the shrine at night began before it had been blessed and officially opened. This argument, that Saint-Denis enjoyed a public reputation as a place of holy healing and divine aid, was echoed in later pages by miracle accounts attributed to Dagobert's reign, and which involved hopeful pilgrims who filled the shrine at night. The popularity of the shrine, which this manuscript claims began in the year of its consecration, was stressed in the miracle tales which follow this illustration. In one such miracle recorded in this section, a wealthy merchant attended the dedication of the shrine and had heard of Christ's miraculous visit. He left the area the next day, traveling on a boat aboard the Seine toward the sea, but found himself

[341] The earliest written versions of this story appear, as previously noted, in the 1233 manuscript BnF ms lat. 2447 and n.a.f. ms lat. 1309.

plagued with a persistent memory. He had seen the pilgrims the night he left, poor men and women, who thronged Saint-Denis at night to sleep next to the altar, or pray steadfastly through the night. Each hoped for a miracle for themselves or a family member. The merchant, though, recalled how they would line the floors of the shrine in utter darkness. As he recalled the pious hope he saw in the eyes of the pilgrims, he realized he was called to aid them. Once he returned home, he sent a purse of gold by messenger to the shrine, designating it for candles as tall as a man to stand in sconces next to the wall. Those who came to Saint-Denis would no longer have to sit their vigils in the dark.[342]

When the manuscript turns to the final episode on the death of King Dagobert, Yves of Saint-Denis addresses the question of how a king should die, and how a king should behave in death toward the shrine. The first image on the death of the king has Dagobert dying inside the abbey, a claim first made in the *Gesta Dagoberti regis*. (fig. 40) In the lower register, Dagobert lies on his deathbed, his face contorted in pain, attended by a physician and Nantilde, cradling his head. His son Clovis, who appears as a young man, stands near the bed as well. He hands a document to the abbot which, according to the caption below, confirms gifts of property to the abbey.[343] The will has been sealed with the king's ring, the wax seal dangles from the bottom of the document, and having done this, Dagobert "leaves the world" having remembered his patron in his final hour. Dagobert receives a reward for his devotion in the abbey, as his body is prepared for interment in the church itself, close to but on one side of the altar.[344] In the image, the abbot

[342] The miracle story in question can be found in BnF ms lat 13836, fol. 165r.
[343] *Rex infirmata ac patroni memoratur/ Illi dat villas anulo confirmat et illas/ post que dolore gravi permitur rex atque vi/ ex mundo transit qui dignus culnene mansit/ regni celestis et in eius vivere festis/ hunc plangunt perceres regina lucovius heres*. BnF ms lat. 5286, 159v.
[344] *Et sibi si prebes ius francia plangere debes nam rexit bene te docte iusteque quiete in templo siquidem iacet hic que fecerat idem regali more digno cumulatus honore proximus altari nam sic voluit cumulari ju dextro latere potes ut nunc usque videre*. BnF ms lat. 5286, 159v

and monks perform his funeral attended by the members of the royal family, the body of the king lined on all sides by candles as tall as a man. The caption below states that the king, who has made this place – the shrine of Saint-Denis – has merited rest close to the altar.

This illustration is the only one of a king in his final hours and during his funeral. The emphasis in these images is on the reciprocal obligations of the king and the saint's shrine – the king enriches the abbey, as he promised in his youth, and receives in return preferential place in the abbey and, after death, the supernatural support of the saint in attaining salvation. As the lands granted to the abbey during the reign of Dagobert and bequeathed afterward by his widow and principal heir were not contested properties in the thirteenth century, the only purpose in these images would be for persuasion of contemporary kings. Dagobert becomes an archetype of how a king should behave.

The next page of illustration from the *grisaille* version of the *res gestae* mirrors the last full page illumination found in the presentation copy of the manuscript. (fig. 41) BnF ms. fr. 13836, having lost previous chapters, opens with the vision of John as he sees the king's soul carried out to sea by the demons. The illustration is more finished than in the grisaille version, as banderoles appear to identify all individuals in the panels. The man wakening the hermit is Dionysius, accompanied by Rusticius and Eleutherius. These individuals are not named in the grisaille version, although in other respects, the image is nearly identical. (fig. 42) The *grisaille* manuscript, the illustrations follow this sequence of events with the entrance of the saints and an angelic host who cast the demons out, then lift the king to heaven. (fig. 43) From an inspection of the remaining quires, the final illustration on the salvation of Dagobert was never included in BnF ms. fr. 13836. From this notable absence, we can deduce that the manuscript had been complete up to the last images on the Dagobertian saga, and at this point, with the death of Philip

IV, the monks halted production. The *grisaille* manuscript continues with full page illustrations through the death of Charles Martel.

The representations of the salvation of Dagobert little resemble those found in the *Vie et histoire Sancti Dionysii* of the thirteenth century. In the earlier illuminated version of these events, the witness has no part. The written account of the king's salvation includes mention of John, and Ansoaldus reports the hermit's vision to the scribe in Saint-Denis, but John himself is absent in these images. In the *res gestae* images from BnF ms lat 5286, the sequence begins with Dionysius, bending over the sleeping man, to tell him "tremble, Brother, and pray for the soul of the passing king." In the upper panel, the hermit peers out the window and sees the small boat loaded down with demons bent on tormenting the soul of a king. The inclusion of the hermit as witness to these events lends authority to the vision, permitting those who look on the image to participate through the eyes of John. For further verisimilitude, the illustrator offers more detail in this image, particularly when drawing the demons. Several of them have second faces on their bodies; two have a head growing from their abdomens, another shows a face on his back, while one demon has a whistling face located on a buttock. Even the boat has sprouted demon heads, one on each end. One demon has grown wings from his hips, and several have horns. As the demons prepare to row to the volcano, they play instruments; one holds a tambour while another seems to play a stringed instrument. A cat headed demon blows on a flute behind. The playfulness of this image belies the seriousness of its purpose; the illustration of the king's salvation presented in the *Vie et histoire Sancti Dionysii* focused attention on the torture of the king, as his soul was beaten and whipped by the demons. This illustration offers shaggy demons, misshapen and playful.

In the following illustrations, the king receives rescue from his tormentors. Two bishop saints, Denis and Maurice, help Dagobert from the boat, while the martial Martin, identifiable by

the helmet he wears, wades into the boat and tosses out the demons. They fall comically into the waves, their feet kicking above the water as they are driven out. Dagobert reaches a hand to the bishop saints, who aid him to step out of the boat. In the upper register, the king has been placed within a canopy, and the saints lift his grateful soul up toward the awaiting angels, who cense his pathway to heaven.

The illustrations in this section of the manuscript on the death of Dagobert were modeled closely upon the tomb erected in Saint-Denis in the mid-thirteenth century. (fig. 18) The bas relief of Daobert's tomb, though less detailed than the illustrations found in the *grisaille* manuscript, show the same principal four scenes: the bishop wakening the hermit, while the demons abuse the soul of the king in the boat; the intervention of the heavenly host; the lifting of the king to the heavens above. The question we must ask, then, is why these illustrations repeat the composition and themes of the earlier carved tomb, and what they might be saying to the kings who reigned in the early fourteenth century.

The Dagobertian saga in the *res gestae*, if the presentation copy of that manuscript were similar to the *grisaille* account, emphasized certain events in the life of the king in ways intended to stress the duties of the royal family to the abbey. A young Prince Dagobert is instructed on the path of virtue central to Christian rule while negative exemplars of vanity, greed, and violence appear below. The tale of the mystical consecration demonstrates not just the power and importance of the saint, but the separation of Saint-Denis from conventional lines of power in the international church. For as Christ himself consecrated the abbey on the night before the officials intended to perform that duty, the bishops were sidelined. Saint-Denis is special, set apart from other monastic institutions, and particularly blessed even though, by the fourteenth century, the wall which had received the blessing of Christ had been removed. The singularity of the abbey

and its officials was jealously maintained in the later centuries, as the Dionysian abbot was given place of preferment in processions and the local bishops were not allowed to enter the monastery while garbed in the regalia of their office.[345] When addressing the death of Dagobert, the illustrations first demonstrate the death of the king inside the abbey, then mark his preferred placement in the nave close to the altar and the relics of the saints. He received this coveted burial site in response to his generosity and marked preferment of Saint-Denis over all other shrines. The scenes of Dagobert's salvation that follow mark the claim that only the most important Gallic saint would have the power to intervene and save a king. For kings would have had to perform deeds with, in ordinary lives, would be sinful, and they cannot be judged by the same standard. Thus Dagobert, who executed his half-brother, married multiple women and maintained concubines, possibly assassinated his infant nephew, and committed acts of violence that would merit damnation, could be saved by his association with St.-Denis, the patron saint of the royal houses of France.

The illustrations of the reign of Dagobert and his association with the royal basilica offer a view not to how the abbey was in the eighth century under the Merovingian kings, but they show what the abbey had become in the centuries since its establishment. In the illustrations on the discovery of the ruined shrine, the structure appears whole and undamaged. The tower above the rooftops holds a bell, an anachronistic representation of early Christian shrines not borne out by the archaeological investigations performed on Saint-Denis. Inside, the prince lounges casually upon a tomb divided into three parts, designating the resting place of three individuals rather than one. Above his head, the illustrator places a censor to mark this as a holy site. None of these representations fit with the descriptions of the shrine in the text, as the story clearly indicates that

[345] William Jordan, "Anger of the Abbots", 237.

the holy site had been forgotten and abandoned in the intervening centuries. In those illustrations that outline the construction of a new shrine, the structure appears with the apparatus which would have been familiar to fourteenth century visitors to Saint-Denis, complete with pillars and an altar draped in embroidered cloth. Instead of sepulchers for the saints, the translation of the remains required elaborate reliquaries, shown in these illustrations as resembling Gothic architecture and standing half as tall as a man. These, too, would have been familiar items housed in the royal basilica.

Just as intriguing are the representations of the church officials in the illustrations of the mystical consecration. The bishops, who had been assembled by order of Dagobert to consecrate the new structure, were supplanted by the direct blessing of Christ himself. In these images, the bishops, all crowned with miters and holding their signs of office, become superfluous. The consecration of the abbey by the highest Christian officials of the land was cancelled as Dagobert, accepting the account provided by the leper, kneels before the shrine of the saint in wonder. Possibly, the illustration of these events was meant as a reference to the singularity that was Saint-Denis, where ancient privileges granted to the abbey forbade the entrance of secular clergy from entering while wearing their regalia. Certainly their faces look less than pleased as they hear the story of the pilgrim.

Taken together, the extraordinary illustrations of the story of Dagobert become a polemic against the burial practices of the Capetian kings – who sub-divided their bodies and scattered them – against the paltry generosity of the kings toward the shrine, the the secular church, and perhaps even the new mendicant orders. The manuscript indirectly addresses the concerns of the royal family, members of which chose to place body parts in separate locations, reserving only the skeleton for burial in the abbey. The fad for divided burial, when chosen for reasons other than

purely practical, meant that the royal family might multiply the number of prayers offered for their souls. Popular institutions established by the Dominicans and Cistercians vied for the right to bury kings and queens, promising routine masses in the thousands and claiming they would encourage the prayer of the faithful who came to visit. The *Vie de St.-Denis* offered an alternative argument; only the traditional patron saint of the royal family has proven powerful enough to mitigate the sins of a king, no matter how grave. However, the saint only offers his assistance to those who were notably generous in life, and who adopted St.-Denis as personal patron. These acts would gain the deceased the right to conspicuous entombment in the nave of the church, close to the relics of the saints. Singular illustration of the funeral of a king demonstrates the centrality of this message to the living kings who would receive the document.

The *Vie de St.-Denis* was not completed before the death of Philip the Fair. Even the material on Dagobert's life was truncated; as previously noted, the last full page illustration in ms. lat. 13836 was only the first events depicted on Dagobert's tomb, and the artist did not illustrate the scene of the king's salvation. The remainder of the manuscript would have been completed after the ascension of Philip's second son to the throne, as the last chapters of the chronicle of kings includes the death of Louis X and his infant son, followed by the coronation of Philip V in 1317. While most of the tale of Dagobert would have been written specifically for Philip IV, Abbot Gilles of Pontoise must have believed the message in the manuscript important enough to repurpose for later kings. The decision to finish the manuscript for Philip V rested upon events in the kingdom just prior and after the death of Louis X in 1316. The messages in the Dagobertian saga were not entirely specific to Philip the Fair, but would have been generalizable to any of his heirs.

On July 5, 1316, Louis X of France (1289-1316) died at the Bois de Vincennes, the royal residence just outside Paris. His passing was unexpected; the king was still a young man, only three years past the date of his knighting ceremony and two years after he assumed the throne from his father, Philip the Fair (1268-1314). Although at the time poisoning was suspected, the accused was acquitted and no further charges were ever made in connection with his death.[346] As his health had been strong all his life, Louis had taken little opportunity to settle his earthly affairs before his death and left no clear and undisputed heir to replace him. His daughter Jeanne (1311-1349), only four at the time of her father's passing, was of suspect paternity; her mother Marguerite of Burgundy (1290-1315) had engaged in an adulterous affair around the time of Jeanne's conception, and although Louis claimed the child as his own before he died, that act could be set aside as insufficient grounds on which to rest any claims to succession.[347] After the Tour de Nesle Affair of 1314 which had resulted in the conviction of Marguerite and her sister/sister-in-law Blanche of Burgundy (1296-1326) for adultery, Louis found himself unable to attain an annulment. Pope Clement V had died in 1314, and two years would pass before the cardinals would choose a successor. The issue became critical when Philip the Fair died unexpectedly in 1314, as Louis required both wife and legitimate heir. Margaret conveniently died soon after the death of Philip IV, and Louis remarried five days later.[348] His marriage to Clementia of Hungary (1293-1328)

[346] For the account of the death of Louis X and the events following his passing, see Brown, "Double funeral of Louis X," 227-271. Brown cites the work of Geffroy de Paris for evidence regarding the accusations of murder laid at the door of Mahaut of Artois, who was mother-in-law to Louis X and his youngest brother Charles; charges against her were dismissed in 1317 and no one else seems to have been suspected. See Gilles de Muisit *Chronique normande du XIVe siècle*, ed. Auguste and Emie Molinier (Publications de la Société de l'histoire de France 205 ; Paris 1882), 32.
[347] See Ernest Petit, *Histoire des ducs de Bourgogne de la race capétienne*, (Paris, 1885-1905), VII, 42, n. 2; Anselme I 92, *Chronographia* I 220 n. 4 ; *Cont Chronique de Guillaume de Nangis*, I 427.
[348]Margaret may have died from her poor treatment in the Château Gaillard where she suffered imprisonment for roughly two years, or that she was strangled after the death of Philip the Fair. The timing of her death seems too convenient to be coincidental, and whether it was hastened by murder or from illness brought on by confinement is a moot point. For references, see Peggy McCracken, *The Romance of Adultery: Queenship and Sexual Transgression in Old French Literature*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press), 1998; Elizabeth M. Hallam, and Judith Everard. *Capetian France, 987-1328*, (Harlow: Pearson Education), 2001; Elizabeth A. R. Brown, (2000) "The King's

had only produced one pregnancy, and Louis perished before his wife was brought to childbed. Even were she to produce a son and undeniable heir, France would suffer through a protracted and dangerous regency period, one likely to result in instability and internal strife.

Waiting in the wings were other potential claimants to the throne. Philip the Fair had been fortunate in his offspring, and had produced three sons and a daughter who all lived to adulthood. Isabella of France (1295-1358), married to England's King Edward II, had produced an heir to her husband's throne and, despite the later application of the Salic Law, her son was not an inconceivable choice as heir in those early days after the death of Louis. Philip IV had two other adult sons: Philip, Count of Poitou (1292-1322); and Charles of Champagne (1294-1328). The brother of Philip the Fair, Charles Valois (1270-1325), and Philip's cousin Odo of Burgundy (1295-1350) were also likely claimants, despite both being descended from cadet branches of the Capetian house.

France had not experienced a crisis of succession in centuries; no Capetian king had passed away without leaving a clear and legitimate heir before.[349] As his death approached, Louis dictated his final will, but left no instructions as to the fate of the kingdom. With a wife pregnant, Louis may have hoped that she would bear a son and that he would survive; naming any other heir at this time might have presaged the assassination of wife or child. As the players in the struggle for the kingdom lined up on various sides, the question of legitimacy became the key; not that of blood relation – though that was still a factor for Jeanne during this period – but the question of whom God had chosen as the successor to Louis. If, as many believed at the time, the unlooked-for death

Conundrum: Endowing Queens and Loyal Servants, Ensuring Salvation, and Protecting the Patrimony in Fourteenth-Century France", in *Medieval Futures: Attitudes to the Future in the Middle Ages*, Burrow and Wei (eds), 2000.

[349] The testament of Louis X, despite lacking a date and location of drafting, was most likely composed at the Bois de Vincennes soon after the king became seriously ill, between June 1 and 5, 1316. A.N. J 404, no. 22.

of Louis was a sign of displeasure from God, the rightful heir to the throne might not have been one of his brothers who would be equally displeasing to the Lord, thus the crown could have been given to an uncle of the newly deceased king. Any individual who wished to pursue a claim to the throne would require a degree of delicacy and tact, along with diplomatic skills and the support of religious institutions and individuals; a difficult feat when so much was at stake.

When he heard the news that the king had died, Philip, Count of Poitou, still languished in Lyon as he attempted to resolve the commission given him by his brother.[350] When Pope Clement V died in 1314, the cardinals of the church split on the issue of his successor. For two years, the papacy lay in abeyance, waiting for a clear candidate acceptable to not only the parties controlling the council, but to the king of France and his representatives. Philip attempted to resolve the differences by splitting the council, and convened 22 cardinals in Lyon in May of 1316 with the promise that he would not force them to stay.[351] With that assurance, the cardinals gathered to continue their bickering. Upon receiving the news of his brother's death, Philip did not immediately start out for Paris, but remained in Lyon to continue his task and consolidate what power he could in the south. He gathered oaths of allegiance from those lords within range, finalized the marriage details for one of his daughters to a powerful local ally, and watched carefully from the south the deeds of his uncle and younger brother, both of whom were positioned in Paris. Clementia, only four months pregnant at the time of her husband's death, remained in the Bois de Vincennes under the watchful eyes of Charles of Valois and Charles de la Marche, both potential claimants to the throne.[352] By the end of July, anxious over rumors that Charles of

[350] See Brown, "The Double Funeral of Louis X", 239, note 52.
[351] For the pledge Philip gave to the cardinals, see *Acta Aragonensia: Quellen… aus der diplomatischen Korrespondenz Jaymes II,* (1291-1327), ed. Heinrich Finke, 3 vols. (Berlin-Leipzig 1908-1922), I 208, no. 136; Cont. Nangis I, 404; Geffroy de Paris lines 5957-62, 7189.
[352] In her work on the events leading up to Philip's claim on the throne, Brown cites letters issued by Charles de la Marche, the counts of Valois, and Louis d'Evreux, written to the people of St-Ormer, urging them to be faithful. In

Valois had begun to consolidate power in the north to support the claims of Jeanne, Louis' daughter, to the throne, Philip used military force to sequester the cardinals and compel an acceptable choice from them.[353] Once free to leave Lyon, Philip faced an uncertain political situation in Paris. Each step he took needed to be considered carefully.

According to contemporary sources, Philip of Poitou approached Paris on July 11 from the south-east, a path which took him near the Bois de Vincennes where Clementia of Hungary awaited the birth of her child.[354] Possibly, Philip hoped at that time to take control of the young widow and the heir to the throne, although Louis X had not included him in the list of potential regents for. Louis had named family members as protectors of his widow: he had commended her care to Charles of Valois and Louis d'Evreux (1276-1319), brother and half-brother to his father, Philip the Fair; and also to Charles de la Marche, Louis' younger brother.[355] All were powerful men whose claims to the regency, even the crown, were not out of the question. Although Philip may have believed himself to be the most obvious of choices to succeed his brother, were Clementia to fail to produce a viable heir, his brother Louis did not make any such provision. Thus, as he approached the castle outside Paris, Philip must have been aware of the precariousness of his position.

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the letter of June 18th, 1316, the letter signed by the above individuals announced the death of Louis X. See Albert Pagart d'Hermansart, "Deux lettres de princes français aux échevins de Saint-Omer après la mort de Louis X dit le hutin, pendant la vacance du trône (1316), *Bulletin du Comite des travaux historiques et scientifiques : Histoire, archeologie et philologie*, (1894), 22-24 ; cited in Brown, "Double Funeral", 240, note 56.

[353] Rumors that Charles Valois had taken possession of both Clementia and Jeanne, and sequestered them in the Bois de Vincennes. During the weeks between the death of Louis and the arrival of Philip in the Ile-de-France, Charles de Valois had begun to revive alliances with his own supporters, and that they had floated the idea of championing Jeanne's claim to Navarre, Champagne, and perhaps, the throne of France. See *Acta Aragonensia* I 210-11, no. 137, and ibid, I 467-68, no. 312. To Philip, this would seem to be his uncle's move to claim the regency, should Clementia bear a son, which, h would place him in a troubling position in the kingdom.

[354] Geffroy de Paris, *La chronique métrique attribuée à Geffroy de Paris*, ed. Armel Diverres, (Publications de la Faculte des Lettres de l'Universite de Strasbourg 129 ; Paris 1965), lines 7717-66.

[355] Geffroy de Paris lines 7705-7707.

Chronicle accounts of the next several days indicate that Charles de Valois met Philip outside the Bois de Vincennes on July 11.[356] Charles wished to retain the regency rather than surrender control over Clementia to Philip.[357] Philip refused to give a decision to his uncle at that point, and instead retired to consider his options. His most obvious choice was to ride to Paris, seize the reins of power, and assert his rights as next eldest son of Philip the Fair. Upon approaching the city, Philip was met by another delegation on July 12. Ame V of Savoy, along with other barons, met Philip outside the city and, according to the account of Geffroy de Paris, Philip was urged to act and seize the throne as regent for the unborn child.[358]

Instead of proceeding to the king's court in Paris, Philip skirted the city to arrive on July 12th at the abbey of Saint-Denis. Two days after the death of the king, Charles Valois and Louis d'Evreux had staged a royal and costly funeral, not waiting for the arrival of Philip.[359] As the papal dispensation permitting the separation of body parts for multiple burials had only been extended to Philip the Fair, Louis' body was interred without division in Saint-Denis in the early part of June. The king had not made any form of request on his final resting site, and thus he was placed in the nave of the abbey near the grave of his father, Philip IV.[360] All this was done without

[356] Brown, "Funeral," 249.
[357] In a notation in the work of Geffroy de Paris, the counts of Valois and Evreux provided a payment to the master of Clementia's household for expenses incurred after the death of Louis X on June 23rd. Some of these expenses could have been connected with the funeral arrangements in process at this point, but the payment provides evidence that the family of the deceased king had taken control of the queen's household and her person. Geffroy de Paris, lines 7717-66.
[358] Geffroy de Paris lines 7776-81.
[359] The details of Louis' funeral were recorded by Gencien de Pacy, and can be found in *Comptes royaux (1314-1328)*, ed. Francois Maillard, 2 vols. (Recueil des historiens de la France, Documents financiers 4; Paris, 1961), II 189-93; cited in Brown, "Funeral", 228, note 6.
[360] At his death, the ban on bodily division still extended to all the royal family, and the interregnum was not lifted until afterwards. Clementia, after the death of her husband, petitioned the new pope John XXII for the privilege of divided burial, which she received in September of 1316. See Guillaume Mollat, Bibliothèque des Ecoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, ser. 3, 1bis (Paris 1904-1914) no. 18543; Brown, "Funeral," 435; and Brown, "Death and the Human Body," 257.

the presumptive heir to the throne in attendance, but with those individuals most likely to challenge Philip's path to the throne ordering the ceremony and attending in Saint-Denis.

Philip's decision to travel to the abbey, rather than to the court of his father and older brother, speaks to the power of symbolic behavior in fourteenth century France. Once he arrived at Saint-Denis, Philip conferred with Abbot Gilles to take the next step on the path to claiming both the regency and the throne. On July 13th, 1316, Philip attended the second funeral for his brother, before numerous other noble persons gathered at the abbey for this purpose.[361] Afterwards, Philip took a day to meet with members of the local nobility, gathering their pledges of support, before he embarked for Paris. Although these acts may have seemed diversions from his primary goal, to Philip and the people he intended to rule, the support of Saint-Denis and its patron saint were critical to his eventual success. St.-Denis was the kingmaker; securing the support of the saint by conspicuous acts of generosity and elaborate rituals in his shrine became a symbolic act by which Philip emulated his predecessors on the throne, and made a clear statement about his plans for the kingdom. Philip set the stage to make a claim as the natural heir to his older brother, much as his brother Louis had done in 1314, as he presided over the funeral of Philip the Fair. Two years previously, Philip and his brothers had attended the royal funeral in Saint-Denis, and Louis took the lead role as the eldest son and heir. Philip's decision to re-enact the obsequies for Louis thus becomes a political move tying together the state and the venerable monastery. After the funeral, Philip lingered an additional day at the abbey to receive those nobles who came to attend upon him. There, likely seated upon the chair historically known as the Throne of Dagobert, Philip received his eventual subjects and their oaths of support before he travelled to

[361] The precise dating of Louis' second funeral is in doubt, as Geffroy de Paris states it occurred on July 14, while the continuation of the chronicle of Guillaume de Nangis states it was on July 13. See Geffroy de Paris, lines 7781-86; continuation of the chronicle of Guillaume de Nangis, I 427.

Paris to declare himself the rightful regent. Contemporary accounts date the beginning of Philip's rule to coincide with the date of this funeral, rather than the date of his brother's death or the death of his young nephew, known as Jean the Posthumous, who died a few short days after his birth.

Although Philip had to address some uprisings and revolts against his ascension to the crown, and although the question of Jeanne's claims to the throne continued to surface during his reign and that of his brother, his use of the abbey of Saint-Denis was a crucial turning point in his bid to become king. Crowned in Reims in January of 1317, Philip had used the monastery as other members of his royal line had before. By evoking the support of the saints of that particular abbey, he counted on the funeral ritual to solidify his otherwise shaky claim to the royal succession.

Although no record has survived of the nature of discussions made between Philip and Abbot Gilles in the days surrounding the second funeral of Louis X, the future king and the abbot would have conferred. Philip clearly designated the payment of a comparatively small sum of money to cover the expenses of a second funeral, though these costs would have been minor.[362] The abbot and monks of Saint-Denis, for their part, could reasonably count upon Philip's actions between July 12th and 14th as a sign of a successful campaign of promotion begun centuries before. Philip did not rush to the site of all royal coronations at Rheims cathedral; instead, he came to Saint-Denis to sit vigil for his older brother while gathering the fidelity of his local nobles. Official records of Philip's reign commence with the dating of his brother's funeral.[363] It is possible, then, that the abbot brought up the question of the as-yet incomplete manuscript which had been commissioned by Philip the Fair. If so, there is no record of payment from the royal treasury to complete the book. If the subject had not arisen, perhaps the abbot chose to complete the *Vie de*

[362] Elizabeth Brown has catalogued the associated costs for both the funeral of Louis X and for the separate funeral of his infant son, Jean. See Brown, "Double Funeral," 253.
[363] Fawtier, *Comptes du Tresor* xxii, no. 1183 and p. 81.

St.-Denis himself, and offer it to Philip at a later date in commemoration of the unity of purpose they had established in the days preceding the funeral.

After he had attended the rituals at Saint-Denis, Philip then moved to seize control of the kingdom. He traveled to Paris accompanied by the nobles who had attended the second funeral, and he was installed as regent for his unborn nephew on July 15, 1316.[364] Despite their earlier attempts to claim the regency, the counts of Valois, la Marche, and St-Pol attended Philip in the court soon after his arrival. Together, these great men determined the fate of the kingdom; Philip would become regent, Clementia would receive the pension granted her by her late husband, and the assembled individuals offered their fealty.[365] Afterwards, Philip began the work of ruling the kingdom he had unexpectedly inherited, despite the uncertain outcome of his sister-in-law's pregnancy. When she delivered a child prematurely, Philip was fortunately away from the center of power, and when the child died just six days after his birth, Philip convened yet another funeral for a family member in Saint-Denis.[366] The child, known as John the Posthumous, was laid to rest in the same tomb as his father, in the line of royal sepulchers lining the crossing of the nave in the royal basilica. Once his nephew had died, Philip was able to take the throne as king in his own right, and he was crowned in 1317.

The *Vie de St.-Denis* was not presented to Philip V in the first year of his reign, but most likely two years after his coronation. When cataloguing the document, Deslisle listed the date as 1317 to correspond with the presentation image that opens ms. fr. 2090. The abbot of Saint-Denis

[364] Geffroy de Paris lines 7790-92.
[365] On the meeting in Paris on July 15, see Geffroy de Paris lines 7811-39; Jean de St-Victor, HF 21:663; Brown, "Double Funeral," 258.
[366] On the death of the infant Jean, see Cont. Nangis I 430-431; A. Hellot, "Chronique parisienne anonyme de 1316 à 1339 précédée d'additions a la chronique française dite de Guillaume de Nangis (1206-1316), *Mémoires de la Société de l'histoire de Paris et de l'Ile-de-France* 11 (1884), 26. The Nangis account states that the child was buried on Nov. 20, 1316, the anonymous Parisian account claims it was on the 21 or 22nd of November.

kneels before the new king with the bound manuscript in hand with the court looking on, yet the chronicle account that he would have received included material on the death of Louis X and his son John, and the coronation ceremony for the new king. These events casts doubt on the date of 1317, particularly as the manuscript production would have been in abeyance between 1314 and 1317. I would posit that the decision to finish the book as a gift to Philip V was made during the time the would-be king visited Saint-Denis seeking support in his bid for the kingdom. Having provided Philip a stage for his ritual, Abbot Gilles then sought to complete the document which would, within its binding, make the most consolidated, most complete, argument the abbey had ever composed on the centrality of the abbey and the saint to the continuation of the Capetian line.

Philip V's father had been buried in two separate locations, his older brother was interred complete in the abbey in a tomb next to those of his father and grandfather. However, on the heels of her husband's interment, Queen Clementia petitioned the Pope John XXII for the right to dispose of her body as she chose, an option permitted her in 1317.[367] At her death in 1328, the widowed queen had dictated that her burial take place in two spots; her body and entrails in the church of the Dominicans in Paris, her heart in a chapel to be built in Notre-Dame-de-Nazareth.[368] The abrogation of the interregnum in divided burials would have posed an alarming problem for the abbey of Saint-Denis. Having succeeded in burying Louis X complete, the right awarded to the royal family would have raised concerns.

These concerns were not unjustified. In 1323, as Philip V entered into his final illness, king sought out supernatural remedies for his ailment during the three months before he died. The last months of his life were recorded by Paul Lehugeur (fl. 1322) in his *Histoire de Philippe le*

[367] Guillaume Mollat, Bibliothèque des Ecoles, no. 884.
[368] Pierre Moret de Bourchenu, marquis de Valbonnais, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de Dauphine,* (Paris 1711), 235 ; Brown, "Death and the Human Body," 260, note 162.

Long: Roi de France (1316-1322).[369] Fearing his illness would be serious, Philip requested that the holy relics of many local saints be brought to him in the Bois de Vincennes, and in that summer, the monks of Saint-Denis began burning candles for him.[370] In December, Abbot Gilles processed barefoot with a contingency of monks to Longchamp, where the king eventually died, carrying the most important relics of the abbey, including a piece of the true cross, a nail from the crucifixion, and an arm of Saint Simeon.[371] After kissing the relics, Philip claimed to have received a revival of his health, but he soon fell sick again and, by January of 1322, the king called to make a new will which would supersede that he had drafted the previous year.[372]

The will of 1321, written soon after Philip became ill, provided that his body should be buried in Saint-Denis with his ancestors, and did not make provision for the division of his body. His will for interment in the royal basilica seems curious, given that Philip had won the concession from Pope John XXII to do as he chose with his body in 1317.[373] Giving way to fears of his own personal salvation, the king ordered his body be divided and interred in three separate locations; his hear in the church of the Cordeliers in Paris with his wife would be buried, his entrails with his grandfather at the Dominican church in Paris, and his bones with the monks of Saint-Denis.[374]

The relationship between Philip V and the abbot of Saint-Denis may have been a close one. The abbot had been present at the death of Philip IV, and certainly Philip V had leaned upon the abbey as he maneuvered to claim the throne. While the king's biographer did not note the *Vie de*

[369] Lehugeur, *Philippe,* (Paris, 1897-1931), vol. 1:463-465
[370] Brown, "The Ceremonial of Royal Succession in Capetian France: The Funeral of Philip V," *Speculum,* Vol. 55, no. 2, (Apr., 1980), 269.
[371] Michel Félibien, *Histoire de l'abbaye royale de saint Denys en France,* (Paris, 1706), p. 264 ; Lahugeur, *Philippe,* 1 : 465.
[372] Philip's will is preserved in AN, J 404A, no. 26. The codicil which superseded the will of 1321 can be found in AN J 404A no. 27. Cited in Brown, "Death and the Human Body," p. 259; Brown, "The Funeral of Philip V," 275.
[373] See above, note. 112.
[374] See above, note 112.

St.-Denis manuscript in his accounting of these months, we may suppose that the arguments laid out in that document swayed Philip in the months before his death to choose an undivided burial in the abbey. The illustration of the funeral of Dagobert, shown in the nave of the abbey which would have resembled that which Philip visited in 1316, could have been persuasive. The issue of the placement of the king's body, and the divine support of the saint in achieving salvation for the flawed Merovingian king, could also have given the ailing monarch comfort. Yet in the end, Philip gave way to the fears which had motivated other family members, and he was the first Capetian king who had three separate tombs in three separate institutions. This level of spiritual insecurity marked the first of several French royal burials in widely separated places, as the practiced continued at the death of his younger brother Charles. In the royal necropolis, Philip was accorded a new location for burial, as the mid-point for the crossing of the transept had been filled entirely by the burial of his brother Louis X and his infant son. Instead, Philip was given placement between the sepulchers of his father and brother and the altar itself, close to the steps leading from the transept to the high altar, a place roughly equivalent with the tomb of Dagobert.[375]

Whatever role the manuscript given to Philip V may have played in the decisions he made in the final dispensation of his remains, the abbey of Saint-Denis received much of his body, and erected a tomb above him a few years after his death. Other royals joined him in turn. Although most also chose to be divided at death, the choice to house the principal parts of the body in the venerable abbey was not challenged, despite the fears raised in the late thirteenth century. The monks did not protest the burial arrangements of Philip V or his younger brother Charles; instead, they performed elaborate funeral rituals, interred the kings' bones with due honor, and allowed

[375] See Felibien, *Saint Denys*, p. 350; Jules Formige, *L'abbaye royale de Saint-Denis: Recherches novelles* (Paris, 1960), 14.

other body parts to go to the churches established under rival orders. The saga of King Dagobert found in the *Vie de St.-Denis* was persuasive enough to gain royal provisions to the shrine, but not enough to make the kings feel secure enough to choose a singular burial.

When considering the actions of both Philip IV and Philip V in regards to the abbey of Saint-Denis, what one can see is that the basilica had become less of a holy site for the kings than a place with political utility. Philip IV disputed with the monks over the dispensation of his father's and grandfather's body parts, considering both to be tools of persuasion and influence. Upon establishing his court on the Ile-de-la-Cite, King Philip IV situated the relics of his canonized grandfather inside the throne room, symbolically conflating the law of the king with the divine sanction conferred on the proceedings by St. Louis' bones. Philip IV was not convinced, as previous generations had been, that disinterring the dead would be blasphemous. After 1306, he shuffled the tombs of his ancestors to make room for himself in the central transcept aisle, setting aside tombs for rulers of lesser importance. For Philip, Saint-Denis was less a site for veneration of the saint and more the personal stage for his own claims to legitimacy and power.

Similarly, Philip V could not be said to have been among the more devout petitioners at the basilica of Saint-Denis. Although he turned to the abbey in the weeks before assuming the throne, his moves must be linked less to personal piety and more to a pious belief in his right to claim his brother's throne. He, too, thought dynastically, as his father had done. When he attended the funeral of first his brother, then his nephew, he engaged in rituals of inheritance, acting as the presumed king should act.

None of this should be taken to argue that neither Philip IV nor his son were pious individuals. Indeed, both were conventionally generous to numerous shrines, supported

charismatic preachers, and engaged in ritual with their families and the nation as a whole throughout their reigns. Rather, both father and son may have been willing, as Louis IX had been, to offer the necessary obeisances to Saint-Denis for the sake of tradition and continuity, while reserving to themselves a private and more heartfelt devotion that took them in other directions. When he died, Philip V had been in Longchamps for weeks, hoping that the shrine founded for the sister of his grandfather might be able to render him aid. Among his final desperate attempts to regain health, Philip called for the holy relics of France to be brought to him, and while a thorne from the crown and a nail from the cross were included, the accounts make no mention of relics specific to St.-Denis himself. In the end, as his father had done, Philip V hedged his bets, dividing his body among three separate sites hoping that the promises made in each might deliver him to salvation. By the time Philip V died, the promises of St.-Denis' power to elevate and rescue the kings of France no longer resonated.

Conclusion:
The power of the abbey and the last of the Capetians

The power of Saint-Denis rested upon the careful establishment of stories, enhanced and repeated over time until they resonated, gaining a general patina of truth along the way. The older the story, the more often it had been told, the more plausible it sounded. That the tale of Dagobert altered along the way, losing more questionable aspects while gaining others, must be considered the hallmarks of a successful campaign of propaganda. Above all, what modern audiences should gain from a consideration of this story, told in many guises and using many materials, is that the abbey of Saint-Denis was neither foreordained nor even particularly likely as a foundational aspect of the Frankish monarchy. Its reputation was constructed, brick by brick, through the careful manipulations of historical records by clever and ambitious monks and abbots, playing to an audience of kings who needed what was on sale; legitimacy, precedents, and sanctified rule. In return, the abbey gained pilgrims, notoriety, and the generous alms of the royal family.

The Merovinginans and Carolingians showed no marked preference for any one abbey as a burial spot for their families. Most commonly, kings of these lines established a new institution and were buried there in turn. Louis the Pious, despite his reliance on Saint-Denis for support during the rebellions of his sons, nonetheless was buried in the Abbey of Saint-Arnould in Metz, where Charlemagne had interred his wife Hildegarde and her sisters. Charlemagne himself found a final resting place in Aachen, the seat of his power while he was emperor in the west. Nothing in the history of the early Carolingians points toward the ascendancy of Saint-Denis as the royal burial place by tradition.

Yet during this period, Abbot Hilduin had moved to lay the seeds that other abbots would harvest. The *Gesta Dagoberti regis*, attributed to Hincmar, established the close connection

between an otherwise forgotten Merovingian king and the abbey. In order to assert the right of Saint-Denis to bury the kings, Hincmar constructed a tale – possibly from oral accounts around the abbey, possibly from whole cloth – which made Dagobert the first king buried in the abbey and provided evidence of the power of the saint in conducting a royal soul to salvation. While the story may not have been enough to convince Louis the Pious to be buried there, his son Charles the Bald was. With that significant burial, the abbots of the ninth century established their rights.

Accidents of history similarly persuaded the kings to prefer Saint-Denis, as the abbots of the late ninth and early tenth centuries were, quite often, also the Counts of Paris, who counted the local abbey as their family's private burial ground. Once those same counts ascended the throne, assuming the family name of Capet, the continuation of burial in the vaults of the local basilica should have been predictable. Only once Philip I reverted to the earlier custom of choosing a burial in an institution to which he felt personal loyalty were the monks alarmed enough to begin the dissemination of the tale of Dagobert once again.

That the abbey of Saint-Denis was successful in their bid to claim royal bodies cannot be denied. The monastery could boast a continuous line of Capetian dead with only two less notable gaps, from Odo to Charles III and on into the lines of both Valois and Bourbon. Their successes overshadow the struggles of the abbey to maintain their position, though. Through the lens of distant centuries, what we see is the crowd of sepulchers and the effigies of kings filling the nave. It is harder to see the effort of the abbots in establishing their position in the kingdom. The abbey won their central place in the kingdom with difficulty, and with the use of carefully crafted mythologies and monuments meant to fix the centrality of the monastery in the lives of the kings, and in the preservation of their souls.

In 1323, Philip V received placement in a new spot chosen by him in front of the transept and near the stairs leading to the main altar. In 1328, his younger brother Charles joined him, having similarly divided his body for burial in Saint-Denis and in the same Dominican church chosen by his father and brothers. Saint-Denis, by this time, had become the conventional necropolis for the kings, but their hearts would be buried in those places that moved them most. The story of Dagobert had been enough to persuade the Capetians of the thirteenth century that burial in Saint-Denis was necessary as a political and dynastic measure, but they were more dubious on the usefulness of the ancient monastery in preserving their souls. The separation of the body of Louis IX, despite the practicality of that choice, opened the possibility that kings might fulfil their duties to the conventional necropolis while sending their hearts and their viscera to the institutions of newer and more vivacious organizations, like the mendicant orders established in the early thirteenth centuries. That Saint-Denis managed to keep the kings from abandoning the older institution entirely should be considered a success of their propaganda campaign.

The other mission of the abbey, to win a place in the hearts of the French people, was also served by the careful promotion of the history of Dagobert, with stress laid upon the miraculous consecration of the shrine attributed to his reign. That blessing, which must have originally been attributed to the re-consecration of the church after the renovations of Fulrad, had been first popularly associated with Dagobert, then officially recorded as part of his interactions with the monastery. Dagobert, credited first with building a shrine (which he had not), establishing it as a monastic abbey (which he had not), was also the king whose structure received a heavenly blessing. Paired with the tale of a miraculous healing, this story promoted the shrine to those who would visit either during one of the annual fairs or seeking divine aid for themselves or a family member. While the abbey did not keep records of pilgrimage numbers, part of the justification for

the reconstruction of the chancel to the east was to better accommodate the numbers of pilgrims who would crowd the shrine. In *De institutiones*, Suger justified his expansion of the choir by claiming that, "…on special days such as the feast of the blessed Denis … when the narrowness of the place forced women to run to the altar on the heads of men as on a pavement with great anguish and confusion."[376] Although Suger may have been exaggerating the size and fervency of the pilgrims, documents written in the abbey offer signs that the monks both saw popular affection for the saint and sought to enhance it. They also capitalized upon the placement of royal bodies, and may have instructed pilgrims in the identification of the dead and with tales of their lives and reigns, with particular emphasis on the generosity of specific kings which would benefit both parties. In doing so, Saint-Denis capitalized, as other shrines did, on the alms offered by her visitors and, in the creation of legends about the shrine, may have increased the abbey's share of the wealth from pilgrims.

Dagobert as an important figure linking the church of France and the kings declined after the fourteenth century. Once the abbey could simply expect the bodies of the royal family to enhance their vaults, the need to further promote the ancient king faded. Upon their deaths, the kings would grant their bodies, either in whole or in part, to the royal basilica without question, so firmly had the traditional been established. Thus Dagobert, by the eighteenth century, who had once persuaded the kings to join him in the nave of Saint-Denis, became instead an exemplar of a flawed and even incompetent king, saved only by the support of the church. In the folk song, Good King Dagobert, the king struggles to dress himself correctly, eat properly, even sleep with the queen, without instruction from his supporter, St. Eloi. His pet saint, Eloi, had been the royal goldsmith of the Merovingian court for both Dagobert and his father. In Good King Dagobert,

[376] Suger, *De institutione*, Chapter XXV.

Eloi serves as an advisor, an apologist, and a man who would figuratively gild the lily. The song highlights the role played by the French church, which excused, even sanctified, the abuses and incompetencies of the kings. In the march of events toward the French Revolution, the song became both anti-monarchical and anti-ecclesiastical; both the first and second orders are condemned as corrupt, incompetent, and ruled by concerns not shared by the third order. Dagobert thus made his final transformation from client king of the royal patron saint to buffoon and, finally, to obscurity.

This dissertation has been fundamentally focused on the issue of death, and on the universal insecurity all humans face as we near our ends. The Frankish kings of the middle ages considered the fate of their eternal souls in a manner one might regard as schizophrenic: on the one hand, a life of privilege and absolute rule, bolstered on all sides by an obsequious church (both secular and regular) proclaiming divine sanction; on the other, a wealth of Christian material outlining a narrow path to salvation. In response, the kings turned to find newer and more reassuring offers of support from those institutions in which they placed their trust. It should be no wonder that, as Saint-Denis aged, as the magnificent Gothic elements of the abbey church could be found in even more elaborate structures closer to home, and as exciting new institutions held out guarantees of a ladder to heaven, the kings and their families snapped up those opportunities. Saint-Denis appeared more and more staid, more and more dated, and even the rehabilitated fable of Dagobert's salvation failed to reassure the royal family. Although the Capetians continued to be buried in the abbey of Saint-Denis, and the Valois and Bourbons adopted the practice in turn, the burials seemed more perfunctory than passionate. Even the later Capetians buried their hearts elsewhere.

More than anything, the story of how an abbey used the resources at its disposal to craft a careful and complex web of myths meant to capture the love of the royal family demonstrates the power of stories. Saint-Denis was no more meant to be the necropolis of France than Rheims was meant to be the site of French coronation ceremonies. That these two institutions were able to make the claims to primacy they did speaks to how intelligent and ambitious monks and abbots tapped into the stories constructed by previous generations, enhanced and tailored them to a new audience, and promoted them to disparate audiences. Dagobert, initially a debauched and bloodthirsty king, was transformed by their hands to a symbol of piety, a ruler who humbly placed his soul into the hands of the patron who had struck a bargain with him in youth. By the eighteenth century, that violent king returned to his original form, as early Enlightenment thinkers began to pick at the feet of clay so visible in modern monarchy. Dagobert reverted to the king exposed by Fredegar, who seemed repulsed by the Merovingian's manifest debaucheries and the murder of family members. Finally, the king became a symbol of royal excess and the obsequious toadying of the church. By the end of the eighteenth century, the power of both Frankish church and the French monarchy ended; so successfully had Saint-Denis entwined itself with the ruling houses of France that, in the Revolution, the abbey came under assault and came close to complete demolition. In 1793, to celebrate the executions of the king and queen of France, the bodies of earlier kings were removed and thrown into burial pits, their skeletons picked clean of any treasure that once had accompanied them into the grave. Accounts of the disinterment of the kings in Saint-Denis note gilt crowns, metal worked belts and elaborate rings removed and melted down.[377] Returned to the abbey twenty three years later, all the royal bones were stored together in the

[377] "Les débris d'une couronne de vermeil garnie de quantité de pierres fausses, dites venir de Philippe le Long," Paul Lacoix, " Inventaires du trésor de l'abbaye de Saint-Denis en 1793," *Revue universelle des arts* 4 (1856), 355. Georges d'Heilly, *Extraction des cercueils royaux à Saint-Denis en 1793,* (Paris, 1868), 123-4, 214-16.

catacombs below the shrine, a plaque listing names and families. So closely were the royal families of France associated with the abbey of Saint-Denis that removing the one meant, in symbolic fashion, obliterating the other.

Le bon roi Dagobert
A mis sa culotte à l'envers ;
Le grand saint Éloi
Lui dit : Ô mon roi!
Votre Majesté
Est mal culottée.
C'est vrai, lui dit le roi,
Je vais la remettre à l'endroit.
Comme il la remettait
Un peu il se découvrait ;
Le grand saint Éloi
Lui dit : Ô mon roi !
Vous avez la peau
Plus noire qu'un corbeau.
Bah, bah, lui dit le roi,
La reine l'a bien plus noire que moi.
Le bon roi Dagobert
Fut mettre son bel habit vert ;
Le grand saint Éloi
Lui dit : Ô mon roi !
Votre habit paré
Au coude est percé.
C'est vrai, lui dit le roi,
Le tien est bon, prête-le moi.

Du bon roi Dagobert
Les bas étaient rongés des vers ;
Le grand saint Éloi
Lui dit : Ô mon roi !
Vos deux bas cadets
Font voir vos mollets.
C'est vrai, lui dit le roi,
Les tiens sont neufs, donne-les moi.

Le bon roi Dagobert
Faisait peu sa barbe en hiver ;
Le grand saint Éloi
Lui dit : Ô mon roi !
Il faut du savon
Pour votre menton.
C'est vrai, lui dit le roi,
As-tu deux sous ? Prête-les moi.
Du bon roi Dagobert
La perruque était de travers ;
Le grand saint Éloi
Lui dit : Ô mon roi !

Que le perruquier
Vous a mal coiffé !
C'est vrai, lui dit le roi,
Je prends ta tignasse pour moi.

Le bon roi Dagobert
Portait manteau court en hiver ;
Le grand saint Éloi
Lui dit : Ô mon roi !
Votre Majesté
Est bien écourtée.
C'est vrai, lui dit le roi,
Fais-le rallonger de deux doigts.

Du bon roi Dagobert
Du chapeau coiffait comme un cerf
Le grand saint Éloi
Lui dit : Ô mon roi !
La corne au milieu
Vous siérait bien mieux.
C'est vrai, lui dit le roi,
J'avais pris modèle sur toi.

Le roi faisait des vers
Mais il les faisait de travers ;
Le grand saint Éloi
Lui dit : Ô mon roi !
Laissez aux oisons
Faire des chansons.
Eh bien, lui dit le roi,
C'est toi qui les feras pour moi.

Le bon roi Dagobert
Chassait dans la plaine d'Anvers
Le grand saint Éloi
Lui dit : Ô mon roi !
Votre Majesté
Est bien essouflée.
C'est vrai, lui dit le roi,
Un lapin courait après moi.

Le bon roi Dagobert
Allait à la chasse au pivert ;
Le grand saint Éloi
Lui dit : Ô mon roi !
La chasse aux coucous
Vaudrait mieux pour vous.
Eh bien, lui dit le roi,
Je vais tirer, prends garde à toi.

Le bon roi Dagobert
Avait un grand sabre de fer ;
Le grand saint Éloi
Lui dit : Ô mon roi !
Votre Majesté
Pourrait se blesser.
C'est vrai, lui dit le roi,
Qu'on me donne un sabre de bois.

Les chiens de Dagobert
Étaient de gale tout couverts ;
Le grand saint Éloi
Lui dit : Ô mon roi !
Pour les nettoyer
Faudrait les noyer.
Eh bien, lui dit le roi,
Va-t-en les noyer avec toi.

Le bon roi Dagobert
Se battait à tort, à travers ;
Le grand saint Éloi
Lui dit : Ô mon roi !
Votre Majesté
Se fera tuer.
C'est vrai, lui dit le roi,
Mets-toi bien vite devant moi.

Le bon roi Dagobert
Voulait conquérir l'univers ;
Le grand saint Éloi
Lui dit : Ô mon roi !
Voyager si loin
Donne du tintoin.
C'est vrai, lui dit le roi,
Il vaudrait mieux rester chez soi.
Le roi faisait la guerre
Mais il la faisait en hiver ;
Le grand saint Éloi
Lui dit : Ô mon roi !
Votre Majesté
Se fera geler.
C'est vrai, lui dit le roi,
Je m'en vais retourner chez moi.

Le bon roi Dagobert
Voulait s'embarquer pour la mer
Le grand saint Éloi
Lui dit : Ô mon roi !
Votre Majesté
Se fera noyer.
C'est vrai, lui dit le roi,
On pourra crier : « Le Roi boit »

Le bon roi Dagobert
Avait un vieux fauteuil de fer ;
Le grand saint Éloi
Lui dit : Ô mon roi !
Votre vieux fauteuil
M'a donné dans l'œil.
Eh bien, lui dit le roi,
Fais-le vite emporter chez toi.

La reine Dagobert
Choyait un galant assez vert ;
Le grand saint Éloi
Lui dit : Ô mon roi !
Vous êtes cornu,
J'en suis convaincu.

C'est bon, lui dit le roi,
Mon père l'était avant moi.

Le bon roi Dagobert
Mangeait en glouton du dessert ;
Le grand saint Éloi
Lui dit : Ô mon roi !
Vous êtes gourmand,
Ne mangez pas tant.
Bah, bah, lui dit le roi,
Je ne le suis pas tant que toi.

Le bon roi Dagobert
Ayant bu, allait de travers ;
Le grand saint Éloi
Lui dit : Ô mon roi !
Votre Majesté
Va tout de côté.
Eh bien, lui dit le roi,
Quand tu es gris, marches-tu droit ?

A Saint Eloi, dit-on
Dagobert offrit un dindon.
"Un dindon à moi!
lui dit Saint Eloi,
Votre Majesté
a trop de bonté."
"Prends donc, lui dit le roi,
C'est pour te souvenir de moi."

Le bon roi Dagobert
Craignait d'aller en enfer ;
Le grand saint Eloi
Lui dit : Ô mon roi !
Je crois bien, ma foi
Que vous irez tout droit.
C'est vrai, lui dit le roi,
Ne veux-tu pas prier pour moi ?
Quand Dagobert mourut,
Le diable aussitôt accourut;
Le grand saint Éloi
Lui dit : Ô mon roi !
Satan va passer,
Faut vous confesser.
Hélas, lui dit le roi,
Ne pourrais-tu mourir pour moi ?

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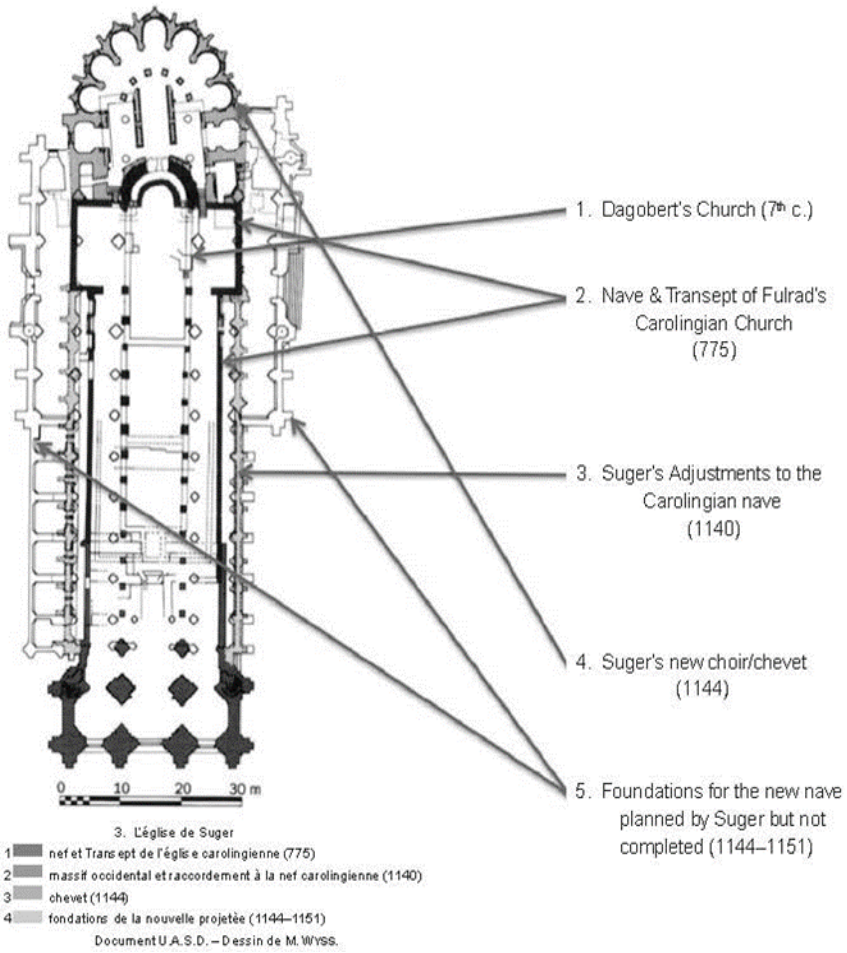
Figures:



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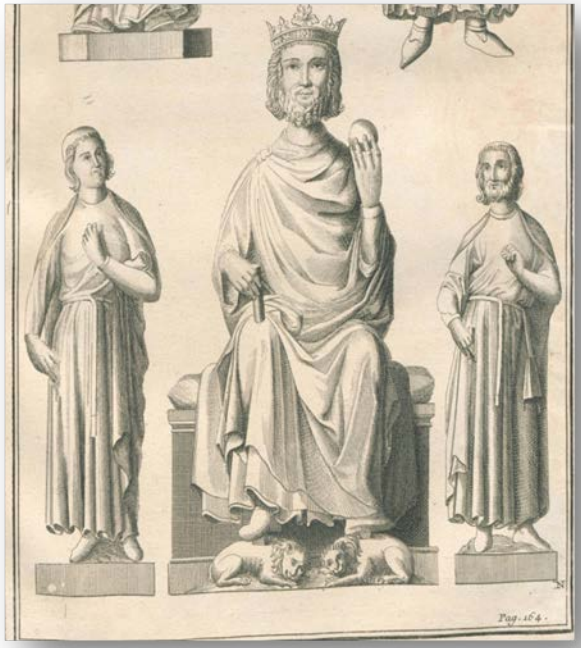

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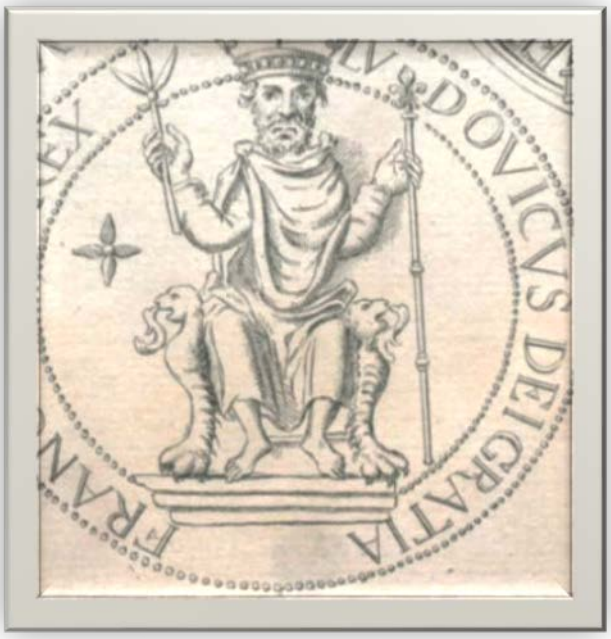

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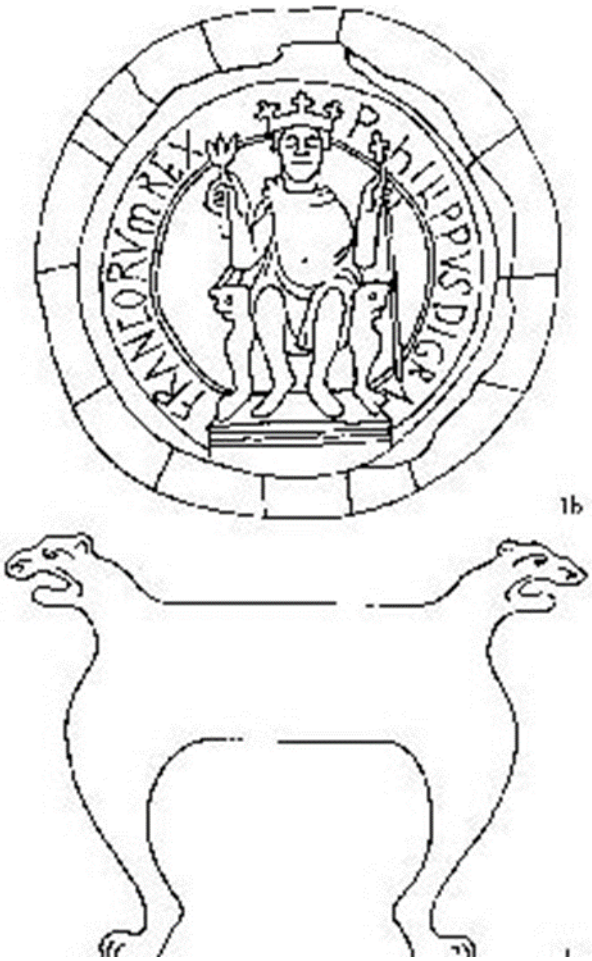

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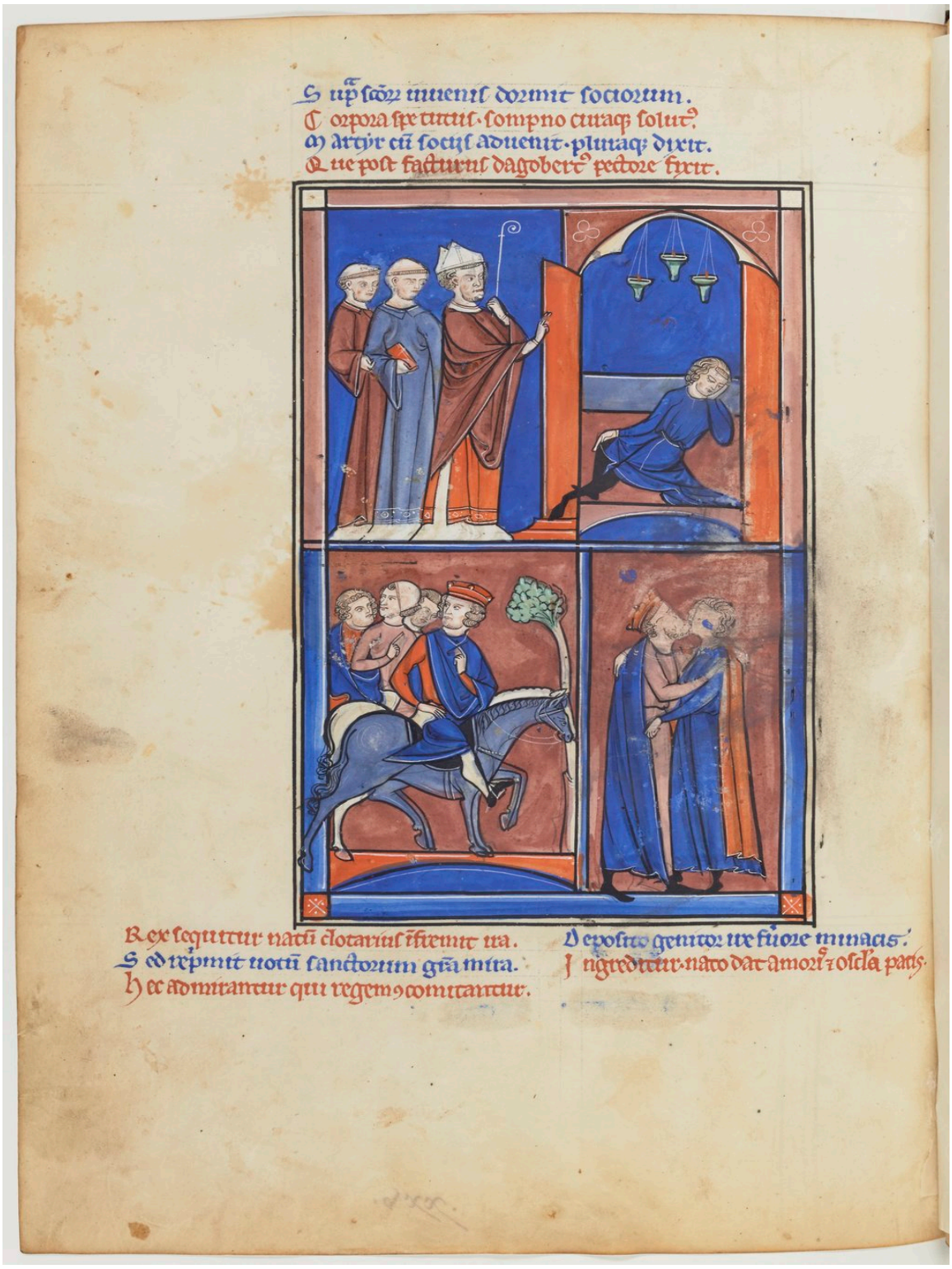
Fig 12 –*Dagobert and the stag hunt ; complaint of Sadrigisilius*. Paris, BnF ms naf 1098 fol. 51r.



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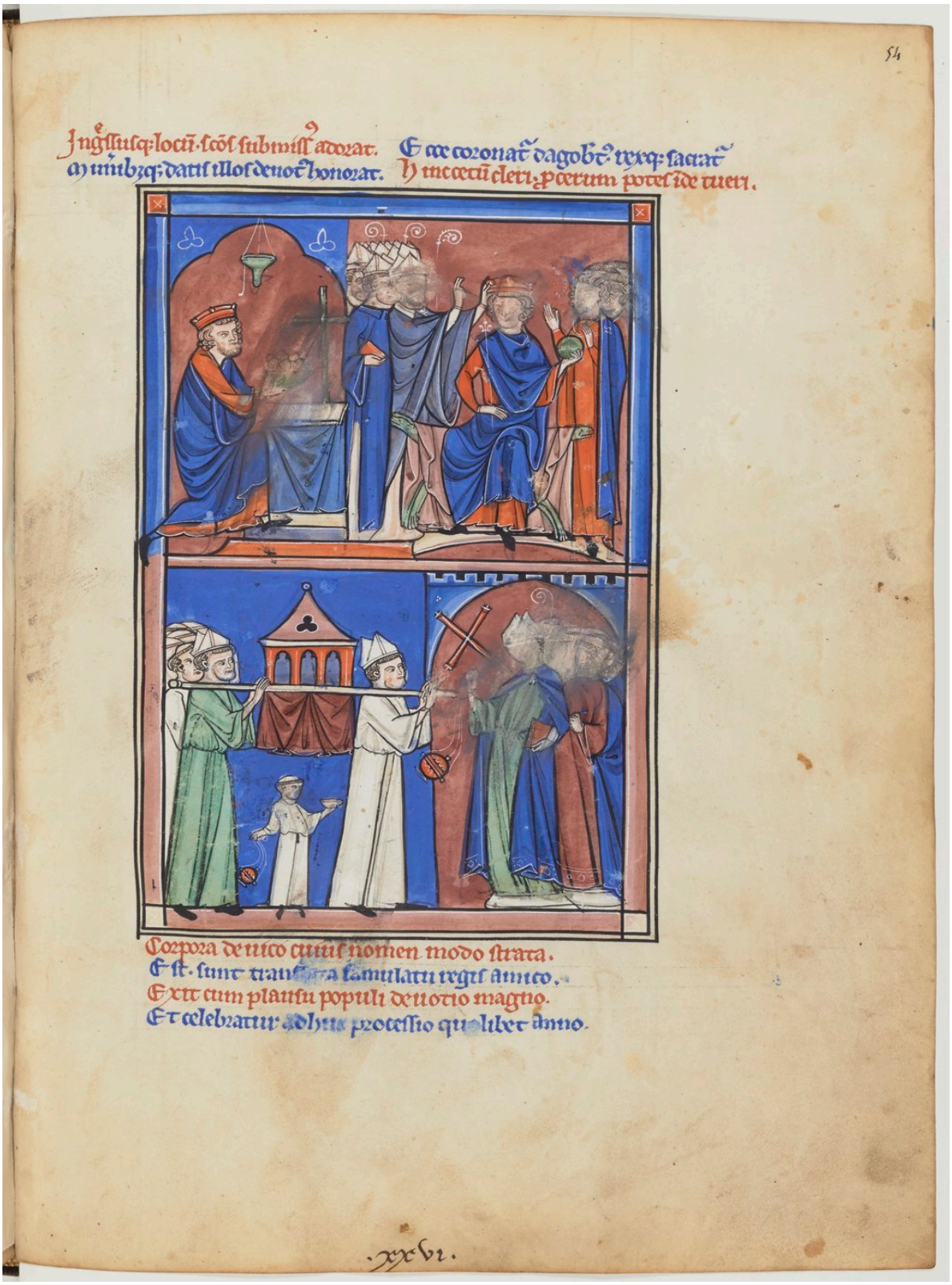

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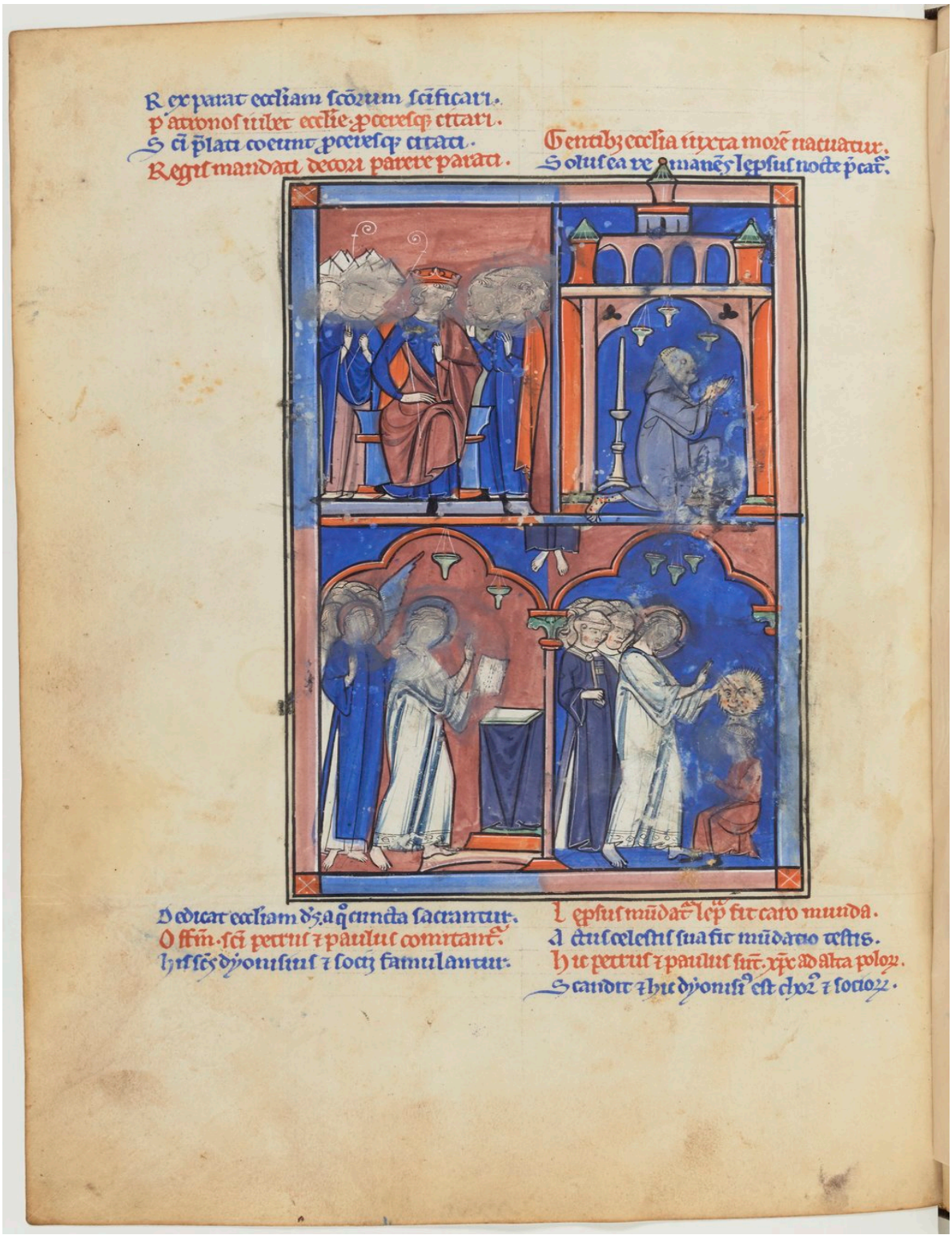

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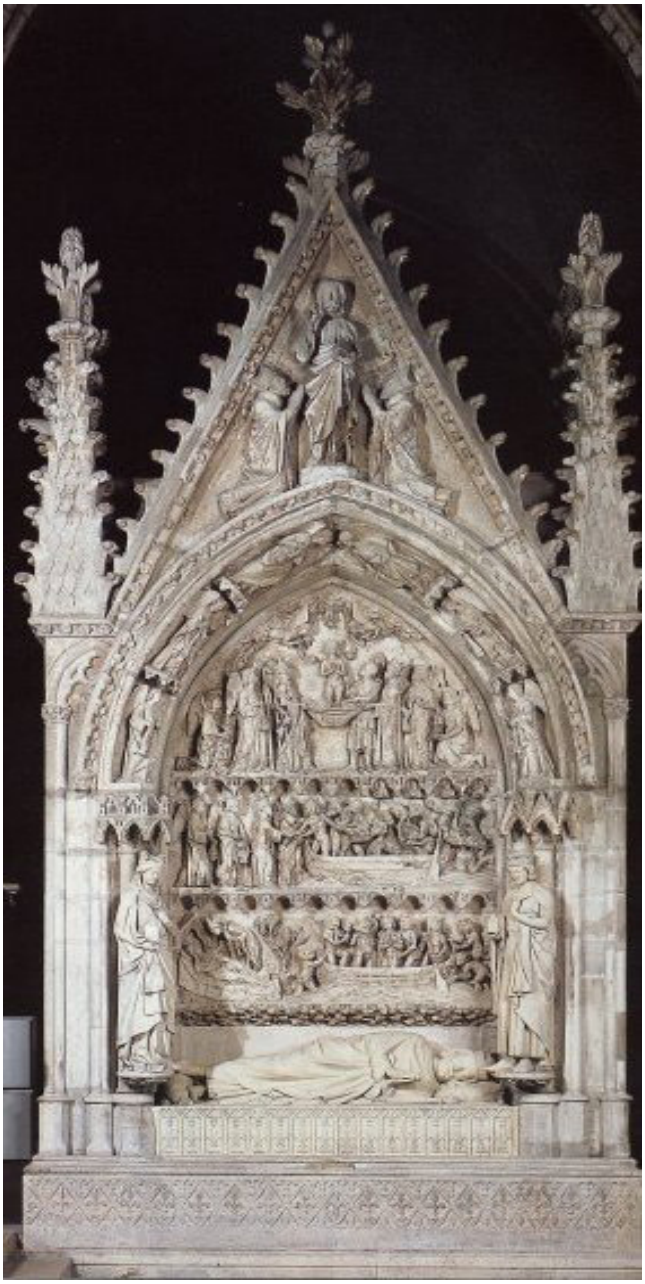

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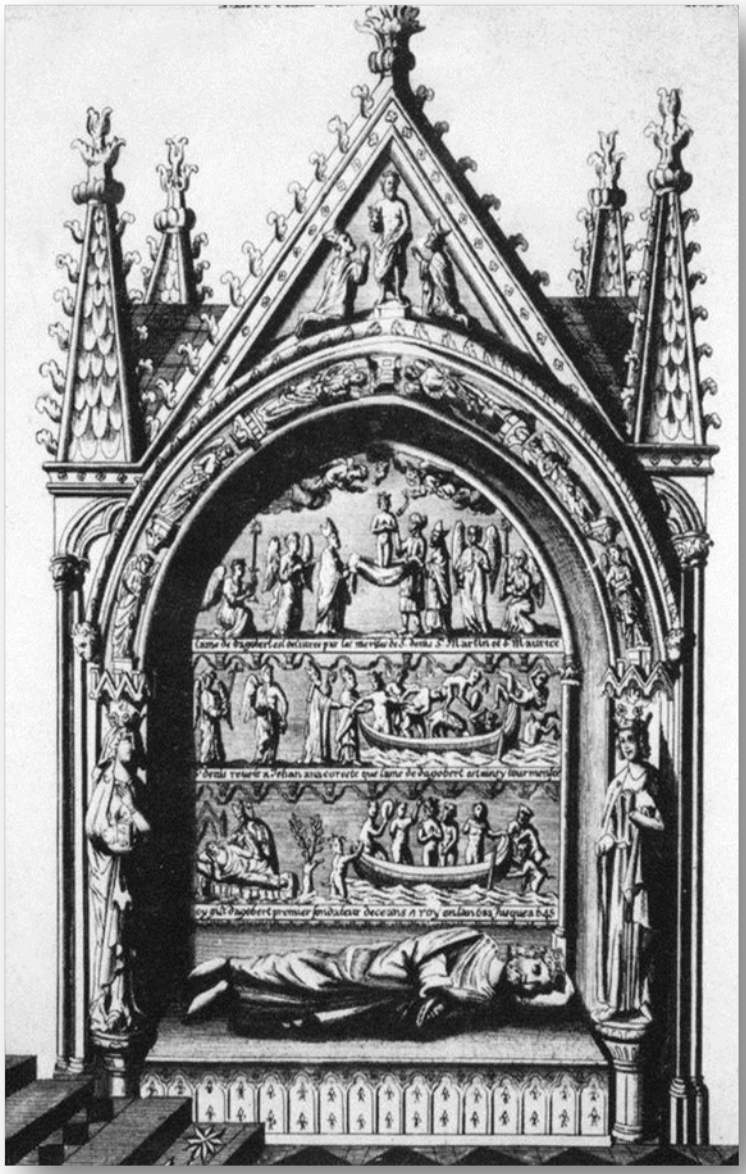

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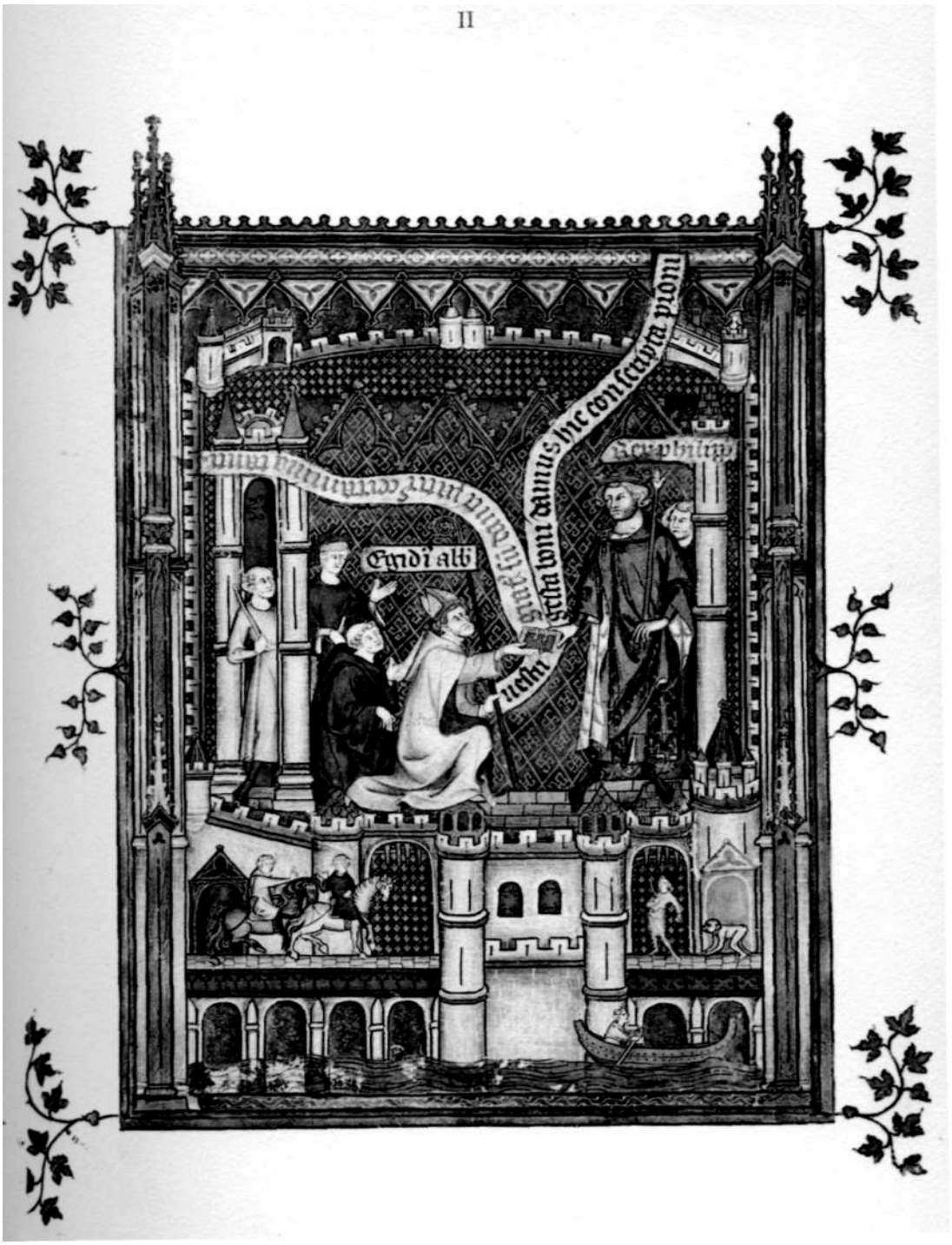

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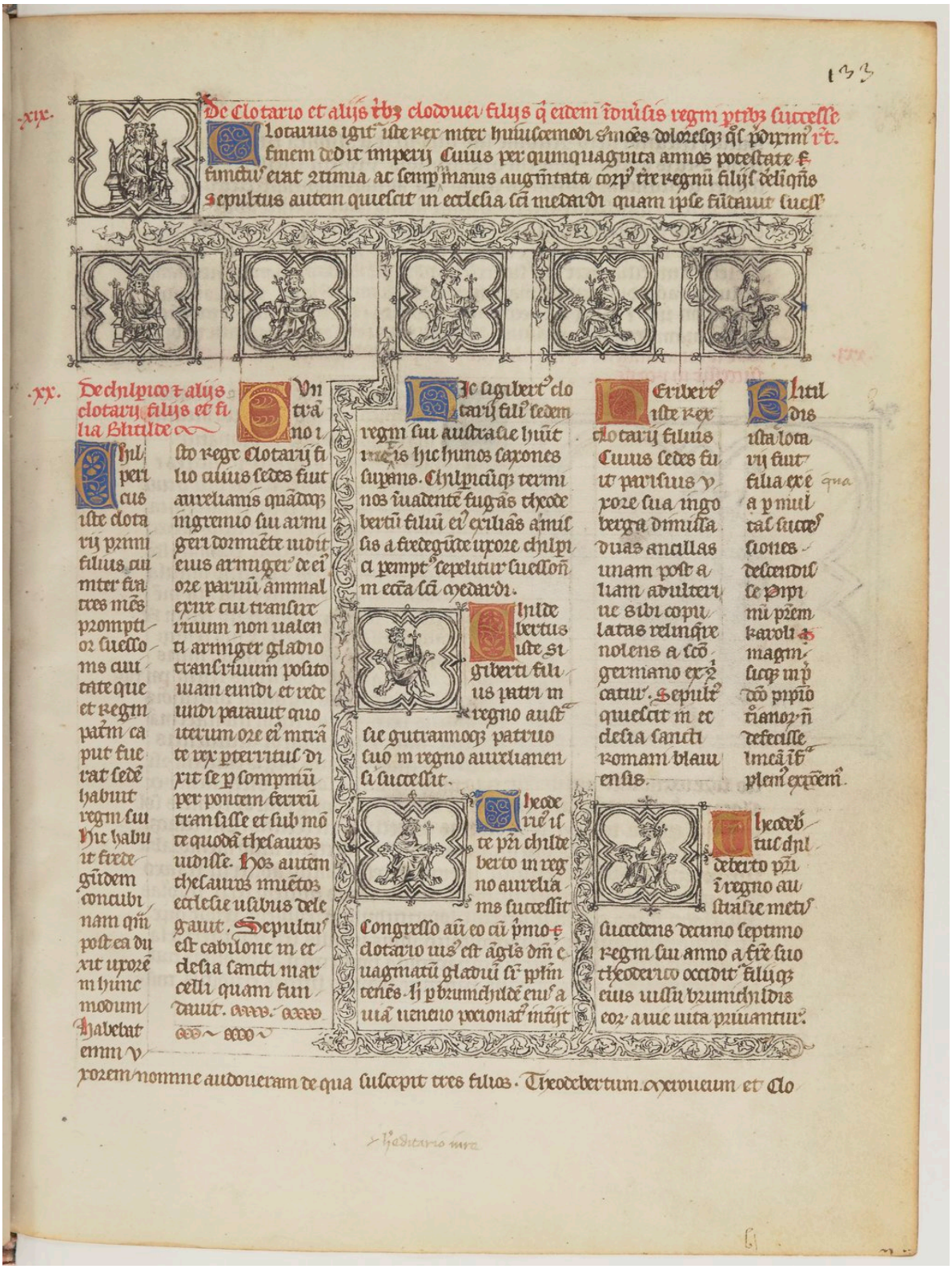

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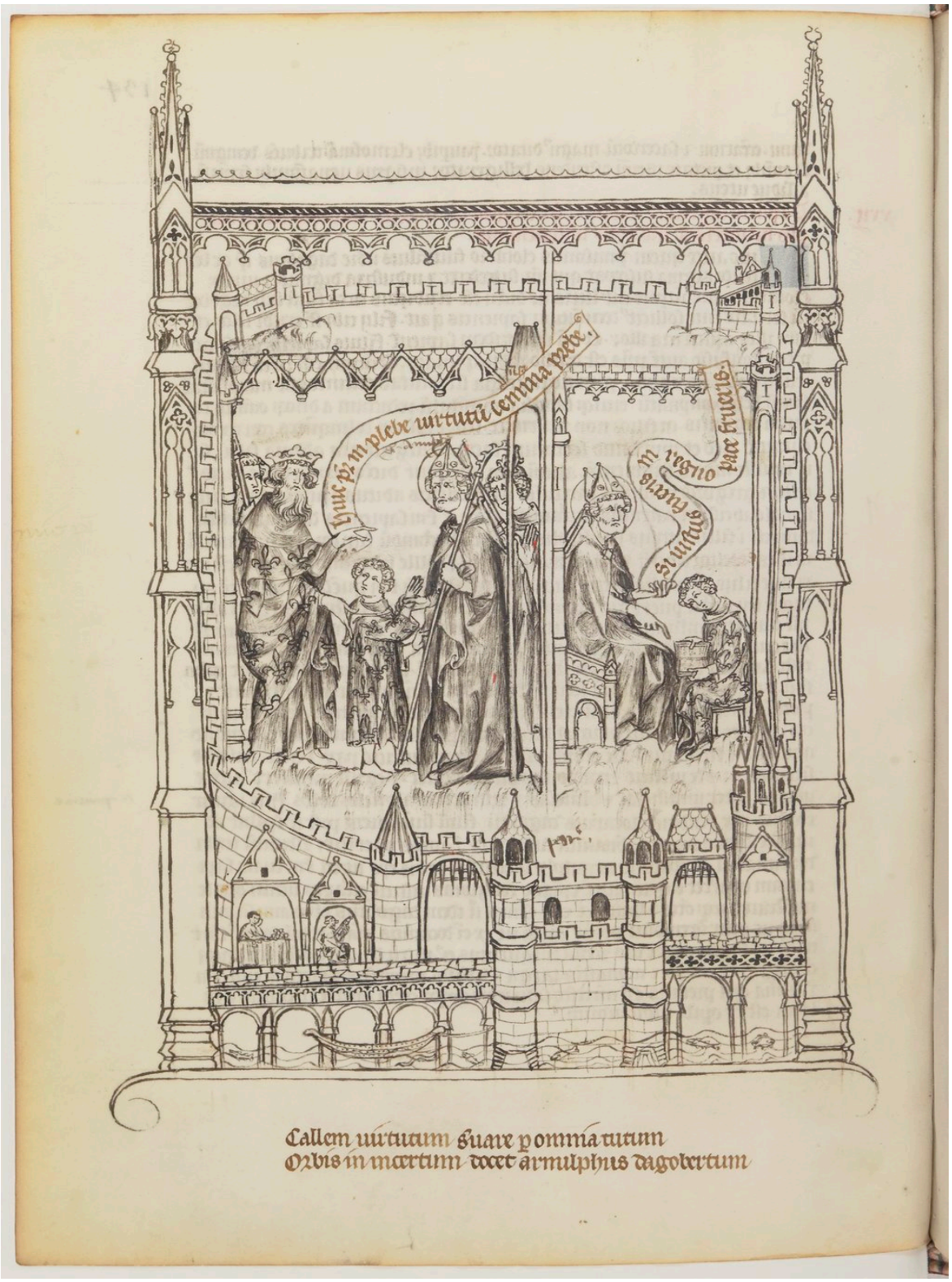

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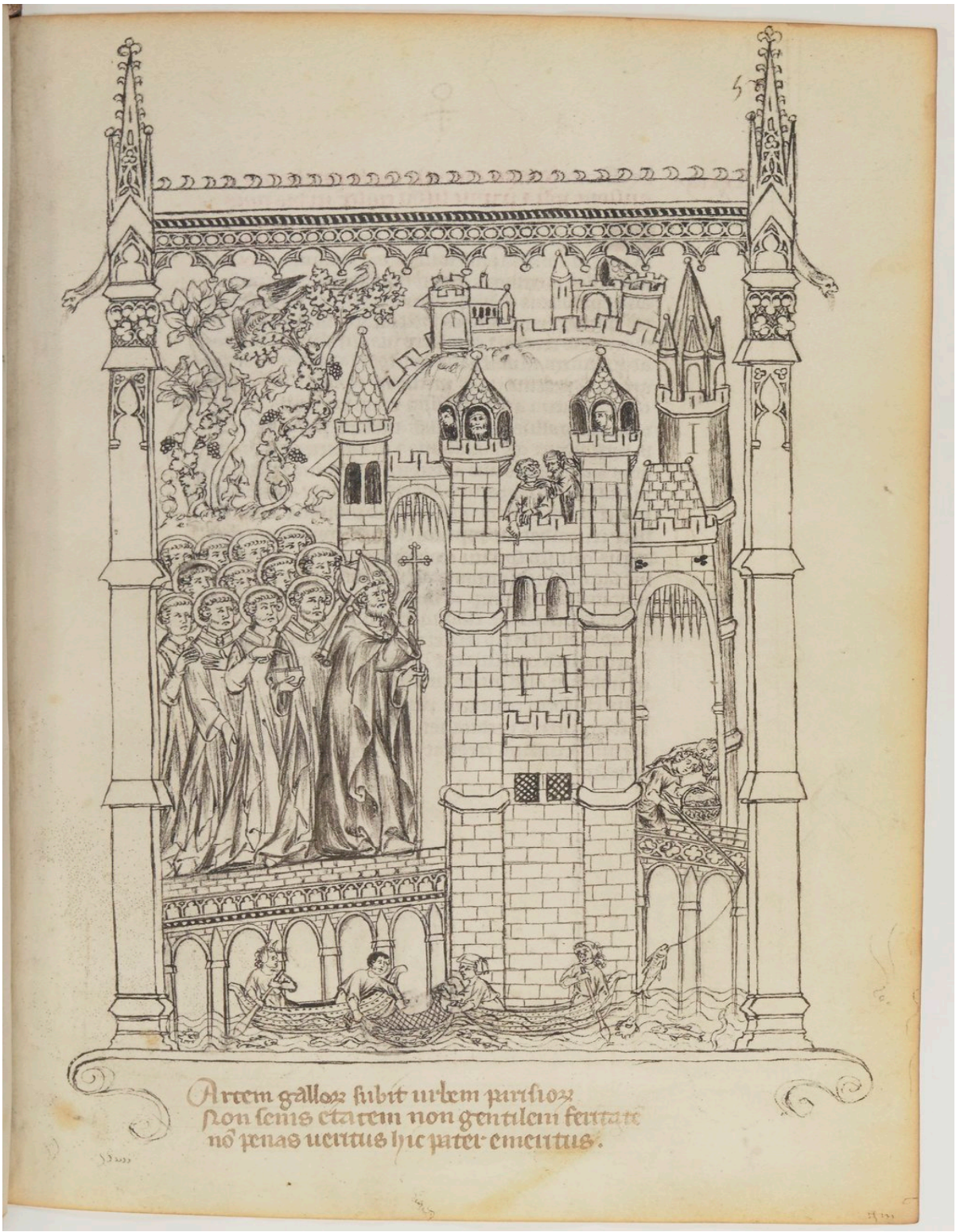

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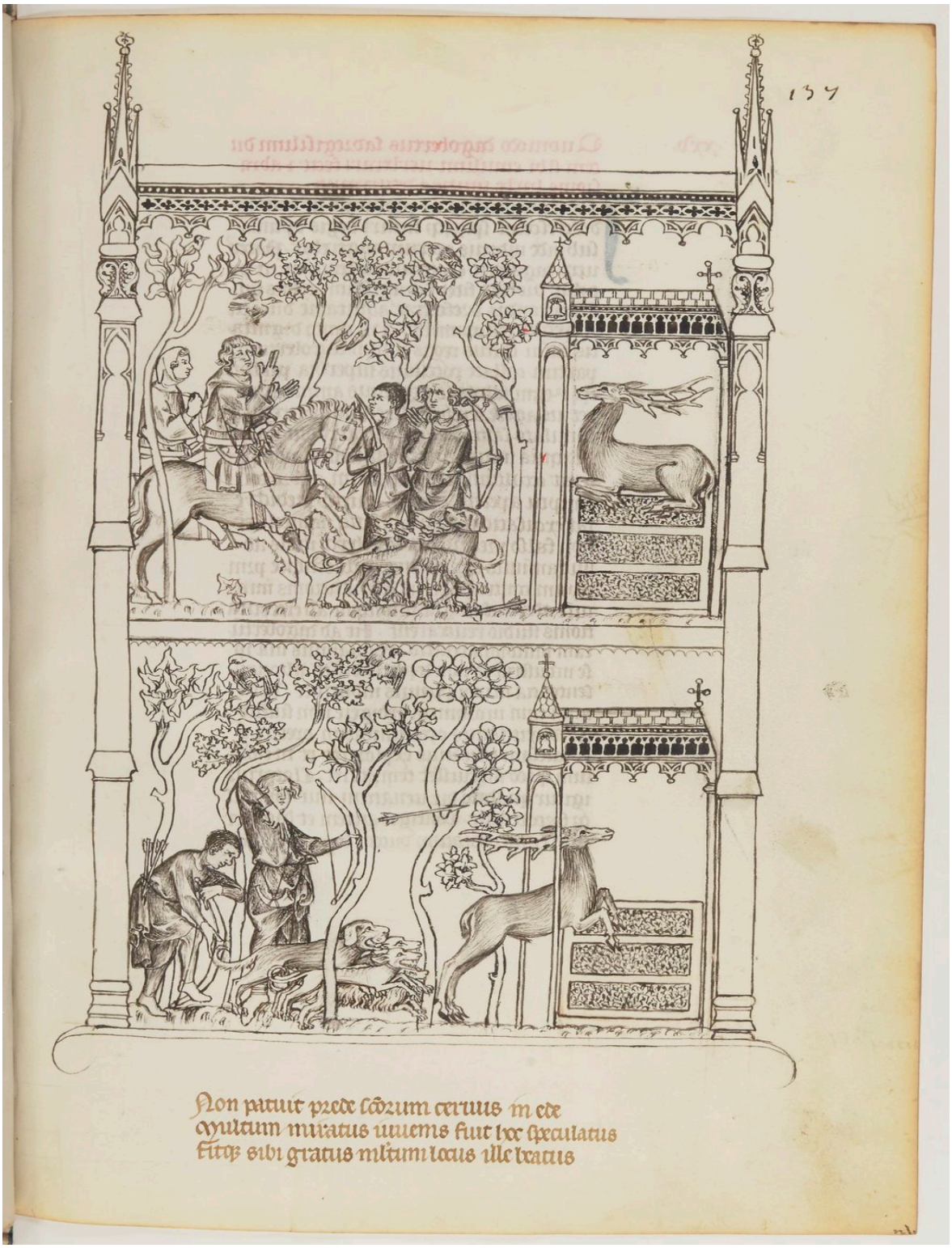

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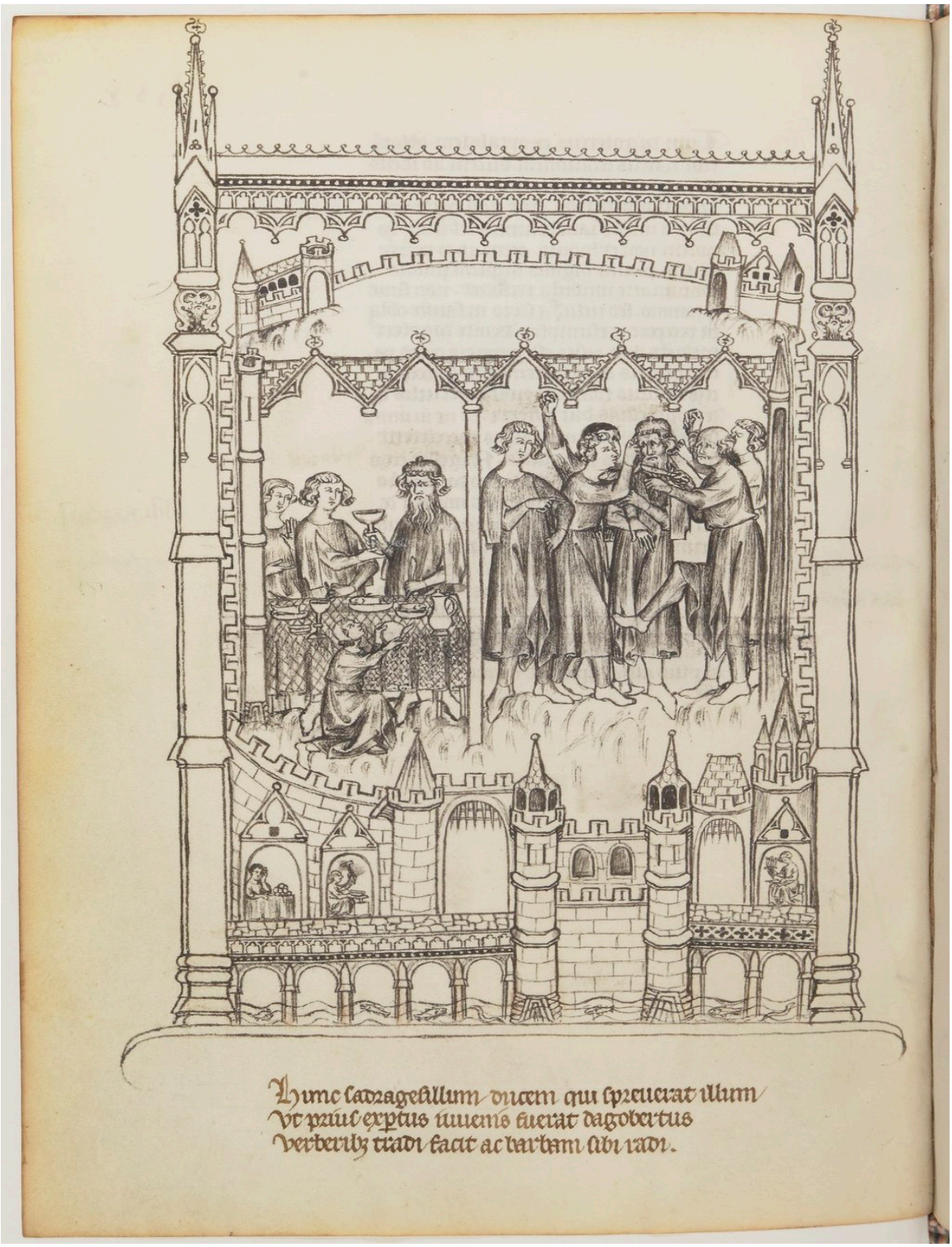

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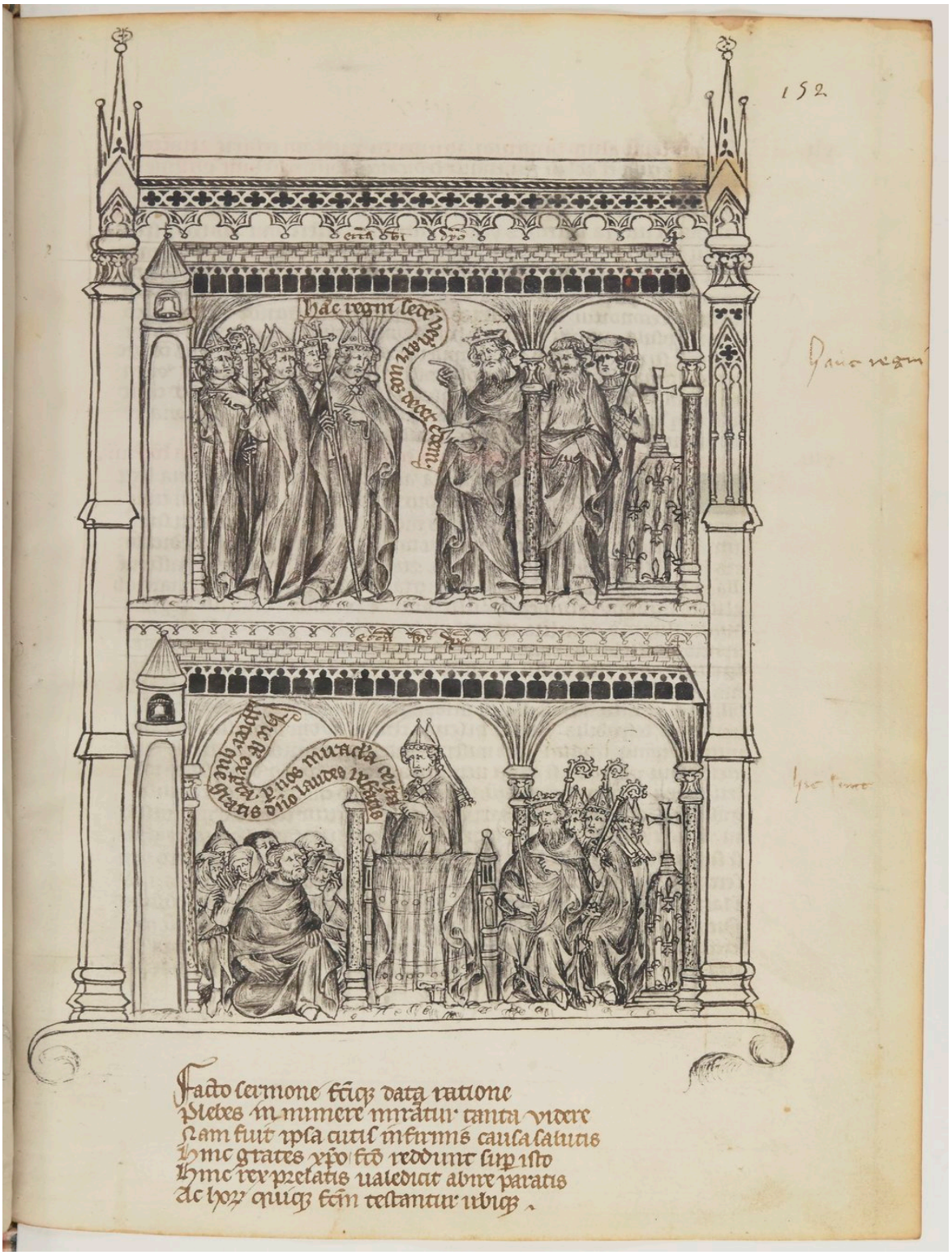

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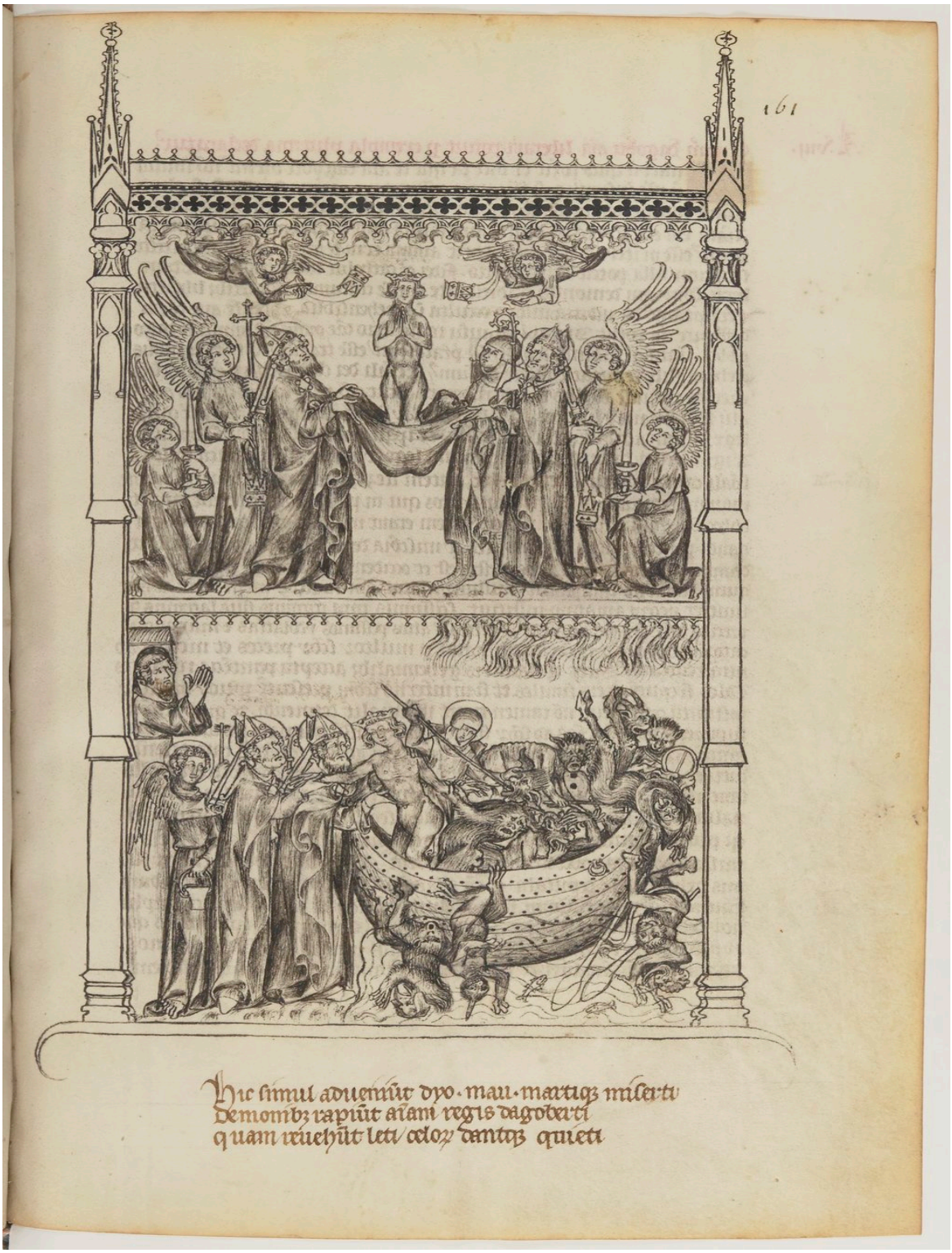

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