

51. Schapiro, 'Silos', p. 46.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 44, figs. 14, 15.
53. Avranches BM, Ms. 210, Folio 4 verso. See also M. Dosdat, *L'enluminure romane au Mont Saint-Michel, X^e-XII^e siècle*, Rennes, 1991, pp. 70-72.
54. M. Lafargue, 'Les sculptures du premier atelier de la Daurade et les chapiteaux du cloître de Moissac', *Bulletin monumental*, XCVII, 1938, pp. 195-216; P. Mesplé, *Toulouse. Musée des Augustins. Les sculptures romanes*, Paris, 1961, nos. 110, 111; D. Milhan, *L'art roman toulousain au Musée des Augustins. Les grandes étapes de la sculpture romane toulousaine (cat.)*, Toulouse, 1971, pp. 11-60, pls. 6, 7.
55. See n. 25 above.
56. I am inclined to think that the same workshop produced the corbels of St Hilaire in Foussais as well as those in Vouvant.
57. Schapiro, 'Silos', p., 46, fig. 20; J. Bousquet, *La sculpture à Conques au XI^e et XII^e siècles*, 3 vols. (PhD diss., Université de Lille, III), 1973, I, p. 362, III, pp. 505-06, compares the masons' depiction to those depicted in the murals of St Julien in Brioude (quotes M. Aubert who regards the capitals as modern, made after older examples).
58. Crozet, 'Survivances antiques', p. 30.
59. Because of the deterioration of the stones in many of the churches, I could not identify with certainty any other images of masons with their tools. This was also the case in Corne-Ecluse and St Quantin de Roncamps.
60. Aubert, 'La construction', 1961, p. 30.
61. R. Wittkower, *Sculpture Processes and Principles*, Harmondsworth, 1979, fig. 3, p. 15.
62. E. Lefèvre-Pontalis, 'Les bénitiers caryatides', *Bulletin monumental*, LXXXII, 1923, pp. 187-88.
63. Aubert, 'La construction', 1961, pp. 24-30. The representations of architects, master masons and other builders in manuscript paintings, and the depictions of building procedures in the representations of the Tower of Babel, were discussed mainly by P. du Colombier, *Les chantiers des cathédrales*, Paris, 1973; J. Harvey, *Medieval Craftsmen*, London, 1975; Wittkower, *Sculpture Processes*, pp. 33-38, fig. 3; Egbert, *The Medieval Artist. A comparison of self-representations of manuscript painters, who often signed their work, with those of the sculptors of the corbel series is the subject of a separate study.*
64. See the examples on the glass windows of Chartres Cathedral; Aubert, 'La construction', p. 34. Such capes are also worn by the troubadours and jongleurs in an illustration in a thirteenth-century manuscript of *vidas*: Paris, Bibl. Nat. Ms. fr. 12.473. For illustrations, see A. Brilliant, *Les troubadours et le sentiment romanesque*, Paris, 1945, figs. 34, 48, 63.
65. Crozet, 'Chauvigny et ses monuments', pp. 39-40; *idem*, *Chauvigny, Saint-Savin*, Paris, n.d., p. 9.
66. K. Gerstenberg, *Die deutschen Baumeisterbildnisse des Mittelalters*, Berlin, 1966, pp. 18, 19, 22. Gerstenberg's material is convincing for he shows the persistence of a specific facial type in self-portraits, which were identified as such by inscriptions from the fourteenth century onward. I am aware that his hypothesis, like my own, is difficult to prove. However, the persistence of such a tradition, whose beginnings I can show in the corbels, and the fact that self-portraits by artists since the Renaissance display the same characteristics, favours this interpretation.
67. *Ibid.*, pp. 78-128.
68. The traditional imagery of religious compositions in the area of the upper margin in early Romanesque stone reliefs, was thus transformed into the autonomous and monumental, though still marginal, corbel programme, which included a wide range of images from the sculptors' immediate cultural environment.

Reading the language and texts of marginal Romanesque sculpture

Traditional iconographical study is based on the investigation of the relationships between images, the deciphering of their context and content, and then reading their meaning. This is usually done with the help of various learned writings which provide parallel or simultaneous systems of representations.

Marginal sculpture is a multilayered system; it expressed one thing to its patrons and another to the artists and their public.¹ Such characteristics have been indigenous to large areas of public art sponsored by official patrons and executed by artists and artisans of popular culture. The pictorial language of the margins, emerging alongside twelfth-century official art, represents specific subjects and projects of realistic, expressive and stark images. This kind of 'marginal language' was not used elsewhere in the church, even when the subject matter was similar to that represented on the more easily visible capitals.² The individual images in the series of marginal sculpture function as self-contained autonomous units, each retaining its independent meaning, and each comparable to words in an open ended sentence. These 'words' are all unified under the general design of the series. They might be regarded as being subjected to the architectural form of the series, functioning mostly as supporting elements. There is a casual relationship between one unit and the next, either in terms of action or of time, but communication rests between the observer and individual units, for each corbel is a frontally constructed unit, often depicting emblematic if not enigmatic codes. Consequently, this structure prevents the marginal sculpture from being a decorative system of recurring patterns, with single units forming a complex ornamental system, be it floral, geometrical or figurative.³ (A single component of such an ornamental system does not function as an individual meaningful unit, even when it frames a central composition.) Marginal art itself does not serve as any kind of framework for other artistic works.⁴ It has its own, marginal place in a church, but should be seen as part of the overall architectural plan, which itself was understood as a reflection of the cosmos.⁵

I believe that the onlooker, medieval as well as modern, was and is able to read this language by deciphering its codes and sources, despite their being different from the

official art. The language of the margins – individual corbels as well as the overall series – consists of codified, or stereotyped, gestures and expressions, both realistic and metaphorical. Such images were new in the twelfth century and their source seems to be the non-written popular culture – rich in visual modes of communication such as gestures, body movements and aural metaphors – on the one hand, and on the other a constant formal dialogue with the traditional gestures and schemes of the official sculpture, in the course of which the latter are dismantled and reshaped to serve the margins' pictorial schemes.

Compared to the new 'marginal language', official medieval sculpture consisted of traditional and stereotyped corporeal gestures, specific to depictions of earthly or heavenly scenes. Reserved, moderate, often symbolic gestures are indigenous to the heavenly world, such as the hand of Christ raised in blessing, the raised hands of the mourners in scenes of the *Pietà*, or the measured representations of the 'saintly' face, which wears little expression, or at most a quiet smile. For the depiction of the world of mortals (as in various depictions of the Last Judgement), the gestures are harsher and have a sense of urgency – such as the figures pulling or dragging each other – and the facial expressions are expressive and eloquent. Compared to marginal art, however, even the gestures of the damned in hell are not violent, though, characteristically, they have a broader range of body movements. In addition, in official art the location of the figures is crucial. The presentation of individuals, whether saints, ordinary mortals or royal personages, always reflects their place in the celestial or earthly hierarchy. A figure may be standing, or seated on a throne or a raised chair, for example. In the same way, figures seated on a simple chair or footstool signify a lower class, while lowly, evil and marginal figures are usually shown sitting on the floor – a notable example being the Roman soldiers shown at the foot of the Cross or next to Christ's tomb, from early Christian ivories to the Giotto fresco in the Arena Chapel.⁶ Until the thirteenth century the latter type of depictions were few; but in the later Middle Ages such depictions became more common and specific, such as, for example, the poor under St Nicolas's tomb on the right tympanum of Chartres' southern façade.

The images of the heavenly world in medieval sculpture present to the observer a model, often exalted and well-ordered, hierarchy. In a way they confront the observer with a demand that he or she emulate exemplary persons and saintly figures and behave in such 'normal', or even ideal, ways themselves.

In contrast, marginal sculpture of the twelfth century, which presented expressions, gestures and postures that were new and unprecedented in European medieval art, makes use of gestures and expressions outside of, and contrary to, the official canon.⁷

Reading the codes

One way to decipher the language of marginal sculpture is to read its specific gestures, body postures and expressions as codified signs and symbols.

Two images common to marginal sculpture will be examined as being representative of its codes: the image of the *cry*, where a screaming figure is depicted in a bust or head, and the image of a figure displaying its buttocks to the observer.

The image of the *cry* will be examined as being indigenous to the dialogue between the canons of the official art and the marginal language, and that of the *bared buttocks* as being characteristic of codified popular expressions.

The image of the *cry*

Even if the cries depicted on the corbel series are representative of the cries of sinners being tortured in hell, they can also be interpreted as an attempt to comprehend and describe pain and terror in this world. In marginal art, the individuals experiencing pain are the fool, the sick, the old and at times also the jongleur. Their painful cries are shown by images of heads being thrown back and mouths twisted, or by heads being bent forwards (pl. 2.1–5, cf. 1.14–15, 17, 18, 55). How do these images relate to medieval traditions of depicting the *cry*, and what is its role in the *longue durée*?

Neither the cosmic cry of Christ on the Cross – 'My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me?' – described in the first three Gospels, nor the description of His agony in death in the Gospel of St John, found expression in the early Christian depictions of the crucifixion.⁸ The early images of Christ on the Cross (whether fully clothed or merely clad in a loincloth) were heroic: His eyes were open, His figure immaculate. The figures at the foot of the Cross were depicted in the same way. Their laments and tears were represented symbolically rather than spontaneously, and even Mary Magdalene in her dramatic grief, according to the gospel of St John, was portrayed as a graceful woman – head covered and with restrained movements.

These visual formulas seemed to express Christian exegesis and to reflect the critical attitude towards such excessive emotions as fear, despair and anger, which were perceived as being characteristic of pagan passion and emotion, not as a way of finding salvation in the true faith.⁹ Thus, the depiction of the *cry* and a display of grief became part of secondary scenes, where the lamenting figures were portrayed as women, lowly and anonymous. Hence, the early Christian ethos excluded a demonstration of the agony of Christ and his followers, and turned the *cry*, as an outward expression of pain, into the sole property of the lowly 'anonymous' group. In this way a visual behavioural model was constructed in which the divine and the noble heroically disguise their pain, while the base-born demonstrate and display it.

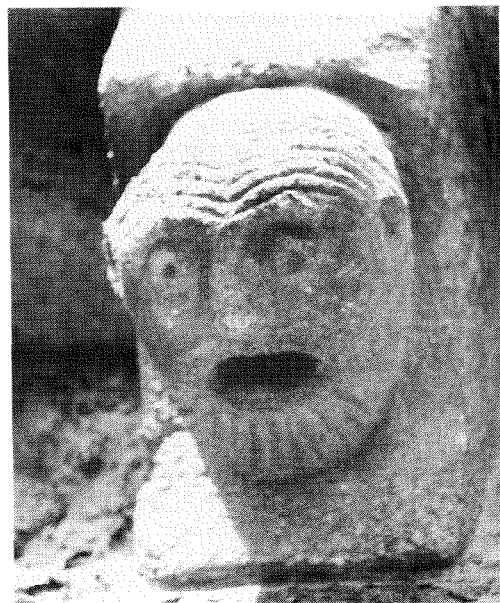
And so, in early Christian art, the anonymous women tear at their clothes and skin, with dishevelled hair and wide staring eyes, their hands thrown up in despair and their mouths agape in the *cry*. Yet the classical spontaneous depiction of grief



2.1 Moissac, St Pierre, corbel from series above southern portal: screaming man.



2.2 Cahors, St Etienne, corbel from north porch: young man, crying out.



2.3 Brioude, St Julien, corbel from eastern choir wall: man crying out.



2.4 Cahors, St Etienne, corbel from north wall: man crying out.



2.5 Poitiers, St Pierre, gargoyle and corbel from west façade: cry of man and monster.



2.6 Autun, St Lazare, detail from Last Judgement tympanum on western narthex: devil and damned.

became an identifying sign, whose meaning was allegorical and symbolic.¹⁰

In the Renaissance of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, a change took place in the approach to emotional contexts. In different groups of writings, from the commentaries on the holy Scriptures to ecclesiastical and courtly poetry, individual expressions of emotion began to be depicted. The works of art retained the representations of the crying women in scenes of lamentation, but incorporated portrayals showing more intense movement than those of earlier periods. In depictions of the crucifixion of this period, the heroic ethos began to incorporate the portrayal of suffering. And so, gradually, Christ on the Cross began to be shown as a suffering figure: with head drooping, eyes shut, and open wounds on his body. The number of depictions of Christ's companions actually touching his body also increased.¹¹

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the *cry* is 'heard' in visual and written depictions of the condemned bemoaning their punishment in hell (pl. 2.6). The *cry* is similarly characteristic of the tortured and the torturers in various writings, from Tundale to Honorius of Autun,¹² as well as in painted and sculpted images of the damned and the demons in depictions of the Last Judgement. In the sculptural representations of the Last Judgement the *cry* remained symbolic and allegoric in much the same way as in early Christian depictions of scenes of lamentation. However, the proliferation of condemned sinners and demons shown crying, represented a further step in relating the *cry* to individual and human figures. If in early Christianity depictions of the *cry* focused on lamenting women, and occasionally on 'others' and 'the lowly', in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries a conspicuous development took place – figures of the damned and the condemned and of sinners, both men and women, were added to the list.¹³

However, the most significant breakthrough in depicting the *cry* in twelfth-century art was in marginal sculpture, including corbel series and gargoyles. Here the artists depicted the *cry* spontaneously – it was direct and dramatic, portrayed with intense pathos, and unlike anything seen previously in the Middle Ages. As in classical sculpture, the first attempts at visual depictions of individual experience focused on portrayals of pain and suffering.¹⁴ Unlike the representations in classical art, however, the criers were marginal figures: drunks, beggars, the sick, whores and the artists themselves. While it is not possible to compare the countless and varied marginal images of the *cry* with specific writings of the period, perhaps, as in street theatre where the spoken word and the performances are conditioned by specific locations and spontaneous interactions with different audiences, so too can the images of the *cry* be read in connection with their particular location and function.

The *cry* images on the corbels are formulas that eventually made their way into the pictorial language of official art and became part of the accepted artistic canon; as, for example, the mourning angels in the works of Giotto in the Arena Chapel. From the thirteenth century onwards the most vehement expression of pain was reserved for the reformed sinner Mary Magdalene. Combining sin and redemption, and

placed lowest in the pictorial holy hierarchy, she was able to convey – whether at the foot of the Cross or at the feet of Christ – such strong emotions as pain, entreaty, and despair.¹⁵ This image of Mary Magdalene was a key influence leading to the depiction of emotion in official art.

As well as the *cry*, there are frequent representations of sticking out the tongue, gritting or showing the teeth, raucous laughter, and so on. As a rule, these are characteristic of the devil (pl. 2.7, cf. 1.9–12, 50–51, 54, 56). However, when transferred to human beings they not only represent 'demonic types' but express *recrimination* and *provocation*; although here these gestures and emotions assume a more neutral colouration because they are no longer linked directly to the devil.

Bared buttocks display

The body postures of marginal figures are even bolder than their expressions – in particular those in which men and women display their buttocks to the viewer (their behinds can also be clothed), a gesture even more insolent perhaps than revealing the genitals (pl. 2.8–11, cf. 1.12). Moreover, the *bared buttocks display* should be regarded in the context of an art which eliminated canonic Romanesque classical figures showing their back to the observer, and constructed its compositions using frontally depicted forms and figures, or figures depicted in profile, and so enhanced a one-layered confrontation with the observer by reflecting the social requisites of reserved and codified gestures.

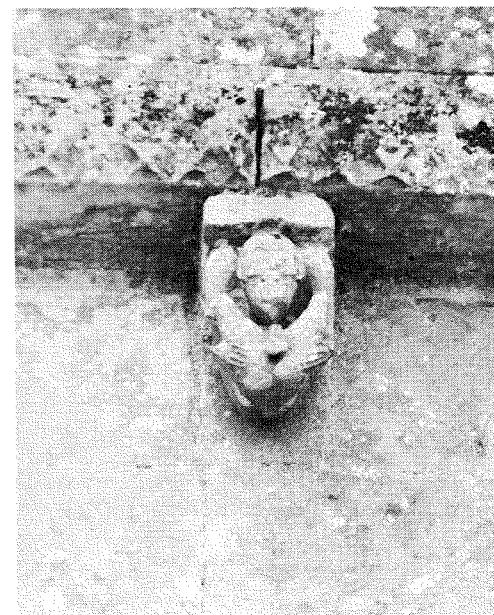
The *bared buttocks* break the rules of this art. It ignores the traditional rules of depicting medieval figures in order to search for a deeper reality, and consciously uses distortion and simplification of form to this end.

While such gestures may also have had their allegorical and metaphorical significance, their impact is immediate; there is no misunderstanding them. The dialogue between such figures and the official canon can be compared to a confrontation between two texts, a bringing together of the canonic and the popular, as is known from the dialogues of Marcolph and Salomon,¹⁶ or the parodial romances which used numerous versions of stories relating to the lower parts of the body and its functions.¹⁷ However, in marginal pictorial traditions these forms appear constantly and are a long-term phenomenon. They appear on misericords and in other half-hidden places as well as later in civic houses. They were never accepted as belonging to the canon of 'high art'.

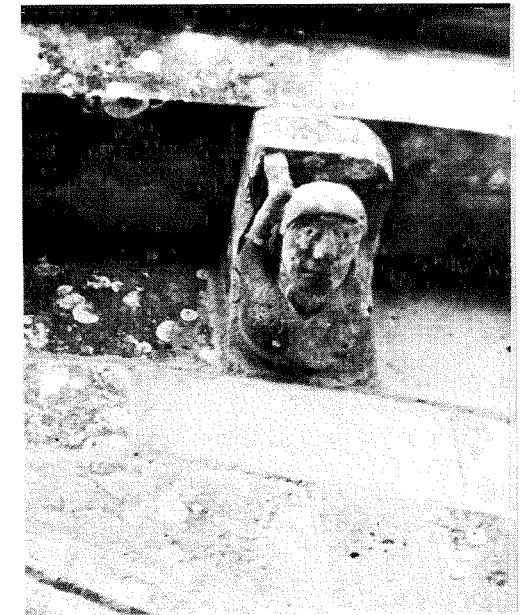
I believe that the representations of vulgar yet common expressions in marginal sculpture were done deliberately and indicate the role of the margins as a bridge between the learned and the illiterate. In addition, other subversive gestures in passive or aggressive forms should be mentioned: wide open mouths, faces twisted in a scream, large tongues projecting hugely from the mouth, heads thrown back in suffering. These representations are not to be read in the context of symmetrical or hierarchical compositions, but are part of a vocabulary of forms, perhaps limited in



2.7 Civray, St Nicolas, corbel from west façade: monster with bared teeth and tongue stuck out.



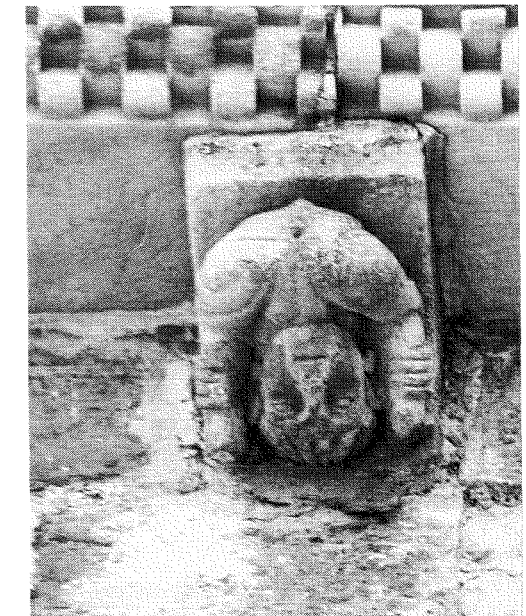
2.8 Perignac, St Pierre, corbel from west façade: man with bared buttocks.



2.9 Aulnay, St Pierre, corbel from apse: man baring buttocks.



2.10 Cahors, St Etienne, corbel from north wall: man with legs bent back over head.



2.11 Cahors, St Etienne, corbel from north wall: jongleur doing somersault, with bottom stuck out.

scope and stereotypical but clear and extreme, which is common to the figures presented and establishes an immediate rapport between them and the viewer. In employing these kinds of gestures the makers of marginal sculpture codified basic concepts of popular culture, such as its visual appeal and its nonverbal signs and symbols.

These series include types and characters who were the salient popular heroes of town and square – the jongleurs, or professional performers. But alongside them also are the mad, the drunkards, the prostitutes and marginal women, and the fools. All these are multidimensional if stereotyped figures, combining the frightening and the comic and arousing both tears and laughter. Often, there is also an element of the enigmatic and the intriguing that defies explanation. The sculptors of the series stressed the inherent strength of popular archetypes, via such different modes as idealization, irony, sarcasm or criticism, but did not turn them into enduring personifications.

Thus the utter lack of normative models on the one hand distinguishes the corbel series from the official art, and the utter lack of sentimentality on the other hand distinguishes the series from the sentiments of popular art.¹⁸

Marginal and official sculpture – a comparative study

The unique qualities of the language of corbels and of their images can be brought into even sharper focus if we compare an image from the corbels – deliberately direct and expressive in its design and manner of presentation – with the same image as it appears in official art, where it functions in a planned context and acquires different connotations.

One such comparison can be made between the depiction of the jongleurs on the corbels with their rendering in the official religious art of the time on the portals of four Romanesque façades: those of St Hilaire in Foussais,¹⁹ St Nicolas in Civray,²⁰ the archivolt of the northern transept portal of St Pierre in Aulnay²¹ (three churches that appear in our survey of corbels), and the central portal of the narthex of Ste Madeleine in Vézelay.²²

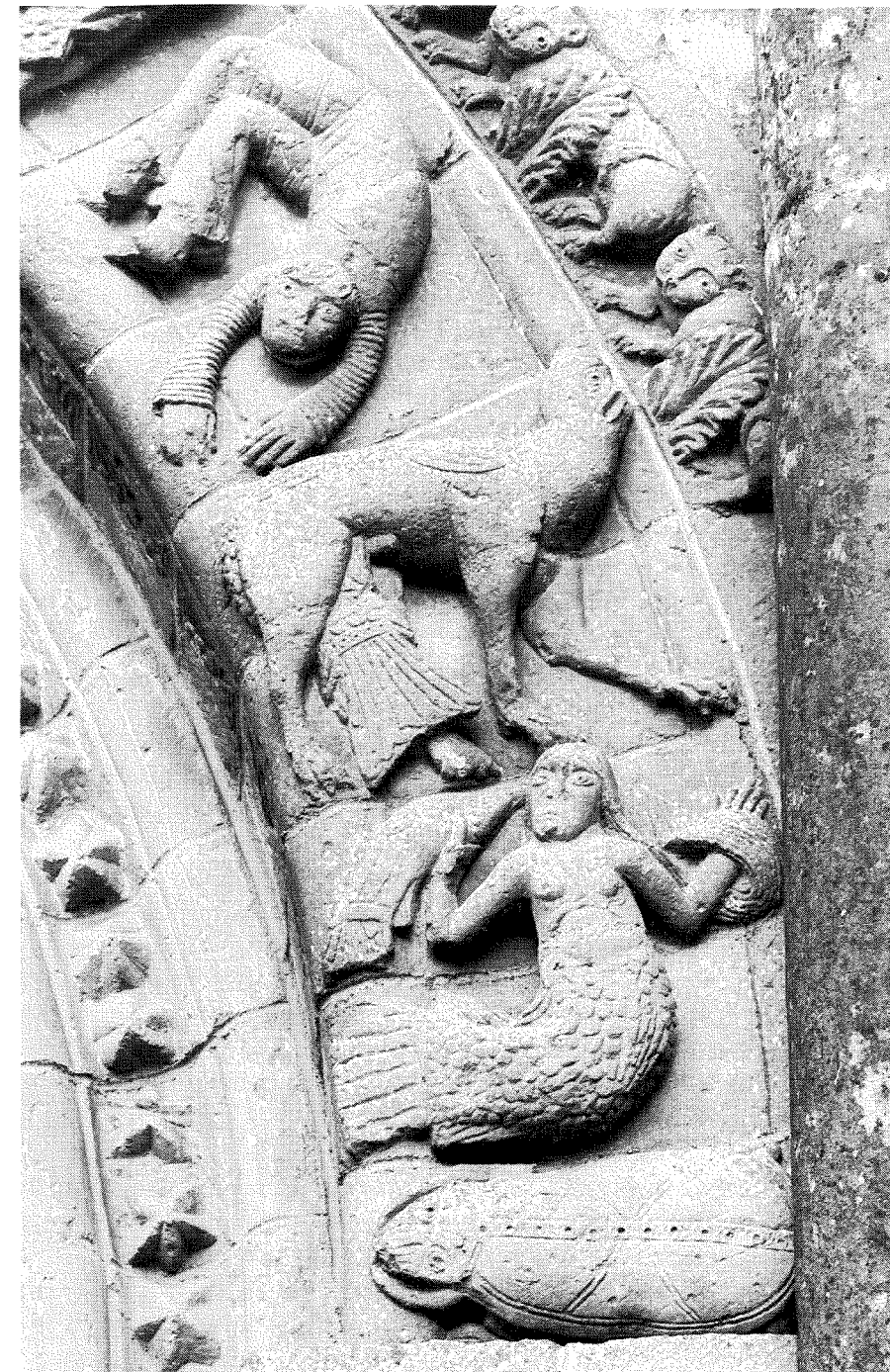
In the main archivolt of the central portal of the west façade of St Hilaire in Foussais (pl. 2.12), the scheme develops from the summit of the arch downwards along its sides. At the summit of the arch, Christ in Majesty is depicted flanked on his right by two symbols of the Evangelists, a donor (?) and four apostles, and on his left by an angel, two symbols of the Evangelists, a bishop and four apostles. The figures of this heavenly court are small and compactly depicted, with each figure occupying only a single stone. However, the figures of the acrobats and musicians on the two lower sides of the arch are large – two acrobats occupy two entire stones each. Following the figures of the apostles on the left-hand side, i.e. to the right of Christ, a woman acrobat is bent backwards in an arc, holding her body with her



2.12 Foussais, St Hilaire, west façade, central portal.



2.13 Foussais, St Hilaire, west façade, detail of archivolt of central portal, left side: jongleurs.



2.14 Foussais, St Hilaire, west façade, detail of archivolt of central portal, right side: acrobat, monsters and mermaid.

hands. Next comes a flute player, and an acrobat – with a long embroidered robe depicted on two of the arch stones – falling onto his hands (pl. 2.13). This group is followed by a militant Virtue and a male personification of Lust on the lowest parts of the arch. Following the apostles to the left of Christ, a musician playing a stringed instrument is depicted, succeeded by an acrobat occupying a two-stone space and falling on to his hands like his colleague on the right side. After him come a monster, a mermaid and a second monster (pl. 2.14).

The depiction of the jongleurs and acrobats in St Hilaire in Foussais is thus in keeping with official ecclesiastical art in that it places the sinners in the lower parts of the hierarchy, next to monsters. However, it departs from the traditional depiction of the Last Judgement in placing jongleurs on both sides of the arch, and not only to the left of Christ. Furthermore, the artist devotes significantly greater space to the performers, even though they are closer to the observer, and elaborates many details of their posture and clothes, while depicting the celestial court as small and remote. The artist thereby makes it abundantly clear where his sympathies lie. Hence, while conforming generally to the traditional ecclesiastical scheme, the small divergences create an ambivalence between form and content.

The sculptural scheme of the façade of St Nicolas in Civray remains problematic mainly in regard to the question of the original location of the sculptures. Although it is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss the entire scheme, it appears that in each of the three façade sections the area of the portals and the upper parts represent an intelligible iconographic program.²³ I would argue that the northern section is dedicated to the *miles Christi*, the noble lord represented in the equestrian statue in the upper part,²⁴ while the portal depicts scenes from courtly life. On the summit of the portal's inner archivolt, a seated musician is playing his instrument, while an acrobat is standing on his head performing to the music. On each side of this scene a short-bearded male bust is depicted (pl. 2.15). The two busts are rendered in profile, as if observing the performers with slightly open mouth, perhaps singing. These busts can be compared on the one hand with late antique cameos,²⁵ and on the other with the pair of male heads from the cornice metopes on the façade of the church in Chadenac. This scene can be identified as a courtly scene, of lords watching a performance of jongleurs. The depiction of Samson fighting the lion on the left portal's capital is a routine image of spiritual or earthly power,²⁶ and the hunting scenes on the trumeaux were often part of courtly depictions.²⁷ On the left side of the portal there is an additional relief of a jongleur playing his instrument.

Hence, in St Nicolas in Civray the jongleurs appear as part of a larger programme depicting courtly life. But even in the scene on the archivolt, a distinction is made between performers and observers. This presentation can be compared to descriptions of the jongleurs performing before the nobility in contemporaneous chronicles and chansons.²⁸

The two inner archivolt of the southern transept portal in St Pierre in Aulnay are supported in their inner side by a series of small figures. The archivolt depicting the

Elders of the Apocalypse is supported by a frieze of kneeling dancers, while the apostles' archivolt is held up by crouching atlantes. The kneeling dancers, who belong to the world of the jongleurs, wear embroidered trousers and shirts. The right hand of each is lifted in a dancing movement, which also serves as a supporting function, while the left hand rests on the right knee (pl. 2.16). They are ranged in two groups emerging from the middle of the archivolt towards the left and the right. Made to conform to the shape of the archivolt, and because of their repetitive and monotonous depiction, the dancers become a unit or motif making up the frieze. It is interesting to compare this frieze with that of a single dancer depicted on a corbel of the north apse in Aulnay (pl. 2.17). The figure's back and front are simultaneously shown in movement. His left hand is on his knee in the same gesture as the frieze dancers, his right hand holds aloft a musical instrument, his feet show below his long robe. This single dancer (situated near a tightrope walker) demonstrates the vivid realism of the corbel figure in contrast to the dancers on an archivolt of an ornamental nature.²⁹

The fourth example is the acrobat in a medallion situated on the summit of the archivolt surrounding the tympanum of the central portal in the narthex of Ste Madeleine in Vézelay.³⁰ Scenes of the labours of the months and the zodiac signs are depicted on the archivolt while on its summit, above Christ's head, are three medallions constituting a triad: in the middle is an acrobat, to his right a hound biting its tail, and to his left a mermaid holding her tail (pl. 2.18). These three images commonly depicted on capitals and corbels seem to assume a different meaning in the erudite official art of the Vézelay tympanum. Perhaps Bernard of Clairvaux's famous words about the jongleurs can serve as a key to the understanding of these images. Comparing his Cistercians to jongleurs, Bernard wrote: 'In the eyes of worldly people we have the air of performing *tours de force*. All that they desire we flee, and what they flee we desire, like those jongleurs and dancers who, head down and feet up in an inhuman fashion, stand, walk on their hands, and attract the eyes of every one.'³¹ Thus, Bernard of Clairvaux borrowed the negative image of the jongleur and used it metaphorically in his preaching.³²

Similarly, in the high official art of Vézelay, the acrobat, the hound and the mermaid were transformed into metaphoric images by their separation from the other medallions, and by the stylization of the figures to conform to the shape of an eternal circle framed again by a medallion.³³ Hence, in official art, despite stylistical differences, the jongleurs expressed a basic uniformity of conception. In the clerical scheme of St Hilaire in Foussais, the jongleurs' image as the condemned sinners is exemplary, while in the centre of the scene describing courtly life in St Nicolas in Civray, it is emblematic. In Ste Madeleine in Vézelay, it is a metaphor for eternity or divinity, while in St Pierre in Aulnay it serves as a decorative motif. These exemplary, symbolic, metaphoric and decorative transformations were conveyed through an expressionless and stylized image of a jongleur.³⁴

By contrast, the jongleurs in the corbel series were depicted as realistic and



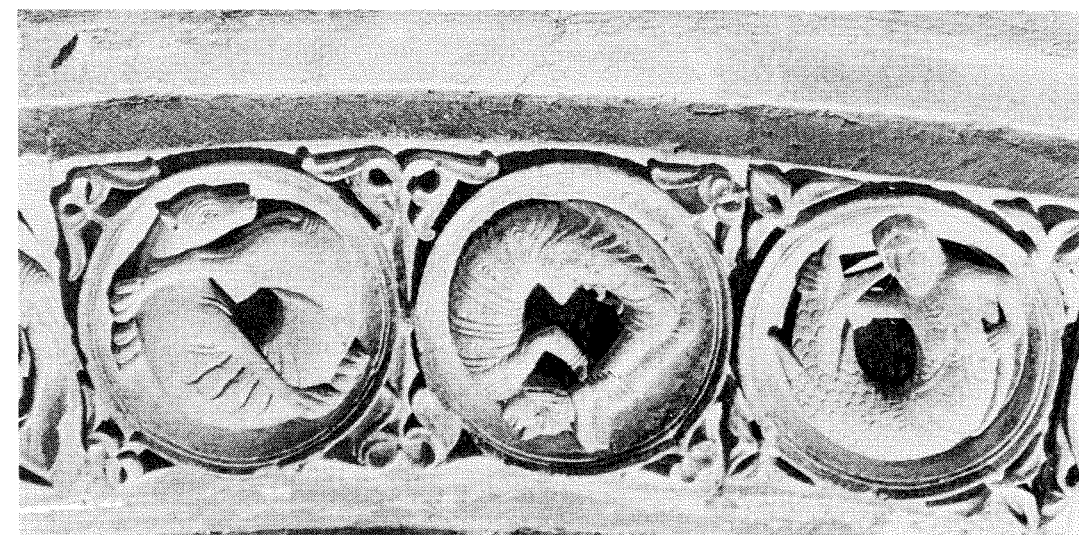
2.15 Civray, St Nicolas, west façade, summit of archivolt of left portal: jongleurs watched by knights.



2.16 Aulnay, St Pierre, southern portal, detail of archivolt: dancers.



2.17 Aulnay, St Pierre, corbel from north apse: dancer.



2.18 Vézelay, Ste Madeleine, central portal of narthex, central medallions (above head of Christ): dog, jongleur, mermaid.



2.19 Surgères, Notre Dame, west façade: jongleurs, one supporting cornice with his knees.

expressive images, and at the same time each is an isolated griefstricken or aggressive 'image of the artist'. The sculptors depicted the jongleurs, who were acknowledged artists, with compassion and with realistic distortions, presumably to express their own professional preoccupation with illusion, transformation, display and disguise (pl. 2.19, 20, cf. 1.34–38). Thus, an allegorical interpretation of the jongleurs on the corbels was possible, but the simple image retained its visual impact and vigour.

I believe that as an artistic language marginal sculpture shows basic similarities with street theatre and its strolling players. Similar elements are to be found in both arts: improvisations depending on the type of location, space and setting, for example, which may change according to local conditions, but nonetheless remain marginal. The language used in street theatre is a spoken vernacular often with specific 'registers'; the bare formal language of marginal sculpture, which retains the everyday visual codes of popular culture, may be compared to a spoken language. In this it differs from the official art which may be equated with the written Latin language. Basic mimicry, expressions and gesticulations are part of street theatre, while idealization and stylization are rejected. The actors and major images are of vulgar and common nature yet the types are varied.

Both street theatre and marginal sculpture refer only generally to an acknowledged framework: the theatre to a certain familiar text (written or not); the sculpture to its traditional location and motifs. However, the freedom of improvisation resulted in many individual fashions and modes of performing and depicting in stone: drama, humour, protest and a conscious narrative were all used. Such artistic expression struck out at the stylized canons of official art.³⁵

The multilayered system: patrons versus artists

The corbel series of marginal sculpture were understood differently by patrons and artists. The artists appear to have related to the individual images, each image having an independent existence of its own. Hence they created a world populated by various types and characters. Not so the patrons. They appear to have perceived these remote creations as one overall project with a unifying meaning: the depiction of Vices. In other words, the representations of expressions, types and characters from 'life' is on the one hand powerful and forceful, and on the other hand could function as a metaphor of a basic, Christian-moral, universal meaning.

Thus codified gestures of the series may have had a metaphorical meaning and may have been considered as figures representing the Vices of anger, despair, cowardice and so on. But there was a huge gap between the harsh and variegated expressions, and their possible interpretation by the official patron in the well-known conventional manner. For example, the latter would have explained the images revealing their buttocks or sticking out their tongue as merely blasphemers of the true faith, and would thus have reduced a bold artistic form into a conventional moral



2.20 Foussais, St Hilaire, corbel from west façade: jongleur as atlant.

lesson. The marginal types could, however, equally well have been understood metaphorically as realistically. The blind could have stood for those who do not perceive the truth, the jongleur for one who turns the world upside down, and the prostitute for lack of constancy and devotion.

Moreover, the figures on the corbels support with their bodies, hands or heads, architectural elements charged with symbolic meaning, such as roofs, cornices and blind arcades. It is therefore plausible to assume that, for the patrons at least, these corbel forms constituted a gallery of sinners being punished by painfully holding aloft a heavy burden. The images of atlantes carrying burdens in the form of architectural parts (as metaphors of punished sinners) were transferred from classical times to the Middle Ages, and were presumably known as such to the learned patrons. Durand-Lefebvre and Adhémar³⁶ maintained that Roman and Gallo-Roman cornices were retained but were transformed into the cornices of Romanesque churches, which include the corbels and metopes. Taking their thesis further, I would suggest that in the Middle Ages a related classical pictorial tradition – that which used images of atlantes, prisoners, animals and the like as supporting elements (presumably for moral instruction) – contributed to the significance of the corbel programmes. In the opening chapter of his *Ten Books on Architecture*, Vitruvius mentions the caryatids – marble statues of women wearing long robes – erected in various parts of public buildings, where they appear to be carrying a heavy load. These statues recalled the sin and punishment of the people of Caryae, who sided with the Persians against their fellow Greeks. He also mentions statues of prisoners in barbarian costume who hold up a roof or an entablature and serve as a monument to the Greeks' triumph over the Persians.³⁷ In addition, Vitruvius speaks of the telamons that support brackets or cornices, though he admits that he does not know 'what they are and why they are so called'. He suggests that their Greek name *atlantes* was derived from Atlas. As for Atlas, Vitruvius acknowledges his punishment but assumes that he is depicted as supporting ceilings and firmaments because he instructed mankind on the heavenly constellations.³⁸

The impact of Vitruvius on the Middle Ages has been frequently studied. Cluny possessed a manuscript of the *Ten Books*, another was given as a present to Henry II of England, and a third was owned by a twelfth-century archbishop of Rouen; in addition, extracts from Vitruvius were known through the writings of Pliny.³⁹ Of course, the figure of Atlas could also have been known in the twelfth century through the writings of Virgil, Pausanias, and others.⁴⁰

The function and meaning of atlantes in the Middle Ages have been studied mainly in connection with specific monuments. The atlantes and supporters of architectural elements and church furniture – such as those of the Bari Throne, Parma Cathedral or the trumeaux in Oloron Ste Marie – were depicted as slaves, prisoners and serfs supporting an official sculptural programme portraying a cosmic hierarchy. In these official programmes the atlantes, following ancient models, express the pain and grief of their eternal burden. Other types of supporters, such as

the atlantes from Modena,⁴¹ remain associated with Atlas, the bearer of a heavenly burden.⁴² The meaning of these large groups of figures has not been deciphered, nor have the specific conditions of their depiction.

The eternally suffering supporters of church furniture and official sculptural schemes only express the idea of sin and punishment metaphorically. In reality, the observer confronts the image of a human being painfully holding aloft a heavy burden; no specific sin or punishment is depicted. In contrast, in the corbel series the particular sin is often shown, with the specific punishment being implicit in the very act of supporting. These metaphorical representations of sin differ radically from the sinners in hell shown in Romanesque depictions of the Last Judgement. There, the allegories of sin, such as Avarice or Lust, appear as static expressionless figures that may be identified by their attributes, while tormenting demons play the expressive parts. In short, sin is interpreted allegorically; punishment is explicit.

Unlike the atlantes that support official ecclesiastical sculptural schemes, the corbel sufferers support only architectural elements of the church; and they express the diversity of individual emotions that are the result of their eternal punishment and not of hard labour. I would argue that unlike the supporters of the official schemes, the corbel series constitute a gallery of punished sinners in which the suffering captives and caryatids of classical times are transformed into anonymous men and women who are prisoners of their carnal passions and agony. They are persons condemned by the church – jongleurs, drunkards, dice players and devilish monsters, images of sin itself and sick persons whose physical abnormalities may reflect mental ones. All these embodiments of evil are to be eternally punished; they are therefore depicted, as Vitruvius said of their classical predecessors, 'for the teaching of posterity'.

Even if it is assumed that the patrons understood the corbels as a 'gallery of punished sinners', they nevertheless allowed these indecent and repulsive images to be created and to be part of the stone sculpture. Did they permit this liberty because the sculptures were situated so far away? Or did they intend these images to glorify themselves as performers of mercy and charity to these wretches, 'les misérables'?

Whatever the reason, they permitted a new genre to make its appearance, one which was destined to continue for many centuries to come.

Notes

1. For the traditional iconographical method see the well-known introduction by Erwin Panofsky to: *Studies in Iconology*, New York, 1972 (1939), pp. 3–31. M. Camille, *Image on the Edge. The Margins of Medieval Art*, London, 1992, p. 69, n. 88 is against writing of 'popular culture outside the church', and does not agree with the suggestion of a multilayered system.
2. The structural differentiation of 'models' and 'anti-models' has been considered to be typical of medieval culture. However, their expression in medieval art has not been discussed so far. See M. Corti, 'Models and Antimodels in Medieval Culture', *New Literary History*, X, 1978, pp. 339–66.

3. E. Gombrich, *The Sense of Order: A Study in the Psychology of Decorative Art*, Oxford, 1984 (1979). See his analysis of marginal images, 'The Edge of Chaos', pp. 251–84.
4. The question of 'work' and 'framework' deserves a separate study. See, for example, the depiction of vine scrolls on the framing columns of each scene on the Junius Bassus sarcophagus. Although pagan in origin, they were bestowed on the sarcophagus with Christian symbolism of the SANGUIS DOMINI (A. Grabar, *The Beginnings of Christian Art, 200–395*, London, 1967, pls. 264, 273. See also the Roman sarcophagus, now in Museo Laterano: *ibid.*, pls. 276–78).
5. On the theological understanding of the church building either as the Cosmos or as the Celestial City, see Guilelmus Durantis, Bishop of Mende, *The Symbolism of Churches and Church Ornaments*, trans. by J.M. Neale and B. Webb, London, 1973 (1843), Chap. I: 'Of a Church and its Parts', pp. 17–38. See also O. von Simson, *The Gothic Cathedral, Origins of Gothic Architecture and the Medieval Concept of Order* (Bollingen Series, XLVIII), Princeton, NJ 1988 (1962).
6. Iconographical analysis of the use of different sorts of seats in medieval art is most revealing. The best-known biblical archetype is the Throne of Solomon. The variety of seats and seaters in medieval art manifests a 'hierarchy of the seats and its seaters'. See Chapter 3, *The Cathedral of Angers*, pp. 47–8.
7. On canonical gestures and forbidden gestures, see C. Casagrande and S. Vecchio, 'Clercs et jongleurs dans la société médiévale (XII^e et XIII^e siècles)', *Annales, E.S.C.*, XXXIV/5, 1979, pp. 913–28, esp. pp. 916–17; J.-C. Schmitt, *La raison des gestes dans l'occident médiéval*, Paris, 1990.
8. A. Grabar, *Byzantium: From the Time of Theodosius to the Rise of Islam*, London, 1966, pls. 331, 332.
9. Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy* (trans. by V.E. Watts, Harmondsworth, 1969), p. 36; Asterius of Amaseia, 'Description of a Painting of the Martyrdom of St Euphemia', in C. Mango (ed.) 1, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire 312–1453*, New Jersey, 1972, pp. 38–39.
10. Grabar, *Byzantium*, pls. 220, 221.
11. See, for example, M.F. Hearn, *Romanesque Sculpture*, London, 1981, pp. 142–46.
12. In his description 'De graculi natura moraliter' Hugo of St Victor condemns the loud shouting of the 'graculi', comparing it to improper human behaviour. See Hugonis de S. Victore, *De bestiis, P.L.*, CLXXVII, cap. XLV, cols. 45–46. E. Gardiner, *Visions of Heaven and Hell before Dante*, New York, 1989, pp. 149–95. *Visio Tundali*, ed. A. Wagner, Erlangen, 1882. On the long-lived tradition of the "Divine Comedy" before Dante, see A. Gurevich, *Medieval Popular Culture: Problems of Belief and Perception* (Cambridge Studies in Oral and Literate Studies), Cambridge, 1988, Chap. 4, pp. 104–52.
13. W. Sauerländer, *Gothic Sculpture in France 1145–1230*, London, 1972, pls. 112–13.
14. J.J. Pollitt, *Art and Experience in Classical Greece*, Cambridge, 1972, pp. 43–44, 143–44.
15. N. Kanaan-Kedar, 'Emotion, Beauty and Franciscan Piety: A New Reading of the Magdalene Chapel in the Lower Church of Assisi', *Studi Medievali*, 3^e ser., XXVI/II, 1985, pp. 699–710.
16. M. Corti, 'Models and Antimodels in Medieval Culture', *New Literary History*, X (1978), pp. 357–64; Schmitt, *La raison des gestes*, 321–55; A. Weir and J. Jerman, *Images of Lust, Sexual Carvings on Medieval Churches*, London, 1986, pp. 100–11.
17. K. Gravdal, *Vilain and Courtois, Transgressive Parody in French Literature of the Twelfth and the Thirteenth Centuries*, University of Nebraska Press, 1989, pp. 57–69.
18. C. Gaignebet and J. Dominique Layoux, *Art profane et religion populaire au moyen âge*, Paris, 1985, pp. 220–26. B. Stock, *The Implications of Literacy. Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the 11th and 12th Centuries*, Princeton, NJ 1983.
For definitions of 'popular culture', see C. Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller*, New York, 1982 (1976), pp. xiii–xxvi.
In the unexplored field of medieval sculptural marginal art it should be emphasized that 'popular art' and 'non-official art' are different categories. M. Miles, *Images and Insight: Visual Understanding in Western Christianity and Secular Culture*, Boston, 1985.

19. E. Maillard, 'Les sculptures romanes dans l'église St Hilaire de Foussais', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 1930, pp. 1–64; R.M. Auzas, 'Les églises de Vouvant, Nieul-sur-l'Autize et Foussais', *Congrès archéologique*, CXIV, 1956, pp. 73–79; J. Adhémar, *Influences antiques dans l'art du Moyen Age français*, London, 1939, p. 191.
20. R. Crozet, 'Le décor sculpté de la façade de l'église de Civray', *Revue de l'art ancien et moderne*, LXVI, 1934, pp. 97–110; M.J. Thirion, 'Civray', *Congrès archéologique*, 1952, pp. 331–35; F. Werner, *Aulnay-de-Saintonge und die romanische Skulptur in Westfrankreich*, Worms, 1979, pp. 135–38.
21. Werner, *Aulnay*, pp. 135–38.
22. A. Katzenellenbogen, 'The Central Tympanum at Vézelay: Its Encyclopedic Meaning and its Relation to the First Crusade', *Art Bulletin*, XXVI, 1944, pp. 141–51; M.D. Taylor, 'The Pentecost at Vézelay', *Gesta*, XIX/1, 1980, pp. 9–16.
23. Werner, *Aulnay*, p. 136 does not see any 'ikonographische Skulptur' here except for several capitals.
24. It is beyond the scope of this study to go into the problem or the huge literature on the identity of the rider. Therefore, in this context, I shall quote only L. Seidel, *Songs of Glory*, Chicago, 1981, pp. 35–70; *idem*, 'Holy Warrior: The Romanesque Rider and the Fight against Islam', *The Holy War*, ed. T.P. Murphy, Columbus, Ohio, 1976, pp. 3–54.
25. Adhémar, *Influences antiques*, pp. 106–11.
26. Seidel, *Songs of Glory*, pp. 68–69; F. Eygun, 'Un thème iconographique commun aux églises romanes de Parthenay et aux sceaux de ses seigneurs', *Bulletin archéologique du Comité des Travaux historiques et scientifiques*, 1927, pp. 387–90.
27. R. Crozet, 'Le chasseur combattant dans la sculpture romane en Saintonge', in *Mélanges offerts à Mme Rita Lejeune*, Gembloux, 1969, I, pp. 669–77.
28. E. Faral, *Les jongleurs en France*, Paris, 1964 (1910), Appendice III, pp. 276–83.
29. Compare these dancers with those on a capital from St Eutrope in Saintes: F. Eygun, *Saintonge romane*, La Pierre-qui-Vire, 1970, pls. 12, 15, 19; R. Lejeune identifies the jongleur of Turolde in the Bayeux tapestry according to his costume: R. Lejeune, 'Turolde dans la tapisserie de Bayeux', *Mélanges offerts à R. Crozet*, Poitiers, 1966, I, pp. 419–25.
30. D. Grivot and G. Zarnecki, *Gislebertus, Sculptor of Autun*, London, 1961; J. Svanberg, 'Gyklar motiv: Romanesk konst och entolkning an portal relieferna de Härjakyrka', *Antikvariskt Arkiv*, XLI, Stockholm, 1970, p. 103; Katzenellenbogen, 'Vézelay', pp. 141–51, figs. 1, 5, 6.
31. *P.L.* CLXXXII, col. 217. Trans. by M. Schapiro, 'From Mozarabic to Romanesque in Silos (1939)', *Romanesque Art: Selected Papers*, New York, 1977, n. 113; *idem*, 'On the Aesthetic Attitude in Romanesque Art (1947)', *ibid.*, pp. 1–27.
32. J. Leclercq, 'Le thème de la jonglerie dans les relations entre saint Bernard, Abélard et Pierre le Vénérable', in *Pierre Abélard et Pierre le Vénérable*, Paris, 1975, pp. 671–84; *idem*, 'Toculator et saltator: Saint Bernard et l'image du jongleur dans les manuscrits', in *Translatio Studii Honoring Oliver L. Kapsner*, O.S.B., Collegeville, Minnesota, 1973, pp. 124–28.
33. In the above-mentioned St Hilaire in Foussais, the same images of the acrobat, mermaid and beast are depicted in the same succession, but as described above they were located on the lower part of the right side of the archivolt, subordinate to the heavenly court on the summit.
34. The depictions of jongleurs in manuscript paintings seem to be an autonomous chapter. Nevertheless, the same questions arise regarding their significance. See K. Mayer, 'The Eight Gregorian Modes on Cluny Capitals', *Art Bulletin*, XXXIV, 1952, p. 87, figs. 5–12; Ph. Lauer, *Enluminures romanes*, Paris, 1927, p. 32.
35. A.M. Nagler, *A Source Book in Theatrical History*, New York, 1952, pp. 49–52, 57–62.
Descriptions of street theatres before the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are rare. However, in post-medieval writings such theatres and their actors have been described as poor people with

few possessions, costumes or accessories. Yet their performances are often intriguing and unforgettable in their bizarre qualities.

- P. Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*, New York, 1978, pp. 149–69, 178–82.
36. M. Durand-Lefebvre, *Art gallo-romain et sculpture romane*, Paris, 1937, pp. 60–65; Adhémar, *Influences antiques*, pp. 186–89, includes the corbel figures among the various forms of Romanesque atlantes and caryatids. See also R. Crozet, 'Survivances antiques', *Bulletin monumental*, CXVII, 1956, p. 29; M. Renard, 'Des sculptures celtiques aux sculptures médiévales. Têtes coupées', *Latomus*, VII, 1948.
 37. Vitruvius, *On Architecture*, ed. and trans. F. Granger, I: Book 1.5–7, Cambridge, Mass., 1962, pp. 9–13.
 38. *Ibid.*, II: Book 6, Chap. VII p. 51.
 39. L.D. Reynolds (ed.), *Texts and Transmission – A Survey of Latin Classics*, Oxford, 1983, pp. 440–43; C.H. Krinsky, 'Seventy-Eight Vitruvius Manuscripts', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, XXX, 1967, pp. 36–70; K.J. Conant, 'The After-Life of Vitruvius in the Middle Ages', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, XXVII, 1968, pp. 33–39; C. Ferguson O'Meara, *The Iconography of the Façade of Saint-Gilles-du-Gard*, New York, 1977, pp. 76–84, discusses Vitruvian texts describing the *scaenae frons* and their impact on the façade of Saint-Gilles.
 40. Ch. Daremberg and E. Saglio, *Dictionnaire des antiquités grecques et romaines*, Paris, 1877–1919, I, pp. 526–28. Atlas appears in Virgil, *Aeneid*, IV, 246, 741 as a musician.
For classical representations of atlantes, see H. Stern, *Le calendrier de 354. Etude sur son texte et ses illustrations*, Paris, 1953, pp. 169–71 and pls. V 1–2, VI 1–2, VII 1; Bianchi-Bandinelli, *Rome, la fin de l'art antique*, pp. 145–47, fig. 137; K. Lehmann, 'The Dome of Heaven', *Art Bulletin*, XXVII, 1945, pp. 1–27; Pauly-Wissowa, *Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertums wissenschaft*, II, Stuttgart, 1896, pp. 2122–133. Atlantes also appear in the form of centaurs and sirens. See Pauly-Wissowa, *ibid.*, pp. 2107–109.
 41. A. Grabar, 'Trônes épiscopaux du XI^e et XII^e siècle en Italie méridionale', *Wallraf Richartz Jahrbuch*, XVI, 1954, pp. 7–52; Adhémar, *Influences antiques*, pp. 186–189; K. Noehles, 'Die Fassade von S. Pietro in Tuscania', *Römisches Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte*, IX/X, 1961/62, pp. 59–67; R. Barthal, *The Sculptural Program of the Cathedral of Oloron-Ste. Marie* (Unpublished diss., Tel Aviv University, 1985); Durand-Lefebvre, *Art gallo-romain*, pp. 208–09; E. Lefèvre-Pontalis, 'Les bénitiers cariatides', *Bulletin monumental*, LXXXII, 1923, pp. 185–88; R. Salvini, *Wiligelmo e le origini della scultura romanica*, Milan, 1956, pp. 84–85; C. Verzar-Bornstein, *Portals and Politics in the Early Italian City-State: The Sculpture of Nicholas in Context*, Parma, 1988, pp. 58–67.
 42. For atlantes in manuscript illuminations, see D. Gaborit-Chopin, *La décoration des manuscrits à Saint-Martial de Limoges et en Limousin du IX^e au XII^e siècle*, Paris, Geneva, 1969, pp. 86–100, and p. 166 (index: 'acrobate'), pls. 95, 97, 103; T. Sauvel, 'Les manuscrits limousins. Essai sur les liens qui les unissent à la sculpture monumentale, aux émaux et aux vitraux', *Bulletin monumental*, CVIII, 1950, pp. 117–44.

CHAPTER 3

Gothic marginal sculpture

In the thirteenth century the location of the corbel series changes drastically. Instead of being installed on the outside of Romanesque churches they are now placed inside them, as running friezes dividing the lower and upper zones of the walls. Thus, the series are situated much higher than before, still more remote from the observer's eye, almost entirely invisible in fact. On the other hand, they become more expansive, each series now comprising about 150 corbels.

Through the explicit rendering of articulated details, facial expressions and elongated proportions, the hermetic Romanesque corbels¹ give way to much more revealing images. Nevertheless, the two factors essential to the corbels' code of representation – gesticulation and transgression of the official language – continue to be their hallmark.

Facial expressions, however, now show a much wider range and postures are more numerous and varied. The pictorial formula for the depiction of emotions becomes more articulate – people are not shown only in the more extreme emotional states, such as shouting, laughing, and so on. They present a more complex range of feelings and emotions. Thus pain, despair and protest are now rendered more variably and with a greater repertoire of expressions and gestures. Transgressions of the official code can still be observed in the choice of imagery as well as in the choice of forms. Both have been derived from official art, but are deliberately used for purposes indigenous to marginal art.

The new Gothic subjects and images

Subjects that were rare in the Romanesque corbel series become common in the thirteenth century. Seated figures of merchants and craftsmen, identified by tools of their trade, can now frequently be observed; so can peasants, engaged in various occupations. At the same time, an entirely new set of images is introduced: the new class of burghers, with their urban costumes and attributes, can be seen, as well as images of the nobility and the clergy, including bishops.

But the most outstanding among the newly created images are those of the true