

IMAGING AND IMAGINING THE BLACK MADONNA OF LE PUY:
RITUAL, SACRED IMAGES AND RACE IN LATE MEDIEVAL AND EARLY
MODERN FRANCE

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LIST OF FIGURES

- Figure 1. The Black Madonna of Le Puy, seventeenth century, installed 1856. formerly in the Church of Saint Maurice du Refuge. In situ, Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay, Photograph EAF 2011.
- Figure 2. Jean-Marie Bonnassieux, *Notre Dame de France*, 1860. Le Puy-en-Velay. Photograph EAF 2010.
- Figure 3. Chapel of Saint-Michel d'Aiguille, begun 962. Aiguille (Le Puy). Photograph EAF 2011.
- Figure 4. Procession of the Virgin of Le Puy on the Feast of the Assumption. 15 August 2010, Place de Breuil, Le Puy-en-Velay. Photograph EAF 2010.
- Figure 5. The Morgan Madonna (Virgin and Child), ca. 1150 – 1200. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Image via ARTstor.
- Figure 6. Map of Black Madonnas in France (extant and destroyed). From Émile Salliens, *Nos vierges noires, leurs origines*, 1945.
- Figure 7. The Virgin of Montserrat (*La Moreneta*). Twelfth century. Abbey of Santa Maria de Montserrat, Catalonia, Spain. Photograph EAF 2007.
- Figure 8. Virgin of Clermont-Ferrand. Bibliothèque municipale, Clermont-Ferrand, ms 145, fol. 130v. From Forsyth, *The Throne of Wisdom*.
- Figure 9. Reliquary Statue of Sainte-Foy. Treasury of the Church of St. Foy, Conques, France. Image via ARTstor.
- Figure 10. Disassembled heads on dowels, The Virgin and Christ (Forez, Auvergne). Second half of the twelfth century. Musée du Louvre, Department of Sculpture, RF 897. From Gaborit and Faunières, *Une vierge en majesté*.
- Figure 11. X-ray showing interior cavity of the Virgin of Forez. Musée du Louvre. Department of Sculpture, RF 897. From Gaborit and Faunières, *Une vierge en majesté*.
- Figure 12. Reliquary cache, Virgin of Saint-Flour (Cantal?). Second half of the twelfth century. Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lyon. Photograph EAF 2010.

- Figure 13. Enthroned Madonna and Child with reliquary cache exposed. Twelfth century. Auvergne, France. Saint Louis Art Museum. St Louis, Missouri. Photograph EAF 2010.
- Figure 14. Unknown artist. *La vierge noire du Puy*, seventeenth century (?). Musée Crozatier, Le Puy-en-Velay. Image via ARTstor.
- Figure 15. Virgin of Vernouillet, Church of Notre-Dame de Vernouillet, c. thirteenth century. From Debaisieux, *Vierges Romanes*.
- Figure 16. Virgin and Child. c. 1340. Belfry, Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay. Photograph EAF 2011.
- Figure 17a. Pilgrimage badges and souvenirs from the pilgrimage to Le Puy-en-Velay. Thirteenth through nineteenth centuries. Musée Croatizer, Le Puy-en-Velay. Photograph EAF 2008.
- Figure 17b. Figurines of Notre-Dame du Puy. Seventeenth through twentieth centuries. Musée Croatizer, Le Puy-en-Velay. Photograph EAF 2008.
- Figure 18. The Virgin of Le Puy. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Ms 1853* *Liber precum latinarum et gallicarum in Lotharingia scriptus*. Toul or Nancy, late fifteenth century.
- Figure 20. The 'Egyptian Statue' of the Virgin and Child. *Speculum humanæ salvationis*, Chapter XI. Ms 720, fol. 17 recto. Hessische Landes- und Hochschulbibliothek, Darmstadt. Image via ARTstor.
- Figure 19. The Queen of Sheba. In Conrad Kyeser, *Bellifortis* (before 1405). Fol. 122r. Image via ARTstor.
- Figure 20. Notre-Dame de Vauclair. Second half of the twelfth century. Originally in the Chapel of Notre-Dame-de-la-Nativité, Molompize, France. Now in the Church of St. Foy, Molompize. From Cassagnes-Brouquet, *Vierges noires, regard et facination*.
- Figure 21. Darmstadt, Hessische Landes- und Hochschulbibliothek. Ms 2505, fols. 22 v. "The Egyptians Made an Image of the Virgin and Child." Lower left quadrant. *Speculum humanæ salvationis*, Chapter XI. Image via ARTstor.

- Figure 22. "The Egyptian Statue of a Virgin and Child." *Mirror of Human Salvation* circa 1481. fol. 31r, col. 1. After *The Illustrated Bartsch Vol. 45, Italian Masters of the Seventeenth Century*. Image via ARTstor.
- Figure 23. Copenhagen, Danish Royal Library, GKS 79 2^o: *Speculum humanae salvationis*. Folio 35r. "Egyptians" venerating the statue of the Virgin. Image from E-manuscripts at the Danish Royal Library, www.kb.dk.
- Figure 24. The Virgin of Le Puy, after restoration, 2010. Image from www.cathedraledupuy.org.
- Figure 25. The Head of Christ, The Virgin of Le Puy, before restoration. 2010. Image from www.cathedraledupuy.org.
- Figure 26. Reconstruction of the original statue of Notre-Dame du Puy, known as the "ancien copie." Made by Phillipe Kaepelin, after an etching by Faujas-St Fond (eighteenth century), 1990.
- Figure 27. "Exact Reproduction" of the Virgin of Le Puy (1777). Etching by Veyrenc in Faujas de St-Fond, *Recherches sur les volcans éteints du Vivarais et du Velay* (1778). Image via Gallica, Bibliothèque nationale de France.
- Figure 28. Pilgrim Badge, Le Puy-en-Velay. c. 1209. Inscription reads SIGILLVM BEATE/ MARIE DE PODIO. Musée Crozatier, Le Puy-en-Velay. From Barral i Altet, *La Cathédrale du Puy-en-Velay*.
- Figure 29. Seal of Guy de Montlaur, Dean of the collegiate chapter of the Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay, 1258.
- Figure 30. Drawing of the Virgin of Le Puy carried in procession, 1578. Le Puy, Bibliothèque municipale, *Mémoires de Jean Burel* ms. 59 (8081), f. 102r.
- Figure 31. Seventeenth-century confraternity prayer card, based on earliest printed image of Notre-Dame du Puy by Jean Petit, c. 1500. Image from Barral i Altet, *La Cathédrale du Puy-en-Velay*.
- Figure 32. Maurthins des Roys. *S'ensuyt la charge, noblesse et bonne ordonnance de l'hospital de Nostre-Dame et ville du Puy...*Lyon, 1523. Woodcut. Paris, Bibilothèque nationale, site l'Arsenal ms. 4 B.L. 3141.
- Figure 33. Frontispiece of *La fondacion de la sainte eglise...*Lyon, c. 1500. British Library, IA. 42390.

- Figure 34. Frontispiece from Odo de Gissey, *Discours de la très ancienne devotion de Notre Dame du Puy*, 1627. From Cassagnes-Broquet, *Vierges noires, regard et fascination*.
- Figure 35. Editions of Odo de Gissey, *Discours de la très ancienne devotion de Notre Dame du Puy*, 1620, 1627, 1644. From Olivier, *L'ancienne statue romane de Notre-Dame du Puy*, Figures 103 – 105.
- Figure 36. Eighteenth-century edition of Gissey, etching by Chambon of Avignon. Collection M. Perrot, Avignon. From Olivier, *L'ancienne statue romane de Notre-Dame du Puy*, figure 130.
- Figure 37. *Beate Marie Aniciencis* (The Virgin of Le Puy). In Wilhelm Guppenberg, *Atlas Marianus, sive De imaginibus Deiparae per orbem Christianum miraculosis*. Ingolstadt, 1657. Image from Bibliothèque municipale du Puy.
- Figure 38. *Imago B.V. Miracula in Monte Serrato* (Virgin of Montserrat). In Wilhelm Guppenberg, *Atlas Marianus sive De imaginibus Deiparae per orbem Christianum miraculosis*. Ingolstadt, 1657. Image from Bibliothèque municipale du Puy.
- Figure 39. "Le Vrai Portrait du Notre-Dame du Puy." Etching by Dufflos, eighteenth century. Displayed in the cathedral treasury, Le Puy-en-Velay. Photograph EAF
- Figure 40. Procession of the Relics of Sainte Genèvieve, Paris 1652. Image from Bibliothèque Sainte-Genèvieve, Paris. Available <http://www.bsg.e-corpous.org/notices/113266/gallery/>
- Figure 41. Plan of Le Puy-en-Velay circa 1544. Drawn by Augustin Chaisiang, in *Le livre de Podio ou chronique d'Étienne de Médicis, bourgeois du Puy*, edited by A. Chassaing in *Recueil des chroniqueurs du Puy-en-Velay*, Vols. I and II, Le Puy, 1859.
- Figure 42. Route of Rogations procession in Le Puy-en-Velay, c. 1544.
1. Cathedral Notre-Dame 2. Chapel of the Holy Savior 3. Church of St. Vosi 4. Church of Evodius 5. Church of Saint Georges 6. Church of Saint-Pierre-La-Tour 7. towards the Chapel of Saint Michel, Aiguilhe.
- Figure 43. Slippers worn by the Virgin of Le Puy. Cathedral Treasury, Le Puy-en-Velay. Photograph EAF 2008.

- Figure 44. Detail, The Virgin of Le Puy on her processional litter. *Le voeu de peste*. 1650. Image from Barral i Altet, *La Cathédrale du Puy-en-Velay*.
- Figure 45. Plan of Early Modern Le Puy with gates and towers. Image from La Ville du Puy-en-Velay.
- Figure 46. Machicolated wall, western facade. Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay. Photograph EAF 2010.
- Figure 47. Map. Le Puy-en-Velay, 16th century. Parish of Saint-Pierre-le-Monastier is at 3, the Cathedral of Notre-Dame du Puy is at 1. From Rivet, *Une ville au XVIème siècle*.
- Figure 48. Jean Solvain, *Le voeu de peste*, 1650. Cathedral of Notre-Dame-du-Puy. Photograph EAF 2011.
- Figure 49. Marginal drawing of a processional canopy from Le Puy-en-Velay. Le Puy, Bibliothèque municipale, *Mémoires de Jean Burel* ms. 59 (8081).
- Figure 50. Jean François, *Le voeu des échevins*, 1653. Cathedral of Notre-Dame-du Puy. Photograph EAF 2011.
- Figure 51. Miracle of the Murdered Chorister. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Douce 374. 15v. *La vie et miracles de Nostre Dame* by Jean Mielot. Image via ArtSTOR.
- Figure 52. Miracle of the Murdered Choirster. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, ms. français 9199, f.13v. *La vie et miracles de Nostre Dame* by Jean Mielot. From Forestier, "Les Juifs au Puy au Moyen Age."
- Figure 53. Miracle tale set at Mont Saint Michel. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale. ms. Français 9198. f. 37v. *La vie et miracles de Nostre Dame*. Image via BnF.
- Figure 54. Proposed reconstruction of the Jewish quarter, "rue de la Juiverie" top right. From Genèvieve Douillard, "Restitution du quartier juif du Puy-en-Velay au Moyen Âge" in *L'art juif au moyen âge*, 143.
- Figure 55. Plan of the Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay, with phases of construction from the primitive church (5th c.) to Romanesque (13th). From Barral i Altet, *La Cathédrale du Puy-en-Velay*.
- Figure 56. Plan of the Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay after reconstruction, with extended western porch. Image via La ville du Puy-en-Velay.

- Figure 57. Armaund Mallay, façade of the Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay with buttresses, before reconstruction, mid-nineteenth century. From Mallay, *Monographie de la cathédrale du Puy*.
- Figure 58. Western façade, Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay, entrance from the *grand escalier*. Photograph EAF 2008.
- Figure 59. Inscription on the steps of the western porch, Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay. Photograph EAF 2010.
- Figure 60. Frontispiece, with identical inscription from the staircase of the cathedral. Odo de Gisse, *Discours historiques de la très ancienne...*Lyon, 1627.
- Figure 61. Fountain and Roman inscription, Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay. Photograph EAF 2008.
- Figure 62. *La pierre des fièvres*. Said to be fifth century, Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay. Photograph EAF 2010.
- Figure 63. Wooden doors depicting the Infancy of Christ. Now on western porch of the Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay, formerly the entrance to St. Gilles chapel. Photograph EAF 2010.
- Figure 64. Close view of Arabic inscription on the border of the Infancy doors. Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay. Photograph EAF 2010.
- Figure 65. Detail of vegetal border, Passion cycle doors. Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay. Photograph EAF 2010.
- Figure 66. Cornet de St. Hubert. Ivory. Twelfth century. From the Treasury of the Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay, now at the Musée Croatizer, Le Puy-en-Velay.
- Figure 67. Infancy doors with Latin inscription on the batten (center) and under each image. Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay. Photograph EAF 2010.
- Figure 68. Detail of the Magi and Herod, Infancy Doors, Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay. Photograph EAF 2010.
- Figure 69. Cloister, Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay. Eleventh century, restored in the nineteenth century. Photograph EAF 2011.
- Figure 70. Byzantine inspired mural fresco painting. Chapel of St. Michel d'Aiguilhe, eleventh century.
- Figure 71. Archangel Michael in Byzantine *loros*. Upper tribune, Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay. c. 1200.

- Figure 72. The Transfiguration of Christ. Western porch, Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay, Beginning of the thirteenth century. Photograph EAF 2010.
- Figure 73. The Virgin and Child Enthroned. Western porch, Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay. Beginning of the 13th c. Photograph EAF 2010.
- Figure 74. Chess match between a French king and Muslim sultan, originally in the Logis des cleregons, Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay. Beginning of the 13th century. Watercolor reproduction, From Courtillé, *Un regard au XIXème siècle*.
- Figure 75. Street niche of the *vierge noire* du Puy. Le Puy-en-Velay. Date unknown. Photograph EAF 2008.
- Figure 76. Shells hanging from a pilgrimage hostel. Le Puy-en-Velay. Photograph EAF 2008.
- Figure 77. The Virgin of Le Puy on her liter. On the steps of the Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay after the Procession of August 15, 2011. Photograph EAF 2011.
- Figure 78. Crowds following and watching the Virgin of Le Puy. Procession of August 15, 2011. Photograph EAF 2011.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER ONE	
The Black Madonnas of Europe and the Virgin of Le Puy Origins, Evidence and Scholarship	20
CHAPTER TWO	
The Virgin of Le Puy in Black and White: Pilgrimage, Print and the Black Madonna	61
CHAPTER THREE	
Procession, Piety and Politics: The Public Role of the Virgin of Le Puy	102
CHAPTER FOUR	
On the Outskirts of the Procession: Jews, Protestants and the Virgin.....	144
CHAPTER FIVE	
Re-Presenting the Virgin: Architecture, Landscape and Memory in Le Puy-en-Velay	166
CONCLUSION	191
EPILOGUE.....	197
APPENDIX I	
Medieval Processions: An Overview	201
APPENDIX II	
Rogations Processions	207
FIGURES	213

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation considers the medieval and early modern contexts of the enigmatic Black Madonna statues of Europe through a careful examination of the changing functions and visual representations of one important example, the Virgin of Le Puy-en-Velay. In order to understand the complex history of this highly venerated Romanesque sculpture, one must begin not with its creation but rather with its destruction. On January 19, 1794, French Revolutionaries removed the Black Madonna of Le Puy from her altar in the cathedral and stripped her of her mantel and jewels. Six months later, on June 8th, they seized the statue from her hiding place in the archives of the cathedral cloister and dragged her in a manure cart to the town hall. There, the statue was burned in a bonfire.¹ Although this event does not represent an isolated instance of iconoclasm during the French Revolution, the destruction of this statue was especially traumatic for Catholic France because the Virgin of Le Puy had been a pre-eminent object of devotion and pilgrimage since the Middle Ages. In 1856, a new "Notre-Dame du Puy" was installed in the cathedral and seems to have inherited all the miracle-working properties of her predecessor (Figure 1). To the modern eye, this new statue bears very little resemblance to what is known of the original statue as preserved in text and image. In fact, one of the only consistent attributes of this

¹ Antoine Alexis Duranson, "Memoire" manuscript published in *Mémoires et procès-verbaux* volume 12 (Le Puy: Société agricole et scientifique de la Haute-Loire, 1903), 82 – 83.

new "Virgin of Le Puy" is her identity as a Black Madonna (*vierge noire*), or image of the Virgin Mary with dark skin. I have chosen to focus upon the example of Notre-Dame du Puy because it served as a prototype for other statues of the Black Madonna in France and because of the variety and abundance of visual images related to the statue.² By focusing on this seminal image, I write an object biography that seeks to explain how medieval objects were used, reused and reinterpreted in the centuries after their creation and ultimately, their destruction.

The historical record indicates that the medieval statue of the Virgin of Le Puy likely dates from 1096. A pious donation from Count Raymond St. Gilles of Toulouse, the statue was given to the Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay before the count departed for the first crusade with Adhémar de Monteil, the Bishop of Le Puy.³ This local narrative of the statue's donation did not last and appears to have faded from the memory of the devout by the end of the fifteenth century. During this time, the assumed provenance of the statue changed to Egypt. The exoticism of the Virgin's "Egyptian" origins was further underscored through printed images of the statue that emphasized her dark countenance. The statue of the

² This approach also takes cues from Robert Manuira's single-site focused study on the Virgin of Czestochowa, which also explores the larger implications of this image outside the medieval period. See Robert Manuira, *Pilgrimage to Images in the Fifteenth Century: The Origins of the Cult of Our Lady of Czestochowa* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2004). Bruno Maes's study of Marian pilgrimage sites in seventeenth-century France is also an important model for its approach to the long durée of these objects' history. See Bruno Maës, *Le roi, la vierge et la nation: pèlerinages et identité nationale entre guerre de cent ans et révolution*, Collection "La France au fil des siècles" (Paris: Publisud, 2002).

³ Jacques Bousquet, "La donation de Ségur par Raymond de Saint-Gilles, Comte de Toulouse à l'église du Puy-en-Velay (1096)" *Annales du Midi* 1 (1962): 65 – 67.

Virgin of Le Puy was therefore “imaged” in a variety of media based upon an “imagined” history of the Black Madonna as an exotic non-European.

State of the Question

This dissertation seeks to unite two fields of study in the history of art: the recovery of lost objects and the rituals surrounding these objects' use. The first part of this dissertation addresses questions of representation and the afterlife of the Virgin of Le Puy; the second turns more directly to the question of ritual functions through an investigation of the statue's role in processions, persecutions, and concept of place in Le Puy-en-Velay. Given the ephemeral nature of rituals and absent objects, my study of the Virgin of Le Puy is informed by methodological approaches from not only the field of art history, but also archaeology and anthropology. The central issue of this dissertation is the absence of the wooden sculpture itself. While destroyed objects prohibit concrete visual analysis, I argue that art historians should and must consider destroyed objects as part of the material culture their era.⁴ The lacunae and discrepancies in the representation of the Virgin of Le Puy present a fascinating investigation of the changing identity and significance of this sculpture. They also present a problem for uncovering exactly what this statue might have looked like. This dissertation thus seeks to outline the state of the evidence for this destroyed statue and to uncover the questions that arise from extant images of the Virgin of

⁴ The destruction of works of art has been recognized and discussed in the context of contemporary art. In these instances, artist orchestrates the object's destruction and therefore destruction becomes a part of the creative process. Destroyed objects extend far beyond these instances and their impact, both before and after their destruction, should not be ignored.

Le Puy. In this way, it seeks to understand how the statue was *looked at*, rather than determining what the statue *looked like*.

A related subject in this dissertation is the study of the "afterlife" of objects, that is, the continued use and changing meanings of an object in the centuries after its creation. While the original context of an object is important, the afterlife of that object forms an equal part of its history. The changing representations and ritual functions of the statue over time present many, often contradictory, interpretations of the statue. Although Notre-Dame du Puy is likely a statue from the late eleventh century, my dissertation focuses on how the medieval statue was viewed and understood in the early modern period. The remaining traces of visual material link the medieval, early modern and contemporary histories of the Virgin of Le Puy and allow for the investigation of an important object of French history.

The "afterlife" of the object has not gone entirely unstudied in the history of art. Aby Warburg's important discussion of an object's *Nachleben* marks the beginning of this interest in art historical studies.⁵ Georges Didi-Huberman developed Warburg's arguments further, arguing for the notion of the "imprint," or trace an object leaves over time.⁶ Didi-Huberman argues that the study of images as indexes allows us to understand how ideas about a work of art in the

⁵ Aby Warburg, *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity: Contributions to the Cultural History of the European Renaissance*, introduction by Kurt W. Forster, trans. by David Britt (Los Angeles, CA: Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities 1999). First published in German, 1923.

⁶ Georges Didi-Huberman, *L'image survivante: histoire de l'art et temps des fantômes selon Aby Warburg* (Paris: Paradoxe, 2002); *La ressemblance par contact: archéologie, anachronisme et modernité de l'empreinte* (Paris: Paradoxe, 2008).

past weave through time to influence our understanding of that work in the present. Contact is the primary means for the imprint to travel through time and through objects. This concept is crucial to the efficacy of sacred objects and their copies such as the Virgin of Le Puy. This theory of images itself takes cues from the work of George Kubler's *The Shape of Time* (1967). Foremost, Kubler's notion of the "prime object" is an important theory. According to Kubler, the prime object resists decomposition of form and meaning through replication.⁷ These kinds of objects thus remain a steady constant in a sea of historical change. The result of such replications of an acceptable model, or prime object, is the subject of Alexander Nagel and Christopher S. Wood's recent book, *Anachronic Renaissance* (2010). They study the "strange and multiple temporality of the [Renaissance] artwork" that occurs when a contemporary image is substituted for and tacitly accepted as an older model.⁸ The "double historicity" of the work of art results in the knowledge of the object's present fabrication while also believing that this same object is "old."⁹ This situation is manifest in the multiple reproductions of the Virgin of Le Puy in both sculpture and print and will be discussed further in chapter two.

Apart from visual representations, I study the afterlife of the Virgin of Le Puy through evidence of the statue's continued use in ritual activities such as

⁷ George Kubler, *The Shape of Time: Remarks on the History of Things* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1962).

⁸ Alexander Nagel and Christopher S. Wood, *Anachronic Renaissance* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2010), 16.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 29.

religious processions. The study of processions in late medieval and early modern Europe has been tremendously fruitful and continues to be a major topic in many fields. Some early studies of processions such as Terrence Bailey's *The Processions of Sarum and the Western Church* (1971) are mainly descriptive and limited to the religious or ecclesiastical significance of these events.¹⁰ Influence from the *Annales* school in France and social historians such as Edward Muir and Richard Trexler turned the study of processions towards the relationship between ritual activities and the social life of the late medieval and early modern city.¹¹ Natalie Zemon Davis was one of the first scholars to consider the role of procession in the formation of social solidarity and conflict. Davis was especially interested in how Catholics and Protestants negotiated urban landscape to create a stake in the sacred spaces of a city.¹² She is also highly influential for her research on the role of violence and conflict that could arise from ritual activities that undermined their theoretical goal of communal bonding.¹³ Most importantly, Davis helped to inaugurate the idea that rituals and events could be used as evidence of cultural consciousness.

¹⁰ Terrence Bailey, *The Processions of Sarum and the Western Church* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1971).

¹¹ See Edward Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981); *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*, 2 ed., *New approaches to European history* 33 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Richard C. Trexler, *Public Life in Renaissance Florence* (New York: Academic Press, 1980).

¹² Natalie Davis, "The Sacred and the Body Social in Sixteenth-Century Lyon" *Past and Present* 90 (1981): 47-49.

¹³ Natalie Davis, "The Rites of Violence: Religious Riot in Sixteenth-Century France" *Past and Present* 59 (1973): 51 – 91.

Davis's research prompted much scholarly interest in the ceremonial culture of the early modern city. For example, Edward Muir, Miri Rubin, and Moshe Shulhovsky have each considered the multiple meanings, effects and consequences of procession in the early modern period.¹⁴ These studies seek to tie rituals, texts and religious beliefs to larger social, political and economic processes and demonstrate the highly interdisciplinary nature of research on processions. The most recent work tends to be collaborative efforts by social historians, art historians, cultural anthropologists, and historians of theater and performance studies.¹⁵ This literature will be discussed further in chapter three.

¹⁴ Moshe Shulhovsky, *Patroness of Paris: Rituals of Devotion in Early Modern France*, Cultures, beliefs, and traditions v. 3 (Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill, 1998); Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981).

¹⁵ From the vast literature on ceremony and performance in early modern and medieval Europe I cite the following prominent studies: Kathleen Ashley and Wim Hüskens, eds. *Moving Subjects: Processional Performance in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2001); Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture*; Robert A. Schneider, "Mortification on Parade: Penitential Processions in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth- Century France." *Renaissance and Reformation* 10 (1986): 123–46; John J. MacAloon, ed. *Rite, Drama, Festival, Spectacle: Rehearsals Toward a Theory of Cultural Performance* (Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1984); Sarah Beckwith, "Ritual, Theater, and Social Space in the York Corpus Christi Cycle" in *Bodies and Disciplines: Intersections of Literature and History in Fifteenth-Century England*, eds. David Wallace and Barbara A. Hanawalt, 63-86 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); Nicholas Howe, *Ceremonial Culture in Pre-Modern Europe* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 2007); Robert E. Stillman, ed. *Spectacle and Public Performance in the Late Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Boston: Brill, 2006); Pierre Béhar and Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly, *Spectaculum Europaeum: Theatre and Spectacle in Europe (1580-1750)*. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1999); J.R., Mulryne, Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly, and Margaret Shewring, eds. *Europa Triumphans: Court and Civic Festivals in Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004). José Pedro Paiva, ed. *Religious Ceremonials and Images: Power and Social Meaning (1400-1750)*. (Coimbra: Centro de História de Sociedade e da Cultura, European Science Foundation: Palimage Editores, 2002); Benoît Bolduc, "Traces, documents, monuments: les textes de l'histoire des spectacles" *Texte* 33/34 (2003): 7-21; Lawrence M. Bryant, *The King and the City in the Parisian Royal Entry Ceremony: Politics, Ritual, and Art in the Renaissance*. (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1986); Lawrence Bryant, "Making History: Ceremonial Texts, Royal Space, and Political Theory in the Sixteenth Century" in *Changing Identities in Early Modern France*, eds. Michael Wolfe, 26–46 (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997).

Methodology and Structure of the Dissertation

While a faithful reconstruction of the medieval statue cannot be achieved given contradictory visual and textual evidence, I will conduct an archaeological analysis of the image of the Virgin of Le Puy. This use of the word "archaeology" takes cues from David Areford's study of early printed images and more broadly, Michel Foucault's *The Archaeology of Knowledge*.¹⁶ Through this model, I suggest the deep layering of images that have been applied to the statue over several centuries. I explore these layers and their historical circumstances of production and use in order to understand the full biography of Notre-Dame du Puy.

Evidence for the medieval statue of Notre-Dame du Puy comes from various sources. I first approach the statue through traces of visual culture that survive. Such traces include records of processions performed in the statue's honor documented in liturgical manuscripts, lay chronicles and most critically, visual representations of the statue in prints, paintings and other media.¹⁷ These

¹⁶ David S. Areford, *Excavating the Medieval Image: Manuscripts, Artists, Audiences: Essays in Honor of Sandra Hindman* (Aldershot, Hants, England: Ashgate, 2004); *The Viewer and the Printed Image in Late Medieval Europe*, Visual culture in early modernity (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010). Areford uses the idea of "archaeology" for printed and manuscript images as a methodology in which the image becomes an archaeological site to explore the social and cultural contexts of its production. More broadly, Foucault's argument for the historical construction of meaning and multiplicity of truth is instructive to my study. See Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Routledge, 2002). First published in French, 1969.

¹⁷ The use of material culture from extant medieval collections such as liturgical vessels, clerical vestements and sculptural decoration as a method for understanding ritual practices is not without precedent. For example, Martin de Framond has discussed this approach to visual culture specifically with the resources available from Le Puy. De Framond's careful study of both the archives of the Département de la Haute-Loire and the treasury of the Cathedral of Le Puy as an overlooked source of visual evidence has been an invaluable source to this dissertation. See Martin de Framond, "Notre-Dame des Armagnacs: Le trésor de la cathédrale du Puy-en-Velay," *Cahiers de la Haute-Loire* (1993): 19-58. The study of destroyed or dispersed visual culture is also

sources reveal the polysemous nature of these events and the multiple interpretations they elicited from the laity and clergy of Le Puy.

My approach to visual culture also extends to the study of the hilltop site of Le Puy-en-Velay. I consider the various ways in which the Virgin of Le Puy interacted with the community of Le Puy-en-Velay through processions and the urban fabric of the city itself. I begin and conclude this dissertation with the example of *Notre-Dame de France*, a mid-nineteenth century colossal statue of the Virgin and Child installed on top of Mount Corneille near the cathedral (Figure 2). This statue, made from the iron of Crimean War cannons, was both a permanent replacement for the original statue and a national symbol of France's allegiance to the Virgin. The statue also creates a visual dialogue with the cathedral and Saint Michel d'Aiguilhe, a stunning Romanesque chapel perched upon a rock overlooking Le Puy (Figure 3). As this study will show, the Virgin of Le Puy has been physically incorporated into the topographical environment of the city, melding together sculpture and site.

This dissertation includes five chapters. In the first chapter, I trace the development of the Black Madonna as a type of the Virgin Mary in late medieval Europe. Through comparative analyses of other Black Madonna statues in France as well as consultation of recent scientific conservation reports from the Louvre

the subject of Mariah Proctor-Tiffany's dissertation, "Portrait of a Medieval Patron: The Inventory and Gift-Giving of Clemence of Hungary." Her collection of visual culture through inventory records and other archival sources has served as a model for this study. See Mariah Proctor-Tiffany, "Portrait of a Medieval Patron: The Inventory and Gift-Giving of Clemence of Hungary" (PhD diss, Brown University, 2007). Another important example is Nancy Netzer and Virginia Reinburg, eds., *Fragmented Devotion: Medieval Objects from the Schnütgen Museum, Cologne*, Exh. Cat., McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

Museum and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, I argue that the original statue of Notre-Dame du Puy was deliberately darkened in the late fifteenth century. At this time, the *histoires* of the statue also declared it to be an antique image of Egyptian origin, a fabrication that helped to legitimize the statue's blackness. As skin color became more precisely aligned with race in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Black Madonna statues like the Virgin of Le Puy were understood less as Egyptian and more as distinctly African. These sculptures thus acquired a racial significance that post-dated their darkening.

The second chapter considers the flexibility of the printed image of Notre-Dame du Puy in the early modern period. Some sixteenth- and seventeenth-century printed images of the Virgin of Le Puy emphasize her dark countenance while others ignore this feature. This chapter will explore the ways in which these variable representations contributed to the identity of the Virgin of Le Puy and specifically to her designation as a Black Madonna. I propose that printed representations of the statue proved to be visually flexible but nevertheless spiritually efficacious. That is, the accuracy of the reproduction of the statue did not diminish its identity as "Notre-Dame du Puy."

The third chapter argues that just as the physical appearance of the Virgin of Le Puy changed, so did the statue's function as both a miracle-working object and a processional sculpture. I investigate how temporal performances such as processions can be retrieved through traces of material culture, and I outline the evidence for processions of the Virgin of Le Puy during the late medieval and early modern periods. Based upon comparative analysis of similar processions in France, I note that the procession of Notre-Dame du Puy was not entirely unique

in medieval France. Yet I also argue that the early and continued use of a cult statue as the centerpiece of these activities distinguishes it from other notable processions in the later Middle Ages that focused upon the public display of the holy Eucharist.¹⁸ I also demonstrate how the processions at Le Puy can be recovered through a combined investigation of both prescriptive sources such as liturgical manuals and descriptive evidence recorded in lay witness accounts and visual representations of these events. Using these sources together thus creates a better understanding of the statue's role during these performances.

The fourth chapter then turns to the other side of this story. It examines the interaction between the Virgin of Le Puy and the "outsiders" of the city, Jews and Protestants. First, I examine a fifteenth-century manuscript that sets a well-known Marian legend, the "Miracle of the Boy Chorister" in Le Puy-en-Velay. I argue that setting this miracle tale in Le Puy not only references the city's anti-Jewish past, but it also showed how Le Puy was understood as an exotic and distant location even within the borders of France. Next, the relationship between the Virgin of Le Puy and the Huguenot population of the city is addressed. The focal point of this part of the chapter is a rare publication defending the Virgin of Le Puy against accusations from the Protestants in the city. The role of idolatry and the worship of sacred images comes to the forefront of this discussion. The

¹⁸ The procession of the Corpus Christi became a focal point for many religious processions in the later Middle Ages because of the increasing theological debates regarding the nature of Christ and the development of Protestantism in the sixteenth century. The fact that Le Puy-en-Velay continued to emphasize its Marian cult statue over this newer type of procession is significant and demonstrates the continued devotion to the Virgin of Le Puy. For more information see Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

chapter ends with a return to the subject of processions. The processions at Le Puy had roots in medieval rituals; however, they experienced some change in the sixteenth century as the Protestant Reformation spread through Europe. In order to preserve the sanctity of the ritual, Catholic processions had to accommodate their routes around Protestant homes that refused to participate in these ceremonies. How and why these changes occurred is explored through primary source descriptions, extant maps and visual evidence such as paintings of processions.

The fifth and final chapter seeks to understand how the Virgin of Le Puy is remembered through the physical environment of the city through the urban fabric, cathedral architecture and fresco cycles, and the ritual activities that persist in Le Puy. Anthropological methods of phenomenology and concepts of "place" are most heavily employed in this chapter.¹⁹ I first consider the ways in which the cathedral's inscriptions set boundaries of sacred space. I then discuss how Islamic-inspired architecture and Byzantine frescoes may have influenced the "Eastern" interpretation of the statue as a Black Madonna.²⁰ I therefore argue that the exterior architecture and interior narrative program created a symbolic Jerusalem in central France during the twelfth and thirteenth century—a

¹⁹ Especially important is Timothy Ingold's notion of pathways as systems of wayfaring wherein the travel between marked places is as significant as static points on a map. Timothy Ingold, *Lines: A Brief History* (London: Routledge, 2007), 72 - 103.

²⁰ I draw upon Mary Carruther's seminal work on medieval memory as well as architectural historian Robert Ousterhout's argument for the conscious architectural allusions to Jerusalem in Western medieval architecture. See Mary J. Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Mary Carruthers and Jan M. Ziolkowski, *The Medieval Craft of Memory: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004). Robert Ousterhout, "'Sweetly Refreshed in Imagination' " Remembering Jerusalem in Words and Images" *Gesta* 48/2 (2009): 153 - 168.

metaphor that later extended to the 'Egyptian' origins of the Black Madonna of Le Puy in the sixteenth century. I conclude with an exploration of the ways in which the memory of the Black Madonna, both medieval and modern, has been preserved in Le Puy through urban planning and public rituals.

The dissertation concludes with an epilogue that considers the contemporary reception of the Black Madonna. I examine this phenomenon with attention to the contemporary procession of Notre-Dame du Puy (Figure 4). I have witnessed this event on three occasions and thus bring this study to a close with a personal account of the modern procession. My investigation of this continued practice therefore serves as a convergence point between past and present and between tradition and invention.

A Short Historical Overview of Le Puy-en-Velay

Given the wide scope of this project, a brief history of Le Puy-en-Velay as it pertains to the Cult of the Virgin of Le Puy and her processions should be briefly outlined here.²¹ Le Puy-en-Velay is an ancient settlement established by the Vellaves tribe in Roman Gaul. *Anicium* was the original name of the Roman city; it became Le Puy (*Podio*, or Puy Sainte-Maire) in the eleventh century in honor of the Virgin. It is historically situated in the state of Velay, in the Auvergne region of central France and is now part of the Département de la Haute-Loire. Bordering what was medieval Languedoc, Le Puy-en-Velay belonged to the domain of the French crown since the early Middle Ages.

²¹ The essential history of Le Puy is J.A.M. Arnaud's *Histoire du Velay*, 3 vols. (Marseille: Laffitte Reprints, 1981). First published, 1816. Arnaud constructs this history from the *mémoires* of the citizens of Le Puy, city archives and the archives of the department of the Haute-Loire. Most contemporary sources cite this volume as a source for the general history of Le Puy-en-Velay.

The foundation of the cathedral has been dated to an inscription on the original altar bearing the consecration date of 465 CE.²² It began as an early fifth-century shrine to the Virgin. According to legend, a girl with a debilitating illness saw an apparition of the Virgin while she was sleeping upon a rock and was miraculously cured of her ailment. This rock, known as the *pierre des fièvres*, became the site of the original chapel on Mount Anis where the cathedral is now located.

A Carolingian church replaced this primitive church in the tenth century. The eleventh-century marked the beginning of the construction of the Romanesque cathedral as well as the Hôtel-Dieu (pilgrims' hospital). The cathedral extended westwards in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and the nave was covered with squinch-supported domes. The cloister and canonical buildings were also constructed during this time. Byzantine-inspired fresco paintings were added to the cathedral in the first quarter of the twelfth-century, while more frescoes decorated the canons' quarters in the beginning of the thirteenth century.²³

As will be detailed further in this dissertation, the approach to the cathedral was extremely unusual. Due to the steep slope of the cathedral site, the western porch extended beyond the entrance, creating subterranean access to the

²² Walter Cahn, *The Romanesque Wooden Doors of Auvergne* (New York: New York University Press, 1994), 59.

²³ An overview of the history of church construction at Le Puy is outlined in Bernard Galland, Martin de Framond, et.al. *Le Puy-en-Velay: l'ensemble cathédrale Notre-Dame* (Paris: Editions du patrimoine/ Centre des monuments nationaux, 2005), 18. See also Xavier Barral i Altet, *La cathédrale du Puy-en-Velay* (Paris: Skira/Seuil, 2000).

cathedral that led directly into the center of the nave. In this way, visitors literally ascended into the center of the cathedral, where the Virgin of Le Puy greeted them upon her altar.

The main expansion of the cathedral complex in the eleventh and twelfth centuries can be related to the Cult of the Virgin of Le Puy and her pilgrimage. The cathedral served as the point of origin along the *via podentis* to Santiago de Compostela, which attracted pilgrims throughout the Middle Ages.²⁴ Early evidence for the pilgrimage to Le Puy itself is small. Saint Mayol, the abbot of Cluny, is said to have performed a miracle in the city in 950, prompting regional visits to the site.²⁵ The economy of Le Puy increased after the tenth century, suggesting the development of the pilgrimage at this time. In a papal bull of 1051, Pope Leo IX (1049 – 1054) granted the Bishop Théodard of Le Puy the right to wear the *pallium* and declared that there is no other city apart from Le Puy-en-Velay that was so devoted to the Blessed Virgin.²⁶ This declaration also endowed Le Puy with the right to grant plenary indulgences to pilgrims, thus further increasing its popularity. Cartularies from the eleventh century also provide evidence for increased donations to the cathedral as well as the establishment of

²⁴ William Melczar, trans. *The Pilgrim's Guide to Santiago de Compostela* (New York: Italica Press, 1993), 85, 103. The *Codex Calixtinus* of Santiago is a manuscript of the book, *Liber sancti jacobi* It was written between 1130 and 1140. The pilgrimage to Le Puy is also mentioned in first book of the Miracles of Saint Foy in Conques in 1010 by Bernard of Angers. See Frédérique Vialet, "Mobilier de la cathédrale du Puy-en-Velay" *Congrès archéologique de France* (1975): 164-194.

²⁵ Esther Cohen, "In the Name of God and Profit: The Pilgrimage Industry in Southern France in the Late Middle Ages" (PhD diss, Brown University, 1976) 69.

²⁶ Privilege by Leo IX, 11th October 1051 ASV, Instr. Tudertina 1. See J.A.M. Arnaud, *Histoire du Velay*, 396.

the parish church of St. Pierre-Le-Monastier.²⁷ By 1210, the cathedral had collected enough donations to the Virgin to found a pilgrim's hospital in the city and began producing pilgrimage badges.²⁸ The pilgrimage to Le Puy-en-Velay reached its height from about 1400 - 1700.²⁹

The Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay also played a primary role in the military quest for Christian salvation during the Middle Ages. Le Puy's most famous bishop was Adhémar Monteil (r. 1080 – 1087), who is often noted as the first crusader against Islam after he volunteered his service at the Council of Clermont in 1095.³⁰ The bishop of Le Puy not only served as religious head of the city, but also as its chief defender against the feudal lords of Velay, principally the Vicomte of Polignac.³¹ Accordingly, the cathedral was fortified with a machicolated wall (still extant) and donjon (Tour Saint-Mayol, no longer extant). This arrangement led to centuries of infighting in the city, as well as feudal

²⁷ Cohen, 35.

²⁸ Jean Berger, "Les enseignes de pèlerinage du Puy" in *Jublié et culte marial (moyen-âge - époque contemporaine)*, Actes du colloque international organisé au Puy-en-Velay par le Centre culturel départemental de la Haute-Loire, published under the direction of Bruno Maës, Daniel Moulinet, and Catherine Vincent (Saint-Just-la-Pendue: Université de Sainte-Etienne, 2009), 94 - 95. Berger also provides a lengthy appendix of the original documents from the archives départementales de la Haute-Loire. In this instance, see ADHL, série H, *fonds de l'Hôtel-Dieu*, 1b1, no. 1.

²⁹ For the pilgrimage to Le Puy, see Bruno Maës, *Le roi, la vierge et la nation: Pèlerinages et identité nationale entre guerre de cent ans et Révolution*.

³⁰ Thomas Asbridge, *The First Crusade: A New History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 43.

³¹ Ibid., 70. The dispute between the Bishop of Le Puy and the Lord of Polignac derived from the income imposed upon pilgrims to the cathedral known as the *pedagium* levied upon "all those who come to perform a pilgrimage and to pray." Asbridge cites Antoine Jacotin, *Preuves de la maison de Polignac: recueil de documents pour servir à l'histoire des anciennes provinces de Velay, Auvergne, Gévaudan, Vivarais, Forez, etc., IXe-XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: E. Leroux, 1898), 120; *pedagium* = 13 deniers, confirmed by King of France in 1188, 1192, 1219, 1255.

disputes with other powerful lords of the Velay.³² The papacy recognized the holdings of the cathedral and reaffirmed its power in 1145, marking its important and continued connection with Rome throughout the Middle Ages. In addition, the diocese of Le Puy maintained powerful religious allies in France itself through a sustained relationship with the Abbey of Cluny from the tenth century.³³

The city not only held a special status among pilgrims and religious authorities, but the royalty of medieval France and the Papacy also visited Le Puy-en-Velay. Among others, documented papal visits include Urban II, Gelasius II, Callistus II, Innocent II and Alexander III.³⁴ Although there is some speculation that early Carolingian kings such as Charlemagne and Charles the Bald also visited Le Puy, the evidence for these visits is dubious.³⁵ In the later Middle Ages, royal visits increased the prominence of the pilgrimage to Le Puy and its Virgin statue throughout Europe.³⁶

³² For an overview of the bishopric in Le Puy see Xavier Barral i Altet, *La cathédrale du Puy-en-Velay*, 69 - 81.

³³ Dominique Iogna-Prat, "Cluny et Le Puy-en-Velay" in *La cathédrale du Puy en-Velay*, ed. X. Barral I Altet (Paris: Skira), 124 – 125.

³⁴ Jacotin, *Preuves de la maison de Polignac*, I, 247; 285 – 289.

³⁵ Framond, "*Notre-Dame des Armagnacs*: Le trésor de la cathédrale du Puy-en-Velay," 36.

³⁶ Such royal visitors as Philip the Bold (1282), Philip the Fair (1285), Charles IV (1394), Charles VII (1420), Louis XI (1436, 1475, 1476), Charles VIII (1495), and Francis I (1533), whose visit was extensively documented by the sixteenth-century chroniclers of Le Puy. In addition to these royal visits, the city also gained fame for the visit of Isabelle Romée, the mother of Joan of Arc, who is said to have visited Le Puy to pray to the Virgin on her daughter's behalf. The dates of important royal visitors to Le Puy are recorded in M. Charles Rocher, *Les vieilles histoires de Notre-Dame du Puy* (Le Puy: Marchessou, 1890). See also, Martin de Framond, "Les visites royales et leur exploitation (1229 – XVe siècle) in *La cathédrale du Puy-en-Velay*, 138. For more sources on the history of Le Puy, see *Gallia Christiana Nova* (1720), II, 685-752; instrum., 221-62; Arnaud, *Histoire du Velay*, 3 vols. (1816).

Despite Protestant revolts in many regions of France, Catholicism maintained its powerful stance in the region during the sixteenth century Wars of Religion.³⁷ Marian pilgrimages in the early modern period were endorsed by the state, and their support helped to proclaim Catholicism as the "true religion" of the war-torn country. The Jesuits (Society of Jesus) also played a major role. They established their church in Le Puy in 1588, and quickly adopted the Virgin of Le Puy as a powerful image for this new Catholic Reformation order.

As both the number of pilgrims and processions expanded in the city, the Virgin of Le Puy gained a nationalistic identity as "Notre-Dame de France" in the seventeenth century. Processions became even more connected with Marian pilgrimages during this time.³⁸ These rituals continued in Le Puy until the French Revolution, when the medieval statue was burned in 1794.

A new "Notre-Dame du Puy" was inaugurated at the cathedral in 1856, followed in 1860 by a colossal statue of the Virgin and Child on top of Mount Cornielle, just north of the cathedral. The cathedral also underwent a massive and controversial restoration in the mid-nineteenth century under Armand Mallay and Eugène Viollet-le-Duc. Consequently, the medieval approach was lost, as the facade was moved forward and two side stairways provided new entrances

³⁷ Records from the sixteenth century indicate over five hundred priests were affiliated with the numerous churches in the city and new Catholic orders of the Jesuits and Capuchins were established at Le Puy in 1589 and 1613, respectively. By this time, the bishop of Le Puy was an especially powerful figure, serving as the principal lord of Velay, controlling over forty percent of the region. Henry Heller, *Iron and Blood: Civil Wars in Sixteenth-Century France* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), 33.

³⁸ For a good analysis of Marian pilgrimages in Early Modern and Baroque France, see Bruno Maës, *La Vierge, La Roi et la nation: Pèlerinages et identité nationale entre guerre de Cent Ans et Révolution*.

to the cathedral.³⁹ Although the architecture of the cathedral has been substantially altered, the placement of the Virgin within and upon the landscape of Le Puy-en-Velay served as a way to ignite the memory of Notre-Dame du Puy and commemorate the Virgin as the patron of France. Processions of the Virgin of Le Puy continue to this day every August fifteenth, the Feast of the Assumption of Mary. Thousands of people continue to come to Le Puy from all over the world to experience the ritual of walking together and giving their devotion to Notre-Dame du Puy. The routes, music and participants have changed, but the iterative experience of procession remains a part of the community of Le Puy-en-Velay to this day.

³⁹ The central approach was re-inaugurated in 1994, although this entrance is only open during the summer.

CHAPTER ONE

The Black Madonnas of Europe and The Virgin of Le Puy: Origins, Scholarship and State of the Evidence

*Noire je suis, mais en beauté je passe
toute clarté du Soleil radieux;
Ceux qui seront humbles et dévotieux
Verront un jour de la beauté de la face.*¹

[I am black but in beauty I surpass/all brilliance of the shining sun/ Those who are humble and devout/Will one day see the beauty of my face.]

- Theodose de Bergame, *Histoire admirable de Notre-Dame du Puy* (1616)

In October 1096, Raymond St. Giles IV, Count of Toulouse and Rodez and Duke of Narbonne, set out on the First Crusade with Adhémar, Bishop of Le Puy-en-Velay. Before his departure, Raymond donated a statue of the Virgin Mary to the Cathedral of Notre-Dame du Puy. The count left specific instructions for the care of his offering, above all requesting that a candle illuminate the sculpture day and night.² Most scholars agree that Raymond's donation is likely the medieval statue of Notre-Dame du Puy, a wooden sculpture of the Virgin Mary enthroned with the Christ Child seated on her lap. Although Le Puy-en-Velay was

¹ Théodose de Bergame, *Histoire admirable de Notre-Dame du Puy* (Lyon: Louis Mugret, 1620), chapter VII, n.p.

² Jacques Bousquet, "La donation de Ségur par Raymond de Saint-Gilles, Comte de Toulouse à l'église du Puy-en-Velay (1096)" *Annales du Midi* I (1962): 65 – 67. According to this document, Raymond asked that a candle burn day and night before the statue of the Virgin. ("...ut candela dum vixero incessanter die ac nocte pro me ante Dei Genitricis venerandam imaginem super altare ardeat.") See also, Claude de Vic, Joseph Vaissète, and Alexandre du Mège, *Histoire générale de Languedoc*, Volume II, Preuves. 343 - 4 (Toulouse: J.B. Paya, 1840).

already a site of pilgrimage, the statue of Notre Dame du Puy became its focus from this point onwards.³ Devotion to this statue reached its height in the late middle ages and persisted until its destruction in the eighteenth century.

At the end of the fifteenth century, the count's donation faded from the collective memory of the devout as the statue acquired a new provenance.⁴ Rather than a gift of local origin, fifteenth- and sixteenth-century *histoires* of Notre-Dame du Puy invented biblical origins for the statue to augment its position in the growing number of miraculous Virgin sculptures across Europe.⁵ According to these texts, the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah created the statue of Notre-Dame du Puy, despite the inconvenient fact of having lived five centuries before the birth of Christ. Yet, as will be discussed further in this chapter, the antiquity of the sculpture was an essential component of its new identity. Created during the prophet's exile in Egypt, the statue not only obtained the requisite old age possessed by the most sacred of holy objects, but it also gained an exotic 'Egyptian' provenance. As these legends reimagined the origins of this statue,

³ Bernard of Angers also mentions the pilgrimage to Le Puy in first book of the *Miracles of Saint Foy of Conques* in 1010. It is also listed as the southern most starting point on the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela in the *Liber sancti jacob*i (book four of the Codex Calixtinus, written between 1130 and 1140). See William Melzer, trans. *The Pilgrim's Guide to Santiago de Compostela* (New York: Italica Press, 1993), 85, 103.

⁴ Odo de Gisey, *Discours historiques de la très-ancienne dévotion à Notre-Dame du Puy* (Lyon, 1620), 213. Odo de Gisey mentions this alternative provenance in his *Discours* but dismisses it, noting that it could account for miracles that took place before the time of St. Louis but that the sculpture presently on the altar is the true Notre-Dame du Puy.

⁵ Numerous sixteenth and seventeenth chronicles of Le Puy recount this legend, See for example, the oldest, Pierre Odin, "S'ensuit la fondation de la sainte eglise et singulier oratoire de Nostre-Dame du Puy, translaté par Hieremie le prophete" in *Les vieilles histoires de Notre-Dame du Puy, réimprimées d'après les manuscrits ou les éditions originales, avec un appendice. Mémoires et process-verbaux de la société agricole et scientifique de la Haute-Loire*, 1886 – 1887, t. 5, Le Puy, 1890, 1 – 32.

some illustrations of the Virgin of Le Puy that accompanied these texts depicted the statue with dark skin. It would thus appear that this celebrated statue became a Black Madonna centuries after it was first called “Notre-Dame du Puy.”

The Black Madonna: History and Interpretations

An overwhelming interest in the Virgin of Le Puy as a Black Madonna has dominated much of the literature on this statue. For many modern viewers, the Black Madonna is viewed as a powerful, visceral, and almost deviant archetype. The intrigue of the Black Madonna has permeated contemporary literary fiction, most notably in the work of Toni Morrison and Sue Monk Kidd.⁶ The Black Madonna is now most often approached only through the lens of race, a concept that had not fully developed until the eighteenth century. Yet the concept of the Black Madonna today is understood quite differently than it was in medieval and early modern Europe. These sculptures have been a part of the history of European religious visual culture for centuries and therefore must be reconsidered in their historical context. Like most works of art, these sculptures have undergone both physical and cultural changes regarding their intended function and audience perception.

It is the goal of this chapter to outline the historical origins of the Black Madonna of Le Puy. It will show that there is no extant evidence that statue was a *vierge noire* before the late fifteenth century. I thus situate the Virgin of Le Puy more broadly in the context of Marian sculptures of twelfth- and thirteenth-

⁶ Toni Morrison, *Paradise* (New York: Plume, 1999); Sue Monk Kidd, *The Secret Lives of Bees* (New York: Penguin Books, 2003). See also Marie France Boyer, *The Cult of the Virgin: Offerings, Ornaments and Festivals* trans. Jane Brenton (London: Thames, 2000); Rebecca Flores, "Black and Brown Goddesses Feminist Iconography in Contemporary Chicana Literature" (M.A. Thesis, Texas State University, 2010). Available <http://ecommons.txstate.edu/engltd/22>.

century Europe to argue that Black Madonnas should not be seen enigmatic anomalies but rather as an integral part of late medieval and early modern devotion.⁷

In the broadest sense, the Black Madonna is any depiction of the Virgin Mary with dark skin. Black Madonnas exist in a variety of media including panel-painted icons and freestanding sculpture. The Black Madonna as a subtype of the Virgin Mary likely originated in Byzantine icons, such as the much-celebrated Black Madonna of Częstochowa (Poland).⁸ In this study, I focus upon those Black Madonnas that fall into the sub-category of a Virgin in Majesty (*maiestà*) sculpture. These sculptures are generally constructed of wood and represent an enthroned Madonna and Child. The mid-twelfth century Morgan Madonna, for example, is an important surviving example of this type (Figure 5).⁹ These sculptures are also known as *sedes sapientiae*, a Latin phrase that translates to the "throne of wisdom."¹⁰ Through this enthroned composition, these statues visually convey the idea that Mary is the vessel of Christ incarnate, or more

⁷ The former approach can be seen in the following works, among others: Sophie Cassagnes-Brouquet and Jean-Pierre Cassagnes, *Vierges noires: regard et fascination* (Editions de Rouergue, 2000); Emile Saillens, *Nos vierges noires* (La Bègude-de-Mazenc: Arma Artis, 2002, First published 1945); Jean-Baptiste Bayard, *Déeses mères et Vierges noires, répertoire des Vierges noires par département* (Monaco: Ediciones du Rocher, 2001). Jean Hani, *La vierge noire et le mystère Marial* (Paris: Maisnie Tredaniel, 1995).

⁸ Robert Maniura, *Pilgrimage to Images in the Fifteenth Century: The Origins of the Cult of Our Lady of Częstochowa* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2004).

⁹ Virgin in Majesty statues are often associated with the eleventh and twelfth century Romanesque period, however, this type extends beyond this era. Later Enthroned Madonnas are often executed in a more sinuous Gothic style. See for example, *The Enthroned Virgin* (Soissons), Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; *The Sedes Sapientiae of Saint John the Evangelist*, Liège, is also a good example of a Gothic Enthroned Madonna.

¹⁰ Illene Forsyth, *The Throne of Wisdom; Wood Sculptures of the Madonna in Romanesque France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), 1.

literally the throne from which the salvation of Christ comes.¹¹ The metaphor of the throne also alludes to Christ's royal ancestors, Solomon and David. Although many extant Black Madonnas in western Europe are of the Virgin in Majesty type, there is no universal form for these sculptures.¹²

Although Notre-Dame du Puy is among the most celebrated of the Black Madonnas of Europe, her dark complexion is not entirely unusual especially in France. Émile Saillens was the first to analyze the locations of French *vierges noires* in 1945 (Figure 6). Saillens cited 205 statues in his study, while the more recent work of Jean-Baptiste Bayard, lists over three hundred examples. While the precise number of *vierges noires* in France is debated, the majority of them, including the Virgin of Le Puy, are found in the mountainous Auvergne region of central France.¹³ They are also well documented in the East-Pyrenees, Provence, and the Rhône Valley. Apart from Notre-Dame du Puy, the most famous French *vierge noire* is Notre-Dame-de-Sous-Terre at Chartres. This sculpture is also unfortunately no longer extant. Although this study focuses primarily on French Black Madonnas, these sculptures are found elsewhere in Europe. Such examples include the Virgin of Montserrat in Catalonia, Spain (Figure 7) and the Virgin of Altötting in Bavaria, Germany. These sculptures claim medieval, natural and heavenly origins like many relics and sacred objects of the Middle Ages.

¹¹ Ibid., 2.

¹² There are a few exceptions: The Virgin of Rocamadour has been especially well noted for its visceral and gaunt appearance, while Black Virgin of Bonne Délivrance in Paris stands in a traditional Gothic s-curved posture.

¹³ Cassagnes-Broquet, 62 – 68. The most cited examples in France include Our Lady of Rocamadour, Saint-Sauveur d'Aix (Aix-en-Provence), Aurillac (Cantal), Chartres (Eure-et-Loir), Clermont-Ferrand (Puy de Dome), Meymac (Corrèze).

Unfortunately the true dates of most of these sculptures cannot be determined with scientific certainty.

The Virgin in Majesty: Construction, Polychromy and Function

Because most Black Madonnas in France belong to the Virgin in Majesty class of wooden sculptures, a brief technical consideration of these works of art should be addressed here. The earliest Virgin in Majesty statue in Auvergne is said to be the late tenth-century Virgin of Clermont-Ferrand. This statue does not survive but a late tenth- or early eleventh-century manuscript from Clermont-Ferrand provides some evidence for its Virgin in Majesty composition.¹⁴ The text of this manuscript describes the statue as an Enthroned Madonna bearing the Christ Child upon her lap. It also states that the wooden statue was superficially gilded and seated upon a reliquary throne decorated with precious gemstones.¹⁵ A marginal image of the statue that conforms to the textual description also appears in the manuscript (Figure 8). Most scholars agree that this statue, along with the famous reliquary of St. Foy at Conques, served as the prototype for Virgin in Majesty statues in the region (Figure 9).¹⁶

While the absence of the medieval statue makes it impossible to confirm the specific features of the Virgin of Le Puy's manufacture, comparative technical analysis of surviving Auvergnat sculptures demonstrate the consistency and

¹⁴ Forsyth, 49. Clermont-Ferrand, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 145, fols. 130v – 134v.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ilene Forsyth has noted several discrepancies between this image and the description of the statue from the text, and therefore, the drawing is likely a schematic representation rather than a faithful reproduction. Forsyth also posits that the Virgin of Le Puy probably was not sheathed in gold, based on later descriptions of the Virgin's painted tunic. See Forsyth, 103.

techniques employed among central French workshops. Most of these sculptures were carved from local wood sources, chiefly walnut or oak in Auvergne. While the regional availability of this medium certainly explains its use, Lucretia Kargère and Adriana Rizzo have noted that the deciduous wood selected for these sculptures was not the most abundant type in Auvergne, thus indicating a conscious choice of material.¹⁷ The selection of a rare type of wood lent material credence to the sculptures' purported sacral properties. For example, sixteenth- and seventeenth-century *histoires* of the Virgin of Le Puy claimed the statue was made from *sétin*, a special type of wood found only on the area around Mount Sinai.¹⁸ This association with a sacred site indicates that the choice of material was important to validate the miraculous powers of these sculptures.

Careful analysis of the construction of Virgin in Majesty sculptures has also revealed important evidence regarding the function, use and reuse of these objects. Virgin in Majesty sculptures from Romanesque Auvergne are often joined together from several pieces of wood.¹⁹ This construction method is

¹⁷ Lucretia Kargère and Adriana Rizzo, "Twelfth-Century French Sculpture in the Metropolitan Museum of Art: Materials and Techniques" *Metropolitan Museum Studies in Art, Science and Technology* 1 (June 2010): 45.

¹⁸ This argument is repeated in several legends, see Marthurins des Roys, *S'ensuyt la charge, noblesse et bonne ordonnance de l'hospital de Nostre-Dame et ville du Puy/ Pour esmouvoir a incliter tous devotz crestiens et crestiennes a donner a eslagir de leurs biens temporelz/ affin destre resmunerez a participans des spiritulz*, (Lyon, 1523). See chapter entitled, "En ce chapitre est contenu de quoy est fait ledict image." See also *La fondacion de la sainte eglise singulier oratoire de nostre dame du puy, comment le devot ymage fut trouve Jeremie le prophete (translatee de latin en françois)* (Lyon c. 1500); *Histoire admirable de l'église de Nostre Dame du Puy et de l'image d'icelle, recueille par un dévot religieux prédicateur de l'ordre de S. François* (Lyon, 1616).

¹⁹ There are exceptions to this practice. The Virgin Enthroned from Forez now in the Louvre Museum was sculpted from a single piece of wood except the head and throne. Jean-René Gaborit and Dominique Faunières, *Une vierge en majesté* (Paris: Musée du Louvre éditions, 2009), 9.

somewhat unusual, and appears to be a regional practice.²⁰ The heads of the Virgin and Child were almost invariably carved separately on a large tenon and inserted into the body with a mortise dowel (Figure 10). While some wooden sculptures were open in the back to prevent radial cracking, most Romanesque Virgin in Majesty statues were conceived in the round for use in processions and other liturgical celebrations.²¹ These sculptures were sometimes hollowed on the interior and re-sealed with a wooden board (Figure 11). In some cases, these cavities were used to store reliquaries, but not all hollowed spaces on these statues should be assumed to have possessed a relic. In some cases, the reliquary cache was integral to the structure of the sculpture itself and therefore would have been a planned part of the original design. Such an example can be seen in the head reliquary from an Enthroned Madonna in the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lyon (Figure 12). In contrast, the Virgin in Majesty at the Saint Louis Art Museum contains an opening on the Virgin's shoulder (Figure 13). In this case, the panel is a poor fit to the statue that suggests that it was added at a later date to enclose a secondary relic.²² Ilene Forsyth has argued that the reliquary function of these sculptures was never requisite at any time and seems to be

²⁰ Kargère and Rizzo, 59.

²¹ Ibid., 46. This is not always the case with later Virgin Enthroned sculptures, especially large Gothic wooden sculptures that were generally hollowed in the back. See for example, The Museum of Fine Art, Boston's Virgin and Child (French, Soissons?), 1210 - 1215. Accession no. 59.701.

²² The mid-twelfth century Virgin Enthroned and Child in Majesty from Autun in Burgundy (c. 1130 – 1140) at the Metropolitan Museum of Art also offers a good example of an original reliquary cache. This statue contains a cavity on the back of the sculpture that would have been fitted with a panel. The drapery of the Virgin's mantel stops at this opening, indicating its integral purpose and design. Charles Little, "Romanesque Sculpture in North American Collections" *Gesta* 26/2 (1987): 158, figs. 1 and 6.

exceptional by the middle of the twelfth century.²³ However, new radiology studies of these sculptures reveal that more Enthroned Madonnas possessed a reliquary cache than previously thought.²⁴ These conservation studies reveal that more of these sculptures did have a reliquary function at one point in their use, thus Forsyth's argument may need revision as more radiography studies of these sculptures are undertaken. The varied construction techniques of Virgin in Majesty sculptures make determining whether or not a cavity was intended for reliquary or structural purposes difficult and must be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Without the opportunity to investigate the medieval statue of Notre-Dame du Puy it cannot be determined if its reliquary cache was original. Several other important relics such as the milk of the Virgin and foreskin of Christ were kept in the treasury of the cathedral but these relics were stored separately from the statue.²⁵ A note of the Virgin of Le Puy's possible reliquary function is briefly mentioned at the closing of Claude Doleson's play, *Le mystere et historie miraculeuse...du devot et singulier oratoire de Nostre-Dame du Puy d'Anis* (1518).²⁶ In the concluding monologue, an actor sings praises to the Virgin,

²³ Forsyth, 38. Forsyth bases her claim on her study of 110 examples of which 72 held no recognizable reliquary function.

²⁴ Kargère and Rizzo, 45 - 46. A recent radiography study of the Virgin of Montvianeix (Cloisters, Metropolitan Museum of Art) has revealed a previously unknown cavity in the shoulder of the sculpture that is now impossible to access.

²⁵ Gissey, 61.

²⁶ Claude Longeon, "Le théâtre au Puy-en-Velay au XVI^e siècle" in *Mélanges offerts à Georges Couton* (Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 1981).

calling her “c’est le plus noble reliquaire” [She is the most noble reliquary].²⁷

While this phrase might have been metaphorical, it also provides some evidence that the statue was a reliquary from at least the sixteenth century.

It is also clear that the sculpture possessed a cavity when it was destroyed. This evidence comes from the eyewitness account of Antoine-Alexis Duranson, who recorded an incident during the incineration that took the crowd watching the bonfire by surprise:

Après que ladite statue eut brûlé d’un côté, un soldat de la garnison prit une longue barre et dit: “A présent que tu t’es rôtie la figure, tourne-tou de l’autre côté”....On remarqua à l’instant que les toiles enduites de couleur, qui la recouvraient furent brûlées, en procurant un feu bleuâtre, qu’il s’ouvrit une petite porte sur son dos et qu’il en sortit de la cavité qui y étoit pratiquée et que l’on n’avoit jamais soupçonnée, une espèce de parchemin roulé en forme boule.²⁸

After the aforementioned statue [Notre-Dame du Puy] was burned on one side, a soldier of the garrison took a long stick and said: 'Now that the front of you is roasted, turn over on the other side.' At that moment, one noticed that the colored vestments covering her (the statue), now burned, made the fire bluish, and a little door on her back opened. Out of the cavity that no one that no one had ever suspected came a piece of parchment rolled into a ball."

Duranson’s account is intriguing not only because the eighteenth-century citizens of Le Puy knew nothing of this reliquary cache, but also because it demonstrates the multiple and changing functions of this statue from its primary role as a cult object. Gradually, the sculpture itself became miraculous in and of itself without the need for a relic. Once tales of the statue’s Egyptian provenance

²⁷ Étienne de Médicis, *Le livre de Podio ou chronique d’Étienne de Médicis, bourgeois du Puy* ed. A. Chassaing in *Recueil des chroniquers du Puy-en-Velay*, Vols. I and II, (Le Puy, 1859). 599.

²⁸ Antoine Alexis Duranson, "Memoire." Manuscript published in *Mémoires et procès-verbaux*, volume 12 (Le Puy, Société agricole et scientifique de la Haute-Loire, 1903), 80 – 82. Available via Gallica, Bibliothèque nationale de France.

were believed the entire statue became a relic rather than a reliquary. Its function as a container was thus negated in favor of its new status as a holy object itself.

Studies of the layers of polychrome and other decorative elements of these sculptures have also provided a better understanding of their changing appearance and function. In most cases, Virgin in Majesty sculptures were polychromed from their original manufacture, and they were also often repainted several times. Much of what is known about medieval painting techniques is recorded in Theophilus's *De divers artibus* and his techniques, especially the mixing of oil paints, have been verified in recent conservation studies of two Virgin in Majesty sculptures at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.²⁹ These sculptures were first sealed with a lead white ground, to which layers of paint were added. Although most of these sculptures have lost their brilliant polychromy, traces of red ochre, vermillion, and ultramarine suggest these sculptures would have been vibrantly painted.³⁰ Gemstones and rock crystals were also applied to these sculptures, although these precious stones were often removed at a later date. Descriptions of the Virgin of Le Puy indicate that the statue was incrustated with gemstones and a 1444 inventory from the cathedral lists several mantels and other articles of clothing worn by the Virgin which were decorated with jewels, gems, intaglios, cameos offered by pilgrims to Le Puy.³¹

²⁹ Kargère and Rizzo, 51; Presbyter Theophilus, John G. Hawthorne, and Cyril Stanley Smith, *On divers arts: the foremost medieval treatise on painting, glassmaking, and metalwork* (New York: Dover Publications, 1979).

³⁰ Ibid., 53.

³¹ Médicis, I, 121 - 22. For example, the inventory lists " *Item, une ceinture longue, a femme, toute d'or, a charnières, garnie de perles, saphirs du Puy, esmeraudes & rubis d'Alexandrie*" [Item, a long belt for a woman, all of gold, clasped, decorated with pearls, sapphires from Le Puy,

This is certainly true of the Virgin's garments from the seventeenth century, whose elaborately bejeweled mantel is emphasized in an anonymous painting known as *La Vierge noire dans la Chadaraïta* (Le Puy, Musée Croatizer) (Figure 14).

Kargère and Rizzo's study of the Montvianeix Virgin at the Metropolitan Museum of Art also reveals that polychrome was also used to imitate more expensive materials. For example, the throne of the Virgin is painted a deep red and speckled with lighter shades in imitation of porphyry, a prestigious stone with antique royal connotations. In addition, they note that bands of tin relief decorations on the Virgin's mantel were painted a yellowish tinge as a substitution for gold.³²

Loss of original polychromy on many of these sculptures makes it difficult to determine the precise skin tone of medieval Virgin in Majesty sculptures. The analysis of the Montvianeix Virgin and Child has revealed that it had a black layer of paint that was later repainted in pink skin tones.³³ While it is difficult to know if and when the Montvianeix Virgin was a *vierge noire*, this evidence suggests

emeralds and rubies from Alexandria]. The practice of dressing the Virgin grew more elaborate in the Early Modern period, culminating in the dressed Virgins of Spain and the New World. For more information see Susan Verdi-Webster, *Art and Ritual in Golden Age Spain: Sevillian Confraternities and the Processional Sculpture of Holy Week*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).

³² Kargère and Rizzo, 54. See also Forez Virgin dossier RF 0987, Musée du Louvre, Department of Sculpture. This conservation of this sculpture revealed that it was originally covered in gold repousée except head and hands.

³³ Lucretia Kargère, "The Montvianeix Madonna: Materials and Techniques in Twelfth-Century Auvergne" in *ICOM-CC Preprints of the 13th Triennial Meeting, Rio de Janeiro 22 - 27 September 2002*, ed. Roy Vontobel 2. (London: Maney, 2002), 508. Louis Bréhier first observed the black underpaint of the Montvianeix Virgin. See "Notes sur les statues de Vierges romanes, Notre-Dame de Montvianeix et la question des Vierges noires" *Revue d'Auvergne* (1933): 193 – 198.

that Black Madonnas may have appeared earlier than the fifteenth century.³⁴

Other Black Madonnas share a similar history, such as the Virgin of Bon-Espoir (Dijon), whose black underpaint was discovered and restored in 1945 but was subsequently re-painted white again.³⁵ Given the limited number of these sculptures that have undergone scientific paint analysis we must wonder how many other Virgin in Majesty statues might have been Black Madonnas at one point in their history.

State of the Literature: Interpretations and Approaches

Although the Enthroned Madonna is a popular iconographic type of the Virgin Mary in a variety of media, Virgin in Majesty sculptures are somewhat understudied. The key source continues to be Ilene Forsyth's seminal 1972 study *The Throne of Wisdom: Wood Sculptures of the Madonna in Romanesque France*. Forsyth's book sought to counter French art historian Emile Mâle's claim that these sculptures not should be considered works of art but only understood as cult objects.³⁶ She also addresses the dating of these sculptures, noting iconographic and functional changes to these images from the tenth through twelfth centuries.

³⁴ Kargère suggests the underpainting could be as early as the thirteenth century but certainly after the twelfth. It is difficult to date the underpainting, however, a thirteenth century Black Madonna would be quite early for this type, so I hesitate to suggest a concrete date for this layer. Kargère admits that the thirteenth century would be an early date for the Black Madonna in France. Personal communication, 10 May 2010.

³⁵ Pierre Quarré, "La Statue de Notre-Dame de Bon-Espoir à Dijon et son ancienne polychromie" *Mémoires de la commission des antiquités de la côte d'or* 22 (1947 - 1953): 190 - 197.

³⁶ Emile Mâle, *The Gothic Image: Religious Art in France of the Thirteenth Century* trans. D. Nussey (New York: Harper, 1972).

Forsyth's book is critical but it focuses more broadly on the Virgin in Majesty type rather than Black Madonnas. The more focused study of the Black Madonna is rooted in the late-nineteenth century.³⁷ These early studies did not question the meaning of these statues but rather, they were more interested in the possible ways the objects acquired their dark complexions. In 1878, Parisian architect and religious archaeologist Charles Rohault de Fleury first proposed the hypothesis that the silver plating on sculptures of the Madonna had tarnished over time and therefore copyists assumed they were originally black.³⁸ Stephan Beissel, a German Jesuit priest and scholar of Marian art, also proposed that these sculptures' dark skin was an unintentional side effect caused by silver oxidation and smoke residue.³⁹ This hypothesis holds true for some "Black Madonnas" such as the Virgin of Vernouillet. The lead paint base on this statue partially oxidized resulting in an unevenly darkened face (Figure 15). Yet the accidental darkening of some Black Madonnas cannot account for instances in which only the face of the Virgin is black.⁴⁰

³⁷ Carl G. Jung, *Four Archetypes: Mother, Rebirth, Spirit, Trickster* trans. R.F.C. Hull (New York: Routledge, 1972), 7 – 38.

³⁸ Forsyth, 21.

³⁹ Stephan Beissel, *Geshichte der Verehrung Marias in Deutchland während des Mittelalters: Ein Beitrag zur Religionswissenschaft und Kunstgeschichte* (Freiburg im Breisau, 1909). Beissel's translation from Monique Scheer, "From Majesty to Mystery: Change in the Meanings of Black Madonnas from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Centuries" *The American Historical Review* 107/5 (2002): 1418.

⁴⁰ Hélène Leroy and Francis Debaisieux, *Vierges romanes: portraits croisés* (Beaumont, France: Editions Debaisieux, 2009), 34.

Art historical scholarship on Black Madonnas begins in earnest with Louis Bréhier, who was the first to consider these objects as works of art.⁴¹ Although he was primarily concerned with identifying, dating and describing these sculptures, Bréhier's scholarship is especially notable for attention to the *vierges noires* of Auvergne. Bréhier proposed several possible theories for the darkening of these statues. He argued for pagan origins of Black Madonnas, proposing that isolated regions such as Auvergne preserved these traditions into the Christian period. Despite possible pagan allusions, Bréhier also believed that these sculptures were painted black at a date later than their original construction. The interpretation of Black Madonnas as feminine deities continued throughout the twentieth century. Marie Durand-Lefebvre (1937) and Emile Saillens (1945), for example, were among the first to argue that the Black Madonna was an extension of pre-existing Celtic mother-goddess cults.⁴²

Leonard W. Moss and Stephen C. Cappannari were among the first scholars to reconsider the Black Madonna as a “Christianized” fertility or earth

⁴¹ Louis Bréhier, “Communication à propos de l’origine des Vierges noires” *Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, Comptes rendus des séances*, 1935. Paris (1935): 379 – 385. See also his “Notes sur les statues de Vierges romanes, Notre-Dame d’Montvianeix et la question des Vierges noires”; “Les Origines de la sculpture romane” *Revue des deux mondes* 10 (1912): 870 – 901. “Vierges romanes d’Auvergne” *Le Point, revue artistique et littéraire* 25 (1943): 12 – 33. After Bréhier, the issue of Virgin in Majesty sculptures was also a point of interest for Joseph de Borchgrave d’Altena, whose lengthy 1960 article focuses on the discovery of Notre-Dame d’Eprave, a deteriorated virgin statue. Borchgrave d’Altena engages in a detailed comparison of this statue with others, dating it to the second half of the thirteenth century. His analysis is generally descriptive and he expresses a certain bias of language towards these objects, noting their powerful stance of an “oriental sovereign.” See Joseph de Borchgrave d’Altena, *Vierges de Pitié*. S.l: s.n, 1965.

⁴² Marie Durand-LeFebvre, *Etude sur l’origine des Vierges noires* (G. Durassie & Cie, Paris, 1937); Emile Saillens, *Nos Vierges noires, leurs origines*. Saillens insists on a Greek origin for these figures, as he argues that their presence is most prominent along the Gallo-Grecian trading route, and not throughout all of ancient Gaul.

goddess such as Isis and Cybele. They argue there are over thirty miracle-working Black Madonnas in Europe that cannot explain their dark color through physiognomic changes. Instead, they posit that these sculptures are manifestations of pagan mother-goddesses in a veneer of Catholicism that allowed them to be known as “Madonna” figures.⁴³ Moss and Cappannari do not recognize or acknowledge that medieval viewers may not have perceived the origins of these sculptures. Their argument for the pre-Christian association of black with fertility and the earth has heavily influenced the scholarship on these sculptures since this time. For example, later studies used Jungian psychology to interpret these sculptures as mother-goddess archetypes.⁴⁴ Legends of the discovery of many of the sculptures in natural secluded environments were also cited as evidence for the chthonic origins of the Black Madonna.⁴⁵ These legends

⁴³ Leonard W. Moss and Stephen C. Cappannari, “In Quest of the Black Virgin: She is Black Because She is Black” in *Mother Worship: Theme and Variations*, ed. James J. Preston (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 53-74. See also Leonard W. Moss and Stephen C. Cappannari “The Black Madonna: An Example of Culture Borrowing” *Scientific Monthly* 73 (1953): 319-24. Moss and Cappannari designate three distinct types of Black Madonnas: those that reflect the color of the indigenous population, such as the Virgin of Guadalupe, those which have turned dark due to smoke residue and deterioration of silver pigments, and those they designate as “miracle-working” that provide no evidence of physical change. Among such virgins they posit, are the Virgins of Montserrat, Einsiedeln (Switzerland), Chartres, Madonna Nera of Tindari (Sicily) and the Virgin of Le Puy.

⁴⁴ In addition to the literature discussed in this chapter, see Fred Gustafson, *The Black Madonna* (Boston: Sigo Press, 1990); China Galland, *Longing for Darkness: Tara and the Black Madonna, a Ten-Year Journey* (New York, Penguin Books, 1990); Ean Begg, *The Cult of the Black Virgin*, (London: Penguin Books, 1996); Stephen Benko, *The Virgin Goddess—Studies in the Pagan & Christian Roots of Mariology* (New York: E. J. Brill, 1993). Jean Markle, *La grande deesse - Mythes et sanctuaires* (Albin Michel: Paris, 1997); Jean Hani, *La Vierge Noire et Le Mystère Marial* (Paris: Tredaniel, 1995).

⁴⁵ Cassagnes-Brouquet, 44 - 49. Many *vierges noires* in France are said to have been discovered in natural environments such as trees, bushes or riverbanks. In addition, the aquatic origins of the Virgin are especially well documented. The Virgin of Err (East Pyrenees), Chartres (Notre-Dame Sous-Terre, now destroyed) among others all claim such origins. Still other legends profess the discovery of a Black Madonna in caves, grottos or, as in the case of the Virgin of Pradelles, a subterranean crypt.

were often related to the pre-Christian context of the sacred site, usually a church, associated with the statue. Such analogies are found in Gautier de Coincy's *Miracles de Notre-Dame* (c.1218) in which the pagan goddess Aphrodite is compared with the Virgin. However, these references were not meant to equate the two women but rather to show the divine superiority of Mary.⁴⁶ The Egyptian goddess Isis has also been argued to be a source for these statues on the basis of her similar compositional form of a seated mother and child.⁴⁷ While it is true that many Christian churches were founded upon Gallo-Roman Temples of Diana, scholars who view Black Madonna sculptures as a sign of the continuity of mother goddess cults have overemphasized this correlation. Indeed, the practice of building Christian sites over pagan ones was not necessarily indicative of continuity, but rather supremacy of the new religion.⁴⁸

The above studies of the Black Madonna are not rooted in historical evidence, and thus serve as an example of the mythological approach to these

⁴⁶ See *Survival of the Gods: Classical Mythology in Medieval Art* catalogue. Exhibition by the Department of Art, Brown University, Bell Gallery, List Art Center, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, February 28-March 29, 1987.

⁴⁷ Eloise McKinney-Johnson, "Egypt's Isis: The Original Black Madonna" in *Black Women in Antiquity*, ed. Ivan Van Sertima (New Brunswick: Journal of African Civilizations), 1987, 64-71; Danita R. Redd, "Black Madonnas of Europe: Diffusion of the African Isis" in *Black Women in Antiquity*, 162-87; Elisabeth Piltz, "The Black Virgin—An Ancient Acheiropoietos" *Kairos: Studies in Art History and Literature in Honour of Professor Gunilla Akerström-Hougen*, ed. E. Piltz (Paul Åstrioms förlag: Jonsered, 1998), 91 – 109. For a more critical approach to this transformation in the Byzantine Empire, see Elisa Buono, "From Goddess to Virgin: Transformations in the Eastern Empire" in *Survival of the Gods: Classical Mythology in Medieval Art* (Providence, RI: Brown University Department of Art, 1987), 85 – 95.

⁴⁸ Sylvie Villate has argued that the connection between Roman Temples of Diana and medieval Black Madonnas is unwarranted in the case of Le Puy-en-Velay because there is no archaeological evidence for a mother goddess cult at *Anicium* (Roman Le Puy). Instead, a cult to Apollo was present near the site but this male pagan god would not have been connected to Notre-Dame du Puy. See "'Anicium' du sanctuaire païen à la christianisation des Vellaves" *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 74 (1996): 139 - 158.

sculptures. The more recent literature on the Black Madonna is divided into two groups of scholarly agendas. The first group of scholars remains steadfastly convinced of the pre-Christian associations of the Black Madonna. These researchers have thus been less interested in investigating the various Christian contexts of these statues.⁴⁹ Danitita Redd, for example, maintains that the Black Madonna in Europe has African origins from the Egyptian cult of Isis.⁵⁰ Others such as Ean Begg and Jean-Baptiste Bayard have dedicated their research to documenting the locations of these images yet they also maintain the connection between *vierge noires* and mother-goddess cults.⁵¹

The second group of scholars has returned to a more historically based approach to these objects. While Illene Forsyth recognized the formal inspiration for these statues may have been rooted in pagan statues, she also argued that the *sedes sapientiae* composition can be dated to the Carolingian time period with the revival of freestanding sculptures.⁵²

⁴⁹ Stephen Benko, *The Virgin Goddess: Studies in the Pagan and Christian Roots of Mariology* (New York: Brill, 1993); Marina Warner, *All Alone of Her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976), 275 – 276. Benko in particular examines evidence for pre-Christian temple sites under Christian churches that house these statues. While Benko and others argue that the continuity of the ancient form of seated mother and child represents an obvious continuity, these studies fail to consider that the adaptation of this form was an intentional form of supersession to prove the superiority of the new Christian church established at these sites. See also, Lucia Chiavola Birnbaum, *Feminism, Religion and Politics in Italy* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2000). Chiavola Birnbaum takes an especially “first-generation” feminist approach to her research.

⁵⁰ Redd, 162-87.

⁵¹ Ean Begg, *The Cult of the Black Virgin* (London: Penguin, 1996); Jean-Baptiste Bayard, *Déeses mères et Vierges noires, répertoire des Vierges noires par département*.

⁵² Forsyth, 10 - 11. Such early free-standing sculptures in France include the Virgin of Clermont-Ferrand and the reliquary of St. Foy at Conques. Forsyth also cites the Virgins of Essen and Hildesheim Madonnas in Germany as examples of Carolingian influence.

Most significantly for this study, Forsyth is one of the first scholars since Brèhier to question the existence of medieval Black Madonnas. Like Brèhier, Forsyth also argues that these statues were darkened at a post-medieval date.⁵³ Later, scholars such as Klaus Schreiner, Sophie Cassagnes-Brouquet, Frédérique Vialet and Xavier Barral i Altet have also maintained that Black Madonnas were likely darkened after the medieval period.⁵⁴

Turning more specifically to the scholarship on the Virgin of Le Puy herself, a few French scholars have attempted to construct the iconography of the statue. This interpretation was primarily achieved through collecting a repertoire of known images of the statue in various media such as pilgrimage badges, prints and small votive reproductions. The earliest of these compendia is Paul Olivier's *L'ancienne statue romane de Notre-Dame du Puy, vierge noire miraculeuse* (1921), which still remains a rare but essential source.⁵⁵ More recently, the exhibition catalog *Iconographie de la Vierge noire du Puy* (Musée Croatizer, 1983) provides a wide array of images of Notre-Dame du Puy from chapter seals to ceramic plates and ex-votos. It does not however include some critical images

⁵³ Forsyth, 20 - 22.

⁵⁴ Cassagnes-Brouquet, 139; See also Klaus Schreiner, *Maria: Jungfrau, Mutter, Herrscherin* (Munich: C. Hanser, 1994); Xavier Barral i Altet, "Observations sur la statue romane de la Vierge à l'Enfant de Notre-Dame du Puy et sur son noircissement postérieur" in *Jublié et culte marial (moyen-âge - époque contemporaine)*, Actes du colloque international organisé au Puy-en-Velay par le Centre culturel départemental de la Haute-Loire, published under the direction of Bruno Maës, Daniel Moulinet, and Catherine Vincent (Saint-Just-la-Pendue: Université de Sainte-Etienne, 2009), 59.

⁵⁵ Paul Olivier, *L'ancienne statue romane de Notre-Dame du Puy : Vierge noire miraculeuse : essai d'iconographie critique* (Le Puy-en-Velay: Impr. Peyriller, Rouchon et Gamon, 1921).

discussed in Olivier's early study and as a result, these important depictions have been overlooked in more recent literature.⁵⁶

Last, Sylvie Vilatte and Monique Scheer are among the few contemporary scholars to consider the evolution of the Black Madonna and the modern interpretation of these medieval statues. Vilatte is the only scholar to have considered the Virgin of Le Puy as her primary focus on the study of Black Madonnas.⁵⁷ She relies almost exclusively on texts to examine how the statue is described from the fifteenth through the eighteenth century. Vilatte concludes that the statue of the Virgin of Le Puy was darkened at the end of the Middle Ages.⁵⁸ She also notes that the description *Vierge noire* does not appear until the nineteenth century when these statues first became associated with Pagan origins. Vilatte argues that the statue would have been read on two levels: first, as a relic from the biblical past and second, as a contemporary reminder of the effort to convert Muslims in the ongoing Crusade campaign.⁵⁹ Given the popular histories of Muslims converted by Virgin icons, I believe this double reading of

⁵⁶ Frédérique Vialet, B. Gourtay, and Yves Soulingeas. *Iconographie de la Vierge noire du Puy: Baptistère Saint-Jean, exposition 1983* (Le Puy: Département de la Haute-Loire, 1983). The essays in this catalogue also contribute to this scholarship with an excellent synopsis of past literature as well as a brief study of the architecture environment surrounding the Virgin. These discussions, however, are quite limited and do not consider the statue's role in processions and liturgical performance in any substantial detail.

⁵⁷ Sylvie Vilatte, "Faux mystère et vrai problème historique: la question des Vierges noires" *Revue d'Auvergne* (1997): 12 – 38; "La 'déoute Image noire de Nostre Dame' du Puy-en-Velay: histoire du reliquaire roman et son noircissement" *Revue Belge de philosophie et d'histoire* 74 (1996): 727 – 760.

⁵⁸ Ibid., "La 'deuote Image noire de nostre-dame' du Puy-en-Velay," 741. I agree with Vilatte's assessment.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 753 – 756. See also "faux mystère et vrai problème historique," 32 – 33.

the dark complexion of the Virgin statue is quite possible.⁶⁰ Vilatte's research is critical to this study and will be discussed further in chapter two.

Monique Scheer approaches the problem of the Black Madonna from a larger scope of evidence, focusing primarily on German examples.⁶¹ She argues that most darkened Virgin in Majesty sculptures were *perceived* specifically as Black Madonnas only after the Middle Ages. This change in perception was as a result of Catholic Reformation efforts to preserve the veneration of the Cult of the Miraculous Virgin. Although Scheer and Villate reach different conclusions regarding the development of the Black Madonnas of Europe, they both agree that the mystique of these sculptures is a post-medieval phenomenon. It should also be noted that a recent publication by Xavier Barral i Altet also discusses the post-medieval darkening of the statue. He likewise argues that the statue was not a Black Madonna in the Middle Ages, basing his argument on the lack of direct evidence.⁶² I agree with these authors and will push their analyses further in my discussion of Black Madonnas in chapters one and two. To be sure, the mystery currently attached to the Black Madonna is largely a modern conceit, not a medieval one.

⁶⁰ For more examples of Marian conversion of Muslims during the Middle Ages, see Krijnie Ciggaar, "Glimpes of Life in Outremer in Exempla and Miracula" in *East and West in the Crusader States: Context-Contacts-Confrontations* II. Acta of the congress held at Hernen Castle in May 1997. Ed. K. Ciggaar and H. Teule (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 1999).

⁶¹ Monique Scheer, "From Majesty to Mystery: Change in the Meanings of Black Madonnas from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Centuries" *The American Historical Review* 107/5 (2002): 1412 – 1440.

⁶² Xavier Barral i Altet, "Observations sur la statue romane de la Vierge à l'Enfant de Notre-Dame du Puy et sur son noircissement postérieur," 60. Barral i Altet's comments mostly concern refuting previous arguments for a vierge noire in the Middle Ages and does not discuss the significance of blackness in as extensive detail as Vilatte and Sheer, thus I have focused on these scholar's articles rather than Barral i Altet's in this case.

The Virgin of Le Puy: State of the Evidence

Despite some excellent theories, it is unclear precisely when the Virgin of Le Puy “became” a Black Madonna. While printed reproductions are most commonly used as evidence for the original statue of Notre-Dame du Puy, these renderings are often inconsistent and unreliable. Sophie Cassagnes-Brouquet claims that a *vogue du brunissement* occurred in twelfth- and thirteenth-century France, but there is no firm evidence to confirm these dates.⁶³ As discussed above, recent scientific analyses of polychrome indicate that these statues might have been darkened earlier than the fifteenth century. Nevertheless, the written description of most known Black Madonnas as specifically “black” does not occur in the Middle Ages.⁶⁴

The crusader Count Raymond St. Gilles's donation to the cathedral in 1096, discussed at the beginning of this chapter, serves as the strongest piece of early evidence for the presence of the Virgin statue at Le Puy. Earlier evidence does point to the establishment of the Cult of the Virgin at Le Puy before this time, but it is difficult to ascertain if the cult preceded a physical statue.⁶⁵ Direct

⁶³ Cassagnes-Brouquet, 153.

⁶⁴ Barral i Altet, “Observations sur la statue romane de la Vierge à l'Enfant de Notre-Dame du Puy et sur son noircissement postérieur,” 59. This is true both in France and throughout Europe. The Virgin of Loreto, for example, was darkened in the 1490s. See also Karin Vélez, “Resolved to Fly: The Virgin of Loreto, the Jesuits & the Miracle of Portable Catholicism in the Seventeenth-Century Atlantic World” (Ph.D. diss, Princeton University, 2008), 346. Although Velez notes that statues like the Virgin of Loreto were darkened at a later date, she also claims many black enthroned Madonna sculptures such as those at Montserrat, Rocamadour and Halle were darkened by 1400. This conclusion appears to be made on their proposed date of manufacture rather than specific evidence pertaining to the color of the statue.

⁶⁵ Evidence for the cult generally relies upon the shift of the site name from its Roman appellation, Ancium, to Podium. The words “Sancta Maria” begin to appear on coins in the area from the second half of the tenth century. A 912 CE charter refers to Sancte Maria Aniciensis as does a manuscript given by tenth century Bishop of Le Puy, Adalard, (918 – 924) see Bibliothèque

references to *la Sainte-Image* do not appear until the beginning of the eleventh century, further confirming that donation of Raymond of Toulouse was in fact the Virgin of Le Puy. The earliest visual evidence for the statue of the Virgin of Le Puy exists only in pilgrimage badges. These small images depict an Enthroned Virgin holding a scepter topped with a fleur-de-lis, an object that does not reappear in later representations of the statue.⁶⁶

Some scholars have also speculated that there was a pre-existing statue of the Virgin Mary at the cathedral. For example, a document written by Guy d'Anjou (c. 980) mentioned pilgrims visiting the altar of Mary at Le Puy, but it is not clear if this statue was Notre-Dame du Puy or a more generic image of the Virgin.⁶⁷ In addition to these early documents, Vincent of Beauvais makes note of the Virgin of Le Puy in his third volume of the *Speculum historiale*. He remarks that Western Muslims (*sacreceños occidentales*) sent gifts to the Virgin of Le Puy to bless their fields.⁶⁸ It has also been posited that early images are

nationale, Paris. Collection Colbert ML 1452. The charter is reprinted in the *Dictionnaire topographique de la France; Dictionnaire topographique du département de la Haute-Loire: comprenant les noms de lieu anciens et modernes*, eds. Augustin Chassaing and M. Antoine Jacotin, under the direction of the Comité des travaux historiques (Paris: E. Leroux, 1907).

⁶⁶ See discussion in Forsyth, 104 and Vialet, 18.

⁶⁷ The text reads: “Idem puis proesul Guido statuit ut episcopi et omnes canonici, moirentes in civitati aniciense, itemque *peregrini ad altare Sancte marie* orationis causa venientes, si contigeret eos mori, in praefacto Sancti Petri caenobio sepelirentur” (reprinted in Olivier, 20).

⁶⁸ It is assumed that Western Muslims refers to Berbers from North Africa. Beauvais's text reads: “Ibi etiam, ut dicitur, Sarraceni occidentals mittunt munera, ut beata Virgo eos liberet a fulgoribus & tempestatibus & agros suos.” Chapter 21, Book III, “sacreligio locali.” Although Beauvais's text is most commonly cited, he draws upon the writings of Stephen of Bourbon for this account: “Ibi etiam, ut audivi, ipsi Sarraceni occidentals [editor's note: Moors of Spain] mittunt aliquando munera, ut beata Virgo eos liberet a fulgoribus et tempestatibus et agros suos.” See Étienne de Bourbon, *Anecdotes historiques...d'Étienne de Bourbon*, ed. A. Lecoy de Marche (Librairie Renouard: Paris, 1877) #320, *du don de fortitude*. This text alone does not confirm that Muslims were living in Le Puy, only that gifts were sent there, yet it suggests a possible Islamic connection with the city. As will be discussed further in chapter five, this connection is

representations of an older cult statue who carried the same title of “Notre Dame.” For example, both a deteriorated fresco at the northern porch of the cathedral and a small relief figure of a Virgin and Child in the bell tower have been argued to be early evidence of another cult statue of the Virgin (Figure 16). It is difficult to affirm, however, that these early images refer to the statue itself and not the popular iconographic type of the Virgin.⁶⁹ Xavier Barral i Altet has rejected this thesis, and I am inclined to agree that only one unique Romanesque statue of the Virgin of Le Puy existed until its destruction in the eighteenth century.⁷⁰

Despite these ambiguous pieces of evidence, it is clear that Notre-Dame du Puy was an enthroned Madonna type. Textual descriptions confirm this fact as well as other surviving statues that cite the Virgin of Le Puy as their model. Such statues include the eighteenth-century Notre-Dame des Nieges in at the Monastery of Sainte-Claire in Aurillac and The Virgin of Thuir in Rousillon.⁷¹

strengthened by the architectural building techniques and use of Arabic inscription in the Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay itself.

⁶⁹ The fresco dates to the thirteenth century and is located on north tympanum by first bay. It depicts a Virgin in Majesty surrounded by angels, prophet Isaiah, St. John the Baptist.

⁷⁰ Xavier Barral i Altet, "Observations sur la statue romane de la Vierge à l'Enfant de Notre-Dame du Puy et sur son noircissement postérieur," 50.

⁷¹ Pierre Ponsich, "La Vierge de Thuir et les relations artistiques entre la région auvergnate et les pays Catalans à l'époque préromane et romane" *Cahiers de Saint-Michel-de-Cuxa* 25 (1994): 51 - 61. It is generally agreed that the Virgin of Le Puy would have been an enthroned virgin statue given both visual and textual descriptions and the predominance of this type of statue in this region of France. The Thuir and Nieges Madonnas do share similarities to extant prints of Notre-Dame du Puy, especially her headdress and multicolored tunic. I have also discovered an image of a replica of the Virgin of Le Puy from the Chapel of Raymonds (near Tence). It appears as an addendum to a transcription of a procession by the selliers of Le Puy. The statue is close to Faujas St.Fond's representation, except the Virgin's features are less aquiline and her hands are painted black. In many ways, this statue is the closest representation I have found to the Vienna manuscript. It belonged to Canon Henry Péala at the time of the publication, but no further information regarding the date or present location of the statue is known. It is an intriguing

Despite the lack of clear visual sources, other sources provide evidence for the destroyed sculpture. Such evidence can be found in liturgical ordinals and cathedral inventories. The earliest extant inventories date to 1410 and 1432.⁷² A copy of a third inventory from 1444 survives in sixteenth-century chronicler Etienne Médicis manuscript, *Le livre de Podio*. These inventories list several reliquaries and objects rendered with an image of the Virgin such as processional crosses, the crown of the Virgin, and numerous precious silver and gold items.⁷³ In addition, these inventory records indicate that there were many *imago* [statues] of the Virgin in the Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay. For example, the 1444 inventory lists eight statues of the Virgin in gold or silver in the cathedral treasury.⁷⁴ It is therefore somewhat difficult to know which one of these statues was Notre-Dame du Puy; however, references to the mantels and other vestments belonging to *La Sainte-Image* make it clear that this statue was part of the cathedral's collection at this time.

Last, a large collection of small ex-votos, decorative objects, and other small figurines of the Virgin of Le Puy survive. Many examples of these items are located at the Musée Croatizer in Le Puy. These images include the

replica that demands further study. See C. de Bonneville-Colomb & L. Coste. *Comment les maitres selliers du Puy-en-Velay accompagnent aux processions la Sainte Image de Notre-Dame: Transaction entre l'Abbée de Saint-Pierre-la-Tour et les maitres selliers du Puy* (21 Avril 1525) (Saint-Etienne: Société de l'imp Théolier, 1908). BM Lyon Cote A 9627, Fonds Chomart. Thanks to M. Chomart for allowing me to photograph this image.

⁷² Archives départementales de la Haute-Loire, Série G 796.

⁷³ Ibid. See also, Médicis 100 – 111. Médicis also lists the extant relics in the cathedral, including the belt, milk and hair of the Virgin, I, 35.

⁷⁴ Médicis, I, 363 – 364.

aforementioned pilgrimage badges dating from the thirteenth century to small wooden statuettes from the eighteenth century (Figure 17 a & b). The cathedral treasury also holds some important vestments such as mantels, crowns and slippers worn by the statue in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Figure 43). The extant mantels and clothing of the Virgin in the cathedral treasury date only to the seventeenth century. In addition, rings, bells and shields with the image of the statue are dispersed in numerous collections throughout France. Olivier and Vialet's catalogues provide the best, if not fully complete, compilation of these images. It should also be mentioned that an early canvas painting, *La Vierge au Manteau*, is also in the collections of the Musée Crozatier; however, this painting does not represent the Virgin of Le Puy.⁷⁵

In addition to visual remnants of the medieval sculpture, textual descriptions are also useful for determining the early appearance of the statue. Abbot Pierre Odin (d. 1502) wrote one of the earliest descriptions of the Virgin statue in the late fifteenth century.⁷⁶ Odin's text is the first to associate the Virgin of Le Puy with Egypt and the dark wood of Sinai. He does not describe her as 'black' but rather only remarks that her face was not pleasant. Later in the sixteenth century, Médicis notes that Huguenots in Le Puy called her

⁷⁵ This painting was commissioned by the Carmelite nuns of Le Puy. I do not believe it is related to the Virgin of Le Puy as it takes the form of a *misericordia* so it has not been considered here. For more information on this painting see, Hélène Millet and Claudia Rabel with Bruno Martin, *La Vierge au Manteau du Puy-en-Velay* (Paris: Editions Fage, 2011).

⁷⁶ His text was printed around 1530 and was transcribed by Charles Rocher in the nineteenth century. See Rocher, *Les vieilles histoires de Notre-Dame du Puy, réimprimées d'après les manuscrits ou les éditions originales, avec un appendice. Mémoires et procès-verbaux de la société agricole et scientifique de la Haute-Loire*. Le Puy, Impr. Marchessou, 1890. A sixteenth century copy of the text also survives in the Bibliothèque nationale, Paris (2222 ancien coté 8002 Fonds Français, 14/15).

‘massiarada,’ an Occitan word for ‘dirty.’⁷⁷ Some have pointed to this word as evidence for the darkened color of the statue. Yet as Denis Crouzet has argued, this word was associated with an instance of iconoclasm in Le Puy in which Protestants deliberately defiled a likeness of the Virgin.⁷⁸ It is difficult to know if ‘massiarada’ referred to the sullied appearance of this particular statue or the cult statue itself.

The earliest written record that makes an oblique reference to the statue's skin color is Claude Doleson's 1518 play *Le mistere et historie miraculeuse.... de Nostre-Dame du Puy d'Anis*. This text recounts the history of the Virgin of Le Puy and repeats the popular narrative that St. Louis gave the statue to Le Puy after his campaigns in Egypt.⁷⁹ Furthermore, the Virgin of Le Puy is directly connected to the dark woman in the Song of Songs at the end of the play, a trope popularized in the sermons of Bernard of Clairvaux about which more will be said further in this dissertation.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Médicis, 512.

⁷⁸ Denis Crouzet, *Les guerriers de Dieu: la violence au temps des troubles de religion, vers 1525-vers 1610* (Seyssel: Champ Vallon, 1990), 696.

⁷⁹ Claude Doleson, *Le mistere et historie miraculeuse.... de Nostre-Dame du Puy d'Anis*, printed in Médicis, *Le livre de Podio*, 569.

⁸⁰ St. Vosy proclaims at the end of the play:

“C’est Ymage prophetiquement [This image was prophetically]
 A esté faict de la Vierge Marie [made of the Virgin Mary]
 De laquelle, sans que point on varie [from which it scarcely deviates]
 Au premier chappitre des Cantiques [From the first chapter of the Canticles]
 Le Saige, en paroles aultentiques [The wisdom, in authentic words]
 De cette très-noble Vierge proposa, [of this very noble Virgin suggests]
 Quant il dict: *Nigra Sum, sed Formosa, Filia Hierusalem* (592) [when it says: I am Black but Beautiful, Children of Jerusalem].

Although references to the Virgin of Le Puy as "dark" date to the sixteenth century, the statue is designated by ethnicity as Ethiopian or 'Moorish' in the seventeenth century.⁸¹ Even then, she is rarely discussed as black.⁸² I have located only one small text by an anonymous Franciscan directly refers to the Virgin of Le Puy as *noire* in the title of the publication until the modern era.⁸³ More commonly, *histoires* emphasized the statue's miraculous or devout qualities, even if her dark countenance is suggested within the text or accompanying images.⁸⁴ In addition to these examples, Odo de Gissey, a seventeenth-century Jesuit and author of a monograph on the Virgin of Le Puy reports that the statue was washed in vinegar and water on Good Friday.⁸⁵ This statement has led some scholars to argue that this practice caused the darkening of the sculpture and thus it was incidental and unintentional.⁸⁶ Such evidence remains unconvincing, as there is both written and visual evidence for the dark countenance of the Virgin of Le Puy before Gissey's text. Moreover the prevalence of the Black Madonna in Auvergne by the seventeenth century indicates the broad accretion of this type rather than an accidental and isolated occurrence.

⁸¹ Gissey, 228. "tout le tient du visage de la Mère et de l'Enfant tire sure l'Ethopien et More."

⁸² Théodose de Bergame, *Histoire admirable de l'église N.-D. du Puy et de l'image et miracles d'icelle* (Lyon, Louis Mugret, 1620), Chapter VII. Bergame does refer to the statue as *noire* but this is a rare instance. "Ce qui a fort augmenté la devotion de l'Eglise Cathedrale Nostre-Dame du Puy est l'image noire qui est sur le grand Autel..."

⁸³ *Histoire admirable de l'église de Nostre Dame du Puy et de l'image d'icelle, recueillie par un dévot religieux prédicateur de l'ordre de S. François*, 1616.

⁸⁴ See Bergame, Gissey, et al.

⁸⁵ Gissey, 228.

⁸⁶ Cassagnes-Brouquet, 163.

While most scholars have argued that the Virgin of Le Puy did not become a *vierge noire* until the sixteenth century, a few scholars have questioned this assumption. Both Michel Carlat and Virginia Reinburg have discussed a small miniature of a stoic dark-skinned Virgin of Le Puy which appears in a lavish late fifteenth-century book of hours now at the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek in Vienna (Figure 18).⁸⁷ This miniature is regarded as the earliest known image of Notre Dame du Puy depicted as a Black Madonna. The image is critical and is discussed at length in chapter two. Given this image, it can be safely argued that the Virgin of Le Puy was recognized as a Black Madonna by the late fifteenth century.⁸⁸ But what did it mean to be black? To uncover this answer, the historical meaning of "blackness" must be carefully considered.

Blackness in the Middle Ages: Perception and Visual Representation

While the darkened complexion of these statues seems naturally associated with race to modern audiences, these statues were not considered to be of specific sub-Saharan African descent until more recent centuries.⁸⁹ Indeed, "blackness" was considered a symbolic, rather than an ethnic, indicator until the

⁸⁷ Virginia Reinburg, "Les pèlerins de Notre-Dame du Puy" *Revue d'histoire de l'église de France* 75/195 (1989): 297 – 313; Michel Carlat, "L'Ymage de Notre-Dame du Pui en Auvergne à la fin du XV siècle" *Cahiers de la Haute Loire* (1993): 59 – 74.

⁸⁸ Interest in the Black Madonna in both late fifteenth-century sculpture and painting appears to be an international phenomenon that demands further exploration. For example, Bernardo Zenale's *Madonna and Saints* (Spencer Art Museum) makes reference to the Virgin as 'black but beautiful' around her halo yet does not depict her as dark skinned. Zenale's contemporary, Bernardo Butinone's *Madonna and Child* (Brera Gallery, Milan) also provides an ambiguous example of this trend, as the Virgin and Child appear dark skinned but no reference to this painting as a 'black madonna' has been made to my knowledge. Thanks to Professor Muller for referring me to this painting.

⁸⁹ For good illustrations and a general overview of "blackness" in medieval art, see *The Image of the Black in Western Art*, ed. Jean Devisse. Volume 2 (New York: Morrow, 1976).

fifteenth century.⁹⁰ This is not to say that the medieval West had not yet articulated a visual or textual rhetoric for the “other.”⁹¹ For example, different ethnicities were described and sometimes illustrated in travelogues such as the Anglo-Saxon manuscripts *Marvels of the East* (c. 1000) and the *Liber monstrorum* (9th c.). These texts argue that the dark skin of Ethiopians is a result of a torrid climate.⁹² Yet, as Robert Bartlett has noted, many of these illustrations did not reflect personal observations but rather copied conventions of depicting people of the 'Orient.'⁹³ Although groups of people were sometimes defined by cultural and linguistic habits in the Middle Ages, the notion of 'race' as a category does not appear in European languages until the fifteenth century.⁹⁴ Moreover, 'racism,' or hatred towards a group of people based on skin color (rather than as a stereotype or an identifying ethnic feature) developed only in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.⁹⁵

⁹⁰ Ibid., 136.

⁹¹ For a good overview of the other in medieval art see, Debra Higgs Strickland, *Saracens, Demons & Jews: Making Monsters in Medieval Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); Ruth Mellinkoff, *Outcasts: Signs of Otherness in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages* 2 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993). Mellinkoff does not focus on Blackness in medieval art and argues that it was always a negative feature. While her book provides good examples, she does not allow for multiple interpretations.

⁹² Higgs Strickland, 88.

⁹³ Robert Bartlett, "Illustrating Ethnicity in the Middle Ages" in *The Origins of Racism in the West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 146.

⁹⁴ T. F. Earle and K. J. P. Lowe, *Black Africans in Renaissance Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

⁹⁵ The issue of whether or not racism existed before the modern era is the subject of a new series of essays, see *The Origins of Racism in the West* eds., Benjamin Isaac, Joseph Zeigler, Miriam Eliav-Feldon.

The connotation of blackness with sin or the devil is the most common reading of this color in medieval art but it is not exclusive. While physiognomic differences were recognized in the Middle Ages, the idea of 'blackness' was utilized more broadly and with quite distinct meanings. The relationship between blackness and sin was a long established trope in medieval literature. The theologian St. Jerome first espoused this metaphor, famously declaring "we are all Ethiopians," that is, we are sinners.⁹⁶ "Blackness," however, was not always demonized in the Middle Ages. Medieval theologians wrote extensively about the relationship of Mary to the Bride in the Song of Songs. Moreover, the text of Song of Songs was incorporated into the liturgical feast of the Assumption of Mary as early as the seventh century. Accordingly, this phrase would have been recognized by the medieval devout not only in written word but also orally recalled in the liturgical songs of the Mass.⁹⁷

This Old Testament love poem serves as a major source for the interpretation of the Black Madonna as the Bride declares that she is "Black but Beautiful" (*nigra sum sed formosa*).⁹⁸ The explicit connection of the "Bride" with "Mary" (versus her role as *ecclesia*) is documented in the twelfth century in the writings of Rupert of Deutz (d. 1135), Honorius of Autun (d. 1151) and most

⁹⁶ Dorothy Hoogland Verkerk, "Black Servant, Black Demon: Color Ideology in the Ashburnham Pentateuch" *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 31/1 (2001): 57-77.

⁹⁷ Rachel Fulton, "Quae est ista quae ascendit sicut aurora consurgens?: The Song of Songs as the Historia for the Office of the Assumption" *Mediaeval Studies* 60 (1998): 55 -122. See also Anne W. Astell's *The Song of Songs in the Middle Ages*.

⁹⁸ The translation of *nigra sum sed formosa* has been argued as both "beautiful" and "comely." The latter may be more indicative to the heavy features of the Black Madonna but both expressions connote the positive use of the word *nigra*.

significantly, Bernard of Clairvaux's series of sermons on the poem.⁹⁹ According to Bernard (d. 1153), the Bride and Bridegroom of this poem were allegorical representations of Christ and his Mother, Mary, who constituted a coupling intended for the salvation of humankind.¹⁰⁰ This love is not erotic, but a chaste, spiritual love demonstrating the masculine and feminine attributes of God.¹⁰¹ Bernard also explains that although the Bride's dark skin bears a cultural stigma, "blackness" does not always indicate a negative feature:

These remarks of mine are for simple persons who have not learned to distinguish between color and form; form refers to the shape of a thing, blackness is a color. Not everything therefore that is black is on that account ugly....and so the bride, despite the gracefulness of her person, bears the stigma of a dark skin, but this is only in the place of her pilgrimage.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Honorius of Autun, *Sigilium Beate Marie* [*Patrologia Latina* 172: 495 - 518] and *Expositio in Cantica Canticorum* [*Patrologia Latina* 172: 347 - 496]; Rupert of Deutz, *Commentaria in Canticum Canticorum*, ca. 1125; Bernard of Clairvaux and Ailbe J. Luddy, *St. Bernard's Sermons on the Canticle of Canticles* (Ann Arbor, MI.: University Microfilms International, 1978).

¹⁰⁰ See his sermon 85: "But notice that in spiritual marriage there are two kinds of birth, and thus two kinds of offspring, though not opposite. For spiritual persons, like holy mothers, may bring souls to birth by preaching, or may give birth to spiritual insights by meditation. In this latter kind of birth the soul leaves even its bodily senses and is separated from them, so that in her awareness of the Word she is not aware of herself. This happens when the mind is enraptured by the unutterable sweetness of the Word, so that it withdraws, or rather is transported, and escapes from itself to enjoy the Word. The soul is affected in one way when it is made fruitful by the Word, in another when it enjoys the Word: in the one it is considering the needs of its neighbor; in the other it is allured by the sweetness of the Word. A mother is happy in her child; a bride is even happier in her bridegroom's embrace. The children are dear, they are the pledge of his love, but his kisses give her greater pleasure. It is good to save many souls, but there is far more pleasure in going aside to be with the Word. But when does this happen and for how long? It is sweet intercourse, but lasts a short time and is experienced rarely! This is what I spoke of before, when I said that the final reason for the soul to seek the Word was to enjoy him in bliss." Reprinted in *An Anthology of Christian Mysticism*, ed. Harvery Egan, S.J. (Liturgical Press, 1991): 166-179. See Professor Katherine Gill website of sermons on Song of Songs, available http://people.bu.edu/dklepper/RN413/bernard_sermons.html

¹⁰¹ This understanding of Christ and the Virgin's love was popular in Cistercian writings, of which Clairvaux was a member, see Carolyn Walker Bynum, see *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York: Urzone Publishers, 1991).

¹⁰² Sermon 25, St. Bernard of Clairvaux, *On the Song of Songs I* (The Works of Bernard of Clairvaux, Volume II) trans. Killian Walsh (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 2005).

Bernard argues that the Bride's blackness is only an exterior feature that does not penetrate the beauty and purity of her soul. Moreover, he explains that the color of the Bride's skin is the result of the extreme heat of her place of origin in Lebanon, or more broadly, the Near East. The East is also directly associated with the Virgin of Le Puy herself, as legends recounted her origins in Egypt. Although Bernard's sermons were written in the twelfth century, the Jesuit order appropriated the phrase *nigra sum sed formosa*, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in connection with the Black Madonna, a strategy that will be discussed further in chapter two.

In addition to the woman of the Song of Songs, later medieval paintings and manuscripts depict dark-skinned Africans in the context of the Holy Land. This is most commonly represented in late medieval depictions of the three Magi. Yet as fears of plague and Turkish invasions spread throughout Europe in the late fourteenth century, uneasiness towards the "other" began to rise.¹⁰³ This attitude was nevertheless inconsistent and often divided by gender. For example, Ethiopian women engendered empathy in the fourteenth century by connecting them with Saint Matthew's role as an apostle to Africa.¹⁰⁴ However, other women, such as the Queen of Sheba, were sometimes depicted as black temptresses, thus no clear division between gender and color can be derived in late medieval art (Figure 19).¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Devisse, 24.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 28.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 44. The question of African representations of the Virgin Mary needs further research. I have found some examples of representations of the Virgin in an African (chiefly Christian

Blackness, Antiquity and Egypt

It is most probable that in the West, the Virgin of Le Puy would have been seen less as “black” but rather as “Eastern,” perhaps associated with honorable Crusader booty. Indeed, many *vierges noires*, especially those from Auvergne, are claimed to have been carried back to France from the Holy Land.¹⁰⁶ The most precious of these objects often dated to what was called “antiquity,” a rather ambiguous time period that evoked the ancient past and especially the biblical era. The older the image could claim to be, like a sacred relic, the more authoritative it became.¹⁰⁷

As a result, the devout were often complicit in the dating of the image, both believing that an object is “old” while also recognizing the pragmatic reality that it is not.¹⁰⁸ This was true, for example, of both the icons of the Virgin of Loreto and the Virgin of Czestochowa. These miraculous images claimed St. Luke

Ethiopia) context from the fifteenth century. These images depict the Virgin as black but not with specifically African physiognomic features, although this does occur in eighteenth century manuscripts. Other saints such as Peter and Paul are white in these manuscripts so the choice to make the Virgin visually similar to the majority of the Ethiopian population seems to be a conscious choice.

¹⁰⁶ Cassagnes-Broquet, 62. The Virgin of Le Puy was far from the only Black Madonna to have connections with the Crusades. See Notre-Dame de Vauclair among several others.

¹⁰⁷ Klaus Krüger also discusses the ways in which the archaic representation of the Madonna of Loretto helped to authenticate her power over time. See Klaus Krüger, “Authenticity and Fiction: On the Pictorial Construction of Inner Presence in Early Modern Italy” in *Image and Imagination of the Religious Self in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* ed. Reindert Falkenburg, Walter S. Melion and Todd M. Richardson (Proteus: Studies in Early Modern Identity Formation 1) (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 37 – 69. See also Robert Manuira, *Pilgrimage to Images in the Fifteenth Century: The Origins of the Cult of Our Lady of Częstochowa* (Woodbridge : Boydell Press, 2004).

¹⁰⁸ Christopher Wood has called this process, ‘substitution.’ See Christopher S. Wood, *Forgery, Replica, Fiction: Temporalities of German Renaissance Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

as their maker despite the relative impossibility of this fact.¹⁰⁹ This is also the case for Notre-Dame du Puy, who also claimed antique origins as the work of the Prophet Jeremiah during his exile in Egypt.¹¹⁰ As Karin Vélez has noted, the blackness of these sculptures did not only indicate their old age, but their place within the *Christian* biblical past.¹¹¹ Blackness was thus not only a sign of antiquity but also authenticity, an outward sign of Eastern origins. The Virgin of Le Puy's dark color therefore indicated a temporal distance, not a cultural one.

If the Virgin of Le Puy was thought to be of antique Egyptian origins, how and why did this invented history occur? The legend of the Virgin of Le Puy itself is admittedly peculiar. The seeming strangeness of this legend is explained through an examination of the work of twelfth-century French theologian, Peter Comestor. Comestor's major work is the *Historia scholastica*, in which he provides a didactic sacred history and commentary for several scriptures of the Old Testament and the Acts of the Apostles.¹¹² This work provides framework for the Virgin of Le Puy's tale. In the book of Tobias, a chapter entitled "The transport of relics from Judea to Egypt" describes Jeremiah's intentions of hiding the Jewish relics in a cave. He also warns the Egyptians of imminent, massive deaths in Egypt. Comestor then reveals that crocodiles infested the region and

¹⁰⁹ Vélez, 340. Luke was also said to be the painter of the wooden sculpture of the Virgin of Montserrat. In the seventeenth century, Luke was then "promoted" to sculptor to take credit for the Virgins of Rocamadour and Loreto.

¹¹⁰ See Macabees, 2: 1 - 15; Jeremiah is said to have lived in a sealed cave in Egypt. There is no biblical evidence for the creation of a statue in this cave but this is generally thought to be the site of his creation.

¹¹¹ Vélez, 350.

¹¹² Reprinted *Patrologia Latina* CXCVIII, 1053-1844.

they were rid through prayer. Jeremiah tells the kings of Egypt that this is a sign that they should destroy all their pagan idols and honor a Virgin who will give birth. The Egyptians thus created a statue of Virgin and Child after this incident and venerated it in a secret temple.¹¹³ Only later was the creator of this statue named as Jeremiah so as to connect this legend with the Virgin of Le Puy.

Comestor's writings were widely known throughout France, and seventeenth-century chronicler Odo de Gissey identifies him as the source for the origins of the Virgin of Le Puy. Gissey himself draws this conclusion from two books by a certain Jacques David published in 1515 and 1520. David's text appears to be the oldest to record that Notre-Dame du Puy was Jeremiah's holy statue.¹¹⁴ Thus, the statue maintained its antique and holy origins but was recused of any association with current-day Egyptians, namely Muslims.

Egypt and The Virgin of Le Puy

As outlined above, the Egyptian origin of the Virgin of Le Puy is repeated throughout the fifteenth through the seventeenth centuries.¹¹⁵ Given this curious

¹¹³ Hic est Jeremias, qui regibus Aegypti signum dedit, quod eorum idola everti oporteret, cum virgo pareret. Unde et sacerdotes eorum in secreto templi loco, imaginem virginis et pueri statuantes, adorabant. [This is Jeremias, who gave the warning to the kings of Egypt that their idols must be overturned by/with a Virgin who gives birth. Hence, their priests adored the statue of the seated Virgin and child in the secret place of the temple]

¹¹⁴ Jacques David, "Tractatus de imagine Mariae Virginis" (1515) and "Historia dedicationis ecclesiae podii constructionis et translationis" (1520), cited in Louis Pascal, *Bibliographie du Velay et de la Haute-Loire* (Marseille: Laffitte, 1980). Odo de Gissey, *Discours historiques de Notre-Dame du Puy* (1620) Chapter VIII. Also cited in Louis Desgraves, *Répertoire bibliographique des livres imprimés en France au seizième siècle*, Bibliotheca bibliographica Aureliana (Baden-Baden, Heitz, 1968).

¹¹⁵ Most of these chroniclers argue that she was made by the prophet Jeremiah and brought back from Egypt to France by a successor of Clovis, likely Dagobert, Clovis II or Saint Louis depending on the source consulted. These chroniclers include, in chronological order, Pierre Odin, Étienne Médecis, M. des Roys, Théodore de Bergame, Odo de Gissey, Fr. Theodore de Bergame, Faujas de St. Fond and A.A. Duranson. A comprehensive comparison of these chroniclers' remarks on the

insistence on the Egyptian appearance and origins of the statue, we must also question what exactly the word “Egyptian” meant in the late medieval and early modern periods. While the word developed a connotation of a vagabond or bohemian in later centuries, this does not seem to be the intent of these writers when describing the Virgin of Le Puy.¹¹⁶ Egypt was not only a venue for the Crusades of St. Louis but it also held a strong place in Christian biblical history as the land of Moses and the flight of Mary and Joseph. To be “Egyptian” was distinct from “Muslim” or “Saracen.” Accordingly, this idea may have been adopted at Le Puy to correspond with the Hebraic embroidery on her mantel. Indeed, Gissey calls this border embroidery *Judaïque* and notes that the black faces of the Virgin and Child would be agreeable to the “Egyptians and Sarasins” of her country of origin.¹¹⁷

As Martin Bernal has argued, Renaissance scholars had an active interest in *fontes*, or sources for biblical and pagan legends, and developed a fascination for Egypt as an ancient land of mysterious cults. While Bernal is somewhat shortsighted to attribute the fifteenth- and sixteenth-centuries’ fascination with the Orient and magic exclusively to Egyptian religion, his larger argument for the respect of Egypt as civilization apart from Islam during the Renaissance holds

Virgin of Le Puy has been compiled by Frédérique Vialet et. al, see *Iconographie de la Vierge noire du Puy*.

¹¹⁶ “Égyptien, enne,” *Dictionnaire de L'Académie française*, 4th Edition (1762), 596. “Sorte de vagabonds qu'on appelle aussi Bohémiens.” For the development of the ethnic distinction of the gypsies of Eastern Europe and the etymological connection with Egypt see Miriam Eliav-Feldon, “Vagrants or Vermin? Attitudes towards Gypsies in Early Modern Europe” in *The Origins of Racism in the West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 276 - 292.

¹¹⁷ Gissey, 227.

merit.¹¹⁸ In addition, Bernal cites good evidence that the visual representations of Egyptians were not at all determined by a specific race.¹¹⁹ Moreover, Jean Devisse has argued that Egyptians were darkened during the fifteenth century not as a sign of racial alterity but rather as a visual cue to their Eastern origins.¹²⁰

A vast array of visual evidence from medieval sources provides a plausible hypothesis that an “Egyptian” statue took the form of an enthroned Madonna. For example, the widely dispersed manuscript, *Mirror of Human Salvation* (*Speculum humanae salvationis*), provides several examples of a scene in which the Egyptians erect a statue of the Virgin and Child. For example, in a copy of the *Mirror* now in the Hessische Landes- und Hochschulbibliothek in Darmstadt, Germany the statue under the title “The Egyptians made an image of the Virgin and Child” is depicted as an enthroned Madonna with fair skin (Figure 20). A second manuscript (Ms 2505, fols. 22) verso depicts the same scene as a standing Virgin and Child (Figure 21). The former example was reproduced as a woodcut in the 1481 printed version of this text (fol. 31r) (Figure 22). Last, while most versions of this manuscript depict the Virgin and Child alone, the Danish Royal Library's copy (GKS 79 2^o 35r) shows Egyptians venerating the statue (Figure 23). These figures are not darkened as some Muslims often are and wear

¹¹⁸ Martin Bernal, *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization*. Volume I, The Fabrication of Ancient Greece 1785 – 1985. (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1987), 154 – 155. While Bernal's scholarship has been hotly contested since its publication, the main issue with his argument stems not from Renaissance conceptions of Egypt but rather that Ancient Greeks believed themselves to be descendants from Ancient Egyptians. I agree that Bernal writes in broad strokes concerning this thesis; however, his understanding of the Renaissance nuance of the Ancient Egyptians remains valid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 155.

¹²⁰ Devisse, 136 – 94.

headgear reminiscent of those seen on Magi figures.¹²¹ While this evidence is somewhat limited, it does provide a medieval precedent for the idea that Virgin and Child statues were created in Egypt long ago.

The Virgin of Le Puy as a Black Madonna Past and Present

In the end, negative evidence seems to be the best indicator of the relative insignificance of the distinct category of the Black Madonna in the Middle Ages. If we return back to a geographical and material analysis of these images, it becomes clear that the Black Madonna, especially in Auvergne, was not strange and unusual, but rather quite a regular interpretation of the Virgin. Most importantly, I believe we should examine these images as examples of a local Marian tradition whose influence spread during the late Middle Ages. Only after this time were *vierges noires* exoticized as the Western representation of the Virgin Mary became more narrowly defined. Indeed, Monsignor Louis Cornet, Bishop of Le Puy in 1985, addresses the question of the Virgin's race explicitly in his small publication of prayers to Notre-Dame du Puy.¹²² He implores the Virgin to explain why she is black, stating that he has "rien contre le noir" and in the end declares that they are "le même limon" despite their different skin colors. Here, race is an issue for the bishop—he struggles to understand her blackness in a way the early modern authors simply did not. Race adds a new dimension to the

¹²¹ Comparative examples in other media needs further study. For a similar instance of an enthroned Virgin in a Flight to Egypt relief sculpture, see the doors Novgorod Cathedral, Germany (before 1138). This particular rendering depicts the Virgin with large hands and nose, not unlike many Black Madonnas.

¹²² Louis Cornet, *Pieres à Marie du Puy* (Le Puy-en-Velay: Imprimerie Jeanne d'Arc, 1985). Poem entitled, "Prière à Marie, La noire," 5.

image of Notre-Dame du Puy in this context—it functions as a visual barrier that must be reconciled rather than a spiritual sign of antiquity that if reconciled, comes undone.

The recent "facelift" of the statue of Notre-Dame du Puy provides a fortuitous conclusion to this chapter. In November 2010, the sculpture underwent a six-week long conservation in which it was cleaned, inspected for insect damage, and repainted with a new coat of black paint (Figure 24). During this process, a second "Notre Dame du Puy" based on the medieval statue served as a proxy during the Virgin's absence. The cathedral's administration was quite transparent about the restoration, providing pictures of the process on the cathedral's website (Figure 25).¹²³ This unapologetic acknowledgement of the statue's facture provides a striking contrast to the clerics of previous centuries. Nevertheless, the seamless replacement of one sculpture for another indicates that the shifting identity Virgin of Le Puy continues to this day. This is not to imply that the sculptural proxy was understood be *the* Notre-Dame du Puy during this time. Yet the fact that it is believed to be a representation of the original, and moreover, was granted the right to take the place of the miraculous sculpture united these representations together in a way that reminded its viewers not only of the current statue but also of the memory of the original Notre-Dame du Puy. In this case, even more than visual likeness or verbal decree, the identity of Notre Dame du Puy was registered by her placement within the church.

¹²³ "La Vierge noire reprends des couleurs" Official website of the Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay. Available http://www.cathedraledupuy.org/La-Vierge-Noire-reprends-des-couleurs_a588.html. Accessed 18 August 2011.

Simply put, the Virgin of Le Puy was likely perceived as distinctively *noire* in the fifteenth century at the very earliest. Yet her precise form and appearance remain unknown. 'Reconstructing' her image becomes a more complicated process as the Virgin's features changed dramatically in different representations of the statue. This process of presenting, representing, and re-presenting the statue from the late Middle Ages through the eighteenth century instigates critical issues regarding the veracity of images and is the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

The Virgin of Le Puy in Black and White: Pilgrimage, Print and the Black Madonna

The statue of the Black Madonna that currently rests on the main altar of the Cathedral of Notre Dame du Puy-en-Velay is a ruse of sorts (Figure 1). Those who come to venerate her image are often complicit in this deception: they know that this statue is not the original "Notre-Dame du Puy" but nevertheless they accept it as a miracle-working statue. This new Virgin of Le Puy was not originally made for the cathedral. It is an eighteenth-century sculpture from the Church of Saint Maurice du Refuge, given to the Cathedral of Le Puy in 1856.¹ The statue is elaborately dressed, enveloped in a mantle with a small central opening, through which the dark face of the Christ Child peers out. The Virgin does not sit regally enthroned as she does in many medieval sculptures of this type; rather she stands, almost bodiless, with only the tips of her shoes peeking out from under her enormous mantle. Despite its post-medieval origins, the statue's efficacy as a miracle-working object and destination of pilgrimage is retained through her title—she is Notre-Dame du Puy because this is what she is *called*.

¹ Xavier Barral i Altet, *La Cathédrale du Puy-en-Velay* (Paris: Éditions du patrimoine, 2000), 128.

Another sculpture of the Virgin of Le Puy is kept in the Eucharistic sanctuary of the cathedral. That sculpture sits enthroned, her oblong face staring stoically at her faithful through round eyes. The Virgin wears no mantle. Her dress is painted onto the statue itself, a tunic of bold reds, golds and greens. She too is painted black with one exception—her hands, which hold the small Christ Child—are stark white. This second statue is understood to be a reproduction of the now-destroyed medieval sculpture (Figure 26).² The statue, however, is not called “Notre-Dame du Puy.” Instead, it is only the *ancien copie* [copy of the former]. People do not enter this chapel to venerate this replica, that honor is reserved for the Eucharist itself. The two enthroned Madonna statues in the cathedral thus share the same referent, the Virgin of Le Puy, but have markedly different functions and appearances save their distinction as *Vierges noires*. In both cases, little effort was made to recreate the physical appearance of the original statue, known now only from extant paintings, prints and texts. The lack of concern for visual similarity between these two sculptures serves as only the most recent rupture in a long series of palimpsests that reflect the changing image of the Virgin of Le Puy. The goal of this chapter is to understand both how and why these changes occurred. It seeks to answer how the many ‘images’ of Notre-Dame du Puy served the needs of its various audiences over this time.

The changing representations of Notre-Dame du Puy must be evaluated through a nuanced understanding of the representation of sacred objects in the medieval and early modern periods. I will look carefully at a series of depictions

² Phillipe Kaepelin, “A propos d'une reconstitution de Notre-dame du Puy” *Cahiers de la Haute-Loire* (1993): 75 - 80.

of Virgin of Le Puy from the thirteenth through the eighteenth centuries in which the representation of the Virgin changed depending on knowledge of the physical statue itself. Medieval images of the statue are schematic and survive primarily in small media such as metal pilgrimage badges. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, printed illustrations depict the statue of the Virgin of Le Puy as both black and white. I will explore the ways in which these varying representations contributed to the identity of Notre-Dame du Puy and specifically to her designation as a Black Madonna.

Central to this investigation is the question of the representation of sacred images, especially those that were mass-produced. Because they are replicable, the efficacy of these kinds of sacred images must be questioned. This problem has been the subject of much art historical scholarship. In the twentieth century, Walter Benjamin famously argued that mechanical reproduction diminished the “aura” of the original work, thus negating its power.³ Similarly, Hans Belting argued that holy images became understood as “art” after the Middle Ages and hence lost their talismanic power.⁴ David Freedberg countered these interpretations, arguing for the power of the sacred replica.⁵ Freedberg especially

³ Benjamin however, considers nineteenth-century prints and his theories continue to be debated in scholarly circles. See Walter Benjamin, Michael William Jennings, Brigid Doherty, Thomas Y. Levin, and E. F. N. Jephcott. *The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility, and other writings on media*. (Cambridge, MA : Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008). Originally published as “Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit” *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, 1935.

⁴ Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image Before the Era of Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

⁵ David Freedberg, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 1989.

noted that in examples of pilgrimage images, power resided in the perceived efficacy of these images. That is, their mimetic quality did not matter so long as the image worked.⁶ Given the debate surrounding sacred images, I do not seek to find a definitive answer to the power they held. Such a quest is unavoidably tempered by historical distance. Instead, I seek to understand the multivalency of these images and their multiple and often simultaneous functions.

The 'Copy' and the Original

In order to investigate the images in this chapter adequately, the late medieval and early modern definition of 'copy' and 'original' must be addressed first. "Copying" in the modern sense of the word, was not a forbidden practice in the medieval or early modern periods. The act of copying did not carry the stigma of plagiarism that its modern practice holds. Instead it depended much on the context of reuse. To copy was plainly to imitate and did not carry connotations of forgery. As Peter Parshall and others have explained, such images were often called a *contrafactum*, or an attempt to render information visually without reference to faithful representation or skill.⁷ Such images were opposed to those that were drawn by the invention of the artist. Yet the notion of "invention" needs to be further defined. Invention as an original creation of the artist was not

⁶ Ibid., 113.

⁷ Peter Parshall, "Imago contrafacta: Images and Facts in the Northern Renaissance" *Art History* 16 (1993): 554-579. Most previous Early Modern studies of copying and reproductive prints have often focused upon high quality prints by Italian or Dutch masters or scientific images, not the more technically unsophisticated images that will be considered in this chapter. See in addition to Parshall, Lisa Pon, *Raphael, Dürer and Marcantonio Raimondi: Copying and the Italian Renaissance Print* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004).

understood exclusively as such until the later fifteenth century.⁸ For the medieval mind, invention (*inventio*) signified "discovery," or the physical or metaphorical unearthing of older objects.⁹

In this sense, an invention could both refer to and serve as a substitution for the original, usually antique, object. This process of substitution and replication is the subject of Alexander Nagel and Christopher Wood's recent study on Renaissance works of art that defy temporal fixity, a term they call "anachronic."¹⁰ Wood and Nagel argue that the substitutive quality of objects in the Renaissance allowed them to "stitch through time" therefore eliding the temporal distance between the prototype and its contemporary substitute.¹¹ Wood and Nagel's approach to the Renaissance image is compelling for their argument that the elision of time occurs in such objects; however, their insistence that this act is a distinct product of a Renaissance attitude toward the image is not fully convincing and will be discussed further below.

Wood and Nagel's premise for the loose connections between the copy and original are rooted in Richard Krautheimer's seminal article on medieval architecture, in which he argues that the medieval notion of the copy would have

⁸ See Anthony Cutler, "Originality as a Cultural Phenomenon," in *Originality in Byzantine Literature, Art and Music: A Collection of Essays*, ed. A.R. Littlewood (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 1995), 208 - 209.

⁹ Ibid., 208. This important connection between discovery and invention is also discussed in Sarah K. Kozlowski, "Intersections of Portrait and Icon in Italy and the Mediterranean around 1450," (PhD diss, Yale University, 2010). Thanks to SKK for allowing me to read her dissertation with such generosity.

¹⁰ Christopher S. Wood and Alexander Nagel, *Anachronic Renaissance* (New York: Zone Books, 2010).

¹¹ Ibid., 14.

not anticipated a direct replica of an architectural model, but rather that a copy could make oblique references to past building shapes, patterns and decorations.¹² Similarly, in medieval Byzantium, copies of “original” icons were thought to possess the same miracle working-capacities as their referents. The copy was thought to retain the sacred power of the original by virtue the efficacious transfer between the prototype and its referent.¹³ Furthermore, local representations of the prototypical 'Blessed Virgin Mary' like the Virgin of Le Puy, the Virgin of Montserrat, and the Virgin of Guadalupe, among others, spread across Western Europe during the late Middle Ages and Renaissance.¹⁴ These local Virgins presented diverse and sometimes controversial issues as we soon shall see.

The replication of sacred images in the West was not as generous. While there are some cases in which a copy of an icon or even a reproductive print gained or exceeded the power of its referent, but the spiritual efficacy of the copy was not automatic.¹⁵ The transfer of power between the copy and original object was usually achieved through an action, be it contact with the original or

¹² Richard Krautheimer, “An Introduction to an ‘Iconography of Mediaeval Architecture’” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 5 (1942): 1 – 33.

¹³ Belting, 441. See also Gary Vikan, "Ruminations on Edible Icons: Originals and Copies in the Art of Byzantium" in National Gallery of Art, *Studies in the History of Art*, Volume 20 "Retaining the Original: Multiple Originals, Copies, and Reproductions" (1989): 47-59.

¹⁴ William Christian, *Appartitions in Late Medieval and Renaissance Spain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981).

¹⁵ Lisa Pon, "The Printed Image in the Age of Miraculous Reproduction" Paper presented at the annual meeting for the College Art Association, New York City, February 9 - 12, 2011.

miraculous event that proved the copy's sacred economy.¹⁶ The dual nature of the image in the Middle Ages becomes even more complicated when the referent is in itself a referent to another sacred object or person.

Representations of cult statues, rather than archetypal sacred personages, seem to provide a distinction that has been generally overlooked. A cult statue of the Virgin or other holy person is something that could be seen and reproduced. In these cases, there are two paths of references: First, the copies of the Virgin of Le Puy are depictions of the *statue* of the Virgin of Le Puy, a physical object which in turn stands in for a more general representation of the Virgin Mary. Second, the copy of the statue is obliquely recognized as an object but its identity as the "Blessed Virgin Mary" overshadows its intermediary referent. The specific image stands in for a general understanding of the Virgin. An extant image of the "Virgin of Le Puy," is therefore a reproduction whose referent, the medieval statue, no longer exists. Yet these images can also bypass this gap in representation by connecting themselves with the Virgin Mary as a prototype. Thus the chain of replication begins with the sacred prototype but it is then split between object and reproductive image. Because in the case of Notre-Dame du Puy the visual link between statue and reproduction has been removed, we must consider how the *ensemble* of these images created the identity of the Virgin of Le Puy, a subject to which we shall now turn.

¹⁶ Georges Didi-Huberman has discussed the notion that an image can hold both a singular presence (index) and disseminated presence (imprint) through its copies. During the Middle Ages, he argues that images were both commemorative and expectative. Georges Didi-Huberman, *L'image survivante: histoire de l'art et temps des fantômes selon Aby Warburg* (Paris: Paradoxe, 2002), 90.

D'après nature: The Virgin of Le Puy and the Geologist

To best understand the changing visual representations of the Virgin of Le Puy, a crucial rendering must be addressed first. It appears in an unusual place for an image of the Virgin Mary, geologist Barthélemy Faujas de St-Fond's *Recherches sur les volcans éteints du Vivarais et du Velay* (1778).¹⁷ Although the majority of Faujas de St-Fond's text focuses upon descriptions of the volcanic geography of the Massif Central region of France, the author also provides a section of *mémoires* in which he describes his investigation of the statue of the Virgin of Le Puy. In this section, St-Fond includes an etching of the statue that is labeled as produced *d'après nature*, that is, from direct observation.¹⁸ He thus approaches the sculpture via the lens of scientific investigation. Moreover, Faujas St-Fond reassures his audience of his empirical analysis. He provides a detailed description of the statue, stating the exact dates he examined the sculpture.¹⁹ Most forcefully, he pledges his allegiance to scientific observation, declaring, "I will not say anything that I have not seen with my own eyes." Indeed, he claims the etching is *la reproduction exacte* [the exact reproduction].²⁰

Given Faujas St-Fond's statements for the veracity of his description, it is understandable how this image has been accepted as the authentic representation of the medieval sculpture. It must be nevertheless conceded that it

¹⁷ Barthélemy Faujas de Saint-Fond, *Recherches sur les volcans éteints du Vivarais et du Velay* (Grenoble : Chez Joseph Cuchet, 1778). Digitized version available through the University of Strasbourg, <http://num-scd-ulp.u-strasbg.fr:8080/284/>.

¹⁸ Ibid., 424.

¹⁹ 25 October, 30 October and 3 November, 1777.

²⁰ Faujas de St-Fond states, "je ne dirai rien que je n'aie vu des mes propres yeux," 424.

is an odd and rather awkward image (Figure 27). Although twelfth- and thirteenth-century sculptures of the Virgin and Child are often seated stiffly upon a throne, this “Notre-Dame du Puy” sits uncomfortably erect.²¹ Her nose is aquiline and ill proportioned for her face, a feature that is inconsistent with other Romanesque enthroned Virgin sculptures. She is dressed in a multi-colored tunic decorated with a diamond-shaped pattern and a border of pseudo-Hebraic embroidery. Faujas de St-Fond makes it a point to state that his illustrator, Veyrenc, faithfully copied these Hebrew letters in the etching although it is clear that the words are meaningless. In addition, Veyrenc also includes a small image of the Virgin and Child enveloped in a large mantle at the lower right-hand corner of the etching. Underneath a cartouche explains that this smaller image does not represent the actual statue. Rather is a copy of “Notre dame du Puy after the engraving by M. Th. Rousselet which was itself made after an imprecise drawing.” This statement is in direct contrast to Veyrenc’s and Faujas St-Fond’s approach, drawn “after nature, under the mantle that covers her.”²²

Both Faujas St-Fond and his illustrator show a concern for accuracy and authenticity that had never been a concern in prior renderings of the statue. Faujas St-Fond’s quest for scientific reasoning nevertheless does not exclude him from his own cultural biases. Despite their prevalence in Auvergne region of France, Black Madonnas remained unusual and enigmatic images in the late

²¹ The definitive study of Romanesque wooden sculptures is Ilene H. Forsyth, *The Throne of Wisdom; Wood Sculptures of the Madonna in Romanesque France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972).

²² Both of these statements are inscribed on the etching itself. In French, these statements read: “Notre dame du Puy d’après la gravure de M. Th. Rousselet faite sure un dessin inexact” and underneath the etching, “d’après nature, telle qu’elle est sous le manteau qui la couvre.”

eighteenth century. Indeed, Faujas St-Fond's interest in the pagan origins of the Virgin of Le Puy belies his empirical goals. For example, he describes the statue as "rendered in a tough and stiff attitude of a person sitting on a throne...like some Egyptians."²³ He also describes the gauze wrapping around the statue as a covering "à la manière des momies égyptiennes" [in the style of Egyptian mummies].²⁴ Faujas St-Fond's interest in Egypt is not surprising given the context of the late eighteenth-century French archaeological expeditions to the East, and it certainly influences his reasoning. He ultimately argues that his scientific observation confirms sixteenth-century legends of the statue's Egyptian origins.²⁵ Faujas St-Fond thus provides a pragmatic explanation for her dark skin while simultaneously maintaining her association with Eastern sources, an issue that will be returned to later in this chapter.

The Pilgrimage to Le Puy: Medieval Representations of the Statue

Although Faujas St-Fond's representation of the Virgin of Le Puy is the most often cited image of the original sculpture, early visual evidence from the medieval period for the Virgin of Le Puy remains scarce. A pilgrim traveling to Le Puy in the early thirteenth century would have journeyed long through the

²³ Ibid., 425. He states " elle est dessinée d'une manière dure et raide, son attitude est celle d'une personne assise sur un siège, à la manière de certaines divinités égyptiennes " [she is constructed in a strong and stiff manner, her posture is that of a person seated on a throne, in the manner of certain Egyptian gods].

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid., 428. Faujas de St-Fond states, "Voilà la description fidèle de la statue actuelle de Notre-Dame du Puy. – On a vu: 1. Que la croyance générale est qu'elle vient d'Egypte, et que la chronique et les auteurs sont d'accord sur ces points." [Here is the faithful description of the current statue of Notre-Dame du Puy. – We saw : 1. That the general belief is that she came from Egypt and that the chronicles and authors are in agreement with these points].

mountains of the Massif Central, into the rolling hills of the Haute-Loire, through the gates of Le Puy, and finally up the steep streets of the city, where the cathedral sits perched at the top. This pilgrim would have knelt before the Virgin and participated in a mass at the cathedral before continuing forth on his or her way, either back home or over the Pyrénées to Santiago de Compostela, the celebrated pilgrimage site in northern Spain. Before leaving Le Puy, the pilgrim would have likely offered a vow to the Virgin and purchased a small metal badge.²⁶ This badge commemorated the pilgrim's visit and also served as a symbol of his or her spiritual journey. These badges were often worn on pilgrims' cloaks or even sewn into pocket-sized books. Medieval pilgrims also received an indulgence, or partial remission for sins committed, upon completion of the pilgrimage, a spiritual reward for the arduous physical voyage.²⁷

These badges were mass-produced from molds and therefore they lack substantial detail. This is understandably so, given their small scale.²⁸ Twenty five examples of Marian pilgrimage badges from Le Puy survive. These badges were found throughout France in Chartres, Paris, Orléans, Vienna and Lyon,

²⁶ From at least 1249, the Hospital of Saint Mary maintained a booth selling pilgrimage badges at the bottom of the cathedral stairs. See Archives de la Haute Loire, IB2/9. The sale of pilgrimage badges and other objects was contentious between the hospital and the merchants of Le Puy and resulted in a series of litigations bestowed by the bishop on the pilgrimage trade. See Archives départementales de la Haute Loire, Serie B, IB1, IB2.

²⁷ For an analysis of the function of pilgrimage badges, see D. Bruna, "Enseignes de pèlerinage et identité du pèlerin" *Cahiers de Saint-Michel de Cuxa* 31 (2000): 59 - 63.

²⁸ For examples, see the catalogue raisonnée of extant pilgrimage badges in France, D. Bruna, *Enseignes de pèlerinages et enseignes profanes* (Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1996).

while others have been located in distant locations such as Rome and London.²⁹ The earliest known surviving image of the Virgin of Le Puy herself is a 1208 seal from the chapter of the cathedral. A second seal from 1209 and pilgrimage metal from 1210 also survives (Figure 28). They are single-sided small decorative images of an enthroned Virgin that are stamped with the words *Sigillum Beate Marie de Podio* [Seal of the Blessed Mary of Le Puy].³⁰ Other pilgrimage badges, chapter and hospital seals and confraternity badges from Le Puy-en-Velay date to the thirteenth century.³¹ In one instance, a chapter seal is inscribed, “Notre-Dame du Puy, priez pour nous” [Our Lady of Le Puy, pray for us] (Figure 29). This invocation likely indicates the presence of a cult statue at the cathedral. Despite these examples, little else is known about the original statue.

Nevertheless, as Brigitte Bedos-Rezak has argued in her study of the wax seals of French nobles, a schematic rendering did not negate either the presence or the identity of the thing represented in the Middle Ages. In this way, pilgrimage badges represented the Virgin of Le Puy away from the site itself.

²⁹ Jean Berger, "Les enseignes de pèlerinage du Puy" in *Jublié et culte marial (moyen-âge - époque contemporaine)*, Actes du colloque international organisé au Puy-en-Velay par le Centre culturel départemental de la Haute-Loire, published under the direction of Bruno Maës, Daniel Moulinet, and Catherine Vincent. Saint-Just-la-Pendue: Université de Sainte-Etienne, 2009), 92 - 93.

³⁰ Barral i Altet, *La Cathédrale du Puy-en-Velay*, 120 – 121.

³¹ See discussion and reproductions in Paul Olivier, *L'ancienne statue romane de Notre-Dame du Puy : vierge noire miraculeuse : essai d'iconographie critique* (Le Puy-en-Velay: Impr. Peyriller, Rouchon et Gamon, 1921). See also Frédérique Vialet, Gourtay, and Soulingeas, *Iconographie de la Vierge noire du Puy. Baptistère Saint-Jean, exposition 1983* (Le Puy: Département de la Haute-Loire, 1983). Earliest chapter seals are from 1209, 1210, 1245 -1309, then none survive until the sixteenth century. The earliest hospital seals date from 1234, 1235 – 1304, 1309 - 1393. Seals of the diocese date from 1247 – 1248. A confraternity seal from the end of fifteenth century reads: “S * COFRATE * BTE * M * ET * PN * HOSPE * PODIEN.” Pilgrimage seals from Le Puy are on display at the Musée Crozatier in Le Puy and at the Musée Cluny (Musée de Moyen Age), Paris.

Medieval identity, for sacred objects or political persons, should not be evaluated by representation but rather by sign—in the case of pilgrimages, quite literally by badge.³² The badge was the pilgrims' proof not necessarily of the veracity the sculpture's likeness, but the *presence* of the statue itself. Pilgrims to Le Puy made the journey, they saw the statue and they experienced the Virgin's power.

The most crucial aspect of these badges was not visual but rather tactile. Although pilgrimage badges were not assumed to have a sacred value at the time of their purchase in a shop near the cathedral, it was common practice to take these new badges to the shrine where they touched the holy image. This act thus transferred the power of the cult object to the badge itself.³³ In this way, the act of touching the statue was not only a way to transfer the sacred power of the statue to a representation of the image, but mimics the same impetus of early Christian pilgrimage ampullae that contained vestiges—typically dirt, stones or water—from a holy site the pilgrim visited.³⁴ In each case, physical contact with the divine is paramount. This contact thus captures the spiritual experience of pilgrimage that can then be accessed later through these souvenirs.³⁵ Without this contact with

³² Brigitte Bedos-Rezak, "Medieval Identity: A Sign and a Concept" *American Historical Review* 105/5 (2000): 1489-1533.

³³ The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries saw increasingly heated battles between the merchants and the Hôtel-Dieu at Le Puy over the sale of pilgrimage badges and other souvenirs. In a grievance to the Parlement of Paris in 1432, the merchants of Le Puy complained that the cathedral chapter would only allow badges purchased by the hospital to be touched by the statue or holy relics in the cathedral. Archives de la Haute-Loire, Série B, IB1, IB2.

³⁴ Cynthia Hahn, "Loca Sancta Souvenirs: Sealing the Pilgrim's Experience" in *The Blessings of Pilgrimage*, ed. Robert Ousterhout (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 93.

³⁵ The problem of unofficial badges is documented at Le Puy. From 1432 – 1439, the merchants of Le Puy filed grievances complaining that the cathedral chapter would only allow badges purchased from the Hôtel-Dieu to touch the statue and holy relics in the cathedral. See Berger, 97-100. Archives départementales de la Haute Loire, série H, fonds Hôtel-Dieu, 1b.

the sacred, a pilgrimage badge would lose its apotropaic value thus rendering "unofficial" badges void of sacral power.³⁶

These pilgrimage badges acquired a second function when the pilgrims returned from their voyage. Many confraternities, or lay religious organizations, even used the badges as a form of evidence for going on pilgrimage. Upon displaying the badge earned, these members gained good standing within the sodality.³⁷ Often these badges are preserved because they were sewn into private prayer books. Many are found within richly illuminated manuscripts, elevating the mass-produced pilgrimage badge to a more singular and elite status inside a lavish codex. This practice thus may have converted the function of these badges from a souvenir and talisman to devotional object.³⁸

Notre-Dame du Puy as a Black Madonna in Manuscripts

As discussed in the previous chapter, representations of Notre-Dame du Puy as a Black Madonna are not known until the late fifteenth century. Two early representations are especially important because they are not prints but images in manuscripts. These images are thus unique in the sense that they were not reproduced *en masse*. Perhaps the least known of these images appears as a small drawing in the notebook of Jean Burel, a chronicler of Le Puy-en-Velay. His manuscript, written as a local history of the city, is a fascinating collation of

³⁶ The importance of touch and pilgrimage souvenirs was not only applicable to objects in Western medieval Christian pilgrimages. See especially, Gary Vikan, "Byzantine Pilgrimage Art" *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 5 (1982): 1 - 54.

³⁷ Bedos-Rezak, 144.

³⁸ Denis Bruna, "Témoins de dévotion dans les livres d'heures à la fin du moyen âge" *Revue Mabillon* 9 (1998): 141 - 143.

personal observations, sketches and pasted-in prints and prayer cards.³⁹ A fervent Catholic, Burel described many religious events, including a description of a procession of the Virgin of Le Puy.⁴⁰ At the bottom of this page, he provides a crude drawing of a bust of a dark-skinned Virgin statue (Figure 30). The Virgin wears a pointed crown upon her covered head and carries the Christ Child amidst her enormous mantel. Two large processional torches decorated with the emblematic shields of Le Puy are depicted on each side of this figure, common feature that indicates the special veneration of the statue in the city. They are also consistent with mid-fifteenth century cathedral inventory records of processional candelabra.⁴¹

The images in Burel's text are intended to accompany witnessed events such as city processions so it is likely that Burel viewed the statue firsthand. Significantly, this depiction is found within a private manuscript—the *mémoires* of an inhabitant of Le Puy, who had no goals of persuading others of the beauty of the statue or authenticating its age or origins. As such, this drawing likely comes the closest to representing the statue as it appeared in the sixteenth-century. This image accompanies a textual description of the event and is therefore likely that, descriptive.

³⁹ Le Puy, Bibliothèque municipale, Ms. 59 (8081). Republished as Burel, *Mémoires de Jean Burel, bourgeois du Puy à l'époque des guerres de religion*. (Le Puy-en-Velay: Editions de la Borne, 1983).

⁴⁰ Ibid., f. 102r.

⁴¹ 1444 inventory copied in Étienne de Médicis, *Le livre de Podio ou chronique d'Étienne de Médicis, bourgeois du Puy* ed. A. Chassaing in *Recueil des chroniqueurs du Puy-en-Velay*, Vols. I and II, (Le Puy, 1859), 110.

While this image may be exceptional, it is not the earliest representation of the statue of the Virgin of Le Puy as a Black Madonna. This image appears in a richly decorated book of hours produced between 1462 and 1481 (Vienna, ÖNB, Codex 1853*).⁴² It is a small image, appearing in a single folio of a substantial manuscript of two hundred and twenty-five pages. It also comes closest to matching Faujas St-Fond's 1794 etching of the Virgin. The statue sits regally enthroned, holding the Christ Child in her lap. She wears an unusual crown that covers her head, ears, and chin and is dressed in a colorful robe with green sleeves and a blue tunic decorated with white and red diamond-shaped patterns (Figure 18). It is a highly unusual garment for this type of sculpture, one that has been compared to Coptic textiles.⁴³ The image is without question the Virgin of Le Puy, verified by a written inscription behind the miniature stating her identity as “Nostre Dame dv Pvi en Avvergne” [Our Lady of Le Puy in Auvergne].

In most ways, this early image of Notre-Dame du Puy as a *Vierge noire* defies representations of the statue that follow it in the decades to come. The statue does not have a purely black visage; rather it is painted with specifically dark brown skin. Moreover, upon close personal investigation of the original manuscript, a pink flesh underpaint is clearly visible underneath a layer of darker

⁴² This image is discussed as the earliest representation of the Virgin of Le Puy in Virginia Reinburg, "Les pèlerins de Notre-Dame du Puy" *Revue d'histoire de l'église de France* 75 (1989): 297-313. It is the subject of Michel Carlat, *L'Ymage de Notre-Dame du Pui en Auvergne à la fin du XV siècle* *Cahiers de la Haute-Loire* (1993): 59 – 74.

⁴³ Philippe Kaeppelin, "La Sainte Image de Notre-Dame du Puy: deux hypothèses" *Le Fil de la Borne* 22 (1997): 18 - 19. Kaeppelin presents some interesting evidence for the origins of the Virgin of Le Puy's garment but he relies too heavily on the "Egyptian" aspects of the statue.

paint.⁴⁴ This technique is applied in other images in the manuscript so it may simply be a case of artistic practice rather than an indication that this darker layer of paint was added at a later date.⁴⁵ Such details however are more likely a result of this manuscript being decorated in color rather than the strictly black and white media of print. Nevertheless, some details in the manuscript are distinctive. Her flattened nose implies sub-Saharan African features that do not apply to most images of European Black Madonnas. Moreover, the statue's hands are not black, but rather, a stark white, indicating that only the face of the Virgin may have been darkened. Christ also has fair hair, although his face is also dark. The early date of the miniature suggests that the Virgin of Le Puy could have provided the prototype for the increasing prevalence Black Madonna statues throughout the region in later centuries.

Otto Pächt includes this book of hours in his study of French manuscript painting and believes it belonged to a female based on illuminations of female saints and the cycle of the education of the Virgin in the manuscript.⁴⁶ Books of hours were personalized and often referred to specific saints and other holy

⁴⁴ Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Codex 1853*. Personal consultation 30 May 2011.

⁴⁵ Such is the case with the African magi in an illumination of the Nativity (f. 43v).

⁴⁶ Österreichische Nationalbibliothek (Vienna), Cod. 1853*, fol. 135v. The book also contains other prayers and images of female saints Lucy, Agatha, Catherine of Siena, Cecilia and Margaret. The distinctive liturgical calendar also points to a provenance in Toul or Nancy, in the Lorraine region of France. See, Otto Pächt and Dagmar Thoss, *Die illuminierten Handschriften und Inkunabeln der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek: Französische Schule II* (Vienna, 1977), 91 – 102.

figures that were significant to the owner.⁴⁷ More specifically, the emblem and motto of René I d'Anjou appears several times throughout the manuscript, thus connecting this book of hours to his court.⁴⁸ Most probably, the owner was his daughter, Marguerite of Austria, although her direct patronage is uncertain.⁴⁹

The connection of with the court of René d'Anjou is important. René d'Anjou was a dedicated pilgrim and visited Le Puy three times in 1451, 1456 and 1460.⁵⁰ Moreover, his daughter Marguerite grew up in the court of Louis XI and was engaged to the dauphin, Charles. Though Charles repudiated Marguerite, her youth in the court is significant because Louis XI was also a benefactor to the Cathedral of Le Puy like her father. Louis's most important donation was a new free-standing niche (*chadaraïta*) for the Virgin of Le Puy, given to the cathedral in 1476.⁵¹ Knowledge and devotion to this particular statue was therefore certainly present at his court.

Despite these connections, the image of Notre-Dame du Puy remains an anomaly in the manuscript. While the book of hours is richly illuminated with over one hundred and fifty full-folio illustrations, only one pilgrimage statue—

⁴⁷ Kathryn A. Smith, *Art, Identity and Devotion in Fourteenth-Century England: Three Women and Their Books of Hours* (London: British Library and University of Toronto Press, 2003); John P. Harthan, *Books of Hours and Their Owners* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977).

⁴⁸ For more information on the stylistic aspects of this manuscript that connect it to the Court of René d'Anjou see Carlat, 62 – 63.

⁴⁹ Saint Margaret is emphasized as a saint in this manuscript, lending more possibility to this provenance. A passage on folio 61v makes reference to Geoffrey d'Anjou, an ancestor of René and Marguerite, so the Anjou connection is solidified in both text and image throughout the manuscript.

⁵⁰ Carlat, 64.

⁵¹ Sylvie Vilatte, "Faux mystère et vrai problème historique," 34.

Notre-Dame du Puy—is represented. The rest of the manuscript provides images of the deeds of saints, the passion of Christ and the life of the Virgin without reference to a specific European site or physical object of devotion. This singularity sets the image of Notre Dame du Puy apart from the rest of the manuscript. It strongly suggests that the patron of this text wanted this specific cult statue included.

This image of Notre-Dame du Puy must be read on many levels. First, because René and his entourage likely saw this statue, it can be used strictly as visual evidence. That is, as the first detailed representation of the cult statue of the Virgin of Le Puy.⁵² It is tempting to suggest that this image may be a faithful representation of the statue. Its early date certainly supports this theory, as does its uniqueness as a manuscript illumination. Moreover, this was a specific image created for a specific patron, one who likely saw the statue of Notre-Dame du Puy in person. It did not have the expectation of wide circulation and was produced under the supervision of René or Marguerite. It is also the representation closest to Faujas St-Fond's late eighteenth-century etching. While this print is not completely reliable for reasons discussed above, it does lend some consistency to certain features and dress of the sculpture. It is therefore not unreasonable to regard this image as more representative of the physical statue than other mass-produced representations of Notre-Dame du Puy in print.

This first reading of the manuscript illumination—as visual evidence—is often the only way scholars have understood it. Although the image's value as an early

⁵² Carlat proposes this reading.

representation of the Virgin of Le Puy as a Black Madonna is important, the image also appears in the context of a devotional text, a book of hours. As a richly illuminated manuscript, this book not only attests to the private devotional function of the book, but it also indicates the owner's level of wealth.

The physical context of the illumination within the manuscript itself is also important. Notre-Dame du Puy appears opposite a multi-page devotional prayer to the Virgin Mary. In the prayer, the Virgin is described much like the statue of Notre-Dame du Puy opposite it, “seated on a divine throne in your devoted church.” Moreover, the prayer equates the daily devotions of the hours to pilgrimage. The supplicant tells the Virgin that she has come this morning, “comme vostre pelerine” [like your pilgrim].⁵³ Notably, this prayer is written in French, while the majority of the text is in Latin, again emphasizing the singularity of Notre-Dame du Puy in this manuscript. This painted image thus replaces the physical object of pilgrimage through the medium of devotional prayer. In this way, this illumination should not only be read as a visual document of an object but as a virtual replacement of it. The miniature therefore works in the opposite manner of a pilgrimage badge. As part of a book of hours, it serves a primary devotional function. Pilgrimage badges may have also had such a function, which became primary later when they were sewn into books. Each object also indicates distinct types of audiences who would have used such objects—the wealthy illuminated manuscript owner and the poorer pilgrimage-

⁵³ Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 1853*, f. 136v. “Royne qui feustes mise/et assise/lassus on throne divine/en votre /devote esglise/ Sens faintise/suis venus a ce matin/Come vostre pelerine.” This prayer is written in French, while the majority of the text is in Latin, again emphasizing the singularity of Notre-Dame du Puy in this manuscript.

goer. Furthermore, the pilgrimage badge visually references the act of seeing the statue through an oblique representation, whereas the manuscript legitimizes the veracity of its representation through detail. Indeed in this manuscript, sight and site are connected through the page, rendering physical touch a non-requisite component.

Race, Antiquity and the Anjou

The Anjou miniature also presents another problem regarding the understanding of blackness in late fifteenth century France. As argued in the previous chapter, during the late medieval and early modern period, the Virgin of Le Puy was likely identified as black more for her antique origins in the East. Her blackness was a sign of her age and origins, not her ethnicity. Yet she is often visually distinguished as African in the Anjou manuscript. Her broad nose and wide lips are emphasized in this miniature while they are largely ignored in printed images of the statue in the sixteenth century. The only other image of the Virgin of Le Puy that also highlights these features is an anonymous seventeenth-century painting of the Virgin now at the Musée Crozatier in Le Puy (Figure 14). Although the African features of the Virgin are also prominent in this painting, it is her sumptuous mantle that draws the viewers' attention. The Anjou manuscript is also about two hundred years older, when concepts of race and ethnicity were more fluid.

Given this anomaly, the miniature must also be read in the context of the Court of René d'Anjou. It is known that René came to Le Puy on pilgrimage

“accompanied by moors.”⁵⁴ René also employed several artisans from Southern France, among them a "Jean Monperos" from Le Puy.⁵⁵ Several Muslims are also documented as living at his court, although it is unclear if these men were of African or Arab descent.⁵⁶ If we are to assume his court illuminators would have seen Berber or black Muslims, it is possible that the image of Egypt and Africa were conflated in this representation.

Sylvie Vilatte has also brought attention to the presence of Muslims on René's pilgrimage to Le Puy, arguing that the king had a demonstrated interest in the black Saint Maurice and thus this color would have held "ethnic value" to the king.⁵⁷ She also points to his interest in the Crusades and the Holy Land, positing that the dark color of the Virgin of Le Puy would have been an aid to the conversion of Muslims.⁵⁸ While I agree with Vilatte that René d'Anjou is a critical figure in the interpretation of the Virgin of Le Puy as a Black Madonna, I believe

⁵⁴ Carlat, 64. Carlat cites the accounts of Gissey and Médicis.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 78. See also, Noël Coulet, Alice Planche, and Françoise Robin. *Le roi René: le prince, le mécène, l'écrivain, le mythe* (Aix-en-Provence: Édisud, 1982). Robin cites the *archives notariales* in Aix: 308 E/665.

⁵⁶ Albert Lecoy de La Marche, *Le roi René, sa vie, son administration, ses travaux artistiques et littéraires : d'après les documents inédits des archives de France et d'Italie* (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1969 (First published 1875), 151 - 152. Lecoy calls these "moors" Arabs and Turks, including his favorite named Falcon but also remarks that René also bought others through slavery. Lecoy also notes that René also employed a *maure blanc* who was free to go throughout the kingdom. Lecoy's main source for these records is the *comptes et mémoires de René d'Anjou*, Archives des Bouches-du-Rhône, B 215.

⁵⁷ Vilatte, "Le 'déoute image noire de Nostre-Dame," 741.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 752 – 753.

his interest in the Holy Land and the Crusades would have influenced the perception of the statue as ancient and Egyptian.⁵⁹

As Vilatte notes, the Anjou dukes also had a longstanding connection with the Holy Land. As part of the Angevin dynasty and the House of Valois-Anjou, René had a historical connection to the rule of Jerusalem and a claim to the city in his own right. Among his many titles, René of Anjou was the nominal king of Jerusalem and of Naples. The fourteenth-century House of Anjou-Naples also seems to have had a particular interest in the Black Madonna.⁶⁰ The connection to the Anjou line in Naples is significant and appears to have influenced the cultural identity of René and his court. Angevin chroniclers in Nancy attest that René wore Eastern-inspired clothing such as Turkish hats and porphyry-colored robes decorated with Jerusalem crosses during festivals and processions in the city.⁶¹ The Angevin connection with Naples and Sicily might also help to explain the 'Coptic' tunic worn by the Virgin of Le Puy in the Anjou miniature as this city

⁵⁹ Vilatte's article drew my attention to the Angevin connection but I have pushed her argument further. The link between René and his devotion to Saint Maurice is her primary argument for René's interest in the Virgin of Le Puy. She notes that René was interested in the Middle East as evidenced by his clothing but does not explore the statue's association with Egypt as an ancient Biblical land as part of this argument. Instead she connects the Virgin of Le Puy to this milieu arguing that her dark skin was a sign of conversion from the Islam to Christianity.

⁶⁰ Early Angevin interest in the Black Madonna needs further research. For example, the tabernacle of Robert of Anjou in Brno, Czech Republic, contains a Black Madonna as its centerpiece. This statuette a Gothic-styled standing Virgin dated to circa 1332 - 1339. If this date is accurate, this statue would be a very early example of a Black Madonna and I hesitate to accept that the statue was black in the fourteenth century. To my knowledge, no study on this tabernacle has examined the paint on the sculpture to verify its date. Olga Pujmanova, "Robert of Anjou's Unknown Tabernacle in Brno" *The Burlington Magazine* (121/ 917 (August 1979): 491. For more information on the Neapolitan-Angevin connection with Byzantium and their artistic commissions, see Sarah K. Kozlowski, "Intersections of Portrait and Icon in Italy and the Mediterranean around 1450." Thanks very much to SKK for sharing her dissertation with me.

⁶¹ Robin, 49.

provided a major thoroughfare between East and West. The Kingdom of Hungary was also under Angevin rule from 1290 and therefore offers another historical connection between the House of Anjou and Eastern territories.⁶² The dark skin of the Virgin of Le Puy in the Anjou manuscript might therefore not have been viewed as a distinct feature but rather as a part of her total visual ensemble as an ancient statue from the East.

René's artistic patronage also demonstrates a strong interest in both ancient and Byzantine sources. Byzantine art during the Renaissance was viewed as "oriental" like Islamic art so René's interest in these objects is likely rooted in this understanding.⁶³ For example, one of his most lavish books of hours contains an image of the Virgin that was copied from a Byzantine icon.⁶⁴ Moreover, René's interest in the prophet Jeremiah—the purported sculptor of the Virgin of Le Puy—is revealed in his library. René owned at least three glossed versions of the Book of Jeremiah along with several other Old Testament texts, demonstrating his knowledge and interest in ancient biblical history. This evidence might suggest that René had a direct role in the re-imagination of the origins of the

⁶² Sándor Csernus and Noel-Yves Tonnerre, "Charles-Robert (1308- 1342) et Louis Le Grand (1342 - 1382)" in *L'Europe des Anjou: aventure des princes Angevins du XIIIe au XVe siècle* (Paris: Somogy éditions d'art, 2001), 156 - 157. This connection might also be an early instance to the etymological connection between Egyptian and the Gypsy population of Eastern Europe and Bohemia.

⁶³ Anthony Cutler, "The Pathos of Distance: Byzantium in the Gaze of Renaissance Europe and Modern Scholarship" in *Reframing the Renaissance: Visual Culture in Europe and Latin America 1450 – 1650*, ed. Claire Farago (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 23 – 45, see especially 37 – 45.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 272. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, ms. lat. 17332, folio 15v.

Virgin of Le Puy in the late fifteenth-century, but such conclusions are premature without further research.

In this section, I have addressed the significance of two early images of the Virgin of Le Puy from manuscript sources. The drawing of the statue in Jean Burel's chronicle is perhaps the least-known image of the Virgin of Le Puy, but it also might well be the most accurate representation. The private and local nature of Burel's text lends credence to the possibility that this rendering of the Virgin was created after an eyewitness account. Similarly, the illuminator of the earliest known depiction of the Virgin of Le Puy as a Black Madonna, the Angevin book of hours, may have also seen the statue firsthand or received instructions from someone who had. Yet it also takes liberties with this representation based on the devotional and courtly context of the work. While the Anjou and Burel images function differently, it is significant that the only representations of the Virgin of Le Puy as a Black Madonna from this early period come from manuscript texts. The burgeoning print industry in sixteenth-century Europe will change this dynamic and with it, the image of Notre-Dame du Puy.

Print Culture and the Black Madonna in Early Modern France

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Notre-Dame du Puy was not only represented in the black and white media of print but the statue was imaged as precisely that, both black and white. Rather than the fixity the printed image might imply, images of Notre-Dame du Puy began to wander from the

representation of the physical statue itself, especially when these books were printed away from Le Puy-en-Velay.⁶⁵

In some ways, the development of printing technologies would seem to be quite an ingenious way of reproducing these holy images. An image could be mechanically reproduced many times, preserving the integrity of the replica from print to print. In religious texts, a fairly standard image of the Virgin could be substituted to evoke the idea of “Notre Dame du Puy” without the financial burden of producing a unique likeness of the sculpture.⁶⁶ This same print could then become a representation of another Virgin statue in a separate text.

Yet what does it mean to represent a cult image in print? The crude quality of the prints that will be discussed here could have been considered differently than those created for elite devotional use or commissioned by ecclesiastical authorities. These types of mass-produced prints were holy images that the laity could afford. Whether or not these prints held the same efficacy of their prototypes or even the pilgrimage badges that often touched the holy statue itself is a central question for these images.

As in much of western medieval art, early sixteenth-century printed representations of the Virgin Mary often depict her as a young maiden, lithe and

⁶⁵ The nature of “fixity” implied in the invention of printing has been famously debated by Elizabeth Eisenstein, who argues for the regularity mandated by the invention of the printing press, and Adrian Johns, who views the nature of printing as a matter of human agency and thus questions the fixity implied in mechanized reproductions. See Elizabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early Modern Europe* (2 vols. ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); Adrian Johns, *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

⁶⁶ For use of stock images see, Karen L. Bowen and Dirk Imhof, *Christopher Plantin and Engraved Book Illustrations in Sixteenth-Century Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 154; *The Sixteenth-Century French Religious Book* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001).

petite with long blonde hair. This Marian visual trope has little to do with the statue of the Virgin of Le Puy but it is nevertheless somewhat adopted in early printed representations of the Virgin. One of the first known printed images of Notre-Dame du Puy appears in a book illustration by Jean Petit dating to circa 1500 (Figure 31).⁶⁷ In this illustration, the Virgin statue is not depicted a Black Madonna—a significant detail especially given the early date of this image. It does, however, retain some features of the Anjou manuscript illumination such as a large, flattened nose and a wimple that covers her head. A large mantle envelops both the Virgin's body and the Christ Child, who peeks out of the garment. It is not unique to Le Puy, and appears in other reproductions of the Virgin Mary. It was subsequently reused in the seventeenth century for a confraternity in Le Puy and was purportedly the model for a stone sculpture of the Virgin of Le Puy.⁶⁸

While the Petit image is not a Black Madonna, it is also not a typical fifteenth-century representation of the Virgin Mary. In a very different example, "Notre Dame du Puy" appears in Marthurins des Roys 1523 *histoire* the Virgin of

⁶⁷ Jean Petit, "Le grand proufit et merite utile que l'on acquiert de ouyr la messe selon les saincts docteurs de Sainte Eglise" Paris, 1500. This text is conserved at the Bibliothèque de Toulouse and reprinted in "Pragmatica Sanctio" of 1526. Cited in Vialet, Gourtay, and Soulingeas, *Iconographie de la Vierge noire du Puy*, 195. According to Vialet, the image of the Virgin was widely reused from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century although it was often modified and embellished, as is the case of the seventeenth-century confraternity prayer card of Notre-Dame du Puy. See also Olivier, *L'ancienne statue romane de Notre-Dame du Puy.*, 105; Joseph Breck, "A Souvenir of the Black Virgin of Le Puy" *Metropolitan Museum Studies* 1/2 (May 1929): 155.

⁶⁸ This stone copy is the subject of Joseph Breck's 1929 article "A Souvenir of the Black Virgin of Le Puy." This object was at one time in the Drecier collection at the Metropolitan Museum of Art but a search to locate the object has not been successful. Breck dates the sculpture to the sixteenth century but gives no evidence apart from its similarities with the Petit print. This sculpture does provide a good example of the ways in which a printed image of the Virgin becomes the model for subsequent copies rather than the actual sculpture itself.

Le Puy as a fair-skinned Virgin, seated in her niche with the Christ Child on her lap and flanked by two angels holding large candles.⁶⁹ Her long, flowing blonde hair falls down over her mantle and her head is topped with a crown of fleur-de-lis (Figure 32).

This print has been linked to an earlier woodblock printed in Lyon from 1500. It appears in an anonymous incunable about the Virgin of Le Puy that contains some prose identical to the des Roys text.⁷⁰ Although somewhat less sophisticated than the des Roys woodcut, this print also depicts a white Virgin with blonde hair (Figure 33). Her nose, however, is noticeably smaller and her mantle flows gently over her body without overtaking her small figure. Thus despite clear evidence for the dark complexion of the Virgin of Le Puy from the Anjou book of hours, faithful representation of the statue was not a primary concern for these early printed histories. Such variability in print is not entirely unusual for Black Madonna sculptures. For example, prints of the Virgin of Einsiedeln in Switzerland depict this statue as both black and white in the sixteenth century.⁷¹ Moreover, the Virgin of Loreto changed from white Virgin to

⁶⁹ Marthurins Des Roys, *S'ensuyt la charge, noblesse et bonne ordonnance de l'hospital de Nostre-Dame et ville du Puy/ Pour esmouvoir a incliter tous devotz chestiens et crestiennes a donner a eslagir de leurs biens temporelz/ affin destre resmunerez a participans des spiritulz*. Lyon, 1523. Only known copy is at the Bibliothèque nationale de Paris, site l'Arsenal. Cote 4 BL 3141.

⁷⁰ *La fondacion de la sainte eglise singulier oratoire de nostre dame du puy, comment le devot ymage fut trouve Jeremie le prophete (translatee de latin en françois)*. (Lyon, c. 1500). Only known copy is at the British Library, IA.42390.

⁷¹ Christopher S. Wood, "Ritual and the Virgin on the Column: The Cult of the Schöne Maria in Regensburg" *Journal of Ritual Studies* 6 (1992): 96.

a black one and then back to white again.⁷² Therefore in many religious texts, it can be argued that a fairly standard image of the Virgin could be substituted to evoke the idea of “Notre Dame du Puy” without the financial burden of producing an exact likeness of the sculpture.⁷³

In the case of the des Roys text and its anonymous counterpart, audience must be considered carefully. While these books do repeat similar passages of text, they are intended for distinctly different audiences. Des Roys addresses three ways to read his text in his prologue. First, he includes glosses in Latin for the clergy, which aim to legitimize his history through biblical references. He then provides the bulk of the text in prose for those the laity who read French. Finally, he includes some poetry, to 'please the ear' of both audiences.⁷⁴ This book also contains numerous woodblock prints that serve to illustrate the scenes he describes. Several parts of these woodblocks appear in many portions of the text, which in turn create a new scene without a need for a unique print. These prints are somewhat crude and the Lyonnais printer likely reused stock images.

While the demand for sophisticated illustrations in Des Roys's book was not of major concern, his text provides more specific information regarding the statue and especially, her physical attributes. Foremost, Des Roys's goal is to authenticate the miraculous foundation of the cathedral and the provenance of

⁷² Karin Vélez, "Resolved to Fly: The Virgin of Loreto, the Jesuits and the Miracle of Portable Catholicism in the Seventeenth Century Atlantic World" (PhD diss, Princeton University, 2008).

⁷³ For use of stock images see, Karen L. Bowen and Dirk Imhof. *Christopher Plantin and Engraved Book Illustrations in Sixteenth-century Europe*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 154; *The Sixteenth-Century French Religious Book*, St Andrews studies in Reformation History (Aldershot, Hants, England: Ashgate, 2001).

⁷⁴ Des Roys, Prologue, n.p.

the statue at Le Puy-en-Velay. While des Roys never specifically describes the statue of Notre-Dame du Puy as *noire* [black], he does refer to her as *une brunette ymage* [a brown statue].⁷⁵ He recounts how Egyptians worshiped the statue and how at one time King Nebuchadnezzar kept it in his treasury in Babylon.⁷⁶ Des Roys further emphasizes the darkened countenance of the sculpture by arguing that it was made from *sétin*, a type of wood found only on Mount Sinai. This reference to material from an ancient holy site further legitimizes the antiquity of the image and aligns it with other sacred wooden objects from the East such as the Ark of the Covenant.⁷⁷ Moreover, Des Roys is careful to note that “lequel boys ne se peult par feu bzusler” [this wood could not be burned by fire], further connecting the blackness of the statue with her ancient origins rather than an accidental event.⁷⁸ Because the frontispiece of the Virgin of Le Puy offers no visual allegiance to Des Roys’s text, it must be read as a stock image like the other images found throughout the book. Here, the printed word is primary and the audience is assumed to have some literacy. Images in this text were narrative tools rather than devotional devices.

The anonymous incunable from 1500 functions somewhat differently.

Although these texts are connected, the 1500 version is much shorter and written

⁷⁵ Note that “ymage” in medieval French refers specifically to an object, not a two-dimensional “image.” See Jean-Claude Schmitt, “La culture de l’imago” *Annales: histoire, science sociales*. 51/1 (1986): 3 - 36.

⁷⁶ Des Roys, n.p. on leaf count 50, “En ce chapitre est contenu de quoy est faict ledict image.”

⁷⁷ Belting, 305. As Belting notes, “Western legends about miraculous images stress their age and history but seldom refer to their miraculous origin or their authentic reproduction of a model,” 308.

⁷⁸ Des Roys, n.p., “En Ce Chapitre est contenu de quoy est faict ledict image.”

primarily in rhyme. The frontispiece depicting “Notre-Dame du Puy” is also the sole image in this book. Moreover, nowhere in this text is the Virgin referred to as dark-skinned. She is only called *une vierge enfanteroit* [a Virgin with child] although the author does connect her with the same Egyptian origins as Des Roys. The woodblock, also printed in Lyon, was thus also likely a stock image. Despite its generalities, given the fact that this visual rendering of the statue is never negated and that it is the *only* image in the text, it is possible that this woodblock provided the reader an image of the Virgin of Le Puy for contemplation. Its authenticity was gained via the text rather than from the cult statue itself.

These early sixteenth-century printed representations of the Virgin of Le Puy present an image in flux. While it is clear that the need for an authentic image of the statue was not pre-requisite for these early printed books, the question of the differences between these images still remains a key issue. However, in the case of print, the most pragmatic solution may be the best answer. Given the media of the woodblock, it would have been difficult to render details of the Virgin’s face if it were dark. Other details thus provided visual cues as to her identity—her large multi-colored mantel, flattened nose, and unusual crown.

The Virgin of Le Puy, the Jesuits, and the Black Madonna

As the book industry grew in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Virgin of Le Puy became increasingly associated with her darkness in both text and image, especially upon the arrival of the Jesuit order. Catholic Reformation printing efforts increased as a powerful means of visual

communication and persuasion.⁷⁹ The Black Madonna in particular was of special importance to the Jesuits. Their founder, Saint Ignatius of Loyola, had vowed his allegiance to the Virgin in front of the Black Madonna of Montserrat in northern Spain upon his adoption of the priesthood.⁸⁰ As a result, the Black Madonna became a crucial means of establishing local Virgin identities like Notre-Dame du Puy for the Jesuit order.

The Jesuits arrived in Le Puy a few decades after the initial Protestant conflict in 1588 and began steadily promoting the miraculous statue through the establishment of both the collegiate church of St. Joseph (begun 1605), and the city's first press.⁸¹ Records from the sixteenth century indicate over five hundred priests were affiliated with the numerous churches in the city, including the Jesuits, and soon thereafter, the Capuchins.⁸² The Jesuits began fervently promoting the Virgin of Le Puy as a Black Madonna through printed publications. Indeed, Virginia Reinburg has argued that the Jesuit, rather than the Episcopal establishment, had more influence in sustaining the Cult of the

⁷⁹ During this time, the development of local iterations of the Virgin Mary became popular. Each of these sacred sites sought to have a unique statue of the Virgin with a specific history connected to that place. In this way, the sacred image became not only an authentic representation of a holy figure, but it was also an intimate part of the local landscape and therefore, forged a unique bond with the community. Such communal association with specific local renditions of the Virgin encouraged competition among towns for the status of "their" Virgin. For more on this subject see, William A. Christian, *Local religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain* (Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1981).

⁸⁰ St. Ignatius of Loyola, *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius: Based on Studies in the Language of the Autograph*, 1st ed., Vintage spiritual classics (New York: Vintage Books, 2000).

⁸¹ Pierre Cuzbizolles, *Le diocèse du Puy-en-Velay: des origines à nos jours* (Nonette: Creer, 2005), 284.

⁸² Barral I Altet, *La Cathédrale du Puy-en-Velay* (Paris: Skira, 2000), 78.

Virgin of Le Puy and her pilgrimage.⁸³ I agree with Reinburg and would argue further that the Jesuits were especially crucial in promoting the statue as a Black Madonna. The Jesuits often equated the dark-skinned Mary with the woman in Song of Songs who also declares *nigra sum sed formosa*.⁸⁴ As noted in the previous chapter, the Jesuits did not invent this connection. The Song of Songs has served as a major source for the interpretation of the Black Madonna as the Bride and Christ as the Bridegroom since the Middle Ages.⁸⁵ For example, the frontispiece for local Jesuit priest Odo de Gissey's *Discours de la devotion de Notre-Dame du Puy-en-Velay* (1620) depicts a dark-skinned Virgin who stands behind a banner decorated with *fleurs-de-lis* (Figure 34).⁸⁶ The top portion of the banner is inscribed with the letters IHS, which was not only an abbreviation for the name of Christ but a symbol appropriated by Ignatius of Loyola for the Jesuit order. The dark countenance of the statue is repeated not only in image but also in text, as the phrase *nigra sum sed formosa*, or "I am black but comely" is

⁸³ Reinburg, 310.

⁸⁴Sophie Cassagnes-Brouquet and Jean-Pierre Cassagnes, *Vierges noires, regard et fascination* (Rodez: Editions du Rouergue, 2000), 167. See also the argument in a German Jesuit context in Monique Scheer, "From Majesty to Mystery: Change in the Meanings of Black Madonnas from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Centuries" *The American Historical Review* 107/5 (2002): 1412 – 1440.

⁸⁵ The equation of the Virgin Mary with the Bride from the Song of Songs was not a Jesuit invention; rather it was a common trope in the Middle Ages. For secondary literature on the Song of Songs see, Richard A Norris, *The Song of Songs: Interpreted by Early Christian and Medieval Commentators* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans, 2003); Ann W. Astell, *The Song of Songs in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990); Rachel Fulton, "Mimetic Devotion, Marian Exegesis, and the Historical Sense of the Song of Songs" *Viator* 27 (1996): 86 -116. E. Ann Matter, *The Voice of My Beloved: The Song of Songs in Western Medieval Christianity*, Middle Ages series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990).

⁸⁶ Odo de Gissey, *Discours historiques de la très-ancienne dévotion à Notre Dame du Puy...* (Le Puy: B. Pays, 1986). Viewed versions of 1620, 1693 (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale; Lyon, Bibliothèque municipale).

prominently inscribed at the bottom of the frontispiece. This phrase was not added underneath the print but rather it was a part of the plate and hence integral to the design.⁸⁷

Gissey's much-copied frontispiece also gained influence outside of Lyon and Le Puy. It appeared in three editions in 1620, 1627, 1643 and posthumously, in 1693. In each edition, slight changes were made to the plate, but the Virgin of Le Puy remained a Black Madonna (Figure 35).⁸⁸ In a fascinating contrast, Chambon, an eighteenth-century printmaker from Avignon reproduced a very close copy of Gissey's frontispiece. This etching retains all the essential features of the Gissey etching, save one—the Virgin is no longer a Black Madonna (Figure 36).⁸⁹ This change was no accident, for the phrase *nigra sum sed formosa* is also absent. This omission is curious given the fidelity paid to the rest of the image. Indeed, the bottom of the print even includes another inscription that originates from the steps of the Cathedral of Le Puy itself. This change may indicate a new preference for a fair-skinned Madonna in the later seventeenth century or simply an omission for visual clarity.

Based the evidence discussed above, I believe the connection between the Black Madonna and the biblical East was introduced by the Anjou, unwound through print, and reunited through Jesuit influence. But the identity of the

⁸⁷ One can still see clearly the impression left by the print in the 1623 version of Gissey in the Bibliothèque municipale of Lyon. This is significant because it strongly suggests that this print was not a stock image to which the phrase "Nigra Sum sed Formosa" was later applied.

⁸⁸ Reproduced in Olivier, figs. 103 – 105.

⁸⁹ Reproduced in Olivier, fig. 130.

Virgin of Le Puy does not stop here. It becomes complicated once again in the late seventeenth century as the statue's fame spreads beyond France.

The Virgin of Le Puy as a Global Image in Early Modern Europe

The “imagined” image and origins of the Virgin of Le Puy became even more commonplace as her cult grew throughout Europe. By the sixteenth century the Cult of the Virgin of Le Puy had spread beyond France. Confraternities dedicated to the statue were established outside Le Puy in Amiens, Abbeville, Valencia and London during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The most prominent example of the pan-European appeal of miraculous images of the Virgin is Wilhelm Gumpenberg’s *Atlas Marianus Sive De imaginibus Deiparae per orbem Christianum miraculosis* (Latin edition, 1657). The small pocket-sized text was intended to be an easily portable reference guide of various local identities of the Virgin Mary. Gumpenberg’s text includes a few examples of Black Madonnas, including the Virgin of Le Puy, who is identified as *Beate Marie Aniciensis*.⁹⁰ She is again claimed as a creation of the prophet Jeremiah who came to France *ex Aegypto*. Similarly, the image provided at the end of the history of Notre-Dame du Puy depicts the Virgin and Child with markedly dark faces. The same conical jeweled mantel and crown with a distinctive chin strap appear prominently here much like several other prints and paintings of the Virgin of Le Puy from this century (Figure 37). Indeed, it is the vestments and material accoutrements that are emphasized in these images, not their visages. As Richard Trexler has argued, the physical appearance of the statue itself plays a

⁹⁰ Wilhelm Gumpenberg, *Atlas Marianus: Quo sanctae Dei genitricis Mariae imaginum miraculosarum origines duodecim historiarum centuriis explicantur* (Lyon, 1657), 93.

secondary role to the sumptuous dress of these miracle-working objects.⁹¹ It is also unlikely that Guppenberg viewed many of these sculptures. For example, although the Virgin of Le Puy is rendered as a *vierge noire*, other quite well known Black Madonnas such as the Virgin of Montserrat are depicted with only slightly darkened skin (Figure 38). While there are several explanations for these discrepancies—Guppenberg certainly could not have known all of these images but may have been to Le Puy—these differences again reveal the disjunction between reproductive images and their referents.

Viewed alone, the image of the Virgin of Le Puy in the *Atlas Marianus* is not so different from other French prints, especially those found in book illustrations. However, the entire context of Guppenberg's atlas plays a critical role in the interpretation of this print. First, the function of this text seems ambiguous. The Latin text that accompanies each image of a local Virgin presumes a literate and scholarly user. It could have been used for many purposes, both as an atlas and perhaps also as a devotional aid. While images in this book would have been used differently among specific audiences, I am inclined to think the small size and single page illustrations of the text would have lent themselves well to devotion as well as information. Moreover, if these small images of local Virgins served a devotional purpose, the text could have

⁹¹ Richard C. Trexler, "Being and Non-Being: Parameters of the Miraculous in the Traditional Religious Image" In *The Miraculous Image in the Late Middle Ages and Renaissance*. Ed. Erik Thunø and Gerhard Wolf (Analecta Romana Instituti Danici 35. Rome: Bibliotheca Hertziana, 2004), 20 – 21.

been a means of a virtual pilgrimage to Marian shrines across the globe, transporting their viewers not on their feet but through meditation.⁹²

Although the Virgin of Le Puy is less venerated around the world today, it continues to be a 'global image' of sorts. Not only is at least one religious school dedicated to 'Nuestra Señora del Puy' in Spain but The Sisters of the Child Jesus (*Las Hermanas del Niño Jesús*) have also been affiliated with the Virgin of Le Puy since their foundation in Argentina. Furthermore, a copy of the Virgin of Le Puy was brought to the Basilica of Nuestra Señora de Luján, near Buenos Aires, Argentina in 2007.⁹³ This basilica, along with its own Virgin of Luján, is one of the most important pilgrimage sites in South America. This statue was displayed in the crypt of the basilica for veneration and a dedicatory mass was performed in honor of the occasion. Although the Hermanas del Niño Jesús presented the sculpture and its history as the "Virgin of Le Puy" no records from the diocese of Le Puy-en-Velay confirm that the actual statue went to Luján at any point. Nevertheless, this contemporary copy of the Virgin of Le Puy is intriguing precisely because it was treated as the authentic image. It would appear that the efficacy of the Virgin of Le Puy has not only traveled via printed image but also by sculptural proxy.

⁹² This concept of a "virtual" pilgrimage would have been familiar to an early modern pilgrim. See Kathryn M. Rudy "A Guide to Mental Pilgrimage: Paris, Bibliothèque de L'Arsenal Ms. 212" *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, 63/ 4 (2000): 494-515.

⁹³ "La Virgen Negra del Puy" Website for the Hermanas del Niño Jesús, Argentina. Accessed 4 September 2011. Available http://hermanasninojesus.org.ar/e/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=34&Itemid=55

A similar transfer of Virgin's identity can be seen in the image of Nuestra Señora of Guadalupe. Originally the name of a Spanish sculpture, the 'Virgin of Guadalupe' has several sanctuaries in Bolivia, Perú and Ecuador, each adorned with its own local Virgin statue. Yet the identity of the Virgin of Guadalupe is most commonly associated with the Mexican miracle-working image. These Virgins of Guadalupe are distinct but share a name because the indigenous name for the Mexican miraculous image reinterpreted from an Aztec word into the Spanish 'Guadalupe.'⁹⁴ This blending of images and identities in early modern Latin America presents a new host of questions for the representation of the Virgin Mary and her identity as a Black Madonna. These implications demand further research that I hope to pursue in future projects.

The Veracity of the Image: Conclusions on the 'Virgins' of Le Puy

In this chapter, I have discussed several examples of visual representations of the statue of the Virgin of Le Puy. These images were often copied from other sources or manipulated to serve the needs of its audience. Therefore, we cannot discuss the Virgin of Le Puy as a singular image. She demonstrates a curious multiplicity that is complicated further by the destruction of the medieval statue itself. Moreover, many representations of the statue claim to be a representation of the Virgin of Le Puy not by virtue of visual similarity but rather textual declaration. Simply labeling the image as "Notre-Dame du Puy" made it true. As Wood and Nagel have noted, some early printed images of cult statues do acknowledge in their textual description the substitution process that has taken

⁹⁴ D. A. Brading, *Mexican Phoenix: Our Lady of Guadalupe: Image and Tradition Across Five Centuries*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

place from original statue to print, or even secondhand knowledge based upon a pre-existing print.⁹⁵ Others, however, claim no such hesitation, but rather announce the "truth" of the image represented.

Even more intriguing is the label "le vray portrait," a declaration that became firmly part of the lexicon associated with prints of sacred objects in the eighteenth century. For example, a print called "Vray portrait de l'image miraculeuse de Notre-Dame du Puy en Velay" depicts an indistinct Virgin and Child inscribed within a cartouche (Figure 39). In such an image, the meaning of the word "vrai" must be considered. As Johanna Takarska-Bakir has argued, prints that claim to be "true images" (*vray portrait*) do not confine themselves to logical concepts of "truth" but rather understands truth to be ontological. She posits that for those who owned these rustic prints "a thing is held to be true because it *is* an image, a book, a name, etc. and not by virtue of fulfilling particular criteria of veracity required of an image, a book, a name, etc."⁹⁶ Although Takarska-Bahir's study is limited to nineteenth-century devotional prints, particularly those in Poland, her evaluation of the "true image" for folkloric prints as would have been valid in the early modern period. Indeed, the "vray portrait" is signed "à Lyon et à Paris chez Duflos." Nicolas-Simon Dufflos was part of a Parisian engraving family who is known to have worked in Lyon

⁹⁵ Wood and Nagel, 13. Wood and Nagel provide the example of "The image of the image of Our Lady" a print of a sculpture which apologizes for being a print. As they argue, the "hesitation" of this copy casts the substitution process of Renaissance practices of copying in doubt.

⁹⁶ Joanna Tokarska-Bakir, "Why is the Holy Image 'True'? The Ontological Concept of Truth as a Principle of Self-Authentication of Folk Devotional Effigies in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century" *Numen* 49/3 (2002): 256. Tokarska-Bakir is an ethnologist and has criticized art historians for considering their failure to seriously investigate what they may see as "commonplace devotional bric a brac."

around 1727.⁹⁷ By this time, engravings and book illustrations concerning the Virgin of Le Puy were printed in Lyon, and it is likely that Dufflos did not see the actual statue but instead worked from copies. Much like the statue of Notre-Dame du Puy herself, whose legends of antique origin belied her medieval provenance, prints often held contradictory messages in word and image that suspended the gap between indexical object and secondary reproduction.⁹⁸

In the end, the complex and contradictory visual evidence for the statue of the Virgin of Le Puy provokes more questions regarding the appearance of the statue in the late medieval and early modern periods than it answers.

Representations of the Virgin of Le Puy held multiple functions and multivalent meanings. Printed images of the statue vary widely not only from each other, but from early manuscript images of the Virgin of Le Puy. Yet even singular images like those in René d'Anjou's book of hours or Jean Burel's chronicles cannot be trusted as faithful representations. In each case, an image of Notre-Dame du Puy must be evaluated by its function not only its iconography. It is clear that some printed images were used as devotional tools, but it is not certain that all representations of sacred images were viewed and used the same way in print. The contradictory representations of Notre-Dame du Puy during the early modern period therefore suggests that print culture both helped to solidify the identity and power of religious images through mass distribution while simultaneously questioning the efficacy and authenticity of the representations

⁹⁷ Marius Audin et Eugène Vial, *Dictionnaire des artistes et ouvriers d'art de la France, Lyonnais*. Paris, 1918 – 1919.

⁹⁸ See a similar discussion in Wood and Nagel, 29.

themselves. These meanings were not only created through new media or new audiences however, but were instigated, re-labeled and re-made through ritual practice. Accordingly the demand for a faithful and specific rendering of the statue was not pre-requisite. It was enough to simply be identified as "Notre Dame du Puy."

CHAPTER THREE

Procession, Piety and Politics: The Public Role of Notre-Dame du Puy¹

Odo de Gissey devotes a chapter of his early seventeenth-century *histoire* of the Virgin of Le Puy to the processions of the statue in the city. In this chapter, Gissey refers to not one but two statues called "Notre-Dame du Puy." The first is the cult statue in the cathedral but the second "Notre-Dame" is *another* statue dating to the early fifteenth century used exclusively for processions:

*C'est icy, que je veux renger les Processions, esquelles je treuve, que la devoute Image de nostre Dame du Puy a esté solennellement portee par la Ville: car pour ne parler de celle, qu'on tient encore plus ancienne du temps de Saint Louys & de laquelle nous avons dict quelque chose cy devant: l'autre est du temps d'Helie de l'Estrange, l'An 1404.*²

It is here that I want to lay out the processions I have found in which the consecrated image of Our Lady of Le Puy is solemnly carried through the city: For I do not speak of that one, who is even older than the time of St. Louis and of whom we have said some things about before [this chapter]: the other is from the time of Helie de l'Estrange [Bishop of Le Puy], from the year 1404.

Although Gissey distinguishes between these two statues, he still refers to both statues as "Notre-Dame." The processional statue was not an arbitrary

¹ Portions of this chapter have been presented as "Circling the City: Rogations processions and religious devotion in late medieval Le Puy-en-Velay," International Medieval Congress, Leeds, United Kingdom, 12 July 2011 and as "Performing Processions: Investigating Religious Processions at Multimedia in Le Puy-en-Velay" International Congress in Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo, Michigan, 10 May 2010.

² Odo de Gissey, *Discours historiques de la très-ancienne devotion à Notre-Dame du Puy* (Lyon, 1620, reprint 1986 by B. Pays), 525.

placeholder but rather it carried a dual identity with the original cult statue itself.³

While the first half of this dissertation examined the changing image of Notre-Dame du Puy, the second part will more directly examine the role of the Virgin of Le Puy within her urban environment and interaction with various groups, monuments and landscapes within Le Puy-en-Velay. Margit Thøfner's argument that processions are inherently "spatial, performative and commemorative works of art" has been highly influential in both the structure and concept of the remainder of this dissertation.⁴ These next chapters will examine how the Virgin of Le Puy's continued presence in the processions was integral to preserving the memory of the statue and her cult after her destruction and moreover, contributed to the recreation of the statue's identity in the modern era.

The goals for the second half of the dissertation will be three-fold. I aim to explore how ephemeral performances such as processions can be accounted for in the urban fabric of the city and through traces of visual culture that remain. I will also discuss the ways in which late medieval processions provided extra-liturgical means for both community and conflict, thus illustrating the multiple and simultaneous meanings of processional activity in Le Puy-en-Velay. Last, I

³ Ibid. As discussed in chapter two, an eighteenth-century "Notre-Dame du Puy" replaced the destroyed original sculpture in 1856 and it continues to be used in annual processions to this day. The fifteenth-century processional counterpart to whom Gissey refers is rarely mentioned outside of his text. It is unclear why this statue was processed instead of the original statue in the cathedral, and Gissey provides no real clues indicating only that is was it was for "diverses raisons."

⁴ Margit Thøfner, *A Common Art: Urban Ceremonial in Antwerp and Brussels during and after the Dutch Revolt* (Zwolle: Waanders Publishers, 2007), 20.

aim to understand how the Virgin of Le Puy becomes an agent of collective memory through ritual, architecture and urban landscape. In this chapter, I focus on the structure and ritualized aspects of the processions themselves. The fourth chapter addresses the interaction between the Virgin of Le Puy and minority groups in the city, namely Jews and Protestants. The ways in which the built and natural environment contributes to the identity of the Virgin of Le Puy is the subject of chapter five.

This chapter will investigate the relationship between the ritual of procession and the objects that mark processional space. I consider these processions as ritual practices, examining how both the act of movement and the objects carried in procession provided cues for devotion. Due to the ephemeral nature of these ceremonies, the processions of Notre-Dame du Puy must be recovered through extant material culture. Such evidence can be found in less-studied records such as liturgical ordinals, cathedral inventories, and chroniclers' accounts of these processions. This chapter also considers how visual cues such as statues, buildings, and gates initiated ritual movement in processions. It also explores how the disintegration of these cues led to violent ends. As my research will demonstrate, the objectives of both the objects in procession and the processions themselves were multiple, transitional and at times, contradictory.

Although some processions in Le Puy focused on the cathedral's holy relics, for the purposes of this chapter I concentrate upon those processions in which the Virgin of Le Puy is featured prominently. Some may argue that the early modern sources that record these processions might have viewed the processional sculpture rather than the statue in the cathedral—the *real* “Notre-

Dame du Puy.” I contend however that the disjunction between these images was largely irrelevant. The act of procession imbued both the local urban space and processional objects, especially the Virgin of Le Puy, with a sacred presence. To ignore the many processions that included the “Virgin of Le Puy” in any form would be to ignore a critical aspect of her complex identity.

Interrogating Processions as Visual Culture

The “procession” is difficult to study in the history of art because of its ephemeral nature. Temporal by definition, a procession cannot be considered in the same way as a traditional art object. There are two major questions in the study of medieval and early modern processions. First, how can the structure and movements of these events be accurately reconstructed? Extant texts such as processionals, missals and ceremonials can help provide an outline for these actions. Yet while texts serve as an invaluable resource to the historian, they are often hard to interpret and present a static description of the event that belies the motion and temporality involved in these kinds of ceremonies.⁵ This problem prompts a more elusive question: what did the ritual of procession mean to both participants and spectators? Indeed, considering rituals like processions only through motionless texts or images lends itself to an incomplete reading of these events.⁶

⁵ As Nicholas Howe has noted, such written evidence denies the researcher the ability to witness the preparation, dispersement, choreography and shifts in the use of space as accorded to cultural anthropologists. See his introduction in *Ceremonial Culture in Pre-Modern Europe*, ed. Nicholas Howe (Notre Dame, IN: University of Indiana Press, 2007).

⁶ Thomas A. Boogaart, “Our Saviour’s Blood: Procession and Community in Late Medieval Bruges” in *Moving Subjects Processional Performance in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, eds. Kathleen M. Ashley, and Wim N. M. Hüsken. Ludus, 5 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2001), 70.

Processions are also often discussed in relationship to another medieval religious activity, pilgrimage. While pilgrimage and procession are both rituals of motion, the focal points and phenomenological experiences of these activities are not the same. The pilgrimage journey consists of motion *towards* an object or holy site. The goal is linear. The procession, in contrast, is more circular, wherein the objects and people move with each other. The procession, especially those conducted out of doors, inverts the goal of the pilgrimage. It is motion *away* from the holy site into the secular city where the procession sanctifies these spaces through communal motion and prayer.⁷ The Virgin of Le Puy herself also functions differently in procession and pilgrimage, the former as a participant in a communal event, and the latter as a static sacred image that is distanced from the community by its miracle-working properties. While these distinctions are important, the actions of procession and pilgrimage are not mutually exclusive. Processions often begin at the site of pilgrimage and end there as well. Both the procession and the pilgrimage site are significant, and thus these two activities work together to provide the total experience for the participant.

The problems with visually documenting processional activity are perhaps best explained through an example. The famous etching of the procession of Sainte Genèviève in Paris from 1652 provides an excellent case

⁷ My argument is informed by the scholarship of religious anthropologist Ronald Grimes, who has studied the processional activity of Native American culture in Santa Fe. I have found his distinction between processions and pilgrimages instructive. He notes that pilgrimages are centered upon a specific sacred site (the 'center out there' as Victor Turner has described them) but fixed sites are not as important for processions. Instead the motion towards and around these sites creates the sacred space, therefore, the sacred is carried with the processant himself. See Grimes, *Symbol and Conquest: Public Ritual and Drama in Santa Fe, New Mexico* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976), 72 – 73.

study to consider the fact and fiction of early modern processions (Figure 40).⁸ The etching captures the many participants in the procession, marking each group with a caption. It attempts to capture a totalizing view of the event, winding the procession across the print from right to left and bottom to top, ending with a crowd of spectators who look on. In the bottom row, the relationship between the church and state is clearly displayed—the mayor and bishop of Paris appear together, along with the abbot of Saint Genèvieve and the ministers of justice of Paris. The saint's large reliquary takes the center position. The grimaces of the porters reveal the weight of the *châsse*; they lurch forward balancing the reliquary on their shoulders. These small gestures are the only visual cues indicating the momentum and continual action of the procession. Indeed, this print chiefly illustrates the hierarchy of the procession rather than the experience of the event itself. While the etching provides important evidence related to the visual culture of early modern processions such as vestments and liturgical instruments, the procession is depicted as a record of order and hierarchy. There are no streets, no monuments, no city in the print. Paris is removed from the procession.⁹ These sorts of images are often cited as examples of early modern processions. While they can be useful as pieces of evidence, there is

⁸ Louis Boissevin, *La magnifique procession de la chasse de Ste. Genèvieve, patronne de Paris faite LXI juin 1652 PO la paix*, Paris, Chez Boisson Place Maubert, rue Gallande a la pomme rouge. Viewed at Institut national d'histoire de l'art, Paris. Côté OC 59.

⁹ The absence of Paris was not lost on subsequent editions of this print. In a print from 1706, the Cathedral of Notre-Dame de Paris is depicted in the background, illustrating its significance in the procession and the site of departure and return for the procession (*Représentation ou vraye discription de la procession solennelle tenue en l'Eglise de Nostre Dame à Paris où la châsse de S.t Geneviève et celle de S.t Marcel et mise en veue...* Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Estampes et Photographie, accessed via Gallica. Available <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8407827n.r=procession+paris.langEN>

a danger in understanding these images as transparent documents of an event. In contrast, I will examine the processions of the Virgin of Le Puy by placing the statue within her urban, spatial, topographical and cultural contexts. This approach aims to consider processions not only as ritual gestures but also as evolving performances whose meanings change within the contexts of their audiences.

Processions: State of the Literature and Methodological Approaches

Modern studies of medieval processions began with nineteenth-century efforts to collate and republish these practices from late medieval and early modern liturgical texts. Within the last twenty years, the interest in medieval processional activity has attracted studies from a variety of fields that seek to explore the ambiguity and theatricality of these spectacles.¹⁰ Art historians have been part of this endeavor and their substantial contributions to this growing field of study provides promising directions for future research. For example, Rita Tekippe's dissertation on the reliquary shrines of Sts. Martin and Sevastius in Tournai includes a thorough consideration of the role these art objects played in

¹⁰ Terrence Bailey's *Processions of Sarum and the Western Church* is among the oldest scholarly works on the subject, but still remains the most comprehensive study of medieval processions in Western Europe. Bailey's approach is primarily descriptive and comparative, focusing instead on evidence of their practice. He does not address the meaning of processional activities, only that they occurred with increasing frequency throughout Western Europe. See *The Processions of Sarum and the Western Church* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1971). Sabine Felbecker also provides a general overview of historical processions her large scope ranges from ancient to Christian models of processions. See Sabine Felbecker, *Die prozession historische und systematische Untersuchungen zu einer liturgischen Ausdruckshandlung*. Münsteraner theologische Abhandlungen, 39 (Altenberg: Oros, 1995). These preliminary studies are still essential to the research on processions but more specific analyses of localized practices has now become a more popular avenue of scholarship.

church processions.¹¹ Tekippe views medieval processions and their objects as instruments of communal solidarity. As will be discussed further below, this outcome was not always achieved. In addition to Tekippe, Cecilia Gaposchkin has considered the visual relationship between portal depictions of ancient processions in Amiens and their connections with contemporary processions in the city.¹² Margit Thøfner has also considered the urban civic processions of sixteenth and seventeenth century Brussels and Antwerp from an art historical perspective.¹³ Her study is especially notable for her emphasis on ceremony as an art form, not as a historical “text” that must be decoded.¹⁴ She argues instead that the study of processions should be a serious topic of art historical inquiry as these festivities were not only a significant part of visual culture but also presented a formalized means to enforce the social, political and religious dynamics of these communities.¹⁵ Although Thøfner’s study focuses mainly on urban civic rituals such as entrance processions of political figures, her approach to the study of processions is the closest to my own. Like Thøfner, I seek to understand what the role of the object was in these ceremonies, not to define what they meant.

Promising examples of this approach to the study of processions have been

¹¹ Rita Tekippe, "Procession, Piety, and Politics: Three Medieval Rheno-Mosan Reliquary Shrines and the Cult Communities for Bishop-Saints Servatius of Maastricht, Eleutherius of Tournai, and Remaclus of Stavelot" (PhD diss, The Ohio State University, 1999).

¹² Cecilia M. Gaposchkin, "Portals, Processions, and Piety: Saints Firmin and Honoré at Amiens" *Art and Architecture of Late Medieval Pilgrimage in Northern Europe and the British Isles* (Boston: Brill, 2005).

¹³ Margit Thøfner, *A Common Art: Urban Ceremonial in Antwerp and Brussels during and after the Dutch Revolt* (Zwolle: Waanders Publishers, 2007).

¹⁴ Ibid., 21 – 22.

¹⁵ Ibid., 12.

employed in the recent dissertations of Pascale Rihouet, and Anne Heath, although these studies do not focus on a single object.¹⁶ Most recently, Kristin Noreen has considered the ways in which the materiality of an icon interacted with processional space in medieval Rome and investigated the functions devotional objects played for many distinct audiences and spaces.¹⁷ These art historians are forging new paths of inquiry into the study of processions and indicate an interest and need of more such approaches.

Outside of the discipline of art history, anthropologists, semiologists and musicologists have conducted many studies of processions.¹⁸ Processions have also drawn interest for historians, who study these events as part of the larger interest in early modern ritual and ceremony Europe.¹⁹ Many of these studies highlight the ceremonial role of processions played in the social cohesion

¹⁶ Pascale Rihouet, "The Unifying Power of Moving Pictures in Late Medieval and Renaissance Umbria" (Ph.D. diss, Brown University, 2008) and Anne Heath, "Architecture, Ritual, and Identity in the Cathedral Saint-Etienne and the Abbey of Saint-Germain in Auxerre, France" (Ph.D. diss, Brown University, 2005).

¹⁷ Kristin Noreen, "Re-Covering Christ in Late Medieval Rome: The Icon of Christ in the *Sancta Sanctorum*" *Gesta* 49/2 (2010): 117 - 135.

¹⁸ Louis Marin, "Establishing a Signification for Social Space: Demonstration, Cortege, Parade, Procession (Semiotic Notes)" *On Representation* trans. Catherine Porter (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 38 – 53. Louis Marin approaches the procession through the theory of semiotics, dismissing the more performative and unstructured aspects of processional activity. In more historically-focused studies of processions, Roger Reynolds has discussed processions as a form of medieval drama, where music, dance and "props" such as banners, liturgical instruments and relics combined to create a performance. See Roger E. Reynolds, "The Drama of Medieval Liturgical Processions" *Revue de Musicologie*, 86/ 1 (2000): 127 – 142. Important literature that discusses the relationship between medieval ritual, procession and music include, Craig Wright, "The Palm Sunday Procession in Medieval Chartres" in *The Divine Office of the Latin Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 344 – 371; Susan Boynton, *Shaping a Monastic Identity: Liturgy and History at the Imperial Abbey of Farfa, 1000-1125* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2006), 126 – 135; Margot Fassler, "Adventus at Chartres: Ritual Models for Major Processions" in *Ceremonial Culture in Pre-Modern Europe*, ed. Nicholas Howe (Notre Dame, IN: University of Indiana Press, 2007). See also her "Liturgy and Sacred History in the Twelfth-Century Tympana at Chartres" *The Art Bulletin* 75/ 3 (1993): 499-520.

of urban life.²⁰ For example, Moshe Sluhovsky has examined how procession sacralized the public spaces of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Paris.²¹ Edward Muir has also made substantial contributions to the study of urban ceremony. His analysis of the ways in which rituals shifted meanings from the medieval to early modern periods strongly informs this dissertation.²²

Finally, Susan Verdi Webster's work on processional sculpture in sixteenth-century Spain deserves a special mention. Her book, *Art and Ritual in Golden Age Spain: Sevillian Confraternities and the Processional Sculpture of Holy Week* (1998) is the only art history study of early modern processional

¹⁹ See among others, Ronald F. E. Weissman, *Ritual Brotherhood in Renaissance Florence: Population and Social Structure* (New York: Academic Press, 1981); Richard C. Trexler, *Public Life in Renaissance Florence* (New York: Academic Press, 1980); William A. Christian, *Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981); Moshe Sluhovsky, *Patroness of Paris: Rituals of Devotion in Early Modern France* (New York: Brill, 1998); Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Edward Muir, "The Eye of the Procession" in *Ceremonial Culture in Pre-Modern Europe*, ed. Nicholas Howe (Notre Dame, IN.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007); Wim Blockmans and Esther Donckers, "Self Representation in Court and City in Flanders and Brabant in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries" in *Showing Status: Representations of Social Positions in the Late Middle Ages*, eds. Willem Pieter Blockmans and Antheun Janse (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1999).

²⁰ The edited volume, *City and Spectacle in Medieval Europe*, while not exclusively dedicated to the medieval procession, has also been instrumental in demonstrating the affective qualities of ceremonial culture and its explicit connection to urban life during the Middle Ages. See *City and Spectacle in Medieval Europe*, ed. Barbara A. Hanawalt and Kathryn L. Reyerson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994).

²¹ Sluhovsky, 66. While Sluhovsky's study of the early modern processions of Saint Geneviève in Paris reveals much about the role of medieval and early modern religious processions in *creating* movable spaces wherein the secular streets of a city become temporarily sanctified space, his focus is more on the sacralization of this space, not its ephemeral nature. Ronald Grimes has made a similar argument for the sacred spaces created by processions in the context of his study of the ritual life of Santa Fe noting that unlike the pilgrim, "the processant carries what is sacred with him, thereby generating sacred space while he walks," See Grimes, *Symbol and Conquest*, 72.

²² Edward Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981); *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*, 2nd ed., New approaches to European history 33 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). Muir discusses the transformation of ritual during the Reformation in sixteenth-century Europe, wherein the "ritual" of the Catholic Church came to signal empty gestures to Protestants, who valued the representative symbols of religion.

sculpture.²³ She is especially interested in the connection between ritual and sculpture conceived specifically for processions. The vogue for processional sculpture in seventeenth-century Europe may help to explain why another sculpture served as a surrogate for Notre-Dame du Puy as discussed in the opening of this chapter.

In addition to historical studies of processions, the act of procession has been connected to ritual theory.²⁴ While ritual has been a subject of inquiry for anthropologists since the nineteenth-century, early studies focused on supposed universal qualities of ritual and its meaning for the identity formation of individuals and communities. Arnold Van Gennep's study of the rituals connected to rites of passage is an influential example of such scholarship.²⁵ Victor Turner used Van Gennep's theory of rites of passage to argue for the "liminality" experienced by the individuals passing through such rites that involve the breakdown of societal structures. Although I believe Turner's argument for the "anti-structure" associated with ritual is not as universal as he posits, Turner's scholarship was the first to address the performative aspects of ritual.²⁶

²³ Susan Verdi-Webster, *Art and Ritual in Golden Age Spain: Sevillian Confraternities and the Processional Sculpture of Holy Week* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).

²⁴ While attention to ritual is essential to this dissertation, I will also take care not to exploit modern understandings of "ritual" to assume ritual meanings during the Middle Ages as Philippe Buc has cautioned. See *The Dangers of Ritual. Between Early Medieval Texts and Social Scientific Theory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

²⁵ Arnold Van Gennep, *Rites of Passage*, trans. M.B. Videzom and G.L. Cafée (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960) First published 1906.

²⁶ Victor Witter Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. The Lewis Henry Morgan Lectures, 1966 (Chicago: Aldine Pub. Co., 1969). See also *From Ritual to Theatre: The*

The study of ritual as performance seeks to understand the effects of ritualized action upon participants and non-participants. Rather than uncover the meaning of these prescribed acts, it recognizes the polysemous nature of ritual and the variety of meanings that may be associated with these actions. David Parkin's argument for the "ritual of bodily function" argues that ritual is created relative to the actions of other movements around the participants.²⁷ In Parkin's view, processions derive meaning from not only the individual action of the processant but also from their experience as a group in motion. This group then responds to the actions or inactions of their human and built environment.²⁸

Gavin Brown also provides an instructive analysis of ritual as performance, arguing for the study of what ritual does rather than what it means.²⁹ He posits that ritual not only provides for consistency through repeated actions, but it also allows for instances of inconsistency between prescribed action of ritual texts and the performance itself. Brown specifically points to the ritual of the liturgy, noting that it follows a script, but this script does not in and of itself constitute the ritual. Following Parkin, Brown discusses the indeterminacy present in performed rituals as a result of human action. While Brown is correct that the execution of ritual is often different from prescribed actions, his argument that the human

Human Seriousness of Play. Performance studies series, 1st v. (New York City: Performing Arts Journal Publications, 1982).

²⁷ David Parkin, "Ritual as Spatial Direction and Bodily Division" in *Understanding Rituals* ed. Daniel de Coppet (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 11 – 25. Parkin's spatial conception of ritual is also highly conversant with Muir's *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*.

²⁸ Ibid., 16.

²⁹ Gavin Brown, "Theorizing Ritual as Preformance: Explorations of Ritual Indeterminacy" *Journal of Ritual Studies* 17:1 (2003), 3-16.

role in ritual is connected to Turner's anti-structure is overly simplistic. It is therefore perhaps Catherine Bell who provides the most satisfactory means for the study of ritual. Rather than considering ritual "thought" and ritual "action" as distinct categories, Bell instead argues for the *ritualization* of human behavior that generates historically-contextualized meanings rather than predetermined ones.³⁰

Comparative Data: Evidence for Medieval Processions

The Virgin of Le Puy was not the only enthroned Madonna sculpture to be carried in procession during the Middle Ages. Ilene Forsyth has noted that the fifteenth of August (the Feast of the Assumption) marks the roots of such processions in Auvergne.³¹ As noted in the introduction, processions with the Virgin on the Feast of the Assumption are still performed in the region. Throughout France, processions of cult statues are documented from an early date. This is especially true in Auvergne, as processions with the miraculous statue of Sainte Foy at Conques have been recorded since at least the eleventh century.³² The closest example to the Virgin of Le Puy's function as a processional object is the *Vierge noire* of Chartres, Notre-Dame-sous-terre. This statue also was carried in procession in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, as attested by pilgrimage badges from this site that depict the Virgin placed on a

³⁰ Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

³¹ Ilene Forsyth, *The Throne of Wisdom* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), 40.

³² *The Book of Sainte Foy*, translated with an introduction and notes by Pamela Sheingorn. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995.), 120. See especially, section 2.4, "About the Large Number of Miracles Worked by Sainte Foy during a Procession in Auvergne."

litter.³³ These instances of cult statues borne in procession provide some pieces of evidence for these rituals but they do not provide a specific context for the procession itself.

Although the above evidence indicates that carrying a Virgin statue in procession was not an unknown event in France, it was also not standard practice. More often, the clergy carried a cross, holy water and an epistle book. Also more common was the procession of holy reliquary caskets. These holy objects were usually processed during celebrations of the translation of the saint or on his or her feast day. At Le Puy, relics of local saints (especially Saints Agrève, George and Martin) were also processed on other feast days but the Virgin of Le Puy also featured prominently in many early processions. Indeed, the inclusion of the Virgin statue beyond Marian celebrations such as Rogation processions in Le Puy seems to have been a local and specialized tradition. Further information regarding the general structure and components of the medieval procession can be found in Appendix I.

Processions at Le Puy-en-Velay

Processions were performed in Le Puy from at least 1254 when the town celebrated Louis IX 's return from the Crusades.³⁴ Textual documentation of processions at Le Puy is unfortunately somewhat elusive due to two fires at the

³³ Illene Forsyth, *The Throne of Wisdom: Wood Sculptures of the Madonna in Romanesque France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), 43. For more examples see, Ludovic Nys, ed., *Gloria Mariae—statues et reliquaires portés à la grande procession de Tournai* (Tournai, 1992); Alphonse Delescluse, “Une procession à Savelot in 1509” *Bulletin de la Societe d’Art et d’histoire du diocese de Liege* 8 (1894): 367 – 70.

³⁴ Étienne de Médicis, *Le livre de Podio ou chronique d’Étienne de Médicis, bourgeois du Puy*, ed. A. Chassaing in *Recueil des chroniqueurs du Puy-en-Velay*, Vols. I and II (Le Puy, 1859), 188 – 201. Original manuscript, c. 1515.

cathedral archives that destroyed many medieval documents in the fourteenth and eighteenth centuries. However, liturgical texts, material culture and lay chronicles afford a good knowledge of the late medieval and early modern processions at Le Puy. Direct evidence for the processions at Le Puy-en-Velay primarily come from four textual sources: a ceremonial text (sixteenth-century copy of a fourteenth-century document), missal (Le Puy, Ms. 4, fifteenth century), and the sixteenth-century chronicles of two burghers from Le Puy.³⁵

From 1874 – 1878, Jean-Baptiste Payrard, the abbot of the canons of Le Puy, published the *ancien ceremonial* of the cathedral in successive editions of the *Tablettes historiques de la Haute-Loire et du Velay* (now the *Cahiers de la Haute-Loire*). According to Payrard, these documents are a sixteenth century copy of the medieval ceremonial at Le Puy entitled *Incipit Liber ordinaries secundum usum Aniciensis ecclesie* (T. 586), located at the Seminary of Le Puy.³⁶

Based on my study of the extant fourteenth century processional texts at Bayeaux, Evreux, and Laon, I have found the processions recorded in the *ancien cérémonial du Puy* to reflect earlier practices. In some cases, these texts have been edited to include fifteenth-century variants, but they are based on the

³⁵ The major written records of these processions are documented by Etienne Médicis (1475 - 1565) and Jean Burel (c. 1540 - 1603), two lay burghers of Le Puy. Jean Burel, *Mémoires de Jean Burel, bourgeois du Puy à l'époque des guerres de religion*. 2 vols. (Saint-Vidal: Centre d'Etude de la Vallée de la Borne, 1983); Étienne de Médicis, *Le livre de Podio ou chronique d'Étienne de Médicis, bourgeois du Puy*. Original manuscripts are held at the Bibliothèque municipale du Puy, ms. 56 (8082) and ms. 59 (8081). The processions in Le Puy are also discussed by mid seventeenth-century Jesuit priest Odo de Gissey as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter.

³⁶ Jean-Baptiste Payrard, "Ancien cérémonial de l'église angélique du Puy" *Tablettes Historiques de la Haute Loire et du Velay* (1872/1873 – 1876/1877ff.). Payrard does mention that he made some changes to this manuscript in order to correct the Latin text and restore the work to its original integrity. The original Payrard cites was not located at the Seminary of Le Puy as he notes. This text seems to now be missing according to the seminary librarian.

original texts. The antiphons sung during rogation days at Le Puy are fairly consistent with those at Evreux, including the common *cum jocunditate, timor et tremor, de Jherusalem* and *omnipotens deus*.³⁷ The antiphons are not quite as consistent at the processional preserved at the Cathedral of Bayeux and no text includes the same musical structure.³⁸ The Bayeaux processional also provides more detailed instructions for the procession that are similar to those at Le Puy. There are some ambiguities in these texts that mention practices performed “by custom” or shortened titles of antiphons that do not precisely indicate the hymn sung. These discrepancies are unfortunate, but do not negate the information that can be learned from processional texts in conjunction with visual evidence. All Rogations processions are marked by the visitation to other churches in the city and the singing of antiphons and litanies. Instructions for the actions of the children’s choir, the regular choir, the deacons and clergy are specifically mandated in both the Le Puy and Bayeux texts, and to a lesser extent in the Evreux processional. It can be inferred then that the Rogations processions at Le Puy were structurally similar to other major cathedrals in France in that they followed many of the same antiphons and typical movements between the cathedral and other churches in the city.³⁹

³⁷ *Ordre des processions du dimanche des rameaux, des petites & grandes litanies, de l'Ascension, du Saint Sacrement*, Processional of Evreux, published 1743. This text records medieval practices from the cathedral.

³⁸ *Ordinaire et coutumier de l'église Cathédrale de Bayeux (XIIIe siècle): publiés d'après les manuscrits originaux*, Bibliothèque liturgique 8 (Paris: A. Picard, 1902).

³⁹ For more examples of Rogations processions see, Barbara Haggh, “An Ordinal of Ockeghem's Time from the Sainte-Chapelle of Paris: Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, MS 114” in *Tijdschrift van de Koninklijke Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis* 47 1/2 (1997): 33-71. See

Certainly, one must use caution when relying on copied texts, as some early modern copyists were known to have altered medieval documents for their own purposes.⁴⁰ I therefore cannot rely upon these texts as an infallible testimony of the medieval processions at Le Puy; however, musicologist Wulf Arlt has also examined the documents at Le Puy and found them to reflect medieval practices.⁴¹ In addition, I have examined an unpublished manuscript of a book of hours from Le Puy (London, British Library, Mss. Add. 58771) that provides strong evidence for the continuation of the medieval calendar and liturgical practices of the Cathedral of Le Puy.⁴²

Rogations

The earliest processions that include the Virgin of Le Puy statue occurred on Rogations days in the mid-thirteenth century. Rogations, or the “beating of the bounds” is a Christian ritual derived from the Roman harvest ceremonies rogibalia and ambarvalia.⁴³ The importance of procession during Rogation days

also, Marie-Noelle Collette, *Le répertoire des rogations d'après un processional de Poitiers: XVI siècle* (Paris: Éditions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1976).

⁴⁰ Such erroneous transcriptions are quite common in copies of medieval texts in the early modern period. For a discussion of early modern copying practices see, Julia C. Crick and Alexandra Walsham, *The Uses of Script and Print, 1300-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

⁴¹ Wulf Arlt, “The Office for the Feast of the Circumcision from Le Puy” in *The Divine Office of the Latin Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 324 – 343.

⁴² Augustin Chassaing published the medieval calendar of Le Puy in the late nineteenth century. See “Calendrier de l'église du Puy-en-Velay au moyen-âge” *Annales de la société d'agriculture, sciences, arts et commerce du Puy*. Vol. 33 (Paris: H. Champion, 1882). Chassaing cites sixteenth-century copies as evidence of medieval rituals. His reconstruction of the liturgical calendar at Le Puy deviates from Ms. 58771 only in the addition of saints to specific days, not in the order or veneration of local saints of Auvergne.

⁴³ Bailey, 96. The Festival of Rogations has very early origins in the Catholic Church. Rogations processions are said to have begun in 394 when Theodosius ordered processions to ask for divine help in an attack on Eugenius and Arbogast. Rogations are most commonly linked to supplication

was recognized as early as the tenth century in France, as cited in an anonymous sermon from Corbie.⁴⁴ The earliest known Rogation procession in Le Puy that included the Virgin statue dates to 1255. This procession occurred on the third of May, also known as the *Journée des Transits*. Records of the same procession were documented by sixteenth-century Le Puy chronicler Étienne Médicis in 1375, 1404, 1468, 1480, 1502, 1512, 1517, 1523 and 1525.⁴⁵

These processions were practiced during the three ferial, or non-feast, days before Ascension Thursday. They were especially unique events in the medieval period because they extended outside ecclesiastical boundaries. As noted above, the cathedral itself was contained within another wall called a close, or self-contained area that was governed by ecclesiastical authorities. Despite the explicit marked boundaries of the community, the Rogations procession sought to define the sacred boundaries of the entire city and surrounding areas, highlighted by the presence of the miraculous Virgin statue who blessed these areas with her sacred presence and healing power. Historians have often read

for a good harvest, as mentioned by John Chrysostom in 399. In Gallic lands, the Christian appropriation of this ancient ritual has been traced to the Bishop Mamertus of Vienne, who in 474, called for a three-day procession before the Feast of the Ascension to repent for the natural disasters that had befallen his community. Emperor Justinian regularized the regulations for Rogations processions in 527 (recorded in *Rituale Romanum* of 1614) and the Council of Orléans mandated them for all of Gaul in 511. In addition, Rogations processions are clearly documented in France from 546 at Reims, and Limoges from 580.

⁴⁴ Paris, Bibl. Nationale 18296, f. 81. The sermon is discussed as the “origin” of Rogations processions by D. de Bruyne. See “L’origine des processions de la Chandleur et des Rogations—A Propos d’un sermon inédit” *Revue Benedictine* 34 (1922): 14 - 26.

⁴⁵ Médicis, 188 – 201.

these types of processions as providing social cohesion by physically uniting the spaces of the parish through procession.⁴⁶

While the first day of Rogations at Le Puy is not well-recorded, the second and third days provide much detail regarding the rituals for the procession around the city. Most of the roads, gates, churches, and other physical monuments have been identified through archaeological and textual documentation, but a few locations remain unknown. It is not possible to map the entire work with absolute precision but the general structure and relationship between ritual, movement and place can be analyzed. Fortunately, fifteenth-century population records, or *compoix*, from 1408, 1456, and 1464 have been preserved in the city archives.⁴⁷ These records provide important information regarding the demographics of the citizens of early modern Le Puy as well as critical documentation of the streets and thoroughways of the city. Bernard Rivet and Phillippe Ramona used these records in order to create a map of the city from 1450.⁴⁸ This map is based on Augustin Chaisiang's nineteenth century map

⁴⁶ Steve Hindle, "'Beating the Bounds of the Parish: Order, Memory and Identity in the English Local Community, c. 1500 - 1700" in *Defining Community in Early Modern Europe* eds. Michaël Halvorson, Karen E. Spierling. London: Ashgate, 2008. 205 - 228. See also, Sabine von Heusinger, "Topography of Sacred Space and the Representation of Social Groups: Confraternities in Strasbourg" in *Politics and Reformations: Communities, Politics, Nations and Empires*, Essays in Honor of Thomas A. Brady, Jr. ed. Christopher Ocker, et al. (Boston: Brill, 2007) 67 - 84.

⁴⁷ Compoix of 1456 – Le Puy, Bibliothèque municipale, "Fonds Cordial ms 16"; Compoix of 1464 – Archives Municipales, CC20. The compoix from 1408 survives but provides little information used in this dissertation. See Philippe Ramona, "Compoix du Puy de 1456 et 1464." He notes: "Les renseignements qu'ils comportent sont particulièrement précieux car les relevés exhaustifs pour le XV^e siècle sont extrêmement rares... De plus, de nombreux éléments de filiation sont signalés dans le document." Compoix record available online at: [http://dep.geneanet.org/search_etat_civil.php?ref=43157fis](http://dep.geneanet.org/search_etat_civil.php?ref=43157fis;);

⁴⁸ Philippe Ramona, "Le Puy au milieu du XVe siècle: la ville consulaire et ses habitants" *Cahiers de la Haute-Loire* (2005): 205 – 294.

of Le Puy in 1544 (Figure 41). Both these sources use Etienne Médici's text to create the city plan. These maps have been the primary source used to study the routes of the processions discussed in this dissertation.

According to the *ancien cérémonial du Puy* the second ferial day of Rogations began after noon. After a minor cantor recites the *propitius esto*, the weekly priest or deacon would bless the cathedral with holy water and then a procession to the neighboring parish churches of Le Puy would commence [full text with translation provided in Appendix II] (Figure 42). Bearing the miracle-working Virgin of Le Puy in their retinue, they would process first inside the church to the sanctuary and the chapel of Saint Paul [unknown location].⁴⁹ As a minor cantor begins to sing *De Jherusalem* the procession enters to the Chapel of the Holy Savoir in the bell tower where the Virgin was deposited above the altar. The litany to saints would then commence as the procession went to the Baptistry of Saint John just outside the cathedral. According to the ceremonial, these litanies are to be performed "quickly in a lowered voice." The same procedure was followed at the collegiate churches of Saint Georges, Agrève and Vosi and the Church of Saint Pierre-de-la-Tour on the other Rogation days with invocations to the Virgin, Christ and Saints Julien and Gerard. The procession then returns to the baptistry and then the antiphon *cum jucunditate* was recited by the home of the Seigneur of Mons [precise location unknown, likely at the

⁴⁹ The chapel of Saint Paul's precise location within the cathedral is unknown. Although the ceremonial indicates that the procession should go to the "ecclesiam" of the Holy Savior, this appears to be the Chapel of the Holy Savior in the bell tower, which was detached from the cathedral proper.

corner of the Rue la Traverse and the Rue la Frenerie].⁵⁰ After these litanies were recited, the procession returned to the cathedral where processional crosses were arranged in front of the choir to go to the Chapel of St. Michel, a small Romanesque church that rests on the top of Mount Aiguilhe, known as the *Acuela*. While still in the cathedral, two priests in the choir dropped to their knees in the middle of the procession to recite the litany of saints until they reached Saint Michael's name. These priests then arose and exited out the steps of the cathedral towards the Chapel of Saint Michel d'Aiguilhe.

At this time, the procession extended beyond the bounds of the city, passing over waterways and bridges of the Borne Valley. On their way to Saint Michel, three young choristers from the collegiate churches of Saint Georges and Saint Vosi and Saint Pierre-de-la-Tour recited an antiphon before reaching the water. This waterway is assumed to be the Borne River. Upon arriving into Aiguilhe [Acuela], the weekly priest performed a mass at the Chapel of Saint Gabriel at the bottom of the hill. In the fields next to a vineyard, two child choristers sing the antiphons *tua est potentia* and eventually *aspice dominus*. From this point, the procession would head back to the city, entering Le Puy through the "gate that is closest to Saint Agrève." This gate appears to be the Porte de Vienne. The procession then continued "until the blessed image is at the Square of Saint George by the marketplace [Porche du For]." Having returned to

⁵⁰ Mons was a faubourg next to Le Puy-en-Velay. The Chateau de Mons was burned in the fifteenth century. The Sir de Mons owned nineteen homes in Le Puy-en-Velay. Given the location of the procession, the home the ceremonial refers to is likely one of the four he owned in the second île. According to Genèvieve Douillard's reconstruction of these îles in 1544, the Sir de Mons owned a large home on the Rue la Traverse at the corner of the Rue la Frenerie. This home seems to be the most likely location for the processional route.

the doors of the cathedral, the cantor sung *Aufer a nobis* and the weekly priest recites *Salve domine plebem*. The procession ended when the statue of the Virgin was deposited in her place (*in suo loco*) after the priest recites this versicle.

Unfortunately this precise *loco* remains tenuously interpreted as the main altar. A note is added to the end of these instructions that indicates that priests could choose to go barefoot during the processions of Rogations except for the weekly priest who celebrates the mass.

After the noon procession, a separate set of directions is provided for a second procession through the lower city. Notably, this part of the Rogations ritual appears to be reserved for the procession of relics rather than Notre-Dame du Puy. The third day follows a similar order, although there are no clear references to the procession of the Virgin of Le Puy or cathedral relics. The route was modified to include some streets in the lower city, and does not visit Aiguilhe. Instead, the procession goes to the small church of Saint Pierre-le-Vieux and crosses the Borne River to the Cemetery of Saint Laurent. The procession concludes again at the cathedral steps, but the precise route from Saint Laurent is not indicated [See full translation in Appendix II].

It is perhaps most useful to examine these prescribed directions for Rogations processions by considering how the specific mention of places, objects and people worked in relation to each other to signal ritual practice. As argued by David Parkin, concious spatial orientation and bodily movement are the primary agents of ritual; words play a secondary role.⁵¹ In many instances throughout the

⁵¹ Parkin, 17.

procession, approaching a threshold such as a door, gate or natural landmark signaled the ritualization of movement. For example, choristers from the collegiate churches are required to recite an antiphon before arriving at the Borne River as the procession moves towards the Chapel of St. Michel d'Aiguilhe. It was not the specific antiphon that mattered for the procession but rather when and where it was recited. Similarly, the text instructs the soft and quick performance of litanies from the cathedral to the baptistry. Given the proximity of these two buildings this note is unsurprising yet it reveals that conscious motion towards a place. This motion ritualized the processional space over any verbal cues. Moreover, the Virgin of Le Puy often acts as a visual marker of ritual movement. The ceremonial instructs that the procession moves towards the cathedral until the Virgin has reached the square. Here, the processants become defined in relation to the object rather than to each other. Even the end of the procession is signaled by the placement of the Virgin on the altar. Finally, the majority of sites highlighted by the Rogations processions in Le Puy were contained within the cathedral close, with the exception of St. Michel d'Aiguilhe, thus emphasizing not only the sanctity of these sites but also their allegiance with the cathedral itself.

This is not to say that the antiphons or litanies recited in the procession were not important but rather to suggest that place and motion were just as important as verbal intonations. In one instance, the recitation of the litany of saints until Saint Michel points to a more verbalized ritual practice. Yet, the ceremonial indicates that the priests reciting this litany must drop to their knees in the middle of the procession. Their bodily action thus cues the procession as much as the litany itself.

Devotion and Disorder: A Lay Perspective of Processions in Le Puy

If one only has access to the liturgical texts, these events appear highly structured, ordered and seemingly harmonious. Yet a liturgical ordinal is a prescriptive source, so it dictates actions before the event. Descriptive texts, those that provide an account of the event performed, can provide new information about these processions that either confirm or contradict the liturgical directions. In addition to the *ancien cérémonial*, the sixteenth-century chronicles of Etienne Médicis (1475 – 1565) and Jean Burel (1540 – 1603) serve as critical sources of evidence for processional activity in the city. Most notably, these texts provide copious descriptions of the visual culture surrounding late medieval and early modern processions. Other pieces of evidence include processional crosses, liturgical vestments, paintings and confraternity banners, many of which are located at the Musée Crozatier in Le Puy and at the cathedral treasury. This evidence is an important means to access the more ephemeral aspects of procession. Examined together then, these sources serve as the material evidence by which we can uncover the moving space of processions in Le Puy-en-Velay.⁵² The significance of sacred boundaries in and around the city of Le Puy-en-Velay

⁵² This approach to processions takes cues from the work of Tim Pestell, which examined the archaeological remains of a monastic priory to ascertain the limits of secular and sacred spaces within this landscape. See Tim Pestell, "Using Material Culture to Define Holy Space: The Bromholm Project" in *Defining the Holy: Sacred Space in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* eds. Andrew Spicer and Sarah Hamilton (Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate Press, 2005). A similar methodology was employed in Jonathan Glixon's study of the relationship between music and ritual ceremonies of Venetian confraternities. See Johnathan E. Glixon "Music and Ceremony at the Scuola Grande di San Giovanni Evangelista: A New Document from the Venetian State Archives" in *Crossing the Boundaries: Christian Piety and the Arts in the Italian Medieval and Renaissance Confraternities* ed. Konrad Eisenbichler (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 1991).

is important to understanding the role of the Virgin statue within her total environment, and will be discussed in further detail in chapter five.

Etienne Médicis's *Le livre de Podio* provides an excellent example of a descriptive text that records the processions of sixteenth-century Le Puy-en-Velay. His descriptions of processions serve as an important source of comparison to the *ancien cérémonial*. In some ways, Médicis' descriptions match the tenor and content of the processional quite well. For example, the below account of a funeral procession describes the ritual step by step, noting its similarities with the sites followed by a Rogations procession:

Premierement, que lesdits habitués de ladicte eglise feront procession comme les jours de Roisons, & pourteront toutes les croix, & iront en procession à Saint Agreve, & là diront les trois premiers pseaulmes & les trois premieres leçons de l'office ou agende des Morts; puis partiront en procession & iront à Saint George dire les autres trois pseaulmes & trois leçons audit office subsequens; puis partiront en procession & iront à Saint Vosi dire les autres trois pseaulmes & les trois dernieres leçons ; puis partiront en procession & iront à Saint Pierre la Tour dire les laudes dudit office; puis partiront en procession & iront à Saint Pierre le Monastier dire la messe desdits trespasés; puis après, toujours en procession, suivront le cimentiere dudit Saint Pierre & le grant Clausel, & sera distribué aux clerks de ladicte eglise quatre deniers podies & aux Chanoines huit deniers, & se prendroit ces deniers, c'est à sçavoir : du commun aport de l'autier, les deux parties, & l'autre tierce partie par les bayles desdits clerks: & ainsi est fait & observé chacun an jusques à present.⁵³

First, those regular churchgoers of the said church will go in procession as is done on Rogations days, and they will carry all the crosses, and go in procession to Saint Agrève, and then say the first three psalms & the first three lessons of the Office of the Dead. Then they leave in procession to go to the Church of Saint George to recite the other three psalms and say three readings of the office then they will leave in procession to go to the Church of Saint Vosi to say the other three psalms & the last three readings and then leave in procession to go to Saint Pierre le Monastier to say the Mass of those who have passed away. Then on, still in a procession, they will go to the cemetery of Saint Pierre & The Grand Clausel [graveyard], and it will be distributed to the clerks of the aforementioned church, four pence [podies] & to the canons, eight pence, and the pence that will be taken, which is to say, from the shared contribution, one community supporting the other, the two parts, and the other third by the *bailes* of the said clerics: and so is done and observed each year until the present day.

⁵³ Médicis, 191.

Based on this description, one could argue that these events occurred as they were prescribed in liturgical texts. Yet Médicis also provides a description of a Rogations procession that offers a much more phenomenological account of these processional activities at Le Puy. Most intriguing is Médicis's description of the massive crowds partaking in the procession. Here, we learn of the types of participants, including not only pilgrims but also those who come out of curiosity to watch the spectacle. These processions, especially those held out of doors, did not only have a religious value but provided entertainment for the citizens:

Il estoit de louable costume, le temps passé, de porter processionnellement, les jours des Rogacions, chacun an, le devot ymage Nostre Dame du Puy & en ce portement se faifoient ordinairement, en ladicte ville, si grant triumphe & bruit que c'estoit merveilles. Pour laquelle cause s'assembloient au Puy tant de gens d'ung parti & d'autre, les ungs pour pelerins, autres par curiosité de voir le triumphe & assemblée, autres y venoint pour vendre leurs denrées, tant que finalement la devocion torna plustost à train de foire ou marcheè que de procession....⁵⁴

It was the praised tradition in the past to carry in procession the holy image of Our Lady of Le Puy each year on the Rogation days and upon this carrying [act of procession] that is done regularly in the aforementioned city, there was such a large and noisy celebration that it was miraculous. For this reason, so many people gathered at Le Puy from one region or another, some were pilgrims, curious to see the celebration and gathering, and others came there to sell their goods, so much so that in the end the devotion turned into a fair or market rather than a procession.

In this description, Médicis does not dissect the procession from its urban environment, but rather places the Virgin and the procession within it. Médici's descriptions of these processions also provide more information about the participants, actions and multi-sensory experience of these ritual activities. Unlike the *cérémonial*, which almost never mentions that people outside the clergy joined in processions, Médicis draws attention to the people of Le Puy as

⁵⁴ Médicis, 188.

participants in these events. The image of street vendors selling their wares points to the commercial aspects of procession, where devotional prints and other items could be sold to the faithful. While it is true that he does not provide specific information on religious vestments or instruments used in the procession, he does provide more accurate information about the non-ritualized aspects of these events. Here, it is the motion outside of the procession that interests Médicis, not the ritualized movements of the procession itself.

Médicis not only describes the processions of the city during the sixteenth century in vivid detail but he also provides several inventory records from the cathedral that gives evidence for objects used in procession such as crosses, candles and other ecclesiastical objects such as the Virgin and Child's slippers (Figure 43).⁵⁵ The most important item from the cathedral inventories is the canopy that carried the Virgin in procession. This object is also reproduced in extant drawings and paintings from the seventeenth century (Figure 44).⁵⁶

The second non-liturgical source for processions in Le Puy-en-Velay is the *mémoires* of Jean Burel (c. 1560). Writing about fifty years after Médicis, Burel also provides an invaluable record of the material culture of processions. His small book, while not as detailed as Médicis's tome, includes small sketches of items carried in procession in Le Puy-en-Velay. These descriptions also mention

⁵⁵ The usefulness of the Le Puy inventories to reconstruct lost objects from the cathedral has been discussed by Martin de Framond, Director of the Archives de la Haute Loire, in his article on the treasury of Le Puy. See "Notre-Dame des Armagnacs: Le trésor de la cathédrale du Puy-en-Velay" *Cahiers de la Haute Loire* (1993): 19 – 38.

⁵⁶ Médicis, 122. This item reads "quedam chadareta in qua portatur ymago beate Marie in Rogacionibus."

relics and other sacred objects that would have served as a visual “marker” of the processional space as it moved throughout the city. For example, Burel records a written account of a 1578 procession as well as a sketch of the Virgin of Le Puy. This sketch, already discussed in chapter two, is a rudimentary drawing of the head and torso of the statue flanked by two illuminated torches (Figure 30).⁵⁷ In Burel’s descriptions, the procession as performance is made abundantly clear through his emphasis on the ephemeral sights and sounds of bells, prayers, chants and fiery torches that accompanied the primary ritual movement of the procession. These objects served as ritual cues to ignite devotion. For example, Burel notes that when two canons carried Virgin sculpture on a gilded pavilion during the procession, all the bells in the city rang and prayers, songs and supplications to the Virgin filled the streets where her cortège passed.⁵⁸ It was thus the sculpture’s physical marking of the space through procession that directed attention towards public devotion.

Finally, Burel stresses the illuminated aspect of the procession. Both canons and consuls carried torches, presumably much like the ones Burel included in his image of the Virgin. Burel’s attention to these torches and the length he goes about describing them is instructive for the sacred and social significance of these objects. For example, he notes that the noble *seigneurs* and the governor of Le Puy carried torches decorated with the arms of the city while the canons carried torches with image of the statue upon them. Other devoted

⁵⁷ Burel, 79.

⁵⁸ Le Puy, Bibliothèque municipale. Ms. 59 (8081). *Mémoires et journal de Jean Burel, marchand tanneur du Puy*. 1560-1603. “Ymage de Notre-Dame porte en procession” f. 102r.

citizens also carried illuminated candles in their hands during the procession, a practice that continues in the procession on the Vigil of the Assumption in Le Puy today. No examples of these torches have survived to my knowledge.

Nevertheless, Burel's drawing and textual account of the Feast of the Assumption procession highlights the use of visual culture to promote the power of secular and religious authorities in Le Puy-en-Velay, a subject that will be returned to shortly.

Processions and the Urban Planning of Le Puy-en-Velay

One cannot examine the processions in late medieval and early modern Le Puy-en-Velay without an accurate record of the city's size, shape and demographics. The natural landscape that makes Le Puy-en-Velay unique remains untouched but the city has undergone significant changes in street planning, infrastructure and neighborhood divisions since the Middle Ages. Many of these changes, however, are modern alterations, and Bernard Rivet argues that the urban fabric and general divisions within the city remained largely consistent from the medieval period into the sixteenth century.⁵⁹

Early twentieth-century archaeological excavations of walls and fortifications provide physical evidence for the divisions in and around the medieval city.⁶⁰ The first wall around the city was erected in the ninth or tenth

⁵⁹ For a detailed analysis of the restoration and evolution of architecture in Le Puy-en-Velay from the middle ages to the baroque period see, Claude Perron, *Notes et croquis pour servir à la réhabilitation des quartiers anciens de la ville du Puy* (Le Puy-en-Velay: Cahiers de la Haute-Loire, 1972).

⁶⁰ Ulysse Rouchon, "Les Fortifications de la Ville du Puy" *Congrès archeologique de France*, Le Puy (1904): 358. For more information on defense fortifications in medieval religious structures see Sheila Bonde, *Fortress-Churches of Languedoc: Architecture, Religion and Conflict in the High Middle Ages* (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), esp. 27 - 34.

century. Louis VI officially confirmed this walled area in 1134 as having seven gates and seven towers. The wall was at its fullest extent in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (Figure 45). At this time, it spanned five kilometers in circumference and possessed eleven gates but only five towers.⁶¹ Fortifications in Le Puy-en-Velay were eventually torn down in the eighteenth century as both infighting and external threats declined.

As outlined in the introduction to this study, the cathedral lies geographically at the highest point of Le Puy and occupied its own jurisdictional district known as the close (*cloître*) that was built within a machicolated wall constructed from 1220- 1240.⁶² These fortifications can still be seen on the western side of the cathedral (Figure 46). The border of the cloister ran along the Rue de Frenerie, Rue des Portes and the Rue de Vienne. These streets also served as primary routes for cathedral processions.⁶³

The fortifications along the close were not constructed to protect the cathedral from outside threats but rather because of long-standing tension between the rising merchant class in Le Puy and the cathedral canons. As the city began to expand to the west and south in the thirteenth century, the physical division between the cathedral close and the lower town of Le Puy was delineated

⁶¹ Geneviève Douillard, "Topographie médiévale de la ville du Puy, jusqu'en 1544" (Mémoire de maîtrise, Université de Paris IV-Sorbonne, 1982), 19.

⁶² Ibid., 18. The extent of cloître determined by Bernard de Montaigu in 1236 and was expanded in 1237 under doyen Guillame de Chalençon.

⁶³ Ibid., 204. The close is also discussed by Gissey: "Cette Partie superieure de la ville est vulgairement appelée le Cloistre, ou y a trois portes & yssuës sur les champs," 119. [this upper part of the city is informally called the close, where there are three portals and exits to the countryside].

by economic and religious factors. The areas inside the close were reserved for the noble classes, the Hôtel-Dieu, and inhabitants associated with the Cathedral Notre-Dame.⁶⁴ The richest îles (neighborhoods) lay to the south of the cathedral while some of the poorest were situated within the close itself. The low income of the neighborhood around the cathedral was due to the charitable foundations associated with the cathedral in this area. The chapter of the cathedral and the affiliated University of Saint Mayol actually owned many of the land plots in the more affluent areas of the city, thus the cathedral benefited from the high rents and taxes on these properties.⁶⁵

In addition to these separations within the city, the Jewish quarter likely lay just outside the close, parallel to the Rue des Farges.⁶⁶ It was, however, clearly within the walls of the city. As will be detailed further in chapter four, the Jewish population of Le Puy was forced out of the city during the fourteenth century yet the memory of the Jews of Le Puy remained a part of the collective consciousness of the city's inhabitants in the centuries that followed. To my knowledge, no specific area in the city was designated for Muslims. More likely, Muslims who came to Le Puy were itinerant artisans working around the Rhône Valley, as will be discussed in chapter five.

⁶⁴ Giséy, 206. Giséy notes that the close consisted of the cathedral, bishop's residence, hospital, parochial churches and "belles maisons de divers grands seigneurs, qui se plaioient d'estre près de Notre-Dame" [beautiful homes of many great lords, who were pleased to be close to the Cathedral Notre-Dame].

⁶⁵ Douillard, 178. The richest îles were numbers 5, 7, 11, 12 (in 1544). The inhabitants of these wealthier neighborhoods were primarily notaries, merchants and fishmongers. Generally the northern and southern divide was separated by the rues Portail d'Avignon, Chaussade du Bessat, du Palais Rochetaillade, and Montpeyroux. The richest streets in the city were Rues Panessac, Palais, Saulnerie, Courrierie, Saint Gilles, Saint Jacques, Place Saint Pierre, Mauroret, Bidoyre.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

Last, the circulation of the city routes must also be briefly addressed. Because Le Puy-en-Velay was a highly visited pilgrimage site, the city streets had to accomodate more people than the standard population of a small medieval city. The gates between the cathedral close and the lower town played a significant role in both restricting and allowing circulation into the cathedral district. Médicis discusses one instance in which the ecclesiastical authorities at the cathedral elected not to open some of the gates of the close during the procession of the Saint Pardon, resulting in a tremendous congestion of the crowd towards the cathedral and ultimately, seven deaths.⁶⁷ Safety was evidently of increasing concern in Le Puy-en-Velay, as Médicis notes the presence of police around the gates of the city as well as a recent prohibition against entering the city with weapons or artillery.⁶⁸ Accordingly, Médicis makes a great effort to provide guidelines for pilgrims visiting Le Puy-en-Velay, instructing them on the best routes to reach the cathedral. He also notes that the city is organized to negotiate the large amount of visitors passing through his city. The urban planning of early modern Le Puy was thus highly influenced by the ritual movement of procession and pilgrimage. Failure to consider the role of the city streets in the execution of these processions or to ignore the impact of access during the procession could end tragically.

⁶⁷ Médicis, 144.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 154, also discussed by Douillard, 19.

Violence Ritualized: Processions and the fight for sacred space in Le Puy-en-Velay

While processions in Le Puy were often performed to promote cohesion within the Catholic community of the city, they could also provoke violence among the participants. The act of procession implies a group whose willingness to conform to the actions of the ritual dictates its success. The urban planning of the city of Le Puy sometimes disrupted this cooperation. For example, Médicis recounts the memory of a procession of the Virgin in 1255 in which the citizens of Le Puy attempted to push through a gate where the statue was placed. The lively transcription is worth quoting in full here:

Or, le très-devot & saint ymage ester mys la, le people indiscret, peu de singuliere & affectuese devocion, se lança celle part pour passer dessoubs, non pensant y avenir pour la multitude & grosse quantité du people qui y estoit, car, de la porte des Forges (out l'ymage estoit mis) jusequ'en l'eglise, tout estoit comble & farcy de gent & davangtaige. Pourquoy, pour le poulement que firent les derniers aux premiers, attendu que la rue desdictes Forges est en decise, & que nul bon ordre ou conduite n'y avoit souffifamment esté mise, & que le passaige soubs ledit ymage estoit petit, la force des derniers poulsarent les premiers & telle maniere les oppressarent & si violement passassent en quelque part soubs ycelluy. ⁶⁹

Thus, the very devout & holy statue was placed there and the reckless people with little outstanding and affectionate devotion started to move this part [the gate] in order to pass underneath, not thinking of the consequences for the crowd and the large amount of people who were there, because it was packed full of people from the Porte de Forges (where the statue was placed) all the way to the church. And because, for that the last of the group pushed the first ones, stretching from the street known as the Forges that declines downward and because good order and conduct was not sufficient there and because the passage underneath the image was small, the force of the last one pushed those at the beginning and the oppressed them in in such a manner and so violently trampling over them in any way possible.

While Médicis's, writing in the sixteenth-century, could not have witnessed this event himself, his shocking account of this legendary event demonstrates how

⁶⁹ Médicis, 189.

sites within the city were already becoming places of medieval memory for the early modern devout of Le Puy. As David A. Warner has argued, the study of past rituals should not be used as evidence for the reality of the event but rather for how this information was processed as a real memory.⁷⁰ That is, it did not matter if this event did not occur—the memory of the event was more significant than any reality. For Médicis, then, rather than the repetition of the annual procession, it is the trauma of a single manifestation of this ritual that remained present in the minds of later generations.

Indeed, the memory of this singular event persisted for centuries. Rev. Spenser Northcote, author of a nineteenth-century compilation of the sanctuaries of Mary, claimed that after this procession the "holy image was very rarely afterwards carried in public, and only on extra-ordinary occasions."⁷¹ My research proves this statement to be false but historical fact is of little importance for Northcote. More important is the fact that this event permeated the history of the Virgin of Le Puy for centuries. The memory of a single violent event became so powerful in the collective memory of the community that it overshadowed evidence for the continued practice of processions with the Virgin in Le Puy-en-Velay.

Accidental deaths were not the only instance of disorder in processions at Le Puy. At times, this disorder was a planned part of the ritual. As such, we must

⁷⁰ David A. Warner, "Ritual and Memory in the Ottonian Reich: The Ceremony of Adventus" *Speculum* 76 (2001): 255-83.

⁷¹ J. Spenser Northcote, *Celebrated Sanctuaries of the Madonna* (London: Longmans, Green, 1868).

also consider how ritual is transformed or maintained through disorder, often in the form of violence. The physical divide between the cathedral close and the lower town of merchants in Le Puy-en-Velay was also symbolically underscored through ritual activities in both parts of the town. For example, Henry Heller has called attention to Médicis's account of a Corpus Christi procession in which the canons of Le Puy carried both the Virgin of Le Puy and the holy Eucharist in procession through the upper portion of the city. Similarly, the priory of St. Pierre Le Monastier performed a similar procession through the lower town. When the canons extended their procession to include the parishes of St. Pierre, these two religious processions confronted each other on the city streets and a riot ensued (Figure 47).⁷² This confrontation became an annual event and thus the violence was both planned and circumscribed. For example, a part of the procession in the upper town included a theatrical production of the history of St. Michel in which the actors dressed as devils and wielded iron clubs under their costumes for use in the assumed violence that would commence.⁷³ One can only imagine the irony of these religious dramas as fictive demons became human adversaries on the city streets, blending sacred history and contemporary strife into acts of physical violence. The aggression of these activities was planned and to some extent, restrained. It was expected and in this way, it became a part of the ritual of the

⁷² Médicis, 177 – 80.

⁷³ Ibid. See also Henry Heller's description of this event in *Iron and Blood: Civil Wars in Sixteenth-Century France* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), 19. Heller places this example in the context of a "social war" determined by class struggles in Le Puy. I am less convinced of the argument for pure class motivations "cloaked" in religious events but the topography of Le Puy lends itself more physically to these sorts of professional divisions within the city.

procession itself. Violence was thus symbolic, if also brutal.⁷⁴ The iterative aspect of this violent behavior therefore turned weapons into ritual objects much like the liturgical instruments used in more peaceful processions. Accordingly, this example not only demonstrates the violence that communal gatherings such as processions could evoke, but it also how such displays of disorder were imbedded within religious ritual.⁷⁵

The threat of infighting during processions also served as a means to assert power in Le Puy. According to inventory records from the chapter, the canons issued a sort of "cease and desist" order to the priory of St. Pierre and all other churches in Le Puy prohibiting them from having procession before the cathedral's designated event occurred.⁷⁶ The parish of St. Pierre-le-Monastier's resistance to this mandate created another instance of anticipated ritual violence, in which this church vied for their right to process through the city streets. This "race to procession" added conflict disguised in ritual to the rival churches in Le Puy and thus warranted an official sanction. In this way, processional movement through the streets of Le Puy signified both community and conflict. The ritual

⁷⁴ The concept of ritualized violence is discussed at length by David Nirenberg in his *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 210 - 214.

⁷⁵ Natalie Davis, "The Rites of Violence" Religious Riot in Sixteenth-Century France" *Past and Present* 59 (1973): 152 - 187.

⁷⁶ Jean-Baptiste Payrard, *Documents inédits relatifs à l'histoire de N.-D. du Puy et du Velay : 1re layette de l'inventaire (Chartier) de Sancta Aniciensi ecclesia* (Le Puy: Marchessou, 1868), Inventory No. 114 (129), dated 11 July 1488.

movement of procession through the city could therefore create sacred space and simultaneously render this same space a belligerent zone of social disorder.⁷⁷

The Politics of the Virgin

By the sixteenth century, not only had the intensity and frequency of religious processions grown, but the regularity of public celebrations such as royal entry processions also became an increasingly significant part of the visual culture of the city. As such, the incorporation of the city arms and participation of secular magistrates indicates the extent that religious processions had become political in the early modern period.

Although the numerous royal entry processions that also took place in Le Puy extend beyond the scope of this dissertation, the role of the Virgin of Le Puy as both political and ecclesiastical instrument of power must be briefly addressed here. In the fifteenth century, the Virgin of Le Puy was championed on behalf of François I and the House of Valois and Anjou. The events of the Hundred Years' War further emphasized this alliance when the local nobility of Le Puy defeated Burgundian troops and attributed the victory to the Virgin.⁷⁸ Accordingly, she was celebrated among the Armagnacs and became an integral part of their political identity.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Many scholars have discussed the descralization of space through processional disorder. For an analysis of the spatial semiotics of procession and its relationship to the power dynamics of ecclesiastical authorities see, Kathleen Ashley and Pamela Sheingorn, "*Discordia et Lis: Negotiating Power, Property and Performance in Medieval Selestat*" *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 26/3 (1996): 419 – 446.

⁷⁸ Médicis, 238.

⁷⁹ Framond, "Notre-Dame des Armagnacs," 19-58.

Not only was the Virgin statue aligned symbolically with France, but according to the 1436 archives of the Hôtel-Dieu in Le Puy, her mantel was also embroidered with the fleur-de-lis. This royal symbol was further connected to the Cult of the Virgin of Le Puy through the sale of fleur-decorated pilgrimage badges sold at the Hôtel-Dieu.⁸⁰ Royal offerings to the Virgin continued throughout the early modern period, with a largesse similar in sum to those at Saint Denis and Chartres.⁸¹ Accordingly, the political power held by the Virgin of Le Puy was likely equal to her sacral qualities. Indeed, visual signs of the royal alliance of the Virgin are still present in the cathedral today, as a large tapestry of fleur-de-lis provides a striking background for the altar of the Virgin.

Paintings of processions in Le Puy-en-Velay also stress the political and pious nature of these ceremonies. Jean Solvain's *Le voeu de peste* (1650), for example, documents a 1630 procession of the Virgin during a time of plague in Le Puy (Figure 48). This large painting currently hangs in the nave of the cathedral. The bottom right-hand corner of the Solvain's painting bears an inscription that describes the scene to the viewer:

*Voeu fait rendu par tous les Ordres des habitants de la ville du Puy le 22 avril 1630, rendans graces à Dieu de les avoir delivres du male de peste duquel mouruent dix mil et plus desdictz habitants l'année precedente, ceste faveur leur estant arrivée par les priers puissantes de la glorieuse Vierge, leur bonne dame et patronne, de la quelle a esté porté en procession solennel le saint Image come est icy depainct*⁸²

⁸⁰ Hôtel-Dieu 1B2/9 (1436), "depicta scripta flores lilii com cora vel sine corona."

⁸¹ Framond, "Notre Dame des Armagnacs," 37.

⁸² Antoine Jacmon et al., *Mémoires d'Antoine Jacmon, bourgeois du Puy*, Mémoires d'Antoine Jacmon, bourgeois du Puy. Publiés aux frais de la société d'agriculture, sciences, arts et commerce du Puy par Augustin Chassaing (Le Puy-en-Velay. Impr. de Marchessou fils, 1885), 35.

The vow that was performed by all the orders of the inhabitants of the city of Le Puy on the 22nd of April 1630, giving thanks to God for having delieved them from the terrible plague which killed ten thousand or more inhabitants the year before, this favor came to them by way of the powerful prayers of the glorious Virgin, their fair lady and patron, who is carried in solemn procession, the holy statue who is painted here

In Solvain's painting, the Virgin of Le Puy is carried upon a small altar-like canopy. The use of such a podium for the Virgin was a long-standing tradition for the processions at Le Puy as evidenced by a similar drawing of a processional canopy by Burel in his sixteenth-century *mémoires* (Figure 49).⁸³ The painting also provides good evidence for both the spectatorship of the procession and the participants. While the majority of the processants are clerics or confraternity members, the men that carry the sculpture itself are the consuls of Le Puy. Seventeenth-century scribe Antoine Jacmon confirms the scene presented by Solvain, identifying each group of participants.⁸⁴ These men are dignitaries of the city, three of them working as magistrates while the others are the town apothecarian, noted merchant and *practicien* [judge/administrator of justice]. Their position in the painting and Jacmon's account of the procession is central. The city supported the Virgin, and in turn, the Virgin protected her city.

Solvain's painting depicts a seventeenth-century procession, so one cannot assume the same priority or structure of the processions in Le Puy three or four hundred years prior. Nevertheless, if we are to analyze both the textual sources and this painting together, it can be assumed that the mere fact that the Virgin of Le Puy is consistently presented as the central figure borne on a litter

⁸³ Burel, *Mémoires*, 103.

⁸⁴ Jacmon, 37.

demonstrates her centrality to the ritual activity. Such centrality was not always given to cult statues, especially as the Feast of the Corpus Christi became more dominant in the late middle ages and early modern periods.⁸⁵ The focus on the Virgin of Le Puy in both textual and visual sources clearly indicates the importance of the statue to Le Puy-en-Velay and its history of processional activity.

The fraught intercession between political and religious functions of the Virgin of Le Puy can perhaps best be exemplified through another seventeenth-century painting, Jean François's *Le voeu des échevins* (1653). Hanging in the nave of the cathedral just opposite from Solvain's plague procession, François depicts the Virgin of Le Puy sitting within her niche as the local magistrates of Le Puy flank her image in prayer (Figure 50). At the center, embracing the nearest *échevins* are two scantily-clad men, who gaze up in adoration at the Virgin. She bears an elaborate mantel that hides her body and a golden bejeweled crown sits upon her hairless head. Beneath her niche is a crowned crest displaying three fleurs-de-lis, thereby associating the Virgin with the French monarchy and more locally, the *échevins*.

This painting shows not how the statue physically functioned within the community but instead how the Virgin of Le Puy served as a unifying symbol for both the religious and political communities of the city. By the seventeenth century, the Virgin of Le Puy acquired a new function to legitimize and bless the political establishment of the city. Now Notre Dame du Puy was not simply an

⁸⁵ Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture*, 243 - 269.

object of pilgrimage, a reliquary or a processional statue but she was a visual symbol of Le Puy-en-Velay that held political, social and religious significance.

Conclusions

The late medieval and early modern processions in Le Puy-en-Velay were more than ordered ritual action, they were events with multiple parts, people and motivations. These ephemeral events were mechanisms that encouraged collectivity while simultaneously acknowledging the hierarchies and divisions within the church and social networks of the city. Central in these ritual events was the Virgin of Le Puy, who played multiple roles as cult object, processional statue, political emblem and Marian reliquary. Susan Verdi-Webster has discussed this type of sensory experience that accompanied early modern Spanish processions.⁸⁶ Processional sculpture, she argues, is inherently experiential. That is, these objects are only fully "active" through participation the event itself. Sharing the same space and experience as the processants, the sculpture and audience move as one, prompting an intense emotional connection with the divine.⁸⁷ Processional sculptures thus fused the image and the prototype (the Virgin, in this case) through the sensory experience of a procession. While I believe Verdi-Webster perhaps overstates the singularity of this effect in both its Spanish context and processional sculpture—the icons of Byzantium worked in similar ways—her attention to the reciprocal nature of image and audience is important. As the Virgin of Le Puy moved across the streets, she became more

⁸⁶ Webster, 58.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

than a site of pilgrimage or representation of the Virgin. Her role in processions required an audience—not only to carry the image but also to share in her experience.

After the medieval sculpture was burned in 1794, processions ceased to exist in Le Puy for a few years. However, the 1836 customary of the cathedral indicates that processions occurred even before the installation of the second "Notre-Dame du Puy." This customary offers more specific instructions for processions, noting "it is appropriate to carry a statue of the holy Virgin on a litter."⁸⁸ Here, the use of the article "a" is important. Because the traditional sculpture was destroyed, "a statue" of the Virgin replaced it but this was *not* the Virgin of Le Puy. In a reversal of roles, a prototypical statue of the Virgin Mary now stood in place of her localized image. Through the object's participation in procession, these identities became fused as one, much like they had done previously in print.

⁸⁸ *Ceremonial à l'usage de l'église du Puy* (Le Puy, P. Pasquet, 1836), 444.

CHAPTER FOUR

On the Outskirts of the Procession: Jews, Protestants and the Virgin

In the sixteenth century, an inscription on the Bishop of Le Puy's door in the cathedral complex read:

Digna fuit exclusio Judaeorum a Podio /Non intrent, quia captio/ clericulis est data

Well-deserved was the expulsion of the Jews from Puy. May they not enter for their capture is in the hands of altar boys.¹

This haunting inscription refers to a popular Marian miracle tale known as the “murder of the boy chorister.” This tale was repeated in several important works of medieval literature, appearing in the Alfonso X's *Cantigas de Santa Maria* and Gautier de Conci's *Les miracles de Nostre-Dame*. Perhaps most famously, it is told by the Prioress in Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*.² The story recounts how a young boy was singing praises to the Virgin as he filed past the Jewish quarter of his city, inciting the rage of a Jew who then murdered the boy. Through the Virgin's intervention, the boy continued to sing posthumously, and reveals his murderer who is then violently attacked by a Christian mob and dies.

¹ Etienne de Médicis, *Le livre de Podio ou chronique d'Étienne de Médicis, bourgeois du Puy*, edited by A. Chassaing in *Recueil des chroniqueurs du Puy-en-Velay*, Vols. I and II (Le Puy, 1859), 38. Reprinted and translated in Anthony Paul Bale, *The Jew in the Medieval Book: English Antisemitisms 1350 – 1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 66.

² Bale provides a list of the versions of this miracle tale, 169 – 172.

A distant and exotic setting relative to the immediate audiences of this tale is a key component in almost every version of this miracle.³ In the *Canturbury Tales*, the prioress does not set her story in Le Puy, but rather in Asia, a distant and largely imagined locality for Chaucer's English audience.⁴ Other early French sources for this tale do not mention a specific locality for the miracle, but the *Cantigas of Santa Maria* similarly sets the scene in faraway Britain.

In the fifteenth century, this tale—along with many other Marian miracles—was adapted and transcribed by Jean Miélot, the secretary to Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy (r. 1419 – 1467) in his *La vie et miracles de Nostre Dame* (c. 1465).⁵ In Miélot's version, the tale takes place in Le Puy-en-Velay. This location appears to be a new addition in the fifteenth century that was popularized by Miélot.⁶ Thus Miélot's choice to set this tale in Le Puy-en-Velay seems to be of particular importance. Although there is no evidence for such an event occurring in the city, as the legend clearly evolves from other older versions across Europe, Le Puy played a large role in the expulsion of Jews from France in

³ The original setting for Gauthier de Coincy's *Vie et miracles de Notre Dame* sets this tale in Gauthier's native Soissons, France. It is interesting to consider that this tale changed from a story of local origin to one of a distinctly foreign environment in subsequent editions.

⁴ Carlton F. Brown, "Chaucer's Prioress Tale and its Analogues" *Publications of the Modern Language Association* 21/2 (1906): 486. Exemplum 31 – "Exemplum de puero qui frequenter cantabat scilicet gaude Maria." Brown also lists Ceasarius of Heisterbach, *Libri VIII Miraculorum* as an early source for this story. See Brown for additional sources.

⁵ Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, ms 9199. Number XIX: "D'un jeusne clerc qui bien chantoit en hault 'Erubescat Judaeus' le quel la vierge Marie preserva de mort." f. 13v. A comparison of these manuscripts can be found in, Léopold Delisle, *Les miracles de Notre-Dame, rédaction en prose de Jean Miélot* (Paris, 1886).

⁶ Miélot's text is the most cited source of this miracle tale set in Le Puy. It also appears in Jean Mansel's *Les fleurs de histoires* (Bibliothèque nationale ms. français 56) c. 1445. Because this text and Miélot's are close in date, it suggests the setting of this miracle tale in Le Puy was circulating in France by this time when they were codified by Miélot and Mansel. I focus on Miélot's text because it is the most famous version and because it is illustrated.

the fourteenth century. This history of antisemitism thus lent credence to the tale as it was repeated in many *histoires* of the Virgin of Le Puy.⁷ In fact, the Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay displayed a monument to this miracle tale until the mid-nineteenth century.⁸

The sixteenth-century inscription on the bishop's door recalling these altar boys awaiting the entry of the Jews into the Le Puy as quoted at the beginning of this chapter thus alludes to the anti-Jewish history, both fictive and real, in Le Puy-en-Velay. While this tale attributes the miracle to the Virgin Mary and not specifically the Virgin of Le Puy, the choice to set this story in Le Puy-en-Velay is significant. Moreover, the local identity of the Virgin of Le Puy would have likely been associated with this popular and persistent legend in the city. The Virgin of Le Puy therefore must be considered in terms of those devoted to her and those who disparaged her. This chapter will consider how outsiders, namely the medieval Jews and early modern Protestants of the city, formed part of the Virgin of Le Puy's identity.

First, I will examine legends surrounding the "Miracle of the Murdered Chorister." As I will argue below, the choice of Le Puy-en-Velay in Miélot's version may have been the result of the city's true history for the persecution of Jews as well as the city's reputation as a distant and somewhat exotic locale thanks to the Virgin of Le Puy and her pilgrimage. I will also examine evidence

⁷ François-Hubert Forestier provides a complete list and excerpts of documents relating to this miracle tale set in Le Puy-en-Velay. See "Les Juifs du Puy au Moyen Age" *Cahiers de la Haute-Loire* (1999): 223 – 240. Forestier includes these documents to determine the truth of the legend in Le Puy. He does not acknowledge that this was a popular legend and thus likely did not occur there (182).

⁸ Bale, 66.

for a Jewish quarter in Le Puy-en-Velay and investigate to what extent the urban space and historical events in Le Puy may have contributed to the association of the chorister tale with the city.

Next, the relationship between the Virgin of Le Puy and the Huguenot population of the city will be addressed. Here, the role of idolatry and worship of sacred images comes to the forefront of this discussion. A rare “avertissement” from sixteenth-century Le Puy serves as the focal point for this portion of the chapter. In this document, the Virgin of Le Puy speaks on her own behalf against claims of idolatry. The statue thus asserts an agency that transfers the Virgin’s power from literal object to figurative subject, further complicating issues regarding the authority of sacred images explored previously in chapter two. This chapter ends with a return to the subject of processions. The Protestant community remained part of the urban fabric of Le Puy-en-Velay yet Catholic processions had to accommodate their routes to avoid the homes of Huguenot converts. This ‘accommodation’ was sometimes forcibly manipulated by the clergy of Le Puy and resulted in a temporary change in the sacred spaces in the city.

Le Puy and Jean Miélot's Vie et Miracles de Notre-Dame

Jean Miélot's *La vie et miracles de Notre-Dame* (c. 1456) is a middle French compilation of Marian miracle tales based on several Latin texts and most likely, Gauthier de Conci's twelfth-century *Les miracles de Nostre-Dame*.⁹ It survives in two volumes (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, français ms. 9198 and ms.

⁹ See discussion of sources in John Reuning, “*La vie et miracles de Nostre Dame* de Jean Miélot: A Partial Critical Edition”(MA Thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2003), 1 – 3.

9199). The tale of the murdered boy chorister appears in the second volume (français 9199). A second version of this text is preserved at Oxford University (Bodleian Library, Ms. Douce 374). As mentioned above, Miélot changes the location of the tale of the murdered chorister in his text not to a foreign land as was standard for this legend but to “la cité de Anice, que lon nomme orendroit Le Puis, en Auvergne” [The city of Anicium, which is now called Le Puy, in the Auvergne].¹⁰

Miélot's version of this miracle tale is also distinct in that it situates this miracle around the processions of Le Puy. After the boy is killed for singing his praises to the Virgin, the Jew goes to the cathedral on Palm Sunday to seek a new victim, knowing that a procession would take place there. As the procession filed past the Jew, the ghost of the murdered chorister appeared to the crowd and took his place in the procession. The Jew was thus exposed as murderer and stoned to death while an image of the Virgin restored the boy to life.¹¹ Miélot emphasizes the frequency of processions in Le Puy, stating that processions around the cathedral occurred every Saturday in the city in the first line of the exemplum.¹² A half-length grisaille miniature also illustrates the procession around the cathedral in both versions of Miélot's text (Figure 51 & 52). Slight variations in

¹⁰ Cited in Bale, 64. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Fr 9199 13v. ; Oxford, Bodleian, ms. Douce 374, 15v.

¹¹ Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, ms Fr. 9199 f. 13v English translation in Carleton Fairfield Brown, “A Study of the Miracle of Our Lady told by Chaucer’s Prioress” published for the Chaucer Society by K. Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co. and by H. Frowde. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1910), 83. This story appears in a slightly changed form in the Oxford, Bodleian, Ms. Douce 374 version, in which the chorister is not murdered, but thrown down a well. This scene is depicted in the manuscript.

¹² Paris, Bibliothèque nationale fr 9199, 13v. “Il y a ung costume de procession tous les samedis.”

the Paris and Oxford versions exist, but they are largely similar in composition, highlighting the large procession encircling the cathedral and walls of the close.¹³ These miniatures have been proposed to be the work of Flemish illuminator Lieven Van Latham who worked in the Court of Burgundy.¹⁴

The strong focus on processional activity in Miélot's version of this tale is also notable. Several other versions of the tale only discuss the boy singing alone, not as a part of a procession. While this detail of course could reflect the general growth of processional activity in the late Middle Ages, it is nevertheless a significant change to the source of the miracle and may indicate the importance of processions to the Virgin Mary practiced in Le Puy. It is tempting to use the illustration of the procession in Miélot's manuscript as visual evidence for these events in late fifteenth-century Le Puy, but one must take some caution in this conclusion. For example, Miélot's version cites that the phrase sung by the chorister "erubescat Judeus infelix" [Let the unhappy Jew be shamed] was the line that triggered the Jew's anger. This phrase was not part of the antiphons in any known processions at Le Puy-en-Velay but rather is part of the *Gaude Maria Virgo*, a popular poem repeated in some of the versions of the chorister's tale.¹⁵ , Nevertheless, architectural detail and specific places play an important role in this text. Not only does Miélot cite notable pilgrimage sites at Laon, Toulouse and

¹³ The Oxford version of the manuscript depicts a more aerial viewpoint and includes a man wearing a distinctive pocket on his garment to designate him as a Jew. This detail is not included in the Paris version (ms 9199).

¹⁴ Jean le Tavernier and Phillipe de Mazerolles have also been proposed as possible minaturists for the other two versions of Miélot's book.

¹⁵ Bale, 67.

his native Soissons, but the illustrations that accompany these legends also make loose connections to specific places. For example, Miélot sets one of his miracles at Saint Michel 'en normandie.' The corresponding image displays a church complex surrounded by water (Figure 53).¹⁶ This oblique reference to the most striking feature of the famous Monastery of Mont Saint Michel serves to localize and specialize this miracle tale for Miélot's royal patrons.¹⁷ Likewise, grisaille miniatures of the cathedral in each illumination of the chorister's miracle bear some similarities to the Cathedral of Le Puy. The Paris manuscript depicts the prominent wall encircling the cathedral like the close in Le Puy, and the cathedral also possesses a conspicuously large portal entrance. The enormous entrance into the cathedral certainly would have distinguished this site from other cathedrals and could have been another implicit reference to the specificity of this site.¹⁸

One must suspect that Miélot's decision to change the location of this tale was rooted in historical events that his audience would have known.¹⁹ The presence of Jews in Le Puy is documented from the thirteenth century.²⁰ According to archival records, the canons of the collegiate church of Saint Agrève were charged tax on their goods and gardens situated "between the Jewish area

¹⁶ Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, ms français 9199, 24v.

¹⁷ Richard Krautheimer has famously argued for the loose connection between copies of monuments in medieval architecture. See his "Introduction to an Iconography of Medieval Architecture" *Journal of the Courtauld and Warburg Institutes* 5 (1942): 1–33.

¹⁸ The large portal door is most notable in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, ms. fr 9199.

¹⁹ Bale concurs with this idea, noting that with the change of the location to Le Puy from Asia, the tale becomes one of "imagined geography" to that of "lived reality," 66.

²⁰ Forestier, 160. The earliest documentation for a Jewish presence at Le Puy dates to 1212. Some legends reference the conversion of 500 Jews in Auvergne in the late fourth century, but evidence for this is lacking.

and the wall of the city of Le Puy."²¹ A second document confirms this agreement by the bishop, mentioning this property lies “close to the wall of the city of Le Puy and on the other side is the territory and wall of the Jews.”²² As François-Hubert Forestier has argued, this “wall” was not necessarily a large outer wall of the city, but could have also been a smaller portion within the larger city ramparts.²³ This is entirely plausible at Le Puy, given that the cathedral complex and surrounding area were certainly separated from the rest of the city by the close. The years 1320 – 1321 saw tremendous persecution of Jews in France and elsewhere in Europe, cumulating in an edict by Philip V in 1321 mandating the expulsion of the Jews from the country.²⁴ While this ordinance was not strictly followed in some French cities, Le Puy actively participated in the expulsion of Jews.²⁵ According to inventory records from the cathedral, a 1373 letter gave privileges to the clerics of Saint Mayol to drive out or jail any Jew who came to the city in memory of their ancestors' "wicked actions."²⁶ A similar document from 1403 notes the

²¹ “qui sont inter terram juzior et claustram civitatis Podii,” Archives de la Haute-Loire, G 521/2. Reprinted in Forestier, 164.

²² Forestier, 165. “ex alia parte sunt domus terre juzior.”

²³ Ibid., 89 – 91. See Compoix du Puy de 1544, Archives départementales de la Haute-Loire, 1C 926.

²⁴ Bale, 65 . See also *Gallica Christiana*, Paris, 1720, Tom II, 723. “An 1321. Judeai edicto Philippi V Regis, Ancio pulsi sunt ob clericum majoris ecclesiae interfectum.”

²⁵ Ibid. For more information about violence towards Jews during the Middle Ages see David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

²⁶ Jean Baptiste Payrard, *Documents inédits relatifs à l'histoire de N.-D. du Puy & du Velay: Ire layette de l'inventaire (Chartier) de sancta aniciensis ecclesia* (Le Puy: Impr. et lithographie M.-P. Marchessou, 1868). See also Gissey, 497.

internment of a Jew, Jean Bernard (called Abraham), and reiterates the right of the church to imprison any Jew inside the walls of the cathedral close.²⁷

Before Jews were expelled from the city, they likely lived in a Jewish quarter located near the cathedral. Extant fifteenth- and sixteenth-century compoix of the city mention the presence of a Jewish street called the “charreyra Juzeva” and the “chanton to la Juerie” in the compoix of 1408 and 1544 respectively. By this time, the Jews would have already been expelled from the city, so these street names are likely a historical reference rather than an indication of an active Jewish quarter. This street was closed off in the eighteenth century but retained its Jewish heritage as it was marked the “ancienne rue de juiverie.”²⁸ Genèvieve Douillard has studied these compoix extensively, and has proposed that the Jewish quarter was located in the *île paulhe* and that the Rue de la Juiverie ran parallel to the Rue des Farges between the Rue Saint Julien (now Grangeville) and terminating at the Rue de l'Ouche. (Figure 54).²⁹ This alignment is no longer exists, as the Rue de la Juiverie was eliminated during the construction of the larger Avenue de la Cathédrale that runs perpendicular to the former street. Douillard bases her evidence primarily on archival records and the compois of 1408, both of which do not record the names of the owners and

²⁷ Payrard, No. 73 (107).

²⁸ Forestier, 165. Forestier's main source is the compoix du Puy de 1723, Archives départementales de la Haute-Loire, 1C 928.

²⁹ Ibid., 166. See also Geneviève Douillard, "Restitution du quartier juif du Puy-en-Velay au Moyen Âge" in *L'art juif au moyen âge* (Berg International éditeurs, 1988), 142 – 144. Douillard bases her reconstruction on a document describing the homes along the "Rue Judaïque" (Archives départementales de la Haute Loire, G 175).

renters of homes in this area.³⁰ Forestier concurs with this placement based on archaeological evidence for former thruways in this area and extant drawings depicting the gate to the Jewish quarter.³¹ If this estimation is accurate, the Jewish quarter would have been directly below the graded incline leading to the western portal of the cathedral. This textual and archeological evidence indicates that the Jewish quarter in Le Puy would have been located quite close to the processions in the cathedral close in the early permutations of religious processions in the city.

No evidence indicates that processions ever entered or came near the Jewish quarter, even after the expulsion of the Jews from Le Puy. Most extra-mural processions were routed in the opposite direction, towards the affiliated collegiate churches on the eastern side of the cathedral. Similarly, this quarter could have been easily avoided on the way to St. Michel d'Aiguilhe during Rogations processions that extended beyond the city wall. While it cannot be known if the old Jewish quarter was intentionally avoided perhaps even because of this tale, later processions did adapt their routes according to the demographics of the city, more of which will be discussed further below.³²

Given this history and Le Puy's importance as a remote Marian pilgrimage site, Miélot's choice of Le Puy can hardly be considered an arbitrary one. The

³⁰ Douillard, 142. Douillard points to a graphic archival record from 4 March 1627 which clearly notes that the buildings along the Rue de la Juiverie were intact.

³¹ Forestier, 166.

³² Sabine von Heusinger has shown that processions in Strasbourg and Colmar avoided the Jewish quarter of these cities. See her "Topography of Sacred Space and the Representation of Social Groups: Confraternities in Strasbourg" in *Politics and Reformations: Communities, Politics, Nations and Empires*, ed. Christopher Ocker, et al. (Boston: Brill, 2007), 67 - 84.

city's role in the expulsion of the Jews from France maintained its significance a century later. As Anthony Bale has also argued, Miélot shifts this miracle tale from a distant land of imagined antisemitism to a closer locale with a demonstrated anti-Jewish history.³³ While Bale's argument seems plausible, Le Puy-en-Velay was not exactly local or familiar to the Burgundian court. I believe that given the remote location and reputation of the miracle working Black Madonna the city of Le Puy-en-Velay may have been understood as an exotic and distant place even within the borders of France. Moreover, the Dukes of Burgundy and the Dukes of Anjou were both bitter rivals and often blood relatives. As argued in the previous chapter, René d'Anjou's interest in the Black Madonna of Le Puy appears to be rooted in his interest in the Holy Land. The Black Madonna of Le Puy was thus becoming more associated with Egypt and the exoticism of the Holy Land at precisely the same time Miélot was composing his manuscript. It is perhaps not surprising that this interest in Le Puy appears in the late fourteenth century Burgundian court. Given the increasing fame of the Black Madonna of Le Puy, Miélot's choice of the city for this tale might be well rooted in the statue's connection to Egypt as well as any knowledge of the Jewish population or their history in Le Puy-en-Velay.

Despite the ambiguities surrounding the fiction and reality of Miélot's version of the "Murder of the Boy Chorister" miracle, the connection of the Virgin Mary with Le Puy-en-Velay is made abundantly clear. Although the statue plays no role in the procession itself, her role as a miracle-working statue is pivotal to

³³ Bale, 66.

this story. Miélot's choice of Le Puy thus also indicates the status of the Virgin of Le Puy as a miracle-working statue in fifteenth-century France. Miélot's setting therefore indicates that Le Puy held a special meaning in fifteenth century France. The city's role in the anti-Jewish activities of the past century, its strong tradition of religious processions, and the remoteness of the site seem to have made Le Puy a logical location for this exemplum. Miélot's selection of Le Puy then seems to suggest a specific historical moment in which the city's frequent processions, Virgin statue and actions towards its Jewish population were well-known.

Erasing Efficacy—The Virgin of Le Puy as 'diable ydole'

By the sixteenth-century, the Jewish population had declined as a result of mass expulsions and new religious enemies, called Huguenots, or French Calvinists, threatened the sanctity of the Virgin of Le Puy. Despite all theological arguments verifying the authenticity of a sacred image, the power of these images is ultimately contingent upon its audience's belief in its veracity. The miraculous powers of the Virgin were readily accepted when Le Puy-en-Velay was predominately Catholic, but the influence of Calvin and Protestant reform throughout France changed the demographics of the city in the sixteenth-century. Civil war between Calvinist and Catholic factions grew with increasing violence throughout the century, threatening both the stability of the monarchy and the Catholic Church in France.³⁴ Through these wars, Le Puy remained a

³⁴ There is a vast and somewhat debated literature on the origins, significance and impact of the French civil wars, particularly among historians of this period. Henry Heller's *Iron and Blood* claims to take a bold historical stance on French civil wars of the sixteenth century by claiming that the so-called "Wars of Religion" were not based in religious opposition but rather were the

Catholic stronghold with strong ties to the *Ligue*; however, Protestantism was not unknown in sixteenth-century Velay.

The tension between the Catholics and Huguenots of Le Puy was far from civil, and often resulted in acts of violence towards images. Of primary concern to these believers was the difference between a *representation* of the sacred and the sacred thing itself. This distinction came to a theological head with the debate of Real Presence in the Eucharist, but it also extended to what Protestants saw as the worship of idols rather than their referents.³⁵ Etienne Médicis, for example, laments the actions of the Huguenots towards the Virgin of Le Puy. Above all, he notes that they call the Virgin an “ydole” thus stripping her of her authenticity as a sacred Christian image. He describes how Protestants of Le Puy defiled the statue in vivid detail:

result of accumulating class struggle among the aristocracy, bourgeoisie, and commoners. Heller takes aim at Roland Mousnier’s thesis of a “society of orders” that ruled France during the early modern period. Mack P. Holt has taken contention with Heller’s premise that religion was “beside the point” in the French civil wars. Holt argues that while Heller’s thesis does reveal the societal tensions among the upper and middle classes in sixteenth-century France, he also admonishes Heller’s text for its insistence upon socio-economic causes of these wars and rather reductionist dismissal of religious tensions between Catholics and Protestants. See the discussion and rejoinder between Henry Heller and Mack Holt on this issue: Henry Heller, *Iron and Blood: Civil Wars in Sixteenth-Century France* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1991). With review/critique/rejoinder: Mack Holt, “Putting Religion Back into the Wars of Religion” Review Article in *French Historical Studies* 18/2 (1993): 524 – 551; Henry Heller, “Putting History Back into the Religious Wars: A Reply to Mack P. Holt” *French Historical Studies* 19/3 (1996): 856 – 861; Mack Holt, “Historical Method and Historical Forces: A Rejoinder” *French Historical Studies* 19/3 (1996): 863 – 873. For the social and cultural impact of the Wars of Religion, see Barbara Diefendorf’s examination of social and religious conflict in Paris after the Massacre of St. Bartholomew in *Beneath the Cross: Catholics and Huguenots in Sixteenth-Century Paris* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

³⁵ For more historical context of this debate see, among others, Raymond A. Mentzer and Andrew Spicer, *Society and Culture in the Huguenot World, 1559-1685* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Thomas J. Heffernan and Thomas E. Burman, eds. *Scripture and Pluralism: Reading the Bible in the Religiously Plural Worlds of the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Boston: Brill, 2005); Christopher Elwood, *The Body Broken: The Calvinist Doctrine of the Eucharist and the Symbolization of Power in Sixteenth-Century France* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

Oseray-je cy amener comment es assemblées de ces mauldits, insensés villans et déturpés, excommuniés, sacrileges et appostats Huguenaux hérétiques du Puy, se sont trouvés plusieurs qui ont détraicté de ce saint et miraculeux ymaige Nostre-Dame l'appelant ydole, troncon de bois, massiarada, et ses imaiges faits de papier appelés T...C. (torche culs)....”³⁶

Dare I be so bold here as to bring up how the groups of these cursed, insane villans and humiliated, excommunicated, sacreligious and apostates, the heretical Huguenots of Le Puy, many who were found to have disparaged this holy and miraculous statue Notre-Dame, calling her an idol, a stump of wood, dirty and those images made of paper called *torche-culs* [ie. toilet paper]...

Médici's description of the Huguenots actions toward the Virgin of Le Puy demonstrates the power of visual dissent. The Virgin called an idol, and her image was sordid like waste paper. For the Huguenots of Le Puy, the Virgin functioned as a threatening image, as a visual sign of their dissatisfaction with the Catholic faith.

This attitude towards the Virgin of Le Puy was not only recorded by Médicis, but it has also been preserved in a little-known *avertissement* printed Lyon in 1563.³⁷ This text survives in its original format, bound with a copy of *La polymachie des marmitons*, another Protestant polemic. Huguenots had dominated Lyon a year prior, promoting hundreds of conversions to the Protestant confession in the formerly staunchly Catholic city. There was thus

³⁶ Médicis, 512.

³⁷ *Avertissement a messieurs du Puy, touchant l'idolatrie qu'ils commentent envers l'idole de leur Nostre Dame sur le chant Psaume 40 avec un chanson spirituelle à louange de la paix sur le meme chant. Plus vn Echo qui declaire par ses // responses la source des troubles de // France, & l'effect de la guerre. // A Lyon, // 1563. In-8 de 8 ff. non chiff. de 32 lignes à la page pleine, sign. A-B.* Viewed copy at Houghton Library (Harvard University) 99 – 37. I am deeply indebted to Shirin Fozi for directing me to this source.

both public support and an economic market for this criticism of the Virgin of Le Puy.³⁸

The *advertissement's* publication in 1563 was even more significant to the citizens of Le Puy. From the fourth to the tenth of August 1562, Huguenots seized the city under the command of le Chevalier de Blacon.³⁹ The presiding bishop of the city, Antoine II de Saint-Nectaire, helped combat the resistance against the siege, but ultimately, he was unsuccessful. Upon the capture of the city, fifty people were tried and executed in the Place du Martouret, exactly the same place where the Virgin would also be destroyed some two hundred years later.⁴⁰

Although tenuous terms of peace were established in the city in 1568, armed Protestant soldiers commanded a large presence in a city that was soon devastated further by plague, famine and continued warfare spurred by the events of St. Bartholomew's Day.⁴¹ Terms of peace were not achieved until 1596,

³⁸ Timothy Watson, "Preaching, printing, psalm-singing: the making and unmaking of the Reformed church in Lyon, 1550 – 1572" in Raymond Metzger and Andrew Spicer, eds., *Society and Culture in the Huguenot World, 1559 – 1685* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 10 – 21.

³⁹ *Le Consulat de la ville du Puy-en-Velay du XIIIème au XVIIème siècle* (Le Puy-en-Velay: Archives municipales, 1991), 4.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ St. Bartholomew's Day occurred on 24 August 1572 after the marriage of Margaret of Valois to Henry of Navarre, a Protestant. This event resulted in the attempted assassination of the Protestant general Gaspard de Coligny and days of mob violence in which Protestants were killed in huge numbers. This event is seen as the turning point in the Wars of Religion in sixteenth-century France, although the origins and impact of the event are still debated. For more information see Barbara D. Diefendorf, *The Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 2009).

two years before Henri IV issued a nation-wide but short-lived decree of religious tolerance, the Edict of Nantes.⁴²

The *advertissement* attacks the Catholic devotion to the Virgin through rhymed verse directly addressing the people of Le Puy and more specifically, the canons of the cathedral. The poet, speaking directly in the “vous” form of direct address, chastises the Catholics of Le Puy for their worship of the “noire, lourde et frivole” [black, unsightly and frivolous] idol.⁴³ He goes on to address the very materiality of the sculpture, noting that it is nothing but wood “sans entendement, ne vertu” [without reason or worth]. These accusations criticized the Catholic veneration of relics and other liturgical objects for their luxurious appearance or supposed sacred presence. He further emphasizes the inert nature of the sculpture, noting that she has no real corporeal elements: “Elle n'a bras, jambes, ne pieds, ne mains, Aussi n'en feroit-elle rien” [She has no arms, legs, or feet or hands, /Therefore she can do nothing with them]. Rather than human, the Virgin is a monster, a product of the devil. It is a biting critique that becomes even more powerful as the poet assumes the voice of the Virgin herself:

L'Idole du Puy aux Idolatres.

*Povre papiste, idolatre aveuglé,
Qui viens icy de loin pour m'adorer,
Advise-toy, car tu es mal reiglé
Et n'est pas moy que tu dois reverer.
Je ne suis rien, pour bien me decorer,*

⁴² For a detailed account of the years during the siege of Le Puy (with excellent images, maps and diagrams), see Archives départementales de la Haute-Loire and Archives municipales du Puy-en-Velay, *Portrait d'une ville assiégée: Le Puy-en-Velay pendant les guerres de la Ligue (1589-1596)* (Puy-en-Velay: Archives départementales de la Haute-Loire, 1991); See also *Réflexions sur la pénétration de la Réforme dans le Velay: (1530-1560)* (Le Puy-en-Velay: Association des Cahiers de la Haute-Loire, 1999).

⁴³ *Avertissement*, 5.

Sinon un lourd et malheureux idole.

[The Idol of the Puy to the idolaters:
Poor Papist, blind idolater,
Who comes here from far away to worship me,
Be warned, because you believe wrongly
And it is not me that you should revere.
I am nothing, it does well to decorate me,
Otherwise an ungainly and misfortunate idol.]

Although the statue speaks of herself as an idol, the poet in effect enables the Virgin of Le Puy to possess the very corporeal act of speech.⁴⁴ In fact, all the functions of the statue were entirely dependent on audience interpretation and use—the Virgin was a passive object. Employing such a poetic trope of direct address also indicates that the poet understood the power of the statue to those who believed in her miraculous acts.

In fact, such animate actions of Notre-Dame du Puy were not without precedent. A fourteenth-century transcription indicates that the statue of Notre-Dame du Puy held a small prayer in her hands. The prayer, with its intimate speech to the Virgin of Le Puy, offered a personal way to connect with the iconic image.⁴⁵ As Virginia Reinburg has argued, this prayer demonstrates the “spiritual transaction” of the supplicant, Mary and God.⁴⁶ I might add that this network of

⁴⁴ Irene Winter, “Agency Marked/Agency Ascribed: The Affective Object in Ancient Mesopotamia,” in *Art’s Agency and Art History* eds., R. Osborne, and J. Tanner (Malden & Oxford: Blackwells, 2007), 42-69. The Virgin of Le Puy’s agency in this document opens Winter’s essay.

⁴⁵ Virginia Reinburg, “Prayers” in *Medieval Christianity in Practice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009). Reinburg has also discussed the use of feudal language in prayers to the Virgin of Le Puy, illustrating their personal relationship with the image. See “Hearing Lay People’s Prayer,” in *Culture and Identity in Early Modern Europe, 1500-1800: Essays in Honor of Natalie Zemon Davis*, eds. Barbara Diefendorf and Carla Hesse (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), 19-39.

⁴⁶ Paris, bibliothèque nationale, ms. nouv. acq. lat. 592, fol. 120v (book of hours, use of Paris, fourteenth century). Virginia Reinburg has translated the prayer into English in “Prayer” in

intercession also includes not only Mary in the guise of Notre-Dame du Puy but the physical statue itself. The statue provided a visual means to prayer, a “body” to which the devotee pledged the redemption of his or her soul. While the statue could not ever speak, the “Virgin of Le Puy” communicated with its believers through prayer, procession and intercession.

Protesting Processions: Sacred Space in Early Modern Le Puy

The double threat of Protestants and plague created turmoil in the city from the sixteenth century and grew even more communal in nature as processions began to play a larger role in the ceremonial culture of the city. While processions at Le Puy had been performed for centuries, the size and expense of these events increased, following a trend across Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁴⁷ Extraordinary processions for plague and penitence were performed not only in response to outside threats, but they also reflected the Catholic reformation efforts of the newly installed Jesuit order at Le Puy in 1588. Jesuit power in Le Puy grew during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, culminating in the episcopal leadership of Just de Serres, a deeply devoted Jesuit, who oversaw the bishopric of Le Puy from 1621 - 1641.⁴⁸ Under Just de Serres, ritual practices including processions became regulated and specific rules for the

Medieval Christianity in Practice, 159 – 163 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009). Many thanks to Reinburg for allowing me to view a draft of her work before publication.

⁴⁷ For more information on the increased processional activity in Le Puy see Bruno Maës, *Le roi, la vierge et la nation: pèlerinages et identité nationale entre guerre de cent ans et révolution* Collection “La France au fil des siècles” (Paris: Publisud, 2002), 150 – 153.

⁴⁸ Xavier Barral i Altet, *La Cathédrale du Puy-en-Velay* (Paris: Skira, 2000), 338.

order and actions of processions were established beyond the general guidance of the ordinals of the cathedral.

The close presence of Protestants actually served to reinforce the sacred power of holy images like the Virgin of Le Puy for French Catholics in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁴⁹ Jesuit Odo de Gissey, for example, commented on the Protestant threat in Le Puy in the seventeenth century, noting especially that more processions were performed because of the close presence of Huguenots in neighboring towns.⁵⁰

Perhaps the most interesting example of Protestant reaction to the increased processional activity at Le Puy was the “guerre des tapisseries.”⁵¹ Typically during a procession, tapestries decorated homes along the processional routes. Protestants living on these streets refused to participate in these activities, thus during a procession on July 11, 1565, the Feast of the Dedication of the Cathedral, the Bishop Antoine de Senecterre ordered that tapestries be taken from his home and nailed to the doors of Protestants who refused to decorate their homes in honor of the occasion. He carried his own tapestries with him in

⁴⁹ Marc Venard “Catholicism and Resistance to the Reformation in France” in *Reformation, revolt and civil war in France and Netherlands : 1555-1585*. Proceedings of the colloquium, Amsterdam, 29-31 october 1997, ed. Philip Benedict (Amsterdam: Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1999).

⁵⁰ Gissey, 530.

⁵¹ Martin de Framond also discusses this event in his article, “Aspects des espaces publics du Puy-en-Velay au XVI^e siècle” in *Construire l'espace au XVI^e siècle: Acts du colloque du Puy-en-Velay*, ed. Marie Viallon (Saint-Etienne: Publications de l'Université Sainte-Etienne, 2008), 204. Framond draws attention to the conflict of urban spaces in Le Puy, especially public and private through many examples in his article.

procession and ordered that each Protestant home was covered as the procession passed by.⁵²

Although this instance did not end violently, it demonstrates the dimensions of public and private spaces allocated to the procession. As Martin de Framond has argued, while the streets of Le Puy were deemed sacred to Catholics during procession, the Protestants homes along these routes stood at a precipice between public and private spaces.⁵³ I also agree with Framond and would suggest further that the visual power of the procession, not only the homes on the route, stood a claim in urban fabric of the city itself.

The urban spaces of Le Puy were not only contested in procession but also fought through bloodshed. Jean Burel recounts several examples in which Protestants are burned in the city square and other instances when Protestants are accused of breaking a crucifix that stood in the Place de Breuil in 1555.⁵⁴ Burel's documentation of Protestant violence during the mid-sixteenth century is the most detailed account of this tumultuous history in Le Puy. Yet Burel was himself a member of the Catholic league and his descriptions of these events are heavily biased towards the Catholic effort. Despite the decidedly one-sided account of Protestant activities in Le Puy, these records, along with the increasing presence of the statue in secular and religious processions, indicate that the

⁵² See description in Médicis, 556.

⁵³ Framond, 205.

⁵⁴ Jean Burel, *Memoires de Jean Burel: bourgeois du Puy à l'époque des guerres de religion*. 2 vols. (Saint-Vidal: Centre d'Etude de la Vallée de la Borne, 1983), 9.

Virgin of Le Puy's function in the community was growing far beyond her original role as cult statue. She was now a symbol of Catholic France.

In this chapter, I have examined the interactions of the Virgin of Le Puy with the city's outsiders, first, Jews and later, Protestants. From these "outsider" perspectives, the Virgin of Le Puy played inverse roles. Catholics justified the expulsion and imprisonment of Jews in honor of the Virgin's "authentic" miracle whereas they defended the "authenticity" of the statue during Protestant attacks. For Protestants, the threat of Notre-Dame du Puy more physically embodied in the statue itself. The "Virgin" was not the problem. The statue was. It is perhaps this need for increased authenticity that prompted the statue to claim a more antique and sacred provenance at this time. As argued in chapter one, the Virgin of Le Puy was likely darkened in the late fifteenth century in order to ensure her antique origins and corresponding legends of her provenance in Egypt. Although Black Madonnas were not unknown, they were still special. As an "Egyptian," religious leaders in Le Puy used her exotic provenance to increase the popularity of her cult.

The statue's destruction in a bonfire adds a dramatic turn to this later history of the Virgin of Le Puy. By the eighteenth century, the Virgin of Le Puy was no longer celebrated for its alterity, but instead it was a symbol of Catholic France and the *ancien régime*. The Virgin of Le Puy gained a new identity, not as outsider but rather as enemy. Objects like the Virgin of Le Puy were vilified during the French Revolution for their claims to sacred powers. It would seem, then, that the violent destruction of the Virgin of Le Puy marked the end of her changing identities. For some time, this was true. Yet ultimately "Notre-Dame du

Puy" was preserved despite the statue's demise. The continued ritual of procession through the landscape of the city with its steeply graded streets, architectural marvels and jagged outcrops became a way for Ponot(e)s to both remember and reimagine the Virgin of Le Puy. Just how this is accomplished is the subject of chapter five.

CHAPTER FIVE

Re-Presenting the Virgin: Architecture, Landscape and Memory in Le Puy-en-Velay

*Le rocher de Cornille en masse merveilleux,
D'un imparfait triangle est l'angle sourcilleux,
On voit assis sous luy le fameux edifice,
El l'Auguste Palais de la Reyne des Cieux,
Où Dieu se Rend à tous favorable & propice.*¹

The Rock of Cornielle, the marvelous mound,
An exalted peak, it is made of an irregular triangle
Underneath it we see the famous building sitting
The majestic palace of the Queen of Heaven,
Where God makes himself known to all those favorable and worthy

- V. Bernard, Canon of the Cathedral Notre-Dame du Puy, Prior of St. Stephen.

This short poem, included at the end of Odo de Gissey's seventeenth-century *histoires* of the Virgin of Le Puy, calls attention to the importance of the landscape of Le Puy-en-Velay. This "exalted peak" atop a "marvelous mound" rising up from the volcanic outcrops of the Velay provides a striking description of the cathedral. Indeed, the site of Le Puy-en-Velay is an integral part of the Virgin of Le Puy's identity, one that extends beyond the walls of the cathedral and into the landscape that frames both the built and natural environment of the city.

This chapter aims to insert the city, topography and architecture of Le Puy-en-Velay into the study of Notre-Dame du Puy. While much research has been devoted to either the Virgin of Le Puy or the cathedral itself, very rarely have

¹ *Discours historiques de la très-ancienne dévotion à Notre-Dame du Puy* (Lyon, 1693), 540. Printed at the end of Gissey's text.

they been considered in their relationship to each other and as a larger part of the environment of the city itself. In this chapter, I analyze late medieval and early modern religious sites in Le Puy-en-Velay, highlighting the various ways these spaces were used, altered and sometimes, forgotten.² The chapter considers how the statue of the Virgin of Le Puy related to the architectural program of the cathedral, its fresco cycles, inscriptions and the topographical landscape of the surrounding area. I first turn to the cathedral itself. I examine the ways in which the Virgin of LePuy would have been understood within the architectural and aesthetic environment of the cathedral. Monumental inscriptions are one way the architecture echoed the presence of the Virgin. I look at how these inscriptions functioned as liminal spaces and ways to direct attention to the memory of the Virgin of Le Puy. This section also looks more specifically at the so-called "Islamic" architecture of the cathedral and asks how sculpture, architecture, inscriptions and mural paintings can be read as both a testament to the relationship of Le Puy with Mediterranean artistic networks of exchange and more symbolically, as an allusion to Jerusalem and the city's historical connection to the Crusades. Last, the chapter concludes with a study of the landscape of Le Puy-en-Velay. It will consider the ways in which the act of

² Memory and oblivion have often been viewed as dialectical. See Suzanne Küchler, "The Place of Memory" in *The Art of Forgetting* ed. Suzanne Küchler and Adrian Forty (Oxford: Berg, 1999). Michel de Certeau also discusses rootedness of memory in an imaginary place. As he argues, with modernization, memory draws not from materiality but from its absence. See *The Practice of Everyday Life* trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 59.

walking through the streets of Le Puy-en-Velay can activate collective memory related to the historical sites of the city and to the destroyed statue.³

The study of memory as a collective and historical construct is a long and well-established field of scholarship. The study of collective memory began in sociology with the work of Maurice Halbwachs but has quickly become an interdisciplinary endeavor.⁴ Most important for this dissertation is Mary Carruthers' scholarship on medieval memory.⁵ Carruthers argues that memory remained an instrumental way of exercising authority even as literacy increased. For the medieval mind, memory was neither purely conscious nor chronological.

³ I use the word "site" quite deliberately, drawing upon Pierre Nora's discussion of *lieux de mémoire*, or sites of memory, that can be both physical and conceptual places where cultural memory is stored. Nora argues that nationally-sponsored projects like museums and archives manufacture a collective idea of the past that distances people and their relationship with true historical memory. While I agree with Nora that post-modernity has altered our relationship with the past, I also believe that rituals like processions are key sites of memory that can be studied for the ways they evoke past traditions. Through ritual action, the physical spaces of the city are defined in relationship to each other and to memories of those spaces through time. As such, ritual constructs spaces into places. The essential role of ritual in the creation of sacred space has been discussed at length by historian of religion J.Z. Smith and will be considered in further detail at the close of this chapter. See Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: *Les lieux de mémoire*" trans. Marc Roudebush *Representations* (1989) 26: 7-25; Jonathan Z. Smith, *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1987).

⁴ Maurice Halbwachs, *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire* (Paris: Alcan, 1925); Halbwachs, *La Topographie légendaire des Évangiles en Terre Sainte: Étude de mémoire collective* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1941); Halbwachs, *La mémoire collective*, published posthumously by Jeanne Alexandre (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1950). Halbwachs's studies have been questioned in later literature for his contention that memory is always socially constructed. For example, Paul Connerton argues that historical reconstruction is independent of social memory, noting that this practice replaces a singular interpretation of evidence for trace reminders of the past as a group. For an overview of memory studies see, Wulf Kansteiner, "Finding Meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies" *History and Theory* 41/2 (2002): 179-197. See also, Noa Gediand and Yigal Elam, "Collective Memory-What is it?" *History and Memory* 8 (1996): 30 - 50. For an analysis of memory studies in art history see, Kurt W. Forster "Aby Warburg's History of Art: Collective Memory and the Social Mediation of Images" *Daedalus* 105/ 1, In Praise of Books (1976): 169-176.

⁵ See overview of Carruthers's contributions to medieval art history in Anne D. Hedeman and Clark Maines, "Introduction to *Making Thoughts, Making Pictures, Making Memories*" *Gesta* 48/2 (2009): 95 -98.

Although Carruthers's studies tend to focus on the retention of textual knowledge, she also posits that memories triggered by places, false or otherwise inaccurate, were often more important than the true history of that site.⁶ As I will argue below, the striking and unusual architecture of the Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay could have been associated with both "Islamic" and "biblical" architecture. As such, the temporal distance between holy sites like Jerusalem and Le Puy were collapsed through visual associations be they fictive or actual memories.

The Boundries of Sacred Space: Monumental Inscription

In chapter three, I discussed how the urban planning of the city often dictated the success or failure of processional activity in the community. As discussed in chapter three, a crowd of processants stampeded towards the cathedral when the Virgin of LePuy was placed on a gate that marked the entrance into the cathedral close. The statue was not only a visual marker of the procession, but it also physically marked the entry into the ecclesiastical space of Le Puy. At that moment, the statue was a liminal site of passage from secular to sacred space.

Liminal spaces extended to the cathedral itself. These spaces are not always noticable now because the cathedral has been dramatically reconstructed over several centuries. The record of the cathedral's architectural and structural changes is preserved foremost in plans, written descriptions and visual reproductions. Recent archaeological excavations at the cathedral and the

⁶ Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) 135 – 137.

baptistery have also helped to determine the chronology of building construction.⁷

The complex architectural reconstruction efforts at Le Puy must be carefully examined so that the medieval and early modern built environments of the city can be accurately understood. As discussed in the introduction of this study, the Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay underwent several periods of construction and expansion from the sixth to the thirteenth centuries (Figure 55). Due to the steep grade of Mont Anis and the extension of the nave in the twelfth century, the building was increasingly unstable and the facade was reinforced with large buttresses in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. From 1843 - 1865, a team of architects under Eugène Viollet-le-Duc and Armand Mallay conducted an extensive restoration and reconstruction of the cathedral (Figure 56).⁸ These changes have changed the experience of entering the cathedral substantially. In order to better support the weight of the church, these architects moved the facade forward and extended the porch towards the Rue des Tables (Figure 57). This addition is known as the *grand escalier* for the imposing set of stairs that now leads into the cathedral (Figure 58). In addition, the subterranean entrance into the nave was blocked and replaced by two side aisles in order to access to the interior.

⁷ Sophie Liegard et. al. "Resultats des interventions archeologiques menées de 1992 à 1995 dans la Cathédrale du Puy-en-Velay, Haute-Loire." *Archéologie médiévale* 29 (1999): 115 – 144. See also their article in *La Cathédrale du Puy-en-Velay* ed. X. Barral i Altet (Paris: Skira, 2000), 56 – 67.

⁸ Bernard Galland, Martin de Framond, et.al. *Le Puy-en-Velay: l'ensemble cathédrale Notre-Dame* (Paris: Editions du patrimoine/ Centre des monuments nationaux, 2005), 18.

The current entrance into the cathedral does not resemble the experience of a medieval pilgrim. Memory of the unusual former entrance is preserved in a famous expression that notes, "You used to enter the church of Our Lady through the navel and come out through the ears."⁹ As a pilgrim entered into the nave from the staircase, he or she arrived just a few feet away from the statue.¹⁰ There, they could pray and leave offerings to the Virgin of Le Puy and then exit through the transept without interfering with the daily rituals of the cathedral canons. According to Médicis, pilgrims would have entered the nave to see the *pierre des fièvres* and then process to the altar to venerate the Holy Eucharist. The "glorieux ymage Nostre-Dame du Puy" was installed to the left. After prayer, the canon would bless the pilgrims and they would exit the cathedral through the transept.¹¹ Although this approach was reinagurated in 1994, the central staircase is now closed apart from the summer months, and the right hand stairway was adapted to lead into the south aisle during the eighteenth century.

The former entrance to the cathedral also included cues to prepare the pilgrim to greet the Virgin of Le Puy. As one enters into the porch of the

⁹ "entrer par le nombril, ressortir par les oreilles." Expression discussed on the website of the Cathédrale Notre-Dame du Puy. Avaliable http://www.cathedraledupuy.org/La-cathedrale_r2.html.

¹⁰ Alain Erlande-Brandenburg, *The Cathedral: The Social and Architectural Dynamics of Construction*, Cambridge studies in the history of architecture (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 118. Alain Erlande-Brandenburg proposed this route based on a previous archaeological study of the cathedral.

¹¹ Médicis, 155. "Entrant par ladite porte, venoient jusques sus la pierre miraculuese aux sebricitans, & droit au devant du drap où sont depaincts les neufs Preux...au front devers devant, auvoit ung autel richement estoffé sus le quel, devers main dextre, estoit en une moult belle custode d' argent surdoré, le precieux Corps Nostre-Seigneur...& du costé gauche dudit autel, estoit le glorieux ymage Nostre Dame du Puy."

cathedral, two steps beneath the arch of the second bay bear a Latin inscription warning those who enter "If you do not shun crime, then be sure not to cross this threshold / for the Queen of Heaven seeks a worship free of all stain" (Figure 59).¹² Another epigraph is said to have decorated the southern portal with an equally foreboding inscription stating, "If your life has been lecherous, then avoid this threshold, and do not profane its sanctity as long as you smell the evils of the flesh."¹³ As Calvin Kendall has argued, these inscriptions thus marked a transitional boundary into sacred space, evoking the word *limen*, or "threshold," to further emphasize its transitional zone.¹⁴ The first inscription is difficult to see today because it appears deep within the porch staircase, but it would have been more clearly noticed in the original design of the cathedral. This inscription was literally a *limen* into the cathedral, announcing the Cult of the Virgin at its door. This inscription became part of the identity of the Virgin of Le Puy. It appeared not only on the steps of the cathedral, but it also engraved underneath prints of the Virgin statue in the frontispiece of Odo de Gisey's seventeenth-century history of the Virgin (Figure 60). While it must be recognized that not all visitors would have been able to read these inscriptions, its reproduction and association with the Virgin of Le Puy beyond the Middle Ages is a testament to the power of this site and its continued relevance to the community.

¹² Cited with English translation in Calvin B. Kendall, "The Gate of Heaven and the Fountain of Life: Speech-Act Theory and Portal Inscriptions" *Essays in Medieval Studies* 10 (1993): 115. See also Kendall, *The Allegory of the Church: Romanesque Portals and their Verse Inscriptions*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 121.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Kendall's work drew my attention to these inscriptions. I have examined his argument further by connecting them not only as liminal spaces of entry, but also as ways to remember the Cult of the Virgin of Le Puy. Kendall does not discuss the reuse of this inscription on the Gisey print.

Although some of the inscriptions in the cathedral were destroyed during construction, others remain untouched. In a particularly revealing example, nineteenth-century architect Auguste Mimey extensively reconstructed the chevet of the cathedral but left its Gallo-Roman inscription intact. This inscription evokes the healing power of a well found within the cathedral. It reads, “the fountain with its divine power is medicine for the sick, healing without charge when the art of Hippocrates fails” (Figure 61).¹⁵ The well itself also remains untouched, although it no longer functions. One must wonder if Mimey was leery of removing this inscription, lest the sacred power of the medieval site be tarnished. The healing nature of the site was indeed at the very origins of the cathedral, founded upon a sacred rock, known as the *pierre des fièvres* (Figure 62). An inscription beside the rock used to remind viewers of the power of the site. It announced, “people placed by this rock, having slept, become well. If you want to know why, the power is attributed to the altar.”¹⁶ The medieval origins of this sacred site were thus preserved through these inscriptions. Moreover, the inscription directs attention to the “altar.” This word likely invoked both the rock as a primitive altar at the cathedral site but also the current altar upon which the Virgin of Le Puy rested. Kendall has also studied these inscriptions to argue for the message of healing they evoke.¹⁷ He focuses on the relationship between the viewer of these inscriptions and Christ. While I agree with Kendall's general line

¹⁵ Kendall, *The Allegory of the Church*, 123. “Fons ope divina languentibus est medicina, Subveniens gratis ubi deficit ars Ypocratis”

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

of reasoning, I would argue that these inscriptions would have recalled the Virgin of Le Puy rather than Christ. The inscriptions are not tropological and metaphorical as Kendall argues, but they are literal and local. These inscriptions focused attention upon the Virgin's power as a divine healer and provided a clear link between the two most sacred objects in the cathedral: the statue and the stone.

Visualizing Jerusalem: Remembering the Holy Land in France

The Latin inscriptions in the Cathedral Notre-Dame may have lost their original force and meaning, but they are, for the most part, still clearly visible and legible. The meanings of the inscriptions are an important part to understand how they evoked the central role of the Virgin of Le Puy. Yet these inscriptions are not the only ones in the cathedral. Two large doors on the western porch of the cathedral display not only Latin inscriptions but one of these doors is also decorated with a large border of Arabic inscription.¹⁸ They have often been cited as an example of Islamic influence in Romanesque France and remain one of the best examples of Arabic inscription on French Christian monuments.¹⁹ The inscription is written in a stylized form of Arabic known as *kufic* that is often

¹⁸ These doors are thought to have been the entrance to the now inaccessible St. Gilles Chapel in the cathedral. They are now on the left portal of the western facade. See Walter Cahn, *The Romanesque Wooden Doors of Auvergne* (New York : New York University Press for the College Art Association of America, 1974).

¹⁹ Katherine Watson, *French Romanesque and Islam: Andalusian elements in French architectural decoration c. 1030 – 1180*. (BAR International Series 488(i): Oxford , 1989), 65. The use of Arabic epigraphy in France is rare; only four examples survive. The surviving examples are the carved wooden doors at Le Puy, a valve of the door at Lavoûte-Chilac, the impost on capital 50 at Moissac cloister, and a carved lintel at Saint-Pierre-de-Rhèdes. Of these, only the doors of Le Puy contain legible Arabic phrases. Walter Cahn's seminal study of French Romanesque wooden doors provides a comprehensive formal analysis of the doors at Le Puy, including its Arabic inscription, and presents an essential analysis of the doors' patronage and construction. See Walter Cahn, *The Romanesque Wooden Doors of Auvergne*.

difficult to decipher, even by those who read Arabic fluently. As will be discussed further below, it is unlikely that the main audiences of the cathedral during the Middle Ages—the clergy, Christian pilgrims, and the laity of Le Puy—would have even recognized this border as Arabic, let alone be able to read it. Thus the modern interpretation of this inscription as signaling an Islamic presence in the area does not address how the inscriptions were understood in a pre-modern context. As I will argue further below, these doors, read together with the fresco program and cathedral architecture, may have evoked the Holy Land. At the center of this ensemble is of course the Virgin of Le Puy, a statue with supposed "Egyptian" origins. As discussed earlier, the Holy Land, or the Middle East, was considered foreign, exotic, and distant in the Western medieval mind. Moreover, the Virgin of Le Puy was a Christian object "rescued" from lands then dominated by Islam. In this section, I will explore how elements of the cathedral that date to the medieval period may have influenced the *early modern* understanding of the Virgin of Le Puy as "Eastern." In this way, the 'memory' of the Virgin of Le Puy as a product of the Holy Land was not only triggered through written words but in the very fabric of the cathedral.

When considering the possible architectural influences on the reading of the Virgin of Le Puy as product of the Holy Land, one must start with the most distinctive "Eastern" element in the cathedral—the doors decorated with Arabic inscription. These simple carved wooden doors are composed of two vertical panels. They once displayed eight crudely rendered scenes of the Infancy of

Christ, six of which survive (Figure 63).²⁰ These doors have thus been generally referred to as the "Infancy Doors." Framing these scenes is a long band of Arabic inscription repeating the phrase has been variously translated as standard Islamic invocations of blessings to God (Figure 64).²¹ Across from the Infancy doors stands a second pair of doors, equal in style and composition. An inscription is not present on the Passion doors; instead, a stylized vegetal motif serves as a border to these scenes (Figure 65).

The presence of Arabic inscription in a Christian context, while unusual in France, is not altogether surprising at Le Puy. Vincent de Beauvais, for example, commented on a local case of "sacrilege" in which "Western Muslims" (*sacreceños occidentales*) in Le Puy-en-Velay sent gifts to Virgin of Le Puy so that she would bless their fields.²² While this comment alone cannot attest to the presence of a local Muslim population in the area, three other instances of portals decorated with Arabic inscription from Romanesque Auvergne survive.²³ Moreover, the Cathedral of Le Puy provides rich blend of not only Islamic, but indeed, multi-cultural, art and architecture. At Le Puy, one encounters not only multi-lobed arches and alternating voussoirs reminiscent of Islamic architecture, but also brilliant frescoes painted in a Byzantine style. These elements have not

²⁰ Cahn, 35 – 42.

²¹ Watson, 66. The inscription is generally thought to repeat the phrase, "al-mulk-lillah," or "The Kingdom is God's."

²² Beauvais's text reads: "Ibi etiam, ut dicitur, Sarraceni occidentals mittunt munera, ut beata Virgo eos liberet a fulgoribus & tempestatibus & agros suos." Chapter 21, Book III, "sacreligio locali."

²³ Cahn, *The Romanesque Wooden Doors of Auvergne*. Apart from Le Puy, Arabic inscriptions appear on wooden doors in Chamalières-sur-Loire, Blesle, and Lavoûte-Chilhac.

been adequately considered in conjunction with the statue of Notre-Dame du Puy. The layers of meaning inherent in the architecture, sculpture and painting at Le Puy thus suggest complex connections between France and the Mediterranean during the Middle Ages.

Because the Arabic inscription on the Infancy doors is partly legible, it has often been argued that the artisan used a direct Islamic model.²⁴ Documentation of Muslim ateliers in the Rhône is sparse; however, Muslims did live in France from at least the tenth century. For example, Arabic geographers documented the garrison site of Fraxinet near current-day St. Tropez. Fraxinet also appears in Latin contemporary accounts and monastic charters.²⁵ Xavier Barral i Altet posits

²⁴ Beginning in the early twentieth century, scholars have debated the extent or even existence of Islamic-influenced architecture to little consensus. French art historians Emile Mâle and Ahmet Fikry argued that several architectural elements at the cathedral such as archivolt of exotic fauna, polylobed arches, and voisoirs filled with vegetal and foliated decoration all derive from Islamic sources. In addition, they note that the use of ornamentally decorated octagonal squinch-supported domes and striped brickwork pattern employed at Le Puy are also present in many Islamic monuments such as the Great Mosques of Kairouan and Córdoba. Since this time, the use of a direct Islamic model at Le Puy has been questioned in favor of local comparanda in the Rhône-Alpes. Marcel Durliat first argued that the domes at St. Martin d'Ainay in Lyon and those at St. Philibert at Tournus are more probable models for Le Puy. More recently, Xavier Barral i Altet supported the regionalism of Le Puy's architecture, arguing that Le Puy has "nothing to do" with Islam but rather Rome and its Carolingian successors are the chief models for the cathedral. For a good overview see, Vladimir P. Goss, "Western Architecture and the World of Islam in the Twelfth Century," in *The Meeting of Two Worlds: Cultural Exchange between East and West during the Period of the Crusades* ed. V. Goss, et al. Studies in Medieval Culture, XXI (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1986), 367. See also, Marcel Durliat, "L'art dans le Velay" *Congrès archéologique du Puy* 133 (1975): 14; Xavier Barral i Altet, "Sur les supposées influences islamiques dans l'art roman: l'exemple de la Cathédrale Notre-Dame du Puy-en-Velay." *Cahiers de Saint-Michel de Cuxa* 35 (2004), 118.

²⁵ Philippe Sénac, "Les Musulmans en Provence au Xe Siècle" *Histoire de l'Islam et des musulmans en France du Moyen-Age à nos jours*, ed. Mohammed Arkoun (Paris: Albin Michel, 2006), 27. The Latin sources cited are as follows: contemporary accounts – Antapodosis, bishop Luitprand of Cermona; *Annales* of Monk Flodoard; *Histoires* of monk Raoul Glaber (11th century); Some 20 donation charters from the 11th century at the monasteries of Saint-Victor of Marseille and Saint-Honorat of Lérins. On the Arabic side, Fraxinet was known as *Jabal al-Qilal*. Geographer Ibn Hawqal notes in his *Kitab surat al-ard* (Book of the Configuration of the Land) that "*Le Jabal al-Qilal* is situated in the region of France, is in the hands of combatants of jihad for the faith" (Sénac, 31). Tenth-century archeological evidence for Muslim shipwrecks has also been discovered between the coasts of Marseille and Cannes (Sénac, 36.) While the Muslim

that the church treasury of Le Puy would have been the source of the Arabic inscriptions on the doors; however, I have not been able to locate a complete inventory of the treasury to verify this claim.²⁶ Only one Islamic object, *The Cornet de St. Hubert*, can be accurately attributed to the treasury. This oliphant was kept in the chapel of St. Paul and is now located at the Musée Crozatier (Figure 66).²⁷ Unfortunately, this specific oliphant was first listed in the inventory in 1574, so its influence upon the doors is dubious.²⁸ However, its existence in the treasury suggests that similar works of art may have been present in the treasury during the twelfth century. For example, a cathedral inventory from 1444 lists a woven cloth decorated with "littere morisque."²⁹ While this cloth is no longer extant, it is notable that this decoration was understood as "Moorish" and thus connected with Islam in the fifteenth century. It does not, however, reveal how this association would have been understood or whether "Moorish" lettering was distinct from Arabic or Hebrew characters.

presence in France wanes after this time, important evidence points to a continued population of Muslim communities in Southern France. For example, Benjamin of Tuleda remarked that in the mid twelfth-century there were as many Muslims as Christians living in Montpellier. Funerary steles written in Arabic in this region also attest to a Muslim presence. See François Clement, "Des musulmans à Montpellier au XIIe siècle?" in *Histoire de l'islam et des musulmans en France du Moyen Âge à nos jours*. Vincent de Beavais's commentary also attests to the local presence of Muslims in the sparsely populated areas of Auvergne and certainly at Le Puy.

²⁶ Barral i Altet, *La Cathédrale du Puy-en-Velay*, 256. One of the first objects to come to Le Puy is a manuscript written by St. Ildefonso (Bibliothèque nationale, man. Lat. 2855). This manuscript was reportedly given to Santiago's first pilgrim, Godesalc, bishop of Le Puy, by Fr. Gomez at the Abbey of Albeda in the Rioja. This exchange is illustrated in Parma, bib. Palatine ms. Lat 1650. Less is known about the contents of the medieval treasury itself.

²⁷ Avinoam Shalem, *Islam Christianized: Islamic portable objects in the medieval church treasuries of the Latin West* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang Verlag, 1996), 248.

²⁸ Roger Fourneyron, *Guide catalogue du musée crozatier* (Le Puy: Musée Crozatier, 1979), 52.

²⁹ Médicis, 120. "alius pannus aureus, jacens in diversis barris per longum de caneto rubeo & viridi, & in duabus ex dictis barris sunt foliagia, in alia littere morisque."

Despite these possible models, the employment of Arabic inscription at Le Puy appears to be quite superficial by comparison with Islamic inscriptions found in similar architectural settings. In Islamic regions, monumental inscriptions, especially those on doors or facades often serve a dedicatory function. For example, the inscription around the mihrab at the Great Mosque of Cordoba identifies the patron, Caliph Al-Hakim II.³⁰ At Le Puy, this information is given in a separate, Latin inscription. It identifies both the artisan, Gauzfredus, and the patron, Petrus (Figure 67).³¹ Moreover, the biblical scenes are briefly identified underneath each scene in Latin script as well. The Arabic inscription at Le Puy therefore demonstrates the lack of a genuine understanding of its architectural purpose. This epigraphy cannot be described as Islamic in anything but its language, Arabic, which in and of itself is not exclusive to Islam.

The notion that an Islamic art form was inherently antagonistic or even always recognizable as "Islamic" to the medieval viewer is a serious question that has been generally ignored.³² While evidence for Muslims in France persists throughout the Middle Ages, it is troublesome to assume that Islamic construction practices and motifs were understood as specifically deriving from Islamic regions. So, the architecture and decorative elements at Le Puy-en-Velay

³⁰ Sheila Blair, *Islamic Inscriptions* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), 16.

³¹ Cahn notes a "strikingly similar" situation in the Beatus of Saint-Sever (Paris, Bibl. Nat. lat. 8878), in which a central Latin inscription is bordered by a pseudo-Arabic inscription.

³² Ahmet Fikry, *L'art roman du puy et les influences islamiques* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1934), 263. See also Oleg Grabar, "Islamic Architecture and the West: Influences and Parallels" in *Islam and the Medieval West* (Binghamton: SUNY, 1975), 63.

may not have been understood as Islamic, but were they understood as distinct, or foreign in some way?

As discussed above, the iconography on the doors refers the birth and death of Christ. The scene of the Magi and Herod on the infancy doors offers a particularly interesting example of multiple interpretations of Islamic elements on the doors. The Latin inscription reads, "Ecce videns Arabes se/ vus turbatur Erodes" [Behold, upon seeing the Arabs, Herod was disturbed].³³ In this context "Arabes" describes the Magi, biblical kings from the East, but certainly not Muslims. In addition, one might notice that the tri-lobed arch under which Herod sits is distinct from the rest of the framed narratives (Figure 68).³⁴ This seemingly Islamic architectural form, coupled with the border inscription, may too have been a visual cue to signify the Holy Land. Indeed, Richard Ettinghausen has long espoused that *kufic* script was associated with the time of Christ.³⁵ I would argue that reading the doors as a single object is the key to the inclusion of Arabic on the portal. The border inscription on the Infancy doors thus may be *formally* Arabic but it is *contextually* Christian.

Inscription, Painting and Architecture: Creating the Holy Land in France

If an "Eastern" or Holy Land interpretation of the Arabic inscription at Le Puy can be argued, we must then ask to what extent this metaphor was applied to

³³ Cahn, 40.

³⁴ Ibid. Cahn also notes the distinct architectural setting of this scene but ties it to Carolingian and Ottonian examples.

³⁵ Richard Ettinghausen, "Muslim Decorative Arts and Painting –Their Nature and Impact on the Medieval West" in *Islam and the Medieval West*, ed. S. Ferber, exh. cat. (Binghamton, New York: State University New York Press, 1975), 14.

the rest of the cathedral. The Cathedral of Le Puy displays many Mediterranean influences outside the Infancy doors. For example, the cathedral's spoliated porphyry columns not only signaled the diocese's wealth and luxury but also claimed ancient origins from the East.³⁶ The cathedral is also often noted for its unusual domes on squinches that are reminiscent of Islamic construction and the alternating voissors of the cloister which recall those at the Great Mosque of Cordoba in Spain (Figure 69).

The painted murals in the cathedral also indicate a Mediterranean presence, both in style and narrative. Recent conservation studies reveal that the frescos contain lapis lazuli, the rare blue color from the central Asian steppes known to Byzantine artists.³⁷ Two sets of fresco cycles are present in the cathedral complex. Those decorating the nave and tribune of the cathedral date to the second half of the twelfth century to the beginning of the thirteenth while those in the canons' quarters were completed a century later. Although many of these frescos are severely deteriorated, their narratives are preserved in watercolor reproductions.³⁸ The murals at Le Puy are not the only instances of Byzantine-inspired fresco painting in Auvergne—one can see the regional interest in this style at the nearby chapel of St. Michel d'Aiguilhe (Figure 70).³⁹

³⁶ Barral i Altet, 188.

³⁷ Didier LeGrand, "Les techniques de la fresque" in *Regard du XIXe s. sur les fresques de la cathédrale du Puy*, Exh. cat. *Le Puy-en-Velay, Musée Crozatier, 11 mai-31 octobre 2005* (Le Puy-en-Velay: Musée Crozatier, 2005), 51.

³⁸ The most complete source for these murals and their reproductions is the exhibition catalog, *Regard du XIXe s. sur les fresques de la cathédrale du Puy*, 2005.

³⁹ For more on Auvergnat wall painting in the middle ages see, Anne Courtillé, *Histoire de la peinture murale dans l'auvergne du Moyen-Age* (Brioude: Editions Watel, 1983); see also

The Byzantine influence of these fresco cycles, especially those in the cathedral itself, is readily apparent. In particular, an enormous rendering of St. Michael depicts the Archangel in distinctly Byzantine dress wearing a brown and red tunic covered by a loros (Figure 71).⁴⁰ Furthermore, the Virgin and Child and Transfiguration scenes on the Western porch have been argued to derive from Byzantine sources.⁴¹ On the southern tympanum, the Transfiguration closely follows Eastern models as Christ stands within a mandorla, flanked by the prophets Moses and Elijah (Figure 72). From left to right, Saint James, Saint John and Saint Peter, kneel at Christ's feet.⁴² To the north, the Virgin and Child sit enthroned as two angels hold a veil behind them (Figure 73). The Virgin herself is labeled "mater deo" (Mother of God), thus further emphasizing the iconography of the Virgin as *Theotokos*.⁴³ Given the distinctly Byzantine composition of both fresco cycles as well as the Eastern allusions provided by the doors both in style and narrative, it is not difficult to imagine how these images worked together to provide a majestic view into heavenly Jerusalem via the portals in the Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay.

subsequent articles by Anne Courtille, "Influences byzantines dans quelques décors peints de la France romane" in *Hortus Artium Medievalium* (Zagreb, 1998): 85 - 97; "Byzance, Italie, une méridionalité exclusive dans la peinture murale? Quelques exemples en Auvergne, Bourbonnais ou Velay" *Siècles 15* (2002): 47 - 74.

⁴⁰ Anne Courtille, "Les peintures murales de la cathédrale du Puy" in *Regard du XIXe s. sur les fresques de la cathédrale du Puy*, 29.

⁴¹ Bruno Saunier and Didier LeGrand, "Les peintures murales de la tribune nord: Cathédrale du Puy, Haute-Loire" *Bulletin Monumental* 18 (1997): 58 - 69.

⁴² Courtille, *Les peintures murales*, " 34. This composition is very typical in Byzantine art but scarcely appears in Western sources. See for example, "Portable icon with the Transfiguration of Christ" Musée du Louvre, ML 145.

⁴³ Ibid.

Thirteenth-century murals in the chapter room of the canons further intensify the connection between Le Puy and the Holy Land. For example, on the porch of the cathedral between the north lateral arc and the third bay, a now-deteriorated fresco of a chess game between a French king and Muslim sultan once appeared (Figure 74). A very similar chess match also appeared in the chapter room (now barely visible).⁴⁴ The motif of the chess match is often regarded as a sign of cultural co-existence, but it also refers to, if not precisely contemporary events, certainly medieval rather than biblical ones. These scenes show more direct contact and interest in the East, likely spurred by the Crusades. They add yet another layer to the meaning of the art and architectural program at Le Puy-en-Velay. As Anne Derbes has convincingly argued, these frescos were commissioned after the first crusade and likely implied a double reference to biblical and contemporary history in the East.⁴⁵ Thus, extending the reading of the cathedral from the exterior architecture to the interior mural program, the cathedral becomes a symbolic re-creation of Jerusalem, both past and present.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Ibid., cat. 87, 124.

⁴⁵ Anne Derbes, "A Crusading Fresco Cycle in the Cathedral of Le Puy." *Art Bulletin* 72 (1991): 561-76. Further emphasized by Anne Courtille, "Les peintures murales de la cathedrale du Puy," 30.

⁴⁶ Several art historians have discussed the use of mural painting to create a narrative of sacred space. See foremost, Otto Demus, *Romanesque Mural Painting* (New York: H. N. Abrams, 1970) and Marcia Kupfer *Romanesque Wall Painting in Central France: The Politics of Narrative* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993). See also essays in *Shaping Sacred Space and Institutional Identity in Romanesque Mural Painting: Essays in Honor of Otto Demus* ed. Thomas E.A. Dale with John Mitchell (London: Pindar Press, 2004).

The possible topographical appropriation of Jerusalem is not unique to Le Puy.⁴⁷ Foremost, Richard Krautheimer's argument for the ability of loose copies of medieval architecture to recall antique buildings without replicating them exactly serves as the foundation for studies of medieval memory and the built environment.⁴⁸ Mary Carruthers has argued that medieval pilgrims used architecture to refresh memory and *locate* the textual descriptions of Jerusalem. For the medieval mind, this process of association among architecture, text and memory allowed a pilgrim to "visit" Jerusalem without literally making the voyage.⁴⁹ Robert Ousterhout makes a similar argument for the city of Jerusalem itself. He argues that pilgrims to Jerusalem used the contemporary spaces of the city to become a "meditative map" of the sacred biblical narratives that occurred in the city.⁵⁰ The passion and infancy door narratives at Le Puy could have also worked in a similar manner, as they recalled the narratives of the biblical past within the context of the cathedral complex as a sort of alter-Jerusalem.

⁴⁷ See Robert G. Ousterhout, "The Church of Santo Stefano: A "Jerusalem" in Bologna" *Gesta* 20/ 2 (1981): 311 – 321; Peter Fergusson, "The Refectory at Easby Abbey: Form and Iconography" *The Art Bulletin* 71/ 3 (1989): 334 – 351. Fergusson argues that the abbey's refectory was modeled after the *cenaculum* of Jerusalem; Dorothy Glass makes a similar argument for the lintel of the Entry to Jerusalem on the central western portal at San Cassiano a Settimo, in which a local saint is included in the procession to connect this biblical event more forcefully with the paraliturgical activity of the church. See Dorothy Glass, *Portals, Pilgrimage and Crusade in Western Tuscany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997). The notion of "Christian topography" in has also been explored in Crusader literature. See Stephen G. Nichols, "Poetic Places and Real Spaces: Anthropology of Space in Crusader Literature" *Yale French Studies* 95 (1999): 111 – 133.

⁴⁸ Richard Krautheimer, "Introduction to an Iconography of Mediaeval Architecture" *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 5 (1942): 1-33.

⁴⁹ Carruthers, 249. (1st edition).

⁵⁰ Robert Ousterhout, " 'Sweetly Refreshed in Imagination' " Remembering Jerusalem in Words and Images" *Gesta* 48/2 (2009): 153 - 168.

The statue of the Virgin of Le Puy then must also be considered as a part of this larger evocation of the East. This is not to imply that the statue was understood to have Middle Eastern origins during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The statue developed legends of an Eastern provenance in the late medieval and early modern periods, evidence for which has already been outlined in this dissertation. As discussed in chapter two, the earliest known image of the Virgin of Le Puy appears in a late fifteenth-century book of hours connected to the Court of René d'Anjou (Figure 18). The Angevin king had a vested interest in the East not only politically as the nominal King of Jerusalem but also personally. His extensive library contained twenty four volumes of books written in "turquine et morisque" and a book of descriptions of Eastern lands.⁵¹ As argued earlier in this dissertation, I believe Notre-Dame du Puy also was painted black around this time to further emphasize her Eastern origins. Indeed, the Angevin rulers of fourteenth-century Naples also commissioned works of art that purported to be older than they actually were, thus René's interest in objects of antique origins could have been inherited from his Neapolitan ancestors.⁵²

⁵¹ Albert Lecoy de La Marche, *Le roi René, sa vie, son administration, ses travaux artistiques et littéraires: d'après les documents inédits des archives de France et d'Italie* (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1969) (First published 1875), 184 - 185. Lecoy de La Marche compiled René's library from several inventory records from the House of Anjou in the Archives of Aix-en-Provence, Angers and Bouches-du-Rhône. See also AN P. 1335, cote 133, inventory of the Chateau d'Angers in 1471; cited in Françoise Robin, *La cour d'Anjou-Provence: La vie artistique sous le règne de René* (Clamecy: Picard, 1985).

⁵² Sarah K. Kozlowski, "Intersections of Portrait and Icon in Italy and the Mediterranean around 1450" (PhD Diss, Yale University, 2010). Many thanks to SKK for allowing me to view her dissertation and her helpful conversations about the Angevin dynasty and medieval mechanisms of reproducing miraculous images.

Through this new emphasis on the Middle Eastern origins of the Virgin of Le Puy, the connection of the Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay to the Holy Land did not fade as the Crusades became a distant memory. Rather, it strengthened and continued the connection between Le Puy to the sacred sites of the East. Odo de Gisey describes the Virgin's tunic as "Tyrian purple" decorated with a border as "à la mode Hebraïque."⁵³ Thus, the sculpture's associations with the East were certainly maintained well into the seventeenth century.⁵⁴ In fact, in many ways the Notre-Dame du Puy's connections with the East is still present in the minds of local citizens. While researching in Le Puy, I had the opportunity to discuss my topic with several potnot(e)s, many of whom confessed they knew little about the cedar doors, but each one "knew" that the Virgin of Le Puy came from Egypt. The memory of medieval Le Puy and the Eastern origins of the statue is indeed not only preserved through images in the cathedral, but reminders of the past penetrate the very landscape of the city.

Walking with the Virgin: A Phenomenological Approach to Memory

So far in this chapter, I have attempted to uncover the medieval sites of memory connected to the cathedral and the Virgin of Le Puy through an examination of maps, architectural plans, inscriptions and mural paintings. Yet examining these static pieces of visual evidence to access the collective memory of

⁵³ Odo de Gisey, *Discours historique de la très ancienne dévotion à N.-D. du Puy* (Lyon, 1620), 70. Chapter XVI. "Description de la S. Image, & de l'opinion qu'on a qu'elle foit de la main de Ieremie"

⁵⁴ This connection to the East was extremely important for the competition between rising number of miracle-working statues across Europe. As detailed in chapter two, the closer objects like Notre-Dame du Puy could be associated with biblical history, the more sacred and powerful they became.

Le Puy is rather reductive and denies the medieval notion of mapping as memory making.⁵⁵

Mapping through experience has provided a novel means for uncovering cultural memories embedded in a place. This phenomenological approach to place began in the field of anthropology and is now integrated in several humanistic disciplines. As Robert Ousterhout and others have argued, the process of mapping was a step towards contemplation rather than abstraction.⁵⁶ Further, Michel de Certeau has famously argued that the lives of cities are lost in maps, which provide only a concept of the city not its reality.⁵⁷

Timothy Ingold argues that places exist within a system of interrelated movements rather than static markers or "sites of memory."⁵⁸ For Ingold, the past can be located in the present within the context of past memories, journeys, and stories connected to that space. Ingold argues that some of these memories are preserved through the experience of walking through places. The irregular route created through this exploration of space thus creates a sort of "sketch

⁵⁵ Carruthers, 144 (1st edition). Carruthers discusses the use of *loci* as a mnemonic. Her study considers the elite classes of medieval society but the concept of pictorial memory and place is still applicable across a wider medieval audience.

⁵⁶ Ousterhout, "Sweet Relics" 158.

⁵⁷ Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, see especially "Walking the City."

⁵⁸ Tim Ingold, *Lines: A Brief History* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 90. Katrin Lund has also discussed the process of "synchronized walking" as a way in which the multiple and often disparate narratives of each participant creates notions of both their past histories and a shared sense of belonging. Lund examines contemporary processions in Spain so this freedom to place oneself in the narrative memory of processional space and its connection with local topography was admittedly more circumscribed in past centuries; however, this sort of memory-making is applicable to the way in which processions at Le Puy could be experienced today. See Katrin Lund, "Listen to the Sound of Time: Walking with Saints in an Andalusian Village" in *Ways of Walking: Ethnography and Practice on Foot* ed. Timothy Ingold and Jo Lee Vergunst (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2008).

map” based less on physical boundaries than the relationship between significant sites.⁵⁹ Similarly, art historian Lisa Pon has described the ways in which the procession of a miraculous print, the Madonna of the Fire, sacralized urban space through connecting cultural memories of places along this route through the processional path.⁶⁰ The intersection of urban space, print and miracle root this image to a specific place.⁶¹ In this way, Pon explores how typically 'placeless' objects such as prints can become ritually tied to a place.

Although Ingold and Pon's studies do not evaluate sculpture as a medium for the sacralization of space, their argument for the ways in which movement through urban landscapes signals cultural memory is relevant to the the Virgin of Le Puy. The modern sites of Le Puy are connected to their past forms not only through the spatial relationships to people and their actions within these spaces but also through the thread of time and memory that is ‘mapped’ cognitively onto the minds of its viewers through walking through these same places. This phenomenological approach thus focuses on the journey rather than points of reference that dominate cartographic realities.⁶²

⁵⁹ Ibid. 85. Ingold distinguishes this sort of "sketch map" as emphasizing gesture, or movement along surface rather than cartographic maps that defines space through boundaries and borders.

⁶⁰ Lisa Pon, "Place Print and Miracle: Forlì's *Madonna of the Fire* as a Functional Site" *Art History* 31/3 (2008): 303 - 321.

⁶¹ Pon's argument for what she describes of the "locus of overlap" that occurs in this print is rooted in James Meyer's concept of a functional site in contemporary art.

⁶² For a similar approach see E.S. Casey, "How to Get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time: Phenomenological Prolegomena," in S. Feld and K.H. Basso. eds. *Senses of Place* (Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press, 1996), 13–52.

Walking through the city, the layers of the past are clearly evident. For example, the streets of Le Puy-en-Velay are prominently highlighted with small niches of the Virgin that watch over its inhabitants. These niches are mostly modern creations but some of them can be dated to at least the sixteenth century. These images placed the Virgin of Le Puy not only in the cathedral but also within her local community. About fifty of these wall niches survive in the city today, and include more traditional images of the Virgin Mary and specific images of Notre-Dame du Puy as a Black Madonna (Figure 75). While domestic prayer niches adorned with saints are not uncommon in Europe, the special attention to depicting the Virgin of Le Puy as a *Vierge noire* is significant. In addition, about seventeen niches remain vacant. These voids in their own way also draw attention to the lost sites of Le Puy through the absence of their devotional figures.

The medieval rituals of pilgrimage are also recalled on the city streets. Hostels who welcome contemporary pilgrims to rest hang shells from their doorsteps, a medieval practice originating with the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela (Figure 76). Continuing to walk through the city, it is clear that while some medieval streets in Le Puy still exist, the town itself has experienced much growth and change. The Jewish quarter is no longer extant and certainly the cathedral itself does not preserve its original orientation. Moreover, the modern urban planning of the city does not seem to have taken the processional sites into account as the city expanded. For example, the parish churches that marked the processional activity of the Rogations processions discussed in chapter three have been destroyed, replaced now with the Seminary of the Cathedral of Le Puy. The modern procession has also grown to include new streets in the city that extend

beyond the cathedral precinct.⁶³ It would then seem that the city of Le Puy continues these processions not only for religious devotion but also partly for the sake of cultural heritage, as a way of preserving some semblance of a past tradition in spite of urban change.⁶⁴ The exact medieval routes of the procession are thus less important than the ritual of the procession itself.

The act of the procession serves as a site of memory for the community that is independent from the fixity of its routes. These events have become simultaneously commemorative, iterative, and performative. Certainly I cannot argue that participating in the contemporary processions at Le Puy render the same experience as their medieval counterparts. Clearly, they cannot. However, through the repetition of the procession over centuries, this ritual has become a continued process with which people have engaged with the landscape of Le Puy over time. Similarly, the contemporary processions at Le Puy succeed not by reproducing medieval rituals but rather by re-presenting them, that is, by renewing their value and function in a city that has both preserved and altered its paths. The seamless substitution of the destroyed Virgin of Le Puy for its contemporary version might be therefore understood as a way of re-*placing* the sculpture, rather than replacing it.

⁶³ Modern day processional route (Feast of the Assumption, 2008/2011): depart les grands escaliers, Rue des Tables, Avenue de la Cathédrale, Boulevard Carnot, Rue Pannessac, Rue Courrierie, Place du Marouret, Rue Chaussade, Rue Chèverrie, Place Cadelade, Boulevard Marchal Fayolle, Boulevard du Breuil, Boulevard St. Louis, Boulevard Carnot, Avenue de la Cathédrale, Rue des Tables, Les grands escaliers. This route was altered in 2010 for the 150th anniversary of the statue of Notre-Dame de France. The procession began at the municipal garden and continued through the streets of the lower town up to the cathedral.

⁶⁴ The resurgence of local city historical festivals has its roots in the nineteenth-century. These sorts of events have been argued to tie local urban history to the history of France. See Stephane Gearson, "Town, Nation or Humanity: Festive Delineations of Place and Past in Northern France ca. 1825 – 1865" *The Journal of Modern History* 72/3 (2000): 628 - 682.

CONCLUSION

" . . . Some things go. Pass on. Some things just stay. I used to think it was my re-memory. You know. Some things you forget. Other things you never do. But it's not. Places, places are still there. If a house burns down, it's gone, but the picture of it stays, and not just in my re-memory, but out there, in the world." ⁶⁵

- Toni Morrison, *Beloved*

Morrison's description of "rememory" captures the essential questions underlying this dissertation. How does one "picture" the past? Does our memory preserve destroyed objects or does it distort them? For Morrison, rememory is the traumatic, overwhelming recall of the past.⁶⁶ This recall lies in the essence of place. Despite the trauma of the Virgin of Le Puy's destruction, the sculpture maintains her identity through association with her place, Le Puy-en-Velay. Although the image of Notre-Dame du Puy has been imagined and re-imagined several times over the course of over six hundred years, place remains the constant in this history. The city of Le Puy provides a means for remembering the past and preserving the identity of its most famous member. Through rituals like processions, Notre-Dame du Puy remains "out there," not as a memory, but as an image preserved in the past.

⁶⁵ Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (New York: Penguin Books, 1987), 36.

⁶⁶ Morrison's concept of rememory is a complicated mix of traumatic, unwanted memories and reconciliation with the past. My use of the word here is not to equate Morrison's concept exactly to the Virgin of Le Puy but to draw attention to the way in which place preserves the past.

This dissertation has considered two interconnected ephemeral artifacts: the now-destroyed statue of the Virgin of Le Puy-en-Velay and the processions preformed in her honor during from the thirteenth through the eighteenth centuries. Through exploring the rituals and representations associated with this statue I have demonstrated the ways in which Virgin of Le Puy must not be understood as a static image with a consistent function. Instead, I have argued that she held a variety of roles that were activated through the changing political, religious and physical environment of Le Puy-en-Velay. Although the statue of Notre-Dame du Puy was likely created during the Middle Ages, the sculpture developed new meanings, functions and identities in the centuries after its creation. Indeed, 'Virgin of Le Puy' was a site of pilgrimage, a processional sculpture, a reliquary, an 'idol' and most prominently, a Black Madonna. These functions shaped the identity of the Virgin of Le Puy over time.

In the case of the Virgin of Le Puy, the extended history of the sculpture is more complicated precisely because of the object's absence. Before the statue's destruction, images of the Virgin of Le Puy maintained varying degrees of faithfulness to the original statue. In this way, there is no single *Notre-Dame du Puy* but rather the sculpture is curiously plural: One must ask *which* rather than *who*. These contradictions do not mean that the image of the Virgin of Le Puy is entirely inscrutable. What is needed is a spectrum of possibility and a methodology that incorporates more than one component of evidence, even if these sources are contradictory.

The second focus of this study has been to consider the ways in which the spatial environment of Le Puy-en-Velay, both urban and topographical,

influenced the changing functions and identity of the Virgin of Le Puy.

Processions became a primary means of asserting both the sculpture's identity and importance in Le Puy as well as providing a means for tangible interactions between sculpture, human bodies and architecture. As suggested by David Summers, "real spatial conditions" always exist within cultural parameters.⁶⁷ These parameters change over time, thus the relationship between people and their spatial arrangements are modified to fit these new concepts of place. For example, medieval Le Puy's borders were more distinctly defined by Jewish and Christian relationships. Later, as the city of Le Puy was divided into areas that distinguished between class and confession, it was the Huguenot iconoclast who provided a foil for the Virgin's identity.

Summers concept of "Real Space" is also useful for understanding how Notre-Dame du Puy has not only survived in spite of its destruction but also how its efficacy has been preserved through time. As Summers argues, "images do not simply represent, rather they inevitably make present" through their capacity preserve that space in time.⁶⁸ The statue has thus been constantly re-presented over time and as such, is renewed and redefined based on the needs of that present time. In this way, the Virgin of Le Puy preserves the "real space," the relationship between the object and its observers, not through her multiple representations but through the act of presenting the statue anew, of re-

⁶⁷ David Summers, *Real Spaces: World Art History and the Rise of Western Modernism* (London: Phaidon, 2003), 53. Summers defines real space as that which is defined by and in relation to the human body. That is, the space shared by people, things and architecture (see especially p. 43).

⁶⁸ Ibid., 252.

presenting the legitimacy of the statue at crucial points in the history of this miraculous image.

Preserving the Past: Notre-Dame de France and the Virgin

I will conclude this study with a final example that exemplifies the importance of place to the identity of the Virgin of Le Puy. The unique site of Le Puy is especially important for this sculpture's biography precisely because of its destruction. As discussed previously, the medieval sculpture was replaced in 1856. A "coronation" of the new statue followed the ritual re-installation of Notre-Dame du Puy on the altar. In a speech after the statue's coronation, the Bishop of Le Puy praised the new statue precisely by evoking the memory of her ancestor, recalling how long ago thirty-two lamps burned day and night before the holy statue. These were Raymond of Toulouse's instructions when he donated the statue to the cathedral. Yet the bishop does not recognize this source, and states the statue was given to the city by Saint Louis.⁶⁹ Just as the older sculpture's identity was grafted upon the new one, the memory of the donation of Raymond of Toulouse was combined with the legend of St. Louis to create a new history of the Virgin. He also recalls the Virgin's role in the city's triumph over Protestantism in previous centuries by citing an inscription in the cathedral that preserves this memory.⁷⁰ Most significantly, the bishop not only recalls the

⁶⁹ Adrien Nampon, *Discours pour le couronnement de Notre Dame du Puy* (Paris: Charles Douniol, Librairie-Editeur, 1856), 8. "autrefois trente-doux lampes brûlainet jour et nuit devant la sainte image donnée par saint Louis."

⁷⁰ Nampon, 20. The inscription reads "Civitas haec non vincitur/Nec vincetur, sic legitur/Per Mariam protegatur/Haec privilegiata" [This city shall not be conquered, nor shall be overcome, for we read [it is written] that it is saved by this privilege through Mary] The privilege refers to the papal decree bestowing indulgences to the cathedral and the right for the bishop to wear the pallium.

statue's many visits from the French royal monarchy and thousands of medieval pilgrims, but he also reminds his diocese of the Virgin's special devotion by "Sarrasins," who prostrated themselves before the statue.⁷¹ These memories became part of the official history of the Virgin at this coronation, which aimed to restore the reputation of Notre-Dame du Puy after accusations of idolatry in the previous century.

The re-installation of the Virgin of Le Puy at the cathedral was only the first step in commemorating the memory of the older statue. Four years later, a colossal statue was erected on top of Mount Corneille, a large outcrop situated next to the cathedral (Figure 2). Made from Russian cannons from the Crimean War, the sculpture represented the triumph of "Marianne, la France" through the literal destruction of enemy artillery. Contemporary records from 1860 reveal that the memory of the destruction of the first statue was directly related to the erection of this second statue. The medieval Virgin of Le Puy's demise in "feu" (fire) was resurrected in "fer" (iron) from the victories of France.⁷² The dedication of the statue also coincided with the restoration of the cathedral, yet another, albeit imperfectly executed, means of remembering the past. In this way, this statue contributed to a national identity aligned not only with Notre-Dame du Puy but also with the whole of Catholic France.

The Virgin of Le Puy was thus integrated into the physical landscape of the city through its colossal counterpart. This sculpture has become a symbol of the

⁷¹ Ibid., 20.

⁷² Decatin, J. A. I. *Guide du touriste à Notre-Dame du Puy en Velay* (Le Puy, 1860), 38.

city and a double representation of the "Virgin of Le Puy." The activities of procession and pilgrimage are physically enforced within the landscape itself, evoking the memory of Notre-Dame du Puy while simultaneously replacing these memories with a new identity of the Virgin. Notre-Dame de France embodies the identity of its referent, the Virgin of Le Puy, through its sheer materiality, its inherent "objectness." It remains permanently tied to this place, never to be burned in effigy like its predecessor in the cathedral. It ensures the presence of the Virgin at Le Puy, despite any possible loss of the cult statue. The identity of Notre-Dame du Puy rests therefore not in the object itself. The absence of the original is made present through her place, Le Puy-en-Velay.

EPILOGUE

Ritual Revisited: Notre-Dame du Puy in the Twenty-First century

I have had the opportunity to witness the procession of the Black Madonna of Le Puy on the fifteenth of August three times (2008, 2010, 2011). Although I cannot and will not argue that these processions produce the same experiences as their medieval predecessors, attending these events has proven to be immensely informative to my approach towards religious ritual. The routes, participants and prayers of the procession have changed, but the popularity of the Virgin of Le Puy continues. The procession draws tens of thousands of visitors to Le Puy each August who come to honor the Black Madonna, just as they have for over seven hundred years.

The procession I attended was also my first visit to Le Puy-en-Velay, so my experience felt akin to a pilgrimage. Getting to Le Puy still requires an effort, even with the modern conveniences of transportation. The city was unfamiliar and the procession unknown. I set out to be an observer of the procession—to photograph not only the event but also the people who came to venerate Notre-Dame du Puy. In retrospect, my approach was likely too heavily informed by the anthropological theories of ritual I had been immersed in at the time. While these theories are helpful ways of understanding ritual behavior, I found myself *looking* for signs of order, disorder, dispersment and gesture. In this way, my

first experience was that of a myopic researcher determined to make sense of what she saw.

In 2010, the city celebrated the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the installation of Notre-Dame du France with a procession with the Virgin of Le Puy from the city center to the colossal statue, thus uniting the two "Notre-Dames" together through ritual movement and prayer. This procession was much different than the one I knew, although the city itself had become familiar. Because this procession was linked with another celebration, the event started on what would have been cow pastures in the Middle Ages, the Place du Breuil. Starting in the new part of the city, the procession ambled down the large Boulevard Saint Louis before turning into the old city towards the cathedral. I chose to walk among the crowd this time, wanting to get a perspective of the physical space of procession as well as the vantage point of the participants to the Virgin of Le Puy. The new route along a wide boulevard allowed the statue to be seen from a great distance by the participants, unlike the previous procession when the masses of crowds could participate without ever seeing the statue during the actual event. The route was carefully planned not only to accommodate the large number of expected visitors but also to visually connect the two sculptures of Notre-Dame du Puy together during the procession itself. The procession proceeded into the upper town via the Rue Grangeville so that the processants could see both statues at once. This visual impact, though temporary, demonstrated the powerful connection to both topography and built environment for processions and it informed my approach to chapter five.

The last procession, in 2011, came full circle—both literally and metaphorically. I came to the procession with a much deeper understanding of the history of the event, its city and the sculpture. Yet having this knowledge also allowed me to watch the procession as it existed in the present, as a current event rather than a historical iteration. The procession was formally similar to the one I had seen in 2008. The procession followed the same route, sang the same songs and praises to the Virgin, and the same recording even echoed throughout the streets. Yet as sensory experience, this procession was very different. It was a very warm day in Le Puy-en-Velay. The physical effort of the processants was clear, especially those who carried Notre-Dame du Puy herself. The procession is always somewhat challenging given the steep incline of the city and the cathedral, but it was especially grueling in the summer heat. The multi-sensory experience of this final procession confirmed my approach to processions as performances with diverse outcomes and experiences.

This final procession also gave me an opportunity to get very close to the statue after the procession ended. After the bishop gave a short sermon on the steps of the cathedral, the community is invited to come venerate the statue on her liter (Figure 77). This is a rare opportunity as Notre-Dame du Puy is usually enclosed within her niche, distant from any chance of human contact. As I was one of the first to approach the statue, I felt the rush of the people behind me reaching out to touch the Virgin of Le Puy (Figure 78). It made Médicis's description of the trampled processants in thirteenth-century Le Puy seem not only plausible but also truly probable. Space was a premium and touch was the goal. These basic instincts had not changed since the Middle Ages. Even though I

came to Le Puy as a researcher, I could not help but reach out to touch the statue myself. It seemed simultaneously so illogical yet so necessary. I knew all too well exactly what the sculpture in front of me was. I knew its history, its facture and its images. But in that moment, those truths did not matter. Imagining the Virgin of Le Puy had become more powerful than her image.

APPENDIX I

Medieval Processions: An Overview

Given that much research on processions approaches these rituals theoretically, it is important to understand the context and structure of medieval and early modern processions in more detail. First, processions in the Middle Ages did not adhere to a strict arrangement or form.¹ The specific order and movement of these activities, recorded in texts later known as processionals, were not used consistently during the Middle Ages.² Instead, directions were usually kept as part of the *antiphoner*, a collection of chants used during the Mass and liturgical activities. Even as these processions developed a more regularized form, processions maintained a strongly local character, which resulted in a set of local sources for these rituals.³ Early records of processional activities from the medieval period are rare, but there have been some attempts to record and transcribe some of these manuscripts.⁴

¹ Terrence Bailey, *The Processions of Sarum and the Western Church* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1971), ix. Most work that has been done on early processions focus on more exceptional practices such as Palm Sunday or Corpus Christi processions.

² The earliest study of processions is Serrarius's *Sacri perpatetici* (1607). See discussion in Bailey, 79.

³ Susan Boynton, *Shaping a Monastic Identity: Liturgy & History At the Imperial Abbey of Farfa, 1000-1125* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 4.

⁴ An important source is the *Répertoire des rituels et processionnaires imprimés conservés en France* (1984), which lists major extant liturgical sources for processions, antiphoners, graduals and other texts by city in France. See Jean-Baptiste Molin, *Répertoire des rituels et*

The structure of the earliest medieval processions is generally believed to have been adapted from the Roman *adventus* ceremony.⁵ These processions were recorded in Jerusalem as early as the fourth century and also appeared in Rome.⁶ These stational processions were connected to the sites of Christ's Passion and Crucifixion.⁷ Early Roman processions were held out of doors and included both the clergy and the lay faithful.⁸ These extra-mural events were unlike smaller indoor processions and other ritual activities where the laity did not have an active role.⁹ From early descriptions of Roman processions we know early medieval processions included first, stational crosses followed by the clergy, more crosses, the choir, and finally, the laity. As the significance of holy objects in

processionnaires imprimés conservés en France (Paris: Editions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1984). Ulysée Chevalier's multi-volume *Bibliothèque liturgique* (1893 - 1897) also provides documentation and transcription of some extant processional activity from Laon, Reims, and Bayeux among others. Chevalier also published a rare full transcription of the Divine Office of the Feast of the Circumcision at Le Puy (*prosolarium ecclesiae Aniciensis*), which provides good evidence of the ritual practices at the cathedral. See also "Ordinaires de l'église cathédrale de Laon (XIIe Et XIIIe siècles): Suivis de deux mystères liturgiques" *Bibliothèque liturgique* volume 6 (Paris: A. Picard, 1897); "Ordinaire et coutumier de l'église Cathédrale de Bayeux (XIIIe siècle) Publiés d'après les manuscrits originaux" *Bibliothèque liturgique* volume 8 (Paris: A. Picard et fils, 1902).

⁵ Margot Fassler, "Adventus at Chartres: Ritual Models for Major Processions" in *Ceremonial Culture in Pre-Modern Europe* ed. Nicholas Howe. (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 13.

⁶ The most important record of early pilgrimage to Jerusalem is that of Egeria who went there c. 381 - 384 CE. For English translation see, John Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels* (Oxford: Aris & Phillips), 2006.

⁷ Bailey, 79.

⁸ The structure of medieval religious processions in Rome has been studied extensively by Sible de Blaauw, whose research provides a useful framework for the general structure of processions in the Middle Ages. See Sible de Blaauw, "Contrasts in Processional Liturgy: A Typology of Outdoor Processions in Twelfth-Century Rome" in *Art, liturgie et cérémonie au Moyen Age* ed. Nicolas Bock et al. (Rome: Viella, 2002), 357 – 396.

⁹ The lay involvement in liturgical rites decreased from the ninth century, when it became largely centered on clerical participation. The late medieval procession therefore provided a ritual outlet for the laity to actively participate in religious ritual outside of the prescriptions of the Mass.

religious processions increased, images of the Virgin, gospel books or saints' reliquaries preceded the first crosses.¹⁰

While the order of medieval processions varied by occasion, region and participation of important figures such as the king or Pope, they were relatively hierarchical. They also became more diverse, expanding to incorporate two main types of processions: triumphal and participatory. The triumphal procession highlighted a specific person or object and drew upon the classical antecedents of the *pompa triumphalis* and *adventus* processions of Ancient Rome. In such processions, public participation was somewhat limited to spectatorship for the laity, especially those lacking rank or nobility.

Conversely, participatory processions emphasized lay participation.¹¹ Such celebrations could be penitential or celebratory. Celebratory processions most commonly occurred at the beginning and end of Lent, the main feasts of the Virgin Mary (Purification, Annunciation, Assumption and Nativity) and the feasts of Advent season. During penitential processions, lay confraternity members or clerics often performed acts of self-mortification such as flagellation as a sign of religious devotion. Other processions varied by church or region and often corresponded with the feast days of local saints or the dedication of the church.¹² Furthermore, new architectural innovations in thirteenth-century churches prompted more processional activities within its interior spaces in addition to the

¹⁰ Blaauw, 357 – 396.

¹¹ Ibid., 358.

¹² Ibid., 373.

increased number of extra-mural processions that developed during this time as well.¹³

There were also two different occasions for procession: liturgical, known as ordinary processions, or extraordinary processions, invoked during times of catastrophe or civic celebration. Throughout the Middle Ages, examples of ordinary processions often survive in the recordings of religious communities such as monasteries. In contrast, extraordinary processions in early modern Le Puy and elsewhere in Europe began to blur the distinction between secular and sacred ceremony. Late medieval and early modern extraordinary processions took on more aspects of the triumphal cortèges popularized by the royal entrance processions of medieval and Renaissance monarchs.¹⁴ They became more elaborate affairs and participation of the laity increased. Processions also began to include intermittent theatrical performances during the event. The *Gran procession* of Lille provides the best evidence for such activities but they also occurred in Le Puy.¹⁵

¹³ Anne Walters Robertson, *The Service-Books of the Royal Abbey of Saint-Denis: Images of Ritual and Music in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 251. Early processions at the Abbey of Saint Denis are recorded in *nou. acq. latin 306* (Paris, bibliothèque nationale). Personal consultation of this manuscript verifies many processions although they lack specificity of place names and focus rather upon roles for the canons, deacons and sub-deacons (viewed 27.07.2011).

¹⁴ See discussion in Thøfner's discussion of the *Ommegangen* in Antwerp and Brussels in *A Common Art: Urban Ceremonial in Antwerp and Brussels During and After the Dutch Revolt* (Zwolle: Waanders Publishers, 2007), 46 – 51.

¹⁵ Alan E. Knight, "Processional Theater in Lille in the Fifteenth Century" in *Le théâtre et la cité dans l'europe médiévale*. Actes du V^e Colloque international de la S.I.T.M. (Perpignan, juillet 1986), eds. J.-Cl. Aubailly, Hans-Dieter Heinz (Stuttgart: Akademischer Verlag, 1988) 347 - 358.

Objects in Procession: Liturgical Objects, Statues and Vestments

The procession was an especially attractive form of medieval visual communication because it provided a representation of a divine, ordered world.¹⁶ The militaristic undertones of these processions, marked by banners, oriflammes, and the marching cadence of the ceremony itself aided in this pictorial understanding of the triumph of the divine over evil.¹⁷ The carrying of objects in procession also mimicked antique practices of processing with war spolia, battle standards and other objects that demonstrated the power of the collective group.

Liturgical processions included various ecclesiastical objects and accoutrements such as the processional cross, candles, censers and the aspergillum, an object that was used for dispensing holy water.¹⁸ Extra-liturgical processions such as the ones examined here included this basic liturgical equipment but also expanded the variety of accessories to highlight the increased spectacle of these cortèges. Such objects included reliquary châsses, confraternity banners, and statues, especially those of the Virgin and saints. Last, liturgical books were also carried in processions, either for display, such as the gospel, or as an instructional aide to the clerics performing these ceremonies. In addition to these objects, processions were also visually marked by the dress of the clergy.

¹⁶ Rita Tekippe, "Piety, and Politics: Three Medieval Rheno-Mosan Reliquary Shrines and the Cult Communities for Bishop-Saints Servatius of Maastricht, Eleutherius of Tournai, and Remaclus of Stavelot" (PhD diss, The Ohio State University, 1999), 364 - 365. Tekippe has argued that the carrying of sacred objects, such as relics and cult statues, was also connected to Biblical history as the Ark of the Covenant was paraded into battle to ensure divine protection of the troops.

¹⁷ Ibid., 364.

¹⁸ Rita Tekippe, "Pilgrimage and Procession: Correlations of Meaning, Practice and Effects" in *Art and Architecture of Late Medieval Pilgrimage in Northern Europe and the British Isles* eds. Sarah Blick and Rita Tepikke (Boston: Brill, 2005), 699.

Processional instructions often mandated specific vestments for the occasion such as special pluvial copes, albs and maniples were to be used during the processions.¹⁹ Sound and smell also added still more dimensions to the procession, as the use of incense and the singing of psalms and hymns have been associated with these activities since antiquity. These general aspects of medieval processions can serve as a framework for more specialized research on processions.

¹⁹ A good explanation of liturgical vestments and objects used in the liturgy can be found in Stephen N. Fliegel, *Replendent Faith: Liturgical Treasuries of the Middle Ages* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2009). For more information on liturgical vestments see, Janet Mayo, *A History of Ecclesiastical Dress* (London: Batsford, 1984) and Cyril E. Pocknee, *Liturgical Vesture: Its Origins and Development* (London: Mowbray, 1960). It is not known if the Virgin received a special mantle during processional activities or Marian feasts. Visual records of her mantle indicate that her vestments were growing increasingly elaborate, with more emphasis on her mantle during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The statue receives a special garment for the contemporary procession of the Virgin on the Feast of the Assumption.

APPENDIX II

Rogations Processions recorded in *Le ancien cérémonial du Puy*: Latin Transcription and English Translations

Latin published by Jean-Baptiste Payrard, "Ancien cérémonial de l'église angélique du Puy." *Tablettes Historiques de la Haute-Loire et du Velay*. VIII, 1877-78, 377ff.

English translations by EAF and Lauren Donovan

Note on translations: the English translations stay close to the original Latin text for accuracy. I have indicated additional information or unclear locations in brackets.

Latin

Feria secunda. – Ad processionem que fit post meridiem dicitur à cantore minore antiphona *Propitius esto*...Et ebdomarius stans in loco decani spargit aquam benedictam...Et post vadit processio ad sanctum Salvatorem et cum fuerit ad januam ecclesie juxta capellam sancti Pauli incipit cantor minor antiphonam *De Jherusalem* et tunc intrat processio ecclesiam sancti Salvatoris. Et postquam deposita fuerit ymago beate Marie super altare, incipit ebdomarius letaniam minorem...et dicunt eam festinate et submissa voce...et [vadunt] ad sanctum Johannem...Et in aliis duobus diebus dicitur eodem modo letania in ecclesiis sanctorum Georgii et Agripani Evodii et sancti Petri de Turre [cum istis invocationibus:] *Sancta Maria...sancta Domprine...sancta Juliane...sancta Geralde*...Deinde vadit processio ad sanctum Johanem et juxta domum *del senhor de Mons* incipit cantor minor antiphonam *Cum jucunditate*...Et post reddit per ecclesiam beate Marie processio et ordinantur cruces et processio ante introitum chori et duo chorarii qui debent esse sacerdotes, vel unus sacerdos et alius dyaconus, flectunt genua sua in medio processionis et incipient letaniam et dicunt eam usquequo dicatur *Sancte Michel*...Et tunc illi duo surgunt et exit processio versus gradus...et vadit ad

English

The second ferial day [of Rogations]—for the purpose of the procession that is made after noon. The antiphon *Propitius esto* is recited by the minor cantor...and the weekly priest stands in the place of/ or in place of [a substitute for] the deacon and sprinkles holy water...And after the procession goes towards the sanctuary of the Savior and when the procession is at the door of the church next to the Chapel of Saint Paul [and] the minor cantor begins the antiphon *De Jherusalem*, and then the procession enters into the church of the Holy Savior [chapel? Chapelle Saint-Saveur du clocher]. And after the image [statue] of the Virgin Mary is deposited above the altar, the weekly priest begins the lesser litany...and they recite them quickly and in a lowered voice...and [they go] to the sanctuary of John [Chapelle of Saint-Jean-des Fonts Baptismaux]...and on the other two days the litany is said in the same way in the church of saint George and Agrève, Vosi and Saint Peter of Tours [with these invocations:] *Holy Mary...Holy Lord....Saint*

Aculeam per pontem *dous Estrolhas* et per partum prepositi...Cantatur ab uno puero sancti Georgii antiphona *Domine Dominus noster*...Dictur ab uno puero sancti Evodii antiphona *Et clamemus*...Cantatur ab uno puero sancti Petri de Turre antiphona *Abraham*...Predictae antiphone debent esse finite antequam transeant aquam. Et ad Aculeam in capella sancti Gabrielis celebratur missa de die ab uno ebdomadario. Post missam foras extra portale Aculee incipit unus puer respons...*Tua es potentia*. Et alius puer incipit repons. *Aspice, Dominus*...juxta campum hospitalis Aculee et juxta vineam domini Iterii Rupeforti...Juxta portale quod est juxta ecclesiam sancti Agrippani incipit socius cantoris minoris respons. *Beatum Dompninum*...Et subtus capellam sancti Michaelis in introitu incipit cantor respons. *Alleluia*...Et cum imago beate Marie fuerit in plano sancti Georgii et ad januam ecclesie juxta Forum ante fores incipit cantor antiph. *Aufer a nobis*...In choro dicit ebdomadarius versiculum *Salva Domine plebem*...postquam ymago beate Marie deposita fuerit loco suo, et dicit nonam. –Nota quod in his tribus diebus debent ire ad processionem descalceati duo cantors et ebodmarii, clericuli et alii quicumque voluerint, excepto ebdomadario, qui debet celebrare missam. Et possunt intrare desclaceati ad nonam.

*Julian....Saint Gerard....*After the procession goes to the Chapelle Saint-Jean and next to the house of the Seigneur of Mons the lesser cantor begins the antiphon *Cum jucunditate*....And after the procession return to the church of Blessed Mary and the crosses and the procession are organized before the entrance of the choir and two choral members who should be priests, or either one priest or a deacon, go down on their knees in the middle of the procession and begin the litany and he recites [the litany] until *Saint Michel* is said...And then these two arise and leave the procession opposite the steps...and go toward Aiguilhe over the bridge *des Trollas* [Estrollas] and through the land owned by abbot [? Cathedral close]...the antiphon *Domine Dominus noster* is sung by a boy of St. George...the antiphon *Et clamemus* is said by a boy of Saint Evodius...and the antiphon *Abraham* is said by a boy from Saint Peter of Tours...The aforementioned antiphons should be completed before they pass over the water. And toward the Aculeam in the Chapel of Saint Gabriel mass of the day is celebrated by the weekly priest. After mass outside and beyond the gates of the Aiguilhe one boy begins the response...*Tua es potentia* and another boy begins the response *Aspice Dominus*...next to bountiful fields of Aiguilhe and next to the vineyard on the road of Lord Rupefort [Rocheport?].....Next to the gate which is next to the church of St. Agrève the companion/partner of the minor cantor begin the response *Beatum Domnum*...And below the chapel of Saint Michael the cantor begins the response in the indroit *Alleluia*....And when the image of Blessed Mary is at the square of Saint George and at the door of the church next to the marketplace and outside in front of the doors the cantor begins the antiphon *Aufer a nobis*...In the choir the weekly priest recites the versicle *Salve Domine plebem*....Afterwards the image of blessed Mary is deposited in her place and the he recites Nones. Note that on these three days the two cantors and weekly priests,

Feria tertia. ---Sequitur de processione post meridiem. (*Ordinut in feria IIa*). Exeunt reliquae. Juxta forum...ad sanctum Georgium [invocationes] *sancte Georgi...sancta Stephane...sancte Sylvester*. Et in plateo sancti Georgii dicitur a cantore antiph. *Cum jucunditate*...et ad sanctum Agripanum *Agnus Dei...sancte Agripiane...sancte Laurenti*, et dicitur lentania ibidem usquequo dicitur *sancte Michael*. Et post vadit processio ad sanctum Petrum de Monasterio cantando lentiam, processio per planum sancti Georgii et per territorium sancti Evodii recta via et per pontem Arbert et per viam que dicitur Mercatoria, et in introitu dicte vie incipit cantor antiphonam *Iniquitates*...cantat eam epistolarius sancti Agripani; antiphonam *Peccavimus*...et cantat eam epistolarius sancti Georgii; antiphonam *Exaudi*, et cantat eam epistolarius sancti Petri de Turre; quando est siccum tempus dicuntur iste due antiphone, scilicet *Nunquam est in Idolis*...et cantat eam unus clericulus ecclesie Anicii, et ant. *Domine rex*...Et cum processio transierit per Brolium in Calciata sancti Egidii, incipit cantor *O claviger*...Post missam, juxta portam sancti Ylarii unus puer [cantat] responsorium *Tua est potentia*...Juxta domum Philippi de Conchis (1) incipit cantor resp. *Felix valde*...Super furnum inferiorum de Gradibus incipit socius cantoris minoris resp. *Constans esto, Domnine*....et in Graza, subtus canthenam majorem, incipit cantor respons. *Audivimus eam*...Ad janauam ecclesie in gradibus incipit cantor antiph. *Aufer a nobis*...et cantant omnes pueri in quinta et in omni voce usque ad *represa Miserere*...et alii clerici qui sunt in scolario dicunt similiter in omni voci *Miserere*...usque *Exaudi*, et ita cantant inter se donec venerit imago beate Marie in choro.

clerics and all others who would like should go to the procession barefoot, excluding the weekly priest, who should celebrate the mass. And is able to enter barefoot at Nones.

Third Ferial Day – Following the procession after noon. (The order in ferial day IIa). The relics are brought forth. Next to the marketplace at St. George the invocations to Saint George...St. Stephen...Saint Sylvester [are recited]. And in the square of St. George the antiphon *Cum Jucunditate* is recited by the cantor...and to St. Agrève [the invocations] *Agnus Dei*...Saint Agrève...Saint Laurent and the same litany is recited in the same way at Saint Michel. And after the procession goes to St. Pierre Le Monastier [parish church in lower town] for the purpose of singing the litany, the procession goes through the square of St. George and through the [territory – place] of St. Vosi in a straight path and over the bridge Arbert and through the road called Mercatoria and in an indroit on the said street the cantor begins the antiphon *Iniquitates*...the secretary of St. Agrève sings it; the antiphon *Peccavimus*....the secretary of St. George sings the antiphon *Exundi* and the secretary of St. Peter of Tours sings when it is the dry time [during a drought] these two antiphons are recited, of course *Numquam est in Idolis* and one cleric of the church of Ancium [Cathedral ND du Puy] sings it and the antiphon *Domine Rex*...and when the procession crosses through Brolius in Calciata of Saint Egrdi [parish church], the cantor begins the antiphon *O Claviger*...after the mass next to the door of Saint Ylari [Hillaire?] [parish church] one boy sings the response *Tua es potentia*. Next to the house of Philip of Conhis the cantor begins the response *Felix valde*. The partner of the minor cantor begins the response *Constans esto, Domine* above the bakery underneath the steps [of the cathedral - Rue des Grazes]...and at the steps behind the sacramental vessel, the cantor begins the response *Audivimus eam*....the cantor begins the antiphon *Aufer a nobis* to the

Feria IIIa – Ad processionem in choro incipit cantor antiphonam *Propitius...*; ad portam juxta Forum ant. *De Jherusalem*; ad sanctum Evodium...*Sancte Evodi...sancte Scrutari...sancte Martine...*; juxta capellam sancti Jacobi extra, incipit cantor antiph. *Cum jucunditate*; ad santum Petrum de Turre...*sancte Petre...sancte Paule...sancte Andrea...*et dicitur ibidem letania usquequo dicitur *sancte Michael*. Postea vadit processio ad sanctum Marcellum, cantando letaniam, et nihil aliud dicitur in eundo, et vadit processio per la Frenaria et per Rochataliada et per la Chanabotaria et per Panassac et per pontem dous Estrolias via recta usque ad sanctum Marcellum et celebratur ibi missa de vigila et fit sero in cimiterio post missam juxta posticum sancti Petri. Incipit cantor antiph. *Timor et tremor* et dicitur usque ad pontem. ...Et ad pontem in introitu incipit cantor vel socius ejus antiph. *Omnipotens Deus* et dicitur usque ad finem pontis. Et ultra pontem unus puer resp. *Tua est potentia...*Et juxta cimiterium sancti Laurentii incipit alius puer resp. *Aspice Domine...*Infra civitatem in introitu incipit unus puer resp. *Civitatem...*Juxta domum dous Vergonjas incipit cantor resp. *Gaude Maria...*Juxta domum Poteti socius cantoris incipit resp. *Alleluia Dei...En la Graza* et ad januam ecclesie in gradibus resp. *Alleluia. Audvimus eum*

door of the church at the steps...and all the children sing in fifths and in all one voice until *represa Miserere*...and all the clerics who are in the group recite [the antiphons] in the same way in one voice *Miserere*...until *Exaudi* and thus they sing among themselves until the image of Blessed Mary arrives in the choir.

Ferial Day IIIa – For the purpose of procession the cantor begins the antiphon *Propitius* in the choir...near the gate next to the marketplace the antiphon *De Jherusalem*; to St. Vosi...*Sancte Evodi...Sancte Scrutari...Sancte Martine...*: next to and outside of the chapel of Saint Jacob the cantor begins the antiphon *Cum jucunditate*; to Saint Peter of Tours...*Sancte Petre...Sancte Paule...Sancte Andrea...*and in the same place the litany is said in the same way as *Sante Michel* is said. Afterwards go in procession to Saint Marcel, for the purpose of singing the litany and nothing else is said while going/processing and go in procession through the Frenaria and through Rochaliada and through the Chanbortaria and through Panassac [all street names] and across the bridge dous Estrolias in a straight path until St. Marcel and there the Vigil mass is celebrated and it is done late in the cemetery after mass next to the back door of Saint Peter [de la Tour]. The cantor begins the antiphon *Timor et tremor* and it is said until the bridge. —And at the bridge the cantor or his associate begins as an opening the antiphon *Omnipotens Deus* and it is said until the end of the bridge. And beyond the bridge a boy responds *Tua est potentia...*And next to the cemetery of Saint Laurent another boy begins the response *Aspice Domine...*in the cathedral close a boy begins responds *civitatem* in the indroit...next to the house of two Vergonjas [Veronicas?] the cantor begins the response *Gaude Maria...*next to the house of Potet the associate of the cantor begins the response *Alleluia Dei...en la Graza* and to the door of the church on the steps the response *Alleluia. Audvimus eum*.

FIGURES

All figures labeled EAF are property of Elisa Anne Foster



Figure 1. The Black Madonna of Le Puy, seventeenth century, installed 1856. Formerly in the Church of Saint Maurice du Refuge. In situ, Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay. Photograph EAF 2011.



Figure 2. Jean-Marie Bonnassieux, *Notre Dame de France*, 1860. Photograph EAF, 2010.



Figure 3. Chapel of Saint-Michel d'Aiguilhe, begun 962. Photograph EAF 2011.



Figure 4. Procession of the Virgin of Le Puy on the Feast of the Assumption. 15 August 2010, Place de Breuil, Le Puy-en-Velay. Photograph EAF 2010.



Figure 5. The Morgan Madonna (Virgin and Child) ca. 1150 – 1200. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Image via ARTstor.

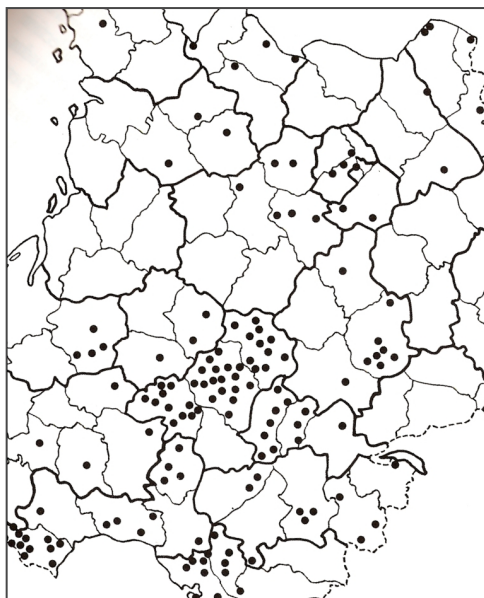


Figure 6. Map of Black Madonnas in France (extant and destroyed). From Émile Salliens, *Nos vierges noires, leurs origines*, 1945.



Figure 7. The Virgin of Montserrat (*La Moreneta*). Twelfth century. Abbey of Santa Maria de Montserrat, Catalonia, Spain. Photograph EAF 2007.



Figure 8. Virgin of Clermont-Ferrand, ms 145, fol. 130v. Bibliothèque municipale, Clermont-Ferrand.



Figure 9. Reliquary Statue of Sainte-Foy. Treasury of the Church of St. Foy, Conques, France.



Figure 10. Disassembled heads on dowels, The Virgin and Christ (Forez, Auvergne). Second half of the twelfth century. Musée du Louvre, Department of Sculpture, RF 897. From Gaborit and Faunières, "Une vierge en majesté."



Figure 11. X-ray showing interior cavity of the Virgin of Forez. Musée du Louvre. Department of Sculpture, RF 897. From Gaborit and Faunières, "Une vierge en majesté."



Figure 12. Reliquary cache, Virgin of Saint-Flour (Cantal?). Second half of the twelfth century. Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lyon. Photograph EAF 2010.

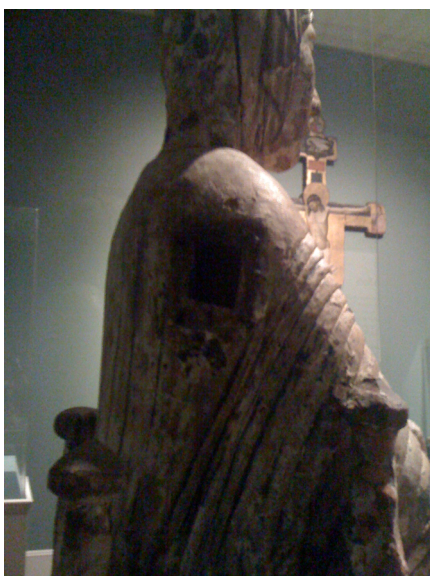


Figure 13. Enthroned Madonna and Child with reliquary cache exposed. Twelfth century. Auvergne, France. Saint Louis Art Museum. St Louis, Missouri. Photograph EAF 2010.



Figure 14. Unknown artist. *La vierge noire du Puy*, seventeenth century (?). Musée Crozatier, Le Puy-en-Velay. Image via ARTstor.



Figure 15. Virgin of Vernouillet, Church of Notre-Dame de Vernouillet, Thirteenth century. From Debaisieux, *Vierges Romanes*.



Figure 16. Virgin and Child. c. 1340. Belfry, Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay. Photograph EAF 2011.



Figure 17a. Pilgrimage badges and souvenirs from the pilgrimage to Le Puy-en-Velay. Thirteenth through nineteenth centuries. Musée Croatizer, Le Puy-en-Velay. Photograph EAF 2008.



Figure 17b. Figurines of Notre-Dame du Puy. Seventeenth through twentieth centuries. Musée Croatizer, Le Puy-en-Velay. Photograph EAF 2008.



Figure 18. The Virgin of Le Puy. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek (ÖNB), Ms 1853*. Miniature illumination from *Liber precum latinorum et gallicarum in Lotharingia scriptus*. Toul or Nancy, late fifteenth century.



Figure 19. The Queen of Sheba. In Conrad Kyeser, *Bellifortis*. (before 1405). Fol. 122r. Image via ARTstor.



Figure 20. Notre-Dame de Vauclair. Second half of the twelfth century. Originally in the Chapel of Notre-Dame-de-la-Nativité, Molompize, France. Now in the Church of St. Foy, Molompize. From Cassagnes-Brouquet, *Vierges noires, regard et fascination*.



Figure 20. The 'Egyptian Statue' of the Virgin and Child. *Speculum humanæ salvationis*, Chapter XI. Ms 720, fol. 17 recto. Hessische Landes- und Hochschulbibliothek, Darmstadt. Image via ARTstor.

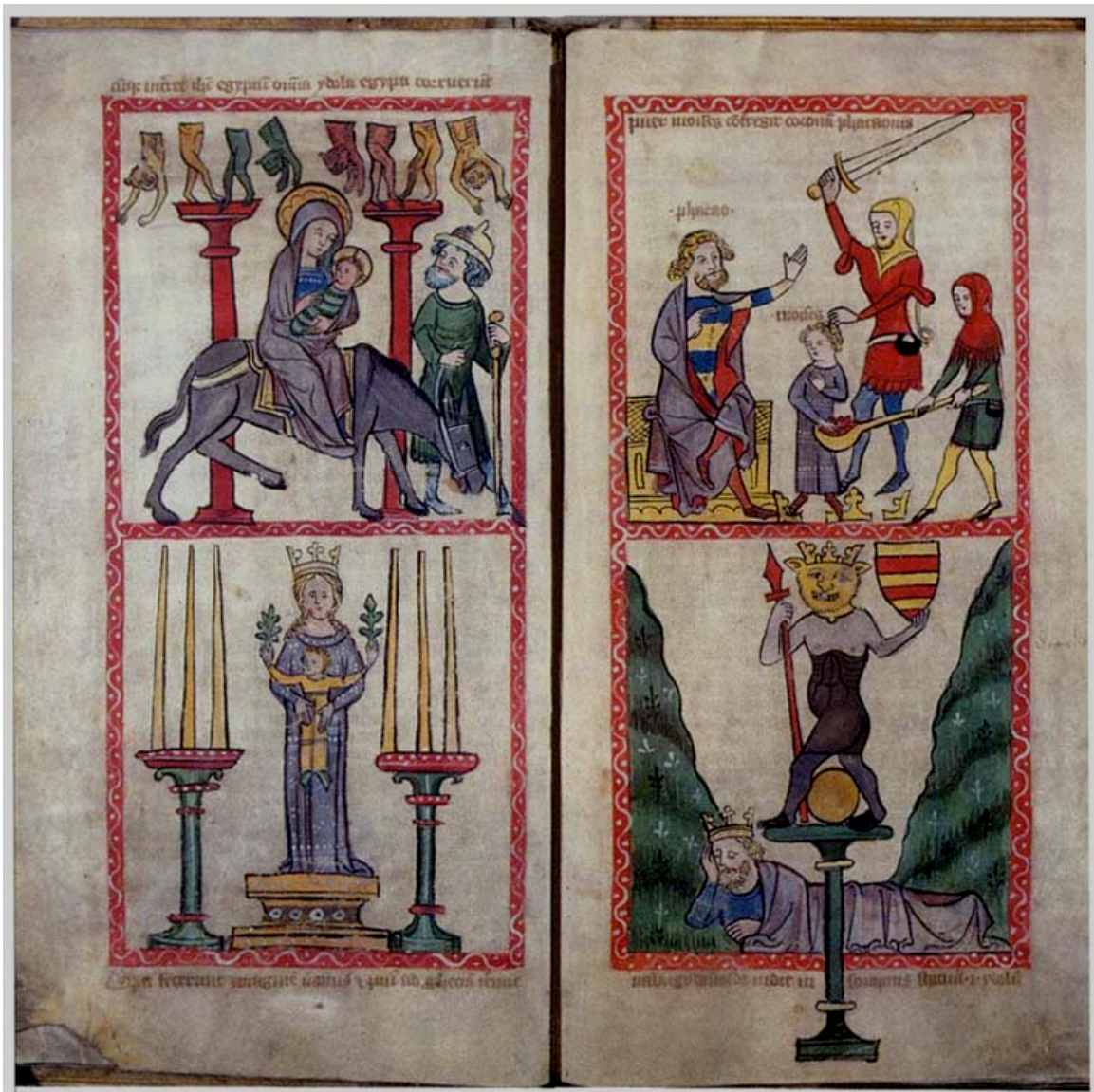


Figure 21. Darmstadt, Hessische Landes- und Hochschulbibliothek. Ms 2505, fols. 22 v. "The Egyptians Made an Image of the Virgin and Child." Lower left quadrant. *Speculum humanæ salvationis*, Chapter XI. Image via ARTstor.



Figure 22. 'The Egyptian Statue of a Virgin and Child.' *Mirror of Human Salvation* circa 1481. fol. 31r, col. 1. After *The Illustrated Bartsch Vol. 45, Italian Masters of the Seventeenth Century*. Image via ARTstor.



Figure 23. Copenhagen, Danish Royal Library, GKS 79 2^o: *Speculum humanae salvationis*. Folio 35r. "Egyptians" venerating the statue of the Virgin. Image from E-manuscripts at the Danish Royal Library, www.kb.dk.



Figure 24. The Virgin of Le Puy, after restoration, 2010. Image from www.cathedraledupuy.org.



Figure 25. The Head of Christ, The Virgin of Le Puy, before restoration. 2010. Image from www.cathedraledupuy.org.



Figure 26. Reconstruction of the original statue of Notre-Dame du Puy, known as the “ancien copie.” Made by Phillipe Kaeppelin, after an etching by Faujas-St Fond (18th century), 1990.



Figure 27. “Exact Reproduction” of the Virgin of Le Puy (1777). Etching by Veyrenc in Faujas de St-Fond, *Recherches sur les volcans éteints du Vivarais et du Velay* (1778). Image via Gallica, Bibliothèque nationale de France.



Figure 28. Pilgrim Badge, Le Puy-en-Velay. c. 1209. Inscription reads SIGILLVM BEATE/ MARIE DE PODIO. Musée Crozatier, Le Puy-en-Velay. From Barral i Altet, *La Cathédrale du Puy-en-Velay*.



Figure 29. Seal of Guy de Montlaur, Dean of the collegiate chapter of the Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay, 1258.



Figure 30. Drawing of the Virgin of Le Puy carried in procession, 1578. Le Puy, Bibliothèque municipale, ms. 59 (8081), f. 102r.



Figure 31. Seventeenth-century confraternity prayer card, based on earliest printed image of Notre-Dame du Puy by Jean Petit, c. 1500. Image from Barral i Altet, *La Cathédrale du Puy-en-Velay*.



Figure 32. Maurthins des Roys, *S'ensuyt la charge, noblesse et bonne ordonnance de l'hospital de Nostre-Dame et ville du Puy...* Lyon, 1523. Woodcut. Paris, Bibilothèque nationale, site l'Arsenal ms. 4 B.L. 3141.



Figure 33. Anonymous. Frontispiece of *La fondacion de la sainte eglise...*Lyon, c. 1500. British Library, IA. 42390.

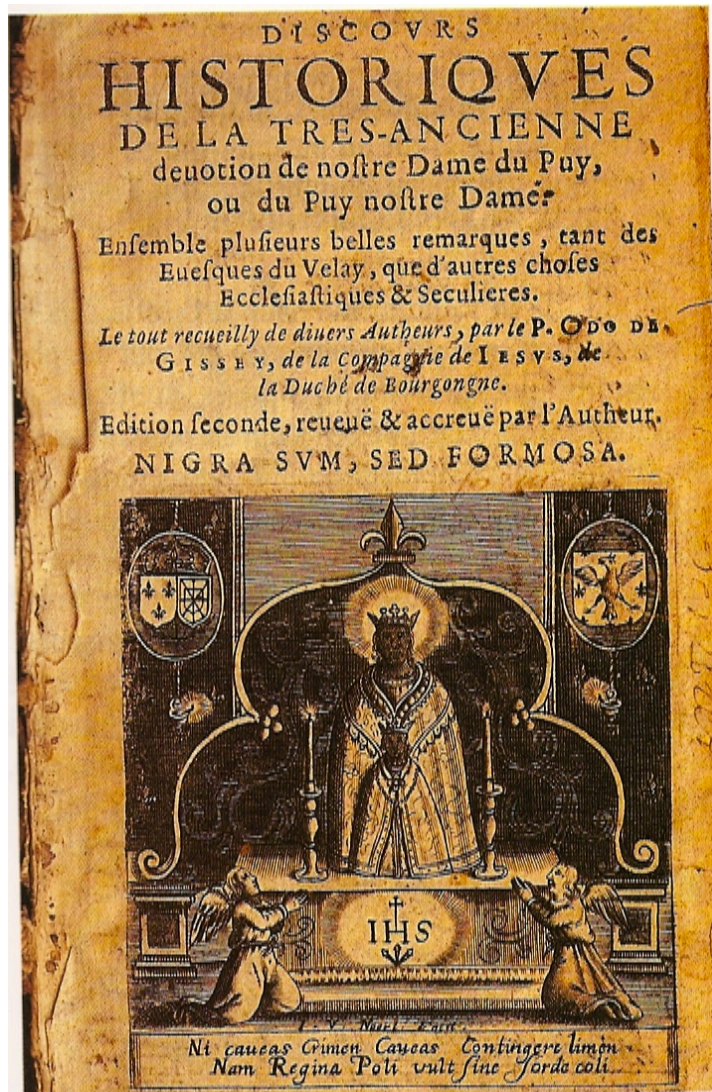


Figure 34. Frontispiece from Odo de Gissey. *Discours de la très ancienne deuotion de Nostre Dame du Puy*, 1627. From Cassagnes-Broquet, *Vierges noires, regard et fascination*.



Figure 35. Editions of Odo de Gissey, *Discours de la très ancienne devotion de Notre Dame du Puy*, 1620, 1627, 1644. From Olivier, *L'ancienne statue romane de Notre-Dame du Puy : vierge noire miraculeuse : essai d'iconographie critique*. Figures 103 – 105.



Figure 36. Eighteenth-century edition of Gissey, etching by Chambon of Avignon. Collection M. Perrot, Avignon. From Olivier, *L'ancienne statue romane de Notre-Dame du Puy*, figure 130.



Figure 37. *Beate Marie Aniciensis*. (The Virgin of Le Puy). In Wilhelm Guppenberg, *Atlas Marianus, sive De imaginibus Deiparae per orbem Christianum miraculosis*. Ingolstadt, 1657.



Figure 38. *Imago B.V. Miracula in Monte Serrato* (Montserrat). In Wilhelm Guppenberg, *Atlas Marianus sive De imaginibus Deiparae per orbem Christianum miraculosis*. Ingolstadt, 1657.



Figure 39. "Le Vrai Portrait du Notre-Dame du Puy." Etching by Dufflos, 18th c. Displayed in the cathedral treasury, Le Puy-en-Velay.



Figure 40. Procession of the Relics of Sainte Genèvieve. Paris. 1652. Image from Bibliothèque Sainte-Genèvieve, Paris. Available <http://www.bsg.e-corporus.org/notices/113266/gallery/>



Figure 41. Plan of Le Puy-en-Velay circa 1544. Drawn by Augustin Chaissiang, in *Le livre de Podio ou chronique d'Étienne de Médicis, bourgeois du Puy*, edited by A. Chassaing in *Recueil des chroniqueurs du Puy-en-Velay*, Vols. I and II, Le Puy, 1859.

7 (to St. Michel)

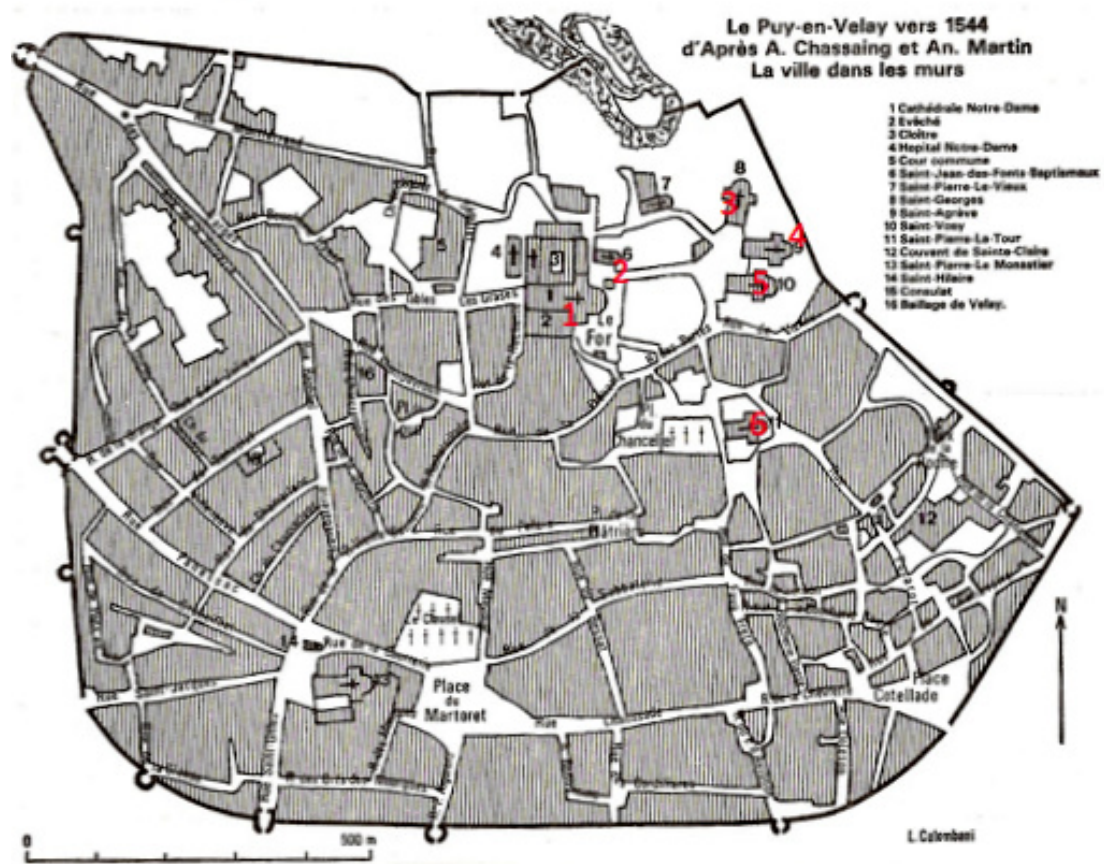


Figure 42. Route of Rogations procession in Le Puy-en-Velay, c. 1544.

1. Cathedral Notre-Dame 2. Chapel of the Holy Savior 3. Church of St. Vosi 4. Church of Evodius 5. Church of Saint Georges 6. Church of Saint-Pierre-La-Tour

7. towards the Chapel of Saint Michel, Aiguilhe. Map from Rivet, *Une ville au XVI^e siècle*.



Figure 43. Slippers worn by the Virgin of Le Puy. Cathedral treasury, Le Puy-en-Velay. Photograph EAF 2008.



Figure 44. Detail, The Virgin of Le Puy on her processional liter. Jean Solvayn, *Le voeu de peste*, 1650. From Barral i Altet, *La Cathédrale du Puy-en-Velay*.

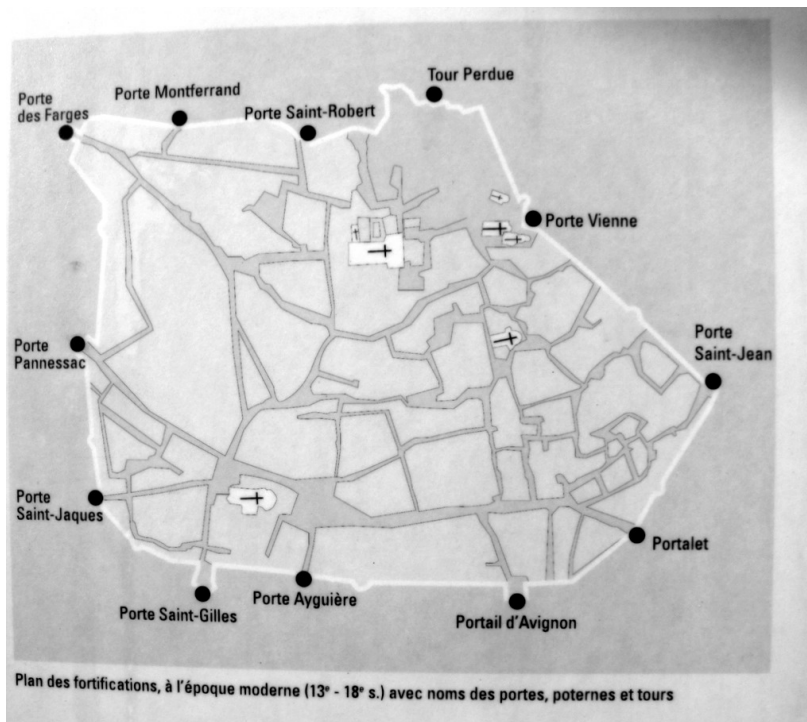


Figure 45. Plan of Early Modern Le Puy with gates and towers. Image from La Ville du Puy-en-Velay.



Figure 46. Machicolated wall, western facade, Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay. Photograph EAF 2010.



Figure 48. Jean Solvain, *Le voeu de peste*, 1650. Cathedral of Notre-Dame-du-Puy. Photograph EAF 2011.



Figure 49. Marginal drawing of a processional canopy from Le Puy-en-Velay. In Jean Burel, *Mémoires. Le Puy*, Bibliothèque municipale, ms. 59 (8081).

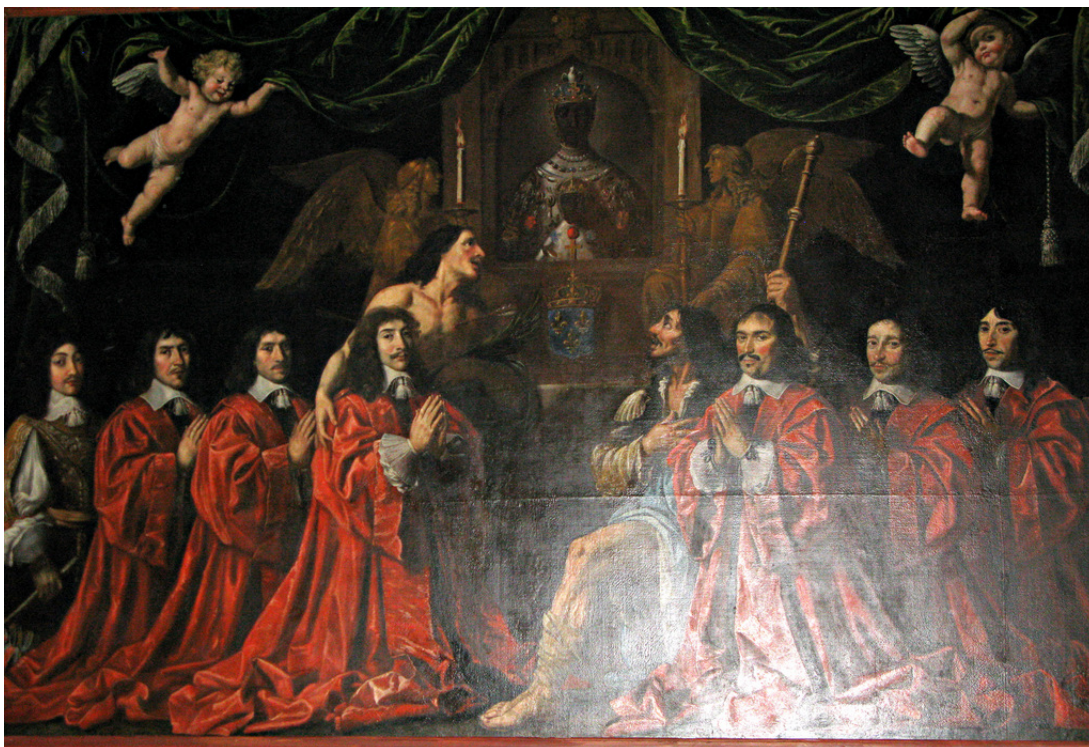


Figure 50. Jean François. *Le voeu des échevins*, 1653. Cathedral of Notre-Dame-du Puy. Photograph EAF 2011.



Figure 51. Miracle of the Murdered Chorister. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Douce 374. 15v. *La vie et miracles de Nostre Dame* by Jean Mielot. Image via ARTstor.



Figure 52. Miracle of the Murdered Choirster. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, ms. français 9199, f.13v. *La vie et miracles de Nostre Dame* by Jean Mielot. From Forestier, "Les Juifs au Puy au Moyen Age."



Figure 53. Miracle tale set at Mont Saint Michel. *La vie et miracles de Nostre Dame* by Jean Miélot. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale. ms. Français 9198. f. 37v. Image via BnF.

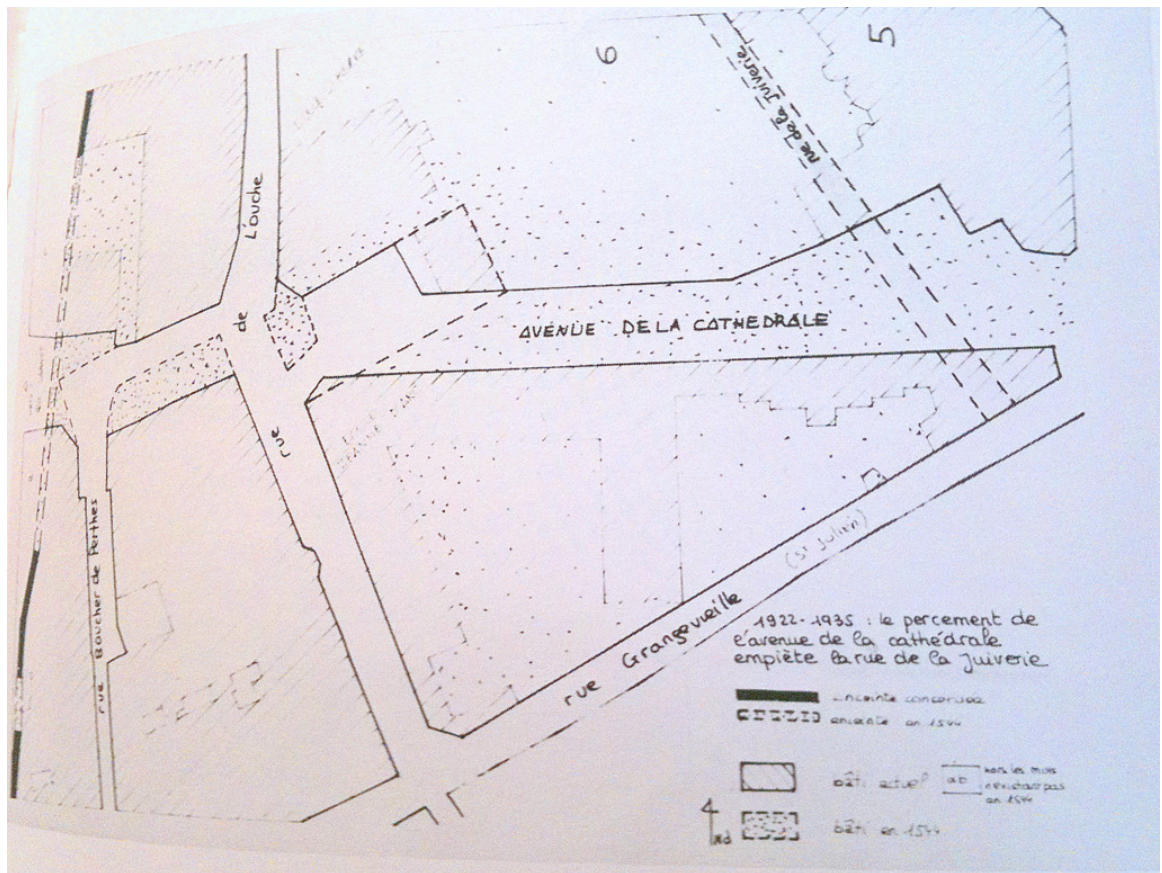


Figure 54. Proposed reconstruction of the Jewish quarter, "rue de la Juiverie" top right. Gen vieve Douillard, "Restitution du quartier juif du Puy-en-Velay au Moyen  ge" in *L'art juif au moyen  ge*, 143.

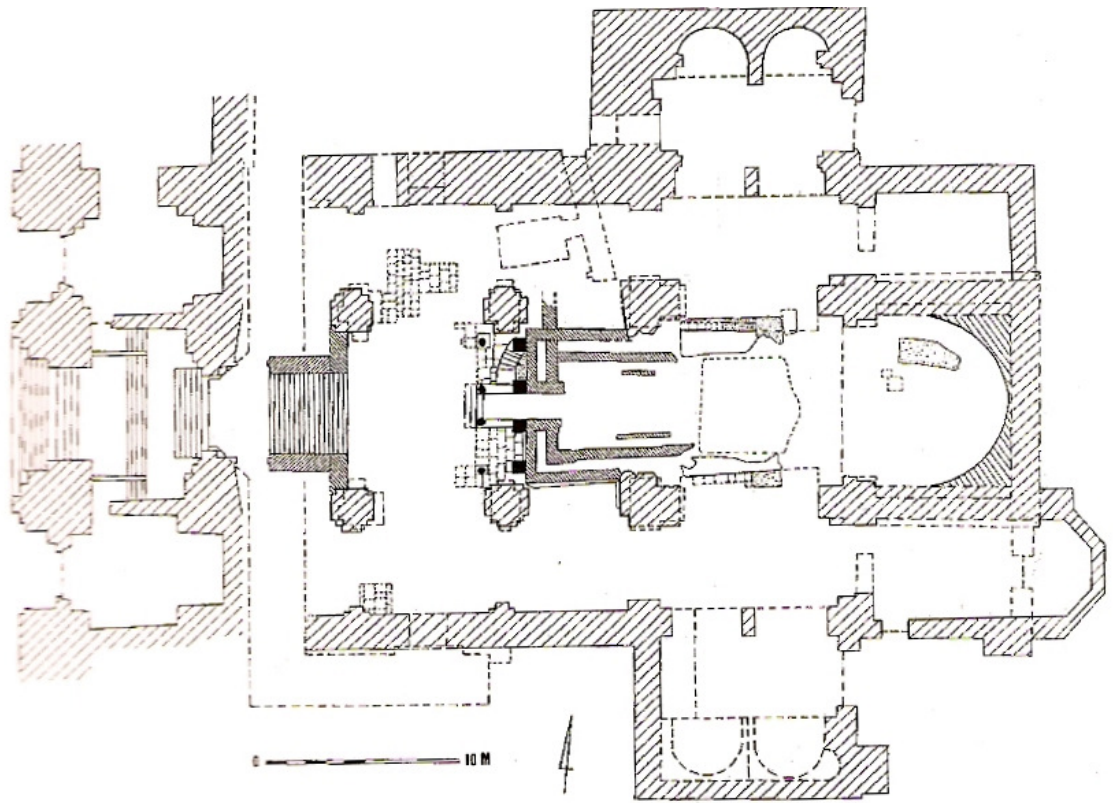


Figure 55. Plan of the Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay, with phases of construction from the primitive church (5th c.) to Romanesque (13th c.). From Barral i Altet, *La Cathédrale du Puy-en-Velay*.

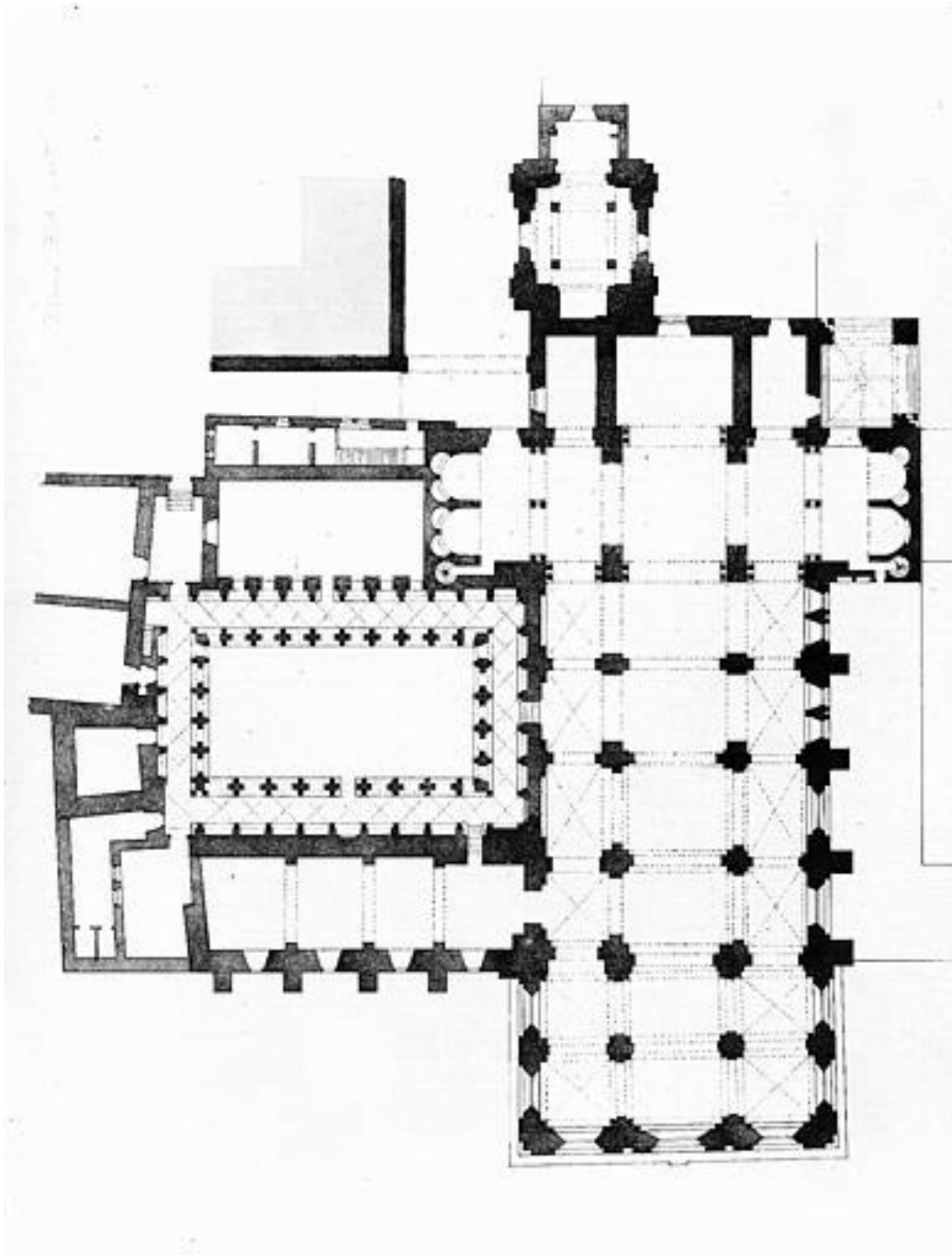


Figure 56. Plan of the Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay after reconstruction, with extended western porch. Image via La ville du Puy-en-Velay.

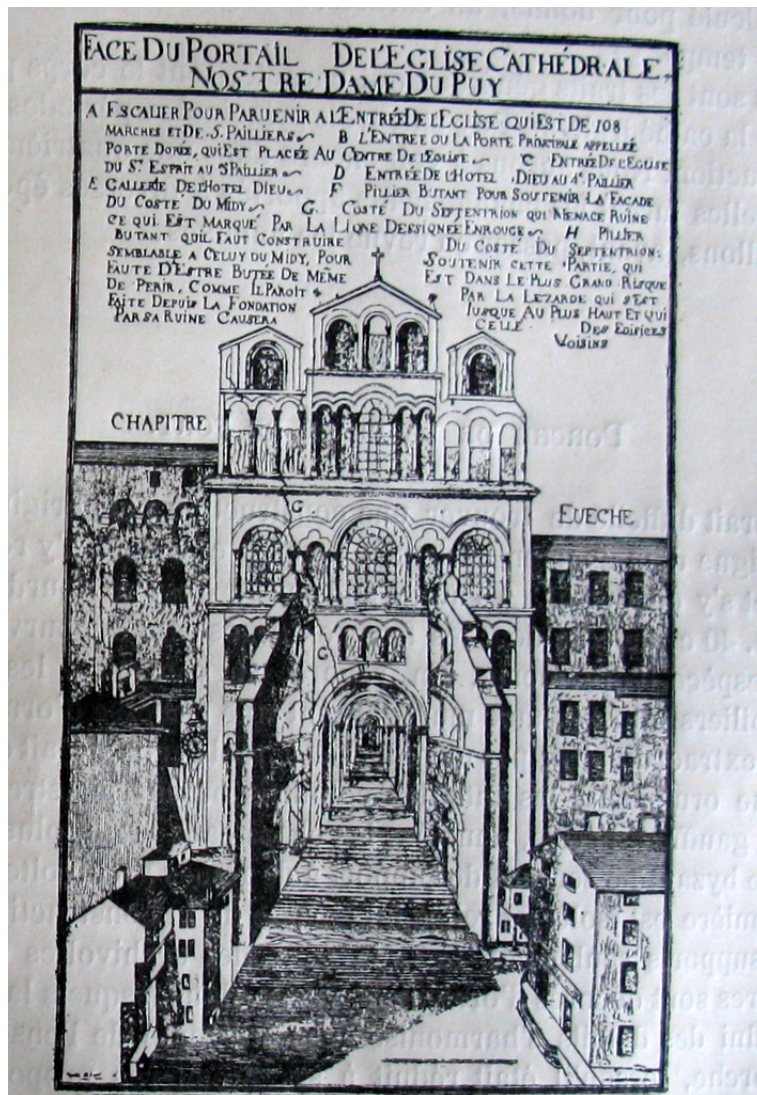


Figure 57. Armaund Mallay, Façade of the Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay with buttresses, before reconstruction. Mid-nineteenth century. From Mallay, *Monographie de la cathédrale du Puy*.



Figure 58. Western façade, Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay, from the *grand escalier*. Photograph EAF 2008.



Figure 59. Inscription on the steps of the western porch, Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay. Photograph EAF 2010.



Figure 60. Frontispiece, with identical inscription from the staircase of the cathedral (below image). Odo de Gissey, *Discours historiques de la très ancienne...* Lyon, 1627.



Figure 61. Fountain and Roman inscription, Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay. Photograph EAF 2008.



Figure 62. *La pierre des fièvres*, said to be fifth century. Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay. Photograph EAF 2010.



Figure 63. Wooden doors depicting the Infancy of Christ. Now on western porch of the Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay, formerly the entrance to St. Gilles chapel. Twelfth century. Photograph EAF 2010.



Figure 64. Close view of Arabic inscription on the border of the Infancy doors. Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay. Photograph EAF 2010.



Figure 65. Detail of vegetal border, Passion cycle doors. Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay. Photograph EAF 2010.



Figure 66. Cornet de St. Hubert. Ivory. Twelfth century. From the Treasury of the Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay, now at the Musée Croatizer, Le Puy-en-Velay.



Figure 67. Infancy doors with Latin inscription on the batten (center) and under each image. Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay. Photograph EAF 2010.



Figure 68. Detail of the Magi and Herod, Infancy Doors, Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay. Photograph EAF 2010.



Figure 69. Cloister, Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay. Eleventh century, restored in the nineteenth century. Photograph EAF 2011.



Figure 70. Byzantine inspired mural fresco painting. Chapel of St. Michel d'Aiguilhe, eleventh century. Photograph EAF 2010.



Figure 71. Archangel Michael in Byzantine *loros*. Upper tribune. Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay. Second half of the twelfth century. Photograph EAF 2010.



Figure 72. The Transfiguration of Christ. Western porch, Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay, Beginning of the thirteenth century. Photograph EAF 2010.



Figure 73. The Virgin and Child Enthroned. Fresco. Western porch, Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay. Beginning of the thirteenth century. Photograph EAF 2010.



Figure 74. Chess match between a French king and Muslim sultan. Watercolor reproduction, originally in the Logis des cleregons, Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay. Beginning of the thirteenth century.



Figure 75. Street Niche of the *vierge noire*. Le Puy-en-Velay. Date unknown. Photograph EAF 2008.



Figure 76. Shells hanging from a pilgrimage hostel. Le Puy-en-Velay. Photograph EAF 2008.



Figure 77. The Virgin of Le Puy on her liter. On the steps of the Cathedral of Le Puy-en-Velay after the Procession of August 15, 2011. Photograph EAF 2011.



Figure 78. Crowds following and watching the Virgin of Le Puy, Procession of August 15, 2011. Photograph EAF 2011.

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