

The *Trinity with the Communion and Martyrdom of St Denis* in the Louvre: Authorship, Meaning and the Message of Nicopolis.*

The large altarpiece of the *Trinity with the Communion and Martyrdom and of St Denis* in (Fig. 1) is a central work in the history of early French and Netherlandish painting. Its current placement on the second floor of the Richelieu wing in the Louvre, set on a wall, in seeming isolation, at the fork of two different routes to the story of Renaissance painting, reinforces this position (Fig. 2). From here, one chooses a path to the right, to Fouquet and France, or to the left, to Van Eyck and the Netherlands. While its size, technical brilliance, extraordinary imagery, early date and sheer survival demand attention, it is often seen as an oddity: a 'curious combination of cult image and historical narrative', as Panofsky described it,¹ that marries passages of bold observation and violent action with compelling, exotic but puzzling figures, who leer or gesture in unexplained ways, the whole dominated by large amounts of ultramarine and an extensive, finely tooled gold ground that has lost all definition with time and become distractingly flat. St Denis's mitre seems to float free of his head; the vestments of Christ melt into the gold background; and the angels that weave through the rays emanating from God the Father appear disembodied, their finely tooled wings hardly visible: the nuanced interplay of depth and space that must have characterised the whole, especially in flickering candlelight, is now hard to recover or fully comprehend.

The *Martyrdom* has also suffered, perhaps, from the long and unresolved debate concerning its authorship and its documentation.² The questions are essentially these: was it from start to finish a work entrusted to one master, Henry Bellechose, that was simply being completed by him in 1416 when he received pigments to 'parfaire' a panel of that subject for

* Brief note of thanks to place here. Title to be revised!!

¹ Erwin Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish Painting. Its Origin and Character* (New Haven, Harvard University Press, 1953), p. 84.

² This is addressed in all the scholarship on the panel. Among the major contributions are those by Alfred de Champeaux, 'L'Ancienne école de peinture de la Bourgogne', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 19 (1898), pp. 129-142; Charles Sterling, *La peinture Française* (Paris, Librairie Floury, 1938) pp. 38-9 and notes 41-2 Nicole Reynaud, 'A propos du Martyre de saint Denis', *Revue du Louvre et des musées de France*, 2 (1961), pp. 175-76; Georg Troescher, *Burgundische Malerei. Maler und Malwerk um 1400 in Burg, dem Berry mit der Auvergne und in Savoyen* (Berlin, Verlag, 1966), pp.112-117; Renate Prochno, *Die Kartause von Champmol: Grablege der burgundischen Herzoge 1364-1477* (Berlin, Akademie Verlag, 2002), pp. 54-54; *The Limbourg Brothers. Nijmegen Masters at the French Court 1400-1416*, exhib.cat. Nijmegen, Museum Het Valkhof, 28 August-22 November 2005, eds Rob Dückers and Pieter Roelofs, pp. 46-48. F. Boespflug, *La Trinité dans l'art du occident 1400-1460* (Strasbourg 2006), pp. 57-75; S. Lindquist, *Agency, Visuality and Society at the Chartreuse de Champmol* (Aldershot, 2008), pp.161-165; Pierre-Yves Le Pogam, *Les premiers retables. Une mise en scène du sacré*, exhib. cat. eds by Pierre-Yves le Pogam (Paris, Musée du Louvre, 2009), pp. 188-93; and Pieter Roelofs, in *Johan Maelwael. Nijmegen Paris-Dijon. Art around 1400* exhib. cat. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, 6 October 2017-7 January 2018, ed. by Pieter Roelofs (Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 2017), pp. 27-31.

the Chartreuse de Champmol? Or was it begun by his predecessor as ducal painter in Dijon, the more famous Jehan Maelwael, one of five wooden retables for Champmol delivered to him in 1398, with Bellechose then completing some years later what Maelwael had left unfinished? If the work was shared, where did Maelwael stop and Bellechose begin? The association of the retable with either of these payments has also been questioned, potentially setting it free from the ambit of both painters.³ And while it has a provenance to Dijon, can we be certain it was from the Chartreuse de Champmol at all?

Arguably, the questions of authorship are unsolvable on stylistic analysis alone: we have no documented work by Maelwael that survives, with the exception of the layers of polychromy on the Great Cross (the 'Well of Moses') in the large cloister at Champmol.⁴ These tell us something about the pigments he used, but little about his style as a panel painter, and while the attribution to him of the *Large Round Pietà* in the Louvre seems highly plausible, even that rests on circumstantial evidence.⁵ Equally, there are no other surviving documented panel paintings that may be associated with Bellechose: nothing else can be brought in to assess his hand.⁶ The archival sources are also challenging, but more promising. While the Champmol and ducal accounts are a rich and mostly well preserved resource, they do not document all the stages of the production of the altarpieces by Maelwael and Bellechose for the Chartreuse, nor in the detail that we might wish: they tend to give us evidence concerning *either* their measurements, *or* their subject matter, *or* their intended location, but not all three in the same payment, making identification of the works from document to document particularly tricky. Nevertheless, a careful rereading of these and the introduction of new, unpublished material allows us to re-evaluate the making of these paintings, revising some errant interpretations, and putting the question of the genesis of the Louvre *Martyrdom* on a firmer footing.

This scrutiny is worthwhile, since who conceived this work, when and for where, matters: not simply because on it depends the artistic identity of two painters to the dukes of Burgundy at a period of intense innovation at the courts of France around 1400, but also, and

³ Victor M. Schmidt, 'Ensembles of Painted Altarpieces and Frontals', in: *The Altar and its Environment 1150-1400*, eds. J.E.A. Kroesen & V.M. Schmidt (Turnhout 2009), pp. 203-221 and the same author, 'Painting around 1400 and the road to van Eyck: notes on an exhibition and a catalogue', *Simiolus*, 36 (2012), pp. 210-224, (p. 218).

⁴ For this, see Susie Nash, 'Polychromy, Collaboration and Making Meaning on the 'Well of Moses' at the Chartreuse de Champmol in Dijon', *Circumlitio. The Polychromy of Antique and Medieval Sculpture*, eds by Vinzenz Brinkmann, Oliver Primavesi, and Max Hollein (Turnhout, Brepols, 2010), pp. 357-81.

⁵ For this painting and the arguments for attributing it to Maelwael see most recently *Johan Maelwael. Nijmegen Paris-Dijon*, pp. 25; 113-115, cat. 17.

⁶ For documents relating to Bellechose see Bernard Prost, 'Une Nouvelle Source de documents sur les artistes dijonnais du XVe siècle', *Gazette des beaux-arts* 6 (1891), pp. 161-76; Georg Troeschler, *Burgundische Malerei* pp. 112-116 and Sylvain Laveissière, *Dictionnaire des artistes et ouvriers d'art en Bourgogne*, 1, A-K (Paris, F. de Nobelle, 1980), pp.36-37.

perhaps more importantly, because of what might follow in terms of understanding its genesis, meaning and message from the particular historical and political moment in which it was conceived: if it was one of the panels delivered to Maelwael, then its planning and at least partial execution took place between 1397-1403, under Philip the Bold; if a work entirely by Bellechose then its imagery and form was established at the earliest after May 1415, when he took over as court painter in Dijon for John the Fearless on Maelwael's death in March of that year. Both of these dates, significantly it seems, are connected with key moments of political and personal tragedy - the defeats at Nicopolis (1396) and Agincourt (1415) that each duke was involved or implicated in. Both will prove relevant for a new argument concerning the history and meaning of the *Martyrdom* put forward here, that moves away from questions of style and attribution to consider the work as a response to a very particular moment, and the concerns of highly sophisticated patrons, visualised by equally sophisticated painters.

The Martyrdom of St Denis and its place at Champmol

The initial question of whether the *Martyrdom* comes indeed from the Charterhouse in Dijon may seem settled, presented as a fact in the literature, but it is far from straightforward. Unlike the retables of Jacques de Baerze and Melchior Broederlam made for the altars of the chevet and the chapter house, the *Martyrdom* was not recorded in the monastery at the revolution in 1790.⁷ Its connection to Champmol rests instead primarily on a short and somewhat vague statement in an auction catalogue of 1849, when the work was sold in Paris as part of the Joseph-Gaspard Bartholomey collection from Dijon. There it was attributed to the invented Simone Memmi (Simone Martini?), and was described along with another painting, its 'pendant' as having 'décorait autrefois la chapelle des anciens ducs de Bourgogne'.⁸ The pendant, optimistically attributed to Albrecht Dürer in the same sale, and described incorrectly as showing the crucifixion with St Michael, is clearly however the work also now in the Louvre but currently on deposit at the museum in Dijon, showing the *Crucifixion with the Martyrdom of St George* (Fig. 3) and which has precisely the same dimensions to the *St Denis* panel; both have been transferred to canvas.⁹ It also follows closely, and not insignificantly, the general format, design and iconographic combination in one visual field of

⁷ The inventory was made on 1 July 1790; Dijon, Archives départementales de la Côte-d'Or, ADCO Q2 832, ff. 1-68. For the de Baerze retables see *The retables of the Charterhouse of Champmol*, ed. by Sophie Jugie and Catherine Tran-Bourdonneau (Dijon, and Ghent, Snoeck, 2014).

⁸ *Catalogue d'une jolie collection de tableaux anciens, des écoles Italienne, Flamande et Française, provenant du cabinet de M. B***, dont la vente aura lieu Hotel des ventes mobilières, rue des Jeuneurs no. 42, le Samedi 15 décembre 1849*, lots 1 and 2. I thank Aude Gobet for making a copy of this available to me.

⁹ The measurements given for the Louvre *Martyrdom* are 162 cm x 211; for the Dijon *St George* 161.5 x 211.5.

the crucified Christ with the martyrdom of a saint as seen in the *St Denis* composition; there is no doubt these two are a pair, and very probably conceived as such (to which we will return), even if the *St George* was clearly painted - or finished - by a later artist around 1460-70.¹⁰ This second panel is thus of significance at several points in understanding the *Martyrdom*: it provides evidence for the history and meaning of the first, more famous image. In terms of provenance, for a start, the monk in the *St George* retable at the foot of the cross helps firmly associate this work, and by association the *St Denis* retable, with a Carthusian monastery, helping identify the somewhat ambiguous 'chapelle des anciens ducs de Bourgogne' of the 1849 sale catalogue as the Charterhouse at Champmol. The iconography of both paintings secures this further, since chapels dedicated to St Denis and St George existed at Champmol in the fifteenth century, and the Trinity in the *Martyrdom* panel references the wider dedication of Champmol itself to 'la Sainte et Benoiste Trinité'.¹¹

Moreover, it would also seem that when the monastery was renovated in 1774, two paintings also featuring St Denis and St George were commissioned from the Dijon painter Carle van der Loo, presumably to replace the two altarpieces that Bartholomey had acquired and that were sold in 1849.¹² These eighteenth-century works, or the descriptions of them in 1791, provide key evidence for where the earlier panels (and the chapels dedicated to St Denis and St George) were located, since they were recorded in the Revolutionary inventory of the monastery as being set on two altars in the converse (lay) brothers choir.¹³ These were set into chapels created in the west side of the choir screen that itself formed a wide passage between the monks choir and the converse choir, from which one could enter into the small cloister on its south side, and the chapel of St Peter on its North (see Fig. 4). It is likely that the one dedicated to St Denis was on the south, closest to the entrance to the cloister, and that dedicated to St George was on the north, closest to that chapel of St Peter.¹⁴ These 'chappelles du bois'

¹⁰ The similarity between these two panels is often remarked on, see below and note XX.

¹¹ The necrology of the Charterhouse makes reference to both an 'Capellae Sti Dyonisii' and a 'Sacelli Sti Georgii' in the 15th century; no location is given there for the St Denis chapel but the 'Sacelli Sti Georgii' is referred to as in front of the choir screen in relation to a tablet with an inscription that was set there in 1475 to record a donation made by Peter de Villeta, a native of Besancon; the necrology has been published in Prochno, *Die Kartause von Champmol*, pp. 354-55; see also below and note XX.

¹² For these and a similar line of reasoning see Le Pogam, *Les premiers retables*, p. 191.

¹³ Dijon, ADCO Q2 832, item 107, nos 14 and 15ff. 33-34. 'sur l'un des autels dudit choeur des freres, un tableau ..representant un Saint George...un autre faisait le pendant du precedent, meme cadre et aussi hauteur representant S. Denis...'

¹⁴ The basis for this is that in Dijon, ADCO Q2 832 the St George altar is described first, and on the whole these lists seem to move from left to right; in addition in his notes made at Champmol at the Revolution, Louis-Bénigne Baudot describes the series of narrative paintings around the lay brothers choir as 'autour de ce choer on voit en commencement du cote de la chapelle St Denis'. It seems unlikely they would read in narrative sequence from right to left, so one presumes they started on the south wall of the church, and so that was the side where the St Denis chapel was placed. Notebooks of L.B. Baudot, Dijon, Bibliothèque municipale MS 2081, p. 7

constructed, along with the screen, in the late 1380s, must have been fairly substantial structures, judging by the quantity of wood supplied for them, and the amount paid to the carpenter Jean de Fenain to construct and carve them.¹⁵ They would have flanked the entrance to the choir in an arrangement that can be envisaged with reference to the surviving, if later, screen at the Carthusian monastery of Miraflores (Fig. 5), though they might have looked more like a less elaborate version of those depicted by Jan Gossaert, after Van Eyck (Fig. 6).

The Martyrdom of St Denis and its Painters

There seems little doubt, then, that the *Martyrdom* panel was originally set on one of the altars of the converse choir at Champmol, and as such was one of the more accessible and publicly visible images in the church.¹⁶ Its exact connection to particular payments relating to various painted retables made for the monastery, and thus its attribution and date, are more controversial, however. The key document that refers most clearly to the painting is from May 1416 when the spice merchant Jehan Lescot was paid for pigments supplied to Henry Bellechose to complete ('parfaire') for the church at Champmol 'ung tableau de la vie de Saint Denis' and to make ('faire', not 'parfaire') another panel, of the *Death of the Virgin*, of which we have no trace.¹⁷ No dimensions of the panels are given, nor intended locations within Champmol, but the association of this record with the Louvre painting seems firm; it is unlikely

¹⁵ He was paid 180 francs in 1389 'pour la charpenterie et facon de deux chapelles de bois qui sont entre les sieges du cueur de l'eglise desdix chartreux et les sieges des convers d'iceulz chartreux, garnies d'une cloison d'entre paraille a celles des cieges desdiz convers pour ce paie a lui...IX^{xx} francs'. Dijon, ADCO B11671 f. 272r, Prochno, *Die Kartause von Champmol*, p. 304. In 1388, Jean de Liège had been paid 324 francs for entirety of the 72 seats of the stalls for the monks choir, ADCO B11671, f. 189v, Prochno, *Die Kartause von Champmol*, p. 293

¹⁶ The lay choir was the most accessible part of a Carthusian church; although clearly at Champmol visitors could be allowed into the monks choir (as Georges Lengherand clearly was in 1486, Jeffrey Chipps Smith, 'The Chartreuse de Champmol in 1486: The Earliest Visitor's Account.' *Gazette Des Beaux-Arts* 106 (1985), pp. 1–6), in general the lay brothers choir would be the area to which most visitors would be contained; according to the Carthusian customs of the order, the only visitors allowed into the monks choir were religious ones; by implication, other visitors could access the lay brothers choir, see Guigo I, *Consuetudines Cartusiae/ Coutumes de Chartreuse* (Paris, Les éditions du Cerf, 2001), p. 185.

¹⁷ 'A Jehan Lestot espicier demourant a Dijon la somme de Xi fr demy qui deu lui estoient pour les parties que Sensuivent. C'est assavoir I franc pour unne livre de macicot, Vi gros pour un livre ocre de rup, IIII francs demi pour deux livres de cynople, XVI gros pour IIII livres de blanc de plomb, III gros pour vert de gris vermet, XVIII gros pour un livre ynde, XVI gros pour II livres vermoillon, I franc pour II livres migne, lesquelles parties one estees baillees a Henry Bellechose painter de mondit seigneur pour convertir es ouvraiges de peintres qui fait pour mondit seigneur et pour l'eglise de Chartreux de Dijon. Et tant pour parfaire ung taubleau de la vie Saint Denis comme pour faire ung tableau de trespassement de la glorieuse vierge Marie que ycellui seigneur lui a ordonne faire, lesquelles parties sont plus a plain declairies et advisees que elles pouront couster en ung feuillet de papier atachie doubz le signet de l'un d'euz au mandement de messeigneurs desdiz comptes. Donne le XXIX jour de may l'an mil CCCXVI... ', Dijon, ADCO B4467, f. 46, Prochno, *Die Kartause von Champmol*, p. 276-77 the term 'parfaire' v 'faire' has received much discussion, see most recently Roelofs, who explores the distinction between these two terms; for their use see also Susie Nash, 'The Two Tombs of Philip the Bold', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institute*, 2019, pp. 1-111 (p. 48).

to pertain to another panel showing the life of St Denis, despite recent claims to the contrary.¹⁸ Its failure to mention the Trinity, put forward as the main reason for dissociating the document with the work in the Louvre, is both explicable and unremarkable: Champmol's dedication meant there were multiple images of this subject there, so its most distinctive, and easily distinguishable feature would rather be the scenes from the life of St Denis that it was combined with.¹⁹

The term 'parfaire' in the pigments for the St Denis panel is central to the next document that has been associated with the work : a payment of eighteen years earlier in March 1398 to the carpenter Daniel Hobel for delivery of a set of five 'tables de boiz pour autels', destined for certain chapels in the church delivered to Maelwael, 'qui les doit paindre'.²⁰ Though neither the subjects nor the specific chapels are given, the measurements of the panels are. One of them, read as 6.5 ft x 4.5 ft (210 x 145.8 cm, with the foot calculated as 32.4 cm) by Dehaisnes in 1886 and followed by subsequent scholars, was thought close enough to the Louvre painting (that measures 210 x 162 cm) to suggest that they were one and the same, and thus it was argued that the Louvre panel was begun by Maelwael, and completed by Bellechose.²¹ However, in a short but influential article of 1961 Nicole Reynaud pointed out that the

¹⁸ Schmidt, 'Ensembles of Painted Altarpieces and Frontals', pp. 212-16; these arguments have been effectively countered by Michele Tomasi, 'Matériaux, techniques, commanditaires et espaces. Le système des retables à la chartreuse de Champmol', *Netherlands Yearbook for the History of Art*, 62 (2012), pp. 28-55 (n.9, p. 50) and by Le Pogam, *Les premiers retables*, pp. 191-192.

¹⁹ The identification of works by their most distinctive iconographical element, rather than their central one, is seen in other examples from the ducal accounts at this period: for example, the 'tresspassement de notre dame', mentioned in the same payment as the life of St Denis panel seems to have had a 'passion' as part of its imagery, as we learn in a payment for its gold leaf, Dijon, ADCO B1588 f. 222r; another example of a similar manner of identifying a panel commissioned for the duke by its key saint, rather than its central, and more common, image, is found with the payment of 1397 to Maelwael for a panel showing 'plusieurs ymaiges d'apostres et Saint Antoine' that in fact had at its centre a Virgin and Child: when it is recorded in the 1404 inventory of Philip the Bold it is described as 'Item un grant tableau de bois en façon de demy port ouquel a Nostre Dame au milieu les deux saints Jehan, saint Pierre et saint Antoine, et le fist Maluel'; for the payments and this lost panel see Roelofs, 'Johan Maelwael, Court Painter in Guelders and Burgundy', p. 41.

²⁰ 'A Daniel Hobel charpentier de menues fers demourant a Germolles pour la vendue de V tables de boiz pour autel, par lui vendues et delivrees audit Champmol pour ycelles baillier a Jehan Maluel peintre et varlet de chambre de mondit seigneur qui les doit paindre pour les mettre sur les autelx de certaines chapelles de l'eglise d'iceulx chartreux chasune contenant VII piez demi de long dont il y a en II chascune de VI piez, une de III piez demi et II chasune de III piez demi de hault, par marchie fait par ledit Jean Maluel, Claux Sluter, ouvrier et varlet de chambre de monseigneur, Regnaudot de Janley et plusieurs autres des gens d'icellui monseigneur.....XXVII livres t.'; ADCO B11673, f. 13r; Prochno, *Die Kartause von Champmol* p. 327.

²¹ Chrétien Dehaisnes, *Documents et extraits divers concernant l'histoire de l'art dans la Flandre, l'Artois et le Hainaut avant le xve siècle*, 2 vols, II, Lille 1886, II, pp. 769-770; the measurements are transcribed correctly, however, by Cyprien Monget, *La Chartreuse de Dijon d'après les documents des archives de Bourgogne*. 3 vols, Montreuil-sur-Mer 1898-1905, I, p. 295; Dehaisnes published the document without associating it with the *St Denis* panel; Alfred de Champeaux, 'L'Ancienne école de peinture de la Bourgogne', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 19 (1898), pp. 129-142, first made the connection, followed and accepted by Charles Sterling, *La peinture Française* (Paris, Librairie Floury, 1938) pp. 38-9 and notes 41-2 and Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish Painting*, pp.83-84, among others.

measurements had been mistranscribed and that the panel referred to was 7.5 not 6.5 feet in length, making a painting of 7.5 x 4.5 feet, or 243 cm x 145.8 (see Fig. 7) - so not just the wrong size but the wrong proportions: the St Denis panel is both 33 cm shorter in length and 17.8 cm taller in height than this.²² While some loss in size might be envisaged, an *increase* in its height seems, admittedly, highly implausible, in a painting that clearly has had nothing added to its top or bottom edges: the connection with Maelwael was severed, and after this point the resounding opinion was that the panel was entirely by Bellechose.²³ While Reynaud was correct, certainly, in her reasoning, she had overlooked two key things: firstly, that there were two other panels delivered at the same time to Maelwael that are, in fact, exactly the right proportions for the *Martyrdom*, with measurements given as 7.5 x 6 ft (243 x 194.4, Fig. 7);²⁴ and secondly that the dimensions of the painting today of 210 x 162 cm are of course of its painted surface alone, not including any frame (its current frame is from the 19th century); presumably its original was lost at the time of its transfer to canvas in 1852, if not before.²⁵

The panels supplied to Maelwael, must, of course, however, have had frames. It is impossible to imagine that Hobel would have produced a set of joined planks without such elements, or that their measurements might have excluded them.²⁶ Panels for paintings large and small were invariably supplied framed at this period, part of the carpenters role: they were conceived and worked on as an entity, with the whole being prepared, gilded, painted and decorated as a single ensemble, sometimes even carved out of the same planks, as is well known from physical evidence as well as documentary and visual sources.²⁷ Surviving frames

²² Nicole Reynaud, 'A propos du Martyre de saint Denis', *Revue du Louvre et des musées de France*, 2 (1961), pp. 175-76.

²³ Those who attribute it to Bellechose alone from this point include: Charles Sterling and Hélène Adhémar, *Musée national du Louvre. Peintures, écoles française XI, Ve, XVe, et XVIe siècles* (Paris, Musées Nationaux, 1965), no. 11, p. 5; Troescher, *Burgundische Malerei*, pp.112-117; Prochno, *Die Kartause von Champmol*, pp. 54-55; Boespflug, *La Trinité dans l'art du occident*, pp. 57-58; Le Pogam, *Les premiers retables*, p. 191; Philippe Lorentz, *l'art à la cour de Bourgogne*, p. 95-96; the exceptions are is Albert Châtelet, *Early Dutch Painting. Painting in the Northern Netherlands in the Fifteenth Century* (Oxford, Phaidon, 1980), pp. 16-20; Schmidt, 'Ensembles of Painted Altarpieces and Frontals', pp. 215-16, both on untenable grounds; there has however been a move in recent literature on Maelwael to argue once more for his authorship more convincingly, see most notably Roelofs, *Johan Maelwael. Nijmegen-Paris-Dijon*, pp. 29-30.

²⁴ See the document in note XX above.

²⁵ An inscription on the back of the canvas states 'enlevé de sur bois. Mompere. 1852'.

²⁶ Albert Châtelet, *Early Dutch Painting*, p. 16 and Schmidt, 'Ensembles of Painted Altarpieces and Frontals', p. 216, both assume what Hobel supplied was unframed planks and that Maelwael cut them down in some manner; Schmidt ties the delivery in early 1399 of 'raclers de fer acrees' that were 'pour racler plusieurs tables et tableaux' that Maelwael was working on to this process, but this must relate to the scraping of the surface of the panels both before and after applying the ground. For this document, Prochno, *Die Kartause von Champmol* p. 328.

²⁷ Hélène Verougstraete, *Frames and Supports in 15th- and 16-century Southern Netherlandish Painting* ebook Brussels, Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage, 2015), <http://org.kikirpa.be/frames/files/assets/basic-html/index.html#1>. Details of the frames are not specified in the payment to Hobel because clearly a contract for them had already been agreed (with Maelwael, Sluter and de Janley) and Hobel was an outside supplier: the payment is for the whole objects, delivered as made; this contrasts to the payment of 1388 to Jean de Fenain,

that demonstrate this can be found on the closely related *Large Round Pieta* and the *Man of Sorrows* attributed to the van Lymborchs (Fig. 8). That Hobel's panels indeed came framed is further indicated by their price, and that the contract for them was made not by Maelwael alone, but in conjunction with Claus Sluter and the master of works Regnaudot de Janley: the five together cost 27 livres, equivalent to over forty days wages for the highly paid Maelwael (and probably then to more working days for the presumably less well paid Hobel), a sum that is only justifiable if the works were more than simply a collection of joined boards.²⁸

If we look again, then, at the dimensions of these panels supplied in 1398 in relation to the Louvre painting, but now with a missing frame in mind, it is remarkable how exactly they correspond both in terms of late medieval units of measure as well as in their actual, present dimensions.²⁹ The unframed Louvre panel at 211 x 162 is, to a centimetre, equivalent to 6.5 x 5 Burgundian foot - that is exactly one Burgundian foot (32.4 cm) in each direction less than the pair of panels supplied to Maelwael. The carpenter, working in the local measure, was likely to calculate the frame's width as a proportion of that unit: if he made it to be half a Burgundian foot (16.2 cm) all around, it brings the dimensions of the Louvre panel to exactly 7.5 x 6 Burgundian foot - a precise match with the two supplied in 1398. Such a frame, as visualised in Fig 9, is also a perfectly plausible size in terms of proportion, given what evidence we have of original frames of the period - especially when seen in relation to the wide frame around works like the Louvre *Man of Sorrows* (Fig. 8) we might envisage a similar, and perhaps similarly decorated frame around the *Martyrdom*..

There are other pieces of evidence that support the assertion that the *St Denis* panel is indeed one of those supplied to Maelwael in 1398. Firstly, that two were provided of exactly the same size at the same time suggests that they were a matching pair; what we have may in fact be an order to equip three altars, not five; the other matching panels measuring 7.5 x 3 ft provided at the same time could well be frontals for these altars, an arrangement certainly found elsewhere at Champmol.³⁰ A matching pair fits neatly with the two altars dedicated to St Denis

employed as the carpenter at Champmol, for his panels for the 26 paintings for the monks cells, for which see Élisabeth Ravaud, 'Le calvaire avec un moine chartreux de Jean de Beaumetz. Entre examen scientifique et documents d'archives', in *Regards sur les primitifs. Mélanges en l'honneur de Dominique Thiébaud* (Paris, Éditions Hazan, 2018), pp. 136-143.

²⁸ See note XX above.

²⁹ The basis of the arguments set out here were first presented by the present author at the Louvre on 6 June 2015. I am grateful to Dominique Thiébaud for her invitation to speak there and her generosity with sharing the Louvre's resources that instigated the present research.

³⁰ Schmidt, 'Ensembles of Painted Altarpieces and Frontals', pp. 215-16, points to earlier supplies of altarpieces at Champmol where this is so, and also toys with the possibility that these two panels could also be frontals, but comes to different conclusions than drawn here.

and St George on either side of the choir screen facing the lay choir, the only two altars at Champmol that were pendants in this manner. Secondly, the materials provided to Bellechose for the ‘perfecting’ of this retable, when seen in the context of other deliveries of pigments for similar works, are relatively limited. They included 1 lb of lead tin yellow, 2 lb of red lake, 1 lb of indigo, 1 lb of verdigris, 4 lb of lead white, 2 lb of vermilion and the same of red lead but no gold or other metal leaf at all.³¹ While the absence of blues are explained by their tendency to be supplied differently (Bellechose had received some precious azure as part of the painters materials he inherited from Maelwael), the absence of gold leaf is more striking.³² By comparison, for the panel Bellechose was, indeed, clearly starting from scratch at the same time showing the *Death of the Virgin*, he was duly supplied with gold leaves, these bought specially in Paris, just a couple of months later.³³ We can also trace deliveries of gold leaf for other works at this period Bellechose was documented as undertaking: the repainting of angels on columns around the high altar of Notre Dame in Dijon (1415), and for banners and other things at Talant (in 1416).³⁴

The absence of any gold leaf supplied for the St Denis panel is best explained by the strong probability it had already been gilded at a period prior to Bellechose's appointment. Once the design had been drawn, laying the gold ground, and its tooling, would be the first stage undertaken.³⁵ And indeed, an array of preparatory materials, tools and equipment were supplied to Maelwael for exactly this process on the retables he had received in 1398, starting with a large delivery in May of that year from Estienne Lorfèvre that included 3,600 leaves of

³¹ For these pigments and their quantities in context, see Susie Nash, “Pour couleurs et autres choses prise de lui ...”: The Supply, Acquisition, Cost and Employment of Painters’ Materials at the Burgundian Court, c. 1375–1419’, in *Trade in Artists’ Materials. Markets and Commerce in Europe to 1700*, eds Jo Kirby, Susie Nash and Joanna Cannon (London, Archetype publications, 2010), pp. 97–182; lead white and red lead do suggest preparatory work, but as these pigments were for both starting one panel and perfecting another, we might presume they were used in the preparation of the other painting of the *Death of the Virgin* Bellechose was starting from scratch.

³² For this and the way blues were acquired and supplied more generally at this period at the ducal court, see Susie Nash, “Pour couleurs et autres choses prise de lui ...”: The Supply, Acquisition, Cost and Employment of Painters’ Materials at the Burgundian Court, c. 1375–1419’, in *Trade in Artists’ Materials. Markets and Commerce in Europe to 1700*, eds Jo Kirby, Susie Nash and Joanna Cannon (London, Archetype publications, 2010), pp. 97–182 (p. 130)

³³ Payment of 22 August 1416, Dijon ADCO B1588, f. 222; Monget, *La Chartreuse de Dijon*, II, p. 24, Nash, ‘Pour couleurs et autres choses’, pp. 111, Table 1 and 133-37.

³⁴ The payment for the gold leaf for the columns in Notre dame (800 leaves) is B4471, f. 89; that for the banners for Talant is ADCO B4471, f. 89 (just 125 leaves); Monget, *La Chartreuse de Dijon*, II, pp. 24;25; Nash, ‘Pour couleurs et autres choses’, pp. 111, 133-37. It seems unlikely the payment for a supply of this is just missing: if gold leaf had been required for the St Denis panel, it surely would have formed part of the special order to Paris for the 1,200 abnormally expensive ‘fin d’or renforcie’ for the *Death of the Virgin*.

³⁵ Something well known from sources like Cennino Cennini, see Lara Broecke, Cennino Cennini's *Il libro dell'arte. A new English translation and commentary with Italian transcription* (London, Archetype, 2015), chapters 123-142, pp. 159-177.

high quality gold (*or reinforcie*) and a substantial amount (15 lb) of lead white.³⁶ That this work had stalled, and was being undertaken, rather belatedly, in the summer of 1403, is indicated by a payment to the specialist gilder (*ouvrier de dorer à plat*), Herman of Cologne, to work with him on 'dorer à plat V tables d'autel que pieca ycellui monseigneur avoit enchargies audit Malouel faire pour l'eglise desdiz chartruese', clearly the five supplied in 1398, as well as for gilding parts of the Great Cross, which had taken over as the major project for Maelwael's shop from 1400; more gold leaf, sourced from Paris, was provided at this period for the retables, too.³⁷ Some visual evidence supports the idea that the gilding of the Martyrdom panel dates from this period: the distinctive patterns stamped on the gold ground that forms the cross down the back of St Denis's cope are remarkably close to the design of flowing looped leaves ending in four-petal flowers found on the panel in Cleveland, one of those made for the monks' cells at Champmol, commissioned in 1389 from Jean de Beaumetz but still in progress in 1396 (Figs 10 and 11).³⁸ Such a parallel draws the work on the gilding of the *Martyrdom* back towards the 1390s. It is also not without significance that the style of the pseudo-Kufic script tooled around the hems of the robe of Christ, the foremost angels and St Denis (rather than that done in mordant gilding, so at the very last stage, on the robes of the executioners) is remarkably similar in form to that carved by Sluter and polychromed by Malouel around 1402 on the edges of the robes of Jeremiah on the Great Cross, and indeed, on the frame of the Man of Sorrows in the Louvre (Figs 12 and 13).³⁹ These small but significant details draw the campaigns on these works together in their moment of creation.

³⁶ ADCO B11673, f. 26; Prochno, *Die Kartause von Champmol*, p. 329; this type of gold was reserved for only the most important projects, see Nash, "'Pour couleurs et autres chose', p. 119 and p. 133-37. The gilding had not got underway immediately as linen was supplied for the panels, which would be used under their grounds, in September 1398, ADCO B11673 f. 29, Prochno, *Die Kartause von Champmol* p. 329.

³⁷ The payment to Herman of Cologne is ADCO B11673, ff. 15r-v; that for the extra 1,500 gold leaves is ADCO B11673, ff. 151r-v; both transcribed in Prochno, *Die Kartause von Champmol*, pp. 342-43.

³⁸ For the cell panels see most recently and in most detail, Ravaud, 'Le calvaire avec un moine chartreux de Jean de Beaumetz', pp. 136-43. This pattern is also found in the background of the Troyes *Man of Sorrows*, (Troyes, Musée des Beaux-Arts), Sophie Jugie in *L'art à la cour de Bourgogne : Le mécénat de Philippe le Hardi et de Jean sans Peur (1364-1419)*, exhib. cat, Dijon: musée des beaux-arts (28 May - 15 September 2004), Cleveland: The Cleveland Museum of Art (24 October 2004 - 9 January 2005), cat. 111, p. 295, noted the repetition of the punched pattern from the Cleveland *Crucifixion* in the Troyes *Pieta*; its reappearance in the *St Denis* retable supports the dating suggested by her the Troyes panel to c. 1390-1400, rather than that of c. 1410-20 as assigned more recently in *Johan Maelwael. Nijmegen-Paris-Dijon*, cat. 21, p. 123 and *The Road to Van Eyck*, pp. 131-33, cat. 8.

³⁹ Those made in mordant gilding around the edges of the robes and on the stripes of the executioner and his companions are somewhat different in form than those punched into the ground; the former had to be done at the very end of the painting process, the latter at the beginning. The fact that this type of decoration occurs on both the Christian figures and the Saracens (and is used in a similar scattergun manner by the Van Lymborchs) suggests a complex appropriation of these exotic textiles, indicators of status and luxury that can have positive, as well as negative, connotations, if they carry meaning at all; indeed, when Philip the Bold sent presents to the Sultan Bayezid in 1397 for the ransom of his son, discussed further below, he included saddles worked with 'lettres sarrazinoyses', which might seem like coals to Newcastle, see p. XX below.

Although our last sight of the retables under Maelwael is this payment to Herman of Cologne for help with their gilding in the summer of 1403, it seems likely that the ducal painter continued to work on these into the next year, taking them at least partly into the painting stage. However, the death of Philip the Bold in late April 1404 disrupted Maelwael's unfinished projects in Dijon: he seems to have returned initially to his hometown; got married; and then when he is found back in the service of John the Fearless in 1406 his presence was most often required in Paris and Artois, in the company of the duke, and then, when back at Champmol, on the polychromy of Philip's tomb in 1410. In 1413 he was certainly back in Nijmegen for a period, and by March 1415 he was dead.⁴⁰ All of this is pertinent to any speculation about the state of the *Martydom* in 1416 when Bellechose was charged to finish it.

One other highly significant unpublished document provides the final piece of evidence for the Louvre retable being a work begun by Maelwael and completed by Bellechose. This is transcribed in a volume of copies of ducal documents from the eighteenth century that contains mostly letters from the duke, and it gives a very particular explanation as to the reasons behind Bellechose's appointment:

'Bellechose, Henry de Brabant. Le duc de Bourgogne par lettres de Dijon 23 may 1415 le retenir et l'establiir pour son peintre et varlet de Chambre aux gages de 10 sols tournois par jour et autres droits proffits et emoluments ordinaries audit office *au lieu de feu Jean Maluel son maistre qui l'estoit auparavant*, n'ayant personne a la main qui puisse mieue continuer les ouvrages commences aux Chartreux les Dijon par ledit feu Maluel qui en estoit pourvu dudit office dont il fera serment en tel cas requis es mains des gens des Comptes de Dijon'. [my italics]⁴¹

This intriguing statement concerning Bellechose's relationship to Maelwael is potentially a little ambiguous: could the 'son' in 'son maistre' refer to John the Fearless, rather than to Bellechose? If so it would mean simply that Maelwael was Jean's master [painter] before Bellechose, but this would be a highly uncharacteristic and odd turn of phrase. Normally master craftsman in the service of the duke are defined as 'varlet de chambre' or simply 'son

⁴⁰ For this period of Maelwael's life see Roelofs, 'Johan Maelwael' pp. 45-46.

⁴¹ 'Bellechose, Henry de Brabant. The duke of Burgundy by letters from Dijon 23 may 1415 retains him and establishes him as his painter and varlet de chambre with wages of 10 sols tournois a day and other rights, profits and ordinary emoluments of the said office in place of the late Jean Maluel who had been his master, having no one at hand who could better continue the works started at the Chartreuse of Dijon by the late Maluel who had been provided with the said office, for which he will take an oath as required in the hands of the gens des comptes' Paris, BnF Collection Bourgogne MS 58, f. 81; the document was referenced by Prost, 'Une Nouvelle Source', p. 163, n. 6, but he does not transcribe it nor comment on its content.

peintre', etc in relation to their patron. The title *maistre* might be used occasionally in documents before a craftsman's name, as an adjective indicating status, although it was never actually applied to Maelwael in all the various types of ducal accounts referring to him that survive.⁴² Moreover it is not a term that we find used as a noun, independently, in the way it is employed here. If, on the other hand, the 'son' refers to Bellechose, this would make proper sense of the language. It would also tell us, at last, something about the relationship between the two painters: Bellechose had practiced, and it would seem learnt his craft in Maelwael's workshop.⁴³ This makes the conformity of style in the St Denis panel, noted by many scholars in relation to the question of its attribution, both unremarkable and entirely expected, and supports the arguments made recently by Pieter Roelofs to this effect.⁴⁴ It was not completed by an independent master brought in with a different formation and tradition to the duke's painter in Dijon, but, as the document says, by the painter who was on hand and who could best continue the works by Maelwael, who had been his master.

What is not ambiguous in the document is the statement of Bellechose's role and the duke's priorities. It tells us as clearly as we could wish that the new painter's primary task on appointment was completing unfinished projects, and specifically those for Champmol left unfinished by Maelwael. Given the array of evidence then, it seems we can be assured that the Martyrdom of St Denis is a work begun by Johan Maelwael, instigated by Philip the Bold in 1398, and completed by his pupil, assistant, and heir to his position as ducal painter, Henry Bellechose, under the orders of John the Fearless in 1416. Trying to untangle their relative contributions in its painted parts is then arguably fruitless, and doubly so when the process of painting in oil is taken into account: the painting stage would progress in layers, across the whole panel, as time was required for one layer to dry before applying another. Maelwael's contributions to the paint stage are likely to be under the surface. What can be discerned of the underdrawing in the infrared reflectograms supports this: it suggests a homogenous style with few discernible shifts from drawn to paint layers, the reinforcing of some thinner, drier lines

⁴² Maelwael is invariably cited as 'peintre' or 'peintre et varlet de chambre'. The most extensive collection of published documents on Maelwael remains Frederich Gorisson, 'Jan Maelwael und die Brüder Limburg; eine Nimweger Künstlerfamilie um die Wende des 14. Jahrhunderts', *Bijdragen en mededelingen van de Vereneiging Gelre*, 54 (1954), pp. 153-221.

⁴³ While many scholars have in the past presumed a distinct break between the tenures of Bellechose and Maelwael, the idea of Bellechose being in Malouel's workshop was floated by Châtelet, *Early Dutch Painting*, p. 20, though on no evidence other than his conviction the large round Pietà was painted in part by Bellechose. More recently, however, Sophie Cassagnes-Brouquet in *Art at the Court of Burgundy*, p. 90. has suggested that because Bellechose was not reimbursed for his move, and given the speed of his appointment, he was already in Dijon, perhaps as an assistant in Maelwael's workshop. The idea is developed further by Roelofs, *Johan Maelwael. Nijmegen-Paris-Dijon* p. 29.

⁴⁴ Roelofs, *Johan Maelwael. Nijmegen-Paris-Dijon*, p. 29.

by ones in a broader, more liquid medium a standard procedure and not one that should ever be taken to suggest two hands.⁴⁵ Maelwael, then, had designed and gilded the panel, and most likely started painting in some of the layers at least; Bellechose completed the work of his master faithfully, without altering the composition in any significant way. Given Bellechose's formation, the *Martyrdom of St Denis* may be a much better document for Maelwael's style than we had supposed.

Nicopolis

The debate concerning who painted the *Martyrdom* has been framed in the past solely in relation to attribution, renewed more recently in the burgeoning of exhibitions and publications on Maelwael and his famous nephews, the Van Lymborch brothers.⁴⁶ However, more is at stake here than authorship. Fixing the genesis of the panel to Philip the Bold's agency in early 1398 places it at a highly charged moment both personally and politically for the duke, and his son and heir: the fallout from the the crusade against the Turks that had culminated in the disastrous battle of Nicopolis (in present day Bulgaria) in September 1396.⁴⁷ There the allied Christian army that had been assembled by the duke of Burgundy and led by his son, the count of Nevers, the future John the Fearless, was utterly defeated by the Sultan Bayezid, in large part due to the rashness of its young leader; estimates of losses among the Christians ranged at the time up to as many as 100,000 dead.⁴⁸ News of the victory of the Turks arrived to a disbelieving and shocked Paris in late December of that year; news of the fate of Philip's key advisors, so many of whom died in the battle or in the aftermath, trickled in more slowly:

⁴⁵ Elizabeth Ravaud, Myriam Eveno, Giles Bastian and Witold Nowick, 'Painting in the Circle of Johan Maelwael. A Material Analysis of Panel Paintings in France around 1400', in *Johan Maelwael. Nijmegen-Paris-Dijon*, pp. 35-37 (p. 37), observe two distinct techniques in the underdrawing; the drawing has a mechanical character, with very precise, often unbroken lines, which suggests the careful transfer of a design to the panel. I thank Sophie Caron at the Louvre for supplying me with the IRR images to study, and Clare Richardson in the Conservation department at the Courtauld for discussing them with me.

⁴⁶ Most notably *The Limbourg Brothers. Nijmegen Masters at the French Court 1400-1416*, exhib.cat. Nijmegen, Museum Het Valkhof, 28 August-22 November 2005, eds Rob Dückers and Pieter Roelofs; *Johan Maelwael. Nijmegen-Paris-Dijon*; and *Maelwael Van Lymborch Studies 1*, eds Jos Koldewei and Pieter Roelofs (Turnhout, Brepols, 2018).

⁴⁷ For the battle of Nicopolis, the origin of this crusade and its aftermath see most pertinently Aziz Suryal Atiya, *The Crusade of Nicopolis* (London, Meuthen, 1934); Richard Vaughan, *Philip the Bold. The Formation of the Burgundian State* (London and New York, Longman, 1979, new edition Woodbridge, Boydell, 2002), pp. 59-78; *Nicopolis, 1396-1996: actes du colloque international, Dijon, 18 octobre 1996, organisé par l'Académie des Sciences, Arts et Belles-Lettres de Dijon*, eds Jacques Paviot and Martine Chauney-Bouillot (Dijon, Société des Annales de Bourgogne, 1997); Jacques Paviot, *Les ducs de Bourgogne, la croisade et l'orient (fin XIVe siècle - XVe siècle)*, (Paris, Presses de l'université de Paris-Sorbonne, 2003), pp. 17-57.

⁴⁸ Atiya, *The Crusade of Nicopolis*, pp. 94-95 for the varying estimates; he places the French losses alone more in the region of 10,000. The army comprised English, Hungarian, and German contingents, but was dominated by the Franco-Burgundian forces.

it was only in January of 1398 that he learnt of the death of his closest friend, Guy de la Trémouille, Chamberlain of Burgundy.⁴⁹ Indeed, it is likely that the full story of the campaign, and the full horror of the slaughter of the prisoners enacted by Bayezid was only known once John the Fearless finally arrived back in Dijon in February of 1398.⁵⁰

It is not possible to overestimate the impact of this catastrophe on both father and son, with the entire Franco-Burgundian army that had left, symbolically, from Dijon in April 1396 either killed or captured: a whole generation of the cream of Burgundy's nobility and administrators, as well as soldiers, were wiped out. France was plunged into national mourning.⁵¹ Philip, its instigator and architect, was personally as well as politically affected, and he also paid dearly financially: he had to rally all his resources, territories and influence, internationally and at home, to raise a figure of close to 200,000 in ransom. It took another 250,000 odd francs, with over a year of embassies, extravagant presents of tapestries (of the legend of Alexander), white falcons (with silver bells), horses, hunting dogs, fine cloth of Rheims, and ivory saddles (decorated with 'lettres sarrazinoyses'), to get his son released from captivity by this 'mescreans de la foy chrestienne'.⁵² For Jean, who was not yet bloodied as a knight, Nicopolis must have been an utterly harrowing experience, and one that he certainly did not forget, nor fail to mark for the rest of his life.⁵³ He led his army to a violent and humiliating defeat, made all the more traumatic by the actions of Bayezid after the battle: the young count of Nevers, captured, bound, and stripped, was forced to stand and watch while, against the rules of warfare (though in retaliation for a similar slaughter by the crusaders), the prisoners, stripped to their underwear, were brought in groups before him then decapitated, a

⁴⁹ Prochno, *Die Kartause von Champmol*, p. 169.

⁵⁰ See this Kelly DeVries, 'The Effect of Killing the Christian Prisoners at the Battle of Nicopolis', *Crusaders, Condottieri, and Cannon. Medieval Warfare in Societies around the Mediterranean*, eds Donald Kagay and Andrew Villalon (Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2003), pp. 157-74 (pp. 166-67).

⁵¹ 'Quand ces nouvelles furent sceues et publiees nul ne pourroit deviser le grand deuil qui fut mené en France, tant du duc de Bourgogne, qui de son fils se doubtoit que pour argent ne le peust ravoier et que on le feist mourir' *Le Livre des faits du bon messire Jehan le Maingre, dit Boucicaut, maréchal de France et gouverneur de Jennes* ed. by Denis Lalande (Paris and Geneva, Librairie Drouz, 1985), XXVII, p. 118; Bertrand Schnerb, *Jean sans Peur. Le prince meurtrier* (Paris, Payot, 2005), pp. 88; Paviot, *Les ducs de Bourgogne, la croisade et l'orient*, p. 41 and 43.

⁵² This is how Bayezid is referred to in the ducal accounts that list payments for gifts and other things relating to the ransom of John the Fearless, ADCO B1514, ff. 284-289. For the raising of the ransom see Vaughan, *Philip the Bold*, pp. 73-78; for the presents, Jean Froissart, *Oeuvres*, ed. Joseph-Marie-Bruno-Constantin Kervyn de Lettenhove, *Oeuvres de Froissart. Chroniques*, t. XV (Brussels, 1877), XV, pp. 337-39; Attila *The Crusade of Nicopolis*, appendix V, pp. 141-43; Henri David, *Philippe le Hardi. Le train somptuaire d'un grand Valois* (Dijon, Bérnigaud et Privat, 1947) pp. 38-40; Schnerb, *Jean sans Peur*, p. 89.

⁵³ Jean held annual services for those who died at Nicopolis; those who stood with him that day and survived, and the relatives of those who died, became his closest inner circle when he came to rule as duke. See Bertrand Schnerb, 'Le contingent franco-bourguignon à la croisade de Nicopolis', in *Nicopolis, 1396-1996: actes du colloque international*, pp. 59-74 (pp. 69-71) and Schnerb, *Jean sans Peur*, pp. 103-05.

process that went on for many hours.⁵⁴ The description given by Michel Pintoin, the Chronicler of St Denis, is representative of the tenor of how these events were reported, and recorded:

'Ainsi, nos illustres chevaliers furent donnés en spectacle aux nations et exposés aux insultes de leurs ennemis. Malgré l'éclat de leur naissance, ils furent, ô doux Jésus, livrés aux outrages des Sarrasins, en punition de nos péchés. Comment retenir nos larmes en présence d'un pareil malheur? Quel coeur serait assez dur, quelle âme assez cruelle, pour ne point s'attendrir en voyant des nobles et vaillants hommes, qu'on trainait au supplice comme des victimes, s'adresser adieu an Jésus-Christ? Ce qui contribua encore à augmented la douleur, ce fut la constance avec laquelle ils présentèrent leurs têtes aux glaives des bourreaux qui les environnaient. ...C'était un hideux spectacle de voir ces monceaux de cadavres, ces membres épars, et tous ces flots de sang qui inondaient la terre'.⁵⁵

Following the slaughter, Jean and a handful of others, such as Jehan II le Meingre, dit Boucicaut and Enguerrand VII de Coucy, spared by Bayezid with ransom in mind, were marched to Adrianople, then to Gallipoli and finally to Bursa and for some months imprisoned in a tower, where Coucy perished; several others died on the way home after being ransomed; only a handful of the French elite made it back home alive.⁵⁶

⁵⁴Jean being forced to watch the slaughter is described by Froissart and other chroniclers: Froissart, *Chroniques*, XV, p. 326: 'car le roy vouloit que ils veissent la correction et discipline que l'en feroit du demourant des autres' The Chronicler of St Denis described how: 'pour mieux humilier le comte [de Nevers] et pour insulter publiquement la foi chrétienne.....Bayazid le fit placer sur une éminence dans le plus piteux équipage, et se tenant en face de lui, il enjoignit sous peine de mort a tous les prisonniers par la voix du herault, de passer l'un apres l'autre, comme des condamnés, dans l'espace qui se trouvait entre lui et le comte, *Chronique du religieux de Saint-Denys*, trans M. L. Bellaguet, pref. B. Guinée, 6 vols (Paris, Editions du Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques, 1994), II, ch. XXVIII, pp. 517.

⁵⁵ 'Thus, our illustrious knights were made a spectacle to the nations and exposed to the insults of their enemies. Despite the splendour of their birth, they were, O sweet Jesus, delivered to the insults of the Saracens, as a punishment for our sins. How can we hold back our tears in the presence of such a misfortune? What heart would be hard enough, what soul cruel enough, not to be moved by seeing noble and valiant men, who were dragged to death like victims, bid farewell to Jesus Christ? What further increased the pain was the constancy with which they presented their heads to the swords of the executioners who surrounded them..... It was a hideous sight to see these piles of corpses, these scattered limbs, and all these waves of blood that flooded the earth', *Chronique du religieux de Saint-Denys*, II, ch. XXVIII, pp. 516-19, which also gives the original Latin; the French is quoted here for ease of comprehension. This event is also described by Johann Schiltberger, a young soldier who survived the massacre because he was just turned 16; the relevant passage quoted in translation in DeVries, 'The Effect of Killing the Christian Prisoners', pp. 164-5; also Froissart, *Chroniques*, XV, pp. 326-28

⁵⁶ Jean Richard, 'Les prisonniers de Nicopolis', in *Nicopolis, 1396-1996: actes du colloque international*, pp. 75-83. B-A Pocquet de Haut-Jussé, 'Le retour de Nicopolis et la rançon de Jean sans Peur', *Annales de Bourgogne*, 9 (1937), pp. 296-302

Yet Burgundy's star did not fall because of the debacle, since Philip was careful to spin the events to his advantage. Crusading, even such a failed attempt, held cachet and an almost mythical status: Jean was greeted, strategically if bizarrely, as a conquering hero on his return. After entering Dijon on 22 February 1398 with some magnificence, and, after symbolically freeing all the prisoners in the city by his own hand and holding a service for those who died in the battle against Bayezid, he immediately went to Paris where he received a large gift from the king of 20,000 francs, then embarked on a tour of the Flemish towns in a similar spirit, where he enacted triumphal entries with extensive celebrations.⁵⁷ The horror of the event was not lost or erased, however: reports of the atrocities committed on the western captives after the battle were widespread, and tenacious, but these served only to increase the heroism of the crusaders that had survived. Those who died there were characterised as Christian martyrs by all the commentators who describe the events of the battle: it is evident in the passage quoted above by Pintoin, who also talks of their 'sainte mort';⁵⁸ Boucicaut's biographer in *Le Livre des faits* describes how they were 'menoit au martyr' without uttering a word;⁵⁹ they died 'la plus saint et digne mort que Chrestian puisse mourir.....accompaignez avec les benoists martyrs' and he had no doubt they were 'sains en Paradis';⁶⁰ Froissart records how the slaughtered prisoners were 'martirisées pour l'amour de Nostre Sauveur Jésus-Crist, qui en veulle avoir les ames'.⁶¹ To reinforce this truth Pintoin adds a miracle to the story: the slain, denied a Christian burial, were left exposed and unburied on Bayezid's orders, yet, miraculously, their bodies were conserved for thirteen months in all their freshness, and no bird or beast disturbed them, eating instead only the corpses of the Turks.⁶² While the disaster had been turned into a glorious sacrifice, the deep anti-Turk feeling and rhetoric that these events nurtured is not to be underestimated.⁶³ It played out in well-known ways into the reign of Philip the Good, for whom his father's experience at Nicopolis, and the sacrifice of French 'martyrs' there, was far from forgotten: indeed, he was identified by the chronicler George Chastellain as the son of the man captured at Nicopolis, and his father's experience there was something he was reminded of,

⁵⁷ For these see Vaughn, *Philip the Bold*, p. 76; Schnerb, *Jean sans Peur*, pp. 100-02.

⁵⁸ 'devote occumbere', *Chronique du religieux de Saint-Denys*, II, ch. XXVIII, pp. 519-20

⁵⁹ This is in chapter XXVI, entitled 'De la grant pitie du martire que on faisoit des chrestiens devant le Basat'... 'sans nul mot sonner pour occire devant le tyran les bons Chrestiens'; *Le Livre des faits*, ch. XXVI, 113-14

⁶⁰ 'Si n'est mie doute que s'ilz le receurent en bon gré, que si se Dieux plaist, qu'ilz sont sains en Paradis' *Le Livre des faits*, p. 116. The biographer compares the killing to the massacre of the innocents, and Bayezid to Herod.

⁶¹ Froissart, *Chroniques*, XV, p. 327.

⁶² *Chronique du religieux de Saint-Denys*, II, ch. XXVIII, pp. 518-521.

⁶³ DeVries, 'The Effect of Killing the Prisoners', pp. 167-68; Hilmi Kaçar and Jan Dumolyn, 'The Battle of Nicopolis (1396)', Burgundian Catastrophe and Ottoman Fait Divers', *Revue Belge de philologie et d'histoire*, 91 (2013), pp. 905-34 (pp. 905-08).

sometimes by others, and in myriad ways throughout his life, fuelling his well known, if unfulfilled, crusading ambitions.⁶⁴

The Martyrdom of St Denis and Nicopolis

In Dijon, the order for the retables to Maelwael came from Philip the Bold in March 1398, just a month after his son's return to the town with, it seems, an entourage of Saracen boys to convert in tow and a taste for exotic textiles and Turkish armour that he must have also brought with him.⁶⁵ Maelwael would, without doubt, have witnessed all this and presumably heard the stories told by the survivors. At this moment Philip's concerns to give thanks for the safe return of his son, expiate himself for the losses suffered at Nicopolis and commemorate, and glorify, those who fell there, were high on his agenda, and had been since the news of the disaster arrived; throughout 1398-9 numerous substantial payments were made to compensate the survivors, or the families of the deceased, and services were held to pray for their souls.⁶⁶ That part of this expiation might take place at the duke's own burial foundation in Dijon, in the town where the crusaders had symbolically gathered and set out from, and where John had returned to, is unsurprising, and also, as we will see, demonstrable. That an image of St Denis might be one vehicle for it is also natural: a connection between the patron saint of the kings of France and the campaign against the Turks was well established: Denis had been evoked by the French, including St Louis, for their protection on earlier crusades, and any French King, or his proxy (Philip, at this point, was the virtual ruler of France during Charles VI's absences) would seek permission of St Denis to depart for a crusade at his altar, before his relics in his basilica, with the deposit and blessing of the *Oriflamme*.⁶⁷ Indeed, Philip went with his son to the basilica of St Denis the night before Jean was due to leave Paris for the crusaders'

⁶⁴ Elizabeth J. Moodey, *Illuminated Crusader Histories for Philip the Good of Burgundy* (Turnhout, Brepols, 2012), p. 80. Kacar and Dumolyn 'The Battles of Nicopolis', p. 915; Pope Pius II in 1459 made a point of reminding Philip that his father had witnessed the slaughter at Nicopolis, see DeVries, 'The Effect of Killing the Prisoners', pp. 167. For a detailed discussion of Philip the Good's crusading ambitions see Paviot, *Les ducs de Bourgogne, la croisade et l'orient*, pp. 59-176.

⁶⁵ Paviot, *Les ducs de Bourgogne, la croisade et l'orient*, pp. 53-54;273; Schnerb, *Jean sans Peur*, pp.105 -06. Moodey, *Illuminated Crusader Histories*, pp. 102-03.

⁶⁶ Schnerb, 'Le contingent franco-bourguignon à la croisade de Nicopolis', pp. 67-69.

⁶⁷ For the role of Denis as a protector of France, credited for victories under his banner by earlier crusaders, see Gabrielle M. Spiegel, 'The cult of St Denis and Capetian kingship', in *Saints and their Cults*, *Studies in Religious Sociology, Folklore and History*, ed. by Stephen Wilson (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 141-68 (pp. 153-54); it must be noted that the only evidence we have for the banners made for the campaign into Hungary is for four that showed the Virgin, one carried by Jean de Vienne who valiantly raised it time and time again when it had fallen (*Chronique du religieux de Saint-Denys*, II, ch. XXVI, 504-05). That St Denis had not been the figure that had been painted on their banners could suggest, perhaps, that there was something of expiation towards the saint here in this choice of dedication for the altar and the image that was set on it.

rendezvous in Dijon, to hear mass and pray to the saint for the success of the enterprise.⁶⁸ Reading the Louvre panel, then, with the events of Nicopolis and its mythology of martyred (French) Christians in mind is not without reason or substance, but to do so requires close attention to its particular visual strategies and narrative choices.

Two things stand out immediately about how the decapitation of St Denis and his followers is depicted in the Champmol retable: the dramatic violence of the moment, and the exotic group of onlookers that institute or witness it. Both are sometimes commented on but not analysed further.⁶⁹ The execution is particularly bloody, but is also told in a particular way, distinct from any visual tradition for the beheading of this saint. Normally Denis and his followers are either shown all bent to receive the blow (as in Paris, BnF MS fr. 2092, Fig. 14, and the Lucon Pontifical BnF Lat 8886, Fig. 15), or picking up their heads after the fact (as in the relief on the Valois portal at St Denis, Fig. 16, and a Parisian ivory of c. 1360, Fig. 17). In the Martyrdom retable, however (Fig. 18), the miracle is not depicted, and the focus is on sacrifice rather than resurrection. While the matching blue and gold robes of all three martyrs suggest three different stages of action in a kind of stop-motion effect, what we have in fact is one frozen moment of heightened drama: Rusticus's execution has already occurred; his body lies headless, hands crossed, blood spurting from its neck and from his haloed head that has rolled to the very foreground of the picture plane. In front of him, St Denis's decapitation is in progress: blindfolded, his neck is half severed, with the wound gaping and pouring blood, the horror intensified by the fact that the first blow has not done its job (Fig. 19). The climax of this action is about to occur: the huge axe held by the startlingly half-naked, dark-bearded and dynamically poised executioner teeters at the very top of the swing, its blade about to fall. The substantial, bare, muscled arms and legs of this figure emphasize the force of his action, his flesh and underwear exposed in a transgressive manner, adding to the impression of rough, immoral violence, and exotic, eastern origin.

⁶⁸ Recorded in *Chronique du religieux de Saint-Denys*, II, ch.ch. III, pp. 428-9. It is also perhaps of note that in 1396, with the crusade in its final planning stages, Charles VI chose to give Philip a gold image of St Denis, Jan Hirschbiegel, *Étrennes. Untersuchungen zum höfischen Geschenkverkehr im spätmittelalterlichen Frankreich der Zeit König Karls VI (1380-1422)*, (Munich, Oldenbourg Verlag, 2003), p. 384.

⁶⁹ The St Denis panel is used by Caroline Walker Bynam, 'Violent Imagery in Late Medieval Piety', *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute* 30 (2002), pp.3-36 (p. 3) as illustration of one of the 'grisly and prolonged executions of the culture's martyred heroes and heroines, the saints', but without any further analysis of its particular violence; Lindquist, *Agency, Visuality and Society*, pp.161-165, discusses the violence of the martyrdom scene, and compares it usefully to other martyrdoms on retables made for Champmol, which are notably less bloody, but reads its purpose and meaning differently; the exotic onlookers are mentioned by Le Pogam, *Les premiers retables*, p. 190 who suggests that their eastern costumes could have a negative connotation in relation to the defeat at Nicopolis; as far as I am aware he is the only author to link the painting to the battle in any way.

The representation of the third of the martyrs, the deacon Eleutherius, as yet unharmed, is perhaps most significant of all: he stands, forced to watch the action, hands bound, head down, waiting calmly for his fate. He is held tightly by a blue-turbaned Saracen, in a yellow stripped robe, who twists the saint's body towards the massacre, with one hand on the scruff of his neck and the other pulling on his upper right arm; his toothy grin and direct gaze out at the spectator draws particular attention to his action. The contrast between the saint's pale skin and downturned gaze against the Saracen's ruddy features, and bold, leering stare, again make a strong visual statement about the Christian 'good' against the infidel 'evil' (Fig. 20).⁷⁰ The whole cannot have failed to resonate for an audience around 1400 with the widely known actions of the Sultan, decapitating his prisoners, forcing Jean, bound and captive, to stand and watch the slaughter of his followers.⁷¹ Eleutherius here of course is not stripped but decorously dressed, composed and unmoving. He, along with his companions, are emphatically marked out as martyrs of France: all three wear matching blue and gold vestments, their patterns evoking if not reproducing a fleur de Lis motif.⁷² The choice to dress the saints alike was a novel one (Figs 14, 15, although see Fig. 26), and the colour is also far from standard for the saint or his followers.⁷³ The royal association of the robes in the *Martyrdom* panel would have been abundantly evident, as blue and gold vestments of this sort clearly marked out the French kings: Charles V had had an extensive set of new coronation vestments and hangings consigned to St Denis in 1380 that were entirely of blue and gold, strewn with fleur de Lis.⁷⁴ Christ, who wears almost (but not exactly) the same robes is then, by visual implication, allied to the French monarchy, conscripted to the side of France, and their *roi très chrétien*. Moreover, the contrast of the richly dressed saints in the royal blue and gold with the half-naked

⁷⁰ The author of the *Livre des faits* characterised the Turkish soldiers, in relation to this precise action on their part, as 'ces cheins Sarrasins, lais et orribles, qui les tenoient durement devant ce tirant ennemi de la foy', *Livre des faits*, XXVI, p. 114.

⁷¹ Pintoin, in his description of these actions, notes that they were 'pour mieux humilier le comte [de Nevers] et pour insulter publiquement la foi chrétienne', *Chronique du religieux* p. 517; see also note XX above.

⁷² François Boespflug, 'Le bleu, couleur liturgique ou signal politique? Autour des ornements du Christ et de ses martyrs dans Communion et martyr de saint Denis', in *La création artistique en France autour de 1400. Actes du colloque international École du Louvre-Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dijon - Université de Bourgogne. 7-10 July 2004*, eds. Élisabeth Taburet-Delahaye, Paris, École du Louvre, 2006), pp. 135-150, discusses the allusion in the pattern of the vestments to the fleur de Lis, concluding that it was a symbol of the union of the houses of France and Burgundy, on the one hand, and between those houses and God on the other.

⁷³ Indeed, blue robes for Denis or his followers are far from standard, and matching robes are equally rare; there was no standard iconographical convention for the colour of the robes of St Denis and his followers at this time, it would seem, unlike St Louis, and the only other example of them wearing matching liturgical vestments shows them in red, not blue and gold.

⁷⁴ For these see Susie Nash, 'Inventory as Royal Object: Charles V and the Enumeration of Kingship', in *The Medieval Book as Object, Idea and Symbol* Harlaxton Medieval Studies; Vol. 31, ed. by Julian Luxford (Donington, Shaun Tyas, 2021), pp. 41-79 (p.66).

executioner effectively flips the humiliation of the prisoners at Nicopolis on its head, emphasizing the barbarous nature of the Saracens against the morality of the Christian martyrs. Such a portrayal would counter, effectively, the voices, like Philippe de Mézières and Michel Pintoin, who blamed the failure of the crusade on a lack chivalric virtues in the knights who took part in it, even if, at the same time, they constructed their deaths as sacrifice in a holy war.⁷⁵

The white striped turbans worn by three of the other figures behind the executioner and the man in yellow also suggest they are Saracens, although only one of them is bearded (Fig. 21). He wears the richest and most complex headgear, its white cloth wrapped over an embroidered blue and gold cap, set off with an elaborate topknot. He stands directly behind the executioner, his red robes and raised hands framing (and directing?) the action, that he turns away from to converse with his neighbour (Fig. 18); his emphatic gestures are a striking contrast to the silent attention and decorum of Eleutharius, who stands in direct vertical alignment with him, head bowed, hands crossed, in silence. The other two figures wearing white turbans gesture in ambiguous manners; they are clean-shaven and blue-eyed, making their origin unclear: one is in full profile, his mouth open, seemingly speaking into the ear of the grinning Saracen in yellow, while pointing to the right, perhaps to something outside the picture plane, or once on the original frame; the other seems to converse with the Saracen in red, placing two fingers to his lips in a gesture that indicates thought, or concern; Froissart, and the eye-witness account from Johann Schiltberger, tells of how the Sultan's counsellors eventually begged Bayazid to stop the slaughter - the killing had gone on from morning to vespers.⁷⁶ This might perhaps explain in part this interaction, and gesture, though it remains ambiguous.

⁷⁵ Philippe de Mézières *Une épître lamentable et consolatoire, adressée en 1397 à Philippe le Hardi. duc de Bourgogne, sur la défaite de Nicopolis (1396)*, eds and commentary Philippe Contamine and Jacques Paviot (Paris, Société de l'histoire de France, 2008); for a discussion of Mézières text in relation to Nicopolis see Moodey, *Illuminated Crusader Histories*, pp. 100-05. Pintoin spends some time criticising the excess in dress of the crusaders, the luxury of their tents 'ornées de peintures', the ridiculous length of their robes and their pointed shoes, their taste for good wine, women and gambling. *Chronique du religieux de Saint-Denys*, II, ch. XXIV, pp. 496-99.

⁷⁶ 'Blood was spilled from morning until vespers, and when the king's counsellors saw that so much blood was spilled and that still it did not stop, they rose and fell upon their knees before the king, and entreated him for the sake of God that he would forget his rage, that he might not draw down upon himself the vengeance of God, as enough blood was already spilled. He consented, and ordered that they should stop, and that the rest of the people should be brought together, and from them he took his share and left the rest to his people who had made them prisoners' Schiltberger, quoted in DeVries, 'The Effect of Killing the Prisoners', p. 164-65. It is also possible of course that, as the panel was finished after 1415, the choice of eye colour for the Saracen might have been made then, and have another meaning, in relation to the characterisation of the English at Agincourt as Saracens, for which, see below p. XX, and note XX.

More mysterious still is the final figure right at the back, who is set apart from the rest of the group in several ways: he is clean shaven, young, but with darker skin and brown eyes (Fig. 21). His composed features have none of the exaggerated expressions of the others in this group: he looks away, in silence, to the right, and he is dressed in a distinctly different fashion, wearing black with a white neck covering, and a grey-black chaperon of a type akin to the those worn by members of the French court c. 1400, even by John the Fearless himself (Fig. 22). It is tempting to see in this figure a reference to the Muslim youths brought back from the crusade by John to Dijon, put in the care of an interpreter, a Nicopolis veteran Viennot Le Clopetel, and subsequently converted and baptised.⁷⁷ We know of the fate of at least three of them, who received particular favour from all three dukes: Philip the Bold had stood as godfather to one (who took the name Philippe), the future Philip the Good as godfather to another (who took the name Philippe de Charolais); and another, that John the Fearless may well have stood as godfather to, was named Jean Philippe. They were all provided with fine robes, tunics, shoes and chaperons at their baptisms, and one was even housed for a time at Champmol in 1409.⁷⁸

On the other side of the Trinity with its monumental, and bloody crucifixion, St Denis is miraculously given communion by Christ, while imprisoned in a building that looks very much like a tower, with a decidedly eastern feel, its domed structure, arched topped and circular windows, red bricks, and a vaguely classicising frieze more evocative of the east, and the Holy Land, than of any western structure; indeed, red bricks, domes, round-topped arches and circular windows, can be found in what remains of medieval architecture in Nicopolis and its regions (Figs 23, 24).⁷⁹ One could imagine how descriptions by returning crusaders of buildings they encountered - or were imprisoned in - could have translated into Maelwael's rendition of an exotic-style prison for St Denis. Domed, pinkish buildings are common signifiers for eastern exotic lands, of course, and can be found in contemporary representations of the Holy Land, such as the *Livre des Merveilles* (BnF fr 2810, Fig. 25), given by John the

⁷⁷ For these converts see Paviot, *Les ducs de Bourgogne, la croisade et l'orient*, p. 273.

⁷⁸ John the Fearless had ordered the Turk to stay at the Chartreux at some point before May 28th 1409, ADCO B1560, f. 70v; in the accounts of the Chartreuse there is a payment of October 1410 for a key and a latch for the room the Saracen had recently left: 'pour un clef et ung luquot mis en la chambre es Sarazine nagueres xprienniez.', ADCO B11673 f. 215, Lindquist, *Agency, Visuality and Society*, p. 192, n. 31 (but mistranscribed). This Turk was baptised Jean Phelippe in Dijon on 26 May 1409, the feast of Pentecost, when John the Fearless was himself in Dijon, and given by the duke a robe and chaperon worth 12 ecus, which, along with his name, suggests he might have stood as godfather to him; the other was baptised in Paris and given the name Phillipe de Charolais as his godfather was the young count of Charolais, Philip the Good, and to distinguish him from another baptised Turk who had had Philip the Bold as his godfather; see Paviot, *Les ducs de Bourgogne, la croisade et l'orient*, p. 273.

⁷⁹ Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish Painting*, notes the 'faintly romanizing or orientalizing style' of the prison; Le Pogam, *Les premiers retables*, p. 188-90, connects the red bricks to the Flemish origin of Bellechouse, but there seems to be nothing northern about this structure.

Fearless to the Duke of Berry in 1412, but even so are usually combined with recognizable western style structures. There is nothing like this in the work of the van Lymbourchs, who set the stages of their Holy Land with decidedly northern European buildings; the prison-tower in the St Denis panel is something that finds no easy parallel.

The depiction of the martyrdom and communion in the Louvre panel demands explanation, and invites this particular, and singular, reading because it contradicts so overtly the central features of St Denis's Vita as told in the Golden Legend and the more extensive *Vie de Saint Denis*.⁸⁰ The saints' martyrdom and communion took place, crucially, not in the Holy Land but in Paris: the locale was fundamental to his cult and its status in France. His imprisonment was on the Île de la Cité, his martyrdom at Montmartre, and by the fourteenth century these sites were depicted with some precision in representations of his life and death. In the lengthy illustrated copy of the *Vie de Saint Denis* (Paris BNF 2090-92), begun for Philip IV before 1314 and in the library at the Louvre by the 1370s, the location for the events of his preaching, torture, communion and execution is established through elaborate scenes of Parisian life and trade, each inscribed 'Parisius' to make the point unmissable (Fig. 26).⁸¹ In other depictions of the martyrdom from around the moment of the St Denis panel, or shortly after it, the locale of Paris is equally firmly established: in the Châteauroux Breviary made for Louis of Guyenne in 1413-15 (Bibliothèque municipale de Châteauroux, MS 2, Fig. 27), Notre Dame is clearly visible in the background, for example.⁸² St Denis' prison is also, normally, not a tower at all but a recognizably western structure, with pointed arches, pitched roofs, turrets and crenelations, as seen in the Maubuisson retable attributed to Évrard d'Orléans of c. 1330-40 (Fig. 28).⁸³ Moreover, the persecution of Denis and his companions was ordered by a Roman Emperor, Domitian, and executed by his prefect, Sisinnius, sent to Paris for this purpose. This origin of the protagonists is made abundantly clear in the *Vie de Saint Denis* with

⁸⁰ For the life of St Denis in the Golden Legend see Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend. Readings on the Saints*, 2 vols, trans. by William Granger Ryan, (Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 1993), II, pp. 236-41. For his Vita, Charlotte Lacaze, 'The "Vie de Saint Denis" Manuscript (Paris Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms. fr. 2090-2092)', unpublished doctoral dissertation, New York University, 1978.

⁸¹ For this manuscript see the detailed study by Lacaze, 'The "Vie de Saint Denis" Manuscript', and Emily Guerry, 'A Time and a Place for Suffering: Picturing the Vie de Saint Denis in Paris', in *Artistic Translations between the Fourteenth and Sixteenth centuries* eds Zuzanna Sarnecka, and Aleksandra Fedorowicz-Jackowska (Warsaw, University of Warsaw Press, 2013), pp. 69-94. The manuscript was presented to Philip V around 1318-19 and has been connected to his preparations for a crusade in those years, a reminder to the king of the importance of St Denis in any such preparation, Lacaze, pp. 72-75; it is in both Latin and French; the French translation however is interwoven on inserted leaves at a point some years after the original creation of the book, probably, from the style of their borders and initials, in the reign of Charles V, although Lacaze argues for an earlier date.

⁸² For this manuscript see *Paris 1400*, no 69, pp 143-44; Inès Villela-Petit, *Le Bréviaire de Châteauroux* (Paris, Somogy, 2003), pp. 109-12; the differences are more striking than the similarities, on the whole, between these works and the Louvre panel.

⁸³ For this see Le Pogam, *Les premiers retables*, pp. 101-05

Sisinnius, dressed in recognisably Roman armour, with round shoulder guards and plated *lorica segmentata* mail (see Figs 14, 27). The figures accompanying him, who then undertake the torture and executions are admittedly more exotic, dark skinned, one with a white cloth tied around his head, but the other with a winged helm of more roman-pagan form; in most depictions of the martyrdom, they are in western garb (Figs 15, 27).⁸⁴

In the Louvre panel, then, transferring St Denis's martyrdom to an act undertaken, and ordered, by Saracens, emphasizing the violence and bloodiness of the action against Christian martyrs, connecting Denis and his followers so overtly to the royal house of France, and in turn to Christ, and casting St Denis's prison as a decidedly un-French location, all make perfect sense as a response to Nicopolis. The *Martyrdom* and the particulars of its depiction surely allude, indeed overtly, to the slaughter there, and to the actions of Bayazid in forcing the count of Nevers to watch the horror, but it also becomes an analogue for the massacre of France itself at the hands of the infidels. Such a conflation is in line with the characterisation of those who died in the crusade as Christian martyrs that, as we have seen, was common to all contemporary commentators on the event. Moreover, the combination of the martyrdom with the scene of the communion of St Denis, miraculously received while imprisoned, might be explained in these terms too: while those who fell in battle would likely have confessed and received communion beforehand, such would probably not have been possible for the prisoners who died in captivity like Enguerrand de Coucy; the promise of heavenly intervention to receive last rites is evidently relevant to the captivity of the crusaders under Bayezid.

Reading the *Martyrdom* in this manner does not mean, of course, that it did not work effectively on several other levels as well: as an image of the Trinity, to whom the Chartreuse de Champmol was dedicated; as an image of the cross, and Christ crucified, to whom the Carthusians were particularly devoted; as an image of communion, and of salvific blood, serving an altar where the sacrament would be performed; and as an image of St Denis, to whom the altar was consecrated.⁸⁵ But the particulars of its iconography suggest that it was something more than this too: a vehicle for the memorialisation and glorification of the French 'martyrs' of the battle of Nicopolis, and a metaphor for the martyrdom of France itself during this disastrous crusade.

⁸⁴ It is possible, of course, that the executioners of St Denis in the 'Vie de Saint Denis' manuscript might be part of its rhetoric designed to speak to the crusading intentions of Philip V, an argument made by Lacaze, 'The "Vie de Saint Denis" Manuscript', pp. 72-75.

⁸⁵ Some of these aspects of the imagery of the *Martyrdom* are explored most usefully by Lindquist, *Agency, Visuality and Society*, pp. 162-64; for discussion of the Trinity in particular, see Boespflug, *La Trinité*, pp. 57-75.

Champmol and Nicopolis

While the visual evidence that the Martyrdom contains overt, unmissable references to the events of the Franco-Burgundian crusade seems compelling, there is external evidence that supports the interpretation that this image, on this altar, was indeed intended to commemorate those who took part in that action. The Chartreuse de Champmol, in ways that have rarely been recognised, was for Philip a locus for the expiation of the losses at Nicopolis.⁸⁶ The wider argument for this in relation, in particular, to the Great Cross (the 'Well of Moses') in the Large Cloister will be presented elsewhere, but for our purposes here the crucial evidence is found in an overlooked source, the necrology of the monastery.⁸⁷ This document records the obits of those who had annual masses said for their souls, usually in return for gifts, sometimes to particular altars there. It is highly exclusive, recording only twenty-one names celebrated on just seventeen dates.⁸⁸ Those who received this honour can be classed into three groups: the first comprises Philip the Bold and nine of his closest relatives: his wife, Margaret of Flanders, his son, John the Fearless, his daughter, Catherine, duchess of Austria, his grandson, Philip the Good and two of Philip's wives, Bonne of Artois and Isabella of Portugal; his brother Jean de Berry; his nephew, Louis of Orleans and (a slight outlier) Louis d'Estampes count of Dourdon. The second group comprises priors of the order, of which just three are entered: Jean de Vaultx (d. 1404); Andre Vauvert, (d. 1421) and Jean Tapperel (d. 1638; clearly a late addition).

The third group is the most revealing and unexpected, but that they form a meaningful unit at all, and the significance of their identity, has never been recognised: they comprise seven of Philip's inner circle of counsellors, all of whom were at Nicopolis, and six of whom died there or in its aftermath: these are Guy de la Trémouille, Lord of Sully; his brothers, Guillaume de la Trémouille, the marshal of Burgundy and Pierre de la Trémouille; Jean de

⁸⁶ The two major recent studies of Champmol, Prochno *Die Kartause von Champmol* and Lindquist, Agency, Society and Visuality, do not discuss Nicopolis at all; Kathleen Morand, Claus Sluter (. Artist at the Court of Burgundy (London, Harvey Miller, 1991), pp. 91-98, is the only author to bring some consideration of it to bear on Champmol's imagery, and there only in relation to the project of the Great Cross.

⁸⁷ 'Susie Nash, "No Sorrow like unto my sorrow': Philip the Bold, Nicopolis and the Great Cross at the Chartreuse de Champmol', forthcoming 2022. Some part of this argument has already been put forward at a lecture at the Frick, New York, in December 2018.

⁸⁸ Copies are Dijon ADCO 1F-16, ff. 186-189 and Paris, BNF MS Lat 13872, ff. 525v-527r, transcribed in Prochno, *Die Kartause von Champmol*, pp. 354-55 and 370-71. Although the document itself does not survive two versions that seem to copy it independently speak to the accuracy and completeness of their transcription, for this see also Prochno, *Die Kartause von Champmol*, pp. 172-73.

Vienne, admiral of France; and three of Philip's key chamberlains, Oudart de Chasseron, Jean de Sauvegrain and Jean de Saint Croix (chevalier de la Passion). The significance of these men to the duke cannot be underestimated, and their role in the crusade from the start was central: five of them stood as witness to the declaration of those who should accompany the count of Nevers into Hungary, made in Paris in March 1396;⁸⁹ four of them were then appointed as part of John's permanent inner council of five for the campaign.⁹⁰ All were highly trusted and experienced courtiers, soldiers or administrators, but Guy de la Trémouille was probably Philip's closest friend, marked out by the request in the Duke's will that he be buried at his feet at Champmol.⁹¹ Each of these courtiers donated sums for the founding of altars in the church, although only Guy de la Trémouille's seems to have been made at an early date, and to have had his name attached to the chapel he supported.⁹² They comprised substantial gifts however, of 500 or 1,000 francs, attached to altars in the chapter house and sacristy, and one, from Jean de Sauvegrain, was 'pro fundatione Capellae Sti Dyonisi', the chapel of St Denis.⁹³

However, what connects this elite and exclusive group of Nicopolis crusaders in the Champmol necrology to the St Denis altar is not this gift from one of their number, but the collective date at which their obits were celebrated. While all the other individuals commemorated— the duke, his family, the priors, including Pierre de la Trémouille who went to, but did not die, at Nicopolis - have obits performed on the date of their death, as is standard, these five knights, who all died there, are listed under a single date: 9th of October.⁹⁴ This was not when they died (some fell in battle, some died on the way home); it is also not the date of

⁸⁹ This was Jeanne de Vienne, Guy and Guillaume de la Tremouille, Oudart de Chaseron, and Pierre de La Trémouille. For the list of those who would accompany the duke, and those that formed his inner circle of counsellors, see Atiya, *The Crusade of Nicopolis*, Appendix VI, pp. 144-48. *Les ducs de Bourgogne, la croisade et l'orient*, p. 33-34. The campaign is always referred to as the 'voyage de Hongrie' in the ducal accounts.

⁹⁰ These were Jeanne de Vienne, Guy and Guillaume de la Tremouille, Oudart de Chaseron,; fifth man was Philip de Bar, placed first among the councillors, who also died at Nicopolis.

⁹¹ This was marked with a G on the floor near Philip's tomb, in spot where he was placed.

⁹² For the chapel of Guy de la Trémouille at Champmol see Prochno, *Die Kartause von Champmol*, pp. 167-75.

⁹³ Jean de Sauvegrain, dit Le Normendel, was the *Ecuyer de cuisine* and valet de chambre of the duke; he made a major donation to Champmol in 1389, but it was not at that point connected to any altar, see Monget, *La Chartreuse de Dijon*, I, pp. 165-66,. He also rented one of his houses to the brass founder Colart Joseph, to use as his workshop while he was in Dijon making the extensive brass ornaments for Champmol; Monget, *La Chartreuse de Dijon*, I, p. 172 and Prochno, *Die Kartause von Champmol*, 58; Jean is listed among those who accompanied the count of Nevers into Hungary by Froissart, *Chroniques*, XV, p. 423; an inventory of his belongings is dated 8 November 1397 (Dijon ADCO B356 cote 2); he clearly died on the campaign.

⁹⁴ VIII Octobris (alias IX); this is the formula for when the obit falls on a major feast day, and indicates that it will be celebrated the eve before, though its date is that of the 'alias'. So the obits would be said in practice on the vigille of St Denis, but they are all named as 9th October. It is of note that Philip the Good's death date is given here correctly in the necrology as 17 June; it has entered the historical record incorrectly as 15 June because of a letter written describing his death that is dated 16th June and the writer says the duke died the day before, on the Monday; however in 1467 that Monday was 17th June; the writer has either incorrectly dated his letter, or it has been mistranscribed. For the letter, see Richard Vaughn, *Philip the Good. The Apogee of Burgundy* (London, Longman, 1970), p. 398.

the battle (which was 25th September).⁹⁵ It is however the feast day of St Denis. Choosing this date for the celebration of their obits suggests that they were to be performed at the altar of this saint. Identifying each of them as *miles* (not a title any of the other people listed in the necrology, who were certainly also knights, are given) is surely significant too in terms of why they received such an honour at Champmol: it was their sacrifice in battle that marks them out here, and it is as a group of knights that they were commemorated on the feast of St Denis.

The further significance of this altar - and presumably too this image on this altar - is demonstrated with another major foundation there: in 1434 Philip the Good and Isabella of Portugal established two daily masses to be said 'in capella Sti Dionysis': one of these was to the Virgin, one for the Dead, except on Thursdays, when they should be to the Holy Spirit, and Fridays, when they should be to the Cross.⁹⁶ These were to be performed by the two monks that Isabella had just founded cells for at the Charterhouse. The choice of this location, out of all of those presumably available to the duke and duchess at Champmol, might relate to its greater accessibility in the converse choir, but it is tempting to see it in the light of its role as a locus for the commemoration of a battle that had been such a defining moment for Philip's father and grandfather, and that shaped Philip's ambitions for undertaking his own crusade. All the messages inherent in the image of St Denis on this altar would have been still highly pertinent for Philip, whose interest in Nicopolis, in the sacrifice of Burgundian nobility, and in the possibility of a new campaign to the Holy Land, is well known, and indeed was one guiding factor behind his formation of the order of the Golden Fleece. Isabella shared these ambitions, having possibly an even greater zeal for the project to liberate Jerusalem.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ The sixth knight included in the necrology who fell on the campaign, Guy de la Trémouille, who died in Rhodes on the way home from captivity, had a different date for his obit: this to seems to be unconnected, again, to his date of death, which was 22 April; his obit is 3 May, the feast of Saint Croix, chosen presumably again with his devotion to the crusade and his death there in mind.

⁹⁶ These are mentioned both in the obit for Philip the Good, where it is noted that he was 'fundator duarum missarum in capella Sti Dionisii quotidie dicendarum quam fundationem suscientur dotavit' and in the obit for Isabella of Portugal, where it is noted that she founded 'duas missas cum viro suo quotidie dicendas in sacella Sti Dionysis ordinavit'. These, along with one other endowed by Philip at the altar at the head of his grandfather's tomb, were the only mass foundations recorded in the Necrology. They are recorded also in the 1434 will of Isabella of Portugal where more detail on their celebration was given: 'deux messes basses cotidiennes et tous les jours perpetuellement, l'une a nostre Dame et l'autre ses trespassez, exceptez les jours de jeudy et de vendredy esquelz lesdictes messes seront l'une du Saint Esprit et l'autre de la Croix, et aussi exceptez les jours solomnelz esquelz iceux duex religieux diront leur messe selon le temps et a leur devotion.', 46 H778 Liasse, 1434, transcribed in Prochno, *Die Kartause von Champmol*, p. 356

⁹⁷ Isabellas interests in the Holy Land are well documented. The largest donation in her will was to the Franciscans in Jerusalem. Her donation for the masses at these altars followed directly her Joyeuse entrée into Dijon in 1433 and a visit to Champmol; the altar with its altarpiece would therefore have been recently seen by her, and not simply an abstract idea.

St Denis and St George

One other final piece of evidence that connects the *Martyrdom* retable to a Burgundian campaign to memorialise and enshrine those fallen in battle against the infidels is the painting that was its pendant, set on the other chapel on the choir screen, with which we began: the *Crucifixion with the Martyrdom of St George* (Fig. 2).⁹⁸ This is generally considered a work of c. 1450-60, and we know nothing of its genesis from archival sources, but that it matches the *Martyrdom* retable so precisely in its size and format suggests it could in fact have been the other panel with the same measurements supplied to Maelwael in 1398, rather than a panel made later to match it; Maelwael may have designed this work too, and could have got some way with its gilding, since the use of a solid gold ground, especially in this manner for both the background and the halos of the saints that cut through the composition, is much more in line with c.1400 than c. 1450. Its paint surface, textiles patterns and handling is far from Maelwael, of course, and could have been made in fact anywhere between c. 1460-1480. As it, too, has been transferred to canvas we cannot use its original support to help untangle its physical history or date, but it is clear that unlike the St Denis panel its gilded areas have been reworked and restored, and there were some additions to the design that are evident on its surface alone (Fig. 29);⁹⁹ the scale, placement and condition of the Carthusian monk shown kneeling before the cross suggests this figure was not part of the original plan, but perhaps introduced when the panel was completed - possibly with a financial contribution from the prior or the monk it depicts - in the later fifteenth century.¹⁰⁰ While we have no clear evidence that this panel depicting St George was indeed planned at the start by Philip, the saint was of interest to him at precisely this period, and was also connected to the crusading events of Nicopolis: this is neatly illustrated by a gift to Guillaume de Laigle for recovering the body of Guy de la

⁹⁸For this panel see most recently Prochno, *Die Kartause von Champmol*, pp. 56-58; and Sophie Jugie in *L'art à la cour de Bourgogne*, pp. 260-61. a 'Sacelli Sti Georgii' in front of the choir screen in relation to a tablet with an inscription that was set there in 1475 to record a donation made by Pierre de Villette, a native of Besancon.

⁹⁹ The surface of the gilding along the line of the figure of Christ suggests that originally he, and the cross, might have been placed lower, balancing these elements more closely to the crucified Christ in the *Martyrdom of St Denis*; the face of the Carthusian monk has a very strange surface, and a strong outline in ink around the head which might suggest it was painted on a different support and stuck on, or at the very least it was painted over a surface to which has caused the paint to deteriorate severely. For examples of portraits painted on different supports and stuck onto panels see Griet Steyart, 'The Seven Sacraments'. Some technical Aspects observed during the Restoration', in *Rogier van der Weyden in Context*. Papers presented at the Seventeenth Symposium for the Study of Underdrawing and Technology in Painting held in Leuven, 22-24 October 2009, eds Lorne Campbell, Jan Van der Stock, Catherine Reynolds and Lieve Watteuw, Leuven, Peeters, 2012), pp. 119-35 (124-25). These observations are supported by a letter in the museum dossier of 9 June 1981 which discusses the X-ray of the painting, noting that it shows modifications to the figure of St George, and the contours of Christ; I thank Lola Fondbertasse of the Musée des Beaux arts in Dijon for sharing this document with me.

¹⁰⁰ Jugie in *L'art à la cour de Bourgogne*, p. 261, makes a similar suggestion thinks it likely to be an offering by a monk that wanted to finish a decoration left unfinished, rather than a ducal commission.

Trémouille from Rhodes where he had died on the way back from Nicopolis, a task that was combined with the acquisition in Athens of the extraordinarily significant relic of the head of St George.¹⁰¹

What we can tell, without technical examination or documentation, is that the composition and imagery of the *St George* retable was designed to match the *St Denis* retable to a remarkable extent, as has been noted by several scholars, forming an iconographic and visual counterpoint to it.¹⁰² The extent of this match, however, has not been fully recognised, nor have its implications been explored. The choice of the beheading of St George in itself is striking, since it was not the most frequently depicted part of the saint's iconography, but it was clearly chosen to pair with the beheading of St Denis. It echoes its design both in overall form, and in its details: the central crucifixion with narratives either side; the crowd of figures watching the execution that pile up on the right hand side; the horizon line that slopes dramatically down from right to left; the raised arm of the executioner, set in juxtaposition with the arm of the cross, are all significant compositional parallels, but there are also close matches in its details: St George is blindfolded, just like Denis, and his head has also been partly severed, again like the bishop saint's, the gash from the first blow also made visible (Figs 30); the executioner has similarly bare legs and arms; the figures looking on are also dressed as Saracens (again, not necessarily pertinent to St George's actual martyrdom); and their distracting, emphatic and somewhat ambiguous hand gestures, juxtaposed sometimes awkwardly in conjunction with other figures, are comparable in their overall effect to those in the St Denis panel.

That this deliberate echoing of one panel in the other was not the result of a later painter creating a composition to match the *Martyrdom*, but a panel whose design was conceived at the same time and then finished much later is further suggested by the remarkable similarity in outline, pose, gestures and even facial types (the sharp noses, pointed chins and pursed lips) and palette (a group in blue, green and red) of the Virgin and the three Maries below the cross, to similar groups in the cell paintings made in the late 1390s by Beaumetz and his workshop for Champmol (compare Figs 31,32,33). The figure of St John is also particularly revealing:

¹⁰¹A messire Guillaume de Laigle, Chevalier et chambellan de monseigneur le Duc, outre les frais qu'il estoit nagueres fait es parties de Rhodes et d'Athenes querir et faire venir par deça le chief de Monseir St Georges et aussie le corps du feu le Seigneur Tremouille donne en la ville nuits st George le 17 nov 1400. ADCO B1526, f. 147v, Monget, *La Chartreuse de Dijon*, I, p. 301. Guillaume de Laigle was one of Philip's trusted go-betweens in negotiating the ransom with Bayezid in 1397; see Paviot, *Les ducs de Bourgogne, la croisade et l'orient*, p. 43 Philip also owned a relic of the sword of St George; it is also of note that, of only three sets of tapestries in his extensive collection that depicted saints lives, one was of St George, the other of St Denis, and the third (also related potentially to a crusading ambition) was St Catherine.

¹⁰²Jugie, *L'art à la cour de Bourgogne*, p. 261 and Prochno, *Die Kartause von Champmol*, pp. 56-57;

the tilt of his head, the shape of his features, the style of his hair, are all very much at odds with a work of 1450 or after, but bear comparison with the type used in the Beaumetz panels and in the large round Pieta attributed to Maelwael, while the way his robe is drawn together with a tasselled gold cord looped twice through the fabric at the neck repeats a motif used on the Virgin in that panel (Figs 34, 35). The bones, then, of the figures in the St George retable, if not their flesh, is from c 1400.¹⁰³

If, as suggested here, the *Crucifixion with St George* was intended from the start as a visual pair to the St Denis, it makes the crusading references of both all the more apparent. Here on the two altars that would have been most visible to visitors to the church, flanking the entrance to the choir were planned two altarpieces that represented the martyrdom of the patron saint of the kings of France, and that of the ultimate Christian knight and crusader, the conqueror of Palestine: on one altar the church and its evangelising martyrs, on the other the knight of Christ. In the choir beyond the first thing that would be visible as anyone passed between these two chapels was the tomb of Philip the Bold, instigator of the crusade, son and brother of a French king. This monument was set with its west end directly at the entrance to the choir, and what would have been immediately visible of his effigy from between the screen - and the altars on it - would be only his fleur de Lis crested helm held by angels (Fig. 36); indeed, when the altar that was set up in front of it by 1420 was in place, even the pleurants would be hidden.¹⁰⁴ The placement of these retables and their role thus makes more sense of their extraordinary format and, for this time and place, unusual material choices:¹⁰⁵ as large scale, single-field 'pala' type painted panels, without wings and of unusual height, they would have been constantly visible and easily legible, their message unmissable.

Agincourt

¹⁰³ This might explain the strange style of the work, that has defied close dating, and the attribution to a Spanish painter, initially favoured and then rejected by Sterling, 1955, p. 66. That it is so hard to place makes sense if it is a work that is attempting to complete a composition already well advanced in a style that is not their own. Infrared reflectography would be very useful in furthering the question of its relationship to the St Denis panel. I am grateful to Lola at the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Dijon for providing me with scans of what they have on the painting.

¹⁰⁴ For the mis-en-scène of the tomb of Philip the Bold in the 15th century see Susie Nash, 'Ad Pedes Patris, John the Fearless, Philip the Good and the Tomb of Philip the Bold', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, forthcoming.

¹⁰⁵ Michele Tomasi, 'Matériaux, techniques, commanditaires et espaces. Le système des retables à la chartreuse de Champmol', *Netherlands Yearbook for the History of Art* 2012, vol 62, pp. 28-55, examines the hierarchy of material choices in the altarpieces at Champmol, and argues, especially in relation to the carved retables of Jacques de Baerze, for their novelty. Panel paintings of this format would have been equally novel.

One question that remains outstanding is why, more than twelve years after Maelwael stopped work on the retables for the lay choir following the death of Philip the Bold, John the Fearless decided, in the spring of 1416, to make a push to complete one of them, at least, and not, it would seem the other. While this must remain speculation, the conjunction of dates here seems again significant. The previous autumn, on October 25th 1415 another equally and perhaps more famously disastrous battle for the French occurred: Agincourt. Jean did not take part in this action, though it seems he had intended to join the army he changed his mind and was in Dijon when news of the defeat reached him. As with Philip and Nicopolis, the list of those who died there who were close to the Burgundian duke was long and painful: both his brothers, Anthony of Brabant and Philip of Nevers, were killed; many of his retainers and friends who had joined the army there were lost too; Anthony, significantly, was executed with the massacre of the prisoners that Henry V enacted after the battle in a startling parallel with Bayezid's actions after Nicopolis.¹⁰⁶ Once again French knights were 'martyred'; the English troops were compared, intriguingly, in contemporary accounts with Saracens in their evil, ungodly ways, and according to various reports, Jean was plunged into deep mourning.¹⁰⁷ He sent his gauntlet in a classic chivalric gesture to the King of England, and although he then abandoned the initial idea of all-out war, seeing in the defeat potential for political gain (the conflict with the Armagnacs a more pressing priority), the message invested in the retable at Champmol, representing, as it did, the slaying of France itself, must have seemed pertinent in this renewed moment of loss, so resonant of the disaster of twenty years earlier. All this could certainly explain Jean's move to have Bellechouse finish it in the months after the battle, and, in turn, why he did not give similar orders to complete its pendant. The image of St George would no doubt at this point have been less attractive, and hardly apropos: George was the English saint, the patron of their chivalric order, evoked by Henry V at every opportunity; he featured in their battle cry: 'for St George and England!', set, significantly, against the French cry: 'Montjoie St Denis!'.¹⁰⁸ While in 1416 the association between George and England would be pointed and unwelcome, by the 1460s and 70s, however, the saint had been fully re-appropriated by the Burgundians, particularly by Charles the Bold, and their relationship with

¹⁰⁶ For John the Fearless's reactions to Agincourt, see Richard Vaughan, *John the Fearless. The Growth of Burgundian Power* (London and New York, Longman, 1965), pp. 207-09. Schnerb, *Jean sans Peur*, pp. 622-27.

¹⁰⁷ *Journal d'un bourgeois de Paris*, ed. by Colette Beaune (Paris, Librairie générale française, 1989), 'les Engloys d'autre costé qui sont autant mal que els Sarrazins', p. XX, 1419; this pro-Burgundian writer also compared the Armagnacs to 'tryans Sarrazins', p. 80, and the killing of John the Fearless at Montereau to an act of Saracen tyranny.

¹⁰⁸ Spiegel, 'The cult of St Denis and Capetian kingship', pp. 153-54.

the English had changed completely.¹⁰⁹ The completion of the panel at this period under the patronage of one of the monks, as is suggested by the kneeling Carthusian who appears at the foot of the cross, would have been unremarkable.¹¹⁰

The *Martyrdom and Communion of St Denis with the Trinity* can only, then, be fully understood in the wider context of the historical moments it was both conceived and completed, and in the particular context of the altar for which it was made, with its pendant panel in the lay brothers' choir at Champmol. While there are many questions, notably about the genesis and patronage of the *St George* altarpiece that remain unanswered, the *Trinity with the Communion and Martyrdom of St Denis* can now take a more secure place in the story of French painting around 1400, and in how we might reconstruct of the style of Johan Maelwael and his pupil Henry Bellechose: but it also becomes a much more fascinating artistic, religious, historical and political object, that reveals the sophisticated way the Burgundians used their artistic patronage - and their most skilled artists - to create images that did double, or triple, duty in terms of commemoration and devotion, personal expiation and strategic association, serving the liturgical needs of the monks at the Charterhouse of Champmol, but also of Burgundian *memoria* and myth.

¹⁰⁹ For the Burgundian interest in St George under Charles the Bold see, Hugo van der Velden, *The Donor's Image. Gerard Loyet and the Votive Portraits of Charles the Bold* (Turnhout, Brepols, 2000), pp. 122-51.

¹¹⁰ The only evidence of patronage related to the area around this altar was a tablet with an inscription that was set, in 1475, in the 'Sacelli Sti Georgii', in front of the choir screen, in relation to record a donation made by Pierre de Vilette, a native of Besancon. Charles the Bold had entered Dijon for the first time in 1474 to accompany the bodies of his father and mother, Philip the Good and Isabella of Portugal to the Chartreuse to be buried. The conjunction of dates here is interesting, but there is nothing at present to tie the completion of the retable to the foundation of Vilette (who was not a Carthusian brother, as far as I am aware) nor to the visit of Charles the Bold.

