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Vézelay: Sketch Plans by K. Conant and 3D Modeling as a Research Tool

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Abstract : The central nave portal of La Madeleine, Vézelay, presents a most powerful sculpture ensemble that has long fascinated visitors and puzzled art historians with its unusual portal configuration and its rare iconography. This study re-examines the problematic configuration of the central nave portal in the larger framework of the building process. To this end, first I will attempt to employ 3D modeling as an experimental research tool. Second, I would like to introduce an unpublished drawing by Kenneth Conant, entitled "Vézelay: Chronology of the Abbey Church, Sketch Plans", now housed in the Graduate School of Design, Harvard University. Third, I would like to propose a hypothetical reconstruction with 3D modeling of the central nave portal of Vézelay predating the construction of the present grand narthex.

Keywords : Vézelay, Conant, Cluny, portal, reconstruction, narthex, 3D modeling

Résumé : Le portail central de la Madeleine de Vézelay présente un ensemble sculpté puissant qui fascine les visiteurs et stimule les historiens par sa configuration inhabituelle et son iconographie rare. Cette étude réexamine la configuration complexe du portail central donnant sur la nef, de manière à comprendre le processus de construction. Dans un premier temps, j'utiliserai la modélisation 3D comme outil expérimental de recherche. Dans un second temps j'analyserai un dessin inédit de Kenneth Conant, intitulé "Vézelay : Chronologie de l'église abbatiale, plans schématiques", document qui se trouve actuellement à la Graduate School of Design, Harvard University. En troisième lieu, je proposerai une reconstruction hypothétique du portail central de Vézelay, antérieure à la construction du grand narthex actuel, et que l'on peut visualiser grâce à la modélisation 3D.

Mots-clés : Vézelay, Conant, Cluny, portail, reconstitution, narthex, 3D modeling

The central nave portal of La Madeleine, Vézelay, presents a most powerful sculpture ensemble that has long fascinated visitors and puzzled art historians with its unusual portal configuration and its rare iconography of the "Pentecost" (fig. 1). This study re-examines the problematic configuration of the central nave portal in the larger framework of the building process. To this end, first I will attempt to employ 3D

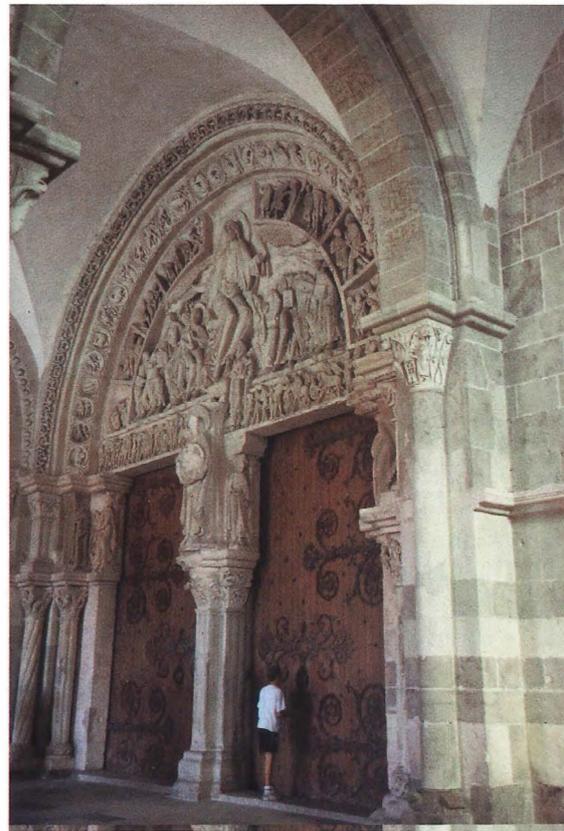


Fig. 1. Vézelay, narthex, the central portal.

modeling as an experimental research tool. Second, on this special occasion celebrating the 1100's anniversary of Cluny, I would like to introduce an unpublished drawing by Kenneth Conant, entitled "Vézelay: Chronology of the Abby Church, Sketch Plans", now housed in the Cluny Collection of the Graduate School of Design, Harvard University (fig. 5). Third, I would like to propose another hypothetical reconstruction of

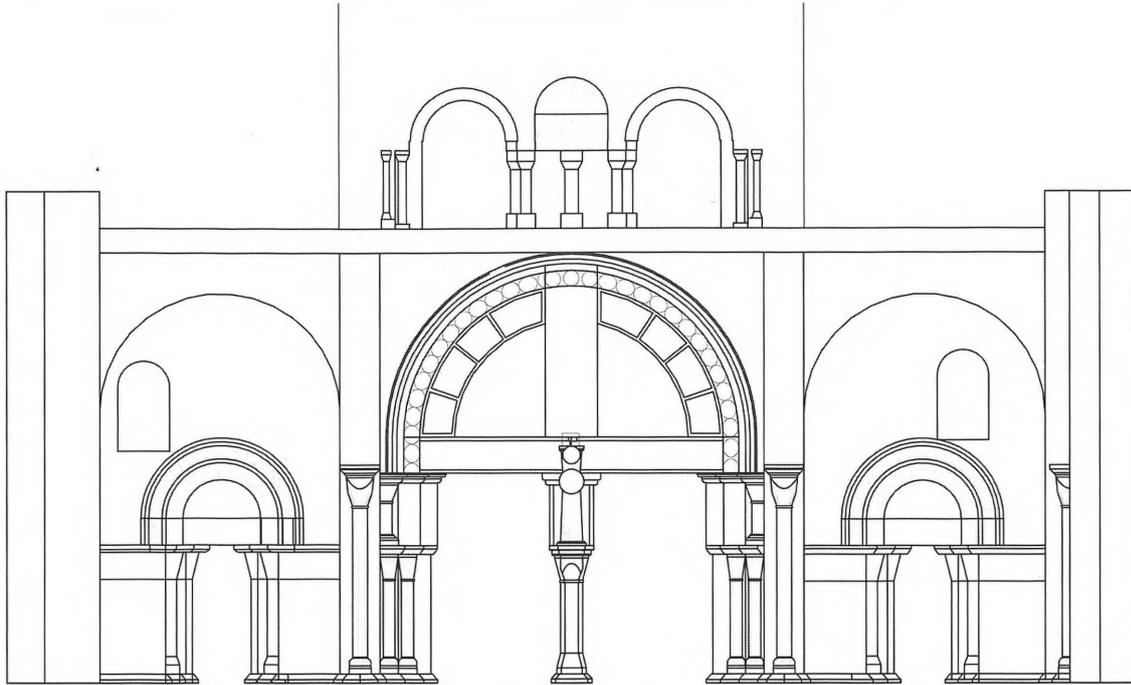


Fig. 2. 3D model 1, the nave façade viewed from the narthex.

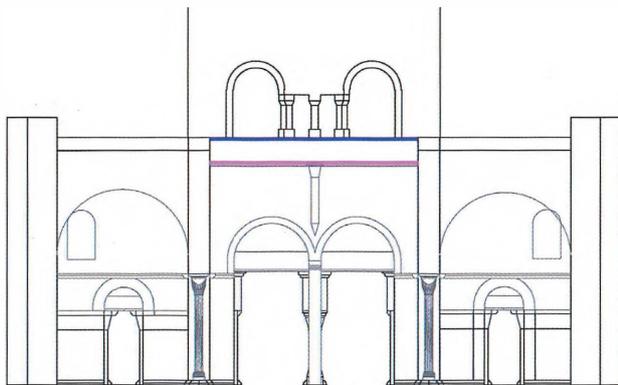


Fig. 3a. 3D model 2, the west wall of the nave.

the central nave portal of Vézelay predating the construction of the present grand narthex and to visualize the hypothesis with 3D modeling.

3D modeling allows us to see the whole nave façade at once, which we cannot do when we visit the site. 3D modeling also helps to visualize and objectively examine various hypotheses. To model the central nave portal and Saint-Michael's chapel in the tribune, I used drawings and measurements by Viollet-le-Duc, now housed in the Archives départementales de l'Yonne, Auxerre. To model the north and south portals of the nave façade, measurements were taken on site by myself in 1998 and 1999 using a measuring tape and a *Leica*



Fig. 3b. Vézelay, the west wall of the nave.

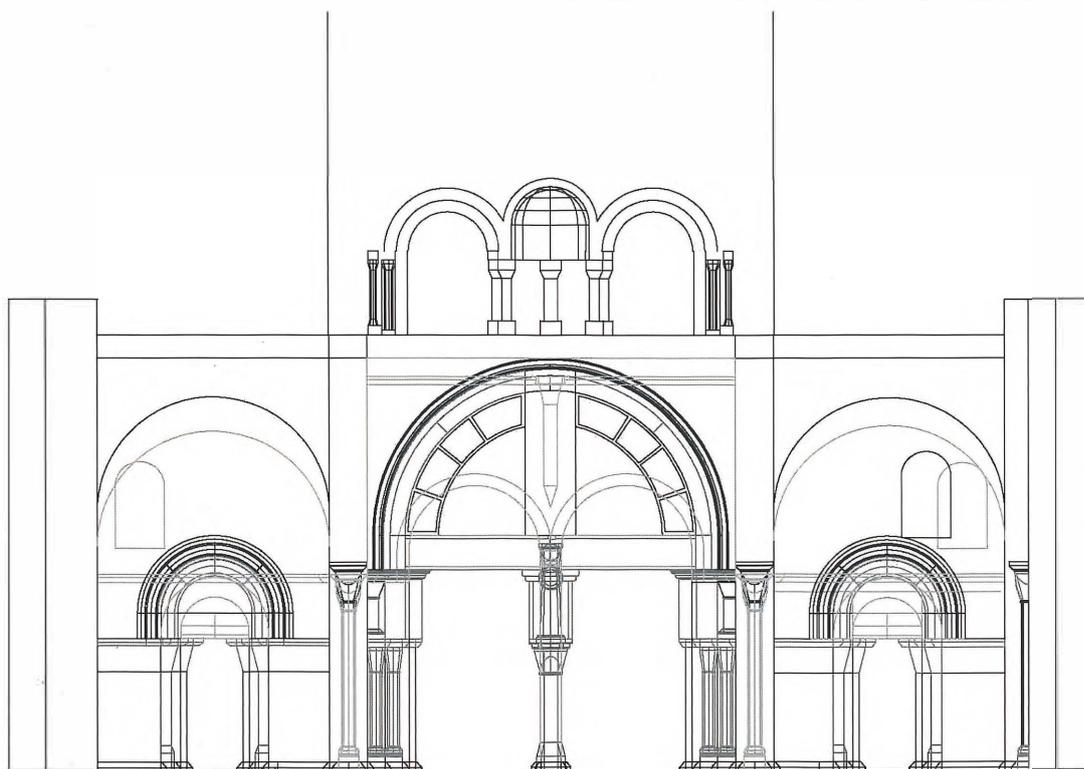


Fig. 4. 3D model 3, superposition of models 1 and 2.

DISTO Basic. In order to obtain more precise measurements, however, all components of the façade, particularly those of the portals, must be measured from scaffolding¹.

Model 1 (fig. 2) shows the present state of the nave façade with the three portals viewed from the narthex. The central portal is obviously out of scale compared to the side portals; the central portal is also so high that its outermost archivolts reaches all the way to the vault above and conforms to it (fig. 1). In other words, the outermost archivolts of the central portal and the vault in front of it must have been constructed together. Model 2 (fig. 3a) presents the west wall of the nave. Model 3 (fig. 4) is the superposition of models 1 and 2. This illustrates the physical relationship between the nave façade and the west wall of the nave. Looking up at the back view of St. Michael's chapel located high above the west wall of the nave, one may have an impression that the cornice running across the wall indicates the floor level of St. Michael's chapel (fig. 3a, pink line). The actual floor level of the tribune, however, is as high as the blue line, which is just above the apex of the outermost archivolts of the central tympanum (fig. 4). In other words, the openings flanking St. Michael's chapel have no railing that prevents one from falling onto the nave floor. This unusual, and also dangerous, elevation of

the tribune must have been caused by the construction of the vault of the grand narthex just beneath and the installation of the present central portal whose archivolts conform with the vault. Interestingly enough, the difference between the cornice on the west wall of the nave (pink line) and the actual floor level of the tribune (blue line) looks almost equal to the height of the intermediate register of the central portal². And in fact it is on this level of the central portal that we notice most of the irregularities and oddities listed below:

1. empty surface is left above the mandorla of Christ on the tympanum³
2. a big lacuna is seen between the two lintel blocks beneath the mandorla
3. the statue of St. Jean the Baptist stands just in front of the tympanum, supporting nothing, and the decorative impost molding behind him is cut off, indicating the installment of St. John the Baptist was an afterthought
4. the unfinished back surface of the standing apostles on the intermediate register is exposed

1. N. Stratford took some measurements of the central nave portal from scaffolding in 1967-1968. See Stratford 2010, 214-217.

2. The measurement of the difference between the cornice and the floor level of the tribune has not been taken.

3. According to the schematic drawing of stone arrangement of the tympanum and the lintel by Stratford 2010, 215, fig. 2, the void part and Christ's head are the same stone.

5. three roundels at the top of the zodiac archivolt have nothing to do with the zodiac and labors of months iconography and these three roundels have different borders from the rest. The roundel to the left of these three roundels is abruptly cut at less than half of its expected width, leaving only part of the long legs of a bird. This, too, must have been caused by an afterthought⁴.

In addition, scholars have pointed out the following archeological facts:

1. the lower moldings on the jambs were cut at both ends of the portals but the upper decorated moldings were planned as we see them today
2. traces of springing stones for the original lower arches are still visible just above the lower molding of the south portal as well as on the north exterior wall
3. a half buried decorated base in the southeast corner of the narthex shows a similar style to those in the western bays of the nave.

Integrating all the evidence drawn from the 3D models, along with the abovementioned oddities and archeological facts, one must conclude, first, that construction of a low open porch was actually begun in front of the nave facade. Second, the present central portal is too high for this low porch. Third, the reconfiguration of the central portal must have occurred at the time of the construction of the grand narthex.

What, then, did the original nave facade look like before the construction of the grand narthex? And how did the building construction proceed?

Here is a concise chronology relevant to the building of Vézelay⁵. The first consecration of Vézelay took place in 878 by Pope Johanness VIII⁶. Abbot Artaud (1096-1106) undertook the construction of Vézelay with the choir being consecrated on the 21st of April 1104, which was followed by the assassination of the Abbot in 1106. On the eve of Mary Magdalene's feast, the 21st of July 1120, a conflagration broke out, consuming more than one thousand lives. The epitaph on the tomb of Abbot Renaud de Semur (1106-c. 1128), now in Cluny III, referred to him as "reparator monasterii Vezeliacensis." In 1132, *l'ecclēsia peregrinorum* was consecrated by the Bishop of Autun, Étienne de Bagé⁷. And finally, the altar of Saint-Michael in the tribune above the narthex was consecrated between 1145-1151⁸. In

addition, the inscription around the rim of the so-called Ecclesia medallion on the third south arcade of the nave says "sumodo fumosa sed ero post haec speciosa"⁹.

Evidently, there is a lacuna in documents between the assassination of Abbot Artaud in 1106 and the fire of 1120. How did the construction of Vézelay proceed during these 14 years?

Salet hardly ever refers to these years preceding the fire of 1120. He assumed that, except for the vaulted choir and transept constructed under the abbacy of Artaud, the fire consumed the entire Carolingian nave with its timber roof. Salet's theory is based on this premise. He argues that soon after the fire, the rebuilding campaign began with the present nave façade¹⁰. The central portal of the façade was originally designed lower to match a modest open porch in front of the facade. As soon as the construction of this porch began, however, second thoughts led to the replacement of the modest porch with the more ambitious, grander narthex standing today. Thus, the low central portal was raised by inserting the intermediate register and the side portals were augmented with heavy decorative archivolt so that the three portals would go well with the grander narthex to be constructed in the future after the completion of the nave. After the completion of the facade, the new nave was constructed from the west to the east in one campaign, and completed around 1135-1140. Thus, the façade with three portals, according to Salet, would have been exposed to the exterior for these 15-20 years until the construction of the narthex began.

Salet based his theory on the above-mentioned premise that the fire consumed the entire Carolingian nave. Therefore, the premise implies that after the assassination of Abbot Artaud in 1106 the nave construction had ceased or hardly proceeded at all until the fire of 1120. Simple questions rise. During these fourteen years did the monastery continue using the small Carolingian church with its simple façade? If so, did not the monastery need a porch or narthex, also termed *galilee*, to accommodate the increasing number of pilgrims so that monks could conduct their daily offices without interruption? Though Salet's theory of the nave construction is widely accepted, his reconstruction of the central nave façade is objected to by several scholars¹¹. Among them, Beutler, Armi, and Stratford speculated that the side portals could have been prepared before the fire of 1120, although each

4. For the arrangement of the stone blocks, see Stratford 2010, figs. 1 and 2.

5. Salet 1948, 19-27; Diemer 1975, 10-24; Saulnier & Stratford 1984, 1-7.

6. Salet 1948, 19, n. 5; Saulnier & Stratford 1984, 4, n. 21: consacrée en 878: "Dedicatio monasteriorum Pulteriensis [Pothières] et Vizeliacensis a domno Iohanne papa facta et inde Trevis [Troyes] concium tenuit."

7. Regarding the definition of *l'ecclēsia peregrinorum* and its consecration of 1132, see Salet 1936, 6-13; Diemer identified this *l'ecclēsia peregrinorum* as the standing nave or a part of the nave of Vézelay, see Diemer 1975, 19ff.

8. Salet 1936, 22.

9. Salet 1948, 193; Saulnier & Stratford 1984, 231; Kendall 1998, 299.

10. Salet 1940, 223-237; Salet 1948, 41-48, 66.

11. Oursel 1976, 382-387; Beutler 1967, 79-30; Armi 1983, 94-98, 105-109, 177-187. Armi, refuting Salet's and Beutler's, proposed three campaigns for the central nave portal based on sculpture style, but he did not present his own reconstruction of the portal. Saulnier and Stratford indicated that the side portals could have been made originally for the central portal, see Saulnier & Stratford 1984, 76-79, n. 16.

of their hypothetical reconstructions is completely different. I also question whether the present nave façade with three portals would have been entirely constructed after the fire of 1120 due to the following basic questions:

1. Would people really have started the construction with a façade so richly embellished with three portals? Wouldn't it be necessary first of all to construct a new nave after the fire?
2. Even if the construction had indeed started with the façade as Salet conjectured, would people have abandoned the original plan of the low porch so easily in order to spend more time to reconfigure the central portal with its complex and rare iconographic program?
3. If the three portals could have been completed within a short period of time, how can the obvious discrepancy of the sculptural style and stone seen on the central portal be explained?
4. If the entire nave was constructed after the fire of 1120, why did not Vézelay employ the architectural style of Cluny III, preferring instead the regional style that prevailed in southern Burgundy?
5. Does not the epitaph on the tomb of Abbot Renaud de Semur, "reparator monasterii Vezeliacensis" imply that a part of the building survived the fire of 1120?

With these questions in mind, I would like to introduce Conant's drawing, "Vézelay: Chronology of the Abbey Church, Sketch Plans" (fig. 5). Though Conant did not include any text, yet, a detailed chronology written in the right margin clearly conveys his theory. He proposed ten consecutive phases of construction, starting in 1096 through to its completion in 1145 (or 1146). Here, using color coding, I would like to discuss his Vézelay chronology (fig. 5).

First, Conant drew the hypothetical undated pre-Romanesque church (blue) within the present basilica. He thought that the construction of Artaud's church had begun with the sanctuary (pink) in the east end in 1096 (phase I, 1096-1099) and that the dedication of the choir took place in 1104 (phase II, 1100-1104). The work continued to the transepts (orange) around 1105-10 (phase III) in such a way that the new church would surround the existing pre-Romanesque church with its timber roof. While continuing the construction to the west of the transept, Conant conjectured that the construction of an additional three-bay deep structure (red) was planned on the west in front of the existing pre-Romanesque church. Thus, the façade with three portals for the addition was prepared between 1112 and 1114 (phase IV), followed by the construction of the western structure, or *galilee*, between 1115 and 1119 (phase V). The old façade of the pre-Romanesque church was kept, and thus functioned as a solid divider between the old and new structures (blue and red). Then, in 1120 a conflagration broke out, consuming the timber-roofed pre-Romanesque church between the vaulted choir and transept in the east and the new additional structure in the west. After the fire, the building campaign resumed with the eastern bays of the nave (light green) towards the

west (phases IV, VII, and VIII); also the three surviving bays of the western structure (red) were incorporated into the new nave. Thus, the western structure now became the three westernmost bays of the elongated nave. After having completed the nave in the early 1130s, a grand narthex (dark green) was built in front of the façade that survived the fire (phase IX). Finally Gislebertus completed the central portal of the new west façade in late 1140s (phase X).

Such is Conant's chronology of Vézelay. Obviously, his building process is much more complicated than Salet's. Nonetheless, Conant's theory appears quite concrete and practical from the point of view of both monks and builders. It differs from Salet's as follows: first, the three western bays of the nave were originally constructed as a *galilee* before the fire; second, the present nave façade was originally constructed as the west façade of the additional western structure. As for sculptures of the nave portals Conant kept silent.

Conant's supposition of the additional western structure before the fire and its conversion to the three western bays of the present nave after the fire means that the nave went through two campaigns. In relation to this, I recall Armi's two-campaign theory for the nave of Vézelay¹². That is to say, the nave façade below the low impost molding and the lower courses of the aisle walls were executed by the Brionnais Atelier before the fire of 1120; after the interruption of the fire, the much expanded work force with a turnover of masons and sculptors continuously constructed, from west to east, the nave, upper aisles, and the nave façade above the lower molding. Thus, Armi's theory partially accords with Conant's theory. The difference is that Conant assumed the first western structure was completed, while Armi supposed the only lower courses of the western bays were completed. In September 2009, two stone analysis specialists made preliminary observations of the building stones of the nave façade and the western bays of nave at my request¹³. They could not detect any traces of damage caused by the fire. This may imply one of the following possibilities: 1, the entire nave façade and the nave were constructed after the fire as Salet supposed; 2, the façade of the existing pre-Romanesque church prevented the flame and smoke from penetrating into the new western addition; 3, only the foundation of the western addition was laid out and everything else (portal sculptures, capitals) was still under preparation in the *chantier*.

Thus some uncertainties remain in Conant's hypothesis. Even so, I believe, his "Sketch Plan" is worth paying attention to as we attempt to solve problems concerning the unusual configuration of the central nave portal. Here are some references to support his hypothesis.

12. Armi 1983, 177-190, fig. 226b.

13. I thank M. Stéphane BÜTTNER of Centre d'études médiévales, Auxerre, and Mme Lise LEROUX, Ingénieur géologue de Laboratoire de Recherche des Monuments Historiques, France.

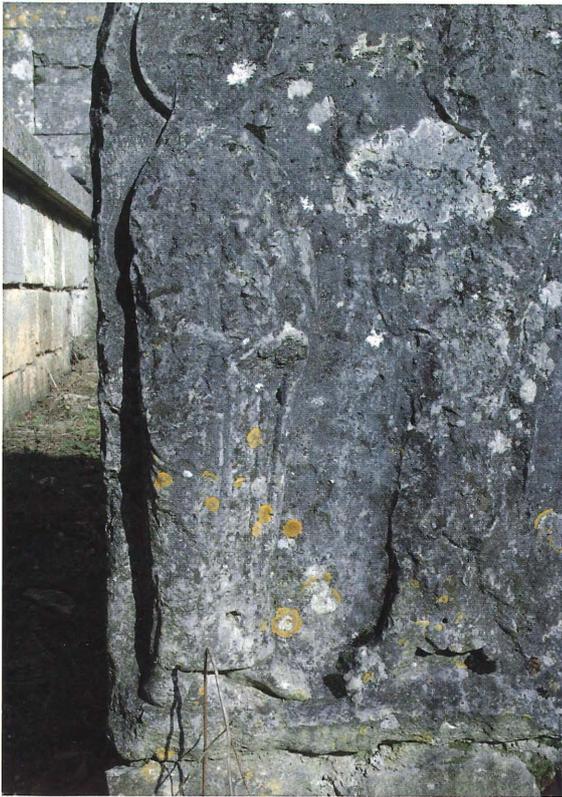


Fig. 6a. Vézelay, the dismantled lintel, left.

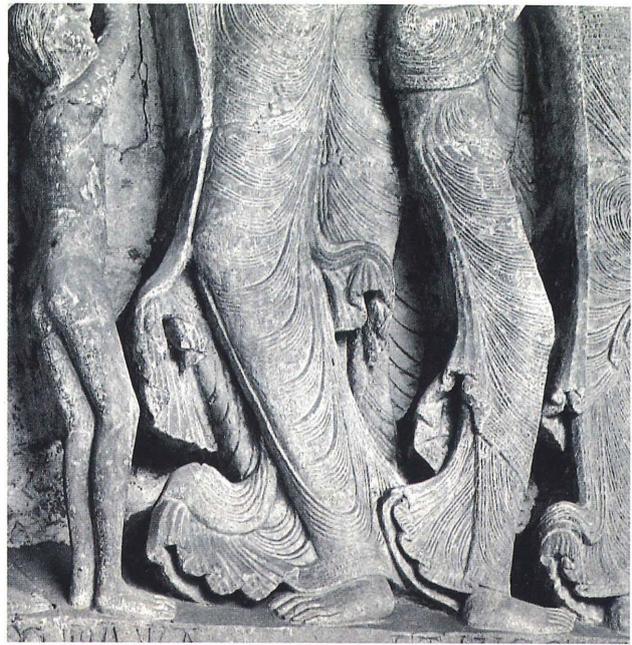


Fig. 6b. Autun, Last Judgment portal, detail.

First, it was common practice in Romanesque Burgundy to construct an additional structure, or *galilee*, to the west of an existing basilica, as were the cases of Old St-Vincent of Mâcon and Perrecy-le-Forges, among others. Especially in the case of Vézelay, a popular pilgrimage center, the monastery must have needed a *galilee*, *espaces d'accueil*, of sufficient space to accommodate the increasing number of pilgrims and laymen. We can also easily imagine that such an addition would complement the small nave of the pre-Romanesque church so as to accommodate lay visitors. Certainly, the solid façade of the pre-Romanesque church made a clear division between the old nave and the additional western structure, forming a zone of silence, a space necessary for the monastic community, especially during Divine Office in the choir.

Second, the bases with decorative motifs in the central nave portal and in the southeast corner of the present narthex show a similar sculpture style to those in the first three western bays of the nave. These decorated bases of Vézelay must have been made by the same Brionnais workshop as those in the porches of Mâcon and Perrecy. I have dated the comparable decorated bases of Mâcon and Perrecy to 1110-1115 elsewhere¹⁴. In fact, these Brionnais-derived

bases of Vézelay decrease in number as one proceeds to the eastern bays, where tori and scotia type bases increase. It is plausible, therefore, that these decorated bases could have been prepared originally for the additional western structure associated with a regional style of architecture in the mid to late 1110s.

This may explain why Vézelay continued employing the Brionnais-derived style of architecture. The architecture style of Cluny III, which is characterized by a newly introduced three-registered elevation, slightly pointed arches, and such internationally accepted classic elements as fluted pilasters, capitals with their astragals detached from baskets and undecorated bases of tori and scotia, seems to have appeared in its totality around 1120 and started spreading to Paray-le-Monial, Autun, Saulieu, Semur-en-Brionnais and other places in the late 1120s, 1130s and early 1140s. Cluny, as the most powerful spiritual center in Europe, abandoned the regional style of architecture, in which the combination of decorated bases and attached astragal type of capital had been used. It is important to notice that the diffusion of the sculpture style of Cluny ambulatory capitals to Vézelay could have started in the mid-1100s preceding the diffusion of the architectural style of Cluny III from the late 1120s to Autun and other palaces. In other words, Cluniac style of sculpture spread before that of the architecture. The sculpture style of the Cluny ambulatory capitals, dated to the early 1105-1110 based on the grounds of the destruction of Cluny II starting

14. For dating and stylistic analysis of decorated bases of Mâcon, Perrecy-les-Forges, and Vézelay, see Darling 1994, 99-114, 194-198,

Pls. 76-82; Armi 1983, 39-40, Pls. 10c-12d.

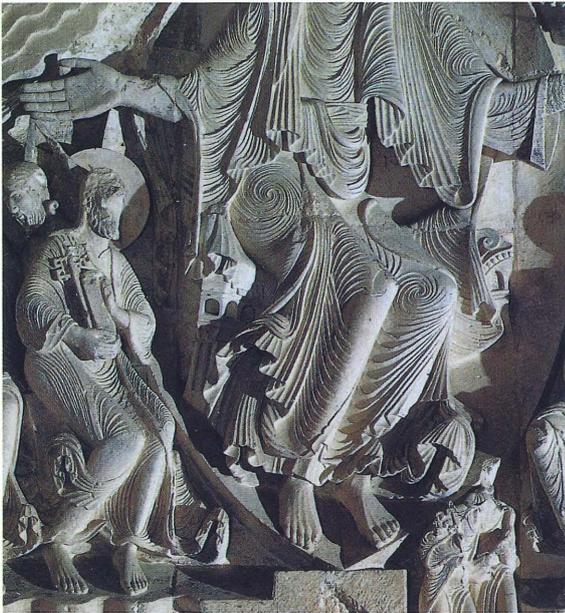


Fig. 7a. Vézelay, narthex, central portal, detail.



Fig. 7b. Vézelay, the dismantled tympanum, detail of drapery.

in 1113, appears on the nave façade (except for the central tympanum, its compartments, and some roundels) and on several capitals in the nave of Vézelay, while its nave retains the Brionnais derived architecture style predating Cluny III¹⁵. Furthermore, Conant's hypothesis that the additional western structure, or at least its foundation stones, survived the fire may explain why people started the post-fire construction from the west. If no structure had existed after the fire, the rebuilding campaign could have started from Artaud's structure in the east westward. Or, if no structure had existed in the west, its axis would have affected the axis of the new nave, thereby causing the distortion of the last eastern bay due to being forcefully connected to Artaud's structure.

For all these reasons, it seems plausible that an additional structure, or at least its foundation and lower courses of its walls, had existed to the west of the pre-Romanesque church before 1120, and that after the fire, the western structure was integrated into the new, and present, nave to form three western bays. While this was being built, I believe, a simple open porch was being constructed in front of the façade. We have to accept that this open porch was actually constructed, because traces of the springing of the low arches exist just above the lower course of molding of the present nave façade and the exterior north wall. I doubt that the new porch would have been so easily abandoned, as Salet supposed. Even a modest porch could have offered welcoming space for pilgrims and laymen during the following 15-20 years of the nave construction.

15. Darling 1994, 170-198.

Whether or not the open porch was completed, the first façade of the western structure must have been exposed to the semi-exterior until the construction of the present grand narthex began in front of it around 1135. What did the first façade predating the construction of the grand narthex look like? Surely, the central portal of the first façade had to be low enough to construct the low vaults of the open porch in front of it.

Now using 3D modelings I would like to examine possible reconstructions of the first façade that was created in mid-1110s. The conditions for the modeling are, first, that the three portals must display the sculpture style just before 1120, and second, the central portal must be low enough to be fitted under the lower arches. Salet, Diemer, Saulnier and Stratford, and Krüger suggested the possibility that the south and north portals leading to the aisles could have constituted the central portal. 3D model 4 (fig. 8) illustrates this hypothesis. On making this model, I eliminated the intermediate registers of the present central portal and moved the north and south tympana with their capitals and the fluted pilasters to the central porch. Their sculpture style is certainly acceptable but the widths of the lintels of the side tympana are each 189 cm, too small for the width of the central portal¹⁶. Narrative scenes from Christ's infancy cycle on the south portal and Appearance of Christ to the

16. Measurements of the north and the south portals were taken by the author. Each width of the left and right threshold between the respective jamb and the trumeau measures 316 cm. The examples with twin tympana for the central portal can be seen, for example, at Montréal (Yonne) and Oloron-Sainte-Marie (Basses-Pyrénées).

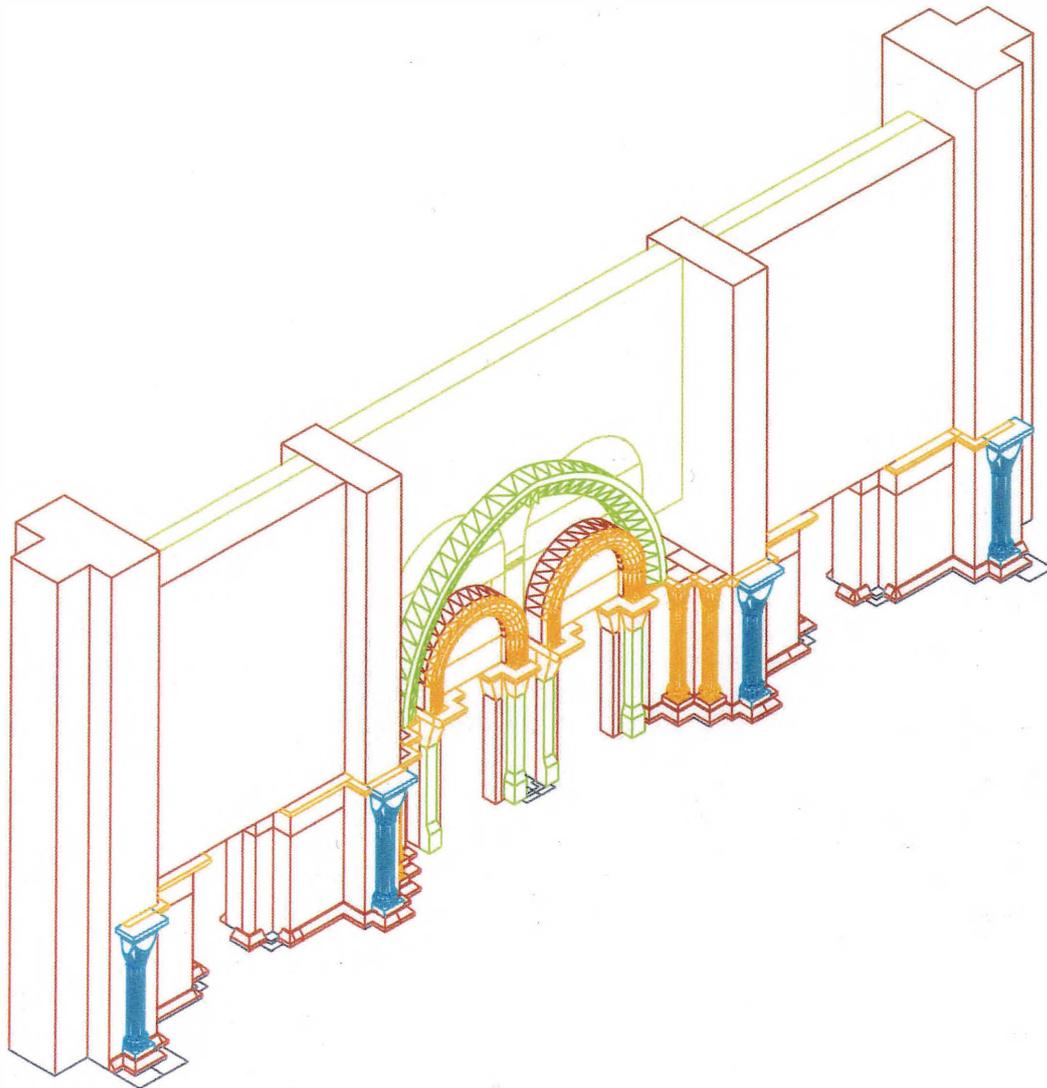


Fig. 8. 3D model 4, reconstruction of the first façade with the side portals.

Apostles with Emmaus scenes on the north portal are unusual iconography for a main portal leading into the nave.

I would like to propose another hypothetical reconstruction by employing the tympanum and two lintel blocks that were dismantled from the façade by Viollet-le-Duc in 1857 and are set along the exterior wall¹⁷. 3D model 5 (fig. 9a) demonstrates such a hypothesis viewed from the front and 3D model 6 (fig. 9b) shows the same model with a hypothetical one-

bay open porch. I am aware that it is a bold idea to employ the dismantled tympanum and lintel set for a hypothetical reconstruction of the central portal, because no one has ever doubted that the dismantled set was created for the present west façade by Gislebertus or a member of his workshop in 1140s. To my knowledge, only Zarnecki mentioned the possibility that Gislebertus might have carved this Vézelay set preceding his famous "Last Judgment" portal at Autun.

Zarnecki based his supposition on his observation that the remnant details on the dismantled tympanum and lintel set

17. Saulnier & Stratford 1983, 245-246.

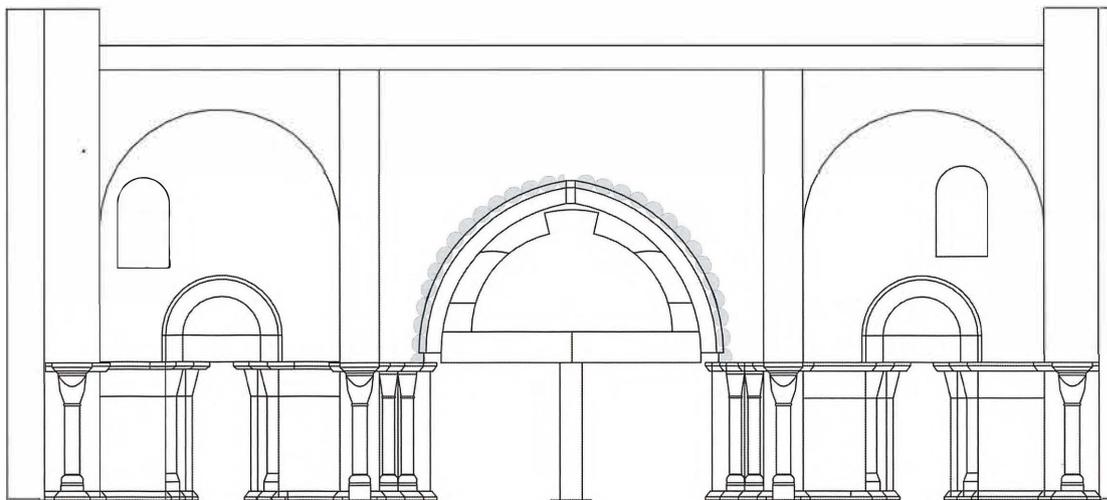


Fig. 9a. 3D model 5, reconstruction of the first façade with the dismantled tympanum and lintel set.

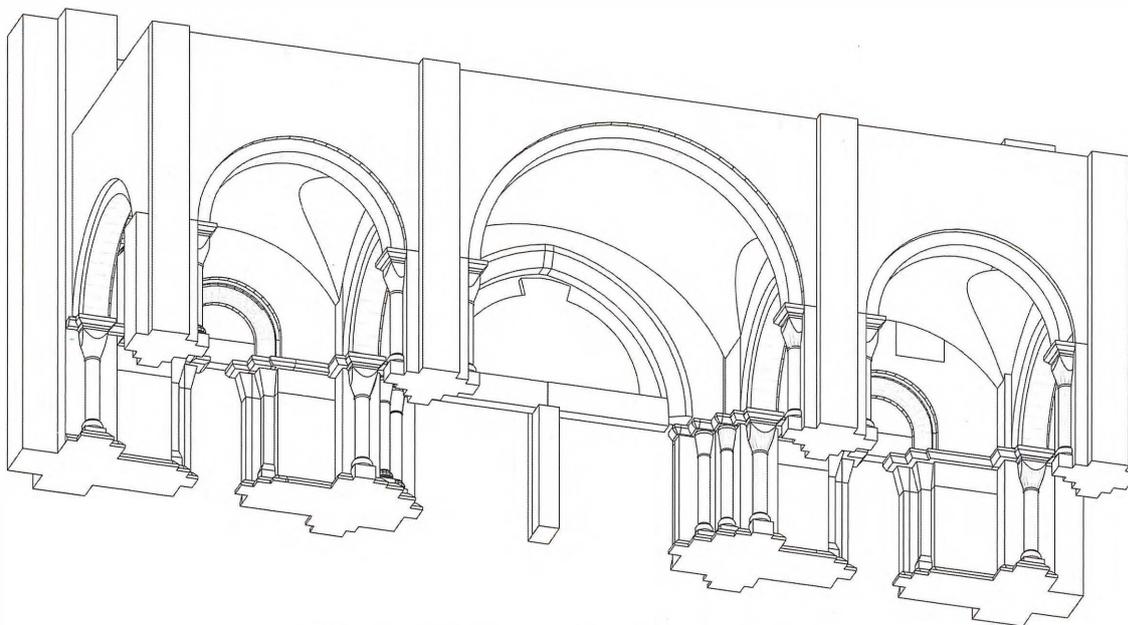


Fig. 9b. 3D model 6, reconstruction of the open, low porch.

show much flatter carving than that of Autun¹⁸. To examine the validity of employing this tympanum and the lintel set, I set up three criteria: size, sculpture style, and iconography. As for size, the dismantled tympanum measures 491cm in width and about 265 cm in height, while the lintel measures 631 cm (two blocks combined) in width and 75 cm in height. In other words, the dismantled tympanum is small enough for the central portal under the low vault of the modest porch.

In fact, the zodiac archivolt, excluding the three roundels at the top, fits nicely around this small tympanum. On the other hand, the width of the "Pentecost" tympanum is, after Viollet-le-Duc's measurements, about 568 cm excluding the compartments at the both ends and about 760 cm including the compartments¹⁹. Further, I compared the widths of such

18. Grivot & Zarnecki 1961, 174.

19. Viollet-le-Duc's drawing of the central nave portal of Vézelay, now in the archives départementales, Auxerre, has minor mistakes in shapes of stone blocks of the portal. Measurements taken by Stratford in 1967-68 are slightly different. See Stratford 2010, 214.

Romanesque tympana as the west portal of Cluny III (560 cm, c. 11125-1130)²⁰, Autun (640 cm, c. 1130-1140)²¹, Moissac (655 cm, c. 1125-1135)²² and Conques (670 cm, 1140). The comparisons make it clear that the dismantled tympanum of Vézelay is the smallest and the "Pentecost" tympanum rivals the scale of the tympana made in the 1130s and 1140s.

The next criterion is iconography. "The Christ in Majesty" with its apocalyptic overtones on the dismantled tympanum is a representative theme for a main portal, as many other examples demonstrate²³. And narrative scenes from the life of Mary Magdalene (John 11: 1-2, Luke 7:36-50) seem to be the perfect choice for Vézelay, because pilgrims and laymen made special visits to worship her relics, which in turn brought prosperity to the monastery and the town. Isn't it possible that the dismantled tympanum and lintel set carved by the Gislebertus workshop was originally made for the first façade of the western addition and then it was moved to the present west façade as the construction of the grand narthex began? The reason would have been to replace "the Christ in Majesty" of the dismantled set with a new "Pentecost" program with strong emphasis on the Apostles and St. Jean the Baptist and this rare iconographic ensemble would have reflected the practical, symbolic, and liturgical functions of the grander *galilee* to which the portal faces²⁴. The unusual configuration of the central portal with its many oddities must have borne witness to the drastic reconfiguration of the central portal. The preparation of the complex sculpture ensemble for the grand central portal, however, must have started several years before the completion of the nave.

The set of "the Christ in Majesty" tympanum and the lintel with Mary Magdalene narrative scenes must have also been adjusted to its new location, by having been combined with such additional compositional elements as jamb figurines so that the main portal leading to the narthex would look grander and *au courant* for the 1140s.

The last criterion is sculpture style. The poor condition of the dismantled tympanum and the lintel severely limits our stylistic analysis. Nonetheless, comparisons of such extant details as the cross nimbus and drapery of Christ and several lintel figures of Vézelay (fig. 6a, 7b) with their Autun counterparts (fig. 6b) reveal that the extant figures and details of Vézelay are much flatter than those of Autun²⁵. In other words, the

details of Vézelay are still attached to the ground surface and, hence, they survived. Most figures on the tympanum and the lintel of Autun, on the other hand, are in high relief or even in the round²⁶. In addition, the Last Judgment iconography of Autun is far more complex than "the Christ in Majesty" of Vézelay. Gislebertus is thought to have stopped at Vézelay on his way from Cluny. Perhaps Gislebertus (or his workshop) carved the dismantled portal of Vézelay before he launched his major work as a mature sculptor at Autun.

Finally, does the dismantled Vézelay set present a style earlier than that of the "Pentecost" tympanum? Again stylistic comparison is almost impossible. All we can observe is that the seated apostles flanking the huge Christ as well as several figures in the compartments show extremely advanced carving techniques that anticipate the styles in 1140s. At the same time, the present central portal also exhibits a style common to the side portals: figures on the lintel, some of the roundels, and the standing apostles in the intermediate register. This stylistic diversity implies that sculptures of the present central portal could have been carved over a long period while the construction of the nave was progressing. Examinations of the dismantled tympanum and lintel set with respect to size, iconography, and sculpture style make it possible to employ the set for the hypothetical reconstruction of the first central portal. Thus, 3D model 5 (fig. 9a) demonstrates such a hypothesis viewed from the front and 3D model 6 (fig. 9b) shows the same model with a hypothetical one-bay porch like those of Mâcon and Perreçy. Given clues to the building chronology of Vézelay by Conant, I have attempted to visualize hypothetical reconstructions with 3D modeling. I believe that employing other technology such as *la prospection géophysique* would be useful for detecting the foundations of the pre-Romanesque basilica and the possible open porch.

20. The measurement is after Conant 1968, 102-103.

21. The measurement is after Grivot & Zarnecki 1961, 30, Plan I.

22. The measurement is after Rupprecht 1975, 83.

23. For Viollet-le-Duc's drawing of the dismantled tympanum before the restoration (Fond VLD p. 102), see Saulnier & Stratford 1984, fig. 25.

24. Regarding the central portal iconography of Vézelay and liturgical functions of narthex, see Diemer 1985, 94-104. For various functions of Romanesque *galilee*, see Darling 1994, 81-95; Sapin 2002; Krüger 2003, 204ff.

25. Stylistic comparisons of figures on the dismantled Vézelay lintel with those on "the Pharaoh and Holy Women" capital in the tribune also evince the antecedence of the lintel figures. See, Saulnier &

Stratford 1984, Cat, 111, figs. 71-73.

26. Grivot & Zarnecki 1961, 173.

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