

## Summaries

### **The importance of the stalls in the process of the economic reconstruction after the Hundred Years War.** By Arnaud Espel

The construction of the choir stalls of the Abbey of St. Martin-aux-Bois dates to the extreme end of the fifteenth century, or may be from the early sixteenth century, that is the first years of the abbacy of Guy de Baudreuil, first laic abbot (1492-1531).

The Hundred Years' War and the Franco-Burgundian War left a ruined, weakened, depopulated abbey. At the same time he undertook the economical reconstruction of the abbey, Guy de Baudreuil offered to his augustinian canons a very important set of stalls, of a high quality and without doubt expensive, paid with his own money. The repairing of the cloister, so important in canons' life, was undertaken only few years later.

The economical reconstruction could not be done without a religious restoring. For Guy de Baudreuil, endowing his abbatial church with a beautiful set of stalls was part of this restoration, and showed it off to the religious community, but also to the local aristocracy who is essential from an economical point of view for the life of an abbey but as well because it provided a « reservoir » of canons.

### **Musical life of Canons in their choir stalls.** By Frédéric Billiet

The concept of an ensemble of stalls constructed in a choir seems to be a solution to the liturgical demands of the church among which the routine of singing domines. The disposition of antiphony, the research of the acoustic qualities, the circulation for singers and musicians, the reading of musical texts are the parameters considered by the carvers.

Frédéric Billiet aims to permit greater comprehension of the musical life of the canons and the singers from evidences left by ancient texts and papers and still existing set of stalls, such as the one of Amiens Cathedral.

**The stalls of St. Gervais of Geneva : a Political Program through Religious Iconography.** By Corinne Charles

The temple of St. Gervais in Geneva shelters since the Reformation a set of only eight high stalls from 1445-47. The carvings on dorsal panels show four times St. John the Baptist, twice St. Francis of Assisi and two angels. This unique religious iconography has given rise to a number of hypotheses of interpretation, from the nineteenth century on, suggesting more particularly the loss of a part of the stalls, making incomprehensible the iconographic program.

Owing to new archival texts she discovered and studied and to material investigations of the stalls, dismounted for a restoration, Corinne Charles proposes different inferences : the set of stalls is complete ; it was built for the church St. Francis in Geneva, where the florentine nation had its seat : the insistant presence of St. John the Baptist permits her to assert with strenght a religious but chiefly political iconographic program.

**The iconographic program of the jouées panels of Amiens Cathedral.**

By Monique Olivier

Amiens Cathedral set of stalls presents an exceptional ensemble of scenes drawn from the New Testament which unroll, according to a strict chronology, on the jouées panels of the high and base choir stalls. Two elements are determinant for understanding this program : the choice of the episodes and their location. Among numerous scenes drawn from the Apocrypha, relatively subordinate and picturesque, other essential ones are missing.

The choice therefore reveals the Amienois devotion and more specifically the spirituality of the Chapter. All the same the disposition is not left to chance and obeys to a division East/West and North/South according to a symbolic hierarchy : eastward we find the Incarnation and the Resurrection, the two components of the Salvation. Westward, the temporal might of the king representative faces the religious power of the Decan, who manages the canons community. There are also numerous bonds between Old and New Testaments.

Such a program may be compared with the one of St. Victor of Paris which seemed however to have been more theological and less narrative. But most of the sets of stalls, nevertheless when dorsal panels were without figurative ornaments, showed on their jouées panels architectural or heraldic patterns, though some of them possess religious personages, fulllength.

**Iconographic program on dorsal panels in São Martinho of Tibães (Portugal).** By Marianne Péchereau

The set of stalls in the Benedictine church of Sao Martinho of Tibães dates from 1668 and possesses dorsal panels decorated with 28 religious personalities in half relief, gilded and polychromed. The representation of figures on dorsal panels of stalls is in itself not very original : we find it in other Portuguese monasteries such as Santa Maria de Bouro or Santa Maria de Grijó, but they are usually concerned with various scenes of the life of the saint patron. At Tibães, the 28 figures are very different, from the simple monk to the founder

of the Benedictine order, but also others saints belonging to very various monastic orders.

Which is the bond between all these people coming from varied horizons and times ? The only logical connection is based on their « attributes », which are not the usual attributes of the saints : these attributes were chosen, to recall the part that these people played in the development of the services that took place in the choir or in the improvement of the religious music. That is corroborated by the two wood-tablets dated from 1667 : they give the list of personalities and precise whether they took part in the creation of such service or religious feast.

**Religious and Political Iconographic program in spanish stalls.  
The case of Zamora Cathedral.** By Maria Dolores Teijeira

Spanish choir stalls usually present religious iconographic programs referring to the characteristics of the Chapter who ordered the work. These programs include depiction of apostles, prophets, saints and other sacred persons, sculpted on the dorsal panels. They have sometimes also a political meaning.

That is so with the choir stalls of Zamora Cathedral, in the north of Spain : the program which includes sacred persons is utilized to set the difference between the power of church and that of the king, in an historic stage where the ecclesiastic institution in crisis was threatened by the great power of modern monarchies.

**The story of Job in the choir stalls of Champeaux.** By Carole Fournol

The collegiate church St. Martin of Champeaux (Seine et Marne) still conserves today an important set of stalls, erected in the first quarter of the sixteenth century.

Its decoration is rich and varied : the *jouées* panels, the canopies, show already the influence of the early Renaissance, with foliated scrolls, Mythological scenes, when the arm-rests are formed of monsters and little personages. The misericords show the usual themes at the end of the Middle Ages, that is daily life scenes, proverbs, but also, what is more seldom, episodes of Job's life. Among 54 misericords, twelve, on the southern high stalls, are devoted to a book of the Old Testament, when one only misericord is consecrated to St. Martin, saint patron of the collegiate church. During the fifteenth century, the cult of Job spreads out : religious books or Mystery-plays show this evolution. This is this « saint », patron of musicians and of lepers, that the canons have chosen to honour with the carved iconography on an important part of their misericords.

**Medieval Images of Joseph and his Brethren in Picardy.**  
By Elaine C. Block

Very few set of stalls possess misericords dedicated to the Old Testament : that is the case of the one in the Cathedral of Amiens. And among its 110 remaining misericords, 46 present the life of Joseph and his brothers. Why such an importance given to this story of Joseph ?

Joseph is not the most popular Old Testament figure on misericords. We find him on some windows in Chartres, Bourges, the Sainte Chapelle and St. Merri

in Paris, and in other churches in Ile de France. Joseph has often been illustrated in picture bibles, especially in Picardy, in which Joseph is presented as a « type » prefiguring « antitype » in the New Testament.

We can notice that on Amiens misericords there are much more details than in the drawing in the Bibles. And the misericords very often show most, or even all, of the brothers. One reason for this emphasis can be found in the existence in Amiens of the Confrérie Notre-Dame du Puy, a very important brotherhood who gathered together members from church and from town.

### **The announcement of the Salvation and its realization in the carved scenes of the choir stalls of Auch**

By Marie-Eve Martin-Cortés

The set of stalls in Auch Cathedral shows the great wish of the Chapter to realize an important iconographic program in the choir, in connexion with the stained glass windows by Arnaud de Moles.

The dorsal panels organize a cortege of masculine and feminine characters, in alternance with prophets and sibyls ; the jouées panels illustrate the life of Christ. Other religious scenes inspired by the Old and the New testaments are scattered in other parts of the stalls that are less easy to see, such as misericords, arm-rests or partitions.

This iconographic program has regard for the principles of the concordance between the Old and the New Testament, with traditional themes used since several centuries. At the same time, the influence of the Renaissance style trickles in all these religious images.

### **The iconography of choir stalls : sharing and transmitting of models (illuminatings, engravings...). By Danièle Alexandre-Bidon**

Motifs of misericords of the end of Middle Ages are often issuing from ancient iconographical traditions (sculptures, XI<sup>th</sup>-XII<sup>th</sup> centuries, literature and illuminatings XIII<sup>th</sup> century). Renewed during the XV<sup>th</sup> century, due to the new medium, engraving (alphabets models, playing cards, etc.), they bear witness to common inspiration with the other medieval arts (especially marginal illuminatings in manuscripts) destined for wealthy and cultured circles (high nobility, high secular clergy) including the so-called « popular » motifs or apparent coarse motifs, even those present in princely manuscripts. Wood carvers drew from the same models as court-artists, but they modified them at random, either by focusing on an expressive detail, or by changing attitudes, till subtly transforming the meaning of the image. Engravings and illuminatings, sometimes with a caption, often placed in a better context, allow not only to determine influences and ways of transmitting images, but also to decipher a number of misericords which motif — zoom of a more complicated image — had become too allusive to be understood, giving back their true moral or Christian meaning to many motifs accused to « retain the soul in low areas » (Emile Mâle).

**Sources of the Iconography in Choir Stalls or some problems of Interprétation.** By Kristiane Lemé

The stalls iconography finds its origine in oral as well as written literature, in other works of art and in collections of models, used by carvers, illuminators or drawers of tapestry cartoons.

But the comparison between wood carving and « model » let, at times, some surprises out : the carver may copy faithfully this model, but he often introduces variants that may be unintentional, wether because the artist did not understand what he tried to imitate, or consciously : proverbs are, in this respect, very interesting, lending themselves to a varied treatment and to multiple, and even, contradictory interpretations.

The development of engraving at the end of the Middle Ages played a great part in the spreading of images, but at the same time induced an evolution of their meaning, making their understanding more difficult for us, and even giving rise to misinterpretations...

**Games and Diversions in the decoration of choir stalls : the example of the stalls of St. Anne of Gassicourt (Yvelines).** By Sylvie Bethmont-Gallerand

At the end of the Middle-Ages, game playing was a widespread practice. It was however something that was constantly condemned by Church authorities. The decorative imagery of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, as seen in the carvings of choir stalls, is an echo of this paradigme or contradiction. This presentation is particularly interested in the representations of games played by the first steps of childhood : *infantia* and *pueritia*.

The main examples are taken in choir stalls of the church of Sainte-Anne de Gassicourt, France, where images of childhood and youth seem to hold a privileged position. Here we find two representations of children playing together, these scenes consist of a jousting tournament and a round of Blindman's buff. They where not unique, and we can propose fruitful comparisons with other choir stalls carvings.

Elsewhere, numerous games are depicted in the margins of illuminated manuscripts, or in other contemporary mediums such as sculptures, paintings and tapestries, where games playing can be the principal iconographic subject. These are the most accessible documentary sources to make comparisons with choir stalls imagery.

Two remarks can be done : first of all, games seem to be directly related to the status of being young. Be they simply tolerates as a cure for idleness or favored at certain liturgical times of the year. Secondly, youthful game players, such those seen at Gassicourt, are often replaced by their idealized representation : the *putto*.

It is not possible to consider these representations of children's games as simple, humorous images of leisure. To further complete the signification of these images a liturgical usage can be proposed, as they can be related to the holy childhood of Christ Jesus.

