

@a2 Chapter II

@a3 Belgium

Although Belgium did not exist as a separate country in the Middle Ages, the name is used here to embrace the two major twelfth-century Schools of font production working in the Meuse and Scheldt valleys. Both Schools also produced tomb-slabs, which have been found as far away as Scotland and Scandinavia, and a variety of architectural elements, capitals, bases and engaged shafts for compound pillars; fonts were just one of the products of their quarry-based workshops. They worked in similar dark, hard limestones and, despite unmistakable characteristics of their own, displayed a clear family resemblance.

The fonts of the Mosan School outnumbered the Tournai output by around three to one and were made over a longer period, beginning around the middle of the twelfth century and continuing well into the third quarter of the thirteenth. The production of Tournai fonts began around 1150 and was complete by the end of the century or very shortly thereafter. Mosan fonts were also exported more widely, with many examples in Holland and Germany, plus a few in Denmark, as well as those in Belgium and northern France. The Tournai fonts, by contrast, are found only in France and Belgium with a small but significant group (around 17 per cent of the total) exported to England. Although it is not the case that all Tournai fonts are of higher quality than their Mosan counterparts, those in England, which has no Mosan fonts, are all of higher grade; England may be seen as the luxury market. The proliferation of a wide variety of types of stone in England meant that there was no pressure to import fonts from elsewhere and, in the so-called marbles of Sussex and the Isle of Purbeck, England had its own dark hardstone. A possible factor in the greater cross-Channel market penetration for the Tournai workshops was the existence in the city of the Guild of St Christopher, already established as early as *c.* 1130. The Guild was linked with the stone industry and affiliated to the London Hansa of which the statute of *c.* 1187 reveals that access to it could only be made through certain English cities, of which Winchester was one. Its cathedral has a Tournai font and so do three parishes of the diocese in the gift of the bishop.¹

Just as a seam of golden limestone runs across southern England from the Cotswolds to Lincolnshire, so beds of dark limestone run across northern France, via the Scheldt at Tournai and the Meuse near Namur, to the German border at Aachen.² It was certainly extracted and worked by the Romans and has been quarried for much of the time across the intervening centuries, wherever it is reasonably close to the surface and therefore easy to

¹ P. Rolland, 'L'Expansion tournaisienne au 11e et 12e siècles: art et commerce de la pierre', *Annales de l'Académie royale d'archéologie de Bruxelles*, LXXII, 1924, pp. 206–7.

² The stone used for the Mosan fonts is commonly known as *calcaire bleu de Meuse* or *de Namur*.

extract. The stones used by the two Schools are similar but not identical hard, dark limestones. When freshly cut or broken, the stone is a dense black, shading to grey with exposure to the air, as can be seen on the fonts today. When made smooth they are capable of taking a high polish and, with handling, they develop a black sheen which may be the reason for the absence of traces of paint, on which Tollenaere remarks.³ The stones used by the Tournai and Mosan schools can hardly be told apart, other than by chemical analysis. Both are carboniferous, of similar age (Tournai is Devonian, Namur Visean) and the main differences are that Tournai limestone contains more fossils and more argilo-silicates than Namur.⁴ In practical terms, though, the Namur limestone is generally of higher usable quality than Tournai, occurring in wider beds of fairly regular thickness. It is not susceptible to frost and is not schistous; in other words it does not have a tendency to delaminate. Breaks in Namur fonts are usually vertical, whereas in Tournai fonts they are horizontal. Tournai marble, as it is often called, is a dense black/blue limestone and is not a true marble. It is of a schistous nature, not a freestone like the Caen and English limestones, and lies in beds of varying thickness and quality, spread over a considerable depth. Depending on the quality and vulnerability to frost of the different strata, it has been used for a range of applications, from rubble-filling, through road setts, to highly finished sculpture.

Which quarries were active in the eleventh and twelfth centuries are unknown today. There is no documentation earlier than the thirteenth century; no records exist, of requisitions, commissions, invoices or receipts, and thus there is little evidence to show the precise locations from which the stone was extracted. Most Mosan fonts can be shown to have been made from stone of a single stratum within the Meuse valley around Namur, the Dinant bed and, depending on the precise locality, there are detectable minor differences. The Mosan fonts were produced in workshops which are known to have existed in two main areas of the valley of the Meuse, between Namur and Huy and between Yvoir and Dinant. One of the original Tournai quarries is still in production on the outskirts of the city at Vaulx-lès-Tournai, beside the river, but most of those active in the Middle Ages now lie beneath the city.

The stone was extracted in open-cast quarries along the banks of the river, where the beds came close to the surface, and the masons responsible for shaping it would have worked in or directly alongside the extraction points, well placed for transport by river craft. Stone to be used for architectural sculpture is likely to have been converted, at least approximately, to the shape required and then shipped to the site where it was to be used; it would be placed in position and then finished off, especially where carving on one block had to match with those on either side.⁵ A mason will typically begin with a rough block about twice the volume of

³ L. Tollenaere, *La Sculpture sur pierre de l'ancien diocèse de Liège à l'époque romane*, Gembloux, 1957, p. 178. The effects of handling may be seen clearly at Furnaux, on the heads of the lion supporters, though few Mosan fonts have been polished to the extent common with many Tournai products, especially the English group.

⁴ 16 to 18 per cent contrasted with 3.2 to 5 per cent.

⁵ Tollenaere, pp. 176–7, believes that this was even more true of Mosan workshops than of others, though there is evidence of wealthy patrons importing skilled workers for specific projects.

the finished article and the cost of transport in the Middle Ages was as high, relatively, as today, especially when the route could not be completed on a single river. Movable items such as altars, fonts and tomb-slabs were finished in the quarry workshops to avoid the need to transport what would eventually be thrown away as waste. This is substantiated by the remarkable consistency, both in the choice of motifs and in the style of carving them, which enable certain groupings to be established. It is also clear that there could not have been a sufficient number of competent masons with the necessary sculptural skills for the work to have been carried out at the multitude of building sites active at any one time.⁶

@c The Mosan School

It is as difficult to differentiate between the various workshops as between different quarries, though a study of the decoration and the form can provide many useful clues.⁷ Not all of them, for example Maastricht, Liège and Looz, seem to have been producers of fonts which were the speciality of the Namur workshop, with smaller output at St Vith (of so-called ‘mortar’-type fonts) and in the area between Sambre and Meuse. Here Florennes, centre of a strongly religious area, is known to have been the home of a workshop producing a range of high-quality works, including some of the finest Mosan fonts.⁸ The distinction between single and multiple-supports does not appear to be a useful one and much more helpful is that between round and square bowls, which seem to display quite separate approaches to decoration. Most square Mosan fonts have foliate rather than animal decoration, whereas round fonts have both forms of ornament. Square fonts more often have full rather than Lombard arcading while round bowls have both in equal measure. But the greatest distinction lies in the execution of the sculpture, whether foliate or animal; round bowls have flat images, reminiscent of linoleum-cuts, but on square

⁶ See J. Trouvelot, ‘Remarques sur la technique des sculpteurs du Moyen-Age’, *Bulletin monumental* 1936, pp. 103–8, for a discussion on where the masons worked.

⁷ Tollenaere, pp. 166–77, looks briefly at the problem of assigning specific works to individual workshops and also at the question of whether or not there were travelling sculptors, working either as individuals or in groups. She identifies workshops in the Dyle valley, at Liège, Looz, Maastricht, Namur, St Vith and in the area of the Entre-Sambre-et-Meuse, and thinks that there may well have been many more. Being concerned with Mosan sculpture in general, Tollenaere, while identifying the differing styles of the salient heads – a characteristic of the majority of the fonts of this School – and noting that they fall into distinct groups, does not set out a typology based on variations in form of the font itself.

⁸ Beauvechain, Donstiennes, Hanzinne, Neerhespen, among others. Tollenaere, p. 173.

bowls the background is cut away more deeply and left with a rough finish, and the motifs are carved in medium relief. Foliate ornament issues from masks equally frequently on bowls of both shapes, though these are less likely to be inverted on round bowls than on square. Finally on round bowls the foliate ornament more often curls back on itself to create its own roughly circular framing, while square bowls tend to have tendrils which progress from one side of the face to the other. The square fonts are regular and remarkably consistent in shape, but among the round bowls there is a certain variety in the proportions between height and diameter. For some reason which is unclear, the more squat subgroup of round Mosan fonts seems to have been entirely made for the export market, or at least they only survive outside France and the Benelux area. Examples are the fonts of Ballum in Germany and Højer in Jutland [87]. These, and others in the Rhineland, like Straelen [94], are all of high quality, leading to the conclusion that it was the best which were exported. It is not that there are no high quality fonts close to the areas of production but rather that the proportion of good examples outside those areas is higher.

The two main types of Mosan fonts, with round and square bowls, are both subdivided into single and multisupport models.⁹ There are two other, much less common, types to be considered. The first are the single-support round fonts with salient heads but no other ornament. One variant with just two examples, about six miles apart, at Soulme [76] and Daussois has a flat underside to the bowl and a narrow cable-moulding where the underside of the bowl meets the top of the shaft, and the small salient heads are bearded. They are set on short stubby shafts. Soulme has a square base with corner leaves and Daussois a round base. Lustin and Renneville are very similar except for the heads which are clean-shaven and have ‘consoles’ beneath the chin. Jamblinne differs in the way the bottom of the bowl curves to meet the shaft. Zyfflich is also plain except for the heads which are more realistic in the delineation of features than on the other plain bowls. It now stands on a low modern base.¹⁰ The final variant retains the general appearance and volume of the round Mosan fonts, though is in fact more massive. They have salient heads and are set on single heavy shafts which in some cases mimic the multisupport fonts, with colonnettes engaged with the main shaft. In line with their late date, some are octagonal but two have retained the circular form of bowl.¹¹ These fonts are all large, of very fine-grained stone and of a high standard of finish. The other subgroup may be called the ‘chess-piece’ model, as at Chateau Porcien [77].

⁹ See Appx 2A.

¹⁰ The church was destroyed during the battle for the Reichswald in 1944, when the original supports must have been lost. Its apparent unusual size may indicate that it was a tub font but I have no record of dimensions.

¹¹ Octagonal examples are at Linnich, Münstermaifeld and Zülpich. Similar in style, but with round bowls, are Koslar and Bad Münstereifel. All these fonts are in Germany.

They are mostly monolithic, with square or octagonal bases, and the shaft and bowl consist externally of a succession of octagonal mouldings of varying profile. The earlier products have salient heads with more detailed facial features than any of the earlier examples, to the extent that some might even have been portraits modelled on people known to the artist, and the final version is without heads. The late date of these fonts is clear from the diminished size, which reflected the change to infant baptism.

@e The Bowl

On the main types the bowls have more or less vertical faces, the majority completely vertical, though some square bowls have sides which flare slightly to the top, typically giving a difference between the lengths of top and bottom edges of no more than a few centimetres. Round bowls curve down from the vertical in an unbroken line to meet the shaft but the square bowls have a rounded cushion below the vertical face to assist in the transition from square bowl to cylindrical central support. This cushion, or ‘belly’, is normally about 20 per cent of the total height of the bowl.¹² The faces of square bowls are usually framed with plain narrow borders but there is no similar edging on circular bowls. The excavated basins of all Mosan fonts are round and of similar depth, around 27cm, but their profile ranges from cylindrical to hemispherical, with one font, at Matagne-la-Petite,¹³ unusually having a basin which is concave, widening markedly below the rim before rounding-off to the bottom. Drain-holes are present in about 30 per cent of cases but there is no way of establishing whether or not these are an original feature of the basin or a later addition. Jupille, significantly different from the normal shape, is made of the same *calcaire bleu de Meuse* and thus probably a variant of the standard Mosan fonts, taking the ‘arcade only’ decoration onto a circular bowl but without salient heads. The bowl is shallower and the bottom curves down in two steps to meet the shaft. The arches, supported on fully tectonic columns, reach to just below the rim and stand on a raised narrow band set some way up from the curved section, giving depth to the arcade.¹⁴

@e The Supports

¹² Typical measurements are: bowl height 35cm, face height 27cm, though measured examples do vary between 7 per cent and 33 per cent.

¹³ This font came from the church of Ossogne in 1660; Tollenaere p. 292.

Normally, but not invariably, on single-support fonts the base matches the bowl, round or square, but on multisupport examples bases are square for both shapes of bowl. Round Mosan bases are found solely with round, single-support bowls, are quite simple and consist of a single circular slab of stone, usually of slightly lesser diameter than the bowl, with a more or less simple concentric arrangement of roll-mouldings providing a location socket for the cylindrical shaft. Square bases are much more complex and, though of a single slab of stone, are essentially in two parts, a square plinth with vertical sides beneath a shaped, rounded upper part, with a circular socket for the main shaft. On multisupport fonts there are smaller location points for the corner colonnettes, though in some cases it is only the presence of concentric roll-mouldings which gives this appearance and in fact there are only circular pads on which the colonnettes stand; sometimes there is not even a hole for a connecting pin. In many cases the sockets are surrounded by wider concentric swellings like the cushions found on the undersides of so many of the bowls. The top of each corner of the square base is usually ornamented with a leaf, its size dependent on whether or not there are corner sockets and their size. The square bases of single-support fonts have the largest leaves, as they offer an uncluttered space for the mason. There are two fonts which have unique arrangements on the base. On the base at Asselt¹⁵ [78] the roll-mouldings which form the sockets for the colonnettes are carved to form faces which look diagonally outwards to the corners. Two are human, one with unnaturally large ears, and the other two seem to represent a pig and a wolf, representing the forces of evil which lie in wait for the unwary. Saint Séverin-en-Condroz [79] has upturned lions' heads at the corners. No other example of the Asselt carvings is known and, though the St Séverin base is unique for the Mosan School, some Tournai fonts have lions at the corners.¹⁶

All Mosan medieval shafts are cylindrical except for the 'chess-piece' fonts. Those of other shapes are always later and frequently modern. An exception is Kempen which was

¹⁴ J.-C. Ghislain says ('Un fragment de cuve baptismale Romane Mosane à Anheit', *Bulletin des Amis du musée d'art religieux et d'art mosan, Liège*, X, 1983, p. 14) that Médard, of which only fragments survive, may have been another without salient heads.

¹⁵ The bowl of this font was found in pieces, being used as building material in the tower of the church at Tegelen. It seems to be not a precise fit with the base, which was already in the Asselt church.

¹⁶ Vermand and Zedelgem.

originally set upon five cylindrical supports, although the present single shaft, probably of the thirteenth century, is square, with integral octagonal base. Multisupport arrangements, which underpin both round and square bowls, consist of a substantial load-bearing central shaft surrounded by more slender cylindrical colonnettes. These are purely decorative, as is proved by the number of multisupport fonts which have lost them but still stand securely on the single central shaft. The colonnettes are set at the four corners of square bowls and are spaced evenly around the circular bowls. There are only three exceptions to the 1 + 4 format. The unique and very high-quality font in the Romanesque church of St Séverin-en-Condroz has twelve colonnettes, in four clusters of three, the centre shaft in each case being of a greater diameter than the others. The fonts in the cathedral of Aachen and at Neerhespen have eight colonnettes in pairs and of equal diameter; each pair flanks the corner. On all multisupport fonts the colonnettes are plain but many central shafts have narrow mouldings encircling the centre, suggesting a wooden barrel with its hoops; Thynes and Flône are examples.¹⁷ Only at Beauvechain is the shaft ornamented with spiral mouldings enriched with beading, entirely consistent with the quality of sculpted decoration of this font, both on the sides of the bowl and on the salient heads.

The presence of empty corner sockets or pads on the top of the base is the most obvious indication that a font without colonnettes was originally on multiple supports but some fonts have also lost their original bases. In these cases the evidence is to be found on the underside of the corners of the square bowls. These may have quite simple sockets analogous to those on the upper surface of the base; more often they are carved as capitals for the colonnettes but integral with the bowl itself. Multisupport round bowls do not have capitals for the colonnettes, so it is often difficult to see evidence of original colonnettes. Single support square fonts almost invariably have broad leaves carved beneath the corners, in place of the integral capitals but there are no leaves beneath the bowls of single-support round fonts.

@e The Decoration

Mosan stone church furniture was produced in the same quarries as the tympana, capitals and bases, so it is likely that the fonts and altar tables were made by the same people. The Church, acting through its monks and clerics and in association with the sponsors, decided what decoration was to be used, which symbolic motifs, which Biblical or hagiographic stories. Presented with the block of material extracted by the quarrymen and the Church's commission, it was up to the individual mason to apply his own skills and imagination, his feel for the properties of the material and for the shape and volume of the rough block, to deliver a product which would meet the criteria laid down and of a quality which would satisfy the sponsor. Despite its position, in the centre of numerous cultural influences and crossed by many major rivers and former Roman roads, the valley of the Meuse seems to

¹⁷ So many colonnettes have been replaced over the years that it is impossible to be sure that none of the Mosan shafts were decorated with spiral or ziz-zag ornament as is found on some Tournai fonts.

have produced artists in stone who were mainly of ‘rustic’ ability, noted for a touching naïveté rather than for refinement; this was in marked contrast to their fellows working in other media and makes it all the more surprising that they developed such a distinctive style. The fonts of the highest quality were, generally, the earliest; the explosion of growth in demand over a relatively short period would have led to increasing standardisation and would have required a major expansion of the work-force engaged. Mosan sculpture lacks the nervous energy of works like Moissac, with none of their animating detail. This may be due to the material not lending itself so well to that type of work, but Tollenaere remarks that the fonts were made to be seen in the restricted light of medieval churches, where outline was more important than detail. She also comments that, designed to stand in a corner, fonts would often have first been seen diagonally, with two faces offered to the viewer at once, explaining why, on square bowls, the most interesting and important decoration is often on two adjacent sides, simple repetitive motifs on the others.¹⁸

The vertical spaces between the salient heads on round bowls and the four sides of square bowls provide the main areas for decoration which most commonly consists of arcading, foliage and animals; human figures are rare, as are highly formalised motifs. A single type of ornament may be used on all the available panels or may be applied to one or more surfaces in association with others. In relatively few cases, for example on the round font at Daussois¹⁹, there is no ornament of any kind except for the salient heads. The square bowl at Blaugies is also entirely plain, but the undecorated fonts are exceptions.

@e Architectural Motifs

The form of the blind arcading on Mosan fonts is remarkably consistent on both square and circular bowls.²⁰ The column-base is round and may either rest directly on the ‘ground’ or may stand upon a square narrow plinth. It is separated from the shaft by a slender torus and an astragal acts as a collar below the capital which is virtually identical in all cases except for variations in size. The capital flares slightly to the top and is embellished by a vertical groove running down from top centre for about three quarters of

¹⁸ Tollenaere, p. 194. She backs the latter argument with additional evidence from Tournai examples: Winchester Cathedral and Dendermonde have two adjacent sides with narrative sculpture, the other pair with birds or beasts in roundels.

¹⁹ Also at Amberloup, Butgenbach, Jamblinne, Soulme, Utrecht (St Pieter) and Zyfflich.

²⁰ In his article on the Antheit fragment Ghislain sets out (fig. 5) a typology of the main group of ornamental arcading on Mosan fonts. See note 13.

its height. In almost all cases the arch springs from a square abacus, otherwise directly from the top of the capital. The arches are plain except for the most sophisticated examples such as Beauvechain [80], arcading is always simple, never interlaced; decorated and twinned column shafts are rare but are found at Ohey, Gingelom and Seraing [81]. Decoration of the spandrels, only found in about half the arcades, is very simple and consists of no more than triplets of narrow leaves in an inverted arrow-head.²¹ Lombard friezes, where the arches alone are shown, sometimes with capitals but without supporting columns, are relatively uncommon and occur more frequently on round bowls than on square. These friezes tend to take up far more of the vertical height of the panels than the equivalent arch-plus-capital section of complete arcading, for example at Ciney [82]. The Lombard frieze at Hückelhoven is doubly unusual in having only three arches on each face and because those arches are horseshoe shaped. Waddewarden also has three-arch arcading between its salient heads, but they are fully tectonic. At Brienne-sur-Aisne and Rochehaut there is a Lombard frieze of four arches on each side, with a single supporting column in the centre. The usual number of arches on each panel is four, though square bowls, with no salient heads to accommodate, often have six.²² At Jamoigne the arcade consists of columns supporting a lintel represented by the narrow plain band running along the top of the face, rather than a row of arches. At Longlier there is arcading on each panel of the circular bowl and the square bowl at Braine-l'Alleud has similar decoration but with a unique additional feature. Beneath the arcade across the full width of each face is a narrow horizontal panel which contains a slender vine tendril framed by two long-necked birds.²³ Jeantes [83] echoes the Tournai font at St Just-en-Chaussée with its three masks and three flowers in discs occupying the six arches of the arcade. It is more usual for there to be arcading on only one, or occasionally two, panels, while the others are occupied by foliate and animal motifs.

²¹ See Ciney, Flostoy, Grace-Berleur, Russon and others. Flône, Ossogne, Reppe and Thynes have no spandrel ornament.

²² There are, of course, other exceptions: two at Ohey and Seraing, three at Eisdien and Russon.

²³ Tollenaere fig. 20 and pl. LIX (C). From her description it appears that this extra panel occurs on each face but it is not specifically stated.

@e Foliate Ornament

Leaf decoration is almost always based on the palmette or vine, often with bunches of grapes. Quite special to fonts of the Mosan School is the way in which the ends of the vine leaves are folded at the extremities, a feature also found on Mosan capitals in the westwork at Liège (St Barthélémy), and from the choir of the Chapel of Cornillon.²⁴ Similarly the upstanding palmettes of the fonts are also found in monumental sculpture, for example in the westwork of Tirlmont (St Germain).²⁵

The vine tendrils frequently issue from a mask, which may be upright, inverted or even on a slant. The concept of a tendril which begins at one corner and advances diagonally across the face is found on several Mosan fonts, for example on all four panels on the square font at Hour [84] and on the round bowl at Nouvion-sur-Meuse, but is unknown in other schools, where the normal convention is for the tendril to be continuous and to adopt a sinuous form as it meanders horizontally around the bowl.²⁶ The arrangement at Jeantes, where there are two tendrils interlaced is rare among Mosan fonts and only otherwise appears at Achène and on one face at Hour, where there is a mask set diagonally in each bottom corner and a third, set square, at the top centre. The reason for the disrupted treatment of the tendrils on Mosan fonts is almost certainly that the salient heads divide the surface vertically into four panels, similar to the four sides of a square bowl, whereas round bowls in other schools have an uninterrupted circumference for the decoration.²⁷ The bunches of grapes associated with Mosan vine-motifs tend to be much more rounded than elsewhere and this is particularly well displayed at Château-Porcien. Only at Gentinnes [85], where the font is of outstanding quality, are human figures also included and on two sides birds peck at the vine. The masks from which the tendrils emerge are lions' heads, *en face*, and may sometimes, as at the Château d'Emptinne,²⁸ be crowned. Some of these masks appear to wear a mane but this may be no more than confusion with the leaves shooting from the stem as it flows from the mouth. On some fonts, especially in the top surface spandrels, the tendrils may extend outwards in a gradual attenuation, while on others the stems may curve back on themselves so that they create the effect of a roundel. At Hönnepel the tendrils issuing from the mask on one face terminate in serpents' heads which bite the ears of the mask. On the Nouvion-sur-Meuse font the pattern is so arranged that the masks act both as points of origin for the foliage and as straps joining two adjacent roundels formed of the stems and associated foliage. At Givonne [86] the mask either has a moustache or the upper teeth are bared. On a number of Mosan fonts the foliate ornament consists of *fleur-de-lis*, often with five, rather than the more usual three leaves. These are almost invariably contained within

²⁴ Now in the Musée Diocésain at Liège.

²⁵ Tollenaere, pls. IV and V.

²⁶ See later chapters on Bentheim, Danish and Swedish fonts in particular.

²⁷ At Harzé alone does the decoration continue round the bowl beneath the salient heads and this has beasts, not foliage.

²⁸ Now in the courtyard of the château, used as a sink beneath a tap for watering cans.

roundels formed of their own stems and do not, usually, emerge from masks. Good examples are at Martouzin-Neuville, Thugny-Trugny and Alseberg. Palmettes are also framed in their own stems, a very common motif in southern Sweden, and may be carved upright as at Wasigny²⁹ or inverted as at Thugny-Trugny. At Højer (Denmark) [87] the stems of the palmettes issue from the mouths of the salient heads on either side. Finally there are the rare motifs at Bastogne and Halle-Booienhoven which look like flowers emerging between pairs of leaf clusters. They may however be no more than small, round bunches of grapes, as at Nouvion-sur-Meuse, and only appear to be flowers because they are round and are drawn emerging almost vertically from the shoot.

@e Beasts

Animals may be real or mythical, the latter predominating. Real animals, in the sense of quadrupeds, are rare, especially as virtually all Mosan lions must be included in the mythical category. On one side of the square font at Son there is a dog in pursuit of a rabbit, both quite unmistakably delineated [90]. The Rumigny font has an animal wearing a studded collar, quite possibly intended to represent a dog wearing a spiked collar to engage in bear-baiting, but its tail, passing between the legs and up across the flank makes a lion a more likely interpretation. It is difficult to think of another example of real creatures unless one turns to birds which are all realistically shown, though never in flight.³⁰ The birds on one face at Hour and those in the vines at Gentinnes are all of a clear natural outline, and are given strong, rook-like beaks. At Herkenrath pairs of birds drink from the pot standing between them, while at Logny-lès-Chaumont there is the unusual variation of one bird stooping to drink while the other, upright, waits its turn. At Goesnes [88] two doves peck at a bunch of grapes suspended between them. This is not uncommon and is found, for example, on the Tournai font in Winchester Cathedral [108] but here there is a unique feature: above the bunch of grapes a small dove flies down, clearly intended to represent the Holy Spirit and thus to reinforce the Eucharistic symbolism of the grapes.

Unlike the Tournai fonts, where a whole menagerie of mythical beasts may be found, in the Mosan School all are variations on the dragon and lion themes. Both are to be found as often on the crudest examples of the School, such as Remilly-lès-Pothées, as they are on the most

²⁹ Now in a private garden of the town.

³⁰ The only exceptions are in the Baptism of Christ on fragments of the Hanzinne font in the Archaeological Museum at Namur, where the dove of the Holy Spirit is flying down above the head of Christ, and at Goesnes.

sophisticated such as Reppe³¹ and St Séverin-en-Condroz. The main difference between the rough and the sophisticated examples is the degree of modelling. The crude versions are completely flat outlines like a linoleum-cut, with no more than an occasional incised line for the eye and the mouth to aid recognition. The more developed beasts are modelled in medium relief with considerable detail in musculature, manes, claws, teeth and hair, though nowhere do the Mosan artists indulge themselves in the luxuriantly feathered tail-plumes of the East Jutland lion fonts. The same difference is also seen with birds, which vary between mere outlines and fully feathered creatures; the fully detailed representations are the more rare.

The usual pose for lions is *passant gardant*,³² with the tail either passed between the legs and brought along the back, or just twisted up and forwards from the root so that it lies along the spine. Some are only *passant*, while Saint Séverin font has pairs of lions *statant regardant* on each vertical face, rumps to the centre, heads to the corners and on one panel at Soiron two lions face each other. They are two of the few examples in this School of pairs of separate beasts on a single panel; the norm is for each panel to be occupied by one main beast, with occasionally a smaller creature – most often a bird – inserted to fill an empty space, for example below the main beast's chin, as at Hannappes. The device well known from Romanesque capitals and from the East Jutland lion fonts, where two beasts face inwards and share a single head occurs only rarely, for example at Cologne (St Anton), Jeantes, Kempen [89] and Kürten.

There are two further rare portrayals of the lion. At Ciney [82], a five-support font, the square bowl has a Lombard frieze of four arches on each side, where the capitals of the outermost arches on adjacent sides seem to spring out of the top of the head of a lion, its mane occupying the space on the belly normally reserved for the integral capitals for the corner colonnettes. At Seraing there is virtually no 'belly' and at the corners of the bowl, and to its full height, are very similar lions to those at Ciney. The shape of these lions' heads, small skulls and long, ruff-like manes on the neck, is very like those on the base of the Herefordshire font at Sutton St Michael. If they were human heads they would be analogous to the Little Belt group of Danish fonts or to the Alternun group in England. Indeed, their presence in this position makes this the nearest thing to a square font with salient heads. Similar to Seraing is the font from Villers-la-Ville.³³

Mosan dragons, as always in early medieval art, are bipeds, more often than not without wings. Like the lions they appear almost invariably as single creatures but there are a few cases where a pair of dragons appears with the necks interlaced, *regardant*. On the flat-relief examples the heads are virtually featureless and the identifying characteristic is the serpent-like tail looped back on itself, like Hannappes, occasionally with a smaller second head at its extremity. The loop may be downward so that the tail is brought up behind the body (Hannappes), or upward so that it trails behind the rump (Theux). The dragon's mouth is open and shows either a long tongue or large pointed teeth. Except for Lummen and

³¹ This font is now at Huy and the Huy font in the Louvre.

³² The use of heraldic terms for the physical attitude of beasts is most convenient for descriptive purposes and is set out in the glossary.

³³ Now in the Musées d'Art et d'Histoire, Brussels. The font from Sclayn, now in the Musée Archéologique, Namur, is of the same form but with foliate decoration on the panels.

Givonne, interlacing of necks seems to occur only on the better fonts and is seen at Gerderath, Raucourt and Nouvion-sur-Meuse [91], the latter two with beading running the length of the creatures' bodies. The Reppe font [92], in the church of St Pierre at Huy since 1856,³⁴ has a most elaborate dragon occupying one face, its tail divided in two, each with a small head at the end. Beasts other than dragons and lions are found on these fonts too, but it is hard to say whether they are intended to represent some specific animal, for example a pig, or are no more than quadrupeds of unknown ancestry drawn by an ignorant and maladroit craftsman. The one exception is on the font at Ballum, where one panel contains a centaur (or Sagittarius) with bow and arrow.

The Tetramorph, the symbols of the four Evangelists, are found in pairs at Straelen on two of the faces, and one on each panel on the Huy font. In both cases only the angel of St Matthew is nimbed. They also occur, all nimbed, at Oostham,³⁵ Herpen (on both fonts with open books) and on a font now in the Musée Diocésain at Liège. In this last case the beasts are in high relief.³⁶ When these symbols occur in the spandrels of the top surface, all are nimbed.

@e Human Figures

Apart from Gentinnes there are few Mosan fonts with human figures. The broken square bowl of Hanzinne, now in the Archaeological Museum at Namur, the square bowl from Cousolre in the Musée des Beaux Arts at Lille, the two complete fonts in Germany at Straelen and Menzelen-Ost, the font at Neerhespen, north of Liège and the box-shaped bowl from Wilderen, now in the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire at Brussels,³⁷ are the limit of narrative sculpture as decoration of Mosan fonts. The fragments from Hanzinne³⁸ show that there were Biblical scenes on all four sides and the symbols of the Evangelists in the top spandrels. The scenes depicted on the sides are:

The Flight into Egypt. At the left-hand end of the face stands a palm tree, towards which Joseph walks; a bundle hangs from the staff resting on his left shoulder and he leads a donkey ridden by the Virgin with the Child in her lap.

³⁴ The original Huy font is in the Louvre. Tollenaere, p. 250. The font now at Huy came from Reppe.

³⁵ Destroyed in May 1940. Tollenaere p. 291.

³⁶ Unfortunately, though Tollenaere pictures one of the beasts on pl. 55 (E) the reference in her text on p. 143 is not supported in the topographical inventory, so there is no description.

³⁷ The Wilderen font, although included by Tollenaere, differs so much from the Mosan type that it is not covered here but in a separate section at the end of the chapter. The same applies to the massive tub font on lion supporters at Furnaux, which also has human figures.

³⁸ Now in the Musée Archéologique, Namur.

The Resurrection. At the left stands a winged angel, left hand extended in the gesture of speech. To the right the three women, holding ointment pots, stand behind a large sarcophagus on which the lid still reposes.

The Nativity [93], depicted in Byzantine style, is at the right-hand end of the panel. To the right Joseph, his head resting in his left hand, sits sleeping in a chair. In the background is the crib watched over by ox and ass. In the foreground the Virgin Mary lies asleep, her head on her right hand, and framing the left side of the scene is a draped curtain, before which there appears to have been a nimbed figure; only a trace of the head survives. Unfortunately the panel is broken here and about half is missing. It may have depicted the Adoration of the Magi or perhaps the Annunciation, but there are no clues to what is missing.

The left half of the Baptism of Christ again has gone. The Saviour is in the centre, the right side of His body cut away by the damage to the bowl. The waters of the Jordan are heaped up around His waist and at the right-hand end of the panel stands an angel holding a large cloth. Above the Saviour's head the dove of the Holy Spirit flies down from the right. The missing part of the scene must have shown John the Baptist and the other half of Christ's body.

Straelen has a round five-support font. On two of the four panels are the signs of the Evangelists in pairs, of which only Matthew is nimbed, although all are winged [94]. The other two faces have Biblical scenes depicted beneath a Lombard frieze. On one side three arches frame the Nativity; the centre arch is wide and depressed and contains the Virgin abed. To the left is the crib, with ox and ass standing beside it, and on the right Joseph sleeps in a chair, his right hand on the head of a staff. The other panel has four arches of equal width; left to right these contain two Magi *en face*, the third facing right towards the fourth arch in which the Virgin, frontal, is enthroned with the Child on her lap.

Neerhespen [95] is unique among Mosan fonts, its only parallel the Tournai font of Châlons-sur-Marne [115]. Four angels blow oliphants, one at each corner, while, on each face, the same scene is played out, the dead rising from their tombs, summoned to judgement by the angels' call. The lay-out of the tombs and the positioning of the resurrected souls varies on each side. Unlike its Tournai cousin, the Neerhespen bowl is round, not square and the angels hold their oliphants on their left side instead of the right; the size of the Châlons font allows a greater number of resurrected to be shown but the message of death, resurrection and judgement is the same in both cases.

Other fonts have a mix of human figures and other motifs. Menzelen has a complicated foliate design on one face, beasts on two others and on the last *militēs pugnantes*; two men, not in armour, confront each other, round bucklers in their left hands and drawn swords in their right. The Cousolre³⁹ single-support font has a square bowl with conventional ornament on three sides, two with arcading and one with mask and foliage. On the fourth is a scene which has puzzled art-historians for many years. Rather more than the left half of the face is taken up by an enormous lion with a large head, *gardant*, while the remainder of the face shows two figures, male and female, flanking a tree; the man stands on the left, the woman at

³⁹ Now in the Musée des Beaux Arts, Lille. Due to the long-term closure of the Museum I was not able to examine this font for myself. Curé FT Ronse, *Les Fonts baptismaux de Zedelghem et les fonts romans tournaisiens du XIIIe siècle*, pp. 28–9, gives a detailed description and claims the scene represents the Fall. The *père* Potier prefers to believe that the figures represent St Walbert and his wife St Bertille.

the right. There are two different interpretations, one that it is the Fall and the other that it represents St Walbert and his wife St Bertille, whose remains are believed to reside in the church.⁴⁰ The problems over the normal interpretation of the scene lie in the details such as the rich dress worn by the two figures, and the fact that the woman holds an open book pressed flat against her breast by her left hand. Her right, open, with palm outwards is in front of the trunk of the tree. The man holds a staff with flag in his right hand and clasps the trunk of the tree with his left. Ronse, who prefers to see the scene as a reference to the Fall, does not describe it as the Temptation itself but rather an object lesson for Christians drawn from the story of the Fall, how the divine grace obtained through the sacrament of baptism gives energy and strength to the soul and endows God's children with heavenly gifts; this is why the figures are so richly clothed. The Gospel book which the woman holds is the source of the work of redemption from which baptism was derived and she is pointing to the sacred olive tree to which she owes her salvation, while the man holds a sceptre to which is attached the flag of victory. The other view, that we are looking at two obscure local saints, is expressed by the *père* Potier in a notice on the church.⁴¹ The problem with both versions is that neither accounts satisfactorily for the lion, though Ronse does see it as a figuration of the evil from which we are saved through baptism. There is nothing wrong with this in iconographic terms but it would have been more in line with the Bible story to have incorporated a serpent, or its *alter ego* the dragon, equally symbolic of evil. The tree is quite different from normal portrayals of this period of the Tree of Knowledge, having a single trunk and broad leaves like a five-petal *fleur-de-lis*. Finally, though by no means a conclusive argument, the church is dedicated to Our Lady, not to either Walbert or Bertille.

@e Formal Motifs

The small number of huge late octagonal and round fonts all have stylised ornament quite unlike anything else produced by the Mosan School. Münstermaifeld is the only multisupport example and has a single clover-leaf on each of the eight faces, including those sides with salient heads, so that each head appears to be superimposed on the device. Linnich is like Münstermaifeld, but with four-leaf-clover motifs. At Zülpich [96] the sides with the salient heads are wider than the others and round-headed arches with shoulders flank the heads; the alternate narrower sides each have single crosses *paty*.⁴² Bad

⁴⁰ By tradition, when the font still stood in the church of Cousolre, it was known as 'La pierre de Walbert'.

⁴¹ Jennepin, 'Notice sur une vasque de fonts baptismaux pediculées executées au 10ème ou 11ème siècle pour l'église de Notre Dame de Cousolre', *Annales du Cercle archéologique de Mons*, XX, p. 19 (date unknown).

⁴² A heraldic term to describe a cross with flaring arms, like a Maltese cross, except that the ends of the arms are not notched. The cross *paty* is common in Romanesque art, the degree of flare being variable. See glossary.

Münstereifel has a round bowl and between each pair of salient heads are three sunken discs, the centre disc enclosing a cross with slightly flaring arms. On the round bowl at Koslar are pairs of discs, two plain, two with straight-armed crosses, alternating between each pair of heads. An earlier font, at Thugny-Trugny, has stylised fleurs-de-lis on one side, recessed in the manner of this late group, with Mosan vine and palmette decoration on the other three. The only other example of this mixing of early and late styles is on the Erezée font which has on one face a pair of squared-off four-leaf clover motifs.⁴³

Rare in Mosan sculpture are the small circular devices consisting of discs enclosing petals or leaves so that they look like stars or flowers.⁴⁴ Only four fonts with examples of this type of motif seem to survive. At Son the side which depicts a dog in pursuit of a rabbit has a disc containing an eight-leaf motif at top right, above the hindquarters of the dog. On the font in Laon Cathedral [97] these motifs occur twice. One face has a short vine tendril of three leaves and two bunches of grapes, offset to the left, leaving an irregular space between it and the adjacent salient head. In this space is an oval, distorted so that it can fit beside the head. Its longer dimension is vertical and two horizontal cross-bars form semicircles at top and bottom; between these are two raised semicircular areas, their bases formed by the sides of the oval and not quite touching in the centre. On the adjacent face, also with similar vine tendril offset to the left, are two 'space-fillers'. Below, growing out of the narrow plain band defining the bottom of the face, is a miniature tree consisting of a slender trunk with branches hanging down on each side like a weeping willow. Above this is a disc containing a six-petalled flower. The other two faces have crude beasts and these fill the panels. The layout forces the onlooker to believe that these designs are deliberate and not merely an example of the medieval *horror vacui* filling in a space left through inaccurate measurement or workmanship. In fact the foliate decoration is of finer quality than the beasts and the two motifs are very similar, even down to the number of grapes shown in each bunch, and are off-set in identical manner to the left.

The Rumigny font [98] has a somewhat complicated variation on the use of these motifs. On one face are five rings interlaced, so that they form three ovals flanked by two spaces shaped almost like half-moons. The left-hand half-moon contains a seven-petalled flower inscribed within a ring; the other is empty. The four ovals, reading from the left, contain: a small cross paty; a plain raised oval; another but outlined with double lines; another similarly outlined and containing a straight-armed cross. The final example is on one side of the square bowl at Jeantes. This has a full arcade of six round-headed arches, with human faces in the three on the left, five-leaf motifs in discs with one leaf at the top, in the other three. [83]

@e The Upper Surface

Few Mosan fonts have decoration on the upper surface of the bowl and only three bowls aspire to the decorated concentric bands which will be seen to be so much a feature of the

⁴³ Tollenaere, pls. XLIII (B, C) and XLIV (D).

⁴⁴ See Patrick Reutersvärd, 'The Forgotten Symbols of God', *Konsthistorisk tidskrift*, LI, 1982 and LIV, 1985, for a detailed examination of these symbols.

Tournai School, Braine-l'Alleud (square), one of unknown provenance in the Liège Museum and Oplinter (both round). All have a continuous meander of vine tendril with leaves taking up the full width of the upper rim, except at Braine-l'Alleud where there are also spandrels; these have the Evangelists' symbols, of which two hold books and the other two crosses with flared arms.⁴⁵ Decoration of the upper surface is otherwise confined to the spandrels, the quasi-triangular spaces at the corners bordered by the curved rim of the basin and the upper edges of the two adjacent sides. The simplest form of spandrel decoration is foliate and consists of some type of three-pronged motif, such as a modified fleur-de-lis, a short pointed leaf running into the corner with longer leaves splaying out sideways and attenuated as they extend to the narrowest points at each extremity of the spandrel. The Ebly font, of which only the bowl survives, is unusual in that it has a Greek cross on two corners and in the other two a pair of dragons with interlaced necks and a large capital 'A'. Other motifs are based on bird or animal figures, including the almost ubiquitous Mosan mask with foliage issuing from its mouth. This motif occupies one spandrel at Flône, where the mask is horned; in two other corners pairs of birds touch beaks and entwine their necks. The fourth spandrel at Flône is occupied by the nimbed eagle of St. John. At Hanzinne, Sclayn and Gentinnes [99] the symbols of all four Evangelists occupy the spandrels and it is puzzling that only St John appears at Flône. A possible explanation might be a connection with the patronal saint of the church but this is not the case today, it being dedicated to St Matthew, though it is always possible that the church had a different medieval dedication, or that the font was made for a different church; the latter is the more likely explanation. The Tournai font of Southampton (St Michael) also has an incomplete Tetramorph, but there they are on the face of the bowl.

@e The Salient Heads

Salient heads are a characteristic of the circular Mosan bowl but are not unique to this School, being found also in Denmark and Sweden, on square bowls as well as round. On Mosan fonts they jut out strongly from the face of the bowl, typically around ten centimetres, with virtually the whole head disengaged from the surface. They are normally extensions of the upper rim, leading to suggestions that they might have been used as a shelf for candle or chrism during the service. In a very few cases the heads are little more

⁴⁵ Tollenaere p. 212 and pl. LIX E.

than a rounded boss, indicating their probable origin in the knobs of domestic mortars. Generally they range from flat-topped protrusions at the top of the bowl, with one or two incised lines suggesting human features, to fully delineated human heads with eyes, ears, nose and mouth, often with a beard or moustache. The dressing of the hair may differ from head to head, and they may wear crown, mitre, cowl or peasant cap. Very occasionally the heads are clearly intended to portray women.⁴⁶ Where different types of people are depicted around the same bowl, they may be intended to represent the multifaceted conditions of mankind embraced by the Christian Church. In the more common, less detailed styles, the heads almost certainly symbolise the Four Rivers of Paradise which water the earth, related to the act of the priest in consecrating the water. With his hand dividing the surface of the water in four, in the form of a cross he says: 'It is God who has made you burst forth from the spring of earthly Paradise and who has divided you in four rivers to water the whole land' and Tollenaere believes that these words explain the symbolic origin of the heads.⁴⁷ Other views of the symbolism is that they may represent the Four Winds, the Four Elements or the Cardinal Points,⁴⁸ in other words the four corners of the world to which the Gospel would be preached. Of all the possible solutions, the argument in favour of the Rivers is the strongest, being linked with the figures of men often found as supporters for bronze fonts.

The majority of the less detailed heads are topped with a plain hat which rises to a point in the centre front and has a ridge running back from the peak to join the outer rim of the

⁴⁶ Examples of this variety of detailing are at Lesquielles-St Germain and Saint Séverin-en-Condroz. Château-Porcien is an example of an octagonal font with one woman's head. Of the earlier round font bowls a woman's head is only known at Donstiennes and Oplinter, where just one of each set of four is female. Tollenaere says (p. 245) that all the heads are female at Herpen, but I see no evidence of this. Those with recognisably female features tend to be later than the Romanesque period.

⁴⁷ Tollenaere, p. 218.

⁴⁸ F. Nordström, *Medieval Baptismal Fonts: An Iconographical Study*, Umeå, 1984, p. 33, talks of 'heads at the cardinal points' of round bowls but it is impossible to be sure of the orientation of fonts when first installed in their churches.

bowl.⁴⁹ This is so like a mitre that it seems to suggest that they are bishops' heads. Given that the right to baptise had been reserved to the bishops or their representatives, this does not seem unreasonable, except that, in the twelfth century, the mitre was of a different shape, high at the sides and low in the centre. At Archennes and a few other places the 'hat' is shaped like those worn by figures in Italian Renaissance frescoes, tall, flat-topped and flaring slightly to the top. Royal crowns are of necessity carved so that they do not protrude upwards from the top of the head and thus take on the appearance of fillets studded with precious stones; both Beauvechain and St Séverin-en-Condruz are among the fonts with this refinement. In a few cases it is difficult to see whether a head is covered by some form of close-fitting cap or is just one on which the hair is not detailed; at Chaumont-Porcien, however, there can be no doubt that some form of peasant's cap is intended, as it has been given a scalloped edge around the forehead. At Donstiennes, level with the top of the bowl, there are thick flat discs on top of normal heads with detailed hair.

Tollenaere identifies three separate types of heads, 'Cylindrical', 'Regional' and 'Oriental',⁵⁰ though neither explaining her grouping, nor highlighting characteristics which might help to understand her choice of terms. The smallest group, 'Oriental' (presumably 'Byzantine'?) [80], is quite distinct, if only from the excellent detailing used, especially of hair and beards.⁵¹ The 'Cylindrical' label is generally acceptable in that its shape is a matter of fact, round when viewed from above and barely tapering to the chin [91]. This group needs to be subdivided into those with and those without head-covering; the former display another prominent characteristic, a curved plane below the jaw, which slopes down to the bottom of the bowl. There are other noticeable differences of detail, for example whether or not ears, nose and mouth are delineated, but these would make further differentiation too complex. Cylindrical heads occur on fonts with a wide variety of decoration.⁵² The third group, 'Regional' [98], similar in numbers to the preceding group, seems oddly named, for the word in English usually has a pejorative sense, implying a lack of taste and refinement. In fact they show considerable realism, not least in the rounding of the top of the head and in the jaw-line

⁴⁹ The most pronounced central peak is to be found on the font of Ohey, now in the Musées des Halles Universitaires at Louvain-le-Neuf.

⁵⁰ Tollenaere, listed in her table, pp. 52–3. Even allowing for translation, the reason for the choice of nomenclature is not entirely clear in all cases. In some respects, her grouping seems incomplete. After personally examining over sixty fonts (about one third of the surviving examples) and then looking carefully at illustrations in her book, it appears that there is one group to be added and another to be subdivided.

⁵¹ Beauvechain, Donstiennes, Lesquiennes-St Germain, Looz, Oplinter and St Séverin-en-Condruz. Tollenaere includes Chéreng, which is more generally thought to be of the Tournai School. The stone is from the Tournai quarries but the mason responsible for the carving, indeed the whole concept, is clearly Mosan.

⁵² There are many fonts with this type of head, e.g. (with arcading) Goesnes, Rochehaut; (with foliate motifs) Gerderath, Nouvion-sur-Meuse; (with beasts) Givonne, Hönnepel.

and other features. They do not have the sloping plane of the cylindrical group, joining chin to the bottom of the bowl; instead there is a broad leaf which reaches up from the top of the colonnette, the tip pointing to the throat. Fonts with these heads are generally of higher quality than the second group and a further refinement at Menzelen has human faces carved on the broad-leaf motifs.⁵³

A further group which deserves to be added is identified by a distinctive way of handling what happens below the chins and which may best be styled the 'Console' Group. The heads are generally the same shape as, but usually smaller than the 'Cylindrical' group and could perhaps be judged as a third subdivision of that group. There is a clear neck below the chin and then comes a quite distinct shelf or console, below which the stone curves away to the bottom of the bowl, as with the 'Regional' group. The length of the neck varies according to the proportions of the bowl, the most extreme being on the font at Jumet.⁵⁴

There are, of course, other minor variations, for those who seek a category for everything, but it is the basic form which should be the deciding criterion, with variations only noted for the richness which they highlight in the work of these often rustic craftsmen. Such variations include the detailing of features,⁵⁵ whether or not hair is shown below the head-covering⁵⁶ and the degree of modelling of the features.⁵⁷ At Rumigny there appears to be another variation, as if the round bowl had five salient heads, not the usual four. Close examination reveals that one of the decorative motifs consists of an angel with spread wings, looking straight out of the bowl, his body and wings in low relief, the head in high. The same angel, with head in high relief, also appears on one face of the square font of Rubigny. These two villages are no more than 20km apart. The undecorated bowls seem to have the smallest heads, two of which share a particular trait unknown in any other examples.⁵⁸ The beards are not only more curly than might be expected on otherwise plain bowls but they are carved behind the line of the jaw, leaving the cheeks and chin clear. These beards seem to show a strange affinity with three other quite distinct variants, Sclayn, Seraing and Villers-la-Ville.⁵⁹ Within each group, despite the variations, there is considerable consistency, but a comparison between the most featureless head of the 'Cylindrical' Group (Nouvion-sur-Meuse) and the most detailed of the 'Oriental' (Beauvechain) is almost incredible for works of common ancestry.

⁵³ These are as numerous as the 'cylindrical' heads and include Archennes and Laon Cathedral.

⁵⁴ Tollenaere, pl. XXXV (D).

⁵⁵ Fragment of Marcinelle font, Tollenaere, pl. XXXIV (A).

⁵⁶ Beauvechain font, Tollenaere, pl. LVII (A, D).

⁵⁷ Fragment of font in Louvain, Tollenaere, pl. XXXIV (E), (A, D).

⁵⁸ Utrecht (St Pieter) and Butgenbach.

⁵⁹ Of these three Villers-la-Ville is in the Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Brussels and Sclayn in the Musée Archéologique, Namur; the latter is fragmentary.

@c The Tournai School

In the twelfth century a very remarkable school of sculpture grew up on the banks of the Scheldt near Tournai, around the quarries of hard blue-black limestone.⁶⁰ Their baptismal fonts are extraordinarily consistent in their form, in the details of their ornament and in the nature of the figure subjects. All the evidence suggests that there were originally between fifty and sixty, between a quarter and a third of the comparable Mosan output, although accident, vandalism and war have caused some to be damaged so that they are difficult to use statistically, while others no longer survive, even as fragments, and no fewer than ten are known only as bases. Certain characteristics which these fonts possess in common make them instantly recognisable as a type quite distinct from any other.⁶¹ The model may be described generically as in seven pieces: base, central shaft, four corner colonnettes and the square table out of which the basin for the water is hollowed. So few still rest on their original supports, while others have bases which are partly hidden by a floor raised above the level of the original pavement, that it is difficult to be certain of the overall height but a measurement of around one metre may be assumed from the small number of fonts which can be confidently asserted to be complete.⁶² The 'table' (bowl) averages one metre square, the vertical faces around 22cm and the lower part of the table, the 'belly', where it curves down to meet the central column, around 18cm, giving an overall thickness of table-slab of about 40cm. The sides of the bowl are decorated with human figures, with arcading or with formalised plant or animal motifs and the upper surface has ornament in the spandrels and concentrically around the circular basin. The majority are supported on a massive cylindrical central shaft, flanked by four colonnettes which were decorative, not structural, though a few have only a single column. The supports rise from a square base which may have leaves at the corners or, in the more sophisticated examples, *couchant* lions. These characteristics, allied to the distinctive dark stone, establish an instantly recognisable type.

⁶⁰ J. R. Allen, 'The Font at Zedelgem, near Bruges, in Belgium', *The Reliquary*, 1898, pp. 267–8.

⁶¹ J. R. Allen, 'Fonts of the Winchester Type,' *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, L, 1894, p. 17.

⁶² Among others, Lichtervelde, Lincoln, Winchester and Zedelgem.

@e Identifications

Although the group was not researched in detail as a whole until 1989–90,⁶³ several of the fonts have been published individually or in small groups since the mid-nineteenth century.⁶⁴ In 1944 Dunning attempted to establish their distribution but, like his predecessors, he was hampered by working from a list which was incomplete and also complicated by erroneous inclusions.⁶⁵ Since then discoveries of fragments have continued to be made, though it is most unlikely that there are any more complete bowls to be found; further research could in fact reduce the list by three or four examples.⁶⁶

The number and locations of the English group have been known for over 100 years. Certainly Dean Kitchin and J. R. Allen were writing in 1894 about seven fonts, not all complete, but at least with bowls in one piece and, in the same year, a fragment was found at Ipswich, bringing the total in England to eight.⁶⁷ Since then several other English fonts have

⁶³ For my MA dissertation, ‘Tournai Marble Baptismal Fonts of the Twelfth Century’, University of Essex, 1992. New discoveries since that research have been incorporated into this chapter.

⁶⁴ The most wide-ranging are: Cloquet, ‘Fonts de Baptême Romains de Tournai’, *Revue de l’art chrétien*, 1895, Cecil. H. Eden, *Black Tournai Fonts of England*, London 1909 and G. Pudelko, *Romanische Taufsteine*, Berlin, 1932, pp. 44–53.

⁶⁵ G. C. Dunning FSA, ‘The Distribution of Tournai Fonts’, *Journal of the Society of Antiquaries*, 1944, pp. 66–8.

⁶⁶ My articles, C. S. Drake, ‘The Distribution of Tournai Fonts’, *The Antiquaries’ Journal*, LXIII, 1993, and ‘A Tournai Font in Laon Cathedral?’, *The Antiquaries’ Journal*, LXXVII, 1997, set out the situation as currently accepted. Dr Freda Anderson, who had made exhaustive studies of Tournai sculpture in general, was developing ideas about the English group but sadly died before these could be published.

⁶⁷ J. R. Allen, ‘Fonts of the Winchester Type’, pp. 17–27 and G. W. Kitchen, ‘The History of the Cathedral Font, Winchester’, *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, L, 1894, pp. 6–16. Neither they nor the later writers, Eden nor Bond, referred to the fragment consisting of a half bowl found during excavations in the town-ditch at Ipswich in 1894. There are no indications as to where this font may originally have been, though J. Blatchly and B. Haward, *The Tournai Font in St Peter’s, Ipswich*, Ipswich Historic Churches Trust, 1983, p. 3, think the most likely place would have been the nearby priory of Christchurch.

been proposed as of Tournai provenance. One was stated to have been destroyed, 'being in poor condition', at the major restoration of Romsey Abbey around 1850, but the local archaeological society has no evidence for such a font.⁶⁸ A single-support font with plain bowl, in the village church at Boulge, was ascribed to the Tournai School, suggesting that the decoration had been chiselled off, but the finish is too smooth for that to be likely and there is no record either of it having been a victim of Dowsing's iconoclasm, or of the work having been carried out at any other time.⁶⁹ The proportions of the bowl are quite different from the norm, with its short sides and height markedly above the average but, against those negatives, there are leaves beneath the corners of the bowl and the base has all the marks of a single-support Tournai font, complete with leaf-spurs at the corners.⁷⁰ The font at Iffley is of a black limestone and is supported on a large central drum with corner colonnettes, but the bowl is of uneven shape, undecorated and of the wrong general appearance and proportions. There are no capitals for the colonnettes, the base lacks the Tournai outline, and the overall

The list consists of St Mary Bourne, East Meon, Southampton (St Michael's) and Winchester Cathedral (all in Hampshire), at Lincoln Cathedral and Thornton Curtis (Lincolnshire) and at Ipswich (St Peter) (Suffolk). The fragment is in the collections of the Ipswich Museums.

⁶⁸ J. C. Cox and A. Harvey, *English Church Furniture*, London, 1907, p. 168. In a folder at the Society of Antiquaries is a photograph showing what looks like a Tournai font at Christchurch Priory but a visit to the church showed a modern copy of a post-Romanesque (probably fifteenth century) font of basalt-like material and the badly damaged original. (This Christchurch is in Dorset, not the priory referred to in the previous note.)

⁶⁹ A note from a Canon J. T. Fowler, *Antiquaries Journal*, 1923, p. 154, mentions that Kitchin, p. 6, had shown it to be Tournai, but it is not mentioned in that reference. H. Munro Cautley, *Suffolk Churches and their Treasures*, 3rd edn, Ipswich, 1954, p. 229, said it was Purbeck, but N. Pevsner *The Buildings of England: Suffolk*, Harmondsworth, 1974, states quite baldly that it is Tournai and proposes a comparison with Ipswich (St Peter) with which it actually has nothing in common. Fowler suggests it originally had corner colonnettes beneath the leaves which decorate the underside of the bowl at the corners, but completely overlooks the absence of sockets for the shafts on the upper side of the base, which is clearly for a single-support font. There appears to be no trace, either, of recesses in the underside of the corner leaves to take the top of the colonnettes. It is certain that it has always been a single-support font.

⁷⁰ The usual ratio between height and side length is 1:3, or 1:3.5, but in the case of Boulge it is 3:8.

height is below the norm for the School.⁷¹ With little evidence to support these possible additions there is really no controversy over the identifications of the English group. On the Continent, however, it is, a different situation. Dunning's analysis of the work of earlier scholars gives two Tournai fonts in north-west Germany, fifteen in Belgium and thirty-two in north-east France, a total of fifty-seven (including the eight in England).⁷² Pudelko makes no mention of any Tournai fonts in Germany, nor does Rolland, on whom, given such close correlation of numbers, Dunning's distribution must be based.⁷³ Of the fifteen listed in Belgium, only two (Mons and Lokkeren) are no longer thought to be Tournai, so that part of Rolland's list was substantially correct at the time it was written. The French list of thirty-one, however, was considerably overstated, no fewer than seventeen being misattributions.⁷⁴ Since 1945 scholars in Belgium have continued their research and have made new discoveries, mainly in the form of fragments, and some of the most recent have

⁷¹ See entry for Iffley in RCHM volume for Oxford and N. Pevsner *Oxfordshire*, London, 1974, p. 661, where he describes it as 'touchstone'.

⁷² G. Pudelko, pp. 44–53 and 126–37. P. Rolland, 'L'Expansion tournaisienne aux XI et XII siècles: art et commerce de la pierre', *Annales de l'Académie royale d'archéologie de Bruxelles*, LII, 1924, pp. 175–219 and LXXIII, 1925, pp. 41–50. F. Bond, *Fonts and Font Covers*, Oxford 1908 and 2nd edn, London, 1985, p. 205. C. H. Eden, pp. 29–30. We can discount Eden's short first list taken from *The Reliquary and Illustrated Archaeologist*, ns IV, p. 259; his second list copies Bond. The source on whom they in turn relied for their lists was Camille Enlart, *Manuel d'archéologie française: l'architecture religieuse*, 1902, pp. 763–82.

⁷³ Dunning's short article was concerned more with the distribution of the fonts relative to possible means of transportation, than to the publication of a definitive Tournai list. However, if the list is wrong, then so may be any deductions made from a study of the distribution of the fonts on his map. A study of the track of the main Roman roads in the area of north-east France and Flanders does indeed support Rolland's contention that those leading from Tournai to Bavay, Boulogne and Oudenburg played a part in the dispersion of these fonts, a fact which Dunning claims is refuted by his map, though it only shows the rivers.

⁷⁴ The majority of those now discarded from the early lists are Mosan. I have viewed every one of those fonts listed which are still used for baptism, plus all those either used as building materials or in museums, except for the fragments in the Gruuthuse Museum in Brugge (communicated by E. Jacquemyn) and a few of the recent discoveries.

been of bases found beneath church floors.⁷⁵ In addition, the museum of the Academy of the New Church, Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, has the upper part of approximately one quarter of a font bowl.⁷⁶ Photographs suggest that the fragment consists of about three quarters of the height of the bowl, while the two sides are a little greater than, and a little less than, half the full length of the sides respectively.⁷⁷

@e Establishing a Chronology

Lacking any substantive evidence, attempts to establish a proper chronology were based in the one case (Cloquet) on an evolution of the design of the capitals and bases of the colonnettes, and in the other (Pudelko) on a combination of changes to the form of the font as a whole and on developments in their decoration.⁷⁸ In fact it is likely that the variations in handling of the bases and capitals were merely different solutions to a common problem being worked out simultaneously by different sculptors.⁷⁹ There was, however, agreement

⁷⁵ I am greatly indebted to E. Jacquemyn and J.-C. Ghislain (Belgium), and A. Plateaux (France), whose researches have provided many of the additional identifications which are included in the list at Appx 2B.

⁷⁶ Professor George Zarnecki told me of a fragment of a Tournai font in America and I am indebted to him and to Professor Walter Cahn for the information (GESTA, XVI/2, 1977). The provenance given in the note from the Museum is of no help and states merely that it was bought from Demotte in 1924, who purchased it from Belgium. The US location is therefore used as the identifying name.

⁷⁷ Based on these approximations this bowl must have been roughly 31cm high and 1m long, making it a close match with Southampton (St Michael) (32cm x 101cm), which it resembles in decoration.

⁷⁸ L. Cloquet, 1895, p. 317, and G. Pudelko, pp. 44–53. Cloquet's argument concentrates attention on differences of detail between the fonts but, beyond establishing that the single-pedestal version was later than the '1 + 4' original, his Table does not seem to represent a logical sequence and could equally well be reversed, or even reshuffled altogether. He requires to be read with care; in some places he is at fault for errors of observation or undue reliance on information from third parties.

⁷⁹ In his *filiation*, Saintenoy ('Prolègomenes à l'étude de la filiation des fonts baptismaux des baptistères jusqu'au 16ème siècle', *Annales de la Société archéologique de Bruxelles*, V and

that the single-support model was the final version of the Tournai font, though certain similarities between decorative elements at Winchester [103] and Gent (St Bavon) [117] imply that both types were, at one stage at least, being made simultaneously. Gent is the only single-support font with Biblical narrative sculpture.⁸⁰

With the multisupport examples the differences in form, within the overall consistency of outline and proportions, are so minor as to contribute little to establishing a chronology, while the manner in which the various types of decoration – architectural, foliate, animal, narrative and geometric – were ‘mixed and matched’ on different fonts militates against a study of ornament being any more useful. It is well known that a difference in quality is a highly unreliable basis for dating, being far more likely to be due to the relative skills of the masons responsible for the work than to the date of manufacture. Analysis shows that no Tournai bowl displays a form of decoration which it does not share with at least two others on one or more sides and in often quite different combinations. Only beasts are frequently found on all faces of the same bowl but even here there is considerable variety of layout and style.

It is a little easier with single-support fonts, of which Zillebeke must be among the earliest, if only for its great size. Its belly still retains the marked swelling with incised ‘rope’ decoration seen on so many of the multisupport bowls, but the ratio of side-length to frieze height has changed and only Laon Cathedral and Compiègne [106] are similar, though thinner still. On these the belly is smooth but broad leaves grow up over it to intrude on the bottom centre of the vertical face, otherwise a feature found only at St Just-en-Chaussée; these two fonts show the first signs of the stepped face to be seen later at Gallaix. Blessy [119] and Deftinge (geometrical ornament), Guarbecque (foliage) and Hautmont and Gallaix (mythical beasts) are all very much smaller and thus likely to be some of the last to be made. Gallaix, with its fully stepped bowl was probably the last.

@e The Bowl

Although there are two known round fonts of Tournai stone, Chéreng [100] and Le Tréport, the decoration on both is so transparently Mosan that it would be misleading to consider them here. It is thus possible to say that all products of the School are square table fonts. The sides all have vertical faces without any trace of flare and the decorative panels

VI, 1891–2) did not mean that there was a progressive linear development of font design, rather that there is a family relationship between one form and another.

⁸⁰ L. Cloquet, 1895, pp. 314–15. Four fragments of this font are now displayed in the museum of the ancient abbey of St Bavon in Gent. Cloquet quotes from van Lokkeren’s history of the Abbey of St Bavon, in which the Abbé points out the identity of style and decoration of the St Bavon and Winchester fonts, going so far as to suggest that the buildings carved on the two bowls follow the same design. Van Lokkeren *Histoire de l’Abbaye de St Bavon*, 1855, pp. 82–3.

are framed within narrow plain bands. Only at Zedelgem and Zillebeke and on the fragment from Pervyse are the vertical bands replaced by corner ornament, masks at Zillebeke, figures on the other two. Below the vertical face the bowl curves down in a prominent rounded 'belly' to meet the central shaft. On five-support fonts the capitals of the corner colonnettes are carved out of the underside of the bowl so that, of the colonnettes, only the shafts are separate pieces.⁸¹ The decoration of the capitals is based upon one or more leaves, and needs no further comment, other than to mention Bond's statement that Tournai fonts used the plantain leaf, 'a late design'.⁸² The belly is most often plain but when decorated, it either bears spiral incised lines to make it look like twisted strands of rope or has a single broad leaf, point upward, in the centre. The common Romanesque cable motif is otherwise not explicitly used on Tournai fonts. The broad leaves on the underside of the four corners of the single-support bowls may be seen as the vestigial remains of the corner capitals persisting beyond the demise of the multisupport font of which they are a reminder.⁸³ The undersides of the corners at Deftinge are formed of broad flat leaves and Zillebeke is similar, with the same type of broad leaf beneath the corners, except that the points curl at the corners like the spur-ornament familiar from the bases of the five-support fonts, and indeed from column-bases generally in Tournai architecture.⁸⁴ At Gallaix there is no more than a suggestion of the corner capitals. The lower edges of the vertical faces are stepped, so that the centre of the face is narrower than at the ends; plain edges form a border to each frieze in which pairs of dragons confront each other.⁸⁵ The final stage of the progressive attenuation of the decoration below the corners is achieved at Spiere, which may be of the thirteenth century; there the flat

⁸¹ This was completely overlooked in the insensitive restoration of the supports at Noordpeene, where the replacement colonnettes were created with integral capitals which duplicate those on the underside of the bowl.

⁸² F. Bond, p. 151.

⁸³ L. Cloquet, 1895, p. 315.

⁸⁴ L. Cloquet, 1895, p. 316.

⁸⁵ L. Cloquet, 1895, p. 316 and fig. 7.

underside of the square table is joined directly to its single cylindrical support by no more than a simple quarter-round moulding or large torus.⁸⁶

@e The Supports

It is difficult to generalise because few Tournai fonts exist complete with all their original supports and some have lost them all. However, there is so little variation among those examples which do survive, that certain assumptions may be made. The upper, visible, part of the base is quite highly articulated, often as a close reflection of the underside of the bowl itself. Mouldings form the sockets for the supporting shafts and in some cases, such as East Meon, they are no more than shallow concentric differentiations in the upper surface of the plinth, while at Thornton Curtis and Lincoln Cathedral [112] there are small *abaci* like collars into which the colonnettes are set. At Southampton the *abaci* are much wider and flatter and are surrounded in turn by further concentric mouldings of rounded form giving a three-step profile. Southampton also has a torus round the central column as is found at Zedelgem too.⁸⁷

The most common further articulation of the base is the corner leaf or spur, varying considerably in style and usually larger on single-support examples.⁸⁸ In their neatest form these spurs are small and accentuate the point of the corner, as at Guarbecque. On the Lichtervelde font there are two leaves, at Montdidier (St Pierre) [113], Southampton [114] and Dendermonde the spur has become three-leafed and at Lincoln six-leafed. With the single-support fonts at Hautmont [115] and Compiègne the motif has spread out into a goose-foot, elaborated to provide a mirror-image of the underside of the corner of the bowl. A form of ornament not found everywhere consists of incised lines over all or part of the upper surface of the base (Saint Venant, Winchester and Zedelgem); the lines are applied in a spiral to the mouldings around the bases of the shafts, giving the sense of a cable-moulding. Also rare are animal masks (Saint Venant, Vermand and Zedelgem). The corner arrangement at Vermand is unique among these fonts in using whole animals in a way familiar from Romanesque capitals, with the head on the corner shared by two bodies on the adjacent sides

⁸⁶ This font now survives as a fragment, though Cloquet described it in 1895 as if still complete.

⁸⁷ F. Bond, p. 153, comments that, in the last quarter of the twelfth century, the most popular base consisted of two roll-mouldings separated by a deep hollow and with the lower roll considerably flattened.

⁸⁸ The angle spurs appear to be derived from the decoration on the bases of Tournai columns in nave arcading, of which there are fine examples in the churches of the Holy Blood in Bruges and of Guarbecque.

but the others have no more than lions' masks placed at each corner and, sometimes, in the centre of the sides.

The central shaft often recalls the wooden barrels which were used before the introduction of stone vessels. Some have distinct thickening at mid-height, like wooden casks and, while some are plain, others may be embellished with annular mouldings reminiscent of the cooper's hoops, from one at Lincoln to five at Southampton. All surviving colonnette shafts are plain, except for Winchester and Zedelgem, where two and three respectively are decorated with incised lines. It is more likely here that the smooth shafts are replacements, rather than that they were different by design but there is no evidence to say whether plain or decorated colonnettes were the norm. Winchester's two decorated shafts have the spirals cut in opposing directions and are at opposite corners of the font, while at Zedelgem the two cut the same way are side-by-side, which may be fortuitous, or by design. It is known that Lichtervelde once had smooth octagonal shafts, characteristic of Tournai engaged shafts in architectural applications; these were replaced at some time between 1857 and 1895,⁸⁹ but may not themselves have been original.

@e The Decoration

There was a relatively narrow range of motifs actually in use by the School, but the imagination which the craftsmen applied to their task was so fertile that the overwhelming impression given is of a much wider repertoire than was in fact employed. The Tournai sculptors excelled in monumental sculpture and they took their motifs, through the intermediary of metalwork, textiles, ivories and miniatures, from animal and plant forms and, more rarely, from humans.⁹⁰ Folke Nordström⁹¹ shows that there was an enormous range of subject-matter in use in twelfth-century baptismal iconography, but many of the themes found no place in the Tournai group.⁹² Despite the evident skills of the Tournai

⁸⁹ L. Cloquet, 1895, p. 309.

⁹⁰ Writing of Mosan fonts of the period, J. Stiennon, 'Art roman de la vallée de la Meuse aux 11e, 12e et 13e siècles', *La Sculpture en pierre*, Bruxelles, 1966, p. 128, states that their decoration is often linked with ancient traditions based on both oriental and Anglo-Saxon art, with Assyrian heads, Persian lions and dragons with interlaced necks, and suggests that eighth-century textiles and manuscripts were the medium of transfer of the ideas. These comments are equally true of the Tournai works.

⁹¹ F. Nordström, *Medieval Baptismal Fonts: An Iconographical Study*, Umeå 1984.

⁹² Fewer than 10 per cent of Tournai fonts have narrative sculpture on the bowls. The Fall occurs at East Meon and St Bavon, the Passion at Dendermonde and St Venant, the Nativity at St Bavon and the Last Judgement at Chalons-sur-Marne. St Nicholas legends are depicted at Zedelgem and Winchester Cathedral and the conversion of Saul at Dendermonde.

sculptors, and setting on one side the high quality of some examples, it has nevertheless been said that they do fall short of the standards being achieved elsewhere at the same time.⁹³ The coarseness of the work may be due to the fact that these objects were made in quarry-based workshops, where the sculptors came from the ranks of the quarrymen and lacked artistic training and exposure to external influences, though it is likely that the crudeness of much of the work, especially of the figures, is due to the brittle nature of the stone, rather than to any lack of skill on the part of the craftsmen.⁹⁴ Although aesthetically pleasing, the stone is very difficult to work. Its fine grain makes it hard to cut and, due to its fissile nature, the problems increase if attempts are made to achieve deep modelling.⁹⁵ However Tournai decoration is viewed, it is clear that there is considerable variation in the quality of the work, both in the overall composition and in the carving of the beasts. Ere, Deux-Acren and La Neuville-lès-Corbie [116] are at the least refined end of the spectrum and Ipswich, Lincoln and Southampton in the middle of the range behind St Bavon, Winchester and Zedelgem. Vermand's decoration is full of complex detail, finely cut, and makes the fullest use of the variety of motifs available, but Lichtervelde and Thornton Curtis display the highest quality of design and execution. There is no single Tournai font or fragment known which has a form of decoration on any of its sides which cannot be found on another of the group, so that, with all the great variety of decorative programmes of these nearly sixty fonts, the sense of family is clear.

Although decoration may be found on all elements of the fonts, it is the bowl which in every case receives the greatest attention and there is none which is devoid of decoration, unless the two English fonts of Boulge and Iffley are accepted in the Tournai group. 'Tournai fonts

⁹³ P. Kidson does seem a little extreme, 'Anglo-Saxon and Norman Architecture in Hampshire', *Archaeological Journal*, CXXIII, 1966, p. 177, when he refers to the quality of the sculpture on the Tournai fonts as 'often abysmally poor'.

⁹⁴ R. de Lasteyrie, *L'Architecture religieuse en France à l'époque romane*, Paris, 1912, p. 763. An analytical study of the motifs used and of the combinations in which they appear would be essential in any attempt to isolate individual craftsmen or workshops within the Tournai School and could demonstrate that more than one craftsman worked on any one piece.

⁹⁵ Canon J. Chassart, *La Sculpture scaldienne*, Catalogue of the 1956 exhibition at Tournai, p. 35.

are distinguished by the richness of decoration of their vertical faces . . . arcades, hellish monsters and historiation'.⁹⁶ An analysis of the repertoire of frieze ornament found on these fonts reveals a number of main groups of decoration, within which can be identified several subtypes and minor variations. Three main types can be identified: arcading, symbolic flora and fauna, and narrative decoration which includes scenes from the Old and New Testaments and legends of the saints.⁹⁷ Hagiography is, in fact, quite rare in twelfth-century art.⁹⁸ Jacobs, who adds masks and 'geometrical compartments' to the list of motifs used,⁹⁹ is correct on both features and observant too, as they are rare. Other than in the spandrels of the upper surface, masks only appear on the corners of Zillebeke and in arcading at St Just-en-Chaussée [117], while a geometrical design is only found at Blessy and Deftinge (all faces)¹⁰⁰ and at Noordpeene (one face). There are no examples of foliate discs, four-looped crosses or other recycled pagan sun-symbols, except for some rosettes in the arcading at Gondecourt and St Just-en-Chaussée.

The decoration of virtually all Tournai fonts shows evidence of careful planning, so that hardly anywhere is there the feeling, so common elsewhere in Romanesque art, that some motifs have been forced into a frame that is too small for them. This holds true whether there are two, three or four beasts on a face, with or without arcading. Human figures seem frozen in stiff postures and only the position of the hands, the way the hair is dressed and the seams of the clothes offer any variety of characterisation. The pleats in the costumes are depicted with fine parallel lines, reducing the depth of modelling. The slightly protruding eyes are almond-shaped and somewhat oversize, making masks of the faces. The relatively narrow rectangle of the side of the bowl has made the decoration almost totally linear in concept and it is perhaps this characteristic which is mostly responsible for the static nature of so much of the sculpture. The varying degree of modelling, shallow at East Meon and Zedelgem, deeper at St Bavon and Winchester, makes no difference to the sense of immobility.

Some Tournai fonts have distinct types of decoration on two each of the four friezes; for example, Dendermonde, East Meon and Winchester all have two faces of narrative and two of symbolism. The modern approach would almost certainly be to place the matching ornament on opposite faces, East/West and North/South, but in all these examples the matching motifs are to be found on adjacent faces, even if there is no sequential reason for placing the two historiated faces on either side of the angle. The same juxtaposition can be found also on fonts where there is no historiation; St Mary Bourne has two friezes of vine branches and two of arcading, and again the matching sides are placed adjacent to each other.

⁹⁶ L. Cloquet, untitled article on Tournai fonts, *Revue de l'art chrétien*, 1890, pp. 416–17.

⁹⁷ *Bulletin monumental*, 1932, pp. 309–10.

⁹⁸ J. R. Allen, 'The Font at Zedelgem near Bruges in Belgium', *The Reliquary*, 1898, ns IV, p. 262.

⁹⁹ A. Jacobs, 'Notes sur une cuve baptismale de l'époque romane du 12e siècle trouvée à Rotselaer', *Bulletin de l'Académie d'archéologie de Belgique*, XV, 1882, p. 445.

¹⁰⁰ The Blessy font is built into the wall, so it cannot be stated with certainty that the motif is on all four sides. Against this, however, there is no known Tournai font with one design on three sides of the bowl and a different one on the fourth.

Tollenaere¹⁰¹ suggests that this arrangement recognises that these fonts would be most commonly seen when approaching them at an angle, with two sides visible at the same time. This might be the case where there is narrative; for example, at Winchester it might be felt important that people approaching the font should see all the St Nicholas legends simultaneously, but it does not seem convincing when applied to those fonts which do not tell a story. Another aspect of the same asymmetrical approach is to be found on many of the fonts decorated with beasts, which may be found grouped in pairs, in threes or in fours, often with a mix of grouping on different faces of the same font. There are few cases where there is any symmetrical ordering of the groups, or of the beasts within the groups. Indeed, the most common number of beasts to occupy a face is three and the only way of achieving a symmetrical arrangement with that number would be to carve the outer beasts facing either towards or away from each other and the centre one *en face*, or *sejant gardant*; in fact this solution is never used. At Ipswich (St Peter) [101] there are three lions *statant gardant* on each face; those at the corners face outwards, perhaps guardians of the consecrated water, but of the centre lions three face right and the fourth to the left.¹⁰² The medieval sculptor may have had no feeling for symmetry, as we do today, but this seems unlikely when we consider capitals and tympana, the western façades of Romanesque churches, or their ground plans, with transepts, ambulatory and radiating chapels.

While there is no type of decoration used uniquely on any single font, not all types are used with the same frequency. Of the approximately fifty whole fonts, or fragments large enough to show the decoration used, nineteen have the same basic decorative type on all four sides, though usually with variations. Only at Châlons-sur-Marne [119], Gent (St Bavon), St Venant and Zedelgem are there human figures on all four sides, and the first three are the only examples to have scriptural decoration alone. Just three, Compiègne, Guarbecque and Zillebeke have plant motifs on all faces and only Blessy and Deftinge geometrical ornament. Southampton (St Michael's) has roundels on all sides, three with mythical beasts and on the fourth three of the Evangelists,¹⁰³ while five bowls have a purely animal *décor*. It is not

¹⁰¹ Tollenaere, p. 48.

¹⁰² In their paper, J. Blatchly and B. Haward (note on p. 7) remark that one centre lion of the three on each face is differently oriented from the others. They propose that this would have ensured, with the font as originally positioned, that no centre lion would have had its hindquarters to the altar. This is not persuasive; an analysis of the Tournai fonts reveals no other case of a similar arrangement so this cannot have been an issue of general concern to the School. This cannot, of course, rule out that it may have been in the mind of the sponsor who commissioned this particular bowl.

¹⁰³ They appear to be Matthew, John and Mark, with only the bull of St Luke missing; all are nimbed. This is the only known Tournai font with the signs of the Evangelists, although C. H. Eden says, p. 23, that St Luke and St Mark are represented at Lincoln on the North face, because the front feet of these two confronted beasts seem to rest on books. This is by no means clear, the beasts are anyway not nimbed and an explanation would be needed for the

uncommon to find arcading on all sides of a Mosan font but, although no fewer than nineteen Tournai fonts have some form of arcading, the only survivors with this form of ornament on all four sides are Laon Cathedral and Gondécourt, the sole example with two-tier decoration on all sides, though Neuf-Berquin, destroyed 1914–18, had simple arcading on all four sides of the bowl.¹⁰⁴ Fifteen have arcades of full round-headed arches while on just four the columns reach to the top of the face as if supporting an architrave. Only at St Venant may there have been a Lombard frieze, with each disciple's head framed by an unsupported arch, as at North Grimston, but it is impossible to be sure as the only surviving visual record of the decoration is in drawings. In the same scene at Dendermonde the heads are all nimbed and there are no framing arches. Because a number of fonts exist today only as fragments, any list of examples with identical decoration on all four sides can only be speculative.

@e Architectural Motifs

Ghislain¹⁰⁵ was interested in the use of arcading, which he believed Mosan artists had probably adopted from the Tournai School, though not the insertion of statuesque figures into the arches, in the Antique manner, which occurs in a few cases. He identified five types of column and arch used in Mosan arcades but the picture is simpler on Tournai fonts, where arcading is more sparsely used. Intersecting arches are not used at all and twin columns only appear on two fonts. There is no Tournai arcade which is non-tectonic, except for Ribemont which had capitals but no bases. Some of the column shafts are plain, others decorated. At Vermand two forms of decoration are used for the column shafts, a lateral chevron and a criss-cross, the former also appearing once at Zedelgem. At St Mary Bourne the decoration is spiral, contra-rotating on each pair of shafts. It is the same at Gondécourt but with single and twinned columns alternating, the single shafts left plain; this is repeated at East Meon. The columns at Comines and Ipswich are single and plain while at Montdidier and St Just-en-Chaussée they are all single but are alternately plain and decorated. Font decoration reflected the architectural motifs in use in buildings at the

third beast on this side of the bowl. At first sight this might be taken as an eagle (St John) but it has four feet and must therefore be a griffin.

¹⁰⁴ A reference (n. 17) in J.-C. Ghislain's article on Wauthier-Braine, *Annales du Cercle historique et folklorique de Braine-le-Chateau, Tubize et des régions voisines*, VII, 1986–7. Ghislain gives no authority for his statement and I have been unable to find either a detailed description or an engraving.

¹⁰⁵ J.-C. Ghislain, 'Un fragment de cuve baptismale romane mosane à Antheit', *Bulletin trimestriel des Amis des Musées d'art roman et d'art mosan*, X, March 1983, pp. 11–18.

time the fonts were made¹⁰⁶ and Bond remarked that many of them had been adopted from the structural members of the church, but *not until* (Bond's emphasis) these members had been in use in buildings for a considerable time, in fact not until their design had, with the passage of time, become thoroughly familiar to the eye and stylistically acceptable. For this reason he warned that architectural decoration is not an accurate pointer to the dating of the fonts.¹⁰⁷

On Tournai fonts arcading is used in a number of ways: to divide the face into a series of vertical panels, to provide niches for human figures, and as a formal pattern of blind arcading. In the first case there are four examples, Vermand [102], Ipswich (St Peter) where the columns support a straight lintel on all four sides, Noordpeene, where one face is divided into three by two twinned columns enclosing pairs of trefoil arches and Hautmont where each face of the bowl is divided vertically in half by a tall slender column. In the second case there is regular arcading of round-headed arches supported on columns, each bay enclosing a human figure, as on the fragment from Spiennes, with a similar scheme on the Lampernisse fragment, though with flat lintel instead of arches. One face at Noordpeene has a single arch containing a human figure and at opposite ends of one side of the Lessines font can be seen two figures in arches. A variant of this type is found at Zedelgem, where there is, on two sides, a series of arches framing figures, but with some of the columns omitted, so that there are double bays to accommodate different combinations of figures which here are not 'statuesque' but characters in a narrative.

The blind arcading may rise to the entire height of the frieze, as at Comines, Montdidier, Ribemont and St Just, or only form a lower tier, where it fills the bottom two thirds of the frieze height, as at East Meon, Gondécourt and St Mary Bourne. Gondécourt is the sole two-tier example where there are rosettes or similar motifs within the bays, though they appear too at Ribemont and at St Just, where in some panels the round shape becomes a crude human face. Because of damage it is not easy to be certain how to describe the Laon Cathedral font but it appears that it might be an unusually deep Lombard frieze, with each impost ending in a decorative finial, rather than supported on a column. The upward-curving water-leaf which invades the face from the belly is approximately the width of one and a half arches and the arcade was obviously carved around the leaf as only complete arches are shown.

Buildings are a major feature on most of the historiated faces and, irrespective of the story portrayed, all are similarly drawn, indeed the points of likeness are so marked that it is tempting to recognise at least a common workshop of origin, even perhaps a specialist at work. Unlike the simple buildings found on some Scandinavian fonts, Tournai examples were all in the grand style of Romanesque, multistoried, furnished with arcading and towers, all topped with a cross, whatever scene is portrayed. Because buildings all occur in association with human figures, they are often overlooked, but they form an intriguing element of the complete designs and the evident care with which they were executed emphasises their importance. The buildings occur at Dendermonde, East Meon, Gent, St Venant, Winchester [103] and Zedelgem, that is on every font where a story is told, though

¹⁰⁶ J. B. Schayes, *Histoire de l'architecture en Belgique*, vol. II, 1849, pp. 68–9.

¹⁰⁷ F. Bond, p. 147.

not on every such face. From this it is reasonable to deduce that they are intended to be representative and also that the decoration of Lessines (St Pierre) may also have included a Biblical or saintly story, as small sections of roof and wall can be seen on two of the fragments.¹⁰⁸ From a purely decorative point of view, what is interesting is that the same type of building serves very different purposes in the various scenes depicted: at Winchester and Zedelgem it is probably the church of St Nicholas at Myra, at East Meon and Dendermonde the heavenly Jerusalem and at St Venant the earthly Jerusalem. At Gent the situation is unique in that there is a building on every face, representing respectively Herod's palace, the inn at Bethlehem and, on the two faces portraying the Temptation and Expulsion, Paradise. Indeed the Temptation is framed between two buildings, but that is perhaps an artistic convenience and emphasises the fact of Eden being within the heavenly gates.

@e Foliate Decoration

Compared with Mosan fonts, the Tournai artists made much less use of foliate decoration and only eleven of the known fonts and fragments have plant decoration on the frieze.¹⁰⁹ Plants are most often portrayed in a formalised manner, as is customary in Romanesque art, and the two motifs most commonly used by the Tournai artists are the vine and the palmette, both of which appear in a variety of forms, the former with and without bunches of grapes. The acanthus does not appear at all. Although always of very formalised design, the fleur-de-lis should be included under the heading of plant ornament. It appears on four of the fonts and is used differently in each case. At Thornton Curtis it occurs on one face with a single floret between each of two pairs of beasts, and at Hove it occurs once between a confronted pair of lions. In both cases the intention is possibly to represent purity protected. At Ribemont the main design on one side consisted of a pattern of three linked fleur-de-lis, with the extremities of the outer petals turned downwards, terminating in inverted trefoils of which the inner ones are shared. At St Mary Bourne there are seven fleur-de-lis on one of the sides with two-tier decoration, where it takes the place of the more usual doves or animals above the line of arcading. They sit snugly within the space

¹⁰⁸ E. Jacquemyn carried out a brief comparative study of these buildings associated with his study of the font at Zedelgem. I am not aware how far he has taken this but it is likely that further work would yield interesting evidence for grouping certain fonts together as emanating from the same workshops.

¹⁰⁹ M. Arkand, *Les Grands Moments de l'histoire de Tournai et du Tournaisis*, 1957, p. 6, saw the Tournai sculptors excelling in the rendering of flora and the vines at St Mary Bourne and Montdidier outshine for realism any similar work of the Mosan School.

above each pair of columns which support the springing of the round-headed arches and reach to the top edge of the bowl. A single smaller fleur-de-lis motif stands on the top of the left-hand arch of the arcade.

Vines are found in no fewer than nine cases, twice in quite realistic manner, otherwise in the familiar Romanesque meander. St Mary Bourne [104] and Montdidier [105] have similarly carved elaborate patterns of vines on two of the faces, which spread up from the bottom of the face of the bowl and arch outwards; the stems are tied together before the branch and bunches of grapes hang down. There are two vines on each face, almost touching but separated by a narrow vertical line. On both fonts the spaces between the outward spread of the vines at the top centre of the face are filled by similar inward-curving motifs, suggesting that the same hand was at work on both bowls. At Compiègne [106] an undulating, formalised vine-tendrils meanders continuously around all four faces. Here the table is much shallower than the Tournai norm and the band of decoration more narrow, between a wide plain band at the top and a more narrow band below; this drops slightly to give a step where the leaves on the underside come out to meet the corners. In the centre of each side a large water-leaf emerges from the belly and curls up until the point meets the top of the band of decoration. Just before it reaches the vertical, three narrower leaves shoot out on each side. Three other fonts with vine decoration now survive only as fragments. One of these, in three pieces, has been used as building material in the church of Escanaffles, where it originally stood. Two pieces have been used in flat areas of wall and one at the corner of a buttress, so that probably the whole bowl survives in the three fragments. Vine tendrils are found on all three while two of the pieces have small birds among the leaves, feeding on grapes. The two pieces of the bowl of Nivelles (St Gertrude) display similar vines in which there are also small birds, though no grapes are visible on the pieces which remain. The corner fragment from Spiennes is so small that no more can be said about it than that it is decorated with vine-leaves and grapes. Ribemont font had vine tendril ornament on one side.¹¹⁰

At Zillebeke all four sides have foliate decoration carved in two tiers. The lower register consists of two undulating vine-tendrils which emerge from the mouth of a fish at the bottom-centre of each face and spread laterally. There are no bunches of grapes. The upper register is divided from the lower by a plain narrow band and terminated at the corners by bull-like masks; from their mouths emerge strong stems with seven palmettes alternately upright and inverted. Each centre palmette is inverted and smaller than the others, on one side appearing to be drawn as a bunch of grapes, though there are no vine leaves. There is a narrow cable-moulding at the top edge of the face (unique among Tournai bowls) and at the bottom a plain narrow band which widens beneath the corners, as at Compiègne. Palmettes are not as common on Tournai fonts as on Mosan. Apart from Zillebeke they appear alone, in two pairs, on all four faces at Guarbecque and on one of the two surviving faces at Nivelles

¹¹⁰ The find was recorded in an anonymous note by the town pharmacist, an amateur archaeologist, who sketched the decoration discovered on the two fragments (*Bulletin archéologique du Comité des travaux historiques*, 1886, p. 166). I am grateful to M. Gissing of the Archives du Département de l'Aisne, who supplied me with details and a copy of the rough sketches of the decoration.

where they are less spreading than at Guarnbecque and are more tightly confined within framing constructed of their own stems, like Zillebeke.

@e Beasts

The largest decorative group depicts birds, animals and legendary beasts in great variety. They are portrayed with far less modelling than human figures, the details incised rather than sculpted. Not only are the creatures themselves quite flat, both bird and beast alike, they are very little proud of the background, which has been chipped away to only a very shallow degree. It is only at Noordpeene, and to a lesser extent at Vermand, that there is any noticeable attempt to treat the beasts in the same way as the human figures. On no fewer than twenty-one of the fonts they are used as the main or sole decoration for the sides of the bowl and others display them in the spandrels of the upper surface. They appear in many different poses, in many forms, in a variety of numerical combinations and facing in different directions. There are lions both real and legendary, asps, dragons, griffins, basilisks and real birds. Few are associated with any other motif other than the roundels which they occasionally occupy, or where they are in conflict with human figures, for example at Noordpeene, Vermand and Zedelgem.

These creatures are so heraldic in concept, that it is convenient to refer to their poses in the phrases of heraldry. The majority are *passant* to the right or left with just one pair, at Vermand, *sejant*. All but a few either face the direction in which they are walking, or look back over their shoulders, *regardant*. A relatively uncommon pose, found only with lions, is where the animal faces the onlooker, *gardant*, a pose found only on nine fonts. One is Noordpeene, where the single lion crouches looking out at us, its tongue hanging out between its jaws. At Ipswich all twelve lions are *stantant gardant*, uniquely with all four feet planted on the ground. Three of the four *couchant* lions on one face at Thornton Curtis are also *gardant* as is the pair on one face at La Neuville-lès-Corbie [107], crouching on either side of a strange 'T'-shaped block which might be intended to represent a pedestal font or, more probably, an altar. At St Just-en-Chaussée the two lions on one side of the bowl are almost identical in style with those at Ipswich, with their heads at the corners, *gardant*, except that they, like the majority, are crouched. Gallaix had a pair similar to Thornton Curtis and on the fragment from Kontich is an example like the lions of St Just, while the fragment found at Rotselaer displays three lions *gardant* on one face. Vermand has pairs of lions *gardant* occupying the outer panels on three of the faces, their heads, like St Just and Ipswich, nearest the corners; all other legendary beasts are in profile, either looking forward or *regardant*. At Hove there are three lions on each face, in two combinations: Two adjacent sides have all three beasts *passant* in the same direction while on the others two lions confront each other across a fleur-de-lis at the left, watched by a third on the right. Of all the fauna depicted, the birds are usually clearly recognisable, especially those at Winchester [108] and Dendermonde, framed in formal roundels. These, judging from head, beak and tail, are quite clearly doves, as are the pair on one side at La Neuville-lès-Corbie, where they are more formalised and less natural; they both drink from a vase placed between

them, a motif more common as spandrel-decoration than on the frieze. Another, less realistic, dove occurs on one face at Noordpeene. Identifiable birds are also featured on faces which have two-tiered decoration. At St Mary Bourne one face has two pairs of doves above the arcade drinking from vases placed between them and at East Meon on one side there is a single pair of birds, almost certainly also doves, facing each other across a spray of leaves. Gondecourt, the only font with two-tiered decoration on all faces, has birds above the arcading on two faces, all facing right. On one side they drink from separate wide-topped bowls and on the other they are either pecking at bunches of grapes or holding sprigs in their beaks. The description in the literature conflicts with the picture¹¹¹ and the damage is too serious for these birds to be easily identified but their poses suggest they are most likely to be intended as doves. Birds impossible to identify are found among the foliage at Escanaffles and on the Nivelles fragment, where they fill spaces at the top of both sides between the vine-leaves and the frame.

Lions are generally recognisable from their plumed tails, the formalised mane on their shoulders and their clawed feet, but the head is more like that of a lioness, or of the leopard used on the London silver assay mark, because no clear attempt is made to frame the head in the mane, even when the creature is shown full-face. Their tails are brought down between the hind legs then up the flank about midway along the body until they are pointed to the rear horizontally along the back and above the rump.¹¹² Where tails do not pass between the legs they are usually curved up over the rump and point forward along the back. There are lions on fifteen fonts¹¹³ and perhaps also at Lincoln and at Vimy, but they are not readily distinguishable from some of the other strange beasts; Vermand has a pair of lions *sejant regardant* on one face, but this font stands out with its symmetrically placed winged lions, drawn with a fine technique, and with a strong flavour of the Near East, underlining the debt which Romanesque art owes to eastern influences.

Hautmont [109] is unique among Tournai fonts for its portrayal of a figure straight out of Classical mythology, the centaur. The majority of the remaining beasts found on the Tournai bowls defy identification, but may be taken to be versions of the dragon, wyvern, basilisk group of winged creatures so popular with the medieval artist, each enlivened by the whim of the sculptor, who either lacked the interest to show detail (Lincoln [110], La Neuville-lès-Corbie), or indulged his sense of fantasy with free embellishments (Noordpeene), or even

¹¹¹ De Contencin, 'Notice sur l'ancienne église de Gondecourt etc.', *Bulletin de la Commission des monuments historiques du nord*, 1843, p. 417 and pl. 1. This font is now in the crypt museum at La Treille, Lille.

¹¹² 'selon une formule ancienne', Ghislain, 'Les Fragments de fonts baptismaux romans tournaisiens de Kontich et de Hove', *H. E. Kubach Festschrift*, Stuttgart, 1988, p. 695. Unique for this School, the Hove lions have strongly emphasised sexual organs which Ghislain suggests may be intended to show them as a threat to the unbaptised.

¹¹³ At Deux-Acren, Ere, Gallaix, Hove, Ipswich (St Peter and the Museum fragment), Kontich, La Neuville-lès-Corbie, Noordpeene, Rotselaer, St Just-en-Chaussée, Thornton Curtis, Vermand, Winchester and Zedelgem.

gave rein to his sense of humour as at Deux-Acren, where there is a galaxy of grinning creatures which seem to gambol happily across each face.

Beasts appear in groups of two, three or four on each face and there is no example of an animal alone. Two fonts, Gallaix and Lichtervelde, have just two beasts on all sides of the table. At the former there are three pairs of mythical beasts and one of lions *gardant*; all crouch. At Lichtervelde [111] are pairs of dragons, finely carved, two with their tails linked and *regardant*, the other two with necks entwined. Judging from what survives, the Ipswich Museum fragment may also have had two beasts on each face. There are five fonts where there is a combination of sides bearing two beasts and sides with three, namely Deux-Acren, Ere (fragment), La Neuville-lès-Corbie, Noordpeene and Vimy. Hove and Ipswich (St Peter) have three on each face, Lincoln has three groups of three and one of four, while Thornton Curtis has four on each side. Little can be said with certainty about the fonts which now only exist as fragments, but measurements suggest that the Bryn Athyn and Rotselaer fonts had three beasts on each face. The two examples of two-tier decoration which include beasts are East Meon and Gondecourt. On the former one face has four dragons, those in the centre with tails entwined, the outer ones facing inwards, and the other has a pair of dog-like creatures facing inwards and flanking the pair of birds in the centre. Gondecourt has two sides with beasts, both with a pair of dragons, tails entwined and flanked by inward-facing animals which cannot be identified.

Thornton Curtis [112], the smallest multisupport font and situated in a relatively remote village, displays an unexpected degree of refinement and calculation which is easy to overlook. Of all the fonts with beasts, this displays the greatest complexity in the planning of the ornament, with quality of execution to match. All four faces have four beasts facing each other, two by two. On one side of the bowl all four are virtually the same, while on the opposite side three identical lions are shown *gardant* but the fourth has a different head and tail. Both the other sides have differently matched pairs of quite distinct beasts; in one case the inner and outer creatures form the pairs and in the other the pairing is related to the direction faced. Only at Vermand, where a lion is consuming a man, at Noordpeene, where consumption seems to be contemplated, and at Zedelgem, do animals appear in the same scene as human figures. At Zedelgem, in addition to the two enormous lions, in the top left corner is a small animal which may represent a hunting dog.

@e Human Figures

There are thirteen fonts which display human figures, including Spiennes and Lampernisse, of which today only fragments survive. Montdidier (St Pierre) has the figure of Christ alone, shown in head and torso only, with His right hand raised in blessing. He is framed in a small niche in the centre of one side, surrounded by vine scrolls. Vermand has two men framed between colonnettes in the central panel of one face; they face each other, grasping cudgels as though about to start fighting, a variation of *milites pugnantes*. On another side of the same font the figure of a bearded man is seen to be swallowed, feet first, by a large lion. At Noordpeene there are two faces with panels containing figures. On one a single figure stands beneath a round-headed arch supported on columns and holds his severed head in his hands; he is thought to be St Denys, the patron saint of the church.

On the other face there are two figures, upper body only, framed between twin columns and with a decorative arch above their heads. They face each other, that on the right leaning back with the air of a sick man, while the other is more upright and, holding down what looks like a piece of cloth or of leather with the left hand, appears to cut it with a knife held in the right, perhaps a variation on the St Martin legend. Another panel on this face includes a bearded head showing above the hindquarters of a lion *regardant*. The badly worn fragments at Lessines (St Pierre) show human figures on two sides, one with two single figures beneath arches at opposite ends of the face but this piece is so damaged that it is impossible to say whether or not the intervening space continued this design. The second face has a figure in the centre beneath an arch and two others, again at opposite ends, who blow hunting-horns.¹¹⁴

Both the Spienne and Lampernisse fragments have ‘statuesque’ individual figures of men clad in long robes, standing within arcades, but there are quite significant differences between the two. At Lampernisse there are no arches, the columns reaching to the upper edge of the bowl and effectively supporting a lintel. Between the columns stand figures holding books. At the corner is a winged angel, also holding a book, this last detail suggesting that the original four corner figures might possibly have represented the Tetramorph. The books held by the others and the general size and spacing suggest further that this font might have portrayed the apostles, three to a side. Against both proposed interpretations is the fact that none of the figures is nimbed. On the Spienne fragment the arcading has similar columns but here they support round-headed arches. Of the two figures which survive, one holds a book and the other a crosier; both wear clerical dress. From the Lampernisse fragment it is known that two sides at least had figures in arcading but at Spienne the remains of the second side visible on the fragment show that it was decorated with formalised vines and grapes. Not only do the other seven fonts of this group all have human figures as the main element and taking up the whole of at least two of the four faces, but they are characters in stories, not statues. Dendermonde, East Meon and Winchester have two faces decorated in this way, Châlons-sur-Marne, Gent, St Venant and Zedelgem have four. Winchester and Zedelgem portray legends of St Nicholas on two and three sides respectively but all the historiated decoration on the other fonts is Biblical, with scenes from the Garden of Eden and the Nativity and the conversion of Saul on the road to Damascus. The surprising omission from Tournai Biblical decoration, the more so considering the frequency with which it is featured elsewhere on fonts of all periods, especially the twelfth century, is the baptism of Christ Himself. The fourth side at Zedelgem [114] is a unique portrayal of Psychomachia, the struggle between Good and Evil for the souls of men. In the centre of the face two soldiers stand back to back and confront a pair of enormous lions which are attacked by two other soldiers who stand behind them, only the upper part of their bodies visible. A fifth soldier at the right-hand end of the scene and occupying the corner of the bowl blows a horn and in the top corner at

¹¹⁴ This font is broken and parts have been reused in a buttress adjacent to the road, to provide a sharp arris on the corner; it is highly vulnerable to passing traffic.

the opposite end is a hunting-dog. All the soldiers are clad in chain-mail, wear helmets with nasal bars and brandish swords. The two in the centre carry kite-shaped shields familiar from the Bayeux Tapestry.

The Châlons-sur-Marne font [115] has the same scene on each side, depicting the resurrection of the dead as they rise from their tombs in response to the call of the massive oliphants sounded by angels at each corner of the bowl. Although all portraying the same subject, the scenes differ slightly in the way the emerging figures are shown. The heads of the angels at the corners are slightly proud of the upper surface and intrude slightly into the spandrels. The figures are the full height of the bowl, with the feet forming part of the capitals of the vanished corner colonnettes. The horns which the angels blow protrude from the right side of their mouths and sweep round onto the adjoining face of the bowl where they are held at the end by their outstretched right hands. Their left arms hang down the sides of their bodies. Only on the round Mosan font of Neerhespen does this scene occur again in baptismal iconography.

One side of the Dendermonde bowl, one depicts a scene from Acts and the other the Last Supper [113], an unusual subject for a font and is otherwise known only at St Venant, twice in England and three times in Sweden.¹¹⁵ In both Tournai examples the scene takes up a complete side of the bowl and shows all twelve apostles. At Dendermonde Christ is seated at the right-hand end of the table, an eastern convention. At His feet is a small figure who has been severally thought to represent the Magdalene, drying Christ's feet with her hair, or Judas, prostrate with guilt. Close inspection reveals that the figure is bearded so the latter must be more likely, even though there are the full twelve disciples seated at the table, all looking towards the Saviour.

The second narrative face at Dendermonde appears to portray the conversion of Saul on the way to Damascus but restoration carried out in the nineteenth century has caused some confusion.¹¹⁶ The repair consists of the replacement of a section of the face amounting to nearly half the area of the whole; it occupies a central position, offset to the left and to the top. Of the original carving there remains at the left a falling horse, all except for head and neck, and the body of a man prostrate on the ground below. At the far right is a building, probably symbolising the Heavenly Jerusalem, as Peter stands with his keys at the gate, looking to his right. Along the bottom edge of the face between are three pairs of human feet below robes shown from about the knee, with the base of a goblet-shaped object between the first two pairs of feet from the left [fig. 5]. The repair [116] has restored the horse's head and neck and has completed the bodies of the three men. Two now face each other across a brazier, shaped like an urn with flames issuing from the top, while the third, at the right and nimbed, looks towards the others. The nimbus is correct, as part of the original survives on the fragment on which St Peter is carved. While this reconstruction looks convincing, it is meaningless and therefore almost certainly wrong. If the man fallen from his horse is Saul, as seems entirely plausible, a more credible restoration would have been for the brazier to be a

¹¹⁵ F. Nordström, p. 121. They are at Brighton and North Grimston in England and at Simris, Stenkyrka and Skogstibble in Sweden.

¹¹⁶ An article in the *Messenger des sciences et des arts*, VI, 1838, pp. 233–40, includes an illustration and text on p. 238 which show that the damaged area had not been restored at that time. The restoration is believed to have been carried out around 1858–60.

font, still flanked by figures facing each other, but with the third facing St Peter at the right. The whole scene could then be interpreted as Saul struck by lightning, Saul converted and baptised as Paul and St Paul admitted to Heaven by St Peter [fig. 6].

At St Venant was a virtually complete Passion sequence, possibly the most complete continuous narrative on any known font.¹¹⁷ The Last Supper takes up the whole of the first side [fig. 7]. Christ is seated in the centre, the cross of His nimbus without a disc. He and the six disciples on either side have their heads framed by the arches of a Lombard frieze. On the table before the disciples are round dishes and pieces of bread, while before Christ is a goblet. The Saviour's right hand is on His breast, the left rests on the table. The disciples' right hands all rest on the table, half of them holding knives, and their left arms are across their bodies. Below the table can be seen the pleated robes and their bare feet and at Christ's feet a small figure, head and shoulders only, lies upon its back. The second side shows a row of eleven standing figures, their heads again framed by a Lombard frieze. [Fig. 8] At the left Christ is kissed by Judas and next is arrested by a soldier. In the centre bay, Jesus, naked except for drawers, is tied by hands and feet to a post to be scourged; a single soldier stands to His right and five more occupy the arches to His left, all facing Him and holding rods over their shoulders. The next side, unframed, depicts the Crucifixion; [fig. 9] two armed soldiers stand at the left and an imposing building closes the opposite end. In the centre Christ, unnimbed and a cloth decorated with three crosses around His brow, is being nailed to the cross by two men on ladders. Christ is flanked by the thieves tied to gantries, one gazing at Him and the other looking away. The fourth side shows, [fig. 10] at the left, Christ with the same head-band being carried between two men; this must represent the Entombment though hard to explain is the tall rectangle behind Christ's body between the two men who hold Him horizontally between them. The remainder of the side, about two thirds of the space, portrays the Resurrection. Three soldiers in chain mail, carrying kite-shaped shields and armed with sword and spear stand facing a large sarcophagus supported on an arcade of seven arches. Behind it stand three women carrying pots of ointment and at the right of the scene stands an angel, a staff topped with a fleur-de-lis in his left hand, and making the sign of speech with his right.

Gent (St Bavon) is in pieces and incomplete but shows two scenes from the Garden of Eden and two from the Nativity. The most complete fragment is the side with the Fall and shows Adam and Eve flanking the Tree of Knowledge, both eating apples. The serpent is coiled around the Tree, its head facing Eve who stands on the left and takes another apple from its open mouth. The scene is framed by Romanesque buildings at each end. A much smaller fragment [117] has a slender tower at the left (the corner) and then God the Father, wearing a cruciferous nimbus and looking directly out of the font as he grasps Adam by the right elbow with His left hand. Adam faces God, while behind him Eve turns away, both covering themselves in shame. This second fragment 'follows' the first as the action moves left to

¹¹⁷ The description which follows is taken from the illustrations to the article by Dancoisne and Van Drival, 'Les Fonts baptismaux de St Venant', *Statistiques monumentales du département du Pas de Calais*, 1850. The font and the plaster cast in the Arras Museum were both destroyed in the 1914–18 war. See also 'Notice sur les fonts baptismaux de Saint-Venant (Pas de Calais)', *Mémoires de la Société des antiquaires de la Morinie*, III, 1836, pp. 183–8.

right around the bowl. Of the two fragments showing scenes from the Nativity the larger depicts the kings before Herod. There is again a building at the right, with Herod enthroned, *en face*, a huge sword in his left hand. Herod holds out his right hand to the first of the three crowned Magi who face him. Two of them are bearded and one clean-shaven, an attempt to show variation in age. The Adoration is on a smaller fragment, about two-thirds of the length and the upper half of the whole side; it is the right-hand section, complete to the corner. At the right, a star above its roof, is yet another building, presumably representing the inn at Bethlehem. Next is a female head, facing out and framed by an arch supported on columns, and further to the left are the crowned heads of the Magi. The missing parts probably depicted, on this last side, Christ on the Virgin's lap and perhaps a second building on the left. On the other fragment to the right of God confronting the first sinners would have been the Expulsion plus, possibly, Michael teaching Adam and Eve to work and a final building. At East Meon there are only two narrative faces and both display scenes from the Garden of Eden, with the action moving from right to left. First [118] God and Adam stand facing each other, representing either the creation of Adam or God's warning not to eat the fruit of the Tree. Next God creates Eve who is seen from the knees up emerging from Adam's rib as he lies on the ground. This side is completed with the Fall, like St Bavon, but with Adam on the left and Eve, taking the apple from the serpent, on the right. Again both hide their shame with large leaves but a subtle variation from Gent is that the branches on the right of the Tree pass behind Eve and occupy part of the space between her and her creation, thus providing a separation of the two scenes. At the right-hand end of the second side is a three-storey Romanesque building representing Paradise and then St Michael, winged, holding an enormous sword in his left hand as he places his right in a dismissive gesture on the shoulder of Adam who is preceded by Eve. They cower with their knees bent in submission, both holding leaves to conceal their nakedness. The three figures appear again in the same order but now Adam and Eve are dressed. The archangel, with a spade instead of his sword, shows Adam how to dig, while Eve stands alone at the left with a huge distaff in her hands and a spindle at her feet.

Winchester Cathedral and Zedelgem fonts share the legends of St Nicholas, a very popular saint in the twelfth century, although rarely depicted in baptismal iconography and only otherwise known at Brighton and Nørre Lyndelse. St Nicholas of Myra features largely in the *Golden Legend*¹¹⁸ where many miracles are attributed to him. Some of them have been recognised on both these fonts but other identifications are more speculative. The Winchester font devotes two faces to the saint, Zedelgem three, of which two use a quite separate approach from all the other historiated faces, placing the figures in arcading. One of the legends is treated in very much the same way on both fonts, that of the nobleman who undertook to give a golden chalice to the saint's church if he should be blessed with a son through the saint's intercession. After his son was born, the nobleman liked the cup so much he kept it for himself and had another made, of silver. On his way with his son to hand over the cup, the boy, leaning out of the boat to fill the original chalice with water fell overboard and drowned. His father then found that every time he tried to place the second cup on the altar it was rejected by an unseen hand, until his son appeared, restored to life and bringing with him the original gift. The artists have chosen the moment when the boy fell overboard and the two fonts are very close in the way it is portrayed. A sailing vessel with central mast

¹¹⁸ Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend*, J. M. Dent edition from Caxton, 1900, II, pp. 109–22.

braced with two stays, but no sails hoisted, carries three passengers. Both ships have clearly drawn rudders but only at Winchester is it manned. Directly below the ship at Zedelgem [122] and beneath the stern at Winchester a figure lies in the water, hand outstretched to the cup. At Zedelgem this scene is slightly off-centre, flanked by two other scenes involving buildings. To the right a figure which at first sight seems a cleric, holding a long-staff cross, stands outside a building in which a man, hands aloft *orans*, attends another in bed. The complication of the standing figure is that close examination reveals a faintly drawn wing on the side nearest the ship, suggesting that it is the Angel of the Resurrection.¹¹⁹ Andries interprets the scene as St Nicholas appearing to Constantine in a dream to intercede for three officers wrongly accused and condemned to death, the Angel attending in support. An alternative reading would be that the figure in bed is the saint at the point of death, accompanied by an acolyte praying for his soul and the figure outside is an angel sent by God to take the saint to heaven. De Voragine tells that this was in response to the saint's prayer. At the opposite end of this face is a scene which consists of a church with nave and chancel in which two people are at prayer. Approaching the church from the direction of the scene of drowning is a bishop with mitre and crosier leading a youth by the hand. They must represent St Nicholas about to restore the drowned boy to his parents, so it must be read together with the ship.

At Winchester the drowning occupies the right-hand third of the face and the remainder seems to be taken up with the story of the wicked innkeeper, though there seems no ready explanation for the figures of a youth and the saint at the far left. Between them and the ship are depicted a man with an axe, a woman's head appearing over his shoulder and three heads with a coverlet up to their chins. Next comes the saint, robed as a bishop and three half figures which seem to be rising from the ground with his encouragement. These two groups may be interpreted as the inn-keeper who ran out of meat and decided to kill for sausages three young men staying at the inn, only to be thwarted by the saint who brought them back to life. This legend is also portrayed at Zedelgem but is placed in arcading across two sides of the bowl, on each of which are six arches supported by four columns, each of three scenes in a double arch. In the first two bays from the left are pairs of embracing figures, the women on the right and the men on the left. They seem to have no connection with the last bay on the right in which a man grasps an axe as he faces a woman who holds her plaits, the inn-keeper and his wife preparing for their crime. Continuing onto the next side, at the left are the three boys in bed, the inn-keeper holding the axe above their heads, encouraged from behind by his wife. In the centre the saint restores the boys to life and at the right the inn-keeper stands, axe in hand, with his wife speaking into his ear, the wicked couple horrified that their work has been undone by the saint.

The two embracing couples on the previous side Andries believed must be part of the legend of the nobleman who was so impoverished that he could not provide dowries for his three daughters who therefore faced a life of prostitution. Three times at night St Nicholas threw a bag of gold through the open window so that they could marry and lead blameless lives. The two embracing couples (Andries says no room for the third) are little enough evidence to accept this interpretation but there is no other suggestion. At Winchester however, on the second side [103], this legend appears in a far more reliable fashion. At the far right stands a large Romanesque building, from the crosses on its roof intended as a church, perhaps the

¹¹⁹ A similar figure with long-staff cross appears as the Angel of the Resurrection with the women at the tomb on the St Venant font.

saint-bishop's own cathedral. Nicholas himself, with mitre and crosier, stands facing left and hands a money-bag to a kneeling nobleman who, with his other hand, passes a second bag to a woman standing behind him. Behind her a second woman passes a bag to the third sister. At the left extremity of this side of the bowl stands a man, hawk on wrist, clearly a well-born contender for the hand of one of the daughters. On the Zedelgem font all the figures are contained either within the arcading or between the narrow framing bands around the 'open', non-arcaded side. At Winchester, where both sides are 'open', all the figures are contained top and bottom except for the bishop, whose mitre in all three appearances breaks the line, thus accentuating his importance.

@e Geometrical and Other Motifs

There is just one geometrical design used on Tournai fonts and it consists of slender recessed triangles, points upwards, containing raised semicircular areas joining the two base corners of the triangles. This same motif, with very minor variations, occurs on all four sides of the small, single-support Deftinge font and on one side of the major font of Noordpeene. The relatively small five-support¹²⁰ font at Blessy [119] is built into a curved niche so that only one full and two part sides are visible. The same decoration appears on all the visible sides and is framed, like Noordpeene, by a plain border. At Deftinge the border is only at the top and is broad, so that it cuts off about a third of the height of the triangle. At Noordpeene each triangle with contained demilune is framed between two vertical lines the whole height of the panel between the framing bands.

The repertoire of decoration on the Tournai fonts has been used with such variety by the craftsmen, that it always seems possible to discover something new, including odd shapes which appear, but for which there seems no explanation. At St Mary Bourne, on the face with pairs of doves drinking, there are strange tear-shaped blobs below the heads of the birds which, if they were fowl, could be taken as their wattles, though they are not attached to the necks. On the same face the arches spring almost from the outer edge of the pairs of capitals which crown the twin column shafts and the space between is filled with a plain demilune. At Deux-Acren one side has roughly shaped areas in the same plane as the decoration, three at the foot and one at the top of the frieze, filling the space between the tails of the two strange beasts portrayed. It can only be assumed that these are examples of the medieval artist's *horror vacui*, like the use of a small palmette to fill the corner on one face of the Ipswich Museum fragment. None of the Tournai fonts has any of the disc-enclosed flower motifs.

@e The Roundels

¹²⁰ L. Cloquet, 1895, p. 316. This form of ornament also occurs at Harrow-on-the-Hill, where the bowl is cup-shaped and the motif is inverted. F. Bond, p. 276. It also occurs on a capital in the Dorset church of Studland.

Roundels are used on four fonts, in groups of three, to frame birds, beasts and symbolic motifs. At Southampton [120] they are found on all four sides, at Dendermonde and Winchester on two, and on the Bryn Athyn fragment they occur on both sides of the surviving fragment. At Southampton the roundels on one face display the nimbed symbols of Matthew, Mark and John and, on each of the other sides, three lions *regardant*. On two of these sides the centre lion is flanked by two which are winged and on the third side the arrangement is reversed, the winged lion in the centre. The roundels here are all plain, as at Bryn Athyn, which has one face with two lions (that at the corner winged) and one with two cockatrices. At Winchester one face has the left-hand roundel beaded, the others plain; they are occupied by a *regardant* lion between two *regardant* doves, tails to the corners. On the other side all three roundels are beaded and contain pairs of doves with bunches of grapes hanging down from the frame above their heads. The two on the left bow their heads, the centre pair eat the grapes and the pair at the right contemplate the partly eaten bunch. They symbolise the human soul before, during and after partaking of the Eucharist to which baptism is the door. One face of the Dendermonde bowl has three winged *regardant* lions, all in beaded roundels. On the other side the roundels are plain and contain the Agnus Dei with long-shaft cross between two single *regardant* doves, tails to the centre, grapes above their heads.

The spandrels created at top and bottom, where two roundels abut against each other, are all filled with splayed-leaf motifs, except on the Dendermonde face with three lions, where their forepaws break the constraint of the framing ring and occupy the bottom spandrels. The Agnus Dei is contained within the frame of the roundel but all the others either break the frame (though to a lesser extent than at Dendermonde) or grasp it in their talons. Unlike most Tournai beasts, all the creatures which inhabit roundels are finely detailed with hair and feathers and one cockatrice has a pattern of small discs on its rump. All the roundels are strapped together where they touch each other and are also tied to the plain narrow framing line at top and bottom of the bowl.

@e The Upper Surface

Tournai fonts stand out from almost all others in the richness of the upper surface of the bowl, which is always decorated, mostly with formal designs. This is something which is hardly known elsewhere, with the exception of a small number of Mosan fonts where the top ornament is almost exclusively limited to the spandrels. The sheer size of the Tournai bowl (around one metre square on average) offered a basin of more than adequate diameter (an average of 70cm) yet left ample space for decoration between the circular rim and the

straight edges of the bowl. Every accessible Tournai font bowl, complete or fragment, shows evidence of decorated spandrels and of some form of decorative band encircling the basin. Sixteen of these bands are profusely decorated and thirteen consist of shallow concentric mouldings without ornament. These figures, and the evident quality of the carving of this decoration, emphasise that the Tournai School was creating a luxury product, with the richest top surface decoration found on the fonts made of the highest quality stone, where there is no surface-flaking, an all-too common problem, given the schistous nature of the stone.

The plain concentric bands are normally contoured to form triple shallow roll-mouldings, though in a few cases they consist of no more than concentric incised lines. The decorated bands show great imagination in the choice of motifs and ingenuity in the way they are used. Seven fonts have palmettes within the band, arranged so that the stems are alternately pointing in and out; between the palmettes are sheaves. A further five have an undulating vine tendril, usually with grapes but at Winchester it is entwined with a continuous ribbon, and three have a plain band within which are eight discs filled in as faces (Montdidier) or as stars. Vermand is a more complex development, with twelve discs rather than the standard eight; between them are sheaf-like motifs placed on end so that they run lengthwise in the encircling band. When the discs number eight they are placed with one opposite the centre of each side of the bowl and the other four opposite the corners, while at Vermand they are placed like the figures on a clock-face.

The most common form of spandrel ornament consists of leaf-clusters, with twenty-seven based on vines or fleur-de-lis, plus four with palmettes. Next come ten fonts with pairs of birds drinking, three with a cross in the main motif and five with masks, usually with tendrils issuing from the mouth. The St Just font has two spandrels with mitred masks, at Dendermonde [121] a mask holds a winged cross in its mouth and at Zedelgem masks spit out foliage, while at Zillebeke one spandrel has a very human mask framed by foliage. Only at Montdidier are there dragons with interlaced necks. The positioning of the angels at Châlons-sur-Marne has an interesting effect on the treatment of the corners of the upper surface. The tops of their heads extend beyond the level of the upper surface and intrude slightly into the area of the bowl, in effect reducing the triangular effect of the spandrel. Behind the backs of the angels' heads the remaining space is taken up with a representation of the feathers of the wings, grossly under-scale for the size of the angels.

@e The Corners

Only nine fonts have any form of 'finishing' at the angles of the bowl. Zillebeke has crude masks, but at the upper half of the vertical edge only, and at Comines, Hove, Ipswich (St Peter), St Just and Vermand there are columns linked with the arcading of the sides; the arcading at Spiennes and Montdidier end in a part-arch at the corner, rather than a column. At Châlons-sur-Marne, reminiscent of the salient heads of so many Mosan fonts, the huge angels, despite their link with the resurrection scenes taking place on the sides of the bowl,

seem superimposed on the overall design. Zedelgem [122] has human figures at the corners, but much smaller than the angels of Châlons. They are contained within the design, rather than superimposed on it, and act almost as terminals of the adjacent arcading. One of the figures is a soldier with shield and horn, part of the lion-hunt on one face, but the other three corners are occupied by figures of clerics, differently clad but all said to represent St Nicholas, whose legends are depicted on the adjacent sides, although only one has mitre and crosier.¹²¹ The Lampernisse fragment has angels on the corners identically positioned to the figures at Zedelgem.

@e Conclusions

At least five fonts listed as of Tournai origin, all single-support examples, are not conclusively products of the School: Chéreng, Le Tréport, Hautmont, Laon Cathedral II and Compiègne.¹²² Le Tréport and Chéreng are the only circular examples in the whole of the currently accepted Tournai output, and both have the salient heads familiar from the Mosan School. Unfortunately Le Tréport survives only as a fragment, but it appears to be of the late Mosan ‘chess-piece’ form. Chéreng is clearly Mosan work and similar to Beauvechain. Hautmont is square but more box-shaped than a table font and the decoration is applied in a unique manner. The raised portion of the design is absolutely flat, instead of being rounded and quasi three-dimensional, as on all other Tournai fonts. It is as though the carver started with a smooth bowl and then carefully pared away the stone surrounding his designs like a linoleum-cut, leaving the figures still flat, but proud of the background surface. The beasts are also differently placed, in that all the creatures, which include the only centaur on any of these fonts, are in pairs on each face, all looking inwards to the centre, and each face is divided into two equal halves by the outline of a slender colonnette, complete with capital and base. The beasts are lighter in style and more full of movement than is found elsewhere. At Compiègne and Laon the proportions of the

¹²¹ F. T. Ronse, *Les Fonts baptismaux de Zedelgem et les fonts romans tournaisiens du 12e siècle*, 2nd edn, Zedelgem, 1982, pp. 62–5, suggests they represent the saint at different stages in his career.

¹²² C. S. Drake, 1997, pp. 20–4, discusses the arguments regarding these fonts and others. The Chéreng stone has been checked by chemical analysis and confirmed as of Tournai origin.

bowl are also markedly different, being shallower and wider than the norm, with a height to length ratio of 1:6. The band of decoration is narrower than the norm, only about half the height of the vertical face of the bowl, and is framed by plain strips, wide at the top, narrower at the bottom. In the middle of each face a large broad leaf emerges from the curved ‘belly’ below the vertical section and wraps over the face, the point reaching the upper smooth band.

There are, too, reservations about the inclusion of Saint-Just-en-Chaussée in the list and visitors to the church are now faced with a placard beside the font stating: *Pierre de Marquise, maçon de Tournai*.¹²³ This font has the large flat leaf curling up onto the face from the belly, otherwise known only at Compiègne and Laon, and the stone has a brownish tinge, not unlike the colour of the font in St Peter’s, Ipswich. Both have similar lions guarding the corners, Ipswich on all four sides, St Just on only two. Should Ipswich also be placed on the ‘doubtful’ list? Perhaps, but surely another *maçon de Tournai*.

Now that the Laon Cathedral question has been resolved,¹²⁴ there remains apparently only one other major problem concerning the attributions. At Ribemont there is a medieval bowl (not Tournai) on a Tournai base. There are no colonnettes, as the design of the bowl would not accommodate them, but the base is provided with sockets for a five-support font. The decoration on three sides of the missing bowl is known to have consisted of, respectively, continuous undulating vine tendril, conjoined fleur-de-lis motifs and blind round-headed arcading with a bezant in each arch; the shape of the arches is reminiscent of those on the Laon font. These details are known because, in 1886,¹²⁵ the ground around the church was dug up in the course of constructing a road and two large corner fragments of a font bowl were found buried in the earth. They were sketched and recorded by the town’s pharmacist, but no record has been found so far of the subsequent fate of the two fragments, each about a quarter of the bowl and likely to have weighed individually not less than 160 kg. It seems inconceivable that they would have been thrown away or reburied, especially at a time of

¹²³ This notice had appeared between my first and second visits in 1988 and 1992 respectively. Although more brown than black in appearance, the stone is considerably darker than any of the Marquise fonts researched. The Marquise quarries are close to Boulogne-sur-Mer. They produce a wide range of limestones, darker than Caen stone, but none darker than the stone of the Lincolnshire wolds.

¹²⁴ C. S. Drake, 1997.

¹²⁵ There is a report in the *Bulletin archéologique du Comité des travaux historiques*, 1886, p. 166.

growing enthusiasm for matters of antiquarian interest. It is more likely that they now languish, unrecognised and unlabelled, in some *musée lapidaire* in northern France.¹²⁶

@c Other Romanesque Fonts

Such was the output of the Mosan and Tournai workshops, that very few Romanesque fonts were made in Belgium in other formats or in other stone. There are, however, two of major importance which must be considered. Also of the *calcaire bleu*, but otherwise totally unlike the normal Mosan products, is Furnaux [123] which consists of a large tub borne on the backs of four crouching lions of the same dark limestone as the bowl and set radially at the corners of a thin square plinth. The lions are all in different poses, three with fully detailed manes. One grasps a man's body, another a human head, a third has its paws together, while the lioness holds an open book. Only the lioness looks straight to the front, the others turn their heads in different directions. Each beast is carved with its own plinth and the whole body is shown, including the hind legs and tail. The tub is in two parts, a slightly flaring bowl with a plain moulding at the rim and a broader lower section in two stages, slightly more than half the height of the bowl.¹²⁷ The iconographic programme is in two registers: the face of the tub displays four scenes in low relief and on the lower section are two bearded figures facing each other and prostrate as if making obeisance, with hands clasped and stretched out before them; with the space between them they take up one half of the perimeter. The remainder is taken up with a further space and then a pair of dragons with interlaced tails, that on the left grasping a human head in its claws.

The largest scene on the bowl portrays the Baptism of Christ, with two attendant angels. Christ is naked, up to His waist in Jordan, while on the left the Baptist, clad in his camel-skin robe, leans forward with his right hand to touch the Saviour's head; with the left hand he clasps his robe to his body. The scene is flanked by two angels, turned inwards and holding cloths. Above the head of the angel on the right the dove of the Holy Spirit flies down towards Jesus. Only Jesus and John are nimbed. The other three scenes are harder to identify

¹²⁶ What is interesting about this font is that the original drawing, published in 1886, was totally honest in showing in full lines only what existed then; the speculative restoration was drawn in dotted lines. Yet, since that date, successive articles have reproduced the whole sketch in full lines and even a book published by the Mayor of Ribemont in 1964, *Notre petite ville de grand renom*, described it in detail according to the sketch, as if it still survived in the parish church and had not been destroyed more than a hundred years before.

¹²⁷ Rough cement around the bottom of the bowl indicates that the two sections are separate pieces of stone.

and, moving right from the Baptism, consist of three people followed by two pairs. In the trio an angel grasps the right wrist of a bearded man, his left hand raised as if pointing to the third figure which covers its eyes with the right hand; Next comes an angel holding out a banderole towards another bearded man and finally a third bearded man points to a banderole held out by a young, clean-shaven man who has a short staff in his left hand. The interpretation is still open to debate, despite various proposals put forward.¹²⁸ Tollenaere shows Crépin's solution in parallel with her own. Her view depends on an altered juxtaposition of the elements carved on the two registers of the tub. At the moment the dragons are half below the Baptism and half below the two figures immediately to the left; the prostrate men are below the angel leading a man by the hand and the figure hiding its face. Tollenaere, to support her theory, suggests rotating the bowl relative to the lower section, so that the pair of dragons comes entirely beneath the baptism, representing the threat of evil or the sin washed away in the water and thus iconographically sound. The prostrate men then come below the figure hiding its face and the angel handing a scroll to a bearded man.¹²⁹ Tollenaere sees the bearded men in the lower register as Abraham and Lot prostrating themselves before the heavenly messengers. Her version of the scenes above takes the trio to the left of the Baptism to be the compact between God and Abraham (Genesis 17: 1–17). This explanation is weakened by two details: neither figure is nimbed, contrasting with the haloes worn by both Christ and the Baptist, and one figure is a youth. The Father is always shown as an old man and Abraham was aged ninety at the time the pact was made. Next to the left Tollenaere sees the angel announcing to Lot the destruction of Sodom (Genesis 19: 12–14); the single angel in each of the first two scenes may represent the two who came to Lot's house to warn him. Finally Lot is led by the hand by an angel, followed by his wife (Genesis 19: 16–17). Her sorrowing demeanour reflects her disobedience of the angel's instructions, leaving her turned to a pillar of salt. The connection between the lower and upper figures is based on a careful observation by Tollenaere of similar emblems on the right shoulders, identifying Abraham. Wilderen¹³⁰ is made of a carboniferous sandstone from the Liège area. It is a square pedestal font and on all four sides are scenes of similar composition, framed by pairs of figures seated on lions' heads which rest on their forepaws. On the first side sit two nimbed figures, presumably Evangelists, one hand on a desk, the other poised to write; between them is a tree. On the second, the right-hand figure writes at a desk while the figure opposite sits with his left hand before his face, holding a banderole in his right. Between these two figures is a

¹²⁸ Crépin, 'Notes d'un touriste', *Annales de la Société archéologique de Namur*, III, 1853, pp. 383–6. L. Tollenaere, 'L'Iconographie des fonts baptismaux romans de Furnaux, *Namurcum*, XXVII, 1953, pp. 7–13.

¹²⁹ In fact a very slight adjustment to the changed positioning of bowl and plinth from Tollenaere's fig. 3 would centralise both dragons and prostrate men beneath the relevant figures on the bowl. The effect on the other grouping would be visually an improvement but there are, surely, still problems over the identification, not least because it has Lot appearing in both registers.

¹³⁰ Now in the Musées Royales at Brussels. The bowl only survives.

third, nimbed like the others, right hand on his breast and holding a slender sceptre in his right. Tollenaere sees these as the other two Evangelists, one writing, the other not daring to look at the Saviour who looks down at him.¹³¹ The third face shows St Peter at the left, keys in the right hand and a banderole in the left. The figure at the right, presumably Paul, presses a book against his chest with his left hand and holds up his right, palm outwards. Between them a large semicircular frame (the diameter formed by the upper edge of the bowl) encloses the Saviour who blesses with His right hand and holds a book in His left. All three figures are nimbed. The fourth side, again with two seated, nimbed figures, is more complicated. The figure on the left Tollenaere identifies as the patron saint of the Wilderen church (unnamed; the church today is dedicated to Our Lady), who holds by the waist a male figure who bows in respect as he offers a model of the church to Christ, the figure on the right. This she identifies as the lord of the manor dedicating his village's church to God. The scene is completed by the inclusion of a fourth, female, figure, the noble's wife, who fills the central lower space and also bows humbly towards Christ. The two lay figures are smaller than the others and are not nimbed.

At Dave is a massive round tub on a typical Tournai style base. The tub is absolutely plain except for a prominently salient rim and it is reduced in diameter at the bottom to fit into the shallow socket in the base. This consists of a square plinth, above which a spirally carved roll-moulding touches the centre of each of the square sides and at each corner is a large water-leaf ornament. While the base follows the style of the hardstone fonts both it and the bowl appear to be of sandstone.

¹³¹ L. Tollenaere, p. 334.