

A Group of Fourteenth-Century Mosan Sculptures

WILLIAM H. FORSYTH

Curator of Medieval Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

AMERICAN museums are full of charming and sometimes beautiful statues of the Virgin and Child of the medieval period, most of them obviously French in origin. Many of them were given by American private collectors who acquired them in the first quarter of the twentieth century when such sculptures were more easily available than at present. Since these statues customarily passed through a number of hands, their places of origin have almost always been forgotten and are not now easily rediscovered.¹ Beyond a general attribution to the fourteenth century, their dates are also usually unknown. Indeed, it is rare to find any fourteenth-century Madonnas that can definitely be dated, even among those that have remained in their place of origin.²

Until recently one of the Museum's finest Madonnas

of this period (Figure 1) shared the usual anonymity, and could only be labeled "French, xiv century." All that was known about the statue when it was acquired in 1924 was that it had previously been in the Economos collection in Paris and that it had passed through the hands of several international art dealers.³ It was a double satisfaction, therefore, to discover at the same time both its date and its origin.

A study of photographs of fourteenth-century sculpture had already indicated that our statue was extraordinarily like another marble Madonna, at Diest in eastern Belgium just west of the Meuse valley.⁴ A close examination of the Diest Madonna (Figure 2) revealed the astonishing fact that it was a modern copy of our figure. That it is a copy is apparent in many ways, some of which can be verified by a study of the com-

1. The author has sought where possible to form regional groups of French Virgins of the fourteenth century by analyzing their facial characteristics and other distinctive features of their style and iconography. See for instance, "Medieval Statues of the Virgin in Lorraine Related in Type to the Saint-Dié Virgin," *Metropolitan Museum Studies* 5, Part 2 (1936) pp. 235-258, and "The Virgin and Child in French Fourteenth-Century Sculpture. A Method of Classification," *Art Bulletin* 39 (1957) pp. 171-182.

2. Among the few securely dated French Madonnas of this period are those at Limoges Cathedral, tomb of Renaud de la Ponte, 1325; Sens Cathedral, 1334; a silver statuette in the Louvre from the abbey church of St. Denis, 1339; Magny-en-Vexin from the abbey church of St. Denis, 1340; Muneville-le-Bingard, 1343; Lesches (Seine-et-Marne), 1370. Other statues, like those at

Coutances, Langres, and Dijon (portal of Chartreuse of Champmol) have terminal dates but not specific dates of manufacture.

3. Acc. no. 24.215. H. 46 in. (117 cm.). See Joseph Breck, "A Marble Statue of the Virgin," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 20 (1925) pp. 39-41, and Martin Konrad, *Meisterwerke der Skulptur in Flandern und Brabant* (Berlin, 1928) pp. 12, 13.

4. H. 46½ in. (118 cm.). The Virgin at Diest has been published by Marguerite Devigne, *La Sculpture mosane du XII^e au XVI^e siècle* (Paris and Brussels, 1932) p. 67, and Konrad, *Meisterwerke*, pp. 11-14, pl. III, who related it to the Metropolitan Museum figure. It was exhibited in Brussels twice, once in 1954 (*Trésors d'art du Brabant*) but not in the catalogue, and again in 1961 (*Collections de l'Assistance publique*, no. 6). I owe the last two references to the kindness of M. Didier, Librarian, Institut Royal du Patrimoine Artistique, Brussels.



FIGURE 1

Virgin and Child, from Diest. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fletcher Fund, 24.215

FIGURE 2

Virgin and Child. Diest Museum (photo: Institut Royal du Patrimoine Artistique, Brussels: ACL)

parative photographs: the lack of precision in such details as the carving of the hair and the mouth of the Virgin (Figures 3 and 4), the absence of grime, the imitation of some of the breaks around the base of our figure, and the extreme freshness of the chisel-work. Traces of the original painted border remain on the old statue, but are missing on the copy.

The copy, which is now in the local museum of Diest, came from the church of St. Catherine. One can presume that it was made to replace the original when that was sold from the church some time before the First World War.⁵ The church of St. Catherine belongs to the *beguinage* of Diest. The Beguines were a lay sisterhood then popular in the Lowlands; their male counterparts were known as Beghards, a name which soon became associated with wandering mendicants and which is related to the English word “beggar.”

A report of the church, dated 1345, states that the sister superior of the Beguines of Diest paid two pounds for the image “in alabaster stone,” a remarkably high

5. The same duplication occurs in another marble statue of the Virgin and Child now in the Metropolitan Museum from the Morgan collection, acc. no. 17.190.721. A modern copy of it is now in the church at Couilly, east of Paris, said to have come from the former abbey of Pont-aux-Dames nearby. The copy was probably also made when the statue was originally sold, about the beginning of the century. Here too the copy is betrayed, if examined closely, by the freshly cut surface, the lack of any wear, and a slight misunderstanding of some drapery. Mme Lefrançois-Pillion published both statues as original in “Les Statues de la Vierge à l’Enfant dans la sculpture française au XIV^e siècle,” *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 77 (1935) p. 14, figs. 5, 8.

FIGURE 3

Detail of the Metropolitan Museum’s Virgin, shown in Figure 1

FIGURE 4

Detail of the Diest Museum’s Virgin, shown in Figure 2 (photo: ACL, Brussels)





FIGURE 5
St. John supporting the Virgin, from Huy. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, gift of Archer M. Huntington, in memory of his father, Collis Potter Huntington, 26.101.6

price for the time.⁶ The statue is actually of marble, but a variety sometimes confused with alabaster. Cardinal Granville, in the middle of the sixteenth century, granted an indulgence of twenty days to those praying before the high altar on which stood the statue, then called Our Blessed Lady of Jerusalem.⁷ In an eighteenth-century letter of the archbishop there is a reference to the alabaster statue of Our Lady of Jerusalem, which had been moved from the high altar to the front of the choir.⁸ Another eighteenth-century description of the statue records that it was then placed "above the entrance to the choir." By the early twentieth century the Virgin was standing in a central niche on the north wall of the nave. It is clearly and happily apparent, therefore, that our statue is one of the rare medieval Madonnas for which there is documentation.

Although the statue is also carved on its back side, it probably was not intended to be seen all around, as there are two metal bars by which it was once attached to a wall, as well as a long vertical slot cut in the middle of the back. There are traces of gilding on the hair, the belt, and the veil of the Virgin, as well as stains to indicate that there was a pattern painted on the border of her garments. (The modern statue at Diest has modern gilding and no traces of old paint.)

It is no surprise to find that the Museum's statue, coming as it does from Diest, is related to sculptures of the middle Meuse valley and that in fact it belongs to a closely knit group, all probably carved in the same regional workshop and some even by the same hand. The group consists of six statuettes, all of about the same size, a small relief, and two life-size figures of the Madonna, all in marble, as well as a large-scale wood

6. F. J. E. Raymaekers, *Het Kerkelijk en Liefdadig Diest (Geschiedenis der Kerken, Kapellen, Kloosters, Liefdadige Gestichten, Enz.)* (Louvain, 1870) p. 450 (S. Beghuinarum Be Katine de Diest, from 1331 on), identifies the statue as that bought in 1345 by the head of the Beguines of Diest and described in the accounts of that year: "ITEM de una ymagine lapidis alabastris . . . 2 lb. gross. antiquorum."

7. Raymaekers, *Diest*, p. 450.

8. "Haec imago divae virginis ex alabastro lapide sculpta, modo posita est ante chorum supra ostium chori" (Raymaekers, *Diest*, p. 450).

9. R. Koechlin, "La Sculpture belge et les influences françaises aux XIII^e et XIV^e siècles," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 45 (1903) pp. 338, 339. Konrad, *Meisterwerke*, pp. 12, 13. Devigne, *Sculpture*, pp.

relief. Koechlin, Konrad, and Devigne among others have alluded to various statues in the group and seen their similarities.⁹

Two sculptures of this group, now in the Metropolitan Museum (Figures 5 and 6), are said to have been owned by a private collector of Le Huy and to have come from the church of Notre-Dame in that town.¹⁰ Their later history is fairly well recorded. They appeared in the sales of the Stein collection (Paris, 1886) and of the John Edward Taylor collection (London, 1912) before their acquisition by the American collector Arabella Huntington.¹¹ In 1926 they were given to the Museum by her son, Archer M. Huntington, who founded the Hispanic Society of America and formed its famous collection of Spanish art.

The sculptures must have originally stood on both sides of a Crucifixion, since one of them represents the Virgin fainting at the foot of the cross and the other the Centurion, raising his arm in testimony toward the crucified Christ, now missing. The back sides of both reliefs are flat and uncarved to allow them to be attached, probably to an altar retable in the church.

The provenance of Huy is an entirely credible one for these sculptures, since they evolve from other Mosan figures, in particular from the carving on the tympanum of the Bethlehem portal of Huy (Figure 7) adjacent to the same church from which the sculptures are said to have come. John's narrow shoulders, the drapery fall from his left arm, and the drapery pockets formed by the folds on the front of the Virgin's mantle repeat those on the figures of the tympanum. The facial types are also similar, and so is the armor worn by the soldiers in the right-hand sculpture and in the Mas-

58, 66, 67, and figs. 78–81, describes and illustrates most of these figures (without stressing their close relation).

10. Acc. nos. 26.101.6, 26.101.7. H. 22 in. (56 cm.) and 26 in. (66 cm.), respectively. Joseph Destrée, "Groupes en albâtre provenant de l'église collégiale de Huy," *Bulletin de l'Institut archéologique liégeois* 41 (1911) pp. 75–80, pl. 1. *Idem*, "À propos des deux groupes en albâtre de l'église collégiale de Huy," *Chronique archéologique du Pays de Liège* 7 (1912) p. 85. Devigne, *Sculpture*, p. 58. J. Breck, "A Gift of Tapestries and Sculpture," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 21 (1926) pp. 142–146.

11. Sale catalogue of John Edward Taylor collection at Christie's, London, July 1912, no. 195, notes previous sale in Stein collection. A. Hyatt Mayor, President of the Hispanic Society, believes that Mr. Archer Huntington's mother probably acquired them before they passed into the possession of her son.



FIGURE 6

The Centurion and soldiers, from Huy. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, gift of Archer M. Huntington, in memory of his father, Collis Potter Huntington, 26.101.7

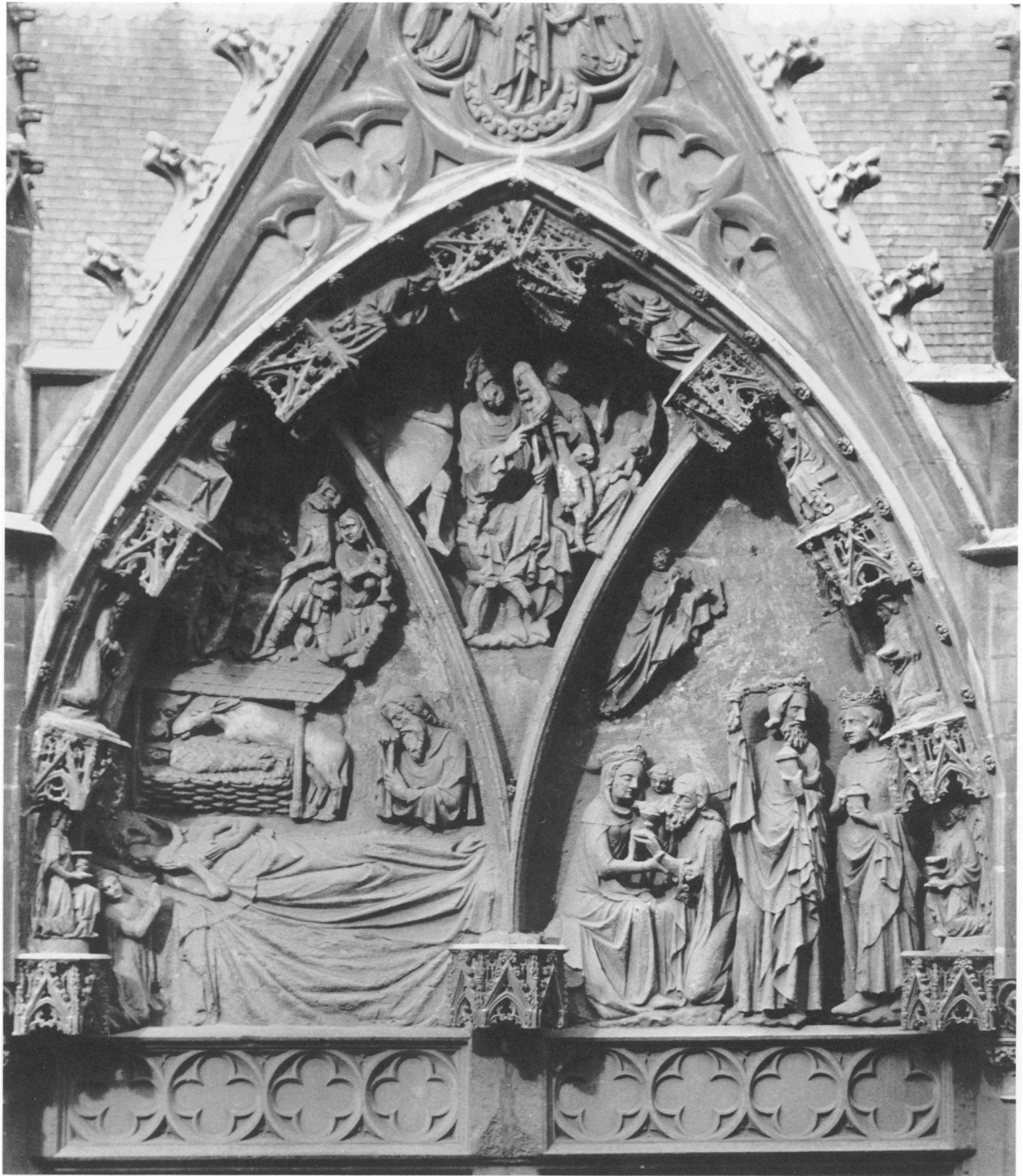


FIGURE 7
Tympanum of the Bethlehem portal, Huy (photo: ACL, Brussels)

FIGURE 8
The Entombment of Christ.
Chapelle du Calvaire, Liège
(photo: ACL, Brussels)



sacre of the Innocents at the top of the tympanum. The tympanum, therefore, must have been known to the sculptor who made the two Crucifixion sculptures. Since the present church was begun only in 1311, the portal could be considerably later in date, but probably earlier than 1345 when the Diest Virgin was made.¹²

Even closer comparisons can be made between the drapery folds and faces of the two Crucifixion sculptures and those of a small relief of the Entombment of Christ placed in the modern Chapelle du Calvaire at Liège, also on the Meuse just northeast of Huy (Figure 8). It too may have come from a retable depicting the Passion.

Two figures of the group were known only by casts

in the Brussels Museum (Figures 9 and 10),¹³ until both recently turned up on the art market. They have been acquired by the Dayton Art Institute. The first, one of the Magi (Figure 11) from an Adoration of the Magi, seems patterned in costume and facial type after the two standing Magi of the Adoration scene on the Bethlehem portal (Figure 13). The other (Figure 12) is a standing Virgin from an Annunciation, especially close to the Diest and Huy Virgins in its facial type (Figures 3, 14).¹⁴ In the Brussels Museum catalogue both of the casts are called "liégeois work," thus attesting to their Mosan provenance. Their flat backs and their size suggest that they too were once part of altar retables.

12. Various dates for the portal have been proposed. J. J. van Ysendyck, *Documents classés de l'art dans les Pays-Bas III* (Antwerp, 1886–1887) pl. 1, gives the thirteenth century. J. Helbig, *La Sculpture et les arts plastiques au pays de Liège et sur les bords de la Meuse* (Bruges, 1890) p. 72, gives the first half of the fourteenth century. E. Marchal, *La Sculpture et les chefs-d'œuvre de l'orfèvrerie belges* (Brussels, 1895) p. 238, reports finding a date, 1536, which obviously refers to a later addition to the door, since removed. J. Baum, "Die lütticher Bildnerkunst im 14. Jahrhundert," *Belgische Kunstdenkmäler* (Munich, 1923) I, p. 174, gives the second half of the fourteenth century. Koechlin, "Sculpture belge," pp. 341, 343, gives the fourteenth century. Canon H. Demaret, *La collégiale Notre-Dame à Huy. Notes et documents* (Huy, 1921), dates the doorway in the thirteenth century and believes it was moved in the fourteenth century from the north transept to its present location near the

chevet. Devigne, *Sculpture*, pp. 65, 66, gives the last quarter of the fourteenth century.

13. H. Rousseau, *Musées Royaux du Cinquantenaire, Bruxelles. III^e section (Pavillon Nord) Catalogue sommaire des moulages* (Brussels, 1926) nos. v. 3018-1 (1154) and v. 3018-2 (1155), lists "un roi mage" and "une sainte portant un livre; figures debout en demi-bosse, paraissant provenir d'un retable liégeois, XIV^e siècle." Devigne, *Sculpture*, pl. xviii, nos. 78, 81, also publishes these two casts. Koechlin, "Sculpture belge," p. 338, first published these two casts along with the seated Virgin in the Van den Bergh Museum, Antwerp, and the Virgin in the Lille Museum, as all coming from one group.

14. Bruce H. Evans, "A Medieval Marble Virgin Annunciate," *Dayton Art Institute Bulletin* 26 (1967) pp. 1–6. The Virgin, acc. no. 67.53. H. 22 1/4 in. (56.5 cm.). The Magi, acc. no. 68.4. H. 22 in. (56 cm.).



FIGURE 9
Cast of one of the Magi. Brussels
Museum



FIGURE 10
Cast of the Virgin Annunciate.
Brussels Museum



FIGURE 11
One of the Magi, original of the
cast in Figure 9. Dayton
Art Institute, 68.4



FIGURE 12
Virgin Annunciate, original of the
cast in Figure 10. Dayton Art
Institute, 67.53

FIGURE 13

Adoration of the Magi, detail from the tympanum of the Bethlehem portal, Huy, shown in Figure 7 (photo: ACL, Brussels)

In the Mayer van den Bergh Museum of Antwerp is a seated Virgin, with the Child standing in her lap, which comes from the church of St. Pierre, at St. Trond, in the diocese of Liège.¹⁵ (Figure 15.) The position of the Child suggests that he is looking at other figures, now lost, but which must have represented the Magi. Perhaps the Dayton Magus is one of these lost figures, as Devigne has surmised. It is even possible that both figures were once in the same collection, that of Carlo Micheli¹⁶ and that they could have come from the same original source, the church at St. Trond. In fact, the posture of the Virgin, as well as her drapery and her facial type, seems to be derived from the Virgin of the Adoration of the Magi on the Bethlehem portal (Figure 16). Koechlin remarked on the facial type as a mark of a distinct atelier, and Devigne linked the atelier to the Huy portal.¹⁷ The face is also close to that of the Diest Virgin.

One of the finest of the group is a nursing Virgin and Child (Figure 17), since 1888 in the Lille Museum and said to have come from Bailleul, northwest of Lille, but doubtless originating in the Meuse valley like the

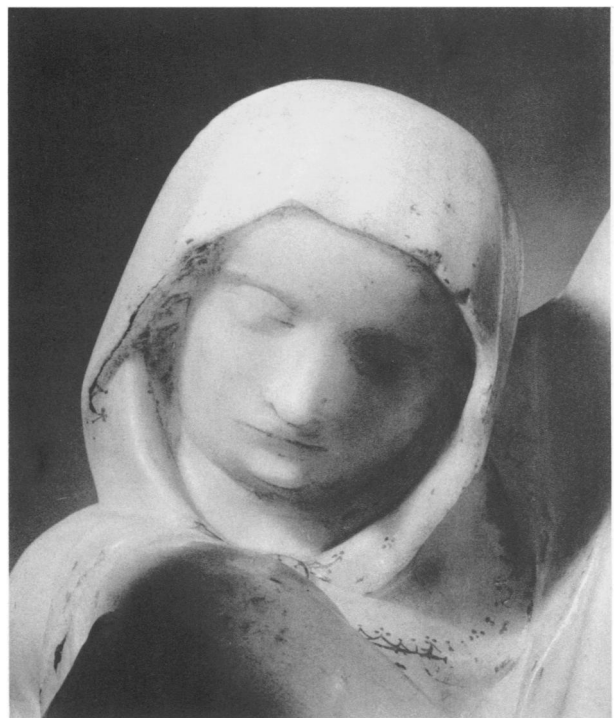
15. Devigne, *Sculpture*, p. 66, pl. xviii, no. 79.

16. Evans, *Dayton Bulletin*, pp. 5, 6, makes this suggestion. Micheli, who died about 1895, was the head of the cast atelier at the Louvre and could have made the casts both of the Antwerp seated Virgin and the Dayton standing Virgin and Magus. For the Micheli collection, see Jozef Coe, "La Collection Micheli au musée Mayer van den Bergh," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 107 (1965) pp. 344 ff.

17. Koechlin, "Sculpture belge," p. 338, and Devigne, *Sculpture*, p. 66.

FIGURE 14

Detail of the Metropolitan's St. John and the Virgin, shown in Figure 5



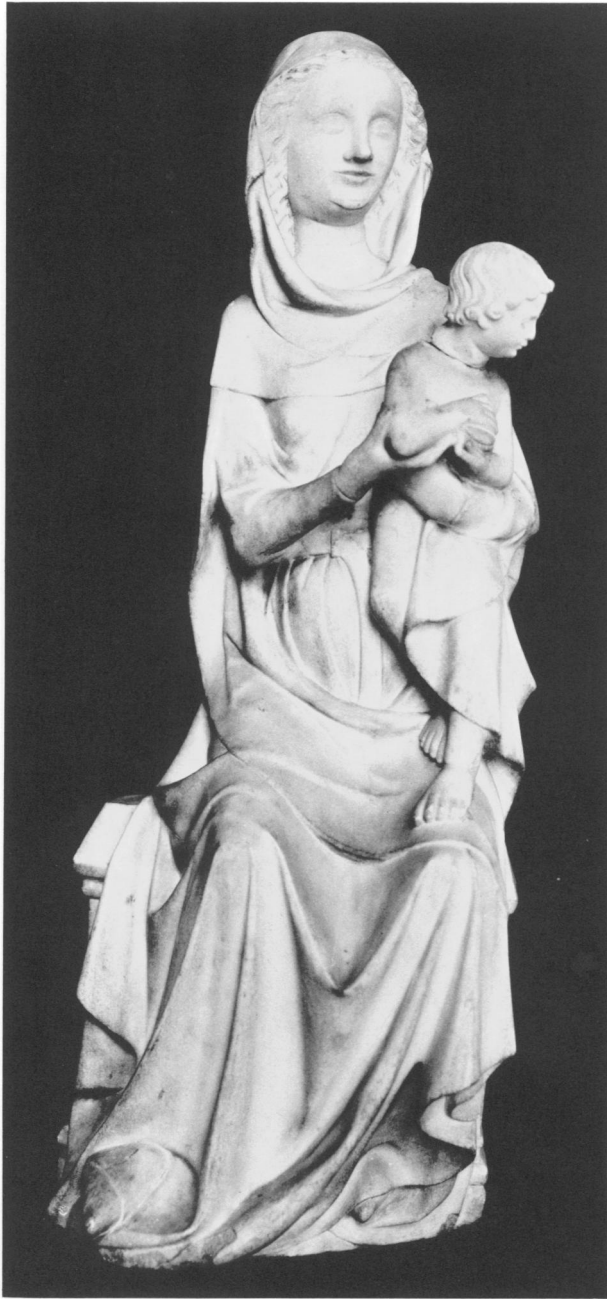


FIGURE 15
Virgin and Child. Mayer van den Bergh Museum, Antwerp (photo: ACL, Brussels)

FIGURE 16
Adoration of the Magi, detail from the tympanum of the Bethlehem portal, Huy, shown in Figure 7 (photo: ACL, Brussels)

rest.¹⁸ The Virgin's face is the closest to that of the Diest Virgin, but the folds do not have their sharpness and are softer and rounder.

There are other Mosan sculptures in the Museum in the same general style and of about the same scale. One of them, said to have come from the *beguinage* of Namur and now in the Cloisters Collection, is a seated king (Figure 18).¹⁹ Another represents a Holy Woman

18. H. 25½ in. (64 cm.). Exhibited in Paris at the Petit Palais. See the catalogue *La Vierge dans l'art français* (1950) no. 161, fig. 27. Here and in P. Vitry and G. Brière, *Documents de sculpture française du moyen âge* (Paris [1904]) pl. xcvi, 1, the statue is called French. M. Pinchart of Lille bought the figure before 1870 from a dealer who said it came from Bailleul nearby, but it must have come originally from the region of the Meuse. See J. Casier and P. Bergmans, *L'art ancien dans les Flandres (Région de l'Escaut)*. *Mémorial de l'Exposition rétrospective organisée à Gand en 1913*, I (Brussels, 1914) cat. no. 1027, pp. 44-45, pl. iv, and bibliography. See also Koechlin, "Sculpture belge," p. 338; Devigne, *Sculpture*, p. 66; and Konrad, *Meisterwerke*, p. 12.

19. Acc. no. 26.63.34. H. 19 in. (48.2 cm.). The head may be later in date.





FIGURE 17
Virgin and Child. Lille Museum (photo: ACL,
Brussels)

FIGURE 18
Seated king. The Metropolitan Museum of Art,
the Cloisters Collection, 26.63.34

with an ointment jar.²⁰ It may be Flemish or Mosan, and it has some resemblance to a kneeling donor in the Van den Bergh Museum, Antwerp. In the Museum of Art of the University of Michigan is a third Mosan figure with some resemblances to those of our workshop. Philippe Verdier has convincingly compared the Michigan figure to four other statuettes of apostles shown in the 1905 exposition at Liège, two of them coming from the local episcopal museum.²¹ Since he derives the style of these figures from the Huy portal and calls them Mosan, it is difficult to understand Verdier's

20. Acc. no. 21.171. H. 15¾ in. (40 cm.). It is probably from an Entombment group or from a scene of the Marys at the Easter Sepulcher.

21. P. Verdier, *The International Style, The Arts in Europe around 1400*, October 23–December 2, 1962, the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, cat. no. 94, pl. LXXVII, and M. G. Terme, *L'Art ancien au pays de Liège. Mobilier et sculptures de l'exposition universelle de Liège* (1905) nos. 1350; 1350, pl. 2.





FIGURE 19
Virgin and Child. Antwerp Cathedral (photo:
ACL, Brussels)

suggestion that they were made by a workshop in Lille in the time of Philip the Bold, Duke of Burgundy (1364–1404). Even assuming a migrant Mosan workshop active in Lille, this dating is too late and the provenance of related sculptures too different to accept the hypothesis.

Several other pieces which are generally similar to those of the group exist in the Netherlands and have been kindly pointed out to me by Dr. Jaap van Leeuwenberg of the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. They are either Mosan in origin or made under Mosan influence.

There is, in addition to these smaller scaled figures, a life-size statue of the Virgin and Child closely related to the Diest Virgin in the arrangement of the drapery, in the facial type, and in the Child. It is in a chapel of the ambulatory of Antwerp Cathedral (Figures 19 and 20). Another Virgin at Orval in southeastern Belgium, which is said to be of plaster cement,²² is a modern copy of the Antwerp statue. Casts of the Antwerp Virgin are indeed known to have been made.²³ The Antwerp Virgin itself, it must be admitted, looks remarkably fresh; perhaps it was overcleaned when the casts were made. It was not apparently recorded before 1880 when it was exhibited in Brussels. It is said to have come from “a former church of Liège.”²⁴ Often exhibited²⁵ and published since then,

22. Didier kindly writes that “la Vierge d’Orval est une copie récente, en ciment ou en pierre reconstituée, de la Vierge d’Anvers.”

23. Rousseau, *Catalogue sommaire des moulages*, p. 164, no. 1682, records one cast in the Brussels Museum.

24. H. about 50 in. (about 127 cm.). In the *Catalogue officiel de l’Exposition Nationale, IV^e section—Industries d’art en Belgique antérieure au XIX^e siècle* (Brussels, 1880) B 446, it is described: “La Vierge portant l’Enfant Jésus. Marbre XIII^e siècle. Provient d’une ancienne église de Liège. Cathédrale d’Anvers.” The *Guide Bleu* for Belgium (1958 ed.) p. 145, is even more explicit: “Vierge en marbre provenant de l’ancienne cathédrale Saint-Lambert, de Liège (1360 env.).” J. J. van Ysendyck, *Documents classés de l’art dans les Pays-Bas* (Antwerp, 1881–1889) p. 87, specifically reaffirms the Liège origin of the statue, again without giving his source. See also Konrad, *Meisterwerke*, pp. 12 and II.

25. It was exhibited again in Brussels and Paris in 1882 (*L’Art ancien à l’exposition nationale belge*, with illustration opposite p. 272); in Antwerp in 1948 (A. Jansen and C. Van Herck, *Kerkelijke Kunstschatten* [Antwerp, 1949] II, p. 51, cat. no. 236); in Liège in 1951 (*Art mosan et arts anciens du pays de Liège*, no. 434); again in Paris in 1951–1952 (*Trésors d’art de la vallée de la Meuse*, no. 180); and in Antwerp in 1954 (F. Baudouin, *De Madonna in de Kunst. Catalogus no. 138, Kon. Museum voor Schone Kunsten*). In Paris in 1968, *L’Europe gothique XII^e–XIV^e siècles*, Musée du Louvre, no. 165, bibliog.



FIGURE 20
Detail of the Virgin and Child shown in Figure 19 (photo: ACL, Brussels)

FIGURE 21
Front view of the Metropolitan's Virgin and Child from Diest, shown in Figure 1

FIGURE 22
Side view of the Metropolitan's Virgin and Child

the statue is clearly Mosan in style and can be considered a product of our workshop. Koechlin ²⁶ called her a typical "Vierge à la française," but Vöge²⁷ was probably more correct in relating her to French prototypes rather than in attributing her to a French workshop. Her supposed relation to a Virgin at Hal is hard to see.²⁸ Though there are superficial resemblances between our group and German sculpture, these may merely indicate parallel developments from a common French model.²⁹

The drapery of the Antwerp Virgin lacks some of the more sober architectural verticality of our Diest Virgin (Figures 21 and 22). And, like the Lille Virgin, she is

26. Koechlin, "Sculpture belge," p. 339.

27. Wilhelm Vöge, "Die Madonna der Sammlung Oppenheim," *Jahrbuch der königlich preussischen Kunstsammlungen* 29 (1908) pp. 217-219.

28. Georg Troescher, *Die burgundische Plastik des ausgehenden Mittelalters* (Frankfurt am Main, 1940) p. 72, also suggests some influence from the St. Catherine of Courtrai by Beauneveu. For the supposed relation to Hal and to German sculpture, see also bibliography quoted by Konrad, *Meisterwerke*, p. II.

29. Konrad, *Meisterwerke*, pp. 11-14, cites the Antwerp Virgin as having a more direct relation with Lorraine and Cologne sculpture than with that of Paris and as being slightly earlier than the Diest Virgin. There is some parallelism in posture between Antwerp and some Cologne sculpture but no true similarity.





FIGURE 23
Virgin and mourners from a Crucifixion group.
Church in Louviers, Normandy (photo: Archives
Photographiques)

somewhat more flexible in posture, bending her right leg so that her knee projects with the affected movement more common to later fourteenth-century sculpture. The swing of her body to one side has some of the exaggeration found in two Virgins of northern Lorraine, at Longuyon and at Munster, and in another Virgin at Saint-Sauveur-lès-Bray. Her hands are softer and less stiff. She probably, therefore, was done at a later time.

All of the sculptures so far discussed are of marble, but there are two large wood reliefs from a Crucifixion



FIGURE 24
Annunciate Virgin. La Gleize (photo: ACL, Brus-
sels)

group in the church at Louviers in Normandy that can be attributed to the same workshop. The left-hand group shows the Virgin and St. John with the Holy Women (Figure 23), the right-hand group the Centurion and the soldiers. The drapery style, the unusual facial types of the women and the men, including the soldiers, the carving of the hair, the modeling of the hands, and even the position of John's extended right thumb, all of these features are exactly the same as in other sculptures of our group. In the companion group of the Centurion and soldiers there are also details of

the armor similar to those of the Huy Crucifixion group in New York. The sculpture has been shown in at least four exhibitions since 1931, the last time in Cleveland in 1966–1967, and always labeled as French,³⁰ but there can be no doubt that it is by the same Mosan workshop which produced the other sculptures of our group. Certainly the style of the Louviers reliefs is unlike other Norman or indeed other French sculpture, and the comparisons to Crucifixion reliefs at St. Thibault in Burgundy or in the Van den Bergh Museum, Antwerp, or to French ivory carvings, has no real validity beyond a general similarity due to a contemporary date.³¹

Our group can be ascribed to not more than two masters probably active in the same workshop. One hand may have done the Diest, the Lille, and the two Antwerp Madonnas, and another most of the smaller sculptures, including the Museum's two Crucifixion



FIGURE 25
Coronation of the Virgin, from Walcourt. Musée des Arts Anciens, Namur (photo: ACL, Brussels)

sculptures from Huy. The workshop is surely to be located in the middle Meuse valley. Similar sculpture in and around Liège, Namur, and Huy, especially the Bethlehem portal, as well as the provenance of most of the pieces, prove this source.

The workshop was evidently not an isolated one, since there are other sculptures from the Meuse valley, a number in the museums of Liège and Namur, that have general similarities to those of our group. Among them is a wood Annunciate Virgin from La Gleize (Figure 24) and two wood statues of Mark and Luke, all with many resemblances to our workshop in the folds, the arrangements of the drapery, and the faces.

Other indications prove that the workshop was native to the Meuse valley. One finds the same widely spaced bulging eyes, the wide mouth and double chin of the Virgin, and the same bearded male heads, not only on the Bethlehem portal but appearing earlier on sculpture of the Coronation of the Virgin from the north porch of the collegiate church at Walcourt, now in the Musée des Arts Anciens at Namur (Figure 25), and on the Resurrection of Christ from the tympanum of the church of the Holy Cross at Liège and now in the Musée Diocésain of Liège.³²

A curious and fascinating series of sculptures in northern Italy are so close to those of our group that it has been suggested by Vöge, Middeldorf, and Weinberger either that Mosan sculptors went to Italy or, what is less likely, that some Italian sculptor trained in the Meuse valley went back home.³³ The angel and the Virgin of an Annunciation in the cathedral baptistery

30. In 1931 in Rouen, in 1934 and 1950 in Paris, and in 1966–1967 in Cleveland. See the catalogue of plates published with a preface by Paul Vitry and with notices by Fernand Guey and Jean Lafond, *Exposition d'art religieux ancien, mai–juin 1931, V^e centenaire de Jeanne d'Arc* (Rouen, 1932) pl. xxx of both reliefs; the catalogue *La Passion de Christ dans l'art français* (Paris, 1934) no. 52, illustrated, at the Musée du Trocadéro and the Sainte-Chapelle; the catalogue *La Vierge dans l'art français* (Paris, 1950) no. 172, pl. 29, at the Petit Palais; and the catalogue by William D. Wixom, *Treasures from Medieval France* (Cleveland, 1967) no. vi-13 on pp. 240 and 375.

31. See *Exposition*, Rouen, notice pp. 16, 51.

32. Devigne, *Sculpture*, pp. 51, 60, pls. xiv, xvi.

33. Vöge, *Jahrbuch*, pp. 217–219. U. Middeldorf and M. Weinberger, "Französische Figuren des frühen 14. Jahrhunderts in Toscana," *Pantheon* 1 (1928) pp. 187–190, and M. Weinberger, "Remarks on the Role of French Models within the Evolution of Gothic Tuscan Sculpture," *Romanesque and Gothic Art I* (International Congress of the History of Art, New York, 1963) p. 203.



FIGURE 26
Gabriel and the Virgin of the Annunciation.
Cathedral baptistery, Carrara

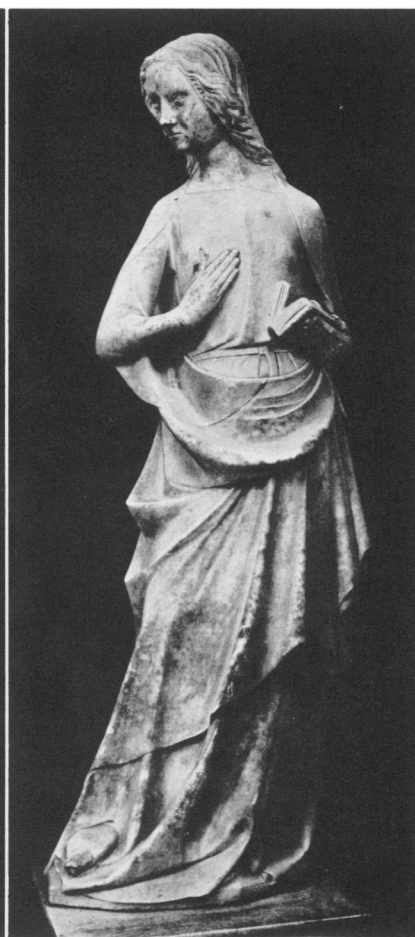


FIGURE 27
Virgin and Child, from Pisa. State Museums,
Berlin, Inv. 2301

of Carrara (Figure 26) have many trademarks that ally them closely to the group: the sharply funneled columnar folds below the large pocket of drapery in front of the Virgin,³⁴ the bent forefinger of the angel, the flattened folds of his garment around his neck, and the drapery fall below his hand and his face. The Carrara Virgin is comparable to the Annunciate Virgin now in Dayton and the Carrara John to the John of the Crucifixion group in our Museum. The most definite proof of the presence of a link between such Italian sculpture and the middle Meuse is given by a marble Virgin and Child from Pisa, now in the Berlin Museum (Figure 27), which is clearly modeled after the Diest and Antwerp Virgins.³⁵

There are also close connections between fourteenth-century sculptures of the Meuse valley and those of the region of Paris. Two of the most famous *tombiers*, or tomb carvers, of the period working in France came from the Meuse: Pépin de Huy and, later in the century, Jean de Liège. It was Jean who carved the head of Marie de France, a daughter of Charles IV, which comes from her lost funeral effigy in St. Denis and is now in the Museum (Figure 28). The face shows the subtle modeling characteristic of this great Mosan

34. Such abrupt vertical folds are typical of Mosan fourteenth-century sculpture. See the statue of St. Christopher at Hannut, for example. Devigne, *Sculpture*, pl. XIII.

35. Vöge, *Jahrbuch*, pp. 217, 218.

sculptor. The royal effigy of Charles IV, made about the time of his death in 1328 for his tomb in the abbey church of St. Denis (Figure 29), could well have been carved by one of the Mosan sculptors then active in Paris.³⁶ The sculpture has an arrangement of tubular drapery folds similar to those hanging down below the Child of the Diest Virgin; the eyes also show some similarity.

Jeanne d'Évreux, the widow of Charles, was a great patroness of the arts throughout most of the fourteenth century. The statue of Notre-Dame-la-Blanche that Jeanne d'Évreux ordered in 1340 for her chapel at St. Denis and which is now at Magny-en-Vexin (Figures 30, 31) has a system of drapery folds similar to those of the Diest Virgin and the effigy of Charles IV, and it may also be by a Mosan sculptor.³⁷ The same workshops could have produced such a marble Virgin and the royal effigies, to judge by their similarities of style.

Many other parallels exist between the Magny and the Diest Virgins.³⁸ The postures of both the Virgin and the Child are similar. The Magny Virgin's hair has the same kind of wave. The half-nude Child is carried



FIGURE 28
Head of Marie de France, from St. Denis. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, gift of George Blumenthal, 41.100.132

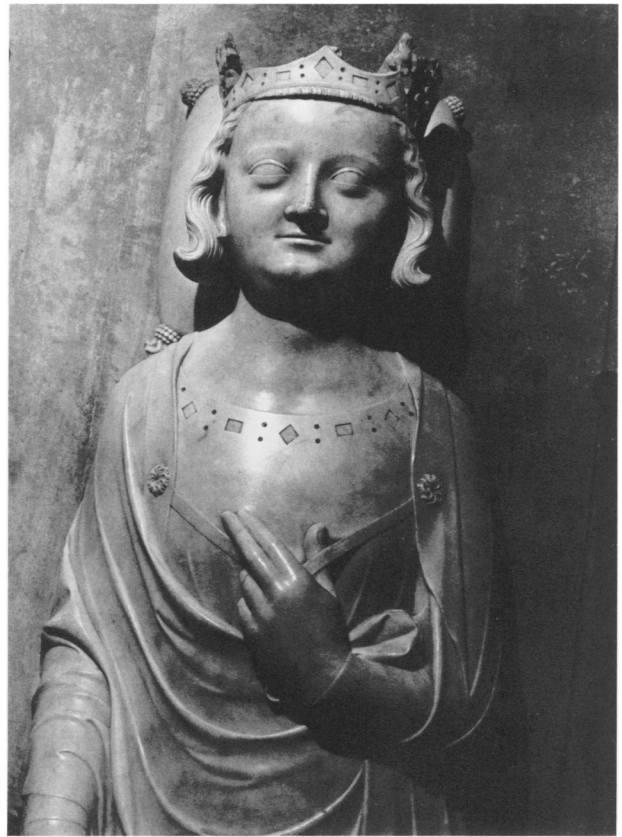


FIGURE 29
Charles IV. St. Denis (photo: Archives Photographiques)

the same way, and he also holds a bird on his left knee pecking his finger. The Virgin's left forefinger is also slightly flexed. She too has dimples at the bases of her fingers where the joints should be. In her right hand she also carries a rusticated stump of branch open at the top, probably to receive a flowering staff, now

36. G. Brière and P. Vitry, *L'Église de Saint-Denis* (Paris, 1948) pp. 79–80. M. Pierre Pradel of the Louvre has been studying the oeuvre of Jean de Liège for many years.

37. Georges Huard, "Communication sur la Vierge de Magny-en-Vexin," *Bulletin de la Société nationale des Antiquaires de France*, 1938, séance du 16 février, has conclusively identified this Virgin after drawings by Lenoir made at the time of the Revolution. The Virgin and Child now at St.-Germain-des-Prés, Paris, usually said to be from St. Denis, he has proved to be from Notre-Dame, Paris.

38. Vöge, *Jahrbuch*, p. 218, relates the Antwerp Virgin to the Magny Virgin, and Baum, "Lütticher Bildnerkunst," p. 166, relates a Mosan Virgin and Child at St. Servatius, Liège, to the Magny Virgin. The St. Servatius Virgin has a general resemblance to the Diest Virgin.



FIGURE 30

Virgin and Child, from St. Denis. Church in Magny-en-Vexin (photo: Archives Photographiques)

FIGURE 31

Side view of the Virgin and Child shown in Figure 30 (photo: Claude Schaefer)

missing, which would perhaps have been made of precious metal. The arrangement of the folds of her gown around her feet are quite similar to those of the Diest Virgin. The relative size of the Virgin's head to her body is the same in both statues. Surely the sculptor of the Diest Virgin knew either the Magny Virgin or one like her.

The fact that the Magny Virgin may have been carved by a Mosan sculptor in no way implies that it derives from earlier Mosan sculpture. On the contrary, it follows earlier French Virgins, such as the so-called Virgin of Paris, now placed in the crossing of the cathedral of Notre-Dame. The Magny Virgin was one of four or five statues which may be considered the archetypes for the great majority of French Madonnas of the fourteenth century.³⁹ Two of the many Madonnas that may be said to follow in her train are in the Museum, one said to come from Cernay-lès-Reims, and the other possibly from southern France. It was natural, therefore, for the Diest sculptor to have been influenced by so famous an archetype, made five years earlier.

The attitude of the Child of the Diest Virgin, who

reaches out to touch his mother's cheek, may have been adopted from another French Madonna now in the Louvre, given to St. Denis by Jeanne d'Évreux, a silver statuette made in 1339.⁴⁰ This iconography was ultimately derived from Byzantine art through Italian sources.

The drapery formula of the Diest Virgin follows the pattern of the Magny Virgin but accentuates the abrupt transition between the large pocket fold of the cloak and the severely vertical columnar folds beneath. A similar kind of exaggeration of a French model also occurs in Germanic sculpture at Freiburg, Strasbourg, and elsewhere.

Whatever foreign influences there were upon it, however, fourteenth-century Mosan sculpture had its distinctive style. If the Meuse valley was no longer the dominating artistic center it had been in the twelfth century, the great period of its enamelers and metalworkers, it still could produce sculpture worthy of the name Mosan. Surely a province that supplied the French capital with some of its leading sculptors was not deficient itself in the art.

39. The other archetypes certainly include the Virgin and Child originally from a side portal and now within Notre-Dame, Paris, the Coutances Virgin, the Virgin from Notre-Dame now at St.-Germain-des-Prés, and the silver statuette given by Jeanne d'Évreux to St. Denis in 1339, now in the Louvre.

40. The inscription on the base of the statuette gives the donor and date: "Cette ymage dona ceans ma dame la Reine Jehē devreux, Royne de France et de Navarre, compaigne du Roy Charles, le xxvii jour d'avril l'an mcccxxxix."