

A Fifteenth-Century Virgin and Child Attributed to Claux de Werve

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IN MEMORY OF PIERRE QUARRÉ (1909–1980)

A MONUMENTAL SCULPTURE of the Virgin and Child from Burgundy (Figure 1), now in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, was first attributed to Claux de Werve (d. 1439) by the late Pierre Quarré, curator in chief of the Musées de Dijon and a leading authority on Burgundian sculpture. The statue is undoubtedly the finest example of Burgundian Gothic sculpture owned by the Museum. My purpose here is to present a fuller study of it than has hitherto been attempted, and to explore its historical and stylistic context in the light of Quarré's attribution.¹

The statue comes from the convent of the Poor

Clares in the small town of Poligny,² which is set beneath the foothills of the Jura Mountains in the picturesque and fertile countryside of the Franche-Comté. Poligny was once an important stronghold of the dukes of Burgundy, and the convent, founded under the leadership of St. Colette (1381–1447),³ lies on a quiet street directly below the site of the old ducal castle.

Colette, whose work as a reformer of the Poor Clares made her known throughout France, and particularly in Burgundy and its immense fiefdoms (including the Low Countries and the Franche-Comté),

1. Publications of the statue include: Joseph Breck, "A Late Gothic Sculpture," *MMAB* 28 (1933) pp. 74–76, cover ill.; James J. Rorimer, "Une Statue bourguignonne du XVe siècle au Metropolitan Museum de New York," *Bulletin Monumental* 97 (1938) pp. 112–116; idem, "Late Medieval Sculpture from the Byways of Burgundy," *MMAB* n.s. 9 (1951) p. 183; Theodor Müller, *Sculpture in the Netherlands, Germany, France, and Spain, 1400 to 1500* (Harmondsworth, 1966) p. 57, pl. 65; Thomas P. F. Hoving, "Director's Choice," *MMAB* n.s. 28 (1970) pp. 212, 213; Pierre Quarré, "La Sculpture bourguignonne au XVe siècle de Claus Sluter à Antoine le Moiturier," *Monuments Historiques de la France* 2 (1973) p. 42; idem, "Les Statues de Claus de Werve en Franche-Comté," *Archéologie occitane: Moyen-Age et Epoque Moderne—Actes du 99e Congrès National des Sociétés Savantes* 2 (1974) pp. 126–127; idem, *Claux de Werve et la sculpture bourguignonne dans le premier tiers du XVe siècle*, exh. cat. (Dijon, 1976) p. 10; Jacques Baudoin, *La Sculpture flamboyante: Les Grands Imagiers d'occident* (Nonette, Puy-de-Dôme, 1983) p. 166. See also Pierre Camp, "Recherches sur les 'imageurs' bourguignons de la fin du Moyen-Age," mimeographed manuscript (Gray, [1983]) I, p. 57. Jacqueline Boccador, in *Statuaire médiévale en France de 1400 à 1530* (Zug, 1974) I, p. 178, attributes the statue to a later date.

2. Among the many sources that mention the convent, the

following can be cited: Jacques-Théodore Bizouard, *Histoire de Sainte-Colette et des Clarisses en Franche-Comté, d'après des documents inédits* (Besançon, 1888) esp. pp. 97–104, 110, 365; François-Félix Chevalier, *Mémoires historiques sur la ville et la seigneurie de Poligny* (Lons-le-Saunier, 1769) II, pp. 159–174; Jacques Fodéré, *Narration historique et topographique des convents de l'ordre Saint-François et monastères Sainte-Claire, érigés en la province anciennement appelée de Bourgogne, à présent de Saint-Bonaventure* (Lyons, 1619) pp. 41–45; Pierre-André Pidoux de la Maduère, *Mon Vieux Poligny: Souvenirs* (Dijon, 1932) pp. 17, 22–23, 59, 60, 63–65, 67, 68; Alphonse Rousset, *Dictionnaire géographique, historique, et statistique des communes de la Franche-Comté* (Lons-le-Saunier, 1857; repr. Paris, 1969) V, pp. 246–254, 292–294; Jules de Trévillers, *Sequania monastica: Dictionnaire des abbayes, prieurés, couvents, collèges et hôpitaux conventuels, hermitages de Franche-Comté et du diocèse de Besançon antérieurs à 1790* (Vesoul, [1950]) p. 26.

3. Born Nicolette Boëlet or Boylet, she was an older contemporary of St. Joan of Arc, although the two women are not known to have ever met. For Colette's life see: *Acta Sanctorum Martii a Joanne Bollando S.J.*, March 6 (Venice, 1735) pp. 532–627; Baudet and Chaussin, *Vies des saints et des bienheureux selon l'ordre du calendrier avec l'histoire des fêtes* (Paris, 1941) III, pp.

was the daughter of a carpenter attached to the abbey of Corbie in Picardy, near Amiens. As a recluse in her home town, she had visions of the Virgin and SS. Francis and Clare, who urged her to carry out needed reforms in the Franciscan order.⁴ She attracted the attention of Henri de Baume, a Franciscan friar who became her confessor and whose influence, as a member of a powerful seigneurial family in the Franche-Comté, later drew her to Poligny. Through him, she met Blanche of Savoy, countess of Geneva, and other leading figures of the Franche-Comté, who arranged an audience with Pope Benedict XIII. The pope was so impressed with Colette that he himself received her vows as a Franciscan nun and named her abbess and mother in perpetuity of the reformed order of St. Francis.⁵ Before she died in Ghent at the age of sixty-six, St. Colette had founded seventeen new Franciscan convents—Poligny among them—and had reformed numerous existing ones. She seems to have won the affection and veneration of all, and to have numbered among her devoted supporters many of the great families of her time.

The convent of Poligny was a gift in 1415 (see Appendix 1) from John the Fearless (Jean sans Peur), second Valois duke of Burgundy (1404–19), made at the instigation of his wife, Margaret of Bavaria, who depended upon Colette as her spiritual adviser.⁶ At the convent prayers were to be offered continually on behalf of the duke, for Margaret was increasingly alarmed at the series of deepening crises facing John and the Burgundian state. In 1414, civil war had broken out anew between John and his Armagnac foes, who captured and pillaged a number of the duke's cities in northern France. The English, under Henry V, took advantage of this dangerous moment to renew the Hundred Years' War by invading France and inflicting a disastrous defeat on the French at Agincourt. John had meantime been plotting with the English against the Armagnacs. Margaret's worst fears were realized when, on September 10, 1419, the duke was assassinated.⁷

In the absence of any written record, it is reasonable to suppose that the statue of the Virgin and Child was, like the convent, a ducal gift. A seventeenth-century document explicitly states that the duke and duchess supplied the convent with everything necessary according to the pleasure of Colette, "our Beloved Mother," because they wished to be the

sole founders⁸ and to make a gift worthy of their high rank. The statue was probably commissioned between June 1415, when John donated the land and buildings, and October 1417, when St. Colette installed her nuns in the nearly completed convent.⁹ Seen as glorifying the Virgin and Child rather than the convent, the statue would not have infringed St. Colette's ideal of strict Franciscan poverty.

The original location of the statue is unknown. It was probably not made for the chapel, whose three altars had other dedications.¹⁰ It was perhaps intended for the cloistered area, where it would have been virtually inaccessible to all but the sisters. Indeed, it is mentioned in later records of the convent as having presided at their "family reunions": "Une grande Vierge de pierre, assise, son Enfant sur les genoux, du XVe siècle, préside toutes les réunions de famille."¹¹

The statue somehow survived when Poligny was sacked in 1638, during the French invasion of the Franche-Comté, then a part of the Holy Roman Empire.¹² In 1792, during the Revolution, the convent

123–132; Paul Guérin, *Les Petits Bollandistes: Vie des Saints de l'Ancien et Nouveau Testament* (Paris, 1888) III, pp. 202–215; Soeur Marie-Colette, "Regard sur l'histoire des Clarisses: L'Épanouissement de l'ordre et le second printemps franciscain," typescript in the author's possession (Paray-le-Monial, 1932) II; [Marie] Sainte-Marie Perrin, *La Belle Vie de Sainte-Colette de Corbie (1381–1447)* (Paris, 1921); Pierre-André Pidoux de la Maduère, *Sainte Colette (1381–1447)* (Paris, 1907); André Ravier, *Sainte-Colette de Corbie* (Besançon, 1976).

4. Pidoux de la Maduère, *Sainte-Colette*, pp. 49–50. For other such visions see also Perrin, *Belle Vie de Sainte-Colette*, pp. 85–91.

5. Pidoux de la Maduère, *Sainte-Colette*, p. 64.

6. Perrin, *Belle Vie de Sainte-Colette*, p. 126.

7. Bizouard, *Histoire de Sainte-Colette*, p. 98, and Joseph Calmette, *Les Grands Ducs de Bourgogne* (Paris, 1949) pp. 148–171.

8. Author's translation of a document of 1623 in the convent archives entitled "Mémoire de tout ce que nous avons peu recueillir des choses plus particulières que Ntre. Béate Mère Colette a dictes et fait en ce sien monastère de Poligny," typescript copy, p. 1.

9. See Appendix I and Bizouard, *Histoire de Sainte-Colette*, pp. 106–108.

10. The altars were dedicated respectively to Notre-Dame-de-Pitié; to SS. Anne, Anthony of Padua, and Louis of Toulouse; and to All Saints (Bizouard, *Histoire de Sainte-Colette*, p. 102).

11. From a typed copy of a document entitled "Annales du monastère." I am indebted to the sisters and to the Abbé Sage, formerly curé of St.-Hippolyte, Poligny, for assisting my research in the archives of the convent.

12. Rousset, *Dictionnaire*, V, p. 249.



1. *Virgin and Child* from Poligny (Jura), Burgundian, ca. 1415–17. Painted limestone, 53 × 42 × 28 in. (135 × 114 × 71 cm.). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 33.23

was suppressed; largely ruined, it was later sold for other uses.¹³ The statue's weight and bulk may have dictated a nearby hiding place. It escaped damage, as did sculptures in the neighboring church of St.-Hippolyte, probably because of the conservatism and piety of the inhabitants.

The Poor Clares returned to Poligny in 1817 and, with the help of the enthusiastic townspeople, rebuilt their convent on its original foundations. On August 9, 1833, the mayor of Poligny returned the statue to the nuns at their request. It was placed high above the main altar of the convent chapel in a neo-Gothic niche, which has since disappeared.

In 1875, the chapel was refurbished with wood paneling and the statue was moved to the refectory; placed on a low base within a wooden frame, it was photographed there in or before 1920 (Figure 2).

In that year, the statue was sold, with the permis-

2. The *Virgin and Child* as it appeared in the refectory of the convent of the Poor Clares in Poligny, ca. 1920 (photo: Demotte)



sion of the bishop, to François Vuillermet, a prominent citizen of Poligny, who indicated his intention of setting up a local museum. He provided the convent with an exact copy of the sculpture, which is still held in reverence by the sisters. The original statue changed hands at least twice. It was exhibited in Paris, probably by the dealer Georges Demotte, who had it cleaned and who later in 1920 sold it to Jacques Seligmann.¹⁴ In 1933, more than a decade after the statue had left its original home, Seligmann's in New York sold it to The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The statue is distinguished by its noble conception and masterful technique. Enlivened by polychromy (see Appendix 2), its appearance offers a rare impression of the state in which most medieval statues were originally seen.

The composition is simple but elegant. It can be divided somewhat arbitrarily into two areas, each reflecting the other. The upper pyramidal section is active and dynamic. The lower section forms a broad, stable rectangle, crossed by diagonal, vertical, and horizontal accents. The transition between the two parts is skillful and subtle. The whole is held firmly together by the enveloping blue cloak of the Virgin.

The Virgin's thick, brownish hair accentuates her face and frames it like a halo (Figure 3). The headcloth is creased in the center to coincide with the part in her hair and carefully folded on either side. The face is idealized with regular features, lively but formal. The mouth, with slightly projecting upper lip and dimpled at the corners, strongly balances the long straight nose, arched brows, and almond-shaped eyes, slightly swollen in the characteristic Burgundian manner. There is a firm distinction between chin and neck. A double cord or strap, holding the cloak together below the neckline of the dress, terminates in two heavy tassels issuing from acorn knots. The breast is indicated by loose folds.

The position of the two figures demonstrates the gentle, tender relationship between them. Their heads lean gravely in opposite directions, counterbal-

13. Bizouard, *Histoire de Sainte-Colette*, pp. 345–349, and Rousset, *Dictionnaire*, V, p. 292.

14. See Germain Seligmann, *Merchants of Art: 1880–1960—Eighty Years of Professional Collecting* (New York, 1961) pl. 60, where it is recorded in the caption as coming from “the convent of the nuns of Sainte-Claire, Poligny.”



3. *Virgin and Child*, detail of the Virgin's head

The Child's curly head is tilted sharply upward as he gazes intently at his mother, his lips partly open as if speaking to her, perhaps about what he has been reading (Figure 5). She bends her head downward without looking directly at either him or the book, but rather seems preoccupied with her own thoughts. Her mood suggests the passages in Luke recording that she "kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart," as she reflected on the Adoration of the Shepherds (2:19), and later on the young Christ among the Doctors of the Temple (2:51).

Steadied firmly by Mary's left hand, the Child sits comfortably and securely in her lap. A heavy book with parchment leaves lies open before them, creating a focus of attention. Their encircling arms and hands converge on this book; they tip the leaves for

4. *Virgin and Child*, detail of the Virgin's left hand and the Child's garment

ancing each other. The Child wears a green garment, decorated with gold griffins surrounded by foliage (Figure 4).¹⁵ The griffin is a fabulous beast combining the eagle and the lion, symbols of strength and courage and attributes of royal power, and is thus appropriate for the Christ Child. Household accounts of the dukes of Burgundy refer to purchases of similarly patterned brocades from Lucca, which was famous for their manufacture.¹⁶

15. The brocade pattern on the Child's garment is certainly by a master hand, perhaps that of Henri Bellechose, who was ducal painter in Dijon between 1415 and ca. 1440/45. He completed for the Chartreuse de Champmol the *Martyrdom of St. Denis*, now in the Louvre. See Charles Sterling, *Paris, Musée national du Louvre. Peintures: Ecole française, XIVe, XVe et XVIe siècles* (Paris, 1965) pls. 29–37, and Thieme-Becker, *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künstler* (Leipzig, 1909) III, pp. 239–240.

16. For similar examples see Donata Devoti, *L'arte del tessuto in Europa* (Milan, 1974) figs. 45–57; Adèle Conlin Weibel, *Two Thousand Years of Textiles* (New York, 1952) pp. 59–60, figs. 181–200; and Otto von Falke, *Decorative Silks* (New York, 1922) p. 36 and figs. 227, 242, 345, 372, 373, 381. Textile patterns after about 1425 were dominated by pomegranate designs, which are lacking here, thus adding to the assumption that the statue is earlier; see Brigitte Klesse, *Seidenstoffe in der italienischen Malerei des 14. Jh.* *Schriften der Abegg-Stiftung* (Bern, 1967) p. 487.





5. *Virgin and Child*, upper half

easier reading, while the Child's right forefinger points to the open page.

The rectangular composition of the lower section of the statue is established by the cushioned bench upon which the Virgin is seated (Figures 1, 6). Its top is indicated on the Virgin's right by her cloak, which forms two prominent right angles in its fall, covering the entire front of the bench. At the opposite end, the seat is defined by the edge of an inscribed scroll and by the vertical drapery of the Virgin's cloak.

Two square holes on the top of the seat have been filled with plaster cement. They are probably contemporary with the sculpture and may have held two uprights to support a brocade forming a cloth of honor behind and a canopy above the Virgin, as in an early fifteenth-century *Annunciation* tapestry (Fig-

6. *Virgin and Child*, three-quarter view

ure 7).¹⁷ Such a cloth of honor was customarily used to enhance the dignity and state of great personages.

The Virgin's cloak falls from her left shoulder, covering part of her arm and enfolding the Child, to be drawn across her lap and over her right knee. This arrangement creates a strong diagonal fold in front that sweeps from the Virgin's right knee down to the base of the sculpture below the scroll. The cloak recalls the deep undercutting and long supple folds of the garments of the mourners on many contemporary Burgundian tombs.¹⁸ Such thick, ponderous fabric did not allow for sharp creases. Across the bottom, the rectangle is bounded by heavy folds around the Virgin's feet and by the bulk of the lumpy base.

On the Virgin's right, her cloak is carefully arranged in a zigzag rhythm of descending folds with ample, flowing lines (Figure 8). The right-angle fold of drapery over the seat is echoed at the base. Emerging from beneath his garment, the sole of the Child's right foot is tipped up under the book just below the Virgin's right hand (Figure 9). The same engaging detail, of a foot or feet peeping out from under a long robe, occurs in other works associated with de Werve.

In contrast to the broken rhythms on her right, the Virgin's left side is covered by two folds of drapery sweeping down in a graceful arc from her head to her lap (Figure 10). These folds merge into several pockets and are counterbalanced by the dominant diagonal, already described, that swings around from the front. Drapery spilling over the seat and spreading out onto the base of the sculpture also merges

17. The composition of this tapestry is related, through a common source, to an *Annunciation* scene (lacking the cloth of honor) by Melchior Broederlam, painter to Philip the Bold, on the outer left wing of the altarpiece for the Chartreuse de Champmol, Dijon; the painting dates from the closing years of the 14th century. For the tapestry see Adolfo S. Cavallo's forthcoming catalogue of medieval tapestries in The Metropolitan Museum of Art. The cloth of honor also appears in manuscript illuminations of this period by masters of the Paris School working for the dukes of Berry; see William D. Wixom, "An Enthroned Madonna with the Writing Christ Child," *Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* 57 (1970) p. 290, n. 25, figs. 10, 11, 15, 24.

18. Illustrated by Pierre Quarré, *Les Pleurants des tombeaux des ducs de Bourgogne* (Dijon, 1971) figs. 12, 18, 31, 60.



with this diagonal and stabilizes the composition. Between the diagonal and the lower pocket, the fabric is indented horizontally.

The inclination of the Virgin's head toward the Child is more apparent from her left. Clearly visible from this side, the minute tips of two curls nestle among the larger waves of hair, which in turn end in long ringlets over her shoulders and down her back. The Child sports a mass of tight curls. The angle of the Virgin's left arm exposes the tiny buttons that fasten the close-fitting sleeves of her dress.

A striking feature of the sculpture is the wide scroll with an inscription not known in other representations of the Virgin (Figure 11). By placing her slightly off center, the sculptor has adroitly made space on the seat beside her without interfering with the equilibrium of the composition. The resulting asymmetry can be seen only from the rear. The upper part of the scroll disappears over the top of the

7. *The Annunciation*, detail, Southern Netherlandish, early 15th century. Tapestry. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Harriet Barnes Pratt, in memory of her husband, Harold Irving Pratt, 45.76



8. *Virgin and Child*, view of the right side

cushion; the lower part is slipped under the Virgin's cloak and rolled up (the rolled-up end, somewhat ambiguously related to the rest of the scroll, can be seen lying between it and the base of the seat).¹⁹ Because of its prominent position and size, the inscription may well be considered as the *titulus*—the theme, or *raison d'être*—of the statue. The page to which the Child points may once have borne the same passage,²⁰ or one referring to the same theme, but it now shows no trace of an inscription.

19. I know of no other instance in Burgundian sculpture where a scroll is laid flat over a seat. Wide scrolls, however, are often shown held in one hand and partly unrolled. See the six Old Testament figures on the Puits de Moïse (Dijon, Chartreuse de Champmol), illustrated in Georg Troescher, *Clavis Sluter und die burgundische Plastik um die Wende des XIV. Jahrhunderts* (Freiburg-im-Breisgau, 1932) I, pp. 99–105, pls. 25–32; and also Dijon, Musée des Beaux-Arts, *La Chartreuse de Champmol* (Dijon, 1960) pp. 11–12, pls. XI–XIII.

20. This possibility has already been suggested by Wixom, "Enthroned Madonna," p. 302, n. 65.



9. *Virgin and Child*, detail of the book and the Child's foot



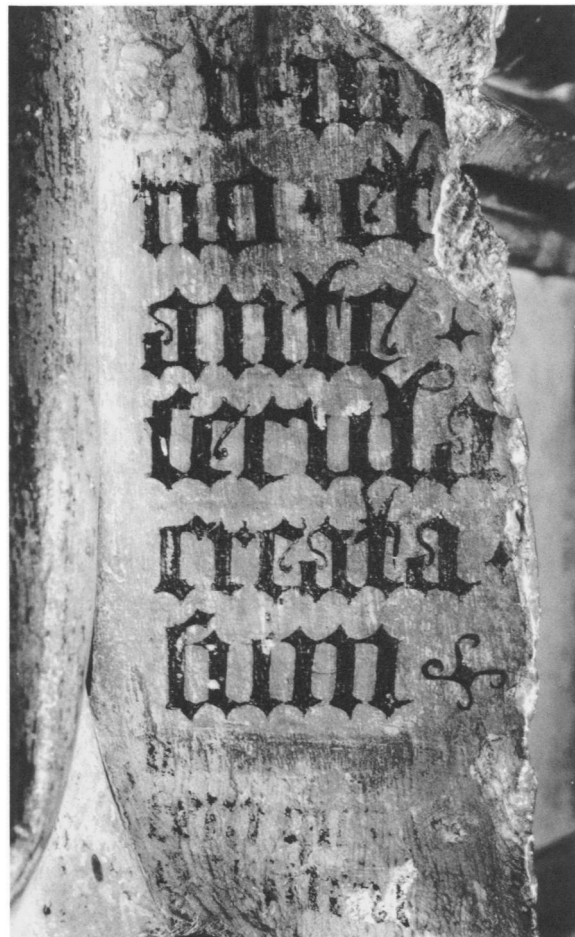
10. *Virgin and Child*, view of the left side

The inscription on the scroll reads: *Ab · ini / tio · et / ante · / secula / creata · / sum* + ("From the beginning, and before the world was I created"). The text is taken from chapter twenty-four, verse nine, of the deuterocanonical book of Ecclesiasticus in the Vulgate, dedicated to and extolling Wisdom.²¹

The original Gothic lettering on the scroll, obviously by a skilled hand, varies slightly in width to fit the available space and identifies the inscription as contemporary with the statue. The first letter, in red,

²¹ The English translation is taken from the Douay version. The New American Catholic Edition of the Bible (New York, 1961) reads: "Before all ages in the beginning He created me." See the Jerusalem Bible (Garden City, N.Y., 1966) pp. 1067f., n. 24a: "The liturgy applies this passage, by 'accommodation,' to the Blessed Virgin."

11. *Virgin and Child*, detail showing the inscription on the scroll



is barely visible in the photograph. The outer edge of the scroll has been damaged, cutting off part of the second *i* of *initio* and the *punctus elevatus*, or dividing point, after *et* and *secula*. At the bottom of the scroll appear two or perhaps three lines of lettering, illegible and smaller in scale. They were undoubtedly a gloss on the text.²²

The Church came to use this text as a reference to Mary in the Hours of the Virgin and in breviaries and missals at Lauds, Terce, and Vespers.²³ Although not confined to the Franciscans, the text is one that was particularly emphasized by them before it was generally adopted into the liturgy.²⁴ In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the Seat of Wisdom, *Sedes Sapientiae*, was already accepted as an appellation of the Virgin. In this role she was often shown seated upon a throne, holding the Christ Child stiffly centered on her lap.²⁵

In a sermon on the Nativity of the Virgin, the thirteenth-century Franciscan friar John de la Rochelle (d. 1245) used this same text from Ecclesiasticus to compare Mary with Wisdom, as a pure being untouched by original sin.²⁶ Throughout the fourteenth century, Franciscan piety continued to develop this concept, to the point where Mary was seen as herself the personification of Wisdom.

St. Colette, an ardent Franciscan, must have been cognizant of such teaching and of its bold implication of a relationship amounting to virtual identity between the Virgin and Wisdom. In her last testament she exhorts her sisters to remember that they were "chosen by the uncreated wisdom of our sovereign Father . . . to be spouses of Christ . . . temples of the Holy Spirit, and heiresses and queens of the kingdom of Heaven."²⁷ By these terms, customarily reserved for the Virgin herself, and read aloud to each sister on the day of her final vows, St. Colette held up the Virgin as the ideal toward which her nuns were to aspire. The Poligny statue gives visual form to this ideal.

The original inscription was later covered by a version mainly in French, which was removed in modern times:²⁸ *A[ve] / Maria / plaine de / grâce fut / créée / bienheure / use avant / les / siècles*. This version, an amalgam of parts of the angel's salutation with the original text, is an evident attempt to make the reference to the Virgin more direct.

It is obvious that the statue was meant to be seen from the front, since the surface at the back is only partly finished (Figure 12). Beautifully regular chisel

marks on the seat indicate how the stone block was trimmed to size by the mason; a fine horizontal line was then incised as a guide in cutting out the cushion, the carving of which is nearer completion on the left than on the right. The tassels of the cushion at both ends are roughly indicated.

On the back of the Virgin, the surface of her cloak shows a series of parallel chisel marks running in slightly different directions (Figure 13). The most finished areas are her hair and head-cloth, where the chisel marks have been smoothed away. Thus the back of the statue offers a rare example of several stages of carving that show how the sculptor went about his work (see Appendix 3).

Later, an iron loop, used to secure the statue to a support, was imbedded in the back of the Virgin and an area was roughly gouged out above it. A second hole was made in the seat, almost directly below the first, probably for the insertion of a similar loop, now

22. See, for example, the same text with its marginal gloss in small letters in the *Biblia latina cum glossa ordinaria Walafridi Strabonis*, III, edited by Adolf Rusche, printed by Anton Koberger in Strasbourg in 1481, unpagged. I am grateful to the Speer Library, Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, N.J., for the opportunity to examine this incunabulum (Hain-Copinger, no. 3173).

23. I am greatly indebted to John Plummer of the Pierpont Morgan Library and Professor Emeritus of Princeton University for this information, which he gleaned from late medieval manuscripts of Books of Hours and from modern printed breviaries and missals.

24. I wish to thank Professor John Fleming of Princeton University, who confirms this statement, for the following source: Eligius M. Buytaert, O.F.M., ed., *Henrici de Werla, O.F.M., Opera omnia: I. Tractus de Immaculata Conceptione beatæ Mariæ Virginis*, Franciscan Institute Publications 10 (St. Bonaventure, N.Y., 1955) p. 77, "In anima et carne Virginis habitat Sapientia increata . . .," and pp. 74, 81.

25. See Ilene H. Forsyth, *The Throne of Wisdom: Wood Sculptures of the Madonna in Romanesque France* (Princeton, 1972).

26. Killian F. Lynch, O.F.M., ed., *John de la Rochelle, O.F.M., Eleven Marian Sermons*, Franciscan Institute Publications 12 (St. Bonaventure, N.Y., 1961) p. 90, lines 68–88, "Eccli. 24, 'Ab initio et ante saecula creatus sum,' id est creari praeservata ab initio, de quo Gen. I 'in principio creavit Deus caelum et terram.'" For dating of the sermon see p. xxiii.

27. Translated by the author from the "Exhortation de Sainte Colette ou son testament," quoted in *Analecta Franciscana: Seraphicae legislationis—Textus originales* (Florence, 1897) p. 298. Kindly supplied by the library of the Franciscans at St. Bonaventure, N.Y.

28. This information was supplied to the Metropolitan Museum by Jacques Seligmann's son, Germain. See Breck, "A Late Gothic Sculpture," p. 76, n. 3, and Rorimer, "Une Statue bourguignonne," p. 112. The later version is still visible in Figure 2.



12. *Virgin and Child*, view of the back

13. *Virgin and Child*, detail of chisel marks on the back



missing; part of the iron core of this insertion remains.

The statue has no known direct predecessor, and does not fit into any existing sequence of figures. Although somewhat similar iconographically, a fourteenth-century group of seated Madonnas from northern Champagne, with a closed not an open book, is too unrelated to serve as a prototype.²⁹

At Arbois, just north of Poligny, is a standing *Virgin* of about 1388, who holds a Child pointing to a passage in a book. Another, almost its twin, is at Hal (Halle, south of Brussels) in the southern Netherlands. Their prototype may have been the *Virgin* (now restored) on a trumeau of the cathedral at Tournai, also in the southern Netherlands and now a part of Belgium.³⁰ There are certain tenuous similarities between these statues and the Metropolitan Museum's *Virgin* in the tilt of the head, in her serious expression and gentle mood, and in the Child's stocky proportions.

The iconography was prevalent in Tournai, a great pilgrimage and ecclesiastical center.³¹ The Tournai school produced a series of funerary reliefs in which the seated *Virgin* and Child with a book, often open, was the central image (Figure 14).³² These reliefs were widely exported to France and imitated there. No evidence exists, however, for their use as models for the Museum's statue, although the theme could have been taken from such a source.

The iconography is rarely found in French sculpture of the fifteenth century. The two closest examples are later in date and show no real connection to the *Virgin and Child* from Poligny.³³

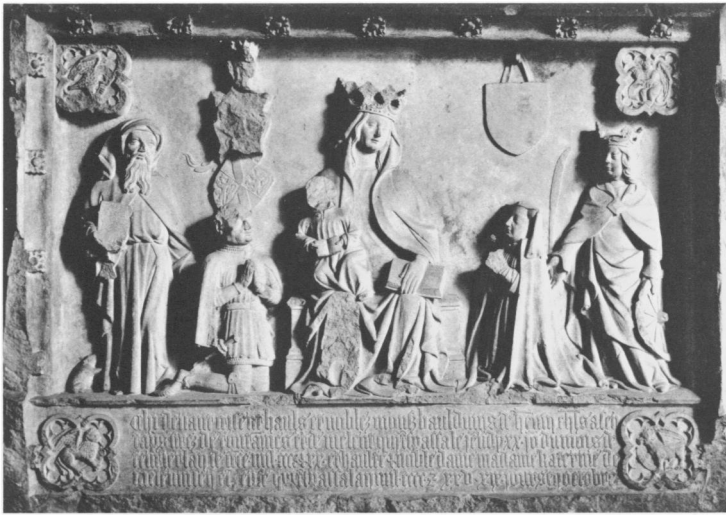
29. See William H. Forsyth, "The Virgin and Child in French Fourteenth Century Sculptures: A Method of Classification," *Art Bulletin* 39 (1957) p. 180, figs. 22–24, 26.

30. Robert Didier, Michael Henss, and J. A. Schmoll gen. Eisenwerth, "Une Vierge tournaïsiennne à Arbois (Jura) et le problème des Vierges de Hal," *Bulletin Monumental* 128 (1970) pp. 93–113. The Tournai trumeau statue probably formerly held a book.

31. E.-J. Soil de Moriamé, *Les Anciennes Industries d'art tournaïsiennes à l'exposition de 1911* (Tournai, 1912) pp. 34–36, 64–65, and A. de la Grange and Louis Cloquet, *Etudes sur l'art à Tournai et sur les anciens artistes de cette ville* (Tournai, 1887) pp. 146–160.

32. Soil de Moriamé, *Anciennes Industries d'art tournaïsiennes*, pp. 62–67, and for specific examples, p. 72, pl. xxxvi; p. 73, pl. xxxvii; p. 77, pl. xlii; pp. 84–85, pl. liii; p. 130, pl. xci.

33. See an example illustrated by M[aurice] P[erron] in *Les Vierges du Jura* (Lyon, 1939) unpagged, and the *Virgin and Child*



14. Funerary stele of Baudoin de Henin (d. 1420).
Tournai, St.-Nicolas (photo: A.C.L., Brussels)

15. *Enthroned Virgin with the Writing Christ Child*, Franco-Netherlandish, ca. 1400. The Cleveland Museum of Art, Purchase, John L. Severance Fund, 70.13 (photo: Cleveland Museum)



In a charming statuette in the Cleveland Museum of Art (Figure 15), the Child is shown writing upon a scroll rather than holding an open book. William Wixom relates it to drawings and miniatures of “Franco-Netherlandish artists working in and for the courts of France circa 1400.”³⁴ In spite of the great difference in style and scale between the sculptures in Cleveland and New York, both show aspects of the same southern Netherlandish iconography.

The intrinsic quality of the New York *Virgin and Child* demands an attribution of the highest order. Claux de Werve was trained by his uncle, the great Claus Sluter, with whom he was working in Dijon in December 1396 for Philip the Bold (Philippe le Hardi).³⁵ When Philip was succeeded in 1404 as duke of Burgundy by his son, John the Fearless, the latter at once contracted with Sluter to complete his father’s tomb, for which Sluter had already carved two mourning figures, or *pleurants*.³⁶ In 1406, at Sluter’s death, nine years before the foundation of the Poor Clares at Poligny, John appointed de Werve his *tailleur d’images*.³⁷ By the end of 1410, de Werve had completed the tomb to the duke’s satisfaction and was paid for his work.³⁸ He was kept continually in the ducal employ until his death in 1439.³⁹ Between 1415 and 1419 de Werve’s was the only workshop recorded in Dijon; it was so preeminent that even after 1419 and until his death it was paid more than eight times as much as all other workshops combined.⁴⁰ It

at the Louvre from Longvé (Allier), for which see Pierre Pradel, *Michel Colombe* (Paris, 1953) pl. 5, no. 2. For later examples in Flemish painting see Madonnas by Jan van Eyck (1433) and Rogier van der Weyden (1436) in Erwin Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish Painting* (New York, 1971) I, pp. 183, 258, 259; II, pls. 116, 179.

34. Wixom, “Enthroned Madonna,” pp. 285–302, esp. p. 293. For an early general study of the subject see Charles P. Parkhurst, Jr., “The Madonna of the Writing Christ Child,” *Art Bulletin* 23 (1941) pp. 290–306. See also the bibliography in Didier, Henss, and Schmoll, p. 98, n. 1.

35. For Claux de Werve’s origins, probably in Guelders (the Dutch province of Gelderland), see Pierre Quarré, “Le lieu d’origine de Claux de Werve, imagier des ducs de Bourgogne,” *Mémoires de la Commission des Antiquités du département de la Côte-d’Or* 30 (1976–77) pp. 345–351, and Troescher, *Claus Sluter*, pp. 129–130.

36. See Quarré, *Claux de Werve*, doc. 29, p. 34.

37. *Ibid.*, doc. 5, pp. 22–23.

38. *Ibid.*, doc. 8, pp. 23–24.

39. *Ibid.*, docs. 9–21, pp. 24–29; doc. 27, pp. 32–33; doc. 31, pp. 35–36.

40. Camp, “Recherches sur les ‘imageurs’ bourguignons,” pp.

was during these years that the duke spent considerable energy and funds in establishing the convent at Poligny; he would surely have involved his leading sculptor in a project of importance to himself and to his wife.

In spite of de Werve's position at court, the identification of his oeuvre is an elusive problem, depending primarily upon stylistic comparisons. In an attempt to define his work, Pierre Quarré brought together a large body of interrelated Burgundian sculpture from the first third of the fifteenth century.⁴¹ There can be no doubt about de Werve's importance in the sculpture of the period. In general, however, his work cannot be compressed into a tightly organized sequence: each piece is distinct in its originality.

De Werve's most famous and most completely documented work is the tomb of Philip the Bold (Figure 16).⁴² This great ensemble includes forty-one pleurants within an elaborate architectural framework surrounding the base, above which lies the effigy of the duke. Because of its reconstruction, the effigy is not a reliable comparison. The two kneeling angels at the duke's head (Figure 17)⁴³ are, however, draped in a fashion like that of the Metropolitan Museum's Virgin. The clustered folds around their feet are close to those on the Museum's statue. All three figures have the same rapt gaze. Down the back of the angel on the duke's right hang long, wavy tresses of hair similar to those of the Virgin (Figure 18); two tassels on the cords tying this angel's hair resemble those fastening the Virgin's cloak. The angels, the Virgin, and the Child have the same fleshy, dimpled hands and carefully articulated fingers. The bottom of the foot of the angel on the duke's left shows from beneath his robe in the same way as that of the Child.

With two exceptions by Sluter, the pleurants around the base are documented as the work of de Werve.⁴⁴ They can be closely compared to the Virgin in their sense of calm and in the depth and sweep of their drapery (Figures 19–21). The soft, thick folds of their cloaks lie on the ground in the same flat loops (Figure 20). An open book carried by one pleurant is reminiscent of that held by the Virgin and Child, both in its treatment and in the way in which it is handled (Figure 21). Tool markings on the back of another pleurant recall those on the back of the Museum's Virgin (Figure 22).

Other works can be attributed to de Werve by circumstantial and stylistic evidence. They include sev-

eral lost sculptures, known only by drawings, among them three statues formerly on the portal of the church of the Jacobins in Dijon. The drapery of the *Virgin and Child* standing in the center of this ensemble, to judge by a drawing of 1650, was handled in a fashion characteristic of de Werve, and reminiscent of the sculpture in New York.⁴⁵ The coat of arms of John the Fearless on the base of the lost statue indicates that this was the gift of the duke, who is likely to have had it carved by his official sculptor.

Comparisons with other statues included in de Werve's oeuvre offer further evidence that it was he who carved the New York *Virgin and Child*. A standing figure of the Virgin at Meilly-sur-Rouvres,⁴⁶ southwest of Dijon, has the same pensive attitude and undirected gaze as the Metropolitan's Virgin (Figure 23). The arms and hands of the Meilly *Virgin and Child* converge in a somewhat similar fashion around a focal point. There are resemblances in the soft, noble simplicity of the drapery, with thick, plushy folds clustering around the base, in the slight

51, 56. These estimates may not be based on complete coverage of all sources.

41. Quarré, *Claux de Werve*, pp. 5–12. For the purposes of this paper, only those works significantly related to the Metropolitan Museum's *Virgin and Child* are discussed.

42. For a general discussion of the tomb see Quarré, *Claux de Werve*, pp. 6–7, 37–40, pls. 1–15, docs. 5, 7, 8, 12; Troescher, *Claus Sluter*, pp. 131–140, pls. XLVII–LI; and Charles Févret de Saint-Mémin, "Description des tombeaux des ducs de Bourgogne," *Mémoires de la Commission des Antiquités du département de la Côte-d'Or* 2 (1842–46) pp. 24–31.

43. The angels were repaired in the 1820s, when the tomb was reassembled, new wings then replacing those lost during the Revolution. See two reports by Charles Saintpère, the architect in charge of the reconstruction, on July 10, 1819, p. 2, and on Aug. 16, 1821, p. 3. Mme Jean Richard, formerly of the Musée de Dijon, is to be thanked for supplying these reports from the Archives Départementales, Dijon, XXX T3 C/1, for compiling a file on the restoration of the tomb, and for many other courtesies. See also Pierre Quarré, "La Reconstitution des tombeaux des ducs de Bourgogne," *Bulletin de la Société des Amis du Musée de Dijon* (1944–45) pp. 39–42.

44. Quarré, *Les Pleurants*, figs. 1–40.

45. Quarré, *Claux de Werve*, no. 90, pl. LV. See also *ibid.*, p. 10, no. 92, pl. LVI, for a kneeling statue of Dine Raponde (d. 1415), counselor to John the Fearless, which was formerly in the Sainte-Chapelle in Dijon and is known from a drawing of 1726. The drapery can be compared with that of the Metropolitan Museum sculpture.

46. *Ibid.*, no. 62, pl. xxxiv; Henri David, *De Sluter à Sambin* (Paris, 1933) I, pp. 54–55, 237–238; and Dijon, Musée des Beaux-Arts, *Canton de Pouilly-en-Auxois, Côte-d'Or: Statues, XIIIe au XVIIIe siècle* (Dijon, 1969) no. 14.

16. Tomb of Philip the Bold, before 1411. Dijon, Musée des Beaux-Arts (photo: Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dijon)



ripple of cloth across the Virgin's breast, and in the fold of her cloak over her right arm. In both sculptures the Virgin's head, with fundamentally similar features, inclines gently to one side. The tiny curled ends nestled between the larger waves of her hair are virtually identical. The soft wrinkles of the Child's garment, his wide neckline, and his sleeves, folded back to form cuffs, are the same (Figure 24). He has the same stocky proportions and the same sturdy neck. At Meilly the soles of both his feet are just visible under his robe.

Differences certainly exist, but they are not significant in determining an attribution. The Meilly statue is much smaller in size (less than 30 inches, or 76.5 centimeters, high). The flat ridge above the head-cloth indicates the presence originally of a crown, now sawed off. Chisel marks on the back, although somewhat similar, are sharper and more mechanically even. The narrower block of stone, appropriate to a standing rather than a seated posture, makes the Meilly statue appear less expansive in width and depth. A pomegranate is held rather than a book. The carving lacks incisive detail, particularly in the hands and the Child's hair. Yet in spite of the lesser quality of its execution, the sculpture is stylistically linked to the ducal workshop of de Werve. That



17. Detail of the tomb of Philip the Bold, showing the two angels kneeling at the head of the effigy (photo: Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dijon)

18. Back of an angel on the tomb of Philip the Bold (photo: Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dijon)

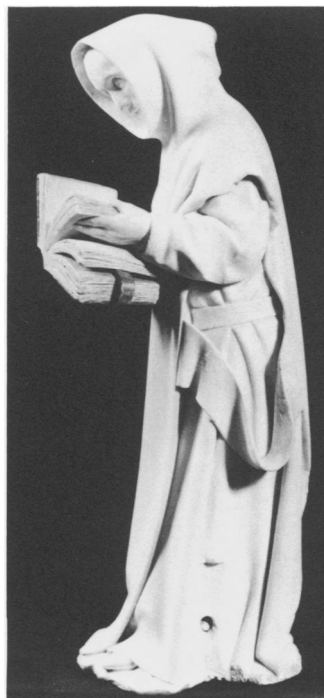




19. Pleurant no. 12



20. Pleurant no. 21



21. Pleurant no. 10



22. Pleurant no. 36,
back view



23. *Virgin and Child*, first quarter of 15th century. Meilly-sur-Rouvres (Côte-d'Or), St.-Aignan (photo: Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dijon)

24. Detail of the *Virgin and Child* at Meilly-sur-Rouvres (photo: Ministère de la Culture)





25. *Annunciate Virgin*, first quarter of 15th century. St.-Seine-l'Abbaye (Côte-d'Or), Abbey Church (photo: Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dijon)



26. *Mourning Virgin*, first quarter of 15th century. Flavigny-sur-Ozerain (Côte-d'Or), St.-Genest (photo: Ministère de la Culture)



27. *Virgin and Child*, first half of 15th century. Autun (Côte-d'Or), Musée Rolin (photo: Giraudon / Art Resource, New York)

there was ducal interest in Meilly is evident from the fact that in 1400 Philip the Bold bought land there to benefit his foundation of the Chartreuse de Champmol in Dijon.⁴⁷

An *Annunciate Virgin* (Figure 25) in the church of St.-Seine-l'Abbaye,⁴⁸ northwest of Dijon, has sweeping drapery reminiscent of that of the Meilly Virgin and, to a lesser extent, of that of the Virgin in New York. The features, the tiny tips of curls in the hair, the articulated fingers, the soft folds on the bodice,

and the heavy tassels of the cloak place the statue in the style of de Werve. The accompanying figure of Gabriel, who holds a wide scroll, has chisel marks on the back of his left wing that are akin to those on the back of the Metropolitan Museum Virgin.

A *Mourning Virgin* at Flavigny-sur-Ozerain (Figure 26), survivor of a lost Calvary group, has been called a faithful replica of the Virgin of the Calvary, also lost, by de Werve atop the Puits de Moïse in the Chartreuse de Champmol.⁴⁹ Her head and body are shrouded in the manner of a pleurant by de Werve on the tomb of Philip the Bold;⁵⁰ the drapery, in its

47. See Abbé Claude Courtépée and Beguillet, *Description générale et particulière du duché de Bourgogne: IV. Bailliages d'Avallon, Arnay, Auxerre, Saulieu et description du Maconnais et de la Bresse*, 3rd ed. with preface by [Pierre] Gras and [Jean] Richard (Paris, 1968) p. 76.

48. Quarré, *Claux de Werve*, nos. 49, 50, pls. xxvi, xxvii.

49. *Ibid.*, no. 42, pl. xxiii. This is the only sculpture in wood here discussed.

50. *Ibid.*, no. 32, pl. xiv, and Quarré, *Les Pleurants*, fig. 31.

long, soft folds with horizontal indentations, recalls that on the Metropolitan Museum's Virgin.

A standing *Virgin and Child* in the Musée Rolin of Autun (Figure 27) has been related to de Werve's oeuvre.⁵¹ In its quiet charm and dignity, the statue expresses the same mood as the sculpture in New York. The Virgin's cloak is similarly held by tasseled cords below the neckline and then folded back over the right arm to reveal the lining, engraved to imitate ermine and carved in low relief with small black tails. The gown is richly brocaded with an intricate black and maroon pattern now obscured by grime and varnish. The garments flatten out over the lumpy base in the same manner as in the Metropolitan Museum's piece.

Although certain differences can be noted, they are not significant enough to preclude a direct relationship to de Werve. The face of the Autun Virgin is softer in detail, suggesting a slightly later date. The belt, with prominent loops, is tightly drawn, and the hands are coarsely modeled. The portrayal of the Child as a swaddled infant is, of course, totally different, and gives the group an intimate air reminiscent of scenes of the Nativity.⁵² The statue's function as a focus of private devotion may account for this intimacy. It is known to have come from the chapel of Notre-Dame-du-Châtel, now demolished, which was connected with the fortified town residence of the Rolin family, who endowed it. A Rolin probably gave the statue, along with the furnishings of the sanctuary. The unusually rich decoration of the figure reflects the opulence of the family, which for several generations played a leading role in Burgundian affairs.

A standing *Virgin and Child* in the venerable abbey church at Baume-les-Messieurs (Figure 28), some twelve miles south of Poligny, can be compared with the Metropolitan Museum's sculpture.⁵³ The tasseled ties of the Virgin's cloak and the diagonal ripple of folds across her bodice are similar. Her hair is equally thick, but looser and more casual. Although heavier and less well modeled, the faces of both Virgin and Child resemble those of the statue in New York. The hands are the most skillfully executed part of the Baume statue; although plumper than those of the Metropolitan's Virgin, they are close to them in quality. However, the Child, who sits a little stolidly on his mother's left arm, lacks the gentle relationship with her that one finds in other Madonnas



28. *Virgin and Child*, first quarter of 15th century. Baume-les-Messieurs (Jura), Abbey Church (photo: Courtauld Institute of Art)

51. Quarré, *Claux de Werve*, pp. 11–12; David, *De Sluter à Samblin*, I, p. 226; and Joseph Rérolle, "La Vierge d'Autun," *Mémoires de la Société Eduenne* n.s. 48 (1927) pp. 105–111. Quarré and G. Vuillemot suggest conflicting dates in *Statuaire autunoise de la fin du Moyen-Age*, exh. cat. (Autun, 1968) p. 3 and no. 4; reprinted in *Mémoires de la Société Eduenne* 51 (1968) pp. 193–212. Baudoin, *Grands Imagiers*, pp. 178–179, attributes the statue, erroneously I believe, to de la Huerta.

52. See Danielle Gaborit-Chopin, "Une Vierge d'ivoire au XIII^e siècle," *La Revue du Louvre et des Musées de France* 33 (1983) pp. 270–279, fig. 14.

53. See Besançon, Palais Granvelle, *Art sacré dans le Jura du Moyen-Age au XVIII^e siècle: Poligny, Baume-les-Messieurs, Saint-Cloud*, exh. cat. (Besançon, 1972) p. 84; Abbé Brune, "Le Mobilier et les oeuvres d'art de l'église de Baume-les-Messieurs (Jura)," *Bulletin archéologique du Comité des Travaux historiques* (1894) pp. 457–478; Rorimer, "Une Statue bourguignonne," pp. 114–115; Rousset, *Dictionnaire*, II, pp. 233, 234; and Anne McGee [Morganstern], "A Study of the Fifteenth-Century Sculpture from Poligny," M.A. diss. (New York University, 1961) pp. 30–34.

attributed to de Werve. The somewhat heavy drapery of the Virgin's cloak, gathered vigorously straight across her body and over her right arm, is a detail that completely differs from the master's quiet style. The statue is apparently not by de Werve but clearly shows his influence.

Historical connections exist between Baume and Poligny, where the abbey of Baume had long held rights. Amé de Chalon (d. 1431), abbot and rebuilder of Baume, who is identified as donor of the Baume statue by his coat of arms and initial on the base, bought land adjacent to the convent of the Poor Clares.⁵⁴ Blanche of Savoy, an important patron of St. Colette, had married into the Chalon family,⁵⁵ and other members of her husband's family were also strong supporters of the abbey. That an artistic connection also existed between the two places is very likely.

In Poligny itself, in the church of St.-Hippolyte, only a few steps from the convent of the Poor Clares, is a standing *Virgin and Child* (Figure 29),⁵⁶ which serves as an interesting parallel to the sculpture now in the Metropolitan Museum and which for similar reasons can be attributed to de Werve.⁵⁷

The St.-Hippolyte statue is known as the *Founder's Virgin* in reference to Jean Chousat (d. 1433),⁵⁸ who gave land and financial aid to the church. He probably commissioned the statue before 1429, since in that year he established a college of canons, one of whose duties was to sing anthems at the altar of the Virgin, where an image of her would certainly have stood. Chousat was a chief adviser to John the Fearless for more than twenty years and would have had easy access to de Werve as the duke's official sculptor. He could well have known the Poor Clares' statue since he was also one of their benefactors and directed the chapter of St.-Hippolyte to continue his gifts to the convent after his death.⁵⁹

Similarities with the *Virgin and Child* in New York include the mood of gentle melancholy and quiet composure, the thick suppleness of the drapery, the unusually deep undercutting of the garments, and the general type of features and hands. The Child wears a somewhat similar brocaded garment, with a wide neckline and a sleeve folded back into a cuff. The drapery scheme, although reversed, is close to that on the standing *Virgin* attributed to de Werve that was formerly on the portal of the church of the Jacobins in Dijon.⁶⁰

The standing position of the Virgin obviously en-



29. *Virgin and Child*, the so-called *Founder's Virgin*, before 1429. Poligny (Jura), St.-Hippolyte (photo: Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dijon)

54. Rousset, *Dictionnaire*, V, p. 170.

55. Chevalier, *Mémoires historiques . . . de Poligny*, p. 160.

56. See Baudoin, *Grands Imagiers*, p. 166, and the guidebook by Abbé Sage, *Collégiale Saint-Hippolyte, Poligny* (Lyons, 1976) unpaginated. See also Quarré, *Claux de Werve*, p. 10, no. 71, pl. XLV; idem, "La Collégiale Saint-Hippolyte de Poligny et ses statues," *Congrès archéologique de France en Franche-Comté en 1960* (Paris, 1960) pp. 218–219; and idem, "Les Statues de Claux de Werve en Franche-Comté," pp. 121–123.

57. Quarré, "Sculpture de Claus Sluter à Antoine le Moiturier," p. 42, and idem, *Jean de la Huerta et la sculpture bourguignonne au milieu du XVe siècle*, exh. cat. (Dijon, 1972) p. 15.

58. Chousat also gave several sculptures in the St.-Hippolyte choir, at least some of which are attributed to de Werve, although not directly related to the Metropolitan Museum's *Virgin and Child*. See Quarré, "La Collégiale," pp. 215–218, and idem, "Les Statues de Claux de Werve en Franche-Comté," pp. 121, 123. One of these statues depicts Chousat himself in the guise of St. Thibault (Theobald of Provins). See Quarré, *Claux de Werve*, no. 69, pl. XLIII. See also Sage, *Collégiale Saint-Hippolyte*.

59. Bizouard, *Histoire de Sainte-Colette*, p. 107, n. 1.

60. See note 45.



30. *Virgin and Child*, second quarter of 15th century. Bézouotte (Côte-d'Or), St.-Martin (photo: Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dijon)

tails a different arrangement of the drapery.⁶¹ Other modifications occur in the slightly plumper face, which is less sharply delineated. The Child's hair is less tightly curled. The interaction between mother and son and the eager interest so appealing in the Metropolitan Museum's *Virgin and Child* are diminished here, as the Child, holding a small, closed book, leans against his mother but turns his head outward to the worshiper. The impression of the *Founder's Virgin* is on the whole more decorative than monumental, reflecting perhaps a later development of the master's style.

A *Virgin and Child* at Bézouotte (Figure 30) is among several that reflect the direct influence of the *Founder's Virgin* in posture and drapery.⁶² The statue stands in the former seigneurial chapel, dedicated to the Virgin and founded by Thierry de Charmes (d. before 1457), equerry to the ducal court, in accordance with the will of his father (d. 1431).⁶³ There is

a visible if distant association with the *Virgin and Child* in the Metropolitan Museum: in the Virgin's face; in the puffy folds of drapery; in the Child's wide-necked garment with a turned-back cuff; in the detail of his feet; and in the way he points to a passage—though on a scroll instead of in a book.⁶⁴ Behind the Bézouotte Virgin's left forearm are traces of several widely spaced parallel chisel marks similar to those on the back of the Metropolitan Museum Virgin.

This article has sought for the first time to give a full account of the Metropolitan Museum's *Virgin and Child* from Poligny. The statue must have been commissioned for the convent of the Poor Clares from which it came, and was probably given by John the Fearless, duke of Burgundy, at the time he built the convent—that is, between 1415 and 1417. This proposed dating would make the statue contemporary with related sculptures by Claus de Werve, who was employed by John for most of his working life.⁶⁵ A study of these other sculptures confirms Quarré's attribution of the statue to de Werve.

The essence of the sculptor's style emerges in the statue's noble simplicity and in the majestic gentleness and tranquil grandeur of the figures. His superb craftsmanship appears in the complete harmony of the composition and in the wonderful treatment of the drapery.

61. This composition was the basis for the dynamic *Virgin and Child* by Jean de la Huerta at Rouvres-en-Plaine, dated between 1445 and 1448. See Quarré, *Jean de la Huerta et la sculpture bourguignonne*, pp. 14–15, no. 43, pl. xxiv.

62. See Quarré, *Claus de Werve*, no. 74, pl. xli. Another *Virgin and Child*, at Brétigny (ibid., no. 68, pl. xl), is attributed by him to de Werve. It has the same verve and freshness as the Metropolitan Museum's sculpture, but because of the difference in iconography and composition, it is not closely enough related to be discussed here.

63. Two 15th-century tombstones of the de Charmes family, embedded in the floor in front of the statue, identify the chapel (Archives de la Côte-d'Or, Dijon, B 443). My thanks are due to the Abbé Jean Marilier of Dijon and Mme Monique Dumery of Bézouotte for their assistance.

64. For three contemporary statues of the *Virgin and Child* from Dijon with similar iconography and drapery arrangement, see Troescher, *Claus Sluter*, pls. xb (Paris, Louvre, from Plombières-lès-Dijon), xa (Paris, Cluny Museum, from St.-Apollinaire, near Dijon), and 1xa (Frankfurt-am-Main, Liebieghaus).

65. As this article was going to press, the author received confirmation from Dr. Pierre Rat and M. André Pascal, both of the University of Dijon, that cross sections of limestone taken from the statue revealed their identity to photographs of limestone from the old quarry of Asnières near Dijon, a primary source for Dijon workshops in the 15th century.

The Arcadian calm of the Metropolitan Museum's *Virgin and Child* forms a complete contrast to the dynamic movement implicit in the work of Claus Sluter, de Werve's predecessor as head of the ducal workshop, as well as to the turbulent virtuosity of de Werve's successor there, Jean de la Huerta. It is even more at variance with the dry intensity of Antoine le Moiturier, who succeeded Huerta.

Date and place of origin associate the sculpture with St. Colette, without whose fervent determination the convent at Poligny would not have been built. The unusual inscription, with its Franciscan emphasis, must have accorded with St. Colette's thinking, and she is probably responsible for its choice.

The duchess of Burgundy, Margaret of Bavaria, was the bridge between her husband, the irascible and violent duke, and the intensely spiritual saint. Loyal to John the Fearless and apprehensive for his safety, the duchess was dependent upon St. Colette as her spiritual counselor.

The conjunction of these very different personalities, who each in his or her way influenced the times in which they lived, adds historic interest to a work of art that has justly been described as the masterpiece of Claux de Werve.⁶⁶

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66. Quarré, "La Sculpture bourguignonne au XVe siècle," p. 42: "Le chef-d'oeuvre de Claux de Werve est sans doute la grande statue assise de la Vierge à l'Enfant, provenant des Clarisses de Poligny, maintenant au Metropolitan Museum of Art de New York."

Appendix 1

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO THE FOUNDATION OF THE CONVENT

Deed of gift dated June 2, 1415, by John, duke of Burgundy, addressed to the Chambre des Comptes in Dijon and to other officials, regarding property in Poligny for the foundation of a convent of Poor Clares under the auspices of Abbess Colette:⁶⁷

Jehan, duc de Bourgoingne, comte de Flandres, d'Artois et de Bourgoingne . . . à l'umblé supplicacion & requeste de nostre tres chiere et tres amée compaigne la duchesse, qui . . . ait sa singuliere affection & devocion de fonder . . . l'un d'iceulx convens de cordelieres en nostre ville de Poligny, par le moyen & advis de nostre chiere & bien amée seur Colée, abesse des cordelieres d'Auxonne . . . pour l'amour & reverance de Dieu & de son divin office qui continuellement jour et nuit sera celebré oudit convent, et afin que nous et elle puissions et doions mieulx estre participans ès prieres, oroisons et autres biens qui y seront faiz, il nous plaise donner à Dieu et admortir à l'église nostredite maison, maisiere, jardin & appartenances d'icelle, pour y fonder et edifier lesdits eglise et monastere . . . pour la bonne affection et devocion que nous avons à ladicte fondation, pour les grands biens & fruit qui en pourront venir pour le remede & salut des ames de nous, de nostredite compaigne & de noz successeurs, par le moyen desdictes prieres, oroisons & biens qui y seront faits . . . pour y faire edifier ladicte eglise et monastere et autres edifices et aiences dudit convent de suers cordelieres. . . Et afin que ce soit ferme chose et estable à tousiours, nous avons fait mettre

nostre scel à ces presentes. . . Ce fut fait en nostre ville de Dijon le ii^e jour du mois de juing l'an de grace mil CCCC & quinze. Ainsi signé

Par monseigneur le duc, vous et autres presens, G. Vignier.

Order dated August 6, 1415, of John, duke of Burgundy, to his Chambre des Comptes in Dijon to allow work to proceed without further impediment⁶⁸ on the convent of the Poor Clares in Poligny:

Jean Duc de Bourgogne . . . A nos amés & féaux les Gens de nos Comptes a Dijon. . . Nous ayant par nos autres lettres . . . donné & amorti a l'Eglise, & a icelle Abbessse [Colette] notre meix & maison située en la rüe dessus notre bourg de Poligni pour y fonder & édifier un Monastère de Cordelieres . . . vous avés . . . fait empêcher notred. don & octroy, tellement que les maçons & autres qui déjà procédoient a l'oeuvre dud. Monastère ont delaissé led. ouvrage. . . [nous] vous avons mandés & commis . . . que les aucuns de vous . . . se transportassent aud. P., voir & visiter nosd. maisons, nous rapporter au vrai &c. . . & appellés avec vous nos amés et féaux Jean Chousat, [et al.]. . . [Nous] vous mandons & enjoignons expressement que tout l'empêchement . . . vous oties & levies, & ferés & laisserés jouïr lesd. Religieuses, . . . d'iceux dons et amortissements. . .

Donné en notre Châtel de Rouvre le 6 jour d'aoust 1415. S[igné] par Monseigneur. J. Bonost.

67. Archives de la Côte-d'Or, Dijon, B 11682 (Séries B-Cour des Comptes de Bourgogne). The complete transcription by Martine Chauney, assistant to the Director, Bibliothèque Publique, Dijon, with the help of Professor Jean Richard of the University of Dijon, is in the files of the Medieval Department, MMA. The document was published, with some errors, by Bernard Prost, "Documents inédits sur Sainte Colette (1415–1422)," in *Archives historiques, artistiques et littéraires* (1889–91) I, pp. 112–114.

68. Extracts taken from François-Félix Chevalier, master counselor in the Chambre and Cour des Comptes of the comte de Bourgogne, *Mémoires historiques sur la ville et seigneurie de Poligny* (Lons-le-Saunier, 1769) II, doc. cxx, pp. 673–675.

Appendix 2

PAINT AND CONDITION

After the earlier cleaning by Demotte, Charles Langlais, Restorer in the Medieval Department of the Metropolitan Museum in 1934, removed two coats of oil paint and part of a glaze from the flesh areas, leaving the right side of the Child's face untouched.⁶⁹

Rudolf Meyer, Master Restorer at The Cloisters, examined the statue in considerable detail in March 1984. In his report he states that "a brownish oil (glaze) base, instead of gesso, was applied to the entire surface of the stone as a primer coat under the paint." He adds, in a letter to the author: "all gilding is done in oil gilding, including the Virgin's and the Child's hair. I have no doubt that these are the original layers." He sets up the following sequences of paint layers for the various areas of the statue:

Cloak, outer surface: gold (oil gilding), vermilion, whitish, blue, light blue.

Cloak lining: vermilion, red glaze, vermilion, blue, light blue.

Gown: blue, whitish, blue (azurite), whitish, red.

Faces, Virgin and Child: at least two coats of flesh color; eyes, dark brown ocher; eyeballs, gray; eyebrows, ocher with single hairs in dark brown.

Hands, Virgin and Child: two layers of flesh color.

Hair, Virgin and Child: gold, possibly with brown glaze, whitish, light brown.

Virgin's head-cloth: two layers of whitish.

Tassels on cloak and cushion: gold, dark brown, whitish, vermilion.

Edges of book: gold (oil gilding).

Child's gown: green with gold pattern, whitish (traces).

Cushion on seat: two layers of green.

Seat: (left side) red, vermilion, red; (right side) green, vermilion, red; (moldings, upper and lower) blue bordered by gold; (base) green, red.

Ground, in front of and at same level as base of seat: two layers of green.

Scroll: white with black and red inscription.

In August 1984, Laura Juszczak, then of the Metropolitan Museum's Paintings Conservation Department, analyzed the bottommost paint layer from the following eight places and recorded her findings in a report to the author:

1. Virgin's blue tunic
2. Edge of Virgin's blue tunic
3. Green from the base
4. Green of Child's tunic
5. Flesh tone from Virgin's right hand
6. Blackish paint from undercut area of Virgin's cape
7. Paint from side of bench
8. Paint from behind sculpture in area of Virgin's cape.

According to this report, the sample (no. 5) from the Virgin's right hand, with only one, rather thick paint layer, "consists of lead white, a red lake, azurite, and vermilion (presence of mercury in latter confirmed by microchemical test). All these pigments could be found on a piece of this date" (i.e., fifteenth century). The greens on the base, on the Child's garment, and on the side of the seat (nos. 3, 4, 7) "all contain terre verte, a marine clay that has been used in European paintings since before classical times."

Laura Juszczak noted that samples nos. 6 and 8 came from areas on the sculpture that seemed to have been overlooked in past overpainting. "They both have a similar layer structure: a couple of priming layers, orange to beige in color, followed by a top, thin blue-black layer consisting of charcoal black and some azurite (latter seen in sample no. 8)." She deduced that the Virgin's tunic originally contained azurite, traces of which she found in samples nos. 1 and 8.

Examination of the scroll under ultraviolet light revealed no new information. Two black pigment

69. Langlais's report to James J. Rorimer is in the Medieval Department files.

samples from the inscription, taken from both the large and small letters, could not be used in dating, since charcoal black, of which both samples are composed, "has been in constant use over the centuries."

The condition of the sculpture is extraordinarily good, considering its size and bulk and the number of times that it has been moved. Minor chipping appears at the edges of the Virgin's cloak and on the right side and base of the seat. A few areas are also

chipped on the pages of the book, on the outer edge of the scroll, and on the front corner of the cushion above it. Other chippings are too minute to mention.

Minor repairs were noted by Rorimer in a report of January 1933. These include the Child's upper lip, the tip of his nose and a small section above it, part of the lower lid of his right eye, the top joint of the Virgin's right little finger, and two inches of drapery over her left arm.

Appendix 3

CHISEL MARKS

During an examination of the Museum's *Virgin and Child* from Poligny, the late Pierre Quarré raised the question with the author whether variations in tool marks on Burgundian fifteenth- and sixteenth-century sculptures could be used to distinguish between the work of different sculptors or workshops.⁷⁰ He was not referring to those marks seen on the back of the Virgin's seat where the stone was trimmed to size; these were left by the masons before the sculptor began his work. Rather, Quarré was concerned with the shallower, more delicate parallel lines fanning out in slightly different directions on the back of the Virgin's cloak (Figures 12, 13).

On sculptures attributed stylistically to Claux de Werve, the writer has noted several with similar parallel lines on the back. Such lines are found on a pleurant of the tomb of Philip the Bold (Figure 22), on the figure of Gabriel at St.-Seine-l'Abbaye, and on

the statues of the Virgin and Child at Meilly-sur-Rouvres, Bézuotte, and, to a lesser extent, Autun.

Testing Quarré's idea further, the author has examined chisel marks on several score of sculptures attributed not only to de Werve but also to Antoine le Moiturier and Jean de la Huerta in the Musée des Beaux-Arts of Dijon and in the Musée Rolin of Autun. These marks are of differing types. They are usually hard to find, and Quarré has warned that different patterns are not so easily identifiable as are painters' brushstrokes. They are visible, moreover, only in those small areas not later smoothed over by scrapers. It would require a thorough and systematic investigation to determine what significance these marks may have, and whether they might help in making distinctions and strengthening attributions in the vast anonymity of late Gothic sculpture.

70. See also Wixom, "Enthroned Madonna," p. 294, n. 43, for a discussion of this point.