

*Visibility and Exclusivity:
The Tombs of Blanche (d.1243) and Jean (d.1248)
of France in the Cistercian Abbey of Royaumont*

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Thomas Aquinas wrote that a beautiful sepulchre, when visible, is particularly effective in moving the viewer to compassion and to prayer for the departed.¹ Between 1248 and 1260, around the same time when Aquinas wrote down this observation, two elaborate tomb monuments were constructed for the abbey of Royaumont (Asnières-sur-Oise, Val d'Oise). Intended for the burial and commemoration of Blanche (1240–43) and Jean (1247–48), children of King Louis IX of France (r.1226–70), these two tombs were located near the high altar inside the Cistercian abbey church.² Because of the vicissitudes of time, all that remains of the monuments are the two funerary plaques finely decorated with champlevé Limoges enamel and gilt copper-alloy effigies³ (Plate 1). Their artistic originality and dazzling visual impact have captured the gaze of viewers throughout the centuries, seemingly living up to what Thomas Aquinas considered to be an effective tomb. Even though the monuments of Blanche and Jean have been included in almost every survey of medieval French tombs or Limoges enamel work since the beginning of the nineteenth century, there has been little scholarly attention relating to their placement within their original context and for the intended audience of the monuments. Much still remains to be explored about the location, accessibility and visibility of these two children's tombs at Royaumont. This essay will therefore offer a contextual analysis and propose a reconstruction of the monuments' original locations inside the royal Cistercian abbey.

The Unlikely Survival of the Funerary Plaques

The Cistercian abbey of Royaumont (Plates 2, 3) was founded by the young Louis IX in 1228 with the assistance of his mother Blanche of Castile (d.1252). While the high

¹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae, Supplementum Tertiae Partis*, ed. C. van Egmond, (Cologne, 1639), 518–19: '*Sed illa quae ad ornatum sepulturae adhibentur, prosunt quidem vivis, in quantum sunt vivorum solatia: sed possunt etiam defunctis professe, non quidem per se, sed per accidens, in quantum scilicet per huiusmodi homines excitantur ad compatiendum, et per consequens ad orandum [...]* (but those things which are applied for the ornament of a tomb, they benefit the living to the degree that they are solace for the living: however they can also benefit the dead, not by virtue of their existence, but incidentally, inasmuch as people are moved to have compassion and as a result to pray [...])'.

² B. de Montfaucon, *Les monumens de la monarchie française*, 5 vols (Paris, 1730), ii, 160; J. Le Goff, *Saint Louis* (Notre Dame, IN, 2009), 202–4.

³ For the most recent discussion of the gilt copper and Limoges enamel of the two funerary plaques: *Enamels of Limoges 1100–1350*, eds M. M. Gauthier, B. Barrière, J. Becquet, M. Pastoureau, B. de Chancel-Bardelot et al. (New York, 1996), 402–5.







2. L. Boudan, Aerial view of the abbey of Royaumont, c.1700.
Paris, BnF, département Estampes et photographie, EST VA-416.

1 (previous two pages). Unknown, funerary plaque with effigy of Blanche of Franche (1240-43) and Jean of France (1247-48), c.1248-1260. © Centre des monuments nationaux.

altar may already have been consecrated in 1232, the completed church was dedicated in 1235 in the presence of the entire court.⁴ According to Louis IX's biographer Jean de Joinville (d.1317), the church was built at the enormous cost of 100,000 *livres*.⁵ Another royal biographer, the Dominican friar Geoffroy of Beaulieu (d.1273×76), wrote that Royaumont was foremost among the religious houses founded by the saintly king.⁶ The abbey church was symbolic of the general decline in observing the Cistercians' obedience to the ideal of poverty, but it became an object of amazement and awe in the centuries after Louis IX's death, as is evidenced by later accounts.⁷ In 1688, court historian André Félibien (d.1695) wrote that the abbey church was considered one of the most outstanding examples of Louis IX's patronage.⁸ A couple

⁴ H. Duclos, *Histoire de Royaumont: sa fondation par Saint Louis et son influence sur la France*, 2 vols (Paris, 1867), i, 164; R. Branner, *St Louis and the Court Style in Gothic Architecture* (London, 1965), 30-5; M. Untermann, *Forma Ordinis. Die mittelalterliche Baukunst der Zisterzienser* (Munich, 2001), 60, 71.

⁵ Paris, BnF, MS Français 20813, f. 132r.

⁶ *Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France*, eds N. de Wailly and J. D. Guigniaut, (Paris, 1840), xxi, 11.

⁷ M. Bideault and C. Lautier, *Ile-de-France gothique – 1* (Paris, 1987), 281-92.

⁸ A. Félibien, *Entretiens sur les vies et sur les ouvrages des excellens peintres anciens et*



3. Tavernier de Junquières, view of the west façade and abbatial palace of Royaumont, c.1790
© Paris, BnF, département Estampes et photographie, EST Réserve VE-26 (M).

of decades later, in 1713, the travelling Benedictine monks Edmond Martène and Ursin Durand visited the royal abbey. They later wrote that it was ‘*un des plus beaux monumens de la piété de S. Louis*’ (one of the most beautiful monuments to the piety of St Louis).⁹ In 1791, shortly before the demolition of the church, the antiquary Aubin-Louis Millin (d.1818) would repeat this praise.¹⁰

Despite centuries of fame, most of the history of the church and the abbatial complex is not well documented, as a result of the Wars of Religion in the sixteenth century and the French Revolution. Consequently, no archival records are known to have survived which explicitly mention the tombs of Blanche and Jean. Their history, in the written record, is shrouded in mystery until they were drawn sometime around 1700 for the collector and antiquary François-Roger de Gaignières (d.1715) by the artist Louis Boudan.¹¹ This resulted in various illustrations (Plates 1, 4, 5, 6, 7) of the

modernes, 8 vols (Paris, 1725), v, 231.

⁹ E. Martène and U. Durand, *Voyage littéraire de deux religieux bénédictins de la congrégation de Saint-Maur*, 2 vols (Paris, 1717), ii, 152–3.

¹⁰ A.-L. Millin, *Antiquités nationales, ou recueil de monumens*, section xi (Paris, 1791), 4.

¹¹ There is little written evidence about the visits to the Cistercian abbey. According to a letter by Charles Faucon de Ris (1612–93), Gaignières passed through Royaumont in the summer of 1690, but it is not known if this is also the moment when Boudan made the illustrations: Paris, BnF, MS Français 24991, f. 176r. See also, A. Ritz-Guilbert, *La collection Gaignières. Un inventaire du royaume au XVIII^e siècle* (Paris, 2016), for more information on the



TOMBEAU DE BLANCHE DE FRANCE *fille*
du Roy S^t Louis. il est dans le mur a gauche du grand Autel
de l'Eglise de l'Abbaye de Royaumont.

4. L. Boudan, drawing of the arcosolium of Blanche of Franche in its original state inside the abbatial church of Royaumont, c.1700 © Oxford, Bodl., MS Gough Drawings Gaignières 2, f. 29r.



TOMBEAU DE JEAN DE FRANCE *fils du Roy S^t
Louis, il est dans le mur a gauche du grand Autel de l'Eglise
de l'Abbaye de Royaumont.*

5. L. Boudan, drawing of the arcosolium of Jean of France in its original state inside the abbatial church of Royaumont, c.1700 © Oxford, Bodl., MS Gough Drawings Gaignières 2, f. 26r.



6. L. Boudan, drawing of the funerary plaque and effigy of Blanche of France, c.1700.
© Oxford, Bodl., MS Gough Drawings Gaignières 2, f. 30r.



TOMBE de cuivre esmaillee qui est sur le precedent tombeau de **JEAN DE FRANCE** fils du Roy **S^t Louis** au tour de laquelle est escrit.

Hic jacet Joannes excellentissimi Ludovici Junioris Regis Francorum filius, qui in etate Infantie, migravit ad Christum, anno gratie millesimo ducentesimo quadragesimo septimo, Sexto idus Martii.

7. L. Boudan, drawing of the funerary plaque and effigy of Jean of France, c.1700.
© Oxford, Bodl., MS Gough Drawings Gaignières 2, f. 25r.

monuments of Blanche and Jean of France.¹² They now present the earliest known and only visual source of the original compositions, because the tombs would be partially dismantled and reordered in the 1760s. Boudan's drawings show that each of the two plaques, which are now displayed as individual objects devoid of any context, was once part of a separate monument.

The monuments to these royal children followed the same general design. They both consisted of a rectangular stone tomb chest placed in an arched and sculpted niche in a wall, a tomb typology usually referred to as an *arcosolium* or an *enfeu*.¹³ The fronts of both tomb chests were decorated with (probably) unpainted blind arcading.¹⁴ Both sarcophagi had a wooden top onto which Blanche's and Jean's funerary plaques with effigies were fixed.¹⁵ The two monuments were each a little over 2 m high and about 1.2 m wide.¹⁶ Despite their relatively small size, the niches contained an intricate iconography. The sides were filled with an alternating pattern of lozenges depicting the heraldic symbols of the children's father Louis IX, their mother Marguerite de Provence and their paternal grandmother Blanche de Castile, not too dissimilar from the heraldic background of French fleurs-de-lis and castles of Castile in some of the stained-glass windows created for the Sainte-Chapelle¹⁷ (Plate 8). Finally, both monuments each contained a substantial painted representation of Blanche and Jean respectively on the vertical wall surrounded by an alternating pattern of heraldic motifs the royal houses of France, Castille and of Provence. Like their gilt-copper effigies directly below, the two children's painted representations were clad in heraldic dress and other paraphernalia which leave no doubt about their royal lineage.

collaboration with the artist Louis Boudan, about whom very little is known; R. Marcoux, 'L'espace, le monument et l'image du mort au Moyen Age. Une enquête anthropologique sur les tombeaux médiévaux de la collection Gaignières' (unpub. Ph. D. thesis, University of Laval and University of Burgundy, 2013), 60–1; and L. Beaumont-Maillet, *La France au Grand Siècle. Chefs-d'oeuvre de la collection Gaignières* (Évreux, 1997), 8–13, for further biographical information on Gaignières and Boudan.

¹² H. Bouchot, *Inventaire des dessins exécutés pour Roger de Gaignières et conservés aux départements des Estampes et des Manuscrits*, 2 vols (Paris, 1891), i, 10–14; J. Adhémar and G. Dordor, 'Les tombeaux de la collection Gaignières. Dessins d'archéologie du XVII^e siècle', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 84 (1974), 42, nos 189–90.

¹³ A. Erlande-Brandenburg, *Le roi est mort: étude sur les funérailles, les sépultures et les tombeaux des rois de France jusqu'à la fin du XIII^e siècle* (Genève, 1975), 117; A. M. Morganstern, 'Liturgical and Honorific Implications of the Placement of Gothic Wall Tombs', *Hortus Artium Medievalium* 10 (2004), 81–96, at 81.

¹⁴ This motive is stylistically similar to a surviving altar fragment which was carved for the Sainte-Chapelle in Paris some years before the children's tombs in Royaumont were begun; Branner, *St Louis and the Court Style*, pl. 74.

¹⁵ Paris, BnF, MS Français 20813, ff. 149r–v.

¹⁶ The measurements of various parts of the recessed arches were written by Boudan himself on his preparatory drawings: Paris, BnF, MS Clairambault 632, f. 131r.

¹⁷ M. Aubert et al., *Les vitraux de Notre-Dame et de la Sainte-Chapelle de Paris, Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi – France 1: Département de la Seine, I* (Paris, 1959), 344–6.



8. Anonymous, stained-glass window panel from the Sainte-Chapelle depicting a scene from the story of Daniel, c.1241–48 © London, Victoria & Albert Museum.

The hunting attire of Jean, which further underlines the boy's aristocratic background, is similar to the iconography found on contemporary seals.¹⁸

The tombs of Blanche and Jean escaped destruction several times. On 28 February 1409, the nave and transept were destroyed almost entirely by fire after the bell tower above the crossing had been struck by lightning. Miraculously, the fire ceased before it could damage the area around the high altar.¹⁹ The religious wars of the sixteenth century had resulted in the burning of the archives of Royaumont, but the royal tombs inside the choir remained intact. On 26 April 1760, the bell tower was again struck by lightning. Significant parts of the nave, the north arm of the transept and the crossing were completely destroyed, but the east part of the church survived. However, the tombs would succumb not much later to another threat: renovation. A major restoration project was undertaken between 1761 and 1763, during which the choir of the abbey church underwent significant changes. The old screen separating the choir and the ambulatory, which dated from the thirteenth century, had to make way for a new one made of metal grills. This inevitably led to the demolition of the

¹⁸ M. Pastoureau, *Traité d'héraldique* (Paris 1979), 40–6. For an in-depth discussion of seals as expression of aristocracy – and the appearance of hunting paraphernalia in them – in France at the time of the tombs of Blanche and Jean: B. Bedos-Rezak, *Form and Order in Medieval France* (Aldershot, 1993).

¹⁹ J. Juvenal des Ursins, *Histoire de Charles VI Roy de France* (Paris, 1614), 245, 250; Duclos, *Histoire de Royaumont*, ii, 48–9, 55.

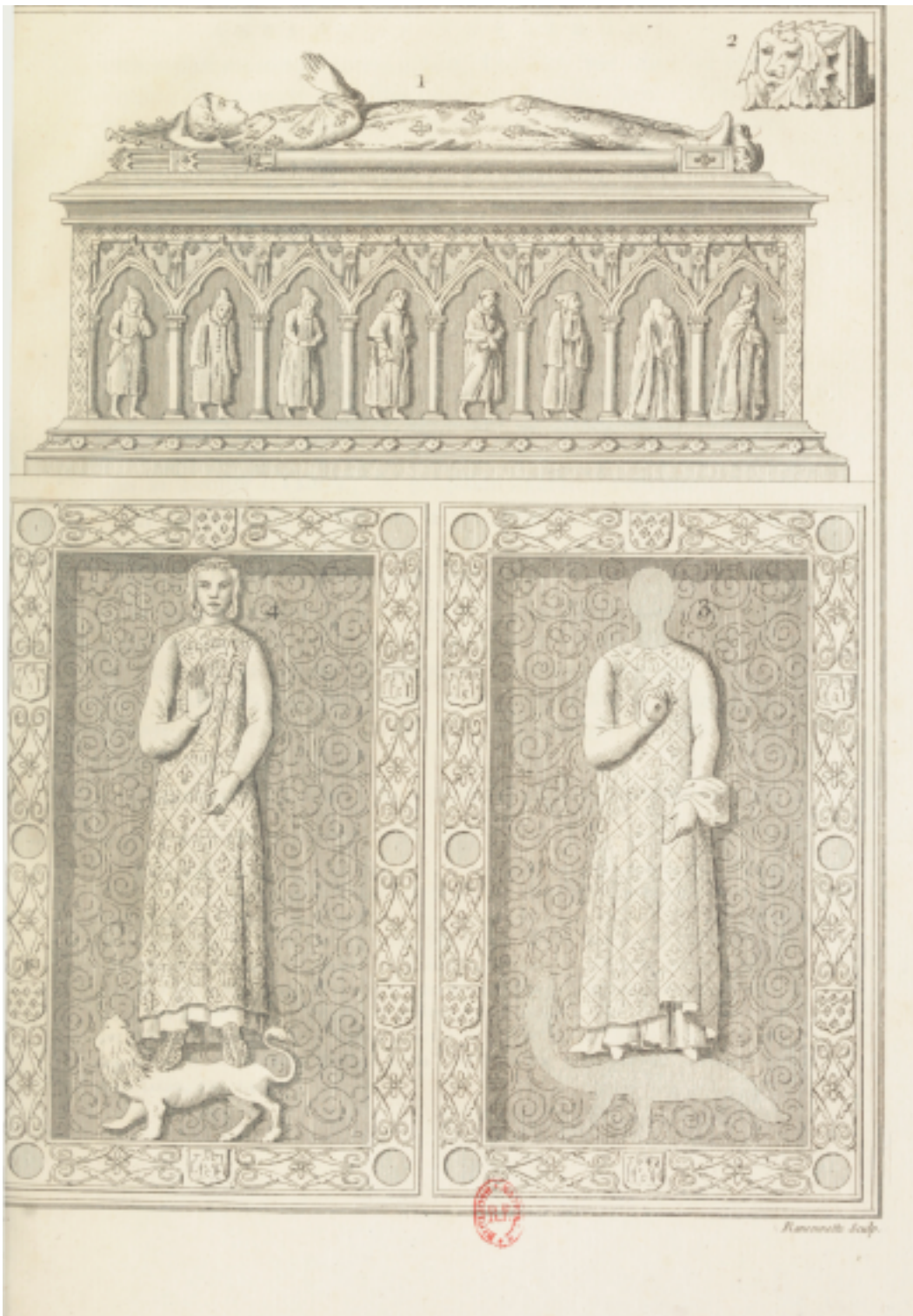
monuments of Blanche and Jean, which were part of the original screen (see below).²⁰ While the architectural parts, including the murals, were disposed of, the champlévé Limoges enamel plaques with the gilt copper-alloy effigies were preserved by the monks, though in varying states of disrepair²¹ (Plate 9). This is a very fortunate turn of events because structural changes to the area around the choir or high altar often caused the disappearance of medieval metal tombs and effigies in France.²² The funerary plaques with the effigies of Blanche and Jean remained more or less in their original location inside the modernised choir at Royaumont until the abbey was suppressed by the Assemblée nationale and its assets offered up for sale in early 1791.²³ The new owner of the abbey, Jean-Joseph Bourget de Travanel, planned to

²⁰ M. Pessiot, 'Un tombeau oublié de la famille de Saint Louis à Royaumont: le tombeau d'Ote (†1291), fils de Philippe d'Artois', *Revue du Louvre* 4 (1994), 29–36, at 31; *Histoire de l'Académie des sciences de l'Institut de France* (Paris, 1760), 2, 63. The refurbishment of the church was largely funded by Bernardin de Rosset de Fleury (1718–81), archbishop of Tours and commendatory abbot of Royaumont: Paris, Archives Nationales [hereafter AN], MC/ET/XCII/640, quittances of 21 and 22 October 1761, and of 21 April, 6 July, 8 October and 21 December 1762, and of 17 September 1763. The document lists some of the artisans involved in the restoration of the abbey church. One of them is Jacques Gamain, whose family worked as locksmiths for the court of Versailles. He was responsible for (part of) the metal grille which was to replace the old choir screen (see n.57). See also J. Bourzat, *Une dynastie à la cour de Versailles: Les Gamain* (Paris, 2016). An incorrect reconstruction of the metal grills at Royaumont was made in 2016: G. Gbikpi-Benissan, P. Callet and F. Magoulès, 'Spectral Domain Decomposition Method for Physically-based Rendering of Royaumont Abbey', 2016 *IEEE Intl Conference on Computational Science and Engineering (CSE) and IEEE Intl Conference on Embedded and Ubiquitous Computing (EUC) and 15th Intl Symposium on Distributed Computing and Applications for Business Engineering (DCABES)* (Paris, 2016), 379–85.

²¹ Aubin-Louis Millin provided a description of the situation shortly before the dissolution of the abbey of Royaumont in 1791. He criticised the monks' carelessness: Millin, *Antiquités nationales*, 7–8. Dom Poirier explicitly wrote in his notes that Millin's observation that the plaques of Blanche and Jean were '*sciés à longueur* (sawn to pieces)' was wrong, because they were still intact when Poirier saw them: Paris, BnF, MS Français 20813, ff. 141r–143r.

²² See for example R. Marcoux, 'Investigating the Metal Tombs of Medieval France: A Statistical Approach', *TMBS* 19:3 (2016), 186–212, at 187.

²³ The agenda point was spearheaded in the Assemblée by its member Louis-Alexandre de la Rochefoucauld (1743–92), who was head of the so-called *Comité ecclésiastique* and the *Comité d'Aliénation des biens nationaux*, which were responsible for Royaumont: E. Laurent and J. Mavidal, *Archives parlementaires de 1787 à 1860. Recueil complet des débats législatifs & politiques des chambres françaises. Première série (1787–1799)* (Paris, 1886), 260; R. Cobb, 'Sur la destruction de l'abbaye de Royaumont', *Annales Historiques de la Révolution Française* 35 (1963), 360–1. De la Rochefoucauld later received reports on the dissolution of the abbey: Paris, AN, F/17/1263. The church and a significant part of the religious complex were estimated at a combined value of 121,764 livres in May 1791. See the catalogue *Tableau des biens particuliers, et journal des domaines nationaux qui sont à vendre* (Paris, May 1791), 5–6.



9. P. N. Ransonnette, engraving of the funerary plaques and effigies of Jean (bottom left) and Blanche (bottom right) and of the tomb of Louis of France. A.-L. Millin, *Antiquités nationales, ou recueil de monumens*, section xi (1791).

*Statue de Philippe de France, frère de S. Louis.
(de l'Abbaye de Royaumont.)*



Ornements peints sur l'habit.



Chaussure de la même figure.



Imbard del.

*Chaussure et Ornement
tirés d'une tombe en email,
qui représente la figure de Jean,
deuxième fils de S. Louis.*



Blanc sculpt.

Musée des Monuments français.

turn the former religious house into a textile factory with a mill.²⁴ It was then decided by the revolutionary authorities that the remains of the royal children be transferred to the abbey of Saint-Denis. Most of the remaining royal tombs at Royaumont were deemed historically and artistically important enough to be salvaged and transported to the Benedictine abbey too.²⁵ Dom Germain Poirier (d.1803), archivist of Saint-Denis and later Keeper of the National Archives, was appointed to personally examine the funerary monuments and oversee their transferral to the capital.²⁶ The church of Royaumont would be demolished shortly after.²⁷ The funerary plaques of Blanche and Jean did not remain in Saint-Denis for long. In 1794 they became part of Alexandre Lenoir's famed *Musée des monuments français*, where the engraver Amédée Perée (d.1840) made a study of parts of the tombs of Jean and of Philippe-Dagobert (Plate 10) which will be discussed later.²⁸ The tombs were returned to Saint-Denis in 1821.²⁹ There they were placed under reconstructed niches by Viollet-le-Duc in c.1868–72 during his restoration of the church.³⁰ At that same time the plaques and effigies were heavily restored. The face of Blanche and most of the escutcheons on both plaques, which were joined onto the main brass plate and which had already been lost by the time of Gaignières, were reconstructed (compare Plates 11, 12) and a dog was added below Blanche's feet. Viollet-le-Duc's versions of the arcosolia were

²⁴ He applied to the revolutionary authorities with his commercial plans. Much remains unknown about this person: Cobb, 'La destruction', 360–1. The abbey was later inherited by his brother Pierre-Nicholas-Joseph de Bourget de Travanet (1753–1814), a soldier and politician. In 1833 the artist William Callow (1812–1908) visited the abbey of Royaumont and drew parts of the abbey in their dilapidated state. This set of drawings, which are currently preserved in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, shows the presence of the factory in the medieval complex: V&A Museum, E.923-1937 – E.932-1937.

²⁵ Paris, AN, F/17/1263. This folder, titled *Comités ecclésiastique et d'aliénation réunis*, contains the official communications on this subject.

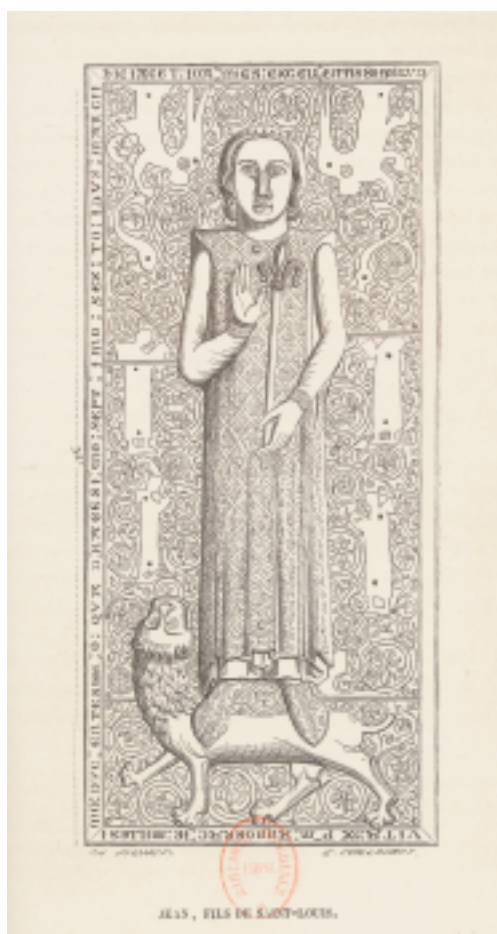
²⁶ Poirier's mission took place in July and August 1791. Detailed descriptions of the several phases of this undertaking can be found in Paris, AN, F/17/1263. See also n.23. For more information on Dom Poirier's interesting life and other activities: C. Dacier, *Notice historique sur la vie et les ouvrages de Germain Poirier* (Paris, 1804).

²⁷ Demolition work started in May 1791, but it was not until after Poirier's visit in August that same year that the church itself was razed to the ground: Cobb, 'La destruction', 360–1.

²⁸ E. Brown, 'The Oxford Collection of the Drawings of Roger de Gaignières and the Royal Tombs of Saint-Denis', *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 78 (1988), i-viii, 1–74, at 7–25.

²⁹ A. Lenoir, *Musée des monuments français, ou description historique et chronologique des statues en marbre et en bronze, bas-reliefs et tombeaux des hommes et des femmes célèbres, pour servir à l'histoire de France et à celle de l'art* (Paris, 1800), 190–1; A. Lenoir, *Musée royal des monuments français, ou mémorial de l'histoire de France et de ses monuments* (Paris, 1816), 49.

³⁰ Two undated photographs are known which show the plaques with effigies of Blanche and Jean in their reconstructed niches: *Plateforme ouverte du patrimoine*: reference nos APMH00086892 and APMH00086893.



11. Ch. Fichot and E. Cuillaumot, engraving of the funerary plaque of Jean as it was in 1848.

Reproduced from F. de Guilhermy, *Monographie de l'église royale de Saint-Denis. Tombeau et figures historiques* (Paris, 1848), 164–5 © Paris, BnF.



12. Ch. Fichot, engraving of Jean of France's funerary plaque as it was in 1875. Reproduced from F. de Guilhermy, *Inscriptions de la France du V^e siècle au XVIII^e: II* (Paris, 1875), 156 © Paris, BnF.

later demolished and the funerary plaques of Blanche and Jean moved to their current location on the north side of the high altar at Saint-Denis in 1955.³¹

Chronology and Attribution

With the lack of any contemporary documents, the chronology of the creation of the tombs of Blanche and Jean remains unknown, but their historic context may give some clues. Blanche had already been dead for several years when Prince Jean joined his sister in the afterlife in March 1248. His death was quickly followed by very significant events for his father the French king. A month after the boy's death, the

³¹ H. E. s'Jacob, *Idealism and Realism: A Study of Sepulchral Symbolism* (Leiden: 1954), 78; *Enamels of Limoges*, Gauthier, Barriere, Becquet, Pastoureaux, Chancel-Bardelot et al., 404.

THE TOMBS OF BLANCHE (d.1243) AND JEAN (d.1248) OF FRANCE

Sainte-Chapelle was consecrated with great pomp.³² It seems that preparations for the Seventh Crusade coincided with increased royal patronage of the Cistercian abbey of Royaumont. In June, only months after Jean's death, Louis confirmed the assets of the Cistercian abbey and expanded them by adding further donations of land and privileges.³³ The king's brother Robert I of Artois (d.1250) granted extra benefices to Royaumont in the same month.³⁴ Moreover, the royal accounts of that same year make mention of crucifixes produced for the abbey. They can probably be identified as the silver and copper-gilt crucifixes in which relics of the Crown of Thorns and the Holy Cross were presented to Royaumont.³⁵ On 12 August 1248, Louis IX left Paris and formally began the Seventh Crusade. After the king's departure, work on many major building operations and artistic commissions was slowed down or suspended until his return to France in 1254.³⁶

It has been suggested that the monuments of Blanche and Jean were commissioned by the children's grandmother Blanche of Castille after the death of Jean in March 1248 because of her involvement with the foundation of Royaumont and in the absence of her son on Crusade.³⁷ Although Queen Blanche might have had

³² Branner, *St Louis and the Court Style*, 65.

³³ The charter is kept in Arras, Archives départementales de Seine-Maritime, 11 H 1. See also L. Delisle, *Cartulaire Normand de Philippe-Auguste, Louis VIII, Saint-Louis et Philippe-le-Hardi* (Geneva, 1978), 324.

³⁴ This concerned the donation of benefices and the exemption from taxes to buy butter in the county of Artois: Arras, Archives départementales du Pas-de-Calais, A 11, pièce 17. This privilege was still effective in 1345 (Arras, Archives départementales du Pas-de-Calais, A 645, pièce 3). These and other benefices would remain important sources of income for the abbey until well into the 16th century. Documents held in the departmental archives in Lille show that the dukes of Burgundy, who had inherited the County of Artois in 1384, were still obliged to pay yearly sums to the abbots of Royaumont according to provisions made by Robert of Artois and his granddaughter Mahaut of Artois (1268–1329). The payments took place in the abbey of Saint-Omer (Pas-de-Calais) in the presence of the abbots of Royaumont until the first half of the 16th century. Some receipts of these yearly transactions can be found in Lille, Archives départementales du Nord, B 2032, c.20; 2036, c.10, 2043, c.10; 2275, c.12.

³⁵ *Receuil des historiens*, eds de Wailly and Guigniaut, xxi, 284; Paris, BnF, MS Latin 5472, f. 3r. See also F. de Mély, *La sainte couronne d'épines à Notre-Dame de Paris* (Paris, 1927), 32.

³⁶ Branner, *St Louis and the Court Style*, 86. I disagree with Nolan who argues, based solely on the dates of Louis's absence due to the Crusade, that it must have been Blanche of Castile who was responsible for the children's monuments: K. Nolan, *Queens in Stone and Silver. The Creation of a Visual Imagery of Queenship in Capetian France* (New York, 2009), 138.

³⁷ For a more recent assessment of Blanche of Castile's involvement with Royaumont: A. Gajewski, 'The Patronage Question Under Review: Queen Blanche of Castile (1188–1252) and the Architecture of the Cistercian Abbeys at Royaumont, Maubuisson, and Le Lys', in *Reassessing the Roles of Women as 'Makers' of Medieval Art and Architecture*, ed. T. Martin (Leiden, 2012), 195–244.

a role in the commissioning of the funerary plaques and effigies, there is no evidence that she was solely responsible for them or that the construction of the monuments was one coordinated effort.³⁸ If the monuments were begun in 1248, it is more likely that this was probably part of the increased patronage lavished on Royaumont shortly before the king's departure that same year. It is likely that little, if anything, of the tombs of Blanche and Jean was actually finished or put in place inside the choir at Royaumont by the time Louis IX departed overseas. Instead, like most royal projects, work on the two children's tombs may have been halted too, only to be continued after the king safely returned in 1254.³⁹

Upon his safe arrival in France Louis quickly resumed his personal connection with Royaumont.⁴⁰ For example, he celebrated his safe return with an elaborate Christmas Mass at the Cistercian abbey that same year.⁴¹ He also continued his habit of visiting his favourite hunting lodge close to Royaumont in the following years, regularly conducting his political affairs from there.⁴² Jacques Le Goff even went so far as to say that 'Louis was at home at Royaumont'.⁴³ Louis IX would have therefore had ample opportunity to oversee and personally intervene with the continued work on his two children's monuments after 1254. The monuments of Blanche and Jean should be considered the products of his own patronage. Moreover, dating the completion of the tombs of Blanche and Jean to after 1254 implies that the creation of the two tombs fell in the same period as the king's commissioning of the gilt copper-alloy effigies of his mother Blanche of Castile at the Cistercian nunnery of Maubuisson (Saint-Ouen-l'Aumône) and of Charles the Bald (d.877) in Saint-Denis, Paris.⁴⁴

³⁸ J. Louis, 'L'effigie funéraire dans le royaume de France, 1134–1267' (unpub. Ph. D. thesis, University of Strasbourg, 2006), 300.

³⁹ Branner even argued that the so-called 'Court Style', which was developed under Louis IX, only started to flourish after Louis IX returned from the crusade in 1254: Branner, *St Louis and the Court Style*, 86; Le Goff, *Saint Louis*, 465.

⁴⁰ Duclos, *Histoire de Royaumont*, i, 210–12.

⁴¹ Duclos, *Histoire de Royaumont*, i, 212; A. Dimier, *Saint Louis et Cîteaux* (Paris, 1954), 64.

⁴² Several charters indicate that he was in or near the abbey of Royaumont in February 1256, March and June 1258 and in March 1259: Delisle, *Cartulaire Normand*, nos 572, 693. Surviving royal accounts also show payments to a baker and to a monk at Royaumont in July 1256: *Receuil des historiens*, eds de Wailly and Guigniaut, xxi, 355. Finally, Louis and his entourage conducted affairs from or at the royal lodge close to Royaumont in 1267 and 1268, as is evidenced by several letters signed at Royaumont by Cardinal Simon de Brion (c.1285), who was Keeper of the Royal Seal and Chancellor of France: Paris, AN, Trésor des Chartes (layettes) (1261–70), nos 53.5339, 54.5373, 285.5355, 288.5339.

⁴³ Cited from the English translation of the original French, Le Goff, *Saint Louis*, 465.

⁴⁴ S. Badham and S. Oosterwijk, "'Monumentum aere perennius'? Precious-metal Effigial Tomb Monuments in Europe 1080–1430', *CM* 30 (2015), 7–105, at 14. For possible influence of the two monuments on a children's tomb in Westminster Abbey, see also S. Oosterwijk, 'The Tomb Monument of Katherine, Daughter of Henry III and Eleanor of Provence (1253–1257)', *The Antiquaries Journal* 92 (2012), 1–28.

The Location of the two Monuments

The question then arises as to what purpose the monuments for Blanche and Jean served. How and for whom were the children's monuments visible? What was the identity of the envisaged audience? The rest of this essay is dedicated to answering these questions.

The exceptional iconography of the monuments, which each includes two representations of the children, allows for some observations on the intended audience. Before going into that, the iconography of the tombs needs to be explained further. Jean's copper effigy holds a sceptre, an attribute which was used on other effigies for prematurely deceased royal sons before⁴⁵ (Plates 1, 6). Blanche's effigy holds a ball in her right hand and has a lizard-like animal below her feet⁴⁶ (Plates 1, 7). The gilt-copper effigies offer a stylistic image of the children, which must have been deliberate. There was the underlying belief that a person's appearance, as Thomas Aquinas reasoned, was a direct manifestation of their virtue and the goodness of their soul. This had a profound effect on funerary imagery which was concerned with preserving a deceased person's appearance for posterity.⁴⁷ Sophie Oosterwijk has argued that the depiction of children as mini-adults in their own tomb representations reflects medieval theological thinking about how the deceased would appear in the eternal life.⁴⁸ The funerary plaques of Blanche and Jean similarly show stylised representations which do not represent the children's physical appearance at all as it would have been at the time of their deaths. Instead, the plaques preserve the children's idealised looks in anticipation of what is to come at the time of their Resurrection, showing them in their age of strength and maturity, for when the Last Judgement comes and they enter the Kingdom of Heaven.⁴⁹ The idealisation of these images is further emphasised by the heraldic patterns depicted on the heraldic surcoats of both effigies and the escutcheons along the edges: they preserve the signs of the children's royal status for posterity.

The funerary plaques can be considered prospective monuments in the sense that they show what awaits Blanche and Jean in the afterlife. This is contrasted by their lost painted representations on the wall. The painted representations gave the viewer

⁴⁵ The effigies of Alphonse and Jean of France at the collegiate church of Poissy carried sceptres too: *Enamels of Limoges*, Gauthier, Barrière, Becquet, Pastoureau, Chancel-Bardelot et al., 404–5; Nolan, *Queens in Silver and Stone*, 234, n. 85.

⁴⁶ Marcoux, 'L'espace', 310. The lizard-like creature had already been lost by Gaignières' time but its contours are visible in Boudan's illustration of Blanche's plaque. During the Viollet-le-Duc's restoration programme a small dog was added which is still part of the funerary plaque.

⁴⁷ D. Olariu, 'Thomas Aquinas' Definition of the *imago Dei* and the Development of Lifelike Portraiture', *Bulletin du centre d'études médiévales d'Auxerre* (BUCEMA) 17 (2013), 1–16, at 2.

⁴⁸ S. Oosterwijk, 'Deceptive Appearances: The Presentation of Children on Medieval Tombs', *Ecclesiology Today* 42 (2010), 45–60, at 55–7.

⁴⁹ Le Goff, *Saint Louis*, 219.

a very different prospective image of the social positions which the children would have fulfilled in their earthly existence if they had reached adulthood. Heraldry again played a significant part in this, but it worked differently for both monuments. The lozenges inside the niche of Blanche's tomb, which all show the arms of France impaling either those of Castile or Provence, are reminiscent of the coats-of-arms of noble and royal women after their marriage. The heraldic pattern is therefore likely to be interpreted as a conscious sign of Blanche's expected role to make an advantageous marriage and to become a mother, had she lived.

The monument of Jean deals with the semi-prospective use of heraldry in a different way. Jean was depicted on the wall against a greenish background filled with gold-hued balls or discs. The background of Blanche's painted representation is filled with the heraldic emblem of Castile, so it is likely that the circles depicted around Jean represent a heraldic motif too. If so, these gold discs or balls must be identified as heraldic emblems called bezants.⁵⁰ The only other coat-of-arms ever used by Louis IX's children, which contains bezants, is that of Pierre (d.1283) who received the county of Alençon from his father in 1269.⁵¹ Is there a possible connection between the bezants on Jean's tomb and Alençon? There is no evidence to suggest that Jean was destined to become a member of the clergy, so at a certain age he, as the younger child of a sovereign, would have been granted lands and titles from the Crown in appanage in order to secure his position at court and to improve his marriage prospects, as was the case with Louis IX's other surviving children. The presence of bezants on the tomb may refer to such a prospective appanage. Perhaps the intention had been to give to Jean the county of Alençon, which had been part of the Crown since 1221. The appanage certainly did not belong to anyone else during Jean's short life. After his death the appanage would have been available to be granted to one of the other children of Louis. This turned out to be Pierre, who was born about three years after Jean's death.⁵² Changes in the granting of titles and land due to the death of a child were not uncommon to the French royal family.⁵³

⁵⁰ J. Woodward and G. Burnett, *A Treatise on Heraldry, British and Foreign: With English and French Glossaries* (Edinburgh, 1965 repr.), 189–90. In French heraldry they are called *besants d'or*; Pastoureau, *Traité d'héraldique*, 40–6. I thank Philip Lankester for his valuable advice on this topic.

⁵¹ For example, the Alençon coat-of-arms with the bezants is identified as such by Bernard de Montfaucon in the famous miniature showing Philip VI of France presiding over the end of the trial of Robert III of Artois on 6 August 1332: Montfaucon, *Les monumens*, ii, 247.

⁵² A. Vallez, 'La construction du comté d'Alençon (1269–1380). Essai de géographie historique', *Annales de Normandie*, 22 (1972), 11–45, at 12–13; X. Hélary, 'La mort de Pierre, comte d'Alençon (1283), fils de Saint Louis, dans la mémoire Capétienne', *Revue d'Histoire de l'Église de France* 94 (2008), 5–22, at 6–7.

⁵³ For example, after the demise of Louis IX's younger brother Jean Tristan in 1232 at the age of thirteen, Anjou and Maine, which Jean Tristan had received in appanage, were transferred to their surviving brother Charles (1227–85) in 1246: G. Sivéry, *Blanche de Castille* (Paris, 1990), 111. Charles's claim to the County of Anjou would later enable him

THE TOMBS OF BLANCHE (d.1243) AND JEAN (d.1248) OF FRANCE

It is thus safe to say that heraldry served to underline the dual-purpose commemoration of the monuments of Blanche and Jean. While it was used to immortalise the idealised images of the children in their respective funerary plaques, the heraldry in the painted wall depictions enabled the viewer to ponder their future earthly roles which would never be fulfilled. The person seeing this intricate symbolism would have needed sufficient experience with heraldry in order to understand and appreciate this double prospective message of the monuments of Blanche and Jean. The knowledge required for the intricacies of this iconographic programme implies that exclusivity of audience was envisaged for these two children's tombs. Location played a significant part in ensuring that exclusivity.⁵⁴

There is no surviving written medieval evidence to suggest the original location of the monuments of Blanche and Jean in Royaumont. The drawings and written sources from the time of Gaignières' collection present the oldest known evidence. They tell us that before the demolition of c.1761 the children's tombs were to the north side of the high altar inside the choir, much like founders' funerary monuments in other Cistercian monasteries.⁵⁵ In 1730, Bernard de Montfaucon added that the children's monuments were inserted in a wall under one of the grand arcades which separated the sanctuary from the ambulatory.⁵⁶ Dom Poirier drew from his documentary and archaeological research in 1791 the conclusion that the sanctuary was originally surrounded by a wall which was at least partially decorated with paintings.⁵⁷

to found the second House of Anjou.

⁵⁴ As Marcoux eloquently remarked: '*En principe, le tombeau est avant toute chose un lieu, celui de la sépulture* (In principle the tomb is before all else a place, that of burial)': Marcoux, 'L'espace', 330.

⁵⁵ Untermann, *Forma Ordinis*, 77. It is known that the circumference of the Cistercian abbey church of Longpont (Aisne) contained several arcosolia and other free-standing monuments of lavish size and decoration below the arcades encircling the high altar: Dimier, *Saint Louis et Cîteaux*, 54–6.

⁵⁶ Bernard de Montfaucon uses the following phrase: '*Le même Prince se voit encore gravé sur une plaque de cuivre relevée contre la muraille dans le chœur de l'Abbaye de Royaumont, à main gauche du grand autel. Les monumens* (The same Prince is visible also on a plaque of copper in relief against the wall inside the choir of the Abbey of Royaumont)'; Montfaucon, *Les monumens*, ii, 161. Blanche's monuments is described as being '*à main gauche du grand autel dans le chœur de l'Abbaye de Royaumont* (on the left side of the high altar inside the choir of the Abbey of Royaumont)'; Montfaucon, *Les monumens*, ii, 162. In 2005 Michel Huglo briefly remarked that traces of the royal tombs are still visible 'in the circumference of the choir' at Royaumont; M. Huglo, 'La dispersion des manuscrits de Royaumont', *Revue bénédictine* 115 (2005), 365–406, at n.7. See also Erlande-Brandenburg, *Le roi est mort*, 93. The presence of a wall separating the sanctuary from the ambulatory is also suggested by a drawing of the tombs of Othon (d.1291), son of Philip of Artois, and of Louis and Philippe of Alençon.

⁵⁷ Poirier described the demolition of the old walls surrounding the choir as a consequence of the restoration of 1761–3: '[...] *mais en décorant le sanctuaire par de très belles grilles*



13. L. Boudan, drawing of the double monument of Louis and Philippe of Alençon at Royaumont, c.1700 © Paris, BnF, Réserve MS Pe 11c, f. 48r.



14. L. Boudan, drawing of the tomb of Othon of Artois (d.1291) at Royaumont, c.1700 © Paris, BnF, MS Clairambault 632, f. 135r.

The presence of the children's tombs within the sanctuary of the abbey church of Royaumont is corroborated by a description made on 28 July 1791 of Dom Poirier's visit to disinter the remains of the royal children at Royaumont. Although the canopied niches of Blanche and Jean were lost by that time, Poirier's description gives us an impression of the original locations of the children's tombs through the author's own observations of the sanctuary and the mortal remains which were still interred inside the sanctuary.⁵⁸ While Poirier proposed that the remains may have been

substituées aux murs qui en formaient l'enceinte et le long desquels étoient les tombeaux on a fait disparaître les figures peintes sur ces murs ou qui y étoient adossées, on a perdu également les inscriptions qui les accompagnoient [...] (but while decorating the sanctuary with very beautiful grills which substitute the walls, which formed the screen and against which the tombs were located, one has made the painted figures disappear on these walls where they were located, one has also lost the inscriptions which originally accompanied them [the tombs]): Paris, BnF, MS Français 20813, f. 118v.

⁵⁸ Paris, BnF, MS Français 20813, f. 178r, 'La première operation a été de reconnoître les tombeaux déposés dans le sanctuaire le long des grilles qui en ferment l'enceinte' (The first

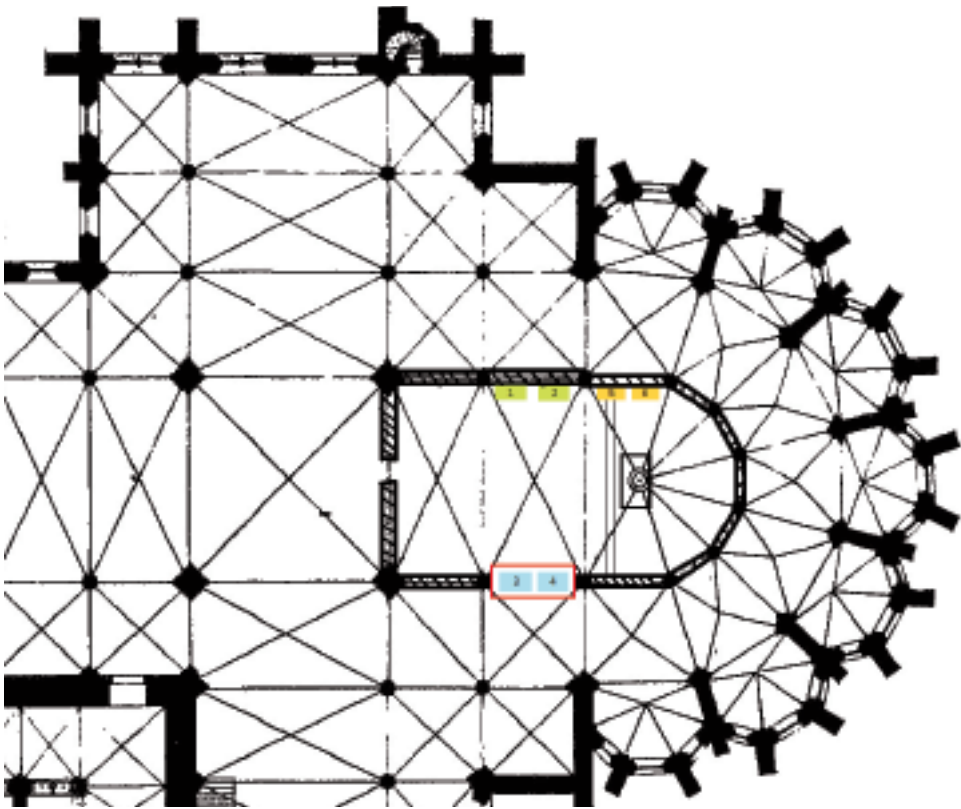


Plate 15. Hypothetical reconstruction of the choir and the locations of the tombs of Blanche (1), Jean (2), Philippe-Dagobert (3), Louis (4) c.1260-1760. The location of the monuments of Othon (5) and Louis and Philippe (6) dates from after their displacement in the 15th century. Plan from Lauer 1908, with additions by the author.

temporarily removed during the 1761 reconstruction, he reconstructed the original configuration of the monuments inside the sanctuary.⁵⁹ This makes Poirier's description an invaluable source to approximate the original locations of the royal tombs. Although his notes are not always clear, it seems that Dom Poirier described the order of the tombs on the northside of the choir as follows: the westernmost tomb was that of Blanche, followed by Jean's tomb as the second one.⁶⁰ They were followed by a double tomb of grandchildren of Louis IX, namely Louis (d.1277) and Philippe (d.1279) (**Plate 13**), the two prematurely deceased sons of the aforementioned Pierre of Alençon.⁶¹ Another monument housed the remains of Othon (d.1291), son of Louis

task was to identify the tombs deposited inside the sanctuary along the grills which formed its screen').

⁵⁹ Paris, BnF, MS Français 20813, ff. 118v-121r.

⁶⁰ This sequence is explicitly described by Dom Poirier in his own notes made at Royaumont; Paris, BnF, MS Français 20813, f. 213r.

⁶¹ The legend of Louis Boudan's drawing misidentifies them as Pierre and Philippe. Misidentification was not uncommon. In another drawing the twin sons of Louis VIII and Blanche of Castile, Alphonse and Jean who were buried in the middle of the choir of the

IX's great-nephew Philip of Artois (**Plate 14**). The latter two monuments were probably located directly next to the high altar, as is revealed by descriptions and Boudan's drawings.⁶² The high altar must have been at the east end of the choir at Royaumont, so a hypothetical reconstruction can be made based on Poirier's observations and Boudan's illustrations⁶³ (**Plate 15**). The burial of all other non-royal persons at Royaumont remained restricted to the chapter house (for abbots) and the cloister or the portals of the church (for members of the royal household) until the fifteenth century (see below).⁶⁴

The Visibility of the Two Monuments

The area close to the high altar, where Blanche and Jean were commemorated, was an enclosed space. This meant that the two monuments were hidden from the eyes of the many visitors which the abbey church would receive.⁶⁵ The choir of a Cistercian church was almost never entered, not even by the monks and abbot of the abbey. Only the serving priest, deacon and subdeacon would have entered the area around the high altar during Mass.⁶⁶ Moreover, as the wall of the two monuments of Blanche

collegiate church of Notre-Dame de Poissy, were misidentified as Philippe and Jean; Paris, BnF, département des Estampes et de la photographie, Rés., MS Pe 11c, f. 48r.

⁶² *Gallia Christiana*, iv, 776; P. Lauer, 'L'Abbaye de Royaumont', *BM* 72 (1908), 215–68, at 257–9; Pessiot, 'Un tombeau oublié', no. 10.

⁶³ This order is also motivated by the descriptions by Gaignières and Dom Poirier: Paris, BnF, MS Latin 5472, 2; Paris, BnF, MS Français 20813, ff. 119v–121r; and Paris, AN, F/17/1270/B, doc. 126. Pessiot reversed the order of the four tombs in her article, though she does not state any sources. She refers to Millin's description which contains many mistakes and which described the tombs in a partially demolished state: Pessiot, 'Un tombeau oublié', 31. When Viollet-le-Duc had the two children's monuments reconstructed in Saint-Denis, he located them to the left of the high altar too: G. d'Heilly, *Extraction des cerceux royaux à Saint-Denis en 1793* (Paris, 1868), 147.

⁶⁴ *Gallia Christiana*, ix, 842–3. Most of these persons had been part of the royal court during and after Louis IX's lifetime. Several of their monuments were reproduced by Louis Boudan: Lauer, 'L'Abbaye de Royaumont', 237, 260–2. For some reproductions of known (but now lost) tomb stones from the cloister of Royaumont: Adhémar and Dordor, 'Les tombeaux', nos 353, 373, 497, 505, 514, 521, 523.

⁶⁵ Indulgences were given to religious visitors. Moreover, the presence of relics of the True Cross and saints attracted large crowds on festive days: Paris, BnF, MS Latin 5472, 3; Duclos, *Histoire de Royaumont*, i, 381.

⁶⁶ M. Aubert, *L'architecture cistercienne en France*, 2 vols (Paris, 1947), i, 315–17; Untermann, *Forma Ordinis*, 241; E. Mouraire, 'Les autels et les reliques de l'abbatiale de Cîteaux', *Bulletin du centre d'études médiévales d'Auxerre (BUCEMA)* 4 [thematic number] (2011), 1–28. The secluded nature of the sanctuary at Royaumont is further corroborated by another source. In 1250, while Louis IX was on the Seventh Crusade, archbishop Eudes Rigaud of Rouen (1200–75) complained in his travelogue that women could approach the high altar at Royaumont: Duclos, *Histoire de Royaumont*, i, 116. Eudes Rigaud would preside over Mass at Royaumont on Assumption Day in 1262 in the presence of Louis IX: Le Goff, *Saint Louis*, 613.

and Jean was made up of the choir screen itself, it would have been impossible to see them from the ambulatory. Thus, only a very select group of people who could enter inside the sanctuary were able to gain access to the tombs and see all the details of the intricate visual programme displayed on the funerary plaques, effigies and murals.⁶⁷

Nevertheless, the architectural pretensions of the niches do suggest that the tombs of Blanche and Jean, even without a constant audience at all, were meant to be in dialogue with their ecclesiastical setting. Although no visual sources on the interior of the church remain, we may get a sense of the impressive scale of the building through an eighteenth-century drawing of the nave of the Cistercian abbey church at Royaumont⁶⁸ (Plate 16). One biographer of St Louis wrote in 1662 that it was at Royaumont ‘où il [Louis IX] fait esclater particulièrement sa magnificence dans le bastiment & dans les ornemens de l’Eglise, dont les richesses & les beautez sont renduës plus esclatantes par les loüanges de Dieu qui y sont chantées iour & nuit, quelquefois en la presence de nostre Prince, lequel y assiste autant que ses affaires le permettent (where in particular he lavished his magnificence on the structure and the ornaments of the church whose splendour and beauty are rendered even more impressive by the praises of God sung there day and night, sometimes in the presence of our Prince, as much as his obligations allow)’.⁶⁹ The association made here between the splendid church interior funded by Louis IX and the daily offices is especially interesting as it was written at a time when the choir screen, the original context of the tombs of Blanche and Jean, was still extant.

More precise information on the interior of the famous abbey church comes from a source contemporary to the monuments of Blanche and Jean. In 1263, the General Chapter of Cîteaux criticised the abbey of Royaumont for its excesses of decoration which went beyond what was considered appropriate for a Cistercian house: the new statutes of the Cistercian Order which were drawn up in the same year even contained a separate clause demanding that the painted images, sculptures and statues at Royaumont be reduced to the Cistercian vow of simplicity.⁷⁰ The same

⁶⁷ M. Mersch, ‘Konzepte und Konstitution von Räumen im Zisterzienserorden’, in *Geist und Gestalt. Monastische Raumkonzepte als Ausdrucksformen religiöser Leitideen im Mittelalter*, ed. J. Sonntag (Berlin, 2016), 121–40.

⁶⁸ Aubert, *L’architecture*, i, 127; Branner, *Saint Louis and the Court Style*, 33–4; and no. 20 for a brief discussion of a hypothetical digital reconstruction of the church of Royaumont.

⁶⁹ J. M. de Vernon, *Le roy très-chrestien, ou La vie de St Louis roy de France* (Paris, 1662), 128.

⁷⁰ Aubert, *L’architecture*, i, 30–1, 144, 316; P. Binski, *Medieval Death. Ritual and Representation* (London, 1996), 59–60, 88; Untermann, *Forma Ordinis*, 77, 117; C. Kratzke, ‘Bestatten - Gedenken - Repräsentieren: mittelalterliche Sepulkraldenkmäler in Zisterzen’, in *Sepulturae cistercienses*, eds J. Hall and C. Kratzke (Forges-Chimay, 2005), 9–26, at 16; Y. Le Pogam, ‘Le tombeau de Philippe Dagobert : un monument royal chez les moines blancs’, *BM* 168 (2010), 133–48, at 133. The year has sometimes been transcribed as 1253. See E. Martène and U. Durand, *Thesaurus novus anecdotarum*, 5 vols



16. Tavernier de Junquières, view of the nave and choir of the Cistercian abbey church of Longpont, 18th century © Paris, BnF, département Estampes et photographie, Réserve VE-26 (J).

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clause makes mention of newly made hangings and of columns or piers newly decorated with angels around the high altar. The sanctuary was surrounded by an ambulatory with seven rayonnant chapels which would have each had their own elaborate furnishings.⁷¹ It is also known that the windows of the choir were filled with stained glass which would have cast their colourful shades on the tombs and the elaborately decorated sanctuary of the abbey church. In two of these windows were depictions of Louis IX's younger brother Philippe-Dagobert and of the king's son Louis of France, who were both buried near the high altar.⁷² Since the monuments of Blanche and Jean were located on the north side of the sanctuary, they would have been particularly well illuminated by the sunlight streaming into the church through the multicoloured windows on the south side at different times of the year. This must have created a visually powerful interplay with the glistening of the gilt copper and Limoges enamel of the children's funerary plaques.⁷³ While the great wealth of the interior of the abbey was targeted with the 1263 statute, any royal tombs in Royaumont were exempt, as happened in other Cistercian monastic houses.⁷⁴

Paradoxically, the elaborate decorations and visual splendour of the children's monuments and their interaction with their equally beautiful surroundings were reserved for an extremely exclusive audience. The tombs of Blanche and Jean were

(Paris, 1717), iv, 1400; Erlande-Brandenburg, *Le roi est mort*, 164; Nolan, *Queens in Stone and Silver*, 135.

⁷¹ Little is known about the use or dedications of the chapels inside the church, but a notarial document from 1655 makes mention of chapels dedicated to St Maclou, St Sulpice, St Nicholas and to the Virgin Mary inside the abbey church. The latter is probably the chapel in which abbot Jean II de Montmirel (d.1453) was buried (see n.100): Paris, AN, MC/ET/LXXXVII/183, minutes de Charles de Hénault, January to June 1655.

⁷² Montfaucon, *Les monumens*, ii, 183 and fig. xxxv.

⁷³ For a detailed case study on the importance of the interplay of light and a gilt-bronze funerary plaque in a different context, see: J. Luxford, 'The Hastings Brass at Elsing: A Contextual Analysis', *TMBS* 18:3, 193–211.

⁷⁴ Martène and Durand, *Thesaurus*, iv, 1400: '*Item, abbati Regalis-montis praecipitur auctoritate capituli generalis, quod picturas, & imagines, & sculpturas, cortinas & columnas cum angelis circa majus altare de novo factas, ad humilitatem & simplicitatem antiquam ordinis dirigat: ita tamen quod sepulcris regalibus, vel eorum qui regali genere prodierunt, nullum praejudicium per praeceptum hujusmodi generetur. Quod si adimpletum non fuerit intra mensem, idem abbas cum priore suo a vino absteineat, donec praeceptum capituli effectum sortiatur* (Even so, it is ordered to the abbot of Royaumont on the authority of the General Chapter, that he bring the images, statues and sculptures, hangings and piers newly made with angels around the high altar to the ancient humility and simplicity of the Order: and that for the royal tombs, or of those who descendent from the royal house, no such precedent is generated. That if this is not implemented within a month, the same abbot [of Royaumont] with his prior have to abstain from wine until the ordinance of the Chapter has been fulfilled)'; Kratzke, 'Bestatten - Gedenken - Repräsentieren', 16. The alteration of the church interior imposed by the General Chapter of Cîteaux probably never took place at Royaumont.

never meant to be clearly seen by those barred from entering the sanctuary. The choir screen served to keep most worshippers at a physical distance without allowing glimpses through some openings like entrances, as was regularly the case in other contexts where tombs were located between the choir and the ambulatory.⁷⁵ The importance of exclusive visibility was further emphasised in the two other royal tombs which were placed in the sanctuary at Royaumont during the reign of Louis IX, as will be discussed below.

The Completion of a Royal Funerary Programme

When the monuments of Blanche and Jean were installed sometime between 1254 and 1260, they were not the first in the sanctuary. The first (royal) tomb to be erected inside the church of Royaumont was that of Philippe-Dagobert (d.1234), Louis IX's younger brother. (Plate 17) It is not known when precisely this tomb was finished, but it is generally assumed that it was constructed around the time of the consecration of the newly finished abbey church in 1235.⁷⁶ Its original state is preserved in an illustration by Louis Boudan, and thanks to the efforts of Dom Poirier the heavily sculpted tomb chest and effigy have survived. The many traces of polychromy show that the entire tomb was painted with expensive pigments, was partially gilded, and it contained inlaid glass, which would have reflected the overall wealth of the interior of the abbey church in which it stood.⁷⁷

Important for this discussion is that along the edges of the tomb runs an inscription which puts an unusual emphasis on the sculpted imagery of the tomb. The Latin inscription, transcribed by Boudan in the drawing, directly animated the dauphin's effigy and the sculpted figurines depicted in procession along the four sides of the sculpted tomb chest: the inscription starts with Philippe-Dagobert telling us of his heavenly destination, after which the statues on the coffin are described according to their function on the sculpted tomb chest. The literal explanation of the tomb's iconography and the emphasis on seeing in both inscriptions suggest that conscious attempts were made to set the tone for a programme focused on viewing and visibility, even if only for a very small audience.⁷⁸ There used to be a second (probably later)

⁷⁵ This phrase is partially based on Binski's words: P. Binski, 'The English Parish Church and its Art in the Later Middle Ages: A Review of the Problem', *Studies in Iconography* 20 (1999), 1–25, at 13.

⁷⁶ E. Leistenschneider, *Die französische Königsgrablege Saint-Denis. Strategien monarchischer Repräsentation 1223–1461* (Weimar, 2008), 38; Le Goff, *Saint Louis*, 214–15. For the most complete discussion on the chronology of this tomb, see Le Pogam, 'Le tombeau de Philippe-Dagobert', 133–48.

⁷⁷ s'Jacob, *Idealism and Realism*, 92, 98; Le Pogam, 'Le tombeau de Philippe-Dagobert', 136–9.

⁷⁸ N. Saul, *English Church Monuments in the Middle Ages. History and Representation* (Oxford, 2009), 341–2, 348–50. For indepth discussions of similar instances in late-medieval tombs: H. Swift, *Representing the Dead. Epitaph Fictions in Late-Medieval France* (Cambridge, 2016).



TOMBEAU DE PHILIPES DE FRANCE *fils de Saint Louis a conte' droit du grand Autel de l'Abbaye de Royaumont, il est de pierre, peint & dore', & autour sur le bord a commencer par les pieds est escrit.*

*Angelico ductu, feror, ad patriam sine luctu,
Nos circumstantes psalmis precibusque vacantes
Exequias facimus PHILIPPI quem Sepelimus
Concives superi stantes secus agmina cleri
Sic animae pueri cogunt Dominum misereri
Unus spirituum paries alter Monachorum
Signant perpetuum sic jubilate Chorum.*

17. L. Boudan, drawing of the tomb of Philippe-Dagobert at Royaumont, c.1700
© Oxford, Bodl., MS Gough Drawings Gaignières 2, f. 28r.

inscription near Philippe-Dagobert's monument⁷⁹ which directly invoked the importance of the beholder by starting with *Ecce* ('Behold!').⁸⁰ The presence of inscriptions aimed at explicitly explaining parts of the tomb and addressing the viewer is quite rare in tombs from thirteenth-century France.⁸¹ One similar instance is the inscription on the bronze effigy of bishop Geoffroy d'Eu (d.1236) in Amiens cathedral, which can be dated to roughly the same time as Philippe-Dagobert's tomb.⁸² Starting with *Ecce* (Behold!), just like the second inscription on the tomb of Philippe-Dagobert, the text on the bishop's tomb focuses on the importance of its earthly audience and implores their gaze straightaway.

There is, however, a significant difference in the intended audience between the two funerary monuments. The bronze effigy of bishop Geoffroy d'Eu was once located conspicuously close to the western portal in the middle nave of the cathedral of Amiens, accessible and visible to all. Philippe-Dagobert's tomb, however, was inside the closed-off sanctuary at Royaumont from the start. Perhaps it was originally located somewhere in the circumference of the sanctuary, much like the later tombs of Philippe-Dagobert's cousins Blanche and Jean, but its original position is likely to have changed when the fourth and final royal tomb was constructed at Royaumont, namely the monument of Louis of France (d.1260), King Louis IX's oldest son and heir. (Plate 18) Boudan's drawings show that the two monuments were placed one after the other with the faces of the effigies toward the high altar. The tomb closest to the high altar was that of Louis of France, followed by the monument of Philippe-Dagobert. (Plate 17) They may have been located in the same bay as the tombs of Blanche and Jean.⁸³ Boudan did not include any steps in the flooring in front of the said tombs, which suggests that the tombs were not at the west end of the choir precinct or at the foot of the high altar, as was the case for the tombs of Philippe and Louis of Alençon and Othon of Artois (discussed below). Other authors have already observed that Boudan's drawings and sketches clearly show that the tombs of Philippe-

⁷⁹ Poirier suggests that the inscription, which does not appear on the tomb itself, was once painted or written on the choir screen or a part of the canopy, Paris, BnF, MS Français 20813, ff.124v–126r.

⁸⁰ For this inscription: *Gallia Christiana*, ix, 842. Briefly mentioned by Millin, *Antiquités nationales*, ii, 11. It was Poirier who convincingly argued that this inscription was probably added later to the monument: Paris, BnF, MS Français 20813, ff. 118r–119v.

⁸¹ Marcoux, 'L'espace', 310.

⁸² J. Corblet, *Les tombes en bronze des deux évêques fondateurs de la cathédrale d'Amiens* (Paris, 1872), 12–13, 18; S. Oosterwijk, 'All that Glisters is not Gold. New Discoveries about Precious-Metal Effigial Monuments in Europe', in *The Monuments Man: Essays in Honour of Jerome Betram*, ed. C. Steer (Donington, 2020), 286–310, at 294–6.

⁸³ The clearest descriptions of their locations inside the choir are offered by Dom Poirier in his cite papers. Some other authors have alluded to their locations in passing. See also Erlande-Brandenburg, *Le roi est mort*, 164; Pessiot, 'Un tombeau oublié', 31; *Enamels of Limoges*, Gauthier, Barrière, Becquet, Pastoureau, Chancel-Bardelot et al., 404.



18. L. Boudan, drawing of the tomb of Louis of France at Royaumont, c.1700
 © Paris, BnF, département Estampes et photographie, Réserve MS Pe 11c, f. 30r.

Dagobert and Louis of France were located under a joined canopy⁸⁴ (Plates 17, 18). The monument of Louis of France is usually dated to some time after 1260, so, if this is the case, we may assume that the final configuration of the two monuments below the joined canopy, as is shown in Boudan's illustrations, was not created until the completion of the latter prince's tomb.

Judging from the illustrations and from the surviving parts, Louis of France's tomb was no less rich in execution than Philippe-Dagobert's. The canopy would have only increased that effect with its own polychromy in various parts of the vault. The interment of the king's eldest son and heir Louis was a significant event for the Cistercian abbey. The prince's death in 1260 had a major impact, as attested at the time. Vincent of Beauvais, who famously worked with Louis IX and who wrote parts of *Speculum Maius* at Royaumont from c.1246 to 1260,⁸⁵ composed a consolatory treatise at the Cistercian abbey. Pope Alexander IV sent a long letter from his court in Anagni to the mourning king.⁸⁶ The young dauphin's death brought an end to Louis IX's hopes of a smooth dynastic succession, as Guillaume de Nangis later emphasised in his biography of the saint king.⁸⁷

The prince's funeral held great political importance too because it coincided with King Henry III of England's sojourn in Paris for a peace treaty with Louis IX which saw a temporary end to the dispute over the English possessions in France and Gascony.⁸⁸ King Henry famously took part in the funeral procession to Royaumont on the day of Epiphany 1260, sometimes even carrying the young prince's bier on his own shoulders. This was recorded by several contemporaries and a representation of the scene was later carved on one side of the prince's stone tomb chest at Royaumont.⁸⁹ Finally, around the same time as the dauphin's funeral, the collection of relics at the abbey of Royaumont was significantly expanded. In 1260 or 1261, the relics of Barga of Asnières, a supposed follower of St Ursula, and of other saints

⁸⁴ Erlande-Brandenburg, *Le roi est mort*, 167; Morganstern, 'Liturgical and Honorific Implications', 86; Le Pogam, 'Le tombeau de Philippe-Dagobert', 138.

⁸⁵ He would finish a substantial part of his *Speculum Maius* during his stay at the royal Cistercian abbey: Duclos, *Histoire de Royaumont*, i, 242–54; S. Lusignan, 'Vincent de Beauvais, Dominicain et lecteur à Royaumont', in *Lector et Compiler. Vincent de Beauvais, frère prêcheur: un intellectuel et son milieu au XIIIe siècle*, eds S. Lusignan and M. Paulmier-Foucart (Grâne, 1997), 287–303; Le Goff, *Saint Louis*, 203, 320, 475; R. Jacobs-Pollez, 'The Education of Noble Girls in Medieval France: Vincent of Beauvais and *De Eruditione Filiorum Nobilium*' (unpub. Ph. D. thesis, University of Missouri-Columbia, 2012), 24, 42, 234.

⁸⁶ Duclos, *Histoire de Royaumont*, i, 247; Baroni, *Annales Ecclesiastici*, xxii, 44–6; Paris, BnF, MS Français 20813, f. 118r.

⁸⁷ Poirier cited this in his studies on the tomb: Paris, BnF, MS Français 20813, f. 117v.

⁸⁸ Le Goff, *Saint Louis*, 194–9.

⁸⁹ *Receuil des historiens*, eds de Wailly and Guigniaut, xx, 338, 412. During the funeral service, Louis of France was associated with the memory of his paternal grandfather, Louis VIII: Erlande-Brandenburg, *Le roi est mort*, 104.

THE TOMBS OF BLANCHE (d.1243) AND JEAN (d.1248) OF FRANCE

were transported to the high altar of the royal Cistercian abbey in a large procession, after which Louis IX, Archbishop Eudes Rigaud and many other noblemen, prelates and clergymen celebrated a 'grand mass' (*magnam missam*).⁹⁰ The construction of the dauphin's tomb had therefore coincided with, if not partially contributed to, a significant period for the royal Cistercian abbey.

The tomb of Louis of France also marks a different approach to how a funerary monument might be viewed. Unlike the tomb of Philippe-Dagobert, the dauphin's monument seems to have had no inscriptions inciting a specific visual experience or interpretation of its sculpted parts. The final configuration of the two tombs, however, below a conspicuous canopy on the south side of the sanctuary, adds an interesting dimension to the notion of visibility in the royal mausoleum at Royaumont. Another sketch by Louis Boudan (**Plate 19, overleaf**) shows that, unlike the monuments of Blanche and Jean, the highly decorative canopy and the two tombs below it were completely visible from the ambulatory without any visual obstruction from any part of the surrounding choir screen.⁹¹ Philippe-Dagobert's and Louis of France's tombs therefore functioned as a partial screen through which the viewer might have had a glimpse into the sanctuary and the high altar. This was not uncommon for Cistercian abbeys.⁹² For example, other illustrations by Boudan show that the choir screen at the abbey of Longpont was also interrupted by elaborate tombs which fulfilled the function of a physical boundary while also allowing those barred from entering to catch glimpses of the high altar and the rest of the liturgical heart of the church.⁹³ Unfortunately most Cistercian examples of this are now lost. The intersection of choir screen and tombs at the former Cistercian abbey church (now cathedral) of Altenberg (North Rhine-Westphalia) in Germany illustrates what the experience of the sanctuary at Royaumont would have been like.⁹⁴

It should, however, be noted that this does not mean that the monuments of Philippe-Dagobert and Louis of France allowed for a good view inside the area around the high altar. The sanctuary in Royaumont, as in most Cistercian monastic churches,

⁹⁰ This was recorded by Eudes Rigaud in his travelogue; *Receuil des historiens*, eds de Wailly and Guigniaut, xxi, 584. Conrad von Hochstaden, archbishop of Cologne, recorded in two letters dated 1260 and 1261 the transferral to Royaumont of the relics of St Berge and two other followers of St Ursula and the bodies of eight martyred followers of St Maurice called 'les Thebains': E. Martène and U. Durand, *Thesaurus novus anecdotorum* (Paris, 1717), i, 1111–13. See also *Gallia Christiana*, ix, 843; Duclos, *Histoire de Royaumont*, i, 398. Royaumont already possessed several significant relics, including the head of the apostle St James the Lesser which had been given to the abbey in 1240; *Gallia Christiana*, ix, 843.

⁹¹ Paris, BnF, MS Clairambault 632, f. 133v.

⁹² Untermann, *Forma Ordinis*, 242.

⁹³ Morganstern, 'Liturgical and Honorific Implications', 86.

⁹⁴ Untermann, *Forma Ordinis*, 533–4. For more information on Cistercian regulation concerning the use of various types of altars, see the following case study on Cîteaux: Mouraire, 'Les autels et les reliques'.



19. L. Boudan, sketch of Philippe-Dagobert's tomb from the south side, c.1700
© BnF, MS Clairambault 632, f. 133v.

would have been elevated.⁹⁵ Moreover, the top of the sarcophagi of Louis of France and Philippe-Dagobert must have been more than one metre high in itself. When the height of the sculpted effigies is added to this, the inevitable conclusion is that the visually resplendent tombs of the two princes would hardly have enabled a good view of the tombs of Blanche and Jean from the ambulatory in their final configuration below the canopy.

This digression served to show that, even as substantial changes were made to the programme of the funerary complex with the tombs of Louis of France and Philippe-Dagobert, the liturgical and spatial exclusivity of the sanctuary was strictly maintained. The unchanged outcome of this was that the monuments of Blanche and Jean most likely were never meant to be accessible or even visible to the clergy, let alone to lay audiences. The tomb of Louis of France was the last addition by Louis IX, which means that the royal funerary programme at Royaumont had been completed. Important to note is that dating the completion of the entire funerary programme at Royaumont to sometime after 1260 means that it presents a chronological counterpart to the collection of royal monuments which were erected in the church of Saint-Denis from c.1263 onwards. There, as at Royaumont, privileging the visibility of some kings' tombs over that of others within a highly exclusive liturgical space was an important strategy which has already been commented on by other authors.⁹⁶

The Steady Decline of a Royal Mausoleum

Louis IX's funerary legacy was not to last. The first changes to the funerary programme inside the choir at Royaumont took place in the late thirteenth century. Two of Louis IX's grandchildren, Louis (d.1277) and Philippe (d.1279), were laid to rest in tomb monuments inside the choir. In a break with precedent, these were probably no longer delegated to the circumference of the choir. The double tomb of Louis and Philippe was most likely conceived as a free-standing sepulchre in the middle of the sanctuary before the high altar. Later, Othon (d.1291), son of Philip of Artois, was buried inside the choir of Royaumont.

It is likely that these three tombs were all inserted into the choir screen directly to the side of the high altar at some point in the fifteenth century to make way for

⁹⁵ Untermann, *Forma Ordinis*, 533–4.

⁹⁶ G. Sommers Wright, 'A Royal Tomb Program in the Reign of St. Louis', *The Art Bulletin* 56 (1974), 224–43, at 224; Erlande-Brandenburg, *Le roi est mort*, 81–3, 127–9; R. Recht, *Le croire et le voir. L'art des cathédrales (XIIe-XVe siècle)* (Paris, 1999), 340; M. Gaposchkin, *The Making of Saint Louis. Kingship, Sanctity, and Crusade in the Later Middle Ages* (Ithaca and London, 2008) 140–52; Leistenschneider, *Die französische Königsgrablege*, 33ff; A. Gajewski, 'The Powers of the Saints: Architecture and Liturgy in Abbot Suger's Shrine-Choir at Saint-Denis in the 12th and 13th Centuries', in *Paris. The Powers that shaped the Medieval City*, eds A. Gajewski and M. Cohen (London, 2023), 27–60.

other burials.⁹⁷ (Plate 15) Reflecting a wider change of burial customs in the Cistercian monastic churches in the fifteenth century, the abbots of Royaumont were no longer buried in the chapter house, as was previously demanded by their Order's tradition, but chose burial inside the more prestigious and conspicuous parts of their churches.⁹⁸ The abbots' monuments started to appear in the church and were closing in on the sanctuary, which up until that point had been reserved purely for the six aforementioned royal tombs. In 1453, abbot Jean II de Montmirel (d.1453) was buried in the chapel of the Virgin close to the sacristy.⁹⁹ His successors went even further by choosing burial closer to the high altar. The three successive abbots Jean III Collé (d.1490), Jean IV de Merré (d.1507) and Guillaume III Salé de Bruyères (d.1537) were each buried under an individual tomb slab in front of the high altar.¹⁰⁰ It was probably for this that the tombs of Louis and Philippe of Alençon and Othon of Artois were removed and inserted into niches in the choir screen. The abbots' choice of burial marks the final break with the royal funerary programme at Royaumont as Louis IX had once envisioned it. This discontinuation of the decidedly royal programme in the choir precinct at Royaumont could in part also have to do with the fact that from 1420 the bonds of patronage and loyalty with the French royal house were severed for a significant amount of time, as the abbey came under English rule following the Treaty of Troyes.¹⁰¹ The abbots may have felt themselves free from the obligation to honour the exclusivity of the royal funerary programme inside their abbey church.

⁹⁷ Pessiot, 'Un tombeau oublié', 31; A. Erlande-Brandenburg, 'Le choeur dans les cathédrales gothiques', in *La place du choeur. Architecture et liturgie*, eds S. Frommel and L. Lecomte (Paris 2012), 57–66, at 61. This is also suggested by Dom Poirier's description of the demolition of the monuments. He notes that the remains of Louis and Philippe of Alençon showed signs of heavy damage and, surprisingly, that they were not buried in the ground but stayed in the stone coffins: Paris, BnF, MS Français 20813, ff. 121r–122r, 216r.

⁹⁸ Untermann, *Forma Ordinis*, 90–3. See also M. Gray, 'Jesu Mercy, Lady help: Medieval Tomb Carvings at Tintern Abbey', in *The Monuments Man*, ed. Steer, 87–111, at 91.

⁹⁹ The chapel of the Virgin Mary was located to the south of the choir precinct until the dissolution of the abbey in 1791; Millin, *Antiquités nationales*, 7. A 17th century notarial document shows that the chapel had a cross vault: Paris, AN, MC/ET/LXXXVII/183, minutes de Charles de Hénault, January to June 1655.

¹⁰⁰ See the list of abbots drawn up by Dom Poirier: Paris, BnF, MS Français 20813, f. 214r. See also *Gallia Christiana*, ix, 844–6. The remains of one of these slabs were preserved in a private collection, but their current location is unknown; Lauer, 'L'Abbaye de Royaumont', 266–8. It is Poirier's description which convincingly suggests that Jean Collé (d.1490) was the first to be buried in front of the high altar. All three bishops are mentioned in confirmations of yearly payments made to the abbey of Royaumont by the dukes of Burgundy. See n.34.

¹⁰¹ Duclos, *Histoire de Royaumont*, ii, 2–10, 68. For example, in 1424, King Henry VI of England confirmed a donation to the Cistercian abbey: Paris, AN, K/189, no.107 (2), 18 February 1424. This change in allegiance was not new to the Cistercian community. Royaumont had submitted to the English before in 1359 in order to save the abbey from sacking: H. Denifle, *La désolation des églises, monastères & hôpitaux en France pendant la guerre de cent ans*, 2 vols in 3 (Paris, 1897–9), ii, 221.

Conclusion

In this essay it has become clear that the funerary plaques of Blanche and Jean of France once functioned in a context that was the opposite of their current display at Saint-Denis. While visitors can now confidently walk up to the visually resplendent depictions of the two children immortalised in copper-gilt and Limoges enamel, the original audience of the beauty and intricate symbolism of the plaques could not have been more different. The study of the original location of the plaques has allowed for new insights on the intended visual impact of the children's monuments. Archival research has shown that they were originally located on the inside of the choir screen at Royaumont, which was a very inaccessible part of the church. By locating them in one the least visible parts of the very restricted choir, the deliberate outcome was that the monuments of Blanche and Jean were hardly ever seen by an earthly audience, apart from a handful of people who had the privilege and knowledge to enter the highly exclusive area around the high altar. Those very few would have been able to experience how the tombs entered into a close dialogue with their architectural and artistic surroundings. Their visual splendour, combined with the ceremonious and almost solitary experience of being inside the sanctuary of the royal abbey of Royaumont, would have all added up to create a transcendental experience which was anticipated by the children's tombs in many ways. In that sense, the tombs of Blanche and Jean seem to live up to Thomas Aquinas's contemporary observation on beautiful, prayer-inducing funerary monuments. But the tombs of Blanche and Jean were not intended solely to elicit prayers from the occasional passing religious visitors. They were constructed with a very different motive in mind, that went beyond Aquinas's definition of a successful tomb: by ensuring their non-visibility, the tombs functioned as places of the preservation of knowledge on the children for the ultimate 'audience' that any Christian could wish for: the Last Judgement. This function of the tombs seems to have informed other parts of the funerary programme at Royaumont too, where visibility and accessibility remained significant tools in upholding the message which all the various tombs in its sanctuary were meant to convey. Even as the royal funerary programme in the Cistercian abbey underwent significant changes during the lifetime of Louis IX, it was ensured that Blanche and Jean remained tucked away behind the choir screen, safe from any outside influences, in order to await their turn for the afterlife.