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IS THE “TÊTE GÉRENTE” FROM SAINT-DENIS?

MICHAEL W. COTHREN

In memory of Stephen Gardner

IN his *Dictionnaire* of 1868, Eugène Viollet-le-Duc introduced into the historiography of medieval art an extraordinary work that was to become one of the most famous and exalted examples of the glass painter's art: an isolated head of a bearded figure now known as the “Tête Gérente.”¹ The fragment was prominently illustrated in the article on “Vitrail” (Fig. 1), but it was documented in a frustratingly sketchy manner. Only three pieces of information were given: the head is identified as part of Alfred Gérente's “collection choisie,”² dated to the 12th century, and proclaimed “un véritable chef-d'œuvre.”³ There is no suggestion of original provenance.

Although Viollet-le-Duc's lavish praise and detailed technical analysis of this visually commanding piece secured a place for the “Tête Gérente” in subsequent literature on medieval stained glass,⁴ the fragment itself dropped out of sight between Alfred Gérente's death in 1868⁵ (the very year in which the *Dictionnaire* appeared) and 1948, when

of this article. Financial support for my research was provided by a grant from the J. Paul Getty Trust to the Glencairn Museum (Bryn Athyn, PA), which funded my work on the Corpus Vitrearum volume cataloguing its important collection of medieval stained glass. My hypothesis concerning the provenance of the “Tête Gérente” was first presented in May 1991 as part of a symposium honoring the life and career of Stephen Gardner. Its publication here is affectionately dedicated to the memory of this friend and colleague, whose work on the architecture of the Abbey Church has had—and will continue to have—such an impact on the way we understand Suger's important projects in the middle of the 12th century.

1. *Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture française du XI^e au XVI^e siècle*, v.9, Paris, 1868, pp. 414–417, fig. 19 bis. Viollet-le-Duc describes his illustration as “un calque fait avec le soin le plus scrupuleux,” but in actuality the engraver has filled in areas of lost paint that are not only apparent today (cf. Figs. 1 and 3) but are also discussed by Viollet-le-Duc in the text. The head, however, is reproduced in exact scale.

2. Alfred Gérente (1821–1868) was trained as a sculptor, but he became a successful Parisian glass painter when he inherited his brother Henri's studio in 1849. He is best known for his work (under the supervision of Viollet-le-Duc) in the restorations of Saint-Denis (1848–1858) and Notre-Dame de Paris (1861–1865). For his life and career, see Ulrich Thieme and Felix Becker, *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildender Künstler*, v. 13, Leipzig, 1920, p. 449; Jean-Pierre Suau, “Alfred Gérente et le ‘vitrail archéologique’ à Carcassonne au milieu du XIX^e siècle,” *Congrès archéologique*, v. 131, 1973, pp. 629–645; Louis Grodecki, *Les Vitraux de Saint-Denis: Étude sur le vitrail au XII^e siècle*, Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi, France, Études, v. 1, Paris, 1976, pp. 52–56; Françoise Perrot, “La Restauration des vitraux,” in *Viollet-le-Duc*, exhibition catalog, Paris, 1980, pp. 174–175; and Virginia Chieffo Raguin, “Revivals, Revivalists, and Architectural Stained Glass,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, v. 49, 1990, pp. 316–318.

3. *Dictionnaire* [note 1], p. 414.

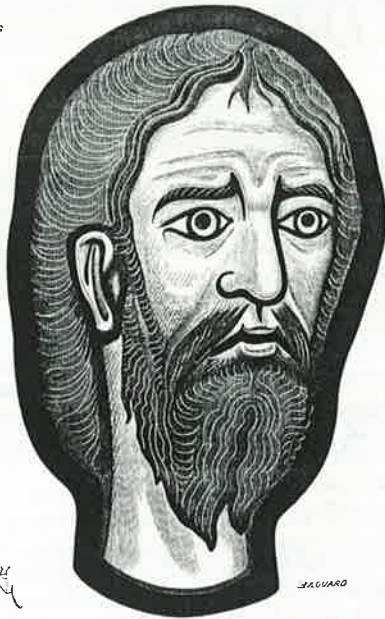
4. E.g., Charles Connick, *Adventures in Light and Color*, New York, 1937, p. 54.

5. At this time, the head presumably passed with Gérente's studio to Edouard Didron. See Raguin [note 2], p. 316, n. 30.

Acknowledgments. This article would not have been possible without the cheerful assistance of the staff of the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire in Geneva, especially Claude Lapaire, its director, who facilitated my examination of the “Tête Gérente” in July 1988, and Jacqueline Cognard, who has responded to all my requests for photographs. I owe a further and special debt of gratitude to my inspiring colleague, the late Catherine Brisac, who accompanied me to Geneva to examine and discuss the fragment, and who never let our disagreement concerning the provenance of this head interfere either with scholarly collaboration or with friendship. Mary B. Shepard at The Cloisters provided graceful editorial assistance at several stages in the writing

très-fines ont été faites au style. Les plus délicates parmi ces enlèvements ont à peine l'épaisseur d'un cheveu. On en voit sur les sourcils, sur la barbe et même sur le sommet de la tête. Il est certain que ces ombres épaisses, empâtées, très-appreciables au toucher, ont été posées après

19 bis



une première cuisson; car, sur quelques points, cet émail opaque s'est écaillé, et dessous on aperçoit la première couche de demi-teinte qui adhère au verre. Les demi-teintes les plus légères ont dû être posées de même après la première cuisson; car, passées sur la première demi-teinte en quelques points, elles n'ont pas délavé cette première demi-teinte. Du reste, avec les moyens de peinture actuellement en usage, nous ne pouvons obtenir de pareils résultats, ces demi-teintes lavées, fon-

FIG. 1. The "Tête Gérente" as illustrated in Viollet-le-Duc's Dictionnaire (1868), fig. 19 bis.

Jean Lafond published his discovery of "ce morceau d'élite" in the Musée Ariana in Geneva. By that time, the head had been incorporated in a "panneau d'antiquaire" (Fig. 2), one of 22 panels of French medieval glass—most with substantial cores from Saint-Fargeau—that had been acquired for the museum by Gustave Revilliod in 1885.⁶ In 1960, this collection was transferred to Geneva's Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, and 10 years later, the "Tête Gérente" was removed from the antiquarian panel of 13th-century fragments to become, once again, an isolated and esteemed fragment (Fig. 3).⁷

In the 1948 article in which he reintroduced the "Tête Gérente," Jean Lafond also initiated the



FIG. 2. The "Tête Gérente" within the "panneau d'antiquaire" in which it entered the Musée Ariana in 1885. (Photo: Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, Geneva, Cat. Ariana, 1938-79)

scholarly search for the origin of the famous head by dismissing the enterprise as a futile exercise in long speculation.⁸ He did, however, eliminate two likely sites from consideration—the Abbey Church of Saint-Denis ("on y pense naturellement quand on sait qu'Alfred Gérente a restauré les vitraux de l'abbaye") and the Cathedral of Strasbourg ("un

6. Jean Lafond, "Les Vitraux français du Musée Ariana et l'ancienne vitrerie de Saint-Fargeau (Yonne)," *Geneva*, v. 26, 1948, pp. 115-132. For further information on the history of this group, see Virginia Chieffo Raguin, "The Thirteenth-Century Glazing Program of Saint-Fargeau (Yonne)," *Studies on Medieval Stained Glass: Selected Papers from the XIth International Colloquium of the Corpus Vitrearum, Corpus Vitrearum, United States of America, Occasional Papers*, v. 1, New York, 1985, pp. 70-72. She reports that Claude Lapaire, director of the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, has discovered that Revilliod purchased this group of 22 French panels in June 1885 from Charles Töpffer, a Swiss painter who was then living in Paris.

7. It is presented as such in the catalog of the museum's stained glass (Claude Lapaire, *Vitraux du Moyen Age*, Genève, 1980, pl. 1, pp. 23-24) and in recent scholarship (e.g., Louis Grodecki, *Le Vitrail roman*, Fribourg, 1977, ills. 20-21, pp. 32 and 282-283, where, as with Viollet-le-Duc, the discussion centers on technical virtuosity).

8. Lafond [note 6], p. 130.



FIG. 3. The “Tête Gérente” as it appears today in the Musée d’Art et d’Histoire, Geneva: (a) interior view with transmitted light, (b) exterior view with surface light, and (c) interior view with surface light. (Photos: Musée d’Art et d’Histoire, Geneva, D.79)

nom qui vient non moins naturellement à l’esprit, à cause de l’‘énergie’ du style”). He saw no close stylistic relationship with extant glass from either place.

Almost 30 years later, Catherine Brisac was the first to attempt to establish a specific 12th-century provenance.⁹ She assigned the “Tête Gérente” to a lost program of seated patriarchs created between 1180 and 1200 for the apse of the Cathedral of Lyon. Brisac’s conclusion rests on three lines of argument. First, she examined the history of local restoration campaigns to reconstruct plausible circumstances by which the head could have been acquired by Henri Gérente at Lyon, maintained by him until his death in 1849, and subsequently passed with his studio to his brother, Alfred, in whose collection Viollet-le-Duc knew the piece. Henri Gérente had worked at Lyon between 1845 and 1846, taking responsibility for a project to reuse the fragmentary remains of the late 12th-century patriarch program, still extant in the 19th century, in the glazing of the south choir chapel.

Brisac admitted, however, that the crux of her argument rested, not in a reconstruction of historical circumstances, but in a comparative stylistic and technical analysis. Yet since Gérente’s south choir chapel glazing was destroyed by bombing in 1944, direct comparison with the Lyon patriarchs was impossible. She was forced instead to rely on indirect comparisons between the “Tête Gérente” and a schematic drawing of one patriarch reproduced by Lucien Bégule.¹⁰ The case is not strong. Even setting aside the serious problems introduced by the use of a sketchy 19th-century line drawing

9. Catherine Brisac, “La ‘Tête Gérente,’” *Revue de l’art*, v. 47, 1980, pp. 72–75. Her assignment of the piece to Lyon was already incorporated in Grodecki [note 7], a book on which she collaborated. Her argument is affirmed and summarized in *Les Vitraux de Bourgogne, Franche-Comté, et Rhône-Alpes*, Corpus Vitrearum, France, Série complémentaire, Recensement des vitraux anciens de la France, v. 3, Paris, 1986, p. 301.

10. Lucien Bégule, *Monographie de la cathédrale de Lyon*, Lyon, 1880, fig. 61; *idem*, *Les Vitraux du Moyen Age et de la Renaissance dans la région lyonnaise*, Lyon, 1911, fig. 63. Bégule’s figure is reproduced in Brisac [note 9], fig. 5. She introduced her comparison



FIG. 4. Head of an apostle. Le Champ-près-Froges, Church of Notre-Dame. (Photo: Bruno Cougnassout © Inventaire Générale SPADEM 1983)

to represent the style of lost 12th-century stained glass, the “extraordinaire parenté formelle et stylistique” Brisac claimed for the “Tête Gérente” and the Bégule drawing simply indicates common reliance on widespread typological conventions for articulating the heads of prophets:¹¹ three-quarter view, powerful neck, long and wavy hair, and commanding intensity of expression. These are not the sort of shared idiosyncratic traits (either local or regional) that would identify provenance.

To bolster her historical and stylistic arguments, Brisac introduced technical comparisons between the “Tête Gérente” and collateral regional glass at Le Champ-près-Froges (Fig. 4). But the similarities she pointed out—and their association with Theophilus’s *De diversis artibus*—can be matched in glass throughout France during this period. Indeed, fundamental distinctions of style and execution

separate the lean, fluid painting and dominating plasticity of heads from Le Champ-près-Froges and the meticulous, almost brittle execution and flat patterning of the “Tête Gérente.” The comparison actually argues against, rather than for, a provenance in the Lyonnais for the famous fragment.

The recent enlargement of the corpus of glass remaining from the 12th-century windows of Suger’s Saint-Denis¹² has occasioned a return to Lafond’s discarded suggestion of a Dionysian provenance for the “Tête Gérente.” Using the same lines of inquiry employed by Brisac—stylistic and technical comparison substantiated by local restoration history—a more comfortable and secure home for the prestigious fragment can be established at Saint-Denis than at Lyon.

The facial articulation of the “Tête Gérente” has for some time suggested to me the work of a Saint-Denis painter I have called the Jeremiah Master,¹³ but it was the recent discovery of the panel portraying the Dream of the Magi (Fig. 5) in the tracery lights of a window in Raby Castle¹⁴ that made the case for a Saint-Denis provenance most compelling.

by admitting that “la confrontation entre la ‘tête Gérente’ et celle du dessin de Bégule est essentielle à ma démonstration” (p. 74).

11. Jean Lafond alluded to this feature of the “Tête Gérente” when he proposed a specific iconographical identification based on its evocation of “le type traditionnel de saint Jean-Baptiste” (Lafond [note 6], p. 129).

12. In 1948, when Lafond published his article on the Musée Ariana glass, the important panels at Wilton, Highcliffe Castle, Glasgow, Raby Castle, Glencairn, and the Musée de Cluny were unknown. For the enlargement of the Saint-Denis corpus between 1948 and 1976, see Grodecki [note 2], pp. 65–69. For the more recent discoveries mentioned here, see Michael W. Cothren, “The Infancy of Christ Window from the Abbey of Saint-Denis: A Reconsideration of Its Design and Iconography,” *The Art Bulletin*, v. 68, 1986, esp. pp. 417–419.

13. The stylistic and technical characteristics that distinguish this and two other painters who worked at Saint-Denis are outlined in Michael W. Cothren, “Suger’s Stained Glass Masters and Their Workshop at Saint-Denis,” in *Paris, Center of Artistic Enlightenment*, Papers in Art History from The Pennsylvania State University, v. 4, 1988, pp. 46–75. See also *idem* [note 12], pp. 416–417.

14. The Dionysian provenance of this panel was first recognized by Peter Newton soon after Peter Gibson of the York Glaziers Trust called attention to it while supervising its restora-



FIG. 5. *The Dream of the Magi*, panel from the *Infancy of Christ* window of the Abbey Church of Saint-Denis. Now in the collection of Lord Barnard, Raby Castle. (Photo: author, reproduced by kind permission of Lord Barnard)



FIG. 6. *Head of a sleepy Magus*. Detail of Fig. 5. (Photo: author, reproduced by kind permission of Lord Barnard)

The head of one Magus (Fig. 6) is particularly close to the “Tête Gérente.” There is, admittedly, a distinction in expressive effect—the sleepy attitude of the awakening Magus contrasts with the alert concern expressed by the “Tête Gérente.” But the linear systems used to define noses, eyes, and lips are quite closely related, and these are the facial features this artist chose to standardize from head to head. Although the two faces display different sorts of ears and beards, both types in the “Tête Gérente” can be documented in other heads painted by the Jeremiah Master,¹⁵ who seems to have delighted in the use of a variety of formulas for these facial features throughout his work. The stylistic relationship between these two heads is heightened by the use of the same very distinctive stick-lighting technique to detail the beards and hair.¹⁶ A variety of linear marks—straight slashes, undulating curves, zigzags, and *V*'s—are employed

together on both heads to enliven the painted surface and to suggest three-dimensionality. In each case, skin is reserved as unpainted or lightly painted glass on either side of the lower lip and up the back of the long neck, extending to the ear, as if to set off the decorative effects of the stick-lighted patterning.

tion in 1980. See David O'Connor and Peter Gibson, “The Chapel Windows at Raby Castle, County Durham,” *The Journal of Stained Glass*, v. 18, no. 2, 1986–1987, pp. 124–126; and Cothren [note 12], esp. p. 399.

15. For variety in beard types, see Cothren [note 12], figs. 2, 3, and 25a. With ears, the choice seems more limited, involving whether or not hair obscures the upper half of the form (*ibid.*, figs. 3c, 4a, and 4c) or is tucked behind to reveal the ear in its totality (*ibid.*, figs. 2b, 3b, and 4b). Each of the obscured ears is articulated in a slightly distinctive fashion.

16. Stick-lighting is a process in which lines of light are revealed by scratching—presumably with a sharpened stick—

A general increase in complexity and detail in the articulation of the "Tête Gérente"—the reserved pupils, the variable thickness of stick-lighting scratches, and the individual strands of hair etched into the thick eyebrows—may be the result of a significant difference in scale between the two heads.

The strong stylistic association between the "Tête Gérente" and the work of the Jeremiah Master at Saint-Denis is reinforced by additional technical and some physical evidence.¹⁷ In addition to the unusually detailed and extensive use of stick-lighting, the painting of this artist is distinguished by its complexity and fussiness. The accumulation of short, precise brushstrokes, characteristic of his painting throughout the Infancy of Christ window, is equally apparent in the "Tête Gérente." Individual strokes frequently overlap, creating lines built up in layers that fry in the firing process. The physical characteristics of the paint itself—translucent in the solid beds of stick-lighted areas, and alternately reddish and charcoal in color on the same piece of glass—are comparable as well, as are the fabric and surface texture of the glass. The impressed blemishes spread over the interior surface of the "Tête Gérente" coordinate exactly, in both type and distribution, with those on glass employed throughout the 12th-century windows at Saint-Denis. The nature of interior and exterior corrosion, which represents one of the most distinctive features of glass that has survived from the abbey, provides further physical evidence for a Dionysian provenance.¹⁸

It is not difficult to reconstruct a path by which the "Tête Gérente" could have made its way from Saint-Denis into the collection of Alfred Gérente. In 1847, his brother, Henri, was chosen by Viollet-le-Duc to begin the restoration of the ambulatory windows of the abbey church.¹⁹ Upon Henri's death in 1849, Alfred inherited the stained glass studio and continued at Saint-Denis where his brother had left off. Between 1849 and 1857, Alfred restored and completed three medieval windows (Infancy of Christ, Moses, and Anagogical) and created four neo-Gothic windows for ambulatory chapels.

Many of the panels from the 12th-century glazing of the abbey that are now dispersed disappeared from Saint-Denis during the period when the Gérentes were entrusted with restoring the windows.²⁰ It is easy to imagine that Alfred Gérente would have maintained within the studio an exquisite head—notable for its technical virtuosity—while whole (and thus more marketable) panels or figures were slipped into the art market.²¹

through solid beds of dried but unfired opaque paint. Stick-lighting is also used by the Jeremiah Master in the Infancy window to articulate the hair of the angel in the Dream of the Magi and one of Herod's counselors. See Cothren [note 12], figs. 3c and 4a.

17. I am grateful to Claude Lapaire, director of the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, who made the "Tête Gérente" available for study during July 1988.

18. Because they have been maintained in a variety of environmental conditions since their partial dispersion at the end of the 18th century, the 12th-century panels that have survived from Saint-Denis are characterized by corrosion at different levels of advancement. At Wilton, Twycross, Raby Castle, and Saint-Denis itself, the exterior of the potash glasses (the blue "soda glass" is a separate case) displays either a chalky deposit or the velvety, frosted surface that remains when these deposits slough away or are cleaned off. The interior surfaces of these panels have suffered from considerable loss of paint. It is not these panels, but those which have been protected in museums or private collections, that present the best comparison with the "Tête Gérente." The exterior surfaces of all are covered with a milky, smooth, lustrous, pastel layer of corrosion, in which small circular "pits" or spots (waiting to pop open as "pits") appear, concentrated inside a relatively clean margin running around the leads, and especially prevalent in depressions or valleys where water has collected. Interior surfaces are dotted with tiny dark spots, which avoid painted areas but often line up along a brushstroke of halftone modeling.

19. For the involvement of the Gérente brothers in the restoration of Saint-Denis under Viollet-le-Duc's supervision, see Grodecki [note 2], pp. 52–56.

20. *Ibid.*, pp. 54–57, 64–65, and 109. See also Jane Hayward in Jane Hayward and others, *Radiance and Reflection: Medieval Art from the Raymond Pitcairn Collection*, exhibition catalog, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1982, pp. 89–97.

21. For the practice of retaining medieval glass in restoration studios, with special reference to the "Tête Gérente," see Raguin [note 2], p. 316. Some especially fine whole panels may have been retained by Gérente as well. Grodecki ([note 2], p. 109) established that the Saint Benedict panel now in the Musée de Cluny was, until 1958, in the collection of one of Alfred Gérente's descendants. Notes in the files at the Burrell Collection indicate that Grodecki had traced the figure of Jeremiah from the Infancy window to a son-in-law who inherited Alfred Gérente's studio in 1868.

If the “Tête Gérente” is from Saint-Denis, the problem remains of determining precisely where it originally appeared within the glazing program. This question is complicated by a notable discrepancy of scale between this and all other heads in surviving panels: the “Tête Gérente” is 12 cm high and 7 cm wide, whereas even including the crown, the unusually attenuated head of the sleepy Magus is only 9 cm by 5 cm. This suggests that the “Tête Gérente” might not originate from a small-scale narrative window in the ambulatory comparable to those that held all other surviving panels, but rather from an ensemble or opening that called for larger figures. There are several intriguing alternative locations.

Suger’s statement that “the exquisite hands of many masters” created “a splendid variety of new windows, both below and above”²² in his new choir has suggested to some that the clerestory, like the ambulatory, was glazed with stained glass in the mid-12th century.²³ The “Tête Gérente” could be the single survivor of an upper-story narrative window, whose elevated position would have called for increased figure scale. In this same passage, Suger further implies the existence of a stained glass window filling the large central lancet opening of the west facade, a location that also calls for larger figures.²⁴ On the other hand, though it does not exclude removed placement in clerestory or facade²⁵ altogether, the exquisite and finely detailed painting on the “Tête Gérente” (which would be invisible from any distance²⁶) does raise the additional possibility that a more monumental—perhaps non-narrative—figure, or series of figures, might have been included in the original downstairs glazing. Any attempt to choose among these alternatives—or others that will inevitably arise on extended reflection—would distance itself from pure speculation only with great difficulty, perhaps only with the discovery of additional evidence.

While speculating, it might be worth considering if the “Tête Gérente” could have originated from a contemporaneous program executed elsewhere by the same painters who worked at Saint-Denis. In

fact, the career of Alfred Gérente leads to such speculation.

Between 1854 and 1861, soon after he had established himself as his brother’s successor in the restorations of Saint-Denis, Alfred Gérente restored the three 13th-century rose windows of the Parisian Cathedral of Notre-Dame. He continued to work

22. “Vitrearum etiam novarum praeclarum varietatem, ab ea prima quae incipit a *Stirps Jesse* in capite ecclesiae, tam superius quam inferius magistrorum multorum de diversis nationibus manu exquisita depingi fecimus.” Gerda Panofsky-Soergel, ed., *Abbot Suger on the Abbey Church of Saint-Denis and Its Art Treasures*, 2nd ed., Princeton, 1979, pp. 72–74.

23. Grodecki [note 2], pp. 25, 27–28, and 30; Jane Hayward in Sumner McKnight Crosby and others, *The Royal Abbey of Saint-Denis in the Time of Abbot Suger (1122–1151)*, exhibition catalog, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1981, p. 61. If there had been 12th-century stained glass in the clerestory of Suger’s choir, it might have been destroyed to make way for more modern windows at the time of the 13th-century reconstruction of that part of the church, but part or all of it might also have been saved for reuse in the new openings. As further examples come to light, the practice of reusing “spolia” seems increasingly common. See, most recently, Madeline H. Caviness, “Romanesque ‘belles verrières’ in Canterbury?,” in *Romanesque and Gothic: Essays for George Zarnecki*, v. 1, Woodbridge, 1987, pp. 35–38 (she cites many examples and earlier literature on them). Whatever glass was in the clerestory at Saint-Denis in the 13th century was largely—if not completely—destroyed at the end of the 18th century. See Grodecki [note 2], pp. 39–41.

24. The possibility of a monumental Last Judgment window here—similar to that which Grodecki has proposed as the original context of larger-scale fragments of the 12th-century glazing of Le Mans (“Les Vitraux de la cathédrale du Mans,” *Congrès archéologique*, v. 119, 1961, pp. 69–70; *idem* [note 7], pp. 62 and 284)—comes immediately to mind.

25. It might be argued that a reference to “removed placement” in the case of the central facade window is somewhat misleading. A narrow passageway, accessible from two staircases to either side, does allow a close view directly in front of the window (see Sumner McKnight Crosby, *The Royal Abbey of Saint-Denis from Its Beginnings to the Death of Suger, 475–1151*, New Haven, 1987, fig. 74). But this narrow shelf cannot, it seems to me, be construed as the vantage point intended for this window; there is no chapel floor comparable to that from which the side chamber windows (if there were any) would be seen. For the central west window, the primary vantage point—at ground level, looking up at a rather severe angle—would be comparable to that of the putative choir clerestory windows.

26. The history of stained glass contains numerous examples of painted detail that is difficult or impossible to see when windows are installed, but they are still exceptional. The Passion window at Bourges, for instance, contains delicately stick-lighted damascening in halftone on the exterior, an effect so

there into the 1860s, producing neo-Gothic windows for the lower-story chapels.²⁷ Could the “Tête Gérente” be from Notre-Dame? There are 12th-century panels—admittedly unrelated to the “Tête Gérente”—among the medieval glass now in the south rose. These panels could represent the reused remnants of earlier glazings at the cathedral.²⁸ Although Gérente maintained these stopgap medallions within the newly restored rose, he might have extracted and kept some 12th-century glass, including the “Tête Gérente.”²⁹ The appearance of 12th-century Sugerian glass at Notre-Dame would be especially interesting, given the evidence of Suger’s donation to the cathedral of a window portraying the Triumph of the Virgin, documented both by Suger’s biographer³⁰ and by the glass painter who was charged with dismantling most of the medieval glazing of Notre-Dame in the 18th century.³¹ It seems plausible, even logical, that Suger would have sent or commissioned his own stained glass painters—of whom he was justifiably proud—to execute this important and conspicuous donation.

The preponderance of evidence points to the 12th-century glazing of the Abbey Church of Saint-Denis as the probable original location of the famous “Tête Gérente.” Examination of the style, technique, and physical character of the artifact itself, as well as the career of the man who owned it in the 1860s, all boldly state the case for the royal abbey. But the possibility that the “Tête Gérente” could be Parisian is not only plausible; it is also too compelling to be ignored.

delicate that it is easy to miss even when the panels are examined from close range on a light-table. I know of no detailing as fine as the scratched hairs of the “Tête Gérente” in a clerestory glazing. Of course, few clerestory glazings—even fragments of clerestory glazings—have survived from this early in the 12th century.

27. Jean Lafond in Marcel Aubert and others, *Les Vitraux de Notre-Dame et de la Sainte-Chapelle de Paris*, Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi, France, v. 1, Paris, 1959, pp. 20, 24–25, 35–36, and 53–54; *Les Vitraux de Paris, de la région parisienne, de la Picardie, et du Nord-Pas-de-Calais*, Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi, France, Série complémentaire, Recensement des vitraux anciens de la France, v. 1, Paris, 1978, pp. 31–32; Louis Grodecki, Catherine Brisac, and Jacques Le Chevallier, *Les Vitraux de Notre-Dame de Paris*, Paris, n.d.; Raguin [note 2], p. 317.

28. These panels were added to the rose by Guillaume Brice between 1725 and 1727. See Lafond [note 27], p. 65; Grodecki [note 7], pp. 114–117 and 286; and Grodecki, Brisac, and Le Chevallier [note 27], p. 3. As Grodecki indicates, the original provenance of these panels is uncertain and may not be Parisian. In separate conversations with Madeline Caviness, Mary B. Shepard, and me, Catherine Brisac reported that she had found documentation indicating that Brice had purchased these panels—originating from another church—and subsequently incorporated them into the rose of Notre-Dame in the 1720s, but as far as I know, Brisac did not publish her findings.

29. A possible further clue leading the “Tête Gérente” in this direction is Virginia Raguin’s argument that another famous fragment (also an isolated head, which Lafond identified as Abraham), inserted into the Saint-Fargeau panels purchased by Revilliod for the Musée Ariana, was withdrawn by Gérente from the west rose of Notre-Dame. See Raguin [note 6], pp. 72 and 80, n. 16; and Lafond [note 6], pp. 130–131.

30. Guillaume de Saint-Denis in *Œuvres complètes de Suger*, ed. Albert Lecoy de la Marche, Paris, 1867, p. 387.

31. Pierre Le Vieil, *L’Art de la peinture sur verre et de la vitrerie*, Paris, 1774, p. 23. For this window, see also Grodecki [note 2], p. 23; Lafond [note 27], p. 15; Philippe Verdier, “Suger a-t-il été en France le créateur du thème iconographique du couronnement de la Vierge?” *Gesta*, v. 15, 1976, pp. 227–235; and *idem*, *Le Couronnement de la Vierge. Les Origines et les premiers développements d’un thème iconographique*, Montréal, 1980, pp. 29–32.