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# The Heraldic Casket of Saint Louis in the Louvre

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THE HERALDIC *CASKET OF SAINT LOUIS* IN THE LOUVRE

by

Audrey L. Jacobs

A Thesis Submitted in

Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in Art History

at

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

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ABSTRACT  
THE HERALDIC *CASKET OF SAINT LOUIS* IN THE LOUVRE

by

Audrey L. Jacobs

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2014  
Under the Supervision of Professor Richard A. Leson

The *Casket of Saint Louis*, a small coffer, decorated with enamel medallions and heraldic shields, includes the arms of Louis IX of France and his mother Blanche of Castile among 21 members of the French nobility from the early thirteenth century. It holds special significance for the understanding of medieval France's political landscape. Ensembles of heraldry that appear on objects and monuments of the thirteenth century reveal more than individual identities: they define relationships and illuminate political events. The *Casket of Saint Louis* invokes political and social networks and events relating to the Capetian dynasty in the years before Louis IX reached his majority. The large number of powerful (and sometimes hostile) members of the nobility represented on the casket, arranged in an ordered, courtly space created by the decorations, affirm the power and stability of Capetian authority under Blanche of Castile's rule. In contrast to the earlier scholarship, I argue that Blanche of Castile likely served as patron or recipient of the casket.

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To my family

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
List of Figures .....	vi
List of Tables .....	xiii
Acknowledgements .....	xiv
Introduction: The <i>Casket of Saint Louis</i> in the Louvre .....	1
Chapter I: The State of the Question .....	5
Chapter II: Heraldry and Art Historical Inquiry .....	14
Pinoteau’s Chronological “Fork” .....	16
The Castile Problem .....	21
Reconsidering Traditional Heraldic Analysis .....	26
Chapter III: The <i>Casket of Saint Louis</i> in an early-thirteenth century Cultural Context..	34
Gendered Implication of the Casket .....	36
Heraldry, Familial Identity, and Politics .....	46
Chapter IV: A New Proposal for the Dating of the <i>Casket of Saint Louis</i> .....	50
Scenario 1: 1229 .....	52
Scenario 2: 1234 .....	54
Scenario 3: 1236 .....	58
Conclusion .....	60
References .....	62
Appendix: Figures .....	65

## LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1a:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, front*, 1234-7. Multimedia coffer. (Photo: author).

FIGURE 1b:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, top*, 1234-7. Multimedia coffer. (Photo: author).

FIGURE 1c:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, back*, 1234-7. Multimedia coffer. (Photo: author).

FIGURE 1d:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, left side*, 1234-7. Multimedia coffer. (Photo: author).

FIGURE 1e:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, right side*, 1234-7. Multimedia coffer. (Photo: author).

FIGURE 2:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of France, large*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel. (Photo: author).

FIGURE 3:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of France, small*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel. (Photo: author).

FIGURE 4a:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of Castile, large*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel. (Photo: author).

FIGURE 4b:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of Castile, small*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel. (Photo: author).

FIGURE 5a:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of Dreux-Brittany, large*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel. (Photo: author).

FIGURE 5b:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of Dreux-Brittany, small*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel. (Photo: author).

FIGURE 6a:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of Bar, large*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel. (Photo: author).

FIGURE 6b:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of Bar, small*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel. (Photo: author).

FIGURE 7:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of Jerusalem*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel. (Photo: author).

FIGURE 8:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of England*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel. (Photo: author).

FIGURE 9:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of Navarre-Champagne*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel. (Photo: author).

FIGURE 10:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of Burgundy*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel. (Photo: author).

FIGURE 11:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of Dreux*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel. (Photo: author).

FIGURE 12:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of a Cadet Branch of Courtenay*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel. (Photo: author).

FIGURE 13:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of Champagne*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel. (Photo: author).

FIGURE 14:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of Flanders*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel. (Photo: author).

FIGURE 15:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of Toulouse*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel. (Photo: author).

FIGURE 16:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of La Marche Lusignan*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel. (Photo: author).

FIGURE 17:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of Montfort-l'Amaury*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel. (Photo: author).



FIGURE 18:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of Montmorency, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel. (Photo: author).*

FIGURE 19:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of Coucy, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel. (Photo: author).*

FIGURE 20:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of Beaumont-en-Gâtinais, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel. (Photo: author).*

FIGURE 21:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of a Cadet Branch of Beaumont-en-Gâtinais, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel. (Photo: author).*

FIGURE 22:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of Roye, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel. (Photo: author).*

FIGURE 23:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of Harcourt, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel. (Photo: author).*

FIGURE 24:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of Malet, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel. (Photo: author).*

FIGURE 25:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of Unknown Family, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel. (Photo: author).*

FIGURE 26:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Winged Salamander Biting Lion, 1234-7. Gilt copper. (Photo: author).*

FIGURE 27:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Winged Salamander Mirroring Lion, 1234-7. Gilt copper. (Photo: author).*

FIGURE 28:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Griffon Biting Lion, 1234-7. Gilt copper. (Photo: author).*

FIGURE 29:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Lion on Back of Salamander, 1234-7. Gilt copper. (Photo: author).*

author).

FIGURE 30:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Winged Salamander Biting Salamander*, 1234-7. Gilt copper. (Photo: author).

FIGURE 31:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Salamander Biting Lion*, 1234-7. Gilt copper. (Photo: author).

FIGURE 32:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Dogs Flanking Stag, Enameled*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel. (Photo: author).

FIGURE 33:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Dogs Flanking Stag*, 1234-7. Gilt copper. (Photo: author).

FIGURE 34:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Lock with Two Salamanders with Interlocked Necks*, 1234-7. Gilt copper. (Photo: author).

FIGURE 35:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Two Salamanders with Interlocked Necks*, 1234-7. Gilt copper. (Photo: author).

FIGURE 36:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Two Salamanders with Interlocked Tails*, 1234-7. Gilt copper. (Photo: author).

FIGURE 37:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Man Cleaving Head of Lion, Enameled*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel. (Photo: author).

FIGURE 38:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Man Cleaving Head of Lion*, 1234-7. Gilt copper. (Photo: author).

FIGURE 39:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Man Cleaving Head of Salamander, Enameled*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel. (Photo: author).

FIGURE 40:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Man Cleaving Head of Salamander*, 1234-7. Gilt copper. (Photo: author).

FIGURE 41:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Crowned Lion*, 1234-7. Gilt copper. (Photo: author).

FIGURE 42:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Double-Headed Eagle, 1234-7. Gilt copper. (Photo: author).*

FIGURE 43:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Bird Eating Fish, Enameled, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel. (Photo: author).*

FIGURE 44:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Winged Salamander, 1234-7. Gilt copper. (Photo: author).*

FIGURE 45:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Griffon, 1234-7. Gilt copper. (Photo: author).*

FIGURE 46:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Two Lions Biting Vegetation, 1234-7. Gilt copper. (Photo: author).*

FIGURE 47:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Two Hawks Biting Vegetation, 1234-7. Gilt copper. (Photo: author).*

FIGURE 48:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Lion and Hawk Biting Vegetation, 1234-7. Gilt copper. (Photo: author).*

FIGURE 49:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Samson Wrestling Lion, Enameled, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel. (Photo: author).*

FIGURE 50:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Samson Wrestling Lion, 1234-7. Gilt copper. (Photo: author).*

FIGURE 51:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Man with Dog, Enameled, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel. (Photo: author).*

FIGURE 52:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Crowned Falconer on Horseback, Enameled, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel. (Photo: author).*

FIGURE 53:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Porter Carrying a Stag, 1234-7. Gilt copper. (Photo: author).*

FIGURE 54:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Couple Embracing, Enameled, 1234-7. Gilt copper and*

enamel. (Photo: author).

FIGURE 55:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Two Men in Combat, Enameled*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel. (Photo: author).

FIGURE 56:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Musician*, 1234-7. Gilt copper. (Photo: author).

FIGURE 57:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Musician with Dancer, Enameled*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel. (Photo: author).

FIGURE 58:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Marguerite Flower*, 1234-7. Gilt copper. (Photo: author).

FIGURE 59:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, Sun Flower*, 1234-7. Gilt copper. (Photo: author).

FIGURE 60:

*The Casket of Saint Louis, King Giving Blessing, Enameled*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel. (Photo: author).

FIGURE 61:

Engraving of *Thibaud IV's Seal and Counter-Seal*, after 1234. From: H. D'Arbois de Jubainville, *Essai sur les sceaux des comtes et des comtesses de Champagne*, (Paris: A. Durand, 1856), plate II, images 5, 6.

FIGURE 62:

*Bible Moralisee (Toledo) ms. 240: fol. 8r: Blanche of Castile: Louis IX of France, author dictating to a scribe*, ca. 1235. <http://www.artstor.org/> (accessed May 5, 2014).

FIGURE 63a:

*Diagram of Decorations on the Casket of Saint Louis, front*. 1854. From: Eugène Grésy, *Cassette de saint Louis, dans l'église de Dammarie (Seine-et-Marne)*, (Paris: de C. Lahure, 1854), 8.

FIGURE 63b:

*Diagram of Decorations on the Casket of Saint Louis, back*. 1854. From: Eugène Grésy, *Cassette de saint Louis, dans l'église de Dammarie (Seine-et-Marne)*, (Paris: de C. Lahure, 1854), 10.

FIGURE 63c:

*Diagram of Decorations on the Casket of Saint Louis, top*. 1854. From: Eugène Grésy, *Cassette de saint Louis, dans l'église de Dammarie (Seine-et-Marne)*, (Paris: de C. Lahure, 1854), 6.

FIGURE 63d:

*Diagram of Decorations on the Casket of Saint Louis, left side.* 1854. From: Eugène Grésy, *Cassette de saint Louis, dans l'église de Dammarie (Seine-et-Marne)*, (Paris: de C. Lahure, 1854), 9.

FIGURE 63e:

*Diagram of Decorations on the Casket of Saint Louis, right side.* 1854. From: Eugène Grésy, *Cassette de saint Louis, dans l'église de Dammarie (Seine-et-Marne)*, (Paris: de C. Lahure, 1854), 9.

FIGURE 64:

*Sainte-Chapelle: interior view of a stained glass window; detail of two figures with a chalice*, ca. 1248. Stained glass and paint. <http://www.artstor.org/> (accessed May 5, 2014).

FIGURE 65:

*Tombs of Blanche and Jean of France.* ca. 1248-1252. Copper and enamelwork. (Photo: author).

FIGURE 66:

*Wax Seal and Counter-Seal Impressions of Dervorguilla de Bailliol.* 1282. From: Maurice Keen, "Heraldry and the medieval gentle woman," *History Today* 53 (2003): 22.

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Heraldry Identifications.....10

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### **Introduction: The Casket of Saint Louis in the Louvre**

The *Casket of Saint Louis* (Louvre, MS 253; Figs. 1a-e), a small coffer (5 ½ x 14 ⅛ x 7 ½ in.), decorated with enamel medallions and heraldic shields, includes the arms of Louis IX of France (b.1214, r.1226-1270) and his mother Blanche of Castile (b.1188, r.1226-1235, r.1248-1252) among 21 members of the French nobility from the early thirteenth century. It holds special significance for the understanding of medieval France's political landscape. Ensembles of heraldry that appear on objects and monuments of the thirteenth century reveal more than individual identities: they define relationships and illuminate political events. The *Casket of Saint Louis* invokes political and social networks and events relating to the Capetian dynasty in the years before Louis IX reached his majority.

Several French scholars have studied the casket, including Eugène Grésy (1854), Edouard Ganneron (1855), and, most recently, Hervé Pinoteau (1978/9, 1983, and 2006).<sup>1</sup> The French scholarship has centered on the provenance and the identity of the arms represented on the casket. In the 1996 exhibition catalog *Enamels of Limoges: 1100-1350* (1996), Barbara Drake Boehm and Michel Pastoureau briefly reviewed the casket but, to date, no work in English has comprehensively engaged this object or thoroughly considered implications of the French scholarship.<sup>2</sup>

The casket's decorations include: heraldic escutcheons executed in enamel and gilt copper; an enameled locking mechanism in the shape of a dragon; crystals; copper

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<sup>1</sup> Eugène Grésy, *Cassette de saint Louis, dans l'église de Dammarie (Seine-et-Marne)*, (Paris: de C. Lahure, 1854); Edmond Ganneron, *La cassette de Saint Louis, roi de France, donnée par Philippe le Bel à l'abbaye du Lis: reproduction en or et en couleurs accompagnée d'une notice historique et archéologique*, (1855); Hervé Pinoteau, "La date de la cassette de saint Louis: été 1236?", in *Cinq Études d'Héraldique et de Symbolique Étatique*, 115-160 (Paris: Le Léopard d'Or, 2006).

<sup>2</sup> John Philip O'Neill, *Enamels of Limoges: 1100-1350*, (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1996), 360-63.



hardware; and tin sheeting painted green over a wooden core. The casket also displays 36 gilt-copper medallions decorated with flower designs or scenes of animals and people. The courtly scenes within the medallions show hunts, flowers, animals and people in combat, and dancers with musicians, scenes common on secular objects. Eleven of these medallions, located on the back panel, have blue enameled backgrounds, while the remainder are openwork gilt copper executed with repoussé and engraved elements. The casket's wood (beech) core has been partially replaced since its manufacture.<sup>3</sup> A tin veneer with green varnish, chipped in several places, sheaths the wooden core. Gilt copper nails function both to hold the tin to the wood and to provide aesthetic interest. The object has lacked a bottom since at least the nineteenth century and perhaps since the 1790s.<sup>4</sup>

Pinoteau argues that the 46 gilded enameled shields were executed as an ensemble.<sup>5</sup> Pinoteau believes the casket's heraldry must have been applied to the object at a rare moment when peace was maintained among all of the persons represented. Since the nobles represented on the casket often opposed one another and few moments of the early thirteenth century saw the entire group of nobles at peace, the collection of this set of authentic heraldry allows us to date the casket with some certainty. If the heraldic enamels were indeed made at one time, then the casket provides the second earliest example of an ensemble of enameled heraldry decorations made simultaneously for a single object.<sup>6</sup> The heraldry refers to several important players of early-thirteenth century

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<sup>3</sup> Pinoteau, "La date," 116; O'Neill, *Enamels of Limoges*, 360.

<sup>4</sup> Grésy, *Cassette de saint Louis*, 2.

<sup>5</sup> Pinoteau, "La date," 123.

<sup>6</sup> The first object to include an ensemble of heraldry made simultaneously, according to Pinoteau, is the *Cup of Resafa* from around 1191. Another first that this casket represents is the indication of Jerusalem's colors as well as the colors of Harcourt, Malet, Roye and others, all of which had, before this, always appeared in uncolored media. Ibid., 114, 125.

in France, including kings of Europe and a number of powerful nobles, the latter mostly from northern France. The actual number of shields on the casket is 46, but due to the insistent symmetry in the arrangement of the decorations, scholars have long believed that the casket was originally decorated with 53 separate shields.<sup>7</sup>

In its original state the casket would have had twelve shields decorated with the arms of France (figs. 2, 3) and twelve of Castile (fig. 4) (one shield of France is missing). Eight of the arms of Castile serve as corner brackets and are larger than the remaining four. Seven of the arms of France, set in red roundels, are approximately twice the size of the other arms of France. The remaining shields form two size groups, the smaller measuring approximately three quarters the size of the larger. The shields include a larger and a smaller shield of Dreux-Brittany (fig.5a, b), a larger and smaller shield of Bar (fig. 6a, b), a large shield of Jerusalem (fig. 7) and a cadet branch of Beaumont-en-Gâtinais (fig.21), and a small shield of each of these kingdoms or families: England (fig.8), Navarre-Champagne (fig.9), Burgundy (duchy) (fig.10), Dreux (fig.11), a cadet branch of Courtenay (fig.12), Champagne (fig.13), Flanders (fig.14), Toulouse (fig.15), La Marche Lusignan (fig.16), Montfort-l'Amaury (fig.17), Montmorency (fig.18), Coucy (fig.19), Beaumont-en-Gâtinais (fig.20), Roye (fig.22), Harcourt (fig.23), and Malet (fig.24).<sup>8</sup> The last shield, also a smaller size, has been identified as possibly belonging to the family of Moret in Ile-de-France (fig.25), although the colors for this family are not known.<sup>9</sup>

According to Pinoteau, the ensemble of these shields on one object likely signifies a complex web of fealty and possibly an important political event. The following thesis builds upon the work of Pinoteau by offering three possible political and social scenarios

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<sup>7</sup> Grésy, *Cassette de saint Louis*, 5; Pinoteau, "La date," 117.

<sup>8</sup> Pinoteau, "La date," 116.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 122, 134, n57.

that could explain the assemblage of heraldry on the *Casket of Saint Louis* and considers gendered implications of the casket's decoration in light of contemporary events.

## Chapter I: The State of the Question

The casket, from at least the time of Saint Louis' canonization (1297), belonged to the Cistercian Abbey of le Lys near Melun. The nuns of le Lys probably used it to hold relics of the Saint until its acquisition by the Musée du Louvre in the nineteenth century. In their studies, Grésy and Ganneron draw upon an inventory from 1678 and two nineteenth-century testimonies to locate the object in the Abbey of le Lys at the time of Philippe le Bel. The abbey originates in Blanche of Castile and Louis IX's patronage; Blanche founded le Lys in 1244, and Louis confirmed the abbey in 1248.<sup>10</sup> At the time of Blanche's death, the abbess of le Lys was the queen's cousin. It was probably for this reason that the abbey received Blanche's heart upon her death in what was for the time a rare act of the partition of a non-saintly body.<sup>11</sup> The seventeenth and nineteenth-century documents, combined with the abbey's royal origin, establish relatively firm grounds for the casket's presence there at the end of the thirteenth century.<sup>12</sup>

A change in leadership at the abbey in 1678 may have occasioned the inventory undertaken in that year.<sup>13</sup> The reference to the *Casket of Saint Louis* in the inventory appears as the fourth item among the abbey's relics: "Fourth, the reliquary of Saint Louis, given by Philippe le Bel, King of France, his grandson; where there are four bones of this king, his hairshirt given by this same king with the casket."<sup>14</sup> Ganneron notes that this

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<sup>10</sup> Grésy, *Cassette de saint Louis*, 1.

<sup>11</sup> Kathleen Nolan, *Queens in stone and silver: the creation of a visual imagery of queenship in Capetian France* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 146.

<sup>12</sup> Pinoteau also relates a story, written by Marguerite of Provence's confessor, of a nun who went to the hairshirt of Louis IX in 1278, seeking a cure for an eye malady, but eventually was cured at the tomb of Saint-Denis. Pinoteau cites this story to claim that there was "a very particular casket" in the Abbey of le Lys by 1278. Pinoteau, "La date," 115.

<sup>13</sup> Ganneron, *La cassette de Saint Louis*, 1.

<sup>14</sup> "Quatrièmement. 'La chasse de saint Louis, donné par Philippe le Bel, roy de France, son petit-fils; où il y a quatre ossement de ce roy, son cilice donné par le mesme roy AVEC LA CASSETTE.'" [Emphasis Ganneron's] Ibid., 2.

fourth item was written by a different hand than the first three, but he concludes that this does not provide sufficient reason “to suppose... that it is a pre-meditated addition.”<sup>15</sup> In other words, Ganneron does not think that the different scripts indicate that the casket arrived at the abbey later than the inventory suggests. Ganneron discusses another inventory from 1790 that does not mention the casket or many of the relics and suggests that only precious materials concerned those carrying out this inventory.<sup>16</sup>

In 1793, during the revolution, the convent was sacked and shut down. Objects that held no material worth were burned, but some of these objects, among them the casket, were saved by community members.<sup>17</sup> The casket and relics were entrusted to a former sister of the Abbey of le Lys, Sister Sainte-Pélagie, who looked after them until she could return the relics to the Abbey. In 1820, when the nun returned the casket, M. Pellet, abbot and general vicar of Meaux, took an official statement from Sister Pélagie and two other nuns who swore that they recognized the relics and that the relics were in the same state as before the revolution.<sup>18</sup> Another statement made in 1838 indicated that the relics were exhibited in the open before the revolution and were only placed in the *Casket of Saint Louis* when Sister Pélagie received the objects. According to Ganneron:

This statement certified, by irrefutable testimonies, that these relics were exhibited, before the revolution of 1790, in the church of the Abbey of le Lys, and that they were enclosed in the new reliquary such as they had been received from the hands of sister Sainte-Pélagie, enclosed in a *coffer covered with copper ornaments*, attached to and embedded in a case garnished with crimson damask and decorated with silver flowers in raised

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<sup>15</sup> “*Mais ce ne me paraît pas une raison suffisante pour supposer, comme on l’a fait, que c’est une addition réfléchie.*” Ibid., 2.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ganneron says that the *Saint Louis Casket* and several other relics were saved by M. Foix, a judge in the town of Melun. Ibid., 3.

<sup>18</sup> This statement was taken September 23, 1820. Ibid., 3. See also: Grésy, *Cassette de saint Louis*, 3.

embroidery [emphasis Ganneron's].<sup>19</sup>

Ganneron and Grésy rely on two nineteenth-century testimonies and the seventeenth-century inventory to establish a documented provenance. Ganneron adds that the decorations of the casket must be medieval and that the heraldry indicates that the box could only have belonged to Saint Louis.<sup>20</sup> Finally, in addition to this evidence, Grésy cites the pious care with which the nuns preserved this casket and the other relics and reliquaries as proof that the box is an authentic medieval object.<sup>21</sup>

The abbot of Deschamps (and vicar of Dammarie-les-lys) found the casket in May 1853 in the abbey church of le Lys in a larger roughly-hewn box, positioned with another reliquary symmetrically behind the altar, with both boxes positioned two meters from the ground.<sup>22</sup> The French government purchased the casket in 1858 for 25,000 francs and placed it in the Musée des Souverains until that museum was abolished in 1872.<sup>23</sup> The Louvre, where it now resides, acquired the casket in that year.<sup>24</sup>

Grésy and Ganneron are primarily concerned with the authentication of the casket. Both scholars relate the story of Abbot Deschamp's 1853 discovery of the casket, discuss documents supporting its provenance, identify its heraldry, and discuss the symbolism of the medallion imagery. Grésy also draws upon the medallion images as evidence for the object's authenticity; he labels each medallion's location on a diagram of

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<sup>19</sup> "Ce process-verbal constate, par des témoignages irrécusable, que ces reliques étaient exposées, avant la récolution de 1790, dans l'église de l'abbaye du Lis, et qu'on les enfermaient dans la nouvelle chasse tels qu'elles avaient été recues des mains de sœur Sainte-Pélagie, encadrées par un coffret couvert d'ornements en cuivre, attachées et scellées sur un carton garni de damas cramoisy et orné de fleurs d'argent brodées en bosse." Ganneron, *La cassette de Saint Louis*, 3.

<sup>20</sup> Ganneron, *La cassette de Saint Louis*, 4-5.

<sup>21</sup> Grésy, *Cassette de saint Louis*, 4.

<sup>22</sup> Ganneron, *La cassette de Saint Louis*, 3.

<sup>23</sup> Pinoteau, "La date," 115.

<sup>24</sup> Grésy and Ganneron both argued for the object to go to the Sainte-Chapelle, although Grésy acknowledged the *Musée des Souverains* as an appropriate second choice. See: Grésy *Cassette de saint Louis*, 12; and Pinoteau, "La date," 115.

the casket (figs.63a-e). Both Grésy and Ganneron draw several themes from the medallions' iconographic subjects, including religious struggle against evil, hunting metaphors representing Christ or the apostles hunting for souls, classical motifs, and feudal loyalty.<sup>25</sup>

Ganneron focuses on the heraldry of the casket to support his thesis that it must pertain to Louis IX; he draws familial and friendship links between Louis IX and some of the persons represented by shields on the casket. For example, Ganneron shows that some of the persons referenced held the offices of the crown, including the “*connétable*,” “*maréchal*,” “*grand chambellan*,” “*grand bouteiller*,” etc.<sup>26</sup> Likewise, he points out events that indicate the closeness of each noble referenced to Louis IX, such as the king's coronation (1226), when Mallet of Graville and Richard of Harcourt served as witnesses, or the 1248 and 1270 crusades in which the Lord of Coucy, and the counts of Dreux, Bar, and Dammartin participated.<sup>27</sup> He assumed that the box was created to reflect relationships from Louis IX's entire life, and so gave more importance to the roles that the nobles played during Louis' reign, in contrast to Pinoteau who emphasizes the historical events that might connect this object to a specific date.

Pinoteau, a French aristocrat and heraldry specialist, wrote the only full-length article on this casket since the nineteenth century. This work, entitled “La date de la cassette de saint Louis: été 1236?,” was originally published in the journal *Cahiers d'héraldique*. The article appears now as one of five chapters in *Cinque Études*

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<sup>25</sup> Grésy suggests (as Pinoteau does) that the scenes are not specific and are “reduced to popular ornamentation”. He reminds the reader that the dragon, griffon, and ibis personified the devil and the vicious instincts, while the lion, eagle, panther, and stag represented Christian virtues. Although he also calls the stag a symbol of philosophical pride and doubt. He asserts that these motifs were borrowed from contemporary bestiaries. Ganneron, *La cassette de Saint Louis*, 49-52. Grésy, *Cassette de saint Louis*, 5, 7-11.

<sup>26</sup> Ganneron, *La cassette de Saint Louis*, 7.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

*D'Héraldique et de Symbolique Étatique*, a 2006 volume of his essays in which Pinoteau republished several of his studies.<sup>28</sup> Pinoteau advances nineteenth-century scholarship by arguing for an earlier date than previously thought: the summer of 1236. He ardently states his position that medieval heraldry possessed powerful symbolic meanings and was therefore not merely decorative.<sup>29</sup> Pinoteau here endorses a conception of medieval heraldry that has gained favor in recent years: heraldic ensembles represent accords, familial ties, and allegiances that arose from specific historical moments.

Pinoteau describes the medallions and then identifies each person represented in the heraldry. The most significant change in Pinoteau's identifications from those of Ganneron and Grésy is his insistence on the heraldic representations of living individuals, rather than general representations of families or posthumous memorials to individuals, in all instances except for that of the Castile arms. The identifications of Ganneron and Grésy represent a mixture of living and posthumous persons and families. Pinoteau agrees with seven of Grésy's identifications for the shields and 14 of Ganneron's but proposes eight new identifications all for "living" persons: Jean of Brienne for Jerusalem (fig.7), Henri the archbishop of Reims for Dreux (fig.5a, b), Jeanne the Countess of Flanders and Hainaut for Flanders (fig.14), Raimond VII for Toulouse (fig.15), Adam II for Beaumont-en-Gâtinais (fig.20), Jean I for the younger branch of Beaumont-en-Gâtinais (fig.21), Hugues X the Count of La Marche or Manhaut Countess of Dammartin for La Marche-Lusignan (fig.16), and the Moret Family for the unknown escutcheon (fig.25). Pinoteau uses these identifications to refer to a historical moment. He presents a

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<sup>28</sup> In the forward to the republished original version he explains that this article expands three of his past works in this article: the 1966 book, *L'Héraldique de saint Louis et de ses compagnons*, the 1970 exhibition catalogue *La France de saint Louis*, and a communication in *Bulletin de la S.N.A.F.*, 1978-1979, Paris, 1982. Pinoteau, "La date," 113-4.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 114.




chronological “fork” between 1234 and 1237 and, in describing the relationships of each person referenced in the heraldry to Louis IX, he concludes that the casket must have been made in the summer of 1236. Unlike Ganneron and Grésy, Pinoteau presumes that the casket was made during the lives of the individuals who were referenced through the heraldry on the casket, thereby making the previously accepted date of 1297 far too late. He also posits several possibilities for what might have prompted the creation of the box, suggesting that the casket would have signified political and familial allegiances. Table 1 shows the relative identifications of the different arms by Ganneron, Grésy, and Pinoteau.

**Table 1. Heraldry Identifications**

	<b>Grésy</b>	<b>Ganneron</b>	<b>Pinoteau</b>
 (fig.2)	Louis IX	Louis IX	<b>France Ancient</b> Louis IX
 (Fig.4)	Remembrance perhaps of the ancestors of the King of Castile, Alphonse IX	In memory of Blanche of Castile, queen of France, mother of Saint Louis	<b>Castile</b> Louis IX, to allude to inheritance rights
 (Fig.5a)	Pierre of Dreux dit Mauclerc	Pierre of Dreux dit Mauclerc	<b>Dreux-Brittany</b> Pierre Mauclerc
 (Fig.6a)	Henri II, Count of Bar	Henri II, Count of Bar	<b>Bar</b> Henri II
 (Fig.9)	Thibaut II, who married Isabelle, daughter of Louis IX	Thibaud IV of Champagne	<b>Navarre-Champagne</b> Thibaud IV of Champagne
 (Fig.7)	(in honor of) Charles, second brother of Louis IX	Kingdom of Jerusalem-None other than Saint Louis!	<b>Jerusalem</b> Jean of Brienne
 (Fig.8)	England in memory of Eleanor, maternal grandmother of Louis IX	Henry III, King of England	<b>England</b> Henry III
 (Fig.10)	Hugues of Burgundy	Hugues IV of Burgundy	<b>Burgundy Ancient</b> Hugues IV

 (Fig.11)	Jean of Dreux	Robert III, Count of Dreux	<b>Dreux</b> Henri, Archbishop of Reims
 (Fig.12)	Pierre of Courtenay	Robert of Courtenay	<b>Courtenay with cadency</b> Robert of Courtenay
 (Fig.13)	Thibaut le Grand	Thibaut IV of Champagne	<b>Champagne</b> Another symbol for Thibaud IV
 (Fig.14)	Duke of Flanders who married Marguerite, daughter of Louis IX	Baudouin IX, count of Flanders and his successors	<b>Flanders</b> Jeanne Countess of Flanders and Hainaut
 (Fig.15)	(in memory of) Alphonse, Count of Toulouse	Alphonse Count of Toulouse	<b>Toulouse</b> Raimond VII
 (Fig.18)	In honor of the sire of Montmorency	Mathieu II of Montmorency	<b>Montmorency</b> Bouchards VI or better: Pierre Montmorency Marly
 (Fig.17)	Aufroy of Montfort	Amaury, Count of Montfort	<b>Montfort-l'Aumary</b> Amaury V
 (Fig.19)	Coucy	Raoul, Sire of Coucy	<b>Coucy</b> Enguerrand III
 (Fig.20)	Jean of Beaumont	Jean of Beaumont	<b>Beaumont-en-Gâtinais</b> Adam II
 (Fig.21)	Guillaume of Beaumont	Guillaume of Beaumont	<b>Beaumont-en-Gâtinais with cadency</b> Jean I
 (Fig.22)	Barthélemy of Roye	Barthélemy of Roye	<b>Roye</b> Bartélemy of Roye
 (Fig.16)	Count of Dammartin	Philippe, Count of Dammartin	<b>La Marche-Lusignan</b> Hugues X count of La Marche and of Angoulême Or Manhaut Countess of Dammartin and Boulogne
 (Fig.23)	Jean of Harcourt	Richard of Harcourt	<b>Harcourt</b> Richard Lord of Harcourt
 (Fig.24)	Jean Mallet	Robert III Mallet of Graville and his sons.	<b>Malet</b> Robert II Malet Robert III, knight banneret

 (Fig.25)	Cadet branch of Courtenay Either Guillaume I or Guillaume II Lord of Yerre	Does not know; maybe cadet of Courtenay or Boulogne	<b>Corneuil or Moret Family?</b>
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In contrast to the earlier scholarship, I would like to suggest that Blanche of Castile likely served as patron or recipient of the casket. I argue this on the grounds that women often employed heraldry to represent themselves and that Blanche would have had particular social and political reasons for creating or receiving an object like the casket. The high number of powerful (and sometimes hostile) members of the nobility represented on the casket, arranged in an ordered, courtly space created by both the heraldic and figural decorations, affirm the power and stability of Capetian authority under Blanche of Castile's rule.

To do this, I reconsider the evidence Pinoteau presents for his attributions and his date of the summer of 1236. In Chapter II, I take up the matter of Pinoteau's assertion that Castilian arms do not represent Blanche's personal identity, an assertion he made to establish a *terminus post quem* date of after her regency. I follow Pinoteau's ensemble-contextual methodology by using heraldry to isolate a range of dates and to search for suitable events that would cause such an object to be made.<sup>30</sup> In Chapter III, I contextualize Blanche of Castile's patronage or reception of objects like the casket within

<sup>30</sup> Pinoteau claims that the *Casket of Saint Louis* "should be studied at the head of a series and should be compared thoroughly" with these boxes. Yet their shape and decorative programs, as well as their use of heraldry and proposed dates, all differ greatly from the Louvre casket and therefore may have been made for completely different purposes. Pinoteau, "La date," 124. Of note, the work by Jean-Bernard de Vaivre on the casket of Aix-la-Chapelle (also known as the casket of Aachen) and the work by Alain-Charles Dionnet conducted on the *Reliquary Casket of Jean de Montmirail* at Longpont in response to the *Enamels of Limoges* exhibition inform my reading of the *Casket of Saint Louis*. For their work on these caskets, see: Jean-Bernard de Vaivre, "Le décor héraldique de la cassette d'Aix-la-Chapelle," *Aachener Kunstblätter* 45 (1974): 97-124; and Alain-Charles Dionnet, "La cassette reliquaie du bienheureux Jean de Montmirail," *Revue Francaise d'Héraldique et de Sigillographie* 65 (1995): 89-108.

the framework of scholarship that deals with female use of heraldry and other decorations. Manuscripts, small metalwork objects, architectural decorations, and especially the great copper, silver, and gold tombs of kinship offer a rich body of scholarship with which to investigate the casket's function. In Chapter IV, I examine influential political and social events from Blanche of Castile's first regency which may be reflected in the decorations of the casket and propose three possible dates for the *Casket of Saint Louis*: 1229, 1234, and 1236.

## Chapter II: Heraldry and Art Historical Inquiry

When a datable coat of arms or set of different arms appears on an object, heraldrists can sometimes use this information to determine an object's date or commissioner. The *Casket of Saint Louis* exemplifies this method of traditional heraldic analysis so well that Pastoureau features Pinoteau's work in his recent handbook, *Heraldry: Its Origins and Meaning* (1997), in order to underscore the furthest extent to which one can precisely date an object that contains authentic shields. Pastoureau states, "art history could not date [the *Casket of Saint Louis*] to within less than fifty years, but, thanks to the research undertaken by Pinoteau, heraldry managed to pinpoint its manufacture to within a period of a few weeks."<sup>31</sup> This chapter dissects Pinoteau's use of ensemble-contextual methodology, supports his sound conclusions, and identifies problematic assumptions.

The traditional study of heraldry uses chronological information such as birth, death, marriage, and knighthood dates of individuals whose blazons are recorded in armorial rolls (rolls and codices which list arms of feudal troops). By comparing the blazons (or written descriptions of heraldry) recorded in armorial rolls, to the escutcheons that appear on decorated objects, books, or windows, heraldrists can identify an individual owner or a particular family line. Differentiated heraldry (for example, the Dreux-Brittany, fig.5a,b, Navarre-Champagne, fig.9, and Courtenay, fig.12, arms), especially that which shows cadency (modifications to a shield that mark a younger or cadet branch of a family, see fig.12), allows more precise identifications and dating.<sup>32</sup> Earlier scholars like Grésy and Ganneron recognized the value of such heraldic

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<sup>31</sup> Michel Pastoureau and Francisca Garvie, *Heraldry: its origins and meaning* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1997), 79.

<sup>32</sup> Meredith Parsons Lillich, "Early Heraldry: How to Crack the Code," *Gesta* 30 (1991): 45.

identifications in associating the casket with an owner, but not necessarily in dating the casket. Naturally, the *terminus post quem* of an object can be established by identifying the dates when noblemen or women began using the arms which identify them. For men in the thirteenth century, this usually took place in conjunction with knighting, because it was at this moment that arms were ceremonially bestowed; yet a woman may have used arms after marriage or after inheriting her father's lands. Of course, an object would not use the arms of a person before those arms existed.

Pinoteau supposes the *Casket of Saint Louis* to have originated in a period when all of its heraldry would have been in active use, and therefore understands the escutcheons to indicate a particular date. Essentially, Pinoteau argues that heraldry in this period was not used only for decoration or to evoke vague meanings of family pedigree or wealth. By setting a *terminus post quem* and a *terminus ante quem* based on when certain people began using the heraldry and on the deaths of those who possessed the heraldry, Pinoteau raises the possibility that the casket documents a recognized historical event. He attempts to find an event that might unite the heraldry in a fashion analogous to wax seal impressions on a charter or treaty, documenting specific events which support the collection of seals, although he ultimately settles on a looser and more symbolic interpretation.<sup>33</sup>

Pinoteau is not alone in his insistence on dating an object to a period when all the owners actively used their arms. Boehm and Pastoureau accept Pinoteau's date in the catalog *Enamels of Limoges* (1996) and Pastoureau highlights Pinoteau's work in the above-mentioned case study in the efficacy of heraldry in dating an object.<sup>34</sup> Alain-

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<sup>33</sup> Issues of interpretation and function are discussed in the next chapter.

<sup>34</sup> O'Neill, *Enamels of Limoges*, 360-63.

Charles Dionnet and Jean-Bernard de Vaivre also use this system to date similar caskets such as the *Coffret of Blessed John of Montmirail* and the *Casket of Aix-la-Chapelle*.<sup>35</sup> Pastoureau notes, however, that objects as early as this time period and increasingly more often after the mid-thirteenth century use heraldic decoration differently, to show wealth and prestige, rather than reifying alliances or family ties.<sup>36</sup> Indeed, some tombs from the early thirteenth century, before the date of this casket, combine past with present generations to argue claims about power, inheritances, and family membership.<sup>37</sup> These semantic issues as they pertain to the *Casket of Saint Louis* are explored more in depth in the next chapter. For the purposes of this chapter, the casket's heraldry is examined with the presumption that the arms that appear on the casket belong to living individuals at the time of the creation of the casket and that, therefore, its date range can be narrowed dramatically.

### **Pinoteau's Chronological "Fork"**

Pinoteau establishes the date of the *Casket of Saint Louis* through triangulation of a number of important historical events. First, he establishes several main factors which create a bounded period of a few years (1234-1237) during which the casket may have been made. He then narrows this period further to the few months in the summer of 1236 and argues for the suitability of each individual's arms appearing on an object made at this time. He analyzes the relative strength of each person's relationship to Louis IX in the year 1236 in order to make the case for his proposed date.

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Pastoureau and Garvie, *Heraldry: its origins and meaning*, 78-9.

<sup>35</sup> De Vaivre, "Le décor héraldique de la cassette d'Aix-la-Chapelle," 97-124; and Dionnet, "La cassette reliquaire du bienheureux Jean de Montmirail: 89-108.

<sup>36</sup> O'Neill, *Enamels of Limoges*, 340.

<sup>37</sup> Theodore Evergates, *The cartulary of Countess Blanche of Champagne*, (Toronto: Published for the Medieval Academy of America by University of Toronto Press, 2010), 6. See also: Anne McGee Morganstern and John A. Goodall, *Gothic tombs of kinship in France, the low countries, and England* (University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 6-18.

Pinoteau believes that Sancho VII of Navarre's death in April 1234 was the event that caused the combination of the arms of Navarre and Champagne, (fig.9) since the territories of Navarre and Champagne were not combined until Sancho's death. Thibaud IV inherited Navarre through his mother, Blanche of Navarre, sister of Sancho VII who had no legitimate male heirs.<sup>38</sup> Pinoteau notes that Thibaud IV used the Navarre heraldry on his "equestrian shield" (fig.61) and that of Champagne on his counter-seal (fig.62) and that "it is more than probable that it was he who first used the split Navarre and Champagne heraldry that one sees on the casket."<sup>39</sup> As Pinoteau observes, there is no earlier instance of dimidiated (the combination of two vertically divided arms) Navarre and Champagne arms.<sup>40</sup> This inheritance and the dimidiated shield enable Pinoteau to establish a *terminus post quem* of 1234 for the casket.

Pinoteau's triangulation is further conditioned by the notable absence of any heraldic reference on the casket to some important cadenced arms of the French royal family.<sup>41</sup> For example, the arms of Louis IX's uncle Philippe Hurepel (1200-1234), which would have shown the arms of France cadenced, do not appear on the casket, since, as Pinoteau believes, Philippe had died in January of 1234.<sup>42</sup> The death in 1234 of Philippe thus reinforces Pinoteau's *terminus post quem*. The arms of another important brother, Robert, Count of Artois (1216-1250), are also absent. Since Robert was not knighted until 1237, Pinoteau is able to arrive at a *terminus ante quem* for the casket. Although Pinoteau points out in other parts of his article that the casket lacks seven of its

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<sup>38</sup> Thibaud, titled variously the Chansonier and the Posthumous, was numbered the IV in Champagne but once he inherited Navarre in 1234 he was Thibaud I in the kingdom of Navarre. In this thesis I refer to him as Thibaud IV.

<sup>39</sup> Pinoteau, "La date," 118; and Hervé Pinoteau and Claude Le Gallo, *L'Héraldique de saint Louis et de ses compagnons* (Paris: Les Cahiers nobles, 1966), 20.

<sup>40</sup> I return to this matter below.

<sup>41</sup> Pinoteau, "La date," 117.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.



original 53 shields (one of which would have been another of Louis IX's arms), he does not seem to be bothered by this information in using the lack of certain important shields as indications of the casket's date. According to Pinoteau, a *terminus ante quem* of 1237 is reinforced by the fact that Jean of Brienne used the arms of Jerusalem, perhaps exclusively, until his death in March 1237.<sup>43</sup>

Further historical-contextual study allows Pinoteau to narrow his focus within the date range of 1234-7. For example, during Blanche of Castile's regency (1226-1234/5), many of those persons referenced on the casket, including the English king Henry III and several important Norman barons, were regularly at odds with the French crown.<sup>44</sup> Henry III continued the attempts of his predecessors Richard I and John to gain Norman territories. But in January 1236, Éléonore of Provence, the sister of Louis IX's wife Marguerite of Provence, married Henry III and, for a brief time, the two kingdoms enjoyed peace. For Pinoteau, this marriage supplies a rationale for the inclusion of the English royal arms and pushes the *terminus post quem* for the casket to sometime after January of 1236.<sup>45</sup>

Having established these chronological parameters, he examines the historical conditions of 1236. At the time, all of the nobles represented on the box briefly enjoyed peace with Louis IX, including some notorious for earlier undermining the young king's

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<sup>43</sup> Pinoteau, "La date," 118-9. However, it is worth noting that Pope Gregory IX recognized in 1231 Frederick II as King of Jerusalem (after Frederick had married Jean of Brienne's step-daughter several years earlier) and that Louis IX and Frederick II renewed treaties in 1232. The arms could refer to Jean of Brienne, whose children were brought up in the French royal court and who was a supporter of Blanche of Castile and the young King Louis IX during the regency. Gestures to a former or current king of Jerusalem, both on friendly terms with Louis IX, are equally conceivable. Jacques Le Goff and Gareth Evan Gollrad, *Saint Louis* (Notre Dame, Ind: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009), 13, 74.

<sup>44</sup> I will use the term "regency" for the periods of Blanche of Castile's rule on behalf of her son. Jim Bradbury (citing Jacques le Goff) notes that the period may be better defined as a co-rule because of legal definitions of the roles, but most scholars refer to the periods as regencies. Jim Bradbury, *The Capetians: kings of France, 987-1314* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2007), 202.

<sup>45</sup> Pinoteau, "La date," 119.

rule. Pierre Mauclerc, one of the most vociferous dissidents, had for the moment settled with the French crown and “even” Henri of Braine needed an alliance with the king in this year.<sup>46</sup>

For Pinoteau, another important factor in the casket’s manufacture was the support of many important French barons for Louis IX in a political struggle between Louis and important French clergy that had begun in the previous year (1235). The conflict reached a climax in a complaint to the Pope on the king’s behalf by several of the barons listed on the casket.<sup>47</sup> The dispute stemmed from legal questions in the city of Beauvais where money changers had a disproportionate share of power over the other trade professions.<sup>48</sup> The bishop claimed jurisdictional authority over the matter and Louis responded by occupying the city with his forces, arresting large portions of the offending population, demanding an exceptional amount of rent from the bishop, and finally seizing the bishop’s holdings.<sup>49</sup> The conflict eventually involved Blanche of Castile, many bishops and arch bishops of France, most of the French nobility, and the pope. The document that Pinoteau cites, which includes many of the nobles on the casket, asserted (much to the pope’s indignation) that “episcopal temporal rights only derived from secular, royal, and seigniorial justice.”<sup>50</sup> Louis did not immediately win this dispute with the bishops and the pope, but rather, because the pope and his successor became distracted by other matters, the declaration was little by little normalized.<sup>51</sup>

Pinoteau lists all the signatories of this complaint and italicizes the names of those

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 123.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Le Goff and Gollrad, *Saint Louis*, 75.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 76.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 76-7.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 77.

who appear on the casket: Hugues IV, Duke of Burgundy; Pierre Mauclerc, Count of Brittany; Hugues X, Count of la Marche; Amaury V, Count of Montfort; Robert of Courtenay; Bouchard VI, Sire of Montmorency; Richard of Harcourt; and Adam and Jean of Beaumont.<sup>52</sup> Yet it is worth emphasizing here that many of the remaining shields on the casket represent persons that do not appear as signatories on the complaint. These are shields of: Henry III of England, Jean of Brienne or Frederic II as king of Jerusalem, Enguerrand III of Coucy, Thibaud of Champagne and possibly of Navarre-Champagne, Jeanne of Flanders, Raimond VII of Toulouse, Henri II Bar, Bartélemy of Roye, Robert of Malet, an unknown member of the Moret family, and, of course, Louis and Blanche in the shields of France and Castile.

Pinoteau contextualizes the possible date of the casket's creation within the political environment of 1235 and 1236, highlighting Thibaud IV's inheritance dispute with Alix of Cyprus (effectively ended in 1234) and of the marriage of Thibaud's daughter to Jean I of Brittany (1236).<sup>53</sup> He suggests that the community represented by the casket's heraldry would not have to imply a physical meeting or a particular document, but rather an ideal concord: "Without imagining a physical or feudal reunion, one can think of an ideal association around an act of importance."<sup>54</sup> He explains the large number of Norman barons who are referenced through the heraldry on the casket

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<sup>52</sup> Those who appear on this declaration who are not also on the box are: Jean IV de Montoire count of Vendome, Simon de Dammartin count of Ponthieu, Jean d'Oisy count of Chartres, Louis count of Sancerre, Guillaume I count of Joigny, Hugues V de Chatillon Count of Saint-Paul, Jean II count of Roucy, Baudouin III count of Guines, Jean of Braine count of Macon, Gautier d'Avesnes, Jean de Nesle, Etienne de Sancerre, Geoffroi IV viscount of Chateaudun, Raoul III viscount of Beaumont, Aimeri II viscount of Chatelleraul, Archambaud IX sire of Bourbon, Raimon IV viscount of Turenne, Guillaume de Hommet de Normandie, Henri de sully, Guillaume et Dreux de Mello, Gaucher de Joigny, Jean de Toucy, Jean marshal of France, Hugues d'Athis master-panetier de France, Geffroi de la Chapelle, Hugues de Bauche, Geoffroi de Poincy, Robert et Gaco de Poissy, Gui Mauvoisin, Gui de Chevreuse.

Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Pinoteau, "La date," 123.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

but who are not present on the 1235 list of signatories by suggesting that the object could have been commissioned by this very group of Normans, nobles who were continually pushing against the French king's centralization of power in the mid-thirteenth century, as a show of loyalty to Louis IX.<sup>55</sup> Here, citing Jean-Pierre Bebelon from the Archives Nationales and the Musée de l'Histoire de France, Pinoteau claims that the central medallion depicting an act of homage (fig.60) reinforces this idea.<sup>56</sup>

While Pinoteau wonders whether the northern nobles commissioned the casket for Louis IX, he draws no firm conclusions about its patron or original purpose. Rather, his conclusion is that only in the summer of 1236 was there sufficient peace between the persons referenced through the heraldic decoration to rationalize production of such an object. Generally speaking, for Pinoteau, the casket's heraldic ensemble served as a symbolic declaration of allegiances. This is in contrast to Ganneron and Grésy, who had suggested that the casket's heraldry (which Pinoteau thought was conceived as a reliquary in connection to the 1297 canonization) functioned as a memorial to the nobles who had played important roles throughout Louis IX's rule.<sup>57</sup> Pinoteau rather believes that the heraldry was not retrospective but devised to testify to an act of fealty, an "ideal concord, perhaps impossible to realize."<sup>58</sup>

### **The Castile Problem**

Pinoteau's premise for establishing a date for the casket involves a rejection of Blanche of Castile's representation through the presence of the arms of Castile in her heraldry. All of the major publications to date that treat the *Casket of Saint Louis*

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 124.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Grésy, *Cassette de saint Louis*, 7; and Ganneron, *La cassette de Saint Louis*, 8.

<sup>58</sup> "une sorte d'idéal de concorde, peut-être impossible à réaliser". Pinoteau, "La date," 123-124.

conspicuously deny Blanche of Castile's personal representation through the casket's Castilian heraldry.<sup>59</sup> Though this assumption is long-standing, it treats Blanche of Castile's heraldry profoundly differently than that of all the other men and women on the casket. And this inconsistent application of heraldic analysis allows Pinoteau to suppress the possibility of Blanche of Castile's patronage of the object and reinforce a date later than her regency (which ends in 1234 or 1235).

Ganneron ascribes the appearance of Castilian arms in so many of Louis IX's decorative programs to the son's filial love for his mother, "heightened by the piety of the monarch."<sup>60</sup> For Pinoteau, the combination of Castilian and French arms conforms to Louis IX's custom of using these arms together in artworks; Pinoteau claims that Louis used both French and Castilian arms in large numbers in order to emphasize his Castilian inheritance rights.<sup>61</sup> The rights that Pinoteau invokes here come from a story in which a group of Spanish nobles had sworn that Alphonse VIII (Blanche's father), on his deathbed, made Blanche's son heir to Castile in the event that Alphonse's son died without heir. But when this event did come to pass in 1217, Ferdinand, the son of Bérengère, took the crown without French protest.<sup>62</sup> Although Pinoteau believes Louis IX incorporated Castilian arms in many windows and objects as a subtle reminder of his Castilian rights, he does not explain why Louis would persist in claiming these rights into the 1230s and 1240s. He also fails to consider the possible artistic and political influence

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<sup>59</sup> Evidently writing for a popular audience sometime after the casket's acquisition by the *Musée des Souverains*, Théophile Gautier wrote a short essay in which he states that the heraldry represents Blanche of Castile. However, in keeping with Grézy and Ganneron, he implies that Louis IX employed the heraldry out of filial piety. Drake Boehm and Pastoureau also connect the heraldry to Blanche, though they still associate the casket with Louis IX. Théophile Gautier, *La cassette de Saint Louis*, n.d., 5. See also: O'Neill, *Enamels of Limoges*, 162.

<sup>60</sup> Ganneron, *La cassette de Saint Louis*, 5-6.

<sup>61</sup> Pinoteau and Le Gallo, *L'Héraldique de saint Louis*, 8; and Pinoteau, "La date," 117.

<sup>62</sup> Pinoteau and Le Gallo, *L'Héraldique de saint Louis*, 8.

that Blanche of Castile, as Louis' mother and as the former and future ruler of France, may have enjoyed.

Significantly, upon the casket's discovery in 1853, the public assumed that it must have belonged to Blanche of Castile. Grésy immediately disputes this claim.<sup>63</sup> The notion that Castilian heraldry coupled with French royal arms does not refer to Blanche as an individual may be traced at least as far back as Grésy and forward through Ganneron, Pinoteau, and some English language literature. For example, in his study of the Sainte-Chappelle glass (fig.64), Beat Brenk cites Pinoteau's *L'heraldique de saint Louis et ses Compagnons* and "La Date" in arguing that the Castile and France heraldry in the windows of the Sainte-Chapelle represents the "fusion of the two kingdoms."<sup>64</sup> Rather than the specific identities of Blanche and her son, Pinoteau's idea here is employed to argue that the windows recall the inheritance claims that had long been surrendered.

Rather than associate her with the Castilian arms on the casket, Pinoteau inventories Blanche's sons and nephews who possess elements of the Castilian arms in their heraldry. He goes on to make several problematic claims in a passage which is worth quoting at length:

[...] There can be no talk of automatically attributing the Castilian shields on the casket to Blanche of Castile, who in any case should not carry arms at all. Though this is demonstrated fairly easily, it retains some importance [to reiterate], for one has too often read that a monument adorned with castles was made by order of Blanche while regent, which means that one is not able to fix the date past the arbitrary year of the end of her regency,

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<sup>63</sup> Grésy, *Cassette de saint Louis*, 2.

<sup>64</sup> Beat Brenk, "Chapter 12: The Sainte-Chapelle as a Capetian Political Program," in *Artistic integration in Gothic buildings*, ed. Virginia Chieffo Raguin, et al. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 199. See also: Therese Martin, *Reassessing the roles of women as 'makers' of medieval art and architecture* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 218, n81.

1235 or 1236, etc. And it is thus that even now one dates the windows of the north transept of Notre-Dame de Chartres!<sup>65</sup>

Notably, Pinoteau maintains that Blanche would not have borne arms and that the windows at Chartres Cathedral, which include the Castilian arms, should not be dated based on associating these arms with her financial or political support. Pinoteau takes pains to develop this point so that he may date the casket to later than Blanche of Castile's regency.

The statements that Blanche "should not carry arms" and that Chartres Cathedral's north transept windows should not be dated on the basis of Blanche's capacity to fund them are puzzling, since they seem inconsistent with prevailing scholarship and even Pinoteau's own work. In this respect, Pinoteau contradicts himself, since he accepts that the Countess Jeanne of Flanders is represented by the arms of Flanders on the casket, yet is keen to omit any possible reference to the most powerful woman in France in this decade.<sup>66</sup> As for dating the windows at Chartres to Blanche's first regency or while Louis VIII still lived, Pinoteau acts counter to prevailing scholarship on the matter.<sup>67</sup> The idea that Louis IX used the arms of Castile to support his Castilian rights appears to be Pinoteau's; in his earliest publication where this claim appears (1970), he supports the idea that Blanche would not have used her heraldry in

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<sup>65</sup> "...il ne saurait être question d'attribuer automatiquement les écus castillans de la cassette à Blanche de Castille, que ne devait d'ailleurs point porter d'armes. La Chose qui se démontre assez facilement a son importance, car on atrop souvent lu qu'un monument orné de châteaux avait été fait par ordre de blanche alors regent, ce qui entraîne que l'on ne peut dépasser la date arbitraire de fin de régence, fixée à 1235 ou 1236, etc. Or, c'est ainsi qu'on date jusqu'ici les vitraux du transept nord de Notre-Dame de Chartres!" Pinoteau, "La date," 117.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid. 120.

<sup>67</sup> Emile Mâle, *Chartres* (New York: Harper & Row 1983), 160; and Nolan, *Queens in stone and silver*, 132.

such great quantity because Marguerite of Provence's heraldry appears nowhere in the art of this period.<sup>68</sup>

That the Castile arms represent the maternal bloodline is not a wholly unreasonable conviction. Maurice Keen shows the important role of the female bloodline in heraldry formulated to represent a son's pedigree, but also emphasizes the active use of heraldry by women.<sup>69</sup> Keen shows that when women brought a highly respected lineage or a greater title to a marriage than that of the husband, the wives' arms were merged with their husbands' and repeated in their sons' arms.<sup>70</sup> Like Pinoteau, Keen also emphasizes that the language of heraldry developed to show "bloodline" and inheritance rights, not a woman's own personhood, *per se*. Yet the examination of gender roles and uses of heraldry by both sexes reveals, as many other studies do, that women possessed arms and that when their arms appear on objects, they invoke the woman individually rather than her lineage or inheritances in the abstract.

Moreover, recent scholarship has amassed compelling evidence for identifying Blanche of Castile as patron of art objects that have traditionally been associated with Louis IX. Many scholars now attribute examples of Castilian heraldry at Chartres and the Sainte-Chapelle, for example, to her individual patronage.<sup>71</sup> Kathleen Nolan shows that Blanche, like numerous noble-women before her, commissioned family members' tombs. For example, the tombs of Blanche's grandchildren Blanche and Jean of France (fig.65) contain alternating shields of France and Castile around the boarder and on the robes of

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<sup>68</sup> Hervé Pinoteau, "Autour de la bulle <<Dei Filius>>," *Itinéraires*, 147 (1970): 102.

<sup>69</sup> Maurice Keen, "Heraldry and the medieval gentle woman," *History Today* 53 (2003): 21-27.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 22, 25.

<sup>71</sup> Otto Georg von Simson, *The Gothic cathedral: origins of Gothic architecture and the medieval concept of order* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1956), 221; Mâle, *Chartres*, 160; and Nolan, *Queens in stone and silver*, 132.



the children which cannot symbolize a Castilian inheritance as Pinoteau believes for the *Casket of Saint Louis*. Indeed, Nolan argues for Blanche's agency as patron for these tombs, in part because of the inclusion of the Castilian arms. Finally, Blanche's seal, with fleurs-de-lis sown throughout the front-side and a large castle with small fleurs-de-lis on the counter-seal, shows the integral part her Castilian heritage played in her identity as a ruling queen of France. This research therefore proceeds with the hypothesis that the *Casket of Saint Louis* represents Blanche of Castile's political and social presence rather than Louis IX's inheritance rights through his mother.

### **Reconsidering Traditional Heraldic Analysis**

Pinoteau, through this contextual-ensemble methodology, arrives at one reasonable date for the creation of the *Casket of Saint Louis*, but this date is certainly not the only possibility. In his highly detailed, well-organized, and knowledgeable article, he overlooks some irregularity of his application of the methodology and fails to consider some key art-historical and material aspects of the casket. Peculiar traits in the style or material of some escutcheons and inconsistent application of his methodology to others merit further discussion.

Two curious aspects of this casket do not fit neatly with his hypothesis. First, as Pinoteau himself notes, the fleur-de-lis on the arms of France has a triangular bottom section with a flat base. (Fig.2, 3) Pinoteau observes that even the fleurs-de-lis used in the stained glass of the northern transept of Chartres cathedral, traditionally associated with Blanche of Castile's patronage and dated to around 1230, had advanced beyond the early style of the casket's fleurs-de-lis.<sup>72</sup> This stylistic trait suggests to me either an earlier date or an older and more conservative patron. If Blanche of Castile commissioned the casket,

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<sup>72</sup> Pinoteau, "La date," 116; and Mâle, *Chartres*, 157, 160.

she might have wanted to evoke the authority of her husband, Louis VIII, and father-in-law, Philippe Auguste, through their aesthetic.<sup>73</sup> Second, Pinoteau mentions that the collection of individuals referenced through the casket's heraldry largely forms the old guard of the French nobility at this time. Pinoteau conceives of this collection of individuals as the grand knights of the age of Philippe Auguste and Louis VIII, saying:

It appears we find ourselves before a 'monument' that commemorates the people one talks about under Philippe Auguste and Louis VIII. They are in a way a little old, if I am permitted the expression. They are here and there the knights who gained immense honor and figure in the windows at Chartres: Pierre Mauclerc, Robert of Courtenay, Amaury of Montfort, Jean of Beaumont... glorious, brave men already in another age.<sup>74</sup>

This aspect also seems to reflect an earlier time or a patron wishing to suggest earlier events. Curiously, Pinoteau offers no explanation for these antiquated features and references.

Material inconsistencies may exist in the escutcheons that all the major scholars identify as from the Beaumont-en-Gâtinais family.<sup>75</sup> (Figs.20, 21) Pinoteau identifies elder and younger brothers of Beaumont-en-Gâtinais: Adam II for the undifferenced heraldry and Jean I for the heraldry with cadency.<sup>76</sup> For proper cadencing, one would

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<sup>73</sup> Robert Branner describes Blanche of Castile's architectural patronage as aesthetically conservative or modest, in keeping with Cistercian traditions, while Nolan positions her between Cistercian traditions and contemporary Parisian architectural innovations. Whatever the case, it appears that Blanche's aesthetic uses traditional elements and could be responsible for the flat-based fleur de lis on the casket. Nolan, *Queens in stone and silver*, 124 and 129.

<sup>74</sup> "Il est manifeste que nous nous trouvons effectivement devant un 'monument' qui commémorant des personnes qui firent parler d'elles sous Phillippe Auguste et Louis VIII. Ce sont parfois des chevaliers qui ont eu l'immense honneur de figurer à jamais dans les verrières de Chartres : Pierre Mauclerc, Robert de Courtenay, Amaury de Montfort, Jean de Beaumont... glorieux preux déjà d'un autre âge." He also mentions: "It is also curious that there are so many Dreux and Dreux-Bretagne arms on the casket: it seems that the Dreux were there for some reason, just like the count of Champagne their close parent and ally, marked by two arms." "Il est aussi curieux qu'il y ait tant de Dreux et Drex-Bretagne sur la cassette : il semblerait que les Dreux y furent pour quelque chose, tout comme le comte de Champagne leur proche allié, marqué par deux écus." Pinoteau, "La date," 123.

<sup>75</sup> Grésy, *Cassette de saint Louis*, (de C. Lahure: Paris, 1854), 7; Ganneron, *La cassette de Saint Louis*, 40; and Pinoteau, "La Date," 121. Pastoureau uses Pinoteau's attributions. O'Neill, *Enamels of Limoges*, 360.

<sup>76</sup> Pinoteau, "La date," 121.

expect these shields to be identical except for a label, or horizontal band with descending bars, near the top of the younger brother's. These shields show black or blue on Jean I's cadenced version in the fields where white appears on Adam II's undifferenced version. Additionally, the larger cadenced shield has more gyronnies (triangles formed from partitions radiating from the center). Pastoureau blazons them "Gyronny Argent and Gules" and "Gyronny Argent and Gules a Label of five points Azure," making no mention of the different colors or different number of gyronnies.<sup>77</sup> Pinoteau explains that the number of gyronnies was augmented on the enlarged shield from its normal number.<sup>78</sup> He does not explain the different color or why the younger brother would be represented with a larger shield. An explanation as simple as a craftsman's error could account for the incorrect family colors.<sup>79</sup> But we also cannot be sure that these attributions refer to the same family.

Another feature of the casket for which Pinoteau fails to provide a persuasive explanation is the repetition of certain shields. For some recurring shields, like France and Castile on the *Casket of Saint Louis*, the repetition is probably used to establish feudal meaning. But some coats of arms are repeated only once, not in the great numbers of the France and Castile arms. The *Casket of Saint Louis* has two such surviving duplicate shields, Bar and Dreux-Brittany. (Figs.5a, 5b, 6a, 6b) For these shields, it seems one must determine whether they represent a more important person, two people sharing the same heraldry, or something else altogether.

Pinoteau does not treat the two instances of recurring shields in the same way. For the two arms of Dreux-Brittany, he identifies Pierre Mauclerc of Dreux, Count of

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<sup>77</sup> O'Neill, *Enamels of Limoges*, 360.

<sup>78</sup> Pinoteau, "La date," 148.

<sup>79</sup> I thank Richard Leson for his insights on the materiality of medieval craftsmanship.

Brittany (1213-1237), and his son Jean I, who became Count of Brittany in 1237.<sup>80</sup> For the two arms of Bar, he identifies only Henri II count of Bar-le-Duc who died in 1239 at Gaza.<sup>81</sup> In comparison, the *Coffret of Blessed Jean de Montmirail* has a larger array of repeated shields, with ten different repeated shields out of a total 22 different shields. In this case the repetition should not indicate more than one individual.<sup>82</sup> The *Coffret of Montmirail* dates to a later decade than the *Casket of Saint Louis* (Dionnet reckons 1242 but Pastoureaux and Boehm think 1270), and therefore the repetition could be treated differently on the two caskets based on changes in the use of heraldry. However, the repeated shields should not be treated differently from one occurrence to the next on the same object.

Another person may be represented twice in the heraldry, but in this case through two different coats of arms. Pinoteau believes both the Champagne arms (fig.13) and the dimidiated Navarre-Champagne arms (fig.9) represent Thibaud IV. But here, as with the Castile heraldry, Pinoteau neglects to entertain the possibility that a woman may be associated with a coat of arms. Thibaud IV of Champagne, according to Pinoteau, is represented with two different escutcheons on this casket: Champagne's "Azure a Bend Argent cotised Or" and Navarre-Champagne's "Gules a Chain in cross saltire and orle Or dimidiated by Azure a Bend Argent cotised Or." Pinoteau believes this doubling of Thibaud's heraldry represents his roles as Count of Champagne and as King of Navarre, despite the fact that both roles would be adequately represented in the dimidiated heraldry alone. Pinoteau explains:

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<sup>80</sup> Pinoteau, "La date," 146.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Dionnet, "La cassette reliquaire du bienheureux Jean de Montmirail," 93.

Becoming Thibaud 1<sup>st</sup> king of Navarre, he associated his Champagne arms with those of his new kingdom. It is certain that he took the arms of Navarre on his equestrian seal and the shield of Champagne on his counter-seal, and it is more than probable that it is really he who created the *mi-parti* of Navarre and of Champagne that one sees on the casket, even though it does not appear on the seals until the time of his son Thibaud II/V, that is to say 1253-1270.<sup>83</sup>

Indeed, one medieval manuscript has been identified to a date before 1234 partly because of the appearance of separate Navarre and Champagne arms, rather than combined arms.<sup>84</sup> Yet it may be that it was not Thibaud IV who created these arms, but rather his mother Blanche of Navarre who, in keeping with the tradition of many aristocratic women of the time, may have carried her father's arms impaled on her husband's.

Keen explains that from the twelfth century a woman's arms after marriage could use the design of her husband's arms on the viewer's left hand side impaling her father's arms on the viewer's right hand side.<sup>85</sup> The dimidiation of the escutcheon on the *Casket of Saint Louis* does not comply with this formula: the Navarre arms, or Blanche of Navarre's father's arms, make up the viewer's left hand side of the shield, leaving the right side for her husband Thibaud III's arms. But Keen also points out that, in cases where the wife came from a higher bloodline, her family's arms would be emphasized in her husband and sons' arms and sometimes the husband's arms were swapped outright for his wife's.<sup>86</sup> Furthermore, Keen offers a thirteenth century example of a woman from the royal house of Scotland whose counter-seal (fig.66) shows this inverse impalement

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<sup>83</sup> "Devenu Thibaud 1<sup>er</sup> roi de Navarre, il associa les armes de Champagne à celles de son nouveau royaume. Il est certain qu'il prit les armes de Navarre sur son sceau équestre et l'écu de Champagne que l'on voit sur la cassette, encore qu'il n'apparaisse sur les sceaux de son temps de son fils Thibaud II-V, c'est-à-dire en 1253-1270."

Pinoteau, "La date," 118.

<sup>84</sup> Robert Branner, *Manuscript painting in Paris during the reign of Saint Louis: a study of styles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 64.

<sup>85</sup> Keen, "Heraldry and the medieval gentle woman," 22.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

“indicating the higher dignity of the blood that she brought to their union”; indeed her son briefly became king of Scotland through her inheritance.<sup>87</sup> Similarly, Blanche of Navarre came from a superior lineage than her husband and, through her, her son became King of Navarre. Her seal employs the Champagne arms of her husband, which shows that she did not use the arms of her father at least in some contexts.<sup>88</sup> Though this possibility (that the dimidiated arms of Navarre and Champagne represent Blanche of Navarre) remains uncorroborated, it raises an important alternative to consider.

Finally, three additional coats of arms on the casket invite doubt about Pinoteau’s 1236 date. First, Pinoteau acknowledges that Raimond VII of Toulouse had a short-lived falling out with Louis IX in 1236, and suggests that his heraldry’s presence on the box evokes a “wish of concord.”<sup>89</sup> Furthermore, Richard of Harcourt, Pinoteau’s choice for the Harcourt arms (fig.23), died sometime between 1235 and 1242.<sup>90</sup> While the date of Richard of Harcourt’s death does not preclude the possibility of a 1236 date for the casket, Pinoteau’s methodology works only if Richard died after the summer of 1236, an event which remains uncertain and, given the seven-year range, perhaps unlikely. Lastly, Pinoteau declines an attribution that makes much more sense to him, solely because the knight dies in 1234; the shield of Dreux (fig11) “seems difficult to fit to Robert III count of Dreux and dying in 1234 or to his son Jean 1<sup>st</sup> who succeeded him [but knighted in 1241].” He concludes that “this will be therefore the arms without cadency of a clerk of the branch of Dreux, and one can see only Henri, brother of Robert III, who was archbishop of Reims [...]. The only bother is that this prelate did not entertain cordial

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> H. D’Arbois de Jubainville, *Essai sur les sceaux des comtes et des comtesses de Champagne*, (Paris: A. Durand, 1856), plate II.

<sup>89</sup> “*un vœu de concorde*.” Pinoteau, “La date,” 120.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 122.

relations with Saint Louis, but the latter came to his aid at the beginning of 1236.”<sup>91</sup> Rather than consider a date within Blanche of Castile’s regency, Pinoteau attributes the Dreux arms to the brother of the knight that he admits he would prefer.

In sum, Pinoteau uses an extraordinary amount of knowledge and logic in his analysis of the heraldry on the *Casket of Saint Louis*. His achievement builds on and surpasses the scholarship that Grésy and Ganneron in identifying the casket’s heraldry and date. But he disregards an immoderate amount of evidence, especially evidence that could lead to an earlier date and that could allow for a link to Blanche of Castile. Pinoteau’s methodology is also complicated by the fact that objects as early as the 1230s, but especially by the late thirteenth century, used the arms of famous, powerful families as generic status symbols.<sup>92</sup> The tension between heraldry as generic indicator of luxury and as specific identifier persists in recent literature on these thirteenth century objects. Moreover, Grésy and Ganneron believed that objects at this time, such as the *Casket of Saint Louis*, might employ the arms of long deceased knights as a way of memorializing the important figures in a person’s life.<sup>93</sup> Pinoteau rejects this out of hand with no discussion of the complexities of early heraldic use, even though heraldry on early thirteenth-century tombs, for example, combines generations to arrive at ends similar to Grésy’s and Ganneron’s explanation of the *Casket of Saint Louis*.<sup>94</sup> Because of the large number of different families and occasionally because of the obscurity of the families, I believe traditional heraldic analysis is the right methodology for dating this casket, but not for considering its function. Because of the variety of meanings heraldry could

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 119.

<sup>92</sup> O'Neill, *Enamels of Limoges*, 341-2.

<sup>93</sup> Grésy, *Cassette de saint Louis*, 1-12; and Ganneron, *La cassette de Saint Louis*, 7.

<sup>94</sup> Scholars who have considered this casket now agree with Pinoteau that the casket’s heraldry designates arms-bearing individuals at the time of the casket’s creation.

generate, the function of early heraldry on any given object must be studied at the level of the individual object.



### Chapter III: The *Casket of Saint Louis* in an early-thirteenth century Cultural Context

Pinoteau's methodology of analyzing the heraldry (and to some extent the decorations) of the *Casket of Saint Louis* offers one way of understanding heraldically decorated objects from this period. Pinoteau's insistence on considering the heraldry critically is important; when Pinoteau observes that he refuses "to accept the idea expressed by other heraldic specialists, that [the arms] are added to make [an object] prettier," he is rightly resisting the impulse to dismiss heraldry as merely an abstracted form of decoration.<sup>95</sup> Especially in the early thirteenth century, heraldry implied something more personal and specific than the abstracted meanings of wealth and status that it began to suggest a century later. This methodology, though, privileges the heraldic decorations and the object's political function to the exclusion of other social and religious functions. Considering the object as a whole expands an art historian's ability to contextualize the object's origin, ownership, and function.

In his 2006 forward to his republished article "La date de la cassette de saint Louis: été 1236?," Pinoteau acknowledges that scholarly understanding of how heraldry works is still emerging.<sup>96</sup> Indeed, in the time since Pinoteau's first 1978/9 publication on the casket, several important works have been published that develop art historical views on the meaning of heraldry in medieval objects. In his article, however, Pinoteau errs insofar as he stresses the political function of the heraldry. In doing so, he marginalizes discussion of the casket's other decoration, namely its medallions and enameled dragon latch. This chapter considers the *Casket of Saint Louis* in light of recent studies of analogous artworks that employ heraldry.

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<sup>95</sup> Pinoteau, "La date," 114.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

To begin with, the formal qualities and iconographic content of the casket's medallions merit further attention. The medallions show a number of animal and human figures as well as vegetal motifs. Six medallions (figs. 26-31) show various assortments of animals in combat (lion, griffon, salamander/dragon).<sup>97</sup> Two medallions (figs.32, 33) show a pair of dogs flanking a deer. Three medallions, including the medallion with the lock, (figs.34-36) show salamanders with interlocked necks or with interlocked tails. Four medallions (figs.37-40) picture a man cutting the neck or the head of a lion or salamander. There is a single crowned lion, a griffon, a double-headed eagle, a salamander, and a crane eating a fish. (Figs.41-45) Three medallions show either two lions (fig.46), two hawks (fig.47), or a lion and a hawk (fig.48) biting a stalk of vegetation, which Grésy calls a pinecone.<sup>98</sup> Two men battling lions (figs.49, 50), one with a spear rides a dog (fig.51), and one with a hawk and a crown rides on horseback (fig.52). A porter carries a slain deer (fig.53), a couple embraces (fig.54), and a pair of men fight (fig.55). One medallion shows a single rebec player while another shows a rebec player with a dancer. (Figs.56, 57) Flower designs appear on two medallions. (Figs.58, 59) Finally, the central blue enameled medallion (fig.60), which holds particular interest for Pinoteau, shows a seated king gesturing to a kneeling subject. The enameled medallions

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<sup>97</sup> The French literature on the *Casket of Saint Louis* calls the two legged, reptilian creature (sometimes winged) a dragon and Boehm and Pastoureau call the creatures basilisks or chimeras, but the same creature appears on a seal case Lillich wrote about wherein she called it a salamander. As I explain later in this chapter, I prefer the term salamander for its symbolic potential.

<sup>98</sup> Grésy, *Cassette de saint Louis*, 9.

The form appears in several formats. Grésy and Ganneron mention capitals at Saint Georges de Bocherville. The catalog *Ivoires médiévaux: Ve-XVe siècle* contains two objects with comparable motifs. A *Peigne liturgique: Samson déchirant le lion; feuillages*, dated to 870, shows birds biting fruit which the catalog entry describes as grapes. Another object, *Partie d'un manche de crosse, de tau ou de flabellum*, from 1180-1200, shows the vegetal form with no animals, and on this object the form is identified as a pinecone. Danielle Gaborit-Chopin, *Ivoires médiévaux: Ve-XVe siècle* (Paris: Éditions de la Réunion des musées nationaux, 2003), 148 and 232.

are located on the back of the casket, while the gilded medallions are located on the lid, front, and sides.

While Pinoteau questions whether all of these decorations were made for the same object, I believe that their formal and thematic qualities show an intentional unity.<sup>99</sup> Stylistically, the gilt medallions seem like a set made together and the medallions with blue enamel seem like a different set made together. The arrangement of the medallions on the lid (though not necessarily on the four sides) shows evidence of symmetry (fig.1-b), raising the possibility that the craftsperson planned the subject matter or at least considered the arrangement of the medallions. This presumes that each medallion is in its original location. Some subject matter appears in both kinds of medallions and, in these duplications, formal qualities indicate a stylistic link beyond generic subject matter. Three subjects recur among the gilt and enameled medallions (figs.37-40, and 51): the dogs flanking a stag, the man cutting the throat of the lion, and the man cutting the throat of the salamander. The close repetition of iconographies and themes across the two sets suggests that the medallions were struck at the same time by metalworkers utilizing shared models, or that one set of medallions served as the inspiration for another.

Many of these themes appear commonly on gothic objects.<sup>100</sup> But the relationship of medieval people, whether highly literate or not, to images was more complex. Therefore, to understand an object's meaning more fully one must consider the meaning of these images along with that of the heraldry.

### **Gendered Implications of the Casket**

The iconography of the medallions raises a number of questions about the

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<sup>99</sup> Pinoteau, "La date," 116-7.

<sup>100</sup> Meredith Parsons Lillich, "Gothic heraldry and name punning: secular iconography on a box of Limoges enamel," *Journal of Medieval History* 12 (1985): 239.

casket's original reception and use. I am especially interested in two aspects of the casket's reception: whether the casket should be "gendered" and, in a related vein, for what sort of environment it was appropriate. Pinoteau believes that the box belonged to Louis IX and suggested that it was given to him by other men—namely the contentious Norman barons—for political reasons. In contrast, I argue that a woman could have owned or commissioned the casket and that the meaning of its extra-heraldic decoration worked in tandem (not at odds) with its heraldic, feudal implications to create rich and complex meanings.

Pinoteau minimizes discussion of the 36 medallions, associating them generally with the thirteenth century's courtly veneration of classical antiquity. He believes that the scenes possess no unity and wonders whether the medallions were all made to be put together.<sup>101</sup> He situates the subject matters in romantic terms:

A work of uncontestable artistic interest, the *Casket of Saint Louis* is ornamented with medallions showing some real heraldic beauties, but also all the curious motifs which come from Roman art and even, as it were, from the beginning of time. [...] one scene must be an homage to a king and which seems absolutely important, for central in the back panel (lifting perhaps the "key" to the casket), a man and a woman approach each other, probably for a kiss, a man atop a horse, a falcon on his fist, but again a combat of men which resembles a duel... A tragic universe, but also a courtly one [...]<sup>102</sup>

He likens the scenes' subject matter to that of medieval romance literature of the period.<sup>103</sup> With the exception of the central medallion's subject matter, Pinoteau does not attend to how the iconographic content of the medallions might have conditioned the

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<sup>101</sup> Pinoteau, "La date," 116.

<sup>102</sup> "*Œuvre d'un incontestable intérêt artistique, la cassette de saint Louis est ornée de médaillons offrant de belles bêtes héraldiques, mais aussi de tous les curieux motifs qui viennent de l'art roman et même pour ainsi dire, du fond des âges. [...] une scène qui doit être un hommage au roi et qui paraît tout à fait importante, car central sur le panneau arrière (livrant eut-être la <<clé>> de la cassette), un homme et une femme se rapprochant, probablement pour un baiser, un homme à cheval, faucon au poing, mais encore un combat d'hommes qui ressemble à un duel... Univers tragique, mais aussi courtois[...]*" Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 116-7.

casket's function or reception. The "key" to the casket that Pinoteau cautiously suggests might be in the hands of the man paying homage on the central medallion underscores his desire to place the casket's function within a uniquely male political arena. (Fig.60) A close examination of the casket, however, reveals that no key is actually depicted.

Grésy and Ganneron, too, offer brief interpretations of the medallions' scenes. They interpret the scenes from religious and feudal perspectives.<sup>104</sup> They note that the medallion picturing a musician and dancer (fig.57) resembles iconography found in the capitals of Saint-Georges de Bocherville and also in enameled basins, one of which may have belonged to Blanche of Castile.<sup>105</sup> Grésy finds even Louis IX's love for his wife Marguerite of Provence in the flower designs.<sup>106</sup> Many scenes take on religious significance for Ganneron and Grésy: the lion and eagle in combat and biting a pinecone represent the "dispositions necessary to be admitted to the Eucharist feast" seen in twelfth century capitals; the man slitting the throat of the dragon symbolizes "Christian force" also seen in capitals; and a crowned man combatting a lion may represent King David.<sup>107</sup> Finally, Ganneron likens the crowned lion to Christ.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Grésy agrees with Pinoteau in that the scenes are not specific and are "reduced to popular ornamentation". He reminds the reader that the dragon, griffon, and ibis personified the devil and the vicious instincts, while the lion, eagle, panther, and stag represented Christian virtues. Although he also calls the stag a symbol of philosophical pride and doubt. He also asserts that these motifs were borrowed from contemporary bestiaries.

Grésy, *Cassette de saint Louis*, 5, 7-11; and Ganneron, *La cassette de Saint Louis*, 52.

<sup>105</sup> Pinoteau also cites an earlier precedent for some of the motifs: in endnote 22 he writes, "We find this aspect of struggle on the throne of Charles II the Bald left at Rome and become 'flesh of saint Peter' and on the enamels of thrones in gilded copper serving the Merovingian kings at Saint-Médard de Soissons, around 1150-1160, such that the painter Jean du Tillet conserved for us the memory". He cites his work *Quelques réflexions sur l'oeuvre de Jean de Tillet et la symbolique royale française*, in the Archives heraldiques suisses. Pinoteau, "La date," 128. For Grésy and Ganneron's identifications, see: Grésy, *Cassette de saint Louis*, 10-11; and Ganneron, *La cassette de Saint Louis*, 52.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>107</sup> Grésy, *Cassette de saint Louis*, 8-9; and Ganneron, *La cassette de Saint Louis*, 50.

<sup>108</sup> Ganneron 51.

Light-hearted but meaningful word-play may also appear in the casket's decorations. Both Grésy and Ganneron see a rebus in the marguerite flower in one of the medallions.<sup>109</sup> (Fig.58) The casket contains two medallions of flowers (one that Grésy identifies as a "flower of the sun" and Ganneron labels "an emblem of royalty" (fig.59) and the other a marguerite) which could refer to Louis IX and his wife Marguerite, whom the young king married in 1234.<sup>110</sup> Rebuses appear repeatedly in medieval imagery. The castles in the Castilian arms represent one particularly relevant example. Another example of heraldic rebus is found on a seal case in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. Here, Meredith Parsons Lillich has illustrated that a common type of imagery, the embracing couple, shown in an unusual way so that the slouching man "prays" to the woman, obliquely references the Prie family's *cri d'armes*, or battle cry.<sup>111</sup> The arms of Marguerite of Provence's father do not appear on the casket, although they could easily count among the missing shields. The medallions, if they do refer to Louis IX and Marguerite, need not imply her direct involvement with the casket, rather they could bring up associations of the events of 1234 for the medieval viewer.

The example of the marguerite flower demonstrates the multiplicity of meanings afforded by Gothic imagery. While the "marguerite" rebus seems likely, not every design need contain such specific meaning. Similarly, a marguerite rebus need not refer directly to Marguerite's patronage or ownership. Rather, such a meaning is one among many that a medieval viewer may have understood in the casket's decoration. Gerald Guest's interpretation of the Toledo-Morgan *Bible moralisée's* donor image, which is generally thought to depict Blanche of Castile and Louis IX, is helpful here. (Fig.62) Guest

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<sup>109</sup> Grésy, *Cassette de saint Louis*, 10; and Ganneron, *La cassette de Saint Louis*, 51.

<sup>110</sup> Grésy, *Cassette de saint Louis*, 10.

<sup>111</sup> Lillich, "Gothic heraldry and name punning," 241-2.

emphasizes that the “broader trend in imagemaking” in the Gothic period “is as much about structuration as about content.”<sup>112</sup> He describes Gothic images as “matrices” built upon exegetical practice which allow for and even demand “a multiplicity of readings,” especially where there are multiple focal-points which signal authority.<sup>113</sup>

The donor page of the Toledo-Morgan manuscript, with its clear arguments for scriptural authority made for each of the four figures, prompts more specific messages than the casket might. I do not propose to read into the *Casket of Saint Louis* the same level of specificity in meaning that Guest derives from studying the image’s multiple focal points of authority. But some elements of Guest’s model can benefit a reading of the casket. Guest’s analysis of the manuscript affirms the layering and unification of secular and sacred subject matter. It also points to both the use of this argument for Blanche’s “role as regent” and this kind of visual claim-making in objects associated with Blanche of Castile.<sup>114</sup>

Pinoteau’s emphasis on issues political and courtly and Grésy and Ganneron’s concentration on religious themes illustrate misguided modern tendencies to apply categories of “sacred” and “secular” to pre-modern thought. While Grésy and Ganneron tentatively acknowledge the mixture of both secular and sacred connotations, Pinoteau seems to accept only a secular interpretation of the medallions. The imagery, heraldry, and early history of the casket, however, show that it was appropriate for courtly and sacred environments. Many of the images featured on the *Casket of Saint Louis* recall similar subject painted in contemporary manuscripts for secular and sacred contexts. For

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<sup>112</sup> Gerald B. Guest, “Authorizing the Toledo moralized Bible: exegesis and the gothic matrix,” *Word & Image: A Journal of Verbal/Visual Enquiry* 18 (2002): 248.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Nolan, *Queens in stone and silver*, 130.

example, two legged dragons or salamanders appear as marginalia or entwined in initial letters in manuscripts made during Louis IX's reign. Hunting dogs populate a law text which Robert Branner associates with Louis IX.<sup>115</sup> The dogs accompany spear-bearing or flute-playing men, while stags, two-legged, winged dragons, lions, and a long-necked bird recall other subject matter found among the medallions. The common appearance of salamanders, lions, and birds in sacred and secular manuscripts demonstrates the ability of these figures to address concerns of both worlds.

Heraldry, a military device originally developed for the battlefield, also functions on both secular and sacred grounds in the *Casket of Saint Louis* and Gothic art more generally. Michael Michael identifies the function of armorial rolls, painted shields, or statues in churches to promote dynastic claims and feudal hierarchies through physical proximity to holy spaces or images. Michael even suggests that heraldry occupied a "quasi-legal" function through its display in highly privileged sacred spaces.<sup>116</sup> The early appropriation as reliquaries of the *Casket of Saint Louis*, the *Reliquary of Jean de Montmirail*, and the casket at Aix-la-Chapelle adds additional illustrations for Michael's argument that heraldry set in holy locations lent a sacred dimension to worldly authority. Kinship tombs, discussed below, offer another example of heraldry's use in sacred contexts. The suitability of the casket's heraldic decorations for religious use, as evidenced by its early re-appropriation as a reliquary, has been acknowledged.<sup>117</sup> I bring up these associations to emphasize the religious significance that the casket's heraldry would have evoked in its original, courtly context as well. The feudal relationships raised

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<sup>115</sup> Branner, *Manuscript painting in Paris*, 72-73.

<sup>116</sup> Michael A. Michael, "The Privilege of Proximity: Towards a Re-definition of the Function of Armorials," *Journal of Medieval History* 23 (1997): 56.

<sup>117</sup> O'Neill, *Enamels of Limoges*, 362.



by the heraldry would have been embedded in the spiritual perspective of Louis IX and Blanche of Castile.

A recent study of the *Psalter-Hours of Jeanne of Flanders* illustrates more clearly how imagery and heraldry can at once contain religious meanings and suggest romance literature and political ideals.<sup>118</sup> Furthermore, the study shows how imagery and heraldry work together to create these associations for female reception. The psalter merges the religious message of psalms and the political message of courtly romances, alluded to in marginal images and heraldry, and creates a new behavioral prescription for the female recipient. The fusion of religious text and romance literature, especially in light of heraldic references to important neighboring powers, instructed and influenced Jeanne of Flanders' identity within her local feudal network.<sup>119</sup> Neither heraldry nor imagery on their own achieve such a potent message about personal identity within a community. The manuscript establishes a corollary to the *Casket of Saint Louis* for how heraldry, secular imagery, and sacred context can suit and function in an artwork associated with a woman.

Although an argument for female reception can be made, the imagery should not necessarily be gendered uniquely female. Winged dragon forms like the enameled locking mechanism appear in manuscripts and objects linked to men. For example, the hilt of the sword used in Philippe Auguste's knighting ceremony takes the form of dragons styled comparably to the lock on the *Casket of Saint Louis* and the *Coffret of Blessed*

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<sup>118</sup> Richard A. Leson, "Heraldry and Identity in the Psalter-Hours of Jeanne of Flanders (Manchester, John Rylands Library, MS Lat. 117)," *Studies in Iconography* 32 (2011): 155-198.

<sup>119</sup> Leson, "Heraldry and Identity," 162.

*John of Montmirail*.<sup>120</sup> The winged dragon could represent a salamander. Salamanders are characterized by a wide variety of attributes, sometimes including hair and horns, but often represented as dragon-like creatures with wings.<sup>121</sup> Salamanders could hold associative meanings of chastity or of “great power and force” because they were thought to survive in fires, suggesting the equal cross-gender suitability for some decorative elements that have traditionally been associated with one or the other gender.<sup>122</sup> Salamanders and an embracing couple appear on the Boston seal case which Lillich argues belonged to a man. Thus, these motifs may appear on both men’s and women’s objects.

Finally, the courtly, festive ambience of the casket’s decorations, alluded to initially through the possible light-hearted name punning, draws certain strong correlations to Byzantine courtly traditions and banquet paraphernalia. In Byzantium the gift of dead game from the emperor carried great symbolic significance. In one account, the Emperor Romanos II gave a courtier three animals which the emperor had hunted himself.<sup>123</sup> They each symbolized various facets of the Emperor’s might against his enemies and they are described one after another in a series. The account of Romanos’ three gifts has a rhythm and a unity that can also be sensed in the *Casket of Saint Louis*. The repetition of explaining separately each animal’s symbolic meaning constructs a pattern with variations building on a single idea: the power of the Emperor over his enemies. Similarly, the lion, griffon, salamander, and other animals appear multiple

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<sup>120</sup> Hervé Pinoteau and Jean de Vaulchier, *La symbolique royale française, Ve-XVIIIe siècles* (La Roche-Rigault: PSR éditions, 2003), 320.

<sup>121</sup> Lillich, “Gothic heraldry and name punning,” 245.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid. 245, 247.

<sup>123</sup> Eunice Dauterman Maguire and Henry Maguire, *Other icons: art and power in Byzantine secular culture* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2007), 34.

times. Each takes a turn mounting and biting the neck of another. (Figs.26, 31) Then four humans slit the throats of these animals, establishing a hierarchy. These variations on a theme serve to generate and reaffirm an argument about Louis IX and Blanche of Castile's authority and power.

The repetition of forms produces specific meanings about the strength of the king as well. The crowned falconer (fig.52) may represent masculine and kingly ideals, and is repeated by the forms of Samson wrestling a lion (figs.49, 50) and a hunter with a dog (fig.51).<sup>124</sup> The forms are too similar to treat as unrelated. The body sways backward, the legs stretch out, the head tilts forward, and the position of at least one arm of each figure repeats in at least two other figures (the king's back-stretched arm perfectly matches the back arms of the two figures of Samson, while the front arm of the man with a dog grasps a leash in the same way that the two men grasp the lions' manes). Biblical queens and kings served as types for royal models in the windows of the Sainte-Chapelle and Chartres. Like the figure identified as King David, Samson fighting the lion probably makes a statement about the French king's strength, and in this case, it reinforces such a connection through the repetition of forms among the Samson figures, crowned falconer, and hunter.

Another formal parallel appears in the medallions depicting combat between two men (fig.55) and a rebec player with a castanet dancer (fig.57). Rather than fighting head-on as one sees in other medallions of the time period, in the *Casket of Saint Louis* one swordsman contorts his torso so that his feet point away from his enemy and improbably

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<sup>124</sup> I thank Richard Leson for the insight on falcons as representations of male aristocratic values.

he must plunge his sword into his enemy's heart while half turned away.<sup>125</sup> The likeness between both figures in these two scenes creates a strong sense that playful analogies are at work; perhaps the parallel scenes together create a message about the conquering powers of feminine charm. Certainly, the repetition and variation among repeated formal qualities in both sets take serious themes of aristocratic manhood into the ribald and even ridiculous, creating an impression of lively humor.

Images, resembling those seen in the *Casket of Saint Louis*, of hunting, hybrid creatures, and entertainers in Byzantium also appeared in banquet settings which, like the gift of hunted prey, served to reinforce the host's power and control over nature and his enemies.<sup>126</sup> Hybrid creatures symbolized the exotic and the novel, metaphorically linked to the host's ability to manipulate nature, a metaphor which was also reflected in the banquet food.<sup>127</sup> Masterful and unusual combinations of different foods created flavors not found in nature and, moreover, banquet preparers physically manipulated food so that birds might take the form of fish and fish the form of birds.<sup>128</sup> One can imagine a box, so richly decorated with provocative imagery and containing precious seasonings or other luxury goods associated with feasting, brought out in the midst of festivities and displayed to and discussed among guests.<sup>129</sup> These collections of hybrid creatures, banquet performers, and hunting scenes create a sense of marvel and gaiety, but also work to reinforce the power of the banquet hosts.

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<sup>125</sup> For examples of human combat scenes in enameled medallions, see O'Neill, *Enamels of Limoges*, 165.

<sup>126</sup> Maguire and Maguire, *Other icons*, 54.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 36 and 41.

<sup>129</sup> I thank Richard Leson for his insights on these subjects.

Earlier scholars resolutely assumed that the casket's discovery as a reliquary designates the role for which it was originally made. Pastoureau and Pinoteau associate the casket with documents and Dionnet speculates about whether the *Coffret of Blessed John of Montmirail* could have been made to contain documents as well.<sup>130</sup> Pinoteau also offers several political events that he thinks may inform a reading of the casket's meaning. De Vaivre argues that a later but analogous casket now in Aix-la-Chapelle was made on the occasion of a marriage.<sup>131</sup> Additionally, Lillich argues that the above-mentioned Boston seal case was a "personal trophy" that a minor noble received upon inheriting his family's lands.<sup>132</sup> On the *Casket of Saint Louis*, hunting and combat, combat and lovemaking, lovemaking and feudal loyalty all combine and overlap in delicate, complex ways through the repetition and variation of images and heraldry. While the events Pinoteau associates with the casket may play a part in its meaning, the casket does not function only in terms of the political, and, furthermore, this reading misses the point of what is at stake in the casket's associative meanings: the imagery and heraldry work together to elaborate on and define the identities and relationship of the commissioner and recipient of the casket to their wider social and political context.

### **Heraldry, Familial Identity, and Politics**

The social and political context may be better understood by exploring how early thirteenth century employment of heraldry exploited family ties to make political claims. Pinoteau highlights the family relations or supporters at court that can be drawn between

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<sup>130</sup> Pinoteau, "La date," 124; O'Neill, *Enamels of Limoges*, 362; and Dionnet, "La cassette reliquaire du bienheureux Jean de Montmirail," 95.

<sup>131</sup> Lillich, "Gothic heraldry and name punning," 243.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 248.

each of the coats of arms and Louis IX.<sup>133</sup> This characteristic suggests grounds on which to situate the casket in the context of kinship tombs which use heraldry to show family bonds. These tombs, because of their use of heraldry, provide a valuable avenue for interpreting objects like the *Casket of Saint Louis*.

Certain tombs, beginning in the Gothic period, expressed kinship between the deceased (pictured as a recumbent effigy) and ancestors, spouses, siblings, and offspring identified in heraldic escutcheons or inscriptions or heraldic clothing accompanying a statuette placed systematically on the sides of the tomb plinth.<sup>134</sup> The earliest of these kinship tombs recognized by scholars is the tomb of Thibaud III of Champagne, father of Thibaud IV who features on the *Casket of Saint Louis*.<sup>135</sup> In her book *Gothic Tombs of Kinship: In France, the Low Countries, and England*, Anne McGee Morganstern argues that the widowed Blanche of Navarre commissioned the tomb during the turbulent years of her regency when her son's inheritance rights were contested.<sup>136</sup> More notably, she argues that the tomb reflects not a specific event but rather a "political reality of family relations" and might be read as a claim for the succession of Thibaud IV as "part of the Divine Order" against opposing claims of his Champagne inheritance.<sup>137</sup>

The study of Thibaud III's tomb illustrates the value that women in embattled positions of power in the early thirteenth century might place on this kind of heraldic language and the ways in which they might employ heraldry to create a web of familial and power associations or even specific claims about their or their loved-one's position in

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<sup>133</sup> O'Neill, *Enamels of Limoges*, 360.

<sup>134</sup> Anne McGee Morganstern and John A. Goodall, *Gothic tombs of kinship in France, the low countries, and England* (University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 6.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 8, 10.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 13, 15.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 8, 18.

society. Blanche of Castile surely used heraldry to similar effect, when, as previously mentioned, she included her family's heraldry as well as her husband's in her grandchildren's tombs.<sup>138</sup> Like the *Psalter Hours of Jeanne of Flanders*, these instances show that women were fluent in the symbolic potential of heraldry and conversant with it in a wide variety of contexts, whether as commissioners or recipients of objects. In particular, these examples demonstrate the ability of women to use heraldry that belongs to those outside the immediate family to strengthen and define a recipient's identity. During or after a regency troubled by conflicts with several of those represented on the casket, the heraldry likely signifies Blanche and Louis' paradigm of ideal power structures. Everyone in this 'courtly universe' has his or her place; Louis is central to everything and his mother directly supports him, while their long-time supporters and recently secured allies gather honorably around the Capetian monarchy.

Heraldry on tombs and on smaller objects, though, works in certain significantly different ways. Heraldry on tombs tends to blend generations in a way that Pinoteau suppresses for the *Casket of Saint Louis* in favor of establishing a date for an object that could otherwise belong to a span of many years. Rather than questions of lineage demonstrated in vertical kinship bonds of tombs, the casket with horizontal kinship bonds appears to refer to some slightly more definite moment, though still perhaps not a particular event such as what one easily gravitates toward in studying these objects. The audience would also have been different for a casket than for a tomb, since family members or members of the religious community hosting the tomb used kinship tombs in prayer. The public and religious function of a tomb, in contrast with the private nature of a casket, ultimately suggests a different function for its heraldry.

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<sup>138</sup> Nolan, *Queens in stone and silver*, 138.

Thus the *Casket of Saint Louis* is not only a candidate for the patronage of a powerful woman on heraldic grounds, but its other decorations are likewise found in numerous analogous objects made either for a noblewoman or at her command. That the casket either belonged to Blanche of Castile or was created by her directive is demonstrated by multiple studies of meanings conveyed to female audiences through heraldry and the sort of courtly decorations found on the casket, decorations intended to foster familial interests. Imagery spanning the secular and sacred worlds, similar in content and style to that on the *Casket of Saint Louis*, appears in many documents created for women. Furthermore, heraldry, once the purview of warriors, quickly became a symbolic language which women readily used. Rather than associating the imagery with a mixture of popular medieval literature and the heraldry with a combination of several political events, one can read the decorations in a way that at once has less to do with concrete events and more to do with cultural conceptions. The decorations, in the heraldry as well as the medallions, constructs not just a 'courtly universe' but Blanche and Louis' courtly universe and their place within it. The casket, finally, should not be considered a document made for and by men with oblique reference to the ruling queen. Study of the casket should acknowledge Blanche of Castile's direct involvement in its creation.



#### **Chapter IV: A New Proposal for the Dating of the *Casket of Saint Louis***

In the previous chapters, I examined Pinoteau's methodology and some of the assumptions he makes which I believe lead to mistakes in dating and attribution. The use of traditional and more recent forms of heraldic analysis have confirmed both the probability of Blanche of Castile as either commissioner or recipient of the *Casket of Saint Louis* and the possibility of a date earlier than the summer of 1236. This chapter considers these new interpretations within the chronological context of Blanche of Castile's first regency (1226-1235) and the years that immediately followed. In particular, I explore possible connections between the casket and events that took place in or leading to 1229, 1234, and 1236.

One important consideration is whether or not a scholar must distinguish between the dates of the events that may be reflected in an object's collection of heraldry and the true date of the object's manufacture. Pinoteau's interpretation merges these two kinds of dates to a period of about a year, from the signing the complaint to the Pope (September, 1235) and the marriage of Henry III and Éléonore of Provence (January, 1236) to the relative political stability and casket's production in the summer of 1236. I believe that, while the casket may have been made within a year of the events that inspired its decorations, there are more than reasonable grounds to explore a longer period between the events and ideas evoked in the heraldry and the event that would have caused its creation. In this chapter, I differentiate between the two types of dates and suggest that the heraldry might recall a series of events from a span of several years while the decorations as a whole indicate its manufacture around a major celebration.

As a result of the Treaty of le Goulet between Philippe Auguste, King of France, and John I, King of England, Blanche of Castile married Prince Louis VIII in 1201. Even while her father-in-law ruled, Blanche appears to have played an active role in the politics of France, having loyally completed a diplomatic mission and accompanied her husband and father-in-law on military campaigns.<sup>139</sup> Historians attributed some events of the early-thirteenth century to varying degrees of autonomous activity on Blanche's part. Yet, even assuming the strictest sense of male-oriented political structures, her active political presence from early in her career as a French royal seems easy to grant.

In general, those arms gathered in the heraldic decorations on the casket tend to belong to one of two different ongoing conflicts that aggravated the first regency, during Louis' minority. Many shields belong to nobles who sided with the English against the French several times in the late-twelfth and thirteenth centuries. These nobles include Pierre Mauclerc, Henri II of Bar, Hugues IV of Burgundy, Henri of Dreux, Enguerrand III of Coucy, Adam II and Jean I of Beaumont-en-Gâtinais, and Hugues X of La Marche-Lusignan. Thibaud IV of Champagne for a short time in 1227 supported a coalition of Louis IX's opponents, but quickly switched sides and, in fact, needed the French crown's military support in the first half of the 1230s. The Countess Jeanne of Flanders became a supporter of Blanche and Louis after Blanche freed her husband, Ferrand of Portugal, who had been imprisoned in the Louvre by Philippe Auguste after the Battle of Bouvines (1214) until 1227 when Blanche of Castile released him. Raimond VII of Toulouse represents the conflict to the south that had threatened Louis IX's minority.

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<sup>139</sup> Philippe Delorme, *Blanche de Castille: épouse de Louis VIII, mère de Saint Louis* (Paris: Pygmalion, 2002), 48, 50.

Louis VIII died in November 1226, only three years after succeeding his father Philippe Auguste. The sudden death arose from illness contracted while on the Albigensian Crusade in the southern territories of France. Within the span of three weeks, Blanche of Castile had effected her son's coronation. Jim Bradbury writes that Louis IX's period of rule as a minor "was expected to be disastrous, a weak moment for the monarchy."<sup>140</sup> Set against this backdrop, Blanche of Castile's achievements over the next nine years stand out as particularly distinguished.

### **Scenario 1: 1229**

The first half of 1229 marks the earliest possible date for the creation of the casket. It is the latest possible year to identify Blanche of Navarre in the Navarre-Champagne arms because she died in May of that year. The French crown achieved two important political goals in this year: to draw down the conflict in the south of France which had intensified earlier that decade during Louis VIII's Albigensian Crusade and to arrive at a stronger, more lasting détente with the northern barons and the English crown. I begin with Louis IX's coronation and continue through the political events that led up to the treaties of 1229.

A number of important nobles who appear on the casket attended the young king's coronation in 1226, but certain key figures found on the casket were absent. The Duke and Count of Burgundy, the Counts of Dreux and Bar-le-Duc, the Countesses of Flanders and Champagne, the Sire of Coucy, and John of Brienne, King of Jerusalem at this time, came to the coronation along with others not represented on the casket.<sup>141</sup> The Count of Montfort could not leave his command in Languedoc to attend, though he was a

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<sup>140</sup> Bradbury, *The Capetians*, 202.

<sup>141</sup> Medieval documents disagree on whether Bar and Burgundy attended the coronation. Le Goff and Gollrad, *Saint Louis*, 55.

close ally of Louis VIII and Blanche of Castile.<sup>142</sup> Hugh of Lusignan and Peter of Dreux were among those who did not attend. Thibaud IV, who had earlier that year abandoned Louis VIII during the Albeginsian Crusade, was not invited; his mother Blanche of Navarre was invited in his stead.<sup>143</sup> Jacques Le Goff suggests that the absence of certain nobles at the coronation may not stem from political reasons, as other historians have implied, but rather from the “unusually rushed” ceremony, though he concedes that some of these figures had political motives to avoid coming to the coronation.<sup>144</sup>

In the following months, early in 1227, Blanche of Castile and her advisors began to make political gestures toward those in a position to undermine Louis IX’s rule, but these were not enough to secure Louis’ claim to the throne.<sup>145</sup> That summer a coalition of barons, including Philippe Hurepel and Pierre Mauclerc, attempted to kidnap the young Louis IX. Yet on account of the support of the common people of Paris, the recently released Ferrand of Flanders, and Thibaud IV (with whom Blanche had recently reconciled) their efforts failed.<sup>146</sup> After that attempt, the northern barons demonstrated no more military aggression toward the French crown until October 1229, when Pierre Mauclerc sided again with the English.<sup>147</sup>

In the spring of 1229, the French royal government signed treaties with the southern nobility who were their foes in the Albeginsian conflict. Notably, Raimond VII

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<sup>142</sup> Jean Richard and S. D. Lloyd, *Saint Louis: Crusader King of France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 13.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>144</sup> Le Goff and Gollrad, *Saint Louis*, 57.

<sup>145</sup> For example, she gave Philippe Heurepel (Louis VIII’s younger half-brother whose birth had only recently been legitimated by the Pope) three castles that Louis VIII had withheld. Furthermore, she released Ferrand of Flanders, husband of Jeanne of Flanders, who had been imprisoned for his treachery at Bouvines and whom Louis VIII had agreed to release a year earlier. And finally, a complicated set of arranged marriages between royal children and northern French nobles was effected in order to draw the aristocracy (who often sided with the English) farther into the sphere of French political power. *Ibid.*, 58-9.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, 60-1.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

of Toulouse, who appears on the casket, was finally brought into the royal sphere of influence through the Treaty of Meaux-Paris. The treaty was signed on April 11, 1229 at Meaux, a town within Thibaud IV's holdings.<sup>148</sup> The next month Blanche of Navarre, Thibaud IV's mother, died. She had been an influential advisor to Thibaud even in her retirement.<sup>149</sup> It is possible she played some role in the events leading up to the summer of 1229.

If Thibaud IV is not represented with two different versions of heraldry then one of the shields must represent his mother, Blanche of Navarre. The Navarre-Champagne arms adds another layer of significance to the meanings of this box. The French monarchy was very important to Blanche of Navarre in securing her son's inheritance. She wrote repeatedly to Philippe Auguste entreating the king to allow Thibaud IV to do homage, despite his age. Philippe Auguste, after her relentless requests, decided in 1214 that Thibaud IV, then 13 years old, could render homage even though French law at that time required the majority age of 21 for this act.<sup>150</sup> More importantly, Thibaud IV's quick defection from the rebellious barons to Blanche and Louis in the 1220s may be a policy that Blanche of Navarre directed for her son.<sup>151</sup> Her part in the negotiations, which took place in Champagne, would be recognized in the decorations if the casket was created for festivities coinciding with the negotiations.

### **Scenario 2: 1234**

Following 1229, a series of conflicts caused a renewed period of diplomatic work and military campaigns for Blanche of Castile and Louis IX, although none were as

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<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>149</sup> Richard and Lloyd, *Saint Louis: Crusader King of France*, 43.

<sup>150</sup> Theodore Evergates, *Aristocratic women in medieval France* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 83.

<sup>151</sup> Richard and Lloyd, *Saint Louis: Crusader King of France*, 43.

dangerous for the French monarchy as during the first half of the regency (1226-1229). This period of the regency culminates in Louis IX's marriage to Marguerite of Provence in the summer of 1234 and a moment of relative peace among the casket's constituents. In 1234, Louis IX was only one year less than the age of majority (according to French custom, 21 years old). As Louis IX achieved these rites of passage, doubts of succession and of his mother's governing capabilities ebbed and Blanche would certainly have felt an intense pride in her own achievements and those of her son and her government. The festivities around the marriage would have borne greater political significance because of the success of the regency.

In this period of Louis' reign (1229-1234), Le Goff describes several events which, while peaceful, underscored the growing stability of Louis' claim to the throne.<sup>152</sup> First, the assembly of Melun in December 1230, which confirmed and extended earlier policies concerning Jewish populations, demonstrate Louis' legal authority over, as Le Goff emphasizes, "*the entire kingdom* and not only [...] the royal domain. [emphasis Le Goff's]"<sup>153</sup> The passing of several important advisors to Blanche and Louis, who had served in Philippe Auguste and Louis VIII's administration, also shed light on the growing independence of Blanche and, especially, Louis IX's leadership.<sup>154</sup> And the conflict between Louis and Paris' clergy shows Louis' role in government gaining recognition and acceptance by the Pope.<sup>155</sup>

An important truce was established between Louis IX and several of the rebellious northern barons in 1231. Previously in 1228, Enguerrand of Coucy, Philippe

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<sup>152</sup> Le Goff and Gollrad, *Saint Louis*, 67.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 68.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 73.

Hurepel, and others began a campaign of words against Blanche of Castile, accusing her of misappropriating funds to benefit her native Castile and of being mistress to both a Roman pontifical legate and Thibaud IV.<sup>156</sup> These stories and songs were a precursor to conflict that would reignite in 1230. At the same time, Pierre Mauclerc of Dreux refused to heed Blanche's summons in 1229 after he had paid homage to England.<sup>157</sup> More political maneuverings followed in late 1229 with the invasion of Champagne by the Duke of Burgundy, Philippe Hurepel, the Coucy, and the Dreux, among others, an undertaking ostensibly in defense of Alix of Cyprus' decades-old claims to the territory.<sup>158</sup> The hostilities toward Champagne were broken into two parts when Blanche summoned the barons to support her campaign against Pierre Mauclerc (although only Thibaud brought a large contingent of knights).<sup>159</sup> Blanche was obliged to march with her army into Brittany to force a truce between Champagne and its aggressors in June 1231.<sup>160</sup> Negotiations, involving both Louis IX and Blanche of Castile, resulted in a temporary peace.<sup>161</sup> The conflict was finally settled permanently in 1234 when Thibaud IV agreed to pay an enormous sum to Alix in exchange for her renunciation of her claims to Champagne.<sup>162</sup>

The marriage of Louis IX to Marguerite of Provence in the summer of 1234 offers a yet more favorable scenario, in that it affords a most likely event for theasket's creation. With such strong, recently achieved progress toward the Capetians' political ideal vision of their domain, the heraldry carries more poignant force. Furthermore, the

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<sup>156</sup> Ibid., 61-2.

<sup>157</sup> Richard and Lloyd, *Saint Louis: Crusader King of France*, 17.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 44-5.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid., 46.

religious and courtly imagery carries with it more specific connotations related to a marriage banquet, an occasion that would have had heightened associations with both religious and amorous messaging. The combination of heraldry and medallion imagery on the occasion of Louis' wedding allows an especially unified reading of the casket as a whole object. The casket's decorations reflect John Lowden's reading of folio 8 in the Toledo-Morgan *Bible moralisée* as a possible gift given by Blanche to Louis IX for his marriage.<sup>163</sup> Rebellious barons and long-time supporters are now arranged in symmetry and order around the evenly, ubiquitously distributed heraldry of the reigning king and queen-mother of France. Likewise, repetition, variation, and symmetry in the medallions reinforce the ordered world that Blanche's regency has produced.

I prefer the year 1234 for the creation of this casket as a date when Blanche and Louis had treaties with or the allegiance of each of the individuals represented on the casket. Multiple truces with the English, Raimond VII of Toulouse, and the northern nobility were in effect in 1234. Louis IX was married in this year, a period of copious gift-giving, and may have attained majority in 1234 or 1235.<sup>164</sup> While Blanche still exerted strong political influence in 1234, and would continue to appear in negotiations, the transition of authority from Blanche to Louis had certainly begun. Perhaps this casket marks a statement of gratitude from son to mother for having stabilized his kingdom and thwarted the attempts to undermine his claim to the throne. Or perhaps it signifies Blanche's perspective of the culmination of her regency, communicated in a gift to her son during this transition. In much the same way as tombs, the casket uses heraldry to

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<sup>163</sup> John Lowden, *The Making of the Bibles Moralisées. 1, 1*, (University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State Univ. Pr, 2000), 132.

<sup>164</sup> Le Goff and Gollrad, *Saint Louis*, 83.



evoke family ties and allegiances and emphasizes Blanche of Castile's importance amid these relationships.

### Scenario 3: 1236

The events that Pinoteau cites as inspiration for the heraldic decoration of the casket also present valid possibilities and should not be entirely dismissed. Pinoteau's date of the summer of 1236 remains a reasonable one for consideration. This date, which probably falls after the transition of power from Blanche to Louis ended, does not preclude the possibility of Blanche's patronage, since her major acts of patronage continued after the end of her first regency.<sup>165</sup> Pinoteau refers to the conflict between Louis IX and French bishops and the pope, in which Louis compelled the nobility of his domain to support him in a letter to the pope, an episode which indicates yet again the growing stability of Capetian power during this time. This event could certainly be reflected in the decorations. Pinoteau raises the possibility of Thibaud's conflict with Alix of Cyprus and the challenges posed to Louis by the powerful northern nobles as a guiding factor in the creation of the casket. Yet, for both of these episodes, major agreements seem to have been reached by 1234, although several of the northern territories would remain a source of irritation for Louis IX for several decades.

He highlights several political events which have already been mentioned as well as the tombs of members of the Dreux and Britton families.<sup>166</sup> He then associates the casket with the northern barons, imagining it as a gift from these barons to Louis IX as a testament to their loyalty.<sup>167</sup> Pinoteau does not cite a specific act or event for this gift-giving occasion. These comments appear to be cursory in nature and in several places he

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<sup>165</sup> Nolan, *Queens in stone and silver*, 124.

<sup>166</sup> Pinoteau, "La date," 121.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, 124.

follows a line of thought only to suggest that it is a direction that merits further study (for example, regarding the kinship tombs and other objects decorated with heraldry). I have attempted in this thesis to explore more fully much of the evidence he introduces, and believe that a gift, possibly associated with an act of homage, from the Northern nobility to Louis IX seems unlikely. The emphasis on Castile and France, while representing each of the other individuals once (or at most twice), when the nobles included on the casket have no single alliance, seems not to support this idea of northern homage. Furthermore, the imagery in the medallions favors a festive environment and a significant social occasion. The date of 1236 is still a possibility, since a number of occasions for celebration and banqueting could have occurred in the summer of this year. The marriage between Marguerite of Provence's younger sister Éléonore and Henry III, which Pinoteau notes as a reason for England's heraldry on the casket, might have prompted celebrations as Éléonore left France for her new home. In this case, the connection between the northern French nobility and the King of England could serve as another explanation for the large amount of northern nobility.

## Conclusion

As the first lengthy study in English of the *Casket of Saint Louis*, this thesis endeavors to highlight an important segment of French scholarship concerning Gothic heraldry. It also proposes new interpretations of this casket's decorative program. I propose that consideration of Blanche of Castile's political and aesthetic influence establishes a clearer framework of analysis for the casket. I have argued that recent studies on female patronage and reception of objects with heraldry show the fluency and efficacy with which women interact with heraldry.

While there is room to dispute Pinoteau's method of traditional heraldic analysis, I agree with its use for this object. Even within his method, however, Blanche of Castile's regency supplies a more secure period of dating. The year 1234 gives confidence to the attribution of Richard of Harcourt, who died between 1235 and 1242, and allows for the Dreux arms to be linked to Robert III of Dreux, who died in 1234. Furthermore, Blanche of Navarre may have used the arms of Navarre-Champagne, a consideration which makes 1229, an important year for the Capetians, another possible date.

The casket's medallions and decorative program as a whole offer an equally important avenue of study. Understood within recent scholarship on thirteenth-century heraldry usage, the casket no longer belongs only in secular or sacred contexts; neither does it belong necessarily to one gender. The heraldry and medallions together create a powerful argument for Capetian authority, which involves the support of powerful nobles symbolized in their heraldry and the conquest of inferiors in imagery. The argument is made in religious, political, and even humorous ways. Associating the creation of the box with a grand banquet further illuminates the casket's original function.

The year 1234, during the wedding festivities of Louis IX and Marguerite of Provence, stands foremost as a date for the creation of the *Casket of Saint Louis*. It provides an appropriate event for the casket's creation, within a period when Blanche of Castile would be most likely to commission or receive such an object of luxury. Situated in this context, the object takes on potent associations with the political achievements of Blanche's regency and Louis marriage. The *Casket of Saint Louis* offers medievalists insights into the political and social relationships of the early thirteenth century.

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## APPENDIX: FIGURES

Image omitted because of ProQuest copyright regulations.

Fig. 1a: *The Casket of Saint Louis, front*, 1234-7. Multimedia coffer.

Image omitted because of ProQuest copyright regulations.

Fig. 1b: *The Casket of Saint Louis, top*, 1234-7. Multimedia coffer.

Image omitted because of ProQuest copyright regulations.

Fig. 1c: *The Casket of Saint Louis, back*, 1234-7. Multimedia coffer.

Image omitted because of ProQuest copyright regulations.

Fig. 1d: *The Casket of Saint Louis, left side*, 1234-7. Multimedia coffer.

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Fig. 1e: *The Casket of Saint Louis, right side*, 1234-7. Multimedia coffer.

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Fig. 2: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of France, large*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel.

Image omitted because of ProQuest copyright regulations.

Fig. 3: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of France, small*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel.

Image omitted because of ProQuest copyright regulations.

Fig. 4a: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of Castile, large*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel.

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Fig. 4b: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of Castile, small*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel.

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Fig. 5a: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of Dreux-Brittany, large*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel.

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Fig. 5b: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of Dreux-Brittany, small*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel.

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Fig. 6a: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of Bar, large*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel.

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Fig. 6b: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of Bar, small*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel.

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Fig. 7: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of Jerusalem*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel.

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Fig. 8: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of England*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel.

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Fig. 9: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of Navarre-Champagne*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel.

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Fig. 10: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of Burgundy*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel.

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Fig. 11: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of Dreux*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel.

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Fig. 12: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of a Cadet Branch of Courtenay*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel.

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Fig. 13: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of Champagne*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel.

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Fig. 14: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of Flanders*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel.

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Fig. 15: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of Toulouse*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel.

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Fig. 16: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of La Marche Lusignan*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel.

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Fig. 17: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of Montfort-l'Amaury*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel.

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Fig. 18: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of Montmorency*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel.

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Fig. 19: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of Coucy*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel.

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Fig. 20: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of Beaumont-en-Gâtinais*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel.

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Fig. 21: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of a Cadet Branch of Beaumont-en-Gâtinais, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel.*

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Fig. 22: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of Roye, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel.*

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Fig. 23: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of Harcourt, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel.*

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Fig. 24: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of Malet, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel.*

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Fig. 25: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Arms of Unknown Family, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel.*

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Fig. 26: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Winged Salamander Biting Lion*, 1234-7. Gilt copper.

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Fig. 27: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Winged Salamander Mirroring Lion*, 1234-7. Gilt copper.

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Fig. 28: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Griffon Biting Lion*, 1234-7. Gilt copper.

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Fig. 29: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Lion on Back of Salamander*, 1234-7. Gilt copper.

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Fig. 30: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Winged Salamander Biting Salamander*, 1234-7. Gilt copper.

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Fig. 31: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Salamander Biting Lion*, 1234-7. Gilt copper.

Image omitted because of ProQuest copyright regulations.

Fig. 32: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Dogs Flanking Stag, Enameled*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel.

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Fig. 33: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Dogs Flanking Stag*, 1234-7. Gilt copper.

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Fig. 34: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Lock with Two Salamanders with Interlocked Necks*, 1234-7. Gilt copper.

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Fig. 35: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Two Salamanders with Interlocked Necks*, 1234-7. Gilt copper.

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Fig. 36: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Two Salamanders with Interlocked Tails*, 1234-7. Gilt copper.

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Fig. 37: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Man Cleaving Head of Lion, Enameled*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel.

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Fig. 38: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Man Cleaving Head of Lion*, 1234-7. Gilt copper.

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Fig. 39: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Man Cleaving Head of Salamander, Enameled*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel.

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Fig. 40: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Man Cleaving Head of Salamander*, 1234-7. Gilt copper.

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Fig. 41: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Crowned Lion*, 1234-7. Gilt copper.

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Fig. 42: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Double-Headed Eagle*, 1234-7. Gilt copper.



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Fig. 43: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Bird Eating Fish, Enameled*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel.

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Fig. 44: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Winged Salamander*, 1234-7. Gilt copper.

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Fig. 45: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Griffon*, 1234-7. Gilt copper.

Image omitted because of ProQuest copyright regulations.

Fig. 46: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Two Lions Biting Vegetation*, 1234-7. Gilt copper.

Image omitted because of ProQuest copyright regulations.

Fig. 47: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Two Hawks Biting Vegetation*, 1234-7. Gilt copper.

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Fig. 48: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Lion and Hawk Biting Vegetation*, 1234-7. Gilt copper.

Image omitted because of ProQuest copyright regulations.

Fig. 49: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Samson Wrestling Lion, Enameled*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel.

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Fig. 50: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Samson Wrestling Lion*, 1234-7. Gilt copper.

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Fig. 51: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Man with Dog, Enameled*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel.

Image omitted because of ProQuest copyright regulations.

Fig. 52: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Crowned Falconer on Horseback, Enameled*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel.

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Fig. 53: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Porter Carrying a Stag*, 1234-7. Gilt copper.

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Fig. 54: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Couple Embracing, Enameled*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel.

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Fig. 55: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Two Men in Combat, Enameled*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel.

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Fig. 56: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Musician*, 1234-7. Gilt copper.

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Fig. 57: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Musician with Dancer, Enameled*, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel.

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Fig. 58: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Marguerite Flower*, 1234-7. Gilt copper.

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Fig. 59: *The Casket of Saint Louis, Sun Flower, 1234-7. Gilt copper.*

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Fig. 60: *The Casket of Saint Louis, King Giving Blessing, Enameled, 1234-7. Gilt copper and enamel.*



Fig. 61: Engraving of *Thibaud IV's Seal and Counter-Seal, after 1234.*

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Fig. 62: *Bible Moralisée (Toledo) ms. 240: fol. 8r: Blanche of Castile: Louis IX of*

*France, author dictating to a scribe, ca. 1235.*

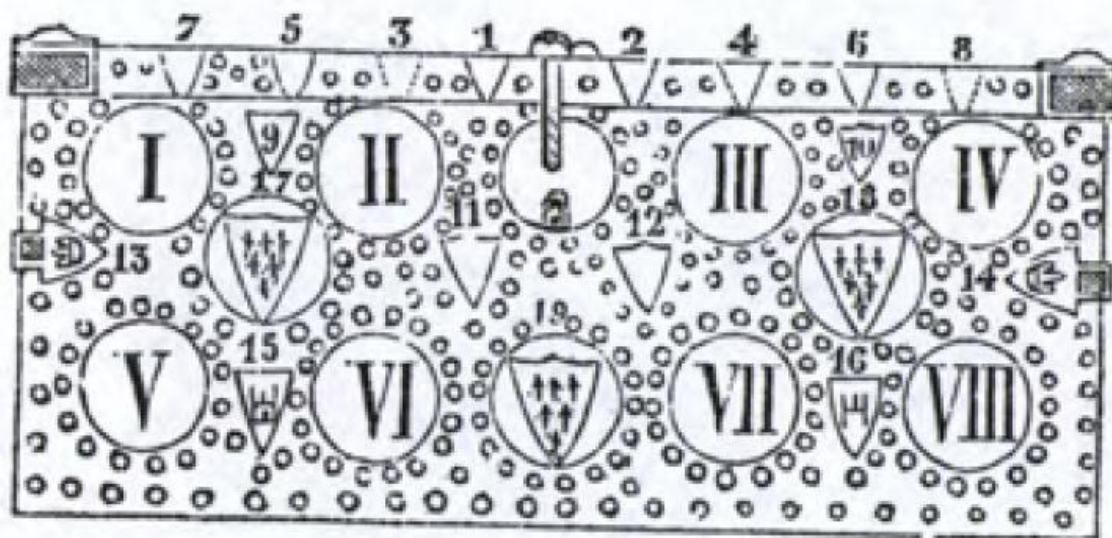


Fig. 63a: *Diagram of Decorations on the Casket of Saint Louis, front.* 1854.

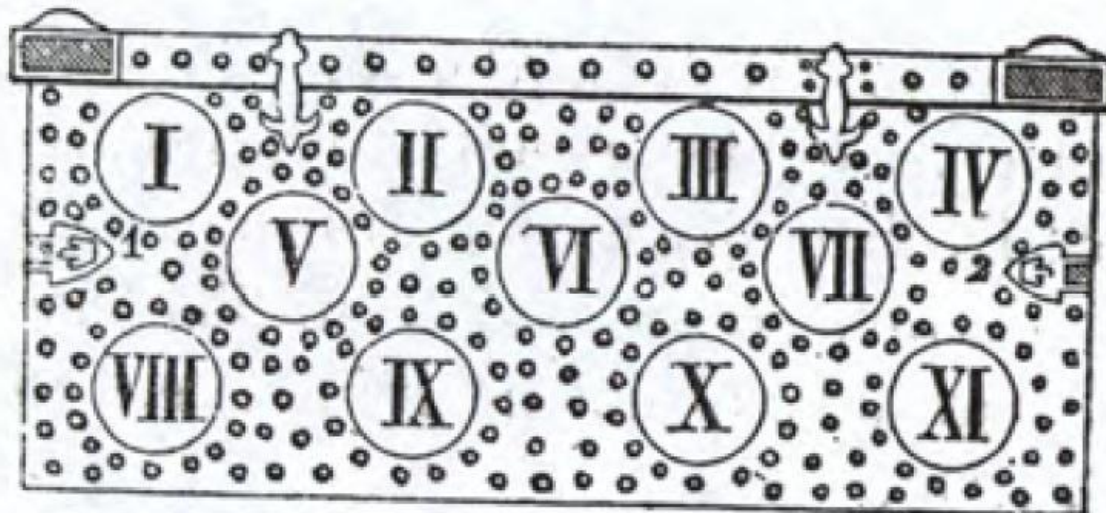


Fig. 63b: *Diagram of Decorations on the Casket of Saint Louis, back.* 1854.



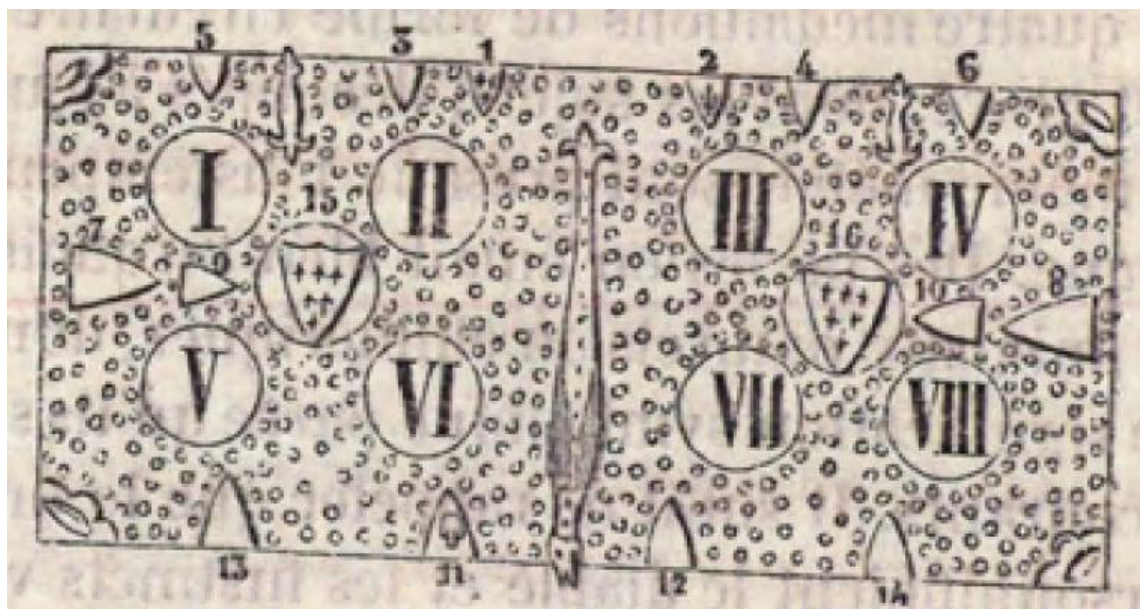


Fig. 63c: *Diagram of Decorations on the Casket of Saint Louis, top.* 1854.

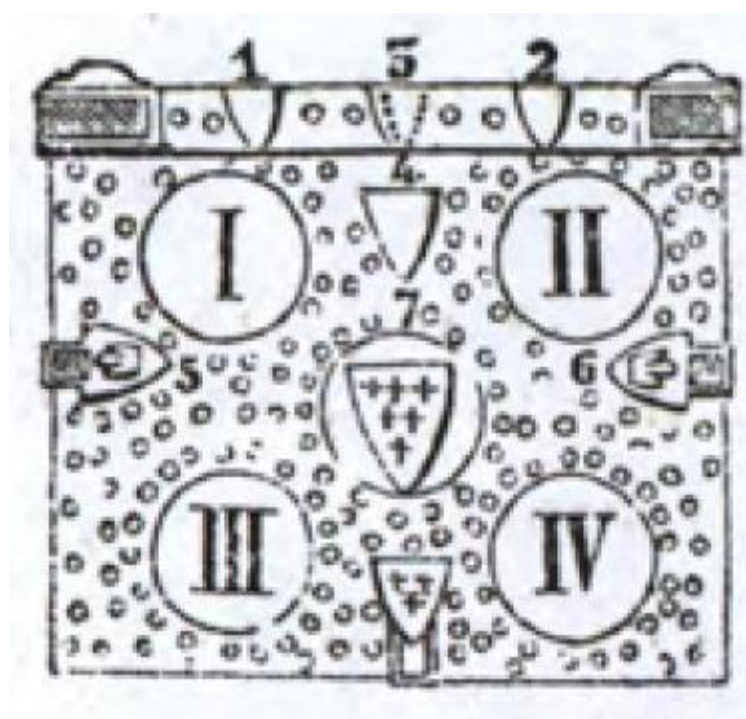


Fig. 63d: *Diagram of Decorations on the Casket of Saint Louis, left side.* 1854.

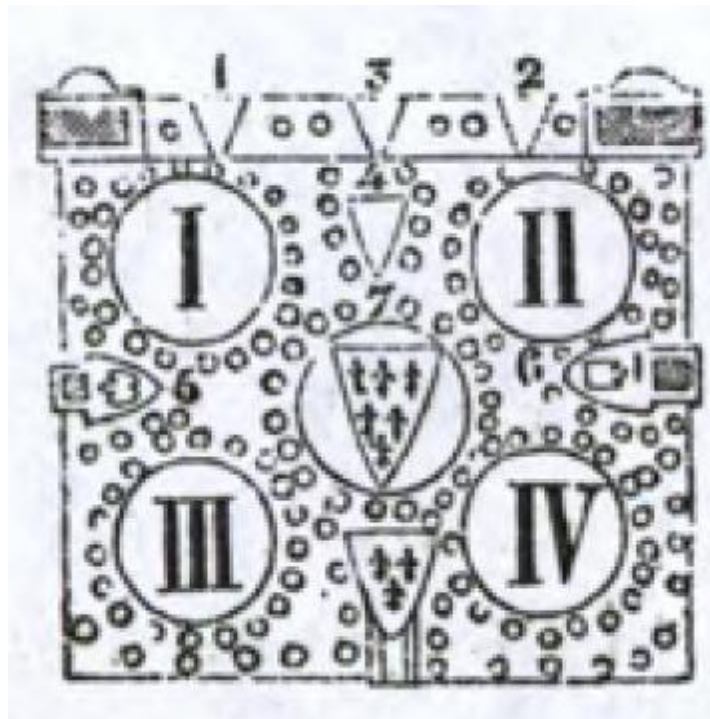


Fig. 63e: *Diagram of Decorations on the Casket of Saint Louis, right side.* 1854.

Image omitted because of ProQuest copyright regulations.

Fig. 64: *Sainte-Chapelle: interior view of a stained glass window; detail of two figures with a chalice, ca. 1248.* Stained glass and paint.

Image omitted because of ProQuest copyright regulations.

Fig. 65: *Tombs of Blanche and Jean of France. ca. 1248-1252.* Copper and enamelwork.

Image omitted because of ProQuest copyright regulations.

Fig. 66: *Wax Seal and Counter-Seal Impressions of Dervorguilla de Bailliol, 1282.*