The objective of this chapter is to introduce several examples of the sculptural Entombment of Christ and to consider them in light of the impulse towards performative piety. The latter term refers to the active quality of pathos engendered by these sculptural *tableaux vivants* that triggers a sympathetic response in the worshiper, at times cerebral, and at other times visceral. Christopher Tilley has demonstrated how we need material objects to negotiate our perceptions of the world; in other words, all humans think metaphorically as we objectify culture in order to fully comprehend it.\(^1\) Linguistic metaphors unfold in time and sequence, whereas solid metaphors are spatial.\(^2\) We respond to the Entombment precisely because its power resides in a non-linguistic, non-discursive level of consciousness. In this sense, the sculpted Entombment functions as a solid metaphor for the Holy Sepulcher: it foregrounds the tomb as the most poignant relic of the death of Christ. And since vision is not passive, the worshiper reconstructs this scene from the Passion from the details of the image before him.\(^3\) The power of the Entombment is vividly inscribed in the heart and mind of the worshiper, and thus it transpires not in the historical past, but in the eternal present.

**Entombment of Notre-Dame-des-Fontenilles, Tonnerre**

One of the most well known Entombments in Burgundy is found in the Hospital of Notre-Dame-des-Fontenilles at Tonnerre (fig. 7).\(^4\) The two master

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3. Sara Lipton, “‘The Sweet Lean of his Head’: Writing about Looking at the Crucifix in the High Middle Ages,” *Speculum* 80/4 (2005), 1172–1208, esp. 1200.
4. The hospital was founded by Louis IX’s sister-in-law, Margaret of Burgundy, Queen of Jerusalem and Sicily and Countess of Tonnerre, in 1293; Forsyth, *The Entombment*, 65; the sculpture of the Entombment is well documented and these records are published by Bernard Prost, “Le Saint Sépulcre de l’hôpital de Tonnerre,” *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 1, 3rd per. (1893), 492–501. See Karsallah, *Les Mises au tombeau*, 143–144 for the history of the documentation of this Entombment. The Entombment was restored by Eugenie Thierry
sculptors, Jean Michel and Georges de la Sonnette, in the company of their workshop, were commissioned by Lancelot de Buronfosse to carve a “holy sepulcher, which is placed and set in a chapel of our said church ... which holy sepulcher is and will be for the time to come a thing of very great profit and great revenue for our said church, and which has cost a great sum of money to the said Lancelot.” The Entombment, created 1453–1454, is enacted by eight figures with Joseph of Arimathea at the head of Christ and Nicodemus at his feet. There was formerly a guard installed in a niche at the entrance to the chapel representing a Saracen, one of the guards sent by Pilate to watch the

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5 Forsyth, The Entombment, 65; the architects, “Jehan Michiel and Gorge de la Sonnecte” each had a valet and it is presumed from the large allowances of cheese and wine granted by the hospital that they were accompanied by a full complement of workers.