

Título / Title: Wooden sculpture in Romanesque Iberian Peninsula: a wide and attractive panorama. Lines of research / Escultura de madeira na Península Ibérica românica: um panorama vasto e atrativo. Linhas de investigação

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Abstract

Romanesque polychromed wooden imagery in the Iberian Peninsula (12th-13th centuries) stands both as a valuable and complex heritage. Apart from some general lines that determine compositional and symbolic features, the local context, the liturgy, the artists or workshops and the influence of some prestigious models have created a highly attractive scenario. It is important to note that some statues that are preserved separately today may well be, from a broader perspective, part of larger ensembles of liturgical furniture. At the same time, the number of studies on technical and material aspects involving interdisciplinary work has increased. One of the questions that concern scholars the most is the spread of typology and stylistic trends. The influence of metal and precious metal works on tempered polychromed must be assessed. Other times, the spread of modalities confined to an area might well obey cult and pilgrimage reasons. Not all works, however, strictly follow one modality or another. Another hypothesis deals with the importation of some objects.

Keywords: Sculpture, Wood, Polychromy, Iberian Peninsula, Workshops.

Resumo

A imagística românica de madeira policromada na Península Ibérica (séculos XII-XIII) representa uma herança que tem tanto de valioso como de complexo. Exceptuando algumas linhas gerais que determinam características composicionais e simbólicas, o contexto local, a liturgia, os artistas ou as oficinas e a influência de certos modelos prestigiados criaram um cenário altamente atrativo. É importante notar que algumas das estátuas que se encontram preservadas em separado actualmente podem muito bem fazer, numa perspectiva mais vasta, parte de conjuntos maiores de mobiliário litúrgico. Ao mesmo tempo, o número de estudos sobre aspectos técnicos e materiais que envolvem trabalho interdisciplinar tem aumentado. Uma das questões que mais preocupa os académicos é a disseminação das tendências tipológicas e estilísticas. A influência de trabalhos com metal e metais preciosos na policromia temperada deve ser

avaliada. Outras vezes, a disseminação de modalidades confinadas a uma área poderá perfeitamente obedecer a motivos de culto e peregrinação. Porém, nem todos os trabalhos seguem estritamente uma modalidade ou outra. Outra hipótese prende-se com a importação de alguns objectos.

Palavras-chave: Escultura, Madeira, Policromia, Península Ibérica, Oficinas.



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In the Romanesque period, polychrome wood sculpture in the Hispanic kingdoms and counties presents an extraordinary variety of types and styles. This is reflected in the examples that are still worshipped in their original place, and in the huge number of works conserved in museums and private collections whose provenance is not always known. Thus, images of the Virgin Mary, different types of Crucifixes, whole or fragmentary groups of the Crucifixion or the Descent from the Cross, images of saints or of Christ enthroned and other kinds of statuettes, make up a rich and, at the same time, complex panorama. We must not forget, moreover, that production in wood covered other types of objects, items of furniture, some associated with the altar (frontals, edicules or *retrotabula*, baldachins) and the presbytery as a whole (seats, lecterns, and so on), objects that could also be worked in other materials (stone) or covered with metal.

Classifying and contextualizing them is made difficult by various factors, largely depending on the long history of the objects that have survived. Firstly, it is virtually impossible to reconstruct their original site, associated with an architectural and liturgical context that we can only evoke hypothetically through indirect sources or by comparison with other examples (fig. 1). Secondly, it is difficult to get an idea of the original “Romanesque” appearance of the works, given the successive transformations that they have logically undergone over the centuries, due to renovations, adaptations or restorations resulting from their continued use. We are paradoxically fortunate that it is precisely an object’s rich and eventful history that has enabled us to contemplate it today, still a challenge for contemporary scholars. Finally, one has to bear in mind the

scarcity of records to supply us with evidence for dating and classification. We have very little information regarding their dating, authorship and patronage, although there are some significant points of reference.



Fig. 1 – *Crucifix of Alquézar* (Aragon), second half of the 12th century, polychromed wood, Colegiata de Santa María de Alquézar. (© Jordi Camps)

Previously, too, we want to delimit chronologically the works and the groups that we will deal with within the margins that place us during the 12th century and, approximately, the first half of the 13th century, including those that fit within the art of 1200. As usual, this may be a conventionalism, but we stand in line with what generally considers historiography on the subject in relation to the Hispanic world, although in other European areas the beginning of Gothic art had place in the middle of the 12th century.

Overview

Despite various general and monographic studies, interest in wood sculpture was slow to develop if we compare it to the number of chapters devoted to architecture, monumental sculpture, painting or even the metal arts. Although typological or compositional comparison with the exceptional ivory carvings of León has been a recurring feature, it was not until Arthur Kingsley Porter's great book, published in 1928, that the speciality we are considering here was significantly tackled¹. Despite that, important studies like those by Camps Cazorla² or Gómez-Moreno³, from the 1930s, barely touch on it or ignore it altogether, although they do not overlook ivory carving.

Eventually, the first large-scale effort of systematization appeared with the great work by Josep Gudiol i Ricart in the volume of the collection *Ars Hispaniae* dedicated to painting and statues, ivories included, which appeared in 1950⁴. This was the first attempt at classification by regions, schools or workshops and types in the Hispanic context, which would be revised in the corrected edition of the volume in 1980, which we should regard as a second book on the subject⁵. It is still an unavoidable historiographical point of reference in any study or research work to do with wood sculpture. Later, and at the same time as specific studies of works, types and territorial contexts intensified, one must bear in mind how the cataloguing of the works in museums, including the American ones, made it possible to reconfigure a wide panorama. These fruits were gathered in the general studies by authors such as Joaquín Yarza or Isidro G. Bango, among others⁶. Despite that, other works heavily characterized by the importance of black and white photography do not grant

¹ PORTER, Arthur K. – *Spanish Romanesque Sculpture*. Florence: Pantheon; Paris: The Pegasus Press, 1928.

² CAMPS CAZORLA, Emilio – *El arte románico en España*. Madrid: Labor, 1935.

³ GÓMEZ-MORENO, Manuel – *El arte románico español. Esquema de un libro*. Madrid: Centro de Estudios Históricos, 1934, p. 26, pl. XXX. In any case, the attempts at comparison between the ivories and the wood, are interesting, how it approximates the Calvary of Corullón with the book-cover of Queen Felicia (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York) (p. 26, pl. XXX).

⁴ COOK, Walter William Spencer; GUDIOL RICART, José – *Pintura e imagerie románicas* (*Ars Hispaniae*, VI). Madrid: Ed. Plus Ultra, 1950, pp. 279-389.

⁵ COOK, Walter William Spencer; GUDIOL RICART, José – *Pintura e imagerie románicas...*, pp. 263-355.

⁶ YARZA, Joaquín – *Arte y arquitectura en España, 500-1250*. Madrid: Cátedra, 1979; BANGO TORVISO, Isidro G., *El Románico en España*. Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1992.

woodcarving the importance it deserves⁷. In this respect, it is important to remember that in the failed attempt at an exhibition of Medieval Hispanic Art in the early 1990s, reflected in a brilliant catalogue, some productions, not many, were taken into account, especially from the Catalan context⁸. At the same time, contributions by regions or by types have become more noticeable, such as those by Manuel Trens⁹, Rafael Bastardes¹⁰, Celina Llarás¹¹, Clara Fernández-Ladreda¹², Minerva Sáenz¹³, María José Martínez¹⁴, Sergio Pérez and Rubén Fernández¹⁵, and Tim Heilbronner¹⁶, among many others. The studies made since these dates have stressed their liturgical role and their inclusion with the church's architectural context and spaces, as in authors like Francesca Español¹⁷, Gerardo Boto¹⁸ and Marc Sureda¹⁹. Lately, a long list of them is being compiled, volume by volume, in the ambitious *Enciclopedia del Románico*, which

⁷ DURLIAT, Marcel – *El arte románico en España*, Barcelona: Juventud, 1964. The most significant case is that of the publications of *Zodiaque*, published in Sainte-Marie de la Pierre-qui-vire, and his collection "la nuit des temps", with the volumes ordered according to regional criteria.

⁸ O'NEILL, John P. (ed.) – *The Art of Medieval Spain, a.d. 500-1200*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1993, cat. 102, p. 222-223, cat. 137, p. 282, cat. 139, pp. 284-286, cat. 164-168, pp. 316-324.

⁹ TRENS, Manuel – *Les majestats catalanes*, Barcelona: Ed. Alpha, 1966 (Monumentae Cataloniae, XIII).

¹⁰ BASTARDES i PARERA, Rafael – *Les talles romàniques del Sant Crist a Catalunya*. Barcelona: Artstudi, 1978.

¹¹ LLARÁS i USÓN, Celina – "La talla". in *Catalunya Romànica*, XXVII. Barcelona: Fundació Enciclopèdia Catalana, 1998, pp. 117-126.

¹² FERNÁNDEZ-LADREDA, Clara – *Imaginería medieval mariana*. Pamplona: Gobierno de Navarra, Departamento de Educación y Cultura, 1988.

¹³ SÁENZ NAVARRO, Minerva – *Imaginería románica en La Rioja. Tallas de Cristo crucificado y de la Virgen con el Niño*. Logroño: Gobierno de La Rioja. Instituto de Estudios Riojanos, 2005.

¹⁴ MARTÍNEZ MARTÍNEZ, M. José, "Imaginería románica", *Arte Antiguo y Medieval en la Ribera del Duero. Biblioteca. Estudio e Investigación*, 16, 2001, pp. 193-210.

¹⁵ PÉREZ MARTÍN, Sergio; FERNÁNDEZ MATEOS, Rubén – *La imaginería medieval en Zamora (siglos XII-XVI)*. Zamora: Instituto de Estudios Zamoranos "Florián de Ocampo", Centro de Estudios Beneventanos "Ledo del Pozo", 2015, pp. 21-44.

¹⁶ HEILBRONNER, Tim – "The wooden 'Chasuble Madonnas' from Ger, Ix, Targasona and Talló. About the Iconography of Catalan Madonna statues in the Romanesque period". *Locus Amoenus*, 9. Bellaterra, 2007-2008, p. 31-50; *Ikongraphie und zeitgenössische Funktionshölzerner Sitz madonnen im romanischen Katalonien*. Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovač, 2013.

¹⁷ ESPAÑOL, Francesca – "Los Descendimientos hispanos". in SAPORI, Giovanna; TOSCANO, Bruno (ed.) – *La Deposizione lignea in Europa: l'immagine, il culto, la forma*. Perugia: Electa, Editori Umbri Associati, 2004, pp. 511-554.

¹⁸ BOTO VARELA, Gerardo – "Sobre les persuasives imatges de culte. Encomis i escrutinis des de l'Edat Mitjana hispana". in BOTO VARELA, Gerardo (ed.), *Exposició. Imatges medievals de culte. Tallas de la col·lecció El Conventet*. Girona: Fundació caixa Girona, 2009, pp. 37-43.

¹⁹ SUREDA i JUBANY, Marc – "Les lieux de la Vierge. Notes de topo-liturgie mariale en Catalogne (XIe-XVe siècles)". in MATHON, Jean-Bernard (dir.) – *Romanes et Gothiques. Vierges à l'Enfant restaurées des Pyrénées Orientales. Perpignan, Chapelle Notre-Dame des Anges du 15 septembre au 17 décembre 2011*. Perpignan: Éd. Silvana, 2011, p. 39-69.

provides a solid basis for future studies and classifications²⁰. For decades now, the role of the consolidations, restorations and technical and material studies of works has been gaining ground thanks to the improvement in the techniques and the means of analysing the wood, the polychromy, and so on, just as it has been developing for decades everywhere, outside the Iberian Peninsula²¹.

One aspect of study in which we must move forward is the apparent absence of three-dimensional carvings in wood before the 12th century, despite the existence of some examples in certain points of Europe well known. It is strange that in the case of existence, no example has been preserved, as in the case of evorary, with the exceptional *Crucifix of Fernando and Sancha* in León. In fact, the parallelism between the date of this masterpiece (1063) is interesting with the first document that could allude to a statue in Catalonia, specifically in Estamariu (1063-1064), next to La Seu d'Urgell, such as Sansterre and Henriët have observed in one of their works²².

Museums, because of their need to conserve, study and publish their works, have also tackled the problems of the origin and the condition of images in wood. In this case, there may be other problems, particularly the action of some excessive restorations, or also the not always unintentional confusion relative to the true origin of some works, seeing as many of them are of unknown provenance. The review of the documentation, the photographic material and the collections themselves has continued to provide new information and to introduce significant rectifications. Thus, by way of example, a Christ from a Descent from the Cross, traditionally considered to be from Catalonia, actually comes from a building in Asturias, since the base came from a private collection in Cangas de Narcea²³ (fig. 2). However, some recent experiences open the

²⁰ GARCÍA GUINEA, Miguel Ángel; PÉREZ GONZÁLEZ, José María (dir.) – *Enciclopedia del románico en Castilla y León. León*. Aguilar de Campoo: Fundación Santa María la Real, 2002-2018.

²¹ For example, CASCIO, Agnès; DESCHAMPS-TAN, Stéphanie; LE POGAM, Pierre-Yves – “La restauration du Christ Courajod. La luminosité d’une polychromie romane restaurée”, *Techné*, 39, 2014, pp. 52-59; KARGERE, Lucretia, RIZZO, Adriana – “Twelfth-Century French Polychrome Sculpture in The Metropolitan Museum of Art: Materials and Techniques”. *Metropolitan Museum Studies in Art, Science and Technology*, 1, 2010, pp. 39-72, particularly pp. 59-61.

²² SANSTERRE, Jean-Marie; HENRIËT, Patrick – “De l’inanimis imago à l’omagem mui bella: méfiance à l’égard des images et essor de leur culte dans l’Espagne médiévale (VII-XIII siècle)”. *Edad Media. Revista de historia*, 10, 2009, pp. 37-92.

²³ BARRACHINA NAVARRO, Jaume – “Crist de Davallament”, “Obra romànica dispersa en colleccions no tractada fins ara. El colleccionisme a Catalunya”. in *Catalunya Romànica*, XXVI.

door to future discoveries: thanks to a photograph taken in situ in 1917, it was possible to attribute a crucifix that had previously been of unknown provenance to Santa Maria de Cap d'Aran. More significant is the case of another Christ, in this case a Majesty, attributed for decades to a church near Ripoll; thanks to two photographs taken in the early twentieth century, we were able to certify that it came from the church of Sant Miquel de Prats, in Andorra²⁴. To all this we may add yet another factor, the rigidity derived from the traditional division into artistic disciplines that has not always led to the creation and comparison of data obtained from the study of works similar to one another from the technical or material point of view. In this respect, the consideration of panel painted items of furniture ought to be especially useful, so significant in many ways with regard to the classification of objects carved in wood, as we shall see below.



Fig. 2 – *Crucifix from a Descent from the Cross* (Asturias?), last quarter of the 12th Century, polychromed wood, 180 x 165 x 42 cm, Museu Frederic Marès, Barcelona, MFMB 650,

Museu Frederic Marès. © Foto: Guillem F-H

(permission for reproduction obtained by the autor 06/11/2018).

Barcelona: Fundació Enciclopèdia Catalana, 1997, pp. 335-341, p. 357, n. 1; VÉLEZ, Pilar (dir.) – *Museu Frederic Marès. Guia*. Barcelona: Ajuntament de Barcelona, Institut de Cultura, 2011, pp. 36-37.

²⁴ CAMPS I SÒRIA, Jordi – “Una aportació a la recuperació del romànic d’Andorra: la Majestat de Sant Miquel de Prats (Canillo)”. in RUIZ I QUESADA, Francesc (ed.) – *Viatges a la bellesa, miscel·lània homenatge a Maria Rosa Manote i Clivilles, Retrotabulum Maior*, 1. Barcelona, 2015, pp. 63-70.

In the shadow of the sumptuary arts

The hypotheses that have given primacy to three-dimensional works, carved from a block of wood and covered with precious metal, are extremely well known and have been discussed at length. Thus, images in wood polychromed in tempera would be a less sumptuous, more inexpensive version than the former. Their genesis has to do, depending on the area, with the recovery of volume as a means of depicting holy images. I cannot go into detail here on these matters, on the appearance of the earliest European examples of rather monumental three-dimensional images and the ideological undercurrent opposed to them in the early Middle Ages, subjects that have been dealt with at length by historians²⁵. Occasionally too, typological or even stylistic similarities have been observed between small metal objects and productions on a monumental scale. In the case of Hispania, one only has to turn one's gaze towards some images that have been related to the crucifixes from León carved in ivory. This is the case with the Crucifixion scene from Corullón (Museo de León)²⁶, whose features have been regarded as influenced by some ivory productions, such as the Evangeliary of Queen Felicia²⁷. Some authors like Gómez-Moreno, Gudiol and Estella have stressed the similarities between the images of Christ on the Cross, on the configuration of the *perizonium* and of the anatomical features. Curiously, on the other hand, more recently it has been suggested that the group from León was an imported work (a question that I shall deal with below in reference to other works). Whatever the case, this link between sumptuary works and monumental carving is one of the leitmotifs of the historiography, as is also the case with other famous Hispanic ivories such as the Christ of Nicodemus, from the Holy Chamber in Oviedo, or the one from San Juan de Ortega (Burgos, Museo del Retablo)²⁸. The question, now, is to consider to what extent some of these

²⁵ BELTING, Hans – *Image et culte: une histoire de l'image avant l'époque de l'art*. Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1998; WIRTH, Jean – *L'Image à l'époque romane*. Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1999; SCHMITT, Jean-Claude – *Le Corps des images: essais sur la culture visuelle au Moyen Âge*. Paris: Gallimard, 2002.

²⁶ GRAU LOBO, Luis A. – “Museo de León”. in GARCÍA GUINEA, Miguel Ángel; PÉREZ GONZÁLEZ, José María (dir.) – *Enciclopedia del Románico en Castilla y León. León*. Aguilar de Campoo: Fundación Santa María la Real, 2002, pp. 602-614; especially pp. 609-610.

²⁷ The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York [17.190.134 i 17.190.33].

²⁸ ESTELLA, Margarita M. – *La escultura del marfil en España. Románica y gótica*. Madrid: Editorial Nacional, 1984, pp. 59-60 and 70-74; YARZA LUACES, Joaquín – “Cristo de Nicodemus”. in *De Limoges a Silos*. Madrid: Sociedad Estatal para la Acción Cultural Exterior, 2001, pp. 171-172.

emblematic works, destined for privileged centres, might have become a prestigious model followed in other fields.

Thus, with respect to the images of the Virgin with the Child, it is essential to reconsider the role of works such as the *Virgin of Irache*²⁹, the one in Pamplona Cathedral, the *Virgen de la Vega* in Salamanca Cathedral³⁰ (fig. 3), or the one in Toledo Cathedral, the latter thought to have been made in Navarre³¹, as archetypes or as models of examples carved in wood and simply polychromed. A similar problem arises with the image from Girona Cathedral, which was covered in sheet silver – according to some traces of nails found in Mary’s back – and which was in fact applied to a refined, precise woodcarving³² (fig. 4). For centuries it must have been one of the liturgical ornaments on the high altar in the cathedral of Santa Maria, but apparently it did not leave much of a mark on examples from the surrounding area. From a historiographical point of view, the quality of its carving has thrown up the paradox that the image has been dealt with more in works about sculpture than in those dedicated to precious metalwork. Indeed, with the odd exception its importance does not seem to be in keeping with its influence on other examples. The idea of a prestigious model or example is probably not always meant to coincide in an iconographical, compositional and stylistic reflection, as *is* the case in other images.

²⁹ FERNÁNDEZ-LADREDA, Clara – *Imaginería medieval...*, pp. 41-94.

³⁰ HERNANDO GARRIDO, José Luis – “Imagen de la Virgen de la Vega”. in *Enciclopedia del Románico en Castilla y León. Salamanca...*, pp. 285-287.

³¹ A significant synthesis of the images of the metal Virgin is in YARZA LUACES, Joaquín – “Las imágenes hispanas de la Virgen y Limoges”. in *De Limoges a Silos...*, pp. 196-207.

³² Museu del Tresor de la Catedral de Girona, inv. 10. LLARÁS I USÓN, Celina – “Marededéu”. in *Catalunya Romànica*, XXIII. Barcelona, 1988, pp. 151-152; ESPAÑOL, Francesca – “El escenario litúrgico de la catedral de Girona (s. XI-XV)”. *Hortus Artium Medievalium*, 11, 2005, pp. 213-232, especially pp. 218-220; CAMPS, Jordi – “Mare de Déu de la catedral de Girona” in CASTIÑEIRAS, Manuel; CAMPS, Jordi; LORÉS, Immaculada (ed.) – *El romànic i la Mediterrània. Catalunya, Toulouse i Pisa. 1120-1180*. Barcelona: Museu Nacional d’Art de Catalunya, 2008, pp. 418-419.



Fig. 3 – *Virgen de la Vega*, Salamanca, ca. 1200, Gilt-copper alloy, champlevé enamel, and cabochons and wood core, 72 cm, Old Cathedral, Salamanca (© Fundación Santa María la Real/J.L. Alonso) (permission for reproduction obtained by the autor 02/11/2018).



Fig. 4 – *Virgin of Girona Cathedral* (Catalonia), Girona, second third of the 12th century, wood carving (formerly covered with silver), 44 x 15 x 12,5 cm, Capítol de la catedral de Girona, 10 (© Capítol de la catedral de Girona) (permission for reproduction obtained by the autor 02/05/2019).

Styles and types

As I said earlier, the first attempts at classifying woodcarvings were based on criteria of style and type, something that in Catalonia, for example, has made it possible to establish a certain relative chronology and to structure much of the panorama, despite the difficulties arising from so much variety. We shall see some of these cases below, such as the Virgins from La Cerdanya, in the Pyrenees.

But typological similarities relative to the composition, the arrangement of the clothing or the attributes do not always correspond to stylistic similarities. I feel that this is the case with a series of carvings of the Virgin with the Child grouped together in Aragon around the type called “of Jaca”, that Clara Fernández-Ladreda has studied³³. The most important piece, due to where it was found, is the image from Albay (Jacetania), which has been compared to a work of unknown provenance conserved in the Museu Nacional d’Art de Catalunya (fig. 5), next to the Mianos and Lastiesas, among others. Despite the evident similarities in the fall of the creases and in the crowns, I believe that the works must be associated with different workshops. In my opinion, the carving in the MNAC can also be made to agree with ligneous and stone sculptures from Castile and León, and with works from the Germanic world datable to about 1230, if we consider the elegant way in which the creases in Mary’s tunic fall, giving the group a certain solemnity and a monumental feel.

³³ FERNÁNDEZ-LADREDA, Clara – “Arquetipos y tallas derivadas en la imaginería. El ejemplo de las vírgenes aragonesas”. in *Modelo, copia y evocación en el románico hispano*. Aguilar de Campoo, 2016, pp. 173-191.



Fig. 5 – *Virgin*. Unknown provenance, ca. 1230, wood carving with traces of polychromy in tempera, 79 x 33,5 x 29 cm (Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, MNAC 003924). (© Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya. Foto: Calveras, Mérida, Sagristà)

With regard to the images of Christ on the Cross it is important for example to refer to the *Crucifix from Santa Clara de Astudillo* (near Palencia), dated to the second half of the twelfth century, which belongs to one of the most frequent types in the groups of Christ on the Cross, dressed in the *perizonium*. With different variations, we observe similar cases in Italy, France, and elsewhere. Examples of this type are conserved from Galicia to Catalonia, always showing different variations with respect to the clothing, the attributes, the position of the arms or the head and, needless to say, the style. The original cross has very often not survived. In fact, in Catalonia it presents us with a choice apparently halfway between the Majesties and the numerous cases of *Christus Patiens*. To go back to the carving from Astudillo, it is an expression of the dual nature of Christ (divine, human), marked by a solemn expression, the head richly crowned, with his eyes open. From a stylistic point of view, associations have been established with ivory carving, specifically the image of Christ from the reliquary diptych of Bishop

Gundisalvo of Oviedo (c. 1162-1174). The details of the cross or of Christ's crown, among other things, show that some of these images were decorated and treated in an attempt to reflect a certain splendour, as was seen more forcefully in works covered with precious metal, as I mentioned above. Beyond the possible association with works in other materials and formats, the image from Palencia has also been compared typologically to other crucifixes like those from Ourense Cathedral (Galicia), the *Cristo de los Carboneros* from San Cristóbal in Salamanca³⁴, or, especially, the one from Santervás de Campos (Valladolid)³⁵ (fig. 6). Notwithstanding this, I believe that due to their appearance some of these works come from other workshops. But only a restoration and a detailed analysis of these carvings would make it possible to confirm my suspicions, the result of direct observation.



Fig 6 – *Crucifix from Santervás de Campos* (Castile), second half of the 12th century, polychromed wood, 200 cm (Fundación Santa María la Real/P.L. Huerta) (permission for reproduction obtained by the autor 08/05/2019).

³⁴ HUERTA HUERTA, Pedro Luis – “Iglesia de San Cristóbal”. in *Enciclopedia del Románico en Castilla y León. Salamanca...*, pp. 302-310, especially pp. 309-310.

³⁵ SIMON, David L. – “Romanesque Art in American Collections XXI. The Metropolitan Museum of Art: Part I. Spain”, *Gesta*, 23, 1984, pp. 145-159; MANN, Janice – “Crucifix”. in O’NEILL, John P. (ed.) – *The Art of Medieval Spain...* pp. 222-223.

Another type of order aspect should be revised: we refer to the so-called Calvary groups and their evolution. Firstly, the formula was adopted to place small-scale figures of Mary and Saint John attached to the crossbar of the cross (which coexist with the adoption of the painted figure). Later on, it evolved into a monumental development, with the figures located apart from Christ and exempt, which we fully consider of the Gothic period, as we can see in two sizes of Asturian origin preserved in the museum of Cleveland³⁶.

The workshops and the coordinated production of objects for worship and furniture

Another aspect that has been considered by historians is that of the workshops, understood as centres of production from which types were disseminated. At the same time, works would be distributed to other centres, monastery churches and parish churches, and so on. They would be centres following general guidelines covering different types of production, on both a technical and a typological level. In the case of Catalonia the workshops of the monastery of Ripoll and the cathedral of La Seu d'Urgell have been studied very closely, centres that were also distinguished by their *scriptoria*, by ambitious constructions and by a special dedication to liturgical furniture (altar tables, baldachin tables, etc.). In the case of the circles of the Ripoll Workshop, the similarities between various works of different types and techniques are undeniable. On one hand, the connections are evident between the reliefs on the doorway and the execution of the applied statuettes of the altar frontal from the old parish church of Sant Pere³⁷, attached to the monastic site (fig. 7). The arrangement of the ligneous *Maiestas Domini* might even agree with the image of the Dream of Solomon in the large stone group. In other cases, as in the Majesty from Sant Joan les Fonts (Museu d'Art de

³⁶ DEL ALAMO, Constancio; VALDEZ DEL ALAMO, Elisabeth – “Mourning Virgin and saint John”. in GUILLERMAN, Dorothy (dir.) – *Gothic Sculpture in America. II. The Museums of the Midwest*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2001, pp. 353-355.

³⁷ Museu Episcopal de Vic (inv. MEV 556). See DURAN-PORTA, Joan – “Frontal de Sant Pere de Ripoll”. in CASTIÑEIRAS, Manuel; CAMPS, Jordi; LORÉS, Immaculada (ed.) – *El romànic i la Mediterrània...*, pp. 392-393.

Girona)³⁸, the rough imitation of the carving's features with respect to the *Maiestas Domini* on the doorway in Ripoll is combined with a more accomplished reproduction of geometrical and floral motifs on painted frontals originating from the same workshop, like the one from Sant Martí de Puigbò³⁹.



Fig. 7 – Altar frontal from *Sant Pere de Ripoll* (Catalonia), second third of the 12th century, polychromed wood, 101 x 186 x 23 cm, Museu Episcopal de Vic, MEV (© Museu Episcopal de Vic) (permission for reproduction obtained by the autor 30/04/2019).

The style and the repertoires of Ripoll were developed in monumental groups and images in the surrounding area, as happened in Vic and Besalú. The trends do not always correspond to dissemination from an easily recognizable great centre, something that has entailed the invention of names that in actual fact never performed this role. It is the case with the so-called Erill Workshop, around which are grouped works that traditional historiography has granted an excessive role in a group or a place. This hypothetical workshop is distinguished by the groups of the Descent from the Cross located between the Boí and Aran valleys, in the Catalan Pyrenees. The most complete group, after which it is named, is the one from the parish church of Santa Eulàlia in Erill la Vall. Now split between the Museu Episcopal de Vic and the Museu Nacional d'Art

³⁸ Museu d'Art de Girona (Museu Dicesà de Girona, 11). See, firstly, COOK, Walter William Spencer; GUDIOL RICART, José – *Pintura e imagerie romànica* (1950 edition), p. 305.

³⁹ Museu Episcopal de Vic (MEV 9). See CASTIÑEIRAS, Manuel; CAMPS, Jordi – “Figura pintada, imatge esculpida. Eclòsió de la monumentalitat i diàleg entre les arts a Catalunya. 1120-1180”. *El romànic i la Mediterrània...*, pp.133-147, especially p. 142.

de Catalunya⁴⁰, it is composed of seven figures, something that distinguishes the Catalan groups from all those known in Europe in the Romanesque period (fig. 8). It is unquestionably a group of notable quality, which excels in the abstract simplification of the physical features, the gestures and the clothes of the figures. But the work that most definitely stands out in this workshop is the famous Christ of Mijaran, an extraordinary torso that is the only vestige, with the hand of Joseph of Arimathea incorporated on its left-hand side⁴¹. As you will remember, conditions in the Aran valley are very different to those in the Ribagorça and Boí valleys. Geographically north-facing, in the Middle Ages it depended on the Occitan bishopric of Saint-Bertrand de Comminges. Despite its enormous power, it is feasible to think that in this region or further north in Languedoc there might have been other groups, now lost, acting as models or points of reference.



Fig. 8 – *Descent from the Cross from Erill la Vall* (Catalonia), second half of the 12th century (?), wood with traces of polychromy, Dimas, 131 x 31 x 50 cm; Virgin Mary, 144 x 40 cm; Joseph of Arimathea, 134 x 68 x 27 cm; Christ, 147 x 126 x 41 cm; Nicodemus, 155 x 58 x 44 cm; Saint John, 144 x 40; Gestas, 136 x 33 x 59 cm, MEV 4229 (Dimes, Josep d'Arimatea, Crist, Nicodem, Gestes) i MNAC/MAC 3917 (Virgin Mary), 3918 (Saint John). (© Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya. Foto; Calveras, Mérida, Sagristà)

⁴⁰ Museu Episcopal de Vic (MEV 1953) Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya (MNAC 3917 i 3918). CAMPS, Jordi – *Els grups d'escultura del davallament de la creu durant el romànic. De Mijaran i Erill al Santíssim Misteri de Sant Joan de les Abadesses*. Barcelona: Amics del MNAC, 2010 (includes Spanish translation).

⁴¹ CAMPS, Jordi; DECTOT, Xavier – *Sculptures du Val de Boi*, Paris. Barcelona: Musée National du Moyen Âge, Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, 2004; VALLE LAFUENTE, Carla del – “A L'entorn de la creu. Nous plantejaments en la imatgeria romànica de la Val d'Aran”. *Síntesi. Quaderns dels Seminaris de Besalú*, 2, 2014, pp. 129-144.

This series of works also enables us to open up another field of discussion. Some authors have linked these carvings from Ribagorça and Aran to other examples from Upper Aragon. Especially notable is the Christ from San Pedro de Siresa, a carving that was discovered in 1995 and which had originally been in the centre of a group of the Descent from the Cross⁴² (fig. 9). Some authors have tried to establish a direct link between this magnificent carving, also linked to a Descent from the Cross, and the works from Boí and Aran⁴³. The Christ from San Mamés de Asín has also been included in this group⁴⁴. On the other hand, the Crucifix from the collegiate church of Alquezar⁴⁵ is in my opinion more remote. In any case, we must ask ourselves to what extent the compositional and iconographical similarities between some of these works correspond to the inclusion in common guidelines, general trends or working methods, rather than to possible direct links between sculptors and workshops. Similar problems have been posed in other techniques, as in the case of some important mural painting circles active between Catalonia and Aragon. I believe this to be one of the key points when classifying and dating works and associating them with a particular artistic circle. In any case, this observation would not be contradictory with the possible impact of an image that might have acted as a model, as a reference for a whole series of images belonging to an extensive geographical context.

⁴² LACARRA DUCAY, María del Carmen – “El Cristo de San Pedro de Siresa (aproximación a su estudio)”. in *Homenaje a Don Antonio Durán Gudiol*. Huesca: Instituto de Estudios Altoaragoneses, 1995, pp. 483-498.

⁴³ SUBES, Marie-Pasquine – “Le Christ de Mijaran et ses liens avec la sculpture romane d’Erill la Vall et de Ripoll”. *Quaderns del Museu Episcopal de Vic*, IV, Vic, 2010, pp. 9-30.

⁴⁴ ACÍN FANLO, José Luis – *Arquitectura románica: siglos X-XI, XII y XIII*. 5. *Arte religioso de la Diócesis de Jaca (Iglesias Costa, Manuel; edición revisada y aumentada por Jose Luís Acin Fanlo y Enrique Calvera Nerín)*. Zaragoza, 2009, p. 90-91.

⁴⁵ SUBES, Marie-Pasquine – “Le Christ de Mijaran...”, p. 16.



Fig. 9 – *Crucifix from a Descent from the Cross of San Pedro de Siresa* (Aragón), second half of the 12th century, polychromed wood, 208 x 53 x 31 cm, San Pedro de Siresa Church, Fundación Santa María la Real/E. Hasta (permission for reproduction obtained by the autor 02/11/2018).

Foreign sculptors? Imported works?

The importation of works has always been accepted for certain types of art objects, of different types. An example that is beyond doubt, for example, is that of the production of enamels from Limoges that spread to many parts of Europe. Beyond the problematic dissemination of the workshop at Silos⁴⁶, the presence of countless examples in the Hispanic world is undoubted. From other cultural and political provenances, we are all sufficiently aware of the huge amount of products that, whether through trade, diplomacy or warfare, arrived from the East, the Islamic world or, particularly, Al-Andalus. However, and despite the fact that some authors have dealt with the hypothesis of importation for some examples of woodcarving, this is an option that I believe has been barely considered and accepted, occasionally as an alternative to the hypothesis of

⁴⁶ *De Limoges a Silos...*

the arrival of a foreign sculptor or artist. One of the most notable examples is the *Virgin of Puenteadura* (Burgos), studied by Ara Gil and Martínez, which is thought to have a probable French origin⁴⁷ (fig. 10). Indeed, it has been said that the repetitive and refined treatment of the creases in the clothing recalls those in sculptures from the Île-de-France, and more specifically from the *Portail Royal* in Chartres Cathedral, something that would enable us to justify production in a workshop in that region. In the context of Portugal the hypothesis has been considered of a foreign origin for the Christ of Bouças (Matosinhos), given the similarities with examples from Burgundy and from elsewhere in the Iberian Peninsula, such as Palencia, Aragon and Catalonia⁴⁸.



Fig. 10 – *Virgin from Puenteadura* (Castile), second half of the 12th century, polychromed wood. 108 x 46 x 32 cm, Museu Frederic Marès, MFM 1408, Museu Frederic Marès © Foto: Guillem F-H (permission for reproduction obtained by the autor 06/11/2018).

⁴⁷ ARA GIL, Clementina-Julia – “120. Mare de Déu amb el Nen”. *Fons del Museu Frederic Marès/I. Catàleg d’escultura i pintura medievals*. Barcelona: Ajuntament de Barcelona, 1991, p. 183; MARTÍNEZ MARTÍNEZ, M. José – “Virgen con el Niño (Museo Frederic Marès, Barcelona)”. in GUINEA, Miguel Ángel; PÉREZ GONZÁLEZ, José María (dir.) – *Enciclopedia del Románico en Castilla y León, Burgos, IV*. Aguilar de Campoo: Fundación Santa María la Real, 2002, p. 2485.

⁴⁸ VARELA FERNANDES, Carla – “PATHOS – the bodies of Christ on the Cross. Rhetoric of suffering in wooden sculpture found in Portugal, twelfth-fourteenth centuries. A few examples”. *RIHA Journal* 0078 (28 November 2013), URL: <http://www.riha-journal.org/articles/2013/2013-oct-dec/fernandes-christ>

If we turn to the Catalan context, we may suspect a similar phenomenon in the case of a group of images of the Virgin that emerged around the bishopric of La Seu d’Urgell towards the last quarter of the twelfth century, which corresponds to the same stylistic and partly iconographical conception. Lately, some authors such as Tim Heilbronner have interpreted these images as the symbol of Mary as a priestess, to judge by her clothing⁴⁹. Of the ones conserved, the most outstanding piece in the group is the *Virgin of Ger* (Museu Nacional d’Art de Catalunya)⁵⁰ (fig. 11), which presents considerable stylistic similarities with the image of the Angel from a *Visitatio Sepulchri* from Cologne⁵¹. If we accept a direct link between the Catalan Virgin and the angel from Cologne, we have to consider how it came about.



Fig. 11 – *Virgin from Ger* (Catalonia), ca. 1180, polychromed wood, 52,5 x 20,5 x 14,5 cm, Museu Nacional d’Art de Catalunya, MNAC 65550. (© Museu Nacional d’Art de Catalunya. Foto; Calveras, Mérida, Sagristà)

⁴⁹ HEILBRONNER, Tim – “The wooden ‘Chasuble Madonnas’”...; ANGHEBEN, Marcello – “Les statues mariales catalanes et la progressive assimilation de la Vierge à l’enfant au prêtre officiant”. in BROUQUET, Sophie (éd.) – *Sedes sapientiae. Vierges Noires, culte marial et pèlerinages en France méridionale*. Toulouse: Presses universitaires du Midi, Méridiennes, 2017, pp. 19-45.

⁵⁰ Museu Nacional d’Art de Catalunya (MNAC 65503). See CAMPS I SÒRIA, Jordi – “Imatge de la Mare de Déu de Ger”. in *Prefiguració del Museu Nacional d’Art de Catalunya*. Barcelona, 1992, p. 149-150; CAMPS I SÒRIA, Jordi – “Wooden Sculpture”. in CASTIÑEIRAS, Manuel; CAMPS, Jordi – *Romanesque art in the MNAC collections*. Barcelona, 2008, p. 137-163, especially pp. 140-142.

⁵¹ EUW, Anton von – “J. 32 Un ange assis”. in *Rhin-Meuse: art et civilisation 800-1400: une exposition des Ministères belges de la culture française et de la culture néerlandaise du Schnütgen-Museum de la ville de Cologne*. Bruxelles: Ministère de la Culture française; Cologne: Culture néerlandaise, 1972, p. 301; TOMAN, Rolk (ed.) – *El románico. Arquitectura-escultura-pintura*. Köln: Könemann, 1996, p. 353.

If we could ever demonstrate this attractive hypothesis, we would be on a similar level to that of the group of Virgins covered in metal located between the Auvergne and Catalonia. It includes the images from Châteauneuf-les-Bains (Puy-de-Dôme), Saint-Chély-d'Apcher, in Prunières (Lozère), Saint-Georges de Baroilles (Loire) (Musée du Louvre), the *Virgin of Victory*, in Santa Maria de Tuir (Roussillon) (fig. 12), that of Plandogau (Pallars) (Museu Frederic Marès) and one last example, now lost, that was once in the collection of Carles Vallin (Barcelona)⁵². Let us concentrate on the image in Tuir (Roussillon). Covered with lead and tin sheet, with traces of gilt, it presents a relatively habitual composition: Mary appears seated on a throne, of wood with traces of polychromy, with the Child sitting in the middle. One of the most significant details of the group is the closed Carolingian-style crown, as well as the inscription, *MATER DEI*, that runs around the front of the plinth. In fact, such a homogenous series poses one of the questions most discussed with respect to the centres of production of images and the dissemination of certain types. In this respect, it is interesting to observe that despite the homogeneity of this group, covering a wide geographical area, there are also clear differences between each example: technical, compositional, and qualitative too. Images like those from Châteauneuf-les-Bains or the one from Baroilles, however, clearly show the dissemination of a type over a wide area, which can probably be explained by the exemplary nature of a model or prototype, by the role played by historic Marian pilgrimage routes, or simply by the importation of objects. In this respect, the hypothesis according to which a point of reference for these works could have been the lost image from a Marian centre as important as Le Puy is also very intriguing⁵³.

⁵² FORSYTH, Ilene H. – *The Throne of Wisdom. Wood sculptures of the Madonna in Romanesque France*. Princeton, 1972, pp. 179-180, fig. 124-125; CAMPS, Jordi – “74. Mare de Déu amb el Nen”. *Fons del Museu Frederic Marès...*, p. 143.

⁵³ PONSICH, Pierre – “La Vierge de Thuir et les relations artistiques entre la région auvergnate et les pays catalans à l'époque préromane et romane”. *Les Cahiers de Saint-Michel de Cuxa*, 25. Prades-Codalet, 1994, pp. 51-71.



Fig. 12 – *Vierge de la Victoire* (Roussillon), ca. 1200, lead mixed with tin (with traces of gilding) and wood core, 54 cm, in Sainte-Marie de la Victoire Church, Thuir (Roussillon) (Jordi Camps).

Apart from the images for worship, another exceptional case of an object carved in wood is that of the faldstool from Roda d'Isàvena, known as the “Chair of Saint Raymond”, unfortunately stolen and cut up in 1979 by René Alphonse Van der Berge, known as *Erik le Belge*⁵⁴. The pieces, in a scissor structure, are worked with a great feeling for detail and refinement, comparable to that of the metal arts. Due to its exceptional nature in the Hispanic context, the hypothesis has also been established that it could be an imported work, probably from northern Europe.

⁵⁴ LLARÁS I USÓN, Celina, in ADELL I GISBERT, Albert *et alii* – “Sant Vicenç de Roda”. in *Catalunya Romànica*, XVI, Barcelona, 1996, pp. 435-438; YZQUIERDO PERRÍN, Ramón – “Sillas, coros y cátedras medievales: notas sobre su ubicación y funciones”. in HUERTA, Pedro Luis (coord.) – *Mobiliario y ajuar litúrgico de las iglesias románicas*. Aguilar de Campoo: Fundación Santa María la Real, 2011, pp. 107-148, especially pp. 115-116.

Interdisciplinary research: some examples

Collaboration between institutions and interdisciplinary research between art historians or museum and heritage conservators and restorers has generated, and must continue to generate, very interesting results, always in accordance with the state of development of each of the subjects and the analysis techniques. The research has made it possible to learn about the images' long history, in some cases the discovery of deposits of relics, and to scrutinize the layers and the nature of the examples' pigments and agglutinants. In 1952, the work on a carving of a Suffering Christ (*Christus Patiens*) in the then Museu d'Art de Catalunya made it possible to discover the cavity in it, with packets of relics wrapped in pieces of fabric – some from Al-Andalus – and fragments of parchment. This supplied a most valuable datum, the consecration of the image in 1147, besides the verification of the relics, and a restoration, in the sixteenth century⁵⁵. In the late twentieth century works by the Generalitat de Catalunya's Centre for Movable Assets led to a similar discovery: it made it possible to date the image of the Virgin from the great Benedictine monastery of Sant Cugat del Vallès to 1218, made by order of Abbot Ramon de Banyeres⁵⁶.

Research work and discoveries of this kind have gradually been taking place. Thus, in 1988 the *Virgin from Astorga Cathedral* was worked upon, and this led to the discovery of a reliquary in the form of a niche in the image's back. This case, moreover, throws up the possibility that an original layer of polychromy may have been covered later by a thin sheet of silver⁵⁷.

It is interesting to cite in detail another example relating to the work of the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, where since the beginning of this century we have been

⁵⁵ AINAUD DE LASARTE, Joan – “Un Crist romànic datat”. *Butlletí de la Societat Catalana d'Estudis Històrics*, II, 1953, pp. 341-344; AINAUD DE LASARTE, Joan – “La consagració dels Cristos en creu”. *Liturgica*, 3, 1966, pp. 11-20.

⁵⁶ FERRAN, Domènec – “136. Mare de Déu de Sant Cugat”. in *Millenium. Història i Art de l'Església Catalana*. Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya, 1989, pp. 194-195; FERRAN I LOPEZ, Domènec; PLADEVALL I FONT, Antoni – “Sant Cugat del Vallès”. in *Catalunya Romànica*, vol. XVIII. Barcelona, 1991, pp. 184-186.

⁵⁷ PÉREZ GIL, J. – “Virgen de la Majestad”. in *Encrucijadas. Las Edades del Hombre, Catedral de Astorga*. Astorga, 2000, n. 17, pp. 290-291.

trying to maintain an interdisciplinary line of work addressed to the study of woodcarving that is slowly producing significant results.

One of the most outstanding images of Romanesque carving in Catalonia is without doubt the *Majestat Batlló*, named after the owner who donated it to the museum. It represents the type of the Majesty, understood as an expression of the *Christus triumphans* comparable to the *Volto Santo* in Lucca, Tuscany⁵⁸. Apart from the excellent sculptural quality of the carving, the image stands out because much of the polychromy has survived. The object's outward appearance was revealed as a result of the cleaning that was done after it entered the museum in 1914⁵⁹. After several subsequent interventions that made its consolidation possible, it was studied between 2007 and 2010. This enabled us to analyse the different types of wood and to analyse the polychromy in detail. The investigation confirmed the presence of a first layer covered by the one now visible, something that we had already sensed thanks to some lacunas in the external one (fig. 13-14).

⁵⁸ TRENS, Manuel – *Les majestats catalanes...*; BASTARDES I PARERA, Rafael – *Les talles romàniques...*; DURLIAT, Marcel – “La signification des Majestés catalanes”. *Cahiers Archéologiques*, 37, 1989, pp. 69-95; CAMPS I SÒRIA, Jordi – “Romanesque Majestats: A Typology of Christus Triumphans in Catalonia”. in MULLINS, Juliet, NÍ GHRÁDAIG, Jenifer; HAWTREE, Richard (ed.) – *Envisioning Christ on the Cross. Ireland and the early medieval West*. Dublin: Four Court Press, 2013, pp. 234-247.

⁵⁹ FOLCH I TORRES, Joaquim – “Una ‘Majestat’ romànica”. *Gasetta de les Arts*, 1, n. 4, 1928, pp. 1-2; CAMPS I SÒRIA, Jordi – “Majestat Batlló”. in *Prefiguració del Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya*. Barcelona, 1992, pp. 154-156; CAMPUZANO *et alii* – “Noves aportacions a l'estudi de la Majestat Batlló: identificació i caracterització de la policromia subjacent”. *Butlletí del Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya*, 11, 2011, pp. 13-31.

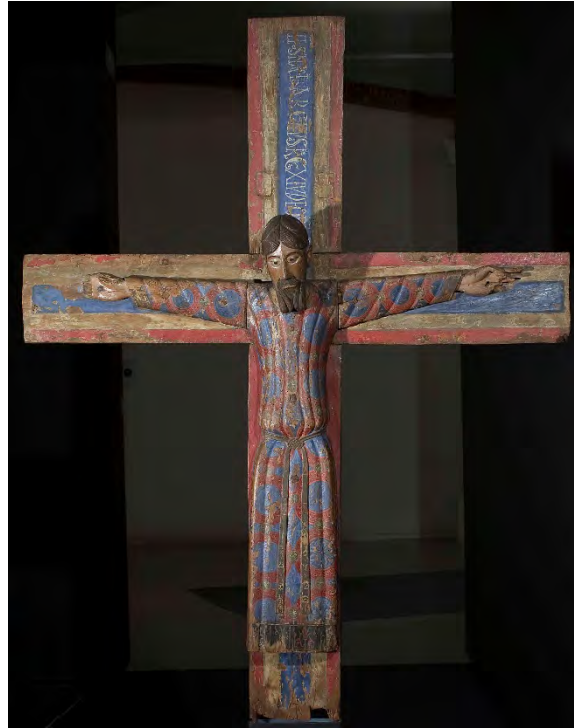


Fig. 13 – *Majestat Batlló*. (Catalonia), mid. 12th century, polychromed wood, 94 x 96 x 17 cm (Christ), 156 x 120 x 4 cm (cross), Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya. MNAC 15937. (© Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya. Foto: Calveras, Mérida, Sagristà)



Fig. 14 – *Majestat Batlló*. Hypothetical reconstruction of the first layer of polychromy (Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya). (© Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya. Foto: Calveras, Mérida, Sagristà)

The pigments used include minerals used relatively frequently, such as lead white for white, haematites, vermillion or cinnabar for red, aerinite for blue, for which azurite was also used. The second layer of polychromy, applied without preliminary preparation, is characterized by the predominance of red and blue, on both the figure and the cross. In this case, the use of lapis lazuli for certain areas of blue is noticeable. The decoration of the bottom edge of the tunic corresponds to the first stage of colour application. A special mention is warranted by the motifs on the neck, the cuffs and the belt of the tunic; the grey and worn appearance is due to the application of tin sheet, something that gave the work a rather luxurious appearance, with the reflection of the mecca gilt. Generally speaking, one has to point out the refined technique in the superimposition of the layers of primer and the pigments, and the use of cinnabar, azurite or lapis lazuli, which were obtained through trade, and which indicate a profound mastery of the techniques of the period. This may suggest that it is a work associated with an important centre and a powerful patron.

It is difficult to decide upon the chronological distance between the two layers of polychromy. Firstly, it is necessary to point out the accuracy that was maintained with respect to the compositional scheme, of both the Crucifix and the cross. The traces of inscriptions on the back have yet to be studied, but it is important to point out that the second inscription on the front is longer in length in the second layer, although its meaning is the same. This change leads me to think that the carving was moved to a different place, which could have involved a difference in height. This would explain why all the symbolic aspects of the piece survived despite the colour change. The change could have more to do with the new building in which it was placed and to some event that could have made it necessary to modify it. In any case, these are hypotheses that are difficult to confirm.

Lately also, work has been done on an image identified as a Saint John the Evangelist, kept in the museum in Vilafranca, not far from Barcelona⁶⁰. Its origin is unknown, but it presents all the stylistic traits and some technical similarities to the works from the Boí and Aran valleys that we saw earlier. During the restoration process, on the back at

⁶⁰ VINSEUM. Museu de les Cultures del Vi de Catalunya, inv. 3357 (Manuel Trens collection).

shoulder height evidence was discovered of sockets that must almost certainly have been where wings were attached. This contribution to the work's initial appearance forced me to reconsider the identification of the work⁶¹. A Virgin has also been restored whose historic appearance has been partially recovered, with the peculiarity that the inclined position of the Child leads one to conclude that the image was associated with a group that was very probably part of an Epiphany context⁶².

Study avenues for the future

In this essay I have had to give priority to the aspects relative to the formal configuration of the woodcarving, trying to cover all the components associated with its production. No less important, however, have been the contributions made so far pertaining to the location and the interaction of the images in the vicinity of the altar and the presbytery⁶³, their function in worship and their integration in liturgical theatre⁶⁴ (fig. 15), their role as containers of relics in some cases⁶⁵, and the development of devotion. It is also important to bear in mind the stories or legends associated with their distant origin or to miraculous interventions, many of which, but not all, correspond to the Middle Ages⁶⁶. In this respect, their connection is notable in battles or with events in

⁶¹ CAMPS, Jordi; MIGUÉLEZ, Alicia – “Yo, Juan. La recuperación de una talla procedente del románico catalán”. *Románico. Revista de Arte*. Madrid: Amigos del Románico (AdR), núm. 21, diciembre 2015, pp. 26-33; CARRERAS, Anna; MESTRE, Mireia; ORIOLS, Núria – “Estudio técnico de una talla románica y proceso de restauración”. *Románico...*, pp. 34-43.

⁶² Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya (MNAC 15926); See: <http://blog.museunacional.cat/recuperem-una-marededeu-romantica/>

⁶³ SUREDA i JUBANY, Marc – “Les lieux de la Vierge...”

⁶⁴ FORSYTH, Ilene H. – *The Throne of Wisdom...*, pp. 31-60; MARTÍNEZ DE AGUIRRE, Javier – “Aproximación iconográfica a la iglesia del Santo Sepulcro de Torres del Río”. in MELERO MONEO, M. Luisa; ESPAÑOL BERTRÁN, Francesca; ORRIOLS I ALSINA, Anna; RICO CAMPS, Daniel (ed.) – *Imágenes y promotores en el arte medieval: miscelánea en homenaje a Joaquín Yarza Luaces*. Bellaterra: Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 2001, pp. 153-165; CARRERO SANTAMARÍA, Eduardo – “El Santo Sepulcro: imagen y funcionalidad espacial en la capilla de la iglesia de San Justo (Segovia)”. in *Anuario de Estudios Medievales*, 27, 1997, pp. 461-477.

⁶⁵ GABORIT, Jean-René – “Vierges-reliquaires et reliques de la Vierge”. in BRETTEL, Paul; ADROHER, Michel; CATAFAU, Aymat (dir.) – *La Vierge dans les arts et les littératures du Moyen Âge. Actes du colloque de Perpignan du 17 au 19 octobre 2013*. Paris: Honoré Champion, 2017, pp. 351-369; CAMPS I SÒRIA, Jordi – “Imágenes relicario de los siglos XII y XIII en Catalunya”. in VARELA FERNANDES, Carla, (coord.), *Imagens e Liturgia na Idade Media* (“Bens Culturais da Igreja”, 5). Lisboa, 2016, pp. 125-144.

⁶⁶ See, for instance, the example of the Virgins on Montserrat and Ripoll, the last one disappeared (Catalonia): BARAUT, Cebrià – “Un recull de miracles de Santa Maria, procedent de Ripoll, i les

which, according to the literary and documentary sources, the ruler, often the king, played a large part⁶⁷. On all these fronts, historiography has made substantial progress over the last two decades. I find myself obliged, however, to leave the broad and developed treatment of these subjects for future occasions.



Fig. 15 – *Cristo de los Gascones*, 13th century, polychromed wood, 182 x 70 cm, San Justo de Segovia Church (Castile) (Jordi Camps).

In another order of things, we have very little information about promoters and artists, although the consideration of different foreign cases, like that of the Presbyter Martinus Madonna⁶⁸, from Central Italy, may be illustrative and may supply intriguing clues. This work, dated 1199, confronts us with the scant number of Hispanic examples that can be dated with any degree of precision. This aspect, important when classifying

Cantiques d'Alfons el Savi". in *Maria Ecclesia, Regina et Mirabilis, Scripta et Documenta*, VI. Abadia de Montserrat: Ed. Estanislao M. Llopart 1956: pp. 127-60.

⁶⁷ YARZA LUACES, Joaquín – “Virgen de las Batallas.”, in *De Limoges a Silos...*, pp. 217-221; BARRACHINA, Jaume – “Crist crucificat de Palma de Mallorca”. in *Catalunya Romànica*, XXVI..., pp. 359-360; BUESA CONDE, Domingo J. – *La Virgen en el Reino de Aragón. Imágenes medievales*. s.l.: Ibercaja, 1994, pp. 231-234.

⁶⁸ Bodem Museum, Berlin, inv. No. 29 (See NOCENTINI, Serena; REFICE, Paola (ed.) – *Mater Amabilis. Madonne medievali della Diocesi d'Arezzo, Cortona e Sansepolcro*. Firenze: ArtoutMachietto Editore, 2012).

works, groups and regional peculiarities with justification, opens up another aspect of the study of woodcarving: that of discerning clearly between the examples that actually correspond to a date from the Romanesque period from those that are later. This task, which involves not only the researchers but also the agents of the spread of innovation in research, has a long way to go in the field of study, but also in that of the institutions responsible for the conservation of the works. At the present time, the reality is that numerous general or monographic publications, as well as catalogues, continue to include objects that belong to later periods in the “Romanesque” sections⁶⁹. The creation of a critical corpus like the one that has been carried out in other spheres⁷⁰ could represent a step forward in this task.

As I have been suggesting throughout this essay, and despite the fact that much very meritorious work has been undertaken, many systematic technical studies are still needed, analyses of the works that may help to supply data about their original appearance and about the changes they have undergone throughout history. With these it will thus be feasible to cross-reference the data obtained from different works, areas, types, variants and periods. Let us not forget that the images were placed in a context, with its structures and furniture (beams, frontals, edicules or tabernacles, baldachins, etc.), which have almost completely disappeared. Only this way will it be possible for new data to appear, if they exist, to tell us whether, as is still believed, corporeal images emerged somewhat later than in other Romanesque regions, or if it is necessary to consider the existence of examples, lost and/or replaced, before the second half of the twelfth century.

⁶⁹ A notable attempt at classification is the one carried out at the Museu Episcopal de Vic (BRACONS i CLAPÉS, Josep – *Catàleg de l'escultura gòtica del Museu Episcopal de Vic*. Vic: Patronat d' Estudis Ausonencs, 1983).

⁷⁰ The catalogue tackles a region, administratively the Département des Pyrénées Orientales, which in the Romanesque period was in the Catalan context (MATHON, Jean-Bernard (dir.) – *Romanes et Gothiques...*)

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