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Special Issue Reprint

Ideas and Images Serving Christianity

Words Illustrated by Forms and Forms Explained by Words

Edited by
José María Salvador-González

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Guest Editor

José María Salvador-González

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About the Editor

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José María Salvador-González is a Professor at the Complutense University of Madrid, Spain. His publications are mainly focused on Mariology and religious studies. He holds twenty degrees from Rome, Paris, Louvain, Caracas and Madrid universities. He has six PhDs in areas such as Aesthetics and Art Sciences (Universite Panthéon-Sorbonne, Paris I (1981)); Social Sciences (Universidad Central de Venezuela (2002)); Art History (2007); Sciences of Religions (2018); and Philosophy (2022) (the Complutense University of Madrid); and Medieval History (Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia-UNED (2024)). He is the Director of the academic journal De Medio Aevo (Q1) and the CAPIRE Research Group at the Complutene University of Madrid.

Preface

Christianity is a religion of the word, as it is based on both the Old and New Testament and the exegetical writings required to interpret the doctrinal contents underlying the Holy Scriptures. These biblical writings and their canonical exegesis were disseminated by word to catechize believers. This pedagogical need stimulated the production of a wide range of varied discourses, from rigorous theological treatises to elaborate liturgical hymns and simple homilies. This process aided in bringing to light the occasionally cryptic founding scriptures via other hermeneutical words based on the necessary doctrinal teachings to the masses. On the other hand, the image appears early on in Christianity—especially in the Middle Ages, when most of the population was illiterate—as indispensable support and a complement to the word. Thus, the word becomes an image, acting as the visible materialization of an idea. However, at the same time, the word must come in support of the image, acting as an explanatory verbalization of the image, especially when the iconic appearance is not evident through all its objective or symbolic details. This is how the essential intertwining between word and image in Christianity becomes evident: word reflected in image and image revealed by the word. This reprint, written by thirteen researchers in various areas of Arts and Humanities, is especially addressed to scholars and researchers of religious issues, Christianity, medieval and Renaissance art and culture, as well as to everyone interested in the development of the societies and cultures of medieval and Renaissance Europe.

José María Salvador-González
Guest Editor

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Article

Regina Coeli—Doctrine and Iconography of the Virgin Mary's Heavenly Royalty

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Abstract: This article aims to highlight the privileged status granted by Christianity to the Virgin Mary when considering her the Queen of Heaven. From the very early centuries of our era, this sublime title was assigned to the Virgin Mary, for her condition of Mother of God, by an increasing number of Church Fathers and theologians. Later, it was expounded by an uncountable number of medieval liturgical hymns. Finally, from the 12th century onwards, these textual proclamations were shaped in sculptures and paintings according to various iconographic types. The author will proceed by first analyzing a large corpus of texts by many Church Fathers, theologians, and hymnographers. Then, he will consider twenty sculptures and paintings which reflect the heavenly royalty of Mary according to five iconographic types.

Keywords: Western Christianity; Mariology; heavenly royalty; divine motherhood; patrology; theology; liturgical hymns; Marian iconography

1. Introduction

The title Queen of Heaven assigned to the Virgin Mary appeared in Christianity as early as the 4th century in a few patristic allusions, which became more copious in the following centuries. In a quick chronological sequence, during the Middle Ages, an increasing number of Church Fathers, theologians, and medieval liturgical hymnographers produced an enormous corpus of texts that explicitly and enthusiastically proclaimed Mary's Heavenly Royalty. However, these relatively early textual statements about Mary's status as the Queen of Heaven took several centuries to be reflected in clear and precise artistic images. Only in the 11th–12th centuries did the sculptural and pictorial representations of the Virgin as Queen become general in Western Europe. Mary appeared wearing a crown, almost always enthroned, sustaining the Child Jesus in her arms, according to the iconographic type of *Sedes Sapientiae*. Images of Mary standing crowned with her Child in her arms were also frequent, both in small and monumental sculptures, especially in the mullion of the Gothic portals. From the middle of the 12th century, the iconographic type of Mary's Coronation, first in sculpture, then in painting, developed primarily.

The thesis of the heavenly royalty of the Virgin Mary, although ignored in some Mariology books (Ponce Cuéllar 2001; De Fiores et al. 2009), is considered by other authors (De Fiores 2006b, pp. 971–89; Hauke 2008, pp. 245–51; De Fiores 2006a; De Fiores and Zamberlan 2009, pp. 1024–34).

Now, to better explain the topic, this paper will be divided into three epigraphs. In the first one, some texts by many Fathers and medieval theologians from the Greek-Eastern and Latin Churches that concordantly highlight Mary's privilege as the Queen of Heaven will be examined. In the second epigraph, numerous fragments of medieval liturgical hymns that exalt the Virgin Mary as the Queen of Heaven, Lady of Angels and Saints, or other similar titles of celestial sublimity will be exposed. In the third epigraph, twenty paintings and sculptures that illustrate several iconographic ways of representing the Virgin's Heavenly Royalty are to be iconographically analyzed. This comparative analysis of texts and images will allow us to draw several rational conclusions.

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2. Mary's Heavenly Royalty According to Some Church Fathers and Medieval Theologians

From the very early centuries of our era, some Eastern and Western Church Fathers proclaimed the celestial Sovereignty of the Virgin Mary. In this regard, the Ecumenical Council of Ephesus, held in June and July 431, established as a dogma that Mary is the true Mother of God (Θεοτόκος). This dogma founded the doctrinal bases for supporting the entitlement of Mary as the Queen of Heaven because, as far as she is the mother of God the Son, the King of Heaven, Mary rightfully deserves to be honored as the Heavenly Sovereign.

Therefore, as a logical consequence of the dogma of Mary's divine motherhood, the title of Queen of Heaven was increasingly acknowledged to the Virgin by Christian thinkers from the 6th century onwards. Moreover, during the Middle Ages, many Church Fathers, theologians, and liturgical hymnographers, especially in the Latin Westernambit, proclaimed Mary through various charming designations such as Queen of Heaven, Celestial Lady, Heavenly Empress, Queen of Angels and Saints, and other similar expressions of sublime status. So, throughout medieval times numerous Christian masters highlighted the supreme sovereignty of the Virgin over the angels, the saints, and the celestial and terrestrial beings, all of them paying an endless tribute of honor to her as their celestial sovereign.

2.1. Mary's Heavenly Royalty in Greek-Eastern Churches

Towards the mid-4th century, St. Ephrem of Syria (306–373) is the first Church Father who designates the Virgin Mary through several meaningful royal titles. That is the case when he requests her protection in front of the devil with this eloquent prayer: "August virgin and sovereign, queen, lady, protect me under your wings, guard me, so that Satan, who sows ruin, does not rejoice against me, nor does the iniquitous adversary triumph over me."[1]

Some three and a half centuries later, Saint Germanus, Patriarch of Constantinople (634–733), in a homily on the Presentation of Mary to the temple, asks the Virgin, whom he calls Lady, to sit down, since it is convenient for her to sit as the glorious queen with all the kings of the earth. He also says that her throne is much more noble than that of the cherubs, and a sacrosanct seat corresponds to her dwelling on it.[2] In another homily on the Annunciation, structured as a dialogue between the angel Gabriel and Mary, the patriarch of Constantinople puts this declaration into the angel's mouth: "You are called the throne-bearer of God, and the royal seat of the heavenly King, because, as Queen and lady, and daughter of an earthly king [David] and of royal lineage, you are endowed with majesty."[3] Furthermore, in another homily on the Presentation of the Virgin to the temple, Germanus exalts Mary as "the unspeakable joy of the world", "the conciliatory Queen of peace", and "the immaculate splendor of the virgins."[4]

Approximately, for the same years in which Germanus of Constantinople expressed these sentences, Saint Andrew of Crete (650–740) assumed this thesis in several writings. Thus, in his fourth sermon on the Virgin Mary's birth, he calls her "Queen of the human race", asking her to rejoice in being the chaste mother of Christ, magnificently adorned entirely with royal prerogatives.[5] In his homily 13 on the Dormition of the Virgin, speaking of the extra-natural divine maternity of Mary and the supernatural incarnation of God the Son, the writer from Crete calls for the celebration of the problematic prophesied miracle that Mary is the immaculate Queen and the most illustrious Mother of God.[6] In another later passage of that sermon, the author extols Mary with multiple metaphorical praises, calling her "exalted throne [of God]", "gate of heaven higher than heaven", "Queen of all humankind [. . .], who is more exalted than all other beings except God."[7] Lastly, in another fragment of this homily on the Dormition of the Virgin, Andrew of Crete proclaims Mary as "the three times Queen Mother of God" and as the "Queen of all men", the only one capable of giving substance to the Word of God.[8]

Around the same decades, the influential Syrian Father Saint John Damascene (675–749) repeatedly affirmed the heavenly majesty of Mary. In a homily on the Annunciation, he extols the Virgin with these exhaustive praises:

> Hail, the only Queen among queens, who is undoubtedly the daughter of kings, but also the mother of the King of the universe and the strength of kings and religious emperors. Hail, the only Queen among queens, surrounded by a golden dress and with variety, as David, the singer of psalms, proclaimed.[9]

In the first homily on the Dormition of the Virgin, John Damascene affirms that after her Assumption into Heaven, Mary remains with great freedom as the ineffable joy of the angels, the everlasting enjoyment of the patriarchs and the perennial exultation of the prophets.[10] A few paragraphs later, he makes an assurance about the bodily Assumption of Mary into heaven: "Your immaculate and clean body of all stain has not been left on earth: but you, Queen, Mother, Lady, and true begetter of God, are transferred to the royal see of heaven."[11] Finally, in writing in praise of Saint Barbara, Juan Damascene assures that Mary is the Holy Mother of God, the first Virgin to give birth, and the Mother of God, "Queen of all men and women, of heavenly and earthly beings."[12]

Almost a century and a half later, the Byzantine poet Saint Joseph the Hymnographer (816–886) assigned the title of Queen of Heaven to the Virgin Mary in numerous Marian hymns. In one of them, he says: "Circled with varieties in fringes of gold, now you stand as a Queen and Lady at the right hand of the Lord God, interceding for your servants."[13] In another hymn, he requests intercession of Mary in these terms: "Oh, the most grateful to God, who gave birth to Christ, make us, as Queen that you are worthy of the kingdom of heaven to whom we turn to you."[14] In another song, the Byzantine composer expresses, "You have been made the Queen of all creatures: and therefore we glorify you, oh, Mother of God, the only perpetual Virgin."[15] Moreover, in a new Marian ode, Joseph the Hymnographer extols Mary in these terms: "Holy is God, who dwelt in your womb when he found you as the holiest and purest of all creatures, oh, immaculate Mother, Queen whose name sounds like domination."[16]

2.2. *Mary's Heavenly Royalty in the Latin Fathers and Theologians*

Similar claims of the heavenly majesty of the Virgin Mary are documented in numerous texts by Latin Church Fathers and theologians. Thus, already in the first half of the fifth century, Saint Peter Chrysologus (380–450) exalted Mary as the sublime Queen of Heaven with these eloquent sentences:

> She is truly blessed for, in addition to receiving the glory of the divine seed, she also existed as queen of chastity. She is truly blessed because she was bigger than heaven, stronger than earth, wider than the orb; for she alone contained [in her womb] God, whom the world could not contain. She carried [gestated] the one who carries the orb, begot her begetter, nourished the one who feeds all living beings.[17]

Approximately half a century later, the fine poet and hymnographer Saint Venantius Fortunatus (530–607), in a canticle in honor of Mary, pays tribute to her as the Queen of Heaven with these elaborate verses:

O glorious Lady,	O Gloriosa Domina,
Exalted above the stars	Excelsa super sidera
you breastfed with your sacred breast	Qui te creavit provide,
the provider who created you.	Lactasti sacro ubere.
What sad Eve took from us,	Quod Eva tristis abstulit,
You give it back to us with nutritious germ;	Tu reddis almo germine;
Enter the afflicted as stars,	Intrent ut astra flebiles,
You have been made the window of Heaven.	Coeli fenestra facta es.
You are the entrance of the supreme King	Tu regis alti janua
and the shining gate of light:	Et porta lucis fulgida:
Redeemed people, clap your hands	Vitam datam per Virginem,
To the life that has been given to us by the Virgin.	Gentes redemptae, plaudite.[18]

In another chapter of this collection of hymns in honor of the Virgin, Venantius Fortunatus insists on proclaiming the heavenly royalty of Mary with these refined verses:

With whose sacred honor, mother, you surpass Olympus.
Moreover, you stand above the skies that carry stars.
You will sit on the proud throne, happy Queen,
You are surrounded, white Virgin, by snowy choirs.
Nobler than the present noble senate,
Your very seat is more exalted than the high consuls.
Thus, please reign forever beside the begotten king,
Ornated by your childbirth, fertile mother.

Cujus honore sacro, genitrix, transcendis Olympum.
Et super astrigeros erigis ora polos.
Conderis in solio felix regina superbo,
Cingeris in niveis lactea virgo choris.
Nobile nobilior circumsistente senatu,
Consulibis celsis celsior ipsa sedes.
Sic juxta genitum regem regna perennem,
Ornata ex partu, mater opima, tuo.[19]

More than four centuries later, the abbot Saint Odilo of Cluny (961/62–1049) expressed the heavenly royalty of Mary through this lyrical hymn:

Here comes the day of joy;
nice in every light
in which the Queen of virgins
climb the path of the stars,
surrounded by glittering choirs
of angels,
And to whom an illustrious army
of holy virgins follows,
As it suits to everyone to believe,
Christ, born of her,
Comes manifest, bright,
With a heavenly diadem.
Beyond the glory of angels
And takes with him as an optimal dowry
[the privilege of] Not knowing the bed of sin
Next to the throne of [God] the Father.
The city of the heavenly kingdom
and all its dignity
Honor the Mother of her Prince
with its convenient wishes.

Adest dies laetitiae,
Jucundus omni lumine,
In quo Regina virginum
Scandit iter astriferum,
Angelorum praefulgidis
Circumvallata cuneis,
Quamque sanctarum virginum
Sequitur agmen inclytum.
Ut decet omnes credere,
Coelesti diademate
Clarus, occurrit obvius
Christus, ex ea genitus.
Ultra angelorum gloriam
Torum delicti nescium
Secum ad Patris solium
Reportat pignus optimum.
Coelestis regni civitas,
Et ejus omnia dignitas,
Parentem sui Principis
Votis honorat congruis.[20]

Two or three decades later, the Benedictine reformer and Cardinal Saint Peter Damian (1007–1072) alluded on several occasions to the heavenly royalty of Mary. In a sermon on the Assumption, he says that the Virgin is the upright Queen of the Angels in the sublimity of conversation because she is the rod of the Kingdom of God, and she is subtle in contemplating God because she knew how to keep all these words in her heart, with due consideration.[21] Several paragraphs later, to explain the Assumption, he assumes the query from the *Song of Solomon* "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, Leaning upon her beloved of her?" (Song of Solomon 8:5). In addition, he responds by saying that Mary is that Queen, who upon seeing her the daughters of Zion proclaimed blessed, and to whom the queens praised. Hence, Peter Damian concludes that Mary ascends today (in her Assumption) from the desert, that is, from the world, sublimated to the loftiness of the royal throne.[22] Furthermore, in another homily on the birth of the Virgin Mary, Peter Damian states:

> Today the Queen was born for the world, the window of heaven, the gate of Paradise, the Tabernacle of God, the star of the sea, the ladder of heaven through which the Supreme King descended humiliated to the lowest; and the man, who lay prostrate, ascended exalted to the highest.[23]

Approximately three or four decades later, the conspicuous theologian Saint Anselm of Aosta, Archbishop of Canterbury (1033/34–1109), took up the theme of the heavenly royalty of Mary on numerous occasions. Thus, in a sermon on the Assumption, he enunciates:

> You have been exalted above the choirs of angels for eternity as the joyous and glorious Queen of Heaven, where you help all those who glorify you as a lady and frequent your holy name with humble prayer.[24]

In another passage of this homily, the author prays the Virgin for her soul not be contaminated with the stain of sin but preserved with a pure heart and a chaste body through the merits of her birth, annunciation, childbirth, purification, and assumption. So —Anselm concludes—"I can present myself to the excellent palace of heaven, in which you exult and reign as the glorious Queen of angels and men, Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ".[25]

In another sermon on Christ and all saints, Saint Anselm begs the Virgin—whom he designates as the mother of the Savior, calling her "mother of mercy itself, holy Mary, Lady of the world, Queen of Heaven"—to offer to his Son the Lord the prayers that he commends to her mercy.[26] In another sermon in honor of the Virgin, he extols her with these praises: "You are the honor of the world. You, the nobility of the Christian people, oh, Queen and Lady of the world, stairway to heaven, the throne of God, the gate of Paradise, hear the prayers of the poor, do not despise the groaning of the wretched."[27] Moreover, in another sermon with a similar profile, Saint Anselm implores the saving help of the Virgin with these expressions: "Honour of virgins, Lady of the nations, Queen of angels, the fountain of gardens, the ablution of sinners, Holy and Perpetual Virgin Mary, help the wretched, help the lost."[28]

Almost half a century later, the monk and theologian Honorius of Autun (1080–1151) is probably the author who most frequently and most convincingly adopts the thesis of Mary's heavenly royalty in a series of passages, several of which come from his famous work *Sigillum Beatae Mariae*. In one of them, he says that today (the day of the Assumption), the glorious Virgin emigrated to the glory of Heaven, where her Son Christ sublimated her as Queen of Heaven above all the orders of the angels.[29] In another later passage of this work, the author says that the stature of Mary is similar to that of the palm, and, having been Christ a palm on the cross, since through him we obtain the palm of victory, the high glory of Mary is assimilated to this stature of Christ because he is the King of Heaven and she is the Queen of the angels.[30]

Speaking of the Presentation of Jesus to the temple, Honorius ponders the innumerable multitude of inhabitants of heaven who came together in a joyful and orderly procession to attend the act in which the Virgin Mother offered the King of Glory to the human genre while the Queen of Heaven came to the temple today with the King of angels.[31] In another subsequent passage of this writing, the author expresses:

> Therefore, the glorious Mother of God, the perpetual Virgin Mary, be exalted by us with the highest praise, by whom the lost world is restored to life; she is the honorable Queen of Heaven with all the angels, the venerable Lady of the world with all the saints.[32]

Finally, in a sermon on the Assumption, Honorius of Autun assures that on this day, the glorious Virgin is led with joy and exultation through the desert towards the heights; and with the joy of the angels and the jubilation of the saints as Queen of Heaven, she is introduced into the heavenly palace, where she now exudes delights, because the torrent of God's will floods her among the cohorts of angels and armies of the saints.[33]

Around those same years, Hugh of St. Victor (1096–1141) expressed in a sermon on the Assumption:

> That is why the holiest virgin Mary was truly purple, for she shone upon all the saints with royal dignity as the Lady of the world and the Queen of Heaven; she who acted and ruled royally over everything, suppressed the vices and elevated the virtues.[34]

Around those same years, Saint Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153), commenting in a sermon on the works of the Trinity on the exclamation of Saint Elizabeth in the Gospel of Luke, "behold, all generations will call you blessed" (Luc I, 48), says that this designates Mary, as "Mother of God, Lady of the world, Queen of heaven". In addition, it ensures that all generations of heaven and earth will call her blessed because "you engendered life

and glory for all generations", "For in you the angels find joy, the just grace, and sinners forgiveness for eternity."[35] In his first sermon on the Assumption, the abbot of Clairvaux exalted the helping and saving power of the Virgin by expressing:

> Our Queen preceded us, she preceded us and so glorious she was assumed so that the servants who cry can confidently follow the Lady. Lead us behind you; we run to the smell of your ointments (Cant. 1, 3). Our pilgrimage sent in advance our lawyer, who, as the mother of the Judge and mother of mercy, will deal with the business of our salvation pleadingly and effectively.[36]

More than a century later, the conspicuous Franciscan master Saint Bonaventure of Bagnoregio (1217/21–1274), in his fourth sermon on the Annunciation, stated:

> By the nuptial marriage, the Virgin Mary is the Mother of God; by the royal throne, she is the Queen of heaven; by the priestly ornament, she is the advocate of humankind. And the Virgin Mary was fit for all these things since she was of the species of men, of the species of kings, and the species of priests. Let the loving Virgin Mary say: *He who created me rested in my tabernacle*.[37]

In another passage of this homily, the author insists on the royalty of Mary, consigning: "And for this reason the Blessed Virgin became the queen of all" the celestial beings as of the earthly, and infernal ones; because her benefits overflow to everyone."[38] In the third sermon on the Assumption, Bonaventure once again ponders the Virgin's heavenly royalty in these terms:

> Notwithstanding, [Mary] has been made noble above all saints as to the excellence of dignity or gender; because she, being the Mother of the Most High Emperor by gender and dignity, is the noblest of all creatures; and, therefore, she was not undeservedly exalted above all creatures and placed on the highest throne at the right hand of her Son.[39]

Finally, in the sixth sermon on the Assumption, Bonaventure exalts the Queen of Heaven in these warm concepts:

> Hurry, for you will be crowned with a glorious crown, by which you will be made like the majesty of the eternal Father, according to verse sixty-two of Isaiah: *You will be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord and a diadem of the kingdom in the hand of your God*. Because she, superior in glory to the others, shows to be in the hand of God as an example of union and burning desire. Because she, as queen of heaven, she sits at the eternal King's right hand, according to the Psalms: The queen was present at your right hand in golden garments, and is crowned with a crown like the eternal King's crown.[40]

3. Mary's Heavenly Royalty Proclaimed by Medieval Liturgical Hymns

It is now time to expose a large set of fragments from numerous Latin medieval liturgical hymns that allude in some way to Mary's heavenly royalty of her exclusive titles and privileges as the celestial Lady holding the power of facilitating the entrance of believers to Heaven. To better appreciate the evolution of this thesis on Mary's celestial Sovereignty in these hymns, they will be exposed chronologically, grouped by centuries between the 10th to the 15th.

3.1. 10th-Century Hymns

Dating from the 10th century, there are the following six hymns alluding to Mary's royalty:

The *Hymnus 43. Hymnus de beata Maria* praises the mother of the Redeemer for her sublime virtues through this lyric stanza:

You are adorned with roses and lilies,	Rosis ornata et lilio,
that emanate tuberose and balsam,	Nardo manans et balsamo,
Queen and honor of virgins,	Regina et decus virginum,
Tabernacle of Jesus Christ.	Christi Jesu sacrarium.[41]

The *Hymnus 71. Hymnus de sancta Maria* underlines the unique and unrepeatable condition of the monarchial Virgin in these terms:

Noble Queen of the world,	Regina mundi nobilis,
Mother of God and man,	Mater Dei et hominis,
no woman in the world	Nata in mundo similis
Is born similar to you.	Non est tibi ex feminis.[42]

The *Hymnus 5. Purificatio* requests Mary's efficacious mediation to achieve the believer's eternal salvation and avoid his condemnation through the following verses:

Mother full of grace,	Mater plena gratiae,
Queen of Heaven,	Coelica regina,
make us enjoy	Facias nos facie
of God's face,	Perfrui divina,
And that Satan's cohort	Nec sua nos acie
with his army	Gratia fallaciae
Do not sink us in the bilge	Cohors Sathanina
Through deceit.	Mergat in sentina.[43]

The *Hymnus 6. De Beata Virgine Maria* greets the celestial Lady in these terms:

Hail, the glory of the world,	Salve mundi gloria,
Queen of Heaven,	Regina coelorum,
the joy of the saints,	Sanctorum laetitia,
Life of the blessed.	Vita beatorum.[44]

The *Hymnus 11. De Annuntiatione Beatae Virginis Mariae* extols the saving power of the heavenly Sovereign through these concepts:

O venerable Virgin,	O, virgo venerabilis,
laudable	Laudabilis
Queen,	Regina,
Born of David's lineage,	De stirpe David orta,
You are the true gate of Heaven	Tu vera coeli porta,
For everyone who praises you	Cunctis te laudantibus
With excellent prayers.	Precibus praecelsis.[45]

The *Hymnus 56. In Resurrectione Domini Nostri* exalts Savior's royal mother through these short verses:

3a. Be blessed	3a. Benedicta sit
The same Queen of the world,	ipsa mundi regina,
3b. By which our life	3b. Qua vita nostra
always advanced.	prodiit in saecula.[46]

3.2. 11th-Century Hymns

From the 11th century, these four hymns alluding to the theme under analysis outstand:

The *Salve Regina* (the most popular of the Marian antiphons), although attributed to the Benedictine monk Hermann von Reichenau (Hermannus Contractus, 1013–1054), is probably the work of an anonymous eleventh-century author. This antiphon proclaims the heavenly royalty of the Virgin while begging her pious intercession in these expressive verses:

Hail, holy Queen, Mother of Mercy,	Salve, regina,
Hail our life, our sweetness, and our hope.	mater misericordiae;
To thee do we cry,	Vita, dulcedo et spes nostra, salve.
Poor banished children of Eve;	Ad te clamamus, exules filii Evae;
To thee do we send up our sighs,	Ad te suspiramus, gementes et flentes
Mourning and weeping in this valley of tears.	in hac lacrymarum valle.
Turn then, most gracious advocate,	Eia ergo, advocata nostra,
Thine eyes of mercy toward us;	illos tuos misericordes oculos
And after this our exile,	ad nos converte,
Show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb,	Et Jesum, benedictum fructum ventris tui,
Jesus.	nobis post hoc exilium ostende,
O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.	O clemens, o pia, o dulcis virgo Maria![47]

The hymn *Benedicta es Coelorum Regina*, another well-known Marian antiphone, probably from the 11th century, accumulates the praises in honor of the regal mother of the Savior in these stanzas:

Blessed you are,	Benedicta es,
Queen of heaven,	Coelorum Regina
And ruler of the whole world,	Et mundi totius domina,
And medicine for the sick.	Et aegris medicina.
You are called	Tu praeclara maris
The brightest star of the sea,	Stella vocaris,
Who gives birth to the Sun of clemency,	Quae solem justitiae paris,
By whom you are illuminated.	A quo illuminaris.
God the Father sanctified you	Te Deus Pater,
to become	Ut Dei mater fieres,
God's Mother and God's brother,	et ipse frater cujus eras filia,
Whose daughter you were,	Sanctificavit,
Kept you sacred,	Santam servavit
And sent you this greeting:	Et mittens sic salutavit:
Hail, full of grace.	Ave, plena gratia.[48]

The *Hymnus 83. In Annuntiatione Beatae Virginis Mariae* exalts the heavenly Sovereign with these phrases:

Holy Virgin,	Sancta virgo,
Mary, Mother of the Only Begotten	Dei mater Maria
of God,	unigeniti,
Queen of Heaven and Earth,	Coeli, terrae regina,
The only Lady.	sola domina.[49]

The *Hymnus 29. In Nativitate Domini Nostri* celebrates the greatness of the Redeemer's mother with these simple words:

Rejoice, Queen of Heaven,	Gaude, coelorum regina,
blessed because you expel,	quae pellis, benedicta,
Eve's faults.	Evae crimina.[50]

3.3. 10th–12th-Centuries Hymns

The following eight hymns can be documented from some approximate date in the long interval between the 10th and 12th centuries:

The *Hymnus 44. In festo Paschae* praises the superiority of the Savior's mother in these short phrases:

4a. Be blessed	4a. Benedicta sit
this excellent Queen	celsa regina illa
4b. Who begat the King	4b. Generans regem
that plundered hell.	spoliantem tartara,[51]

The *Hymnus 99. In Annuntiatione Beatae Mariae Virginis* salutes the heavenly Empress that way:

2a. Hail, Virgin of virgins,	2a. Ave, virgo virginum,
Spouse of the King of all,	sponsa regis omnium,
white lily	virginitatis
of virginity,	candens lilium
Mary.	Maria.
2b. Hail, Lady of Queens	2b. Ave, coeli de spina (?)
from the thorn (?) of Heaven.	reginarum domina,
Heaven and Earth	te benedicunt
bless you,	coeli et terrae,
Mary.	Maria.[52]

The *Hymnus 101. In Annunciatione Beatae Virginis Mariae* lauds the sublimity of the virtues of the celestial Queen through these expressive verses:

2a. Lady of the World,	2a. Mundi domina
Who is the only one	quae est sola,
chaste	castissima
Queen of virgins,	virginum regina,
2b. The cause of salvation	2b. Salutis causa,
The gate of life	vitae porta
and Heaven,	atque coeli
full of grace.	referta gratia.[53]

The *Hymnus 104. In Purificatione Beatae Virginis Mariae* commemorates the royal mother of the Redeemer for her powerful saving mediation through these stanzas:

6a. Oh Queen of virgins,	6a. Virginum o regina,
we sing to you, Mary,	te canimus, Maria,
by whom the clear lights	per quam fulsere clara
shined to the world.	mundo lumina.
6b. You are the world's nutritious salvation,	6b. Tu salus orbis alma,
you have been made the gate of Heaven,	tu coeli porta facta,
life is given to everyone	per te saeculo vita
through you.	omni est data.[54]

The *Hymnus 105. In Assumptione Beatae Virginis Mariae* celebrates Mary's heavenly sovereignty with these verses:

6a. Oh, blessed	6a. O beata
and venerable	et venerabilis
Virgin, who enjoys	Virgo, quae gaudiis
Of angels' joys.	perfruis angelorum.
6b. Oh heavenly	6b. O regina
Queen, Mary,	coelestis Maria
because you do not lack	quia non eges
Of the glory of Paradise.[55]	paradisi gloria.

The *Hymnus 106. In Assumptione Beatae Virginis Mariae* pays tribute to God the Son's mother with these delicate praises:

4a. The excellent Virgin.	4a. Praecelsa Maria
Mary got scared	virgo pavescit
By the light, [when] Gabriel	lumine, Gabriel
spoken like this:	affatur ita:
4b. You, nutritious Queen,	4b. Concipies, alma
will conceive to the King	regina, orbis
Of the universe, which rules	regem in saecula
All things from eternity.	regentem cuncta.[56]

The *Hymnus 107. In Assumptione Beatae Virginis Mariae* enjoys the royalty of the mother of God the Son this way:

4a. Hail, Mary	4a. Ave, Maria,
Nourishing mother of my Lord,	Domini mei mater alma,
Heavenly	Coelica
full of grace,	plena gratia,
4b. You, blessed,	4b. Tu benedicta
give birth to the King in this world,	regem in saecula paries,
turned into	effecta
Queen of the orb.	orbis regina.[57]

The *Hymnus 118. In festo, Omnium Sanctorum* invokes the immaculate mother of God the Son as the effective protector of the faithful's bodily and spiritual purity through these verses:

8a. Supreme	8a. Regina
Queen	virginum
of the virgins,	praemaxima,
you are an uncorrupted mother	tu mater incorrupta
and a pregnant virgin,	virgo et gravida,
8b. Consecrated	8b. Sacrata
To the Lord	Domino
and to chastity,	et castitas,
keep clean	nostras serva animas
our souls and bodies.	mundaque corpora.[58]

3.4. 12th-Century Hymns

From the 12th century, one is able to document these seven hymns referring to the topic above:

The *Hymnus 346. De Beata Virgine Maria* asks the celestial Queen, whose virginal divine maternity celebrates, to intercede before her Son for the faithful's salvation against the infernal enemy:

Let us sing the praises of the Virgin,	Laudes canamus virginis,
which, by a word from God,	quae sermone, non semine
not by man's semen	a Deo, non ab homine
became the mother of God and man;	fit Dei mater hominis;
[. . .]	[. . .]
With our prayers, Queen, [we request you]	Nostris, regina, precibus
be an open door before your Son,	esto patens ad filium, quo clauso venit,
Who came through a closed door,[59]	ostium,
To save us from [hellish] enemies.	salvare nos ab hostibus.[60]

The *Hymnus 352. Sancta Maria* (rewritten in the 12th century from an original of the 7th-century poet Venantius Fortunatus) glorifies the royal mother of the Supreme King through these lyrical stanzas:

Now, Virgin of virgins,	Nunc tibi, virgo virginum,
We offer you the praise of our poems,	Laudes ferimus carminum
And this little crowd resonates with you,	Teque, coelorum regina,
Queen of Heaven.	resultet haec plebecula.
[. . .]	[. . .]
Breastfeed, Queen of children,	Lacta regina parvulum
the Son of the Eternal King,	Aeterni regis filium,
nurse with your sacred breast	*lacta sacrato ubere*,
the one who granted you to live.	qui te concessit vivere.
You are from an illustrious royal lineage	Tu clara stirpe regia
And, by full rights, You gave birth	jureque mundi domina
to the Owner of the world,	*desideratum omnibus*
the one desired by everyone.	tu protulisti *gentibus*.[61]

The *Hymnus 505. Letania de domina nostra virgine Maria* glorifies the heavenly royalty of the Savior's mother through these sentences:

Holy Mary, Queen of virgins,	Sancta Maria tu floris et rosis,
thornless rose,	Panis et pastoris,
with flowers and roses,	Virginum Regina,
With loaves and shepherds,	Rosa sine spina.
Pray for us to the blessed	Ora pro nobis benedictum
fruit of your womb.	ventris tui fructum.[62]

The *Hymnus 527. De sancta Maria (troparium)* extols and pleads for the power of Mary's universal mediation before her divine Son through this long sequence of expressive verses:

Oh, Lady, oh, make us auspicious	O domina, o dominum
The Lord,	propicium fac
your firstborn,	nobis tuum primogenitum,
Holy Mary!	sancta Maria![63]

Several stanzas later, *Hymnus 527* goes on to say:

Oh, Queen!	O regina,
oh, reign, win,	o regnat, vincit,
dominate,	imperat,
your only begotten	non moriturus
will not die	tuus unicus,
Holy Mary!	sancta Maria!
Now you, mother, reign	Nunc super choros angelorum
At the right hand of your Son,	exaltata
exalted	a dextris filii
over the choirs of angels.	mater regnas,
circled	coelesti gloria
for heavenly glory,	circumdata,
Holy Mary!	sancta Maria![64]

Then the *Hymnus 527* concludes by expressing:

Remember us with mercy	Nostri memor esto in misericordia
in this misery,	in hac miseria,
take us, who are devastated,	nos exules
to the eternal	reduc ad aeterna
tabernacle,	tabernacla,
Holy Mary.	sancta Maria.
Oh Virgin, oh Lady,	O virgo, o domina,
Oh, Queen mother,	o mater regina,
Holy Mary.	sancta María.[65]

The *Hymnus 558. Oratio ad gloriosam Virginem Mariam* devotes to Virgin Mary's sovereignty in almost all its stanzas, in some of which it expresses:

Oh, Mary, Mother of God,	O Maria, mater dei,
Have pity on me, I beg you,	miserere precor mei
And pray for me to God,	atque pro me roga deum,
So that he acquits this guilty.	ut absolvat istum reum.
Here I entrust myself to you	Ecce tibi me commendo
And I give myself to you as a slave,	et me servum tibi reddo,
you, Lady, welcome me	tu, domina, me suscipe
and look here with mercy.	et clementer huc respice.[66]

Then *Hymnus 558* continues lauding the Virgin Mary through similar proclamations over her sublime qualities in these stanzas:

Oh, lady worthy of veneration	O domina veneranda
And praise, above all,	super omnes et laudanda,
if you want to help me,	si me velis adjuvare,
who will force me to despair?	quis me coget desperare?
Oh, glorious Lady,	O domina gloriosa,
Beautiful above all	super omnes speciosa,
Remember your servant	memor esto servi tui,
Who entrusted himself to you.	qui se commendavit tibi.
Oh, sweetest Lady,	O domina dulcissima,
The meekest above all,	super omnes mitissima,
help me, I beg you	assis mihi supplicanti
and I always call on you.	et te semper invocanti.[67]

In the next stanza, *Hymnus 558* goes on to express:

Oh, the most merciful Lady,	O domina piissima,
the worthiest of all praise,	omni laude dignissima,
make me worthy to exalt you,	fac me digne te laudare,
revere you and love you.	venerari et amare.
Oh Lady loved by God,	O domina deo cara,
decent and distinguished by your lineage,	stirpe decens et praeclara,
but even more distinguished by your merits	sed meritis praeclarior
and nobler because of your customs.	moribusque nobilior.
Oh, the most pleasant Lady,	O domina gratissima,
very rich for your virtues,	virtutibus ditissima,
so fertile with all good,	omni bono tam fecunda,
who is not second to everyone.	quod nulli es hoc secunda.[68]

Insisting on the same idea, the *Hymnus 558* repeats its praises over the excellent virtues of the Queen of Heaven as follows:

Virgin always before childbirth	Virgo semper ante partum
And in childbirth and after childbirth,	et in partu et post partum,
You are preferred to all by all rights,	jure cunctis es praelata,
And exalted above all,	super omnes exaltata,
Always chaste, always pure,	Semper casta, semper pura,
always to please God,	semper deo placitura,
never feckless, never vain,	nunquam levis, nunquam vana,
as if you were not human.	ac si esses non humana.
Oh Lady of ladies,	O domina dominarum,
Oh Queen of queens,	o regina reginarum,
for your mercy	propter tuam pietatem
drive away my poverty.	pelle meam paupertatem.[69]

The *Hymnus 98. De gaudiis Beatae Virginis Mariae* salutes the Virgin's privilege as the universal helper, whose saving support it pleads for by these rhymes:

1. Queen of Heaven, rejoice,	1. Regina coelorum, gaude,
Enchanted with heavenly praise.	Inclita coelesti laude.
2a. Rejoice, glittering gem,	2a. Gaude, gemma lucida,
Rejoice, gate of Heaven,	Gaude, coeli janua,
Splendid as the lilies,	Lucens ut lilia,
Blooming rose.	Florens rosa.
2b. Splendid gate of Heaven,	2b. Coeli porta fulgida,
Only you are the unique salvation.	Sola tu salus unica,
Oh, Lady of the world,	O mundi domina,
save us.	Tu nos salva.[70]

The *Hymnus 69. In Assumptione Beatae Virginis Mariae* implores the exalted Sovereign of Heaven for her mediation in saving humankind by stating:

8a. Happy Star and Queen,	8a. Felix sidus et regina,
By which the divine light shone,	Per quam luxit lux divina,
Look at us in the shadow;	Nos in umbra respice;
8b. Hold out your hand to the fallen of the Earth,	8b. Tende manum stratis humi,
Make us, Assumpted, to be assumed	Fac, assumpta, nos assumi
To the rest of the blessed.	Beatorum requie.[71]

3.5. 11th–13th-Century Hymns

From this interval of three centuries, one can set up these two hymns alluding to the theme:

The *Hymnus 98. De beata Maria Virgine* celebrates the sublimity of the Empress of Heaven through these warm expressions:

9a. Hail Queen of virgins	9a. Ave virginum regina,
bright morning star,	Stella fulgens matutina,
Lady of the angels;	Angelorum Domina;
9b. Uplifter of the oppressed,	9b. Sublevatrix oppressorum,
hear the pleas	Supplicantum servulorum
From your servants who beg you.	Intende precamina.
10a. You are the hope of the faithful,	10 a. Tu es spes fidelium,
You are the salvation and the refuge,	Salus et refugium,
Hail, Lady of the World;	Ave mundi domina;
10b. The most chaste of virgins,	10b. Virginum castissima,
The best of queens,	Reginarum optima,
Absolve our faults.	Solve nostra crimina.[72]

The *Hymnus 95. De Compassione Beatae Virginis Mariae* sympathizes with the pain of the royal Virgin of Sorrows through these feelings:

Console yourself more,	Consolare, domina
Lady and Queen,	magis et regina,
Why do you abandon yourself to sadness,	Cur moerore deficis,
morning star,	stella matutina,
Your Son removes	Tuus levat filius
the world from ruin.	mundum a ruina.[73]

3.6. 13th-Century Hymns

From the 13th century these three hymns alluding to the above theme can be considered:

The *Hymnus 583. Sequentia* honors the heavenly royalty of Mary, whose protection it begs to receive earthly and heavenly goods, by expressing:

Filled with so many merits,	Tantis meritis onusta,
Embellished with so many graces,	Tantis gratiis venusta,
Oh, august Empress,	imperatrix o augusta,
Who reigns in the kingdoms of Heaven!	coeli regnans in regia!
Give us, mother and matron,	Nobis, mater et matrona,
Your gifts to the hopeful,	sperantibus tua dona
And give us the goods of one life and another,	utriusque vitae bona
since you can, by your grace.	da, nam potes, ex gratia.[74]

The *Hymnus 585. Sequentia de Sancta Maria* requests the rescuing intercession of the celestial Sovereign through these rhymes:

Empress of the angels,	Imperatrix angelorum,
Comforter of the orphans,	Consolatrix orphanorum,
Hear us, oh Mary.	Audi nos, o Maria.
[. . .]	[. . .]
You are seated on the sublime throne,	In sublimi sedes throno,
Propelled by the sound of prayers,	Propulsata precum sono,
Hear us, oh Mary.	Audi nos, o Maria.[75]

The *Hymnus 126. De beata Maria Virgine* pleads for Mary's mercy and saving power through these verses:

Queen of the world, Mary,	Regina mundi, Maria,
excuse	Excusa peccatorum
the limitations	Nostrorum
from our sins	Distermina
And give us the joys of Heaven.	Et da coelorum gaudia.[76]

The hymnus *Magna, major, maxima* requests the mediation of the heavenly Lady before her divine Son in favor of the believer through these expressive proclamations:

Great, greater, the greatest [Virgin],	Magna, major, maxima,
fill the intimacy of the heart	Reple cordis intima
With the heavenly temperature.	Coelesti temperie.
Oh, the happiest light,	O lux beatissima,
Be close to us	Esto nobis proxima,
Asking the King of glory	Rogans regem gloriae,
that we join the inhabitants of Heaven,	Ut nos jungat superis,
Granting us that after the hope	Dans nobis in dexteris
Let's enjoy the new way on the right.	Post spem frui specie.
Virgin Mother of grace,	Quae regina diceris,
you who are called Queen,	Miserere miseris,
have mercy on the poor.	Virgo mater gratiae.[77]

3.7. 14th-Century Hymns

Corresponding to the 14th century one can find out more than two dozen hymns alluding to the subject under study:

The famous antiphon *Ave, regina coelorum* greets the celestial Sovereign with these expressive rhymes:

Hail, O Queen of Heaven.	Ave, regina coelorum,
Hail, O Lady of Angels	Ave, domina angelorum;
Hail! thou root, hail! thou gate,	Salve, radix, salve, porta
From whom unto the world a light has arisen:	Ex qua mundo lux est orta.
Rejoice, O glorious Virgin,	Gaude, Virgo gloriosa,
Lovely beyond all others,	Super omnes speciosa;
Farewell, the most beautiful maiden,	Vale, o valde decora,
And pray for us to Christ.	Et pro nobis Christum exora.[78]

The *Hymnus 586. Laudes beatae Mariae* commends the heavenly Lady as follows:

You, Queen, to whom	Tu regina, quam divina
the divine glory crowned,	Coronavit gloria,
you are the morning star	Tu lucina matutina
which shines brightly.	Fulgens luculentia.[79]

The *Hymnus 591. Laudes Mariae* puts in light the tribute that everybody in Heaven pay to the celestial Empress as follows:

Hail, Royal Virgin,	Ave virgo regia,
mother of clemency,	mater clementiae,
Hail, full of grace,	ave plena gratia,
Queen of glory,	regina gloriae,
egregious mother	genitrix egregia
Of the sublime offspring,	prolis eximiae,
Who are sitting in glory	quae sedes in gloria
From the heavenly homeland,	coelestis patriae,
royal mother and daughter	regis veri regia
of the true King.	mater et filia.[80]

Several stanzas later, *Hymnus 591* retakes similar proclamations to praise Mary as the Queen of Heaven that way:

You [are] mother and daughter	Tu tantae potentiae,
of so much power,	tantae victoriae,
of so much victory,	formae tam egregiae
in such an egregious way,	mater et filia,
cleaning light,	lux munditiae
pious mother.	genitrixque pia,
The celestial beings	obediunt tibi coelestia,
And the luminaries of Heaven obey you,	coeli luminaria,
The Sun and the moon	stupefiunt de tua
And all the stars in heaven	specie sol et luna
Are amazed at your beauty.	cunctaque polorum sidera,
Virgin who rules the heights,	virgo regens supera,
The angels praise you above heaven.	te laudant angeli super aethera.[81]

The *Hymnus 595. Ad eandem [Mariam]*, from about the 14th century, strongly requests the saving intercession of the celestial Queen before her divine Son in favor of the devotees, through these eloquent rhymes:

Lady of Heaven,	Coeli domina,
To which all armies	quam sanctorum agmina
Of the saints revere	venerantur omnia
in the heavenly curia,	in coelesti curia,
pray to your Son,	tuum roga Filium,
The Redeemer of all,	Redemptorem omnium,
to give us the divine prize	ut sua clementia
by his clemency,	nobis donet bravium,
And so, to erase the vice	sic deleat vitium
and the opprobrium of those who pray.	se precantium et opprobria.[82]

The *Hymnus 322. De beata Virgine Maria* acclaims the heavenly Sovereign as follows:

Hail, Lady of the world	Salve mundi Domina
And Queen of Heaven,	Et coeli regina,
Virgin mother of God,	Mater Dei integra,
Thornless rose.	Rosa sino spina.[83]

The *Hymnus 477. Item ad sanctam Mariam*, from around the 14th century, celebrates the excellence of Mary's majesty with these vivid stanzas:

Rejoice you who are sitting	Gaude super sidera
above the stars like a Queen,	sedens ut regina,
whose mandates	cujus fert imperia
every creature carries.	omnis creatura.
The chorus of the blessed	Ad tuum arbitrium
And the Principalities	coetus beatorum
submit with joy	atque principatuum
at your discretion,	gaudentes famulantur,
And those armies	et ad tuum desiderium
of celestial spirits	illa supernorum
get aroused diligently	spirituum agmina
at your wish,	sedule inflammantur,
And continually rejoice	abundanti de tua
of your abundant	et perenni gloria
and perennial glory,	jugiter laetantur,
And worship you continuously	te principem et reginam
Like Princess and Queen	illius coelestis patriae
of this heavenly homeland.	jugiter venerantur.[84]

The *Hymnus 504. Psalterium Mariae* proclaims the position of Mary as Sovereign of Heaven next to her divine Son, by stating:

Hail, noble Queen,	Ave regina nobilis,
chaste and humble at the same time,	casta simul et humilis
who are present at the right hand of your Son	astans a dextris filio
Beautiful in a varied dress.	vestitu pulchra vario.[85]

Quite a few stanzas later *Hymnus 504* continues to express similar praises, when enouncing:

Hail, famous Queen,	Ave regina celebris,
from which the light	de qua lumen in tenebris
born in the darkness gives birth to joy	exortum parit gaudium
In the faithfuls' houses.	in domibus fidelium.[86]

The *Hymnus 508. Roseum crinale Beatae Virginis Mariae* praises the helping power of the heavenly Lady in these terms:

Hail, noble Queen,	Salve nobilis regina,
to which no ruin terrifies,	nulla quam terret ruina,
and you are the pond of the saints,	et sanctorum es piscina,
of which the true medicine	de qua vera medicina
was favorable to us.	nobis arridebat.[87]

The *Hymnus 530. De eadem [beata Virgine Maria] Sequentia*, from about the 14th century, exalts the Sovereign of Heaven, whose saving universal intercession before her divine Son pleads with these moving verses:

You joined your King Son,	Regi nato adhaesisti,
whom you nursed and nurtured,	quem lactasti et pavisti
With the proper behavior of a mother.	more matris debito.
You, then united to Him,	Quae conjuncta tunc eidem
have recently been made Queen	es regina facta pridem
By the merits of your deeds.	operum pro merito.[88]

The *Hymnus 530* goes on in the same line of plaudits to the heavenly Lady, whose saving mediation it requests in these terms:

So, Queen, get	Reis ergo fac, regina,
before the King [God]	apud regem, ut ruina
that the ruinous debts of the prisoners	relaxentur debita,
be forgiven, and do with your usual mercy	Et regnare fac renatos,
let the reborn reign	a reatu expurgatos
after being purged of their guilts.	pietate solita.[89]

The *Hymnus 531. Alia sequentia*, from about the 14th century, pleads for the saving intercession of the Queen Mother before her divine Son by these moving proclamations:

Throne of the true Solomon [Jesus]	Thronus veri Salomonis,
whom the King ordained in glory	quem praeclaris coeli donis
With the illustrious gifts of Heaven.	ornavit rex gloria.
O Queen of mercy	O regina pietatis
And all holiness,	et totius sanctitatis
inexhaustible river,	flumen indeficiens,
Save those who trust in you,	In te salva confidentes,
Satisfying the thirsty	salutari sitientes
with your healthy drink.	potu nos reficiens.[90]

The *Hymnus 536. Oratio de Sancta Maria* vehemently requests the royal Virgin of Mercy in favor of the afflicted sinners, when expressing:

Empress of the angels,	Angelorum imperatrix,
Consoler of the poor,	miserorum consolatrix,
Console me who am moaning,	consolare me gementem,
Already stinking in sins.	in peccatis jam foetentem.
Comfort the sinner	Consolare peccatorem
and do not give your honor	et ne tuum des honorem
To the alien or the cruel,	alieno aut crudeli,
I beg you, Queen of Heaven.	precor te, regina coeli.[91]

The *Hymnus 53. In Visitatione Beatae Mariae Virginis* celebrates the enthronement of Mary as Queen of Heaven by her divine Son through these expressive stanzas:

5a. The dominator [woman] of the world	5a. Mundi dominatrix,
transcends, assumed [to Heaven],	Choros angelorum
to the choirs of angels,	Transcendit assumpta,
Queen of Heaven,	Regina coelorum,
nurturing Mother of God,	Dei mater alma,
5b. There the Son enthrones	5b. Illic hanc cathedrat
this Virgin,	Virginem filius,
and imposes the crown	Imponit coronam
Above her head	Super caput ejus
For the glory of God.[92]	Ad gloriam Dei.

The *Hymnus 66. De beata Maria Virgine* invokes the saving power of the celestial Empress in these sentences:

3a. Hail, Lady of the world,	3a. Salve, mundi domina,
Hail, Queen of Heaven,	Salve, coeli regina,
mercy mother;	Mater pia;
3b. Hail, you who heal the guilt,	3b. Salve, sanans crimina,
Hail, you who save all things,	Salve, salvans omnia,
oh Mary.	O Maria.[93]

The *Hymnus 71. De beata Maria Virgine* extols the sublime greatness of de Virgin as heavenly Sovereign as follows:

Oh, Mary, merciful mother.	1a. O Maria, mater pia.
Shimmering star of the sea.	Stella maris fulgida.
nurturing mother, spouse of God,	1b. Mater alma, sponsa Dei,
Daughter of the High King.	Summi regis filia.
You are the Queen of Heaven	2a. Tu coelorum es regina,
The verdant rose devoid of thorns,	Vernans rosa carens spina,
Lady of the angels.	Angelorum domina.[94]

The *Hymnus 73. De beata Maria Virgine* implores the rescuing mediation of the royal mother of God in these stanzas:

4a. Sweet, and tender Queen,	4a. Dulcis, mitis et regina,
Lead us safe from destruction	Duc nos salvos a ruina
For so many crimes in the world.	Per tot mundi crimina.
4b. Take us with you, let's be salvageable	4b. Transfer tecum, valeamus
And let us rejoice with your Son	Et cum nato gaudeamus
Above Heaven, Mary.	Super coelos Maria.[95]

The *Hymnus 75. De beata Maria Virgine* invokes the crucial protection of the celestial Lady through these moving phrases:

4a. Hail, Queen of Heaven,	4a. Salve, regina coelorum,
Consoler of the poor,	Consolatrix miserorum,
refuge of the fallen,	Lapsorum refugium,
4b. Comfort the fallen,	4b. Tu nos lapsos consolare,
Pious, come, don't be late,	Pia veni, ne morare,
Granting us the remedy.	Conferens remedium.[96]

The *Hymnus 97. De beata Maria Virgine* requests the rescuing intercession of the heavenly Empress before God in these words:

5a. You, Queen of Heaven,	5a. Tu coeli regina,
World's medicine,	Mundi medicina,
clean our crime	Munda scelus
, merciful.	Nostrum piissima.
5b. Fast forward to life	5b. In mortis ruina
In the ruin of death	Nos ad vitam mina
appeasing God,	Placans Deum,
You [who are] the most benign.	Tu benignissima.[97]

The *Hymnus 99. De gaudiis Beatae Mariae Virginis* exalts the Sovereign of Heaven as follows:

1a. Rejoice, Mary,	1a. Gaude Maria,
Mother and daughter	mater aeterni
Of the eternal King,	regis et filia,
1b. Rejoice, Mary,	1b. Gaude Maria,
Queen of Heaven	regina coeli
and Lady of the world.	et mundi domina.[98]

The *Hymnus 133. De beata Maria Virgine* greets the celestial Madam with these warm praises:

Hail, Queen of Heaven	Ave, regina coelorum,
Mother of the King of angels,	Mater regis angelorum,
Hail, hope of believers;	Ave, spes credentium;[99]

The *Hymnus 147. De beata Maria Virgine* proclaims Mary's heavenly royalty in these verses:

Be blessed	Benedicta
the cell of cleanliness,	Sit cella munditiae,
the road guide,	Dux viae,
The Queen of the homeland,	Regina patriae
The mother of the King of glory.	Mater regis gloriae.[100]

The *Hymnus 72. In Assumptione Beatae Mariae Virginis* addresses Mary, as Queen of Heaven, to ask for her saving mediation in life and death, by proclaiming:

Hail, Mary, mother	Ave, Maria gratiae
of grace,	Mater, mundi regina,
Mother of mercy,	Mater misericordiae,
Save us from ruin;	Salva nos a ruina;
Source of life, vein of forgiveness,	Fons vitae, vena veniae,
Hurry then to come,	Venire tunc festina,
When we get closer to death,	Cum morti propinquamus,
Oh, let us be safe with you	O, tecum valeamus
in perpetual enjoyment.	Perpetuo gaudere.[101]

The *Hymnus 91. De beata Maria Virgine* exalts the heavenly Lady with these poetic compliments:

1a. Hail, Queen of glory,	1a. Salve, regina gloriae,
Mary, star of the sea,	Maria, stella maris,
You give birth to the Sun of Justice,	Solem paris justitiae,
You, who are comparable to the moon.	Quae lunae compararis.
1b. Sweetness of the life of grace,	1b. Vitae dulcedo gratiae,
source of healthy water,	Fons aquae salutaris,
Mother of mercy,	Mater misericordiae,
you are called harbor.	Tu portus appellaris.[102]

The *Hymnus 541. De Sancta Maria* proclaims and requests the mediating power of the Virgin as the celestial Queen through these emotive proclamations:

Illustrious advocate,	Advocata inclita,
Trinity's Garden,	hortus trinitatis,
Empress of Heaven,	imperatrix coelica,
Deity's Temple,	templum deitatis,
star that shines very clearly	stella coeli fulgida
in the sky,	summae claritatis,
Be for me, Lady,	esto mihi, domina,
A merciful mother.	mater pietatis.[103]

Several stanzas later the *Hymnus 541* insists in similar praises to the heavenly Sovereign, when extolling:

Virgin, flower and lily,	Virgo, flos et lilium,
Virgin so adorned,	Virgo tam ornata,
superexalted	In coelorum solium
to the throne of Heaven,	Superexaltata,
You reign set otherwise	Secus Dei Filium
together with God the Son.	Regnas collocata;
Help me,	Mihi fer auxilium,
sweet advocate.	Dulcis advocata.[104]

The German hymnographer and Carthusian monk Konrad von Haimburg (Conradus Gemnicensis, † 1360), composed the famous hymn *Crinale Beatae Mariae Virginis*, in some of whose stanzas he sings the sublime attributes of the imperial mother of the Redeemer, while requesting her saving protection, through these rhymes:

Hail, mother of Solomon [Christ],	Ave mater Salomonis,
worthy of scepters and crowns,	Digna sceptris et coronis.
worthy of the supreme gifts of your Son,	Digna summis nati donis,
who reigns on the thrones of Heaven,	Quae in coeli regnas thronis,
O Queen of Glory!	O, regina gloriae.
Hail, living fountain of the gardens,	Ave vivus fons hortorum,
By which the mind of the contrite thirsts,	Quem mens sitit contritorum,
Wash away the stain of sinners,	Lava labem peccatorum,
Give [us] heavenly nectar,	Nectar praebe supernorum,
Oh, butler of pardon.	O, pincerna veniae.[105]

Some stanzas later of this *Crinale*, Konrad von Haimburg goes on to insist in similar ideas:

Hail, singular Virgin,	Salve virgo singularis,
Despite being the mother of an amazing boy,	Mater tamen miri maris,
That is why you are the only one	Unde sola expers paris
who gives birth without [sexual intercourse],	Digne cunctis dominaris
You dominate everyone with dignity	In supremo solio.
on the supreme throne.	Salve Saba generosa
Hail generous [Queen of] Sheba[106]	O, regina gloriosa,
O glorious Queen,	*Dona regis pretiosa*
Give us the precious gifts of the King,	*Impertire gratiosa*
Give us the grace in banishment.	*Nobis in exsilio*.[107]

Furthermore Konrad von Haimburg, in the hymn *Oratio super Salve Regina* highlights the supernatural power of intercession of the Empress of Heaven before her divine Son, by proclaiming:

Hail, noble Queen,	Salve nobilis regina,
source of mercy,	Fons misericordiae,
medicine of life for the sick,	Aegris vitae medicina,
vein of forgiveness for the fallen.	Lapsis vena veniae.
now drink for the thirsty	Sitibundis nunc propina
nectar of indulgence,	Nectar indulgentiae,
and medicine of grace	Et quos culpae pungit spina,
for whom the thorn of guilt pierces.	Medicamen gratiae.[108]

An untitled hymn from the 14th century sings the sublime splendor of the glory by which Mary reigns in Heaven in the fullness of her bodily and spiritual beauty, by acclaiming:

Rejoice, noble Queen,	Gaude, Regina nobilis,
incomparable Virgin	Virgo incomparabilis,
who shines alone	Quae in vestitu candido,
with a white, omniform,	Omniformi et fulgido,
and effulgent dress, sitting	Sola fulges in solio
on the imperial throne.	Sedens imperatorio.[109]

Then this untitled hymn goes on to praise the heavenly Lady as follows:

Rejoice, you, in whose head	Gaude in cujus capite
A golden crown shines,	Distincta miro lapide
Distinguished with an admirable precious stone,	Corona lucet aurea,
And dressed in an ethereal light . . .	quam vestit lux aetherea . . .
Rejoice, you who are	Gaude quae plenitudine
beautifully adorned with the fullness	decoris stolae geminae,
Of the decorum of a twin stole,	Tam corporis quam animae,
Both body and soul.	ornata es pulcherrime.[110]

The *Hymnus 13. De conceptione Beatae Mariae Virginis. In 3. Nocturno. Responsoria* requests the effective intercession of the heavenly Lady to achieve well-being on Earth and salvation in heaven through these emotional words:

Oh mother	O misericordiae
And Queen of mercy,	Mater et regina,
Save us from ruin	In valle nos miseriae
in the valley of misery;	Custodi a ruina;
for this special feast	Ob festa specialia
Take us to the happy	Tua gaudiosa
joys from Heaven,	Duc nos ad coeli gaudia
glorious Virgin.	Virgo gloriosa.[111]

The *Hymnus 15. De conceptione Beatae Mariae Virginis. In 1. Vesper. Ad Magnificat* intones the royalty of Redeemer's mother as follows:

Queen's glory	Gloria reginae
Of Heaven remain endless,	coelorum sit sine fine,
She launched the morning star,	Quae jubar ingessit,
With which the eternal night withdrew.	quo nox aeterna recessit.[112]

3.8. Hymns from the 13th–15th Century

Numerous hymns on the subject produced on an approximate date in the long interval of these three centuries can be taken into account.

The *Hymnus 518. Sequentia de Santa Maria Virgine* asks for the protection of the celestial Sovereign in these verses:

Mother of the King and Queen,	Mater regis et regina,
Guide and discipline of customs,	morum dux et disciplina,
Lead us from the bilge of evils	de malorum nos sentina
to heaven.	perduc ad coelestia.[113]

The *Hymnus 7* salutes the royal mother of God by these poetic expressions:

Hail, burning bush	Salve ardens rubus
without any burns	Nihil concrematus,
To which the King of Heaven	Per quam rex coelorum
was born into the world,	In mundum est natus,
who chose you for himself	Qui sibi te elegit
As a virtuous espouse,	Sponsam virtuosam,
As Lady of the angels	Dominam angelorum
And Queen of Heaven	Et reginam polorurn,
and all kingdoms.	Omnium regnorum.[114]

The *Hymnus 14* celebrates Mary's celestial royalty by these vivid enouncements:

The cohorts of the saints	Te clamant,
acclaim you,	Amant
They love you	Jugiter
Continually,	Agmina sanctorum,
praising together sweetly	Collaudantes praedulciter
the Queen of Heaven.	Reginam polorum.[115]

The *Hymnus 15* aknowledges the Virgin as preelected celestial Lady as follows:

Before God	Haec praeconcepta
created the world,	Dudum fuerat,
She [Mary] was preconceived	Antequam mundum
For a long time	Deus fecerat,
in divine mind	Mente divina
As Queen of Heaven.	Coeli regina.[116]

The *Hymnus 29* pleads for the saving protection of the heavenly royal mother of the Redeemer by this stanza:

Glorious Empress,	Imperatrix gloriosa,
Filled with the titles of praises,	Plena laudum titulis,
powerful and imperious,	Potens et imperiosa,
With angelic songs	Canticis angelicis.
Mother and Queen,	Jure commendaris,
Entrust us with full right	Mater et regina,
To your Son without disturbing him,	Nato non gravaris.
Give us your Son,	Tuo nos assigna,
Mother of Christ, worthy of God.	Christi mater, Deo digna.[117]

The *Hymnus 34* asks for the saving intercession of the celestial Sovereign with these vibrant pleas:

Mary, messenger of the triune God,	Maria triuni gerula,
I beg you with a piteous voice,	Te precor voce querula,
Do not despise the words of those who lament,	Ne aspe maris verba lamentantis,
Crying out to you, Queen of glory,	Ad te, regina gloriae,
Wailing with teary eyes	Clamantem mundi scoriae
From the scum of the world.	Rorantibus ocellis ejulantis.[118]

The *Hymnus 42* expresses the believer's confidence in the protection of the heavenly Lady as follows:

Oh Queen	O regina,
divine light,	lux divina,
Pray for me	Pro me rogita,
Oh most beautiful	O formosa,
than the rose,	plus quam rosa
Do visit the sense.	Sensum visita.[119]

The *Hymnus 48* asks for the saving intercession of the celestial Empress through these vibrant pleas:

Oh Queen,	O, regina,
Lady of Heaven,	Coeli domina,
Virgin daughter	Virgo Dei filia,
And mother of God,	Et puerpera,
Give us who ask you	Da nobis petentibus
that, by your prayers,	Tuis precibus,
We will be	Ut simus cum civibus
with the citizens of Heaven	In coelestibus.[120]

The *Hymnus 50* congratulates Mary as the celestial Monarch as follows:

Hail, Queen of Glory,	Salve regina gloriae,
slag cleaner,	Emundatrix scoriae,
Empress of Heaven,	Imperatrix coelica,
The voice of an angel greeted you	Blande vox angelica
Mercifully, gently.	Te piam salutavit.[121]

The *Hymnus 56* sings the glory of the royal mother of the Savior with these simple rhymes:

Hail, Queen of Heaven,	Ave regina coelorum,
Mother of the King of angels,	Mater regis angelorum,
Beautiful spouse of God,	Sponsa Dei speciosa,
appreciable rose from the flowers.	Spectabilis florum rosa.[122]

The *Hymnus 85* the hymn celebrates Mary's status as the Empress of Heaven by the following verses:

Rejoice, Queen of glory,	Gaude regina gloriae,
You who enter Heaven today,	Quae polos transis hodie,
Above the heavenly cohorts,	Peragmina coelestium,
Mary, the whitest lily.	Maria candens lilio.[123]

The *Hymnus 109* extols the divine motherhood of the royal Virgin, whose help it asks for by this stanza:

Oh, Mary, you are the worthy	Sponsa Christi Deo digna,
Spouse of Christ, worthy of God,	Virgo virginum regina,
Virgin Queen of virgins,	Nobis pia sis benigna,
Be merciful and kind to us.	O, Maria, tu condigna.[124]

The *Hymnus 131* proclaims Mary's heavenly royalty by these short sentences:

You behold the King	Regem conspicis,
That prevails over Heaven,	Regentem aethera,
The sad world already defeated,	Victo jam orbe tristi
You are called Queen of Heaven.	Coelorumque regina vocaris.[125]

The *Hymnus 140* requests the intercession of the Monarch of Heaven before her divine Son in favor of humankind with these touching pleas:

Empress of Heaven,	Imperatrix coelica,
mother of orphans,	Mater orphanorum,
magnificent Queen	Regina magnifica
From the heavenly homeland,	Patriae coelorum,
Oh, Egregious Virgin,	O, virgo egregia,
Erase [our] faults	Inclytum per natum
Through your illustrious Son	Sobole de regia
From royal lineage.	Deleas reatum.[126]

A few stanzas later the *Hymnus 140* continues to praise the heavenly Lady as follows:

The holiest Queen,	Regina sanctissima,
Favorer of the clergy,	Fautrix clericorum,
The most chaste of virgins,	Virginum castissima,
Light also of the saints,	Lux quoque sanctorum,
Grant that by your prayers	Tua per precamina
We can see your Son	Natum videamus,
and remain	Et tecum in patria,
With you in the homeland [of Heaven].	Da, ut maneamus.[127]

The *Hymnus 185* begs the celestial Sovereign for her careful attention to the pleas of the faithful through these vibrant stanza:

Sublime star of lights,	Excelsum sidus luminum,
Queen of Heaven,	Regina coelorum,
To which the Rector of Heaven	Quam elegit ab aeterno
chose from eternity,	Rector aetherorum,
Listen, Mary, the prayers of	Audi vota supplicum,
Your supplicants.	Maria, tuorum.[128]

3.9. 15th-Century Hymns

Dating back to the 15th century, one can document a large series of hymns that allude to the subject under analysis:

The *Hymnus 537. De Beata Maria Virgine* requests the intercession of the heavenly Lady before her divine Son in favor of the believers through these vivid verses:

Princess and patron	Angelorum
Of the angels,	princeps et patrona,
Grant [us]	dona,
that you speak good things	ut loquaris bona
in favor of the Kingdom's crown,	pro regni corona,
with the praise you enjoy.	laude quae fruaris.[129]

The *Hymnus 392. Ave Maria in rythmis* exalts the exclusive privileges of the celestial Sovereign as follows:

Hail, blessed Queen,	Ave regina beata,
you are a consecrated Virgin,	quae es virgo consecrata,
designated mother of God	Dei mater ordinata
before the beginning of the world.	ante mundi principium.
Mary, conductor of Heaven	Maria coeli ducissa
And Princess of virgins,	virginum et principissa,
true crown of the martyrs	martyrum corona ipsa
And mirror for the saints.	et sanctis speculum.[130]

A few stanzas later, the *Hymnus 392* continues extolling the virtues and exclusive privileges of the Lady of Heaven through these poetic expressions:

Full of love of salvation,	Plena salutis amore,
Of honesty and candor,	honestate et candore,
Of clarity with splendor,	claritate cum splendore,
you are the happy spouse of the King.	es felix sponsa regia.
The Lord procreated you,	Dominus te procreavit
He crowned you adorned,	et ornatam coronavit,
And ordained you crowned	coronatam ordinavit
to his beloved Son.	suo dilecto filio.
You are the Queen Empress,	Tu regina imperatrix,
The Mediator between God and us	Dei et nostrum mediatrix
And the consoler of sorrows,	ac moestorum consolatrix,
chosen from the start.	electa ab exordio.[131]

The *Hymnus 447. Assumptionis Beatae Mariae Virginis* celebrates Mary's exaltation as the celestial Sovereign after being assumed into Heaven, by this expressive stanza:

The Queen of world today	Regina mundi hodie
Ascends to the throne of glory,	thronum conscendit gloriae,
distinguished as this lily	illum enixa lilium,
that exists before the morning star.	qui est ante luciferum.
Assumed [to Heaven], she stands out	Assumpta super angelos
over angels and archangels,	excellit et archangelos,
and a tiny woman	cuncta sanctorum merita
surpasses all the merits of the saints.	transcendit ima femina.[132]

The *Hymnus 462. Gaudia terrena et aeterna Beatae Mariae Virginis* celebrates the sublime privileges of the elected mother of God the Son through these warm statements:

Rejoice, Virgin, bride of Christ,	Gaude virgo, sponsa Christi,
after being greeted [by Gabriel], you conceived	salutata concepisti
by the announcement of the archangel.	nuntiante archangelo.
Rejoice, beloved Queen,	Gaude regina dilecta,
you have been made mother of God	Dei mater es effecta
giving birth in a manger.	pariendo in praesepio.
Rejoice, because your triumvirate	Gaude, nam triumviratus
adored childbirth	tuus partus adoratus
stands happily by a royal trinity.	est trino fausta regio.[133]

The *Hymnus 479. In honorem virginis prosa* salutes Mary's splendid heavenly royalty through these poetic expressions:

Rejoice, Queen of Heaven,	Gaude coelorum regina,
Sun of admirable brilliance,	Sol mirae fulgentiae,
Bright moon, path of life,	Luna splendens, vitae via,
Source of supreme grace;	Fons supernae gratiae;
because three kings	nam tres reges, mater pia,
Of royal power, pious mother,	Regalis potentiae,
offered three gifts	Dona obtulerunt tria
To the new King of glory.	Novo regi gloriae.[134]

The *Hymnus 480. De beata Virgine oratio* vehemently pleads for the helpful intercession of the Lady of Heaven through these two fiery stanzas:

Rejoice, light of the world,	Gaude lumen saeculorum,
Oh, Queen of angels	O, regina angelorum,
Turn your face towards me, "be healed!"	ad me vultum tuum verte, "esto sanus!"
say openly,	dic aperte,
Oh, shining dawn!	O, rutilans aurora!
[. . .]	[. . .]
Rejoice, now enlightened,	Gaude nunc illuminata,
enthroned in Heaven,	coeli sede collocata,
Glorious Empress,	imperatrix gloriosa,
Help me, Virgin, without delay,	juva, virgo, non morosa,
offering prayers on my behalf.	pro me preces offerens.[135]

The *Hymnus 481. De Beata Maria Virgine* extols the heavenly royalty of the Virgin together with her divine Son by proclaiming:

Rejoice, crowned with a double set of	Gaude stellis coronata
Stars, illustrated	bissenis et illustrata
by the principle of light.	luminis principio.
Rejoice, blessed Queen,	Gaude regina beata,
exalted above Heaven,	super coelos exaltata,
Mother united to the Son.	mater juncta filio.[136]

The *Hymnus 484. De Beata Virgine Maria* celebrates the supernatural attributes and privileges of the royal mother of God through these lyrical proclamations:

Hail, Queen of Heaven,	Ave coelorum regina,
Hail, discipline of customs,	ave morum disciplina,
Path of life, divine light,	via vitae, lux divina,
Virgin, mother, daughter.	virgo, mater, filia.
Hail, holy temple of God,	Ave templum sanctum Dei,
source of salvation, door of hope,	fons salutis, porta spei,
all the convicts run towards you	ad te currunt omnes rei
with full confidence.	plena cum fiducia.[137]

Then the *Hymnus 484* continues its exaltation of the celestial Queen for her outstanding virtues by proclaiming:

Hail, mother of the Savior,	Ave mater salvatoris,
vase of virtues, flower of honor,	vas virtutum, flos honoris,
sinner's medicine,	medicina peccatoris,
merciful mother of the Lord.	pia mater Domini.
Hail, mother of Jesus Christ,	Ave mater Jhesu Christi,
You begot God being a virgin,	virgo Deum genuisti,
by your virtue you ascended	per virtutem ascendisti
giving salvation to mankind.	dans salutem homini.[138]

The *Hymnus 488. Salve Regina* exalts the heavenly royalty of God's mother as follows:

Today you became Queen,	Regina hoc effecisti,
You redeemed us from death	Nos de morte redemisti,
When you conceived Christ	Quando Christum concepisti
The Savior of all.	Salvatorem omnium.[139]

The *Hymnus 489. Super Salve Regina*, inspired by the *Salve Regina* antiphon, acclaims with special insistence the Virgin Mary in her condition as Queen of Heaven and helper of humankind. Thus, in its first stanza it states:

Hail noble *Queen*	*Salve* nobilis *regina*
source of *mercy*,	Fons *misericordiae*,
Medicine of life for the sick,	Aegris vitae medicina,
vein of forgiveness for the fallen:	lapsis vena veniae:
now gift for the thirsty	sitibundis nunc propina
nectar of indulgence,	Nectar indulgentiae,
and medication of grace	et quos culpae pungit spina
For whom the thorn of guilt pricks.	Medicamen gratiae.[140]

A few stanzas later, the *Hymnus 489*, while continuing to celebrate the glories of the celestial Lady, requests her intercession before her divine Son through these rhymes:

And our special hope,	Et spes nostra specialis,
Hail, honor of the virgins,	Salve decus virginum,
Whose virginal bosom	Cujus alvus virginalis
produces the salvation of men,	Fert salutem hominum,
eternal Empress	Imperatrix aeternalis
Of the heavenly cohorts,	Supernorum agminum
ask the Lord	Ut nos eruat a mali,
To get us out of evil.	Deprecare Dominum.[141]

In other later verses the *Hymnus 489* asks for the saving protection of the empyrean Sovereign by the following expressions:

Truly *clement*,	Vere *clemens*,
truly *pious*,	vere *pia*,
Truly royal Virgin,	vere virgo regia,
To whose praising harmony	cui laudis harmonia
resounds in the homeland [of Heaven],	personat in patria,
Ruling us on this road	nos gubernans in hac via
Through your protection,	tua per praesidia
Take us, *oh sweet Mary*,	transfer *dulcis o Maria*
to eternal joys.	in aeterna gaudia.[142]

The *Hymnus 490. De beata Virgine solemnis antiphona* salutes the celestial Empress as follows:

Hail, Lady of the world,	*Salve* mundi domina
Queen of Heaven,	*regina* coelorum,
joy of the saints,	sanctorum laetitia,
life of the blessed.	*vita* beatorum.[143]

The *Hymnus 491. De Beata Maria Virgine* greets the royal mother of God the Son with these enthusiastic compliments:

Hail, Queen of Glory,	*Salve regina* glorie,
Mary, star of the sea,	Maria stella maris,
You give birth to the Sun of justice,	solem paris justitiae,
and compare yourself to the moon	quae lunae compararis.
[. . .]	[. . .]
High King's Palace,	"Summi regis palatium,
Emperor's Throne,	thronus imperatoris,
Bridegroom's Kneeler,	sponsi reclinatorium,
You are the spouse of the Creator.	tu sponsa creatoris.[144]

The *Hymnus 492. Oratio de Beata Maria* requests the redeeming intercession of the Queen of Heaven in life and death with these pathetic pleas:

So, Madam,	Eja ergo, domina,
Queen of the whole world,	totius mundi regina,
Let us soon clean up	fac nos in hac miseria
the vices in this misery,	praesto deflere vitia,
So that, after the end of life,	ne post vitae terminum
Let us not be led to torture,	trahamur ad supplicium,
But with your holy prayers	sed tuis sanctis precibus
We join the citizens of Heaven.	jungamur coeli civibus.[145]

The *Hymnus 496. Super Ave maris stella*, inspired by this famous Marian antiphone, asks for the salvific help of the celestial Lady as follows:

Queen of Heaven,	*Nos culpis solutos*,
make us meek and chaste,	malis involutos,
let us who, wrapped in evils,	regina coelorum,
be freed from guilt,	*mites fac et castos*,
and fed	alimento pastos
with the bread of angels.	pane angelorum.[146]

The *Hymnus 510. Ad beatam Mariam* manifests his devoted fidelity to the Queen of Paradise through these eloquent declarations:

You are Empress in Heaven	Imperatrix es in polo
reigning endlessly,	regens sine termino,
I adore you and venerate you,	te adoro teque colo,
as I must by duty,	sicut jure debeo,
I do not want to deny you, mother,	te negare mater nolo,
although my vice disgusts me,	quamvis gravor vitio,
I want to praise you always	te laudare semper volo,
although I am not able.	licet non sufficio.[147]

Several stanzas later the author of this *Hymnus 510* goes on to express his admiration before the sublime greatness of the heavenly Empress through these rhymes:

Oh, queen of angels	O, Regina angelorum
And Lady of the world,	Atque mundi domina,
Empress of the underworld,	Imperatrix infernorum,
The most sublime Queen,	Hera sublimissima,
The true mother of orphans,	Vera mater orphanorum,
the most pious of the pious,	Piarum piissima,
The true health of the sick,	Vera salus infirmorum
heal my vices.	sana mea vitia.[148]

Some verses later, the *Hymnus 510* continues to ask for the rescuing protection of the heavenluy Queen with these expressive stanza:

Sweet and the most meek	Imperatrix reginarum
Empress of queens,	Dulcis et mitissima,
Flower and gem of the maidens,	Flos et gemma puellarum,
be propitious	Mihi sis propitia,
In this valley of tears	In hac valle lacrimarum
In which misery exists,	In qua est miseria,
I committed crime, have mercy	Crimen feci, sed non parum
abundantly, Madam.	Miserere, domina.[149]

The *Hymnus 533. Ad Beatam Virginem Mariam* asks for the saving protection of the celestial Sovereign that way:

Hail, morning star,	Ave stella matutina,
sinners medicine,	peccatorum medicina,
Princess and Queen of the world,	mundi princeps et regina
be discipline for us.	esto nobis disciplina.[150]

The *Hymnus 544. Flores Beatae Mariae Virginis, ad primam, hymnus* requests the help of the Lady of Heaven to live virtuously through these invocations:

Spouse of the Supreme Prince,	Superni sponsa principis,
promoter of man,	Propiciatrix hominis,
Mary, royal Virgin,	Maria, virgo regia,
Full of praise and grace,	Plena laude et gratia,
Suppress the stimulus of flesh	Compesce carnis fomitem
And the fury of the cruel enemy,	Hostisque saevi rabiem,
Grant us to despise earthly things,	Terrena da despicere,
and wish the heavenly ones.	Superna concupiscere.[151]

The *Hymnus 556. Alia prosa* salutes the empyrean Lady as follows:

You, who are called Queen,	Quae Regina diceris,
Have mercy on the wretched,	Miserere miseris,
Virgin, mother of grace.	Virgo mater gratiae.[152]

The *Hymnus 563. Ad Beatam Virginem Mariam* asks for the redeeming help of the celestial Sovereign through these rhymes:

Bow down, o Queen,	Aures tuas, o Regina,
your ears to my prayers,	Meis precibus inclina,
so that the heavenly medicine	Ut coelestis medicina
Would be close to me through you.	Per te mihi sit vicina.[153]

The *Hymnus 590. Ad Beatam Virginem Mariam* exalts in this way the supernatural virtues and privileges of the heavenly Lady to live virtuously:

Holy Mother of God,	Mater dei sanctissima,
very bright star of the sea,	stella maris clarissima,
mighty Queen!	regina potentissima!
Honor and glory of the saints,	Decus et gloria sanctorum,
Mediator of the weak,	mediatrix languidorum,
Consoler of the poor!	consolatrix miserorum!
thornless rose	Rosa spinae nescia,
Virgin full of grace,	virgo plena gratia,
you carry the beauty of purity,	gerens sanctimoniae decorem,
And have the modesty of chastity.[154]	tenens sanctimoniae pudorem.[155]

Then this *Hymnus 590* goes on to praise the sublime virtues of the celestial Queen in these effusive terms:

Born of royal lineage,	Orta de stirpe regia,
merciful, propitious,	misericors, propitia,
noble, humble, laudable,	nobilis, humilis, laudabilis,
prudent, admirable:	prudens, ammirabilis:
mirror of virginity	Virginitatis speculum
That lights up the whole world.	totum illustrans saeculum.
You are the lily of Paradise,	Tu paradisi lilium,
Empress of Heaven,	imperatrix coelestium,
Dominator of the beings of the Earth,	dominatrix terrestrium,
honor of virgins,	honor virginum,
devoid of guilt.	expers criminum.[156]

The *Hymnus 619. Thronus beatae Mariae* celebrates the exclusive status of the Queen of Paradise at God's side with these eloquent verses:

Hail, Lady of Heaven,	Salve coeli domina,
To whom the cohorts of angels	cui pangunt carmina
sing songs	angelorum agmina
next to the Supreme Good,	summo coram bono,
singing hymns sweetly,	intonantes pariter,
modulating them	hymnizantes dulciter,
continuously	modulantes jugiter
with the sound of harmony.	harmoniae sono.
All beings, Heaven, Earth, the seas,	Tibi parent omnia,
are subject to you,	polus, tellus, maria,
regal dominating Lady,	dominatrix regia,
on the heavenly throne.	in coelesti throno.[157]

The *Hymnus 66. De conceptione Beatae Mariae Virginis. Ad Matutinum* exalts the privileged greatness of the royal mother of God with these eloquent stanzas:

1. Oh, radiant spouse of Christ,	1. O sponsa Christi fulgida,
gracious Queen of Heaven,	Regina coeli inclita,
prudent Virgin	Virgoque prudentissima
and intact mother of God.	Et mater Dei intacta.
[. . .]	[. . .]
3. You are the pleasant rod	3. Tu virga stirpe regia
of royal lineage born of David,	David sacrata exorta,
Lady, you breastfed	Quae regem sine macula
The King of kings without staining you.	Regum lactasti domina.[158]

The Hymnus 71. In Praesentatione Beatae Mariae Virginis salutes the celestial Sovereign as follows:

Hail, little container of virtues	Salve, virtutum cellula
Hope and Lady of the world,	Mundi spes atque domina,
illustrious Queen of Heaven,	Regina coeli inclyta,
Gate of eternal life.	Aeternae vitae janua.[159]

The *Hymnus 75. In Praesentatione Beatae Mariae Virginis. In 1. Vesperis* celebrates the protecting power of the Lady of Paradise in this stanza:

Behold how prudent and faithful	En quam prudens et fidelis
Is Mary, Lady of the world,	Maria, mundi Domina,
Established now in Heaven	Constituta nunc in caelis
As Queen who protects all beings.	Regina tuens Omnia.[160]

The *Hymnus 93. In festo Mariae nivis. In 1. Vesperis* exalts the saving capability of the celestial Empress in these sentences:

For this we praise the Queen of virgins,	Ob hoc reginam virginum
with a diligent mind,	Laudemus mente sedula,
so that she saves us through her Son	Ut nos per suum filium
for eternity.	Salvificet per saecula.[161]

The *Hymnus 17. De praesentatione Beatae Mariae Virginis. Ad Matutinum. Invitatorium* commemorates the empyrean Lady that way:

Let us adore accordingly	Reginam coeli Mariam
Mary, the Queen of Heaven,	Concorditer adoremus,
Who, entering the temple of the Lord,	Quae intrans templum Domini
brought hope, so that we praise [her].	Spem contulit, ut laudemus.[162]

The *Hymnus 19. De Praesentatione Beatae Mariae Virginis. In 3. Nocturno. Responsoria* addresses the heavenly Sovereign looking for her protection in the face of life's difficulties through these warm pleas:

Oh crystal Queen	O regina crystallina,
whom the divine light informs,	Quam informat lux divina,
medicine for the sick	Infirmorum medicina,
get our minds out of ruin,	Mentem perduc a ruina,
and the body out of languor;	Corpus a languoribus;
Make me call you friend.	Fac, ut dicam te amicam.[163]

The *Hymnus 19. De Praesentatione Beatae Mariae Virginis. In Vesperis* asks for the protection of celestial Empress by the following verses:

For the grace you found,	Per gratiam, quam invenisti,
Queen of Heaven, save us,	Salva nos, regina coelorum,
who praise you, mother	Laudantes te, mater
And hope for the orphans.	Et spes orphanorum.[164]

The *Hymnus 21. Historia de Domina in sabbato. In 3. Nocturno. Responsoria* highlights this way the sublime status of Mary as the empyrean Lady over the angels and blessed:

Gate of Paradise,	Paradisi janua,
hope and path of life,	Vitae spes et via,
the hierarchy of Heaven	Tibi servit cernua
serves you meekly	Coeli hierarchia.
And praises you assiduously,	Te decet assidua
pious Queen;	Laus, regina pia;[165]

The German hymnographer Ulrich Stocklins von Rottach (Udalricus Wessofontanus, act. 1438–1443), in his *Hymnus 15. Alia oratio de Beata Virgine Maria*, extols the celestial Sovereign through these warm stanzas.

You are called Queen of virgins,	Tu regina diceris virginum,
White rose and light of lights,	Rosa candens et lumen luminum,
meek and singular consolation	Mitis atque levamen hominum
Of humankind.	Singulare.
You are the purger of our guilt.	Tu purgatrix es nostri criminis.
You, the beloved of godhead	Tu divini dilecta numinis
and the one who never despair	Et quae nunquam peccantem
the sinner.	Desperare.[166]

Ulrich Stocklins von Rottach, in the *Hymnus 19. Oratio devota de Beata Maria Virgine*, asks for the saving intercession of the celestial Queen before her divine Son through these vivid rhymes:

Oh, heavenly Queen of glory,	O regina coelestis gloriae,
Of dignity and excellence,	Dignitatis et excellentiae,
For you, oh, mother of forgiveness,	Per te nobis, o mater veniae,
The weight of wickedness is removed from us.	Remittatur pondus nequitiae.
[. . .]	[. . .]
The honor of the orb, sublime Lady,	Decus orbis, sublimis domina,
Appease the divine King for us,	Placa nobis regentem numina,
Queen of all creatures,	Creaturae totius regina,
listen to the pleas of your plebs.	Tuae plebis audi precamina.[167]

Once again Ulrich Stocklins von Rottach, in his *Hymnus 21. O pulcherrima mulierum*, celebrates the protecting role of the empyreal Lady as follows:

Hail morning star	Ave, sole pulchrior
more beautiful than the sun	Stella matutina,
more flowery than lilies,	Liliis floridior,
that smells in the middle of the frost,	Olens in pruina,
redder than roses	Rosis rubicundior,
O Queen of Heaven,	O coeli regina,
Save me from ruin	Me, qui tibi famulor,
Since I am at your service.	Serves a ruina.[168]

One more time, Ulrich Stocklins von Rottach, in *his Hymnus 31. Abecedarius VI*, pleas for the redeeming help of the celestial Empress as follows:

Illustrious Queen	Totius saeculi
of all the world,	regina inclita,
perfectly endowed	Cunctis virtutibus
of all the virtues,	perfecte praedita,
always be with us	Nos tuis precibus
with your prayers,	semper concomita
we who wander miserably	Vagantes misere
by regions of the world.	per mundi climata.[169]

Ulrich Stocklins von Rottach, in his *Hymnus 34. Abecedarius IX*, request the efficacious protection of the heavenly Sovereign as follows:

Noble Queen	Regina nobilis
And Lady of Heaven,	coelique domina,
to whom the cohorts	Cui angelica
Of the angels attend,	adsistunt agmina,
May	Efficacissima
your most effective prayers	tua precamina
cancel the attempts	Nostrorum hostium
From our enemies.	pellant conamina.[170]

Insisting on similar ideas, Ulrich Stocklins von Rottach prays in his *Hymnus 43. Abecedarius 3*, to the royal Lady to protect him from evil as follows:

From here, I beg you,	Hinc te venerabilem
venerable Queen,	Deprecor reginam,
for your commendable	Tuam per laudabilem
and divine Son	Prolem ac divinam
expel [from me] the horrible	Abige horribilem
satanic larva,	Larvam sataninam,
So that it does not me drag	Ne me trahat flebilem
into the pitiful ruin of death.	Mortis in ruinam.[171]

Ulrich Stocklins von Rottach, in his *Hymnus 48. Rosarium I*, asks for the mediation of the celestial Lady before her divine Son in this stanza:

Hail, Virgin, the only one	Ave, virgo, cui soli
whom fertility was granted,	Data est fecunditas,
whom the Trinity too	Quam quoque regina poli
ordained as Queen of Heaven,	Ordinavit trinitas,
May your kindness unite us	Tuae sacrae jungat proli
To Your holy Son.	Nos tua benignitas.[172]

Lastly Ulrich Stocklins von Rottach, in his *Hymnus 50. Rosarium III* requests the safeguarding of the celestial Sovereign by these exclamations:

Rejoice, oh, Queen	Gratulare, o regina
of existing things,	Rerum exsistentium,
be our medicine	Esto nostra medicina
in the minds of the sick	Mente infirmantium,
and always defend us	Ac defende a ruina
of ruin in the future.	Semper nos in posterum.[173]

The *Hymnus 71. In Assumptione Beatae Mariae Virginis* praises the Queen of Heaven through the following proclamations:

11a. Ordainer of the Angels,	11a. Angelorum ordinatrix,
Mediator of Sinners,	Peccatorum mediatrix,
Health of health;	Sanitatum sanitas;
11b. Dominator of the Ladies,	11b. Dominarum dominatrix,
Empress of Queens,	Reginarum imperatrix,
the sanctity of sanctities.	Sanctitatum sanctitas.[174]

The *Hymnus 57. De Doloribus Beatae Mariae Virginis* salutes the celestial Empress in this stanza:

1a. Hail, generous Virgin	1a. Salve virgo generosa
and glorious Queen	Et regina gloriosa
of the heavenly host,	Coelestis militiae,
1b. Preelected blooming rose,	1b. Praeelecta vernans rosa,
sometimes painful mother	Mater quondam dolorosa
in the valley of sadness.	In valle tristitiae.[175]

The *Hymnus 96. De beata Maria Virgine* celebrates in the following rhymes the supernatural exaltation of God's mother to Heaven:

You are already sublimated in the Kingdom,	Jam in regno sublimaris,
And contemplate the face of your Son,	Nati vultum contemplaris,
you are worthy of being placed next to the King	Ut regina coronaris,
to be crowned Queen,	Nescia quippe paris
certainly, you give birth without sexual intercourse.	prope regem digna locaris.[176]

The *Hymnus 82. In Praesentatione Beatae Mariae Virginis* salutes the virginal God the Son's mother as follows:

Hail, Queen,	Salve regina,
pious Virgin, fertile	pia virgo, divina
by divine grace	gratia fecunda,
preserving her virginity.	puritate salva.[177]

The *Hymnus 102. In Assumptione Beatae Mariae Virginis* commemorates the royal exaltation of the mother of Christ through the following statements:

3a. The Son decorated her,	3a. Natus decoravit,
adorned her	Ornavit,
And so, he arranged her,	Sic ipsam disposuit,
3b. So, he put her on the throne	3b. Ut coeli reginam,
Like the Queen	Dominam
And Lady of Heaven.	In throno suo posuit.[178]

An untitled hymn from the 15th century celebrates through these enthusiastic stanzas the sublime status of the elected Savior's mother after being exalted as the empyrean Empress:

Rejoice, Virgin, as you adorn	Gaude, virgo, quae decore
Heaven with your decorum in the form of light,	Ornas coelum lucis more,
as the sun surpasses with its splendor	velut cuncta sol splendore
everything that shines.	superat lucentia.
Rejoice, you, to whom the choirs	Gaude cui angelorum
Of angels and saints are subjected	Chori parent et sanctorum,
As to their Queen, they offered her	Ut reginae, ac votorum
The gifts of their votes.	Exhibent obsequia.
[. . .]	[. . .]
Rejoice, supremely crowned,	Gaude, summe coronata,
adorned with the gifts of the flesh,	carnis dotibus ornata,
associated with the right hand of Christ,	Christi dextris sociata,
reigning above all things.	Regnans super omnia.
Rejoice, you who always enjoy	Gaude, semper quae frueris
Of these sincere delights,	His deliciis sinceris,
So that you rejoice in eternity	Ut in aevum iucunderis
with great joy.	Summa cum laetitia.[179]

A second untitled hymn from the 15th century commemorates the exaltation of Mary as the Lady of Paradise by these verses:

The Queen elevated to Heaven,	Regina sursum levata,
exalted above all	Super omnes exaltata
The hierarchies of celestial beings,	Ordines coelestium,
Is placed on the right of her Son,	In nati destra locatur,
glorified in her body and her soul	Carne mente gloriatur
As the promoter of the faithful.	Promotrix fidelium.[180]

The *Hymnus 550. De Beata Maria Virgine*, from about the 15th century, extols as follows the exemplary behavior of Mary as the mother of God the Son, by which she deserved to be exalted as the Sovereign of Heaven:

You joined your King Son,	Regi nato adhaesisti,
whom you nursed and nurtured,	quem lactasti et pavisti
With the proper behavior of a mother.	more matris debito,
You then united to Him,	Quae conjuncta nunc eidem
You have recently been made Queen	es regina facta pridem
By the merits of your works.	operum pro merito.[181]

4. Marian Iconographic Types Reflecting Mary's Heavenly Royalty

The relatively early and forceful affirmations of the medieval liturgical Fathers, theologians, and hymnographers about the heavenly royalty of the Virgin Mary took a long time to be reflected in sculptural and pictorial images. Only from the 12th century will the first documented sculptures of Mary with the crown of Queen of Heaven begin to be seen before paintings with similar characteristics appeared since the 13th century. In addition, it is necessary to underline that the doctrine and iconography of Mary as Queen of Heaven are phenomena manifested essentially in the Latin Western Church, since in the field of the Greek-Eastern Churches they occur very rarely. Instead of this majestic and imposing model of the Virgin Queen, Byzantine art prefers other more human and emotional types of the Virgin Mary: such are, for example, the *Glycofilousa* or *Eleusa*, the *Galactotrofusa* (*Virgo Lactans*), the *Odeghitria* (the one that shows the way), the *Platytera*, and other iconographic types based on warm human feelings.

In the initial sculptural representations of the Virgin Queen, Mary appeared wearing a crown on her head and carrying her Child in her arms in two basic situations. The first is as a free-standing sculpture, according to two different compositional modalities: as a figure seated with the Child in her lap, following in the latter case the iconographic model of *Sedes Sapientiae*, or as a standing figure with her Child in her arms. The second situation is that of architectural sculpture integrated into the Gothic portals. In turn, this modality of architectural sculpture assumes two expressions: either as a standing figure on the mullion

of the portals or in a seated position on the tympanum, almost always in the Coronation scene, sometimes as the Virgin enthroned with the Child in her arms. In fact, from the middle of the 12th century, the iconographic type of the Virgin Mary's Coronation began to spread first in sculpture, then in painting. Finally, the Virgin crowned as Queen also multiplied in other Marian iconographic types, such as the Virgin of Mercy and the *Sacra Conversazione*.

In this sense, the author will now analyze these five iconographic types just mentioned of Mary crowned as the Queen of Heaven: (1) The Enthroned Virgin; (2) The Standing Virgin with Child; (3) The Virgin Mary's Coronation; (4) The Virgin of Mercy; and (5) The *Sacra Conversazione*.

4.1. The Enthroned Virgin

The compositional-narrative modality of the enthroned Virgin with her Child in her arms illustrates the iconographic theme of Mary *Sedes Sapientiae* (See or Seat of Wisdom), an iconographic theme already analyzed in other studies (Salvador-González 2012; 2017, pp. 359–78; 2020a, pp. 56–68; 2020b, pp. 127–45; 2021a, pp. 111–35; 2021b, pp. 525–53; 2021c, pp. 391–406; 2022b; 2022c). In it, the Virgin appears seated (sometimes on a throne) holding her Child, almost always seated on her legs, in such a way that she appears as the seat of Christ, the divine Wisdom.

The expression *Sedes Sapientiae* derives from the passage of *Proverbs* in which it is stated: "Wisdom hath built her house" (*Sapientia aedificavit sibi domum*. Prov. 9:1). This biblical sentence was interpreted from early dates by the Church Fathers and medieval theologians according to two complementary exegetical projections. According to a Mariological projection, some interpreted it as a symbolic prefiguration of the Virgin Mary, who was "built" as a "house" by God the Father so that God the Son "lodged" in her (in her womb) during his conception, gestation, and birth. In turn, according to a Christological projection, other Fathers and theologians interpreted this "house" as the human nature in which God the Son "housed" his divine nature, both natures being indissolubly united in the single person of Jesus Christ, Son of God incarnate as a man. In any case, both interpretative variants, far from being antithetical, are essentially related and entirely complementary: this is because the human nature of Christ ("house" in which divinity dwells forever) was generated in the womb of Mary ("house" in which God the Son stayed for only nine months during his gestation).

In this way, the four works to be analyzed below—as well as countless other examples of the same iconographic type—visualize the double Mariological-Christological thesis of the *Sedes Sapientiae*: in her position as the seat or throne of her little Son, Mary symbolizes this seat or house[182] that Wisdom built for herself, to be able to incarnate as a man in her womb, but it also symbolizes the human nature, generated from the womb of Mary, in which God the Son hypostatically housed his divine nature.

On the other hand, the fact that in these four works to be analyzed Mary appears enthroned and with a royal crown on her head reflects the thesis that, being the mother of God, the supreme King of Heaven, she deserves to be the Heavenly Queen. This "genetic" relationship between the King Son and the Queen Mother is an idea brought to light by many patristic, theological, and liturgical texts analyzed above.

This Romanesque wooden statuette from France (Figure 1) is a good example of Mary as *Sedes Sapientiae*. Both protagonists, in a completely frontal position and perfect monoaxial symmetry, fulfill their respective roles in this iconographic theme: Mary, as the enthroned and crowned Queen of Heaven, serves as a throne for her divine Son (the divine Wisdom). The archaism of the style, the clumsiness of the workmanship, and the inexpressiveness of the characters reveal the Romanesque period in which this sculpture was made.



Figure 1. *Enthroned Virgin and Child*, c. 1130–1140. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

This ivory statuette of the Virgin enthroned with her child in her arms (Figure 2)—one of the few Spanish examples of this material that have been preserved—perfectly illustrates the first iconographic type under study. Covered in flowing garments, the Virgin appears seated on a throne with a Queen's crown on her head, holding her divine Child seated on her lap. The seated (enthroned) child Jesus holds the sphere of the universe in his left hand, while he raises his right hand as a sign of blessing (or cursing), rehearsing as a child the pose of the adult Universal Judge Pantocrator. For her part, Mary grasps an apple in her right hand, to signify that she is the new Eve, who as the mother of the Savior, contributes to healing the lethal damage caused to us by the First Mother of Humanity. This attribute of the Virgin as co-redemptrix/helper is illustrated even more strongly by the fact that she is stepping on the head of the dragon/devil that lies under her feet. Such detail reflects the promise made by YHWH in the Earthly Paradise, when, condemning the First Parents for their Original Sin, he promised that a woman would crush the head of the tempting serpent: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel." (Gen 3:15).



Figure 2. *Enthroned Virgin and Child*, c. 1200–1250. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

This French statuette in painted ivory from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (Figure 3) maintains some similarities and differences with respect to the previous Spanish sculpture. The similarities derive from the enthroned pose, the royal crown on the head, and the crushing of the devil serpent. The fundamental difference lies in the fact that the Child's behavior is more natural, leaving behind his imposing mini-Pantocrator-Judge attitude to assume the tender gesture of playing with his mother, trying to take what she offers to him (a flower? an apple?).



Figure 3. *Enthroned Virgin and Child*, c. 1275–1300. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Jan van Eyck's panel, *The Virgin of Chancellor Rolin*, c. 1435, from the Musée du Louvre in Paris (Figure 4) is a sophisticated example of the iconographic sub-type under consideration. The political, social, and economic echoes emanating from the ostentatious praying figure of Chancellor Rolin, rendered with the acute realism characteristic of early Flemish painters, are worth noting. However, it is more interesting to highlight here the role of the Virgin Mary in her status as the Queen of Heaven. Richly dressed and seated on a throne, Mary holds on her legs her divine Child in a sumptuous palace, while a flying angel is going to place on her head an enormous, rich crown of gold and precious stones. One can find here again the symbolic scheme of Mary the Queen as *Sedes Sapientiae*: the crowned and enthroned Virgin, serving at the same time as the throne for her Child, who performs the gesture of blessing, characteristic of the Universal Judge Pantocrator.

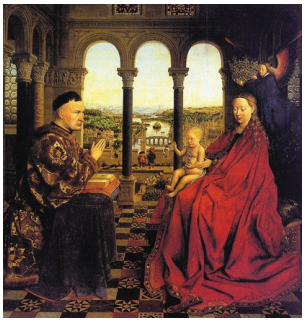


Figure 4. Jan van Eyck, *La Virgen del Canciller Rolin*, c. 1435. Musée du Louvre, Paris.

4.2. Standing Virgin with Child

The symbolic meaning of this second iconographic sub-type has much in common with that of the first. In fact, characterizing Mary with a crown on her head, presenting her divine Son standing up, once again manifests the idea that precisely because she is the Mother of the King of Heaven, she has deserved to be crowned the Queen of Heaven, the Lady of the angels, the saints, and all the blessed of Paradise. This is evidenced by the five works of this sub-type to be analyzed below.

The French *Standing Virgin with Child* statuette, c. 1310–20, from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (Figure 5) is a good specimen of the iconographic sub-type to be considered in this section. Wearing the crown of the Queen of Heaven, the Virgin contemplates upright her little Child, while he unfolds a scroll or phylactery, to signify

the New Testament that he has come to reveal. On the other hand, the fact of representing Mary holding and protecting her defenseless Son in her arms reinforces the dogmatic idea of Mary's virginal divine motherhood and, therefore, also the idea of her sublime privilege as heavenly Sovereign, as the mother of the King of Heaven. It thus becomes clear that a simple woman was able to conceive, gestate, give birth, nurture, and protect the omnipotent Son of God.



Figure 5. *Standing Virgin with Child*, c. 1310–20. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

The statuette in alabaster and gold *Standing Virgin with Child*, c. 1350–75, from the British Museum (Figure 6), probably sculpted in the English Midlands, also exhibits the iconographic sub-type under consideration. Mary appears standing and crowned as the Queen of Heaven, bearing in her right her Child, and holding in her left a flowering branch, a likely allusion to Jesse's flowering rod or Aaron's flowering rod. Christ holds a golden orb in his right hand to symbolize his absolute power over the universe.



Figure 6. *Standing Virgin with Child*, c. 1350–1375. The British Museum. Photo British Museum.

The German Gothic carving *Virgin and Child on a Crescent Moon*, c. 1480, from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (Figure 7) is a clear exponent of the subject of Mary *Regina Coeli* in the form of a standing figure in free-standing sculpture. The gesture of the Virgin showing/offering her little Son face to face reinforces the thesis that it is precisely she who, by accepting the divine plan of becoming the mother of Emmanuel, made it possible for God the Son to incarnate as man, and come from heaven to this world to redeem the guilt of the human beings and bring them the eternal salvation. This explains why this Virgin carries a bunch of grapes in her left hand, in a clear reference to the wine of the Eucharist and, therefore, to Christianity. The Child carries in his right hand a sphere, the symbol of the universe, to signify that He is the King and Lord of all that exists. In turn, Mary exhibits in this sculpture an enormous crown of the Heavenly Queen, in her privileged condition as the mother of the King of Heaven. The presence of a crescent moon under the feet of the Virgin shows her as the Apocalyptic Woman, in a clear allusion to the

vision of Saint John the Evangelist in his *Apocalypse*, when he says he has seen "a woman clothed in the sun, and the moon was under her feet." (Rev 12:1).



Figure 7. *Virgin and Child on a Crescent Moon*, c. 1480. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

The impressive *Virgin and Child* in the mullion of the *Portal of the Virgin*, west left portal of Notre-Dame of Paris, c. 1210–20 (Figure 8), is a perfect example of the architectural monumentalization of the iconographic sub-type studied here, with the feature of the crowned Queen of Heaven holding her divine Child on her left arm. "Enthroned" on the arm of her mother, with a book in his left hand and blessing with his right, he reflects the pose of the Universal Judge-Pantocrator. In turn, the Virgin holds a flowered stem in her right hand, to signify her Biblical prefiguration as the flowered stem at Jesse's root, and Aaron's dry, flowered rod. It is important to note here that, in addition to the meanings already highlighted in the preceding examples, in the sense of Mary as the Queen of Heaven, this statue of the Virgin on the mullion of Notre-Dame of Paris, being located right at the entrance of the temple, also implies the idea of Mary as *Janua Coeli*, a theme that, as shown in other studies (Salvador-González 2023a; 2023b, pp. 1–24), implies the affirmation of the intercessory and protective power of Mary to facilitate the eternal salvation of the believer.



Figure 8. *Virgin and Child*, mullion of the *Portal of the Virgin*, west left portal of Notre-Dame of Paris, c. 1210–20.

First, the small dimensions of the painting by Jan van Eyck, *The Virgin in a church*, c. 1438–1440, from the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin (Figure 9) reveal that it is one of the portable devotional images that some wealthy people could afford for their exclusive personal use.

However, more interesting for our purposes is to note that it is also a brilliant example of the iconographic sub-type under analysis: the Virgin Mary as the Queen of Heaven standing with her Child in her arms. This is manifested by the elaborately crown of gold and precious stones that she wears on her head. As if that were not enough, the fact that the scene is set inside a monumental Gothic cathedral is intended to mean that Mary, as the mother of Christ the Savior, the founder of Christianity, is also the Mother of the Church (*Mater Ecclesiae*) and collaborator of her divine Son in the eternal salvation of the faithful.



Figure 9. Jan van Eyck, *The Virgin in a church*, c. 1438–1440. Gemäldegalerie, Berlin.

4.3. The Coronation of the Virgin

As already said, since the 12th century, the rich iconographic theme of the Coronation of the Virgin has spread in Western Europe, a theme that, partially addressed by some authors (Mâle [1924] 1966, [1899] 1988; Bréhier 1928; Réau 1957; Toscano 1960; Schiller 1980), has been treated in depth as a specific topic by other specialists (Verdier 1980; Thérel 1984; Salvador-González 2012; 2022a, pp. 1–28). What all these various interpretations of the Coronation of Mary have in common is that it is Christ himself, enthroned and almost always crowned, who presides over the solemn ceremony of the coronation of the Virgin, usually imposing the crown himself on the head of the Virgin. Mary, thus putting in light that the Virgin deserves to be the Queen of Heaven, for being the mother of the King of Heaven. This is manifested by the five works to be analyzed below.

The Coronation of the Virgin, atop the tympanum of the *Portail de la Vierge* (North Portal) on the west façade, c. 1210–1220, from the Cathedral of Notre-Dame of Paris (Figure 10), is a perfect pattern of a monumental representation of the ennoblement of Mary as the Queen of Heaven. Surrounded by a cohort of small angels in the first internal archivolt, and flanked by two large kneeling angels carrying two candelabra, Christ and the Virgin appear enthroned and crowned as the Sovereigns of Heaven. Christ blesses his pleading Mother as he hands her a scepter, while a flying angel atop the tympanum finishes placing the crown on the Virgin's head. Thus, one can see with a monumental resonance the exaltation of Mary as the Queen of Heaven, the Lady of angels and saints. This is a royal dignity that she deserves due to her condition as the virginal mother of the Savior, who thus certifies it by presiding over the coronation ceremony of his mother as Heavenly Empress.



Figure 10. *The Coronation of the Virgin*. Tympanum of the *Portail de la Vierge* (North Portal) on the west façade, c. 1210–20. Cathedral of Notre-Dame of Paris.

On the tympanum of the *Portal of the Virgin* (South Portal) on the west façade of Amiens Cathedral, c. 1220–30 (Figure 11) the coronation scene is accompanied in the lower register by the two scenes of the burial of the Virgin (on the left of the image) and of her resurrection/her assumption (on the right of the picture). The royal couple is flanked by four angels, one thuriferary and the other ceriferary on each side of the throne, while at the top two angels encircle the crown on the Virgin's head, accompanied by a third angel who incenses the heavenly Lady. Enthroned next to her divine Son, who blesses her with his right hand, while she holds the book of Scripture in her left, Mary carries in her left hand her scepter that accredits her as the Empress of Heaven.



Figure 11. Tympanum of the *Portal of the Virgin* (South Portal) West façade of the Amiens Cathedral, c. 1220–30.

The Coronation of the Virgin, c. 1324 (attributed to Paolo Veneziano), from the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC (Figure 12) reflects essentially the iconographic sub-type under study. Surrounded by a cohort of angels, Christ, and the Virgin Mary, both with splendid crowns on their heads, stand enthroned. Christ is finishing crowning his mother, who makes a gesture of acceptance, extending both hands forward. With their common throne and their two crowns, Christ and Mary show their status as the Kings of Heaven, to whom the surrounding angels pay a respectful tribute of honor.



Figure 12. Paolo Veneziano (attributed), *The Coronation of the Virgin*, c. 1324. The National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC.

Fra Angelico composes *The Coronation of the Virgin*, 1434–35 (Figure 13), from the Musée du Louvre with a conceptual structure that substantially enriches this iconographic type. Sitting on a splendid Gothic throne and crowned with a splendid golden crown, Christ is crowning his mother, respectfully kneeling in front of him. With such an unusual disposition of both protagonists, the cultured Fra Angelico wanted to signify that the original King of Heaven since eternity is Christ, God the Son, who decided to reward Mary as Queen of Heaven for having accepted to be his virginal Mother on earth. Angelico enriched this altarpiece with plenty of angels and saints, covered with luxurious vestments, all paying respectful tribute to both celestial Sovereigns. The painter accumulated such a crowd aside the throne to better highlight that Mary is the Queen of Heaven, of angels, saints, and blessed of the celestial Paradise.



Figure 13. Fra Angelico, *The Coronation of the Virgin*, c. 1434–35. Musée du Louvre, Paris.

Although much simpler in composition than the Fra Angelico altarpiece just discussed, Fra Filippo Lippi conceives the triptych *The Coronation of the Virgin*, c. 1441–45, from the Pinacoteca Vaticana (Figure 14) with similar conceptual intentions to those of the Angelico. In fact, after more explicitly designing the palace and throne of the King of Heaven, animated on both sides by small groups of angels and saints, such as Fra Angelico's earlier work, Lippi depicts Christ seated on the common throne in the act of placing the royal crown on the head of his mother, who humbly kneels before him. As in the previous case, here too, the inaugural moment of Mary's kneeling to be crowned by her divine Son does

not diminish in the least her status as the majestic Queen of Heaven, the Lady of angels, saints, and the blessed.



Figure 14. Fra Filippo Lippi, *The Coronation of the Virgin*, c. 1441–1445. Pinacoteca Vaticana.

4.4. The Virgin of Mercy

Although it is the rarest and the least representative iconographic sub-type of the Heavenly Royalty of Mary, this one of the Virgin of Mercy also has sufficient doctrinal justification. Precisely because she is the Queen of Heaven, the Virgin Mary, the mother of the Savior, has two decisive powers: that of helping and protecting the faithful in the difficulties, dangers, and temptations of this life and, furthermore, that of interceding before, her divine Son, the Universal Judge, to obtain his clemency so that those who turn to her may obtain the eternal salvation. These ideas are well reflected in the two panels to be presented below.

Lippo Memmi in his *Madonna della Misericordia*, c. 1350, from the Capella del Corporal in the Orvieto Cathedral (Figure 15), depicts the Virgin praying with folded hands while two angels raise the edges of her cloak to cover a diverse crowd of people from various categories and social classes, who implore her protection kneeling at her feet in fervent prayer. Mary appears as the majestic Queen of Heaven with her golden crown, surrounded by a host of angels who serve as her cohort of honor. It is evident here that they want to emphasize the effective power that, thanks to her privilege of being the Queen of Heaven, the Virgin exercises in favor of humans to achieve their protection in the vicissitudes of this life and, ultimately, their eternal salvation.



Figure 15. Lippo Memmi, *Madonna della Misericordia*, c. 1350. Capella del Corporal, Orvieto Cathedral.

The *Madonna della Misericordia*, c. 1444–64 (Figure 16) that Piero della Francesca painted as the central panel of *The Mercy Polyptych*—commissioned by the Sansepolcro Company of Mercy—is undoubtedly the best-known example of this Marian iconographic type. In this central panel of the aforementioned polyptych, Piero captures the Virgin protecting eight people under her wide cloak, which she unfolds with both hands, who represent the group of members of the Sansepolcro Company of Mercy, a corporation made up of various confraternities dedicated to the help and well-being of the population, managing hostels for pilgrims, houses for the poor, hospitals for the sick, and orphanages for foundlings. By depicting the protective Virgin with the crown of the Queen of Heaven, Piero also reveals the idea that it is precisely because of this condition of the heavenly Sovereign that Mary can effectively protect and help those who come to her.



Figure 16. Piero della Francesca, *Madonna della Misericordia*, c, 1444–64.

4.5. The Sacra Conversazione

The *Sacra Conversazione* is perhaps the most complex of the sub-types in which the iconographic theme of the Virgin Mary as the Queen of Heaven is manifested. Although such a sub-type admits numerous compositional variants, they are all essentially reduced to this structure: the Virgin Mary, with or without a crown, appears seated on a sumptuous throne holding her divine Child in her arms, while around the throne are concentrated small groups of angels and saints. These saints, almost always identifiable by their own attributes and characteristics, remain very close to the Virgin on both sides of the throne, as if they were engaging her in a conversation on sacred topics (*Sacra Conversazione*). Four examples of this type will be now considered.

Painted by Fra Angelico, the *Sacra Conversazione*, known as *Pala di San Marco*, c. 1440, in the Museo Convento di San Marco in Florence (Figure 17), is a paradigmatic work in this regard, not only for having been the most relevant painting commissioned by Cosimo de' Medici, destined for the most important temple of the Order of the Domenicani Osservanti, but also because it clearly reflects the doctrinal meaning of the subject. Seated majestically on a luxurious throne with a niche-shaped back, the Virgin appears in the center of the scene, holding the Child in her arms, surrounded on both sides by groups of angels serving as a cohort of honor. To the right of the royal couple are St. Lawrence, St. John the Evangelist, and St. Marc, while to their left St. Dominic de Guzman, St. Francis of Assisi, and St. Peter Martir do the same. Kneeling in the foreground are St. Cosme and St. Damian, the patron saints of the Medici (St. Cosme was the patron of "Cosimo" il Vecchio).



Figure 17. Fra Angelico, *Sacra Conversazione* (*Pala di San Marco*), c. 1440. Museo Convento di San Marco, Florence.

The central panel of *The Saint John Triptych* that Hans Memling painted around 1474–79 for the Saint John Hospital in Brugge (Figure 18) is an exquisite model of *Sacra Conversazione* in the style of the early Flemish painters. Having on her head a simple diadem with some precious stones, instead of a pompous gold crown, the Virgin Mary appears in a luxurious palace, seated on an elegant throne with a canopy, with a dorsal and pedestal decorated with oriental tapestries and carpets. Served by two little kneeling angels, Mary has as an honor guard on her right in an upright position Saint John the Baptist, with his camel skin dress, his staff, and his lamb (*Agnus Dei*), and on her left Saint John the Evangelist with his apocalyptic red dress and his chalice with poison. Seated at the feet of the royal couple, on their right remain Saint Catherine of Alexandria (with the broken cogwheel of her martyrdom), on whom the Child is putting the ring of her mystical wedding with him, and on her left Saint Barbara with the fortified tower that identifies her. Thus, in this colorful Flemish *Sacra Conversazione* with four saints and two angels, the Virgin Mary manifests herself as the majestic Queen of Heaven and the Lady of all who inhabit it.



Figure 18. Hans Memling, Central panel of *The Saint John triptych*, c. 1474–79. Saint John Hospital, Brugge.

In addition, Giovanni Bellini offers in his *Pala di San Giobbe*, c. 1487, from the Galleria dell'Accademia in Venice (Figure 19) a good example of Mary as the Queen of Heaven in

Sacra Conversazione with some saints. In a monumental marble palace, the Virgin appears seated with her Child in her arms on a sumptuous and high throne housed in an apse with Byzantine mosaics, entertained by three musical angels seated at her feet. To the right of the two royal protagonists, Saint Francis of Assisi, Saint John the Baptist, and Saint Job remain standing, while to their left Saint Dominic de Guzmán, Saint Sebastian, and Saint Louis of Tolosa stand. Here again, the enthroned Virgin with her divine son in her arms is a vivid image of Mary in heavenly *Maestà*.



Figure 19. Giovanni Bellini. *Pala di San Giobbe*, c.1487. Galleria dell'Accademia, Venice.

Also, Sandro Botticelli in his *Sacra Conversazione* (*Pala di San Bernaba*), c. 1490, from the Galleria degli Uffizi in Florence (Figure 20), offers a complete sample of the iconographic sub-type analyzed in this section. Flanked by four powerful angels, the Virgin appears with her Child in her arms seated on a lavish marble throne in the context of a splendid palace, like the majestic Kingdom of Heaven. To the right of the heavenly sovereigns Saint Barbara (with her broken cogwheel), Saint Augustine writing her *Confessions*, and Saint Barnaba form a trio. To the left of the throne, one can see Saint John the Baptist, Saint Ignatius of Antioch, and the Archangel Saint Michael, with his armor as the leader of the angelic legions. Once again, Mary, solemnly enthroned with her divine Son in her arms and surrounded by angels and saints, manifests in this *Sacra Conversazione* her sublime hierarchy as the Queen of Heaven, the Lady of all the blessed who dwell in it.



Figure 20. Sandro Botticelli, *Sacra Conversazione (Pala di San Barnaba)*, c. 1490. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.

5. Conclusions

At the end of this long investigation, it seems possible to synthetically extract some crucial results.

In almost perfect agreement, the Church Fathers, theologians, and medieval liturgical hymnographers, mainly in Latin Western Christianity, find a direct relationship between the divine motherhood of Mary and her privileged status as the Queen of Heaven. According to them, for having accepted to be the Mother of God the Son, the King of the Universe, he grants his mother Mary the exclusive privilege of sharing his royal dignity, exalting her as the Queen of Heaven and all its inhabitants.

Therefore, the angels, the saints, the virgins, and the blessed of the heavenly Paradise pay a tribute of veneration and respect to Mary, recognizing her as her Lady, and joyfully celebrating her sublime glory.

Many Fathers, theologians, and liturgical hymnographers also emphasize that Mary deserved to be elevated as the Queen of Heaven for the fullness of her grace and the excellence of her virtues, which make her far superior to all celestial and terrestrial creatures, with such a sublimity that only God is above her.

On the other hand, medieval Christian art wanted to reflect these doctrinal approaches visually. For this reason, the iconographic types of the crowned Virgin carrying her divine Child in her arms soon appeared as a way of manifesting the "power" of Mary as nurturing mother over the omnipotent Son of God. This situation of Mary protecting her little Jesus is expressed both when she is standing and sitting on a throne, in the modality of *Sedes Sapientiae*.

In the same way, since the 12th century onwards, the iconographic type of the Coronation of the Virgin became frequent in sculpture and painting, an exaltation carried out by Christ himself in majesty, often personally placing the crown on the head of his mother.

In addition, both medieval writers and artists who deal with the subject of the heavenly royalty of the Virgin shed light on this conviction in various ways: Mary's status as the Queen of Heaven gives her the necessary power to protect from evil those who come to her in search of her merciful help, and to intercede before his Son the Savior in favor of the believer, keen to obtain eternal salvation.

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Notes

1 Ephremus Syrus, *Hymni de b. Maria* 19 (ed, T.J. Lamy II, Malines 1886, 624). Cited by (Hauke 2008, p. 247).

2 "Sede, Domina; decet enim, regina cum eis et prae omnibus regibus terrae gloriosa, sublimi adeo loco sedere. Tibi, quae Cherubico longe nobilior es thronus, sacrosancta ad inhabitandam sedes debetur." (Germanus Constantinopolitanus, *In Praesentationem SS. Deiparae, I*. PG 98, 303).

3 "*Angelus*. Thronus Dei bajulus, regalisque coelestis regis sella apellaris, quod Regina ac Domina, regisque terreni filia, regiaque specie, ac majestate praedita sis." (Germanus Constantinopolitanus, *In Annnciationem SS. Deiparae*. PG 98, 323–326).

4 "Ave, mundi Gaudium inenarrabile; ave, regina pacis conciliatrix; ave, matrum splendor immaculatus." (Germanus Constantinopolitanus, *In Sanctae Deiparae Praesentationem*, XV. PG 98, 1499).

5 "Gaude, casta mater, ac virgo lactans. Gaude, diadema pulchriudinis, generisque ac hominum Regina, regalibus undique magnifice decorata praerogativis." (Andreas Cretensis, *Oratio IV. In sanctam Nativitatem praesanctae Dominae nostrae Dei Genitricis, semperque virginis Mariae*. PG 97, 863).

6 "velut non tantum demiretur humanam concretionem seu compositionem, ejusve rursum in partes disjunctionem: quin enimvero, et jam ipsum, in Regina hac immaculata illa illustrtissimaque ipsius Matre, arduum miraculum oraculo celebrent". (Andreas Cretensis, *Oratio XIII. In dormitionem sanctissimae Deiparae Dominae nostrae III*. PG, 97, 1087).

[7] "Tu inexhausti unguenti nova pixis unguentaria; [. . .] solium illud excelsum; porta coelis coelorum elevatior; regina totius humani generis; nuncupatiomem cum usu sinceram retinens; quae, uno excepto Deo, rebus omnibus excelsior es." (Andreas Cretensis, *Oratio XIII. In dormitionem sanctissimae Deiparae Dominae nostrae III*. PG, 97, 1099).

[8] "Haec sane tibi, o ter regina Dei Genitrix, a te tuisque ad Deum efficassimis praecibus, occultos rerum tuarum, quamquam rudius, docti sermones, pro modica nunc facultate, vel minus accurate digessimus. [. . .] Sed, o Regina universorum hominum, ipsiusque per se Sapientiae et Verbi subsistentia, capax: primae, inquam, illius, et principis, ac omnium causae!" (Andreas Cretensis, *Oratio XIII. In dormitionem sanctissimae Deiparae Dominae nostrae III*. PG, 97, 1107).

[9] "Salvesis, sola inter reginas regina, quae regum quidem filia es, universorum autem Regis Mater, ac religiosorum regum et imperatorum robur. Salvesis, sola inter reginas regina, vestitu deaurato circumdata, ac varietate, veluti psalmorum cantor David exclamavit." (Joannes Damascenus, *Homilia in Annuntiationem B.V. Mariae*. PG 96, 654–655).

[10] "et cum magna et inexplicabili libertate astans, angelis, et mundo sublimioribus Virtutibus universis, omni sermone major laetitia es, patriarchis sempiterna oblectatio, justis gaudium ineffabile, perennis prophetis exsultatio." (Joannes Damascenus, *Homilia I in Dormitionem B.V. Mariae*. PG 96, 718).

[11] "Non est relictum in terrra immaculatum omnisque labis expers corpus tuum: sed in regias coelorum sedes, regina tu, hera, domina, veraque Dei Genitrix, translata es." (Joannes Damascenus, *Homilia I in Dormitionem B.V. Mariae*. PG 96, 719).

[12] "Te sancta sanctorum Deipara, prima Virgo parens, et Dei mater, quae muliebrem sexum prima solaque clarificavit, cunctorumque masculorum ac feminarum, coelestium ac terrestrium Regina est, tanquam ejus mater qui omnibus dominatur". (Joannes Damascenus, *Laudatio Sanctae Barbarae Martiris*. PG 96, 810).

[13] „Circumdata varietatibus in fimbriis aureis, tanquam Regina ac Domina, a dextris Dei ac Domini nunc astas, intercedens pro servis tuis." (Josephus Hymnographus, *Mariale*. PG, 105, 1122).

[14] „O Deo gratissima, quae regem Christum peperisti, utpote regina, eos, qui ad te recurrunt, dignos fac regni coelorum." (Josephus Hymnographus, *Mariale*. PG, 105, 1142).

[15] „Tanquam Creatorem enixa, creaturarum omnium Regina facta es: propterea te glorificamus, o Deipara, sola semper Virgo." (Josephus Hymnographus, *Mariale*. PG, 105, 1175).

[16] „Sanctus est Deus, qui habitavit in utero tuo, cum te omnibus creaturis sanctiorem ac puriorem invenisset, o Dei Mater immaculata Regina cujus nomen dominationem sonat." (Josephus Hymnographus, *Mariale*. PG, 105, 1187).

[17] "Vere benedicta, quae et divini germinis suscepit gloriam, et regina totius exstitit castitatis. Vere benedicta, quae fuit major coelo, fortior terra, orbe latior; nam Deum quem mundus non capit, sola cepit. Portavit eum qui portat orbem, genuit genitorem suum, nutrivit omnium viventium nutritorem." (Petrus Chrysologus, *Sermo CXLIII. De eadem [De Assumptione D. Mariae Virginis]*. PL 52, 584).

[18] Venantius Fortunatus, *Miscellanea. Liber VIII. Caput IV. De Sancta Maria*. PL 88, 265. Cited also as *O gloriosa Domina*. In (Chevalier 1894, p. 130).

[19] Venantius Fortunatus, *Miscellanea. Liber VIII. Caput VII.In laudem sanctae Mariae Virginis et matri Domini*. PL 88, 282.

[20] Sanctus Odilo, *Hymnus in Assumptione Sanctae Mariae*. PL 142, 1053–1054.

[21] "Sic et angelorum regina recta est in sublimitate conversationis, quia virga directionis, virga regni Domini (Psal. xliv). Subtilis in deitatis contemplatione, quia ipsa est quae conservabat omnia verba haec, conferens in corde suo (Luc, ii)" (Petrus Damianus, *Sermo XL. De Assumptione Beatissimae Mariae Virginis*. PL 144, 721).

[22] "Sequitur de ejus Assumptione: Quae est ista, quae ascendit de deserto, deliciis affluens, innixa super dilectum suum? Haec est regina illa, quam videntes filiae Sion, "Beatissimam praedicaverunt, et reginae laudaverunt eam (Cant, vi)". Ascendit autem hodie de deserto, id est de mundo, ad regalis throni celsitudinem sublimata." (Petrus Damianus, *Sermo XL. De Assumptione Beatissimae Mariae Virginis*. PL 144, 722).

[23] "Hodie nata est regina mundo, fenestra coeli, janua paradisi, tabernaculum Dei, stella maris, scala coelestis, per quam supernus Rex humilatus ad ima descendit; et homo, qui postratus jacebat, ad superna exaltatus ascendit." (Petrus Damianus, *Sermo XLVI. Homilia in Nativitate Beatissimae Virginis Mariae (VIII Sept.)*. PL 144, 753).

[24] "Exaltata super choros angelorum gaudens et gloriosa in perpetuum regina coelorum, ubi adjuvas omnes qui te dominam glorificant, et sanctum nomen tuum humili prece frequentant". (Anselmus Cantuariensis, *Oratio 40. Ad sanctam Virginem Mariam. In Assumptione ejus*. PL 158, 963).

[25] "Nulla de caetero macula peccati anima mea inquinetur; sed mundo corde et casto corpore per merita tuae saluberrimae nativitatis, annuntiationis, et sanctissimi virginei partus tui, et castissimae purificationis, et gloriossisimae asssumptionis in excelso cœlorum palatio possim praesentari, in quo gloriosa exsultas et regnas regina angelorum et hominum, Mater Domini nostri Jesu Christi." (Anselmus Cantuariensis, *Oratio 40. Ad sanctam Virginem Mariam. In Assumptione ejus*. PL 158, 966).

[26] "In primis audio te supppliciter orare, quae vicinior existis salutis nostrae, quae vitam nostram peperisti, mundo perdito remedium attulisti, benedicta super mulieres Virgo mater ipsius misericordiae, sancta María, Domina mundi, regina coeli, tuae sanctissimae pietati meam orationem qualemcumque committo, ut eam offeras dilectissimo Filio tuo Domino nostro." (Anselmus Cantuariensis, *Oratio 39. Ad Christum et omnes sanctos*. PL 158, 932).

[27] "Tu decus mundi. Tu nobilitas populi christiani, O regina et domina mundi, scala coeli, thronus Dei, janua paradisi, audi preces pauperum, ne despicias gemitus miserorum." (Anselmus Cantuariensis, *Oratio 45. Ad eamdem sanctam Virginem Mariam*. PL 158, 962).

[28] "Decus virginum, domina gentium, regina angelorum, fons hortorum, ablutio peccatorum, sancta et perpetua Virgo Maria, succurre misero, subveni perdito". (Anselmus Cantuariensis, *Oratio 49. Ad eamdem Dei Matrem. PL 158, 947).*

[29] "Filii sui inhaerens complexibus perenniter divinitatis ejus cum angelis satiatur aspectibus. Ad quam gloriam hodie gloriosa virgo migravit, in qua eam Filius reginam coelorum super omnes ordines angelorum sublimavit." (Honorius Augustodinensis, *Sigillum Beatae Mariae*. PL 172, 49).

[30] « *Statura tua assimilata est palmae*. Christus fuit palma in cruce, quia per eum adipiscitur palma victoriae. Cui assimilata est statura, id est alta gloria Mariae, quia sicut ipse Rex coelorum, ita ipsa regina angelorum. » (Honorius Augustodinensis, *Sigillum Beatae Mariae ubi exponuntur Cantica Canticorum. Caput VII*. PL 172, 514).

[31] "O quam innumerabilis multitudo supernorum civium ad hodiemam festivitatem, fratres, celebri cultu confluxit, dum mater virgo regem gloriae humano generi produxit! Quam laeto commitatu ordinatim praecessit, dum regina coelorum cum rege angelorum hodie ad templum processit!" (Honorius Augustodinensis, *Pars III. Liturgica*. PL 172, 851).

[32] "Deinde gloriosa Dei Genitrix perpetua virgo Maria summis laudibus a nobis extollatur per quam perditus mundus ad vitam restauratur; quae regina coelorum cunctis angelis est honorabilis, domina mundi omnibus sanctis venerabilis. " (Honorius Augustodinensis, *Pars III. Liturgica*. PL 172, 1015).

[33] "gloriosa virgo Maria cujus hodie sollemnia recolimus votive, de hoc mundo confusis Judaeis, daemonibus in abyssum submersis, in Iaetitia et exultatione educitur, et per desertum aeris cum concentu angelorum et jubilatione sanctorum in coeleste palacium regina coelorum introducitur, in quo nunc cum deliciis est affluens, quia inter coetus angelorum, inter agmina omnium sanctorum exundat eam habundantius voluptatis Dei torrens." (Honorius Augustodinensis, *De Assumptione Sanctae Mariae*. PL 172, 991).

[34] "Beata itaque virgo Maria vere purpura fuit, quae super omnes sanctos regali dignitate velut domina mundi, et regina coeli, effulsit; quae se prae omnibus regaliter egit et rexit, vitia depressit, virtutes erexit." (Hugo de S. Victore, *Sermo 46. In Assumptione Beatae Mariae*. PL 177, 1025).

[35] "Eo beatam te dicent omnes generationes (Luc. I, 48). Genitrix Dei, domina mundi, regina coeli. Omnes, inquam, generationes. Sunt enim generationes coeli et terrae. [. . .] Ex hoc ergo beatam te dicent omnes generationes, quae omnibus generationibus vitam et gloriam genuisti. In te enim angeli laetitiam, justi gratiam, peccatores veniam inveniunt in aeternum." (Bernardus Claraevallensis, *Sermo II. De operibus Trinitatis super nos, et de triplici gratia Spiritus sancti*. PL 183, 328).

[36] "Praecessit nos regina nostra, praecessit, et tam gloriosa suscepta est, ut fiducialiter sequantur Dominam servuli clamantes. Trahe nos post te; in odorem unguentorum tuorum curremos (Cant, 1, 3). Advocatam praemissit peregrinatio nostra, quae tanquam Judicis mater, et mater misericordiae, suppliciter et efficaciter salutis nostrae negotia pertractabit."(Bernardus Claraevallensis, *In Assumptione B.V. Mariae. Sermo I*, 1. PL 183, 415).

[37] "Propter nuptiale connubium Virgo Maria est Mater Dei; propter regale solium, regina caeli; propter sacerdotale ornamentum, advocata generis humani. Et ad haec omnia idonea erat Virgo Maria, cum esset de genere hominum, de genere regum et de genere sacerdotum. Dicat ergo amantissima Virgo Maria: Qui creavit me requievit in tabernaculo meo." (Bonaventura de Balneoregio, *De Annunciatione B. Virginis Mariae. Sermo IV*, 1: Q IX, 672a).

[38] "Et ideo beata Virgo omnium regina facta est.—Omnes ergo eam laudent, in eius honorem omne genu flectatur, caelestium, terrestrium. et infernorum; quia beneficia eius in omnes redundant." (Bonaventura de Balneoregio, *De Annunciatione B. Virginis Mariae. Sermo IV*, 1: Q IX, 673a).

[39] "Super omnes Sanctos nihilominus facta est nobilis quantum ad dignitatis sive generis excellentiam; ipsa enim genere et dignitate, cum sit Mater Imperatoris altissimi, est omnium creaturarum nobilissima; et idcirco super omnem creaturam et ad dexteram Filii sui fuit non immerito exaltata et in solio sublimissimo collocata". (Bonaventura de Balneoregio, *De Assumptione B. Virginis Mariae. Sermo III*, 2: Q IX, 692a).

[40] "Festina namque, quia coronaberis corona gloriosa, per quam efficieris conformis maiestati Patris aeterni, secundum illud Isaiae sexagesimo secundo: Eris corona gloriae in manu Domini et diadema regni in manu Dei tui. Ipsa namque, in gloria prae ceteris excelsior, quasi in manu Dei ostenditur ad exemplum unionis et accensionis desiderii. Unde ipsa tanquam regina caeli sedet ad dexteram Regis aeterni, secundum illud Psalmi': Astitit regina a dextris tuis in vestitu deaurato, et coronata est corona consimili coronae Regis aeterni". (Bonaventura de Balneoregio, *De Assumptione B. Virginis Mariae. Sermo VI*, 2: Q IX, 699b–700a).

[41] Hymnus 43. AHMA 2, 46.

[42] Hymnus 71. AHMA 2, 61.

[43] Hymnus 5. AHMA 2, 125.

[44] Hymnus 6. AHMA 2, 151.

[45] Hymnus 11. AHMA 2, 154.

[46] Hymnus 56. AHMA 7, 68.

[47] *Salve Regina*. In Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salve_Regina (accessed on 28 December 2022).

[48] *Benedicta es, Coelorum Regina*. In (Chevalier 1894, p. 37).

[49] Hymnus 83. AHMA 10, 71.

[50] Hymnus 29. AHMA 7, 48.

[51] Hymnus 44. AHMA 7, 57.
[52] Hymnus 99. AHMA 7, 112.
[53] Hymnus 101. AHMA 7, 115.
[54] Hymnus 104. AHMA 7, 119.
[55] Hymnus 105. AHMA 7, 120.
[56] Hymnus 106. AHMA 7, 121.
[57] Hymnus 107. AHMA 7, 122.
[58] Hymnus 118. AHMA 7, 133.
[59] It alludes to Ezekiel's *porta clausa* as a symbol of the virginal divine motherhood ant perpetua virginity of the Virgin Mary.
[60] Hymnus 346. Mone 1854, 35.
[61] Hymnus 352. Mone 1854, 44.
[62] Hymnus 505. Mone 1854, 261.
[63] Hymnus 527. Mone 1854, 314.
[64] Ibid., 315.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Hymnus 558. Mone 1854, 361.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Ibid., 362.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Hymnus 98. AHMA 10, 82.
[71] Hymnus 69. AHMA 9, 57.
[72] Hymnus 98. AHMA 8, 79.
[73] Hymnus 95. AHMA 10, 80.
[74] Hymnus 583. Mone 1854, 398.
[75] Hymnus 585. Mone 1854, 399.
[76] Hymnus 126. AHMA 10, 100.
[77] *Magna, major, maxima*. In (Chevalier 1894, p. 88).
[78] *Ave, regina coelorum*. In Chevalier. *Poésie liturgique traditionnelle*, 1894, 47.
[79] Hymnus 586. Mone 1854, 401.
[80] Hymnus 591. Mone 1854. 406.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Hymnus 595. Mone 1854, 408.
[83] Hymnus 322. Mone 1854, 4.
[84] Hymnus 477. Mone 1854, 192.
[85] Hymnus 504. Mone 1854, 235.
[86] Hymnus 504. Mone 1854, 239.
[87] Hymnus 508. Mone 1854, 277.
[88] Hymnus 530. Mone 1854, 318.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Hymnus 531. Mone 1854, 319.
[91] Hymnus 536. Mone 1854, 324.
[92] Hymnus 53. AHMA 8, 51.
[93] Hymnus 66. AHMA 8, 61.
[94] Hymnus 71. AHMA 8, 63.
[95] Hymnus 73. AHMA 8, 65.
[96] Hymnus 75. AHMA 8, 66.
[97] Hymnus 97. AHMA 8, 78.
[98] Hymnus 99. AHMA 10, 83.
[99] Hymnus 133. AHMA 10, 103.
[100] Hymnus 147. AHMA 10, 111.
[101] Hymnus 72. AHMA 9, 59.

[102] Hymnus 91. AHMA 9, 74.
[103] Hymnus 541. Mone 1854, 333.
[104] Ibid.
[105] Conradus Gemnicensis, Hymnus 2. AHMA 3, 23. This hymn had already been included by Mone 1854, where it stands with the entry *Hymnus 507. Oratio, quae dicitur crinale beatae Mariae virginis*. Mone 1854, 268.
[106] It is an analogy of the Queen of Sheba as a prefiguration of the Virgin Mary, after having assimilated king Solomon to Christ.
[107] Conradus Gemnicensis, Hymnus 2. AHMA 3, 23.
[108] Conradus Gemnicensis, Hymnus 10. AHMA 3, 38.
[109] Untitled Hymn. (Bover 1947, p. 356).
[110] Ibid.
[111] Hymnus 13. AHMA 5, 52.
[112] Hymnus 15. AHMA 5, 57.
[113] Hymnus 518. Mone 1854, 303.
[114] Hymnus 7. AHMA 1, 51.
[115] Hymnus 14. AHMA 1, 56.
[116] Hymnus 15. AHMA 1, 57.
[117] Hymnus 29. AHMA 1, 68.
[118] Hymnus 34. AHMA 1, 73.
[119] Hymnus 42. AHMA 1, 82.
[120] Hymnus 48. AHMA 1, 86.
[121] Hymnus 50. AHMA 1, 87.
[122] Hymnus 56. AHMA 1, 94.
[123] Hymnus 85. AHMA 1, 111.
[124] Hymnus 109. AHMA 1, 126.
[125] Hymnus 131. AHMA 1, 139.
[126] Hymnus 140. AHMA 1, 145.
[127] Ibid.
[128] Hymnus 185. AHMA 1, 170.
[129] Hymnus 537. Mone 1854, 327.
[130] Hymnus 392. Mone 1854, 90.
[131] Ibid.
[132] Hymnus 447, Mone 1854, 154.
[133] Hymnus 462. Mone 1854, 173.
[134] Hymnus 479. Mone 1854, 193–194.
[135] Hymnus 480. Mone 1854, 196.
[136] Hymnus 481. Mone 1854, 198.
[137] Hymnus 484. Mone 1854, 201.
[138] Ibid.
[139] Hymnus 488. Mone 1854, 205.
[140] Hymnus 489. Mone 1854, 208.
[141] Ibid.
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[143] Hymnus 490. Mone 1854, 210.
[144] Hymnus 491. Mone 1854, 211.
[145] Hymnus 492. Mone 1854, 212.
[146] Hymnus 496. Mone 1854, 217.
[147] Hymnus 510. Mone 1854, 284.
[148] Hymnus 510. Mone 1854, 285.
[149] Hymnus 510. Mone 1854, 286.
[150] Hymnus 533. Mone 1854, 321.
[151] Hymnus 544. Mone 1854, 340–341.

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155 Ibid.
156 Ibid.
157 Hymnus 619. Mone 1854, 442.
158 Hymnus 66. AHMA 4, 46.
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161 Hymnus 93. AHMA 4, 60.
162 Hymnus 17. AHMA 5, 62.
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175 Hymnus 57. AHMA 8, 54.
176 Hymnus 96. AHMA 9, 77.
177 Hymnus 82. AHMA 10, 69.
178 Hymnus 102. AHMA 10, 85.
179 Untitled hymn. In (Bover, 1947, p. 348).
180 Untitled hymn. In (Bover, 1947, p. 355).
181 Hymnus 550. Mone 1854, 351. This stanza appears also included as Hymnus 530 in Mone 1854, 318.
182 It should be specified that the Latin word *sedes* means both "seat" to sit on and "see" or "house" to live in.

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Is a Theological Synthesis Still Possible? The Paradigm of Objective Mariology

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Abstract: As a "doctrinal synthesis of the Christian faith" (St. John Paul II), the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God could serve as a focal point that brings together various theological concepts and approaches pertaining to salvation history. For that to happen, however, it is necessary to delve into and discover the richness of Mariology. Often regarded as a secondary discipline, as a context for other disciplines or even as a source of difficulties in ecumenical dialogue, Mariology nowadays needs a revival of its own. The call for constructing an "objective Mariology" presumes that the autonomy of theology as an academic discipline will be preserved and that theological reflection on the Virgin Mary will be objectivized in terms of both form and content. To meet these demands, one must strive to respect the supernatural purpose and sources of theology as such, and strengthen and develop biblical Mariology as well as the reflection of the Church Fathers. Furthermore, there is a need to draw from the rich legacy of the Franciscan school when reflecting on the unity of God's plan of creation and Redemption in His eternal reasons. Finally, one must not accept a departure from the "hermeneutic of continuity" in the Catholic doctrine on the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, Immaculate and Assumed. The article sets out to describe the essence of the above assumptions and proposes specific conditions that would foster the development of an "objective Mariology". In that respect, it is important to establish the First Person of the Holy Trinity as the starting point for any reflection on the plan of salvation—of which the Immaculate Conception is the ultimate origin and ultimate goal.

Keywords: theology; Franciscan school; God's eternal reasons; hermeneutic of continuity; objective Mariology

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1. Introduction

In recent years, the development of all sciences has greatly accelerated, with the different disciplines claiming ever broader spheres of influence. The reasons behind this shift are diverse, including technological advances and their implications. In addition, this process has certainly been fostered by the virtualization and digitization of life in all its aspects. New specializations have emerged, and individual disciplines of science have expanded to such an extent that it is now difficult to find a person whose expertise covers an entire field of research; experts' knowledge is becoming deeper but, at the same time, narrower. Considering this state of affairs, one has to wonder whether it is still possible to maintain a single theoretical model of reality that suits all scientists and conforms both to their convictions and to the results of their specialist studies and experiments. The answer seems to be very complex, exceeding the capabilities of any single individual who might be interested in providing it.

Nevertheless, one may attempt to offer an answer within the constraints of one discipline; in this case, theology. Is it possible to outline a theological vision that brings together the achievements of various disciplines and, at the same time, focuses on a specific point? Will that point be located closer to God (top-down theology) or to the human person (bottom-up theology)? It may be worthwhile to search for and identify a single element

that appears central to the development of a theological synthesis. First, however, one needs to ask a supporting question: Is it possible to return to reflection on the objective current of salvation history in theology?

As John Paul II noted on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary in 1988, "one could say that the dogma of the Immaculate Conception is a marvelous doctrinal synthesis of the Christian faith" (Jan Paweł II 1999).[1] A synthesis is a unique way of summarizing and focusing on what is important. Therefore, in the Pope's view, the Immaculate Conception is a focal point for all the beams that represent theological theorems and truths of the Church's faith (De Fiores and Serra 1996).[2] Can this intuition provide an answer to the questions put forward in this article? Importantly, in order to build a Mariological synthesis of theology, one must first overcome certain difficulties: "At present, Mariology follows a rather rigid Christotypical or ecclesiotypical pattern. This pattern, however, does not appear to be the most appropriate solution. A renewed Mariology should instead be integral in character" (Napiórkowski 2016, p. 12). What needs to be done in order to overcome this difficulty and thus restore Mariology to its rightful place among other theological treatises?

This article attempts to answer the question whether it is justifiable to build a Mariological synthesis of all Catholic theology. First, it presents the three main assumptions: the preservation of the autonomy of theology as an academic discipline and the objectivization of content and form in Mariology. Then, it proposes specific conditions for the development of an "objective Mariology". It can be argued that many of the problematic issues which preoccupy Catholic theologians today stem from the lack of full objectivity in Mariology. Key questions include Mary's priestly dignity,[3] the role of the Mother of God as Co-Redemptrix (Miravalle 1995; Manelli 2002; Most 2019), and the Creator's eternal reasons and recapitulation (Bartnik 2012, pp. 44–45; Santorski 2012, p. 23).

2. The Identity and Autonomy of Catholic Theology in the Context of Mariology

The current trends in culture and science are characterized by a blurring of boundaries. Years ago, Joseph Ratzinger—who was later to become Pope Benedict XVI—emphasized that seeking a seamless connection between "the Church and the world means failing to appreciate the essence of the Church and the essence of the world" (Ratzinger 2016, p. 945). In his view, it is not possible to subordinate being a Christian to the rational structure of some specific period: "Today, more than ever, a Christian must be aware that he belongs to a minority and that he largely stands in opposition to what conforms to 'the pattern of this world' (Romans 12: 2)" (Ratzinger 2016, p. 945). In the early days of Christ's Church, St. Paul delivered a similar warning when he wrote that "the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (1 Corinthians 1: 18). Then, he added even more forcibly: "Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?" (1 Corinthians 20). While times change, the temptation to blur important boundaries between things which are by nature different is always present.

Referring to the social changes over the past few decades, Ratzinger noted that "the ability and courage to be in opposition, the strength to learn to be in the minority is becoming the most urgent task in a Christian's relationship to the world in the coming years—renouncing the post-conciliar euphoria that erred the most in that very respect" (Ratzinger 2016, p. 945). Over time, admiration of the world turned into uncritical emulation, causing the apostolic zeal of Christ's modern-day disciples to abate. St. Paul once reminded the faithful of the need to cling to God's truth despite opposition from the world: "For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Corinthians 1: 22–24). How much of the Apostle's message has remained in the minds of the modern Christians?

In view of the above, it is necessary to return to the fundamental question: Who is Jesus Christ? The deliberations of the early Church on that subject were mainly soteriological,

even though they stemmed from a reflection on ontological issues. The debates of that time were, above all, about presenting the mystery of Christ and His works so as to demonstrate that He was the Redeemer of man—every man—in all of his spiritual and corporeal existence. This entails an important Mariological question, since such an approach requires a "realistic treatment of Mary's motherhood with all its implications. This, in turn, is a precondition for a realistic approach to the question of salvation, which is nowadays shifting perilously from the primary meaning of Christ's humanity as the 'instrument' of salvation towards some idealistic view of the salvific question" (Królikowski 2005, p. 284). In view of the above, it is important to focus attention on Mary as the Virgin Mother, since this will serve to defend the realistic soteriology from the unwavering threat posed by the Monophysite interpretation. This leads to the conclusion that faith in Mary's motherhood of God guarantees a correct soteriological concept. Thus, Mariology precedes an appropriate understanding of soteriology, which in turn directs one towards a correct Christological concept. Even at this level, it becomes apparent that there is a need to recognize a special kind of theological autonomy, since the Incarnation, Redemption, and Virgin Motherhood of God's Mother go beyond the verification framework typical of other historical or linguistic sciences, or even philosophy.

Following the path set by the Scripture, the Church Fathers drew an image of the Virgin Mary as an exceptional being. It is thanks to Her and through Her that the Son of God took on His human nature.[4] "The reference to the Fathers in Mariology is therefore a path that leads to regaining the most authentic approach, that is, one which leads directly to the word of God, thus validating all the deliberations on Mary and Her role in the work of salvation" (Królikowski 2005, pp. 278–79). It is important to note that the theology of the Church Fathers—including their Mariology—is founded on the Bible. For that reason, it "is set in the perspective of the most current demands concerning a renewal of theology, the most prominent one being the call to return to the Scripture" (Królikowski 2005, p. 279). Biblical Mariology must meet the requirements of theological hermeneutics, which does not stop at the edge of sense but seeks a deeper truth and follows the principles of biblical analogy and analogy of faith.

It is commonly accepted in the Church that "through Her special relationship with Christ and with the Church, Mary has played and continues to play a special role in God's economy of salvation taking place in the world" (Krupa 1968, p. 117). One must not, therefore, omit to include the Immaculate Virgin in any discussion of the Creator's plans concerning the course and ultimate goal of the history of the creation's salvation. The Fathers of the Second Vatican Council emphasize that by giving praise to its Lord and Savior, the "holy Church honors with especial love the Blessed Mary, Mother of God, who is joined by an inseparable bond to the saving work of her Son. In her the Church holds up and admires the most excellent fruit of the redemption, and joyfully contemplates, as in a faultless image, that which she herself desires and hopes wholly to be" (Second Vatican Council 1963, Sct. 103).[5] The perspective of Mary's participation in the work of the Son—and the work itself—may only be understood appropriately in the light of the Divine Revelation, which must not yield to the pressure of secularized "restrictions" or be disregarded on account of any given world view.

3. Towards the Objectivization of Content in Mariology

An important part of the motion towards "objectivization" in contemporary Catholic Mariology is the return to the legacy of the Franciscan school (Pontoglio 1994). A point of fundamental importance to studies on the Virgin Mary is the mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God, which is not explained exhaustively within the soteriological discourse—as emphasized more prominently in the Dominican tradition.[6] According to the Blessed John Duns Scotus (+1308), the Incarnation had been intended by God the Father from eternity. This view has a very rich interpretational tradition of its own (Burns 2001; Martelet 1984; Bolewski 2012). According to the Subtle Doctor, the Incarnation "is the fulfilment of creation and enables every creature, in Christ and through Christ, to be filled with grace and to

praise and glorify God in eternity" (Benedict XVI 2010). In his mind, the Redemption of the man affected by original sin had taken place through the passion, death, and resurrection of the Son of God. Furthermore, he considered the Incarnation to be "the greatest and most beautiful work of the entire history of salvation that it is not conditioned by any contingent fact" (Benedict XVI 2010).[7] Even man's sin did not affect God's actions; on the contrary, it was cleansed by these actions—planned from eternity and carried out throughout history.

In recent times, a rich chapter in the history of the Franciscan school was written by Father Maximilian Maria Kolbe (+1941), the founder of Niepokalanów (a religious community named after the Immaculate Virgin) and a martyr saint. During a homily on the day of Father Maximilian's beatification, St. Paul VI recalled that he had been "an apostle of Marian devotion" and that his spiritual legacy "does not raise any trace of hesitation or doubt, although today, it is Marian piety that sometimes gives rise to a certain distrust towards two theological trends: the Christological trend and the ecclesiological trend, which appear to compete against it. Quite the contrary, in Father Kolbe's Mariology, Christ occupies the most prominent place, one that is necessary and sufficient for the economy of salvation" (Paweł VI 1972, p. 239). In his writings and conferences, Father Kolbe draws a picture of Mary who is completely devoted to Her Son's work and filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit. Thus, he makes his readers sensitive to the Trinitarian interpretation of the Mariological dogmas. "In accordance with all theological doctrine, all liturgy and theology of inner life, Father Kolbe perceives Mary to be included in God's plans of salvation as the 'end of the eternal purpose,' as the Fullness of Grace, as the Seat of Wisdom, as the eternally-destined Mother of the Word Incarnate, as the Queen of the Messianic Kingdom and, at the same time, as the Handmaid of the Lord, chosen to offer her irreplaceable contribution to the work of salvation as the Mother of the Man-God" (Paweł VI 1972, p. 240). The founder of Niepokalanów created an original method of pursuing Mariology that cannot be separated from a Marian lifestyle. Father Kolbe used to say that a person who "cannot bend a knee and, in humble prayer, beg Her for the knowledge of who She is, should not expect to learn anything more about Her" (Kolbe 2008, Sct. 1109). It may seem that the founder of Niepokalanów followed a "maximalist" trend in Mariology, but did he—as a result of this—stray from the teaching of Christ, the continuous Tradition, and the piety of the Church?

Mariology is a journey towards discovering the mystery of God in His works, among which Mary is the Masterpiece. It is important to find a rightful place for Her in the consciousness of the Church. In the light of the charismatic renewal, it is important to reveal that "the first charismatic is the Church, and within the Church, the first charismatic is Mary. She was the first person to experience in Her soul and in Her body what the Church had been called for; remaining in unity with the entire Church, Mary is—as the Council says—'the image and beginning of the Church as it is to be perfected in the world to come'" (Suenens 1988, p. 14; Second Vatican Council 1964, Sct. 68). Endowed beforehand with the grace of the Immaculate Conception and assumed into Heaven upon the end of her earthly life, Mary heralds the triumph of the Church. Her "fiat"[8] is the most important of all the words that man has ever spoken, because it "paved" the way for the Redeemer to carry out the work of Redemption.

4. Towards the Objectivization of Form in Mariology

An important issue noted by Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI is the emphasis on the "hermeneutic of continuity" in the history and theology of the Church. Many years ago, in an interview with Vittorio Messori, Ratzinger strongly emphasized that he did not approve of "the terms *pre*- or *post*-conciliar," arguing that "to accept them would be tantamount to accepting a rupture in the history of the Church" (Ratzinger and Messori 1985, p. 113). This remark is of particular importance with regard to Catholic Mariology. When considering any theological question, it is important to bear in mind the Divine guidance, a pedagogy in a sense, of God's *synkatabasis* that leads one to the fullness of the truth.[9] In other words, "an attempt to understand one salvific event (and thus a certain truth of the faith) in

isolation from others will result in erroneous observations, or at least in the emphasis being misplaced in the conclusions thus drawn" (Kunka 2011, p. 71). This cannot be permitted.

During the Second Vatican Council, the Fathers asked themselves whether it was appropriate to speak of the Mother of God in a separate document or in the constitution on the Church. The dispute was put to a vote, with the latter option prevailing by a majority of forty votes. "At that time, it proved necessary to undertake great efforts in order to restore the Council's unanimity around what would later become the eighth chapter of *Lumen gentium*" (Sesboüé 2001, p. 481). Obviously, Mariological reflection was not a major subject of interest for the Council: "Mary and Her mysteries came to the surface during a debate on the truth about Christ and the Church, which the Council wished to present to the contemporary public in a new light" (Krupa 1968, p. 117). As a result, it was necessary to address the mystery of Redemption, since it is the single most important subject as regards the Church's awareness and mission in the world. Thus, the question of man's participation in Christ's work of Redemption came into the spotlight. "The latter point has long been a subject of contention between Catholics and Protestants" (Krupa 1968, p. 117).[10] Thus, it needs to be noted that the Fathers of the Council also wished—to a degree—to take into account the opinions of the latter.

Those participating in the deliberations of the Council were well aware of the fact that the question of man's involvement in the work of Redemption was, in the first place, associated with Mary as the Mother of the Word Incarnate. Proclaiming Redemption is an essential part of Christianity, which is why "the Council, as the official and authentic teacher of the revealed truth, neither would nor could disregard the matter or accept a solution which might suggest that, in the face of some difficulties, it had chosen not to proclaim all of Christ's truth" (Krupa 1968, p. 118). Following a long and multifaceted debate, the Council clearly and decidedly spoke in favor of recognizing "Mary's participation in the fulfillment of the work of Redemption" (ibid.). The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church states that Mary "became the mother of Jesus, the one and only Mediator. Embracing God's salvific will with a full heart and impeded by no sin, she devoted herself totally as a handmaid of the Lord to the person and work of her Son, under Him and with Him, by the grace of almighty God, serving the mystery of redemption" (Second Vatican Council 1964, Sct. 56). In another section, it also states that "predestined from eternity by that decree of divine providence which determined the incarnation of the Word to be the Mother of God, the Blessed Virgin was on this earth the virgin Mother of the Redeemer, and above all others and in a singular way the generous associate and humble handmaid of the Lord. She conceived, brought forth and nourished Christ. She presented Him to the Father in the temple, and was united with Him by compassion as He died on the Cross. In this singular way she cooperated by her obedience, faith, hope and burning charity in the work of the Saviour" (ibid., sct. 61).[11]

It must be admitted, however, that ecumenical tendencies "clearly had an impact both on the scope of the Council's teaching about Mary and on the form in which this teaching was given to the faithful to follow" (Krupa 1968, p. 118). As the Fathers conclude, "in expounding the doctrine on the Church, in which the divine Redeemer works salvation, [the Council] intends to describe with diligence both the role of the Blessed Virgin in the mystery of the Incarnate Word and the Mystical Body, and the duties of redeemed mankind toward the Mother of God, who is mother of Christ and mother of men, particularly of the faithful" (Second Vatican Council 1964, Sct. 54). Further on, they explain that the Council does not "have it in mind to give a complete doctrine on Mary, nor does it wish to decide those questions which the work of theologians has not yet fully clarified. Those opinions therefore may be lawfully retained which are propounded in Catholic schools concerning her, who occupies a place in the Church which is the highest after Christ and yet very close to us" (ibid.). In view of the above, "the Council neither rejected nor modified anything that in other respects—with the exception of Mary's role in the work of Redemption—would be the subject of theologians' unrestricted debate and work" (ibid.). By addressing the participation of the Immaculate Virgin in Her First Born Son's work of Redemption, "also

on account of the separated brethren, [the Council] did not offer it as a dogmatic truth but only—as it noted—intended 'to describe [it] with diligence—*illustrare sedulo intendit*'" (ibid.). This leads to the important conclusion that it would be unjustified to reduce the scope and perspectives of Catholic Mariology exclusively to what was stated as part of the teaching of the Council.

The proposed objective Mariology can also be described as an integral Mariology, although this name only focuses on one of the features—the ability to encapsulate "in one compact whole all that one should believe about Mary" (Jankowski 2004, p. 35). An important part of this Mariology is the "logic of God's eternal plan" (ibid.) that has already been mentioned above.

Besides integrity, another distinct feature of an objective Mariology is its adequacy. This attribute refers to St. John Paul II's call to construct an adequate anthropology as a theoretical basis for his Theology of the Body. During his Wednesday catecheses, the Pope explained that the purpose of an adequate anthropology is to "understand and interpret man in what is essentially human. The biblical texts contain the essential elements of such an anthropology, which become clear in the theological context of the 'image of man'" (John Paul II 2006, p. 178). An anthropology built along these lines is rooted in the "origin", that is, in the truth granted by God to His creation prior to Adam and Eve's sin. The same applies to an adequate (that is, objective) Mariology, which sees the "origin" of the Virgin Mother of God in the Father's eternal purpose fulfilled in Her Immaculate Conception.

Personalism as a universal system is very helpful in developing an objective Mariology (Bartnik 2013), and some attempts to conduct a "Mariological renewal" from a personalist perspective are already being made (Guzowski 2003, pp. 59–89; Bartnik 2012).

5. The Foundations of an Objective Mariology: Main Methodological Assumptions

A dogmatic treatise devoted to Mary and Her works—referred to as Mariology—is designed in its objective aspect to lead theologians to the discovery of God's eternal plans and reasons. God's wisdom is revealed to man in a manner that respects the limitations of man's perception. The person of Jesus Christ who took his flesh from the Virgin Mary constitutes a central axis for the fulfillment of the Father's plans as He brings the world into existence. In his letters, St. Paul sees Christ as the First Born of all creation, the First Born from the dead.[12] To grow and deepen their awareness, which draws from St. Paul's intuition, the faithful must accept the notion of God's purpose: a purpose which cannot be restricted in its form, content, or even means of fulfillment by any events or circumstances that take place in the created world. Catholic Mariology focuses on the brighter beams of protological, soteriological, and eschatological interpretation. The aim of Mariology is to present the Mother of the Savior and the events of Her life—as described in the Scripture—in a manner that reveals the extent to which God's will and His eternal purpose culminated and bore fruit in the created world.

Every treatise is centered around God Himself and His glory as well as around a reflection on the consequences of God's resolutions, which embody His everlasting love in the created world. Drawing from the experience and Tradition of the Church, Mariology intends to search for and reflect theologically on the signs of the Triune God's presence, concern, and wisdom as well as His infinite mercy for all His creation. As the Virgin Mother of God and the Immaculately Conceived One, Mary Assumed into Heaven may only find Her rightful place in theology where the original, pure will of Divine creation comes to the fore in order to praise the Creator, live for Him, and find solace and ultimate reason of existence in Him.

6. Conclusions

The following methodological assumptions of an objective Mariology can be identified:

1. Mary is the only person in the created world who—while belonging to the material world—has retained a complete transparency of Her existence so that, through Her

goodness and beauty, She reveals the infinite goodness and eternal beauty that belong to the Triune God alone.

2. Treated as an intermediary in revealing the reasons of the Divine will and in their fulfillment in Jesus Christ, She never overshadows the truth that God alone is worthy of praise.
3. The role of the Immaculate Mother of God in the mission of Christ's Church is to bring together and focus (like a lens) Christ's dispersed brethren and the thoughts and views of Her Son's disciples on the mysteries of the Father's love in the Holy Spirit.
4. Taken into Heaven with Her body and soul, She is a role model and anchor of hope for the pilgrim Church—a promise that the children of the Church will open themselves to and partake in the love of the Eternal Love. Her holiness and blamelessness are signs of the holiness and blamelessness of the Redeemed in Heaven.[13]
5. Each of the Catholic dogmas determines the correct understanding of other truths of the faith and of the faith in general. In that spirit, Rev. Professor Czesław S. Bartnik reiterates that "as a result, Mary's virginity has proven to be one of the fundamental categories in theology and salvation history, one which the hagiographers of the Gospel of Childhood captured with their supernatural intuition and incorporated in the Christian kerygma. Any Christian or theologian who has strayed from this category has thus negated their whole Marian allegiance and, as a result, their Mariology. Over time, rejection of the veneration of the Mother of God, including the truth about Her permanent virginity, obscures many other fundamental Christian truths. 'Rejoice, oh Virgin Mary, for thou hast destroyed all heresies throughout the world'[14]" (Bartnik 2003, p. 407).
6. Objective Mariology strives to avoid defining itself as Christotypical or ecclesiotypical, which is—in most basic terms—the reason for its objectivism. It is simply a theological vision of the Mother of God, the Immaculate Virgin eternally chosen by the Father.
7. "The Marian doctrine grows richer in direct contact with piety or spirituality. Any study of Mary must be open to inspirations that spring from prayer, contemplation, asceticism, fasting, alms, service to one's neighbor, or mystical experiences. A Mariology thus inspired and enlivened is also certain to help bridge the deep chasm between dogmatics and Marian piety" (Napiórkowski 2016, pp. 12–13).
8. The objective of theology—including dogmatic theology—is not to understand something that is not lived by or valued. Instead, its goal is to make the mind, will, and heart capable of desiring to live the truth granted to man by the Triune God. By fulfilling that goal, theology will remain free from external compulsions, discipline, and economic rules as well as from being internally constrained by narrowness of the heart, coldness of the soul, and a stench of selfish self-complacency with one's own vanity. Such a theology will be capable of inspiring the desire for the living God; it will be capable of moving the mind, the will, and the heart to know Him, love Him, and serve Him.

It would be a gross methodological error to strip Mariology as a theological discipline of its supernatural character. While constructing a framework of intersubjectively verifiable and communicable claims constitutes the nature of other sciences, it does not exhaust the nature of theology as a field of study. Therefore, Mariology must not avoid its purpose: to interpret data concerning the Revelation, which is considered a source of a supernatural nature and must be interpreted as such.

The goal of the interpretation of the Revelation must also remain within the sphere of the supernatural—going beyond the boundaries of the area of interest and study of non-theological sciences. In addition to this "external" demand, there is an additional "internal" demand to permit Mariology to develop in an objective manner. While "Mariology in context" (Saniewski 2008) is important, what seems even more essential today is a comprehensive, integral vision that comes to the fore when constructing an objective Mariology. A Mariology thus defined could serve as a foundation for the creation of a complete theological vision. This assertion has its factual basis (who is Mary in the Revelation) and

formal basis (how to speak of Her in accordance with the Revelation), as this article has attempted to explain.

Can the truth of the Immaculate Conception become a focal point that brings together all the beams of Catholic theology? If that is the case, it would be necessary to expand and deepen its positive interpretation, focusing on the Merciful Father's reasons (Bolewski 2005). In other words, the reflection must go beyond Mary's freedom from original sin. Mary is the Creator's Masterpiece, the Mother of the Redeemer, and the Temple of the Paraclete, for She is "full of grace" (Greek: *kecharitôméne*, Luke 1: 28). As such, She is the icon of the redeemed human person, the fulfillment of all salvation history. It is in Her that the salvific action of God and the hope of the redeemed human person can be seen most clearly. This image of the Immaculate Virgin Mother—eternally intended by the Father for His Son—is what an objective Mariology strives to capture. The source of its "objectivism" lies in the revealed plan of the "Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change" (James 1: 17), before whose face—as those chosen in Christ "before the foundation of the world"—we will be "holy and blameless" (Ephesians 1: 4).

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Notes

1 For more information, see (Serra 2004).
2 For a broader context with regard to this intuition, see (John Paul II 1987).
3 For a comprehensive treatment of the subject, see (Balter 1979).
4 See John 1: 14 and Galatians 4: 4.
5 For more information, see (Maggiani 2009).
6 Regarding interpretations of the Incarnation in St. Thomas Aquinas, see (Strzelczyk 2005, pp. 375–81).
7 For more on this subject, see (Veuthey 1988).
8 See Luke 1: 38.
9 John 16: 12–13.
10 As the author argues, "this issue is one of the greatest difficulties in the ongoing ecumenical dialogue between Catholics and Protestants. Against that background, the Marian question had been faced with significant difficulties from the very beginning. Many Fathers of the Council were even of the opinion that the Council should not address that question at all".
11 See also (Second Vatican Council 1963, Sct. 103).
12 Cf. Colossians 1: 15, 18.
13 See Ephesians 5: 27; Colossians 1: 22.
14 Liturgical antiphon, Victor the Blind, 9th century.

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Article

The Importance of Literary Sources in the Pictorial Tradition of the Beatus Manuscripts: The Case of Percussion Musical Instruments

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Abstract: This work carries out a detailed analysis of the context and the reasons that led the illustrators of the Beatus manuscripts to select and represent the two percussion instruments that appear in the illustration of Visio III of the *Commentary on the Book of Daniel* by Jerome transmitted in some manuscripts since the number of percussion instruments drawn and their typology do not correspond to what can be read in Jerome's text, in the biblical text, and in the existing bibliography on the subject. This fact cannot be explained solely on the basis of the preceding pictorial tradition or the organological reality of the time, as the absence of sources does not allow for this. However, the literary sources of that period may have influenced the illustrators of this scene to draw these two percussion instruments.

Keywords: Beatus of Liébana; Beatus; Beatus manuscripts; *sambuca*; *cymbalum*; *symphonia*; *Commentary on the Book of Daniel*; *commentary on the apocalypse*; nebuchadnezzar's orchestra; musical iconography

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1. Objective

The aim of this work is to carry out a detailed analysis of the circumstances and reasons that led the illuminators of the Beatus manuscripts to select and represent the musical instruments in Visio III or Visio Tertia of the *Commentary on the Book of Daniel* by Jerome transmitted in several of the preserved manuscripts, focusing the analysis on the percussion instruments. This Visio III comments on chapter 3 of the *Book of Daniel*, in which there are up to four lists (3:5, 7, 10, 15) of musical instruments that were used to worship the golden statue that Nebuchadnezzar II ordered to be built.

The appearance of two percussion instruments in this illustration (when in the *Commentary on the Book of Daniel* and in the biblical text itself, and not with certainty, only one appears: the *symphonia*[1]) is a fact that cannot be explained solely, as critics have tried to do, on the basis of the preceding pictorial tradition or the organological reality of the time, which, moreover, are very imprecise in this specific matter due to the absence of preserved sources, as will be shown later on. In fact, I believe that it was the literary sources that initially led to the illustration depicting two percussion instruments, a membranophone and an idiophone, a question that had not been raised by critics until now.

If we put aside Sections 2 and 10 of this article, devoted respectively to the state of the question, the conclusions and the bibliography, this work is divided into two large blocks. The first block (Sections 3–6) is mainly devoted to the study of the pictorial, literary, and musical traditions that preceded the musical instruments in question. In Sections 3 and 4, the analysis focuses on the textual and pictorial tradition of the manuscript transmission of the Beatus manuscripts themselves, and in Sections 5 and 6, on the earlier Western cultural tradition. The analysis carried out in this section will serve, among other aspects, to delimit the relevance and innovation of the representation of the percussion musical instruments in this scene of the Beatus manuscripts in relation to the preceding Western cultural tradition. The second block (Sections 7–9) is devoted to delimiting the relationships between the

literary sources that the illustrators of the Beatus manuscripts could have read, the cultural (and, within this, the musical) context of the illustrators themselves, and the representations of these percussion instruments in the Beatus manuscripts. Through the detailed analysis carried out in both blocks, which are necessary and complementary, the circumstances and reasons that must have led the illuminators to select and represent the two percussion instruments that appear in this scene will be precisely delimited.

2. The State of the Question

The study of the musical instruments that appear in the preserved Beatus manuscripts has been a subject that has not enjoyed critical favour. The Beatus manuscripts are cited for different purposes as an example of a source that preserved a certain type of musical iconography, but there are hardly any detailed studies of their content. This situation is even more acute with the instruments in question, those that appear in *Commentary on the Book of Daniel* by Jerome, as they are only found in four manuscripts of the twenty-nine that contain miniatures, occupying, therefore, a very marginal place in the pictorial tradition of the Beatus manuscripts (in spite of their undoubted organological importance)[2].

There are no detailed studies on these instruments in the manuals of Western or Iberian medieval musical iconography or organology, although they can be considered iconographic and organological landmarks due to their idiosyncrasy and the rarity of their location and dating[3].

The same is true of musical archaeology works, which deal with different kinds of musical instruments dating from the early Middle Ages in excavations on the Iberian Peninsula. Furthermore, the vast majority of this type of archaeological studies are dedicated to finds from the centuries after the creation of the family of Beatus manuscripts in question, the 10th century, and the few that can be traced back to that period are dedicated to finds located in Muslim territory, which are much more numerous (Navarro 2020, pp. 15–53, 216–40).

On the other hand, the works from other disciplines (mainly art history and philology) that have studied the Beatus manuscripts do not pay much attention to the musical instruments contained in their miniatures, and those of the *Commentary on the Book of Daniel* are particularly rare due to their exceptionality[4]. As an example, two of the four study volumes accompanying the four facsimile editions of the four Beatus manuscripts containing these instruments, the study volume of the Beatus of Valladolid and the study volume of the Beatus of Silos, do not pay any attention to the musical instruments when dealing with the corresponding miniature (Rodríguez and Herreros 1993, pp. 74–75; Franco 2003, p. 188). The other two volumes of studies, the one accompanying the Beatus of Urgel and the one accompanying the Beatus of King Ferdinand, also do not deal in detail with the instruments themselves when studying this illustration (Klein 2002, pp. 271–72; Yarza 1994, pp. 224–25), focusing on an aspect that was already dealt with by the previous bibliography (Neuss 1931, p. 226), explaining the reasons for the absence of these instruments (and the musicians who play them) in the other Beatus manuscripts that do contain the illustration of the adoration of the statue of Nebuchadnezzar, since it seems that there is a gap in the miniatures that should have been filled by the musicians and their instruments, an absence to which an answer will be given later in accordance with the research carried out in this work[5].

The works of history of art dedicated to the study of the different pictorial cycles derived from the *Book of Daniel* have not dealt with the issue discussed in this work since the image that concerns us has not traditionally been the subject of artistic representation (unlike other cycles of the same book that have enjoyed fame throughout the history of Western art), even in works as close iconographically to the Beatus manuscripts as the Bible in the Archive of the Royal Collegiate Church of San Isidoro of León, Ms. 2 (Vallejo 1997, pp. 159–74; 1999, pp. 175–86; Mentré 1989, pp. 77–82).

It is, therefore, necessary to turn to those works that have specifically dealt with the issue at hand. Within the field of musicology, we must highlight a work (Romero 1977), the first monographic and detailed publication on the organology of the Beatus manuscripts,

as it focuses on the study of the *tubae* and *citharae* of the *Commentary on the Apocalypse* attributed to Beatus of Liebana, ignoring, therefore, the *Commentary on the Book of Daniel* by Jerome and the percussion instruments that concern us in this study. Due to the purpose for which it was created (an entrance speech to the Royal Academy of Fine Arts of San Fernando), it is a work of scholarship rather than a work of research; nevertheless, several important contributions can be highlighted. Firstly, it brings together previous approaches to the subject (pp. 26–32), outlining in general terms the (practically non-existent) state of the question. Secondly, although he stresses mainly the Arab influence in explaining the drawings of the *tuba* and *cithara*, he is aware that there are other influences (pp. 64–79). Thirdly, he notes the importance of the organological context of the time in the illustration of the *tuba* and *cithara* of the manuscripts (pp. 79–89).

Subsequently, the research of Dr. Rosario Álvarez stands out since, throughout her life, she has been the person who has studied Iberian medieval organology in the most depth, including the musical iconography preserved in the Beatus manuscripts. She devoted two works to the latter subject (Álvarez 1982a, 1993).

In the first one, she makes an iconographic and, to a lesser extent, organological commentary on all the musical instruments that appear in the Beatus manuscripts, devoting fundamental attention to chordophones (pp. 49–68) and, to a much lesser extent, to the rest: aerophones (pp. 68–71); membranophones (pp. 71–72); and idiophones (p. 72). She considers the membranophone to be a darbuka, an instrument introduced by the Arabs in the Iberian Peninsula from the early times of the conquest, according to the author (p. 71). She devotes barely ten lines to the description of the idiophone, rightly indicating that it is a set of cymbals.

The second of the articles is much more complete and detailed, carrying out not only an organological and iconographic analysis of the instruments but also a fundamental aspect of the objective of this work: an analysis of the origin of the instruments that appear in the Beatus manuscripts. This article, therefore, constitutes in itself the state of the art on the issue at hand. This work is divided into three sections, excluding the introduction and conclusions. The first one (pp. 205–8) is devoted to the study of the aerophones in the *Commentary on the Apocalypse*. The second one, the longest (pp. 208–16), is a study of the chordophones in the above-mentioned commentary. And the third one, the shortest (pp. 216–18), is a study of the instruments used in the worship of Nebuchadnezzar's statue in the *Commentary on the Book of Daniel*.

The author believes that four of the instruments described could be adapted to the biblical text (p. 217):

> "Indeed, there is a tuba, which in the painters' conception could be, as we have already seen, a horn or a straight trumpet; also a double oboe, which could translate the term fistula; a lute, which would translate the term cithara; and the cup-shaped drum, which would represent the symphonia, which according to the description given of it by Saint Isidore (Etymologiae, lib. III, cap. 22) was a drum with a double drumhead".

The author finds no explanation for the *sambuca* and the *psalterium*. In fact, she considers that the inclusion of cymbals could be explained by the lack of models on the part of the painters, which obliged them to include a different type of instrument.

However, and despite what was said above in relation to the membranophone, the author does not consider this instrument to be the *symphonia* isidoriana but rather a narrow cup-shaped drum that oscillates in the three codices between this shape and that of an hourglass, indicating (as in her first work) that it is a darbuka. In addition, the author states that the instrument has a single drumhead and is played with one or two hands, held in different ways, indicating that the ones depicted in the codices are rather unusual (suspended high and with the drumhead facing downward).

With regard to the cymbals, Álvarez indicates that this is an instrument that does not appear in European iconography at the same time or prior to the Beatus manuscripts, although they are frequent in Byzantine iconography.

These considerations are what essentially lead the author to consider that Obecus (the illuminator of the Beatus of Valladolid, the oldest of those containing the instruments that are the subject of this work) used a Coptic model to draw this scene because nowhere else could the combination of instruments that appear in it be found[6].

Subsequently, the author returned to the subject of the musical iconography of the Beatus manuscripts in a study of a similar theme, contributing some new information (Álvarez 1995). The author states (pp. 99–102) that the manuscripts reflect common scenes of Andalusian musical life, including the instruments. Furthermore, in the specific case of the membranophone, she again describes it as a darbuka, but this time providing evidence of archaeological finds of drums from the Iberian Peninsula with similar characteristics to the darbuka and dated to the same period as the Beatus manuscripts (Álvarez and Roselló 1989). However, she does not rule out the existence of a North African model, possibly Coptic, which she defended in the previous article mentioned above.

This is, in broad terms, the state of the art on the subject. In this paper, the objectives set out will lead to refuting some of the aspects pointed out in the state of the question that I consider to be erroneous, biased or inconclusive, depending on the case.

3. The Musical Instruments of the *Commentary on the Book of Daniel* within the Literary Tradition of the Beatus Manuscripts

The text of the commentary attributed to Beatus of Liébana can be framed in the line of other earlier and later commentaries on Revelation, relying heavily on the preceding patristic literature (Gryson 2012, pp. XI–XIII, CXXXIV–CXLII; Álvarez 1978, pp. 130–32). Several editions or revisions of Beatus' text have been reported, and it is generally accepted that the first edition of the text took place in 776. Subsequently, at least two more recensions were made, which critics have fixed at 784 and around 940, the latter being posthumous (Gryson 2012, pp. XXX–LXIV)[7]. This last recension presents notable extensions in relation to the previous versions, incorporating after Beatus' commentary, perhaps for the first time, the *Commentary on the Book of Daniel* by Jerome, which is the text that concerns us in this work[8]. This recension can be observed in all the manuscripts of the right branch of the stemma (the R family, descended from the δ subarchetype) proposed by Gryson (2012, p. LXIV), with the exception of the manuscript from the monastery of San Andrés de Arroyo (F-Pn, Nouv. Acq. Lat. 2290), which is incomplete from Book XII of the *Commentary on the Apocalypse* by Beatus. All the surviving manuscripts of this family were copied from the mid-10th century onwards from models which already incorporated this recension[9]. In addition, there are two manuscripts belonging to different stemma families (the α and γ families), one older and one later, of Castilian (E-Mh, Cod. 33) and Gascon origin (F-Pn, Lat. 8878), respectively, to which the aforementioned 10th-century recension was also partially applied, being, therefore, the manuscripts that also contain the *Commentary on Book of Daniel* by Jerome[10].

In all the manuscripts mentioned above, the same musical instruments appear, cited, in turn, in the biblical text, since Jerome (1.3.4-6), in the Visio Tertia of his commentary, paraphrases the list of instruments of the Vulgate (Dan 3:5, 7, 10, 15): *tuba; fistula; cithara; sambuca; psalterium;* and *symphonia* (Weber and Gryson 2007, pp. 1871–72; Glorie 1964, p. 798). Later (1.3.7b), Jerome simplifies the list, noting only *tuba, fistula,* and *cithara* (Glorie 1964, p. 799).

4. The Musical Instruments of the *Commentary on* the *Book of Daniel* within the Pictorial Tradition of the Beatus Manuscripts

The pictorial tradition of the Beatus manuscripts, although closely linked to the literary, is different from the literary, so it is important to distinguish carefully between the textual tradition and the pictorial tradition (Klein 1978; Gryson 2012, p. XX)[11]. Klein (1978, p. 96) fixed two pictorial versions of the work, dating the first pictorial version to 784. This first version has been transmitted in two formats, an older one, transmitted in the manuscripts of the family located on the left branch of the stemma, and a more recent one, the latter

being observed in the manuscripts E-Mn, Vit. 14-1 and F-Pn, Lat. 8878, the latter being the more interesting format for the purpose of this work, as the latter manuscript will later receive new additions that correspond, according to Klein, to the second pictorial version[12].

Subsequently, a second pictorial version was established, which also had two phases, the earliest of which is seen in the additions of E-Mh, Cod. 33[13]. The most modern phase of this second pictorial version takes place at the same time as the third textual recension, which critics date to around 940, as indicated above, as it was accurately dated (on very solid grounds) to around 940–945 (Williams 1978, pp. 216–19). The most modern phase of this second pictorial version is the one that affects all the manuscripts of the right branch family of Gryson's stemma (Gryson 2012, p. LXIV, the R branch, from the δ archetype) and Klein's (1978, p. 96, families IIa and IIb)[14]. Moreover, as mentioned above, this second pictorial version also affected the codex from Saint-Sever (F-Pn, Lat. 8878), which, as mentioned above, according to Klein, is also one of the two surviving representatives of the more modern branch of the first pictorial version.

However, although the third textual version and this more modern phase of the second pictorial version can be seen in all the manuscripts of the right branch of Gryson's stemma (family R), which coincides with families IIa and IIb of Klein's stemma, it is true that the miniatures of the musical instruments in question can only be seen in the manuscripts that constitute the so-called "Magius group" (with the exception of the manuscript illuminated by Magius himself), which corresponds to Klein's group IIa and one of the two subfamilies (the left one) of the right branch indicated by Gryson. Klein's group IIb (the right subfamily of the right branch of Gryson's stemma) and the manuscript from Saint Sever (F-Pn, Lat. 8878) contain the miniature but without musical instruments, with the exception of the Beatus of Cardeña (E-Mman, Ms. 2), which, although belonging to this group, contains the text without the miniature (and the aforementioned case of the incomplete Beatus of San Andrés de Arroyo, which lacks the *Commentary on the Book of Daniel*)[15].

Therefore, of the forty-one textual testimonies (with or without miniatures) preserved among unabridged manuscripts and fragments[16] and of the twenty-nine pictorial testimonies preserved among unabridged manuscripts and fragments (Williams 2017, pp. 67–148), only four manuscripts belonging to the same subfamily (made up of five manuscripts) within the stemma, unanimously recognised both at textual and pictorial level, the so-called "Magius group", contain the text and illustrations of interest to us. The family is made up of the following codices:

The Beatus of Magius or Beatus Morgan: New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, Ms 644. This manuscript, dated to the mid-10th century, perhaps around 945, comes from the Monastery of San Salvador of Tábara or the area around the Monastery of San Miguel de la Escalada (Gryson 2012, p. XV; Williams 2017, pp. 69–72). This manuscript is the only one of the group that contains the illustration of the adoration of the statue without musical instruments (f. 248v);

The Beatus of Valladolid or of Valcavado: Valladolid, University Library, Ms. 433. The manuscript is dated 970, from the Monastery of Valcavado (Gryson 2012, p. XVI; Williams 2017, pp. 75–78). The instruments are found on f. 199v;

The Beatus of Urgel: Urgel, Diocesan Archive, Ms. 26. Manuscript dated to the last quarter of the 10th century, whose provenance has been placed in La Rioja, Navarre or Aragon (Pyrenean area) on the basis of a model from the Kingdom of León (Gryson 2012, p. XVI; Williams 2017, pp. 87–89). The instruments are found on f. 213v;

The Beatus of King Ferdinand or Beatus of Facundus: Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, Ms. Vit. 14-2. Dated 1047, from a royal scriptorium in León, perhaps from Sahagún (Gryson 2012, p. XV; Williams 2017, pp. 96–99). The instruments are found on f. 276v;

The Beatus of Silos: London, British Library, Ms. Add. 11695. A copy of the text was made in 1091, and that of the images in 1109. It comes from the Monastery of Santo Domingo of Silos (Gryson 2012, p. XIV; Williams 2017, pp. 112–15). The instruments are found on f. 299r.

Among the four manuscripts containing the instruments, different organological relationships can be observed that provide interesting information about the transmission

of the scene in question. First of all, it must be assumed that the first testimony that contains the musical instruments discussed is the Beatus of Valladolid, dated 970, so it is very likely that the model on which this Beatus was based was the first to contain the famous instrumental ensemble of the *Commentary on the Book of Daniel*. According to Díaz y Díaz (1978, p. 177) in this group, the following relationships are observed:

> "The model of Magius, which, as has been said, probably came from the Castilian area, was related to one or more other codices, from one of which, almost at the same time as Magius, the Beatus of Valcavado was copied by the scribe and illuminator Obecus, whose spelling is closely related to the former. And from a different codex, but not very different, a little later, further east, perhaps already in the region of Navarre, the Beatus of Urgel was copied. Some time later, from a model also related to that of Obecus, the codex that is now in London came out in Silos".

Furthermore, in the colloquium following this conference, in response to Otto Werckmeister's direct question about the origin of the Silos manuscript (now in London), Díaz y Díaz (1978, p. 190) replies that "*specifically, the text of Valcavado, through whatever copies it may be, he-or a twin of his-is, in my opinion, the one that reached Silos and gave rise to the London manuscript*".

Therefore, according to Díaz y Díaz, the Beatus of Urgel was copied from a model very close to the one used to copy the Beatus of Valladolid and from the Beatus of Valladolid itself or, what is more likely, from one very close, the Beatus of Silos was copied[17].

If we look at the arrangement of the instruments in the scene, we can see how the Valladolid and Urgel Beatus have the same instruments, all different from each other, and the same arrangement on the folio. However, the Beatus of King Ferdinand, which must have come from a similar model to the one used to create these codices, has a slight variation, exchanging the interior instruments, moving the *cymbala* to the right side of the statue and the *cithara* (the lute) to the left.

The Beatus of Silos, on the other hand, presents a much simpler arrangement than can be seen in these three codices since it includes an ensemble made up only of the two main types of instruments, which, moreover, already appeared in the illustrations of the *Commentary on the Apocalypse* of Beatus in all the manuscripts: the *cithara* (the lute) and the *tuba*[18]. These instruments are arranged symmetrically, as follows: *tuba–cithara–tuba*-statue of Nebuchadnezzar-*tuba–cithara–tuba.* This differentiating fact distances us from the very meticulous filiation drawn by Díaz y Díaz (1978, p. 177), although it can also be explained by the greater schematization and simplification observed in this codex if we compare it with the previous ones of his own family (Werckmeister 1978, pp. 221–27). In any case, what seems clear is that the illuminator preferred to continue illustrating this scene with the instruments he already knew, as he had performed on numerous occasions in the folios of the *Commentary on the Apocalypse* of Beatus rather than experimenting with new ones.

5. Pictorial Influences of the Illustrations in the *Commentary on the Book of Daniel*

Klein (1978, pp. 90–104), following Neuss (1931, pp. 239–41, 273–74), considered that the pictorial tradition of the *Commentary on the Apocalypse* transmitted in the Hispanic Beatus manuscripts could ultimately be traced back to an archetype, African or Spanish, from the 5th or 6th centuries. At the same time, however, Klein questioned Neuss's methodology and results and argued that the Beatus manuscripts are an independent pictorial tradition resulting from characteristics and influences that crystallised on the Iberian peninsula, a tradition that has no direct relationship with the other late-antique cycles, as the Central European illustrated Apocalypses do (Klein 2010, pp. 13–26).

The same is true of the pictorial tradition of the illustrations of the *Commentary on the Book of Daniel* by Jerome preserved in the Beatus manuscripts since their origin must be sought in the pictorial tradition of the Hispanic Bibles, which culminates with the Bible preserved in the Archive of the Royal Collegiate Church of San Isidoro of León, already referred to above

(Williams 1965, 1978, 1999; Zaluska 1987)[19]. Williams (1978, pp. 211–13; 1994, p. 60), following Neuss (1931, pp. 222–36), carefully demonstrated with very solid arguments that this cycle of illustrations did not come from an illustrated *Book of Daniel* or an illustrated commentary on it, but from an illustrated Bible, probably earlier than the one quoted above. However, contrary to Neuss, who argued that the illustrations in the *Commentary on the Book of Daniel* belonged from the beginning to the archetypal illustrated commentary produced during Beatus' lifetime, Williams (1978, pp. 211–13; 1994, p. 25) showed that they were only added to the manuscript tradition in the 10th century. He did not deny that these illustrations were ultimately derived, like the illustrations in Beatus' commentary, from a late antique model[20]. However, he defended (similar to Klein's approach to the illustrations of the *Commentary on the Apocalypse*) the authenticity and independence of the Hispanic pictorial tradition, which in the middle of the 10th century and after the contributions of different influences (Schlunk 1945, pp. 241–65; de Palol 1978, pp. 117–34; Ainaud 1978, pp. 19–32; Beckwith 1978, pp. 55–64; Guilmain 1978, pp. 65–82), culminated in a pictorial revival that came to fruition with the cycle of illustrations of the *Commentary on the Book of Daniel* that was included in the manuscripts (Williams 1978, pp. 213–19; 1994, pp. 55–78; 2017, pp. 23–26). This pictorial renovation is, therefore, embodied in the most modern phase of the second pictorial version described by Klein, which, as mentioned above, Williams himself dates to around 940–945.

6. Relevance and Innovation of the Musical Instruments of the Beatus Manuscripts within the Pictorial Tradition Preceding the *Book of Daniel*

Before concluding the analysis of the pictorial tradition, it is important to point out that the Bible preserved in the Archive of the Royal Collegiate Church of San Isidoro of León (Ms. 2) has only three miniatures related to the cycle of Daniel (ff. 318r-v, 319r-v, and 325v)[21], to which another on the story of Susanna must be added, closely related to Daniel (f. 324v), and three other minor ones (two capital letters and small handwriting, located in a square less than half the width of a column) that have nothing to do with the story narrated in the biblical text. Therefore, none of these miniatures illustrates the worship of Nebuchadnezzar's statue, and the musical instruments discussed in this article do not appear at any time.

The absence of this scene is not only characteristic of this Bible but is repeated throughout the previous history of Iberian art (Williams 1977; Fontaine 1977, pp. 319–408) since, although the representations of certain cycles of the *Book of Daniel* have enjoyed great fortune throughout history (such as the three young men in the furnace or Daniel in the lions' den), the fact is that the appearance of the musical instruments in the scene of the worship of Nebuchadnezzar's statue has been a forgotten episode in the visual arts (Réau 1978, pp. 390–410).

The absence of these instruments in the earlier art means that their representation in the Beatus manuscripts can be considered a truly personal creation of the Iberian illuminators of the 10th century. In this sense, it is enough to take a look at the list of instruments in the *Book of Daniel* (3:5, 7, 10, 15) and Jerome's commentary (3.4–6, 3.7b) and analyse their characteristics (Mitchell and Joyce 1965). The relationship of the instruments between the three biblical texts, Vulgate (Weber and Gryson 2007, pp. 1871–72), Septuagint (Rahlfs and Hanhart 2006, p. 1483), and Hebrew Bible (Elliger and Rudolph 1997, pp. 1386–87), is as follows (see Table 1), with some slight variations, depending on the listing (recall that there are four different listings in verses 5, 7, 10 and 15, respectively)[22].

Therefore, if we compare the characteristics of these instruments from the Ancient World with the instruments that appear in the Beatus manuscripts, we can see that the Beatus manuscripts contain a very different instrumental ensemble in which we can observe some instruments with organological characteristics very different from those that appear in the ancient sources and which have been described by critics. Broadly speaking, it is sufficient to recall that in the biblical text, there are two aerophones, three chordophones, and the *symphonia*. However, in the Beatus manuscripts that we are dealing with here, there are three aerophones (two of them seem to have similar characteristics), only one chordophone, and two percussion instruments, a membranophone and an idiophone.

Table 1. Biblical Instruments (Dan 3:5, 7, 10, 15).

Hebrew Bible	Septuagint	Vulgate
קרנא (qarna’) (Kolyada 2009, pp. 65–66; Montagu 2002, pp. 96–97)	*σάλπιγξ* (Landels 1999, pp 78–81; Mathiesen 1999, pp. 230–34; Michaelides 1978, pp. 55, 294–95; Webster 1998, pp. 140–55; West 1992, pp. 118–22; Wille 1967, pp. 75–104)	*tuba*
משרוקיתא (mašrôqîṯā) (Kolyada 2009, pp. 94–97; Montagu 2002, pp. 97–98)	*σῦριγξ* (Landels 1999, pp. 69–72; Mathiesen 1999, pp. 222–25; Michaelides 1978, pp. 314–16; West 1992, pp. 109–14; Wille 1967, pp. 109–22, 524–30, 536)	*fistula*
קיתרס (qayṯrôs) (Kolyada 2009, pp. 51–53; Montagu 2002, p. 98)	*κιθάρα* (Landels 1999, pp. 48–53; Maas and Snyder 1989, pp. 2–14, 24–36, 53–79, 165–81; Mathiesen 1999, pp. 258–70; Michaelides 1978, pp. 168–70; West 1992, pp. 50–56)	*cithara*
סבכא (śabbḵā’)[23]	*σαμβύκη* (Duchesne-Guillemin 1968, pp. 5–18; Maas and Snyder 1989, pp. 151, 184, 186, 201, 244, n. 121; Mathiesen 1999, pp. 275–80)	*sambuca*
פסנתרין (pəsantērîn) (Kolyada 2009, pp. 50–51; Montagu 2002, pp. 98, 110–11)	*ψαλτήριον* (Maas and Snyder 1989, pp. 1–2, 40–41, 147–55, 181–84; Mathiesen 1999, pp. 270–72; Michaelides 1978, p. 276)	*psalterium*
סימפניה (sûmpōnyā)[24]	*συμφωνία*[25]	*symphonia*

The illuminators were faced with a major problem. They had before them a commentary written almost six centuries earlier (Jerome’s commentary) on a translation (the Vulgate, also by Jerome) of another text written six centuries before the commentary and the Vulgate and twelve centuries before the time of the illuminators themselves and which, therefore, referred to a cultural (and, within this, organological) context very different from the Iberian cultural world of the tenth century (Collins 2002, pp. 1–15).

This difference in the cultural context and the absence of organological models in previous visual arts when illustrating this story were the causes that forced the illuminators to look for information from other sources, being, in the first place, the literary sources, the ones that must have determined the illuminators’ decision to draw one instrument and not another, at least in the case of percussion instruments and, perhaps, in some other instruments, such as the *psalterium*[26]. In the case of percussion instruments, once the instruments to be drawn had been determined (through literary sources), it is very likely that the illuminators turned to the organological reality of their time to try to further specify the drawing of their models, as can be seen in the following pages.

7. The Case of the *Cymbalas*

I consider that the representation of the *cymbala*[27], an instrument that does not appear in the biblical text, is not accidental and is the result of research carried out by the illuminator or illuminators who created the model from which the Beatus of Valladolid was copied. There are consistent grounds for thinking that the *cymbala* that appears in the miniature represents the *sambuca*, an instrument that appears in the biblical text.

The *sambuca* of the *Book of Daniel* was a type of harp that originated in the Mediterranean East. Broadly speaking, these are practically the only characteristics that can be said with any certainty about this instrument[28]. It is very important to note that the *sambuca* does not appear once again in the entire Bible, which contributes to its absence in the visual arts. On the other hand, the silence of classical sources on the technical and musical aspects of the *sambuca* is considerable, and, as with other ancient harp types, for data, we have to turn to encyclopaedists and very late antiquarians, who refer to it as an instrument of bygone times[29]; so it is likely that we are dealing with a type of harp that must have been very little used in the Greek world, especially from the classical and Hellenistic periods,

which meant that its knowledge in later times was fundamentally encyclopaedic in nature[30]. In fact, in the Roman world, the *sambuca* may have been a completely extinct instrument, at least referred to as such[31], and in the Latin sources, there is a silence similar to that, which can be observed in the Greek sources. Only Paulus Festus (Lindsay 1997, p. 434) can be singled out, and he indicates that it is a harp; Martianus Capella (Willis 1983, p. 354, 9.924), who provides no information about it, and Isidore of Seville, who places it among the wind instruments in a passage that is difficult to read and probably erroneous, which has already been analysed by critics (Gasparotto and Guillaumin 2009, p. 72, Etym.3.20.7)[32]. Undoubtedly, the knowledge of all these authors was literary.

The two most copied works (among the Greek and Latin works cited) in the Latin High Middle Ages were *De Nuptiis Phololog*i*ae et Mercurii* by Martianus Capella and the *Etymologiae* by Isidore of Seville (only fragments of the work by Festus, much less copied, have been preserved), which contributed to the fact that the information available on the physical characteristics of this instrument was practically nil. However, it was these two sources (the works of Capella and Isidore), together with others detailed below, which, paradoxically, provided the necessary information for the illuminators of the Beatus manuscripts to deal with the pictorial interpretation of this biblical organological passage written twelve centuries earlier.

7.1. The Choice of Cymbala: The Sambucos–Cymbala Connection

There are two very important manuscripts in the history of the transmission of the text of *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii* by Martianus Capella, both dated to the 9th century (thus, a century before the date of the first preserved Beatus manuscripts with the miniatures of the instruments of the *Commentary on the Book of Daniel*), which contain glosses describing the term *sambucos* (by which Capella is literally referring to the *sambuca*[33]), like some *cymbala* (Teeuwen 2002, pp. 481–82, glosa 16.8)[34]. The first manuscript, of French origin, is Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, MS BPL 36. On f. 120r, one can read the term *cymbalos*, which is written above the term *sambucos*. The second manuscript, also of French origin, is Paris, BnF, Lat. 8671. On f. 77v, the gloss *cymbala* appears above the term *sambucos*. Therefore, it is possible to note the existence of two literary documents in which the same semantic identification can be observed for both terms (*sambucos* and *cymbalos/cymbala*), constituting a unique case in the literature, both in Antiquity and in the early medieval Latin literature (Bernhard 2016, u. sambuca, col. 1095).

*De Nuptiis Phololog*i*ae et Mercurii* was one of the most copied works in the High Middle Ages, especially appreciated in the Carolingian period (Leonardi 1961)[35], being the subject of a large number of glosses, mainly in Books I and II, but also others, such as Book IX, the one dedicated to music (Teeuwen 2002, pp. 358–567). However, although there is an interesting manuscript tradition that can undoubtedly be dated to the 9th and 10th centuries that contains the musical glosses to Book IX of Martianus Capella, it should be noted that there are only a few manuscripts dated to those same centuries that contain the fragment in question (9.924) glossed, being reduced to barely eleven[36]. Except for the two manuscripts cited above, the other nine manuscripts listed in the last footnote do not relate the two terms or concepts in any way.

On the other hand, two important points should be noted. Firstly, none of the manuscripts cited are of Iberian origin. Secondly, not a single manuscript has been preserved in Spain or copied in the territories of present-day Spain that contains the work of Martianus Capella, with three very late exceptions (Ayuso 2012, pp. 109–58). However, these data do not mean that Capella's work was not found on the Iberian Peninsula at the time of the creation of the illustrations since it is possible to prove a previous existence of Capella's text, in whole or in part, thanks to the works of Isidore of Seville (Fontaine 1983, pp. 748–49; Díaz y Díaz 2004, p. 93; Fontaine 2000, p. 70), even in relation to purely musical themes, an area in which he was one of the main sources for the Bishop of Seville (Diago 2019, pp. 181–84, 556–57). Furthermore, we must not forget the constant cultural exchange (including literary and manuscript exchange) between the south and north of the Pyrenees, which was not interrupted even during the

period of the greatest Muslim domination of the Iberian Peninsula, allowing for contemporary works to reach the Iberian *scriptoria* from the north of the Pyrenees (Díaz y Díaz 1991, pp. 9–276; 1983, pp. 42–53, 66–75, 98–105, 127–132, 136–140, 149–245, 293–480).

In any case, and although we cannot be sure that this specific glosa was found in the Iberian peninsula in the 10th century with the preserved literary sources, I consider that the exceptionality of it is a first-rate argument in this sense, for it seems too much of a coincidence that the only musical instrument (other than a chordophone) with which the *sambuca* has been associated in the preserved early medieval literary sources (even if they are of French origin), the *cymbala*, is the same instrument that appears in the first early medieval representations (of Iberian origin) in which the *sambuca* should appear. This coincidence (which is even more surprising given the great organological differences between the two instruments) suggests that this association was not as uncommon as the preserved literary sources suggest and that, therefore, the early medieval Hispanic illustrators who made the musical instruments on the model from which the Beatus of Valladolid was painted, may have had access to a literary source that contained a similar relationship to the one observed in the two manuscripts discussed above.

7.2. The Drawing of the Cymbala

Isidore of Seville accurately describes the cymbala (Etym.3.21.11) as follows: "Cymbala acitabula quaedam sunt quae percussa inuicem se tangunt et faciunt sonum. Dicta autem cymbala quia cum ballematia simul percutiuntur; cum enim Graeci dicun σύν, βαλά ballematia"[37]. Therefore, in a few lines, the Bishop of Seville deals with four different aspects of this instrument: its physical description; the way it is played; some of the occasions on which it is played; and the possible etymology of its name. The first three aspects mentioned coincide, with nuances, with what must have been the musical and performing reality of this instrument in the Ancient World. Regarding their shape, Isidore describes the cymbala as a pair of small concave objects, bowls, or plates ("acitabula"[38]). Regarding the way they are played, the Bishop of Seville indicates that the sound is produced when one part of the instrument is struck against the other (one acitabulum against the other). Finally, Isidore points out the main occasion on which these instruments were used: they were played while dancing. Elsewhere in his Etymologiae, in the introduction to rhythmic music (Etym.3.21.1), Isidore also describes the material from which these instruments could be made, clearly indicating that they were made of metal: "cymbalum, sistrum, acitabula aenea et argentea, uel alia quae metallico rigore percussa reddunt cum suauitate tinnitum et cetera huiuscemodi"[39].

Therefore, Isidore's precise description leaves little room for improvisation by the illustrators of the Beatus manuscripts. In addition, the Isidorian *Etymologiae* was a very widely copied work, being considered one of the most copied literary works of the Latin High Middle Ages, so it is highly probable that a copy of this work was found in the *scriptorium* where the illustrations were created (Díaz y Díaz 2004, p. 200)[40]. At this point, we can also consider the great dependence that Beatus' own *Commentary on the Apocalypse* has on the work of Isidore, especially for all questions relating to the liberal disciplines and what can be called general culture, although also for questions of a doctrinal, exegetical or theological nature, being the author most used by Beatus of Liébana together with Gregorius Magnus (Álvarez 1978, pp. 130–32; Gryson 2012, pp. CXXXIV–CXXXV)[41].

However, one should not rule out the possibility that the illustrators of the Beatus manuscripts themselves may have seen *cymbala* with their own eyes. Firstly, it is known that the so-called *qraqeb*, two spoon- or saucer-shaped discs related to the *Gnawas*, a tribe of sub-Saharan origin whose members served as slaves in the Muslim territories of the Iberian Peninsula, existed. The particularity of these *qraqeb* is that they were joined by a leather cord of about thirty centimetres, as is the case with the *cymbala* of the manuscripts. However, references to these qraqeb date from after the 10th century (Navarro 2020, p. 201). On the other hand, some possible samples of Muslim-era *cymbala* found in the Roman Theatre of Zaragoza have been preserved, although they are also dated to a somewhat

later date (Mendívil 2018). Similarly, many examples of the cymbala from the Roman period (some from the Late Antique period) have survived to the present day, a musical instrument quite common in the sites of the Iberian Peninsula (and throughout the Roman Empire), including territories in the north of the peninsula that belonged (several centuries later) to the Kingdom of León itself, where some of the most beautiful Beatus manuscripts were copied and, perhaps, the model of the Beatus of Valladolid may have been copied (Morais et al. 2014). Perhaps the direct observation of a *cymbala* or similar instrument (or perhaps the ingenuity of the illuminators) is the reason why the two *cymbala* appear joined by a cord in the illustrations of the manuscripts.

In any case, taking into account the preserved sources (archaeological and iconographic remains being absent in the 10th century), it can only be demonstrated that the illuminators had at their disposal the literary sources when delimiting the characteristics of the musical instrument for the definitive drawing, since in the *Etymologiae* of Isidoro of Seville they are described precisely.

7.3. The Sambucus–Saltator Connection

There is an important aspect that critics have not dealt with either, and that is that in the Beatus of Valladolid, the musician playing the *cymbala* has three very particular characteristics that make him unique among all the musicians that populate the Beatus manuscripts. Firstly, the musician is dancing with very pronounced movements, with none of the stiffness of the body that can be seen in the other musicians in the scene. Secondly, his clothing is strikingly different from everyone else's, as it seems that his upper body (except for his head and hands) is covered with brown fur, with his legs also covered up to his ankles, but not by a tunic like the rest of the musicians, but by what looks like trousers made of the same fabric as the clothes covering the rest of his body. Thirdly, he is a musician with long hair, so he may be an effeminate character or a woman. This very interesting and exceptional novelty that can be observed in the Beatus of Valladolid can also be explained thanks to the literary sources for two reasons that are explained below.

On the one hand, in several dictionaries dating from the time of the composition of the illustrations (10th century) and produced in the north of the Iberian Peninsula, the term *sambucus* is defined with the term *saltator*, as a dancer. These dictionaries are the following: Madrid, Real Academia de Historia, Cód. 46 (fol. 137r); Madrid, Real Academia de Historia, Cód. 31 (f. 103); and Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, Vitr. 14-5 (f. 183). The first two codices were made in San Millán de la Cogolla (they are not copies of each other, although they are related). The third is divided into two parts, one (ff. 1-16, 80–186) coming from the eastern region of the Kingdom of León and the other (ff. 17–79) from the Ebro region with influences from Catalonia or La Rioja (Díaz y Díaz 1983, pp. 332–34; Ruíz 1997, pp. 221–23, 281–84; García and García 1997, pp. 46–96). Therefore, these codices, produced at approximately the same time and place as the illustrations of the Beatus manuscripts, relate to both terms, constituting a great novelty (as occurred with the relationship between the term *sambucos* and the terms *cymbala/cymbalos*) since, taking into account the preserved sources, it can be affirmed that it originates from the Iberian Peninsula or was first literarily recorded there.

On the other hand, Isidore describes the function of the *saltatori*, a term well known in the Latin literature, while commenting on its etymological origin in *Etym.*18.50 (Cantó 2007, pp. 172–73), a book dedicated to the stage trades among other subjects: "*Saltatores autem nominatos Varro dicit ab Arcade Salio, quem Aeneas in Italiam secum adduxit, quique primo docuit Romanos adolescentes nobiles saltare*"[42]. However, this is not the only allusion made by the Bishop of Seville to dance, as he made another much more important one for the subject of this work in *Ecc.Off.*1.41.2 (Lawson 1989, p. 47), as it is closely related to the image of the musician of the *cymbala* of the Beatus of Valladolid described above. The text by Isidore is as follows:

> "Tunc enim miseri homines et, quod peius est, etiam fideles sumentes species monstruosas in ferarum habitu transformantur; alii femineo gestu demutati uir-

> ilem uultum effeminant; nonnulli etiam de fanatica adhuc consuetudine quibusdam ipso die obseruationum auguriis profanantur; perstrepunt omnia saltantium pedibus, tripudiantium plausibus; quodque his turpius nefas, nexis inter se utriusque sexus choris, inops animi, furens uino, turba miscitur"[43].

It can be seen how, among other aspects, the Bishop of Seville explicitly points out that the dancers wear monstrous costumes as if they were wild beasts, also simulating effeminate appearance and movements, coinciding with the attributes that the *sambucus–saltator* of the Beatus of Valladolid has and which make him unique: on the one hand, he appears to be disguised in furs as if he were a wild beast, and on the other hand, he appears to have an effeminate appearance and movements, as shown by his long hair and the exaggerated twisting of his figure while he dances.

Moreover, it should be noted that the scene described by Isidore could hardly have been seen in real life by the illuminator of the Beatus (although it is not impossible) since the text is based on several fragments of Caesareus of Arles located within Serm.192.2-4 (Morin 1953, pp. 779–82), an author who lived in Gaul in the 5th and 6th centuries. In these fragments, Caesareus criticises the celebration of the January Kalends in what seem to be remnants of an ancient pagan ritual, perhaps in honour of the god Janus.

If to all that has already been said in this section, we add what Isidore says above in *Etym*.3.21.11, where he explicitly points out that the *cymbala* are used for dancing; the precise description he gives of them, as well as the relationship sambucos–cymbalos/cymbala given in the glosses to Capella's text, it seems that the influences of the literary sources in the illustration of the cymbala and the musician who plays them in the Beatus of Valladolid were very important.

Taking all this into account, I do not share the opinion of Álvarez (1993, p. 217) on the existence of a Coptic model (not preserved) that justifies the drawing of the musical instruments, an opinion similar to that defended by Male (1922, pp. 4–6) at a general level (and not only organological), who proposed a Coptic or Syrian origin of the archetype, and that Neuss (1931, pp. 239–41), first, and later (and above all), Klein (1978, p. 104) proved wrong with solid arguments already referred to above[44].

8. The Case of the Membranophone

Another percussion instrument that appears in the musical ensemble of the scene of the worship of Nebuchadnezzar's statue is a membranophone. The appearance of this instrument was not accidental and, as with the *cymbala*, is a response to the information that the illustrator or illustrators of the model that served as a copy for the Beatus of Valcavado or Beatus of Valladolid were able to find in the written sources and, only at a later stage, to the imitation of the models that they were able to observe in the organological reality of their time.

8.1. The Choice of the Membranophone: The Isidorian Symphonia

I believe that the illustrators chose a membranophone and not another type of instrument because of the texts of Isidore of Seville for several important reasons.

First of all, it should be noted that, as indicated in Section 6, the biblical text contains an instrument, the *symphonia*, whose meaning, as discussed in note 24, is highly controversial for critics. It is a highly polysemous term that is generally used with much more common musical meanings other than that of a musical instrument. However, it is also used to refer to a musical instrument that some researchers consider to be a wind instrument (Barry 1904, pp. 180–210; Finesinger 1926, pp. 21–75; Stradling and Kitchen 1982, pp. 800–4); others, a stringed instrument (Farmer 1957, p. 245); and others, a percussion instrument (Hartman and DiLella 1978, p. 150; Ellenbogen 1962, p. 122, n. 2; Mitchell and Joyce 1965), although the list of researchers is longer (Kolyada 2009, pp. 145–48). This division among researchers is due to the imprecision found in the classical sources, where not a single description of the physical appearance of the instrument can be read, with the exception of the one below[45].

Secondly, a very important fact should be pointed out: Isidore of Seville is the only author in all Greco–Latin literature who describes the *symphonia* clearly, in detail, and without any doubt as a musical instrument, considering it to be a membranophone (Diago 2024b). Other earlier authors may also have considered the *symphonia* as a percussion instrument, but there is only one text that does not offer any doubt in this sense. This is fragment 3.18.9 of *De Medicina* of Celsus, which, however, does not provide any information about its physical characteristics to the point that it is not even possible to differentiate whether it is a membranophone or an idiophone (Spencer 1961, pp. 292–94)[46].

Therefore, the illustrators of the Beatus manuscripts were able to rely on some reflections by Isidore of Seville, the only ones in all the Latin literature, which explained in detail the physical characteristics of an instrument called *symphonia*, the same term that appeared in the biblical text they were to illustrate, referring to a musical instrument about which they knew absolutely nothing, since (according to the surviving sources) there was no Instrument of that name among the instruments of their time in the Iberian Peninsula, and the other iconographic, archaeological, or literary sources, contemporary or earlier, did not offer any precise information on the subject.

8.2. The Drawing of the Symphonia

Isidore of Seville presents two reflections on *symphonia* within the paragraphs dedicated to rhythmic music (strung and percussion instruments), in which some of the characteristics of the membranophone that appear in the Beatus manuscripts can be observed. The first reference is to be found in a fragment at *Etym*.3.21.9-10, dedicated to the *tympanum*, in which Isidore, after precisely describing the physical characteristics of this instrument, indicates that a *tympanum* is half of a *symphonia*, comparing it, in turn, to a sieve or a sieve-pan, an object that is also usually cylindrical and hollow in shape, with a structure similar to that of a modern tambourine, that is, to that of a tympanum. The text of *Etym*.3.21.9 is the following: "*Tympanum est pellis uel corium ligno ex una parte extentum. Est enim pars media symphoniae in similitudinem cribi*"[47]. The second reference is more extensive and detailed. It is found in *Etym*.3.21.14, a paragraph, which Isidore devotes entirely to the instrument we are dealing with here: "*Symphonia uulgo appellatur lignum cauum ex utraque parte pelle extenta, quam uirgulis hinc et indi musici feriunt, fitque in ea ex concordia grauis et acuti suauissimus cantus*"[48].

Therefore, if we take into account what is said in both paragraphs, Isidore not only gives a detailed physical description of the instrument but also describes how it is played and the sounds it produces. On the one hand, Isidore makes it clear that the *symphonia* is a hollow-wood instrument covered at each end by a taut skin. Therefore, for Isidore, the *symphonia* is a kind of wooden drum or tambourine with two drumheads or membranes, one at each end or base of the drum cylinder (hence, he defines the *tympanum* as half of a *symphonia*). Secondly, the Bishop of Seville describes precisely how the instrument is played: the performer beats both drumheads or membranes with drumsticks (it is understood that one is in each hand), so, as his hands are occupied with the drumsticks, it is deduced that the instrument must be hanging from the performer's own shoulders or must be supported on some specific part of the performer's body, such as the thighs. Finally, Isidoro points out the sound produced by the instrument and, by extension, the purpose of the possibility that both membranes can be played: one of the membranes produces a deeper sound, and the other a higher sound, resulting in a very pleasant combination.

Of all these details, the most striking is the double membrane, a detail that can be seen in the Beatus of Valladolid and, much more visibly, in the Beatus of Urgel (but not in the Beatus of King Ferdinand, in which there is no membrane at the top or bottom, although the musician only plays on the lower part) and which has gone unnoticed by critics. This detail inextricably links the illustrations of the Beatus manuscripts with the fragment quoted from Isidore of Seville, as he is the first author in the Latin literature to mention this detail in the *symphonia*. Furthermore, it should be borne in mind that, to date, no type of membranophone has been found on the Iberian peninsula with a double

membrane at the time when the Beatus manuscripts were composed, despite the fact that several dozen remains of drums have been found, especially in Islamic territory. The only drum that could have a double membrane is the drum of the so-called Pila de Xátiva, located in the Almodí Museum in the city of Xátiva (Spain), dated to the second half of the 11th century and, therefore, a century later than the time of the Beatus manuscripts. In it, we can see a drum in the shape of a tube (although showing a slight widening at both ends), which is supported horizontally on the performer's thigh and attached with a rope to his shoulder, each side of which is presumably struck with each of the performer's hands. Therefore, if we take into account that this work is dated to the 11th century, it is more likely that Isidore's text was also the source of information from which the illustrator drew the instrument's double membrane.

Further problems of interconnection between the image of the Beatus manuscripts and the text of Isidore present other details related to the shape of the instrument and the way it is interpreted. From Isidore's text of *Etym*.3.21.14, we can only deduce that it is a hollow wood, while from the text of *Etym*.3.21.9 we can also deduce that it is cylindrical in shape, which does not correspond to the shape in which the instrument appears in the Beatus manuscripts, as it is hourglass-shaped. Similarly, Isidore of Seville clearly indicates in both fragments that the *symphonia* is played with drumsticks (as is the tympanum), and in the Beatus manuscripts, on the contrary, it is played with the hand. It is very likely that both the hourglass shape and the way of playing it (with the hands) observed in the Beatus manuscripts is due to the organological reality of the period in the Iberian Peninsula since, especially in Muslim territory, a multitude of membranophones were developed, of which several dozen have been preserved (all of them made of ceramic, a much more durable material than wood). However, only one, the earliest of them, can be dated to the 10th century at the earliest (Vindry 1980, pp. 221–26). The rest of the archaeological finds date from the 11th century onwards. Likewise, it should be noted that the drum that can be dated to the 10th century is cup-shaped, like today's darbukas, but not hourglass-shaped, although both shapes share a narrowing in the central part where the instrument can be held, as it appears in the miniatures of the Beatus manuscripts, both shapes (especially the cup shape) being some of the most common among the Iberian membranophones preserved in those centuries (Navarro 2020, pp. 128–31, 189–201, 389–430). On the other hand, in relation to the interpretation that appears in the Beatus manuscripts, in which it seems that the instrument is being beaten from bottom to top with one hand while it is held with the other by the central narrowing, it should be noted that Iberian iconography has also been preserved, in which drums appear placed vertically being beaten from bottom to top, as is the case with the so-called "*Tañedora del tamborcillo*" from the Archaeological Museum of Córdoba, dated to the 10th century (Navarro 2020, pp. 105–6, 401–2). However, there is a notable difference between this image and that of the Beatus manuscripts, as the player uses both hands to strike the instrument, resting it against her body, while the musicians of the Beatus manuscripts, as has already been indicated, only strike the instrument with one hand, holding it with the other.

Bearing this in mind, it is easy to suppose that, in the case of *symphonia*, the organological reality of the period, especially that of Muslim origin, must have played an important role in drawing the definitive model of the membranophone of the Beatus manuscripts, whose most important characteristics had already been chosen and sketched out in the texts of Isidore of Seville.

9. The Absence of the Instruments of this Scene in the Text of the Beatus Manuscripts

Taking into account what has been said so far, we are in a position to give a more precise answer than that given in the state of the question (see note 5) to the absence of these musical instruments in the rest of the Beatus manuscripts that contain this illustrated scene and have the holes for them.

These musical instruments were drawn by an illustrator or illustrators, who knew how to obtain advice from literary sources or from other colleagues who had a more complete

cultural background and a deeper knowledge of literary sources. Whichever way it was performed, it is certain that there must have been a process of documentation.

If this question is applied to the history of manuscript transmission, it is very likely that, originally, only the model used to copy the Beatus of Valladolid was illustrated with these musical instruments. From this model must have come, either directly or through other intermediate copies, the Beatus of Urgel and, later, the Beatus of King Ferdinand[49]. The illustrator (one or more) of this model was the one who carried out the research and dared to innovate with the illustration of these musical instruments, including the two percussion instruments mentioned above. This model must have been somewhat different and most probably somewhat later, although not much later, than the model used by Magius to illustrate the so-called Beatus Morgan since it is the only manuscript in the group that does not contain the musical instruments of this scene. Moreover, it should also be remembered that the Beatus Morgan predates the Valladolid Beatus. Therefore, both models, which were very close to each other, albeit with some differences, started from the same pictorial design when it came to distributing the images in the scene. In the end, however, the scene could only be completed by the illustrator, who had the necessary knowledge due to his research into literary sources.

On the other hand, and at approximately the same time that the model of the Beatus of Valladolid was copied, or perhaps even earlier, the model or models from which the group of the Beatus of Tábara and Gerona would later be developed were copied, and exactly the same thing happened as in the previous case. Once the model was copied without the musical instruments, the gap was passed on to the following manuscripts, whose illuminators kept it unfilled.

The great difficulties encountered by the illuminators in interpreting a text written twelve centuries earlier in such a different cultural context due to the lack of pictorial models was an insurmountable barrier that could only be overcome at a specific moment in the manuscript tradition when it was decided to turn to other sources of information, firstly, literary sources, and secondly, the organological reality of the time.

In the same way, and for the same reasons explained above, it is very likely that the musician who appears dancing with the *cymbala* in the Beatus of Valladolid was a unique and exclusive innovation of Obecus, the illuminator of this Beatus, or, what I think less likely, of the miniaturist, who painted the model on which the Beatus of Valladolid was based, since it would have increased the chances that this *saltator* would also have been transmitted to the rest of the manuscripts of the family, at least to that of Urgel and to that of King Ferdinand. Therefore, it was Obecus who had to do research on this subject and who dared to innovate in relation to the preceding tradition.

Perhaps, as Klein (2002, pp. 271–72) pointed out, the early archetype had musical instruments which, for one reason or another, were lost over the centuries. In any case, what is clear is that at a later point in the history of the pictorial transmission of this scene (the second half of the 10th century), musical instruments appear or reappear, differentiated from the primitive instruments (whose characteristics were very different in some cases), and conditioned by totally different cultural and musical circumstances.

10. Conclusions

The percussion musical instruments that appear in the scene of the adoration of the statue of Nebuchadnezzar in some Iberian Beatus manuscripts are a true innovation of the medieval peninsular illustrators of the 10th century. The absence of a previous pictorial model and the antiquity of a text written twelve centuries earlier in a very different organological context, unknown to early medieval authors, meant that the first illuminator (one or more) who dared to paint these musical instruments (probably the illuminator of the model used to copy the Beatus of Valladolid) had to do a great deal of research, turning to the literary sources available to him to choose the appropriate instruments, and the result was the *cymbala* to represent the *sambuca* of the biblical passage and a membranophone with a double membrane, the Isidorian *symphonia*, to represent the biblical *symphonia.* Similarly,

the characteristics of the musician who plays the *cymbala* in the Beatus of Valladolid or Beatus of Valcavado, characteristics that make him unique and differentiate him from all the musicians in the Beatus manuscripts, were also delimited by the literary sources, since the coincidences between text and image are precise and numerous (although in this case it is most likely an innovation of Obecus, the illuminator of this Beatus).

Among the literary sources used to illustrate these percussion instruments are, first of all, different fragments of Isidore of Seville (Etym.3.21.1, 9–10, 11, 14, 18.50, Ecc.Off.1.41), belonging to works that were very widespread throughout the Iberian peninsula in the High Middle Ages; followed by some 9th-century glosses to Book IX of *De Nuptiis Filolgiae et Mercurii* by Martianus Capella, a work that must have been present in the Iberian Peninsula in the Hispano–Visigothic period, although, with the preserved sources, it cannot be proved that it was present at the time of the creation of the Beatus manuscripts; and several early medieval Iberian dictionaries from the 10th century, created in the same areas where the manuscripts of the Beatus manuscripts were created.

Once the appropriate instruments had been chosen to represent the biblical *sambuca* and *symphonia* thanks to the literary sources, and once their fundamental physical and organological characteristics had been established, which are much more precise and coincident in the case of the *cymbala*, it is probable that the illuminators turned to the organological reality of their time in search of models to complete their drawing, a fact that can be specified with greater arguments in relation to the drawing of the *symphonia*, since, on the one hand, there is some slight variation between the drawing of the Beatus manuscripts and the texts of Isidore (not so in the most important characteristic, which is exceptional, the double membrane), and, on the other hand, several dozen ceramic drums have been preserved from the Iberian Muslim territory (although only one from the 10th century, the others being later) that show a narrowing in the central part, either in the form of a cup or in the form of an hourglass. Similarly, Hispano-Muslim iconography from the same period has also been preserved, in which a similar (but not the same) way of playing the instrument to that seen in the Beatus manuscripts, as in both cases, it is in a vertical position and is struck from the bottom upwards, although in the Beatus manuscripts it is held with one hand and struck with the other, while in the Hispano-Muslim iconographic example referred to it is struck with both hands, resting the instrument on the body itself.

The very precise and numerous coincidences between the literary and iconographic sources dealt with; the novelty that many of them present in relation to the previous tradition, both texts and images; and the exceptional nature of the knowledge they contain, in many cases the only examples (literary and pictorial) in which very rare knowledge has been preserved (with the exception of the description of the *cymbala*), not only among early medieval sources but even among classical and patristic antiquity sources, are all too important arguments in favour of the interrelation between text and image. It would be extremely surprising if this coincidence, this novelty, and exceptionality emerged in the paintings of the Beatus manuscripts by chance, without any conscious intellectual effort on the part of one or more illuminators interested in deciphering and interpreting a biblical passage on the organology of the Ancient World that was unknown to them (at least several of the instruments mentioned therein), with the aim of being able to draw the musical instruments of the scene as accurately and faithfully as possible to the biblical text.

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Notes

1 This issue will be discussed further below.

2 A complete, rigorous and up-to-date catalogue of the manuscripts and fragments of the Beatus manuscripts containing miniatures can be found in Williams' (2017, pp. 67–149) last major work, published posthumously. Detailed information on the four Beatus manuscripts containing the instruments discussed in this work will be provided later in this paper.

3 As an example, we can go through the great manuals published in different periods in which, in the best of cases, we can observe an illustration or a very brief commentary of a Beatus used as an example to explain questions unrelated to the organological content of the Beatus manuscripts themselves, even in works or chapters dedicated more exclusively to dealing with questions of musical iconography in medieval miniatures. See (Buhle 1903; Crane 1972; Ferrara 1979; Munrow 1976; Montagu 1980; Álvarez 1982b; Homo-Lechner 1996; Marschein 2001; Muller 2013).

4 A large number of publications belonging to these disciplines (philology and art history) will be cited throughout this work, which deal with topics close to or tangential to the issue at hand.

5 Neuss (1931, p. 226) considered this organological motif to be a characteristic addition to the codices of this branch. Klein (2002, pp. 271–72) considers that these manuscripts are the only testimonies that have maintained the original image of the primitive model, which, according to the author, must have contained the musical instruments. Yarza (1994, pp. 224–25) considers that this motif has been forgotten by the illuminator or illuminators of the models used to copy the manuscripts that do not contain these instruments.

6 Among other reasoning, the author argues for the existence of a North African model (due to the lute and the darbuka), probably Egyptian, due to the presence of cymbals, which were introduced into Egypt in the Hellenistic Period and have remained in use in Coptic liturgy as ritual instruments, although they also fulfil other functions in Egyptian Christian festivals.

7 These are the most widely accepted dates at present. However, it should be noted that other authors had previously set more recensions or other different dates for some of them. Díaz y Díaz (1978, pp. 182–84) gave a summary of the main opinions on the subject up to that time, as from that date onwards there was greater consensus on the subject (largely thanks to the fundamental international congress held in Madrid in 1976 on the subject, whose proceedings and colloquiums were published in 1978, a congress from which several publications are cited in this work and which are still fully in force). Similarly, it should be noted that there is now a large consensus among the different authors regarding the manuscripts that make up the different families of the stemma.

8 There are doubts about the exact moment of the union of the *Commentary on the Book of Daniel* by Jerome with the *Commentary on the Apocalypse* by Beatus of Liébana. It is now accepted that the two texts were not joined by Beatus himself (Díaz y Díaz 1978, p. 173), although this position has traditionally been held by various authors (Neuss 1931, pp. 222–36). Díaz y Díaz (1978, p. 175) has argued, in my opinion with relevant but not conclusive arguments, that the two works could have been linked as early as the ninth century. However, the only thing that can be said with certainty today is that the Jerome commentary (with or without miniatures) has only been preserved together with Beatus' commentary in manuscripts created after the middle of the 10th century or in earlier manuscripts that underwent modifications after that date (a date that coincides with that of the third textual recension). Moreover, as will be pointed out below, it has also been demonstrated that all the preserved miniatures of the *Commentary on the Book of Daniel* must always be dated after 940–945.

9 Only two manuscripts are direct copies of one another: the Huelgas manuscript (US-NY, Pierpont Morgan Library, Ms. M. 429) from Tábara (E-Mahn, Ms 1097 B) and the Alcobaça manuscript (P-Ln, Alc. 247) from Lorvao (P-L, Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, Casa Forte 160 [Lorvao 43]). All the others are related through hypothetical sub-archetypes, which are necessary to explain their origin (Gryson 2012, p. XVIII). Hence, in this work we always speak of models and not of direct copying.

10 The manuscript E-Mh Cod. 33 is dated to the first half of the 10th century, being one of the oldest manuscripts of the stemma, receiving the additions of the third recension in the first quarter of the 12th century in the Monastery of San Millán de la Cogolla. For its part, the French manuscript is dated to around the middle of the 11th century, coming from the Monastery of Saint-Sever, in Gascony (Gryson 2012, pp. XIV–XVI).

11 Klein (1978, p. 96) elaborates a complete pictorial stemma codicum on the basis of the stemma established by Sanders (1930, pp. XI–XVIII) for the textual tradition. Klein's stemma is thus closely related to Sanders' stemma, modifying it in several points (Klein 1978, p. 96).

12 The first manuscript can be considered as the oldest preserved manuscript (other than a fragment) that includes the *Commentary on the Apocalypse* of Beatus of Liébana (Klein 1976). Regarding the second manuscript, it has already been indicated that it is later (see note 11). However, it also transmits the earliest phase of the first pictorial version which was later completed (Klein 1978, p. 96). It was these aspects, together with others of a palaeographical and textual nature, that led W. Neuss (1931, pp. 235–36, 285) to consider this manuscript much older, believing it to convey a pictorial and textual model closer to the original archetype. In fact, Neuss, because of the importance he attached to this mansucript, considered that the *Commentary on the Book of Daniel* by Jerome had been linked from the beginning to the *Commentary on the Apocalypse* of Beatus of Liébana. This opinion was rejected with solid arguments at the textual level (Díaz y Díaz 1978, pp. 171–80) and at the pictorial level (Klein 1976, 1978; Williams 1965, 1978). Moreover, after the publications cited above by Klein and Williams, especially those of 1978, it was possible to establish more precise dates for the different pictorial versions transmitted in the Beatus manuscripts, as it will be shown.

13 This codex would be the only survivor of this first phase of the second pictorial version (Klein 1978, p. 96). Bearing in mind that, according to Gryson (2012, pp. XIV–XVI), the additions made in this codex of the third textual revision took place in the first quarter of the 12th century, and that, according to Klein (1978, p. 96), the pictorial additions of the first phase of the second

pictorial version in this manuscript would fall within a similar time frame, we would be dealing with a very late copy that represents a pictorial phase that took place much earlier

14 The iconographic characteristics of the most modern phase of the second pictorial version are to be found, in the first place, in two models that served as copies, on the one hand, of the manuscript illuminated by Magius (New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, Ms 644), the first testimony of the group we are dealing with (Klein's subfamily IIa), and, on the other hand, the Beatus of Tábara (Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Ms 1097 B), also illuminated by Magius and completed after his death by Emeterius and dated 970, the first testimony of the subfamily IIb indicated by Klein (Gryson 2012, p. XIV; Williams 2017, pp. 78–81).

15 This group IIb is constituted at the pictorial level by the following manuscripts: the Beatus of Tábara (E-Mahn, Ms 1097 B), the Beatus of Las Huelgas (US-NY, Pierpont Morgan Library, Ms. M. 429), the Beatus of San Andrés de Arroyo (F-Pn, Nouv. Acq. Lat. 2290), the Beatus of Manchester (GB-MAN, John Rylands Library, Ms. Lat.8), the Beatus of Cardeña (E-M, MAN, Ms. 2, although there are also small fragments of this manuscript located in other libraries), the Beatus of Gerona (E-GERacap., Ms. 7) and the Beatus of Torino (I-TU, Naz. Univ. Ms.I.II.1). For the other locations of the fragments of the Beatus of Cardeña, see (Williams 2017, pp. 125–29).

16 Gryson (2012, pp. XIV–XVI, XIX) notes forty, and considers that there is sufficient evidence to suggest that about a hundred copies of Beatus' commentary must have been produced between the late eighth and mid-sixteenth centuries, despite the considerable work involved in transcribing such an extensive text and creating the illuminations that illustrate it. To the testimonies pointed out by Gryson must be added the Milan fragment, no. 28 in the definitive catalogue of pictorial testimonies (so far) established by Williams (2017, pp. 144–45).

17 Remember what Gryson said about the absence of direct copying between manuscripts except for the two cases cited above (outside our manuscripts).

18 I have named the instruments with the terms *cithara* and *tuba* because these are the terms used in the manuscripts.

19 However, Williams also considered the inverse, more remote possibility, a hypothesis that he also maintained until the end of his days (Williams 2017, pp. 23–26). This Hispanic tradition continued after that date (the second half of the tenth century), manifesting itself in other preserved Bibles.

20 In fact, Williams points out several connections between these depictions of the *Commentary on the Book of Daniel* and models from antiquity (Williams 1978, pp. 211–13).

21 Williams skilfully relates yet another miniature from this Bible to the miniatures of the *Commentary on the Book of Daniel* transmitted in the Beatus manuscripts. This miniature is located on f. 283v and is used to illustrate the capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar II narrated in the Book of Jeremiah, although it is also narrated in other books of the Bible which are not illustrated with this image in this Bible (Williams 1994, p. 60; 1978, pp. 211–13).

22 A specific bibliography on each instrument is then provided. The musical instruments of the Hebrew Bible that concern us in this work are written in Aramaic. Next to the name of each Aramaic instrument, a bibliography about the instrument within the Hebrew and biblical musical reality of the Ancient World is added. What appears to the right of the Aramaic term is the phonetically transliterated term. Next to the name of each Greek instrument, a bibliography about the instrument in classical Greco-Latin antiquity is added.

23 It is a chordophone, a type of harp, probably angular (Kolyada 2009, pp. 53–56).

24 It is undoubtedly the most difficult instrument to determine of all those listed here due to the polysemy of the term. Kolyada (2009, pp. 145–48) considers that the term *symphonia* in the *Book of Daniel* can refer to any of its main meanings (and common in ancient literature, such as music or a set of voices or instruments that sound harmoniously) or to a specific musical instrument (whether it is an aerophone, chordophone or membranophone), being impossible to precisely delimit the characteristics of the (only probable) instrument called *symphonia*, stating that it is "one of the unclear musical terms of the Bible". In fact, she includes the analysis of this instrument in a chapter whose title is a faithful reflection of the current state of the question: "Ambivalent musical terms". The analysis includes the main opinions on the subject published over more than a century, showing how some researchers consider this instrument to be an aerophone, others a chordophone and others a membranophone.

25 The term is translated with the Greek term συμφωνία. Kolyada (2009, pp. 145–48) expounds the Greek origin of the Aramaic term סימפניה (transliterated sûmpōnyā or sumponyah), a fact that undoubtedly influenced its use in the Septuagint.

26 For the interpretation and drawing of the *tuba* and the *cithara*, the illustrators already had the models in the *Commentary to the Apocalypse* of the Beatus manuscripts themselves (some of them, as in the case of the *cithara*, very different from what can be seen and read in the sources of Antiquity). With regard to the *fistula* in the biblical text, it does not seem unreasonable to relate it to the tibia that appears in the illustrations, as Álvarez (1993, p. 217) has already pointed out. In any case, there is still much to be said about the representation of these instruments in the Beatus manuscripts, beyond the more specific subject matter of this analysis dedicated to percussion instruments. On the other hand, I consider the *psalterium* to be the most difficult instrument to interpret in the illustrations of the Beatus manuscripts together with the percussion instruments, but this subject needs to be dealt with in more detail in future research, not only because of the problems involved in the interpretation of the *psalterium* in the manuscripts (in case it actually appears in the manuscripts, a question that raises many doubts, since the term *psalterium* seems to have always referred to a chordophone and in the miniatures only one appears, which is the *cithara*, which previously appears in the *Commentary on the Apocalypse*), but also because the relationship between text and image in relation to the three instruments

mentioned at the beginning of this note (*tuba*, *cithara* and *fistula*), as well as the reasons that led the illuminators to illustrate them in that particular way (if all three are illustrated), must also be analysed in detail, and perhaps first of all.

27 A musical instrument very common in the Ancient World throughout the Mediterranean arc was called *cymbala* in the Latin world (*cymbalum* comes from the Greek κύμβαλον). It is an instrument of oriental origin associated with the cult of Cybele or Dionysus, as well as with its performance during dance, especially by women. Like modern orchestral cymbals, the instrument also consisted of two cymbals, but of a size small enough to be held comfortably while dancing (Landels 1999, pp. 83–84; Mathiesen 1999, pp. 171–72; Michaelides 1978, p. 70; West 1992, p. 125). However, there were also other models of *cymbala* (Cottet 2022).

28 For *sambuca*, see bibliography as given in notes 23 and (Duchesne-Guillemin 1968, pp. 5–18; Maas and Snyder 1989, pp. 151, 184, 186, 201, 244, n. 121; Mathiesen 1999, pp. 275–80).

29 Standing out far above all are the fragments 4.77 175d-e (Kaibel 1887, pp. 393–94), 4.81 182f (Kaibel 1887, pp. 398–99), 14.34 634a (Kaibel 1889, p. 390), 14.40 637b (Kaibel 1889, p. 406) of *Deipnosophistae* of Athenaeus of Naucratis, in the 2nd century AD, who provides the most complete information on the instrument.

30 References to this instrument are practically non-existent in the Greek literature of the classical and Hellenistic periods. Prior to Athenaeus this instrument is mentioned by Aristotle (Pol.8.6.6–7 1341b) in a list in which different types of harps appear. The Stagirite provides no information on the physical characteristics of the instrument, and it can only be deduced from his text that it is a chordophone (Aubonnet 2002, p. 324). After Athenaeus, information on the *sambuca* can be found in the treatise by Aristides Quintilianus (2.16), who describes it as a sharp instrument associated with the feminine (Winnington-Ingram 1963, p. 75).

31 Vendries (1999) does not cite the *sambuca* as an instrument used in the Roman world.

32 (Cerqueira 2006, pp. 166–68); and, more recently, in (Diago 2024a). I would like to thank Dr. Diago Jiménez, a specialist in the musical texts of Isidoro de Sevilla, for allowing me to consult the manuscript of his work before it was published. On the other hand, it should be noted that the current critical reference edition of Book III of the *Etymologiae* does not consider chapter 14 of Lindsay's (1971) classic edition, adding it at the end in the form of an appendix. Therefore, the numbering of the chapters in this edition varies from Lindsay's, being one number less from that same chapter 14 (Gasparotto and Guillaumin 2009, pp. 54–83, 152–64). All subsequent citations of Book III of the *Etymologiae* in this work are from this critical edition.

33 This term is used in a literary enumeration of the music of different musical instruments.

34 It should be noted that Teeuwen does not indicate the folios of the manuscripts on which each gloss is found.

35 Leonardi (1961) counted 241 manuscripts. Of these, about fifty manuscripts contain the complete text of the work, half of them dating from the ninth and tenth centuries. However, there is not a single manuscript containing only Book IX.

36 There are manuscripts that do not have glosses in Book IX and manuscripts that have glosses but, for one reason or another, have lacunae that affect the fragment in question (9.924). In addition to the two manuscripts mentioned above, there are the following nine manuscripts: Bamberg, Staatliche Bibliothek, Bambergensis Class. 39; Besançon, Bibliothèque Municipale, Ms. 594; Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, Ms. 153; Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Reg. lat. 1535; Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Reg. lat. 1987; Köln, Erzbischöfliche Diözesan- und Dombibliothek, 193; Leiden, Bibliotheek der Universiteit, B.P.L. 88; Leiden, Bibliotheek der Universiteit, Voss. lat. 2° 48; Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud lat. 118. Therefore, Teeuwen's (2002, p. 355) list of manuscripts is incomplete, as it does not take into account other important manuscripts, such as those of Cambridge, Bamberg, Köln or Vatican 1535, so the number of glosses found by Teeuwen could increase considerably.

37 "*Cymbala are a kind of plates which, when struck together, produce sound. They are called cymbala because they are played at the same time as dancing, as cum is said in Greek σύν, and ballematia,* βαλά".

38 It is a polysemous term. One of its meanings refers generally to a small concave-shaped object, referring especially (but not exclusively) to objects such as bowls, plates or dishes (Gaffiot 2000, u. acetabulum, p. 22). According to the same dictionary, Cassiodorus uses the term *acetabula* as a synonym for *cymbala* in *Inst*.2.5.6, in his definition of the *percussionalia*.

39 "*. . .cimbalum, sistrum, bronze or silver plates and other which, when struck with something metallic, produce a soft tinkling sound, and the like*".

40 This author estimates the number of copies made at around five thousand, based on the number of more than a thousand copies first collected by Anspach, to which must be added others discovered later (Fernández 1966).

41 Isidore's most useful work was the *Etymologiae*, but it was not the only one, since Gryson (2012, pp. CXXXIV–CXXXV) points out up to ten other works by Isidore that were used to compose the *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, with *Quaestiones in Vetus Testamentum* and *De Ecclesiasticis Officiis* standing out above all others. The latter work will be referred to later.

42 "*Varro says that the dancers [saltatori] are named after the arcade Salio, whom Aeneas brought with him to Italy, and who was the first to teach the young Roman nobles to dance*".

43 "*Then the misguided men and, what is worse, the faithful too, take on a monstrous appearance, disguising themselves in the guise of wild beasts; others effeminate their manly appearance, moved by feminine gestures; some, also following the fanatical custom, profane the day by observing the omens. The noise of the dancers' footsteps and the applause of the dancers pervades everything, and, most ominous of all, the chorus of both sexes intermingle, and they are joined by the mob, devoid of judgement and beside themselves with wine*".

[44] In fact, in the event that a model from the Ancient World (not preserved) must necessarily exist to explain the existence of the musical instruments in the Beatus of Valladolid, I consider that in Western art there are iconographic sources from the same period that are still preserved and which, in my opinion, bear certain similarities with the *cymbala* musician in the Beatus of Valladolid. By way of example, this musician can be compared with the musician playing the same instrument in the famous Pompeian mosaic of the street musicians, from the so-called House of Cicero in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale of Napoli, whose original painting is attributed to Dioscurides of Samos. This mosaic also shows a *tibia* and a membranophone (a *tympanum*) that is played with the drumhead facing downwards, as is the case with the membranophones of the Beatus manuscripts.

[45] Barry (1904) points throughout his work to numerous passages in the literature of antiquity as examples of the consideration of *symphonia* as a wind instrument. However, with the exception of one passage, all of them are ambiguous and lend themselves to the consideration of the term with other meanings which, in many cases, may not even be that of a musical instrument. There is only one exception in a very late passage attributed to Dio Chrysostom, in which the *symphonia* could be considered as a wind instrument (Barry 1904, pp. 188–89).

[46] Other passages from Prudentius and Athenaeus of Naucratis (who paraphrases Polybius) could also be included in this list of ancient sources, but both are very doubtful due to their purpose (other than organological and musical), and in neither case do they offer a detailed or precise description of the physical aspect of the instrument, contrary to what occurs in the work of Isidore of Seville (Diago 2024b).

[47] *"The tympanum is a skin or leather stretched over one side of a piece of wood. It is the middle of the symphonia, shaped like a sieve".*

[48] *"A hollow piece of wood with a skin stretched on both sides, which the musicians play with drumsticks, is called a symphony by common people. And a very pleasant sound is produced thanks to the harmony between the bass and the treble".*

[49] The relationship between the Beatus of Silos and the Beatus of Valladolid has already been discussed above. However, the Beatus of Silos lacks percussion instruments, as was pointed out at the time.

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Hortus Conclusus: A Mariological Symbol in Some Quattrocento Annunciations, According to Church Fathers and Medieval Theologians

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Abstract: This paper seeks to interpret the biblical metaphor of the hortus conclusus (closed garden) according to a Mariological projection, as presented iconographically in various Quattrocentro Annunciations. The author bases his interpretations on the exegesis developed by many Latin and Greek-Eastern Church Fathers and theologians, who considered this metaphorical expression of the *Song of Songs* to symbolize Mary's virginal divine motherhood and perpetual virginity. Their textual interpretations of this doctrine helps elucidate the Mariological meaning in six Quattrocento paintings that include a more or less explicit "closed garden." These six paintings present a closed garden as a visual metaphor illustrating the Mariological dogmas unveiled by the Church Fathers and theologians when explaining this biblical metaphor.

Keywords: Annunciation; hortus conclusus; divine motherhood; perpetual virginity; Mariology; Patrology

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1. Introduction

From the 2nd century of our era, and especially during the 3rd and 4th centuries, various heterodox movements arose within Christendom that, in one way or another, denied that Jesus Christ had two different natures, the divine and the human, substantially united in one person (ὑπόστᾰσις). Led by Nestorius, one of these heterodoxies denied the divinity of Christ, granting him only the category of a human person. A second heresy, starring Eutyches, denied the humanity of Christ because, according to him, human nature was only an appearance in Christ since his only person/nature was the divine one. Both heresies implied refusing that the Virgin Mary was the true Mother of God (Θεοτόκος) when denying that Christ was a true God and a true man. For this reason, the Nestorians considered Mary a simple Christotókos (Χριστοτόκος) or anthropotókos (ἄνθρωποτόκος) after maintaining that the man Christ, born of her, was not a true God.

In this context of heterodox deviations, many influential Church Fathers were forced to develop an intense apologetic campaign in defense of the fundamental canonical dogmas. The first, defending the Christological dogmas, was centered on the firm conviction that Christ, the Son of God incarnated as man, has two natures, divine and human, united in the one person of Christ, true God, and true man. The second, as a necessary consequence, was defending the Mariological dogmas: Mary is the virginal Mother of God (Mary's virginal divine motherhood), and she also remained perpetually virgin, virgin before childbirth, virgin in childbirth, and virgin after childbirth (Mary's perpetual virginity). Only as a derivation and indirect reflection of these two dogmatic meanings could patristic and theological interpretations of the hortus conclusus be linked to some extent with the devotional or spiritual role (for example, in the life of virgins or nuns) played by the image of this metaphor in the *Song of Songs*.

To explain and justify these two essential Mariological dogmas, from the 2nd century onwards, the Church Fathers investigated the Old Testament in search of some expressions that could be interpreted as Mary's prophecies or metaphorical prefigurations consistent

with these two privileges: her virginal divine motherhood and her perpetual virginity. Thus, they soon brought to light several Old Testament sentences that, in their view, foreshadowed Mary as the virginal mother of God. In this sense, they saw her prefigured as "the rod that blossomed in Jesse's root", "the flowered dry rod of Aaron", the soaked fleece of Gideon, "the ark of the covenant, "the vessel of manna, "the enclosed garden and the sealed fountain", "the temple of God", "the thalamus of divinity", "the house (or the thronus) of Wisdom", "the palace of the King", "the royal hall", and many other symbolic figures drawn from various Old Testament passages.

Now, leaving out all the other prefigurations of the Virgin Mary in the Old Testament, the author will analyze in this article the one that, according to the Eastern and Western Church Fathers and theologians, alludes to Mary in the *Song of Songs* as an "enclosed garden" (hortus conclusus). Accordingly, many Eastern and Western Church Fathers and medieval theologians interpreted the hortus conclusus metaphor as an eloquent symbol of Mary's virginal divine motherhood and her perpetual virginity, as can be seen throughout this paper. Furthermore, based on these multiple Mariological interpretations of the Church Fathers and theologians, throughout the Middle Ages, many hymnographers composed countless liturgical hymns in which Mary is extolled in her virginal divine motherhood and her perpetual virginity through this metaphorical expression, as the author has highlighted in another article (Salvador-González 2023, pp. 1–25).

For greater clarity, I analyze the topic from two complementary perspectives: that of various Greek and Latin Church Fathers who interpret this metaphor with the above double Mariological projection and through several paintings of the Annunciation of the Italian Quattrocento that incorporate, as a symptomatic element, a fence, a wall, or a barrier enclosing a garden, a courtyard, or an open domestic space. To conclude, I consider relationships between these patristic and theological texts and the pictorial Annunciations commented on here. In other words, the purpose is to interpret iconographically, based on patristic and theological sources, several shapes of "closed garden" that stand in some Italian *Annunciations* from the 15th century.

The author has focused his attention on the Annunciations of the Italian Quattrocento because, in this country and in that century, the symbol of the hortus conclusus appears in the most precise and most reiterated way.

On the other hand, the author's iconographic interpretations of this Marian symbol achieve particular relevance due to two adverse facts. First, the Marian symbol of the hortus conclusus has been ignored by many iconographers and experts in Christian symbology (Bréhier 1928; Trens 1947; Réau 1957, pp. 86–87;[1] Toscano 1960; Champeaux and Sterckx 1966; Cirlot 1969; Urech 1972; Chevalier and Gheerbrant 1973; Grabar 1979; Schiller 1980). Second—and even more regrettable—the few authors who, as far as the author knows, have considered this specific and precise Marian symbol (Ferguson 1956, p. 48; Biedermann [1989] 1993, p. 248; Becker 2008, p. 216) have "explained" it incorrectly and without any documentary justification. For example, George Ferguson states about the hortus conclusus:

> "*Garden*. The closed garden symbolizes the Virgin Mary's Immaculate Conception, in the sense expressed by the Song of Songs: 'You are a closed garden, my sister wife, a closed garden, a sealed fountain.' (4,12)." (Ferguson 1956, p. 48).

Hans Biedermann, for his part, expresses in this regard:

> "*Garden* [. . .] In Christian iconography, the enclosed garden is a symbol of virginity in general and the Virgin Mary's in particular ('Mary in the Forest of Roses')." (Biedermann [1989] 1993, p. 248).

Finally, Udo Becker says the following at his own risk:

> "Closed Garden, *Hortus conclusus*, image from the Song of Songs that became part of Marian symbolism; Mary is represented sitting in such a garden, with the unicorn in her lap. It is an emblem of the Immaculate Conception." (Becker 2008, p. 216).

As will be seen throughout this article, the hortus conclusus is, according to the Church Fathers and theologians, a symbol of Mary's virginal divine motherhood and her perpetual virginity. So this symbol has no essential relationship with Mary's Immaculate Conception, as Ferguson and Becker erroneously claim, nor with virginity in general or, even less, the unicorn, as Biedermann pretends.

Before exposing the interpretations of the Church Fathers and theologians on the metaphor above, it is convenient to transcribe the corresponding biblical text. In one of the many passages in the *Song of Songs* in which the Bridegroom or Husband and the Bride or Wife exchange compliments, the Bridegroom says to the Bride: "*Hortus conclusus, soror mea, sponsa. Hortus conclusus, fons signatus*" (Cant 4:12. *Biblia Sacra* 2005, p. 616)./"You are an enclosed garden, my sister, wife, an enclosed garden, a sealed source."

2. The Hortus Conclusus in the Exegeses of Some Church Fathers and Theologians

Many Fathers and theologians of the Eastern and Western Churches established a formal parallelism/identification between the hortus conclusus and Mary's perpetual virginity and her virginal divine motherhood.

Among the Fathers of the Greek-Eastern Churches who interpreted the hortus conclusus metaphor of the Song of Songs as a symbol of the Mariological dogma of Mary's virginal divine motherhood, the author can especially mention the following: Saint Epiphanius of Salamis (c. 310–403), Saint John Chrysostom (398–404), Hesychius of Jerusalem († c. 450s), Chrysippus of Jerusalem (ante 409–479), Saint Germanus of Constantinople (635–732), Saint John Damascene (675–749), and John the Geometer (c. 935–c. 1000).

Among the Fathers and theologians of the Latin Church who interpreted this hortus conclusus metaphor as a Mariological symbol of Mary's virginal divine motherhood, the author can mention, above all, the following: Saint Ambrose of Milan (339/40–397), Saint Jerome of Strido (c. 374–420), Saint Ildefonsus of Toledo (607–667), Saint Paschasius Radbertus (c. 792–865), Saint Peter Damian (1007–1072), Saint Bruno of Cologne (or Bruno the Carthusian, 1030–1101), Saint Anselm of Canterbury (1033–1109), Rupert of Deutz (Rupertus Tuitiensis, c. 1075/80–c. 1129), Honorius of Regensburg (1080–1151), Hugo of St Victor (1096–1141), St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153), Peter of Celle (Petrus Cellensis, c. 1115–1183), Peter of Blois (Petrus Blesensis, c. 1135–c. 1212), Alain of Lille (Alanus de Insulis, 1115–1202), Adam of Perseigne (Adamus Perseniae Abbas, 1145–c. 1221), Helinand of Froidmont (Helinandus Frigidimontis, 1160–1229), Richard of Saint Laurent (Richardus a Sancto Laurentio, † c. 1250), Saint Anthony of Padua (Antonius Patavinus, 1195–1231), Saint Bonaventure of Bagnoregio (1117/21–1274), Saint Albert the Great (1193/1206–1280), Saint Bernardino of Siena (1380–1444), and Dionysius the Carthusian (Denys van Leeuwen or Denis de Rickel, 1402–1471).

So, since the number of Eastern and Western Fathers and theologians who interpreted Mariologically the hortus conclusus metaphor is so large, it is impossible to present them all in this short article. Therefore, the author will now analyze only some representative examples of such exegeses in the Greek-Eastern and Latin-Western backgrounds.

Beginning with the Greek-Eastern Church,[2] already in the first half of the 5th century Proclus († 446), Archbishop of Constantinople, praises the Virgin Mary, saying that she is the flowery and unfading garden in which the tree of life planted freely gives everyone the fruit of immortality.[3]

At about the same time, Hesychius of Jerusalem († *post* 450), in a sermon in honor of the Virgin Mary, begins stating that with an undoubted right all languages greet the Virgin and Mother of God with gratitude, imitating the greeting that Gabriel, the prince of the archangels, gave her; because he greeted her with the expression "God save you, the Lord comes from you (*ex te*)", since the Lord, incarnating in her, would appear to humankind.[4] Then, Hesychius points out that for this reason, the prophets and exegetes designated the Virgin Mother of God with multiple metaphorical figures, such as "mother of light", "Star of life", "Throne of God", "Temple greater than heaven", "Chair not inferior to that of

the cherubs", "Garden not sown, fertile and uncultivated", and various other analogous metaphors.[5] Shortly afterward, Hesychius insists on similar ideas by stating:

> «Another [prophet] called you a closed door to the east [. . .]. Another called you an enclosed garden; and a sealed fountain, the same thing the husband born to you predicted in the Song of Songs. Enclosed garden, because the sickle of corruption or the grape harvest did not touch you, but the flower of Jesse's root that manifests itself in a pure form to the human race is cultivated for you by the Holy Spirit.»[6]

Toward the first half of the 8th century, John Damascene (675–749), in a sermon in honor of the Virgin Mary's Nativity, dedicates the following praise to her: "God save you, enclosed garden, fertility never opened preserving the virginity, whose smell is like the open field, which the Lord, who was born of you, blessed."[7] That way, the Damascene condenses in this brief praise the statement of Mary's perpetual virginity and her virginal divine motherhood.

In parallel, and undoubtedly with even greater insistence than in the Greek-Eastern Church, the Latin Church Fathers and theologians expanded on these exegetical interpretations of the hortus conclusus (Song 4:12) with the two Mariological projections already expressed. Thus, in the second half of the 4th century, Ambrose (330–397), Bishop of Milan, in a treatise on Mary's perpetual virginity, affirms that the biblical expressions "closed door", "enclosed garden", and "sealed fountain" are metaphors or symbols of Mary's virginity, for which he advises virgins to close their doors (of their bodies) to prevent profaners from entering and urging them to preserve their virginity's seal intact.[8] A couple of paragraphs later, Ambrose parallels Mary's virginity with that of the other virgins, who must imitate their supernatural model, Mary, by advising them:

> «You are a closed orchard, virgin, preserve your fruits: may the thorns [of sin] not rise to you, but may your grapes bloom. [. . .]. You are a paradise, virgin; beware of Eve. You are a sealed fountain, virgin, let no one dirty your water, let no one muddy it; so that you always see your image [reflected] in your source.»[9]

In this way, Ambrose of Milan is, according to what the author knows, the first Church Father who complements the primary Mariological interpretation of the hortus conclusus with its secondary devotional or mystical interpretation by proposing the absolute virginity of Mary as an example of chastity for the other virgins.

Some years later, Jerome of Strido (c. 347–420) assures in an apologetic epistle to Pammachius that Christ is a virgin and that his Mother, Mary, is a virgin and mother, a perpetual virgin, for which she can be designated with the *Song of Songs* as "an enclosed garden, a sealed fountain" since she is a virgin after childbirth and a mother without having intercourse with any husband; so, we say that Christ is virgin and Mary is also virgin.[10]

Toward the middle of the 6th century, Just, Bishop of Urgell, after taking up the expression above with which the Bridegroom praises the Bride in the *Song of Songs*, asserts that this Bride, who is enclosed like a garden by the grace of Christ, is surrounded by an indissoluble matter.[11] Just of Urgell adds that the same Mary, Holy Mother of God, can be considered as the enclosed garden and the sealed fountain because, since she conceives while remaining a virgin and gives birth while remaining a virgin, she manifested in herself the immaculate virtue of the enclosed garden and the sealed fountain.[12]

Toward the end of the 6th or early 7th century, the polygraph Isidore (c. 556–636), Archbishop of Seville, praises Mary—which, according to him, means Lady or Illuminator—as "clear lineage of David, Stem of Jesse, Enclosed Garden, Sealed Fountain, Mother of the Lord, Temple of God, Tabernacle of the Holy Spirit", for being "a holy Virgin, a fertilized Virgin, a virgin before childbirth, a virgin after childbirth, who received the greeting of the angel and knew the mystery of [Jesus'] conception."

Some decades later, Ildefonsus (607–667), Archbishop of Toledo, asserts in a book on Mary's perpetual virginity that a new prodigy was performed on Earth when God's

Word became flesh with the name of Emmanuel, which means "God with us." With even greater precision, Ildefonsus adds that this certainly alludes to this enclosed garden and the sealed fountain of the *Song of Songs*: Mary is an enclosed garden since, when God entered her, he found her uncorrupted; but she is also a fountain that remained sealed, because Christ, God, and man, when he was born from her, did not violate either the source of virginity or the integrity of the blood (her body).[13] Thus, in his interpretation of the hortus conclusus biblical metaphor, Ildefonsus of Toledo underlines at the same time the dogma of the virginal divine motherhood of Mary with that of her perpetual virginity.

Analogously, the unknown author of the Fourth Sermon on the Assumption—formerly attributed to Ildefonsus and today considered not of his authorship—affirms that the Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus Christ according to the flesh, born of Abraham's seed of Judah's tribe, is the stem of Jesse's root, the gate of heaven, the honor of women, the queen of virgins, the enclosed garden, the sealed fountain, and the well of living waters.[14]

Almost two centuries later, the Benedictine Paschasius Radbertus (c. 792–865), Abbot of the Corbie monastery, interprets the phrase from the *Song of Songs* "*Hortus conclusus, soror mea; hortus conclusus, fons signatus*", in the following Mariological sense: Scripture says "hortus conclusus" because the Virgin Mary's womb was intact and uncorrupted;[15] it also called her "garden" because in her all the delights of Paradise flourished, and the sealed fountain is her virginal womb, from which our redemption (Christ) sprang and "sealed", because out of it came unpolluted and uncorrupted blood (Christ).[16] Paschasius concludes his explanation by saying that Mary was the sealed fountain because she was sealed with virginity's seal so that her husband Joseph found her pregnant via the Holy Spirit's work, the primary witness of her perfect chastity.[17]

Approximately a century and a half later, the Benedictine Peter Damian (1007–1072), Cardinal Bishop of Ostia, states in a sermon that the Blessed Virgin Mary was impregnated and became pregnant without male semen through the Holy Spirit's work and grace so that she obtained the dignity of being the Mother of God without losing her virginity.[18] The author adds that Mary remained a Virgin when she conceived Jesus and did not suffer pain when giving birth to him since He, being born from her in an ineffable way, did not corrupt the cloister of her virginity.[19] Peter Damian concludes by saying that the Son of God entered into Mary who was a Virgin, and, when he was born, he left her, leaving her a virgin since she is the hortus conclusus and the fons signatus mentioned in the *Song of Songs*, which produced the fruit of fertility (Christ) without diminishing the merit of her virginity.[20] In this way, Peter Damian also subscribes to the double Mariological interpretation of the hortus conclusus biblical metaphor, by simultaneously affirming the two complementary dogmas of the virginal divine motherhood of Mary and her perpetual virginity.

Moreover, in one of his poems, Peter Damian proclaims the Virgin Mary in these lyrical verses:

> «Garden of delights
>
> The smell of softness;
>
> You are that whole field,
>
> whom God blessed.»[21]

Approximately seven decades later, the German theologian and Canon Hugh of Saint-Victor (1096–1141), conspicuous leader of the Victorine School, in a rare book on beasts and other things, says that the blessed Virgin Mary was humble, obedient, quiet, the connubial bed of the Bridegroom (Christ), the temple of Solomon, the rod of Aaron, the enclosed garden, the sealed fountain, the triclinium of the Trinity.[22]

Perhaps around the same years, the German monk and theologian Honorius of Regensburg (1080–c. 1153), in an exegetical book on the *Song of Songs* with Mariological projection, says that the Virgin Mary, the incorrupt mother of God, was the enclosed garden, to which the Bridegroom Christ descended when he entered the Virgin's closed womb.[23] Several pages later in this book Honorius, after repeating the well-known sentence of the *Song of*

Songs, "*Hortus conclusus, soror mea, sponsa*", goes on to say that Mary was the orchard of herbs or aromas, meaning that she is full of virtues and was closed in childbirth precisely by the Holy Spirit's seal.[24] The author insists on calling Mary "hortus conclusus" because she kept the seal of virginity after childbirh and continues to call her "fons signatus" because she was also the source and the first example of virginity.[25] With his interpretation of the biblical hortus conclusus, Honorius of Regensburg complements its two primary Mariological projections—the virginal divine motherhood of Mary and her perpetual virginity—with the secondary mystical or devotional projection, in the sense that Mary's virginity is a perfect example of virginity for the other virgins.

Almost while Honorius of Regensburg expressed these ideas, the prestigious Saint Bernard (1090–1153), Abbot of the Cistercian monastery of Clairvaux, did so in similar terms. Thus, in a sermon on the *Song of Songs*, Bernard says that Mary preserves her virginity as in a garden to which modesty, recollection, and discipline are familiar, which is why this garden encloses the garden flower that is exhibited in the field and spreads into the nuptial bedchamber.[26] The Abbot of Clairvaux completes his speech by saying that this explains the expression of the *Song of Songs*, Hortus conclusus, fons signatus" because God certainly seals in the Virgin the cloister of modesty, and the guard of sanctity inviolate, being holy in body and spirit.[27] In this sense, just as Ambrose of Milan and Honorius of Regensburg did before, Bernard of Clairvaux, when interpreting the hortus conclusus metaphor of the *Song of Songs*, perfects its two primordial Mariological meanings—Mary's virginal divine motherhood and her perpetual virginity—with the derived devotional meaning, by raising the sublime virtues of Mary, especially her chastity and modesty, as a role model for other virgins, in particular, and for Christians in general.

Half a century later, the French diplomat and poet Peter of Blois (1135–1203) asserts in a sermon for the Virgin's Nativity that, thanks to the integrity of her virginity, Mary deserves the titles of "hortus conclusus, fons signatus", closed door (of the temple, according to Ezekiel's prophecy); in addition, because of her holiness, she deserves the titles of the temple of God, the door of the sanctuary, the tabernacle of the Holy Spirit, and for her glory, Mary deserves the titles of the king's throne hall, the storehouse of fragrances, the *fountain of gardens*, and the paradise of delights.[28]

Seven or eight decades later, the influential master Bonaventure of Bagnoregio (c. 1221–1274), General of the Franciscan Order, and Cardinal Bishop of Albano, applied on several occasions to interpret Mariologically the metaphors being analyzed. Thus, in a sermon on the Annunciation, he says that when the Bridegroom names the Virgin Mary in the *Song of Songs* with the expressions "*Enclosed garden, my sister, wife; enclosed garden, sealed fountain; your emanations are Paradise*", he alludes to an enclosure three times, to show that she is an incorrupt virgin when she conceived, a virgin in childbirth, and a virgin after delivery, against the heretics, who said that, after Jesus was born, Mary had intercourse with a man. Furthermore, Bonaventure says that in this lies the huge wonder of Mary, who, even being closed (being a virgin), has been fruitful with extreme fruitfulness.[29]

Moreover, in another sermon for Mary's Assumption, Bonaventure goes on to say that the Blessed Virgin Mary is compared to a sealed fountain through the integrity of her modesty. That is why the *Song of Songs* expresses it by saying: "Enclosed Garden, my sister, my wife, enclosed garden, a sealed fountain. Your exhalations are Paradise."[30] Bonaventure proceeds by saying that the garden's enclosing and the fountain's sealing go hand in hand because whoever wants to have the modesty of chastity must have the beauty of modesty. This chastity and modesty enclose the blessed Virgin Mary's garden: she was fruitful, but she was a virgin; she is an "*enclosed garden*" because she was intact, unpolluted, and uncontaminated; and she was "*sealed fountain*" because she was closed (virgin).[31] Bonaventure concludes his dissertation by insisting that the Scripture says "*enclosed garden*" because Mary was of a very rigid discipline and the most beautiful modesty because, if someone is modest, he do not boast in the filth of lustful pleasure.[32]

As can be seen from the comparative analysis of the patristic and theological texts exposed here, their complete doctrinal concordance is evident throughout all the centuries and in the two Eastern and Western christian milieus: all those Fathers and theologians of the Greek-Eastern and Latin Churches coincide in interpreting the biblical metaphor hortus conclusus as a poetic symbol for Mary in her double supernatural privilege as God's virginal mother and perpetual virgin.

Now, Mary's virginal divine motherhood and perpetual virginity have an essential and indissoluble relationship with the Annunciation. In this event, the heavenly messenger Gabriel communicates to Mary to have been chosen by God the Father to conceive and give birth to God the Son supernaturally incarnated as man preserving her virginity. Let us see, therefore, if these Church Fathers and theologians' exegetical texts are reflected in some way in the Renaissance iconography of the Annunciation.

3. Iconographic Interpretation of Seven Quattrocento Annunciations

Just as a few texts can be studied to illustrate the doctrine of Mary's perpetual virginity, so six Quattrocento paintings can be examined as illustrating the theme of the hortus conclusus. This does not mean that the Italian artists of that period are the "inventors" of this iconographic subject: in fact, this iconograpghic topic was already well known in the Byzantine sphere as early as the 11th century, as Helena Papastavrou (2007, pp. 255–58) has convincingly demonstrated in her excellent monograph on the Byzantine and European Annunciations from the 11th to the 15th century.

In *The Annunciation (Montecarlo Altarpiece)*, c. 1432, an altarpiece of the Basilica di Santa Maria delle Grazie in San Giovanni Valdarno (Figure 1), Fra Angelico stages this meaningful Marian event in a house shaped as a little loggia, widely open to a flowery garden. Through the wide openings in the front—at the top of which, in a medallion, the figure of a prophet carries a phylactery to signify the prophecies about Messiah's birth—can be seen in the background, in the intermediate plane to the right, the simple room of the Virgin, lacking a door.

In this *Montecarlo Altarpiece*, the angel Gabriel and the Virgin Mary exchange with gestures of modesty their decisive dialogue: he, as the celestial herald, respectfully communicates the Most High's message to the Virgin; she humbly accepts the divine design as a submissive "slave of the Lord (*ancilla Domini*)." This is a bodily expressiveness similar to that depicted by Fra Angelico in other *Annunciations*, such as those in the Prado Museum, Cortona, Convento di San Marco in Florence, and Armadio degli Argenti.

Fra Angelico wanted to emphasize in this San Giovanni Valdarno's altarpiece the garden, in which can be perceived a little wooden fence that closes the house's garden. This is an eloquent detail to highlight the profound Mariological meanings of the hortus conclusus, according to the well-known exegeses of Eastern and Western Church Fathers and theologians about the two Mariological meanings already explained: Mary's virginal divine motherhood and her perpetual virginity.

In this sense, it is necessary to emphasize that, as a cultured Dominican friar and Prior of the convent of San Domenico in Fiesole, Fra Angelico knew perfectly well all the crucial Mariological meanings underlying the hortus conclusus biblical metaphor. Therefore, he wanted to make those dogmatic meanings explicit by including an enclosed garden in this *Annunciation* of the *Montecarlo Altarpiece*, as he did in his other three versions of the *Annunciation* above (except for the one in the Prado Museum).

In this sense, it is a pity that the commentators the author knows of this *Montecarlo Altarpiece* (Pope-Hennessy 1952, p. 168;[33] Bartz 1998, p. 53;[34] Refice 2009, p. 168; Zuccari 2009, p. 33) do not document with patristic and theological arguments the dogmatic meanings of this hortus conclusus.

Fra Filippo Lippi (1406–1489) structures with great originality *The Martelli Annunciation*, c. 1440, from the Martelli Chapel in the Basilica of San Lorenzo in Florence (Figure 2). From the outset, Lippi stages the event in an ostentatious and complex Renaissance palace, with an enlarged perspective. In addition, he surprisingly adds two other angels as companions

of the archangel Gabriel, filling the left half of the composition, while in the right half, he places Gabriel and Mary.



Figure 1. Fra Angelico, *The Annunciation (Montecarlo Altarpiece)*, c. 1432. Museo della Basilica di Santa Maria delle Grazie, San Giovanni Valdarno.



Figure 2. Fra Filippo Lippi, *The Martelli Annunciation*, c. 1440. Cappella Martelli, Basilica di San Lorenzo, Florence.

The author is interested in emphasizing the very significant meanings of the closed garden (hortus conclusus), which can be seen in the intermediate planes: as he has repeatedly stated, this closed garden symbolizes Mary's virginal divine motherhood and her perpetual virginity. It is necessary, in fact, to remember that Fra Filippo Lippi was a learned Carmelite priest and friar, who, as such, knew very well all the essential Mariological meanings deciphered by the Church Fathers, theologians, and medieval hymnographers in the hortus conclusus biblical metaphor. That is why he wanted to illustrate these dogmatic meanings through an enclosed garden that he included in the background of the scene of this *Martelli Annunciation*.

Therefore, it is surprising that the commentators the author knows on this *Martelli Annunciation* (Marchini 1979, p. 203; Ruda 1993, pp. 115–33, 399; Holmes 1999, pp. 122–25;[35] Christiansen 2005, pp. 51–55; Fossi and Princi 2011, pp. 19–21) have forgotten to mention the hortus conclusus, or, when someone does mention it (Holmes 1999, pp. 123–24), she does not justify with documentary arguments its deep Mariological symbolisms.

Benedetto Bonfigli prefers to stage this *Annunciation*, c. 1445, from the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum in Madrid (Figure 3), in a courtyard or open-air space neighboring a luxurious palace, against the background of a fanciful landscape of city, sea, and mountains. In that open space, Gabriel, on his knees with a lily stem in his left hand, blesses the Virgin with his right while she kneels with her hands joined in prayer. From the upper left angle, God the Father, surrounded by a nimbus of cherubim, sends towards Mary the fertilizing ray of light (symbol of God the Son), preceded by the flying dove of the Holy Spirit. What is most interesting to highlight here is the high, luxurious wall of carved marble that fully encloses the courtyard (a substitute for a garden) where the Virgin remains and with which she identifies herself. This walled courtyard is an imaginative way of signifying the traditional hortus conclusus,[36] with its inherent deep dogmatic meanings.

When trying to explain the motifs of why Benedetto Bonfigli included an enclosure of the domestic space in this *Annunciation* from the Thyssen-Bornemisza in Madrid, it is not necessary to imagine that the painter had sufficient theological culture to know the dogmatic meanings of the biblical metaphor hortus conclusus. As possible explanations for this inclusion, these two hypotheses stand out: either Bonfigli had at his side some ecclesiastic or humanist fellow who indicated to him the need to include this symbolic enclosure in his *Annunciation* and, eventually, instructed him about its Mariological meanings; or Bonfigli

limited himself to "copying", paraphrasing it, the compositional detail of some "closed garden" or domestic enclosure that he had seen in other *Annunciations* of some leading painters, although he did not know its true Mariological symbolisms.

Fra Carnevale (1420–1484) stages *The Annunciation*, c. 1445–1450, at the Alte Pinakothek in Munich (Figure 4), inside a splendid Renaissance palace, luxuriously furnished, opening onto an opulent garden. The archangel Gabriel begins kneeling before the Virgin, while pointing towards her with his right index finger to signify that the Most High has chosen her to be the Mother of God the Son when incarnating as a man. Standing before a precious prie-dieu/lectern, on which she keeps her prayer book open, Mary—towards whom the dove of the Holy Spirit descends flying—lowers her head and eyes with modesty and compliance, ready to accept the divine design as a humble "slave of the Lord". Behind her, the Virgin's nuptial room stands, through whose open door one can see the red bed, with its partially closed protective curtains. It is clear that in this painting, Fra Carnevale wants to give the bed and the nuptial room (*thalamus*) an explicit, significant function as an eloquent symbol of the Mariological and Christological dogmas already explained.

It is necessary, in this regard, to specify that Fra Carnevale was a cultured Dominican priest and friar, who, due to such a status, knew well all the core Mariological meanings with which the Church Fathers, theologians, and medieval hymnographers interpreted the biblical metaphor of the hortus conclusus. Therefore, Fra Carnevale wanted to make these dogmatic meanings perceptible by including an enclosed orchard in the background of this *Annunciation* in the National Gallery in London.



Figure 3. Benedetto Bonfigli, *The Annunciation*, c. 1445. Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum, Madrid.



Figure 4. Fra Carnevale, *The Annunciation*, c. 1445–1450. The National Gallery f Art, Washington, DC.

It is, therefore, bizarre that the relevant meanings of this symbolic bed go unnoticed by many commentators on this painting. As far as the author knows, only Keith Christiansen has considered this Marian symbol when, commenting this Fra Carnevale's *Annunciation*, asserts, "Beyond this sanctified area is a deep, colonnaded portico, at the end of which is a door surmounted by an escutcheon supported by two winged putti that leads to an arbor and a closed gate (commonly referring to Mary's virginity; Ezekiel 44:1–2). The walled garden (the hortus conclusus of the Song of Songs 4:12) to the left of the colonnade is surrounded by the arbor and contains Cyprus trees (symbols of the Virgin), a well (the fons hortorum of the Song of Songs (4:15), a thatched structure of some sort, and peacocks (symbol of immortality)." (Christiansen 2005, p. 182).

In his *Annunciation*, c. 1452–1466, a fresco in the main choir chapel of the Basilica of San Francesco in Arezzo (Figure 5), Piero della Francesca (c. 1415–1492), depicts Mary with a gesture of surprise at the unexpected arrival of the angel Gabriel. He begins to kneel before the Virgin while raising her right hand in the double gesture of blessing her and indicating, pointing towards heaven, the divine origin of his message. In the upper-left quadrant, God the Father sends the ray of light (symbol of God the Son) towards Mary's head that will fertilize her womb.



Figure 5. Piero della Francesca, *The Annunciation*, c. 1452–1466. Basilica di San Francesco, Arezzo.

In the courtyard adjacent to the portico where the Virgin stands, Piero highlights with special emphasis on the back wall a closed door, a compositional and conceptual link between the angel and Mary, which represents the idea of Ezekiel's porta clausa. The closed door included in this painting symbolizes the five Mariological and Christological meanings highlighted for more than a millennium by the Latin and Greek-Eastern Church Fathers and theologians when interpreting the textual metaphor of Ezekiel's sentence above. According to these Christian doctrine's masters, Ezekiel's porta clausa is, in its Mariological implication, a triple symbol of Mary, namely, her virginal divine motherhood—in its two essential moments, when conceiving and giving birth to the incarnate Son of God without needing male participation—and her perpetual virginity, by always remaining a virgin before childbirth, during childbirth, and after childbirth. Furthermore, the Church Fathers and theologians interpret Ezekiel's closed door in its Christological dimension as a double symbol of the virginal conception/incarnation and the supernatural birth of God the Son made man in Mary's inviolate womb. Therefore, it is disappointing that none of the commentators the author knows of this painting by Piero della Francesca (Clark 1951, pp. 93–96; Busignani 1967, pp. 97–99; Hendy 1968, pp. 85–86, 90; Longhi 1989, p. 79; Venturi 1990; Centauro 1990, pp. 225, 275, 284; Angelini 1991, p. 41; Roettgen 1996, pp. 230–33) have mentioned its closed door. Only Frederick Hartt (1987) and Daniel Arasse (1999) mention and partially explain it.

Apart from—and as a complement to—this obvious porta clausa, the author believes it is plausible to interpret in this fresco by Piero the solid wall that closes the courtyard (an enclosure of an intimate residential space) as a subtle suggestion of the hortus conclusus. Thus, the painter would allude to the various explained Mariological meanings of the enclosed garden, which agree with the Mariological and Christological meanings of Ezekiel's porta clausa. In any case, none of the above commentators on this painting, not even Hartt or Arasse, has considered the high wall included in this fresco as a possible allusion to the hortus conclusus.

Now, the possibility that Piero della Francesca wanted to include this high wall enclosing the domestic space as a clear allusion to the biblical hortus conclusus could be explained by two complementary motifs: first, because Piero himself was a man of great humanistic and Christian culture, which is why he most likely knew the Mariological meanings of the biblical metaphor hortus conclusus; second, because this Annunciation was destined for the important Basilica of San Francisco in Arezzo, it is almost certain that

some Franciscan theologian would induce the painter to include in this *Annunciation* an allusion to the hortus conclusus from the *Song on Songs* after having already made clear the reference to the other biblical metaphor of Ezekiel's porta clausa.

In the famous *Cestello Annunciation*, 1489–1490, originally painted for the church of the Florentine monastery of Cestello, now at the Galleria degli Uffizi in Florence (Figure 6), Sandro Botticelli displays a series of novel compositional and narrative features, especially concerning the bodily expressiveness of both protagonists with their dynamic gestures and attitudes. The author will not dwell now on those aspects, which several commentators have analyzed well. On the contrary, he wants to highlight the austere garden enclosed by a low white wall that can be glimpsed through the intermediate planes' door before the extensive panoramic view of a river and city landscape.



Figure 6. Sandro Botticelli, *The Cestello Annunciation*, 1489–1490. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.

Now, the possibility that Botticelli wanted to include in this Cestello Annunciation a closed garden in allusion to the biblical hortus conclusus could be explained in two ways: first, because Boticelli had a great humanistic and religious culture, so he probably knew the Mariological meanings of the hortus conclusus metaphor of the *Song of Songs*; second, because, since this painting was intended for the church of the Florentine monastery of Cestello, it cannot be ruled out that some theologian or ecclesiastic may have induced Botticelli to include that closed garden in this Annunciation as a direct reference to the biblical hortus conclusus metaphor. In any case, Botticelli seems to offer another exquisite example of hortus conclusus, with its dogmatic meanings already explained.

That is why it is surprising that none of the commentators the author knows of this work (Mandel 1967; Lightbown 1978, vol. I, p. 101, vol. II, pp. 69–71; Horne 1980, pp. 164–67; Horne 1986, pp. 165–70; Meltzoff 1987; Grömling and Lingesleben 2000, pp. 74–77; Galizzi Kroegel 2003, pp. 67–68; Magaluzzi 2003; Cecchi 2005, pp. 254–60) have highlighted this hortus conclusus or, above all, have justified its true Mariological meanings from primary sources of Christian doctrine.

A partial exception to this silence is Ronald Lightbown, who, when analyzing this *Cestello Annunciation* in his last monograph on Botticelli (Lightbown 1989), only mentions the topic with the following comment: "The setting of the Annunciation [Cestello] is a room or vestibule paved with a perspective floor of red tiles in a white framework. Its receding lines lead the eye through a doorway in the gray wall to a white-walled garden plot and the high horizon of a river landscape". (Lightbown 1989, pp. 194–97).

4. Conclusions

At the end of this research tour, three main conclusions seem to matter:

(1) Throughout more than a millennium, many Fathers and theologians of the Greek and Latin Churches interpreted the expression hortus conclusus (and its analogous fons signatus) from the *Song of Songs* (4:12) as a clear metaphor for Mary in her double privilege of virginal mother of God and perpetual virgin. This millenary exegetical concordance justifies the solid Christian doctrinal tradition, which defends against heretics and infidels the two essential Mariological dogmas of Mary's virginal divine motherhood and perpetual virginity.

(2) The analysis of six pictorial Annunciations from the Italian Quattrocento—in a situation like many other Annunciations from other times and countries—shows that many artists include in the representation of this Marian event a garden or domestic space enclosed by a fence or a wall. This symptomatic narrative-compositional coincidence between different artists interested in highlighting this enclosed garden allows us to suppose that the same idea or significant metaphorical figure inspires all of them: that of visualizing the symbolism of the two crucial Mariological dogmas of Mary's virginal divine motherhood and her perpetual virginity.

(3) In the end, from the textual-iconic comparative analysis between those interpretations of Christian thinkers on the biblical expression under study and the pictorial images of the Annunciation analyzed here, this last conclusion seems to be inferred in complete logic: the masterminds of these paintings included in the scene a garden or space enclosed by a wall or fence as a *visual metaphor* capable of illustrating at all times the *textual metaphor* of the hortus conclusus, according to the two Mariological meanings deciphered by the Eastern and Western Fathers and theologians for more than a millennium. It is necessary, in fact, to remember that the six Italian painters whose *Annunciations* have been analyzed here were in favorable conditions to know the Mariological meanings of the biblical metaphor hortus conclusus. Three of them, Fra Angelico, Fra Filippo Lippi, and Fra Carnevale, being priests and friars, knew these dogmatic symbolisms perfectly. Regarding the other three, Piero della Francesca and Botticelli were people of great humanistic and religious culture, to a lesser extent, it seems, than Benedetto Bonfigli. But in those last three cases, a theologian or ecclesiastic fellow could have served as an iconographic mentor who induced them to include a closed garden or an analogous enclosure of domestic space in their corresponding *Annunciations*, especially in those that, like those of Piero della Francesca and Botticelli, were destined for important churches.

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Notes

1 In his renowned collection on iconography of Christian art, Louis Réau asserts that there are seven Old Testament prefigurations of Mary's virginal motherhood: (1) the unconsumed burning bush; (2) Aaron's flowering rod; (3) Gideon's fleece; (4) the closed door revealed to Ezekiel; (5) the sealed stone from Daniel's lions' den; (6) the rolling stone in Nebuchadnezzar's dream explained by Daniel; (7) the three young Hebrews in the oven (Réau 1957, pp. 86–87). Unfortunately, Réau forgot to mention the hortus conclusus as a biblical prefiguration of Mary's virginal motherhood.

2 To facilitate the transcription of the texts of these Greek-Eastern Fathers, we will quote them according to the Latin translation brought by Jacques-Paul Migne in his *Patrologiae Cursus Completus. Series graeca*, 166 vols.

3 "Ipsa [Mary], floridus ac immarcescibilis hortus, in qua lignum vitae plantatum universis libere fructum immortalitatis praebet." (Proclus, *Oratio VI*, 758).

4 "Iure proculdubio omnis grati animi lingua salutat Virginem et Deiparam, ac pro viribus Gabrielem angelorum principem imitatur. Itaque hic quidem dicit ei, *Ave*, ille vero acclamat, *Dominus ex te*, eo quod Dominus aditus assumpta carne apparuerit humano generi." (Hesychius, *Sermo V*, 1460 A–1461A).

5 Hesychius, *Sermo V*, 1460 A–1461A.

6 "Alius te appellavit portam clausam in oriente sitam [. . .]. Vocavit te hortum conclusum; et fontem signatum, is qui ex te ortus est sponsus, praedixit in Canticis. Hortum conclusum, ob id quod falx corruptionis, aut vindemia te non attingit; florem autem qui ex radici Iesse hominum generi pure exhibetur, excultus tibi a puro et intemerato Spiritu. Fontem conclusum, quia flumen vitae ex te prodiens replevit terram; alioqui ramus nuptialis fontem tuum nequaquam exhausit." (Hesychius, *Sermo V*, 1465A-B). The translation in mine.

7 "Ave, hortus conclusus, virginitatis compendium nunquam aperta fertilitas, cujus odor est sicut agri pleni, cui benedixit, qui ex te prodiit, Dominus." (Iohannes Damascenus. *Homilia II in Nativitatem B.V. Mariae*. PG 96, 691).

8 "Porta ergo clausa virginitas est: et hortus clausus virginitas: et fons signatus virginitas. Audi, virgo, diligentius apertis auribus, et clauso pudore, aperi manus, ut te pauper agnoscat: claude ostium, ne temerator irrepat: aperi mentem, serva signaculum." (Ambrosius, *De Institutione Virginis*, 321).

9 "60. Hortus clausus es, virgo, serva fructus tuos: non ascendant in te spinae, sed uvae tuae floreant. [. . .]. Paradisus es, virgo, Evam cave. 61. Fons signatus es, virgo, nemo aquam tuam polluat, nemo conturbet; ut imaginem tuam in fonte tuo semper attendas." (Ambrosius, *De Institutione Virginis*, 335–336). The English translation is mine.

10 "Christus virgo, Mater virginis nostri Virgo perpetua, mater, et virgo. [. . .] Hortus conclusus, fons signatus *(Cant.* 4, 12) [. . .]. Virgo post partum, mater ante quam nupta. Igitur, ut dicere coeperamus, Christus virgo, virgo Maria, utrique sexui virginitatis dedicavere principia." (Hieronymus, *Epistola XLVIII*, 21, 510).

11 "*Hortus conclusus soror mea sponsa*. Huic sponsae, quae velut hortus concluditur, id est Christi gratia, tam indissolubili materia circumdatur, ut de ea Isaias propheta dixerit: *Non adiiciet ut pertranseat per te omnis incircumcisus et immundus (Isa.* LII)". Potest etiam hortus conclusus et fons signatus, ipsa mater Domini S. Maria intelligi; quae virgo concipiens virgoque generans, conclusi horti et signati fontis intemeratum in se decus exhibuit." (Justus Urgellensis, *In Cantica*, 91, 978).

12 "*Hortus conclusus soror mea sponsa*. Huic sponsae, quae velut hortus concluditur, id est Christi gratia, tam indissolubili materia circumdatur, ut de ea Isaias propheta dixerit: *Non adiiciet ut pertranseat per te omnis incircumcisus et immundus (Isa.* LII)". Potest etiam hortus conclusus et fons signatus, ipsa mater Domini S. Maria intelligi; quae virgo concipiens virgoque generans, conclusi horti et signati fontis intemeratum in se decus exhibuit." (Justus Urgellensis, *In Cantica*, 91, 978).

13 "Hic est itaque hortus ille conclusus in Canticis, fons signatus (Cant, IV, 12): hortus siquidem conclusus, quia quando Deus ingressus est ad eam, incorruptam invenit; sed fons signatus permansit, quando Deus et homo natus est ex ea, nec tamen fontem pudoris aut sanguinis integritatem violavit." (Justus Urgellensis, *In Cantica*, 91, 978).

14 "Est igitur sancta et venerabilis Virgo Maria, mater Domini nostri Jesu Christi secundum carnem, ex semine Abrahae orta ex tribu Juda, virga de radice Jesse, clara ex stirpe David, filia Jerasalem, stella maris, ancilla Dei, regina gentium, domina regum, sponsa Domini, mater Christi, Conditoris templum, Spiritus sancti sacrarium, velut columba speciosa, puIchra ut luna, electa ut sol (*Cant*, IV), signaculum dei, reparatio Evae, introitus vitae, jauua coeli, decus mulierum, caput virginum, hortus conclusus, fons signatus, puteus aquarum viventium." (Anonymus, *Sermo IV. De Assumptione*, 258).

15 "Nimirum quia, quidquid in ea speciali narratur affamine, totum expressius monstratum signatur in genere. Ait enim Sponsus ita: *Hortus conclusus, soror mea; hortus conclusus, fons signatus* (Cant, iv, 12). *Itaque hortus conclusus*, quia uterus Virginis modis omnibus integer atque incorruptus fuit." (Paschasius Radbertus, *Expositio in Matttheum*, 106).

16 "Hortus autem ideo est appellatus, quia universas delicias paradisi in eo effloruerunt, et signatus est venter pudoris, ubi fons emicuit nostrae redemptionis. Signatus, inquam, quia incontaminatus atque incorruptus exstitit sanguis, ex quo manavit unda liquoris." (Paschasius Radbertus, *Expositio in Matttheum*, 106).

17 "Ergo quia signatus fuit sigillo pudoris, inventa est a sponso habens in utero, non aliunde quam de Spiritu sancto, ut idem investigator mysterii, etiam testis fieret castitatis." (Paschasius Radbertus, *Expositio in Matttheum*, 106).

18 "beatissima Virgo nullo viri semine gravida, sola sancti Spiritus gratia fecundatur. Quae et dignitatem Genitricis obtinuit, et virginalem pudicitiam non amisit. Quae et dignitatem Genitricis obtinuit, et virginalem pudicitiam non amisit." (Petrus Damianus, *Sermo XLVI*, 760–761).

19 "Quae enim Virgo permansit concipiendo, dolorem sentire non potuit patiendo. Ille quippe, qui ex ea ineffabiliter prodiit, claustrum virginalis pudicitiae non corrupit." (Petrus Damianus, *Sermo XLVI*, 760–761).

20 "Virginem denique veniens, introivit, Virginem nihilominus exiens, dereliquit. Haec est enim hortus conclusus, fons signatus (*Cant*. IV), quae et fructum fecunditatis edidit, et virginitatis meritum non imminuit." (Petrus Damianus, *Sermo XLVI*, 760–761).

21 "Ortus deliciarum/Odor suavitatum;/Tu ager ille plenus,/Cui benedixit Deus." (Petrus Damianus, *Rythmus*, 938). The translation is mine.

22 "Beata Virgo Maria fuit, humilis, obediens, quieta [. . .] thalamus sponsi, templum Salomonis, virga Aaron [. . .] hortus conclusus, fons signatus, triclinium Trinitatis [. . .]". (Hugo de S. Victore, *De Bestiis*, 138–139).

23 "Hortus conclusus fuit virgo Maria, mater Dei incorrupta, in quem hortum sponsus Christus descendit quando in clausum Virginis uterum venit." (Honorius, *Sigillum*, 492).

24 "*Hortus conclusus, soror mea, sponsa.* Ipsa erat herbarum vel aromatum hortus, id est plena virtutibus; quae erat in partu conclusus, scilicet signaculo sancti Spiritus." (Honorius, *Sigillum*, 507).

25 "*Hortus conclusus* iterum, quia post partum non est reclusum virginitatis signaculum. *Fons signatus*. Ipsa etiam erat fons, id est primum exemplum virginitatis." (Honorius, *Sigillum*, 507).

26 "Et bene in horto virginitas, cui familiaris verecundia est, fugitans publici, latibulis gaudens, patiens disciplinae. Denique in horto flos clauditur, qui in campo exponitur spargiturque in thalamo." (Bernardus, *Sermón 47*, 3–5, 619).

27 "Et habes: *Hortus conclusus, fons signatus*. Quod utique claustrum pudoris signat in virgine, et inviolatae custodiam sanctitatis, si tamen talis fuerit, quae sit sancta corpore et spiritu." (Bernardus, *Sermón 47*, 3–5, 619).

28 "propter virginitatis integritatem *hortus conclusus, fons signatus*, porta clausa, *Libanus non invictus*, propetr sanctitatem templum Dei, porta sanctuarii, cara Dei, sacrarium Spiritus sancti; propter gloriam aula regis, cella aromatum, *fons hortorum*, paradisus deliciarum." (Petrus Blesensis. *Sermo XXXVIII*, 673).

29 "Unde Sponsus Virginem Mariam alloquens Canticorum quarto dicit: *Hortus conclusus, soror mea sponsa; hortus conclusus, fons signatus; emissiones tuae paradisus*.—Ter dicit clausionem ipsius, ut ostendat, quod incorrupta fuit in conceptu, in partu et in progressu, contra haereticos, qui dixerunt, postea ipsam a viro fuisse cognitam. Et in hoc est tamen valde mirabile, quod sit clausa, et tamen fecunda erat fecunditate summa". (Bonaventura, *De Annunciatione. Sermo II*, 2, 597).

30 "Tertio comparatur beata Virgo fonti signato propter pudicitiae integritatem; unde in Canticis: *Hortus conclusus, soror mea sponsa, hortus conclusus, fons signatus. Emissiones tuae paradisus.*" (Bonaventura, *De Assumptione. Sermo IV*, 718).

31 "Clausio horti et signatio fontis coniuncta sunt, quia qui vult habere pudicitiam castitatis, oportet, quod habeat et venustatem verecundiae. Ista claudunt hortum beatae Virginis; fecunda fuit, sed tamen virgo fuit; *hortus conclusus,* quia intacta, impolluta et incontaminata fuit; fuit *fons signatus,* quia clausus." (Bonaventura, *De Assumptione. Sermo IV*, 718).

32 "Dicit his: *hortus conclusus,* quia fuit rigidissimae disciplinae et venustissimae verecundiae, quia, si aliquis est verecundus, non libenter diffundit se in turpitudinem libidinis." (Bonaventura, *De Assumptione. Sermo IV*, 718).

33 Pope-Hennessy (1952, p. 168) attributes this Annunciation to Zanobi Strozzi.

34 Commenting on the counterpart Annunciation by Fra Angelico in the Diocesan Museum of Cortona, Gabriele Bartz (1998, p. 50) states, "As a Marian symbol, a garden of the *hortus conclusus* type (closed orchard) appears on the left: it is a meadow full of rose bushes, with palm trees and fruit trees." Regrettably, Bartz has ignored the Mariological meanings of that hortus conclusus.

35 In her documented monograph on Fra Filippo Lippi, Megan Holmes is a partial exception to the usual omission or insufficiency of the analyzed topic, when asserting, "The courtyard is the Enclosed Garden, a standard but usually plainer symbol of Mary's virginity". (Holmes 1999, p. 123). In another paragraph, Holmes goes on to say, "Behind this shallow space representing the Virgin's chamber, Fra Filippo Lippi depicted a deep hortus conclusus (enclosed garden) that extends back along the steeply receding orthogonals of the neo-classical buildings on either side." (Holmes 1999, p. 124).

36 Commenting this painting Andrea De Marchi asserts, "Bonfigli was certainly very familiar with the cloistered and discrete settings in Fra Angelico's paintings of the Annunciation—sited between a monastic cell and a walled garden (hortus conclusus)—but he includes instead the view of a city set against a wide horizon". (De Marchi 2005, pp. 212–14).

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On the Perfect Sphere: The Preference for Circular Compositions for Depicting the Universe in Medieval and Early Modern Art

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Abstract: This essay explores circular compositions in medieval and early modern art. Delving into the intersection of religious, philosophical, and scientific ideas, the text examines the prevalence of circular depictions in medieval and early modern aesthetics. Utilizing an interdisciplinary approach, the author draws from primary Hermetic and Neoplatonic sources, providing four reasons for this preference. Firstly, this essay explores the scientific understanding of the shape of the universe, planets, and stars. The second reason delves into the psychological, symbolic, and geometric aspects associated with circular compositions, connecting them to Christian cosmological diagrams and symbolism in the visual arts. Furthermore, the essay investigates the conceptualisation of the universe as a mirror reflecting the divine, emphasising the role of beauty in religious art. The essay concludes by examining the visual culture of medieval and early modern periods, tracing the evolution of circular representations from Roman coins and shields to illuminated manuscripts and paintings. The article sheds light on a hitherto underexplored aspect of medieval and early modern cultures, despite its significance in shaping symbolism and organizing iconographic programs within these periods.

Keywords: Hermetism in arts; Neoplatonism in arts; Christian aesthetics; circular composition; scientific cosmological diagrams; medieval visual cultures; early modern visual cultures; symbolic forms; *Lapidario*

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I behold our very beautiful world,
united in a wonderful order (Nicholas of Cusa 1998, p. 37).

1. Introduction

How does a culture envision something as inherently ineffable, or at least beyond the human capacity for visualisation, as the entire universe and beyond? This essay will delve into an aspect of medieval aesthetics that linked religious, philosophical, and scientific ideas about the shape of the universe as well as ways of relating to it and representing it using circular compositions (Figure 1). For centuries, circular compositions depicted several spheres, combining Platonic approaches with Neoplatonic ideas, and Christian dogmas with scientific hypotheses, in an intuitive whole replete with different concepts.

One of the most compelling reasons behind this penchant for circular compositions has to do with the way in which the ancient Babylonian, Greek, Jewish, and Roman cultures conceived the universe as a circular entity, forging a vision that would subsequently give rise to the Christian worldview. Bianca Kühnel explores the contributions of the Babylonians, Egyptians, Ancient Greeks, and Romans in establishing general conceptions about the universe in Late Antiquity. Subsequently, Christian authors such as Isidore of Seville (c. 560–636) and the Venerable Bede (c. 672–735) expanded upon these ideas, shaping the prevailing way of conceiving the universe in the Middle Ages (Kühnel 2003, pp. 83–113). These foundational concepts were as pervasive and implicit in their time as they are in ours. In the twenty-first century, we have developed our understanding and imagination of the universe, influenced by figures such as Copernicus (1473–1543),

Kepler (1571–1630), and Einstein (1879–1955), even without the necessity of directly reading their works.



Figure 1. Anonymous, *Tapestry of Creation*, eleventh century. Embroidery, 3.58 m × 4.50 m. Girona Cathedral.

Accordingly, this paper performs an in-depth inquiry into the Hermetic and Neoplatonic cultural horizons that contributed to the development of the ideal of the perfection of the cosmos. In referring to Hermetism, the text alludes to Late Antiquity sources attributed to Hermes, and their influence on Christian authors of the Middle Ages, as well as, most importantly, early modern authors. These writings are closely associated with astrology, magic, and alchemy. Concerning Neoplatonism, it will refer to authors who drew ideas from Plato's *Symposium* (c. 370 BC), *Phaedrus* (c. 370 BC), and *Timaeus* (c. 360 BC), blending them with mysticism. Both philosophical and religious currents converged in early modern authors, proving highly influential in understanding the mindset of that epoch. Throughout the text, authors closely or loosely connected to this Hermetic–Neoplatonic cultural horizon will be cited, such as Plotinus (205–270), Proclus (412–485), Macrobius (c. 380–c. 430), Pseudo-Dionysius (sixth century), the *Corpus Hermeticum* (third century), the *Book of the Twenty-Four Philosophers* (twelfth century), Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499), Giordano Bruno (1548–1600), or Nicholas of Cusa (1401–1464).

This quintessential worldview was not only important in Late Antiquity and essential in the Middle Ages, but also prevailed in Renaissance and early modern aesthetics. As discussed further on, some of that current's theories and assumptions would serve as an aesthetic basis for the images created. Bianca Kühnel highlighted the prevalence of this geometrical shape in diagrams, particularly in the Byzantine context, and in the Western Carolingian and High Middle Ages periods (Kühnel 2003, p. 116).

As we explore in the following pages, this characteristic persists into the Late Middle Ages and early modern societies. This is one aspect in which we can observe a continuity between both cultural horizons. Surprisingly, there is a limited number of essays on this subject. Kühnel regrets that there are only a few cases where scientific diagrams have been integrated into art historical discourse (Kühnel 2003, pp. 66–67). This essay tries to contribute to filling this gap.

And, in addition to the primary Hermetic and Neoplatonic sources, this interdisciplinary essay will attempt to meet Kühnel's demands by analysing medieval circular compositions through art historical methodologies. It will also cite secondary sources in this field of knowledge, such as Kühnel, Michael Camille, Rosa Alcoy, Alejandro García Avilés, and Linda Safran, as well as visual studies of the medieval period and its iconographic programs by Hans Belting and Ana Domínguez Rodríguez. But the essay will also delve into other fields of knowledge to analyse the issue, such as psychology applied to the perception of forms as Rudolf Arnheim did, or psychology in general with C. G. Jung. It will draw from secondary sources on Hermeticism from different schools of interpretation, Frances Yates and Wouter Hanegraaff, historians investigating the medieval cultural context closest to magical thinking, such as Paola Zambelli and Nicolas Weill-Parot, and cultural analysts like John Higgs.

In the subsequent pages, four reasons explaining this preference will be presented. Perhaps the more significant reason was scientific, and we will start from this point. Not only was the universe conceived as being circular, but so were the stars, planets, and movements of the astral forces. The emphasis is also placed on the importance of circular compositions in representing the universe and their role as imago mundi, namely, microcosms of the macrocosm. These imagistic diagrams were a means to represent and materialise the order of the cosmos, illustrating the harmonious relationships among its constituents (Safran 2022, p. 93).

The next topic addressed below is the reasoning behind the use of circular compositions, which is grounded in the analogous idea that nature is a mirror reflecting the divine. God, as the epitome of perfection, was often conceptualised or visualised in a rounded form, as exemplified in the *Omne bonum* (c. 1360). According to the theories of Plato (c. 425–348 BC), Nicholas of Cusa, and Giordano Bruno, visible things as a whole served as sensible images of the intelligible God.

In this vein, consideration is given to the notion that nature functions as a living mirror of God, the infinite deity, in addition to several other interpretations. Consequently, there was a conditional acceptance of matter in that it possessed the potential to unveil the divine. In the school of thought influenced by Hermeticism and Neoplatonism, beauty played a significant role in religious art. For instance, Bruno asserted that the visible world was akin to shadows or reflections of the One, and that it was possible to perceive this through imagination. Therefore, so as to understand divine ontology, it was first necessary to perceive its reflection in the mirror of nature. Art, particularly in depictions of religious figures like the Virgin Mary, became an essential visual tool for embodying beauty in the earthly realm.

In this study of circular compositions in medieval and early modern art, the spotlight is also placed on the symbolic and psychological reasons behind their popularity. The discourse extends to the dynamic interplay and tension created by the circular compositions within their rectangular settings, often found in walls, book pages, and similar contexts. Here, rounded curves and straight lines embody two contrasting forces, creating visual tension. Circular compositions possess the capacity to convey the notion of an outwardly expanding force, while simultaneously eliciting a sense of security.

Following this, the connection between geometry, mathematics, and mysticism will be examined, exploring the influence of the Pythagorean roots of Platonism when these artists or commissioners conceived the geometry of the piece. The symbolism and psychology associated with these compositions are then explored in various cultural contexts, including Christian cosmological diagrams.

Architecture, such as the combination of the square and hemispherical vault, is also discussed in relation to the symbolic representation of the celestial over the earthly. For similar psychological and symbolic reasons, this combination of cubes and spheres located in religious architecture is also to be found in some of the works of the great masters of the High Renaissance and Mannerism, such as Raphael (1483–1520) and El Greco (1541–1614),

with the same use of the horizontal earthly dimension crowned by a circle as a visual expression of the divine realm.

Lastly, the preference for circular compositions is discussed on the basis of the tradition of composition deriving from Roman and even ancient Greek culture, the relevance of the visual culture of previous ages, and their production of images. The origin of those images can presumably be traced back to the circulation of ubiquitous objects, such as coins, in many European kingdoms. An example of the importance of this visual culture is the constellations inscribed on medallions appearing in the *Lapidario* (c. 1250) and other illuminated manuscripts on astrology.

Regarded as a vade mecum or pharmacopeia, a handbook containing descriptions of medicinal substances, the *Lapidario* is devoted to astrological and talismanic themes, combining Western and Eastern influences. Specifically, it correlates stones with the degrees of the zodiac and decans by means of explanatory texts and illuminated miniatures. The book also sets out syncretic astrological theories with Neoplatonic and Ptolemaic influences, reflecting the interest of monarchs in astrology and astronomy[1]. Indeed, astrology played a central role in the courts of Alfonso X of Castile (1252–1284) and Peter IV of Aragon (1336–1387), among others, where Arabic texts were translated, and astronomical tables were drawn up.

Possibly originating from Roman medallions and coins, as well as from medieval cultures, these circular compositions eventually became symbolic and iconographic representations. For this reason, an analysis is performed here on the visual culture of the Middle Ages, above all from the thirteenth century onwards, and on that of the early modern period, focusing on the images appearing in illuminated books, tapestries, and paintings, and borrowing ideas not only from visual culture studies and the history of art, but also from philosophy, religious studies, the history of ideas, and the history of science.

2. The Shape of the Universe

The first reason behind the preference for circular compositions addressed here is the most obvious of all: to represent visually the purported shape of the universe. This representation was subsequently refined and nuanced over the centuries in Babylonian, ancient Greek, and Roman cultures, before being adopted by Christian culture in the Middle Ages and, albeit still rooted in previous ethe, adapted to the new worldview. In the *Catalan Atlas* (1370–1380), the known world up to that point is represented. In the section with cosmography (Figure 2), a model is included that was repeated well into the 17th century, with concentric circles from the Earth to the four elements, the seven "planets" (including among them the Moon and the Sun), the wheel of the zodiac, plus the phases of the Moon, along with a multitude of other astronomical data.

Special attention is paid here to the Platonic roots of this notion because of the importance of this current for the object of study, for the *Timaeus* already refers to a spherical universe as the appropriate shape for a living entity containing all living beings and, therefore, all shapes[2]. Indeed, Plato, for whom the sphere was the perfect geometric shape, visualized a universe formed by eight spheres[3]. More specifically, he used a dodecahedron as the quintessence to describe the universe, in reference to the circle; as it was a perfect living entity, it had to be circular in shape.

This idea was subsequently taken up by Neoplatonic thinkers, like Proclus, who had the following to say about the circle: 'The first and simplest and most perfect of the figures [. . .] If you divide the universe into the heavens and the world of generation, you will assign the circular form to the heavens and the straight line to the world of generation'[4]. Curiously enough, this Platonic and Neoplatonic stance became a model for visual compositions, as in Giovanni di Paolo's *Creation of the World and Expulsion from Paradise* (1445), the panel being clearly divided into two sections. On the one hand, it depicts the universe as a set of concentric circles, with the Earth at the centre surrounded by the heavenly spheres, including the Sun, followed by the constellations of the zodiac, above which God the Father, supported by blue cherubim, is floating. On the other, there is a representation of the

world after the Fall, a realm of straight lines, curves, and the many chaotic forms of this protean reality.



Figure 2. Abraham Cresques (?), *Atlas of Marine Cards* (*Catalan Atlas*), 1370–1380. Illuminated manuscript (parchment), 64 cm × 50 cm. National Library of France.

According to this worldview, all the extremes were located at the same distance from the centre[5], an idea that probably led Neoplatonic and Hermetic authors to formulate the theory set out in Aphorism 2 of the *Book of the Twenty-Four Philosophers*: '*Deus est sphaera infinita cuius centrum est ubique, circumferentia nusquam*' ('God is an infinite sphere whose centre is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere')[6]. Both Cusa and Bruno probably borrowed this famous aphorism from the *Book of the Twenty-Four philosophers*[7], as it already appears in works written as early as in the twelfth century.

Those astronomers influenced by Pythagoras (c. 570 BC–c. 495 BC) and Plato looked for perfect movements when analysing the celestial model, the most perfect of which was circular, a notion also appearing in Aristotle (384 BC–322 BC) (*On the Heavens*, a reference work for centuries). Ptolemy (c. 100–c. 170) adapted some of Plato's and Aristotle's ideas, his model of the universe maintaining the movement of the spheres, but this now being eccentric. The poet Aratus (c. 310 BC–240 BC) disseminated the model among a wider audience, his verses—like, for instance, *Harmonia macrocomica*—becoming a celestial planisphere even down to modern times and his model being, more often than not, transformed into a visual scheme.

The description of the universe as a sphere formed by several spheres, a notion that prevailed for centuries, also appears in *Book II* of Pliny the Elder's *Naturalis Historia*, devoted to cosmology (c. 23–79). There is also reference to the motion of the spheres in the *Corpus hermeticum*, the most relevant Hermetic work. In his vision, Hermes sees the kyklophoria, which are explained to Asclepius as the circular motion of the heavenly spheres on incorporeal God, in opposite directions that create friction and balance[8].

Christian thinkers also pondered on this subject. For his part, the medieval scientist Robert Grosseteste (c. 1170–1253) argued that the spherical quality of the universe was a light effect: God inserted a point of light into a point of matter, the former ra-

diating in all directions pulling the latter spherically[9]. As a consequence of this process, the density gradually increased from the circumference to the centre of the Earth (Quinlan-McGrath 2013, p. 26). When artists wanted to represent God's creation, they worked with these ideas in mind, following the biblical verse appearing in one of the Sapiential Books, the *Book of Proverbs* 8, 27: '[. . .] when he marked out the horizon on the face of the deep'. God traces a circle over the abysm as the first act of creation, as illustrated in an outstanding folio from the *Codex Vindobonensis 2554* (c. 1225) (Figure 3).



Figure 3. Anonymous, *Codex Vindobonensis 2554,* c. 1225. Illuminated manuscript (parchment), 34.4 cm × 26 cm. Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, n. 2554, f.1 v.

In Christianity, with the circle thus came the representation of the compass as an attribute of God the Creator. This can be seen in another example appearing in a section of the Catalan artist Pere Serra's *Retable of the Holy Spirit* (1394), in which God is depicted creating a spherical universe, an idea that would subsequently become a subject of theological reflection[10].

Furthermore, Christian thinkers and artists gave God a leading role in their depictions of the universe, adding an Empyrean conception beyond the physical spheres, with the Christian God and angels, as is the case of several medieval and early modern images. This model with the Empyrean surrounding the spheres is shown in one of the coloured copies of the *Nuremberg Chronicle* (1493) (Figure 4).

Not only the physical universe but also the astral subject-objects and their movements were thought to be circular. The universe was spatially conceived as a sphere formed by several other spheres moving in a circular orbit, as well as being established as a circle, like the zodiac wheel; the same also applied to the constellations depicted in circular compositions[11]. Even time was believed to be circular, taking the shape of a cosmic snake or one eating its own tail, to wit, an ouroboros or the image of the cycle of time.

This cosmological conception originated before the ancient Greeks, for the Sumerians and the Egyptians shared some of those ideas. Albeit generally not depicted on their vaults, which were rectangular, the Egyptians also conceived the sky as a circle, as a figure of the goddess Nut whose body was adorned with stars and solar discs. Surrounding her, the Egyptians placed the so-called 'Nun', the last sphere which was beyond the light and even unknown to the gods (Lull 2016, pp. 392–93). According to Lull, however, the Denderah

zodiac, perhaps the most famous ancient Egyptian image of the cosmos, is the only circular composition of a celestial planisphere, dating as late as the first century BC, in that culture (Lull 2016, p. 413).



Figure 4. H. Schedel, *Liber chronicarum* (*Nuremberg Chronicle*), 1493. Printed (incunable), 44 cm × 30 cm. University of Heidelberg. https://doi.org/10.11588/diglit.8305#0032 (accessed on 1 October 2023).

Those ideas gave rise to an iconographical type: the circular zodiac[12]. In the *sphaera barbarica* and *sphaera graecanica* alike, draftsmen included allegorical representations of the signs of the zodiac and the constellations, which were conceived as spheres.

The way of representing the zodiac wheel was quite firmly established. The *Revised Aratus latinus*, appearing in an illuminated book (Figure 5) housed in the Abbey Library of St Gall (Ms. Sang. 250) (fourth quarter of the ninth century), includes a common illustration of the zodiac wheel—depicting Apollo-Helios and Diana-Selene in the centre—with the signs proceeding in counterclockwise direction. The order of the constellations on the ecliptic had a direct influence on the zodiac and, subsequently, on natal charts, with the 12 houses, beginning with the ascendent on the left side. Around that time there were representations with the same pagan iconographic type appearing, for instance, in Rabanus Maurus's *De originibus rerum* (c. 825).

With some modifications, it follows a model already present in Late Roman, Early Byzantine pagan, and Jewish works of that period. The god in the central disc dominates the zodiacal signs, symbolizing both nature and time, with the sun more prominent than the moon, adding a higher status to this figure (Kühnel 2003, pp. 45, 164)[13].

One of the most noteworthy representations of the cosmos as a sphere is the *Farnese Atlas*, a Roman marble copy of a probably Hellenistic original, now lost, specifically a celestial globe with low reliefs depicting most of the ancient Greek constellations. Another more complex model associated with the zodiac wheel is the *paranatellonta*—*para* in Greek means 'along with' and *anatellein*, 'to rise'—each of whose 36 figures occupies 10 degrees,

albeit sometimes containing double the number, with each of the 72 figures consequently occupying 5 degrees (Domínguez Rodríguez 2007, p. 309)[14]. These depictions of the celestial sphere and the different constellations were used for mnemonic purposes, as a visual scheme for remembering the stellar positions and as a useful scientific method.



Figure 5. Anonymous, *Zodiacus Circulus-Sol & Luna*, in 'Revised Aratus latinus', fourth quarter of the ninth century. Illuminated manuscript (parchment), 24.7 cm × 18 cm. St Gallen.

Those astronomical images were important because they were givers of energy linked to the sacred which, in turn, was believed to be a perfect and immutable order, sanctioned by tradition, with the same stable formulas as icons. Furthermore, humans could benefit from pondering on them: '*Certains hommes, grâce à leur compréhension de la disposition céleste, comprirent beaucoup de choses cachées dans le monde des éléments, en explorant les secrets de la nature aussi bien supérieure qu'inférieure*'[15], as will be seen further on.

For example, humans could realize that they were a microcosm of the macrocosm (See Ferrer-Ventosa 2023, pp. 495–511), whose goal, as Quinlan-McGrath asserts, was to 'look outward, and see the divine order; look inward, and recognize the divine soul' (Quinlan-McGrath 2013, p. 198)[16]. That notion, based on an analogy, which is a constant in both Hermetic and Neoplatonic literature, could be depicted in a circular diagram with an anthropomorphic figure in the centre, surrounded by the spheres of the elements, planets, and signs, drawing parallels between these and human body parts and character traits (Page 2002, pp. 52–54). From a Neoplatonic viewpoint, the visible image should link the mind of the believer to the invisible archetype, an idea that was acceptable in Christian terms[17].

Even Dante (c. 1265–1321) held that view of the universe, for he structured Paradise in his *Divine Comedy* (1321) along the lines of the Ptolemaic model of nesting spheres, which ends in a vision of God: three circles of different colours but of the same size merge in pure light; then, the poet spies a human figure, a reference to the second person of the Trinity ('*mi parve pinta della nostra effige*') (Dante 1997, p. 458). It is a vision of the One replete with Neoplatonic ideas, exemplified in the last verse, with love at the centre of the cosmos moving the stars.

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, philosophers with Hermetic and Neoplatonic worldviews maintained some of these principles. For instance, in his *De vita* (1489), Marsilio Ficino describes the celestial revolutions and circular movements as focal points[18]. As those astronomical images accumulated spiritual power, he contended that it was essential to live with them. In his theory of images, the material image of each object and being spread its radiation spherically from every point, losing its original shape in this radial propagation; that radiation carried the form and matter of the material image (Quinlan-McGrath 2013, p. 76).

In order to attract the universal rays for the purpose of promoting good health, those images were depicted by tracing the movements of the planets and their passage through the signs of the zodiac in paintings with magical attributes. Ficino recommended that they be painted in bedrooms, where they were conducive to sleep and meditation with the aim of attracting cosmic energies, like the virtues associated with the planets[19].

And in Ficino, as in other Hermetic authors, the way of considering the universe was also influenced by Muslim authors with Neoplatonic and Hermetic leanings, such as Abu Ma'shar (787–886) and the anonymous author of the *Picatrix* (c. 1050), who used the system of Teucer of Babylon (first century BC), the *sphaera barbarica* that combined notions deriving form Hellenism, Egyptian astrology, and Babylonian culture, instead of the Ptolemaic system, known as the *sphaera graecanica* (Domínguez Rodríguez 2007, p. 336). In both cases, the zodiac system was conceived as a circular structure, specifically, as a sphere.

Bruno, a philosopher who borrowed some of his ideas from Hermetism, put forward his own hypothesis based on spiral motions. Despite praising Copernicus, his system was original, drawing from the premise that as celestial bodies were formed by combinations of different elements, their motion could not be simple or uniform. Bruno highlighted the distance between an infinite universe and the supposedly geometric harmony of a spherical cosmos. To Tessicini's mind, Bruno's model was geometrically inaccurate, for it contradicted both Copernicus and traditional astronomy (Tessicini 2016, pp. 156–57). Bruno applied some of the Neoplatonic and Pythagorean principles of harmony of the universe, such as the cosmological order, to which he added his own concept of the infinite that transformed spheres into spirals.

This worldview changed with Kepler's innovative way of conceiving the cosmic order which, nonetheless, was grounded in Neoplatonic thought. In his *Mysterium Cosmographicum* (1596), he declares that the sphere is perfection and that, therefore, the planets have to be spherical.

3. Nature as a Mirror of God

The second reason is more metaphorical: if God is circular owing to His perfection, then nature, which mirrors Him, must also have this shape.

A miniature illustration in the *Omne bonum* is divided vertically into three sections, in the lowest of which there is a vision of the cosmic diagram with two donors, a layman and woman, contemplating it with expressions of devotion (Figure 6). They are praying for their souls in the physical realm, the sublunar world under the spheres. In the middle section, St Paul and St Benedict are interceding for them. Lastly, in the top section, there is a vision of God with a round face to highlight visually His perfection, as is contended here. The divine face of God shines for the angels, the saints, the donors of the piece, and the beholder (Camille 1996, p. 126; Alcoy 2017, pp. 91–92). As God has a perfect form, He has to be conceived as being circular. According to Cusa in his *De ludo globi* (1463), the true circle only exists as an ideal, for any material thing that appears to be truly round is not really so, for only God can possess perfect roundness[20].

As to its structure, however, the illustration appearing in the *Omne bonum* points to a relationship between invisible God and the world, underscoring the similarity between the shape of both so as to explain visually a principle of Christian theology[21]. As nature, or the world, is a work of God, it is more excellent that any artwork created by humankind, as St Bonaventure claimed (Camille 1996, p. 134).

One of the reasons why these circular forms with that meaning were used was linked to Hermetism and Neoplatonism: the consideration of nature as a mirror of God and the artwork as a reflection of that intuition. This notion that the visible reveals the invisible appears in Plato's *Timaeus*, a work on cosmology and ontology and one of the seminal sources of these currents. It ends by expressing the idea set out here: the philosopher declares that the visible things of this world are sensible images of the intelligible god ('image of the intelligible Living Thing')[22].

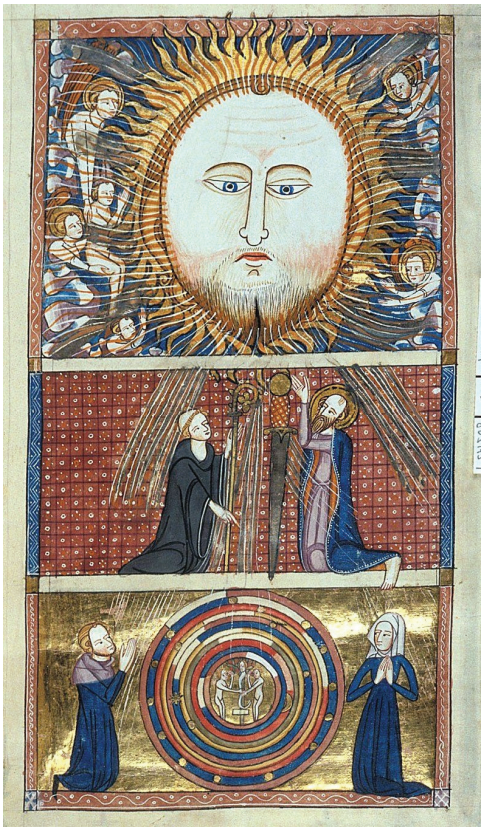


Figure 6. James le Palmer, *Omne bonum*, c. 1360. Illuminated manuscript (parchment), 45 cm × 31 cm. British Library, Royal MS 6 E VI/1, fol. 16r, http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=royal_ms_6_e_vi!1_fs001r (accessed on 1 October 2023).

This thread can be followed in the philosophical current essential to the arguments set out here. The analogy between the intelligible and its reflection in the material world had a long tradition in the Platonic/Neoplatonic and Hermetic schools. Nature would be another reflection of the primal image. For most of these authors, nature was neither evil, as some Christian authors held, nor an impersonal machine, based on mechanisms, as in the subsequent Cartesian and Hobbesian mindsets, but the receptacle of God, in the sense of both the Neoplatonic conception of beauty and the character of Diotima in Plato's *Symposium*, who advocates for embodying beauty in this world (Hanegraaff 2022, pp. 106–12).

The notion of the things of the world as shadows or reflections in a mirror chimes perfectly with Neoplatonic ontological perspectives. As Geurt Imanse asserts, occultism is that in 'which we see the reflections of the visible world, it is the mirror of visions and the mechanism of magical life' (Imanse 1987, p. 357). Those things reflected in matter are like

shadows in that they are the product of the light of the real being or the One, as well as being reflections of this One in matter, that is, not the real being but a product of the One, an image but not the real subject or model, an optical illusion, so to speak. The intellect only sees the appearance of things, which are signs. According to some medieval Neoplatonic authors, like Pseudo-Dionysius and Abbot Sugar (c. 1080–1151), divine splendour can be perceived and grasped through images, *per speculum in aenigmata*. Scholastic thinkers drew a distinction between beauty and kindness, the latter being a moral attribute differing from sensible things (Camille 1995, p. 340).

The *Tapestry of Creation* (Figure 1) (eleventh century) in Girona (Spain), a kind of mandala imbued with Christian theology, is an encyclopaedia of the universe of sorts, but as a mirror image. From a Christian viewpoint, Christ is at the centre of the cosmos, from which the entire creation expands.

In his *Docta ignorantia* (1440), Cusa, who was influenced by that philosophical school, declares that nature serves to reveal the divine, the visible offering a faithful reflection of the invisible, in order that all creatures should understand the Creator through these mirror images and enigmas, literally stating, 'All our wisest and most divine teachers agree that visible things are truly images of invisible things and that from created things the Creator can be knowably seen as in a mirror and a symbolism'[23].

Bruno, who praised Cusa in his *Oratio valedictoria* (1588)[24], considered the order of nature as the living mirror of the infinite deity (Tessicini 2016, p. 132). The motto *per visibilia ad invisibilia Dei* corresponds to this mindset. In his *Thirty Statues* (1586), Bruno argues that human intelligence is finite, so the only way to understand divine ontology—ultimate infinity in the words of Cusa—is by seeing it reflected in the mirror of nature, in its figures, shadows of truth, effects, or traces[25].

The cosmos is 'a sort of living mirror in which is the image of the natural and the shadow of the divine'[26].The inner spirit would be like a mirror in which the perceptible object is at one with the percipient subject[27]. Imagination is essential for human intellectual processes and Bruno grounded his system in this ability of the mind, quoting the Neoplatonist Synesius (c. 373–c. 414): when awake, a human being can be wise, but when asleep, participates in God and His methods because of the power of imagination[28]. As Bruno declares further on in the same work, vision is more certain in the act of imagination than in the physical world[29], because the constitution of things, not just their appearance, is seen directly.

The philosopher from Nola divided beings into those that were things and those that were their signs. The cosmic order was rational, an image or vestige of the divine[30]. The best example of this way of thinking in Bruno, which considers things as shadows or vestiges, would be images as shadows of ideas, which was the title of one of his major works.

In another of his magna opera, *De gli eroici furori* (1585), Bruno suggests that the enlightened sage sees God reflected in the world and in nature, unity in numbers, and the Monad in plurality. Although this divine Monad remains in the realm of intellectual substances, the earthly and cosmic nature, its reflection, arises from it[31].

Hence the conditional acceptance of matter, for it could reveal the divine. The problem of the visibility of God raised a number of crucial questions about the relationship between visible things and matter in general in Christianity. As for the range of possibilities, at one end of the scale, it would imply regarding everything in matter as false, with truth—the only real aspect in ontological terms—being the sole divine essence, a stance that had serious visual consequences, such as aniconism and iconoclasm. Indeed, at the Synod of Elvira (c. 306), the Church forbade images in churches contending that the object of veneration and worship did not belong on a wall (Belting 1994, p. 145).

At the opposite end of the scale, there was the idea of spirit and matter as one, the latter with the ability of offering insights into the divine, a monist solution that supported Bruno's arguments. Ficino and other Christian thinkers with a Neoplatonic background took an approach that was not as drastic as Bruno's, according to which matter would hint

at the divine. The utopian writer Tommaso Campanella (1568–1639), a thinker influenced by them, expressed this idea with a metaphor. In his *Epilogo Magno* (1598), he refers to the world as a statue of God, while stating that true philosophy involves searching for evidence of the godhead in nature, like a lover contemplating the portrait of the loved one[32].

In other words, spiritual beauty was transformed into material beauty, hence the controversial conception that the Virgin could not be ugly; as a matter of fact, some theologians criticized icons and sculptures that were not sufficiently beautiful. Nevertheless, beauty was regarded as a quality, as evidenced by the story appearing in the *Stella Maris* (c. 1248) about a painter who painted a very beautiful Virgin and a hideous devil. Piqued, the devil demanded that the painter portray him as beautiful, as well. When the painter refused, the devil made him lose his footing on the scaffold. Nevertheless, the painter did not plunge to his death because the image of the Virgin, pleased with the beauty with which she had been represented, extended her pictorial arm and supported him until he received human assistance (García Avilés 2021, pp. 105–6).

Reality could be understood as a ladder with several rungs leading from the ground or matter to the higher or intelligible, an idea espoused by Renaissance Neoplatonists, such as Ficino in his *Theologia platonica* (1482)[33], although without literally mentioning the ladder. For Paola Zambelli, it was an idea very close to the heart of this philosophical current (Zambelli 2012, p. 107). Even a thinker influenced by Neoplatonism like Bruno delved into this notion. As with Ficino, in his *De la causa* (1584), he imagines a ladder uniting all levels of existence, namely, the Neoplatonic One. By climbing or descending it, the godhead was able to communicate with even the smallest thing. But even magi could reach the top of the ladder with their rites[34].

4. Circular Compositions and the Symbolism and Psychology Deriving from the Forms Depicted

Another reason behind the use of circular compositions for visually representing the universe had to do with their benefits. As previously seen, this conception of the universe as a sphere was portrayed by medieval and early modern artists but not solely for mirroring physical reality.

These circular compositions stand out for the fact that they practically always focus the attention of the beholder. Besides the two types into which Rudolf Arnheim divided these compositions in his *The Power of the Center*, concentric and eccentric, he includes another in which there is something that disturbs the circle's balance, like, for example, an off-centre ink dot (Arnheim 1982, p. 6). Arnheim is of the mind that circular compositions promote movement, for their centre points in all directions but to none in particular. So, despite having an indisputable centre, this and their circumference were all points but none, as in the quote from the *Book of Twenty-Four Philosophers* or in Bruno's conception of the infinite. An accomplished circular composition transmitted the feeling of an outwardly expanding force striving to manifest itself, stretching itself to surpass its limits (Arola 2015, p. 148). Perhaps the best example of this force is a star, like the Sun.

The power that this conception of the image confers on the centre is discernible in the models of the universe discussed above. Some examples, such as the one appearing in the *Leiden Aratea*, a famous Carolingian manuscript (815), are literally full of circular elements, including some anthropomorphised planets, constellations, and signs, inscribed in a circle.

In illuminated manuscripts, it is possible to observe the tension between two opposing forces, as the drawings have two limits: the rectangular shape of the folio and the circular shape of the image, in the case of sheets of paper, papyri, and scrolls.

Circular compositions are particularly limited when they are tondi, designed to be hung anywhere depending on the whim of their owners. As Arnheim indicates, a round frame, or tondo, contrasts with its surroundings by creating the feeling of isolation, whereas a rectangular frame usually adapts to its surroundings, since the walls on which it is generally hung are almost always rectangular (Arnheim 1982, pp. 50–54, 115–35). In relation to the Renaissance tondo, Bouleau claims, 'A tondo (circular picture) is nearly

always a simple and charming picture, with supple forms enclosed in a ring; and at a time when a monotonous rigidity dominated the altarpieces, it offered from the very first its slightly precious grace, freed from symmetry' (Bouleau 2014, p. 49).

Raphael's masterpiece *Madonna della Sedia* (1514) shows how the shape of the frame determines the structure (Figure 7). As already noted, it gives the impression of centrifugal force, that the artist has composed the painting from the centre outwards. Raphael achieved that feeling in circular compositions, according to Gilbert Durand, for whom they conjure up a feeling of safety, mystical enclosure, stability, and intimacy inside an initiatory labyrinth, as mandalas do (Durand 1999, pp. 238–41).



Figure 7. Raphael, *Madonna della Sedia*, 1514. Oil on panel, 71 cm × 71 cm. Palazzo Pitti (Florence).

Geometry and mathematics, from a mystical viewpoint, were keystones of these cultural horizons. In the Platonic and Hermetic context (or contexts), it was considered that each entity and species had a specific mathematical shape, which derived from a particular idea from above (Quinlan-McGrath 2013, pp. 147–48). As a rule, Neoplatonists believed that the universe possessed a mathematical structure. In addition, those involved in the arts believed that they should be able to mimic this structure[35].

In this process of transforming conventional symbols into divine ones, Cusa proposed a three-step system that allowed access to the infinite maximum, the divine in his terms, which, in his approach, was based on mathematical signs. The three steps consisted first of considering mathematical figures with their finite qualities and ratios; next, those ratios had to be transformed into infinite figures; and finally, the ratios of infinite figures had to be established on a higher, supreme plane, namely, the infinite[36].

Research on the golden ratio, deriving, among other things, from the circle[37], reveals this mystical approach to mathematics. Following its advent in Florence, Renaissance artists—including Uccello (1397–1475), Michelangelo (1475–1564), Piero (c. 1415–1492), Botticelli (c. 1445–1510), Leonardo (1452–1519), and Raphael, to name but a few—certainly used it.

But it was the author Luca Pacioli (c. 1445–1517) who presumably extended its use or, at least, who exceled in the art of constructing his hypotheses on solid mathematical foundations. His *De divina proportione* (1509) is an outstanding treatise replete with Neoplatonic concepts. He disseminated his own ideas, in addition to Plato's and Piero della Francesca's works on the golden ratio, written 40 years before.

In addition to addressing some of the principles of the golden ratio in his treatise, Pacioli was the first author to regard it as divine (Livio 2003, pp. 127–47), using the idea of correspondences between things with no apparent relationship[38], a key Hermetic concept,

to support his arguments. In his *De divina proportione,* he demonstrated how, on the basis of this proportion, it was possible to obtain simple geometric shapes and, therefore, regular bodies, namely, with volume, and from these the rest of the figures.

More to the point, in Chapters LVI and LVII, Pacioli explains how to construct a spherical body and to insert it into the five Platonic solids (Pacioli 1956, pp. 107–8). For this reason, the Platonic quintessence was the pentagon, whereas for Pacioli, the dodecahedron was the perfect figure, the embodiment of the circle, which he created using 12 pentagons[39]. This Platonic conception was embodied in paintings not only for its benefits, owing to the formal reasons already set out above, but also for the psychological factors underlying their symbolism.

As with others, medieval Christian cultures had codes to explain things visually. For instance, the circle corresponded to the celestial vault in the traditional symbolism of forms[40]. Similar to other cultural analysts, Roman Gubern maintains that the circle would have formed part of a universal symbol code, a figure of perfection since all the points on its circumference are equidistant from its centre, a symbol of both the Sun and the patriarchal chariot, as well as the maternal full Moon (Gubern 1996, p. 80). On his part, the specialist in symbols of Western Esotericism Frederick Goodman delves a little deeper in this respect, with the circle symbolizing the spirit and the cosmos as a whole. By his reckoning, this form is certainly the most important of all magical symbols (Goodman 1989, pp. 16–17)[41].

As another cultural analyst John Higgs remarks: 'We all need models in order to deal with the world around us. We need models that fit the existing facts, and which have some ability to predict what will happen next. This is what all the best ideologies, religions and philosophies offer us. What we shouldn't do is confuse these models with the real world, for the map is not the territory and the menu is not the meal' (Higgs 2013, p. 73).

Asian mandalas offer insights into this question. According to Jung, their shape is a psychic structure that exists a priori in the human mind and, therefore, an archetype inherent to the collective unconscious[42]. Buddhists and Tantrists use the mandala, a Sanskrit noun signifying 'circle', to symbolize the essence of a sacred space, a matrix or model of a perfect universe. These geometric shapes usually consist of an inner circle enclosing a god, this main deity being surrounded by other deities, bodhisattvas, buddhas, lamas, and so forth, each functioning as a specific power, and of a multilevel square palace inside a circle, again surrounded by figures (Leidy 1997, p. 17; Thurman 1997, p. 127). Indeed, there are examples of cosmological compositions with astrological connotations in the Buddhist mandala genre (Leidy and Thurman 1997, p. 75).

As with mandalas, Christian cosmological diagrams represented a journey, in this case, through the universe to the sublunary world. Plotinus had already explained creation as a journey to the centre, instead of outwards. In *The Sixth Ennead* (c. 270), he portrays the journey of the soul as a circle that does not lead to the outer reaches but to the centre, the point from which it emerged[43].

Similar types, like the remarkable Persian horoscope of Prince Iskandar (1384–1415), showing the planetary positions when he was born on 25 April 1384, are also to be found in the aniconic tradition of Muslim countries (Figure 8).

But as Mircea Eliade claims about Eastern cultures, these images are imago mundi, an image of the world or worldview, representing a thumbnail universe. When one is created, the creation of the world is being recreated magically (Eliade 1963, p. 24–26). In both Eastern and Western cultures, circular compositions and structures can be considered as imago mundi. If the universe is circular, with a limited form, it can become an equally limited image of the whole, an imago mundi that would represent a microcosm of the macrocosm[44].

The circle with psychological and spiritual connotations was put to several uses in Christianity, such as the mandorla enveloping Christ in majesty and the nimbus around the heads of saints, both variations on the same theme. The association of the clipeus, the circular mandorla, with heaven is present in many imago clipeata compositions. From

Antiquity down to the Middle Ages, this was a way of making the invisible divinity visible (Alcoy 2017, pp. 145–47).

The same symbolic code can be applied to architecture. The relationship between matter and spirit, earth and heaven, human and divine, is symbolically portrayed in some buildings associated with the idea of divinity, including St. Peter's Basilica (plus the Pantheon in a pagan context), in the combination of the square and the hemispherical vault. In view of the spherical dome crowning the cube, it can be interpreted in the sense of the celestial prevailing over the earthly. As the square was regarded as inferior to the circle, the latter was associated with the sky and the former with the earth[45].

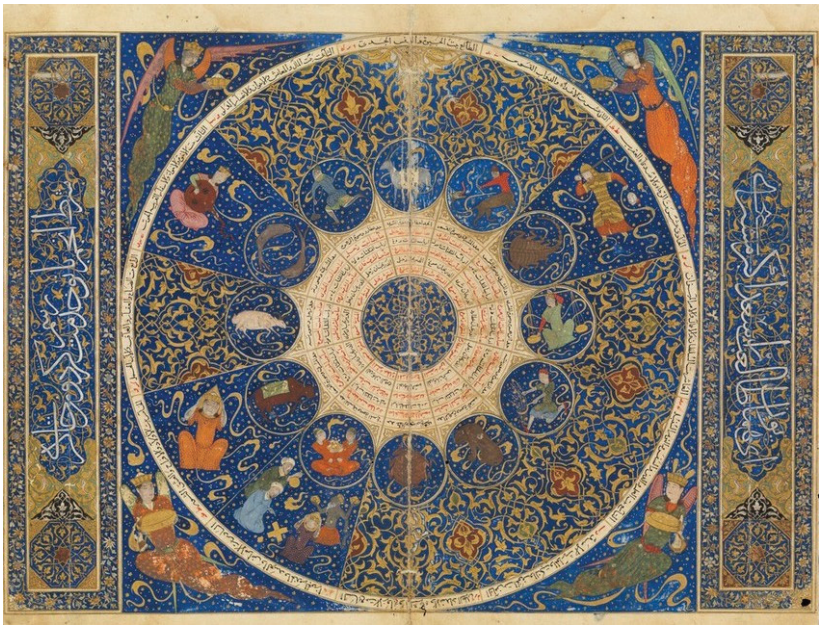


Figure 8. Anonymous, *Kitab-I viladat-i Iskandar (Book of Birth of Iskandar)*, 1411. Illuminated manuscript, 26.5 cm × 17 cm. Wellcome Collection, MS Persian 474, pp. 38–39, https://wellcomecollection.org/works/ua87equq/items?canvas=38 and https://wellcomecollection.org/works/ua87equq/items?canvas=39 (accessed on 1 October 2023).

The shape of semicircular apses and apsidioles, as well as the themed frescoes and mosaics which frequently depict the Heavenly Jerusalem, the Kingdom of Heaven, the Second Coming, and the like, contributes to reinforcing the link between God, perfection, and the circle.

Even the rose windows of churches were interpreted symbolically. For example, the different sections of the four levels of concentric circles of the Gothic north rose window at Notre-Dame, in Paris (thirteenth century), are separated according to the golden ratio (Meisner 2018, p. 111)[46]. That Romanesque and Gothic porticos had circular rose windows has been attributed to the compositional influence of cosmological designs appearing in illuminated manuscripts, often featuring a central Christ (Arnheim 1982, p. 131).

A traditional way of conceiving this Christian symbolism can be seen in an engraving from the alchemical treatise entitled *Tripus aureus, hoc est, tres tractatus chymici selectissimi* (Figure 9), whose 1677 edition includes an engraving featuring a radiant circle representing God, the circle as the world creation, made by Him, with angels of divine perfection, a triangle as the material world of the four elements (and the *Tria prima* of alchemy), and

a rectangle below as the inferos, the world of evil, visually symbolised by a half sphere or Satan.

This Christian symbolism persisted in the visual arts during the Renaissance. Over the following centuries, symbolic values would still be attributed to the circle, as a figure linked to the divine and perfection. Something akin to this symbolism of the forms also appears in the paintings of some of the great masters of the period, such as Raphael and El Greco.

Raphael, who had a penchant for these simple forms, resorted to them in his *Disputation of the Holy Sacrament* (1510) (Figure 10). This composition plays with the contrast between the horizontal line of the theologians and the curved line of the divine above them, specifically, the circle in which Christ is depicted, crowned by the Father, both in turn exerting an influence on those below. Furthermore, this same contrast can be found on the vertical axis between the rectangular altar and the series of circles and semicircles decorating it. But the real power of the composition resides in the two opposing forces: circular versus rectangular. The lower one depicts a number of saints, theologians, and pontiffs, arranged in a rectangular shape, resembling a frieze, a horizontal line that curves at its ends. Meanwhile, the lower edge of the upper level rests on a bank of clouds upon which saints and key figures from the Testaments are seated, surrounded by other beings from the Catholic otherworld, such as archangels, seraphim, and cherubim—all figures placed in concentric circles emanating from the axis of God.

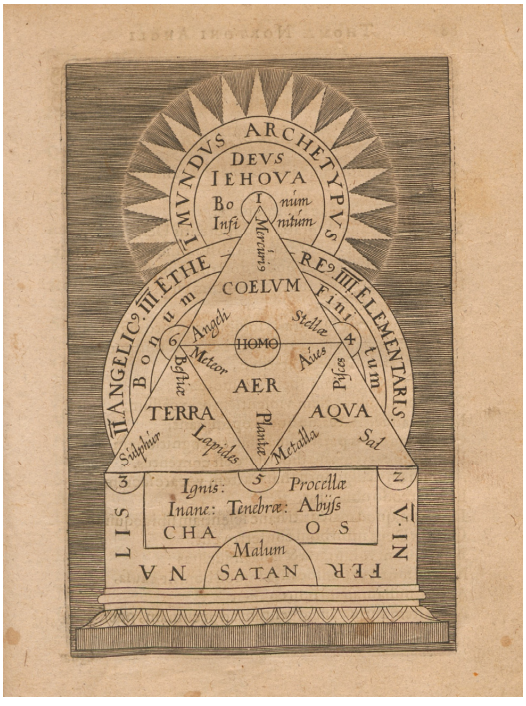


Figure 9. Thomas Norton, 'Crede mihi seu ordinale', in *Tripus aureus, hoc est, tres tractatus chymici selectissimi*, 1618. Engraving, 19 cm × 13 cm. ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, Rar 8239. https://doi.org/10.3931/e-rara-34295.

The central axis features the Trinity, following a typical iconographic scheme, with the Father at the top, followed by the Son and the Spirit, represented by the customary dove symbol. Lower down, there is a monstrance with the consecrated host, as the issue in dispute is the existence of transubstantiation. The painting defends its existence with

stimulating visual arguments, placing the liturgical symbol representing it directly below the Trinity on the central axis. This arrangement serves to connect the divine circles with the rectangular forms of the earthly dimension, represented by Doctors of the Church, popes, and even writers such as Dante. Even the ground exhibits a design featuring squared shapes.

Raphael used that kind of composition in other masterpieces, such as the *Transfiguration* (1520). El Greco borrowed the compositional scheme of Raphael's *Transfiguration* in *The Burial of the Count of Orgaz* (1586), whose forms possess an analogous symbolic meaning, although he painted this masterpiece in the late Mannerist style characterized by its swirling shapes. The divine characters are arranged in a circle around Christ on the throne in the upper segment, taking advantage of the fact that this portion is semicircular in shape. In contrast, the human figures, representing matter, are to be found in the lower square-shaped section. They include the quintessence of the material realm—a corpse—together with a frieze of pale faces that starkly contrast with their Baroque attire.

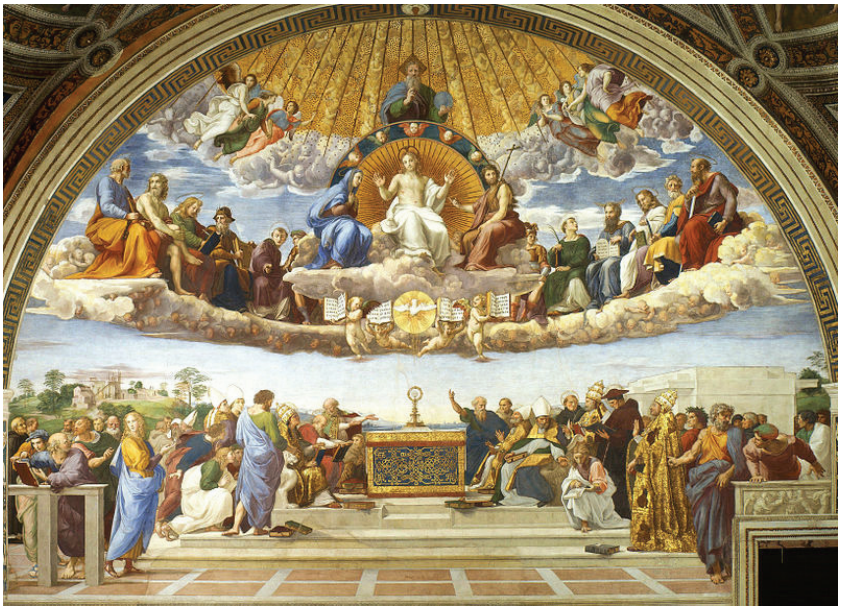


Figure 10. Raphael, *Disputation of the Holy Sacrament*, 1509. Fresco, 5 m × 7.70 m. Stanza della Segnatura, Palazzi Pontifici, Vatican.

5. Roundels and Painted Medallions

The last possible reason behind the preference for circular compositions has nothing to do with a meaning or idea, but with an artistic genre and with shape, for they might have originated from Roman clipeus, medallions, and coins, among other objects bearing images. As the Spanish medievalist art historian Manuel Castiñeiras states, 'In the Middle Ages there existed a close relation between artistic models and numismatic types, establishing a fruitful dialogue between coining, 'sumptuary' art and monumental art' (Castiñeiras 2006, p. 250).

As exemplified by the historical process involving the clipeus shape, from its use in military shields to its incorporation in the iconography of a figure enclosed in a clipeus, the prevalence of circular objects for sharing ideas, for imposing a hierarchical order, or as things of value might have given rise to circular compositions and iconographic types. The frequent presence of roundels in the illuminated books examined below, which might be explained by their origin in coins and medallions, seems to be connected with these visual references and cultural objects referred to here.

This brings to mind one of the mystical visions of 'Ara Coeli' in which the Sybil prophesized the Coming of Christ, contained in the Limbourg Brothers' *Très Riches Heures* (Musee Condé, ms. 65 fol 22r) (1412–1486), representing the iconographic type of the Virgin and Child above a waxing moon, inscribed in the sun. This is yet another example of the merging of pagan and Christian concepts, so commonplace in these circular compositions, and might also be the case of another image appearing in the Master of the Munich Golden Legend's illuminated *Book of Hours* (1430), containing several roundels accompanying the main image. In sum, the model is to be found in many different works.

The accent is now placed on the medieval visual culture of the Iberian Peninsula, an especially important European region in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, thanks to the Arabic influence and its flourishing culture, whose libraries, housing books on medicine, alchemy, and astrology/astronomy, amazed inquisitive Western and Northern European Christian thinkers, as Davies observes (Davies 2009, p. 25). In the Christian kingdoms of the Iberian Peninsula, following the Roman example as in other realms, coinage and its iconographic significance served as a way of promoting the powers that be. Kings disseminated their image, associating it with displays of power and linking it to the religious realm, for example, by inscribing religious symbols or legends, like Dei gratia rex, on their coins (Estrada-Rius 2006, pp. 241–42).

In some Christian realms, particularly those with Muslim neighbours, coinage served to convey religious messages. This is evidenced by a twelfth-century penny bearing the religious legend dextera domini, meaning the hand of God (MNAC reference 034100-N), discovered in the episcopal see of Vic, in the Catalan county of Barcelona, dating from only a few decades after the death of Abbot Oliba (c. 971–1046), the former bishop of Vic, during whose time the area had experienced a golden age (Figure 11).



Figure 11. Episcopal mint of Vic (Catalonia), *Hand blessing*, second half twelfth century. Silver Coin, 17 mm. MNAC, National Art Museum of Catalonia, 034100-N https://www.museunacional.cat/en/colleccio/diner/bishopric-vic/034100-n. (accessed on 1 October 2023).

Returning to illuminated manuscripts, the *Lapidario*, one of the most remarkable works on astrology, was produced in another of the Christian realms of Iberia, in this case the kingdom of Castile. In Domínguez Rodríguez's opinion, the *Lapidario*, which reflects both Western and Eastern influences, is a syncretic work maybe of Greek origin, specifically from the Hellenistic period, but which would have been transmitted through the Arabic sources (Domínguez Rodríguez 2007, p. 108). This essential work, several copies of which are conserved in Madrid, El Escorial, and the Vatican, is a matchless astrological-talismanic compilation, containing several treatises (Weill-Parot 2002, pp. 123–25). The translations

performed at the court of Alfonso X appear to be the only editions of the *Lapidario*, illustrated with illuminated miniatures, to have survived in the West (González Sánchez 2015, p. 153).

The purpose of the *Lapidario*, probably the most sumptuous work of its kind produced in Europe during the thirteenth century, was to extol a king who was a veritable patron of the arts. Immensely wealthy thanks to the lands conquered by his father Ferdinand III (1199–1252), called the Saint, in the valley of the river Guadalquivir, including the major cities of Jaen and Seville, he lavished money on the humanities, among other things.

The artworks produced at the court of Alfonso X reflected syncretic astrological theories strongly influenced by the Neoplatonic and Ptolemaic currents. The *Lapidario*, which is no exception, is philosophically grounded in Neoplatonic notions, such as the celestial world of the macrocosm reflected in the microcosm of the sublunary world and its stones. To this should be added the idea that all living beings, ordered by their level of perfection on a ladder, are linked by a current of universal sympathy, with God at the root of everything, in a system comprising cosmic bodies and eight or nine spheres, depending on the source.

More than a book on geology, however, the *Lapidario* is a vade mecum, a pharmacopeia, a remedy book (Domínguez Rodríguez 2007, p. 177). In one section, the author draws parallels between 360 stones and the 360 degrees of the zodiac, and in another, he links 36 stones to the decans. The majority view in academia tends to hold that Alfonso X not only promoted research, but also chose the books to be translated, supervising final versions and writing styles (González Sánchez 2015, pp. 18–25).

The pages of the chapter devoted to each constellation are divided into two columns with its name appearing at the top of each double page. The stones are highlighted in red ink, whereas the rest of text is written in black ink. The text descriptions are accompanied by illuminated miniatures visually explaining how to extract the stones, to which should be added other miniatures indicating the sign or constellation in which this should be done.

Although the text descriptions are translations, the images illustrating them correspond to the originals (García Avilés 2011, pp. 108–9). Domínguez Rodríguez singles out Capricorn (79r), which, along with the rest of the constellations, is inscribed in a medallion, as the best drawing in the entire manuscript (Figure 12) (Domínguez Rodríguez 2007, p. 127). The text description of each stone, below the drawing representing it, starts with an illuminated capital, with each page generally containing two illuminated capitals and two representations of the constellation and sign of the zodiac in question, also inscribed in a medallion, thus forming a contrast between the rectangular text columns and the circular images.



Figure 12. Alfonso X, *Lapidario*, c. 1260. Illuminated manuscript (parchment), 40 cm × 29 cm. El Escorial, RBME h-I-15, f. 79r https://rbme.patrimonionacional.es/s/rbme/item/13127#?c=&m=&s=&cv=171&xywh=-97,342,1197,674 (accessed on 1 October 2023).

Several books on astrology were produced in the scriptorium of the court of Alfonso X, most of which were translations of Arabic works[47]. A manuscript housed in the Spanish National Library, commencing with the *Libro de las figuras de las estrellas fijas de la octava esfera* (sixteenth century), also includes the *Lapidario*, which begins with a section in which the constellations are visually represented in wheels or circular diagrams (Figure 13). The book's sumptuousness is exemplified by the medallion representing the constellation of Pegasus on one of its pages, an illustration of a better quality than the rest, according to the researcher specializing in the Alfonsine scriptorium Ana Domínguez Rodríguez (Domínguez Rodríguez 2007, p. 99). Although the book was originally produced in the Alfonsine scriptorium (thirteenth century), it was illuminated in the sixteenth century.



Figure 13. Alfonso X, 'Libro de las figuras de las estrellas fijas de la octava esfera,' in *Tratados de Alfonso X sobre astrología y sobre las propiedades de las piedras*, sixteenth century. Illuminated manuscript (parchment), 42 cm × 28 cm. Biblioteca Nacional España mss/1197, tenth image http://bdh-rd.bne.es/viewer.vm?id=0000009637&page=1 (accessed on 1 October 2023).

Yet, the choice of these medallions seems to have had more to do with a lore of visual references, based on Arabic and Roman models and on their own cultural objects such as coins, than with an expression of the universe in which there was a symbolic preference for circular compositions for representing ideas or an analogous way of thinking in which something in the physical world mirrored the perfection of God.

6. Conclusions

Art does not reproduce the visible
but makes visible
Creative Credo, Paul Klee (1920) (Klee 1961, p. 76)

In the preceding pages, four possible reasons behind the medieval predilection for circular compositions have been examined. Firstly, there was the notion that the universe was circular. Additionally, the circle also served to reflect the form of nature, as a mirror image of God reflecting its beauty and perfection. Thirdly, there were several psychological and symbolic reasons, such as the need to evoke a sense of expansion and security. Lastly, circular compositions might have originated from significant objects, such as coins.

Although it is possible to consider more reasons, for instance, liturgical necessities, these are the four main ones. The article has shown how the influence of writing sources from Platonic, Neoplatonic, Hermetic, and Christian mystic sources helped to establish those reasons. Those texts and ideas contributed to consolidating rounded compositions. Drawing on this background, exemplified by figures like Nicholas of Cusa, Marsilio Ficino, and Giordano Bruno, the essay has illustrated the interconnections between texts and images in visually representing key ideas pivotal for European societies, particularly from the twelfth to the seventeenth century. This perspective illuminates existing continuities.

Linda Safran's words, the 'habit of thinking with circular patterns' (Safran 2022, p. 99) helped create a notion of imago mundi, based on the idea that the world created by God was as perfect as He was. It is noteworthy to point out that, as shown in the preceding pages, to forge those artistic compositions, scientific, philosophical, and theological reasons came together, interwoven in those artistic designs.

At any rate, far from disappearing without a trace, a similar idea of a geometric shape embodying a worldview in an image originated from Copernicus and, subsequently, from Kepler and René Descartes, but with the circle and the circular motion of the spheres being replaced by the ellipse and the spiral.

This idea has left its mark on culture and can still be found here and there. Even in contemporary times, we find artists who exhibit the same attraction to a round arrangement, conveying a sense of marvel at the sight of the cosmos and sharing a feeling of harmony, thanks to the circular composition. For instance, this concept appears to manifest in a photograph taken by Anton Jankovoy in the Annapurna region (Figure 14). After leaving the diaphragm of his camera open for almost two hours, the movement of all the stars was visible, except for that of the Pole Star, whose position is apparently fixed because it coincides with the North Pole.



Figure 14. Anton Jankovoy, *Head Spinning Himalayas*, 2015. Photography.

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Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

Notes

1 As a vade mecum, the treatises compiled in the *Lapidary* serve as a reference book providing instructions on using gemstones to create talismans. These treatises establish connections between the properties of stones, the influence of the stars, and the medicinal implications of utilising them for healing. According to the original prologue, the book was initially written in Arabic. King Alfonso X the Learned acquired it and commissioned its translation into Castilian around 1250. To delve deeper into the *Lapidary*, refer to Section 5 for additional information on this book.

2 Plato, *Timaeus* 33a–c, *Complete Works* (Plato 1997b, p. 1238).

3 Plato, *Timaeus* 38–39d, pp. 1241–43.

4 Collected in (Pedoe 1983, p. 170).

5 Plato, *Timaeus* 33b, p. 1238. At the end of *The Republic* (616–621), Plato mentions the same circular motion, in this case to explain the cosmic movement of souls, which he compares to a spindle: Plato, Rep. X, 616–621 (Plato 1997a, pp. 1219–23)

6 (David 2018, p. 321). Dällenbach mistakenly credits Dante with this famous sentence about God as an infinite sphere, for the idea can already be found in previous Hermetic works, such as the *Book of the Twenty-Four Philosophers*, which, in all likelihood, influenced many other authors, primarily the Florentine poet and writer (Dällenbach 1989, p. 104). Dällenbach should not be held to blame because he is quoting another author.

7 For instance, in *De docta ignorantia*: 'But those who considered the most actual existence of God affirmed that He is an infinite sphere, as it were. I will show that all of these [men] have rightly conceived', in *De docta ignorantia*, I, 12 (Nicholas of Cusa 1990, p. 20). Besides, Cusa maintained that God was an infinite sphere that reached all: see Nicholas of Cusa, *De docta ignorantia*, I, 12, p. 20. As for Bruno, the idea appears in his *De la causa, principio et uno*, V (Bruno 2004, p. 89).

8 *Corpus hermeticum II*, 6–7 (1992, pp. 9–10). The heavenly spheres make their circular motions or kyklophoria (Toussaint 2002, p. 314).

9 Robert Grosseteste was a Franciscan scholastic philosopher from England, Bishop of Lincoln, and well-versed in science. He is primarily recognized for his significant contributions to the study of light and played an important role in the development of the scientific method.

10 In Valentin Weigel's *Philosophia Mystica*, a Rosicrucian book written several centuries afterwards, it is explained that God the Father traces a circle with a compass, the Son becomes the centre of that circle and the Holy Spirit, its circumference (see Arola 2015, p. 190). Later on, it was Masonry that gave importance to the compass for tracing circles and for alluding to sacred geometry and to the Great Architect of the universe. It was also visually used by William Blake, an artist influenced by Hermetism, whose *Ancient of Days* (1794) offered a new version of this figure of God the Creator, this time going beyond His circular perfection. Rosa Alcoy, a researcher specializing in medieval art, links this painting to the medieval *Bible moralisées* (Alcoy 2021, pp. 238–39).

11 In reference to a study on medieval cosmology and the nature of spheres, please see (Edward Grant 1987, pp. 152–73).

12 In an Alfonsine text, the zodiac is defined as the place that is willing to give a soul all the things that are willing to receive it (Domínguez Rodríguez 2007, p. 104).

13 Circular zodiacs were also very popular in Eastern Christianism. According to Linda Safran, 'Zodiac imagery presented in a circular format was widespread in the early Byzantine eastern Mediterranean' (Safran 2022, p. 95).

14 Another circular diagram used for topics relating to astrology was the volvelle, a device designed to locate the position of the moon in the zodiac for medical purposes. In this respect, see, above all, (Page 2002, p. 54).

15 *De radiis* VI, 14 (Al-Kindi 2003, p. 47). 'Some men, thanks to their understanding of the arrangement of the heavens, understood many things hidden in the world of the elements, exploring the secrets of both higher and lower nature' [Own translation].

16 As to the soul as a sphere there is a Gnostic treatise in which it is described as having this shape: (1997, p. 335). For his part, Cusa, following Plato (see n. 4, with the reference to Chapter 10 of *The Republic* and the circular movement of souls), considered that the movement of the Soul of the World, which moved itself and all other things, was circular. This had to be so because its movement was perpetual and contained all motion and beings: *De ludo globi*, I, 40 (Nicholas of Cusa 2000, p. 1201).

17 In the Christian theory of images of the first centuries of the Common Era, they were justified on the grounds that they derived from a Platonic prototype, according to which there was an original image of all things in the divine world and reproductions of them in the earthly world and in art in the form of images, icons, and so forth (Belting 1994, pp. 153–54).

18 De vita triplici III, 19 (Ficino 1980, p. 153).

19 Marsilio Ficino, *De vita triplici* III, 19, pp. 153–54.

20 Nicholas of Cusa, *De ludo globi*, 1, 11–13, pp. 1186–87.

21 In his *The Vision of God* (1453), Cusa considers theology as circular, for the attributes of God affirm each other in a circular relationship. Moreover, in these attributes, all otherness is unity and all diversity, identity (they are different but, at the same time, one and, therefore, diverse and simultaneously one and the same). See *De Visione Dei*, III, IX (Nicholas of Cusa 1988, p. 684).

22 Plato, *Timaeus* 92c, p. 1291.

23 Nicholas of Cusa, Docta ignorantia I, 11, 30, p. 18.

24 Secondary sources: (Yates 1964, p. 247; Tessicini 2016, p. 138). Bruno as a disciple of Nicholas of Cusa: (Conty 2012, p. 465).

25 Lampas triginta statuarum, 64, XXVI (Bruno 2003, p. 1023).

26 *De imaginum, signorum et idearum compositione* I, 1, 2 (Bruno 1991, p. 10).

27 Giordano Bruno, *De imaginum, signorum et idearum compositione* I, 1, 13, p. 28

28 Ibid. I, 1, 14, p. 40.

29 Ibid. I, 1, 17, p. 44.

30 Ibid. I, 1, 1, p. 7.

31 *De gli heroici furori* II, II (Bruno 2013, pp. 281–87).

32 In (Yates 1964, pp. 393–94).

33 The philosopher talked about five degrees of all things, from the body, plus its attributes, soul, and angelic nature, to God, in five degrees in hierarchical order: see Theologia platonica, I, I (Ficino 2001, p. 7).

34 Giordano Bruno, *De la causa, principio et uno*, V, p. 93. Secondary source: (Yates 1964, p. 248).

35 In the introduction to the Spanish translation of Luca Pacioli's *De divina proportione*, it is contended that a work of art ought to reflect the universe '*allo specchio*': (González 1991, p. 25).

36 Nicholas of Cusa, *De docta ignorantia* I, XII, 33, p. 20. Cusa also identifies God with an infinite line, which then becomes a triangle (the Trinity), a circle for unity, and a sphere that unites opposites: Ibid. I, X, 27, p. 16. This interpretation has been understood, in the first case, as a reference to exact mathematics, in the second, to speculative mathematics, and, in the third, to mystical mathematics (Machetta and d'Amico 2003, p. 162).

37 Although, as Durand asserts, the golden ratio would be spiral in shape (Durand 1999, p. 303).

38 Pacioli was able to develop his intellect thanks to the splendid library of Federico da Montefeltro (1422–1482), to which he had access, probably through his teacher Piero della Francesca. Pacioli collaborated with Leonardo da Vinci when both were living in Milan, hosted by Ludovico Sforza (1452–1508). Leonardo even illustrated *De divina proportione*.

39 Luca Pacioli, *De divina proportione* XXXI, pp. 67–73.

40 This symbolism is to be found in alchemy, in which a circle with a focal point signifies the Sun. In his *Psychology and Alchemy*, C. G. Jung holds that this figure signifies protection: *Psychologie und Alchemie*, 63 (Jung 1980, p. 87).

41 In Book II of *De occulta philosophia* (1533), a reference work in this regard, H. C. Agrippa explains some of the uses of the circle in these practices, considering it as the most suitable figure for bindings and summoning spirits—depending on the place—owing to its infinite nature. As with other Hermetic thinkers, for him, this geometric shape is perfect: *De occulta philosophia* II, 23 (Agrippa 1995, p. 330). This surely explains why in the history of the occult and magic there is a tradition of representing magicians conjuring up spirits in a magic circle. One of the most common Western images of magic is an extravagantly dressed and hatted character drawing a magic circle (the Solomonic circle) on the ground, surrounded by letters and strange signs, before invoking spirits or demons. The same circle can even be found in *Les véritables clavicules de Salomon*, a grimoire written as late as in the eighteenth century. But it is John William Waterhouse's *The Magic Circle* (1886), that is a shining example of magical imaginary.

42 In C. G. Jung, *Psychologie und Alchemie*. The bottom line here is whether the mind perceives it or not. Those variations explain why this structure is only perceived by a few: C. G. Jung, *Psychologie und Alchemie*, 329–330, pp. 240–41.

43 *The Enneads*, VI 9, 8 (Plotinus 2016, pp. 892–93). The journey that a mandala offers beholders is from its circumference to its centre, where its main deity reigns (Leidy 1997, p. 41). According to Macrobius, as the soul descends through the cosmic spheres and each planet, it acquires the qualities that it will possess once it has a body: *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*, I, 12, 13–14 (Macrobius 1990, pp. 136–37). In his commentary on Plato's *Symposium on Love*, Ficino mostly followed Macrobius's ideas, albeit introducing small modifications: *De amore* VI, IV (Ficino 1987, pp. 117–19).

44 For further information, see (Ferrer-Ventosa 2023).

45 Tibetan mandalas integrate both with a symbolic sense of harmonizing them (Arnheim 1982, p. 117), due to their non-dualistic belief.

46 Nicholas Temple and Cecilia Panti have connected the rose windows of Lincoln Cathedral to Grosseteste's scientific ideas on light. (Temple 2016, pp. 29–58; Panti 2016, p. 74–76).

47 Work in the scriptorium was conducted in several steps: *transladar* or translating; *capitular* or dividing the text into chapters; *emendar* or correcting; *endreçar* or style editing; *glosar*, namely, when a specialist was called upon to assess the results or even to

elaborate on them; there was also sometimes an additional step that could be called *ayuntar*, which involved selecting sources and compiling them coherently (González Sánchez 2015, p. 168).

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Article

Visual Exegesis of Herodias and Salome from Feminist Rhetorical Criticism: The Construction of a Myth

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Abstract: The biblical account of Salome has been marked throughout history by two main themes: on the one hand, the princess's dance in front of the main rulers of Galilee, and on the other hand, the request for the head of John the Baptist to King Herod, instigated by his mother Herodias. The reading of this passage has been strongly marked by the different patriarchal exegetical approaches, which have modulated the reception of both female characters being traceable through the visual and literary arts, to the point of taking on the concept of *femme fatale*. Really, in both moments Salome is the executor of the actions, not as a result of her capacity for agency, but due to her influenceable character. Through a critical–historical analysis of the biblical passage, Herodias and Salome emerge with characteristics quite different from what 19th-century Art History inherited. The methodology of feminist rhetorical criticism allows for an approach to the visual re-imaginings of this biblical passage that have shaped the iconography of these two figures. The field of visual arts, particularly the production of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, will be the great receptacle for the genesis of the fatality and assimilation of these female biblical figures.

Keywords: Salome; Herodias; *femme fatale*; feminist rhetorical criticism; reception of the Bible; iconography; biblical cultural studies

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1. Introduction

The figures of Herodias and Salome appear in the New Testament in reference to the death of the preacher John the Baptist, early on in the public life of Jesus[1]. Through the texts of Matthew (Jerusalem Bible 1992, 14:1–12)[2], Mark (6:14–29)—who present a more extensive narrative with a notable hostility towards Herod's court—and Luke (3:19–20)—who presents the event more briefly and respectfully, an event that has generated a great collective imagination in the world of Art History. After the brief phrase, "and the opportune day came" (Mk 6:21), a whole series of events are recorded that led to the disastrous climax of the passage: the beheading of John the Baptist. To understand the outcome of the prophet's life, it is necessary to go back to the initial passages of the synoptic gospels, where John's preaching in the desert is recounted, baptizing those who wanted to obtain forgiveness for their sins. Likewise, it was John himself who baptized Jesus in the Jordan River. So, while the public life of Jesus developed in the region of Galilee and his preaching began, in parallel John the Baptist also announced the Kingdom of Heaven, his fame reaching the ears of the tetrarch Herod Antipas.

At this point, the story quickly advances, placing the arrest of John the Baptist as the origin of the passage, the expositional urgency being such that the biblical text does not detail the imprisonment of the preacher, nor does it specify whether there was resistance or under what circumstances the arrest occurred. However, the guilty transgression of his arrest is insisted upon, adding its origin: "because of Herodias" (Mk 6:17). The arrest warrant for John the Baptist was directly ordered by King Herod due to the public judgments issued by the Baptist, who maintained that "it is not permitted for you to have your brother's wife" (Mk 6:18), concerning the marriage of the monarch with the wife of his brother Herod Philip, who was still alive. Only in the story of Saint Mark can we appreciate

the personal tension that the monarch's wife showed towards the accused, since "Herodias hated him and wanted to kill him" (Mk 6:19).

It is in this framework that the character of Salome appears, "the daughter of Herodias herself" (Mk 6:22) who only comes to light with two phrases, one addressed to King Herod and the other to his mother. Salome danced before all those attending the king's celebrations and she captivated those present, to the point that the king offered her whatever she wanted most as a way of gratitude. The young woman, after consulting with her mother, sentenced the imprisoned man to death with one phrase: "The head of John the Baptist" (Mk 6:24).

2. Portraits of Herodias and Salome, according to Flavius Josephus

Scripture verses mentioning Herodias and Salome are few and lack any kind of personal nuance that would let the reader understand the characters' personalities. In this way the female characters are relegated to the shadow of the text and are almost an anecdotal element of the episode. The lack of interest in the women who are part of the life of the tetrarch Herod Antipas is so high that the name of Salome is not even mentioned in the Bible[3], and reference is only made to her with the degree of kinship she presents with her mother Herodias.

The name of Salome is known only through a monumental 20-volume work called *Jewish Antiquities* (*Antiquitates Judaicae*[4]) (ca. 90 CE) in which its author, Flavius Josephus, recounts a daring history of the Jewish people from the dawn of humanity and creation, following the biblical texts, until the time of the Roman procurator Florus in Judea (ca. 64–66 CE), that is, the period of the Jewish Wars. In volume XVIII of this historical encyclopedia an exhaustive genealogy of the life of Herod Antipas appears, and the women who are part of his life are nominally identified:

> [. . .] Herodias [. . .] was married to Herod [Philip], the son of Herod the Great, who was born of Mariamne, the daughter of Simon the high priest, who had a daughter, Salome; after whose birth Herodias took upon her to confound the laws of our country, and divorced herself from her husband while he was alive, and was married to Herod [Antipas], her husband's brother by the father's side; he was tetrarch of Galilee; but her daughter Salome was married to Philip, the son of Herod, and tetrarch of Trachonitis. (*Ant.*, XVIII, V, 136)

The life of this first-century Jewish-Roman historian, general, and diplomat is full of inconsistencies and his writings have sparked many debates[5], to the point that the saying "according to Flavius Josephus" is frequently recited after citing data provided by said author (Whiston and Maier 1999, p. 16). However, despite this, the writings of Flavius Josephus are a fundamental source for delving into the history of the Jewish people and the sociopolitical context under the rule of the different foreign political forces, mainly those that were contemporaneous with his life: the Greco-Roman period.

This is why the writings of Flavius Josephus will be very valuable for the reconstruction of the times in which Herodias and Salome lived, as well as for delving into their lives, mainly in the figure of Herodias, since she played a very active role in the diplomacy and the political framework of the Herodian dynasty. However, another difficulty is added since the texts of Flavius Josephus cannot be compared with other sources from antiquity, so a comparison of the facts is not available. The work *Jewish Antiquities* draws directly from the writings of the Syrian historian Nicholas of Damascus (64 BCE—ca. 4 CE) regarding the time of Herod the Great (Morgan Gillman 2003, p. 20), and both authors present the women of the Hasmonean and Herodian dynasties with harsh descriptions, as well as through clear value judgments about their attitudes (Ilan 1996), to the point that they regularly reveal their lack of partiality towards them and adopt a jocular tone on many occasions (Strickert 2014, pp. 361–64). Therefore, it is difficult to identify an accurate version of the role of Jewish women in Greco-Roman times, and hence of biblical women, particularly given that Nicholas of Damascus himself firmly considered that women were "the root of all evil" (Ilan 1996, p. 262).

Flavius Josephus outlines a series of events around the figure of Herodias that could have generated a portrait different from that of the pejorative visual tradition that resides in Western collective imaginations; however, unfortunately it is an image that has not transcended the history of visuality. Josephus' texts present a strategist Herodias who incites her husband, Herod Antipas, to undertake a sea voyage to Rome to present the honors to Caesar since her brother, Herod Agrippa I, had been crowned king of Judea and she "was not able to conceal how miserable she was, because of the envy she had towards him" (*Ant.*, XVIII, VII, 241); an influential and convincing Herodias who obtained the obedience of her husband thanks to her speech about the disadvantaged situation that Herod Antipas presented in the face of the new power held by Agrippa (*Ant.*, XVIII, VII, 243); a diplomatic Herodias who knew the rules and language of power when she had to converse with Caesar (*Ant.*, XVIII, VII, 254); and even a generous and helpful Herodias who decided to reject the offer of safe conduct offered by the emperor and opted to accompany her husband into exile (*Ant.*, XVIII, VII, 255).

However, none of this is highlighted by the hand of the first-century historian, who ends the chapter alluding to female perversity: "And thus did God punish Herodias for her envy of her brother, and Herod also for giving ear to the vain discourses of a woman" (*Ant.*, XVIII, VII, 255).

From Archeology to Texts

The first surviving ancient written accounts of the death of John the Baptist, the Gospels, and the texts of Flavius Josephus present several discrepancies when it comes to detailing the event of the beheading. While on the one hand, the Gospels indicate the cause(s) of the death of John the Baptist, the historian Flavius Josephus limits himself to adding the event as part of a broad story focused on the life of Herodias Antipas, without mentioning the promoter(s) of the crime (*Ant.*, XVIII, V, 116–119). Regarding the geographical location of the act, there is a greater consensus in the first-century sources placing it in the archaeological site of Machaerus, a mountain fortress located in the Transjordanian territories of the Dead Sea, in modern-day Jordan.

The fortress of Machaerus is mentioned by the historian Strabo in his work *Geographica*, in the encyclopedia *Historia Naturalis* by Pliny the Elder, and finally in the works *Bellum Judaicum*[6] and *Antiquitates Judaicae* by Flavius Josephus. In the Gospels, the tragic death of the Baptist is mentioned, but no reference is made to the specific place of his imprisonment and subsequent beheading (Vörös 2022, pp. 23–31). It will be in the texts of the philo-Roman Jewish writer, Flavius Josephus where the city of Machaerus appears associated with the Golgotha[7] of John the Baptist—"Accordingly he was sent a prisoner, out of Herod's suspicious temper, to Macherus, the fortress I before mentioned, and was there put to death" (*Ant.*, XVIII, V, 119)—and described in great detail, being an impregnable citadel with a strategic location (*Bell.*, VII, VI, 163–177).

Machaerus (*Μαχαιρούς*, from ancient Greek *μάχαιρα*, meaning "sword") (Vörös 2022, p. 9), is located in the ancient region of Perea, located 8km from the Jordanian shore of the Dead Sea, and is currently under the archaeological direction, and in constant interpretation, of the archaeologist Győző Vörös, member of the Hungarian Academy of Arts. Vöros' work methodology is based on historical archaeology, a way of undertaking archeology where written records and oral tradition are combined with the archaeological material found, to shed light on the interpretation and contextualization of the site. On the archaeological site of Machaerus, both pieces—the archaeological remains and the written material heritage—fit in perfect harmony, facilitating their identification (Vörös 2022, pp. 289–90).

The fortress has several construction periods, and houses the old fortified palace of Herod the Great, which would end up being occupied, according to tradition, by Herod Antipas, his wife Herodias, and the princess Salome. The archaeological work at the site has been very fruitful since its beginnings[8], currently providing a wide reconstructed panorama of the ancient fortress city of Machaerus and the importance of the settlement. On the slope of the hill was the lower area of the city with one of the most important hydraulic

constructions of antiquity: an aqueduct; and at the top was the great fortified palace that contained cisterns, three Jewish ritual baths (called *mikva'ot* in Hebrew), and a multitude of rooms. Within the palace complex, the large ancient Herodian courtyard of 660 m^2 stands out with a peristyle composed of eight Doric columns on each side, all topped off, at one end, by a niche for the monarch's throne (Vörös 2015). This space has been interpreted as the biblical place where Herod celebrated the great party on the occasion of his birthday, and therefore the place where Salome danced and where the king sentenced John the Baptist to death with his ruling (Vörös 2022, pp. 299–300).

Therefore, the royal bastion of Machaerus has been identified as one of the Herodian palaces, thanks to the architectural analogies with other palace constructions of the monarch spread throughout the territory, and also due to archaeological findings of great luxury. However, the interpretation does not end at this point, since thanks to the written sources the importance of this strategic point is preserved due to the presence of five characters, spread over time, mentioned in the Gospels: Herod the Great, Herod Antipas, Herodias, Salome, and John the Baptist (Vörös 2022, p. 291).

3. The Framework of Biblical–Cultural Studies: Feminist Rhetorical Criticism

The academic specialty of Biblical Studies focuses its development on the analysis of biblical texts, presenting from its genesis a clear masculine imprint, both due to its components and the prevailing ideology. Thanks to the feminist movements of the 1960s–1970s, the birth of another perspective of biblical analysis began where women have a more active role[9], both within the story and in its interpretative action (Scholz 2013, pp. 2–3). Faced with this need for the "depatriarchalization" of biblical interpretation (Trible 1973), Feminist Biblical Studies emerged to break the *continuum* of the male exegetical tradition and the historical reception of the Bible that had been carried out until then (Schüssler Fiorenza 2014, pp. 1–5).

Methodologies for approaching the biblical text have been very varied throughout the history of the discipline, one of them being the narrative method, also known as narrative criticism, which understands the biblical compendium as literature. In this line, James Muilenburg was a prominent personality and pioneer in the application of a new methodology for approaching the biblical text called rhetorical criticism (1968, cited in Trible 1994). Muilenburg starts from biblical narrative criticism, which had a great tradition in the exegetical world, and in which the textual study of conventions prevailed, structuring the text by isolating it in small blocks of rather than delving into the historical–social context in which literary productions were framed. Under these premises, Muilenburg observes deficiencies in the analysis of certain aspects of the text that would allow a more accurate approach to its ultimate meaning, such as the individuality of each work, its particularities, and those details that break the norm. This is how the working methodology of rhetorical criticism was born, focused mainly on Hebrew composition, maintaining that "a responsible and proper articulation of the words in their linguistic patterns and their precise formulations will reveal to us the thoughts, but as he thinks it" (Trible 1994, p. 26).

Following in Muilenburg's wake, his disciple Phyllis Trible continued to develop the discipline of rhetorical criticism: "[. . .] I view the text as a literary creation with an interlocking structure of words and motifs" (Trible 1978, p. 8), to the point that she proposed a variant of said methodology applying the gender factor, where feminism became a critique of culture (Trible 1978, p. 23). Specifically, her studies focused on the Christian field and began with feminine images of God; this is how feminist rhetorical criticism was born.

This type of feminist critical inquiry into the biblical text provides different nuances that had previously not been contemplated in exegesis: (a) the language is androcentric, therefore it is not a unit of truthful analysis of reality, but it is a good means to approach the symbolic constructions of spaces, where women were relegated to the background; (b) the language is political, therefore it is a reflection of patriarchal society and always serves the interests of men, making it impossible to separate the text from its cultural and religious context; (c) it is not enough to analyze only the text per se and its textual rhetoric; it is necessary to know in which space/s they are articulated; (d) rhetoric is the art of composition and persuasion

(Trible 1994, pp. 32, 41) so texts are not exempt from intentionality and seek to transform the mentality of the recipient (Schüssler Fiorenza 1996, pp. 40–41).

Along these lines, studies that focus on feminist rhetorical criticism and feminist biblical studies in general seek an analysis of biblical texts from intersectionality[10] (Schüssler Fiorenza 2014, pp. 9–12) where the textual contexts of the discourses are, and they become material per se for analysis and, in turn, generate new dialectics in relation to the cultural context of the time in which the texts are framed, as they are reproducers of the prevailing *kyriarchy*[11], because, as the Mexican writer Rosario Castellanos (1925–1974) said, "the word has a virtue: if it is accurate it is lethal like a poisoned glove."

To carry out this methodology and to be able to break the "pre-constructed" limits, various hermeneutics are combined to apply a biblical interpretation with a feminist perspective: on the one hand, through the hermeneutics of suspicion, the non-neutrality of the speeches and the education received, both being sifted by traditional androcentric interpretations; and on the other hand, thanks to the hermeneutics of historical memory, we seek to resituate women in biblical traditions to recover their intangible heritage in religious history (Martínez Cano 2021, pp. 111–13).

3.1. Salome "Must" Dance. A Gender-Critical Reading of the Biblical Passage

A reading of the biblical passage of the beheading of John the Baptist from the hermeneutics of suspicion and memory mainly allows us to bring to light other interpersonal relationships of the protagonists that play a crucial role in the story and the concatenation of the events. When the reader is fully aware of how the values of gender, ethnicity, social class, and even decolonial perspectives influence their reading and interpretation of the Bible, it is possible to carry out a more realistic analysis of how the reception of the text has been transformed.

As a mere approximation, William Lillie's (1954) analysis of the figure of Salome is very interesting, following the approach of A.H.M Jones (1938), since he maintains that "the Gospel account gives the impression that the dancer was a young child" (Lillie 1954, p. 251). The author suggests that the dance could be performed by a girl no older than eight years old, and this statement is reiterated after Herod's promise, a promise similar to that which would be made to a little girl. Lillie reflects on this offer as well, since "sophisticated princesses of Salome's age know what they want without consulting their mothers" (Lillie 1954, p. 251).

This reading of the passage from a gender criticism approach highlights the less active (or inactive) role that Salome presents in the scene, almost being a highly secondary character. Along these same lines, it is important to stop at the textual gaps, at what is not delved into or is not directly mentioned in the text, since at no point is the young woman's longing for the death of John the Baptist manifested[12]. Salome's capacity for agency is restricted by her parents, who exude security in their interventions: first of all, the monarch Herod tells her to ask for what she wants most, through words that do not reveal any doubt about the power she has over the king: "ask me for whatever you want and I will give it to you" (Mk 6:22); On the other hand, young Salome's mother, Herodias, plays an active role in the passage with her clear wishes and answering her daughter's question without hesitation about what to ask of her stepfather: "the head of John the Baptist" (Mk 6:24).

This is how the figure of Herodias plays a crucial role in the beheading of John the Baptist, but contrary to what one might think, throughout the history of visuality she has been a figure overshadowed by her daughter. Herodias' reasons for carrying out this gruesome wish can be seen in the Gospel of Mark, where the Edumean princess's desire to kill the preacher is explained (Mk 6:19). But this request for the head of John the Baptist has generally been explained sexually (Kraemer 2006, p. 344), even though the evangelical accounts do not offer any additional information about Herodias' motives, beyond her anger at the Baptist's accusations about his marriage. Even so, these lines will be more than enough to develop and sustain the entire discourse where the lubricious intentionality of Herodias is the protagonist.

This will be the main reason why this passage will arouse so much interest later in the history of images: from patriarchal biblical studies, it is interpreted that both women are the agents of the beheading. These readings are the result of their fears about the female figure and the changes that *fin-de-siècle* society experienced, reaching the height of visual perversity in Europe at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th (Bornay 1995, p. 189).

The story of Herodias and Salome became the perfect umbrella to embrace all the fears of turn-of-the-century society in the face of new and incipient female models of behavior. The beheading of John the Baptist, as would happen with the biblical passage of Judith and General Holofernes, became a synonym for male castration, and female attitudes were reinterpreted to justify the innate evil in women (Glancy 1994, p. 44).

Streamlining the biblical story, John the Baptist died because of two women and a dance[13]. Therefore, Salome had to dance, Salome had to show herself before the men present at the banquet, and had to carry out the action that Herodias had in mind, in the same way that Queen Jezebel convinced King Ahab to embrace idolatry (1 Kings 16:31), being considered one more component of the broad cast of "evil women" in the Bible (Janes 2006).

3.2. From Visual Exegesis: Illuminating Feminist Rhetorical Criticism

Images, in their broadest sense[14], are a mediated representation (de Hulster 2009b, p. 225) between the artist and the receiving public, being a channel in constant operation. These cultural productions, the result of human agency, encode within them various contents to be transmitted: sets of beliefs, mentalities, worldviews, in many cases with no need for specific physical support, since the images can be generated in the mind of the reader, being also a field of study of Art History. In the field of theology, the concept of the image also goes beyond the barriers of the physical and seeks transcendence—"So God created the human being in his image, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them" (Gen 1:27)—being an important aspect in religious discourses. Both the disciplines of Art History and Theology (more specifically biblical exegesis) focus their analyses on images, so there are methodological parallels that can shed light on each other (Nygren 2017, pp. 271–75). Throughout the history of religions, images have been part of phenomenological discourse to facilitate the transmission of the constant word/image dichotomy.

This is why it is not possible to analyze the history of the transmission and reception of the biblical text (in this particular case concerning the female characters of Herodias and Salome) apart from the artistic production that has directly or indirectly generated the biblical passage. Thanks to traditional approaches, such as iconographic and iconological studies (Panofsky 1972), it is possible to carry out an exegetical approach from visuality to the texts of the Bible and also to extend the analysis to the social and cultural history of the peoples who inhabited the territories of the region of Ancient Israel and the Transjordan, as well as mentality in general (Schmitt 2009, p. 73), all of this being the key to the history of mentalities.

Extrapolating the words of Othmar Keel[15], "many, many Biblical texts can be understood better in the context of the time they were written when you look at pictorial evidence" (1978, cited in de Hulster 2009a, p. 139), and applied. In this particular case study, to achieve a complete understanding of how the resignification of the characters of Herodias and Salome has occurred through the world of visuality, it is crucial to know the context and the prevailing archetypes at each historical moment. This prior premise presents a clear harmony with the discipline of rhetorical criticism, where "the best clue to interpretation is the text itself" (Trible 1978, p. 8), interpreting the Bible as literature per se and in constant artistic research through words and motives, without separating form and content. It becomes an exchange between the text, the reader, and the historical context in which the cultural artifact and its original creator are framed. It also addresses the reception of the said text, that is, the world in which the text is interpreted, which will be far from the sociocultural parameters of its birth (Nygren 2017, pp. 284–85; Yebra 2022, p. 64). With this methodology, creation and textual and visual representation are conceived as dynamic processes in constant decoding and resignification.

For this reason, it is possible to work on the artistic manifestations of Herodias and Salome by combining visual and textual disciplines: on the one hand, iconographic and iconological studies, added to the history of mentalities and the social history of art; and on the other, the feminist rhetorical criticism of the passages represented.

At this point, the image becomes a text where various stories come together and interact with viewers, where the visual image must be "read as a biblical story and vice versa" (Yebra 2022, p. 64). The text–image dichotomy is articulated as a whole, its relationship with society and culture being paramount, or as Trible calls it: the text–image–world triad (Trible 1978, pp. 5–30).

In all this, one must not forget the feminist approach to rhetorical criticism, pointed out by Trible, which begins a path towards the reading of different biblical passages, as well as figurative representations, where the role of certain biblical women can be resituated and made visible. An indispensable methodological fusion in Biblical–Cultural Studies is to delve into the patriarchal discourse on women through visuality, which reached its maximum splendor in the 19th century, and which was based on the visual dialectic around images of biblical women coined as evil by the male exegetical tradition.

4. The Visual Reception of Myth: From Nameless Girl to *Femme Fatale*

Throughout the History of Art, the figure of Salome has been very suggestive for artists, who used the biblical passage of the beheading of John the Baptist to explore and develop their manner of genius. In general, in Renaissance art the representations of this biblical passage appear framed by palatial architecture where the hermeneutics of space provide the recipient with the context of the action, as in the work of Giotto (ca. 1315) and Filippo Lippi (1452–1464), and in the triptych of Rogier van der Weyden (ca. 1455). These highly scenographic representations of the passage will be crucial to the history of dance, as they are contemporaneous with the development of medieval theater and parallel to the continued tradition of liturgical dance practiced in Christian worship (Adams and Apostolos-Cappadona 1990, p. 101).

Meanwhile, there are images in which the young woman is carrying the decapitated head on a tray while she quickly goes to complete her mission, as in the painting by Sandro Botticelli (ca. 1488). More isolated will be the portrait-type representations with Salome posing in front of the spectators with her trophy, as in the versions by Lucas Cranach (ca. 1520 and 1530), Alonso Berruguete (1514), and Tiziano (1550). In all of them, Salome is represented as a woman of the artist's time, with the clothing typical of the moment; in some scenes she is also represented alongside Herodias, although in the background.

During the Baroque period in Western art, the interest in representing Salome focused on capturing feminine beauty (Adams and Apostolos-Cappadona 1990, p. 101). It is common to find paintings depicting the young woman as impassive, almost innocently detached from the action, with her sole identifying attribute being the tray carrying the head of John the Baptist. Prominent are the versions of Caravaggio (1607 and 1609), Reni Guido (1635) and the one by the Valencian painter Luis Antonio Planes (18th century). Until the end of the Baroque period, the identification of Herodias and Salome frequently swapped, with confusion and dissidence existing in the actions carried out by each one (Bornay 1995, p. 190).

However, all this artistic production is not comparable with the visual explosion that the passage experienced in the second half of the 19th century[16], specifically the female figures that were its protagonists, articulating a language where women are labeled as both artisans and malefactors. It will only be possible to understand the alteration of the iconographic type in the key text/image context reception.

4.1. The Stele of the Demonic Hebrew Lilith

During the second half of the 19th century, in the most developed countries of Europe, a series of social and cultural circumstances occurred that led to the irrational use of certain biblical women in art as an example of perdition and sin. The consolidation of the labor movements, the discontent of the bourgeoisie, the Great Economic Depression that England

suffered (1873–1896) and the consequent destabilization of the Victorian ideal, the increase in the consumption of prostitution (directly proportional to the increase in diseases such as syphilis) added to the prevailing mentality of male supremacy—antagonistic to the incipient feminist movements—and the gradual occupation of women in public space, caused turn-of-the-century European societies to experience important processes of change in which the role of women diminished.

> For many, seeing women outside of their maternal and conjugal roles translated into fear and anxiety. Outside of these traditional roles, she appeared as a usurper, and therefore, threatening, since she endangered the stability and continuity of institutions and established rights and privileges. (Bornay 1995, p. 16)

One of the most important social changes that the population experienced was the increase in misogyny in response to these new scenarios, which translated into a fear of the "new models" of women generated by access to the world of work. An entire theoretical, religious, medical, and of course visual corpus was created, in which it sought to invalidate and relegate the female figure. This is how in the world of visual arts the archetype known as the *femme fatale*[17], the evil woman, was born and proliferated. In the words of Valle Inclán in his work *La Cara de Dios*:

> The femme fatale is the one seen once and always remembered. These women are disasters of which traces always remain in the body and soul. Some men kill themselves for them, others who go astray. (Cited in Bornay 1995, p. 114)

The iconographic antecedents of the femme fatale type must go back to a female figure from Hebrew mythology: Lilith. She appears in post-Talmudic literature[18] and is considered the first wife of Adam who became one of the most terrible demons of Judaism for not wanting to lie with her spouse supporting his weight on her because she considered the position offensive (Graves and Patai 1986, p. 59). This caused her anger at his lack of understanding, which culminated in her rebellion against God. Her evil flooded her entire body to the point of stealing children and strangling them to end her life, a life she could never live because of the divine punishment imposed for her disrespect (Blair 2009, pp. 26–30). That is, she is a "bad" woman, rebellious, and a devourer of lost men whom she seduces with her erotic influence.

Throughout turn-of-the-century visual production, the archetype of the femme fatale found different female costumes to embody the myth (Bornay 1995), whether they were mythological, literary, historical, biblical, or hybrid characters, or monsters.

4.2. Fin-de-Siècle Painting

In the medieval period, the daughter of Herodias was interpreted in a purely moralistic sense, undergoing a transformation in the 19th century that, as occurred with the figure of Lilith, had a verbal but also a visual level (McDonald 2009, p. 175), in which images were an essential tool in the configuration of the collective imagination. The figure of the nameless young woman vaguely drawn in the biblical passage was left behind, giving way to the configuration of a perfect prototype of the *femme fatale*. The representations of the bad woman coincide in many traits: on a physical level they are women of hypnotic beauty, with long hair and often reddish tones (Bornay 2021), added to a whitish complexion that enhances the tone of their hair and transmits a false innocence, that is, that "in its physical appearance all vices, all voluptuousness and all seductions must be embodied". Meanwhile, on a psychological level they stand out "for their ability to dominate, to incite evil, and their coldness, which will not prevent them, however, from possessing a strong sexuality, often lustful and feline, that is, animal" (Bornay 1995, p. 115).

Much of the visual triumph of the figures of Herodias and Salome at the end of the 19th century is because the biblical passage is framed in the Near East, a space inhospitable to European societies and idealized by artists. As occurred in the ancient Roman Empire in the West (Schneider 2006, p. 240), the obsession with the East in the 19th century was such that it must be considered as another element in the modeling of European turn-of-

the-century identity, so much so that in the world of visual and textual arts, Orientalism prevailed—a phenomenon that delimited an imaginary border between East and West and that served to generate diverse stories, discourses, and collective imaginaries around the Levantine territories of the Mediterranean Basin in which the East embodied the most hidden passions, debauchery, and uncontained lust as a true Paradise of the Senses.

The discourse built on the East and the distortion of the female image was the perfect symbiosis to accommodate certain biblical passages of an "exotic" nature, as occurs in the works of the French painter and precursor of Symbolism, Gustave Moreau (1826–1898), who made several different versions of the story of Salome. In one of them,, the figure of Salome appears framed by orientalized architecture, in vaporous environments with censers, and dressed in rich transparent fabrics (Figure 1). In one of them she even dares to interact with the bloody head of John the Baptist located in the center of the pictorial composition. In this line, Moreau's disciple, Pierre Amédée Marcel-Béronneau (1869–1937), followed in Moreau's artistic footsteps, with a collection focused on Salome where she always appears naked, haughty, and looking directly at the viewer (Figure 2). This defiant look is an immanent characteristic of the *femme fatale*. This serene and defiant gaze can also be analyzed in Jean Benner's portrayal of Salome (1836–1906), or Leon Herbo's depiction of Salome (1850–1907), who remains unfazed despite holding a tray with a decapitated head in her hands. In other versions, the mere presence of the woman is enough to convey an atmosphere of danger, as in the work of the Armenian painter Vardges Sureniants (1860–1921) (Figure 3), or in that of Henry Ossawa Tanner (1859–1937), where the woman hides in the shadows while contemplating the inert male body in the corner of the painting (Figure 4).



Figure 1. Gustave Moreau, *Salome*, 1876.

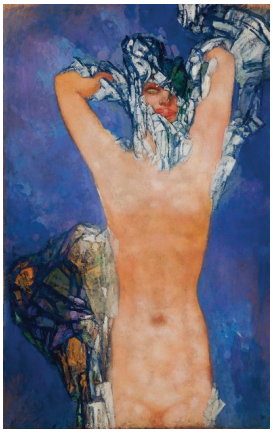


Figure 2. Vardges Sureniants, *Salome*, 1907.

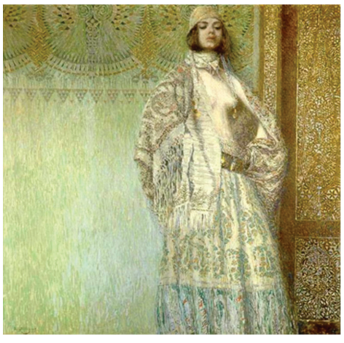


Figure 3. Vardges Sureniants, *Salome*, 1907.

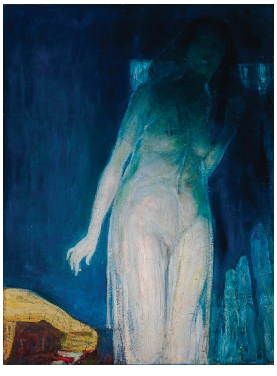


Figure 4. Henry Ossawa Tanner, *Salome*, 1900.

The iconographic type of the tempting Salome presents another important moment widely represented by *fin-de-siècle* artists: abandonment in dance. Salome no longer performs just any dance in this new visuality, but she dances to be seen, and what is more dangerous in a system where women are relegated to the private space of the home: Salome dances for herself, breaking the patterns of relegated femininity. The painter Franz von Stuck (1863–1928)—a great lover of the representation of the *femme fatale*—shows the young

woman fully dressed with her arms raised and oblivious to the spectators, but this dancing disinhibition is accentuated by her nudity in his other version of Salome (Figure 5), or as occurs in the work of Gaston Bussiere (1862–1928) (Figure 6).

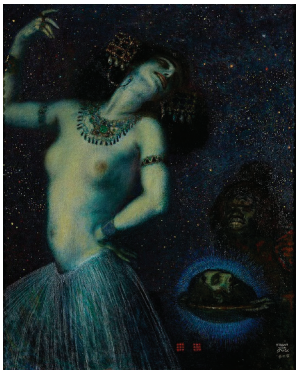


Figure 5. Franz von Stuck, *Salome*, 1906.

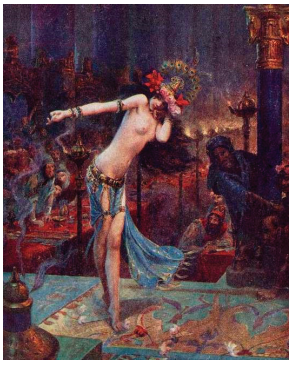


Figure 6. Gaston Bussiere, *Salome*, 1926.

These types of paintings present a strong erotic component, which was one of their main visual attractions for turn-of-the-century society. Salome's unjustified nudity is taken to the extreme with necrophilic attitudes towards the decapitated head of John the Baptist. Salome dances in front of her human trophy with her eyes wide open in the grip of alienation, as expressed by Leopold Schmutzler (1864–1940) (Figure 7), kisses its inert lips, as in the work of Lucien Lévy-Dhurmer (1865–1953), or insinuates herself in front of it with a reprehensible attitude, as in the works of the artists Lovis Corinth (1858–1925) (Figure 8) and Max Oppenheimer (1885–1954) (Figure 9).

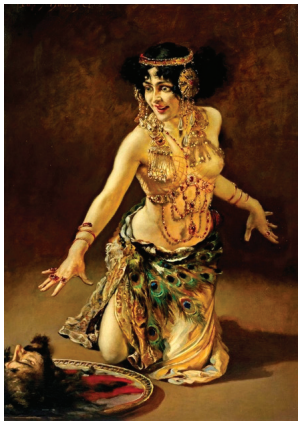


Figure 7. Leopold Schmutzler, *Salome*, 1907.

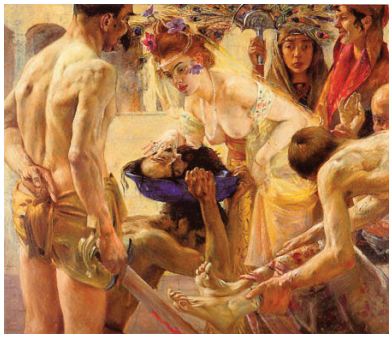


Figure 8. Lovis Corinth, *Salome*, 1900.

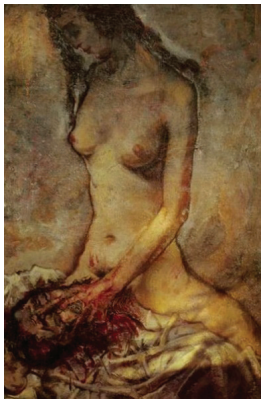


Figure 9. Max Oppenheimer, *Salome*, 1914.

5. Origins in Literature: From Flaubert to Strauss

It is not possible to address the configuration of the artistic type of the *femme fatale* without analyzing the important influence of literature. It is true that the presence of this type of evil woman can be traced throughout the history of literature in different contexts, but it was in the second half of the 19th century when, as happened in the world of plastic arts,

these women emerged as the authentic "male chimeras" (Bornay 1995, p. 118) whose field of action was perfectly delimited. The alteration of the image of Salome as the incarnator of feminine fatality also has its genesis in literature, adding essential characteristics from textual production.

In the work *Atta Troll, a Midsummer Night's* Dream (1847) by the German poet, Heinrich Heine (1797–1856) (Bornay 1995, p. 189), it is possible to glimpse the negative connotation of a disturbed Herodias who openly announces her infatuation with John the Baptist and, later, carrying the decapitated head of the aforementioned with her throughout the work. However, really, the full configuration of the Herodias–Salome binomial as a *femme fatale* materializes in the work Herodias (1877), by the French writer Gustave Flaubert (1821–1880). The writers make personal interpretations of the biblical passage, paying special attention to the absences and gaps that the text presents, since they will be the perfect spaces to generate new discourses and to let the creator's imagination fly.

Through Flaubert's short story of *Herodias*, one of the most important elements of the biblical passage is consolidated: Salome's dance, converted into the erotic climax of the narrative.

> With her eyelids half closed, she twisted her waist, her belly swayed with wave-like undulations, she made her two breasts tremble and her face remained motionless and her feet did not stop[19] (. . .) Then were the transports of the love that wants to be satisfied (. . .) everyone, dilating their nostrils, throbbed with desire. (1877, cited in Bornay 1995, pp. 190–92)

Another literary heritage must be added to the erotic conception of Salome's dance: the famous nickname of the "Dance of the Seven Veils". Its origin lies in the tragedy by Oscar Wilde (1854–1900), *Salomé* (1891),—a work that was very controversial in London at the end of the 19th century, even having its theatrical performance banned, alleging that it portrayed biblical characters in immoral attitudes (Rodríguez Fonseca 1997, p. 67). She was born to be performed on stage, and in Wilde's approach, his friend, the young actress Sarah Bernhardt, was to play the role of Salome. It was quite a scandal, since Salome was portrayed as a young woman suffering from schizophrenia who darkly confessed her love for a decapitated head, all of this in a decadent theatrical atmosphere that the artist Aubrey Beardsley (1872–1898) perfectly illustrated in his drawings specifically for the play (Figures 10 and 11).



Figure 10. Aubrey Beardsley, *Clímax*, 1893.



Figure 11. Aubrey Beardsley, *Salome*, 1893.

However, the collective imagination of Salome and Herodias also drew on the performing arts, as happened with the play *Salome* (1905) by Richard Strauss (1864–1949), which was based on the French work by Wilde. The German soprano Marie Wittich played a crazed Salome, taking the "Dance of the Seven Veils" to the height of visuality and eroticism.

6. Conclusions

In the light of Art History, the biblical characters of Herodias and Salome undergo a visual deconstruction at the turn of the century and become authentic daughters of Eve[20], reincarnations of the type known as the femme fatale. They are a real testimony of how *kyriarchal* power has shaped, over the centuries, the reception of female biblical figures to the needs of the prevailing mentality, redefining Herodias and Salome as receptacles of preconceived opinions about them—a visual interpretation that is completely removed from the exegesis of the biblical text, and in which both women lose their autonomy to form a single person and an executing mind.

In this sense, traditional approaches to art history will not be sufficient to analyze the scope of the visual reception of these female characters, so, added to Biblical–cultural Studies and its analysis of the influence of the biblical text on the construction of culture, it is essential to add the methodology of feminist rhetorical criticism to highlight the gender perspective. In this metamorphosis of the myth it is not possible to separate the text from the images, since they all form a set where the function of visuality will be vital to unravel how the characters have conditioned the reading of the stories and their transmission to the present day.

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Notes

1 From New Testament exegesis, the passage of the beheading of John the Baptist is analyzed as a foreshadowing of the death of Christ (for more information, consult Dapaah (2005)). A phenomenon that transcended textual criticism and also had its reflection in the pictorial world, mainly in the late Middle Ages and early Modern Age (Baert 2019).

2 All biblical references have been consulted in the Jerusalem Bible (1992), so this information will be omitted from now on.

3 Reference is made in the New Testament to a woman named Salome, within the context of Jesus' followers, hence she is known as one of his disciples, one of his followers. She appears only in the Gospel of Mark (15:40 and 16:1). The association of the name Salome with the figure of Herodias' daughter was also important in exegesis due to the role of Theodore de Beza (1519–1605), a French reformer and successor to John Calvin in Geneva, who promoted in the Geneva Bible of 1560 this nominative association. The Geneva Bible of 1560 was used by the early Calvinist reformers, in which extensive commentary and notes on passages from the Old and New Testaments appeared (Krans 2006). It is in one of these commentaries where extratextual assessments of the passage of Herodias and her daughter were expressed, indicating that Salome's dance brought inconveniences; even in a marginal note, it is mentioned as a wanton dance. (Metzger 1960, p. 349).

4 From now on *Ant*.

5 For more information consult Albertz (2011). (Jewish antiquities XI.297–301). In Albertz (2011, pp. 483–504) and Whealey (2003).

6 From now on *Bell*.

7 In the Gospels, the name of the place outside the walls of Jerusalem where Jesus was crucified. Also called Calvary (a term assimilated from Latin) and whose translation means "place of the skull" (Mt 27:33; Mk 15:22; Jn 19:17).

8 The archaeological campaigns in Machaerus began in 1807 and different institutions have participated in their excavation work: the American Baptist Churches, the Order of Franciscan Friars, and finally the Hungarian Academy of Arts (Vörös 2022).

9 Thanks to the development of cultural studies in the 90s in Great Britain and the United States, Biblical Sciences were influenced by this new trend, giving rise to Biblical–cultural Studies (Yebra 2022, pp. 57–61).

10 The term was developed by Kimberly Crenshaw (Schüssler Fiorenza 2014, p. 11) which encompasses a new system of analysis of reality/context taking into account ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, domination... To delve deeper into the methodology, see Lykke (2010).

11 A neologism coined by Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza in 1992 composed of the Greek word *kyrios* (lord) and the Greek verb *archein* (to rule, dominate). This term refers to a social system based on graded domination over individuals, which goes far beyond the limits of patriarchy since *kyriarchy* is not based on gender issues. *Kyriarchism* implies the subordination of a "servant class" to an "elevated class", so it contemplates any dominant hierarchy maintained through law, mentality, and/or imposition (Schüssler Fiorenza 2014, pp. 12–14).

12 For further information on the survival of the figure of Salome, consult Hamidović (2013).

13 As researcher Gerardus Van der Leeuw stated in his studies on the relationship between religion and art: "The art of the dance is even more primitive than verbal art. Here rhythm is all-powerful, it rules the whole man and compels them to follow the right path" (Van der Leeuw 1963). In this type of analysis, bodily gesturality becomes the primary channel of communication among humans and between them and the gods, with dance -understood broadly as bodily movement- being a fundamental aspect of ritual praxis. Researcher Diane Apostolos-Cappadona examines the role of dance and women who dance in the Bible through the Western visual tradition, concluding that there are two unique women who dance in the Hebrew and Christian traditions and serve as paradigms for analysis: Miriam and Salome, respectively. While the former dances in joy for the escape from Egyptian slavery, embodying piety and faith, the latter dances by request and pleasure of a man, representing wickedness and the erotic. Thus, dance becomes another element of visual rhetoric to be analyzed in biblical narratives, carrying diverse meanings through exegesis. For a more in-depth exploration of this aspect, refer to Adams and Apostolos-Cappadona (1990).

14 Understanding the term "image" in all its flexibility of meaning, where not only the object of study is limited to a painting, a sculpture, or an architectural work, but the field of aesthetics is expanded to other manifestations such as the performing arts, conceptual art, or digital art, among others (Nygren 2017, p. 271).

15 The historian of religions and theologian, Othmar Keel, specialized in biblical exegesis and iconography of the ancient Near East. His works were fundamental in the consolidation of the iconographic discipline as an academic and methodological tool in Biblical Studies. His main work is called *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms* (Othmar 1978).

16 During the Rococo and Neoclassical art periods, biblical passages are difficult to find in painting, as secular themes such as still lifes, genre scenes, historical, or mythological subjects predominate. However, the 19th century witnessed a shift with Romantic thought, leading to a revival of religious themes in artistic interest, although not always with a pious or worshipful purpose. A notable example of this is the figure of Salome, which will become one of the most popular representations of symbolism. Such is the case that the French artist Gustav Moreau, a precursor of Symbolism, "was obsessed with Salome. He created over one hundred images of her, all of which would influence the writers and dancers of the next twenty years" (Adams and Apostolos-Cappadona 1990, p. 103).

[17] The term *femme fatale* was coined a posteriori after the identification of a new type of woman brought about by a new way of acting for women in the second half of the 19th century (Bornay 1995, p. 113).

[18] Specifically in the *Ben Sira Alphabet*, dated to the 8th century CE (Blair 2009, p. 28).

[19] The dance that Salome performs in this short story is greatly influenced by a previous work by Gustave Flaubert, *Salammbo* (1862), where the dance performed by the daughter of the general of Carthage, Amílcar Barca, with a python is recounted with great complicity and a high degree of eroticism. This also facilitated the establishment of the association of the bad woman with the snake animal.

[20] Term used by the 5th century Syriac poet and theologian, Narsai of Nisibe, in his homily 80, to refer to women in general, denoting their negative character (Molenberg 1993). Other authors have used similar names referring to the personification of women as descendants of some woman considered "bad" by history: such as "daughters of Lilith" (Bornay 1995) or "daughters of Pandora" (Calero Secall and Virginia Alfaro Bech Coordinators 2005).

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Article

Philosophical Reflection on Beauty in the Late Middle Ages: The Case of Jean Gerson

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Abstract: The late Middle Ages witnessed a recapitulation of medieval reflection on beauty. Jean Gerson is an important representative of these philosophical and theological contributions, although he has been largely neglected up to this time. A first dimension of his ideas on beauty is the incorporation of beauty (*pulchrum*) into the number of transcendentals, i.e., the concepts "convertible" with the notion of being (*ens*), that is, unity, truth, and goodness (*unum*, *verum* and *bonum*). This article revisits Monica Calma's study on Gerson's theory of beauty and suggests new hypothetical sources that may have inspired this aspect of his thought. The second aspect emphasised here is Gerson's classification of beauty, which entails some similarities to the one of Ulrich of Strasbourg, but also differs from it. Moreover, its incorporation of a division entirely devoted to artistic beauty is highly remarkable.

Keywords: transcendentals; art; aesthetics; Alexander of Hales; Henry of Ghent; Dionysius the Carthusian; ontology; metaphysics; theology; intellect

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1. Introduction

Despite their limitations, studies developed during the twentieth century (Maritain 1920; Panofsky 1951; De Bruyne 1955; Tatarkiewicz 1962; Assunto 1982; Eco 1987) have put beyond doubt the existence of an important medieval reflection on beauty. These "words" about beauty written by medieval authors cannot be overlooked to understand how men during that historical period understood beauty and even art. Certainly, most of the discourse of medieval authors deals with a beauty that is not properly "aesthetic", since they focus on an unperceivable beauty: The beauty of God, of angels, of virtue, of souls, and so on. Nevertheless, this conception of invisible beauty also permeates their ideas about visible beauty.

The transposition of ideas about non-perceivable beauty to sensible beauty becomes quite evident in the author we are going to study in this article, a prominent figure of the early 15th century, Jean Gerson. His conception of beauty has already been discussed by Calma (2007), whose main concern was the metaphysical status of beauty, related to the question of transcendentals. Since her approach can be balanced by further remarks, the first section of these pages is devoted to the assessment of Gerson's sources to explain the inclusion of beauty (*pulchrum*) among the transcendental notions, and mostly Calma's preference for Ps.-Bonaventure.

Turning away from Calma's approach, another rich aspect of Gerson's theory of beauty will be examined in the second section: The classification of the sorts of beauty. The study of the levels of beauty will provide us with a map for exploring the landscape of ideas about beauty in the late medieval world. In Jean Gerson's classification, artistic beauty makes an important appearance, something that makes his contribution to the subject particularly valuable.

2. The *Pulchrum* as Transcendental

Monica Calma (2007) devotes an important article to the question of *pulchrum* in the later medieval period. In it, she particularly studies Gerson's contribution to the insertion

of this notion in the list of the transcendentals. This work deserves special recognition for having drawn attention to Gerson's important pages on beauty in his *Collectorium*, which, as she states, "have been totally ignored by authors of works on medieval aesthetics and have not even been the subject of analyses about the transcendentals" (Calma 2007, p. 474).

According to this author (Calma 2007, p. 477), "at the level of language and at the conceptual level, there is a perfect coherence between Gerson's text and the medieval way of dealing with the problem of transcendentals". To verify this statement, let us read for ourselves the relevant passages of Gerson's work.

First, we must consider his definition of beauty, based on Augustine: "numerical equality" ("aequalitas numerosa": Gerson 1971, p. 198). It must be said that the edition of Gerson's complete works does not include an apparatus of sources. For this reason, it is appropriate to recall here that this definition is found in *De musica*, VI, 13, 38 (Jacobsson 2017, p. 221, l. 16). Hereafter, Gerson (1971, p. 199) evokes another famous definition of beauty formulated by Augustine, often quoted by medieval authors: "The beauty of the body is a congruence of the parts with a certain softness of colour".[1] Gerson quotes these words to clarify the difference between *formositas* and *pulchritudo*, since the latter, beauty, means a certain addition to the mere presence of form (*forma*). According to him, form can exist in something even without beauty being present in it.

This association of beauty with form could reveal a latent influence of Albert the Great, who defines beauty as the "splendour of form" ("splendor formae").[2] Despite the relevance of this author's thought for later medieval reflections on beauty (from his disciples Thomas Aquinas and Ulrich of Strasbourg onwards), Calma does not mention him in her article. Another important source, even more fundamental and neglected by Calma when studying Gerson, is the *Summa Halensis* where we are also told that "the beautiful properly speaking is attributed to something because of its species or form".[3]

In line with Franciscan thought, Gerson also understands beauty as a feature oriented to an archetype. To explain this, he refers to pictorial art:

> "Let us observe that the beauty of a painting or picture refers to the tablet itself which, for that reason, is called 'beautiful.' Let us add, moreover, that beauty refers above all to the model if the image or copy is entirely in conformity with its model, even if the model is very ugly. Thus, for example, we say that the image of a jester, an owl or a bat is beautiful. That is why people say that the jester has been beautifully painted."[4]

This reference to the plastic arts is remarkable, since it is not always easy to find in the context of medieval philosophical-theological meditation on beauty, which tends to wander into the realm of natural beauty and almost always leaves the dominion of the visible to enter the one of the invisible.

Gerson (1971, pp. 201, 205) links beauty with the four Aristotelian causes. As Calma (2007, p. 476) has pointed out, this aspect of his doctrine certainly has a parallel in Ps.-Bonaventure's treatise on the transcendentals (Halcour 1959). However, a much more plausible precedent is the *Summa Halensis*, where we are told of final and formal causality in relation to beauty.[5] Likewise, we will notice below how the genuine Bonaventure is the closest source for this teaching as developed by Gerson.

Gerson (1971, p. 205) studies the question of beauty as "transcendental" to explain what he calls "natural beauty":

> "Natural beauty can be described as numerical equality born and resulting from unity, truth, and goodness; or from measure, number, and weight; or from mode, species, and order. Thus, the properties of being are unity, truth, and goodness, so that being and truth, being and goodness are interchangeable. It is not possible to be any being to which these three [proprieties] do not suit. [Such properties] are not distinguished in reality but only in the meaning of signification. This also what happens with mode, species, and order; and with measure, number, and weight."[6]

This passage seems a development of the thought of Bonaventure, who had written:

> "Creatures are the effect of the creative Trinity by a threefold kind of causality: efficient causality, from which creatures receive unity, mode and measure; exemplary causality, from which creatures receive truth, species and number; final causality, from which creatures receive goodness, order and weight."[7]

Already the *Summa fratris Alexandri* had employed the Augustinian triad of species, number, and weight to describe beauty (Costarelli Brandi 2020, pp. 1404–5). Now, unlike Alexander of Hales and Bonaventure, Gerson explicitly incorporates beauty as a property of things that actually coincides with unity, truth and goodness, so that "there is no positively contrary entity that consists positively in natural ugliness" and, as a consequence, like the good "the beautiful is also interchangeable with the entity as a property resulting from these three [properties]".[8] The proper characteristic of beauty as the fourth "transcendental property" is, for our author, a result of the presence of the other three transcendental properties in an entity. Hence, Gerson compares beauty to the figure of the triangle that is created by the harmonious arrangement of three straight lines, a harmony that, as a perfect unity, would be best represented by the circle. Therefore, sublimating the geometrical metaphor, Gerson speaks of a "triangulated circle and a circular triangle".[9]

We see here an express insertion of beauty within the doctrine of transcendentals, also assigning to the *pulchrum* the terminology proper to these concepts. However, it is debatable whether, as Calma (2007, p. 477) affirms, this treatise "is inscribed within the doctrinal descent of the treatise of Ps.-Bonaventure" on the transcendentals, that is, within the framework of the opuscule edited by Halcour (1959). Calma herself doubts the historical possibility of relating Gerson's text to that of Ps.-Bonaventure. Nevertheless, she attaches so much importance to this anonymous thirteenth-century work because it expressly counts beauty among the transcendental properties of the entity. According to Aertsen (1996, p. 350), such a step would not have been taken by other contemporary authors. The Pseudo-Bonaventurian treatise would represent an exception and would become the first medieval writing in which *pulchrum* clearly appears together with the other traditional transcendentals: *ens*, *unum*, *verum* and *bonum* (Halcour 1959, pp. 64–67).

Now, there is no need to link Gerson's text with this treatise, since the inclusion of the *pulchrum* in the list of transcendentals is a development of the medieval scholastic doctrine (Alexander of Hales, Albert, Thomas. . .), which has not been carried out exclusively by the treatise of Ps.-Bonaventure. For instance, although it is doubtful whether Gerson knew his work, Ulrich of Strasbourg affirmed that "the beautiful, as well as the good, is interchangeable with the being".[10] For him, beauty is not only interchangeable with goodness, as Albert and Thomas had said, but even with being. Likewise, one of Gerson's sources, a theologian who was contemporary with the other thirteenth-century authors mentioned, Henry of Ghent, lists *pulchrum* together with *ens*, *bonum*, *unum* and *verum*.[11] Consequently, this development of the medieval doctrine of the transcendentals may have come to Gerson by a different road from the aforementioned Pseudo-Bonaventurian treatise. This explains why Gerson does not use the same terminology as Ps.-Bonaventure: as Calma (2007, p. 477) has already observed, Gerson designates the "transcendentals" as *proprietates* while Ps.-Bonaventure spoke of *conditiones*.

If the pages of Gerson's *Collectorium* are to be dated between 1427 and 1428 (McGuire 2006, p. 31), they will be followed, a few decades later, by the only medieval treatise expressly devoted to the question of beauty, Dionysius von Rijkel's *De venustate mundi et pulchritudine Dei*, which must have been written sometime after 1452 (Stoelen 1954, col. 433). We know of Dionysius' appreciation for Gerson, as he counts the latter among his great authorities (Mazour-Matusevich 2006, pp. 366–67). Like Gerson, Dionysius explicitly introduces beauty into the list of transcendentals: "According to the commentators of St. Dionysius, as the good, the true and the one are interchangeable with the being, so also the beautiful. In such a way, every being is beautiful, just as every being is said to be good, true and one".[12] Later he adds: "The interchangeable with the being, that is, the good, the

true and the beautiful, add nothing real to the being, but only a certain consideration and a notional property".[13]

Dionysius evidently recognises that beauty is not only interchangeable with goodness, as Albert and Aquinas had said, but even with the being itself. Like Gerson, Dionysius understands beauty to be—to use the later accepted language—a "transcendental" of the being. Calma (2007, p. 479), however, disagrees with this interpretation. She refers to an important article by Emery (1996), an expert on Dionysius, who had studied the question of beauty in *De venustate*. As Calma interprets Emery's view, Dionysius would not have held the transcendental status of *pulchrum*. Calma (2007, p. 480, n. 95) sustains her interpretation on an article in which Emery (2003) studies the passages in which Dionysius the Carthusian explains the conventional list of transcendentals, where we cannot find beauty alongside the others. Now, Calma does not seem to have considered that, when Emery (1996, p. 315) presents *De venustate*, he expresses himself in these words: "Beauty can be interchangeable with the transcendentals, the unique, the true, the good and the being". Moreover, he explicitly asserts that "beauty is transcendental being" (Emery 1996, p. 320).

Although Calma disregards it, she could have adduced a similar passage from Gerson, who, like Dionysius, also once ignores beauty when he refers to the transcendentals (by the way, here he calls them by using almost the same terminology widely accepted later): "The univocity of the being transcendent to God and to the creature with its proper features or transcendent properties, which are the one, the true and the good, is of great help to contemplative and intelligent men".[14] The mere absence of beauty in this text could lead us to exclude it from the list of transcendental properties, but evidently this argument *ex silentio* is not valid here, as it is shown by the passage from the *Collectorium,* which we have read above, as well as by the other analogous Gerson's texts cited in note.

In short, in both Gerson and Dionysius, we find a clear doctrine of the transcendentals that includes beauty among them, as a property of being. Whether Gerson is right or wrong in considering beauty as a true transcendental when, instead of bringing a specific formality to being, it is rather the mere result of the presence of the other transcendentals, is open to debate. But in any case, Gerson's text leaves no room for doubt as to his conviction that beauty belongs to these properties.

However, its transcendental character is probably not the most important feature of Gerson's study of beauty. It is a theory that helps us to recognise that it is not a specific field of reality, but an aspect that is linked to the very ordering of the real and the mutual composition of its entitative elements. The true aesthetic question, i.e., finding out what makes some entities more beautiful than others, has to do with discovering the nature of an appropriate arrangement of their constitutive factors. Moreover, if beauty were only a matter of essence, there would be no way to elucidate why one entity is more beautiful than another member of the same species. For this reason, the medievals insisted not only on this basic beauty of the real as real, but also on the different dimensions of a thing's beauty, contemplating how its beauty is extended through its various articulations. Therefore, let us now consider the classification of beauty proposed by Gerson.

3. The Classification of Beauty

The most famous classification of beauty available to us in the Middle Ages is undoubtedly that of Ulrich of Strasbourg. This disciple of Albert the Great establishes the following division of beauty:

> "Since there are substantial and accidental forms, in addition to uncreated beauty there is a double beauty, that is, an essential and an accidental one. Likewise, each of these beauties is double, because essential beauty is either spiritual (as the soul is animal beauty, or intellectual [beauty], as the beauty of the angel) or corporeal (as nature or natural form is the beauty of matter). Similarly, the accidental form is either spiritual (as science, grace and virtues are the beauty of the soul and ignorance or sins are its deformities) or it is corporeal."[15]

This passage allows us to establish the following levels of beauty:

1. Uncreated beauty;
2. Created beauty;
    a. Essential (i.e., substantial) beauty;
        i. Spiritual essential beauty;
            1. Animal spiritual essential beauty;
            2. Intellectual spiritual essential beauty;
        ii. Corporeal essential beauty;
    b. Accidental beauty;
        i. Spiritual accidental beauty;
        ii. Corporeal accidental beauty;

This classification of beauty will resonate in the pages of Gerson's *Collectorium* that we are discussing in this article, although we will soon see that his division is somewhat different from Ulrich's and in some ways richer than it. If we go through his pages, we immediately see that uncreated beauty also appears, for Gerson speaks to us of the "first beauty",[16] that is to say, God himself. In the divine Trinity, the consubstantiality of the Son and the Holy Spirit with the Father allows us to recognise a triangular-circular consummation of the supreme beauty, in continuity with the idea of the circular triangle or the triangular circle that we have already discussed regarding created beauty. This led us to speak of a "vestigium Trinitatis" in the triangular nature of beauty: Gerson (1971, p. 205) insists on the character of divine "imprint" that belongs to beauty connected with the possession of the other three transcendentals, the *unum* (linked to *modus* and *mensura*), the *verum* (linked to *species* and *numerus*) and the *bonum* (linked to *ordo* and *pondus*). Somewhat later, he proceeds to divide created beauty:

> "Beauty, which is a numerical equality, is divided, according to its first division, into a natural and an artificial beauty. Natural beauty is manifold, for there is an intellectual, a rational and an animal beauty. Moreover, there is one, which is only vital, another one, which is only substantial, and another one, which is only accidental. Finally, artificial beauty is introduced by the art of reason into natural beauty, and it is either per se or accidental."[17]

We find here a certain continuity with Ulrich: For example, we notice that Ulrich's two spiritual beauties are set out by Gerson in separate groups, so that new groups emerge, such as the beauty of non-rational animals and that of vegetables, differentiated by him from mere "bodily beauty". It is thus very interesting how the distinction between the levels of beauty called by Ulrich substantial is extended by Gerson to a greater variety. But even more illustrative is the appearance of a completely new division: Artistic beauty, of no little importance for speaking of a medieval aesthetic reflection (Torrijos-Castrillejo 2020, pp. 117–19). This innovation perhaps warns us of the imminent arrival of the Renaissance. In this way, the division of beauty is reformulated as follows:

1. Uncreated beauty;
2. Created beauty;
    a. Natural beauty;
        i. Natural intellectual beauty;
        ii. Natural rational beauty;
        iii. Natural animal beauty;
        iv. Natural vital beauty;
        v. Natural substantial beauty;
        vi. Natural accidental beauty;
    b. Artificial beauty;
        i. Per se artificial beauty;

ii. Accidental artificial beauty;

In the previous section, we noted that "natural beauty" is really identified with the being but differs from it by reason. For this reason, in the same way as different degrees of perfection can be found in being, so also different levels can be found in natural beauty. But this is not all. Within the divisions of natural reality listed here, Gerson finds further subdivisions:

> "[i] There is the intellectual being, and this exists in two ways: either it exists by itself, or it is connaturally united to another, like the human intellect. [ii] There is, furthermore, the rational being according to its two parts. [iii] There is, moreover, the animal being, and this in two ways: either it is united to reason, as is the case with human beings, or it exists by itself, as is the case with brutes. [iv] There is also the vital or vegetable being, and this in two ways: either with sense or without sense. [v] There is also the only substantial being, such as the elements or prime matter, which is nothing by way of principle since it is part of the substantial compound. Now, [matter] considered without its form, is not a formal act and is called 'formless' or 'ugly,' and it tends to form as something beautiful. [vi] Lastly, there is the analogous being which we call accident, to which it corresponds 'being in another,' but not 'being,' as the philosophers say; nevertheless, faith asserts that it can exist by itself without a subject of inherence."[18]

This text elucidates well the levels of reality listed above to identify the different types of beauty. The degrees of perfection identified in the intellectual, rational, animal, etc., nature are explained here by showing how the intellect can exist either in angels, without a link to a body, or in man, i.e., associated with a soul. Rationality occurs only in the human being, whose nature is twofold, corporeal, and animal. On the other hand, animality is either linked to rationality—and so it is in the human being—or on its own. "Vitality" refers to vegetative life, which can also occur in conjunction with the immediately higher degree of reality, sentient life, or on its own. Likewise, substantial entity indicates the most basic corporeal condition, with no link to life. Finally, Gerson does not place the accidental being in a separate group from the other degrees of substantial reality, as Ulrich did in distinguishing between essential and accidental beauty, but establishes accidental beauty as a sort of lowest degree of natural beauty.

It is worth reviewing Gerson's analysis of these levels of beauty to see what would be comprehended by each of these levels. In speaking of intellectual natural beauty, he again uses his triadic scheme, evoking Augustine's three powers of the soul: Memory, intelligence and will (Gerson 1971, p. 206). He acknowledges that the Thomists place them in the order of accidents, while the Scotists identify them with intellectual nature itself. He associates himself with the view of Henry of Ghent (Brown 1975, p. 493) and considers that they form a single reality with it but differ from intellectual nature only by a "distinction of reason" (they are distinguished by virtue of the formalities of their different objects).

This nature of the intellect reflects, as Augustine teaches, the vestige of the creator, being an image of the Trinity, even when it is united to the rational soul. The human intellect, despite its initial condition of *tabula rasa* (it comes into the world devoid of knowledge and intellectual habits), is also active intellect, endowed with its own light. It is therefore a great beauty, given the classical and medieval link between beauty and light (Vasiliu 1997). It is further embellished by being clothed in such habits, both during life and after death, when the blissful life of the blessed has arrived.

Gerson establishes a second level of embellishment of intellectual beauty through the acts of the powers adorned by the habits. These additions to intellectual beauty can be considered "supernatural beauty", for they complement natural beauty (Gerson 1971, p. 208). Earlier, he had already spoken of a "spiritual beauty" to refer to the gifts of grace given by God to intellectual creatures (Gerson 1971, p. 200). Thanks to this kind of beauty, the Mother of God can be considered more beautiful than the angels, even if they surpass her in merely natural beauty (Gerson 1971, p. 215). Let us recall that Ulrich of Strasbourg

(*De summo bono*, II, tr. 3, c. 4; De Libera 1987, p. 63), after having elucidated created beauty, refers to a series of beauties that "do not form part of the natural beauty of the universe", which would consist in the supernatural actions of God, from the incarnation of Jesus Christ to the beatific vision, passing through the infused gifts, etc.

After speaking of intellectual beauty, Gerson turns to rational beauty and recognises the same threefold scheme: The plane of nature, the plane of habits and the plane of acts (Gerson 1971, p. 210). As for animal beauty, he refers to its beautification through the external and internal senses by the service they render to the liberal arts (Gerson 1971, p. 211). This aspect of sensibility serves to the rational part, but there is also an animal beauty that looks "downwards" to the merely corporeal. However, even in this aspect of sensibility, there is a certain participation of reason, as the instincts of animals clearly show. From these instincts spring not only the beauty of the "artifacts" produced by animals but even those made by human artisans (!): "The first art [sc. the art of God] has given to and infused in both human beings and the rest of animals many arts from which artificial beauties are born".[19] To exemplify this, he refers to the nests of birds or the skill of certain predators in hunting. Moreover, he recognises that this kind of beauty occurs even on the vegetative level of life, both in plants and in lower animals, such as bivalves, which are able to grow their own shells by themselves. This is how he arrives at vital beauty, praising the infinity of operations of the vegetative part of life, something that manifests the wisdom of the creator.

Concerning substantial and accidental beauty, Gerson (1971, p. 213) only says that its instances, present to the senses, are also infinite. He includes in this observation also artificial beauty, affirming that the multiplication of artificial beings has its origin in God, despite divine simplicity:

> "All writing of letters and names is contained, not potentially but actually, before the gaze of God who beholds such numbers, letters, and figures. A sign of this taken from an image can be applied to other cases: for example, the maker of a statue can form a very beautiful image by merely removing some parts of a log of wood which existed before the artist and to which he has added nothing."[20]

We see, then, that the infinite variety of products made by human art cannot mean a novelty with respect to God, who is able to contemplate all the combinations of which human art could use. It is undeniable that this concise presentation of artistic beauty is somewhat unsatisfactory, but it is at least of great interest that in Gerson's *Collectorium* it deserved a place in the medieval classification of beauty.

It is worth recalling that Gerson (1971, p. 205) had earlier referred to a distinction between an artificial beauty *per se* and one *per accidens*. Unfortunately, in his whole discourse he did not provide us with an explanation of this suggestive distinction: is he referring to the difference between the art made by animals and plants, as opposed to the introduction of beauty in nature by the art of human reason, albeit accidental to it?

4. Conclusions

We have delved into the pages of Jean Gerson's *Collectorium* on beauty to find one of the first systematic formulations of the notion of *pulchrum* within the table of transcendentals. In contrast to Monica Calma, we have proposed other more plausible sources for this late medieval development of the doctrine of the transcendentals. However, our main contribution to the study of this work, neglected by scholars of beauty in the Middle Ages, has been the exposition of Gerson's new classification of beauty. In addition to other significant insights, the multiplication of the levels of natural beauty in comparison with the previous classification by Ulrich of Strasbourg is worth mentioning. Finally, it is noteworthy that Gerson has established a specific category for artificial beauty as opposed to natural beauty.

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Notes

1 "[. . .] corporis pulchritudo est partium congruentia cura quadam coloris suavitate" (Augustinus, *De civitate Dei*, XXII, 19, 2; Dombart and Kalb 1955, p. 838, ll. 41–42). Somewhat later Augustin also talks of a "congruentia numerosa" (Augustinus, *De civitate Dei*, XXII, 24, 4; Dombart and Kalb 1955, p. 850, l. 135).

2 Albertus Magnus, *Super de div. nom.*, c. 4; (Simon 1972, p. 182, l. 39).

3 "[. . .] pulcrum proprie ex specie dici sive forma" (Alexander de Hales, *Summa theologica*, inq. 1, tr. 2, q. 3, c. 2; De Hales 1924–1948, vol. 2, p. 100, §76).

4 "Notemus ultra quod pulchritudo picturae vel imaginis refertur ad ipsam tabulam, quae proinde pulchra nominatur. Addamus praeterea quod pulchritudo maxime refertur ad exemplar si per omnia conformis est imago vel exemplatum suo exemplari, sit licet exemplar illud turpissimum; sic dicimus buffonis imaginem inde pulchram, sic bubonis et vespertilionis; ecce inquiunt buffonem pulchre pictum" (Gerson 1971, p. 199). These words recall Aristotle's idea that art succeeds in pleasing even when it depicts the ugly (*Poet.*, 1448b11–12).

5 See Alexander de Hales, *Summa Theologica*, inq. 1, tr. 2, q. 3, c. 1 (De Hales 1924–1948, vol. 2, p. 99, §75) and Costarelli Brandi (2020, p. 1399).

6 "Pulchritudo autem naturalis describi potest quod est aequalitas numerosa consurgens et resultans ex unitate, veritate, et bonitate; vel ex mensura numero et pondere, vel ex modo, specie et ordine. Itaque proprietates entis sunt unum et verum et bonum, sic quod ens et verum, ens et bonum convertuntur. Nec est possibile quod ens aliquod sit quin haec tria sibi conveniant, quae non re distinguuntur sed sola significandi ratione. Sic de modo, specie et ordine; sic de mensura, numero et pondere" (Gerson 1971, p. 205).

7 "[. . .] creatura est effectus Trinitatis creantis sub triplici genere causalitatis: efficientis, a quo est in creatura *unitas, modus et mensura*; *exemplaris*, a quo est in creatura *veritas, species* et *numerus*; *finalis*, a quo est in creatura *bonitas, ordo et pondus*" (Bonaventura, Breviloquium, II, 1, 2; Bonaventura 1883–1902, vol. 5, p. 219a). On the importance of this text for the understanding of beauty in Bonaventure, see Salvador-González (2021, p. 281; 2022, pp. 55–56).

8 "Pulchritudo igitur naturalis non habet aliquod ens positive contrarium quod sit positive turpitudo naturalis [. . .]. Pulchrum similiter cum ente convertitur tamquam proprietas resultans ex tribus prioribus" (Gerson 1971, p. 205). Later, in this work, Gerson (1971, p. 214) insists again on the merely negative character of ugliness, which cannot cancel the natural beauty infused into the creatures by God. There are also other passages in his earlier works, neglected by Calma, in which Gerson includes *pulchrum* among the transcendentals, with a truly remarkable systematisation: "[. . .] ens et bonum et pulchrum convertuntur; propterea tantumdem habet quaelibet res, sit substantia, sit accidens, de bono et pulchro quantum de ente nec habere potest malum contrarium" (Jean Gerson, *De passionibus animae*; Gerson 1973, p. 6): this work was composed at 1408 or 1409 (Palémon Glorieux *apud* Gerson 1973, p. viii). "Conceptus simplex entis recipitur multipliciter in se et in passionibus suis primis quae sunt unum, verum, bonum, pulchrum; nedum in intellectualibus et rationalibus et cognitivis; sed suo modo generaliter in omnibus creaturis" (Jean Gerson, *Centilogium de conceptis*; Gerson 1973, p. 506): this work was composed at 1424 (Palémon Glorieux *apud* Gerson 1973, p. xv).

9 "[. . .] circulus triangulatus et triangulus circulatus" (Gerson 1971, p. 205).

10 "[. . .] pulchrum sicut et bonum convertitur cum ente" (Ulrich von Strassburg, *De summo bono*, II, tr. 3, c. 4; De Libera 1987, p. 57, l. 3). Although he did not take this text into account when he wrote his book on transcendentals, Aertsen (2006, p. 430) did mention it in his article on beauty.

11 Cf. Henricus de Gandavo, *Summae Quaestionum ordinariarum*, a. 1, q. 2 (Wilson 2005, pp. 66, 716–20); a. 48, q. 1 (Führer 2007, p. 35, 7–p. 36, 12); a. 14, q. 6 (Gandavo 1520, vol. 1, f. 142rQ).

12 "Itaque, secundum B. Dionysii commentatores, quemadmodum bonum et verum ac unum convertuntur cum ente, ita et pulchrum: ita quod omne ens est pulchrum, sicut omne ens dicitur bonum et verum ac unum" (Dionysius, *De venustate mundi*, c. 1; Dionysius 1907, p. 227a).

13 "Convertibilia entis, videlicet bonum, verum, pulchrum, reale nil superaddunt enti, sed solum aliquam rationis considerationem ac proprietatem" (Dionysius, *De venustate mundi*, c. 3; Dionysius 1907, p. 229a).

14 "Univocatio entis transcendentis ad Deum et creaturam cum suis propriis seu proprietatibus transcendentibus, quae sunt unum, verum, bonum, plurimum confert viris contemplativis et intelligentibus" (Jean Gerson, *De modis significandi*; Gerson 1973, p. 639). Here the term *univocatio* is under the influence of Scotus' thought. However, due to Gerson's severe view of Scotism (Hoenen

2003, pp. 343–44), it is accepted by him only with nuances (Bauer 1973, p. 382; Vial 2006, p. 135). Another passage from *De modis significandi* by Gerson (1973, p. 633) should also be considered.

15 "Cum autem sint formae substantiales et accidentales, praeter increatam pulchritudinem est duplex pulchritudo, scilicet essentialis et accidentalis. Et harum pulchritudinum utraque est duplex. Nam essentialis est spiritualis, ut anima est pulchritudo animalis, vel intellectualis, ut est pulchritudo angeli, vel est corporalis, ut natura sive forma naturalis est pulchritudo materiae. Similiter forma accidentalis vel est spiritualis, ut scientia et gratia et virtutes sunt pulchritudo animae et ignorantia vel peccata sunt eius deformitates, vel est corporalis" (Ulrich von Strassburg, *De summo bono*, II, tr. 3, c. 4; De Libera 1987, p. 56, ll. 63–70).

16 "[. . .] pulchritudo prima" (Gerson 1971, p. 202). The referral to divine beauty is central to Gerson's approach, which, like all medieval, understands created beauty in referral to divine beauty (Pradier 2022).

17 "Pulchritudo quae est aequalitas numerosa, dividitur prima sui divisione quod quaedam est naturalis, quaedam artificialis. Naturalis multiplex est: quaedam intellectualis altera rationalis, dehinc animalis. Rursus aliqua est solum vitalis, altera solum substantialis, altera accidentalis. Artificialis vero quaedam est per se, quaedam per accidens per rationis industriam superinducta pulchritudine naturali" (Gerson 1971, p. 205).

18 "Invenitur autem ens intellectuale et hoc dupliciter: vel per se existens, vel ut alteri natum uniri, ut humanus intellectus. Invenitur rursus ens rationale secundum duplicem portionem. Invenitur praeterea ens animale, et hoc dupliciter; vel conjunctum rationi, ut in hominibus, vel per se stans, ut in brutis. Proinde invenitur ens vitale seu vegetabile, et hoc dupliciter: vel cum sensu vel sine sensu. Amplius est ens solum substantiale, ut elementa vel materia prima quae de se non est principaliter nihil, cum sit pars substantialis compositi; sed considerata sine forma non est actus formalis, et informis dicitur, aut turpis, appetens formam sicut aliquid pulchrum. Tandem est ens analogum, quod appellamus accidens, cujus est inesse non esse secundum philosophos, cum tamen ponat fides ea posse sine subjecto per se esse" (Gerson 1971, p. 206).

19 "[. . .] ars prima dedit et indidit tam hominibus quam ceteris animantibus artes innumeras unde prodeunt artificiales pulchritudines" (Gerson 1971, p. 212). This conception of art as a divine gift is reminiscent of Plato's ideas on artistic inspiration (Tirado San Juan 2013, pp. 94–98).

20 Omnis insuper scriptura, litterarum et nominum, continetur nedum potentialiter sed actualiter in aspectu Dei videntis numeros hujusmodi, litteras et figuras. Cujus signum accipito de una imagine qualiter inferre licebit de ceteris. Potest itaque statuae factor per solam partium ablationem formare pulcherrimam imaginem ex uno trunco ligni qualis utique prius illic erat, cum nihil addiderit" (Gerson 1971, p. 213).

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Article

Christian Iconography on Ming and Qing Chinese Porcelain: Religious Influence and Artistic Hybridization

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Abstract: Since the arrival of Christian missionaries in China through maritime trade networks, missionary activities have been changing from the 16th century to the 18th century. Christian missionaries faced numerous challenges stemming from cultural context and religious policies in China. Throughout history, various religious strategies have been employed to address these challenges. The use of Chinese porcelain to depict Christian imagery holds significant importance. The present study is focused on four representative Chinese porcelains dating from the Ming to Qing dynasties, each associated with specific phases of Christianity in China. Examining the connections between the Christian mission in China and Christian iconography on Chinese porcelain leads to the conclusion that the visual culture associated with the Christian mission in China is influenced by and reflects intercultural or interreligious dialogue with mutual understanding. In the meantime, it signifies an intricate process of interaction, appropriation, hybridization, and adaptation, through which Christian iconography gained new significance on Chinese porcelain.

Keywords: Christian iconography; Chinese porcelain; religious influence; artistic hybridization; missionaries

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1. Introduction

Since the first half of the 15th century, Portuguese Maritime Exploration gave rise to a new era of global trade and fostered extensive cross-cultural exchange among people from diverse regions. European missionaries and merchants were eager to pursue their religious and commercial endeavors, gradually encountering cultural and religious diversity in these regions. The visual representation of Christian images served as a bridge to mutual understanding and facilitated the recognition of a shared imaginary in intercultural and interreligious dialogue. As written by Pope Gregory the Great, "*Quod legentibus scriptura, hoc idiotis praestat pictura*" (What writing offers to those who read it, a picture offers to the ignorant who look at it) (Chazelle 1990), missionaries utilized visual art to elucidate religious doctrines and depict the lives of the saints to their adherents and prospective converts, with the aim of facilitating their conversion.

Among these subjects with visual representation, Chinese porcelain, as a highly profitable object, in its way, shows the history of global expansion and demonstrates significant cross-cultural connections. It consistently integrates Western concepts, religious symbols, and missionary objectives with Chinese artistic techniques, aesthetic principles, and cultural identity. The Chinese porcelains are decorated with Christian iconography, illustrating how the expansion of Christian missionary activities and local religious policy had an influence on the design of Chinese porcelain, meanwhile embodying how the Chinese craftsman transformed the original Christian iconography into the "domesticated" image (Odell 2018).

During the Ming and Qing dynasties, which coincided with the several significant phases of spreading and developing the Christian religion in China, the Portuguese Jesuits and other religious congregations commissioned porcelain objects from Chinese factories,

many of which featured emblems or Christian images (Matos 2001; Welsh 2003). Christian content was incorporated into the Chinese artistic tradition through deliberate modifications, resulting in variations in the new works. The present study is not focused so much on the supposed source of Christian iconography and Chinese motifs but rather on presenting the artistic hybridization (Ginzburg 1992; Serrão 2015; Afonso 2016) and visualizing how these Chinese porcelains with Christian iconography relate to the culture context and religious policies of various historical periods.

With the study objectives mentioned above, this article focuses on examining four representative Chinese porcelains dating from the 16th to the 18th century. These pieces include a bowl inscribed with AVE MARIA (made between 1520 and 1540) from the Medeiros e Almeida Museum (Portugal), a bottle with symbols of Christ's Passion (made between 1620 and 1644) from The British Museum (UK), a saucer featuring the Crucifixion scene (made between 1662 and 1722) from the Nanchang University Museum (China), and a dish depicting John the Baptist (made between 1715 and 1725) from The Metropolitan Museum of Art (USA). These four pieces serve as case studies from the perspective of the historical exchange of art, culture, and religion. They are examined and analyzed within the framework of extensive interconnections among diverse cultural paradigms, artistic forms, religious organizations, and historical epochs.

Each section begins with a description of the porcelain, followed by an explanation of the Christian iconography and Chinese motif, highlighting their hybridization and adaptation. Furthermore, the cultural context and religious policies of the historical periods in which each piece was made are explored. Finally, a plausible connection between these pieces and their religious contexts is proposed. By adopting the historical approach, the present article primarily uses Chinese porcelain and its Christian image as historical evidence. Christian iconography on Ming and Qing Chinese Porcelain is a valuable and visible tool for understanding evangelization and religious policies in different historical contexts. Therefore, the structure adopted is to study the objects first and then examine the social, cultural, religious, and political factors that influenced and shaped the Christian iconographies to establish a direct link between the image and the history.

2. Case Studies

2.1. Bowl with the Inscription AVE MARIA from the Medeiros e Almeida Museum (1520–1540)

In 1498, the Portuguese navigator Vasco da Gama arrived in Calicut, and on his way home, he brought several pieces of Chinese porcelain to present to his king, Dom Manuel I (Dias 2010, p. 21). Due to the king's fascination for Chinese porcelain, as soon as Portuguese merchant ships arrived in China, they ordered the Chinese porcelain decorated with the emblem of the King of Portugal. As the "first order" porcelain, the bowl shows the significance of Christianity in Portuguese trade and the interdependence of royal authority and ecclesiastical power.

The interior of the rim is inscribed with the Latin phrase "*AVE MARIA GRACIA PLENA*" (Hail Mary, full of grace) (Figure 1a). The following words are based on the Archangel Gabriel's salutation to the Virgin. The exterior surface is segmented into four roundels, each depicting the coat of royal arms of Portugal, the armillary sphere of King Manuel I, a Chinese natural scene, and the sacred monogram IHS within a crown of thorns, respectively. The base bears an apocryphal six-character Xuande (1426–35) reign mark (Levenson 2007, p. 150). According to Afonso (2014), there are four additional bowls featuring variations of "Ave Maria" on the rim.

The royal Portuguese arms (Figure 1b) are depicted painted upside down, resembling a Chinese bronze bell, due to the lack of knowledge among Chinese craftsmen. It contains five escutcheons set in a cross, a border charged with six castles, and a crown decorated with three florets. The armillary sphere of King Manuel I (Figure 1c) is crossed by a band that should read the monarch's motto, but where some illegible characters appear, considering a copy of the Latin inscription—*Spera in Deo et Fac bonitatem* (Have hope in God and do good deeds). The Chinese nature scene (Figure 1d) depicts a bird next to a rock and a

flowering branch. The monogram IHS (Figure 1e) is derived from the initial three letters of "Jesus" in Greek and has been in use since at least the third century (Carvalho et al. 2016, p. 154). Furthermore, Maria Antónia Pinto Matos (2001) points out the resemblance between the monogram and the one carved in relief on the interior walls of the Jerónimos Monastery, on which the lettering in stone appears executed to simulate broken and dry twigs. According to Clare Le Corbeiller (1974, p. 15), this piece of porcelain could be commissioned by the Jesuits.



Figure 1. Bowl with the inscription AVE MARIA, 1520–1540, Medeiros e Almeida Museum, Lisbon. (**a**–**e**). Photo: Mo Guo.

The interior well depicts a guardian lion playing with a brocaded ball (Figure 1a). This style of Buddhist lion design is evident in porcelains bearing the reign marks of both Zhengde and Jiajing, as documented by Levenson (2007, p. 150). The Marian prayer was inscribed on the inner rim of the bowl, while the monogram IHS adorned the exterior surface. The representation of a Buddhist symbol was painted on the noblest and most visible part of the piece. The arrangement of the position of the motifs, to a certain extent, also reflects the significance attributed to Buddhism to some extent.

The presentation of the Latin phrase "AVE MARIA GRACIA PLENA" in the alphabet also yields a peculiar visual representation. In contrast to the simplicity and regularity of the alphabet, the inscription on the rim resembles the presentation of symbols and images. It is hypothesized that the Chinese craftsmen, in the process of copying the alphabet, inadvertently converted it into symbols. Chinese characters constitute a logographic writing system, primarily employing pictographs and ideographs, whereas the Latin script is a phonographic writing system. As a result, Chinese craftsmen frequently misinterpreted Latin spellings based on their understanding.

With the exception of the additional inscription and the associated elements of the person who commissioned it, there were not many significant alterations to the original motifs on this bowl. Like the "first order" porcelain, the religious elements were less prominent, and they did not blend with other Chinese motifs, which was consistent with their religious policy during this period. There was no attempt to integrate with the local culture or religion.

The "first order" porcelain covers a broad chronology. It begins with the commercial contacts among the Malay, Indian, and Cantonese merchants established in Malacca following the conquest of this vital trading port in 1511 when the Portuguese naval officer Afonso de Albuquerque subdued the city. In the early sixteenth century, every year, eight to ten junks arrived annually to engage in trade in Malacca (Zhang 1988, p. 198). Subsequently, Tomé Pires, who would later serve as Portugal's first ambassador to China, arrived in Malacca in 1512. Tomé Pires compiled the Suma Oriental, which provided hosts of helpful information on trade opportunities for Portuguese merchants. With the arrival

of the Portuguese explorer Jorge Álvares on the southern coast of China in 1513, during the reign of Emperor Zhengde (1506–1521), the first meeting between Portugal and China took place. In 1522, the Portuguese attempted to renew trade relations with China. However, they were forcibly expelled from the Island of Tunmen, and an imperial decree was promulgated banning all commercial activities with the Portuguese. The direct commercial trade to Canton was halted, but economic activities persisted in locations outside the city, such as Malacca, Siam, and other ports in the South Seas. During the 1530s and 1540s, illicit trade activities were primarily focused in Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Fujian provinces, where the Portuguese had set up provisional settlements (Canepa 2016, p. 31). The date generally accepted for the foundation of the trading post in Macao is 1557, during the reign of Jiajing (1522–1566). However, Portuguese merchants have regularly visited it since 1535 (Gomes 1966). They mainly used temporary shacks and tents to store and display their goods in Shangchuan, the largest island west of the Pearl River, in Guangdong province. Dating back to around 1590, it marks the beginning of the production of *kraakporselein*. The production of "first order" gradually ceased after 1600 due to the emergence of Dutch competition in Asia. The production of "first order" porcelain lasted almost a century. Typically, these pieces feature royal heraldry or religious inscriptions alluding to Portuguese merchants or missionaries involved in East Asian activities.

The production of "first order" porcelain occurred in three distinct phases: the period of initial contacts (1511–1522), the period of clandestine trade (1522–1557), and the period following the establishment of Macao (1557–1600) (Afonso 2014, p. 189). Portuguese individuals engaged in commercial activities and commissioned porcelain with European motifs for their own use. The pieces of "first order" porcelain bore witness to commercial exchanges and the spread of Christianity in China. In this period, there was outright persecution in 1542, and all religious communities were violently suppressed. Concurrently, the imperial government implemented the Sea Prohibition (*haijin*) policy, which prohibited its population from participating in maritime activities until 1572. Hence, Christianity and the production of Chinese export porcelain were undeniably restricted, but they endured, particularly in coastal areas. According to S. Huang (1988, p. 154), approximately 500 Portuguese individuals resided in Zhangzhou in 1541. George Mascarenhas was among the earliest Portuguese to explore Fujian, Quanzhou, and Xiamen, two coastal prefectures. The arrival of Francis Xavier in South China in 1552 symbolizes the beginning of Catholic missions in China, despite his death a few months later on Shangchuan Island before reaching mainland China. However, in his capacity as a representative of the Portuguese empire, Francis Xavier did not visit Macao but instead spearheaded the initial Christian mission to Japan.

After a short sojourn in Malacca, the Portuguese Jesuit Nunes Belchior Barreto (1519–1571) and his associates landed in 1555 on the islands of Shangchuan and Lampacau in the Pearl River Delta. "Shangchuan was characterized as a center for trade, where various goods such as silk, porcelain, camphor, copper, alum, and China-wood were exchanged for a wide range of merchandise from this land [Japan]" (Cited in Boxer 1963, p. 22). During the period of waiting for favorable winds to sail to Japan, Nunes Barreto undertook a visit to the city of Canton. In Canton, he encountered his associate Fernão Mendes in late 1555, who is known for signing a famous letter documenting this meeting. This letter represents the earliest known Portuguese document originating from Macao. Nunes Belchior Barreto holds the distinction of being the first Jesuit to arrive on the shores of Macao. Seven years later, in August 1562, Luis Fróis and Giovanni Battista Del Monte arrived in Macao, marking the establishment of the first Jesuit residence and the commencement of apostolic work (Santos 1994, p. 8). The structured organization of the spiritual militancy of the Society of Jesus was instrumental in establishing initial connections with local communities, mainly through the efforts of Estêvão de Góis, who, in 1556, traveled to Canton with the purpose of acquiring proficiency in the Chinese language. Nevertheless, the conversions of local people to Catholicism were predominantly confined to coastal regions (Carvalho et al. 2016, p. 17). Furthermore, archaeological excavations in these regions have uncovered Chinese

porcelains with Christian iconography, as evidenced by findings in Shangchuan (Wen et al. 2019), Zhangzhou, and Quanzhou.

Christianity in Macau has a long history, and the Christian heritage reflects its unique position as a crossroads of different cultures. Melchior Carneiro (1516–1583) established the Santa Casa da Misericórdia (the Holy House of Mercy) shortly after his arrival in 1569 and subsequently served as the first Bishop of Macao. Presently, the Museum of the Holy House of Mercy of Macao exhibits a collection of significant Chinese porcelain pieces featuring the sacred monogram IHS from various historical periods. In 1572, the Society of Jesus established the inaugural primary school, staffed by three priests and a brother. This event was succeeded two years later by the erection of the famous church of St. Paul of Macao (Barreto 2006, p. 137). Upon his arrival in Macao in 1582, the Jesuit Mateo Ricci commenced his mission by fully engaging with the Chinese language and culture. Typically, these pieces feature royal heraldry or religious inscriptions alluding to Portuguese merchants or missionaries involved in East Asian activities marked the inception of a new era, signifying the emergence of Roman Catholicism and the Golden Age of Chinese–European scientific exchange.

2.2. Bottle with Symbols of Christ's Passion from the British Museum (1620–1644)

Following the establishment of the first official Portuguese settlement in 1557, a significant influx of Jesuit missionaries arrived in Macao to establish missionary bases directed towards China and Japan. After 1580, following the union between Spain and Portugal and the consolidation of their colonial empires under the Spanish Habsburg monarchs, Dominican, Franciscan, and Augustinian missionaries, backed by Spain, commenced their presence in Macao, establishing churches and residences. The years spanning from 1580 to 1640 marked the period of the Iberian Union. The inclusion of porcelain from Catholic religious orders underscores the swift expansion of Catholicism in the East under the Portuguese Padroado during this era. The bottle (Figure 2) bearing the symbol of the Dominicans is assumed to have been commissioned by that religious order.



Figure 2. Square-sectioned bottle with symbols of Christ's Passion, 1620–1644, British Museum, London. (Museum no. OA 1963.5-20.7). Photo: Mo Guo.

The bottle's decoration style suggests it was produced during the Tianqi or Chongzhen period (Canepa 2016, p. 277). Two sets of identical images are depicted on all four sides of

the bottle. The two sides are painted with a cross with a crown of thorns and a ladder in a garden setting, surrounded by leafy banana plants. In the foreground, there is a whip, a cockerel, and a dog holding a lit candle in its mouth. The elements symbolically represent Christ's Passion, Death, and Resurrection: the empty Cross and the ladder symbolize the rescue of Jesus's body after the Crucifixion; the cockerel represents Peter's triple denial of Jesus before the cockerel crowed; and the whip symbolizes the torture of Jesus. The dog serves as the symbol for the religious order of the Dominicans, derived from the Latin origin of their name, "Domini Canes," which translates to "dogs of the Lord." The remaining two sides are illustrated on the lower part with a Chinese landscape featuring a pagoda, a Chinese dwelling, two boats, and a distant mountain. The upper portion of the landscape is adorned with cherubs engaged in playing horns or beating drums amidst auspicious clouds (known as *xiang yun*, a traditional Chinese decorative pattern representing stylized clouds), potentially symbolizing the Resurrection of Christ and his ascension to heaven (Hall 2001, p. 79). Three similar bottles can be found in the National Museum of Ancient Art in Lisbon, the Musée Obigny-Bernon in La Rochelle, France, and a private collection in Brazil.

The scenes depicted on all four sides of the bottle are encompassed by floral borders featuring curling leaves and tendrils, which are traditional motifs commonly found in Chinese porcelain. This design is reminiscent of the patterns seen on porcelain produced in the transitional style for the Dutch market (Matos 2001, p. 30). As noted by Teresa Canepa (2016, p. 277) in her research, the creation of this sizable square bottle model likely followed the production of glass prototypes. While the *kraak* bottle's similar shape was also produced for the Portuguese market, such as the square bottle featuring a coat-of-arms associated with the Portuguese Families Vilas-Boas and Faria, or Vaz (Canepa 2008, p. 166), its overall style is more closely associated with porcelains made for the Dutch market than for the Portuguese market. Furthermore, this bottle was discovered in India (Hall 2001, p. 79).

The square-shaped bottle indicates that Chinese potters adapted their porcelain production to align with the preferences and needs of their European clientele, resulting in the creation of new shapes that mirrored European influence. Moreover, the religious elements are no longer portrayed as insignificant motifs in an unimportant position; instead, they are integrated harmoniously with Chinese motifs. The religious scene does not appear directly but rather as symbolic objects, such as the Cross, the whip, or the dog, which are depicted in a subtle and nuanced manner. The religious policy during this period may exhibit more remarkable similarities with this visual representation.

Since the initial endeavors led by Francis Xavier, Nunes Belchior Barreto, and other Jesuits, the missionaries of the Society of Jesus engaged in substantial intercultural, philosophical, and scientific dialogue with the Chinese people, with Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) serving as the prominent figure.

On 24 March 1578, Matteo Ricci embarked on a voyage to Goa, India, accompanied by Michele Ruggieri, Duarte de Sande, Baltasar de Sequeira, and a coadjutor priest, Domingos Fernandes Pires. On 26 April 1582, by order of Alessandro Valignano (Visitor of Missions for East Asia from 1574 to 1610) and at the request from Michele Ruggieri, Father Matteo Ricci was sent to Macao to study Chinese language and culture (Malatesta 1994). Indeed, Alessandro Valignano, Matteo Ricci, and Michele Ruggieri were the pioneering Jesuit missionaries who initiated the new accommodation approach or adaptation to Chinese culture, customs, and language.

Several years prior, on 23 January 1576, the Catholic Diocese of Macao was established through the papal bull *Super Specula Militantis Ecclesiae*, issued by Pope Gregory XIII. The Diocese of Macao was the first diocese established in the Far East, exercising authority over Catholics of China, Japan, Korea, and the surrounding islands under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Goa. Consequently, Macao emerged as the focal point of the Catholic faith in the Far East. The activities of the Society of Jesuits in Japan and China were funded by residents of Macao. The Jesuits typically served as justices of the peace in Macao, and their

presence facilitated the establishment of contacts with the official authorities in East Asia. They are becoming increasingly essential to the port city's internal social fabric and are also a significant influence on Japanese career paths (Barreto 2006, p. 136).

Nicolas Standaert (2008) outlines the approach of Matteo Ricci and his colleagues in their religious policy, identifying four key characteristics: a policy of accommodation or adaptation to Chinese culture; propagation and evangelization 'from the top down'; indirect propagation of the faith through the utilization of European science and technology; and openness to and tolerance of Chinese values.

Since the mid-16th century, Jesuits in Asia have been gathering information on Chinese culture, recognizing the significant role of the literati in China, as they were essentially responsible for the entire imperial administration (Loureiro 2009, p. 250). Recognizing the significance attributed to the literati in Chinese society, Ricci communicated to Valignano the necessity of forsaking the attire and conduct of Buddhist monks in favor of adopting the fashion and decorum of the Confucian elite of literati and officials. It entailed growing their hair and beards, donning suitable silk garments, and wearing the distinctive tall four-corner hat, as depicted in the painting "Portrait of Matteo Ricci" by You Wenhui, housed at the Church of the Gesù in Rome, to engage with and host literati and officials (Malatesta 1994). In 1594, Ricci commenced the practice of growing his hair and beard à *la chinoise*, and in May 1595, he made his initial appearance donning the attire of the scholarly Confucian class. Ricci and his successors obscured the visual differentiation between society's religious and secular domains (Brockey 2007, p. 44). The Jesuits aimed for the widespread dissemination of Christianity throughout the country through the conversion of the Mandarin elite, officials, and even the emperor. Several prominent individuals, including Xu Guangqi (1562–1633), Li Zhizao (1565–1630), Yang Tingyun (1562–1627), and Wang Zheng (1571–1644), were converted to Christianity (Standaert 2008, p. 172). Afterward, although some Western science, art, and architecture were welcomed by the Qing court, the conversion of the Chinese Emperor did not occur.

On 24 January 1601, Matteo Ricci successfully presented "valuable European items" to Emperor Wan Li, including "a painting of Jesus, two paintings of the Virgin Mary, a copy of the Lord's Prayer, a precious inlaid cross, two chiming clocks, a gazetteer map of the world, and an elegant zither" (Y. T. Wang 2007, p. 142). Matteo Ricci held a strong belief in the miraculous power of sacred images and their capacity to facilitate conversions, thereby illustrating the function of images as a visual adjunct to Christian literature. Extensive use of imagery was employed in his preaching, with an emphasis on the necessity of images to console and assist new Christians (Levenson 2007, p. 144).

In addition, Ricci, a mathematician and astronomer, requested the General of the Society of Jesus in Rome to dispatch Jesuits with expertise in the field of science. Between 1601 and 1610, Matteo Ricci and other Jesuits, including Diego Pantoja, Gaspar Ferreira, and Sabatino de Ursis, were permitted to remain in Beijing due to their expertise in mathematics, astronomy, geography, music, and proficiency in the Chinese language and classics of Chinese culture. They gained the favor and attention of Emperor Wanli and numerous court officials. Ricci's success in converting Chinese elites can be attributed to the cross-cultural and religious interaction, resulting in the fusion of Confucian ideals with Christian values. The Jesuits recognized the importance of studying native traditions to adapt their religious message to Chinese culture. They embraced a tolerant stance toward specific Confucian rituals while rejecting Buddhism and Neo-Confucianism. Matteo Ricci played a significant role as one of the founders of the Catholic Mission in China, which was under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Society of Jesus in China until the 1630s.

As defined by Luís Afonso in his article, the "Controlled Contact Pattern" characterizes the cultural encounter, with China consistently holding a dominant position in shaping relations with the Europeans. Considering the vulnerable situation in China, a nuanced approach to integrating them into Chinese culture and society was necessary. The missionaries fulfilled this role admirably. Nicolas Standaert (2002) noted that the Jesuits in China adhered to the Chinese 'Cultural Imperative', which was an inherent aspect of

the framework of religious life in late imperial China. They accommodated themselves to local values (Standaert 2002, p. 2). Matteo Ricci fully immersed himself in the Chinese cultural context, exemplifying the concept of "accommodation".

Since the 1620s, missionaries were compelled to limit their apostolic activities (Brockey 2007, p. 82) due to the repressive policy of the declining Ming state. During the 1630s, the Ming Dynasty faced a period of crisis characterized by internal turmoil and external threats to the imperial court. In the Annual Letter of 1636 from a Vice-Province, Portuguese Jesuit António de Gouvea (1592–1677) communicated to Europe that the empire had been afflicted with "miseries, hardships, and calamities" as a form of divine retribution for its numerous sins. The natural disasters and political instability during the final years of the Chongzhen reign (1627–1644) further complicated the circumstances faced by missionaries. Upon receiving the news of the defeat, the Chongzhen emperor "turned many times to Heaven, offering sacrifices and gifts to calm it", but to no avail (cited in Brockey 2007, p. 92).

From the 1630s, the influence power of the society diminished, as the Jesuits were gradually accompanied successively by the Dominicans, the Franciscans, the Augustinians, and the missionary members of the Missions Étrangères de Paris. From the viewpoint of the Society of Jesus, the presence of these competing religious orders poses a potential threat to the mission they have diligently cultivated in China over the years. The Iberian Empire (1580–1640), ruled by Philippe II of Spain, who was king of both Portugal and Spain, was a period characterized by the unification of the crowns in the Iberian Peninsula. Until 1640, the Portuguese throne was occupied by three Spanish kings, after which a Portuguese king reclaimed the crown. The national rivalry between Portugal and Spain intensified the conflict between the Jesuits and the Mendicant friars. The Society of Jesus contained several divisions based on national lines.

Given that the bottle (Figure 2) featured the symbol of the Dominicans, this study primarily focuses on Dominican missionaries. By the late sixteenth century, Dominican friars were appointed to the Parián of Manila with the backing of the Spanish colonial administration. During their tenure, they established a web of connections and familiarized themselves with the language spoken by the immigrant community, predominantly hailing from southern Fujian and northern Guangdong.

Their route from Manila to Macao failed several times because of Portuguese authorities and Jesuit opposition. Macao became the non-entry point to China, especially after the Dominican Bartolomé Martínez failed attempts during 1612 and 1619. The failures caused the Dominicans to explore alternative entries, and they changed their direction and managed to enter Fujian (Borao 2018). In 1619, on his way from Manila to Macao, the wind drove Bartolomé Martínez to Isla Hermosa (modern-day Taiwan), which became the springboard to enter mainland China. In 1629, Bartolomé Martínez organized the trips to China, but he died that year in a shipwreck off the northern coast of Taiwan (Borao 2009, p. 14).

Although Macao was considered an essential conduit for missionaries seeking to enter mainland China, some European missionaries entered mainland China directly from Taiwan through the coast of Fujian. In 1632, the Italian Dominican Angelo Cocci (1597–1633) landed in a boat on an island along the Fujian coast from Taiwan and entered Fuzhou from there. Angelo Cocci was the first Dominican to bypass Macao and enter Mainland China (González 1964, p.51). He was also invited by literati converts of the Jesuits in Fujian and joined them in Fu'an in the summer of 1632 (Menegon 2003, p. 338). During the years 1631 to 1634, a significant number of Dominicans and Franciscans traveled to Fuzhou. They sought permission from Giulio Aleni (1582–1649), the missionary who introduced Roman Catholic Christianity to Fujian Province in 1625 and formed a circle of literati acquaintances in the region. Upon Aleni's refusal of Cocchi's request, a group of local baptized intellectuals established the first Dominican mission in their hometown, Fu'an (Brockey 2007, p. 103). Since then, Fu'an has emerged as the focal point of the Dominican mission in China and the location of significant advancements in mission policy and practice.

Nevertheless, the missionary approach adopted by Dominican missionaries in the Philippines was also extended to China, with the aim of eradicating all forms of idolatry and superstition without accommodating local social customs. The presence of friars in Fujian raised significant concern among the Jesuits. During the 1630s, the Jesuit missionary policy underwent a shift with the introduction of mendicant orders (Standaert 2008, p. 169).

Another significant concern during this period was the Dutch competition attempting to gain access to China. From 1624, when the Dutch first arrived in Taiwan, until 1642, the Spaniards relinquished control of the island after being expelled by the Dutch. Throughout this process, Christianity underwent a transformation into a religion with local significance. The Dominicans proclaimed a "spiritual conquest" of China stemming from the Spanish imperial endeavor. Since its shape and overall style are more associated with the porcelains exported to the Dutch, the Dutch competition can also be traced in this porcelain bottle.

2.3. Saucer with the Crucifixion Scene from Nanchang University Museum (1662–1722)

Nearly all kilns, including those in Jingdezhen, suffered severe destruction during the transition from the Ming to the Qing dynasty. The Rebellion of the Three Feudatories (1673–1681) had a significant impact on Jingdezhen, leading to the destruction of the furnaces. As a result, half of the kiln owners lost their property (Finlay 2010, p. 34). During the early Qing Dynasty, the *Haijin* policy imposed strict limitations on maritime trading and coastal settlement, resulting in the obstruction of Chinese porcelain exports. Therefore, almost no Christian-themed porcelain produced between 1640 and 1680 could be found (Dong 2021, p. 340). Until the middle of the Kangxi period, along with the Qing dynasty's stabilization and the gate's reopening, porcelain production and exportation were gradually restored. During the 1680s and 1690s, the reinvigoration of European trade in Maritime Asia also brought a continuous influx of ships to the shores of Fujian and Guangdong provinces in search of Chinese goods (Brockey 2007, p. 180). By the early 1690s, Chinese porcelain was resurgent with Christian themes (Dong 2021, p. 340).

The saucer (Figure 3) was produced during the Kangxi reign and depicts the scene of the Crucifixion of Christ. The Christian image is depicted in underglaze blue with rather rough line drawings. Three figures are depicted in the center, with Jesus in the middle and the Virgin Mary and Saint John standing at the base of the Cross, gazing affectionately at Jesus. It is difficult to determine the identity of the characters from their appearance. However, it can be traced in the Gospel of John. *When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing by, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold your son!" Then he said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home* [John 19: 26–27]. However, Chinese scholars Chen (2010, p. 89) and Fan (2020, p. 73) argue that in the Crucifixion scene depicted on this saucer, the standing figures on either side are the Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalene. The three wooden panels below are representative of the Crucifixion. Jesus is depicted as unclothed on the Cross, with a cloth wrapped around his waist. He inclines his head to the left, with his arms outstretched and fixed on the Cross. The crown of thorns is not depicted on Christ's head, and the inscription INRI (Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews) is inaccurately transcribed. The facial features of the three figures exhibit distinct oriental characteristics, while the proportions of the torsos and limbs are drawn in a problematic manner. Nevertheless, Chinese craftsmen attempted to utilize the perspective technique without delineating the facial contours. The three figures were depicted with more plane faces, influenced by the traditional Chinese ink painting techniques (Chen and Zou 2021, p. 243).

Additionally, they appear to be wearing traditional Asian robes. These three biblical figures were domesticated on Chinese porcelain to assimilate into the local culture. Yu (2014, p. 217) asserts in his research that the porcelains depicting the Crucifixion of Christ were not created solely for the European market but specifically for missionaries in Japan and China.



Figure 3. Saucer with the Crucifixion scene, 1662–1722, Nanchang University Museum, Nanchang. Photo: Mo Guo.

All the incongruities demonstrated on this porcelain, including the detailed depiction and the proportions of the figures, indicate that it may not have been a direct reproduction of a European print and that the design had been altered over time (Howard and Ayers 1978, p. 140). Chinese craftsmen used cross-hatching without washed tones to convey the contrast of light and dark, like the technique of Western sketching. The painting style suggests a European origin, with the motifs likely derived from a copperplate engraving design. The pattern was probably sourced from a European print of a missionary publication. Numerous Chinese porcelains feature the decoration of the Crucifixion of Christ, indicating its popularity as a subject in the early eighteenth century among religious orders in Asia and Europe. They currently can be found at the National Museum of Ancient Art in Lisbon, the Peabody Essex Museum in Boston, Christie's Auction in London, the Asian Civilisations Museum in Singapore, the Macao Museum, and the Guangdong Museum. The collection includes porcelain jars featuring Christ flanked by stylized tulips and leafy lotus scrolls. Le Corbeiller (1974, p. 17) observes a connection between the scrolling floral design and Chinese export embroidered ecclesiastical textiles.

The 'Crucifixion' porcelains represent the earliest instances of the depiction of Jesus on Chinese porcelain and the earliest manifestations of European print influence on Chinese porcelain design. In 1712, Father François Xavier d'Entrecolles corresponded from Jingdezhen regarding porcelain production, with particular emphasis on the Crucifixion theme. He treasured the gift received from a parishioner, which had been purchased from the Remains of a large shop and was painted with the Virgin Mary and St. John flanking the Cross, a relic d'Entrecolles valued "more highly than the finest porcelain made a thousand years ago." One of his followers informed him that a considerable amount of this same type of ceramic had been illicitly transported to Japan until the "enemies of religion" halted the traffic shortly before Christianity arrived in Jingde Zhen. This kind of commerce came to an end sixteen or seventeen years ago (that is, about 1695) (Finlay 2010, p. 21). Therefore, it can be demonstrated that Chinese porcelain depicting the Crucifixion of Christ was popular and underwent modifications over time.

Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the porcelain incorporates Christian elements beyond symbolic objects, as they are also depicted in narrative themes within historical scenes. This approach aims to enhance the accessibility of the Bible story for better understanding. The Holy Scripture was conveyed through Christian iconography depicted on porcelain.

The porcelain depicting the Crucifixion of Christ is a product of the intricate social milieu during the transition from Ming to Qing. It reflects the evolving religious policies of that era.

The year 1644, marking the fall of the Ming court and its replacement by the Manchu leaders of the Qing, holds more symbolic significance than merely serving as the effective date of a new period (Standaert 2008, p. 170). The violence during the dynastic transition did not impede the proselytizing efforts, and the missionary strategy remained unchanged. In 1644, the Vice-Province documented 188 new converts across all six northern residences, and the Jesuits continued to pursue political patronage (Brockey 2007, p. 110). The German Jesuit missionary Johann Adam Schall (1592–1666), also known as Tang Ruowang (汤若望) in Chinese, was recommended by Xu Guangqi and significantly contributed to the missionary efforts during this transitional period. During times of uncertainty regarding sovereignty, the Jesuits demonstrated loyalty to the ruling party. Schall was appointed to lead the reformation of the traditional Chinese calendar at the Imperial Court in Beijing. As a result of his contributions to legitimizing the new regime for Chongzhen, he secured a position at the Imperial Astronomical Bureau in 1645. Subsequently, he established a friendship with Shunzhi and secured a position in Chinese court society, which he leveraged to propagate the Catholic faith. He became a central figure in the Jesuits' endeavors in China.

Under the protection of Schall, there was little disturbance in the growth of the number of Catholics. According to Latourette (1929, p. 107), it is estimated that the number of individuals who converted to Christianity in China near the beginning of the 17th century was about 13,000, rising to 100,000 or reaching 250,000 by 1664. Due to the timely adjustment of religious policy and the loyalty of the missionaries headed by Schall to the emperors from the Ming to the Qing, the personal safety of missionaries was enhanced, and the evangelization was not interrupted by the change of dynasties. But in 1664, the Jesuit mission in China endured its most severe crisis in history, leading Jesuits in China from a period of great optimism to one of deep despair due to the events commonly referred to as the Calendar Case (*Li Yu*) and the Canton exile. Schall faced impeachment and trial after allegations brought forth by Yang Guangxian. Additionally, four Jesuits in Beijing underwent interrogation and condemnation, while missionaries in the provinces were collectively exiled to Guangzhou. Their positions were reinstated upon the ascension of the Kangxi Emperor (1661–1722), and an unexpected earthquake occurred in Peking in 1665. In 1668, Ferdnand Verbiest, also known as Nan Huairen (南怀仁) in Chinese, took over from Schall and became the principal scientist at the court, subsequently assuming the position of director of the Astronomical Bureau (Brockey 2007, p. 132). Playing a role as one of the young Kangxi's personal tutors and counselor, Verbiest gained significant influence as an official at the imperial court and ushered in a new era of missionary activities in China.

The Jesuits had established and maintained a close relationship with Kangxi. In 1675, Kangxi visited the Peking Jesuits' residence and bestowed upon the missionaries an honorific inscription, "*Jing Tian*" (Revere Heaven, 敬天 in Chinese). In 1677, Kangxi organized the ceremonial funeral for the Portuguese Jesuit Gabriel de Magalhães, also known as An Wensi (安文思) in Chinese. For more than forty years, the Jesuits ceased using the term Tian to refer to the Christian God (Brockey 2007, p. 137), and they had to disregard Chinese funeral traditions. However, Jesuits found it impossible to resist Kangxi's favor. They recognized the necessity of imperial protection and acknowledged that the only viable approach for advancing Christianity in China was to adapt their religious message to conform with the imperial political orthodoxy. In 1679, Kangxi requested the Portuguese Jesuit Thomas Pereira (1645–1708), also known as Xu Risheng (徐日升) in Chinese, and the Italian Jesuit Claudio Filippo Grimaldi (1639–1708), known as Min Mingwo (闵明我), to perform on the harpsichord and harmonium, which were presented to the emperor (G. Huang 1995, p. 21). Kangxi's openness to adopting Western culture also resulted in significant contributions from missionaries across various fields of endeavor.

In 1692, the Kangxi emperor promulgated an "edict of toleration" to legitimize the propagation of Christianity. The Jesuits regarded this as their most significant triumph while simultaneously sowing a concealed threat (Brockey 2007, p. 164). The Christian mission reached a new apogee before its eventual decline after 1705 due to the Rite's Controversy.

Carlo Tomasso Maillard de Tournon (1668–1710) was dispatched by Clement XI to China to address the issues concerning the Vicars and Kangxi. Nevertheless, his audiences with Kangxi in 1705 and 1706 resulted in significant diplomatic failures, leading to a substantial shift in the circumstances surrounding missionary endeavors in China. Tournon and the Vicar Apostolic Charles Maigrot were repatriated to Europe via Macao in 1706. During the same year, Kangxi issued a decree stipulating that all missionaries in China were required to acquire a license, known as *piao*, and to pledge their acceptance of the Chinese Rites (Brockey 2007, p. 187). The Jesuits encountered a dilemma as a result of the imperial *piao* issued by Kangxi and the *Cum Deus Optimus* issued by the Pope. The majority of them acquiesced to the *piao* and ultimately submitted to imperial authority. Yang's allegations against the Jesuits prompted concern within the imperial government, leading to a deliberate differentiation between Christian teachings and Western scientific expertise. As a result, Kangxi consistently imposed limitations on their missionary activities.

Until Kangxi's death, the Jesuits were treated in a friendly manner. Kangxi became frustrated after the Tournon's legation. However, with the advent of the Yongzheng reign, the policy of tolerance in religions took a sharp turn; Yongzheng started the proscription of Christianity, ordered the closing of all churches in the whole country, and expelled almost all missionaries, except some in Beijing. They retained their positions at court as artists or scientists instead of Christian missionaries. In the version of the Sacred Edict promulgated in January 1724, Christianity was included among the "perverse sects and sinister doctrines" (Standaert 2001, p. 564). Ultimately, the Jesuits paid the price for making the imperial power their source of protection. Since 1724, the Jesuits' activities were transferred into the shadows, which meant the complete negation of all the social and political gains they had made in China.

During Emperor Kangxi's patronage, Chinese porcelains experienced significant changes and advancements over sixty years, particularly during the Chromatic Revolution. In a letter sent to Europe, the missionary artists Matteo Ripa (1682–1745), also known as Ma Guoxian (马国贤) in Chinese, and Giuseppe Castiglione (1688–1766), known as Lang Shining (郎世宁) in Chinese, mentioned that they were requested by Kangxi to paint with enamels in 1716. Nevertheless, they were loath to undertake this task and deliberately engineered the failure. Kangxi was eager to produce imperial-made painted enamelware, and thus, he recruited Cantonese craftsmen with expertise in enamel production and sought the participation of a Western enameller. In 1719, a French Jesuit, Jean-Baptiste Gravereau (1690–1762), known as Chen Zhongxin (陈忠信) in Chinese, arrived to work as an enameller in the Imperial ateliers. He showed a preference for using European enamel colors. The experimental stage during the Kangxi reign involved the application of a combination of domestic and foreign colors (M. C. Wang 2022, p. 27). The most exquisite pieces were exclusively crafted during the Yongzheng reign, and the *famille rose* achieved its technical zenith during the Qianlong period. Subsequently, the porcelain capital, Jingdezhen, expeditiously embraced the new color palette and revitalized its entire production system (Shih 2022). Numerous Chinese porcelains featuring the same central scene of the Crucifixion were decorated in polychrome enamels and were made during the Kangxi, Yongzheng, and Qianlong reigns.

2.4. Dish with John the Baptist (Made in 1715–1725) from the Metropolitan Museum of Art

In addition to the Crucifixion, the Baptism scene was the only bible scene depicted on Chinese porcelain before 1740, possibly due to the importance of this sacrament in the evangelistic endeavors of missionaries in China (Kerr and Mengoni 2011, pp. 66–69). In a report submitted by Vice-Provincial Antoine Thomas to his Roman superiors in 1703, the Jesuits' mission achieved its greatest extent. By his reckoning, there was a yearly average of

14,600 baptisms (Brockey 2007, p. 176). The number of baptized individuals is a significant indicator of the effectiveness of missionary efforts in China, representing the highest form of sacrament.

Porcelains featuring the Baptism theme were exclusively produced during the reigns of Yongzheng and early Qianlong (Dong 2021, p. 346). According to the records of museums, the earlier version of the dish was predominantly in blue and white, typically of enormous size, produced around 1715–1725. Examples of such dishes can be found in The British Museum (Inventory number 1963, 0422.13), the Mottahedeh Collection (Howard and Ayers 1978, p. 306), the Jorge Welsh works, the RA Collection, and the San Antonio Museum of Art. The later version, dating from 1725 to 1735, was characterized by overglaze iron red and gold. Porcelains painted in red enamel and gilt from this period are housed in the Dresden Porcelain Collection (Inventory number PO 7863), the Royal Museums of Art and History of Belgium (Inventory number VDN 0035), the Victoria and Albert Museum (Inventory number c.220-1931), and the Museum of Fine Arts. A dish featuring the same Baptism scene, painted in underglaze blue and gilt, was also produced during the Yongzheng period, around 1725, and is currently housed in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Inventory number 6787–1860).

This large dish (Figure 4), painted in blue and white, depicts the Baptism of Christ in the river Jordan. According to Krahl and Harrison-Hall (1994), Christian symbols were present on Chinese porcelain made for the Portuguese during the Ming dynasty. However, this large dish is among the earliest examples depicting a scene from the Bible.



Figure 4. Dish with John the Baptist, ca. 1715–1725, China. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Photo: Metropolitan Museum of Art, Public Domain.

The center is decorated with a medallion enclosing Christ and John standing in the water. Saint John, wearing a cloak that falls in folds, pours water over Christ's head, dressed in a loin cloth. In the background, a European-style house appears on the horizon, and the Holy Spirit is represented as a dove radiating rays of light in the sky. The representation reveals the artist's lack of familiarity with the subject (Ströber 2001, p. 69). In the foreground, between trees growing out of rocks, a river appears in the background, indicated by the blank space, while the background is filled with washed blue strokes. The whole picture has movement in the stillness, creating the feeling of being there for the viewer.

The central composition depicting John the Baptist and Christ in the Jordan River is based on a passage from the Gospel of Saint Matthew. "When Jesus was baptized, he went up immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting on him; and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased'" (*Mt* 3:16–17), to which reference is made in a cartouche on the rim of this porcelain (abbreviated to *Mat.3.16*).

The *cavetto*, employed for the curved area connecting the base and the rim, is segmented into six panels and adorned with the turtleback pattern (*Guibei Wen*, 龟背纹) in the remaining space. The six panels feature delicately painted naturalistic and landscape scenes, portraying thatched cottages, houses, mountains, trees, and sampans (small boats with flat bottoms commonly used along the coasts and rivers of China and Southeast Asia). The turtleback pattern consists primarily of hexagonal prisms arranged in a honeycomb-like sequence. The hexagonal geometric pattern is initially referred to as "turtleback" in the *Yingzao Fashi* (Treatise on Architectural Methods) from the Song Dynasty.

The rounded border is decorated with stylized European-style flowers, leaves, and fruits. Four putti, depicted as plump Chinese infants, are concealed within the thick, intertwining tendrils. The upper part is painted with a large bird or an eagle grasping a flower stem in its beak. The stem extends to the sides, connecting all the flowers. The outermost edge is a thin, narrow border painted with the lozenge pattern (*Lingxing Wen*, 菱形纹).

Le Corbeiller (1974, p. 69) observes that while the subjects may have originated from engravings, the composition and border design display similar stylistic peculiarities to those found on late seventeenth-century Delft biblical plates. One such plate is a tin-glazed earthenware painted with blue enamel, depicting Jacob's dream, produced at the "De Roos" factory in Delft between 1690 and 1710 (Inventory number C.1761–1919, Victoria and Albert Museum). According to Eva Ströber (2001, p. 69), this border can be observed in a multitude of commissioned porcelain pieces. The porcelain models in question are considered European, likely Delft faience decorated with biblical scenes dating back to the latter half of the 17th century. Consequently, the inaccurate and seemingly naive reproduction by the Chinese craftsman can be ascribed to a combination of insufficient understanding of the subject and the appropriation of the motif from Delft pottery, which is frequently executed in a cursory style or sketchy fashion.

After 1740, meticulous reproductions of copperplate engravings featuring Christian religious motifs began to emerge, often adorned with borders in the fashion of Meissen porcelain or Viennese Du Paquier porcelain (Ströber 2001, p. 69). While the motifs and biblical scenes may not be entirely accurate or congruous, Chinese craftsmen have been known to repaint European motifs on Chinese porcelain, symbolizing a reciprocal exchange and shared learning. The reopening of commercial trade with Europe during the early Qing dynasty facilitated a mutual exchange of ceramics between China and Europe. The introduction of Western decoration and a hybrid pattern for the European market brought new subject matters to China and enriched the variety of motifs used in Chinese porcelain decoration (Scott 1997, p. 30).

Regarding this porcelain dish (Figure 4), it is also noteworthy that the stone depicted on the central medallion was added to the bible scene by a Chinese craftsman. The different tones of the significant color palette act as highlights and shadows, and they emulate the texture of the stones. Consequently, the image exhibits a three-dimensional and naturalistic quality. The modeling of the forms unveils the linear perspective of the composition, which further reminds us of Western approaches. This dish shows the fusion of styles as the Chinese motif and bible scene are combined with realistically modeled, three-dimensional forms arranged according to a linear perspective. This melding of styles echoes the manner established by the art produced by European Jesuits.

We can also observe a precursor of the "oriental" style that developed in 18th century Europe with *Chinoiserie*, where a European idea of Chinese style was invented and imposed. The scene depicts the Baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist in a setting reminiscent of a Chinese landscape, complete with trees, rocky rivers, and distant houses in the back-

ground, resembling a Chinese *Shanshui Hua* (mountain and water painting, 山水画). The amalgamation of Christian imagery with Chinese motifs results from the European *Chinoiserie* trend. The Christian motif with Chinese aesthetics originated in China and likely made its way to Europe, where it was subsequently replicated by European ceramic manufacturers. Moreover, Chinese craftsmen adapted specific European motifs. These hybrid iconographies have the potential to be utilized to trace the communication between China and Europe. The process of cultural exchange, where one culture is influenced by external cultural transformation and then undergoes local progress and development, is not uncommon after the age of exploration (Dong 2021, p. 359). These porcelains were painted with Christian scenes, such as the Baptism or the Crucifixion of Christ, inspired by Dutch or English faience models or engravings. Whether they were produced for export to Europe or specifically commissioned with Chinese-style motifs for use in Asian missionary work (Howard and Ayers 1978, p. 316; Ströber 2001, p. 69), they represent significant iconographic evidence of the cultural exchange between China and Europe and the artistic, intercultural process. The painting techniques shown on Chinese porcelain are closely associated with the missionary activities of that era.

The introduction of engraving and European print, as well as the presence of European Jesuits, in China, elicited great admiration from the emperors and literati for European artistic techniques. These techniques included pictorial realism, linear perspective, portraiture, the contrast between light and dark, and optical illusion. Despite the prohibition of Christianity decreed by Yongzheng in 1724, the fervor for European artistic methods persisted, and the effort to amalgamate Western and indigenous technologies endured.

During the Kangxi reign, the imperial workshop predominantly utilized Western enamel pigments. During the Yongzheng period, a greater variety of sophisticated colors in porcelain decoration was partly attributed to the innovations introduced by the Jesuits (Nadler 2001, p. 24). In the sixth year of the Yongzheng reign (1728), Chinese artisans developed a technique for extracting enamel pigments, marking the regular integration of local production and imported materials. Yongzheng, while not as widely revered, endeavored to comprehend Western scientific knowledge to a similar extent as Kang Xi. Nevertheless, he exhibited courteous treatment towards the missionary painters serving at the court and demonstrated significant appreciation and interest in the contrast technique between light and dark. During the Yongzheng reign (1723–1735), Giuseppe Castiglione emerged as a notable missionary painter, producing remarkable results in his artwork. The masterpieces "Beauties Collection" and "One Hundred Horses" by the artist reflect a distinctive European painting style while incorporating auspicious symbolism and aesthetic suggestions from Chinese painting. It is achieved through light and dark colors to create volumetric quality and convey a sense of light and shadow. During the Yongzheng period, Castiglione established contact with Nian Xiyao (1671–1738), a painter, mathematician, and government official. Castiglione and Nian collaborated on the first Chinese-language book about the mechanics of perspectives titled "Visual Learning" (*Shixue*, 视学), which is an adaptation of Andrea Pozzo's "*Perspective Pictorum et architectorum*" (1642–1709) (Tang 2017, p. 93). Furthermore, Nian Xiyao also provided oversight for the Imperial Kiln at Jingdezhen.

When Nian Xiyao was assigned as the Supervisor of the imperial kiln, he applied Western painting techniques to porcelain, which he learned from Castiglione. In the meantime, soon after the central officials assigned by the Yongzheng arrived in Jingdezhen, they took control of imperial kilns, and the local potters gradually acquired proficiency in enamel painting techniques. These central officials had a certain level of connection with the court's Office of Ateliers (M. C. Wang 2022, p. 50). The porcelains produced at the Jingdezhen imperial kilns from 1726 to 1735 were co-supervised by Nian Xiyao and Tang Ying. Some of them decorated with Western themes and motifs were known as "Nian wares" (*Nianyao*, 年窑) (Kleutghen 2014, p. 120), and they became paradigmatic for the broader phenomenon of aristocratic taste. Like Giuseppe Castiglione, the European missionaries working at the court could not carry out their missionary endeavor under the Yongzheng's religious policy. However, Yongzheng's embrace of the Jesuits as artists

and artisans facilitated technological exchanges and fostered innovative interactions. The painted-enamel porcelains demonstrate the influence of the Jesuits, primarily in the approach to depiction, while the preferred subject matter of decorations remained Chinese. The amalgamation of the subdued yet discernible Western approach with Chinese styles emerged as a distinguishing feature of the artwork created during the Qing dynasty in the eighteenth century.

After 1740, Chinese porcelain pieces featuring Christian religious motifs were meticulous replicas of European copperplate engravings. The most prevalent theme is the series depicting the Nativity, the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection, exemplified by a set of three Qianlong period dishes displayed in the Medeiros e Almeida Museum, as well as portraits of religious figures like Saint Ignatius of Loyola, Martin Luther, and John Calvin, which can be found in various museums. The majority of these pieces are painted in enamel pigments, of which many are decorated in a black enamel known as *shui mo* (水墨, ink color) in Chinese and referred to in the West as grisaille, Jesuit ware, or *encre de Chine*. The grisaille technique represented a novel advancement in Chinese porcelain manufacturing, likely influenced by European black-and-white prints and engravings. François Xavier d'Entrecolles's letter suggests that before 1722, Chinese artisans could not produce successful grisaille-painted porcelain (Fan 2020, p. 72). The initial recorded achievement occurred in 1729, as indicated by an imperial decree stating: "No. 40, porcelain painted in ink [*shui mo*]" (Cited in Carvalho et al. 2016, p. 162). Thanks to the study by Christiaan Jörg, the origins of Christian religious scenes can be identified. The illustrations in a small Lutheran Bible by the Dutch engraver Jan Luyken (1649–1712) perfectly harmonize with the Christian decorations found on Chinese porcelains (Jörg 2002). The porcelain, painted in *grisaille* to depict the life of Jesus, not only closely resembles the original copperplate but also imbues this religious theme with a greater sense of solemnity. Consequently, this series of porcelain gained widespread popularity in Europe. Given that these items were primarily tailored and distributed in Europe, their connection to missionary activities in China is limited, but they are associated with the Dutch East India Company (VOC) (Jörg 2002). During the 18th century, the Dutch were the sole nation engaged in commercial trade with Japan. Consequently, the porcelain *en grisaille* could be utilized by Japanese converts.

3. Discussion

In the context of Christian images produced in China, porcelain stands out as the most significant source. This aspect is evident in the sheer volume of exported objects to Europe and the diverse range of iconographic and typological representations. The four Chinese porcelains examined in this article represent various phases of Christianity in China throughout the Ming and Qing dynasties. The intermittent intersection of Chinese art with Christian elements is evident in these porcelain pieces.

The first Chinese bowl made between 1520 and 1540, probably during the Jiajing period, is one of the first orders of porcelain, a term generally attributed to the very first commissions of Chinese porcelains by the Portuguese after they arrived in China. In Europe, the Portuguese were the first to engage in the activity of commissioning porcelains. They were the first to directly contact Chinese merchants, so their role in missionary work is not surprising. The combination of the symbol of the King of Portugal and the symbol of Christianity is a political affirmation of the King Manuel of Portugal, to whom the Pope had granted the right of territorial, political, and spiritual sovereignty of the overseas conquests, presenting the king as the herald of Christ and Christianity in Asia.

The second Chinese bottle was made between 1620 and 1644, specifically during the Tianqi or Chongzhen period. The symbol of the Dominicans reflects the complex circumstances that arose during the sixteen years of the Iberian Union. In the 17th century, the Dominican, Franciscan, and Augustinian missionaries encountered the Jesuits. In contrast to other mendicant orders, Jesuit missionaries adopt a policy of accommodation or adaptation to Chinese culture. The discrepancies arose from their divergent apostolic methodologies, leading to the Chinese Rites Controversy. The shape of the porcelain also mirrors the

competitive dynamics involving the Dutch. Chinese porcelain exports underwent a transition from being commissioned by the Portuguese to being commissioned by the Dutch.

The third Chinese saucer was made between 1662 and 1722, within the Kangxi period. This porcelain depicting the Crucifixion is significant as one of the earliest manifestations of the figure of Jesus on Chinese porcelain and as an early example of Chinese porcelain design influenced by European prints. It serves as a testament to the transitional period from Ming to Qing, the flourishing of porcelain production with technical advancements, and the varying degrees of success and failure of missionary strategies.

The final dish was made between 1715 and 1725, probably dating back to the Yongzheng era. The imposition of religious restrictions did not impede the exchange and evolution of artistic expression. The Chinese porcelain features a comprehensive depiction of the Bible story at its center, while the rim is adorned with a decorative band incorporating leaf and fruit motifs reminiscent of designs found on Delftware. Despite technical imperfections and limited comprehension, the Baptism in the Chinese landscape demonstrates the fusion of the Christian scene and Chinese motifs, reflecting the influence of the European *chinoiserie* trend. The Chinese porcelain featuring a European print design with biblical motifs may have been used by local converts or exported to Europe. They probably arrived in Europe more as curiosities and as evidence of the success of the Christian mission. After 1740, a variety of decorative items, including *encre de Chine* and Jesuit wares, were made for Christian missionaries, not in China, but in Europe.

From a vertical perspective, from the first porcelain to the last, the presence of Christian iconography, the utilization of European artistic techniques, and the incorporation of religious motifs are three noteworthy aspects to consider.

The first bowl is decorated with the sacred monogram IHS on the exterior surface and the Latin inscription "AVE MARIA GRACIA PLENA" on its rim. The second bottle is painted with several religious symbols, constituting a relevant religious representation on two sides. The third saucer is portrayed at the inner center of the scene of the Crucifixion. The version is simplified, yet it completely occupies the image. The final dish depicts the entire scene of Baptism. The biblical narrative is conveyed through the imagery depicted on porcelain. The evolution of Christian iconography is evident in the progression from the monogram and inscription to the symbolic elements, followed by the simplified scene, and ultimately culminating in the complete bible scene, showcasing increasing diversity and visibility.

The first bowl exhibits a complete Chinese style, evident in both its decoration and shape. The second bottle was made after its European glass prototype. The third saucer attempted to employ the perspective technique. The design of the religious scene on the last dish appears to have been derived from a copperplate engraving and European print found in a missionary publication. In addition to the Chinese missionary efforts, Western technology was also utilized to create Christian iconography.

The first bowl exhibits a scarcity of religious motifs. The traditional Chinese motif, such as the guardian lion symbolizing Buddhism, is depicted in the most esteemed porcelain section. The second porcelain is a fusion of religious and Chinese motifs. Numerous cherubs are depicted within the traditional auspicious motif—*xiang yun*. Religious motifs are seamlessly integrated with Chinese motifs in a harmonious manner. The third porcelain piece prominently features religious images, with Western figures painted by Chinese craftsmen sporting oriental facial features. In the fourth piece, the Chinese motifs have been marginalized, and the porcelain borders have also been westernized.

The Jesuits introduced European culture to China in a distinctive manner as a result of missionary efforts. Before the Yongzheng reign and within favorable social and political conditions, Christianity manifested in increasingly European characteristics.

It is also worth pointing out that in the first two porcelain pieces, the choice of craftsmen was mainly based on their inventory of traditional Chinese motifs. Even though the inscription AVE MARIA, the sacred monogram, and the royal coat of arms requested by those who commissioned were painted in the first bowl, the most crucial choice of the

porcelain craftsmen remained the guardian lion motif, a Buddhist symbol in Chinese culture. The second bottle also reflects the Chinese craftsmen's preference. They accomplished the symbol of Dominicans and did not forget to choose their familiar patterns to create, such as auspicious clouds and a Chinese landscape. Their choice or preference, in other words, is in line with their own cultural identity. Moreover, this intentional or unintentional choice promotes cultural blending and religious syncretism and creates a dynamic space for interreligious dialogue. In the third saucer and the last dish, although the religious figures were domesticated in the process of adaptation, two scenes of bible stories are presented in their entirety, reflecting the power of sacred images. When words and language became communication barriers, images became necessary missionary tools. The transmission of faith is realized through material culture, which could be porcelain, prints, or other art forms.

4. Conclusions

Porcelains have traversed various regions and cultures over time, posing a challenge in interpreting their original contexts. Due to the limited information available about the individual who placed the order and the absence of corresponding records regarding the acquisition of religious porcelain by Chinese converts, it is currently unfeasible to definitively link these Chinese porcelains featuring Christian iconography to missionary endeavors in China. Additionally, no historical evidence exists that Chinese craftsmen were Christian or knew the Bible stories. It cannot be ruled out that the religious motifs on these porcelains were extracted from other materials, such as engravings, since Christianity arrived in China by the 7th century, and different techniques, materials, and motifs to the Christian subjects were applied for missionary purposes. However, the presence of Christian iconography, the utilization of European artistic techniques, and the incorporation of religious motifs contribute to a better understanding of the spread of Christian missions and local religious policies during various periods. More importantly, they illustrate artistic miscegenation and transcultural communication.

The four pieces of Chinese porcelain emphasized in this article reveal that objects of art and material culture represent paradigms encompassing beliefs, worldviews, and discourses within a specific historical period and context. Chinese craftsmen interpret and convey a distinct religious culture through their familiar artistic expressions. Despite being commissioned by Europeans, Chinese craftsmen consciously or unconsciously adapted unfamiliar Christian iconography in accordance with their aesthetic codes, cultural ideology, and religious beliefs. In doing so, they revitalized Western religious motifs and biblical scenes. In China, Christian iconography was shaped by Chinese culture. Conversely, it is undeniable that certain Jesuits favored using aesthetic models from Chinese art to depict Christian scenes, thereby aiming to facilitate the process of conversion. This alternative strategy aligns with their adaptation policy and reflects their interest in understanding other cultures. This interaction reflected on Chinese porcelain promotes intercultural and interreligious dialogue.

This dialogue becomes tangible and visible through cultural and visual materials. In the objects, read the religious influence as much or more than in the documents. The biblical themes are not only explicated through verbal discourse but also visually depicted through images produced in China. The image may serve as a reflection of the word, thereby aiding in the elucidation of sacred histories and Christian teachings that may not be easily comprehensible through words alone, particularly for individuals lacking a background in Bible history and Christian teachings (Lopes 2017, p. 95). Additionally, Hans Belting (2001, p. 9) points out that an image is more than a product of perception. It is created as the result of personal or collective knowledge and intention. We live with images; we comprehend the world in images. Written materials could undoubtedly complement visual material.

Intercultural or interreligious dialogue is not simply an event; instead, it is a dynamic process that evolves over time. Nicolas Standaert (2008) suggests that missionaries in

China created a space of interaction that led to the reframing of that space wherein traditional actions and ideas are reconceived. Therefore, the focus is neither on the transmitter nor on the receiver but on what is "in-between". Chinese craftsmen and European missionaries collaborated innovatively to create a space where dialogue could take place.

The juxtaposition of symbols from two distinct religions does not indicate any potential religious syncretism (Afonso 2014, p. 192). These pieces show traces of balanced intercultural communication; in other words, Western and Eastern cultures never try to overlap each other but assimilate and coexist. In this "in-between" space, we can envision the impact of European traders and missionaries, who introduced a new wave of Christianity to China and brought diverse objects to Asia, connecting multiple regions through artistic and knowledge exchange networks. Thus, it facilitated coexistence and mutual understanding among different cultural civilizations.

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Article

Saepius Legentes ac Sedulo Conspicientes: Reading the Image, Contemplating the Text in Hrabanus Maurus' Carmina Figurata

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Abstract: *De Laudibus Sanctae Crucis* (*DLSC*) by Hrabanus Maurus is a seminal work in the medieval Christian literature that explores the Cross as the central structure of the universe through a unique amalgamation of poetry, prose, and visual art. The work employs a multi-layered narrative that enriches the reader's understanding, encouraging a meditative interaction with the text that emphasizes the contemplative over the recitative. This paper analyzes Hrabanus's intricate use of verbal and visual elements to guide his readers into a profound meditation on the universal significance of the Cross.

Keywords: Hrabanus Maurus; medieval theology; visual poetry; theological symbolism; Carolingian renaissance

1. Introduction

> "... Quidam monacus, post monachum Moguntinae civitatis episcopus, nomine Rabanus, ... tale de laude crucis orditus est opus et textuit et texendo perfecit, quo pretiosius ad videndum, amabilius ad legendum, dulcius ad retinendum, nec laboriosius ad scribendum potest inveniri nec poterit" ("A certain monk, and after being a monk bishop of Mainz, called Hrabanus, started such a book about the praise of the Cross and wove it and perfected it by weaving, that none other can be found more precious to see, more pleasing to read, sweeter to remember, or more laborious to write"). (Odilo of Cluny, *Sermo* XV, *De sancta cruce*, PL 142: 1034A–B)

The monk and later bishop of Mainz St Odilo (994–1048) is here referring to is no other than Hrabanus Maurus (780?–856)[1]; the book is the work that is generally known as *De Laudibus Sanctae Crucis* from Jacobus Wimpfeling's first edition in Pforzheim in 1503, although most probably during the Middle Ages it was rather referred to as *In honorem sanctae crucis* (Perrin 1998, p. 255) or some other similar expression[2]. It enjoyed great popularity during the Middle Ages, as over eighty manuscripts or fragments have survived to the 21st century (Perrin 1990). Nowadays, we are all familiar with it as well, at least to a certain extent, as some of its pages are shown on the cover of some recently published books about the Carolingian era, with some enigmatic figures floating on a grid of letters[3].

The book, composed between 810 and 814, is in itself a remarkable demonstration of mastery of the Latin language, and the integration of image and text is such that, at times, it is hardly possible to determine where the image ends and the text starts.

Hrabanus conceived it as a double work, divided into two books, complementing each other, preceded by a few preliminary pieces that change from manuscript to manuscript. The first book, which is the core of the whole work, is a series of 28 *carmina figurata*, in a layout with each *carmen* placed on the left page of the double-page spread and the corresponding explanation of the *carmen* added on the right page, together with the transcription of the *versus intexti*. The second book starts with a preface where Hrabanus explains why he added it (apparently later) and the free prose transcription of all the *carmina*. In his

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relatively recent and only scholarly edition[4], Michel Perrin (1997b, pp. X–XI) refers to the preliminary pieces as A, to the *carmina figurata* of the first book as B, to the corresponding *declarationes figurae* of the first book as C, and to the second book as D. Then, he notes each piece with a number; for instance, B12, C12, and D12 refer, respectively, to the twelfth *carmen figuratum*, its corresponding *declaratio figurae*, and its rendition in prose. This incredibly convenient referencing convention will be followed in the rest of this paper.

In this article, our goal is to delve into the several layers of meaning of the text and images and how Hrabanus leads his reader to the text through the figures in a sort of pendulum movement, *saepius legentes ac sedulo conspicientes* ("reading over and over again and observing diligently"), as he states in one of the preliminary pieces[5]. However, before that, we need to take a detour to understand Hrabanus Maurus' choices and his compositional methods in his personal use of the old genre of the *carmen figuratum*.

2. Composition and Dissemination of *De Laudibus Sanctae Crucis* (*DLSC*)

Hrabanus conceived the idea of *DLSC*, apparently encouraged by Alcuin while still studying under his direction at the Monastery of Tours. At least, this is what we have to understand from Alcuin's letter to Hrabanus, in which he requests *libellum, quem me rogante scribere promisisti, rogo, ut tua fiat promissio firma et mea impleatur laetitia* ("the Little book which you promised to write at my request, I ask, so that your promise be fulfilled and my joy complete." MGH, *Epistolae* IV, pp. 223–24). However, Alcuin died in 804 when Hrabanus was far from having *DLSC* ready.

When Hrabanus finally finished *DLSC*, somewhere between 810 and 814, he was 30 years old, as he himself declared in the *Intercessio Albini pro Mauro*:

> Ast ubi sex lustra implevit, iam scribere temptans/ad Christi laudem hunc edidit arte librum,/quo typicos numeros, tropicas et rite figuras/indidit, ut dona panderet alma dei. ("And when he completed six lustra, now attempting to write, he produced this book with art for the praise of Christ. In it, he placed symbolic numbers and allegorical figures, in order to unfold the nourishing gifts of God"). (A2) (MGH, *Poet. Lat*. II, p. 159)

Some additional information about the origin of *DLSC* is found in Hrabanus' letter to his fellow student (and later Hrabanus' successor as abbot of Fulda), Hatto (M.G.H. Epist. V, p. 381[6]), when he presented him with the first copy of the book. This letter was written at the latest in December 814, since Hrabanus refers to Hatto as conlevita, meaning they were both deacons, and we know that Hrabanus was ordered as a priest that year. In it, Hrabanus recalls that he started the work *te adhortante* ("with your urging") and *te conlaborante* ("with your help"). Although this later statement could be understood simply as a polite expression in recognition of friendship, Hatto's role in the conception of *DLSC* may have been indeed very influential since, according to Hrabanus, Hatto was very appreciative of the art of painting (*Nam picture tibi cum omni sit gratior arte*, M.G.H. Poet. Lat. II, p. 196, v. 1), whereas for Hrabanus, the written word was clearly superior[7]. Therefore, the collaboration between Hatto and Hrabanus may have been instrumental in the origin of *DLSC*. Furthermore, Hrabanus seems to have been the only author, with Hatto's role reduced to that of a reviewer.

Although in the same letter to Hatto, Hrabanus states that he dictated (*dictavi*) *DLSC*, we should understand "dictation" in the general sense of "composition," at least for the *carmina,* as it is difficult to believe that this type of *carmina figurata* could be composed in any other way than by writing (as we shall see more in depth in the following section). Moreover, in the dedication to Archbishop Otgar of Mainz (A1, v. 2), Hrabanus refers to *DLSC* as the *librum* quem *dudum mente dedi et calamo* ("the book some time ago I produced with my mind and my pen"); this statement is also corroborated by another dedication to the abbey of Saint-Denis (A4, v. 3–4), where he adds *prosaque metroque confeci librum mente manuque simul* ("I made the book in prose and verse with my mind and my hand at the same time"), implying that,

together with the mental effort, he also labored manually. Of course, the prose parts could have been dictated to a secretary in the literal sense of the word.

Apart from Hatto, who seems to have received a preliminary version of *DLSC*, Hrabanus (or rather the abbots of Fulda, since one cannot assume that Hrabanus could have had the monastery scriptorium at his disposal to produce such costly manuscripts) presented many authorities with copies of *DLSC*, and for a few of them, the dedicatory poems or letters have been preserved in one way or another. When we are confronted with any of the existent copies of the book, it is easy to see why the abbots of Fulda Ratgar (802–817) and Eigil (817–822), and later Hrabanus himself (822–842), considered it a precious gift. In chronological order (Perrin 1997b, pp. XX–XXVI), the personalities we know for certain received a copy of *DLSC* are the following:

- Hatto, around 810 (*M.G.H. Epist.* V, pp. 381–82).
- Archbishop Haistulf of Mainz (813–826) (A1, v. 6–112).
- The abbey of St. Martin of Tours (maybe as early as 824, but it could have been as late as 822) (A2).
- Archbishop Otgar of Mainz (826–847), but the presentation happened in any case before 833 (A1) (Perrin 1997a, p. 57).
- Emperor Louis the Pious, probably in 835, maybe in 831 (A5, A6) (Perrin 1997a, p. 52)
- Pope Gregory the Fourth (827–844), although he may have never received the book (A3)
- Archbishop Raoul of Bourges (840–866). However, Perrin thinks that although manuscript P (see below) belonged to Raoul, he may have been, in fact, the second or even the third owner[8] (Perrin 1997b, pp. XXIV–XXV)
- Pope Sergius the Second (844–847), in 844 (Perrin 1997b, p. XXV)[9]
- Margrave Eberhard of Friuli (dead in 864/5) (MGH, Epist. 5, pp. 481, 15–19)
- The abbey of St. Denis, after 840 (A4)

We know these personalities received a copy of *DLSC* simply because the presentation letters have been preserved somehow. We cannot know who else may have also been presented with one.

In any case, a few of the 81 manuscripts and fragments identified by Perrin (1990) were copied either in Fulda or Mainz and, therefore, under Hrabanus' supervision. These are the following:

- V: Vaticanus, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Reginensis Latinus 124: 365 × 295 mm, 61 ff., copied in Fulda during the second quarter of the ninth century (https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Reg.lat.124 (accessed on 15 June 2024)). It is a composite manuscript, and one of its segments may have been Hrabanus' own copy, or otherwise, a copy from the exemplar of the library of the Fulda monastery, copied during Hrabanus' lifetime, and corrected as the text evolved and became more precise (Perrin 1997b, pp. XXXIV–XXXV, XXXIX).
- P: Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 2423: 415 × 325 mm, 45 ff., copied in Fulda in the second quarter of the ninth century (https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9078151c/f1.item (accessed on 15 June 2024), in black and white).
- A: Amiens, Bibliothèque Municipale 223: 405 × 335 mm; 47 ff., copied in Fulda in the se second quarter of the ninth century (https://portail.biblissima.fr/ark:/43093/mdatab46be2e2dfc8fdd8cc234d100192cea3b945c02e, http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8452181v (accessed on 15 June 2024)).
- T: Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale Unversitaria K. II. 20: 290/330 × 210/240 mm, 48 ff., copied in Fulda in the middle of the ninth century.
- Q: Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 2422: 365 × 280 mm, 43 ff., copied in Fulda and Mainz in the middle of the ninth century (https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8490076p (accessed on 15 June 2024)).
- W: Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek 652: 410 × 310 mm, 47 ff., copied in Fulda and Mainz in the middle of the ninth century (https://digital.onb.ac.at/

RepViewer/viewer.faces?doc=DTL_7223619&order=1&view=SINGLE (accessed on 15 June 2024)). This seems to be the copy of Archbishop Otgar of Mainz[10].

3. Structure: *Opus Geminum* in Two Books

In Hrabanus' conception, *DLSC* was an *opus geminum*[11], meaning that it was written both in verse and prose, referring to the *carmina figurata*, always placed on the left page of the double-page spread, and the corresponding *declarationes figurae* (that is, the corresponding explanations of the *carmina*), always placed on the right page, so that *carmen* and *declaratio* face each other. To that, he added some preliminary matter that grew with time; in the initial state of composition, the preliminary matter contained at least the *carmen figuratum* where Hrabanus establishes his authorship and the prologue accompanying it. This preliminary matter grew with new dedications. Also, later, Book II was added with a prologue and a prose rendition of the *carmina*.

In Perrin's (1997b) scholarly edition, however, *DLSC* (he rather uses the title of *In honorem sanctae crucis*) is divided into four main parts. The first part is the preliminary matter, including dedications, a prologue, and a list of chapters. As a whole, this part is identified as A by Perrin (1997b). Then, Book I is divided into the *carmina*, labeled as B, and the *declarationes*, labeled as C. Finally, Book II is Perrin's part D.

3.1. Preliminary Pieces

As for part A, although none of the preserved manuscripts contain all these pieces together, Perrin (1997b, p. XI) lists the following:

- A1: Dedication to Otgar.
- A2: Dedication to St-Martin of Tours. It is also known as *Intercessio Albini pro Mauro.*
- A3: Dedication to Pope Gregory the Fourth.
- A4: Dedication to St-Denis.
- A5: *Carmen figuratum* to emperor Louis the Pious.
- A6: *Declaratio figurae* corresponding to A5.
- A7: Prologue.
- A8: Poem-preface with Hrabanus' signature.
- A9: Table of chapters.

Some manuscripts, but not all, also add images representing the author, guided by Alcuin, offering of the finished book to St. Martin, or a very similar composition where Alcuin guides Hrabanus to the presence of Archbishop Otgar of Mainz, instead. The presence of Alcuin was conceived, most probably, as a sort of posthumous tribute to his old master. Some manuscripts include, instead, a similar scene where the book is offered by Hrabanus alone to Pope Gregory the Fourth (see Figure 1).

The best-known piece of this introductory matter is the dedicatory to Emperor Louis the Pious, which is itself a *carmen figuratum* (A5), followed by the corresponding *declaratio figurae* in prose (A6) (Figure 2). Together, all pieces can qualify as a *speculum principis* (Sears 1990, p. 642), and it is a later (most likely in the 830s) addition. It has been the object of study multiple times[12], and therefore, we send the interested reader back to those studies. Here, we will limit ourselves to calling attention to the fact that the content of the *versus intexti* is very consciously related to the part of Louis' body where they have been placed.

However, although it has not received much attention, one might argue that the most important piece of part A is the *carmen figuratum* where Hrabanus declares his authorship (A8), complementing the prologue (A7). The reader will immediately notice that it is the only *carmen* placed on the right page of the double-spread, and it has no distinguishable figure. However, some letters stand out against the colored background in a fashion that forms a sort of grid of six rows and six columns superimposed on the grid of 36×36 of the poem. A closer look will also reveal that the 36 *litterae intextae* reveal the author's name: MAGNENTIVS HRABANVS MAVRVS HOC OPUS FECIT. Finally, it is written in elegiac couplets (minor mode) rather than elegiac hexameters, as the rest of the *carmina* is.



Figure 1. Manuscripts V, fol. 2v (**left**), Hrabanus, guided by Alcuin, presenting *DLSC* to St. Martin; and W, fol. 1v (**right**), Hrabanus, guided by Alcuin, offers *DLSC* to Archbishop Otgar of Mainz. In both cases, the presentation image faces the *Intercessio Albini pro Mauro* (A2).



Figure 2. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek 652, fols. 16v-17r. *Carmen figuratum* with the image of Louis the Pious (A5) and corresponding *declaratio figurae* (A6).

As for the content, Hrabanus states clearly his objective: *nunc dicere numen, partier carmina et al.loquiis/dona patris summi, quae largus reddidit orbi* ("to proclaim, equally in poems and speeches, the divine will, the gifts of the Supreme Father, which generously he gave to the world"). Further, he compares himself to the widow who offered a few small copper coins (Mc 12:41–44, Lc 21:1–4) and asks the rich ones of this world not to scorn his little offering (that is, the book), because, after all, he is only giving to the world what he had received from Christ (*en quanto tribuo tribuit mihi Jesus amator*).

The signature-poem (A8) is paired with the prologue (A7) (Figure 3). It is not just a coincidence (nothing is in *DLSC*), as the two texts complement each other. In the prologue, Hrabanus returns to the motivation that prompted him:

> Hortatur nos lex diuina ad deferendum Domino dona; nec excipit aliquem, sed ab omnibus spontaneam expetit oblationem, cum Moysi Dominus praecepit ita dicens: Loquere filiis Israhel, ut tollant mihi primitiai, ab omni hamum: qui offert ultroneus accipietis eas. Vbi nullus excusationi locus datur, quando uoluntas prompta quaeritur et non necessitas imponitur, sed uniuscuiusque proprio arbitrio relinquitur, unde ipse haec legens, animum deuotum impendens, offerebam has primitias, in laudem sanctae crucis expensas, quae columna est caelestis aedilicii, in qua uidelicet constructa est domus Christi: ipsi arbitri interno qui me conspicit, non superba intentione, sed humili deuotione, quicquid sua gratia possum, in eius laudem uolo conferre, qui non secundum faciem, sed secundum cor iudicans, non aestimat quantitatem muneris, sed quantitatem deuotionis ("The divine law encourages us to bring gifts to the Lord; it doesn't exempt anyone but seeks a voluntary offering from all, as the Lord commanded Moses, saying: Speak to the Israelites, that they take for me a first offering, from everyone who is willing; you shall receive them from those who offer willingly. Where no excuse is given place, when a ready will is sought and no necessity is imposed, but it is left to each one's own discretion. Hence, I, reading these things, devoting a devout spirit, shall offer these first fruits, spent in praise of the holy cross, which is the pillar of the heavenly building, in which the house of Christ is evidently constructed. To that internal judge who sees me, not with proud intention, but with humble devotion, whatever I can by His grace, I want to contribute to His praise, who judges not according to appearance, but according to the heart, not estimating the quality of the gift, but the amount of devotion").

Nevertheless, then Hrabanus addresses his reader, informing them of the way to read *DLSC*:

> Nec enim arbitror me posse aliquid sanctae cruci decoris conferre, quae claritate sua cuncta clarificat; sed claritatem eius et maiestatem perpetuam, laudibus quibuscumque possum, conseruis meis praedico, ut saepius eam legentes acsedulo conspicientes, nostram in ea redemptionem assidue cogitemus, Redemptorique nostro incessanter gratias agamus … ("For I do not think that I can contribute any honor to the Holy Cross, which illuminates all things with its brightness; but its brightness and everlasting majesty, with whatever praises I can, I proclaim to my fellow servants, so that by reading about it often and diligently observing it, we may constantly think about our redemption in it, and unceasingly give thanks to our Redeemer …")
>
> Quapropter rogo, ut quicumque textum huius operis perspexerit, non statim propter artificis uilitatem spernendo abiciat, sed, si uelit et possit, legat et oculo sanae fidei intuendo atque per auctoritatem diuinarum Scripturarum diiudicando … ("Therefore, I ask that whoever has examined the text of this work would not immediately discard it with contempt due to the lowliness of the craftsman, but, if willing and able, should read it and consider it with the eye of healthy faith and judge it through the authority of the divine scriptures …")
>
> De cetero autem moneo lectorem, ut huius conscriptionis ordinem teneat, et figuras in eo factas ubique seruare non negligat, ne operis pretium pereat, et utilitas lectionis minuatur. Quod ut facilius possit, uniuscuiusque figurae rationem in sequenti sibi pagina prosaico stylo intimare curabam, subtetnectens expositionem eius simul et uersus qui in ea conscripti sunt. ("Furthermore, I advise the reader to maintain the order of this writing and not neglect to preserve the figures made therein everywhere, lest the value of the work be lost, and the utility of reading be diminished. To make this easier, I took care to intimate the rationale of each

figure on the following page in a prose style, underpinning both its explanation and the verses that are written in it.")

That is, Hrabanus conceived *DLSC* to guide the meditation of the readers, and this meditation includes the contemplation of the figures as well as the rumination on the different levels of the text, presumably the *versus intexti*, the *declaratio figurae* on the right page, and the field of the *carmen*. This reading must have been extremely slow, given the grammatical complications and the absence of aiding devices such as punctuation or space between words.

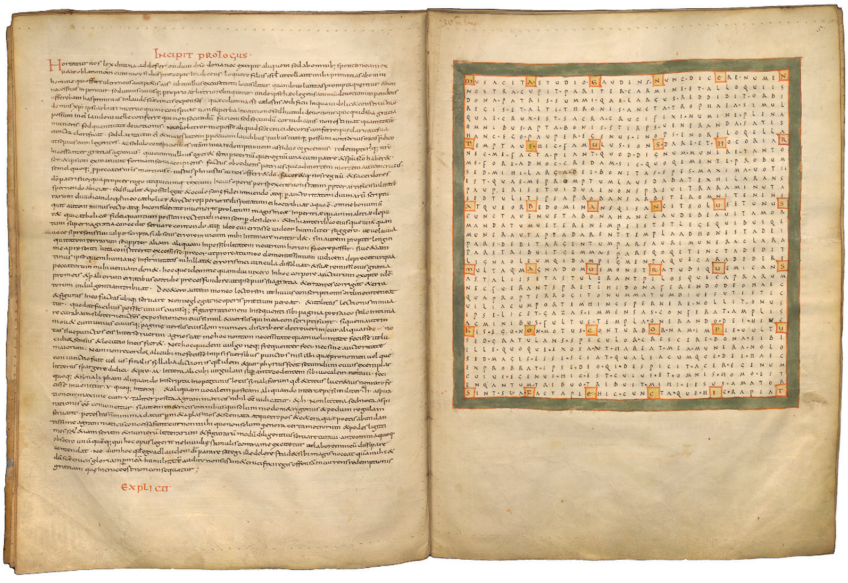


Figure 3. Prologue (A7) and signature-poem (A8) in Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek 652, fols. 4v-5r.

3.2. Book I: Carmina and Declarationes Figurarum

The core of *DLSC* is Book I. It comprises 28 *carmina figurata* (identified as B by Perrin) plus the corresponding *declarationes figurae* (identified as C by Perrin), which have the function of expounding the theological, spiritual, and symbolical rationale of the *carmina*. All the *carmina* occupy the left page of the double-page spread, whereas the corresponding *declaratio figurae*, where Hrabanus elaborates on the poem content and its sources, occupies the right page (see Figure 4). Together, they can be conceived as a cosmological macro-poem about the history of creation, the mediation of Christ, and the redemptive power of the Cross, starting with the risen Christ and then descending to the time and space of human history. Then, the first half of the *carmina* (B1 to B14) deals with the time from the creation of the universe to the Passion of Christ, whereas the second half (B15 to B24) deals with the time of the Church and the Kingdom of Heaven (Perrin 2009, p. 44). The *declaratio figurae* corresponding to *carmen* 28 works as a sort of conclusion and recapitulation for the whole book with the statement that the Cross is the *consummatrix et perfectio rerum* ("consummation and perfection of the world") at the end of the *declaratio figurae* (C28) (Perrin 1995, p. 200).

In this way, Book I can be considered a sort of liturgical year in miniature, a concentration of dogmatic and theological poetry and sacred history. All in all, a true monastic prayer.



Figure 4. B15+C15: the Lamb of God encircled by the evangelists' symbols. Ms. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 2422, fol. 17v-18r.

The composition of the *carmina* is extremely complex. All poems in section B are written in hexameters of a fixed number of letters (there are 14 poems of 37 letters, 7 of 35, 4 of 39, 2 of 36, and 1 of 41), and most of them are also square, meaning that the number of verses is the same as the number of letters per verse. Only a few poems are slightly higher than wide: B1 (47 × 39), B22 (41 × 39), and B28 (43 × 35). Because of its square or rectangular nature and the fact that the letters are arranged in a grill, this type of *carmen figuratum* is sometimes referred to as *carmen cancellatum* or "grill poem".

If writing poetry within these constraints is not difficult enough, the figures add a new layer of complication. The groups of letters overlaid on the figures can be read independently, contain their own message, and have their own Latin metric. Therefore, they are to be read twice—once by themselves and once together with the "field" of the poem. They receive the name of *versus intexti*, where "intextus" means, literally, interwoven. The poem is written in rustic capitals in most earlier manuscripts, with the *versus intexti* highlighted using the uncial script (Perrin 1997b, p. XXXIV).

So, in order to build his poems, Hrabanus needed first to determine the main theme of the poem, then consider which figure(s) and which number(s) would be appropriate to convey it, and after that, give form to the *versus intexti* within the appropriate shape and number. Further, he would have to decide the number of letters for the hexameters, place the figures with the *versus intexti* in the grid, and compose each hexameter using the letters of the *versus intexti* when required[13].

One can hardly imagine the difficulty of writing Latin metric poetry within such constraints, and one cannot but be forgiving of the liberty Hrabanus takes concerning the conventions of classical poetry. Hrabanus is, as a matter of fact, very conscious of this and feels that some explanation is needed in the prologue. One almost feels that he is apologizing for it, even though licenses of this sort are not uncommon in the poetry of the time. Still, in 1884, Dümmler found this twisting of the language so appalling that he chose "to omit the book composed on the praises of the Holy Cross, lest readers be wearied by its tedious and insipid circumlocutions" (MGH, *Poetae Latini aevi Carolini* II, p. 157). It would seem that in his harsh judgment he was ignoring the constraints that the genre was imposing on the composition and therefore the function of the figures as well.

3.3. Book II: Prose Rendition of the Carmina

Also, the reading must have been extremely cumbersome, even with the help of the *declaratio figurae*. To help the reader, Hrabanus added Book II at a later date (D in Perrin's notation), in which he renders the same poems in prose after a short preface of justification declaring the rationale of the addition:

> Opus, quod in laudem sanctae cruces metrico stilo condidi, in prosam vertere curavi, ut, quia ob difficultatem ordinis et figurarum necessitate obscura locutio minusque patens sensus videtur metro inesse, saltem in prosa lucidior fiat ("The work, which I composed in praise of the holy cross in metrical style, I have taken care to convert into prose, so that, because the expression seems obscure and the meaning less clear due to the difficulty of the arrangement and the necessity of the figures in the meter, it may at least become clearer in prose.").
>
> (MGH *Epist*. 5, p. 384)

In some manuscripts, between Book I and Book II, the poems were re-copied but in normal writing—that is, free from the grid and the figures and with separation between words (Perrin 1997b, p. XIX).

4. The Figures of *DLSC*

When confronted with any of Hrabanus' *carmina*, the first thing one perceives is the figures. However, by no means do they have the value of paintings or illustrations.

The figures within Hrabanus' *DLSC* are far more than mere visual embellishments; they serve as a fundamental component of the text communicative framework. Each figure, intricately designed, guides the reader's journey through the text, leading them directly to the *versus intexti*. But not only that: the figures are meticulously crafted to convey specific theological messages, interwoven with the messages offered by the texts, and therefore they function simultaneously as narrative devices and symbols in their own right. Their dual role enriches the reader, providing a deeper, more layered understanding of the text's spiritual and intellectual exploration.

Therefore, in this section, we will analyze the interaction between the figures and the verses, uncovering the sophisticated method by which Hrabanus embedded a layer of rich symbolic and doctrinal content into the fabric of his poetry in order to complement and enhance the textual narrative.

The figures themselves, which in one way or another are cross-like designs (except for B22, which is *Chi-Rho* monogram), can be divided into four different types:

- Plain crosses, in general, very stylized and with a linear design (see Figure 5).
- Geometrical shapes (squares, hexagons, etc.) (see Figure 6).
- Letters, many times doubling as numbers, either Roman or Greek.
- Pictorial elements (Christ, the Four Living Creatures with the Lamb, Hrabanus himself, etc.) (for example, see Figure 4 above).

However, even the figures that represent pictorial elements such as Christ, the Lamb of God, or angels are not materially exact representations but have a symbolic type; they transcend physical reality and take the viewer to the superior reality they represent.

Besides the obvious cross-like pattern most of the figures are arranged in, to read the *versus intexti* they contain, one must go from top to bottom and then from left to right; that is, the eyes must follow the figures in the same direction the sign of the Cross is made.

In this way, the Cross inevitably becomes the mediation between the material world of the book pages and that superior reality into which the reader-observer is taken.



Figure 5. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek 652, fol. 31v-32r. B26-C26.

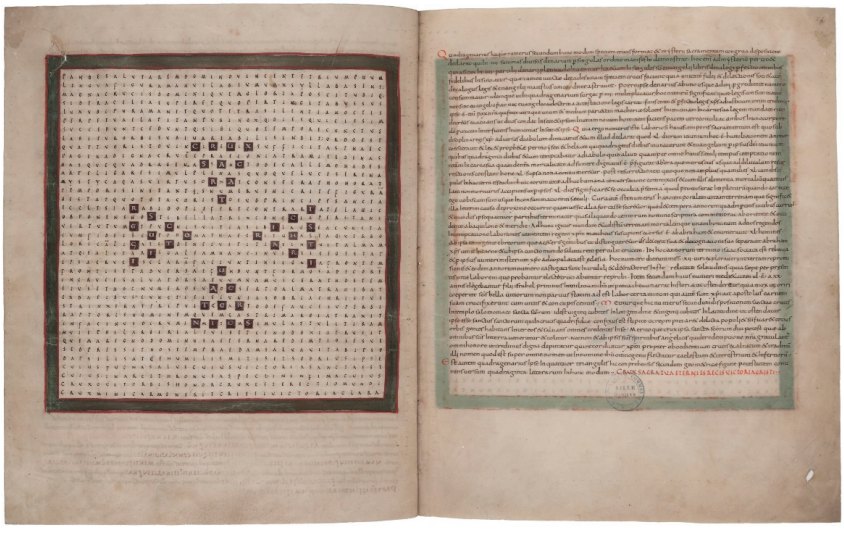


Figure 6. Amiens, Bibliothèque Municipale 223, fols. 23v-24r. B18-C18.

That Hrabanus did not see the figures as a mere ornament to the written word is plain from his admonition to his friend Hatto (M.G.H., *Epist.* V, p. 328):

> . . . si cui commissum tibi opus ad rescribendum tradideris, illum admoneas, ut figuras in eo factas et conscriptionis ordinem servare non negligat, ne forte, si formas figurarum variaverit, et scripturae ordinem commutaverit, operis precium perdat; et iam opus meum non meum esse faciat, quia non meum idem, sed nec suum, quia est vitiatum (". . . if you entrust the work I send you to somebody else to copy it, admonish him not to neglect the figures made in it nor the text of the writing, lest the work loses its value if he changes the shape of the figures or alters the order of the writing; and so make my work no longer mine, but his, because it is corrupted").

Another sign of the value of the figures is the fact that the titles of the *carmina* are, for the most part, either the description of the image itself or the meaning of some number that is conveyed by the figure. The following table lists the titles of the poems (Perrin 1997b, pp. 23–24), the size of the grid in the number of letters (height by width), a brief description of the figures, the *versus intexti* (in small uppercase), and the folia where they can be found in the manuscripts VPAQW[14]

I. De imagine Christi in modum crucis brachia sua expandentis et de nominibus eius ad diuinam seu ad humanam naturam pertinentibus ("On the image of Christ extending his arms in the form of a cross and on the names belonging to his divine or human nature") [47 × 39]	Risen Christ, naked but with a loincloth, extending his arms in the form of the cross, although the cross is missing. On Christ's head, there is a cruciform halo with the letters A, M, Ω. The hands of Christ extend beyond the field of letters. DEXTRA DEI SVUMMI CVNCTA CREAVIT IESVS./CHRISVS LAXABIT E SANGVINE DEBITA MVNDO./IN CRVCE SIC POSITVS DESOLVENS VINCLA TYRANNY./AETERNVS DOMINVS DEDVXIT AD STRA BEATOS./ATQVE SALVTIFERAM DEDERAT DEVS ARCE CORONAM. VESTE QVIDEM PARVA HIC TEGITUR QVI CONTINENT ASTRA, ATQVE SOLVUM PALMO CLAUDIT VBIQBE SVO./ISTE EST REX IVSTITIAE./ORDO IVSTUS DEO./REX REGVM ET DOMINVS DOMINORUM./A, M ET Ω (Jesus created all things with the right hand of the Most High./Christ will pay the world's debts with his blood./Thus placed on the cross, He frees us from the chains of tyranny./The eternal Lord has led the blessed to the heavens./God has placed the crown of salvation in the sky./A small garment covers He who holds the stars together,/and his palm encloses the entire earth./This is the King of Justice./A just order by God./King of Kings and Lord of Lords./A, M, and Ω) V: 8; P: 4; A: 6; Q: 3; W: 6
II. De crucis figura quae intra tetragonum est scripta et omnia se comprehendere manifestat ("On the figure of the Cross, which is written within a square and reveals all things within itself") [35 × 35]	Stylized Greek cross just one letter in width in a square. O CRVX QVAE SVMMI ES NOTO DEDICATA TROPAEO./O CRVX QVAE CHRISTI ES CARO BENEDICTA TRIVMPHO,/O CRCX QVAE EXCELLIS TOTO ET DOMINARIS OLYMPO./O CRVX QUAE DEDERAS RVPTO PLEBEM IRE AB AVERNO./O CRVX DVX MISERO LATOOQVE REDEMPTIO MVNDO./O CRVX VEXILLUM SANCTO ET PIA CAVTIO SAECLO (O Cross, dedicated to the illustrious trophy of the Most High./O Cross, flesh blessed by the triumph of Christ./O Cross, you surpass and rule over the entire Olympus./O Cross, you have allowed the people to leave the shattered Avernus./O Cross, guide for the wretched and redemption for the vast world./O Cross, standard and pious protection for the world you sanctify.) V: 9; P: 5; A: 7; Q: 4; W: 7
III. De nouem ordinibus angelorum et de nominibus eorum in crucis figuram dispositis ("On the nine orders of the angels and their names arranged in the form of a cross") [36 × 36]	The words "crux" and "salus" arranged in a cross shape. ANGELI/ARCANGELI/VIRTVTES/POTESTATES/ PRINCIPAT<VS>/DOMINATIONES/THRONI/ CHERUBIN/SERAPHIN (Angels/Archangels/Virtues/ Powers/Principalities/Dominations/Thrones/Cherubim/ Seraphim.) V: 10; P: 6; A: 8; Q: 5; W: 8

IIII. De Cherubim et Seraphim circa crucem scriptis et significatione eorum ("On the Cherubim and Seraphim written around the cross and their significance") [37 × 37]	A stylized Greek cross divides the field into four quadrants. The two upper quadrants are occupied by two seraphims with six wings (following Is. 6:2). In the two lower quadrants, there are two cherubims with arms extended. EX ARX ALMA CRVCIS, EN FABRICA SANCTA SALVTIS./EN THRONVS HIC REGIS, HAEC CONCILIATIO MVNDI./SIGNA CRVCIS CHRISTI AST SERAPHIM CAELESTIA MONSTRANT/PENNARVM ATQUE SITV HAC CVNCTA SACRATA PROBANT./NAM HAEC SOCIA EXVLTANT CELEBRANDO HAC LAVDE SVPERNVM/CONCLAMANTQVE TRIBVS SCEPTRA SABAOTH VICIBVS./HINC SIGNANT CHERVBIM HAEC LABBARA SANCTA TRIVMPHUM,/DISTENSISQVE ALIS BRACHIA TENSA NOTANT./QVAE LATERE ASSISTVNT ARCAE ET SACRA OPERCVLA CONDVNT/FACTAQVE PROPITIA OFFICIO IPSA PROBANT. (Behold the venerable fortress of the cross; here is the holy fabric of salvation./Here is the throne of the King, which reconciles the world with God./The celestial Seraphim signify the cross of Christ,/And by the position of their wings, they demonstrate that all is consecrated./These allies exult in celebrating the Most High with this praise,/And proclaim three times the scepters of Sabaoth./These holy banners mark the triumphs of the Cherubim,/With their wings spread, they symbolize the outstretched arms of Christ./Those who stand by the side of the Ark and conceal its sacred cover/Prove by their action the accomplishment of atonement.) V: 11; P: 7; A: 9; Q: 6; W:9
V. De quattuor figuris tetragonicis circa crucem positis et spiritali aedificio domus Dei ("On the four square figures placed around the Cross and the spiritual structure of the house of God") [35 × 35]	A stylized cross divides the field into four quadrants. A square occupies each quadrant. INCLYTA CRVX DOMINI CHRISTI FVNDAMEN ET AVLAE./TE PATRIARCHARVM LAVDABILIS ACTIO SIGNAT./PLEBSQVE PROPHETARVM DIVINO FAMINE IVSSA./AGMEN APOSTOLICVM PANDIT TVA RITE TROPAEA./MARTYRUM ET IPSE CHORVS EFFVSO IVRE CRVORE (Illustrious Cross of the Lord, foundation of God's Church./The praiseworthy action of the patriarchs signifies You./The people of prophets, commanded by the divine word./The apostolic rank rightly unfolds Your trophies./The very chorus of martyrs has justly shed their blood.) V: 12; P: 8; A: 10; Q: 7; W:10
VI. De quattuor uirtutibus principalibus quomodo ad crucem pertineant et quod omnium uirtutum fructus per ipsam nobis collate sint ("On the four principal virtues and how they pertain to the Cross, and how the fruits of all virtues are bestowed upon us through it") [37 × 37]	Four triangles arranged to form a cross. ARCE CRVCIS DOMINI SVMMA PRVDENTIA SISTIT./IVSTITIA ET PRONA MANDAT SE PARTE TENENDAM./FORTI SED IN DEXTRO CORNV FERT SPICVLA TVDO./CUM IN LAEVO MODERANS DISPONIT IVRA MODESTA. (Wisdom resides at the very top, in the fortress of the Lord's Cross./Justice dictates that it be willingly upheld./On the right side, courage carries its arrows./While on the left, temperate moderation arranges its laws.) V: 13; P: 9; A: 11; Q: 8; W: 11

VII. De quattuor elementis et quattuor uicissitudinibus temporum et de quattuor plagis mundi et de quattuor quadrantibus naturalis diei quomodo omnia in cruce ordinentur et in ipsa sanctificentur ("On the four elements and the four changes of the seasons, and the four plagues of the world, and the four quarters of the natural day, how all things are ordered in the cross and sanctified in it") [35 × 35]	Four circumferences of different colors arranged in the shape of a cross. VER, ORIENS, IGNIS, AVRORA, HAC PARTE RELVCENT./AVTVMNVS, ZEPHIRVS, TELLVS ET VESPERA HIC FIT./ARCTON, HIEMS, LYMPHA, MEDIA NOX ECCE LOCATAE./AER, AESTAS, AVSTER, ARCI HIC SIT MERIDIESQVE (Spring, the East, fire, dawn shine on this side./Autumn, Zephyrus, the earth, and evening are here./The Bear, winter, water, and midnight are placed here./Air, summer, the south wind, and midday are here in the fortress.) V: 14; P: 10; A: 12; Q: 9; W: 12
VIII. De mensibus duodecim et duodecim signis atque duodecim uentis et de apostolorum praedicatione et de ceteris mysteriis duodenarii numeri quae in cruce ostenduntur ("On the twelve months and twelve signs, and the twelve winds, and on the preaching of the apostles, and on the other mysteries of the number twelve which are shown in the Cross") [37 × 37]	Twelve-armed cross, with the secondary arms stemming from the middle of the main arms. IN CRVCE NVNC MENSES, VENTI, DVODENAQVE SIGNA./GREX ET APOSTOLICVS DECORATVR LVCE CORVSCA./SVNT QVOQVE CONSOCIA HIC STIPS, PLAGA ET ORBIS OPVS./SANCTA VALET CELEBRI AST CRVX DARE CALLE BONVM HOC. (In the cross now, the months, the winds, and the twelve signs of the Zodiac./The flock of apostles is adorned with dazzling light./This trunk of the cross, this region, and the work of the world are also associated here./The holy cross can bestow this good through a well-trodden path.) V: 15; P: 11; A: 13; Q: 10; W: 13
VIIII. De diebus anni in quattuor hexagonis et monade conprehensis et de bissextile increment quomodo in specie sanctae crucis adornentur et consecrentur ("On the days of the year encompassed in four hexagons and a monad, and on the leap year increment, how they are adorned and consecrated in the representation of the Holy Cross") [41 × 41]	A cross formed by four narrow hexagons. TERQVE CENTENOS DECIESQVE SENOS,/ET SEMEL QVINOS HABET VNIVERSVM/TEMPVS, ANNALIS CRVCE CIRCVITUS/ECCE DIES HIC./SED PLAGIS POSTI SATIS EXAGONI/QUATTVOR MONSTRANT DECIES NOVENOS./SINGVLI TOTOS PIE CVM MONADE/ET SVPER VNVM./STIRPS QVOQVE SANCTA CRVCIS CONPLET CERTO ORDINE SCEPTRVM/HAECQVE DECVS MUNDI EST MAGNA SALVS HOMINVM HAEC./CUNCTA TENET CHRISTVS BARATHRVM, ORBEM ATQVE AETHERA CELSA,/NAM REGIT ASTRA POLI HIC CLAVSTRAQVE CVNCTA DIEI (The universal time contains/three times a hundred, ten times six,/and once five days in the cross,/This is the annual cycle./Four hexagons placed at the corners/Each signify, in a holy manner, in total/ninety plus one/With a unit. Also, the holy wood of the cross completes the sovereignty in a specific order;/It is the glory of the world and the noble salvation of men./Christ holds all—the abyss, the world, and the high heavens,/For He governs the stars of the sky and all the gates of the day.) V: 16; P: 12; A: 14; Q: 11; W: 14
X. De numero .LXX. et de sacramentis eius quomodo cruci conueniant ("On the number 70 and its mysteries, and how they correspond to the Cross") [37 × 37]	A cross pattern formed by five circular sets of 14 single-letter squares (70 squares in total). CRUX, PIA CONSTRVCTA, HIC SVPERASTI VINCVLA MORTIS./MAGNA, BONA ET SANCTA, HIC SVPERASTI CRIMINA SAECLI (O Cross, piously constructed, here you have overcome the bonds of death./Great, good, and holy, here you have overcome the crimes of the age.) V: 17; P: 13; A: 15; Q: 12; W: 15

XI. De quinque libris mosaicae legis quomodo per crucem innouentur et exponantur ("On the five books of the Mosaic law and how they are renewed and expounded through the Cross") [36 × 36]	Five squares arranged in a cross shape. Each square has a side six letters in length. TE GENESIS CRVX ALMA BEAT, TVA MVNERA LAVDAT./EXODVS ATQVE CANIT TRANSITVS CARMEN AMORE./IVRA SACERDOTIS LEVITICVS OPTIME PSALLIT./AST NUMERVS CANTAT MAGNALIA MIRA TRIVMPHI./NAM DEVTERNOMIVM RENOVANTIS GAVDIA DICIT. (Genesis, O nourishing Cross, calls you blessed and praises your gifts./Exodus sings the song of passage with love./Leviticus excellently chants the priestly laws./But Numbers sings of the astonishing wonders of triumph./For Deuteronomy speaks of the joys given by He who renews the world.) V: 18; P: 14; A: 16; Q: 13; W: 16
XII. De nomine Adam protoplausti quomodo secundum Adam significet et eius passionem demonstret ("On the name of Adam, the first-formed, and how it signifies the second Adam and demonstrates his passion") [35 × 35]	The name "Adam" in Greek uppercase letters. SANCTA METRO ATQVE ARTE EN DECET VT SINT CARMINA CHRISTO HINC. (It is fitting that the poems to the glory of Christ be holy in their meter and their art.) V: 18; P: 15; A: 17; Q: 14; W: 17
XIII. De diebus conceptionis Christi in utero uirginis in quattuor crucibus demonstrates, hoc est, .CC.LXX.VI. Et eius numeri significatione ("On the days of gestation of Christ in the womb of the Virgin Mary showing in four crosses that is 276, and on the significance of this number") [35 × 35]	Four Greek crosses arranged in a cross shape. The width of the crosses' arms is three letters, so each cross contains 69 letters. FORMA SACRATA CRVCIS VENERANDO FVLGET AMICTV./MAGNVS VESTIT HONOR LAETVS, LOQVOR HOC NATIONI./CORPORIS ERGO SACRI CONSTRVCTIO IN ARTE BEATA./E NVMERO RADIANS QVAE INTVS PROBAT IISSE BEATE./NVNC CANAM AT EXORANS LESVM ABDERE ET VDA PIARE/VERA SALVS ISTA EST BENEDICTIO SANCTA SALVTIS./IN TOTO IPSE MANENS TENET IPSEQVE VIVIT IN OMNI./FONS BONITATIS, AMOR PIETASQVE, REDEMPTIO VERA. (The sacred form of the cross shines with its venerable garment./I joyfully tell the nation that great honor clothes it./The construction of a holy body is blessed in its art./Shining from the number it embodies, it proves the blessed event./Now in my song, I pray for Jesus, wounded, to hide and wash away my tears/This is the true salvation, the holy blessing of salvation./He himself remains in all, holds everything, and lives in every being./Fountain of goodness, love, piety, and true redemption.) V: 20; P: 16; A: 18; Q: 15; W: 17
XIIII. De annis ab exordio mundi usque in annum passionis Christi in notis graecarum litterarum secundum formam sanctae cruces dispositis simul cum sacramento quod in hoc reuelatur ("On the years from the beginning of the world until the year of the Passion of Christ, arranged according to the form of the Holy Cross in the signs of Greek letters, together with the mystery revealed in this") [39 × 39]	Greek ciphers arranged in a cross shape: ∞ = 1000, T = 300, Z = 7, Γ = 3. The Γ occupies the center of the cross, and each of the arms is formed by the letters Z, T, and ∞, running from the center to the edge. The addition of all the ciphers results in 5231. EN CRVCIS HAEC SPECIES IESVS BENE MONSTRAT HONOREM./CONPVTAT HVNC NVMERVM IESVS QVO EST PASSVS IN ARVIS. (This aspect of the cross well demonstrates the glory of Jesus./Jesus counts this number at the end of which He underwent His Passion on the earth.) V: 21; P: 17; A: 19; Q: 15; W: 19

XV. De quattuor euangelistis et agno in crucis specie constitutis ("On the four evangelists and the Lamb arranged in the form of the Cross") [36 × 36]	The Lamb of God in the center of the field. Then, arranged to form a cross, are the symbols of the four Evangelists. MATTHEVS HVNC HOMINEM SIGNAVIT IN ORDINE STIRPIS./LIBER GENERATIONIS <IESV CHRISTI>./MARCVS REGEM SIGNAT./VIX CLAMANTIS <IN DESERTO>./DAT LVCAS PONTIFICEM./FUIT IN DIEBUS HERO<DIS REGIS IUDAEAE SACERDOS>./ALTIVOLANS AQVILA ET VERBVM HAVSIT IN ARCE IOHANNIS./IN PRINCIPIO ERAT V<ERBVM>./SEPTEM SPIRITVS DEI./ECCE AGNVS DEI, ECCE QUI TOLLIT PECCATA MVNDI. (Matthew marked this man in the order of lineage./The book of the generation <of Jesus Christ>./Mark signifies the king./The voice of one crying <in the wilderness>./Luke presents the high priest./In the days of Herod, <king of Judea, there was a priest>./The soaring eagle, John, grasped the Word in the fortress <of heaven>./In the beginning was the <Word>./The seven spirits of God./Behold the Lamb of God, behold He who takes away the sins of the world.) V: 22; P: 18; A: 20; Q: 17; W: 20
XVI. De septem donis Spiritus Sancti quae propheta Esaias enumerate ("On the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit enumerated by the prophet Isaiah") [37 × 37]	A Greek cross with a width of five letters. Within it, seven flowers of eight petals each, one flower on the crossing and three flowers on each of the arms. SPIRITVS SAPIENTIAE/ET INTELLECTVS,/SPIRITVS CONSILII/ET FORTITVDINIS,/SPIRITVS SCIENTIAE/ATQVE PIETATIS,/SPIRITVS TIMORIS DEI (Spirit of wisdom/and understanding,/Spirit of counsel/and might,/Spirit of knowledge/and piety,/Spirit of the fear of God.) V: 23; P: 19; A: 21; Q: 18; W: 21
XVII. De octo beatitudinis euangelicis ("On the eight beatitudes from the Gospels") [39 × 39]	Eight octagons arranged in a cross shape. REGNA POLI DOMINVS VVLT PAVPERIS ESSE BEATI/ATQVE SOLVM MITES SEMPER HABITARE SVPERNVM./FELICES FLENTES QVIS CONSOLATION IN ALTO EST/NAM IVSTI CVPIDOS AETERNA REFECTIO CONPLET./MENTE PIOS SURSVM MISERATIO LARGA REPENSAT/CORDA SERENA DEVM CERNENT ET IN ARCE SVPERNA. PACIFICOS DOMINVS PROLIS CONPLECTIT AMORE./PRO CHRISTO AFFLICTOS REGNVM IAM SPECTAT OLYMPI. (The Lord wishes the kingdom of heaven to belong to the blessed poor/And that only the meek may always dwell in heaven./Blessed are those who mourn, for they have consolation in heaven,/For eternal refreshment fills those who hunger for righteousness./Generous mercy rewards in heaven those with pious hearts/And the pure in heart will see God in the heavenly fortress./The Lord embraces his peaceful children with love./The kingdom of Olympus already beholds those who have suffered for Christ.) V: 24; P: 20; A: 22; Q: 19; W: 22

XVIII. De numero quadragenario et mysterio eius ("On the number forty and its mystery") [37 × 37]	Four sets of 10 single-letter squares arranged as a tretractys. The four tetractys are arranged to form a cross. Therefore, in total, 40 single-letter squares. CRUX SACRA, TU AETERNI ES REGIS VICTORIA CHRISTI (Sacred Cross, you are the eternal victory of Christ, our King.) V: 25; P: 21; A: 23; Q: 20; W: 23
XVIIII. De quinquagenario numero et sacramento in eo manifestato ("On the number fifty and the mystery manifested in it") [37 × 37]	Five Xs (Latin cipher 10) arranged in the shape of a cross. Each of the diagonals of the Xs has five letters. QVINQVE IVVAT APICE AST SACRA DICERE, DE CRVCE ET HAEC NAM EST (It is beneficial to speak of five sacred things by a letter, which is that of the cross.) V: 26; P: 22; A: 24; Q: 21; W: 24
XX. De numero centenario et uicenario et mystica eius significatione ("On the number one hundred and twenty and its mystical significance ") [37 × 37]	Four lambdas (Greek cypher 30) arranged in the shape of a cross. EST ORBI TOTO DOMINI NAM PASSIO VITA./ARVO CRVX VNA SPES LIBERTATIS AB IRA./LUX LAETA LVCET DIVINO MVNERE PLENA./VERACI NVTV SIGNAT ET PROEMIA REGNI. (The Passion of the Lord is life for the entire world./For the world, the cross represents the sole hope of liberation from divine wrath./The joyful light shines, full of the divine gift./It also marks the rewards of the kingdom with a truthful sign.) V: 27; P: 23; A: 25; Q: 22; W: 25
XXI. De numero septuagenario et binario cum eius significationibus ("On the number seventy-two and its significance") [37 × 37]	A cross formed by four oval sets of 18 single-letter squares each. Therefore, in total, 72 single-letter squares. IN CRVCE LEX DOMINI DECORATVR LVCE CORVSCA./GENTES ET LINGVAE SOCIANTVR LAVDE SACRATA. (The law of the Lord is adorned with dazzling light on the cross./Nations and languages are united in sacred praise.) V: 28; P: 24; A: 26; Q: 23; W: 26
XXII. De monogrammate in quo Christi nomen conprehensum est in cuius medietate tempus praedicationis ipsius denotatum est et in altera medietate tempus ante iudicim eius futurum in quo Antichristus regnaturus aestimatur ("On the monogram in which the name of Christ is included, in one half of which the time of his preaching is indicated, and in the other half the time before his future judgment during which the Antichrist is estimated to reign") [41 × 39]	A Chi-Ro shaped with Greek letters. The P: COCHR IHECVC ALHΘIA (adding up 1260^{15}). The X: ΘC XPC IHC (adding up 1327). At the center of the X, there is an H from ALHΘIA; adding the H (8) to 1327, one gets 1335. NAM ALMA DECET RADIANT SCRIPTA HINC QVOD NOMINE CRISTI./SANCTA SALVTARIS LAVDAT HAEC SCRIPTIO CHRISTVM./CHRISTVS HOMO EST PLACIDVS NEMPE ARBITER HIC QVOQVE MVNDI EST. (It is fitting that from here below the sacred writings shine with the name of Christ./This holy and salvific writing praises Christ./Here is Christ the man, the gentle judge of the world.) V: 29; P: 25; A: 27; Q: 24; W: 27
XXIII. De numero uicenario et quaternario et eius sacramento ("On the number twenty-four and its mystery") [37 × 37]	Greek cross with arms ending in triangles made up of six single-letter squares, in the style of a cross pattée. FORTIS VIRTVS/VICTOR CLARVS./FORTIS CONPLEVIT CHRISTVS SVA FAMINA VIRTVS./VICTOR CONSIGNANS IESVS PIA PROEMIA CLARVS. (Courageous strength./Illustrious victor./Christ, with courageous strength, fulfilled His promises./Jesus, the illustrious victor, guarantees pious rewards.) V: 30; P: 26; A: 28; Q: 25; W: 28

XXIIII. De numero centenario et quadragenario atque quaternario eiusque significatione ("On the number one hundred forty-four and its significance") [37 × 37]	Four irregular pentagons of 36 letters arranged in the shape of a cross. INMACVLATA COHORS CANTAS TV VOCIBVS ILLIC,/REX VBI IESVS OVAT QVO PASCIT VIRGINIS AGNVS,/CARMINA QVAE NVLLVS DIFFVSO FAMINE CANTAT./HIC VESTER GREX NI SOLVS ET SPLENDIDVS ORDO. (Immaculate cohort, you sing with full voices there,/where King Jesus triumphs, where the Lamb of the Virgin grazes,/the song that one hears but cannot sing./Your flock is numerous and your order splendid here below.) V: 31; P: 27; A: 29; Q: 26; W: 29
XXV. De Alleluia et Amen in crucis forma ordinatis ("On the words Alleluia and Amen arranged in the form of the Cross") [37 × 37]	A small Greek cross at the center of the field. Around it, the letters of the word Alleluia arranged to form a cross pattern. CRVX AETERNA DEI ES LAVS, VIVIS IN ARCE POLORVM. (O Cross, you are the eternal praise of God; you live in the citadel of the heavens.) V: 32; P: 28; A: 30; Q: 27; W: 30
XXVI. De prophetarum sententiis quae ad passionem Christi et ad nostrum redemptionem pertinent ("On the sayings of the prophets which pertain to the passion of Christ and our redemption") [37 × 37]	Greek cross, with the arms and shaft reaching the edges of the text. ES PLACITA SUPERIS, CRVX, HVIC ES NAVITA MVNDO (You are pleasing to the beings above, O cross, you navigate this world.) V: 33; P: 29; A: 31; Q: 28; W: 31
XXVII. De apostolorum dictis ex eadem re in Nouo Testamento ("On the words of the apostles concerning the same matter in the New Testament") [35 × 35]	Greek cross, with the arms and shaft reaching the edges of the text. SI DO TE TIBI METRA SONO HIS TE, IESVS, IN ODIS./SI DO NISVS EI ET SI HONOS ARTEM IBIT ET ODIS (O Jesus, if I give you my verses, I make you resound in my songs./If I give Him my art and my efforts, His glory will be expressed in my songs.) V: 34; P: 30; A: 32; Q: 29; W: 32
XXVIII. De adoratione sanctae cruces ubi opifex ipse pro se deprecatur et ubi imago ipsius ad orandum subtus crucem genua flectit ("On the adoration of the Holy Cross, where the craftsman himself prays for himself and were the image of himself bows down beneath the cross to pray") [43 × 35]	Greek cross, slightly displaced to the upper part of the field. Under it, Hrabanus in attitude of adoration. ORO TE RAMVS ARAM, ARA SYMAR ET ORO./HRABANUM MEMET CLEMENS ROGO, CHRISTE, TVERE, O PIE IVDICIO. (O tree, I pray to you, you who are an altar, and I pray to be carried upon your altar./O Christ, in your mercy and holiness, I beseech you, protect me, Hrabanus, on the day of Judgment.) V: 35; P: 31; A: 33; Q: 30; W: 33

From the titles of many of the *carmina* and the letter to Hatto quoted above, it appears clearly that, in Hrabanus' conception of *DLSC*, the figures are an essential constituent part and not a mere decoration. Nevertheless, here, the figures are also at odds with the role that Pope Gregory the Great had attributed to religious images in his famous letters to bishop Serenus of Marseilles (*Reg. Epist*. 9 and 10), so often used by the Carolingian scholars. These figures are not for the instruction of the illiterate; rather, they are guiding and informing the rumination of the readers of the text.

Another feature that immediately stands out for the observer is the omnipresence of geometry, whose attributed meanings most likely originate in Boethius's *De institutione arithmetica* (Perrin 2009, p. 37). The educated reader would not fail to recognize that the circle in B7 is the representation of perfection and, therefore, of God, and the triangle in

B18 is an abstract representation of the Trinity. The same goes for the number of shapes and the number of letters each shape takes on the grid.

In C11, Hrabanus also attributes to figures a mnemonic function in the context of the relationship between the Old and the New Covenant:

> Quisquis legis primae plenam desiderat habere notitiam, necesse est ut huius figurae per omnia menor sit et eius factum mente saepius revoluat, et conparans priora posterioribus recolat scriptum: 'Omnia in figura contingebant illus; scripta sunt autem ad correctionem nostram, in quos fines saeculorum deuenerunt', et quod exemplari et umbrae deseruiunt caelestium; et ítem: 'Vmbram enim habens lex futurorum bonorum, non ipsam imaginem rerum'. Vmbra enim non sine vero corpore fit, sed tamen ipsa in se veram et integram speciem corporis non exprimit. Quapropter oportet ut quisquis veritatis amator est, si umbram prius videat, ad verum, cuius ipsa umbra est, ocius oculos convertat, ne dum in umbra penitus intuitu haereat, veritatis fructum neglegens perdat. ("Whoever may desire to have full knowledge of the first law needs to be thoroughly familiar with this figure and often reflect on its deed in his mind, and by comparing the earlier with the latter, he should recall the scripture: 'All these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come, and that which serves as a model and shadow of heavenly things. And likewise: 'For the law having a shadow of good things to come, not the very image of the things.' For a shadow is not made without a real body, yet it does not express the true and complete from the body in itself. Therefore, it is necessary that whoever is a lover of truth, if he first sees the shadow, should quickly turn his eyes to the truth, of which it is a shadow, lest while he dwells deeply in contemplation of the shadow, he neglects and loses the fruit of truth").

This is the power of images in the understanding and rumination of *DLSC*, which is in itself a form of devotion and veneration of the Divine person based on the senses, with its inexhaustible source of religious instruction and contemplative wonder (Hamburger 2020, p. 33). In this sense, *DLSC* is a statement of the potentialities of the image in collaboration with the written text in the service of a single message (Ferrari 1999, p. 316).

In this way, because of the reciprocal and intrinsic relationship between the written verse and the figures, the *versus intexti* can qualify as "iconotext," defined by Michael Nerlich as a combination of figures and words intertwined to create a unified system of signification in such a way that neither can be freed from the other (Wagner 2015, pp. 378–79).

On top of this, many images convey a number either directly or indirectly by the number of letters fitted in the *versus intexti*, and numbers add a new layer of significance and are not small. In a later section, we will return to the numeric symbolism in *DLSC*.

Colors, however, seem to have more a decorative than a symbolic function since, as Perrin (2009, pp. 41–42) points out, the manuscripts of the ninth century do not agree in the use of the colors for the *figurae;* therefore, one must assume that colors have no particular significance in most of the figures of the ninth-century manuscripts from Fulda and Mainz (the ones that were copied under Hrabanus' supervision).

There is one exception to this, though: B16. The reason is no doubt that Hrabanus refers to colors in the corresponding *declaratio figurae*, C16, where he expounds that Jesus shows the whiteness of the lily in the chastity of his flesh and the redness of the rose in the blood of his passion (see Figure 7). Then he continues specifying the meaning of the colors of the flowers: hyacinth means the heavenly life of Christ among men, purple the blood of his Passion, linen the absolute chastity of his body, and scarlet his perfect charity.

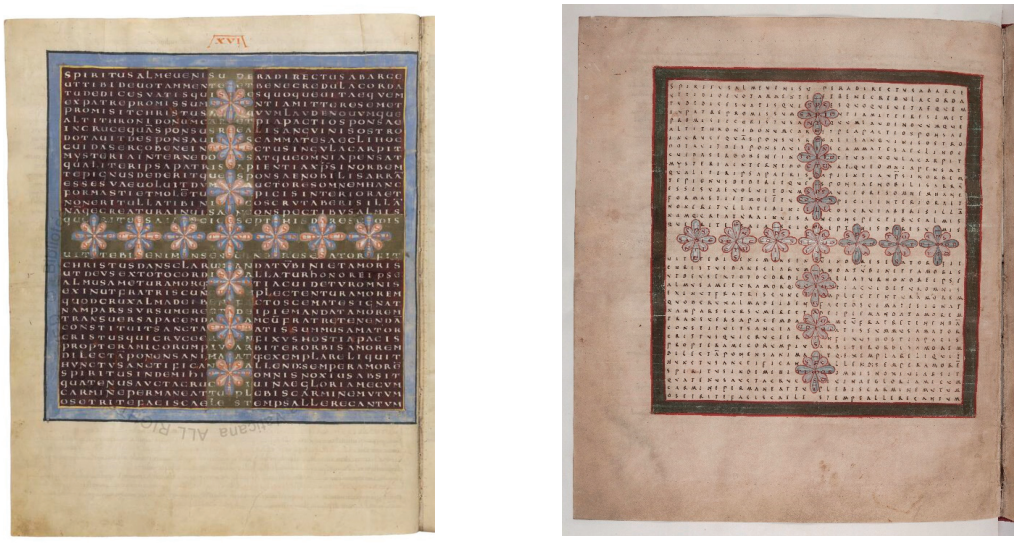


Figure 7. B16. **Left**: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Reginensis Latinus 124, fol. 23v. **Right**: Amiens, Bibliothèque Municipale 223, fol. 21v.

For the rest, as Perrin (2001, 2009) notes, manuscript V tends to use different colors, whereas most of the other manuscripts of the ninth century tend to agree with each other in the use of colors. And this cannot but cause some surprise, not only because nothing else in *DLSC* seems to lack a particular meaning but also because in a later work (*De rerum naturis*, also known as *De universe*, 20,10), Hrabanus is very conscious about the meaning each color:

> Colores autem diversi diversas significant species virtutum, quibus decorator plasma Dei ad imaginem sui conditoris, ut ruborem sinopidis vel minii ostendat in ardore caritatis, et purpurismum in martyrio et passionibus pro Christi nomine expensis, in auripigmento splendorem sapientiae, in Veneto atque hyacintho caelestem conversationem, in cerusa candorem castitatis, et ceteris speciebus virtutum, ut pro se opportunitas temporis affert et ratio postulat ordinis. ("The different colors signify different kinds of virtues, with which the creation of God is adorned in the image of its creator, so that the redness of sinopis or minium shows in the fervor of charity, and purplish in martyrdom and sufferings spent for the name of Christ; in orpiment the brilliance of wisdom, in Venetian blue and hyacinth the heavenly conduct, in white lead the wideness of chastity, and in other kinds of virtues, as the opportunity of time brings forth and the reason of order demands.")

However, the disagreement of manuscript V in the use of the colors may have another explanation: although V does not qualify *codex purpureus*, the background of almost every *carmen figuratum* is dyed in purple, and that may have conditioned the choice of colors by the miniaturists. Furthermore, as Pastoureau (1986) points out, color and even the perception of color are cultural concepts that change with time, and maybe colors that we see as different were considered more similar in the ninth century. Other possibilities are the availability of pigments and colorants and even some misunderstanding of the *rubricator* or the miniaturist. In this respect, B7 seems quite illustrative. In this case, W disagrees with almost all the other manuscripts, as if the miniaturist had turned the colors to 90 degrees (see Figure 8).

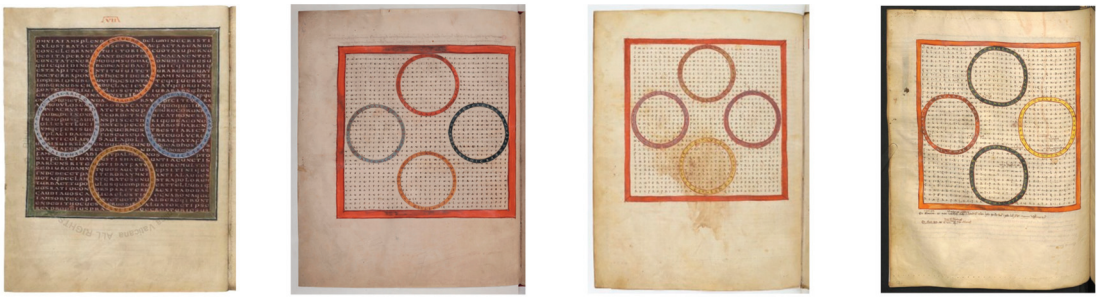


Figure 8. B7. From left to right: V, fol. 14v; A, fol. 12v; Q, fol. 9v; W, fol. 12v.

5. Conclusions: The Uniqueness of *DLSC*

DLSC by Hrabanus Maurus stands as a profound theological meditation on the Cross, positioning it as the governing structure of the universe. Through his intricate blend of visual, verbal, and numerical elements, Hrabanus orchestrates a symphony of intellectual and spiritual engagement, inviting his readers into a dynamic interaction where they traverse from the tangible representations of images to the abstract realms of conceptual thought. This journey is further enriched by the *declarationes figurae* and the additional explanations in the second book, which together weave a dense tapestry of symbolic meaning. The inclusion of such a multitude of representational layers—figural, abstract, narrative, and hieratic—transforms *DLSC* into what Hamburger (2020, pp. 27, 30) describes as a "spectacular heteroglossia," a multi-voiced discourse that speaks across centuries.

Hrabanus' work is not merely to be read but to be observed and meditated upon. The visual and textual layers demand a mode of engagement that is reflective and contemplative rather than recitative. Each element, from the individual figures in the poetry to the overarching thematic structures, contributes to a complex puzzle that challenges the reader. The integration of these elements, which may initially appear mysterious and difficult to decipher, underscores the meditative process Hrabanus envisioned. This approach compels the reader to slowly unravel the meanings, progressing step by step from the visible intricacies of the images to the invisible depths of the text.

The interplay between figures and words in *DLSC* is akin to an intricate embroidery, where every thread is essential to the complete picture. Michael (2023, p. 10) notes that Hrabanus opted to create *DLSC* not only within the visually rich genre of figurative poetry but also by incorporating unprecedented pictorial figures into some of his poems. This method enhances the semantic relationships between the elements of the poem, where the more unusual the elements, the tighter their semantic connections become, often clarified through annotations within the poem itself or by references to specific biblical passages.

In *DLSC*, Hrabanus positions Christ as the mediator between the heavenly and earthly realms, embodying the savior of a world that reflects the heavenly Jerusalem. This theological positioning emphasizes the transformative power of Christ and the Cross, suggesting a world transfigured—or 'christified'—through Redemption. As a result, the work highlights the vital stages of Redemption, accentuating the importance of the Cross in liturgical celebrations, particularly during the Paschal Triduum. This focus elevates the Cross cult, underscoring its centrality in Christian worship and theology.

Isidore of Seville's notion from *Etymologiae* that "an image expressing the species of something, which when it is seen creates a memory of it" resonates deeply within Hrabanus' work. This idea encapsulates the essence of *DLSC*'s imagery, designed to be seen, remembered, and reflected upon. Through this visual and textual interplay, Hrabanus crafts a cognitive and spiritual map for his readers, guiding them through a layered exploration of Christian doctrine and the cosmic significance of the Cross. In doing so, *DLSC* serves as a theological treatise and a monumental work in the annals of medieval scholarly and religious art.

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Notes

1 Hrabanus Maurus was one of the most prominent figures of the Carolingian Renaissance. Born into a noble family around 780, he was dedicated to the Fulda monastery, whose abbot sent him to Tours to study under the tutelage of Alcuin of York. This education set the foundation for Hrabanus' extensive contributions to Christian theology, education, and poetry. After his return to Fulda, he was appointed as *scholaster* or school master. As abbot of Fulda from 822 to 842, Hrabanus implemented reforms to enhance the monastery's role as a center of learning and spirituality. His leadership not only expanded the library, making it one of the most significant in Europe but also fostered an environment where scholarly activities flourished. His efforts in expanding Fulda's scriptorium contributed to the preservation and dissemination of classical and Christian texts, underscoring his role in the Carolingian intellectual revival. Hrabanus' involvement in the theological debates of his time, particularly regarding predestination and free will, highlighted his deep engagement with the doctrinal issues facing the Church. Despite facing controversy, his intellectual rigor and dedication to orthodoxy were evident in his writings and teachings. Beyond his scholarly and religious contributions, Rabano Mauro's legacy includes his influence on the educational methods of the time. He advocated for a curriculum that encompassed a wide range of subjects, including the liberal arts, aiming to develop well-rounded individuals equipped with both spiritual and worldly knowledge. This holistic approach to education reflected the Carolingian Renaissance's ideals, emphasizing the importance of learning and intellectual curiosity.

2 Literary works had no formal title in the Middle Ages. Other expressions used to refer to *DLSC* are "laus Cristi", "liber ad laudem Christi", "Christi ad laudem", "libellum quod in honorem sanctae crucis dudum prosa metroque", "in laudem sanctae crucis", "liber de sanctae cruce", and similar (Perrin 1997b, pp. XVI–XXVII).

3 Two examples are Mayke de Jong's *The Penitential State. Authority and Atonement in the Age of Louis the Pious, 814–840*, and Peter Godman and Roger Collins' Charlemagne's Heir. *New Perspectives on the Reign of Louis the Pious*.

4 Rabani Mauri *In honorem sanctae crucis*. Corpus Christianorum. Continuatio Medievalis, vol. 100. Turnhout: Brepols, 1997.

5 We follow Jean Perrin's edition in the referencing of the different elements of *DLSC*. This quotation is taken from the prologue, identified by Perrin as A7.

6 A partial translation into French can be found in Perrin's prologue to his 1997 edition in the Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Medievalis, p. XIII.

7 In a dedicatory poem to abbot Eigil (MGH, *Poetae*, ii, p. 186), Hrabanus extols the written word for its enduring nature and spiritual significance, articulating that God's laws were recorded in written, and therefore emphasizing that while all material creations are vulnerable to decay and the ravages of time, written characters alone possess immortality: Lex pia cumque dei latum dominans regit orbem,/Quam sanctum est legem scribere namque dei!/Est pius ille labor, merito cui non valet alter/Aequiparare, manus quem faciet hominis./Nam digiti scripto laetantur, lumina visu,/Mens volvet sensu mystica verba dei./Nullum opus exsurgit, quod non annosa vetustas/Expugnet, quod non vettat iniqua dies:/Grammata sola carent fato, mortemque repellunt,/Praeterita renovant grammata sola biblis./Grammata nempe dei digitus sulcabat in apta/Rupe, suo legem cum dederat populo,/Sunt, fuerant, mundo venient quae forte futura,/Grammata haec monstrant famine cuncta suo. ("As God's kindly law rules in absolute majesty over the wide world, it is an exceedingly holy task to copy the law of God. This activity is a pious one, unequalled in merit by any other which men's hands can perform. For the fingers rejoice in writing, the eyes in seeing, and the mind at examining the meaning of God's mystical words. No work sees the light which hoary old age does not destroy or wicked time overturn: only letters are immortal and ward off death, only letters in books bring the past to life. Indeed God's hand carved letters on the rock that pleased Him when He gave His law to the people, and these letters reveal everything in the world that is, has been, or may chance to come in the future." Trad. Godman 1985, p. 249).

8 In a letter to Eberhard of Friuli (MGH, Epist. 5, pp. 481, 15–19), Hrabanus informs that he had sent a copy of *DLSC* to Pope Gregory the Fourth. However, when the messengers, presbyters Ascrih and Hrudpert, arrived in Rome, the Pope had passed away, and they handed over the book to his successor, Sergius. The story is corroborated by the Annals of Fulda for the year 844.

9 As referred in the note above, Sergius was not the intended recipient of the book, but Gregory the Fourth.

10 This manuscript has been foliated in a somewhat irregular fashion. As it seems, when the manuscript was copied in the ninth century, some pages were left blank, and some of them were later used for annotations, notably the page that mirrors the dedication to Otgar and that is presently foliated as 1r, with the illustration of the presentation being fol. 1v. Therefore, the folium that contains the dedication to Otgar in the verso was left without foliation and later a Roman "I" was added. All the references to this codex use the existing foliation system.

11 In this, Hrabanus follows Prosper of Aquitaine and Sedulius.

[12] An excellent study about Louis' representation in *DLSC* and the changes it suffered along the centuries can be found in Kelin Michael's doctoral dissertation (Michael 2023). I warmly thank Dr. Michael for her assistance by providing me with her work that will not be publicly available until 2029 in the Emory University repository of theses and dissertations.

[13] One unfinished *carmen figuratum* of Venantius Fortunatus (BNF Lat. 8312 fol. 22r) shows this compositional procedure. See Brennan 2019. A reproduction, in black and white, is accessible at https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10034714t/f23.item (accessed on 1 June 2024).

[14] Because all the *carmina* figurate occupy the left page of the double-spread, and therefore the verso of the folio, the "v" after the folium number has not been considered necessary.

[15] Because one of the Cs is common for SOCHP and IHCVC.

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Interpreting Visuality in the Middle Ages: The Iconographic Paradigm of the Refectory of the Monastery of San Salvador de Oña

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Abstract: The research area of the interaction between religion, politics, and medieval Hispanic art has been pioneering and at the cutting edge of contemporary historiography in recent years. The deployment of iconographic and calligraphic motifs in medieval religious spaces has been identified as a key means of propagating legitimating messages of power and disseminating Christian doctrines. This interdisciplinary study proposes an analysis of the artistic vestiges present in the refectory of the Monastery of San Salvador de Oña (Burgos), with a view to establishing their decorative evolution during the 14th century and their symbolic significance. In order to establish a chronological proposal for the remains, the historical, artistic, and architectural contexts of the monastery are analyzed. This is complemented by a study of materials and techniques and a symbolic and iconographic analysis of the signs of power and evangelical concepts from the time of Pedro I until the transition to the Trastámara dynasty. In this way, a cross-disciplinary investigation is proposed, with the aim of elucidating how a sacred artistic work situated within a secular context can serve multiple purposes of political and religious legitimation through the adaptation of its iconography over time.

Keywords: last supper; Kufic calligraphy; iconography; refectory; material analysis; monastery of San Salvador de Oña; Pedro I; Enrique II; Trastamara Dynasty

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1. Introduction

The intersection of religion, politics, and art has been a topic of considerable interest throughout the history of peninsular art, with a substantial body of research devoted to the subject. These studies have contributed to a corpus of knowledge that includes the works of prominent figures such as Almagro Gorbea, Azcárate, Ruiz Souza, Pérez Monzón, Bango Torviso, Senra Gabriel y Galán, Cómez Ramos, and Dodds, among many others. However, these syncretic studies have indicated the existence of new horizons that have advanced in the fields of iconography, epigraphy, and contextual studies. The depiction of a multiplicity of iconographic and calligraphic motifs within monastic and religious contexts has been identified as an efficacious method of propagating doctrines associated with Christian postulates and political positions during the Hispanic Middle Ages. This phenomenon has been the subject of extensive study by Pastoureau (1996), Ruiz García (1999), Cano Ávila and Essawi (2004), and Marquer (2012, 2013).

This study, which adopts an interdisciplinary approach, aims to analyze the artistic vestiges located in the regular space of the refectory of the Monastery of San Salvador de Oña (Burgos, Spain). In this context, the iconography has been shaped not only by the presence of Benedictine monasticism but also by the shifting political trends of the Late Middle Ages. In order to achieve this, the monastery is studied from a historical, artistic, and architectural perspective, with the aim of contextualizing the location of the space and the piece to be analyzed. This approach facilitates the establishment of a chronological formal line of analysis, which, in turn, facilitates progress towards material and technical studies. This integration of historical and material perspectives facilitates a more comprehensive understanding of the religious and political influences that have

shaped the evolution of distinctive calligraphic and iconographic elements within this regular space.

This article analyzes the visual representation of symbols of authority and religious dogmas in the refectory of Oña, examining their rethink, reworking, and synchronicity with the contexts in which they are inserted, from the cultural influence of Pedro I and his confrontation with Enrique II in the 14th century to the religious and political reforms in the 15th century led by the Catholic Monarchs. By analyzing these calligraphic vestiges and visual representations from an iconographic and material perspective, we can gain deeper insights into the artistic and cultural circulations that have influenced artistic and religious production in the Spanish Middle Ages. Furthermore, this analysis can facilitate a deeper understanding of the social and political functions of sacred art, as well as its pivotal role in the dissemination and reinforcement of political and religious values.

The history of the monastery of San Salvador de Oña dates back to the 11th century, when the Count of Castile, Sancho García (995–1017), known as "the one with the good laws", established this center. In 1011, Gómez Díez, a knight, and his wife Ostrocia transferred and sold their property in the Valley of Oña (Yepes 1960, p. 424). It seems plausible to suggest that he founded it as an expression of gratitude to God for the successes achieved in the campaigns to recover the Castilian territory from the Muslim taifas. Furthermore, he proposed that his daughter, Princess Tigridia, would oversee the institution's dual nature. The monastery's strategic location in Oña, situated near the border with the kingdom of Pamplona, indicates the intention to establish a Castilian political and military resistance point against the Navarrese expansion.

Following the demise of Count Sancho García, a period of considerable upheaval ensued. Sancho Garcés III of Pamplona, husband of Muniadona of Castile, assumed control of the territories of Castile, Monzón, and Álava through matrimony, thereby introducing Benedictine models with Cluniac influences, led by Paterno. The first abbot with whom we have a record is García (–1032), who was brought by King Sancho the Great of Navarre with Abbot Paterno of San Juan de la Peña, who introduced Cluniac observance in Oña (Zaragoza 1994, p. 561). During the Middle Ages, the Monastery of Oña witnessed the expansion of its privileges, ultimately leading to a state of autonomy from both the royal authority and the Cluny order, with which it was previously only affiliated through Benedictine principles. In the fifteenth century, the Benedictine order of Valladolid assumed control of the monastery with the assistance of the Constable of Castile and the Bishop of Burgos. However, they were unable to establish the monastery as a subject of the Valladolid jurisdiction. During the 15th and early 16th centuries, the monastery saw a significant artistic expansion marked by decorative and architectural reforms surrounding the cloister, church, chapter house, and refectory.

Since its establishment, the Monastery of San Salvador de Oña has been inextricably linked to and has faithfully reflected the influence of its count and royal benefactors. This support and the constant symbolization of these legitimizing messages are evident in the monastery's heritage remains, but they have also been reflected in the successive expansions and decorative stages that the monastery has undergone. This institution provided a means for nobles and kings from disparate Hispanic kingdoms to reinforce their legitimizing message and perpetuate their remarkable legacy. This political and symbolic importance is exemplified by one of the monastery's most significant artistic manifestations: the 15th-century count and royal pantheon, which interweaves funerary art with political iconography, memory, and power.

Nevertheless, other reflections in the monastery's sacred art demonstrate its alliance with the power of the elite of its time. These include sculptures, canvases, altarpieces, and mural paintings that populate the church, cloister, and regular spaces of the monastery. Consequently, it demonstrates not only the typical religious observance in these settlements, but also the authority of its sponsors through the utilization of pious scenes, bestiaries, or epitaphs, reflecting feudal power.

The monastic complex comprises a variety of architectural spaces, exhibiting a diverse array of styles and chronologies, spanning from the Middle Ages to the modern era. However, the medieval period, spanning from the 11th to the 16th century, is characterized by a notable coherence between the architectural spaces, their functional design, and the aesthetic embellishments. In order to gain an understanding of the circumstances pertaining to the spaces that will subsequently be delineated, it is essential to undertake a formal description of the monastery, together with the rooms that currently constitute it and the location of its most notable artistic works. This facilitates the subsequent establishment of the monastery's construction phases in a clear and coherent manner.

The monastic ensemble is composed of a series of diverse buildings, among which the abbey church is particularly noteworthy. The church is of the Hispanic rite and was renovated several times between the 11th and 15th centuries. The grand staircase provides a view of a porch with a checkered impost and a semicircular arch, within which are embedded six sculptures representing the rulers of the Kingdom of Castile from the 14th century. The grand porch provides access to a transitional courtyard situated in front of the church facade. This courtyard preserves the remains of the Romanesque construction, including the porch and the semicircular windows with a jagged design.

Upon entering the interior, one encounters a polychrome atrium that dates from the late 15th century. The atrium is adorned with Passionist paintings by the celebrated Oña-based friar, Friar Juan de Zamora. Furthermore, the museum houses a collection of heraldic samples from the Kingdom of Pamplona, Castile, and the emblem of the Catholic Monarchs. The interior of the temple is accessed via a Gothic-Mudejar door, crafted from walnut and boxwood, which opens to a spacious vestibule at the foot of the church. The upper floor of the aforementioned vestibule contains the choir stalls.

The interior of the temple, which was reconstructed in its current form in the 15th century, comprises three large naves separated by three sections of lateral chapels, a transept, a main chapel, and an altar. This architectural ensemble occupies a considerable volume of space, with dimensions of approximately 83 m in length, 20 m in width, and 20 m in height (Figure 1).

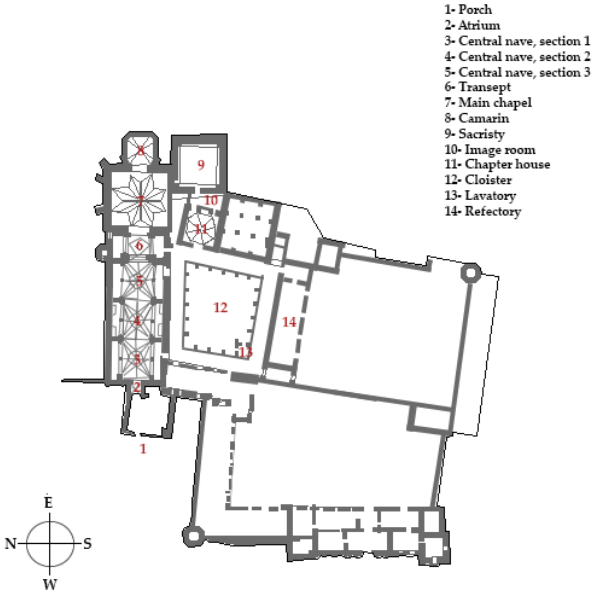


Figure 1. Plan of the monastery of San Salvador de Oña on the plan by Inés Cambero. In grey are the persistent remains of the building and outlined in black is the current surface of the building. Source: author.

In the lateral chapels located on either side of sections 1 and 2, four large altarpieces are installed, which are currently enclosed by substantial ironwork. Section 3, oriented to the south, is of particular interest as it houses the 14th-century Gothic fresco of Santa Maria Egipciaca. Despite extensive restoration, the painting allows us to observe the story of the saint's life with a moralizing vision, presenting her sins and redemption through God and penitence. Of particular interest is the large carving on the Gospel side of this same section, the Christ of Saint Tigridia, which dates back to the 12th century.

The section of the transept is of particular significance, as it currently houses a considerable number of works of art, which are of great cultural and historical importance. It is evident that the architectural design incorporates a prominent lantern structure, a post-medieval addition that allows for substantial illumination within the space. The most notable feature, however, is the Chapel of Santa Catalina on the epistle side, which houses a 15th-century Gothic altarpiece dedicated to the saint, as well as six panels by Juan Sánchez that formed part of a larger altarpiece ensemble, now lost. The Baroque organ, constructed in 1768 by Antonio de San Juan and comprising over 1100 pipes, is situated in front of the chapel and is still used on occasion for festivities.

The large main chapel is surmounted by a 400 m^2 star-shaped vault constructed circa 1460 by Fernando Díaz (Figure 2a). The space was expanded due to the considerable number of monks residing in the monastery, necessitating an enlargement of the choir area. This reform resulted in the removal of the triple apse, a feature that had been present since the establishment of the Romanesque church, in favor of a square altar of greater dimensions that extended towards the chancel.



(**a**) (**b**)

Figure 2. Artistic remains from inside the monastery from the 15th century. Source: author. (**a**) Starry vault as seen from the center of the main chapel; (**b**) View of the foot of the tomb of King Sancho Garcés II of Pamplona, known as "Sancho Abarca".

In the same century, the chapel was completed with two masterpieces of Hispanic Gothic art created by Fray Pedro de Valladolid. These include a double-decker choir stall

crafted from walnut wood with tracery and the royal and county pantheon, which is made of inlaid wood (Martín Martínez De Simón 2012, pp. 637–40) (Figure 2b). This masonry, which is unique in the world, comprises eight inlaid sepulchers in walnut and boxwood, in which members of the Castilian and Pamplona nobility who were related to the monastery are interred. The following individuals are interred within the aforementioned tomb: Sancho García, Count of Castile, and his wife Urraca Gómez; Sancho Garcés III of Pamplona, and his wife Muniadona of Castile; Sancho II, the first king of Castile; and García Sánchez of Castile. The final members of the line of Counts of Castile were García and Sancho IV of Castile, who was also known as García Sánchez. García Sánchez was the son of King Sancho IV and Queen María de Molina. García and Sancho IV had several sons, including Enrique and Felipe of Castile, who were princes of Castile (Tour Turístico Oña 2016).

The chapel is flanked by a large Baroque altarpiece in the form of a gilded triumphal arch. Adjacent to this is an octagonal chapel, or "camarín", dedicated to Saint Iñigo, a revered figure in the local community, where his relics are kept. This saint served as a confessor to King Sancho III the Great of Pamplona, who appointed him abbot of Oña in 1035, thereby providing impetus to the Benedictine monastic community at the monastery. The lunettes of this chapel feature frescoes by Francisco Bayeu, brother-in-law of the painter Francisco de Goya (Monasterio de San Salvador de Oña 2024).

The monastery's visitable route includes the sacristy, situated adjacent to the main altar. This space was originally used to store the sacred vessels and priestly vestments, and it currently houses liturgical objects, historical textiles, and other artistic pieces. This room, which dates from the 16th century, features a minimalist decorative style, incorporating storage cupboards, a Rococo altarpiece, and a multitude of paintings on diverse subjects. Two sets of objects merit particular attention in this room: the Arabic aljubas of Count García (10th century) and of the Infante Don García of Castile (12th century), and an excellent set of both Nordic and Arabic boxes from the 12th and 14th centuries.[1]

A transition space exists between this room and the Chapter House, which is currently utilized as the Image Room by the museum. This space houses sculptures of Romanesque devotion and from other periods.

The Chapter House is an almost quadrangular space dating from the 12th and 13th century and represents one of the monastery's most significant architectural features. It served as the primary venue for the monks to engage in deliberations pertaining to crucial matters. This space exhibits distinctive characteristics, including the presence of arches at its western entrance that have been partially walled up on the exterior. These arches are believed to be part of the original Romanesque cloister and are notable for their polychrome decoration. This space currently plays host to one of the monastery's most exceptional pieces: the architectural relief of the refectory.

It is also noteworthy to mention the cloister, which serves as the fundamental structure of the monastery and from which other monastic rooms, such as the refectory, are distributed. The cloister, which was originally constructed in the 12th and 13th century and exhibits a quadrangular structure, was replaced in 1503 with a new Gothic structure that employed the same surface configuration but lacked the semicircular arcades. This resulted in the necessity to increase the vertical construction space, which, in turn, required a meter's deepening of the vertical levels of the cloister floor.[2] The cloister is surrounded on the interior by the tombs of the Counts of La Bureba (Herrera Oria 1917, pp. 125–42) and obstructed on the interior by a small, roofed structure attached to the southwest corner, which is known as the lavatory. Despite the absence of tangible evidence, historical accounts, such as that of Herrera Oria, attest to the existence of a fountain that occupied the central space of this area prior to the arrival of the Jesuits in Oña (Herrera Oria 1917, pp. 144–48).

The refectory, situated on the south side of the cloister, is currently inaccessible. Its point of entry has undergone a series of alterations over time, with the original access point located at the western end of the room and the subsequent relocation to the eastern end. A detailed examination of this room is provided subsequently, as it represents a principal focus of investigation in this article.

In order to study the most relevant remains of the monastery in a chronological manner, it is essential to review the construction phases of the building that took place during the Middle Ages. This will enable us to establish a correlation between the extant works and the abbeys, as well as the historical events that have left an imprint on the monastery's material reality. In the course of their research, prominent historians, artists and architects such as Enrique Herrera Oria (1917), Juan del Álamo (1950), Antonio de Yepes (1960), Pilar Silva Maroto (1974), Isabel Oceja Gonzalo (1986) and Santiago Olmedo Bernal (1987) have made significant contributions to the field. Ernesto Zaragoza (1994), Fernando Gutiérrez Baños (2005), José Luis Senra Gabriel y Galán (1992, 1995, 2012), Martín Martínez De Simón (2012), Fernando Gutiérrez B In addition, the studies of José Luis Senra Gabriel y Galán (1992, 1995, 2012), Martín Martínez De Simón (2012), and Fernando Gutiérrez Baños (2005) allow us to propose a sequence of construction phases of the building and the decoration of the most relevant works during the 11th and 16th centuries.:

- Phase 1: The period preceding the establishment of the monastery in 1011, during which the site was already in existence. In this period, documentary evidence exists, which pertains to Oña, and is dated 934. This evidence takes the form of a writing by Iby Hayyan, which recounts an assault by Abd-al-Rahman III on the fortifications of this town (Reyes Téllez 2012, p. 37). It can, thus, be postulated that the extant remains of defensive towers are located at the entrance to the church. Of particular note is the tower associated with Samson's staircase, which served as the access tower and exhibited a distinctive elbow-shaped design characteristic of the Islamic world. This architectural feature afforded the defenders enhanced control over the entrances, thereby providing a strategic advantage against invaders.
- Phase 2: Oñeca Garcés (1011–1014) to St. Trigidia (1014–1030). Oneca Garcés, sister of Count Sancho Garcés and abbess of San Juan de la Hoz, assumed the role of guardian to her niece Tigridia, daughter of the count and abbess of San Salvador de Oña, during the nascent stages of its establishment. In the early years of the enclave, men and women were welcomed under the formula *Dei cultores y deo devotas* (Reyes Téllez 2012, p. 45), although the exact scope of the profession of both is not specified. During this period, the monastery was established as a duplicate space under the Hispanic rite, with facilities to accommodate this liturgy. Hispanic monasteries were typically composed of two enclosed spaces. The first was an interior, smaller area offering greater protection, which served as the monastic quarters. The second was an exterior space surrounding the garden and orchard. Although there is currently no material evidence from this period, the approaches of architects such as Cambero, in his preliminary studies, can be followed to suggest that the original location of this courtyard and this church would correspond to the cloister and the current church (Cambero Lorenzo 2019, p. 32).
- The third phase of the monastery's history is characterized by the tenure of Abbot García (1032–1039) and Abbot Pedro Pérez (1259–1271). The reforms of the 12th century are evidenced by documentary sources, which indicate that a portion of the cloister construction was completed around 1141. This indicates that the church and the remainder of the cloister were also completed at this time. The abbot responsible for implementing these reforms was Juan de Castellanos (1137–1160), who, according to the chronicles of the period, was in charge of concluding the construction of the refectory (Zaragoza 1994, p. 562).
- The fourth phase of the monastery's history is characterized by the tenure of Abbot Pedro García (1272–1287) and Abbot Sancho Díaz (1381–1419). During the period between 1332 and 1360, which corresponds to the reforms of the church, modifications were made to the main chapel. These modifications were carried out by Abbot García (1313–1329) (Zaragoza 1994, p. 564). The walls of the main chapel were widened, thereby enlarging the space and eliminating the Romanesque chancel with three apses. It may be reasonably assumed that the cycle of animalistic capitals of the east transept's toral closures and the mural of Santa Maria Egipcíaca were also configured during this

period. The capitals originally comprised a 360° structure comprising twelve supports, nine of which remain due to the enclosure of the western wall during the mid-10th century. Consequently, it is probable that the work was completed prior to this period, which spans from 1332 to 1360 (Cuesta Sánchez and Pazos-López 2022, p. 60). A traumatic event occurred in the monastery between 1366 and 1367. Troops under the command of the Black Prince, retreating from the civil war between Pedro I and Enrique II, razed the center to the ground and looted a large quantity of items. In order to collect the payment of the debt that Pedro I was unable to pay because of the support of the British troops in the conflict with his half-brother, precious works from the monastery were collected (Herrera Oria 1917, pp. 86–87). During this period, the figure of Abbot Lope Ruiz (1350–1381), who served as royal chaplain to Alfonso XI and Pedro El Justiciero (Pedro I the Cruel), is worthy of particular note. During his tenure, the monastery was sacked by the Black Prince of Wales (Zaragoza 1994, p. 565), after which fortification work commenced with the construction of the wall and Puerta del Cid under Abbot Sancho Díaz (1381–1419).

- Phase 5: the period from Abbot Pedro de Briviesca (1419–1452) to Abbot Juan Manso (1479–1495). This phase encompasses a multitude of remodeling works undertaken between circa 1430 and the conclusion of the century, encompassing both the church and the regular rooms. During the tenure of Pedro de Briviesca and his successor until 1460, the vaults of the central nave, the enclosures of the side chapels, the enclosure of the Santa María Egipcíaca Mural Paintings, and other architectural elements underwent significant modifications. The final phase of decoration of the refectory's relief involved the painting of the lunettes and repolychroming with the use of gold leaf. This was possibly undertaken in response to the deterioration caused by the sacking of 1367. The period between 1460 and 1470 saw the construction of the doorway and the polychrome atrium or narthex, in addition to the altar choir and the choir loft, the royal and county pantheon, and the access door in walnut and boxwood. This was carried out by Fray Pedro de Loreno in collaboration with Fray Pedro de Valladolid. Additionally, the ribbed vault of the main chapel was constructed, a project undertaken by Fernando Díaz that drew inspiration from Juan de Colonia and his school of thought. It was completed in 1470. As Martín Simón notes, this type of vault is also present in the Cartuja de Miraflores and will serve as an architectural model that will be disseminated throughout the entire peninsular geography during the reign of the Catholic Monarchs, as evidenced by buildings such as San Juan. The Royal Chapel of Granada, also known as the Chapel of the Reyes or El Paular, saw significant construction between 1465 and 1470. The most notable documentation from this period pertains to the payment for the works, which was signed by the abbot and the master. Based on these sources, it can be inferred that the vault was completed around 1470 (Martín Martínez De Simón 2012, pp. 639–40).
- Phase 6: from Abbot Andrés Gutiérrez de Cerezo (1495–1503) to Abbot Alonso de Madrid (1506–1512). In 1503, the Romanesque cloister underwent a reformative process with the objective of replacing it with a Gothic cloister designed by Simón de Colonia. This endeavor reached its culmination with the installation of the fountain in 1508 (Martín Martínez De Simón 2012, p. 643). The abbot responsible for initiating this reform was Alonso de Oña y del Castillo (1503–1506), who completed two sections of the cloister, with the remaining two sections completed by Alonso de Madrid (1506–1512). The latter abbot concluded the remodeling process by placing the fountain of Simón de Colonia in front of the refectory (Zaragoza 1994, p. 569).

Presently, the monastery is only partially accessible to visitors in the aforementioned areas, as the remainder of the premises, including the refectory, the Renaissance cloister, the regular quarters, and the upper levels, are in a state of disuse. Over the course of its history, this enclave has experienced a series of disruptions and transformations. During the Middle Ages, it was subject to sackings. In the Modern Age, it was affected by disentailments. In the Contemporary Age, it was utilized for military and sanitary purposes. Additionally,

it was sold to private hands and served as a Jesuit Colegio Máximo from 1880 to 1969. It was at this time that the Diputación de Burgos acquired the building for the purpose of establishing a mental sanatorium, which was subsequently transformed into a geriatric home. The extensive renovations that were carried out during this period led to the discovery of a significant amount of material evidence.

2. The Space and the Object

2.1. The Refectory

One of the most significant spaces within the Benedictine monastery of Oña is the refectory. This room, which is situated at the heart of the monastery, has been in use since the observance brought about by Sancho el Mayor de Pamplona in 1033 was consolidated.

This space in Oña was used by the monks as a dining room during the Middle Ages, although it is currently inaccessible to the public. The structure is elongated and rectangular, measuring approximately 25 meters in length and 8.90 meters in width. It is covered with simple ribbed vaults distributed in three sections, with large windows on the south wall that allow for natural light to enter (Figure 1).

This room was completed in 1141 (Herrera Oria 1917, p. 163)—1179 AD—and has subsequently undergone numerous modifications, both internal and structural, which have resulted in a significant alteration to the current view of the room. It is assumed that from the end of the 15th century or the beginning of the 16th century onwards, the central access door to the refectory, which serves as the entrance today, was opened. This entailed the partial destruction of the medieval architectural relief located on the eastern side of the room. A considerable number of the stone components of the central arch of this relief were deposited in the river's rubble heap, where they were subsequently discovered by local residents. However, the majority of these have since been lost.

In his chapter "El proceso constructivo del monasterio de San Salvador de Oña durante la Edad Moderna y la contemporánea" (Pérez Camacho 2012, pp. 470–95), Antonio Manuel Pérez Camacho and Magdalena Illardia Gálligo in "El claustro de los caballeros y su entorno" (2011, pp. 444–69), concur in indicating the opening of this door in the 15th century under the abbacy of Fray Pedro de Briviesca. Nevertheless, no evidence has been uncovered to substantiate this hypothesis, as historical sources such as Herrera Oria, Fray Iñigo de Barreda, Arzalluz (1950), and the Abadologio de Zaragoza Pascual make no mention of the destruction of the eastern wall. In addition to the aforementioned historical sources, the architect José Ramón Duralde offers an alternative explanation in his 2012 article, "La restauración del monasterio de Oña: una obra necesaria" (pp. 536–59). Duralde proposes that the cloister-refectory axis can be restored by recovering the original entrance to the cloister, which was located at the western end. In this way, he indicates that the changes introduced in the seventeenth century may have resulted in the relocation of the entrance to its current position.

However, the refurbishment of the refectory can be dated to 1880, when the monastery was acquired by the Society of Jesus. This was a period of significant alteration to the building, including the re-traction of walls towards the interior of the room, which reduced the usable space, and the addition of a vaulted roof (Senra Gabriel y Galán 1992, p. 36). In 1969, the space was once again remodeled in order to adapt it to the construction of kitchens for the psychiatric center, thereby revealing a large relief embedded in the eastern wall. Finally, it is worth mentioning the historical fountain of Fray Iñigo de Barreda, which offers us a window into the past.

> *"The piece of the refectory is very old, as it was completed in the year one thousand one hundred and forty-one. It is magnificent and beautiful in a great way, as if made for such a large community; it is forty-eight steps long and thirty-seven feet wide. It has been renovated many times, and today only the walls and a rich and majestic coffered ceiling in the form of an orange vault remain. There is a memory that it was in its beginnings, as it is said that it had a great reputation of having been then one of the most costly and curious works of Castile, truly that the aforementioned coffered ceiling will be understood,*

> *because it has a singular and pilgrim assembly and inlay. It is gilded and painted, with interverados and many oil paintings of various saints, and what makes it stand out most is a starry gilded rosette and some large gilded carved pinecones that hang downwards, with the gold as fresh and shiny as if they had just been gilded, being so that they are about seven centuries old. And the memory also says that the seats of the monges were made of very delicate inlaid wood, with their highly polished gilded and painted backs. On the trabiessa table they were more outstanding and of greater refinement, with the abbot's seat standing out, on the head of which the era in which this work was made was read in an extraordinary way.*
>
> *IN ERA DECIES CENTENA, BIS QUINQUAGENA SEPTIES DENA, INTER TRINA FACTUM: EST HOC OPUS REGNANTE MPERATORE DOMNO ALDEPHONSO TOLETO, ET PER OMNES HESPERIAS.*
>
> *Which means: as in the era of one thousand one hundred and seventy-nine this work was made, reigning—in Toledo, and throughout Spain, the emperor Don Alonso; that having reduced the years of Caesar, which are thirty-eight, it was made in the years of Christ our Redeemer, one thousand one hundred and forty-one.*
>
> *What is certain is that this sumptuous and beautiful piece says what it is and what it has been just by looking at it, as today it appears from the cornice of its famous coffered ceiling on its smooth walls in white Yesso with great capacity, cleanliness and clarity, as it has five arched windows three rods high and about two wide, with their stained glass windows that give it copious light from the south*". (Herrera Oria 1917, pp. 163–65)

In this chronicle, Fray Iñigo de Barreda presents a vision of the monastery as it appeared in 1771, the year in which this manuscript was completed. In this way, we can see how Barreda employs the information contained in the preceding chronicles to describe not only the space he observes, but also the space that at certain times came to exist. This enables him to highlight issues such as the wooden coffered ceiling made up of rosettes and pinecones, painted and gilded, which must have been structurally similar to the ceiling of the Royal and Condal Pantheon.

The medieval ceiling, along with the inlaid seats, which may have been constructed between 1460 and 1470, have been lost. Only traces of similar works in the abbey church remain. The ceiling, constructed during the abbey period of Fray Pedro de Briviesca, exhibits comparable elements in terms of technique and materials, as evidenced by the choir stalls in the Main Chapel, crafted from wood and Gothic tracery, and the sarcophagi of the Royal and County Pantheon, which feature boxwood and walnut inlay. It is also noteworthy that in addition to the aforementioned loss of the wooden coffered ceiling, there has been a structural alteration of the ceiling, which has undergone a transformation from a flat wooden ceiling to a vaulted ceiling in three sections, akin to the current configuration.

With regard to the frieze (Figure 3), which is referenced by Father Barreda and provides a date for the room, only a small fragment of it currently exists. This fragment includes some letters incised and colored in black, which would indicate the time of its creation and the patronage responsible for it. Senra Gabriel y Galán (1995, p. 269) proposed that the words of the inscription (DOM)NO AL(DEPHONSO) could be included in this fragment, thereby establishing the reign of Alfonso VII as the time of construction of the refectory and the exceptional ensemble in which it was inserted. In this way, it is evident that the influence of royal power was not only evident in the monastery of Oña, but also reflected in this specific piece and, consequently, in a space of regular use.

Further evidence of the connection between Alfonso VII and the monastery, as well as this particular piece, can be found in his visit to the monastery in 1137, during which he made a donation to the family tombs (Senra Gabriel y Galán 2012, p. 408). This is particularly significant as, following the death of Alfonso I of Aragon in 1134, the annexation of La Bureba to the territories of Alfonso VII occurred, a period during which he consistently demonstrated his support for the monastery. Throughout this period, he

provided consistent and unwavering support to the monastery, a stance that continued until his grandson Alfonso VIII (Senra Gabriel y Galán 2012, p. 406).



Figure 3. Detail of the frieze with inscription (DOM)NO AL(DEPHONSO) on arch 4. Source: author.

2.2. The Architectural Ensemble as a Key Work of Hispanic Medieval Art

The carved and polychromed stone ensemble (Figure 4) that would have been located in this room is an extremely peculiar piece with various references in the Burgundy area. However, there is no other vestige that can be demonstrated to match the impeccable workmanship of our relief in its carving process.

This piece is composed of nineteen elements, which, although decontextualized, coalesce to reveal an impressive carved and polychrome architectural ensemble. Over the centuries, this ensemble has undergone modifications and reforms that have altered its final appearance. It was removed from the wall in 1969 as part of the work on the psychiatric hospital's kitchens. Following the discovery of the arches, the entire piece was removed at the request of the parish priest of the town, D. Agustín Lázaro, and placed on the north side of the cloister, where it remained until approximately 2008, when it was relocated to the chapter house. In 2012, the year of the celebration of the Edades del Hombre in Oña, on the occasion of the *Monacatus* exhibition, the piece was relocated to the transept of the church. It subsequently returned to the chapter house, where it is currently situated.

The architectural relief, which now consists of five arches (Figure 5), is made of white dolomitic stone. Two of the arches are partially mutilated, while the remaining four are intact. Additionally, there are four quadrangular capitals, the remains of which have been divided into five pieces. Additionally, a single fragment of the frieze bearing the 12th-century inscription is currently situated in the upper part of the ensemble. An assortment of large plaster slabs with the remains of black Kufic inscriptions[3] can also be found. The ensemble, which is incomplete due to its fragmentation and removal, originally comprised seven arches. The central arch was destroyed in the 15th and 16th centuries, while the seventh arch was walled in due to the narrowing of the room in the 19th century.

The five arches that represent the carving or manufacturing phase have been preserved, and they feature a variety of decorations on their archivolts, which are distributed evenly as one moves from the ends of the ensemble towards the lost central arch. The decorations exhibit a progressive increase in complexity, beginning with the simplest form observed in arch 1, characterized by smooth, parabolic archivolts. This is followed by arches 2 and 5, which feature outer archivolts with opposing trilobed leaves in contrast to the inner saw-toothed archivolt. The complexity culminates in arches 3 and 4, displaying outer riveted and silhouetted braids and pineapple-angled archivolts.

The spandrels are completed with rosettes of two distinct types. The first type features a central arrangement of fine, stylized leaves, while the second type comprises a combination of smooth and striated leaves, with an interior of small, smooth, stylized leaves covered with gold and polychrome. The composition of the rosettes is characterized by a variety of colors, including red, turquoise blue, yellow ochre, brown, black, greyish blue, and green. The full composition is presented at a later stage, based on the results of the laboratory examination of previously selected micro-samples. The rosettes are surmounted by a ring of die-cut perforations, distributed at uniform intervals. The entire architectural ensemble is embellished with polychrome decoration and metal leaf. The lunettes contain vestiges of mural painting, which include depictions of human figures. These have been identified by historians as the Apostles, thereby representing the Last Supper.

The measurements of the entire object are presented in Table 1, both in their individual components and as a whole. The four capitals are complemented by four bosses, which are divided into five pieces and arranged and catalogued in accordance with the specifications outlined in Table 2.



Figure 4. Ensemble of the refectory relief exposed in its current location. Source: author.

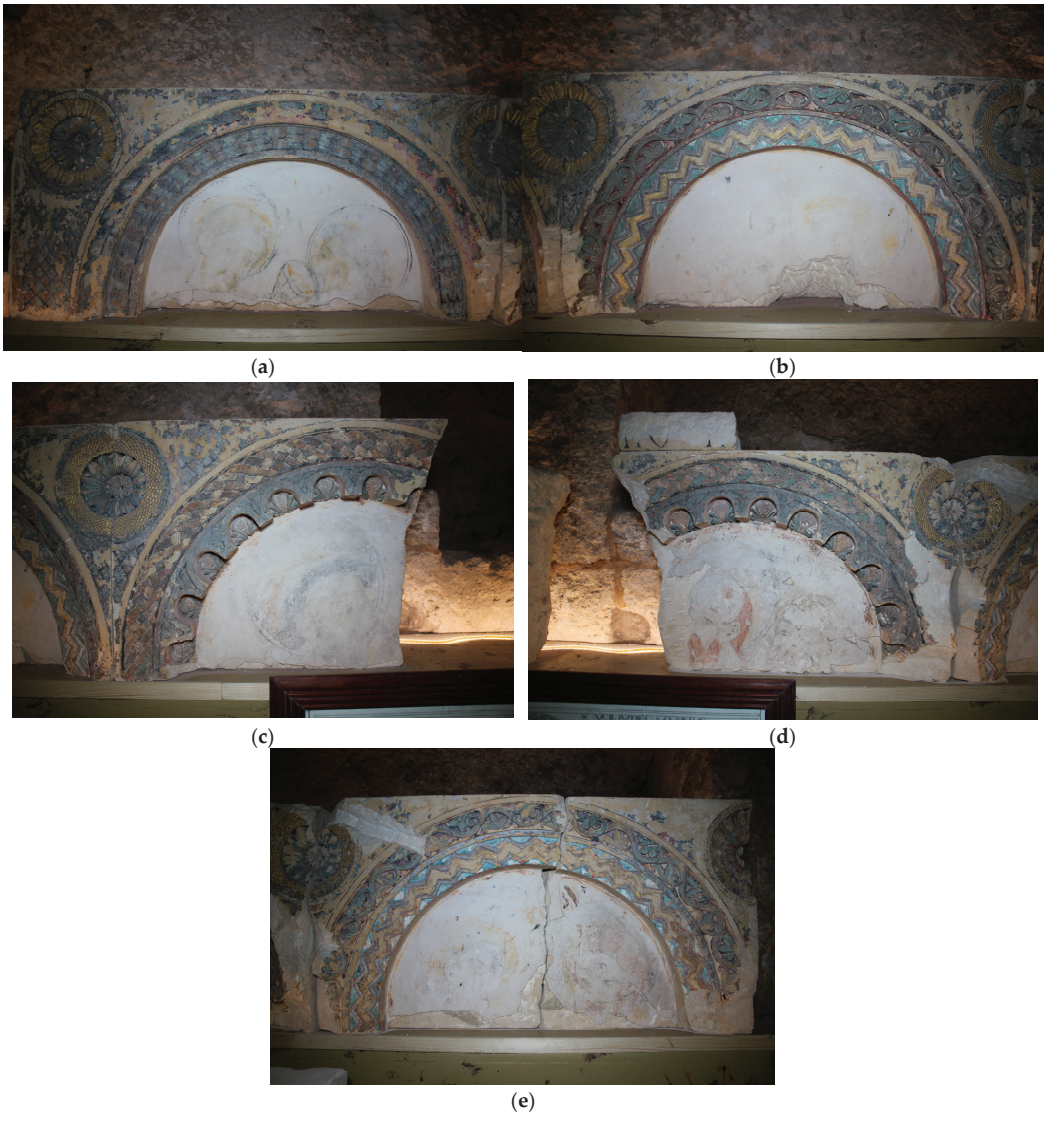


Figure 5. Ensemble of the relief of the refectory. Source: author. (**a**) Arch 1; (**b**) Arch 2; (**c**) Arch 3; (**d**) Arch 4; (**e**) Arch 5. Source: author.

Table 1. Measurements of the arches of the ensemble of the relief of the refectory. Source: author.

Piece	Width (cm)	Height (cm)	Depth (cm)	Outer Archivolt (cm)	Inner Archivolt (cm)
Arch 1	129.5	60	27	7	8
Arch 2	117	60	27	7.5	8.5
Arch 3	70	60	27	6	8
Arch 4	80	60	27	7	9
Arch 5	123	60	27	8.5	9
TOTALS	519.5	60	27	-	-

Table 2. Measurements of the capitals and capital tops of the ensemble of the relief of the refectory. Source: author.

Set Piece	Code Piece	Width (cm)	Height (cm)	Depth (cm)
CT1	P23	45	9	42.5
CP1	P24	32.5	28	58
CT2	P31	26.5	10	24.5
	P27	42	10	42
CP2	P22	32	28	53.2
CT3	P25	42	10	58
CP3	P29	32.5	27.5	53.5
CT4	P20	44,5	10	42
CP4	P28	32.5	28	46.5

With regard to the existing capitals and capital tops (Figure 6), it is important to note that only four of the eight that originally existed have survived. This is due to the construction works carried out during the 16th century and the subsequent reduction of the walls in the 19th century, which resulted in the loss of other four elements that constituted the complex, as well as the potential existence of the bases and columns of the complex. The surviving elements of the ensemble reflect the style of the arches in terms of complexity, with the simplest located on the far left and the most complex situated in the center of the composition.

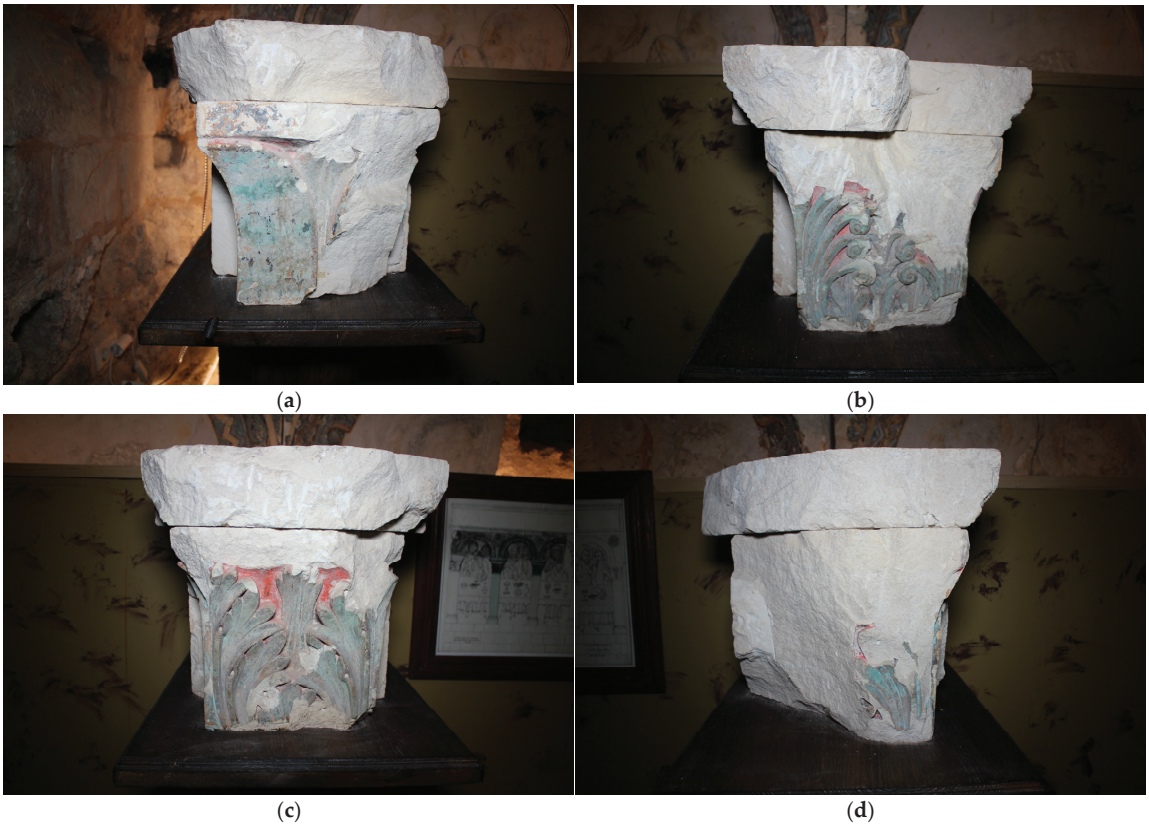


Figure 6. From left to right and from top to bottom: (**a**) Capital and capital top 1; (**b**) Capital and capital top 2; (**c**) Capital and capital top 3; (**d**) Capital and capital top 4. Source: author.

In terms of both structure and decoration, there are no references for this piece throughout the Peninsula. However, examples of morphologically similar pieces of lesser quality can be found elsewhere. The most illustrative national example is the refectory of Santa María la Real in Aguilar de Campoo, which features a tripartite arcade but lacks carved or polychrome decoration. Outside the Iberian Peninsula, the refectory of the Abbey of Saint-Wandrille provides an illustrative example. Although it has the form of an arcade with semicircular arches linked together on columns attached to the wall and three shades of polychrome, it does not possess the same technical difficulty as the Oña ensemble. Nevertheless, there are examples that serve as stylistic references for the decorations of the San Salvador de Oña piece in the regions influenced by Burgundian art associated with the Abbey of Cluny during the 12th century, namely the period of Cluny III.

One of the pieces considered to be a model or inspiration for these Onyan arcades is the stone choir stalls of the Cluny church, which were identified by Kenneth John Conant in his monograph Cluny, *Les églises et la maison du chef d'ordre* (1968). This piece, which has been preserved in fragments, can be found in two locations: the Metropolitan Museum of New York at The Cloisters and the *Musée d'Art et D'Archéologie* de Cluny. In the Iberian Peninsula, an example of a partially preserved and now reconstructed stone choir can be found in the Museum of the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela. This is the Stone Choir of Master Mateo, created by Master Mateo during the construction of the church between 1180 and 1200. It was subsequently reconstructed by professors Yzquierdo Perrín and Otero Túñez in 1981.

In examining the piece from Burgos, it becomes evident that there are numerous decorative patterns that can be attributed to the Cluniac style. These patterns are not exclusive to the Abbey of Cluny; rather, they can also be observed in various sites within the Burgundy region, specifically in the department of Saône-et-Loire. The most notable examples can be observed within the church of Cluny itself, as well as in local residences and other nearby sites, including the Basilica of Paray-le-Monial and the Cathedral of Saint-Lazare d'Autun.

One of the most frequently observed decorative motifs in the vicinity of Cluny is the design of the angled archivolt, which can be seen in arches 3 and 4 of the relief. This decorative design is evident in the archivolts of the three lower blind windows of the south transept of Cluny Abbey, as well as in other elements of the abbey's furnishings that are not part of the abbey's architecture. These include the 11th-century altar, which was probably consecrated by Pope Urban II. Furthermore, this decorative motif is evident in the village houses, where it constitutes a frieze at the apex of the semicircular windows. Finally, in relation to the Saône-el-Loire area, this decoration can be observed in the interior of the tympanum of the basilica of Paray-Le-Monial, where it delineates the scene of the Last Supper.

Additionally, the rosettes in the spandrels of the ensemble, which draw inspiration from Burgundian art associated with Cluny, are worthy of note as a decorative motif. These figures are present throughout the abbey and constitute the principal decorative elements of the choir enclosure, which was constructed between 1120 and 1130. Furthermore, the rosettes can be observed on a lintel featuring twelve variations. However, the style and the resemblance in the shape of the petals of all of them, particularly the smaller central rosette similar to those of Oña, demonstrate the evident influence of the Burgundian workshops of Cluny in Oña during the 12th century.

Furthermore, there is evidence from Oña that suggests the influence of this monastery on neighboring sites. This evidence is material in nature and directly correlates with the architectural forms observed in the refectory complex. This is exemplified by the rosettes of the spandrels, which are also present in other locations. As Magdalena Illardia notes, these can be observed in the tympanum of the interior apse window at Abajas, the tympanums of the windows on the interior south wall at Escóbados de Abajo, and the tympanum of an apse window at Quintanarruz (Illardia Gallego 2011, p. 550).

It is noteworthy that the ensemble displays decorative evidence attributable to its second decorative stage. This comprises six stone slabs of an average thickness of approximately 5 cm and variable sizes, which exhibit traces of calligraphy. Some of the stones, which have undergone considerable deterioration, display clear indications of Kufic script and the distinctive flourishes associated with this style of Arabic calligraphy (Figure 7a–c). The barely perceptible calligraphy was photographed and submitted to ImageJ© software with the DStrech© plugin, which was used to enhance the quality of the inscriptions, thus facilitating the attribution of their characters and the interpretation of their meaning (Figure 7d).



(**a**) (**b**) (**c**) (**d**)

Figure 7. Pieces with remains of Kufic calligraphy in the refectory of Oña: (**a**) Piece P33; (**b**) Piece P34; (**c**) Piece P32; (**d**) Piece P34 with remains of Kufic calligraphy subjected to specific image treatments with software ImageJ©. Source: author.

In terms of the iconography of the piece as a whole, it can be noted that figurative remains are present in the lunettes of the arches in a Gothic style. This has led to the piece being dated after its construction, with Gutiérrez Baños dating it to the beginning of the

15th century (Gutiérrez Baños 2005, pp. 118–24). Alternatively, it may be dated to the third decorative phase of the ensemble. The figures depicted in the lunettes are not only partially mutilated, but also exhibit an advanced state of degradation, which impedes an accurate identification of the scene. The historical record from the time of its extraction identifies the object as a representation of the Last Supper, based on the presence of certain objects—which have since been partially lost due to degradation—and the location of the piece and its interpretation in relation to the Benedictine order.

A hypothetical reconstruction of the scene is currently displayed in the chapter house (Figure 8). This reconstruction is visible in darker areas, where existing fragments of the frontal are displayed, and in the line drawing. As evidenced by the destruction of the central arch in the 16th century and the lack of surviving elements in the lower part of the complex, there is no basis for accepting this reconstruction as accurate. The only elements that have survived are the arches up to the capitals, leaving the structure of the columns, the central area, and the right arch, which has not yet been extracted from the wall, open to interpretation.



Figure 8. Reconstruction of the refectory carried out by Mr. Agustín Lázaro in 1969. Source: author.

These questions allow us to support this identification, as no other visual references can be found that would indicate the possibility of being in front of another Christological scene. The depiction of the Last Supper scene represents a theme with a double significance, as it shows two different aspects in its iconography: the betrayal of Judas and the establishment of the Eucharist. This allows for differentiation between the historical Holy Supper and the symbolic one.

3. Analytical Results and Study Methodology

In regard to the methodology employed in this study, which was designed as a comprehensive investigation of the polychromies on stone in the refectory of the Monastery of San Salvador de Oña, it is important to note that a mixed approach and study method were essential. In this regard, a body of knowledge has been constructed that draws upon elements from both the field of conservation of cultural heritage and that of art history, thereby forming a multidisciplinary study.

Firstly, it is necessary to specify the two main variants of study that have been followed. The first variant is centered on the field of Art History and has been informed by a bibliographical study focused on the artistic, architectural, iconographic, stylistic, symbolic, religious, and historical fields. The second variant has been derived from a system of work taken from the disciplines of Conservation and Restoration. The disciplines of Conservation and Restoration have enabled the composition and state of conservation of the

polychromies under study to be determined. This has been achieved through organoleptic examination, photographic study, recording of alterations, and the taking and interpretation of micro-samples using scientific examination techniques.

The study of the materials that comprise the polychromy on stone is founded upon a mixed methodology that encompasses the examination of the work itself, as well as the sources and feedback derived from them. This approach enables the derivation of comprehensive studies that facilitate the identification of the constituent materials and the techniques employed in their creation. The present approach to this mode of study is inherently complex, given the theoretical corpus based on historical-literary sources, collectively known as artists' treatises or technological art sources. This corpus comprises over 400 examples (Kroustallis 2013, p. 69).

The most pertinent sources for the study of pigment production and utilization in antiquity and the Middle Ages are those from the 8th to 15th centuries. These include the following, which are of particular relevance: *Mappae Claviculae* (Smith and Hawthorne 1974), the treatises of Heraclius, Archerius, the Book of Master Peter of St. Audemar, the manuscripts of Jehan le Begue, and the Bolognese Manuscript. The relevant sources can be found in Medieval and Renaissance Treatises on the arts of painting (Merrifield 1999), *De diversis artibus* from the monk Teófilo (1979), and *The Montpellier Liber diversarum arcium* (Clarke 2011). However, some contemporary contributions have the potential to clarify certain historiographical, terminological, and technical issues pertaining to the use and production of pictorial materials in the Middle Ages. Notable contributions to this field have been made by Max Doerner (1998), Mark Clarke (2001), and Stefanos Kroustallis (2008a, 2008b, 2012).

In order to gain insight into the technical expertise and extensive use of pre-existing materials evident in the vestiges of Oña, a range of studies from the field of conservation and restoration of cultural heritage were employed to identify and characterize the diverse supports, preparations, pigments, binders, and metals utilized in the polychromies, supports, preparations and mortars, pigments, binders, and metals.

The laboratory results provided by ArteLab S.L. are presented in a report format, comprising the interpretations of the analyses and tests carried out. These are presented in tabular form, with materials distributed by layers and accompanied by footnotes. Additionally, microscopic images are provided, taken with halogen and UV light, as well as scanning electron microscope images with backscattered electrons (BSEs), diffractogram graphs, EDX spectra, and chromatograms of organic material. Finally, summary tables of materials are included. These analyses were conducted by professionals in the sector without precise indications of areas or materials to be traced. In some cases, this resulted in an inadequate characterization of materials in conflictive points of the samples previously detected.

These analyses, complemented with organoleptic and microscopic studies with UV, halogen, and grazing light, as well as in situ digital microscopy, provided data and images that allowed us to establish the possible pictorial sequences of the pieces, as well as the discovery of organic materials and possible methods of decoration in singular areas. This led to the formulation of decorative theories for the most relevant pieces in this collection.

In this way, and using the knowledge that both disciplines, in a multidisciplinary way, have been able to offer on the history, materiality, artistic techniques, creation, style, chronology, or context of these pieces, it was possible to obtain data that integrate and complement each other, ensuring that the analytical results are the extension of the historical research and vice versa, thereby providing greater knowledge of those pieces and episodes for which we had only small testimonies.

3.1. Technical and Material Analysis of Calligraphy

Of the five plaques discovered, three display the most discernible vestiges, which include calligraphic elements in the flowery Kufic and vegetal motifs. Piece P32 features vegetal or floral motifs that are typically associated with Kufic writing, characterized by a geometric appearance and thick strokes. This motif is also present in pieces P33 and P34 (Figure 7a–c). These calligraphic and graphic remains can be stylistically related to those

found in other peninsular locations, such as the palaces of the Partal and the Generalife of the Alhambra. The latter are dated between 1302 and 1019 (Puerta Vilchez 2015, p. 102).

The material characterization and stratigraphic analysis (Figure 9) of these inscriptions, conducted by the ArteLab S.L. laboratory, yielded definitive results, elucidating the composition of the black pigmentation. The analyses revealed the presence of three layers, as illustrated in Table 3. It appears that a plaster may have been applied to the stone support layer. This layer enables the support to acquire a uniform whitish tone, which allows for the calligraphy to be spread without chromatic interference. The application of a black pigment based on charcoal and small concentrations of bone black, largely covered by a whitewash based on calcium carbonate,[4] can be observed on this layer. This technique is relatively simple, involving the application of black pigment to produce the mural calligraphy.

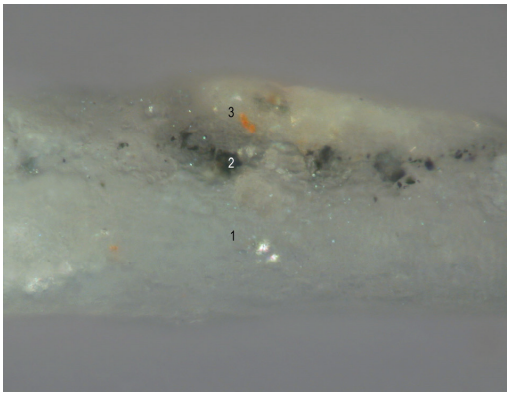


Figure 9. Optical microscopic image of the cross-section of micro-sample P5. Numbers in the image correspond to the layers referenced in Table 3. (MPlan objective 50 ×/0.75). Source: ArteLab S.L.

Table 3. MSSO-RFT-P5-PL01. Black pigment on stone plate. Plates with Kufic writing. Refectory. Source: ArteLab S.L.

Layer	Color	Thickness	Pigments/Fillers	Observations
3	White	0–20	Calcium carbonate, earth pigments (very low proportion), gypsum (very low proportion), bone black (very low proportion)	Remains of a possible whitewashing
2	Black	0–10	Charcoal, bone black (very low proportion)	Hints of a layer of paint
1	White	45–60	Gypsum, silicates (very low proportion)	Possible plastering [1]

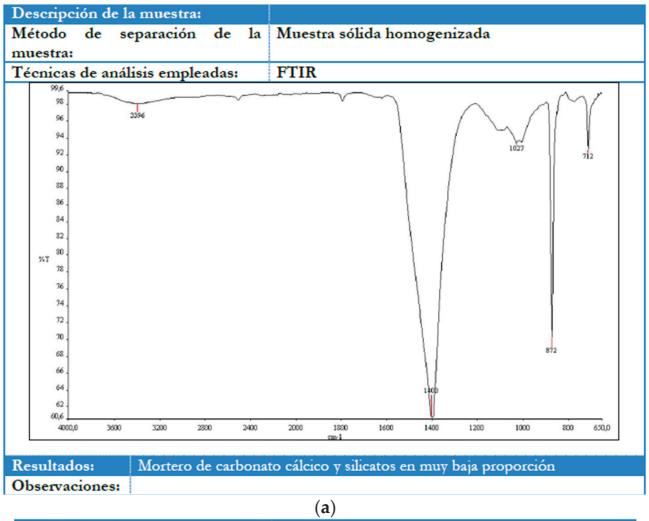
[1] A small amount of magnesium (Mg) is detected in this layer, which could correspond to a low proportion of dolomite.

3.2. Technical and Material Analyses of the Arches' Lunettes

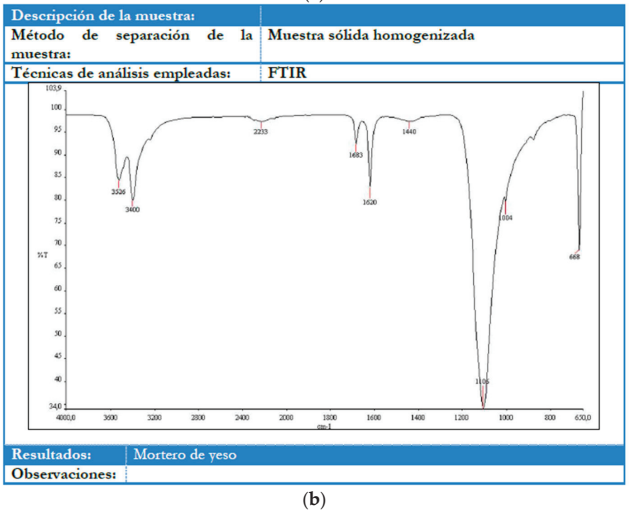
It is likely that these lunettes, which are currently sectioned at the height of the arches, continued along the pilasters up to the bases, thus creating large decorative canvases of more than two meters in length. In order to ascertain the nature of the supports and the pictorial materials employed in these paintings, FTIR analyses were conducted at the ArteLab S.L. laboratory. In this manner, in conjunction with other investigations, including specific solubility tests conducted in situ, we were able to ascertain their resilience to humidity and, consequently, to infer their original composition.

The material characterization analyses have identified the presence of two distinct types of mortar. The first, which is thicker and in contact with the substrate, has a composition of calcium carbonate and silicates in low proportion. The second, which is thinner and has a polished texture, is made of gypsum and is used to prepare and polish the surface before the application of color.

The FTIR analysis of the initial mortar (Figure 10a) indicates that it is a mortar with a minimal calcium carbonate and silicate proportion. In order for the mortar to adhere correctly to the stone support, it was necessary for the dolomite to be irregular; this was achieved by treating it with a variety of tools. In some areas of the tympanum of arch 4, where part of the mortar has been lost, the tool marks are visible. The analysis of the second mortar (Figure 10b) indicates that it is a plaster mortar, which is used to prepare and polish the pictorial surface prior to the application of color. This material peculiarity indicates that we are dealing with a type of painting that goes beyond traditional fresco mural painting. Consequently, it is necessary to characterize the binders and pigments used in these mural decorations and to determine how this technique is carried out.



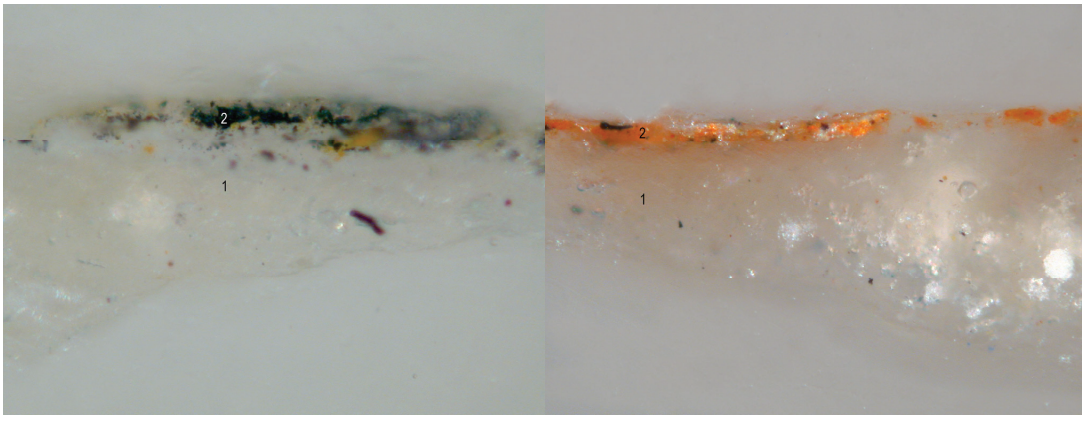
(**a**)



(**b**)

Figure 10. FTIR analysis on the mortar layers of the lunettes of arches 3 and 5: (**a**) FSSO-IMP01: Arricio. Taken from Arch 5. Lower part of the tympanum, left. (Sample separation method homogenised solid sample. Analysis techniques employed: FTIR. Results: Very low proportion calcium carbonate and silicate mortar); (**b**) FSSO-IMP02: Intonaco. Taken from Arch 3. Lower part of the tympanum, central area (Sample separation method_ homogenised solid sample. Analysis techniques employed: FTIR. Results: Gypsum mortar). Source: ArteLab S.L.

With regard to the pigments employed in the lunettes, two samples were taken of the most pertinent pigments identified, namely, black and orange (Figure 11), given that the tones observed in these lunettes span the spectrum from black to yellow ochre. The black pigment sample, MSSO-SCP-F-PL16 (Table 4), was obtained from the drawing of the cup of arch 1, an area where the outline is still clearly visible. The sample was analyzed and found to contain very low proportions of charcoal, lead white, and orpiment. The combination of these two pigments with charcoal is indicative of the techniques described in Chapter LXXII of Cennini's *Book of Art*, entitled "On how to paint dry on the wall". In this chapter, Cennini outlines the use of white lead and yellowish pigments, including orpiment, to lighten colors that cannot be used in fresco painting. However, he notes that orpiment is rarely employed in this way (Cennini et al. 1988, p. 123).



(**a**) (**b**)

Figure 11. Cross-section of samples PL16 and PL17. The numbers in the images correspond to the layers referenced in Tables 4 and 5. (**a**) Optical microscope image of the cross-section of microsample with MPlan objective 20×/0.40.; (**b**) Optical microscope image of the cross-section of microsample with MPlan objective 20×/0.40. Source: ArteLab S.L.

Table 4. MSSO SCP FSSO PL16. Black pigment on plaster. Location: Arch 1. Tympanum, lower part. Drawing of a cup. Source: ArteLab S.L.

Layer	Color	Thickness (μm)	Pigments/Fillers	Observations
2	Black	0–15	Charcoal, white lead (low proportion), oropiment (very low proportion)	Paint layer
1	White	50–100	Gypsum	Possible plastering

Table 5. MSSO SCP FSSO PL17. Orange pigment on plaster. Location: Arch 4. Tympanum, lower part, Apostle's orange beard. Source: ArteLab S.L.

Layer	Color	Thickness (μm)	Pigments/Fillers	Observations
2	Orange	0–15	Earth pigments, charcoal (very low proportion), minium (very low proportion)	Paint layer
1	White	25–150	gypsum, silicates (very low proportion)	Possible plastering

The final sample, MSSO-SCP-F-PL17 (Table 5), illustrates the orange pigment derived from the apostle's beard, discernible in arch 4. The characterization of materials indicates the presence of earth pigments in conjunction with charcoal and minium, albeit in minute quantities.

Given the inability to explicitly identify the binders in the aforementioned samples, solubility tests were conducted on select and limited areas of the composition using swabs. This approach aims to ascertain the resilience and composition of these areas. Following the application of the swabs moistened in warm water, it was observed that the pigments of the gypsum lunettes or stuccos exhibited sensitivity to humidity. The most susceptible to these tests were the yellow and dark ochre pigments, with the orange pigments displaying a lesser degree of sensitivity.

This widespread detachment of the pigments suggests two potential methods for the application of dry paint. One possible explanation is that the paint was applied using a lean tempera binder, such as glue tempera or, less likely, gum tempera. However, given the observed degradation of the piece and the progressive deterioration that has occurred over time due to exposure to the elements, it is also possible that the paint is a fatty binder such as linseed drying oil or a fatty egg yolk or casein tempera that has lost the stability of the paint film, thus facilitating its detachment in the form of powder.

With regard to the technique employed in the painting of the lunettes, it is important to note that the geometric forms that constitute the decorative scheme were initially delineated through an incised drawing, serving as a reference for achieving the desired proportions and shapes. The outline is more clearly discernible in arch 2, where the paint is notably diluted. In this tympanum, the nimbus of the Apostles is incised into the mortar in order to delineate their shape prior to painting. These incisions are maintained in the existing nimbus in the remainder of the arches, indicating that this was an established working method.

The application of these plaster mortars on the lunettes demonstrates the superimposition of these materials on the pre-existing polychromy in the areas of the soffit, as well as the clear presence of edges, which would indicate that both mortars were manufactured in a decorative stage subsequent to the polychromy inside the arch. With regard to the current state of the lunettes, it is possible to note a discrepancy in their coloring, with some of them displaying a difference in the tone of their mortars, which are cleaner and lighter in color.[5]

4. The Symbolic Transformation of the Refectory: The Transition from the 14th Century to the 15th Century

4.1. The Reign of Pedro I and the Reflection of Islamic Influence: The Imprint on the Artistic Remains of the Onian Refectory

The Crown of Castile experienced a period of significant and continuous transformation during the 14th century. This period was characterized by a series of economic, social, and political events that had a profound impact on the future of the kingdom and its configuration. The successive battles against the Nasrid troops carried out by Alfonso XI the Justiciero required the constant support of the Castilian nobility in exchange for their military support, which was reciprocated with lands and privileges (Valdeón Baruque 2024a). However, the death of the monarch in 1350 due to the plague epidemic suddenly truncated this situation.

In that same year, Pedro I of Castile, the legitimate son of Alfonso XI and Maria of Portugal, upon ascending to the throne, sought to establish a circle of confidence, headed by Juan Alfonso de Alburquerque, an outstanding nobleman of Lusitanian origin, followed by other figures who were already present in his father's government. In order to consolidate his power and neutralize the threat posed by Leonor de Guzmán, the king's father's mistress, and her supporters at court, Pedro I kept a significant number of nobles in his domains and permitted them to amass wealth in exchange for allegiance (Díaz Martín 2007, pp. 41–43).

Nevertheless, the monarch was compelled to reform the fiscal system with the objective of augmenting the kingdom's revenue, which had been significantly depleted by his father's protracted military campaigns in the south and the devastating plague epidemic (Díaz Martín 2007, pp. 47–48). Faced with these extreme measures that threatened the welfare state and the authoritarian and centralizing figure of Alburquerque, the nobles of

the kingdom perceived Pedro I as a direct threat to their autonomy and privileges. Consequently, they resolved to confront and oppose him (Díaz Martín 2007, p. 55). Furthermore, the capture and execution of Leonor de Guzmán, the mistress of Alfonso XI and mother of Enrique de Trastámara, in Talavera in 1351 has been attributed to Queen María of Portugal (López de Ayala 1994, p. 34; Valdeón Baruque 2002, p. 59).

In 1353, Pedro I entered into a marital union with Blanca de Borbón, the daughter of the French monarch, with the objective of consolidating the political alliance between Castile and France. Nevertheless, a few days after the marriage, Pedro I repudiated his young wife, confining her to Arévalo to join his mistress, María de Padilla, with whom he had four children. Following this, Pedro I attempted to annul his marriage to Blanca de Borbón and marry Juana de Castro, the widow of Diego López de Haro. The latter's abandonment was used by the high nobility, led by Enrique de Trastámara and Juan Alfonso de Alburquerque, to oppose the legitimate monarch (Díaz Martín 2007, pp. 105–110).

The coalition against Pedro I was consolidated in 1354, although he was able to attract some nobles to his cause, such as the princes of Aragon. In this year, the Castilian king openly confronted his rivals in Toledo. As Valdeón notes, the papal legate proceeded to launch the excommunication against Pedro I of Castile in the Cathedral of Toledo (Valdeón Baruque 2002, p. 74). In this confrontation, the troops of Enrique II perpetrated a violent sacking of the major Jewish quarter of Toledo, which had been fully supportive of the Castilian king, who was in a position of considerable military strength. In light of this military superiority, the bastard's forces were compelled to retreat, resulting in Enrique II's exile in France in 1356. This marked the beginning of the decline of the noble cause in Castile. In an effort to consolidate his power, the king granted pardons to those who had supported his half-brother, provided they agreed to abide by the conditions set forth by Pedro I. Those who remained opposed to Pedro I's cause were compelled to follow him. Those who were not in favor of following them were exiled either to France or Aragon. This resulted in a prohibition of the collection of rents to those ecclesiastics who did not reside in Castile. This measure directly provoked the accumulation of groups of nobles willing to recover their benefits and privileges on the other side of the Castilian border (Díaz Martín 2007, pp. 126–35).

In that same year, the War of the Two Peters broke out between Pedro I of Castile and Pedro IV of Aragon, capitalizing on the aforementioned fact. The conflict initially took place on the border between the two kingdoms. As was to be expected, the Aragonese king, confronted with the Castilian advance, sought the assistance of Enrique II of Trastamara and John II of France, also known as "the Good", in order to continue his attacks on the king of Castile. While Pedro I, following a series of confrontations, returned to Seville to secure financial resources and plan further incursions against the Aragonese monarch (Díaz Martín 2007, pp. 143–44).

From 1359 onwards, there were numerous clashes that resulted in defeats on both sides. The most notable of these was the defeat of Enrique II in Nájera, which enabled Pedro I to reinforce the border with Aragon by signing the Peace of Terrer in 1361. However, in 1362, hostilities resumed when the Castilian forces took Teruel and advanced to Valencia. In the same year, the Treaty of London was signed with Edward III of England. In the following year, 1363, the Peace of Murviedro was concluded between Pedro I and Pedro IV. Among other clauses, it provided for the expulsion of Enrique II and the Castilian exiles from Aragonese lands. However, no response was forthcoming. In the absence of a response to Pedro I's requests, Pedro IV entered into the Binéfar agreement with Enrique II with the objective of conquering the Castilian crown. This resulted in the prolongation of the war until 1365, when the defeat in the town of Murviedro marked the end of the conflict for Pedro I (Valdeón Baruque 2002, pp. 85–102).

The policies enacted by Pedro I during this period prompted numerous nobles to defect and align themselves with Enrique II, largely due to the relentless nature of the Castilian monarch, as evidenced by incidents such as the "orgy of blood" that transpired in 1358 within the Alcázar of Seville. At this time, the assassination of the Master of the

Order of Santiago, his half-brother Fadrique, was carried out in cold blood, as was the murder of the latter's senior knight, along with other nobles (López de Ayala 1994, p. 268; Díaz Martín 2007, p. 159).

Nevertheless, the most significant conflict of Pedro I's reign was the prolonged confrontation with his half-brother, Enrique II of Trastámara. With the support of the kingdoms of France and Aragon, Enrique proclaimed himself King of Castile in 1366 in the city of Calahorra. This conflict, more commonly referred to as the Civil War, saw the formation of opposing sides, with Enrique and Pedro each securing the support of formidable allies. In addition to the support of Aragon and France, the count of Trastámara also enjoyed the backing of Pope Urban V and the White Companies, which constituted a significant component of his military forces. Conversely, the side of Pedro I was able to rely on significant support from England, which was engaged in a parallel conflict with France as part of the Hundred Years' War. Enrique II's incursion into Castile from Aragon prompted Pedro I's rise from Seville to the city of Burgos, whereupon he proceeded to march towards Toledo. This event was exploited by Enrique II to proclaim himself king of Castile in the Monastery of Las Huelgas, Burgos. However, the effective authority of the illegitimate monarch did not extend beyond the eastern portion of the northern plateau. Consequently, he advanced towards Toledo with the objective of conquering it, which he regarded as "the axis of the political and economic life of the Crown of Castile" (Valdeón Baruque 2002, 144).

After the conquest of Toledo, Enrique's troops marched to Seville where king Pedro was, from where he fled due to the lack of support he was finding, until he settled in Portuguese lands. From there he marched to Santiago de Compostela, where the murders of the dean and the archbishop took place, increasing the image of cruelty against the Church on the part of the king. Pedro I continued his march towards France, until arriving at Bordeaux, where he signed in 1360 the agreement of Libourne with the Black Prince of Wales, heir to the throne of England and Charles II of Navarre. In this way, the Civil War of Castile was included as another episode in the Hundred Years' War that was being fought on the continent.

Consequently, in 1367, the English troops entered the peninsula via the Pyrenees until they reached Santo Domingo de la Calzada, entered Vitoria/Gasteiz, and encountered the troops of Enrique II in Nájera. The English army was triumphant due to its superior military capabilities and the strategic use of archers, resulting in the defeat of the army led by his brother.

Nevertheless, Pedro I's failure to adhere to the stipulations of the Libourne accord with the English contingent prompted the Black Prince to return to England, albeit after amassing considerable wealth from monasteries such as San Salvador de Oña and San Millán de la Cogolla (Valdeón Baruque 2002, p. 183). Meanwhile, in 1367, Enrique II, who was in exile in France, once again assembled an army with the intention of reclaiming his throne amidst the ongoing uprisings in the region. These uprisings were a direct result of the Libourne agreement and the attacks launched by the Nasrid forces in response to the pacts struck between King Pedro I and Muhammad V. One year later, the incursions of Enrique II compelled Pedro I to advance towards the central plateau until he reached Montiel, where the decisive encounter between the two brothers took place (López de Ayala 1994, pp. 286–92). The death of king Pedro I at the hands of his brother inaugurated the Trastámara dynasty, which brought about a significant shift in the prevailing trends associated with the monarch's maurophilia and his philo-Jewish tendency, as Valdeón Baruque (2002, pp. 107–8, 267–76) observed.

Pedro I was perceived as an ally of the non-Christian minorities, a stance that was exploited by his brother and his enemies. Additionally, he was accused of fiscal abuses against the Church and of persecuting prelates such as the Archbishop of Toledo, Don Vasco, who was exiled to Portugal, and the Archbishop of Braga, Jean de Cardaillac, who was taken prisoner. It seems plausible to suggest that, in opposition to the stance adopted by his half-brother, Enrique II, upon assuming power in 1369, may have opted to expand the number of clergy serving the crown in a variety of roles. These included roles such

as major chancellor, major notary, royal chaplain, and major chaplain of the kingdom (Díaz Marcilla 2020, pp. 15, 20, 26, 42).

In this context of cultural mixtures and military crises, and in spite of the monarch's overt confrontations with significant sectors of the Church, it is pertinent to examine his close relationship with several prominent figures within the same institution. His close relationship with prominent figures from his formative years included Juan Saavedra, Bishop of Palencia and Major Chancellor, and Don Bernabé, Bishop of the Diocese of Osma, who was responsible for fostering the prince's intellectual development (Valdeón Baruque 2002). Furthermore, at a more mature age, he appointed ecclesiastical authorities such as the Abbot of Oña, Lope Ruiz, as chaplain (Zaragoza 1994, p. 565).

This figure is one of those that, during the Middle Ages, fell exclusively on members of the clergy. They were permitted not only to serve personally in the royal residence but also to assume significant responsibilities within the court. According to the studies of Nogales:

> "*The chaplain would be one who enjoys ecclesiastical income by reason or title of chaplaincy. [...] would refer to a benefit attributed to a chaplain with specific religious obligations, established in a foundation act that, in general, would not in itself imply a reference to a specific architectural framework -a chapel-, but would make use of pre-existing spaces. In a particular sense, a royal chaplaincy would be characterized by the following parameters:*
>
> - *Royal foundation, i.e., these chaplaincies are instituted by a member of the royal family.*
> - *Exercise of the Royal Patronage over all or some of the positions.*
> - *Quitclaims settled on rents of the Crown (tercias, chest of the aljamas, etc.).*
> - *Fulfillment of their religious obligations in favor of the soul of a royal person or a royal servant".*
>
> (Nogales Rincón 2010, pp. 142–43)

However, he makes a necessary clarification on the term chaplain:

> "*However, occasionally in both medieval and modern documentation it is possible to document some references to royal chaplains or chapels that should not be confused with these institutions. In the first place, this denomination must have been applied to certain monks and monasteries linked to the Royal Patronage, in relation to the notion of chapel as "Iglesias de los Monges" [...] Pedro I's reference to the clerics of the monastery of Oña as "mios capellanes*". (Nogales Rincón 2010, p. 146)

From this, we can infer that the monastery at Oña, which has been linked to the power of the counts since its foundation, enjoyed a close relationship with the Royal Patronage during the reign of Pedro I. This is evidenced not only by the enclave's history but also by the presence of the remains of monarchs, queens, and princes. The Monastery of San Salvador de Oña, thus, became a pivotal location for the appointment of a funeral chaplaincy whose role was to serve the royal pantheon and intercede on behalf of the deceased monarch (Nogales Rincón 2010, p. 146).

To situate the monastery in the context of Pedro I's reign, it is essential to consider the role of Abbot Lope Ruiz (1350–1381). Zaragoza provides insight into the abbot's tenure, noting the following: "*He was a native of Oña and son of the nobleman Juan Ruiz de Oña. [He was chaplain to Alfonso XI and Pedro El Justiciero. During his abbacy, he saw how the monastery of Oña was sacked by the Prince of Wales, who had come to the aid of Pedro I the Cruel, after fighting with him. He died in 1381*". (Zaragoza 1994, p. 565)

The continued preference of Pedro I of Castile for Islamic culture—known as maurophilia—was not an isolated episode in medieval peninsular history, but it was the result of the cultural context of artistic and political circles in the Castile of the 13th and 14th centuries.

These centuries produced a series of profound changes in the territory that had a notable influence on its cultural and architectural development. Episodes such as the wars against Aragon and the relationship with the Nasrid kingdom of Granada increased the

adoption of Islamic cultural elements. On the other hand, it is evident that the less predominant European influence in architectural and artistic matters gave way to the creation of a distinctive peninsular style with a strong Andalusian imprint (Ruiz Souza 2013, p. 309). This phenomenon of assimilation of Islamic culture in the Iberian Peninsula has been noted by scholars such as Juan Carlos Ruiz Souza, who highlighted how this process significantly influenced the Castilian artistic promoters of the 14th century (Ruiz Souza 2004). During this period, the Crown of Castile experienced a significant reflection both in architectural terms—extensively studied by specialists such as Lampérez, Romea, Torres Balbás, Navarro García, and Almagro Gorbea (2013)—and in stylistic aspects.

The distinctive context in which these architectural and iconographic elements were situated meant that they were not merely the result of a random decision on the part of Pedro I. Rather, they were the consequence of a strategic and considered choice, reflecting his political and cultural aspirations.

From a political perspective, it is clear that Pedro I had to navigate a complex landscape. He had to contend with the nobility, seek legitimacy for his reign, and assert royal authority over the Church. To achieve these goals, he needed tools that reflected his authority and legitimacy. In order to achieve this, he employed two main strategies: firstly, the use of architecture, and secondly, the utilization of symbols, particularly epigraphy. Both of these reflected the centralized power and majesty of the sovereign, which was typical of Islamic society. However, on a cultural level, the 14th century was characterized by a flourishing of commercial and artistic exchange between the Nasrid and Castilian kingdoms, resulting in a significant enrichment of both societies in a range of domains, including architecture, literature, artistic techniques, and the arts.

While it is accurate to conclude that rivalry and military conflicts were a prevalent aspect of the reign of Alfonso XI, it is also evident that economic cooperation and peace agreements were integral to the period. This is exemplified by the favorable relations and treaties maintained between the monarchs Pedro I and Muhammad V. As a consequence of these relations, a courtly culture reflecting the diversity of the peninsular was promoted at the Castilian court with the participation of figures such as Ibn al-Jaṭīb (Marquer 2011) and Ibn Khaldun (Gumiel Campos 2016, p. 33).

However, this Nasrid influence was not merely embraced in the Castilian court in a cultural sense; forms, symbols, and legitimizing structures were also incorporated from the adoption of an enclave such as Seville. This city, with a strong Islamic substratum, was from an early age the official residence of King Pedro, as it offered him a plethora of palatial structures and established artistic resources that he was able to utilize for his legitimizing purposes. The Islamic palaces of the centralized court and great opulence not only placed the monarch at the center of the created cosmos, but also elaborated an extensive iconographic program of laudations and praises through decorative elements such as calligraphy, plasterwork, tiles, and muqarnas cupolas. These intricate messages were designed with a single purpose: to reflect the greatness and supremacy of the king. In order to achieve this objective, artisans from the Nasrid palaces in Granada were deployed, as well as alarifes from Granada, artisans specialized in plaster work and other decorative arts from Toledo and Seville (Gumiel Campos 2016, p. 35).[6]

One of the most significant inquiries regarding the ornamentation employed by Pedro I pertains to the epigraphies or inscriptions in Arabic, which served to exalt the majesty of the monarch through laudatory expressions. In her numerous scientific contributions, Julie Marquer addresses the subject of Arabic inscriptions in the propaganda project of Pedro I of Castile (1350–1369) in works such as "Epigraphy and power: the use of Arabic inscriptions in the propaganda project of Pedro I of Castile (1350–1369)" (2012) and "The written power: problematic and significance of the Arabic inscriptions". The inscriptions of the palaces of Pedro I of Castile (1350–1369) (2013) address matters pertaining to the decoration, its function in the legitimizing image as a vehicle for political propaganda, and the controversies surrounding language assimilation.

It is common to find in the decorations of the palaces of the Castilian king inscriptions with phrases such as these: "al-saʿd al-dāʾim li-llāh, al-ʿizz al-qāʾim li-llāh" (perpetual fortune comes from God, eternal glory to God); "al-ḥamd li-llāh al-ʿizza li-llāh al-mulk li-llāh al-šukr li-llāh" (Praise be to God, glory to God, God is sovereign, praise be to God); the Nasrid political motto, "wa-lā gāliba illá-llāh" ("there is no victor but God") and "ʿizz li-mawlānā al-sulṭān don bidru ayyadahu Allah" (Glory to our lord the sultan Don Pedro help him God) (Marquer 2012, p. 33, 35) (Figure 12, Seville inscription). And as some specialists indicate, the reference to God in them only implies the aulic sense with a clear recognition of the divine supremacy to which the king is subordinated (Marquer 2012, p. 30; Cano Ávila and Essawi 2004, p. 61).



Figure 12. Kufic inscription of the Alcazar of Seville. Source: author.

It can be posited that the relationship between the abbot Lope and the Castilian king, along with the presence of material remains of clear Islamic influence, allow us to hypothesize that the Oña center represented another epicenter where the legitimizing image of Pedro I was promoted in his struggle for the throne with his bastard brother, Enrique II.

The material remains from the 14th century, which can be found in the refectory and other rooms of the museum, can be grouped into three artistic typologies: Kufic epigraphy from the refectory, 14th-century chests, and geometric tiles made with the "cuerda seca" technique from the main chapel. Nevertheless, as Marquer proposed, the most significant evidence for the legitimizing role of the monarch in his iconographic program, which was disseminated throughout the peninsula, is the presence of Kufic epigraphy.

Nevertheless, the content of these calligraphies from Oña is challenging to decipher due to their advanced state of deterioration, which hinders the ability to comprehend the text as a whole. Instead, it is possible to discern individual words, but not a complete and coherent understanding. This is exemplified by piece P34 (Figure 7b), which, following an analysis by Arabists, has only a limited portion of its content translated. This resulted in the word "Allah" being preceded by a cut word ending in the sound "d".[7] This detail does not permit confirmation of concordance with the aulic phrases typical of the context deployed by Pedro I in other centers of the peninsula. However, in conjunction with the material remains of the fourteenth century and the decoration of this same piece in its second decorative phase,[8] it is possible to propose that these remains belong to its iconographic program.

Nevertheless, further material and calligraphic research is anticipated, with the objective of developing a more precise chronology that corroborates this hypothesis and enables the attribution of this center to the extensive program of legitimation initiated by the monarch across the peninsula.

4.2. The Subsequent Adoption of a Dual Iconography: The Last Supper

A significant aspect of Enrique II's political outlook, in contrast to that of his brother Pedro I, was his overt hostility towards social sectors of other religions, including Jews and Muslims. During the period of conflict with his brother, Enrique II employed the rhetoric of anti-Judaism to garner support and to discredit his brother's legitimacy by highlighting his own brother's pro-Jewish sentiments and affinity for Jews. In these instances of affinity, Enrique II was able to garner the support of Pope Urban V in a crusade against the Nasrid Kingdom of Granada, and by extension, against his brother. The monarch Muhammad V also provided unconditional backing. This hostile policy was evidenced by the encouragement of attacks that were launched against Jewish quarters such as Toledo, Aguilar de Campoo, and towns like Briviesca, where the vast majority of the Hebrew community was annihilated (Valdeón Baruque 2002, p. 273).

Despite these violent actions and following his ascension to the throne, Enrique II reversed these policies, integrating the Jewish community more closely into the upper echelons of his court. However, this integration did not extend to the broader population, where anti-Semitic sentiment continued to grow and gain traction (Valdeón Baruque 2024b).

Concurrently, the political situation with the peninsular kingdoms resulted in the formation of coalitions between 1369 and 1371 against the Kingdom of Castile by Portugal, Navarre, Granada, and Aragon, with the objective of avenging the death of Pedro I. These coalitions ultimately dissolved through the establishment of pacts and truces, as well as the evident supremacy of Castile.

This period of stabilization and change in historical parameters situates us in a context that is wholly distinct from that of Pedro I. It may be posited that the transformation, which occurred on a political, economic, religious, and social level, constituted the genesis of the "modern state", and with it, the selection of appropriate models, specific iconographic representations, and new artistic preferences, as many historians have suggested.

This is exemplified by the final decorative phase of the refectory at the Monastery of San Salvador de Oña. This piece, created in three distinct decorative phases, underwent a final stage of intervention that involved repolychroming the entire surface area, including all arches. Additionally, the use of gold leaf was employed in specific areas of the arches and rosettes, while a new iconographic display was introduced in the mural painting on the lunettes of the arches, depicting the Last Supper.

The Oña scene has been identified by art historians due to the presence of a consistent number of apostles and the presence of ornaments typical of the Eucharistic scene. These include the cup present in the lunette of arch 1 (Figure 5a) (Gutiérrez Baños 2005, pp. 118–24; Senra Gabriel y Galán 2012, p. 402). This scene, which is narrated in the four Gospels,[9] exhibits discrepancies between them with regard to certain narrative and iconographic details. For instance, there is a lack of precision regarding the persons present at this event

(Grabar 2008, p. 95). Despite the evident state of degradation that can be observed in the five arches, the Oña scene contains the presence of nine figures, which would allow for the location of four other characters that have since disappeared. The composition features Christ and Saint John in the center, with two additional figures positioned within the arch that remains integrated into the wall.

It is crucial to commence this proposed iconographic analysis of Oña by establishing a pivotal point: the advanced state of degradation of the scene, coupled with the partial loss of numerous constituent elements, precludes the possibility of conducting a comprehensive interpretation and identification of the scene. Consequently, only at this juncture can interpretations of actions, characters, and gestures be formulated. By comparing these with those of other contemporary works of a similar nature, it is possible to discern the style and structure of this work by Oña.

It is, thus, imperative to commence by delineating the specific type of scene under consideration. In order to achieve this identification, it is necessary to turn to Gertrud Schiller, who, in her work that has been translated into English, *Iconography of Christian Art*, indicates that there are different typologies of the Last Supper images that can be observed in the earliest images of Christian art. The iconography of the Last Supper comprises three principal types: Christ washing the feet of his disciples; Christ blessing or distributing the food, which would imply the establishment of the Eucharist; and Christ seated with his guests pointing to the traitor (Schiller 1972, p. 28).

Accordingly, the images of the Last Supper can be subdivided into discrete scenes, with a particular focus on the episode of the washing of the feet, as narrated in the Gospel of John (13:1–15). This account describes how Jesus washed the feet of the apostles, who were gathered together in the upper room, prior to returning to the table. This scene frequently depicts Jesus in the foreground with Simon Peter, as they are the primary figures in the Gospel narrative, while the remaining apostles are positioned in the background. Subsequently, the scene of the Communion of the Apostles is introduced, depicted with the apostles arranged around a table of variable shape, with a tablecloth, with a variable number of foodstuffs, whether bread, meat, or fish, and bowls or chalices to hold the wine. Ultimately, in accordance with the Gospel narratives, the announcement of the betrayal represents one of the most profound forms of suffering endured by Christ (Schiller 1972, p. 28). The scene typically depicts all the apostles and Christ gathered at the table. In this moment, Christ reveals to his disciples that he will be betrayed and handed over to die for one of their own. His disciples express surprise and fear through gestures as they question who the betrayer is. In response, Christ indicates that he will reveal the betrayer through formulas that have been reflected in medieval iconography, such as bread or plates.

Since its inception, the prototype has undergone significant alterations in terms of the configuration of its constituent elements and the actions carried out. The earliest images provide insight into a Communion of Apostles with a centralized arrangement centered on Christ, positioned behind an altar in a manner reminiscent of a priest. Two groups of apostles approached simultaneously, receiving the bread and wine from the central figure. Over time, not only did the altars and tables where the Eucharistic action took place change, but also the nature of the gatherings depicted shifted from a ritual image to that of a religious feast (Schiller 1972, pp. 28, 31).

In order to gain insight into the scene depicted in the Oña monastery mural painting, it is essential to consider an element that, although not present in the painting, plays a pivotal role in shaping its structural composition and, consequently, the distribution of figures and elements observed in the painting. This element is the table, as illustrated in Figure 8. In the context of historical and material culture, the representation of the Holy Supper, which would have been set in a nocturnal setting, demonstrates a tendency to present a variety of table types, contingent on the cultural origin of the representation. This enables us to identify sigma-shaped tables in the earliest manifestations of Paleochristian art, round tables—which are typical of Carolingian art—and the most prevalent, rectangular tables. The latter are of particular significance in this study, given the distribution of Oña's work

and the fact that they began to be present in medieval iconography from the 11th century onwards, as Réau (2008, p. 427) notes.

The rectangular configuration of the table allows for the positioning of Christ at the center, with the apostles situated at right angles to the sides, all situated behind this movable element. It is important to exercise caution when approaching this particularity, as the table from which this pictorial group originates has not survived to the present day. Furthermore, there are four figures missing from the group, three of whom are crucial to the scene as a whole. However, it can be posited that, as in other examples of medieval European art, this structure is ideal for the representation of horizontal scenes in doorways, facades, or monastic refectories. A concise illustration of scenes from the Last Supper featuring this type of rectangular table can be observed in European examples of paintings, including the frescoes in the church of Santa María de Arcos de Tricio, La Rioja, Spain (12th century), and the frescoes in the Chapel of Santa Catalina in the Cathedral of La Seu d'Urgell, Spain (13th century) (Figure 13). Furthermore, stone traces can be observed in the church of Saint-Basile d'Étampes in Essone, France (1140–1155), as well as in manuscripts such as folio 56 of the Karlsruhe 3378 manuscript of the *Badische Landesbibliothek*, dated to the 14th century.[10]



Figure 13. Mural painting of the Last Supper at the Chapel of St Catherine is located within the Cathedral of La Seu d'Urgell. Source: Wikimedia Commons.

One of the key unknowns regarding this mural painting from Oña is the lack of identification of the figures involved in the scene. While studies of these paintings have provided a description of the scene as the Last Supper, they have not offered any insights into the identities of the figures or the specific objects present in the painting. In order to achieve this, it is necessary to focus on three key figures in this process: the figures of Saint John, Saint Peter, and Judas. The first is typically situated in close proximity to Christ, as he has traditionally been depicted in a position lying on Jesus' chest, as described in the Gospel of John. The opening of the new access door to the room in the 16th century resulted in the loss of the central arch and the iconography it once housed within the Oña refectory. It may be surmised that the largest of the seven arches would have depicted both Christ and, presumably, Saint John, his favored disciple. However, this conjecture regarding the positioning of the figures does not permit further investigation into the postures or gestures of either Christ or the apostle.

One figure that could be posited as a presence in the Oña scene is that of Saint Peter. Simon Peter is one of the twelve most significant apostles, renowned for his zeal and

unwavering devotion to Christ. He is one of the most prominent figures in the four Gospels. He is a highly relevant figure in Christian theology, whose high prestige led to the appearance of several anonymous writings bearing his name, including the Gospel of Peter, the Apocalypse of Peter, the Acts of Peter, the Acts of Peter and Paul, and the Preaching of Peter (Cipriani 2000, p. 1863).

The Catholic Church has identified him as the first father of its institution due to the words that Christ addressed to him, as recorded in the Gospel of Saint Matthew (6: 18–19):

> "*I say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of God; and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven*".

The figure of Jesus has been depicted throughout history by numerous artists in a multitude of ways, with inspiration drawn not only from the canonical texts but also from the apocrypha. This has resulted in the typical depiction of the figure in question with the attributes associated with this Gospel passage, including a bunch of keys that identify him as the guardian of the Kingdom of Heaven, a cockerel in reference to his triple denial of Christ, or the inverted cross, symbol of his martyrdom. However, there is a paucity of information regarding his physical appearance. Nevertheless, the Christian iconographic tradition typically depicts him as an elderly man with a white beard, which may be a representation of the wisdom and stability that is assumed to be a fundamental aspect of the Church. This figure, as Christ's successor, is typically depicted accompanying and standing close to him. This iconography and arrangement can be traced in numerous examples of the material culture of the Middle Ages, including the manuscript M.283 fol. 15r (1228–1247) and the Vita Christi (1315–1325), both of which are housed in the Morgan Library.[11]

This arrangement is exemplified in Oña, where a figure is visible in arch 3, the one situated to the left of the missing central arch, which would traditionally be occupied by Christ (Figure 5c). This figure, seen in a mirror image, would be to the right of Christ, alone under one of the arches, which would emphasize the importance of this figure. However, due to the gradation of the pictorial surface, it is not possible to identify his features with certainty.

With regard to the final character in the scene, Judas Iscariot, it can be stated that his construction is based on a combination of sources, including the canonical Gospels, the exegesis of the Fathers of the Church, and medieval legends. Collectively, these sources have shaped the portrayal of Judas as a character linked to sin since his childhood (Monzón Pertejo and López 2021, p. 6).

The betrayal of the apostle, who will ultimately betray Jesus due to his greed and envy, which were promoted by the devil, is revealed in the scene of the Last Supper. This betrayal will be reflected in multiple works of art[12] (Monzón Pertejo and López 2021, pp. 7–8). In terms of iconography, the figure in question has been identified by certain key aspects, particularly in the context of medieval art. The use of yellow as a color symbolizing betrayal is one of the main identifying features, although the figure is also recognizable due to the bag he carries, which contains 30 silver coins as payment for the betrayal of Christ. In the scene of the Last Supper, he can be identified by his act of eating bread from Christ's plate or stealing fish. This is exemplified in the *Lectionary of Sankt Peter*, Salzburg (1050), in the Morgan Library, and in one of the enamel panels of The Verdun Altar (1181) is another example of this iconography (Figure 14), as is the *Gospel Book of Ivan* Alexander (1356) in the British Library.[13]



Figure 14. Enamel panel of the Last Supper. Verdun Altar. Source: Hans A. Rosbach, Wikimedia Commons.

Additionally, the subject is depicted in a separate scene, kneeling in front of a table in an attitude of supplication while receiving a piece of wet bread from Jesus, as described in the Gospel of Saint John (López Martínez and Navarro 2020, p. 133). This attitude has been widely represented in art, with references in sculpture, manuscripts, and paintings. For example, it can be seen in the aforementioned tympanum of the church of Saint-Julien-de-Brioude in Saint-Julien-de-Jonzy, France (Figure 15), in the fresco paintings of the church of St. Georg in Rhäzüns (Switzerland, ca. 1350), and in the church of St. John of God (Switzerland, ca. 1350–1350). In addition, the fresco paintings of the church of St. Georg in Rhäzüns (ca. 1350–1350) and the church of St. John of God (ca. 1350–1350), both located in Switzerland, depict Jesus in a similar posture of supplication, kneeling before a table. In the manuscript *Speculum Humanae Salvationis*, he is also depicted wearing the distinctive yellow tunic.[14]

While the absence or presence of a golden or black nimbus is undoubtedly a definitive means of identification (Schiller 1972, p. 37; Réau 2008, p. 430),[15] the utilization of dark materials, such as ochre, charcoal, or bone black, which are starkly divergent from the gold that is characteristic of the nimbus, serves to illustrate the profound significance of the symbolism of color and materials in the Middle Ages. The use of gold in artistic works during this period was not merely a matter of economic value; it was also due to the brilliant and lasting qualities of the metal,[16] which were assimilated with divine light. Consequently, the utilization of materials and colors that eschew the radiance and warm tonality inherent to this golden material effectively situates the representation at a remove from the divine essence, as evidenced by the portrayal of Judas (Portal and Gutiérrez 1996; Pastoureau and Simonnet 2006). In the case of Oña, the subject displays a nimbus of a darker hue. However,

given the advanced state of deterioration of the paintings and their prolonged exposure to the elements for a period exceeding 20 years, it is not possible to ascertain with certainty that this is not a consequence of an intrinsic reaction of the pigments and binders, together with the mortars of which they are composed.



Figure 15. Portail de l'église de Saint-Julien-de-Jonzy. Source: Jean-Pierre Gobillot, Wikimedia Commons.

It can be observed that there is a distinctive architectural feature in Oña that is integrated into the overall architectural relief and serves as a framing element for the paintings. This feature is the arcades, which are a prominent element in the town's landscape. This distinctive and theatrical element of medieval works of art effectively resolves the distribution of space for the placement of the apostles and Christ at the Last Supper, with an even distribution along the horizontal table. Such structures are found in a considerable number of medieval works, both Romanesque and Gothic, throughout Europe. Examples include the frescoes and paintings like of the cresting of the baldachin of Tost (mid-13th century), Catalonia, Spain; the wall paintings of the Church of St. Georg in Rhäzüns, Switzerland (c. 1350–1350); and the San Gaggio Altarpiece paintings (1390–1399) from Florence, which are now located in Berlin. Such architectural elements can also be observed in works of a stony or ligneous nature. For instance, the door of the Cathedral of Saint Domnius in Split, Croatia (1214), and tympanums, such as the one in the church of Saint-Martin de Bellenaves (1100–1149), France, exhibit this characteristic.[17]

It would be remiss not to mention manuscripts such as the Huntingfield Psalter (1210–1220) and the Yolande of Soissons Psalter-Hours (1275–1299), both of which are housed in the Morgan Library; *The Livre d'images* de Madame Marie (ca. 1285–1285) from

the Bibliothèque Nationale de France and the Nuremberg Hours (1290–1300) from the *Stadtbibliothek Nürnberg*[18] are two notable examples. Additionally, there are examples of sumptuous artworks, such as the ivory diptych (1320–1340) from the *Musée du Louvre*, the ivory diptych with scenes from the Passion of Christ (1330–1360) from the National Museum of Denmark, and the diptych with scenes from the Passion of Christ (1350–1374) from the Ashmolean Museum. Additionally, the ivory diptych with scenes from the Passion of Christ (1350–1399) from the *Staatliches Museum Schwerin*, or those in the Thorvaldsens Museum in Copenhagen (1350–1450), and the *Musée du Petit Palais* (ca. 1370–1399).[19]

In the case of Oña, it is evident that the semicircular arches diverge significantly from the interwoven Gothic arcades characterized by lobed arches and intricate tracery designs, as observed in some of the earlier contemporary works. Nevertheless, the presence of capitals at the extremities of these arches may be regarded as a coinciding element. In some instances, the capitals exhibit more intricate designs, whereas in others, they are simply carved into the stone to create a simple yet functional volume.

In this architectural relief from Oña, two issues emerge with regard to the arches and their interaction in the distribution of the figures. It is important to note that, although the paintings are of an advanced stage of the Late Middle Ages, their delimiting structures are not. The arches and capitals are of an earlier 12th-century date, and, thus, their aesthetic characteristics are incongruous with those of the paintings. In this ensemble, we can discern the intertwining of Romanesque and Gothic features. This discrepancy prompts the question of whether other European ensembles, whether they be stone, ornamentation, or manuscripts, exhibit a similar lack of aesthetic concordance. In the case of Oña, the figures have a clear Gothic appearance, while their framing in the scene is clearly Romanesque with semicircular arches.

Nevertheless, it is evident that the Gothic artists of Oña were able to achieve an effective distribution of figures in accordance with the exemplars observed in diptychs and manuscripts of the period. This is despite the fact that they were working within the constraints of a pre-existing architectural framework. An equal distribution is observed in groups of two individuals, with the exception of the figure in arch 3, which depicts Saint Peter, who is positioned separately. This discrepancy is likely attributable to the positioning of Christ with Saint John in the central arch, which results in an uneven number of apostles (11) in an even number of arches (6).

A comparative analysis of other European examples where these cantilevered architectural structures are present as decoration suggests that this may have been a reality in the architectural ensemble of Oña. However, the absence of material remains of columns or bases precludes the possibility of confirming this hypothesis. Consequently, it can be postulated that the refectory may have been constructed without supporting columns, relying instead on a cantilevered structure comprising solely the arches and capitals, as evidenced by the surviving remains.[20]

5. Conclusions

This article demonstrates that the Monastery of San Salvador de Oña has been a significant institution since its establishment, initially associated with county authority and subsequently with royal power. The refectory, despite being a room of regular use, has housed a very important piece that has undergone significant periods of reform and aesthetic, and structural remodeling associated with this power since its initial execution. Over time and in response to the various political and cultural contexts in which the monastery has been immersed, this room has adapted the aesthetics of this piece, as well as its iconography and decoration, subordinating its meaning to political movements and the legitimization of royal power.

Firstly, since its carving in 1179 (1141 AD), with the addition of an inscription dating it with the reference to "OPUS REGNANTE MPERATORE DOMNO ALDEPHONSO TOLETO", which translates as "work done during the reign of Alfonso VII of León". Secondly, with the accession to power of Pedro I and the addition of Nasrid epigraphy,

techniques and materials, which include a comprehensive display of praise for the figure of the king and mention of Allah as the sole entity subject to royal power. It is also noteworthy that Enrique II and the Trastámara dynasty exhibited a shift in iconography in contrast to the maurophilia of his brother. This was an attempt to initiate a new political, economic, social, and religious trend in which Christianity would become the dominant force, as opposed to the previous period of alliances with the Nasrid kingdoms, which were regarded as infidels.[21]

The material evidence from Oña demonstrates a clear aesthetic change from this point onwards, with an emphasis on Christian iconography and the use of symbolic themes specific to the space in which the piece was located. While the precise date of the paintings on the lunettes of this work cannot be ascertained, they can be situated within a chronological framework spanning the reign of Enrique II and the year 1495. In this year, one of the most significant architectural and decorative intervention projects for the remodeling of the monastery in the Middle Ages was concluded (Martín Martínez De Simón 2012). The paintings, which are challenging to interpret individually due to conservation issues, do not present thematic ambiguity due to the number of figures and their aesthetic characteristics, attributes, and attitudes. Nevertheless, it would be beneficial in the future to conduct an archaeological examination of the walls where the remaining figures are believed to survive. This would enable verification of both their arrangement and the original structure of the arcades. This would facilitate the connection of the remains with their European and Islamic artistic references across the different stages of construction. It would also allow for a deeper understanding of the political, religious, commercial, and cultural interactions in which this monastery was immersed.

This approach would facilitate the expansion of our current understanding of this religious center by pursuing further investigation into this distinctive work, which has been shaped by the directives of its architects, exhibiting variations in its aesthetic and iconographic elements, its chromatic palette, and its overall appearance, with the objective of modifying its message to the world, and in this case, its message to the Benedictine community that inhabited it.

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Notes

1 For those wishing to view detailed, high-quality images of all the rooms and works, the following link will direct you to the relevant information. Monasterio de San Salvador de Oña. Available online: https://www.xn--monasteriodeoa-2nb.com/ (accessed on 16 August 2024).

2 This difference in level between the original wall construction of the cloister and the later excavation of the reform of 1503 can be seen in the eastern interior wall of the chapter house where the remains of the arcades of the Romanesque cloister are still preserved.

[3] The fragment with the carved inscription measures 31.8 cm wide, 9.5 cm high, and 14 cm deep. The plaster plates have a variable structure that remains within 50 cm high and 3 cm thick. They are in a delicate state of conservation, as they show advanced degradation of the black writing lines, as well as damage from vandalism.

[4] The whitewashing of this layer would correspond to the process of walling the piece into the wall.

[5] The lunettes of arches 1, 2, and 5a are smoother and whiter than the lunettes of arches 3, 4, and 5b. We can intuit a polishing, abrasive cleaning or cleaning with unsuitable products on their surface, eliminating a natural or decorative patina that can be seen in the historical photos of the piece in situ.

[6] In their research, Ana García Bueno and her team at the University of Granada identified the use of materials such as copper resinate and tin leafs in the decorative elements of buildings in Granada, including the Palaces of the Alhambra, the Madrasa of Yusuf I, and the Royal Room of Santo Domingo. The application of these materials on wood or plasterwork, following specific techniques or using unique binders typical of the Islamic tradition, has enabled the identification of the characteristic hand of the Nasrid artists in the Royal Alcazars of Seville. For further information on these matters, please refer to the publications by Ana García Bueno and her team on the Reales Alcázares of Seville, the Madrasa of Yusuf I, and the Cuarto Real de Santo Domingo (Granada).

[7] This could be the word alhamdulillah, which translates as "Praise be to Allah".

[8] The presence in the refectory complex of materials characteristic of the second decorative phase (14th century), including the extensive use of tin or copper resinate, demonstrates a high degree of concordance with the materials and techniques employed in the Nasrid kingdoms of Granada (Cuarto Real de Santo Domingo and Alhambra) and the Reales Alcázares of Seville. This suggests the existence of an artistic connection.

[9] Matthew, 26: 17–26; Mark, 14: 12–22; Luke, 22: 7–14; and John, 23: 21–30.

[10] Artwork 128486. Capital of Notre-Dame de Saint-Basile de Étampes in Essonne, Île-de-France. Available at: https://theindex.princeton.edu/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=66C1035D-B37A-4A71-B3D4-AECD3627A5FC (accessed 18 August 2024); Badische Landesbibliothek—Karlsruhe 3378, fol. 56—14th century (center). Available at: https://iconographic.warburg.sas.ac.uk/object-wpc-wid-enug (accessed 18 August 2024).

[11] Psalter. System number: 104789, Ms. M.283 fol. 15r. Morgan Library and Museum. Available on: https://theindex.princeton.edu/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=B4CF512A-0B60-4AED-AE67-483613C5A879 (accessed on 18 August 2024); *Vita Christi*. System number: 70125, Ms. M.643, fol.14fol.8r. Morgan Library and Museum. Available on: https://theindex.princeton.edu/s/view/ViewImage.action?id=7BB4C18C-7476-4597-9DAD-99DDF0F72851 (accessed on 18 August 2024).

[12] In the Gospel passages of the Last Supper of St. John (23: 21–30) and St. Mark (14: 12–22), the words that Christ indicates to his disciples to discover who will betray him are referenced. In this case, the bread that they will eat is mentioned. In the Gospel of St. John, Christ states, "It is he to whom I give the morsel that I will dip", while in the Gospel of St. Mark, he says, "dip with me in the dish". These actions have been reflected in the iconography of the Middle Ages, in which Judas is depicted as focusing on the food, denoting his betrayal, while the rest of the disciples are either attentive to Christ's words or disturbed by their content. On occasion, Judas has also been depicted with a demon near his head or mouth, representing him as the cause of his action.

[13] *Lectionary of Sankt Peter*. System number: 76284, Ms.G.44, fol. 80r. Morgan Library. Available on: https://theindex.princeton.edu/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=B7DE53AD-5CFE-47C1-836C-F91FF28A4AA4 (accessed on 15 August 2024); *The Gospel Book of Ivan Alexander*. System number: 50741, Ms.Add.39627, fol. 202v. British Library. Available on: https://theindex.princeton.edu/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=F4600F6D-2542-416E-BBBE-A8DA2EDDB34E (accessed on 15 August 2024).

[14] Sankt Georg de Rhäzüns. System number: 159821. Current location: Graubünden, Switzerland. Available on: https://theindex.princeton.edu/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=23872D46-088A-4A7D-9121-9FE968914F1C (accessed on 15 August 2024); *Speculum Humanae Salvationis*. System number: 51205, Ms. 2505, fol. 28v. Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Darmstadt, Hesse, Germany. Available on: https://theindex.princeton.edu/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=0EBB8893-25B0-4833-BA57-74B3AEC56CCB (accessed on 15 August 2024).

[15] The representation of Judas with a black nimbus is evident in notable works such as the *Communion of the Apostles* by Fra Angelico in San Marco, Florence, and *The Last Supper* by the Master of Perea (Masaveu Collection).

[16] Gold is a noble metal that does not oxidize or deteriorate on contact with oxygen or other materials, thereby confirming its durability and stability over time. The only means of weakening the structure of gold and causing its deterioration is to mix it with aqua regia (a mixture of nitric acid and hydrochloric acid in a concentration of 1 to 3 parts by volume), ammonia, or mercury.

[17] Crest of the baldachin of Sant Martí de Tost. Inventory number: MEV 5166. Museu Episcopal de Vic, España. Available on: https://museuartmedieval.cat/es/colleccions/romanico/cresteria-del-baldaquin-de-sant-marti-de-tost-mev-5166 (accessed on 15 August 2024); San Gaggio Altarpiece. System number: 180323. Inventory number: 1108. Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. Available on: https://theindex.princeton.edu/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=92D138ED-B505-427C-86B1-A42AEEF7913A (accessed on 15 August 2024); Door of Cathedral of Saint Domnius. System number: 74676. Current location: Split, Croatia. Available on: https://theindex.princeton.edu/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=937A56EE-458E-45F2-8340-479C746182DB (accessed on 15 August 2024); Portal of Saint-Martin of Bellenaves. System number: 103796. Current location: Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, France. Available on: https://theindex.princeton.edu/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=86BB243A-8CFE-4194-94A4-5D429F778719 (accessed on 15 August 2024).

[18] Huntingfield Psalter. System number: 79575, M.43, fol.22r. Morgan Library and Museum. Available on: https://theindex.princeton.edu/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=83E807AB-0A56-45AA-8839-EDA2DAA6D7AE (accessed on 15 August 2024); Yolande de Soissons Psalter-Hours. System Number: 1238, M.729, fol. 319v. Morgan Library and Museum. Available on: https://theindex.princeton.edu/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=7E7F5552-FD25-43ED-8C9D-3C9BD3C39132 (accessed on 15 August 2024); Livre d'images de Madame Marie. System number: 181353, N.Acq.fr.16251, fol. 30v. Bibliothèque nationale de France. Available on: https://theindex.princeton.edu/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=3793561F-0490-4793-823B-89F7998A0A8E (accessed on 15 August 2024); Nuremberg Hours. System number: 56626, Solger 4.4o, fol. 72v. Stadtbibliothek Nürnberg. Available on: https://theindex.princeton.edu/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=9065E6E2-4CB6-4066-8A31-FC51AC2AEC54 (accessed on 15 August 2024).

[19] Ivory dyptich Last Supper Scenes. System number: 83070. Inventory number: OA 10006. Musée du Louvre. Available on: https://theindex.princeton.edu/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=43F40064-7433-45FF-9ECD-B16E648B7940 (accessed on 15 August 2024); Ivory diptych with Scenes from the *Passion of Christ*. System number: hds20240510002. Inventory number: 10360. National Museum of Denmark. Available on: https://theindex.princeton.edu/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=57C6E298-9520-443C-A5D2-79B5907E40C3 (accessed on 15 August 2024); Diptych with scenes from the *Passion of Christ*. System number: 184420. Inventory number: 1947.191.199. Ashmolean Museum. Available on: https://theindex.princeton.edu/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=71F0FFEA-B850-4B1B-B81C-1FCA0CCCBD83 (accessed on 15 August 2024); ivory diptich with Virgin Mary and Christological Scenes. System number: jls20240719004. Inventory number: MK 33. Staatliches Museum Schwerin. Available on: https://theindex.princeton.edu/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=7F351BCD-1E71-46B1-8533-3AEF03BF7BBD (accessed on 15 August 2024); Ivory diptych. System number: hds20240507001. Inventory number: G54. Thorvaldsens Musuem. Available on: https://theindex.princeton.edu/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=A5679975-6C37-43F8-9D03-FED6908488B4 (accessed on 15 August 2024); Ivory diptych with Christ Passion Scenes. System number: jls20240109002. Inventory number: ODUT01278. Musée du Petit Palais. Available on: https://theindex.princeton.edu/s/view/ViewWorkOfArt.action?id=D630C641-D394-4373-98B6-4EE853FA8043 (accessed on 15 August 2024).

[20] An exemplar of this architectural style in Hispanic refectories is the structure located in the monastery of Santa Maria la Real in Palencia. This demonstrates a simplified version of the style, comprising three cantilevered arches inserted in the wall and capitals, without the presence of columns. Available on: https://www.santamarialarealmuseorom.com/es/recorridos/visita-historico-artistica/12#imagenes-1 (Accessed on 20 August 2024).

[21] During the civil war between Pedro I and Enrique II, Pope Urban VI adopted a definitive stance in favor of the Trastamara, thereby elevating his cause to the status of a "crusade" against the infidels of the Nasrid kingdom of Granada and, by extension, against his brother, who was aligned with Muhammad V.

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Article

Communio—"Icon" of Personal Fulfillment: Ratzinger on God and the Human Being

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Abstract: Joseph Ratzinger points to the dialogical nature of the human being. Indeed, the human is by nature called to live in relationships, and for him/her social life is a natural environment of existence. This need, which humans discover within themselves, has its source in *Communio Trinitatis*, the profound communion of the three Divine Persons. In essence, God is not a loner but an eternal dialogue of love. As evidence of this, He created the human being in His image and likeness. The human's role model lives in a relationship of love. Hence, the individual also discovers a deep need within him/herself for interpersonal communication. In this respect, it is healing for a person to live in a relationship. Firstly, because the dialogue of faith with God is true healing and salvation for the human being. Secondly, relationships with other humans also have an enriching impact on their personality. However, J. Ratzinger stresses that isolation alienates people and even leads to illness or death. Meanwhile, a living relationship with God and other people transforms the human person and ensures personal growth.

Keywords: God; human being; Christianity; image; icon; communio; credo; pro-existence; participation

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1. Introduction

Human nature is full of movement and tension. Development is the most important task that the human being has to accomplish in their life. He/she is called to achieve a personal *optimum potentiae*. J. Ratzinger, in his philosophical and theological reflection, indicates that the human finds his/her fulfillment in an invigorating relationship with God. It is a bond that brings happiness, healing, and enriches the human personality. J. Ratzinger puts forward a thesis on the community character of the human person in connection to the truth about the Holy Trinity. Their internal relationships are indeed a model for interpersonal relationships. The human being was created in the image and likeness of God, who exists as *Communio Trinitatis*. Accordingly, human life is also woven of bonds. In line with this, no one is the owner of one's life and no one lives only for themselves. On the contrary, the individual finds their personal fulfillment in giving him/herself to others. In conclusion, communication is life, whereas the lack of it means death. Therefore, the human needs a conscious decision of faith. It is, so to speak, a way out of oneself and an encounter with the Divine "You". It is precisely this loving relationship that brings true healing and leads to personal fulfillment. The human being who experiences this bond begins to live for others. Their life becomes a pro-existence. The exemplary relationships of the Persons of the Holy Trinity are an inspiration to the individual in all social references. Moreover, the philosophical and theological theses are confirmed by the experience of social sciences. Participation enriches the community and, above all, the person who gets involved in its life. The highlighted issues determine the structure of the presented article. Joseph Ratzinger will be the expert in the analysis of the mentioned questions raised. This issue constitutes one of the main themes of his theological reflection.

2. *Communio Trinitatis*—Model of All Communities

The Holy Trinity is the source and model of all interpersonal relationships. J. Ratzinger emphasizes that the foundation of all interpersonal relationships is the inner relationship

with God, which unites the "I" and the "You". The Christian faith tells us that God is Triune, that He Himself is relationship; we are the image of God, precisely because we are relational creatures, created to find true life in receiving and giving (Ratzinger 2022b, p. 208; Vanzini 2023). Given that the human was created in the image and likeness of God, the bonds of love existing between the persons of the Holy Trinity, are his/her point of reference. Saint John writes in his first letter: "God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him" (1 John 4:16). The teaching about God who is love can only be understood when referred to the truth about the Holy Trinity—God as a Trinity is love (Ratzinger 2014a, p. 111). Surely, God is neither a loner, a monad, nor an atom but relationship, love—and therefore, He is life (Ratzinger 2014a, p. 159). An eternal interchange between the individual Persons of the Trinity takes place in Him. Furthermore, God is not only the Logos—the principle and foundation of all reality, the source of order in the world. He is also Dia-Logos, that is, word, conversation, reference, dialogue. Ultimately, He is love (Ratzinger 2006b, pp. 186–87), and this love exists as a relationship between the three Divine Persons (Ratzinger 2001, p. 245). J. Ratzinger stresses that God himself is conversation: in himself, He is the speaking, listening, and responding (Ratzinger Joseph/Benedykt XVI 2021, pp. 28–29). God is thus pure relationship (Ratzinger 2006b, p. 230). He is an everlasting dialogue (Salij 2010, p. 23). Describing these references, the theologian confirms: After all, the Spirit does not speak from himself; the Spirit listens to the Son and makes the Son heard; neither does the Son speak from himself, but as sent by the Father, He is the Father's unveiled presence (Platovnjak 2022b, pp. 270–71). And eventually, the Father gives himself to the Son in such a way that everything He holds belongs to the Son: each of the three Persons refers to the others, exists only in the others and in the circle of outpouring love, lives in the greatest unity and supreme permanence which gives stability and unification of all that exists (Ratzinger 2020j, p. 974). Thus, in the mystery of the Holy Trinity, God manifests Himself as a gift and the acceptance of the gift, as well as the dynamic of unceasing love (Roszak 2013). God is relationship, and therefore the human can also establish a relationship with Him (Ratzinger 2020i, p. 977).

The names of the Divine Persons speak clearly of their relationality. The Father is a relational concept. He indicates a bond with the Son. In turn, the Son lives in relation to the Father. Therefore, it can be said that God in His inner life, is relationship (Ratzinger 2006b, p. 17; Krzemiński 2015, p. 60; Krzemiński 2012, p. 295). K. Krzemiński, referring to the catechesis of Richard of Saint-Victor, characterizes the relationships of the Persons of the Holy Trinity: The Father is love wholly given and unselfish, the Son is love received (*debitus*—which owes everything to someone else, and *gratuitus*—which itself gives). The fullness of love finds its culmination when the Holy Spirit, love only received (*debitus*), entirely due, loves perfectly those who give Him everything (Krzemiński 2015, p. 62). As we continue, let us look at faith, understood as a living relationship with God. It is a bond that brings liberation to the human person from his/her self-centeredness, and leads to a healing relationship with God.

3. *Credo*—Act of a Personal Exodus

For J. Ratzinger, the Christian faith consists in knowing the true God (Ratzinger 2005b, p. 136). In accordance with his episcopal motto *Cooperatores Veritatis*, he emphasizes that the Creed—the profession of true faith—is essential for the relationship between the human being and God. It is basically a profession of truth. Such a starting point requires a holistic adherence of the whole person to God. Therefore, faith is not merely an intellectual act, but also the perception, discovery and acceptance of God. It is the entry into communion with the living God. Dialogue with the One who gives fullness to our freedom, direction and meaning of great value (Ratzinger 2020d, p. 241; Collado 2023). J. Ratzinger states that "faith is a way out of oneself, [. . .] faith is love. [. . .] To believe is to enter, together with the Church, into the love of God" (Ratzinger 2020d, p. 242). Furthermore, fellowship with God gives life, while a severed relationship leads to death. "Being with God" is more real than death and allows one to overcome it (Ratzinger 2014a, pp. 102–3). Surely, a believer does

not know what is going to happen in the future. However, he/she is aware that his/her life is built on a solid foundation, has a purpose and meaning, and reaches its fulfillment in God (Benedict XVI 2007, no. 2). Joseph Ratzinger emphasizes that salvation is achieved through adoption, approval, care, and de facto by being accepted. In other words, "an unsaved human being is someone who has not been accepted. [. . .] Then again, if a person is approved, needed, and accepted, their life will become meaningful and open—they then live for someone, are wanted, and this in turn makes them open up to their own life. [. . .] As a result, in this adoption humanity flourishes, [. . .] the hidden layers of humanity become revealed, free, greater, and ready" (Ratzinger 2020h, pp. 847–49). However, salvation and healing of the human being from their alienation are achieved through the establishment of a living relationship with God.

Christ leads the disciples to the Father. Living in relationship with the Father is the essence of His identity (Ratzinger 2005a, pp. 25–26). Accordingly, the encounter with the Person of Christ is the beginning of faith and of being a Christian (Benedict XVI 2005, no. 1). He—the herald of the Kingdom of God—liberates people from their paralysis and addictions, and enables them to join His kingdom, by giving them the truth and hence initiating love, which is true healing and true salvation (Ratzinger 2020d, pp. 242–43). Thus, the boundary between life and death is not defined by the physical death of the human body. This boundary lies in the decision of accepting Christ or rejecting Him (Platovnjak and Svetelj 2023, pp. 278–81). Choosing Christ means life for the individual. Rejecting Him, on the other hand, leads to death. Christ is the measure of humanity already here on Earth. He reveals His true greatness to the human being (Ratzinger 2006a, pp. 65–70). Despite this, the individual may choose to break free from the hands of God to gain apparent freedom. Still, that is a nihilistic, empty act, which leads to nothingness and senselessness (Ratzinger 2020e, p. 783). Driven by selfishness, greed, and desire, the human does not become free but is instead heading toward enslavement (Ratzinger 2020h, pp. 847–49). That is why the decision of faith becomes necessary to make, to put on Christ, be like him, and imitate Him. The decision of faith requires, as it were, "to get out of yourself", it demands a true "exodus", more precisely, liberation from self-absorption, self-confinement, which is the true slavery and disease of the human person (Ratzinger 2020f, pp. 852–53). Therefore, liberation from self and entrusting oneself to God in the decision of faith is like a Copernican revolution in human life. It is not a question of stopping the sun and moving the Earth but about liberation from self-centeredness, self-love, self-interest—to focus on God, who becomes the true center of reality (Ratzinger 2006a, pp. 70–71). Going out toward God has a healing effect on the human being. It is especially needed in times of secularization, which is based on a delusive sense of human self-sufficiency, a narcissistic focus only on oneself, an attitude of consumerism expressed in the multiplication of possessed things and the replacement of them with new ones. However, this attitude is accompanied by a radical insatiability in the sphere of values that are of essence for the human being (Jan Paweł II 1987, no. 28).

4. *Pro-Existence*—Icon of Christian Identity

The human being emerged from the hand of God and, as a creature, is called to a communion of love with Him, together with his/her brothers and sisters (Ratzinger 2020b, p. 150). Humans are driven to social life by the potentiality of their nature that holds various abilities in seed form, which they ought to develop (Roszak 2022). The communities and societies they belong to, play an important role in this process. In the physical dimension, the individual is in need of social life in order to maintain and develop his/her life. Certainly, since the beginning of human history, it has been easier to survive in a group than alone. Even in highly developed societies, people need a social context to sustain their existence. Nonetheless, moral development can be achieved through the presence of other people, whereas such virtues and moral capacities as love, solidarity, truthfulness can be practiced and developed only through interpersonal collaboration. Intellectual development also takes place through interpersonal exchange. What is more, new generations participate

in the intellectual achievements of society and all of humanity. Therefore, integral human development always occurs in a social context due to the presence and collaboration with other people (Łużyński 2008, pp. 36–39).

Differences create interpersonal relationships. The individual seeks cooperation with other people because of what he/she does not have and what others do have. Due to the fact that the human is not self-sufficient, he/she is in need of collaboration with others (Delsol 2017, p. 121). In this case, it can be concluded that a person is rich precisely because of his/her shortcomings, and through them they receive happiness (Ratzinger 2014b, p. 393). J. Ratzinger points out that the exchange of receiving and giving is important for the dynamics of growth (Ratzinger 2014a, p. 92). It can therefore be said that the essence of social life consists of giving and receiving (Rauscher 1975, p. 17). Ratzinger stresses that no human being is enclosed in him/herself. No one can live by themselves and for themselves. We receive our life from the outside, from others. The human lives in those he/she loves, in those thanks to whom he/she lives and for whom he/she exists. The human person is a relationship and has his/her life in the form of a relationship. Therefore, to be truly human means to exist in a relationship of love (Ratzinger 2022a, p. 64). Human beings need one another—their approbation, self-liberation—in order to become free to give themselves to others (Ratzinger 2020a, p. 308). In this way, the individual becomes him/herself by existing with other people and for other people (Ratzinger 2014a, p. 177). In line with the Bavarian theologian, openness and existence in relationships are essential features of the human soul. The more open the individual is to others, the more he/she is him/herself. It can even be said that this makes him/her more of a person (Ratzinger 2014a, p. 155). In his opinion, the human being is not an enclosed monad, but both in love and hatred, he/she refers to others, is directed toward them; our own being is present in others, either as guilt or grace. The human being is never only him/herself, but rather, he/she is him/herself in others, with others, and through others. Whether the others curse or bless the individual, they forgive him/her, and turn his/her guilt into love—all this is part of the individual's own destiny (Ratzinger 2014a, p. 217). Now then, humanity is about being with others. However, this can only be possible in a spirit of generosity and readiness to serve. Just the one who loses him/herself will gain themselves, just as the one who gives him/herself will find him/herself. In such a way the person learns how to be human and develops their personality (Ratzinger 2020c, p. 714). Furthermore, love is joy because of the existence of the other person. The person who loves wants to say: it is good that you are here! In other words, he/she discovers happiness thanks to the existence of the other. More concretely, love is the affirmation of another. It also changes the life of the person that loves, who discovers that his/her life is richer, happier, more precious, and more complete (Ratzinger 2006a, p. 81). In consequence, the person who gives receives, through love, far more than he/she has given.

5. *Participation*—Sign of Personal Enrichment

A human being who makes an exodus from his/her egocentrism discovers how much they gain in the dimension of interpersonal relationships. Admittedly, the dynamic of love makes the giver receive even more. By practicing love, the individual him/herself changes. Their life becomes richer, happier, and more complete. J. Ratzinger presents this question from a theological and philosophical perspective. This is also confirmed by sociological research. Let us have a look at how participation in social life is presented in sociology.

Participation in the areas of education, culture, social assistance, as well as involvement in various civil initiatives, is of great importance for development. W. Szymczak stresses that this role consists "in developing many positive qualities in the people involved, and equipping them with multiple skills. [. . .] Furthermore, social involvement is accompanied by an attitude of trust, and in consequence—honesty, arising from the experience of cooperation and the functioning in a network of reciprocity norms, but also in an atmosphere of positive attitude toward others" (Szymczak 2022a, pp. 17–18). Every act carries external and internal consequences—that is, transitive and intransitive. The former

are somehow located on the outside of the person. They are visible effects of human activity. The latter, however, leave a mark inside the human being. The act not only changes social reality but, above all, has an impact on the person that performs the act, leads to his/her self-fulfillment and development of the potential contained in his/her personality.

Participation in various aspects of social life changes and develops the person involved (Oviedo 2022). In addition, social participation gives a sense of agency, which is an expression of its subjectivity. Human beings act intentionally and reflect on their activity. They experience the efficiency of their actions and satisfaction from their fruitful actions and build readiness to undertake similar initiatives in the future. By partaking in social life, the human confronts him/herself, discovers who he/she is, becomes acquainted with his/her own "I", his/her possibilities and limitations, and in the changing social context adapt to the conditions in which he/she is active. Furthermore, in dialogue with other people, the individual gets to know him/herself. Moreover, what the individual experiences by participating in social life resonates in his/her consciousness and may lead to a change in behavior. Meanwhile, by performing various tasks, he/she learns conscientiousness, punctuality in their performance, time management, as well as how to establish a hierarchy of tasks, and increase self-confidence, internal control, and one's own subjectivity. Simultaneously, by performing different roles, the individual learns them and confronts their requirements with his/her own skills, limitations, and conditions. Accordingly, the human becomes able to develop the skills he/she already possess and learn new ones and shape an attitude of availability toward new tasks and learn flexibility in the changing social context. Involvement forms a sense of meaning in the human and creates an opportunity to satisfy important psychological needs, including: a sense of security, self-realization, affiliation, recognition, of being needed (Platovnjak 2022a, pp. 62–65). Therefore, engagement in the activity of apostolic religious groups fosters the development and deepening of religiosity and morality, in particular, pro-social morality, which is characterized by altruism, empathy, solidarity, social trust, and a concern for the common good (Szymczak 2022a, pp. 30–33; 2022b, pp. 3–28).

Then, on top of that, the participant develops social competences, such as social knowledge, pro-social thinking, social experience, social personality, emotional and social intelligence, as well as moral maturity, social authority, trust, and social abilities and skills (Szymczak 2022a, p. 33). Further, engagement raises professional qualifications and promotes the formation of communication competences. It also promotes the building of social capital and trust and develops an attitude of reciprocity and collaboration (Szymczak 2022a, pp. 34–35). Sociological data hereby indicate that social participation is of great formative importance. The person who is active in various types of communities and societies changes him/herself due to the fact that commitment enriches his/her personality, develops competences, and teaches dialogue, tolerance, and solidarity. All in all, participation helps to develop a valuable social identity and become a worthy social actor.

6. Conclusions

The communion of the Divine Persons of the Holy Trinity is the model of all social relationships. God is love, mutual reference, and Dia-Logos. In His inner life, He is relationship. In this respect, the human being, created in His image and likeness, discovers within him/herself a deep inclination to live in relation to God and other humans. For J. Ratzinger, this particular relationality holds a liberating and healing significance. In his opinion, self-absorption is alienation that limits the human, while salvation, on the other hand, is achieved through adoption, approval, and by being accepted by God. The individual, by making an "exodus" from his/her egocentricity, isolation, and self-sufficiency, establishes a life-giving relationship with God. Pro-existence, that is, to live for others, is and should be the right way to exist, whereas true humanity, in being with others, can be learned in social collaboration through the exchange of "giving and receiving". The theological and philosophical theses of J. Ratzinger find their confirmation in sociological data. Consequently, participation in various aspects of social life develops the person

involved, shapes an attitude of trust and honesty, gives a sense of agency, and provides an opportunity to confront oneself with one's own capabilities and limitations. Furthermore, it gives a sense of one's own subjectivity in the action, promotes opportunities to learn empathy and solidarity, and encourages the formation of communication skills. Based on the issue of interpersonal references, perceived from the perspective of the teaching of J. Ratzinger, isolation leads to human alienation. However, life in positive relationships enriches and heals the personality of the human being.

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The Merchant Scene in Medieval Conceptions of the *Visitatio Sepulchri*: Origins and Transmission

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Abstract: This article aims to elucidate the origin of the merchant scene within the Easter drama, which can, by extension, be interpreted as representative of the entire *Visitatio Sepulchri*. Given that the troper-proser Vic 105 is the oldest attestation of the scene, we have used this manuscript as our starting point. Through a critical edition of the first nine stanzas of the drama, we propose a multidisciplinary working hypothesis that combines tools from reception history and cultural transfers studies with more traditional methods of stemmatics. As part of an ongoing project, we present two types of results: those that are well-supported by strong evidence, and others in the form of plausible hypotheses, awaiting further data to be substantiated.

Keywords: plainchant; liturgical drama and medieval theatre; medieval music; liturgy; merchant scene; interdisciplinarity; poetry and music; middle ages; medieval art; iconography

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1. Introduction

The events following the Passion and death of Christ were, from the very beginning, the most decisive and central in Christianity. For instance, in the Preface to a masterful essay by Heinrich Schlier, Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI highlights this as a fundamental challenge for interpretation: "Schlier was perfectly well aware that Jesus' Resurrection from the dead represents a borderline case for exegesis; but it becomes particularly clear in it that the interpretation of the New Testament always deals with borderline problems if one aims at reaching the core of the question. The faith in the Resurrection of the New Testament writings faces the exegete with an alternative that demands a response from him" (Schlier 2008, p. 6). Medieval Christians faced precisely this same type of exegetical challenge and demand for a response when, in the transition from Easter night to morning, they sought to deepen their understanding of passages concerning the Resurrection, such as Mark 16:1–2 or Luke 23:55–56 and 24:1–3, where the holy women, devastated by grief, journeyed to the tomb to anoint the body of Christ. Whether through liturgical actions, chants, or iconography, whether explicit or implicit, every detail of the Gospel narrative became of utmost importance for approaching these central mysteries within the History of Salvation.

In light of this reality, we encounter the dramatized scene and visual representation of the sale of ointments. This action is implicitly referenced in the statement from Mark 16:1: "When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him." During the transition from the 11th to the 12th centuries, this moment in the Gospel became a motif and an opportunity to enhance, through rhetorical *ornatus*—which implies both embellishment and explanation (Tello Ruiz-Pérez 2007)—the still-emerging Easter scenic celebrations at the altar of the Visitation of the Sepulchre (dialogued tropes, performances on a small scale, etc.), which date back at least to the ninth and tenth centuries (given the extensive historiography on this subject, we refer, for practical purposes, to the updated bibliographical synthesis and discussion by Norton 2017a). Within this dynamic of explanatory enrichment and

deepening, the most significant and notable contribution of the *Mercator* scene lies, as Berthold describes, in how it "opened the door to one of the traditional stock characters of the popular theater—the *Mercator*—apothecary, quacksalver, medicaster, and pillroller of burlesque and mime. He did not have to be invented, but simply brought into the play [. . .] A low sales table, a pair of scales, spice boxes, and ointment pots mark the scene of this first 'worldly' interlude" (Berthold 1972, p. 236).

Given its widespread dissemination, complex elaborations, and subsequent reinterpretations in *Pasiones*, *Mystères*, plays, and various forms of theatrical representation—whether in Latin or vernacular languages, both within and outside the temple—the introduction of this "worldly interlude", or, in other words, the non-biblical and profane element (*pro-fanus*, i.e., "outside the temple", or more precisely, in front of it), which intertwines with the central events of the "paschal kerygma", raises a pertinent question: can it be regarded as a distinguishing factor that demarcates the boundaries between liturgy, liturgical drama, and theater proper during the Middle Ages? (see an updated discussion in Petersen 2022). Notably, amid an increasingly pronounced process of secularization of the scene, as evidenced by many late sources, recent scholarly discussions suggest that the depiction of the spice merchant or merchants—represented with heightened dramatic and comedic elements, incorporating the customs, gestures, and typical strategies of medieval itinerant healers, apothecaries, surgeons, and quack doctors—on the path of the women to the tomb may have served as a form of efficient advertisement, almost guild-like in nature, promoting the sale of goods and services by such traders (Katritzky 2020).

Before its dramatized appearance, the scene also emerged in the realm of iconographic images, albeit with varying success in terms of its proliferation. Indeed, examples in the visual arts, illuminations, and miniatures are rather scarce, sporadic, and scattered (Réau 1957, pp. 541–42; Hofmann 1972; Lorés i Otzet 1986; González Montañés 2002, pp. 427–32). Nonetheless, its existence as an image is intriguing, as the absence of a common biblical model compels us to draw parallels or even engage in direct dialogue with the performative dimension of the scene. In this regard, its significance in art presents a privileged case study for verifying the controversial hypothesis—articulated from Mâle to Davidson—regarding a medieval dependency of image configuration on dramatic and theatrical events (for a thorough discussion of this hypothesis, see González Montañés 2002, pp. 11–31). Building on this hypothesis, a new question arises: in seeking inspiration to enrich the representation of the Easter event, could sculptors and painters of religious images have been influenced by dramatizations of the *Visitatio Sepulchri* that included the sale of ointments?

These key points and the questions they generate collectively highlight the need to clarify, as precisely as possible, the origin of this scene and its potential transmission routes. The earliest dramaturgical evidence of the scene in the context of Easter can be found in the *Verses pascales de III Mariis* of the *Visitatio Sepulchri*, preserved in the troper-proser Vic 105 as a late 12th-century addition to a manuscript dating from the late 11th or early 12th century. Thus, it seems logical to consider the context in which this manuscript was used as our starting point and foundation.

However, beyond this first Ausonian testimony—which has not always been considered by scholars—a general consensus has persisted: "the theory that the *Visitatio sepulchri* provided the initial impetus, from which the merchant scene grew quasi-organically from the liturgy, and that it only 'gradually abandoned also the Latin of the liturgy in favour of the language of ordinary life', is widely accepted as a convenient truism" (Katritzky 2007). In other words, this is a liturgical "convenient truism" which, moreover, tends to attribute the origin of the scene—*fons et origo*—exclusively to a creative tradition of literary origin. This theory stems from Meyer's pioneering explanation of a hypothetical *Zehnsilberspiel*, which he believed originated in present-day France and whose words and actions were supposedly integrated into the dramatic framework of a *Visitatio* (Meyer 1901, pp. 106–20). Thus, even without fully taking into account early non-liturgical testimonies relevant to our scene—such as the *Sponsus* in Pa 1139 (e.g., Dürre 1915; Young 1933; Donovan 1958; Romeu Figueras 1963; De Boor 1967; Castro Caridad 1997, 2019)—or extrapolating the

scene's emergence outside the liturgical sphere as a *Ludus Paschalis*, based on the text's inherent complexity (e.g., Nicoll 1931; Warning 1974; Lipphardt 1975–1990; Dronke 1994), this literary thesis has generally proven inadequate in delineating fundamental aspects, such as its genetic relationship to liturgical action.

Amid this extensive array of hypotheses and speculation regarding the origins of this scene from strictly philological or theatrical perspectives, relatively few comprehensive studies have emerged from the field of musicology. Notable among these are investigations addressing distribution, developmental processes, and structure (e.g., Schuler 1951; McShane 1961; Moore 1971; Smoldon 1980; Rankin 1981, 1989; Sevestre 1987; Evers and Janota 2013). Nevertheless, with a few remarkable exceptions (Norton 1983, 2017b; Batoff 2013; Eberle 2019, 2023), studies focusing on how melodies may have been generated and their function within their liturgical context remain nearly non-existent.

Our aim here, drawing from the evidence provided by a combined iconographic, philological, and musicological approach, is to address this gap concerning the origin of the merchant scene and the motif of ointment sales. We situate this inquiry within a framework of liturgical dependency and connection—not merely incidental due to its presence in Vic 105—with the Matins of Easter Day, as evidenced by the reuse of melodic materials and the scene's dramatic placement within the rite. Geographically, this scene was first dramatized and subsequently depicted iconographically, based on the scenographic model of the *Visitatio Sepulchri*. We demonstrate that the introduction of this non-biblical scene first occurred in Catalonia, specifically within the area of influence comprising Vic–Ripoll, Girona, and Sant Cugat del Vallés, likely between the late 11th and early 12th centuries. Although the drama was not copied in Vic until the late 12th century, the Vic–Ripoll nucleus had already emerged as a prominent center for liturgical song composition from an earlier period (see, e.g., Tello Ruiz-Pérez 2016). Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that this scene may have originated at Vic Cathedral.

To achieve this, our methodology first involved examining the overall structure of the drama as it appears in Vic 105, and the intrinsic characteristics presented in the first nine stanzas, which encompass the dialogue between the merchant and the holy women. We then used the testimony of customaries and chapter charters to elucidate the liturgical context in which the Vicenzan drama unfolds, aiming to establish possible relationships with preceding and succeeding chants. Following this, through a critical edition of all readings and variants of the nine stanzas depicting the sale of ointments—found across 42 manuscripts and fragments, totaling 47 versions—we traced their potential dissemination routes from the Catalan area. Lastly, we juxtaposed these findings on transmission with the sporadic dissemination of the few available iconographic testimonies, in order to determine in which cases a connection to the scene exists and in which cases the theme of the image represents a spontaneous and occasional manifestation.

2. The *Visitatio Sepulchri* of Vic 105

Vic 105 is a troper-proser from Vic Cathedral, with the main body copied during the first quarter of the 12th century (codicological analysis in Gros i Pujol 1999, pp. 44–56; 2010). However, the section of interest to us (Figure 1), located within the eighth booklet between folios 58v and 63r, was added later—towards the end of the 12th century—and includes several palimpsests, with rubrics dating from the 15th century (Gros i Pujol 1999, pp. 44–45, 51–53; Castro Caridad 1997, pp. 111–12, 247; 2019, p. 144; Garrigosa i Massana 2003, pp. 236–37).

This can be referred to as a "compositional complex" because it consists of two interconnected works that originated based on distinct moments in the events following the Resurrection. On one side is a *Visitatio Sepulchri*, titled "Verses pascales de III Mariis", and on the other, an *Officium Peregrini*, bearing the rubric "Versus de pelegri<no>". Additionally, the hymn *Audi iudex mortuorum*, with the response "O redemptor sume carnem" (Dreves et al. 1886, pp. 80–82, AH 51, No. 77), is included. This hymn, which pertains to Maundy

Thursday for the consecration of chrism, appears under the rubric "Versus de crismate in cena domini".

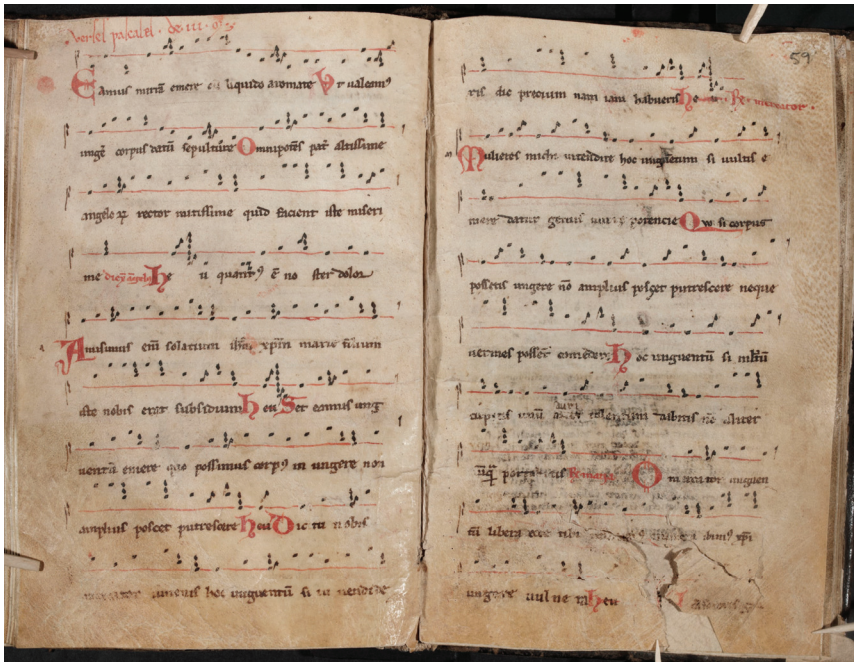


Figure 1. Vic 105, ff. 58v–59r. Merchant scene (beginning of the *Visitatio*).

Although various scholarly divisions and interpretations have treated these pieces as integral parts of a broader unified Easter structure (see Petersen 2022 for a discussion and updated synthesis of this issue), the sequence of the compositions (Table 1) is as follows:

Table 1. General design of ff. 58v–63r of Vic 105.

Composition	Rubric	Scene/Chant	Section
Visitatio Sepulchri	*Verses pascales de III Mariis*	*Mercator*	A: Exhortative introduction B: Lament and dialogue with the Merchant
		Planctus	C: Lament D: Lament (*sine notatione*)
		Quem quaeritis *Te Deum*	E: Dialogue with the Angel
Officium Peregrini	*Versus de pelegrino*	*Hortulanus*	A: Song of the Magdalene with the Angels B: Dialogue with the Gardener
		Nuntio Apostolis *Peregrinus* *Doxologia*	C: Dialogue with the Apostles D: Journey to Emmaus
Ad Chrisma consecrandum	*Versus de crismate in cena domini*	*Hymnus*	

It can be noted that, while we place ourselves within the context of Easter—supplemented by the use of the *Te Deum* from Matins to conclude the *Visitatio*, and the addition of the hymn for Maundy Thursday ("in cena domini")—the manuscript provides no specific references regarding which celebrations, if any, these compositions were intended to accompany (for a

complete philological edition of the entire set, see Castro Caridad 1989, 1997, pp. 124–33, 252–57; for a musical edition, see Anglès 1935, pp. 276–78). We will return to this question below.

Here, we will focus exclusively on the first nine stanzas of the *Visitatio*, specifically the merchant scene. According to Castro's classification based on Young's criteria (Young 1933, vol. 1 pp. i–xv), this *Visitatio* would be classified as Type I, as it does not include the Apostles' race to the tomb (Type II) or, if we consider the scene separately, the appearance of Christ to Mary Magdalene (Type III) in the guise of a Gardener (Castro Caridad 1997, p. 111). As mentioned earlier, this scene represents the first testimony to focus on the purchasing of errands preceding the sorrowful journey to the tomb, particularly concerning the ointments (Mark 16:1). Thus, the manner in which the holy women chant and express themselves is of utmost interest.

2.1. Formal Organization of the Merchant Scene

From Table 1, it can be deduced that the nine stanzas (see text and translation in Table 2) of the scene are organized into two distinct sections: (a) an exhortative introduction (stanza I) and (b) a lament (stanzas II–V, with refrain), which transitions into dialogue with the merchant (stanzas VI–IX, where the refrain returns at the end). The separation into sections, whether through poetic and/or melodic means, implies a division regarding the materials used.

Stanza I consists of four octosyllabic verses that alternate in pairs between an iambic rhythm, featuring a proparoxytone final cadence before the caesura, and a trochaic rhythm with a paroxytone cadence (8pp, 8p, 8pp, 8p),[1] employing a rhyme scheme of aa'aa'—consonant between the first and third lines and assonant between the second and fourth (Table 3). In contrast, stanzas II-IX share a common structure of three trochaic decasyllables with a proparoxytone cadence and internal caesura (4p + 6pp; 4p + 6pp; 4p + 6pp), featuring a changing aaa rhyme scheme (Table 4).

Table 2. Text (Castro Caridad 1997, pp. 124–27) and translation (Dronke 1994, pp. 92–95) of the stanzas I–IX.

	Text		**Translation**
Ia.	Eamus mirram emere		Let us go to buy myrrh
	cum liquido aromate,		with liquid spices,
Ib.	Ut ualeamus ungere		So that we may anoint
	corpus datum sepulture.		the body due for burial.
	Dixit angelus		*The angel says:*
II.	Omnipotens	Pater altisisime,	Almighty Father, highest one,
	angelorum	rector mitissime,	gentlest ruler of the angels,
	quid facient	iste miserime!	what shall these most wretched women do?
R.	Heu, quantus est noster dolor!		Alas, how great is our grief!
III.	Amisimus	enim solatium,	For we have lost our solace,
	Ihesum Christum,	Marie filium.	Jesus Christ, the son of Mary:
	Iste nobis	erat subsidium.	he was our support—
R.	Heu, [quantus est noster dolor!]		Alas, how great is our grief!
IV.	Sed eamus	unguentum emere,	But let us go to buy the ointment
	quo possimus	corpus inungere;	with which we may anoint his body:
	non amplius	poscet putrescere.	after that, it cannot decay.
R.	Heu, [quantus est noster dolor!]		Alas, how great is our grief!

Table 2. *Cont.*

	Text		Translation
V.	Dic tu nobis, hoc unguentum dic precium,	mercator iuuenis, si tu uendideris, nam iam habueris.	Tell us, young merchant, if you'll sell us this ointment— tell us the price, for you shall have it now.
R.	Heu, [quantus est noster dolor!]		Alas, how great is our grief!
	Respondet Mercator		*Merchant answers:*
VI.	Mulieres Hoc unguentum datur genus	michi intendite. si uultis emere, mirre potencie,	Women, mark my words: if you want to buy this ointment, it is endowed with the nature of myrrh's power:
VII.	quo si corpus non amplius neque uermes	possetis ungere posçet putrecere possent comedere.	If you can use this to anoint a body, after that, it cannot decay— the worms will not be able to consume it.
VIII.	Hoc unguentum unum auri Nec aliter	si multum cupitis, talentum dabitis; umquam portabitis.	If you want this ointment very much, you must pay one talent of gold, otherwise you'll never take it with you.
	Respondet Maria		*Mary answers:*
IX.	O mercator, Ecce tibi Ibimus Christi ungere vulnera.	unguentum libera. <dabi>mus m<un>era.	Merchant, do release the ointment: Look, we're handing you the money— we shall go to anoint Christ's wounds.
R.	Heu, [quantus est noster dolor!]		Alas, how great is our grief!

Table 3. Poetic and melodic design of stanza I.

	Syllables	Rhyme	Melody
Eamus mirram emere	8pp	a	A
cum liquido aromate	8p	a′	
ut ualeamus ungere	8pp	a	A
corpus datum sepulture	8p	a′	

Table 4. Poetic and melodic design of stanza II (=III–IX).

		Syllables	Rhyme	Melody
Omnipotens	Pater altisisime	10pp (4p + 6pp)	a	A
angelorum	rector mitissime	10pp (4p + 6pp)	a	A
quid facient	iste miserime	10pp (4p + 6pp)	a	B

Regarding their melodies (Figure 2), the first stanza exhibits a double cursus pattern (AA), which is typical, for example, of sequences and prosulas (see, e.g., Peláez Bilbao and Tello Ruiz-Pérez 2021). The remaining stanzas, following Dante's terminology,[2] maintain a stanzaic organization of *pedes cum cauda* or *sirma* (AAB), with a *diesis* marking the stanza's division between the repetition of one *pes* and another (AA) and everything else (B). Additionally, the refrain, associated with the interventions of the Maries (omitted when the merchant speaks), consists of a paroxytone octosyllable (8p), characterized notably by a long ascending–descending melisma spanning conjunct intervals over the interjection "Heu!" as an expression of grief. In any case, it appears to draw on common motivic materials previously introduced in the stanzas.

The compositional procedures employed in both sections correspond to what has come to be known as *Nova Cantica* or *Neues Lied* (e.g., Arlt 1986, 1990; Llewellyn 2018; Camprubí Vinyals 2020; and several practical cases in Peláez Bilbao and Tello Ruiz-Pérez 2024). This circumstance is particularly significant as it links our stanzas with other compositional genres, both in Latin and the vernacular. As highlighted by various musicologists, such as Sevestre, and philologists like Castro (Sevestre 1987; Castro Caridad 1997, p. 114), these stanzas, with their metric regularity—where syllable count serves as the primary metric criterion—their use of rhyme, accentual rhythm, and melodic style emphasizing steps of a third (in this case, the sequence D–F–a–c),[3] clearly transport us to the compositional climate of other dramas such as the *Sponsus* in Pa 1139 (edited by Avalle and Monterosso 1965), to *versus* repertoires, Occitan passions like the *Passion Didot* (MacDonald 1996, 1997), or even troubadour repertoires. In this regard, it is worth noting that in the *Thuringian Play of the Ten Virgins* from manuscript Mühl 60/20—directly linked with the *Sponsus* in Pa 1139—the textual and musical reuse of stanzas II and IV from our merchant scene has been identified (Amstutz 2002, pp. 171–201); similarly, a strikingly similar melody of stanza I from Vic appears in the *cansó Aissi cum es genser pascors* (BEdT 406,2) by Raimon de Miraval (1160–1220), also in octosyllables (edition in Switten 1985, pp. 144–47).
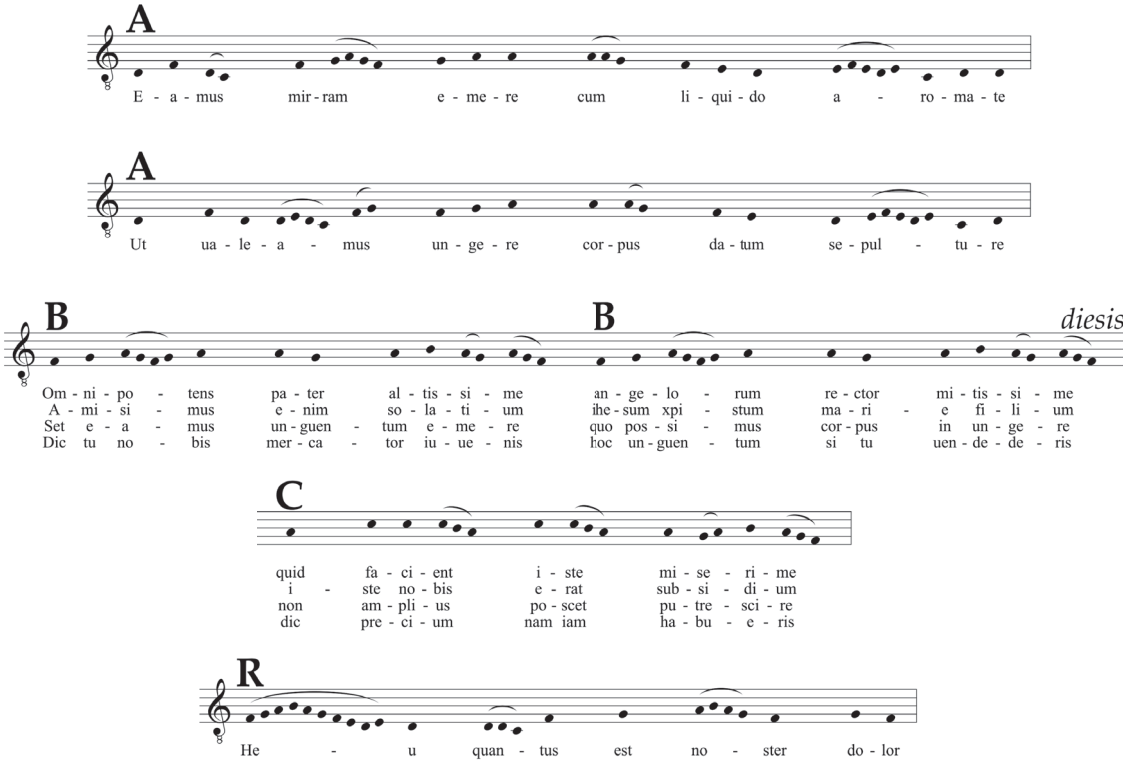


Figure 2. *Cont*.

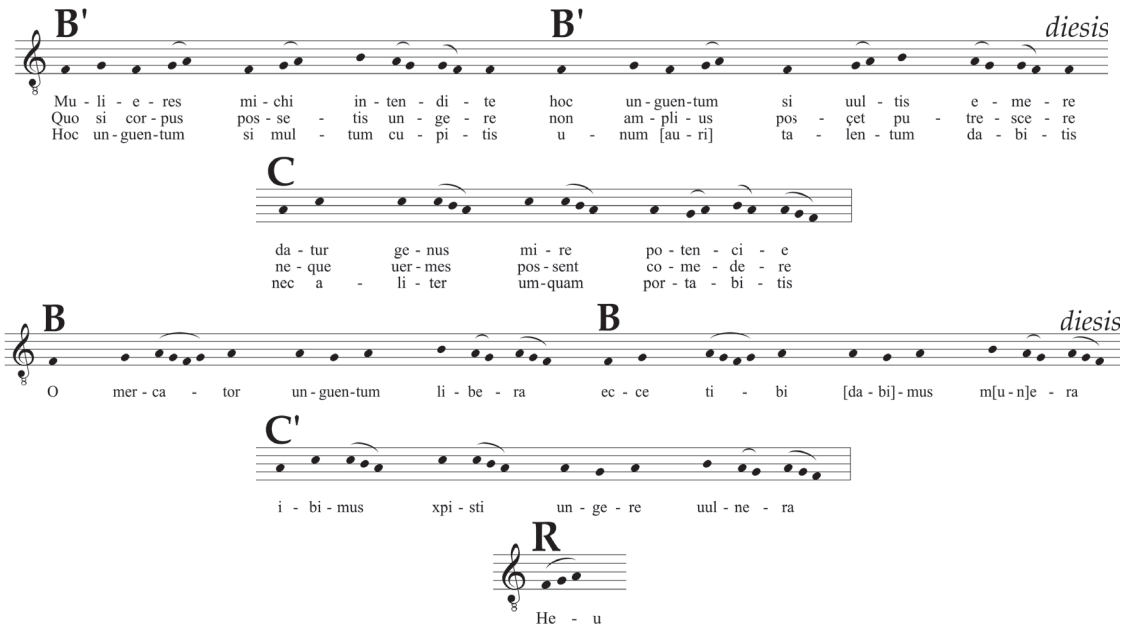


Figure 2. Musical transcription 1: Formal structure of stanzas I–IX (merchant scene).

2.2. Liturgical Context and Connections of the Merchant Scene

In alignment with Petersen's observations in one of the most recent studies offering a thorough reflection on the drama of Vic 105, we must consider the following:

> There are numerous problems in understanding these pages of the manuscript, which also do not indicate any specific liturgical placement for either part of the mentioned textual units [*Visitatio* and *Peregrinus*]. The way it was edited by Karl Young and Peter Dronke seems to indicate that there is altogether one connected drama [. . .] Donovan and Castro Caridad understand the text as two dramas, an Easter morning drama and a special, innovative *Peregrinus* drama for Easter Monday, the Easter morning drama ending with the *Te Deum* before the second mentioned rubric ["Versus de pelegrino"] [. . .]
>
> Since there are no indications telling us when the ceremony was to be performed during Easter, we cannot know. (Petersen 2022).

We believe Petersen's argument is correct. Indeed, if we rely solely on the troper-proser Vic 105, which provides no specification regarding the liturgical location of these ceremonies, it is impossible to determine their exact placement with certainty. For this reason, Donovan, Romeu Figueras, Lipphardt, and Castro herself (see Castro Caridad 1997 for specific citations for each source below) have sought corroboration from other testimonies originating from or near Vic within the Catalan region. Although subsequent to Vic 105, these testimonies—comprising customaries or chapter charters (Vic 134, Pa nal 903, Vic s/n, Ger 20 e 3, Ger s/n, and GerS 18)—precisely identify the liturgical setting for both the "Verses pascales de III Mariis" and the "Versus de pelegri<no>." For the sake of brevity, we will present here only the versions from the Vic manuscripts (Tables 5 and 6), as normalized by Castro, and provide their translations accordingly.

Table 5. Text (Castro Caridad 1997, p. 134) and translation of *Officium matutinum* (Vic 134, f. 17r; Pa nal 903, f. 163v; and Vic s/n, f. 52r).

Text	Translation
[. . .] Tercium responsorium, *Et ualde mane* et cum *Gloria*, et uerbeta:: Christus hodie surrexit ex tumulo, uicto Zabulo, expurgato baratro. Una sabbati ueniunt summo iam diluculo sancte femine unguento satis cum mirifico redeunt sed Christo non inuento. *Orto iam sole, alleluia, alleluia*. Deinde fiat representacio de .III. Mariis si uoluerint. Qua facta, episcopus dicat: *Te Deum laudamus*; uersus *Surrexit Dominus de sepulchro*. Deinde dicantur laudes.	[. . .] Third responsory: *Et ualde mane*, with the *Gloria* and the *verbeta*: Christ has risen from the tomb today, having once defeated the devil and purified hell. At the first light of Sunday, the holy women approach with their very aromatic ointment; but they return because they have not found Christ. *Orto iam sole, alleluia, alleluia*. Afterwards, if desired, the representation of the three Maries can be performed. Once completed, the bishop will say the *Te Deum* with the verse *Surrexit Dominus de sepulchro*. Then, Lauds will be recited.

Table 6. Text (Castro Caridad 1997, p. 247) and translation in the Office of Vespers for Easter Monday (Vic s/n, f. 54v).

Text	Translation
[. . .] In reuersione, oratio: *Concede quaesumus*. Et fiat *Officium Peregrini*, si uouerint, sicut ordinatum est.	[. . .] Upon returning, the prayer *Concede quaesumus* shall be recited. If desired, the Pilgrim's Ceremony may be performed as prescribed.

Let us examine the data. The evidence suggests that the *Visitatio* was designed to be optionally dramatized during the Matins on Easter Sunday, while the *Peregrinus* was intended for the Vespers of Easter Monday. Furthermore, in the case that concerns us most here—that of the *Visitatio*—specific instructions are provided regarding which responsory in the third nocturne should be sung before, and most importantly, that this responsory, *Et valde mane* (Cantus n.d., chant ID No. 006676), should be sung with *verbeta*—a term used in the Catalan area to denote a *prosula*, or a small textual addition to the melisma or *pneuma* of the responsory. In consequence, we conclude that the chant immediately preceding the merchant scene is the composition *Christus hodie surrexit ex tumulo* (edited by Bonastre i Bertran 1982, pp. 125–27).

Upon close examination of this *verbeta*, we immediately perceive that, mutatis mutandis, it functions almost like a theatrical annotation, imaginatively situating the context for the subsequent merchant scene and its dialogues. In a way, it appropriately prepares the participant in the liturgical service to experience and witness the events that occurred "then" and are "taking place again"—hic et nunc, one of the most significant dimensions of the liturgy—on Easter morning, as recounted in the Gospels. In fact, the responsory itself incorporates verbatim passages from Mark 16:1–2 and Luke 24:1.

However, the relevance of the *verbeta* is not limited solely to providing a liturgical context for our scene; it also does so stylistically, serving as a sophisticated source of melodic formulas and motivic cells. In this regard, we must not overlook that the melody of the *verbeta* derives entirely from the practice of fitting a text to the original melisma of the responsory "Orto iam sole, alleluia, alleluia" ["at the rising of the sun"]. Therefore, we must assume that the compositional structure inherently contains all the spiritual, poetic, and musical elements necessary to sustain the continuity with the forthcoming merchant scene.

In the comparison of melodic motifs transitioning from the responsory/*verbeta* to stanzas I and II (=III–IX) in the merchant scene—presented here through a synoptic arrangement using colors and boxes (Figure 3)—one can observe strong melodic cohesion and the multiplicity of relationships that emerge during the transition from the final responsory of the Matins nocturne to the liturgical performance of all the biblical or imagined moments associated with the visit to the sepulcher, before the bishop intones the *Te Deum*. In this specific context, Eberle's exemplary musical analysis already compared and identified the melodic relationship between the beginning of stanza I and the responsory but omits the intermediary link through which this relationship is indirectly established, as the *verbeta Christus hodie surrexit* serves as the connecting element that links the responsory and the *Visitatio*. Nevertheless, his analysis remains highly useful in illustrating how, after the merchant scene in D mode (*protus*), the motifs of the stanzas gradually transform from a modal perspective, culminating in G mode (*tetrardus*), within which the dialogue *Quem quaeritis*—the authentic core of the *Visitatio*—and the *Te Deum* itself unfold (Eberle 2019, 2023). This transformation represents a remarkable exercise in compositional craftsmanship.

On the other hand, the typical structure of the *verbeta*—a double cursus with rhymes based on the sonority of melisma, specifically in this case on the vowel "o"—explains the poetic–musical function of this form in the first stanza (AA) of the merchant scene. In other words, it serves as a true gateway to the liturgical drama. Moreover, as shown in Table 7, the *verbeta* reflects the rhythmic imitation of iambic trimeter (5pp + 7pp) in the first couplet, trochaic septenarius (8pp + 7pp) in the second, and catalectic dactylic tetrameter in the final single line (10p). These metrical patterns ultimately shape all nine of the merchant's stanzas in one way or another.

Table 7. Poetic and melodic design of *Christus hodie surrexit ex tumulo*.

		Syllables	**Rhyme**	**Melody**
Christus hodie	surrexit ex tumulo,	12pp (5pp + 7pp)	a	A
uicto Zabulo,	expurgato baratro.	12pp (5pp + 7pp)	a	A
Una sabbati ueniunt	summo iam diluculo	8pp + 7pp	a	B
sancte femine unguento	satis cum mirifico	8pp + 7pp	a	B
Redeunt	sed Christo non inuento.	10p	a	C

Therefore, it is difficult to deny the coherence within the sequence *Et valde mane* (responsory), *Christus hodie surrexit* (*verbeta*), merchant scene (*Visitatio Sepulchri*), which not only establishes a clear liturgical context in Vic but also suggests a series of broader implications. For instance, the *verbeta* is a *unicum* from Catalonia, chronologically sourced as follows: GerS 45, f. 12v; BarAm 381, f. 6r; Vic 134, ff. 17r and 18r; Vic 117, f. 72r; Würz s/n, f. 66v; Vic 118, f. 87v; Vic XVIII 13; Bar 662, f. 53v; Bar 706, f. 54v; Vic 85, ff. 74v, 76r, and 79r; Tar 84, f. 32r; Ger 20 e 3, ff. 58r and 71r; Pa 1309, f. 84r; BarO s/n, f. 60r; Tar s/n, f. 74v; and BarFC s/n, f. 220v. This implies that, if it serves as the cornerstone for the poetic and musical construction of the merchant scene, the origin of this scene must be traced to Catalonia, most likely within the creative center of Vic–Ripoll. From there, this initial secular scene would spread extensively across Europe, undergoing adaptations and expansions—both in Latin and in vernacular languages—ultimately emerging as one of the quintessential scenes of medieval theater. Exploring hypotheses regarding these transmission paths will be our next step.

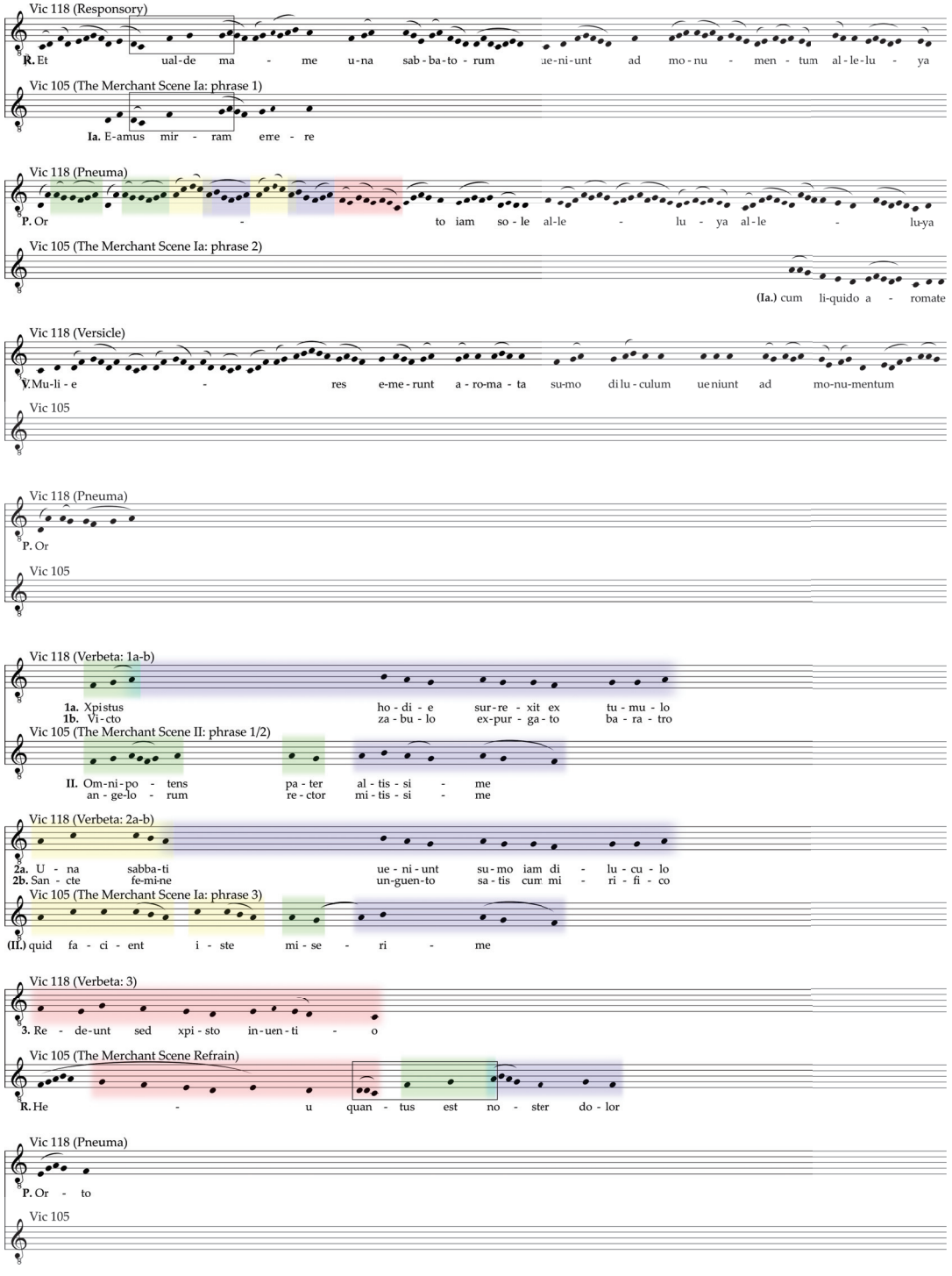


Figure 3. Musical transcription 2: Motivic relationships between responsory, *verbeta* (Vic 118, ff. 87r–88r), and merchant stanzas and refrain (Vic 105, ff. 58v–59r).

2.3. Manuscript Transmission of the Merchant Scene

After clarifying its liturgical origin in the Easter Matins, any hypothesis regarding a cultural object, such as the nine stanzas of the merchant scene, must be grounded in two fundamental principles: first, the development of a philological–musicological critical edition and second, an analysis based on criteria from the fields of reception history and cultural exchanges (for a more detailed explanation of this necessary combination, see Tello Ruiz-Pérez 2006, pp. 6–16). The first principle is presented here in a synoptic form, detailing all readings and variants in relation to Vic 105 (Appendices A–E), while the second is introduced only as a provisional argument, a work in progress.

Given the substantial number of manuscripts we have examined—alongside the extensive body of literature[4] that each has produced over nearly two centuries—and the fact that some manuscripts are in Latin while others are partially or entirely in *Langue d'oïl*, Southern Bavarian, various other dialects of Upper German, or Old Czech, undertaking a stemmatic analysis is far from straightforward. In total, we have 42 manuscripts containing 47 distinct versions, each from different periods, composed for different purposes, and illustrating how stanzas were integrated into particular, and sometimes unique, contexts. This complexity only further intensifies the challenge.

To address this complexity, we have grouped the sources by geographical regions or manuscript families, arranging them chronologically from the oldest to the most recent, based on the concordance of variant similarities. Accordingly, we have delineated several regions: Catalonia and Occitania, the Northwest, the Southern Bavarian Area and Black Forest, the Hesse Group, Bohemia, and finally, Lower Saxony. Amid this apparent "mixed bag", we have also found that some manuscripts transmit the repertoire in adiastematic notation, requiring us to treat the entire melody as a variant in itself in those cases. Conversely, when the notation is diastematic, we have employed square notation and non-standard transcription methods to facilitate easier comparison of various neumatic groupings.

Before proceeding with any strict assessment of readings and musical–textual variants, it is essential to first address the transmission and arrangement of stanzas in each source (Table 8). For example, stanzas Ia–b (Vic 105 and Vic 187) and IX (Vic 105) are unique to the Vic Cathedral. Additionally, we have identified other stanzas—restricted to those in Latin—that do not appear in the original core of Vic 105. In such cases, these stanzas are marked with a letter in brackets. Similarly, we have emphasized specific features of each source in italics and brackets, such as their presence in incipit, an absence of musical notation [*s.n.*], mutilation [*mut.*], and other relevant details. To aid comprehension, a census of all these additional stanzas, along with their corresponding text, has been compiled and is provided in Appendix F.

The most striking feature of the stanza distribution in Table 8 is the noticeable lack of uniformity in both their number and order. This phenomenon can be attributed to the diversity of contexts—almost all related to Easter—in which they are embedded. A liturgical drama differs significantly from a Passion play performed in a town square, just as a *mystère* diverges from a play that is part of an educational collection. The occasion and usage dictate all aspects, leading to a broad spectrum that ranges from intimate *planctus* to elaborate theatrical productions, where Easter occasionally appears to be merely an excuse. Furthermore, the number of merchants, apothecaries, doctors, and their families and friends varies considerably, from the solitary "mercator iuuenis" of Vic 105 to an entire procession of diverse characters and intricate secondary narratives in the Eger Passion Play. This variation in the number of "merchants" could be particularly intriguing when considering iconographic representations.

As a working hypothesis regarding the issue of readings and variants, and without delving into excessive detail, we first present an inversion of a prevalent assumption among contemporary scholars. Specifically, it is commonly believed that a composition of any type originates simply and becomes increasingly sophisticated over time through reinterpretations. Conversely, we observe that the opposite holds true for our nine stanzas. There is no version more complex than that of Vic 105, as evidenced by both its internal

and external relationships. From this version, the melody—while preserving its original structure—gradually simplifies, particularly in relation to its neumatic style in the stanzas and the melismatic character of the refrain, approaching a syllabic style in certain cases.

Table 8. Distribution of the stanzas by source.

Stanzas	Sources
Catalonia and Occitanie	
Ia–Ib II R III R IV R V R VI–VIII IX R	Vic 105 (ff. 58v–59r)
[*incipit s.n.*]: II R III IV	Martène (III, p. 172)
Ia–Ib	Vic 187 (f. 1v)
[*mut.*]: VII R VIII	Bar 911 (fragment)
Northwest	
II R III R IV R [A] VII R V R VI R VIII R	Tours 927 (f. 1v)
R [X] VI IV_{α} [*s.n.*: Y] [Z] VIII	DHaa 76 F 3 (f. 1r)
[J2 E–F] II R III R IV R VI V R VIII R	SQ 86 (pp. 611–613)
II R III R IV IV_{α} VI V VIII	DHaa 71 J 70 (ff. 163v–164r)
Southern Bavarian Area and Black Forest	
[B] VI R V R [C] VIII R	Mü 4660a (f. 6r)
V R VIII	Mü 4660 (f. 108r)
[*Mut.*]: [E] III R VI IV_{α} VIII [D]	SG Fragm. Fab. IV (f. 1v)
[S] [*incipit s.n.*]: II III IV [*s.n.*]: R VI IV_{α} V [*incipit s.n.*: D]	NY M 886 (ff. 5r–6v)
II R III R IV IV_{α}	Vip IV (a) (f. 34v).–Vip IV (b) (ff. 80v–81r)
II R III R [F]	Vip XIV (ff. 74v–75r)
[D] II R III [F]	Ith 410 (ff. 52r–52v)
II R III	Bol I 51 (f. 47r)
R [B]	Karls D 137 (ff. 86v–87r)
[*incipit s.n.*]: [O–P] IV	Mü 7691 (f. 121r)
II R	InnsK 1 rtr.m (f. 75r–75v)
II R III R IV [D–F]	Vip III (ff. 60v–61r)
II R III R IV R	Vip VII (ff. 13v–14r)
[D] III R	InnsM 575 (ff. 118r–118v)
[*incipit s.n.*]: II	FBs 12 (f. 48v)
Hesse–Thuringia Group	
[*incipit s.n.*]: R [D–F] II III IV VI V VIII R	FM 178 (*Dirigierrolle*)
[*mut.*]: VI IV_{α} V	FM III 6 (ff. 1r–1v)
[J2] II R III IV IV_{α} VI IV_{α}	Be 757 (ff. 4v–5r)
[*incipit s.n.*]: II [*s.n.*]: IV_{bis}	Mühl 60/20 (f. 96r)
[*s.n.*]: II R III R IV [D–G] VI IV_{α} V R VIII R	Inns 960 (ff. 41r–46r)
[*s.n.*]: [D–E] II R III R IV R	Be 1219 (*Dirigierrolle*, ff. 9r–12r)
R II R III R IV R VI IV_{α} V R VIII R	Ka 18 (ff. 92v–94r)
Bohemia	
[*incipit s.n.*]: II III IV	Wi 13427 (ff. 129r–129v)
II R [D] III R [E H] IV IV_{α} [F]	PrU VIII G 29 (a) (ff. 133r–134r)
IV IV_{α}	PrU VIII G 29 (b) (f. 134r)
[J1] II R III R IV IV_{α} [D–F]	PrU I B 12 (ff. 135v–136r)
II R	Wro 226a (f. 2v)
[J3] II R III R IV IV_{α} [K D L E M F]	PrU XVII E 1 (a–b) (ff. 135r–144v)
II R III R IV IV_{α} [D–E]	Nürn 7060 (ff. 128v–130)
[J3 O–Q] II R III R IV R	Zwi 1 15 3 (ff. 56r–56v).–Zwi 36 1 24 (a) (ff. 1r–2r)
[D–F] III II	Zwi 36 1 24 (b) (ff. 7r–8r)
[J3] II III IV	Zwi 36 1 24 (c) (ff. 10v–11v)
II R III R IV R [S] II R III R [E D] IV VI IV_{α} V R VIII R [D–F]	Eger B V 6 (ff. 107v–112v)
Lower Saxony	
[D–F] II R	Hild 383 (f. 125v)
[T–V] II R [W]	Wol VII B 203 (ff. 23r–24r)
[D–F] IV	TriS 1973/63 (pp. 20–21)

Among the earliest testimonies documenting the stanzas derived from the version in Vic 105, one trajectory extends northwesterly toward Tours 927 (of uncertain origin

but conceived within a Norman/Angevin milieu), while another moves toward the heart of Central Europe, likely via a goliard, as evidenced by Mü 4660a and Mü 4660. It is important to note that Ripoll, as attested by its *Carmina Rivipullensia*, served as a transit point for goliards. Along both routes, the addition of new stanzas generated a particular diffusion in which, undoubtedly, many intermediate testimonies have been lost. However, in general terms, this dual diffusion proves to be entirely heterogeneous due to factors such as multilingualism and varied purposes.

Nevertheless, based on the versions of these early sources (Tours 927, Mü 4660a, and Mü 4660), which already offer a new interpretation in contrast to Vic 105, a preliminary examination of the synoptic edition suggests that one could argue for a relative stability in the transmission of both the text and melody of our stanzas across the respective stemmatic branches that emerge from them. Interestingly, there are generally greater divergences between Vic 105 and the entire corpus than within the corpus itself. This observation remains significant regardless of context and use. In some respects, it is as if one could discern a sacred mark of origin within the liturgy that must be respected as the locus auctoritatis where the theatrical interest in introducing the stanzas involving the commercial transaction of selling ointments to the holy women first emerged. As we assert, this remains merely a working hypothesis.

3. The Iconographic Motif of the Sale of Ointments

We begin with the premise that the motif of the scene, as observed, originated in a sophisticated manner from the liturgy, specifically within the context of a *Visitatio Sepulchri*. It is essential to recognize that this dramatic model incorporated profane elements derived from the everyday commercial practices in Vic at the time—such as the merchant's demonstrated skill in selling his products at favorable prices, as illustrated in Vic 105. Consequently, it is reasonable to assert that this phenomenon likely captured the imaginations of sculptors and manuscript illuminators. This scenario exemplifies the theories proposed by scholars such as Mâle and Davidson (e.g., as updated in González Montañés 2002), particularly regarding the notion that the iconographic paradigm emerged from dramatized performances of the liturgy.

However, the iconography of the paschal sale of ointments is by no means among the most widely disseminated in the medieval world, as evidenced by the scarcity and dispersal of the testimonies in which it appears. It is likely that its extrabiblical nature posed significant limitations on its representation in the visual arts, especially on the part of the patrons. Despite this dispersion, we shall examine a few examples—some of which, to the best of our knowledge, remain unpublished in critical scholarship—that notably appear to converge along the same primary transmission routes as the nine stanzas of the drama under discussion.

3.1. An Early Isolated Testimony

Notably, the earliest known representation of this scene dates to the early 11th century, significantly earlier than Vic 105, and can be found in the Uta Evangeliary from Regensburg. It is depicted specifically in a decorative medallion in the Gospel of Saint Mark (Berthold 1972, pp. 236–38). The manuscript is housed in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek under catalog number Mü 13601, and it was commissioned around 1025 by Abbess Uta von Niedermünster of Regensburg, Bavaria (Figure 4).

In the upper left corner, two of the Maries are visible; strikingly, the figure of Salome is absent from the image (Cohen 2000, p. 115), despite the fact that all three Maries are mentioned in both the accompanying titles and the Gospel narrative. It is possible that one of the figures was omitted due to spatial constraints, or, as Cohen suggests (Cohen 2000, p. 117), the image may have been based on a different visual model. Nevertheless, this depiction appears to be unique and iconographically isolated until comparable evidence emerges in the visual arts of later periods, particularly in the 12th and 13th centuries. These later instances, however, do not seem to be temporally or spatially connected with Mü

13601, nor do they appear to have evolved from this example. Moreover, Mü 13601 clearly does not owe any referential debts to liturgical or non-liturgical performances.



Figure 4. Detail of Mü 13601, f. 86r.

3.2. The Catalan–Occitan Group

Our next reference can be found at the entrance of the Provençal Abbey of Saint-Gilles-du-Gard (ca. 1130–1150), where the tympanum dedicated to the Crucifixion (on the right portal) depicts a scene representing the sale of ointments and the visit to the Sepulcher by the three Maries, along with other scenes related to the Resurrection (Figure 5). A stylistically and chronologically related example is preserved in the cloister of Saint Trophimus in Arles (north and east galleries), where the northwest pillar features a depiction of the sale of ointments and the Resurrection (Figure 6). Notably, in this representation, the scene of the visit to the tomb is absent, in contrast to the other examples.

A third example, possibly derived from the aforementioned works, can be found in the frieze of Notre-Dame des Pommiers in Beaucaire, which depicts the sale of ointments and the visit to the Sepulcher. In this scene, the three women are shown before the merchant, who is weighing the perfumes on a scale (Figure 7). Similarly, in the Civic Museum of Modena, there is a capital that stylistically resembles the frieze of Beaucaire, representing the Sale of Perfumes (Figure 8). This capital originates from the Pieve di San Vitale di Carpineti, located in the Reggio area, and was donated to the Museum by Giuseppe Campori in 1884. Attributed to a craftsman from the Po Valley, it dates to before 1178 and is made of marble.



Figure 5. Detail from the west façade of the Provençal church of Saint-Gilles-du-Gard.



Figure 6. Detail from the cloister of Saint Trophimus in Arles.



Figure 7. Detail of the frieze at Notre-Dame des Pommiers in Beaucaire.

These four testimonies can be categorized within the same group due to their close relationships and shared context, which revolves around the artistic centers in Provence. Although the scene depicting the sale of ointments rarely appears in visual representations (Lorés i Otzet 1986), there are two additional examples of this scene in the Catalan region: one is a capital located in the southern area of the cloister of Sant Cugat del Vallés, and the other is a capital housed in the Cluny Museum in Paris, which is purportedly Catalan and most likely originates from Sant Pere de Rodes, although its provenance remains uncertain. This latter capital stylistically resembles the sculptures found in the cloister of Girona Cathedral and the aforementioned capital from Sant Cugat (Lorés i Otzet 1986, p. 132). Both capitals depict scenes of the sale of ointments and the visit to the Sepulcher, and the stylistic similarities between these capitals and those of Girona Cathedral are evident.



Figure 8. Capital from the Pieve di San Vitale in Carpineti.

One characteristic shared by the capitals of Girona Cathedral and the cloister of Sant Cugat del Vallès is the architectural elements (turrets) framing the depicted scenes in the historiated and biblical capitals. The cloister of the monastery of Sant Cugat del Vallès contains a key element that aids in dating its construction and indicates that it was built after the cloister of Girona. This temporal reference is provided by the testamentary legacy of Guillem de Claramunt in 1190, which supported the construction of the cloister. The similarities and coincidences between both sculptural ensembles have been attributed to the presence of a workshop from Girona that relocated to Sant Cugat, leaving its mark on the Vallesan monastery with the sculptural traditions of Ripoll and, consequently, Roussillon. Furthermore, this is the only definitive reference that allows us to ascertain the presence of a workshop operating in the cloister, which originated from the Girona Cathedral. The construction of the Girona cloister began around the 1180s, involving sculptors trained under the influence of the third workshop of the Daurada in Toulouse. These sculptors, who worked in Girona, likely also contributed to the work at Sant Pere de Rodes and later may have moved to Sant Cugat, possessing a thorough knowledge of the local tradition due to the dissemination of sculpture from Roussillon and Ripoll (Lorés i Otzet 1991, p. 70).

The capital from the cloister of Sant Cugat del Vallès is situated in the southern gallery within the iconographic cycle of the Passion (Figure 9). It closely resembles the capital located in the Cluny Museum that depicts the same scene, which is likely to have originated from Sant Pere de Rodes (Lorés i Otzet 1986).[5] The six capitals from Catalonia housed in the Cluny Museum were acquired in 1881 in Paris by Edmond de Sommerand from a collector named Stanislas Baron upon his return to Spain. Although the museum has no record of their provenance (Lorés i Otzet 1994, p. 59), it is significant that Salet also notes their connections to those from the cloister of the Girona Cathedral as well as those from Sant Cugat (Salet 1959).

There are several indications that may suggest the capitals studied by Salet could have originated from a common source. All six examples were acquired simultaneously by the same individual; they possess identical dimensions of 35 × 28 cm; and they are constructed from the same material, limestone (Lorés i Otzet 1994, p. 60). Furthermore, the connection between these capitals and those from the cloisters of Girona and Sant Cugat, as noted by Salet, along with the identification of one capital as originating from the monastery of Rodes, may lead to the conclusion that the six capitals purchased in 1881 by the Cluny Museum are part of the group that was looted from the Monastery of Sant Pere de Rodes. Indeed, the acquisition dates coincide with the most intense years of cloister dismantlement.



Figure 9. Capital from the cloister of Sant Cugat del Vallés.

As Lorés points out (Lorés i Otzet 1994, p. 80), the iconographic program of Sant Pere de Rodes may have concluded coherently with the episode of the Resurrection of Christ. In the fourth capital of the six mentioned, preserved in the Cluny Museum (Figure 10), the themes of the sale of ointments and the visit to the tomb of the three Maries are represented. On two faces of the capital, the women are depicted carrying containers to anoint the body of Christ and encountering the angel. The first woman gestures toward the flask, while the angel indicates where Christ has gone. This composition is echoed in a capital from the southern gallery of Sant Cugat, reflecting the dialogue between the characters, which constitutes the core of the scene—*Quem quaeritis*—in which the angel announces that Christ has risen. Although the capitals adhere to the characteristics common in most Western compositions, there are notable differences in certain details. The capital from Sant Pere de Rodes presents a composition that deviates somewhat from the more generalized type.

Concerning the scene of the sale of ointments at both Sant Cugat and Sant Pere de Rodes, it is depicted on two faces of the capital. The women approach the merchant and apothecary, who are positioned behind a table. In the foreground, scales and containers are visible. Both capitals, dated to the third quarter of the 12th century, directly present the scene followed by the visit to the Holy Sepulchre. These scenes are framed by semicircular arcades (two on each side), reminiscent of another capital housed in the Cluny Museum, which depicts the Nativity of Jesus.

As Lorés points out, this is all connected to the *Visitatio Sepulchri* in Vic 105 (Lorés i Otzet 1994, p. 82). The depiction of a merchant and an apothecary in these scenes is not at all unusual in later manuscript sources containing the drama, including those from Catalonia (Ger s/n), where we frequently find a complete cast of related characters, often involved in secondary narrative threads, whether implicit or explicit. In surviving visual examples, when this occurs, a similar compositional scheme is consistently followed: two figures seated behind a table, two merchants—one young and one old—and the three Maries approaching from the side. However, an exceptional case can be found in the pillar of the cloister of Arles, where the composition deviates from this norm by dividing the scene into two overlapping registers: the upper register depicts the three Maries, while the lower register shows the merchants seated behind a table.



Figure 10. Capital from the Musée du Cluny, Paris. Catalog number Cl. 19002 (Cl. 10757).

3.3. Later Examples

We would like to succinctly address several later iconographic testimonies that may be connected, in various ways, to the primary channels through which the performative scene was transmitted. Of particular significance in this context is the sculptural ensemble within the Holy Sepulchre in the Chapel of St. Maurice (1286–1300) at Constance Cathedral (Figure 11). This ensemble is notable for its specificity, depicting a merchant in the role of an apothecary, characterized by a scholarly demeanor reflective of the customs of the period for this type of trade (Tripps 1999, figs. 50 a–c; Kurmann 2016). It is highly likely that the iconographic program of this work was influenced by the strong impact of performances represented in manuscripts from the southern Bavarian region and the Black Forest.



Figure 11. Detail of the apothecary from the Holy Sepulchre in the Chapel of St. Maurice at Constance Cathedral.

On the other hand, directly connected to the specionarius of DHaa 71 J 70, we find a representation in NY M 87, f. 202v (Figure 12). In this illumination, the holy women are depicted in the act of purchasing, standing before a learned figure who is seated, almost enthroned, suggesting both high social status and a carefully crafted scenographic design. Similarly, although in a different context, as Katritzky notes, comparable vignettes appear in manuscripts illustrating Arnoul Gréban's French *Mystère de la Passion* (Katritzky 2018, p. 112, illustrations 10a, 10b). Finally, we wish to highlight another example from the Poitiers missal Pa 873, f. 194r, this time related to the *Sponsus* Play, where, in the Common of Virgins, the wise virgins are shown purchasing oil as the merchant fills their jars (Figure 13).[6]



Figure 12. Detail of NY M 87, f. 202v.



Figure 13. Detail of Pa 873, f. 194r.

4. Conclusions

In a concise summary, we present the key findings of our ongoing research. First, we have provided philological and musicological evidence, supported by well-reasoned arguments, to situate the origin of the merchant scene almost unequivocally in the Catalan region, specifically in Vic. Notably, due to its strong poetic and melodic connection with the final responsory—preceding the *Te Deum*—of the Easter Matins and its *verbeta* (*Christus hodie surrexit*), which is unique to Catalonia, we have demonstrated that the scene's origins are deeply embedded in the development of the Easter liturgical rite at Vic Cathedral.

Therefore, in response to the question of whether the *Visitatio Sepulchri* of Vic 105, in which the sale of ointments is integrated for the first time, should be classified as a literary work, a *Ludus Paschalis*, or a liturgical drama, we can confidently assert that the "Verses Pascales de III Mariis" of Vic 105 constitutes a liturgical drama closely associated with the

events surrounding Christ's Resurrection. This is followed in the manuscript by another liturgical drama, the *Peregrinus*, composed for the Vespers of Easter Monday.

Moreover, the stylistic characteristics of the nine stanzas that comprise this scene, which mark the beginning of the *Visitatio*, suggest a connection to the compositional genres of the *Neues Lied*. This association could potentially place the composition as early as the late 11th century, particularly given that in Vic 105—the earliest known liturgical testimony of the introduction of this extrabiblical secular scene—the entire drama appears as a late 12th-century addition. This earlier dating aligns with the copying of formally similar dramatic and poetic compositions, such as the *Sponsus* or the *versus* repertoires in Aquitaine.

Based on this evidence and through a critical edition of the stanzas, we have formulated a working hypothesis regarding the widespread transmission of the scene across Europe. There is substantial reason to believe that this transmission occurred shortly after the testimony found in Vic 105, branching in two directions: one towards the Norman northwest and the other, via the *Carmina Burana*, into the heart of the continent. From these key points, various additions, variations, and performative adaptations—both formal and contextual—proliferated, organizing the testimonies into distinct families and regions with relatively consistent boundaries.

Our working hypothesis underscores the pivotal role of multidisciplinary and cross-disciplinary approaches in liturgical studies. To this end, we have integrated notable instances of the sale-of-ointments motif in iconography—despite the relative scarcity of such representations. Nonetheless, it is significant that these examples are concentrated in the Catalan–Occitan region, indicating a clear connection with the liturgical drama preserved in Vic 105, both due to their geographic proximity and the iconographic elements employed. As previously mentioned, the study of transmission is ongoing; however, it is encouraging to observe increasing support for this horizontal approach (e.g., Abajo Vega 2005).

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, A.T.R.-P. and P.P.B.; methodology, P.P.B. and A.T.R.-P.; formal analysis, P.P.B. and A.T.R.-P.; investigation, P.P.B. and A.T.R.-P.; resources, P.P.B. and A.T.R.-P.; writing—original draft preparation, A.T.R.-P. and P.P.B.; writing—review and editing, A.T.R.-P. and P.P.B. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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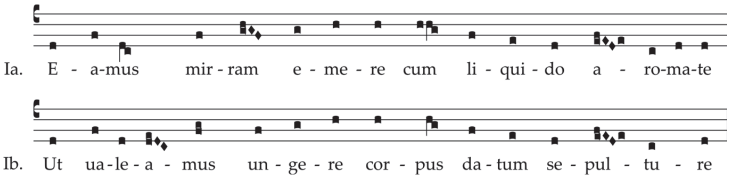
Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: No new data were created or analyzed in this study. Data sharing is not applicable to this article.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Appendix A. Synoptic Edition of Stanza I

Vic 105



Catalonia and Occitanie
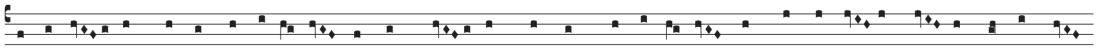
Vic 187

Ia.

Ib.

Appendix B. Synoptic Edition of Stanzas II–V

Vic 105



II.	Om-ni-po	-	tens	pa-ter	al-tis-si-me	an-ge	-	lo	-	rum	re-ctor	mi-tis-si-me	quid	fa-ci-ent
III.	A-mi-si	-	mus	e-nim	so-la-ti-um	ihe-sum		xpi	-	stum	ma-ri	- e	fi-li-um	
IV.	Set	e-a	- mus	unguentum	e-me-re	quo pos	-	si	-	mus	cor-pus	in un-ge-re	non	am-pli-us
V.	Dic	tu no	- bis	mer-ca-tor	iu-ue-nis	hoc un	-	guen	-	tum	si tu	uen-di-de-ris	dic	pre-ci-um

II.	i	-	ste	mi	-	se	-	ri	-	me				
III.	i	-	ste	no-bis		e	-	rat		sub	-	si	-	di - um
IV.	po-scet		pu	-	tre	-	sci	-	re					
V.	nam iam		ha	-	bu	-	e	-	ris					
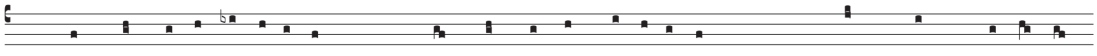
Catalonia and Occitanie

Martène

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III.					< ... >									
IV.	Sed								< ... >					
V.				< ... >										

Northwest

Tours 927
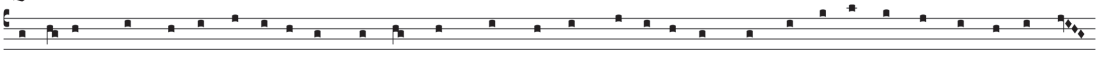


II.												fa	-	ci - unt
III.				so	-	la	-	ci	-	um				
IV.	Sed													
V.		no-bis		tu										

II.	mi	-	ser	-	ri	-	me							
III.	i	-	pse	e	-	rat	no	-	bis					
IV.	ut hoc		cor	-	pus		pos	-	si	-	mus			
V.														

II.														
III.														
IV.	quod nunquam		uermes		pos	-	sint		comme	-	dere			
V.	quod	te		de	-	de	-	ri	-	mus				

SQ 86
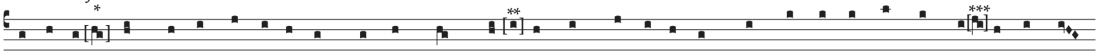


II.	Pe-res tres	-	tout	puissans	hau-tis	mes	rois	des	an	-	gles		gou	-
III.	Nous avons		per	-	du nos-tre		confort	ihe-sum	chri	-	stum	tres tout	plain	de
IV.	Mais ore al	-	lons	lon-guement	a-ca-ter		du-quel	oin	-	dre		puissons	le	cors
V.	Di nous mar-chans		tres	bons	vrais	et	loiaus	cest un	-	gue	-	ment	se	tu

II.	ver	-	ne	-	res	tres	pi-tous	nos	-	tre	cuer	que	fe	-
III.	doucour.		il		es-toit	biaus	et	plain	de	bonne	a	mour		
IV.	tres bel.		il		es-toit	vrai	sa	-	lus		et	vraie	a-mours	
V.	vendre	le	veus		di	tost	du	pris	que	tu		a	-	voir

II.	ront	mal	-	leu	-	ou	-	rous						
III.														
IV.														
V.	en	veus												

DHaa 71 J 70

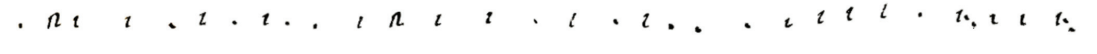


II.												fa	-	ci
III.		*												
IV.	Sed	*						do	-	minum				
V.														

II.	-	e	-	mus	nos	*** mi	-	ser	-	ri	-	me		
III.	i	-	pse	e	-	rat	no	-	stra	so	-	la	-	ti - o
IV.	i	-	pse	e	-	rat	no	-	stra	re	-	dempti	-	o
V.	pre	-	ti	-	um	quod	ti	-	bi	da	-	bi	-	mus

Southern Bavarian Area and Black Forest

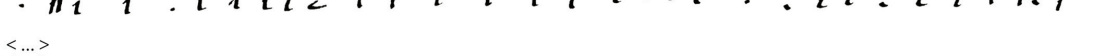
Mü 4660a



II.	< ... >													
III.	< ... >													
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V.														

II.														
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V.	pre	-	ti	-	um	pro	quan	-	to		de	-	de	- ris

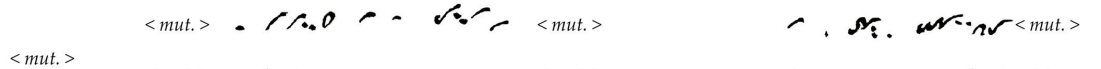
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II.	< ... >													
III.	< ... >													
IV.	< ... >													
V.		mer	-	ca	-	tor	no	-	bis					

II.														
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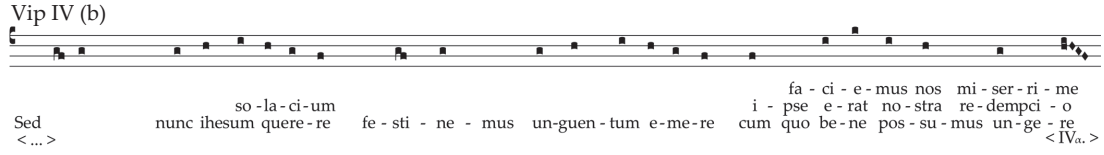
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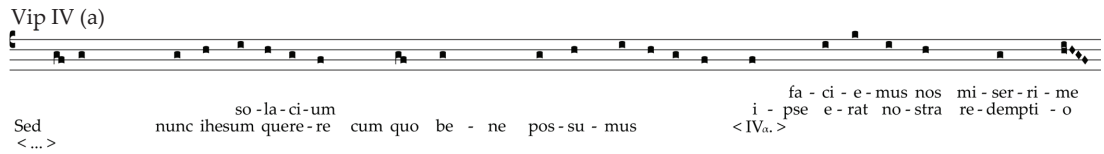


NY M 886



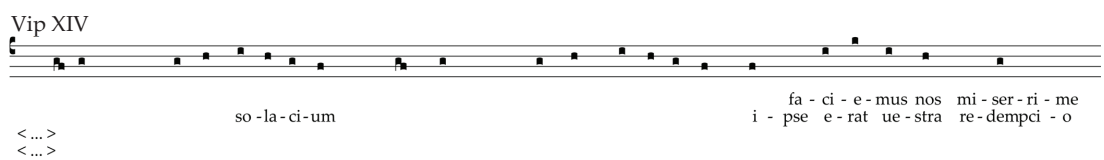
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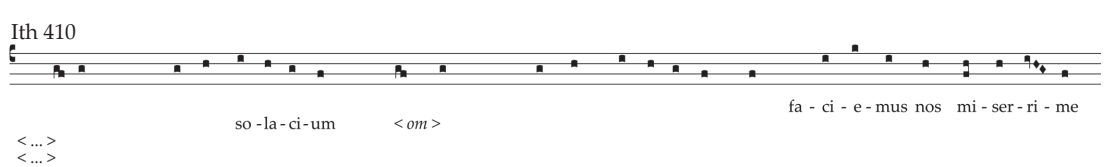
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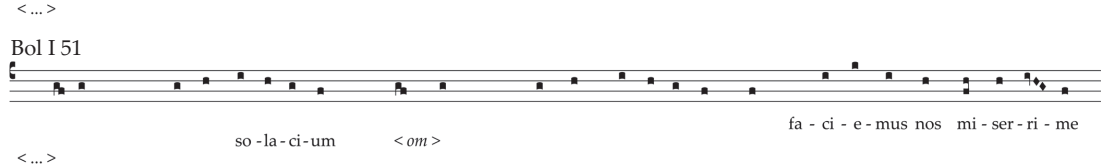
Vip XIV



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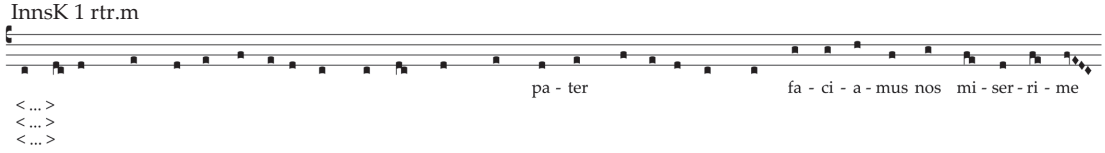
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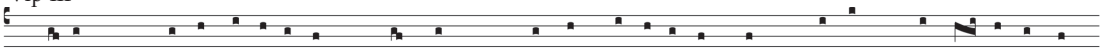


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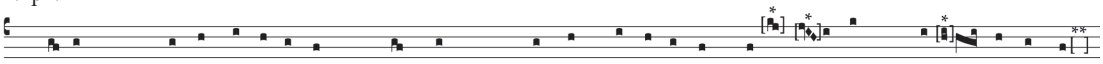


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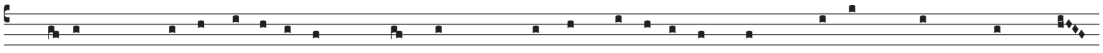


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III. i - pse e - rat no - stra re - dem-ci - o
IV. Sed cum quo be - ne pos - su - mus < IVa. >
V. < ... >

Vip VII



II. *fa - ci - a - mus nos mi - ser - ri - me
III. i - pse e - rat no - stra re - dem-pci - o
IV. Sed cum quo be - ne pos - su - mus cor - pus do-mi - ni sa - cra - **tum
V. < ... >

InnsM 575



II. < ... >
III. i - pse e - rat no - stra re - dempci - o
IV. < ... >
V. < ... >

FBs 12

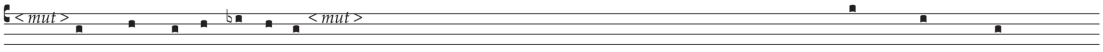
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V. < ... >

Hesse–Thuringia Group

FM 178

II. < ... >
III. < ... >
IV. Sed < ... >
V. < ... >

FM III 6



II. < mut >
III. < mut >
IV. < mut >
V. D < mut > quod ti - bi da - bi - mus

Be 757



II. fa - ci - e - mus nos mi - ser - ri - me
III. so - la - ci - um i - pse e - rat no - stra re - dempci - o
IV. Sed cum quo be - ne pos - si - mus < IVa. >
V. < ... >

Mühl 60/20

II. Om - ni - po - tens pa - ter < ... >
III. < ... >
IVbis. Sed e - a - mus o - le - um e-me-re pre - ter quod nil pos - su - mus a - ge - re qui ca - ret hoc ca - re - bit glo - ri - e
V. < ... >
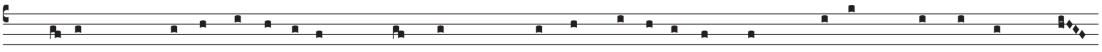
Inns 960

II. fa - ci - a - mus nos mi - ser - ri - me
III. i - pse e - rat no - stra re - dem-pti - o
IV. Sed cum quo be - ne pos - si - mus < IVa. >
V. quod ti - bi da - bi - mus

Be 1219

II. fa - ci - e - mus nos mi - ser - ri - me
III. i - pse e - rat no - stra re - dempti - o
IV. Sed fer-uen-tes o - pe - re ca - ri - ta - tis un - guen - tum e - me-re quo do - minum pos - si - mus un - ge - re
V. < ... >

Ka 18
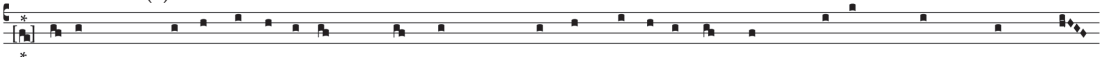


II. fa - ci - a - mus nos mi - ser - ri - me
III. i - pse e - rat no - stra re - dempti - o
IV. Sed cum quo be - ne pos - si - mus cor - pus do - mi - ni san - ctis - si - mi
V. quod ti - bi da - bi - mus

Bohemia

Wi 13427
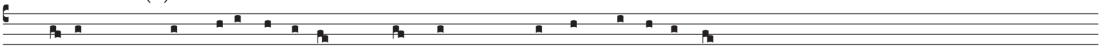
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III. < ... >
IV. Sed < ... >
V. < ... >

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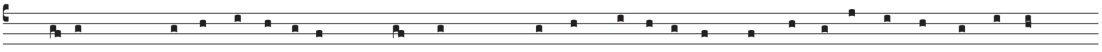


II. fa - ci - a - mus nos mi - ser - ri - me
III. i - pse e - rat no - stra re - dempci - o
IV. Sed cum quo be - ne pos - si - mus < IV$_a$. >
V. < ... >

PrU VIII G 29 (b)
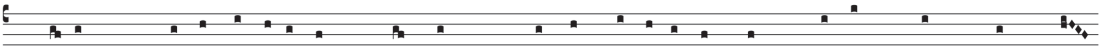


II. < ... >
III. < ... >
IV. Poydem ta - mo ku - pi-ti drahe mo-sti jenz du - de - my kje - ho ra - nam kla - sti < IV$_a$. >
V. < ... >

PrU I B 12
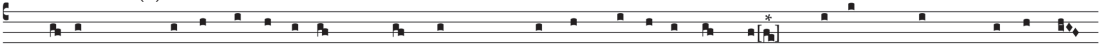


II. fa - ci - a - mus nos mi - ser - ri - me
III. i - pse e - rat no - stra re - dempci - o
IV. Sed cum quo be - ne pos - si - mus < IV$_a$. >
V. < ... >

Wro 226a
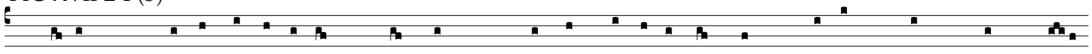


II. fa - ci - e - mus nos mi - ser - ri - me
III. < ... >
IV. < ... >
V. < ... >

PrU XVII E 1 (a)
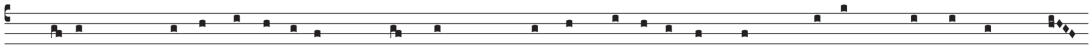


II. * fa - ci - e - mus nos mi - ser - ri - me
III. i - pse e - rat no - stra re - dempci - o
IV. Sed cum quo be - ne pos - si - mus < IV$_a$. >
V. < ... >

PrU XVII E 1 (b)
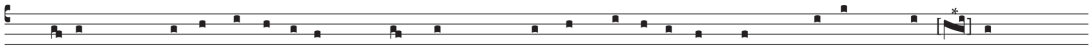


II. Vse-mahu - ci ot-ce prene-jvy-si ty an - jel - sky kre-li pre-za-du-ci co u - ci-ni-me my smutne ze-ny
III. Ztr-ti-ly sme ha-se u-ti-se-ni je-zu kri - ste sva-te ma-ri sy-na neb on jest oyl na-se u - tie-se - ni
IV. A - le pod - me masti ku-po-va-ti kte-ruz by - strom moh-ly u-le-ci-ti <IV$_a$. >
V. < ... >

Nürn 7060
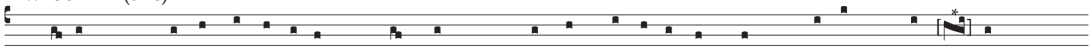


II. fa - ci - e - mus nos mi - ser - ri - me
III. i - pse e - rat no - stra re - dempti - o
IV. Sed cum quo be - ne pos - si - mus <IV$_a$. >
V. < ... >

Zwi 1 15 3



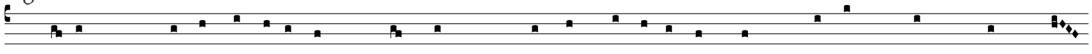
II. fa - ci - e - mus nos mi - ser - ri - me
III. i - pse e - rat no - stra re - dempti - o
IV. Sed cum quo be - ne pos - si - mus cor - pus do - mi - ni sa -*cra - tum
V. < ... >

Zwi 36 1 24 (a–c)



II. fa - ci - e - mus nos mi - ser - ri - me
III. i - pse e - rat no - stra re - dempti - o
IV. Sed cum quo be - ne pos - si - mus cor - pus do - mi - ni sa -*cra - tum
V. < ... >

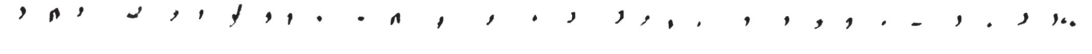
Eger B V 6



II. fa - ci - e - mus nos mi - ser - ri - me
III. i - pse e - rat no - stra re - dempci - o
IV. Sed cum quo be - ne pos - si - mus cor - pus do - mi - ni sa - cra - tum
V. quod ti - bi da - bi - mus
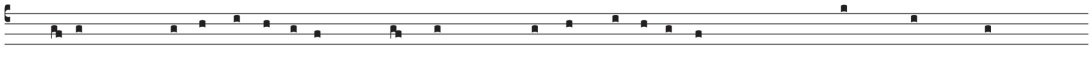
Lower Saxony

Hild 383
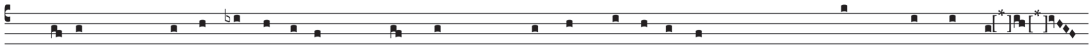


II. fa - ci - e - mus nos mi - ser - ri - me
III. < ... >
IV. < ... >
V. < ... >

Wol VII B 203
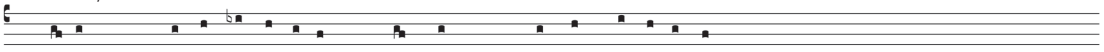


II. fa - ci - e - mus nos mi - ser - ri - me
III. < ... >
IV. < ... >
V. < ... >

Wol 965



II. fa - ci - e - mus nos mi - ser - ri - me
III. i - pse e - rat no - stra re - dempci*- o*
IV. < ... >
V. quod ti - bi da - bi - mus

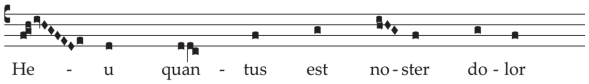
TriS 1973/63



II. < ... >
III. < ... >
IV. Sed cum quo be - ne pos - si - mus < IVα. >
V. < ... >

Appendix C. Synoptic Edition of the Refrain and Stanza IVα

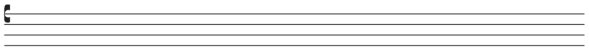
Vic 105



R. He - u quan - tus est no - ster do - lor

Catalonia and Occitanie

Bar 911



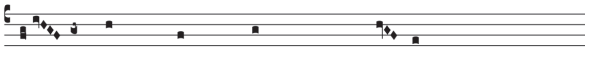
R. < *text. mut.* >

Martène

R. do - lor no - ster
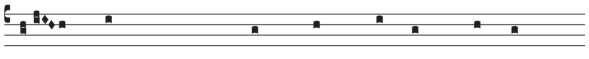
Northwest

Tours 927
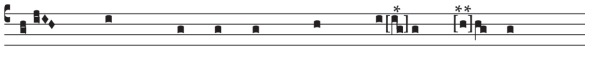


R.

DHaa 76 F 3



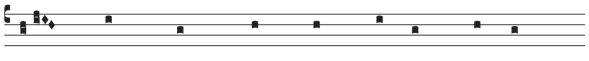
R. [*s.n.*]
IVα. cor - pus do - mi - ni sa - cra - tum

SQ 86



R. Heu - las nos - tre do - lour con grans il est
(He - las mout nous a - *moit **li vrais)
(He - las ver - rons le *nous ja - mais)

DHaa 71 J 70



R.
IVα. cor - pus do - mi - ni sa - cra - tum

Southern Bavarian Area and Black Forest

Mü 4660a



R. do - lor no - ster
Ve - re do - lor ue - ster

Mü 4660



R.

SG Fragm. Fab. IV

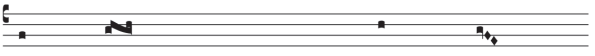
< *mut.* > < *vix leg.* >

R. < *mut.* >
IV$_a$. < *mut.* > [m]i - ni sa - cra - tum

NY M 886

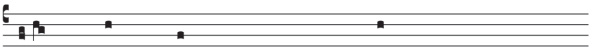
R.
IV$_a$. cor - pus do - mi - ni sa - cra - tum

Vip IV (b)



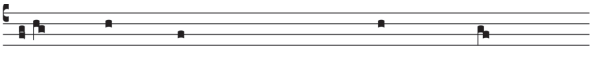
R.
IV$_a$. cor - pus do - mi - ni sa - cra - tum

Vip IV (a)



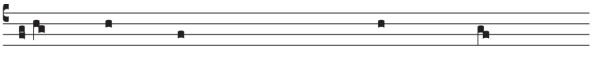
R. He - w
IV$_a$. cor - pus do - mi - ni sa - cra - tum

Vip XIV



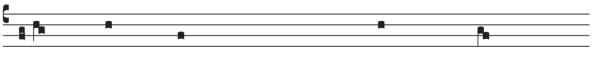
R. He - w

Ith 410



R. He - w

Bol I 51



R. He - w

Karls D 137



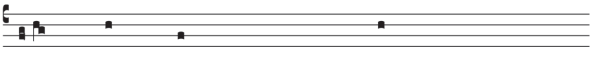
R. He - u [*bis*]

InnsK 1 rtr.m



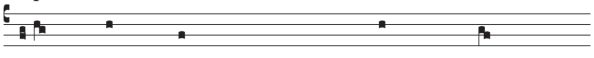
R.

Vip III



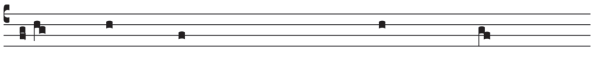
R. He - w
IV$_a$. cor - pus do - mi - ni sa - cra-tum

Vip VII



R.

InnsM 575



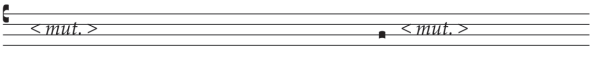
R.

Hesse–Thuringia Group

FM 178

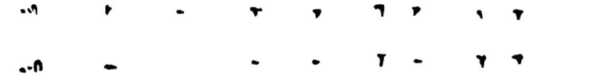
R.

FM III 6



R. < *mut.* >
IV$_a$. < *mut.* >

Be 757



R.

IV$_a$. cor - pus do - mi - ni sa - cra-tum

Mühl 60/20

R.

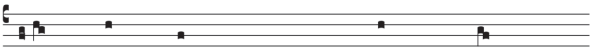
Inns 960

R.
IVα. cor - pus do - mi - ni sa - cra-tum

Be 1219

R.

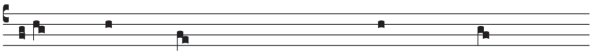
Ka 18



R.
IVα. cor - pus do - mi - ni sa - cra-tum

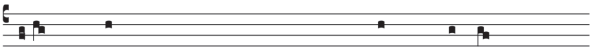
Bohemia

PrU VIII G 29 (a)



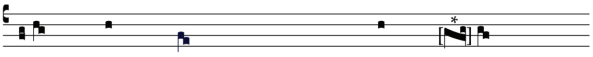
R.
IVα. cor - pus do - mi - ni sa - cra-tum

PrU VIII G 29 (b)



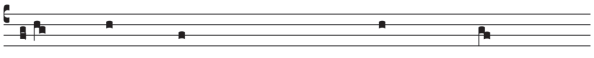
IVα. hori - e tu - ho na - sie ve - li - ka

PrU I B 12



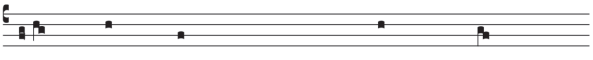
R. *
IVα. cor - pus do - mi - ni sa - cra-tum

Wro 226a



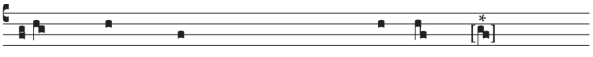
R.

PrU XVII E 1 (a)



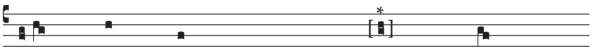
R.
IVα. cor - pus do - mi - ni sa - cra-tum

PrU XVII E 1 (b)



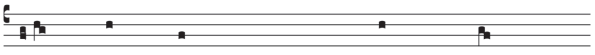
R. Au wech ja - ka jest na - se bo - lest
IVα. tie - lo pa - na pre - slav - *ne - ho

Nürn 7060



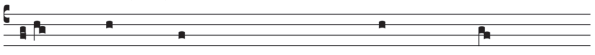
R.
IVa. cor - pus do - mi - *ni sa - cra-tum

Zwi 1 15 3



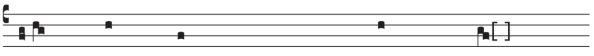
R. He - w

Zwi 36 1 24 (a–c)



R. He - w

Eger B V 6



R.
IVa. cor - pus do - mi - ni sa - cra-tum

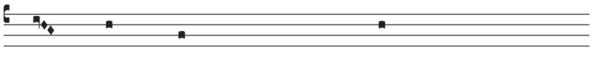
Lower Saxony

Hild 383



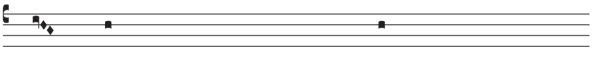
R.

Wol VII B 203



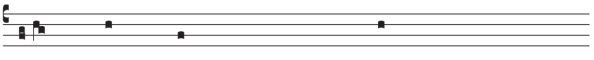
R.

Wol 965



IVa. cor - pus do - mi - ni sa - cra-tum

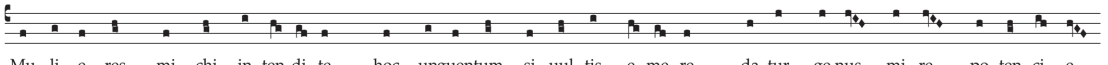
TriS 1973/63



IVa. cor - pus do - mi - ni sa - cra-tum

Appendix D. Synoptic Edition of Stanzas VI–VIII

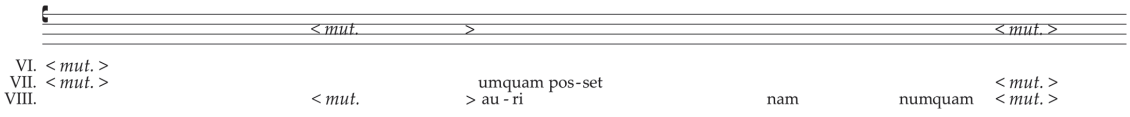
Vic 105



VI. Mu - li - e - res mi - chi in-ten-di-te hoc unguentum si uul-tis e-me-re da-tur ge-nus mi-re po-ten-ci - e
VII. Quo si cor-pus pos - se - tis un-ge-re non am-pli-us pos-çet pu - tre-sce-re ne-que uermes possent co-me-de-re
VIII. Hoc unguentum si mul-tum cu-pi-tis u - num[au-ri] ta-len-tum da-bi-tis nec a - li-ter umquam por-ta-bi-tis

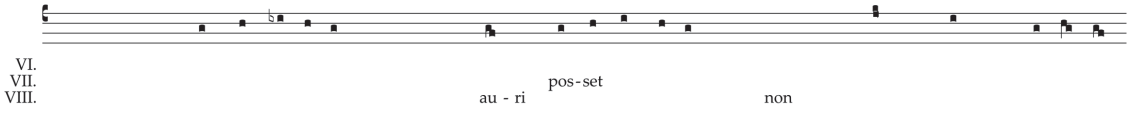
Catalonia and Occitanie

Bar 911

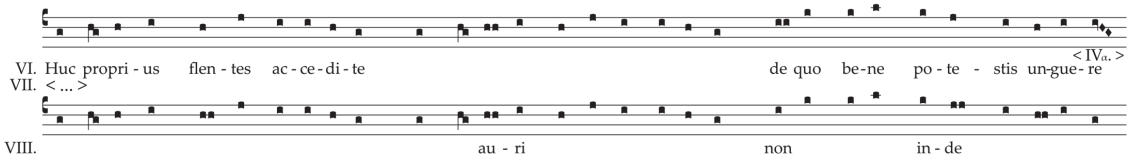


Northwest

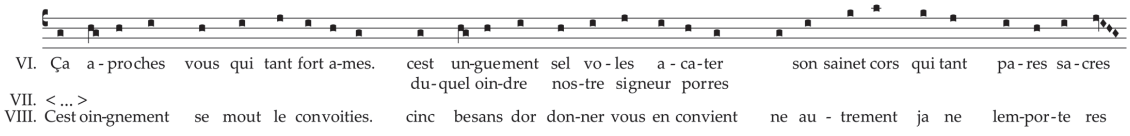
Tours 927



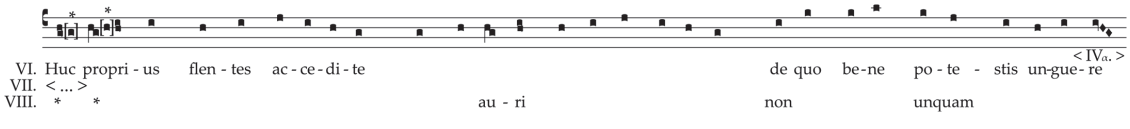
DHaa 76 F 3



SQ 86

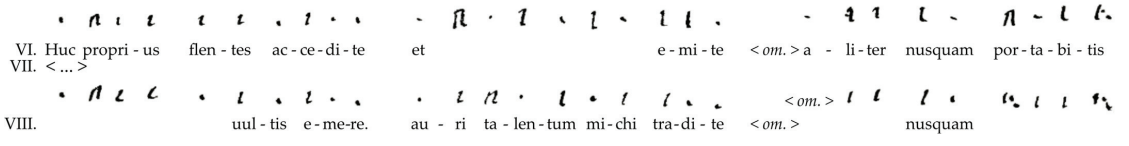


DHaa 71 J 70

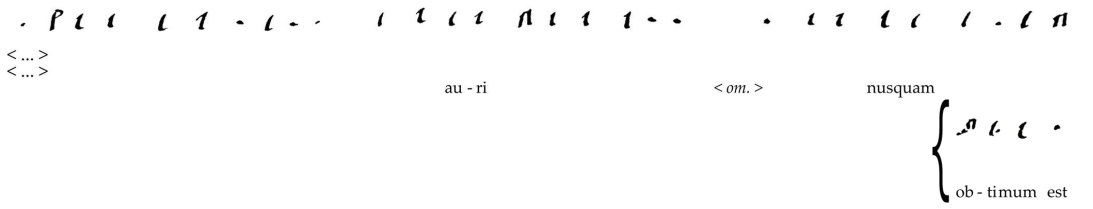


Southern Bavarian Area and Black Forest

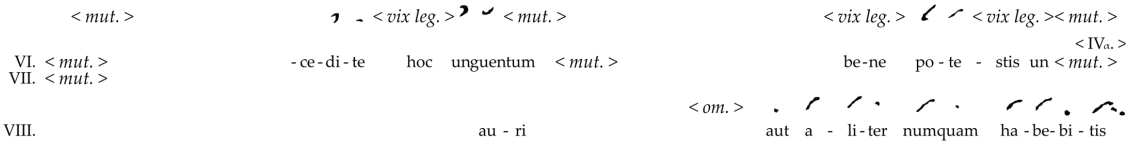
Mü 4660a



Mü 4660



SG Fragm. Fab. IV



NY M 886

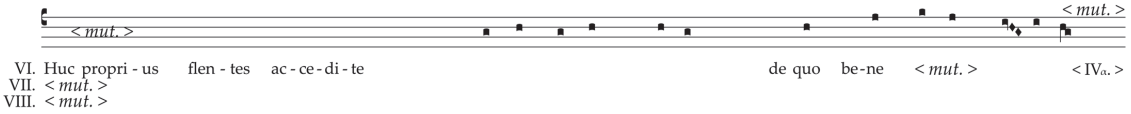


Hesse–Thuringia Group

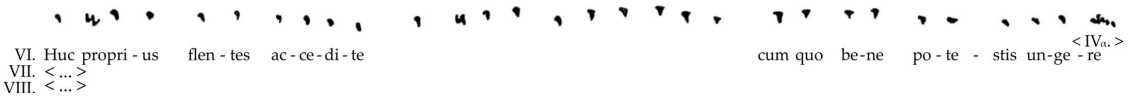
FM 178



FM III 6



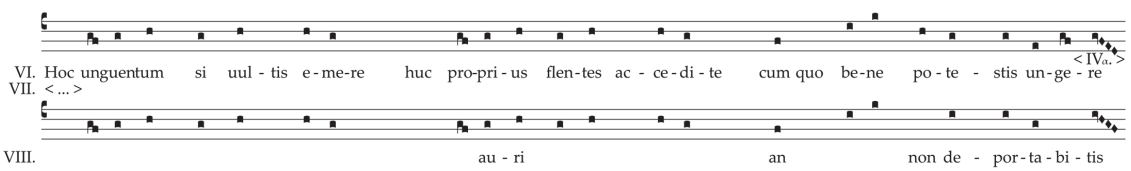
Be 757



Inns 960
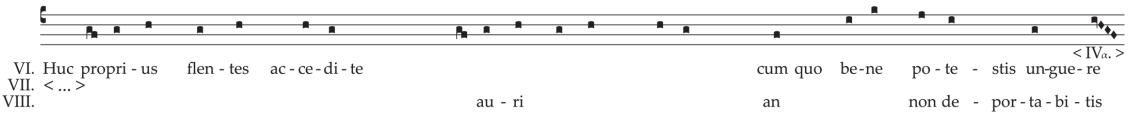


Ka 18



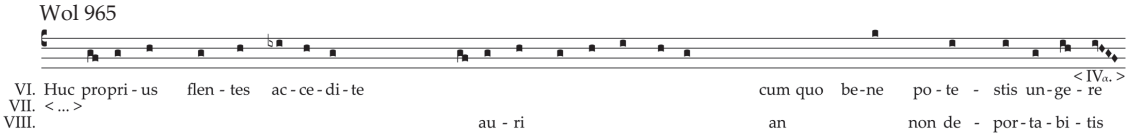
Bohemia

Eger B V 6
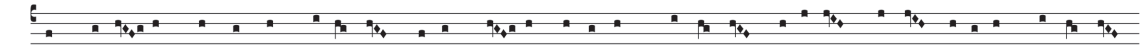


Lower Saxony

Wol 965



Appendix E. Synoptic Edition of Stanza IX

Vic 105



Appendix F. Latin Stanzas Not Present in Vic 105 (The Source from Which the Reading Is Taken Is Indicated)

Tours 927		
A.	Venite si	complacet emere
	hoc unguentum	quod uellem uendere
	de quo bene	potestis ungere
IVα.	corpus domini sacratum	
Mü 4660a		
B.	Aromata	pretio querimus
	corpus iesu	uolumus ungere
	aromata	sunt odorifera
	sepulture	xpisti memoria
C.	Dabo uobis	ungenta optima
	saluatoris	ungera uulnera
	sepulture	eius in memoriam
	et nomini	eius ad gloriam
Inns 960		
D.	Heu nobis internas mentes	
	quanti pulsant gemitus	
	pro nostra consolatione	
	qua priuamur miseri	
	quam crudelis iudeorum	
	morte dedit populo	

E. Iam percusso ceu pastore
oues errant miseri
sic magistro discedente
turbantur discipuli
abque nobis eo absente
dolor crescit nimius

F. Sed eamus et ad eius
properemus tumulum
si dileximus uiuentem
diligamus mortuum
et ungamus corpus eius
o leo sanctissimo

G. Ibant ibant tres mulieres
ihesum ihesum ihesum querentes
maria jacobena maria cleophea et salomena
re uemasti tu tres mulieres
dare mihi narium
dabo tibi sal salium

PrU VIII G 29 (a)

H. Ad monumentum uenimus gementes
angelum domini sedentem uidimus et dicentem
quia surrexit ihesus
(**Cantus n.d., chant ID** 850144)

PrU I B 12

J1. Dum transisset
Et ualde mane una sabbatorum ueniunt ad monumentum orto iam sole
(Intonation of Mc 16, 1–2)

PrU XVII E 1

J2. R. Dum transisset sabbatum maria magdalena et maria iacobi et salome emerunt aromata
Ut uenientes ungerent Jesum alleluia Alleluia
℣. Et ualde mane una sabbatorum ueniunt ad monumentum orto iam sole
℣. Gloria Patri et filio et spiritui sancto
(**Cantus n.d.**, **chant ID** 006565 and 006565a)

K. Leta Syon laudans plaude
renouata terra gaude
agens deo gracias

L. Veni desiderate
ueni xpiste amate
ueni patris gloria
ueni sanctorum corona

M. Quis est iste qui uenit cum gloria
cum quo sanctorum copia
peragi [*sic*] at [*sic*] celi palacia

Zwi 36 1 24

O. Ihesu nostra redempcio
amor et desiderium
deus creator omnium
homo in fine temporum

P. Que te uicit clemencia
ut ferres nostra crimina
crudelem mortem paciens
ut nos ab hoste tolleres

Q. Inferni claustra penetrans
tuos captiuos redimens
uictor triumpho nobili
ad dextram patris residens

Eger B V 6

S. Nuper ueni de studio
scio quod tota regio
mihi coequalem
nescit nec habet talem
hoc loquor sine fraude
sed tamen ficta laude

Wol VII B 203

T. Heu uerus pastor occidit
quem culpa nulla infecit
O mors plangenda

U. Heu nequam gens iudaica
innocentis homicida
O gens damnanda

V. Heu quid agemus misere
dulci magistro orbate
O mors lacrimanda

W. Hinc eamus
ut ungamus
Condimentis
Dormientis
caraem sanctam xpisti

DHaa 76 F 3

X. Femine quid gemitis
quid gementes queritis
et sic hic preceditis
et ex hiis non emitis
rebus aromaticis
sepulture debitis.
Nostrum solatium heu

Y. Ihesu nostra redempcio

Z. Ista pixis nobile continet ungentum
ista cui simile non est adimentum
si quis huius tercie deferat ungentum
auri dabit integrum marcam aut talentum
Tibi dabimus heu

Appendix G. Archival Souces

Sigla	RISM Sigla	Signature	Provenance	Century	Typology	Area
Bar 662	E–Bbc 662	Barcelona, Biblioteca de Catalunya, M. 662	Barcelona	14/15	Antiphonary	Catalonia and Occitanie
Bar 706	E–Bbc 706	Barcelona, Biblioteca de Catalunya, M. 662	Catalunya	14/15	Antiphonary	Catalonia and Occitanie
Bar 911	E–Bbc 911	Barcelona, Biblioteca de Catalunya, M. 911, frag. f. 156	Girona, Seu Sta. Maria	13/14	Troper–Proser	Catalonia and Occitanie
BarAm 381	E–Bac m. 381	Barcelona, Arxiu de la Corona d'Aragó, Monacales 381 (Cod. Varia. VIII)	Girona (Col·legiata St. Feliu?)	12	Antiphonary	Catalonia and Occitanie
BarFC s/n	E–Bcapdevila s/n	Barcelona, Felipe Capdevila Rovira, colección privada, Ms. s/n	Tarragona, Seu Sta. Tecla	1568 (16m)	Processional	Catalonia and Occitanie
BarO s/n	E–Boc s/n	Barcelona, Centre de Documentació de l'Orfeó Català, Ms. s/n	Sant Joan de les Abadesses, Monestir St. Joan de les Abadesses	1425 (15i)	Processional	Catalonia and Occitanie
Be 757	D–B 757	Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin—Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Cod. germ. fol. 757 [Fragment]	Thuringia	14	Berliner Thuringian Easter Play	Hesse–Thuringia Group
Be 1219	D–B 1219	Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin—Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Cod. germ. fol. 1219	Mainz area	1460 (15m)	*Dirigierrolle* of the Mainz Easter Play	Hesse–Thuringia Group
Bol I 51	I–BZf I 51	Bolzano, Biblioteca del Convento dei padri Francescani, Cod. I 51	Bolzano (Tirol)	1495 (15x)	Bolzano Passion Play	Southern Bavarian Area and Black Forest
DHaa 71 J 70	NL–DHk 71 J 70	Den Haag, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, ms. 71 J 70	Egmond–Binnen, Benedictijnerabdij St. Adalbert	15	Hymnary	Northwest
DHaa 76 F 3	NL–DHk 76 F 3	Den Haag, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, ms. 76. F. 3	Maastricht, St. Servaasbasiliek > Delft, St. Hippolytus–Kerk	12x/13i	Evangeliary	Northwest
Eger B V 6	H–EG B V 6	Eger, Főegyházmegyei Könyvtár, Cod. B. V. 6 (*olim* 772–774)	Eger (Bohemia)	1563 (16m)	Eger Passion Play	Bohemia
FBs 12	D–FRsa 12	Freiburg im Breisgau, Stadtarchiv, B 1 (H) Nr. 12	Freiburg im Breisgau, Münsterplatz	1599 (16x)	Freiburg Passion Play	Southern Bavarian Area and Black Forest

Sigla	RISM Sigla	Signature	Provenance	Century	Typology	Area
FM 178	D–F 178	Frankfurt am Main, Universitätsbibliothek Johann Christian Senckenberg, ms. Barth. 178 (Ausst. 29)	Frankfurt am Main	14i	*Dirigierrolle* of the Frankfurt Passion Play	Hesse–Thuringia Group
FM III 6	D–F germ. III 6	Frankfurt am Main, Universitätsbibliothek Johann Christian Senckenberg, fragm. germ. III 6	Frankfurt am Main	14i	Frankfurt Passion Play	Hesse–Thuringia Group
Ger 20 e 3.	E–G 20 e 3	Girona, Arxiu Capitular de la Catedral, ms. 20–e–3 (*olim* 9)	Girona, Seu Sta. Maria	1356–1360 (14m)	Customary	Catalonia and Occitanie
Ger s/n	E–G s/n	Girona, Arxiu Capitular de la Catedral, s/n	Girona, Seu Sta. Maria	1528–1539 (16im)	Chapter charters	Catalonia and Occitanie
GerS 18	E–Gs 18	Girona, Arxiu diocesà i Biblioteca diocesana del Seminari, Col·legiata de Sant Feliu, ms 18 (*olim* 158)	Girona, Col·legiata St. Feliu	15im	Customary	Catalonia and Occitanie
GerS 45	E–Gs 45	Girona, Arxiu diocesà i Biblioteca diocesana del Seminari, Col·legiata de Sant Feliu, ms 45 (*olim* 20)	Girona, Col·legiata St. Feliu	12	Antiphonary	Catalonia and Occitanie
Hild 383	D–His 383	Hildesheim, Stadtarchiv, ms. Mus. 383	Bad Bevensen (Lüneburg), Zisterzienserinnenkloster Medingen	1320ca (14i)	Prayer book	Lower Saxony
Inns 960	A–Iu 960	Innsbruck, Universitäts– und Landesbibliothek Tirol, cod. 960	Schmalkalden, Kollegiatstift St. Egidius?	1391 (14x)	Neustift–Innsbruck Play	Hesse–Thuringia Group
InnsK 1 rtr.m	A–Iadk 1 rtr.m	Innsbruck, Provinzarchiv der Kapuzinerprovinz Österreich-Südtirol, Ms. Liturg. 1 rtr.m (*olim* Feldkirch, Bibl. des Kapuzinerklosters, Ms. Liturg. 1 rtr.m)	Benediktbeuern–Peißenberg–Schongau area	16i	Processional [Augsburg (Feldkirch) Easter Play]	Southern Bavarian Area and Black Forest
InnsM 575	A–Imf 575	Innsbruck, Tiroler Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum, Musiksammlung, 575 (V^2.p.18)	Bressanone (Tirol)	1551 (16m)	Bressanone Passion Play	Southern Bavarian Area and Black Forest

Sigla	RISM Sigla	Signature	Provenance	Century	Typology	Area
Ith 410	US–I 410	Ithaca (N.Y.), Cornell University Library, Archives 4600 Bd. Ms. 410 (*olim* MS F 6)	Bolzano (Tirol)	15x (1494–1595)	Bozner Passion Play	Southern Bavarian Area and Black Forest
Ka 18	D–Kl 18	Kassel, Landesbibliothek und Murhardsche Bibliothek der Stadt Kassel, 2° Ms. poet. et roman. 18	Friedberg/Alsfeld	16i (1501–1517)	Alsfeld Passion Play	Hesse–Thuringia Group
Karls D 137	D–KA D 137	Karlsruhe. Badische Landesbibliothek, Cod. Donaueschingen 137	Donaueschingen	15mx	Donaueschingen Passion Play	Southern Bavarian Area and Black Forest
Klos 574	A–KN 574	Klosterneuburg, Augustiner–Chorherrenstift, Bibliothek, Cod. 574	Klosterneuburg, Augustiner–Chorherrenstift St. Mariä Geburt	13i	Miscellany	Southern Bavarian Area and Black Forest
Martène		Edmond Martène. 1736. *De antiquis Ecclesiae ritibus libri tres*. Antwerpen: J. B. de La Bry, from an *Ordinarium* from Narbonne, which is no longer locatable	Narbonne, Cathédrale St. Just–et–St. Pasteur	14/15	Ordinary	Catalonia and Occitanie
Mü 4660	D–Mbs 4660	München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, clm 4660	Seckau, Augustiner–Chorherrenstift BMV	1230ca (13i)	Carmina Burana	Southern Bavarian Area and Black Forest
Mü 4660a	D–Mbs 4660a	München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, clm 4660a	Seckau, Augustiner–Chorherrenstift BMV	1230ca (13i)	Carmina Burana (fragmenta)	Southern Bavarian Area and Black Forest
Mü 7691	D–Mbs 7691	München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, clm 7691, Brevier des, 1496	Indersdorf, Augustiner–Chorberrnstifts Maria Himmelfahrt, St. Peter und St. Paul	1496 (15x)	Breviary	Southern Bavarian Area and Black Forest
Mü 13601	D–Mbs 13601	München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, clm 13601	Regensburg, Kanonissenstift Niedermünster	11i	Evangeliary	Southern Bavarian Area and Black Forest
Mühl 60/20	D-MLHr 60/20	Mühlhausen, Stadtarchiv, Ms. 60/20 (*olim* 87/20)	Eisenach (Thüringen)	1350–1371 (14m)	Thuringian Play of the Ten Virgins	Hesse–Thuringia Group
Nürn 7060	D–Ngm 7060	Nürnberg, Germanisches National–Museum, Hs. 7060	Eger (Bohemia)	15x/16i (1500ca)	Eger Play	Bohemia

Sigla	RISM Sigla	Signature	Provenance	Century	Typology	Area
NY M 87	US–NYpm M 87	New York, The Morgan Library & Museum, MS M 87	Egmond–Binnen, Benedictijnerabdij St. Adalbert	1440ca	Breviary	Northwest
NY M 886	US–NYpm M 886	New York, The Morgan Library & Museum, MS M 886 [Fragment]	Melk, Benediktinerstift St. Peter und St. Paul	15im (1430ca)	*Mercatores* Play	Southern Bavarian Area and Black Forest
Pa 873	F–Pn 873	Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. lat. 873	Poitiers, Abbaye St. Jean de Montierneuf	15m/x	Missal	Catalonia and Occitanie
Pa 1139	F–Pn 1139	Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. lat. 1139	Limoges, Abbaye St. Martial	11x + 12/13	Troper-Proser/Miscellany	Southwest
Pa 1309	F–Pn 1309	Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. lat. 1309	Girona, Seu Sta. Maria	1457 (15x)	Breviary	Catalonia and Occitanie
Pa nal 903	F–Pn nal 903	Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. nouv. acq. lat. 903	Vic, Seu St. Pere	14	Customary	Catalonia and Occitanie
PrU I B 12	CZ–Pu I B 12	Praha, Národní knihovna Ceské republiky, Cod. I B 12 (cat. 68)	Praha, Katedrála sv. Víta, Václava a Vojtěcha	1384 (14x)	Easter Play	Bohemia
PrU VI G 10a	CZ–Pu VI G 10a	Praha, Národní knihovna Ceské republiky, Cod. VI G 10a (cat. 1175)	Praha, Bazilika–Klášter sv. Jiří	13/14	Processional Antiphonary	Bohemia
PrU XIII E 14d	CZ–Pu XIII E 14d	Praha, Národní knihovna Ceské republiky, Cod. XIII E 14d (cat. 1175)	Praha, Bazilika–Klášter sv. Jiří	14	Ordinary	Bohemia
PrU XIII H 3c	CZ–Pu XIII H 3c	Praha, Národní knihovna Ceské republiky, Cod. XIII H 3c (cat. 2396)	Praha, Bazilika–Klášter sv. Jiří	14	Processional	Bohemia
PrU XII E 15a	CZ–Pu XII E 15a	Praha, Národní knihovna Ceské republiky, Cod. XII E 15a (cat. 2182)	Praha, Bazilika–Klášter sv. Jiří	14i	Processional	Bohemia
PrU VI G 3b	CZ–Pu VI G 3b	Praha, Národní knihovna Ceské republiky, Cod. VI G 3b (cat. 1167)	Praha, Bazilika–Klášter sv. Jiří	14	Processional Antiphonary	Bohemia
PrU VII G 16	CZ–Pu VII G 16	Praha, Národní knihovna Ceské republiky, Cod. VII G 16 (cat. 1363)	Praha, Bazilika–Klášter sv. Jiří	14	Processional Antiphonary	Bohemia
PrU VIII G 29	CZ–Pu VIII G 29	Praha, Národní knihovna Ceské republiky, Cod. VIII G 29 (Y.II.5.n. 5.) (cat. 1611–1612)	Praha, Katedrála sv. Víta, Václava a Vojtěcha	14	Easter Play	Bohemia

Sigla	RISM Sigla	Signature	Provenance	Century	Typology	Area
PrU XVII E 1	CZ–Pu XVII E 1	Praha, Národní knihovna Ceské republiky, Cod. XVII E 1 (*olim* Y.III.3.n.53) (cat. 177)	Bohemia	15	Easter Play	Bohemia
SG Fragm. Fab. IV	CH–SGsap fragm. fab. IV	Sankt Gallen, Stiftsarchiv (Abtei Pfäfers), Fragm. Fab. IV	Pfäfers, Benediktinerabtei BMV (Kanton Sankt Gallen)	14i	Passion Play	Southern Bavarian Area and Black Forest
SQ 86	F–SQ 86	Saint–Quentin, Médiathèque Guy de Maupassant, ms. 86	Origny, Abbaye Ste. Benoite	1315–1317 (14i)	Ordinary	Northwest
Tar 84	E–TAha 84	Tarragona, Arxiu Històric Arxidiocesà, Ms. 84	Tarragona, Seu Sta. Tecla	14	Customary	Catalonia and Occitanie
Tar s/n	E–TAha s/n	Tarragona, Arxiu Històric Arxidiocesà, Inc. s/n	Tarragona, Seu Sta. Tecla	1485–1486 (15x)	Breviary (Patriarch Pere d'Urrea)	Catalonia and Occitanie
Tours 927	F–TOm 927	Tours, Bibliothèque municipale, ms. 927	Norman/Angevin milieu	13	Miscellany	Northwest
TriS 1973/63	D–TRs 1973/63	Trier, Stadtbibliothek Weberbach, Hs. 1973/63 4°	Trier	15m (1450ca)	Trier Easter Play	Lower Saxony
Vic 85	E–VI 85	Vic, Arxiu i Biblioteca Episcopal, Cod. 85	Vic, Seu St. Pere	1398 (14x)	Breviary	Catalonia and Occitanie
Vic 105	E–VI 105	Vic, Arxiu i Biblioteca Episcopal, Cod. 105 (*olim* CXI)	Vic, Seu St. Pere	12i [*add.* 12x and 13i]	Troper–Proser	Catalonia and Occitanie
Vic 117	E–VI 117	Vic, Arxiu i Biblioteca Episcopal, Cod. 117 (*olim* CXXIV)	Vic, Seu St. Pere	1278–1318 (13x/14i)	Processional	Catalonia and Occitanie
Vic 118	E–VI 118	Vic, Arxiu i Biblioteca Episcopal, Cod. 118	L'Estany, Monestir–canònica agustiniana Sta. Maria	14m	Processional	Catalonia and Occitanie
Vic 134	E–VI 134	Vic, Arxiu i Biblioteca Episcopal, Cod. 134 (*olim* LXXXIV)	Vic, Seu St. Pere	1216–1228 (13im)	Customary (by Andreu s'Almunia, d. 1234)	Catalonia and Occitanie
Vic 187	E–VI 187	Vic, Arxiu i Biblioteca Episcopal, Cod. 187	Vic, Seu St. Pere	1445 (15m)	Easter Play (*Representació del Centurió*)	Catalonia and Occitanie
Vic s/n	E–VI s/n	Vic, Arxiu i Biblioteca Episcopal, Cod. s/n	Vic, Seu St. Pere	1413 (15i)	Customary/Chapter charters	Catalonia and Occitanie
Vic XVIII 13	E–VI XVIII 13	Vic, Arxiu i Biblioteca Episcopal, Fragments XVIII, n. 13 [Fragment]	Vic, Seu St. Pere	14	Antiphonary	Catalonia and Occitanie

Sigla	RISM Sigla	Signature	Provenance	Century	Typology	Area
Vip III	I–VIPbc III	Vipiteno, Biblioteca Civica, Cod. III	Bolzano (Tirol)	1514 (16i)	Vigil Raver's Passion Play	Southern Bavarian Area and Black Forest
Vip IV	I–VIPbc IV	Vipiteno, Biblioteca Civica, Cod. IV	Bolzano (Tirol)	15mx	Bolzano Passion Play	Southern Bavarian Area and Black Forest
Vip VII	I–VIPbc VII	Vipiteno, Biblioteca Civica, Cod. VII	Tirol (Bolzano?)	1520 (16i)	Tirol Passion Play	Southern Bavarian Area and Black Forest
Vip XIV	I–VIPbc XIV	Vipiteno, Biblioteca Civica, Cod. XIV (XVI)	Vipitieno (Tirol)	1486 (15x)	Lienhart Pfarrkircher's Passion Play (Church Provost in Vipiteno)	Southern Bavarian Area and Black Forest
Wi 13427	A–Wn 13427	Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 13427	Praha, Katedrála sv. Víta, Václava a Vojtěcha	1334–1366 (14m)	Breviary	Bohemia
Wol 965	D–W 965	Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Cod. Guelf. 965 Helmst. (Heinemann–Nr. 1067)	Braunschweig (Brunswick) Kollegiatstift St. Cyriacus?	15	Miscellany	Lower Saxony
Wol VII B 203	D–Wa VII B 203	Wolfenbüttel, Niedersächsisches Landesarchiv – Standort Wolfenbüttel, VII B Hs, Nr. 203	Braunschweig (Brunswick) Kollegiatstift St. Cyriacus	1314 (14i)	Lectionary	Lower Saxony
Wro 226a	PL–WRu 226a	Wroclaw, Bibliotheka Uniwersytecka, MS I Q 226a [Fragment]	Wroclaw	14x/15i	Wroclaw/Breslau Easter Play	
Würz s/n	D–WÜubs s/n	Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek, Bruno Stäblein Archiv, s/n	Vic, Seu St. Pere	1278–1318 (13x/14i)	Processional	Catalonia and Occitanie
Zwi 1 15 3	D–Z 1 15 3	Zwickau, Ratsschulbibliothek, 15.1.3 (*olim* ms. I XV 3)	Jáchymov, Latinské školy	1520–1523 (16i)	Collection of plays by Rector Stephan Roth for the Latin School	Bohemia
Zwi 36 1 24	D–Z 36 1 24	Zwickau, Ratsschulbibliothek, 36.1.24 (*olim* ms. XXXVI I 24)	Jáchymov, Latinské školy	1520–1523 (16i)	Collection of plays by Rector Stephan Roth for the Latin School	Bohemia

Notes

1 From the perspective of strictly poetic diction, the cadence of the second verse would be 8pp (arómate) with an iambic rhythm. However, it is the melodic configuration itself—marked by a *pressus* on "cum" and a *pes subpunctis resupinus* emphasizing the syllable "a–"—that shifts the accent to a trochee (cúm liquído áromáte), thereby aligning it with the fourth verse of the stanza, which obviously repeats the same melody.

2 Dante Alighieri. *De vulgari eloquentia*, II, X, 4. (Squarotti et al. 1983, p. 512).

3 An interesting and thorough melodic analysis can be found in (Eberle 2023).

4 We refer to the most recent references cited in the Introduction for access to an extensive bibliography.

5 Some of the capitals attributed to this monastery, which was plundered in the 19th century, are now preserved in various museums, including the Museum of Art in Girona, the Castle Museum of Peralada, and the aforementioned Cluny Museum in Paris.

6 We would like to express our sincere gratitude to Miss Nadia Smirnova, art historian and researcher at the Complutense University of Madrid, for her generosity in providing this reference.

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An Ontology of the Word in Catalan Romanesque Culture

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Abstract: The history of culture in Catalonia during the Romanesque period (9th–12th centuries) has often been written from a strongly positivist mentality, which is a reductionistic approach. Economic history has distorted this period's intellectual and cultural history. This article presents a compelling analysis of a series of manuscripts from the monastery of Ripoll in the context of Catalonia's visual and intellectual culture between the 10th and 12th centuries. These writings demonstrate the pivotal role of the arts of the word (dialectic, rhetoric, and grammar) in this cultural center of great European significance. They also illustrate the formative influence of this institution on Gerbert of Aurillac, who would become Pope Sylvester II and the fruitful period of Abbot Oliba. Other artworks and musical manuscripts contribute to understanding a profound ontology of the word in Catalonia and prepare the ground for its cultural renaissance in the 12th century.

Keywords: medieval culture; Romanesque Catalonia; feudalism; memory; Apocalypse; word and image; neo-Platonism; ontology; Ripoll monastery; Last Judgment

1. Introduction

The Middle Ages, certainly until the 12th century, remains one of the most enigmatic epochs in world history, in the sense that Umberto Eco alluded to a few years ago following the path of James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*. Through the word "chaosmos", he traced a bridge between the medieval period and postmodernity: both have their chaotic condition (fragmentation, confusion, and a combinatory nature) and their cosmic sense (they are a labyrinth with a code that allows us to find the center). "A tension between a typically medieval search for a code and a hermeneutics representative of deconstructive tendencies. This tension between *cosmos* and *chaos*, order and disorder, is reflected in the word *chaosmos*" (Farronato 2003, pp. XIII and 17).

Due to its geographical location and political circumstances, Catalonia's situation during this era was particularly intricate. The region's history often highlights a shift from the Carolingian dynasty towards Rome and Cordoba as the principal development. This perspective depicts the Catalan counties as a peripheral region reliant on distant power centers. However, the relationships between the counties and their immediate neighbors across the Pyrenees and the Iberian Peninsula played a more crucial role in shaping the region's fate. The establishment of the Spanish March integrated the Catalan counties into the Carolingian empire. Connections with the North were not unprecedented, as Visigothic rule had spanned the Pyrenees, and the Catalan counties shared a traditional adherence to Visigothic law with their neighbors in Septimania. From a Parisian standpoint, these counties had technically remained part of the West Frankish and later French kingdom until 1258, when Louis IX renounced his claims to the Catalan counties in the Treaty of Corbeil. From Barcelona's perspective, however, Capetian rights had mainly become obsolete by the turn of the millennium, if not entirely extinguished. Despite juridical independence,

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the Catalan counties remained part of the late- and post-Carolingian world, more closely aligned with that milieu than with their Iberian neighbors.

In this context, the Santa Maria de Ripoll monastery between the end of the 9th century and the first half of the 11th played a notable role in European culture, especially Iberian culture. Ripoll, the capital of the Ripollès region and the cradle of Catalonia, has always played a prominent role in Catalan history and identity. Surrounded by mountains in the heart of the Pre-Pyrenees, in 970, the monastery had 66 manuscripts, and by 1008, it had as many as 121. The monastery's most influential era can be noted during Gerbert of Aurillac's period of study (967–970), who would later become Pope Sylvester II, and the death of Abbot Oliba (1046). Supposing we attribute the monastery's essential cultural development to the first half of the 11th century, we have to think that the recovery of classical Carolingian models affected not only Abbot Oliba's political ideology but also the stylistic models imposed on the monastery's school (Cingolani 2017, pp. 471–72). In this article, I will analyze Ripoll's collection of manuscripts to explain that a new ontology of the word was fermenting to prepare for the 12th-century Renaissance, which was not exclusive to medieval France.

Any ontology of the word must start by clarifying its different entities, which I will use in at least three ways: considered as logos (linguistically, philosophically, and theologically), ethos (juridically), and pathos (symbolically). Whenever the word can change reality, it can be called "ontological". In this, the ontology of the word means that, well before the consolidated 13th-century metaphysics, the use of the word in its different dimensions was able to generate new realities not only as a linguistic fact (dialectics, rhetoric, and grammar) but as a lever that pushes reality beyond its linguistic dimension into knowledge, action, and emotion.

The importance of rhetoric in the *Scriptorium* of the monastery of Ripoll, between the 9th and the 11th century, shows a great interest in the word as a linguistic entity. What is especially relevant, given the written and visual sources, is to note that, in reality, the metaphysical vision of the word had never wholly disappeared, precisely because of the connection between the arts of language and metaphysics. That is why a study of the ontology of the word is so enlightening: in Romanesque Catalonia, there was a system of signs, signifiers, and statements; it must also be recognized that there was an ontology of the word capable of understanding a philosophical and theological reality that involved the linguistic dimension.

I would be intrigued to explore whether medieval philosophy ought to be sought in a different direction from the Christian philosophy suggested by Etienne Gilson. Following an Anglo-Saxon-rooted orientation, there has been an exodus of metaphysics such that logic, semantics, and the philosophy of language have become the new centers of attention (Norman Krezmann, Anthony Kenny, and Jan Pinborg). The question was to determine if medieval philosophy was not more readily found in the *Summae Logicae* than in the *Summae Theologiae* (Jan Aertsen). In France, an ethical approach sought the locus of medieval philosophy in the faculty of arts, the notion of intellectuality, and the experience of thought (Alain de Libera).

I want to focus on the formal structure of this text, dealing with the inspiration that can provide the transcendentals of being in the form of *logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos*. Because this work will chronologically come to an end in the 12th century, this is an anachronistic form of analysis. On the other hand, I postulate that the medieval ontology of the word (in the particular case of Catalonia) leads to the formulation of the relevant doctrine of the transcendentals of being; this way, this text will also enjoy a synchronistic atmosphere. I hope the reader can relish the moment the Middle Ages were prepared for and confronted with a comprehensive philosophical explanation of reality in the Latin world.

2. Logos: The Word as Language

2.1. Dialectic

Modernity describes a word as an essential element of language that carries meaning and can be used independently and uninterruptibly (Miller and Brown 2013, p. 473). Even though speakers of a language have an intuitive grasp of a word, linguists still need to reach a consensus on its definition, and numerous attempts to find specific criteria for the concept remain controversial (Bussmann 1996, p. 1285). In 1928, Bloomfield introduced the concept of words as "minimal free forms" from a semantic perspective. For him, words were considered the smallest meaningful unit of speech that could stand by themselves (Katamba 2005, p. 11). However, the 21st-century approach to the word seems far from the richness of the many senses of the medieval word.

Manuscript Ripoll 83 in the Crown of Aragon Archives contains a Boethius commentary on the *Categories* of Aristotle translated from Greek into Latin used in the 10th century in Santa Maria de Ripoll (fol. 1r–98v) and an Aristotelian *De interpretatione* (fol. 99r–104r) (Figure 1). This introduces us to the critical area of dialectics in the early Middle Ages in Catalonia and Boethius as a transmitter of Greek logic to the Latin West. This is a clear presence of "his prolix expositions of the third-century neo-Platonist Porphyry's *Isagoge* or introduction to Aristotle's *Categories*, of the *Categories* itself, and of Aristotle's *De interpretation*" (Asztalos 1993, p. 367).

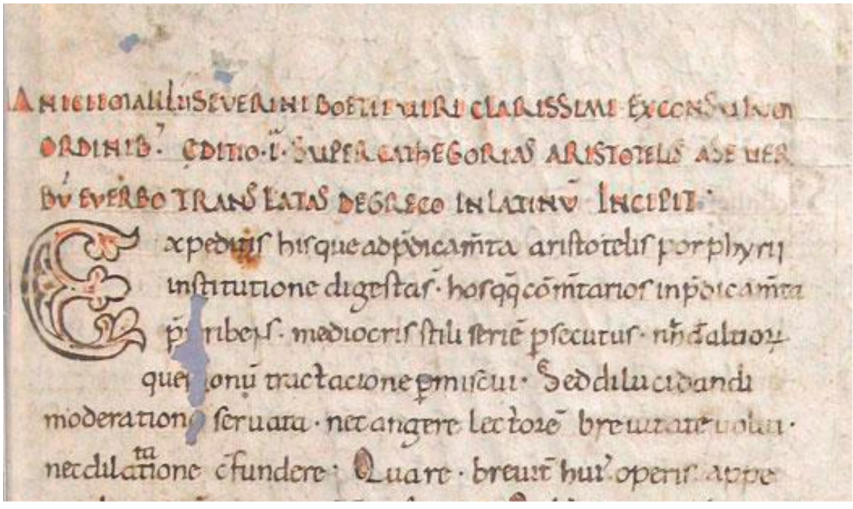


Figure 1. Boethius, *Commentary on Aristotle Categories*, Monastery of Santa Maria de Ripoll, 10th c. Archive of the Crown of Aragon, Ripoll, 83, fol. 1r.

In the same volume, Augustine's *Liber de magistro* (fol. 104v–117v) points to the educational idea in the period of Oliba that is present in a different manuscript from the same period with varying materials of scholarly contents (Ripoll 74). There is a trace of the ontology of the word in *De magistro*, as far as Francis E. Tourscher's 1924 translation of Augustine's *De magistro* into English used the term "reality" as a translation for *res* (Augustine 1924). Augustine says to Adeodat: "What as to the meaning of a sign—If a thing does not signify something, can that thing be a sign?" (Augustine 1924, p. 13) "To this also, I think, you will assent: that when we say name (or noun) we signify something" (Augustine 1924, p. 24).

When turning to the early Middle Ages, Boethius' method for finding arguments differs from Aristotle's. The former's discussions on dialectics were among the most

important influences on future scholastic treatment of words and language. However, this commentary on the *Categories* "reveal Boethius' working methods in his earliest works on Greek logic", and seemed "unarmed with proper translations and unfamiliar with the work he was commenting on" (Asztalos 1993, pp. 367+407) and it could not influence the culture of the word in Romanesque Catalonia to any great extent, though it was a starting point.

Accounts of the dialectic based ultimately on Boethius' views continued to play a fundamental role in philosophy even through the 14th century. For him, dialectics was primarily a result of metaphysics. Peter Abelard's (c. 1079–1142) writings on the *Topics* tried to separate certain parts of logic from metaphysics by insisting that certain inferences hold not in virtue of any dialectical relationships but solely in virtue of their form. Terminists like William of Ockham (c. 1287–1347) completed this partial divorce between logic and metaphysics (Stump 2020, p. 1ff.).

Romanesque plastic language shows that words pointed to ontologies between the 10th and 11th centuries, preparing the cultural development of the 12th century. There was a deep connection between logic, dialectics, and metaphysics as metaphysical relationships between extramental elements were accepted even by strong dialecticians like Garlandus of Besançon (ca. 1030/40–1102), a character in transition between Boethius and Abelard (Stump 2020, pp. 96–97). For him, the logic was ultimately dependent on the *Topics* (Stump 1974) and thus, to some extent, grounded in metaphysics. As such, medieval philosophy and logic do not map neatly onto contemporary philosophy (Stump 2020, p. 248). The reader must understand this when the term "word" is used when discussing the Middle Ages as "the age of the word".

This explains why contemporary historians wonder what the word's destiny was in the Middle Ages.[1] By studying its vicissitudes and multiple meanings, one can further understand this enigmatic, fascinating world that is full of symbols and constitutes the literary and artistic imaginary of the period (Le Goff 1992). The word undergoes a great deal in the transition between sound and silence.[2] In some way, there are many words and different silences that we have to understand if our aim is to analyze the word's ontological visual culture.

2.2. Rhetoric

In the same volume as Boethius' commentary on the *Categories*, we find a collection of rhetorical manuscripts compiled in Ripoll by the time of Oliba (971–1046). The presence of these rhetorical texts is preparing the ontology of the word. At least three pieces on rhetoric are found in the 11th-century Ripoll 42: Cicero's *De inventione retorice artis retorica* (fol. 72r–108v) with Grillius' marginal commentaries (fol. 71v–95r with interruptions) (Figure 2), Augustine's Rhetoric with marginal glosses (fol. 108v–110v) (Figure 3), and Isidore of Seville's Rhetoric (*Etymologiae* II, 1–4 in fol. 71r). It is difficult not to see in Cicero a relationship between rhetoric and political philosophy: "But the man who equips himself with the weapons of eloquence, not to be able to attack the welfare of his country but to defend it, he, I think, will be a citizen most helpful and most devoted both to his interests and those of his community" (*qui vero ita sese armat eloquentia, ut non oppugnare commoda patriae, sed pro his propugnare possit, is mihi vir et suis et publicis rationibus utilissimus atque amicissimus civis fore videtur*) (Cicero 1949, vol. II, p. 1).

However, the main text in this manuscript concerns Augustine's *Rhetorica* with marginal glosses in Book IV of his *De doctrina christiana* (On Christian Doctrine). In Book I, every sign is also some *res* or thing (*Quam ob rem omne signum etiam res aliqua est; quod enim nulla res est, omnino nihil est; non autem omnis res etiam signum est*) (Augustine 1996, vol. I, p. 2). The first fundamental distinction regarding signs outlined in *De doctrina christiana* is, thus, the division between "things" (res) and "signs" (signa). The term *res* has been

generally translated in English as “thing” or “some-thing” and seldom as “reality.” Any form of conceptualizing *signum* without resorting to the notion of *res*, in other words, out of context, would be incomplete and did not align with Augustine’s thought.

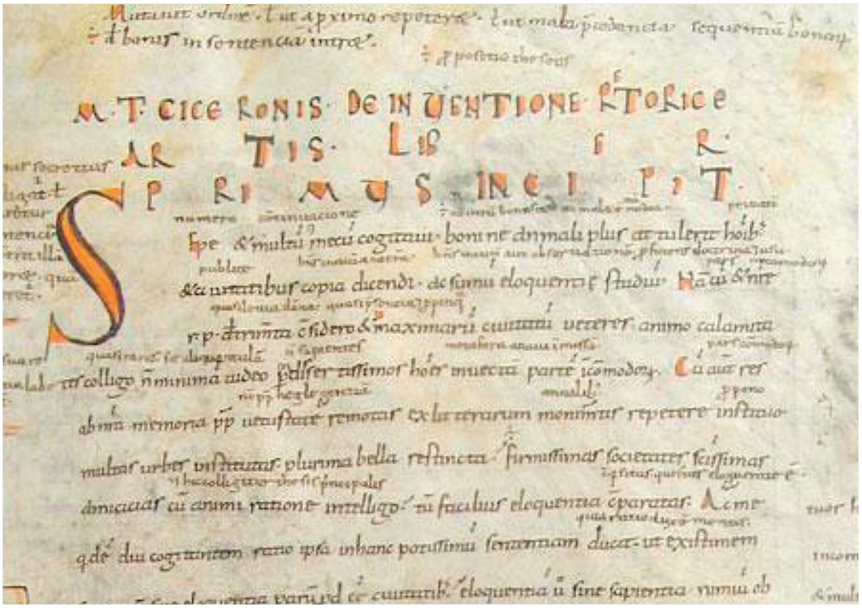


Figure 2. M. T. Cicero, *De Inventione Rhetorica*. Monastery of Santa Maria de Ripoll, 11th c. Archive of the Crown of Aragon, Ripoll, 42, fol. 72r.

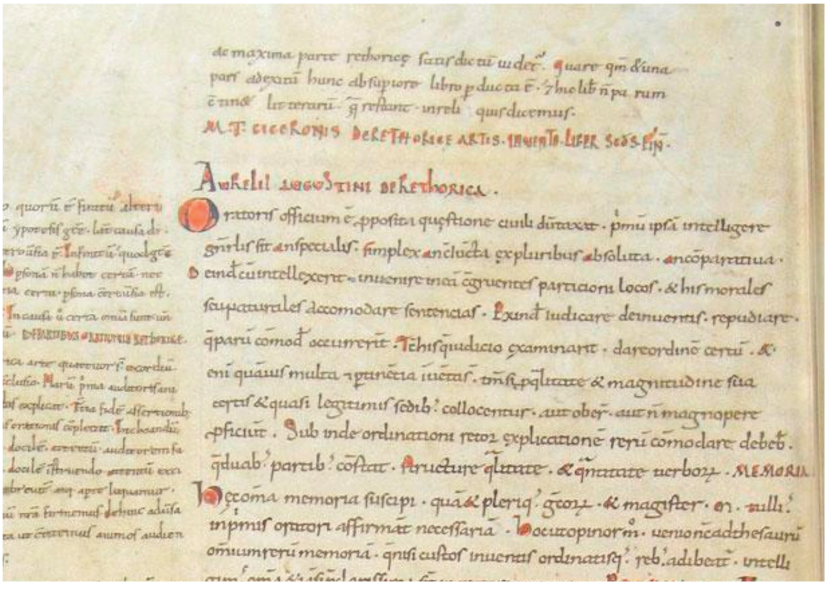


Figure 3. Saint Augustine, Rhetoric (Book IV of *De Doctrina Christiana*), 11th c., Monastery of Santa Maria de Ripoll. Archive of the Crown of Aragon, Ripoll, 42, fol. 108v.

This approach is in line with Augustine’s work plan. Within *De doctrina christiana* and elsewhere (the dialogue *De magistro* as well as *De dialectica*), *res* and *signum* are discussed

as related to one another. This *res/signum* division is consistent throughout Augustine's works and should not be overlooked. The concept of *res* thus deserves the same level of attention as the notion of *signum* and opens a rhetoric to a deep ontology of the word (Gramigna 2020, pp. 112–13). Augustine discriminates against *res* negatively, arguing that *res* is not *signum*. Indeed, *res* is described as things not employed to signify something. Here, Augustine sets out the division between *res* and *signum* as an opposition between things that do not signify and things that do signify with some care. The sign is always a thing, yet not all things are signs (Gramigna 2020, pp. 115–17). Cicero, who distinguished between *res* and *verba* concerning the *vis oratoris*, is one of Augustine's possible sources (Testard 1958). His concept is so broad and general as to include all the earlier uses of the term: *res* as the subject of a discussion, *res* as a fact, and *res* as a meaning of a term or an event, all being encompassed in Augustine's concept of *res* (Jackson 1967, p. 68).

2.3. Grammar

The early Middle Ages also included grammar as the third of the arts of language. Latin was taught in Ripoll at an elementary level via the method established by Donatus, the Roman grammarian and teacher of rhetoric, in his *Artes Grammaticæ* and later via the medium of Priscian's *Institutiones Grammaticæ*. Ripoll 46 contains some works from both. Donatus' *Comentum Donati grammatic* [sic] *urbis Romae* (fol. 42a–50c) (Figure 4), Donatus *Ars* [*maior*]*/Donati gramatici* (including the incomplete book I, fol. 51a–54d), the *Ars maior, cum commentario* (including books II and III, fragments of book I, and other additions from the 12th-century fol. 55r–86v), and the *Primae partes Artium* [=*Ars minor, cum commentario*]*/Donati grammatici urbis Romae* (fol. 28r–40r; preceded by the *Preffatio in Arte Donati. Primum nobis interrogandum est...*, fol. 27r–v); and Priscian's *Ars institutiones grammaticae* I–XVI (*Priscianus maior*) and XVII–XVIII (*Priscianus minor*). Ripoll 42 contains Priscian's *Preexercitamina*, *Prisciani gramatici* (fol. 111r–113v) with the explicit *Prisciani sophyste ars preexercitaminum secundum Hermogenem et Libanium explicit feliciter* (Figure 5), as well as the *Grammatica, recensio/Usuardi* (including the dedication letter to Aimonius in fol. 11r–19v), followed by an added *De verbis impersonalibus* (same handwriting, fol. 20v), syntactical rules inspired in Priscian (fol. 20r–v), and declinations (different handwriting, fol. 20v).

> "Medieval grammar was genre-based, and all the ancient grammatical genres found continuity in the Middle Ages. Donatus became the unrivaled authority for elementary grammar, Priscian for the more theoretical language study, and commentaries continued to be written on all levels of teaching. Some ancient, very short *artes* similar in length to Donatus enjoyed a brief popularity in the Carolingian Renaissance but soon fell into disuse." (Luhtala 2013, p. 348)

Priscian's *Institutes of Grammar* was the standard textbook for studying Latin during the Middle Ages and part of the core curriculum of the University of Paris in the 13th century (Rico 2005, p. 20). "In the Carolingian renaissance, the study of Priscian's *Institutiones grammaticae* was revived, and this massive work became an object of commentary, which initially took the form of glossing but was later pursued in independent commentaries. Its study was always associated with dialectic, and the philosophical trend was reinforced during the following centuries. Priscian's minor work *Institutio de nomine, de pronomine, de verbo* was universally known by the end of the 7th century, as was also Isidore's *Etymologiae* (636), which expanded the structure of Donatus' *Ars maior* with a large number of topics, like orthography, analogy, etymology, glosses and differentiae" (Luhtala 2013, p. 348).

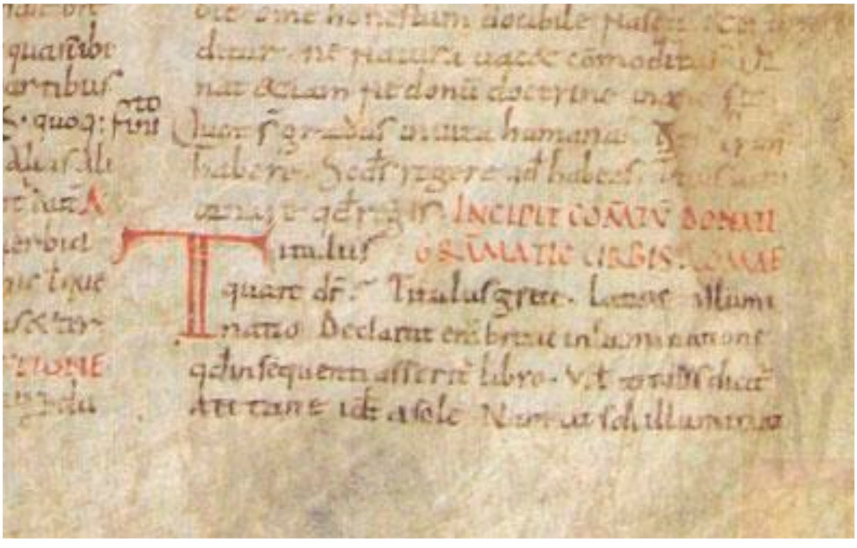


Figure 4. Aelius Donatus, *Comentum Donati grammatic [sic] urbis Romae* 10th c. Monastery of Santa Maria de Ripoll. Archive of the Crown of Aragon, Ripoll 46, fol. 27r.

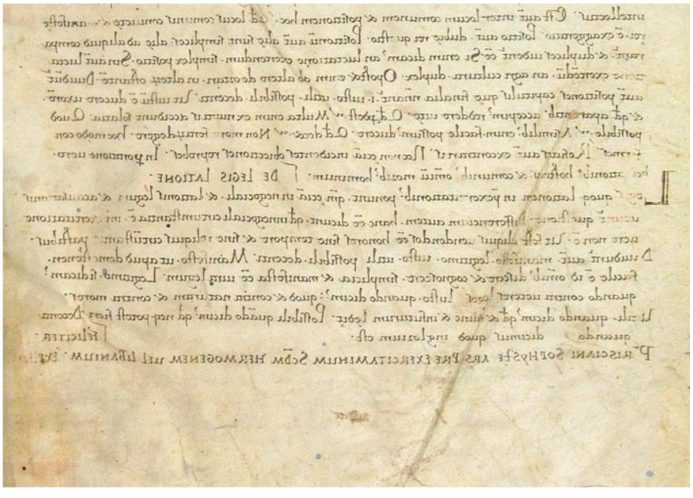


Figure 5. Priscianus Caesariensis, *Institutiones Grammaticae*, Monastery of Santa Maria de Ripoll, 10th c. Archive of the Crown of Aragon, Ripoll 42, fol. 113v.

From the 9th century onwards, there were two sufficiently distinct levels in the study of grammar, one based on Donatus and the other on Priscian (Luhtala 2013, p. 350). Priscian's famous expression "*dicitur autem nomen vel a Graeco, quod est* νόμα *et adiecta o* ὄνομα, *dictum a tribuendo, quod* νέμειν *dicunt, vel, ut alii, nomen quasi notamen, quod hoc notamus uniuscuiusque substantiae qualitatem*" defines a noun as signifying a substance with quality. The first meaning of "ontology of a word" is the only definition of a noun that references a substance with a particular quality. This builds on Augustine's idea that every sign is also some *res* or thing.

Isidore of Seville, also present in Ripoll (Ripoll 42, fol. 71r) (Figure 6), wrote in his *Etymologies* II 1 that *Retorica est beni dicendi scientia* ("Rhetoric is the science of speaking well") (Figure 6) and "is connected with the art of grammar (*Grammatica*), for in grammar, we learn

the art of speaking correctly, while in rhetoric, we understand how we may express what we have learned" (*Coniuncta est autem Grammaticae arti Rhetorica. In Grammatica enim scientiam recte loquendi discimus; in Rhetorica vero percipimus qualiter ea, quae didicimus, proferamus*). The first book of the *Etymologiae* is a complete grammatical manual, despite having been written with the synthesis and brevity that generally characterizes the encyclopedia and Isidore's work; its main inspiration is the treatises of Donatus, the critical referent for grammarians during the late Middle Ages (Carracedo Fraga 2020, p. 223). In Ripoll 46, we also find Isidore's *De ortographia* (*Etymologiae* I, 27 fol. 25v), which rounds out the basic grammatical program as defined by Donatus' manuals and includes several other complements which he considers essential within the sphere of grammar. At the end of the section corresponding to book 1 of the *Ars maior*, he adds two supplements: some brief chapters (1. 21–26) about graphic signs and an in-depth chapter on orthography (1. 27) (Carracedo Fraga 2020, p. 225).

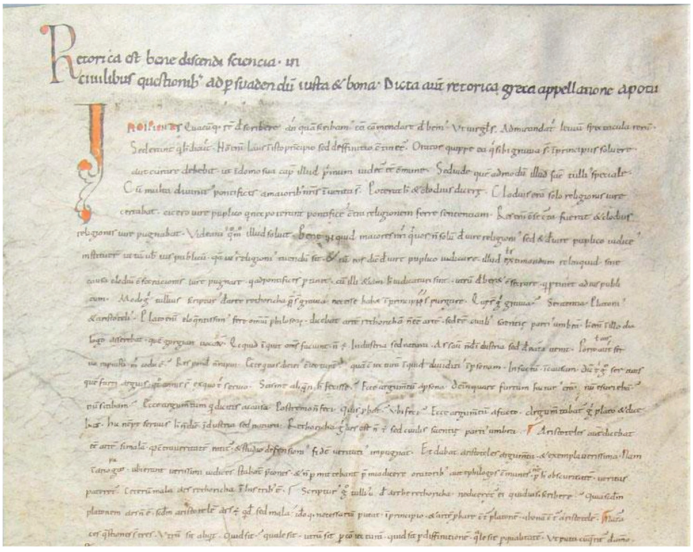


Figure 6. Isidorus Hispaliensis, *Etymologiae*, Monastery of Santa Maria de Ripoll, 10th c. Archive of the Crown of Aragon, Ripoll 42, fol. 71r.

Bede's earliest treatises, like *De arte metrica*, were intended for school use (Heikkinen 2012, p. 5). In many respects, this work is revolutionary: it is one of the first metrical treatises composed for an audience of non-native speakers of Latin. It remained in use throughout the Middle Ages, although its influence began to wane somewhat after the cultural revolution of the 12th century. Ripoll 46 (10th century) has the *Adoritur congregatio Bede presbiteri de noticia Artis metrice. Versus Bedani de Exemplis* (Incipit: *Mens tenebrosa tumet mor[tis] obscura tenebris...* fol. 2v) (Figure 7). His *Liber [=De arte metrica]/Bede presbiteri* includes the table of chapters which interrupts the beginning of ch. VII (fol. 2v–9v). Ripoll 106 (10th–12th centuries) contains the same Incipit *Mens tenebrosa tumet mortis obscura tenebris* (fol. 9v), the *Ars metrica* (fol. 9v–25v) and Sedulius *Liber [=Carmen Paschale]/Sedulius [=Caelii Sedulii]*, including a dedication letter, preface and books I (=I–II), II (=III–IV) and III (=V) (fol. 58v–74v). Both Incipits seem inspired by Sedulius' Carmen Pascale: *mens tenebris obscura suis*, "the mind is clouded by darkness" (Sedulius 1879, p. 30).



Figure 7. Beda Venerabilis. *De Arte metrica*. Monastery of Santa Maria de Ripoll, 10th c. Archive of the Crown of Aragon, Ripoll 46, fol. 2v.

The Venerable Bede can justifiably be regarded as the creator of a literary genre: his *De arte metrica* presents syllable prosody and the poetic meters as a unified system rather than as separate subjects, and his presentation served as the primary model for the subsequent *artes metricae* of the Carolingian era and the High Middle Ages (Heikkinen 2012, p. 2). Bede's starting point for his treatise on meter was the belief that metrics were an inalienable part of Judaeo-Christian heritage. This belief was based on the writings of Christian apologists such as Cassiodorus, Jerome, and Isidore (Heikkinen 2012, p. 9). Bede presents the elements of verse following the same structure as Donatus' *Ars maior*. Though Bede's discussion of grammar and meter seems highly pragmatic on the surface, his belief in the importance of these subjects was, in essence, idealistic, based as it was on the concept that God ultimately created meter (Heikkinen 2012, p. 16).

The arts of language, as described by Boethius, Priscian, and Isidore, continued to develop in Romanesque Catalonia before their evolution in the Parisian schools in the 12th century. This can be explained through three conclusions to this section. First, although dialectical arts are seen in the monastic school of Ripoll, the fundamental elements are rhetoric and grammar. It is important to signal this because, although the connection between dialectics and ontology is weak, in the Scriptorium of Ripoll, we find Augustine's *De magistro*, dialectics, and rhetoric. It is promising for the ontology of the word that there is a connection between sign and reality, one of the first bridges between the word as signifier and signified. Second, Isidore's rhetoric and grammar are crucial in connecting with the late-antiquity rhetoricians the Venerable Bede would explicitly take upon himself to Christianize. Third, the insistence on the poetic form of the hexameter in Bede's writings helps us to understand the appearance of this poetic form in some altar frontals in 12th-century Romanesque Catalonia. Let us now explore what the ontology of the word consists of from the point of view of historical action, which we shall call ethos.

3. Ethos: The Word as Action

Logos has been considered a form of logic, dialectics, rhetoric, and grammar that generated a new ethos in Catalonia with the first symptoms of feudalism in the early 11th century. As a word in action, this generates economic links in newly founded feudal–vassal

relationships. Artistic language makes it possible to establish analogies between linguistic, political, and theological words, as the miniatures of the *Liber Feudorum maior* (LFM) and the *Liber Feudorum Ceritaniae* (LFC) will show. The feudal oaths prove the word has both logical and ontological force through ethics. This is the only way to understand what objects, for example, vassals swear to: *per coronam*, *per grana incense*, *per librum missalem*, *per librum evangelium et calicem*, *cum libro regulea et cum regula*, *per textum evangelium*; and at the same time, they swear to the natural world, another possible "word": *per lignum*, *per herbam et terram*, *per ramum et cespitem* (Du Cange 1733, vol. 3, col. 1533).

At the end of Alfonso II of Aragon's reign (c. 1164–1196), two manuscripts were created for the preservation of Aragonese judicial, financial, and political documentation, the LFM (c. 1195) and the LFC (c. 1200). The first is an illuminated lay cartulary with seventy-nine Romanesque miniatures that break up the flow of the text. It was a written record of how the territory of the counts of Barcelona had grown, and it shows the visual and textual language of political power. The true distinctiveness of both cartularies lies in the subject matter of their images. They mostly depict the ritual of homage: an individual, kneeling, places his or her hands between the hands of a second individual, usually seated. A deeper analysis fosters a better understanding of just how complex the administrative history of 12th-century Catalonia was (Kosto 2001b). Still, it represents a political unfolding that is born from *logos*, passing through *ethos*, and reaching *pathos*, because its content is not only linguistic or academic in nature but it has a juridical dimension. It uses the visual vocabulary of political theology: a strong sense of abstraction, the intentional portraiture of historical characters, and the miniatures as an instrument of unusual power.

The oath is an expression of the ontology of the word as a new *ethos*. This commitment has ultimately brought together the power held by the counts of the House of Barcelona and the count who united Catalonia to the Kingdom of Aragon. A society that, at the time of Ramon Berenguer I, appeared weak in structure and without a state conscience, after a few decades of feudal–vassal commitments, grew as a social body with the capacity for expansion: the history of the Catalan Principality[3] throughout the 13th century is proof of this (Zimmermann 1986, p. 142).

The ethics of feudalism are based on an ontology of the word as language: there is logic, dialectic, rhetoric, and grammar in the feudal–vassal regime—logic because there are new rules pertaining to human relationships; dialectic because, in some way, feudalism is an art of structuring between the Church, the noblemen and women, and the people; rhetoric because a new style of convincing is born: "I promise you protection, and you promise me loyalty"; and ultimately grammar because feudalism needs strict rules to build a new society and prepare for open social organizations, a financial economy, and the birth of the modern State and societal secularization.

It is a liturgy of the oath, complex and contradictory because it associates the oral practice of an oath on a *res sacra* and the drafting of a written text in the form of a notarial document. The image of the agreement on the castle of Cardona shows bishop Folch d'Urgell and Count Guillem Ramon de Cerdanya (Figure 8a).[4] The iconography of these characters presents three elements that form part of the symbolism of the vassal ritual as proposed by Le Goff: the word (the oral oath), the gesture (Figures 8a and 9: the mixing of hands, *immixio manuum*), and the object (Figure 8b: the book held by the third character, interposed between the two main figures).[5]

Placing focus on the act of rendering homage itself is another interesting point. To quote St. Augustine's definition of *signum*, the lord and the vassal exchange certain speeches, interpret various gestures, and give or receive particular objects, which, "adding to the impression they produce on our senses, communicate something that goes beyond our knowledge". (Markus 1957; Fuhr 1989; Gramigna 2020; Holland 2023). Following

Ganshof, the ceremony has a first phase, *hominium*, constituted by two acts. The first is verbal: a declaration by the vassal, manifesting his loyalty to the lord. *Iuramus nos Berengarius et Gulielmus, filii Tedlena ... ad te ...* (LFM, 136). It is common for two brothers or a couple to swear fealty to the lord simultaneously. It is an immediately binding promise of loyalty: formulated in the present tense, there must be no semblance of doubt between the contracting parties, and no mediation is admissible. After the engagement, the one swearing the oath affirms against "negative" actions: *sine fraude et malo ingenio et ulla deceptione*, he will affirm (Zimmermann 1986, p. 114).



(**a**) (**b**)

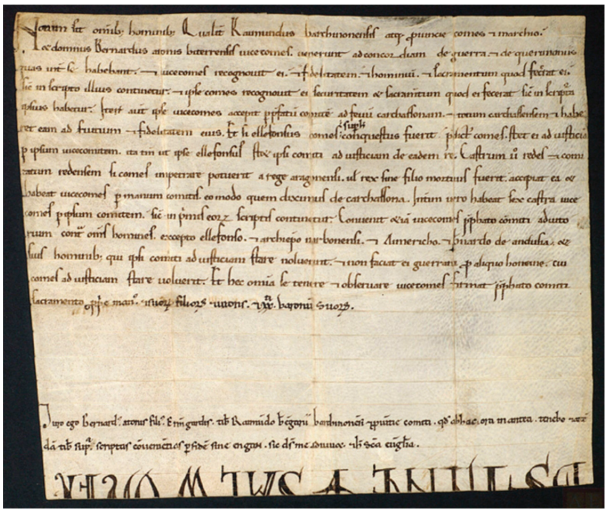
Figure 8. (**a**) Agreement on the castle of Cardona showing its lord, Bishop Folch d'Urgell, and Count Guillem Ramon de Cerdanya, Archive of the Crown of Aragon, Chancellery, Registers 4, fol. 6v; (**b**) Saint Ermengol, bishop of Urgell (right), swears fealty to Wilfred II, Count of Cerdanya (left); a priest holds the holy Scriptures (middle). *Liber Feudorum Ceritaniae* 1128–1241. Archive of the Crown of Aragon, Chancellery, Registers 4. fol. 10v.



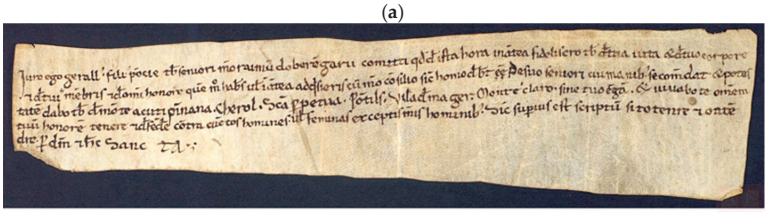
Figure 9. Different hand gestures of the *immixio manuum* in homages of fidelity. *Liber Feudorum Ceritaniae*, 1128–1241. Archive of the Crown of Aragon, Chancellery, Registers 4. fols. 55r, 58r, 62r and 64v (clockwise).

In a symbolic verbal relationship, both the lord's question to the vassal as to whether he swears this oath willingly and the vassal's affirmative answer goes beyond the formality,

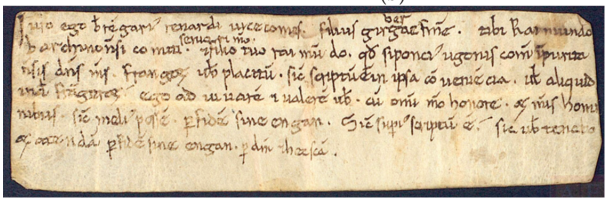
so to speak, pointing to an ethics of the verbal exchange. The *immixio manuum* completes the act. The vassal will offer his closed hands to the lord, who will accept them by closing his hands over those of the vassal: *in manu nostra trustem et fidelitatem*, says an ancient formula (Formulae Merowingici 1882, vol. I, p. 18; Le Goff 1980, p. 241). The vassal's gesture by itself is insufficient; the lord must reciprocate. With the "mixing of hands", an essential chapter of medieval symbolism is being touched upon. Feudal agreements are performed from the almost stereotyped oaths to pacts of mutual aid, betrothal gifts, cessions of rights, and oaths of fidelity by high ecclesiastics or between lay magnates, like the *Concordia* between Ramon Berenguer III, Count of Barcelona, and Bernat Ató, Viscount of Béziers in 1112 (Figure 10a), and others (Figure 10b,c).



(**a**)



(**b**)



(**c**)

Figure 10. (**a**) *Concordia* between Ramon Berenguer III, Count of Barcelona, and Bernat Ató, Viscount of Béziers in 1112. Archive of the Crown of Aragon, Chancellery, Parchemins, Ramon Berenguer III, W/D, 2; (**b**) Berenguer, Renard, Viscount of Peralada, swears allegiance to Ramon Berenguer III, Count of Barcelona, and his son Ramon Berenguer, probably 1128, Archive of the Crown of Aragon, Chancellery, Parchemins, Ramon Berenguer I, W/D, 148; (**c**) Guerau Alemany de Cervelló, son of Pòncia, swears allegiance to Ramon Berenguer III, Count of Barcelona, between 1097 and 1131. Archive of the Crown of Aragon, Chancellery, Parchemins, Ramon Berenguer I, W/D, 160.

4. Pathos: The Word as Image

4.1. The Past

Just as in the rest of Europe, the Middle Ages in Catalonia were marked by the cultural avatars of a Christological Word (written with a capital letter).[6] However, what gives weight to the feudal oath, the Final Judgment, and absolute time is the memory of the past. Memory recreates, so to speak, the vicissitudes of the word. When a man sets out to act on his feudal pact to defend his lord, he does so through a memory: he remembers his commitment. When this subject repents and confesses his sins, he remembers the danger of not being saved, his Apocalypse. The mental categories of the time (fidelity, love, sin, beauty, life, world, man, God...), derived from the word, are activated by memory. Not only are they activated, but a creative memory empowers them, magnifies them, and structures them in the praxis of a powerful religion (Carruthers and Ziolkowski 2002, p. 3).

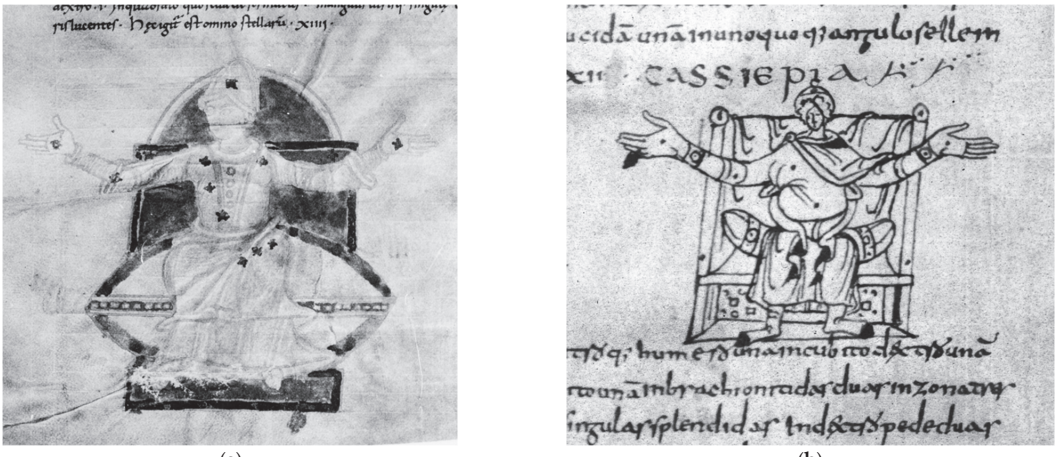
Any work on this should refer to Frances Yates' *The Art of Memory*, an important source for other material on the subject (Carruthers 1998; Annas 1992, pp. 21–22; Antoine 1988; Blum 1969; Bolzoni and Corsi 1992; Carruthers 1996; Gibson-Wood 1987; Hadju 1936; Matthews 1965; Wallis 1995). However, it is worth positing that memory is not just a mnemonic quality, as it was understood in some of Cicero's works. He writes that *ut illa constat ex notis litterarum et ex eo in quo imprimuntur illae notae, sic confectio memoriae tamquam cera locis utitur et in his imagines ut litteras collocat* ("The structure of memory, like a wax tablet, employs places and in these gathers together images like letters", Cicero 1977, n. 56; Carruthers 1996, p. 18). Thinkers took his *De inventione* as the First Rhetoric, considering the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, and then attributed it to him as the Second or New Rhetoric. The latter was the textbook that described the art of memory as a plan for constructing a family house in whose rooms an orator was to "place" images that would suggest to him the material to dissert (Murphy 2005).

Many thinkers have become indebted to Yates, as it was his work that set a precedent for studying rhetorical memory. However, precisely because of its pioneering character, it reinforced some misunderstandings surrounding the possible cognitive uses of the "art of memory" and the nature of its influence in generating the images and "places" to achieve this goal. The main issue is that Yates considered this art of memory a mechanical repetition of previously stored material (Passerini 2016, pp. 82–86). It is dangerous to dismiss the medieval versions of ancient art as "static," without movement, as "imprisoned thought." But if memory is to instigate oaths and judgments and measure time, it cannot simply contain a set of elements to be tirelessly repeated; it must be a starting point for reworking and inventing. In this way, memory serves as a "compositional art" (Crowley 2010).

The arts of memory primarily involve adopting qualities such as imagination and creativity. Memory incorporates *logos* and *ethos* as language and attitude are essential, but they also require *pathos* or emotions. The works of Augustine, Cassian, and Gregory the Great were among the primary sources of the discussion around emotions in early medieval literature. In any case, the early ethical model developed through classical rhetorical theory was to be supplanted by a new paradigm in the professional rhetorics of the 11th, 12th, and 13th centuries: a revived Ciceronianism in which the aesthetic value of style was ascendant (Copeland 2021, p. 4). The history of rhetoric illuminates the theoretical importance of emotion or *pathos*. In the meantime, a new sense of the arts gives rise to images full of ontological sense. For this reason, allegorical memory of the word in 12th-century Catalonia will be a powerful generator of iconography at a time of artistic solid production in the Principality, associated with the cultural Renaissance that other areas of medieval Europe were also experiencing (Panofsky 2018).

Allegories, interpreted as varying mnemonic devices (Hagen 1990), were expressed visually, and "In allegory, the visual characteristics of all figurative language are reduced

to a sort of diagrammatic form or impress" (Fletcher 1964, p. 179; Pomel 2004, p. 89). By way of example, we can take the image of Neptune punishing Cassiopeia by banishing her to a place in the sky where she hangs upside-down half the year as a lesson in humility (Astrological Treatise of the Reg. Lat 123 of Santa Maria de Ripoll, attributed to Abbot Oliba). Heaven is represented diagrammatically via a horizontal almond shape, an abstract graphic convention indicating that Cassiopeia is in the sky (Figure 11a). On the topic of Cassiopeia, the artist behind the Revised Aratus Latinus does not use the diagrammatic visual strategy to represent the same allegory, as instead he depicts a cushion (Figure 11b).



(**a**) (**b**)

Figure 11. (**a**) Constellation of Cassiopeia as a woman. Astrological Treatise. Santa Maria de Ripoll (Catalonia) 1056. Attributed to the Abbot Oliba. Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Reg. lat. 123 fol. 191v. The Warburg Institute Iconographic Database. With permission. (**b**) Constellation of Cassiopeia. Revised Aratus Latinus, 9th century. Corbie (Picardy) (?) Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 12957, fol. 67r. The Warburg Institute Iconographic Database. With permission.

It is essential to see that the cultural revival in 12th-century Catalonia goes hand in hand with a spirit of reformation that permeated the monastic culture of the time.[7] In the Middle Ages, remembering is a strong visual experience. The text, the written word, means very little to most people; it is often a hieroglyphic that few possess the knowledge to decipher. Thus, we must rely on the support of the ear through liturgical preaching and the assistance of the human eye, which is impressed by the compositions, colors, and volume of space. The inscriptions Alpha and Omega have been used since the first pieces of Christian art. Since then, the history of salvation has been depicted as a linear evolution between the beginning and the end of the Greek alphabet. Christians know that they have been born to live in baptism and that they will die sometime before the Second Coming of Christ. There will then be a Final Judgment where some will be saved, and others will be condemned. The inscription of the baldachin of Ribes de Freser (9 miles north of Ripoll) makes for an interesting visual lesson: (a) *[Q]uisquis super astra levatur. Ad me spem vit(a)e duce me [. . .]; [. . .]m lux et forma dierum; on the book: p/a/x l/e/o* ("Anyone can be raised to the stars. Take me to the hope of life ...; [. . .] light and beauty of the days; on the book: Peace Lion") (Figure 12). This inscription fits well with the marginalia of Ripoll 74's fol. 154r, from the first half of the 12th century: *Per me mundatur quiquis super astra levatur/ Ad me, spem vite, duce me, mea mebra, venite*.



Figure 12. Maiestas Domini is surrounded by angels in a rainbow mandorla. Baldachin of Ribes de Freser (Ripollès, Catalonia), 1119–1134. Tempera on Scots pine wood, 80.5 × 157 × 3.5 cm, Episcopal Vic Museum MEV 3884.

4.2. The Present

The Beatus of Girona, a 10th-century illuminated manuscript housed in the museum of Girona Cathedral (Catalonia), gives a clear impression of the feeling of present time (Figure 13). It is presented here as an example of the Alpha (fol. 19r) and interlaced Omega (fol. 284r), used as an iconography of a linguistic matrix: two letters of the Greek alphabet appear in the Christological environment of the Second Coming. This full-page painting at the top of the main text combines three elements that are usually shown separately: the author's portrait, the letter alpha, and the *Maiestas Domini*. The images indicate an extensive knowledge of Islamic iconography; despite the general style reflecting similar artistic developments in northern Europe, figures at the top represent the collective portrait of the authors whose works were used by Beatus of Liebana as sources when writing his Commentary on the Apocalypse. As for the significant letter Alpha, its most ancient usage in illustrations from the kingdom of Castile and Leon are to be found in the work by Florentius the scribe on the Moralia in Job by Saint Gregory the Great in the year 945 (Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, Cod. 80, f. 1v).

Some faithful Christians may still be unaware that they are two letters and signify the beginning and end of an unknown ancient alphabet. The reading of Alpha and Omega is not necessarily linguistic but iconographic. They are the image of a linguistic feature that, in the environment of Christ, the judge, operates as if it were a visual ontology of the word. In these letters, the linguistic entity has disappeared and been substituted and empowered by the symbolic dimension of the word. Alpha and Omega signify that this world has a beginning and an end, while God is eternal, as defined in the Apocalypse. It reflects the concept of God existing both at the zero moment of creation and as an infinite, timeless being.

This Word, promised in the Old Testament and brought to life in the Gospel, receives a brilliant expression during the long centuries of Patristics. The Fathers of the Church annotate, comment on, and update it with elements from diverse traditions, fundamentally Greco-Roman and Jewish. Selecting some of the Church Fathers and leaving out others would be difficult. However, there is no doubt that Augustine and Scotus Eriugena were received in Catalonia in the 12th century and incorporated into the liturgical life of the counties (Puigarnau 1999). Patristics would sprout an apotheosic expression of the

Christian Word, already formulated as a rigorous theology. It is multifaceted thinking summarized in two fundamental aspects: the cosmological, as observation of the world, and the mystical, as observation of the Creator (Kaczynski 2006): between both, the present time is developed as a living *pathos* which celebrates the birth of life and expects the end of earthly human existence.



Figure 13. Alpha (with Maiestas Domini and "Ego sum A et O") and Omega in Beatus of Girona (975). Girona Cathedral Museum 7(11) fol. 284r.

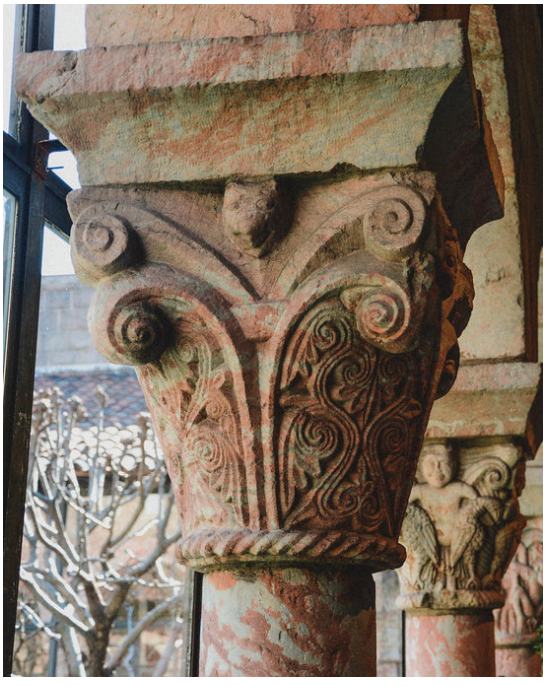
Neither Judgment nor oath are words unique to theologians or feudal lords. In the 12th century, society is centered around the social structure of the Christian Word because it is in the public sphere. People suffer with this Word; they see it sculpted in their churches' tympanums, painted on the vaults of their little churches and cathedrals, and sing it in medieval dramas such as the Erythraean Sibyl (Holdenried 2006). Because the aesthetic avatars of the Word form part of an authentic culture that connects Apocalypse, majesty, power, feudal homage, drama, music, and art, we have to explain the incidences of the Word as a structuring element of a genuine aesthetic culture in feudal Catalonia.

The Word usually has an aesthetic mediation, which, in terms of the Christian culture of the time, is the theology of light. After the culture of creation, the Word of the *Fiat Lux* appears clearly (Genesis, 1–3); after the culture of the Bible, the Word of the *Lux mundi* is almost obvious (John, 1,1 and 8, 12). Scotus Eriugena expresses it at a time close to the origins of Carolingian feudalism (Ganshof 1996, pp. 20–50): "We can say that God the Word is the primary reason for all things, which is simple and manifold. It is called logos by the Greeks, which is a word, reason, or cause. What is written in the Greek Gospel (Burrows 1930) must be interpreted as 'In the beginning was the Word', or: 'In the beginning was the Reason', or: 'In the beginning was the Cause'. For no one who affirms this will deviate from the truth. For the firstborn Son of God is at once word, Reason, and Cause (...) For He is the word of the Father. Therefore, the Son of God, being word and Reason and Cause, can be the creative Reason and Cause of the established universe, simple and infinitely manifold, i.e., the Word of God". (Migne 122, p. 642)

This is the Eriugenian concept of the Primordial Cause: a creative and created word in the Son, who is not created but begotten (Kijewska 2011, p. 33). For this reason, it

must be a word associated with a theology of Light and Darkness that, when deployed in the world, establishes the pattern of time (Alpha/Omega), defines a redemptive horizon (Apocalypse), and unites men under a power originating in that same Word (ceremony of homage) (Burrows 1930). How Eriugena's sermons in the 12th-century Catalonian liturgy were received is a relevant witness in the analysis of the body of the Word as directly linked to the visual culture in the Romanesque Marca Hispanica, the southern frontier with the former Carolingian Empire, where arts and architecture have a flavor of byzantine classicism.

The repair and redecoration of churches at this time may highlight the renewal or rebirth of this society, also manifesting in the striking vegetation of sculpture in 12th-century Catalan cloisters in Saint-Michel de Cuxa, the Benedictine monastery, located at the foot of Mount Canigou in the northeast Pyrenees, founded in 878 (Figure 14a). It is the exact moment in which music becomes separate from mathematical knowledge and is recognized as the human voice, in tune with the religious needs of the moment (Anglès 1932, 1935). Even birdsong is recognized as a call to religious life by Miro of Ripoll (Ladner [1961] 1983). Increasingly, art speaks through church murals, miniature paintings, and sculptures preserved in oratories, monastic cells, and family homes (Vinyoles 2013). Limoges' bronze casters and enamellers supply crucifixes and other objects throughout Europe (Duran-Porta 2018), constituting a powerful manifestation of this pathos word, which helps explain the aesthetic fecundity of this period. For example, the Christ in Majesty with Alpha and Omega was produced in the 12th century (Figure 14b).



(**a**)



(**b**)

Figure 14. (**a**) Monastery of Saint-Michel de Cuxa (Catalonia, North), ca. 1130–1140, The Cloisters Collection, 1925, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Accession Number: 25.120.398–.954. Public domain. (**b**) Book cover: Christ in Majesty with Alpha and Omega. Provenance unknown. Chased and gilded copper with cast elements and application of "champlevé" enamel. Limoges, circa 1190–1200, 24.2 × 11.5 × 0.7 cm, 12th century. MNAC Inventory number 065560-000.

The iconography of the hand of God is dynamic and seems to add emotion to many scenes. It is a divine intervention in the direct present that turns everything into a dramatic event. In the Bible of the Monastery of St. Peter of Roda, Yahweh points to King David's head (Figure 15a). The hand is the Word that becomes present as upon the Israeli King's head (Figure 15b). The hand of God can be re-created as a renewed sense of *pathos*: as a pointer to the eternal word of Yahweh and as the presence of the Word where the hand of God is the sign of his earthly kingship. At the same time, long before Greek, the Hebrew notion of the word marks an important precedent in the history of monotheistic religions: it is a revealed and awaited Word (Gutmann 1977). On the other hand, Greek *logos* establishes fundamental cultural guidelines for understanding the narrative of the Prologue of the fourth Gospel: rationalizing, through the term *logos*, the basic fact that God demonstrates his dwelling among men (cf. John 1:14) (Waetjen 2001). This event, referred to throughout the Middle Ages, consolidates a Christian aesthetic culture, as it is linked with the *logos* and the *ethos* (Kessler 2000, pp. 6+12+38+187). This is the Word's primary meaning in Catalonia's art and documentation of the 9th to the 11th centuries.[8]



(**a**) (**b**)

Figure 15. (**a**) Biblia Sancti Petri Rodensis. Monastery of St Peter of Roda (Catalonia), thought to have been created in Ripoll, 901–1100. Bibliothèque nationale de France. Latin 6 (2) Remigius Autissiodorensis *De Celebratione missae*. Explicit oratio Salomonis Fol. 129v. (**b**) Biblia Sancti Petri Rodensis. Monastery of St Peter of Roda (Bibliothèque nationale de France. Latin 6 (3) Remigius Autissiodorensis *De Celebratione missae*. Fol. NP.

In the context of the ontology of the word sense of the present time, I have always wondered about the meaning behind the almond shape that often contains the symbolic representation of the Word incarnate as the unfolding of a theology of light. This figure, which is sometimes also a globe of light, usually presents an opening in the sky, a kind of celestial crack through which Christ reveals Himself. This almond or globe is often surrounded by the tetramorph or at least four angelic creatures. However, for the first time, I realized that the diagrammatic design of an almond or circle comes from a musical Pythagorean tradition that appeals to a perfect mathematical reason with Platonic roots.

As such, I present the image of Ripoll 42 of *Musica cum Retorica*, in comparison with the *Librum de regina de contemplacione Dei* (Ripoll 214) *Maiestas Domini*. On the left, Christ appears as a horseshoe through an almond and an unfinished double globe of

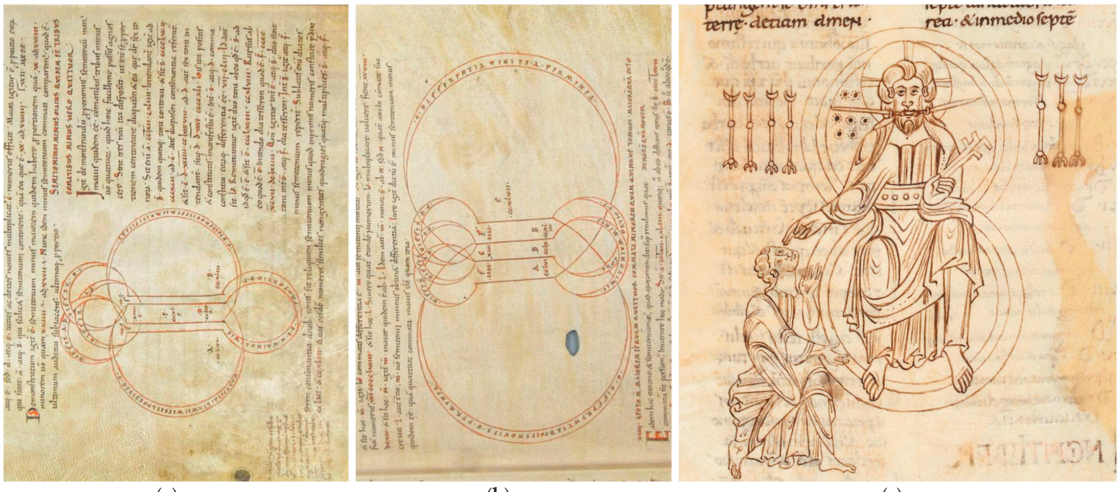
light (Figure 16a). At the same time, on the right, there is a musical diagram of Boethius' manuscript surrounded by different, smaller globes (Figures 16b and 17). However, the key to these images is realizing that they are not formal metaphors but scientific representations of a mathematical–musical development in the form of a diagram. There is a transposition from the world of (material) physics into the symbolic. Music is perceived as a circular physical phenomenon in that half a mandorle is two quarter-circles, and the mandorle emerges from harmony as a "law" of the universe.



(**a**) (**b**)

Figure 16. (**a**) Maiestas Domini with mystical almond and Tetramorph. A kneeling figure at the bottom bows at the feet of the Lord (attitude of proskinesis). *Librum de regina de contemplacione Dei*, Monastery of Santa Maria de Ripoll, 12th c. Archive of the Crown of Aragon, Ripoll, Ms, Ripoll, 214, fol. 6v. (**b**) "Musica cum Retorica" Monastery of Santa Maria de Ripoll, 10th c. Archive of the Crown of Aragon, Ripoll 42, fol. 23v.

The beauty of song (*musica instrumentalis*) brings together the musical numbers of the human body (*musica humana*) with its exemplar, the precise motion observed in the revolutions of the heavenly spheres (*musica mundana*): "So that there can be no doubt that the order of our soul and body seems to be related somehow through those same ratios by which subsequent argument will demonstrate sets of pitches, suitable for melody, are joined together and united" (*De institutione musica*). This triad is essential to Boethius's philosophical and theological works. Boethius invoked *musica humana* in *Consolatio*, where the human soul adopts the forms of musical sensations heard by the ear or felt through astral influence. The dynamism of Boethius's triad seems analogous to the emanations between the neo-Platonic hypostases of being, and Boethius also suggests in *Quomodo substantiae* that mere participation in the world grants living beings the essential goodness of God, a direct participation in the deity's essence (Rimple 2012, p. 450).

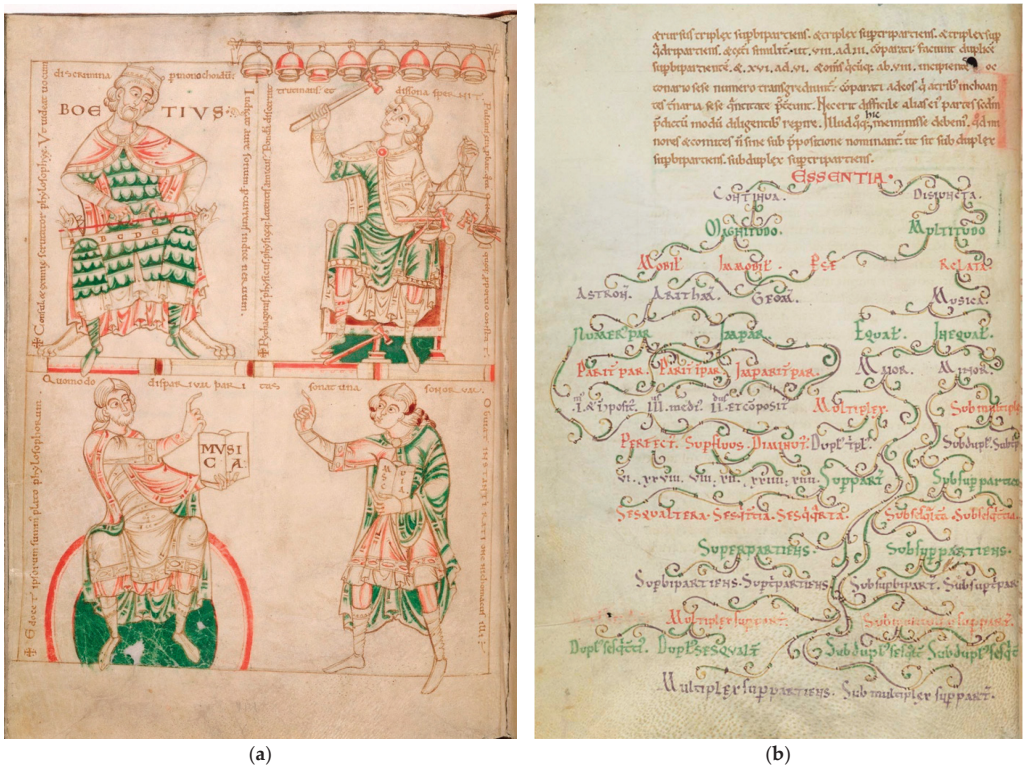


(**a**) (**b**) (**c**)

Figure 17. (**a**,**b**) "Musica cum Retorica" Monastery of Santa Maria de Ripoll, 10th c. Archive of the Crown of Aragon, Ripoll 42, fols. 24v, 25r. (**c**) Rhodes Bible, Paris, Bibl. Nat., Ms. Lat. 6 (4), 12th century. Christ Pantocrator surrounded by the seven candlesticks, fol. NP.

The Platonic affiliation of this idea is explicitly elucidated in *De Institutione Arithmetica* in the Cambridge University Library, and sandwiched between the texts on fol. 61v is a remarkable full-page illustration of the four most crucial music theorists relevant to the text: Boethius, Pythagoras, Plato, and Nicomachus (Figure 18a) (Walden 2015, p. 216). The latter three are ancient Greek, suggesting a solid continuity between ancient music theory, Boethius, and the medieval era (Teviotdale 1992, pp. 186–88). "Numbers", Boethius explains in *De institutione arithmetica* I. 2, are the "principal exemplar in the mind of the creator and are thus essential for understanding the natural world" (Boethius 1983, p. 72). As Christ is sometimes depicted reigning over the mathematical universe, Plato is seen here sitting on a musical arithmetical mandorle shape.

One of the most ambitious and complex of the Cambridge manuscript diagrams covers almost the entire fol. 22v, yet, curiously, almost exclusively among those in the manuscript, it has been largely overlooked by contemporary scholars. This folio, a single visual presentation, is the ambitious attempt by its scribe and artist to subject Boethius' text to complex schematics, synthesizing all information, subject areas, and particular vocabulary about arithmetic and music from *De Institutione Arithmetica* I. 1–31. This 12th-century diagram constitutes a map of the domains of the Boethian inquiry and their interrelations, presenting the precepts of *De Institutione Arithmetica* I as a unified whole (Figure 18b). Each line establishes a connection between different text areas to illustrate how arithmetic and music serve as interrelated branches of the study of mathematics. This diagram was used as a conceptual and interpretative device for the scribe to explicate Boethius' ideas. It is a complex theoretical material and a mnemonic guide that could assist the medieval pedagogue who wished to instruct his students in the mathematics of music speculation. Finally, this diagram constitutes a fully developed theoretical exercise in its own right while also reflecting the role of Boethian philosophy and mathematics in 12th-century musical scholarship (Boethius 1983, p. 208).



(**a**) (**b**)

Figure 18. (**a**) Portrait of Boethius, Pythagoras, Plato, and Nicomachus. *De Institutione Arithmetica* Cambridge University Library's *De Institutione Arithmetica*, Ms II.3.12, 12th century, fol. 61v. (**b**) The arbor summarizing the various branches of Essentia as described in the first book of Boethius, *De institutione arithmetica*, Cambridge University Library's Ms II. 3. 12, 12th century, fol. 22v.

The arbor of fol. 22v is unique in its ambition, its comprehensiveness, and the extraordinary level of detail in its summary of the first book of *De Institutione Arithmetica*. While Boethius only sometimes progresses in a precise order through his argument, the illustrator has attempted to project a unifying logic. Medieval scholars have treated Boethius' text in much the same way as Boethius treated Nicomachus, creating a diagram that shows 12th-century musical theory at its most complex and ambitious. Above all, the diagram is visually stunning, seamlessly integrating word and image to delight the eye while leading the intellect to better understand how music and arithmetic are interrelated as branches of the mathematical quadrivium (Walden 2015).

> "There are two kinds of essence. One is continuous, joined together in its parts, and not distributed in separate parts, such as a tree, a stone, and all the bodies of this world, which are properly called magnitudes. The other essence is disjoined and determined by its parts as though reduced to a single collective union, such as a flock, a populace, a chorus, a heap of things, things whose parts are terminated by their extremities and are discrete from the extremity of some other. The proper name for these is a multitude." (Boethius 1983, p. 221)

4.3. The Future

The great abundance of iconography of the Last Judgment in 12th-century Catalonia undoubtedly refers to the imagination of Christ–Word as a prophet of the future. One way

to live the idea of the Last Judgment is through the *pathos* of the Song of the Sibyl.[9] This medieval drama reminds singers and the audience that the end is nigh for this world. It was a celebrated chant of significant educational influence, and in its execution, people took an active part. The verses *Judicii signum* already alleged in Greek by Constantine at the Council of Nicaea (325), translated into Latin by St. Augustine in *The City of God*, were performed after the sixth or ninth lesson of the Christmas matins in France (Gastoué 1924; Raugel 1923–1924), Italy, Castile (Gómez Muntané 1996; Donovan 1958), and Catalonia (Gómez Muntané 1980). In its beginnings, the Latin text was used (Analecta Hymnica 1886; Cantiones Bohemicae 1886), and only as of the 13th century was it sung in the vernacular language in France, Provence, and Catalonia, where it officially persisted until the 15th century.[10]

The sibylline chant develops simultaneously with other elements related to the theology of light, directly associated with the Word of the final Judgment. The fact that these verses appear in the same framework of the liturgical celebration as a Christmas Mass, with homilies allusive to the Christ–Light[11] and a great deal of apocalyptic iconography, is not purely down to chance. Indeed, in the end-of-the-night sermon of the Christmas matins, the sibylline verses are added, by which, in addition to the announcement of the Messiah, the second coming of Christ at the end of the world is prophesized. These are the same verses St. Augustine used in *The City of God* when he spoke of the Eritrean Sibyl as a prophetic testimony of the coming Christ.[12]

There is an abundance of Latin documentation. In Cordoba, a particular 10th-century copy corresponds to the Visigothic liturgy, even though it bears a notation similar to the Aquitanian of the Catalan manuscripts (Cordoba 1, fol. 69b; Anglès 1988). Others carry significance as well: Ripoll, also from the 10th century (Ripoll 106, fol 92v), the *Collectaneum* of Paris, originating from Saint Martial de Limoges (PBN 1154, fol. 122r) (Figure 19a). From the 11th century, a Paris *Lectionarium* (PBN 5304, fol. 112v) (Figure 19b), another one with no pseudo-Augustinian addition (PBN 2832, fol. 123v) (Figure 19c), that of Saint Martial (PBN 1139, fol. 58), and the Catalan Lectionary of the Collegiate Church of St. Felix of Girona. From the 12th century: the *Lectionarium* of Montpellier (Montpellier, fol. 52) and others (Anglès 1988, p. 292). It is essential to view the chant of the Sibyl in the broader context of 12th-century medieval liturgical dramas and even the general history of music in Catalonia (Anglès 1935, p. 118).

By briefly analyzing the vernacular, one can gain an idea of the widespread practice of this deep-rooted devotion and its relation to the concept of judgmentalism as another manifestation of this art of the word based on pathos. *Ell iorn del judizi para qui aura fag servizi* ("The day of Judgment for those who served will be well paid") is the first imprecation, to which is replied: *Us reis venra perpetuals Del cel ques anc non fon aitals: En carn venra sertanament, Per far del segle jugamen* ("A perpetual king will come from Heaven for those who did not imitate him. It is certain that he will come in actual flesh, to judge the world in righteousness"). And, again, it is repeated: *Ell iorn ...*("The day. . .") (Figure 19a–c).

The concept of mystical drama associated with that of Judgment is insistently developed in the patristic literature of the time (McGinn 1995). Scotus Eriugena points us in this same direction. He writes that the Father judges no man but has given all judgment to the Son. However, he knows the future judgment not only through knowledge of the future but through experience, since it was a reality when giving this Judgment to the Son (Migne 122, p. 595b).



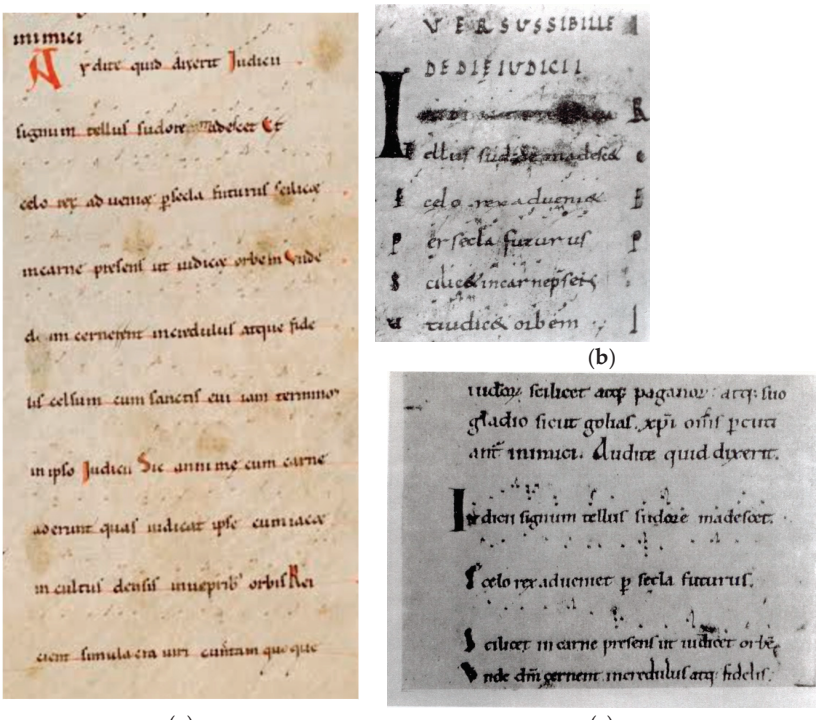
(**a**) (**b**) (**c**)

Figure 19. The Chant of the Sibyl in Catalonia: (**a**) PBN 1154, fol. 122r (10th century); (**b**) PBN 5304, fol. 112v (11th century); (**c**) PBN 2832, fol. 123v (9th century).

The definition of Judgment is almost violent: "The segregation of the reprobates" (*segregatio reproborum ab electis*). Manuscripts from around Catalonia offer a version of the *Sibyl* that is placed in the context of a theology of light through the fire of God: *Et coram hic domino reges sistentur ad unum: Decidet e celo ignisque et sulphuris amnis*; the Montpellier Sibyl, which appears, as noted, in the same fold of manuscripts as Scotus' *Homily*, offers an even more explicit light and dark theology: *Eripitur solis iubar, et chorus interit astris. Volvetur celum lunaris splendor obibit*. (Montpellier fol. 52).

However, the composition and chanting of the Sibylline verses are a testimony that goes beyond, so to speak, minority events. It is a late-antique Christianization of popular pagan customs that, received in Catalonia in the 12th century, experienced an extraordinary reception. Loudly repeating a refrain such as *Ell iom del judizi para qui aura fag servizi*, year after year, represents an authentic experience of *pathos*, once again, a structuring element of the Art of the word in this period of county Catalonia (Figure 20a–c). It has been said above that the oath is a "word of going". In contrast, the judgment is a "word of return". What the Sibyl's chant narrates is the avatars of the "word of return". The sibylline chant gives voice to the iconography of the Pantocrator, sculpted in tympanums and painted in apses of the geography of the Catalan Principality. It is possible that the hieratic condition of the Father's *logos*, crowned by a mystical almond, could be incomprehensible to some. However, liturgical uses such as the Sibylline Chant, translated early into vernacular languages, illuminate the mysteries of the Word and awaken the memory of the faithful in a way that is both dramatic and accessible to all.

One of the great merits of the ancient art of rhetoric in its contact with music is the assumption of the *logos*, *pathos*, and *ethos* triad as the cornerstone of discourse in its unique power. The logical, the ethical, the emotional, and the dimensions of discourse, so to speak, constitute the sine qua non of human communication or, ultimately, of human relations. Emotion means an outward movement, an *ex-motus*. In this sense, the Romans saw in rhetoric the power to *movere*, to move beings. The visual *pathos*, when taken in its affective meaning, becomes, until the 12th century, the epistemological principle par excellence, not only for discourse in general but especially for musical discourse, due to the nature of its meaning.



(**a**) (**b**) (**c**)

Figure 20. (**a**) Musical version of the Chant of the Sibyl, Ms 23 of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (National Library of Catalonia) fol. 11r.; (**b**) Manuscript of the Sibyl, Visigothic of Mozarabic liturgy, written in Burgos around 960, curiously punctuated with Aquitanian notation. Biblioteca Vaticana, Reg. Lat. 125, fol. 76v, Lectionarium monasticum, 13th c.; (**c**) Chant of the Sibyl, Paris, BN, lat. 1154, fol.122a, Collectaneum, from St. Martial of Limoges, 10th century.

5. Conclusions

The characteristics of any visual culture in the Western Middle Ages have always been linked to the quality of the culture of the word. Since late Antiquity, this word, verbal or written, has been conditioned by the relationship between signified and signifier. From our knowledge of the Aristotelian *Categories*, explored by Severinus Boethius, the avatars of the word move between a dialectic empty of meaning and a maturation of the ontology of the word that climaxed in the 12th century.

At that point, a crystallization of the word was prepared in the union between faith and reason, which would arrive at the time of St. Thomas Aquinas, and that, in turn, would give rise to a new semantic relativism from the Nominalism initiated by William of Ockham in the 14th century. This means that the culture of the word will have evolved between St. Augustine and the late Middle Ages, with evident interruptions and continuities. The present text's tripartite structure, following the spirit of the transcendentals of being, has been of great pedagogical help. After all, the point of arrival of the ontology of the word in Romanesque Catalonia will be the new metaphysics of the 13th century arising from Paris after the assimilation of the complete *Corpus Aristotelicum*.

The visual and musical culture of the Romanesque period in Europe between the 9th and 12th centuries progressively approaches what we have called the ontology of the word. This ontology presents itself visually in a feudal society founded on the feudal–vassal pact with clear manifestations in a literary and plastic imaginary. The feudal oath thus connects

with the notion of considering the Christian God as a purely subsistent relationship. In their substantial unity, the members of the Trinity are defined by a plurality of relationships that, ad extra, lead to Creation, Redemption, and Sanctification. The feudal world reflects, by way of analogy, this idea of creative otherness that allows for the establishment of a social structure in the form of a network of visual relations of a transcendental matrix. At the same time, this ontology of the word is reflected in the liturgical space where, from the tympanums of 12th-century churches to the tremendous pictorial programs in the central apses, the iconography of the Last Judgment finds its purest programmatic development. In reality, Christ, the judge, surrounded by his angels, evangelists, apostles, and saints, never ceases to remind us that he is the Lord of all and that we are all his vassals.

The Romanesque movement's artistic style moves within a great primitivism during the 10th century and the end of the 11th century, reflecting an ontology of the word that has yet to mature visually. The 12th-century masterpieces of the Catalan Romanesque, its mural paintings and altar frontals, suggest that non-logic Aristotelian writings must reach and spread through the University of Paris before we can speak of a metaphysics of the word. In the meantime, an idealized ontology of the word with Neoplatonic, Augustinian, pseudo-Dionysian, and Eriugenian roots will prepare the new Scholastic language of the perfect unity between reason and faith and the world of visual and musical culture. Before the arrival of the metaphysical Aristotle in Western Europe, we could only speak of an ontology of the word, of profound consequences in visual culture, but by no means of proper metaphysics. Supposing the Gothic system of the arts has already assimilated the metaphysics of the scholastic word, the 12th-century Romanesque accepts only, or at most, an ontological word that remains linked to a purely logical dialectic. For this purpose, it has been essential to rely on the rich collections of the monastery of Santa Maria de Ripoll, which, before and around the time of Abbot Oliba (9th to 11th centuries), adopted the ancient texts of dialectics, rhetoric, and grammar as basic manuals to develop their education programs. Other writings on arithmetic have helped us to better understand the iconography of the 12th-century doomsday.

Romanesque Catalonia is a specific example of how this ontology of the word has crystallized in the full vernacular art, distinct from the aesthetics of its neighbors to the north, south, and west and in the classical Italo-Byzantine art system. The particularities in the relationship between oath, judgment, and memory of time permeate the neo-Carolingian Marca Hispanica in different ways: with a feudal system distinct from that of countries to the north, a legal sense deeply rooted in the tradition of Roman law, an image of the *logos* mainly influenced by Byzantine classicism and the vernacular masters, and finally, a solid sacramental sense that unites with considerable force the visible and the invisible, at the moment of pronouncing the word of the oath that will finally end in Judgment or the Second Coming of the Savior.

The culture of the word is studied in this article. I have tried to explain that this culture crystallizes, in space and time, in two key concepts: the oath as a feudal power structure and the judgment as a catalyst of a religious feeling. In articulating these two concepts, a third has been fundamental: memory as a cognitive power that constantly creates and recreates a feudal power (derived from judgment) and an apocalyptic religious culture (made explicit in the iconography of the Last Judgment). The oath has been discussed in terms of the memory of this word that generates feudal power. The feudal–apocalyptic pact has been interpreted as a sacramental ceremony that refers to God's Word, a generating and structuring pact of a social mesh of power.

We considered the Judgment as a soteriological memory and recalled the first word in Christ: baptism. This "sacramental–baptismal memory" indeed referred to a Final Judgment. The iconographic programs of the Apocalypse were a memory, a remembrance

of our origins, and a reference to our last days: they awakened a memory and pointed to the end of time. An Alpha and an Omega reminded us that no one can escape this fate. Finally, the memory of oath and judgment was always linked to time as the memory of the word: remembering the word measured time. This is the link between the oath, Judgment, and time: through the *Anno domini*, in which this memory of the word definitively solidified in 12th-century Catalonia.

Through this work, I have attempted something beyond the historicist inspiration, which is suspicious of the methods of the history of culture. I wanted to illustrate the spirit of the age with the voices and forms of the spirit itself and, therefore, to eliminate the self as the primary source of errors from the investigation between word, action, and image. This has forced art historians to abandon the generalities of the *Geistesgechichte* (history of the spirit) and concentrate on the individual as such and on individual images. This formed the basis for the type of sources employed in this attempt to explain the art of the word between the 9th and the 12th century in Catalonia: homiliaries, epigraphy associated with the work of art, images from the period, sacramentaries, antiphonaries, evangeliaries, hymnbooks and, naturally, an abundant bibliography on the subject. I have tried, therefore, to see in all iconic representations the reflection of mental images, *Vorstellungen* (anticipations of the idea). I have been attempting to postulate, as a mental habit of the time, a facility to remember inventively, an actual "creative memory" that makes possible the activity and the actuality of a word with a robust Christological flavor, to find, in each factual detail that history offers, the general principle that underlies it.

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Notes

1 Among others: (McKitterick 1989; Mostert 1999). Quoted in (McKitterick 2012, p. 73).

2 "Worth noting here is the transition from signification to reification, from sign to thing to the silence of the word, which, made flesh, transcends the entire system of discourse". (Bedos-Rezak 2000, p. 1499).

3 On the so called the "theory of the principate", (Bisson 1989); quoted in (Kosto 2001a, p. 279).

4 LFC, fol. 6d. Cf. LFM, 11, fol. VI.

5 Le Goff pointed out that the hand in the "rite manuel" of the *immixio manuum* was not so much to be seen as an abstract concept ("la manus du droit romain, incarnation et en définitive synonyme de la potestas"). Rather, "ce qui compte, ce qui signifie, et même symbolise, c'est ce que fait la main, et non ce qu'elle est"; (Le Goff 1976, pp. 679–779+712; Le Goff 1980, p. 239).

6 "Because of this integral relationship between creation and Incarnation, the Franciscan theologians held that 'a world without Christ is an incomplete world', that is, the whole world is structured Christologically". (Hayes 1996, p. 15). Quoted in: (Delio 2007, p. 443).

7 "The canonical renewal in Catalonia has nothing to envy from that of other European regions, since during the 11th and 12th centuries, among new foundations and reformed institutions, there were no less than sixty-nine Augustinian canonical institutions". (Pladevall 1968, esp. pp. 52–60; Zaragoza Pascual 1996, esp. pp. 661–64; Vones-Liebenstein 1996; Jaspert 1996; Moran 1997; Pladevall 1999–2000). Preceeding quotation and bibliography from (Jaspert 2006, p. 394). In addition to this, (Calvo Gómez 2015).

8 In the English language, the study of Romanesque Catalan Art dates from the 1920s and is due to the Americans Charles Louis Kuhn, Chandler Rathfon Post, Walter William Spencer Cook, and Arthur Kingsley Porter. (Cook 1923a, 1923b, 1924, 1925, 1926, 1927, 1928; Post 1930; Kuhn 1930).The Catalan art historians were influenced by the French Arcisse de Caumont or Narcisse-Achile de Salvandy. They soon found echoes in Catalonia in two scholars, frequently undervalued: Josep de Manjarrés i de Bofarull, (1816–1860) and Mn. Josep Gudiol i Cunill (1872–1931). Following this double line, French and Catalan, a long list of scholars can be woven, in which stand out on the French side, for their works on northern Catalonia Jean Auguste Brutails, Henri Focillon, Pere Ponsich and Marcel Durliat and on the Catalan side, a much longer list that, starting from Josep Puig i

Cadafalch and Lluís Domènech i Montaner, could be narrowed to names as well known locally as Eduard Junyent, Josep M. Gudiol i Ricart, or Joan Ainaud de Lasarte (on this Catalan–French historiographic line (Pladevall 2008).In the present century, little by little, some scholars of Catalan Romanesque art are gradually making it known in the English language: (Duran-Porta 2009; Castiñeiras 2018); etc.The aforementioned works are important for the history of Catalan Romanesque art. However, there are very few studies, even in Spanish and Catalan, that explain the artistic forms in a convincing way. Apparently, no one offers effective answers, also based on primary sources, about the relationship between art, history, literature, and thought that took place in the renaissance of the plastic arts in Catalonia, especially at the beginning of the 12th century of our era.

[9] On this subject, the references would be innumerable. I refer to an important article in (McGinn 1994).

[10] "Sibillae carmina et pastorum nugas, aliasque vulgares cantilenas, nullo tempore in ecclesiis cani permittantur", say the Synodals of Tarragona (Villanueva 1852, vol. XXII, p. 185).

[11] For example, the coincidence of the Homily to the prologue of the Gospel of John (written by Scotus Erugena) and the Song of the Sibyl in the same sheet of manuscripts. Cf. Montpellier: fol. 52v–54v, from the 12th century. The Vox Spiritualis is anonymous and incomplete. It is interrupted by the words *perfidos inuasit arrianos, protinus adiecit: et deus erat verbum* (VI, 24). A review of it can be found in (Aude 1905, pp. 380–85; Raugel 1923–1924, pp. 774–83; Anglès 1935, pp. 292+294+296+301).

[12] On its Eastern origin and its relation to the apocalyptic theme regarding the emperor (McGinn 1979, pp. 122–25).

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