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**THE AWAKENING OF ENDYMION: BEAUTY, TIME, AND ETERNITY IN  
ROMANESQUE SCULPTURE, AND ITS PHOTOGRAPHIC AFTERLIFE**  
**EL DESPERTAR DE ENDIMIÓN: BELLEZA, TIEMPO Y ETERNIDAD EN LA  
ESCULTURA ROMÁNICA Y SU DEVENIR FOTOGRÁFICO**

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ABSTRACT

Focusing on a series of extraordinary photographs of the sarcophagus lid of Alfonso Ansúrez (d. 1093), I delve in this essay into its formal, iconographic and performative aspects as I follow its geographical and temporal iterations in the first decades of the twentieth century. It traveled from the municipal cemetery of Sahagún, where it had been reused as the tombstone of a local townsman, sailing across the Atlantic to the Fogg Art Museum at Harvard, and then returning to Spain to become a stellar exhibit in the recently renovated National Archaeological Museum in Madrid. Each of these photographs records a unique intersubjective encounter between the figures carved on the lid, especially Alfonso's marble embodiment, represented in the moment of his glorious resurrection following classical models of the myth of Endymion, and the persons on the other side of the lens. Notable among them were the art historian Ricardo de Orueta, who was Director General of Fine Arts in the government of the Spanish Republic, and the eminent Harvard medievalist Arthur Kingsley Porter. Made available to many eyes/I's through their photographs, the sepulchral slab acquired a new aesthetic life and a pathway into the mainstream historiography of the Romanesque. An analysis of the photographs serves to reveal essential aspects of the work presenting it as an important case study to investigate the dialectics of death and resurrection, both in the context of Christian dogma and within the art historical discussions around the question of the *Nachleben der Antike*, inspiring a theoretical inquiry into the significance of artworks as they exist and acquire meaning through the confluence of the time of nature, the time of life, the time of history, and the time of eschatology.

KEYWORDS: Romanesque, Sculpture, Photography, Alfonso Ansúrez, Ricardo de Orueta, Kingsley Porter, *Nachleben der Antike*, Harvard, Mythology, Endymion, Heritage.



## RESUMEN

A través del análisis de una serie de fotografías excepcionales de la lauda de Alfonso Ansúrez (†1093) profundizo en aspectos formales, iconográficos y performativos de su diseño que hasta ahora habían pasado desapercibidos, a la vez que exploro las circunstancias de sus desplazamientos geográficos en las primeras décadas del siglo xx, cuando viajó desde el cementerio municipal de Sahagún, hasta el Fogg Museum de Harvard, para luego regresar a España y ser presentada con honores en el Museo Arqueológico Nacional. Cada una de estas fotografías registra un encuentro intersubjetivo único entre las figuras esculpidas en mármol, especialmente el retrato de Alfonso Ansúrez, representado en el momento de su resurrección en perspectiva escatológica siguiendo modelos clásicos del mito de Endimión, y las personas al otro lado de la cámara. Entre ellos destacan el historiador del arte Ricardo de Orueta, Director General de Bellas Artes durante el gobierno de la II República, y el medievalista de Harvard Arthur Kingsley Porter cuyas trayectorias vitales se entrecruzan en torno a esta lauda, y, en términos generales, en un proyecto común de dotar al arte medieval español de un lugar destacado en la historiografía internacional, proyecto en el que la fotografía jugó un papel fundamental. El análisis estético, teórico y técnico de estas fotografías sirve para revelar aspectos esenciales de la lauda, presentándola como un caso excepcional para investigar el papel de la belleza en la dialéctica de la muerte y la resurrección, tanto en el contexto del dogma cristiano, como en las discusiones teóricas en torno a la cuestión de *Nachleben der Antike*.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Románico, Escultura, Fotografía, Alfonso Ansúrez, Ricardo de Orueta, Kingsley Porter, *Nachleben der Antike*, Harvard, Mitología, Endimión, Patrimonio.

They went joyously down into that vast tomb, and wandered by torchlight through a sort of dream, in which reminiscences of church aisles and grimy cellars...seemed to be broken into fragments, and hopelessly intermingled...On either side were horizontal niches, where, if they held their torches closely, the shape of a human body was discernible in white ashes, into which the entire mortality of a man or woman had resolved itself...And while their collected torches illuminated this one small, consecrated spot, the great darkness spread all round it, like that immenser mystery which envelops our little life, and into which friends vanish from us, one by one.

Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Marble Faun* (1860)<sup>1</sup>

\* Researching the photographic materials for this paper has been an exhilarating experience thanks to the guidance and wisdom of the extraordinary professionals taking care of them, most especially: Raquel Ibáñez González at the Biblioteca Tomás Navarro Tomás (CSIC) for the Orueta/Gómez-Moreno Archive; Joanne Bloom at the Harvard Fine Arts Library for the A. K. Porter Collection, about which I had also the fortune of benefiting from numerous conversations with Kathryn Brush, who shared with me her profound and precise knowledge of Porter's legacy; Megan Schwenke at the Harvard Museums Archives; and Ilaria Della Monica at Villa I Tatti. This study would not have been possible without my Harvard *nostos*, for which I am grateful to Jeffrey Hamburger and the Department of History of Art and Architecture, as well as to the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, principally Luis Girón and Josiah Blackmore, and to the Real Colegio Complutense and its Director, José Manuel Martínez Sierra. The return to Harvard was made even more especial thanks to the honor of joining the Senior Common Room at Lowell House, following in the footsteps of distinguished Lowellian scholars on Spanish Romanesque sculpture such as Walter Muir Whitehill. For this, I want to thank Thomas Bisson and the brilliant Faculty Deans of Lowell House, Diana Eck and Dorothy Austin (*occasionem cognosce*). My gratitude also to colleagues who inspired aspects of this paper: Herbert Kessler, Bissera Pentcheva, Jas Elsner, Alexander Nemerov, Madeline Caviness, and Rocío Sánchez Ameijeiras.

<sup>1</sup> N. HAWTHORNE, *The Marble Faun: Or, The Romance of Monte Beni*, New York, 1990 [1860], p. 24.

Wandering into the cemetery with his camera, the photographer focuses on a consecrated spot marked by a marble slab profusely decorated with a host of figures that seem to react, with a sudden jolt of animation, to his presence (Fig. 1). His feet, perched precariously on an unstable stool onto which he had climbed in order to capture the full length of the stone, find their echo in the bare feet of the angel that hovers directly in front of him, in the world below. Nearby, another angel, with his gaze fixed on the camera, swings a censer and points to the buoyant feet of his companion, as if to signal, with a hint of disdain, the very gift that the human visitor wished to have, but lacks – the ability to fly.

Through the lens of the camera, everything seems to be floating in this ethereal marble universe – a mineral expanse sprinkled with loose particles of glint which ripples out beyond its material boundaries and bursts into an orbital debris made of dust, pebbles and dry grass. Located at the very edge that marks the limit between the artwork and the surrounding wasteland is the magnetic center towards which that profusion of carved bodies elegantly gravitates. There is figured a starry celestial realm organized in concentric circles from where emerges the Hand of God to re-create life.

Here, the purpose of the divine intervention is not to bring forth creation out of the primordial abyss of nothingness but to initiate the cataclysmic unfolding of the end of time. The inscription next to the hand reads *Dextera Christi* indicating that we are not in the temporal realm of Genesis but in that of eschatology when “all that are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment” (*John 5: 28-29*).

Responding to God’s command is the portrait of the person whose mortal remains this lid once covered – a young nobleman, we learn from another inscription, named Alfonso, the son of Count Pedro Ansúrez, a high official at the court of King Alfonso VI of León-Castile



Fig. 1. Sarcophagus lid of Alfonso Ansúrez at the Sahagún municipal cemetery, ca. 1920. Photo: Ricardo de Orueta, ATN/GMO/e1934. Fondo Gómez-Moreno/Orueta, Archivo, ACCHS (CSIC)



(r. 1065-1109), and of Countess Eilo.<sup>2</sup> His uneventful life, which came to an abrupt end in December 1093, was fated to oblivion had not been for the love of his parents, who, seeking consolation in the hope of being reunited with him in heaven, commissioned this precious sepulchral slab decorated with images that anticipated the fulfillment of the promise of the resurrection. Vanished today are his mortal remains, as well as the splendid royal Benedictine monastery of Sahagún, where his tomb was originally located.<sup>3</sup> But, his memory lives on due to the sheer notoriety of this fragmented sarcophagus lid, which has become a central work in the canon of Romanesque sculpture. In the opening paragraph of his seminal article on this piece, Serafín Moralejo meditates on the implications of its survival:

A work of art is but the place it occupies – or the gap its disappearance leaves – in that framework of events we know as the History of Art. It is well known how monuments change their meaning and value – indeed, their essence – in accordance with the displacements in time and space to which they are submitted by archaeologists and connoisseurs. In our present case, it is not the work that moved, it remains as firmly attached as ever to its epigraphical date, December 1093, which constitutes one of the few unanimously accepted milestones in the origins of Spanish Romanesque sculpture.<sup>4</sup>

In this essay I follow the displacements of the sepulchral slab through the analysis of a series of extraordinary photographs that document its geographical and temporal iterations in the early decades of the twentieth century. It traveled from the municipal cemetery of Sahagún, where it had been reused as the tombstone of a local townsman, sailing across the Atlantic to the Fogg Museum at Harvard, and then returning to Spain to become a stellar exhibit in the recently renovated National Archaeological Museum in Madrid. Each of these photographs records a unique intersubjective encounter between the figures carved on the lid, especially Alfonso's marble embodiment, represented in the moment of his glorious resurrection following classical models of the myth of Endymion, and the persons on the other side of the camera lens. Notable among them were the art historian Ricardo de Orueta, who became Director General of Fine Arts in the government of the Spanish Republic, and the eminent Harvard medievalist Arthur Kingsley Porter. Far removed from one another in their intellectual

<sup>2</sup> For his biography, see B. F. REILLY, "The Rediscovery of Count Pedro Ansúrez", in S. BARTON and P. LINEHAN (eds.), *Cross, Crescent and Conversion. Studies on Medieval Spain and Christendom in Memory of Richard Fletcher*, Leiden, 2008, pp. 109-26.

<sup>3</sup> For the history and archaeological remains of this monastery, once the radiating center of the Cluniac reform in Spain, and also the site of the mausoleum of King Alfonso VI and his wives, see V. HERRÁEZ ORTEGA, M. C. COSMEN ALONSO *et alii* (eds.), *El patrimonio artístico de San Benito de Sahagún: esplendor y decadencia de un monasterio medieval*, León, 2000; and, for the royal tombs, see J. M. VIDAL ENCINAS and M. E. PRADA MARCOS, "El monasterio y panteón de Alfonso VI en Sahagún: Aspectos históricos y arqueo-antropológicos," in *Alfonso VI y su legado. Actas del Congreso Internacional "IX Centenario de Alfonso VI (1109-2009)"*, León, 2012, pp. 243-81.

<sup>4</sup> S. MORALEJO, "The Tomb of Alfonso Ansúrez (†1093): Its Place and the Role of Sahagún in the Beginnings of Spanish Romanesque Sculpture", in B. F. REILLY (ed.), *Santiago, Saint-Denis, and Saint Peter. The Reception of the Roman Liturgy in León-Castile in 1080*, New York, 1985, pp. 63-100. The present essay expands on questions left open by Moralejo and should be read in conjunction with his article, for he covers the fundamental aspects of the lid's iconographic program and its stylistic context, which will only be summarily alluded to here. Also see, D. HASSIG, "He Will Make Alive Your Mortal Bodies: Cluniac Spirituality and the Tomb of Alfonso Ansúrez", *Gesta*, 30.2 (1991), pp. 140-53; and, for a shorter but valuable introduction, with new insights, see Moralejo's catalogue entry "Lid for the sarcophagus of Alfonso Ansúrez", in *The Art of Medieval Spain, A.D. 500-1200*, exh. cat., New York, 1993, pp. 234-5 (no. 107).

backgrounds and in their vital trajectories, they were both united in their attempt to provide Spanish medieval art with the recognition it deserved in international scholarship – a project in which photography played an important role. Both of them had a special relation with this sepulchral slab as an object of study and artistic admiration – an artwork on the verge of disappearance that, through their pictures, became available to many eyes/I's acquiring a new aesthetic life and finding a pathway into the mainstream historiography of the Romanesque. Additionally, as we shall see, an analysis of the photographs serves to reveal essential aspects of the work in its formal, iconographic and performative dimensions, presenting it as an important case study to investigate the dialectics of death and resurrection, both in the context of Christian dogma and within the art historical discussions around the question of the *Nachleben der Antike*, thus inspiring a theoretical inquiry into the significance of artworks as they exist and acquire meaning through the confluence of the time of nature, the time of life, the time of history, and the time of eschatology.<sup>5</sup>

“Having narrowed to a single point, the dead man’s world might now in death breathe again,” writes Alexander Nemerov, “spreading around the body an allegorical set of spirits attesting to the significance of the life.”<sup>6</sup> In the case of the Ansúrez lid, that set of spirits spreading around the body was first carved in marble and then imprinted in a gelatin silver emulsion to attest to the significance of an “afterlife.” Half-buried in the ground of the cemetery, it was through the medium of photography that both the sepulchral slab, as an artwork, and, with it, the person it was created to memorialize, initiated the fulfillment of the prophecy carved on its decoration: “And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt” (*Daniel*, 12:2).

#### **IMAGO LUCIS OPERA EXPRESSA: LIGHT AND THE BEAUTY OF THE RESURRECTION**

A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:  
Its loveliness increases; it will never  
Pass into nothingness; but still will keep  
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep  
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.

John Keats, *Endymion* (1818)

Every time Alfonso’s grieving parents visited his tomb in the years following his death, they would come face to face with his likeness, portrayed there in the exultant moment when he rises from the dead, his hands pushing forward to touch the Hand divine as his body soars

<sup>5</sup> I have recently pursued these issues in relation to another central work in the canon of Romanesque sculpture, the *capital of the satyr* from Jaca Cathedral (ca. 1105) whose stylistic genealogy is connected to the Ansúrez lid, see F. PRADO-VILAR, “The *superstes*: Resurrection, the Survival of Antiquity, and the Poetics of the Body Romanesque Sculpture”, in H. BREDEKAMP and S. TRINKS (eds.), *Transformatio et Continuatio: Forms of Change and Constancy of Antiquity in the Iberian Peninsula 500–1500*, Berlin, 2017, pp. 137-84.

<sup>6</sup> A. NEMEROV, *Acting in the Night: Macbeth and the Places of the Civil War*, Los Angeles, 2010, p. 196. In this essay I converse with questions treated by Nemerov in this book, from which I have drawn much inspiration as I explored the “spatial and place-making powers” of the Ansúrez tombstone.

to heaven. Fluttering in mid-air by his side is the eagle of St. John, a symbol of the resurrection of the flesh, clutching the very gospel that retells the tribulations and triumphs of the faithful in the fullness of time – passages that, recited during the liturgy of the Office of the Dead, would have provided Pedro and Eilo with some comfort as they actively participated with their prayers in the procurement of their son's salvation.

Yet much more effective as an immediate vehicle of consolation would have been their encounter with Alfonso's vivid marble embodiment. "Flitting moments, imminent emergencies, imperceptible intervals between two breaths, ought not to be incrustated with the eternal repose of marble" wrote Hawthorne in his Roman novella.<sup>7</sup> However, that is exactly what the artist carved here in stone, the fleeting moment of transformation when "in the twinkling of an eye (*in ictu oculi*), at the last trumpet... the dead shall rise again incorruptible: and we shall be changed" (1 *Corinthians* 15: 51-4).

The portrait is staged so as if Alfonso were reacting to two sudden presences: first, that of God, towards whom his hands reach out, and the second, that of the viewer whom he acknowledges with glaring eyes. Therefore, in addition to the resurrection illustrated *in the image*, as a prospective instantiation of the events of the endtimes, there is another resurrection *of the image* which occurs, in the present tense, when it is placed under the gaze of the living. In that instant Alfonso's petrified body is activated, his eyes transformed into mirrors that reflect back the emotion projected by the sight of the visitors to the tomb. One can imagine the elation felt by the parents in their encounter with this vision of their son's re-awakened body looking out at them in wonder as if acknowledging their presence. In their visit to the final resting place of their son, the parents would be transported into the experience of the child awakening to a new life in the company of an angelic cohort, miraculously catching a glance of him, joyful and alive again at the flitting moment "between two breaths", just before his disappearance into eternal life. Thus, the interactive imagery of the sepulcher generates an expansive theater that absorbs the viewer transforming a site of death and mourning into one of life and hope.

To create this persuasive sculptural composition, the Romanesque artist found inspiration in Roman art, particularly in a specific type of Endymion sarcophagus in which the figure of the beautiful shepherd, reclining in his deathlike slumber, is isolated, monumentalized, and detached from its narrative context, in order to stress its identification with the remains of

<sup>7</sup> HAWTHORNE, *The Marble Faun*, p. 16.

<sup>8</sup> For the Endymion myth on Roman sarcophagi, see M. KOORTBOJIAN, *Myth, Meaning and Memory on Roman Sarcophagi*, Berkeley, CA, 1995, pp. 63-99; V. PLATT, *Facing the Gods: Epiphany and Representation in Graeco-Roman Art, Literature and Religion*, Cambridge, 2011, pp. 371-93; P. ZANKER and B. EWALD, *Living with Myths: The Imagery of Roman Sarcophagi*, Oxford, 2012, pp. 96-103, 334-44; Z. Newby, "In the Guise of Gods and Heroes: Portrait Heads on Roman Mythological Sarcophagi", in J. ELSNER and J. HUSKINSON (eds.), *Life, Death and Representation. Some New Work on Roman Sarcophagi*, Berlin, 2011, 189-227, esp. pp. 205-9; and *IBID.*, *Greek Myths in Roman Art and Culture*, Cambridge, 2016, pp. 305, 343-44. For mystical interpretations of this myth in Antiquity as an allegory of the apotheosis of the soul after death, see F. CUMONT, *Recherches sur le symbolisme funéraire des romains*, Paris, 1942. These interpretations facilitated its adoption in early Christian art becoming a model for Jonah at rest after being spewed out by the sea monster, an image of resurrection and of the Christian soul in heaven, see D. BALCH, "From Endymion in Roman *Domus* to Jonah in Christian Catacombs: From Houses of the Living to Houses of



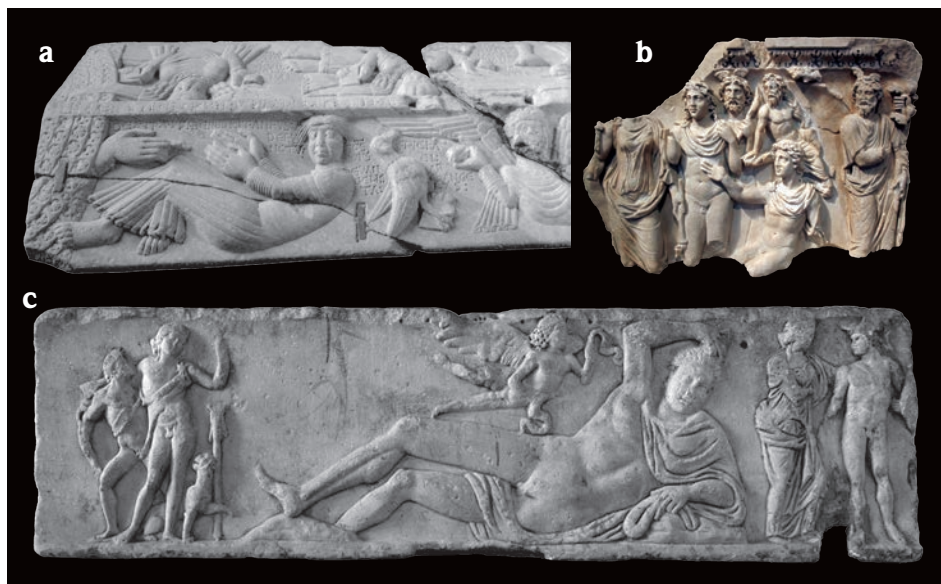


Fig. 2. **a.** Sarcophagus lid of Alfonso Ansúrez at the Museo Arqueológico Nacional. Photo: Arxiu Mas. **b.** Endymion sarcophagus, end of the second century A. D. Berlin, Altes Museum, Inv.Nr. Sk 846. **c.** Endymion sarcophagus, ca. 250 A.D. Rome, Museo di Roma a palazzo Braschi. Photo: D-DAI-ROM-57.1142

the deceased within the sarcophagus (Figs. 2 and 3).<sup>8</sup> In the example at the Palazzo Braschi, the deceased, portrayed in the guise Endymion, gazes at the viewer who is then compelled to adopt the role of the amorous visitor of the myth, Selene, entering the chamber to discover the vision of eternal beauty frozen in a permanent – sleep, the negation of death and its abject consequences, which is at the heart of the tale (Figs. 2c and 3b).<sup>9</sup> Within the rich repertoire of classical *Pathosformeln* available to the medieval sculptor, he also incorporates another type of “awakened” Endymion such as the one featured in a sarcophagus fragment in Berlin, where the shepherd raises his arms as if to seek out the company of his lover after her departure (Fig. 2b).<sup>10</sup>

the Dead”, in L. Brink and D. GREEN (eds.), *Commemorating the Dead: Texts and Artifacts in Context*, New York, 2008, pp. 273–301; and S. J. DAVIS, “Jonah in Early Christian Art: Allegorical Exegesis and the Roman Funerary Context”, *Australian Religion Studies Review*, 13.1 (2000), pp. 72–83.

<sup>9</sup> On this sarcophagus, see KOORTBOJIAN, *Myth, Meaning and Memory on Roman Sarcophagi*, pp. 135–41; PLATT, *Facing the Gods*, pp. 389–93; and ZANKER/EWALD, *Living with Myths*, 106–7.

<sup>10</sup> On this sarcophagus, see KOORTBOJIAN, *Myth, Meaning and Memory on Roman Sarcophagi*, pp. 91–2. For the deployment of classical figural models inspired by Roman sarcophagi in workshops connected to the artist who produced the Ansúrez lid, with theoretical reflections on critical concepts for the study of *Nachleben der Antike* such as the Warburgian *Pathosformel*, see F. PRADO-VILAR “Tragedy’s Forgotten Beauty: The Medieval Return of Orestes”, in ELSNER/HUSKINSON (eds.), *Life, Death and Representation*, pp. 83–118. For the transformations of Greco-Roman myths in Romanesque sculpture, from Ulysses to Prometheus, with discussions on recent methodological meditations on *Nachleben* and “liquid history”, see F. PRADO-VILAR, “The Marble Tempest: Material Imagination, the Echoes of *Nostos*, and the Transfiguration of Myth in Romanesque Sculpture”, in B. V. PENTCHEVA (ed.), *Icons of Sound: Voice, Architecture and Imagination*, New York (forthcoming).



Fig. 3. **a.** Sarcophagus lid of Alfonso Ansúrez. Museo Arqueológico Nacional. Photo: Arxiu Mas.

**b.** Endymion sarcophagus, ca. 250 A.D. Rome, Museo di Roma a palazzo Braschi. Photo: D-DAI-ROM-57.1144

The presence of light as a bestower of life in the classical myth, staged with velvety delicacy in Girodet's *The Sleep of Endymion*, painted in Rome in 1791, helps explore yet another modality of resurrection captured in the photograph (Fig. 4b).<sup>11</sup> If in the myth, Selene's moon-beam caresses Endymion's body imbuing him with the quiver of life, so in the photograph it is the combined action of celestial irradiation and the camera's light-sensitive apparatus what enlivens Alfonso's resurrected body, providing the plastic forms with a jolt of animation as the marble relief vibrates in a play of chiaroscuro. The camera intensifies the luminous tactility of the marble and makes the figure seem to leap out from its mineral slumber and become incarnated as contingent flesh and fabric.

The author of this transfixing photograph was a frequent visitor of cemeteries but, in scouting the resting places of the dead, he was searching for life and transcendental beauty. At the time this picture was taken, Ricardo de Orueta had been working for several years on a multi-volume catalogue of Spanish funerary sculpture – a project that brought together his two

<sup>11</sup> From the vast literature on this painting, see, especially in the context of the present discussion, B. STAFFORD, "Endymion's Moonbath: Art and Science in Girodet's Early Masterpiece", *Leonardo*, 15. 3 (1982), pp. 193-8.



Fig. 4. **a.** Sarcophagus lid of Alfonso Ansúrez at the Sahagún municipal cemetery, ca. 1920. Photo: Ricardo de Orueta, ATN/GMO/e1935. Fondo Gómez-Moreno/Orueta, ACCHS (CSIC). **b.** A. L. Girodet de Roussy-Trioson, *The Sleep of Endymion*, oil on canvas, 198 x 261cm. Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. 4935. **c.** Endymion sarcophagus, third century, A.D. Rome, Doria Pamphilj Gallery. Photo: Ilya Shurygin

passions, art history and photography.<sup>12</sup> A member of the enlightened group of intellectuals associated with the *Institución Libre de Enseñanza*, Orueta combined his scholarly research with his participation in the life and pedagogical activities of the *Residencia de Estudiantes*, a unique educational center that came to embody the vibrant cultural life of pre-Civil War Spain, with distinguished alumni such as the scientist and Nobel laureate, Severo Ochoa, the poet Federico García Lorca, the painter Salvador Dalí, and the filmmaker Luis Buñuel.<sup>13</sup> It is the youthful vitality of the latter that Orueta captured in a series of photographs taken at the *Residencia* during those years. In one of them, the photographer, like Selene, projects his light onto his subject, who opens himself up to expose his bare body so that the camera can fix

<sup>12</sup> See C. GUILARTE CALDERÓN de la BARCA, “Un románico de vidrio y luz: Ricardo de Orueta, tras la cámara”, in R. de ORUETA, *La escultura española de los siglos XI y XII*, Valladolid, 2015, pp. 29-39. See also S. GONZÁLEZ REYERO, “La fotografía en la historia de la Arqueología española (1860-1960). Aplicación y usos de la imagen en el discurso histórico”, *Archivo Español de Arqueología*, 79 (2006), pp. 177-205.

<sup>13</sup> See I. PÉREZ-VILLANUEVA TOVAR, “Ricardo de Orueta en la Residencia de Estudiantes”, in M. BOLAÑOS ATIENZA and M. CABAÑAS BRAVO (eds.), *En el frente del arte: Ricardo de Orueta 1868-1939*, Madrid, 2014, pp. 167-78.



it for eternity, bringing to mind the posture of the awkwardly individualized Endymion we encounter in some Roman sarcophagi such as the example in the British Museum (Fig. 5).<sup>14</sup> In another picture, Buñuel appears flanked by two other students, who are caught jumping in mid-air in a snapshot of life in motion that underscores, again, photography's capacity to defy death by stopping the inexorable flow of time (Fig. 6b).

As Susan Sontag observed, "Photography is the inventory of mortality... Photographs state the innocence, the vulnerability of lives heading toward their own destruction, and this link between photography and death haunts all photographs of people."<sup>15</sup> And yet, even if the Barthesian *punctum* of this photograph is its dimension as a *memento mori* – the fact that it reproduces the likeness of characters who are no longer alive – photography is also a mechanism of resurrection, because every time we look at the snapshot of Buñuel and his friends leaping from their world towards ours, they are suddenly made present and alive again, reaching out to touch us:



Fig. 5. **a.** Luis Buñuel at the Residencia de Estudiantes. Photo: Ricardo de Orueta, ATN/OPR3/0410. Fondo Gómez-Moreno/Orueta, ACCHS (CSIC). **b.** Sarcophagus with the portrait of the deceased as Endymion, ca. 250 A.D. Photo: British Museum, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0

<sup>14</sup> On this sarcophagus (British Museum, inv. 1947,0714.8), see KOORTBOJIAN, *Myth, Meaning and Memory on Roman Sarcophagi*, pp. 91-2, and 137-40. The figure of Ariadne was transformed into a portrait of the deceased in the guise of Endymion by reducing her breasts, inserting a penis in the place of the vulva, and adding his portrait features with his eyes wide open, resembling the type of "awakened Endymion" depicted in the sarcophagus at the Palazzo Braschi. It is noticeable that both examples, especially the latter, show a distribution of flying putti around the portrait of the deceased that recalls the figural composition of the Ansúrez lid.

<sup>15</sup> S. SONTAG, *On Photography*, New York, 1990 [1977], p. 70.

The photograph is literally an emanation of the referent. From a real body, which was there, proceed radiations which ultimately touch me, who am here; the duration of the transmission is insignificant; the photograph of the missing being, as Sontag says, will touch me like the delayed rays of a star. A sort of umbilical cord links the body of the photographed thing to my gaze: light, though impalpable, is here a carnal medium, a skin I share with anyone who has been photographed.<sup>16</sup>

In this sense, subtle similarities connect these photographs of people taken by Orueta with his picture of the sarcophagus lid (Fig. 6). Enlivened through the lens of the photographer, the figure of Alfonso comes closer to that of Buñuel and his companions, all of them looking towards the camera as they thrust their arms forward, permanently frozen in an instant that captures them in the apex of their lives, even if they are now dead. The more we look at the montage of these pictures, the more we see how the subjects depicted in them converge into a singular ontological presence when they are captured and transformed through the medium of photography. Alfonso's marble likeness gets animated by the shutter of the camera – the inert slab thus becomes a *tableau vivant* –, and, similarly, also by the shutter of the camera,



Fig. 6. **a.** Students at the Residencia de Estudiantes. Photo: Ricardo de Orueta, ATN/OPR3/0359. Fondo Gómez-Moreno/Orueta, ACCHS (CSIC). **b.** Luis Buñuel (center) and students at the Residencia de Estudiantes. Photo: Ricardo de Orueta, ATN/OPR3/0394. Fondo Gómez-Moreno/Orueta, ACCHS (CSIC). **c.** Sarcophagus lid of Alfonso Ansúrez at the Sahagún municipal cemetery, ca. 1920. Photo: Ricardo de Orueta, ATN/GMO/e1935. Fondo Gómez-Moreno/Orueta, ACCHS (CSIC)

the youths stop in their motion, coming closer to being sculptures, like models frozen in a *pose plastique*. In one case, the camera moves sculpture to the point of being a living theater, and, in the other, it freezes life to the point of sculptural permanence.<sup>17</sup>

In another mesmerizing photograph we discover that Orueta returned to the cemetery in the company of others, their feet registered again in the margins of the picture (Figs. 4a and 6c). Like a scene from a Roman sarcophagus where we see Selene alighting from her chariot to visit her beloved, so the photographer stepped down the stool to stand immobile before the slab, his feet coming closer to Alfonso's which, like the reclining Endymion trespassing the frame of the sarcophagus, seems to spring forth from the stone.<sup>18</sup>

Remarkably, the shadow cast by the wooden structure they used to hold the camera reveals that the sunlight hits the lid from the side where the firmament is carved on its surface. In this way, the theater of nature completes the dramatic set up of the marble slab establishing a continuity between the celestial illumination coming from the outside and the one represented within. It also performs the function of a sundial marking the hours and introducing a dimension of calendrical time in the photograph, which is set in radical contrast with the other eschatological "clock" inscribed in the artwork itself – the epigraph chiseled along its central molding bearing the date of Alfonso's death. That date marks the beginning of the countdown to his resurrection, the moment when he would burst out of his grave, removing this very lid.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>16</sup> R. BARTHES, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, New York, 1981, pp. 80-1. See also H. DAMISCH, "Five Notes for a Phenomenology of the Photographic Image", *October*, 5 (1978), pp. 70-2. The literature on the tacitility of sight, and on theories of the physical connection between viewer and object during the act of looking in Antiquity and the Middle Ages, is extensive. Worth noting among the new contributions is M. SQUIRE (ed.), *Sight and the Ancient Senses*, London and New York, 2016.

<sup>17</sup> On the topic of sculpture and photography in their dimension as arts of arresting time, and, also, about the photography of sculpture, see G. A. JOHNSON (ed.), *Sculpture and Photography: Envisioning the Third Dimension*, Cambridge, 1998; and, more recently, with discussions of previous literature and a state of the question, see S. HAMILL and M. R. LUKE (eds), *Photography and Sculpture: The Art Object in Reproduction*, Los Angeles, 2017.

<sup>18</sup> On the Selene and Endymion sarcophagus at the Doria Pamphilj Gallery (c. 230), see ZANKER/EWALD, *Living with Myths*, p. 17, and pp. 337-40 for a similar sarcophagus at the Louvre (inv. Ma 1335).

<sup>19</sup> A fruitful discussion on the performance of death and resurrection in relation to the question of the confluence of multiple registers of time within, and outside, the representation may be articulated through a combined analysis of the Ansúrez lid and another work of eschatological content created to be the marker of the tomb of a Spanish nobleman, El Greco's *Burial of the Count of Orgaz* (ca. 1587). In 1923, around the same period in which these photographs were taken at the Sahagún cemetery, Albert Einstein, the modern "prophet of time," arrived in Madrid to give several lectures on the theory of relativity, and paid a visit to Toledo on March 6 of that year, where he declared El Greco's "magnificent picture" to be "among the most profound things that I saw." Starting with the scene of Einstein contemplating *The Burial*, I have analyzed the structure of space-time in this interactive painting, and its anachronistic folding and unfolding in memory and history, which is reflective of the medieval Christian temporality of eschatology, and its classical figural substratum, in terms that complement my examination of the Ansúrez lid here, see F. PRADO-VILAR, "Diario de un argonauta: En busca de la belleza olvidada", *Anales de Historia del Arte, Volumen Extraordinario*, 1, 2010, pp. 75-107, esp. pp. 75-82. In a forthcoming publication, I delve into *The Burial*'s photographic afterlife with the analysis of a series of pictures taken during the Spanish Civil War when the painting was lowered, laid on the floor, and "buried" under a pile of sandbags. In ways that parallel the Ansúrez lid, these photographs show how the kaleidoscopic theater of viewing generated by the painting in its contemporary setting, aimed to mirror the *ethos* and *pathos* of the local society for which it was created, is re-activated in history, serving as a mechanism to bend present time and re-frame current events. Aspects of this research were presented



Pivotal in the imagery of the sarcophagus, symbolically and compositionally, is the Hand of God/Christ which, as Serafin Moralejo noted, seems to appear here “for the first time in funerary art.”<sup>20</sup> Its size, almost lifelike, and its “disembodiment” situate it in a liminal position within the theatrical performance of the resurrection carved on the stone, as if it were a feature coming from a world outside the representation. To be sure, in the temporal unfolding of the sepulchral slab as an artwork, from its making to its photographic replication, several hands as agents of resurrection reflect that of God: first is the hand of the sculptor chiseling

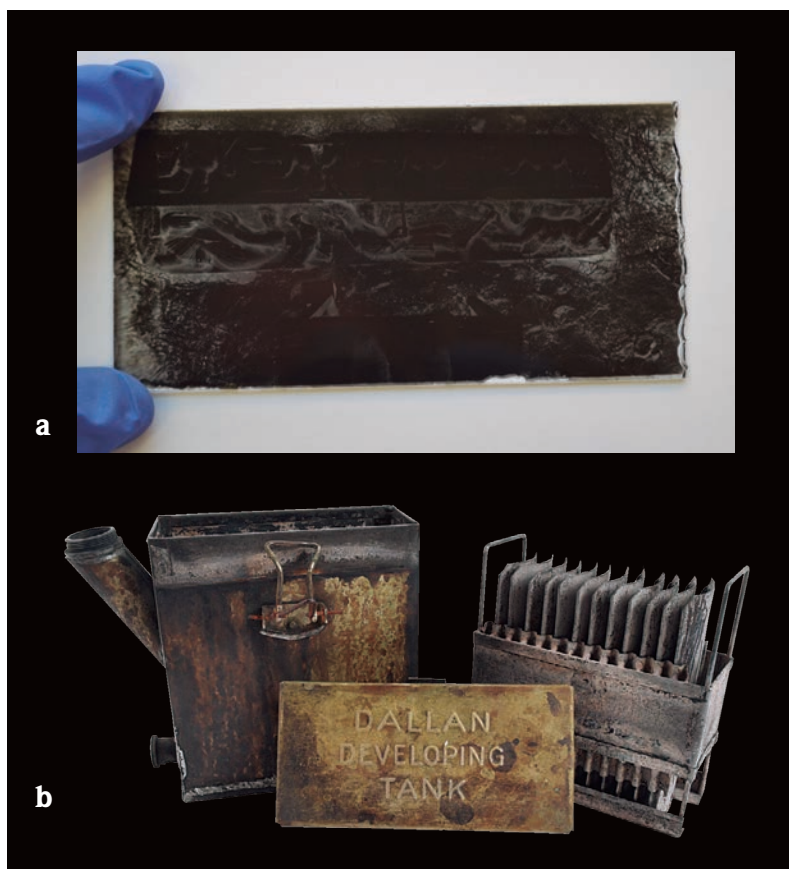


Fig. 7. **a.** Gelatin silver glass plate negative of Fig. 1

**b.** Dallan developing tank, ca. 1900-20

at Harvard in a memorial lecture commemorating the 400 anniversary of Cervantes' death. The Spanish writer, like Einstein, was a perceptive observer of *The Burial*, from where he might have drawn some inspiration for his own *Don Quixote* – a kaleidoscopic and anachronistic novel which concludes with the tableau of a lamentation over a dead “knight of the Sorrowful Countenance” (“In a Place of La Mancha Whose Name Is...Orgaz: Anatomy of a Creative Encounter Between Cervantes and El Greco,” Real Colegio Complutense, Harvard, February 11, 2016).

<sup>20</sup> MORALEJO, “Tomb of Alfonso Ansúrez”, p. 67.

Alfonso's image in marble for posterity "between two breaths"; the second is the hand of the photographer who, first, with the click of the camera captures the images, and then, during the developing process, reveals the latent negative image into its positive realization.

Certainly, the technical ritual of the developing process constitutes an industrial metaphor of the dialectics of death and resurrection (Fig. 7). Alfonso's stone portrait is captured by light in a gelatin silver glass plate which would have then been inserted into a Dallan tank – a stainless steel "sarcophagus" where the negative latent image would remain for a period of time bathing in developing liquid. Next, the glass plate would be extracted from the box, put to dry, treated, retouched, and, on occasions, inscribed with a signature and a date, just like the sarcophagus lid. Afterwards, through contact with the glass plate, and exposure to light, the print is created, which is then submerged in liquid to consolidate the positive image. In this final phase, as the hand of the photographer moves the print within the liquid, Alfonso's likeness would have come progressively into view, his eyes animated by the rippling effect of the transparent fluid, opening up and staring, once again, as he did in the cemetery, towards the agent of his rebirth. The resurrection process is now complete, by a hand in the world that mirrors that of God in the stone.<sup>21</sup>

#### SUN-PAINTING AND SUN-SCULPTURE: WITH A STEREOSCOPIC TRIP ACROSS THE ATLANTIC

What a fearfully suggestive picture. It is a leaf torn from the book of God's recording angel. What if the sky is one great concave mirror, which reflects the picture of all our doings, and photographs every act on which it looks upon dead and living surfaces, so that to celestial eyes the stones on which we tread are written with our deeds, and the leaves of the forest are but undeveloped negatives where our summers stand self-recorded for transfer into the imperishable record?

Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr., *Soundings from the Atlantic* (1864)<sup>22</sup>

Within the enclosure of the cemetery, the slab stands alone in a crepuscular abandonment, partially buried in mud, grass bursting through its cracks, as if Nature wanted to reclaim the stone, slowly sucking it back into its geological matrix (Figs. 8 and 10b). The photographer's distant view creates the phantasy that we are looking into a world of things undisrupted by human presence. Removed and disembodied, the camera aims to adopt the position of that "great concave mirror, which reflects the picture of all our doings, and photographs every act on which it looks upon dead and living surfaces." The sepia print evokes a nightly vision when the moon would periodically illuminate Alfonso's marble figure, making it glow in different intensities according to the lunar phases of the calendar. By holding the photograph in our hands, we may begin a visual immersion, entering into a mythological reverie in which, as

<sup>21</sup> For an analysis of the compositional, iconographic and iconological implications of the motif of the Hand of God in the tympanum of the Portal of the Lamb of the basilica of San Isidoro de León (ca. 1100), which is rooted in the artistic genealogy of the Ansúrez lid, and its inspiration in the gestural vocabulary of tragedy and sacrifice in Roman sarcophagi, with allusions to the Warburgian "iconology of the interval", see F. PRADO-VILAR "Tragedy's Forgotten Beauty: The Medieval Return of Orestes", esp. pp. 108-9; and *IBID.*, "Lacrimae rerum: San Isidoro de León y la memoria del padre", *Goya*, 328 (2009), pp. 195–221, esp. p. 215.

<sup>22</sup> O. WENDELL HOLMES, Sr., "Sun-Painting and Sun-Sculpture: with a Stereoscopic Trip Across the Atlantic", in *Soundings from the Atlantic*, Boston, 1864, pp. 166-227, esp. p. 183.



Fig. 8. Sarcophagus lid of Alfonso Ansúrez, ca. 1925. Photo: Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University, AKP 269L, 276 Sp211 8A 5a

day turned to night in the cemetery, we imagine Selene visiting her Romanesque Endymion to enliven his epidermis with the iridescent touch of her rays. A scene like that would float in the imaginary of the Middle Ages, made available to viewers in different materializations, whether in its rotund plastic presence in reused Roman sarcophagi or as an ethereal apparition in translucent gemstones, such as a beautiful chalcedony intaglio now in Hannover (Fig. 17d). In this small object, the dimension of the myth of Endymion as an allegory of the poetics of the photographic image is enhanced due to the fact that the artist created a negative impression of the amorous encounter which, like a photographic glass plate, could be reproduced upon contact, allowing for a serial replication of its figuration, and its circulation through unexpected geographical and temporal realms. Any medieval viewer could see similar images in different contexts, either reset on a Cross, forming part of an eschatological program for contemplation during liturgical ceremonies, including the last rites, or imprinted on a document when the intaglio was used as a personal seal-matrix (*secreta*) for a signet.<sup>23</sup>

Multiple registers of time are represented in the photograph through the objects it contains. Lying on the ground along parallel horizontal planes are two manmade artifacts that

<sup>23</sup> See N. ADAMS, J. CHERRY and J. ROBINSON (eds.), *Good Impressions: Image and Authority in Medieval Seals*, London, 2008, and, specifically for the use of ancient intaglios for signets, see M. HENIG's contribution to the volume, "The Re-use and Copying of Ancient Intaglios set in Medieval Personal Seals, mainly found in England: An aspect of the Renaissance of the 12th Century", pp. 25-34.

<sup>24</sup> The abandoned broom next to the gate brings to mind one of the most iconic images in the history of photography, William Henry Fox Talbot's *The Open Door* (1844) published in his pioneering *The Pencil of Nature*, London,



mark the temporal coordinates which bracket human existence: far back is a discarded broom, and, crossing the middle of the picture, the sepulchral slab.<sup>24</sup> The broom reminds us of our base corporeality, our being bound to perform the repetitive daily chores of cleaning the waste produced by our abject bodies. Conversely, the lid is a beautiful object made of noble durable materials on which, through a display of man's highest artistry, are carved images that represent the very moment when a decomposed carcass shall regain its plenitude to perform that final leap that will propel him outside time, into the eternal abode. If we scan the photograph from the broom to the slab, we are moving from rhopography to eschatology along a diagonal axis that leads into a sacred object – a concave vessel that echoes the heavenly “concave mirror above” – whose figural and symbolic centrality in the context of the iconographic design of the lid has been underscored by Moralejo:

With their index fingers the three angels are pointing to the chalice in their midsts, the *calix salutis perpetuae* (the chalice of perpetual bliss) of the Canon of the Mass, guarantee of the promise contained in John 6:54: “He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will rise him up at the last day.”<sup>25</sup>

The promise represented by the vessel, made to contain Christ's blood, is fulfilled on the other side of the lid when Alfonso is raised up at the last day, “clothed again with *his* skin, and in *his* flesh *he* will see *his* God” (*Job* 19:25–27). Central to both the artwork and the photograph, the chalice is a gravitational vortex that swallows the space-time around it – the time of nature, the time of life, the time of art, the time of history, and the time of eschatology.

If the photograph registers the marble slab's phenomenological insertion in the world, it also records its latent inscription into the canon of Romanesque sculpture and medieval historiography. The persons behind the camera that day were Arthur Kingsley Porter and his wife Lucy.<sup>26</sup> In the previous years, they had traveled extensively along the pilgrimage roads studying and photographing all the major monuments – a field work that resulted in Porter's landmark 1923 publication *Romanesque Sculpture of the Pilgrimage Roads*, made up of one volume

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1844–46. It is worth meditating about this photograph of the slab at the Sahagún cemetery, alongside Fig. 4a, with the projected shadows, as they bring to mind Robyn Kelsey's reading of Talbot's photograph in relation to time: “The broom in his famous photograph operates like the gnomon of a sundial, marking the time of the exposure as a passing moment. Once the photographic apparatus was set up and the lens cap removed, time did the work of making the image, and more or less became its subject. Photography embedded a moment of illumination on the reactive surface of the photographic plate”, see R. KELSEY, *Photography and the Art of Chance*, Cambridge, MA, 2015, p. 22. One could say that this photograph of the lid, like Talbot's *Open Door* “represents the chance encounter with a propitious configuration of forms in the world” (KELSEY, *Photography*, p. 31).

<sup>25</sup> MORALEJO, “Lid for the Sarcophagus of Alfonso Ansúrez”, in *Art of Medieval Spain*, p. 234. On rhopography and still life, see N. BRYSON, *Looking at the Overlooked: Four Essays on Still Life Painting*, London, 1990, pp. 60–95. On Chardin's still-lives, see, more recently, and with an emphasis on the materiality of painting, E. LAJER-BURCHARTH, *The Painter's Touch: Boucher, Chardin, Fragonard*, Princeton, 2018, pp. 87–163.

<sup>26</sup> For a revealing assessment of Lucy Wallace Porter's essential collaboration in Kingsley's output as a scholar-photographer, see K. BRUSH, “Medieval Art through the Camera Lens: The Photography of Arthur Kingsley Porter and Lucy Wallace Porter”, *Visual Resources*, 33, 3–4 (2017), pp. 252–94. An illuminating study of the photographic production of another pioneering couple formed by a medieval scholar, Georgiana Goddard King, and her partner Edith H. Lowber, is M. H. CAVINESS, “Seeking Modernity through the Romanesque: G. G. King and E. H. Lowber Behind a Camera in Spain c. 1910–25”, *Journal of Art Historiography*, 11 (2014), pp. 1–30.

of text and nine volumes of photographs.<sup>27</sup> Now, two years later, they returned to Spain as Porter was researching for a monograph on Spanish Romanesque sculpture. His excitement about this new project was reported from the field to his friend, the Harvard Renaissance scholar Bernard Berenson, in a letter written from the Grand Hotel de France, in Valladolid, on November 11, 1925:

You have done lots of nice things to me, but never anything for which I am more grateful than pushing me into the Spanish Romanesque field once more. I have seldom work at anything with such breathless interest as this new book. Most unexpected new material is pouring in from all directions. The difficulty is the old one, that there is not time enough to go around.<sup>28</sup>

Included in the new “unexpected material” was the sarcophagus lid of Alfonso Ansúrez, which Porter discovered when he read Manuel Gómez-Moreno’s *Catálogo Monumental de España, Provincia de León*, published that year.<sup>29</sup> As soon as he returned to the USA after that trip, he wrote a glowing review of the book for the *Art Bulletin*, showing his unbridled admiration for the work of the Spanish art historian, and acknowledging the “discovery” of the Ansúrez monument:

The reputation of Don Manuel Gómez-Moreno has preceded his writing. For two decades now his name has been on everyone’s lips, and was at a time when many who spoke of him had never read a word from his pen, nor laid eyes on his inaccessible person. The source of this fame was, of course, the deep impression he made upon the few who did know him. Rumors of the fabulous material he had collected, of the accuracy and brilliance of his scholarship, of his incredible discoveries reached the most remote corners of the world of scholarship. But for a long time he published little. Articles appeared chiefly in periodicals not easily procurable outside of Spain. These articles were of fine quality, and fore-shadowed the stature of the man; but they hardly accounted for his mysterious and ever growing reputation [...]. His name in the world of learning became a sort of myth – the strangest tales were whispered of his uncanny knowledge, of what was contained in his collection of photographs, which no one had ever seen, of what he could tell if he had a mind to [...]. His became a sort of magician’s figure, colorful as that of no other scholar in this prosaic age, having about it something strangely Eastern and impenetrable, superhuman, Klingsor-like. And the less he wrote, the less he was seen, the more his invisible influence was felt in the archaeological thought of two continents [...] The publication of the tomb of Alfonso (died 1093), the son of the

<sup>27</sup> A. K. PORTER, *Romanesque Sculpture of the Pilgrimage Roads*, 10 vols., Boston, MA, 1923. For Georgiana Goddard King’s and Porter’s travels in Spain, see J. Mann, *Romanesque Architecture and its Sculptural Decoration in Christian Spain, 1000–1120: Exploring Frontiers and Defining Identities*, Toronto, 2009, pp. 7-45; and K. BRUSH, “Blazing ‘The Way’: Arthur Kingsley Porter’s First Trip to Northern Spain (1920)”, *Ad Limina*, 9 (2018), pp. 225-45.

<sup>28</sup> Biblioteca Berenson, Villa I Tatti – The Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies, Correspondence, 91.3. For the friendship between the two Harvard art historians, see K. BRUSH, “Bernard Berenson and Arthur Kingsley Porter. Pilgrimage Roads to I Tatti”, in J. CONNORS and L. A. WALDMAN (eds.), *Bernard Berenson: Formation and Heritage*, Cambridge, MA, 2014, pp. 249-68. Porter wrote most of the text for *Romanesque Sculpture of the Pilgrimage Roads* (1923) at Villa I Tatti.

<sup>29</sup> M. GÓMEZ-MORENO, *Catálogo monumental de España. Provincia de León (1906-1908)*, Madrid, 1925, pp. 348-50. For a collection of studies on the ambitious multi-volume project of the “Catálogo Monumental de España” see, A. LÓPEZ-YARTO ELIZALDE (coord.), *El Catálogo Monumental de España (1900-1961): Investigación, restauración y difusión*, Madrid, 2012, especially I. ARGERICH FERNÁNDEZ’s contribution, “La fotografía en el Catálogo Monumental de España: procedimientos y autores”, pp. 109-25.

celebrated Pedro Assurez, is another of the surprises which Gómez-Moreno's book has in store for the archaeological world.<sup>30</sup>

In this article Porter published four photographs of the sepulchral slab taken during his visit to Sahagún in 1925. The first one, occupying vertically a full page of the journal, offers a plunging viewpoint of the lid by situating the camera in an elevated position as if it were the sun or the moon illuminating the work – its rays made visible in the marble surface through the rippling undulations of the firmament (Fig. 9a, and cfr. Fig. 4a). Here the hand of the photographer stands as a carnal conjugate to the Hand of God that emerges from the sky to activate the resurrection. The camera, and us, as viewers, inhabit the magnetic center towards which all the figures gravitate, creating the illusion that we are witnessing souls arising from the vowels of the earth, and progressively becoming visible as they cross the marble surface, which acts as their material delivery system, allowing us to see them momentarily, as if they were accretions of the stone, just before they continue floating in their upward movement – an effect that is enhanced by the sculptor's brilliant detail of having Alfonso's left foot trespassing the outer rim of the firmament. This movement continues as they leave the marble behind and

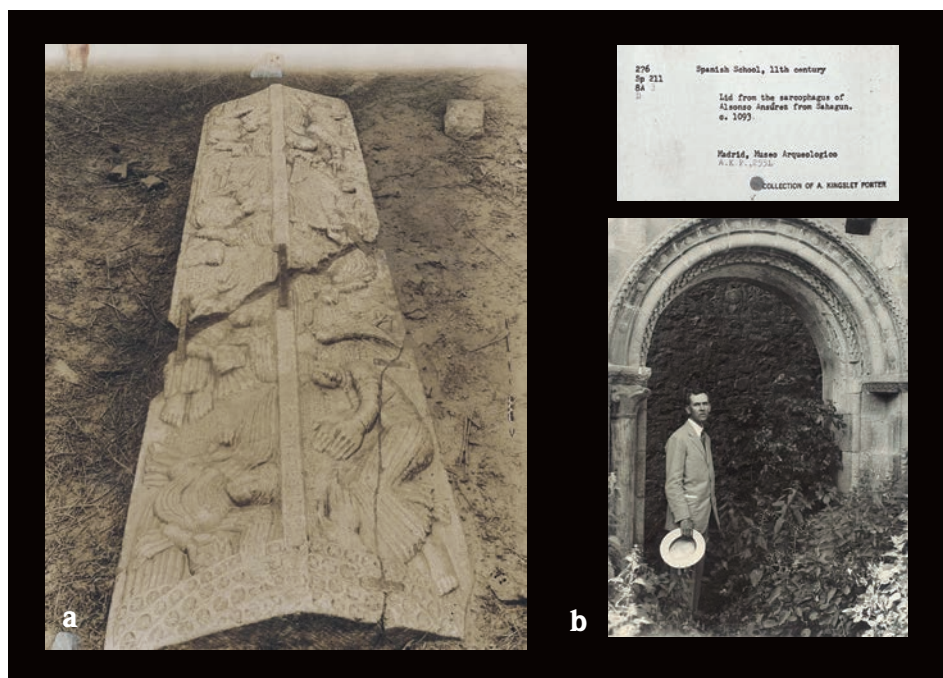


Fig. 9. **a.** Sarcophagus lid of Alfonso Ansúrez, ca. 1925. Photo: Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University, AKP 255L, 276 Sp211 8A 3 D. **b.** Arthur Kingsley Porter at Carracedo, León, 1924. Photo: Harvard University Archives, HUG 1706.125

<sup>30</sup> A. K. PORTER, "Leonesque Romanesque and Southern France", *Art Bulletin*, 8.4 (1926), pp. 235-50, esp. pp. 235, 243.

burst through the silver salt and gelatin emulsion of the print, towards us. The next photograph in the article offers readers the other side of this extraordinary polyedric artistic performance of the resurrection in marble, whose rhetorical configuration we have examined in detail in the discussion of Orueta's picture – the close-up of Alfonso's portrait looking out into the camera, coming alive, *in actu oculi*, under the visitor's gaze.

This time, the leap Alfonso would take by the action of the photographer would propel him beyond the gate of the Spanish graveyard, setting him on an adventitious journey across the Atlantic, to arrive in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in the same land, and under the same sky, where Oliver Wendell Holmes had written about photography and that great concave mirror. There, the precious Romanesque work was to serve as a pedagogical aid for students of art history in his alma mater, Harvard. A comparison between a photograph of the lid preserved in Gómez-Moreno's archive, probably taken ca. 1906, when the *Catálogo monumental* of the province of León was written (even if it was not published until 1925) and Porter's photographs, taken ca. 1925, reveals that the tombstone had changed locations within the cemetery over the years (Fig. 10). Whereas in the earlier pictures the slab appears to be recently installed

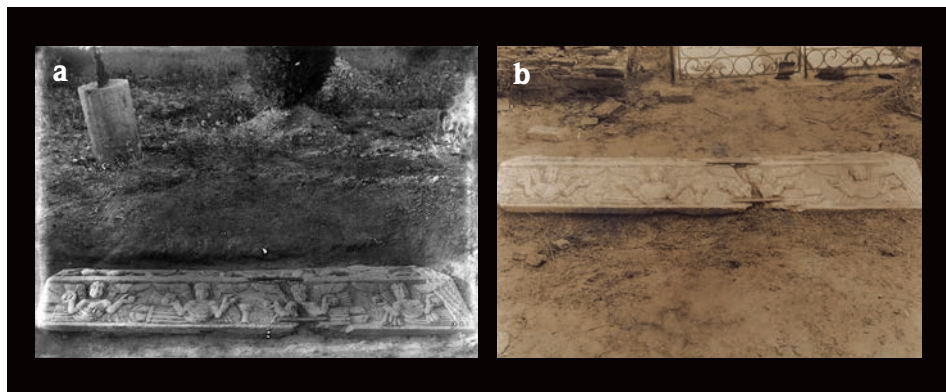


Fig. 10. **a.** Sarcophagus lid of Alfonso Ansuárez at the Sahagún municipal cemetery, ca. 1906. Photo: Manuel Gómez-Moreno, ATN/GMO041/a02036. Fondo Gómez-Moreno/Orueta, ACCHS (CSIC). **b.** Sarcophagus lid of Alfonso Ansuárez, ca. 1925. Photo: Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University, AKP 269L, 276 Sp211 8A 5a

as the marker of a gravesite – that of Manuel Guaza as the *Catálogo monumental* informs – in the later one, it is displaced to a different area, and seems unkempt and abandoned, clearly not set on a burial plot. It is probably for this reason that Porter managed to acquire it from their local owners through the intermediacy of the infamous American dealer Arthur Byne with the intention of bequeathing it to the Fogg Museum.

Its sojourn in Cambridge, from 1926 to 1932, is recorded in several photographs – the most extraordinary of them is published here for the first time (Fig. 11). It forms an evocative pendant to the photograph Orueta took of the lid from a stool, for it also shows the feet of the photographer, who had to climb a wooden ladder in order to capture the length of the stone.





Fig. 11. Sarcophagus lid of Alfonso Ansúrez photographed at the Fogg Museum, Harvard University, ca. 1926-30. Edward Waldo Forbes Papers (HC 2), folder 1934. Harvard Art Museums Archives, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA

Once again, the material presence of the sepulchral slab, through its size and decoration, compels its human visitor to be aware of his physical limitations, and of his mortality, that is to say, of his being bound to the earth, constantly attracted to it until he will eventually surrender to its force and be sucked into its womb, buried under a tombstone just like the one he is photographing.

In Porter's next publication, *Spanish Romanesque Sculpture*, the photographs of the Ansúrez lid that he used to illustrate his 1926 article were re-published but, this time, the location listed in the captions is "Cambridge, Mass., Fogg Museum of Art".<sup>31</sup> When Ricardo de Orueta saw the book, and received confirmation from Sahagún that the slab had been sold, he immediately denounced the fact before the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in a session held in

<sup>31</sup> A. K. PORTER, *Spanish Romanesque Sculpture*, vol. I, 1928, pp. 59-60, plates 44-5. It is noteworthy that Porter preferred to publish the photographs of the slab taken in the Sahagún cemetery, rather than the pictures taken at Harvard, when the lid was cleaned and under more controlled lighting conditions. The arrival of the Ansúrez sepulchral slab coincided with the inauguration of the new Fogg Museum building at its current location on Quincy Street, which was conceived as a pioneering center for art historical research, museum studies, and the sciences of art conservation, see K. BRUSH, *Vastly More Than Brick & Mortar: Reinventing the Fogg Art Museum in the 1920s*, Cambridge, MA, 2003; and F. G. BEWER, *Laboratory for Art: Harvard's Fogg Museum and the Emergence of Conservation in America, 1900-1950*, Cambridge, MA, 2010.

October 1928.<sup>32</sup> As the *Harvard Crimson* reported later, there soon started behind the scenes negotiations led by the Duke of Alba:

In 1931, the Duke of Alba intimated to an American Scholar who visited him while travelling through Spain, that the government wished to have certain art objects of national importance returned, among which was the Fogg sarcophagus... This plan, however, was purely unofficial, and before the Duke was able to accomplish anything more definite, his king had been overthrown by the revolution. After that, letters which contained similar proposals were received by the Fogg with considerable regularity, but in each instance, the Spanish government changed hands before any definite arrangement could be arrived at.<sup>33</sup>

Clearly the *Crimson* journalist was privy to the letters and documents now preserved at the Harvard Art Museums Archives, including the incendiary correspondence sent by Arthur Byne to the Fogg scholars, trying to deter them from returning the slab. Among them is a revealing letter written to Paul Sachs, Deputy Director of the Fogg Museum, on June 17, 1931,

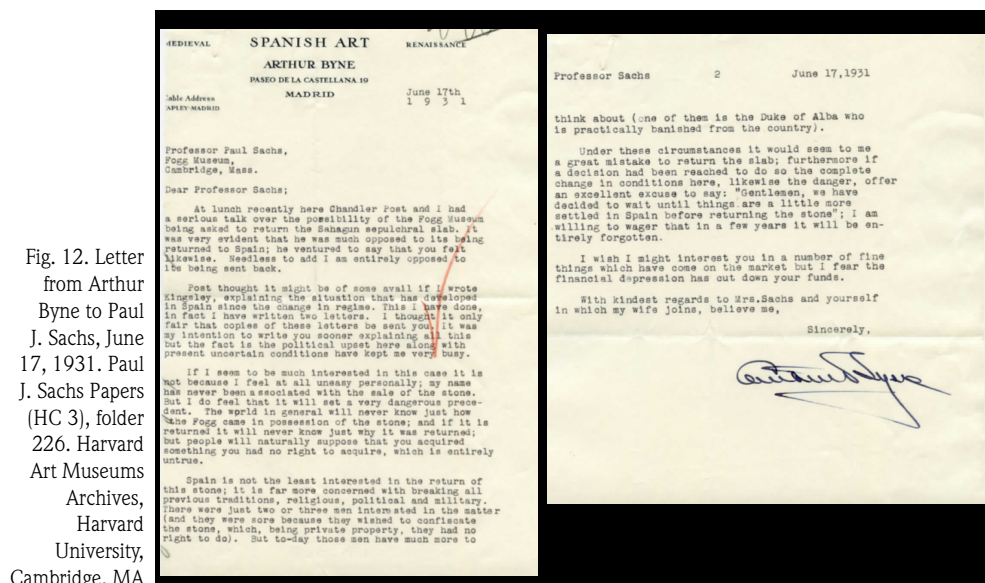


Fig. 12. Letter from Arthur Byne to Paul J. Sachs, June 17, 1931. Paul J. Sachs Papers (HC 3), folder 226. Harvard Art Museums Archives, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA

<sup>32</sup> See M. J. MARTÍNEZ RUIZ, "Orueta y su actuación frente a la pérdida del patrimonio", in *En el frente del arte*, pp. 135-63, esp. p. 157; and, especialmente, *IBID.*, "Polémicas en torno al traslado de algunas obras del patrimonio leonés al Museo Arqueológico Nacional," *Boletín del Museo Arqueológico Nacional*, 29-30-31 (2011-12-13), pp. 117-142, esp. pp. 129-36. The Royal Academy of History was also involved in denouncing the sale, and, in a letter to the Minister of Education and Fine Arts, dated 2 November 1928, they laid out the facts of the sale saying that Juan Guaza (descendant of Manuel Guaza for whose burial the tombstone was reused) had sold it in the early months of 1926 to the Madrid antiquarian J. T. Torres, see *IBID.*, "Polémicas en torno al traslado", pp. 133-5. The documentation published here suggests the involvement of A. Byne in the final sale to Porter.

<sup>33</sup> *The Harvard Crimson*, "Collections and Critiques", December 12, 1935. This is the best account of the facts, now available online: <https://www.thecrimson.com/article/1935/12/12/collections-and-critiques-pa-sarcophagus-slab/>

just a few months after the proclamation of the Spanish Republic (April 14), and the exile of King Alfonso XIII, which presents an eloquent portrait of the dealer in all his cunningness and greed: “If I seem to be much interested in this case,” he writes, “it is not because I feel unease personally: my name has never been associated with the sale of the stone. But I do feel it will set a very dangerous precedent” (Fig. 12). But even if, as Byne confides, the Duke of Alba was rendered inoperative with the abolition of the monarchy, he failed in his assessment that “in a few years” the issue “would be entirely forgotten.” Ricardo de Orueta, the firmest opponent to his business practices, was appointed Director General of Fine Arts under the new republican government and he would take as his personal mission to have the slab returned to Spain.

### LOVE, WAR, AND THE AFTERLIFE OF FIREFLIES

As when a peasant, resting on a hillside....sees fireflies that glimmer in the valley where perhaps he harvests grapes and ploughs his fields, with just so many flames the eighth crevasse was everywhere aglow, as I became aware once I arrived where I could see the bottom. And as the one who was avenged by bears could see Elijah's chariot taking flight, when the horses reared and rose to Heaven, but made out nothing with his eyes except the flame alone ascending like a cloud into the sky.

Dante, *Inferno*, XXVI: 25-40

Saturday, February 18, 1933 was a day for celebration in Madrid. Journalists from the main newspapers were convened at the National Archaeological Museum for the solemn presentation of the sepulchral slab of Alfonso Ansúrez. Among the high officials proudly gathering around the monument were the Museum's Director, Francisco Álvarez Osorio, and the Minister of Education, Fernando de los Ríos, but none could have felt a more personal connection to the tombstone, and to the odyssey of its recovery, than the Director General of Fine Arts, Ricardo de Orueta. That morning, two photographers pressed the camera button at the same time giving us alternate views of an exceptional moment where we see Orueta engrossed in the contemplation of the lid, detached from the frenzy unfolding around him (Figs. 13, 14). The two snapshots together form a unique stereoscopic portrait that finds its literary cognate in the lines dedicated to him by novelist Juan Ramón Jiménez:

De pronto, le dan sus ojos verdes una vuelta, y ya no ve. Se diría que, sugestionado por su ceguera crepuscular perenne, nace el día y muere ante él a cada instante. Su día largo e igual lo lleva dentro y es un día de otros tiempos que él ha detenido, como Josué al sol, pero sin permiso para seguir rodando; día de permanentes ruinas bellas [...] y mira lo que le rodea como una máquina fotográfica de diafragma voluble. Pero, de pronto, le dan los ojos grises una vuelta, y ya no ve.<sup>34</sup>

In this instant of intimate visual communion with the slab, Orueta seems to have halted time, “like Joshua stopped the Sun”, and be transported, like Elijah in the chariot of fire, to that moment, more than a decade earlier, at the Sahagún cemetery, when he stood on the stool and gazed at the marble reliefs through his camera (Fig. 15). Here again were the flying

<sup>34</sup> J. R. JIMÉNEZ, *Españoles de tres mundos*, Madrid, 1987, p. 151.



Fig. 13. Presentation of the Ansúrez lid at the National Archaeological Museum, 1933. Photo: José Zegri, Fototeca ABC, Ref.: 10745250



Fig. 14. Presentation of the Ansúrez lid at the National Archaeological Museum, 1933. Photo: © “Alfonso”, VEGAP, Santiago de Compostela, 2019

angels staring back, teasing him about his own vulnerabilities, now made more evident by the toll of age; and here was Alfonso performing, anew, his energetic jump towards eternity – the miracle of resurrection now activated by the barrage of flashes firing around him. The photographs show us the figure of Orueta self-withdrawn into a state of “centripetal density” by the





Fig. 15. **a.** Sarcophagus lid of Alfonso Ansúrez at the Sahagún municipal cemetery, ca. 1920. Photo: Ricardo de Orueta, ATN/GMO/e1934. Fondo Gómez-Moreno/Orueta, ACCHS (CSIC). **b.** Presentation of the Ansúrez lid at the National Archaeological Museum, 1933, detail (colorized) Photo: José Zegri, Fototeca ABC, Ref.: 10745250

presence of the slab, underscoring “the world-stopping power of the aesthetic to inhale the universe, to internalize it as a sculpturally dense form”.<sup>35</sup>

1933 was a year of triumphs for Orueta. On May 13 Congress passed his *Law for the Protection of the National Artistic Treasure*, a landmark piece of legislation which had gone through a long period of drafting.<sup>36</sup> An image of Orueta on the steps of the Spanish Parliament shows him as a strong-willed but weary fighter for art. One is reminded of the photograph he took of the Romanesque crucified Christ from Corullón, pictured standing at the doorsteps of the church, as if he were a crippled beggar asking alms (Fig. 16). A view of the two prints together reveals their aesthetic and ethical connections – their being two portraits of sacrifice for the larger good, decimated bodies bearing with resignation the weight of the world. This underscores the fact that Orueta’s engagement with his subjects through the medium of

<sup>35</sup> NEMEROV, *Acting in the Night*, pp. 33, 35.

<sup>36</sup> For the slow and painstaking drafting of this legislation, see M. CABAÑAS BRAVO, “Ricardo de Orueta, guardián del arte español. Perfil de un trascendente investigador y gestor político del patrimonio artístico”, in *En el frente del arte*, pp. 21-77, esp. pp. 55-6; and S. GUERRERO, “Ricardo de Orueta, la Ley del Tesoro Artístico Nacional de 1933 y los trabajos de conservación del patrimonio arquitectónico de la Dirección General de Bellas Artes durante la Segunda República,” in *En el frente del arte*, pp. 183-93.



Fig. 16. **a.** Crucified Christ from Corullón. Photo: Ricardo de Orueta, ATN/GMO197/b0313. Fondo Gómez-Moreno/Orueta, ACCHS (CSIC). **b.** Ricardo de Orueta in the steps of the Spanish Parliament. Fondo Gómez-Moreno/Orueta, ACCHS (CSIC)

photography always reflects aspects of himself, from Alfonso's youthful and enthusiastic apprehension of life with his crepuscular gaze to the wooden Christ's sacrificial pathos.<sup>37</sup>

While Orueta gazed mystified at the sepulchral slab on that Saturday morning of 18 February 1933, across the Atlantic, Kingsley Porter was in good spirits looking forward to the week ahead, in which he would pay visits to the Fogg, have lunch engagements, and attend one of the Charles Eliot Norton Lectures given that year by poet T. S. Eliot.<sup>38</sup> After having spent a long stint at Glenveagh castle, his Irish home, he had returned to Harvard to teach, not

<sup>37</sup> In his induction ceremony into Royal Academy of Fine Arts, he delivered a speech on the representation of pain in Castilian sculpture, later published as R. de ORUETA, *La expresión de dolor en la escultura castellana*, Madrid, 1924.

<sup>38</sup> Published as T. S. ELIOT, *The Use of Poetry and Use of Criticism. Studies in the Relation of Criticism to Poetry in England*, London, 1933. As I write these lines, we learned of the passing of Toni Morrison whose Norton Lectures, delivered at Harvard in 2016, I had the privilege of attending while I was engaged in the research for this paper. Listening to her voice at the Sanders theater auditorium, delving on the interwoven themes in her novels and her life, was a soul-making experience. They have been published as *The Origin of Others*, Cambridge, MA, 2018, where she quotes a passage from her novel *Beloved*, pertinent to this discussion, dealing with the memory of a dead child, photography, footprints, and their erasure: "Sometimes the photograph of a close friend or relative – looked at too long – shifts, and something more familiar than the dear face itself moves there. They can touch it if they like, but don't, because they know things will never be the same if they do. This is not a story to pass on", p. 89.

without some resistance. The novelty, this time, was that his young lover, Alan Campbell, had moved to Cambridge to live with the Porters.<sup>39</sup> A few months earlier, on 20 September 1932, as the Ansúrez lid was sailing towards Spain (it would arrive at the National Archaeological Museum on 22 September 1932, although it was not presented to the press until the February 1933 ceremony), Porter had sent one of his most confessional letters to Ellis from Glenveagh, offering a glimpse of his state of mind and his hopes and fears for the future:

Alan Campbell has been with us now nearly a month, which has been one of intense happiness for me, and what is more marvelous and important, I do not think Lucy has been entirely unhappy. Alan's character is one of extraordinary beauty – sweet, unselfish, straight from the shoulders, unclouded by any dark moods. [...] The future is still obscure for me. I feel I can never be again what I have been. Yet I am deterred from burning bridges by a doubt whether I shall be able to justify my existence by any other means than those by which I have been attempting to do so in the past. I feel that no solution postulated on idleness can be right or really satisfying. That is something I must fight my own way through, and it would not be difficult if only I could recover my old hunger. Perhaps I may yet. Alan is leaving in a few days for a trip to Mallorca, but promises to return in November. We are planning in a general way to be here until January, when I am returning to Harvard for I have promised to teach again the second term this year in any way.<sup>40</sup>

That spring term at Harvard started on an optimistic path but, progressively, both the social atmosphere on campus, still reeling from a convulsed period of persecution and repression

<sup>39</sup> Since 1929, Porter had been dealing with depression, brought about, in part, by his anguish at the realization that he was a homosexual. With Lucy's encouragement, he had sought professional help from renowned London psychologist Havelock Ellis, who advised him to pursue his inclinations, rather than repress them, and introduced him to another patient of his, a young American aspiring writer named Alan Campbell. The evolution of the relationship, which began in 1931, is documented through the letters that Kingsley, Lucy and Alan wrote to Dr. Ellis, which are now preserved in the Havelock Ellis Papers at the British Library, and were first reported by P. GROSSKURTH, *Havelock Ellis: A Biography*, London, 1981, pp. 418-20. A detailed account of this correspondence is the most valuable aspect of the, otherwise, uneven, book by L. COSTIGAN, *Glenveagh Mystery: The Life, Work, and Disappearance of Arthur Kingsley Porter*, Dublin, 2013. For an earlier scholarly investigation about these circumstances, see H. RICHARDSON, "The Fate of Kingsley Porter", *Donegal Annual*, 45 (1993), pp. 83-7. Aside from his pioneering studies of human sexuality, Havelock Ellis was greatly interested in Spain, even publishing a learned travelogue titled *The Soul of Spain* in 1908 (soon translated into Spanish as *El Alma de España*, Barcelona, 1928) – which shows a sophisticated take on the country that surely contributed to his productive conversation with Porter as therapist and friend: "Spain is not an easy land to comprehend, even for intelligent visitors, and, taken as a whole, it is by no means a land for those who attach primary importance to comfort and facile enjoyment," he writes in the Preface, "Spain is interesting and instructive, in the highest degree fascinating for those who can learn to comprehend her, but these must always, I think, be comparatively few. For these few, however, the fascination is permanent and irresistible. It is a fascination not hard to justify", see H. ELLIS, *The Soul of Spain*, London, 1908, pp. vi-vii. It is not surprising then that Porter established a deep rapport with the physician on many levels, as he states in a letter to Ellis dated October 2, 1932: "You have made over my life. You know it. I do not need to tell you. And I know that knowledge, combined with infinite similar knowledge, makes your happiness. I hope it is not entirely egotism which makes me desire that you should have about you some physical reminder of what you have done for me. I have thought and thought what might please you. Perhaps a drawing?", Havelock Ellis Papers, vol. XXX, London, British Library, Department of Manuscripts, Add MS 70553, ff. 15-16v. I thank Jeff Kattenhorn from the Department of Manuscripts at the BL for helping me locate this correspondence.

<sup>40</sup> Letter from A. Kingsley Porter to Havelock Ellis, Glenveagh, 20 September 1932. Havelock Ellis Papers, vol. XXX, London, British Library, Department of Manuscripts, Add MS 70553, ff. 12-14v.

of homosexuality under President Lowell's strong arm, and the increasingly departing vital and emotional trajectories of Alan and Kingsley, would soon make that precariously ideal situation unravel.<sup>41</sup> As the academic year drew to a close, the Porters returned to Glenveagh alone for the summer and, as is well known, tragedy struck on 8 July 1933. In Lucy's own words: "He was drowned...The gentle bearing of this tall, self-effacing man contrasted strangely with the daring ruggedness of his mind....In Ireland, his own life – a silent shining flame – for the last time curved upwards, suddenly to drop like a rocket into the sea."<sup>42</sup>

Ricardo de Orueta would go on to live a few more years, some of them under the fear of incendiary bombs dropping on his world. In 1936 erupted the Civil War, and the National Archaeological Museum became the headquarters for the effort of the government of the besieged Republic to preserve the artistic treasures from destruction.<sup>43</sup> The Ansúrez lid, alongside other precious items intimately connected to the formation of Romanesque sculpture, such as the Roman Orestes sarcophagus from Husillos, were packed and brought to the basement, transformed into a bunker to prevent them from being destroyed by shelling.<sup>44</sup> In a devastated Madrid, Orueta was hurrying to finish his book on Romanesque sculpture, and have it published, despite the scarcity of paper. His only preoccupation until the end of his life was to keep the manuscript from being destroyed in the glare of war:

It would be terrible if all the illusions and enthusiasm that I have put into this work were now to fade away like smoke. So much so, that I, who do not fear for my personal safety, have taken [the

<sup>41</sup> For the events on campus that led to the creation of a "secret court" to investigate homosexual practices at Harvard, see W. WRIGHT, *Harvard's Secret Court. The Savage 1920 Purge of Campus Homosexuals*, New York, 2005. As is recorded in Lucy's diary, Porter was called several times to President Lowell's office during the spring term of 1933 and, eventually, a formal inquiry was conducted, with the faculty divided on whether to expel him, see COSTIGAN, *Glenveagh Mystery*, pp. 194-206. Finally, the decision, favorable to his returning to Harvard, was conveyed to him in a letter by his friend, Edward W. Forbes, Director of the Fogg Museum, early in the summer, when Porter was already at Glenveagh. For a larger study, see D. SHAND-TUCCI, *The Crimson Letter. Harvard, Homosexuality, and the Shaping of American Culture*, New York, 2003, esp. pp. 125-9 (where Porter is discussed).

<sup>42</sup> L. KINGSLEY PORTER, "A. Kingsley Porter", in W. E. W. KOEHLER (ed.), *Medieval Studies in Memory of A. Kingsley Porter*, Cambridge, MA, 1939, pp. xi-xv, esp. p. xv. Lucy added "Kingsley" to her name after his death. Edward Forbes, in his obituary, honored the memory of his friend with similar images: "His mind might be compared to a searchlight that flashed in one direction, clearly illuminating that field, then turned its powerful light on another region, and then to still another revealing to the world certain new aspects and the relation of these fields to each other as one by one they emerged from partial shadows", see E. W. FORBES, "Arthur Kingsley Porter (1883-1933)", *Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, 69. 13 (1935), pp. 537-41.

<sup>43</sup> See I. ARGERICH and J. ARA (eds.), *Arte protegido. Memoria de la junta del tesoro artístico durante la guerra civil*, Madrid, 2003.

<sup>44</sup> For the Orestes sarcophagus from Husillos and its Romanesque afterlife, see S. MORALEJO, "Sobre la formación del estilo escultórico de Frómista y Jaca", in *Actas del XXIII Congreso Internacional de Historia del Arte, Granada 1973*, vol. 1, Granada, 1976, pp. 427-34; F. PRADO-VILAR, "Saevum facinus: estilo, genealogía y sacrificio en el arte románico español", *Goya*, 324 (2008): 173-99; *IBID.*, "Lacrimae rerum: San Isidoro de León y la memoria del padre"; *IBID.*, "Tragedy's Forgotten Beauty: The Medieval Return of Orestes". In addition to the bibliography discussed in the aforementioned articles, it is worth citing, in the context of the issues treated in the present essay, involving processes of survival, reproducibility and seriality, S. SETTIS's "Supremely Original: Classical Art as Serial, Iterative, Portable", in S. SETTIS, A. ANGUISSOLA, D. GASPAROTTO (eds.), *Serial/Portable Classic: The Greek Canon and Its Mutations*, Milan, 2015, pp. 51-62.



manuscript] to the basement [of the Center for Historical Studies] so that the shells do not reach it, while I continue to work in my office during the bombings.<sup>45</sup>

In the last days of the moribund Republic, Orueta suffered an accident falling down the stairs at the Casón del Buen Retiro, then the headquarters of the Museum of Artistic Reproductions whose directorship he held. He died on February 10, 1939, just a few months before General Franco's triumphant entry in Madrid. The decades-long dictatorship that ensued shed a mantle of oblivion over the memory of the Republic and over everyone connected to it, including Orueta. His legacy, his photographic collection, and his manuscript, laid buried in a basement, awaiting for their resurrection.<sup>46</sup>

Lucy's reminiscence of Kingsley as a flickering flame could also be a suited figure for Orueta, both ephemeral lives that, at specific moments in time, illuminated the darkness around them – flames that, once extinguished, left behind indelible traces, latent points of emanation of light, smoldering ambers waiting to receive a life-giving breath from a visitor, and ignite again.

That is what Kingsley and Ricardo did to Alfonso and to the precious tombstone that, more than a thousand years ago, an artist, at the request of his parents, produced in order to conjure up his resurrection. As they stood with their cameras focusing on that consecrated spot at the Sahagún cemetery, they played the role of the Christian God, awakening the dead out of the dust of the earth, and also the mythological Selene, reverentially descending on “the thing of beauty” she adored to embrace it with her rays ensuring that it would “never pass into nothingness” (Fig. 17).<sup>47</sup>

I recently visited the Sahagún cemetery in search for that consecrated spot where the Ansúrez lid once laid abandoned, and where Orueta and Porter left their footprints on the dust. The brick gate, much restored, is still there, but now the ground is paved over with cement tiles. What the place lacked in historical continuity, however, was given to me by nature as I noticed the emerald light of fireflies beginning to swirl in the short distance. I imagined a summer evening at the cemetery a hundred years ago when the moonbeams illuminating the lid would have seemed to coalesce into a flock of fireflies, luminescent souls of the departed performing their mating dance. They would glide around the marble slab following the circumvallating flow of the figures, from the angels that emerge out of the starry

<sup>45</sup> Letter from Ricardo de Orueta to Tomás Navarro Tomás, October 4, 1937 (RE-JAE/168/23:7), cited in CABANAS BRAVO, “Ricardo de Orueta”, in *En el frente del arte*, pp. 74-5.

<sup>46</sup> The manuscript was preserved and has been recently published, Ricardo de ORUETA, *La escultura española de los siglos XI y XII*, Valladolid, 2015.

<sup>47</sup> For a meditation on the fragility of the history of Spanish medieval art as an intellectual project, establishing a conversation with the voices and objects we encounter on the verge of oblivion, including references to Kingsley Porter's legacy, see F. PRADO-VILAR, “*Flabellum*: Ulises, la Catedral de Santiago y la Historia del Arte medieval español como proyecto intelectual”, *Anales de Historia del Arte*, Volumen Extraordinario, 2 (2011) pp. 281–316. On these themes, especially in the context of the previous discussions, see also, M. A. HOLLY, *The Melancholy Art*, Princeton and Oxford, 2013; G. DIDI-HUBERMAN, *The Surviving Image: Phantoms of Time and Time of Phantoms: Aby Warburg's History of Art*, University Park, PA, 2017; *IBID.*, *Survival of the Fireflies*, Minneapolis and London, 2018; H. BELTING, *An Anthropology of Images. Picture, Medium, Body*, Princeton and Oxford, 2014; and A. NEMEROV, *Soulmaker. The Times of Lewis Hine*, Princeton and Oxford, 2016.



Fig. 17. **a.** Camera of A. Kingsley Porter in the Agios Petros church at Kalyvia, southwest of Athens. Berenson Library Byzantine art and architecture photograph collection, no. 000136648. Biblioteca Berenson, Villa I Tatti – The Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies. **b.** Students on a field trip to Mérida. Photo: ATN\_GMO\_e1423. Fondo Gómez-Moreno/Orueta, ACCHS (CSIC). **c.** Students on a field trip to Mérida. Photo: ATN/GMO/e1421. Fondo Gómez-Moreno/Orueta, ACCHS (CSIC). **d.** Intaglio with Selene and Endymion, first century A.D., Landeshauptstadt, Hannover, Museum August Kestner, inv. K 490. Photo: Chr. Tepper

firmament on one side, passing over the sacred vessel, to turn around and end up hovering above Alfonso's portrait, enhancing with their light the vitality of his eyes. And then, with Dante, I thought of Kingsley and Ricardo transfigured into fireflies – nomadic, fragile luminous beings, emitting intermittent flashes of light that project themselves beyond death and reach us with their afterglow to guide us as we gather the fragments of the past, and of our minds:

They went joyously down into that vast tomb, and wandered by torchlight through a sort of dream, in which reminiscences of church aisles and grimy cellars...seemed to be broken into fragments, and hopelessly intermingled.

To Kingsley, Ricardo, and Serafín





12





