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The *superstes*

Resurrection, the Survival of Antiquity, and the Poetics of the Body in Romanesque Sculpture

“Behold, I tell you a mystery. We shall all indeed rise again: but we shall not all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall rise again incorruptible: and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption; and this mortal must put on immortality. And when this mortal hath put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: Death is swallowed up in victory.”

1 *Corinthians* 15:51–54

In May 1105, Count Sancho Ramírez, the first-born son of King Ramiro I of Aragon, signed with his own hand the precious parchment that contains his testament. In that moment of reckoning, faced with the realization that human nature is brief and fragile (*humana natura brevis et fragilis est*), he may have reflected on the memories of a long and eventful life – one that had been marked in the beginning by travel and adventure, and defined, in the end, by piety and the call of duty.¹

The child of an illegitimate union, he abandoned the kingdom in his youth to go to the “land of the moors” causing his father to stipulate in his first will (1059) that he would be disinherited if he failed to return to Aragon and “regain his love” and that of his younger brother of the same name, who would later reign as King Sancho Ramírez (r. 1064–1094). Having eventually found his way back to his homeland, he managed not only to repair his familial ties, but also to become an essential agent in the construction of the fledgling kingdom, actively participating in its political consolidation, and contributing to its monumental splendor through a committed labor of patronage in several religious foundations. He maintained a special spiritual connection with the Augustinian canons of the cathedral of Jaca, and with their bishop

1 For a partial transcription of this document, whose original is in the archive of the cathedral of Jaca (inv. A12.1105), see Huesca (1802), 449–452. For the biography of Count Sancho Ramírez, see Arco y Garay (1945), 115–119, and Lapeña Paul (2004), 46f. For the historical context of the Kingdom of Aragon and the patronage of art by members of the royal family, see Mann (2009).

Pedro, whom he addressed as master, supporting with generous donations the remodeling of the episcopal complex, which was to include a chapel designated to be the site of his own tomb. In that cathedral, dedicated to Saint Peter in honor of the alliance between the Aragonese monarchy and the Papacy, he may have attended mass on many occasions during the final years of his life and meditate on the promise of the resurrection as he listened to passages from Scripture describing the events of the Day of Judgment (Fig. 1):

“And the sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and hell gave up their dead that were in them; and they were judged every one according to their works. And hell and death were cast into the pool of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the pool of fire” (*Revelation* 20:13–15).

Immersed in the constellation of images conjured up by the language of Revelation, he may have occasionally lifted his eyes to gaze at the myriad carved capitals decorating the nave of the temple. At the top of a column, stone seemed to liquefy into a stream of running water from where emerge the dead being expelled by the sea (Fig. 1a, b and c). As if prompted by the sound of apocalyptic trumpets, two figures propel themselves upwards in a vital thrust – their bodies suddenly restored to their physical plenitude – while they leave behind, lurking by the sides, demonic personifications death and hell. In this scene, the beauty of the Christian resurrection is made visible through the resurrection of classical beauty. The sculptor found inspiration in the gatherings of nereids, tritons, and other denizen of the sea that glide in the marble weaves of Roman sarcophagi, many of which were then being reused in Christian burials and therefore available for perusal by artists, both in open air cemeteries and in churches such as Sant Pere d'Àger, not far from Aragon (Fig. 1c). To the eyes of the faithful, those festive scenes of sea-dwellers cavorting in the water at the sound of music served to give concrete shape to the eternal bliss described in homilies and commentaries like Julian of Toledo's immensely popular *Prognosticum futuri saeculi* (Fore-

- 2 Seraffín Moralejo, although without elucidating the iconography of this capital, was first to identify the classical models for its composition in marine *thiasos* sarcophagi, citing the example in the Collegiate Church of Sant Pere d'Àger, see Moralejo (1979). Closer parallels, which include the figures of erotes playing double *auloi* that reappear in the Jaca capital, can be found in examples at the Vatican Museums (inv. 2312), and the Louvre, particularly the so-called *Tomb of the Nereids* (inv. MR 885). For a discussion of the meanings of marine *thiasos* sarcophagi in their original funerary contexts and in their posterior reuse, see Zanker/Ewald (2012), 111–129, and 399–403 (for two examples reused in Christian burials, one in the *Palazzo dei Conservatori* and another one in the Church of San Crisogono in Rome). For an overview of the reuse of antique sarcophagi in the Iberian Peninsula, see Moralejo (1984a).



Fig. 1a, b: Jaca, San Pedro: Capital of the Resurrection, ca. 1094. Photo: Antonio García Omedes.

Fig. 1c: Sant Vicenç d'Àger: Sarcophagus with marine *thiasos* from Sant Pere d'Àger (Lleida).
Photo: Baldiri Barat.

knowledge of the World to Come): “*The bodies of all the saints will rise again, overflowing with every happiness and glory of immortality, and as they will be without any corruption, lack, weariness, so they will be also without any deformity; in whose bodies, as Saint Augustine affirms, there will be as much swiftness as happiness.*”³

The *Pathosformeln* created by Roman artists to express visually the spectrum of emotions accompanying the experience of death, from the melancholy of loss to the consolation afforded by the joys of the afterlife, were ready to be divested of their mythological referential matrix and become vessels of embodiment for the actors in that extraordinary cosmic drama of material transformations which was to unfold

3 Julian of Toledo (2010), 441.



Fig. 2a: Huesca, San Pedro el Viejo: Sarcophagus of King Ramiro II of Aragón.

Photo: Antonio García Omedes.



Fig. 2b: Jaca, Convent of the Benedictines: Sarcophagus of Countess Sancha.

Photo: Antonio García Omedes.

when, as Paul says in his First Epistle to the Corinthians: “In the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet [...] the dead shall rise again incorruptible.” That was precisely the moment evoked by the decoration of a third-century marble Roman sarcophagus reemployed as the tomb of King Ramiro II of Aragon (r. 1134–1137), Count Sancho Ramirez’s nephew (Fig. 2a).⁴ Through the lens of Christian eschatology, the erote blowing a flute on the left side of the frieze becomes an angel who sounds the trumpet summoning the dead to rise again – an instance that is represented in the central tableau where the portrait of the deceased, now identified as the Aragonese monarch in substitution of the sarcophagus’s original patron, is born aloft by erotes/angels, who ascend to heaven over personifications of earth (Tellus) and ocean (Oceanus). Coming to terms with his own mortality, Count Sancho Ramírez was surely looking forward to the glory of the resurrection and the joys of the afterlife as he drew up his will in the cathedral of Jaca, disposing that his funerary chapel should be concluded “to perfection” if death surprised him before it was finished, and leaving funding for

⁴ For this sarcophagus, with previous bibliography, see Lapuente (2012).



Fig. 3: Jaca, Diocesan Museum of Jaca Cathedral: Sarcophagus of Count Sancho Ramírez. Photo: Belén Bistué Garcés.

the celebration of an anniversary mass to ensure the salvation of his soul. Dedicated to Saint Nicholas, Saint Augustine, and Saint Martial, this chapel, located in the area bordering the north apse of the temple, underwent several transformations over the centuries disappearing almost completely when the Romanesque cloister, to which it was connected, was dismantled in the seventeenth century. All that seemed to have remained of the count's last abode was a large stone sarcophagus containing some scattered bones, and the fragments of an epitaph recording his patronage in the erection of the chapel and asking for a prayer for the salvation of his soul (Fig. 3).⁵

Time seemed to have been more kind to the sepulchral monuments commissioned by other members of his family, such as his sister, Countess Sancha (+1097), whose richly decorated sarcophagus, featuring her portrait and an image of her naked

5 The inscription reads: “ora pro anima sancii comitis qui fecit hanc ecclesiam, et coadiutoris eius sancii peccatoris. dedicata est ecclesia a stephano episcopo in honorem sancti nicholai, et sancti augustini, et sancti marcialis pridie idus decembris.” For this chapel and the sarcophagus, see Aznárez López/García Dueñas (1991). For the cloister of the cathedral of Jaca, see Aznárez López (1961).



Fig. 4a, b: Jaca, Diocesan Museum of Jaca Cathedral:
Capital of the Satyr, ca. 1105.
Photo: Antonio García Omedes.



Fig. 4c, d: Jaca, Diocesan Museum of Jaca Cathedral:
Capital of the Satyr, ca. 1105.
Photo: Antonio García Omedes.

soul being lifted to heaven by angels, has served to preserve her memory until today, granting her a prominent place in the History of Art (Fig. 2b).⁶

However, two magnificent sculpted capitals that have survived the ravages of time and escaped destruction by being reused in different dependencies within the cathedral, and nearby locations in the city, might furnish another testimony of the splendor of the count's final artistic enterprise, and fulfill, centuries later, the function for which they were conceived: the work of remembrance and resurrection. One of them, now famously known as the *capital of the satyr*, startles visitors to the Diocesan Museum of Jaca Cathedral with the stunning sight of a petrified conflagration of fire from where emerges the most extraordinary nude of the Middle Ages accompanied by one of the most sublime images of the phoenix rising from the ashes in the History of Art (Fig. 4).⁷ The other capital, currently housed in the church of Santiago and Santo Domingo, where it is exhibited in a glass display case with dramatic lighting, is decorated with figures whose monumental corporeality endows them with an overbearing sense of presence and an entrancing self-possessed quality (Fig. 5).⁸

Despite being exquisite works of art that can be securely assigned, on stylistic grounds, to one of the principal workshops of Romanesque sculpture, responsible for such key monuments as the Porte Miègeville of Saint-Sernin in Toulouse and the north transept portal of the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela (ca. 1105–1110),

- 6 For this sarcophagus, see Porter 1924. Among the documents reproduced by Porter in this seminal article is the twelfth-century copy of the Proceedings (*Actas*) of the Council of Jaca of 1063 (Jaca Cathedral Archive, sig. 1A1.1), where King Ramiro I appears accompanied by his two sons named Sancho Ramírez, the king and the count, signaling the distinction of the latter, who proudly refers to himself in some documents as 'Sancius primogenitus regis' underscoring his condition as the first-born son. For this document, see Edad de un Reyno (2006), vol. 1, 157–159. For a more recent discussion of Countess Sancha's sarcophagus and her role in the context of the patronage of Romanesque art by royal women in the Iberian Kingdoms, see Mann (2009), 77–100. On female patronage of Romanesque monuments associated with dynastic memory, also see Valdez del Alamo (1996), Walker (1998), and Prado-Vilar (2009). Less reliable in the treatment of sources, material evidence and chronological proposals is Martin (2006).
- 7 As a result of my earlier study of this work, where I argued for its central importance in the corpus of Romanesque sculpture, Prado-Vilar (2010a), and thanks to the initiative of associations such as *Amigos del Románico*, *Asociación Sancho Ramírez*, and the local authorities, the capital was retrieved from under the altar table where it had been hidden for most of the twentieth century, restored and incorporated to the permanent collection of the Diocesan Museum of Jaca Cathedral. The lecture I delivered on the occasion of its unveiling, coinciding with the 5th anniversary of the museum, was published in Prado-Vilar (2015). A photographic report of the process of retrieval and conservation, by the specialist Antonio García Omedes, who contributed greatly to raising public awareness about this work, can be accessed in his online research database: www.romanicoaragones.com.
- 8 For this capital, see Art of Medieval Spain (1994), 207ff., and Simon (1994) with photographs of its earlier location within the same church serving as a support of a baptismal font (a reused piece of Hispano-Arab origin).



Fig. 5: Jaca, Church of Santiago and Santo Domingo: Capital of the Count, ca. 1105.
Photo: Antonio García Omedes.

they have been largely overlooked in the international scholarly literature, mainly due to their displacement, decontextualization, and their seemingly undecipherable iconography.⁹ Both capitals, as I shall argue, were produced for the funerary chapel of Count Sancho Ramírez, and were meant to be observed together in the vicinity of his

9 The style of these capitals, generally classified as Hispano-Languedocian Romanesque, emerges from a synthesis between the traditions of the so-called *Jaca master*, responsible for most of the sculptural decoration of the cathedral ca. 1094, including the aforementioned *capital of the resurrection* (Fig. 1), and the contemporary workshop of Gelduinus in Toulouse, ca. 1095. The artistic interchange between Jaca and Toulouse at this moment is evidenced by the punctual presence of a sculpture by the workshop of Gelduinus in Jaca and vice versa, see Moralejo (1973) and Durliat (1977). For a survey of Hispano-Languedocian sculpture, see Durliat (1990). For the *Jaca master*, see Moralejo (1977) and (1979), and Prado-Vilar (2008), (2010a), and (2011a). For the Porte Miègeville of Saint-Sernin, see Cazes/Cazes (2008). For the north transept portal of the cathedral of Santiago (the so-called *Porta Francigena*), see Prado-Vilar (2011b) with previous bibliography.



Fig. 6: Giorgio Vasari: Frontispiece of the 1568 edition of the “Le vite de’ più eccellenti pittori, scultori e architettori.”

sarcophagus as part of an overarching program centered on ideas of Christian resurrection, rebirth and renewal. Although all of the iconographic motifs decorating these works find precedents and parallels in contemporary sepulchral imagery, and are grounded in texts which were often cited in the liturgy of the Office of the Dead, and in homiletic compendia, ranging from the Pauline Epistles and Augustine's writings on the Resurrection to the Bestiary, they have proven resistant to interpretation and are virtually absent in discussions of medieval art.¹⁰ This is largely due to the very same qualities that should grant them the status of masterpieces in the corpus of Romanesque sculpture: their innovative reinvention of iconographic themes, and the brilliance and captivating beauty of their plastic execution. They are the products of the confluence of a uniquely gifted artist, trained in a workshop characterized by an intense engagement with antique art, and an educated patron who fostered his creativity by opening up for him a horizon of possibilities for a very personal commission, his own tomb.

From an epistemological perspective, these two works constitute an extraordinary case of *Nachleben der Antike* that allows for a theoretical reformulation of the notion the artistic survival in light of the eschatological dogma of the resurrection. They give insight into the complex processes by which the poetics of the body and emotional power of classical sculpture were activated and transformed into vehicles to visualize the Christian mystery of the resurrection of the flesh. In this respect, they anticipate essential aspects of the etiology of the engagement with antique art in the context of the Italian Renaissance, especially in Rome. Not surprisingly, *Nachleben der Antike* and Christian resurrection are conflated in the design of the very image that adorns the foundational "scripture" upon which the fiction of the uniqueness of the Renaissance is predicated: the frontispiece of the 1568 edition of Vasari's *Lives of the Artists* (fig. 6). As Didi-Huberman observed, we are facing a "pagan Last Judgment" where *Fama* takes on the role of the Angel of the Resurrection, blowing her trumpet to summon back to life the dead artists who suffered the "second death" which results from the destruction of their works and the forgetting of their names. "The breath [of the trumpet of the angel]," reads the Latin inscription accompanying this image, "will proclaim that these men never perished and never were vanquished by death."¹¹ At the sound of the trumpet, the dead artists come out of the ground

10 For an examination of the importance of the dogma of the resurrection of the flesh in medieval theology and the visual arts, see Bynum (1995).

11 For a discussion of this frontispiece, see Didi-Huberman (2005), 53–84. "The Quattrocento and then the Cinquecento," contends this scholar, recalling imagery that will recur in the present study "invented the idea of a phoenix-age, an age when art would be reborn from its ashes. Which was to presuppose that there were ashes, that *art had been dead*. By inventing something like a resurrection of art, the Renaissance delivered, with the same blow, a fantasy of the death of art" (Ibid., 53).

taking on perfect bodies reminiscent of famous classical statues, such as the Torso Belvedere and the Laocoön, which, themselves, had also been laying buried as if they were corpses waiting to be “unearthed” and called back to life. Shivering, they regain movement with the gesticulation of inebriated satyrs in a Dionysian *thiasos*.¹²

Vasari’s frontispiece may serve as a dialectical screen for the discussion that follows, which will start with a *periegesis* through the visual landscape that connects Jaca with Rome in order to delve into the origin, circulation, and transformation of the themes and images that coalesce in the creation of these capitals – a landscape travelled by members of the Aragonese royal family, ecclesiastical patrons, and the artists who worked for them.

Fulget Roma terrestris: Marble, Gold, and the Phoenix of Rome

“How beautiful must be the heavenly Jerusalem if the earthly Rome thus shines. And if in this world one can accord so much honor to those who love vanity, then how much this honor and glory will be elevated to the saints who live contemplating the truth” (Ferrandus, *Vita S. Fulgentii* 9).¹³

In 1068 King Sancho Ramírez embarked on a transcendental pilgrimage to Rome with the intention of putting the young kingdom founded by his father under the direct protection of the Holy See by swearing allegiance to the Pope and thus becoming his vassal as *miles Sancti Petri*. The members of the Aragonese delegation, among whom might have been Count Sancho Ramírez, encountered an overpowering city of ruins and relics, where the material remains of ancient monuments were infused with the teeming power of the blood of the early martyrs.¹⁴ The beauty of *Roma terrestris*, as Fulgentius had observed more than five hundred years earlier, anticipated the splendor of the *Hierusalem coelestis* that awaited the faithful at the end of time. History and eschatology coalesced everywhere in Rome, especially in the venerable early basilicas decorated with scintillating mosaics of golden backgrounds destined to transport the spectator to the glorious visions of the triumph of Christ over death, combining Biblical images with symbols adopted from the Roman imperial past.¹⁵

12 For the unearthing of classical statues in Renaissance Rome, see Barkan (1999).

13 Cited in Kalas (2015), 171.

14 For the revival of antiquity in Rome at the turn of the twelfth century, see Krautheimer (1980), Kinney (1986), (2006), and (2011), Claussen (1992), Hansen (2003), Settis (2008), Herklotz (2000), Tucci (2004), and Riccioni (2011).

15 For a recent study of these mosaics, see Thunø (2015), esp. 63–118. For the transformation of Roman art and architecture in the Constantinian period and its aftermath, see Elsner (1995), and Holloway (2004).



Fig. 7a: Half Centenionalis of Constantius II. Siscia mint. Photo: Beast Coins, LLC.

Fig. 7b: Half Centenionalis of Constantius II. Antioch mint. Photo: Beast Coins, LLC.

Fig. 7c: Rome, San Giovanni in Laterano, Apse mosaic: Phoenix in the Heavenly Jerusalem.
Photo: Public domain image.

Among them was the dazzling apse mosaic of the Basilica of Saint John Lateran, which showed one of the most enthralling visions of the apotheosis of the Church in eschatological perspective.¹⁶ Inside Mount Golgotha, from where emerges a colossal

¹⁶ For this mosaic, its original configuration and its later transformations: Petersen (1991). Among the religious foundations established by Count Sancho Ramírez was the priory of Augustinian

crux gemmata with the four rivers of Paradise flowing from its base, one could see the Heavenly Jerusalem represented as a walled city guarded by an archangel brandishing a sword (Fig. 7c). Perched on top of the palm tree that flourishes in the center of the city stands a phoenix – the bird believed to die and resurrect from its ashes every five hundred years. From the time of Trajan and Hadrian, this “king of birds” had been the symbol of Rome and of the emperor, who “did not die but was [...] eternally regenerated in his successors.”¹⁷ In the early Middle Ages, Hadrian’s Mausoleum, the nest of the phoenix, was renamed Castellum S. Angeli for being the place of the miraculous apparition of the archangel Michael, and was transformed into a towering construction crowned by a chapel “usque ad caelos,” as Liutprando of Cremona described it in the tenth century.¹⁸ Like the mausoleum itself, now turned into a site for the epiphany of the Archangel of Revelation – a monument which surely mesmerized the Aragonese ambassadors on their way to Saint Peter’s – the figure of the phoenix continued to be an emblem in the newly Christian empire when it was chosen by Emperor Constantius II, the son of Constantine the Great, to symbolize the eternal rebirth and renewal of Rome in the coins issued in 348 to commemorate the 1100 anniversary of the founding of the city. The “bird of the sun” appears standing on a pyre or perched on a globe encircled by the inscription FEL.[ICIUM] TEMP.[ORUM] REPARATIO – the restoration of happy times (Fig. 7a, b).¹⁹ The motif of the phoenix also entered religious contexts, becoming, as we have seen, ubiquitous in the decoration of the main Christian basilicas, including the apse mosaics of Santissimi Cosma e Damiano, Santa Maria in Trastevere, or the Lateran, where it was often associated with the image of the resurrected Christ. With the same meaning, the immortal bird also appears next to Christ in a series of Late antique sarcophagi of the *Traditio Legis*, such as the notable example from the cemetery of Alyscamps – a mandatory stop in the Via Tolosana of the pilgrimage roads to Santiago and to Rome – where the phoenix, now partially damaged, is carved in a palm tree, resembling an inhabited vegetal capital on top of a column (Fig. 8).²⁰ The author of the Pilgrim’s Guide of the *Liber Sancti Iacobi* describes the Roman necropolis of Alyscamps (the Elysian Fields), by then turned into a Christian cemetery, as a veritable “museum

canons of San Pedro de Lasieso which he directly put under of the tutelage of the Holy See sending an annual tribute of gold to the Lateran.

- 17 See Davies (2000b), esp. 253, and (2000a), 93–101, for Hadrianic golden coins showing a phoenix.
 18 Cited in Mercalli (1987), 68 (“ecclesia quae in eius vertice videtur, in honore summi et celestis militiae principis archangeli Michelis fabricate, dicatur sancti Angeli ecclesia usque ad caelos”). For Castel Sant’Angelo, see D’Onofrio (1978), and Squadrilli (2000). For the myth of the phoenix, see Van den Broek (1972), and Nigg (2016).
 19 For these coins, see Mattingly (1933).
 20 On this sarcophagus, in the context of a study of baptismal iconography in funerary settings, see Jensen (2011), esp. 66–68.



Fig. 8: Arles, Musée de l'Arles antique: Sarcophagus of the Traditio Legis, inv. MA 17.
Photo: D-DAI-ROM-60.1728.

without walls” where visitors, including patrons and artists, could wonder at the immense expanse of images carved in marble, as they engaged in musings of death and resurrection:

“Then, one should visit, near the city of Arles, the cemetery at a place called ‘les Alyscamps’, and intercede for the dead with prayers, psalms and alms, according to custom; its length and breath are a mile. In no other cemetery but this one can be found so many marble tombs placed on the ground nor of such a size. For they are sculpted with various works and Latin letters and an unintelligible ancient language. The farther you look, the more sarcophagi you will see. In this same cemetery there are seven churches; if, in any one of them, a priest celebrates a mass for the dead, or a layman devotedly has some priest celebrate, or if a cleric reads the psalms there, he is sure to find in the presence of God, at the Final Resurrection, helpers among those pious dead lying there to aid him in obtaining salvation” (*Liber Santi Iacobi*, bk. 5, ch. 8).²¹

As a result of the bond established between the Aragonese monarchy and the Papacy during that journey to Rome, other precious coins arrived in the Eternal City when the Christian era entered the 1100 year of the birth of Christ (Fig 9a). These gold

21 Gerson/Krochalis/Stones (1998), vol. 2, 35. For pagan sarcophagi from the cemetery of Alyscamps, see Gaggadis-Robin (2005).



Fig. 9a: *Auro de Jacca* of King Sancho Ramírez. Photo: Public domain image.



Fig. 9b: Pamplona, Museo de Navarra, Inv. 4605: Coin of Pedro I of Aragón.
Photo: Museo de Navarra.

auros de Jacca, as they are referred to in contemporary documents, were issued to pay the annual tribute of vassalage to the Papacy.²² They served, at the same time, to commemorate the emergence of the young kingdom which, under the protection of the Constantinian *labarum* – carved on the main tympanum of the cathedral of Jaca and many other dynastic foundations – had become the champion in the advance of Christianity in the Iberian Peninsula, and a force for the reformation of the Hispanic Church by promoting the early introduction of the Roman rite. The obverse of these gold *mancuses*, as they are also known, shows the bust effigy of King Sancho Ramírez,

22 For these coins, see Mozo Monroy (2015). For the coinage from Jaca, minted in a workshop adjacent to the cathedral, see Crusafont/Balaguer/Grierson (1986), 101–104.

and, on the reverse, in a field inscribed with the word ARA-GON, grows the tree of life topped by a cross, which came to symbolize the kingdom – a land that was to become a true artistic “nest” for the rebirth of the phoenix of Rome.

The king himself could have given some of those *auros de Iacca* to his older brother, Count Sancho Ramírez, when the latter, already entering the autumn of his life, during Lent of 1092, went to the royal monastery of San Juan de la Peña to announce his intention of undertaking a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, *causa orationis*, to visit the Holy Sepulcher, the site of the Resurrection of Christ. The memories of the pilgrimage of a lifetime and the images he saw decorating the sacred places of Christendom, from Rome to Jerusalem, might have been present in the count’s mind when, in that spring of 1105, he drew up his will giving instructions for the erection of his own sepulchral monument, with his hopes set in the promise of resurrection: “I know that my Redeemer lives, and in the last day I shall rise out of the earth. And I shall be clothed again with my skin, and in my flesh I will see my God. Whom I myself shall see, and my eyes shall behold, and not another: this my hope is laid up in my bosom” (*Job* 19:25–27).²³

23 Although we lack direct evidence to reconstruct the disposition of the capitals in the context of the tomb, it is possible that they served to support an *arcosolium* reproducing a structure which can be found in a typology of tombs that was then being commissioned by Roman magnates in the context of the *renovatio* at the turn of the twelfth century. As an example we may cite the tomb of Alfanus, located in the porch of Santa Maria in Cosmedin, whose arrangement, with a stone sarcophagus, a canopy and richly carved capitals, recalls late Antique and early Christian models going back to the catacombs, see Osborne (1983). For comparative examples ranging from Norman sepulchral monuments in Italy to the tomb of Begon III in the cloister of Sainte-Foy in Conques, see Herklotz (1985), Gardner (1992), and s’Jacob (1954). Closer to the conditions of patronage of the tomb of Count Sancho Ramírez, and to its location in the vicinity of the cloister of Jaca Cathedral, is the funerary monument built in the cloister of the monastery of Santo Domingo de Silos for one its main benefactors, Muño Sánchez de Finojosa (+1080), another illustrious Iberian knight, from the neighboring court of King Alfonso VI of León-Castile. Unlike Count Sancho Ramírez, who fulfilled his dream of travelling to Jerusalem to visit the Holy Sepulcher while still alive, Muño was only granted that privilege after death as a miraculous reward for his piety and his service defending Christianity against the infidels. Although nothing remains of this cenotaph, aside from a few sculptural fragments, documents describe it as a vaulted structure supported by arches resting on beautifully carved capitals, some of which might still survive reused in other parts of the monastery. As Valdez del Álamo noted, the overall structure of the cenotaph was reminiscent of representations of the Holy Sepulcher in contemporary art and, indeed, the promise of eternal life must have been the central thrust of its program, amplified by the imagery of the large reliefs decorating the cloister piers where the Resurrection of Christ, could “be ‘grasped’ or ‘apprehended’ when seeing it enacted by the Apostles in their encounters with Him”. see Valdez del Álamo (2012), esp. 89–97.

Signa resurrectionis: The Capital of the Satyr

“If we were saying that the flesh is going to rise again in order to be hungry, thirsty, sick, to be in difficulties and subject to decay, then you would be absolutely right not to believe [...]. The flesh will rise imperishable, the flesh will rise without blemish, without deformity, without mortality, without being a burden or a weight. The flesh that is now your embarrassment will afterward be your embellishment” (Augustine, *Sermon* 240:3–5).²⁴

A light beautiful body, “without blemish, without deformity, without mortality, without being a burden or a weight” such as the one imagined by Augustine, materializes in one of the capitals that was destined to accompany the count’s mortal remains, presenting us with an arresting vision of the culminating moment in which the deceased emerges from the flames of eschatological fire fully restored to his corporeal plenitude (Fig. 10a). Arguing against Gnostics and pagans, Augustine had forcefully defended the carnality of the bodies of the resurrected, visualizing celestial Paradise as a transfiguration of life in the terrestrial realm, now purged of the abject consequences of the original sin. The bodies of the elect would assume again their mortal shape and individual features regaining each of their organs, which would not be subjected to utilitarian use nor suffer decline but they would enjoy a *sanitas perfecta*. Returning to a prelapsarian state of nudity without shame, they would be a source of delight and sensual gratification. Earlier masterpieces of Romanesque sculpture in the Iberian Peninsula, such as the Cross of Fernando I and Sancha (ca. 1063), exemplify how the theme of the resurrection offered skilled artists the opportunity to explore the representation of nude bodies in movement (Fig. 11a).²⁵ One may say that the artistic flow set in motion by the dynamic stream of intertwining naked figures ascending heavenward on the borders of the ivory cross, at whose sight the Leonese monarch found solace in his last days, achieves its culmination, two generations later, in the Jaca nude. This, in turn, projects itself, in the *longue durée* of the History of Art, on two central works of the Renaissance which result from a “medieval” conflation of *Nachleben der Antike* and the dogma of the Resurrection of the Flesh – a conflation intensified by the personal circumstances of their creators: Luca Signorelli’s frescoes

24 Augustine (1993), 66–68.

25 Werckmeister analyzed the iconography of this ivory crucifix in relation to the Liturgy of the Dead, proposing that it was probably commissioned to be used in the penitential rites of the king, and to preside his funeral, see Werckmeister (1980). For the Cross and the Royal Pantheon of San Isidoro de León, see Prado-Vilar (2009), with discussions of previous literature. Also see Gómez-Moreno (1965).



Fig. 10a: Jaca, Diocesan Museum of Jaca Cathedral: Capital of the Satyr.

Photo: Juan Antonio Olañeta.

Fig. 10b: Arlon (Belgium), Musée Archéologique d'Arlon: Gallo-Roman pillar.

Photo: De Agostini Picture Library/G. Dagli Orti/Bridgeman Images.

in the Cappella Nuova of Orvieto Cathedral (Fig. 11b) and the masterpiece that, according to Vasari, was inspired by them, Michelangelo's *Sistine Last Judgment* (originally commissioned by Pope Clement VII as a "Resurrection").²⁶

26 For Luca Signorelli's *Resurrection of the Flesh*, set in the context of a funerary chapel in connection to painted and stone sarcophagi, see Henry (2012), 175–209. For a discussion of Freud's response to the frescoes, see Wilden (1966), and Owens (2004). For Vasari's famous story of Signorelli drawing the body of his deceased son to preserve the beauty that nature had given him but fortune had taken away, see Vasari (1991), 271. For Michelangelo's *Last Judgment* in the perspective of medieval and early Renaissance representations of the Resurrection of the Dead, see Barnes (1998), and Hall (2005). On the topic of death, embodiment, and representation, also see Belting (2011), 84–143.



Fig. 11a: Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional: Cross of Fernando I and Sancha, inv. 52340. Photo: Gómez-Moreno (1965).

Fig. 11b: Orvieto, Cathedral Santa Maria Assunta, Capella Nuova: Detail of Luca Signorelli's Resurrection of the Flesh. Photo: De Agostini Picture Library/S. Vannini/Bridgeman Images.

If Signorelli had rehearsed the muscular nudes of the Orvieto Resurrection in earlier works inspired by Bacchic imagery such as his *Court of Pan*, the Jaca sculptor similarly studied classical models, drawn primarily from the universe of the Dionysian *thiasoi*.²⁷ In its anatomic articulation and surface effects, this Romanesque nude arises from a combination of several classical *Pathosformeln* of figures engaged in ecstatic dances, such as the satyr stretching to reach a bunch of grapes and the diminutive dancing maenad carved on a third-century Gallo-Roman pillar from Arlon (Fig. 10b).²⁸ To be sure, far from attempting a simple reproduction of a specific figural prototype, the medieval artist studied and mastered the mechanisms of mimetic representation in classical sculpture and, at the same time, exploited the specific morphology of the Romanesque capital as an artistic environment in order to enhance the

27 For Signorelli's *Court of Pan*, destroyed in 1945, see Henry (2012), 84–85.

28 For the Arlon pillar, see Lejeune (2009).



Fig. 12 Madrid, Museo del Prado,
Inv. 173-e: Roman altar.
Photo: Peter Witte, D-DAI-Madrid-WIT-R-18-95-13.

illusion of a dynamic epiphanic encounter. First, he deploys its tectonic function – emphasized by the crouching position and muscular tension of the lateral figures – to showcase, by contrast, the buoyancy of a body that hovers in the air. Then, he takes into consideration the elevated placement of the capital, thus presenting a foreshortened body whose plastic plenitude is meant to be perceived from the lower viewpoint of the spectator. The result is an aerial undulating figure suspended in mid-air that evokes the effect this figuration acquires in a classical typology of objects where it is commonly found, *oscilla* – marble discs that were hang in trees next to sacred groves or in the perystiles of Roman houses. Exposed to the elements, they could move with the wind endowing their figural decoration with a vibrant animated quality.²⁹ A Roman altar in the Prado Museum in Madrid, adorned with one of the most elegant representations of a Dionysian *thiasos* from Antiquity, shows a satyr dancing just

29 For examples of *oscilla* decorated with similar images of dancing satyrs, see Dwyer (1981), and Bacchetta (2006). For a reassessment of the importance of this typology of objects, Taylor (2005).

below an *oscillum* (Fig. 12). The anti-gravitational pull of the satyr is accentuated by its spatial relation to the *oscillum*, whose decoration, featuring a maenad, echoes the dance of the satyr as if representing the continuation of his movement in a visual *mise-en-abyme*.³⁰ The Jaca nude, achieving an even more dynamic effect of *visual fugue*, presents us with a compelling visualization of the natural phenomena of the resurrection as it was described by authors such as Julian of Toledo: “We are to understand this in the same way that we understand that a light feather, a piece of straw, or a thin and dried leaf are lifted aloft by a gust of wind and a puff and are brought high from the earth; likewise, by a glance or a movement of God the bodies of the dead will move, ready at the arrival of the judge” (Fig. 15b).³¹

Consubstantial to the creation of this figure is also a conscious revival of the sensuality of the classical nude, here again put in the service of Christian eschatology. Augustine had argued that there will be no need for sex or reproduction in heaven because death will not exist. The lust (*concupiscentia*) that comes from the urge of engaging in physical intercourse will also cease, and vision will be the vehicle to attain sensual pleasure, which will be drawn from the contemplation of beauty. The capacity to experience “carnal” enjoyment would not be lost but would be transformed because the eyes of the resurrected will be endowed with a special power (*virtus*) – a potent and penetrating gaze (*vis itaque praepollentior oculorum*) capable of capturing the beauty that resides on the inside and, at the same time, achieving a heightened delight in the contemplation of the exterior beauty that resides in the harmony of the body and the perfect articulation of all its organs. Margaret Miles discusses Augustine in terms that may be taken as a guide for the appreciation of the meanings and effects of the Jaca nude:

“References to the somatic quality of resurrection experience: beauty, pleasure, wonder, amazement, and loveliness are woven through Augustine’s text. His requirements for happiness – intensity and permanence – are met in what we see as the distributed sexuality of resurrected bodies. The primary “organ” of resurrected sexuality is the eyes: ‘By use of the bodily eyes everyone possesses all that s/he delights to see’ (*De trinitate* 14. 19). Scopophilia, the ‘perversion’ that *replaces*, rather than acts as preliminary to, genital sex plays a major role in Augustine’s account of the resurrection. Sight, for Augustine, was a kind of touch. Plato’s theory of vision, adopted by Augustine, pictured a quasi-physical ray of light projecting from the eyes to touch its object [...]. Vision *connects* viewer and object,

30 For this altar, see *Entre Dioses y Hombres* (2008), 214–218.

31 Julian of Toledo (2010), 437.

establishing a two-way street on which, as the viewer sees the object, the object travels back along the visual ray to imprint itself on the memory.”³²

This sublimated sensuality is codified in the Jaca figure, whose eroticism is as unquestionable as it is elusive if we try to frame it within the standard paradigms generally utilized to discuss the meaning of nudity in medieval art, almost exclusively analyzed within marginal discourses of the sinful, the obscene and the grotesque.³³ Here, however, we have a figure that exhibits a poetics of the body much closer in spirit to the carnal sensuality of the classical nude and its rhetorical mechanisms to captivate the observer – mechanisms that were also deployed in the Greco-Roman world to serve a funerary function. As Richard Neer has observed, “The urge to retrieve the deceased, to make him present, is carnal. Not in a symbolic or abstract sense, but literally [...]. At issue is a particular way of seeing a statue – a desiring gaze. This way of seeing is the effective correlate of the statute’s function as the present marker of an absence.”³⁴ To be sure, details such as the softly modeled back elicits sensual enjoyment, but the incapacity to possess the body in full view, leaves the eye hungry for more. This deferral of satisfaction turns the act of viewing into a site for the generation of sensual desire – a desire that is doomed to remain unfulfilled by the inadequacy of vision to appropriate the image, triggering, as a result, a synesthetic impulse. Thus, in its plastic conceptualization, the Jaca sculpture pushes the limits of vision to the domain of touch getting us closer to the idea of the penetrating gaze of the elect in heaven.

On account of this, one could say that the sensual gratification attained by the vision of corporeal beauty in the celestial Paradise, as it was promised by Augustine and subsequent medieval commentators, is similar to the pleasure the spectator derives from the contemplation of classical sculpture, that is, from the viewing of alluring nude bodies which can be caressed and visually touched, without penetration, leaving them and the beholder undefiled. Augustine discusses the very process of manufacturing a bronze statue to explain the preservation of the integrity of the material substance of the body of an individual in resurrection, presenting God as a sculptor:

“An artist who has for some reason produced an ugly statue can recast it and make it beautiful, removing the ugliness without any loss of material substance. And if there was any displeasing excess in some parts of this figure, anything out of proportion to the rest, he does not have to cut it off or throw away any part of

32 Miles (2005), 307–27, esp. 323.

33 For a recent survey and state of the question, see Caviness (2017). For a collection of essays on the meanings of nudity in medieval art, see Lindquist (2012). Also see Kay/Rubin (1996).

34 Neer (2010), 52.

the whole; he can simply moisten the whole of the material and remix it, without producing any ugliness or diminishing the quantity of material. If a human artist can do this, what are we to think of the Almighty Artist?" (*City of God* 22:19).³⁵

The New Earth that will arise after the Last Judgment – conceived as a pleasure garden peopled by beautiful nude dwellers in the prime of life enjoying eternal delights, is envisioned as Rome reborn – the final realization of *felicium temporum reparatio*. Incarnational theology and the anthropology of the resurrection are imagined as *Nachleben der Antike*.³⁶

In conclusion, through the process of intercourse between the bodies located on both extremes of the line of vision, one elusively oscillating in the recesses of the capital, and the other compelled to a peripatetic quest to attain visual fulfillment, the viewer is transported into the dreamscape and temporality of eschatology. He is extracted from the time of the living, and propelled forward to the Day of Judgment when, in the twinkling of an eye, he sees in front of him the glorious resurrected body soaring weightlessly on its way to eternal bliss. Turning his face upwards as if pulled by the sight of celestial wonders, the “Christianized satyr” is inebriated with a desire for God – an instantiation of a *Pathosformel* of blissful ecstasy that doubles to serve both *gods of the resurrection*, Dionysus and Christ.

Circulating around the capital, the spectator can marvel at the sculptor’s skill to carve a conflagration of fire out of stone, encountering a visualization of the phenom-

35 Augustine (1995), 1060.

36 In his discussion of Michelangelo’s *Risen Christ* in Santa Maria sopra Minerva in Rome, Leo Steinberg argues, along the same lines, against early and modern critics who interpreted his nudity all’antica as a departure from Christianity and the product of an aesthetic choice that contradicts its subject matter. To the contrary, ponders the scholar, “Where but in ancient art would he [Michelangelo] have found the pattern of naked perfection untouched by shame, nude bodies untroubled by modesty? Their unabashed freedom conveyed a possibility which Christian teaching reserved only for Christ and for those who would resurrect in Christ’s likeness: the possibility of a human nature without human guilt,” see Steinberg (1996), 19–22, esp. 19–20, and 146–147. Citing extensively medieval sources, especially Augustine, Steinberg goes on to support the main thesis of his book, in which he argues for a theological basis for the representation of Christ’s genitalia, and his erection, in some instances in Renaissance art, particularly in images of the Crucifixion and the Man of Sorrows, where it served to suggest the “resurgence of the flesh” and the potency of the resurrected body, see *Ibid.* 315–325. In the anatomical design of the *Jaca nude*, gently pulling back his penis in between his legs (as Antonio García Omedes has perceptively observed) the sculptor managed both to remove the cloth held by its model without changing its position and muscular configuration, and, at the same time, to accord to the necessity of the presence of the genitalia in the resurrection, which here, as in Augustine’s notorious account of the prelapsarian body, can again be controlled at will.

enology of the end of time as it is described again by Julian of Toledo, citing Augustine, in the *Prognosticum*:

“This world will pass away with a metamorphosis of things, not with a total destruction [...] in the conflagration of all fire of the world [...]. ‘Perhaps someone’, he says, ‘could ask: if, after the judgment has been concluded, this world will burn before it is replaced by a new heaven and a new earth, where will the saints be in the very moment of its conflagration, since they, having bodies, must be in some physical place? We can reply that they will be in the most elevated parts, where the flame of that fire will not reach [...]. In fact, their bodies will be such that they will be there, wherever they will want to be. But, rendered immortal and incorruptible, they will not be frightened by the blaze of that fire.’”³⁷

Petrified flames engulf all the figures in the capital, from the hybrid creatures with blazing heads, bound by their sins to the lower realm, to the elevated area where the resurrected dead swirls heavenwards, his body caressed by the quivering tips of the flames. “If you open and immediately shut your eyes, you can see the whole marble in motion,” famously wrote Goethe of the Laocoön group, describing the effect of the sculpture as a “frozen lightning bolt” in words that can be applied to the *capital of the satyr*, where we actually confront the fiery aftermath of lightning strike.³⁸

Indeed, in the sustained dynamics of viewing that leads to a progressive immersion of the beholder into the theater of eschatology, time collapses and the viewer comes to inhabit the prophesized future where he catches a glimpse of the fleeting vision of the wonders of the resurrection, just before the glorious body departs from the visual field. The sculpture freezes an instance in the material metamorphosis of re-embodiment – an instance in the ontological transformation of a dead corpse into an eternal body. We face a snapshot of the moment when History comes to an end in a conflagration of fire, and from the ashes of History, there emerges eternal life.

Another image of metamorphosis and resurrection, also caught in the culminating moment of its unfolding, occurs in the opposite side of the capital where the phoenix rises from the burning pyre of its destruction, now transformed into the nest of its new life (Fig. 4b). Claudian, a pagan poet writing for Christian emperors at the end of Antiquity, put in words what in Jaca was carved in stone: “The ashes show signs of life; they begin to move though there is none to move them, and feathers clothe the mass of cinders [...] between life and life lay but that brief space wherein

37 Julian of Toledo (2010), 456f.

38 Goethe (1986), 17f. See also Didi-Huberman (2017), 127–130.

the pyre burned [...] Thou hast beheld all that has been, hast witnessed the passing of the ages.”³⁹ For early Christian authors, such as Lactantius, Tertullian, and Ambrose, the phoenix, whose real existence was unquestioned, provided a natural proof of the possibility of life after death. It was, in the words of the Bestiary, “a form and image of our future resurrection”:

“Our Lord Jesus Christ displays the features of this bird, saying: ‘I have the power to lay down my life and to take it again’ (*John*, 10:18). [...] For it is a fact that our Saviour descended from heaven; he filled his wings with the fragrance of the Old and New Testaments; he offered himself to God his father for our sake on the altar of the cross; and on the third he day he rose again [...]. The phoenix can also signify the resurrection of the righteous who, gathering the aromatic plants of virtue, prepare for the renewal of their former energy after death [...]. Let this bird teach us, therefore, by its own example to believe in the resurrection of the body. May the end of this life find you shrouded in that faith, that your bones may be fertile; let them be like a well-watered garden, where the seeds are swiftly raised. The point of this example is that everyone should believe in the truth of the resurrection to come. Faith in the resurrection to come is no more of a miracle than the resurrection of the phoenix from its ashes.”⁴⁰

Also informed by the Bestiary, and endowed with a similar allegorical meaning, is the figure of the lion that occupies the contiguous side of the capital. Its formal genealogy can again be found in the visual universe of the Dionysian *thiasoi*, particularly in the panther skins held by satyrs in their ritual dances, like the ones so prominently featured in the altar from the Prado Museum (Fig. 4c and Fig. 12). Closer even to the image carved in the capital is the lion skin placed next to an inebriated Hercules on the Great Dish of the Mildenhall treasure. The invertebrate carcass becomes a model to represent the lion that sleeps with eyes wide open, another natural symbol of the triumph of Christ over death and his resurrection.⁴¹

The remaining side of the capital, in its absence of figural motifs due to its partial destruction, lets us appreciate the poetics of a continuous material metamorphosis, of

39 Claudian (2014), 222–231.

40 Aberdeen Bestiary (Aberdeen University Library, MS 24), fols. 55r–56v. (transcription and translation in <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/bestiary>). See also Jones (1999). Of the numerous references to the phoenix by Christian writers in their meditations on the resurrection, it is worth mentioning, in the context of this analysis of the *capital of the satyr*, the moving Funeral Oration dedicated by Ambrose to his brother Satyrus (*De excessu Satyri* 2).

41 For illustrations of this comparative analysis, see Prado-Vilar (2015).

stone turning into vegetation and this shifting into fire, in an endless rhythm of becoming (Fig. 4d). Possibly nothing substantial has been lost in the broken fragment and fire itself, in its rich Biblical and eschatological symbolism, was the main theme. Fire was the vehicle for God to make himself visible to Moses in the episode of the burning bush from Exodus:

“And the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he saw that the bush was on fire and was not burnt. And Moses said: *I will go and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt*. And when the Lord saw that he went forward to see, he called to him out of the midst of the bush, and said: *Moses, Moses*. And he answered: *Here I am*” (Exodus 3:2-6).

In Biblical exegesis, the burning bush, like the phoenix, is an image of the resurrected Christ and a symbol of his victory over death. The fact that the word for phoenix in Greek serves to designate, indistinctly, the bird and the palm tree caused that both of them became associated in early Christian times, producing compelling symbolic images such as the ones represented in the aforementioned Roman mosaics or in the *traditio legis* sarcophagus from Arles. In the Lateran apse, the phoenix appears crowning a palm tree which is also meant to evoke the tree of life that grew in the middle of the Earthly Paradise where, according to the Bestiary, the phoenix lived. For this reason, it appears again in the Eternal Paradise of the Heavenly Jerusalem as a symbol of the triumph of Christ at the end of time. Following this symbolic thread, it is significant to notice an important detail in the structural composition of each side of the capital. The design of the flames that surround the phoenix and the burning bush – curving around the volutes – reproduces the outline of the “tree of life” that symbolizes the Kingdom of Aragon in the coins minted in Jaca – adding a dynastic imprint on the capital, appropriate to the monument for which it was created (Fig. 4b, d and 9a, b).

Imago comitis: The Capital of the Count

“I know, you love being alive, you don’t want to die; and you would like to pass from this life to the other life in such a way that you don’t rise again dead, but are changed, alive, into something better [...]. That’s what the soul itself has [...] engraved in its deepest will and desire. Since in loving life it hates death, and since it doesn’t hate its own flesh, it doesn’t want what it hates to happen even to that. *For nobody ever hated his own flesh* (Eph. 5:29). The apostle shows us these feelings, where he says, *We have a dwelling from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Indeed, we groan in this one, longing to have our dwelling from heaven put on over us, in which, he says, we do not wish to be stripped, but to be*

clothed over and above, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life (2 Corinthians 5:1–4)” (Augustine, *Sermon* 344.4).⁴²

The commanding figure of the archangel Michael – shown winged, helmeted and brandishing a sword as the Doorkeeper of Paradise (*praepositus paradisi*), following Byzantine models of wide circulation in the west – provides entry into the iconographic program articulated in the second capital, which expounds the eschatological discourse around the tomb of the count (Fig. 5a).⁴³ Inheriting the role of Mercury in classical mythology, Michael is constantly invoked in the liturgy of the Office of the Dead as the conductor of the souls of the just (*psychopompos*) in their journey to the afterlife, serving both as a cosmic warrior defending the faithful against evil, and as the personal advocate of particular souls.⁴⁴ Authors such as Tertullian expressed their belief that, upon death, each Christian would awake in the other world “looking into the clear face of his angel” – an intimate moment that seems to be poignantly staged in the capital where the archangel establishes a visual bond with the character who gazes back at him from the adjacent side (Fig. 5b). This is, I shall argue, a portrait of Count Sancho Ramírez in eschatological perspective, depicted following the iconographic type of the images of the elect in heaven. He appears “dressed” in the nudity of an eternal “iuventus” and holding the testament that “contains the works by which he will be judged” (*Revelation* 20:12–15). The disposition of the head and facial features respond to the scheme designed by artists of this workshop for the representation of members of the royal family on contemporary coins, finding close formal and

42 Augustine (1995), 51f.

43 For an eleventh-century crusader capital from Tyre decorated with busts of archangels in the Dumbarton Oaks collection (BZ.1950.24), see Vikan (1995), 109f. Of the numerous Byzantine examples, we can cite the capitals from the narthex of Kariye Camii, see Hjort (1979), and a later marble capital, possibly from the monastery of the Virgin Peribleptos in Constantinople, and part of a sepulcher, now at the Metropolitan Museum, see *Byzantium: Faith and Power* (2004), 105. A similar figure of the archangel Michael holding a sword at the Gates of Heaven appears in the façade of St. Trophime in Arles, see Prado-Vilar (2015), 220. For an insightful discussion of the iconography of St. Michael, see Kessler (2008).

44 For the importance of the archangel Michael in the liturgy of the Office of the Dead and its reflection on funerary art in an Iberian kingdoms: Werckmeister (1980) with references to Visigothic liturgy in relation to the Cross of Fernando I and Sancha, and Hassig (1991) with references to the Cluniac liturgy in relation to the tomb slab of Alfonso Ansúrez, where the archangels Michael, Raphael and Gabriel have a prominent role accompanying the portrait of the deceased. As a defender against evil and commander of the Heavenly Hosts, Michael acquired a special veneration by the kings of Navarre and Aragón, especially in the sanctuary San Miguel de Excelsis in the mountains of Aralar. According to a miracle collection, King Sancho Ramírez received military aid from the archangel Michael, who appeared in battle to lead the Aragonese troops to victory against the moors. His successor, Pedro I, is said to have been healed from an illness affecting his genitals after a pilgrimage to the shrine, see Henriett (2007), 128f.



Fig. 13a: Rome, Museo Nazionale Romano,
inv. 112444: Hyppolitus sarcophagus.
Photo: B. Malter, D-DAI-Köln-Mal1634-01.

stylistic parallels in emissions from the reign of Pedro I (r. 1094–1104), Count Sancho Ramirez’s nephew (Fig. 9b).⁴⁵ Partially covered with a chlamys denoting his social status, the count’s effigy also recalls antique funerary portraits such as the Roman bust in a clipeus that came to be identified as King Ramiro II in the sarcophagus reused for his burial (Fig. 2a). However, the essential attribute of this portrait is its heroic physicality, which embodies the vigor and beauty of the count’s resurrected self.⁴⁶ Its significance may be explored in connection to another modality of funerary

45 Serafin Moralejo argued that the design of the portraits on the coins issued in the last part of the reign of King Sancho Ramírez (ca. 1090) reflected the style of the workshop of the *Jaca master*, responsible for most of the sculptural decoration of the cathedral, providing additional comparative evidence for the dating of this campaign, see Moralejo (1984b). Similarly, we may draw a comparison between these coins of King Sancho Ramírez, influenced by the *Jaca master* (Fig. 9a) and some of the emissions of his successor Pedro I (Fig. 9b), which reflect a clear influence of the more morbid and robust facial types characteristic of the style of the master working for Count Sancho Ramírez ca. 1105. The aforementioned article, alongside Moralejo (1985), provide the most complete discussion of all the cumulative evidence for his correct dating of important monuments in the formation of the Hispano-Languedocian style, such as the church of San Martín de Frómista (ca. 1088) and Jaca Cathedral (ca. 1094). Negligently neither of them is cited in José Luis Senra’s attempt to revive his unfounded late chronology for the church of San Martín de Frómista, pushing it to 1110–20, see Senra (2012). For additional evidence for the dating of these churches, see Prado-Vilar (2008), esp. 198, n. 63, (2009), esp. 218, n. 43, (2010a), and (2011a).

46 For a discussion of the question of the glorious body of the resurrection and Romanesque portraiture, see Dale (2002).

portraiture deployed in Roman mythological sarcophagi, where the main characters are given the individualised features of the deceased in order to convey the elevation of the latter to the realm of the immortals, as it occurs in a third-century sarcophagus with the story of Hippolytus (Fig. 13a).⁴⁷ Prepared to be fitted with the portrait head of the deceased, the Greek hero holds an open diptych, originally meant to stand for Phaedra's letter in the mythological story, but here turned into a symbol of his learnedness, and, by association, of the deceased's *paideia* and moral virtue. By comparison, the portrait of Count Sancho Ramírez doubles as a Christian Hippolytus, that is, an *imago* of the deceased invested with a muscular heroic body that signifies the vigor and vitality of the resurrection, and holding a diptych that, now closed, becomes a symbol of his virtuous life to be presented, following the apocalyptic narrative, at the moment of Judgment. For those visiting the tomb, this funerary monument, displaying a portentous instantiation of the count's resurrected self triggered remembrance and emulation as they encountered an example of the virtues that led to his triumph over death – a radiant embodiment of his future life inhabiting a different realm of being at the level of angels. As Platt has observed in her discussion of the relation between the *imagines* on Roman sarcophagi and the *corpora* of the deceased within:

“The emphatic corporeality of classicizing forms within the tomb asserts a presence-in-absence that gains added poignancy from its display within a space associated with grief and remembrance. Such provocation of desire and frustration is intensified on the sarcophagi, in particular, by the proximity of the visual field to the physical remains of the dead themselves, so that each relief's tangible corporeality purports to give form to the deceased, while acting as a reminder of their passage to a site that is both immaterial and inaccessible.”⁴⁸

This epiphanic effect of the naturalism of classical sculpture in the charged emotional space of a funerary setting is augmented when it is translated into a religious context such as a Christian funerary chapel, which is predicated on a core belief in the resurrection of the dead. The viewing of an entrancing *imago* of the deceased in eschatological perspective, like Count Sancho Ramírez's in the capital, could only enhance the feeling of the real latent power of his corporeal remains within the sarcophagus to break suddenly the tethers of death at the sound of the apocalyptic trumpets, and

47 For this sarcophagus, see Zanker/Ewald (2012), 348–350. For a discussion of “the deceased *in formam deorum*,” see Borg (2013), 163–177. See also Newby (2011), and (2016).

48 Platt (2011), 376f.



Fig. 13b: Washington, D.C., Dumbarton Oaks Museum:
Seasons sarcophagus.

Photo: Dumbarton Oaks, Byzantine Collection, Washington, DC.

rise again – an instance of cosmic upheaval and astonishing metamorphosis that was visualized in the pendant *capital of the satyr*.

This felicitous composition of the encounter, face to face, between the deceased and the archangel Michael might have been suggested by compositions found in Roman seasons sarcophagi such as the notorious example at Dumbarton Oaks, where the winged personifications of the seasons, ready to be interpreted as angels through a Christian lens, appear looking towards the funerary portrait in the tondo (Fig. 13b). As Hanfmann has extensively discussed in his study of this sarcophagus, allegorical references to the rhythms of death and rebirth were widely deployed by patristic authors to explain the phenomenon of the resurrection, becoming widespread motifs on Roman and early Christian sarcophagi.⁴⁹ The scriptural foundation for those images is found, again, in Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians, the essential text on the resurrection, which is at the basis of the figural program of this capital:

“But someone will say, ‘How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they come?’ You fool! That which you sow does not come to life unless it dies; and that which you sow, you do not sow the body which is to be, but a bare grain, perhaps of wheat or of something else. But God gives it a body just as He wished, and to each of the seeds a body of its own. All flesh is not the same flesh, but there

49 Hanfmann (1951), *passim*. See also Platt (2012), esp. 225.

is one *flesh* of men, and another flesh of beasts, and another flesh of birds, and another of fish. There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one, and the *glory* of the earthly is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable *body*, it is raised an imperishable *body*; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual *body*. So also it is written, ‘The first man, Adam, became a living soul.’ The last Adam *became* a life-giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual. The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven. As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly. Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly” (1 *Corinthians* 15:35–49).

The dichotomy between the first Adam, which “was of earth, earthy,” and the “second man, from heaven” articulated by Paul achieves its visualization in the twin figures occupying another side of the capital whose formal models can also be found in Roman seasons sarcophagi (Fig. 5d). One of them is holding attributes of the earth: fruit and a serpent – chthonic animal par excellence, and symbol of Adam’s sin. The other, sporting a flowing mane of hair swept by the wind, holds a symbol of heaven and resurrection in the form of a wreath with a bird’s head inside – a combination commonly present in early Christian sarcophagi, among which we may cite two notable examples in the Vatican Museum: one featuring the emblem of the resurrected Christ with wreath and birds (inv. MV_31525_0_0), and another showing an apostle before an altar with the wreath of the resurrection and a bird (inv. MV_31518_0_0). In his *De resurrectione carnis*, Tertullian presents the harmonious system of the cosmos, where death is always followed by rebirth, as evidence of the promise of the resurrection (discussing the phoenix as an additional natural proof) – an idea that is replicated by early Christian writers such as Minutius Felix:

“Notice, also, how all nature hints at a future resurrection for our consolation. The sun sets and rises again; the stars sink below the horizon and return; the flowers die and come to life again; the shrubs spend themselves and then put forth buds; seeds must decompose in order to sprout forth new life. Thus, the

50 For an analysis of the models for each of the figures and their transformation, see Prado-Vilar (2010a), esp. 36–39. Two large Roman figural capitals reused in the Middle Ages in the church of San Felice in Pisa offer additional parallels, see Settis (1992).

body in the grave is like the tree in winter, which conceals its live sap under the apparent dryness. Why do you urge that in the depths of winter it should revive and return to life? We must also wait for the spring of the body.”⁵¹

In the capital, facing away from the “spring of the body” represented by the vigorous effigy of the count in his glorious resurrection, is sculpted a personification of winter, the season of death (Fig. 5c). It follows an iconographic type found in mosaics featuring the Seasons, with numerous examples in Hispania, such as the ones in the Roman villas of Los Villares (León), and La Olmeda (Palencia), showing the bust of a veiled lady holding, or covered by, a branch.

The *capital of the satyr* and the *capital of the count* were, in conclusion, conceived to be observed together around the sarcophagus of the first-born son of King Ramiro I of Aragon. From his portrait, and in the presence of his body, he could rejoice *ad aeternum* in the contemplation of the beauty of the signs of his own resurrection, anticipating his entrance into the eternal abode where: “We shall be still and see; we shall see and we shall love; we shall love and we shall praise. Behold what will be, in the end, without end! For what is our end but to reach that kingdom which has no end?” (*City of God*, 22:30).⁵²

Emptied his sarcophagus and scattered the fragments of his funerary chapel, the memory of Count Sancho Ramírez, like the petrified phoenix in the *capital of the satyr*, was preserved in a state of suspended resurrection, teetering on the brink of its complete material disappearance. As an epilogue to this intellectual process of re-assembly and retrieval of memory, and in the spirit of Vasari’s frontispiece of the resurrection of the artists, I would like to summon the presence of two scholars from the past whose thoughts coalesce in the constellation of these objects.

Destructions, Revenants, and the Memory of Stones

“We had a marvellous time in Spain – memory almost dims Constantinople [...]. Jaca turned out to be one of the paradises on earth, as unspoiled as a beneficent God and an inspired Middle Age left it [...]. Unpublished treasures of the first importance lying to right and to left, just waiting to be picked up. Some of the photographs I am going to send you (if the sea air or something else only doesn’t

51 Minucius Felix, Octavius, chap. 34,11–12, cited in Malbon (1990), 92f.

52 Augustine (1972), 1091.

ruin the negatives) will get terribly under your skin” (Arthur Kingsley Porter to Bernard Berenson, May 24, 1924).⁵³

On the eve of setting sail back to America, Arthur Kingsley Porter penned a letter from Montecarlo to his friend, the eminent Renaissance scholar Bernard Berenson, describing with joyful enthusiasm his springtime in Spain. He had caught revelatory glimpses of undiscovered treasures at Jaca – by then a quaint small town lying dormant “in one of the loveliest mountain valleys of Europe, in the shadow of the snow-capped Pyrenees.” With his wife Lucy, a deft photographer, he captured details of the enigmatic sculptural decoration of the cathedral and found in its archive a bounty of “unknown manuscripts and miniatures.” “You open document after document, holding your breath, with no idea what the next may turn out to be,” he told Berenson, advising him, in the same sentence, to keep this information confidential for “I happened upon some things which seem important to me, and I don’t want to send our French friends until I have had a chance to publish.” Those findings saw the light a few months later in his signal 1924 article where, focusing on the sarcophagus of Countess Sancha, he built a case for the importance of Aragonese Romanesque sculpture, connecting it to monuments in Italy, from Bari to Modena, and stressing its chronological priority in relation to Toulouse.⁵⁴ In the previous years Porter had emerged as a towering figure in the renewal of the study of Romanesque art by challenging the core assumptions upon which the canon of medieval sculpture had been construed under the hegemony of French scholars. Nationalism, rather than documentary or archaeological evidence, had determined the systematic early dating of French monuments, and their superior aesthetic judgment, presenting them as the original centers of creativity of which the rest were just late derivative offshoots. His research, supported by an extensive photographic corpus produced during his field trips to Europe, resulted in the monumental *Romanesque Sculpture of the Pilgrimage Roads* which, since its publication just a year before his arrival in Jaca, had garnered acclaim and sparked debate in equal measure on both sides of the Atlantic.⁵⁵ A review in the *New York Times* by the Harvard-trained critic Nathan Haskell Dole, titled “A

53 Biblioteca Berenson, Villa I Tatti – The Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies, Correspondence, 91.3.

54 Among the works discussed by Porter, it is worth noting the sculpted tomb of St. Albertus (+1095) from the Cluniac priory of St. James in Pontida (Lombardy), featuring a scene where three naked figures appear standing on top of a vegetal capital waiting for the apocalyptic rider to collect them, see Porter (1924), and King (1922).

55 Porter (1923).

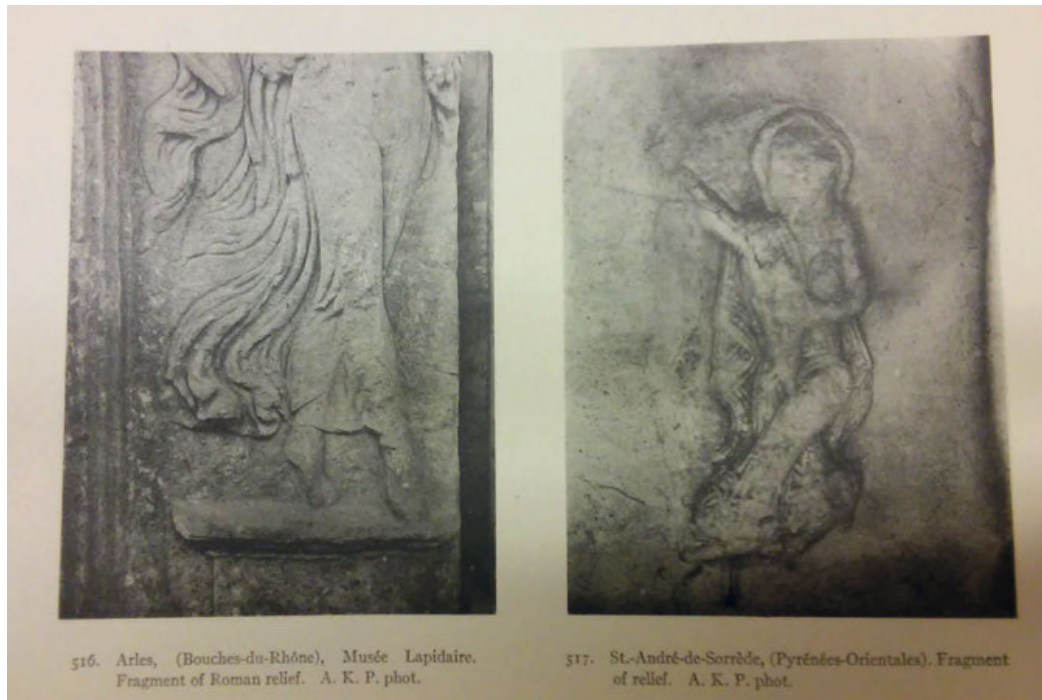


Fig. 14: Arthur Kingsley Porter, *Romanesque Sculpture of the Pilgrimage Roads*, vol. 5.

Pilgrimage to the Land of Romanesque Art. New Chronology Established in Medieval Monuments,” puts Porter’s work in the larger context of a world in rapid change where the boundaries of history, geography, time, and space were coming into question:

“The general world upheaval – wars, earthquakes, tidal waves, Einstein theories, Bolshevism, ectoplasmata, Fascismo – seems to be reflected in the revolt against generally accepted chronology [...]. And now comes Professor Porter with a chronologiclastic onslaught on orthodox archaeology [...]. With Professor Porter as interpreter, we suddenly become eleventh century pilgrims setting out on the journey to Compostela. Through his eyes we see all [...]. To read the text volume and study all the illustrations indicated in the other nine volumes, or rather atlases – for they are enclosed without stitching – is a liberal education in sculpture and iconography and logic.”⁵⁶

The reviewer aptly stresses the character of the book as a visual “atlas” for it offered a photographic roadmap organized by region that afforded readers the possibility of embarking on a visual pilgrimage through lands untraveled. But it also had the poten-

56 *New York Times*, 12th of August 1923.

tial for its own deconstruction and re-arrangement as it gave readers the opportunity of handling and juxtaposing the photographic plates and initiate a personal quest to discover iconographic correspondences and stylistic affinities. In one single instance we see the irruption of the spirit of antiquity in the form of the Warburgian figure of the “nymph in motion,” the pagan “goddess in exile” which, as the photographic pairing shows, seems to inhabit, like a spirit, the Romanesque body of an apostle (Fig. 14).⁵⁷

A central embodiment of Warburg’s notion of *Pathosformel*, the *Ninfa* was the center of panel 46 of his *Mnemosyne* Atlas, which shows her iterations from the pagan world to Christian scenarios. That was precisely the project Warburg was working on when, in late August 1927, he received the visit of Porter, his wife Lucy, and Bernard Berenson in his library in Hamburg. Warburg conveyed the great rapport he had with the medieval art historian in a letter to his brother, reinforcing him in his intention to spend time at Harvard:

“Most favorable was the fact that he [Berenson] brought with him Kingsley Porter, the well known, and here in Germany highly esteemed, art historian, and his charming wife. Both display such a beautiful and open enthusiasm, combined with such a devout expertise, that the company of all three [...] gave rise to an afternoon whose aura provoked a great yet totally unembarrassed enthusiastic mutual respect [...]. Mrs. Kingsley Porter wrote in a very friendly thank-you letter: ‘My husband says he envies our students who will have the privilege of working in your library.’ This remark relates to my telling them that I was planning to travel to America, perhaps in the coming spring, with the goal of bringing Harvard and Hamburg into closer and more permanent connection as places of study.”⁵⁸

One can only imagine what path medieval art history in America would have taken if the Harvard – Hamburg connection would not have been thwarted by Warburg’s death in 1929 and by Porter’s tragic disappearance in 1933. Both scholars, wrestling in different ways with their own internal conflicts in the midst of a world spiralling into war, had struggled to transform their anxieties into engines to propel further and deeper their intellectual quests. Departing from diverse starting points, and following different paths, they seem to be evolving towards areas of convergence.

57 On the *Ninfa* and Warburg, see Didi-Huberman (2003), (2016), Michaud (2004), Agamben (2013), and Weigel (2013).

58 Letter from Aby Warburg to Felix Warburg, 27 August 1927. Cited in Wedepohl (2014), 165f. On the relation between Porter and Warburg, see also Brush (2003), 187–191, and (2010).



Fig. 15a: Jaca, San Pedro: Capital of the Satyr.
Photo: Fundació Institut, Amatller d'Art Hispànic. Arxiu Mas.

If we delve into Porter's mind during the months leading up to his arrival in Jaca, when he was meditating on the connections between beauty, aesthetic enjoyment, and sex in Classical sculpture, emphasising its tactile qualities, its "red-blooded" nature and "pulsating life," it becomes more poignant that he was not able to discover the one "unpublished treasure" which would most fundamentally embody the confluence of his thought with that of Warburg, the *capital of the satyr*.⁵⁹ This classical nude, both a "resurrected" body emerging from a conflagration of eschatological fire and a "reven-

59 These ideas are reflected in the lectures he delivered at the Sorbonne in 1923, where he included provocative meditations on the nature of artistic creation, later published in Porter (1928), esp. 75f.



Fig. 15b: Jaca, San Pedro: Capital of the Satyr.
Photo: Archivo Moreno, IPCE, MECD.

ant” coming to light from the abyss of its own material disappearance, could be made the center of a new hypothetical *Mnemosyne* panel on the themes of *Nachleben der Antike* and Christian Resurrection. The satyr would take the place of the nymph as the paradigmatic symbol, and ultimate embodiment, of this modality of *Nachleben*. Recalling the Latin term discussed by Agamben, and evoked by Didi-Huberman in connection to Warburg’s *Bilderatlas*, we may, in turn, define it as a *superstes*, a “survivor” of a series of destructions and, thus, a “witness” to one of the most fascinating cases of *Nachleben der Antike* in the History of Art, one which might have been lost to us.⁶⁰

60 See Agamben (1999), esp. 17, and Didi-Huberman (2012), esp. 78.



Fig. 16a: Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Inv. 2839: Orestes sarcophagus.
Photo: MAN.

Fig. 16b: Frómista, San Martín: Capital of Cain Killing Abel.
Photo: Fundación Eugenio Fontaneda – Castillo de Ampudia.

Fig. 16c: Scheme of the capital by Serafín Moralejo.

When Porter strolled around the cloister of the cathedral of Jaca in that spring of 1924, he probably passed by the *capital of the satyr*, which was then turned upside down and reused as the base of a column in the enclosure of the chapel of el Pilar, with the side that contains the *superstes* pushed against the wall (Fig. 15a). A few years later, the capital was retrieved from that location in the course of the conservation works carried out in the cathedral under the direction of Francisco Iñiguez Almech, who placed it as the support of an altar table in a chapel located in the south apse (Fig. 15b). To the sensitivity of this architect, who wrote admiringly of the nude describing it as “the delicious little figure of a child, by no means infernal,” we might owe its preservation for he decided to place it towards the wall, hidden from the view of the faithful.⁶¹ It was thus spared the fate suffered by one of its illustrious ancestors in the stylistic genealogy of Hispano-Languedocian Romanesque sculpture: the capital of Cain killing Abel from the church of San Martín de Frómista (ca. 1090), whose composition was inspired by an Orestes sarcophagus that had been reused for a Christian burial in the neighboring church of Santa María de Husillos (Fig. 16b).⁶² Having sur-

61 See Iñiguez Almech (1967), 272.

62 See Moralejo (1976), and Prado-Vilar (2008), (2010a), and (2011a).

vived almost intact since the eleventh century, thanks to being covered, in postmedieval times, by a stucco armature, its two nudes were obliterated when the piece was taken down during the restoration of the church.⁶³ Two photographs published here for the first time might capture the immediate aftermath of the savage attack. Still visible lying scattered on the floor are what seem to be fragments detached from the sculpture, propelled there as a result of the lateral blows to the figures. Hammer in hand, the attacker, in his violent rage, mirrored the gesture of the murderous Cain in the capital, lapsing into the sin condemned by its iconography. (Fig. 17).⁶⁴ Adding to the tragedy of the destruction of the two nudes was the confusion created by the ‘amended’ copy that replaced the original in the apse of San Martín de Frómista, which shows two naked figures mistakenly restored as a man and a woman (fig. 18a). A photograph of the capital taken before its defacement clearly demonstrates that the modern restorer, denounced at the time by scholars such as Manuel Gómez Moreno for his “imaginative” interpretations of medieval iconography, engaged in a clumsy “genital reconstruction” of what he thought was a female figure, proceeding to inflate the genital area and insert a slit, creating a vagina where there was nothing but the result of a common type of breakage in male nudes, with the detachment of the penis – as it had occurred, for instance, with the figure of Orestes in the Husillos sarcophagus (Fig. 18b, c).⁶⁵

This sum of destructions, and creative additions, prevented scholars from deciphering the iconography of the capital and thus exploring the full extent and depth of the engagement of the medieval artist with his classical models. As I have discussed elsewhere, subtle permutations, not only of form, but also of iconographic meaning,

63 For a photograph of the church before the restoration, with the capitals covered by the stucco armature, see Prado-Vilar (2010a). For the militant Catholic fervor that surrounded the restoration, which was characterized by a nostalgia for the “purity” of the Middle Ages and a determination to “cauterize,” “amputate,” and “inoculate” anything that might deviate from that ideal view, see Prado-Vilar (2008), esp. 179–180, and n. 33.

64 For the iconography of this capital in the context of the program of the church of San Martín de Frómista, devoted to the condemnation of fratricidal violence and the promotion of peace, see Prado-Vilar (2008) and (2011a). I am grateful to Rosa Villalón and Raquel Ibáñez, from the Archivo de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales (CSIC), for their assistance locating these photographs.

65 Still accepting as ‘medieval’ the early-twentieth-century reconstruction of the two nudes as a man and a woman, José Luis Senra (2012) proposes the following iconographic interpretation of the capital: “A naked man violently rejects an equally exposed woman in the presence of serpents, [a scene that] seems to evoke in a rather heterodox manner the repudiation of woman in general as the source of original sin,” see Senra (2012), 390. To be sure, so ‘heterodox’ is the rendering of this (newly discovered) iconographic category of “the repudiation of woman in general as the source of original sin” that the author is unable to furnish a single textual source or comparative work to support his interpretation. For a detailed refutation of Senra’s arguments, see Prado-Vilar (2010a), 22, n. 24.



Fig. 17a: Frómista, San Martín: Frontal view of the Capital of Cain Killing Abel. Photo: Archivo Moreno, CSIC, ACCHS.



Fig. 17b: Side view.



Fig. 18a: Frómista, San Martín: Modified modern copy of the capital of Cain killing Abel. Photo: Author.

Fig. 18b: Frómista, San Martín: Capital of Cain Killing Abel. Photo: Fundación Eugenio Fontaneda – Castillo de Ampudia.

Fig. 18c: Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Inv. 2839: Orestes sarcophagus. Photo: MAN.

centering on the themes of family crime and sacrifice, connect the Orestes sarcophagus from Husillos to its Romanesque offspring in San Martín de Frómista, the cathedral of Jaca, and San Isidoro in León. Indeed, the convergence of a series of historical, political and psychological conditions of patronage and reception caused the reactivation of the *Pathosformeln* of the Orestes sarcophagus several times during the eleventh century when figures from the Greek tragedy, such as Orestes, Pylades, Clytemnestra, Aegisthus, and the Erinyes underwent a sort of trans-historical *nostos* reappearing in monuments along the pilgrimage road to Santiago transfigured into Biblical characters such as Cain, Abel, Abraham, Isaac, Daniel, or Moses, who dramatize their stories with the *pathetic* intensity of their classical ancestors.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ For the formulation of *nostos* as a critical concept in the study of *Nachleben*, see Prado-Vilar (2010b), and (2011b), with a discussion of a marble column from the cathedral of Santiago decorated with a Christianized Odyssey.

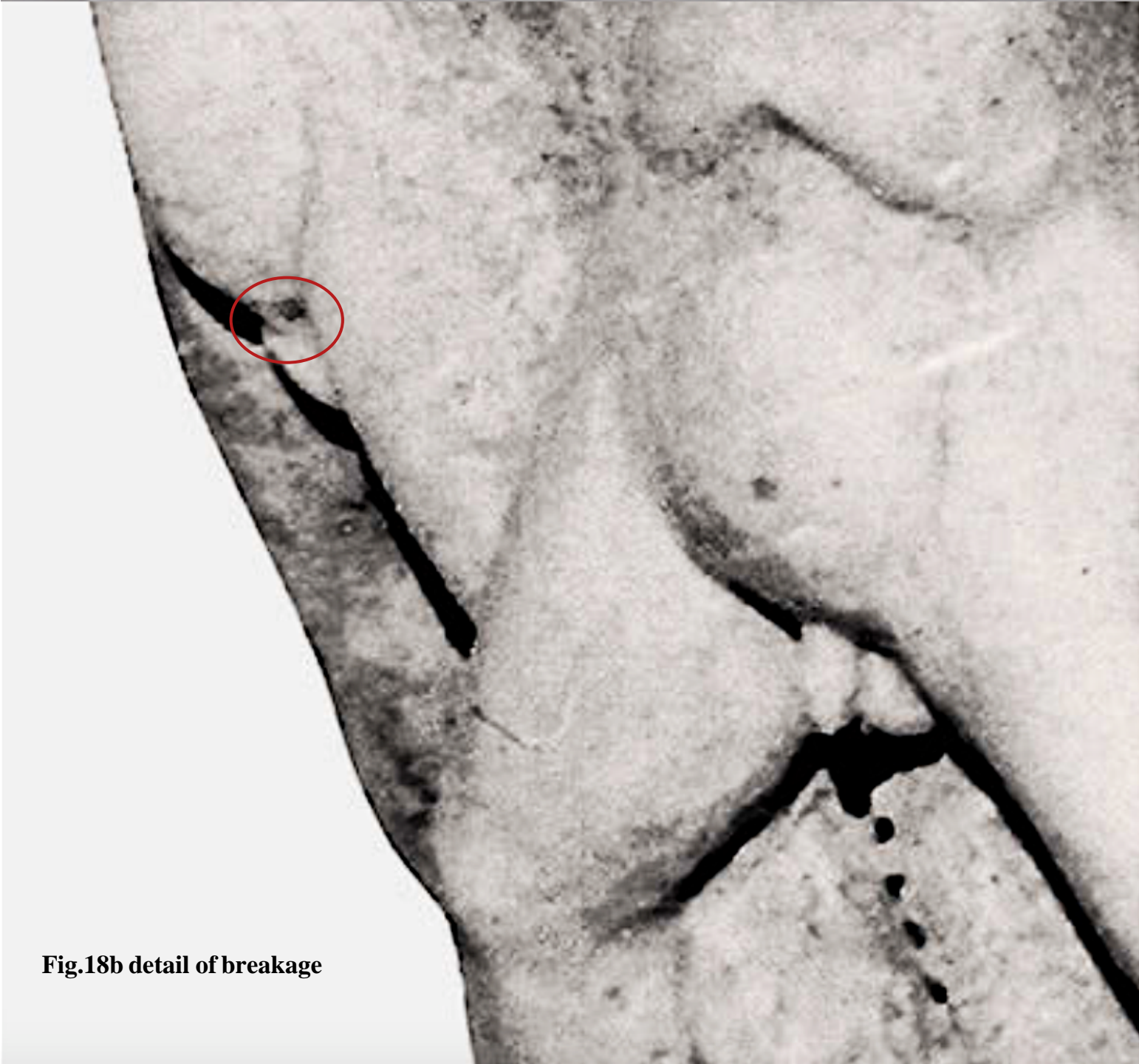


Fig.18b detail of breakage

When the group of artists trained with the *Orestes-Cain master* at Frómista (ca. 1090) moved along the pilgrimage road to Jaca, the *Pathosformeln* of the Orestes sarcophagus had come to dominate the visual morphology of their style: nudes in chiasmic poses, and figures brandishing serpents are ubiquitous in the productions of the workshop of the *Jaca master*, who was the immediate predecessor of the artist working in the chapel of Count Sancho Ramirez. Unlike the former, who found ‘his Antiquity’ primarily in the world of Greek tragedy, this sculptor immersed himself in the exuberant universe of Dionysus, turning stone into an ecosystem teeming with life, which reveals to the eye the poetics of matter in its perpetual transformation. Centuries later, his most startling creation, the resurrected satyr, comes back from the depths of darkness as a *superstes* to demonstrate the beautiful object is, indeed, the “one that tirelessly returns following destructions and wars in order to bear witness that there is survival after death, that immortality is possible.”⁶⁷

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67 Kristeva (1992), 98.

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