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The southwestern border between Galicia and Portugal during the 12th and 13th centuries: A space for experimentation and artistic transmission

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The purpose of this paper is to show the peculiarities of the Galician southwestern border between Spain and Portugal, which became a centre of experimentation and transmission for Romanesque forms during and following, the eleventh century. Tui, as capital of the bishopric and cathedral headquarters, exerted its religious authority in an area that covered a vast territory belonging to two opposing kingdoms, Castile-Leon and Portugal, both of whom shared a porous border regarding common cultural and linguistic tradition. This area provides an interesting example for the study of artistic connections and border relationships in Europe, because is a very unusual case.² This territory has been the object of my PhD dissertation about Romanesque art.³

The study of this border territory situated between north western Spain and northern Portugal so far has not been a focus for Spanish and Portuguese researchers because of various difficulties such as the access to the different primary sources which are spread out through different archives and collections in Spain and Portugal; or the interest by Portuguese researchers since the middle of the twentieth century in highlighting the Portuguese national identity without recognising other foreign influences.⁴ The approaches by different researchers have been mostly very superficial. The first study that recognises the existence of influences from both sides of the border was the PhD thesis by Carlos Alberto Ferreira De Almeida submitted in 1978 who listed briefly the existence of some connections and includes a non-exhaustive description of the Cathedral of Tui, but without reference to the rest of examples in the diocese focusing only on Portuguese examples.⁵ The same problem occurred when Isidro Bango Torviso published in 1979 his PhD Thesis on Romanesque Art in Pontevedra and he did not refer to the links with the Portuguese border. He instead chose to centre his study in descriptions and connections within

¹ PhD from Universidade de Santiago de Compostela (Spain) in 2015.

² Is not a normal situation to have a diocese which is unified by religious reasons but politically separated. A similar case of a diocese shared by several kingdoms in the Iberian Peninsula is Calahorra whose diocese was frontier for Aragon, Navarre and Castile. See: Carl, C. *A bishopric between three kingdoms. Calahorra, 1045-1190*. (Leiden. 2011).

³ Vázquez Corbal, M. 'El arte románico en la antigua diócesis de Tui, unpublished PhD thesis (Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, 2015)

⁴ To have a clear idea about the historiography of Romanesque Art in Portugal and its context, and regarding to the Salazar's dictatorship ideas when Romanesque was considered as a "national style" see Botelho, M^a. L. 'A Historiografia da arquitectura da época românica en Portugal (1870-2010)', unpublished PhD thesis (Universidade de Porto, 2010). The same author published in English: Botelho, M^a. L. 'Portuguese Romanesque architecture, the foundation of Portugal as a Kingdom and its artistic convergence' in A. Musco and G. Mussoto (eds.) *Coesistenza e Cooperazione nel Medioevo. In memoriam Leonard E. Boyle (1923-1999)*. (Palermo. 2014) pp.267-277.

⁵ Ferreira de Almeida, C. A. 'Románico de Entre-Douro-e-Minho', unpublished PhD thesis (Universidade de Porto. 1978).

Spain.⁶ Lúcia Rosas in her M.A. thesis written in 1987 analysed the sculpture in the left bank of the river Miño but insisting on the originality of Portuguese features.⁷ The twentieth-first century has had a similar situation so far. The different approaches are non-exhaustive and only a publication from 2009 talks about the area. In this case it was Ernesto Iglesias Almeida who carried out a historical study concerning the diocese in the Middle Ages, but focusing mainly on historical facts.⁸ In conclusion, the tendency for more than thirty years has been to focus research on Spain or Portugal, not on the diocese as a whole as border territory with its singularities.

In the Anglo-Saxon scholarly world the situation is very similar. Some art historians have made some contributions to the study of Romanesque art in Galicia and Portugal, but focusing on the major buildings or on singular examples without referring to this diocese in particular.⁹ The historian Stephen Lay, provided some historical information about the diocese and its conflicts during the process of independency of the Portuguese kingdom in his PhD thesis.¹⁰

Regarding the situation during the twelfth and thirteen centuries we can say that this was a period of continuing political and military confrontations, however, from the artistic point of view we have a flowering of artistic activity.¹¹ This results in the construction of a new see and the creation of new monasteries and parish churches, that gave to the Romanesque art in this area its own personality that transcends borders and encourages roaming workshops.

To understand this particular situation we have to refer to the spatial organisation of the ancient diocese of Tui which comprised the southwestern part of the Spanish region of Galicia (southwestern Province of Pontevedra and western part of Ourense Province) and northern

⁶ Bango Torviso, I. G. *Arquitectura Románica en la Provincia de Pontevedra*. (A Coruña, Fundación Pedro Barrié de la Maza.1979).

⁷ Rosas, L. 'A Escultura Românica das igrejas da margem esquerda do rio Minho', unpublished MA Thesis (Universidade de Porto, 1987).

⁸ Iglesias Almeida, E. *El Antiguo Obispado de Tui en Portugal*. (Noia. 2009).

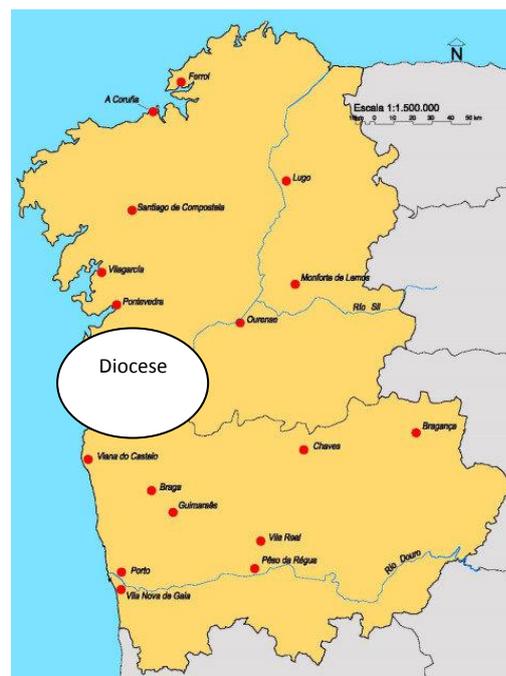
⁹ Regarding to Galicia an focusing on Santiago de Compostela and major buildings there is an interesting group of researches which have been included in a recent publication, D'Emilio, J. (ed.) *Culture and Society in Medieval Galicia A cultural crossroads in the age of Europe*. (Leiden. 2015) pp.573-794. Also by D'Emilio there is an article which provides general information about Galician Romanesque Art: D'Emilio, J. 'The Romanesque churches in Galicia: The making of a provincial art' in B. Pérez Salgado (ed.) *Proceedings of the 4th International Conference in Galician Studies*. Vol. 2 (Oxford. 1997) pp.547-572.

For more on this topic see: D'Emilio, J. 'Working practices in the and the language of architectural decoration in Romanesque Galicia: Santa María de Camporramiro and its sources' in *Arte Medievale 10*, Serie 2., N.1 (1996) pp.69-90; Goddard King, G. 'Little Romanesque Churches in Portugal' in W. Reinhold and W. Koehler (eds) *Medieval Studies in Memory of Arthur Kingsley Porter*. (Cambridge. 1939) pp.273-92; and Ambrose, K. *The marvellous and the monstrous in the sculpture of 12th century Europe*. (Woodbridge, 2013).

¹⁰ Lay, S. 'The Neglected Reconquest- Portugal as an European Frontier (1064-1250)', unpublished PhD thesis (Monash University, Melbourne, 2004).

¹¹ Barros Guimeráns, C. 'La frontera medieval entre Galicia y Portugal' in *Medievalismo. Boletín de la Sociedad Española de Estudios Medievales 4* (1994) pp.27-40.

Portugal (region of Entre Minho-e-Lima, see Map 1.). It was first established during the Suevic kingdom (411-585) and mentioned in the *Parochiale Suevum* or *Divisio Theodomiri* (569).¹² This text shows the different ecclesiastic and territorial division in the Suevic period and we can assume that the distribution of parishes and territories was inspired by the Roman divisions and did not change in the Middle Ages. According to this document there are seventeen archpriesthoods: Tuda, Mineore, Fragoso, Lourinia, Maniola, Taraes, Ripa Tene, Salceta, Longares, Montibus, Sancti Martini de Latronibus, Novoa-Avion, Valadares, Pena de Regina, Coira, Cervaria, Maritima, Ripa Limie and Vale de Vice which remain the same until 1444 when the diocese of Tui is completely disintegrated to separate the Portuguese part and embed it in the diocese of Braga.¹³



Map I: Ancient Diocese of Tui. Map by Margarita Vázquez Corbal (2015)

Its location and distribution is very important because they are ruled by the same religious authority and they belonged to different political entities. Alphonse VI king of León (1075-1109) gave as a dowry the territories of Galicia and Portugal to his daughters: Urraca, his legitimate heir received Galicia, and Theresa his illegitimate daughter received Portugal. Both women married two members of the Burgundian nobility. Urraca married Raymond of Amous who was William of Burgundy's son. Henry, who was Raymond's cousin, married Theresa.

¹² The Suevic kingdom was created when some German invaders conquered Galicia and Portugal and established a kingdom with capital in Braga (Portugal) and ruled until the Visigothic king of Toledo Leovigildo conquered and turned this territory into a Province depending on the Kingdom of Toledo. On the Suevic Kingdom see Díaz Martínez, P.C. *El reino suevo. (411-585)* (Madrid. 2011). In English, Thompson, E. A. 'The conversión of the Spanish Suevi to Catholicism' James, E. (ed.) *Visigothic Spain. New Approaches.* (Oxford. 1980) pp.77-92.

¹³ Almeida Fernandes, A. *Paróquias suevas e diocèsis visigóticas.* (Arouca. 1997). p.78.

These marriages were part of the king's policy to ensure the prevalence of the dynasty and to strengthen his relationships with Burgundy which had started when he married Constance of Burgundy.¹⁴ The separation of Galicia and Portugal eventually started in 1096 when Alphonse VI fixes his illegitimate daughter's dowry and the Portuguese County is declared and its frontier is defined. The same year an agreement between Raymond and Henry of Burgundy was made to ensure Raymond's wife inheritance rights in the absence of a legitimate male heir of Alphonse VI.¹⁵

After Alphonse VI's death in 1109 Henry and Theresa started to exercise their feudal rights, consolidating their desires for independence from the Spanish kingdom and to rule their own territory. These desires would be fulfilled by Afonso Henriques (1109-1185) Henry and Theresa's son, who was born in Guimarães (Portugal) in the same year.

The boundary was the River Miño, a natural border which allowed the counts to control their territories and maintain commercial routes. The existence of this frontier did not influence the economical, religious or social issues of the area. Inhabitants from the two river banks, especially members of nobility, had family and business relations in both counties.¹⁶ The ruling personalities, Urraca and Theresa, competed to gain the favour of the bishop in religious and politic issues and also to have protection and support for their aspirations through generous donations.¹⁷ Despite this healthy coexistence, some Portuguese did not accept the situation of being only a dependent county and these dissenters supported Theresa and saw their expectations of independence fulfilled.¹⁸ In the period from 1130 to 1169 the confrontations

¹⁴To understand the figure of Alphonse VI and his kingdom evolution: Fernández González, F. and Pérez Gil, J. *Alfonso VI y su época I. Los precedentes del reinado (966-1065)*. (León. 2007) and Fernández González, E. and Pérez Gil, J. *Alfonso VI y su época II. Los horizontes de Europa (1065-1109)*. (León. 2008).

Referring to his marriage policy Martin, G. 'Hilando un reinado. Alfonso VI y las mujeres' via *e-Spania. Revue interdisciplinaire d'études hispaniques médiévales e modernes*. (París, Sorbonne Université) <<http://e-spania.revues.org/20134>> December 2010 and Salazar y Acha, J. 'Contribución al reinado de Alfonso VI de Castilla: algunas aclaraciones sobre su política matrimonial' in *Anales de la Real Academia Matritense de Heráldica y Genealogía*. (Madrid, 1992-93) pp.299-336.

¹⁵See transcription and considerations about the agreement in David, P. 'Le pacte successoral entre Raymond de Galice et Henri de Portugal' in *Bulletin Hispanique* 50 (1948) pp.275-290.

¹⁶ Mattosso, J. 'A Nobreza Medieval Galaico-Portuguesa. A Identidade e a Diferença' in *Obras Completas* Vol. VIII (2002) pp.129-147.

¹⁷ For instance Urraca donated in 1122 some villages and churches to extend the preserve of the see including some rural parishes near Tui. Transcription in Flórez, E. 'De la iglesia de Tuy desde su origen hasta el siglo décimosexto' in *España Sagrada* Vol. XXIII (1767).

On the other hand Theresa donated three years after a great part of the monastic and parish churches situated before the Lima River in two documents. The first is the letter of donation of the Monastery of Ázere and other properties to the Cathedral of Tui . [thirteenth century copy] Arquivo Distrital de Braga .Cart. Mitra nº 7.

¹⁸ In fact in the documentary sources she is named "*Regina*": López Alsina, F. 'La cristalización de Tui como espacio de poder señorial entre 1095 y 1157' in Cendón Fernández, M. (ed.) *Tui: Pasado, presente y futuro*. (Pontevedra Diputación de Pontevedra. 2006) pp. 57-95.

between the Castilian Kingdom and the Portuguese County were frequent and the Galician part was occupied in several occasions by the Portuguese Infant Afonso Henriques who was extremely discontent with Theresa's policies. The year 1179 was a key date because of the Pope's intervention. Alexander III recognised the independence of Portugal and the creation of an independent kingdom governed by Afonso Henriques (who became the first king of Portugal) in appreciation for its role in the defence of Christian territories in Portugal against Muslims aggressors.¹⁹ A period of peace and calm began but was broken in 1381, when the disaggregation of the diocese started. Portuguese priests received profit from the Western Schism (1378-1417) to force the separation and joined with the Roman Pope while the Galician Church followed the schismatic Pope of Avignon. This caused a division and Portuguese churchmen and nobility in 1386 declared themselves independent from the Galician church. Afterwards, in 1389, the decision was confirmed yet was not really recognised by the Pope until 1444. This conflict not only affected the political or religious situation, but also the cultural situation. The dates between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries are considered the beginning of the decadence of the Galician-Portuguese culture, leading to the disappearance of the Galician-Portuguese language and its literature. Since then, Portuguese and Galician culture lost their common elements and evolved separately.²⁰ The period between the death of D. Pedro Conde de Barcelos in 1354 and the Battle of Aljubarrota 1385 is considered the worst period of confrontation between Castile and Portugal and that led to a total deterioration of the relationships with Galicia.²¹

From the artistic point of view all these facts and conflicts were very important, and also were royal family ties. From the late eleventh century to the late twelfth century, Urraca and Theresa and their heirs played an important role as patrons; funding and granting lands for different monasteries and churches. Indeed, Urraca and Theresa promoted the appearance of Benedictine monasteries and priories due to their family ties. Apart from being married to a Burgundian, Urraca's parents' marriage was proclaimed and defended by Hugh of Cluny in 1079.²² On the other hand Afonso Henriques, the king of Portugal, was the main promoter of the introduction of Regular Augustinian Canons in the area with the collaboration of Pelayo Meléndez bishop of

¹⁹ Bull by Alexander III 1179 Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo Lisboa, Portugal. Gaveta 19, Maço 14, Documento 7, fls. 5v-7v. Some considerations about this document and the Reconquest by Afonso Henriques are made in the work by Lay, S. 'The Neglected Reconquest- Portugal as an European Frontier'.

²⁰ Languages evolve to Portuguese in Portugal and Galician in Galicia, Portugal lost completely the influence of Castile and Galicia is more and more influenced by Castile.

²¹ Romero Portilla, P. 'Relaciones entre Galicia y Portugal durante los siglos XIV y XV' in *Revista da Facultade de Letras. História* 9, Sèrie III (2008) pp.217-269.

²² To understand the relationship between Urraca and Cluny, Gordo Molina, G. 'La Reina Urraca I y la orden de Cluny' in *Un Magisterio Vital: historia, educación y cultura. Homenaje a Héctor Carrera Cajas*. (Santiago de Chile. 2008) pp.314-323.

Tui (1130-1156), while Spanish kings like Alphonse VII (1105-1157), Fernando II (1137-1188) and Alphonse IX (1188-1230) promoted other religious orders like the Cistercians.²³

In addition to this flourishing of foundations which promoted building activity and consequently the existence of different workshops, the existence of a religious border, set in the River Lima separating this bishopric area from the bishopric of Braga, generated the exchange of artistic solutions and workshops between Galicia and Portugal.²⁴

We can consider the Cathedral Church of Tui, located in the southwestern area of the province of Pontevedra and surrounded by Miño river right in the frontier, as the creator and expander of the Romanesque Art in the Diocese. It is also credited with being the first building to feature Gothic style in the Iberian Peninsula, as its western façade, built in 1225, is usually considered as the first Gothic façade in Spain and Portugal.²⁵ This fact is very important due to the fact that reinforces the sense of the see as a place for experimentation and artistic transmission even in other styles from the Middle Ages like Gothic style.

Re-founded in 1071, we cannot conclude where the building of the Romanesque effectively started but documents show that in the first decade of the twelfth century examples were under construction.²⁶ The Cathedral for example received the influence of the international Romanesque through Santiago de Compostela, the main Romanesque cathedral in Spain which expanded its influence to the main points in the pilgrimage route. In fact, Tui is the gateway to Spain from the different branches from the Portuguese pilgrimage route.²⁷ Its convenient location was ideal for creating and transmitting new decorative patterns and architectural and sculptural models.

The first Romanesque pattern that this Cathedral exported was its northern façade (Photograph 1), which is constantly repeated throughout the diocese and has three main characteristics: a ball pattern in one of the archivolt, frequent depictions of animals (bulls, wolves or similar) as mensulae and a pearl-frame on the door. It was copied with few variations between the last

²³ Regarding the introduction of Augustinian Regular Canons in the Diocese see, Flórez, E. 'De la iglesia de Tuy desde su origen hasta el siglo décimosexto'. All of them are especially generous with Santa María de Oia, the main Cistercian monastery in the Diocese of Tui. Alphonse IX for example is well-known as a devote benefactor of Cistercians in all his territories: Ruiz de la Peña Solar, J. and Calleja Puerta, M. Calleja Puerta, M. 'La fundación del monasterio cisterciense de Valdediós' in *Mundos Medievales: espacios, sociedades y poder : homenaje al profesor José Ángel García de Cortázar y Ruiz de Aguirre* 1 (2012) p.860

²⁴ There is a decorative pattern in cornices in several churches in the Bishopric of Braga which consist of little round arches that comes from Ourense (Galicia) and arrives there from the River Lima frontier.

²⁵ Moralejo Álvarez, S. 'Escultura gótica en Galicia', unpublished PhD thesis (Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, 1975) pp.7-14.

²⁶ Manso Porto, C. 'Reflexiones sobre la catedral románica y gótica de Santa María de Tui' in *Abrente: Boletín de la Real Academia de Bellas Artes de Nuestra Señora del Rosario* 44 (2012) pp. 80-88.

²⁷ Baquero Moreno, H. 'Vias portuguesas de peregrinação a Santiago de Compostela na Idade Média' in *Revista da Faculdade de Letras. História Série II*, Vol. 3 (1986) pp.77-88.

quarter of the twelfth century and the last quarter of the thirteenth century by the roaming masons who worked in the diocese.



Photograph 1: Northern façade. Cathedral of Santa María de Tui (Tui, Pontevedra, Spain)²⁸

The iconography of the capitals of the naves was exported too. We can see this in the example of a capital with an animal's head (Photograph 2) which also appears in the monastic church of Sanfins de Friestas (Valença, Portugal, Photograph 3) founded around 1134 and built around 1180. Other examples such as birds, fabulous animals and hybrids appear for first time combined in Tui were copied in the diocesan area for instance in the monasteries of Ganfei (Valença, Portugal), Longos Vales (Monção, Portugal) and Rebordáns (Tui, Pontevedra) and also in the nearby diocese of Braga. The *bracarense* see itself has collected some of these models like birds or hybrids of lions. When Braga was restored in the second half of the twelfth century after Tui a connection can be drawn amongst the workshops and the masons who were possibly hired in Tui by Braga, taking into account that Tui and the other Galician dioceses except Santiago de Compostela (dependent on the Vatican since 1095), were suffragans of Braga from 1103 to 1395.²⁹

²⁸ All photographs by Margarita Vázquez Corbal (2015)

²⁹ Although Galician dioceses were suffragan they did not pay the tributes and had continuous conflicts. There were several confrontations between Braga and Santiago de Compostela due to these circumstances. Romero Portilla, P. 'Valor de la documentación real portuguesa para la historia de Galicia en la Edad Media' in *Cuadernos de Estudios Gallegos* 117 (2004) pp. 219-237.



Photograph 2 and 3: Left - capital from the Cathedral of Santa María de Tui (Tui, Pontevedra, Spain). Right - capital from Sanfins de Friestas (Valença, Portugal)

As discussed previously, the town of Tui is the first Spanish territory reached by pilgrims who had come from the different branches of the Portuguese route to Santiago de Compostela. Some of the monasteries across the diocese had hospitals and inns and their location mean that there were an important point of exchange. Regarding this we have the example of São Salvador de Ganfei (Valença, Portugal), where there was a hospital for pilgrims, the home of the relics of Saint Ganfried/Ganfei a pilgrim who after finishing his route to Santiago decided to settle near Valença and founded this Benedictine monastery.³⁰ Its space is very different from other examples of the diocese because of the presence of the relics which made necessary the existence of a triple apse for the cult. The plan structures present in the ancient diocese of Tui are mainly simple structures with one main nave with one rectangular or semicircular apse due to their functions as parish churches or monastic churches for small communities of monks and nuns. We only have three apses in the cases of big monastic churches with huge communities or spaces devoted to other functions like those related to the cult of relics or hosting the Cathedral services as it occurred in Rebordáns.³¹

Decorated capitals in the monastery of Ganfei derivate from the Cathedral of Tui, copying the same models and style of the see due to the existence of common workshops or masons trained in them.³² The Romanesque style in northern Portugal in Entre-Minho-e-Lima is very different from the rest of Portugal, the appearance of human figures, animals, hybrids, and the sculpture

³⁰ Fr. Leão de Santo Tomás, *Benedictina Lusitana*. Vol. 1, Part 2 (Lisboa. 1974) p.421. Monastery of Singeverga, MS. António Da Assumpção Meirelles, Fr., *Memórias para à história geral da Congregação de São Bento em Portugal. Memórias para à história particular do Mosteiro de Ganfey fundadas nos documentos do arquivo do mesmo Mosteiro que examinei no ano de 1776* .

³¹ To see examples of the different cases and a complete analysis see Vázquez Corbal, M. El arte románico en la antigua diócesis de Tui, unpublished PhD thesis (Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, 2015) pp. 27-29.

³²Evidenced by the similar style and the documentary sources which relate the different buildings. Vázquez Corbal, M. ‘A arte românica na Antiga Diócesis de Tui: as relações artísticas galaico-minhotas’ in *Incipit 2: Workshop de Estudos Medievais da Universidade de Porto 2011-2012*,. pp.155-164 via Biblioteca Digital Universidade de Porto <<http://ler.letras.up.pt/uploads/ficheiros/12035.pdf>> October 2016.

style given to vegetal capitals is unusual in comparison with those examples that are developed in the bishopric area of Braga, Coimbra or others. In Entre-Minho-e-Lima the roots are definitely Galician.³³

Other example of exchange is Saint Bartolomé de Rebordáns. Originally ruled by Benedictines, it was given to Regular Canons and developed the role of cathedral from 1071 until 1122 when the chapels of the apse of the Cathedral were being built.³⁴ After renovations made between 1156 and 1170 the church of this monastery developed an iconography in its apses (Photographs 4, 5, 6 and 7) related to French parallels located in Saint Radegonde de Poitiers and to other Spanish churches which belong to different routes to Santiago, like Saint Martín de Mondoñedo (Foz,Lugo,Spain). In order to understand the parallels of these patterns we have to pay attention to a significant character who is the bishop Pelayo Meléndez, ruler of the bishopric from 1130 to 1156 and introducer of the Regular Canons in the diocese; we can infer that was a real reformist and close to Saint Teotónio's Santa Cruz de Coimbra which was the main Augustinian centre near the bishopric of Tui³⁵, many priests and future bishops in that époque were educated in Santa Cruz and taking into account the relationships among Santa Cruz and France and León we can assume that these models could have arrived in the diocese through these connections.³⁶ It is very important to note that the evolution of San Martín de Mondoñedo in Foz, Lugo Spain, is similar because both churches were monastic and had the function of cathedrals, and were reformed by bishops with an important background and connections.³⁷

³³ Ferreira de Almeida, C. A. *História da Arte em Portugal: o Românico*. (Lisboa. 2001) pp.39-44.

³⁴ Flórez,E. 'De la iglesia de Tuy desde su origen hasta el siglo décimosexto', pp.80-82

³⁵ First Portuguese saint and a very important figure in religious life in Portugal he has connections with France and was the confessor of the first king of Portugal Afonso Henriques. S. Teotónio was educated in Rebordáns where Cresconio his uncle and future bishop of Coimbra was abbot. He founded Santa Cruz de Coimbra the one of the main centre of Augustinian Canons in the Iberian Peninsula. About S. Teotónio see: Aires de Nascimento, A. *Vida de São Teotónio*. (Lisboa. 2013);

Gómes, S. A. *Hagiografia de Santa Cruz de Coimbra. Vida de D. Telo, Vida de D. Teotónio. Vida de Martinho de Soure. Edição crítica dos textos latinos, tradução, estudo introdutório e notas de comentário*. (Lisboa. 1998). On Santa Cruz and its role: O'Malley, E. A. *Tello and Theotónio, the Twelfth-century Founders of the Monastery of Santa Cruz*. (Washington D. C. 1954) and Cruz, A. *Santa Cruz de Coimbra na cultura portuguesa na Idade Média*. (Porto. 1964).

³⁶ Fleisch,I. 'The Portuguese Clergy and the European Universities between 12th and 13th centuries' in *Carreiras eclesíasticas no ocidente cristão (séc. XII – XIV)*. (Lisboa. 2007) pp.64-66.

³⁷On San Martín de Mondoñedo: Castiñeiras González, M. 'San Martín de Mondoñedo revisitado' in *Rudesindus: A terra e o templo*. (Santiago de Compostela. 2007) pp.118-137.



Photograph 4: Capital. Northern apse of San Bartolomé de Rebordáns (Tui, Pontevedra, Spain)



Photograph 5: Apse San Martín de Mondoñedo (Foz, Lugo, Spain)



Photograph 6: Capital. Northern apse of San Bartolomé de Rebordáns (Tui, Spain)



Photograph 7: Capital. Sainte Radegonde de Poitiers (France)

Another important point on the way to Santiago is Paderne in (Melgaço, Portugal), another monastery related to pilgrimage. It is another example of a triple apse in its plan, but with an innovative decoration in one of its capitals which shows the experimental aim typical in the area (Photograph 8). It combines different icons and symbols: in the front part of the capital there is a depiction of an abbot with a crozier symbol of his power, he is surrounded by knot work and snake-like elements and is chased by a snake.³⁸ On the left side a canine is trapped by different knots and on the right side an unidentifiable character is playing a horn. The result is amazing, providing a capital which is unique. Although the presence of animals trapped in a vegetal tangle it is frequent in Romanesque and they have the meaning of souls trapped by the sin³⁹, the difference here is that the animal is not trapped by plants, it is trapped by knot work and snake-like elements. This kind of knot work has been interpreted as a symbol of sin, chaos and hell as opposed to the clarity and order of heaven.⁴⁰ That is the reason why the combination of this depiction plus the character with the crozier has been identified as part of the ‘Harrowing of Hell’, but the iconography of the main character of the composition is an abbot, not Jesus Christ.⁴¹ Furthermore the abbot is carrying the symbol of his power and we can also observe the

³⁸The Abbot’s walking stick indicates his power. In this case it is being asserted inside and outside of the monastery because the walking stick is not displayed toward him, Avilés, J. *Ciencia heroyca reducida a las leyes heráldicas del blasón*. Vol. 2 (Madrid. 1780) p.77

³⁹ Biurrún Sotil, T. *Arte Románico en Navarra*. (Pamplona. 1936) p.565

⁴⁰ On Hell representations in the Romanesque and its conception as chaos, a good example is the Silus Beatus or Beatus of Liébana Códex from Santo Domingo de Silos (1091-1109), British Library, MS. Additional. 11695 (see: Yarza Luaces, J. ‘El infierno del Beato de Silos’ in *Formas artísticas de lo imaginario*. (Barcelona, 1978) pp.94-118). In Galician art knotwork is considered as an elementary depiction of Hell: Yzquierdo Perrín, R. *Arte Medieval 1* (Col. Galicia Arte, X, A Coruña, 1995) p.429.

⁴¹ Réal, M. ‘La sculpture figurative dans l’art roman au Portugal’ in Graf, G. (ed) *Portugal Roman*. (Yonne. 1986) Vol. 1. p.38.

woollen belt and the tunic. Other distinctive elements of this capital are: the snake's head and the man playing the horn.⁴² Horns are also frequent in Romanesque and associated with apocalyptic and symbolic scenes, angels with horns are also frequent but this character does not resemble an angel.⁴³ Considering all of the above we can conclude that this representation is a combination of different symbols with a deep meaning: a warning against sin.⁴⁴



Photograph 8: Capital from São Salvador de Paderne (Melgaço, Portugal)

The evidence of roaming workshops is very clear in the area.⁴⁵ There were workshops working for different communities in the diocese travelling across it between 1175 and 1200. Monasteries like Saint Eulalia de Donas (Gondomar, Spain) (Photograph 9) or Saint María de Tomiño (Tomiño, Spain, Photograph 10).⁴⁶ These capital decorations are replicated again in the statues that appear in the western façades of the Portuguese churches of Bravães (Ponte da Barca, Portugal) (Photograph 11) and Rubiães (Paredes de Coura, Portugal, Photograph 12) and the tympanum of Albeos (Crecente, Spain, Photograph 13) in Galicia which opens the serial of

⁴² The snakes are frequent in Romanesque as representation of Evil: Herrero Marcos, J. *Bestiario Románico en España*. (Palencia. 2010) pp.177-188. But as we will see later in this article, snakes are frequently depicted in the area and have a more extensive meaning. Adelaide Miranda linked this depiction with the Old Testamentary character of Daniel and the narratives of Bel and the Dragon: Miranda, A. 'Imagens do sagrado na iluminura e ourivesaria românicas' in *Arte Românica em Portugal e Galiza*. (Lisboa-A Coruña. 2001) p.192.

⁴³ Porras Robles, F. 'La representación de instrumentos de viento en el románico jacobeo' in *Revista de Folklore* 28a-325 (2008) pp. 3-13.

⁴⁴ Influenced by the interpretation made by Ferreira de Almeida, *História da Arte em Portugal: o Românico*, p. 89 and by Correia de Sousa, L. 'Iconografía musical na escultura Românica em Portugal' via *Medievalista online*. <http://www2.fcsh.unl.pt/iem/medievalista/MEDIEVALISTA1/medievalista_iconografia.htm> January 2008.

⁴⁵ Cendón Fernández, M. 'El arte medieval en Tui: La catedral como foco receptor del Románico y el Gótico' in Cendón Fernández, M. (ed.) *Tui: Pasado, presente y futuro*. (Pontevedra Diputación de Pontevedra. 2006) pp.121-156.

⁴⁶ Vázquez Corbal, M. 'La iglesia de Santa Eulalia de Donas (Gondomar): Un ejemplo de las relaciones entre el Románico del Baixo Miño español y portugués' in *XXIV Ruta Cicloturística del Románico Internacional*. (Fundación Cultural Rutas del Románico, 2005) pp.150-155.

the tympanums that depict the *Maiestas Domini* (or Christ in Majesty) in the area.⁴⁷ All the features in these depictions are unique and reflect the aims of the rural masons: experimentation and innovation, in this case the best example is the evolution of the tympanums which depict *Maiestas Domini*. The first example the Tympanum of Saint Salvador de Albeos (Creciente, Spain) which offers us the earliest depiction ca. 1170-1190 and we see the changes:⁴⁸ the angels in Albeos are replaced by peasants in Bravães and by flowers in Rubiães, tympanums which were made later c. 1190-1200.⁴⁹



Photograph 9: Capital. Apse.Santa Eulalia de Donas (Gondomar,Pontevedra, Spain)



Photograph 10: Southern capital of the apse in Santa María de Tomiño (Tomiño,Pontevedra, Spain)

⁴⁷ Vázquez Corbal,M. and Rodríguez Ortega,J. A. ‘Los vestigios del monasterio de Albeos: notas para la actualización de un monumento románico en estado de abandono’ in *XXVIII Ruta Cicloturística del Románico Internacional*. (Fundación Cultural Rutas del Románico, 2010) pp.158-161.

⁴⁸ Rural masons in Galicia experimented with combining different iconographic elements, especially in parish churches or small monasteries, in many occasions they lose their original meaning and are out of context from its real sense. On this issue see: Núñez Rodríguez, M. ‘Algunas reflexiones sobre el románico rural gallego’ in *Anuario Brigantino* 6 (1983) pp.113-120 and Fernández-Oxea, J.R. ‘Maestros del Románico rural gallego’ in *Cuadernos de Estudios Gallegos* 17 (1962) pp. 209-222.

⁴⁹According to Jorge Rodrigues, they were peasants, but we can observe that maybe they have lost their wings for spatial reasons: Rodrigues, J. ‘O mundo românico (sécs. XI-XIII)’ in *História da Arte Portuguesa* Vol. I. (1995) pp.180-331.



Photograph 11: Column. Western façade São Salvador de Bravães (Ponte da Barca, Portugal)



Photograph 12: Column. Western façade São Pedro de Rubiães



Photograph 13: San Salvador de Albeos (Crecente, Spain)

Apart from the role of the cathedral there was a monastic influence in this area made by big and medium size abbeys. Example of this are: the powerful Cistercian abbey of Santa María de Oia (Oia, Pontevedra) that transformed the appearance of parish churches of the main villages like the case Santa María de Baiona (Baiona, Spain) whose aspect is like a Cistercian abbey

(Photograph 14), the town of Baiona which was a royal foundation and changed its name in 1201 had an important relationship with Oia.⁵⁰ In 1137 Alphonse VII gave half of the churches of the town to Oia.⁵¹ Another case is the Benedictine Friestas (Photograph 15) whose re-used snake decoration is copied even in rural parishes outside the diocese like in Gualtar (Braga, Portugal) (Photograph 16).⁵² Also Regular Canons when introduced in the area started to build new churches or to restore the pre-existing ones enhancing some architectural structures as at San Bartolomé de Rebordáns (Tui, Spain) whose plan was modified, or Paderne (Melgaço, Portugal) which had a singular gallery whose remains are preserved inside the church and near the western door.⁵³



Photograph 14: Santa María de Baiona (Baiona, Spain)



Photograph 15: Sanfins de Friestas (Valença, Portugal)

⁵⁰ 7th May 1201, Archivo Municipal de Baiona, Carta Puebla, Alfonso IX

⁵¹ Donation by Alphonse VII in Tui on 26th June 1137, Sánchez Belda, L. *Documentos reales de la Edad Media referentes a Galicia: Catálogo de los conservados en la Sección Clero del Archivo Histórico Nacional*. (Madrid. 1953) pp.110-111.

⁵² Probably the stone is a re-used stone from a pre-historic site.

⁵³ Réal, M. 'A organização do espaço arquitectónico entre beneditinos e agostinhos no século XI' in *Arqueologia* 6 (1982) pp. 118-132.



Photograph 16: São Miguel de Gualtar (Braga, Portugal)

The ecclesiastic dominion was so important that it affected those representations related to profane topics. There are several animal and geometric patterns which can be traced in the Galician-Portuguese area since Prehistoric times, for instance: six petals flowers, snakes or knot work among others. The ecclesiastic authorities adapted these symbols to a new message and they started to belong to iconographic programs where they are associated to evil, sin, vices and so on.⁵⁴ This interest in adapting the message comes from an aim of the clergy: if they used a well-known element although it was profane or even pagan, they would attract more new believers and the message would be easier to understand.⁵⁵ This kind of syncretism and re-adaptation of Celtic and Pre-Christian patterns is a constant in this area.

The most important distinctive element of the Romanesque in this area is related to iconography. There are twenty examples of snake or snake-like depictions, used as decoration of architectural elements. Such iconography has been traced back to prehistoric times and is reminiscent of an ancient cult based on snakes.⁵⁶

According to the late-roman poem *Ora Maritima* written by Festus Avienus and Probus, and dated to sixth century, Galicia and northern Portugal were once called 'Ophiussa' (Land of Snakes), and the inhabitants were known as *Oestrimni*, *Saephes* y *Ophis* and had a common cult

⁵⁴About Galicia: Castiñeiras González, M. 'A poética das marxes no románico galego: bestiario, fábulas e mundo ao revés' in *Sémata: Ciencias Sociais y Humanidades* 14 (2003) pp.293-334.

⁵⁵ Bartal, R. 'La coexistencia de los signos apotropaicos cristianos y paganos en las entradas de las iglesias románicas' in *Archivo Español de Arte* LXVI, Núm. 262 (1995) pp.111-132. On classical patterns for Romanesque see: Morais y Morán, J. A. 'Un largo proceso en la definición historiográfica de las fuentes del arte medieval: el arte antiguo como referente para la escultura románica' via *Medievalista online*.

<<http://www2.fcsh.unl.pt/iem/medievalista/MEDIEVALISTA9/INDEX.html>> September 2011

⁵⁶ Bouza-Brey, F. and López Cuevillas, F. *Os oestrimios, os saefes e a ofiolatría na Galiza*. (Santiago de Compostela. 1992) pp. 291-302.

related to snakes.⁵⁷ These animal depictions have a double meaning: they were used like protective symbols inherited from the traditional custom of displaying stone carvings near the gates of the ‘*castros*’ seen in Troña (Pontareas, Spain).⁵⁸ On the other hand they were used as symbols of Evil following the introduction of Christianity e.g. Pedra da Serpe.⁵⁹ We can see in several examples this double meaning. Like in São João Baptista da Comenda de Távora (Arcos de Valdevez, Portugal) where the snake is situated on the base of a capital under a representation related to the Testament which symbolises the triumph over the sin. The snake featured on the western façade of Friestas (Valença, Portugal) monastery in contrast has a clear protective meaning because its laid out in the threshold. In the Cathedral of Tui (Photograph 17) and Saint María de Tomiño (Photograph 18) where two capitals depict several snake bodies with human heads which could be understood as the Apocalyptic Beast but their conception is more similar to the “*Bicha Moura*” a hybrid mythological creature from Galician and Portuguese folklore whose appearance was a mixture between human and reptile characteristics and acted like a treasure keeper and is mentioned in different legends.⁶⁰



Photograph 17: Capital. Cathedral of Tui (Tui, Spain)



Photograph 18: Capital. Apse. Santa María de Tomiño (Tomiño, Spain)

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ A fortress typical of the “*Cultura Castreña*” pre-Roman culture, typical for the Northwestern Iberian Peninsula between the sixth century BC and the first century AD

⁵⁹ Galician name. In English it means ‘Snake’s Stone’.

⁶⁰ Ferreira de Almeida, ‘*Románico de Entre-Douro-e-Minho*’, p.509. In English concerning female enchanted characters in folklore, see: Cardigos, I. ‘The Enchanted Calendar of Moorish Women’ in M. Mencej (ed.) *Space and Time in Europe: East and West, Past and Present*. (Ljubljana. 2009) pp.105-128.

In conclusion, we can highlight the main reasons which justify the importance of this border territory as a place for artistic transmission and experimentation. Firstly is necessary to stress the main role of the Cathedral itself, as a receiver and transmitter of Romanesque style. Without the Cathedral of Tui and its link to the pilgrimage route, Romanesque would have never penetrated into Northern Portugal.⁶¹ Secondly, as shown previously, the role of local and roaming workshops which transmitted traditional and innovative solutions at the same time was crucial. In addition to that, the appearance of monastic orders helped enrich the artistic panorama with their different dogmatic and aesthetical conceptions: the richness of Benedictine sculpture opposed to the Cistercian austerity, or the architectural restorations made by Augustinian Canons in pre-existing buildings. And last but not least, the importance of tradition and historical past in the conception of the iconography. Without this historical background, Romanesque in the old diocese of Tui would not be the same.

These statements underline the necessity of carrying out multidisciplinary studies of border territories in the Middle Ages to have a better understanding of cultural and artistic phenomena about this époque, and the importance of Art History to provide new approaches in border studies. The case of the diocese of Tui during the Middle Ages is singular in all senses, and has been scarcely studied for many years. It needs to be studied and its worth being studied by other disciplines related to Medieval Studies

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⁶¹ For example Lisbon was recovered in 1147, see Matthew, B. 'Military aspects of the conquest of Lisbon, 1147' in J. Phillips and M. Hoch (eds.) *The Second Crusade: Scope and Consequences* (Manchester. 2001) pp.71-89.

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