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Artistic Interchange between Al-Andalus and the Iberian Christian Kingdoms: The Role of the Ivory Casket from Santo Domingo de Silos

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Abstract: The ivory casket made in Cuenca in A.D. 1026 and signed by Mohammad ibn Zayyan constitutes invaluable evidence for the study of artistic transfers between Al-Andalus and the Iberian Christian kingdoms. In the 12th century this piece was transformed in the monastery of Santo Domingo de Silos (Burgos) with the addition of Christian-themed enamels and reused as a reliquary. The appropriation of this object within the ideological context of the Christian expansion in the Iberian Peninsula allows us to reflect on the meaning given to it by the Silos monks. Moreover, a comparative study of the casket with Romanesque sculpture shows the existence of important iconographic influences of this piece in Christian art that have not been sufficiently studied until now. Its analysis offers clues about the way in which figurative motifs could be transmitted from Andalus to Christian art and about the symbolic purposes with which they were used. This work highlights the need to study conjointly the transfer of artistic pieces and the transmission of figurative motifs from one context to another in addition to proposing a methodology for their study.

Keywords: Islamic motifs in Spanish Romanesque; Ibn Zayyan ivory casket; monastery of Santo Domingo de Silos; Romanesque model books



Citation: Monteiro, I. Artistic Interchange between Al-Andalus and the Iberian Christian Kingdoms: The Role of the Ivory Casket from Santo Domingo de Silos. *Histories* **2022**, *2*, 33–45. <https://doi.org/10.3390/histories2010003>

Academic Editor: Alejandro García-Sanjuán

Received: 30 September 2021

Accepted: 16 December 2021

Published: 2 February 2022

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1. Introduction: Transfers between Andalus Art and the Spanish Romanesque

Iberian art from the 10th to the 12th centuries has been the subject of countless studies from the 19th century on due to its extraordinary richness and uniqueness. Nevertheless, a disciplinary barrier has long been present leading to the separation of Christian art from Islamic art of this period, thus converting them into two independent specialties. The border that once existed between Al-Andalus and the Christian kingdoms seems to have led, to some extent, to the separate study of their respective artistic manifestations, despite their geographic and chronological proximity, and their clear connections. There are, however, significant studies about those artistic contacts, primarily in Mozarabic architecture and the illustrated Beatus commentaries. Scholars such as O.K. Werckmeister [1], H. Stierlin [2], J. Williams [3], and P. Klein [4] have analysed these interchanges. Others such as J. Zozaya [5], A. Shalem [6] and M. Rosser-Owen [7] have addressed the importance of Andalus art in the Christian north. In regard to Romanesque art of the 11th and 12th centuries, these connections have been approached from multiple points of view. Scholars like É. Lambert [8], É. Mâle [9], A. Fikry [10] and K. Watson [11] have reaffirmed them, while others like X. Barral i Altet [12] have questioned them, and J. Dodds [13] and E.R. Hoffman [14] (among others) have jointly analysed them. Many of those studies have focused on the transmission of Islamic elements to Christian buildings at an architectural and ornamental level, while the study of the transfer of figurative and iconographic elements has received much less attention. Even though several works have demonstrated the artistic permeability of Spanish Romanesque, many questions remain unstudied, and these interactions are still not widely assumed by historiography.

The borders between Al-Andalus and the Christian kingdoms were both changeable and permeable, allowing for the constant circulation of people, ideas, and artistic objects.

Some ivory pyxides and caskets made between the middle of the 10th century and the middle of the 11th in the workshops of Al-Andalus found their way to the Christian kingdoms a few decades later¹. The dissolution of the caliphate and subsequent instability, as well as the conquest of Toledo by Alfonso VI in 1085, led to the dispersal of these objects². Many of them began to reach the Christian kingdoms from the second half of the 11th century on, where they were generally donated to ecclesiastic treasures and monastic ensembles.

These ivory items seem to have had a considerable artistic impact on Romanesque sculpture and monumental painting, which came into being precisely in the last third of the 11th century. Romanesque art presents various figurative motifs that appear earlier in Andalusian art, such as, for example, birds with intertwined necks, griffins and lions with curved tails, and some themes composed of human figures, such as musicians³ or equestrian falconers [15].

The transmission of motifs from Islamic to Romanesque art has not been the subject of a multidisciplinary analysis that addresses this issue as part of a broad process linked to the transfer of objects⁴. In this article, we propose the need to undertake the joint analysis of both phenomena, both the transfer of figurative themes and that of sumptuary pieces from Al-Andalus to the Christian kingdoms. These objects conveyed a visual culture that would come to be shared by both communities, although with different connotations in each context.

The casket made by Ibn Zayyan in the workshop of the Taifa of Cuenca in the year AD 1026 and preserved for centuries in the monastery of Santo Domingo de Silos (currently in the Museo de Burgos) constitutes a paradigmatic example of this artistic phenomenon. An analysis of its function, its new meaning and influence on Christian visual culture offers relevant information for the study of the connections between Andalusian ivories and Romanesque sculpture, a field hardly explored until now.

2. The Attribution of New Meanings to Andalusian Pieces in the Northern Kingdoms and the Silos Casket Case Study: A Methodological Proposal

To undertake the study of artistic transfers from Al-Andalus to the Christian kingdoms it is convenient to adopt a methodology based on a double line of analysis, which focuses, on the one hand, on the study of Islamic pieces that changed hands—that is, on the objects that could act as transmitters of forms in their journey from Al-Andalus to the Christian kingdoms—and, on the other, on the study of the iconographic themes that were transmitted to Christian art.

Regarding the study of transportable objects themselves, there are two important aspects to consider. First, it is necessary to analyse the initial function of these pieces in Al-Andalus and also their new use in Christian contexts. Second, the symbolism of objects should receive particular attention, both in their origin and the subsequent attribution of new significance to them, since those are relevant questions for understanding the transmission of forms that have been observed.

Initially these luxurious pyxides and caskets seem to have been used to contain perfumes, ointments, or jewellery, and were closely linked to the environment of the caliph or Taifa king. In the Christian world, Andalusian objects often found their way to sacred spaces where they frequently served as containers for relics. Regarding their meaning, in Al-Andalus, they would have been considered a symbolic expression of regal power, taking into account that their manufacture was the exclusive prerogative of the ruler, who most likely dictated their iconographic programme ([16], pp. 281–295).

Once reused in the Christian world, the symbolism of these pieces has been the subject of numerous studies. There are several different historiographic positions concerning the meaning underlying the presence of these ivory caskets in Christian treasuries. They can be summed up as follows:

Their use with a triumphalist connotation within a backdrop of conquest and appropriation, as war booty. This stance has been defended by Shalem, Dodds and Harris (in the case of Leire casket), among others ([6], pp. 72–92; [13], pp. 30, 32) and [17].

The lack of a triumphalist connotation since the objects arrived mainly through trade, diplomatic exchange or as containers of relics from Al-Andalus, as pointed out by M. Rosser-Owen [7].

Their use due to a mere aesthetic admiration for being precious luxury items and, even, their possible perception as earlier Christian works, having forgotten their Islamic origin ([18], p. 24).

It should be noted that several of these considerations could coexist in the Christian attribution of a new meaning within a single object, and that the perception could be different in each case. There is no doubt that its portability created “a broader cultural mechanism through which objects and images extended beyond themselves, both geographically and semantically” in the words of Hoffman ([14], pp. 21–22).

The Silos casket represents a key example in that we know in what context it was manufactured and that its second life in Christian hands began early (Figure 1). This ivory box measures 35 × 19 × 21 cm (width × height × depth). It was made in Cuenca in A.D. 1026 (417 H) by the artist Mohammad ibn Zayyan, as revealed by the Kufic inscription that runs through it. It was probably a commission from the Dhu'l-Nunid family that ruled the Taifa of Toledo at the beginning of the 11th century, although the part of the inscription that indicates the recipient is lost. It may have been mutilated through Christian intervention on the piece, as will be argued later on. According to several specialists, the hunting and fighting scenes between animals that decorate this casket were intended to symbolise the territorial power of the owner of the piece, while the vegetal motifs evoked paradise and the favour of Allah towards the ruler [19].



Figure 1. Ivory casket from Santo Domingo de Silos, made by Mohammad ibn Zayyan in 1026. Currently in the Museo de Burgos, Spain (Photo: Inés Monteiro).

The ivories produced in Cuenca seem to be the work of the same family of carvers, the Ibn Zayyan. Many scholars consider that it was a stable workshop, active between 1026 and 1049–50 AD. Only three complete pieces attributable to this workshop by the inscriptions are preserved. While the pyxis of Narbonne cathedral, manufactured around 1020–30, has vegetal decoration, the casket of the cathedral of Palencia (1049–50 AD, currently in the MAN of Madrid) is decorated with scenes of hunting although without archers or conquering lions [20] and ([21], pp. 57–61).

It is not known in what year the casket arrived at the Silos monastery. It might have been donated by Alfonso VI after the conquest of Toledo in 1085, or it could have arrived a few decades later. At the latest, the piece arrived by the middle of the 12th century, the approximate date when it was transformed into the enamel workshop of the Silos monastery itself ([22], p. 32). At that time enamel plaques were added with the Champlévé

technique representing an Agnus Dei on the top of the lid (an image of Christ as the “Lamb of God”) and Santo Domingo between two angels, on the left side of the box (Figure 2). The Silos enamel workshop was extremely active between approximately 1140 and the end of the 12th century. Although this workshop and its chronology are still a matter of debate, a recent analysis established the date of 1140–1150 for the enamels of the Silos Chest, which is the most accepted chronology [23] and ([24] pp. 1–31).



Figure 2. Saint Dominic with two angels. Enamel plaque on the left side of the casket from Santo Domingo de Silos, 1026 A.D. Currently in the Museo de Burgos, Spain (Photo: José Luis Filpo Cabana, Wikipedia Public Domain. Available online: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Santo_Domingo_de_Silos,_Arqueta_de_Silos.jpg (accessed on 17 June 2021).

This transformation was probably aimed at adapting the object to its new function of containing relics on the altar of the monastery church, perhaps those of Santo Domingo himself [25]. With these enamels, it was intended to Christianise the object from the decorative point of view, although not totally. It is very significant that the Christian artist chose to preserve a part of the Kufic inscription, with the blessing to the bearer in Arabic, the date, and the name of the Islamic artist: Mohammad ibn Zayyan. The name of the ruler to whom it was originally dedicated is missing. The chest could have suffered damage that would explain the need for its reconstruction and the loss of part of the inscription. However, the fact that there are no words cut off, or separated from the sentence that gives them meaning, makes it more plausible that the deletion of the owner’s name responded to deliberate mutilation, considering that the ivory plaques were mounted on a new metal support and therefore selected in some way. The desire was, in any case, to have the work remembered as being of Andalusian manufacture.

The Islamic origin of the object seems to have constituted a source of prestige and did not represent any conflict for the monastic community that used it as a reliquary on the altar of their church. Regardless of whether the object arrived through trade or booty, the 12th century monks might have known that it had belonged to the governors of Toledo defeated by Alfonso VI, taking into account the few decades that had elapsed between its manufacture and its change of owner, and the possible intentional deletion of the name of the owner. The first documentary mention of this piece that remains, however, is a much later one, as it appears in a 1440 inventory of the Benedictine Abbey of Silos, where its origin is still expressly recorded by indicating that it is carved “a la morisca”⁵.

The euphoria that followed the taking of Toledo in 1085 and the symbolic importance of this conquest, since it was the ancient Christian capital prior to the Islamic occupation, leads us to place the reuse and transformation of this piece in the ideological context of the

sacralised war against Islam, where the idea of recovery of the territory prevailed. This idea is very present in the *Historia Silense*, a chronicle written by the monks of Silos themselves in c.1118 so that they partake of this mentality. The representation of an Agnus Dei at the top of the piece and of Santo Domingo on the side, who was known as the liberator of Christian captives held by Muslims in the context of border struggles⁶, adds a triumphalist connotation to the reuse of the object, as has been noticed by most of the scholars who have studied this piece ([25], p. 521). The deliberate preservation of the Kufic inscription to recall its original provenance seems to point in the same direction.

The Christianisation of this object and its use for sacred purposes follows a process similar to the conversion of mosques into churches, which also presented a triumphalist character and followed analogous steps: cleansing with holy water, consecration of an altar with relics and placement of an image of Christian worship ([26] pp. 129–148). We also know that the later Christian tradition considered this piece as a trophy donated to the monastery of Silos by Count Fernán González ([27] pp. 51–52), who had conquered those lands fighting against the troops of ‘Abd al-Rahman III and was commemorated as a hero of the fight against Islam in the epic poem that was devoted to him in the 13th century.

3. The Iconographic Impact of the Silos Casket in Spanish Romanesque: The Christian Reception of Andalusí Visual Culture

Although few works have compared the whole of Ibn Zayyan’s casket iconography with Romanesque sculpture, we note that this small object had a surprising artistic influence. The most striking thing is that practically all the motifs that decorate its ivory plaques can be found in reliefs of churches and Romanesque cloisters scattered in an area that goes beyond the kingdoms of Castile and León.

The casket seems to have an initial bearing on the lower cloister of the Silos monastery, whose capitals are deeply drilled with a notable stylistic influence from Andalusí ivories, as various scholars have already noticed ([28], p. 21) and [29]. Capital No. 6 in the east gallery (dated towards the first quarter of the 12th century⁷) presents pairs of lions turning their backs and turning their heads backwards (Figure 3). The proportions of their heads, the disposition of their eyes and the incisions of their fur are very similar to those of the lions that form a cross with their bodies juxtaposed on the two broad faces of Ibn Zayyan’s casket (Figure 4), as already observed by Pérez de Urbel ([28], pp. 22–23)⁸. These lions are, however, trapped by vegetal tendrils in the capital within a Christian symbolic discourse. Boto has also found similarities between the griffins and quadrupeds in this piece and an illustration from the Beatus of Fernando I and Sancha (c. 1047), where fantastic animals appear with very similar curved tails, arranged in the same way, in a horizontal register⁹.

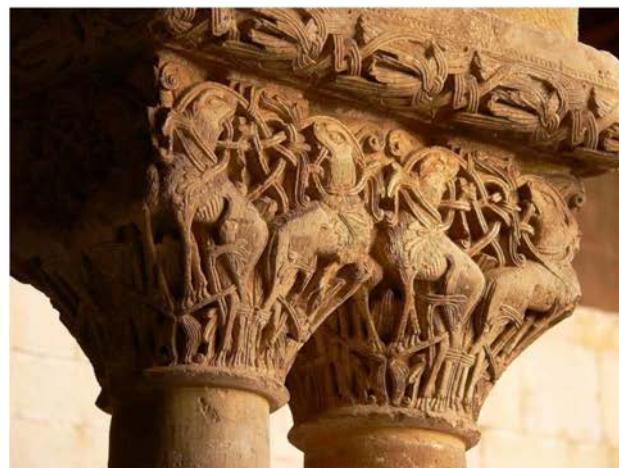


Figure 3. Lions turning their backs on each other. Capital n° 6 from the East gallery of Santo Domingo de Silos cloister; first quarter of the 12th century. (Photo: Inés Monteiro).



Figure 4. Archers, lions with juxtaposed bodies and lions attacking bulls on the front plaque of the casket from Santo Domingo de Silos, 1026, currently in the Museo de Burgos, Spain (Photo: Inés Monteiro).

On the right-side plaque of the Silos casket, two affronted peacocks with intertwined necks can be observed (Figure 5). This is a recurring theme in the Andalusí carvings of the ‘Amirid period, and we find it, for example, in the casket at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London from the early 11th century (inv. n° 10, 1866). This motif also has its parallels in some Romanesque examples, such as in a corbel in the church of Santa Marta del Cerro in Segovia, from the early 13th century, where the same pattern is adopted, although with a more heavy-handed carving and a different arrangement of the birds’ bodies, appearing vertically to conform to the shape of the corbel (Figure 6). The motif of a pair of birds intertwined by their necks appears in other Romanesque reliefs, such as on a capital form the church of San Miguel in San Esteban de Gormaz in Soria (Figure 7).



Figure 5. Ivory plaque with peacocks with intertwined necks, and lions with their heads seen from above. Right side of the casket from Santo Domingo de Silos, 1026, currently housed in the Museo de Burgos, Spain (Photo: Inés Monteiro).



Figure 6. Corbel with birds with intertwined necks from the Romanesque church of Santa Marta del Cerro (Segovia), beginning of the 13th century. (Photo: Inés Monteiro).



Figure 7. Birds with intertwined necks on a capital from the Romanesque church of San Miguel in San Esteban de Gormaz in Soria, c. 1081 (Photo: Inés Monteiro).

Flanking both sides of the peacocks on the Silos casket are lions biting the hinds of deer (Figure 5). These felines adopt a peculiar posture that is quite characteristic of Amirid and Taifa art, with their heads seen from above while their bodies appear in profile. This detail is incorporated in some early Romanesque examples, such as the capital of the San Salvador chapel in the Romanesque cathedral of Santiago de Compostela, as Walker already observed, built in the last quarter of the 11th century under the patronage of Alfonso VI ([30], p. 268). Other Romanesque reliefs include this peculiar posture, as can be seen in the

lion attacking a quadruped in capital No. 4 of the cloister of the cathedral of Santa María de Girona (Figure 8).



Figure 8. Lion attacking a bull and Almoravid archer on capital n° 4 in the cloister of the cathedral of Santa Maria, Gerona (northwest face). (Photo: Inés Monteiro).

Nevertheless, the outstanding motifs on the Silos casket are undoubtedly the archer and the figure of the lion attacking a bull, which appear four times on each of the main façades of the box (Figure 4). Although the conquering lion is a very frequent topic in Islamic art ([31], pp. 164–166), the peculiarity of this Andalusí piece lies in placing this motif next to the representation of an archer. The same combination of themes and figures can be found in capital No. 4 of the cloister of the cathedral of Girona (Figure 9) and in other examples of Catalan Romanesque [32]. The incorporation of the conquering lion in the capital of Girona is carried out, furthermore, with some formal features that seem to explicitly allude to Andalusí ivories, while the archers present clothing and ethnic features that identify them as Almoravid warriors¹⁰ (Figures 8 and 9). All this leads to the conclusion that the sculptors of this capital borrowed these motifs from Islamic art seeking to paraphrase their original message, since they use them as an emblem of conquest over the territory, as I have been able to analyse in detail in a recent article ([32], pp. 491–497)¹¹.



Figure 9. Almoravid archer with Negroid features and lion attacking a bull. Northeast face of capital n° 4 of the cloister of the Girona's cathedral. (Photo: Inés Monteiro).

Although the Girona capital is the sole example of a transfer from Andalusí art to Romanesque sculpture that has been studied in its entire iconographic journey, the conclusions of this work cannot be extrapolated to other cases. It would be necessary to analyse the other motifs found in each Romanesque church to be able to interpret the degree of awareness that could exist regarding their Islamic origin and the intention with which they were introduced. Only with the particular study of each example could we determine the symbolism that these figures adopt in the different Romanesque buildings, a task too broad to be undertaken in this article¹².

The widespread dissemination that the iconography of the Silos casket seems to have had, raises many questions, since it is unlikely that the sculptors of all these Romanesque buildings, scattered geographically and with a different chronology, would have been able to contemplate this ivory box, even though this monastery became an important pilgrimage site in the 12th century. Even more significant is the fact that the Santo Domingo de Silos monastery was one of the main centres of Iberian Christian artistic production throughout the 11th and 12th centuries, where there was an enamelling workshop, an active scriptorium and an outstanding monumental sculpture workshop. Some prominent works of this time were produced in the Silos *scriptorium*, such as the *Historia Silense* (a chronicle of c.1118 focused on narrating the achievements of the struggle against Islam by Alfonso VI) and the Silos Beatus (1091–1109)¹³. We also know that the capitals of this cloister had a major artistic influence throughout Castile and beyond [33]¹⁴. Although it has generally been considered that it was the workers from the second Silos workshop (the ones dedicated to carving the capitals of the south and west galleries) who spread this style through the Iberian Romanesque, the means they used for it have not been studied in depth. These sculptors, like the rest of the Romanesque artists, had to have model notebooks or some sort of support (parchment scrolls or tree bark¹⁵), where the figurative prototypes that were to be transferred to the stone were traced. This would explain why the sculptural style of Silos was imitated in Castilian churches until the 13th century, which cannot be explained by the work of a sole itinerant workshop transferring motifs from place to place. These notebooks were perishable, as they were instruments of daily work, meaning that few testimonies have been preserved¹⁶. Thanks to them, the same figurative themes could be repeated in many buildings, and their existence may explain the enormous iconographic homogeneity that we find in Romanesque art, not only in the capitals but also in the corbels ([34], pp. 193–217). The model notebooks allowed the messages of the Gregorian Reform to reach the reliefs of all the churches, since there was a very rigid ecclesiastical supervision over the images that decorated the walls. This would lead us to believe that they were probably designed by learned clerics who devised the churches' iconographic programmes, determining the images that should appear on their capitals, doorways, and corbels. Although the role of model books in Romanesque art has not yet received a systematic study due to the scarcity of preserved testimonies, there are substantial works on this question in relation to Gothic sculpture that demonstrate the significance that those sketches could have had for the design and execution of the reliefs in the later Middle Ages¹⁷.

Considering the widespread dissemination of the sculpture of the Silos cloister¹⁸, it can be presumed that some of these notebooks could have been made in its important scriptorium, allowing the propagation of its iconography throughout the surrounding area. The motifs that decorated Ibn Zayyan's casket could also be copied in those notebooks or sketches that would have circulated throughout the Christian kingdoms, later being used on site by sculptors¹⁹. Islamic textiles were undoubtedly an even more important element than ivories for the transmission of motifs from Islamic to Christian art since they were more abundant and easier to transport. However, it is unlikely that sculptors had such rich and fragile objects at their disposal at the time of carving the stone: there had to be an intermediate support. This *modus operandi* is the most plausible to explain the presence of composition schemes and figurative models that have generally been called

“oriental” (Mesopotamian, Assyrian, Byzantine or Islamic) in many Romanesque buildings, as Baltrusiatis already noted in his 1934 work *Art sumerien, art roman*.

The transmission of the motifs of the Santo Domingo de Silos casket to Romanesque sculpture could also be explained by the existence of other similar Islamic objects that have now disappeared, as well as by the journey of Andalusí artists through the northern lands or the displacement of Christians to Al-Andalus ([30], pp. 259–275). Yet, in any case, it was necessary to have some sketches or drawings that would serve to plan the iconographic programmes and transfer them to stone. This would explain the diffusion of the same themes in such a wide geographic area and over such a long period, that went into the 13th century.

The problem of why it was desirable to introduce a series of motifs that were typical of Islamic art in the reliefs of Christian churches is even more important for explaining this phenomenon of figurative transmission. We have already pointed out that this question can be answered by analysing the symbolism of each theme in each particular context. To this end, it is also important to know the Christian perceptions of Andalusí objects, the new function and the meaning that is given to them, as we indicated in the previous section. The Arabic inscriptions that run through the ivory pieces from the 10th and 11th centuries reminded their new Christian owners that they belonged to Muslim leaders who had been defeated. Although the pieces could have arrived through trade, and not necessarily as war booty, they did so at a time of religious and territorial confrontation, as payment of *parias* or after the *fitnah*, the taking of Toledo or Cuenca. They were pieces appreciated for their aesthetic and material qualities, no doubt, but they were above all testimonies of the Christian victory, which led to their exhibition in sacred spaces.

In view of our previous hypothesis, we believe that the introduction of Andalusí figurative themes in Romanesque art constitutes an act of artistic appropriation inserted in a context of ideological confrontation and struggle for territory²⁰. This is the case of the Girona capital that presents the conquering lion with the archer, incorporating not only the forms of Islamic art but also its messages. The canons who devised the iconographic programme for this Catalan cloister seem to have considered that Andalusí art was the most suitable for transmitting, in capital No. 4, a triumphalist message towards Al-Andalus ([32], pp. 491–497). Something similar has been concluded by Dodds regarding the falconer in the wall paintings of San Baudelio de Berlanga (Casillas de Berlanga, Soria), from the early 12th century. This motif appears together with a hunter, a camel and an elephant that evoke the visual universe of the Taifa of Toledo. For Dodds, the fact that Toledo had been recently conquered explains the use of this visual language in the kingdoms of León and Castile, with which they would have claimed their political and cultural identity in the midst of the process of conquering Al-Andalus ([15], pp. 107–115).

4. Aesthetics as an Element of Cultural Identity

The artistic transfers that we have mentioned in this article do not seem to be the result of a simple aesthetic admiration, since we are faced with a phenomenon with much more profound implications. According to several scholars, the ivory pieces were insignia of the power of the ruler in Al-Andalus and Romanesque images also had an important symbolic function in their social context. The artistic forms were much more than a decoration; they were elements of prestige and vehicles of messages. The appearance of the works of art made by Muslims and Christians in the Iberian Peninsula, in the midst of the process of border movement, was not merely an aesthetic issue: it was a question of identity. The ornamental facet of these creations and the Christian admiration for them did not neutralise their ability to evoke a religious community or a people, quite the contrary. This makes the study of the transmission of elements from Islamic to Romanesque art particularly complex and fascinating. Nor can we consider that these motifs were incorporated into Christian art as part of a trend, displaying an inclination towards the oriental understood as exoticism. Andalusí aesthetics were too familiar in the Iberian north to be considered exotic, although alien enough to prevent it from being adopted as Christian. The Islamic elements must

have been recognized as belonging to a well-known religious alterity. If the inventory of Silos from the 14th century indicates that the casket is carved “in the Moorish style”, it is because the notion of what was typical of Islamic art has survived.

The artistic exchanges that we have mentioned in this article bear witness to the cultural importance of Al-Andalus in the Christian West and the powerful influence of its refined aesthetics. However, when studying these figurative borrowings, we note that they do not appear to have been introduced in a passive or neutral way. There is a subtle game of appropriation, incorporation or transformation of the themes to enunciate a new message with them. Therefore, we believe that there was an intention behind these forms, a complex underlying message that is, on the other hand, common in all Romanesque images. This is why we can conclude that the forms that travelled from Al-Andalus to the Christian kingdoms, as well as the objects, frequently served to weave a discourse related to identity and power in the process of territorial and religious confrontation.

Funding: This work is part of the Research Project of the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation PID2020-118603RA-I00 “Artistic transfer in Iberia (9th to 12th centuries): the reception of Islamic visual culture in the Christian kingdoms” (2021–2024) PI: Inés Monteiro.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

Notes

- 1 This is the case of the ivory caskets from Leyre (c. 1004) and Silos (1026), and the silver casket of Hisham II (c. 1010).
- 2 Although each piece followed a different pathway and there were other factors that led to the dispersion of the objects (diplomatic gifts, payments of *parias* or wars and alliances, as in the case of Hisham’s casket), it can be assumed that the events that followed the *fitnah* of 1009–1031 involved a more massive looting of this type of courtly possessions.
- 3 Whose clothing and ethnic traits denote their Islamic identity. All these motifs have their own artistic trajectories and specificities ([35], pp. 60–74). For Andalusí elements in French Romanesque see [11].
- 4 That is one of the objectives of the research project in which I am currently involved, entitled “Artistic transfer in Iberia (9th to 12th centuries): the reception of Islamic visual culture in the Christian kingdoms” (2021–2024) PI: Inés Monteiro. Project of the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation PID2020-118603RA-I00.
- 5 “Un arca de marfil labrada a la morisca la qual es llena de las reliquias de las honze mil vírgenes”; “An ivory casket in the Moorish fashion which is filled with the relics of the eleven thousand virgins” ([36], p. 219).
- 6 Santo Domingo was considered to be a liberator of Christian captives in Islamic lands from the 12th century on, and the monastery of Silos is decorated with numerous fragments of chains carried there by prisoners returned from al-Andalus. ([37], p. 171).
- 7 Although this first Silos workshop was traditionally dated to the end of the 11th century, the most recent works point to the first quarter of the 12th century, being a question that is still much debated ([29], pp. 193–225).
- 8 Capital n° 13 of the same gallery is very similar.
- 9 In the illustration of Noah’s Ark, Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, MS Vtr. 14-2, fol. 109. Nevertheless Boto indicates that “one cannot rule out the possibility that the iconography was already established in the north, and had circulated among earlier Christian miniaturists for use in texts other than the Beatus” ([38], p. 244).
- 10 Some elements such as the veil of these figures, their spurs and stirrups, and the type of bow have allowed to identify them as Almoravid warriors, see ([32], pp. 467–471).
- 11 The Conquering lion over the bull represented military victory in the Islamic art.
- 12 This is the purpose of the research project mentioned above.
- 13 In the 11th and 12th centuries this workshop was intensely active, on the basis of several other manuscripts from this period still preserved today in the monastery’s library, such as the Silos Missal.
- 14 In the regions of Soria, Segovia and Gadalajara we find dozens of churches whose capitals follow the models of Silos until the 13th century.
- 15 See the interesting proposal by Milgros Guardia on the possible use of birch bark scrolls that served as templates for Romanesque wall paintings ([39], pp. 168–169). The use of paper in Castile did not appear until the 13th century.
- 16 Among the preserved examples we have the notebook of Adémar de Chabanne c. 1020, some loose folios kept in the Benedictine abbey of Einsiedeln, Switzerland, from the first half of the 12th century, a Berlin manuscript of the mid- 12th century, as well as

another in London (Victoria and Albert Museum), although these are not model notebooks specifically intended for sculpture and could serve *scriptoria* as well as sculptors ([40], p. 8). The most complete is the late *Livre de portraiture* de Villard de Honnecourt, with 33 parchment pages with 250 drawings forming prototypes of sculpture and architecture, dated around 1220 and 1240 and, preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris (MS Fr 19093).

- 17 See the work of Joubert [41] on the Central Portal of Bourges Cathedral, following the operational model provided by Wilhem Schlink on his work about the west façade of Amiens.
- 18 It is a very studied question, see a state of the arts in [33].
- 19 In the collection of drawings by Adhémar de Chabannes (considered by some scholars as an attempt to create a model book) we find a Kufic script. ([42] pp 163–255). At the same time various Romanesque buildings in France and Spain feature Arabic inscriptions on their reliefs, that were copied by Christian artists.
- 20 On the aesthetic appropriation of Islamic art in the Italian Romanesque see the recent contribution of K. Mathews [43].

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