

# THE ROMANESQUE CASKET OF SAINTS ADRIAN AND NATALIA (THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO): CULTURAL CONTEXT AND ARTISTIC ANALYSIS

JOSÉ ALBERTO MORÁIS  
PONTIFICIA UNIVERSIDAD CATÓLICA DE VALPARAÍSO  
CHILE

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## ABSTRACT

A monographic study of the caskets of Saints Adrian and Natalia from The Art Institute of Chicago was carried out. Historiography of Romanesque art has forgotten this piece, but it was studied analyzing the life cycle of both Eastern Saints, examining its technical aspects as well as its epigraphs.

All is kept in the study limits of the origin of its worship in Byzantium, the transfer of their relics to Rome and during the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries, its spread in the old Astur-Leonese Kingdom. Finally, we studied the iconography in relation to the *Passio* written about the martyr and a comparison is carried out with the silversmith works in San Isidoro de Leon.<sup>1</sup>

## KEY WORDS

Saints Adrian and Natalia, Reliquary, Silversmithing, Leon.

## CAPITALIA VERBA

Sancti Adrianus et Natalia, Reliquarium, Opera Argenti, Legio.

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1. Investigation Project DI-VRIEA, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso (Chile) number 039.363/2017. "Circulation of information, objects and people" Study Group, PUCV, Institute of History. Used abbreviation: BnF, Bibliothèque nationale de France.

## 1. Introduction

The Art Institute of Chicago conserves among its collections a reliquary dedicated to Saints Adrian and Natalia, elaborated with sheets of silver plated on a wooden base, which, according to the institution cataloging card, dates back to the XIIIth century, originating in the Leon Province (Spain)<sup>2</sup> (Illustrations 1, 2, 3 and 4).

It is striking that, despite the artistic quality of this sacred object, scientific studies devoted to it are very limited. In fact, regarding the elaboration of the famous catalog *The Art of Medieval Spain* (500-200), published in New York in 1993, the complete record by Professor John Williams only collected three sporadic mentions made by researchers.

The objective of this study is to deepen knowledge of this relic, analyzing technical factors, the images that the Romanesque silversmiths displayed in their four faces, as to narrow down their chronology and place of origin.

## 2. A limited historiographic past

The first recorded mention of the reliquary dates back to 1914, when Josep Gudiol i Cunill responded to a request by Dr. Burkhard Mies, a medieval arts researcher, for *unos cofrecillos, de producción catalana, hechos de madera cubierta con delgada plancha de cobre estampado o repujado a molde*. Gudiol pointed out that Julius Böhler, an antiquarian based in Munich, had sent him two photographs of a lipsanoteca, which the Catalan author rapidly linked to silversmithing productions of medieval Catalonia, and he understood as the custodian of *la mano de San Martín; pero los relieves y leyendas aluden a la muerte de San Adrián*.<sup>3</sup>

It is not easy to trace the piece since, hypothetically, it left Spain for Germany. In any case, its presence at that time in the Böhler collection in Munich must be linked to the establishment in the United States of another art gallery that, in the 1920s, would showcase the works of his son Otto Böhler, fact that could reveal the route followed by this work for international expatriation.

Information preserved in the archives of the Art Institute of Chicago reveal that as early as 1932, the institute was in possession of a Harry Fuld, also linked to

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2. "Reliquary Casket of Saints Adrian and Natalia, 1100/50", *Art Institute of Chicago*, 26 March 2015 <<http://www.artic.edu/aic/collections/artwork/46230>> Chicago, Art Institute, inventory number 43. 65. The measurements of the piece are: 15,9x 25,4x 14,5 centimeters.

3. "Catalan caskets made of wood and covered with thin copper plates stamped or embossed to order"; "the hand of St. Martin; but reliefs and legends elude to the death of Saint Adrian": Gudiol i Cunill, Josep. "Una antigua producción catalana". *Museum*, 4 (1914-1915): 37-44. Piece dated in the twelfth Century and, as far as we know, the first two photographs of the works published.



German collections and buyers of numerous medieval pieces that are now shared between Boston and Chicago.<sup>4</sup>

These same sources reported a casket transfer on October 17, 1942 to the Chicago Museum through Raphael Stora, in an acquisition policy of silversmithing objects, such as the figure of Kate S. Buckingham (1858-1937), collector, philanthropist and promoter, along with her sister Lucie Maud, from the so-called Memorial Gothic Room, the final location where the art piece is being conserved.<sup>5</sup>

If the relics in the museum showcases are traditionally related to the figure of Kate Buckingham, the role that Meyric Rogers and Oswald Göetz played in their valuation was not minor, especially from the 1940s on. In fact, since the publication of Gudiol in the first decade of the twentieth century, a documentary silence took place, broken only by small mentions to the reliquary made by authors.<sup>6</sup> It was only after 1945 that small excerpts of reliquary knowledge began to be obtained, defending its Hispanic origin with the silver plating style, demonstrating a chronology between 1150 and 1170 and insinuating the possibility of establishing comparatives with miniatures and ivories preserved in Spain.<sup>7</sup>

In 1961 a study focused specifically on the technical aspects of the piece, enumerating damages suffered and pondering a possible remounting of the plates, identifying hagiographic scenes without attending to its thematic order and establishing parallels with art from the Northern European book; starting with the Nuremberg *Codex Aureus* and the Saint-Hadelin reliquaries from the collegiate church of Saint Martin de Visé (Wallonia, Belgium), as well as ivories from the Echternach area. In this paper, Hispanic origin is put in question with laconic arguments and interesting data concluded from the spectrophotometric and microscopic study of silver.<sup>8</sup>

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4. Dale, Thomas. "Meyric Rogers, Oswald Goetz, and the Rehabilitation of the Lucy Maud Buckingham Memorial Gothic Room at the Chicago Art Institute in the 1940s", *To Inspire and Instruct: A History of Medieval Art in Midwestern Museums*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2008: 118-130; Swarzenski, Georg. "Die Sammlung Harry Fuld in Frankfurt". *Das Kunstblatt*, 2 (1918): 78-90.

5. Nielsen, Christina. "Introduction". *To Inspire and Instruct: A History of Medieval Art in Midwestern Museums*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2008: 1-5; Seidel, Linda. "The Buckingham Head: An Incidental Portrait of its Accidental Patron", *To Inspire and Instruct: A History of Medieval Art in Midwestern Museums*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2008: 72-86; Fabens Kelley, Charles, "Kate S. Buckingham as a Collector". *Bulletin of the Art Institute of Chicago*, 39/1 (1945): 1-5; Rogers, Meyric. "The Rehabilitation of the Lucy Maud Buckingham Medieval Collection". *Bulletin of the Art Institute of Chicago*, 39/3 (1945), 33-36.

6. The bibliography cited very punctually of the piece, without deepening its study: Swarzenski, Georg. "Die Sammlung...": 88; Rogers, Meyric. "Decorative Arts". *Bulletin of the Art Institute of Chicago: Report for the Year 1943*, 38/3 (1944), 17; Göetz, Oswald. "Medieval Enamels and Metalwork in the Buckingham Collection". *Bulletin of the Art Institute of Chicago*, 38/7 (1944): 110- 112; Foss, Helen. "News Reports". *College Art Journal*, 8/4 (1949): 306; Gudiol, Josep. "Basic Spanish in the Middle Ages". *Art News*, 53/8 (1954): 20; Butler, Ruth. "Frühe spanische Kunstschätze in The Cloisters von New York". *Die Kunst und das schöne heim*, 55/12 (1955): 444-445; Wardropper, Ian; Springer Roberts, Lynn. *European Decorative Arts in The Art Institute of Chicago*. Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 1991: 10-12.

7. Göetz, Oswald. "Medieval Enamels...": 110-112.

8. Donnelly, Marian; Smith, Cyril. "Notes on a Romanesque Reliquary". *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 58 (1961): 109-119.



However, the little diffusion of contributions by Charles Rufus Morey is noteworthy, where it was precisely defended that “relief studies and inscription evidence indicate an attribution to Leon, where it is known that an arm of Saint Adrian is conserved in the abbey of San Claudio”.<sup>9</sup> The hypothesis, on the contrary, is fully assumed in the work that Jesús Hernández Perera devotes monographically to the sumptuary arts of the Spanish Romanesque.<sup>10</sup>

The obligatory bibliographical account dedicated to the Saints Adrian and Natalia caskets is closed, as indicated in the 1993 New York catalog.<sup>11</sup> Here, and not without doubt, it defends its Leon origin, linking the piece with the monastery of San Adrian of Boñar, insisting on the precocity of the cult to the saint, in the Hispanic case, at least from the 7<sup>th</sup> century, and linking the works in silver to other famous works among the Romanesque reliquaries, as is the case of the Holy Ark of Oviedo, within the framework of metal works patronized from royal centers associated with San Isidoro de Leon, and in particular, with the figure of Infanta Urraca, daughter of King Ferdinand I and owner of the mentioned monastic enclave since 1099.

More recent sporadic statements have reiterated such information, scarcely appreciating the iconographic cycle of the artifacts, limiting them to reaffirm their origin in Leon,<sup>12</sup> transcribing the epigraphs located at the reliquary base.

Between 2004 and 2011, other studies have cited this work, maintaining the chronology indicated and linking it to the cult developed in the Iberian Peninsula worshipping these saints, without any further analysis.<sup>13</sup>

### 3. Medieval cult worship of Saints Adrian and Natalia in the north-west Iberian Peninsula

The origins surrounding the hagiographic tradition of Saint Adrian and Natalia are not clear, although their martyrdom is surely linked to the city of Nicomedia —the

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9. “Chasse of St. Adrian”, *Spanish Medieval Art. Loan Exhibition in honor of Dr. Walter W. S. Cook*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art. Cloisters, 1954: catalog card 5. Despite the intense search I could not access the original work of Morey, but I intuit that he was the first author to launch the theory that connected the chest with Leon.

10. Hernández Perera, Jesús. “Las artes industriales españolas de la época románica”. *Goya*, 43-45 (1961): 98-112.

11. Williams, John. “Shrine of Saints Adrian y Natalia”, *The Art of Medieval Spain, A.D. 500-1200*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1992: 257 (catalog card 122).

12. Franco Mata, Ángela. “Las artes suntuarias en las Españas del Cid y del Cantar. Siglos XI y XII”, *El Cid del hombre a la leyenda*. Burgos: Junta de Castilla y León, 2007: 161-183; Franco Mata, Ángela. “La amortización suntuaria: los tesoros de los monasterios románicos”, *Monasterios románicos y producción artística*. Aguilar de Campoo: Fundación Santa María la Real, 2003: 163-186; Franco Mata, Ángela. *Arte leonés fuera de León (siglos IV-XVI)*. Leon: Edilesa, 2010.

13. Nielsen, Christina. “Reliquary Casket of Saints Adrian and Natalia”. *Devotion and Splendor: Medieval Art at the Art Institute of Chicago, Museum Studies*, 30/2 (2004): 30-31 (catalog card 11); Rodríguez Montañés, José Manuel. “San Adrián de Boñar (o de Las Caldas)”, *Enciclopedia del Románico de Castilla y León: León*. Aguilar de Campoo: Fundación Santa María la Real, 2002: 207-214.



present city of Izmit, in northern Anatolia, Turkey— inside an insecure temporary arch that includes late years of the third century until the year 303.

Nineteenth-century authors, and especially the Bolandist school, debated over this Roman imperial service soldier who, because of his refusal to retract the Christian cult, was imprisoned and condemned to martyrdom in the said city during Galero Maximiano's term. However, his remains were quickly transferred to Argiopolis, so that he would be *honrado por los griegos el 26 de agosto*,<sup>14</sup> along with his wife Natalia and twenty-three accompanying martyrs.

However, beyond the most primitive ecclesiastical tradition and the introduction of the *dies natalis* in traditional Greek liturgical calendars, archaeological evidence has not been able to clarify the first building or even if it existed, location where the relics of the saint were deposited during *translatio*.

Of what there is no doubt is that veneration of Saint Adrian soon arrived in the West, in the pontificate of Honorius I (615-638), transforming the old Curia Julia building of the Roman forum into a Christian temple, consecrating martyrs for the first time in Western Europe, an ecclesial space.<sup>15</sup>

Years later, its cult was taking force during the pontificate of Sergio I (687-701), of Antioch. As the *Liber Pontificalis* reveals, the commemoration in Rome of the *dies natalis* became more and more developed with night celebrations on August 14 and 15, a litany which, starting from Saint Adrian to the Forum, was directed to the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, soon developing a *collective penitence* in his honor, parading relics and icons accompanied by songs.<sup>16</sup>

During the 9<sup>th</sup> century, after a vigil, Pope Leo IV (847-855) presided in a committee to honor Saint Adrian, who left this time from Saint John Lateran, stopping again in Saint Mary *Maggiore*, to enter the forum at the doors of the Adrian church.<sup>17</sup>

On the other hand, it is more complicated to obtain reliable data from the analysis of calendars and martyrologies, given the disparity of dates they offer and the difficulty of obtaining absolute references to their chronology. The *Hieronymian Martyrology*, composed in northern Italy in the middle of the fifth century, which became a Gallic copy a century later, places the martyrdom of Saint Adrian on March 4<sup>th</sup> while, on the other hand, analysis of other same nature manuscripts led

14. "honored by the Greeks on August 26": Baillet, Adrien. *Les vies des saints avec l'histoire de leur culte*. Paris: Jean de Nully, 1739: VI, 66; Salaville, Sévérien. "Adrien (Saint)", *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques*. Paris: Librairie Letouzey, 1912: I, 608-609.

15. Quentin, Henri. *Les Martyrologeshistoriques du Moyen Age. Études sur la formation du Martyrologeromain*. Paris: Lecoffre-Gabalda, 1908: 486-487; Krautheimer, Richard. *Rome: Profile of a City, 312-1308*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1980; Bordi, Giulia. "Committenza laica nella chiesa di Sant'Adriano al Foro romano nell'alto Medioevo", *Medioevo: i committenti*, Milan: Electa Edizioni, 2011: 421-433.

16. Andaloro, María. "Il 'Liber Pontificalis' e la questione dell'immagine da Sergio I ad Adriano I", *Roma e l'età carolingia*. Rome: Istitutonazionale di archeologia e storia dell'arte, 1976: 69-77; Parlato, Enrico. "Le icone in processione", *Arte e iconografia a Roma: da Costantino a Cola di Rienzo*. Milan: Jaca Book, 2000: 69-92.

17. Blaauw, Sible de. *Cultus et decor: liturgia e architettura nella Roma tardoantica e medievale*. Rome: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1994: I, 195, 416-437.



H. Quentin to note the date of September 8<sup>th</sup>, which became frequent in this type of sources from the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>18</sup>

In the ninth century and precisely after the *Ado Martyrology* diffusion, the liturgical presence of Saint Adrian was increasingly frequent, thanks to a Benedictine monk author who, it seems, had in his hands one of the sources which was considered fundamental to understanding the iconographic materialization of the Chicago casket. I refer precisely to the *Passio* of the saint, source which we will return to in the following pages.<sup>19</sup>

For the Hispanic case, the question is even more complex, precisely because of the wide spread of the cult, even more so than in Italy, in addition to the rapid appearance of the saint in the Mozarabic calendars which signals the commemoration date on June 16<sup>th</sup>, just like the so-called *Hispanic Passionary* understood it, with texts of a liturgical nature, sung during Mass, containing the acts or passions of the martyrs, with readings to celebrate *dies natalis*.<sup>20</sup>

Thus, a specific date is unclear. No mention is made of Saint Adrian on the well-known Carmona calendar, one of the earliest calendars from the times of late *Hispania*, so it can be deduced that at such a time his worship was not massive.<sup>21</sup>

On the other hand, the aforementioned authors established the *Passionary* composition precisely in the eighth century, but it must be borne in mind that, if accepting, for example, that the *Antiphonary* of the Leon Cathedral was inspired by an earlier codex of the seventh century, we would have a very early first testimony on the peninsular level, where not only the presence of the martyr Adrian is included, but —seeming even more relevant— the figure of Natalia erupts with prominence, being cited twice.<sup>22</sup>

The Tarragona *Orational* or *Libellus orationum* was dated precisely at the end of the seventh century, where essential data was collected between lines 1051-1062 to understand the hagiographic construction of the iconography of these Eastern saints. It is possible that in said chronology; the so-called *Post Sanctus* of the office was already known, alluding to the passage in which Saint Adrian's hand is amputated, an object that will become the fundamental point of the liturgy and his relics.<sup>23</sup> It is precisely this source where the accent is placed on the bloody martyrdom of the saint but, above all, the faithful and unselfish role of Natalia, his wife, who *alivió a los mártires en sus penas (...)* que se mostró diligente en el sufrimiento de tus santos. Natalia

18. Quentin, Henri. *Les Martyrologes...*: 486-487.

19. Quentin, Henri. *Les Martyrologes...*: 488.

20. García Rodríguez, Carmen. *El culto de los santos en la España romana y visigoda*. Madrid: Instituto P. Enrique Flórez de Historia Eclesiástica, 1966: 199; Fábrega Grau, Ángel. *Pasionario Hispánico (siglo VII-XI)*. Madrid-Barcelona: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1953; Ferrer Grenesche, Juan Miguel. *Los santos del nuevo misal hispano-mozárabe*. Toledo: Estudio Teológico de San Ildefonso, 1995: 70-75.

21. García Rodríguez, Carmen. *El culto...*: 201.

22. López Pacho, Ricardo. "El oficio de Santiago apóstol en el folio 176 del Antifonario Mozárabe de la catedral de León". *Tierras de León*, 24/55 (1984): 124-130.

23. Vives, José, ed. *Oracional Visigótico*. Madrid-Barcelona: Monumenta Hispaniae Sacra, 1946: 339-343.



is presented with *honor varonil*,<sup>24</sup> clean of marital sin and described in a sanctifying category, equal to any martyr, even if she never suffered punishment.<sup>25</sup>

Nevertheless, and above all data exposed in relation to the spread of his cult in *Hispania* from the 7<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> centuries, attention must be drawn to what is considered the essential source for valuing the figurative fortune that the martyr Saint Adrian would have. We refer to the *Passio*, a detailed narrative that, despite the difficulties that its dating presents, could have been composed equally between the final years of the seventh century or the beginning of the next and copied already by other Hispanic *Passionaries* during the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

The text, published by Ángel Fábrega in Latin,<sup>26</sup> and never put in relation to the figurative cycle of the Chicago casket, will become the essential element for analysis carried out in the second part of this work, besides certifying the Adrian cult influence into the ninth century.

Precisely in the ninth century, more than other periods and data previously discussed, we find considerable information in order to understand the spread of the Eastern saints cult to the North-west of the Iberian Peninsula.

The San Adrián de Tuñón church, a celebrated pre-Romanesque construction linked to the patronage of Alfonso III (866-910), is one of the first monastic centers in which we know that the saint was worshiped in these territories. The monarch and his wife, Queen Jimena, attend the consecration ceremony of the temple on January 24, 891.<sup>27</sup>

Although historiography has always focused on this first deposition center for relics, it should not be forgotten that previously, in 863, the existence of a church dedicated to the martyr of Nicomedia in Perlín was documented, today a village of Santa María de Trubia, and where the document indicates that the bishop Glacilla de Braga —of Asturian ancestry— consecrated a temple in honor of Saints Christopher, Adrian and Natalia.<sup>28</sup>

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24. "brought relief to the martyrs in their sorrows (...) who was diligent in the suffering of the saints"; "manly honor": Vives, José, ed. *Oracional...*: 339-343.

25. Vives, José, ed. *Oracional...*: 339-343.

26. Fábrega Grau, Ángel. *Pasionario...*, vol. II: chapter XXXII, 266-279. We do not have a Spanish edition of the source, however, the translation into Portuguese was recently carried out: Farmhouse Alberto, Paulo. *Sio. Adrião e Sta. Natália. São Manços. Santos e Milagres na Idade Média em Portugal*. Lisboa: Traduvárius, 2014: 26-48.

27. García Larragueta, Santos. *Colección documental de la catedral de Oviedo*. Oviedo: Instituto de Estudios Asturianos, 1962: 48-53 (doc. No. 13); Fernández Conde, Francisco Javier; Pedregal Montes, María Antonia. "Santo Adriano de Tuñón. Historia de un territorio en los siglos de transición". *Asturiensia Medievalia*, 8 (1995-1996) 79-110; Caballero Zoreda, Luis; Martín Talavero, Rafael. "Santo Adriano de Tuñón y su entramado de madera". *Las iglesias asturianas de Pravia y Tuñón: Arqueología de la arquitectura*. Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2010, 91-138, where the main bibliographical contributions are collected.

28. Calleja Puerta, Miguel. "La Catedral de Oviedo como centro de conservación de documentos en la Alta Edad Media", *Estudos em Homenagem ao Prof. Doutor José Marques*. Porto: Faculdade de Letras, Universidade do Porto, 2006: IV, 179-191.





In any case, the biggest problem lies in explaining the way in which the saint's relics came to *Hispania*, a complex task derived from a series of interpolated and false documents.

For a long time historiography valued the reception of this Eastern cult, derived from contacts of the Asturian Kingdom with Rome, within the framework of relations that the monarch Alfonso III established with Pope John VIII (872-882), a classic subject within Asturian studies. Thus, the document given by the said Holy Father on November 28, 898, authorizing the construction of the Santiago de Compostela cathedral, consecrated in 899;<sup>29</sup> serves researchers in confirming relations of the Hispanic north with Rome. Another letter was also attached where Pope John VIII informed the monarch of the reception of other letters, which in addition to requesting help for the fight against the pagans, would hypothetically end up reinforcing this argument.

Without claiming to be exhaustive in this long matter, the truth is that authors such as Peter Linehan, among others, dissected the documents, concluding that these were in fact interpolations attributable to the bishop Pelayo de Oviedo (1089-1153)<sup>30</sup> and in a certain way they minimized the supposed relations between the ancient Leon Kingdom and Rome, a suitable framework for the transfer of relics, such as the one studied here.

Nevertheless, more recent investigations returned to the question, accepting that, even in the case of false documents, they would rather be false diplomats, with truthful information.<sup>31</sup>

The importance of accepting this information lies in the knowledge of one of the most important Saint Adrian cult events that took place in the Astur-Leonese Kingdom, related to a document where an Athanaric abbot is mentioned as well as the foundation of a monastery in a place called *Katicas*, by monks from the nearby monastery of San Andrés de Pardomino (Leon) between the years 920 and 924.<sup>32</sup> Although authors have discussed whether what really happened in these years was the foundation, endowment or consecration of the building, what does not seem to be in doubt is that the name of the place would be the oldest mention collected

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29. Historiography of the famous bulls we quote is long and I refer only to the essential titles: Sánchez Albornoz, Claudio. *Orígenes de la nación española. Estudios críticos sobre la Historia del Reino de Asturias*. Oviedo: Sarpe, 1975: III, especially see the chapter titled: "Bula de Juan IX a Alfonso III de Asturias autorizándole a consagrar la iglesia de Compostela" and Florianio Cumbreño, Antonio. "En torno a las Bulas del Papa Juan VIII en la Catedral de Oviedo". *Archivum*, 12 (1962): 117-136. Also see: Carriedo Tejedó, Manuel. "Relaciones entre Roma y el Reino de León (910-1090)". *Promonumenta. Revista de la Asociación de Amigos del Patrimonio Cultural de León*, 8 (2009): 64-69.

30. Linehan, Peter. *Historia e historiadores de la España Medieval*. Salamanca: Ediciones de la Universidad de Salamanca, 1999: 145.

31. Rodamilans Ramos, Fernando. "El Primado romano en la Península Ibérica hasta el siglo X: Un análisis historiográfico". *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma, Serie III, Historia Medieval*, 27 (2014): 419-460.

32. Lucas Álvarez, Manuel. *El Reino de León en la alta Edad Media: la documentación real astur-leonesa (718-1072)*, Leon: Centro de Estudios e Investigación San Isidoro, 1995: VIII, 236. Both monasteries were located in the riverbank of the river Porma, having as the main nucleus the locality of Boñar (Leon).





from a monastery consecrated to Saints Adrian and Natalia in La Losilla, near Boñar (Leon).

The presence of the relics outside of Asturias speaks of the cult expansion, and in addition, sources provide information of protection bestowed to them by local nobility.<sup>33</sup> It is precisely here that the figures of Count Guisvando and his wife, Leuvina, emerge, which tradition wishes to see as promoters of the said monastery. The origin appears in the testimony of Prudencio de Sandoval who claims to have seen “memoirs” in the Oviedo cathedral, where it was indicated that Alfonso III had sent Count Guisvando Braóliz to Rome, within the framework of these letter exchanges and requests for help (mentioned above), locating here the transfer of the Eastern Saints relics and their supposed distribution between Tuñón and Boñar.<sup>34</sup>

But as stated before, investigations have long debated the authenticity of the documents and more recently the truth of the news<sup>35</sup> has been defended, adding to it the mention of the count in an important number of documents related to the old Kingdom of Leon and the San Pedro de Eslonza monastery.<sup>36</sup>

Among these sources corroborating the existence of Guisvando Braóliz and his connection with the relics of Saints Adrian and Natalia, an important inscription stands out —now disappeared— (Illustration 5), which Ambrosio de Morales translated:

*Esta aula de Cristo dedicada bajo el nombre o advocación de los Santos Adriano y Natalia, construyó el siervo de Dios Gísvado con su cónyuge Leuvina, corriendo la era nongentésima quincuagésima octava. Séate acepto, oh Señor, el ofrecimiento purísimo de tus siervos ya que ellos lo prepararon para Ti con gozosa devoción en honor de tus Mártires. Sean acogidas por Ti, oh Dios piadoso, las oraciones de los miserables. Todo el que entra aquí triste reo, salga luego muy alegre mediante su oración. Fue consagrado este templo por los obispos Cixilano, Frunimio y Fortis, el día doce de octubre de la Era novecientos cincuenta y ocho.<sup>37</sup>*

33. Pérez, Mariel. “El control de lo sagrado como instrumento de poder: los monasterios particulares de la aristocracia altomedieval leonesa”. *Anuario de Estudios Medievales*, 42/2 (2012): 799-822.

34. Yepes, Antonio de. *Crónica General de la Orden de San Benito*. Valladolid: Francisco Fernández de Córdova, 1615: III, 355-359; Rollán Ortiz, Jaime-Federico. “Correspondencias entre San Adrián de Boñar (Leon) y Santo Adriano de Tuñón (Asturias)”. *Tierras de León*, 36/103 (1997): 63-78.

35. González García, Alberto. “La proyección europea del reino de Asturias: política, cultura y economía (718-910)”. *El Futuro del Pasado*, 5 (2014): 225-298.

36. Rollán Ortiz, Jaime-Federico. “Correspondencias...”: 63-78, fourteen documents are counted, although I suspect that this point should be reviewed by the paleographers.

37. “This house of Christ dedicated under the name or invocation of Saints Adrian and Natalia, was built by the servant of God, Gísvado, with his spouse Leuvina, in the ninth hundredth fifty-eighth era. Be grateful, Oh Lord, for the purest of offerings from your servants, since they prepared it for you with joyful devotion in honor of your Martyrs. May the prayers of the wretched be received by you, Oh merciful God. May everyone who enters here sadly, leave very happy through prayer. This temple was consecrated by the bishops Cixilano, Frunimio and Fortis, the twelfth day of October in the era nine hundred and fifty-eight”: Morales, Ambrosio de. *Crónica General de España*. Madrid: Oficina de Don Benito Cano, 1791: VIII, 185. He also performed the transcription and translation, debating the date: Yepes, Antonio de. *Crónica...*: 355-359. We know the physical inscription from the photograph published in: Gómez-Moreno, Manuel. *Catálogo monumental de España. Provincia de León*. Madrid: Ministerio de Instrucción Pública y Bellas Artes, 1906-1908: 162-167.



This *dedicatio* is essential to confirm the protection that the aristocracy gave to the temple of Saint Adrian of La Losilla, and in respects, the nineteenth century historiography would settle the defense of the Roman origin of the relics of these saints, which arrived in Rome and towards the Astur-Leonese areas, which is still accepted even in more recent publications.<sup>38</sup> In any case, it is one of the few material remains of what should have been one of the most important monasteries of the north-west peninsula, dedicated to oriental saints between the tenth and eleventh centuries and which today has totally disappeared with its medieval factory.

The proliferation of the Saints Adrian and Natalia cult is documented beginning precisely with the Tuñón centers, Boñar (La Losilla), and especially the Leon area, unparalleled by other areas of the northern kingdoms.

The well-known monastery of Santiago de Peñalba (El Bierzo, Leon), founded by Abbot Genadio (909-920), was later ruled by Solomon (931-937) —successor of Fortis, who is quoted in the Losilla epigraph. This information may not be very relevant for making inquiries about the Saint Adrian cult and its extension towards the Galician-Bercian zones if it were not for the recent finding of an engraved inscription in the molding that runs through the eastern apse of the temple where the relics of Saint Adrian have been enclaved since the year 937.<sup>39</sup> Abbot San Rosendo de Celanova (907-977) attended the church consecration ceremony, held in Peñalba on February 9 of that year and perhaps because of his relations with the Bercian monastery, there was a rapid veneration of Saint Adrian, already assumed in the Galician context, when, on September 25, 942, he invokes *a mi patrón el Señor Martín (...) a los santos Facundo y Primitivo, San Adrián y Natalia, San Miguel Arcángel (...)*.<sup>40</sup>

If the extension of the cult to the west of the Kingdom was significant, other monastic enclaves in the east of the region would also suggest an early presence of Saint Adrian's remains on the altars. The remains of the martyr Nicomedia have been mentioned in the epigraphs, at least since 913<sup>41</sup> along with other Eastern saints, such as Saint Cosme and Saint Damian<sup>42</sup> in the central altar of San Miguel de Escalada.

38. Rodríguez Montañés, José Manuel. "San Adrián...": 207-214; Nielsen, Christina. "Reliquary...": 30.

39. They appear cited next to the relics of Santiago, San Torcuato, San Verísimo and possibly Santa Sabina. See: Guardia Pons, Milagros. "Los grafitos de la iglesia de Peñalba. Scariphare et pingere in la Edad Media". *Patrimonio Histórico de Castilla y León*, 33 (2008): 51-58.

40. "my patron Lord Martin (...) to saints Facundus and Primitivus, Saints Adrian and Natalia, Saint Michael Archangel (...)": Díaz y Díaz, Manuel Cecilio. *Ordoño de Celanova. Vida y Milagros de San Rosendo*. A Coruña: Fundación Barrié de la Maza, 1999: 247, Homily from the 25<sup>th</sup> September 942.

41. Caverro Domínguez, Gregoria. "La dedicación de la iglesia en el monasterio de San Miguel de Escalada el 20 noviembre de 913", *San Miguel de Escalada (913-2013)*. Leon: Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de León, 2014: 39-65.

42. Erroneous interpretation made in: Rodríguez Suárez, Natalia. "Los tres altares de San Miguel de Escalada, algunas consideraciones". *Rivista di Storia, Scrittura e Società*, 1 (2015): 2-20, see especially: 7. The author identifies the Adrian in the ara with an *abad de Nérida (?), cerca de Nápoles, nacido en África (...)* *abad del monasterio de San Pedro y San Pablo de Canterbury (...)* *murió el 9 de enero del año 710* ("abbot from Nerida (?), close to Naples, born in Africa (...) bishop of the monastery of Saint Peter and Saint Paul of Canterbury (...) who died the 9<sup>th</sup> of January of 710").



Finally, the same legionense capital counted on what should have been an important monastery dedicated to Saint Adrian, as both historical documents and modern chroniclers report. Dedicated to the saint and to his wife Natalia and with an *fundación incierta*, it should be located *al lado del poniente de la ciudad, junto a la puerta del muro*, as father Risco refers to the old Roman wall and its *Cauriense* door,<sup>43</sup> and therefore the outside walls.

In addition, this space had to be founded in the Middle Ages, which was certainly crowded due to the close presence of other foundations, such as a temple dedicated to Saint Miguel and another to Saint Marcelo: (...) *situm ad portam Cauriensem foras murum ciuitatis; et est ipsa ecclesia inter duos monasterios, Sancti Micaelis et Sancti Adriane et Natalie, et sunt ipsos monasterios ipsu atrio de ipsa ecclesia Sancti Marcelli (...)*.<sup>44</sup>

On the other hand, although the few investigators who dealt with this monastery alluded to the Ramiro I (842-850) era —when the relics arrived in Boñar—to locate their origin,<sup>45</sup> the truth is that in the year 1080, certain problems were documented in its management that led to a rule change, embracing now the Saint Benedict,<sup>46</sup> and in 1090 Risco informed about its possible architectural restoration.<sup>47</sup>

At the end of the eleventh century, the Saints Adrian and Natalia cult was a fully relevant fact in the ancient Kingdom of Leon. It is precisely in this decade when the monarch Alfonso VI was granted a privilege (ca. 1099) by which he donated the monastery of San Adrián de La Losilla to San Pedro de Eslonza, integrating in the *Infantado* through Urraca, now owner of the two monasteries by hereditary right and, most important for our study, endowing them with several artistic works.<sup>48</sup> The reliquary guarded today at the Art Institute of Chicago must be analyzed according to such chronology and historical framework.

#### 4. Figurative cycle

The shrine dedicated to guarding the relics of Saint Adrian has a prismatic shape and a truncated pyramid cover with scales, while the four faces harbor the figurative

43. “uncertain foundation”; “to the west of the city, next to the door of the wall”: Risco, Manuel. *Iglesia de León, y monasterios antiguos y modernos de la misma ciudad*. Madrid: Don Blas Román, 1792: II, 94-96.

44. Sáez, Emilio. *Colección documental del Archivo de la catedral de León (775-1230). I: (775- 952)*. Leon: Centro de Estudios e Investigación San Isidoro, 1987: 41 (doc. No. 368).

45. Villacorta, Tomás. *El cabildo de la catedral de León: estudio histórico-jurídico, siglos XII-XIX*. Leon: Centro de Estudios e Investigación San Isidoro, 1974: 110.

46. Espiritu Santo, Arnaldo do. “Los benedictinos en el reino de León”, *Monarquía y sociedad en el reino de León. De Alfonso III a Alfonso VII*. Leon: Fuentes y Estudios de Historia Leonesa, 2007: I, 713-731.

47. Risco, Manuel. *Iglesia...: 96*.

48. Ruiz Asencio, José Manuel; Ruiz Albi, Irene, *Colección documental del monasterio de San Pedro de Eslonza I (912-1300)*. Leon: Centro de Estudios e Investigación San Isidoro, 2007: 72-73 (docs. No. 70 and 71); Calvo, Aurelio. *San Pedro de Eslonza*, Madrid: Instituto Enrique Flórez, 1957: 142; Rodríguez Montañés, José Manuel. “San Adrián...”: 208.



cycles. A lower flange, which serves as a base for the piece, accommodates a series of inscriptions,<sup>49</sup> while, compositional silversmithing works include micro-architectural representations, in the form of galleries of semicircular arches, with hexafoils in the spandrels and without supports or *cul de lampe* in the interior, which undoubtedly facilitates scene transition. Such architectures are elevated at the extremities on smooth columns, with capitals reminiscent of the Doric order, without entasis, but of the eight that are located at the cist corners, two of them are ornamented with helical bands, and small strips or lianas that embrace them.

Although technically there are several uneven areas and possibly some added silver fragments, in general the piece was assembled from large autonomous plates, both on the two fronts and on the short sides, although precisely the two larger pieces could have been readjusted during placement, causing the tunics and the feet of the figures to be cut off.

Moreover, a careful analysis of the way in which the plates were superimposed, points to their conception as a sealed receptacle, with no possibility of opening, as evidenced by modern authors and occurring with other important Leon reliquaries, such as the exterior urn —lost— made of gold and silver, which held another piece, the reliquary dedicated to San Isidoro in 1063, still preserved today with the *Genesis* cycle.<sup>50</sup> In fact, this last work is essential to understand some technical aspects of the Adrian reliquary, since, as Gómez-Moreno warned, more than a century ago, the silver urn of San Isidoro received a modern restructuring that deprived the original cover form, which the Grenadian reconstructed by drawing, and like the one in Chicago, was covered with a hipped roof<sup>51</sup> (Illustration 6).

Face A of the reliquary (Illustration 1), on a short side, was identified by few authors who treated this reliquary as a moment of the passion of “Adrian, accompanied by Natalia, declaring their Christian faith to the emperor”.<sup>52</sup>

Three figures are shown in the scene: the enthroned monarch, with *regalia*, identifiable perhaps with the figure of Galerius Maximian (260-311), who seems to have ordered the saint to martyrdom. He looks the other way, where one character is tied to the column and another, individualized by his hair in loops over his shoulders and beard, holds a spear and looks at the emperor.

The scene is not about the condemnation of Saint Adrian and the figure tied to the column is not even identifiable with Natalia, which, as we shall see, is precisely

49. In the old photographs published of the works of Gudiol, Donnelly and Smith, one perceives the loss of one of the epigraphic bands, which is currently lost.

50. Morales, Ambrosio de. *Viage...: 46-47*. He reports that the outer reliquary *no tiene ninguna cerradura, sino que está clava con la plata; y así nunca se abre jamás* (“has no lock, but is nailed with silver; And so it never opens”).

51. Gómez-Moreno, Manuel. “El arca de las reliquias de San Isidoro de León”. *Archivo Español de Arte*, 48 (1940): 205-212.

52. Williams, John. “Shrine...”: 257. Makes the exact same interpretation: Franco Mata, Ángela. “Arte medieval leonés fuera de España”, *La dispersión de objetos de arte fuera de España en los siglos XIX y XX*. Barcelona-Cádiz: Publicacions i Edicions de la Universitat de Barcelona-Publicaciones de la Universidad de Cádiz, 2011: 93-132.



characterized in this work by being veiled, attending to her Holy dignity, according to the oldest sources.

It is these texts and, in particular, the *Passio* of the Saint of Nicomedia, which allow the representation to be categorized. The emperor dictates Christian imprisonment and, Adrian, here as a soldier —*prior officii*— in service of pagan imperial power, reveals himself as executor, tying his companions with shackles —*ferro vincitos*— as indicated by seventh century sources.<sup>53</sup>

Continuing the story, we are informed of the repentance of Adrian, who addressing the emperor, finally refuses to worship pagan idols and requests that his name be noted on the Christian list.

The two longitudinally extending faces on the long sides of the urn (B and C) (Figures 2 and 3) present the same type of architectural framing. In the first one, the figures are divided into three groups. To the left, three characters, two beardless and one bearded, look towards the center of the composition, not especially distinguishable by their clothes —equal in all three cases—, but by the weapons they carry, a double-edged axe and a sword with a long blade. At the other end, two figures are represented, one of them carrying a sharp double-edged ax.

The 7<sup>th</sup> century *Passio* refers effectively to the platoons of soldiers or executioners who carry out the judgments of the imperial dictatorship, and who are charged with making Saint Adrian into a martyr, who occupies the compositional center of the narrative. He lies stretched in the air as if falling to the ground after having his right foot amputated on a bronze anvil perfectly described in the cited text.<sup>54</sup> On the other side, his right hand has been equally sectioned, although essentially recovered by the personage who will take full prominence in all hagiographic development of the saint, as mentioned both in the oldest liturgical texts as well as in calendars and martyrologies: Natalia.

In addition to the aforementioned text, her inclusion in a prayer dedicated to the saints in the Mozarabic mass *In diem sanctorum Adriani, Natalix et comitum, martyrum*, should not be overlooked. In the *Post Sanctus*, the wife is described as faithful, selfless, Christian and a companion to her husband in martyrdom. In particular, the Mass says that after the amputations, *cucurrit illa ad virum: et de sectam corporis eius manum sibi amoris usurpavit (0750C) in signum: ut ea pars membri in qua significabatur affectus operis: esset illi pro mentione in solacio charitatis. Quo per hanc amor viri semper in eius viver et corde: et veram quodam modo eius presentiam retineret.*<sup>55</sup>

53. Fábrega, Ángel. *Pasionario...*: XXXII, 8: 268 y XXXII, 2: 267.

54. Fábrega, Ángel. *Pasionario...*: 276.

55. “runs to her husband, and holds the amputated hand of her beloved, body part which signifies the effect of the works, as a sign of love, remembrance and consolation”, “In festo S. Martyrum Adriani atque Natalie”, *Corpus Corporum. Repositorium Operum Latinorum apud universitatem Turicensem*, Univerität Zürich, 27 January 2016 <<http://mlat.uzh.ch/MLS/>>. See also: Tommasi, Giuseppe Maria. *Liturgia antiqua hispanica gothica, isidoriana, mozarabica, toletana mixta*. Rome: Mainardi, 1746: 119-127.



We are witnessing the culminating point, essential for understanding cult relics, the recovery of the hand by Natalia<sup>56</sup> and the *Passio*, which particularizes as follows: *cuando los verdugos colocaron el yunque de bronce debajo de sus pies, la bienaventurada Natalia sujetó los pies de San Adrián y los puso sobre el yunque. Los verdugos, golpeando con toda su fuerza, le cortaron los pies y le partieron las piernas.*<sup>57</sup> For fear of her own punishment and losing the precious treasure, she takes the amputated hand and hides it —*abscondi tmanum*— among her rich clothes. Just at that moment, the seventh century text continues with the emperor ordering a large bonfire to burn the remains of the carnage and corpses of Christians who had already died.<sup>58</sup> This last piece of information will be relevant.

The larger plate (C) (Figure 3) is located on the opposite side of the previous one. The images represented here stand out for their drama and violence, with two bodies appearing at the panel ends. The figure on the left side lost his feet and his right hand, while the one on the right has his arm amputated and is decapitated.

It is in the empty areas of the silver composition where the silversmiths placed the amputation remains, as if fluctuating in the air, but without interrupting the focal point of the composition, in the center, where Natalia, in a veil, seems to rush to the floor, recovering with her hands the precious relic: her husband's hand.

This scene on face C has generally been understood as a continuation of what is narrated in B, but insisting on the rarity of a hagiographic cycle that gave so much protagonism to the martyrdom and the cruelties suffered by Adrian, the two major urn fronts are dedicated to this scene.

The *Passio* focused precisely on the blood and violence of the scene, describing sessions of lashings, disembowelments and organ scattering.<sup>59</sup>

However, for a reliquary of this quality, a redundant exercise in figurative themes and messages is highly improbable. Most likely the two male figures, bearded and with eyes closed, both represent the death of Saint Adrian and the safeguard of his hand by Natalia. But its textual dimension goes far beyond that. In fact, the *Passio* points out that, following the orders of the emperor, a large bonfire was lit with the intention of burning the holy spoils, in an attempt to deprive possible pilgrimages and relic acquisition. In that moment, Natalia, *dominada por un impulso, gritando se quiso lanzar al fuego.*<sup>60</sup>

Apparently, only knowledge of this source can explain the choice of these two similar subjects, which by the location they occupy, should have been the principal figures of this work. Beyond reiterating the martyrdom of Saint Adrian, the fact that

56. For this passage in particular, the text of the *Passio* has been used, although without developing its content: Williams, John. "Shrine ...": 257.

57. "when the executioners placed the bronze anvil under his feet, the blessed Natalia held Saint Adrians feet down on the anvil. The executioners, striking with all their might, then cut off his feet and broke his legs": Fábrega, Ángel. *Pasionario...*: XXIX, 276.

58. Fábrega, Ángel. *Pasionario...*: XXIX, 276.

59. Fábrega, Ángel. *Pasionario...*: XXIX, 274.

60. "overwhelmed and screaming, wanted to jump in the fire." Fábrega, Ángel. *Pasionario...*: XXIX, 276: *Natalia vero, impetu facto, cum voce magna voluit se ipsammittere in ignem.*





Natalia is rushing to her knees into an empty silver space, and the importance given to the bodies and limbs amputated, which seem to fluctuate in the void, highlight the need for further study of these images.

Seventh century texts dictate the following from these events:

*Cuando los cuerpos de todos los santos hombres fueron lanzados al fuego, golpeó una tremenda tempestad, con truenos, lluvia, ráfagas de granizo, relámpagos y temblores de tierra, de tal forma que la ciudad y toda la región quedó sumergida como en un diluvio. De inmediato la hoguera ardiendo se apagó debido a la tromba de agua y ráfagas de viento. Los verdugos, al ver la terrible cólera, huyeron. Otros que aún permanecían allí caían de bruces al suelo y morían. Sin embargo, todos los que estaban en compañía de Natalia y de las otras señoras cristianas empezaron a correr y a recoger reliquias de los mártires. Las hallaron ilesas, de modo que ni siquiera los cabellos se habían quemado por el fuego.<sup>61</sup>*

The composition articulated by the silversmiths who raised this panel was as conceptual as avant-garde. The bodies float in the void waters of a gigantic storm, the great flood, *tonitrua magna et pluvia et grandines et coruscations vel terremotus* as dictated by the source.

The unusual treatment, in blank and without further specification, refers to plastic solutions, revolutionary, in the words of Peter Klein, used by the Hispanic miniaturist Sthepanus Garsia, who between 1038 and 1070, embodied his particular vision of the Great Flood in the Saint-Sever *Beatus*<sup>62</sup> (Figure 7).

In it, water is limited to two neutral color stripes and without any kind of waves, escaping conventionalism of their time.<sup>63</sup>

The last of the reliquary panels in Chicago (D) (Figure 4), on its short side, offers the image of a ship crossing the waters, this time conceived from waves, and is framed in the well-known *trifora* arc gallery.

Once again, the *Passio* specifies that, after the great storm, a Christian man from the region proposed a plan to Natalia to safeguard the relic, moving it by boat—*navicula*— from Nicomedia to Constantinople, under a careful sacredness, with the wind blowing in favor and where the bodies of the remaining fellow martyrs would also embark.

61. "When the bodies of all the holy men were cast into the fire, a tremendous storm struck, with thunder, rain, hail blasts, lightning and earthquakes, so that the city and the whole region was submerged in a flood. The blazing bonfire was extinguished immediately due to the water and gusts of wind. The executioners, seeing the terrible wrath, fled. Others who stayed fell to the ground and died. All who were in the company of Natalia and the other Christian ladies began to run and collect martyr relics. These women were found unharmed and not even their hair had been burned by the fire." Fábrega, Ángel. *Pasionario*...: XXIX, 276.

62. BnF. Ms. lat. 8878, f. 85r. See: Klein, Peter. "Les sources non hispaniques et la genèse iconographique du Beatus de Saint-Sever", *Saint-Sever: Millénaire de l'abbaye: Colloque International 1985*. Jean Cabanot, ed. Mont-de-Marsan: Comité d'études sur l'histoire et l'art de la Gascogne, 1986: 317-333; Klein, Peter. *El Beato de Saint-Sever y su influencia en el Guernica de Picasso*. Valencia: Patrimonio, 2012.

63. Immersed in a blue background, but without pausing the materialization of the waves, the floating corpses were represented in the folio of the Third trumpet: BnF. Ms. lat. 8878, f. 139v.





There is no doubt that the holy wife appears here showing spectators the holy relic delicately *envuelto en un paño púrpura, perfumándola de mira y colocándola en su jergón, junto a la cabecera, sin que nadie lo supiese*.<sup>64</sup>

Williams, Franco Mata, and Nielsen, identified Natalia along with two of her fellow Christians.<sup>65</sup> However, characterization is certainly different, especially in that it is located next to the stern of the ship, bearded and similar to the way in which the effigy of Saint Adrian was figured in the rest of the plates.

The *Passio* recounts the journey undertaken by Natalia and her crew, with the emperor's soldiers pursuing them. After overcoming this first obstacle, the text indicates that (...) *en medio de la noche, apareció un espíritu ingenioso con la apariencia de un barco en el cual parecían estar soldados y marineros. Desde allí se les indicaba como con voz de marinero, that they should keep sailing in the wrong direction because quería hacerles naufragar y destruirlos*.<sup>66</sup>

The holy retinue trusted the voice of that sailor —*naute orientales*—, and they changed the navigation heading. The text goes on to point out that, just then, Adrian appeared on the ship and warned his wife of the deception, that the sailor was actually the devil, accompanied by those who carried his relic, walking on waters on the sides of the boat.

Using the text as a starting point, which is much more complex than the simple identification of the *translatio*, is necessary to assess whether, in reality, the bearded figure present on the deck, is Adrian, while the young bearded man, to which Natalia shows the relic, is not really the demon in the figure of a sailor. The fact that the silversmith had decided to occupy the minimal compositional space that the boat has to offer with these two figures as to not subtract a certain protagonism to Natalia, therefore this study will evaluate the relevance of these two characters from the hypothesis planted.

## 5. About the epigraphs

Although we have lost the first of the epigraphs located under the scene with Adrian as a soldier of the emperor (face A), there are still three other units at the base of the reliquary, known from the reading by Williams which later researchers accepted.

Side B of the casket reads: MARTIRIS EXIMI SACRUM, that is to say, “Consecrated (to the memory) of the exalted martyr”, while under panel C it indicates: QUI

64. “wrapped in a perfumed purple cloth, hiding it from sight and placing it on its mattress, near the head, without anyone knowing”: Fábrega, Ángel. *Pasionario...*: XXXI: 277.

65. Williams, John. “Shrine...”: 257; Franco Mata, Ángela. “Arte medieval...”: 112; Nielsen, Christina. “Reliquary casket...”: 30.

66. “(...) in the middle of the night, an ingenious spirit appeared with the figure of a ship boarded by soldiers and sailors. In a sailor's voice”; “continue to sail in the wrong direction to make them shipwreck and destroy them”: Fábrega, Ángel. *Pasionario...*: XXXIII, 47.



MARTIR FACTUS SPREVIT EUM, “(Adrian) has been become a martyr, Natalia took him.” Finally, the following epigraph was located on face C: (JA) CET HIC ADRIAN, “Adrian remains here.”

Without going into details of specialists in the epigraphic discipline, it should be noted that, these inscriptions were of a certain conservative nature, considered *explanaciones* or *letreros que acompañan a escenas iconográficas de todo tipo para explicar su significado. Unas veces consisten en el simple nombre del personaje, otras en un mensaje doctrinal alusivo a la escena.*<sup>67</sup>

However, it seems clear today, from research advancement on this inscription typology, to try to avoid generalizations and to attend to each specific case. Frequently, any accompanying written message —if it is possible to define this action so ambiguously— a figurative representation was enclosed between the *explanaciones*, although, in many cases, this text explained nothing.

Understanding epigraphs of these pieces under generalist criterions has led to consider that one of its most outstanding functions was to advertise a message, along with that of identifying and accompanying, when related to iconographic representation. However, recent research has limited the functions of written signs of this type, warning that inscriptions neither accompany nor identify or, at least reduce them to such functions which would impoverish messages with more complex purposes.<sup>68</sup>

In fact, if we look at the inscriptions on faces B and D, it seems that the function of accompanying the image was the smallest. The allusion to the memory of the martyr who is consecrated and exalted by the reliquary and the use of the *funera* type, referring to the *epitaphium sepulcrale* from the *hic iacet* formula seems to insist on the complex cataloging of the types and functions of these epigraphs.<sup>69</sup> The notificative verb *iacet* only affects the bodily presence of Saint Adrian, in the form of relics stored in the interior, but epigraphy in this sense, has enlarged the meaning from new dimensions of corporeity, as it also becomes present through the written sign of his memory, which inscription B calls to exalt. Physical presence and memory are not the same and this forces us to rethink the cataloging of the epigraphs and their functions, that of course cannot explain what the viewer does not see, the vestiges guarded inside and only the image, per se, made present.

The inscription makes present, with its written signs, which the spectator cannot see, activates knowledge of the occult and therefore drastically some directs away

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67. “signs that accompany iconographic scenes of all kinds, explaining their meaning. Sometimes they consist of the simple name of the character, others a doctrinal message allusive to the scene”: García Lobo, Vicente; Martín López. Encarnación. “La epigrafía medieval en España. Por una tipología de las inscripciones”, *VIII Jornadas Científicas sobre Documentación de la Hispania altomedieval (siglos VI-X)*. Madrid: Cema, 2009: 185-213.

68. Debais, Vincent. *Messages de pierre. La lecture des inscriptions dans la communication médiévale (XIII-XIV siècle)*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2009: 206-207.

69. See the excellent work of: Martín López, Encarnación. “La salvación del alma a través de las inscripciones medievales”, *IX Jornadas Científicas sobre documentación: La muerte y sus testimonios*. Madrid: Centro de Estudios Medievales de Aragón, 2011: 255-279.



alleged advertising functions.<sup>70</sup> In fact, there are numerous cases of reliquaries—with inscriptions—which, according to sources, were not visible during medieval times.

The most relevant case for the subject discussed here has already been mentioned. The argent urn of San Isidoro, preserved today in the Museo de la Real Colegiata, in Leon, with its elaborate cycle of *Genesis*, presents important epigraphic developments that, at first, could be understood as connections for its reading. However, as stated, such a receptacle existed during the Romanesque, enclosed in another large urn, also of gold and silver, which deprived any vision of the smaller casket.<sup>71</sup> In fact, Ambrosio de Morales, the most linked person to the Middle Ages who recorded the way the work was exposed in the temple, reiterates that the outer ark was spiked and never opened. This discredits attributes of the epigraphs in the urn, that today is preserved of San Isidoro, such as advertising, pedagogical and propagandistic functions, almost understood like a massive consumption of writing.

On the contrary, the function of these epigraphs would be closer to the nature of the so-called *endotaphia*, inscriptions hidden within the sepulchers, whose intentional scope was directed more towards thaumaturgical and symbolic purposes.<sup>72</sup>

In short, I cannot share that the three epigraphs of Saints Adrian and Natalia are a complement to the image, as they are not subordinates to the icon. On the contrary, the inscriptions act on the figure, endowing it with new implications of action. Thus, the inscription on face B appeals to the very presence of the icon, to its exaltation as a container of memories, hence the word *eximi*, which in other epigraphic funerary contexts makes the dead body present, physical, through the image of the rising soul.<sup>73</sup>

Faced with the appeal to the memory to which the inscription of this reliquary is dedicated with the previous inscription, which appears on face C, redefines the idea from the redundancy in such action: “He became a martyr”. This is corroborated by the verb *sprevit*,<sup>74</sup> a veiled allusion to Natalia and an essential character in all the hagiographic action.

70. There is doubt of the publicity character, with good arguments, in: Debiais, Vincent. *Messages...*: 206-207. This function is defended in: García Morilla, Alejandro. *Las inscripciones medievales de la provincia de Burgos: siglos VIII-XIII*. Madrid: Universidad Complutense de Madrid (PhD Dissertation), 2013: 221.

71. In fact, in the current museographic installation, under the small Seville reliquary, another urn has been placed, of greater dimensions, made of wood and has already lost any trace of its medieval decoration. It is usually regarded as the original shell of the outer reliquary.

72. Treffort, Cécile. *Mémoires carolingiennes. L'épitaphe entre célébration mémorielle, genre littéraire et manifeste politique (milieu VIIIe-début XIe siècle)*. Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2007.

73. For concept use: Arco y Garay, Ricardo del. *Sepulcros de la casa real de Aragón*. Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas-Instituto Jerónimo Zurita, 1947: 45.

74. Third person singular, present perfect of the verb *sperno*, *sprevi*, *spretum* which means, to separate, to remove, to reject, to throw away. Nevertheless, it has a polysemous character, having other meanings like depreciating or despising. See: Sánchez Cid, Ignacio. *La repudiación de la herencia en el Código Civil*. Salamanca: Ediciones de la Universidad de Salamanca, 2012: 138; Cange, Charles du. *Glossarium ad scriptores mediae e infimae latinitatis*. Paris: Favre, 1681: III, col. 932.



The last of the epigraphs, on the D side, introduces the formula *Hic iacet*, one of the most relevant. For this reason, I do not think it was accidental to choose one of the short sides of the reliquary, under the *translatio* scene, thus insisting on a sort of triple modality of the martyr presence from the adverb *hic*. Indeed, here is the place, the ship, where the real relic was recovered by Natalia, but also, here, is the geographic location where Adrian reappears to perform his last miracle by way of Constantinople. *Hic* puts accent on the truthful presence, in the *post mortem* apparition of Adrian, which avoids the devil's deception.

Nor does it seem random that, following the nature of the *epitaphia sepulcrale* and the use of the *hic iacet* formula, which frequently alluded to bodies of the deceased, that inscription was placed under the panel where the story of Adrian's martyrdom is revealed, with the hand already turned into a holy relic. It is precisely here that the inscription does not mention the body at all, but where the hand is made figuratively, above.

The inscriptions, besides the information provided, allow another series of relevant data to be obtained for the chronological frame of the artifact. Thus, the external characters of the same can fit within the Carolina type letters, with some very specific preservation of Visigothic type lettering, such as the letter "M", with parallel and convergent upward strokes.<sup>75</sup>

On the other hand, the letter 'A' uses a horizontal straight line in the middle part, while the upper one is a continuation of the right side, forming an ornamental appendix.<sup>76</sup> Cases such as the letter 'E', which appears in a round shape, coexist with the frame, and are also specific to the epigraphs.<sup>77</sup> In fact, it is one of the essential characteristics of the letterings, which in many cases tend towards rounded<sup>78</sup> forms and resort to curved and sinuous strokes that expand upward, which, visually, entwine whole words, resembling Carolina style writing.<sup>79</sup>

In addition, one of the most representative elements of this writing is the abbreviation 'US', where the 'S' is transformed into a large comma, appearing here in the word *factvs*, on face C of the reliquary.

Far from being exhaustive in the analysis of the inscription *ductus* and waiting for an investigation by specialists in this matter, it is convenient to make a quick review on Romanesque silversmith productions of the Northwest Iberian Peninsula, with the intention of establishing comparatives that allow understanding of the artistic framework in which the Adrian prestige was invoiced.

We must first mention the artistic heritage, lost in this sense, an insurmountable issue, more and when, for example, relevant works are lacking from the ancient temples of the Kingdom of Leon, between the first half of the eleventh century and the first decades of the twelfth century. There is nothing left to cite from a case that

75. From the word *martiris* on face B.

76. The letter "A" of the word *martiris* from face B. Note that none of these letters use the broken "V" intermediate stroke.

77. Like in the word *iacet* on face D.

78. See the letter "D" in the word "Adrian" on face D.

79. Note the letters "A" in the three headings and, for example, in the word *factvs* in face C.



should have been magnified among the works of Romanesque silversmiths, the old altar front and the canopy of silversmith's work done under the committees of Bishop Diego Gelmírez for the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela.<sup>80</sup> Little more is known about dozens of pieces that the *Historia Compostelana* mentions in the power of the ecclesiastic, like the silver missal, a silver letter box, boxes, a *Lignum Crucis* of the same material, a gold cross, three chalices,<sup>81</sup> and a crucifix *mirifica aurificis manu consculptum*, property of Gelmírez, which is also lost.<sup>82</sup>

According to Ambrosio de Morales, it is an altarpiece *mayor que creo hay en España*,<sup>83</sup> which the monarch Alfonso VI of Leon ordered to be made for the monastery of San Benito de Sahagún. Neither is there any greater evidence of the cross donated by the infanta Urraca to the cathedral of Leon<sup>84</sup> or the one offered to the altars of the basilica of San Isidoro and which is known from a modern description.<sup>85</sup>

Lost works susceptible of being compared with the casket of Saint Adrian are innumerable and its destiny should not have moved away from the suffered cross, property of infanta Elvira, invoiced for the monastery of Valcabado (Zamora) and sent off already —*desfacere*— in its time to his Niece, Queen Urraca, to buy a horse with the nine *marcos* she obtained.<sup>86</sup>

Others were more fortunate and although they remained missing throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, recent research has managed to provide some images for study. This is the case of the portable altar from the monastery of Santa María de Obona (Tineo, Asturias),<sup>87</sup> a piece of Romanesque silver whose existence was already known in the nineteenth century from drawings showing epigraph development that ran

80. The dating of the two pieces has been discussed but in any case, they could fit between the years 1105 and 1112. A recent study, with bibliographical updates can be found in: Castiñeiras González, Manuel; Nodar Fernández, Victoriano. "Para una reconstrucción del altar mayor de Gelmírez: cien años después de López Ferreiro". *Compostellanum*, 55/3-4 (2010): 575-640.

81. *Historia Compostelana*. ed. Emma Falque Rey, Madrid: Akal, 1994: LVII: 409.

82. *Historia Compostelana...*: LIV: 162, Which are mentioned together with a portable ara and a golden chalice.

83. "greater than I think there is in Spain": Morales, Ambrosio de. *Las antigüedades de las ciudades de España*. Madrid: Benito Caro, 1792: X, 49.

84. A recent analysis of the complex source where it is mentioned in: Henriët, Patrick; Sansterre, Jean-Marie. "De 'l'inanimis imago' à 'l'omagem mui bella': méfiance à l'égard des images et essor de leur culte dans l'Espagne médiévale (VII-XIII siècle)". *Edad Media: revista de historia*, 10 (2009): 37-92.

85. Manzano, José. *Vida y portentosos milagros del glorioso San Isidro, arzobispo de Sevilla, con una breve descripción de su magnífico templo y real casa del mismo señor San Isidro en la muy noble ciudad de León*. Salamanca: Imprenta Real, 1732: 352.

86. Ruiz Albi, Irene. *La reina doña Urraca (1109-1126), cancellería y colección diplomática*. Leon: Centro de Estudios e Investigación San Isidoro, 2003: 483 (doc. No. 81).

87. Moráis Morán, José Alberto. "La imagen de la desaparecida ara de Obona (Asturias) en el contexto de la orfebrería románica astur-leonesa". *Codex aquilarensis*, 29 (2013) 223-250, where the only known photograph of the work is published, property of the Archive of the Institute of Cultural Heritage of Spain.



along the illustration edges<sup>88</sup> (Illustration 8) and today an old photograph exists that allows its study, adding it to this limited list of irrecoverable objects (Figure 9).

Finally, in an attempt to deduce the artistic context in which the Chicago casket was made, the necessary comparisons must be made with respect to the San Isidoro casket in Leon (ca. 1063), the ark in Cámara Santa of Oviedo (ca. 1072 approximately), the aforementioned altar of Obona and the San Salvador de Fuentes cross (Villaviciosa, Asturias), preserved today in the New York Metropolitan Museum.<sup>89</sup>

The epigraphic comparison of the inscriptions presented by these pieces with respect to those covering the lower part of the Chicago reliquary is quite representative. In the comparative table (Figure 10), the presence of the letter A seems common to all the relics linked to the silversmithing core of the Astur-Leonese area, with a small horizontal stroke on the union of the two converging ends, which is especially visible in the inscriptions of the oventense Holy Ark. This particular element, almost by way of nexus, unites the letters in the Obona altar. Without elaborating on the parallels of all the inscriptions, the combination of the square letters with lowercase is symptomatic, a characteristic shared by all the relics. However, while the earliest works, such as the isidorian ark and that of Oviedo seem to reveal certain visigothic preservations, the altar of Obona, for example, already stands out for the total absence of these preservations, since this piece is dated between 1113 and 1138.<sup>90</sup>

On the contrary, if the comparison is established with other relics from the same circle, such as the portable altar donated by the infant Sancha Raimúndez in 1144 to San Isidoro de Leon, preserved in the Museum, the data also confirms an *ante quem* date for the Chicago urn (Figure 11). Epigraphic characters from the era show

88. Miguel Vigil, Ciriaco. *Asturias monumental, epigráfica y diplomática: datos para la historia de la provincia*. Oviedo: Imprenta del Hospicio Provincial, 1887: plate QbIII, number Qb17.

89. An attempt of bibliographic selection on these pieces exceeds the interests of this study. I refer then to the works that suppose an updated synthesis. On the ark of Saint Isidoro: Fernández González, Etelvina. "Relicario de San Isidoro". *Sancho el Mayor y sus herederos. El linaje que europeizó los reinos*. Pamplona: Gobierno de Navarra, 2006: I, 136-141. On the oventense ark, of which again its chronology has been debated: Fernández González, Etelvina. "El Arca Santa de Oviedo y sus precedentes: De Alfonso II a Alfonso VI", *Alfonso VI y su legado*. Leon: Instituto Leonés de Cultura, 2012: 311-343; Bango Torviso, Isidro. "La renovación del tesoro sagrado a partir del concilio de Coyanza y el taller real de orfebrería de León. El Arca Santa de Oviedo (1072)". *Anales de historia del arte. Alfonso VI y el arte de su época*, 2 (2011): 11-68; Alonso Álvarez, Raquel. "Patria uallata asperitate moncium". Pelayo de Oviedo, el archa de las reliquias y la creación de una topografía regia". *Locus Amoenus*, 9 (2007-2008): 17-29 and Alonso Álvarez, Raquel. "La obra histórica del obispo Pelayo de Oviedo (1089-1153) y su relación con la Historia legionensis (llamada silensis)". *e-Spania*, 14 (2012) <<http://e-spania.revues.org/21586>> (Consulted 12<sup>th</sup> April 2015); García de Castro Valdés, César. *El Arca Santa de la catedral de Oviedo*. Aguilar de Campoo: Fundación Santa María la Real, 2017. Regarding Obona's piece: Moráis Morán, José Alberto. "La imagen...": 223-250 and Ruiz de la Peña González, Isabel. "El ara desaparecida del monasterio de Santa María de Obona (Tineo, Asturias)". *El monacato en los reinos de León y Castilla (siglos VII-XIII)*. Leon: Fundación Sánchez-Albornoz, 2007: 531-546. The monographic study of the Fuentes cross still remains pending. See nonetheless: Martin, Therese. "Exceptions and Assumptions: Women in Medieval Art History", *Reassessing the Roles of Women as 'Makers' of Medieval Art and Architecture*. Leiden: Brill, 2012: I, 1-33.

90. Moráis Morán, José Alberto. "La imagen...": 249.





full knowledge of Carolina style letters, which are more evolved and differ from the Saint Adrian casket model.

This data will serve as a basis for the chronological assessments that will be concluded at the end of this study.

## 6. Style as a chronological factor

The last section of the paper focuses on a stylistic analysis of the formulas used by the silversmiths who made the Saint Adrian casket. The absence of specific documentation that makes it possible to specify the origin of the piece more precisely, as well as the details of the hypothetical workshop to which it must be linked, again, must be handled with problematic stylistic contextualization.

The method is dangerous, especially when taking into account the most recent proposals made by researchers and, in the case of Astur-Leonese silversmith works, researchers have tried to outline a renewed panorama of artistic affiliations.

This is the case for the Holy Ark of Oviedo, a piece which traditionally established contacts with respect to the Isidorian urn of Leon, but which today is dated in the year 1072, *siendo una creación de un taller de orfebrería situado en la corte leonesa cuya actividad se debió iniciar con las obras de Fernando I y Sancha, y continuaría en vigor durante el reinado de su hijo Alfonso VI.*<sup>91</sup>

This tendency has been increasingly accepted in recent years, in an attempt to rebuild this workshop, located under the auspices of the royal Leon family. Pieces such as the portable altarpiece of Obona,<sup>92</sup> the chalice of abbot Giraldo (1096-1108), in the cathedral of Braga and dated around the year 1004<sup>93</sup> or the cover of Queen Felicia's *Evangelary*, dated between 1072-1094 and with undoubted technical similarities with respect to the chalice of Urraca,<sup>94</sup> have allowed to extension of works coming from the Leon capital, to other distant areas.

The techniques used by the silversmiths in the adriana casket do not have direct or absolute consequences with the remaining pieces, a fact that, in no case, is an obstacle to disconnect it from isidorian workshops. In fact, this is one of the main riches made from the set of goldsmiths and ivory artists in San Isidoro, characterized by their extensive artistic production, which probably began in 1059 with the San Pelayo casket and extended to at least the Year 1150. These artists were able to

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91. "being a creation of a silversmith's workshop in the Leon court which began with the works of Fernando I and Sancha, still in force during the reign of his son Alfonso VI": Bango Torviso, Isidro. "La renovación...": 46.

92. Moráis Morán, José Alberto. "La imagen...": 249.

93. Nodar Fernández, Victoriano. "Cáliz y Patena de San Giraldo", *Compostela y Europa: la historia de Diego Gelmírez*. Milan: Skira, 2010: 364-367 (catalog cards 25 and 26).

94. Bango Torviso, Isidro. "Cubierta del evangelario de la reina Felicia", *Sancho el Mayor y sus herederos. El linaje que europeizó los reinos*. Pamplona: Gobierno de Navarra, 2006: I, catalog card 116, 292-296.





create very different works stylistically, as dissimilar as the *Hispalense* urn and the Urraca chalice.

Among such a heterogeneous corpus of works, the Saint Adrian casket would enrich this wide use of iconographic and material solutions.

The use of slender micro architectures, with unpaved alley arches, or the introduction of columns with trusses girded or decorated with fine helical vines, is a feature that has been understood proper to the legionense workshop, appearing in the Holy Ark of Oviedo,<sup>95</sup> possibly in the gold coverings of the San Pelayo ark and now also in the Saint Adrian casket. In all the pieces, the presence of a very specific type of smooth capital points towards unitary formulas (Illustration 12).

On the other hand, in an impeccable study on important pieces relevant to Central European Romanesque silversmithing, Joachim Huber indicated that one of the distinguishing features of the Isidorian ark was its four waters structure,<sup>96</sup> without a doubt an original element that is shared with only a few of the preserved pieces in the Hispanic Northwest and of which the Saint Adrian casket would be totally indebted.

Although scaling as a decorative element is frequent in this type of work, it should not be forgotten that it was one of the reasons for the increased fortune from the year 1100 in buildings of the Spanish-Languedoc<sup>97</sup> orbit, from Toulouse to Compostela. Even losing the Romanesque models, the small representation of the tomb of Santa Eufemia from the Orense cathedral,<sup>98</sup> with its scaled cover, seems to recall some figures that should have been very widespread in the ancient Kingdom of Leon.

Less original solutions, such as the location of hexafolias in the spandrels of the Adrian casket arches, have monumental parallels in stone, for example, at the door of forgiveness in the Isidorian basilica, on the heads of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, evocative in turn of formulas proper to the metalwork.<sup>99</sup>

Finally, valuing the technical handling of draping analysis, which is often used—not without problems—to match sculpted Romanesque productions, it will be observed that, of course, the folds of the Adrian ark point to a much greater complexity and naturalism than the Isidorian ark figures. Even more similar,

95. Bango Torviso, Isidro. “La renovación...”: 55.

96. The author indicates that the reliquary of San Isidoro, even with its modern reforms, would be, together with the so-called Great Box of Sion (Valais, Switzerland), two of the oldest reliquaries preserved with a troncopyramidal roof: Huber, Joachim. “La Grande Châsse de Sion et la Querelle de las Investitures”. *La Grande Châsse de Sion. Chef-d’oeuvre d’orfèvrerie du XIe siècle*. Paris: Somogy, 2005: 73-98.

97. Moráis Morán, José Alberto. *Roma en el Románico*. Cáceres: Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Extremadura, 2013: 303.

98. On the late medieval chronology of this image of the tomb and its scaling, see: Moralejo Álvarez, Serafín. “La reutilización de los sarcófagos antiguos en la España medieval”, *Colloquio sul reimpiego dei sarcofagi romani nel Medioevo*. Marburg: Verlag des Kunstgeschichtlichen Seminars, 1984: 187-203.

99. Moráis Morán, José Alberto. “Nuevas reflexiones para la lectura iconográfica de la Portada del Perdón de San Isidoro de León: el impacto de la Reforma Gregoriana y el arte de la tardoantigüedad”. *De arte*, 5 (2006): 63-86.



although not absolute references, are the figures in the Holy Ark of Oviedo, especially for being more complex, swirling at abdomen height in both pieces.<sup>100</sup>

As a conclusion, it should be pointed out that there is no problem in locating the invoice of this silver work within the silversmith committee linked to the Leonese royal family, especially between 1099, when the monastery of Saint Adrian passed into the hands of the Infanta Urraca, along with the invoice of the last works linked to the Isidorian workshops, in the year 1150.

On the other hand, the new reading of the hagiographic cycle that we have presented here seems to emphasize the importance of such images in Natalia, both in the episode of the martyrdom of Saint Adrian, in the passage of the fire extinguished by the storm, as well as in the appearance of the demon during *translatio*. This knowledge was found within the *Passio* and the Tarragona *Orational*.

Finally, formal and technical aspects, the morphology of epigraphic writing and its direct relations with other reliquaries of the Astur-Leonese area seem to confirm both the geographic and chronological ascription defended here.



ILLUSTRATION 1. CASKETS OF SAINTS ADRIAN AND NATALIA. FACE A.  
© THE CHICAGO ART INSTITUTE.

100. I desist making a detailed comparative description of the draped textiles of all the works cited. Sufficed to note, as a specific feature, that the image of Saint Adrian on the A side of the Chicago chest shows a fold of the robe that moves in the wind, quite similar to the solutions used in the niellated cover of the Holy Ark (Oviedo), where the angel on the right arm of the Dimas cross, the Good Thief, offers a direct parallel.



ILLUSTRATION 2. CASKETS OF SAINTS ADRIAN AND NATALIA. FACE B. © THE CHICAGO ART INSTITUTE.



ILLUSTRATION 3. CASKETS OF SAINTS ADRIAN AND NATALIA. FACE C.  
© THE CHICAGO ART INSTITUTE.





ILLUSTRATION 4. CASKETS OF SAINTS ADRIAN AND NATALIA. FACE D. © THE CHICAGO ART INSTITUTE.



ILLUSTRATION 5. EPIGRAPH OF THE CONSECRATION OF THE SAINT ADRIAN CHURCH, LA LOSILLA, LEÓN (LOST). © CONSEJO SUPERIOR DE INVESTIGACIONES CIENTÍFICAS, HUMAN AND SOCIAL SCIENCES ARCHIVE CENTER, MADRID, ATN/GMO/c05979.







ILLUSTRATION 6. PRIMITIVE STATE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE SAINT ISIDORO ARK (ACCORDING TO MANUEL GÓMEZ-MORENO, "EL ARCA DE LAS RELIQUIAS DE SAN ISIDORO DE LEÓN". *ARCHIVO ESPAÑOL DE ARTE*, 48 (1940): 205-212).

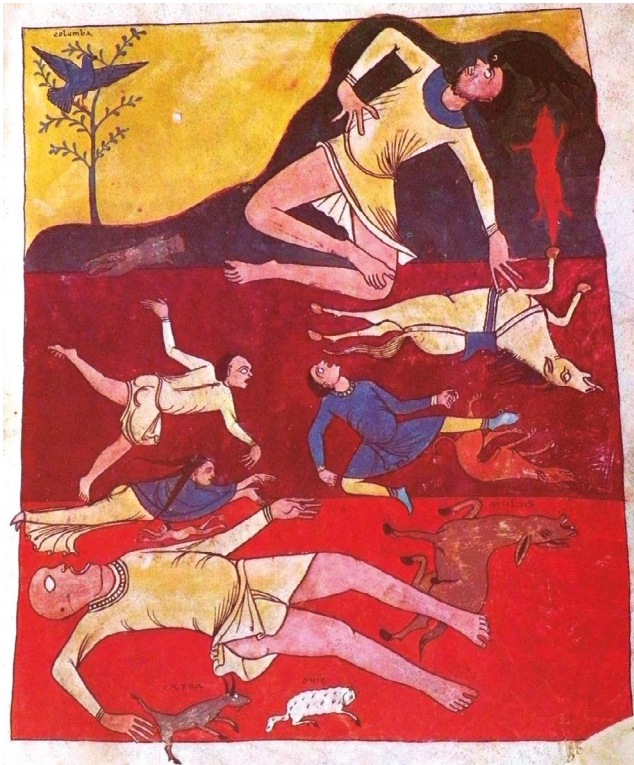


ILLUSTRATION 7. SAINT-SEVER BEATUM, THE UNIVERSAL DELUGE, PARIS, BNF, MS. LAT. 8878, FOL. 85R. © BnF.



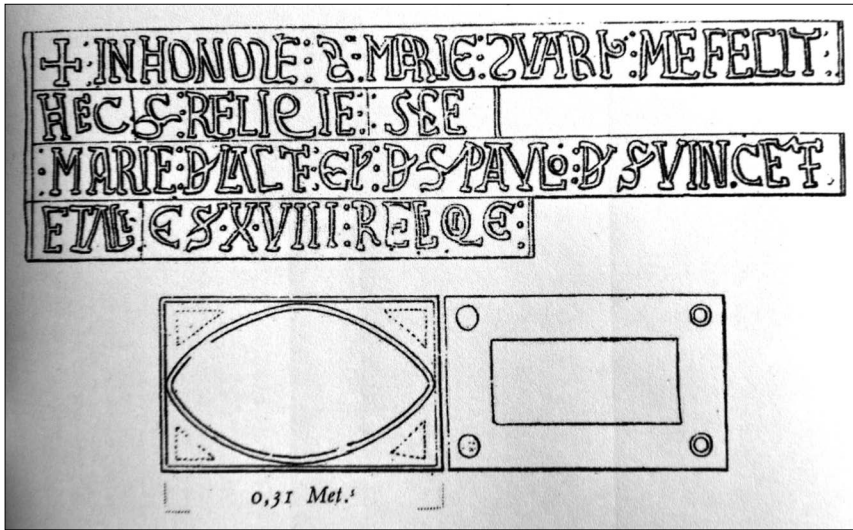


ILLUSTRATION 8. DRAWING OF THE PORTABLE ALTAR IN THE MONASTERY OF SANTA MARÍA DE OBONA, TINEO, ASTURIAS, (ACCORDING TO CIRIACO MIGUEL VIGIL, *ASTURIAS MONUMENTAL, EPIGRÁFICA Y DIPLOMÁTICA: DATOS PARA LA HISTORIA DE LA PROVINCIA*, IMPRENTA DEL HOSPICIO PROVINCIAL, OVIEDO, 1887).



ILLUSTRATION 9. PHOTOGRAPH OF THE PORTABLE ALTAR IN THE MONASTERY OF SANTA MARÍA DE OBONA, TINEO, ASTURIAS. © MADRID, SPAIN, INSTITUTE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE, INVENTORY NUMBER 01907 A.

Arqueta Chicago	Ara Santa (ca. 1072)	Ara San Isidoro (ca. 1063)	Ara Obona (ca. 1113-1138)
			
			
			
			
			
			
			

ILLUSTRATION 10. EPIGRAPHIC COMPARATIVE TABLE PROVIDED BY THE AUTHOR.















Arqueta San Adrián	Ara Sancha Raimúndez (ca. 1144)
	
	
	
	
	
	
	

ILLUSTRATION 11. EPIGRAPHIC COMPARATIVE TABLE PROVIDED BY THE AUTHOR.





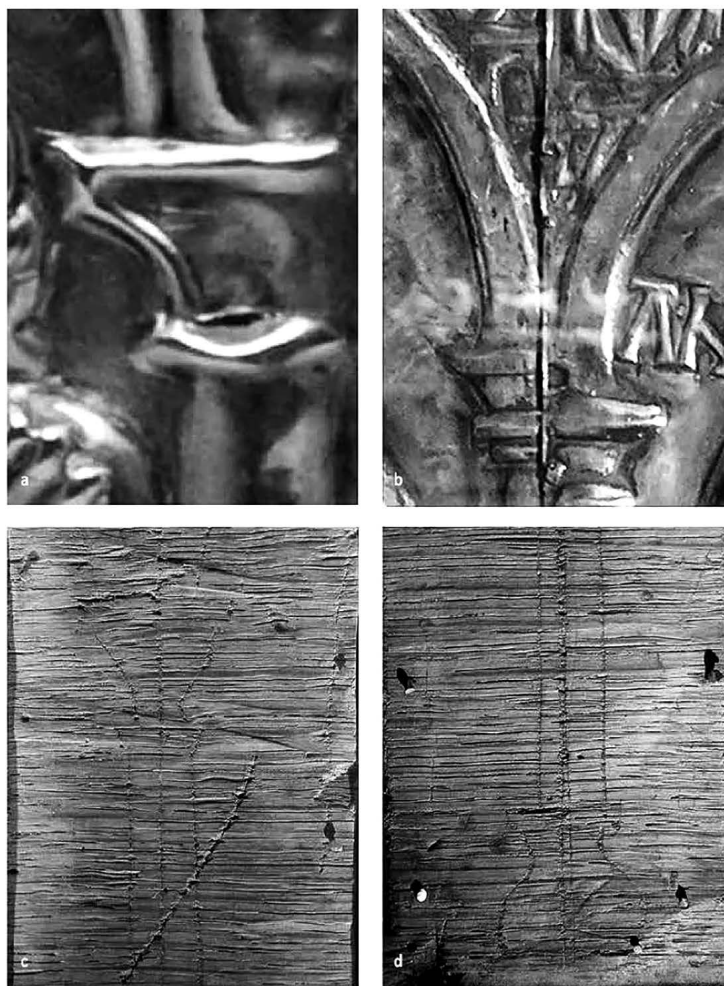


ILLUSTRATION 12. CAPITALS, STEMS AND BASES. A. SAINT ADRIAN CASKET / B. HOLY ARK, OVIEDO, CATHEDRAL / C. SAINT PELAYO CASKET, LEON, D. SAINT PELAYO CASKET, LEON, © MUSEUM OF THE ROYAL COLLEGIATE CHURCH OF SAN ISIDORO.