

# The Romanesque Majesty at the Bilbao Fine Arts Museum

Notes towards a contextualization



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**BILBOKO ARTE  
EDERREN MUSEOA  
MUSEO DE BELLAS  
ARTES DE BILBAO**

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Catalonia is one of the regions of Romanesque Spain and indeed Europe that has conserved the greatest number of religious furniture pieces from the 12th and 13th century, in particular altar panels and images worked in wood and polychrome. These objects have often been taken for modest versions made following models provided by works executed in rich materials such as gold and silver. While these connections are undeniable, it is also true that the technical quality and iconographic complexity of this type of work point to the existence of major workshops and a programmatic vocation governing their creation. I refer in particular to rich altar frontals and sidepieces, baldachin panels and carved images. The latter include a variety of examples of the Madonna, crucifixes, groups of the Descent from the Cross and other types such as the *Maiestas Domini* (sometimes called “of the Saviour”) and saints, in these cases clearly from later dates. In fact, polychrome wood carvings did not just involve the creation of images for worship, but also included the production of small works applied to frontals and other modalities associated with the altar and related furniture (edicules, structures that prefigure the retables of later eras and so on).

Although a substantial number of significant objects from the Catalonian Romanesque period has survived, few actually remain in the buildings they were originally made for, so there is very little information on where they were placed and what their original function might have been; additionally, some of the examples studied and photographed between the late 19th century and the early decades of the 20th century disappeared during the Spanish Civil War. Even so, many are now to be found in public and private collections<sup>1</sup>.

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1 For a study of Romanesque carvings in Catalonia, see Cook/Gudiol 1950, pp. 279-317; Ainaud de Lasarte 1955; Junyent 1957; Junyent 1961, pp. 267-270; Llarás Usón 1998.



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1. Anonymous, Catalan  
*The Majesty of Christ on the Cross*, first half of the 13th century  
Polychrome wood, 130.5 x 107 x 14.7 cm  
Bilbao Fine Arts Museum  
Inv. no. 69/388

Carvings of Christ on the Cross took a number of different forms, from the more frequently found *Christus patiens*, with the half-naked Christ showing the pain of His suffering, where the emphasis is placed on the human aspect of His death, to the Christus triumphans wearing a tunic, known as *Majestat* in Catalonia<sup>2</sup>. The Bilbao Fine Arts Museum has one of these images, a Majesty or Christ Triumphant on the Cross [fig. 1], the exact origin of which is unknown<sup>3</sup>. In Spanish Romanesque, these majesties were practically circumscribed to the north-eastern area of Catalonia, their presence being one of the features that distinguished the Catalonian Romanesque throughout Europe, as we shall see later on. As a modality of the *Christus triumphans*, the Bilbao image has most of the characteristic components of the 12th- and 13th-century Catalonian majesties. The figure seems to be leaning against and fixed to the Cross, the arms open practically horizontally. The face, with the eyes wide open and wearing an expression that transmits gravity and solemnity, is designed to embody the idea of Christ's triumphant victory over death.

The carving is done in poplar wood (the figure of Christ) and pine (the cross)<sup>4</sup>, with pieces of cloth stuck on and painted in tempera, and some points worked with stucco relief. The work in fact uses the most frequent ploys of Romanesque imagery. The Christ measures 91 x 89 x 11.5 centimetres, while the cross measures 130.5 x 107 x 3.2 centimetres. Altogether the piece is 14.7 centimetres thick. In modern times, we first come across the carving during the first third of the 20th century. It has been situated, without documentary proof, in Oleguer Junyent's Barcelona collection and subsequently in the Van Stolck collection in Holland. From there it was sold in 1928 to F. Brimo de Larousilhe, finally arriving at the Bilbao Fine Arts Museum in 1957 as a donation from what was then the Bank of Bilbao. Despite all this, it was not established firmly in the historiography until it became part of the Bilbao museum's collection, and certainly the most rigorous, detailed studies were produced in the last two decades of the 20th century with two essays, one by Ana Sánchez-Lassa<sup>5</sup> and the other by Jaime Barrachina<sup>6</sup>.

In a relatively good state of repair, the piece has retained most of the polychrome on the figure of Christ and on the front and back of the cross. Restoration performed in 1985 and 1986, consisting basically in consolidating and cleaning the work, recovered the original tone of the colours and led to the discovery of significant technical and material detail<sup>7</sup>.

In line with the typology it is classified by, Christ appears to be joined to the cross, in a frontal composition and with the head slightly turned down to his left. His eyes are open, and the hair and beard are lightly carved in simple lines. The arms stretch out horizontally, completely fixed to the crosspiece of the cross. The surface of the long-sleeved tunic (*manicata*) is amply decorated with a series of circles that profile the figures of birds, almost certainly eagles. The girdle, in a yellowy colour that hints at gilt, has the usual knot, behind which the ends drop almost symmetrically in a slight curve. The yellowing strip on the fitting between the body and the arms catches the eye, as do the ends of the sleeves, rendered with stucco relief to give a zigzag geometric motif, the free space of which is occupied by three pearls arranged in a triangle. As di-

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2 Thoby 1959, Trens 1966, Bastardes 1978, Durliat 1989.

3 Recent studies consider the style of this carving proto-Gothic, as even in the 13th century it has features proper to the Gothic style. It is of course one of the two Romanesque works of Catalonian in the Museum's possession. The second consists in two painted panels from a supposed baldachin that represent Noah's ark and the Descent from the Cross (inv. nos. 69/256 and 69/255), from the church in Mare de Déu de la Plana, in the Pessonada, near Hortonedá de la Conca, in the Pallars Jussà district.

4 According to samples taken in 2010 and in line with the Study of the materials present in two microsamples of painting and two samples of wood taken from the work "*Majestad de Cristo en la Cruz*" (literally, *Majesty of Christ on the Cross*), Inv. no. 69/388, ARTE-LAB. S.L., Madrid, 2010.

5 Sánchez-Lassa 1987.

6 Barrachina 1997 ("*Majestat 6*").

7 For a detailed analysis of the state of conservation of the piece and the results of the campaign of inspection and restoration campaign, see Sánchez-Lassa 1987, particularly pp. 55-60.



2. Anonymous, Catalan  
*The Majesty of Christ on the Cross*  
 Bilbao Fine Arts Museum  
 X-radiography

fferent pieces of wood, the feet, fitted under the hollow of the body, are bare, as occurs in most Catalonian examples [fig. 2].

As I have said, the most interesting part of the cross, with cross-potent or Jerusalem cross endpoints, are the motifs painted on the front and back. In the first place, and in the upper part of the upright, is the inscription of the *titulus*, which reads "IHS XPS REX ON", an abbreviation of Ihesus Christus Rex Iudeorum, which identifies the figure of Christ as King of the Jews. Representations of the sun and the moon are shown at the upper end, inscribed in circles; this is a recurring theme in images of the Crucifix. Worth noting too are the figures of Mary and Saint John the Evangelist painted at the ends of the crosspiece [figs. 3 and 4], also frequent in this arrangement and in turn present in any context alluding to the Crucifixion scene. Finally, at the base of the upright Adam can be seen coming to life, accompanied by the inscription identifying him (ADAM), the remains of which are perfectly visible above the tomb, against a green background [fig. 5].

This figurative repertoire accompanies a variety of images of the crucifix, more clearly and continually in the *Christus patiens* than in the triumphant majesties. It should however be noted that comparison with some crucifixes runs into difficulties because the original crosses have often disappeared or, if the cross is still there, it may not actually be the original one. Less habitual is the idea behind the decoration on the back, here exclusively geometric or plant-like, even in the central part [fig. 6], when the standard thing in such objects is the presence of the *Agnus Dei* in the centre accompanied by other figurative elements at the ends,



3-4. Anonymous, Catalan  
*The Majesty of Christ on the Cross*  
 Bilbao Fine Arts Museum  
 Mary and St. John the Evangelist at the crosspieces (details)



5. Anonymous, Catalan  
*The Majesty of Christ on the Cross*  
 Bilbao Fine Arts Museum  
 Adam at the foot of the Cross (detail)



6. Anonymous, Catalan  
*The Majesty of Christ on the Cross*  
 Bilbao Fine Arts Museum  
 Central area, back (detail)

including the Tetramorph. The iconographic, stylistic and technical aspects of the Bilbao carving more than justify proclaiming it Catalonian in origin and our contextualizing it in an era and a geographical frame that we outline below, as we take our analysis further and compare the piece with other examples.

Generally speaking, the technical and material resources applied in the production of the image are the ones usually found in works in polychrome wood from the latter decades of the 12th and the 13th centuries. The treatment of colour in the figure of Christ, largely based on a combination of the red of the tunic and the blue background of the circles surrounding the eagles and the yellow, is the same as the background of the cross. Finding parallels is not a particularly difficult task, one being (despite the differences in the workshops where they were produced) the outer layer of the *Batlló Majesty* [fig. 7]<sup>8</sup>. Some key zones of the tunic were rendered in stucco relief or plaster coated in varnish, the yellow or gold effect calling to mind the works adorned in precious materials. Indeed, remains of tin have been found in the rhomboid figures running along the red strip on the front of the cross [fig. 8], which must also have produced a shiny effect. As regards the pigments used, it is interesting to note the presence of vermilion, from the cinnabar, relatively normal in works from the Catalonian Romanesque, as is clear from those that have been analysed to date<sup>9</sup>. Less habitual is the use of indigo, found in the sample taken from Christ's tunic, although analyses are still required of a greater number of pieces for us to be able to evaluate how frequently this pigment was used.

The image as a whole undoubtedly features the basic constants of the Catalonian majesties. Although this is not the moment to go further into this issue, I should say that the presence of this kind of Crucified Christ in the Catalonian area of influence in the Romanesque period is a distinctive feature in respect of Spain in general. Furthermore, majesties conserved or documented come basically from the north-eastern zone of

8 Morer/Prat/Badia 2008. New results on the analyses performed at the National Art Museum of Catalonia between 2008 and 2010 are currently in the process of being published, in the next two volumes of the *Bulletí* of the institution, nos. 10 (2011, in press) and 11.

9 Morer/Prat/Badia 2008; Castiñeiras 2007.



7. Anonymous, Catalan  
*Batlló Majesty*, mid-12th century  
Partially draped wood with tempera polychrome, 156 x 119.5 x 20.5 cm  
MNAC-Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, Barcelona  
Inv. no. 015937-000

Catalonia, which ranges from the Roussillon area to near Barcelona, including the regions of Gerona, Ripoll and Vic, while the western edge is staked out with examples from around the Seu d'Urgell, perhaps more sporadically<sup>10</sup>.

A recurring explanation for the development of this modality in Catalonia was that the proliferation of majesties reflected the fame of the *Volto Santo* in Lucca [fig. 9], in Tuscany, a cult documented from the late 11th century<sup>11</sup>. Beyond the chronological problem of the current image at Lucca, compositional analogies are sufficiently clear as to be able to talk about the relative familiarity of some Catalonian examples with those from Tuscany and the surrounding areas. However, the technical treatment differs substantially: despite certain similarities in the rendering of the tunics and of the tubular-shaped folds: the Catalonian examples tend towards a geometrization that contrasts with the more modelled forms of the Italian works. This is clear not only in the comparison with the Lucca Christ, but also from other significant works such as the crucifixes in the same mode from Borgo Sansepolcro and Bocca di Magra. But beyond certain parallel formal features, not extendible to technical or workshop issues, the important thing is to verify what typological relation

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<sup>10</sup> Camps 2010.





8. Anonymous, Catalan  
*The Majesty of Christ on the Cross*  
 Bilbao Fine Arts Museum  
 Stratigraphy of a sample taken from grey on red in a rhombus of Cross decoration (MPlan 20 X / 0.40 kens)  
 1. White gypsum and silicate ground (v. l. p.) (350 µm)  
 2. Orange comprising white lead, vermilion (l. p.) and calcium carbonate (l. p.) (25 µm)  
 3. Red comprising vermilion, white lead and calcium carbonate (v. l. p.) (15 µm)  
 4. Red comprising red colouring, white lead (l. p.), calcium carbonate (l. p.) and vermilion (35-40 µm)  
 5. Grey-brown, tin adhesive (20 µm)  
 6. Tin-plate silvering (25 µm)

there could have been between the *Volto Santo* in Lucca and the diffusion of the *majestats* in Catalonia. Likewise, another question that needs to be examined concerns what aspects of the legend of the Lucca Christ could have, sooner or later, found their way into Catalonia. What we have in the way of documentation may add some clues, although they are vague at best. In no case are there sources from the Middle Ages referring specifically to a Catalonian image, as occurs with Lucca, and we do not come across a direct allusion to an image until 1635 when a chapel was built dedicated to the *Majesty of Caldes de Montbui* [fig. 10]<sup>12</sup>.

If we confine ourselves to mediaeval sources and, more specifically, to the Romanesque period, we do find references from the 10th and 11th centuries that might refer to the worship of images of Christ Triumphant. That is at least how the appearance of the term *vultus* (face) in the church at Estamariu (near Seu d'Urgell) in 1063 and 1092 has traditionally been used: *ad imso vultu vel ad majestatem Domini da Stamariz*<sup>13</sup>. This document has also been employed to demonstrate the use of the term "majestad" to refer to the typology we are interested in here. But the term *volto*, *vultus* or *bult* does not appear insistently until much later, in texts of the Goigs (or Joys). The most revealing case is the one of an image, now disappeared, from Toses, which according to the texts of the Goigs was related to the *Volto Santo* in Lucca<sup>14</sup>. Another clear example of the tradition in the use of the term is to be had in the *Majesty of Organyà*: according to an oral source, in the early 20th century, when it was tucked away in the recesses of the church sacristy, the parish priest used the word *bulto* when referring to it<sup>15</sup>.

Other cases include elements found in the legend of the Lucca image. The 19th-century *Goigs* tell us the *Majesty of Caldes* was sculpted by Nicodemus, in the same way as the *Majesty of the Pobla de Lillet*<sup>16</sup>. The interesting thing about this reference to Nicodemus lies in the fact that in the legend of the *Volto Santo* in Lucca, he is considered to be the author of the image from the East<sup>17</sup>. The theme of the voyage, of the move, is also implicit when, with regard to the *majesties* of Beget and Bellpuig, the same *Goigs* refer to a different, although by no means remote origin<sup>18</sup>. Another major factor facilitating arguments for the link

11 De Francovich 1936; Baracchini/Filieri 1982; Ferrari/Meyer 2005.

12 On the *Majesty of Caldes*, see Trens 1966, pp. 115-120.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 38.

14 *Ibid.*, p. 161.

15 Camps 2008. This information, evidence of the importance that may still be given without risk to the oral tradition, was kindly provided by Ms. Anna Maria Guardia.

16 Trens 1966, pp. 115-120, 124-127.

17 Bacci 2005, especially pp. 16-19.

18 Trens 1966, pp. 120-123, 142-143.



9. Anonymous  
*Il Volto Santo*, 12th century  
 Polychrome wood, 245 x 275 cm (Christ)  
 St. Martin's Cathedral, Lucca, Italy



10. Anonymous, Catalan  
*Majesty of Caldes de Montbui*, first half of the 13th century  
 Polychrome wood, 196 x 185 cm (Christ); 360 x 203 cm (Cross, before fire)  
 Parish Church of Santa Maria, Caldes de Montbui, Barcelona

with the Eastern Mediterranean is determined by the references to the *Christ of Beirut*. Gudiol, Trens and Durliat underscored this in relation to the cathedrals of Gerona and Vic, where, particularly in the case of Gerona, martyrologies refer to the cult of the *Christ of Beirut* and to the celebration, on 9 November, of the *Passio Ymaginis*<sup>19</sup>. If we return to the scene at Lucca, there is documentary proof of the importance of this commemoration<sup>20</sup>, although we cannot be absolutely certain that the miraculous image is compositionally and iconographically formulated in a way analogous to the majesties. We have the representation of the miraculous image in an altar in the area of Siena dating from 1215, which consists in the Christ Triumphant dressed in a *perizonium*, instead of the tunic of the majesties, which may qualify its role as a reference<sup>21</sup>.

Marcel Durliat attempted to provide an explanation for the Catalonian *majestats*, not only through typological analogies with Italian works, but also by the features provided by the original decoration of the surviving crosses. Arguing in favour of the idea of Christ on the Cross as a triumphant image, of monarchy, he recalls the figurative representations of the fronts and backs of the crosses (*Agnus Dei*, Tetramorph), together with what remains of a number of inscriptions. Some of the inscriptions that appear on crosses, where allusions to the *Agnus Dei* as the image of Christ who saves humanity from sin are habitual, are currently being inspected and analyzed. This is why Durliat associates such features with the text of the Apocalypse.

The image in the Museum in Bilbao is close only to the most emblematic examples, these being the *Batlló Majesty*, the one in Beget [fig. 11] (despite the original cross not having been conserved<sup>22</sup>) and the one

19 Bacci 2005.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid, fig. 4.

22 Camps 2009, with the preceding abundant bibliography and the allusion to an unpublished report by the Catalonian regional government's restoration centre, the Centre de Restauració de Béns Mobles. This was followed by a number of projects at the Centre, the results of which have yet to be published.



11. Anonymous, Catalan  
*Majesty of Beget*, 12th century  
 Polychrome wood, 207 x 196 x 30 cm  
 Church of Sant Cristofol de Beget, Ripolles, Gerona



12. Anonymous, Catalan  
*Christ in Majesty* from the church of Sant Joan les Fonts,  
 la Garrotxa, Gerona, 12th century  
 Polychrome wood, 186 x 130 cm  
 Diocesan Museum of Gerona  
 Inv. no. MDG1

in Sant Joan les Fonts [fig. 12]<sup>23</sup>, largely through general compositional features and various ornamental details. A substantially different approach to the tunic from the ones above means leaving out of the group another emblematic piece, the *Majesty of Caldes de Montbui*.

How the tunic is treated and rendered is in fact the most revealing of the compositional features. The volume of the tunic in the Bilbao carving is different from the other works mentioned, and is obtained by tubular-shaped vertical folds. However, the decorative expedient based on a geometric system of circles on a red background is visible in some of the most significant images. The treatment given to our work seems to derive from more elaborate schemas, when compared with the *Batló Majesty*, which has conserved practically the entire ornamental system on the clothing. Analogies may also be established with other images, like the *Majesty of Sant Boi de Lluçanès* [fig. 13]. Nevertheless, the motifs in these carvings are floral and geometric. One has to resort to a now extensively remodelled representation, the *Majesty of Caldes de Montbui*, to find an example of animal figuration in the tunic's decoration. The reference is to be found in drawings by Josep Puiggarí that have four-footed front-facing animals inscribed in each geometric figure, located on the stole<sup>24</sup>. We may also refer to a carving of a different typology, the *Virgin of Sant Cugat del Vallès* (in the museum in Terrassa), whose tunic is decorated with front-facing groups of birds<sup>25</sup>.

The echo, in all cases, of Byzantine fabrics and finery marks the character of the tunics in these images, which can be associated with the idea of the royalty of the image. The decoration of the tunic in the Bilbao Majesty certainly seems to have been modelled on the kind in favour at some workshops linked to 12th- and 13th-century Catalonian production. Altar furniture in collections in Catalonia includes examples with

23 Bastardes 1978, pp. 118-122.

24 Published in Gispert 1895, p. 60.

25 Ferran 1989, Ferran/Pladevall 1991.



13. Anonymous, Catalan  
*Majesty of Sant Boi de Lluçanès*, second half of the 12th century  
 Wood, remains of polychrome, 109.5 x 109.5 x 19 cm  
 Episcopal Museum of Vic  
 Inv. no. MEV 9723  
 (Cross of unknown origin, see fig. 16)

animal, often hybrid creatures inside circles. Besides the frames of the numerous altar frontals, we may cite examples datable to around the early decades of the 13th century, such as the surface of the *Baldachin of Tost* [fig. 14]<sup>26</sup> or the back of the frontal panel of the *Baldachin of Toses* [fig. 15]<sup>27</sup>. In all of them we find solutions that enable us to contextualize the Majesty we are interested in here, although none is clearly a direct reference or possible model.

If we establish, therefore, analogies with polychrome examples conserved and analyzed, the Bilbao Majesty is defined by the decoration of the tunic and by the figuration at the ends of the cross. Furthermore, the carving itself, with its angular, schematized forms, relates it to works dating from much later, although the simplicity of some details, such as the hair, beard and facial features, militate against finding convincing parallels.

<sup>26</sup> For this set, see the excellent catalogue Castiñeiras 2008b.

<sup>27</sup> The current mounting of the baldachin is the result of work by J. Folch i Torres done for what was then the Museu d'Art de Catalunya in 1934. It is of particular interest for our purposes to keep the decoration of the front panel in mind (MNAC 4523); see the illustrations in Sureda 1981, figs. pp. 194-195.



14. Anonymous, Catalan, workshop of the Seu d'Urgell, 1200  
*Baldachin of Tost*, c. 1220  
 Tempera, stucco relief and remains of gold-varnished metal sheet on panel, 176.5 x 161 x 9.5 cm  
 MNAC-Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, Barcelona  
 Inv. no. 003905-000



15. Anonymous, Catalan, workshop of the Seu d'Urgell, 1200  
*Baldachin known as "of Toses"*  
 First third of the 12th century  
 Tempera, stucco relief and remains of gold-varnished metal sheet on panel. 488 x 238 x 216 cm  
 MNAC-Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, Barcelona  
 Inv. no. 004523-CJT

16. Reverse of the cross of unknown origin associated with the *Majesty of Sant Boi de Lluçanès*  
Episcopal Museum of Vic, Barcelona  
Inv. no. MEV 1609  
(see fig. 13)



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17. Anonymous, Catalan  
*The Majesty of Christ on the Cross*  
Bilbao Fine Arts Museum  
Back



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I have briefly described above the decoration on the cross. Its iconographic composition and the figuration selected seem to be the most frequently employed, albeit in different formats and techniques, in this particular feature. As in representations of the Crucifixion, Mary and John the Evangelist appear as witnesses to Christ's death saving mankind, while Adam coming to life strengthens the idea of Christ as the new Adam, and may also be justified in line with the legend according to which Adam had been buried in Golgotha. However, few majesties appear to have conserved their original cross, and in some cases the present cross is thought possibly to be the result of an assemblage put together at an unknown date. Furthermore, this iconography is most often appreciable in representations of *Christus patiens*.

Although other examples can be found with the same characters as the Bilbao carving on the front of the cross (apart from their appearance in some crosses associated with majesties, but which do not appear to be the originals), they are much more often found in images of Christ Suffering. In this respect, there is a cross in the Episcopal Museum of Vic [fig. 16], of unknown provenance, to which was added the *Majesty of Sant Boi de Lluçanès*<sup>28</sup>; also, and especially, the cross of the *Majesty of La Llagona*, which has on occasion been considered as belonging to a different era from the image itself<sup>29</sup>.

The back of the cross in the Museum in Bilbao [fig. 17] is also decorated with an unusual repertoire of eight petal floral motifs at the centre and the ends, joined by simple longitudinal strips. However, it should be noted that several crosses enamelled on copper also have floral decoration in the upper part and, likewise, there are examples that, without actually providing parallels that can be directly associated with the work under discussion here, also bear this decorative motif. There is, for instance, a cross in Queralt (Ripollès), although dated in the second half of the 13th century, which bears floral motifs on the back of the carving<sup>30</sup>.

The stylistic features of the carving and the painted figuration on the front of the cross may provide data to situate the image. The simplicity of the carving, especially visible in the angular features of the face, in the summary treatment of the hair, the beard and even the volume of the tunic, undoubtedly distances our piece from the most significant group of the 12th century. We need to remember that the production of majesties in the Catalanian area (and Europe) continued until some time later. So we are perfectly justified in placing the Bilbao Majesty in the 13th century. Of the Catalanian examples, we might recall cases like the *Majesty of Saderra* (Osona), which disappeared in 1936, or the one whose current whereabouts are unknown that seems at one point to have been in Oleguer Junyent's collection<sup>31</sup>. The angular rendering of facial features is also appreciable in works of other typologies, including images of the Virgin, some associated with the boundaries of the bishopric of Urgell. This is true, for instance, of a carving considered to be from Toses<sup>32</sup>.

Figures painted with a certain sense of detail, may provide significant references in contextualizing the whole, particularly the figure of Adam, as well as some details found in the figures of Mary and Saint John. They have already been compared with works of the Master of Soriguerola (once again, in the bishopric of Urgell in Cerdanya)<sup>33</sup>, which would suggest a late dating, close to 1300. Indeed, these slightly looser formulas, with broader faces and a greater sense of proportion in the configuration of the eyes, are the sort to be found in works dated from the early 13th century on, like the *Baldachin of Tost* or the *Baldachin of Toses*, mentioned above in connection with the representation of the eagles on the tunic of the Majestad in Bilbao. Also the rather more schematized rendering of the folds of the clothing in the panels from Aurós, from the Pallars

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28 Gràcia 1986.

29 Durliat 1989, pp. 88-90, figs. 26-28.

30 This example was cited by Barrachina 1997, p. 363.

31 Ibid, p. 362 ("Majestad 5").

32 In reserve at the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya.

33 Barrachina 1997, p. 363.

(in the MNAC), vaguely correspond to the figures of the cross in the work dealt with here<sup>34</sup>. This figuration connects the piece with tendencies deriving from the general renewal of carving and decorating practices in around 1200, which tend to be more lifelike in human figuration, in the approach to the characters' gestures and movement.

This enables us to establish clear points of contact with a series of paintings that until now have been dated towards the first half of the 13th century and in general linked with the bishopric of Urgell, an area that ran from the eastern Ribagorza to Cerdanya and the valley of Toses. This may seem a wide area for situating the Bilbao carving, but if we confine ourselves to comparisons with the baldachins of Toses or Tost, we can whittle it down to an area between the Seu d'Urgell and the environs of Cerdanya, and attribute it to one or other of the workshops active there in the first half of the 13th century.

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34 MNAC 3906 and 3907. See Castiñeiras 2008a, p. 132, figs. pp. 124-125.



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