

Touching the Magdalene: The Cult of Mary Magdalene in Iberia in the Central Middle Ages

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Abstract

The cult of Mary Magdalene came relatively late to north-western Iberia, after having been dispersed through the rest of continental Europe in the early Middle Ages. The earliest evidence for the cult comes from the kingdoms of León, Castile, and Galicia in the second half of the eleventh century, during the reign of Alfonso VI (r. 1065/72–1109). His promotion of the Gregorian reform opened up Iberia to the rest of the Continent. The arrival of a more complex liturgical sensibility led to the restructuring of pre-Romanesque architectural spaces through the use of iconography and powerful visual dialectics unprecedented in local culture. This article considers the staging of the figure of Mary Magdalene in León-Castile-Galicia in some of the most important architectural landmarks that have survived to this day, from Santiago de Compostela to Silos.

This study delves into the unexplored territory of the arrival and consolidation of the cult of Mary Magdalene in the kingdoms of León, Castile, and Galicia between the end of the eleventh century and the first decades of the twelfth century. The cult was present in other parts of European Christendom beginning in the ninth century and was firmly established there before 1050. It grew in Iberia in the last quarter of the eleventh century within a framework of liturgical changes that introduced new cultural modes foreign to the hidebound traditions practiced since the Visigothic period.

To place the Iberian phenomenon within the larger European context, we will first consider the exegetical creation of the syncretic New Testament figure of Mary Magdalene from the first through the sixth centuries, then outline the

development of her cult in the West in the eighth century and the first depictions of the saint in Europe. Although the visual tradition of the Magdalene arrived in Iberia beginning in the tenth century, its rich development in the northwest of the peninsula did not occur until the period between 1080 and 1140, concomitantly with the multiplication of new liturgical spaces. It is in this context that I will address the arrangement of altars and their associations with several scenes from the paschal cycle, along with their theological foundations on both sides of the Pyrenees. My focus here is on the moment before the mid-twelfth century, when the cult of Mary Magdalene and her iconography spread exponentially throughout Iberia (Fig. 1).

Only briefly present in the canonical gospels, Mary Magdalene came to have an enormous impact on the medieval Christian landscape, one that carried into the modern period. Three interrelated elements in the gospels account for her stature: her close connection to Jesus; her role as the “thirteenth apostle” or the “apostle to the apostles” (*apostola apostolorum*); and her privileged position of being the first person to meet the resurrected Christ, making her the herald of the mystery of the Resurrection. Despite the Magdalene’s significance in this regard, the early exegetical tradition, while emphasizing her prominent role in the paschal cycle, tended to reduce her charismatic importance by turning her into a didactic model of feminine submission based on her iconic role as a repentant sinner. In the first two decades of the twenty-first century, art historical, archaeological, theological, exegetical, psychoanalytic, and historical studies considering Mary Magdalene from the perspective of gender, along with literature and film, have raised her profile and revealed nuances and contemporary echoes of her character on every front.¹

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1. The figure of Mary Magdalene remains important in the present day. In 2016, the Vatican released a decree that placed her on the same level as the rest of the Apostles. New archaeological initiatives in the last few years have emphasized again the importance of the town of



Figure 1. Map of the Iberian peninsula identifying Mary Magdalene locations ca. 1080–40 mentioned in the text (© Matilde Grimaldi). See the electronic edition of *Gesta* for color versions of most images.

Scholarship pushing back against the representation of the Magdalene as a passive stereotype has found support in non-canonical sources such as the so-called Gospel of Mary Magdalene (second century), a Gnostic text in which she reveals to the apostles the vision of Christ and the secret teachings given to her.² Texts such as this, which feature a conflict between Mary and Peter, suggest tensions arising from the demands of some women’s circles in early Christianity,³ which, as we will see, come up again at the beginning of the twelfth century in Iberia.

Discerning the Magdalene

To understand the tangled development of the cult of Mary Magdalene in the early Middle Ages, one must recognize

Magdala in the mid-first century. See Marcela Zapata-Meza et al., “The Magdala Archaeological Project (2010–2012): A Preliminary Report of the Excavations at Migdal,” *Atiqot* 90 (2018): 83–126. The figure of the Magdalene continues to be explored in literature and in films such as *Mary Magdalene*, directed by Garth Davis (Universal Studios, 2018), 120 minutes.

2. Karen L. King, *The Gospel of Mary of Magdala: Jesus and the First Woman Apostle* (Santa Rosa: Polebridge Press, 2003). For the Gnostic context, see Elaine H. Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels* (New York: Random House, 1979).

3. Ann Graham Brock, *Mary Magdalene: The First Struggle for Authority*, Harvard Theological Studies 51 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Divinity School, 2003), 128–29 and 143–60.

the two dimensions of her persona. The first stems from her twelve appearances in the four canonical gospels, at first sporadically and eventually as more of a protagonist.⁴ The other comes from the embellishment and instrumentalization of Mary Magdalene by later Western exegesis, a tradition of interpretation that has continued practically to the present day. In their accounts of the paschal cycle, all four gospels emphasize women’s witnessing, and the central role played by women in the story of the entombment is given particular weight. They begin with the arrival at the tomb of the two or three women called Mary, who find it empty. Mary Magdalene stands out in the Gospel of Mark (16:9–11) and especially the Gospel of John (20:11–18), where she is credited with being the first witness of the Resurrection because she saw the location of the burial, verified the absence of the body from the tomb, and was the first to see the resurrected Christ when she approached him in the garden and was told “Do not touch me” (*Noli me tangere*).⁵ The other evangelists do not report this episode, although Luke (24:12) grants a certain prominence to Peter for having ratified the women’s testimonies. It is significant that there is no mention of the three women at the tomb or Mary Magdalene in the Pauline epistles (50–58 CE). For Paul, Peter was the first person to have a vision of the resurrected Jesus (1 Cor 15:5), an assertion seconded later by Luke (Luke 24:34). Following Paul’s lead, the marginalization of

4. Luke informs us that Mary Magdalene, mentioned before the other women, formed part of Jesus’s itinerant retinue and that he had exorcized seven demons from her (Luke 8:1–3). All the other references to her occur in the Passion narrative and the paschal cycle. Matthew (27:55) and Mark (15:40–41) have her watching the Crucifixion from a distance, either next to Mary the mother of James (Matt 28:1), or with Mary the mother of Joseph (Mark 15:47), or in the company of Mary the mother of Joseph and Mary the wife of Cleophas (John 19:25). Mark (15:47) and Luke (23:55–56) claim that, along with Mary the mother of Joseph, the Magdalene was a witness at the entombment of Jesus and, along with Peter and John, at the verification of the empty tomb (Matt 28:1–9; Mark 16:1–7; Luke 24:1–12; John 20:1–2). This company in Mark is maintained in the three synoptic gospels; only in the Gospel of John was Mary Magdalene alone when she visited the tomb on the third day (John 20:1). After she saw it was empty and alerted the apostles, Peter and John ran to verify her account, and shortly afterward Christ appeared to her (20:11–18). The apocryphal appendix to the Gospel of Mark confirms Jesus’s first appearance after death was to Mary Magdalene (Mark 16:9).

5. It is significant that the important role John assigns to Mary Magdalene carries through to several of the so-called apocryphal gospels—likely a reflection, as noted above, of the conflict arising from women’s demands regarding pastoral and eucharistic labor in second-century Christianity. Unless otherwise noted, all English translations of biblical citations are taken from the *Biblia Sacra Vulgata*, Douay-Rheims, 1899; American edition: <http://www.drbo.org>.

Mary Magdalene in the early lineage of the apostles became a fait accompli in subsequent exegeses.⁶

In the West, beginning in the third century the figure of Mary Magdalene began to encompass all eighteen references to Marys in the gospels; this synthesis was generally absent from Eastern Christianity. The impetus behind it was a desire to resolve the ambiguities of the gospels, as well as to counteract Mary Magdalene's prominence in them only toward the end. This process was solidified in the transition from the fourth to the fifth century, when the figure of Mary Magdalene was given new life by the beginning of a process of topographic classification of holy places in the Holy Land⁷ and by the foundational exegetical contributions of authors such as Ambrose of Milan and Augustine of Hippo.⁸ By the end of the sixth century, Pope Gregory I (ca. 590–600) had consolidated a syncretic image of Mary Magdalene that fused Mary Magdalene, Mary of Bethany (Luke 10:38–42; John 12:7), and Mary the anonymous sinner (Luke 7:36–50).⁹ This figure was further amplified throughout the central Middle Ages and is maintained in Magdalene imagery to the present day.¹⁰

After the syncretic version of Mary Magdalene was fully accepted, authors such as the Carolingian monk Hrabanus Maurus, writing in the first half of the ninth century, read her allegorically as signifying the faith and piety of the holy Church, which extended the essence of Christ throughout the world.¹¹ Hrabanus's interpretation had its roots in the writings of Saint Jerome, who construed the etymology of the

toponym given to Mary Magdalene—*Magdala* (or *Tariquea*) as a Greek version of the Hebrew word *migdal*, meaning “tower”¹²—as illustrating the fortification of her faith (in his Letter 127 she is described as “fortified with towers”).¹³ Furthermore, the association of Mary Magdalene with the anointing of Christ's head (representing his divinity) and feet (representing his humanity) was understood to convey that the dual nature of Christ had been fully revealed to her after the Resurrection.¹⁴ Underlying this duality was also an anticipation of her role in preparing the body of Jesus before death and in ensuring the odor of sanctity afterward. The accretion of her various meanings culminated in a much later hagiographic addition that stressed a militant ascetic and penitential practice at the end of the Magdalene's life. Several scholars have argued that the idea of her withdrawal from the world stems from a generalized desire to shift her hagiography away from her apostolic status.¹⁵

In addition, medieval exegesis gave Mary an elevated social status based on the interpretation of her origin (“she would have lived in a fortress”) and because she was mentioned before Joanna, the wife of a steward of Herod, in a gospel passage indicating that the master's disciples had “ministered unto him of their substance” (Luke 8:3). As we will see, this consideration would become important in the creation of a Christian identity for elite women, who would find in Mary Magdalene an unequivocal model for salvation.

Touch Me Not! The Sacred Exaltation of the Intangible

Scripture emphasizes Mary Magdalene's devotion to Jesus during his lifetime through gestures of an intensity the apostles could not understand,¹⁶ her verification of the empty tomb, her communication of this key eschatological event to the apostles along with the angel's message of their imminent encounter with the resurrected Jesus in Galilee, and, finally,

6. Marinella Perroni and Cristina Simonelli, *Maria di Magdala: una genealogia apostolica* (Rome: Aracne, 2016).

7. The anonymous *Life of Constantine* confirmed Helena's interest in promoting places dedicated to Mary Magdalene; see John Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims before the Crusades* (Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 2002), 390.

8. Carmen Bernabé Ubieta, *María Magdalena: tradiciones en el cristianismo primitivo*, Institución San Jerónimo 27 (Seville: Verbo Divino, 1994), 194–95.

9. Aina Trotzig, “L'apparition du Christ ressuscité à Marie Madeleine et le drame liturgique: étude iconographique,” *Revue de musicologie* 86, no. 1 (2000): 83–104, at 85. This subject still generates scholarship centered on identifying her: Grenville J. Kent, “Mary Magdalene, Mary of Bethany and the Sinful Woman of Luke 7: The Same Person?,” *Journal of Asia Adventist Seminary* 13, no. 1 (2010): 13–28.

10. For recent studies see Ward De Pril and Anthony Dupont, “The Four Latin Church Fathers on Mary Magdalene: The Presence of John 20:17 in the Latin Patristic Literature,” in *Noli me tangere in Interdisciplinary Perspective: Textual, Iconographic and Contemporary Interpretations*, ed. Reimund Bieringer, Barbara Baert, and Karlijn Demasure, *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses Bibliotheca* 283 (Leuven: Peeters, 2016), 111–22.

11. Rabanus Maurus, *De universo libri XXII*, in *Patrologiae cursus completus, Series latina*, ed. J.-P. Migne, 221 vols. (Paris: Migne, 1844–80), 111: col. 84.

12. In the Talmud, which uses the full term *Migdal nunaja*, the place is called “tower of fish” or “tower of the fishes” because of the importance of fishing in the economy of the city, which lies on the western shore of Lake Tiberius, also known as the Sea of Genesaret. See Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims before the Crusades*, 327.

13. Dominique Iogna-Prat, “La Madeleine du ‘*Sermo in veneratione sanctae Mariae Magdalena*’ attribué à Odon de Cluny,” *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome: Moyen Âge* 104 (1992): 37–70, at 48n46.

14. *Ibid.*, 46.

15. On this question see Perroni and Simonelli, *Maria di Magdala*, 33–40.

16. It was considered by his followers (Matt 26:6–13; Mark 14:1–9) or by Judas (John 12:1–11) to be wasteful since the perfume could have been sold and the money from the sale given to the poor.

the last and most intimate meeting between Mary and Jesus, the *Noli me tangere*, in what could be defined as a paschal theophany. As has been pointed out by Carmen Bernabé Ubieta, John used the Song of Songs as an inspirational reference for the relationship between the Magdalene and Jesus.¹⁷ The *Noli me tangere*, lasting hardly an instant but imbued with great emotional intensity, clearly marks the narrative climax for the figure of Mary Magdalene. The power of the scene springs from an intellectual context imbued with great mystical and theological importance. At the same time, the Magdalene is a more immediate catechetical model, imitable and therefore more accessible, based on two values: a persistent search for love and the resulting grief from the failure to obtain it, and faithful and subordinate prostration motivated by feelings of devotion.

The centerpiece of the narrative cycle, which has been described by Jean-Luc Nancy as being “on the point of departure,”¹⁸ meaning the last stage of the presence of Christ on earth, is the encounter as related by John. It has been characterized as a privileged vision for one who has the capacity for faith and manages to open her eyes even in the darkness of despair in the face of death; this represents the leap from imperfect to perfect faith, or knowing how to see and hear without touching.¹⁹ The way in which Christ appears in the garden is ephemeral and “not complete,” as he exists between two dimensions, physical and spiritual, revealing his double nature as human and divine; thus he also exists between touching and not touching.²⁰ Confronted with the Magdalene’s desire to hold him in John 20:17, Christ makes clear that he has detached from the physical so that he may reunite and merge with the Father (“Do not touch me, for I am not yet ascended to my Father”).²¹ Once her approach through the senses is rejected, the only possible connection is through introspection, or as Leo the Great interprets Jesus’s words: “when I have ascended to My Father, then you will feel me more perfectly and more truly. You will embrace what you

do not touch and believe what you do not see.”²² The importance of the *Noli me tangere* scene lies in the fact that touch is denied in the presence of the sacred due to its intangible nature.²³ The intangibility of Christ illustrates the belief that—with Mary as the first messenger—the physical plane can be transcended. With death defeated, Christ is provisionally positioned on the very threshold of eternity. The force and mystical import of the message derived from this passage has few parallels in the Synoptic Gospels.

The meaning of the *Noli me tangere* is deepened through its association with two other scenes from the paschal cycle: the Journey to Emmaus (Luke 24:13–25) and Doubting Thomas (John 24–29).²⁴ The common denominator of all three passages is the privileged vision of one who has the capacity for faith: At first, the disciples of the Emmaus story perceived only a fellow pilgrim, while Mary Magdalene mistook Christ for a gardener.²⁵ However, all were eventually able to see beyond appearances. Thomas’s disbelief presents another example of the need for touch to affirm faith. The opposite is true for Mary Magdalene and the disciples at Emmaus, who knew how to see in the darkness as the culmination of their desire to retain Christ’s physical presence.²⁶ There is also a significant shift: Jesus prohibited Mary Magdalene from touching him but encouraged Thomas to do so.²⁷ Around the year 1000, an iconographic association arose out of the interrelated message of these three narratives.²⁸

17. C. Bernabé Ubieta, *María Magdalena: tradiciones en el cristianismo primitivo*, 160–72.

18. Jean-Luc Nancy, *Noli me tangere: essai sur la levée du corps*, 2nd ed. (Montrouge: Bayard, 2013), 21.

19. *Ibid.*, 40.

20. This definition was proposed by Augustine of Hippo. See Barbara Baert, “The Pact between Space and Gaze: The Narrative and the Iconic in *Noli me tangere*,” in “*Noli me tangere*” in *Interdisciplinary Perspective*, ed. Bieringer, Baert, and Demasure, 191–216, at 193.

21. Nancy, *Noli me tangere*, 27–29. See also Barbara Baert, “The Gaze in the Garden: Mary Magdalene in *Noli me tangere*,” in *Mary Magdalene, Iconographic Studies from the Middle Ages to the Baroque*, ed. Michelle A. Erhardt and Amy M. Morris, *Studies in Religion and the Arts* 7 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 189–221, at 194.

22. Leo the Great, Sermon 74, in *Sermons*, trans. Jane Patricia Freeland and Agnes Josephine Conway, *Fathers of the Church* 93 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 1995), 327.

23. In such a tactile religion, the scene has been defined as a true theological hapax (Nancy, *Noli me tangere*, 26). On this question applied to iconography, see also Barbara Baert, “An Odour, A Taste, A Touch, Impossible to Describe: *Noli me tangere* and the Senses,” in *Religion and the Senses in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Wietse de Boer and Christine Göttler, *Intersections: Interdisciplinary Studies in Early Modern Culture, 1568–1811*, 26 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 111–51, at 113–15.

24. John R. Kane, “Mary of Magdala: The Evolution of the Role in Medieval Drama,” *Studi medievali* 26 (1985): 677–84, at 678. The first reference to touching the sacredness of Jesus mentioned in the gospels (“Who touched me?”) is the hemorrhaging woman’s desire to be cured (Matt 9:20–22; Mark 5:25–34; Luke 8:43–48).

25. Nancy, *Noli me tangere*, 40, 45–47.

26. *Ibid.*, 37. For a wider perspective, see Constance Classen, *The Deepest Sense: A Cultural History of Touch*, *Studies in Sensory History* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2012), 27–46, at 30–31.

27. Concerning Augustine of Hippo’s interest in this juxtaposition, see John Kevin Coyle, “*Noli me tangere* (John 20,17) in Manichaeism and Augustine,” in “*Noli me tangere*” in *Interdisciplinary Perspective*, ed. Bieringer, Baert, and Demasure, 123–36, at 133–36.

28. Erin E. Benay and Lisa M. Rafanelli, *Faith, Gender and the Senses in Italian Renaissance and Baroque Art: Interpreting the Noli*

Furthermore, beginning in the tenth century, exegetes began to associate Mary Magdalene with Eve through the inheritance of sin, though with an important nuance: Mary was capable of transitioning from transgressor to a model of perfection.²⁹ Thus, she was transformed from a negative to a positive feminine archetype (exemplified by the Virgin Mary) by choosing a path of interior perfection and repentance.³⁰ Within this traditional dialectic between the Old and New Testaments, a parallel is also drawn between the garden next to Christ's tomb and the Garden of Eden. Christ and Mary Magdalene in the garden are thus a positive reflection of Adam and Eve.

Given the clear value accorded to the intangible over the tangible—Mary Magdalene's encounter with Christ's resurrected body, as opposed to the corpse that she had gone to anoint and, therefore, touch—we can conclude that the interpretation of the *Noli me tangere* story affirms the superiority of the inner world over the world of the senses. The same was true of perfect love, in which *agape* was freed from *eros*.³¹ The emotional intensity of the biblical passage found a perfect fit within the mystical sensibility of the Middle Ages.³²

Cult, Relics, and Liturgy: Iberia in the Context of Western Europe

The early cult of Mary Magdalene in the East, centered in Ephesus,³³ and its establishment in continental Europe has been studied by Victor Saxer and others, who determined that the first European evidence dates to the eighth century.³⁴ The Venerable Bede (d. 735) included Mary Magdalene's feast day in the martyrology of the abbey of Jarrow on 22 July (XI Kal. Aug.).³⁵ The first evidence of a cult specific to Mary Magdalene

is found during the same century in the abbey of Notre Dame de Chelles (Seine-et-Marne), originally a female monastery associated with the Merovingian dynasty.³⁶ Given notions of the Magdalene's elevated social status, she came to be associated with elite women. Held up as an exemplum for widows, she was a model of virtue after marriage and an accessible and imitable example of a woman achieving salvation through her piety and chastity.³⁷

The principal liturgical foundation for Mary Magdalene's cult was the continued influence of Gregory the Great's homilies 25 and 33, which established her as a syncretic figure. Next came the *Sermo in veneratione Mariae Magdalenae*, which was long attributed to Abbot Odo of Cluny (927–42) but has now been located in the first quarter of the eleventh century within the circle of the abbey of Vézelay. As we will see, this abbey was essential to establishing the epicenter of the Magdalene cult in Burgundy.³⁸ Third are the liturgical texts for Easter (*Victimae paschali laudes*). Finally, and tied very closely to the sermon, is the office for 22 July and its octave, which were celebrated in Vézelay in the eleventh century. The liturgical devotion promoted there found vital backing from Rome during the pontificate of Leo IX (1049–1054) on both popular and elite levels.³⁹ Already by the beginning of the twelfth century (ca. 1105), the climate of fervent devotion generated a second and influential sermon by Geoffrey, abbot of the Trinité of Vendôme, in which Mary Magdalene, assumed to be a *meretrix* before her contact with Jesus, is depicted, following an Eastern tradition, as a penitent hermit after Pentecost.⁴⁰

The development of the iconography of the Visit to the Tomb was also influenced by liturgical drama derived from tropes that had been gradually incorporated into the liturgy of Benedictine monasteries since the tenth century. Two closely related texts were foundational: the *Quem quaeritis* (“Whom do you seek?”) trope from the introit of the Easter Mass, and the *Visitatio sepulchri* celebrated at the end of the office of

me tangere and *Doubting Thomas*, *Visual Culture in Early Modernity* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), 36–37.

29. Iogna-Prat, “La Madeleine,” 52 and 66.

30. *Ibid.*, 60.

31. Kane, “Mary of Magdala,” 684.

32. See Damien Boquet and Piroška Nagy, *Sensible Moyen Âge: une histoire des émotions dans l'Occident médiéval*, *L'univers historique* (Paris: Seuil, 2015), 103–49.

33. Victor Saxer, *Le culte de Marie Madeleine en Occident: des origines à fin du Moyen Âge*, *Occasional Papers in Archaeology and History 3* (Auxerre; Paris: Publications de la Société des fouilles archéologiques et des monuments historiques de l'Yonne; Clavreuil), 31.

34. *Ibid.*, 328; Victor Saxer, “Les origines du culte de Marie-Madeleine en Occident,” in *Marie Madeleine dans la mystique, les arts et les lettres: actes du colloque international, Avignon 20–21–22 juillet 1988*, ed. Eve Duperray (Paris: Beauchesne, 1989): 33–47.

35. Saxer, *Le culte de Marie-Madeleine en Occident*, 40–42 and 57.

36. Saxer, “Les origines du culte de Sainte Marie Madeleine,” 33–47.

37. On the context of widowhood in the early Middle Ages, see Emmanuelle Santinelli, *Des femmes éplorées: les veuves dans la société aristocratique du haut Moyen Âge*, *Histoire et civilisations* (Lille: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2003): 159–72.

38. Saxer, *Le culte de Marie-Madeleine en Occident*, 13–17.

39. Jean Leclercq, *Monks on Marriage: A Twelfth-Century View* (New York: Seabury Press, 1982), 89–95, as cited in James A. Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 212n184.

40. Katherine Ludwig Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalen: Preaching and Popular Devotion in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 53–54.

matins on Easter Sunday. The first of these was developed in the monastic settings of Limoges and Saint-Gall.⁴¹

The archbishop of Canterbury, Dunstan (957–78), described how on Good Friday, a cross wrapped in a veil, representing the dead Christ, was placed in a reliquary representing the Holy Sepulcher on top of the altar. At some point on Saturday night, the cross was removed, leaving just the veil, signifying the shroud. Next, at the beginning of the Easter Mass, a monk, dressed as an angel in a white alb, positioned himself to the right of the altar/tomb. Three other monks drew close, playing the parts of the holy women, and the four delivered the dialogue based on the Gospel of Mark (16:1–8): “Whom do you seek?” – “Jesus of Nazareth” – “He is not here, he has risen.”⁴² This cycle was enriched in concert with the increasing complexity of the Easter liturgy, in which Mary Magdalene became more prominent in the twelfth century.

To establish the Magdalene’s cult, relics were needed to inspire pilgrimage. To this end, the abbey of Vézelay, like other emerging centers of pilgrimage, reconceived its sacred possessions. Vézelay (Yonne) was founded around 860 by count Girard de Roussillon, who dedicated it to Christ, the Virgin, and Saint Peter. Originally a modest institution, the abbey experienced a turning point in the first half of the eleventh century: In 1037, the position of abbot was filled by Geoffroi, a great reformer educated under the influence of Cluny and the driving force behind the expansion of Vézelay and its increasing importance. As part of this project, one of his monks created a text around 1040 that asserted that the abbey possessed the mortal remains of Mary Magdalene.⁴³ This hagiographic tradition was strengthened by the assertion that the relics had been translated from Aix-en-Provence, which also claimed to possess them.⁴⁴ The thaumaturgical potential of the remains of Mary Magdalene gave rise to a related collection of miracle stories at the end of the eleventh century.⁴⁵ All of this complemented the basic portrait of Mary Magdalene first sketched out in the *Sermo in ueneratione*, in which she was described as a wealthy woman (*largissimis facultatibus*) born to an illustrious family (*dignitas germinis*) in a castle

(*Magdalo castello*), where she lived a pleasure-seeking life before being cleansed of her sins after her contact with Jesus.⁴⁶

The ambition of Vézelay’s efforts is made clear by the fact that only a decade later, the abbey received a bull from Rome that included its new dedication.⁴⁷ And in a charter from 1108, Mary Magdalene is listed as the only patron when the institution is named.⁴⁸ Finally, among the growing collection of relics, a lock of the Magdalene’s hair began to play a significant role as a holy object central to the anointing of Christ’s feet. This scene created a positive image of women’s hair, which had traditionally been seen as sinful.

Previously, around 1050–60, control over the abbey had shifted to Cluny. The implications for the Magdalene cult would be important given the order’s growing expansion into the northwestern Iberian peninsula and, concomitantly, its role as an influential liturgical center. Already in the first half of the eleventh century, Abbot Odilo (994–1049) echoed the growing sentiment toward Mary Magdalene (*Sermo de sancta cruce*).⁴⁹ Nevertheless, the *Liber tramitis*, the liturgical compendium of Cluniac usage at that time, contains a mention of Mary Magdalene but no evidence of a distinctive cult.⁵⁰

46. Iogna-Prat, “La Madeleine,” 44–45. The sermon also contains a section about the resurrection of Lazarus, the brother of Mary of Bethany, some of whose relics were held by the abbey. Lazarus was a symbol of repentance and of spiritual resurrection, a message that is found in the sculptures on the portal.

47. Hugh de Poitiers, *Histoire du Monastère de la Madeleine*, ed. François Guizot and François Vogade (La Charité-sur-Loire: Bernadat, 1969), 222–23.

48. John Scott and John O. Ward, “Aspects of the Vézelay Chronicle: History and Its Context,” in *Hugh of Poitiers: The Vézelay Chronicle and Other Documents from MS Auxerre 227 and Elsewhere*, trans. John Scott and John O. Ward (New York: State University of New York, 1992), 51–58. The cult of the Burgundian sanctuary was initially transregional; in fact, the first miracle story, written in the eleventh century, is about a knight of Auvergne who was taken captive but then freed after he commended himself to the saint. The miracles from the eleventh and twelfth centuries recount the liberation, protection, and resurrection of knights all over Gaul, especially from Aquitaine. Unlike other centers such as Conques, the developing cult in Vézelay focused on healing; see Alexandra Gajewski, “The Abbey Church at Vézelay and the Cult of Mary Magdalene: ‘Invitation to a Journey of Discovery,’” in *Architecture, Liturgy and Identity: Liber Amicorum Paul Crossley*, ed. Zoë Opacic and Achim Timmermann, *Studies in Gothic Art 1* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 221–40.

49. Dominique Iogna-Prat, “Le croix, le moine et l’empereur: dévotion à la croix et théologie politique à Cluny autour de l’an mil,” in *Études clunisiennes*, *Les Médiévistes Français 2* (Paris: Picard, 2002), 74–92, at 80–81.

50. Dominique Iogna-Prat, “Bienheureuse polysémie: La Madeleine du *Sermo in ueneratione sanctae Mariae Magdaleneae* attribué à Odon de Cluny, Xe siècle,” in *Marie Madeleine dans la mystique*, ed. Duperray, 21–31, at 21–22.

41. David A. Bjork, “On the Dissemination of *Quem quaeritis* and the *Visitatio sepulchri* and the Chronology of their Early Sources,” *Comparative Drama* 14, no. 1 (1980): 46–69.

42. Nils Holger Petersen, “The Representational Liturgy of the *Regularis Concordia*,” in *The White Mantle of Churches: Architecture, Liturgy, and Art around the Millennium*, ed. Nigel Hiscock (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), 107–17.

43. Saxer, *Le culte de Marie-Madeleine en Occident*, 46–88.

44. *Ibid.*, 12–13.

45. *Ibid.*, 21–29.

That changed at the end of the eleventh century under Abbot Hugh of Semur (1049–1109), when Mary is mentioned in several liturgical texts.⁵¹ One of the letters from this charismatic abbot confers on her the status of *apostola apostolorum*, urging both male and female (Marcigny) communities to follow her example.⁵² An altar with this dedication was planned for the third abbatial church known as Cluny III, although we are not sure of its location within the building. It is reasonable to think a similar altar had existed in the previous building, Cluny II.⁵³

The continental reach of the Magdalene phenomenon is made clear around 1130 in the *Liber Sancti Iacobi*, a compilation of texts based on the cult, liturgy, and pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela. Book 5 relates the established hagiographic tradition—the composite figure of Mary Magdalene, her arrival in Provence, her period of celibacy, and her provisional burial in Aix until her remains were translated to Vézelay—adding a reference to her liturgical feast on 22 July.⁵⁴ From that point in the twelfth century, the number of compendia about the Magdalene grew significantly, derived from the basic criteria found in the *Sermo in veneratione Mariae Magdalенаe*.⁵⁵

To summarize, from the end of the eleventh century through the second half of the twelfth century, Mary Magdalene acquired all of the characteristics with which she would enter the modern period. She was rich, beautiful, and respectable until her journey to the dark side, from which she was delivered by her contact with Jesus. After his death, she engaged in strict anchoritism. Eve offered Adam a deadly fruit, but Mary Magdalene gave the chalice of eternal life to the

apostles.⁵⁶ By the thirteenth century, now fully transformed into a stereotype of redeemed lustfulness, she became associated with the repentance of prostitutes.⁵⁷

In the Iberian peninsula, evidence of the feast of Mary Magdalene on 22 July (*In diem sanctae Mariae Magdalенаe*) cannot be confirmed before the eleventh century.⁵⁸ Judging from the scant traces of veneration of the Magdalene (such as dedications of buildings or altars), she was not a cultural focus, and therefore a peninsular iconography of the Magdalene was practically nonexistent. The sole exception is found in the Girona Beatus (975), a manuscript produced at the monastery of Tábara in northwestern Iberia, which was open to continental influences in the cult and liturgy of the post-Carolingian period. On folio 17r the women at the tomb are represented in two registers. In the lower register, an inscription identifies them as “Maria Magdalena et altera Maria” (Matthew 28:1).⁵⁹

Fundamental to the process of Mary Magdalene’s assimilation in Iberia was the arrival of laymen and clerics from Gascony, Languedoc, and Burgundy, as well as the imposition of the Roman liturgy at the end of the eleventh century. It was only then that the syncretic aspects of the Magdalene’s character that had crystallized elsewhere in the fourth century were adopted. The first reference occurs in November 1093, when King Alfonso VI of León-Castile (r. 1065/72–1109) donated the church of Saint Mary Magdalene, along with its attached palaces and baths and a mill, to the abbey of Saints Facundo and Primitivo in Sahagún (León), which was located on the route to Santiago de Compostela. All of the buildings in this donation had been built next to the monastery of Sahagún under the patronage of the recently deceased Queen Constance of Burgundy, queen of León-Castile between 1080 and 1093 (Fig. 1).⁶⁰ Given that Constance most likely arrived

51. Iogna-Prat, “La Madeleine,” 40.

52. Fiona J. Griffiths, *Nuns’ Priests’ Tales: Men and Salvation in Medieval Women’s Monastic Life*, Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018), 68.

53. Martinus Marrier and André Du Chesne, *Bibliotheca cluniacensis* (Paris: R. Fouet, 1614), col. 1639. For the expansion of altars dedicated to Mary Magdalene starting in the second half of the twelfth century, see Saxer, *Le culte de Marie-Madeleine en Occident*, 74–80.

54. *Liber Sancti Iacobi: Codex Calixtinus*, trans. Klaus Herbers and Manuel Santos Noia (Santiago de Compostela: Xunta de Galicia, 1998), 244; *The Pilgrim’s Guide to Santiago de Compostela: Critical Edition*, vol. 1, *The Manuscripts*, ed. Alison Stones et al. (London: Harvey Miller, 1998).

55. Abelard’s recommendations regarding the example of Mary Magdalene to Heloise and her women’s community of the Paraclete are particularly interesting in this respect; see Griffiths, *Nuns’ Priests’ Tales*, 68, 70. In the second half of the twelfth century, a substantial hagiography created in Cistercian circles was attributed, for a time, to Hrabanus Maurus; see Hrabanus Maurus, *The Life of Saint Mary Magdalene and of her Sister Saint Martha: A Medieval Biography*, trans. David A. Mycoff, Cistercian Studies Series 108 (Athens, GA: Cistercian Publications, 1989).

56. Hrabanus Maurus, *The Life of Saint Mary Magdalene and of her Sister Saint Martha*, 30, 73–74.

57. Katherine L. Jansen, “Mary Magdalene and the Mendicants: The Preaching of Penance in the Late Middle Ages,” *Journal of Medieval History* 21 (1995): 1–25.

58. Carmen García Rodríguez, *El culto a los santos en la España romana y visigoda*, Monografías de Historia Eclesiástica 1 (Madrid: CSIC, 1966).

59. Girona, Arxiu Catedral, MS 7. See John Williams, *The Illustrated Beatus: A Corpus of Illustrations on the Commentary on the Apocalypse*, vol. 2, *The Ninth and Tenth Centuries* (London: Harvey Miller, 1994), 51–64, ill. 289. This work is the only evidence of a reference to the visit of the women to the tomb in the Hispanic liturgy.

60. *Alfonso VI: cancellería, curia e imperio*, vol. 2, *Colección diplomática*, ed. Andrés Gamba Gutiérrez, Fuentes y estudios de historia leonesa 63 (León: Centro de Estudios e Investigación San Isidoro: Caja España de inversiones: Archivo Histórico Diocesano, 1998), 328–30.

in León from Chalon-sur-Saône (Burgundy) in 1079, it is logical to attribute the construction of the church to the period between 1079 and 1093. It is also probable that the queen had been devoted to Mary Magdalene before arriving in the Iberian peninsula and that she would have been the one to obtain a relic of the saint for the subsequent consecration of the altar.⁶¹ We know that the monastery of Sahagún had a finger relic of Mary Magdalene that was desecrated during the disturbances that occurred in the kingdom after 1109.⁶²

The queen's devotion to Mary Magdalene should not surprise us given that the *inventio* of the saint's relics in Vézelay took place during Constance's childhood and adolescence in Burgundy.⁶³ The close tie between Constance and the church of Mary Magdalene at Sahagún was reinforced by a donation charter from her daughter, the future Queen Urraca (r. 1109–26), and her husband, Raymond of Burgundy, dated 1 May, 1106. In it, a property in the area of Grajal was given for the sake of Constance's soul, mentioning her role as the constructor of the church (*ecclesiam construxit et consecrari*).⁶⁴ Documented accounts of Constance's contributions include, but are not limited to, her prominent role in promoting the

61. We also have evidence of the queen's devotion to the abbey of Tournus, to which she made a donation: José Luis Senra, "En torno a un espacio de evocación: las 'Res Gesta Domini Adefonsi' y la iglesia monástica de Sahagún," in *La construcción medieval de la memoria regia*, ed. Pascual Martínez Sopena and Ana Rodríguez Lopez, *Historia* (Valencia: Universitat de València, 2011), 243–91, at 251 and 270); José Luis Senra, "Tournus et Sahagún: une connexion architecturale et institutionnelle à la fin du XI^e siècle?," *Bulletin du centre d'études médiévales d'Auxerre* 15 (2011): 267–81. See also Isabelle Cartron, *Les pérégrinations de Saint-Philibert: genèse d'un réseau monastique dans la société carolingienne*, *Histoire*, new edition online, <http://books.openedition.org/pur/126219> (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2010), paragraphs 35–36.

62. José Luis Senra, "Rebellion, Reconciliation, and a Romanesque Church in León-Castile (c. 1109–1120)," *Speculum* 87, no. 2 (2012): 376–412. The *Primera Crónica de Sahagún* reports the theft of a finger relic of Mary Magdalene by the brother of King Alfonso I of Aragón: *Crónicas anónimas de Sahagún*, ed. Antonio Ubieto Arteta, *Textos Medievales* 75 (Zaragoza: Anubar, 1987), 56. A lectionary of around 1180 from Sahagún, now in the Real Academia de la Historia, contains a miniature of the *Quem quaeritis* scene; see Daniel Rico Camps, "Un *Quem quaeritis* en Sahagún y la dramatización de la liturgia," in *Imágenes y promotores en el arte medieval: miscelánea en homenaje a Joaquín Yarza Luaces*, ed. María Luisa Melero Moneo et al. (Bellaterra: Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 2001), 179–89.

63. On the spreading of the cult from Vézelay in the second half of the eleventh century, see Saxer, *Le culte de Marie Madeleine en Occident*, 74–80.

64. Marta Herrero de la Fuente, *Colección diplomática del monasterio de Sahagún*, vol. 3, *1073–1109*, Fuentes y estudios de historia leonesa 37 (León: Centro de Estudios e Investigación San Isidoro, 1988), 1109, doc. 1143.

kingdom's liturgical changes in the reform of the abbey of Sahagún in 1079–80 and elsewhere, including Burgos and Toledo.⁶⁵ The notable role of Cluniac reformer Bernardo de la Sauveterre, abbot of Sahagún (1080–86), who later became archbishop of Toledo (1086–1124), must be stressed in this context. He is associated with the Missal of Saint Facundius (Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS Vitr/20/8), created in southwestern France.⁶⁶ The proper prayers for the mass on the feast of Mary Magdalene (fols. 93v–94r) attest to the presence of her cult.

An equally early example of the Magdalene cult can be found in another Spanish monastery tied to the Aragonese monarchy: in 1094, the altars of the newly built monastic church of San Juan de la Peña were consecrated. Mary Magdalene's relics are included in the charter recording the placement of the relics in the central altar.⁶⁷ By the beginning of the twelfth century, the cult of the Magdalene had spread to such prestigious establishments as the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela and the Cluniac priory of Carrión de los Condes. One telling example of the enthusiasm for her cult is the dedication of a church to Mary Magdalene in the newly conquered Islamic city of Tudela by King Alfonso I of Aragón (1119), mirroring what was occurring in Jerusalem in the same period.⁶⁸ Another instructive example can be found in the interpolations in charters made in the diplomatic circle

65. Bernard F. Reilly, *El reino de León y Castilla bajo el rey Alfonso VI, 1065–1109* (Toledo: Instituto Provincial de Investigaciones y Estudios Toledanos, 1989), 204–6; Andrés Gamba Gutiérrez, *Alfonso VI: cancellería, curia e imperio*, vol. 1, *Estudio*, Fuentes y Estudios de Historia Leonesa 62 (León: Centro de Estudios e Investigación San Isidoro, 1997), 452–69. For context on Constance's patronage, see Therese Martin, "Mujeres, hermanas e hijas: el mecenazgo femenino en la familia de Alfonso VI," *Anales de historia del arte* (2011): 147–79, at 161–62.

66. Kathleen E. Nelson, "The *Sacramentario de Sahagún* and an Exultet," in *Respondámosle a concierto: estudios en homenaje a Maricarmen Gómez Muntané*, ed. Eduardo Carrero Santamaría and Sergi Zauner (Barcelona: Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 2020), 185–98.

67. "Relique etiam de sepulcro domini et sce Marie Magdalene": Manuel Cecilio Díaz Díaz, *Libros y librerías en la Rioja altomedieval: contribución al estudio del ambiente en que nació la lengua española*, Biblioteca de temas riojanos 28 (Logroño: Instituto de Estudios Riojanos, 1979), 319–20.

68. At the end of the twelfth century, the Tudela church was replaced with a more ambitious building: Jorge Jiménez López, "Sobre la iglesia de Santa María Magdalena de Tudela," *Príncipe de Viana* 263 (2015): 1047–77. It is possible that the parish church of the Magdalene in Zamora may date to the same period: José Manuel Rodríguez Montañés, "Iglesia de la Magdalena," in *Enciclopedia del Románico en Castilla y León*, vol. 6, *Zamora*, ed. Miguel Ángel García Guinea, José María Pérez González, and José Manuel Rodríguez Montañés (Aguilar de Campoo: Fundación Santa María la Real, Centro de Estudios del Románico, 2002), 485–98.

of Bishop Pelayo of Oviedo (1101–30). Specifically, a singular relic of the Arca Santa was added to the list: the hair with which Mary Magdalene dried the feet of Christ.⁶⁹

Spaces and Images in Iberia in the Central Middle Ages and Connections with the Continent

A survey of the vast iconographic corpus of Mary Magdalene depicted either alone or alongside the other Marys falls outside the scope of this study, which focuses on the most significant examples so as to understand Iberia as a whole. To a greater or lesser degree, all of them are based on two important sacro-sensual elements: touch, even if unconsummated (as in the *Noli me tangere*), and smell (the Three Marys at the Tomb).⁷⁰ In the case of the *Noli me tangere*, we can add as a powerful metaphor the element of evocative yearning for Paradise. In concert with the growth of the Easter liturgy and the cult of Magdalene relics, the iconography of the three Marys and the *Noli me tangere* was first found in continental Europe around the second half of the ninth century.⁷¹ In the last third of the tenth century, the image of the Magdalene appeared on the Iberian peninsula in the Girona Beatus.⁷²

One of the most attractive elements of the *Noli me tangere* scene is the combination of the two aspects that derive from John's gospel narrative: the physical distance between Christ and Mary Magdalene, and the location of the encounter in a

69. In the 1075 document recording the opening of the Arca this relic is not mentioned: Gamba, *Alfonso VI: cancellaría*, 60–65. See Adeline Rucquoi, “El manuscrito de Cambrai 804: las reliquias de Oviedo y sus milagros,” *Territorio, sociedad y poder* 11 (2016): 77–88, and Francisco Javier Fernández Conde and Raquel Alonso Álvarez, “Los catálogos de las Reliquias de la Catedral de Oviedo,” *Territorio, sociedad y poder* 12 (2017): 55–81.

70. For the senses in a medieval liturgical context, see Éric Palazzo, *L'invention chrétienne des cinq sens dans la liturgie et l'art au Moyen Âge* (Paris: Cerf, 2014).

71. Barbara Baert and Liesbet Kusters, “Contributions to the Origins of the *Noli me tangere* motif,” *Iconographica: rivista di iconografia medievale e moderna* 9 (2010): 26–41, at 26–27.

72. It is also not possible to locate a single case of the iconography of female nobility associated with Mary Magdalene. The clearest instance of a connection is that of Queen Constance of León-Castile, although we have no images tied to her. An instructive example from the Continent is the Gospels of Judith of Flanders (New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS M.709), from the mid-eleventh century, which has on its first folio a Calvary scene with a gnarled cross that evokes the Tree of Good and Evil. A figure of a woman, smaller in scale than the rest, embraces the base of the cross. Her identity is not clear, but a very plausible hypothesis is that this is Judith playing the role of Mary Magdalene; see Patrick McGurk and Jane Rosenthal, “The Anglo-Saxon Gospelbooks of Judith, Countess of Flanders: Their Text, Make-Up and Function,” *Anglo-Saxon England* 24 (1995): 251–308; Mary Dockray-Miller, *The Books and the Life of Judith of Flanders* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2015).



Figure 2. Ivory with *Noli me tangere*, ca. 1115–20 (photo: © Metropolitan Museum of Art).

space that replicates the Garden of Eden. There are two significant examples in northwest Iberia: one is iconographic, found on a Leonese ivory carving; the other, spatial, is found in the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela. Both can be dated to the first decades of the twelfth century.

A pair of ivory plaques, probably crafted in the capital city of León in the first quarter of the twelfth century, present the earliest known set of the four scenes of paschal iconography on the Iberian peninsula.⁷³ They are laid out in a vertical format with two registers. Currently divided among three institutions, the first plaque depicts the Descent from the Cross (Hermitage Museum, Moscow) and the Three Women at the Tomb (Fundación María Cristina Masaveu Peterson, Oviedo), while the second shows the Disciples on the Road to Emmaus and the *Noli me tangere* (Fig. 2). In the second plaque, now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the association between the Disciples on the Road to Emmaus (in the upper register) and the *Noli me tangere* (below) is significant: these are the two most paradigmatic apparitions of the resurrected Christ in the gospels. The inscription between the two images reads D[omi]N[u]S LOQUITUR MARIE (“The Lord speaks to Mary”), underlining the Magdalene’s preeminence. The composition of the scene is exceptional: occupying the entire

73. John W. Williams, “Three Plaques from a Reliquary,” in *The Art of Medieval Spain, A.D. 500–1200* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1993), 250–52.

space inside the frame, the figure of Christ striding to the right turns his torso and head back toward Mary and extends his hands to her, the right in a blessing gesture with the index and middle fingers extended to touch her nimbus and the left avoiding contact with her hands as she reaches out to him. This composition emphasizes the dialectic of the movements performed by the hands; they seem to be activated by the textual content of the inscription, alluding implicitly to Christ's imperative: "Do not touch me."⁷⁴

The Leonese image derives directly from the iconographic explorations carried out in the West starting in the ninth century. From what we know of the corpus that has survived, the emergence of the *Noli me tangere* and its pictorial association with other passages from the paschal cycle in the pictorial sphere can first be found in the Drogo Sacramentary (ca. 850), in which two illuminated initials are dedicated to this theme: Mary's visit to the tomb with her two companions (fol. 58r), and her encounter with Christ (Fig. 3).⁷⁵ From the end of the tenth century, the figure of Mary Magdalene, represented in her scenic apogee, took on a growing iconographic prominence within specific circles, particularly in Ottonian Germany, both in miniature painting and in monumental sculpture.⁷⁶

The dialectic of hands generates a focal point and an axis for the tension in the scene. A striking example of this iconography is found in the *Noli me tangere* scene in the Codex Egberti (ca. 980–90), in which the subordination and dominance between Mary and Christ are clearly represented. Prostrating herself and visibly penitent, the Magdalene's pose recalls images of her drying Christ's feet with her hair—her hands reach toward the feet of Christ, who stands on a slightly higher plane.⁷⁷ In the Gospels of Otto III (ca. 1000), the *Noli me tangere* appears on the same folio as the Doubting Thomas (Fig. 4).⁷⁸ Here Mary stands, bowed before Christ yet maintaining a solid connection to his gaze. As would become classic

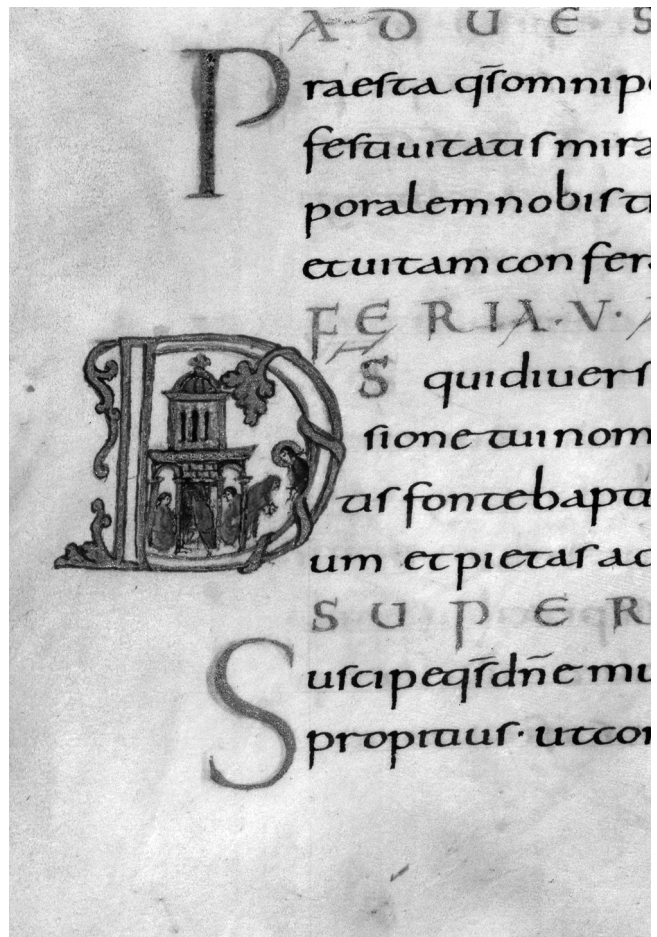


Figure 3. Initial D with *Noli me tangere*, fol. 63v, Drogo Sacramentary, Metz, ca. 850, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS lat. 9428 (photo: © Bibliothèque nationale de France).

in future renderings of the scene, she unsuccessfully extends her hand for contact, creating a dramatic intervening space with enormous psychological and emotional weight.⁷⁹ Emphasizing the gaze (representing faith), the emotional tension of the image is created through the distance between the hands.⁸⁰

On the eleventh-century doors of Hildesheim Cathedral (1010–29), a true theological compendium of the dialectic between the Old and New Testaments is found in a very public iconographic program.⁸¹ Here we can see a juxtaposition

74. Cynthia J. Hahn, "Inscriptions and Interactions: Text and Image on the Cloister Cross and Other Ivories," *Acta ad archaeologiam et artium historiam pertinentia* 24 (2011): 185–204, at 197–200.

75. Baert and Kusters, "Contributions to the Origins of the *Noli me tangere* motif," 5–6.

76. An earlier, isolated case is the Ruthwell Cross (Scotland, eighth century), on which Mary Magdalene appears at the feet of Christ. See Pamela O'Neill, "A Pillar Curiously Engraven; With Some Inscription Upon It": *What is the Ruthwell Cross?*, BAR British Series 397 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2005).

77. Baert, "The Gaze in the Garden," 197–200.

78. Barbara Baert, "Noli me tangere in the Codex Egberti (Reichenau, c. 977–93) and in the Gospel Book of Otto III (Reichenau, 998–1000): Visual Exegesis in Context," in *Illuminating the Middle Ages: Tributes to Prof. John Lowden from his Students, Friends and Colleagues*, ed. Laura Cleaver, Alixe Bovey, and Lucy Donkin, Library of the Written Word 79, Manuscript World 12 (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 36–51.

79. See Baert, "The Pact Between Space and Gaze," 191–216.

80. Baert, "The Gaze in the Garden," 194–95. This concept of tactile distance—metaphysical distance—that is, forbidden contact, would be exploited much later by Michelangelo in the Creation of Adam scene in the Sistine Chapel. On this cultural icon, see Marjorie O'Rourke Boyle, *Senses of Touch: Human Dignity and Deformity from Michelangelo to Calvin*, Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought 71 (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 1–4.

81. Isabelle Marchesin, *L'arbre et la colonne: la porte de bronze d'Hildesheim* (Paris: Picard, 2017).

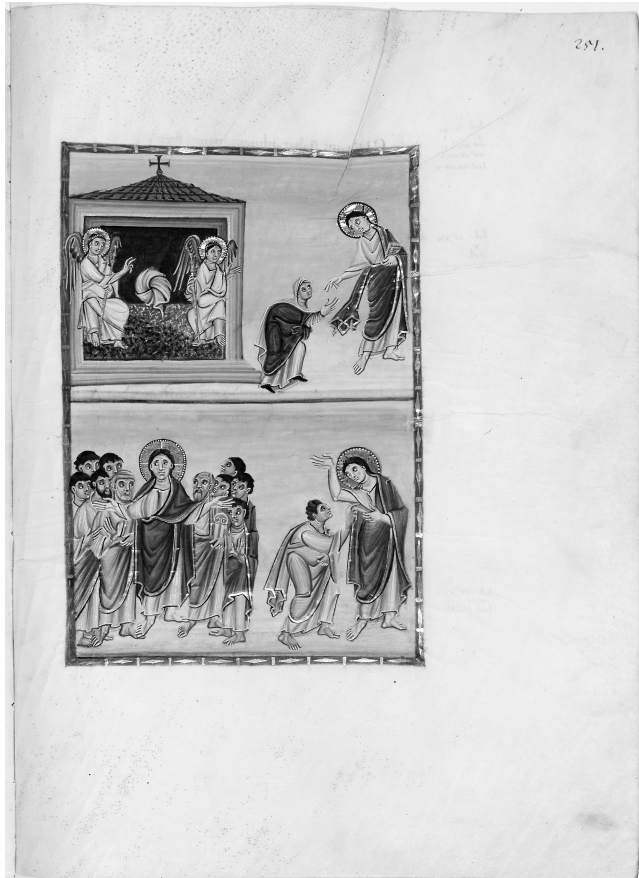


Figure 4. *Noli me tangere* and *Doubting Thomas*, fol. 251r, *Gospels of Otto III*, ca. 1000, Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, MS Clm. 4453 (photo: © Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich).

between the creation of Eve in the first panel of the uppermost part of the left door, which contains scenes from the Old Testament, and Mary Magdalene before Christ in the *Noli me tangere* at the top of the right door, which contains scenes from the New Testament. This presents an explicit comparison of the original sinful woman and the one who is able to redeem herself, both in gardens, as formulated by Augustine of Hippo.⁸² Again we see the dialectic of touch: while Eve is formed by the hands of God, Mary Magdalene, in a composition similar to that of the Codex Egberti, strives for contact with but cannot touch the Son of God (Fig. 5). Mary Magdalene is represented a second time in the New

82. Adam S. Cohen and Anne Derbes, "Bernward and Eve at Hildesheim," *Gesta* 40, no. 1 (2001): 19–38, at 33. In the same context as the doors, the Bernward Gospels (ca. 1015, Hildesheim, Dom- und Diözesanmuseum, Domschatz) present an anomalous iconography of this scene: on folio 75v, Mary touches the feet of Christ. See Robert Dushman, "Another Look at the Disappearing Christ: Corporeal and Spiritual Vision in Early Medieval Images," *Art Bulletin* 79, no. 3 (1997): 518–46, at 537–38.



Figure 5. *Noli me tangere*, detail of Bernward doors, Hildesheim Cathedral, ca. 1010–20 (photo: © José Luis Senra).

Testament cycle of the Hildesheim doors in the scene of the Three Marys at the Tomb. Finally, in the dynamic eleventh century, a roll created in the scriptorium of Montecassino (Exultet, Vatican Library, MS Barb. Lat. 592) unites the Temptation of Adam and Eve with the *Noli me tangere*.

An elegant case study illustrating the development of this dialectic of signifiers in the twelfth century is the small church of the Magdalene in Neuilly-en-Donjon (Allier), only 16 kilometers from the Cluniac female priory of Marcigny, on which Neuilly depended.⁸³ Its west portal presents an iconographic arrangement that efficiently synthesizes the elaborate theological discourses concerning Mary Magdalene developed up to that time. The tympanum depicts the Virgin Mary receiving the three kings. The lintel depicts, from left to right, the Temptation of Adam and Eve and, occupying the largest part, the meal in the house of Simon (Luke 7:36–38), in which Mary Magdalene appears kneeling at the extreme left of the table, drying Christ's feet with her hair. Behind her and in direct contact is the tree of Paradise; farther to its left, Eve offers the apple to Adam (Fig. 6).⁸⁴ As at Hildesheim, albeit with different staging, an effective semantic triangle is created between the Virgin Mary, Eve, and Mary Magdalene.⁸⁵ In the

83. The west exterior portal of Vézelay, profoundly impacted by the French Revolution and dismantled for restoration by Eugène Viollet-le-Duc (1846–53), may have incorporated iconography of Mary Magdalene. The church of Neuilly, about 160 kilometers from Vézelay, could have been influenced by that lost composition.

84. Walter Cahn, "Le tympan de Neuilly-en-Donjon," *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 8 (1965): 351–64; Xavier Barral Altet, "L'image pénitentielle de la Madeleine dans l'art monumental roman," *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome: Moyen-Âge* 104 (1992): 181–85.

85. We must note that the important iconographic link between paradise and the garden of the Holy Sepulcher is not present in the Leonese ivory, where the surroundings in which Mary Magdalene encounters Christ are not shown.



Figure 6. Tympanum, ca. 1130–40, church of the Magdalene, Neuilly-en-Donjon (photo: © José Luis Senra).

Iberian peninsula the same combination of scenes can be seen in the pictorial cycle of the apse of Vera Cruz de Maderuelo (Segovia), today in the Prado Museum (ca. 1120).⁸⁶

Spatial Dialectics: Santiago de Compostela and San Zoilo de Carrión de los Condes

In addition to the image on the Leonese ivory, a reference to Mary Magdalene and the space separating her from Christ is found at the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela. The second phase of the grand Romanesque building was begun in the middle of the 1090s.⁸⁷ The east end, which contained an altar dedicated to the Magdalene, was consecrated in 1105.⁸⁸ In this context, the efforts of the energetic Cluniac monk Dalmatius, who served as bishop from 1094 to 1095, have been overshadowed by the omnipresence of his powerful and long-lived successor, Bishop (1100–20) and later Archbishop (1120–40) Diego Gelmírez. It was Dalmatius who carried out the essential work of restoring the church's finances and reactivating construction, which had slowed to a near halt in 1088–93. It is likely that the liturgical organization of the new altars dedicated to Mary Magdalene, Saint Andrew, and Saint Faith that completed the east end,⁸⁹ sharpening the already

freighted symbolism of the previous altars, was also the work of Dalmatius.⁹⁰

To understand the significance of the new altars, it is necessary to look back to the inception of the Romanesque cathedral in 1075. Two years later, a 1077 document mentions that the initial altars of the new cathedral, facing the altar of Saint James, were dedicated to the Savior, Peter, and John, thus indicating a spatial expression of the Transfiguration. As the first manifestation of the divinity of Jesus, this moment prefigured the Resurrection that would later be represented as a visual echo on the west portal.⁹¹ This composition emphasized the privileged importance of Saint James among the twelve apostles, lending even greater weight to Compostela's claim to be the primatial see of Spain (Fig. 7).

The heightened theological importance of Mary Magdalene, evident in the apses that were added (likely by Dalmatius) beginning in 1093–94, is clear from the features of the matins altar dedicated to her. Book 5 of the *Liber Sancti Iacobi* indicates that “Between the altar of St James and the altar of St Savior is the altar of Mary Magdalene where the morning mass of the pilgrims is celebrated.”⁹² Demarcated

the expectation of consecrating an altar to Saint Nicholas (northern side) later.

90. José Luis Senra, “Concepto, filiación y talleres del primer proyecto catedralicio,” in *En el principio: génesis de la catedral Románica de Santiago de Compostela: contexto, construcción y programa iconográfico*, ed. José Luis Senra (Santiago de Compostela: Teófilo, 2014), 89–91.

91. This imagery, replaced by the Pórtico de la Gloria in the late twelfth century, is mentioned in Book V of the *Liber Sancti Iacobi* (ca. 1130); see Serafín Moralejo Álvarez, “La imagen arquitectónica de la catedral de Santiago de Compostela,” in *Patrimonio artístico de Galicia y otros estudios: homenaje al Prof. Dr. Serafín Moralejo Álvarez*, 3 vols., ed. María Ángela Franco Mata and Eugenio Romero Pose (Santiago de Compostela: Xunta De Galicia, 2004), 1:237–46, at 241; and Senra, “Concepto, filiación y talleres del primer proyecto catedralicio,” 100–101; Bernd Nicolai, “From Transfiguration to Parousia: Examining the Development of the West Portal of the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela,” in *Santiago de Compostela: Pilgerarchitektur und bildliche Repräsentation in neuer Perspektive*, ed. Bernd Nicolai and Klaus Rheidt (Bern: Peter Lang, 2015), 213–34.

92. “Inter altare sancti Iacobi et altare sancti Salvatoris est altare sancte Marie Magdalene, ubi decantantur misse matutinales peregrinis”: *Liber Sancti Iacobi: Codex Calixtinus*, trans. Klaus Herbers and Manuel Santos Noia (Santiago de Compostela: Xunta de Galicia, Consellería de Cultura, Comunicación e Turismo, 1998), 254. Given its contiguity to the apostolic mausoleum, Eduardo Carrero has hypothesized that this cult space was a matins altar, an opinion that I share: Eduardo Carrero Santamaría, “El altar mayor y el altar matinal en el presbiterio de la catedral de Santiago de Compostela: la instalación litúrgica para el culto de un apóstol,” *Territorio, sociedad y poder* 8 (2013): 19–52. Manuel Castiñeiras considers it a chapel-confessio: Manuel Antonio Castiñeiras González, “Roma e il programma riformatore di Gelmírez nella cattedrale di Santiago di

86. I am grateful to Milagros Guardia for suggesting to me the triple connection (Eve in the east wall and Mary and Mary Magdalene in the west wall) between Maderuelo and Neuilly-en-Donjon.

87. Serafín Moralejo Álvarez, “Notas para una revisión de la obra de K. J. Conant,” in Kenneth John Conant, *Arquitectura románica da catedral de Santiago de Compostela*, trans. Justo G. Beramendi (Santiago de Compostela: Colexio de Arquitectos de Galicia, 1983), 221–36, at 227.

88. *Historia Compostellana*, ed. Emma Falque, Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis 70 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1988), 43–44.

89. In the transept, the consecrated altars were dedicated to John the Baptist (southern side) and the Holy Cross (northern side), with

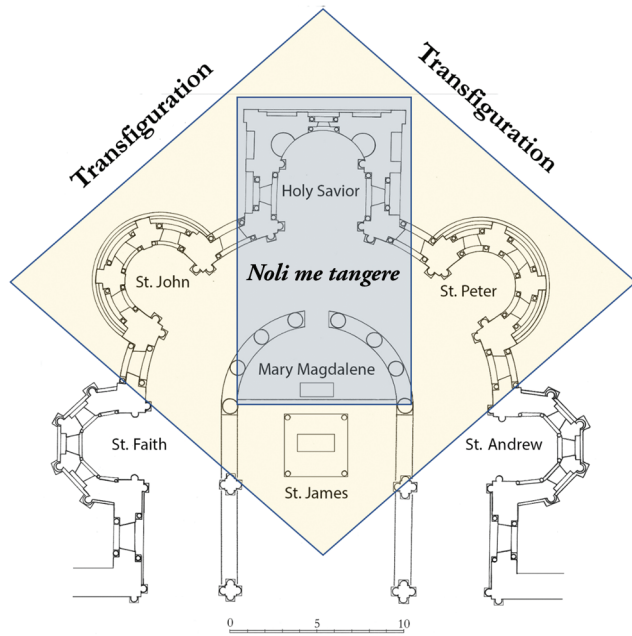


Figure 7. Plan of east end radiating chapels and altars, ca. 1075–1105, cathedral of Santiago de Compostela (A Coruña) (© José Luis Senra).

by the columns of the ambulatory and creating a semicircular shape as a sort of counter-apse, her altar stood across from the axial chapel dedicated to the Savior and abutted the main altar of Saint James, a privileged and exclusive position.⁹³ The fact that the new south altar was dedicated to Saint Andrew, echoing the dedication of the axial altar at Cluny III, lends further support to the notion that Dalmatius was the designer of this holy and ecumenical topography. Dalmatius had attended and participated in the consecration of Cluny III in 1095, along with Pope Urban II, who dedicated the altar to Saint James during the ceremony.⁹⁴

With the introduction of an altar dedicated to Mary Magdalene in the cathedral of Santiago, there were now altars consecrated to the quintet of apostles who were most relevant

Compostella,” in *Medievo: immagini e ideologie: atti del Convegno internazionale di studi, Parma, 23–27 settembre 2002*, ed. Arturo Carlo Quintavalle, I Convegni di Parma 5 (Parma-Milano: Mondadori-Electa, 2005), 211–26, at 214 and 217.

93. The iconographic route of Mary Magdalene in the cathedral has been traced through the end of the Middle Ages by José Manuel García Iglesias, “Espacios y percepciones: María Magdalena en la catedral de Santiago de Compostela,” *Quintana* 2, no. 2 (2003): 41–56.

94. Patrick Henriot, “‘Capitale de toute vie monastique,’ ‘élevée entre toutes les églises d’Espagne’: Cluny et Saint-Jacques au XI^e siècle,” in *Saint-Jacques et la France: actes du colloque des 18 et 19 janvier 2001 à la fondation Singer-Polignac*, ed. Adeline Rucquoi (Paris: Cerf, 2003), 407–49, at 429–30.

in the ministry of Jesus: Peter, James, and John, the witnesses of the Transfiguration; Mary Magdalene, the first to verify his Resurrection; and Andrew, the *protocletos* (“first called”), the first to believe in him as the Messiah (John 1:40–41).⁹⁵ The powerful iconography of the east end at Compostela was buttressed by the addition of an altar dedicated to Saint Faith, who was venerated at Conques, on the north side of the ambulatory. Together with the Magdalene altar, two great centers of pilgrimage—Vézelay and Conques—are thus evoked. The dedications of the other altars recall Rome (Peter), Ephesus (John), and Constantinople (Andrew), conferring an ecumenical character on the basilica.⁹⁶

Mary Magdalene’s altar is placed directly opposite that of the Savior, separated by the ambulatory, further emphasizing her role as *apostola apostolorum*.⁹⁷ While this conveys the Magdalene’s penitential position “at the feet” of her master,⁹⁸ we could go even further and suggest that the “distant proximity” evoked by the contiguous but separated spaces in the chevet of Santiago de Compostela also recall the *Noli me tangere*. Furthermore, the inclusion of an altar to Mary Magdalene in this position suggests a complementary theological and paschal moment in which, according to the Gospel of John, the apostles Peter and John were the ones who rushed to verify her testimony about the empty tomb (John 20:1–9). Here the arrangement of the altars can be understood to represent the three figures involved in verifying the empty sepulcher, itself evoked through the squared-off axial chapel of the Savior in which the cathedral culminates. Thus, a rich and intense dialectic of names is created along with a spatial interrelation in the most significant part of the building. This unparalleled arrangement of the first witnesses to Christ’s divine nature further increased the eschatological weight of the chevet.⁹⁹

95. For the preeminence of Andrew in the cathedral, represented in three places in the Platerías façade, see Moralejo, “La imagen arquitectónica de la catedral de Santiago de Compostela,” 241n15.

96. For the evocations of Rome and Jerusalem in the time of Gelmírez, see Manuel Castiñeiras, “*Didacus Gelmirus*, patrono de las artes: el largo camino a Compostela: de periferia a centro del Románico,” in *Compostela y Europa: la historia de Diego Gelmírez*, ed. Manuel Castiñeiras (Milan: Skira, 2010), 32–97, at 84–93.

97. Manuel Antonio Castiñeiras González, “Topographie sacrée, liturgie pascale et reliques dans les grands centres de pèlerinage: Saint-Jacques-de-Compostelle, Saint-Isidore-de-León et Saint-Étienne-de-Ribas-de-Sil,” *Cahiers de Saint Michel de Cuxa* 34 (2003): 27–50, at 36.

98. Moralejo, “La imagen arquitectónica de la catedral de Santiago de Compostela,” 241n16.

99. Serafín Moralejo pointed out that the associations derived from the apsidal chapels in relation to the Transfiguration and that the prostration of Mary could have been planned or assumed after they were constructed; *ibid.*, 241.

Within the twelfth-century development of the symbiosis between image and space, one of the most fascinating works in western Europe is the reliquary structure built in the south nave aisle of the female monastic church of St. Cyriacus of Gernrode (Saxony-Anhalt), which recreates the funerary aedicule of the Holy Sepulcher. This church reflects the cultural context of the First Crusade.¹⁰⁰ Built around 1100 with additions ca. 1130 following the model of Christ's tomb,¹⁰¹ Gernrode has an antechamber with an inner chamber to its west (Fig. 8). Decorated with reliefs that display a rich narrative cycle following the Gospel of John, the inclusion of this space in the church's Easter liturgical circuit is confirmed by a 1502 copy of a late eleventh-century manuscript revealing that the structure was ritually closed on Good Friday and re-opened on Easter Sunday.¹⁰² The empty tomb at the nucleus of the main chamber is presided over by a monumental sculpture of Christ that is larger than any other figure in the ensemble. Clad in pontifical vestments, he faces east (*Parousia*) toward the entrance of the chamber, making a powerful impression on anyone who enters the space (Fig. 9). Although the figure is sometimes (and in my judgement erroneously) identified as a bishop,¹⁰³ the unique mise-en-scène allows us to understand him as Christ, who possessed an immutable priesthood after overcoming death, as repeatedly stated by Saint Paul (Hebrews 5:1–10; 7:20–25).¹⁰⁴ To this figure's left, on the north wall, are reliefs of the three Marys

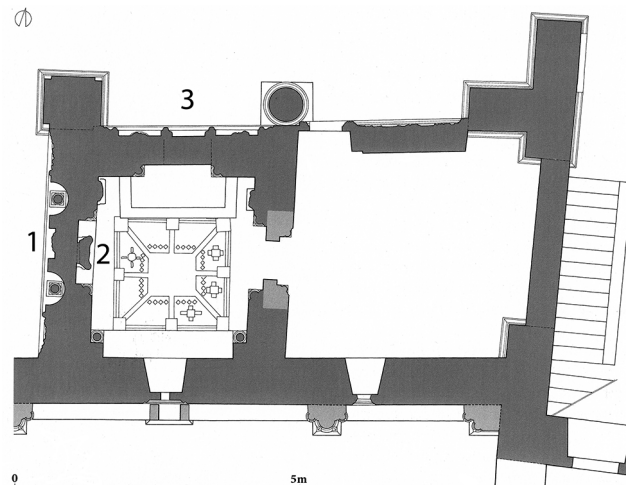


Figure 8. Ground plan of the eastern half of the southern aisle after the changes in the fourth building phase of the replica of the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem, ca. 1100–20, St. Cyriacus of Gernrode (Saxony-Anhalt). Scale 1:75; key: (1) Mary Magdalene?; (2) Risen Christ?; (3) *Noli me tangere* (© LDA, Landesamt für Denkmalpflege und Archäologie Sachsen-Anhalt, Hans-Joachim Krause and Susanne Mechel).

100. A few decades later, in the context of the growing number of spaces dedicated specifically to Mary Magdalene, the taking of Jerusalem prompted the modification of a church dedicated to the saint and also the rebuilding of the Holy Sepulcher in the first half of the twelfth century. In the latter, first an altar and then a chapel were built in the north flank of the Anastasis, that is, near the empty tomb. See Denys Pringle and Peter E. Leach, *The Churches of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem: A Corpus*, vol. 3, *The City of Jerusalem* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 40–42. See also Saxer, *Le culte de Marie Madeleine en Occident*, 122.

101. Bianca Kühnel, “Monumental Representations of the Holy Land in the Holy Roman Empire,” in *Die Kreuzzugsbewegung im römisch-deutschen Reich (11.–13. Jahrhundert)*, ed. Nikolas Jaspert and Stefan Tebruck (Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke, 2016), 319–46, at 324–26.

102. Werner Jacobsen, “Die Stiftskirche von Gernrode und ihre liturgische Ausstattung,” in *Essen und die sächsischen Frauenstifte im Frühmittelalter*, ed. Jan Gerchow and Thomas Schilp, *Essener Forschungen zum Frauenstift 2* (Essen: Klartext-Verl, 2003), 219–46.

103. Nicole Schröter, *Das Heilige Grab von St. Cyriacus zu Gernrode: Ausdruck der Jerusalemfrömmigkeit der Gernröder Stiftsdamen*, Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte Sachsen-Anhalts 11 (Halle: Mitteldeutscher, 2017), 32 and 47–48.

104. On the representation of Christ in liturgical attire in the cathedral of Santiago and other examples, see Manuel Antonio Castiñeiras González, “La catedral románica: tipología arquitectónica y narración visual,” in *Santiago, la catedral y la memoria del arte*,

flanked by two angels (Fig. 9). On the exterior of the north wall is a highly rhetorical rendition of the *Noli me tangere*. On an intermediate level, the figures of Christ and Mary Magdalene are each placed in a distinct frame, decisively separated by a third, empty frame (figs. 10, 11, and 12). Above is a framed bust of Christ Pantocrator, now in his fully heavenly dimension or, in the words of John, already “ascended to my Father” (John 20:17). At Gernrode the words of the *Noli me tangere* are thus represented through a mise-en-scène of images.

It is worth noting that on the other side of the antechamber, now nearly worn away, are representations of Peter and John running to verify that the tomb is empty. Finally, on the exterior of the west wall, back-to-back with the statue of the resurrected Christ on the inside, is a female figure who has been identified as Mary Magdalene (Fig. 13).¹⁰⁵ The juxtaposition of the two sculptures parallels the positioning of the altars of the Savior and Mary Magdalene at Compostela, confirming that even such disparate sites could present a common sacred topography inspired by the passage from John. It is significant that, without any influence between Gernrode

ed. Manuel Núñez Rodríguez (Santiago de Compostela: Consorcio de Santiago, 2000), 39–96, at 70.

105. On this question, see Rainer Kahsnitz, “Die Plastik,” in *Das Heilige Grab in Gernrode: Bestandsdokumentation und Bestandsforschung*, ed. Hans-Joachim Krause, Gotthard Voss, and Rainer Kahsnitz, Beiträge zur Denkmalkunde in Sachsen-Anhalt 3 (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag für Kunstwissenschaft, 2007), 311–83.



Figure 9. Interior, replica of the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem, ca. 1100–20, St. Cyriacus of Gernrode (Saxony-Anhalt). (photo: José Luis Senra).

and Compostela, an analogous liturgical sensitivity elicited a similar interplay of relationships.

Mary Magdalene as Apostola Apostolorum

Mary Magdalene's privileged status, due to her prominent role in the Easter cycle, is also clear in the liturgical topography of the most important Cluniac dependency in Hispania, the Romanesque priory of San Zoilo de Carrión, which I have recently suggested had an altar dedicated to Mary Magdalene.¹⁰⁶ Probably planned around 1100, this altar had a clear

106. José Luis Senra, "May the Angels Lead You Into Paradise: Staging the Cluniac Liturgy in Medieval Hispanic Priors," *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* 9, no. 2 (2017): 149–83; Vincent Debiais and José Luis Senra, "Memoria, panegírico y epigrafía: la condesa Teresa Peláez de Carrión (ob. 1093)," *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* 12, no. 3 (2020): 293–316.

topographic parallel with her altar at Compostela, since each seems to have been conceived as a sort of counter-apse (Fig. 14).¹⁰⁷ At San Zoilo the altar was located at the extreme west of the south nave, built into the western wall of the church and abutting the wall of the western porch, known in the Cluniac context as a galilee. The relevance of the San Zoilo altar is precisely in its contact with the galilee, a space of great liturgical importance in which Mary Magdalene played a key role. Another significant example of Mary's enhanced

107. For the hypothetical configuration of the church of San Zoilo, see José Luis Senra, "El benedictismo cluniacense y su codificación arquitectónica: la iglesia como espacio de performatividad visual en el ejercicio litúrgico," in *Las dos vías del monacato occidental: los seguidores de san Benito y los de san Agustín*, ed. José Ángel García de Cortázar and Ramón Teja (Aguilar de Campoo: Fundación Santa María la Real, Centro de Estudios del Románico, 2022), 35–69.



Figure 10. Interior view to the north, replica of the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem, ca. 1100–20, St. Cyriakus of Gernrode (Saxony-Anhalt) (photo: © José Luis Senra).

importance in this period is the new Romanesque church of the mother house, Cluny III, in which an altar was dedicated to Mary Magdalene, although we do not know if there was a topographical similarity as well.

At the end of the gospels, Galilee is the place that, first through Christ's voice and then through the mediation of an angel and the three Marys, the apostles were told to go meet the resurrected Christ (Mark 16:7: "But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee"; also Matt. 28:7 and Luke 24:6). The interpretation of Galilee as a symbolic space confirming Christ's triumph over death was promoted in both the liturgy and architecture of Cluny in the first half of the eleventh century.¹⁰⁸ At San Zoilo, the altar of Mary Magdalene was deliberately located on the other side of the galilee, an area of particular Christological signification; the space acquired an exceptional liturgical importance due to the contiguity between the altar of the messenger of the Resurrection and the place in which the Resurrection was manifested.¹⁰⁹ We also know that in the basilica at Cluny,

108. Kristina Krüger, *Die romanischen Westbauten in Burgund und Cluny: Untersuchungen zur Funktion einer Bauform* (Berlin: Mann, 2003).

109. The altar in San Zoilo is located under the south tower of the west façade of the church. It is easy to imagine that this altar-tower arrangement might have evoked the etymological association of the Magdalene with a tower; see above, notes 12 and 13.

the Sunday procession of the monks started at the choir and, after passing through the claustral area, returned to the church through the galilee, making stops at the main altars; it is possible that the Magdalene altar would have been part of this liturgical praxis.¹¹⁰ Equally relevant is the fact that the procession included the altar of the Holy Cross, situated in front of the western access to the choir (where, according to the *Liber tramitis*, the laity took communion on Easter Day), thus elevating the eschatological narrative.¹¹¹

The *Liber tramitis*, a customary drawn up around 1040, tells us more about the Easter liturgy in Cluny.¹¹² In the context of the Sunday procession, the customary mentions a pause that the community made in front of the west façade. Before crossing the threshold, indicating that the community should return to the choir, they sang the antiphon *Nolite*

110. The main patron of the Spanish priory, Countess Teresa Peláez, was buried in the west portico, near the altar of Mary Magdalene: Debais and Senra, "Memoria, panegírico y epigrafía."

111. *Liber tramitis aevi Odilonis abbatis*, ed. Peter Dinter, *Corpus Consuetudinum Monasticarum* 10 (Siegburg: Franz Schmitt, 1989), 89, 235, 284.

112. On the *Liber tramitis*, see Isabelle Cochelin, "Évolution des coutumiers monastiques dessinée à partir de l'étude de Bernard," in *From Dead of Night to End of Day: The Medieval Customs of Cluny*, ed. Susan Boynton and Isabelle Cochelin, *Disciplina Monastica* 3 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 29–66, at 39–40.

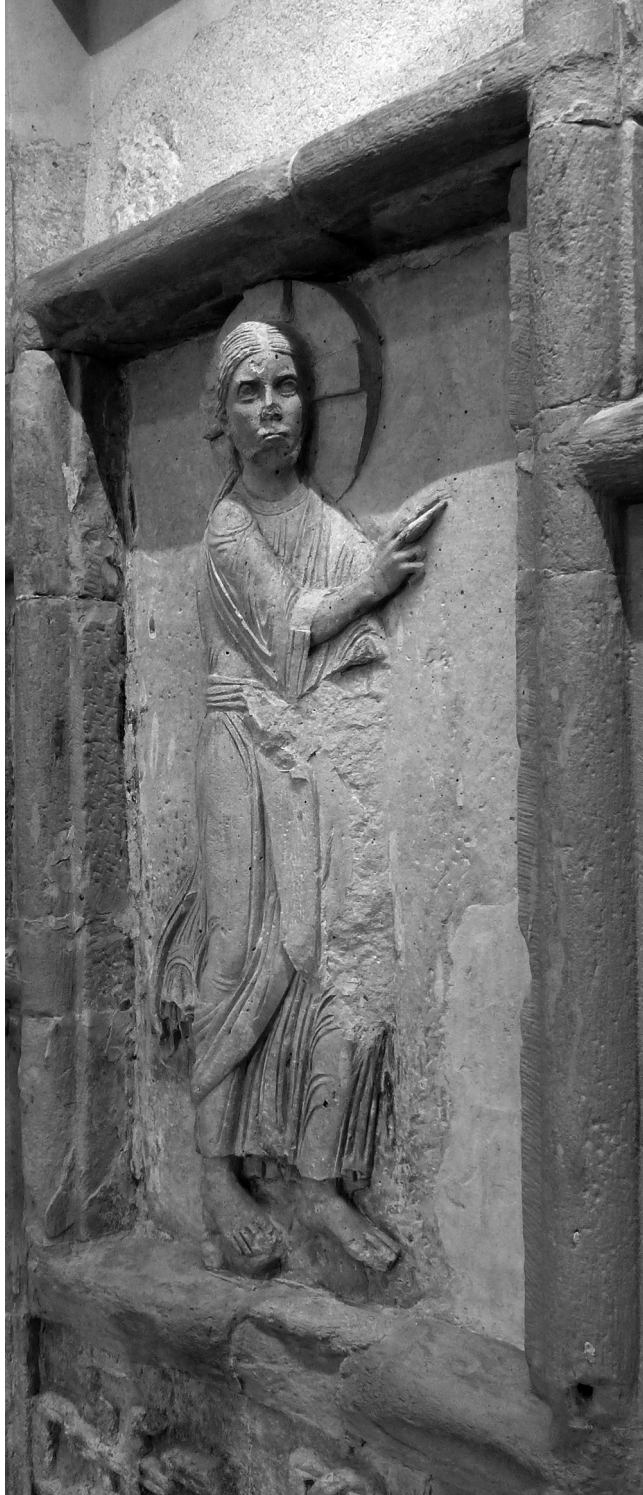


Figure 11. Exterior, replica of the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem, ca. 1100–20, St. Cyriakus of Gernrode (Saxony-Anhalt) (photo: © José Luis Senra).



Figure 12. Detail showing Mary Magdalene from *Noli me tangere*, north wall, replica of the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem, ca. 1100–20, St. Cyriakus of Gernrode (Saxony-Anhalt) (photo: © José Luis Senra).

metuere (“And as to the future / Don’t be afraid / He will set your bones free / Wait”). In response, they exclaimed, “Christus resurgens” or “Maria Magdalena.”¹¹³

As an intermediate space between the sacred and the secular, the galilee here evoked the place where Jesus appeared

113. “Coming together in the atrium in front of the church portal they stand in the order in which they arrived, with the senior monks in the centre as it is customary to stand in the choir. Then the *armarius* makes a sign to the singers whom he wishes to come to the middle, behind the children, and to intone this antiphon: ‘Crucifixum in carne,’ chanted three times with the repetition ‘Nolite metuere.’ On entering the church, one singer intones the antiphon ‘Christus resurgens’ or the response ‘Maria Magdalena.’ When they have said a prayer and all the bells are ringing, Terce is performed.” Trans. Kristina Krüger, “Monastic Customs and Liturgy in the Light of the Architectural Evidence,” in *From Dead of Night to End of Day*, ed. Boynton and Cochelin, 191–220, at 206.

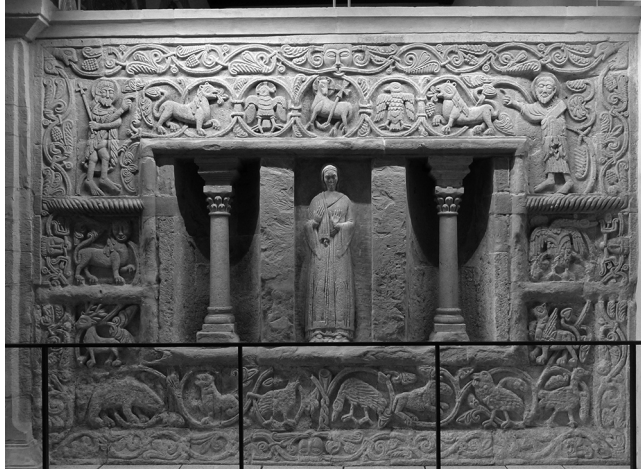


Figure 13. West façade, replica of the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem, ca. 1100–1120, St. Cyriakus of Gernrode (Saxony-Anhalt) (photo: © José Luis Senra).

after the Resurrection (*Christus resurgens*) to his apostles, with whom the community of monks, who embraced the *vita aspotolica*, identified. This liturgical performance was thus the manifestation of death transcended. In the case of San Zoilo, the symbolic-eschatological sense of the space was juxtaposed with its function as a count's pantheon, with its link to the salvation of the dead through the memory of the community of Cluniac monks. Once the threshold of the galilee was crossed, the monks sang a second antiphon to which they would respond with "María Magdalena." Here the topography is key: the altar dedicated to Mary Magdalene was located on the south side of the western section of the church of San Zoilo, possibly an imitation of the sacred topography of Cluny II, which was still in use when the construction of the new priory began.¹¹⁴

There is no evidence that the extended liturgical drama of *Quem quaeritis* would have been performed at Cluny, despite its wide diffusion throughout the Continent. Since San Zoilo was under the authority of Cluny, we can also assume that it would not have been performed there either; perhaps it was reduced to singing the antiphon associated with the altar dedicated to the first witness of the Resurrection. Nonetheless, this significant performative exchange evokes the meeting of Mary Magdalene with the resurrected Christ through an ad hoc spatial plan: the galilee, an architectonic metaphor of the first manifestation of transcending death according to the Evangelists, and the meeting of Christ and Mary Magdalene in the *Noli me tangere*.

114. Christian Sapin and Fabrice Henrion, "Cluny II et le XIe siècle," in *Cluny: les origines du monastère et de ses églises*, ed. Anne Baud and Christian Sapin, *Archéologie et histoire de l'art* 35 (Paris: CTHS, 2019), 76–109.

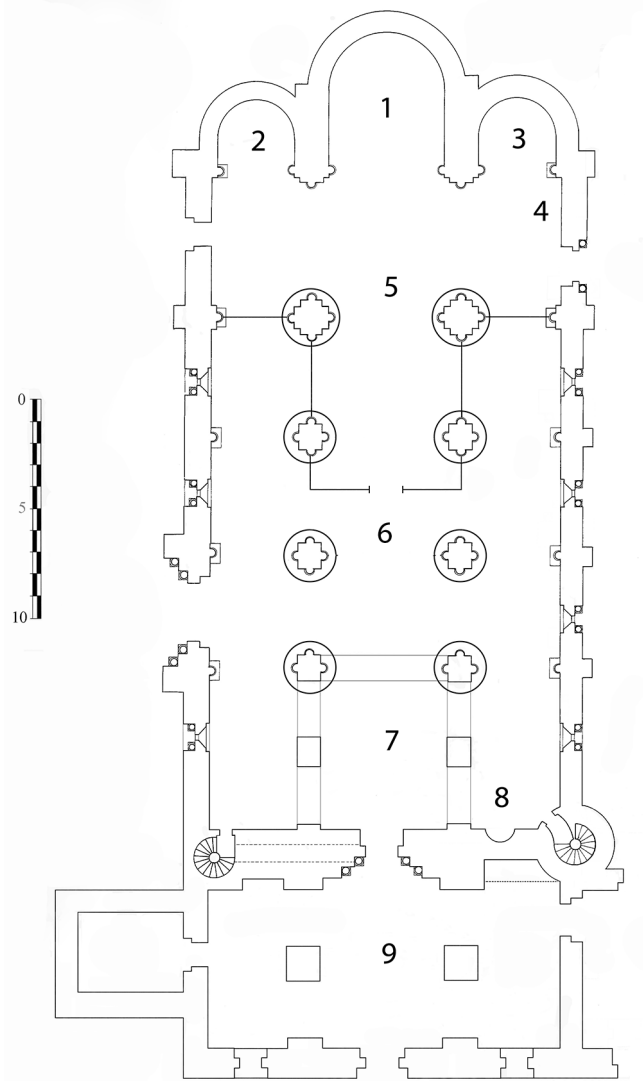


Figure 14. Hypothetical reconstruction of San Zoilo de Carrión (Palencia) with chapels and altars, ca. 1100; key: (1) St. Zoilo; (2) St. Mary; (3) St. Peter; (4) St. Benedict; (5) Choir; (6) Holy Cross; (7) Tribune; (8) Mary Magdalene; (9) Galilee (plan: José Luis Senra).

With all due scholarly caution, we can go even further in a topographical analysis of San Zoilo de Carrión de los Condes, where the altar of Mary Magdalene faced the altar dedicated to the apostle Peter in the south apse. The paschal connotation is unlikely to be a coincidence; here Mary Magdalene is linked to the apostle who was, along with her, one of the first two witnesses to verify that the tomb of Christ was empty.

The *apostola apostolorum* appears in manuscript illumination as well. The St. Albans Psalter (Dombibliothek Hildesheim, MS St. Godehard 1, ca. 1120–40), with exceptional full-page compositions in which the presence of women is significant, was created for Christina (ca. 1095–1155), the charismatic nun and mystic of the priory of the Holy Trinity of Markyate

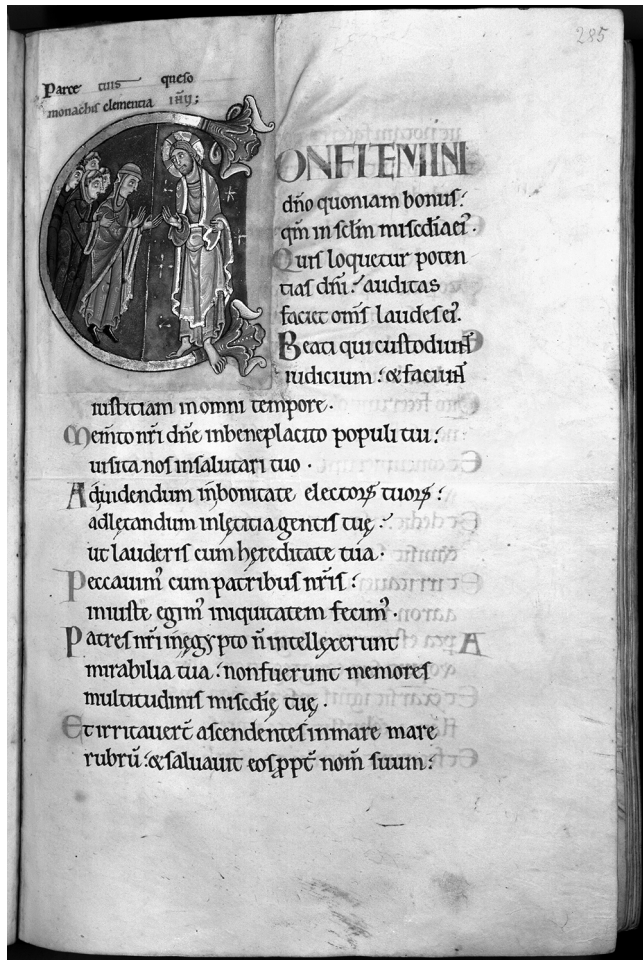


Figure 15. Initial C: Christina of Markyate (Psalm 105), p. 285, St. Albans Psalter, ca. 1120–40, Dombibliothek Hildesheim, MS St. Godehard 1 (photo: © Dombibliothek Hildesheim).

(Hertfordshire).¹¹⁵ Her importance is underlined by an illuminated initial C divided into two chromatic fields (green-earthly / blue-heavenly). In a kind of updated image of Mary Magdalene and the apostles, she leads the monks of the abbey near St. Albans (Fig. 15). Christina gains entrance to Christ's dimension with the fingers of her right hand; she even touches him, thus overcoming the prohibition in the *Noli me tangere* (p. 285). Other folios of this codex also emphasize the role of women, particularly the rarely depicted scene from the Gospel of John in which Mary Magdalene announces to the apostles, fronted by Peter, Jesus's absence from the tomb (p. 51, Fig. 16).¹¹⁶ Also represented are the Visit to the Tomb by the three Marys

115. On this manuscript see Kristen Collins, Peter Kidd, and Nancy K. Turner, *The St. Albans Psalter: Painting and Prayer in Medieval England* (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2013).

116. Magdalena Elizabeth Carrasco, "The Imagery of the Magdalen in Christina of Markyate's Psalter (St. Albans Psalter)," *Gesta* 38, no. 1 (1999): 67–80.

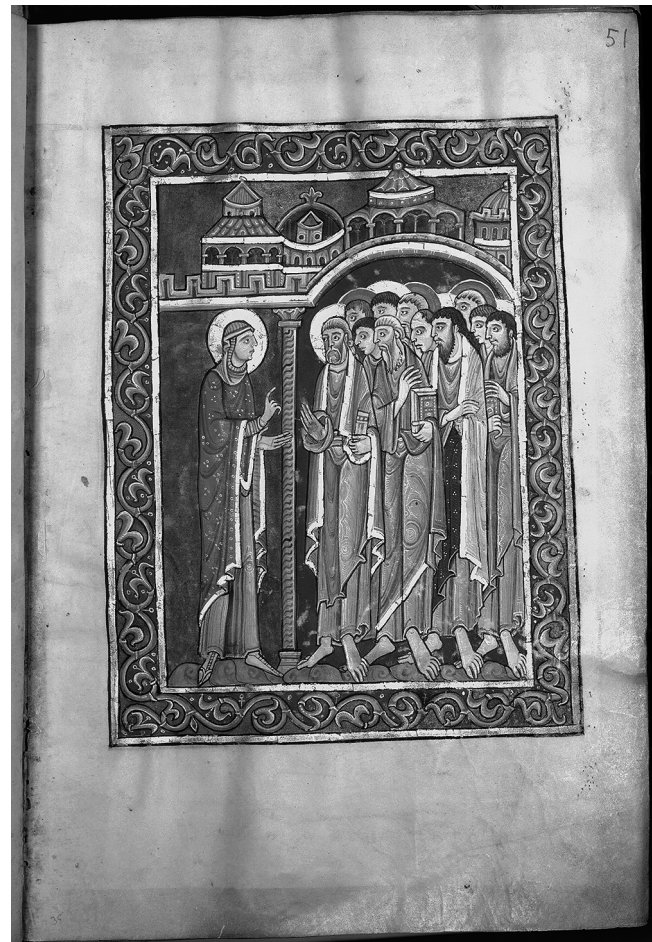


Figure 16. Mary Magdalene announcing the Resurrection to the apostles, p. 51, St. Albans Psalter, ca. 1120–40, Dombibliothek Hildesheim, MS St. Godehard 1 (photo: © Dombibliothek Hildesheim).

(p. 50) and Christ in the pharisee's house with Mary at his feet, as we saw in Neuilly (p. 36). Finally, the paschal cycle includes Doubting Thomas and, in a three-scene narrative, the disciples in Emmaus (pp. 69, 70, and 71). At the same moment on the Iberian peninsula, we find this complex eschatological dialectic playing out on a larger scale in the cloister of the monastery at Santo Domingo de Silos.

Christ the Pilgrim and Christ the Gardener

In the territory of León-Castile in the early decades of the twelfth century, images of Mary Magdalene were widespread. No longer does she only visit the Holy Sepulcher in the company of the other Marys; she is also found in the *Noli me tangere* and the annunciation of the Resurrection to the apostles. While her cult was promoted by the reformist circle of Cluny from 1100 to 1140, it also extended into broader, non-Cluniac circles at Santo Domingo de Silos and the cathedral of Pamplona. The iconographic program of the Silos cloister,

laid out in four pairs of monumental reliefs on the corner piers, was not finished during the cloister's initial phase of construction—two of the reliefs were completed later in a distinct style that eschewed the paschal themes of the first six. Through close analysis of comparative material, I will reconstruct the iconography of the two lost reliefs.

The iconographic impact of the three Marys, whose first Iberian appearance was in the Girona Beatus, came fully into its own a century and a half later in one of the reliefs of the Silos cloister. In its initial phase (ca. 1120¹¹⁷) the claustral decoration included six large reliefs representing paschal iconography in a diachronic setting, the design of which was inspired by full-page manuscript miniatures. Given the content and large scale, a comparison with works such as the St. Albans Psalter is inevitable. The first six reliefs suggest a cloister program with a strong eschatological character that followed rigorous interpretative pairings: the Descent from the Cross with the Burial/Resurrection; the Disciples on the Road to Emmaus, joined by Christ dressed as a pilgrim to Santiago, with the Doubting Thomas; and finally, Pentecost with the Ascension. There is also a careful topographic arrangement: the two first scenes—the Descent from the Cross and the Burial/Resurrection—are across from the door between the monastic choir and the cloister (Fig. 17). Thus, the first thing the monks saw as they crossed that threshold was an image of Christ's salvific death.

However, the workshop from the first phase of construction did not complete the west and south arcades of the cloister, and they also left unfinished the pair of reliefs (indicated by the question marks in Fig. 17) planned for the southwest corner; these would be sculpted at the end of the twelfth century with representations of the Annunciation and the Tree of Jesse, themes unrelated to the paschal cycle.¹¹⁸ In light of the development of the Magdalene cult on the Iberian peninsula, I propose that the two missing reliefs would also have represented paschal scenes, perhaps the Harrowing of Hell, the *Noli me tangere*, or Mary Magdalene and the Disciples.

The cloister's narrative scheme begins with the death of Christ in the Descent relief in the northeast corner, a masterful sequence of images that combines the Burial of Christ (the

central image with Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea placing Jesus's body in the tomb), the Resurrection (suggested in the lower section by the sleeping soldiers), and, in an inscription on the framing arch from Mark 16:1–8, the Marys in conversation with angels, carrying perfumes to anoint Jesus's body (Fig. 18).¹¹⁹ Mary Magdalene is introduced in the inscription, an *explanatio* in two lines of Caroline script: NIL : FORMIDETIS : VIVIT DEVS : ECCE VIDETIS / MARIA MAGDALENE : MARIA IACOBI : ET SALOME (“Fear nothing. God lives, behold, you see / Mary Magdalene, Mary of James and Salome”). To the left of the slab covering the tomb is the word ANGELUS.¹²⁰ A notable feature of the *impaginatio* of the inscription is that the angel is made to speak through his left wing, the tip of which points to the central word, VIVIT (Fig. 19); the second line, where Mary Magdalene is named, begins at the edge of the wing itself.¹²¹ The representations at Silos mark an important advance in compositional subtlety beyond the near contemporary tympanum of the Portada del Perdón of the basilica of San Isidoro in León (Fig. 20). The narrative sequence ends with the Ascension.

119. The originality of the composition becomes evident when we contrast it with the miniature on folio 265r in the contemporaneous lectionary of Silos (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS nouv. acq. lat. 2176), in which there is a juxtaposition of the Resurrection (suggested by the sleeping soldiers) and the three Marys' visit to the tomb.

120. Álvaro Castresana López, *Corpus inscriptionum Christianarum et mediaevalium provinciae Burgensis (ss. IV–XIII)* (Oxford: Archaeopress Archaeology, 2015), 271–73.

121. The narrative in the Gospel of Mark culminates in the flight of the three women, followed by the first appearance of Jesus to Mary Magdalene (Mark 16:9). Among the manuscripts from Silos are two that offer liturgical precedents for the cloister iconography: the “Visit to the Sepulcher” (*Visitatio sepulchri*) written in Caroline minuscule and notated with Aquitanian neumes in a breviary (London, British Library, MS Add. 30848) and an antiphony (London, British Library, MS Add. 30850). Both manuscripts transmit the Roman liturgy and were copied in Visigothic script in the last quarter of the eleventh century (ca. 1080–90). In this version of the *Visitatio* the three women of the biblical text become men (referred to as *discipuli*). On this text, see Eva María Castro Caridad, *Tropos y troparios hispánicos*, Monografías de la Universidad de Santiago de Compostela 157 (Santiago de Compostela: Universidad de Santiago de Compostela, 1991), 165–68. See also Eva Castro, *Teatro medieval*, vol. 1, *El drama litúrgico*, Páginas de Biblioteca Clásica (Barcelona: Crítica, 1997), 159–73; and Barbara Haggh-Huglo, “La historia en honor de santo Domingo de Silos en la British Library, Add. Ms. 30850,” in *Hispania vetus: manuscritos litúrgico-musicales de los orígenes visigóticos a la transición francorromana (siglos IX–XII)*, ed. Susana Zapke (Bilbao: Fundación BBVA, 2007), 175–88. The *discipuli* could perhaps be justified as an attempt to avoid the presence of women in the liturgical performance but this gender shift was not followed in the sculptural relief; see Castro, *Teatro medieval*, 160–63.

117. The differing scholarly arguments concerning the dating of the church and cloister at Silos are summarized in two reviews: Peter K. Klein, “Une vision partielle de Silos,” *Bulletin monumental* 174, no. 2 (2016): 187–93, and Pamela A. Patton, “Review of *Palace of the Mind: The Cloister of Silos and Spanish Sculpture of the Twelfth Century* by Elizabeth Valdez del Álamo,” *CAA Reviews* (2013), <https://doi.org/10.3202/caa.reviews.2013.121>.

118. It seems unlikely that the last two of the original reliefs were reused for the Annunciation and the Tree of Jesse given their different anchoring and their slightly smaller dimensions: 177 × 110 centimeters vs. 1.80 × 105–110 centimeters.

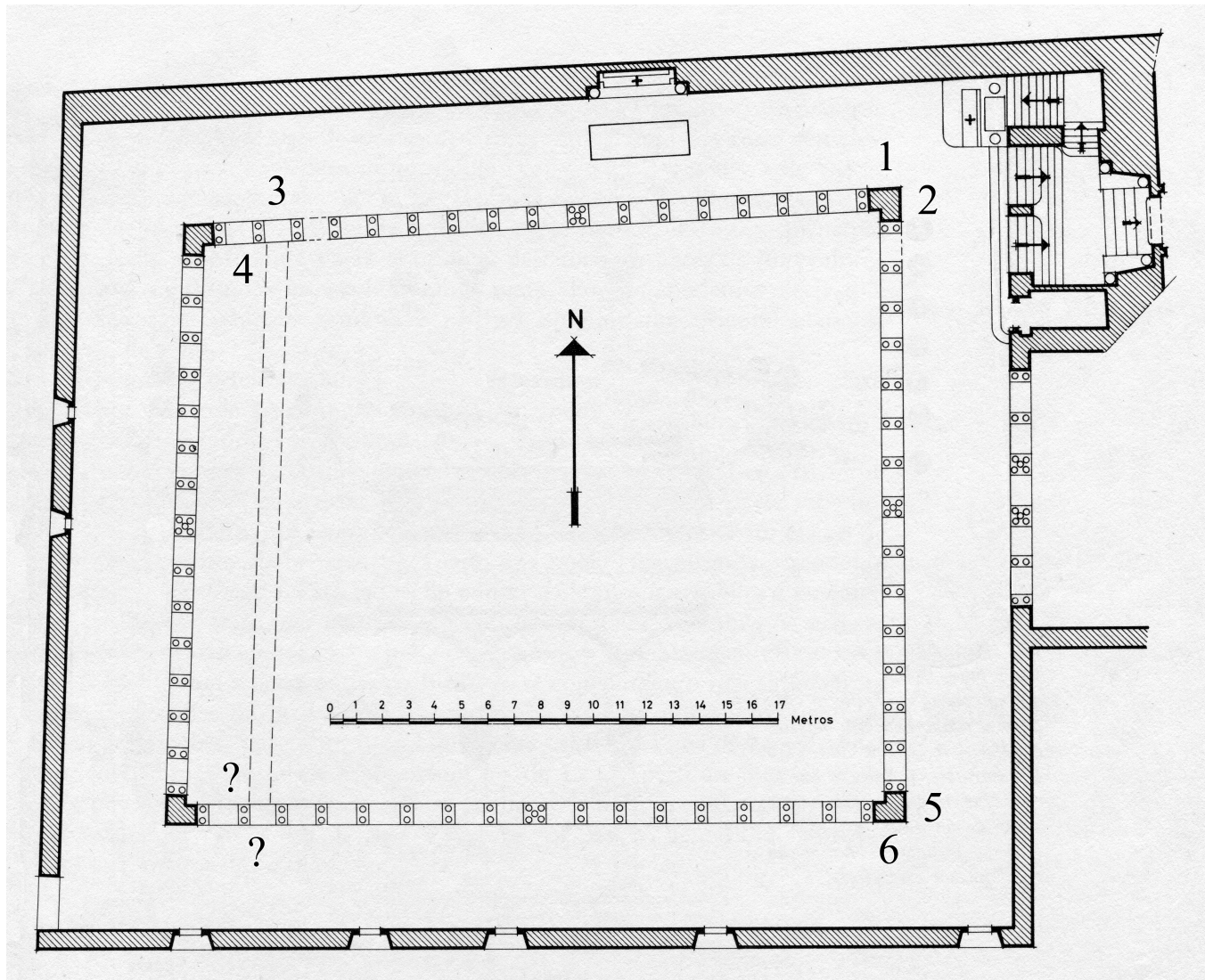


Figure 17. Plan of lower cloister, Abbey of Santo Domingo de Silos (Burgos), ca. 1120–1200, with labels indicating a narrative sequence; key: (1) Descent from the Cross; (2) Burial and the Three Marys; (3) Disciples on the Road to Emmaus; (4) Doubting Thomas; (5) Pentecost; (6) Ascension. Parallel dotted lines indicate the original position of the west gallery (ca. 1120–30) redone at the end of the twelfth century with the displacement of the northwest corner plaques (3 and 4). The two that have been preserved, made in the second phase of the cloister, are from the end of the twelfth century (Annunciation and Tree of Jesse) (plan © R. Saiz).

Given the importance of touch in the Silos cycle, it is likely that one of the missing reliefs was the *Noli me tangere*.¹²² The

122. Otto Karl Werckmeister, “The Emmaus and Thomas Pillar of the Cloister of Silos,” in *El Románico en Silos: IX centenario de la consagración de la iglesia y el claustro, 1088–1988*, ed. Mariano Palacios González, Studia Silensia Series Maior 1 (Burgos: Santo Domingo de de Silos, 1990), 149–61. See also Elizabeth Valdez del Álamo, “Touch Me, See Me: The Emmaus and Thomas Reliefs in the Cloister of Silos,” in *Spanish Medieval Art: Recent Studies*, ed. Colum P. Hourihane, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 346 (Princeton: Index of Christian Art, 2007), 35–64; Elizabeth Valdez del Álamo, *Palace of the Mind: The Cloister of Silos and Spanish Sculpture of the Twelfth Century* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), 118–27.

dialectic of the tactile seen in the veiled hands of the Virgin as she takes the hand of Christ in the Descent from the Cross and in the finger that enters Christ’s side in the Doubting Thomas reflects the same concern for the value of the palpable that is central to the *Noli me tangere* story. And in the visual culture of the central Middle Ages, the scene of the Disciples on the Road to Emmaus is frequently associated with Doubting Thomas and the *Noli me tangere*, as in the León ivory now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The other missing relief might have represented the announcement to the apostles by Mary Magdalene, or Peter and John verifying that the tomb was empty. Nearly all the extant reliefs feature compositions with multiple groups of



Figure 18. Pier relief with Entombment and the Three Marys at the Tomb, ca. 1120–40, cloister, Santo Domingo de Silos (Burgos) (photo: © José Luis Senra).

people; the spectacular exception is the Disciples on the Road to Emmaus, whose monumental simplicity, with just three large figures, parallels the imagery on the Leonese ivories (Fig. 2). The unfinished Silos relief might also have depicted the encounter between the resurrected Christ and his *apostola apostolorum* in the garden next to the tomb. This would create a dialogue between Eden, the archetypal garden, and its evocation in the cloister. Eden itself is referred to in the tree/cross of the Descent scene, in which Adam, raising the lid of his tomb, appears beneath Christ's feet. We have already seen the close theological connections between the scenes of Emmaus, Doubting Thomas, and the *Noli me tangere*, all of which focus on witnessing the Resurrection. The common denominator of the Doubting Thomas and the *Noli me tangere* is tactility defined as an act of faith, one materialized (Thomas) and the other unconsummated (Mary Magda-



Figure 19. Inscription with angel and Mary Magdalene, detail of pier relief with Entombment and the Three Marys at the Tomb, ca. 1120–40, cloister, Santo Domingo de Silos (Burgos) (photo: © José Luis Senra).

lene).¹²³ Mary Magdalene would thus be a logical and appropriate element of the Resurrection sequence at Silos.¹²⁴

Two illuminating examples of contemporary paschal iconography related to Mary Magdalene support my hypothesis about the missing reliefs. The first is in the nave of the basilica of Saint-Lazare of Autun (Saône-et-Loire) in Burgundy, built in the 1120s, which includes a capital depicting both the Visit of the Three Marys to the Holy Sepulcher with an angel pointing at a very clearly defined empty circle (on the right) and the *Noli me tangere* (front face) (Fig. 21).¹²⁵ Another significant example from the same period is found on a capital from the no-longer-extant Romanesque cloister of Pamplona Cathedral (ca. 1130–40). The capital's four sides bear representations of the Descent from the Cross, the Burial of Christ, the Three Marys before the Tomb, and Mary Magdalene's announcement to Peter and the apostles that the tomb was empty (Fig. 22).¹²⁶ We have already seen this novel iconography in the

123. Benay and Rafanelli, *Faith, Gender and the Senses*, 36–37.

124. Although the author does not speculate about the possible iconographical content of the two unrealized Silos reliefs, she makes the case that the exclusion of Mary Magdalene from the cloister program (aside from her presence in the Three Marys relief) “may reflect the male monastic environment, although women, particularly the Virgin Mary, are prominent in the other scenes”: Valdez del Álamo, “Touch Me, See Me,” 57.

125. Not long afterward, a capital imitating this scheme was carved at another Burgundian church, Saint-Andoche de Saulieu (Côte-d’Or), with identical handiwork.

126. For the Romanesque cloister of Pamplona, see Clara Fernández-Ladreda, *La arqueta de Leyre y otras esculturas medievales de Navarra* (Pamplona: Diputación Foral de Navarra, 1983), 25–50; María Luisa Melero Moneo, “La sculpture de la cathédrale de Pampelune et sa repercussion sur l’art roman navarrais,” *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 35



Figure 20. *Puerta del Perdón*, ca. 1120–30, *San Isidoro de León* (photo: © Therese Martin).

St. Albans Psalter, which was also made in this richly inventive iconographic moment.

Conclusions

The cult of Mary Magdalene emerged in the Iberian peninsula at the end of the eleventh century, a period of opening to the European continent, when theological ideas were being absorbed and innovatively adapted. Surviving evidence suggests that the process began with a member of the lay elite, Constance of Burgundy. Her foundation of a church consecrated to the Magdalene in the important town of Sahagún represents the earliest evidence of a direct ecclesiastical dedication to this disciple of Jesus. Immediately thereafter we can trace a refined topography based on the dialectic between space and gospel text in the altars situated in the east end of the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela and in the south aisle of the Cluniac priory of San Zoilo de Carrión de los Condes. In the cathedral of Santiago, the theme of the Transfiguration—the prefiguration of the triumph over death witnessed by Peter, James, and John—was supplemented by the testimony of the Resurrection given by Mary Magdalene. Both scenes are central to the iconographical emphasis of eschatological discourse in the first half of the twelfth century. Based on examples of established Magdalene iconography consisting of her arrival at the Holy Sepulcher with the other two Marys, the *Noli me tangere*, and her relating the news of the Resurrection to the disciples, it is likely that a relief depicting the Magdalene was originally intended to complement the paschal cycle of the cloister at Silos.

(1992): 241–46; Javier Martínez de Aguirre, “El segundo tercio del siglo XII,” in *El arte románico en Navarra*, Serie arte 37 (Pamplona: Gobierno de Navarra, 2002), 115–64, at 121–23.



Figure 21. *Capital with Noli me tangere and Visit of the Three Marys to the Tomb*, ca. 1130, *Saint-Lazare of Autun (Saône-et-Loire)* (photo: © José Luis Senra).



Figure 22. *Capital with Mary Magdalene announcing the news of the empty tomb to Peter and the apostles*, ca. 1140, *cloister of cathedral of Pamplona (Navarra)* (photo: © Museo de Navarra).