

RETHORIC AND AGENCY AROUND IBERIAN SACRED LANDSCAPES (11TH AND 12TH CENTURIES)

RETÓRICA Y AGENCIA EN TORNO A LOS PAISAJES SACROS DEL ÁMBITO HISPANO (SIGLOS XI Y XII)

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Abstract: This paper aims to demonstrate the feasibility of referring to 'landscapes' in medieval art. To this end, it will focus on the agency and rhetoric of five Iberian landscape representations produced between the eleventh and the twelfth centuries. These are the Girona Creation Tapestry, folios 63v-64r and 186v-187r of the Facundus Beatus, the wall paintings of the Pantheon of the Kings, the Monastery of Santa María de Sigena, and the Church of Santa María de Taüll.

Do they reflect a direct observation of reality? To what extent are these landscapes symbolic and are their figures acting as spatial references cores? They show a rhetorical selection of points of view working as visual *mediums*. The notion of space is accentuated as an abstraction, a scenery of social practices and Biblical locations. This inquiry opens the discussion about the role of the multiple devices through which Romanesque landscapes were expressed.

Keywords: Landscapes, visual devices, rhetoric, agency, Iberian medieval materiality.

Resumen: El presente artículo se centrará en demostrar que es posible hablar de paisajes en el arte medieval y en analizar la agencia¹ y la retórica visual de cinco representaciones paisajísticas realizadas entre los siglos XI y XII procedentes de los reinos de Castilla, León y Aragón. Dicha selección tendrá como objetivo fundamental brindar una muestra variada de este tipo de manifestaciones visuales correspondientes el área ibérica cristiana de esa época. Los ejemplos seleccionados, correspondientes a este margen espacio- temporal, son: el Tapiz de la Creación de la Catedral de Girona, los

¹ Traducimos al español "agencia", la palabra inglesa "agency" tal como es utilizada en las traducciones al español de los escritos de Alfred Gell, uno de los fundadores de esta tendencia historiográfica basada en las formas de interacción y respuesta de las imágenes vinculada también a una perspectiva antropológica de estas.

folios 63v-64r y 186v-187r del Beato de Fernando I y Sancha, las pinturas del Panteón de los Reyes en León, del Monasterio de Santa María de Sigüenza y de la iglesia de Santa María de Taüll. Todos ellos constituyen casos interesantes que permitirán abordar conceptos nodales en torno a las nociones de paisaje, lugar, espacio y entorno.

Cada uno de los medios artísticos analizados (tapices, murales, miniaturas) contienen representaciones paisajísticas que comparten ciertos elementos en común. En estas materialidades seleccionadas, interactúan diferentes diseños florales y zoomorfos, los cuales tienden a evocar principalmente dos polos opuestos dentro del relato doctrinal cristiano: el Paraíso y el Apocalipsis. Sin embargo, ¿implican estas manifestaciones visuales observaciones directas de la realidad? ¿Hasta qué punto son estos paisajes simbólicos y las figuras actúan como referencias espaciales nodales?

No cabe duda de que las nociones de *paisaje* y *hombre* resultan elementos inseparables ya que es la visión humana la que configura el paisaje y lo transforma en una síntesis funcional que va más allá de las leyes de la naturaleza. Estos elementos —conceptualizados en imágenes— favorecen una compleja constelación de relaciones dialécticas entre animales, plantas, minerales y arquitecturas creadas por el hombre, configurando todo ello el espacio representado. Se propone así una visión activa del paisaje en tanto que campo de praxis heterogéneo y mixto. Como se examinará más adelante, esta vinculación indisociable constituye un tópico continuo en las imágenes medievales, pues figuras antropomorfas, zoomorfas y fitomorfas están intrínsecamente unidas al entorno natural; y por ello se mezclan, se entrelazan y se involucran mutuamente. En dichas representaciones se desarrollan selecciones retóricas de diversos puntos de vista que operan en tanto que medios visuales. Así, la noción de espacio resulta acentuada a partir de la abstracción, en tanto que escenario de prácticas sociales y localizaciones bíblicas.

Resultará fundamental para este artículo argumentar que durante los siglos XI y XII, se desarrolló una importante retórica de la imagen en torno a las representaciones de paisajes. Aunque éstos no ocupan motivos centrales, ostentan, sin embargo, un potente protagonismo conceptual ya que actúan en continua sintonía con las figuras correspondientes al dogma cristiano que los protagonizan. En estas expresiones materiales de la Edad Media hispana, los paisajes son sintéticos y cumplen funciones ideológicas, simbólicas y doctrinales con una destacable economía de recursos. Son construcciones resueltas plásticamente mediante pocos, aunque precisos elementos tales como plantas, animales, montañas y arquitecturas, los cuales interactúan con diversos personajes destacándolos, confundiéndolos o contextualizándolos. Por todo ello, se examinarán las concepciones fundamentales en torno al paisaje y las ideas de lugar y espacio, siguiendo los postulados de William John Thomas Mitchell. Dicho análisis se concretará en núcleos temáticos tales como la visión del universo y de la Tierra mediante esquemas y *mappaemundi* conceptuales; los lugares cristianos del Paraíso y del Infierno; los espacios que dan cuenta de las actividades humanas y la representación de especímenes animales y vegetales utilizados como indicadores sintéticos de los entornos. Por lo tanto, se pretende abrir el debate acerca del papel fundamental de los múltiples elementos a través de los cuales se plasmó el espacio románico.

Palabras clave: Paisajes, dispositivos visuales, retórica, agencia, materialidades artísticas hispanas medievales.

About the controversial issue of 'landscape' in the Middle Ages

Since the High Middle Ages, images comprised representations of the natural world changed by human actions. Hugh of Saint Victor in his *Didascalicon de studio legendi* stated that the sensitive world resembles a book written by God's finger: every creature is a figure not invented by human call but instituted in the manifestation of Him invisible wisdom by divine will². This presents the conviction, as in the biblical Genesis³, that nature is a divine creation. The metaphor of environs designed by God refers to the idea of *composition*: a selection of elements that operate from certain aims and limits.

This paper will consider the different operating ways of visual landscape agency in Iberian objects during the eleventh and twelfth centuries: the Girona Creation Tapestry, folios 63v-64r and 186v-187r of the Facundus Beatus and the wall paintings belonging to the Pantheon of the Kings of León, the Monastery of Santa María de Sigüenza, and the Church of Santa María de Taüll. Although such motifs are not central, they take a vital conceptual ownership in continuous harmony with the Christian characters and some royal discourses.

The definition of landscape derives from a modern classification associated to the pictorial genre. In this term, the notion of visual construction implicates a selection of external aspects conceptually conceived as the major subject. Experimented in the fifteenth century by Flemish artists and afterwards developed by the Italians, the landscape perception as an independent genre became crystallised in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Such generalization in an archetype was possible thanks to a complex institutional apparatus of practice demarcation, academic background, exhibitions, public opinion, and art theory⁴. From the artistic outlook, Victor Stoichita explained that the depicted window in pictures, like a frame, circumscribes panoramic views with the replica of the same systems in mirrors and maps⁵. If the term assumes

² "Universus enim mundus [...] sensibilis quasi quidam liber est scriptus digito Dei [...] et singulae creature quasi figurae quaedam sunt, non humano placito inventae, sed divino arbitrio institutae ad manifestandam invisibilem Dei sapientiam". HUGO DE SAN VICTORE (ca. 1130): *PL* 176, col. 814.

³ Genesis 1, 17-25.

⁴ SHINER, Larry (2001): p. 14.

⁵ STOICHITA, Victor (1997): pp. 35-36.

an intentional cut of the natural *continuum*⁶, it admits visual and ideological readings.

For social and cultural anthropology, the landscape is an integral relationship between space and time, traversed by symbolic aspects: they witness historical changes in a dynamic process⁷. Therefore, places were analysed in relation with the meanings of particular spaces, as agents of socio-cultural identities⁸. Landscapes become *mediums* to define ideologies and viewpoints of personal experiences. This notion can specify the imaginative ways through which people relate to the environment⁹.

Moreover, Jean-Marc Besse proposed five categories to analyse landscapes, that is, as a cultural representation, a territory produced by societies, a systematic complexity that organizes natural and cultural elements together, and as a sensitive experience space¹⁰. The human view configures and transforms landscapes in a functional synthesis that goes beyond of the laws of nature¹¹. It includes dialectical ties among animals, plants, minerals and human creations, through which social groups conceptualize their surroundings. The phenomenological approaches of Maurice Merleau-Ponty argued the body position on the experience. He emphasised expressions like 'up and down', 'depth', 'movement', and 'living space'¹².

The classification of space, place, and landscape established by Henri Lefebvre and Michael De Certeau, was also adopted by William John Thomas Mitchell, but with variations. While Lefebvre spoke about spatial practices, conceptualized representational spaces in images and symbols¹³, De Certeau offered a contrasting division between space (an abstraction) and place (a particular site). Moreover, Mitchell defined 'space' as a sphere of human practices, exchanges, and signs circulation; *place* like a specific location, and

⁶ SIMMEL, George (1986): p. 175.

⁷ HIRSCH, Eric; O'HANLON, Michael (eds.) (1995): pp. 5-6.

⁸ MASSEY, Doreen (1994): p. 4.

⁹ STEWART, Pamela J.; STRATHERN, Andrew (2003): pp. 1-3.

¹⁰ BESSE, Jean-Marc (2006): p. 146.

¹¹ BRINCKERHOFF JACKSON, John (2003): pp. 55-56.

¹² MERLEAU-PONTY, Maurice (2002): pp. 277-335.

¹³ LEFEBVRE, Henri (1991): p. 33.

landscape as a site where image plays an effective task¹⁴. Landscapes are privileged agents for the transmission of ideologies. It is significant to study “[...] the way landscape *circulates* as a medium of exchange, a site of visual appropriation, a focus for the formation of identities”¹⁵. It can be assumed as changing processes and visual appropriations. The diverse cultural practices determine landscapes as conceptual constructions¹⁶.

These preliminary notions prove that generally, nature operates as a limit of a vast space and places allude to specific sites. In Early Medieval images, landscapes had a symbolic, doctrinal, and ideological function. They were built by few but precise components such as plants, animals, mountains, and architectures which interact with human figures, stressing, confusing or contextualizing them. These categories allow us to rethink medieval spatial typologies: the worldview using schemes and conceptual *mappaemundi*, the Christian places of Heaven and Hell, the spaces that imply human actions, and the zoomorphic and vegetal illustrations used as synthetic signs of landscapes. In this paper, we are going to explore them as a preliminary approximation which certainly deserves to be extended and deepened in future researches.

Visual landscapes in the Iberian Romanesque: materiality and agency

Far from conceiving landscapes as simple aesthetic views, the medieval visual description of them involved rhetorical positions. Symbolic and iconic aspects reached different meanings. These ideas were considered by the realism tinged with idealist metaphysics of Charles Sanders Pierce¹⁷ from the semiotic tradition. According to him, the icon is a sign that indicates the quality or property of an object, sharing certain features. The symbol designates it by a rule or law: an association of general ideas established by the interpreter¹⁸. The symbolic thought, crucial to the medieval idiosyncrasy, allowed to found analogue connections between material things and concepts. The medieval exegetic mechanisms worked through correspondences among forms, words,

¹⁴ MITCHELL, William John Thomas (2002): p. viii, x.

¹⁵ MITCHELL, William John Thomas (2002): p. 2.

¹⁶ MITCHELL, William John Thomas (2002): pp. 1-2.

¹⁷ MERRELL, Floyd (1997): p. 95.

¹⁸ SANDERS PIERCE, Charles (1931-1958): C.P. 2.247; C.P. 2.292, pp. 250-270.

colours, gestures, animals, vegetables, and people, working to go beyond the visible things and conjure up other meanings¹⁹. Such symbolic bonds, always cultural and contextual, worked in permanent link with iconic elements. Figures of visual rhetoric, like the metaphor, the antithesis, and the hyperbole (among others), consolidated such discourses, being sustained by symbolic components and attached by iconic ones.

The Latin word *pagus* is the root from which *pays* was derived, as well as the Romance words *paisaje*, *paesaggio*, *paysage*, and *paisatge* in later periods. Francisco Calvo Serraller attested that the use of the word *pagus* was historically documented since 1100²⁰. The fields constituted the main medieval source of subsistence and their enveloped land payments and taxes. A gradual non-utilitarian view towards nature took place thanks to the transition from the feudal to the early capitalist Renaissance system. During commercial journeys, several geographical, cultural, and anthropological features were perceived. Nevertheless, Calvo Serraller claimed that the landscape, as an autonomous aesthetic view of nature, would become consolidated in the eighteenth century²¹.

Considering this term exclusively under its modern logic implies restricting and annulling its extent in previous times. Given that the notion of landscape was connected to the field from the beginning, several of its earlier mentions and representations show nature intrinsically associated with men and their events²². This point does not imply the absence of 'landscape', as neither do some 'canonical' works of art made by Thomas Gainsborough, the Barbizon School or Jean-François Millet in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries²³. Following the theories mentioned above, landscape may be a compound of

¹⁹ PASTOUREAU, Michel (2012): pp. 7-23.

²⁰ CALVO SERRALLER, Francisco (2005): p. 233.

²¹ CALVO SERRALLER, Francisco (2005): pp. 235-237.

²² SUREDA, Joan (1985): pp. 274-282.

²³ In some of these paintings, landscape and man hold an intrinsic relationship. The human figure used to be represented under contemplative, working or dominant attitudes over nature. It could be indirectly referred by the inclusion of human constructions that affected and modified the environments (mills, carts, boats, and buildings). The animals in flocks, the heaps of hay and the cultivated plants also reveal the human and nature tie. The landscape does not exclude the nature usefulness connotation. See the following examples: *Mr and Mrs Andrews*, Thomas Gainsborough (1750), National Portrait Gallery; *The Barnyard*, Jules Dupré (1843), Private Collection; *The gleaners*, Jean-François Millet (1857), Musée d'Orsay; The pond of *Ville-d'Avray*, Camille Corot (1865-1870), Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

cultural and natural experiences²⁴, or a functional natural and human synthesis²⁵. It could be a selection²⁶ or an invention to be seen²⁷. Finally, it would mean a value through a semiotic structure²⁸, or a reinterpretation of nature articulating images and signs²⁹. Thus, it is possible to support the existence of visual representations of landscapes in the Middle Ages. Early Christian art used iconographic formulas of natural environments inherited from the Antique Greco-Roman tradition³⁰. The combination of the Hellenic details with the Italian synthetic style helped to capture the interest towards nature and social daily activities, being developed already at that time³¹.

Ernst Gombrich mentioned that the Italian fifteenth-century tried to invent the landscape genre, however, it had already happened during the Late Gothic³²; a point then worked by Joaquín Yarza Luaces³³. Yet, in the High Medieval period these classical motifs were reused. As stated by Gisèle Lambert:

The plastic language tells a certain history of the landscape and the farming community in a different way than the verbal one; history is tied with the concept which man has about the nature that surrounds and transforms him, and which the work of art embodies in a visual form³⁴.

These medieval landscapes hold a strong iconic feature and evoke the countryside duties, being also symbolised in biblical stories³⁵. According to

²⁴ BESSE, Jean-Marc (2009): p. 4.

²⁵ BRINCKERHOFF JACKSON, John (2003): p. 55.

²⁶ SIMMEL, George (1986): p. 175.

²⁷ STOICHITA, Victor (1997): p. 94.

²⁸ MITCHELL, William John Thomas (2002): p. 14.

²⁹ MITCHELL, William John Thomas (2002): p. X.

³⁰ Extensive landscape designs were represented in the stays of the patrician Roman *domus*, specially in times of Augustus' Princedom (27 B.C. - 235 A.D.), since it is shown by the paradisiac garden painted in the walls of Livia's Villa in Primaporta belonging to the first century A.D.

³¹ MANZI, Ofelia; BEDOYA, Jorge Manuel (1989): p. 5.

³² GOMBRICH, Ernst H. (2000): p. 114.

³³ YARZA LUACES, Joaquín (1993): pp. 29-51; RODRÍGUEZ BOTE, María Teresa (2014): pp. 371-397.

³⁴ "Le langage plastique raconte une certaine histoire du paysage et de la paysannerie, différente du langage verbal; histoire liée à la conception que l'homme a de la nature qui l'environne et qu'il modèle, et que l'œuvre incarne sous une forme visuelle" [translated into English by Nadia Mariana Consiglieri]. LAMBERT, Gisèle (1994): p. 37.

³⁵ LAMBERT, Gisèle (1994): p. 37.

Kenneth Clark, the notion of nature had a considerable development since the Early Middle Ages. It was alleged to be a section of a process in which man attempted to create an agreement with his environment but depicted it with little connection to its real appearance³⁶. In the Iberian Peninsula, several copies of Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae*³⁷ circulated through northern monasteries. In the first chapter of the Eleventh Book called *De homine et partibus*, Isidore firstly mentions the ability of nature to breed, and then he clarifies that men were born from the earth mud³⁸. Once again, the strong nexus between man and nature under God's omnipresence is a remarked point.

The Isidorian treatise show a perception of the Earth and universe associated with time cycles. Paul Zumthor insists that the high-low axis is connected to the symbolic idea of Ascension and Fall³⁹. The position 'in' [*intus*], which implies confinement, and 'out' referring to movement and limit, were important. 'Here' (alluding to a place) and 'there' (which suggests remoteness likewise openness and closeness) implied spatial concepts⁴⁰. Romanesque Hispanic images involved transcendental expressions of natural and human time. The Latin word *locus*, more used than *spatium*, designated a known territory, unlike the Medieval term *ailleurs* (woods, mountains, and seas) referred to non-places, which its remoteness and unlimited extension made them unknown sites: a region of beasts, and of the outlaw otherness⁴¹. These *loci agrestes* were accompanied with *loci amoeni* or idyllic places belonged to the ancient pastoral poetry⁴².

It is possible to find 'places, spaces, and landscapes' in Romanesque Hispanic depictions created through a solid medieval conceptualization of

³⁶ CLARK, Kenneth (1961): p. 2.

³⁷ RUCQUOI, Adeline (2007): pp. 73-74.

³⁸ "1. Natura dicta ab eo quod nasci aliquid faciat. Gignendi enim et faciendi potens est. Hanc quídam Deum esse dixerunt, a quo omnia creata sunt et existunt. 2. Genus a gignendo dictum, cui derivatum nomen a terra, ex qua omnia gignuntur [...] 3. Vita dicta propter vigorem, vel quod vim teneat nascendi atque crescendi. Vnde et arbores vitam habere dicuntur, quia gignuntur et crescunt / 4. Homo dictus, quia ex humo est factus, sicut [et] in Genesi dicitur (2,7): 'Et creavit Deus hominem de humo terrae' [...]". SAN ISIDORO DE SEVILLA (627-630): XI, 1, 1-4, p. 844.

³⁹ ZUMTHOR, Paul (1994): p. 22.

⁴⁰ ZUMTHOR, Paul (1994): pp. 58-67.

⁴¹ ZUMTHOR, Paul (1994): pp. 51-60.

⁴² RODRÍGUEZ BOTE, María Teresa (2014): pp. 383-386.

reality⁴³. They exalt human work, Christian doctrine or the divine punishment. While Zumthor considered pictorial landscape as an exclusive modern product, he remarked that: "A social attitude changes at the end of the twelfth century. The western man is technically best armed to act himself on the spatial environment, and he looks at it with more interest"⁴⁴.

Numerous landscapes were incorporated into images, bringing diverse spatial outcomes. They displayed diverse degrees of perception, from the restricted monastery books to the vast vision of tapestries or murals by the faithful. Their visual mechanisms integrate the Romanesque vocabulary, becoming effective images⁴⁵. Certainly, different forms of agency are defined by discursive practices and material phenomena with a plurality of devices of dissimilar nature⁴⁶. The latest perspectives about medieval agency devices have demonstrated that images work as corporeal *mediums* in ritual and devotional practices. The mnemonic techniques and memory training, the interrelations between texts and images, contents and materialities turned representational objects into symbols to be experienced⁴⁷. They were thought in concrete performative ways, being associated with miracles and thaumaturgical powers⁴⁸. The operative iconic and symbolic typologies of materiality⁴⁹ in monastic and liturgical spheres as well as in royal ones, functioned at individual and social levels. During the eleventh and the twelfth centuries, Iberian Romanesque reached its most advanced stage due to the expanding network of French, Italian and Iberian monasteries. Furthermore, the pilgrim route of Santiago de Compostela, the Crusades to Jerusalem and the Rome prominence, all had a positive impact on the advancement of this style. The line acts as a descriptive pictorial tool being applied in gestures meanwhile certain chiaroscuro shades accentuate the forms of the figures. The folds of the clothing acquire more

⁴³ SUREDA, Joan (1985): p. 252.

⁴⁴ "A finales del siglo XII, se dibuja un cambio de actitud. Técnicamente mejor armado para actuar sobre su entorno espacial, el hombre de Occidente se pone a observarlo con más interés". [translated into English by Nadia Mariana Consiglieri] ZUMTHOR, Paul (1994): p. 85.

⁴⁵ BELTING, Hans (2011): p. 11.

⁴⁶ BARAD, Karen (2003): p. 810.

⁴⁷ BELTING, Hans (1994): pp. 10-11.

⁴⁸ SANSTERRE, Jean-Marie (1998): pp. 1219-1241.

⁴⁹ BACCI, Michele (2013): p. 16.

movement and suggest the character's anatomy. Nevertheless, pure colours become common visual and material elements in the Aragonese, Leonese and Castilian books and paintings.

For the reasons above and following the theoretical justification of the existence and importance of landscape medieval representations, we will now focus on the specific analysis of the five examples initially proposed.

The universe and the Earth

The complementary topics linked to the discussion on the spatial representations of the universe and the Earth will be approached by way of two different materialities: a tapestry and the miniatures of an apocalyptic book.

About the first case, *The Creation Tapestry* was made in Catalan lands, possibly in Girona, towards the end of the eleventh and the beginning of the twelfth century. Using a classical language⁵⁰, it shows a cosmological scheme of the universe. A refined embroidery was applied to a wool fabric threads of diverse colours. The shapes are linearly delimited by the *acu pictae* technique⁵¹ and the textures, built by rhomboid patterns and filled spaces in zigzag forms, are outlined. Manuel Castiñeiras hypothesised that the Benedictine nuns of Sant Daniel of Girona might have created it since the monastery was sponsored by the countess Mafalda of Apulia. It could be used as a carpet and for Christian festivities of Easter and the Invention and Exaltation of the Holy Cross. He also stated that it was exhibited during the council of 1097, which was led by the archbishop of Toledo Bernard of Agen, to uphold the power of the count Ramon Berenguer III, and to get the restoration of the metropolitan headquarter of Tarragona⁵². Other authors assumed that the tapestry was exposed to the faithful during general liturgical ceremonies, being hung in the major nave of the Cathedral⁵³.

⁵⁰ YARZA LUACES, Joaquín (2007): p. 7.

⁵¹ This technique is closely related with the notion of "painting with needles". The black thread serves to design the figures and to separate the areas of colour in a uniform and clear way. CASTIÑEIRAS, Manuel (2011): p. 17.

⁵² CASTIÑEIRAS, Manuel (2011): pp. 11-12.

⁵³ ESPAÑOL, Francesca; YARZA LUACES, Joaquín (2007): p. 177.

This object illustrates the Creation episode of the Genesis. The spatial design of the universe is expressed by abstract schemes with different scenes (fig. 1). Christ is in a central circle (*In principio creavit Deus celum et terram*) surrounded by another one with a 'landscape collage'. The figures are enclosed in a square in whose corners are depicted the four winds. The entire tapestry is framed by marginal bands that contain the months of the year and scenes of the True Cross.



Fig. 1. Unknown author, *The Creation Tapestry*, end of the eleventh century – beginning of the twelfth century, embroidery, 358 × 450 cm.

Foto de: Girona, Tesoro de la Catedral de Girona, núm. inv. 1. © *Capitol Catedral de Girona*.

Therefore, the construction of space is determined by time. Paul Zumthor argued that the circle evoked perfection and the perpetual return, whereas the square referred to the internal forces that organized everything⁵⁴. The image shows a conjunction of spaces and heterogeneous points of view: Christ, angels, Adam, Eve, animals, plants, and the month characters represented in frontal and lateral ways. The undefined backgrounds combine abstract planes that resemble the sky with curves imitating hills and waved stripes as signs of streams, tides,

⁵⁴ ZUMTHOR, Paul (1994): p. 23.

and seas. The winds area may be a total conceptual space due to the geometric structure of the bottom. It is related to a cartographic scheme because of the clusters illustrating islands, mountains and territories on the edges: a common land depiction in medieval maps. In the low part of the circle, birds and whales appear (*volatilia a coelis et cete grandia*). The sea is shaped by linear reddish waves which contain fish, a crab, an aquatic viper and two cetacean specimens. Towards the right, the quadrupeds are on curved hills with small flowers. Thus, these geometric schemes seem to show an overhead vision of the universe reflecting a spatial and temporary order that departs from God. This structure is upside down and the diverse actions of the beings can be seen in a clear way.

About the second object, The *Facundus Beatus' Mappaemundi* reveals a specific perception of territory. This Apocalypse illuminated manuscript dated from 1047 was commissioned by Fernand I and Sancha. The codex is signed by Facundus who also probably worked on the illuminations with another artist. A contemporary copy of the *Etymologiae*⁵⁵ with its own *Mappaemundi* version dedicated to Sancha and Sancho could be a possible model. The human figures still hold stylistic forms reminiscent of tenth century manuscript art⁵⁶.

In the Prologue of the Second Book, Beatus of Liébana evoked to Isidore's *Etymologiae* and *De Ortu et Obitu Patrum* to comment *Ecclesia et Synagoga*. The *Mappaemundi* shows the *Gestae Apostolorum*: the designation of a certain part of the world to where every apostle should go in the evangelization mission (fig. 2). The illuminator based himself on the Isidorian tripartite graph of the world which was essential for Early Medieval cartographical notions. The abstract idea of space is constituted by a rectangle with rounded corners whose blue straight sides represent the ocean. It is surrounded by seas and rivers shaping the map model called 'T in O' with central axes that describe the Mediterranean. Europe occupies the left side (the North), Africa is in the right (the South) and Asia is above (the East).

Many components allude to some geographical elements such as the Nile, the Danube and the Tanais rivers, different oceanic and Mediterranean islands, the

⁵⁵ Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de El Escorial, Cod. & I.3.

⁵⁶ WILLIAMS, John (1998): p. 34, 38.

deserts in the extreme northeastern and southwestern points of the world, and mountains like the Pyrenees and the Alps⁵⁷. As Isidore of Seville stated, the mounts were the highest elevations of the land and they were called like that because of their prominence⁵⁸. The mount Taurus (*mons Taurus*) is illustrated by vegetable shapes with the phrase *hic bird Phoenix*, which refers to the mythological Greco-Roman tradition of birds. This mount is near to the Red Sea and the fourth part of the world where medieval people believed that strange beasts and races lived. This one evoked the unknown non-evangelized world: an inhospitable non-place. Moreover, Asia contains an important spatial and symbolic *locus*: the Garden of Eden. The original sin is personified by Adam, Eve, and the serpent flanked by two red trees. Furthermore, an architectural style prototype symbolizes Jerusalem⁵⁹.



Fig. 2. Scribe (and illuminator?) Facundus - Leonese royal scriptorium-, *Mappaemundi*. The *Facundus Beatus*, 1047, Illuminated Manuscript (Ink on parchment), 360 × 280 mm (each folio). Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS Vitrina 14-2 (ff. 63v-64r).
Foto de: Biblioteca Nacional de España <http://bdh-rd.bne.es/viewer.vm?id=0000051522>

⁵⁷ SÁENZ-LÓPEZ PÉREZ, Sandra (2014): p. 69.

⁵⁸ "Montes sunt tumores terrarum altissimi, dicti quod sint eminentes". SAN ISIDORO DE SEVILLA (627-630): XIV, 8, 1, p. 1034.

⁵⁹ YARZA LUACES, Joaquín (2006): p. 132.

This *Mappaemundi* covers abstract approaches of the Earth, fixing the real geography with Christian places. Cartographic and geographic points of view are unified by symbolic meanings:

Both in the selectivity of their content and in their signs and styles of representation, maps are a way of conceiving, articulating, and structuring the human world which is based towards, promoted by, and exerts influence upon particular sets of social relations⁶⁰.

The comparison of both representations leads to some preliminary ideas. In both cases, the general configuration of the space is solved through basic geometric figures such as the circle, the square and the rectangle. These synthetic schemes allow the rest of the smaller figures to be arranged in an orderly way. In turn, it exists a general tendency to a formal simplification; for example, both in the tapestry and in the map, the hills and the islands – natural elevations of the land- are driven by semicircular or triangular shapes to indicate their prominences.

Nevertheless, the fact that they are two objects with different subjects and purposes cannot be overlooked. The tapestry seeks to represent the totality of the created universe while the *Mappaemundi* aims to indicate different places on the Earth. In the first one, different viewpoints are placed to assemble the divine look as much as the human one, and consequently, the details of everything are highlighted. The second displays an exclusively cartographic look of the Earth and its parts, with a greater simplification and schematization of its components.

About the agency of these objects, it is interesting to think of the Tapestry as a mobile *medium* made to be exhibited in different positions and from different heights before the eyes of the mass in this ecclesiastic environment, on the occasion of religious celebrations and political ceremonies. Because of its flexible materiality, it could be unfolded and hung from different places, aiming to offer an understandable visualization of such a complex narrative as the Genesis through several schemes and points of view. About the *mappaemundi*, we must considerer this cartographic discourse inserted into the

⁶⁰ HARLEY, John Brian (1988): p. 278.

context of an exegetical and apocalyptic book evoking the evangelization of the different parts of the Earth in relation to the *Gestae Apostolorum*. Yet, it also is necessary contemplate it as a luxury object commissioned by the royal couple, whose political message, expansive and redeeming, was at stake.

The heaven and the apocalyptic hell

These opposite topics that delimit extreme polarities in the making of landscape images will also be examined from other different visual and material productions such as wall paintings and a book's miniature.

On the one hand, the wall paintings in the arches of the Chapter house of the Cistercian Monastery of Santa María de Sigüenza in Huesca, were commissioned by Queen Sancha of Castile. They contain a version of the celestial Paradise painted by an anonymous master between 1196 and 1200. He used a detailed linear treatment with a restricted chromatic range of brown, ochre, blue, yellow, white, and purple shades. Murals incorporated the incipient '1200 Style': a combination of French trends, Byzantine features, and ancient revivals⁶¹.



Fig. 3. Unknown author, *God showing the Paradise to Adam and Eve*, ca. 1196-1200, Fresco traded to canvas, Monastery of Santa María of Sigüenza's Chapter Room, 420 × 420 × 70 cm. Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya. Number of catalogue - MNAC/ MAC: 068703-001.

Foto de: Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya de Barcelona, <http://www.museunacional.cat/es/colleccion/dios-muestra-el-paraiso-adan-y-eva-de-la-sala-capitular-de-sigüenza/mestre-de-la-sala-capitular-de-sigüenza/068703-001>

⁶¹ CASTIÑEIRAS GONZÁLEZ, Manuel; CAMPS I SORIA, Jordi (2008): p. 18.

The iconographic program is based on three narrative cycles: the episodes of the Old and New Testament with an intermediated one⁶². In the first, the scenes of God's presentation of Paradise to Adam and Eve and the education in the work of the land by the angel are framed by a full decorated band with flora, fauna, and geometric motifs (fig. 3). The anthropomorphic figures are surrounded by the exuberant nature emphasized by several types of trees and beasts. The medieval use of the term *locus amoenus* involved such paradisiac garden idea in relation with the ancient Latin literature of Ovid (*Fasti*) and Virgil (*The Eclogues* and *The Georgics*). That scenery included a spring tempered environment where watercourses crossed the hills and fresh groves were the habitat of flowers, fruits, and birds⁶³. From this general archetype derived considerable medieval garden representations. These images were depicted either as blossoming profane parks of nobility, as places of refreshment to the senses to reach God. In the fifteenth century, these ideal visions were widely developed⁶⁴ as prove the *millefleurs* gardens⁶⁵ in the tapestries of the Lady and the Unicorn⁶⁵ or the Paradise in *Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*⁶⁶.

The *horror vacui* in Sigena's paintings does not imply disorder, but beauty and perfection. The medieval vision of landscapes aimed at revealing the totality of their animal, vegetable and geographical parts in clear schemes. To expose the abundance of natural elements was a way to show the *spectrum* of creatures created by God. When Isidore of Seville mentioned Asia, he defined the Paradise as an eastern place whose Greek name translated into Latin meant *garden*. It has forests and fruit trees: even the Tree of life. The weather is template; the air is not cold neither warm⁶⁷. Accordingly, these wall paintings exhibit a detailed naturalistic representation of the flora (fig. 4). Semicircles suggest mounts and among the tree branches there are animals formally linked

⁶² SUREDA, Joan (1985): p. 353.

⁶³ RODRÍGUEZ BOTE, María Teresa (2014): p. 383.

⁶⁴ LANDSBERG, Sylvia (1996): p. 5.

⁶⁵ Musée National du Moyen Âge, Paris (late fifteenth century).

⁶⁶ f.126r, Musée Condé, Chantilly (ca. 1411).

⁶⁷ "Paradisus est locus in orientis partibus constitutus, cuius vocabulum ex Graeco in latinum vertitur hortus [...] est enim omne genere ligni et pomiferarum arborum consitus, habens etiam et lignum vitae: non ibi frigus, non aestus, sed perpetua aeris temperies". SAN ISIDORO DE SEVILLA (627-630): XIV, 3, 2, p. 998.

to the contemporary English Bestiaries. It is possible to identify deer, birds and dragons; the last one alluding to the Sin.



Fig. 4 Unknown author, *God showing the Paradise to Adam and Eve (vegetation detail)*, ca. 1196-1200, Fresco traded to canvas, Monastery of Santa María of Sigena's Chapter Room, 420 × 420 × 70 cm. Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya. Number of catalogue - MNAC/ MAC: 068703-001.

Foto de: Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya de Barcelona <http://www.museunacional.cat/es/colleccio/dios-muestra-el-paraiso-adan-y-eva-de-la-sala-capitular-de-sigena/mestre-de-la-sala-capitular-de-sixena/068703-001>

On the other hand, the *Facundus Beatus'* miniature titled the *Woman clothed with the sun and the dragon* show an opposite place: the Apocalyptic Hell (fig. 5). As John stated, while the woman was about to give birth, the red dragon with seven heads and ten horns (which is the devil)⁶⁸ threatened her; and this image also include the battle against Saint Michael's hosts⁶⁹. The space is treated in an almost abstract form with successive bands of colours. In contrast to the blue plane that symbolizes the sky, the red and orange ones denote the evil place. However, a light blue rectangle expresses the Hell where the devil is enchained together with the impious. A visual texture of small vertical lines suggests a steamy environment. The concise structure reveals a profound

⁶⁸ "Et uisum est aliud signum in coelo: ecce draco roseus magnus, id est diabolus." BEATO DE LIÉBANA (ca. 776): Liber Sextus 2 § 9, p. 660.

⁶⁹ Revelation 12, 1-18.

symbolism and is linked to the dangerous *locus agrestis* where nature escapes of human domain⁷⁰.



Fig. 5. Scribe (and illuminator?) Facundus -Leónese royal scriptorium-, *The woman clothed with the sun and the dragon*, *The Facundus Beatus*, 1047, Illuminated Manuscript (Ink on parchment), 360 × 280 mm (each folio). Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS Vitrina 14-2 (ff.186v-187r).

Foto de: Biblioteca Nacional de España <http://bdh-rd.bne.es/viewer.vm?id=0000051522>

In these Facundus Beatus' illuminations, the threatening environment reflected in the *locus agrestis* typology, offers a visual effective device of Hell. It circumscribes an express dread towards the unrestrained natural forces and to the pernicious consequences caused to the living beings. This area is wild, rustic, and unmanageable as it was the medieval forest. The northern wild landscapes were related to darkness, terror, suffering and misfortune⁷¹. Thus, the visual pictures of Hell alluded to these sinister atmospheres and to the tortures suffered by sinners. Therefore, this miniature displays a dour landscape in a synthetic and symbolic manner, including the steam and infernal fire depicted by short red lines in the sea of the naked sinners.

In both examples, different modalities of representation of these two opposed topics based on the figures' disposition are found. On the one hand, in

⁷⁰ RODRIGUEZ BOTE, María Teresa (2014): pp. 384-385.

⁷¹ CLARK, Kenneth (1961): p. 18.

Sigena's paintings, there exists a heaviness of shapes that derives in a *horror vacui* meant to reinforce the ideas of abundance, richness and exuberance of nature. In this respect, the concept of *locus amoenus* gets to materialize in this multiplicity of connected floral and animal forms an infinite continuity. On the other hand, the concept of *locus agrestis* is expressed in the miniature by way of a strategic location of every figure in the visual discourse, occupying places that stress the meaning of opposition, fight and combat. In addition, the use of strong and warm colours strengthens the infernal environment.

This last idea of landscape contrasts with the idyllic settings of Sigena appointed before. Similarly, their materiality and agency support different scopes. These infernal landscapes take up two folios of a manuscript destined to an individualized understanding. The power of their shapes and colours seek to be fixed in the memory of the reader, whereas the wall paintings, with their abundant and flourishing nature, were seeking to raise the beholder's view, allowing a collective perception of these immense, magnificent and heavenly landscapes.

The spaces of human actions

Other medieval landscapes can be appreciated in the iconographic program of the Pantheon of the Kings in San Isidoro's Royal Collegiate of León. This aristocratic cemetery preserves a pictorial cycle including pictorial series about Christ's infancy, the Apocalypse and the Passion. Initially, the painting plan promoted by the Infanta Urraca was assigned between 1160 and 1170, and before 1149: the date of the new church's consecration⁷². The year 1100 was also considered as the time of the mural completion, just after the Princess's death⁷³. Therese Martin noted that although most of the architectural construction was under the patronage of the Infant, Queen Urraca was crucial to undertake the paintings ended around 1109⁷⁴.

⁷² VIÑAYO GONZÁLEZ, Antonio (1971): p. 7.

⁷³ SUREDA, Joan (1985): p. 334.

⁷⁴ MARTIN, Therese (2006): p. 135.



Fig. 6. Unknown author, *The Annunciation to the shepherds*, First half of the twelfth century, Fresco, 300 × 500 cm (Size of the vault's section). León, Pantheon of the Kings.

Foto de:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Pante%C3%B3n_de_la_Real_Colegiata_de_San_Isidoro_de_Le%C3%B3n#/media/File:12th_century_unknown_painters_-_The_Annunciation_to_the_Shepherds_-_WGA19696.jpg

The frescoes were finished during the first half of the twelfth century and they hold Biblical figures painted in a dense Romanesque language. The scene of *The Annunciation to the shepherds* deserves particular attention (fig. 6). In this image, the landscape relates to the garden of the fortunate ones and the Paradisiac Christian motif. The iconography of the *locus amoenus* is evoked again, but with components of the pastoral bucolic poetry of Theocritus, Virgil, and Ovid⁷⁵. Hence, the mural shows two shepherds doing their rural activities to guarantee the daily survival. The one who gives water to a dog listens to the holy notice of the angel, whereas the other interrupts the tillage of the land. It is suitable to remember the notion of space raised by W.J.T. Mitchell, as a scene of human practices and exchanges⁷⁶.

The landscape panorama is vast: trees with white flowers emerge from wavy hills, revealing the irregularities of the ground, while the blue bands imitate the rivers. In *Fasti*, Ovid professed that fields germinate from the seeds that the peasants sow and evoked to the steers that stay near the manger. Due to their

⁷⁵ SUREDA, Joan (1985): p. 262.

⁷⁶ MITCHELL, William John Thomas (2002): p. x.

labour, they would return with the spring⁷⁷. This season was generally used in medieval pastoral images to advocate an ideal landscape, as it happens in this painting.

Furthermore, goats, oxen, deer, and cows are amidst nature and men, who want to domesticate them. In the seventh *Bucolic* of Virgil, the shepherd Corydon declaimed to the chestnut trees to be raised and that fruits to be lying under them⁷⁸ as a signal of the exuberance and fecundity of nature. Consequently, all these elements support the consciousness of a peaceful location, which mundane temporality is suddenly broken by the immortal angel. The classic literary *locus amoenus* involved multisensory features: descriptions of colours, sounds of animals, smells, and tactile textures of flowers, as well as the fruits' flavours⁷⁹. The pictorial language of these murals connotes similar sensations in a synoptic way, presenting diverse animals and vigorous trees.

Moreover, a cycle of the months painted in the intrados of the arches also show the human field activities. Some of them represent succinct landscapes and natural spaces. Fauna and flora work out key- signs for recognizing each season, for instance, the pruning that takes place in March with a man cutting branches, or September where a peasant with two pigs eating acorns from a tree. Thus, time is in full relation with space and landscape. The linear time managed by God, which has begun with the Fall for Man and that would finish with Redemption, coexists with a profane circular one limited by the cosmologic natural cycles that regulates human events⁸⁰. Certainly, this landscape painted on the ceiling of a royal cemetery works as a visual powerful device that evokes a clear idea of rebirth and redemption. In this case, both the divine and the human times operate as indispensable mechanisms of the constant gear between life and death, death and life.

⁷⁷ OVIDIO (ca. 8-12 A.D.): Book I, verse 660, p. 49.

⁷⁸ "Stant et iuniperi et castaneae hirsutae; / strata iacent passim sua quaeque sub arbore poma; / omnia nunc ridet: at, si formosus Alexis / montibus his abeat, uideas et flumina sicca". VIRGILIO (41-37 B.C.): Seventh Bucolic, verses 53-56, p. 150.

⁷⁹ RODRÍGUEZ-PANTOJA MÁRQUEZ, Miguel (1999): p. 96.

⁸⁰ SUREDA, Joan (1985): pp. 273-274.

Animals and plants: components of synthetic landscapes

Lastly, one of the wall paintings of the parochial church of Santa María de Taüll include zoomorphic elements that suggest symbolic landscapes. In 1123 the Bishop of Roda made the consecration ceremony of the building⁸¹: the approximate date for the creation of the mural cycle, which was completed later. The frescoes continue with Early Christian and Byzantine iconographic codes. They incorporated Catalan Romanesque features with strident chromatic bands for the backgrounds and a substantial body-language in the figures. Although the *Maiestas Mariae* of the central apse is one of the most significant items of the architectonic compound, the wall paintings of the lateral ships, the fronton of the apses, the arches, and the columns display several motifs referred to the Incarnation, the Old Testament stories, the Final Judgment and the weighing of the souls by Saint Michael. They hold an extensive didactic function destined to convince Christian congregation.

In this selected image, two animals are fighting: a wolf is chasing a gazelle (fig. 7). It could be a zoomorphic metaphor of the battle between Good against Evil used commonly in Christian discursive contexts. In the top of the pictorial plane, two birds fly and emulate the position of the quadrupedal animals. The biggest one is a rapacious specimen with threatening claws keeping a similar attitude of assault as those of the wolf. The other bird of fragile body moves in the opposite direction and seems to be harmless and running away, as the gazelle.

These animals chase each other in a cosmic environment which is composed of circles and stars in grey and red hues. Other decorative forms are being jumped by the gazelle, producing a dynamic atmosphere. The quadrupeds are supported on a band of geometric abstract figures that suggests Byzantine influence. The background painted in a neutral colour contrasts with the strident yellow of the gazelle and the red of the wolf. The iconographic animal topics, as the cosmic ones, seem to float in an almost abstract setting. Only these signs – figures of animals and stars allow to anchor the idea of a symbolized nature. Under the Romanesque painting style, landscape receives an important formal

⁸¹ CASTIÑEIRAS GONZÁLEZ, Manuel; CAMPS I SORIA, Jordi (2008): p. 72.

conceptualization⁸². Here, nature is a simplified description of its components, without references to specific places. In order to reformulate the concept of natural landscape and to represent it in the frame of liturgical speeches attended collectively by the faithful, it is possible to think that in the wall paintings of Taüll, the symbol became an essential tool.



Fig. 7. Unknown author, *Wolf chasing a gazelle*, after 1123, Fresco traded to canvas, Church of Santa María of Taüll, 215 × 233 cm. Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya. Number of catalogue - MNAC/ MAC: 015965-003.

Foto de: Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya de Barcelona <http://www.museunacional.cat/es/colleccio/lobo-persiguiendo-una-gacela-de-santa-maria-de-taull/mestre-de-santa-maria-de-taull/015965-003>

Some final ideas

The aim of this paper was to make a first approximation of different material objects which represent places, spaces, and landscapes from early medieval Iberian kingdoms. Iconic and symbolic components worked together to create visual environments. The concept of space mediated by cartographical schemes and abstract models was used to assist the understanding of the universe and the Earth. They were depicted by varied points of view and supported visual signals of specific geographical places like certain rivers, seas, and islands aside from Biblical ones, as Jerusalem. The *loci amoeni* and the *loci*

⁸² SUREDA, Joan (1985): p. 252.

agrestes patterns taken from the classic pastoral literature, allowed to portray places as Paradise and Hell. The representation of the paradisiac garden with the fusion of active human figures, expressed the idea of spaces altered by dynamic exchanges between culture and nature. Furthermore, zoomorphic and vegetal representations worked as pointers of landscapes regarding the Biblical stories.

During the Middle Ages, space and time were always traversed by the divine order but also affected by human actions. Each of these environments could be conceptualised like an *imago agens* in relation with their aptitude to show, communicate and persuade, by conventional codes, in the liturgical monastic and social contexts. Their performative levels were intrinsically tied to the material features of each object. The Tapestry was a portable object employed in liturgical and political festivities in the Cathedral of Girona. The wall paintings were received in religious contexts and sponsored by the royal Iberian authorities. The Beatus manuscripts were used for the study by the monks instead of their apocalyptic landscapes of strong colours and synthetic forms possibly worked as vital mnemonic tools in the task of learning the exegetical text. The agency of these landscape repertories operated in different ways as current *mediums* to persuade and convince in the Christian doctrine and royal power.

Algunas ideas finales

El objetivo fundamental de este artículo ha consistido en realizar un análisis en torno a diferentes expresiones visuales pertenecientes a los reinos cristianos ibéricos de los siglos XI y XII, en las cuales fueron representados diversos lugares, espacios y paisajes. Sobre soportes y materiales muy heterogéneos, fue posible observar la inclusión de aspectos icónicos y simbólicos que recreaban visualmente variados ambientes y entornos. El espacio y el tiempo de los hombres medievales estuvo siempre intrínsecamente unido al orden divino, aunque condicionado, no obstante, por las actividades humanas.

Como se ha podido examinar, las visiones en torno al universo y la Tierra implicaron la expresión de espacialidades fuertemente mediatizadas por esquemas y modelos abstractos, reflejados en modelos cósmicos y cartográficos. En ellos, se condensó una interesante multiplicidad de puntos de vista aplicados

al mismo plano representacional. Igualmente, se incluyó la mención de lugares geográficos específicos tales como determinados ríos, mares e islas, así como también lugares propios del relato bíblico, como ser Jerusalén. Los *loci amoeni* y los *loci agrestes*, patrones retomados de la literatura clásica pastoril, permitieron corporeizar en imágenes ciertos lugares emblemáticos para la cosmovisión medieval, como el Paraíso o el Infierno. En este sentido, la representación del jardín paradisíaco configurado a partir de la incorporación de figuras humanas realizando diferentes actividades campestres y pastoriles, consiguió expresar la idea de un espacio como una trama de interacciones dinámicas entre la cultura y la naturaleza —inclusive considerándolo desde una perspectiva antropológica—. Además, cabe enfatizar que, en estos entornos visuales, los diversos motivos zoomorfos y vegetales funcionan como nodales indicadores paisajísticos estando en total vínculo con el discurso de las historias bíblicas. Estos conforman variadas imágenes-signo que contribuyeron al reconocimiento de determinados lugares y ambientes nombrados en las Sagradas Escrituras.

En efecto, estas diversas concepciones y parámetros utilizados para pensar las coordenadas espacio- temporales desde la perspectiva medieval, implican una interrelación continua entre lo divino y lo humano; entre la esfera sagrada y las acciones cotidianas que atravesaban la vida del hombre. Como se pudo apreciar en las representaciones del Paraíso y de los meses del año, los entornos espaciales y temporales demarcan estos aspectos. El tiempo sagrado y lineal establecido por Dios cuyo inicio había comenzado con el estado *postlapsario* y terminaría con la Redención, convive simultáneamente con un tiempo profano y circular, demarcado por los ciclos del cosmos y de la naturaleza que a su vez determinan las actividades humanas y los cambios en los ambientes en los cuales estas tienen lugar. Lo divino y lo humano se interceptan, se fusionan y se incluyen en las representaciones espaciales.

Entonces, es posible argumentar que cada una de estas imágenes de paisajes, espacios y lugares específicos pueden ser conceptualizadas en tanto *imago agens* —imagen agente— en relación directa con su aptitud de mostrar, comunicar y persuadir mediante códigos convencionales en los contextos litúrgicos, monásticos y regios. Su capacidad retórica visual operó de manera efectiva en estos ambientes de recepción. Asimismo, estas contienen diferentes

niveles performativos íntimamente relacionados con los dispositivos materiales que proporcionan cada una de ellas y que funcionan a partir de diversas dinámicas discursivas. El caso del Tapiz resulta destacable, ya que se trata de una objetualidad portable, con capacidad de ser trasladada de un sitio a otro dentro del templo, dependiendo de sus usos en festividades litúrgicas y/o políticas en el contexto arquitectónico de la Catedral de Girona. Mientras tanto, las pinturas murales fueron reservadas para operar como mensajes activos en ambientes religiosos sostenidos económicamente por el poder regio hispano. Pese a que su materialidad implicó que sus imágenes fueran sostenidas en las paredes de diversos ambientes, las espacialidades y los paisajes diseñados en los muros funcionaron de manera totalmente dinámica en el marco de los complejos entramados políticos y religiosos de ese momento. Por su parte, los entornos plasmados en los Beatos también resultaron de una importante agencialidad. Sus paisajes apocalípticos ubicados esta vez en códices, es decir, en objetos manipulables y transportables diariamente en función del estudio y las actividades de los monjes, destacaron por su protagonismo visual. Sus rotundos y saturados colores al mismo tiempo que sus formas sintéticas, significaron vitales herramientas mnemónicas para la tarea de aprender y afianzar por parte de los monjes el discurso exegético.

De esta forma, diferentes expresiones y variantes paisajísticas lograron manifestarse en imágenes, mostrando una selección retórica de puntos de vista en función del público diverso que las consumía y utilizaba, actuando como efectivos medios agentes persuasivos de la doctrina cristiana.

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