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***The church of Saint-Pierre
in Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne***

Landscape, Architecture, Sculpture, and Precious
Objects through the Experience
of the Medieval Pilgrim

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Abstract

Oggetto della presente tesi è la chiesa di Saint-Pierre a Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne, costruita nel XII secolo nel Limosino meridionale. Grazie alla sua vicinanza con le vie di pellegrinaggio giacobine, la struttura viene indagata non solo come associata ad un monastero a dipendenza cluniacense e ad una comunità urbana agli albori del proprio sviluppo, ma soprattutto come polo di attrazione della venerazione dei pellegrini, quali co-protagonisti nell'utilizzo della chiesa. Si è cercato, quindi, di comprendere come l'elemento del pellegrinaggio abbia caratterizzato ed influenzato la ricostruzione e la fruizione della chiesa di Beaulieu, sia nelle sue architetture che nel portale scolpito, e del suo tesoro.

Object of the present thesis is the church of Saint-Pierre in Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne, built in the twelfth century in the southern Limousin. Due to its closeness to the pilgrimage routes crossing France, the church has been analysed not only as part of a Cluniac monastery and of a newly born urban community, but mostly as an attractive pole for pilgrims, co-protagonists in its usage. It has been investigated how pilgrimage could have influenced the reconstruction and the fruition of the Beaulieu church, both in its architecture, sculpted portal and treasury.

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Introduction

The church of Saint-Pierre at Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne was erected in its current shape during the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth centuries, as part of the Benedictine monastic complex founded three centuries before in the meander of the river. Today the medieval church can be grasped in its architecture, despite the restorations undertaken between the nineteenth and the twenty-first centuries, as well as a large part of the sculptures of the majestic southern portal. Along with it, only scarce traces remain of the now lost monastery, such as the chapter hall and few other buildings.

Studied from the half of the nineteenth century, the church has been the object of various approaches, which evoked but never examined in depth the ‘functioning’ of the church. The plausible audience was defined quite early as composed by three groups: the monastic community, the inhabitants of the town, and the travellers. Only recently this aspect has been studied, but namely for what concerns the portal and the monastic community¹. Thus, this perspective has been left largely ‘unexplored’.

Nonetheless, the rich portal, the presence of a relatively well-preserved architecture, and of remarkable pieces of the treasury, makes Beaulieu a suitable case for investigating the intense and complex relationship that involved people and the sacred during the Middle Ages. Because of that, it seems interesting to try an analysis of these objects from the point of view of the beholders. The intense communicative power of the sculpted portal imagery as well as the attractiveness of the treasury were certainly as strong as today (if not even more) during the centuries when they were produced and firstly displayed to the viewers².

Therefore, the present work will focus mainly on the function of the church and its audience. Among the three types of viewers, that of the travellers will be analysed deeper, in particular the figure of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries pilgrim. Indeed, the pilgrim was particularly affected and attracted by the sacred buildings and the treasures kept within them. As Sigal pointed out, the medieval pilgrim had the possibility to experience in a unique way the sacred space, crossing it into its different ‘sections’, and accessing places not always opened to layfolk. Moreover, its peculiar and ‘liminal’ situation created also a direct connection with the laics too, among which the pilgrim was

¹ Cf. C. E. Besancon, *The French Romanesque Portals of Moissac, Souillac and Beaulieu: a Response to the Papal Reform Movement and Popular Heresy*, PhD Thesis, University of Southern California, a. y. 2012-2013, supervisor C. Malone; B. Franzé, *Art et réforme clunisienne: le porche sculpté de Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne*, «Bulletin du Centre d’études médiévales Saint-Germain d’Auxerre», 18/2, 2014, pp. 1-33; É. Haddad, *Le bien a l’épreuve du mal. À partir du tympan de Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne, adversité apocalyptique et image analogiste*, PhD Thesis, École de Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, a. y. 2018-2019, supervisor M. A. Polo de Beaulieu; M. L. Vescovi, *An Eschatological Mirror. The Romanesque Portal of Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne*, «Gesta. International Center of Medieval Art», vol. 56/1, 2017, pp. 53-80.

² For the communicative power of medieval imagery, cf. W. Cahn, *Romanesque Sculpture and the Spectator*, in *The Romanesque Frieze and its Spectator*, edited by D. Kahn, London, 1992, pp. 45-60.

included in official moments, such as liturgies³. Consequently, how could the ‘ideal pilgrim’ have interacted with the space and the objects of the church of Saint-Pierre at Beaulieu?

From this point of view the complex of the church will be approached, from its sculpted entrance to its sacred core, passing through the architecture. In this sense, the church will appear as a ‘systemic ensemble’ of parts cooperating between them and connected through the experience of the pilgrim. Thus, the analysis will consider the medieval remaining of the church, of its environment and treasury, completed by the written sources. The chosen method will involve the anthropological and historical perspectives with a particular attention to the human behaviour and the relationship with the objects and works of art, always endowed with the meanings and symbols evoked by the cultural background of the beholder⁴.

To better approach the ‘complex object’ of the church and its treasury the thesis will be structured in four chapters. The first will deal with the *status quaestionis* concerning the church and its treasury, trying to catch if and when the figure of the pilgrim was included in previous studies. Afterwards, the following chapter will deal directly with the object, described in its physical features, trying to understand to which extent the current building and decoration preserve the medieval shape. The dating of the church will be proposed through this analysis and by crossing the surviving written sources with the comparison with other similar buildings and sculptures.

The third and four chapters will be devoted to the approach of the church from the pilgrim’s perspective. In the third, the focus will be put on the building. At the beginning the wider dimension of the environmental placement of the church will be investigated, both for its connections with the net of the pilgrimage trails and for its relationship with the surrounding landscape. Gradually reducing the ray of the focus, the building as such will be considered in its hypothetical interaction with the pilgrim. After exploring the possible ways through which the pilgrim could have interpreted and interact with the imagery of the southern portal, threshold to the sacred space, the inner space of the church will be investigated as crossed and experienced by the pilgrim.

The final chapter of the thesis will deal with the treasury of the church, being the main element of attraction for the pilgrim. Thus, the gaze through which the remaining objects and those quoted in the written sources will be looked at will be as coherent as possible with that of the previous chapter.

³ See P. A. Sigal, *Reliques, pèlerinage et miracles dans l’Église médiévale (XIe-XIIIe siècles)*, «Revue d’histoire de l’Église de France», 76/197 (1990), pp. 193-211; cf. also V. Turner, E. Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture. Anthropological Perspectives*, New York, 1978.

⁴ Cf. *Migrating Art Historians on the Sacred Ways*, edited by I. Foletti, K. Kravčíková, A. Palladino, S. Rosenbergová, Brno-Roma, 2018; C. Roux, *Entre sacré et profane. Essai sur la symbolique et les fonctions du portail d’église en France entre le XIe et le XIIIe siècle*, «Revue belge de philologie et d’histoire», LXXXII/4, 2004, pp. 839-854; P. A. Sigal, *L’homme et le miracle dans la France médiévale (XIe-XIIIe siècle)*, Paris, 1985.

Without aiming to a complete reconstruction, the present work will propose a possibly new look to the church of Saint-Pierre, evoking its strong, potential expressiveness, which the sensible gaze of the pilgrim would have fully perceived, though in a peculiar and unique way.

I. Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne: the *status questionis*

I. 1. From the earliest sources to the Second World War

After the Maurists monks left the abbey in the last years of the eighteenth century, the first scientific notice about the Beaulieu former abbey church is attributed to abbot Jacques Texier (1813-1859) and dated back to 1843, followed the subsequent year by the one by Prosper Mérimée (1803-1870)⁵. In this period, Mérimée was charged to collect information about the cultural heritage in the whole of France, and about the Beaulieu church he was writing as of «*fort digne d'intérêt*»⁶. In the same period, abbot Texier was also the first to be interested into the epigraphic inscriptions and the treasury in Beaulieu, inserting the former in his *Manuel d'épigraphie*, and the latter in his *Dictionnaire*⁷. The main contribution of abbot Texier was to have shared with the scientific community the existence of the church and its treasure. In his notice of 1843, the abbot described the southern portal and its sculptures, stressing particularly his opinion about the verve and the vitality of the sculpted figures, comparing them to those of Callot, which should be far from the 'enthusiastic' work in Beaulieu. By defending the originality of the sculptures, Texier also noticed the general absence of inscriptions from the tympanum and the lintels. The former had been interpreted by the abbot as a Last Judgement, reading the lintels as a representation of hell; and this interpretation should have been reinforced, in his opinion, by the presence of the wheels of the prophets in the background. In this first description Texier was not speaking about the lateral reliefs and the sculptures of the sins⁸.

For what concerns the two other contributions of abbot Texier, they were mainly descriptive, as in the one dedicated to the Christian jewellery, the pieces of the treasury of Beaulieu were described in the entry of the relative type of object. The statue of the Virgin had been described with other similar statues⁹. The reliquary box decorated with Limousin enamels had been described among with

⁵ For the notice written by abbot Texier, see J. Texier, *Notes sur le portail de l'église de Beaulieu*, in *Congrès archéologique de France*, proceedings of the national conference (Poitiers, 1843), edited by the Société française d'archéologie, Paris, 1843, pp. 136-139.

⁶ About the notification of the Beaulieu church by Mérimée, see A. M. Pêcheur, É. Proust, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne. Abbaye Saint-Pierre*, in *Congrès archéologique de France. 163^e session. Corrèze 2005*, proceedings of the international conference edited by the Société d'archéologie française, Paris, 2007, pp. 83-103: 85, 102, note 20; for the document itself, it is kept in the Médiathèque de l'Architecture du Patrimoine (Paris), binder 19019 2 002.

⁷ See respectively for the inscriptions J. Texier, *Manuel d'épigraphie. Suivi du recueil des inscriptions du Limousin*, Poitiers, 1851, pp. 157-158; and for the treasure Id., *Dictionnaire d'orfèvrerie, de gravure et de cisellerie chrétiennes, ou de la mise en œuvre artistique des métaux, des émaux et des pierres*, in *Encyclopédie théologique, ou troisième et dernière série de dictionnaires sur toutes les parties de la science religieuse*, 60 voll., 1855-1866, vol. 27, 1857, pp. 369-370, 1042-1043.

⁸ Cf. note 7.

⁹ In his description of the sculpture of the Virgin Texier is stressing particularly the symbolic meaning of the proportions and dimensions of the sculpture, in this way, for instance, the over dimensioning of the head means the high level of

the other reliquary boxes¹⁰. In his *Manuel d'épigraphie*, Texier wrote about the two inscriptions still visible in the scenes of the Temptations of Christ on the right pillar of the portico in Beaulieu (fig. 28b). As an introduction to the epigraphies, Texier wrote a short description of the sculptural ensemble of the portico, which had yet to be restored, repeating in general what can be read in the notice of the 1843. Examining the lateral reliefs, Texier visually described the images, using the inscriptions to achieve the overall meaning of the subject. He also connected the scenes in the lateral reliefs directly to the tympanum, which should be read as the Last Judgement, ascribing to the inscriptions the key role in the general understanding of the sculptures of the porch¹¹.

In 1859 Jules Edmond Maximin Deloche (1817-1900) collected, transcribed and published all the documents survived from the archives of Beaulieu's monastery, scattered after its closure in 1790¹². The 157 folii of the *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Beaulieu* were enriched in Deloche's publication by an introduction and comment by the editor. This work still remains the authority for this written source of the abbey of Beaulieu. Moreover, Deloche added to the study of the documents a complete description of the ruins of the monastery as well as of the church and its sculpted decoration. The latter was attributed through many parallels to the first half of the twelfth century. Although summarized, this description allows to give a glance to the monastery before the restorations undertook in the second half of the nineteenth century¹³.

Starting from this first group of notices, Beaulieu began to be studied and published mainly in the local context, appearing in bulletins and journals of regional societies. After abbot Texier, the next main contribution about the monumental and architectural heritage of Beaulieu's church was written by abbot Jean-Baptiste Poulbrière (1842-1917). He dedicated to Beaulieu three main articles, in which he wrote extensively about the church, its sculptures and treasure¹⁴. Poulbrière was the first who fully analysed the sculpted porch and the architecture of the church, dedicating to each of them a separate chapter¹⁵. He dated the current church to the twelfth century, the apex of the economic and

intelligence and the presence of conscious judgement and memory, see Texier, *Dictionnaire d'orfèvrerie* cit., pp. 1042-1043.

¹⁰ As well as with the statue of the Virgin, also in the case of the reliquary box, the author wrote a visual description of the object, after a brief identification of the iconographic subject, see *Ibid.*, pp. 369-370.

¹¹ For the description of the epigraphical writings in the Beaulieu porch made by Texier, see the reference at his *Manuel d'épigraphie* at note 7.

¹² See J. E. M. Deloche, *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Beaulieu en Limousin*, Paris, 1859; with the enrichment and the revision made in R. H. Bautier, *Les diplômes carolingiens suspects de l'abbaye de Beaulieu*, «Bulletin philologique et historique jusqu'à 1715 du Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques de France», 1955-1956, pp. 375-398.

¹³ See *Ibid.*, pp. CCLXIX-CCLXXVII.

¹⁴ The three main contributions by Poulbrière are: J.-B. Poulbrière, *L'église du Beaulieu et son portail sculpté*, «Bulletin de la société archéologique et historique de Limousin», 22, 1873, pp. 41-103; Id., *L'église et le portail de Beaulieu*, in *Congrès archéologique de France*, proceedings of the national conference (Senlis, 1877) edited by the Société française d'archéologie, Paris, 1878, pp. 582-611; Id., *Beaulieu*, in *Dictionnaire historique et archéologique des paroisses du diocèse de Tulle*, edited by A. Pelissier, J.-B. Poulbrière, Brive la Gaillarde, 1964, pp. 102-122.

¹⁵ For the sculpted porch Poulbrière stress the absence of deep analysis of the iconography before his work, see Poulbrière, *L'église de Beaulieu et son portail* cit., p. 65.

political ascension of the monastery, when Beaulieu entered in the network of Cluny. In dating the building and reconstructing the history of the monument, Poulbrière laid on the *Cartulaire*, through the work made by Deloche, and on the history of the abbey by Amand Vaslet (d. 1733), prior of the abbey from 1723 to 1733. The latter was written in 1727 but edited and published only in 1884 by Poulbrière¹⁶. The text was structured as a narration of the history of the monastery from its foundation to 1727. In this sense, the author focused mainly in the description of the development of the monastery through the main events that occurred in the centuries, laying on the documents still available at that time. Speaking about the church, Vaslet was dating the medieval structure to the time of the founder, Rodolphe de Tourenne, *i.e.* the central decades of the ninth century. The description of the building was very essential and limited to the architectural setting. Nonetheless, the sculpted porch was quoted and briefly described as decorated with sculptures representing the Last Judgement and held by a central pillar in form of an Atlas¹⁷. Despite its summarized form, Vaslet's writing remains a valuable source, since the author could access to documents now lost, like the inventories of the treasury¹⁸. Moreover, it gives a complete list of the restorations and reconstructions undertaken by the Maurists and some glances on the use the latter were doing of the different spaces.

About the treasury, after the work by Texier and the references in Vaslet and Poulbrière, which were more focused on the relics and their history than the reliquaries themselves¹⁹, the main studies were made by Ernest Jean-Baptiste Rupin (1845-1909), who wrote at first a brief article on the statue of the Virgin in 1879²⁰. He dated the sculpture at the mid of the twelfth century, and carefully described it reporting some historical issues as well, with particular concern about its conservation through the difficulties experienced by the abbey²¹. Rupin did also an iconographic analysis, inserting Beaulieu's Virgin in the traditional representation of the same subject, using it also to discern the date of the sculpture itself²². The author was then quoting and correcting the notice made by Texier and comparing the statue in Beaulieu to the one of Sainte-Foy and the one of the Virgin, both in Conques,

¹⁶ See Vaslet, A., *Abregé de l'histoire de l'abbaye de Beaulieu en Bas-Limousin*, edited by Poulbrière, J.-B., «Bulletin de la Société scientifique, historique et archéologique de la Corrèze», 6, 1884, pp. 59-178.

¹⁷ For the dating of the church and the brief description of the sculpted porch by Vaslet see *Ibid.*, pp. 81-82, 130.

¹⁸ For the description of the treasury by Vaslet, based on the inventories but also on what was left in the eighteenth century, see *Ibid.*, pp. 92-97.

¹⁹ For the reference and description of the relics and the treasure in Beaulieu see Poulbrière, *L'église de Beaulieu et son portail* cit., pp. 58-64.

²⁰ For the article of Rupin see E. Rupin, *Statue de la Vierge en bois recouvert de plaques d'argent. XIIe siècle. Église de Beaulieu (Corrèze)*, «Bulletin de la Société scientifique, historique et archéologique de la Corrèze», 2, 1879, pp. 231-244.

²¹ About the historical issues collected by Rupin see *Ibid.*, pp. 236-237.

²² For the iconographic analysis of the statue of Virgin in Beaulieu Rupin was quoting the work of Viollet-le-Duc and the abbot Texier see *Ibid.*, pp. 239-241. About the iconography it worth to be mentioned the small discussion between Rupin and Leon Palustre, which argued around the interpretation of the object that the Virgin is keeping in her right hand. For the point of view by Palustre see Palustre, L., *La Vierge de Beaulieu*, «Bulletin monumental», 46 (1880), pp. 597, 826-829; for the discussion among Palustre and Rupin see Palustre, L., Rupin, E., *Discussions sur la Vierge de Beaulieu*, «Bulletin de la Société scientifique, historique et archéologique de la Corrèze», 3 (1881), pp. 171-179.

and to many other examples, finally connecting it to the Limousine production²³. A few years later, Rupin wrote a brief article focused mainly on the ancient gems reused in the crowns of both the Virgin and Christ, adding also a plate reproducing the intaglios and the cameo²⁴. On the other medieval pieces of the treasure, Rupin again was to be among the first to write about same. In particular, he first wrote an article about the two reliquaries in the form of arms²⁵, dated at the thirteenth century, and then again about all those pieces of the treasure in his monograph about the Limousine jewellery, in which he also analysed the reliquary box covered with Limousine enamels²⁶.

A general presentation of the objects of the treasury in Beaulieu was written also by Émile Molinier (1857-1906) in the Catalogue of the exposition of the Limousine jewellery which took place in Tulle in 1887, where all the surviving pieces of the treasury received their own catalogue sheet, published once again in the local bulletin²⁷.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the first appearance of Beaulieu's church in a general monograph has to be seen in the text written by André Michel (1853-1925) in 1905, in which the description of the church was limited to a brief reference at the sculpted porch, related with other sculptures in the overview of the Romanic sculpture in France, in the volume dedicated to the Romanesque art²⁸. Beaulieu was then included in the research about the sculpted representations of the bell tower in the Romanesque art, made by René Fage (1848-1929)²⁹. These two examples, despite their brevity, show that at the beginning of the twentieth century Beaulieu's church was known also at a wider level, being included in monographies and articles which went over the borders of the Corrèze. In 1911, in fact, the sculpted porch was included by Wolf-Heinrich von der Mülbe (1879-1965) in his work on Romanesque and Gothic French tympana. Being the first appearance of Beaulieu in a non-French writing shows the spread of the notices and articles of the previous century³⁰.

²³ For the comparison between the Virgin of Beaulieu and the other examples of the same kind of statues see Rupin, *Statue de la Vierge en bois* cit., pp. 241-243.

²⁴ See E. Rupin, *Statue de la Vierge. Conservée dans l'église de Beaulieu (Corrèze)*, «Bulletin de la Société scientifique, historique et archéologique de la Corrèze», 11, 1889, pp. 247-251.

²⁵ See E. Rupin, *Reliquaires en forme de bras du XIIIe siècle. Église du Beaulieu (Corrèze)*, «Bulletin de la Société scientifique, historique et archéologique de la Corrèze», 4, 1882, pp. 25-35.

²⁶ See E. Rupin, *L'œuvre de Limoges*, Paris, 1890, pp. 81-85 (the statue of the Virgin), 352-353 (the reliquary enameled box), 481-483 (the two reliquaries in form of arms).

²⁷ See E. Molinier, *L'orfèvrerie limousine à l'exposition de Tulle en 1887*, «Bulletin de la Société scientifique, historique et archéologique de la Corrèze», 9, 1887, pp. 469-537: 499-500 (reliquary box with Limousine enamels), 520-522 (two reliquaries in form of arm), 524 (cylindric reliquary with monogram), 532-533 (statue of the Virgin).

²⁸ See A. Michel, *L'art Roman*, in *Histoire de l'art depuis les temps chrétiens jusqu'à nos jours*, Paris, 18 voll., 1905-1929, II, 1905, p. 625.

²⁹ See M. R. Fage, *Clochers sculptés sur les porches de Moissac et Beaulieu*, «Bulletin de la Société des antiquaires de France», 81, 1907, pp. 199-200.

³⁰ See W.-H. von der Mülbe, *Die Darstellung des Jüngen Gerichts an der Romanischen und Gotischen Kirchenportalen Franchreichs*, Leipzig, 1911, pp. 37, 78.

In the short essay by Fage was also included the topic of the stylistic influence present in Beaulieu and its connection with Moissac, which was then developed by abbot Eugène Lefèvre-Pontalis (1862-1923) in an article of 1914³¹. In the latter, the main events of the whole history of the abbey were reported, including the recent restorations made between the second half of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth century³². Moreover, the church was described in detail: both in the architecture and in the sculpted porch, giving a complete iconographical analysis, too. The treasury was also mentioned, but with direct reference to the previous work by Rupin. The main innovation of this article was the attempt to classify and insert the church of Beaulieu in a 'regional school', due to the stylistic analysis of the architecture and the sculpted porch. After excluding the previous attributions, Lefèvre-Pontalis shaped another 'regional school', naming it *école de Languedoc*, into which he locates Beaulieu's church³³. A few years later, Lefèvre-Pontalis wrote a general essay about the church and other main monuments in the village, for the national archeological Congress of the 1921³⁴. In this second article, the author proposed the same observations as he did in the previous one, but he developed a new point of view about the attribution of the church to the 'Limousine school', according to the study made by Fage on the rural churches of the region, which Lefèvre-Pontalis inscribes into his 'school of Languedoc'³⁵.

The first contribution on the treasury of Beaulieu after the work of Rupin is the notice made by abbot Jules Banchereau and published in the essay by Lefèvre-Pontalis of 1921³⁶. In this text Banchereau associated the statue of the Virgin to the Carolingian tradition; though dating it to the twelfth century, and to the contemporary Auvergnate production. He was then writing about the cylindric reliquary, attributing the monogram to the Carolingian production, but dating the object to the twelfth century, explaining that the monogram should have been a subsequent addition of an older element to the reliquary. The reliquary box with Limousine enamels was dated to the thirteenth century, as well as the two reliquaries in the form of arms, which Banchereau was connecting to the major production of this kind of objects.

The church of Beaulieu was again part of major works on the Romanesque art in France, first in the one by Émile Mâle (1862-1954)³⁷. In this monograph from 1922, Mâle dedicated an entire

³¹ See E. Lefèvre-Pontalis, *A quelle école faut-il rattacher l'église de Beaulieu (Corrèze)?*, «Bulletin monumental», 78, 1914, pp. 58-87.

³² For the historical notices and the restorations of the abbey, see *Ibid.*, pp. 58-60.

³³ About the attribution of the church in Beaulieu to the regional school of Languedoc, see *Ibid.*, pp. 80-87.

³⁴ See E. Lefèvre-Pontalis, *Beaulieu*, in *Congrès archéologique de France*, proceedings of the national conference (Limoges, 1921), edited by the Société française d'archéologie, Paris, 1923, pp. 365-394.

³⁵ See the references in *Ibid.*, pp. 386-387; for the essay wrote by Fage, see R. Fage, *Petites églises et églises rurales du Limousin*, «Bulletin archéologique du Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques», 1920, pp. 335-426.

³⁶ See J. Banchereau, *Trésor*, in *Beaulieu*, by E. Lefèvre-Pontalis, in *Congrès archéologique de France*, proceedings of the national conference (Limoges, 1921), edited by the Société française d'archéologie, Paris, 1923, pp. 388-392.

³⁷ See E. Mâle, *L'art religieux du XII^e siècle en France. Étude sur les origines de l'iconographie du Moyen Âge*, Paris, 1922.

paragraph to the analysis of the ‘iconographic influences’ that the tympanum in the church of Beaulieu had on the one in Saint-Denis. The scholar stated that the latter should have been seen as a re-elaboration of the Last Judgement of the former. Moreover, he used the dating of Saint-Denis at 1140 as a *terminus ante quem* in dating the sculpted porch of Beaulieu, anticipating it in respect of what was said by Lefèvre-Pontalis. He also recognized the model of Beaulieu itself in Moissac, reconstructing the iconographical tradition of the Last Judgment in monumental representation, in which the one in Beaulieu should be the first with an explicit intention to represent this scene, with many innovative elements, like the open arms of Christ, making it the tympanum which originate, thanks to the medium of the one in Saint-Denis, the wider tradition in northern France³⁸.

The same point of view was shared by Raymond Rey (1890-1958) in his monograph on the Romanesque sculpture of the Languedoc, written in 1936³⁹. In his book, Rey dedicated a chapter to Beaulieu and Souillac, located in the part devoted to the *plenitude et apogée* of the Romanesque art in Languedoc, which includes the masterpieces of the decades between 1100 and 1140. At the beginning the author stressed the role of the pilgrimage in the reconstruction of the abbey church during this period, recalling the article of 1914 by Lefèvre-Pontalis and his idea about the “*école languadocienne*”⁴⁰. In connecting Beaulieu with the other churches of the region, Rey was also stating that it should have been seen as the copy of the one in Moissac, following what was already said by Mâle in the previous decade. In quoting the statement by Lefèvre-Pontalis that the sculptures in Beaulieu would be less refined in quality than the masterpiece in Moissac, Rey ascribed the reason to the different type of stone, in Beaulieu a sandstone in large grain, more friable and difficult to work⁴¹. Being the first that identified Christ in the tympanum as a king and not only a judge, Rey read also the lack of symmetrical order in Beaulieu as a representation of the very moment of the appearance of Christ in the Last Judgement more than a clumsy attempt to represent the celestial court, focusing in the visual translation of the ‘*vent de terreur*’ of the beginning of the End of Days⁴². In the analysis of the other reliefs of the porch, Rey submitted what was already said before him. The two works by Mâle and Rey show clearly what would have been the tendency of the rest of the twentieth century in approaching the Beaulieu church, focusing and concerning mainly on the iconographical issue and the connections with the other masterpieces of the Romanesque and early

³⁸ For the exposition of the whole hypothesis of Saint-Denis’s tympanum being inspired by the one in Beaulieu, itself being inspired by the one in Moissac, drawing an iconographic tradition for the representation of the Last Judgement see *Ibid.*, pp. 178-180, 406-419.

³⁹ See R. Rey, *La sculpture romane languadocienne*, Toulouse, Paris, 1936, pp. 239-248.

⁴⁰ About the quotation of Lefèvre-Pontalis in Rey and the role of the pilgrimage in the reconstruction of the abbey church in Beaulieu, see *Ibid.*, p. 240.

⁴¹ About the type of stone used in Beaulieu’s abbey church, see *Ibid.*, p. 242-243.

⁴² For the interpretation of the tympanum scene by Rey, see *Ibid.*, pp. 243-244.

Gothic French sculptures and architectures, and trying to use them to define a precise chronology of the progression of the building phases of the church.

In the subsequent year, a new article was written about the whole complex of the Beaulieu church by Albert de Laborderie (1877-1948)⁴³. From the very beginning, the author recognized the consistency of the previous works on the same topic, affirming that his contribution would have been focused on enriching what was already said on the church, with particular attention on the ornamental decoration⁴⁴. In fact, for the majority of the information de Laborderie laid on what was already developed by the previous authors, mainly by Lefèvre-Pontalis, but with the updates by Mâle and Rey. About the treasure and the furnishing of the church, Laborderie was referring to the works by Rupin and Poulbrière, joined with the one by Forot for the early modern period. Except for the deeper sight on the marginal sculptures in the church, the other main contributions of this article were the report of a complete and rich bibliography, and the update of the chronology of the twelfth century church, previously defined by Lefèvre-Pontalis, backdating it with the idea that the works were begun at the end of the previous century, connecting them with the inclusion of Beaulieu in the Cluny network⁴⁵.

In 1939, the church of Beaulieu appeared again in a non-French article, written by Meyer Schapiro (1904-1996)⁴⁶. The author was examining the sculptures of Souillac, but he linked them to those in Moissac and Beaulieu, used as a comparison but mainly to evoke the artistic context. Although the reference to Beaulieu was brief, the author applied for the first time a point of view focused on the cultural context and its features as a fundamental element in reading both the iconographical and stylistic choices⁴⁷. This approach, which was quite innovative and very characteristic of this author, gave a new perspective in the study of the abbey church of Beaulieu, inserting it in the wider development of art and culture of the contemporary time.

During the Nazi German occupation of France Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne and the Corrèze Department were included in the French State, ruled by the Vichy government. In this period the only consideration of the abbey church was in a brief article on the propagandistic review «Corrèze»,

⁴³ See A. de Laborderie, *L'église de Beaulieu*, «Bulletin de la Société scientifique, historique et archéologique de la Corrèze», 59, 1937, pp. 127-163.

⁴⁴ See *Ibid.*, p. 127.

⁴⁵ For the main considerations on the dating of the twelfth-century church in Beaulieu and the connection of it with the bigger pilgrimage churches, along with its position within the '*école de Languedoc*', see Laborderie, *L'église de Beaulieu* cit., pp. 158-160.

⁴⁶ See M. Schapiro, *The Sculptures of Souillac*, in *Medieval Studies in Memory of A. Kingsley Porter*, edited by W. R. W. Koehler, Cambridge, 2 voll., 1939, II, pp. 359-387: 382-387.

⁴⁷ About the stylistic choices, Schapiro recalls the idea of stylistic development seeing Beaulieu as a step further than Moissac and one backward than Souillac, especially in terms of inner disposition of the tympanum, see *Ibid.*, pp. 382-384.

written by Marguerite Charageat in 1942⁴⁸. In this text the author laid on the previous studies, but she added the feature that, in her opinion, would explain the *fil rouge* that connected all the Romanesque works of art both in Auvergne and Limousin and in northern France, *i.e.* the idea of workers and artisans formed in Limousin and sent only for seasonal work in major construction sites in the whole country⁴⁹.

I. 2. From the end of the Second World War to the last studies

After the end of the war, in 1950, the sculpted porch of Beaulieu appeared again in a non-French work, namely the monograph on Cluniac art by Joan Evans (1893-1977)⁵⁰. Here the church in Beaulieu was studied in the perspective of the overall Cluniac building projects both in Cluny itself and in the provincial affiliations. The Romanesque church was associated to the rule in Cluny of the abbot Hugh of Semur (r. 1024-1109), connecting the beginning of the works with the submission of Beaulieu to the Cluniac order⁵¹. Beaulieu was then quoted in the analysis of the different iconographical themes used in the Cluniac artistic programmes, where it served as a comparative example⁵². The iconography of the tympanum was widely treated. It was seen as a compromise between the Second Coming, described by Beatus of Saint-Sever, and the iconographical tradition of the Ascension, enriched by the open arms position of Christ. Previous and minor examples should be found in capitals in Daurade, and Vézelay can be seen as the subsequent development⁵³. Though not being very innovative, the writing by Evans has the merit to have stressed the strong links of the sculpted programme in Beaulieu with the other products of the affiliations of the Cluniac network.

In 1952, another non-French scholar dealt with the sculpted porch of Beaulieu, Peter Hirschfeld wrote an article for the journal «Nordelbingen»⁵⁴. In this article, Hirschfeld studied the iconography of the lion in 'Romanesque' reliefs in the German regions of Schleswig and Jütland and was just briefly quoting the lintel of Beaulieu in which a lion appears fighting with a man. Although this essay was not adding any new information to the study of the church, it is still worth mentioning

⁴⁸ See M. Chargeat, *Les portails imagés des églises corrèziennes*, in «Corrèze. Revue de la Commission départementale d'action et de propagande régionalistes», 7, 1942, pp. 254-257.

⁴⁹ To define the common features in the Romanesque art in France Chargeat is mainly referring to the monograph by Rey; about that and the idea of the seasonal workers working in major construction sites see *Ibid.*, p. 257.

⁵⁰ See J. Evans, *Cluniac Art of the Romanesque Period*, Cambridge, 1950, pp. 16-17, 31, 69, 77, 81, 97.

⁵¹ For the description of the role of Beaulieu in the Cluniac developments under Hugh of Semur see *Ibid.*, pp. 16-19.

⁵² In specific Beaulieu was quoted for the iconography of the Second Coming, the allegorical animals of the Empires of the Earth, the Vices, and the story of Daniel in the Lions' Den, cf. note 50.

⁵³ For the development of the iconography of the Second Coming and Evans' opinion about the position of Beaulieu in it, see Evans, *Cluniac Art* cit., p. 69.

⁵⁴ See P. Hirschfeld, *Ikongraphische Bemerkungen zur Angler Löwen-Plastik des 12. Jahrhunderts*, «Nordelbingen. Beiträge zur Heimatforschung in Schleswig-Holstein, Hamburg und Lubeck», 20, 1952, pp. 20-31: 24-25.

since it shows, along with the references in Evans' monograph, how the acknowledgement about the church in Beaulieu was already part of the shared knowledge in the wider range of academical studies.

In 1959 and 1960, Beaulieu was once again included in texts that collected the works of art in French regions in the collection by the review «Zodiaque». The abbey church was split in two of them, both edited by Jean Maury (1914-1978): the sculpted porch in the book on Quercy⁵⁵, the architecture and the treasure in the one on Limousin⁵⁶. This choice was explained since the volume of 1959, because of the strict connections existing between Moissac and the Quercy sculpture and the sculpted porch in Beaulieu, while on the other side the architecture of the church and the pieces of its treasure were said to be closer to the Limousine tradition, and because of that were put in the volume edited the subsequent year⁵⁷. In the volume dedicated to the Romanesque art in Quercy, the analysis was structured in two parts: the first one devoted to the iconography, in which was made the first careful association of the different figures to the Biblical sources, mainly the Gospel of Mathew and the Apocalypse, in order to read the scene not as a Last Judgement but as the Triumph of Christ at the End of Days⁵⁸. In the second part Maury analysed the topographical dimension in the cultural relationships between Beaulieu and the surrounding regions, both in terms of influences received and spread by the abbey during the Middle Ages, with a special focus on the artistic level⁵⁹. In the descriptive part for the first time the restorations of the nineteenth century were seriously questioned, starting from the absence of evidences from the older pictures of the church by Mieusement, dated at 1877 (fig. 1)⁶⁰. In describing the sculpted porch, the authors were deepening the iconographical implications of the images in the tympanum, laying on the works by Mâle and Rey⁶¹.

The volume devoted to the Romanesque art in the Limousin focused completely on the investigation of the church as an architectural object, examining deeply both the inside and the outside of the church in detail, using them to understand the different cultural influences and the different chronological phases of the medieval building, although maintaining the majority of the previous statement. On the last page devoted to Beaulieu, a short paragraph was occupied by a concise

⁵⁵ See J. Maury, J. Porcher, M. Vidal, *Quercy Roman*, in *Zodiaque. La nuit du temps*, edited by J. Dieuzaide, P. Belzeaux, 88 voll., Pierre-qui-Vire (Yonne), 1955-1999, X, 1959, pp. 291-320, 329.

⁵⁶ See M. M. S. Gauthier, J. Maury, J. Porcher, *Limousin Roman*, in *Zodiaque. La nuit du temps*, edited by J. Dieuzaide, P. Belzeaux, 88 voll., Pierre-qui-Vire (Yonne), 1955-1999, XI, 1960, pp. 40-52, 86-89, 292-293.

⁵⁷ See Maury, Porcher, Vidal, *Quercy Roman* cit., pp. 291, 314.

⁵⁸ For the iconographical analysis of the Tympanum in Beaulieu and its connections with the written sources, see *Ibid.*, pp. 292-294.

⁵⁹ For the analysis by Maury on the artistic connections of Beaulieu topographical point of view, see *Ibid.*, pp. 314-315.

⁶⁰ For the questioning of the nineteenth-century restorations see *Ibid.*, p. 316; for the picture of the church of the 1877 it is possible to see a digital reproduction on www.bibliotheque-numerique.nha.fr (12.07.2020), while the original is kept in the Médiathèque de l'Architecture du Patrimoine (Paris).

⁶¹ For the description and deeper iconographical analysis of the porch see Maury, Porcher, Vidal, *Quercy Roman* cit., pp. 315-320; for the quotation of Mâle in *Ibid.*, pp. 316-317; for the quotation of Rey, see *Ibid.*, pp. 318-320.

description of the treasury, in which the only upgrade is the association of the statue of Virgin with the medieval Auvergnate tradition of wooden statues⁶².

In 1963, Guido Marinelli wrote an article on the Romanesque Quercy, in which he studied the overall development of the region by examining the main examples⁶³. Beaulieu was also included among them, at the very end of the article. An interesting element of this article was the identification of the Romanesque culture that generated this group of works of art, joined by the author into the bigger region of Quercy, including different 'regional schools' united by the pilgrimage routes. The latter were presented as a mean for the walk of believers in all its cultural implications, showing how the stylistic and chronologic concern needed to be linked to a focus on the 'anthropologic' point of view⁶⁴. Moreover, at the very beginning of his article, Marinelli referred to the bigger quest that activated both experts and local amateurs in the whole area to study and recover the local heritage⁶⁵, mirroring this way the developments of the attention on the cultural heritage registered in France already at the beginning of the nineteenth century. In this sense was probably oriented the big series of books published by the review «Zodiaque», in which the volumes edited by Maury are inserted, as well as the *Dictionnaire des églises de France* edited by Bernard Craplet. In the latter the sheet about Beaulieu, located into the volume on Auvergne, Limousin and Bourbonnais, was written by René Crozet (1896-1972) in 1964⁶⁶.

In 1965 an important contribution in the study of the iconography of the sculpted tympanum in Beaulieu was given by Henry Kraus (1906-1995)⁶⁷. The scholar interpreted the seven small figures between the apostles and the risen dead on the tympanum of Beaulieu as Jews and Christians living during the Doomsday and arguing to be saved among the Chosen. In giving this interpretation, Kraus linked also contemporary texts and the problem of the growing anti-Jewish sentiment through the twelfth century. This contribution, being one of the more accurate on the topic, inaugurated a long-lasting period of research and analysis focused on the iconography of the tympanum, that developed through the subsequent decades, trying to give a more convincing explanation on the 'unusual Last Judgement' of Beaulieu.

⁶² About the brief description of the treasure, see Gauthier, Maury, Porcher, *Limousin Roman* cit., p. 89.

⁶³ It also worthy to notice that this is the first time Beaulieu is appearing in an Italian article, meaning once again the gradual spread of the acknowledgment of its existence outside the borders of France, see G. Marinelli, *Il "Quercy Roman". Profilo di alcune fonti sull'arte romanica in Francia*, «Emporium», 138/823 (1963), pp. 3-16: 15-16.

⁶⁴ For the "anthropologic" approach of the author, see *Ibid.*, pp. 3-7.

⁶⁵ About the mention of the quest of the study and promotion of the local heritage in France in the central decades of the twentieth century, see *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁶⁶ See R. Crozet, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne*, in *Dictionnaire des églises de France*, edited by B. Craplet, *IIB. Auvergne, Limousine, Bourbonnais*, Paris, 1964, pp. 14-16.

⁶⁷ See H. Kraus, *A Reinterpretation of the "Rise Dead" of the Beaulieu Tympanum*, «Gazette de Beaux-Arts», 65, 1965, pp. 193-200.

In the same year an exhibition of medieval treasures from French churches took place in Paris⁶⁸. Three pieces of the treasure of the Beaulieu abbey church were included with concise but rich catalogue cards. The one of the statue of the Virgin was simply recapitulating what was already written, though putting forward the date at the beginning of the thirteenth century⁶⁹; that of the cylindric reliquary, fully described, and for the first time transcribing the monogram in niello, identified as a byzantine one instead of Carolingian⁷⁰; and the latter piece of the treasure involved was the reliquary in form of arm of St Félicité⁷¹.

Leslie Mandelson Freudenheim wrote her Master Thesis on the iconography of the sculpted porch, defended in 1966 at the New York University⁷². She worked on the tympanum sculptures first questioning the traditional identification with the Last Judgement, and secondly by attempting to find out alternative interpretations, related also the historical and cultural context of the period. Although she did not reach to a complete conclusion in her work, she is credited as having shown the importance of the study of the cultural context in all its features, as a mean to understand the unusual iconographies of the tympanum.

In 1967, Meyer Schapiro was invited to deliver the Charles Eliot Norton Lectures at Harvard University. He chose as his main topic Romanesque architectural sculpture⁷³. In this occasion Schapiro was once again demonstrating his interest in the environment that generates the masterpieces and its key-role in their interpretation. The porch of Beaulieu was examined mainly on the iconographic and stylistic point of view, but with a particular focus on the composition of the image. Recalling his studies from 1939, Schapiro was stressing particularly the freedom of the disposition, irregular but in a very calculated way that creates an inner balancing denying the symmetry of the traditional tympanum iconography. In this sense, the images and the architecture are interacting and acting upon each other, with complex interlacing boundaries between the figures and

⁶⁸ See the catalogue *Les trésors des églises de France*, exhibition catalogue (Paris, 1965), edited by J. Dupont, Paris, 1965.

⁶⁹ Mainly by Rupin and Poulbrière with the brief upgrade of the volume on the *Limousin roman*, the only new element is the direct comparison with the wooden statue of the Virgin in Orcival, slightly earlier and an example of the Auvergnate production of wooden statues. For the catalogue card of the Virgin, see A.A. V.V. 389, in *Les trésors des églises de France* cit., pp. 211-212.

⁷⁰ For the catalogue card on the cylindric reliquary, also known as lantern reliquary, see A.A. V.V., 390, in *Les trésors des églises de France* cit., p. 212.

⁷¹ For the catalogue card on the reliquary arm of St. Félicité, see A.A. V.V. 391, in *Les trésors des églises de France* cit., pp. 212-213.

⁷² See L. Mandelson Freudenheim, *The Sculpture of Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne: Including the Tympanum, Lintels and Doorposts Thereof*, M. A. Thesis, New York University, a.y. 1966.

⁷³ The Charles Eliot Norton Lectures of Harvard University were recorded but not published until 2006, when Linda Seidel, who knew Schapiro and attended the Lectures, decided to transcribe and edit them in order to allow their publication; see M. Schapiro, *Romanesque Architectural Sculpture*, edited by L. Seidel, Chicago, London, 2006.

the background. In Schapiro's point of view, the tympanum in Beaulieu showed an ensemble of action, trying to transmit its temporality⁷⁴.

Yves Christe returned to this subject too, first in 1969 in his book on the Romanesque portals and then in an article mainly focused on the porch of Beaulieu and its iconography the subsequent year⁷⁵. Christe examined the porch in order to demonstrate its connection with the triumphalist tradition, rooted in the Roman imperial art. He designed a series of iconographical connections that shows the triumphal background laying under the representations in the sculpted porch in Beaulieu, in order to explain the lack of some characteristic elements of the Last Judgement. At the same time, he showed how other symbolic and iconographic elements, such as the jewelled cross or the rich imperial crown, depicted instead of the thorns one, indicate a more 'imperial' context celebrating the glory of Christ in his Second Coming⁷⁶. As a main source he pointed out the vision of Matthew (Mt 24-25), recalled as a reference in the lateral reliefs. Among other written sources and references to the iconography of the porch, he quoted Peter the Venerable, abbot of Cluny in the twelfth century, namely his books against the Jews and the followers of Pierre de Bruys, which Christe linked directly to the sculptures in Beaulieu⁷⁷. Another important contribution by Christe was the statement that the asymmetrical disposition has to be seen not only as a conscious decision, but also as the result of a meticulous planning, balancing all the masses and creating an inner harmony, surpassing the traditional logic of the symmetrical division still visible in Moissac⁷⁸. At the end of the article Christe questioned also the idea that the 'inferior quality' of the tympanum in Beaulieu, recalling the traditional comparison with the graphic perfection of details in Moissac. Again, he stated that the stylistic difference, due to the hard sandstone in use in Beaulieu, was not a limit but a voluntary choice in order to emphasize the 'essential': the art of sculpture⁷⁹. In the final note, after the end of the article, Christe discussed the issue of the dating of the porch, questioning the idea proposed by Mâle of a direct dependency of the iconography in Saint-Denis from that in Beaulieu. The author discredited

⁷⁴ For the analysis of the Beaulieu's tympanum in the Charles Eliot Norton Lectures of 1967, see Schapiro, *Romanesque Architectural Sculpture* cit., pp. 57-59.

⁷⁵ For the references to Beaulieu's sculpted porch in the book on Romanesque portals by Yves Christe, see Y. Christe, *Le grands portails romans. Études sur l'iconologie des théophanies romanes*, Geneva, 1969, pp. 125-128, 173-175. For the article devoted to the same topic by Christe, see Id., *Le portail de Beaulieu. Étude iconographique et stylistique*, «Bulletin archéologique du comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques. Ministère de l'éducation nationale», 6, 1970/1971, pp. 57-76.

⁷⁶ In his iconographical analysis Christe seems to not consider the interpretation made few years earlier by Kraus.

⁷⁷ The written sources authored by Peter the Venerable quoted by Christe are the *Contra Petrobrusianos* and the *Contra Iudaeos*. After designing the direct references in the sculpted porch in Beaulieu, Christe was then explicating how the influence of the writings by Peter the Venerable was occurring in the choice of already-existing iconographical elements and not the source for creating new one. For the references to the work by the abbot Peter the Venerable and their connections with the sculpted porch in Beaulieu, see *Ibid.*, pp. 67-70.

⁷⁸ About the argument by Christe on the stylistic point of view of the tympanum, see *Ibid.*, pp. 70-76.

⁷⁹ On Christe's opinion about the sandstone used in Beaulieu as a means to let the more 'sculptural' technique emerge, see *Ibid.*, p. 76.

the dating of the former as a *terminus ante quem* for the latter, returning to the proposal made by Lefèvre-Pontalis, which meant to brought again the date forward to 1160, but anticipating it somewhat by supposing that the works of the southern flank of the church were still in progress when the sculpted porch was begun, leading to a date between 1140 and 1160⁸⁰.

The first archaeological survey in the church of Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne was directed by Pierre Lebouteux (1927-2017) in 1966, then published in 1970⁸¹. The excavation was limited to part of the choir area, which was about to be paved. Two curved walls were found along with a monolithic sarcophagus roughly worked (figg. 3a-b). From the analysis of the two walls Lebouteux proposed to interpret them as the remains of two different phases of the building. The second and external one would have been part of the same structure partially included and reused in the Romanesque church, both for the decorations and the construction stones. About the sarcophagus, the author was attributing it to one of the saints whom were kept in the church, assuming that it was buried under the previous floor of the choir, due to its rough appearance⁸². This excavation was not extended over the limits of the newly paved area because of the lack of specialised staff to conduct a wider survey.

In 1972, Jean Marie French (1937-2019) defended her PhD Thesis in Cornell University (New York)⁸³. This research mainly focused on the iconography of the portal programme in the southern porch of Beaulieu, investigated from the point of view of sources and meanings. She decided to follow the perspective already outlined by Freudenheim in 1966, trying to pursue it in order to answer to many questions that were still open about the tympanum. The main, innovative, approach of her thesis was to read the iconographies through both the liturgy and the social and religious milieu of the time, enlightening the fundamental role of the latter in the design of the images and that of the former in interpreting them, developing what had already been suggested by Kraus and Christe⁸⁴.

The subsequent year a second archaeological survey was documented by Rouland Courivaud (1952-2012), in connection with the works of redevelopment of the little square behind the apse of the church. Being alone, the young archaeologist had to register what was found and conduct some quick survey around the apse of the church, where he was able to find many skeletons and two sarcophagi that he attributed to the monastery cemetery. Although being in a difficult condition,

⁸⁰ Cf. note 79.

⁸¹ See P. Lebouteux, *Sondages dans le chœur de l'église abbatiale de Saint-Pierre à Beaulieu-en -Dordogne*, «Centre international d'études romanes. Revue trimestrielle», 1970, pp. 72-76.

⁸² For the sarcophagus found under the choir in Beaulieu, see *Ibid.*, cit., p. 75.

⁸³ See J. M. French, *The innovative imagery of the Beaulieu Portal Program. Source and Significance*, PhD Thesis, Cornell University, a. y. 1971-1972, supervisor R. G. Calkins; French was proposing again the same approach in the shorter context of her article: Id., *The innovative imagery of the Beaulieu Portal Program*, «Studies in Medieval Culture», 8-9, 1976, pp. 19-30.

⁸⁴ In the connections created by French between the porch in Beaulieu and its written and liturgical sources an important role was attributed by the author to the liturgical drama, recalling Kraus' statements about the influence of the *De altercation Ecclesiae et Synagogae dialogus* and deepening it with the addition of the link to the liturgical drama *Ordo Prophetarum*; see French, *The innovative imagery* cit., pp. 27-35, 71-74.

constantly pressed by the need of the redevelopment works to go on, he was able to analyse the overall situation and made some interesting statements about the burial customs of the monks, like the entombment of the skeletons all around the apse with the heads oriented to the main altar⁸⁵. After this excavation by Courivaud no other archaeological surveys were made in Beaulieu.

The very same year the Benedictine monk Jean-Marie Berland wrote what can be considered the first monograph on Beaulieu⁸⁶. Although presented as a pamphlet, the short study fully analysed the church and the village summarizing all the previous studies. Nonetheless, the author specified some information and gave some updating as well. The most important should be seen in the issue of the dating. In fact, Berland quoted the discovery of a two light window similar to those of the galleries in the nave, in the western façade illuminating the northern gallery. Connecting its capital to those of the porch she anticipated the date of the façade to the first half of the twelfth century, agreeing with Rey's dating of the porch itself around circa 1130, as opposed to what was previously proposed by Lefèvre-Pontalis and accepted by Christie⁸⁷.

In 1974, Pierre Héliot (1903-1984) wrote an essay mainly focused on the analysis of the links existing between the major pilgrimage churches and the sacred buildings in the Limousin region built along the pilgrimage routes. Through his examination he considered also the architecture of the abbey church in Beaulieu, which was investigated mainly in the elements that connects it to the main pilgrimage churches, namely the galleries, and distinguished it from the typical settings of the other regional churches⁸⁸.

In the same period, André Grabar (1896-1990) dedicated an article to the examination of the cylindric reliquary of Beaulieu, which was published in the *Études de civilisation médiévale* of the University of Poitiers in 1974. Starting from the description made by Molinier in 1887, Grabar was analysing the object in its main features⁸⁹. To disband the monogram, he asked the help of the Byzantinist Vitalien Laurent, who proposed three different solutions. Grabar was then comparing the reliquary, which he described as a jug, to some objects of the San Marco Treasury in Venice⁹⁰. From this parallel he put forward the hypothesis that the metal net that wrap the cylindric volumes was originally holding plates of precious stones or rock crystal as is still visible in the Venetian examples.

⁸⁵ See R. Courivaud, *Les sarcophages de l'abbaye de Beaulieu*, «Bulletin de la Société scientifique, historique et archéologique de la Corrèze», 95, 1973, pp. 99-104.

⁸⁶ See J.-M. Berland, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne*, Paris, 1973.

⁸⁷ For the issue of the dating and the two-light window as element to pre-date the execution of the porch and the western façade of Beaulieu's church, see *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁸⁸ See P. Héliot, *Les églises romanes à tribunes dans la région Limousine et les grandes basiliques de pèlerinage*, «Bulletin de la Société scientifique, historique et archéologique de la Corrèze», 96, 1974, pp. 157-171: 161-163.

⁸⁹ See A. Grabar, *Un broc byzantine de Beaulieu dans la Corrèze*, in *Études de civilisation médiévale. Mélanges offerts à Edmond-René Labonde*, edited by the C.É.S.C.M., Poitiers, 1974, pp. 363-366.

⁹⁰ Grabar was referring to his studies on the objects of San Marco Treasury made few years earlier, see A.A. V.V., *Il tesoro e il museo*, in *Il Tesoro di San Marco*, edited by H. R. Hahnloser, 2 voll., Florence, 1965-1971, II, 1971.

Although Grabar admitted the difficulties in discerning the date and the original use of the jug, he was the first to conduct a deeper analysis on the object and to try to find connections with other examples from the byzantine production.

In 1978, Robert Favreau and Jean Michaud (1939-2001) published the second volume of the series dedicated to the medieval inscriptions in France, centred on the Limousin region. The epigraphic cards dedicated to Beaulieu, though being very concise, are objective and precise. The authors included not only the epigraphical writings of the porch, but also the two writings present in the treasure, reporting also the hypothesis proposed by Grabar on the interpretation of the Byzantine monogram of the cylindric reliquary, after him registered as a jug⁹¹.

Beaulieu was once again included in a general work on Romanesque sculpture in 1981, by Millard Fillmore Hearn, who inserted it in the wider discussion on the development of the theophany in the Romanesque portals, along with Conques and Autun, as part of a subsequent phase after Moissac and Vézelay⁹². The author stressed the accent put on the Second Coming in the theophany at Beaulieu, already associated with the Last Judgement. Laying mostly on the iconographical reading made in the previous decade by Christe, Hearn added a new reading to the small “prophets” of the tympanum as some heretics, namely Albigensians, avoiding the interpretation made by Kraus. This interpretation would explain also the stressing of the Cross and of the instruments of the Passion along with the wounds of Christ in the tympanum, as marker of the human nature of Christ, balanced by the divine one represented by angels and the whole cortège of the Apostles.

The subsequent year another PhD Thesis included Beaulieu⁹³. Defended by Claude Andrault Schmitt, the main topic was the overview of the churches included in the diocese of Limoges from the architectural point of view, and more precisely the development of the nave area into them. The paragraph on Beaulieu focused mainly on the architectural setting in order to understand the progression of the building works and to determine the date of the different phases through the identification of the conjunction points. After her examination, Andrault Schmitt generally confirmed what was already written about, but updating it. She identified three main phases, with an overall consistency in following the general features of the project: the first, which includes the apse, the choir, the first bay of the nave and the transept, dated between the last years of the eleventh century and circa 1130; the second, lasted circa ten years, would include the central bays of the nave and the

⁹¹ It is the first scientific and complete registration in this sense, enriched also by a related bibliography, see R. Favreau, J. Michaud, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne*, in *Corpus des inscriptions de la France médiévale*, Poitiers, 25 voll., 1974-2014, II. Limousin, 1978, pp. 15-20.

⁹² See M. F. Hearn, *Romanesque Sculpture. The Revival of Monumental Stone Sculpture in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*, Ithaca (New York), 1981, pp. 178-180.

⁹³ See C. Andrault Schmitt, *Les nefs des églises romanes de l'ancien diocèse de Limoges. Rythmes et volumes*, PhD Thesis, Université de Poitiers, a. y. 1982-1983, supervisor C. Heitz, pp. 166-171.

southern aisle along with the sculpted porch; the third, and last, phase would include the conclusion of the nave and the western façade and should be dated at the second half of the twelfth century, with the last elements made at the very beginning of the subsequent century; the bell tower was dated at the fourteenth century. With this research Andrault Schmitt showed clearly the generally accepted progression of the construction works, strengthening it with a deeper observation of the building and adding a description of the events that happened after the end of the Middle Ages.

Peter K. Klein returned again to the iconographical issue in his contribution in the nineteenth number of the *Cahiers de Saint-Michel de Cuxa*, of 1988⁹⁴. Starting from the essay by Christe for the overall interpretation of the tympanum as a Parousia and not a Last Judgement, he focused once again on the figures of the “little prophets”, already object of the article by Kraus of 1965. Following the interpretation of four of them as Jews, Klein examined further the written sources, mainly the commentaries to the biblical quotations from the Apocalypse, which he found as having many relationships with the tympanum iconography. As a result, he proposed to read the other characters as heathens and infidels, worried and scared in the context of the return of Christ. Klein included in his research many miniatures for comparison, recalling a possible connection between the popular anti-Semitism of the period and the representations of the Jews struggling in front of the triumphal return of Christ and the imminent Judgement he was carrying with⁹⁵. The main written sources that Klein quoted as having a key role in the reading of the tympanum iconography are Beatus of Liébana, from the eleventh century, and Rupert of Deutz, who wrote few years before the beginning of the portal in Beaulieu. Both the authors commented the Apocalypse, the former taking a deeper sight to the Parousia and the latter analyzing and commenting the specific Biblical passage of the appearance of Christ at the End of Times (Ap I, 7). Klein proposed to see a direct reference to Rupert of Deutz in the Beaulieu tympanum, in order to figure out the personalities involved and damned, with a particular reference to Jews. Though devoted to the explanation of the general image of the tympanum in Beaulieu, the work by Klein is mainly focused on the deeper analysis and understanding of the small characters, finally identified as Jews and heathens, that should be seen as a reflection of the feelings of the contemporaries. As a conclusion Klein stressed out the connection between the Parousia, the Crucifixion and the Ascension, all being read as Christological theophanies in the medieval exegesis, finding out parallels between the three iconographical traditions⁹⁶.

⁹⁴ See P. K. Klein, *Le tympan de Beaulieu: jugement dernier ou seconde Parousie?*, «Cahiers de Saint-Michel de Cuxa», 19, 1988, pp. 129-134. This essay is the French version of the original German one, published the previous year, see Id., *Et videbit eum omnis oculus et qui eum pupugnerunt. Zur deutung des tympanos von Beaulieu*, in *Florilegium in honorem Carl Hordenfalk Octogenarii contextum*, Stockholm, 1987, pp. 123-144.

⁹⁵ Klein laid mainly on the production of miniatures for manuscripts with the writings by Beatus of Liébana, see *Ibid.*, p. 132.

⁹⁶ For the iconographical parallels between the Ascension and the Parousia, as Christological theophanies, see *Ibid.*, pp. 129-130. This parallel was deepened the subsequent year in an article on the tympanum in Beaulieu and those of the

In the same year, Jochen Zinck wrote an article on the iconographical coherence in the sculpted porches of Moissac, Beaulieu and Charlieu⁹⁷. In the part devoted to Beaulieu Zinck focused on the sculptures of the porch, first examining their disposition, and then explaining the inner net of connections on the symbolic layer. The author started from the comparison of the analysis by Christe and Klein, and then suggested new sources for the images. Recalling the Apocalypse and passages from the Gospel of Matthew, already mentioned by Christe and Klein, he pointed out the importance of the parallel with the Vision of Daniel in reading the images of the tympanum and the lintel, as well as those on the inner sides of the porch⁹⁸. New sources were presented in the analysis of the seven figures that stand between the apostles and the rising dead, namely texts from the book of Ezekiel and Isaiah, added to some commentaries of the Apocalypse. Those allowed Zinck to identify the seven characters as the groups of the Blessed and the Damned⁹⁹. Later, he exposed the different inner connections between the sculptures of the porch, demonstrating how the lateral relieves were meant to allude and anticipate the refusal of the evil forces and the glorification of Christ, then explicitly shown in a triumphal way on the tympanum. The main source on which he based this interpretation was the exegetical writings by Rupert von Deutz, along with the other biblical texts¹⁰⁰. One of the last paragraphs of the section devoted to Beaulieu was centred on Zinck's proposal about the original disposition of the reliefs of the sins¹⁰¹. Zinck concluded the part devoted to Beaulieu of the essay with the analysis of the sculptures of the trumeau, which he read as a symbolic representation of human life through the allegory of the "ages of men"¹⁰².

surrounding local churches by Sophie Cassagnes-Broquet, see S. Cassagnes-Broquet, *Paroles de pierre. L'iconographie des tympans sculptés en bas Limosin*, «Bulletin de la Société des antiquaires des lettres, science et arts de la Corrèze», 92 (1989), pp. 22-26.

⁹⁷ See J., Zinck, *Moissac, Beaulieu, Charlieu – zur ikonologischen Kohärenz romanischer Skulpturenprogramme im Südwesten Frankreichs und in Burgund*, «Aachener Kunstblätter», 56/57, 1988/1989, pp. 73-182.

⁹⁸ In the interpretation of the lintel and the tympanum Zinck adopted a point of view with a stronger focusing with the Vision of Daniel, namely in the passages centred on the description of the evil forces of the End of Times and the beasts representing the major empires of history, see *Ibid.* cit., pp. 138-144; for the interpretation of the lateral reliefs see pp. 144-149.

⁹⁹ In the reading of the seven small figures, Zinck combined the essays by Christe and Klein with the one wrote by Kraus but uploading them with a reading of biblical passages from Isaiah, Ezekiel and some commentaries of the Apocalypse, such as the one by Beatus. Moreover, Zinck was finding also iconographical correspondence in their costumes with those of the elite of the reign of the Whore of Babylon on the ms. Lat 8 of the John Rylands Library in Manchester, see *Ibid.*, pp. 132-136.

¹⁰⁰ For the analysis of the inner connections of meaning in the sculptural programme of the Beaulieu sculpted porch, with a special attention on the biblical exegesis by Rupert von Deutz as a source, see *Ibid.*, 149-157.

¹⁰¹ Zinck opened the section of article dedicated to Beaulieu with a description of the sins reliefs, and then put among the last paragraphs of this part his hypothesis on the original disposition, once again looking at the writings of Rupert von Deutz as a source with a key role, see *Ibid.*, pp. 129-131, 157-159.

¹⁰² For Zinck's analysis of the trumeau figures and their interpretation as allegories of the "ages" of men as symbol of the earthly sufferance opposed to the promised happiness in Heaven, see *Ibid.*, pp. 157-164.

Klein wrote another article about Beaulieu few years later ¹⁰³. Though repeating what he already said in 1988, he focused on the comparison between the eschatological programmes in Moissac, Beaulieu and Saint-Denis. A parallel with the Spanish churches was also made on the iconographical association between the different scenes, centred on the eschatological theme¹⁰⁴. He read in these terms the temptations of Christ and the episodes connected with Daniel in the Lions' Den, along with the inputs of the threatening and imminent Last Judgement, which should be found also on the overall programme of the porch of Beaulieu.

In 1993, a pamphlet about Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne analysed the story of the town and its main monuments, it was co-authored by Bernadette Barrière (1936-2004), Sandrine Boisset, Évelyne Proust and Isabelle Ribieras¹⁰⁵. Despite its popular nature, this brief writing was presenting completely the main elements not only on the abbey church but also of the town itself, updating the similar work made twenty years earlier by Berland. In this text can be found also one of the most recent contribution about the treasury, although it lays mostly on previous contributions¹⁰⁶.

In 1994, Peter K. Klein wrote again on the iconography on the portal of Beaulieu in his article dedicated to eschatological programmes in Romanesque churches¹⁰⁷. He repeated his previous position, stressing once again the key role attributed to the Gospel of Matthew as the main source for understand the tympanum and the Temptations of Christ and proposing again the connection with the sculptures in Moissac and Saint-Denis¹⁰⁸.

In the same year, Éleine Vergnolle was writing a monograph on Romanesque art in France¹⁰⁹. Beaulieu was briefly recalled in the general discourse of the development of the barrel vault. Only later a paragraph was devoted to the analysis of the church, focused on the stylistic examination. Though being combined in a coherent ensemble, Vergnolle stated that the sculptures of the porch were thought for being inserted in a different, and probably wider, disposition then changed while the works of the church were still in progress. In the second part of the paragraph, the author was comparing Moissac to Beaulieu in order to find out similarities and differences. In doing so, she

¹⁰³ See P. K. Klein, *Programmes eschatologiques, fonction et reception historiques du portails du XIIe siècle: Moissac – Beaulieu – Saint-Denis*, in «Cahiers de civilization médiévale», 33/132 (1990), pp. 317-349: 330-334.

¹⁰⁴ For the connection between Beaulieu abbey church and the Spanish churches, see *Ibid.*, pp. 333-334.

¹⁰⁵ See B. Barrière, S. Boisset, É. Proust, I. Ribieras, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne*, in *Patrimoine Limousin*, edited by B. Barrière, Limoges, 8 voll., 1991-2002, II, 1993.

¹⁰⁶ For the paragraph devoted to Beaulieu's treasury, see *Ibid.*, pp. 16-19.

¹⁰⁷ See P. K., Klein, *Eschatologische Portalprogramme der Romanik und Gotik*, in *Studien zur Geschichte der Europäischen Skulptur im 12/13 Jahrhundert*, edited by H. Beck, K. Hengevoss-Dürkop, Frankfurt am Main, 2 voll., 1994, I, pp. 397-411: 400-402.

¹⁰⁸ Explaining once again the role of the Gospel of Matthew as the main source for reading the tympanum and the Temptations of Christ in Beaulieu, Klein seems to not consider the study made by Zinck in 1988. In reading the Parousia of the tympanum he quoted also the exegesis by Albuin the Hermit on St. John's Apocalypse (beginning of the eleventh century), see *Ibid.*, p. 401.

¹⁰⁹ See É. Vergnolle, *L'art roman en France. Architecture, sculpture, peinture*, Paris, 1994, pp. 200-201, 246-248.

recognized the two tympana as linked at the same artistic milieu but saw the one in Beaulieu as more complex on the disposition of the figures, in order to transmit the confusing emotions of the Second Coming of Christ. Vergnolle counterposed the raffinate and precise style of Moissac, still linked to graphical effects, to the more suggestive and dramatic style in Beaulieu, which lays on the break of symmetry and the overlapping layers¹¹⁰.

In his volume on the development of the Last Judgement iconography of 1999, Yves Christe quoted once again Beaulieu, with a major attention on the double lintels and their figures and the relief with the triumphant Christ. Despite he examined the sculptures carefully he concluded that is not possible to give a complete explanation of their meaning¹¹¹.

In 2004, Évelyne Proust wrote a monograph on the Romanesque sculpture in Lower Limousin¹¹². She divided the book in two main parts, the first explaining the general development of the sculptural works in the whole region, following a chronological scheme and looking for the links between the different works of art considered and the external influences. The second part of the book was devoted to the exposition of all the sites considered throughout the first one, doing a wide alphabetical list enriched by relative bibliography. Beaulieu was present in the overall discourse, and had a chapter dedicated to its links with the sculptural traditions of Languedoc and Quercy. For the iconographic analysis the author was laying on the works by Christe and Klien. The stylistic analysis was carried further in a dedicated chapter through a deeper examination of the connections with Moissac and Souillac as part of the same artistic milieu, highlighting always the original elements in Beaulieu. The chapter is concluded by the issue of the dating, which is finally attributed to 1130-1140¹¹³. In the second part of the book, Proust wrote a card on Beaulieu, where the church was presented in all its aspects¹¹⁴. After a brief historical introduction, the architecture and all the sculptural elements were described, in a detailed analysis that followed mainly what was already said in the previous writings. The card is concluded by a concise bibliography. The main interesting point of the contribution by Proust was the proposal to see the church of Beaulieu as part of the regional sculptures, trying to give a deeper sight on the relationships that connected all the sculptural production of the southern Limousin and of the other regions.

¹¹⁰ In explaining her point of view about the style in Beaulieu, focused on the emotional expression of the very moment of the Parousia, Vergnolle was also recalling the difficulties in working with the sandstone which composed the whole church. For Vergnolle's stylistic analysis, see Vergnolle, *L'art roman en France* cit., pp. 247-248.

¹¹¹ See Y. Christe, *Jugements derniers*, Saint-Lèger-Vauban, 1999, pp. 183-184.

¹¹² See É. Proust, *La sculpture romane en Bas-Limousin. Un domaine original du grand art languedocien*, Paris, 2004.

¹¹³ For the stylistic analysis by Proust and the connection with Souillac and Moissac. see *Ibid.*, pp. 145-160.

¹¹⁴ In the card about Beaulieu by Proust also the chapter hall is included, see *Ibid.*, pp. 226-239.

Three years later the Société archéologique française published the proceedings of the Congrès archéologique de France, focused on the Corrèze¹¹⁵. Within it two papers were dedicated to Beaulieu. The first was written by Pierre Garrigou Granchamp and was about the domestic architecture from the twelfth to the fifteenth century in the region¹¹⁶. Beaulieu had its own card divided in a general description of the urban centre and its evolution through the considered centuries, followed by a brief description of the single houses that had been dated between the twelfth and the fifteenth century. Despite being very schematic, this article allowed to give a glance on the heritage of the bourg of Beaulieu, as the counterpart of the abbey and to investigate the traces of its evolution in the considered centuries.

The second article present in the proceedings of the Congrès archéologique de France was authored by Anne-Marie Pêcheur and Évelyne Proust and focused on church at Beaulieu¹¹⁷. The building was presented in its history and formal aspects, recalling mainly what was proposed by Proust few years earlier, but with a slightly deeper sight on the history of the studies, evoked throughout the texts in the different layers of the analysis¹¹⁸. The conclusive paragraph focused on the closest restoration undertaken between 2001 and 2002 by the architect Stephan Manciulescu¹¹⁹. The authors of the article recalled how this restoration was needed for the appropriate conservation of the porch, though they expressed a quite critical position in the way how it was conducted by Manciulescu. In particular, they were arguing against the copies made by the architect to substitute the more external reliefs which he replaced many elements that had been consumed by the weather through the centuries. In doing so he created some details starting from the observation of the French Romanesque sculpture, also adding some elements whose original presence cannot be proved.

Jean-Réne Gaborit authored a book on the Romanesque sculpture in 2010¹²⁰. Here, Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne was included for its sculpted porch, in association with many other sculpted tympana dated between the second half of the eleventh and the twelfth century. Since it is inserted into a general discourse, only the main features were considered. On the iconographic level, the distance

¹¹⁵ For the proceedings of the international conference held by the Société d'archéologie française in 2005, see *Congrès archéologique de France. 163e session. Corrèze 2005*, proceedings of the international conference edited by the Société d'archéologie française, Paris, 2007.

¹¹⁶ See P. Garrigou Grandchamp, *Introduction à l'architecture domestique urbaine, du XIIe au milieu du XVe siècle, dans le Bas-Limousin*, in *Congrès archéologique de France. 163e session cit.*, pp. 9-81.

¹¹⁷ See Pêcheur, Proust, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne cit.*, pp. 83-103.

¹¹⁸ The previous authors are recalled mainly in dating the different phases of the church, in the architectural and iconographical analysis. An interesting addition is made with the quoting of the unpublished notes about the architecture of the church by Jacques Henriot, namely the relationship between the different parts of the architecture. See *Ibid.*, pp. 88-89 (for the quoting in the history of architecture, for Henriot's notes and the paragraph about the constructing phases), 95-98 (for the quoting in the iconographic and stylistic analysis).

¹¹⁹ For the conclusive paragraph written by Pêcheur and Proust about the restorations undertaken on the sculpted porch in Beaulieu from 2001 to 2002, see *Ibid.*, pp. 99-101.

¹²⁰ See J. R., Gaborit, *La scultura romanica*, edited by C. Dezzuto, Milan, 2010.

with the traditional symmetry on the compositional level had been read as a unique ‘experiment’ which had not had a large diffusion afterwards. In this sense, the dependence of Saint-Denis proposed by Mâle already in 1922, and supported by Klein, was questioned by Gaborit, also because of the difficulties in dating the tympanum in Beaulieu¹²¹.

In the same year, the monograph on the French sculpture of the twelfth century by Silke Büttner was published¹²². This article focused on an iconographical investigation of the theme of the Last Judgement, looking for the projection of the ideology of the ‘Christian order’, *i.e.* the representation of Christians and non-Christians. From this perspective, the tympanum of Beaulieu was investigated mainly in the seven figures present between the apostles and the risen dead. Büttner wrote an excursus on the issue, exposing briefly the different interpretations given through the decades from different scholars. At the end she stressed the need of a more accurate observation on those figures, demonstrating that their gestures and dressing are quite ambiguous, and any strict definition appears to be difficult to prove definitely¹²³.

In 2010, Frédéric Le Hech authored a monograph about the history of Beaulieu and its surroundings¹²⁴. In this work, the history of the village and the abbey was proposed from the prehistoric period until the beginning of the twenty-first century, creating a useful summary of the developments of the town through the time.

In 2013, Marcello Angheben wrote a monograph on the developments of the Last Judgement iconography in order to find representations of the *jugement immédiat*, analyzing the different iconographic dynamics involved in these kinds of images¹²⁵. As explained by the title, Angheben’s investigation was mainly focused on the French sculpture of the twelfth and the first half of the thirteenth centuries. Among the cases studied, the church of Beaulieu had been recalled in the part devoted to the tympanum of Sainte Foy in Conques. The parallel between the two tympana led the author to show the affinities, like the importance given to the cross as a triumphal sign of the return of Christ, but also the differences, first the general meaning of the scene, which in Beaulieu is representing the Parousia and in Conques the Last Judgement. From the iconographical point of view

¹²¹ For the pages devoted to Beaulieu in the monograph by Gaborit, see *Ibid.*, pp. 354-356, 375, 380.

¹²² See S. Büttner, *Die Körper verweben. Sinnproduktion in der französischen Bildhauerei des 12. Jahrhunderts*, Bielefeld, 2010.

¹²³ In her excursus on Beaulieu seven ‘spectators’ Büttner recalls the studies by Schapiro, Kraus, Klein, Zink and Strickland, presenting the different readings of the figures as Blessed and Damned, as wisers of the Earth, Jews and Saracens, as well as fools joking on Christians. In his conclusion she does not give a precise identification of the figures. Nonetheless, she was recalling them in the subsequent chapters devoted to the description of the iconography of Jews and Saracens. For the excursus, see *Ibid.*, pp. 215-225; and for the subsequent references, see pp. 297-300, 307 note 155.

¹²⁴ See F. Le Hech, *Histoire de Beaulieu et de son Pays*, Limoges, 2010.

¹²⁵ See M. Angheben, *D’un jugement à l’autre: la représentation de jugement immédiat dans les jugements derniers français: 1100-1250*, Trnhout, 2013.

Beaulieu is presented as a unique case in the overall panorama of the French sculpture in the investigated period¹²⁶.

The same year Catherine E. Besancon defended her PhD Thesis at the University of Southern California. In this work, she analysed the impact of the papal reform and the popular heresies of the eleventh century on the artistic production of southern France between the end of the eleventh and the beginning of the twelfth centuries¹²⁷. Besancon used as case studies the abbey porches of Moissac, Souillac and Beaulieu. In the chapter devoted to the examination of the latter she stressed the key role of the events of the local history in the understanding of the iconographic choices of the sculpted programme¹²⁸. In particular, she was proposing that the concern with threat of heresy that was growing in the neighbouring regions, as well the new submission of the Beaulieu abbey to Cluny, were the generative impulses for the creation of the monumental porch. The main goals of the iconography were the glorification of the Church and its triumph, the focus on the sanctity of the priesthood, and the proclaim of the allegiance of the monastery to the papacy and its reform. Moreover, this message should be linked to the new freedom from the lay investiture experienced by the monastery since its entrance in the Cluny's network¹²⁹.

One year later, Michel Pastoureau wrote a monograph on the Romanesque portals, in which he presented an incisive summary of the main examples of the portals in France¹³⁰. Enriched by the beautiful photographs by Vincent Cunillère, the book showed the main features of the coeval sculptures. Beaulieu had its own chapter. Despite being concise, Pastoureau proposed new attributions to the iconography of some figures and dated the tympanum at 1125 AD¹³¹. On the stylistic point of view, he attributed the porch of Beaulieu to a Toulousan group of sculptors arrived from the building site in Moissac and went afterward to the Quercy and the Périgord. At the end of the brief chapter, he stressed the connection between the tympanum in Beaulieu and the one in Saint-Denis.

¹²⁶ For the parallel between the tympana in Conques and Beaulieu by Angheben, and his opinion about the position of the latter among the cases studied, see Angheben, *D'un jugement à l'autre* cit., pp. 189-190, 609.

¹²⁷ See C. E. Besancon, *The French Romanesque Portals of Moissac, Souillac and Beaulieu: a Response to the Papal Reform Movement and Popular Heresy*, PhD Thesis, University of Southern California, a. y. 2012-2013, supervisor C. Malone.

¹²⁸ In the Thesis by Besancon, Beaulieu occupies the last part, but many references may be found in the introductory chapter as well as in the conclusions. For the chapter focused on Beaulieu, see *Ibid.*, pp. 227-314.

¹²⁹ For a deeper and wider analysis on the elements of the sculpted portal and their specific interpretation from Besancon's point of view, cf. note 128.

¹³⁰ See M. Pastoureau, *Storie di pietra. Timpani e portali romanici*, edited by L. Bianco, Turin, 2014.

¹³¹ In his iconographical identifications Pastoureau was mainly laying on direct observation. In this sense it is interesting to notice that he has been the first to associate the gesture of one of the seven small characters to blindness and to propose the interpretation of the seated figure on the extreme left in the tympanum as a pagan king and not as a prophet. He was also evoking the symbolical meaning of the animals represented on the lintels, for all the identifications by Pastoureau, see *Ibid.*, pp. 50-67.

In 2014, Barbara Franzé examined the sculpted porch of Beaulieu in an article for the *Bulletin du Centre d'études médiévales Saint-Germain d'Auxerre*¹³². Starting from the examination of the previous studies, she focused at first on the issue of dating the sculpted porch, proposing as a solution the rule of abbot Geraud III (a. 1095-1112) according to both the sources and the stylistic comparisons. This Cluniac abbot was the one introduced in Beaulieu after Urban II forced the monks and Hugh of Castelnau to accept the submission of the abbey to Cluny. Franzé stressed that the new conditions of stability and wealth, ensured by Cluny's protection, were the most suitable for the beginning of a building effort like the reconstruction of the entire church¹³³. Later, she investigated the iconography of the sculpted porch, laying on the studies by Christe and Klein, proposing new readings for some elements. In this sense, she evoked the medieval exegesis of the Gospels and St. Paul's letters, mainly the *Moralia in Job* by Gregory the Great, and the role those texts had during the reformation of the Church in the eleventh and twelfth centuries¹³⁴. The new readings proposed by Franzé were meant to connect the programme of the porch in Beaulieu to the politics of the reformed Church, which Cluny was, according to her, certainly accepting. Franzé indicated as the main core of the iconographical programme in Beaulieu on one hand the reminders of the danger of the sins and on the other the promise of redemption. The latter was reinforced by the seven small exotically dressed characters, which Franzé proposed to interpret as Jews and pagans living at the End of Times and finally converted in front of the Parousia¹³⁵. In the conclusion, the author stressed the importance to understand the public which whom the overall programme was devoted to, recalling the fact that the porch was visible from the outside of the abbey, and mainly from the market square of the village, crossed daily by many travelers, merchants and pilgrims too¹³⁶.

The idea of a strong connection of the sculpted programme in Beaulieu to the Reform of the Church as a sign of the submission of the abbey to Cluny was developed forward a few years later in an article by Michele Luigi Vescovi¹³⁷. In his essay, Vescovi read the images of the porch under the

¹³² See B. Franzé, *Art et réforme clunisienne: le porche sculpté de Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne*, «Bulletin du Centre d'études médiévales Saint-Germain d'Auxerre», 18/2 (2014), pp. 1-33.

¹³³ In the historical paragraph Franzé was recalling all the examples quoted by the previous studies as comparisons to Beaulieu and commenting them, mainly Moissac and Cahors, to which she linked the investigation of the history of the abbey from its foundation to the twelfth century. She concluded this part recalling the instability of the moments before and after the rule of Geraud III, see *Ibid.*, pp. 5-9.

¹³⁴ For the references to Gregory the Great's *Moralia in Job* in the Beaulieu's porch programme, see *Ibid.*, pp. 14-17, 21-23.

¹³⁵ Franzé's identification of the seven 'exotic' figures on the Beaulieu's tympanum as Jews and pagans from the whole world converted to Christianity at the End of Days is laying mainly on the commentaries on the letter from St. Paul to the Ephesians (Ephesians 5, 14), which was quite rich and had a renewal during the Reform of the Church in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and in case of Beaulieu was strengthened by the identification of the seated figure on the left of the tympanum with St. Paul himself. See *Ibid.*, pp. 9-18.

¹³⁶ For the attention put by Franzé on the importance of audience, and for some suggestions about the possible ways for activating the images of the porch, see *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24.

¹³⁷ See M. L. Vescovi, *An Eschatological Mirror. The Romanesque Portal of Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne*, «Gesta. International Center of Medieval Art», vol. 56/1, 2017, pp. 53-80.

light of the liturgy according to the Cluniac Reform of the beginning of the twelfth century. The author put the focus on the collective ritual experience and not to the single beholder, laying on a lectionary used in Cluny at the end of the eleventh century¹³⁸. Following the lectures from Lent to Easter, *i.e.* the core of the Cluniac liturgical year, Vescovi read the programme of both the lateral reliefs and the tympanum, in order to understand the anomalies of the iconographical programme¹³⁹. Questioning the function led Vescovi to speak briefly about the audience as well, stressing how during the twelfth century the town was not yet developed. Because of that, he concluded that the major part of the public should have been constituted by monks¹⁴⁰. The porch was seen as a stage where the apse of the liturgical performance took place, with the procession of the priest and monks toward its images to get into the church, while singing and activating the images, mainly during Lent¹⁴¹. Even though the theme of the performative sphere and the function of the sculpted porch was already touched upon by Beasancon and Franzé, Vescovi put the very focus of his article on this gaze in the iconographical reading of the sculpted programme.

Élise Haddad was the last authoring some published researches on Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne. She first approached the topic in her essay in the miscellaneous study about place and space in the Middle Ages of 2018¹⁴². Here she focused on the relationship between the sculpted decoration and the space, namely how the former was shaping the latter. The author identified a net of different poles connected in the space of the church and activated by the visitor while walking¹⁴³. Haddad's description started with the sculptures of the porch, where she indicated as fundamental the concept of embracing sufferance in order to eradicate evil and reach eternal joy. This trajectory, *i.e. iter*, was followed through the different images: starting from the struggle of resisting the evil, namely the lateral reliefs with Daniel in the Lions' Den and those with the Temptations of Christ, along with the reliefs with tormented figures and monsters of the lintels, to reach the final joy shown by the vision of the tympanum. The images are seen as both complete in themselves and strictly connected together.

¹³⁸ The Cluniac Lectionary of the end of the eleventh century (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale Française, MS nouv. acq. lat. 2246) recalled by Vescovi, is itself quoting Gregory the Great's homilies, that for the Easter mass were focused mainly on the one commenting the Hosea's vision, see Vescovi, *An Eschatological mirror* cit., pp. 66-68.

¹³⁹ Vescovi was reading of the porch as a 'performance in stone', *i.e.* under the light of the liturgy for the Easter mass according to Cluniac reformed costume, see *Ibid.*, pp. 61-76.

¹⁴⁰ For the hypothesis of the consistency of the audience of the sculpted porch see *Ibid.*, pp. 61, 76.

¹⁴¹ Vescovi was laying not only on the sources quoted above but also on the writings by Rupert of Deutz, living between the eleventh and the twelfth centuries in the monastery in Liège which adopted the Cluniac liturgy. In this source a special role is attributed to the portal of Galilea which was also setting for the prayers for the dead in Liège and Cluny. Vescovi stated that plausibly the southern porch in Beaulieu would had had the same function, being the set for the evoking of the encounter between Christ and the apostles during his triumphal and final return, see *Ibid.*, pp. 76-80; see p. 78 for a hypothetical procession that could have took place in Beaulieu.

¹⁴² See É. Haddad, *Common Space or Cleft Space? The Example of Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne, an Architectural and Figural Space*, in *Place and Space in the Medieval World*, edited by M. Boulton, J. Hawkes and H. Stöner, New York, 2018, pp. 114-125.

¹⁴³ Haddad opened her article with a brief introduction to the medieval concepts of *locus*, *spatium*, *intervallum*, and *iter*, as key elements in order to try a new reading of the church in Beaulieu, see *Ibid.*, pp. 114-115.

Those visions of the porch put forward two different purposes: the former to exert power over a group, and the latter to reinforce the communality sense of the group itself through inviting the viewer to enter in the church within a community experience¹⁴⁴. Haddad proceeded then to the description of the interior, starting from what is left of the original decoration, trying to trace a net of singularities that creates directions between the space, connecting polarized spots. This analysis led the author to propose that the inner space was originally divided among the laity and the monks, and to see how the decorative elements shaped the space in order to mark this division¹⁴⁵. She concluded suggesting the double message that could have lied behind the whole sculptural programme, both internal and external: on one side the internal division among the laity and clergy, and on the other a general direction that would have recalled also the more suitable path that a Christian should have followed, after the *exemplum* of the monks, with the collective aim of the final salvation¹⁴⁶.

The second contribution by Haddad was an article published in April of the 2019, focused on the reuse of ancient forms in the sculptures of Beaulieu¹⁴⁷. From this point of view, the author was doing a comparison within the different representations of lions both on the inner lintels and on the porch. In this sense, a new meaning had been attributed to the former group, in which she read the allegory of the Eden and the Fall of Man, while on the porch lions are present as support of the Church, namely at the base of the trumeau, but also as an ambiguous force that time to time struggles humans. This vision should point out the different chronological setting into which the sculptures should be put: the lintels would represent the past and an allusion to the present, while the sculpted porch should be more focused on the present but with a strong, eschatological tension towards the future¹⁴⁸. From this analysis Haddad concluded that the forms of the sculptures, connected to an archaic style on the lintels and to a rather innovative and more updated one in the porch, were chosen on purpose in order to transmit this chronological differentiation. The style of the inner lintels,

¹⁴⁴ Haddad proposed the community experience and the view of the sculpted porch as an ensemble of interconnected images as predominant, suggesting on one side the resistance against evil to reach eternal joy and inviting entering the church on the other as the main interpretation. For the description of the porch, see Haddad, *Common Space or Cleft Space?* cit., pp. 116-118, and for the different possible layers of reading, pp. 118-119.

¹⁴⁵ For the analysis of the interior decoration and the interpretation of its role in shaping the space of the church, see *Ibid.*, pp. 121-123.

¹⁴⁶ Haddad is also suggesting that the exemplum of the monastic life was also meant to suggest conversion from secular to monastic to the viewer, through the presentation of the monastic areas of the church as recalling the Paradise, see *Ibid.* cit., p. 123.

¹⁴⁷ See Id., *(Ré)utilisation de formes anciennes dans le décor sculpté de Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne*, «Questes. Revue pluridisciplinaire de études médiévales», 40 (2019), pp. 99-116.

¹⁴⁸ This differentiation in the chronological setting between the lintels and the porch was also connected by Haddad to the different public to which the sculptures were addressed: the lintels and the allusion of Eden to the monks, as a model to follow, and the porch to the lay people, as a reminder to the need to resist against the evil forces along with the promise of eschatological redemption, see *Ibid.*, pp. 107-109.

whether recreated in the twelfth century or simply reused from previous buildings, was consciously employed in order to communicate the sense of “past” and finished period¹⁴⁹.

Finally, in June of the same year, she defended her PhD Thesis about the iconography of the Apocalypse, using as a starting point the sculptures in Beaulieu¹⁵⁰. Haddad divided her thesis in three main parts, the first referred to the analysis of the sculpted porch of Beaulieu and internal decoration, the second focused on a survey on the development of the Apocalyptic iconography from the eleventh century onward¹⁵¹, while in the last part she tried to apply the anthropological concept of ontological development from an analogical vision to a naturalistic one, *i.e.* the passage from the ‘medieval gaze’ to the modern one¹⁵². In Haddad’s thesis, the church of Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne works as the starting point from which the reasoning was developed through iconography, iconology and anthropology. In this sense, it was fully analysed to provide the elements that allows the argument to develop in the different fields through the mean of comparison¹⁵³. This description and analysis of the sculptures of Beaulieu recalled her previous articles and tried to explain also the elements shortly examined by preceding studies, namely the lintels’ monsters, the lions at the base of the trumeau and the carved lintels inside the church. The explanation of their meaning and the pinpoint of the written and figurative sources allowed Haddad to propose also new shades in the understanding of both the overall programme of the portal and the inner functional use of the church. From this perspective the programme in Beaulieu presents the struggles that siege humans in everyday life as a spiritual trail functional to the progression of the soul toward Heaven. Because of that, Beaulieu was seen as an example of eschatological programme structured on different layers meant to be accessible from different viewers, depending on their social and cultural position¹⁵⁴. Laying on the previous analysis

¹⁴⁹ Being the first to read the lintels in this point of view, Haddad was proposing here also one of the more complete reflection and analysis on the inner lintels in Beaulieu, looking for connections between them and the space into which they are inserted, see Haddad, (*Ré*)*utilisation de formes anciennes* cit., pp. 101-106; for what concern Haddad’s interpretation of the meaning of the stylistic differences, see pp. 109-112.

¹⁵⁰ See Id., *Le bien a l’épreuve du mal. À partir du tympan de Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne, adversité apocalyptique et image analogiste*, PhD Thesis, École de Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, a. y. 2018-2019, supervisor M. A. Polo de Beaulieu.

¹⁵¹ The second part of Haddad’s thesis is considering a wide range of images all referred to the Apocalyptic exegesis, trying to emphasize the difference among the represented subjects, *i.e.* from the struggle for the soul’s sake to the dominance of the Last Judgement, namely in their developments through time, trying to indagate the influences derived from the social and historical context. See *Ibid.*, pp. 9-11, 194-491, 670-673.

¹⁵² The third part of Haddad’s thesis is adopting the concept of ontological vision elaborated by Philippe Descola, in order to stress the alterity among the Middle Age conception of reality and the modern one, namely the analogist and the naturalist, trying to apply this method in the interpretation of medieval figurative programmes, showing new connections and readings also for well-known examples that allow to use those figurative vestiges as documents useful for the historic anthropological investigation. This part is concluded by an analysis of the late Middle Ages and the early modern period as a moment of transition between an analogical vision to a naturalistic one, showing the impact of such a change both in the figurative and written production. See *Ibid.*, pp. 11-15, 493-666, 673-679.

¹⁵³ In order to give a context as complete as possible Haddad created some *corpora* of images connected by chronological or thematical links among them, which allows to follow the overall development of the reasoning. For the description of the comparing and gathering methodology, see Haddad, *Le bien a l’épreuve du mal* cit., pp. 15-17.

¹⁵⁴ For the analysis of Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne decorative programme by Haddad, see Haddad, *Le bien a l’épreuve du mal* cit., pp. 7-9, 18-193, 667-669.

of the sculpted decoration, the study by Haddad was enriched by the examination of all the secondary elements in order to find new connections and meanings for the programme itself and to suggest hypothesis on the identity of its public. Another innovative element was the approach by which the author used Beaulieu as a mean through which developing a double reasoning in different fields of research, firstly iconographical and iconological, and secondly anthropological.

I. 3. Conclusions and considerations: open issues

The studies about the monuments of Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne from the first notices in the central decades of the nineteenth century to the last PhD Thesis by Élise Haddad, show how the buildings and the objects were approached from time to time. Starting from a more analytical observation of the decorations, passing to a growing attention to the iconography of the porch, improved consistently after the Second World War, namely after the essay by Kraus of 1965 and that of Christe of 1969. The different scholars tried to find the meaning of the various elements that compose the porch, linking them to different sources, both figurative and written. In the last decade other paths of research have been followed. The PhD Thesis by Catherine Besancon the connection attested between Beaulieu and Cluny has been the starting point to re-evaluate the iconography of the porch, that still presented some singularities. In this sense, also, Barbara Franzé proposed new sources, derived from the Cluniac milieu, comparing them to the sculpted porch in order to find some confirmations for the hypothesis that the latter was made in a cultural environment subjected to the strong influence of the Burgundian abbey. Another new line of research was more focused on the usage of the images at Beaulieu, that was only alluded in many studies in the last decades. Vescovi has been the first who directly dealt with this aspect, connecting his research to the idea by Franzé and trying to apply the Cluniac liturgy for Lent and Easter to the sculptures in Beaulieu. Thus, he put forward a hypothetical reconstruction of a possible procession that could have involved the priest and the monks. Later, Haddad was trying to cross the new discourse about the function and the usage of the images in Beaulieu with a fresh glance on the iconography, due to the introduction of anthropological perspectives applied to the study of the church and its spaces.

In the overall sequence of these studies emerged only in recent times the exigence to understand something more about the audience that should have seen and ‘used’ those images. It seems that an attempt can be made in order to deep more the glance in this direction. In particular, it appeared that the main ‘actors’ in the history of Beaulieu were the monks on one side and the inhabitants of the village on the other, and even though this cannot be questioned, another type of actor can be addressed: the travellers, and more specifically the pilgrims. This nebulous figure had been pointed out as a key element since the very beginning of the studies in Beaulieu, as firstly referred in the essays by Lefèvre-Pontalis in 1923 and that by Raimond Rey in 1936, but almost all the authors that followed agreed with that¹⁵⁵. An interesting contribution in this direction was developed by Pierre Héliot in 1974, when he examined the architectural features that Beaulieu shared

¹⁵⁵ For the essay by Lefèvre-Pontalis, see the reference at note 33; and for the definition of the role of the pilgrims as a generative impulse for the building of the church in Beaulieu and their role in the usage of the structure itself according Rey, see note 45.

with the major pilgrimage churches¹⁵⁶. Referring to what has been already done by Vescovi and Haddad, it will be attempted to understand better, if possible, the role that those ‘third type of actors’ had in reading the images and using the space of the church.

From this perspective, also, the treasury will be considered, being the main attractive reason for the pilgrims to Beaulieu. An element of interest since the monastery of Saint-Pierre in Beaulieu was not directly placed on a pilgrimage route; but laid on a spot between the majors *via Lemovicense* and *via Podense* that connected the continental France, and beyond, to Santiago de Compostela.

¹⁵⁶ For the essay by Pierre Hélot, see the reference at note 88.

II. The Church of Saint-Pierre at Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne

II. 1. Restorations of the Church from the Nineteenth to the Twenty-first Centuries

In 1790, after the French Revolution, the community of the Maurists monks was forced to leave Beaulieu, and the monastic buildings were sold as State properties to be demolished and substituted by private properties¹⁵⁷. Although the church was spared, its state of preservation was very precarious. Already in 1808, the ceiling and the vault of the first two bays of the nave collapsed, and a new one was made in the subsequent decades. The southern portal was covered by a hall since 1575, when the Huguenots took over Beaulieu. Although the Maurists demolished the hall in 1786, they substitute it with a new one soon after, finally demolished only in 1834¹⁵⁸.

The first restoration was undertaken by the architect Anatole de Baudot (1834-1915) between 1880 and 1889. The construction of a new vault for the sculpted portal and the nave was planned, as well as a new roof. The lower part of the apse and its decoration, along with the top of the western façade were restored as well (cf. figg. 2 and 21). A second campaign was directed by Baudot, along with the architect Henri Chaine (1847-1919), and lasted from 1899 to 1907. It involved the chapter hall, restored and converted to sacristy for the church, which was converted to the parish service since the end of the eighteenth century. The second group of restorations included also the demolition of the buildings erected against the apse and the northern wall¹⁵⁹.

Between 1920 and 1929, works were urgently undertaken on the heavily damaged pillars of the dome, about to collapse. In 1931 the same architect restored the roof of the portal made by Baudot, whereas two years later the coloured glass windows were applied¹⁶⁰. The ground level of the square and the alley around the apse was lowered in same turn of years.

¹⁵⁷ See J. M. Berland, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne*, Paris, 1973, pp. 6-7; É. Proust, *La sculpture romane en Bas-Limousin. Un domaine original du grand art languedocien*, Paris, 2004, p. 226.

¹⁵⁸ For the hall covering the portal, see É. Haddad, *Le bien a l'épreuve du mal. À partir du tympan de Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne, adversité apocalyptique et image analogiste*, PhD thesis, École de Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, a. y. 2018-2019, supervisor M. A. Polo de Beaulieu, pp. 149, 153.

¹⁵⁹ The documents about the works undertaken by Baudot are kept in the Médiathèque de l'architecture et du Patrimoine, associated to the folder 19019, namely within the Restauration des edifices de la Corrèze, série générale E81/19/5-20(4), cf. also www.archives-map.culture.gouv.fr. For the summary of Baudot's interventions on Beaulieu, see E. Lefèvre-Pontalis, *Beaulieu*, in *Congrès archéologique de France*, proceedings of the national conference (Limoges, 1921), edited by the Société française d'archéologie, Paris, 1923, pp. 365-394: 368; A. M. Pêcheur, É. Proust, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne. Abbatale Saint-Pierre*, in *Congrès archéologique de France. 163e session. Corrèze 2005*, proceedings of the international conference edited by the Société d'archéologie française, Paris, 2007, pp. 83-103: 84-85; Proust, *La sculpture romane en Bas-Limousin* cit., p. 227.

¹⁶⁰ For the restorations between 1920 and 1940, see Berland, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., p. 27; Proust, *La sculpture romane en Bas-Limousin* cit., p. 227.

In 1946, the restorations involved the sculpted portal, in which a '*mise à nude de la pierre*' was made¹⁶¹. In 1957, the western façade was restored as well, and in this context a two-light window was discovered, its central column has a sculpted capital comparable with those of the southern portal. In 1966 the choir was paved¹⁶². In the following years and the beginning of the subsequent decade the square and the alley around the apse and the chapter hall were the object of an urbanistic restoration¹⁶³.

After a survey on the conditions of the portal sculptures, taken between 1989 and 1990, appeared how the lower sculptures were seriously damaged by weather and the trumeau shown a deep fissure. It is more than ten years after these observations were made, in 2001, that the restorations begun, led by the architect Stăfan Măciulescu. After improving the coverture of the roof, the sculptures of the portal were cleaned and those on the external edge and on the external side of the portal were substituted by modern copies, while the originals were put into the church¹⁶⁴.

More recently the external walls and the roof of the church were once again restored and cleaned. In 2010 the central belfry, in 2011 the towers with the galleries' staircases, and between 2014 and 2019 those of the system of the deambulatory and the ray chapels of the apse. The latter involved not only the rooves but also the external façades and the ground around the apse¹⁶⁵.

II. 2. The Architectural Setting

The church of Saint-Pierre in Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne is located in the core of the small town (fig. 9). Nowadays the building appears as a three-nave basilica church, with a visible transept, a chancel with deambulatory, and chapels emerging both from the eastern side of each arm of the transept and from the apse (fig. 18). The church presents three entrances, one on the western façade, one on the southern side opened towards the central square of the town, and one on the northern, directly connected with the sacristy. All the building is constructed with sandstone in the range of yellowish to rose colours¹⁶⁶.

¹⁶¹ See the reference to Proust at note 160.

¹⁶² In this context the first archaeological survey was taken, cf. note 159; for the archaeological survey of 1966, see P. Lebouteux, *Sondages dans le chœur de l'église abbatiale de Saint-Pierre à Beaulieu-en-Dordogne*, «Centre international d'études romanes. Revue trimestrielle», 1970, pp. 72-76.

¹⁶³ During the excavation needed to level the ground some skeletons and sarcophagi from the previous monastic cemetery were found, see R. Courivaud, *Les sarcophages de l'abbaye de Beaulieu*, «Bulletin de la Société scientifique, historique et archéologique de la Corrèze», 95, 1973, pp. 99-104.

¹⁶⁴ About the restorations led by Măciulescu see Pêcheur, Proust, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., pp. 99-101.

¹⁶⁵ The last series of restorations was made under the State domain, I have found all the connected information still *in situ*, on the explanatory panels temporary displayed on the exterior of the southern arm of the transept of the church.

¹⁶⁶ For the identification of the type of stone used in the church, see Haddad, *Le bien a l'épreuve du mal* cit., pp. 150-151; Proust, *La sculpture romane en Bas-Limousin* cit., p. 29, note 189.

Each side of the church are visible from the exterior, since no building stands attached to them, with the modest exception of the north-western and the south-western corners, partially covered by the bell tower and other buildings¹⁶⁷. Despite being normally oriented, the main façade of the church can be considered the southern, due to the presence of the richly sculpted portal, protruding on the market square along with the southern arm of the transept (figg. 22a-b). The inner bays of the southern aisle are reflected by counterforts with semi-columns on the outside.

Both on the outside and the inside, it is possible to observe the complex structure of the apse at the most eastern part of the building (fig. 19). From an internal point of view, three apsidal chapels are accessible by the deambulatory, itself covered by groin vaults and divided from the chancel by four composed pillars and the four columns of the *rond point* and (figg. 38-41). The eastern side is completed by the two apses of the chapels on each arm of the transept (fig. 42). From an external point of view, it is possible to appreciate a general unity of these architectural elements. A high and continuous crepidoma works as basement for both the apsidal chapels and those of the transept, which volumes are comparable and similarly enriched by semi-columns and counterforts. Over the rooves of their conches, raise the final part of the wall and the roof of the galleries covering the deambulatory, flanked on each side by a small rounded tower containing the spiral stairs that lead to the galleries over the deambulatory. Even higher, the wall and the ceiling of the conch of the main apse (fig. 19).

The northern side of the church has a similar disposition to the southern: the inner division of the bays of the aisle is reflected outside by semi-columns and is concluded eastward by the protruding arm of the transept (figg. 20a-b-c). The latter is partially covered by the sacristy, itself having the western façade decorated with three splay arches containing a two-light window on the sides and the entrance door in the middle (fig. 16). Having no sculpted portal, this side of the church show a general continuity from the transept to the western façade, partially covered by a private building on the west edge.

The western façade is also covered by the same building on its northern corner and by the bell tower on its southern (fig. 21). In this sense, only the central part of the façade is visible, divided in three registers: on the bottom the stepped portal, and above it two series of three windows, stepped, with pointed arch and smaller in the lower level and bigger, with pointed arch and trilobate topping on the higher. At the top of the façade a cornice with two converging lines of steps covers the roof's edges.

¹⁶⁷ The church was surrounded by buildings already in the late sixteenth century, to be partially freed first during the Maurists' presence at Beaulieu, and then with nineteenth and twentieth centuries restorations. See A. Vaslet, *Abregé de l'histoire de l'abbaye de Beaulieu en Bas-Limousin*, edited by Poulbrière, J.-B., «Bulletin de la Société scientifique, historique et archéologique de la Corrèze», 6, 1884, pp. 59-178: 144-152; cf. notes 159 and 160.

The nave is covered by a barrel vault, crossed by transverse arches, as well as the two arms of the transept (figg. 36, 45). Both the nave and the transept are covered on the exterior by a gable roof. At the crossing of the transept, the dome is resting on four arches transitioned by pendentives, and its top is structured by an octagonal tower, enlightened by eight pointed arches flanked by semi-columns, hosting the ancient belfry, concluded by a pointed roof (figg. 19, 20a, 22a).

The inner separation between the three aisles consist in squared pillars with semi-columns on each side, repeated also on the side of the entrances of the deambulatory, and enlarged in the four pillars holding the dome (figg. 36, 38, 39). In the aisles these composed pilasters support the groin vaults and the arches on which a gallery is laying, covering the side aisles, opened on the nave by two-light windows (figg. 37, 44). The galleries are stopping in correspondence of the transept and its crossing point with the nave, to continue above the deambulatory, in order to surround the presbytery (fig. 38). Their two-light windows are here overlooked by four arched windows illuminating the apsidal conch (fig. 39). Every bay of the nave, the transept and the deambulatory are marked by semi-columns and arches protruding from the ceiling (figg. 36, 37, 40b-c).

The second bay of the northern aisle and the external bay of the northern arm of the transept present ogival curves in their ribs.

On the south-western corner of the western façade is positioned the belfry (fig. 22b). It has an irregular, trapezoidal plan, and a six-stories elevation, with a room without windows on the first floor, and two pointed arch windows on each side from the third story on. It is covered by a pyramidal roof with a roof lantern hosting a clock on its top.

II. 3. The Sculptural Decoration

The decorative arrangement of the church of Saint-Pierre in Beaulieu is currently reduced to a part of what should have been the original conception. Nonetheless, the remaining show the high quality of the sculptors working on the building. Starting from the complete loss of the paintings, the major core of the decoration is to be seen today in the southern portal, which will be dealt with below in the present study. Along with it, the exterior is enriched by many smaller sculptural elements. Namely decorative architectural elements, as the modillions running under the cornice of the roof on the southern, eastern and northern sides of the church (fig. 53) and the capitals of some mouldings of

windows in the apses (fig. 58)¹⁶⁸. To those elements should be added the consumed statue on the right of the southern portal, elevated on the top of the counterfort with semi-column (fig. 22b)¹⁶⁹. On the western façade the main decoration is gathered around the first register of windows, and it consists in vegetal capitals of the small columns of the splay windows (fig. 21).

II. 3. 1. The Southern Portal

The sculpted portal is the main evidence of the ensemble of decorations in Beaulieu (fig. 23). It has a simple structure with a huge pillar on each side, leaning against the southern wall of the church and flanking the main portal. The two large pillars are connected by a barrel vault, covered by a gable roof, both added between 1880 and 1889 by Anatole de Baudot¹⁷⁰. The external surfaces as well as the vault are smooth, except for three reliefs located on the southern side of the western pillar. Quite the opposite, the inner part of the portal is widely decorated, starting from the lateral walls, to that of the entrance, where the double door is surrounded by sculptures. The core of the entire ensemble is above the door itself: two lintels and the tympanum which lays on them.

The only sculpted decoration on the external surface is the group of three reliefs placed on the southern side of the western pillar (figg. 24a-b-25). After the restoration of 2001, stone copies are displayed in place of the originals, which are kept inside the church (fig. 24a)¹⁷¹. The three slabs of local sandstone, though being very consumed and missing the higher parts, has been interpreted as three of the deadly sins (figg. 24b-25). From left to right are represented Gluttony, the most consumed, a figure probably holding a bow; Avarice, firmly holding a sack in its right hand and carrying an almost completely lost figure; and Lust, a woman with her breast bitten by snakes and her genital by another animal (toad?). Their appearance, though badly preserved, seems to suggest that their current position is not the original one. Nowadays they seem separated from the rest of the composition, as it is shown their heads turned up leftwards¹⁷².

¹⁶⁸ The carved modillions holding the cornice of the roof present different themes and settings. For the complete analyses, see A. de Laborderie, *L'église de Beaulieu*, «Bulletin de la Société scientifique, historique et archéologique de la Corrèze», 59, 1937, pp. 127-163: 146-157; cf. also the updating in M. M. S. Gauthier, J. Maury, J. Porcher, *Limousin Roman*, in *Zodiaque. La nuit du temps*, edited by J. Dieuzaide, P. Belzeaux, 88 voll., Pierre-Qui-Vire (Yonne), 1955-1999, XI, 1960, pp. 87-88; Proust, *La sculpture romane en Bas-Limousin* cit., pp. 238-239.

¹⁶⁹ The statue on the top of the counterfort has been dated to the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries and connected with the figure of the judge de Cugnères starting from the local nickname Cougnotou, a pejorative of the surname of the judge himself, see Berland, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., p. 14.

¹⁷⁰ Cf. note 159.

¹⁷¹ The originals can be found on the western wall of the southern arm of the transept.

¹⁷² See Haddad, *Le bien a l'épreuve du mal* cit., pp. 145-155; J. Zinck, *Moissac, Beaulieu, Charlieu – zur ikonologischen Kohärenz romanischer Skulpturen-programme im Südwesten Frankreichs und in Burgund*, «Aachener Kunstblätter», 56/57 (1988/1989), pp. 73-182: 128-130, 157-159.

Proceeding towards the inner part of the portal, the lateral pillars share the same disposition (cf. figg. 27a, 28a). The wall is divided in two main surfaces by a double arch laying on three columns with richly carved capitals, under which is located a stone bench. Narrative scenes are displayed inside this setting. The external side of these compositions is concluded by another relief, carved on rectangular slabs.

On the western pillar is represented the story of Daniel in the Lions' Den (Dan 14) (fig. 27c). The reliefs are structured in asymmetrical way: two third of the space, lower and central, are occupied by the scene of Daniel in the Lions' Den. The prophet is depicted on the right, identified by an inscription on the right of his head (fig. 26) and seated on one lion, surrounded by other six (fig. 74). Above this group of figures, a circular porch is designing the den itself, creating a line that is overlapping with the central column, and concluded by a tower-like structure occupying the right side of the left arch. In the remaining space, a very consumed relief can be interpreted as the depiction of Habakkuk with the meal for Daniel, carried by the angel¹⁷³. Above these reliefs, immediately under the arches, two scenes represent the main reasons that led to Daniel's conviction to the Lions' Den. On the left the destruction of the idol of Bel (Dan 14, 1-22), identifiable in the building with three arches topped by towers and hosting a human face, plausibly the idol destroyed by Daniel¹⁷⁴. On the right, despite being deteriorated and missing of the higher half, Daniel killing the Babylonian dragon (Dan 14, 23-30), is recognizable in the serpentine figure dominated by a human¹⁷⁵.

The western pillar is concluded on the left by three slabs in vertical sequence, now visible in a copy realized during the 2001 restoration (fig. 27b). The lower relief shows two animals, maybe lions, overlapping their bodies with their heads supporting the feet of a possibly seated figure, carved over them in the central slab (cf. figg. 27b, 82). The upper one is occupied by a winged figure, plausibly an angel¹⁷⁶. Despite its bad state of preservation different scholars through the last two centuries tried an identification, although none of them have been widely shared yet. The major

¹⁷³ For the identification of this group as Habakkuk and the angel, see Lefèvre-Pontalis, *Beaulieu* cit., pp. 365-394: 379.

¹⁷⁴ This image, differently interpreted through time, has been recently read as the idol of Bel by Besancon, see C. E. Besancon, *The French Romanesque Portals of Moissac, Souillac and Beaulieu: a Response to the Papal Reform Movement and Popular Heresy*, PhD thesis, University of South California, a. y. 2012-2013, supervisor C. Malone, pp. 302-303.

¹⁷⁵ For the interpretation of this group as Daniel killing the Babylonian dragon, see Y. Christe, *Le portail de Beaulieu. Étude iconographique et stylistique*, «Bulletin archéologique du comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques. Minister de l'éducation nationale», 6, 1970/1971, pp. 57-76: 61-63. For a deeper analysis, cf. also P. K. Klein, *Programmes escatologiques, fonction et réception historiques du portails du XIIe siècle: Moissac – Beaulieu – Saint-Denis*, in «Cahiers de civilisation médiévale», 33/132, 1990, pp. 317-349: 333. Haddad, *Le bien a l'épreuve du mal* cit., pp. 109-110.

¹⁷⁶ For the interpretation of this figure as St. Michael killing the dragon, associated both with Daniel killing the dragon and the triumphant Christ, see Zinck, *Moissac, Beaulieu, Charlieu* cit., pp. 143, 148-149.

hypothesis read the main figure respectively as a depiction of the Virgin; a prophet, plausibly Daniel linked with the reliefs of the pillar; an abbot or bishop, maybe St. Benedict ¹⁷⁷.

The eastern pillar of the porch mirrors the setting of the western one. In the arched space are displayed the Temptations of Christ according to Matthew's Gospel (Mt 4) (fig. 28c), parts of which are quoted directly within the figural representation (fig. 28b). On the left the first two Temptations are depicted. A central tower, laying on a high basement, is dividing the composition in the middle. The ashlar of its walls is substitute under the first cornice by the letters of the Latin inscription, which quote precisely the challenging speech of the Devil in the First Temptation (Mt 4, 3):

SI FILI(US) DEI E(S) / DIC UT LAPI/DE ISTI / PA[N]ES FI/ANT

In front of the basement of the tower is depicted the pile of stone, to which the Devil points from the right. On the left Christ moves towards the church with a twisted pose. His legs turn leftwards, his bust is frontal showing the palms of his hands remarking the refusal of the Devil, his head, signed with crossed nimbus, is turned rightwards. The upper part of the composition is divided only in its lower half by the tower, on which is inscribed the Devil's provocative sentence of the Second Temptation (Mt 4, 6)¹⁷⁸:

SI FILI(US) DEI E(S) / M(I)TE TE / DEORSUM

Behind a double arcade, drawing a diagonal going from the tower upwards, the Devil is depicted on the right pointing downwards while Christ, on the opposite side, raises his hand. The clothing of the figures, identical to those of the First Temptation, allows their identification despite the loss of the

¹⁷⁷ The hypothesis to read this figure as the enthroned Virgin had been first discussed by Poulbrière in 1878, see J. B. Poulbrière, *L'église de Beaulieu et son portail sculpté*, in «Bulletin de la société archéologique du Limousin», 22, 1873, pp. 41-103: 81-83. Cf. also Christe, *Le portail du Beaulieu* cit., p. 64.

For the identification as an Old Testament prophet, plausibly Daniel, see Besancon, *The French Romanesque Portals* cit., pp. 293-294; Haddad, *Le bien a l'épreuve du mal* cit., pp. 110-111; J. Maury, J. Porcher, M. Vidal, *Quercy Roman*, in *Zodiaque. La nuit du temps*, edited by J. Dieuzaide, P. Belzeaux, 88 voll., Pierre-qui-Vire (Yonne), 1955-1999, X, 1959, p. 317.

For the interpretation of this figure as a churchman, namely abbot or bishop, plausibly St. Benedict, see B. Franzé, *Art et réforme clunisienne: le porche sculpté de Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne*, «Bulletin du Centre d'études médiévales Saint-Germain d'Auxerre», 18/2, 2014, pp. 1-33: 18-19; Zinck, *Moissac, Beaulieu, Charlieu* cit., p. 148.

¹⁷⁸ For the transcription and the epigraphical analysis of the inscriptions of the eastern pillar see R. Favreau, J. Michaud, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne*, in *Corpus des inscriptions de la France médiévale*, Poitiers, 25 voll., 1974-2014, II. *Limousin*, 1978, pp. 15-20: 15-16.

higher part of the composition. The capital of the left column shows a figured composition too, with a human stretched between three beasts that are biting respectively his head, belly and legs (fig. 76)¹⁷⁹.

Beyond a column in dark green granite, the Third Temptation of Christ occupies the space under the right arch. The figure of Christ dominates the composition, placed in the right half and represented bigger than the other characters; he points upwards with his left hand. On the left the Devil is represented twice, one facing Christ in the very moment of teasing him with the Third Temptation (Mt 4, 8-9), and the other one on the left with a desperate expression, moving leftwards after being defeated (Mt 4, 10-11). The three characters are set on a rock, referring to the 'high mountain' mentioned in the Biblical text. The kingdoms of the Earth are recalled by two buildings under the mountain and one on its left, represented as towers flanked by arcades. The higher part of the composition is lost here, like in the left half of this side.

The last column has a figurative capital, badly preserved, with a central human figure flanked by two other creatures with bird's bodies holding his arms in their mouths. The eastern pillar is concluded on the right by another group of three sculpted slabs (fig. 28a, d). Again, what is visible today is a copy of 2001, while the original pieces are kept in the northern aisle of the church (fig. 28d)¹⁸⁰. The composition shows some volumes in the lower part which can be read as remains of animal bodies. Over them the main figure, the Christ, is recognizable thanks to the crossed nimbus and the physiognomy of the face, which resembles that of the other depictions in the portal. His right hand is raised, maybe blessing, and the other is stretched downwards, holding a book. On the right side, placed next to the corner and inserted in a curvilinear cut of the edge, a group of angels surrounds and seemingly supports the movements of Christ. In the higher panel an angel descends from the clouds with a thurible in his right hand, in order to spread the incense over Christ's head. This representation has been identified as Christ triumphant over the evil forces, represented by the animals of the lower part, as described in the Psalm 90 (91)¹⁸¹. This psalm was used to be related with the Gospel of Matthew during Lent's readings, especially as a conclusion for the narration of the Temptations of Christ. In this sense, the sculpted decoration would have reflected the order of the liturgical readings¹⁸².

¹⁷⁹ This capital has been related to the scenes of the Temptations of Christ as a display of the destiny of the soul that surrenders to the evil forces, see M. Pastoureau, *Storie di pietra. Timpani e portali romanici*, edited by L. Bianco, Turin, 2014, p. 56.

¹⁸⁰ Only the lower and the central slabs have been substituted by the copies made during the restorations of 2001, the originals are kept in the northern aisle of the church.

¹⁸¹ For the identification with the triumphant Christ and its link with the Psalm 90 (91), see Christe, *Le portail du Beaulieu* cit., p. 60.

¹⁸² The connection with the liturgical readings of Lent during the twelfth century has been demonstrated by Franzé and then supported by Vescovi, see respectively Franzé, *Art et réforme clunisienne* cit., pp. 20-22; M. L. Vescovi, *An Eschatological Mirror. The Romanesque Portal of Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne*, «Gesta. International Center of Medieval Art», vol. 56/1 (2017), pp. 53-80: 62-63, 76. Cf. also paragraph III. 2. 3.

The main side of the portal reflects the arched form of the open side (fig. 23). The wall is framed by three rows of squared ashlar alternated with torus mouldings with green granite bases and sculpted capitals. The sculpted decoration spreads around the portal. On each of its jambs a haloed figure is represented standing on a pedestal protruding from the wall¹⁸³, with its head turned towards the entrance, possibly addressed to the viewer (figg. 32a-b)¹⁸⁴. Although these two reliefs appear very damaged, it is possible to identify them due to the remains of their attributes and physiognomy: St. Peter holds keys on the left (fig. 32a), and the bold and bearded St. Paul holds a book on the right (fig. 32b)¹⁸⁵.

The central part of the door is occupied by the trumeau, a monolithic elongated parallelepiped with scalloped-edged angles, marked by corner columns and sculpted on every visible side (29a-b-c). The frontal and the lateral sides host atlas figures, the back presents a fish scale decoration¹⁸⁶. On the front a complex twist of animals, plausibly lions, sustain the feet of a young man himself holding the architrave (fig. 29b)¹⁸⁷. On the left side only a head of the lions appears in the base, but two figures occupy the same space of the young man of the front (fig. 29a). An older figure carries on his shoulder a younger one, who in turn carries the architrave. The right side presents a similar division with a lion's head on the bottom, and two figures superimposed (fig. 29c). The lower is smaller and seems to be attacked by the lion, without sustaining directly the upper figure (fig. 30b). The latter seems to be the oldest person represented on the trumeau, having a long beard divided in four locks. He is carrying the weight of the architrave with his neck and shoulders, whereas his hands are grabbing his slightly flexed legs and the corner columns in order support the effort. The upper figures are better preserved than the lowers, reduced to their essential volumes. Nonetheless, the high quality of the carving is shown, both in the rendering of the bodies, bended by the weight of the architrave, and the details of their clothing with finely carved folds and jewelled-like decorations. Moreover, the faces

¹⁸³ As Besancon argued, the presence of curved carvings on the pedestals could recall those on the tympanum, cf. note 185.

¹⁸⁴ See Besancon, *The French Romanesque Portals* cit., p. 287, note 165.

¹⁸⁵ For the first identifications of the two figures on the jambs of the entrance, see J. E. M. Deloche, *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Beaulieu en Limousin*, Paris, 1859, p. CCLXXII; Poulbrière, *L'église de Beaulieu et son portail* cit., pp. 83-84. They have been associated to the dedication of the church and the former abbey, and more recently connected to the relationship between Beaulieu and Cluny, see Besancon, *The French Romanesque Portals* cit., pp. 288-289.

¹⁸⁶ An interesting analysis of this pattern related to the other reliefs in Beaulieu and to other examples of French sculptures of the twelfth century, as well as to Roman sarcophagi lids, has been made by Besancon, see Besancon, *The French Romanesque Portals* cit., pp. 58-59.

¹⁸⁷ For the identification of the very consumed figures at the basement of the trumeau as lions, see É. Haddad, *(Ré)utilisation de formes anciennes dans le décor sculpté de Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne*, «Questes. Revue pluridisciplinaire de études médiévales», 40, 2019, pp. 99-116: 107.

have a strong expressivity, communicating the heaviness of the effort undertaken by the characters (fig. 33a)¹⁸⁸.

From the beginning of the studies on Beaulieu the tympanum of the southern portal has been the core of the attention of the majority of the scholars. Being on the frontal side, the tympanum is the first sculpted element that catches the viewer's gaze. This appearance is strengthened by the framing of the tympanum itself, which echoes the wider arch of the open side of the porch (fig. 31). The surface of the tympanum is divided in two horizontal stripes, *i.e.* a double lintel, on which the lunette, occupying two third of the tympanum, is laying¹⁸⁹.

In the lower lintel three figures are displayed over a background decorated with vegetal elements, resembling rosettes inscribed in discs (fig. 31)¹⁹⁰. On the left an animal walks rightwards on its four paws. It has a compact and almost ovoid shape with a quite long tail behind it, it seems to be covered by big clumps of fur (fig. 33b). Originally identified as a boar and later as a bear, it has more recently interpreted as a 'fusion' between the two animals, based on a closer observation of its physical features. Due to the 'terrestrial' nature of the two animals, it can be associated to the Beast of the Earth, as described in the Apocalypse according to St. John (Ap 13, 11-12)¹⁹¹. Proceeding rightwards another hybrid animal is depicted walking in the same direction (fig. 33a). Its elongated body presents seven udders under its belly and four short legs with eagle's paws as feet. Behind it, a tail is concluded by two monstrous heads with horns, whereas on the front four more horned heads emerging from the body. This animal can be identified with the Beast of the Abyss, as described in the Apocalypse of St. John (Ap 13, 1-2), both for its features and in relationship with the dragon that

¹⁸⁸ Zinck interpreted the trumeau as a representing the age of man and the earthly sufferance. Recently Besancon pointed out a possible connection with the idea of supporting the Church, whereas Haddad interpreted the trumeau as humanity seen through an eschatological perspective. See respectively Zinck, *Moissac, Beaulieu, Charlieu* cit., pp. 159-164; Besancon, *The French Romanesque Portals* cit., pp. 289-293; Haddad, *Le bien a l'épreuve du mal* cit., pp. 94-107.

¹⁸⁹ Some scholars proposed to read the higher lintel as the lower register of the lunette, creating a unique ensemble between the two elements. See Poulbrière, *L'église de Beaulieu et son portail* cit., p. 89; W.-H. von der Mülbe, *Die Darstellung des Jüngen Gerichts an der Romanischen und Gotischen Kirchenportalen Franchreichs*, Leipzig, 1911, p. 37; Maury, Porcher, Vidal, *Quercy Roman* cit., pp. 316, 318; B. Barrière, S. Boisset, É. Proust, I. Ribieras, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne*, in *Patrimoine Limousin*, edited by B. Barrière, Limoges, 8 voll., 1991-2002, II, 1993, pp. 21-26.

¹⁹⁰ The rosettes of the lower lintel have been read by Haddad as representation of stars, linked to the Apocalyptic account of the dragon meant to discard one third of the stars of the sky (Ap 12, 3-4), see É. Haddad, *Common Space or Cleft Space? The Example of Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne, an Architectural and Figural Space*, in *Place and Space in the Medieval World*, edited by M. Boulton, J. Hawkes and H. Stöner, New York, 2018, pp. 114-125: 117, p. 124, note 9.

¹⁹¹ For the interpretation of this beast as a boar, see Poulbrière, *L'église de Beaulieu et son portail* cit., p. 88. For its identification with a bear, see J. Evans, *Cluniac Art of the Romanesque Period*, Cambridge, 1950, p. 77; Lefèvre-Pontalis, *Beaulieu* cit., p. 382; E. Mâle, *L'art religieux du XII siècle en France. Étude sur les origines de l'iconographie du Moyen Age*, Paris, 1922, p. 407; von der Mülbe, *Die Darstellung des Jüngen Gerichts* cit., p. 37, note 3. For the reading of this animal as a hybrid between boar and bear and its association with the Beast of the earth, see Haddad, *Le bien a l'épreuve du mal* cit., pp. 38-41.

follows immediately afterwards¹⁹². The latter occupies the whole right side of the lower lintel with its coiled body (figg. 33a, 33c). It turns leftwards, facing the previous beast with its human-like face, with beard and moustache, pointed ears and horns, and open mouth. Above the turnings of the coiled body two demons-like monkeys emerging with their busts, holding a snake in their hands and threatening each other with raised fists. The ending of the tail of this hybrid creature has a monstrous face showing a forked tongue, turned towards left (fig. 33c). As mentioned above, this complex figure has been read as a dragon, namely that presented in the Apocalypse as threatening the woman dressed in sun (Ap 12, 3-4)¹⁹³. In summary, the lower lintel shows three figures drawn from the Apocalypse repertoire, which has been used as a source also for the figures on the upper lintel.

The upper lintel has a plane background, showing on the bottom an elongated wavy layer, which resemble water flows or clouds (fig. 31)¹⁹⁴. On the sides of the lintel are three grotesque masks spitting bended decorative ribbons from their opened mouths. On the left, the bigger mask seems to be the origin from which the creatures of the left half of the lintel come (fig. 33b)¹⁹⁵. The rest of the lintel is occupied by four animals and two human figures, divided in two groups, repeating the ideal division in half of the lower lintel. In the left half a lion with vegetal-ended tail is turned rightwards, biting a naked man in the middle of his legs, whereas the subsequent griffin is strangling him with its tail (fig. 33a-b). After a small space in the middle, the group in the right half counts a figure, hybrid between eagle and lion with a composite tail ending with an animal head biting the forearm of a clothed man (figg. 33a, c). The latter is bended under the paw and the bite on his neck of the last hybrid animal on the right.

Being the lower part of the higher sculptural ensemble of the portal, the double lintel divides and unite at the same time the lunette with the other parts of the sculpted portal. As suggested above, the lower lintel find iconographic associations with the Apocalypse (Ap 12-13), where the beasts represented in Beaulieu are described in detail ¹⁹⁶. For what concern the higher lintel, a

¹⁹² For the identification of this animal with the Beast of Abyss (Ap 13, 1-2), see E. Lefèvre-Pontalis, *A quelle école faut-il rattacher l'église de Beaulieu (Corrèze)?*, «Bulletin monumental», 78, 1914, pp. 58-87: 74-75. For a deeper analysis cf. also Evans, *Cluniac Art* cit., p. 77; Haddad, *Le bien a l'épreuve du mal* cit., pp. 30-33.

¹⁹³ This figure has been read as a dragon since the first description of the portal. For the links with the texts of the Apocalypse and the Vision of Daniel; see Maury, Porcher, Vidal, *Quercy Roman* cit., p. 318; and Berland, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., p. 22. Cf. the updated analysis in Haddad, *Le bien a l'épreuve du mal* cit., pp. 34-38.

¹⁹⁴ The curved layer that divides the two lintels was read in many different ways, from sea of fire to the river Styx, from a layer of clouds to the 'crystal sea' of the Apocalypse. See Barrière, Boisset, Proust, Ribeiras, *Beaulieu sur Dordogne* cit., p. 25; S. Büttner, *Die Körper verweben. Sinnproduktion in der französischen Bildhauerei des 12. Jahrhunderts*, Bielefeld, 2010, pp. 132-133, note 60; Y. Christe, *Jugements derniers*, Saint-Lèger-Vauban, 1999, p. 184; J. R. Gaborit, *La scultura romanica*, edited by C. Dezzuto, Milano, 2010, p. 256; Maury, Porcher, Vidal, *Quercy Roman* cit., p. 318; Poulbrière, *L'église de Beaulieu et son portail* cit., p. 95.

¹⁹⁵ For a careful reading of these grotesque masks, see Haddad, *Le bien a l'épreuve du mal* cit., pp. 69-76.

¹⁹⁶ The association of the lower lintel in Beaulieu with the Apocalypse of St. John (Ap 12-13) was already suggested by Lefèvre-Pontalis, and recently developed by Haddad. See respectively Lefèvre-Pontalis, *A quelle école faut-il rattacher l'église de Beaulieu* cit., pp. 74-75; Haddad, *Common Space or Cleft Space?* cit., pp. 115-118; Id., *Le bien a l'épreuve du mal* cit., pp. 28-58.

correspondence can be found in the Book of Revelation too (Ap 9), namely in the description of the army of locusts, set free from the Abyss in order to torment the mislead¹⁹⁷. Although a precise iconographic adherence to the source cannot be seen in Beaulieu, some elements suggest this link. First the wavy bottom, which recalls the smoke that rose from the Abyss and the grotesque mask which represents the entrance of the Abyss itself. Second the tortured men should be read as «those people who has not the seal of God on their foreheads» (Ap 9, 4), victims of the attack of the army of locusts in the Biblical account. In sum, both the lintels are describing events preceding the Last Judgement, in accordance with the depiction of the lunette.

The lunette is certainly the core of the whole programme of the porch. It shows a crowded composition, which depicts the Parousia, or Second Coming of Christ (fig. 31). This episode is described in many biblical passages, but in Beaulieu three main sources can be identified: the Vision of Daniel (Dan 7, 13-14), the Gospel of Matthew (Mt 24, 30; Mt 25, 31), and the Book of Revelation (Ap 1, 7)¹⁹⁸. In these passages is stressed the triumphal and glorious return of Christ at the End of Times, enthroned and surrounded by angels and saints, everything framed by clouds. In Beaulieu, it appears as the material translation of these three visions: the composition is dominated by the enthroned Christ, bigger than any other figure in the whole portal. He seats frontally with his knees open, his arms outstretched, and his palms exposed towards the viewer in order to show the stigmata (fig. 33a). In the same way, his bust is partially uncovered to show the wound of the spear. His face, symmetrical and surrounded by the crossed and jewelled halo, is impassive and serious, directly looking to the viewer that approaches the church (figg. 33a, 34b). On each side a standing angel, with feet laying on the bottom layer of the lunette, is blowing in a trumpet represented as a horn. Behind this first group of figures, two other angels sustain the jewelled cross, in order to raise it, creating a visual parallel with the outstretched arms of Christ but slightly moved on the left (figg. 31, 33a, 34b). This appearance seems to evoke «the sign of the Son of Man» (Mt 24, 30). On the right, descending from clouds placed at the upper edge of the lunette, two other angels are bringing a rich imperial crown and the nails of the Crucifixion (fig. 81). These elements allude to the triumphal epiphany of Christ, since his signs are not only vividly exposed, but also emphasized and charged of an 'imperial' value by their precious appearance¹⁹⁹.

¹⁹⁷ The careful analysis of the higher lintel and its connection with the Apocalypse of St. John (Ap 9) was pointed out by Haddad, see Haddad, *Common Space or Cleft Space?* cit., p. 118; Id., *Le bien a l'épreuve du mal* cit., pp. 59-75.

¹⁹⁸ For the identification of the written sources of the Beaulieu lunette, see Christe, *Le portail de Beaulieu* cit., pp. 57-76; P. K. Klein, *Le tympan de Beaulieu: jugement dernier ou seconde Parousie?*, «Cahiers de Saint-Michel de Cuxa», 19, 1988, pp. 129-134; Maury, Porcher, Vidal, *Quercy Roman* cit., pp. 292-295.

¹⁹⁹ The connection of the image on the Beaulieu lunette to the triumphal imperial tradition were underlined by Christe, see Christe, *Le portail de Beaulieu* cit., pp. 58-59.

On each side of this central core, a numerous group of characters occupies the remaining space in a non-symmetrical disposition (figg. 33b-33c). Indeed, the central group with Christ and the angels is surrounded by the council of the apostles, itself embraced by clouds. All the apostles can be recognized for their dimensions, similar to the angels, bigger than the other characters and smaller than Christ. They are all seated on thrones with their naked feet laying on wavy stripes of clouds, gathered in couples speaking to each other. Their tunics with cloaks, their scrolls, books and haloes are shared markers of their identity as well. Nonetheless, it is not possible to identify them precisely. The only exceptions are St. Paul, emerging only with his head behind the right hand of Christ, and St. Peter holding his keys, immediately on the left (figg. 33b)²⁰⁰.

On the left border of the lunette, a male figure is depicted three-quarters, turned towards Christ (figg. 33b, 34a). He is dressed in tunic with cloak, Phrygian hat and shoes, and wears a long-forked beard. He sits on a throne laying on a cloud as the apostles, although he is smaller than them. His left hand is on his chest, whereas the right is pointing down. This figure has been variously interpreted but a definitive identification has not been found yet, due to the awkward combination of his features and position. The main proposals recognize him as a prophet, though he had been seen as St. Paul or a pagan king too²⁰¹.

Other characters are scattered in the space left between the lower layer of clouds and the division stripe between the lunette and the higher lintel. Under the enigmatic figure with Phrygian hat, three smaller characters are turned towards Christ (figg. 33b, 34a). Though being quite consumed, the details of their appearance are still visible. All of them are wearing beards variously dressed up, and their clothing appears very differentiated as well. On the right three men are raising up from their sarcophagi, pushing away their lids immediately under the clouds that are sustaining the apostles (fig. 33b)²⁰².

Another couple of dead men raises from their coffins on the left corner of the lunette, lifting up their lids under the pressure of the apostles' feet (fig. 33c). On the left, four characters occupy the space between the clouds and the bottom of the lunette (fig. 33c, 34c). They are divided in pairs and present elaborated and various clothing and behaviour. These four curious figures can be associated to the three depicted on the other corner of the lunette. All of them show curious acting and present what can be seen as an 'exotic' clothing. These features, along with their position associated with the

²⁰⁰ For the identification of the apostle above Christ's right hand with St. Paul, as Judas' substitute, see Proust, *La sculpture romane en Bas-Limousin* cit., p. 234.

²⁰¹ For the links with various prophets, see Maury, Porcher, Vidal, *Quercy Roman* cit., p. 318; Vescovi, *An Eschatological Mirror* cit., pp. 66-67. For the identifications with St. Paul and the pagan king, see respectively Franzé, *Art et réforme clunisienne* cit., pp. 15-16; Pastoureau, *Storie di pietra* cit., p. 54.

²⁰² The lids of the sarcophagi of the risen dead has a fish-scale decoration as the roofs of the buildings on the lateral pillars and the back side of the trumeau. Cf. note 186.

other figures of the lunette, struggled a clear and univocal identification. They have been associated with pagans, Jewish and Muslims, both living or resurrected at the End of Times²⁰³. Although is not easy (nor possible) to attribute a precise ‘nationality’ to them, the intention to stress the sense of differentiation and alterity of these figures remains clear. It seems plausible that the intention to represent an image of ‘exoticism’ could be linked to the account of the populations of the Earth still alive at the End of Times and witnessing the Parousia of Christ (Dan, 7, 14; Mt 24, 30; Ap 1, 7)²⁰⁴. In this sense, it would not be surprising if some references to representations of coeval populations considered ‘exotic’ or different from the Christendom, such as Jewish or Muslims, would have been used to underline this element.

After this astonishing imagery surrounding the main entrance of the church, enriched with Biblical references, the interior of the church appears today deprived from what should have been the ‘inner counterpart’ of the portal.

II. 3. 2. The Inner Decoration

The decoration left within the church gathers three small lintels, capitals and bases of some of the semi-columns of the pillars and smaller columns flanking the arches of the apses (figg. 56, 62, 64, 66)²⁰⁵. Compared to other examples, the architectural decorations of Beaulieu appear to be quite simple in the execution and in the content, being mainly geometrical. The bases show a various ensemble of cases in the decoration, whereas the majority of the capitals presents a smooth surface, formed by the intersection of a pyramid into a cylinder, which could have possibly hosted some painted decoration, now lost (*e.g.* figg. 40b-c, 41)²⁰⁶. The few figurative capitals show atlas-like figures holding the abacus or couple of animals, such as griffins (figg. 37, 60). The main figurative

²⁰³ The issue of the identification of the seven small men on the tympanum in Beaulieu was first opened by Henri Kraus in 1965, when he saw their gesture of lifting up the hem of their own cloth as a marker to identify some characters as Jewish. This theory was later updated by Klein, see respectively H. Kraus, *A Reinterpretation of the “Rise Dead” of the Beaulieu Tympanum*, «Gazette de Beaux-Arts», 65, 1965, pp. 193-200; Klein, *Le tympan de Beaulieu* cit., pp. 129-134. Later, Debra Higgs Strickland and Claudio Lange recognized in the figures some details linked to the representation of Muslims, associated to the crusades and the Reconquista, see D. Higgs Strickland, *Saracens, Demons and Jews. Making Monsters in Medieval Art*, Princeton, 2003, pp. 159-161; C. Lange, *La clave anti-islámica – ideas sobre marginación icónica y semántica*, in *Relegados al margen: marginalidad y espacios marginales en la cultura medieval*, edited by I. Monteiro Arias, A. B. Muñoz Martínez, F. Villaseñor Sebastian, Madrid, 2009, pp. 115-127: 125-126. More recently, in 2013, Besancon proposed to see among the seven men also a depiction of heretics, both in an eschatological perspective and as a warning for the viewer, see Besancon, *The French Romanesque Portals* cit., pp. 272-287. Finally, Haddad pointed out another reading for the figures, connected to their gestures and clothing, as acting a sort of ‘purification’ from left to right, passing through Christ. See Haddad, *Le bien a l’épreuve du mal* cit., pp. 79-83.

²⁰⁴ For this interpretation, see Klein, *Le tympan de Beaulieu* cit., pp. 131-133; Pêcheur Proust *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., pp. 96-97; Zinck, *Moissac, Beaulieu, Charlieu* cit., pp. 132-136.

²⁰⁵ The most recent contribution about the decorations inside the church has to be found in Haddad, *Common Space or Cleft Space?* cit., pp. 119-123; Id., *Le bien a l’épreuve du mal* cit., pp. 145-192.

²⁰⁶ For the suggestion to see the smooth capitals as suitable to be painted see Pêcheur, Proust, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., p. 91.

decoration consists in the three lintels, one in the northern aisle and two on each entrance of the spiral stairs that lead to the galleries over the deambulatory.

The lintel in the northern aisle shows a human figure flanked by two animals, probably lions, with their forepaws raised and their tongues licking the palms of the figure (fig. 45a). This relief is located above the walled-up door that once connected the church to the cloister. According to the peaceful behaviour of the lions and the presence of vegetal elements this relief can be related to the description of the Eden garden, where men and animals were used to live peacefully together²⁰⁷.

The lintel above the entrance to the galleries in the northern arm of the transept represents two lions flanking a tree, while eating its leaves (fig. 45b). Already associated to the Persian iconography of the tree of life, this image can be seen as a depiction of the Garden of Eden before the Fall of the Men when all the animals were meant to be herbivorous, as described in the Genesis (Ge I, 29-30)²⁰⁸.

The last lintel of the group is placed above the entrance of the gallery in the southern arm of the transept (fig. 45c). The composition shows a general asymmetry: a big animal with an herbivorous in its mouth occupies the left side, while on the right a man is holding a weapon and a rope to which another animal is tied. Both the animals on the sides are represented in an aggressive shape, showing tusks and claws. The animal on the right is submitted forcibly and has to face the bigger one on the left, which seems to be more aggressive. These features can be seen as an allusion to the world order after the Fall of the Men, *i.e.* the eternal conflict between carnivorous and herbivorous, and between men and animals²⁰⁹.

The three lintels share the same low relief as well as the overall conception of the space and shape. Thus, it is possible to associate them. The technical level of the carvings of the lintels has been pointed out as a mark of their previous dating respect to the other decorations of the church. In this sense, they should be seen as older works re-used in the moment of the construction of the current church²¹⁰. A second possibility has been recently pointed out: the lintels would be the result of an intentional choice of an 'archaic language' in order to recall the antiquity of the stories represented.

²⁰⁷ Previously seen as a depiction of Daniel in the Lions' Den, this alternative interpretation was pointed out by Haddad, see Haddad, (*Réutilisation de formes anciennes* cit., pp. 104-105).

²⁰⁸ For the association of this lintel with the iconography of the tree of life, see Berland, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., p.18; Pêcheur, Proust, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., p. 92; Proust, *La sculpture romane en Bas-Limousin* cit., p. 232. For the association between this lintel and the Genesis (Ge I, 29-30), see Haddad, (*Réutilisation de formes anciennes* cit., pp. 104-105).

²⁰⁹ Haddad proposed how the different and more unstable balancing between the elements of nature after the Fall should be expressed by the asymmetrical disposition, see *Ibid.*, pp. 105-106.

²¹⁰ See Pêcheur, Proust, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., p. 92. For the recent challenge to this idea, see Haddad, (*Réutilisation de formes anciennes* cit., pp. 102-104).

Therefore, the contrast with the sculptures in the porch would be explained by the difference in the time setting of the two groups of sculptures²¹¹.

To conclude, the scarce traces of the inner decoration, marking architectural elements such as modillions or lintels, does not allow to grasp what should have been the original imagery, plausibly in connection with that displayed in the portal.

II. 4. Dating the Church

II. 4. 1. The Origin of Beaulieu Monastic Complex

The monastery of Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne was founded in 855, and realized between 858 and 860, by Rodolphe de Tourenne (d. 866), archbishop of Bourges, who belonged to one of the wealthiest and most powerful families in the region²¹². The establishment took place in a spot close to the Dordogne river, where only a small village was previously settled. The monastery was submitted to the rule of St. Benedict from the beginning and counted twelve monks, sent from the monastery of Solignac. Rodolphe de Tourenne provided the monastery of many donations and properties taken from his own possessions, encouraging other privates to imitate him. Moreover, he collected a rich group of relics both coming from Rome and from local saints. About this first phase of the monastery only few information survived through time²¹³.

Regarding the architectural setting from the ninth to the eleventh centuries, the written sources are not very helpful and provides mostly generic information. Only the archaeological survey undertaken by Lebouteux in 1966 provides some evidences²¹⁴. Under the floor of the inner part of the choir emerged two curved line of shortened walls (figg. 3a-b). The inner and smaller one was on a lower level and seemed to be made of pebbles from the Dordogne joined with lime mortar. Despite being quite fragile, this typology is often attested in the constructions of the region and could be subscribed to the first church built in the mid-ninth century. The second, external wall that emerged

²¹¹ See Haddad, (*Réutilisation de formes anciennes* cit., pp. 109-112.

²¹² For the issue of the foundation date of the monastery, see Berland, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., p. 2; Lefèvre-Pontalis, *A quelle école faut-il rattacher l'église de Beaulieu* cit., pp. 58-59; Pêcheur, Proust, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., p. 83. The main source for these issue remains the *Cartulaire* of the monastery, see Deloche, *Cartulaire de l'abbaye* cit., pp. CCXIX-CCXXXI.

²¹³ Only two documents of the *Cartulaire* talk about the buildings of the monastery. Namely, a document (L) dated 971 in which a donation was made to decorate with paintings the cloister, and a second one (CLIV) dated to the first third of the eleventh century, where the monk Bernard was charged to decorate with paintings the oratory of the Virgin. See Pêcheur, Proust, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., p. 83. For the analysis of the documents, see Deloche, *Cartulaire de l'abbaye* cit., pp. 91-93, 213-215.

²¹⁴ Cf. note 162.

during this excavation was on a higher level and was made out of ashlar, although still roughly jointed. In Lebouteux's opinion this second wall would represent a second church which had substitute or incorporate the previous one and later served as 'quarry' of building material for the current building²¹⁵.

II. 4. 2. Lack of Documents and Written Sources

Only two surviving written documents referring to the monastery of Beaulieu monastery have been identified as providing necessary and useful information: the *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Beaulieu* and the notes taken by the monk Claude d'Estiennot de la Serre (1639-1699) during his journey through France in order to collect information about the monasteries subjected to the Congregation of St. Maur²¹⁶.

The *Cartulaire* gathers together all the medieval and early modern documents from the former archive of the abbey; the latter has been seriously damaged several times through its history and finally scattered when the monastery was closed in 1790²¹⁷. This collection is now kept in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France and includes 157 folii, mainly dated at the half of the twelfth century with few earlier and later additions. Those documents mostly provide economic data: donations and privileges that involved the monastery, as well as accounts of the abbots' main deeds. Nonetheless, there is no mention of the twelfth-century buildings neither of the expenses undertaken for their construction. As previously mentioned, the *Cartulaire* was studied, edited and published by Jules Edmond Maximine Deloche (1817-1900) in 1859²¹⁸.

The notes by d'Estiennot, collected between 1671 and 1688 and concerning the documents of the French Benedictine abbeys, were meant to be published but remained unedited. They were collected in 40 volumes called *Antiquité bénédictines* and Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne was included in the one devoted to the diocese of Limoges and Tulle, written between 1675 and 1676²¹⁹. The notes are divided in two main parts: a general introduction about the establishment of the monastery and

²¹⁵ For the different hypothesis concerning these two wall sections, both in their dating and original shape, see Pêcheur, Proust, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., pp. 83-84.

²¹⁶ See Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, C. Estiennot de la Serre, mss. Lat. 12739-12762, *Antiquités bénédictines*, 40 voll., 1671-1683.

²¹⁷ Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, ms NAL 493, *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Beaulieu*. A digital reproduction of the entire *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Beaulieu* is accessible on www.gallica.bnf.fr (12.07.2020).

²¹⁸ See Deloche, *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Beaulieu* cit.; with the enrichment and the revision made in R. H. Bautier, *Les diplômes carolingiens suspects de l'abbaye de Beaulieu*, «Bulletin philologique et historique jusqu'à 1715 du Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques de France», 1955-1956, pp. 375-398; cf. also Beitscher, J. K., *Monastic Reform at Beaulieu, 1031-1095*, «Viator. Medieval and Renaissance Studies», 5, 1974, pp. 199-210.

²¹⁹ The manuscript including Estiennot's notes about Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne can be found in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, C. Estiennot de la Serre, ms. Lat. 12747, *Antiquité bénédictines. Diocèse de Limoges et de Tulle*, 1675-1676, f. 91-119, 443-470. A digitalized copy is accessible on www.gallica.bnf.fr (12.07.2020).

the consistency of its relics, followed by the chronological list of the abbots, each one enriched by few notes about their main deeds. The notes are concluded by the mention of important personalities or monks that lived or passed through the abbey. The notes taken by d'Estiennot laid mainly on the surviving documents of the former archive, enriched by few other documents now lost, which he partially copied in the second part of the volume. Since they were not published, they became known to the wider public only after their discovery in the Bibliothèque Nationale during the nineteenth century.

To these sources a third written text can be added. It is the already mentioned *Abregé de l'histoire de l'abbaye de Beaulieu en Bas-Limousin*, written by the prior of the abbey Amand Vaslet (d. 1733) around 1727, but published only in 1884²²⁰. Unaware about the notes by d'Estiennot, Vaslet quoted the *Cartulaire* along with other now lost documents. This last source is very useful for what concern the treasury and the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries restorations, due to the account of ancient inventories, now lost, and of the reconstructions and rebuilding undertook by the Maurists from 1670 to 1727.

As shown by this brief description, all the written sources about Beaulieu seems to not be very helpful in understating the shape and the dating of the current church of Saint-Pierre. In this sense, the stylistic comparison with other building of the Limousin and the surrounding regions can serve as mean to clarify the issue.

II. 4. 3. Architectural Comparisons

Since no written documents mentions a precise moment when the construction of the church of Beaulieu in its current shape occurred, the comparison with other better-known buildings remains one of main means that allow to propose a date of construction.

While the edifice gives a feeling of general architectural coherence, a closer look at the ground plan of the church shows that the main west-east axis of the building is slightly moved southwards. This misalignment occurs between the second to last and the last bays of the nave. In the same area, a change in the mouldings of the windows of both the southern and the northern walls is visible: from the 'Limousine moulding' of the windows of the eastern bays to the smoothed one of that on its left (cf. figg. 20b-c, 22a). The windows of the western bays show a simpler decoration and a more pointed arch (fig. 22a). These elements allow to propose that the nave was built in different moments, though

²²⁰ See A. Vaslet, *Abregé de l'histoire de l'abbaye de Beaulieu en Bas-Limousin*, edited by Poulbrière, J.-B., «Bulletin de la Société scientifique, historique et archéologique de la Corrèze», 6, 1884, pp. 59-178.

it does not mean necessarily that the progression stopped²²¹. The apse is showing an overall uniformity, along with the last bay of the nave. These elements are suggesting that the works, probably started on the eastern side, proceeded westwards with a possible break or braking in the construction of the nave.

Aside from this element of discontinuity, the architectural setting of the church of Saint-Pierre appears to be quite coherent in all its development, and it can be used for comparisons in order to understand its belonging either to a precise cultural milieu and to a chronological period. In this sense, its main features both in the ground plan and in the elevation have been easily connected to the other churches of the Limousin area, erected or modified in the first half of the twelfth century. The church of Saint-Robert, in the Corrèze, the abbey church of Sainte-Valérie in Chambon-sur-Vouizie, and the collegial church of Saint-Léonard in Noblat are all showing a more or less similar concept in the plan disposition to Beaulieu. Indeed, the choice to cover the nave with a unique barrel vault and to distribute its weight on the vaults of the side aisles and on the tribunes is comparable. The same can be said for the chancel surrounded by a deambulatory with apsidal chapels, and the transept opened by chapels on the eastern side²²². All these features can be compared on the general level of the plan and elevation, although some examples, especially Saint-Léonard and Sainte Valérie, show marked differences too.

The closest example to Beaulieu in the Limousin region can be found in the church of Saint-Pierre in Dorat (figg. 46-47). This church was rebuilt after a fire in 1080, whereas the new deambulatory was started in circa 1130. Comparing the plans of the two churches, it appears that the apsidal area presents a very close solution, with three apsidal chapels and one other chapel for each side of the transept, and the chancel isolated from the deambulatory by four columns (cf. figg. 18, 46). Except for the different types of pillars, the division of the nave is almost identical as well, though

²²¹ What is suggested by the features of the external side of the southern and northern wall can be found also in the inner space of the church. The northern wall counts one more window, since the second bay from the west is not occupied by a portal. The window of the second bay on the northern side shows a moulding with dentilwork on the upper cornice but with a smaller opening. Seems like a 'middle step' between those on its sides. See Pêcheur, Proust, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., pp. 92-94.

²²² A brief description of these churches and their links to Saint-Martial in Limoges and to Saint-Pierre in Beaulieu can be found in the essay by Héliot, see P. Héliot, *Les églises romanes a tribunes dans la region Limousine et les grandes basiliques de pèlerinage*, «Bulletin de la Société scientifique, historique et archéologique de la Corrèze», 96 (1974), pp. 157-171. Andrault Schmitt analyzed these churches from the architectural point of view, see C. Andrault Schmitt, *Les nefs des églises romanes de l'ancien diocèse de Limoges. Rythmes et volumes*, PhD Thesis, Université de Poitiers, a. y. 1982-1983, supervisor C. Heitz. See also Gauthier, Maury, Porcher, *Limousin Roman* cit., pp. 113-168; Proust, *La sculpture romane en Bas-Limousin* cit., pp. 313-319. For what concerns Saint-Léonard and Sainte-Valérie, cf. also C. Andrault-Schmitt, *Saint-Martial de Limoges and the Making of Saint*, in *Romanesque Saints, Shrines and Pilgrimage*, edited by J. McNeill, R. Plant, Ambingdon, New York, 2020, pp. 122-147: 136-139.

the one in Dorat has one more bay. The perception of the space of the two examples is close too, aside from the absence of tribunes and the presence of a darker stone in Dorat (cf. figg. 36, 47)²²³.

All these similarities are showing how Beaulieu is belonging to this cultural area, both in terms of space and time. Nonetheless, the church of Beaulieu shows some peculiarities as well, first of all the tribunes. They are different than the previous examples since they are lighted by two-light windows. This particular feature evoked often the major basilica buildings located in the region and beyond, which are considered to be the models for these smaller churches.

Among these major buildings is certainly the now lost church of the Saviour in the abbey of Saint-Martial in Limoges, which was the main church of the region at that time. Meant to host the relics of the saint, it was likely started between 1017 and 1021, and firstly consecrated in 1028. It was seemingly built in two phases through a complicated sequence of events, such as many fires and the violent submission of the abbey to Cluny in 1063. The construction was completed at the very end of the eleventh century, or at the beginning of the subsequent one at the latest²²⁴. Despite it was destroyed during the French Revolution, the eleventh – twelfth centuries shape of Saint-Martial can be seen in few eighteenth-century drawings (figg. 48-49)²²⁵. These drawings are summarizing the essence of the architecture, showing the presence of the barrel vault for the nave, as well as the tribunes continuing through the nave itself and in the chancel. In the latter section the tribunes were converted in a smaller gallery passing between the line of windows and the arches that divided the chancel from the deambulatory (fig. 49). This solution found a large echo in the smaller centres of the area, as already said, but shared its main features with other major buildings of the same period as well.

Among them, the abbatial church of Sainte-Foy in Conques probably represented an important reference for Beaulieu as well. Although there are no written sources proving the relationship between these two centres, it seems highly plausible that their closeness allowed Beaulieu to reach the reputation of the prestigious church of Sainte-Foy. Indeed, the latter was already numbered among the main sites to be visited through the *via Podensis* to Santiago de Compostela, proving its importance²²⁶. The overall setting of the two churches shows similar disposition (cf. figg. 18, 51). In

²²³ The comparison between Beaulieu and Dorat was analyzed by Andrault Schmitt in her PhD thesis, stressing both similarities and differences. See C. Andrault Schmitt, *Les nefs des églises romanes de l'ancien diocèse de Limoges* cit., pp. 146-151, 167, 170. Cf. also Id., *Saint-Martial de Limoges* cit., pp. 137-138; Gauthier, Maury, Porcher, *Limousin Roman* cit., pp. 197-230.

²²⁴ Some scholars dated the church between 1062 and 1115, after the submission to Cluny, see Héliot, *Les églises romanes a tribunes* cit., p. 159; Proust, *La sculpture romane en Bas-Limousin* cit., p. 27. Recently, Andrault-Schmitt recalled the updated information from the new excavations (undertaken between 2012 and 2017), and dated the church between circa 1017-1021 and 1095, when pope Urban II consecrated it, see Andrault-Schmitt, *Saint-Martial de Limoges* cit., pp. 122-126, 133-135.

²²⁵ See Andrault-Schmitt, *Saint-Martial de Limoges* cit., pp. 122-124.

²²⁶ Cf. P. Caucci von Saucken, edited by, *Guida del pellegrino di Santiago. Libro quinto del Codex Calixtinus secolo XII*, Milano, 1998, pp. 99-100.

Conques the nave is covered by a barrel vault, itself sustained by the side aisles, covered by groin vaults and overlooked by the tribunes. This arrangement is spread to the transept and connected directly to the deambulatory with three apse chapels. The chancel is isolated from the deambulatory through eight columns, and it is covered by a dome on the crossing point. The apsidal area shows similar choices also in the exterior, such as the crepidoma running around the perimeter and visually unifying the apsidal chapels with those of the transept, creating the illusion of a church with five apsidal chapels (fig. 54)²²⁷.

The progression of the works that resulted in the current church in Conques has been ascribed to the eleventh century. Its development, originally considered as divided in two phases, has been recently challenged by Lei Huang. In fact, according to Erlande-Brandenburg, the first phase was commissioned by abbot Odolric (r. 1030-1065) involving the renewal of the Carolingian church, preserved in its general dimensions, but expanded eastwards. The second phase developed under abbot Bégon (r.1080-1117) and included the end of the works in the transept and the apse²²⁸. The latter would have been modified as compared to the Odolric's project, eliminating the planned seven apses in order to realize the deambulatory with three apse chapels. This change in the project has been attributed, by some scholars, to the influence of the building site of Cluny III, began in 1080/1088²²⁹. On the other hand, Huang analysed in depth the masonry of the entire church from an archaeological point of view and pointed out a new proposal for the development of the construction, structured in ten phases²³⁰. Moreover, he maintained that the apsidal area was rebuilt after its completion but stressed how this derived from static problems rather than a change in the project²³¹. Thus, the presence of both a transept with gradually wider chapels and a choir with deambulatory and apsidal chapels would not be the consequence of a modification of project when still in progress. On the contrary, it would be a combined plan conceived from the very beginning of the works, dated by Huang around circa 1042-1051²³².

²²⁷ For the analysis of the church of Sainte-Foy, see L. Huang, *L'abbatiale de Sainte-Foy de Conques (XIe-XIIe siècles)*, PhD Thesis, Université Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne, a. y. 2018-2019, supervisors F. Journot, Q. Cazes; for the disposition of the apsidal exterior pp. 192-193.

²²⁸ For the progression of the building works in the eleventh century Conques, see A. Erlande-Brandenburg, *L'abbatiale de Conques. Plan, aménagements liturgiques et tympan*, «Bulletin de la Société Nationale des Antiquaires de France», 2007, 2009, pp. 235-245: 237-240; Huang, *L'abbatiale de Sainte-Foy de Conques* cit.

²²⁹ About the possible change in the Saint-Foy project by abbot Bégon, under the influence of the building site of Cluny III, a similar situation can be mentioned about the church of Charité-sur-Loire. Marcel Deyres pointed out how this situation is clearly shown by the different apses in Conques. See M. Deyres, *L'inversion du thème bénédictin à Sainte-Foy de Conques*, «Bulletin monumental», 129/3, 1971, pp. 183-191.

²³⁰ See Huang, *L'abbatiale de Sainte-Foy de Conques* cit., pp. 147-188.

²³¹ See *Ibid.*, pp. 170-172, 177-179.

²³² See *Ibid.*, pp. 26-29, 192-196.

Whether it resulted from a change of the project or not, the apse of Sainte-Foy in Conques is sharing with Beaulieu the major part of elements in terms of conception, both inside and outside²³³. It would thus be possible to argue that, through the closer example of Sainte-Foy, if not the echo of the majestic project of Cluny III, at least the Auvergnat tradition reached the smaller abbey on the Dordogne. The importance of the monastery of Conques, as mentioned above, would have certainly helped to promote its famous church, also in its architectural features, even in centres like Beaulieu.

Another church can be pointed out to be added to the present comparative corpus: Saint-Sernin in Toulouse. Although it is southern than all the previous quoted sites, it shows closeness to Beaulieu in the general concept of the space (cf. figg. 18, 46, 50, 51). Compared to the previous examples, Saint-Sernin has huge proportions and a majestic amplification of the setting: the nave is flanked by four side aisles, the transept has four apses, and the deambulatory has five apsidal chapels (fig. 50). The high tribunes flank the nave, and surround the transept, finally joining the apse on each side. Along with the remarkable dimensions, also the presence of sculptures within the architectural structures is quite spread. It is not known the precise date of the beginning of the building process, although it seems likely that it happened after 1080²³⁴. The written sources refer that in 1096 the main altar was consecrated by pope Urban II²³⁵. Starting from the archaeological analysis of the building materials of the church, along with the posthumous biography of the canon Raymond Gayard (d. 1118), it is possible to argue that in the first decades of the twelfth century the apse, the chancel and the transept were completed, along with the three last bays of the nave. All these parts were already covered as well. When the church of Beaulieu was built, the building site of Saint-Sernin was far from being completed²³⁶. Nonetheless, it is probable that the eastern section, including apse and transept, was already finished. Once again, is not possible to argue that the building site of Beaulieu derives its shape directly from this major example. It is likely, though, that the impact of Saint-Sernin, along with that of Sainte-Foy and Saint-Martial, helped to spread a solution that was well known in the neighbour regions. In this sense, also smaller churches like Beaulieu, adapted to a reduced and local scale the core concept of these bigger sites. Saint-Sernin itself can be seen in dialogue with both

²³³ Another element of connection between Beaulieu and Conques can be seen in the masons' marks spread both outside and inside the eastern half of the church of Saint-Pierre comparable to those used in the Auvergnat churches, see Gauthier, Maury, Porcher, *Limousin Roman* cit., p. 86. For the Auvergnat masons' marks, namely those of Conques, see Huang, *L'abbatiale de Sainte-Foy de Conques* cit., pp. 117-134.

²³⁴ For the analysis of the building process and the dating of the church of Saint-Sernin in Toulouse, see M. Durliat, *La construction de Saint-Sernin de Toulouse, études historique et archéologique*, in *La construction du Moyen Age. Histoire et archéologie*, proceedings of the third conference of the Société des historiens médiévistes de l'enseignement supérieur public (Besançon, 1972), 1972, pp. 201-211.

²³⁵ See *Ibid.*, p. 203.

²³⁶ Durliat pointed out that the majority of the building was completed by circa 1160. See *Ibid.*, p. 206.

Santiago de Compostela (circa 1075-1122/1124) and Cluny III (1080/1088 – post 1240) in terms of architectural setting²³⁷.

These three churches have been inserted in the so-called ‘pilgrimage basilicas’. They were thought to be connected by the same vocation; thus, their characteristic architectural features were read as the reflection of their belonging to the pilgrimage routes²³⁸. Although this point of view has been already questioned and largely dismissed, what can be still considered valid is the idea of a connection occurring between these churches²³⁹. Indeed, the pilgrimage routes were not the element from which these features sprung. The roads that led to Santiago de Compostela were used also for other purposes, as a mean to connect regions. In this sense, they could have served as the mean through which the solutions elaborated in these major building sites spread among them and found a reflection in the smaller sites. As mentioned above, this seems to be the case for the church of Saint-Pierre in Beaulieu too. Nevertheless, Beaulieu seems to be one of the few buildings, among the larger group of the local churches, that kept a high coherence with the major examples. This closer connection can be ascribed to both the direct links that the abbey had with important centres around it since its foundation, such as the counts of Toulouse and the bishops of Limoges and Cahors, and the inclusion of Beaulieu in the Cluny network at the end of the eleventh century.

In fact, the monastery of Beaulieu was confirmed as subdued to the *Cluniacensis caenobii*, by pope Urban II into a 1096 bull addressed to the abbot of Cluny, after twenty years of conflicts between the Beaulieu monks and the Burgundian abbey²⁴⁰. Thus, around 1096 should arrived at Beaulieu its new abbot, Géraud II (r. circa 1096-1119/1130), previously a Cluniac monk. Contrary to his predecessor of twenty years earlier, Géraud remained in Beaulieu and firmly kept the direction of the monastery, as proved by many documents recalling him in his office both in the *Cartulaire* and in other collections²⁴¹. In 1103 he ensured the monastery holdings confirmed by a papal bull and seems

²³⁷ For the connections between Saint-Sernin and Cluny III, see É. Vergnolle, *Le paysage artistique de la France à la fin du XIe siècle*, in *Le concile de Clermont de 1095 et l'appel à la croisade*, proceedings of the international conference de Clermont-Ferrand (Rome, 1995), Rome, 1997, pp. 167-177; 169-170; for the comparison with Santiago de Compostela, see Durliat, *La construction de Saint-Sernin* cit., pp. 205-206.

²³⁸ The point of view that included the churches built during the eleventh and twelfth centuries along the pilgrimage routes, developed through the central decades of the twentieth century, it can be seen in the huge work by Porter. See A. Kingsley Porter, *Romanesque Sculpture of the Pilgrimage Roads*, 3 voll., New York, 1985 (first ed. 1923).

²³⁹ For the questioning of the idea of the ‘pilgrimage basilicas’, see B. Brenk, *Les églises de pèlerinage et le concept de pretention*, in *Art, Cérémonial et Liturgie au Moyen Âge*, proceedings of the third Cycle Romand de Lettre (Lousanne, Fribourg 2000), edited by N. Bock, F. Dobay, Rome, 2002, pp. 125-140; P. Piva, *L'ambulacro e i “tragitti” di pellegrinaggio nelle chiese d'occidente. Secoli X-XII*, in *Arte medievale. Le vie dello spazio liturgico*, edited by P. Piva, Milano, 2010, pp. 81-130: 81-83.

²⁴⁰ The 1096 bull by pope Urban II referred to a previous agreement of 1076 in which the lay abbot Hugh of Castelnau and the community in Beaulieu were forced to accept the submission to the Burgundian abbey. This decision resulted from the complaining of the Beaulieu monks for the usurping presence of the lay abbots during the Council of Limoges in 1031, abusing of the monastic properties. See J. K. Beitscher, *Monastic Reform at Beaulieu, 1031-1095*, «Viator. Medieval and Renaissance Studies», 5, 1974, pp. 199-210; Vescovi, *An Eschatological Mirror* cit., pp. 59-60. Cf. also Deloche, *Cartulaire de l'abbaye* cit., pp. XVIII-XXIX; for the bull by Urban II see pp. XXVII-XXVIII, note 1.

²⁴¹ For the documents and deeds of Géraud II, see Deloche, *Cartulaire de l'abbaye* cit., pp. CCLXVII-CCLVIII.

likely that the building process of the current church in Beaulieu begun under him²⁴². Therefore, when Géraud II started his rule at Beaulieu he left the church of Cluny with the choir and the transept almost completed²⁴³. It does not seem improbable that the majestic model of the Burgundian abbey had an impact on the project of the far smaller church in Beaulieu. If we accept Géraud II as the commissioner of the church, the impulse for the renovation of the monastery would have been under the protection of the *Cluniacensis caenobii*, allowing the possible presence of architects involved or at least acknowledged with the building site at Cluny²⁴⁴. A direct comparison between Beaulieu and Cluny seems misleading. Aside from the limit due the troubled conservative history of the Burgundian abbey, the huge difference of dimensions and importance, and therefore intentions, divides the two churches. All this counted, a similar conception of the space can be perceived on a general level. Thus, the disposition of the choir and the transept in Beaulieu shows to be receptive towards a sort of ‘echo’ of the greater solution of Cluny III, possibly mediated by closer examples as proposed above.

Starting from these connections is possible to suppose a period into which the building process of the church at Beaulieu started. In the first years of the twelfth century Saint-Martial was completed or close to be finished, as well as Saint-Sernin. Sainte-Foy was itself about to be concluded. All of them were realized, at least in the main part, by 1120. Whereas Cluny III was completed in its choir and transept around 1115, and in its west façade around 1130, aside from its *avant-nef*. The local churches comparable to Beaulieu were built at the beginning of the twelfth century. Therefore, the church of Saint-Pierre in Beaulieu can be ascribed to the same moment: the first half of the twelfth century. The uniformity of the apsidal area, proved also by the spread presence numerous masons’ marks, points to a continuity of the building process²⁴⁵. As a consequence, it should be seen as the result of a contemporary project. The coherence of the latter and its closeness to the concept of the major building sites listed before, are all indicating this period for the conception of the church. This suggest the involvement of the abbot Géraud II (r. circa 1096-1119/1130), which brought with his

²⁴² Géraud II not only ensured the monastery with its previous properties but encouraged a new increase in the donations, weakened during the tenth and eleventh centuries, cf. Beitscher, *Monastic Reform at Beaulieu* cit., pp. 204-210. For the attribution of the works of the current church to him, see Franzé, *Art et réforme clunisienne* cit., p. 8; Vescovi, *An Eschatological Mirror* cit., pp. 59-60.

²⁴³ According to Stratford and Vergnolle the church of Cluny III was erected between 1088 and the central decades of the thirteenth century. The first phase of the works involved the choir and the two transepts, completed around circa 1115; and was followed by the erection of the nave and the western façade between 1115 and circa 1120/1130 in the second phase, whereas the third one concluded the building process with the completion of the *avant-nef* after 1240. See N. Stratford, É. Vergnolle, *Le grand portail de Cluny III*, «Bulletin monumental», 170/1, 2012, pp. 15-30: 15-17.

²⁴⁴ The influence of the Cluniac church on its affiliated monasteries under the architectural and cultural point of view is proved also by many other places, such as the church of Notre-Dame in La-Charité-sur-Loire following the model of Cluny II, see T. Kučerová, *The Monastic Church in Charité-sur-Loire. The Testimony of the Bas-relief Tympana*, master thesis, Masarykova Univerzita Brno, a. y. 2018-2019, supervisor I. Foletti, pp. 44-46.

²⁴⁵ For the masons’ marks in Beaulieu, see Barrière, Boisset, Proust, Ribeiras, *Beaulieu sur Dordogne* cit., p. 6; Pêcheur, Proust, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., pp. 85-86; Cf. also note 230.

rule the tight bound to his former coenobium, Cluny. Even if a direct ‘protection’ of the building site by Cluny cannot be firmly proved, seems likely that the architectural shape of the Burgundian abbey in those decades was included among those ‘references’, whether direct or not, from which the project of the church at Beaulieu took inspiration.

II. 4. 4. Sculptural Comparisons

The architecture of the church in Beaulieu is showing a high level of uniformity. The project which laid underneath, was probably elaborated at the beginning of the twelfth century. To understand how the works developed in the subsequent decades it is necessary to make comparative analysis of the sculptural decorations, both in the architecture and in the southern portal. These sculptures can be associated to the architectural setting to understand the cultural relationships that bound the church of Saint-Pierre to the neighbouring artistic tradition, contributing to its dating too.

Following the chronological order proposed earlier, the older decoration is thus placed in the apsidal area. The sculptures are limited here to the architectural elements, creating some figurative details that enrich the

decoration. From the exterior, the complex setting of the apse is marked by the modillions holding the rooves edges, by the mouldings of the windows and the counterforts with emerging semi-columns with geometrical capitals. The modillions can be associated to those of Sainte-Foy (circa 1042/1051- pre-1117), located in the apsidal area as well (cf. figg. 52-53). In both cases, a rich diversity is shown with geometrical, vegetal, and figurative elements. The mouldings of the windows are composed by small columns connected by a capital to a thin torus that marks the arch, echoed by an alternate dentilworked cornices that surrounds the top of windows (figg. 16, 19). The latter element is not present everywhere in the apse in Beaulieu, nonetheless it has been counted among the first examples of the so-called ‘Limousine moulding’, spread in all the Limousin area in the subsequent decades²⁴⁶.

The inner part of the apse has decorated bases of the column in the apsidal chapels, in the presbytery and in the deambulatory. They have two lines of torus enclosing different kinds of decorations, mostly geometrical, that find correspondence in those present in the chancels of the Cahors cathedral (end of the eleventh – beginning of the twelfth centuries) and of the church of Sainte-Foy in Conques (1042/1051-pre-1117 ca.) (cf. figg. 55-56)²⁴⁷. The smooth, geometrical capitals of this area are mirroring those of the external counterforts and are spread to the tribunes both of the

²⁴⁶ See the examples in Proust, *Limousin Roman* cit., pp. 75-143, 187-202.

²⁴⁷ See Pêcheur, Proust, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., pp. 90-91; Prosut, *La sculpture romane en Bas-Limousin* cit., pp. 55-58.

apsidal area and the nave, and to some of the semi-columns of the nave pillars. Those capitals found a precise correspondence in Cahors and in other churches of the Quercy²⁴⁸. The other decorations of the area are focused around the windows, partially mirroring the 'Limousine moulding' of the exterior, and the frame of the arch of the apsidal chapels. Around the windows, the small capitals connecting the shafts to the torus are decorated with human figures and animals, which recalls two other churches: Saint-Junien in Haute-Vienne (post 1102), directly subjected to Limoges, and Saint-Côme and Saint-Damien in Brageac in Cantal (Auvergne) (post 1100) (cf. figg. 57-58)²⁴⁹.

The transept has decorated capitals sustaining the arches that frames its apses, mirroring the setting of the apsidal chapels, whereas others sustain the arch that frames the opening of the transept on the crossing point with the chancel: on the northern section is visible a rich variety of vegetal elements decorating the capitals (fig. 64), three of them with atlantes. Despite being made in a rough technique, they resemble once again some examples in the church of Saint-Junien (post 1102) (cf. figg. 59-60). The positions of the atlantes recall also the illuminations of the Second Bible of Saint-Martial of Limoges (last decades of the eleventh century). The southern transept has only two decorated capitals on the framing of the apse, the one on the left with griffins and the right one with vegetal elements (fig. 62). The latter can be associated with similar examples in the church of Saint-Pierre in Uzerche (last decades of the eleventh century) (cf. figg. 61-62) and Saint-Martial in Limoges (circa 1017/1021-1095/1115) (cf. figg. 63a-b-64)²⁵⁰.

All these links to other buildings are a valuable mean to define more precisely the chronology of the apsidal area and the transept of Beaulieu.

As mentioned above, the deambulatory and the apse of Beaulieu show many affinities with the cathedral of Cahors. The latter was reconstructed between the end of the eleventh and the first half of the twelfth century. Through written sources it is possible to know that in 1119 the main altar was consecrated by pope Callixtus II. Even if it does not mean that the works in the cathedral were completed, it proofs that they were certainly in progress²⁵¹. The connections between Beaulieu and Cahors are proved also by the written sources. In the *Cartulaire* is mentioned how Bernard de Castelnau (r. 1005 - post 1028 ca.), abbot in Beaulieu, was appointed bishop of Cahors in 1005,

²⁴⁸ See Pêcheur, Proust, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., p. 91.

²⁴⁹ For the analysis of the church of Saint-Junien in Haute-Vienne, see A. Cloulas-Brousseau, *Les chapiteaux de la Collégiale de Saint-Junien*, in *Mélanges René Crozet*, 2 voll., Poitiers, 1966, I, pp. 633-637; Gauthier, Maury, Porcher, *Limousin Roman* cit., pp. 170-194. For the churches in Cantal (Auvergne), see B. Craplet, *Auvergne romane*, in *Zodiaque. La nuit du temps*, edited by J. Dieuxaide, P. Belzeaux, 88 voll., Pierre-qui-Vire (Yonne), 1955-1999, II, 1978 (fifth edition), pp. 329-333. For the comparisons of all these buildings with Beaulieu see Proust, *La sculpture romane en Bas-Limousin* cit., pp. 51-56.

²⁵⁰ For the vegetal capitals in Beaulieu, Limoges and Uzerche derived from the Corinthian type, see Pêcheur, Proust, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., p. 91; Proust, *Limousin Roman* cit., pp. 48-50.

²⁵¹ For the analysis of the Cahors cathedral see M. Durliat, *La cathédrale Saint-Étienne de Cahors. Architecture et sculpture. Dixième colloque international de la Société Française d'Archéologie (Cahors 13-14 octobre 1978)*, «Bulletin monumental», 137, 1979, pp. 285-340; see pp. 285-288 for the issue of dating.

whereas in 1112 his successor, Géraud de Gourdon (r. 1068-1112), offered a consistent donation to the Beaulieu community²⁵².

The church of Sainte-Foy in Conques (1042/1051-pre-1117 ca.) returns again in the comparison with the apse of Beaulieu, on the decorative level. As already discussed, the deambulatory of the church was reconstructed after its first erection in the central decades of the eleventh century. Whether associated to a new project or not, it seems likely that they were completed after few decades since the works started, maybe under abbot Bégon (r. 1080-1117)²⁵³. Since the sculptural parallel with Beaulieu is focused on the modillions of the rooves and on the bases in the deambulatory, it can be used to confirm a date around the year 1100.

As already shown with the architecture, the artistic milieu of the Limousin involved Beaulieu. In terms of architectural decoration, the main parallels are with the church in Saint-Martial of Limoges (1017/1021-1095/1115 ca.), Saint-Junien in Haute-Vienne (post 1102) and Saint-Pierre in Uzerche (last decades of the eleventh first half twelfth centuries)²⁵⁴. Moreover, some links bound the manuscript production of the eleventh century to the sculptures of the region too. In this sense, the atlantes on the figurative capitals in Beaulieu can be associated with the miniatures in the Second Bible of Saint-Martial, *i.e.* the manuscript Latin 8 of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France. The latter was realized in the monastery of Saint-Martial in the last decade of the eleventh century²⁵⁵. The church of Saint-Junien in Haute-Vienne has been dated at the beginning of the twelfth century, due to the *Chronique de Maleu* that sets the consecration between 1102 and 1104²⁵⁶. The third church of the region which has comparable with Beaulieu on the decorative level, is Saint-Pierre in Uzerche. Among these three is also the closer on a geographical level. The monastic church was rebuilt during the last decades of the eleventh century and the twelfth century, after the Normans destroyed the previous building. Some written sources are suggesting this dating, since documents report the main

²⁵² The documents referring to the relationship between Cahors and Beaulieu can be found in the transcription by Deloche, see Deloche, *Cartulaire de l'abbaye* cit., pp. CCLII-CCLV, 63. They were also proposed in the analysis of the church by the group of the Zodiaque edition and later by Proust and Pêcheur. See J. K. Beitscher, *Monastic Reform at Beaulieu, 1031-1095*, «Viator. Medieval and Renaissance Studies», 5, 1974, pp. 199-210: 202; Gauthier, Maury, Porcher, *Limousin Roman* cit., p. 45; Prosut, *La sculpture romane en Bas-Limousin* cit., pp. 48, 58; Pêcheur, Proust, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., p. 89.

²⁵³ Huang ascribed the modillions at the seventh of the ten phases he outlined, see Huang, *L'abbatiale de Sainte-Foy de Conques* cit., pp. 256-257, 258-259.

²⁵⁴ Cf. note 250.

²⁵⁵ Proust pointed out the parallels with the Second Bible of Saint-Martial (ms Latin 8 of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France) involving the Tables of Canons and some capital letters, both showing interesting similarities with the capitals in Beaulieu and Saint-Junien. See Proust, *La sculpture romane en Bas-Limousin* cit., pp. 51-53. For the Second Bible of Saint-Martial, see D. Gaborit Chopin, *La décoration des manuscrits à Saint-Martial de Limoges et en Limousin du IXe au XIIe siècle*, Paris, Geneva, 1969, pp. 86-99.

²⁵⁶ For the analysis and dating of Saint-Junien in Haute-Vienne, see C. Arbellot, *Chronique de Maleu, chanoine de Saint-Junien, suivi des documents historiques sur la ville de Saint-Junien*, Paris, Saint-Junien, 1847, p. 41; with the updating in Andraut Schmitt, *Les nefs des églises romanes de l'ancien diocèse de Limoges* cit., pp. 37-40. Cf. note 249.

altar was consecrated twice: first in 1073 and 1086, and then by the bishop of Limoges, between 1095 and 1097²⁵⁷.

The connections with the neighbouring region, the Auvergne, are shown mainly by the church of Saint-Côme and Saint-Damien in Brageac. This building has been dated to the end of the eleventh century, before 1100²⁵⁸.

All these elements allow to link the apse and the transept in Beaulieu to the decades between 1100 and 1130. Moreover, they show the cultural background, developed through the second half of the eleventh century, in which decorative elements at Beaulieu inscribe themselves. This cultural milieu included the *scriptorium* in Limoges as well as building sites such as Cahors (end of eleventh first half of the twelfth centuries), Conques (1042/1051-pre-1117 ca.), Uzerche (end of the eleventh and twelfth centuries) and Saint-Martial (1017/1021-1095/1115 ca.). It proceeded in the beginning of the subsequent century, through the same building sites and those which were subsequently opened, like Saint-Junien (1102 ca.) and Brageac (end of the eleventh century). Therefore, seems plausible to follow Proust in dating the apse of Beaulieu, including the deambulatory and the chancel, between 1100 and 1115²⁵⁹. The transept and the eastern bay of the nave were probably built immediately afterwards, between 1115 and 1130. It does not seem that an interruption occurred in this phase of the building process.

The coherence of the geometrical capitals, the major part both inside and outside the church, confirm the idea that the general lines of the project were attended during the subsequent phases too. In this sense, it can be argued that these architectural elements were produced and stocked at the beginning of the construction works, and then gradually employed with the progression of the building²⁶⁰.

In the nave the main decorations are centred on the pillars, on the bases and capitals of the semi-columns. The capitals of those dividing the nave and the southern aisle are mostly of the simple, geometrical type. Only that on the western side of the second pillar from the choir shows atlantes similar to those of the northern transept (fig. 37). It has been considered a reused material from the

²⁵⁷ For the dating of the current church in Uzerche, see Proust, *La sculpture romane en Bas-Limousin* cit. pp. 54-55, 327-328.

²⁵⁸ For the dating of Brageac church, cf. note 249, and Proust, *La sculpture romane en Bas-Limousin* cit. p. 56, note 37.

²⁵⁹ See *Ibid.*, pp. 56-58.

²⁶⁰ The idea of the previous production and stock of the geometrical capitals was suggested by Pêcheur and Proust. Nonetheless, it has to be recalled how the restorations undertaken in the church, especially those between the second half of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries, could have substitute damaged originals with modern copies in the geometrical shape. See Pêcheur, Proust, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., pp. 92-93; cf. Haddad, *Common Space or Cleft Space?* cit., pp. 119-120.

previous phase²⁶¹. Against the southern wall, framing the inner side of the portal, two semi-columns have capitals shaped in big leaves tying small balls on the angles (fig. 66). This type can be found also in the churches of Saint-Sauver in Figeac and Saint-Ucrisse in Limoges, both dated to the second quarter of the thirteenth century. The church of Saint-Martin in Tulle has comparable capitals as well, dated at the beginning of the thirteenth century (fig. 66). Thus, it would suggest a date of production for the two capitals in Beaulieu to the end of the twelfth century, probably around circa 1190²⁶². On the other side, dividing the nave from the northern aisle, the second pillar from the western façade and the western side of the third pillar, have capitals decorated in the higher part with elements that resemble shells, divided by a curved line. These can be connected to the later part of the building progress, anticipating solutions of the subsequent centuries²⁶³. The semi-columns' bases have decorative bands, with geometrical and vegetal elements finely carved, only in the pillars enclosing the last bay of the nave. The one the western side of the second eastern pillar between the northern aisle and the nave, is the only one to have a figurative decoration: animals hunting each other (figg. 67a-b). This base can be compared with those of Brageac (end of the eleventh century) (fig. 68), along with other buildings of Cantal²⁶⁴.

The presence of bases which still recall solutions linked to the twelfth century, along with capitals with features that will developed in the subsequent century can suggest a braking in the building process. The change of proportions in the arrangement of the division between the naves is confirming this point of view. Indeed, the tribunes are getting smaller from east to west, compressed gradually between the vault and the arches dividing the naves²⁶⁵.

As already mentioned, the misalignment of the axis of the nave has been interpreted as sign of the interruption of the works after the eastern bay of the nave. In this sense, it can be argued that the building process stopped or slowed down after circa 1130, and proceeded afterwards with a slower rhythm, spread in the second half of the twelfth century²⁶⁶. Following the disposition of the different types of capitals, seems possible to imagine the evolution of the works. After the completion of the first bay of the nave, they proceeded to the southern aisle, in order to build the southern portal or to

²⁶¹ For the idea of a reuse of precedent material in the second phase of the building process in Beaulieu, see Pêcheur, Proust, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., p. 93. Cf. Haddad, *Common Space or Cleft Space?* cit., p. 120.

²⁶² See Pêcheur, Proust, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., pp. 93-94.

²⁶³ See Andrault-Schmitt, *Les nefs des églises romanes de l'ancien diocèse de Limoges* cit., pp. 169-170. Cf. Pêcheur, Proust, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., p. 93.

²⁶⁴ See Proust, *La sculpture romane en Bas-Limousin* cit., p. 56. For the church of Saint-Côme and Saint-Damien in Brageac cf. note 249.

²⁶⁵ See Lefèvre-Pontalis, *A quelle école faut-il rattacher l'église de Beaulieu* cit., pp. 63-64; Gauthier, Maury, Porcher, *Limousin Roman* cit., p. 50; Pêcheur, Proust, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., p. 89.

²⁶⁶ See Pêcheur, Proust, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., p. 89.

connect it to the church. At the same time or immediately after, the northern aisle was built and afterwards the nave was covered²⁶⁷.

Finally, the western façade was partially realised only later on, between the end of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth century (fig. 21)²⁶⁸. The stylistic comparison of this side of the church is complicated, since the door itself shows traces of heavy rearrangement, and only the arches of the stepped portal partially survives²⁶⁹. The central layer over it with three windows can be ascribed to the second quarter of the thirteenth century, due to style of its capitals and to the pointed arches of the stepped windows²⁷⁰. The upper level is securely dated to the first half of the eighteenth century, thanks to the record of the restorations undertaken by the Maurists²⁷¹.

The sculpted portal in Beaulieu can be analysed on its own from the stylistic point of view. Being an ensemble of sculptures, it seems on a different level compared to the limited inner decoration. In spite of the big losses that occurred through the centuries, some similarities can be found with other monumental portals. The main comparisons can be made with Moissac (circa 1115-1130) and Souillac (circa 1130-1140). The portal of the church of Saint-Pierre in Moissac has many features comparable to Beaulieu. Both of them were used to be connected to a monastic church and were opened towards a marketplace at the same time (cf. 22a-b, 71)²⁷². The portals are set in a similar way, with a unique space enclosed by lateral pillars and tympanum on the top (cf. figg. 23, 70). The entrance is flanked by lateral figures and divided by an entirely decorated trumeau with scalloped edges²⁷³. The splay of the portals has the same rhythm with three thin columns and torus alternated by flat ashlars. In Moissac the latter are enriched by carved geometrical and vegetal patterns (fig. 69). The lateral walls are divided by two arches in both the cases, although in Moissac another layer of reliefs is added on the top²⁷⁴.

On the stylistic level the figures in both the portals present thin proportions and sinuous positions. Some of the poses among the two examples are almost overlapping. It is the case of some

²⁶⁷ It is probable that the northern wall of the church was built in same time as the southern, and that it was roofed only during the last decades of the twelfth century. This would explain the coherence between the shape of the southern and the northern walls, justified also by the parallel reconstruction of the cloister. See Berland, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., p. 15; Proust, *Limousin Roman* cit., pp. 229-230.

²⁶⁸ See Gauthier, Maury, Porcher, *Limousin Roman* cit., p. 45; Pêcheur, Proust, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., p. 94.

²⁶⁹ A comparison can be proposed with the northern portal of the church of Saint-Pierre in La Dorat, although the loss of the capitals and the shafts of the lateral columns in Beaulieu are not allowing a secure parallel.

²⁷⁰ See Pêcheur, Proust, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., p. 94.

²⁷¹ See Vaslet, *Abregé de l'histoire de l'abbaye de Beaulieu* cit., pp. 149-152.

²⁷² See Besancon, *The French Romanesque Portals* cit., pp. xxiv-xxv; Franzé, *Art et réforme clunisienne* cit., p. 1.

²⁷³ The similarity between the figure on the left jamb of both Moissac and Beaulieu portals, representing St. Peter, is quite remarkable too.

²⁷⁴ For the comparison of the setting of the portals in Beaulieu and Moissac, see Pêcheur, Proust, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., p. 103 nota 58.

of the apostles in Beaulieu and some of the elders seated around Christ in Moissac (cf. figg. 31, 69). Furthermore, the Isaiah of the trumeau in Moissac has an almost specular pose to that of the Daniel on the western pillar in Beaulieu (cf. figg. 73-74). The two prophets show also a strong resemblance in their physiognomy, with a comparable representation of the long hair and the beard (cf. figg. 26, 72). In both the cases the folding of the draperies combines an attention to the anatomical volumes of the bodies with a taste for the decorative geometric lines. The latter is quite visible in the freely arranged edges of tunics and cloaks of many characters of both the tympanums. The majestic representations of Christ have many common elements too (cf. figg. 31, 69). From the enthroned and central position to the general physiognomy, with almost coinciding solutions for the drapery of the legs.

Nonetheless, the two portals have some strong differences that should be acknowledged. Even if the composition of the images has strong analogies, it is quite evident how the dominant symmetry of Moissac is substituted by a freer disposition in Beaulieu (cf. figg. 31, 69). As Christe stated, in the latter case symmetry was not ignore but negated and modified²⁷⁵. In this sense, Christ remains the central axis, and the representation of the apostles on Beaulieu portal recall Moissac figuration of the elders' perfect alignment, but in Beaulieu the apostles are taken apart, divided in smaller sections, partially overlapping. The central group with Christ and the angels is itself losing a definite division, contrary to what can be seen in Moissac. This is due both to the scattered disposition of the angels of the higher register and to the apostles appearing behind the outstretched arms of Christ. This asymmetrical disposition is spread to the lower registers and the lintels, although in the latter case the linear disposition of the figures is softening the overall perception. Thus, the tympanum in Beaulieu appears to be constructed by smaller groups of characters connected and overlapped but at the same time still divided (figg. 33b-c). Another important difference with the portal of Moissac concerns the style itself. If it is true that many choices in the details of draperies or positions in the two portals can be compared, the way in which the sculptures are conceived is slightly different. In Beaulieu is possible to notice a stronger attention to volumes, represented in smoother way, while in Moissac all the angular details are pointing to a more graphic style, closer to typical solutions of painting, miniatures and jewellery²⁷⁶.

While this smoother style takes a stylistic distance with Moissac, at the same time, it allows to underline analogies between Beaulieu and another sculptural ensemble: the remains of the portal

²⁷⁵ See Christe, *Le portail de Beaulieu* cit., p. 72-74.

²⁷⁶ The stylistic difference between Moissac and Beaulieu is quite visible in the comparison between the rosettes of the lintels in the two portals. See *Ibid.*, pp. 74-76. Cf. Proust, *La sculpture romane en Bas-Limousin* cit., p. 158.

of the church of Sainte-Marie in Souillac²⁷⁷. This is quite well noticeable in the figure of prophet Isaiah in Souillac, where the drapery is folded in a way closely comparable with those of the figures in Beaulieu, e.g. the figures of the trumeau (cf. figg. 29a-b-c, 75). Moreover, in both, Souillac and Beaulieu, jewelled stripes are decorating the clothes. But the closest parallels for Souillac's representation of the prophet Isaiah can be seen in the figuration of Daniel at Beaulieu, namely for the iconographical features such as the hairstyle and the drapery, and in Beaulieu's Christ of the First Temptation, for the twisted pose (cf. figg. 26, 74-76)²⁷⁸. This stylistic comparison is also visible in some background elements such as the depiction of clouds. Far from the static and linear shape of those in Moissac, they are expanded in a more curved way, covering the top of the composition both in Souillac's Miracle of Theophilus and in the lunette of Beaulieu (cf. figg. 78, 81). This concept can be applied to all the composition which breaks the symmetry still dominant in Moissac (cf. figg. 31, 69, 77). In Souillac, this setting is putting more forward than in Beaulieu. Similarities with Souillac can be seen on the iconographical level too. In this sense, the monsters and animals of the so-called big and small trumeau in Souillac find a close correspondence in those represented in Beaulieu, both on the tympanum and on the lateral reliefs as well. Their twisted poses and the fur found numerous similarities (cf. figg. 33b, 83). Moreover, Proust pointed out an overlapping resemblance in the anatomical representation of the devil in the so-called Miracle of Theophilus and those in the reliefs with the Temptations of Christ in Beaulieu (cf. figg. 78-79)²⁷⁹. The same can be said for the composed dragon at the feet of the saint on the left of the Theophilus' relief in Souillac and the dragon on the lower lintel in Beaulieu (cf. figg. 31, 81). The crossed lions under St. Peter or in the so-called small trumeau in Souillac can serve as example as well (fig. 83). Lions in similar shape can be found both in Beaulieu, on the western pillar at the feet of the figure on the external relief and around Daniel (figg. 82, 85a-b), and in Moissac, on the frontal side of the trumeau (fig. 84)²⁸⁰.

Starting from the stylistic connections between the three sculpted portals, it is possible to use the information about their dating as mutual sustain in order to define the date of the Beaulieu portal. Unfortunately, none of them can be directly linked to a precise date for the beginning or the end of

²⁷⁷ For the analysis of the sculptures in Sainte-Marie in Souillac, see M. Schapiro, *The Sculptures of Souillac*, in *Medieval Studies in Memory of A. Kingsley Porter*, edited by W. R. W. Koehler, Cambridge, 2 voll., 1939, II, pp. 359-387; J. Thirion, *Observations sur les fragments sculptés du portail de Souillac*, «Gesta. International Center of Medieval Art», vol. 15/1-2 (1976), pp. 161-171. For the latest updating see Besancon, *The French Romanesque Portals* cit., pp. 145-226; C. Knicely, *Food for Thought in the Souillac Pillar: Devouring Beasts, Pain and the Subversion of Heroic Codes of Violence*, «RACAR: revue d'art Canadienne / Canadian Art Review», vol. 24/2 (1997), pp. 14-37; C. R. Krindle, *The Theophilus Relief at Souillac and the Eleven-Century Reforms of the Church*, «RACAR: revue d'art Canadienne / Canadian Art Review», vol. 40/1 (2015), pp. 27-40.

²⁷⁸ See Proust, *La sculpture romane en Bas-Limousin* cit., pp. 156, 158.

²⁷⁹ See *Ibid.*, p. 158.

²⁸⁰ For the comparison between the crossed lions and the dragon in Beaulieu and Souillac, cf. note 279.

the building process, making their mutual dating difficult to define firmly. Nonetheless, some chronological hints are helpful to define a plausible period for their execution.

Concerning Moissac, the recent analysis by Besancon pointed out how the core of the creation of the portal should be dated between 1115 and 1130²⁸¹. The main problem remains the ambiguous link to the documents of the abbey, which were seriously damaged by a fire like those in Beaulieu. Along with them, later documents were usually attributing the portal to the abbacy of Ansquentil (r. 1085-1115)²⁸². The analysis of the relationship with the sculpted cloister, securely dated to 1100 by an inscription, produced different opinions too²⁸³. Besancon analysed the abbeys of Ansquentil and his successor, Roger (r. 1115-1131), along with all the other evidences. She finally argued that the sculpted portal should be ascribed to the latter, with a possible begin during the last years of the former²⁸⁴.

The Souillac portal has been differently dated from 1120 to 1140. Once again, Besancon was the last to get through the issue of dating²⁸⁵. Compared to Beaulieu and Moissac, Souillac present a more difficult situation. The sculptures of the portal were displaced, during the heavy restorations that involved the architectural structure between the fourteenth and the twentieth centuries²⁸⁶. Starting from the lack of documents, in Souillac the stylistic comparison remains the main element that can be used for dating. Aside from Moissac, which was usually proposed as preceding Souillac, the other comparison is with the cathedral in Cahors (end of the eleventh beginning of the twelfth centuries), both for some capitals in the apse and for the sculpted portal (post 1140). From these elements, Besancon argued a dating for Souillac between circa 1130 and 1140²⁸⁷.

Following these hypotheses, and accepting that Moissac preceded Souillac and Beaulieu, it is possible to argue that the latter was realized between 1130 and 1140. The stylistic coherence of the ensemble of the portal, including the capitals, suggests that the sculptures were assembled soon after their execution in the architectural setting. This would put the portal in the sequence of the building process of the church, after the completion of the apsidal area. Moreover, the epigraphical analysis

²⁸¹ See Besancon, *The French Romanesque Portals* cit., pp. 53-65.

²⁸² The attribution of the portal in Moissac to abbot Ansquentil (r. 1085-1115) was firstly mentioned in the fourteenth-century chronicle of the abbey by a subsequent abbot of Moissac, Aymeric of Peyrac (r. 1377-1406). For the discussion about the relevance of this source for the issue of dating the portal, see *Ibid.*, pp. 56-59.

²⁸³ For the comparisons between the sculptures of the cloister and the portal, see *Ibid.*, pp. 53-54, 63-64.

²⁸⁴ See *Ibid.*, pp. 63-65.

²⁸⁵ The main proposals were discussed by Besancon in the paragraph devoted to the dating of Souillac, see *Ibid.*, pp. 154-167.

²⁸⁶ For the restorations of Souillac, see *Ibid.*, pp. 154-156.

²⁸⁷ See *Ibid.*, pp. 164-167. Cf also Durliat, *La cathédrale Saint-Étienne de Cahors* cit., pp. 285-340; H. Pradalier, *Sainte-Marie de Souillac*, in *Congrès archéologique de France*, proceedings of the national conference (Quercy, 1989), edited by the Société française d'archéologie, Paris, 1993, pp. 481-508.

of the inscriptions on the eastern pillar seems to underline the attribution to the beginning of the twelfth century²⁸⁸.

An issue seems to be still open: since the portal can be dated to 1130-1140, how to justify the presence of capitals with curved leaves, dated to the beginning of the thirteenth century, on the inner side of the southern wall behind it (fig. 66)? It has been proposed that the complex of the portal was built on its own and the sculptures mounted on it, while the progression of the works of the church was still at the first bay of the nave. The connection of the southern wall with the portal would have occurred only later, explaining the presence of the thirteenth-century capitals. Another hypothesis is that the ensemble of sculptures was previously prepared and stocked. They would have been assembled with the architecture only once the building progression of the church would have reached the position planned for the portal²⁸⁹. However, the sculpted reliefs and the architectural decorations of the porch seem to be too coherent to be divided by such a chronological gap. Therefore, it seems more plausible that the portal was initially joined to the previous church, and only at a later time to the current one. Afterwards, while the building progression arrived on the western façade, some modifications or interventions could have altered the joining point, adding the thirteenth-century capitals²⁹⁰.

From the stylistic perspective and starting from the proposed dating, it is possible to suppose that the three portals of Moissac, Souillac and Beaulieu were connected by groups of sculptors which were in contact with each other. In this sense, the so-called '*école languedocienne*', firstly outlined by Lefèvre-Pontalis, would include the three portals²⁹¹. Even if nowadays the idea of a 'regional school' is no longer shared, what can be maintained is the concept of big construction sites which were connected, as it is shown by the stylistic similarities²⁹².

²⁸⁸ For the epigraphical analysis of the inscriptions in Beaulieu, cf. note 178.

²⁸⁹ The latter hypothesis was pointed out by Pêcheur and Proust starting from the essay by Christe, see Pêcheur, Proust, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., pp. 98-99.

²⁹⁰ The hypothesis of a first construction of the portal connected to the previous church, later connected to the current one, and plausibly modified in the thirteenth century, was proposed by Besancon. See Besancon, *The French Romanesque Portals* cit., pp. 245-246.

²⁹¹ See Lefèvre-Pontalis, *A quelle école faut-il rattacher l'église de Beaulieu* cit., pp. 80-87.

²⁹² In this sense, already M. Charageat was proposing the groups of seasonal workers hired in the different sites as the element that linked together the building sites, since she argued that they were quite free to move from one to the other from time to time. The idea of a 'languedocian' taste is expressed in an updated form by Proust and Pêcheur. See M. Charageat, *Les portails imagés des églises corréziennes*, in «Corrèze. Revue de la Commission départementale d'action et de propagande régionalistes», 7, 1942, pp. 254-257; Pêcheur, Proust, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., pp. 97-99.

II. 5. Conclusions

The surviving written sources do not report any direct information about the chronology of the building process of the current church of Saint-Pierre in Beaulieu. In this sense, only the comparison with other constructions and sculptures can supply some useful hints in order to define a dating. As a result, emerged how the church in Beaulieu should be dated to the twelfth century, and its sculpted portal to the decades between 1130 and 1140.

Starting from the stylistic analysis, it has been possible to recognize the cultural and artistic connections from which the shape of the current church was formed. From what emerged, it seems that Beaulieu was receptive towards the inputs of different artistic milieus, both on the architectural and on the sculptural level. On the one hand the architectural level has connections with the important buildings of the Limousin and the surrounding regions, themselves connected to the major building sites of the period such as Santiago de Compostela. But Beaulieu was rooted to the local background as well, as shown by the shared elements with the smaller local buildings. On the other hand, the references on the sculptural level are crossing the 'regional borders' recalling important examples on a larger scale and linking to it the site of Beaulieu. After all, these big projects shared similar problems in terms of setting and managing in order to create a coherent ensemble of sculpture and architecture, which makes plausible that ideas and people could have circulated from one to the other in order to share knowledge and solutions.

Moreover, the inclusion of Beaulieu in the Cluny network immediately before the erection of the church would have widened the range of possible contacts, both with the Burgundian abbey and to the other affiliated monasteries, such as Saint-Pierre in Moissac or Saint-Martial in Limoges.

The 'hybrid position' between major buildings and local churches, is emphasized also on the geographical level by the spot of the church itself, close to the historical borders of the Limousin with the Quercy and the Auvergne²⁹³. Beaulieu was deeply connected simultaneously to the local context and to a larger 'net' of bigger and more important buildings extended to the wider level of France, and beyond.

²⁹³ The monastery itself had strong connections on the different regions: it was located into the diocese of Limoges, although it was historically linked to the bishop of Bourges. Nonetheless, a relevant part of its domains was located into the county of Toulouse and in the Quercy, to which new possibility were certainly opened in the end of the eleventh century, with its inclusion in the network of Cluny. For the domains and political links of the monastery through the Middle Ages the main source is the *Cartulaire*, see Deloche, *Cartulaire de l'abbaye* cit.; about the inclusion in the Cluny network, see the references in Vescovi, *An Eschatological mirror* cit., pp. 59-60.

III. Pilgrims and Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne

III. 1. Approaching Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne

III. 1. 1. Beaulieu in its Environment

The small town of Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne is today located in the southern part of the Corrèze department, in Nouvelle-Aquitaine, close to the borders with Midi-Pyrénées and Auvergne.

On the geographical level, the lower Limousin, shows a general coherence. The cold Atlantic winds are kept away by the uplands of the northern part of the region, creating an area with mild climate²⁹⁴. The orography is characterized by hills with gentle slopes, gradually opening westward on the plains of the Bassin Aquitaine, whereas eastward are bordering the higher peaks of the Massif Central. In the latter region, namely in the Puy de Sancy, spring the source of the Dordogne river, which enlarge itself through many tributaries crossing the mountains and gradually slowing down its flow. Subsequently it passes through the southern Corrèze, part of the northern Lot, the Dordogne region and finally joins the Garonne river in order to form the Gironde estuary. The Dordogne presents a winding course, when it flows through Beaulieu it has already reached a sufficient volume of water to be navigable. The river is also improving the already fertile soil of the area, contributing to its agricultural vocation²⁹⁵.

The pleasant valley created by the Dordogne in the Corrèze hosted human presence since the prehistoric period. Before the ninth century, the area of Beaulieu was occupied by a small village named Vellinus, which was likely located on the western bank of the river (fig. 8b)²⁹⁶. Few information is known about this settlement, which was probably formed as gathering of fishermen and farmers during the Gallo-Roman and Late Antique period²⁹⁷. The period centred to the present study is some centuries later when the abbey was founded in 855 and its growth during the subsequent centuries²⁹⁸. According to the written sources, it was the founder, archbishop Rodolphe de Tourenne

²⁹⁴ É. Proust, *La sculpture romane en Bas-Limousin. Un domaine original du grand art languedocien*, Paris, 2004, p. 16.

²⁹⁵ See *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.

²⁹⁶ See B. Barrière, S. Boisset, É. Proust, I. Ribieras, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne*, in *Patrimoine Limousin*, edited by B. Barrière, 8 voll., 1991-2002, II, 1993, pp. 3-4, 30; F. Le Hec, *Histoire de Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne et de son pays*, Limoges, 2010, pp. 15-16, 161; Proust, *La sculpture romane en Bas-Limousin* cit., p. 226. For the written sources mentioning the village, cf. J. E. M Deloche., *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Beaulieu en Limousin*, Paris, 1859, pp. CCXXIX-CCXXX, 65-66; A. Vaslet, *Abrégé de l'histoire de l'abbaye de Saint-Pierre de Beaulieu en Bas-Limousin*, edited by J.-B. Poulbrière, «Bulletin de la société scientifique, historique et archéologique de la Corrèze», 6, 1884, pp. 58-178: 70-71.

²⁹⁷ See Le Hec, *Histoire de Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., pp. 11-19, 161; Proust, *La sculpture romane en Bas-Limousin* cit., pp. 17-19.

²⁹⁸ Cf. paragraph II. 4. 1.

(d. 866), who named the new monastery as *Bellus locus*, emphasizing the pleasant condition of the area²⁹⁹.

Due to its peripheral position, it can be argued that Beaulieu and its surroundings maintained today the general features that could have been visible during the Middle Ages. As it will be analysed below, the monastery as well as the neighbouring town, during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, used to be of the same size as the old town centre as it is nowadays attested (figg. 8c, 9). The hinterland of the valley and the hills were used to grown fruit trees, vineyards and meadows. The river was used for fishing, as a trade route with the neighbouring regions and for grinding cereals through mills. It is likely that between Beaulieu and its dependencies, especially along the river, many woodlands were present as well³⁰⁰.

III. 1. 2. Beaulieu and the Network of the Routes of Pilgrimage

As mentioned above, one of the main purposes of the present work is to propose an analysis of the complex of the church of Saint-Pierre in Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne from the point of view of the pilgrims which crossed the settlement during their journey towards major shrines. Their presence in Beaulieu has been mentioned by many authors, but what was the relationship between Beaulieu and the major pilgrimage routes and their known detours?

According to the fifth volume of the *Codex Calixtinus* or *Liber Sancti Jacobi*, the *Iter pro peregrinis ad Compostellam* by Aymeric Picaud, in the twelfth century there were four major pilgrimage routes that crossed the French kingdom to finally join at Puente la Reina to proceed as one, the Camino, towards Santiago de Compostela. The routes have been studied also through other evidences, trying to reconstruct their path and the main shrines involved³⁰¹. Beaulieu is positioned between the central routes: the *via Lemovicensis*, running on the north, and the *via Podensis*, passing on the south (fig. 6).

The *via Lemovicensis* started at the shrine of Sainte-Madaleine in Vézelay, where people from Rhenish regions, Alsace, Bourgogne and Franche-Comté gathered. From there the path was divided in two itineraries joined again in the Limousin, where the main shrine quoted by the *Codex Calixtinus*

²⁹⁹ See note 295; cf. also G. Soulié, *L'Abbatiale de Saint-Pierre Beaulieu*, «Bulletin de la Société scientifique, historique et archéologique de la Corrèze», 57, 1935, pp. 204-211: 204.

³⁰⁰ For the usage of the territory around the monastery and town of Beaulieu, see Le Hec, *Histoire de Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., pp. 30-31, 162; Proust, *La sculpture romane en Bas-Limousin* cit., p. 16. Cf. also the types of properties quoted in the *Cartulaire* of the monastery, Deloche, *Cartulaire de l'abbaye* cit., pp. CII-CVII.

³⁰¹ See P. Caucci von Saucken, edited by, *Guida del pellegrino di Santiago. Libro quinto del Codex Calixtinus secolo XII*, Milano, 1998. Cf. R. de La Coste-Messelière, *La Francia dei «Chemins de Saint-Jacques»*, in *Santiago. L'Europa del pellegrinaggio*, edited by P. Caucci von Saucken, Milano, 1993, pp. 233-273.

is Saint-Léonard-de-Noblat, recommending the visit to the relics of the confessor³⁰². Along with it, the monastery of Saint-Martial of Limoges was certainly an attractive site too. From Limoges the main path reached Saint-Front of Périgueux, but many detours branched off through the southern Limousin, including the Corrèze. Uzerche was known to be the meeting point of those pilgrims which passed by Limoges, along with Brive and Tulle, from where the pilgrims went southward to reach the Cadouin abbey and cross the Dordogne, returning soon after on the *via Lemovicensis*³⁰³. This way seems to exclude Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne, but it could have been reached through a detour of other secondary paths. Among the possible ways, the more likely seem to be those that, from Tulle or Brive, were heading to Aurillac or to the venerated shrine of Notre-Dame de Rocamadour and later to Cahors, crossed by the other major pilgrimage route close to Beaulieu.

The *via Podensis* had a starting point in Le Puy-en-Velay, dominated by the cathedral of Notre-Dame-de-l'Annonciation. This city was reached by pilgrims from today's Switzerland and other 'tectonics', Bourgogne, Savoy and Auvergne heading to Santiago. The *Codex Calixtinus* lists only Sainte-Foy in Conques and Saint-Pierre in Moissac as main shrines from Le Puy to Ostabat, where the path joins the *via Lemovicensis* and the *via Tournonensis*. From Le Puy the route led through the Massif Central to Sainte-Foy in Conques, and later to Saint-Saveur in Figeac and Cahors. The two latter were joining the detours from the Corrèze, including those potentially involving Beaulieu, to the *via Podensis*. Following this itinerary, pilgrims from the Limousin would have reached Moissac flanked by those from Conques³⁰⁴.

The previous analysis considered the perspective of the pilgrim heading to Santiago de Compostela, though other major pilgrimages had Rome and the Holy Land as arrival points. From the French kingdom the main route would have been the *via Tolosana*, which was crossing the southern regions and the Alps, reaching the Padan Plain from where the pilgrim would have headed to Rome, through the so called *via Francigena*, or to Venice, in order to set sail to the Holy Land. Pilgrims coming from the Limousin or from other French north-western regions, could have used the routes mentioned above and their detours in order to join the *via Tolosana* and Italy through it and, possibly, stopped in Beaulieu as well³⁰⁵.

Although it cannot be considered a pilgrimage route, the Dordogne river should be mentioned as a possible itinerary too. Boats could have been used not only to cross the river, but also to follow its flow westward reaching sites that, similarly to Beaulieu, were built on its banks (fig. 12). In this sense, the abbey of Cadouin with all its numerous relics, Brageac, crossing point between the

³⁰² See Caucci von Saucken, *Guida del pellegrino* cit., pp. 100-103.

³⁰³ See La Coste-Messelière, *La Francia dei «Chemins de Saint-Jacques»* cit., pp. 238-239, 263-266.

³⁰⁴ See *Ibid.*, pp. 238, 266-270.

³⁰⁵ For the *via Tolosana* analysed in both directions, Santiago de Compostela and Italy, see *Ibid.*, cit., pp. 238, 245-252.

Dordogne river and the *via Lemovicensis*, or Libourne, close to the Gironde estuary, Bordeaux and the *via Turonensis*, are all plausible stops from which a pilgrim could have taken the routes on land³⁰⁶.

Finally, to these long-distance pilgrimages should be added the local one. As reported by La Coste-Masselière, the Corrèze was an area from which many pilgrims started their journey³⁰⁷. Moreover, the presence of significant sanctuaries in the nearby localities and cities, or at reachable distance, would have let many to undertake shorter journeys. Therefore, the itineraries mentioned above could have been crossed by locals as well as by foreigners.

III. 1. 3. Reaching Beaulieu: The Landscape

It is not possible to recreate the bodily experience of a pilgrim travelling through the Dordogne valley and approaching Beaulieu. Nonetheless, it seems important to evoke at least the role of the landscape in the perception of the church of Saint-Pierre in Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne.

The value of the concept of ‘landscape’ when approaching a medieval church has been discussed by Martin Lešák³⁰⁸. Following his combined approach between anthropology and art history, the ‘landscape’ should be conceived as a cultural process, activated by all the senses combined with memories, movement and human consciousness³⁰⁹. Quoting Della Dora, Lešák recalled also the dichotomy between ‘garden’ and ‘wilderness’ in the perception of the landscape in medieval thought³¹⁰.

The former was intended as a place recreating the perfection of Paradise, recalling the Garden of Eden. Monasteries, with their fields, cloisters and gardens were conceived as a reflection of Heaven on earth, using men’s control over nature to represent divine perfection³¹¹. Martin Locker recalls also how the medieval concept of ‘garden’ would have re-elaborated the *Locus amoenus* of the Antique

³⁰⁶ The *via Turonensis* started at Tours gathering pilgrims from Nederland, Belgium, northern France, Great Britain and northern Germany, proceeded southwards in western France to reach the other major routes in Ostabat and Puente la Reina. See *Ibid.*, pp. 239-240, 256-262. For the other *viae* crossed by the Dordogne cf. notes 303 and 304. For the use of boats in pilgrimages, cf. P. A. Sigal, *L’homme et le miracle dans la France médiévale (XIe-XIIe siècle)*, Paris, 1985, p. 122.

³⁰⁷ See *Ibid.*, p. 264. Cf. Proust, *La sculpture romane en Bas-Limousin* cit., pp. 25-26. Cf. P. A. Sigal, *Reliques, pèlerinage et miracles dans l’Église médiévale (XIe-XIIIe siècles)*, «Revue d’histoire de l’Église de France», 76/197 (1990), pp. 193-211: 199-200.

³⁰⁸ See M. Lešák, *Sacral Architecture on the Horizon: The Sacred Landscape of Medieval Pilgrims*, in *Migrating Art Historians on the Sacred Ways*, edited by I. Foletti, K. Kravčiková, A. Palladino, et al., Brno, Rome, 2018, pp. 61-74.

³⁰⁹ See *Ibid.*, pp. 61-69.

³¹⁰ Cf. V. Della Dora, *Landscape, Nature, and the Sacred in Byzantium*, Cambridge, 2016; I. Foletti, S. Rosembergová, *Walking to the Holy Mountain. The Migrating Art Historians and a New Hierotopy*, in *The Hierotopy of Holy Mountains in Christian Culture*, edited by A. Lidov, Moscow, 2019, pp. 460-479.

³¹¹ An example is the respect of geometrical forms, firstly the square, in the disposition of the gardens, fruit fields and cloisters of monasteries. See Lešák, *Sacral Architecture on the Horizon* cit., pp. 69-70; cf. A. Maniglio Calcagno, *Architettura del Paesaggio. Evoluzione storica*, Milano, 2011, pp. 53-61.

tradition, mainly its qualities of paradisiac perfection and spiritual contemplation, interpreted through the Christian tradition³¹².

The concept of 'wilderness' was seen as the opposite. A harsh, dangerous, and barren place mainly derived from the Biblical tradition of both the Testaments. According to the Scriptures, the wild place par excellence was the desert. Starting from the banishment of Adam and Eve (Gen 3, 17-19), it was linked with pain, death, punishment, and chaos. In the Middle Ages, this concept was extended also to many other types of environment, such as moorlands, fenlands and woodlands. The common features were those of the *Locus horribilis*, dangerous both for its natural features and for the few, unwelcoming presences which could have inhabited it, human or otherwise³¹³. The uncertainty and threaten of travelling through this kind of landscapes derived mainly from their being made of 'unmanaged nature'. Because of this unknown nature, the 'wilderness' had also another important feature: the potentiality of transformation. These unwelcoming places were suitable for blurring the division between the earthly world and the otherworld. Recalling many pre-Christian myths and folklores, the idea of the 'wilderness' as the space where one can encounter supernatural forces, was reinforced by the New Testament, especially the deeds of Christ, and the subsequent monastic and hermitic tradition. The 'wilderness' could purify and led to divine revelation or testing, through the demoniac presence. But this potentiality of transformation, was also possibly addressed to the 'wilderness' itself. The presence of a religious building would have transformed the 'wilderness' into a 'garden'. This was true both on the objective level, especially for monastic foundations which managed the natural setting in order to establish their settlement, and on the spiritual level³¹⁴.

Lešák proposed that this sacralising presence would have worked as a 'force' emanating from religious architectural setting and, indeed, capable to turn the 'wilderness' into a 'garden', making paradise present. This 'force' would have had also an apotropaic implication, protecting pilgrims and travellers from both natural and demoniac threats in the surrounding 'wilderness'. This concept would have affected medieval pilgrims, influencing their perception of the surroundings and announcing the proximity of the sacred place³¹⁵.

³¹² See M. Locker, *The Secret Language of Movement. Interior Encounters with Space and Transition during Medieval Pilgrimage*, in *Place and Space in the Medieval World*, edited by M. Boulton, J. Hawkes and H. Stöner, New York, 2018, pp. 1-11: 3.

³¹³ See Lešák, *Sacral Architecture on the Horizon* cit., p. 70; Locker, *The Secret Language of Movement* cit., p. 3.

³¹⁴ For the potential transformation of the 'wilderness' into 'garden', both physical and spiritual, see note 312. Cf. also Maniglio Calcagno, *Architettura del Paesaggio* cit., pp. 53-56.

³¹⁵ See Lešák, *Sacral Architecture on the Horizon* cit., pp. 71-73.

Applying this argument on the specific case of Beaulieu and its milieu, it is possible to select two main directions from which a traveller could have approached the site (fig. 7a)³¹⁶.

A pilgrim walking from south, leaving Cahors or Notre-Dame du Rocamadour, and heading northwards to Tulle, Brive or Aurillac, would have followed the path along the Dordogne and crossed many fields and woods (fig. 7c)³¹⁷. Moving closer to Beaulieu, the path would have drawn near to the river, the hills would have been higher but maintaining their gentle slopes, hiding the view of the monastery and the town. But its presence would have been announced by farms on the banks and by mills on the river shore³¹⁸. Only after other forty minutes of walking they would have reached the walls, seeing them only few hundreds of meters before their arrival. The area is still covered with many woods, and trees grown on the shores of the river (fig. 10). In these conditions, the main sense that would have perceived the closeness of Beaulieu would have been hearing, namely the tolling of the church bells in the distance.

A pilgrim coming from north, from Tulle and Brive, on the road called *route de Figeac à Tulle* in the cadastre, would have joint the travellers from Brivezac and Argentat³¹⁹, at the Moulin d'Abadiol, a mill attested as property of the monastery (fig. 7b)³²⁰. The environment around them would have been closer to the one exposed above, encountered by the pilgrims coming from the south, though with slightly higher hills (fig. 12). After walking for other circa fifteen minutes, they would have possibly caught a glimpse of the chapel of Notre-Dame du port haut (twelfth century), known today as Chapelle des Penitents, built on a rock at the edge of the river (figg. 8b, 11)³²¹. Proceeding

³¹⁶ It is not possible to know the exact path of the medieval ways heading to Beaulieu. In this work I referred to the online version of the documents of the 1832-1835 cadastre, since they show the organization of the surroundings of Beaulieu before its development in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. See Cadastre ancien, Archives départementales de la Corrèze (Tulle), www.archinoe.fr (12.07.2020).

³¹⁷ The cadastre reports this road as 'route de Figeac à Tulle'. See Tulle, Archives départementales de la Corrèze, FRAD019 019 CAD B3, mr. Besse, *Commune de Beaulieu. Section B dite de la Contesse. En trois Feuilles. 3e Feuille*, 1832; consulted online on www.archinoe.fr (12.07.2020). Although is not possible to reconstruct precisely how the environment around the road to Beaulieu was organized, an idea can be evoked through the types of properties described in the *Cartulaire* and referred to the monastery holdings in Limousin and Quercy, see the references to Deloche at note 300.

³¹⁸ In the cadastral table B3 is represented the mill d'Estresse on the way towards Beaulieu, nowadays preceded by the Château d'Estresse (Astaillac) which was built only in the fifteenth century and lately used as shelter by the monks during the Huguenots' occupation of the town. Many mills were property of the Beaulieu monastery, taking advantage of the Dordogne flow. See Deloche, *Cartulaire de l'abbaye* cit., pp. 61-62, 71-72, 77, 131-132, 146-147, 158-159, 196-197, 273-274; cf. Le Hec, *Histoire de Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., pp. 31-162. For the Château d'Estresse, see J. M. Berland, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne*, Paris, 1973, p. 3; Le Hec, *Histoire de Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., p. 29; A. M. Pêcheur, É. Proust, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne. Abbatiale Saint-Pierre*, in *Congrès archéologique de France. 163e session. Corrèze 2005*, proceedings of the international conference edited by the Société d'archéologie française, Paris, 2007, pp. 83-103: 83.

³¹⁹ See Tulle, Archives départementales de la Corrèze, FRAD019 019 CAD A2, mr. Besse, *Commune de Beaulieu. Section A dite de Battut. En deux Feuilles. 2me Feuille*, 1835; consulted online on www.archinoe.fr (12.07.2020).

³²⁰ The name itself of the mill is recalling its belonging to the monastery, since 'abadiol' derives from form meaning 'of the abbey'. See Le Hec, *Histoire de Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., p. 31.

³²¹ The chapel of Notre-Dame du port haut depended from the parish church of Sioniac and was later given to the confraternity of the Penitents at the beginning of the nineteenth century, now it is desacralized and used as hall for exhibitions. See Barriere, Boisset, Proust, Rivas, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., p. 37; Berland, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne*

onwards, they would have followed the river edge and crossed the bourg under the chapel, towards the town and the monastery. If the pilgrims were coming from Brivezac and Argentat they would have followed the path on the Dordogne bank, named *route de Beaulieu* on the cadastral table, or used boats (figg. 7c, 12)³²².

Whatever direction or mean the pilgrim would have taken, the position of Beaulieu, hidden behind the slopes of the hills and surrounded by the meander of the Dordogne and its wooded islands, would have impeded to be seen it from afar (fig. 7b, 8a, 8b, 10)³²³. Nonetheless, its progressive closeness would have been perceived by hearing. The bells' sound would have been audible before the sight of the shape of the monastery, evoking the presence of the sacred place. What has been mentioned above about the potential transformation of 'wilderness' into 'garden' and the value of the sacred architecture as spreading apotropaic power over the landscape cannot be limited to the eyesight. The apotropaic 'force' of bells' tolling and its evocative potential of 'garden' would have been a key element for a pilgrim approaching a place such as Beaulieu, hidden to the sight and surrounded by vegetation. The peal or toll of the monastery's bells would have functioned as a guiding element for travellers towards the church and its inhabited surroundings. At the same time, the bells ringing would have also been perceived as a 'protective power' defeating demons and thus turning the 'wilderness' into 'garden'³²⁴.

III. 1. 4. The Town and the Monastery between Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries

What would have seen the traveller once reached Beaulieu? Unfortunately, is not possible to recreate precisely the image of the town during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Nevertheless, few evidences allow some considerations.

cit., pp. 27-30; E. Lefèvre-Pontalis, *Beaulieu*, in *Congrès archéologique de France*, proceedings of the national conference (Limoges, 1921), edited by the Société française d'archéologie, Paris, 1923, pp. 365-394: 392-393.

³²² Even if the pilgrim was coming from the other bank of the Dordogne, leaving Aurillac behind, would have used a boat to cross the river until the construction of the first bridge under the chapel of Notre-Dame, in 1268. Destroyed during the Hundred Years' War, its pillars were still visible in 1835 when the cadastral tables were drawn (fig. 8b). Nowadays only the remains of the pillar under the church are still visible. See Le Hec, *Histoire de Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., pp. 40-41, 43. Cf. Tulle, Archives départementales de la Corrèze, FRAD019 019 CAD Cu, mr. Valette, *Commune de Beaulieu. Section C dite de la Ville*, 1835; consulted online on www.archinoe.fr (12.07.2020).

³²³ The presence of woods on the Dordogne islands can be appreciate even today, but it is witnessed also by the cadastral general table, see Tulle, Archives départementales de la Corrèze, FRAD019 019 CAD TA, mr. Besse, *Tableau d'assemblage du plan Cadastral parcellaire de al Comune de Beaulieu*, 1832; consulted online on www.archinoe.fr (12.07.2020).

³²⁴ See Lešák, *Sacral Architecture on the Horizon* cit., pp. 71-72; Locker, *The Secret Language of Movement* cit., pp. 7-8; É. Palazzo, *Liturgie et société au Moyen Âge*, Paris, 2000, pp. 107-108; cf. also A. Dierkens, *Avant-corps, galilées, massifs occidentaux: quelques remarques méthodologiques en guise de conclusions*, in *Avant-nefs et espaces d'accueil dans l'église entre le IVe et le XIIIe siècle*, edited by C. Sapin, proceedings of the international conference (Auxerre, 1999), Paris, 2002, pp. 495-503: 496. Cf. J. H. Arnold, C. Goodson, *Resounding Community: the History and Meaning of Medieval Church Bells*, «Viator», 43/1 (2012), pp. 99-130; E. Van Loon-van de Moosdijk, *Pilgrim Badges and Bells*, in *Art and Symbolism in Medieval Europe*, edited by F. Verhaeghe, G. de Boe, Zelik, 1997, pp. 149-154.

The presence of the monastery attracted the settlement of artisans and the merchants soon after its foundation, due to the concentration of many resources coming from its vast possessions³²⁵. In this sense, between the tenth and twelfth century the population of laics living outside the monastery enclosure progressively grew until it was recognized as *villa*, *i.e.* town, and therefore surrounded by defensive walls. Indeed, in 1178 Beaulieu was quoted as a ‘city’ for the first time³²⁶. It is not known the exact moment in which the town and the monastery were surrounded by ramparts, though it plausibly happened between the end of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth centuries, following its recognition as a town, thus, its importance. Despite being absorbed by later houses, the line of the walls is still recognizable in the boulevard Rudolphe de Tourenne, itself resulted from the filling of the moat surrounding the old town (figg. 8c, 9)³²⁷. Only few fortifications, such as towers and gates, are preserved to current time (fig. 13)³²⁸. Inside the perimeter of the former ramparts some houses have been dated from the thirteenth to fifteenth century, proving the increasing wealth of the inhabitants of the bourg in the late Middle Ages³²⁹.

Back to the twelfth and thirteenth century, the dwellings of Beaulieu were extended already outside the new walls, gathered in smaller bourgs. The main group occupied the same site of the ancient village of Vellinus, on the Dordogne shore, probably built around an empty space used as square and harbour, as suggested by the dedication of the chapel built on the near rock outcrop, Notre-Dame du port haut (figg. 8b, 11, 12). The latter was built in the twelfth century and served as parish church for the laics living in Beaulieu³³⁰. As mentioned above, this small hamlet on the river was probably the first stop taken by the pilgrims and merchants coming from the north and ending towards Beaulieu reached by travellers coming from north and west, and from the river, since the boats docked there (fig. 8b). The modern street named ‘rue de la Chapelle’ probably follows the medieval path and function. It leads to a town gate which, following the name of the street, is called ‘Porte de la

³²⁵ It seems likely that in few decades the small village of Vellinus was soon flanked by a new settlement at the edge of the monastic enclosure, which developed further in the subsequent centuries, see B. Barriere, S. Boisset, E. Proust, I. Ribieras, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne*, in *Patrimoine Limousin*, edited by B. Barriere, Limoges, 8 voll., 1991-2002, II, 1993 p. 30; Berland, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., p. 3; Le Hec, *Histoire de Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., pp. 37-38, 163.

³²⁶ Beaulieu is precisely mentioned as *cita a Belloc* in a juridical document written in Romance Language and dated to 1178, see Deloche, *Cartulaire de l'abbaye* cit., p. XXXVI note 2; for other mentions of the town in documents in the *Cartulaire* cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 1-13, 43-45, 250-251.

³²⁷ The ramparts of Beaulieu were 600 mt long and reached the 15 mt of height. The presence of the defensive walls is known also through numerous documents referring about the need of restorations during the Late Middle Ages and the Early Modern period, see Barriere, Boisset, Proust, Rivieras, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., pp. 30, 32; Le Hec, *Histoire de Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., pp. 37-38, 43.

³²⁸ See Barriere, Boisset, Proust, Rivieras, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., pp. 35-36; Le Hec, *Histoire de Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., pp. 38-39, 42-43, 163.

³²⁹ See P. Garrigou Grandchamp, *Introduction à l'architecture domestique urbaine, du XIIe au milieu du XVe siècle, dans le Bas-Limousin*, in *Congrès archéologique de France. 163e session. Corrèze 2005*, proceedings of the international conference edited by the Société d'archéologie française, Paris, 2007, pp. 9-81: 17-18, 30-35. Cf. the development of the institutions of the town, see Deloche, *Cartulaire de l'abbaye* cit., pp. XXXV-XLVI; Le Hec, *Histoire de Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., pp. 43, 46-49, 52-53, 164-165.

³³⁰ Cf. note 321.

Chapelle', still existing in its original thirteenth-century shape its lower part, from which people coming from north and west could enter the town (fig. 8c). The etymology of the door and the external street recalls clearly the direct relationship with the small church on the river, and therefore their function of main connection between the harbour and the centre of the town. Two other thresholds to the town are known: the now lost Porte de La Hugonie or de Leygonie, once opened on the southern side of the walls, and the Porte Sainte-Catherine, named by the sources de Moyle (*i.e.* of the mill) or de Pourtarel, on the eastern side. The latter gate is still preserved in its medieval shape, dated to the thirteenth century with some later restorations (fig. 13)³³¹. Travellers coming from south would have entered in the town through this gate or the Porte de La Hugonie.

Inside the perimeter of the walls one fourth of the space was occupied by the monastic enclosure (figg. 8c, 9). Few evidences remain nowadays of the original complex, since the monastic buildings were demolished after the French Revolution³³². The only remaining edifices are the chapter hall, the current sacristy of the church, and a tower named Sainte-Catherine, now private property. Both of these buildings have been dated to the twelfth century. The tower is showing very simple features but is possible to argue that the other buildings of the monastery could have been built similarly (figg. 15a-b)³³³. A technique comparable to that used to build the tower was employed to erect the chapter hall, except for its western façade, opened toward the now lost cloister, and divided by three big arches with 'Limousine moulding' and sculpted capitals hosting a two-light window on the sides and the entrance door in the middle (fig. 16). These capitals, along with those holding the semicolumns in the inner space, has been dated to the second half of the twelfth century (fig. 17)³³⁴.

Aside from these two buildings, only the position of the cloister is perceivable (figg. 9, 18): it was a square, limited on the south by northern aisle and on the east by the northern transept and the chapter hall, with the well on the north-western corner, still present. Some of the columns used in pairs to sustain the roof of the cloister are now employed as pedestal for modern sculptures inside the church (fig. 37). Their capitals are recalling those of the semicolumns marking the inner side of the sculpted portal (fig. 66). Thus, it has been argued that the chapter hall and the cloister were completed along with the nave of the church, in the second half of the twelfth century³³⁵. About the other buildings of the monastery, only their localisation in the general ground plan of the monastery is now

³³¹ Cf. note 328.

³³² Cf. paragraph II. 1.

³³³ The Sainte-Catherine tower has corners built with ashlar, whereas the walls were erected with pebbles and unrefined stones. On the eastern side two counterforts flank a thin window with arched ending, outlined with ashlar.

³³⁴ See Barriere, Boisset, Proust, Rivas, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., p. 31; Berland, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., p. 14; 94; Proust, *La sculpture romane en Bas-Limousin* cit., p. 237. For the nineteenth – twentieth centuries restorations cf. paragraph II. 1.

³³⁵ See Barriere, Boisset, Proust, Rivas, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., pp. 31-32; Pêcheur, Proust, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., p. 94; Proust, *La sculpture romane en Bas-Limousin* cit., p. 236.

known. Their disposition can be grasped through the plan drawn by Joseph de la Bérodière for the Maurists in 1663 (fig. 4a), although overlapped by all the plausible additions built between the thirteenth and the seventeenth centuries, and the partial restorations needed after the Hundred Years' War and the wars of religion³³⁶. An idea of the architectural arrangement of the monastery can also be grasped by a print engraved for the *Monasticon Gallicanum*, a group of images commissioned and supervised by dom Michel Germain (1645-1694)³³⁷. In this engraving it is possible to see the state of the monastery around 1675, already restored by the Maurists (fig. 5). Nonetheless, few evidences of the precedent periods are still present: the tower of Sainte-Catherine visible in the top left corner of the image, whereas another tower is shown on the opposite corner with similar features³³⁸. Although the buildings represented are those of the seventeenth century, it can be argued that during the previous centuries the monastery had a similar disposition. In this sense, both the *hortus* on the bottom of the image and the cemetery, represented between the apse of the church and the tower of Sainte-Catherine, stood in the same location since the twelfth century (cf. figg. 4a, 5)³³⁹. Even if at that time the monastery counted less or smaller buildings, it covered probably the same area, already surrounded by walls.

The nucleus of the overall settlement, both on a monastic and urban level, as well as the main focus of attention for any pilgrims was definitely the church of Saint-Pierre. At the town gates, the pilgrim would have followed either the rue de la République, if entering the town from the south or west, or the rue de Sainte-Catherine, if arriving from east (figg. 8c, 14). These two streets were the main axis shaping the space between the walls of the monastery and the limit of the town. Narrower

³³⁶ For the present work I have seen a reproduction of the document exhibited in the Chapelle des Penitens in Beaulieu. The original document can be found in the Archives Nationales, see Paris, Archives Nationales, NIII, Corrèze, 12.1, D. Joseph de la Bérodière, *Plan de l'abbaye et monastère de Beaulieu, diocese de Lymoges*, 1663. Cf. C. E. Besancon, *The French Romanesque Portals of Moissac, Souillac and Beaulieu: a Response to the Papal Reform Movement and Popular Heresy*, PhD Thesis, University of Southern California, a. y. 2012-2013, supervisor C. Malone, p. 242, note 45, and 428, fig. 3.32.

³³⁷ The *Monasticon Gallicanum* is a group of 168 engravings representing topographical views of the monasteries own by the Congregation of St. Maur completed by descriptions. The whole work remained unpublished until it was resumed by Achille Peigné-Delacourt (1797-1881), helped by the archivist and paleographer Louis Charles Léon Courajaud (1841-1896), whom in 1871 reproduced the engravings and published the complete work. See dom M. Germain, *Monasticon Gallicanum. Collection de 168 planches de vue topographiques représentant les monastères de l'ordre de Saint-Benoit, congregation de Saint-Maur*, edited by A. Peigné-Delcourt, Paris, 2 voll., 1870-1871, II, pp. IX, 3, 7, pl. 30.

³³⁸ This second tower is now absorbed into private buildings, close to a house dated by Garrigou-Granchamp to the fourteenth – fifteenth centuries see Garrigou-Grandchamp, *Introduction à l'architecture domestique urbaine* cit., p. 33 n. 13.

³³⁹ This can be argued also comparing the 1663 plan, before the Maurists started the major part of the restorations. The area between the church and the tower has been indicated as *Cimetière* and the one northern than the buildings as *Jardins* (i.e. cemetery and gardens). Cf. Paris, Archives Nationales, NIII, Corrèze, 12.1, D. Joseph de la Bérodière, *Plan de l'abbaye et monastère de Beaulieu, diocese de Lymoges*, 1663.

The presence of the cemetery has been proved also by the archeological survey made by Courivaud in 1973 in the area, from which emerged two sarcophagi and many human bones dated before the seventeenth century. See R. Courivaud, *Les sarcophages de l'abbaye de Beaulieu*, «Bulletin de la Société scientifique, historique et archéologique de la Corrèze», 95, 1973, pp. 99-104.

alleys branched off from them, dividing and connecting the dwellings around the monastery. The crossing point of these streets is the *Place du marché*, i.e. the market square, which have been the core of the economic life of the town since then and is still used for the seasonal markets and main events of the community (figg. 22a-b). The northern and western sides of the square are delimited by the walls of the church, and the southern portal is opening on it.

Pilgrims coming from all directions would have reached the square after walking through narrow streets. In front of them the church would have appeared quite big, but the main pole of attraction would have been the southern portal (fig. 23). A similar feeling can still be perceived by whom is visiting the old town today, since the general dimensions of the space are unchanged (figg. 22a-b).

After hearing the bells' tolling the pilgrim would have finally see the town. If travelling in the second half of the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries he or she would have met a town only partially surrounded by walls, still under construction. Nonetheless, as recalled by Locker, the presence of ramparts and city gates was strictly related to the concept of civilization. These elements were physical boundaries between rural and urban, the core of the managed nature and the limit of the unmanaged. Both the Classical and Hebrew traditions passed down to Christianity this link between city and civilization, reinforced by the biblical exegesis which elaborate Paradise as a city, the Heavenly Jerusalem³⁴⁰. Thus, following Locker, it is possible to argue that the 'ideal pilgrim' would have perceived through the vision of the urban settlement partially surrounded by walls, the boundary that marked the end of the 'wilderness' as previously described³⁴¹. Crossing this boundary through liminal spaces such as the gates (fig. 13), if already present, or the limit of the dwellings would have put the pilgrim a step closer to his or her encounter with the sacred. Once reached the today's *Place du Marché*, he or she would have faced the complex of the monastery, valued as 'garden' par excellence, dominated by the church, core of its holiness (figg. 22a-b)³⁴². The liminal space that functioned as 'filter' between the outer, earthly world of the square and the inner, sacred space of the monastery and the church was the sculpted portal, the next threshold the pilgrim should have crossed.

³⁴⁰ See Locker, *The Secret Language of Movement* cit., pp. 7-8.

³⁴¹ See *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

³⁴² Cf. note 311.

III. 2. The Sculpted Portal ‘in use’

The main place the pilgrims would have interaction with was certainly the church, firstly its sculpted portal. Indeed, the latter is the first element which functioned as a ‘filter’ and an ‘introduction’ between the sacred, inner space and the earthly, outer world. Its importance and role within the whole building are proved either by its dimensions and by its decorations (figg. 22a-b, 23). Starting from its location on the southern side of the church facing the *Place du marché*, it has been frequently stressed how the portal was addressed to lay people, such as traders, inhabitants of the town, travellers and pilgrims³⁴³. In the irregular shape of the square, the highly decorated porch was certainly the pole to which the gaze would have been mainly attracted, framed by the monumental shape of the church (figg. 22a-b).

Before getting into the analysis of the ways it could have been used and ‘activated’ in its iconographies a short note should be added. As a matter of fact, what we are dealing with today does not correspond precisely to what a pilgrim of the second half of the twelfth or the thirteenth centuries would have seen. Indeed, the porch was object of some modifications through the centuries. It has been already mentioned how the ensemble of sculptures can be dated between 1130 and 1140³⁴⁴. It is not known if in the subsequent centuries the portal was modified, although some damages may have occurred during the Hundred Years’ War and the wars of religion. It is known that the monastery was sacked many times in the sixteenth century, and in 1575 the monks were forced to leave Beaulieu and seek shelter at Astaillac, in the nearby château d’Estresse. They returned only in 1586 to find their monastic buildings ruined and the church damaged³⁴⁵. During the Huguenots’ occupation of the town, the portal was used as threshold between the hall for the community, built in the market square, and the church, converted to serve the protestant community. In this sense the southern, open side of the portal was incorporated into the hall. It is not known precisely what kind of modifications and destructions occurred in that moment. After 1586 the monks kept the hall, and even when the Maurists took over the monastery in 1663, the hall remained there as shown by the plan drawn the same year (fig. 4a-b)³⁴⁶. The portal was freed only in 1834, as shown by the picture taken by Mieusement in

³⁴³ See Barriere, Boisset, Proust, Ribieras, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., p. 29; B. Franzé, *Art et réforme clunisienne: le porche sculpté de Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne*, «Bulletin du Centre d’études médiévales Saint-Germain d’Auxerre», 18/2, 2014, pp. 1-33: 1; Pêcheur, Proust, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., p. 95.

³⁴⁴ Cf. paragraph II. 4. 4.

³⁴⁵ See Barriere, Boisset, Proust, Ribieras, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., p. 5; Berland, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., pp. 3, 6.

³⁴⁶ The hall built between 1575 and 1586 is visible in its general perimeter on the 1663 plan drawn by the Maurists, see Paris, Archives Nationales, NIII, Corrèze, 12.1, D. Joseph de la Bérodière, *Plan de l’abbaye et monastère de Beaulieu, diocese de Lymoges*, 1663. Later, the Maurists demolished the Huguenots’ hall, replacing it with a new one in 1786, see É. Haddad, *Le bien a l’épreuve du mal. À partir du tympan de Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne, adversité apocalyptique et image analogiste*, PhD thesis, École de Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, a. y. 2018-2019, supervisor M. A. Polo de Beaulieu, pp. 149, 153; cf. Vaslet, *Abregé de l’histoire de l’abbaye de Beaulieu* cit., pp. 129-130.

1877³⁴⁷. Being the earliest figurative source available of the portal, it shows the sculptures already arranged as today (fig. 1).

We have thus no sources about a possible replacement or removal of sculptures between the thirteenth and the nineteenth centuries. In this sense, it is not possible to know if the southern side of the portal, namely the end of the two lateral pillars, was meant to host sculptures too. Nowadays, only the reliefs of the sins are displayed there, though it does not seem their original position (figg. 24a-b, 25)³⁴⁸. Yves Christe discussed also the placement of the reliefs with the triumphant Christ and the enigmatic seated figure, ending the inner side of the pillars (figg. 27b, 29d). He contended that in the original project they were meant to be in place of saint Peter and saint Paul on the jambs of the main façade (figg. 32a-b), stressing how the capitals of the jambs show features that would date them to a later period³⁴⁹. Even if this hypothesis cannot be surely dismissed, the coherence of the reliefs on the pillars makes more likely that they were set in the current framework from the first assemblage of the portal³⁵⁰.

Another important loss should be added to the possible lack of external images, that of the polychromy which certainly enhanced the imagery of the portal³⁵¹. Although no traces are visible on the sculptures anymore, the original presence of polychrome decorations is known from other monumental portals of the same period. In fact, the presence of colour served not only to improve realism but also to allow a better intelligibility of the images, creating inner connections and references between the figures³⁵². It is the case, for instance, of the Praousiac Christ, which wounds should have been dramatically emphasized by the colour painting their blood, as pointed out by Klein (fig. 31)³⁵³.

³⁴⁷ Cf. paragraph II.1; for the picture by Mieusement, see S. M. Mieusement, *Photography of the Beaulieu Tympanum*, in INHA: Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art, (1877), on www.bibliothèque-numerique.inha.fr (12.07.2020).

³⁴⁸ See J. Zinck, *Moissac, Beaulieu, Charlieu – zur ikonologischen Kohärenz romanischer Skulpturenprogramme im Südwesten Frankreichs und in Burgund*, «Aachener Kunstblätter», 56/57 (1988/1989), pp. 73-182: 157-159. Recently, Haddad proposed an original placement of the reliefs on the sides of the door, on the jambs on the right of that with St. Paul, see Haddad, *Le bien a l'épreuve du mal* cit., pp. 145-155.

³⁴⁹ See Y. Christe, *Le portail de Beaulieu. Étude iconographique et stylistique*, «Bulletin archéologique du comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques. Minister de l'éducation nationale», 6 (1970/1971), pp. 57-76: 64; cf. also Pêcheur, Proust, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., pp. 98-99.

³⁵⁰ See Besancon, *The French Romanesque Portals* cit., pp. 243-246.

³⁵¹ The absence of colours could be subscribed, in addition to the erosion caused by the weather and the actions of men, to the use of harsh techniques for polishing the sculpted surfaces, cf. Proust, *La sculpture romane en Bas-Limousin* cit., pp. 30-31.

³⁵² It is the case, for instance, of the Portico de la Gloria in Santiago de Compostela, see M. Castiñeras, *The Romanesque Portal as Performance*, «Journal of the British Archaeological Association», 168, 2015, pp. 1-33: 21-22. Cf. also M. Pastoureau, *L'Église et la couleur, des origines à la Réforme*, «Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes», 147, 1989, pp. 203-230.

³⁵³ See P. K. Klein, *Le tympan de Beaulieu: jugement dernier ou seconde Parousie?*, «Cahiers de Saint-Michel de Cuxa», 19 (1988), pp. 129-134: 129; Id., *Eschatologisches Portalprogramm in der Romanik und Gotik*, in *Studien zur Geschichte der Europäischen Skulptur im 12./13. Jahrhundert*, edited by H. Beck, K. Hengevoss-Dürkop, Frankfurt am Main, 2 voll, 1994, I, pp. 397-411: 401. Cf. É. Haddad, *Common Space or Cleft Space? The Example of Beaulieu-sur-*

The portal would have been a colourful and rich ‘advertisement’ of the entrance of the church, the beginning of the sacred space but yet still involved into the worldly one (fig. 23). It has been studied how thresholds of sacred spaces had also an ambiguous nature, hybrid between the two worlds. When a rich imagery is displayed around the entrance, this ambiguity is materialized through the variety of meanings associated to these images³⁵⁴. Those meanings were evoked according to the moment (whether liturgical or not) and the public interacting with the imagery. The southern portal of Beaulieu has been recently studied by Vescovi from the perspective of the liturgical celebrations officed by the monastic community during Easter. What emerged was a high coherence of the sculptures with the content of the texts involved in the rituals³⁵⁵. Nonetheless, it should be recalled how these monumental images were ‘activated’ during official and liturgical celebrations only during defined periods of time, as stated by Palazzo: following the author, during the rest of the day and the night those images, especially if placed outwards, were left ‘resting’ and thus suitable of different interpretations³⁵⁶.

Keeping in mind these elements, the following paragraphs will try to analyse the imagery of the portal from different perspectives, associated to different situations, though united by the presence of the beholder followed until now: the pilgrim.

III. 2. 1. Liminal Space: Waiting at the Threshold

Aside from the conservation history of the portal, its main function is today the same as it was in the twelfth century: the monumental entrance to the sacred space. To understand the importance of the entrance one has to consider the symbolic mean the sacred space, inside the church, has and thus, how this threshold, as a space of transition, also has a particular importance. The sacred space was considered as something markedly distant from the earthly and daily world outside, due, notably, to the holy presence of relics and the liturgical performances the space was hosting³⁵⁷. Moreover, the church was not ‘only’ the place for praying and where the liturgy happened, it was also charged by theoretical implications and conceived as a perfect reproduction of the divine cosmos³⁵⁸. This aura of

Dordogne, an Architectural and Figural Space, in *Place and Space in the Medieval World*, edited by M. Boulton, J. Hawkes and H. Stöner, New York, 2018, pp. 114-125: 116; Id., *Le bien a l'épreuve du mal* cit., pp. 58-59, 79, 83, 98.

³⁵⁴ Cf. Castiñeras, *The Romanesque Portal* cit., pp. 1-33; Dierkens, *Avant-corps, galilées, massifs occidentaux* cit., pp. 495-503; K. Doležalová, I. Foletti, *Liminality and Medieval Art from Space to Ritual and to the Imagination*, in *Convivium Supplementum. The Notion of Liminality and the Medieval Sacred Space*, edited by K. Doležalová, I. Foletti, Brno, 2019, pp. 11-21; C. Roux, *Entre sacré et profane. Essai sur la symbolique et les fonctions du portail d'église en France entre le XIe et le XIIIe siècle*, «Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire», LXXXII/4 (2004), pp. 839-854.

³⁵⁵ See M. L. Vescovi, *An Eschatological Mirror. The Romanesque Portal of Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne*, «Gesta. International Center of Medieval Art», vol. 56/1 (2017), pp. 53-80.

³⁵⁶ See Palazzo, *Liturgie et société* cit., p. 154.

³⁵⁷ See Sigal, *Reliques, pèlerinage et miracles* cit., pp. 193-199.

³⁵⁸ See Palazzo, *Liturgie et société* cit., pp. 147-149.

perfection ideally linked the building to the Heavenly Jerusalem, creating many references between the access to the sacred space and the final entrance through the gates of Heaven at the End of Times³⁵⁹. Furthermore, Christ's assertion «I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved» (Jn X, 9), linked the church threshold also to the symbolical entrance to the *Ecclesia*, the Christian community, itself symbolized by the church building³⁶⁰. This situation 'in between' of the portal, opened towards both the internal and the external space, distinguished it from both of them, blurring the boundaries into something new. The liminal space that emerged had a proper holiness, being at a time the beginning of the sacred space and its symbol³⁶¹.

All these meanings were playing an important role in the approach of the believer towards the church, and its reception structure which had the function to introduce the sacred space. According to its links to Heaven, Sauerländer has stated that the threshold of the sanctuary implied for the faithful both a 'demand for repentance and purification' and a 'promise of forgiveness and salvation'³⁶². In order to reach these goals, between eleventh and twelfth centuries cathedrals and monasteries realized ensemble of sculptures around their entrances which lured the attention of people passing by and spread the messages connected to its significances. This result was reached by charging the sculptures with a growing emotional character, able to communicate with and to move the beholder, what Sauerländer names the 'talking images'³⁶³. The southern portal of Beaulieu emerged from this culture too. As in other examples, the appearing of images around the entrance enveloped not only the door itself but spread outwards to create a space to welcome and surround the beholder while still in front of the door (figg. 23, 27a, 28a).

This projection to the external world materialized the liminal space mentioned above, as marking the opening of the sacred space on the one hand and penetrating the secular world on the other hand. But this 'invasion' of the exterior had also an effect acting the other way around. Because of its great visibility and its location in the middle of the town (figg. 22a-b, 23), the portal of the church was involved in layfolk activities. It has been shown the importance of the church for the local communities as a meeting place, not only for pious purposes. Indeed, church portals are known to

³⁵⁹ See P. K. Klein, *Entre paradis présent et jugement dernier: les programmes apocalyptiques et eschatologiques dans les porches du haut Moyen Âge*, in *Avant-nefs et espaces d'accueil dans l'église entre le IVe et le XIIe siècle*, proceedings of the international conference (Auxerre, 1999), edited by C. Sapin, Paris, 2002, pp. 464-483; 472-480; Palazzo, *Liturgie et société* cit., pp. 147-149. Cf. also notes 311, 312.

³⁶⁰ See Roux, *Entre sacré et profane* pp., 839, 849.

³⁶¹ For the concept of liminality as a «zone within physical space, a place between internal and external space», see I. Foletti, *Liminality. Space and Imagination*, in *Migrating Art Historians on the Sacred Ways*, edited by I. Foletti, K. Kravčiková, A. Palladino, et al., Brno, Rome, 2018, pp. 109-117; 109-110. Cf. also *Convivium Supplementum. The Notion of Liminality and the Medieval Sacred Space*, edited by K. Doležalová, I. Foletti, Brno, 2019; Roux, *Entre sacré et profane* cit., pp. 847-849.

³⁶² See W. Sauerländer, *Romanesque Sculpture in its Architectural Context*, in *The Romanesque Frieze and its Spectator*, edited by D. Kahn, London, 1992, pp. 17-43: 19.

³⁶³ See *Ibid.*, p. 20.

have been used for trading activities, as well as seat for tribunals, where official acts were discussed and oaths were sworn, referring to the holiness of the place. Their strong construction was also used for defensive purposes. The spread of lay usage of these places, representative for the whole community of the town, was constantly struggled by the clergy, which tried continuously to affirm the sacred vocation of the portals, seen as rightful part of the sacred space³⁶⁴. At Beaulieu this seems to be the case as well. Not only the portal was opened towards the market square, being inevitably involved into its related activities, but seems likely that it had functioned also as meeting place for the community. The fact that the sculpted portal in Beaulieu was used as meeting place for the community of the town cannot be proved with certainty, though it could be suggested by the fact that, after the Huguenots took over the town in the sixteenth century, the newly converted inhabitants decided to build the hall for their gatherings directly attached to the portal, instead of using other pre-existing structures of the monastery³⁶⁵.

This peculiar, almost hybrid space, was also the first part of the sacred building that a pilgrim would have encountered. What could have been the interaction between the pilgrim and its images? To answer this question seems fundamental to differentiate two possible scenarios, based on whether the doors were opened or not.

As asserted by Foletti, churches' doors were not always open, and their closure time was more extended in the case of monasteries³⁶⁶. But even when its main function was blocked, this liminal space was far from being inaccessible. An evidence can be seen in the presence of the benches which in Beaulieu, as well as in many other churches along the pilgrimage routes, functioned as furniture for resting (figg. 27a-c, 28a-c)³⁶⁷. They were thought not only to satisfy the pilgrims' need to rest after a plausibly long day of travelling, but also to invite the beholder to stop and contemplate the images from a different perspective. Their shape seems to confirm that: not only the benches are right below the images, but their seatback is undecorated until a certain height, which allows a person to sit without cover the image behind (figg. 27c, 28c)³⁶⁸.

Sitting on the bottom of the western pillar, the pilgrim would have faced the images depicted on the opposite side, showing the Temptations of Christ (fig. 28c). Taking into account the now-lost polychromy, it would have enhanced the narration, distinguishing the different figures and

³⁶⁴ See Dierkens, *Avant-corps, galilées, massifs occidentaux* cit., pp. 499-501; Roux, *Entre sacré et profane* cit., pp. 851-854; Castiñeras, *The Romanesque Portal* cit., pp. 4-6, 19-20.

³⁶⁵ Cf. note 346.

³⁶⁶ See Foletti, *Liminality* cit., pp. 114-115; Id., *Migrating Art Historians. Objects, Bodies and Minds*, in *Migrating Art Historians on the Sacred Ways*, edited by I. Foletti, K. Kravčiková, A. Palladino, et al., Brno, Rome, 2018, pp. 27-57: 46-47.

³⁶⁷ For the role of benches in churches involved by pilgrimage, see Foletti, *Migrating Art Historians* cit., 46-50; cf. also note 366.

³⁶⁸ The benches in Beaulieu were, as the rest of the porch, heavily restored. Nonetheless, a look to Mieusement picture and to their ashlar shows how the restorations kept their general shape. Cf. Christie, *Le portail de Beaulieu* cit., p. 65.

emphasizing the inscription (fig. 28b). The Devil, represented by four figures and associated to the darker, central column (fig. 79), is opposed to Christ³⁶⁹. The latter is depicted three times in the narrative reliefs and another one, in a glorified form on the external edge of this side (figg. 28c-d). The association of these images to Triumph of Christ over Evil, would have had, for the pilgrim, the effect of an example to follow in his or her own life: not only the penitence of Christ in the desert could have been linked to their own, but the evil forces tempting and struggling Jesus were experienced in the uncomfortable journey they were dealing with³⁷⁰. The possibility to observe carefully these images let also the pilgrim get some inner dynamics that a hasty glance would have missed, such as the Christ of the First Temptation, running away from the Devil in the direction of the church, implicitly inviting to enter the sacred space in order to reach safeness (fig. 76)³⁷¹.

On the other side, those who were sitting under these reliefs, would have observed the western pillar depicting Daniel in the Lions' Den (fig. 27c). This story of the prophet has frequently been associated as mirroring the one of Christ, evoking both resurrection and safeness as rewards to those who believed in God. In Beaulieu, being counterposed to the Temptations of Christ, and enriched with some details such as the defeat of the idol Bel and the Babylonian dragon, the narrative of Daniel evokes the idea of a positive character, blessed by God and fighting the Devil. God's favour is expressed here by the presence of Habakkuk carried by the angel to feed Daniel. Once again, the pilgrim could have linked mentally this story to his or her own experience, seeking God's help while immersed in the dangers of life, as Daniel when surrounded by lions (fig. 74)³⁷².

If the images on the pillars could be linked to the fight against evil forces, following the 'demand for repentance and purification' quoted by Sauerländer, in the tympanum this message is displayed in a triumphal way, along with the 'promise of forgiveness and salvation' that the faithful, and the pilgrims in the first place, sought for³⁷³. The tympanum was certainly the first of the images of the overall portal that the pilgrim's gaze would have seen, already visible when approaching from afar (fig. 23). While the composition is full of various characters and narratives, Christ is the focal point of the portal (fig. 31): dominating scene with his larger dimensions and the wide gesture of the

³⁶⁹ Cf. Haddad, Haddad, *Le bien a l'épreuve du mal* cit., pp. 124-126.

³⁷⁰ The reasons that pushed a person to undertake a pilgrimage were various, but a shared feature was certainly the spiritual quest, and the idea to imitate Christ in his fight against temptations and Devil, as well as the apostles in their journeys to spread the Christian faith. See P. Caucci von Saucken, *Vita e senso del pellegrino di Santiago*, in *Santiago. L'Europa del pellegrinaggio*, edited by P. Caucci von Saucken, Milano, 1993, pp. 91-114; V. Turner, E. Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture. Anthropological Perspectives*, New York, 1978, pp. 1-40. Cf. also *Il medioevo in viaggio*, exhibition catalogue (Florence, 2015), edited by B. Chiesi, I. Ciseri, B. Paolozzi Strozzi, Florence, Milano, 2015; namely the essays by H. L. Kessler, *Camminare sui passi di Cristo*, in pp. 66-73; and M. Sureda i Jubani, *La salvezza dell'anima*, pp. 134-135; Id., *Il pellegrinaggio*, pp. 136-137; Id., *Il viaggio nell'immaginario cristiano*, pp. 132-133.

³⁷¹ See Vescovi, *An Eschatological Mirror* cit., p. 62.

³⁷² See Franzé, *Art et réforme clunisienne* cit., pp. 19-20; Vescovi, *An Eschatological Mirror* cit., p. 64; Zinck, *Moissac, Beaulieu, Charlieu* cit., pp. 149-157; 163-164.

³⁷³ Cf. note 362.

outstretched arms, he is the only figure whose gaze is directed towards the viewer. To create a sort of direct eye contact with the figuration of Christ, the pilgrim should have needed to move again in the middle of the liminal space delimited by the lateral pillars (fig. 33a); but also from the sides his face, emerging and slightly tilted forward, would have protruded from the tympanum and stood out among the imagery of the lunette (fig. 34b). Aside from the particular interpretations of the single characters that surrounds Christ, the sign of the cross, echoed by the triumphal cross held by angels behind Christ, would have marked the space and announced the 'promise' out loud (figg. 31, 33a, 34b). But the gesture of Christ was not only meant to welcome and reassure³⁷⁴. His return foresaw also the Last Judgement and the concrete risk to be eternally damned, and the sufferance evoked by the tortured figures in the higher lintel seems to be quite clear in this sense (figg. 33b-c). The subtle, theological meanings of the images would not have been accessible to everyone³⁷⁵. But the strong expressivity of these images would have risen emotions, let the beholder face a 'preview' of Christ's return, with the colours enhancing the sense of truthfulness of the vision³⁷⁶.

The monsters on the lintels, the tormented figures and the sins reliefs, along with the horrible, hybrid body of the Devil would have evoked fear, repulsion and awe, thus, stimulating a reflection on the dangers and threatens, both spiritual and physical, that the pilgrim met along his or her journey. Conversely, Christ, Daniel and the apostles, would have been seen as models to be followed, expressing the hope that all the sufferance and struggles of life were not useless, but led to the final reward of the eternal life in Paradise. In this sense, the connection of the church and its holiness to the Heavenly Jerusalem created a link between the tympanum and the sacred core, the choir and the apsidal area, where the altar, the relics and the main part of the liturgy were to be found. In other words, the sanctuary was the physical display of the promise promoted and announced by the tympanum. Thus, the wait to enter the sacred space acquired a new layer of meaning: standing in front of the threshold was an allegory of the wait of the dead for the opening of the Gates of Heaven³⁷⁷.

³⁷⁴ Cf. Berland, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., p. 22; Soulié, *L'Abbatiale de Saint-Pierre* cit., p. 211.

³⁷⁵ See Pêcheur, Proust, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., p. 97; Proust, *La sculpture romane en Bas-Limousin* cit., p. 150. For the iconographic complexity of the overall ensemble of the images of the sculpted portal at Beaulieu cf. paragraph II. 3. 1.

³⁷⁶ See Sauerländer, *Romanesque Sculpture* cit., pp. 41-43. About the truthfulness of a vision, should be recalled the idea that an eyewitness was considered to be needed, as mentioned many times in the Bible when a vision is reported and confirmed by verbs associated to eyesight. This concept has been displayed by Cahn referring to the small figures of spectators-witnesses on the second archivolt of the Moissac tympanum. In Beaulieu this role could be attributed to the seven enigmatic figures that, as well as the viewer facing the portal, attend the Parousia of Christ. See W. Cahn, *Romanesque Sculpture and the Spectator*, in *The Romanesque Frieze and its Spectator*, edited by D. Kahn, London, 1992, pp. 45-60: 48.

³⁷⁷ A similar situation can be found in the portal of Moissac, see P. K. Klein, *Programmes escatologiques, fonction et réception historiques du portails du XIIe siècle: Moissac – Beaulieu – Saint-Denis*, in «Cahiers de civilisation médiévale», 33/132 (1990), pp. 317-349: 342-348. For the parallel between waiting in front of the door of the church and waiting for the Last Judgement, in some cases associated with burials in the portals, cf. also Dierkens, *Avant-corps, galilées, massifs occidentaux* cit., p. 497-499.

This emotional and mental interaction with the images in Beaulieu portal was experienced by pilgrims in a unique way. Being a pilgrim meant to be a ‘liminal figure’, as stated by Turner and Locker after him, meaning that the peculiarity of the journey, with mainly spiritual goals, led the traveller through a state of constant transition. It was a continuous movement through different places and spaces, seeking – at least in his or her imagination – for the boundaries between the earthly and the spiritual world³⁷⁸. The pilgrim accepted a peculiar status, of eternal foreigner, though always welcomed, since associated to the apostles and to Christ himself³⁷⁹. In this sense, during their spiritual quest, pilgrims visited numerous sacred spaces. Encounters with the images, such as the one described here, were part of their expectations when reaching a town. Thus, they were more favourably disposed to interact, communicate and meditate with the sacred images displayed in front of them.

Undertaking such an experience had also a very pragmatic consequence. As Foletti recently argued – following the researches of D’Aquili, Laughlin, McManus – travelling for long periods has a physical impact on the person perception of the work of art³⁸⁰. After a prolonged, maybe daylong, walking the tired pilgrim would have gladly accepted the attractive invitation of the benches. The mind state described as ‘openness’ by Foletti, meaning a synchronization of mind and body, allowed the pilgrims to interact in an exceptional way with the images. This physical condition would have increased what plausibly was already in the pilgrims’ mind, *i.e.* the expectations to meet a sign, a manifestation of the spiritual world, answering their inner hopes, embraced from the beginning of their journey³⁸¹. With this rooted desire, the release of endorphins due to the conclusion of the effort would have significantly enhanced the pilgrims’ interaction with the images, let them feel «physically part of the stories narrated in the portico». This high involvement would have potentially let the pilgrims fully experience what Belting calls the ‘iconic presence’, transforming the triumphal theophany at Beaulieu almost in a living vision in front of their gazes³⁸².

III. 2. 2. Opening the Doors: Purification to Enter the Sacred Space

In the previous paragraph, it has been argued about the possible use of the portal when its doors were closed, focusing mainly on the meditative experience that the pilgrims could have had

³⁷⁸ See Locker, *The Secret Language of Movement* cit., pp. 7-9; Turner, Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage* cit., pp. 1-11, 34-40.

³⁷⁹ Cf. note 370.

³⁸⁰ See Foletti, *Migrating Art Historians* cit., pp. 44-50; cf. E. D’Aquili, C. Laughlin, J. McManus, *The Spectrum of Ritual: a Biogenetic Structural Analysis*, New York, 1979.

³⁸¹ See Caucci von Saucken, *Vita e senso del Pellegrino* cit., pp. 106-107.

³⁸² See Foletti, *Migrating Art Historians* cit., pp. 47-48. For the concept of ‘iconic presence’, see H. Belting, *Iconic Presence. Images in Religious Traditions*, «Material Religion. The Journal of Objects, Art and Belief», 12/2, 2016, pp. 235-237.

interacting with the images. In the following one, I will try to analyse how the relationship of the pilgrim with this place changed when crossing the threshold was possible.

Although we have no sources explaining the regularity with which pilgrims were welcomed into the church during the twelfth or thirteenth centuries, it can be argued that the major part of the time the access was impeded, since it needed to be controlled³⁸³. In fact, since Saint-Pierre at Beaulieu was a monastic church, it was directly connected to the closed world of the religious community. As mentioned above, the monastery was conceived as a 'paradisiac place', and the life chosen by the monks, refusing the earthly pleasures, placed them closer than anyone else to the divine. Thus, it was a central issue to keep monks safe from the threaten of the outer world³⁸⁴. In Beaulieu the monumental door in the southern portal was the main access for the faithful to get into the church, probably the only 'official' space of the monastery where the secular and the religious world could meet. In this sense, open the doors was not only a physical action, but meant also to expose the inner, sacred space to the evil forces of the external world³⁸⁵.

As a consequence, the door was the main place where the evil should have been stopped³⁸⁶. It is not unusual that a church portal was surrounded by protective and purifying images, and the sculptures in the southern portal in Beaulieu can be read in this way as well. Their connotation as image of the triumph of Christ over the evil forces is explicit in the external relief of the eastern pillar representing the Psalm 90 and alluded by the stories of the Temptations of Christ and Daniel (figg. 27c, 28c-d). Even the Parousia has been connected to this concept, since the Second Coming marks the beginning of End of Time and the definitive fight and fall of the Devil and the evil forces³⁸⁷. Éleine Vergnolle evoked how, along with the single images of defeated evil, the majestic Christ of the theophany covers ideally with his presence all the negative figures represented under him in the whole porch (figg. 23, 33a)³⁸⁸. This idea of a space united by a 'global iconography' including all the different representations, can be associated to the *lieu rituel* as described by Éric Palazzo. Following Palazzo, images and their meanings have a central role in the definition of the liturgical and ritual purposes of a space, as well as its topographical placement³⁸⁹. It is also the case of the entrance of the church, which purifying and apotropaic functions are clarified by the images³⁹⁰.

³⁸³ Cf. Sigal, *Reliques, pèlerinage et miracles* cit., pp. 199-206.

³⁸⁴ See *Ibid.*, pp. 193-199.

³⁸⁵ Cf. note 313.

³⁸⁶ For the church doors' need of protection, both symbolically and with custodians, see Roux, *Entre sacré et profane* cit., p. 845.

³⁸⁷ The triumphal interpretation of the sculptures in Beaulieu was firstly analysed by Christe, see Christe, *Le portail de Beaulieu* cit., pp. 58-64. Cf. also the in-depth analysis of the sources in Zinck, *Moissac, Beaulieu, Charlieu* cit., pp. 149-157.

³⁸⁸ See É. Vergnolle, *L'art roman en France. Architecture, sculpture, peinture*, Paris, 1994, p. 246.

³⁸⁹ For the interweaved influence exerted by topography and functions over the imagery in a sacred space, namely a church, cf. Klein, *Entre paradis présent et jugement dernier* cit., pp. 464-483.

³⁹⁰ See Palazzo, *Liturgie et société* cit., pp. 145-146.

In this sense, the defeat of Evil in the portal of Beaulieu can be read also as echoing these functions. More precisely, rituals connected to the purification before entering the church involved directly people accessing the sacred building, as referred by St. Benedict's Rule, itself followed also by the monastic community in Beaulieu. Among the people visiting the sacred space, pilgrims were certainly between the more interested. Moreover, their 'peculiar' condition made them frequently hosts of monasteries and thus in need to be purified in order to be welcomed³⁹¹:

Greet all the guests that arrive at the monastery as Christ, since he will say: « I was a stranger and you invited me in». And may they all be honoured, especially the brethren in the faith and the pilgrims. As soon as the guest is announced, let the Superior and some brethren immediately go to meet him with all charitable service: and first of all, let them pray together and then exchange the kiss of peace. For the kiss of peace should not be offered until after the prayers have been said, on account of the Devil's deceptions. [...] In the reception of the poor and pilgrims the greatest care and solicitude should be shown, because it is especially in them that Christ is received, for as far as the rich are concerned, the very fear that they inspire wins respect for them³⁹².

As described in the fifty-third chapter of the Rule, the pilgrim had to recite entirely specific prayers in order to defeat the «Devil's deception», *i.e.* a form of exorcism. After receiving the 'kiss of peace', the ritual would have been completed and the pilgrim could enter into the sacred space. Referring to Arnold van Gennep's anthropological studies of the rite of the margin as only way that allows to pass the liminal space, Foletti has argued how the imagery of the portal in Beaulieu would have been the perfect set for this ritual³⁹³. It is, moreover, known that rituals connected to penitence and purification were conducted within churches' portals, both by layfolk and members of the clergy³⁹⁴. The apotropaic value described above, would have thus been actively involved in this kind of rites. The dying dragon in the story of Daniel (fig. 27c), the fleeting Devil of the Third Temptation (fig. 79), and the beaten beasts of the triumphant Christ on the eastern pillar (fig. 28d) were all materializing what the purifying ceremony was meant for. If we imagine the portal involved in this situation, with the monk facing the pilgrim, the latter would have been invested by the majestic image

³⁹¹ In this sense I am referring both to the already evoked parallel between the pilgrim and Christ or the apostles, and to the fact that the pilgrimage was considered as a form of atonement or penitence, see Caucci von Sauken, *Vita e senso del pellegrino* cit., pp. 91-93, 106. Cf. also notes 370, 378.

³⁹² Translated by the author, «Omnes supervenientes hospites tamquam Christus suscipiantur, quia ipse dicturus est: «Hospes fui, et suscepistis me». Et omnibus congruus honor exhibeatur, maxime tamen domesticis fidei et peregrinis. Ut ergo nuntiatus fuerit hospes, occurrantur ei a Priore vel a Fratribus, cum omni officio charitatis: et primitus orent partier et sic sibi socientur in pace. Quod pacis osculum non prius offeratur, nisi oratione praemissa, propter illusiones diabolicas. [...] Pauperum autem, et peregrinorum maxime, susceptio omni cura sollicitè exhibeatur: quia in ipsis magis Christus suscipitur. Nam divitum terror ipse sibi exigit honorem.», *Regula Sancti Benedicti*, LIII, in Gregorio Magno, *Vita di San Benedetto e la regola*, edited by A. Stendardi, Roma, 1995, pp. 204-207. Cf. Foletti, *Liminality* cit., pp. 114-115.

³⁹³ See Foletti, *Liminality* cit., pp. 115-117; cf. also Lešák, *Sacral Architecture on the Horizon* cit., p. 71.

³⁹⁴ See Palazzo, *Liturgie et société* cit., pp. 145-146, 158-159; Roux, *Entre sacré et profane* cit., p. 843-844.

of the Parousia, and the apotropaic power of the cross would have been combined with that of the resurrected Christ, thanks to his outstretched arms and his exposed stigmata (fig. 33a). The gesture of Christ, once completed the ritual, would have acquired a new, welcoming value with the ‘promise of forgiveness and salvation’, granted by the sacred encounter waiting for the pilgrim inside the church. As in other rituals connected to the church entrance, crossing the threshold would have marked the purification of the soul from the sins³⁹⁵.

III. 2. 3. The Portal Activated by the Liturgy

It has been shown how the ritual of the ‘kiss of peace’ could have been reflected in the imagery of the sculpted portal at Beaulieu. Therefore, it can be considered an example of the *lieu rituel* described by Palazzo. As such, the sculptures of the portal were ‘activated’ in their apotropaic meanings, evoked in a different perspective than the more ‘private’ interaction with the isolated beholder. To these situations the liturgical one should be added. Once again, the concept of *lieu rituel* described by Palazzo can be recalled: thus, the decoration of the portal could have been ‘functional’ to other rituals, aside from the ‘kiss of the peace’ described above.

Despite being turned outwards, the portal was still part of the monastery complex. Therefore, it was certainly used by the monks too. As mentioned above, Vescovi has recently analysed the ensemble of sculptures through the lens of the Cluniac liturgy, as described in a late-eleventh-century lectionary used by the Burgundian abbey³⁹⁶. The author recalled that the monastery of Beaulieu was confirmed as part of the Cluniac network, the *Cluniacensis caenobii*, by pope Urban II into a 1096 bull addressed to the abbot of Cluny³⁹⁷. Although it is unclear if Beaulieu accepted the Cluniac liturgical costumes, Vescovi’s analysis has shown many conformities between the instructions described in the lectionary and the imagery of the portal in Beaulieu. This association would begin with the Temptations of Christ, demanded as reading for the first Sunday of Lent during which the text from the Gospel of Matthew of the inscription in Beaulieu was explicitly quoted (fig. 28c). Subsequently, followed the reading of the Psalm 90 (91), displayed on the eastern pillar (fig. 28d),

³⁹⁵ Roux quotes the rites associated to the consecration of the church and to the penitence developed through the Ash Wednesday and the Maundy Thursday, in which passing the threshold marked the remission of sins, see Roux, *Entre sacré et profane* cit., pp. 842-843; cf. also Palazzo, *Liturgie et société* cit., p. 146.

³⁹⁶ Vescovi refers to the manuscript NAL 2246, kept in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France. See Vescovi, *An Eschatological Mirror* cit., p. 57, note 18.

³⁹⁷ The 1096 bull by pope Urban II referred to a previous agreement of 1076 in which the lay abbot Hugh of Castelnau and the community in Beaulieu were forced to accept the submission to the Burgundian abbey. This decision resulted from the complaining of the Beaulieu monks for the usurping presence of the lay abbots during the Council of Limoges in 1031, abusing of the monastic properties. See J. K. Beitscher, *Monastic Reform at Beaulieu, 1031-1095*, «Viator. Medieval and Renaissance Studies», 5, 1974, pp. 199-210; Vescovi, *An Eschatological Mirror* cit., pp. 59-60. Cf. also Deloche, *Cartulaire de l'abbaye* cit., pp. XVIII-XXIX, XXVII-XXVIII, note 1; and paragraph II.4.3.

which was sang during the whole period of Lent until its ending at the Holy Friday. The readings of the Temptations of Christ were connected by Gregory the Great to the deadly sins of gluttony, *vana gloria* and avarice, and his homily was directly quoted into the lectionary following the readings of Matthew's Gospel during Lent. Two of these three sins are represented on the external side of the western pillar in Beaulieu and, despite their original position is still uncertain, their belonging to the ensemble of the portal is sure (figg. 24a-b, 25)³⁹⁸. For what concerns the images with the story of Daniel in the Lions' Den (fig. 27c), Vescovi has recalled an older tradition of reading the story during the Tuesday of Passionate³⁹⁹.

The tympanum with the majestic Parousia (fig. 31) would have had a prime role during the development of the core of the liturgical year: the celebration of Easter. The analogy with the Resurrection is clearly shown by the exposed wounds of Christ. The Cluniac liturgy for Easter established a complex and long sequence of rites intended to glorify not only the Resurrection as such but also the triumph of Christ over Death and Evil⁴⁰⁰. As mentioned above, the latter meaning is expressed vividly by the images on the tympanum. Another insight to the connection between liturgy and sculptures has been pointed out by Vescovi in the shape of the triumphal cross elevated by two angels behind Christ (figg. 31, 34b). The author has stressed how it would refer to the processional cross that was unveiled and exposed in front of the altar during the celebrations of the Holy Friday at Cluny. This would be proved both by its features, namely the jewelled decorations and the beam under it, and by the angels' gesture of lifting it up. The gesture of unveiling the cross and its adoration by the community were associated in the transformation process that symbolically converted it from a sign of torture and death to a sign of triumph, as clearly evoked both by the cross and the arms of Christ on the tympanum in Beaulieu⁴⁰¹.

The involvement of church portals during liturgical processions is well proved by many sources, that explain how the staging in front of the doors, accompanied by chants or specific rituals, was frequently a turning point for the liturgy itself⁴⁰². In the Cluniac context the main entrance of churches acquired, between the eleventh and the twelfth centuries, a peculiar feature. Connected to the western side, regardless of the different shapes this space could show, was related to the concept

³⁹⁸ Vescovi argues that the *vana gloria* could have been represented as well, while lust could have been involved in different ways into the liturgy, see Vescovi, *An Eschatological Mirror* cit., pp. 63-64.

³⁹⁹ Vescovi refers to a 1493 Cluniac missal, but recalls the witness of a sixth-century text, where the same rite was described. Within the readings of the Tuesday of Passionate the episodes of the defeat of the idol of Bel and the Babylonian dragon, as well as the role of Habakkuk in the survival of Daniel into the Lions' Den were all present. See *Ibid.*, pp. 64-65.

⁴⁰⁰ The author connects also the imagery of the tympanum to another homily by Gregory the Great, himself quoting the vision of Hosea, read during the Easter liturgy at Cluny, as reported by the lectionary. In this sense he proposes to recognize the enigmatic figure seated on the left of the tympanum as Hosea. See *Ibid.*, pp. 67-69.

⁴⁰¹ See *Ibid.*, pp. 75-76.

⁴⁰² See Roux, *Entre sacré et profane* cit., pp. 840-846.

of *Galilea*. The latter refers to a building, normally two storied, connected to the church and reached by the monastic community during every Sunday liturgy, celebrating the Resurrection⁴⁰³. According to the Biblical exegesis, namely to Rupert of Deutz (1070/80-1029/30), the name of this place derived from the Biblical country that host the meeting of Christ with his disciples after the Resurrection. This led to a multi-layered significance, implying the conversion from Judaism to Christianity and, starting from Christ's return after his death, an allusion to the final meeting with him, *i.e.* the Parousia and the beginning of the Last Judgement⁴⁰⁴. The ritual adopted by French monastic community since the eighth century, and described by Rupert of Deutz, implied a ritual meeting between the monks, representing the disciples, and the priest, acting as Christ. This moment ended a procession that crossed the whole monastery passing through the cloister and was followed by the mass within the church⁴⁰⁵.

In Beaulieu the sculpted portal is not protruding from the western side of the church. Nonetheless, Vescovi pointed out how the Cluniac concept of *Galilea* could find references into the imagery of the portal. The value of meeting point evoking the final encounter of the risen dead with Christ at the End of Time seems to be mirrored by the tympanum with the Parousia. Not only the dead are represented lifting the lids of their sarcophagi, clearly resurrecting (figg. 33b-c), but also the angel with trumpets and an imperial crown (figg. 31, 81), celebrating the triumph of Christ, as described in the writing by Rupert of Deutz. Moreover, one could argue that the ritual meeting of the priest and the monks, recalling that of Jesus with his disciples, would have been mirrored by the overlooking celestial assembly, counting all the apostles and presided over by the enthroned Christ (fig. 31)⁴⁰⁶.

Although the sculpted portal does not correspond precisely to what a Cluniac *Galilea* would have looked like, Krüger stated how this term should be more connected to the function of this part of the church rather than a specific architectonical structure⁴⁰⁷. Therefore, without identifying the sculpted portal as a *Galilea*, it seems possible to subscribe Vescovi's idea that it could have worked as such during the Sunday liturgy as well as during the rituals celebrating Lent and Easter, serving as a 'liturgical stage'⁴⁰⁸.

⁴⁰³ See K. Krüger, *Tourunus et la fonction des galiliées en Bourgogne*, in *Avant-nefs et espaces d'accueil dans l'église entre le IVe et le XIIe siècle*, proceedings of the international conference (Auxerre, 1999), edited by C. Sapin, Paris, 2002, pp. 414-423; 418-420.

⁴⁰⁴ For the concept of *Galilea* into the Cluniac context, and for the exegesis by Rupert of Deutz, namely his *Liber officialis* (1111), see *Ibid.*, 420-423.

⁴⁰⁵ See *Ibid.*, p. 420.

⁴⁰⁶ See Vescovi, *An Eschatological Mirror* cit., pp. 76-80.

⁴⁰⁷ See Krüger, *Tourunus et la fonction des galiliées* cit., p. 419.

⁴⁰⁸ See Vescovi, *An Eschatological Mirror* cit., p. 79.

Compared to the previous examples these liturgies occurred less frequently⁴⁰⁹. In the case of the celebrations of Lent and Easter, they would have involved all the monks, the community of the town and, if present, also pilgrims. For the Sunday celebrations the presence of the layfolk of Beaulieu seems less probable, since from the twelfth century the church of Notre-Dame du port haut served as parish church, whereas pilgrims hosted by the monastery could have participated.

Between the three situations, the latter would have seen the pilgrims having the more marginal importance. Nonetheless, the chants, readings and commenting of these celebrations would have taken advantage of the imagery of the portal in a way completely different and, maybe, more intense than the single pilgrim could do on his own or involved in the 'kiss of peace'. The atmosphere of the official liturgies would have enhanced the intensity of the encounter with the 'iconic presence' of the sculptures. The presence of the monks and all the liturgical setting, from the clothing of the clergy to the ritual objects implied, not mentioning the value of the auditory part, would have been the means through which this intensity would have been evoked.

In this sense, the sculptures in Beaulieu can be seen as a 'polysemous' ensemble, which meanings are suitable to be evoked in accordance with the different situation (whether liturgical, ritual or individual) occurring in that moment.

III. 3. Use of the Inner Space of the Church

After crossing the threshold (fig. 35), the pilgrim would have finally entered the sacred space of the church and had the possibility to head towards the relics he or she sought for. What can be experienced today entering the church in Beaulieu is very different compared to what could have been the twelfth-century shape of this space (fig. 36). If the architecture is more or less preserved, allowing to perceive the dimensions and the overall structure of the church, a large part of the decoration is missing.

III. 3. 1. Within the Church: Attempting a Reconstruction

The loss of much of the inner decoration and setting of the church of Saint-Pierre is heavily changing the modern perception of the different spaces. An idea of its extension can be grasped in

⁴⁰⁹ It is not known the frequency of the 'kiss of peace' ceremony, though it obviously depended from the amount of people arriving at Beaulieu. Nonetheless, it seems likely that it would have occurred in precise moments of the day, according also to the schedule of daily activities of the monks. See Foletti, *Liminality* cit., p. 115.

the summary of the records of the 1569 pillage of Beaulieu by the Huguenots, reported by Amand Vaslet:

It is said that the people of the encampment of the princes and the admiral de Coligny came to Beaulieu and, convinced to find rich spoils in the monastery, rushed themselves into it, (they) have killed the pitancier and three other secular priests, burnt the choir which was nicely embellished, stripped the altars, burnt the paintings, burnt the documents and the privileges, stole half of the bells, broke the windows from which they took iron and lead, stole the reliquaries, some of which were very beautiful, ruined the dwellings of the religious, leaving only walls almost uninhabitable⁴¹⁰.

This account gives a glimpse on the state of the church in the sixteenth century. It seems reasonable, though, to expect that additions occurred between the completion of the church at the beginning of the thirteenth century and the protestant pillage. Nonetheless, the concept of a space filled with more objects than it is today, and certainly more decorated, can be guessed already for the second half of the twelfth century.

The architectural framework, which shows today the delicate palette of the sandstone of the ashlar, should be imagined as covered by paintings, possibly colourful and figured. We have no mentions in the written documents about inner decorations of the church. Nonetheless, its original presence can be argued. As the core of the holiness of the religious complexes, the interior of a church was described as a *lieu rituel* by Palazzo. Starting from the liturgical analysis, he stated how the monumental decoration, both painted and sculpted, had an active role in defining it, as well as in determinate its different sections. Thus, different subjects and decorations would have been displayed within different spaces according to their function⁴¹¹.

The nave was the first place a pilgrim would have encountered (fig. 36). This space was usually dedicated to layfolk, and paintings or sculptures addressed to them could be expected. In churches that adopted the barrel vault for the nave, the imagery of the lateral walls, occupied by arches, was moved on the ceiling. It is the case of the well-known church of Saint-Savin-sur-Grattempe (end of the eleventh century) where the paintings are well preserved, showing *historiae*

⁴¹⁰ Translated by the author, « Il y est dit que les gens du camp des princes et de l'amiral de Coligny vinrent à Beaulieu, et croyant trouver un riche butin dans le monastère, se jetèrent dedans, tuèrent le pitancier et trois autres prêtres séculiers, firent brûler le chœur qui était très-bien travaillé, dépouillèrent les autels, brûlèrent les tableaux, brûlèrent aussi les papiers et titres, emportèrent la moitié des cloches, brisèrent les vitres dont ils emportèrent le fer et le plomb, emportèrent les reliquaires, et il y en avait de très-beaux, ruinèrent les habitations des religieux, n'y laissant que les murailles presque inhabitables. », see Vaslet, *Abregé de l'histoire de l'abbaye de Beaulieu* cit., pp. 127-128.

⁴¹¹ See Palazzo, *Liturgie et société* cit., pp. 156-159. Cf. P. Piva, *Lo spazio liturgico: architettura, arredo, iconografia (secoli IV-XII)*, in *Architettura medievale: la pietra e la figura*, edited by A. Cadei, P. Piva, Milano-Roma, 2008, pp. 221-264: 248-264.

taken from both the Old and the New Testament⁴¹². Another example is the church of Saint-Junien (frescoes circa 1170-1174), closer to Beaulieu and already in the previous chapter on sculptural comparison. Here the vault displayed the adoration of the apocalyptic lamb by the twenty-four elders⁴¹³. The presence of a comparable barrel vault in Beaulieu left open the possibility that it was painted with similar frescoes⁴¹⁴.

What is even easier to imagine, though always hypothetical, is the imagery that could have completed the apsidal area (fig. 39). In the conch a *Maiestas Domini*, connected with the Parousia of the southern portal, would have evoked the divine presence in the house of God⁴¹⁵. Indeed, the presbytery was the place where this presence was the most strongly revealed, first of all by the Eucharist. As Angheben stated, this central feature of the sanctuary of the church led to a precise kind of decoration. Paintings, sculptures, and sacred furniture would have recalled the main ritual through a direct representation of God in his glory, as well as by allegories from the Old and the New Testament and by elements of the current ritual, such as liturgical vessels⁴¹⁶. Due to this divine presence, the choir and the presbytery of the church were conceived as reflection of the Sky and Heaven. Thus, numerous examples are showing an imagery connected to the paradisiac sphere, such as angles and birds⁴¹⁷. Traces of frescoes with similar subjects can be seen in the *rond-point* of Saint-Hilaire in Poitiers (end of the eleventh century)⁴¹⁸. After investing so much in monumentalizing the entrance, seems likely that a rightful counterpart in the apse would have completed the divine celebration in Beaulieu. Unfortunately, since we have no evidences of this supposedly painted decoration, it would be hazardous to push further this speculation.

Along with the plausible paintings, the presence of furniture would have certainly filled and divided the architectural space. Once again, we have no traces of this important part of the interior setting. Nonetheless, few considerations can be done. Being a monastic church, Saint-Pierre at

⁴¹² See Klein, *Entre paradis présent et jugement dernier* cit., pp. 464-466; Piva, *Lo spazio liturgico* cit., pp. 260-261. Cf. the updatings in *Les stratégies de la narration dans la peinture médiévale. La représentation de l'Ancien Testament aux IVe-XIIe siècles*, edited by M. Angheben, Turnhout, 2020.

⁴¹³ See C. Andrault Schmitt, *Le succès des tours-porches occidentales en Limousin (XIe-XIIe siècles)*, in *Avant-nefs et espaces d'accueil dans l'église entre le IVe et le XIIe siècle*, proceedings of the international conference (Auxerre, 1999), edited by C. Sapin, Paris, 2002, pp. 233-250: 246-247.

⁴¹⁴ Cf. Proust, *La sculpture romane en Bas-Limousin* cit., p. 28.

⁴¹⁵ See M. Angheben, *Scultura romanica e liturgia*, in *Arte medievale. Le vie dello spazio liturgico*, edited by P. Piva, Milano, 2010, pp. 131-180: 140-142, 158-163.

⁴¹⁶ See *Ibid.*, pp. 138-153; cf. Palazzo, *Liturgie et société* cit., pp. 146, 156-157.

⁴¹⁷ See Angheben, *Scultura romanica* cit., pp. 135-138.

⁴¹⁸ Klein, *Entre paradis présent et jugement dernier* cit., pp. 466-470. Cf. also the in-progress project, see É. Sparhubert, C. Voyer, *Présentation du projet: La collégiale Saint-Hilaire et ses chanoines. Atelier organisé dans le cadre du projet la culture visuelle des chanoines: Saint-Hilaire-le-Grand de Poitiers et l'architecture romane au premier XIe siècle*, conference by the CESCUM and the CRIHAM (Poitiers, 2017), Poitiers, 2017; see the summary online on www.cirham.labo.univ-poitiers.fr (12.07.2020).

Beaulieu would have served mainly the community, but external guests would have not been excluded. The involvement of layfolk within the walls of the monastic church raised the need to separate them from the monks, allowing both to use the church at the same time⁴¹⁹.

In this sense a choir was certainly present to mark with its walls the space reserved to the monks. As mentioned in the Vaslet's report, the Huguenots «burnt the choir which was nicely embellished»⁴²⁰. Since no material traces have been left, the only possible evidence for any reconstruction of the choir could be seen in the 1663 plan of the church (figg. 4a-b), in which the area of the crossing point (figg. 38-39) seems to be limited by a structure. The latter is rendered by a line, isolating the presbytery, with an opening on the western side. Nevertheless, it is not possible to know for sure if these limits correspond to those of the choir burnt in 1569. However, the medieval choir would have occupied this space for sure, and maybe extended westwards in the last bay of the nave⁴²¹. The reference to its 'nice embellishment' could suggest a decoration both addressed to monks and laics and meant to emphasize the distinction between the two spaces⁴²². Unluckily this detail, along with the choir construction material, cannot be proved⁴²³.

The core of the holiness of the church was certainly the high altar, placed in the apse. In Beaulieu it was surrounded by the columns of the *rond-point*, themselves laying on a low wall (figg. 39, 41). The restorations of the seventeenth century involved this space too, but once again the 1663 plan gives us a glance of the previous situation (fig. 4a). To better read this document, it can be associated to the report written by the seneschal of Tourenne for the first Maurist abbot, since it describes the state of the monastery immediately after its acquisition by the new order:

The church took pity: barely three altars were in condition to say the holy Mass, one had to be disrobed in order to prepare the other. The sacristy was behind the high altar, itself accessible from eight steps, that lasted until 1692⁴²⁴.

⁴¹⁹ See Piva, *Lo spazio liturgico* cit., pp. 236-243; Sigal, *Reliques, pèlerinage et miracles* cit., pp.196-199.

⁴²⁰ Nowadays only part of the seventeenth-century wooden choir commissioned by the Maurists are preserved (fig. 38). Cf. Vaslet, *Abregé de l'histoire de l'abbaye de Beaulieu* cit., pp.144-147.

⁴²¹ Haddad has recently proposed the placement of inner barriers, starting from the analysis of the different decorations on the surviving bases and capitals, and from some rectangular cavities in the semi-columns of the pillars in the last bay of the nave and in the crossing point. From this point of view, the ancient choir would have been extended in the eastern bay of the nave. See Haddad, *Le bien a l'épreuve du mal* cit., pp. 188-192.

⁴²² See Angheben, *Scultura romanica* cit., pp. 134-135.

⁴²³ One could be tempted to imagine the choir made out of wood, as other later survived examples, but the works on the pillars of the crossing point undertaken between 1920 and 1929 eliminated the possible investigation on their surface. An archaeological survey could, maybe, cast some light on the possible presence of foundations of a stoneworked choir.

⁴²⁴ Translated by the author, «L'église faisoit compassion: a peine y auoit-il trois autels en état de dire la sainte messe; il falloit en depouiller un pour guarnir lautre. La sacristie étoit derriere le grand autel, auquel lon montoit par huit marches, ce qui a duré jusqu'en 1692.» The original document is lost, but Poulbrière reported a later copy, see Vaslet, *Abregé de l'histoire de l'abbaye de Beaulieu* cit., pp. 142-143, note 1.

Indeed, on the plan it is possible to see the summarized representation of this situation (fig. 4b). The only altar to be depicted is the main one, behind which can be seen a wall of uncertain height. The latter is connected also to the basement of the *rond-point*, opened by doors on each side of the altar. As reported above, this small area was used as sacristy in the seventeenth century, but since it was completely demolished by the Maurists it is not possible to know if it was conceived already in the twelfth century. Having no traces of these walls, the reconstruction of a possible continuity within them and the line of the basement of the *rond-point* is impeded⁴²⁵. The position of the altar as shown in the plan seems to be coherent with what could have been expected by the twelfth-century church, as well as the low wall that functions as basement for the *rond-point*. The latter is still present and appears coherent to the columns, isolating the apse from the deambulatory (figg. 40b-c, 41).

An open (unsolvable?) issue concerns the pavement of the church. Vaslet's *Abregé de l'histoire de l'abbaye* reports how the Maurists had to pave almost the entire eastern half of the church⁴²⁶. In this sense, the possible hint about the inner division of the church, normally reflected also on the floor decoration, is missing in Beaulieu⁴²⁷. The archaeological survey undertaken by Lebouteux, focused on the apse, pointed out the peculiar fact that the floor was quite low, apparently on the same level as the other parts of the church⁴²⁸. Since no trace of a crypt emerged, should we imagine that only the high altar was elevated, through the 'eight steps' demolished in 1692?

About the other altars, that occupied the apsidal chapels and those in the transept, there is no trace of their original shape and disposition. However, it is to be expected that already in the twelfth century all the chapels were furnished with their own altar and plausibly other furniture for the liturgies officiated there.

The interior of the church would have been completed by the mobile liturgical objects, such as vessels, thuribles, curtains and other textiles implied to cover, divide and embellish the space. Along with these objects, the light would have been controlled by means of candles, set on candlesticks and candelabras, and through the windows, maybe covered by glass already in the twelfth century⁴²⁹.

⁴²⁵ In the excavation plates drawn by Lebouteux there is no evidence of the foundations of these walls, that could have been an ephemeral structure. See P. Lebouteux, *Sondages dans le chœur de l'église abbatiale de Saint-Pierre à Beaulieu-en-Dordogne*, «Centre international d'études romanes. Revue trimestrielle», 1970, pp. 72-76: 76.

⁴²⁶ See Vaslet, *Abregé de l'histoire de l'abbaye de Beaulieu* cit., pp. 146-147.

⁴²⁷ Cf. Palazzo, *Liturgie et société* cit., pp. 159-160; Piva, *Lo spazio liturgico* cit., p. 239, 257-260.

⁴²⁸ Lebouteux recalled also how the floor of the choir was, when the excavations took place in 1966, made of wood «vétuste et dangereux», possibly placed there by the Maurists. See Lebouteux, *Sondages dans le chœur* cit., pp. 72-76.

⁴²⁹ The windows broken by the Huguenots, in order to collect lead and iron, have completely disappeared and, therefore, cannot be dated.

All these elements would have created a rich, vivid and colorful perception of the inner space of the church, marking the difference with the external world⁴³⁰. The different light, darker during the day and brighter during the night compared to the outer space, combined to the difference in sounds, especially when the daily liturgies were officed by the monks, temperature and smell, due to the burning incense, would have altogether fascinate the beholder. This multisensorial experience of the interior, would have evoked the feeling of otherness, materializing the ‘aura’ radiating from the sanctuary and its relics⁴³¹. The latter, kept in and surrounded by precious objects, would have moved the reactive believer with their presence, enhancing what his or her senses were already perceiving. The pilgrim would have possibly felt these sensations even strengthened, satisfying his or her expectations to enter the house of God⁴³².

III. 3. 2. Hypothesis of Usage: The Pilgrim inside the Church

In the previous paragraphs, the inner space of the church has been studied, in the limits imposed by the scarce evidences. It has been enhanced how Saint-Pierre served the monastic community in the first place. However, it has also been underlined how the position as well as its possession of international and local relics of the church would have certainly implied the presence within its walls of laypeople, coming from the town, the region, or even abroad. Sigal pointed out how monastic churches hosted laics during particular events, such as the main feasts of the liturgical year⁴³³. This could have been the case in Beaulieu too. In fact, the chapel of Notre-Dame built on the Dordogne shore for the parish community, could have hosted the Sunday offices but seems probable that the main liturgies of the year would have been celebrated inside the church of Saint-Pierre. Not only it was larger and probably better embellished, but also ‘more important’, since it hosted sacred relics.

The presence of laypeople during main festivity is proved in Beaulieu by few accounts: writing about Beaulieu, Soulié reported how in 1935 the inhabitants still celebrated the feast *des Corps saints*, remembering the miraculous finding of the relics of the saint patrons of the town, saint Prime and saint Félicien, after the wars of religion⁴³⁴. Therefore, it seems plausible – even if the time between the construction of the church and the institution of the feast is long – that during a similar

⁴³⁰ See Pastoureau, *L'Église et la couleur* cit., pp. 209-215.

⁴³¹ Cf. Angheben, *Scultura romanica* cit., pp. 135-138; Dierkens, *Avant-corps, galilées, massifs occidentaux* cit., p. 496; Palazzo, *Liturgie et société* cit., pp. 147-149; Sigal, *Reliques, pèlerinage et miracles* cit., pp. 193-194.

⁴³² Cf. P. Tychá, *The Visitor's Inner Experience*, in *Migrating Art Historians on the Sacred Ways*, edited by I. Foletti, K. Kravčíková, A. Palladino, et al., Brno-Roma, 2018, pp. 205-215.

⁴³³ See Sigal, *Reliques, pèlerinage et miracles* cit., pp. 197-199.

⁴³⁴ See Soulié, *L'Abbatiale de Saint-Pierre* cit., p. 204; cf. Deloche, *Cartulaire de l'abbaye* cit., p. XIV, note 2; F. Le Hec, *Histoire de Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne et de son pays*, Limoges, 2010, pp. 44-45.

celebration connected to the two saints, the residents of Beaulieu would have been involved. Moreover, the church of Saint-Pierre was used by the monks as official setting for the ritual submission of the laics involved in the management of their properties⁴³⁵.

Aside from the presence of locals and lay officials of the monastery, what is more in our interest is how a pilgrim could have experienced the inner space of the church. As stated by Sigal, the presence of pilgrims within monastic churches broke at a certain level the inner division between laics and clergy⁴³⁶.

Indeed, the pilgrim was mainly interested to approach the sacred relics. We know the precise placement only of the relics of saint Émelie or Émelien, within his altar in the chapel of the northern transept⁴³⁷. It seems plausible that the other relics could have been placed in the other chapels, though their conservation into mobile reliquaries could have allowed some changes according to the different moments and the concomitant needs. Following Sigal, we could imagine that, at least during some periods of the year, the reliquaries were displayed in the apse and in the chapels, associated to the different altars, connected through the deambulatory⁴³⁸. Their presence in the apsidal area strengthened the sacred aura of the altar and attracted the pilgrims. And the apse should not be imagined as an inaccessible place but, as pointed out by Sparhubert in the case of Saint-Léonard de Noblat, neither as a completely opened one⁴³⁹.

The structure of the deambulatory surrounded by apsidal chapels would have served liturgical purposes for the monastic community, also evoking the prestige of renown sanctuaries⁴⁴⁰. In addition, this structure would have functioned well in orienting the flow of people in the apse without letting them penetrate into the choir nor the chapels (figg. 38, 40a-b-c, 41)⁴⁴¹. In this way, the clergy could allow the access to the relics while keeping it under constant control. This monumental space, recalling the mausoleum-like *chevets* of major sites of pilgrimage, would have been a sort of

⁴³⁵ Namely the chapel of saint Émelie or Émelien, *i.e.* the one in the northern transept, were the vassals sworn their submission oath to the abbot. Cf. Deloche, *Cartulaire de l'abbaye* cit., pp. XIV, note 2, CCLXXIV-CCLXXV.

⁴³⁶ See Sigal, *Reliques, pèlerinage et miracles* cit., p. 202.

⁴³⁷ Starting from a similar, official use of the space, it is possible to argue that the relics of the saints Prime and Félicien were placed in their chapel in the southern transept too, cf. note 435.

⁴³⁸ See Sigal, *Reliques, pèlerinage et miracles* cit., pp. 193-194. Cf. also note 445.

⁴³⁹ See É. Sparhubert, *Sur la route de Compostelle: le chevet d'une "église de pèlerinage" à l'épreuve de la liturgie, Saint-Léonard-de-Noblat*, in *L'image médiévale: Fonctions dans l'espace sacré et structuration de l'espace culturel*, edited by C. Voyer, É. Sparhubert, Turnhout, 2011, pp. 41-68: 57; cf. also Palazzo, *Liturgie et société* cit., p. 64; Piva, *Lo spazio liturgico* cit., pp. 230-231. About the access to the sacred space cf. also A. Bailey, *Modern and Medieval Approaches to Pilgrimage, Gender and Sacred Space*, «History and Anthropology», 24/4, 2013, pp. 493-512.

⁴⁴⁰ Cf. Sparhubert, *Sur la route de Compostelle* cit., pp. 41-59.

⁴⁴¹ Cf. P. Piva, *L'ambulatory e i "tragitti" di pellegrinaggio nelle chiese d'Occidente. Secoli X-XII*, in *Arte medievale. Le vie dello spazio liturgico*, edited by P. Piva, Milano, 2012, pp. 81-129: 127-129.

‘advertisement’ for the presence of relics⁴⁴². For those pilgrims who already visited other churches with a similar structure, it would have been also familiar in a certain sense.

It has been ‘followed’ the path of the pilgrim heading towards Beaulieu through the countryside, stressing how his or her main goal was to meet the sacred relics kept in Saint-Pierre. Once the pilgrim would have reached the church and crossed the threshold, which would have been the way within the sacred space to reach the relics? Having no sources only a hypothetical idea can be argued (fig. 4b).

Entering from the southern portal the pilgrim would have headed eastwards in order to reach the chapels where the relics were plausibly preserved. The presence of the trumeau dividing the access could suggest that, in the case of a large flow of people moving inside the church, it could have served as ‘division’ to orientate the two directions (fig. 35)⁴⁴³. Returning once again on the plan by Joseph de la Bérodière, it is possible to notice the presence of a staircase with six steps, in two perpendicular rows eastwards and northwards (fig. 4b). Assuming that this staircase followed the twelfth-century project, we can imagine that people were expected to follow these directions (avoiding going westwards). The connection with the southern isle and the nave allows to think that they could have been crossed by pilgrims. Whatever of the two, the first ‘obstacle’ would have been the choir, which extension in the plan cannot doubtlessly be accepted. Following the southern aisle (fig. 37), they would have flanked it, and reached the southern transept, where the relics of the saints Prime and Félicien were kept (fig. 4b letter a, 38)⁴⁴⁴. It cannot be told if this space was opened to pilgrims in order to reach the altar and pray the companions of saint Foy. Even in the case that ephemeral barriers were put to isolate the transept, a pause in the itinerary of the pilgrim inside the church would have been expected, since the saint patrons of the town were among the main relics kept in the sanctuary. Heading eastwards the pilgrims would have entered the deambulatory where relics could have been kept in the apsidal chapels, probably closed but visible (figg. 4b, 38, 40a-bc, 41). Another hypothesis, which remains depending on the 1663 plan, would see the space between the high altar and the *rond-point* as suitable to display relics (figg. 4b letter c, 41). In fact, the low wall on which lay the columns, is high enough to mark a separation between the deambulatory and the presbytery, but not to completely hide it from the view. Moreover, we have other examples where, in a similar setting, relics

⁴⁴² See *Ibid.*, pp. 41-42, 58-59. Cf. B. Brenk, *Les églises de pèlerinage et le concept de pretention*, in *Art, Cérémonial et Liturgie au Moyen Âge*, proceedings of the third cycle Romand de Lettre (Lousanne, Fribourg 2000), edited by N. Bock, F. Dobay, Rome, 2002, pp. 125-140: 125-126.

⁴⁴³ I would like to express my gratitude to Luca Capriotti for this suggestion.

Recently, Haddad has pointed out how the lions at the base of the eastern and western side of the trumeau seem to be consumed by a frequent touching, that would have polished the relief (figg. 30a-b). Following Haddad’s interpretation, would this detail have been part of an ‘apotropaic ritual’ before entering and leaving the church? If that so, could this ritual have involved the pilgrims too? Cf. Haddad, *Le bien a l’épreuve du mal* cit., pp. 102-105.

⁴⁴⁴ Cf. note 435.

and venerated objects were periodically displayed for the devotion of pilgrims⁴⁴⁵. Thus, reliquaries and statues such as the enthroned Virgin from the treasury in Beaulieu, would have been periodically exposed in this space, plausibly protected by a screen, maybe a grate as in Conques⁴⁴⁶.

After praying in the deambulatory, the pilgrim would have reached the northern transept with the chapel of saint Émelie or Émelien, which kept his relics (figg. 4b letter e, 42)⁴⁴⁷. The situation discussed for the chapel of saint Prime and saint Félicien on the other side of the transept can be proposed again here. After a possible stop for praying saint Émelie or Émelien, the pilgrim would have crossed the most 'delicate' segment of this path, *i.e.* the side of the church connected with the monastery (fig.43). As shown from the plan and visible in the last and first bay of the northern aisle, two openings led to the cloister (fig. 4b)⁴⁴⁸. From these doors the monks entered the church and the choir, though it is highly probable that the access was closed when moments of external visits were expected.

From the northern aisle the pilgrim would have crossed the nave after the end of the choir, through a bay between the second and the last (figg. 4b, 44). The other half of the portal would have let him or her out after climbing the staircase again.

This supposed itinerary through the church of Beaulieu could have been followed also from the other way and, from the beginning of the thirteenth century, included also the western portal as the final exit.

To conclude this analysis of the possible use and presence of pilgrims within Saint-Pierre at Beaulieu, the issue of the galleries should be mentioned (figg. 38-39). This architectural feature has been pointed out in the past as a sign of the association of Beaulieu to the 'pilgrimage churches'⁴⁴⁹. The narrow spiral staircases at the edges of the deambulatory make difficult to reach them, and their low, dark interior opened on the choir does not seem suitable for staging and circulating. Therefore,

⁴⁴⁵ It was the case, for instance, of Sainte-Foy at Conques, Santiago de Compostela, Saint-Léonard-de-Noblat and Notre-Dame du Port at Clermont-Ferrand. See A. Keblová, *Notre-Dame-du-Port and the cult of the Virgin*, in *Migrating Art Historians on the Sacred Ways*, edited by I. Foletti, K. Kravčiková, A. Palladino, et al., Brno-Rome, 2018, pp. 229-245; Sparhubert, *Sur la route de Compostelle* cit., pp. 53-56; Piva, *L'ambulacro e i "tragitti" di pellegrinaggio* cit., 103-104, 108-111, 128.

⁴⁴⁶ Cf. L. Huang, *L'abbatiale de Sainte-Foy de Conques (XIe-XIIe siècles)*, PhD Thesis, Université Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne, a. y. 2018-2019, supervisors F. Journot, Q. Cazes, pp. 194-196.

⁴⁴⁷ Cf. note 435.

⁴⁴⁸ On the plan a staircase leading to the dormitory is represented in the northern transept too (figg. 4a-b). Nonetheless, it cannot be surely related to the twelfth-century project, since the filled door still visible on the northern wall of the transept shown a frame that can be attributed to the reconstruction of this area after the pillage of the Huguenots, maybe coeval to the rib vault.

⁴⁴⁹ See P. Héliot, *Les églises romanes a tribunes dans la region Limousine et les grandes basiliques de pèlerinage*, «Bulletin de la Société scientifique, historique et archéologique de la Corrèze», 96 (1974), pp. 157-171: 161-163; Cf. M. M. S. Gauthier, J. Maury, J. Porcher, *Limousin Roman*, in *Zodiaque. La nuit du temps*, edited by J. Dieuzaide, P. Belzeaux, 88 voll., Pierre-qui-Vire (Yonne), 1955-1999, XI, 1960, pp. 50-51; A. de Laborderie, *L'église de Beaulieu*, in «Bulletin de la Société scientifique, historique et archéologique de la Corrèze», 59, 1937, pp. 127-163: p. 158; R. Rey, *La sculpture romane languedocienne*, Toulouse, Paris, 1936, pp. 239-248: 240.

a direct involvement of the tribunes in the possible pilgrim's itinerary inside the church does not appear as plausible⁴⁵⁰. A suggestive idea would be to in these structures a space to host pilgrims for the night inside the church, letting them perform the 'incubation ritual', *i.e.* the sleep close to the sacred relics in order to have healing visions of the saints⁴⁵¹. Despite its appeal, this hypothesis is impeded both by the absence of material evidences and by the difficult accessibility of the tribunes in the choir, even for infrequent occasions.

The hypothetical path traced above would have been clearly indicated for the pilgrim visiting the church during the Middle Ages. Not only because the venerated object and its context were still present and preserved, but also because proper indications were given to let the pilgrim follow the right path and arrive at the sacred core of the building⁴⁵². Those indications were visible through all the furniture, ephemeral barriers and decorations that enriched and shaped the architectural space. By the means of these objects and the alteration of light, sound and smell, the pilgrim would have crossed the space as a multisensorial experience, to finally meet the relics in their precious display, enhanced by their own holiness⁴⁵³.

⁴⁵⁰ See Héliot, *Les églises romanes a tribunes* cit., pp. 162-163; cf. E. Lefèvre-Pontalis, *A quelle école faut-il rattacher l'église de Beaulieu (Corrèze)?*, in «Bulletin monumental», 78, 1914, pp. 58-87: 63. For an inner view of the galleries, cf. Berland, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., p. 17.

⁴⁵¹ I would like to express my gratitude to Frédéric Le Hec for this suggestion. For the ritual, see L. Canetti, *L'incubazione cristiana tra Antichità e Medioevo*, «Rivista di Storia del Cristianesimo», VII/1, 2010, pp. 149-180; Sigal, *L'homme et le miracle* cit., pp. 134, 144; Sigal, *Reliques, pèlerinage et miracles* cit., p. 205. Cf. also I. Foletti, *Vivre le pèlerinage (médiévale). Une expérience corporelle*, «Convivium. Exchanges and Interactions in Medieval Europe Byzantium, and the Mediterranean», 5/2, 2018, pp. 137-150.

⁴⁵² To help the pilgrim orienting himself or herself within the church was also the duty of the custodian of the church, as proved by the written sources of the eleventh and twelfth centuries analysed by Sigal, cf. Sigal, *L'homme et le miracle* cit., pp. 125-126.

⁴⁵³ See Tychá, *The Visitor's Inner Experience* cit., pp. 212-213.

III. 4. Conclusions

The placement of Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne is not directly linked to the major routes crossing the French kingdom and leading to the main pilgrimage sites (fig. 6). At the same time, a net of the detours can be traced through the Dordogne valley, granting a connection for the monastery with the closer sanctuaries and the main roads. Thus, it is possible to argue that pilgrims could have reached the church of Saint-Pierre in order to venerate its relics. Hidden between the gentle slopes of the hills and the meanders of the river (fig. 10), travellers would have perceived its presence first by the tolling bells and by the shape of the church only once close to the town.

Although it is not possible to fully reconstruct the appearance of the growing urban centre and the monastery, the shape of the old town still allows to perceive the discovery of the church step by step (fig. 9), first from its belfries from afar (fig. 10) and then from its southern façade, opened on the old *Place du marché* by the monumental entrance (figg. 22a-b). It has been shown how this liminal space, once enhanced by polychromy, was suitable to set different kinds of encounter with its imagery (fig. 23). Focusing on the pilgrim as beholder, the sculptures have been read through the meanings that could affect this particular viewer the most. It is fascinating, though, to see how the very same ensemble could have been activated by liturgies and rites in order to evoke significances different but still coherent. The ‘kiss of peace’, purifying the pilgrim and allowing the entrance, and the liturgy connected to Lent and Easter have been reminded here, but other rituals and liturgical dramas could have been performed involving these sculptures. As Castiñeras stated:

In Romanesque portals performance was a way of catching the viewer’s attention, a means of bringing sculptures to life, an opportunity to inject realism into artifice, and a space in which to create a polyphonic work⁴⁵⁴.

After interacting with the alluring portal of the church, already announcing the sacred space, the pilgrim would have gotten into the church. Far from the current empty and delicate appearance, the inner space of the church would have been closer to the *temple de la couleur* described by Pastoureau⁴⁵⁵. Enriched by paintings and furniture, the space would have been voted to reproduce the perfection of Heaven in all its feature, experienced by the beholder on a multisensorial level⁴⁵⁶.

Once again, the pilgrim can be distinguished from the lay or the monk in his or her experience of the sacred space. Tired by the travel and yet focused on the spiritual meeting in the house of God

⁴⁵⁴ See Castiñeras, *The Romanesque Portal* cit., p. 25.

⁴⁵⁵ Cf. Pastoureau, *L’Église et la couleur* cit., pp. 203-230.

⁴⁵⁶ Cf. Tychá, *The Visitor’s Inner Experience* cit., pp. 205-215.

via the holy presence of relics. This kind of meeting was one of the essential parts of the pilgrimage, and the goal the pilgrim sought when heading towards a shrine. In order to allow but also to control these moments, it is likely that the monastic community in Beaulieu structured, with material, maybe mobile, furniture, the inner space to guide the pilgrims through it⁴⁵⁷. Of this setting, partially ephemeral rather than completely permanent, only few traces are left. The main one can be seen in the structure of the *chevet*, with deambulatory and apsidal chapels (figg. 38, 39, 40a-b-c). Although it would be a mistake to read this space as associated only to this purpose, it can be argued its possible use in these particular situations. Moreover, for the pilgrim would not have been only a ‘practical’ way to approach the relics and move within the church without disturbing, but also an architectural sign that monumentalized the sacred core of the building. Indeed, references were evoked with major sanctuaries where the same setting was used to mark the presence of the sacred relics, as a mausoleum⁴⁵⁸. The prestige derived by choosing this shape can be possibly linked to the renovation of the whole monastery overseen by the newly affirmed dominance of Cluny. As one of the consequences, the apsidal area would have worked as another ‘advertisement’ for a pilgrim, accustomed with the main sanctuaries met on the way⁴⁵⁹.

⁴⁵⁷ Cf. Sigal, *Reliques, pèlerinage et miracles* cit., pp. 199-206.

⁴⁵⁸ Cf. Brenk, *Les églises de pèlerinage* cit., pp. 125-140; Piva, *L’ambulacro e i “tragitti” di pellegrinaggio* cit., pp. 81-90, 127-129.

⁴⁵⁹ Cf. Sparhubert, *Sur la route de Compostelle* cit., pp. 47-59.

IV. The Treasury of Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne

IV. 1. Heritage of the Treasury

In the previous chapter has been delineated the possible approach and use of the inner space of the church in Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne by the pilgrims. Moreover, it has been stressed how the purpose of the pilgrim entering the sacred space was to meet the holy, materialized in the relics and their reliquaries⁴⁶⁰. The latter were the core, though not the only part, of the treasury of the church in Beaulieu⁴⁶¹. The presence of relics within the church was a common feature during the middle ages. It was the way through which the space was sacralised, directly linked to the higher and holy power of God, reinforcing the concept of a direct connection between the church and the divine⁴⁶². Thus, the salvific power of God and the promise of an eternity of joy in Heaven after Christ's return were foreseen in the lives of saints. The latter were not only meant as examples of virtue, but they were concluded by the final joining of the saint into the holy court in the Heavenly Jerusalem, as stated by Canetti⁴⁶³.

Being in Heaven with their soul, the saints left their bodies behind. The holiness of these bodies was granted on the one hand by the previous link that united the limbs to the spirit, which blessing remained into the bones, and on the other by the fact that this connection was suitable to be 'reactivated' by the saint himself. In other words, by praying the mortal remains of the saint it was believed to be possible to enter in direct contact with his or her soul in Heaven. In this sense, as remarked by Canetti, the relics were considered as suitable to bestow immediate benefit through the performance of miracles⁴⁶⁴.

To express and visibly enhance their invisible power, relics were enclosed in precious containers: the reliquaries. Those could have different shapes but were commonly made of the most

⁴⁶⁰ Cf. P. A. Sigal, *L'homme et le miracle dans la France médiévale (XIe-XIIIe siècle)*, Paris, 1985, pp. 117-118.

⁴⁶¹ Cf. J. Smith, *Relics. An Evolving Tradition in Latin Christianity*, in *Saints and Sacred Matter. The Cult of Relics in Byzantium and Beyond*, edited by C. Hahn, H. A. Klein, Washington D.C., 2015, pp. 41-61: 53-59.

⁴⁶² See L. Canetti, *Trésors et décors des églises au Moyen Âge. Pour un approche sémiologique des ornamenta ecclesiae*, in *Du matériel au spirituel. Réalités archéologiques et historiques des "dépôts" de la préhistoire à nos jours. XXIXe rencontres internationales d'archéologie et d'histoire d'Antibes*, proceeding of the international conference (Antibes, 2009), edited by S. Bonnardin, C. Hamon, M. Lauwers, B. Quilliec Antibes, 2009, pp. 273-282; P. A. Sigal, *Reliques, pèlerinage et miracles dans l'Église médiévale (XIe-XIIIe siècles)*, «Revue d'histoire de l'Église de France», 76/197 (1990), pp. 193-211: 193.

⁴⁶³ See Canetti, *Trésors et décors* cit., pp. 274-275.

⁴⁶⁴ See *Ibid.*, p. 275; cf. Sigal, *L'homme et le miracle* cit., pp. 126-164.

precious materials and in fashionable forms. By their uncommon and luxurious aspect, the reliquaries defined the relics as divine objects⁴⁶⁵.

Therefore, the possession of relics and their precious reliquaries, to be displayed according to specific setting and moments, not only had a very economical and political meaning but was also a source through which express spiritual authority and attractiveness. The public addressed by these gatherings of rich and precious objects, included pilgrims too. These travellers, as already mentioned above, were particularly affected by the sacred nucleus of churches, being involved in a spiritual journey⁴⁶⁶. Alluring pilgrims meant also to draw the oblations that came with them, ensuring an important income for the institution connected to the church⁴⁶⁷. In this context, Beaulieu was not an exception.

Unfortunately, the monastery shared also the common history of many other religious institutions in France, which lost (entirely or largely) their treasures due to the wars of religion and the French Revolution⁴⁶⁸. As a consequence, only few pieces are now left at Beaulieu to record what should have been the past wealth. Along with them, only the written sources help us to get a general and blurred idea of the precious and sacred objects that the pilgrims would have found visiting the church before the sixteenth-century pillage.

IV. 1. 1. Written Sources

Among the few surviving written sources concerning the Beaulieu monastery, only the *Abregé de l'histoire de l'abbaye de Saint-Pierre de Beaulieu en Bas Limousin* by Amand Vaslet reports some notices about the treasury⁴⁶⁹. The medieval documents of the *Cartulaire* can be used along with the notes by Claude d'Estiennot to confirm the presence of the main relics but not their containers neither their placement nor display.

According to all the sources the main saints associated to Beaulieu, aside from saint Peter, were saint Félicité, the brothers and martyrs saint Prime and saint Félicien, and saint Émelie or

⁴⁶⁵ See Canetti, *Trésors et décors* cit., pp. 277-279; cf. also C. Hahn, A. Palladino, *Relics, Reliquaries, Shrines*, in *Migrating Art Historians on the Sacred Ways*, edited by I. Foletti, K. Kravčiková, A. Palladino, et al., Brno-Roma, 2018, pp. 281-293; C. Hahn, *The Voices of the Saints: Speaking Reliquaries*, «Gesta», 36/1, 1997, pp. 20-31: 28-29; J. Taron, *Introduction*, in *Les trésors des églises de France*, exhibition catalogue (Paris, 1965), Paris, 1965, pp. XIII-XXXII: XIV-XVI.

⁴⁶⁶ See Hahn, Palladino, *Relics, Reliquaries, Shrines* cit., pp. 281-283; cf. paragraphs III.1.3, III.2, III.3.

⁴⁶⁷ See Hahn, Palladino, *Relics, Reliquaries, Shrines* cit., pp. 287-289; Taron, *Introduction* cit., p. XIV.

⁴⁶⁸ See Taron, *Introduction* cit., pp. XVIII-XX.

⁴⁶⁹ See A. Vaslet, *Abrégé de l'histoire de l'abbaye de Saint-Pierre de Beaulieu en Bas-Limousin*, edited by J.-B. Poulbrière, «Bulletin de la société scientifique, historique et archéologique de la Corrèze», 6, 1884, pp. 58-178: 81-100.

Émelien the confessor⁴⁷⁰. Following the sources, their presence dates back to the first decades after the monastery's foundation. The body of saint Félicité came from Rome, as a gift to Rodolphe de Tourenne, founder of the monastery, from pope Leo IV⁴⁷¹; whereas the remains of saints Prime and Félicien, martyred along with saint Capraire and saint Foy in 303 C. E., were formerly kept in the church of Sainte-Foy in Agen but later moved to Beaulieu⁴⁷². Saint Émelie or Émelien the confessor, died as hermit in circa 760-767 into a cave on the Dordogne river, was said to be buried in Beaulieu too⁴⁷³. These saints were present in Beaulieu with their whole bodies, whereas other relics were added to them and enriched the treasury of the abbey⁴⁷⁴.

The fundamental contribution in understanding the general image of the Beaulieu treasury is that by dom Amand Vaslet. Writing in 1727, the religious had access not only to pieces of the treasury now lost, but also to inventories that later disappeared⁴⁷⁵. The latter are mentioned in his chapter devoted to the relics of the monastery, and are not dated except for two of them, referred to 1432 and 1433. Through Vaslet's description, we get to know how the bodies of saint Félicité, saint Prime and Félicien were all kept into wooden cases covered with silver-gilt leaves. The two martyr brothers shared the same case which is depicted by the 1433 inventory as covered with images and enriched by numerous precious stones⁴⁷⁶. In Vaslet's list, which counts other cases similarly made and containing different relics, some objects stand out. Among them a house-shaped reliquary containing relics of saint Martial, the silver cross believed to keep a particle of the True Cross, and an ivory comb associated with Rodolphe de Tourenne and believed to have thaumaturgical powers against fever⁴⁷⁷. Having no images and neither the original inventories, it is not possible to push further the analysis of these lost objects. As a consequence, they cannot be dated and therefore securely included in our discourse on pilgrims' devotion in the church.

Nonetheless, the rich list made by Vaslet and concluded stating that 'several others' reliquaries were lost with the Huguenots pillage, allows us to think of a wealthy and rich treasury. Even if we

⁴⁷⁰ Cf. J. E. M. Deloche, *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Beaulieu en Limousin*, Paris, 1859; Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, ms latin 12747, C. d'Estiennot de la Serre, *Antiquité Benedictines. Diocèse de Limoges et de Tulle. Partie II*, 1675-1676, fol. 93-96 in gallica.bnf.fr (12.07.2020).

⁴⁷¹ See Vaslet, *Abregé de l'histoire de l'abbaye de Beaulieu* cit., pp. 84-85; cf. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, ms latin 12747, C. d'Estiennot de la Serre, *Antiquité Benedictines. Diocèse de Limoges et de Tulle. Partie II*, 1675-1676, fol. 93-94.

⁴⁷² According to Vaslet the reason of their displacement should be seen in the Norman threatens to Aquitaine, at the end of the ninth century, see Vaslet, *Abregé de l'histoire de l'abbaye de Beaulieu* cit., p. 92.

⁴⁷³ See *Ibid.*, pp. 86-89; cf. Deloche, *Cartulaire de l'abbaye* cit., p. 188.

⁴⁷⁴ Other saints are mentioned in various documents from the *Cartulaire*, or are recorded in the work by Vaslet, though a precise list cannot be made with certainty. Cf. note 469.

⁴⁷⁵ For the complete transcription and translation of the pages into the *Abrégé* by Vaslet devoted to the treasury and its appearance, cf. the appendix.

⁴⁷⁶ The heads of saints Prime and Félicien were kept in a separate reliquary of unspecified form, see Vaslet, *Abregé de l'histoire de l'abbaye de Beaulieu* cit., pp. 85-86, 93-94.

⁴⁷⁷ See Vaslet, *Abregé de l'histoire de l'abbaye de Beaulieu* cit., pp. 95-97; cf. the appendix.

cannot directly associate the cases described in the fifteenth-century inventories to the twelfth or thirteenth centuries, seems plausible that similar reliquaries were conceived in those centuries to display the holy relics when the church was rebuilt starting from 1100.

This hypothesis could be strengthened by the results of the above-mentioned excavations by Lebouteux, which exposed the presence of an empty sarcophagus in the choir area (figg. 3a-b). The archaeologist has proposed to associate that coffin to the «beatorum membra Primi atque Feliciani necnon confessoris Amelii tumulata requiescunt»⁴⁷⁸, stressing how it could be connected to the apsidal wall in pebble, *i.e.* the first church of the monastery⁴⁷⁹. In this sense, the bodies of these saints might had been buried into stone sarcophagi under the apse between the ninth and tenth centuries and moved to new reliquaries during the reconstruction of the church two centuries later⁴⁸⁰.

IV. 1. 2. Remaining Objects

Despite the general misfortune that invested Beaulieu, five pieces of the medieval treasury arrived almost intact to us. These interesting objects have been dated between the eleventh and the thirteenth century and can be considered as a fundamental evidence into the analysis of the relationship with the pilgrims of that period, which interest the present work.

The eldest reliquary has been dated to the eleventh century and consist in is a small vessel (only 17 cm height) (figg. 86-87)⁴⁸¹. It has a peculiar, geometrical shape, consisting in a cylinder based on three small spheres and overlapped by a smaller cylinder, topped by a curved grip on which a monogram was welded (fig. 87). The cylinders and the spheres are made of silver, whereas the grip is in gilded copper. The same material constitutes the metal grill that entirely surrounds the reliquary. According to Grabar, the framework was meant to host plates of coloured stones or rock crystal in the rectangular spaces, whereas the small circles that surrounds in two rows the upper cylinder might have been filled with white opaque glass reproducing pearls. These features along with the analysis of the monogram, recognized as Greek, let Grabar confirm the hypothesis of a Byzantine

⁴⁷⁸ Cf. the tenth-century document CXXXV in the *Cartulaire*, see Deloche, *Cartulaire de l'abbaye* cit., p. 188.

⁴⁷⁹ See Lebouteux, P., *Sondages dans le chœur de l'église abbatiale de Saint-Pierre à Beaulieu-en-Dordogne*, «Centre international d'études romanes. Revue trimestrielle», 1970, pp. 72-76.

⁴⁸⁰ For the spread use to 'elevate' buried relics cf. the previous case of Saint-Martial at Limoges and the latter of Saint-Léonard de Noblat, see C. Andraut-Schmitt, *Saint-Martial de Limoges and the Making of Saint*, in *Romanesque Saints, Shrines and Pilgrimage*, edited by J. McNeill, R. Plant, Abingdon-New York, 2020, pp. 122-147: 129-130; É. Sparhubert, *Sur la route de Compostelle: le chevet d'une "église de pèlerinage" à l'épreuve de la liturgie, Saint-Léonard-de-Noblat*, in *L'image médiévale: Fonctions dans l'espace sacré et structuration de l'espace cultuel*, edited by C. Voyer, É. Sparhubert, Turnhout, 2011, pp. 41-68: 52-54.

⁴⁸¹ See A. Grabar, *Un broc byzantine de Beaulieu dans la Corrèze*, in *Études de civilisation médiévale. Mélanges offerts à Edmond-René Labonde*, edited by the C.É.S.C.M., Poitiers, 1974, pp. 363-366.

production⁴⁸². The circumstances that let this object came to Beaulieu are unknown, though Le Hec proposed to trace them back to the first crusade⁴⁸³. This reliquary has been mentioned by Vaslet, who asserted that it kept many unknown relics⁴⁸⁴. As well as the other surviving objects of the treasury, it was restored by Lucien Toulouse in 1959⁴⁸⁵.

Another reliquary has been associated to the *Œuvre de Limoges* and dated to the first half of the thirteenth century (figg. 88a-b-c). The small box, 15 cm of height and 17 cm of length, is shaped as a parallelepiped based on four cubic pediments and covered with a gabled roof. Made of wood, it is encased in copper plates decorated with *champlevé* enamels⁴⁸⁶. The simple form, recalling a 'miniature' sarcophagus, and the technique of the enamels are comparable to the limousine production of similar cases dated between the end of the twelfth and the fourteenth centuries⁴⁸⁷. The box is decorated with figures on the front and the sides, whereas the back is covered with flowers in an orthogonal framework (fig. 88c). On the front is represented the Adoration of the Magi, set in two scenes (fig. 88a): the upper one, on the pitch, represent the riding Magi following the star, while the second and lower one shows the Adoration itself. On the sides of the box are represented two unknown apostles inside a mandorla (figg. 88b-c). The style of the colourful decorative elements enlivening the blue background and that of the lines of the figures, along with the subject in the narrative scene, justify the attribution and dating⁴⁸⁸. According to Vaslet, this enamelled box contained relics of the saints Prime and Félicien, of saint Cloude and saint Ferréol⁴⁸⁹. On the back

⁴⁸² For the deciphering of the monogram Grabar consulted R. P. V. Laurent, expert in Byzantine seals, which proposed him three solutions. He was inclined to subscribe the first one, reading the monogram as referred to the office of 'master of banquets', see *Ibid.*, 364.

⁴⁸³ The first crusade was proclaimed by pope Urban II in 1095 at Clermont-Ferrand, and counted among its protagonists Raimond IV, count of Toulouse, and largely involved the kingdom of France, see F. Le Hech, *Histoire de Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne et de son pays*, Limoges, 2010, pp. 26, 163; cf. G. M. Cantarella, *Il papato: riforma, primato e tentativi di egemonia*, in *Storia medievale*, edited by F. Benigno, C. Donizelli, C. Fumian, S. Lupo, E. I. Mineo, Roma, 1998, pp. 269-290: 283-284; É. Proust, *La sculpture romane en Bas-Limousin. Un domaine original du grand art languedocien*, Paris, 2004, p. 22.

⁴⁸⁴ See Vaslet, *Abregé de l'histoire de l'abbaye de Beaulieu* cit., p. 96; cf. the appendix.

⁴⁸⁵ See the catalogue sheet of the Direction du Patrimoine, cf. *Reliquaire, dit reliquaire laterne*, conservatory sheet by the Direction du patrimoine (written in 1993, updated in 2019), on www.pop.culture.gouv.fr (12.07.2020).

⁴⁸⁶ The *champlevé* is used for the background with speared figures, gilded and engraved, see B. Barrière, S. Boisset, É. Proust, I. Ribieras, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne*, in *Patrimoine Limousin*, edited by B. Barrière, Limoges, 8 voll., 1991-2002, II, 1993, pp. 17-18. During modern times the wooden core of the box was substitute, cf. *Châsse: l'Adoration des Mages*, conservatory sheet by the Direction du patrimoine (written in 1993, updated in 2018), on www.pop.culture.gouv.fr (12.07.2020).

⁴⁸⁷ See Antoine, É., Caudron, S., *Châsse et plaques de châsse*, in *Corpus des émaux meridionaux. Tome II L'apogée 1190-1215*, edited by M. M. Gautheir, É. Antoine, D. Gaborit-Chopin, Paris, 2011, pp. 39-47; cf. É. Taburet-Delahaye, *L'art de l'émail en Occident depuis l'origine jusqu'au XVe siècle*, in *Émaux sur métal du IXe au XIXe siècle. Histoire, technique et matériaux*, edited by I. Biron, Dijon, 2015, pp. 27-64: 49-52.

⁴⁸⁸ Cf. for comparison, *Ibid.*, pp. 42-43; and the catalogue sheets in the same volume, see É. Antoine, *IA 2 16*, pp. 52-53; C. Descatoire, *IA 2 11*, pp. 48-51.

⁴⁸⁹ After Vaslet, it can be stated that these relics were kept within this enamelled reliquary at least in the eighteenth century, and plausibly from an earlier date, though without any further precision, see Vaslet, *Abregé de l'histoire de l'abbaye de Beaulieu* cit., p. 95; cf. the appendix.

side are still visible the lock hole and the outline of the panel covering the opening through which relics could be put inside (fig. 88c).

Only two other reliquaries survived from the former treasury of Beaulieu, both made of wood covered with silver and shaped in form of arms. The smaller (49 cm height) has been associated to saint Félicité already by Vaslet, himself recalling an ‘ancient inventory’ (figg. 89a-b)⁴⁹⁰. The hand holds a small gilded ball between its index finger and thumb. A band with engraved lozenges enclosed by two stripes of filigree enriched by coloured *cabochons* covers the wrist, whereas the forearm wears a silver ‘cloth’ decorated with applied discs stamped with gilded eagles. In the lower half of the arm, a small arched opening is closed by a grill and once allowed to see the relic or relics within the arm. In the fourteenth or fifteenth century the base in gilded copper, of Limousine production, was added to the reliquary. In an unspecified moment the middle finger was lost, to be replaced by Lucien Toulouse during the 1959 restoration⁴⁹¹.

The other arm reliquary, slightly higher (56 cm height), has been attributed to saint Émelie or Émelien as recorded by Vaslet (figg. 90a-b)⁴⁹². The hand shows the gesture of sign of the cross, *i.e.* the blessing. The wrist and the base are surrounded by two bands of filigree enriched by *cabochons*. The silver sleeve is enlivened by linear folds and presents an opening at the same height of that of saint Félicité, covered with a restored grill. The index finger has been restored during 1959 too, by Lucien Toulouse⁴⁹³. Both these reliquaries have been associated, starting from their features, to the thirteenth century⁴⁹⁴.

The last medieval piece survived from the Beaulieu treasury is the statue of the enthroned Virgin with the Child, known as ‘Virgin of Beaulieu’ (figg. 91-96)⁴⁹⁵. This remarkable in the round sculpture has a wooden core covered with silver and vermeil leaves. It repeats the scheme of the *Sedes sapientiae*, with the Virgin seated frontally on the throne holding Christ on her left knee with her left hand (figg. 91, 92a-b), while the right grasps an ovoid-shaped object, possibly an almond (fig. 93)⁴⁹⁶.

⁴⁹⁰ See *Ibid.*, p. 86; cf. the appendix.

⁴⁹¹ According to the inventory mentioned by Vaslet, the lost finger wore a ring. For the conservative history of this object, cf. *Bras-reliquaire de sainte Félicité*, conservatory sheet by the Direction du patrimoine (written in 1993, updated in 2019), on www.pop.culture.gouv.fr (12.07.2020).

⁴⁹² See Vaslet, *Abregé de l’histoire de l’abbaye de Beaulieu* cit., p. 87.

⁴⁹³ Cf. *Bras-reliquaire de saint Emilien*, conservatory sheet by the Direction du patrimoine (written in 1993, updated in 2019), on www.pop.culture.gouv.fr (12.07.2020).

⁴⁹⁴ Mainly the filigrees, see E. Rupin, *Reliquaires en forme de bras du XIIIe siècle*, «Bulletin de la Société scientifique, historique et archéologique de la Corrèze», 4, 1882, pp. 25-35: 33; cf. Barrière, Boisset, Proust, Ribieras, *Beaulieu sur Dordogne* cit., pp. 18-19.

⁴⁹⁵ The most complete study on the Virgin of Beaulieu has been done by Forsyth, cf. also for the references to previous studies, see I. H. Forsyth, *The Throne of Wisdom. Wood Sculpture of the Madonna in Romanesque France*, Princeton, 2019 (1972), pp. 195-197. Cf. *Statue: Vierge à l’Enfant assise*, conservatory sheet by the Direction du patrimoine (written in 1993, updated in 2018), on www.pop.culture.gouv.fr (12.07.2020).

⁴⁹⁶ For the iconography of the *Sedes sapientiae*, see Forsyth, *The Throne of Wisdom* cit., pp. 22-30. About identification of the object hold by the Virgin, cf. Barrière, Boisset, Proust, Ribieras, *Beaulieu sur Dordogne* cit., p. 17; L. Palustre, E.

The Virgin is dressed in a robe with wide sleeves, over a tight tunic, covered with a mantle recalling the chlamys, being closed on her right shoulders by a brooch. Her head wears a short veil under the crown whereas on her feet are pointed and beaded shoes. Christ sits on a cushion on his mother's knee, crowned and dressed in a tunic with mantle draped around his left shoulder (figg. 92a, 93, 94). With his left hand holds an open book with the inscription IHS XPS, whereas blesses with the open right (fig. 93).

The figures are completely enshrouded by silver leaves, which shape the details. Realised in the repoussé technique, the metal sheaths seem to be the product of a capable hand. Indeed, as already remarked by Forsyth, not only the passage between the silver and vermeil sheaths is always skilfully hidden in the drapery's folds, but the presence of the two colours is carefully balanced and enlivened by geometrical patterns, like in the lining of the Virgin's mantle or on Christ's tunic (fig. 93). Moreover, the drapery itself is realized taking advantage of the repoussé iron both in modelling the creases and in using in a decorative way the horizontal strokes left by the tool (fig. 94)⁴⁹⁷. The same technique can be seen on the exposed parts of the bodies and on the throne. Stripes of *jonc lisse* filigree enriched by cabochons and Classical intaglios are applied on the borders of Mary's tunic and forms the crowns (figg. 91, 92a-b, 94). The latter have been identified as later additions by Forsyth, as well the notable cameo on the Virgin's chest (fig. 96)⁴⁹⁸.

Through the stylistic comparison Forsyth has proposed a dating in second or third quarter of the twelfth century, namely with the Madonna at Notre-Dame d'Orcival (fig. 97) for the metalwork and with the stone sculpture on the right portal in Chartres for the draperies and the rendering of the bodies under them⁴⁹⁹. The statue has been recorded by Vaslet as 'very antique', recalling a 1432 statute which directly mentioned it. The Maurist abbot has reported also the 'miraculous' way through which it escaped the Coligny's pillage of the monastery in 1569: a Huguenot would have redeemed it from another who was about to burn it⁵⁰⁰. Describing this statue in 1873, Jean-Baptiste Poulbrière has reported also its subsequent vicissitude during the French Revolution. Apparently, other saviours came out: the Mlles Albert hid it along with other objects, risking their lives⁵⁰¹. Later returned to the church, the statue was restored in 1959 by Lucien Toulouse⁵⁰². As reported by Forsyth, previous

Rupin, *Discussions sur la Vierge de Beaulieu*, «Bulletin de la Société scientifique, historique et archéologique de la Corrèze», 3, 1881, pp. 171-179.

⁴⁹⁷ See Forsyth, *The Throne of Wisdom* cit., p. 196.

⁴⁹⁸ See references at note 497, cf. Barrière, Boisset, Proust, Ribieras, *Beaulieu sur Dordogne* cit., p. 17. For the Classical intaglios on the crowns and the sleeves, see E. Rupin, *Statue de la Vierge. Conservée dans l'église de Beaulieu (Corrèze)*, «Bulletin de la Société scientifique, historique et archéologique de la Corrèze», 11, 1889, pp. 247-251.

⁴⁹⁹ See Forsyth, *The Throne of Wisdom* cit., pp. 196-197; cf. pp. 168-170 for Notre-Dame d'Orcival.

⁵⁰⁰ See Vaslet, *Abregé de l'histoire de l'abbaye de Beaulieu* cit., pp. 95-96; cf. the appendix.

⁵⁰¹ See J.-B. Poulbrière, *L'église de Beaulieu et son portail sculpté*, in «Bulletin de la société archéologique du Limousin», 22, 1873, pp. 41-103

⁵⁰² Lucien Toulouse restored the damaged metal sheaths on right knee and feet of the Virgin and on the throne, whereas keeping the empty setting of the crowns and sleeves, cf. note 495.

studies confirmed that the Virgin of Beaulieu was conceived as a statue and not as a reliquary. This is visible also through the photographs taken during the twentieth century, which show no sign of compartment for relics (figg. 95, 96)⁵⁰³.

IV. 2. Attractiveness and Functions: The Treasury and the Pilgrims

IV. 2. 1. Display within the Church and Veneration by the Pilgrims

After being introduced into and have crossed the sacred space, the pilgrim could finally physically meet with the holiest part of the church. To accomplish the goal of visiting the shrine, the pilgrim expected to have the possibility to spend time closest possible to the sacred objects. The moments passed in dialogue with the saints allowed the pilgrim to express his or her prayers and to search for the contact with the divine⁵⁰⁴. How could this have been accomplished in Beaulieu? The mentioned loss of the original inner setting of the church preclude the possibility to reconstruct the situation precisely⁵⁰⁵. Once again, it is necessary to rely on Vaslet's account, always keeping in mind that it refers to later documents.

Before try to define the possible placement of the survived objects is important to recall how, being made of light materials and small size, they were thought to be mobile and as such were placed in different spots according to the specific needs⁵⁰⁶. Here will be considered the moment in which these objects were displayed in order to be worshipped by the faithful.

Following the order of the hypothetical itinerary described in the previous chapter (fig. 4b), the pilgrim would have first encountered the chapel of the southern transept dedicated to saints Prime and Félicien (figg. 4b letter a, 38). As recalled above, before 1569 their bodies were hosted within a silver-gilt case, enlivened by images and encrusted with gems. Being disappeared, this case cannot be precisely dated and therefore we can only suppose that it was already present in the twelfth or thirteenth century. Nonetheless, these saints were among the main relics preserved in the church since an early period. It seems likely that at least a similar case, though maybe less decorated, was exposed on their altar already in the half of the twelfth century. Along with it, other reliquaries may have been

⁵⁰³ See *Statue: Vierge à l'Enfant assise*, conservatory sheet by the Direction du patrimoine (written in 1993, updated in 2018), on www.pop.culture.gouv.fr (12.07.2020); namely the pictures number AP58P01041 (1958), AP58P01040 (1958), IVR74_19971900934X (1997), IVR74_19971900933X (1997) (fig. 95).

⁵⁰⁴ The time spent praying in front of the relics was not fixed, as Sigal demonstrated, and could last even numerous days; cf. Hahn, Palladino, *Relics, Reliquaries, Shrines* cit., p. 283, 287; Sigal, *L'homme et le miracle* cit., pp.126-134.

⁵⁰⁵ Cf. paragraph III. 3. 1.

⁵⁰⁶ E. g. the statue of the Virgin, see Forsyth, *The Throne of Wisdom* cit., pp. 38-40.

displayed on the altar, such as that of the heads of the saints and the enamelled box, itself containing relics of Prime and Félicien (figg. 88a-b-c)⁵⁰⁷.

The importance of these saints is remarked by Vaslet for subsequent periods: it was to them that the inhabitants of the bourg and the monks dedicated the *festum Protectionis*, for the miraculous brake of the 1356 siege during the Hundred Years' War, as well as during the plague in 1530 when they turned to the martyr brothers. Indeed, their acquired a growing importance in connection with the inhabitants of the town and the nearby hamlets. Therefore, it can be expected that already in thirteenth century, when the community of the town started to increase its influence, this link began to be strengthened and that locals came to visit in small pilgrimage⁵⁰⁸. For the pilgrim travelling on a long-distance journey, their connection with saint Foy was certainly an attractive element. Indeed, the two brothers were known to be martyred after being inspired by the heroism of the young Foy, beheaded in the public square of Agen few days after her⁵⁰⁹.

A more complex situation concerns the apsidal area. Crossing the information reported by Vaslet and Deloche let us understand only partially the situation. What is shared by these sources and seem to be coherent with a plausible twelfth-century setting, are the dedications of the high altar, to saint Peter, and the eastern apsidal chapel, to the Virgin (fig. 4b letters b and d)⁵¹⁰. It can be expected that the high altar could have hosted the relics of saint Peter, mentioned in a document of *Cartulaire* dated to the second half of the twelfth century⁵¹¹. Along with them, it could have hosted the *magni crucifixi* (maybe the silver cross with the particle of the True Cross within it?) quoted in the 1432 inventory and, if that so, also the lost silver case with the body of saint Félicité⁵¹². Vaslet has reported also the custom to place over the high altar the statue of the Virgin during the main festivities, as described in the 1432 statute of the monastery⁵¹³. It is not likely that the high altar was accessible to pilgrims, however, being elevated over eight steps it could have been visible from the deambulatory⁵¹⁴. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the space between the high altar and the *rond-*

⁵⁰⁷ Cf. the appendix and note 476.

⁵⁰⁸ It was in front of their altar that the candidates to be the consuls of the town were presented to be chosen by the abbot, see Deloche, *Cartulaire de l'abbaye* cit., pp. XIV note 2, CCLXXIV note 4. Cf. Le Hec, *Histoire de Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., pp. 44-45.

⁵⁰⁹ See Vaslet, *Abregé de l'histoire de l'abbaye de Beaulieu* cit., pp. 89-93.

⁵¹⁰ Deloche and Vaslet are referring conflicting information about the dedication of the other chapels, which reflects the changings through the centuries. See Deloche, *Cartulaire de l'abbaye* cit., pp. CCLXXIII-CCLXXIV; Vaslet, *Abregé de l'histoire de l'abbaye de Beaulieu* cit., p. 82.

⁵¹¹ Cf. reference at note 516.

⁵¹² The relics of saint Peter were said to be hosted in a silver-gilt reliquary, cf. the appendix. For the document mentioning the relics of saint Peter, cf. Deloche, *Cartulaire de l'abbaye* cit., pp. 266-268; for the reliquary of saint Félicité and the *magni crucifixi* cf. the appendix.

⁵¹³ Cf. the appendix.

⁵¹⁴ Cf. paragraph III. 3. 1.

point could have served for display of reliquaries and maybe for the statue of the Virgin too, as it is documented in other churches (figg. 4b letter c, 41)⁵¹⁵.

The eastern apsidal chapel, with its altar dedicated to Notre-Dame, would have been another suitable place to display the sculpture of the Virgin, during different periods than the main festivities (figg. 4b letter d, 40b). In this case, the statue would have been turned toward the faithful in the deambulatory and facing the space within the *rond-point* with the other relics. Those could have been also spread in the other apsidal chapels but having no certainties about their dedications further speculations would be hazardous.

After the most-holy space of the apse, the pilgrim would have encountered the chapel of saint Émelie or Émelien in the northern transept (fig. 4b letter e, 42). This chapel is directly mentioned in the document recalled above about the relics of saint Peter. There, the chapel functions as the setting for the sworn of obedience by the vicarious of the monastery Bernardus. The latter takes his oath by touching the Gospels, the cross and the relics of saint Peter⁵¹⁶. The direct reference to abbot Pierre de Saint Serene (r. 1164-1190) date this document, as well as the similar one which describes the submission vow of the lord of Cavanhac. Once again, the submitted man was demanded to touch the Gospels and the relics present on the altar⁵¹⁷. These notices describe how this chapel was used in important moments related to the secular power of the abbey. This function does not exclude the possibility for the pilgrims to venerate the relics of saint Émelie or Émelien and the other present on this altar. It is alluring to think that the arm-shaped reliquary of saint Émelien (figg. 90a-b) was involved in such rites during the thirteenth century, as it has been proved for other similar items by Hahn⁵¹⁸.

Not all the reliquaries were necessarily exposed at the same time but seems likely that the major cases containing the bodies of saints Prime and Félicien as well as those of saint Félicité and saint Émile or Émilien were frequently displayed on their altars.

The moment of worshipping the saint was perceived as very intense. Not only it accomplished the expectations of the tired pilgrim, developed during the journey to reach the shrine, but it was experienced as such by its multisensorial features. The extraordinary visual quality of the reliquaries,

⁵¹⁵ See the paragraph III. 3. 2.; cf. Forsyth, *The Throne of Wisdom* cit., p. 39.

⁵¹⁶ It is the document CXCI. As transcribed by Deloche: «Deinde et super altare B. Emelii, tactis sacrosantis Evangeliis et Cruce dominica, cum reliquiis S. Petri superpositis, fidelitatem juravit.», see Deloche, *Cartulaire de l'abbaye* cit., pp. 266-268.

⁵¹⁷ It is the document CXCVI. As transcribed by Deloche: «[...] accepit, et hominum et fidelitatem ei fecit, tactis sacrosanctis Evangeliis et reliquiis super altare Beati Emelii postis, [...]», see *Ibid.*, pp. 275-277.

⁵¹⁸ See Hahn, *The Voices of the Saints* cit., pp. 20-31. For the touch of reliquaries and the involvement of objects of church treasures during oath-swearing, cf. also J. A. Burrow, *Gestures and Looks in Medieval narrative*, Cambridge, 2002, p. 16; Forsyth, *The Throne of Wisdom* cit., p. 45.

due to both the value of their materials and the high artistic quality of their shapes, were for the most a «once-in-a-lifetime» experience, charged with the aura of sacred relics kept within it, as recalled by Hahn and Palladino⁵¹⁹. The physical features of the reliquaries were enhanced by the atmosphere of the inner space of the church, as already described. The smell of incenses, the light of candles and the sound of prayers echoing in the building would have evoked the supernatural sense of contact with the divine⁵²⁰. From the sources of eleventh and twelfth centuries, Sigal pointed out how the worship was a very emotional and expressive act during the Middle Ages. Crying was not infrequent, and the idea that the more prayers the easier the request would have been listened by the saint led groups of people to gather and supplicate the saint together⁵²¹. This would have been even stronger during nocturnal wakes, when the lightning was provided only by lamps and candles⁵²². Recently, Foletti with the statue reliquary of saint Foy in Conques and Pentcheva with the icon of saint Michael in Venice have demonstrated how the precious surface of these objects was meant to react with the trembling light of candles. The continuous move of the flame was constantly reshaping the face of the figures, moving their gaze as it was alive⁵²³. It was not possible to try such an approach with the statue of the Virgin in Beaulieu. However, the simple difference between the neon light of the glass case currently hosting the treasury, and the sunlight penetrating from the closest window in the morning seems to significantly change the appearance and expressions of faces (cf. figg. 98, 99). Thus, seems plausible to imagine a similar reaction to candlelight.

Along with the materiality of the objects and the physical perception of the ambience, the fundamental contribution of the cultural background completed the experience. It has been recalled already the particular position of the medieval pilgrim, in the quest for the meet with the sacred, whom would have been particularly affected by these situations. The involvement created by the material setting, but also by other people present in the sanctuary and praying God and the saints with emotional zeal, would have been a deeply moving experience. The suggestion created by the context

⁵¹⁹ See Hahn, Palladino, *Relics, Reliquaries, Shrines* cit., pp. 287-289; cf. L. Canetti, *Impronte di gloria. Effigie e ornamento nell'Europa cristiana*, Roma, 2012., p. 239; I. Foletti, *Meeting Saint Faith*, in *Migrating Art Historians on the Sacred Ways*, edited by I. Foletti, K. Kravčiková, A. Palladino, et al., Brno-Roma, 2018, pp. 295-315: 308-309; M. Pastoureau, *L'Église et la couleur, des origines à la Réforme*, «Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes», 147 (1989), pp. 203-230: 215-216.

⁵²⁰ Cf. P. Tichá, *The Visitor's Inner Experience*, in *Migrating Art Historians on the Sacred Ways*, edited by I. Foletti, K. Kravčiková, A. Palladino, et al., Brno-Roma, 2018, pp. 205-215: 213-214.

⁵²¹ See Sigal, *L'homme et le miracle* cit., pp. 126-132. Cf. É. Palazzo, *Liturgie et société au Moyen Âge*, Paris, 2000, pp. 85-92, 172-176.

⁵²² See *Ibid.*, pp. 129-130; cf. Id., *Reliques, pèlerinage et miracles* cit., pp. 204-206. The tenth-century document CL of the *Cartulaire* of Beaulieu informs us about the constant presence of lightened candles on the altar of saint Benedict (not precisely identified within the church), we can expect a similar situation for later periods and over the other altars, see Deloche, *Cartulaire de l'abbaye* cit., pp. CCLXXIV note 6, 207-208.

⁵²³ See respectively: Foletti, *Meeting Saint Faith* cit., pp. 312-315; B. V. Pentcheva, *Glittering Eyes: Animation in the Eastern Eikōn and the Western Imago*, «Codex Aquilarensis», XXXII, 2016, pp. 209-226.

has been expressed by Sigal in reference to the miraculous dream, after the numerous accounts of miracles he studied in 1985:

During the night, the spirit essentially troubled by the hope to be healed soon, affected by the stories of miracles that he heard of, impressed by the wealth of the decoration of the church where it possibly was also the image of the saint, some faithful fell asleep and dreamed that the saint appears to them⁵²⁴.

In these conditions, facing the treasury might have been perceived by the pilgrim as the concrete and real encounter with the sacred. Among the surviving objects of the treasury in Beaulieu, the enthroned Virgin seems to express the best the idea of embodiment of the holy presence (fig. 92a), materialized in all the precious items displayed on the altars⁵²⁵. Indeed, as Forsyth has demonstrated, the Virgin's sculptures were often the focus of a lively worship, being felt as sacred even without keeping relics inside. The statue itself was «understood as having divine personalities or as being sacred presences»⁵²⁶.

We can expect that such an atmosphere was even enhanced during official celebrations, by the presence of the officiating clergy and greater gathering of faithful.

IV. 2. 2. Objects in Performance: The Example of the Virgin of Beaulieu

Another moment for the pilgrim to meet with the sacred objects in Beaulieu was certainly during the liturgies that involved them directly. Aside from the Eucharist and the daily services linked to the life of the monastic community and not always opened to outsiders, the major rituals would have included pilgrims too. Processions and main liturgies have been already evoked in relationship with the sculpted portal, which iconography would have been read according to the liturgy⁵²⁷. A similar involvement can be recalled for the objects of the Beaulieu treasury⁵²⁸.

⁵²⁴ Translated by the author, «Au cours de la nuit, l'esprit essentiellement préoccupé par l'espoir d'une guérison qu'ils avaient entendus, impressionnés par la richesse de la décoration de l'église où se trouvait parfois l'image du saint, certains fidèles s'endormaient et rêvaient que le saint leur apparaissait.», Sigal, *L'homme et le miracle* cit., p. 138.

Sigal is referring to an ill pilgrim hoping to be healed, but a similar alteration can be proposed for the healthy but tired pilgrim facing the treasury, cf. I. Foletti, *Migrating Art Historians. Objects, Bodies and Minds*, in *Migrating Art Historians on the Sacred Ways*, edited by I. Foletti, K. Kravčiková, A. Palladino, et al., Brno-Rome, 2018, pp. 27-57: 40-50.

⁵²⁵ Cf. Foletti, *Migrating Art Historians* cit., p. 44; Forsyth, *The Throne of Wisdom* cit., p. 60.

⁵²⁶ Forsyth, *The Throne of Wisdom* cit., pp. 48-49.

⁵²⁷ Cf. paragraph III. 2. 3. For the value of processions as meant to gather the community and the outsiders, cf. Palazzo, *Liturgie et société* cit., pp. 59-71.

⁵²⁸ Vaslet has reported the reference of the custom of exposing the reliquary case of saints Prime and Félicien on their altar and to later carry it in procession by the consuls and the people of the town, that regarded them as their saint patrons. Vaslet does not date this notice, therefore it is not possible to state if it was already in use during the twelfth or thirteenth century. See Vaslet, *Abregé de l'histoire de l'abbaye de Beaulieu* cit., p. 89. Cf. also Le Hec, *Histoire de Beaulieu-sur-*

Among those arrived to us, the statue of the Virgin would serve as a good example, which suits the centuries considered in the present work. Thanks to the important study made by Forsyth, it is possible to propose few considerations, despite the lack of information on the specific situation at Beaulieu. In particular, the active use of the statue in the liturgical drama related to the Epiphany has been deeply analysed by Forsyth⁵²⁹. The *Officium stellae*, already spread and defined in the twelfth century, was performed after the morning prayers and the Epiphany Mass. During this drama three clerics, dressed up with colourful silken tunics, impersonated the Magi. Following an established itinerary through the church, they finally reached the covered image of the Madonna with the Child. There, other clerics dressed up as midwives replied to the explanation of the Magi's quest by uncovering the image and saying: «Behold, here is the Child whom you seek»⁵³⁰. Subsequently, the Magi offered vessels to the image of the Virgin and Christ, which Forsyth has contended to recognize in the *Sedes sapientiae*⁵³¹. During the Adoration scene, a link was explicitly evoked with the *oblatio*, the offering of the Mass⁵³². Following Forsyth, it is possible to imagine how a sculpture in the round would have had much more spectacular and incisive effect rather than a relief or a painting during the climax of the performance. Thus, the 'mimetic equivalence' of the sculpture with the image of the Mother of God and the Savior would have materialized the divine presence. The involvement in a performance such as the *Officium stellae*, with real humans interacting with it, associated to chants and hymns, would have enhanced the perception of these figures as real manifestation of the divine⁵³³. Moreover, the precious metal sheath enriched by the ancient intaglios and the colourful stones were evoking the supernatural, as well as royal, nature of Mary and Christ (figg. 92a, 94).

The only notice about the use of this sculpture is in the 1432 statute of the monastery, as recalled above, and refers the custom to expose it on the high altar during the major festivities⁵³⁴. We can expect to count the Epiphany among them, or at least that the sculpture could have been likely involved in similar rituals.

Dordogne cit., pp. 44-45. About popular processions during the twelfth century, see Sigal, *L'homme et le miracle* cit., pp. 155-163.

⁵²⁹ See Forsyth, *The Throne of Wisdom* cit., pp. 49-59; cf. also T. Kučerová, *The Cult of the Virgin in Charité-sur-Loire*, in *Migrating Art Historians on the Sacred Ways*, edited by I. Foletti, K. Kravčiková, A. Palladino, et al., Brno-Roma, 2018, pp. 317-333.

⁵³⁰ Translated by Forsyth, «Ecce puer adest quem queritis», see *Ibid.*, p. 57.

⁵³¹ Forsyth has quoted also the hymn that was sang during the offering in the Adoration scene, see *Ibid.*, pp. 53-55, 59. In the context of Beaulieu is tempting to see a possible involvement in this drama of the enameled box with the Adoration of the Magi. Although being a reliquary, Antoine and Caudron recalled Drake Bohem and Taburet-Delahaye whom hold the view that such objects could have been implied in the rituals connected with the Epiphany in the Limousin, cf. Antoine, Caudron, *Châsses et plaques* cit., p. 43.

⁵³² See Forsyth, *The Throne of Wisdom* cit., p. 54.

⁵³³ See Forsyth, *The Throne of Wisdom* cit., pp. 58-59.

⁵³⁴ Cf. note 500.

The cult of the Virgin is not described in its development in the sources of Beaulieu, nonetheless some notices about dedications to her in the area of the town may serve as evidences for the extent of its spread. Within the monastic complex, aside from the above-mentioned apsidal chapel, an oratory was dedicated to Notre-Dame. Now lost, its existence is known from the *Cartulaire*, where a document dated to 1005-1028 circa recorded how the monk Bernard was charged with its inner painted decoration⁵³⁵. Although the original location of this chapel is unknown, a hint might be found in the 1663 plan of the abbey drawn by dom Joseph de la Bérodière (fig. 4a). Indeed, a rectangular building, possibly covered with a groin vault, is marked as 'chapelle du Notre-Dame' (fig. 4b letter f)⁵³⁶. Its placement, oriented as the church, connected with the cemetery, and close to the chapter hall of the monastery, seems to strengthen this hypothesis, though it is not possible to prove it and neither to know if the eleventh-century paintings were still there after the reconstructions made during the twelfth and thirteenth century.

Along with these chapels, seems interesting to notice that the sculpted portal itself was known as to be attributed to Notre-Dame, though no depiction of the Virgin survived within its decoration⁵³⁷. We do not know when the portal started to be associated to the Virgin, although seems that the devotion accorded to her was settled enough to dedicate the parish chapel of the town too, itself dated to the second half of the twelfth century (figg. 10, 11)⁵³⁸. The attribution to the same period of the sculpture of the Virgin allows to suppose that in those decades, and plausibly also in the subsequent centuries, the cult of the Mother of God was rooted for the communities of both the monastery and the town. Therefore, the pilgrim crossing Beaulieu would have plausibly experienced and be oriented to the cult of the Virgin as well.

The focus of this cult would have been the statue of the Virgin of Beaulieu, presenting to the pilgrim an image of Mary and Jesus in their appearance as king and queen of Heaven (fig. 92a). The majestic effect of the silver and vermeil, along with the prestige of the jewelled decorations (figg. 93-94), would have been enlivened by the rituals. As beholder of liturgical dramas and rites in major festivities, the pilgrim would have attended to the highly emotional moments, as during the *Officium stellae*. In that context, the sculpture might have been perceived as blurring the boundaries with the

⁵³⁵ According to the document it was a series of (wall?) paintings depicting episodes from the life of the Virgin. It is the document CLIV, see Deloche, *Cartulaire de l'abbaye* cit., pp. CCLXXV, 213-215.

⁵³⁶ It is the building with rectangular ground marked with 'D' and signed with crossing lines from its corners (a groin vault?), see Paris, Archives Nationales, NIII, Corrèze, 12.1, D. J. de la Bérodière, *Plan de l'abbaye et monastère de Beaulieu, diocese de Lymoges*, 1663. Cf. the caption of mark 'D' into the list associated to the plan, see Paris, Archives Nationales, NIII, Corrèze, 12.9, D. J. de la Bérodière, *Devis sur l'estat present de l'enclos et des bastimens y contenus de l'abbaye et monastère de Beaulieu au diocèse de Lymoges*, 1663.

⁵³⁷ Cf. J. M. Berland, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne*, Paris, 1973, pp. 3, 23; J.-B. Poulbrière, *L'église de Beaulieu et son portail sculpté*, in «Bulletin de la société archéologique du Limousin», 22, 1873, pp. 41-103: 82.

⁵³⁸ See Barrière, Boisset, Proust, Rivas, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., p. 37; Berland, *Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne* cit., pp. 27-30; E. Lefèvre-Pontalis, *Beaulieu*, in *Congrès archéologique de France*, proceedings of the national conference (Limoges, 1921), edited by the Société française d'archéologie, Paris, 1923, pp. 365-394: 392-393.

divine, invisible world and the visible one, therefore strengthening the impression of iconic presence⁵³⁹. As Forsyth has put it, for the medieval beholder the statue of the Virgin was « [...] the embodiment of the Romanesque vision of hieratic divinity. But the image was also endowed by his imagination with a vivid, living reality»⁵⁴⁰.

⁵³⁹ Cf. H. Belting, *Iconic Presence. Images in Religious Traditions*, «Material Religion. The Journal of Objects, Art and Belief», 12/2, 2016, pp. 235-237.

⁵⁴⁰ See Forsyth, *The Throne of Wisdom* cit., p. 60.

IV. 3. Conclusions

For the medieval pilgrim travelling towards a shrine, the climax of the experience was the meeting with the sacred, which reveal itself in the holy core of the sanctuary. This revelation was accomplished through the display of sacred objects that were believed to have a direct link with the divine, and which constituted the treasury of the church. In the present chapter it has been attempted a reconstruction of the treasury at Beaulieu, starting from the evidences and the objects left after the struggles that the institution passed through from the sixteenth century onward.

Starting from what has been left, it has been recalled the value that the pilgrim travelling in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries might have attribute to the encounter with the sacred at Beaulieu. Within the limits of this highly hypothetical field, the focus has been put on the statue of the Virgin (figg. 91-92a-b), which seems to better embody the ideal ‘interlocutor’ in the dialogue between the sacred and the pilgrim. Shining in silver and gold, dressed in precious and ancient gems, the statue would have materialized the Virgin Mary and her Son creating a direct connection, in the eyes and mind of the pilgrim, with the heavenly world (fig. 92a)⁵⁴¹.

Through the personal pray as well as through official liturgies, such as the *Officium stellae* or processions, the statue conceived as mediator between the invisible and the visible, the divine and the human, would have materialized the sacred with vivid consistence⁵⁴². Indeed, as Forsyth demonstrated, such sculptures were associated with personalities and human emotions, activating the possibility of a dialogue with the real persons⁵⁴³. As a consequence, they were seen as real divine presence.

The example of the Virgin might be extended to other cult objects, namely the relics mediated through their reliquaries, which frequently raised intense popular worship and devotion. The situation in Beaulieu does not allow us to apply such a discourse, since the main reliquaries are lost.

After the dialogue with the saint and, sometimes, have experienced a miracle the pilgrim would have shown his or her devotion and gratitude through a donation⁵⁴⁴. Later he or she would have returned on the route, heading to the next sanctuary or towards home, with a new sacred experience in his or her memories.

⁵⁴¹ Cf. Hahn, Palladino, *Relics, Reliquaries, Shrines* cit., pp. 287-289.

⁵⁴² Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 289-291; Rupin, *Statue de la Vierge* cit., p. 250.

⁵⁴³ See Forsyth, *The Throne of Wisdom* cit., pp. 45-49.

⁵⁴⁴ These donations could have been an ex voto or oblation to the monastery, as well as candles, cf. Hahn, Palladino, *Relics, Reliquaries, Shrines* cit., p. 286; Hahn, *The Voices of the Saints* cit., pp. 28-29; Sigal, *L’homme et le miracle* cit., pp. 147-149.

Conclusions

The church of Saint-Pierre at Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne has been the object, through the preceding chapters, of different perspectives. As shown in the first chapter, the previous studies only recently dealt with the fruition of the church, working with its plausible audience. Indeed, starting from the nineteenth century, the church has been the object of various approaches. From general and descriptive method that, to the third decade of the twentieth century, covered the general features of the church, to that focused on the iconography of the sculpted portal and its possible sources, as well as the stylistic perspective, creating links with other churches on the architectural and sculptural levels. Finally, the latest studies have concerned also the possible function and the plausible ‘users’ of the church, focused mainly on the portal and the monks⁵⁴⁵.

Nonetheless, the presence of pilgrims at Beaulieu was already suggested in the first half of the twentieth century, but never analysed. Indeed, Lefèvre-Pontalis in 1923 and Rey in 1936 referred to the audience involved in the church as generally composed by three ‘groups’: the monks, the inhabitants of the town, and the travellers⁵⁴⁶. About the monks the main contribution is that by Vescovi, who has written in 2017 concerning the possible activation of the portal’s imagery through the liturgies of Lent and Easter⁵⁴⁷. For the inhabitants of the town, it has been shown how the existence of a structured community is still difficult to define for the twelfth century but can be proved for the subsequent century. Nevertheless, their presence within the church has not been further studied yet, although early studies on the written sources connected with Beaulieu have suggested possible paths of research⁵⁴⁸.

In the present work, after dating and describing the church from the stylistic point of view in the second chapter, it has been proposed a possible reading from the perspective of the ‘users’. Among them, the ‘category’ of the pilgrims has been selected as main focus. Thus, the church has been studied as a ‘systemic ensemble’, both as connected to its landscape and as a complex object,

⁵⁴⁵ Cf. C. E. Besancon, *The French Romanesque Portals of Moissac, Souillac and Beaulieu: a Response to the Papal Reform Movement and Popular Heresy*, PhD Thesis, University of Southern California, a. y. 2012-2013, supervisor C. Malone; B. Franzé, *Art et réforme clunisienne: le porche sculpté de Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne*, «Bulletin du Centre d’études médiévales Saint-Germain d’Auxerre», 18/2, 2014, pp. 1-33; É. Haddad, *Le bien a l’épreuve du mal. À partir du tympan de Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne, adversité apocalyptique et image analogiste*, PhD Thesis, École de Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, a. y. 2018-2019, supervisor M. A. Polo de Beaulieu; M. L. Vescovi, *An Eschatological Mirror. The Romanesque Portal of Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne*, «Gesta. International Center of Medieval Art», vol. 56/1, 2017, pp. 53-80.

⁵⁴⁶ E. Lefèvre-Pontalis, *Beaulieu*, in *Congrès archéologique de France*, proceedings of the national conference (Limoges, 1921), edited by the Société française d’archéologie, Paris, 1923, pp. 365-394; R. Rey, *La sculpture romane languadocienne*, Toulouse-Paris, 1936, pp. 239-248.

⁵⁴⁷ See Vescovi, *An Eschatological Mirror* cit., pp. 53-80.

⁵⁴⁸ J. E. M. Deloche, *Cartulaire de l’abbaye de Beaulieu en Limousin*, Paris, 1859, pp. XXXV-XLVI, 1-13, 43-45, 250-251.

composed by different parts deeply linked with each other. As such, the approach of the pilgrim both to the town and to the church has been analysed in the third chapter, as a continuative experience.

After a brief consideration about the environmental condition into which Beaulieu is placed, the possible connection of the town with the main pilgrimage trails have been investigated. Indeed, none of the major routes crossing France and developed between the eleventh and the twelfth centuries as pilgrimage itineraries passed through Beaulieu. Nonetheless, the monastery could have been plausibly involved to the web of detours covering the region.

Far from aiming to a complete reconstruction, the chapter follows narrowing the focus more precisely on Beaulieu, trying to recreate a hypothetical pilgrim's path heading to the shrine. From the first approach to the surroundings of the town to the core of the sacred space, the various (and scarce) evidences left from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries have been considered. To better define the picture of the town, the monastery, and the church in that period the written and documentary sources have been involved too, though mainly subscribed to later centuries.

Defining the different 'steps' of such an experience some interesting points emerged. Indeed, the perception of the pilgrim was peculiar, influenced by his or her own position as 'travellers of the sacred', which means a mental aptitude and an altered physical state⁵⁴⁹. In these conditions the pilgrim would have been strongly moved by the atmosphere itself that surrounded the sacred building and objects.

A special attention has been given to the sculpted portal, being the main surviving decoration of the church. As threshold of the sacred space, its ambivalent nature between the divine and the mundane worlds, and the presence of such a rich imagery has been considered from the perspective of the pilgrim. In this sense, it has been shown how the experience of this interaction could have changed according to different conditions. The presence (or absence) of 'intermediary' figures, such as the monks of the community, and the possibility (or not) to access the interior (*i.e.* to physically cross the threshold) have been identified as distinctive characteristics.

Facing the closed doors, the pilgrim would have been left alone to experience a direct and private relationship with the imagery of the porch. Quite the opposite, the same ensemble of images would have been perceived differently when involved in a ritual. Two cases have been analysed: the hospitality of the pilgrim, *i.e.* the apotropaic and purifying ritual of welcoming described in the *Regula Sancti Benedicti*, and the official liturgy, where he or she would have participated only as part of the audience (*e.g.* the liturgies officed during Lent and Easter). The various layers of meaning of the sculptures would have been respectively evoked and enhanced (or not) during these different

⁵⁴⁹ Cf. I. Foletti, *Migrating Art Historians. Objects, Bodies and Minds*, in *Migrating Art Historians on the Sacred Ways*, edited by I. Foletti, K. Kravčiková, A. Palladino, et al., Brno-Rome, 2018, pp. 27-57.

situations, from the personal reflection with the closed doors to the more implied and deeper significances recalled by the official liturgy⁵⁵⁰.

The final part of the chapter has been devoted to the inner space of the church, trying to define a hypothetical path that the pilgrim could have followed in order to visit and meet with the sacred core, *i.e.* the treasury. Indeed, after being allowed to enter the inside the church, the pilgrim would have been surrounded by the atmosphere create to enhance the holiness of the place. Unfortunately, the loss of the larger part of the objects and decorations of the inner space makes difficult to propose a precise reconstruction of the itinerary and the plausible aura that would have surround the pilgrim walking within the church. Because of that, the attempt of reconstruction has been heavily limited, and involved mainly the documents and sources reporting the situation of the church before the major losses and modifications, but which are not enough to certainly reconstruct the medieval shape.

Finally, the last chapter has been devoted to main element of attraction for the pilgrim: the treasury of the church. Sacred core of the whole monastic complex, the ensemble of relics and precious objects suffered many damages and losses, being victim of the same troubles that invested the architecture and decorations of the church and the monastery during the early modern period. Nevertheless, a hypothetical (and incomplete) reconstruction of its twelfth- and thirteenth-century state has been proposed through the analysis of both the written sources and the surviving objects. These two fixed points have permitted to draw few considerations about the possible experience of the treasury by the pilgrim, focusing on the main relics of the monastery. Once again, the effect of different contexts has been considered. Indeed, the last paragraph has been devoted to the so-called 'Virgin of Beaulieu'. This wooden sculpture, covered with metal sheaths and jewels, has been studied following the 1972 research by Forsyth about the French *Sedes sapientiae* of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Following her description of the functions of these objects, the Virgin of Beaulieu has been considered not only in the moment of direct worship by the pilgrim but also in the liturgies that could have enhanced its material and intangible qualities. By emphasizing its symbolic value, the boundaries between visible and invisible would have been blurred in the eyes and imagination of the beholder, evoking the sculpture as an iconic presence, as defined by Hans Belting⁵⁵¹. A pilgrim would have been certainly deeply moved by such a situation.

⁵⁵⁰ Cf. I. Foletti, *Liminality. Space and Imagination*, in *Migrating Art Historians on the Sacred Ways*, edited by I. Foletti, K. Kravčiková, A. Palladino, et al., Brno-Roma, 2018, pp. 109-117: 114-116; Vescovi, *An Eschatological Mirror* cit., pp. 53-80.

⁵⁵¹ See H. Belting, *Iconic Presence. Images in Religious Traditions*, «Material Religion. The Journal of Objects, Art and Belief», 12/2, 2016, pp. 235-237.

Thus, the ‘ideal pilgrim’ reaching Beaulieu in the second half twelfth or in the thirteenth century would have probably met a growing town, partially embraced by ramparts, surrounding a monastic complex rebuilt in the twelfth century, from the impulse given by the newly affirmed power of the Cluniac abbots. To this power should be ascribed the enrichment of the abbey too, that would have financed the reconstruction of the complex as well as the acquisition of the treasury pieces. Within the latter some of the saints acquired an increasing connection with the recent communal institutions, especially during the thirteenth century. The complex dynamic of power playing inside the church would have not affected too much the pilgrim, which attention would have been focused on the meeting with the sacred.

To conclude, the present work tried to propose a new perspective on the church of Saint-Pierre at Beaulieu, as a complex object experienced through the eyes and mind of the medieval pilgrim. Nonetheless, the ambition has not been that of an exhaustive and complete reconstruction, being impeded also by the wide loss of both material evidences and written sources. But other limits have been set, in order to respect the dimension and possibilities offered by the present thesis, which could be extended in a deeper analysis. The pilgrims have been considered as ‘unified category’, although the differences of status and genre influenced certainly both the access and the move within the church⁵⁵². Other elements that are suitable to be further investigated are the routes joining Beaulieu to the detours of the pilgrimage trails. In the present study I laid on the documents of the first cadastre of the region, dated to 1832-1835, but an analysis involving older documents could provide more precision in the statement discussed above. The same could be said for the documents consulted, which could be expanded with a wider gaze, including also other evidences connected to similar or closer examples in the same area. The treasury itself has been considered only in its main pieces and relics and could be studied more in depth.

Within these limits, the present thesis has tried to point out the idea, the possibility of a reading of the church also including the lost parts which have left traces in the written sources. By evoking them through the gaze of the approaching pilgrim not only the intimate connection of architecture, sculpture, goldsmithing, and all the other material and immaterial elements of the church, has been enhanced, but also their rich and variable nature in terms of meaning and perception.

⁵⁵² Cf. A. E. Bailey, *Modern and Medieval Approaches to Pilgrimage, Gender and Sacred Space*, «History and Anthropology», 24/4, 2013, pp. 493-512.

Appendix

Translation and transcription of the 1727 record by dom Amand Vaslet of the treasury at the monastery of Saint-Pierre in Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne, objects and inventories⁵⁵³

The body of st. Félicité, he [bishop Rodolphe of Tourenne] wanted to leave it in his monastery at Beaulieu. According to the *Cartulaire*, the body of st. Félicité rested in the said monastery in the fourth year of Charles the Child, which refers to the year 863 (document of the donation of Soiniac, made by st. Rudolphe). Following an ancient inventory of the relics of this same monastery (inventory made on the 27th of March of 1432), the body and the bones of st. Félicité, martyr, rested in our abbey: *In the same way over the mentioned altar, at the feet of the large crucifix, there is a quite large case, made of wood, covered with silver and gilded, which is said to contain the body and the bones of st. Félicité*, etc. And in another ancient inventory the arm of st. Félicité is mentioned: *In the same way another silver reliquary is presented, with its door or access, made in the shape of the arm of the blessed st. Félicité. It holds a small bread, in gilded silver, with a ring on its middle finger, that etc.* It is the only relic of the body of st. Félicité which is still at the monastery, the rest of the body suffered the fate of many other relics, which were burnt by the army of the princes and the admiral Coligny (all Calvinists), when they captured the town of Beaulieu and sacked the monastery in 1569.

It is a tradition that this monastery also possessed the body of st. Émelie or Émeli, monk. The ancient breviary of the abbey, written in Old Gothic, assumes his body. In the third lesson, it says: *Certainly, we enrich our church with many sacred things also of this (of st. Émelie) most holy body, this place treasure of many prayers.* In a donation of the *Cartulaire*, fol. 105, it is assumed the presence of the body of st. Émelie within the church of the monastery; it says: *The sacred place ... of the monastery at Beaulieu, which is consecrated to st. Peter the benevolent bearer of keys, and where rest the blessed buried limbs of Prime and Félicien, as well as Émelie the confessor.* But it appears that it was also burned by the Calvinists, for now there is only an arm covered with silver leaves, sixteen inches long, into which there are relics of st. Émelien, religious and confessor, to which is dedicated a chapel in the transept, in the northern arm. It is on the altar of this chapel, as I already said, that those whom paid tribute to the abbot of this monastery were used to do that, as indeed is proved by the *Cartulaire* (homage of the lord of Cavaignac to the abbot Pierre de Saint-Céré in 1188).

⁵⁵³ See A. Vaslet, *Abrégé de l'histoire de l'abbaye de Saint-Pierre de Beaulieu en Bas-Limousin*, edited by J.-B. Poulbrière, «Bulletin de la société scientifique, historique et archéologique de la Corrèze», 6, 1884, pp. 58-178: pp. 85-87, 89, 93-97.

It was established and solemnized the feast of saint Émelie according to the rite of the first class of the first order, as the feast of one of the main saint patrons of the monastery. [...]

The main relics that were preserved within the church at Beaulieu and which escaped the fury and the rage of Calvinists, are those of the bodies or bones of the glorious martyrs saints Prime and Félicien, under the protection of which are the people of the town as well as of the nearby area, who came there seek help for their needs and necessities. [...] These [of st. Prime and st. Félicien] relics were precious kept in a beautiful case, covered with gilded silver leaves which decorations are described in an old inventory of 1433: «On the upper part two angels, one on each side, with eight apples [or pomes]; and in the middle on the front the image of the saint Virgin; and all about there are other images; and on the top the image of Our Lord J.-C.; and on the upper part there are six silver images, and under the image of Our Lord there is a silver crucifix, and under the crucifix there are many precious stones and a majesty of the saint Virgin: on the right is an image of an abbot and on the left there is an image of a monk; and on the lower part there are eight images, and the two of the middle are those of the saints Prime and Félicien, all in gilded vermeil.» The said inventory records a large number of precious stones.

The heads of the saint martyrs have been divided from their bones, in a separate reliquary.

This rich case exited the rage, the desire and the avarice of the Calvinists' army, led by the princes and the admiral of Coligny, when they entered in the town of Beaulieu in the year 1569: they took it, along with all the rest they found within the monastery, as we will see below. [...]

There is a small box of enamelled brass, about a half-foot long, into which there are relics of the saints Prime and Félicien, of saint Cloud and of the saint Ferréol.

The monastery has the luck to possess also a particle of the true cross, installed into a silver cross about a foot long. Our *Cartulaire* remarks that at the time of abbot Humbert, lived in 1190, there were relics of the true cross; it also refers that there were relics of st. Peter in 898.

There is an image of Our Lady holding in her arms the most holy child Jesus; it is covered with silver leaves and is about two feet long; the two heads wear crowns. This holy image is very ancient and, following the statute of 1432, it was used to be exposed, at the main festivities, on the high altar, and at the eve of the day in which it was exposed, the abbot was obliged to pay the refreshments. It was miraculously preserved at the time of the raid on the abbey by the soldiers of the admiral Coligny: it was a Huguenot who saved it himself, redeeming it from another who took it away to be burned.

Let us note one more reliquary in yellow brass, made as a pyramid on a base of chandelier, and in which are kept relics of st. Catherine, virgin and martyr; - and another reliquary in silver-plated

brass, made in form of a tower, with a small chain, and in which are kept many relics of which there are no notices.

There is also an ivory comb that is said to be of st. Rodolphe, our founder; the people with fever drinks water from the row of teeth of this comb and find themselves relieved.

Here are the only relics that escaped the Calvinists' fury; since before their raid the abbey possessed many other beautiful relics, as one can see from the ancient inventories, which mention a case in which were resting the bones of three saints Innocents, the relics of st. Amand, of st. Desidérius, and a piece of the arm of st. Rudolphe, our founder; - of a reliquary in gilded vermeil where were kept relics of st. Peter; - of another silver reliquary, in the shape of a house, in which there were relics of st. Martial, - and several others.

Pour le corps de sainte-Félicité, il [évêque Rodolphe de Tourenne] voulut le laisser dans son monastère de Beaulieu. Suivant le *Cartulaire*, le corps de sainte Félicité reposait dans ledit monastère l'an 4^e de Charles-le-Jeune, qui revient à l'an 863 (charte de la donation de Sioniac, faite par saint Rudolphe). Suivant un ancien inventaire des reliques de ce même monastère (inventaire fait le 27 mars 1432), le corps ou les ossements de sainte Félicité, martyre, reposent dans notre abbaye : *Item super dictum altare, ad pedem magni crucifixi, est griba (capsa?) magna satis, de fuste, desuper cooperta de argento et super deaurata, in qua dicitur inesse corpus vel ossa sanctae Felicitatis*, etc. Et dans un autre ancien inventaire il est parlé du bras de sainte Félicité : *Item fuit exhibitum aliud reliquiare argenteum, cum sua porta seu janua, factum ad modum brachii, infra quod consistit brachium beatae Felicitatis. Quand defertur unum panum parvum, argenteum, deauratum, cum uno annulo in medio digitorum, in quo*, etc. C'est la seule relique du corps de sainte Félicité qui soit au monastère, le reste du corps ayant eu le sort de plusieurs autres reliques, qui furent brûlées par l'armée des princes et de l'amiral de Coligny (tous calvinistes), quand ils prirent la ville de Beaulieu et pillèrent le monastère en 1569.

On tient de tradition que ledit monastère possédait aussi le corps de saint Émelie ou Émeli, moine. L'ancien vréviaire de l'abbaye, écrit en vieux gothique, y suppose son corps. A la III^e leçon, il dit : *Nos quidem de praesentia etiam sacratissimi ipsius (Emelii) corporis ecclesiam nostram sacrumque hunc locum tanti precii thesauro ditavit*. Dans une donation du *Cartulaire*, fol. 105, on suppose le corps de saint Émelie dans l'église du monastère ; il y est dit : *Locum sacrum... Bellilocensi monasterii qui est consecratus in honore almi clavigeris Petri et [ubi] beatorum membra tumulata requiescunt Primi atque Feliciani, necne confessoris Æmelii*. Mais il y a apparence qu'il a été brûlé aussi par les calvinistes, car à présent on n'a plus qu'un bras couvert de lames d'argent, long de seize pouces, dans lequel il y a des reliques de saint Émelien, confesseur et religieux, à l'honneur duquel nous avons aussi une chapelle dans la croisée, du côté du nord. C'est sur l'autel de cette chapelle, comme j'ai déjà dit, que ceux qui rendaient hommage à l'abbé de ce monastère avaient accoutumé de le faire, comme en fait foi le *Cartulaire* (hommage du sieur de Cavignac à l'abbé Pierre de Saint-Céré en 1088). On fait et solennise la fête de saint Émelie selon le rite de la première classe et du premier ordre, comme étant la fête d'un des principaux patrons du monastère. [...]

Les principales reliques qui se soient conservées dans l'église de Beaulieu et qui aient échappé à la fureur et à la rage des calvinistes, sont les corps ou ossements des glorieux martyrs saints Prime et Félicien, à la protection et à l'intercession desquels les peuples, tant du pays que des lieux circonvoisins, recourent dans leurs besoins et nécessités. [...] Ces saintes reliques étaient précieusement conservées dans une belle châsse, couvertes de lames d'argent dorées, dont les ornements sont marqués dans un vieil inventaire de 1433 : « A la partie supérieure deux anges, un de

chaque côté, avec huit pommes ; et au milieu par-devant l'image de la Sainte-Vierge ; et tout atour sont d'autres images ; et à la cime l'image de Notre-Seigneur J.-C. ; et à la partie supérieure il y a six images d'argent ; et sous l'image de Notre-Seigneur est un crucifix d'argent, et sous le crucifix il y a plusieurs pierres précieuses et une majesté de la Sainte-Vierge : à la droite est une image d'abbé et à la gauche est l'image d'un moine ; et à la partie inférieure il y a huit images, et les deux du milieu sont celles des saints Prime et Félicien, toutes de vermeil [ou argent] doré. » Ledit inventaire marque un grand nombre de pierres précieuses.

Les chefs des saints martyrs étaient séparés de leurs ossements, dans un reliquaire particulier.

Cette riche châsse excita la rage, la convoitise et l'avarice de l'armée des calvinistes, commandée par les princes et l'amiral de Coligny, quand ils entrèrent dans la ville de Beaulieu en l'an 1569 : ils l'emportèrent, avec tout ce qu'ils trouvèrent dans le monastère, comme nous le dirons plus loin. [...]

Mentionnons un petit coffret de laiton émaillé, long d'environ un demi-pied, où il y a des reliques des saints Prime et Félicien, de saint Cloud et de saint Ferréol.

Le monastère a le bonheur d'avoir de plus une particule de la vraie croix, enchâssée dans une croix d'argent longue environ d'un pied. Notre Cartulaire remarque que du temps de l'abbé Humbert, qui vivait en 1190, il y avait des reliques de la vraie croix ; il nous apprend aussi qu'il y en avait de saint Pierre en 898.

Il y a une image de Notre-Dame tenant entre ses bras son très-saint enfant Jésus ; elle est couverte de lames d'argent et haute environ de deux pieds ; les deux têtes portent couronne. Cette sainte image est très-ancienne et, suivant les statuts de 1432, on était dans la coutume de l'exposer, aux grandes fêtes, sur le grand autel, et la veille des jours où on l'exposait, l'abbé était obligé de payer la collation. Elle fut miraculeusement conservée lors du pillage de l'abbaye par les soldats de l'amiral Coligny : ce fut un huguenot lui-même qui la sauva, en la rachetant d'un autre qui l'emportait pour la faire brûler.

Notons encore un reliquaire de laiton jaune, fait en pyramide sur un pied de chandelier, et dans lequel sont des reliques de sainte Catherine, vierge et martyre ; - plus un reliquaire de laiton argenté, fait en façon de tour, avec une petite chaîne, et dans lequel sont plusieurs reliques sur lesquelles on n'a pas de renseignements.

Il y a aussi un peigne d'ivoire qu'on dit être de saint Rodolphe, notre fondateur ; les malades de la fièvre prennent dans de l'eau de la râpüre de ce peigne et se trouvent soulagés.

Voilà les seules reliques qui ont échappé à la fureur des calvinistes ; cas avant son pillage l'abbaye possédait plusieurs autres belles reliques, comme on peut le voir dans les inventaires anciens, qui font mention d'une châsse où reposaient les ossements de trois saints Innocents, des reliques de saint Amand, de saint Desidérius, et une partie du bras de saint Rodolphe, notre fondateur ; - d'un

reliquaire de vermeil [ou argent] doré où il y avait des reliques de saint Pierre ; - d'un autre reliquaire d'argent, en façon de maison, où il y avait des reliques de saint Martial, - et de plusieurs autres encore.

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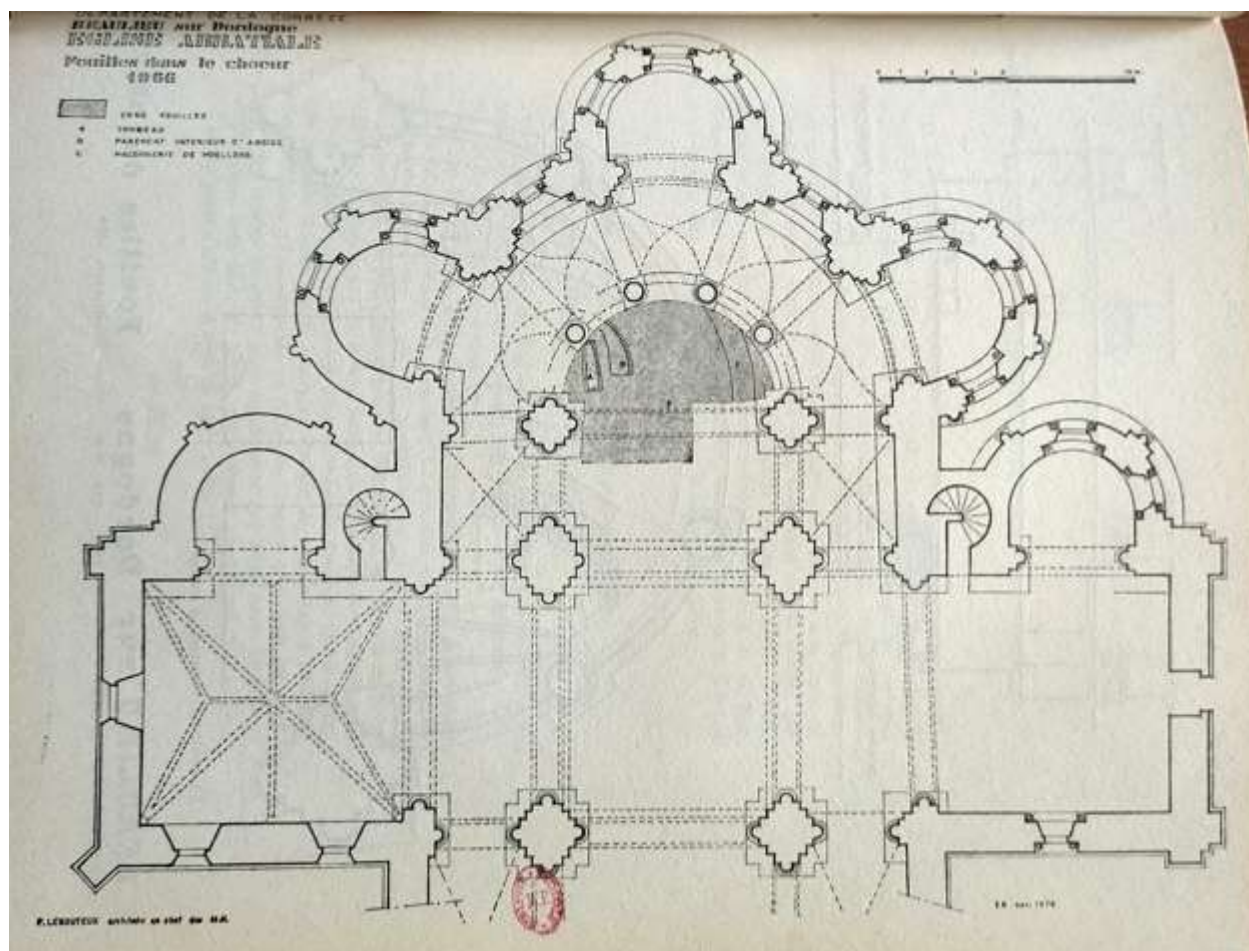


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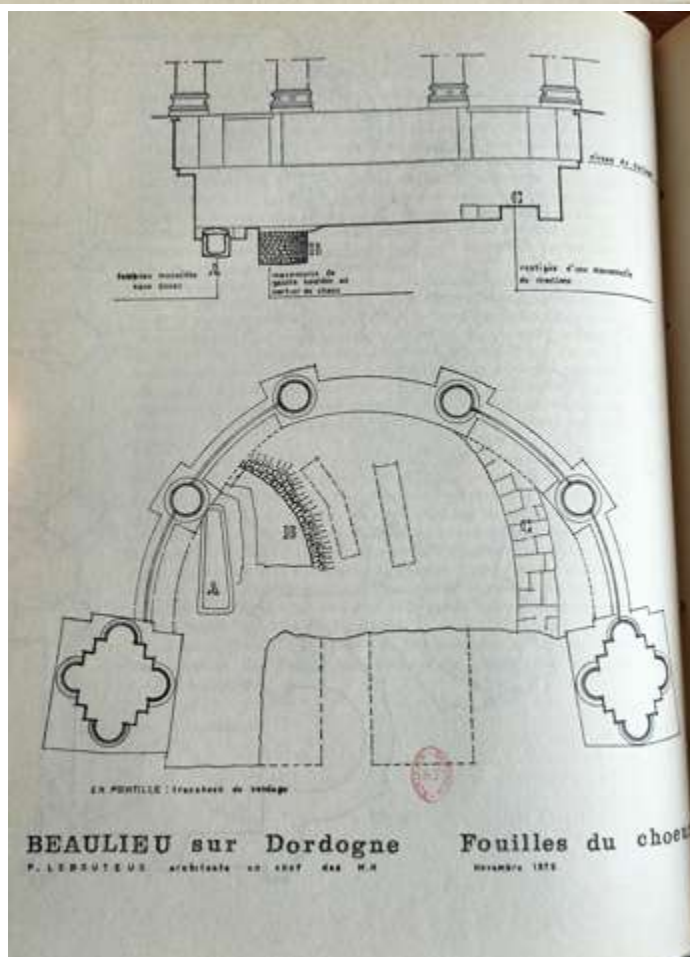


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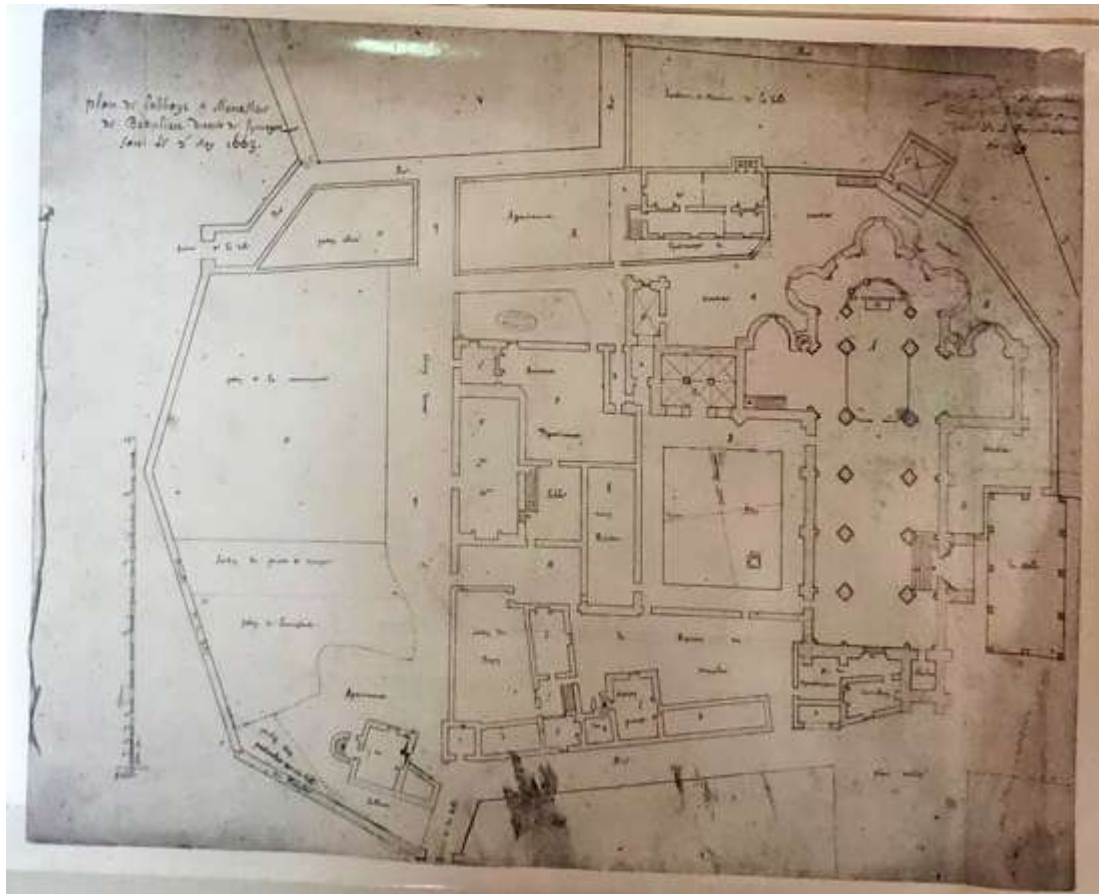


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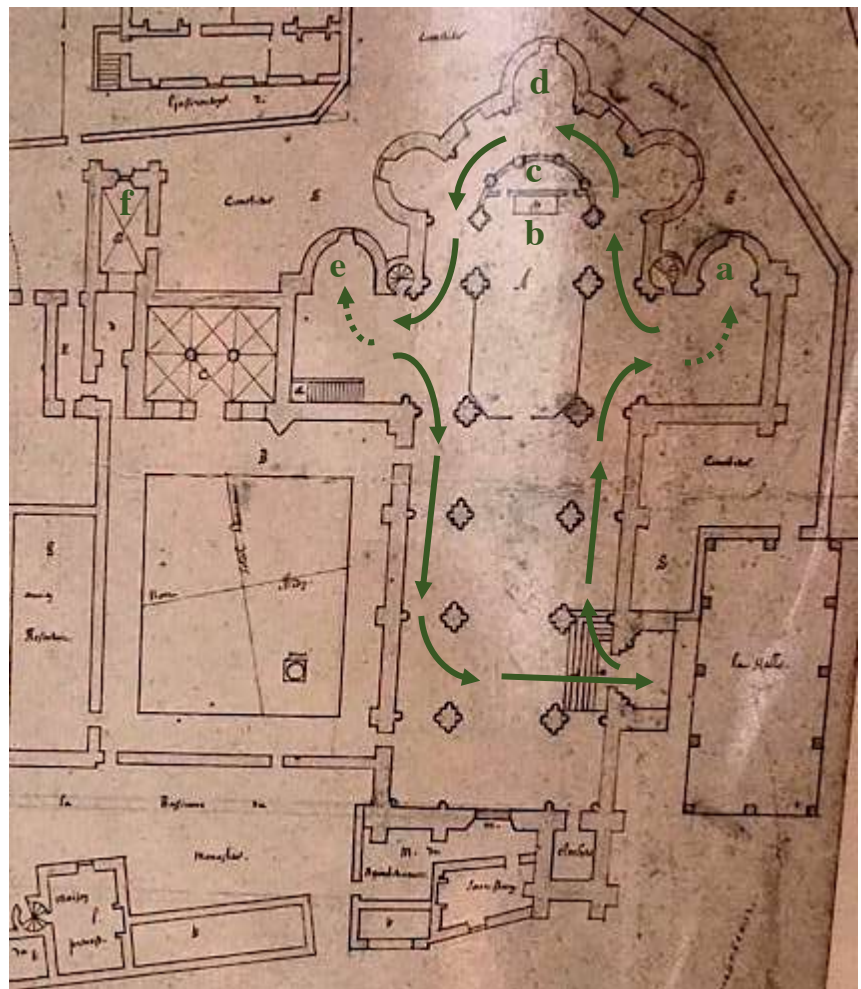


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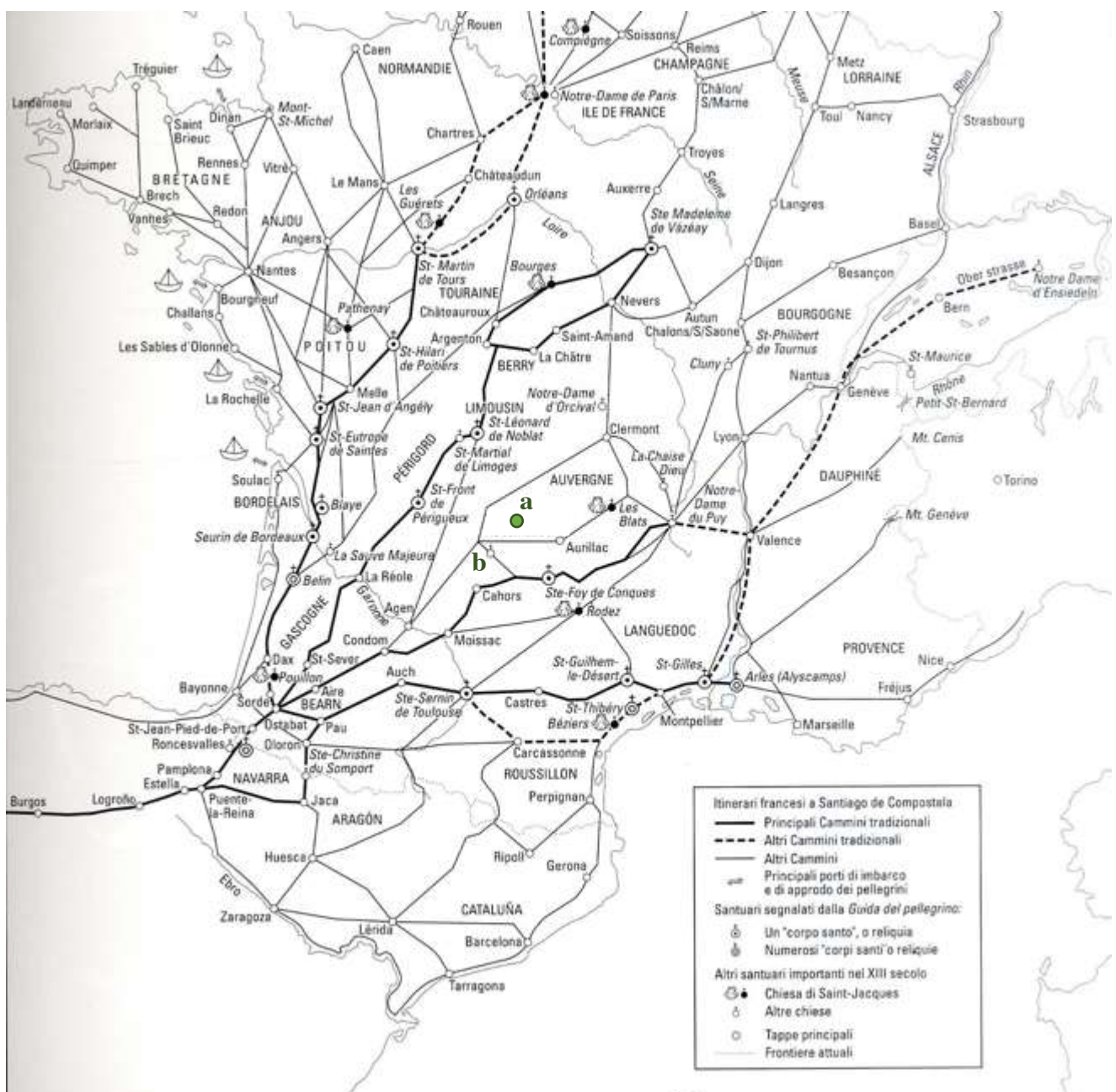




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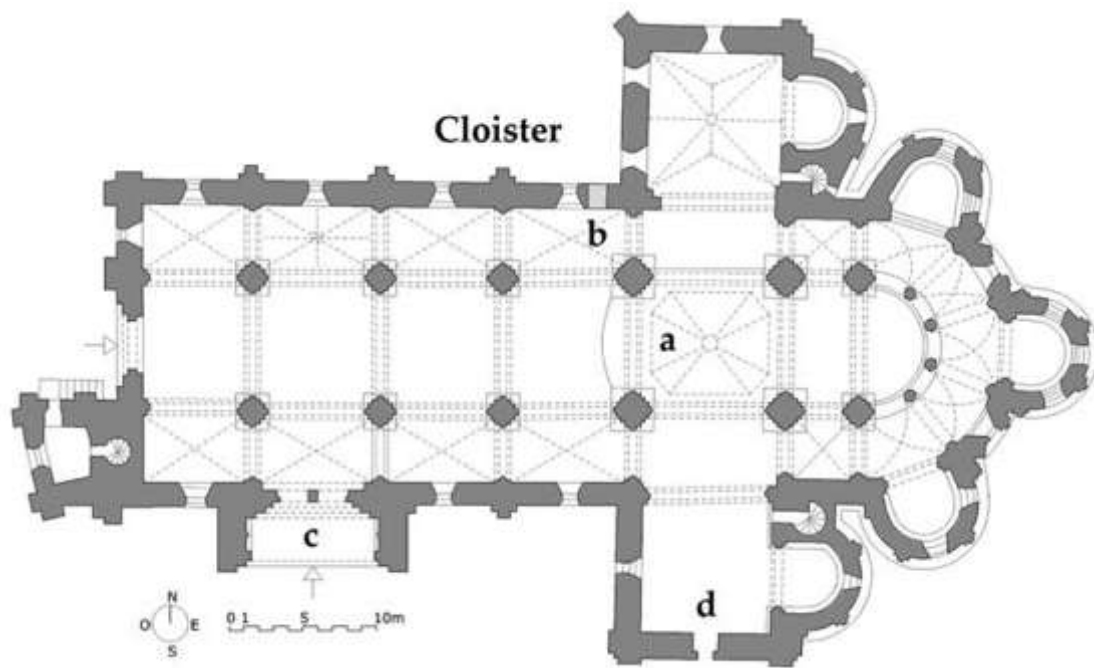


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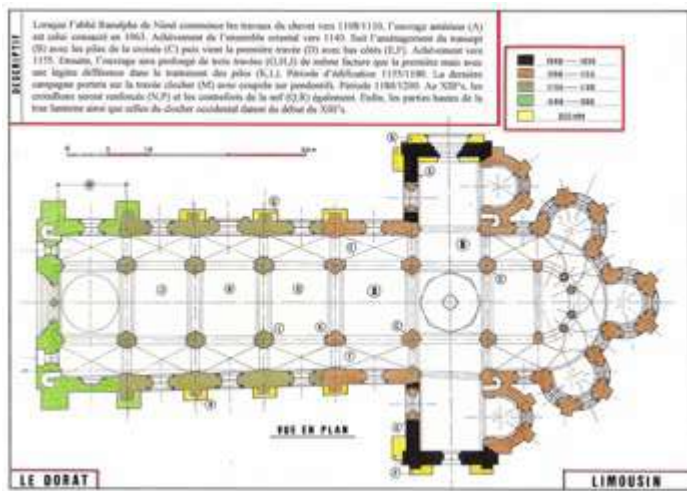


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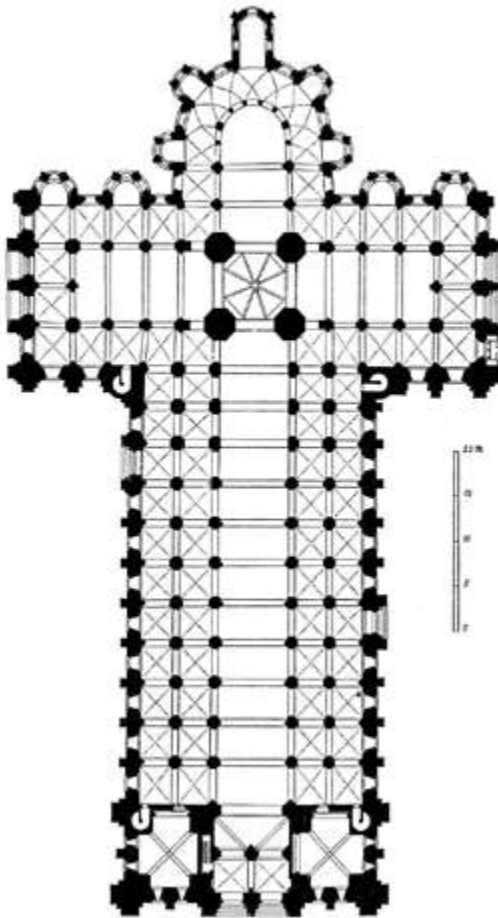


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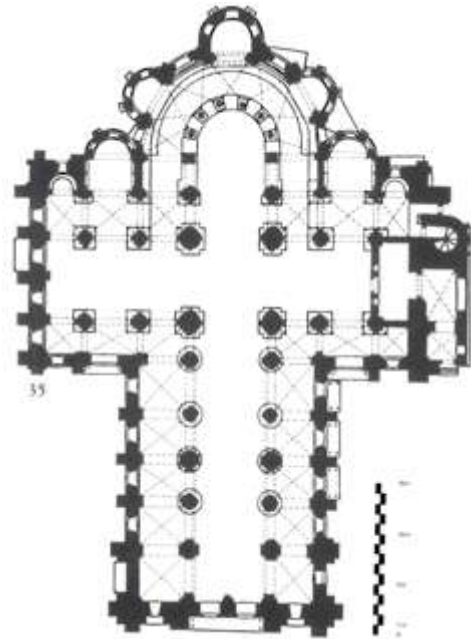


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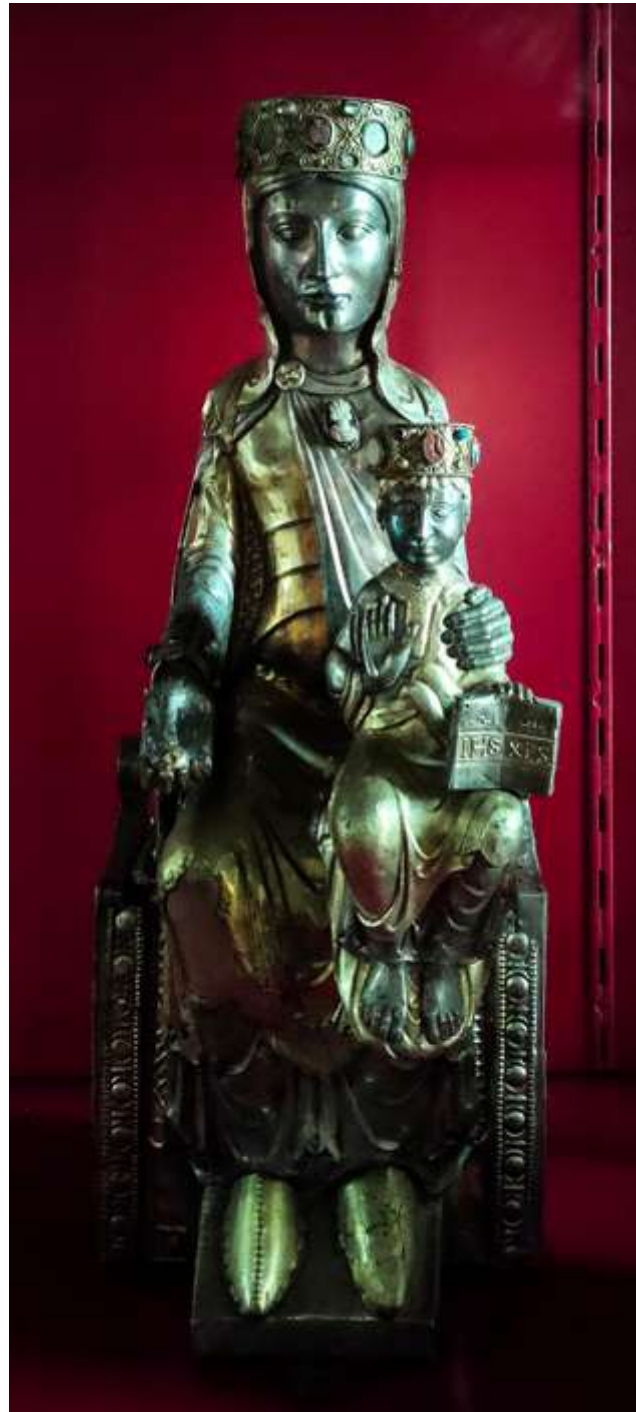


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