Article

The Sacrifice of Isaac Capitals at Sainte-Foy at Conques and Saint-Seurin at Bordeaux

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Abstract: The period between 1080 and 1160 saw an explosion in monastic construction throughout Western Europe. The textual sources from this period document this building boom and explicitly tie construction and refurbishment to monastic reform and the creation of spaces for spiritual renewal. Newly built or remodeled monasteries and churches were richly decorated with wall paintings and monumental sculpture and inscriptions. A new form of sculpture emerged during this period of increased construction—the historiated capital. Despite their small size, capitals in the eleventh and twelfth centuries were frequently decorated with figures of humans or animals, and these images usually referred to a narrative, with lapidary inscriptions serving as commentary to the images. This article will compare two capitals depicting the Sacrifice of Isaac to consider how location and movement around the capitals direct the interpretation and understanding of the narrative scenes and accompanying epigraphy. One capital is in the narthex of Saint-Seurin at Bordeaux, while the other is in the choir of Sainte-Foy at Conques. My analysis involves making connections between the location of the capital within the architectural space and its relationship to other sculpted imagery, monastic interpretations of their spaces, and the liturgical events that took place within those spaces.

Keywords: Romanesque sculpture; Sacrifice of Isaac; medieval epigraphy; Christian art and symbolism; iconography

1. Introduction

The Sacrifice of Isaac was a popular subject in Christian visual culture, which reached its apogee in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, frequently appearing in monumental decorations. Genesis 22 recounts the story of Abraham's faith and obedience to God, demonstrated by his readiness to sacrifice his son, Isaac, upon God's command.[1] The ritual sacrifice of Isaac is stayed through divine intervention; an angel cries out for Abraham to stop and points out a ram, which Abraham sacrifices in the place of Isaac. The narrative has significance in the Judeo-Christian tradition. For Jews, Abraham presents the ultimate believer, demonstrating a faith and obedience to God to an extraordinary degree. Early Christians also adopted this interpretation and considered the story as an important example of God's deliverance (Buser 1980). During the Middle Ages, the Sacrifice of Isaac presented a typological prefiguration of the redemption of Christ, with an Old Testament scene placed in stark relief to the New Testament (Van Woerden 1961). As noted in Romans 8:3: "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh; God sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh and of sin, hath condemned sin in the flesh." As a precursor to God's sacrifice of his son for humankind's salvation, the Sacrifice of Isaac has traditionally been related to the Eucharist, the bloodless sacrifice that distinguishes Christianity from the sacrificial rituals of Late Antiquity (Eckhardt 2014).

This article analyzes two historiated capitals with the Sacrifice of Isaac as their subject to consider how the sculpture's location within architectural space and ritual movement direct the interpretation and understanding of the narrative scenes and accompanying epigraphy. Such an approach expands the biblical narrative's salvific theme for the religious

community. One capital is in the choir of the Benedictine abbey church of Sainte-Foy at Conques, and the other is in the western porch of the collegial church Saint-Seurin at Bordeaux. My analysis involves making connections between the location of the capital within architectural space and its relationship to other sculpted images and the liturgical events that took place within those spaces. The spatial analysis of the inscribed capitals not only broadens our understanding of monumental sculpture but also presents a prism through which to understand the spatial, visual, plastic, iconic, and symbolic dimensions of these capitals' sculpted images and their attendant material texts.

Ritual movements by and around the sculpted capitals that take place during a given time reward the viewer with new compositions and meaning. This phenomenological approach to inscribed capitals enables us to analyze the liturgical resonances of sculpture and epigraphy that go beyond traditional iconographic identification. Jérôme Baschet has noted that a concordance can occur between the image and the ritual act performed in the very place where it appears, and that the image can even take the place of the rite (Baschet 2008, p. 93; Baschet et al. 2012). Customary documents from the eleventh and twelfth centuries are the richest source for reconstructing and understanding the way liturgy was practiced. The religious communities at Conques and Saint-Seurin followed different rules; the monks of Conques followed the Rule of St. Benedict, and the canons of Saint-Seurin followed the Rule of Aachen (Brutails 1897, pp. XXVII and 8; Bynum 1979, p. 2).[2] Although the customaries for Conques and Saint-Seurin no longer exist, Lanfranc's customary from Canterbury, the Cluniac customaries, and the *Regula canicorum* provide evidence for these uses.

The concept of *ductus*, which the fourth-century rhetorician Consultus Fortuniatinus defined as the journey or movement within and through an artistic work, is a productive way to understand how the inscribed capitals provided spatial and directional metaphors for the medieval monk (Tanton 2021; Carruthers 1998; Crossley 2010). *Ductus* allows us to consider the interplay between authorial intention, as demonstrated in the planned arrangement of the capitals within architectural spaces, and how ritual activated and guided the medieval audience's response to the sculpture and epigraphy.

This article first considers the role of the inscribed capital as a narrative support capable of transmitting multivalent meanings. I argue that the analysis of the capitals and their accompanying lapidary inscriptions can be related to liturgical movements within the space of the church. I then consider the Sacrifice of Isaac capital at Conques and its location between the main altar and the entrance into the church at the south transept. The capital faces this entrance from the monastic complex to the choir, and it can be related not only to the Eucharist but also to monastic oblation. I next explore how the representation of the narrative on a capital in the western porch of the collegial church, Saint-Seurin at Bordeaux, can be related to funerary processions while maintaining its overarching salvific significance. The final part of the article considers how funerary and oblation rites enrich the significance of the Sacrifice of Isaac narrative's meaning for medieval religious communities.

2. The Capital in the Twelfth Century

Before looking more specifically at the inscribed Sacrifice of Isaac capitals at Sainte-Foy and Saint-Seurin, it seems useful to look at the capital's form. The capital represents a new tradition of stone sculpture in eleventh-century Europe. As a structural element at the top of a column or pillar, the capital, some thirty centimeters high, is a transition point between the supporting pillar and the spring of the arches. Visually, the surfaces of such capitals offer great scope for decoration, despite their relatively small size. Frequently decorated with human or animal figures, they generally refer to a narrative or a symbolic meaning, while inscriptions, often engraved on the face or the abacus, serve as *tituli* or commentaries on these images. These epigraphic texts, in Latin, the official language of the medieval Latin Church, come from a variety of liturgical and scriptural sources when they are not simply identification vignettes.

The use of the capital as a narrative support is neither a vestige nor a renewal of ancient practices but a formal integration of image and structure, an eleventh-century aesthetic invention. The capital is in fact a new type of sculpture in the round, a tradition that had been lost since Antiquity in Western Europe; it incorporates a relief sculpture on each of its sides, thereby presenting a distinctly new sculptural form (Maxwell and Ambrose 2011; Ambrose 2006; Angheben 2003; Hearn 1981). The renewal of monumental sculptures coincided with the building boom of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and the capital presented a new sculptural form. Unlike a viewer's experience of a tympanum, which has a representation on only one side, the viewer is never able to see all four sides simultaneously. Because they must move around the capital to see all sides, viewers are rewarded with new compositions that appear as they move. Body movement is fundamental to the construction of meaning.

During the Middle Ages, the capital was understood to transmit the words of sacred Scripture. Honorius Augustodunensis, writing in the twelfth century, likened a column to the bodies of the bishops, whose rectitude supported the height of the church building (Treffort 2003, p. 152). The thirteenth-century liturgist, William Durand, equated a capital atop a column or pier with the minds of bishops and Church Doctors (Durand 2007, p. 19).[3] There is a long tradition of Christian authors assigning Christian significance to classical antique architectural forms, such as the column and the capital (Onians 1988, pp. 74–76; Vergnolle 1998).[4] Within monastic spaces, the inscribed capital gave physical presence to important church figures and amplified doctrinal practice. As the capital and its column were equated with a body, the sculptures themselves were viewed by medieval religious communities as participants in the liturgy and the accompanying lapidary inscriptions provided the capitals with a voice. As a plastic manifestation of the thoughts of these church leaders, the capital was intended to convey the words of sacred Scripture that the faithful were bound to follow.

3. The Sacrifice of Isaac Capital in the Choir of Sainte-Foy at Conques

Construction of the present church of Sainte-Foy began sometime between 1030 and 1040, and was finished by the early twelfth century (Vergnolle et al. 2011; Huang 2014).[5] The order of construction began at the east end with the ambulatory and chapels, lower levels of the transept and sanctuary, and upper part of the sanctuary and transept. Based on the size of stone and abaci of the carved capitals, the sculpted angels on the ground level of the abbey are part of the earlier phase of construction (Vergnolle et al. 2011, pp. 87–97). Thus, the Sacrifice of Isaac capital most probably dates to the mid-eleventh century.

In her study of the iconography of the Sacrifice of Isaac, Isabel Speyart Van Woerden noted that the frequency of the theme's representation in the Middle Ages was due to its significance attributed by ecclesiastical writers (Van Woerden 1961, p. 214). A popular theme for monumental decoration, the Sacrifice of Isaac is represented on capitals with lapidary inscriptions four times in twelfth-century France: Sainte-Foy (Conques), near the altar; Saint-Seurin (Bordeaux), in the western porch; Notre-Dame-du-Port (Clermont-Ferrand), at the west entrance; Saint-Trophîme (Arles), in the north gallery of the cloister (*Corpus des inscriptions de la France médiévales* 1979–1995).[6] In these cases instances, the capitals' epigraphy either identifies a figure or contains a short phrase related to the biblical narrative.

Due to the medieval understanding of Isaac as a prefiguration of Christ and his stayed sacrifice as a sign of God's deliverance, the inscribed capital at Conques is located near the main altar, thereby emphasizing the narrative's allusion to the Eucharist, yet the engaged capital faces south with the main scene looking toward the south transept entrance. The Church Fathers, such as Tertullian, Gregory of Nyssa, Paulinus of Nola, and Clement of Alexandria, viewed Isaac as a prefiguration of the sacrifice of Christ (Van Woerden 1961, pp. 216–218, 220, 226, 230; Jensen 1994, pp. 98–99).[7] The theme is sculpted and inscribed on a capital on the southeast crossing pier and faces the portal communicating with the monastic complex on the south side of the church at Sainte-Foy in Conques (Figure 1).
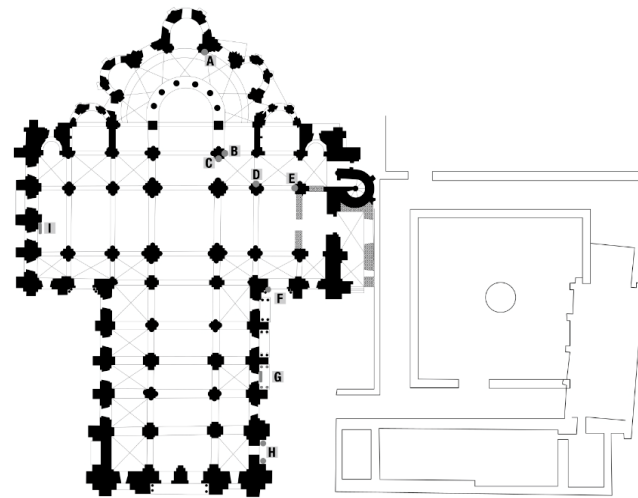
Figure 1. Conques, Sainte-Foy, plan of church and monastic complex. The Sacrifice of Isaac capital is labeled B. Plan: author after Quitterie Cazes (2006), "L'abbatiale de Conques, genèse d'un modèle architectural roman, *Cahiers de Saint-Michel-en-Cuxa* 37: 104.

The Conques capital corresponds to other inscribed eleventh- and twelfth-century capitals depicting the Sacrifice of Isaac in France, with Isaac seated at the center of the scene, flanked by his father Abraham holding a knife and an angel, who intervenes. The inscription reads: MACTANDVS OM O A[BR]AHAM IBI OBTVLIT SVAM PROL[EM] (*Abraham offers his offspring, God is about to be honored*) (Figure 2). The inscription is very similar to an inscribed capital depicting the Sacrifice of Isaac located at the crossing of San Pedro de la Nave, which has traditionally been dated to the seventh century. The inscription reads: + UBI HABRAAM OBTULIT ISAAC FILIUM SUUM OLOCAUPSTUM DOMINO (*Where Abraham offered his son Isaac as a holocaust to the Lord*). This capital differs from the Sacrifice of Isaac capital at Conques in that the apostles Peter and Paul appear on the sides of the capital, making an explicit link between the Old Testament and New Testament. Rose Walker re-dates this building to the eleventh century, which to this author's mind is a justifiable correction (Walker 2017). There is no other historiated capital with lapidary inscriptions dating to the seventh or eighth century in Europe, much less Spain. The similarity to other inscribed capitals, namely Conques, supports Walker's new dating. In the instance of both the Conques and the San Pedro de la Nave inscribed capitals depicting the Sacrifice of Isaac, the capitals are located near the main altar.

Figure 2. Conques, Sainte-Foy, historiated capital representing the Sacrifice of Isaac, south face. Photo: author.

The main altar, as the site of the Eucharist, was the sacred center of the medieval church. Inscriptions on the altar were common in the Middle Ages and they commemorated the altar's dedication and provided an inventory of the relics contained within. These inscriptions have been linked to remembrances of the dead and recommending the souls of the dead to God. Artists' signatures and donors' names inscribed on or near an altar functioned similarly, asking to have their souls recommended to God in prayers of remembrance (Favreau 1979, pp. 21–22). In addition to inscriptions related explicitly to the dedication of an altar, narrative themes related to the Eucharist, such as the Sacrifice of Isaac, are also found near the main altar. The Sacrifice of Isaac had particular resonance for Odo of Cluny, who related Abraham's sacrifice to discussion of sacramental purity, particularly that of Eucharistic purity, thereby highlighting the monastic understanding of the theme's relation to the Eucharist (Odo, *Collationes*, PL 113:558).[8] These inscriptions did more than identify the narrative theme; they perpetually performed the Eucharistic sacrifice. Furthermore, the location of the inscribed capitals near the main altar functioned similarly to inscriptions carved along the edges of the altar tabletop. These inscriptions framed the sacred space, and both designated the space as sacred and actively protected it.

The capital's location allows us to identify its audience—the monks. It faces the door at the south transept through which the monks would have processed daily into the church from the conventual complex before they entered the choir (Figure 3). The inscription, the sculpted scene with its typological resonances, the conceptual link between the altar on which Isaac is seated and the main altar within proximity, the location of the capital framing the sanctuary, and the group that would have had access to see it, namely the monks, all enhance the interpretation of the scene as relating to the celebration of the Eucharist.

Figure 3. Conques, Sainte-Foy, view into the south transept from portal communicating between the monastic complex and the south transept. Photo: author.

Yet another liturgical event took place at the main altar in a twelfth-century monastic church—the ceremony of child oblation (Quinn 1989).[9] In the Cluniac liturgy, the child and the *petitio*—a document on parchment donating the child to the monastery—from the child's earthly father were brought to the altar. The parents would process with the child to the altar and hand him over to the priest. The child would be given the holy bread and wine to hold and instructed to touch the altar cloth, and in doing so would become a "*holocaustum* for God" (Jong 1995; Lanfranc 2002, pp. 162–65). The proximity of the Sacrifice of Isaac capital at Conques to the main altar related to the celebration of the Eucharist and commemorated the ceremony of child oblation. The capital is located to the south of the high altar, with the primary scene and inscription facing the monks as they entered the choir from the conventual complex, regularly reminding the celebrant of God's willingness to sacrifice. I would argue that the monks, upon entering the church and seeing the capital, would have been reminded of their entrance into the monastery as an *oblatio*. The scene

would have conjured memories of this ceremony and their vow of obedience upon entering the monastic order. Indeed, the vow of obedience, along with poverty and chastity, are the vows of a monk. As the Rule of Saint Benedict's Chapter V on obedience notes: "The first degree of humility is obedience without delay" (RSB, p. 6). The capital at Conques depicting Abraham's obedience to God in the location of the ceremony of oblation would have resonated with the monk entering the church from the south transept multiple times during the day, reinforcing his vow of obedience to God and his order.

4. The Sacrifice of Isaac Capital in the Western Porch of Saint-Seurin at Bordeaux

The inscribed Sacrifice of Isaac capital at the collegial church of Saint-Seurin at Bordeaux is located on the north side of the west end porch rather than near the main altar, as seen at Conques (Figure 4). Isaac is at the center of the composition of the capital and he is naked. He lies passively on a rectangular altar with his hands and feet bound. Abraham appears on the north face and grabs at Isaac's hair to reveal his neck. Abraham is represented without a beard, differing from medieval conventions for patriarchal figures. To Abraham's right, an angel restrains Abraham's knife-wielding hand. Another angel is depicted on the south face of the capital, swooping in with a ram as a sacrificial substitute. The names of the main characters (ABRAHAM et HYSAHAC) are inscribed on a rectangle above the reclining figure of Isaac. The Saint-Seurin capital presents the viewer with a dramatic interpretation of the scene. Émeric Rigault has argued that the Sacrifice of Isaac capital at Saint-Seurin presents a formerly unknown iconographic prototype that will later appear in the region, for example at Sainte-Croix in Bordeaux and Saint-Seurin of Rions (Rigault 2015). Rigault provides a tantalizing comparison between the composition of the Saint-Seurin capital with the genealogical tables of the eleventh-century *Beatus of Saint-Sever* (Figure 5 Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France Latin 8878, fol. 7). Although I am hesitant to make direct comparisons between manuscripts and monumental sculptures, there is no denying the striking compositional similarities between the Saint-Sever folio and the Saint-Seurin capital. Although it is difficult to identify the point of contact between the collegial church of Saint-Seurin and the monastery of Saint-Sever, as the distance between the two is over 150 km, Bordeaux was an important see; therefore, it provides a logical point for exchange.

Figure 4. Bordeaux, Saint-Seurin, west porch, north side, Sacrifice of Isaac capital, south face. Photo: author.
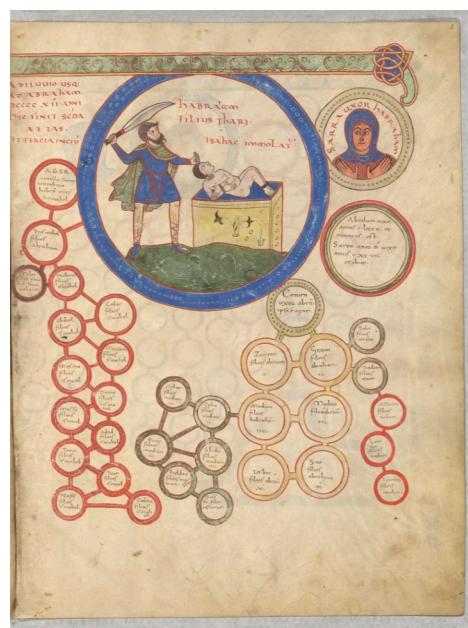
Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

Figure 5. Canon table, *Beatus of Saint-Sever*, Bibliothèque nationale de France, ms. Latin 8878, fol. 7. http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b52505441p/f5.item (accessed on 12 March 2024).

The porch at Saint-Seurin consisted of a barrel vault divided by two bays (we can see the transverse arches divide the space). There have been numerous interventions to the fabric of Saint-Seurin, mostly notably the porch was enclosed and incorporated into a neoclassical façade in 1828 (Araguas 2009, pp. 181–182; Vergnolle 2018, pp. 89–94).[10] The twelve capitals in the porch are linked by friezes and sculpted imposts. The historiated capitals in the porch seem to date to the end of the eleventh century (Voyer and Debiais 2009, p. 141). Conceptually, the porch, like a narthex, presented a point to pass from one existence to another, serving as a transition between the terrestrial world and the celestial Jerusalem in the form of the church building (Tanton 2013). According to Benedictine and Cluniac customaries, the porch played an important part in the liturgy for the dead; funerary processions passed through the porch or narthex and entered the church.

The concept of the narthex as a point to pass from one existence to another is enhanced by descriptions in Cluniac customaries of the procession for the dead through the narthex. A description of this procession in the Cluniac customary of Bernard (ca. 1080) specifically refers to the narthex as Galilee (*Ordo cluniacensis*):

> Therefore, from among these [psalms], two or three, or as many as the hour requires, are sung, [and then] all go out into the Galilee. When, however, the prior comes in the procession near the body, which should be placed at the entrance of the Galilee, the psalms are left off and the Paternoster is said by all (Bernard of Cluny, p. 219).[11]

Thus, the procession enacted the "passing over" of the dead in a space designated for meeting the risen Christ (*Cons. Floriacenses*, pp. 165, 246).

It is unclear what customs were followed by the canons at Saint-Seurin in the eleventh century.[12] Nevertheless, the church was built on a fourth-century necropolis, and its cemetery was used throughout the Middle Ages; thus, funerary rites were an important function of the site. Archaeological reports from 1909 have also identified several tombs dating to the eleventh century to the west of the porch, indicating that the western porch served a role in funerary rites (Barraud and Migeon 2009, pp. 23–34).

As an important funerary site, the porch would receive people from outside the college of canons during the Middle Ages. A capital depicting a popular scene related to salvation would have resonated with a wide audience—both lay and ecclesiastical. To emphasize

this interpretation, one needs only to look at the capital directly across from the Sacrifice of Isaac capital. This capital depicts birds pecking at a large pinecone or fruit, which is a longstanding formula since Late Antiquity to represent Eucharistic symbolism (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Bordeaux, Saint-Seurin, west porch, south side, capital depicting birds pecking at a large pinecone or fruit, north face. Photo: author.

Another inscribed capital on the south side of the porch of Saint-Seurin can be related directly to funerary rites. The capital bears a representation of the tomb of the church's patron saint, Saint Severinus, the fourth-century bishop of Bordeaux (Figure 7). On the west face of the capital, the wrapped body of the saint lies in a tomb with columns along its base. Cécile Voyer and Vincent Debiais have noted that the form of the saint's tomb depicted on the altar corresponds to a specific type, the "autels-tombeaux," which simultaneously represents a monumental reliquary and an altar (Voyer and Debiais 2009, p. 145). This interpretation is enhanced by the form of the wrapped body, which conflates the moment of the saint's funeral and his status as a relic.
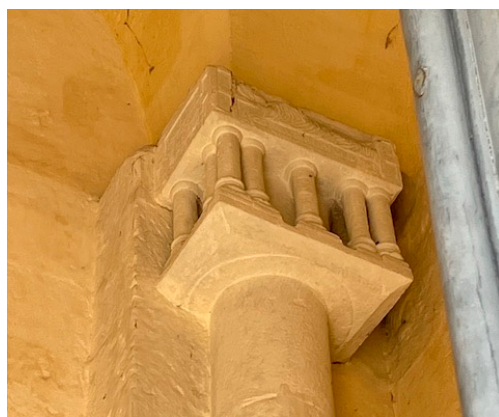
Figure 7. Bordeaux, Saint-Seurin, west porch, northwest corner facing portal, Saint Severinus capital, west face. Photo: author.

The capital's epigraphy enhances the funerary aspect of the capital. The saint's name, SCS SEVERINVS (*Saint Severinus*), is inscribed on the body just below the tomb on the

capital's western face. The image of a tomb with funerary epigraphy on a capital can be related directly to the tombs located to the west of the church's porch and the large cemetery to the north of the church. The northern face reads QVANDO MIGRAVIT A SECVLO M (*when he left this century*), and the southern face reads SIGNIFICAT HA [E]C PETRA SEPVCRVM (*this stone represents his tomb*) (*C.I.F.M.* pp. 91–92). It is difficult to determine the order in which the capital's lapidary inscriptions should be read, although as Debiais and Voyer have noted, the text references Matthew 16:18 (Voyer and Debiais 2009, pp. 151–54).[13] Christ says, "And I say to thee: That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The capital's epigraphic text relates St. Severinus, the patron saint of Saint-Seurin, to the building of the eleventh-century collegial church (Voyer and Debiais 2009, p. 146; Barraud and Migeon 2009, pp. 88–89).

As an important funerary site, the porch of Saint-Seurin would receive people from outside the college of canons during the Middle Ages. Two inscribed capitals located along the processional path, one depicting a popular scene related to salvation and the other the tomb of the church's titular saint, would have complemented the funerary processions that took place in the space.

5. Conclusions

The eleventh-century churches of Sainte-Foy at Conques and Saint-Seurin at Bordeaux received numerous pilgrims and were important stops on the route to Compostela. Conques possessed the relics of the martyr, Saint Faith. Saint-Seurin held several important relics (including Saint Amandus, the bishop of Bordeaux before Saint Seurin; Saint Seurin; Saint Fort; and Saint Veronica), and its crypt, with sarcophagi dating to the fourth century, attracted many visitors.

Analysis of the Sacrifice of Isaac capitals at both churches demonstrates the advantages of placing the work within the field of visual perception and the cognitive historical and cultural contexts in which the work was produced (Riccioni 2008, p. 289). This approach reveals the structuring and complex relationships of multiple themes found in medieval images and epigraphy, and the inventive ways in which art is inscribed within its historical context precisely because it plays an active role in multifaceted interactions, such as the liturgy. This entails making connections between the capitals' locations within architectural space and their relationship to liturgical performance, which was an integral part of religious life. By considering the location, epigraphy, and liturgical events that took place near the Sacrifice of Isaac capitals, we can see that although the overarching interpretation of the scene relating to salvation is evident at Conques and Saint-Seurin, viewers could construct multiple alternative connotations depending on each capital's spatial relationship to specific ritual activities, adjacent imagery, and the role of the viewer.

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Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

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Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

Notes

1   All biblical citations refer to the Douay-Rheims Bible, https://www.drbo.org (accessed on 15 January 2023).

2   Brutailis, *Cartulaire de l'église collégiale Saint-Seurin de Bordeaux* (Bordeaux: Imprimerie G. Gounouilhou, 1897), p. 8. The group of canons at Saint-Seurin from 816 followed the Rule of Aachen (Institutio canonicorum Aquisgranensis, 816), as described in a charter signed by Louis the Pious confirming the community and requiring them to live as monks. By the eleventh century, the status of canon was clearly articulated in the texts. For more on the distinction between monks and regular canons in the

twelfth century, see Caroline Bynum Walker, *Docere Verbo Et Exemplo: An Aspect of Twelfth-Century Spirituality* (Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1979), especially "Introduciton," pp. 2–8.

3   William Durand, *The Rationale Divinorum Officiorum of William of Mende: A New Translation of the Prologue and Book One*, transl. Timothy M. Thibodeau (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), p. 19. Durand notes that "The heads of the columns are the minds of the bishops and teachers; just as the members of the body are directed by the head, our words and deeds are directed by our minds. The capitals of the columns are the words of sacred Scripture upon which we must meditate and which we are obliged to follow."

4   In his book, *Bearers of Meaning: The Classical Orders in Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and The Renaissance* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1988), John Onians presents a history of columnar forms, relating the architectural forms to contemporary written theories. From the encyclopedic tradition of Isidore of Seville's *Etymologies* (ca. 623), which provides a formal and anthropomorphic description of the column and its capital, to Hrabanus Maurus's (ca. 800) reprisal of Isidore's text which includes explicitly Christian interpretation of columns, Onians traces the shifting interpretations of the column in the Middle Ages. Éliane Vergnolle's presents analysis of the formal and technical transformations of the column as an architectural member during the Romanesque to the Early Gothic period. See Éliane Vergnolle, "La colonne à l'époque romane. Réminiscences et nouveautés," *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 41e année n°162 (Avril-juin 1998): 141–174.

5   There is consensus on dating the construciton of Conques based on the cartulary. See G. Desjardins, ed., *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Conques* (Paris: A. Picard, 1879). For a recent analysis of the abbey's archaeology based on masons' marks and stonework, see Lei Haung, "Le chantier de Sainte-Foy de Conques: éléments de réflexions," *Les Cahiers de Saint-Michel de Cuxa* 45 (2014): 93–103.

6   *Corpus des inscriptions de la France médiévale* (Paris: Éd. du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1974–2010) [hereafter referred to as *C.I.F.M.*]. Conques: *C.I.F.M.*, Robert Favreau, Bernadette Leplant, Jean Michaud, eds., vol. 9, Aveyron, Lot, Tarn (1984), p. 26–27; Saint-Seurin: *C.I.F.M.* Robert Favreau, Bernadette Leplant, Jean Michaud, eds., vol. 5, Dordogne, Gironde (1979), p. 93; Notre-Dame-du-Port: *C.I.F.M.*, Robert Favreau, Jean Michaud, Bernadette Mora, eds., vol. 18, Allier, Cantal, Loire, Haute-Loire, Puy-de-Dôme (1995), p. 193; Saint-Trophîme: C.I.F.M.: Robert Favreau, Jean Michaud, Bernadette Mora, eds., vol. 14, Alpes-Maritime, Bouches-du-Rhone, Var (1989), p. 47. The *Corpus des inscriptions de la France medievale* (vols. 1–25) was started by Robert Favreau at the Centre d'Études supérieures de la civilisation médiévale (CESCM) in 1974 at the University of Poitiers. The project records inscriptions produced between 750 and 1300 with each volume organized geographically by current adminsirative departments. At present, 75% of France has been catalogued by the *C.I.F.M.* The north and east of France has not yet been treated. This article also draws from the digital project, *The Inscribed Capital Index* (ICI), which the manuscript's author has built (https://dataartem.org/ici). accessed on 12 March 2024. The ICI presents instances of capitals with lapidary inscriptions (ca. 1080–1160) available for scholarly research in a searchable electronic format. The corpus presented in the ICI is defined largely by the *C.I.F.M.* as well as items the author found during visits to various monasteries, dépôts lapidaires, and museums. The data source presented in the ICI is by no means exhaustive, but additions continue to be made.

7   Van Woerden notes that the Canon of the Mass codified by Pope Leo in 500 explicitly links the sacrifices of Abel, Abraham, and Melchisedek to the Eucharist. See especially, page 220. See also Robin M. Jensen, "The Offering of Isaac in Jewish and Christian Tradition. Image and Text," *Biblical Interpretation* vol. 2, n° 1 (1994): 85–110. Jensen focuses on Early Christian images of the Sacrifice of Isaac and reconsiders the question of visual representation of the biblical narrative and its interpretation.

8   Odo, *Collationes*, II, *PL* 113:558 "*Nos parentes nostri, sicut Abraham obtulit Isaac, et Anna Samuelem, Deo in sacrificium obtulerunt. Nos templum Dei quod esse ipsi debuimus violantes, et oblationem ejus commaculantes idem nosmetipsos, in fermentum conversi sumus. Naaman Syrus in tantam habuit reverentiam locum in quo nomen Dei invocabatur, ut de Israel terram cum burdonibus portaret. Nos in atriis ecclesiae consistentes, in terram sanctorum, juxta quod propheta plangit, iniqua gerimus: In terra sanctorum, inquit, iniqua gessit (Isa. XXVI, 10). Sed sequitur: Ideo [Col.0558C] non videbit gloriam Domini (Ibid.). Vox ad Moysen: Locus, ait, in quo tu stas, terra sancta est (Exod. III, 5). Qui etiam non est ausus respicere contra ignem, et ecce plus est in altare, ad quod nos impure et irreverenter accedimus. Nam ignis ille non erat Deus, sed creatura, ex qua vox Dei resonaret; hic vero corpus Christi est, in quo habitat omnis plenitudo divinitatis.*"

9   Quinn provides a detailed account of the ceremony. Her book provides a new perspective on the topic than previously proposed because she focuses on the oblates themselves, asking about their experiences and how they were raised within the monastery.

10   For discussion of the church's dating, see Philippe Araguas, "Saint-Seurin de Bordeaux: les grandes étapes de l'évolution de l'église canoniale du XIe au XIXe siècle." There are two schools of thought regarding the dating of the porch. Marcel Durliat dates the sculpture to theend of the eleventh century and the beginning of the twelfth century. Éliane Vergnole places the sculpture to the second half of the eleventh century. Araguas relates the eleventh-century configuration of the porch to the porch of Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire.

11   *Ex his ergo duo vel tres, vel quot ipsa hora exigit, canuntur, exitur ab omnibus usque in galileam; cum autem prope Corpus, quod ad galilaeae introitum positum esse debet, venerit Prior cum processione, cessatur à Psalmis, dicitur* Pater noster, *ab omnibus. Bern*, 219.

12   For the history of the college of canons established at Saint-Seurin in the eleventh century, see the mid twelfth-century cartulary of Rufat, the community's sacristan. Rufat, *Cartulaire de L'église collégiale Saint-Seurin de Bordeaux publié avec une introduction et des tables by Jean-Auguste Brutails* (Bordeaux: Imprimerie G. Gounouilhou, 1897). The cartulary, also known as the petit Sancius, is housed at the Archives de la Gironde (G 1030). The archives of the collegial chapter burned in the thirteenth century and were pillaged in December 1542. All that rests of the collection, G. 1010–1654.

[13] For recent detailed analysis of the capital's epigraphy, see Debiais and Voyer, 151–154.

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