

Blazing “The Way”

Arthur Kingsley Porter’s First Trip to Northern Spain (1920)

Kathryn Brush
University of Western Ontario

Abstract: In 1923, the American medievalist Arthur Kingsley Porter (1883-1933) published his ten-volume book on *Romanesque Sculpture of the Pilgrimage Roads*. This article analyzes and contextualizes Porter’s first trip to northern Spain in 1920. This was his only journey to Santiago de Compostela prior to the publication of his book. It therefore played a fundamental role in the conceptualization of his arguments, which brought many medieval monuments in Spain to international scholarly attention for the first time. Drawing on archival sources, the essay explores Porter’s initial encounters with the art and culture of northern Spain, identifies some of the sites he visited along the Way of St. James, and considers his *modus operandi*, especially his representation of individual works of Romanesque art and architecture through first-hand study, writing, and photography.

Key words: Arthur Kingsley Porter (1883-1933), pilgrimage roads to Santiago de Compostela, historiography, Romanesque sculpture and architecture, Lucy Wallace Porter (1876-1962), photographic documentation.

Marcando “el Camino”: el primer viaje de Arthur Kingsley Porter al norte de España (1920)

Resumen: En 1923 el medievalista americano Arthur Kingsley Porter (1883-1933) publicó, en diez volúmenes, su libro titulado *Romanesque Sculpture of the Pilgrimage Roads*. El presente artículo analiza y contextualiza ese primer viaje de Porter al norte de España en 1920, durante el que realizó su única visita a Santiago de Compostela, antes de la publicación del citado libro. Dicho viaje desempeñó, por lo tanto, un papel fundamental en la conceptualización de sus ideas, las cuales llevaron a que la historiografía internacional prestase, por primera vez, atención a muchos monumentos medievales de España. Este ensayo explora, a partir de fuentes archivísticas, los primeros encuentros de Porter con el arte y la cultura del norte de España, identifica alguno de los sitios que él visitó a lo largo del Camino de Santiago y, asimismo, considera su *modus operandi*, especialmente, su análisis de obras

específicas del arte y la arquitectura románicas por medio del estudio in situ de los monumentos, anotaciones de primera mano y el uso de la fotografía.

Palabras clave: Arthur Kingsley Porter (1883-1933), *Caminos de Peregrinación a Santiago de Compostela*, *Historiografía*, *Escultura y Arquitectura Románicas*, Lucy Wallace Porter (1876-1962), *documentación fotográfica*.

Marcando “o Camiño”: a primeira viaxe de Arthur Kingsley Porter ao norte de España (1920)

Resumo: En 1923 o medievalista americano Arthur Kingsley Porter (1883-1933) publicou, en dez volumes, o seu libro titulado *Romanesque Sculpture of the Pilgrimage Roads*. O presente artigo analiza e contextualiza esa primeira viaxe de Porter ao norte de España en 1920, durante a que fixo a súa única visita a Santiago de Compostela, antes da publicación do citado libro. A devandita viaxe desempeñou, xa que logo, un papel fundamental na conceptualización das súas ideas, as cales levaron a que a historiografía internacional prestase, por primeira vez, atención a moitos monumentos medievais de España. Este ensaio explora, a partir de fontes arquivísticas, os primeiros encontros de Porter coa arte e a cultura do norte de España, identifica algún dos sitios que el visitou ao longo do Camiño de Santiago e, así mesmo, considera o seu *modus operandi*, especialmente, a súa análise de obras específicas da arte e a arquitectura románicas por medio do estudo *in situ* dos monumentos, anotacións de primeira man e o emprego da fotografía.

Palabras clave: Arthur Kingsley Porter (1883-1933), *Camiños de Peregrinación a Santiago de Compostela*, *Historiografía*, *Escultura e Arquitectura Románicas*, Lucy Wallace Porter (1876-1962), *documentación fotográfica*.

This essay focuses on the American medievalist Arthur Kingsley Porter (1883-1933), one of the giants in the twentieth-century historiography of the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela. In his best known book, *Romanesque Sculpture of the Pilgrimage Roads* (1 volume of text plus 9 photographic portfolios, Fig. 1), published in 1923, Porter revolutionized the study of eleventh- and twelfth-century sculpture, particularly in France, Italy, and Spain.¹ Arguing that “pilgrimage knows no bound-

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1 Porter, A. Kingsley, *Romanesque Sculpture of the Pilgrimage Roads*, 10 vols., Boston, 1923.

aries," Porter projected a transnational vision of medieval artistry that emphasized mobility across ethnic, linguistic, and geographic frontiers. Employing the modern technologies of the automobile and the camera to investigate the medieval past, the American scholar hypothesized that itinerant architects and sculptors had worked at multiple sites along the pilgrimage roads to Santiago de Compostela, Bari, Jerusalem, and elsewhere, hence promoting the exchange of artistic ideas across Europe and the Mediterranean. The impact of Porter's internationalizing vision of medieval pilgrimage and artistic production was profound—and all the more so because this monumental work and his two-volume *Spanish Romanesque Sculpture* of 1928 appeared precisely during the years when the discipline of art history was being institutionalized in Europe and the USA.²

Porter's vision of an international network of multiple centers of artistic production connected by long-distance travels, multidirectional communication, and reciprocal cultural exchange, countered long-standing conventions of European scholarship that privileged nationalist-centered narratives. Instead of conforming to normative dogma and championing France as the primary locus of artistic creativity in the Middle Ages, the American foregrounded the contributions of Italy and Spain in his book of 1923, bringing many medieval monuments in these regions to international scholarly attention for the first time.

One of the guiding principles of Porter's methodological approach was his commitment to first-hand study of the works of art and architecture he analyzed. He was an intrepid traveler. The aspiring young American scholar made his first trip to Europe in 1904.³ During the early years of his career he journeyed extensively in France and Italy, as his publications of that era, among them *Medieval Architecture*

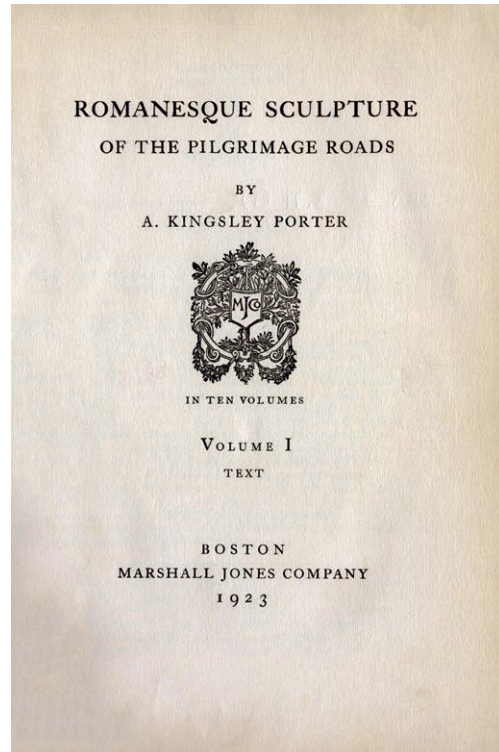


Fig. 1: Title page of *Romanesque Sculpture of the Pilgrimage Roads*, vol. 1, Boston, 1923. Photo: Courtesy of the Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

2 Porter, A. Kingsley, *Spanish Romanesque Sculpture*, 2 vols., Florence and New York, 1928. This book was published simultaneously in German and Spanish translations, *Romanische Plastik in Spanien*, 2 vols., Florence and Munich, 1928; *La Escultura Románica en España*, 2 vols., Florence and Barcelona, 1928.

3 I have established this through my research with Porter's unpublished papers, as outlined below.

(1909) and *Lombard Architecture* (4 volumes, 1915-1917), demonstrate.⁴ Porter's travels to northern Spain did not occur until much later. His first trip took place in 1920, shortly before he wrote *Romanesque Sculpture of the Pilgrimage Roads*.⁵ For the next seven years he would devote a great deal of his scholarly energy to analysis of the medieval cultural patrimony of the Iberian peninsula, and northern Spain specifically. What were the circumstances in which Porter experienced the pilgrimage routes to Santiago de Compostela almost a century ago, and how can this initial trip be positioned in relation to his journeys to other regions of Europe? Which sites did he visit? And how did his first encounters with northern Spain help to shape his unorthodox theories?

Remarkably little critical attention has been given to the specifics of the personal, intellectual, political, and ideological circumstances that animated Porter's early twentieth-century scholarly imagination. I am currently writing a book about Porter that draws on previously unstudied archival materials, including his correspondence, diaries, and photograph collection, now at Harvard University, in order to analyze and contextualize the genesis of his thought in the years from 1900 to 1933.⁶ The story of Porter's "discovery" of northern Spain in 1920 forms a crucial chapter within the narrative of his intellectual formation and knowledge production. This was the American's only trip to Santiago de Compostela prior to the publication of *Romanesque Sculpture of the Pilgrimage Roads* in 1923.⁷ It played a fundamental role in the conceptualization of his arguments. The present essay aims to explore some of Porter's initial encounters with the art and culture of northern Spain, to identify some of the sites visited along the Way of St. James, and to consider his *modus operandi*, especially his representation of individual medieval monuments through first-hand study, writing, and photography.

4 Porter, A. Kingsley, *Medieval Architecture. Its Origins and Development, with Lists of Monuments and Bibliographies*, 2 vols., London and New York, 1909; idem, *Lombard Architecture*, 4 vols., New Haven, 1915-1917.

5 As a youth, in 1902, Porter had briefly sailed to several of the ports in southern Spain while traveling with his brother. He was not, however, studying art and architectural history at that point. I will discuss the travels of 1902 in the book I am writing about Porter (see the following note).

6 My book about Porter, *Motorized Romanesque. Arthur Kingsley Porter's Pilgrimage to Medieval Europe, 1900-1933* (working title), which is based on extensive first-hand study of archival and documentary sources, critically analyzes the pioneering American medievalist's academic formation, his research travels, his publications, and the events of his life. All of the ideas and comments presented in the present essay will be discussed in greater depth and with full documentation in my book. For an earlier discussion of Porter's engagement with Spain, see Brush, Kathryn, "Arthur Kingsley Porter, le Fogg Art Museum et la sculpture romane espagnole," *Catalogne romane. Sculptures du Val de Boí*, Paris, 2004, pp. 43-53; article also appeared in a Catalan translation: "Arthur Kingsley Porter, el Fogg Art Museum i l'escultura romànica espanyola," *Obres mestres del romànic. Escultures de la Vall de Boí*, Barcelona, 2004, pp. 43-53.

7 I have established this through my archival work, as in the previous note.

Contexts

The American medievalist's trip to the Iberian peninsula extended from 12 May through 21 July 1920. He was accompanied by his wife, the former Lucy Bryant Wallace (1876-1962), a gifted photographer who was his constant companion and collaborator from their marriage in June 1912. Significant data about their journey is yielded by their correspondence with family members, friends, and colleagues. Furthermore, Lucy Porter kept a diary in which she recorded many of their daily activities and their impressions of Spanish life and culture.⁸

Before outlining the Porters' itinerary, it is important to position their first exploration of northern Spain in relation to their activities immediately before and after their journey. The couple's field work there, which lasted just over two months, was bracketed by trips to medieval sites in Italy and France. As Janice Mann has suggested, Porter was already acquainted by 1914 or 1915 with ideas about the significance of the medieval pilgrimage roads to Santiago de Compostela, as discussed by Joseph Bédier in his multi-volume book *Les légendes épiques. Recherches sur la formation des chansons de geste*, published between 1908 and 1912, and more immediately by his American colleague Georgiana Goddard King (1874-1939) of Bryn Mawr College, who was then at work on a book on *The Way of Saint James*.⁹ A conference paper delivered by King at Haverford College in 1914, in which she argued for the formative impact of the pilgrimage on the development of sculpture in Spain, seems to have ignited Porter's interest in the topic.¹⁰ In his first article wholly devoted to the subject of medieval sculpture, published in 1915 and entitled "The Development of Sculpture in Lombardy in the Twelfth Century," he began to envisage that certain northern Italian artists had derived inspiration from Spain.¹¹ Three years later Porter wrote an essay on "The Rise of Romanesque Sculpture," which appeared in the *American Journal of Archaeology* in 1919.¹² In it, he pointed to the "vast network" of "many centres" of Romanesque sculpture, positing that "The pilgrimage routes to Compostela formed a sort of melting-pot in which artists from all over Europe met and exchanged ideas." Proclaiming his "certainty" that "Nicolò, and probably

8 Harvard University Archives, Arthur Kingsley Porter Papers, HUG 1706.127, Diaries and Appointment Books of Lucy W. Porter (Mrs. A. K. Porter). A large portion of the information explored in the present article derives from Lucy Porter's diary for 1920, unless otherwise specified.

9 Mann, Janice, *Romanesque Architecture and Its Sculptural Decoration in Christian Spain, 1000-1120. Exploring Frontiers and Defining Identities*, Toronto, 2009, p. 21. Bédier, Joseph, *Les légendes épiques. Recherches sur la formation des chansons de geste*, 4 vols., Paris, 1908-1913 (a second revised edition was issued in Paris, 1914-1921); King, Georgiana Goddard, *The Way of St. James*, New York and London, 1920.

10 Mann, pp. 21-22.

11 Porter, A. Kingsley, "The Development of Sculpture in Lombardy in the Twelfth Century," *American Journal of Archaeology* 19 (1915), pp. 137-154, here p. 154. Porter was attempting to trace the source of the "foreign influence" he detected in the work of an unidentified northern Italian sculptor, declaring that "photographs of Spanish Romanesque sculptures recently shown by Miss King, lead me to venture to suggest the possibility that our artist derived his inspiration in part from Spain."

12 Porter, A. Kingsley, "The Rise of Romanesque Sculpture," *American Journal of Archaeology* 22 (1918), pp. 399-427.

other sculptors of Lombardy, made the pilgrimage to St. James at Compostela," he proposed that "in the churches on the road to Compostela ... there worked side by side sculptors from Northern Italy, from Burgundy, from Languedoc, and from the Ile-de-France."¹³ Why had he not acquainted himself with monuments in northern Spain before 1920?

The answer is a straightforward one. Porter's agenda in the years following his marriage in 1912 was densely packed. Porter and his bride Lucy had spent a honeymoon year (1912-1913) travelling in Europe, particularly in northern Italy, before returning to their home in Manhattan in late 1913. From that point onwards Porter was fully occupied by analyzing and writing up the findings from this research trip, which resulted in the publication of his four-volume work on *Lombard Architecture* between 1915 and 1917. In addition, he had taken up a teaching position at Yale University in 1915, and with that job came many new responsibilities. While was writing *Lombard Architecture* war broke out in Europe, making "leisure" travel to Spain out of the question. When the United States entered the conflict in April 1917 Porter volunteered his services to the war effort. He received an assignment tailored to his skill set in the summer of 1918, and he and Lucy sailed to France that August. Porter's task was to help assess damaged medieval monuments in the *régions dévastées* of northern France for the Commission des Monuments Historiques.¹⁴ He was the only American art scholar invited to do so. After obtaining the special permissions necessary for automobile travel in this war-ravaged region, he and his wife remained there until the late summer of 1919 carrying out inventory work, with occasional visits elsewhere, including Paris, the Loire valley, and Burgundy. The pair sailed back to New York in the fall of 1919 to deal with family matters, returning to Europe in March 1920. Porter's publications and correspondence show that he had wanted to visit medieval sites in northern Spain much earlier, but the spring of 1920 presented him with the first opportunity to do so.

The Porters did not travel directly to a Spanish port. Instead they sailed to Naples because they had left their automobile and chauffeur in Italy. Owing to the age and worn-out state of their vehicle—it was a model from 1912, purchased during their honeymoon and reused in the battlefields of northern France—they decided to buy a new one in anticipation of their cross-country treks in rural Spain. They spent time in Florence and Siena awaiting the delivery of their Fiat, but after weeks of waiting in vain, they gave up on the vehicle, arranging instead to travel via train from Italy and to meet up with a chauffeur and hired automobile in Madrid.

The Porters' journey to Spain in 1920 thus took place after lengthy periods of intensive first-hand engagement with the medieval art and architecture of both Italy

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 409-410, 421-422.

¹⁴ The Porters' experiences during 1918-1919 will be discussed in my book; I will also publish a separate article on the topic.

and France. While researching and writing *Lombard Architecture* Porter had begun to challenge the chronologies of French scholars vis-à-vis the dating and chronologies of sites in northern Italy and France, emphasizing the speed at which artistic ideas travelled across Europe's many diverse regions. He also drew attention to striking affinities, both stylistic and iconographic, among works in northern Italy, Provence, and Languedoc, i.e., along the routes to Santiago de Compostela. Shortly thereafter, his prolonged first-hand exposure to the ruinscapes of northern France not only helped to refine his observational skills but also to confirm his suspicions about the fallacies involved in the practice of *l'archéologie nationale*. A trip that he and Lucy made to Cluny in Burgundy in late 1918 led him to deduce that the sculpted ambulatory capitals had been carved *avant la pose* between 1089-1095, instead of in the mid-twelfth century *après la pose*, as French scholars had long argued. During his extended sojourn in France in 1918-1919, his notion of Cluny's importance as a directing force in the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, took root.¹⁵ He articulated this innovative argument in two *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* articles of 1919 and 1920 and in *Romanesque Sculpture of the Pilgrimage Roads* in 1923.¹⁶

The Porters' appreciation of the medieval architecture and sculpture of Spain in 1920 should be understood in relation to their previous experience of the "martyred" churches in the northern French *départements*. In the course of compiling inventories of moveable objects in individual French buildings, many of which had been plundered or buried beneath piles of rubble that marked the sites of former churches, the Porters came face to face with the wrecked Middle Ages on a daily basis. Lucy, the chief photographer of the two, documented the effects of modern mechanized warfare (Figs. 2 & 3) at a time when the future of the mutilated buildings was unclear. Her husband's day-to-day scrutiny of the "anatomy" of injured buildings moved his thought forward, convincing him that the nationalistic, largely Paris-centric intellectual structures and chronologies of French historians and archaeologists, often conceived in the comfort of the Bibliothèque Nationale, did not accord with the material evidence. Having gained deep knowledge of eleventh- and twelfth-century architecture and sculpture in Italy and France and having already begun to explore the pilgrimage roads theses espoused by King, Bédier, and others, the American couple set out on a quest to explore the "authentic" and "intact" Middle Ages that they believed could still be found in rural Spain. Their attraction to a country allegedly "untouched" by modern civilization was also grounded in their

15 Brush, Kathryn. "Arthur Kingsley Porter et la genèse de sa vision de Cluny," *Constructions, reconstructions, et commémorations clunisiennes, 1790-2010*, in Méhu, Didier (ed.), Rennes, 2013, pp. 209-222.

16 Porter, A. Kingsley, "Les débuts de la sculpture romane," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 61 (1919), pp. 47-60 (Porter argued against the nationalist prejudice of Émile Mâle, emphasizing the vital communication channels that connected sites in Burgundy, Languedoc, northern Italy, and other regions of Europe; he mentioned the Santiago pilgrimage on p. 49); idem, "La sculpture du XIIe siècle en Bourgogne," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 62 (1920), pp. 73-94.



Fig. 2: Cathedral of Saint-Gervais-et-Saint-Protas, Soissons (Aisne), view from the northwest, early 1919. 13 x 18 cm. Photographer: Lucy W. Porter. Photo: Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University, Arthur Kingsley Porter Study and Teaching Collection, AKP 2895M, catalogued as 175 So35 2CN 1.



Fig. 3: View of ruins of church at St.-Thibault (Aisne), 14 May 1919. 13 x 18 cm. Photographer: Lucy W. Porter. Photo: Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University, Arthur Kingsley Porter Study and Teaching Collection, AKP 3481M, catalogued as 175 StT 238 2C 3b.

awareness of the romantic visions propagated by American travelers, writers, and historians from Washington Irving (1783-1859) onwards.

Spanish Itinerary, 1920

The Porters' train journey from Italy through southern France more or less approximated the medieval *via tolosana*. After changing trains in Marseille they travelled through Arles and Tarascon, stopping in Montpellier for five days in order to visit Romanesque churches at Maguelone, St. Guilhelm-le-Désert, and other sites in the vicinity before crossing into Catalonia. With the exception of a day trip to Montserrat, their first days in Spain were spent in the large urban areas of Barcelona and Madrid. In Madrid they met up with their Spanish chauffeur and hired vehicle, extended their passports at the office of the American consul, and visited the Prado and the Museo Arqueológico Nacional, the latter of which gave them a foretaste of the "glories" they would see during their trip. They also spent the large part of two days studying and purchasing photographs of Spanish medieval sculpture and architecture at the studio of Juana Roig Villalonga (1877-1941), owner of the photographic archives of Jean Laurent (1816-1886) and Joseph Lacoste (1872-ca. 1930).¹⁷ After travelling northwest to the Escorial, they headed to Segovia, Ávila, and Salamanca, moving on to Plasencia and Zamora. By the time they arrived in Segovia they were already enraptured by the stunning views afforded by the vast and ever-changing Spanish landscape and by the hospitality of its inhabitants. The abundance of clean inns and good wine, the flocks of sheep in golden fields, and the stork nests picturesquely sited on almost every church or castle tower added to their enthusiasm for the "unexplored" medieval sculpture they searched out, examined, and photographed.

The Porters' journey did not adhere to any one of the main routes to and from Santiago de Compostela. Instead their itinerary shows that they criss-crossed northern Spain, moving back and forth across the medieval roads leading to and from the cathedral of St. James the Apostle. After visiting León and Orense, they followed roads "very bad in places" to Santiago, arriving there on 10 June. They stayed only three days in the Galician capital, admiring the "astonishing" Pórtico de la Gloria,

17 Lucy Porter noted in her diary of 1920 (as in note 8 above), that during their Madrid sojourn they spent the afternoon of 20 May "look[ing] up photographs. Stayed there until 7:30 [p.m.] paying over 400 pesetas worth J. Roig (proprietor) Carrera de San Jerónimo 53—such a nice woman." After breakfast the following morning they returned to the "photograph shop" and "finished at 1:45" [p.m.] The photographic prints purchased by Porter in Madrid in May 1920, which include images of architecture and sculpture in Santiago de Compostela produced by Juana Roig's predecessors, the French photographers Laurent and Lacoste, bear the embossed stamp "JR" and are now in the Special Collections of Harvard's Fine Arts Library (see the discussion of Porter's photograph collection below).



Fig. 4: Cathedral of St. James, Santiago de Compostela (La Coruña), Puerta de las Platerías, left tympanum, right side. 13 x 18 cm. Photographer: Lucy W. Porter. Reproduced in *Romanesque Sculpture of the Pilgrimage Roads*, Figure 679. Photo: Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University, Arthur Kingsley Porter Study and Teaching Collection, AKP 2059M, catalogued as 176 Sa 592 2CPP 3a 5a.

photographing selected portions of the sculpture of the Puerta de las Platerías (Fig. 4), and visiting the cathedral library.¹⁸ The Porters were constantly on the lookout for fragments of eleventh- and twelfth-century sculpture, and likely during this first trip to Santiago they saw and photographed the Pantocrator oddly positioned along the roofline of the outer south wall of the cloister (the treasure façade), immediately adjacent to the Puerta de las Platerías, and discussed here by Manuel Castiñeiras.¹⁹ Despite the rain that fell abundantly during their stay in Galicia they also motored to Noia on the coast, where they picked up scallop shells in emulation of the practices of medieval pilgrims.

After their departure from Santiago their itinerary featured many of the sites associated with the “standard” routes of medieval pilgrims along the *camino primitivo* and *camino francés*, including Lugo, Oviedo, Santillana del Mar, Carrión de los Condes, Fromistá, Burgos, Santo Domingo de Silos, Logroño, San Millán de la Cogolla and Santo Domingo de la Calzada. They also visited the churches in the “adorably run down town” of Estella in Navarre, after which they journeyed on to Pamplona,

¹⁸ The Porters arrived in Santiago on the evening of 10 June 1923 and left for Lugo on the afternoon of 13 June.

¹⁹ See the accompanying article by Manuel Castiñeiras in the present issue of *Ad limina*.

the abbey of San Salvador de Leyre, Sangüesa, Zaragoza, and Huesca. From there they travelled to Lérida, where Porter picked up a letter from the Catalan architect and medievalist Josep Puig i Cadafalch (1867-1956), the only scholar in Spain with whom he had established contact prior to his arrival in 1920.²⁰

Puig i Cadafalch provided Porter with a list of "must-see" sites in Catalonia, and the Porters set out to visit them. Before they arrived in Barcelona, where Porter met with Puig i Cadafalch, they had marveled at the "wonderful" state of the preservation of the former Cistercian abbeys at Poblet and Santes Creus and had visited Tarragona. They had also explored Romanesque sculpture as well as elements of local color in an array of smaller towns, including Agramunt and Vilagrassa. After touring the museums of Barcelona in the company of Puig i Cadafalch and attending to an array of logistics, including the packing of trunks for shipment to the USA,²¹ the Porters embarked on the final leg of their initial pilgrimage to Spanish Romanesque art, driving to San Cugat, as well as to Terrassa, Vich, Ripoll, and Sant Joan de las Abadesses. On 21 July they crossed the Pyrenees into France at Puigcerdà, bidding farewell to their Spanish-speaking chauffeur and his vehicle, which was much worse for wear, and meeting up with their Italian chauffeur who whisked them away in their new Fiat. They spent the following weeks at such sites as St. Martin-du-Canigou, San-Michel-de-Cuxa, Perpignan, Elne, Arles-sur-Tech and Carcassonne before travelling along the *via podiensis* to Espalion, Conques, Souillac, Cahors, Moissac, Toulouse, and the west of France, mostly following the *via turonensis*. As in the case of their trip to Spain, the Porters visited Romanesque churches they had not previously seen in Saintonge and Poitou, among them those at Angoulême, Aulnay, Poitiers, and Parthenay.

The Porters worked tirelessly as a husband and wife team from early in the morning until late at night. Circuitous journeys over bumpy roads or tracks, hikes to remote churches that could not be reached by car, the carrying of heavy camera equipment, and the photographic documentation of the sites they visited, which necessitated long and carefully calculated exposures, did not leave them with many opportunities for writing letters to their friends and family. The correspondence that does survive, along with the comments in Lucy's diary, afford precious views of their impressions of Spain. Writing at the outset of the trip from Madrid on 19 May 1920 to Edward Forbes, director of Harvard's Fogg Museum—the medievalist had received official confirmation of his appointment to Harvard just weeks before he and his wife crossed the Spanish frontier—Porter proclaimed that he had already

²⁰ See note 27 below.

²¹ The Porters arrived in Barcelona on the night of 14 July and remained there until 20 July. In this large urban center they were able to have prints made from their glass plate and sheet film negatives and attend to banking, dental work, etc. Porter met with Puig i Cadafalch while Lucy ran many of the errands. When they had initially arrived in Spain on 12 May they had spent only two days in Barcelona, resting up after their train journey from France before travelling on to Madrid on the evening of 14 May.

"become deeply impressed with the length of the Romanesque road ahead of me."²² Forecasting his future research trajectory in a letter to his brother from Zamora on 3 June, Porter expressed the hope that he would complete his "studies in Spain and Saintonge" before gasoline and tire prices rose exorbitantly.²³ In a letter 30 June from Burgos, also to his brother, he remarked on the "constant succession of strange impressions here in Spain" (i.e., as distinct from Italy or France), asserting that "The art is so different from what I am accustomed too [sic], so intense and unrestrained, and yet with a strong appeal in many ways."²⁴

In her diary entry for 23 May, written in Segovia, Lucy portrayed the excitement of her husband when he discovered "sculptures on façade of S. Miguel he didn't expect to find." She made similar comments later in their journey when he "recognized the hand" of individual sculptors at Santiago and Tarragona whose work he had already traced in France or elsewhere.²⁵ Opining on 3 June that "It seems as if no country had ever been lovelier than Spain," Lucy continued to pen comments in this vein during the entire journey, describing their delight in the children who crowded around them in small hamlets, the "dancing flowers" in the fields, the often rocky and precipitous landscape through which they passed, and the inexpensive prices they paid for comfortable lodgings and delicious cuisine. The largely intact and unrestored medieval churches of northern Spain not only provided a dramatic contrast to the destruction they had witnessed in the *régions dévastées*, but also appear to have established for the Porters a new set of expectations, personal, scholarly, and otherwise. Lucy's diary suggests after their return to France from Spain they viewed that country and its medieval monuments through different, more critical eyes.²⁶

For his part, Porter was fascinated by the quantity and quality of the unmapped eleventh- and twelfth-century sculpture he studied and was enchanted by the "poetical" landscape, the quaintly situated villages, and encounters with "peasants" attired in their local dress. He also came away from his voyage to Spain with a favorable impression of the achievements of its scholars of medieval art, far fewer in number than in France. Confessing to his brother in a letter of 28 July from Perpignan that he had thought patronizingly in advance of his trip that Puig i Cadafalch was "some obscure little scholar," Porter had already realized by the time he reached Madrid that Puig was in fact the president of Catalonia's Mancomunitat and a highly influential

22 Harvard Art Museums Archives, Edward Waldo Forbes Papers, HC 2, Folder 1634, letter of 19 May 1920 from A. K. Porter to Forbes.

23 Harvard University Archives, Arthur Kingsley Porter Papers, HUG 1706.115, Correspondence of Arthur Kingsley Porter with Louis Porter, ca. 1916-1933, letter of 3 June 1920 from A. K. Porter to Louis Porter.

24 Ibid., letter of 30 June 1920 from A. K. Porter to Louis Porter.

25 For example, in her diary entry of 14 July when they were photographing sculpture in the cloister of the cathedral in Tarragona.

26 Lucy's diary of 1920 shows that during their ongoing travels in southern and western France she often regarded that region's architecture and the landscape through eyes colored by their experiences in northern Spain.

figure.²⁷ The American was also unexpectedly impressed by the two volumes of Vicente Lampérez's *Historia de la arquitectura cristiana española en la edad media* of 1908-1909 that he purchased in Oviedo and Burgos and by his visit to the "imposing establishment" of the Institut d'Estudis Catalans in Barcelona.²⁸ He lauded its photograph collection to his brother as "perhaps the finest in the world, which is characteristic of Catalonia, which is the most modern of countries."²⁹ In short, the Porters' stereotypical preconceptions about Spain as a "backward" country, a vision reinforced by their travels to remote villages, were counterbalanced by their experiences of the country's avant-garde modernity. The northern Spain that the Porters encountered in 1920 presented them with a colorful kaleidoscope of cultures, customs, and art works. It was a place brimming with history, and a provocative mix of old and new. Porter was better able to imagine the attraction of the "Santiago journey" and pilgrimages to Rome and Jerusalem, which he characterized in *Romanesque Sculpture of the Pilgrimage Roads* as having possessed "inner vitality," "singular poetry," "emotion," and "mystery."

After studying sculptures along the medieval pilgrimage routes in Spain and subsequently in southern and western France, Porter travelled to Paris where he conducted library research and studied a group of early twelfth-century capitals from the Burgundian abbey at Moutiers-St.-Jean, then part of a large collection of medieval sculpture on offer to Harvard's Fogg Art Museum from the dealer Georges Demotte. On 24 October 1920 he wrote a letter to his colleague Forbes, the museum's director, from Clermont-Ferrand. His missive, designed to attract donors who could support the museum's bid to acquire the Demotte collection, portrayed the Moutiers-St.-Jean capitals as outstanding examples of the artistic originality of Burgundy, "from which radiated [many of] the influences determining the development of sculpture from Spain to Apulia." Porter also highlighted the importance of sculptures from St. Bertrand-de-Comminges and St. Pons, which, in his words, belonged to "the extremely interesting group of churches along the road of St. James. It is now recognized that these pilgrimage churches form the key to the history of medieval sculpture."³⁰

27 Letter of 28 July 1920 from A. K. Porter to Louis Porter, Harvard University Archives (as in note 23). In this letter Porter mentioned that he had contacted Puig i Cadafalch prior to his trip to Spain, noting that he had read "an important book of his," *L'arquitectura romànica a Catalunya*, issued in three volumes (Barcelona, 1909-1918) and co-published by Puig i Cadafalch with Antonio de Falguera and Josep Goday i Casals.

28 Lampérez y Romea, Vicente, *Historia de la arquitectura cristiana española en la edad media según el estudio de los elementos y los monumentos*, 2 vols., Madrid, 1908-1909.

29 Letter of 28 July 1920 from A. K. Porter to Louis Porter (as in note 27).

30 Harvard Art Museums Archives, Edward Waldo Forbes Papers, HC 2, Folder 1516, typed copy of letter of 24 October 1920 from A. K. Porter to Forbes. For the Moutiers-St.-Jean capitals, see Brush, Kathryn, "The Capitals from Moutiers-Saint-Jean (Harvard University Art Museums) and the Carving of Medieval Art Study in America after World War I," in: *Medieval Art and Architecture after the Middle Ages*, Marquardt, Janet T. and Jordan, Alyce A. (eds.), Newcastle upon Tyne, 2009, pp. 298-311.

In short, Porter's first trip to northern Spain was a pivotal moment in his scholarly development. The new knowledge that the American had mobilized during his journey, together with the research data he had gathered in previous years, led him by the early fall of 1920 to firmly establish his "borderless" vision of the role of the Way of St. James and other pilgrimage routes in disseminating artistic ideas around Europe and the Mediterranean. In December 1921 Porter presented these highly influential revisionist views at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in a (published) lecture entitled *The Sculpture of the West*.³¹ He elaborated on them fully in 1923 in his *Romanesque Sculpture of the Pilgrimage Roads*.

Working Methods and Photographic Practice

Porter was no armchair scholar, and, as is well known, he criticized those who were. During his trip to Spain he and his wife covered a great deal of geographical and historical territory, searching out works of sculpture and architecture *in situ* and carefully documenting their finds via photography. They procured photographs from such commercial studios as the Arxiv Mas in Barcelona and Juana Roig in Madrid, when they were available.³² Although some of the churches and cathedrals in the larger cities, including those in Santiago, León, and Oviedo, had already been relatively well documented, this was not the case for a great number of the sites in provincial villages studied by the American couple.

Porter had begun to assemble a large personal photographic archive in the years around 1908, believing like many other coeval scholars that the modern technology of photography had the potential to become a primary research tool of the nascent discipline of art history. Although he was not without criticisms of the medium, he quickly realized that photographs could provide him with valuable *aides-memoires* and comparative material as he worked at his desk and wrote his publications. He began to learn how to use a large-format camera himself around 1904-1908, the years during which he wrote *Medieval Architecture* and commenced his research in Lombardy.³³ With his marriage to Lucy he gained a devoted wife-photographer. He taught the mechanics of large-format photography to his bride during their European honeymoon year in 1912-1913, and Lucy swiftly became the more proficient

31 Porter, A. Kingsley, *The Sculpture of the West. A Lecture Delivered at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, December 3, 1921*, Boston, 1921.

32 I have found no specific mention of the Porters having visited the photographer Adolf Mas during their stays in Barcelona in 1920, but it is very probable that they did. Certainly Porter ordered many photos from Mas as he was writing *Romanesque Sculpture of the Pilgrimage Roads*, as his correspondence, now in the Harvard University Archives, shows. For J. Roig in Madrid, see note 17 above.

33 Brush, Kathryn, "Medieval Art Through the Camera Lens. The Photography of Arthur Kingsley Porter and Lucy Wallace Porter," *Visual Resources. An International Journal on Images and Their Uses* 33 (2017), pp. 252-294. In that article I explore the photographic practices of the Porters in greater depth than is possible here.

photographer of the two. By the time they undertook their mission in the war-torn regions of northern France in 1918-1919, she was the primary camera operator.³⁴ Lucy continued to play this role during their trip to Spain the following year. She was responsible for making more than two-thirds of the photographs published in the nine portfolio volumes of *Romanesque Sculpture of the Pilgrimage Roads*. Her husband has traditionally been viewed as having been a legendary scholar and photographer, but she deserves most of the credit for the latter.

They travelled with two cameras in Spain. One was a large-format camera and the other was a smaller apparatus that could be hand-held or used with a tripod. Lucy "womanned" both cameras, with her husband tending to use the smaller one when he joined her in their photographic enterprise. Lucy's photographs are more accomplished. She not only acquired greater expertise with the mechanics of timing and exposure, but also had a sophisticated grasp of the art of composition owing to her studies at Columbia University with Arthur Wesley Dow (1857-1922), teacher of such artists as Georgia O'Keeffe (1889-1986).³⁵ During their trip in 1920 the Porters necessarily made a great number of photographs owing to the lack of previous documentation. Whereas they had been forced to limit their output in the *régions dévastées* owing to a shortage of glass plates and the requisite chemicals, the availability of plentiful photographic supplies in Spain enabled their expanded production.

Unlike today's smartphone users, the Porters were not "snapshot" photographers. They did not waste their time, energy, and equipment by imaging themselves in front of individual historical monuments or documenting the landscape through which they travelled. They focused almost exclusively on recording the carved tympana, lintels, capitals, and jamb figures of the churches, museums, and other places they encountered. Their work started early in morning and often continued until late at night. At most sites, Porter would take the notes and Lucy would operate the camera or cameras. Porter did not like to be photographed, but at times Lucy managed to document her husband at work, as in the case of their visit to the collegiate church in Santillana del Mar on 26 June (Fig. 5). A week later her husband took a singular image on their smaller camera. His objective was to photograph a sculpted capital in the cloister of San Pedro la Rúa in Estella, but at the same time he captured his photographer-wife at work in the lower left of the image (Fig. 6). This appears to be the only extant photograph that shows Lucy the camera-woman at work. The Porters expended immense energy on their photographic production, developing their glass plate negatives and films en route. To do so, they set up make-shift darkrooms in their hotel bedrooms and bathrooms, frequently destroying rugs and sweaters in the process.

34 Ibid., pp. 261-266.

35 Ibid., pp. 275-278, for Lucy Porter's biography and educational training.



Fig. 5: Collegiate church of Santa Juliana, Santillana del Mar (Navarra), southern transept façade, with A. Kingsley Porter taking notes in the bottom right. 13 x 18 cm. Photographer: Lucy W. Porter. Reproduced in *Romanesque Sculpture of the Pilgrimage Roads*, Figure 860. Photo: Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University, Arthur Kingsley Porter Study and Teaching Collection, AKP 2040M, catalogued as 176 Sa 5925 2CS 2.



Fig. 6: Church of San Pedro la Rúa, Estella (Navarra), cloister, detail of capital showing the Adoration of the Magi. Lucy Porter can be seen operating a large-format view camera at the bottom left. 9 x 12 cm. Photographer: A. Kingsley Porter. Reproduced in *Romanesque Sculpture of the Pilgrimage Roads*, Figure 807. Photo: Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University, Arthur Kingsley Porter Study and Teaching Collection, AKP 389S, catalogued as 176 Es 819 2PC 9ee 1.

The photographs themselves, now in the Special Collections of Harvard's Fine Arts Library, provide vital visual and material evidence of the Porters' travels in 1920 and beyond.³⁶ It is important to emphasize that the images published in the unbound portfolios of *Romanesque Sculpture of the Pilgrimage Roads* in 1923 represent only a highly selective group of images produced during their journey. Although the 1,527 half-tone reproductions came to form a "canon" for scholarly investigation of Romanesque sculpture for much of the twentieth century, they by no means provide a complete picture of what the American couple saw in 1920. The Porters did not confine their "visual regime" to Romanesque sculpture, nor did they focus solely on this one medium, as previously has been thought. Porter had published books on architecture, and he continued his work in this vein in Spain, often photographing

36 Arthur Kingsley Porter Study and Teaching Collection, Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University, VSCO 229. The collection consists of 26,500 black and white photographs, mostly of medieval art and architecture; approximately 11,710 photographs were made by the two Porters, with the other images having been acquired by Porter during his lifetime via purchase or exchange. For the history of the collection, *ibid.*, pp. 255-259.



Fig. 7: Church of Santa María de la Peña, Sepúlveda (Segovia), view of exterior from the south. 13 x 18 cm. Photographer: Lucy W. Porter. Photo: Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University, Arthur Kingsley Porter Study and Teaching Collection, AKP 1828M, catalogued as 176 Se 65 2M 1.

church exteriors, as well as their vaulting, coursing, and apsidal configurations. Lucy, who drew inspiration from practices then in vogue in professional and touristic photography, frequently imaged groups of adults and children in front of the churches that had anchored their communities for centuries (Figs. 7 & 8). Photography provided the Porters with a vehicle for imagining themselves as active *voyeurs* of a distant, yet living past.

Through the camera lens they also recorded their visits to Visigothic and Mozarabic buildings, among them San Juan Bautista at Baños de Cerrato (Zamora), San Pedro de la Nave (Palencia), and San Miguel de Escalada (León). Some of the contexts in which these photographs were made come vividly to life when supplemented by the commentary provided by Lucy's diary. To reach the Mozarabic church of San Miguel de Escalada, to which there was no road access, the Porters punted across a river and hiked through "yellow" fields for several kilometers before studying and documenting the church with the smaller camera (Fig. 9). On the way back they were drenched in a storm, returning to find their dry chauffeur calmly observing the downpour from the comfort of his vehicle.³⁷ They often followed

37 Lucy Porter recorded this event in her diary entry of 7 June 1920.

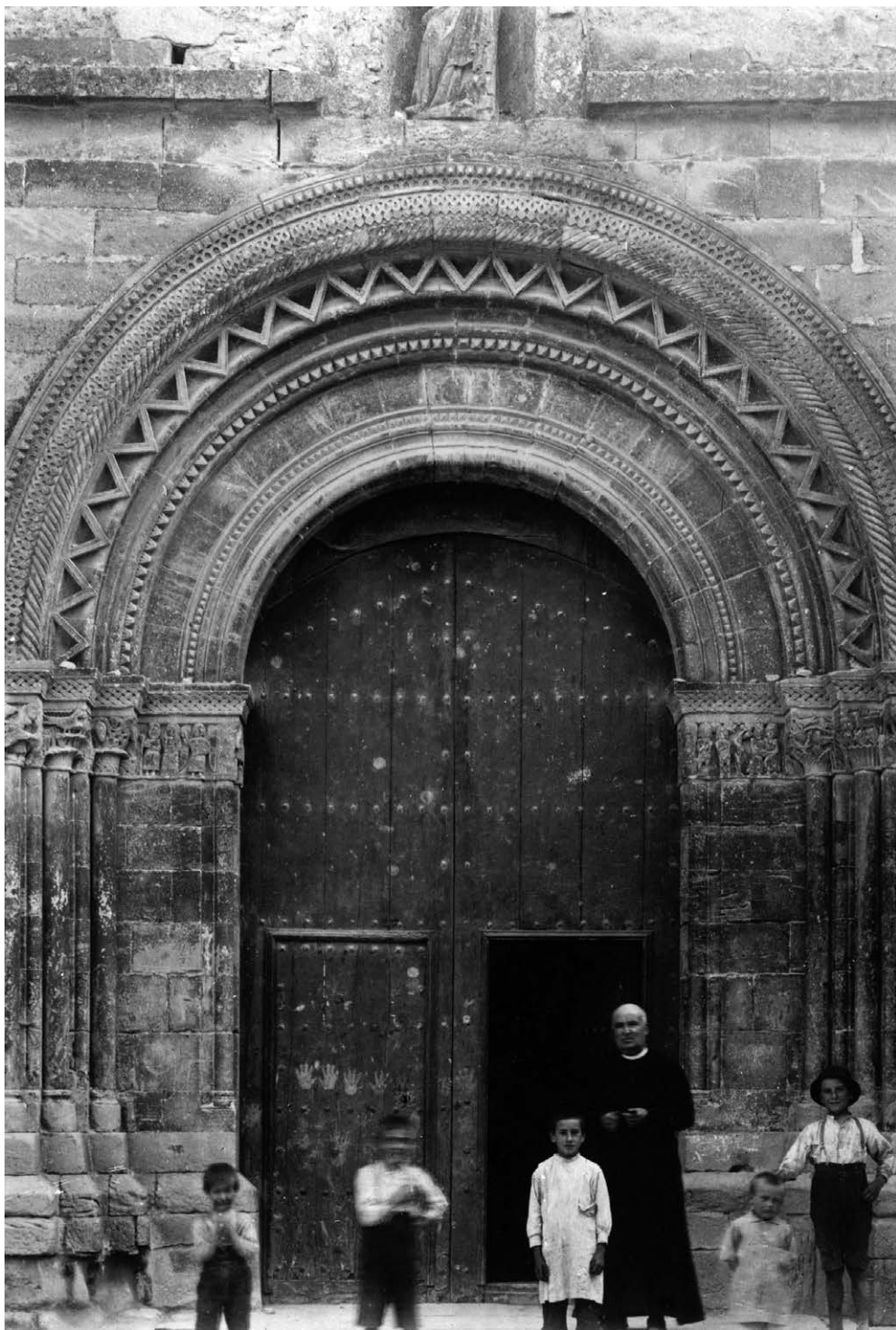


Fig. 8: Church of Santa María, Vilagrassa (Lérida), exterior, portal on north side. 13 x 18 cm. Photographer: Lucy W. Porter. Photo: Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University, Arthur Kingsley Porter Study and Teaching Collection, AKP 2078M, catalogued as 176 V 71 2C 1c.



Fig. 9: Church of San Miguel de Escalada (León), exterior, south side. 9 x 12 cm. Photographer: Lucy W. Porter. Photo: Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University, Arthur Kingsley Porter Study and Teaching Collection, AKP 541S, catalogued as 176 Es 17 2MS 1b.

mule tracks on foot in search of vestiges of other medieval monasteries. At Segovia and Carrión de los Condes friendly inhabitants permitted the Americans to take photos of sculptures on the facades of Romanesque churches from the windows of their immediately adjacent homes. In the cathedral at Segovia the curious sacristan and several censer-bearers gathered around them as they took half-hour-long exposures in the cathedral.

In a letter to his friend Bernard Berenson (1865-1959), written from New York on 21 January 1920, well in advance of the trip to Spain, Porter expressed his fervent enthusiasm for a trip to follow the pilgrimage roads to Santiago de Compostela, declaring that "I have the impression that a set of good photographs of the Spanish, Aquitanian and Poitevin sculptures may lead to amazing results."³⁸ The culmination of his "amazing" research findings was his landmark *Romanesque Sculpture of*

38 Harvard University Archives, Arthur Kingsley Porter Papers, HUG 1706.185, Arthur Kingsley Porter Correspondence with Bernard Berenson, 1918-1956, letter of 21 January 1920 (typed copy of original letter now in the Berenson Archive, Villa I Tatti).

the Pilgrimage Roads, which not only provoked much further investigation into the origins and dissemination of medieval visual culture, but which also influenced the formation of medievalist art historical practice in Europe and North America. For almost a century now, the intellectual projects of thousands of students and scholars have been inspired by Porter's foundational ideas about medieval pilgrimage culture. My research demonstrates that his first trip to northern Spain in 1920 was a watershed in the formulation of his vision of the multidirectional flow of ideas along the pilgrimage roads. The story of how Porter blazed "The Way" is riveting in itself. Most importantly, a critical understanding of the circumstances in which his groundbreaking theories took shape has the potential to inspire today's scholars to generate equally new and original ideas not only about art along the pilgrimage roads, but also about other aspects of medieval visual culture.

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