

Constructing Inherent Styles: Art History and Galician Nationalism in the works of Alfonso Castelao

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Constructing Inherent Styles: Art History and Galician Nationalism in the works of Alfonso Castelao

This paper analyses the works of Alfonso Daniel Manuel Rodríguez Castelao (d. 1950) from the lens of art historiography, to show how Galician art historical contributions from the beginning of the twentieth century connected art and artistic styles from the past with identity significations. My discussion is mainly based on the discourse analysis of *Sempre en Galiza* (1944) and *As cruces de pedra na Galiza* (1950), along with mentions to other texts such as *Alba de Groria* (1948) or several essays from *Revista Nós*. The examination of these texts is complemented with the study of Castelao's visual production. Two main arguments are extracted from Castelao's approach to the history of Galician art: the Celtic ethnic foundation of Galicia and the establishment of two national styles, Romanesque and Baroque, which are seen as intrinsic to this territory.

Keywords: Galicia; nationalism; national identity; historiography; Castelao.

Introduction

This paper deals with the uses of material culture and art from the past in the construction of national identities. It is well known that the birth of nationalism in Europe in the nineteenth century brought with it the construction of a series of narratives that based national identities and collective memory on – among other aspects – the historical past of the territories as a means of cultural and political legitimisation.¹ In this sense, History, Archaeology, and Art History, all academic disciplines that were born at the same time as the modern nation-states, were key in establishing national discourses, searching in the past for the cultural and material roots of their identities. For this reason, when approaching historiographical contributions made in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it is vital to consider the effect of the author's personal and historical

¹ A thorough examination of the concepts of nationalism or national identities is beyond the scope of this paper. I refer to: Anderson, 1983/1991; Gellner, 1983; Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983; Hobsbawm, 1990; Smith, 1991; Beramendi et al., 1994; Özkirimli, 2000.

background on their understanding of their object of study. In this context, romantic notions, particularly those regarding nationhood, had a crucial influence on authors and their literary discourses. Recognising the background of the studies and texts produced during this time allows us to identify the political and identarian echoes that permeate the studies on the past, along with the cultural values and ideological and social functions these texts had at the time of their publication (Moxey, 2004/1994], p. 69).²

To address this crucial aspect of the construction of national identities, this paper will focus on a specific case study: the examination of the uses of material culture and art from the past in the case of Galicia, a historical region in the northwest of the Iberian Peninsula.³ Following the common trends that defined European nations, nineteenth-century Galician authors were compelled by Romantic philosophy to search for their national identity, initiating a period of cultural revival that began in the 1840s with the so-called *Rexurdimento* (Resurgence). This trend continued into the twentieth century, with the development of a cultural and political nationalism during the first half of this century. The latter will be the framework for this paper, as I will focus on the works of a fundamental figure of Galician Nationalism: Alfonso Castelao.⁴ I will conduct a historiographical survey and discourse analysis of several of his books and essays to understand his ideas regarding the history of art in Galicia. Additionally, I will provide a brief overview of Castelao's visual production, in which he sought inspiration from

² For an example of how the political background of authors influences the study of the past, see Boyle, 2013.

³ For previous approaches to this subject: Villares, 2011; Villares, 2015.

⁴ Castelao's work was declared *Bien de Interés Cultural* (BIC) in 2011 by the Regional Government of Galicia. This category implies the highest degree of protection that can be given to heritage in Spain since 1985. See, <https://www.boe.es/boe/dias/2012/03/19/pdfs/BOE-A-2012-3894.pdf>

artistic styles of the past for his paintings and drawings. Both aspects of his work will demonstrate how this author attributed to material culture and art a fundamental role as a means of connecting the present with an immemorial past and as a transmitter of his discourse on national identity.

National Identities and Cultural Heritage

The birth of nationalism was accompanied by the political appropriation of the past and its material culture. Consequently, humanistic disciplines such as Art History and Archaeology proved fundamental in the search for the roots and the glorious past of nations. Thus, a strong connection between national identities and cultural heritage was established, as material remains and symbols of the past were used to create collective memories (see, Winter, 2015). These elements provided the materiality to the past upon which national identities were constructed. As Hamilakis (2007, p. 79) argues, it was precisely this embodied presence of history that provided ‘the objective reality of the nation’.

Through this approach, an artistic and monumental topography of nations was configured, with certain monuments, artists, schools, and styles being memorialised as national landmarks and forms of collective identity. This use of historical remains to establish identity discourses can be seen in various ways, including the promotion of restorations, exhibitions, archaeological excavations, the exaltation of particular elements of a territory’s material legacy,⁵ or – of particular interest for this study – through the contributions made within the discipline of Art History.

⁵ To give an example, the *Dama de Elche* (fifth-sixth century BCE) was presented after its discovery in 1897 as a materialisation of national culture and Spain's glorious past (Ruiz & Rouillard, 2006; Gutiérrez Lloret, 2017).

In the field of archaeology, it was common practice to conduct excavations aimed at fostering national identity by recovering and promoting material vestiges of the past upon which the imagined community would be based (Kohl & Fawcett, 1995; Díaz-Andreu & Champion, 1996). A notable example of this revaluation of ancient art and architecture in shaping national memory and identity is Greece, which turned to its classical past to seek the foundational elements for constructing the modern nation (Hamilakis, 2007).⁶ But excavations undertaken for identitarian purposes were a widespread practice in most states during the nation-building processes. These historical investigations were often motivated by an interest in providing a basis for racial and ethnic ideations. In Spain, this application of archaeology within the framework of cultural nationalism has been extensively studied by Díaz-Andreu (1994, 1995), who explores how archaeological endeavours, and the promotion of excavations were politically charged, linked to the various nationalist movements – Spanish, Catalan, Basque, and Galician – as a means for recovering information about a supposedly ancient national past, a pursuit that frequently involved a search for the origins of an ethnic foundation (Ruiz Zapatero, 2017).

Another professional field intertwined with the construction of national identities was restoration. Interventions in specific monuments were fostered in order to exalt certain historical periods, seeking for these targeted works of art – usually buildings – to align with the desired idea of artistic identity or tradition that was sought within the national discourses (Castro Fernández, 2012). Famous – and controversial – are the cases of France and Germany, where historicist restorations and reconstructions (or even

⁶ In the case of classical antiquity, not only Greece identified itself as the heir to this past and heritage, but it also came to be seen as the past of other European nations, with revivals of the classical era taking place during the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries (Hamilakis, 2007; Fögen & Warren, 2016).

entirely new constructions) were undertaken on numerous Gothic buildings, such as the Basilica of Saint Denis or the Cologne Cathedral, permanently altering the image of these monuments (Thiesse, 1999, pp. 141-151; Speitkamp, 2014). This form of restoration, aimed at reinforcing national identity, persisted throughout part of the twentieth century within the context of dictatorial regimes. For instance, in Portugal during the dictatorship of Salazar, known as Estado Novo (1933-1974), restorations and interventions on significant monuments were carried out, primarily characterized by historicist reintegration that sought stylistic unity. In these, the targeted monuments were linked to Portugal's 'glorious' past, understood as exemplars of the foundation of Portugal's identity (Neto, 2001; Almeida Fernandes, 2017). Similar actions are documented in Spain during the Franco dictatorship (1939-1975), with the restoration and rehabilitation of buildings and monuments associated with the Catholic Monarchs, whose reign was regarded by Spanish nationalism from the nineteenth century as the paramount example of the unity of the peninsular territory (Llorente Hernández, 1995; Ortiz Pradas, 2017).

For the purpose of this paper, our primary focus lies in the role played by art historiography in shaping national identities. Art-historical contributions from this period were inextricably intertwined with the development of national histories. As previously noted, the discipline of Art History emerged simultaneously to the consolidation of modern nation-states and the development of Romantic notions of national identity (Rampley, 2012a; Rampley, 2012b). As a result, Art History had a crucial role in the construction of European national identities, linked to ideas such as ethnicity, race, spirit, or the well-known concept of *volksgeist*. In this context, one of the major contributions of this discipline was the publication of the great 'national histories of art' (Rampley, 2012b). These works were institutionally promoted and responded to the territorial delineation of modern nation-states. Furthermore, academic studies on what were

considered to be the national artistic schools and traditions of each nation were also published. For instance, numerous investigations focused on the Renaissance or Gothic, both claimed as the national style by different states (mainly France, Germany, and Italy), and thus were debated in terms of national sentiments (Moxey, 2004 [1994], pp. 69-90; Passini, 2012).

In an effort to contribute to the formation of those imagined communities, Art History endeavoured to identify and delineate 'national artistic styles' for the different nation-states. This discipline initially suggested the existence of styles inherently tied to specific territories, identifying their characteristic or forms as national attributes. This idea of crafting national styles primarily aimed to highlight historical moments of artistic excellence, which could be claimed as part of a nation's glorious past. Alternatively, national styles could also emerge from distinct expressions that differentiated one territory from another, a common strategy in identity formation. Indeed, in many instances, establishing stylistic differences between territories aided in the construction of their national identity. For instance, this phenomenon is evident in the cases of France, Germany, and Italy whose styles were established and debated in contrast to one another (Passini, 2012). Especially, medieval art was claimed as a pillar of these identities since the Middle Ages were integrated within contemporary discourses on nationality.⁷ A good – and well-known – example of this reality is France, where Gothic art was appropriated

⁷ The Middle Ages were the historical period favoured by romantic thinkers. For instance, the works of Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, John Ruskin, or Augustus Pugin fundamentally focused on Gothic art. In addition, during the end of the eighteenth and the nineteenth century, the 'medieval revival' took place, especially in the areas of architecture and metalwork (Addison, 1938).

as a national style (Therrien, 1997; Passini, 2012).⁸ Regarding national styles, Camillo Boito (1836-1914), Italian architect and key figure in the history of restoration, explicitly referred to the need to develop a ‘national style’ for Italy, alluding to the similar processes that had been or were being carried out in other states:

The other nations are already trying to rediscover a style: the Germans are returning to their pointed arch, the English are going back to their Tudor, the Russians are approaching their Byzantine, the French are still undecided between their Gothic and their Renaissance. For Italy, the great problem lies in the marvellous richness of its past. But, sooner or later, there will need to be an Italian architecture (Boito, 1893; Cfr. Tobia, 1994, pp. 706-7)⁹

This narrative construction of national styles resulted in the organization of exhibitions with a strong emphasis on national identity. These exhibitions aimed to advocate for the recognition of national primitive schools or the great artistic styles of the nation, often serving as acts of propaganda (Lasheras, 2009). In fact, this sense of identity and patriotic undertone played a crucial role in the early major exhibitions, such as the Joshua Reynolds exhibition at the British Institution in London in 1813 or the Rembrandt Exhibition at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam in 1898 (Haskell, 2000/2002). Also, in later chronologies, art exhibitions continued to be associated with national identity during Europe’s dictatorial regimes. For example, the vast exhibition of Italian art held at the Royal Academy of Arts in London in 1930 was intended as a propaganda tool for Mussolini's fascist regime (Haskell, 2000/2002). Similarly, the Portuguese World Exhibition held in Lisbon in 1940 during the Salazar dictatorship celebrated the country’s

⁸ In Spain, this exploration of the medieval and early modern periods led to the appropriation and promotion of what some art historians have called Mudejar, Plateresque and Hispano-Flemish as national styles (Ortiz Pradas, 2010).

⁹ Translated by the author from the quotation in Spanish in Tobia, 1994, pp. 706-7.

history with a clear political appropriation of Portugal's past as a means to legitimize the Estado Novo (Almeida Fernandes, 2017).

A more thorough exploration of the interconnections between nationalism and art falls beyond the scope of this paper. However, this succinct overview of this phenomenon within Europe provides the essential context for the objective of this paper, which is to analyse how Castelao, a key figure of Galician nationalism during the first half of the twentieth century, approached art and architecture of the past as elements of national identity. The study will illustrate how his understanding of certain works of art or artistic styles reflects a use or appropriation of what is perceived as the nation's glorious past. In this paper, I intentionally employ the term 'inherent styles' alongside 'national styles', since Castelao describes them as intrinsic to the spirit, the people, and even the stone of Galicia.

Alfonso Castelao and Galician Heritage

As in other territories, the nineteenth century saw in Galicia the development of Regionalism, which brought a period of cultural revival that began in the 1840s with the cultural and literary movement known as *Rexurdimento* (in English: Resurgence), born within this regionalist context. Regionalism in Galicia was structured around *Galeguismo*, a political movement born in the second half of the nineteenth century that led to the later emergence of Galician nationalism.¹⁰ Authors like Manuel Murguía (1833-1923) and Alfredo Brañas (1859-1900) were influential figures of this period, in which

¹⁰ The regionalist movement in Galicia began with the publication in 1886 of *El Regionalismo Gallego* by Manuel Murguía. Three years later, in 1889, the *Asociación Rexionalista Galega* was founded, and Alfredo Brañas's work, *El regionalismo. Estudio sociológico, histórico y literario*, was released, becoming a reference work for Galician regionalism and nationalism (Barreiro Fernández, 1982; Máiz, 1984b; Viejo Viñas, 2002; Núñez Seixas & Iglesias Amorín, 2020).

intellectuals tried to enhance the regional identity and particularities of Galicia and its people, focusing primarily on the cultural and linguistic exaltation of the territory, with a particular interest in its history (Beramendi & Núñez Seixas, 1995; Ríos Panisse, 2000).

Later, around the turn of the twentieth century (1916), there was a transition away from this previous regionalist perspective and towards a fully formed nationalist movement. This was a more politicised movement, which led to the founding of the *Partido Galeguista* (1931) and the drafting of the Statute of Autonomy of Galicia (1936).¹¹ It was fundamentally represented by the intellectual groups Xeración Nós (1921-1931) and Irmandades da Fala (1916-1921). Both Xeración Nós, with their journal *Revista Nós*, and Irmandades da Fala, with their journal *A Nosa Terra*, advocated the resurgence of national awareness through the recovery of the Galician language and culture. To this end, they published numerous articles and essays on several subjects – from political to cultural contents – in Galician, highlighting the distinctiveness of the Galician nation and its differentiation from Castile (Beramendi & Núñez Seixas, 1995; Máiz, 2001; Quintana Garrido, 2002; Núñez Seixas & Iglesias Amorín, 2020; Villares et al., 2021).

One of the founders and crucial figures of Galician nationalism is Alfonso Daniel Manuel Rodríguez Castelao (b. Rianxo, 1886; d. Buenos Aires, 1950), commonly refer to as Castelao (**Figure 1**). Writer, artist, and politician, he worked intensively on Galician language and culture, taking part in political and cultural activities (Seixas Seoane, 2017; Seixas Seoane, 2019; Biblioteca Nacional de España. n.d.; Biblioteca de Galicia. n.d.).

¹¹ *Partido Galeguista* was a Galician nationalist political party founded in 1931, which held significant importance during the Spanish Second Republic (1931-1939). The party was practically disintegrated after the military uprising of 1936, which led to the repression of party members and their exile during the Spanish dictatorship (1939-1975) (Quintana Garrido, 2002).

Among these, it stands out his involvement in the nationalist political party *Partido Galeguista*, with which he was a delegate of the *Cortes* during the Spanish Second Republic (1931-1939). He was fundamental in the drafting and defence of the Statute of Autonomy for Galicia (1936), which he did not live to see approved, as the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) cut short its recognition. Other significant parts of his career are his collaboration with the organization *Irmandades da Fala* and with the *Seminario de Estudos Galegos*, and his crucial participation in the journal *Revista Nós: Boletín Mensual da Cultura Galega* (1920-1935), of which he was the artistic director.¹² During the Spanish dictatorship (1939-1975), Castelao continued his cultural and political activities from exile (Núñez Seixas, 2004), culminating his life work with the publication in 1944 of his referential book, *Sempre en Galiza*.¹³

Among the contributions of Castelao to the study of Galician culture, there are his investigations on stone crosses, known in Galician as *cruceiros*. These monuments began to be erected in Galicia from the fourteenth century onwards, increasing their production during the Baroque (Valle Pérez, 1974, pp. 49-59; Carreño, 2021, pp. 413-4). They were

¹² The approaches to different artistic movements that Castelao published in the journal *Nós* are also particularly interesting (e.g., issues 11 and 12). He also approaches artistic issues in the publication of parts of his diaries from when he visited France, Belgium, and Germany as part of a travel grant from the Junta de Ampliación de Estudios (1920) to train in the techniques of etching, engraving and lithography (e.g., issues 10, 13, 16). In these essays, his nationalist inclination towards art can also be perceived. To consult this journal, see the digitisation launched in 2020 to commemorate its centenary: <https://revistanos.galiciiana.gal/> [accessed 28 January 2024].

¹³ *Sempre en Galiza* centres fundamentally on political aspects, with the Statute of Autonomy of Galicia playing a protagonist role. Political issues of the time are analysed throughout this work, such as agrarian policy, fiscal reforms, federalism and territorial organisation, the civil war, or the problems of the Galician language. For Castelao's political thinking see: Beramendi & Máiz Suárez, 1992; Máiz, 2000; Garrido Couceiro, 2000; Méixome Quinteiro, 2000.

identified as a distinctive trademark of the Galician landscape, leading to their recognition as a distinctive aspect of Galician cultural identity (**Figure 2**). Most academic examinations of Castelao's work concentrate on his political writings, particularly on his culminating work, *Sempre en Galiza*. However, his surveys on stone crosses offer informative material on how Art History responded to its historical and ideological context. In this sense, this book provides a splendid example to examine the ideas of Castelao regarding art from the past.

Castelao's book *As cruces de pedra na Galiza* (1950) culminated a series of studies on stone crosses conducted by this author.¹⁴ His research began in 1929 when Castelao and his wife, Virxinia Pereira, travelled to Brittany on a scholarship to study the stone crosses of this region (**Figure 3**).¹⁵ As a result, the first book of Castelao on the subject, *As cruces de Pedra na Bretaña* (1930), was published after its public reading at the *Seminario de Estudos Galegos*. Later, Castelao's acceptance speech to the *Real Academia Galega* (1934) was already devoted to the Galician stone crosses. After his death, the Galician publishing Editorial Nós released *As cruces de pedra na Galiza* posthumously.¹⁶ This book is the first monographic approach to these sculptures, which had previously been largely ignored, except for the brief examination conducted by

¹⁴ The exhibition '*Castelao e as cruces de pedra*' was held at the Museo de Pontevedra (2000) under the promotion of both this institution and the Fundación Pedro Barrié de la Maza. Later, in 2004, this same museum commemorated Castelao's visit to Brittany with another exhibition: '*Castelao en Bretaña*'. For the catalogues: Valle Pérez, 2000; Valle Pérez, 2004.

¹⁵ Apart from *As cruces de pedra na Bretaña*, he also published as a result of this trip the essays '*Sant'Iago na Bretaña*' (Castelao, 1929; Castelao, 1930b).

¹⁶ The edition used is Castelao, A. (1950/1984). *As cruces de pedra na Galiza*. Galaxia. For the discourse analysis of this book, selected fragments of the texts referring to identity were introduced into a database. These quotes were associated with a series of tags or thematic keywords to categorise them. Some of the tags used were: 'ethnicity', 'celt', 'tradition', or 'inherent art/own art'.

Bernardo Barreiro de Vázquez Varela (1888), director of the journal *Galicia Diplomática* (1882-1893).¹⁷

Scholarly research on stone crosses as a means to define a cultural identity was first carried out in Ireland, where one of its foremost exponents was Henry O'Neill, author of *Illustrations of the Most Interesting of the Sculptured Crosses of Ancient Ireland* (1857).¹⁸ He was part of a larger group of scholars and antiquarians in Ireland who sought to promote the country's long-standing cultural identity,¹⁹ and his studies on Irish high crosses presented them as a native production, in line with his understanding of Irish art as an expression of a national character, showing Ireland as a nation with its own indigenous artistic culture.

In Galicia, although later, these monuments were also identified as a part of this territory's cultural and national identity, and in the case of Castelao, he presented these crosses as a part of Galician identity by linking them to ethnic considerations. Thus, these crosses were not only part of the Galician landscape and religious culture, but they were also endowed with new meanings through their resignification in Castelao's work. When studying the stone crosses, Castelao proposed two central claims about national identity: (1) Celtism and (2) the idea of a Galician national artistic style.

¹⁷ *Galicia Diplomática* was a journal devoted to historical and cultural issues that had a significant role in the identitarian process, with studies on archaeology, history, literature, art, or documentation. See Rivo Vázquez (2012).

¹⁸ He also examined the Irish round towers, establishing pagan origins and disputing George Petrie's theory that they were built after Christianity was introduced to Ireland (Sheehy, 1980, pp. 22–3; Harbison, 2014).

¹⁹ O'Neill was also a member of the Repeal Association and was involved in the political movements of his time. He painted the members of Young Ireland and Daniel O'Connell during his time in jail (Sheehy, 1980, pp. 17–27, 29–39).

The Celtic Ethnic Background

Firstly, the ethnic perspective presented by Castelao is based on Celtism, the fundamental pillar of his proposal to establish a differential 'spirit' of the Galician people. This corresponds to the main argument at the time to propose a differential Galician reality. In this sense, history and tales of the past were a fundamental part of the search for differential characteristics, thus an essential defining factor of identity. European nations began this procedure by naming their ancestors (Thiesse, 1999, p. 21); and in Galicia, this resulted in an ethnocultural foundation that connected Galicia to the Celts. This idea became a cornerstone of Galician history, finding its starting point in the works of José Verea y Aguiar and his first account on the history of this territory: *Historia de Galicia*, 1838. However, this ethnic basis was finally presented as a central point in the foundation of the Galician nation in the second half of the nineteenth century, with the publication of the *Historia de Galicia* written by Manuel Murguía (1865-1913) (Máiz, 1984a).

Xeración Nós gathered this line of thought that alludes to the alleged Celtic roots of Galicia, having, for instance, a central role in the book of Vicente Risco, *Teoría do nacionalismo Galego* (1920), a referential work of this movement. Galicia's subsequent identification as a member of the 'Celtic Nations' was incisive in the case of its ties to Ireland, which was on the verge of gaining independence from the British. As a result, early twentieth-century Galician intellectuals looked to Ireland as a model in the process

of recovering Galician national identity.²⁰ For this, they recognised the importance of language, history, and culture in the awakening of national conscience.

Castelao's book on Galician stone crosses – in which he studies *cruceiros*, pre-Christian petroglyphs and Romanesque antefix crosses – presents these monuments as the result of a specific religiosity inherent to the people of this land. In his discourse, the ethnic background would define this distinctive religiosity or spirituality, so Castelao connects it with the essence of Galicia, referring to a specific – using his word – 'psychology' that derives from ethnicity. This would mean a specific way of thinking, feeling, and living. In this way, through these monuments, he emphasises the Galician identity as distinct from other territories, while he also connects it with some regions.²¹

Castelao (1950/1984) established a series of relationships between the several stone crosses developed in these Celtic Nations. For this author, the origins of these crosses were marked by the Celtic ethnic background shared by Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Cornwall, Brittany, and Galicia. He argued that this connection would lead to a cultural affinity, and regarding stone crosses, he understood their development as the result of a shared ethos and spirituality derived from the same Celtic roots (Carreño, 2020). For example, when talking about the wayside crosses, he asserts that this typology of cross

²⁰ An essential part of this link with Ireland was the translation of Irish works into Galician. The translation of the *Leabhar Gabhála Éireann* (tenth century) – or *Book of the Invasions of Ireland* – is especially significant since it connects Galicia and the Celtic invasion of Ireland (Lugrís Álvarez & Moscoso Mato, 2005; McKevitt, 2006-2007).

²¹ Therefore, these crosses were used as part of the ideological foundation of a community, being used to establish its sameness with some territories (Ireland, Scotland or Brittany) while helping to formulate its distinctiveness from others (Castile). Máiz (1989, pp. 269-74) established from the study of *Sempre en Galiza* a difference in Castelao's formulations between 'ethnicity of exclusion' (Castile), 'ethnicity of reintegration' (Portugal) and 'ethnicity of identification' (Celtic Nations).

was developed in ‘todo-los países celto-cristiáns’ (‘Every Celtic-Christian country’) as they would be the product of what he understands as the Celtic conscience of the people (Castelao, 1950/1984, p. 78). Another good example is his analysis of the Galician antefix crosses, to which he refers as ‘fillas ou netas das cruces irlandesas i escocesas’ (‘daughters or granddaughters of the Irish and Scottish crosses’) (Castelao, 1950/1984, p. 65). Castelao saw in these types of crosses echoes of what has been understood as Celtic art and relates them to what he identifies as the same 'ethnic background'.²²

In his book, Castelao presented the development of stone crosses as part of the *volksgeist* of these nations.²³ This understanding and deployment of the material culture from ancient and medieval times was part of the promotion of the Celtic origins conducted by nationalist authors since the second half of the nineteenth century. In this sense, Castelao is studying this phenomenon within a broader context of theoretical national

²² For Castelao, these crosses' round and organic shape fit the artistic and religious sensibility of Galicia and the other Celtic Nations (Castelao, 1950/1984, pp. 55, 59). In fact, the association between organic and circular forms and the purported Celtic ancestry of the Galician people and their art can also be found in the reflections about Galician art of Luis Seoane (1910-1979). In his text ‘Arte galega’ (1961/1996, p. 18), Seoane states that ‘estas formas tendentes á espiral e ó círculo, envolventes, que se advirten como característica da arte celta, dinamizan o Románico galego facéndoo desviarse do seu estatismo fundamental; parece atopa-la súa natureza axeitada no Barroco, e percíbese na construción dunha parte moi característica da pintura galega actual’ (‘These forms that tend to the spiral and the circle, enveloping, that are seen as characteristics of the Celtic art, dynamize the Galician Romanesque making it deviate from its fundamental statism; to find its suitable nature in the Baroque, and it is perceived in the construction of a very characteristic part of the current Galician painting’). Thus, it is understood that these ethnic antecedents of the nation endure across centuries, either being adapted or influencing a preference towards certain artistic styles. This looking back at the multiple pasts – ancient, medieval, and modern – does not yield incompatibility; rather, the diverse facets of national construction coexist, fostering a continuity throughout the centuries and the diverse artistic trends that are appropriated as part of the national discourse.

²³ For this idea in Castelao’s thought see Máiz, 1989.

construction, determining that the erection of free-standing stone crosses is the consequence of a shared ethnicity that comes from the same Celtic roots. Thus, the production of these crosses would suit the collective identity of these nations, characterised by a range of shared spiritual and psychological qualities. On this matter, Castelao (1950/1984, p. 98) claimed about the stone crosses in Brittany and Galicia that 'ambos a dous países, xunto cos celto-británicos, compoñen unha familia étnica, de cujos caracteres comúns será ben destacar o seu amor ás cruces outas de pedra' ('Both countries, along with the Celtic-British ones, compose an ethnic family, from whose common features we should highlight their love for the elevated stone crosses').

Castelao saw in these crosses the 'eternal essence' of ethnicity, understanding it as a permanent and continuous reality that has remained unalterable throughout history: from ancient times to the contemporary era. And this way, from a contemporary resignification, he associated alleged ancient ethnic origins with a specific typology of artefact, which was first developed during the Middle Ages. For Castelao, the idea of eternity is essential for defining a nation.²⁴ In this regard, he created a counterpoint between 'History' and 'Tradition'. He rejects history because, in his opinion, it only brought negative episodes to Galicia. On the contrary, Castelao relies on 'tradition', which he believes is found in the essence of Galicia itself, as something perpetual. This stance can be found in other of his works, constituting a pivotal point in *Alba de Groria* (1948)²⁵ and can be found several times in *Sempre en Galiza*:

²⁴ This idea of continuity with the past is fundamental in the creation of national historical narratives, as it shows the nation as an inalterable and enduring vehicle of cultural identity (Anderson, 1983/1991, p. 22).

²⁵ Castelao delivered his speech *Alba de Groria* in Buenos Aires on the *Día da Patria Galega* (25 July) of 1948. In this speech he creates a *Santa Compañía* with all the great figures of Galician

... a verdadeira tradición non emana do pasado, nin está no presente, nin se albisca no porvir; non é serva do tempo. A tradición é a alma eterna de Galiza, que vive no instituto popular e nas entrañas graníticas do noso chan. A tradición non é a historia. A tradición é a eternidade. (Castelao, 1944/2019, p. 38)

(... true tradition does not emanate from the past, nor is it in the present, nor is it glimpsed in the future; it is not a servant of time. Tradition is the eternal soul of Galicia, which lives in the popular institute and in the granite entrails of our soil. Tradition is not history. Tradition is eternity).

In *Sempre en Galiza*, mentions to the Celtic ethnic background are common (referred to as 'primordial' or 'primitive' background). In this work, among other issues, Castelao (1944/2019) seeks to demonstrate that Galicia is a nation with a whole series of differential aspects: language, territory, culture, or landscape. In many cases, this differentiation comes together with references to the Celts and, thus, to a specific ethnicity or race, as well as to the other countries that compose the Celtic Nations:

Galiza é unha auténtica nacionalidade. Ten un idioma propio, fillo do latín, irmán do castelán e pai do portugués, cultivado literariamente cando a língoa de Castela andaba a gatas; (...) ten unha cultura autóctona, manifestada en arte e sabiduría popular, tan insulares como foi a nosa Terra nos tempos xeolóxicos; ten predisposicións psicolóxicas que nos fixeron inasimilables á cultura e dereito de Castela, como os bretóns na Franza e os Escoceses na Inglaterra; ten, se quixeramos -que non queremos-, características diferenciaes de raza, pois somos predominantemente celtas (Castelao, 1944/2019, p. 390).

(Galicia is a true nationality. It has its own language, son of Latin, brother of Castilian, and father of Portuguese, cultivated in literature when the language of Castile was yet crawling; (...) it has a native culture, manifested in art and popular wisdom, as insular as our Land was in the geological times; it has psychological predispositions that made us unassimilable to the culture and law of Castile, like the Bretons in France and the Scots in England; it has, if we wanted - which we

history. It is particularly noteworthy the large presence of medieval figures: from Prisciliano to the Irmandiños (Castelao, 1948/2018).

do not want - differential characteristics of race, since we are predominantly Celtic).

If in *As cruces de pedra na Galiza* he saw the materialisation of the Celtic ethnicity in the *cruceiros*, in *Sempre en Galiza*, he relates it to other aspects of Galicia, such as its territorial distribution and eminent rurality. He refers to the ‘ethnic kinship’ that would be behind this relationship with the land and nature, understanding it as a reflection of a specific way of living and thinking that the Celtic territories share (Castelao, 1944/2019, p. 316.):

Certo que nos sentimos celtas; pero máis que pensar nos invasores que nos deron o pulo xenésico da nosa unidade espiritual, pensamos nas afinidades étnicas que nos asemellan a outros pobos atlánticos que viven nos Fisterres: irlandeses, galeses, bretóns, etc. (Castelao, 1944/2019, p. 52).

(It is true that we feel Celtic; but rather than thinking of the invaders who gave us the genetic impulse of our spiritual unity, we think of the ethnic affinities that make us similar to other Atlantic peoples living at the “ends of the world”: Irish, Welsh, Bretons, etc.).

Galician National Artistic Styles

Besides the ethnic proposal, the second argument extracted from his book on stone crosses is the notion of an inherent artistic style, understood as a product of the nation *volksgeist*. In this sense, connecting with the beginning of this paper, another aspect of the national definition was invoking art from the past as a defining element of identity. Castelao (1950/1984) referred to artistic productions as a reflection of an inherent style of the people and their soul, especially in the case of architecture and stone sculptures. Regarding artistic styles, Castelao – alongside other Galician authors – identified Romanesque and Baroque as genuine Galician styles, while Gothic and Renaissance are viewed as foreign artistic trends.

Firstly, Romanesque is portrayed as a glorious period during which a national aesthetic expression developed in Galicia for the first time. This idea was already present in the work of Manuel Murguía, who believed that the *volksgeist* of this land found its first material manifestations in the artistic and literary productions of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, positioning Galicia as a peninsular cultural leader during the Middle Ages (Castiñeiras González, 2011).²⁶ In Castelao's view, Romanesque was the first artistic style that got 'naturalised' in Galicia. He highlights the prolonged survival of Romanesque in this territory, asserting that Gothic art in this region acquired an 'unusual style' because it could not fully free itself from the Romanesque influence, which he believed was 'consustanciado coa pedra' ('intrinsic to the Galician stone') (Castelao, 1950/1984, p. 110).

Por moi sabido se ten que o primeiro estilo aclimatado e naturalizado en Galiza foi o románico, que perdurou moito tempo no estilo galego de transición ao gótico, apegándose a todol-os xeitos impostos até añodarse co barroco (Castelao, 1950/1984, p. 110)

(It is well known that the first style acclimatised and naturalised in Galicia was the Romanesque, which lasted a long time in the Galician style of transition to the Gothic, adhering itself to all the imposed modes until it was nullified by the Baroque).

The same argument is found in *Sempre in Galiza*, where he asserts again that Romanesque is the first artistic style set in Galicia, enduring over Gothic, which could

²⁶ Besides looking to the Middle Ages searching for the first traces of a national art, the medieval past was also examined in search of figures or milestones that would be part of the national history and the land's identity (Geary, 2002). In this sense, the Middle Ages played an essential role in the construction of the Galician nation, as in many other European cases. In the works of Castelao, there are numerous references to different figures or episodes from this historical period, standing out the bishop Gelmírez, the marshal Pardo de Cela, Roi Xordo and the *irmandiños*, Paio Gomez Chariño and the Castro sisters: Inés and Juana (Villares, 2011; Villares, 2015).

not acclimatise in this territory. Romanesque is shown as a style and a period of splendour for Galicia, in which it reached the peak of its creative essence, achieving a leading role in Western Europe. He refers to a 'splendid Galiza in the morning of the Romanesque era' and the 'stony greatness of Compostela' (Castelao, 1944/2019, p. 319).

In the case of Galicia, this valorisation of Romanesque as an essential or inherent artistic style of Galicia is fundamentally concerned – as it could not be otherwise – with the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela, showing Galicia as an essential European artistic centre.²⁷ Furthermore, this promotion of the Cathedral is essentially focused on its Portal of Glory, which is presented as one of the pinnacles of Western art.²⁸ This importance of the Portal of Glory is attested through all his works, where it is presented as 'cume da escultura románica!' ('culmination of the Romanesque sculpture!') (Castelao, 1944/2019, p. 47). For instance, in his essay *Do meu diario*, during his visit to Ghent – as part of a larger trip to Belgium, where he discovered Flemish art – he asserts: 'Deica hoxe non hai pra min mais que duas obras definitivas: o *Pórtico da Gloria* do méstre Mateos e a *Adoración do Año místico* dos Van Eyck' ('From today there are only two definitive works of art for me: the Portal of Glory by the Master Mateo and the Adoration of the Mystic Lamb by the Van Eyck brothers') (Castelao, 1922, p. 4).

Ao mesmo tempo xurde unha poderosa cultura galega, que adquire independencia e vida propia. Velaí a arte románica, culminando no Pórtico da

²⁷ Mentions of its pilgrimage route often accompany these references to the Cathedral of Santiago. This route is referred to as the primary connection between Europe and the Iberian Peninsula, drawing attention to Galicia's cultural links with the rest of the continent: 'A invención do corpo do Apóstolo – ¿Prisciliano ou Santiago? – fixo da nosa Terra un centro de universalidade' ('The inventio of the Apostle's body – ¿Priscilian or Saint James? – made our land a centre of universality') (Castelao, 1944/2019, p. 64). See also Castelao, 1930a, p. 156.

²⁸ For the beginnings of this view of the Portal of Glory, see Mateo Sevilla, 1991.

Gloria, e velaí a poesía lírica, culminando no Cancioneiro da Vaticana. (Castelao, 1944/2019, p. 64)²⁹

(At the same time, a powerful Galician culture emerges, which acquires independence and a life of its own. There is Romanesque art, culminating in the Portal of Glory, and there is lyrical poetry, culminating in the Vatican Songbook’).

This Romanesque exaltation can also be seen in Castelao’s visual production.³⁰ In fact, Vicente Risco (1927, p. 30v) said about Castelao’s visual work for *Revista Nós* that he ‘traballa amorosamente, faguendo viñetas, testas, iniciás, floróns e colofóns de una arte esquisita, chea de inspiración románica’ (Castelao works lovingly, making vignettes, headings, initials, fleurons and colophons of exquisite art, full of Romanesque inspiration’). Castelao frequently used elements inspired by medieval Galician architecture, that is, what he understood as the essential nation's art.³¹ Numerous drawings and paintings depict Romanesque buildings or sculptures, with a particular interest in

²⁹ In addition to Romanesque art, the Galician-Portuguese *cantigas* are another constant reference in *Sempre en Galiza*. Castelao associated this medieval lyrical poetry with the national essence of Galicia, serving him to create a cultural differentiation between this territory and Castile, associated the latter with epic literature (Castelao, 1944/2019, pp. 321-27).

³⁰ Several exhibitions have been devoted to the artistic production of Castelao. For instance: ‘*Castelao grafista. Pinturas, dibujos, estampas*’, held at the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando (Madrid, 2017); or ‘*Castelao artista. Los fundamentos de su estilo (1905–1920)*’, held at the Museo de Pontevedra (2016). See Valle Pérez, 2016; Fernández-Cid, 2017. See also the virtual visit to the two rooms dedicated to the work of Castelao at the Museo de Pontevedra [Museo de Pontevedra. (n.d.).] [accessed 2 February 2024].

³¹ It is also worth mentioning another common motif that he included in the illustrations for *Revista Nós*: the dolmen, a motif linked to the Celtic culture (**Figure 6**). Besides, in his visual contributions to this journal, there can also be found interlacing motifs inspired by medieval Irish art. The Dolmen was the cover of issue 7 (1921) and was included again in the definitive cover from issue 32 (1926). For the digitisation of *Revista Nós* see [note 13](#).

portals and apses (**Figure 4**).³² These works were done based on the direct observation of reality during his trips and fieldwork.³³ However, what stands out in particular is his fascination with the Portal of Glory, which features prominently in many of his drawings and designs.

A recurrent motif in his art is the monsters from the base of the Portal of Glory. These can be seen in the strip he made for the first number of the *Revista Nós* (1920), where he reinterprets these monsters to accompany the journal's opening (**Figure 5**). This inspiration is evident in other works, such as the heading Castelao designed for the publication *O sentimento da terra na raza galega*, contribution of Vicente Risco to the journal *Nós* (**Figure 6**), or the heading for the brochure published jointly with the daily paper *El Noroeste* in 1918.³⁴ In the latter, he also used the typography that he will later employ in the first issue of *Nós* and many other designs, such as the logo of the *Seminario de Estudos Galegos* (1926). This alphabet typeface takes as inspiration the commemorative inscription on the lintel of the Portal of Glory, which indicates its placement in 1188. Besides this lettering based on Compostela, Castelao also configured a whole alphabet inspired by the type of letters that profusely appeared on early-medieval tombstones (Carballo-Calero, 1983/2020, p. 28).

³² An excellent example of this inspiration on Romanesque architecture is the famous cover of the journal *Nós*, which started being used in issue 10. In this cover, Castelao introduces a series of motifs that show an apparent influence of Romanesque iconography.

³³ His visual inventory includes works from Galicia and other territories, for example, the drawing made during his trip to Brittany, where he captured the Calvaries of this territory. In this respect, there are hundreds of works by Castelao in which stone crosses from all periods are depicted.

³⁴ Other examples of drawings inspired in the Portal of Glory can be found in several issues of this journal, both of Castelao and other authors, such as Xaquín Lorenzo or Camilo Díaz Baliño. See: Carballo-Calero, 1983/2020.

Another example of how Castelao searched for visual elements in the past is the old woman's figure with the skull that he uses in the opening of issue 1 (**Figure 5**) and in the cover of issue 2 of *Nós*. This old woman is caressing a skull with a hole, which seems to be inspired by a similar image from the Portal of Platerías at the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela. The famous woman with skull is one of the most fascinating (and academically debated) images from the only Romanesque portal preserved in the Cathedral, so it is not unreasonable to think that Castelao would have been inspired by it, including a similar image in his visual imaginary. In short, Castelao configures a whole visual universe in which these references to the medieval past of Galicia, especially to Romanesque art, are shared as a way of constructing a national image. This visual reality is the counterpart to his historiographical approaches to the past.

Going back to his literature, besides Romanesque, Baroque is considered the other national style of Galicia, which Castelao (1950/1984, p. 136) defines as ‘peculiar e diferenciado’ (‘unique and distinctive’). He asserts that ‘o estilo barroco concorda cos fondos emotivos do noso xenio, tal como concordou o estilo románico’ (‘the Baroque style matches the emotional background of our spirit, just as the Romanesque style did’) (Castelao, 1950/1984, p. 136). In his argument, he connects again an artistic style with the *volkgeist* of the nation, suggesting that artistic productions respond to an inherent tendency given by the nation's spirit. In fact, Baroque is referred to as a defining national style in which Galicia created pieces that are milestones of the history of art. As he had already done about Romanesque, he discusses the development of the Baroque style using the metaphor of a morning awakening the Galician creative genius: ‘En canto alboreou o esplendoroso día barroco, todol-os elementos estranos foron galeguizados’ (‘As soon as the splendid Baroque day dawned, all the strange elements were Galicianised’) (Castelao, 1950/1984, p. 112).

While Romanesque and Baroque are identified as representative styles of the Galician identity, other artistic trends are considered foreign productions that did not take root in this land. This is the case of Gothic, which Castelao (1950/1984) considers did not enter the essence of Galician culture, for it would be alien to its spiritual reality:³⁵

As artes da construción callaron en Galiza no estilo románico, que perdurou por enriba do gótico, deica enlazarse co barroco. O gótico, por ser un arte lóxico, non pudo aclimatarse no noso país, pero do barroco fixemos, pode decirse, un 'estilo nacional'. Porque tedes que saber que hai un 'barroco galego' e que, neste estilo, creamos exemplares que son fitos na historia da arte. (Castelao, 1944/2019, p. 64)³⁶

(The construction arts set in Galicia in the Romanesque style, which endured over Gothic until it merged with the Baroque. Because it was a logical art, the Gothic style could not be acclimatised in our country, but from Baroque, we made a 'national style'. You have to know that there is a 'Galician Baroque' and that, in this style, we created pieces that are milestones of the History of Art).

Furthermore, there are several references to the long duration of the Romanesque style to the detriment of Gothic, conveying the idea that the latter did not exist in Galicia. However, despite this rejection of Gothic, his arguments regarding the case of Renaissance and Plateresque are even more striking.³⁷ For Castelao, the latest one reflects and affirmation of 'Toledanism' in the Galician territory, claiming when speaking of the *Hospital de los Reyes Católicos* (1486) in Santiago de Compostela that 'na cibdade de

³⁵ For Castelao (1950/1984, p. 125), any artistic style can enter Galicia and leave its mark there, but 'sóio frorece o que as leis do xenio galego aloumiñan, é decir, o que se deixa recriar e pode ser galeguizado' ('only flourishes that which the laws of Galician genius caress, that is to say, that which allows itself to be recreated and can be Galicianised').

³⁶ There are similar references in *As cruces de pedra na Galiza*, where Castelao also highlights the idea of Baroque as a Galician national style in which this land developed masterpieces that could be compared to the Romanesque ones (Castelao, 1950/1984, p. 112).

³⁷ In Spanish *Plateresco*, it is the term applied by some scholars to the late-Gothic and early-Renaissance in Spanish architecture (Camón Aznar, 1945).

Xemírez non deixa de traslocir a súa intención dominadora’ (‘In the city of Gelmírez does not fail to reveal its domineering intention’) (Castelao, 1950/1984, p. 119).³⁸ This derogatory view of Plateresque architecture – and any artistic style from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century – derives from the disdain for the alleged unification of Spain under the Catholic Monarchs reign, which is identified by Castelao as a time of decadence for Galicia, claiming that it wiped out any trace of artistic productions born from the essence of the nation. It is frequent to find references against the Catholic Monarchs in the nationalist literature of the early twentieth century, in the case of Castelao standing out his reflections on *Sempre en Galiza*. For this author, the Catholic Monarchs oppressed Galicia, putting an end to the cultural personality of this territory, and imposing artistic trends with political intentions (Castelao, 1944/2019, pp. 119, 125).

Coa toma de Granada e fin da Reconquista apagouse a estrela de Santiago, cerrouse o camiño luminoso que nos unía a Europa e comezou a decadencia de Compostela. E coa decadencia da cidade [...] entrou Galiza enteira nunha noite de catro séculos. (Castelao, 1944/2019, p. 326)

(With the defeat of Granada and the end of the Reconquista, the star of Santiago was extinguished, closing the luminous path that united us to Europe, and then the decline of Compostela began. And with the decline of the city (...) the whole of Galicia entered a night that lasted four centuries).

These proposals regarding art from the past were not exclusive to Castelao; his contemporaries also shared them. For instance, the architect Manuel Gómez Román (1875-1964), in his entrance speech to the Real Academia Galega (1951), refers to the

³⁸ In this statement, he is creating a reference to the Castilian domination through a foreign style introduced in the Romanesque city par excellence. This rejection is connected to the appropriation by Spanish nationalism of the art and architecture developed during the reign of the Catholic Monarchs as the national style and glorious past of the nation (Ortiz Pradas, 2017).

poor presence of Renaissance in Galicia from this point of view (Garrido Rodríguez & Iglesias Veiga, 1995):

Esa influencia [the influence of Romanesque and the Master Mateo] seguiu latexante na dolorosa etapa histórica que trocou a nosa cooperación na vida de España en forzada subordinación. Causa esta, sen dúbida, de que os esplendores do Renacemento tiveran na nosa terra cativos reflexos. Certo é que por entón erguéronse monumentos fastuosos, pero acúsase neles a inspiración allea, sen participación de maneiras autóctonas. (Gómez Román, 1951/1990, p. 19)

(That influence continued to pulsate in the painful historical period in which our cooperation in the life of Spain changed into forced subordination. This is undoubtedly the reason why the splendours of the Renaissance had poor reflections in our land. It is true that magnificent monuments were built at the time, but they were inspired by foreign trends, without the presence of autochthonous forms).

In this way, other Galician authors participated in this definition of the national styles, finding in their contributions the same ideas promoted in the works of Castelao. Besides his reflection on Renaissance, Manuel Gómez Román also refers to the glory reached in Galicia by the Romanesque and Baroque architectures.³⁹ These ideas are also present in his artistic work since his production can be framed within the architectural regionalist movement, which sought inspiration in the art from the Galician past (Rodríguez Caramés, 2023).⁴⁰ Gómez Román takes motives especially from the Baroque

³⁹ ‘Porque o mesmo cando creaba formas propias, que cando recollía influencias alleas, ás que lles infundía emoción creadora, o espírito peculiar do país brillou moitas veces con esplendores gloriosos. Tal aconteceu coa alborada luminosa do Románico [...]. Daquela a nosa voz ouviuse nidiamente’ (‘Because when it created its own forms and also when it gathered foreign influences, to which it infused creative emotion, the peculiar spirit of the country often shone with glorious splendour. This happened with the luminous dawn of the Romanesque [...]. Then our voice was clearly heard’). Gómez Román, 1951/1990, p. 19.

⁴⁰ This inspiration in the art of the past from a nationalist theory was especially relevant in the field of architecture, where the Romanesque and Baroque inspired many projects of regionalist architects (Iglesias Veiga, 2019).

(in his words: ‘a nosa xenuina maneira de expresion’⁴¹) and apply them to his buildings, while other authors look back to the Romanesque, standing out the works of Antonio Palacios (Iglesias Veiga, 1994; Iglesias Veiga, 2020). Another excellent example of these dynamics is the visual artist Luis Seoane (1910-1979), who was concerned with achieving a genuinely Galician art, understanding that it was fundamental to look to the medieval past to fulfil this purpose (Villares, 2015, pp. 933-39).⁴² For him, ‘la sensibilidad gallega tuvo su máxima expresión en la arquitectura y escultura románicas [...] consustanciadas con el permanente espíritu gallego’ (‘the Galician sensibility had its maximum expression in Romanesque architecture and sculpture [...] consubstantiated with the permanent Galician spirit’) (Alem, 1955, p. 15). In addition to this theoretical appreciation of medieval art, his artistic production also sought inspiration in the past, both in terms of content and form (López Vázquez, 2006; Portela Yáñez, 2010).

Conclusions

This analysis has shown how Galician art historical contributions from the beginning of the twentieth century connected art with identity significations. The study of Castelao’s works presented in this chapter has considered both his literary and visual production. His writing has been fundamentally examined through *Sempre en Galiza* (1944) and *As cruces de pedra na Galiza* (1950). The discussion on these books was complemented with mentions to other texts and discourses, such as *Alba de Groria* (1948) or several essays from *Revista Nós*. Regarding his visual work, his portrayal of art from the past was assessed through different drawings and engravings, having a pivotal role his contributions to *Revista Nós*.

⁴¹ ‘Our genuine form of expression’. Gómez Román, 1951/1990, p. 19.

⁴² See [note 24](#).

Two main arguments are extracted from Castelao's work when studying art from the past: the Celtic ethnic foundation of Galicia and the establishment of two national styles, Romanesque and Baroque. These two points show two resources used to set a differential Galician reality: an ethnic and a cultural distinction, the former based on Celtism while the latest is rooted primarily in the Middle Ages, with a great prominence of the artistic productions of this period.

Following a common trend in the Europe of the time, Galician monuments from the past were endowed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries with new significances and new importance due to their inclusion within the national discourse. In this sense, with Castelao's research, (1) the Galician stone crosses – originally religious artefacts – became part of the identity of this territory, and (2) Romanesque and Baroque were promoted as the artistic styles that were intrinsic and inherent to this land.

Castelao's theories, along with those of other nineteenth and twentieth-century authors, had a considerable impact on the collective imagination of Galicia. As Geary (2002, p. 158) asserted when studying the medieval formation of Europe's nations: 'these perceptions have penetrated so deeply into [...] consciousness that they are no longer understood as historical reconstructions but rather as self-evident and essential components of national identity'. In this sense, it is particularly noteworthy the fact that, even nowadays, most people in Galicia still consider that Gothic art does not exist in this territory, while Romanesque has become the most common identification for monuments in the touristic sphere, even if in many cases they do not belong to this historical period.

In conclusion, particular Galician sites and artefacts from the past occupied an important place in the construction and definition of this region's cultural and national identity. Nineteenth and twentieth-century authors gave to their monuments and their history a new life and meaning in contemporary times.

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Figures:

Figure 1: Joaquín Pintos, *Castelao*. *Photography*. Museo de Pontevedra, Sig. PAGB 24-54.

Figure 2: Alfonso D. Rodríguez Castelao, *O cruceiro da carballeira*, ca. 1922-1929. Oil painting / cardboard (37,5 x 52,5 cm). Museo de Pontevedra, Inv. N° 002579-681.

Figure 3: Anonymous, *Virxinia Pereira nun cruceiro*. *Photography*. Museo de Pontevedra, Sig. AG 158911.

Figure 4: Alfonso D. Rodríguez Castelao, *Ábside románico (Ouzande)*, ca. 1912. Pencil – watercolor / paper (12,7 x 17,9 cm). Museo de Pontevedra, Inv. N° 002579-190

Figure 5: Page from *Revista Nós*, 1 (1920), p. 1. Digital Library *Galiciana*: <https://revistanos.galiciana.gal/es/recurso/ano-i-n%C3%BAmero-1---30-outubro-1920/e86482ff-8639-4536-be27-dedff0b0e65a?pagina=5>

Figure 6: Page from *Revista Nós*, 1 (1920), p. 4. Digital Library *Galiciana*:
<https://revistanos.galiciana.gal/es/recurso/ano-i-n%C3%BAmero-1---30-outubro-1920/e86482ff-8639-4536-be27-dedff0b0e65a?pagina=8>