Caput in the Medieval Latin from Asturias and León*

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Introduction

Anatomic terminology is extremely profitable in the language, provided that man tends to project his body in the perception of space and other realities, a fact that brings about a figurative use of such terms, enriching in this way their semantic field.¹ Caput, -is, a noun of Indo-European origin, is a good example of that situation in the Latin language. Many other meanings were soon added to its proper sense, that is, the upper or front part of the body of all animals, the most important one since most corporal senses are there located.² The Latin Middle Ages inherited those meanings and added some new ones so that the term turned into one of the semantically richest in Medieval Latin, as can be seen in the article of the MLW or in specific lexicons such as the Polish, the Dutch or the Catalan.³ The aim of this paper is to analyse the uses of caput in the Medieval Latin of another Hispanic area, Asturias and León, between the eighth century and 1230. For this period, we count with a corpus of diplomatic texts and some chronicles.⁴ Moreover, it will be compared with its Romance equal “cabeza”, which also occurs in the corpus.

* The current study is a part of both HUM 2006-01430 (Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia) and LE026A07 (Junta de Castilla y León) research projects.
² Its origin is not known for certain. Among other hypothesis, one relates it to a root ghebh- “peak” (Pier Angelo Perotti, Quatro strati nomi neutri: pelagus, uirus, uulgus, caput, in: Latomus 48, 1989, pp. 339-343, esp. 342). Therefore, its meaning “head” would have a figurative origin, though earlier to Latin.
⁴ It is the same corpus which is the basis for an ongoing research project of a Medieval Latin dictionary from Asturias and León, directed by Prof. Maurilio Pérez González
1. Before analysing its meaning, it would be interesting to examine how often *caput* occurs in the texts from Asturias and León, its chronological distribution and its graphic and morphological variants.

1.1. The Latin noun *caput* is fairly present both in the diplomas and in the chronicles from that kingdom. In the diplomas it is found in 202 occasions, which are distributed in centuries as follows:⁵

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Century</th>
<th>9th c.</th>
<th>10th c.</th>
<th>11th c.</th>
<th>12th c.</th>
<th>13th c.</th>
<th>RC⁶</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The outstanding increase of occurrences in the tenth century is explained by the also great increase in the number of extant documents from that century. The presence of *caput* in the next centuries remains in very similar numbers, even though the amount of diplomas continues rising. The chronicles, on the other hand, have 46 examples of the term. The oldest document in which *caput* appears is from 821 (CO 4.130), but it is only kept in a copy belonging to the twelfth-century *Liber Testamentorum*, whose text is very likely to be a creation from that later time. Actually, the first original document in which the noun appears dates back to 908 (CL 22.11).

However, in the documentation *caput* suffers the concurrence of its Romance synonym "cabeza", even though the latter is much less used: 78 times.⁷ Its chronological distribution is as follows:

and of which I am a member myself. Prof. Pérez González and Dr. Álvarez Maurín, together with Ms. Irene Benavides Monje, have digitalized all the documentation from Asturias and León published up to 2001. For the historical sources I have used JOSÉ E. LÓPEZ PEREIRA – JOSÉ M. DÍAZ DE BUSTAMANTE – ENRIQUE VÁZQUEZ BUIJÁN – Mª ELISA LAGE COTOS, *Corpus Historiographicum Latinum Hispanum Saeculi VIII-XII: Corcondantiae*, Hildesheim – Zürich – New York 1993.

⁵ In the references to the *corpus* texts, I use, for the documents, the acronyms of the cartulary in capital letters (given at the end), the document number in that cartulary as well as the line of the edition, and the year of the document between brackets; for the chronicles, the abbreviation of its title in lower case letters (given at the end) followed by the page and line number where the term in question is found. When the text is quoted, the studied term is written in bold.

⁶ The texts from the *Register of Corias*, a cartulary written at the beginning of the thirteenth century in the monastery of the same name, have been counted separately, given that the vast majority of its documents lacks a date. It is also necessary to take into account that, in the rest of the documentation, originals are not separated from copies.

⁷ *Testa*, however, is only found in one occasion, in which it is patronymic: CZ 22.33 (1170) Petro *Testa* conf.
As can be observed, the distribution is very different from the Latin word’s and, at first sight, opposed to what could be expected, since the texts show a higher command of the Latin language and a better knowledge of Latin culture from the twelfth century onwards. However, most occurrences of “cabeza” accumulate in the last two centuries. That situation can only be evaluated appropriately if we notice that, in most cases, the Romance term becomes a personal name and, in some others, a toponym:

“Cabeza” as a proper noun

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>10th c.</th>
<th>11th c.</th>
<th>12th c.</th>
<th>13th c.</th>
<th>RC</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1+0</td>
<td>0+0</td>
<td>31+1</td>
<td>18+3</td>
<td>7+0</td>
<td>78,21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this respect, the difference with caput is also important since the Latin form is much less used as a proper noun, the rate being even lower for the case of personal names. Only as a toponym does it surpass its Romance equivalent, though it is not always easy to determine when the term is used in that way:

Caput as a proper noun

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>9th c.</th>
<th>10th c.</th>
<th>11th c.</th>
<th>12th c.</th>
<th>13th c.</th>
<th>RC</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0+2</td>
<td>1+2</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>2+4(2?)</td>
<td>2+1</td>
<td>0+10</td>
<td>11,88% - 12,87%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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8 The corpus only includes texts written mainly in Latin.

9 The first figure shows its use as a proper noun and the second one as a toponym.

10 The first figure shows its use as a proper noun and the second one as a toponym.
In this case there are not important differences among periods. From these figures, we can conclude that, in general, notary scribes try to avoid the use of the Romance term except in the case of proper nouns, for which it prevails. The oldest use of "cabeza" [ES 30.24 (957)] precisely corresponds with a personal name. Nevertheless, such a name seems to become fashionable in the twelfth century, exactly since 1121, the date of its second occurrence. Above all, it is a patronymic in this century (30 patronymics / 2; 7 patronymics in RC) and in the next one (13 patronymics/ 4 nicknames/ 1 first name).

1.2. With regard to the graphic form of both terms, the situation is very unstable and, as usual in documentation, multiple variants are found. Caput appears in the classical spelling, but also with the voicing of the intermediate labial (47 ex.); in the nominative ending the old -t (44 ex.) and -d (15 ex.) alternate, together with one case in -s: capus (CO 25.951); sometimes it is also spelled with an initial k- (10 ex.).11 The oldest example of the totally Romance form cabo in these texts dates from 863 (CO 8.58), although the text is only kept in a copy from the thirteenth century. It is followed by one from 923 (CL 60.5), in this case in an original diploma. Both are earlier than the first occurrence known till now, found by Corominas-Pascual in a document from San Pedro de Arlanza (931).12

The spelling variations of the Romance term "cabeza", which according to Corominas-Pascual derives from the Hispanic vulgar Latin capitia,13 affect its initial letter, the intervocalic labial, the second vowel and the affricate consonant, a sound that presents many different spellings in these texts.14

1.3. Caput is also affected by morphological variations. The form capus, -i, which is found for the first time in an undated late inscription and in an epigraphic poem from the seventh century,15 survives in the Latin from Asturias and León, where there are Romance forms derived from it such as the undeclined cab, c/kab/po, cabu, and two declined ones: cabum and capus. In the declined forms the noun sometimes has masculine gender: capite

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11 cab-; capud; capus; kab- (5 ex.); kap-.
12 JOAN COROMINAS – JOSÉ ANTONIO PASCUAL, Diccionario crítico etimológico castellano e hispánico, Madrid 1980-1991 (= DCECH), s. v. They take it from VICTOR R. B. OELSCHLAGER, A Medieval Spanish Word-list. A Preliminary Dated Vocabulary of First Appearances up to BerCEO, Madison (Wisc.) 1940, s. v.
13 Capitia never appears in the corpus from Asturias and León.
14 Cabec-; cabeci- (1 ex.); cabeq-; cabesz-, cabetz- (1 ex.); cabiz- (1 ex.); kapez-, kapesz- (1 ex.). The affricate sound is mainly represented by -z- (62 ex.) and sometimes by -c- (3 ex.), -c- (2 ex.), or the groups -sz- (7 ex.), -tz- (1 ex.) and -ci- (1 ex.).
15 Thesaurus Linguae Latinae, Lipsiae 1990, s. v.
suo inclinabit [SH 284.19 (976)]; capite meum ... trado [CL 781.36 (1021); CL 1199.39 (1076)], kapite nostro ponemus [CL 490.13 (1983)]; and, sometimes, feminine: per singulas capitas [OD 130.30 (1021); CO 68.20 and 37 (1072)].

2. *Caput* has the same meaning as the Greek κεφαλή, from which, according to Ernout-Meillet,\(^\text{16}\) it has taken its several senses. In the texts from Asturias and León it turns out to be one of the semantically richest terms. Within the ample spectrum of its semantics, new medieval meanings, some of them specific from that area since they are not found in medieval Latin dictionaries, join the old ones. Let us examine them all.

2.1. Naturally, in the *corpus* from Asturias and León the basic anatomical sense of *caput* ("head") is present in a rather high number of cases, especially in the chronicles, where it prevails over the rest. In them, mainly in the *Chronica Adefonsi Imperatoris*, heads are a particular object of violence: the enemies are often beheaded after being killed (*caput abscondere, amputare, praecedere, perdere, truncare*) and their heads are exhibited as a symbol of triumph, or even carried away:

Alb. 163.18 *Caput* Ioannis Babtiste Constantinopolim perductur; Adef. 229.1 quomodo uenistis perdere *capita* uestra!; Adef. 229.19 *Capita* uero regum suspenderunt in summitate hastarum; Adef. 236.7 Uenit autem Farax adali et amputauit *caput* eius; Rot. 134.9 Aumar uibum adprehendit et in eodem loco *capite* troncuauit; CL 803.21 (1023) ciuitates dimiserunt in paeimento, *capita* hominum truncauerunt.

In other occasions, heads are hit:

Alb. 171.9 quadam occasione uxorix fuste in *capite* percussit, unde post ad mortem peruenit; SH 823.79 (1085) In *capite* si percusserit uel cum solo pugno, quindeçim solidos det.

The noun is also part of the description of a physical activity, which sometimes has a social meaning: *capita humiliare* (Adef. 220.25); *coronam super caput imponere* (Adef. 182.23) / *coronam capiti imponere* (Sil. 208.10); *caput tegere* (Sil. 175.5); *caput ambiere* (Sil. 208.20); *caput inclinare* [SH 284.19 (976); CL 737.12 (1015)]; *caput leuare* [CA 544.6 (1108)], and of the moaning for a death, *capites decaluare* (Adef. 178.11; Pel. 87.14). Or it is used to distinguish some elements like the *capilos capitis* in Sil. 202.7 or the *diadema capitis* in IS 6.12 (1063). The sole example of the Romance

\(^{16}\) **ALFRED ERNOT - ANTOINE MEILLET, Dictionnaire étyymologique de la langue latine. Histoire des mots, Paris 1967, s. v.**
form “cabeza” with this primary meaning belongs to the latter context: SH 415.43 (1025) galnapes XVI, plumazos de kapeza XII.

Animal heads (apri capite [Sil. 158.7], sicut serpens estu sitiens extulit caput [Adef. 195.7]) and drawn heads (ex una parte, erat scriptum Cestelinus; et ex alia, capita apostolorum Petri et Pauli, et crux erat in medio [CL 1849.1140, 1527 (1215)]) are also mentioned.

The documents vary the old expression a pedibus imis ad summum caput (Vitruvius III,1,3) in different ways and almost always relate it to the divine punishment which is wished to fall upon those who disobey their prescriptions: a planta pedis usque ad uerticem capitis rivos ulnerum percurrentes [CA 12.90 (915); CA 34.13 (928)], an expansion of the Biblical sentence from the Deuteronom (28,35) and Job’s book (2,7) aliquem ulcere pessimo a planta pedis usque in uerticem eius percutere. As can be noticed, these medieval scribes felt the need for introducing the object capitis to clarify the sentence.¹⁷

Finally, a document from the twelfth century, but kept only in a forger from the fourteenth century, reflects on the head’s superiority over the other limbs of the body in the introductory formula:

BE 20.2-3 (1151) Deus homines creans, ordinate coniuge membrorum, ca-
pud in sublimi inesse precensuit, ut de ipsa positione plene nosceretur quomodo ceterorum membrorum salutem capita subesse concedet, in quo ei racionem posuit qua recte subdita membra iusta regeret racione.

2.2. Since antiquity caput has not only been used with its primary mean-
ing but also interpreted through synecdoche and metonymy. Through synec-
doehe it came to mean all the parts of the body as a whole, that is to say, a complete individual as a separate and different unit from the rest. In the texts from Asturias and León it is applied to human beings (“person”):

Alb. 177.23 Set et hic quidem glorioso ex inimicis triumfhauit cuentu, nam in eodem monte XV capita amplius noscuntur esse interficta; OD 20.37 (976) in primis kareat suis fronte luminibus et anathema amarenata sit super caput eius; SV 202.13 (1141) tali nimirum pacto ut in die Sanctissimi Vin-
centii festi reddant abbati predicti monasterii et fratribus unam fogacem et unam espaldam; hoc tantum et nichil amplius fiscalis ponderis pro debito sui capita exsoluentes; GR 76.16 (1153) Et ego ... tibi ... la mea parte quam a mi cab et de meas ermanas ... por VI morabatinos ... que tibi dedi.

¹⁷ The expression appears under different versions, though always within the same context: lepra Domini percussus, de uertice capitis usque auestigia pedis sulphoratus penas luat perpetuas [SH 864.35 (1090); CL 1264.32 (1092), etc.]: maledicti a capite usque ad pedes [SH 1179.38 (1110)].
In one occasion, the whole expression uertix capitis gets such sense in the warning formula: SH 228.28 (965) descendat in uerticem capitis sui anathema marnatha. The Romance form is used with the same meaning:

OD 29.18 (988) Et presimus illo de Petrum per mandatum Regis et episcopis pro que damnabit confesionem que tenea super sua kapeza et represera muliere; SV 45-3.15 (1216) ut uos et quicumque de progenie uestra sit simper uassallus de Sanctum Uicencium et faciant suos foros de suas cabezas et de suas hereditates.

This is also the sense of caput in the expression ponere / tradere caput, which means someone’s devotion to the service of a monastery:

CL 490.13 (983) Ideo iam superdicti presbiter una cum frater meo Menendo tibi Domino Ihesu Christo kapite nostro ponemus ad seruendum atque martires tuos, patronis nostris, Sanctorum Iusti et Pastoris, cuius cenobio cupimus militare; CL 781.36 (1021) Quia in hunc locum Sanctum Michaeli capite meum in uiua mea tradis.

Sometimes this meaning extends to the notion of “life”, as it seems to be the case in a chronicle, where the Moslem king asks the Christians who their leader is and they reply proudly:

Adef. 208-18 omnes sumus principes et duces capitum nostrorum.

Finally, there is left a last, more problematic case. It occurs in the following context: after having been punished for it, Alvino Hánniz refuses again to provide the cathedral of León the services to which his village inhabitants were obliged to. The diploma narrates the fact as follows:

CL 899.19 (1032) et postea exaltabi caput suum ipse Aluino et fecit secus ipsa uilla Reiricos sua populatione et presit domino alieno cum que sacabit ipsa uinea quem iam dederat de iuri de Sancte Marie.

The Biblical expression exaltare suum caput (Sirach 11,1) is used here with a pejorative figurative sense, which could be translated as “he became full of arrogance”.

However, caput not only referred to human individuals but to animals as well, though much less frequently as happened in ancient Latin:

CO 85.95 (1081) equas et bacas, gregi numerum copiosa, iuga bobum abundantia et capita presmiscua ampliata, billas et possesiones; SV 212.11 (1144) Damus eciam ibi XXXe cabos inter uacas et boues; SV 349.9 (1189) damus ... illam nostrum albergueriam ... cum tota hereditate ... cum XXXe cabos de ganado. SV 60-3.17 (1221) Et tua mulier ... de quanto ganado ibi troguer los cabos sedeant suos, et de illa cria det nobis quartam partem.
All four occurrences belong to the territory of Asturias and the Romance form cabo appears in all of them with the odd exception of the oldest one. But in this meaning, the distributive use of caput is certainly the most frequent one, as also happened in ancient Latin. Such use generally appears in the expression per (singula) capita:

SH 45.14 (932) tibi do ut diuidas cum filios sic in hereditate quomodo in tota facultate sic diuidatis per capita singula; SH 284.46 (976) tunc fecimus per unicuique capita patefactum; CL 628.39 (1002) in anc cartula uinditionis manus nostras roborabimus et per singula capita signum facimus; OD 130.30 (1021) tunc abeatis postestate adprendere de nos solitus XXX de arenzos per singulas capitae et ipsas terras; CO 100.35 (1090) ipsi homines qui uenerint dent per capita; CL 1976.17 (1299) Relinquam meam hereditatem relinquuo fratribus meys et filio meo Ysidoro, ut ipsi diuidiant inter se per capita; BE 105.32 (1216) et diuideret homines per capitibus ad Sanctum Salvatorem et a parte regis similiter ad Lapetum.

The Romance “cabeza” is used in distributive phrases as well:

SV 130-3.23 (1230) que estos V iamdictos demandadores ant a guarir estos tres quiniones ... don Franco por si e don Rui et elos otros cada qual per sua cabeza como damandaua.

Caput has also a synecdochal meaning in the following quote from the Rot. 146.16 Rex uero Ordionius exercitum in duo capita diuisit, where it denotes the unit resulting from dividing a group, in this case an army. Likewise, that seems to be the case when the noun is applied to one of the topic units or chapters in which a writing is divided: Adef. 195.7 Incipit liber secundus ... Caput primum.

According to my opinion, caput has a sole metonymic meaning in the corpus from Asturias and León appearing in the following quote from a will:

IS 11.51 (1099) Et mando a Don Mames ... I misale et uno obreuiariu ut sedeat ad meum caput.18

Here it seems to denote the “bedhead”, a metonymy by contact, which is not found in medieval Latin dictionaries from other areas. It is possible that the whole expression has the figurative meaning of “taking care of someone who is ill or in death agony”.

18 It is possible that the scribe is trying to translate into Latin the Romance expression “sentarse a la cabecera de alguien”. Corominas-Pascual (DCECH, s. v. cabeza, n. 3) have pointed out that “cabeç” was used in the Catalan language from Rosellón with the meaning of “bedhead”.
2.3. But the term is even richer in figurative senses, as happened in ancient Latin.

2.3.1. The most frequent meaning of *caput* in the texts from Asturias and León is undoubtedly the spatial one. With regards to places which extend in height, *caput* indicates “the top”, “the peak” or “the summit”:

CO 19.195 (908) cuius terminus est ... de parte meridie de illa lanoale usque in *capite* montis Naaranci; OD 67.27 (1006) Et alia terra ... per suis terminis: ... per illos moliones per terminu de Ermoiro, per *kabu* monte et per cottos; CO 100.61 (1090) Hii exquisierunt ipsas mandationes a *capite* portus Lectaregi et infra; OD 291.19 (1092) per illas arcas amuratlas in a sus et per *capo* de illa susana.

The Romance “cabeza” clearly appears in a diploma as the proper noun of a rise in the ground:

CS 167.11-15 (1225) per suis terminis, uidelicet, per summitatem de la Cabeza de Cid Domingo ... sicut incipit a summitate predicti loci de Cabeza de Cid Domingo.

If the place extends lengthwise, *caput* means any of its ends. In the corpus it is a) applied to valleys:

CO 8.58 (863) et alium uallem quod dicunt lohanni per suas terminus de Uarcina usque ad illa nogare fuirata qui stat in *cabo* de ipso ualle;

b) to portions of land of any sort:

SH 31.25 (923) et inde per *caput* Campi Confiniani; ES 25.42 (929) per *caput* de illam serram; OD 116.40 (1019) per *kabu* serra; SH 530.24 (1049) et per illa terra qui est in *caput* de ipsa defesa; SH 932.44 (1094) illa una uinea est sub ecclesia ... et illa alia est in *capo* de totas; SH 936.10 (1095) Et in *caput* de ipsa eira damus uobis una terra cum suo prato; CB 22.18 (1151) et inde per *capud* de uineis de Bustelo;

c) to places where water is dammed up:

ES 25.38 (929) per *caput* de illa pallude; CC 1.39 (1142) a superiori *capite* prese // CN 6.15-16 (1128) et per suas terminus, uidelicet, per illa *cabiza* de illo pelago que dicitur Liberto;

d) and to different kinds of constructions:

SH 331.32 (986) usque ad *caput* de castro; CS 14.14 (1148) uillam ... que ... non multum longe a *capite* pontis ipsius ciuitatis Salamanctice sita est; VS 9.10 (1178) et est solo quod uobis dono in *capud* uille; PE 56.9 (1221) et
stat inter illa casa ... et detrás uadit ata cabo de illo muro de illo archi-presbitero. // RC 176.25 et per illa cabeza de illo castro de rio de Castello.

The noun gets a particular meaning when applied to the building of a church: “end of the longitudinal nave where the altar is situated and which ends in semicircular apses or chapels”, as seen both from the inside:

Pel. 68.3 Et in quarta theca, que est excelsa, sepelierunt reginam Tarasiam ... ad caput, et ad latus mausolei Adefonsi regis Casti condierunt ossa filiorum,

b) or from the outside:

SV 262.35 (1158) addo dacioni ... unam terram iuxta ecclesiam eandem per terminum indirectum capitibus ecclesie usque ad regum.

In another case, it specifically denotes the apses:

Sil. 138.20 aulum beate Dei genitricis et uirginis Marie pari cemento cum tribus capitibus ad effectum perduxit.

There are also some sentences where both caput and cabeza are related to a monastery:

CA 13.32 (916) feci ut ... sit ipsum monasterium suis cum uillis proprio suo in capitae nihilominus restauratum et confessoribus perhenniter dedicatum; CL 1440.14-16 (1143) damus ... tercias omnium uillarum ..., exceptis monasteriis que infra muros Legionis sunt capitibus tantum, et exceptis capitibus Sancti Michaelis de Esqualada ... que retentis terciis tam capita supraddictorum monasteriorum quam monasterium de Vega ... forum ... persoluvant. // RC 146.24 Abbas Munio dedit ... Pelagio, Ouetensi episcopo, mediatatem in illa cabeza monasteri Sancti Tirsii; RC 161.27 Hanc deissionem habet Caurias de Sancto Tirsso ...: inprinis pro mediatete de illa cabeza de Sancto Tirsso caduuit ad Corias Sancto Martino.

It is difficult to precise the meaning in them all, since the context is not explicit enough. However, a five-year-later confirmation of the document from 1143 interprets this paragraph as follows:

CL 1454.10-17 (1148) damus ... tercias omnium uillarum ... exceptis his capitalibus ecclesiis, uidelicet ecclesia monasterii Sancti Michaelis de Scalada, et ecclesia monasterii Sancti Petri de Aslonza, et ecclesia monasterii de Uega.

According to it, caput seems to denote the church of the monastery.

Provided the abundance of these spatial uses since old Latin, it is not strange that caput often appears as a toponym: 19

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19 It is not always easy to decide when it is no more a common noun but a toponym.
CO13.55 (891) damus ... uilla in Penna Alua cum ecclesia Sante Cruce ..., uilla in Capite cum ecclesia Sancta Maria; CL 2999.9 (956) et de alia parte de clusa qui fuit de Castro Capite usque in Airo Faitizo; GR 194.8 (1187) El solar de don Juliano est in Cabo de Villa et est de una parte don Gonzalo Fernandez ...; TR 66.23 (1199) Domnus Petrus de Capite Ville conf.; RC 205.27 et in Villa de Cabo II solos populatus domini regis; RC 117.15 dedit ... Illam quintam integram de Cibugio, tam in Capite quam in alis uillis. / / CL 1808.115 (1209) Et Pena Caualeira et Pena Negra et Cabeza de Papachquinos sint ermata; CS 152.19 (1223) diuidit cum aldeis istis, Pastores, Encina, Cabeça del Vello.

2.3.2. Caput can also be applied to that which flows or runs, such as water currents, time or pieces of writing. In those cases, it indicates the beginning. The “source” of watercourses:

CL 60.5 (923) uenderemus ubis terras ... in karale qui discurre de Luna ad Leione et in cabo suam fontem; RC 101.21 per istos terminos: per illo mol- lione qui stat in cabo de rio Cuao.

In relation to water, the expression caput aquis / aquarum is found twice with the meaning of “ditch, water pipe”. In both cases it appears within the long enumeration of the belongings of the sold or donated property:

EN 2.9 (1150) cum solaribus, pascuis, pratis, molendinis, aquis, capud aquis, rius, montibus ...; EN 5.11 (1163) dedit ... hereditatem ... cum ... omnibus pertinentiis suis ... uidelicet cum ... uallis, ingressibus et regressi- bus, aquis et capitis aquarum, molinis ...

Nevertheless, the phrase aquae aquirum is the most frequently used in those enumerations.

Caput denotes also the beginning of a piece of writing in two occasions:

CL 1200.30 (1076) and CL 1207.30 (1077) Et non solum damus illum locum ita liberum, sicut dicimus, set etiam omnia membra eius, hoc est, deganeas suas quarum nomina sunt Sancti Cipriani sub Villa Velasco in Aratoi, alia in Ceia ..., tercia in ciuitas Graliare ..., quarta deganea in Scopare ..., quinta deganea Sancti Emilian ...., sexta deganea Sancto Romano de Illa Cupa ..., septima deganea in Caminajo in Someza de Zeion ecclesie Sancte Engratie cum hereditatibus, pomoribus et montibus, que similiter sunt libere a seculari perturbationem sicut de capite dicimus;

and the opening day of Lent or Fasting in several others:

CL 1607.18 (1178) predicto ospitali unam marcam puri argenti ad caput comunis quadragésime annuatim persolus; CA 921.20 (1195) Canonici habeant bino denario etre monete tam in anno suis memorum, scilicet in
capite ieiuniis, in festo Sancti Vrbani; SV 18.3.18 (1209) dent singulas pictancias generates in capite quadragesime de piscato.

However, when it refers to a period of time, it can also mean the last moment. Such sense is only found in the prepositional locution ante/ad caput de/gen. (cast. "al cabo de"): 

CA 190.14 (1001) quomodo si non dedisse ipsos Christine et is et tertia al kabo de III septemanas; SH 893.16 (1092) que ad te capo de anno uendatis illas kasas ad tales omenes; CL 1464.7 (1100-1149) et ante capite de anno rapila Sanctio Gasalaniz qui erat uillano; CL 1826.26 (1213) ad quadraginta, cent soldos, et ad capud anni, ducentos soldos; CL 1960.49 (1226-1229) faciant ofrendam pro anima mea de pane et de uino et cera usque ad capud anni.

2.3.3. Another figurative meaning of the term derives from its being the main part of the body and the one governing the rest, as the head was considered since antiquity. With the sense of "the one in charge, the leader", the noun refers to inanimate beings, either a religious entity:

IS 11.4 (1099) mando tornare tota illa hereditate ... de Sancto Pelagio a Sancto Isidoro, qui est iam caput; CD 15.23 (1138) placuit ... abbati ... ut mutetur abbatia in Carracedo tali conditione ut sit caput omnium monasteriorum quae habuerint;

or a city which is the capital of the kingdom:

CO 4.130 (821) Simili etiam modo Toletus totius Hispanie antea caput exitit; CL 1190.30 (1073) urbem quoque hanc (Legionem) caput regni sui esse constituit.

But it is also applied to people:

CL 175.20 (945) duas rationes ... concedo ... ut sit in manibus abbatis qui in Christi agone caput fuerit ibidem in monasterio; CO 25.59 (951) et omnia affirmamus secundum ordinabit qui ipsum locum fundavit, inprimis ut qui in loco Sancti Ioannis in Mones fuerit capus et in agone Dei certatus fuerit, ipse abeat ibidem potestatem; OD 21.3 (976) et greti Christo in kaput electa domna Sancta Marina.

In three occasions the cathedral precentor is referred to by means of the expression caput cori under a Romance form:

CS 16.34.45 (ca. 1150) archidiaconus Arsio, prior Garsia, Felix capiscor, Pelagius archipresbiter ... Felix cabiscor, don Vela prior Sancti Christofori; SM 52.40 (1164) Cabiscol Johannes conf. Salvador Ramiriz conf. Prior Guidus conf.
Moreover, we found once the Biblical phrase *caput anguli* (*psalm*. 117.22) with the same figurative meaning:

SH 175.20 (960) ut ergo hanc fidem super lapidem illum solidatam quem reprehenderunt quidem edificantes, idem tamen a Domino factus est in *caput* anguli.

With the meaning of “primacy, first or main place” it appears both in the prepositional locution *in capite de* (“in charge of”, “at the head of”):

RC 154.12 Et paruit abbas Petrum Diaz... in *capite* de illa uoce cum testibus suis

and on its own:

CL 1183.34 (1072) Hec autem lex iuramenti et huius aque calide ... non aliquo in loco peragatur ut in ipsa urbe, in sede Sancte Dei genitricis Marie, que *caput* retinet eiusdem urbis.

2.3.4. Finally, there are another two figurative uses of the noun which are different from the previous ones. The first one is found within the expression *stare in capite suo* in two diplomas:

CL 432.35 (974) elegerunt eam (domum monasterii) stare in *capite* suo sicut ceteris cenobialibus; CL 433.39 (974) elegerunt eam stare sub regimine sedis Sante Marie Legionensis uel qui episcopi qui ibi successor extiterit et non alio domino aberce super se ..., set staret eam semper in *capite* suo sicut et ceteri monasterii.

They are two different versions of the same text, the original and the interpolated one, respectively. In both of them *caput* seems to have the same meaning Niermeyer interpreted in the sentence *dominus in capite est*: “a lord who is not a vassal of any other lord (the king excepted)”\(^\text{20}\). In this case it is a monastery which is not subordinated to any lord, apart from the bishop.

In the second one it is found within the warning formula:

GR 12.46 (1097) Et si aliquis aliquid de illo monasterio traxerit cum illa uoluntate de illo abbate, reddat illud sine calumnia et si aliquis homo sine uoluntate de illo abbate aliquid intraxerit, reddat illud cum *capite* undeceno.

As can be noticed, it seems to be there a synonym of *calumnia* (*caloña*, “penalty”, “fine”) and, consequently, it must have a similar meaning to the last

one pointed out by Niermeyer: “compensation of loss caused by a mis-
deed”.\textsuperscript{21}

2.3.5. As a noun there is still a final use of the term, whose meaning does
not seem to correspond to any of the given ones in dictionaries. It occurs
twice in an interesting document from 1095 which belonged to the Monas-
tery of Eslonza (ES 222).\textsuperscript{22} The story that the document tells is complex.
Justa Juánez, who had been married to Vellido Saturnínz, and the two
children from this marriage, make a donation to that monastery and to Queen
Urraca in order to thank them for the gift of a country property in Villarente
that tried to solve the poverty in which they were living. The monastery had
inherited the Villarente estate after Elvira Rodríguez’s death, widow of the
abovementioned Vellido Saturnínz. Justa Juánez and her children donate
that property in Villarente and another one in Villaburga in the following
conditions: if the children have offspring, it will inherit the properties, but if
they die with no offspring, Justa will own them for as long as she will live et
capo fecerit super ipse pater noster Velliti Saturniniz. Justa herself ratifies
the act in the condition that if she capo non fecerit super Vellitiz Saturniniz,
et uirum alterum acceperit in coniugio, she will lose the county estates,
which will come to belong to the monastery. Further on she repeats: et si ego
Justa Ioannes remanserit super meos filios et illos mortuos fuerint et radice
uel progenie non dextaurerint, quomodo teneam ego ipsa hereditate in diebus
ulte mee quod in carta resonat et marito non prendiderit nec aleiue non
fecerit super Velliti Saturniniz. The expression aleiue fecerit (“to betray”) is
used here as the antithesis of capo facere; therefore, the latter one must mean
“to be faithful”.\textsuperscript{23}

2.4. However, caput still has one last use, quite common in our texts, in
which its status as noun has changed and it has turned into a preposition, a
typical Romance use. As a preposition, it means “next to, close to”:

SH 47.11 (932) et uadit caput serna ad illas casas; CA 131.7 (975) heredi-
tates ... quae habemus in territorio capud Vericense uilla quae uocitant
Fornella; OD 291.19 (1092) Que uendo, Citi Sendinis et uxor, mea I terra ad
illa Olga, capo illa carera, cum suo prato; CD 8.4 (1126) una uinea quam
habemus ... in loco praedicto Surriba, cabo ipsa casa; SH 1223.8 (1126) Et

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., nr. 22.
\textsuperscript{22} This document is kept only in a copy from the 18\textsuperscript{th} century (Madrid, A. H. N., clero,
carp. 960, nr. 11). I have personally checked the readings.
\textsuperscript{23} CHARLES DU FRESNE DU CANGE, Glossarium mediae et infimae Latinitatis, (ed.)
LEOPOLD FAVRE, Niort 1883-1888, repr. Graz 1954, s. v., p. 152, gathers the expression
caput fecerit with two different meanings: suppurare and domum habere ut caput fa-
miliae, none of which fits within the context of this document from Eslonza.
Except in the two oldest examples, it always takes a completely Romance form; it is even contracted with the article on two occasions: *cabol, caleb < cabo + el*. The occurrences of this preposition in the corpus from Asturias and León are almost one and a half centuries earlier than the oldest one known till now, which dates back to 1056 (“cap de”). The form *cabe* is also documented in an earlier date to the oldest example provided by Corominas-Pascual, which comes from Alfonso X’s *Siete Partidas*. In all the examples from Asturias and León the preposition appears on its own and is always followed by an undelined word.

3. To sum up, with regards to *caput*, both groups of texts that make up our corpus offer a completely different situation: the chronicles present the noun only in its ancient form and without the semantic concurrence of any other term; in the diplomas it is sometimes written in a completely Romance form and it suffers the concurrence of its Romance derivative “cabeza”, which covers a great portion of its semantic field. However, despite the interferences that the native language caused the scribes, men of no great culture, the Latin term clearly prevails in the diplomas. The situation is perfectly reflected in the spatial uses of the word: *caput* is used 37 times with such meaning, *cabo / capo* 24 and *cabeza* 9. As has been reported, the presence of *caput* excels that of the other two, even when it is about describing boundaries, a task notaries tried to do as exactly as possible, which often entailed leaving the toponyms in their Romance form. It seems evident that the documentary scribes do their best to write the texts in Latin.

Semantically, *caput* also keeps its richness in the Latin from Asturias and León. Essentially, its old meaning core remains unchanged, although some senses are missing such as the juridic one (“capital punishment”). *Cabeza*, which only has a late shy presence as a common noun, partially shares that core with it: the proper meaning, the spatial senses, the source of watercourses. In this Latin, *caput* has also some meanings not developed until the

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24 Kept in later copies, the first one from the beginning of the twelfth century, the second one from the beginning of the seventeenth century.
25 Corominas-Pascual, *DCECH*, s. v. cabe.
26 Ibidem.
Middle Ages: “sanctuary of a church”, “church” of a monastery, which also shares with “cabeza”, and the time related ones, all of them common in medieval texts, and some other less frequent such as “compensation of loss”. But it has also acquired a few new meanings, which are absent in the Latin from other European areas, such as “bedhead” or the one that gets in the sentence caput facere super and, above all, in its change into a preposition with spatial meaning, an undoubtedly Romance influence. The prepositional locations ad caput de or in capite de are also new. The conflict between Latin and Romance neatly lies under the situation of this term in the documentary texts from Asturias and León. Nevertheless, neither the view of this part of the body nor its projection in reality seems to have substantially changed from ancient times.

**SOURCES**


CO = *Colección de documentos de la catedral de Oviedo*, (ed.) SANTOS GARCÍA LARRAGUETA, Oviedo 1962.
<table>
<thead>
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<th>ID</th>
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<tr>
<td>CS</td>
<td>Documentación de los archivos catedralicio y diocesano de Salamanca (ss. XII-XIII), (edd.) José Luis Martín et alii, Salamanca 1977.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ES</td>
<td>Cartulario del monasterio de Eslonza, (ed.) Vicente Vignau, Madrid 1885.</td>
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SH  = Colección diplomática del monasterio de Sahagún, I: ss. IX-X, 
     (ed.) José María Mínguez; II: 1000-1073 and III: 1073-1109, (ed.) 
     Marta Herrero; IV: 1110-1199 and V: 1200-1300, (ed.) José A. 


SP  = Cartulario latino de San Pedro de Montes. Transcripción del 
     texto. Comentario morfosintáctico, (ed.) Celestino Domínguez 

SV  = Colección diplomática del monasterio de San Vicente de Oviedo 

VS  = Documentos del monasterio de Villaverde de Sandoval (siglos 

SUMMARY

The aim of this paper is to analyse the uses and meanings of caput in the 
Medieval Latin of an Hispanic area, Asturias and León, between the eighth 
century and 1230. For this period, we count with a corpus of about 8,000 
diplomatic texts and eight chronicles. Caput is also compared with its Ro-
mance equal “cabeza”, which also occurs in the corpus. Moreover, the author 
examines the chronological distribution and the graphic and morphological 
variants of both words.