

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*.

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¹ See JACQUES ANDRÉ, *Le vocabulaire latin de l'anatomie*, Paris 1991.

² Its origin is not known for certain. Among other hypothesis, one relates it to a root ghebh-, “peak” (PIER ANGELO PEROTTI, *Quattro 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.

³ *MLW* = *Mittellateinisches Wörterbuch bis zum ausgehenden 13. Jahrhundert*, München 1959-; *Lexicon mediae et infimae Latinitatis Polonorum*, (ed.) MARIAN PLEZIA, Kraków 1953-2001; *Lexicon Latinitatis Nederlandicae Medii Aevi*, (edd.) JOHANNES W. FUCHS – OLGA WEIJERS ET ALII, Leiden 1977-2005; *Glossarium Mediae Latinitatis Cataloniae. Voces Latinas y romances documentadas en fuentes catalanas del año 800 al 1100*, (ed.) JOAN BASTARDAS PARERA, Barcelona 1960-.

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

9 th c.	10 th c.	11 th c.	12 th c.	13 th c.	RC ⁶
3	52	52	51	16	28

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 BUJÁN – M^a 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.

9 th c.	10 th c.	11 th c.	12 th c.	13 th c.	RC
0	2	1	37	25	13

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.⁸ 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 noun⁹

10 th c.	11 th c.	12 th c.	13 th c.	RC	%
1+0	0+0	31+1	18+3	7+0	78,21%

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 noun¹⁰**

9 th c.	10 th c.	11 th c.	12 th c.	13 th c.	RC	%
0+2	1+2	–	2+4(2?)	2+1	0+10	11,88%- 12,87%

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*

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. OELSCHLÄGER, *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.); cabeç-; cabsesz-, cabetz- (1 ex.); cabiz- (1 ex.); kapez-; kapesz- (1 ex.). The affricate sound is mainly represented by -z- (62 ex.) and sometimes by -ç- (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,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 abscindere, amputare, praecidere, perdere, truncare*) and their heads are exhibited as a symbol of triumph, or even carried away:

Alb. 163.18 **Caput** Iohannis Baptiste Constantinopolim perducitur; 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** troncauit; CL 803.21 (1023) ciuitates dimiserunt in pauimento, **capita** hominum truncauerunt.

In other occasions, heads are hit:

Alb. 171.9 quadam occasione uxoris fuste in **capite** percussit, unde post ad mortem peruenit; SH 823.79 (1085) In **capite** si percuserit uel cum solo pugno, quindecim 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 ERNOUT – ANTOINE MEILLET, *Dictionnaire étymologique 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 Caelstinus; 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 riuos uulnerum 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 forgery 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, capud in sublimi inesse precensuit, ut de ipsa positione plene nosceretur quomodo ceterorum membrorum salutem capita subesse concedet, in quo ei rationem posuit qua recte subdita membra iusta regeret ratione.*

2.2. Since antiquity *caput* has not only been used with its primary meaning but also interpreted through synecdoche and metonymy. Through synecdoche 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 triumphauit euentu, nam in eodem monte XV capita amplius noscuntur esse interfecta; 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 Vincentii festi reddant abbati predicti monasterii et fratribus unam fogacam et unam espaldam; hoc tantum et nichil amplius fiscalis ponderis pro debito sui capitis exsoluentes; GR 76.16 (1153) Et ego ... tibi ... la mea parte quam a mi cab et de meas ermanas ... por VI morabitanos ... que tibi dedi.*

¹⁷ The expression appears under different versions, though always within the same context: *lepra Domini percussus, de uertice capitis usque uestigia 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 seruiendum atque martires tuos, patronis nostris, Sanctorum lusti et Pastoris, cuius cenobio cupimus militare; CL 781.36 (1021) Quia in hunc locum Sanctum Michaeli **capite** meum in uita mea trado.

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 possessiones; SV 212.11 (1144) Damus eciam ibi XXX^a **cabos** inter uacas et boues; SV 349.9 (1189) damus ... illam nostrum albergueriam ... cum tota herediatate ... cum XXX^a **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 abeatís podestate adprendere de nos solitus XXX de arenzos per singulas **capitas** et ipsas terras; CO 100.35 (1090) ipsi homines qui uenerint dent per **capita**; CL 1976.17 (1299) Relinquam meam hereditatem relinquo fratribus meys et filio meo Ysidoro, ut ipsi diuidant inter se per **capita**; BE 105.32 (1216) et diuideret homines per **capitibus** ad Sanctum Saluatorem 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 Ordonius 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 Naarancii; OD 67.27 (1006) Et alia terra ... per suis terminis: ... per illos moliones per terminu de Ermorigo, per **kabu** monte et per cotos; CO 100.61 (1090) Hii exquisierunt ipsas mandationes a **capite** portus Lectaregi et infra; OD 291.19 (1092) per illas arcas amuratas 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 **Cabesza** de Cid Domingo ... sicut incipit a summitate predicti loci de **Ca-besza** 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 suos 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 suos 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 Salamantice 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 **capitis** ecclesie usque ad regum.

In another case, it specifically denotes the apses:

Sil. 138.20 aulam beate Dei genitricis et uirginis Marie pari cemento cum
tribus **capitibus** ad efectum 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 **capite** nihilominus restauratum et confessoribus perhenniter dedicatum;
CL 1440.14-16 (1143) damus ... tercias omnium uillarum ..., exceptis monas-
teriis que infra muros Legionis sunt **capitibus** tantum, et exceptis **capitibus**
Sancti Michaelis de Esqualada ... que retentis terciis tam **capita** supradic-
torum monasteriorum quam monasterium de Vega ... forum ... persoluant. //
RC 146.24 Abbas Munio dedit ... Pelagio, Ouetensi episcopo, medietatem in
illa **cabeza** monasteri Sancti Tirsi; RC 161.27 Hanc diuisionem habet Caurias
de Sancto Tirso ...: inprimis pro medietate de illa **cabeza** de Sancto Tirso
cadiuit 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 **ca-
pitalibus ecclesiis**, uidelicet **ecclesia** monasterii Sanci 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

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 **Caput** usque in Airo Faitizo; GR 194.8 (1187) El solar de don Iuliano est in **Cabo** de Villa et est de una parte don Gonzaluo 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 aliis uillis. / / CL 1808.115 (1209) Et Pena Caualeira et Pena Nigra et **Cabeza** de Papachoquinos 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 uobis terras ... in karale qui discurrere de Luna ad Leone et in **cabo** suam fontem; RC 101.21 per istos terminos: per illo molione qui stat in **cabo** de rio Cauo.

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, riuis, montibus ...; EN 5.11 (1163) dedit ... hereditatem ... cum ... omnibus pertinentiis suis ... uidelicet cum ... uallis, ingressibus et regressibus, aquis et **capitibus** aquarum, molinis ...

Nevertheless, the phrase *aquae aquarum* 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 ..., tertia in ciuitas Graliare ..., quarta deganea in Scopare ..., quinta deganea Sancti Emiliani ..., sexta deganea Sancto Romano de Illa Cupa ..., septima deganea in Caminaio in Somoza de Zeion ecclesia 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 quadragesime annuatim persoluas; CA 921.20 (1195) Canonici habeant bino denario ereti monete tam in anno suis memorum, scilicet in

capite ieiuniis, in festo Sancti Vrbani; SV 18-3.18 (1209) dent singulas piciantias 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 Christime et is et tertia al **kabo** de III septemanas; SH 893.16 (1092) que ad te **capo** de anno uendatis illas kasas ad tales omnes; 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 que habuerint;

or a city which is the capital of the kingdom:

CO 4.130 (821) Simili etiam modo Toletus totius Hispanie antea **caput** extitit; 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 fundauit, inprimis ut qui in loco Sancti Iohannis 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** Iohannes conf. Saluador 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 reprobaberunt 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 parauit 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 domno abere 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)”.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 aliquod 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

²⁰ *Mediae Latinitatis Lexicon Minus*, (ed.) JAN FREDERIK NIERMEYER – COR VAN DE KIEFT – JAN W. J. BURGERS, Leiden – Boston 2002, s. v., nr. 10.

one pointed out by Niermeyer: “compensation of loss caused by a misdeed”.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 Monastery of Eslonza (ES 222).²² The story that the document tells is complex. Justa Juárez, who had been married to Vellido Saturnínez, 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 Saturnínez. Justa Juárez and her children donate that property in Villarente and another one in Villaburgala 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 Saturniníz*. Justa herself ratifies the act in the condition that if she *capo non fecerit super Vellitiz Saturniníz et uirum alterum acceperit in coniugio*, she will lose the country estates, which will come to belong to the monastery. Further on she repeats: *et si ego Iusta Ioannes remanserit super meos filios et illos mortuos fuerint et radice uel progenie non dexauerint, quomodo teneam ego ipsa hereditate in diebus uite mee quod in carta resonat et marito non prendiderit nec aleiue non fecerit super Velliti Saturniníz*. The expression *aleiue fecerit* (“to betray”) is used here as the antithesis of *capo facere*; therefore, the latter one must mean “to be faithful”.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) hereditates ... 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

²¹ Ibid., nr. 22.

²² This document is kept only in a copy from the 18th century (Madrid, A. H. N., clero, carp. 960, nr. 11). I have personally checked the readings.

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 fecere* with two different meanings: *suppurare* and *domum habere ut caput familiae*, none of which fits within the context of this document from Eslonza.

ipsa uinea iacet **capud** uinea de Uimara Michaeliciz; SV 257.10 (1157) per illo rego qui sta en Espine **cab** illo monte in directo ad aiuso ad mare; VS 5.6 (1167) et isto solar iacet **cabol** de Gonzaluo Alfonso; MV 97.8 (1226) Prima terra abet afrontacionis: ... de IIII parte, ela carrera **cabel** arco de la font; SV 118-3.19 (1228) et posuerunt suos terminos: primo finso sedet ad illa carrera antigua **cabe** et (?) salze.

Except in the two oldest examples,²⁴ it always takes a completely Romance form; it is even contracted with the article on two occasions: *cabol*, *cabel* < *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”).²⁵ 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*.²⁶ In all the examples from Asturias and León the preposition appears on its own and is always followed by an undeclined 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 water-courses. In this Latin, *caput* has also some meanings not developed until the

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 locutions *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.

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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 Romance equal “cabeza”, which also occurs in the *corpus*. Moreover, the author examines the chronological distribution and the graphic and morphological variants of both words.