

Two Poems

Jean S. Marshall*

MUSEUM PIECE

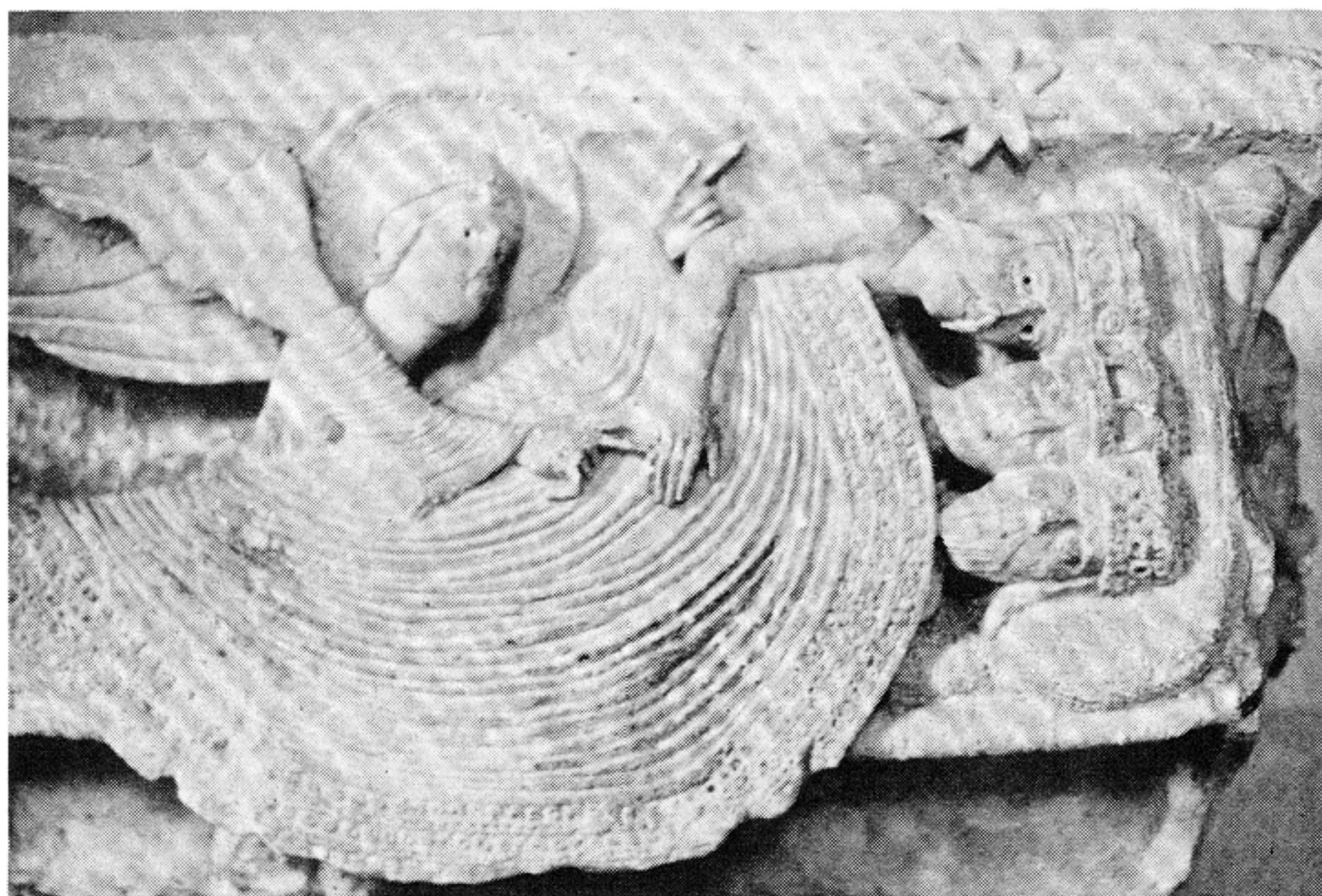
Impaled, moth-like, on the wood,
He hung there dying.
Without struggle He yielded
to the Light.



For centuries they have let Him hang—
in stone,
in delicate, yellowing ivory,
on dark and crimson canvases,
in painted effigies of wood,
the unique specimen, multiplied,
a twisted image
of torture and of death,
obscuring all His days of giving
to broken men new eyes,
diminishing His Gethsemane
where the weight of utter penitence
bore down on Him alone for us,
ignoring the bright and empty tomb
where He unfolded wings of light
from His celestial cocoon.

A Romanesque crucifix in Barcelona, Spain.

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Photograph of Gislebertus' three kings stone carving in Autun, France.

ROMANESQUE

I wish I had imagined magi sleeping.

I know the thread of scripture
and the legends all embroidered
of caravan and quest with incense
and with gold for homage,
then the dream and the departure
by another way.

I know some doubt the birth.
Some doubt that regal journey.

But in a distant century
Gislebertus chipped from stone
three friends waiting.

He saw the magi sleeping
three short fellows side by side
under a coverlet of curving lines
and the angel (bending stiffly in air)
touching (with one finger)
whispering (I'm sure) urgently to say,
"The star appears" (upper right)
"The King is born."