The Medieval Iberian Treasury in the Context of Cultural Interchange

EXPANDED EDITION

EDITED BY

Therese Martin

BRILL

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Cover illustration: Stole of Queen Leonor (detail), 1197 (Museo de la Real Colegiata de San Isidoro de León, Inv. No. IIC-3-089-002-0024, photo: Therese Martin).

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Notes on Contributors

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is Subdirectora general adjunta of the Instituto del Patrimonio Cultural de España, Madrid. An archaeological background contributes to her expertise in object-centered research, especially of textiles. In professional experience and research, she focuses on collections management and museum databases, as well as collecting history and textiles, with a special emphasis on works from the medieval period, their raw materials, and weaving techniques, as well as the transfer of knowledge. Among the grants and fellowships she has received in support of her research is a 2016–2018 Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship at the Victoria and Albert Museum (https://www.vam.ac.uk/research/projects/interwoven), where since 2018 she has been an Honorary Senior Research Fellow. Her publications center on textiles, collecting history, and new technologies of information and communication applied to museums. She has written or collaborated in multiple monographs, exhibition catalogues, book chapters, conference proceedings, and journal articles. At present she is the co-editor of two forthcoming publications, *Silks* (London: V&A and Thames and Hudson) and *Collecting Spain: Spanish Decorative Arts in Britain and Spain* (Madrid: Polifemo).

María Judith Feliciano

is an independent scholar based in New York City. She specializes in the visual culture of the medieval and early modern Iberian worlds with a focus on the influence of the arts of Islam in the artistic developments of Peninsular and Viceregal societies. Her research has been supported by grants and fellowships including Fulbright, de Montêquin, Kress, Pasold, Max Van Berchem, and the Program for Cultural Cooperation between Spain's Ministry of Culture and US Universities. She has published numerous articles on medieval Iberian art and architecture, and she co-edited *Interrogating Iberian Frontiers*, a special issue of *Medieval Encounters* (2006). Her recent articles include "The Invention of Mudejar Art and the Viceregal Aesthetic Paradox: Notes on the Reception of Iberian Ornament in New Spain" (Princeton, 2016), "Al-Andalus and Castile: Art and Identity in the Iberian Peninsula" (with Juan Carlos Ruiz Souza, London, 2016), and "Medieval Iberian Relics and Their Woven Vessels: The Case of San Ramón del Monte († 1126), Roda de Isábena Cathedral (Huesca, Aragon)" (with Ana Cabrera Lafuente and Enrique Parra, Leuven, 2018). Since 2015 she has been the co-director of the *Medieval Textiles in Iberia and the Mediterranean Research Project*.

Julie A. Harris

is a specialist in the art of medieval Iberia. She has published on ivory carving, pilgrimage, the fate of art and architecture during the Reconquest, and Hebrew illuminated manuscripts. A member of Therese Martin's international research projects—*Reassessing the Roles of Women as 'Makers' of Medieval Art and Architecture* (2010–2015), *The Medieval Treasury across Frontiers and Generations: The Kingdom of León-Castilla in the Context of Muslim-Christian Interchange, c. 1050–1200* (2016–2018), and *The Medieval Iberian Treasury in Context: Collections, Connections, and Representations on the Peninsula and Beyond* (2019–2022)—her recent publications have appeared in *Gesta*, the *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies*, *Medieval Encounters*, and the *Journal of Medieval History*. She edited *Women's Creativity and the Three Faiths of Medieval Iberia*, a special issue of the *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* (2014), and co-edited *Church, State, Vellum, and Stone: Essays on Medieval Spain in Honor of John Williams* (Brill, 2005). Recently she was awarded a fellowship from the Center for Spain in America at the Clark Institute for her ongoing project on the decorative carpet pages of Iberian Hebrew Bibles.

Jitske Jasperse

is Assistant Professor of Kunst- und Bildgeschichte at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, and part of the nationally funded research project *The Medieval Iberian Treasury in Context: Collections, Connections, and Representations on the Peninsula and Beyond* led by Therese Martin. She previously held a postdoctoral position at the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas in Madrid (2016–2018). Driven by the questions of why and how people engage with artifacts, both precious and mundane, she has a particular interest in the relationship between material culture, women, and gender. She recently published *Medieval Women, Material Culture, and Power: Matilda Plantagenet and Her Sisters* (Arc Humanities Press, 2020), and she co-edited with Karen Dempsey *Getting the Senses of Small Things / Sinn und Sinnlichkeit kleiner Dinge*, a special issue of *Das Mittelalter. Perspektiven mediävistischer Forschung* (2020). Her articles have appeared in journals across a range of disciplines, including *Medieval Encounters* (2019), *Studies in Iconography* (2018), *Arenal. Revista de Historia de las Mujeres* (2018), and *Journal of Medieval History* (2017).

Therese Martin

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intersections of medieval Iberia's multiple cultures, women's involvement with art and architecture in the central Middle Ages, and Romanesque construction and decoration. Her award-winning publications include "Crouching Cross-bowmen in Early Twelfth-Century Sculpture: A Nasty, Brutish, and Short(-Lived) Iconography," *Gesta* (2015), and "The Margin to Act: A Framework of Investigation for Women's (and Men's) Medieval Art-Making," *Journal of Medieval History* (2016). In addition to her monograph, *Queen as King* (Brill, 2006), she has edited *Reassessing the Roles of Women as 'Makers' of Medieval Art and Architecture* (Brill, 2012) and '*Me fecit.' Making Medieval Art* (*History*), special issue, *Journal of Medieval History* (2016). Currently she heads a fifteen-member team investigating *The Medieval Iberian Treasury in Context: Collections, Connections, and Representations on the Peninsula and Beyond*, funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science, Innovation, and Universities. She is the editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies*.

Pamela A. Patton

is Director of the Index of Medieval Art at Princeton University. Her scholarship centers on the visual culture of medieval Spain and its environs, especially the role of the image in articulating cultural identity and social dynamics among the multiethnic communities of the Iberian Peninsula. Her recent publications include the 2012 monograph *Art of Estrangement: Redefining Jews in Reconquest Spain* (Pennsylvania State University Press, winner of the 2014 Eleanor Tufts Book Award), the edited volume *Envisioning Others: Race, Color, and the Visual in Iberia and Latin America* (Brill, 2016), "An Ethiopian-Headed Serpent in the Cantigas de Santa María: Sin, Sex, and Color in Late Medieval Castile," *Gesta* (2016), and "Blackness, Whiteness, and the Idea of Race in Medieval European Art" (Fordham, 2019). Her current scholarship concerns the depiction and significance of skin color in Iberia and the western Mediterranean. Before joining Princeton in 2015, Patton was professor and chair of art history at Southern Methodist University. She is a co-editor of *Studies in Iconography* and a field editor for *Oxford Bibliographies in Art History*.

Ana Rodríguez

is Profesora de Investigación at the Instituto de Historia, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Madrid. Her main fields of research are the history of medieval Iberia, royal power and political institutions, and the social implications of political processes in the Middle Ages. She is the Principal Investigator of the ERC Advanced Grant *Petrifying Wealth. The Southern European Shift to Masonry as Collective Investment in Identity, c. 1050–1300* (2017–2021). Previously she was the Coordinator of the Marie Curie-ITN European

project *Power and Institutions in Medieval Islam and Christendom* (2013–2016).
Her books include *La estirpe de Leonor de Aquitania. Mujeres y poder en los
siglos XII y XIII* (2014), *Diverging Paths? The Shapes of Power and Institutions
in Medieval Islam and Christendom* (ed. with John Hudson, 2013), and *Objets
sous contrainte. Circulation et valeur des choses au Moyen Âge* (ed. with Laurent
Feller, 2013). Among her recent articles are "Narratives of Expansion, Last Wills,
Poor Expectations and the Conquest of Seville (1248)" (2016), "Remembering
the Crusades while Living the Reconquest: Iberia, 12th-14th Centuries" (2016),
and "Entre des conflits internes et des agents externes: Clôture et monastères
féminins au Moyen Âge dans le royaume de Castille-et-León" (2015).

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ies, National Endowment for the Humanities, and National Humanities Cen-
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International Research and Exchanges Board, American-Scandinavian Foun-
dation, and Berit Wallenberg Foundation. Besides co-editing three volumes on
gender and archaeology, she has published on Scandinavian jewelry, animal-
style art, figurative art of the Vikings, female infanticide, and runic literacy. Her
most recent article is "Dazzle, Dangle, and Jangle: Sensory Effects of Scandina-
vian Gold Bracteates," *Das Mittelalter. Perspektiven mediävistischer Forschung*
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ber of the Internationales Sachsensymposion, and an Editorial Board member
of *Gesta*, the journal of the International Center of Medieval Art. She has been
a Councillor of the Medieval Academy of America, President of the Society of
Historians of Scandinavia, and an Associate Editor of *Medieval Archaeology*.

Beyond the Treasury of San Isidoro: A Tale of Two Projects

Therese Martin

Abstract

In this methodological essay, I present the fruits of research carried out by an interdisciplinary group of scholars 2016–2018, which centered on the Treasury of San Isidoro de León, while also introducing the more wide-ranging comparative work going forward 2019–2022 under the auspices of a reconfigured team. By republishing our studies in open access, we aim to reach a larger community of scholars; our longer-term goal is to move further out into the consciousness of modern society, locating for an interested general public the Leonese collection within its broader historical framework and holding it up for comparison with other significant sites. Cross-cultural luxury objects oblige a shift in the direction of our historical gaze, bringing into clear focus the many collaborations across faiths and the repeated examples of protagonism by women during the central Middle Ages.

Keywords

Nine-hundred and fifty-five years after the presumed founding in 1063 of the treasury of San Isidoro de León, the year 2018 saw the completion of a collaborative research project centering on the Leonese collection. At that time, it was clear that our research was leading to rich and unexpected results which merited further investigation, and so I sought more ambitious funding to exploit the remarkable developments arising from the initial grant. We were fortunate in 2019 to receive the generous support of a Spanish National Research Challenge Grant, allowing the fifteen members of the reconfigured team, drawn together from six countries, to strike out in exciting new directions

through the end of 2022.[1] In the present methodological essay, I reflect on themes and ideas that have emerged since the key results of the first project were submitted for publication two years ago, identifying in this chapter the significant additions to the bibliography that have appeared in the meantime. I also lay out a blueprint for the team's research in the coming years. In addition to expanding the scope of our investigations, the new grant has also made possible the publication of this book in open access: here, gathered in one volume, are the set of studies resulting from the initial Treasury project, completed now by cross-referenced images, a composite bibliography, and a tripartite index to facilitate an understanding of the interconnected nature of the different topics under analysis.[2] By republishing these studies in open access, we aim to bring our work to the attention of as broad a global readership as possible, offering a new view into the roles played by prior research in our current project.

Following the present essay, the volume continues with my chapter, "Caskets of Silver and Ivory from Diverse Parts of the World: Strategic Collecting for an Iberian Treasury," which presents San Isidoro's treasury and analyzes the complexities involved in researching this collection during its heyday from the late eleventh century through the first half of the twelfth. This chapter also takes a deep dive into a later moment in the long life of the monument, which was brought to light during our carbon-14 testing of an object from San Isidoro known as the Beatitudes Casket (Figure 1.1; now held by the Museo

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2   Chapters 2–8 initially appeared as a special double issue of *Medieval Encounters* 25/1–2 (2019), having originated in conference presentations at Princeton University in May 2017 (see Chpt. 2, n.1, for further details, including a complete list of speakers). Chapter 9 was originally published as Nancy L. Wicker, "The Scandinavian Container at San Isidoro, León, in the Context of Viking Art and Society," *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* 11/2 (2019): 135–156; it is here reprinted by permission of the publisher Taylor & Francis Ltd, http://www.tandonline.com. Wicker's article was developed from a presentation given at *Jornadas Proyecto Tesoro. Resultados de la investigación interdisciplinar sobre el tesoro de San Isidoro de León*, held in September 2018 at San Isidoro itself. The authors are grateful to *Medieval Encounters* and to the *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* for facilitating the republication of our work in this revised and expanded format.

Arqueológico Nacional in Madrid, no. 52092), whose meaning was further clarified by a fourteenth-century document from San Isidoro's archive. Digging extensively into the context of other written sources, Ana Rodríguez, in Chapter 3, "Narrating the Treasury: What Medieval Iberian Chronicles Choose to Recount about Luxury Objects," investigates the ways in which a rare few objects were featured in chronicles of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Surprisingly, she finds that Iberian chroniclers tended to ignore the magnificent works they saw all around them, save for select pieces that were singled out in the narratives and highlighted especially for their exotic materials or prestigious provenance.

Turning next to textiles, two scholars who have been working closely together unfold the diverse silk holdings at San Isidoro to tease out the multiple meanings that have accrued to them. Ana Cabrera Lafuente takes an archaeological approach in Chapter 4, "Textiles from the Museum of San Isidoro (León): New Evidence for Re-Evaluating Their Chronology and Provenance." She compiles the first in-depth, analytical catalogue of the textile fragments (see Chpt. 4, Table 4.1), placing each piece in relation to silks held by ecclesiastical or civic

FIGURE 1.1   Beatitudes Casket, oblique view, ivories from the late eleventh
century (?) on fourteenth-century wooden box (Madrid,
Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Inv. No. 52092). See also Figs. 2.6-2.8.
PHOTO: THERESE MARTIN

museums around the world. Her study breaks ground through the application of technical analysis, including radiocarbon dating that reveals unexpectedly early chronologies for several silks in the Isidoran collection. Placing these textiles in their historical context(s), in Chapter 5 by María Judith Feliciano, "Sovereign, Saint, and City: Honor and Reuse of Textiles in the Treasury of San Isidoro (León)," the author follows the movements of textiles into and around the Iberian Peninsula, showing that both they and the treasury were parts of a living process. She draws attention to the freighted symbolic nature of royal drapings and holy textile relics, essential to the construct of León as a capital city in both medieval and early modern moments. Meaningful locations are also crucial to the singular artifact studied by Jitske Jasperse in Chapter 6, "Between León and the Levant: The Infanta Sancha's Altar as Material Evidence for Medieval History." Her detailed investigation of the remarkable inscription and unusual material of a portable altar in the treasury of San Isidoro brings to light hitherto unrecognized networks and connections through kinship, gender, and imaginary pilgrimage, both in the twelfth century when the altar was created and in the life the object would take on in the centuries to come.

In the following chapters, research perspectives broaden out from treasured objects to consider their settings and audience in medieval León. Pamela Patton, in Chapter 7, "Demons and Diversity in León," brings to the fore the layered meanings of a hagiographic image in the Romanesque frescoes of the so-called Pantheon of the Kings.[3] In an extraordinary scene, Saint Martin is tempted by a richly dressed individual who is identified by inscription as the devil; by contrast with the textual source on which the representation is based, the author reads this devil's painted garb at San Isidoro as designed to evoke the exquisite ṭirāz textiles of the Islamicate world. Chapter 8 by Julie Harris, "Jews, Real and Imagined, at San Isidoro and Beyond," investigates the presence of Jews in the city of León, calling to our attention the surprisingly few Old Testament relics at San Isidoro, by contrast with parallel holdings at the royal and ecclesiastical centers of Oviedo and Toledo. In León, it is not at San Isidoro but instead at the Cathedral where the author finds clear traces of royal interactions with the city's now dispersed Jewish community. Finally, the volume closes with Chapter 9 by Nancy Wicker, "The Scandinavian Container at San Isidoro, León, in the Context of Viking Art and Society," which centers on a tiny and unique object, the only Viking-style artifact to have been preserved in the entire Iberian Peninsula. Addressing the diminutive container's decoration and function, the author points out the work's hybrid

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3   In April 2020, Pamela Patton's study was awarded the Charles Julian Bishko Memorial Prize for best article on Spanish medieval history by the Association for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies.

character, which marries a design from the far north with a proposed usage typical of Islamic societies, before the box's eventual conversion into a reliquary. That a Scandinavian container forms part of the treasury of San Isidoro is no accident, as a reading of all the chapters in this volume makes clear, reaffirming the polysemic character of this extraordinary multicultural collection.

As this brief review of the chapters in the present book sums up, the impetus that inspired the initial Treasury project sprang from the remarkable range of objects once gathered at a single Iberian monument—San Isidoro de León—revealing multiple transcultural networks for the central Middle Ages.[4] The works in this treasury only rarely appear in studies beyond those focused on Spanish medieval art history, despite the broad relevance of the assemblage as a whole for scholarship today. In this second, more wide-reaching iteration of the Treasury project, art historians, archaeologists, curators, and historians pursue a common goal across two major lines of inquiry: the geographically charged nature of objects, and women as vectors of cultural exchange. Thanks to the generosity of this second grant, the tenth- to twelfth-century holdings at San Isidoro are now functioning as a test case from which our attention turns outward to comparative study. The team's collaborative investigation of how and why medieval objects crossed cultural, religious, and political borders—often by the hand of a woman—addresses two challenges faced by modern-day society. First, transcultural objects make manifest the connections all too often missing from official written history;[5] they are tangible demonstrations of what would otherwise remain unremarked. This is especially important

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4 Our thanks are offered especially to the staff of the Museo de la Real Colegiata de San Isidoro de León under the direction of Luis García Gutiérrez and Raquel Jaén, and to the Museo Arqueológico Nacional in Madrid, particularly to Sergio Vidal, head of the medieval department, along with Isabel Arias and Beatriz Campderá Gutiérrez. Both institutions generously facilitated first-hand access, allowing team members to examine and photograph the objects and to carry out technical analyses over the course of multiple campaigns, without which the first Treasury project would have been impossible. I am also grateful to the Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum, Glencairn Museum, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Museo de la Catedral de Astorga, Museo de la Catedral de León, Museo de la Catedral de Santiago de Compostela, Museo de León, Museo Tesoro de la Catedral Primada de Toledo, National Gallery of Art (Washington, D.C.), and the Trésor de la Catedral de Girona.

5 An example of this can be seen in the so-called *Historia Silense*, for which a critical edition has been published at long last. In this chronicle, likely written in León during the first quarter of the twelfth century, interactions between Muslims and Christians are portrayed as unremittingly fraught. See Juan A Estévez Sola, ed., *Historia Silensis,* in *Chronica Hispana saeculi XII, Pars III*. Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis 71B (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018). See also the studies in *Historia legionensis (llamada silensis). Écriture de l'histoire*, ed. Georges Martin, special issue, *e-Spania* 14 (2012), https://journals.openedition.org/e-spania/21568 (consulted 14 April 2020).

for recognizing the multiple layers of meanings that build up through con-
tacts across and among religious groups, sometimes bellicose but not as de-
terminedly so as the normative literature of the Middle Ages would have its
readers believe. Second, this project highlights some of the many moments
in which medieval women played a leading role in the movement of objects
from distant lands. Female protagonism, indisputably evident in León-Castilla
during the central Middle Ages, serves in our research as a touchstone for other
medieval treasuries to determine whether the case of San Isidoro, as argued in
the present volume, represents an exception or an as-yet unrecognized rule.

The results of the first Treasury project demonstrated that the creation of a
medieval treasury offers a material witness through which the interests and as-
pirations of those who established it are revealed. Although some of the works
from the Isidoran treasury had previously received sustained scholarly attention,
especially by Ángela Franco,[6] other pieces were all but unknown outside Spain,
and none had ever been subjected to scientific analysis such as carbon-14 dating.[7]
For San Isidoro, a critical re-reading of the material and written evidence reveals
generations of royal ambitions, first those evident in the treasury's storied founda-
tion by Fernando (r. 1037–1065) and Sancha (d. 1067), and later through its resto-
ration in the twelfth century by their descendants, who were clearly conscious of
their lineage. The paucity of objects post-dating the middle of the twelfth century
which can be associated with the Leonese treasury suggests that the royal practice
of offering precious belongings to their dynastic monastery waned throughout
that century, with the Limoges-style enamelwork reliquary marking an end to the
era of large-scale royal sponsorship (Figure 1.2).[8] The Treasury project is now look-
ing more deeply into these developments, examining the periodic bursts of do-
nation activities by rulers. If radiocarbon dating pushed our investigation further
during the first grant, it was archival research which uncovered the nexus that was

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6   From her seminal work of 1991 to her monograph in 2012, among the publications by Ángela
     Franco Mata that address the Leonese treasury are: "El tesoro de San Isidoro y la monarquía
     leonesa," *Boletín del Museo Arqueológico Nacional* 9/1 (1991): 35–68; "La eboraria de los reinos
     hispánicos durante los siglos XI y XII," *Codex Aquilarensis* 13 (1998): 143–166; "Liturgia hispáni-
     ca y marfiles: talleres de León y San Millán de la Cogolla en el siglo XI," *Codex Aquilarensis*
     22 (2006): 92–145; "Tesoros de Oviedo y León. Problemas estilísticos, liturgia e iconografía,"
     Boletín del Museo Arqueológico Nacional 27–28 (2009–2010): 51–118; *Arte leonés fuera de León*
     (*ss. IV–XVI*) (León: Edilesa, 2012).
7   For the results of the radiocarbon analysis, see Chpts. 2 and 4 in the present volume.
8   This object would benefit enormously from metals testing, which we hope to carry out in
     the coming years, to determine if the apparently late twelfth-century Limoges style of the
     enameled copper (?) casket can reliably be tied to a particular time and place of production.
     In her 2013 dissertation, Melanie Hanan contextualized this type of shrine within the larger
     international genre; see her "Romanesque Casket Reliquaries: Forms, Meaning, and Develop-
     ment," PhD diss., Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, 2013, esp. 201–222.

FIGURE 1.2   Limoges-style enamelwork casket, late twelfth century (?) (Museo de la Real
Colegiata de San Isidoro de León, Inv. No. IIC-3-089-002-0003). See also Fig. 5.5.
PHOTO: THERESE MARTIN

key to the history of the ecclesiastical—rather than the royal—institution of San
Isidoro. As detailed in Chapter 2, the fourteenth century was revealed to be a time
of reaching out to non-elite donors, men and women who were encouraged to
join the confraternity with an eye to benefitting in the hereafter.

Moving outward from León, the Treasury project seeks to offer a way into
the meaningful re-use and repurposing of luxury goods, both within and across
cultures during the central Middle Ages, together with the representation of
precious items for medieval and modern audiences. At the heart of both phases
of our research are the multidisciplinary challenges involved in studying works
disparate in material, mode, and moment of manufacture, which were once
gathered together at individual medieval treasuries. Team members delve into
the meanings behind the presence of artifacts from other cultures, reconsid-
ering the paths by which prized possessions arrived at their destinations, with
commerce, plunder, marriage, and modern nationalistic expropriation among
them. In the coming years, we will continue to explore the question of how
medieval treasuries accommodate the evolving interests of their owners across

the centuries.[9] Throughout this research project, objects ever serve as evidence alongside—and sometimes in opposition to—archival sources. Additional radiocarbon dating of textiles and objects, whether from the Leonese treasury or other sites, will provide comparative data for the scientific testing done during the first project. Technical analyses, including dyes characterization of textiles, non-invasive X-ray fluorescence for metals, and carbon-14 for organic materials, make crucial contributions to the larger story that objects can tell about manufacture, techniques, and places of origin.[10]

In the present phase of the Treasury project, issues of audience come more fully into focus as a dual concern for facets medieval and contemporary:[11] we now bring to bear the place of museums in determining our understanding of medieval "artworks," items that are thus deemed worthy of collecting. This project takes as a given that the material reality of treasuries—ivories, metalworks, precious stones, and silks—can best be comprehended if the objects are analyzed within their complete settings, as well as in tandem with textual and visual representations. As we shift our gaze outward beyond the Leonese treasury, we ask how this collection compares to assemblages in other spaces, from a Swiss monastery, to courts in the easterly reaches of twelfth-century Europe, to the Mediterranean kingdom of Sicily. As at San Isidoro, a defining characteristic of these regions is that they represent crossroads of intense cultural interchange, conjuring rich comparisons with Iberia during the central Middle Ages. Capital cities like León and Palermo hold a place of honor at the center of our research because they manifest the links that were forged between far distant lands—across religious boundaries and through the

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9   On the relics and reliquaries, for example, now in the treasury of the Cathedral of Oviedo—a site with important precedents and parallels to San Isidoro—see the research of Raquel Alonso Álvarez, including her latest article, "Royal Power and the Episcopacy: Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century Relics from Oviedo Cathedral," in *Ideology in the Middle Ages: Approaches from Southwestern Europe*, ed. Flocel Sabaté (Leeds: Arc Humanities Press, 2019), 203–234. See also the important study of the Oviedan objects' inscriptions in Arabic (not pseudo-Kufic, as previously presumed) by María Antonia Martínez Núñez, "Inscripciones árabes en la Catedral de Oviedo: El Arca Santa, la Arqueta del Obispo Arias y la Arqueta de Santa Eulalia," *Territorio, Sociedad y Poder* 11 (2016): 23–62.

10   For in-depth and multifaceted analyses approaching a single object from multiple perspectives and disciplines, see Klaus Gereon Beuckers and Dorothee Kemper, eds., *Das Welandus-Reliquiar im Louvre. Ein Hauptwerk niedersächsischer Emailkunst in interdisziplinärer Perspektive. Objekte und Eliten in Hildesheim 1130 bis 1250* (Regensburg: Schnell & Steiner, 2018).

11   On the display of exotic objects and the astonished gaze of viewers, see David Ganz, "Der staunende Blick auf der Schatzkunst," in *Staunen als Grenzphänomen*, ed. Nicola Gess, Mireille Schnyder, Hugues Marchal, and Johannes Bartuschat (Berlin: Reimer, 2017), 247–266.

actions of women—by the objects today in medieval treasuries and modern museums.[12] This project further addresses the challenge of bringing research on underrepresented contacts into the larger scholarly consciousness.[13] Such a range of geographies demands rigorous analysis and close collaboration by specialists from various fields of study. At the commencement of the original Treasury project, an international and multidisciplinary group of scholars worked closely together, while others joined in as external collaborators; each brought expertise from diverse areas of specialization. For the current phase of research, continuing members are joined by specialists with complementary areas of knowledge. In the following schema, the remits of all scholars are detailed according to their areas of expertise, together with the questions we seek to answer as a team.

As Principal Investigator, my efforts are focused on directing the various research trajectories, ensuring that all strands are interwoven so that they reinforce the fabric of the project as a whole. At the same time, I am carrying out individual work on the display of rulership, especially the luxury objects linked to reigning women in Iberia during the tenth to twelfth centuries.[14] These include works owned by Ermesinda of Carcassonne, countess of Barcelona,

12   See recently Umberto Bongianino, "The King, His Chapel, His Church: Boundaries and Hybridity in the Religious Visual Culture of the Norman Kingdom," *Journal of Transcultural Medieval Studies* 4 (2017): 3–50; Fernando Arias Guillén and Pascual Martínez Sopena, eds., *Los espacios del rey. Poder y territorio en las monarquías hispánicas* (*siglos XII-XIV*) (Bilbao: Universidad del País Vasco, 2018), especially Alberto Navarro Baena, "La memoria regia a través de los obituarios leoneses," 397–418, and Carlos Manuel Reglero de la Fuente, "El Infantado monástico: del espacio a la memoria," 419–436.

13   Recent examples include Rosa Maria Bacile and John McNeill, eds., *Romanesque and the Mediterranean: Points of Contact across the Latin, Greek and Islamic Worlds c. 1000 to c. 1250* (London: Maney Publishing, 2015); Talia Zajac, "Remembrance and Erasure of Objects Belonging to Rus' Princesses in Medieval Western Sources: The Cases of Anastasia Iaroslavna's 'Saber of Charlemagne' and Anna Iaroslavna's Red Gem," in *Moving Women, Moving Objects, 500–1500*, ed. Tracy Hamilton and Maria Proctor-Tiffany (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 33–58. The "red gem" of Zajac's title is the same storied "carbuncle" that figures in Chpt. 3 of the present volume by Ana Rodríguez.

14   This was the subject of my 2019–2020 Samuel H. Kress Senior Fellowship at the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, National Gallery of Art. My thinking has benefitted from conversations with CASVA colleagues, as well as with specialists from area museums and universities with whom I was fortunate to meet during my stay in Washington, D.C.: Sheila ffolliott, Katherine Hansen, Genevra Kornbluth, Andrea Pearson, Christine Sciacca, and especially Laura Morreale. Aspects of this research were presented in February 2020 at CASVA and in a Dorothy Ford Wiley Lecture for the UNC Program in Medieval and Early Modern Studies, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. I am grateful to UNC's Jessica Boon, her students, and colleagues for their enthusiastic discussions of my research.
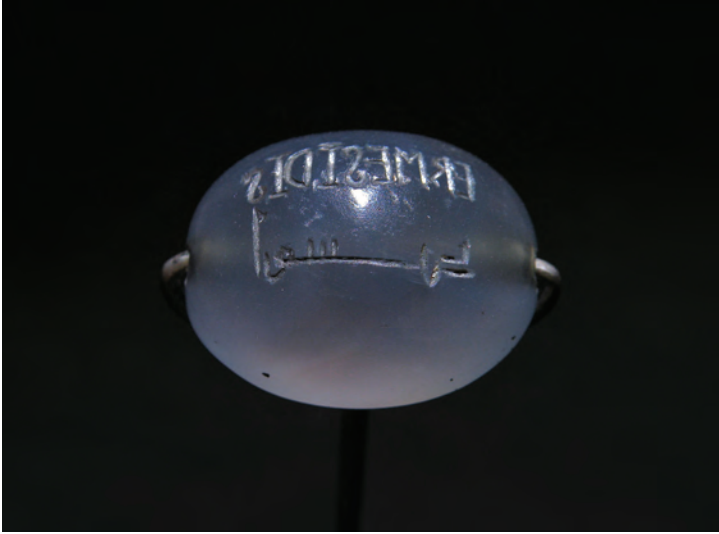
FIGURE 1.3   Seal of Ermesinda of Carcassonne, Countess of Barcelona (d. 1058),
             chalcedony, 3.2 x 2.0 cm. (Trésor de la Catedral de Girona).
             PHOTO: THERESE MARTIN

whose lo ng rule began in 991 when she married Count Ramón Borrell
(r. 972– 1017); her six decades of exercising real authority encompassed all of
her son's reign and half of her grandson's, only coming to an end when her
grandson finally forced her from power the year before she died. Her rock crys-
tal chess set (*eschacos christalinos*), possibly manufactured in Fatimid Egypt,[15]
is among the precious possessions known only from a codicil to Ermesinda's
testament, which was written shortly before her death in 1058 at more than
eighty years of age.[16] However, the countess' bilingual seal survives, bearing her
name in L atin and Arabic—ERMESĪDIS/ارمسند—inscribed in reverse on a
small oval stone of palest blue chalcedony (Figure 1.3). This tiny but telling

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15   During the first Treasury project, Jeremy Johns and Elise Morero contributed deep
      learning about rock crystal, sardonyx, and other worked stone—along with lively good
      fellowship—during research trips to Madrid, León, and Astorga. They have under-
      way a complete corpus of Fatimid rock crystals, from which their most recent publica-
      tion is drawn. See Elise Morero, Jeremy Johns, Hara Procopiou, Roberto Vargiolu, and
      Hassan Zahouani, "Relief Carving on Medieval Islamic Glass and Rock Crystal Vessels: A
      Comparative Approach to Techniques of Manufacture," in *Seeking Transparency: Rock
      Crystals Across the Medieval Mediterranean*, ed. Cynthia Hahn and Avinoam Shalem
      (Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 2020), 51–66.
16   A well-known character from Catalan history, Ermesinda and her 192 charters are the sub-
      ject of a doctoral thesis by Xavier Gil i Roman, "Diplomatario de Ermesèn, condesa de

indicator of authority can still be seen in the treasury of the Cathedral of Girona, the favored site on which Ermesinda bestowed much of the great wealth accumulated during her long lifetime in power.[17] Through works like Ermesinda's seal, I investigate the ways in which material culture evoking other lands was made to buttress the authority of Iberian rulers.

All members of the team approach objects and collections through their multiple contexts: origin of materials; manufacture of artifacts; manipulations by medieval and modern owners; progression to current holder. Among the treasuries that feature in the present phase of research is that of the monastery of St.-Maurice d'Agaune (Switzerland), which has been the focus of Pierre Alain Mariaux's study for more than a decade.[18] For the Treasury project, Mariaux brings comparative analysis to bear, especially relevant for the abbey's silver bejeweled Grande Châsse (Figure 1.4). Now undergoing extensive restoration, the patron saint's reliquary is being studied while still on display to the public, offering extraordinary access to the casket's construction, down to its inner wooden core,[19] and providing answers to questions in parallel to the silver reliquary of Saint Isidore that holds pride of place in the Leonese treasury (Figure 1.5a, b).

Three scholars with expertise in the archaeology and art history of Christian- and Islamic-manufactured textiles—a centerpiece of medieval treasuries—who collaborated closely during the first phase of the Treasury project, will continue with expanded remits in the second. Ana Cabrera Lafuente and María Judith Feliciano are investigating luxury silks from the early and central Middle Ages in such holdings as the monastery of Sant Joan de les Abadesses and the Cathedrals of Roda de Isábena,[20] Santiago de

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Barcelona, Girona y Osona (c. 991–1 de marzo de 1058)," PhD diss., Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 2004. For a recent study with extensive prior bibliography, see Jeffrey A. Bowman, "Countesses in Court: Elite Women, Creativity, and Power in Northern Iberia, 900–1200," *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* 6/1 (2014): 54–70.

17   I am deeply indebted to Joan Piña Pedemonte, director of the Trésor de la Catedral de Girona, for allowing me to study and photograph this object in July 2019.

18   Pierre Alain Mariaux, ed., *L'Abbaye de Saint-Maurice d'Agaune 515–2015*, vol. 2, *Le Trésor* (Gollion: Infolio Éditions, 2015).

19   For the work underway on the Grande Châsse, see especially Pierre Alain Mariaux, Romain Jeanneret, and Denise Witschard, "L'Économie patrimoniale comme mise en oeuvre matérielle et sémantique au sein de l'atelier médiéval: Le cas des remplois de la Grande Châsse de Saint Maurice," a paper presented at "Atelier(s) d'artiste(s). Lieux et processus de production. Matériaux pauvres—Matériaux nobles," held at the MuCEM, Marseille in October 2018. Published online: http://www.opusagaunum.ch/category/article/ (consulted 14 April 2020).

20   Ana Cabrera Lafuente, María Judith Feliciano, and Enrique Parra, "Medieval Iberian Relics and Their Woven Vessels: The Case of San Ramón del Monte († 1126), Roda de

FIGURE 1.4   Grande Châsse, restoration underway, Monastery of St.-Maurice
             d'Agaune (Switzerland).
             PHOTO: PIERRE ALAIN MARIAUX

FIGURES 1.5A, B   Lid and reliquary casket of Saint Isidore, silver and wood, 1063?
                  (Museo de la Real Colegiata de San Isidoro de León, Inv. No.
                  IIC-3-089-002-0001). See also Figs. 4.7, 5.1, 5.2.
                  PHOTOS: A, THERESE MARTIN; B, AMANDA DOTSETH

FIGURES 1.6A, B   Relic bag in tapestry weave, with leonine creatures, geometric and
                     vegetal motifs (or confronted birds?), silk and silver-gilt thread, twelfth/
                     thirteenth century, origin unknown (Trésor de la Cathédrale de Sens,
                     no. B18).
                     PHOTOS: ANA CABRERA LAFUENTE

Compostela, and Toledo, as well as the extraordinary collection at Sens Ca-
thedral in northern France (Figures 1.6a, b).[21] Among their research concerns

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Isábena Cathedral (Huesca, Aragon)," in *Relics @ the Lab. An Analytical Approach to the Study of Relics*, ed. M. Van Strydonck, J. Reyniers, and F. Van Cleven (Leuven: Peeters, 2018), 43–76; María Judith Feliciano, "El corpus epigráfico de los tejidos medievales en Iberia: nuevas aportaciones," in *Arte y producción textil en el Mediterráneo medieval*, ed. Laura Rodríguez Peinado and Francisco de Asís García García (Madrid: Polifemo, 2019), 289–318; Ana Cabrera Lafuente, "Following the Thread: Collecting Spanish Textiles at the Victoria and Albert Museum," in *Collecting Spain: Spanish Decorative Arts in Britain and Spain*, ed. Ana Cabrera Lafuente and Lesley E. Miller (Madrid: Polifemo, in press 2021).

21   The silk tapestry from Sens Cathedral illustrated in Figures 1.6a and 1.6b, which was reworked into a bag to hold relics at some point in its long history, has been generically assigned an Iberian or Sicilian origin; however, nothing can be stated definitively about its place of manufacture without further study. (See Eugene Chartraire, *Les tissues anciens du trésor de la Cathédrale de Sens* [Paris: Honoré Champion, 1911], 45–46, n.58). The research carried out by Ana Cabrera Lafuente and María Judith Feliciano at Sens Cathedral in October 2017 was made possible thanks to the assistance of Dorothée Censier and Virginie Garret of Musées CEREP, Ville de Sens, together with funding provided by their respective projects: for Cabrera Lafuente, the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Grant Agreement no. 703711, *Interwoven*; for Feliciano, the Max Van Berchem Foundation, *Medieval Textiles in Iberia and the Mediterranean Research Project.*

are the uncertainties of an object's provenance, along with its multiplicity of use, reuse and manipulations, which are especially clear in the case of textiles. Following a separate strand, Laura Rodríguez Peinado will pursue an iconographic investigation of San Isidoro's later medieval textiles that bear Christian imagery, chief among them the magnificent fourteenth-century Pennant of San Isidoro.[22] These embroidered works were not included in the first Treasury project, during which we carried out the initial dyes testing on several of the silk fragments at San Isidoro, thanks to funding from Rodríguez Peinado's own previous research project, the first major results of which were published in 2019.[23]

Two project members have been charged with addressing the movement of objects from Muslim to Christian lands from different points of view. Eduardo Manzano, a historian of Islam, is carrying out further investigation on Iberian objects in the Arabic sources. Manzano sees the pillaging of the caliphal palace of Madīnat al-Zahrāʾ around 1010 as a key moment at which treasured metalworks would have been dispersed across the Peninsula, some perhaps ending up in León (Figure 1.7).[24] A distinct approach to the topic is taken by the art historian Mariam Rosser-Owen, whose research was crucial to the initial conception of the Treasury project. Her 2015 call to pay closer attention to "alternative modes of transfer between the cultures that inhabited the Iberian Peninsula" has gained deep and wide-spread traction;[25] along this vein her work now mines the movements of materials, delving into the ivory and gold trade between north Africa and the Iberian peninsula especially during ʿĀmirid rule

22   For prior bibliography on the Pennant, or Pendón, de San Isidoro, see Chpt. 2, n.85.

23   The project headed by Laura Rodríguez Peinado was *Las manufacturas textiles anda-lusíes: caracterización y estudio interdisciplinar*, HAR2014-54918-P; see the volume edited by Rodríguez Peinado and Francisco de Asís García García, *Arte y producción textil en el Mediterráneo medieval* (Madrid: Polifemo, 2019), especially Rodríguez Peinado, "El Mediterráneo y la internacionalización de la producción textil medieval," 17–50 (esp. 32–41 for San Isidoro and the Cathedral of León); and Enrique Parra Crego, "Caracterización de materiales de tejidos medievales hispanos," 347–366. See also Rodríguez Peinado, "Los textiles como objetos de lujo y de intercambio," in *Las artes en al-Andalus y Egipto: contextos e intercambios*, ed. Susana Calvo Capilla (Madrid: Ergástula, 2017), 187–205.

24   His recent monograph sets the stage: Eduardo Manzano Moreno, *La corte del Califa. Cuatro años en la Córdoba de los omeyas* (Barcelona: Crítica, 2019). See also Manzano, "Entre faits et artefacts: interprétations historiques et données archéologiques en al-Andalus," in *La culture materielle: un objet en question. Anthropologie, archéologie et histoire,* ed. Luc Bourgeois, Danièle Alexandre-Bidon, Laurent Feller, Perrine Mane, Catherine Verna, and Mickaël Wilmart (Caen: Presses universitaire, 2018), 93–111.

25   Mariam Rosser-Owen, "Islamic Objects in Christian Contexts: Relic Translation and Modes of Transfer in Medieval Iberia," *Art in Translation* 7/1 (2015): 39–64, at 40.

FIGURE 1.7   Andalusi casket, nielloed silver, eleventh century? (Museo de la Real
Colegiata de San Isidoro de León, Inv. No. IIC‑3‑089‑002‑0015).
PHOTO: THERESE MARTIN

in the decades around the turn of the eleventh century.[26] Both Manzano and
Rosser‑Owen examine the larger Islamicate world within which luxury ob‑
jects originated or were manufactured, together with the routes by which such
items might have made their ways to treasuries in León and beyond.

   Issues concerning the movements of objects also extend beyond works
from Islamic lands. At San Isidoro, a delicate silver Fatimid box once
shared space not only with several silver Andalusi caskets,[27] but also with

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26   Mariam Rosser‑Owen, "Ivory in al‑Andalus: Its Supply and Meaning in the Late 10th
       Century," in *Festschrift in Honour of Anthony Cutler*, ed. Merih Danali Cantarella and
       Cali Buckley (Munich: Hirmer Verlag, in press 2021). See also Rosser‑Owen's forthcom‑
       ing monograph, *Cultural Patronage and Political Legitimacy in al‑Andalus*, Handbook of
       Oriental Studies Series (Leiden: Brill, in press 2021). The larger context for trade in luxury
       goods across northern Africa is the subject of an important recent exhibition, *Caravans
       of Gold, Fragments in Time: Art, Culture, and Exchange across Medieval Saharan Africa*,
       ed. Kathleen Bickford Berzock (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2019).
       See also Sarah Guérin, "Ivory and the Ties that Bind," in *Whose Middle Ages? Teachable
       Moments for an Ill‑Used Past*, ed. Andrew Albin, Mary C. Erler, Thomas O'Donnell,
       Nicholas L. Paul, and Nina Rowe (New York: Fordham University Press, 2019), 140–153.
27   See the new exhibition catalogue on Andalusi metalwork, *Las artes del metal en al‑Andalus*,
       ed. Sergio Vidal Álvarez (Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura y Deporte, 2019). A wealth of rele‑
       vant research can be found in *The Pisa Griffin and the Mari‑Cha Lion. Metalwork, Art, and
       Technology in the Medieval Islamicate Mediterranean*, ed. Anna Contadini (Pisa: Pacini
       Editore, 2018), especially Rafael Azuar, "Arqueología de la metalistería islámica de

a diminutive Viking container made of antler,[28] a reliquary covered in col-
orful enamels that are typical of the Limoges style, and a set of three Si-
cilian painted ivory pyxides, along with other geographically distinct works
including a multitude of figural ivories produced in León itself (Figure 1.8).[29]

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al-Andalus durante los reinos de Taifa (Siglo V HG/XI DC),” 281–292, and Julian Raby, “The
Inscriptions on the Pisa Griffin and the Mari-Cha Lion: From Banal Blessings to Indices
of Origin,” 305–360 + addendum to n.73. See also Susana Calvo Capilla, “Las artes en al-
Andalus y Egipto. Una red de intercambios permanente,” in *Las artes en al-Andalus y
Egipto: contextos e intercambios*, ed. Susana Calvo Capilla (Madrid: Ergástula, 2017), 9–22.
In a January 2020 paper given jointly with Corinne Mühlemann, Beate Fricke questioned
the Fatimid origin of the silver casket at San Isidoro: “Niello and Lampas: The Transfer
of Craft Knowledge between Baghdad, al-Andalus and Northern Europe,” presented at
*Dialogues in the Late Medieval Mediterranean: Methodological Encounters and (Dis)
Encounters*, International Workshop of the Casa Árabe de Madrid, organized by María
Marcos Cobaleda, Borja Franco Llopis, and Antonio Urquízar Herrera.

28   Fruitful discussions with Nancy Wicker led initially to scholarly collaboration on this tiny
      object and then to the publication of her article, “The Scandinavian Container at San
      Isidoro,” republished as Chpt. 9 in the present volume. For other Nordic-Iberian connec-
      tions in this period, see Kurt Villads Jensen, *Crusading at the Edges of Europe: Denmark
      and Portugal c.1000–c.1250* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2016).

29   For the objects from San Isidoro in this list, see in the present chapter Figures 1.1, 1.2, 1.5a-
      b, 1.7, and 1.8; others are illustrated in Chpt. 2.

FIGURE 1.9   Ivory caskets and crozier in the Treasury of the Cappella Palatina, Palermo,
late eleventh to thirteenth centuries; large and small inlaid caskets (back right)
generally dated fourteenth to fifteenth centuries (the treasury pertains to the
Fondo Edifici di Culto of the Ministero dell'Interno).
PHOTO: SILVIA ARMANDO

Such a multifarious collection obliges a definitive conceptual shift, recognizing the geographic resonance of objects for medieval collectors and beholders. Standing out among these distinctive works is the ivory manufacture traditionally attributed to Sicily and southern Italy, as revealed by Silvia Armando's in-depth investigations.[30] Her groundbreaking research brings San Isidoro into comparison with the Norman treasury at Palermo, which boasts a collection of medieval ivories even greater than the Leonese holdings (Figure 1.9). In the coming years, her work will also reconsider the presence of painted "Siculo-Arabic" ivories in ecclesiastical treasuries across the Iberian Peninsula, interrogating especially their distribution along pilgrimage routes.

At San Isidoro, the elite viewers of these precious and exotic containers must have appreciated the prestige inherent in the rich materials as well as in

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30   Silvia Armando, "L'Avorio di elefante nel Mediterraneo Medievale: Circolazione, disponibilità, usi (X-XIII secolo)," in *Sharing Material Culture: Ivory and Bone Artefacts from the Mediterranean to the Caspian Sea, From Antiquity to the Middle Ages*, ed. Michelina Di Cesare, special issue, *Quaderni di Vicino Oriente* 15 (2019): 215–278. A recent study of the ivories at Salerno offers a useful model of interdisciplinary investigation for research on collections like that of San Isidoro: *The Salerno Ivories: Objects, Histories, Contexts*, ed. Francesca Dell'Acqua, Anthony Cutler, Herbert L. Kessler, Avinoam Shalem, and Gerhard Wolf (Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 2016), especially the chapter by Sarah M. Guérin, "The Tusk: Origins of the Raw Material for the Salerno Ivories," 21–30.

the objects' origins in faraway places.[31] This fruitful tack will be pursued further by Jitske Jasperse, who traces the material culture networks of moving women and their portable objects, including a Portuguese royal daughter who married into the Flemish nobility.[32] What might Teresa (1151–1218)—called Matilda in her new home—have brought with her from the Iberian Peninsula that contributed to the shaping of her life and of courtly culture during her long tenure as a Flemish countess? By piecing together the material traces connected to individuals like Teresa, we can gain a more complete understanding of their intimate connections with artifacts, shedding light on the lived experiences of both women and men. Jasperse's art historical investigations are complemented by the historical analyses of Christian Raffensperger, whose research on dynastic marriages, political connections, family networks, and the historiography of Eastern Europe will be brought to bear especially on the documentary sources.[33] As the recent monographs by both Raffensperger and Jasperse have shown, in marriage, elite women themselves embodied exchange, and they publicly enacted alliances by moving from their home lands to new places.[34] There they were assimilated into their husbands' lines while bringing along traditions of their own as well as precious objects.[35] Through their marriages, elite women became the key contact points in political-cultural networks; as

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31 For the evocation of distant geographies through the medium of splendid silks, see the studies in Juliane von Fircks and Regula Schorta, eds., *Oriental Silks in Medieval Europe* (Riggisberg: Abegg-Stiftung, 2016). With the publication of volumes like this one, the Abegg-Stiftung in Riggisberg, Switzerland has been fomenting exemplary scholarship on the collection, conservation, and exhibition of textiles, including its own magnificent medieval holdings.

32 Jitske Jasperse, "Of Seals and Siblings: Teresa/Matilda (d. 1218), Queen of Portugal and Countess of Flanders," *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* 12/3 (2020), open access: https://doi.org/10.1080/17546559.2020.1805120.

33 See the volume of studies currently being prepared by Christian Raffensperger, ed., *Authorship, Worldview, and Identity in Medieval Europe* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, forthcoming 2021), including a chapter by Jitske Jasperse, "Treasuries as Windows to the Medieval World: San Isidoro de León and Saint Blaise at Braunschweig."

34 Christian Raffensperger, *Ties of Kinship: Genealogy and Dynastic Marriage in Kyivan Rus'* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016); Jitske Jasperse, *Medieval Women, Material Culture, and Power: Matilda Plantagenet and Her Sisters* (Leeds: Arc Humanities Press, 2020), open access: http://library.oapen.org/handle/20.500.12657/37333.

35 On this matter, see the recent wide-ranging studies in Tracy Chapman Hamilton and Mariah Proctor-Tiffany, eds., *Moving Women, Moving Objects, 300–1500* (Leiden: Brill, 2019). See also the monographs published separately by each of the editors: Tracy Chapman Hamilton, *Pleasure and Politics at the Court of France: The Artistic Patronage of Queen Marie of Brabant (1260–1321)* (Turnout: Brepols, 2019); Mariah Proctor-Tiffany, *Medieval Art in Motion: The Inventory and Gift Giving of Queen Clémence of Hongrie* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2019).

such, the pivotal importance of these alliances in the history of the Middle Ages must not be underestimated.[36]

Beyond surviving treasures and the written sources that make reference to artifacts and their owners, the present Treasury project opens new lines of research by investigating the imaging of luxury objects in manuscripts and frescos. These textual and visual re-creations brought to a much wider public the elite objects that would otherwise be restricted to the most exclusive of audiences. But what exactly was selected for detailed representation, and how do surviving pieces compare to their painted avatars? Such questions are being addressed by three art historians: Julie Harris, Shannon Wearing, and Jordi Camps. Harris will dig further into issues related to the Jewish presence in León-Castilla, tackling for the Treasury project certain "lost treasures" of Castile's Jews from the standpoint of art history and historiography. What is the evidence that storied objects such as the Hilleli Codex (copied in León ca. 1000) actually existed? And what of the engraved goblet said to be presented to King Alfonso X (r. 1252-1284) by the poet Todros Halevi Abulafia? The power in these objects and their hold as memory, invented or not, form part of Harris's current investigation. She is also addressing the Hebrew illuminated Bible in Iberia as an entity that should be situated on a continuum of Jewish thought, extending from rationalists like Maimonides (1138–1204), who wrote before any surviving example, to mystically inclined thinkers like Profiat Duran (ca. 1350-ca. 1415), who was active near the end of their production. It is this end stage that links in with the Treasury project, for the Bible was by then seen as possessing a power that was artifactual, almost talismanic, as indicated by the Hebrew word *Segulah* that can mean both treasure and remedy.[37] Works such as these were held up for remembrance through written narratives, while the objects under investigation by Wearing and Camps were visually recorded, or indeed invented. Wearing centers especially on manuscripts that make use of brilliant gold leaf—the very definition of "illuminated"—to highlight the luxurious metallic nature of carefully selected objects on the page. She interrogates the simulation of metallic preciousness on parchment as a way

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36   See the useful corrective offered by Katherine Weikert, "The Princesses Who Might Have Been Hostages: The Custody and Marriages of Margaret and Isabella of Scotland, 1209–1220s," in *Medieval Hostageship c. 700-c. 1500: Hostage, Captive, Prisoner of War, Guarantee, Peacemaker*, ed. Matthew Bennett and Katherine Weikert (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2019), 122–139.

37   In a parallel topic of research, Julie Harris's 2020 fellowship at the Clark Institute centered on the tension between ornament and meaning in the decorative carpet pages of Iberian Hebrew Bibles, especially their materiality and function.

to understand the deliberate tension between the pictorial and the material during the central Middle Ages.[38] Camps is continuing his investigations of the choices behind the depiction of treasured metalworks on altar frontals and in large-scale paintings on the walls of Romanesque churches, while also tackling the vexed issue of their display in modern museums.[39] The research lines of Harris, Wearing, and Camps bring to the current Treasury project fresh and interrelated ways of thinking about objects, whether legendary or real, in order to discern the inspirations behind their visual representations. Camps's work takes us up to the modern day, as does the research of Amanda Dotseth, who focuses on how collected treasures, then and now, tell stories that change according to the backdrop against which they are viewed.[40] Dotseth's emphasis on questions of ownership, collecting, and display puts the spotlight squarely on the shifting meanings and museographies of medieval works of art.[41]

The initial Treasury project demonstrated that collaboration among international scholars with a range of interdisciplinary methods and approaches—textual, visual, material, and technical—successfully opens new windows onto the past. An essential characteristic running through both phases of the project is the consolidation of a multidisciplinary team—experts in medieval art, archaeology, and the histories of Islam, Judaism, and Christianity—from universities, research centers, and museums in Italy, Germany, Spain, Switzerland, the UK, and US, in order to undertake innovative research as a collective. Although

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38   This line of thinking is laid out in Joseph Salvatore Ackley and Shannon L. Wearing, "Preciousness on Parchment: Metals, Materiality, and Pictoriality in Illuminated Manuscripts," in *Illuminating Metalwork: Metal, Object, and Image in Medieval Manuscripts*, ed. Joseph Salvatore Ackley and Shannon L. Wearing (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, in press 2021).

39   Recent publications by Jordi Camps include "Pintura mural románica en el Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya: actualidad y retos de una colección singular," in *Pintado en la pared: el muro como soporte visual en la Edad Media*, ed. Santiago Manzarbeitia Valle, Matilde Azcárate Luxán, and Irene González Hernando (Madrid: Ediciones Complutense, 2019), 439–459; Jordi Camps, Manuel Castiñeiras, John McNeill, and Richard Plant, eds., *Romanesque Patrons and Processes: Design and Instrumentality in the Art and Architecture of Romanesque Europe* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2018).

40   Amanda Dotseth, "Collecting San Isidoro de León: Art and National Narrative," in *Collecting Spain: Spanish Decorative Arts in Britain and Spain*, ed. Ana Cabrera Lafuente and Lesley E. Miller (Madrid: Polifemo, in press 2021).

41   Amanda Dotseth, ed., *Collective Display: Medieval Objects Out of Isolation* (Turnhout: Brepols, forthcoming 2021). On the matter of display, see also the admirable interactive exhibition, "Gegenstände des Transfers," especially for ways of understanding the movements of medieval ideas and objects across cultures, by Vera Beyer, Isabelle Dolezalek, and Sophia Vassilopoulou, eds., *Objects in Transfer: A Transcultural Exhibition Trail through the Museum für Islamische Kunst in Berlin* (Berlin: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, 2017); http://www.objects-in-transfer.sfb-episteme.de/#/.

multidisciplinarity and internationalization are rightly held up as research ideals by funding bodies, the practicalities of reaching such lofty goals are rarely given the same attention. To break through disciplinary barriers, it is necessary for scholars to work closely together, debating their ideas in order to weigh and appreciate the types of evidence brought to bear in other fields. For an international group to function as a true team, there must be repeated contact that facilitates discussion and allows scholars the necessary time first to learn from one another and then to apply the new knowledge to their own research.

Beyond reaching the larger community of scholars with the results of our research, the Treasury project aims to move further out into the consciousness of modern society, locating for an interested general public the Leonese collection within its broader historical framework and holding it up for comparison with other relevant sites.[42] On a local level, by producing serious, groundbreaking scholarship that centers on San Isidoro de León, the Treasury project shines a new light on the extraordinary medieval objects held especially by the Museo de San Isidoro in León and the Museo Arqueológico Nacional in Madrid. We are especially gratified to be able to give back to San Isidoro, offering the painstaking fruits of our scholarly labors at this important juncture in the institution's history when it is restructuring and expanding the royal-monastic space to accommodate greater display of the medieval objects. Finally, on the societal front, it is increasingly clear that the stories we tell about the past continue to have real consequences in the present, whether limiting or liberating. By shifting the direction of our gaze so that the many collaborations across faiths and the repeated examples of protagonism by women during the central Middle Ages are brought into clear focus, scholarly investigation can act as a corrective to modern misperceptions about medieval religion and gender, contributing to a changed scope for attitudes and behavior in the present.[43]

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42 To that end, various members of the Treasury project have given interviews to print, radio, and television media in León and Madrid; see for example *Diario de León*, 10 June 2019, https://www.diariodeleon.es/articulo/cultura/joyas-san-isidoro-conquista-europa/20190610040001898301.html.

43 Scholars like Karen Dempsey (National University of Ireland, Galway) offer an admirable model by engaging with virtual audiences on social media like Reddit—with its largely young male demographic—to answer questions about the archaeology of the Middle Ages, especially concerning the roles played by women in medieval castles: https://www.reddit.com/r/AskHistorians/comments/cb25bw/iama_archaeologist_who_specialises_in_medieval/. For her scholarly publications, see recently Karen Dempsey, "Gender and Medieval Archaeology: Storming the Castle," *Antiquity* 93/369 (2019): 772–788, open access: https://doi.org/10.15184/aqy.2019.13; Karen Dempsey, Roberta Gilchrist, Jeremy Ashbee, Stefan Sagrott, and Samantha Stones, "Beyond the Martial Façade: Gender, Heritage and Medieval Castles," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 26/4 (2020): 352-369, open access: https://doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2019.1636119

In sum, the medieval treasury at San Isidoro offers so much more to contemporary society than a static storehouse of luxury items retired from liturgical use and now displayed as a museum collection. This assemblage provides unexpected answers to a broad gamut of questions concerning the lives of medieval artifacts and people, with fruitful teamwork opening exciting new avenues for understanding the past as well as the present. In tracing its itineraries, both Treasury projects seek to tell a tale about the material and metaphorical qualities of historical artifacts, and in so doing to locate the cultures of Iberia within vibrant networks of far-flung connections. Our research sheds a bright light on the complicated provenance of medieval objects whose value was – and still is – enhanced once the disparate pieces are seen together. It is only through juxtaposition that the artworks' active voice can be heard, contributing to a dynamic conversation about belief systems, aspirational owners, gender roles, and changing power structures. In highlighting the paths far beyond Iberia that were taken by people and their objects in the shaping of San Isidoro's treasury, both research projects render visible medieval engagements with materiality in multiple ways. These included the acquisition of prized raw materials such as ivory or rock crystal, but also the cultivation of plants and animals from which fabrics and pigments were fashioned. The dialogue created by these artifacts speaks of the movements of component parts that bridged long distances across water and over land, after which the individual elements were integrated into precious items at various workshops before moving, again and again, until the objects and textiles finally came to rest in church treasuries. Transferred through routes of manufacture, commerce, war, diplomacy, and marriage, such artifacts were bought, stolen, repurposed, donated, and displayed at an owner's behest, acting as visible representations of status and ambitions, both in the medieval past and now. By visualizing the itineraries of artifacts from the central Middle Ages, we are reminded that the past was a time and place inhabited by real, interconnected women and men of differing social levels, religious affiliations, and global geographies, and that processes of the sort that led to the making of a treasury like San Isidoro's are still in full force today.

Completed on 26 April 2020
the feastday of San Isidoro
in Annandale, Virginia
while under quarantine
in the time of COVID-19.

Caskets of Silver and Ivory from Diverse Parts of the World: Strategic Collecting for an Iberian Treasury

Therese Martin

Abstract

By focusing on San Isidoro de León in the central Middle Ages, this study investigates the multiple meanings behind the presence of objects from other cultures in a royal-monastic treasury, suggesting a reconsideration of the paths by which such pieces arrived. The development of the Isidoran collection is reexamined through a close analysis of a charter recording the 1063 donation together with early thirteenth-century writings by Lucas of Tuy. Documentary evidence is further weighed against visual analysis and technical studies of several key pieces from the medieval collection. In particular, the Beatitudes Casket (now at the Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Madrid) is singled out to demonstrate how art historical, epigraphic, and historical research come together with carbon-14 testing, revealing that the object was assembled in a very different moment from those traditionally assumed.

Keywords

1   Introduction

The treasury at San Isidoro de León, with its remarkable range of high-quality objects and its various written sources, functions in the present study as a point of departure to examine larger questions about the evolution of sumptuary collections through networks of contact within and beyond Iberia during the central Middle Ages.[1] In particular, this study presents a test case for reading

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evidence over time, weighing the sometimes contradictory conclusions from documentary or visual sources against scientific analysis. It further addresses the geographically charged nature of objects and it identifies elite women as vectors of cultural exchange through their multiple roles as "makers of art."[2]

I argue that the creation of a medieval treasury offers a material witness through which the interests and aspirations of those who established it are revealed. They represent "progressive accumulated histories," in the felicitous phrasing of Cecily Hilsdale.[3] As is well established, luxury objects with great intrinsic value became even more prized by Christian owners, once turned to a sacred use. Beyond pious donations to a favored foundation, however, treasuries could also function as a source of gifts for allies, which bound them with reciprocal obligations, or as prestigious possessions for the owner's ostentation before an elite audience.[4] Pieces made of precious metals also served to store wealth in the form of silver and gold until the need for liquidity arose. Chronicles, charters, and hagiographies recount the changing circumstances of golden caskets, precious gems, and silk textiles, making clear the importance of material culture not only for elite self-presentation, but also for the economy of the powerful.

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2   "Makers" refers to women's multiple roles as "patrons and facilitators, producers and artists, owners and recipients;" see Therese Martin, "Exceptions and Assumptions: Women in Medieval Art History," in *Reassessing the Roles of Women as "Makers" of Medieval Art and Architecture*, ed. Therese Martin (Leiden: Brill, 2012), I:1–33, esp. 5.

3   Personal communication, March 2018. Along these lines, see recently Cecily Hilsdale, "*Translatio* and Objecthood: The Cultural Agendas of Two Greek Manuscripts at Saint-Denis," *Gesta* 56/2 (2017): 151–178.

4   Two useful essays on this topic appear in Conrad Rudolph, ed., *A Companion to Medieval Art: Romanesque and Gothic in Northern Europe* (Malden, MA and Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006): Pierre Alain Mariaux, "Collecting (and Display)," 213–232, and Brigitte Buettner, "Toward a Historiography of the Sumptuous Arts," 466–487.

Medieval treasures from the Iberian Peninsula are little known outside a specialized audience nor do they often survive in situ. For other lands, there is an extensive bibliography on the medieval treasures of France, Germany, Italy, and England.[5] The royal treasury of Saint-Denis outside Paris, for example, was able to be recreated for an exhibition based on the engravings that had been made before the dispersal of the pieces during the French Revolution.[6] Iberian collections prior to the late Middle Ages, however, have not received the same level of scholarly attention.[7] Yet the rich survivals from a royal treasury like San Isidoro de León[8] offer a most uncommon set of circumstances

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5 On the topic of treasures outside the Iberian Peninsula, excellent work has been done in recent years by Pierre Alain Mariaux, "Trésor et collection. Le sort des 'curiosités naturelles' dans les trésors d'église au Moyen Âge," in *Le trésor au Moyen Âge. Questions et perspectives de recherche* (Neuchâtel: Institut d'Histoire de l'art et de Muséologie, 2005), 27–56; Lucas Burkart et al., eds., *Le trésor au Moyen Âge. Discours, pratiques et objets* (Micrologus' Library, 32) (Florence: Edizioni del Galluzzo), 2010; Cynthia Hahn, "Relics and Reliquaries: The Construction of Imperial Memory and Meaning, with Particular Attention to Treasuries at Conques, Aachen, and Quedlinburg," in *Representing History, 900–1300: Art, Music, and History*, ed. Robert Maxwell (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), 133–147, 235–238; Ulrike Wendland, ed., "*… das Heilige sichtbar machen." Domschätze in Vergangenheit, Gegenwart und Zukunft* (Regensburg: Schnell & Steiner, 2010); Joseph Salvatore Ackley, "Re-approaching the Western Medieval Church Treasury Inventory, c. 800–1250," *Journal of Art Historiography* 11 (2014): 1–37.

6 *Le trésor de Saint-Denis: Musée du Louvre, Paris, 12 mars–17 juin 1991*, ed. Danielle Gaborit-Chopin (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale; Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1991), drawing on Michel Félibien, *Histoire de l'abbaye royale de Saint-Denys en France …* (Paris: Leonard, 1706). The fundamental study of the treasury is Blaise de Montesquiou-Fezensac, *Le trésor de Saint-Denis*, 3 vols. (Paris: Picard, 1973–77). For the early modern inventory, see Erik Inglis, "Expertise, Artifacts, and Time in the 1534 Inventory of the St-Denis Treasury," *Art Bulletin* 98/1 (2016): 14–42.

7 Scholarly focus for the early and central Middle Ages tends to be on selected sumptuary goods rather than on treasures. See the studies in *Splendor. Artes suntuarias en la Edad Media hispánica,* ed. Laura Rodríguez Peinado, *Anales de Historia del Arte*, no. esp. 24 (2014), especially the introductory essay by Francisco de Asís García García, "Una nueva mirada al arte suntuario medieval hispánico," 17–26. See also Joan Duran-Porta, "L'orfebreria romànica a Catalunya (950–1250)," PhD diss., Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 2015.

8 Julio Pérez Llamazares, *El tesoro de la Real Colegiata de San Isidoro de León* (*reliquias, relicarios y joyas artísticas*) (León: Imprenta y Librería Religiosa, 1925). Ángela Franco Mata carried out pioneering work on the treasury of San Isidoro; see especially, "El tesoro de San Isidoro y la monarquía leonesa," *Boletín del Museo Arqueológico Nacional* 9 (1991): 35–68, and more recently, "Tesoros de Oviedo y León. Problemas estilísticos, liturgia e iconografía," *Boletín del Museo Arqueológico Nacional* 27–28 (2009–2010): 51–118. See also Etelvina Fernández González, "Imagen, devoción y suntuosidad en las aportaciones de Fernando I y Sancha al tesoro de San Isidoro de León," in *Monasterios y monarcas: fundación, presencia y memoria regia en monasterios hispanos*, ed. José Ángel García de Cortázar and Ramón Teja (Aguilar de Campoo: Centro de Estudios del Románico, 2012), 161–197.

for collaborative research, filling a gap left by the lack of early modern visual evidence for Spanish treasuries of the type available for other significant collections. At San Isidoro, the material reality of ivories, textiles, and metalwork can only be fully comprehended if they are analyzed in tandem with the documents, chronicles, and miracles that make reference to treasured items: all must be scrutinized together and their value as evidence weighed one against the other. Such a range of evidence demands rigorous attention and close collaboration by specialists from different areas of study. By digging deeply into one major Iberian treasury, our findings shine a new light on the larger matter of royal-ecclesiastical holdings, demonstrating that, across this broadly medieval phenomenon, material priorities can be identified in collections beyond the oft-cited examples of Saint-Denis or the Guelph treasure.[9] As a whole, this volume, dedicated to *The Medieval Iberian Treasury in the Context of Cultural Interchange*, offers a way into the meaningful re-use and repurposing of luxury goods, both within and across medieval cultures.

At the heart of the research project that gave rise to this volume are the works that were once gathered together at the treasury of San Isidoro de León.[10] No complete catalogue has ever been published of the thirty-some pieces, created between the late tenth century and the turn of the thirteenth, that are still in situ in the Museo de la Real Colegiata de San Isidoro—many of which are all but unstudied—much less one that includes the six pieces at the Museo Arqueológico Nacional in Madrid, plus another half dozen works held by museums in Paris, St. Petersburg, and New York, among others; this task will be undertaken by my research group in the coming years as our investigations continue. For the San Isidoro treasury during the central Middle Ages, I use

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9   On the Guelph treasure, see *Der Welfenschatz: der Reliquienschatz des Braunschweiger Domes aus dem Besitze des herzoglichen Hauses Braunschweig-Lüneburg*, ed. Otto von Falke, Robert Schmidt, and Georg Swarzenski (Frankfurt am Main: Frankfurter Verlagsanstalt, 1930); Dietrich Kötzsche, "Der Welfenschatz," in *Heinrich der Löwe und seine Zeit: Herrschaft und Repräsentation der Welfen 1125–1235*, 3 vols., ed. Jochen Luckhardt and Frank Niehoff (Munich: Hirmer Verlag, 1995), 2:511–528; *Der Welfenschatz und sein Umkreis*, ed. Joachim Ehlers and Dietrich Kötzsche (Mainz am Rhein: von Zabern, 1998).

10   Deep gratitude is owed to the staff of the Museo de la Real Colegiata de San Isidoro de León under the direction of Luis García Gutiérrez and Raquel Jaén, and to the Museo Arqueológico Nacional, particularly to Sergio Vidal, head of the medieval department, along with Isabel Arias. Both institutions generously facilitated first-hand access, allowing team members to examine and photograph the objects and to carry out technical analyses over the course of several campaigns, without which this research project would have been impossible. I am also grateful to the Museo de León, Museo de la Catedral de León, Museo de la Catedral de Astorga, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum, and Glencairn Museum.

the word 'collection' consciously, if cautiously, arguing that it is not primarily a random accumulation of precious objects, but instead that many of the pieces reflect a mind (or minds) at work, deliberately bringing together works from distant lands. This study, therefore, investigates the meanings behind the presence in a Leonese treasury of artifacts from other cultures, suggesting a reconsideration of the paths by which they arrived, marriage among them. The prominent place of women in the development of this collection is reexamined as I scrutinize the charter recording the 1063 donation by the rulers of León-Castilla, Fernando (r. 1037–1065) and Sancha (d. 1067), together with the early thirteenth-century writings by Lucas of Tuy. Finally, I single out for close analysis one key work to represent the larger investigation currently underway, showing how art historical, epigraphic, and historical research come together with technical analysis to reveal that the Beatitudes Casket was assembled at a moment far in time from those traditionally assumed. This object exemplifies how medieval works of art, and thus treasuries writ large, change over time to accommodate the shifting needs of their owners. By subjecting a representative piece to close visual and documentary analysis in light of technical findings, the present study tells the larger story of medieval treasuries, showing how objects themselves serve as evidence alongside—and sometimes in opposition to—archival sources.

2   Objects from Distant Lands

If San Isidoro's treasury is known to scholars outside specialist circles, it is for the plethora of sumptuous ivory pieces from a range of origins and for the uncommonly diverse nature of its collection, including Andalusi and Fatimid metalworks, silks from Byzantium and farther east, caskets newly made in Limoges or of unknown provenance, others repurposed, and much more.[11] Among them, and unique in the Iberian Peninsula, is a small antler container of Scandinavian manufacture (Figures 2.1a, 2.1b; no. IIC-3-089-002-0009). According to James Graham-Campbell, it can be dated on stylistic grounds between the 960s and ca. 1000/1025 (Mammen style).[12] The original function

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11   A number of objects from San Isidoro's treasury figure prominently in three major exhibition catalogues: Jerrilynn D. Dodds, ed., *Al-Andalus, The Art of Islamic Spain* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1992); *The Art of Medieval Spain, AD 500–1200* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1993); Isidro Bango Torviso, ed., *Maravillas de la España medieval. Tesoro sagrado y monarquía* (Valladolid: Junta de Castilla y León, 2001).

12   James Graham-Campbell, *Viking Art* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2013), 114–115. As the author rightly points out, this object should be displayed and photographed with the

FIGURES 2.1A, B Scandinavian container for perfume (?), antler, Mammen style, ca. 960–1000/
1025 [NB: the projecting element represents the bird's head, but the object is
displayed upside down for reasons of stability; ring included for scale] (Museo
de la Real Colegiata de San Isidoro de León, Inv. No. IIC-3-089-002-0009). See
also Figs. 9.2, 9.5, 9.6.
PHOTOS: THERESE MARTIN

of this object is not known. Because its pierced design was thought to offer a view of its contents, most scholars assume that it was originally used as a reliquary, which was indeed its later function at San Isidoro. First-hand access to the diminutive piece, however, makes it clear that the openings worked into the intertwined design of bird and snakes are too small to allow for sight. However, what the holes would have permitted to pass through are scents. I suggest that this tiny container, only 4.4 cm high, was designed with an expensive solid perfume in mind. When held in the hand, where it fits comfortably, the antler would have warmed to the touch and released more odor.[13] A similar function has been recognized for the ivories associated with the caliphal court in late tenth-century Córdoba.[14] Exquisitely carved, the Scandinavian object in León gives evidence of elite, long-distance contacts, likely through gift or trade.[15]

Non-adversarial avenues of acquisition for objects from other cultures are rarely taken as a starting point in the study of works of Islamic manufacture that end up in Christian settings. Rather, scholarship has tended to give more attention to ideas of conquest and appropriation, of one religion's dominance over the other. No doubt that sense must have existed for certain objects in specific circumstances, but perhaps not as frequently as we assume, especially given the extensive system of commerce throughout the Mediterranean and beyond. In two fundamental articles published in 1995, Julie Harris says of Islamic works in Christian hands that "it is nearly certain that such pieces

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protruding element—a bird's head—at the top. Instead, the larger end is used as a base to contribute to the piece's stability and safekeeping. A recent master's thesis finds connections as well to the Ringerike style (ca. 1000–ca. 1050); see Rebeca Franco Valle, "Viking Art in the Church: A Scandinavian Casket in San Isidoro de León, Spain," unpublished MPhil thesis, University of Oslo, 2016. My thanks go to the author for sending me a copy of her work.

13   In a May 2017 personal communication, Nancy Wicker agreed with my suggestion that the container was likely designed to hold a solid perfume; I am grateful to her for discussing this piece with me. See Nancy L. Wicker, "The Scandinavian Container at San Isidoro, León, in the Context of Viking Art and Society," *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* 11/2 (2019): 135–156, republished in the present volume. On the choice of permeable materials like ivory to hold incense and perfumes, see especially Lawrence Nees, "L'odorat fait-il sens? Quelque réflexions autour de l'encens de l'Antiquité tardive au haut Moyen Âge," *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale* 55 (2012): 451–471.

14   On this matter, see recently Olga Bush, "Poetic Inscriptions and Gift Exchange in the Medieval Islamicate World," *Gesta* 56/2 (2017): 179–197.

15   For the larger context of contacts, especially bellicose, between Scandinavia and Iberia, see Ann Christys, *Vikings in the South: Voyages to Iberia and the Mediterranean* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015).

were acquired as Reconquest booty,"[16] while Avinoam Shalem tells us that they are "perhaps best understood as trophies of war."[17] Although this triumphalist interpretation holds true for some pieces, it should not be seen as representative for the whole. Rather, I second the approach taken recently by Mariam Rosser-Owen, who proposes "alternative modes of transfer between the cultures."[18] In discussing the well-documented sack of the Fatimid treasury in late eleventh-century Cairo, Rosser-Owen makes a chronological point of particular relevance to San Isidoro and the founding of its treasury by Fernando and Sancha. She underscores that the looting of Fatimid objects occurred around 1069, which means that the silver niello casket bearing the name Sadaqa ibn Yusuf was unlikely to have made its way to León via al-Andalus until some time after that moment (Figure 2.2; no. IIC-3-089-002-0014).[19] If, as most scholars presume, the metalwork object left Egypt through this act of spoliation, it could neither have been part of the 1063 donation, around which the entire historiography of the Isidoran treasury has revolved (a thorny question I parse out in detail below), nor would the box have reached its destination until after the deaths of the treasury's founders: Fernando in 1065 and Sancha two years later. The Fatimid casket at San Isidoro must therefore be associated with one of their descendants rather than with the moment of foundation.

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16   Julie Harris, "Muslim Ivories in Christian Hands: The Leire Casket in Context," *Art History* 18/2 (1995): 213–221, esp. 213.

17   As stated in the opening sentence of Avinoam Shalem, "From Royal Caskets to Relic Containers: Two Ivory Caskets from Burgos and Madrid," *Muqarnas* 12 (1995): 24–38. Shalem also makes an un-cited reference to "luxury ivory caskets which were looted by Christians from the royal palaces in the main capitals of the Islamic kingdoms of Spain" (p. 25). In fact, it is not possible to trace definitively to looting any existing ivory casket from its original Islamic setting to its later Christian holding. See also Shalem, *Islam Christianized: Islamic Portable Objects in the Medieval Church Treasuries of the Latin West* (Frankfurt-am-Main: Peter Lang, 1996); Shalem, "Islamische Objekte in Kirchenschätzen der lateinischen Christenheit: Ästhetische Stufen des Umgangs mit dem Anderen und dem Hybriden," in *Das Bistum Bamberg in der Welt des Mittelalters*, ed. Christine and Klaus van Eickels (Bamberg: University of Bamberg Press, 2007), 163–176.

18   Mariam Rosser-Owen, "Islamic Objects in Christian Contexts: Relic Translation and Modes of Transfer in Medieval Iberia," *Art in Translation* 7/1 (2015): 39–64, esp. 48.

19   The box itself can be dated indirectly to 1044–1047, the years during which the inscription's dedicatee oversaw the treasury as vizier to the Fatimid caliph. See Stefano Carboni, "Casket," in *The Art of Medieval Spain, AD 500–1200*, exh. cat. (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1993), 99–100. For the ransacking of the Fatimid treasury, the date 1067–1068—equally too late for the 1063 donation to San Isidoro—is given by Richard Ettinghausen, Oleg Grabar, and Marilyn Jenkins, *Islamic Art and Architecture 650–1250* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 200.

FIGURE 2.2   Silver Fatimid casket, 1044–1047? (Museo de la Real Colegiata de San Isidoro de León, Inv. No. IIC-3-089-002-0014).
PHOTO: THERESE MARTIN

War booty, despite its relevance for given pieces and its emphasis in medieval chronicles,[20] is no longer the default position to explain the presence of foreign objects in Iberian treasuries. Long-distance commercial interchange, and in particular the importance of ivory trade networks across the Islamic lands, sub-Saharan Africa, and southern Italy has been fruitfully studied by Sarah Guérin.[21] Further, Eva Hoffman's concept of "the shared vocabulary of luxury" has proven a particularly instructive model to explain the larger phenomenon from both Islamic and Christian perspectives.[22] The aptness of such an approach can be seen clearly in treasuries like the one at San Isidoro, in which a

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20   See the contribution to this volume by Ana Rodríguez.

21   Sarah M. Guérin, "Forgotten Routes? Italy, Ifrıqiya and the Trans-Saharan Ivory Trade," *Al-Masaq* 25/1 (2013): 70–91. For the Iberian Peninsula, see Manuel Casamar and Fernando Valdés, "Saqueo o comercio: la difusión del arte Fatimí en la Península Ibérica," *Codex Aquilarensis* 14 (1999): 133–160.

22   Eva Hoffman, "Pathways of Portability: Islamic and Christian Interchange from the Tenth to the Twelfth Century," *Art History* 24 (2001): 17–50, esp. 26; Hoffman, "Translation in Ivory: Interactions across Cultures and Media in the Mediterranean during the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries," in *Siculo-Arabic Ivories and Islamic Painting 1100–1300.*

Fatimid box shared space with a diminutive Scandinavian container, a Limoges reliquary, and other geographically distinct works, including a multitude of locally produced ivories, as we shall see below. Such scholarly approaches encourage a conceptual shift away from the focus on religious triumphalism and toward a recognition of the geographic resonance of objects. At San Isidoro, the presumed royal and ecclesiastical audience for these precious containers would have appreciated the prestige inherent in the luxury materials as well as in the objects' origination in distant lands. Such ideas play out as well in the study in this volume by Pamela Patton, where the eyes of the sophisticated Leonese viewers are trained on painted imagery.[23]

Kinship across the cultures as a mode of object transfer is another fresh tack taken by Glaire Anderson, who reads the making of the San Millán cross in the caliphal ivory workshops as a result of the family relationship between Queen Toda of Navarra (fl. 928–959) and her nephew the caliph ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III (d. 961).[24] Juan Carlos Ruiz Souza adduces other forms of gift exchange among rulers in medieval Iberia,[25] and the studies centering on cross-cultural uses of textiles by María Judith Feliciano are particularly illuminating in this area.[26] Additional attention should be drawn to a relatively underappreciated alternative mode of object transfer, a subset of the well-studied diplomatic gift exchange:[27] marriage as a significant conduit for the long-distance, and at times cross-cultural, movement of luxury items. In marriage, elite women themselves embody exchange, and they both cement and personify alliances as they cross from natal lands to new places.[28] There they are assimilated into

      Proceedings of the International Conference, Berlin, 6–8 July 2007. Römisches Jahrbuch der Bibliotheca Hertziana, vol. XXXVI, ed. D. Knipp (Munich: Hirmer Verlag, 2011), 100–119.

23   Pamela A. Patton, "Demons and Diversity in León."

24   Glaire D. Anderson, "Sign of the Cross: Contexts for the Ivory Cross of San Millán de la Cogolla," *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* 6/1 (2014): 15–41.

25   Juan Carlos Ruiz Souza, "Botín de guerra y tesoro sagrado," in *Maravillas de la España medieval. Tesoro sagrado y monarquía*, ed. Isidro Bango Torviso (Valladolid: Junta de Castilla y León, 2001), 1:31–39.

26   María Judith Feliciano, "Muslim Shrouds for Christian Kings? A Reassessment of Andalusi Textiles in Thirteenth-Century Castilian Life and Ritual," in *Under the Influence: Questioning the Comparative in Medieval Castile*, ed. Cynthia Robinson and Leyla Rouhi (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 101–131; Feliciano, "Medieval Textiles in Iberia: Studies for a New Approach," in *Envisioning Islamic Art and Architecture: Essays in Honor of Renata Holod*, ed. David J. Roxburgh (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 46–65.

27   For an admirably concise assessment of the complex issues involved in gift exchange, see Cecily Hilsdale, "Gift," *Medieval Art History Today, Critical Terms*, ed. Nina Rowe, special issue, *Studies in Iconography* 33 (2012): 171–182.

28   See, for example, Jitske Jasperse, "Matilda, Leonor and Joanna: The Plantagenet Sisters and the Display of Dynastic Connections through Material Culture," *Journal of Medieval*

their husbands' lines while bringing something of their own along: traditions, languages, names, and even kin, as well as objects. Through their marriages, elite women became the key contact points in political-cultural networks. The Eleanor Vase,[29] discussed by Ana Rodríguez in her contribution to this volume, is among the best-known of examples, but as the author further points out, Constanza (d. 1160), the daughter of Alfonso VII of León-Castilla, who was Eleanor's successor as wife of Louis VII of France, is also said to have brought a marriage gift from Islamic Iberia to her husband.[30] Neither Eleanor's gift nor Constanza's was unique; rather, both are representative of the widespread movement of medieval objects from one land to another in which women played key roles.

At the treasury of San Isidoro, we have a heretofore unrecognized example of the acquisition of luxury goods from distant lands through marriage. A set of three Sicilian ivory boxes, whose presence in León has never been explained, are best understood in light of the marriage in 1117 of the infanta Elvira (d. 1135; daughter of Alfonso VI) to Roger II of Sicily (r. as count 1112–1130, as king 1130–1154). According to Silvia Armando, this type of cylindrical container with painted decoration fits neatly into the context of the 1120s, in which high-quality sets of ivories were produced and exported from Sicily and southern Italy (Figure 2.3; nos. IIC-3-089-002-0011, -0012, -0013).[31] These ivory boxes were designed for elite purposes, both lay and ecclesiastic, as containers for a ruler's riches or for sacred remains. The three pyxides in León offer material evidence for the otherwise unattested negotiations that must have taken place between

History 43/5 (2017): 523–547; Tracy Chapman Hamilton and Mariah Proctor-Tiffany, eds., *Moving Women, Moving Objects, 300–1500* (Leiden: Brill, 2019).

29   George T. Beech, "The Eleanor of Aquitaine Vase, William IX of Aquitaine, and Muslim Spain," *Gesta* 32 (1993): 3–10; Beech, "The Eleanor of Aquitaine Vase," in *Eleanor of Aquitaine. Lord and Lady,* ed. Bonnie Wheeler and John Carmi Parsons (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 369–373.

30   "Like the gem of Zafadola, the Fatimid rock crystal jug of Mitadolus ended up in the treasury of the great Parisian abbey of Saint Denis, both presented by King Louis VII of France after receiving them from his two wives: the vase from the first, Eleanor, the gem from the second, Constanza." See Chpt. 3, Ana Rodríguez, "Narrating the Treasury: What Medieval Iberian Chronicles Choose to Recount about Luxury Objects."

31   Silvia Armando, "Caskets Inside Out. Revisiting the Classification of 'Siculo-Arabic' Ivories," *Journal of Transcultural Medieval Studies* 4/1–2 (2017): 51–145. For a detailed assessment of dating issues, see Armando, "Avori 'arabo-siculi' nel Mediterraneo medievale," PhD diss., Università degli Studi della Tuscia, Viterbo, 2012, 1:60–63. The author currently has a study underway addressing Elvira and the Palermo-León connection; I am grateful to her for our fruitful discussions on this matter. See also Noelia Silva Santa-Cruz, "The Siculo-Arabic Ivories and Their Spreading to al-Andalus," *Journal of Transcultural Medieval Studies* 4/1–2 (2017): 147–190.

FIGURE 2.3   Sicilian ivory set, 1120s? (Museo de la Real Colegiata de San Isidoro de León,
Inv. Nos. IIC-3-089-002-0011, 0012, 0013).
PHOTO: THERESE MARTIN

the count of Sicily and Queen Urraca of León-Castilla (r. 1109–1126), which
resulted in the alliance that sent her half-sister to Palermo.[32] Elvira bore five
sons and a daughter before she died in 1135, having been raised to the status
of queen five years earlier when Roger was crowned king in 1130. Although we

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32   Elvira and Urraca were daughters of Alfonso VI (r. 1065–1109). Urraca was his eldest child,
      born ca. 1080 to his second wife, Constanza of Burgundy (d. 1093). Elvira was born ca. 1103,
      the second daughter of Alfonso's fifth consort, Isabel (d. 1107). In 1116, Elvira and her full
      sister Sancha confirmed a donation to the cathedral of León as *Sancia et Geloira eius-
      dem regine sororibus, domum Sancti Pelagii regentibus*, indicating that they ruled over the
      infantazgo at that time. For Elvira and Sancha, see José María Fernández Catón, *Colección
      documental del archivo de la Catedral de León (775–1230)* (León: Centro de Estudios e
      Investigación San Isidoro, 1990), 5:52–56; María Encarnación Martín López, *Patrimonio
      cultural de San Isidoro de León: Documentos de los siglos X–XIII* (León: Universidad de
      León, 1995), 38–39; Carlos Reglero de la Fuente, "*Omnia totius regni sui monasteria:* la
      Historia Legionense, llamada Silense y los monasterios de las infantas," *e-Spania* 14/Dec.
      2012; DOI: 10.4000/e-spania.21775.

cannot know exactly when the Sicilian ivories arrived at San Isidoro, it is most likely to have occurred during Elvira's lifetime, either related to her marriage or as a gift she sent back to León. These ivory pyxides are themselves a visual source that fills a silence in the written register and, further, they speak to the movement of elite women as vectors of medieval culture. They are also crucial for understanding the evolution of the treasury at San Isidoro.

Although some of the objects from the Isidoran treasury have received sustained scholarly attention, others are all but unknown outside León; moreover, works of Islamic or Christian manufacture have been addressed primarily in studies that separate the pieces by the origin of production. But the common factor that unifies all research on the various pieces in the treasury is their attribution to a great donation by the monarchs who ruled over León-Castilla in the mid-eleventh century, Fernando and Sancha. And while it is indeed likely that the initial creation of the treasury stemmed from the impetus of this ambitious couple, both written and visual sources offer evidence for the continued growth of the treasury after their deaths, as shown by the chronologies of the Fatimid box and the Sicilian ivories. It is essential, therefore, to reassess the chronology of the treasury's initial foundation in order to weigh the significance of its later elaboration.

3   A Closer Look at the 1063 Donation

In 1063, the relics of the confessor Isidore (d. 636) were translated from Sevilla to the capital of the kingdom of León-Castilla. An account contemporary with Isidore's translation provides the basic information about the Visigothic saint's installation in León.[33] The remains were deposited with great pomp in a ceremony of re-consecration at the royal monastic church and palatine chapel dedicated to John the Baptist, which had been built around 1055 by Fernando and Sancha.[34] San Juan Bautista was the male half of a mixed community, whose female religious members were under the advocation of the Iberian

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33   José Carlos Martín, "La Translatio S. Isidori Legionem Anno 1063 (BHL 4488): Introducción, estudio y edición crítica," *Exemplaria Classica. Journal of Classical Philology* 15 (2011): 225–253. See also Patrick Henriet, "Un exemple de religiosité politique: saint Isidore et les rois de León (XIe–XIIIe siècles)," in *Fonctions sociales et politiques du culte des saints dans les sociétés de rite grec et latin au Moyen Âge et à l'époque moderne: approche comparative*, ed. Marek Derwick and Mikhail Vladimirovich Dmitriev (Wroclaw: Larhcor, 1999), 75–95.

34   On the history of the monastery in the eleventh century, see Therese Martin, *Queen as King: Politics and Architectural Propaganda in Twelfth-Century Spain* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 30–61.

martyr Pelayo (d. 925), a comely youth who died in Córdoba after rejecting the advances of the ruler ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III.[35] Of the mid-eleventh-century church that received Isidore's bones, two partial walls still stand, incorporated into the later Romanesque construction; the complete foundations of Fernando and Sancha's church are known through the work of John Williams.[36]

A second documentary source, *purporting* to date from the same moment and detailing a grand donation of luxury goods and extensive lands, tells us that 1063 was also the occasion for the rich endowment of the church by the ruling couple.[37] The charter, much loved by art historians for its remarkably detailed character, has been used to associate the entirety of the treasury at San Isidoro with this single moment in time. Such a position, however, is complicated by the existence of multiple objects from the twelfth century. Beyond the pieces that post-date 1063, the date of the charter itself has long been recognized as problematic and, in 2007, the paleographer Encarnación Martín López demonstrated for it a definitive twelfth-century date: the document was written in a hand imitating Visigothic script by someone who normally uses Caroline.[38] Rather than a forgery in the modern sense of the word, she analyzes the document as a sort of mini-cartulary, in which three or more possibly original charters have been merged together to create a maxi-donation. This understanding of the document as a later compilation serves as a cautionary tale for our investigation of the treasury; it also changes the way we think about the multiple layers of history at a treasury and prompts us to consider possible motivations for royal donations and the narratives that arise around them.

The "1063 charter" opens with a first-person declaration by Fernando and Sancha, in which it is stated that they

> have arranged the translation of Saint Isidore's body by the hands of bishops and priests from the metropolitan church of Sevilla to the church of Saint John the Baptist, within the walls of our city, León. We offer,

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35   See Jeffrey A. Bowman, "Beauty and Passion in Tenth–Century Córdoba," in *The Boswell Thesis: Essays on Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*, ed. Mathew Kuefler (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 236–253.

36   See especially John Williams, "San Isidoro Exposed: The Vicissitudes of Research in Romanesque Art," *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* 3/1 (2011): 93–116.

37   Archivo de San Isidoro de León, no. 125.

38   María Encarnación Martín López, "Un documento de Fernando I de 1063: ¿Falso diplomático?" in *Monarquía y sociedad en el reino de León. De Alfonso III a Alfonso VII*, II, Fuentes y Estudios de Historia Leonesa 118 (León: Centro de Estudios e Investigación San Isidoro, 2007), 513–540. She argues that that the parchment's large size, layout, abbreviations, and angularity of letters all indicate a twelfth-century hand.

therefore, in the presence of bishops and many men of religion who have come from different regions, motivated by the desire to honor devotedly such great solemnity, to the aforementioned place of Saint John the Baptist and Saint Isidore, these altar ornaments.[39]

What follows is a verbal display[40] of magnificent goods that helps to imagine how the visual display would once have made the stone church of San Isidoro shine with metalworks, silks, and ivories.

A pure gold altar frontal of fine manufacture with emeralds, sapphires, and all manner of precious stones and enamel (glass/crystal? *olouitreis*);
similarly, three other silver frontals, one for each altar;
three golden crowns: one with six alphas around it,
another with pearls hanging within,
and another golden one with pearls (amethysts? *annemates*) and enamels:
in fact, the third one is the golden diadem from my own head;
a small crystal casket covered in gold,
a golden cross studded with precious stones and enamels,
and another in ivory with the figure of our crucified redeemer,
two golden thuribles with their incense holders also of gold,
and another cast silver censer of great weight,
and a chalice and paten made of gold and enamels.
Golden stoles with luxury silver fabric (*amocerce*)[41] worked in gold,
and also a luxury silver fabric with enamel/crystal appliqué (*olouitrea*).
An ivory casket worked with gold,
and two more ivory caskets decorated with silver:

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39   Martín López, "Un documento de Fernando I," 536. "fecimus translatari corpus beati Hysidori de metropolitana Hispali per manus episcoporum siue sacerdotum intra muros Legionis ciuitatis nostre in ecclesia Sancti Iohannis Babtiste. Offerimus igitur in presencia episcoporum nec non multorum uirorum religiosorum, qui ex diuersis partibus aduocati ad ho [sic] honorem [sic] tante sollempnitatis deuote uenerunt, eidem Sancti Iohanni Babtiste et beato Ysidoro in predicto loco ornamenta altariorum …" I am very grateful to Eduardo Fernández Guerrero for providing a new translation of this document, and to Kenneth Baxter Wolf and Hannah Thomson for helping me to hone the wording.

40   On the reading aloud of documents like the "1063 charter," see Liam Moore, "By Hand and Voice: Performance of Royal Charters in Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century León," *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* 5/1 (2013): 18–32.

41   For translations of the different terms used for textiles in the 1063 donation, see Chpts. 4 and 5 by Ana Cabrera and María Judith Feliciano in the present volume.

inside one of these are three small caskets of the same material.
And diptychs carved in ivory.
Three altar frontals with gold embroidery,
a large brocaded temple veil together with two smaller ones with
    ermine fur;
two mantles embroidered in gold,
and a gold-embroidered textile,
and another purple-bordered Byzantine textile (*grizisco in dimisso
    cardeno*),
also a golden-edged chasuble and two dalmatics embroidered in gold,
and a silk cloth embroidered with gold.
An altar service, that is,
a salt cellar,
a platter (*inferturia*),
a pair of tongs
a pitcher with ten cups,
two golden candlesticks,
a mysterious (?) golden object (*anigma exaurata*),
and a ewer.
All of these containers, both silver and golden, as well as the
    aforementioned ewer, have two handles.[42]

Given the detailed enumeration of the objects, with especially varied and evocative attention to sumptuous materials, it is no wonder that this text has

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42   Martín López, "Un documento de Fernando I," 536–537: "… ornamenta altariorum, id
      est: frontale ex auro puro opere digno cum lapidibus zmaracdiis, saffiris et omni genere
      preciosis et olouitreis, alios similiter tres frontales argenteos singulis altaribus, cororonas
      (sic) tres aureas, una ex his cum sex alfas in giro et corona de alaules intus in ea pendens
      alia est de annemates cum olouitreo aurea, tercia uero est diadema capitis mei aurea, et
      arcellina de cristallo auro cooperta, et crucem auream cum lapidibus conpertam olouit-
      ream, et aliam eburneam in similitudinem nostri redemptoris crucifixi, turibulos duos
      aureis cum inferturia aurea et alium turibulum argenteum magno pondere conflatum,
      et calicem et patenam ex auro cum olouitreo, stolas aureas cum amoxerce argenteo et
      opera ex auro, et aliud argenteum adamorcece habet opera olouitrea, et capsam eburn-
      eam operatam cum auro, et alias duas eburneas argento laboratas: in una ex eis sedent
      intus tres alie capselle in eodem opere facte et dictacos calpertiles eburneos, frontales
      tres aurifrisos, uelum de templo lotzori maiore cum alios duos minores arminios, man-
      tos duos aurifrisos, alio alguexi auro texto cum alio grizisco in dimisso cardeno. Casula
      aurifrisa cum dalmaticis duabus aurofrisis et alia aluexi auro texta, servicio de mensa, id
      est, salare, inferturia, tenaces, trullione com coclearibus X, ceroferales duos deauratos,
      anigma exaurata et arrotoma, omnia haec uasa argentea deaurata cum predicta arrotoma
      binas habent ansas."

been of central importance to art historians.[43] And yet in light of the reattribution of the surviving document to an undefined time in the twelfth century, it becomes necessary to widen our parameters of interpretation beyond 1063. Martín Lopez interpreted the confection of this charter as a response to the need for a written guarantee of the rights and privileges of the monastery. I would like to propose two possibilities in which the social and political context would have been ripe for the writing of such a document. Each is a time of discord during which the charter would have acted as a buttress, recalling a powerful moment by rulers past, who were themselves the founders both of San Isidoro and of the ruling dynasty.[44] The candidates are Queen Urraca during the first part of her reign, 1109–1117, or her children, King Alfonso VII and his only full sibling Infanta Sancha around the years 1144–1148.

As is well known, the early years of the reign of Urraca were extremely unstable;[45] no one can doubt the need for a document during this time to reiterate rights, properties, and goods, but also to emphasize prestigious lineage and the ambitions to rule. As Martín López points out, the size of the supposed 1063 parchment, at 670 × 500 mm, is closest to the large size of several of Urraca's charters (680 × 520 mm), although some of those written during the reigns of Alfonso VI and Alfonso VII also approach its dimensions.[46] Urraca's political situation had improved by 1117, when she was secure enough to negotiate a truce with her estranged husband, Alfonso I el Batallador of Aragón (r. 1104–1134); this was renewed every three years until her death in 1126. Also in 1117, the queen made a major donation to San Isidoro of monasteries and territories in and around León, greatly increasing its holdings.[47] From this moment on, the

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43   It is worthy of note that no books appear in this list, especially given the four surviving books that bear Sancha's name, once on her own, two of them together with Fernando, and once with her son Sancho. On these books and for previous bibliography, see Therese Martin, "Fuentes de potestad para reinas e infantas: el infantazgo en los siglos centrales de la Edad Media," *El ejercicio del poder de las reinas ibéricas*, ed. Ana Echevarría and Nikolas Jaspert, special issue, *Anuario de Estudios Medievales* 46/1 (2016): 97–136, esp. 103–111.

44   John B. Freed has argued that the 1160 *Codex Falkensteinensis* of Count Siboto IV of Falkenstein (Munich, Bayerische Hauptstaatsarchiv, BayHStA KL Weyarn 1) is an example of cartularies made in times of insecurity; see his "Artistic and Literary Representations of Family Consciousness," in *Medieval Concepts of the Past: Ritual, Memory, Historiography*, ed. Gerd Althoff, Johannes Fried, and Patrick J. Geary (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 233–252. See also Elisabeth Noichl, *Codex Falkensteinensis: Die Rechtsaufzeichnungen der Grafen von Falkenstein* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1978).

45   On this context, see José Luis Senra, "Rebellion, Reconciliation, and a Romanesque Church in León-Castile (c. 1109–1120)," *Speculum* 87/2 (2012): 376–412.

46   Martín López, "Un documento de Fernando I," 519.

47   Published in Encarnación Martín López, *Patrimonio cultural de San Isidoro de León: Documentos de los siglos X–XIII* (León: Universidad de León, 1995), 40–42.

final decade of her reign was little different from that of any other monarch of her day.

Our second pair of candidates are Urraca's eldest children Sancha and Alfonso, born to her first husband Count Raimundo of Burgundy.[48] Alfonso VII reigned over León-Castilla from 1126 to 1157, while Sancha ruled the inheritance known as the infantazgo from 1127 until her death in 1159. The network of royal monasteries that made up the infantazgo was controlled by royal daughters and the crown from its *caput* at the mixed monastic community of San Isidoro.[49] During the years 1144–1148, great changes were afoot at San Isidoro, culminating in the removal of the nuns to Carbajal, outside León, and the installation of Augustinian canons in their place.[50] If the "1063 charter" were made in this moment, it would serve to calm the roiled waters while guaranteeing the nearly century-old rights, privileges, and liturgical treasury. The intense attention paid to San Isidoro by the infanta Sancha after the arrival of the Augustinians plays out across nine donations made 1148–1158, some by her alone, some with her brother the king. Although none of these charters references liturgical goods, a portable altar bearing Sancha's name, as with the chalice of her great-aunt Urraca, testifies to the tradition of gift-giving by the rulers of the infantazgo at San Isidoro. Sancha's remarkable portable altar is the focus of the study in this volume by Jitske Jasperse, who looks closely into the question of the infanta as patron of luxury objects.[51]

Given the significance to twelfth-century political life of the 1063 events at San Isidoro—both the saint's translation and the church's rededication—we should be wary of attributing too much documentary weight to the charter for

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48   No children were born of Urraca's marriage to Alfonso I of Aragón. With her third consort, Count Pedro González de Lara, she gave birth at least four more times, but only two of the children are known to have survived, Fernando and Elvira.

49   See Patrick Henriet, "Deo votas: L'Infantado et la fonction des infantes dans la Castille et le León des Xe–XIIe siècles," in *Au cloître et dans le monde: Femmes, hommes et sociétés (IXe–XVe siècles)*, *Mélanges en l'honneur de Paulette L'Hermite-Leclercq* (Cultures et Civilisations médiévales, 23), ed. Patrick Henriet and Anne-Marie Legras (Paris: Presses de l'université de Paris-Sorbonne, 2000), 189–203; 5/junio 2008, special issue of *e-Spania*, especially Patrick Henriet, "Infantes, *Infantaticum*. Remarques introductives," (DOI 10.4000/e-spania.12593), and Therese Martin, "Hacia una clarificación del infantazgo en tiempos de la reina Urraca y su hija la infanta Sancha (ca. 1107–1159)," (DOI: 10.4000/e-spania.12163). See also Carlos Reglero de la Fuente, "Los testamentos de las infantas Elvira y Sancha: monasterios y espacios de poder," in *Mundos medievales: espacios, sociedades y poder. Homenaje al Profesor José Ángel García de Cortázar y Ruiz de Aguirre*, ed. Beatriz Arízaga Bolumburu et al. (Santander: Universidad de Cantabria, 2012), 1:835–847.

50   See Martin, *Queen as King*, 158–161.

51   See Chpt. 6, Jitske Jasperse, "Between León and the Levant: The Portable Altar of the Infanta Sancha as Material Evidence for Medieval History."

establishing the original offerings by Fernando and Sancha. In fact, as every scholar working on objects from San Isidoro's collection has noted, at least in passing, the lone piece that can now be recognized from the list is an ivory crucifix (Figure 2.4a; inv. no. 52340).[52] This was one of six objects belonging to San Isidoro that were requisitioned by a government commission in 1869 to become part of the new national archaeological museum in Madrid, an extraordinary number of pieces to have been appropriated from a single monument.[53] In the 1063 donation, this magnificent object appears as "another [cross] of ivory with a representation of our crucified Redeemer."[54] The ivory cross itself is carved front and back in both low and high relief, while the separate ivory corpus is fully sculpted in the round; the complete object weighs in at a substantial 1,293 grams (2.85 lbs.) of solid ivory. An inscription in two registers at the foot of the cross, beneath the bent figure of Adam, lays claim to the work: FREDINANDUS REX, SANCIA REGINA (Figure 2.4b). Certainly, the royal couple are responsible for this crucifix, and it is indeed probable that such a stunning offering would have been commissioned to mark a major occasion like the rededication of their church at the arrival of Isidore's relics.

But beyond this single item, none of the multiple golden objects listed in the "1063 charter" survives. Of the liturgical textiles, even when a reference to the material, like gold embroidery or purple silk, might suggest a surviving object, the phrasing is too generic to make definite identification possible, although one might try to make a case for the tenth-century embroidery discussed in the contributions to this volume by Ana Cabrera and María Judith Feliciano. Such general descriptions also apply to the ivory caskets in the charter; in fact, it was the very insistence on multiple works of ivory that initially spurred me to pay closer attention to the "1063 charter," for it is quite unusual to find more than a piece or two of ivory listed in Iberian inventories of the early and central Middle Ages.[55] And it is true that San Isidoro boasts an extraordinary collection of ivories, though

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52   See Manuel Gómez-Moreno, *En torno al crucifijo de los reyes Fernando y Sancha* (Madrid: Ministerio de Educación Nacional, Dirección General de Bellas Arte, 1965); Franco Mata, "El tesoro de San Isidoro;" Franco Mata, *Arte leonés fuera de León* (*ss. IV–XVI*) (León: Edilesa, 2012); Noemi Álvarez da Silva, "El trabajo del marfil en la España del siglo XI," PhD diss., Universidad de León, 2014, 84–151.

53   The nineteenth-century context and the role of the newly founded museum in nation-building are currently being studied by Amanda Dotseth. I am grateful to her for sharing her research with me.

54   "Et aliam eburneam in similitudinem nostri redemptoris crucifixi."

55   See the founding donations discussed by Ana Rodríguez, "À propos des objets nécessaires: dotations monastiques et circulation d'objets au royaume de León dans le haut Moyen Âge," in *Objets sous contraintes: Circulation des richesses et valeur des choses au*

FIGURES 2.4A, B   Crucifix of Fernando and Sancha, 1063? (Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Inv.
                   No. 52340). See also Fig. 6.6.
                   PHOTOS: THERESE MARTIN

none that has come down to us today is worked with gold or silver, as specified
in the charter. Yet scholars have gone to great lengths in frustrated attempts to
recognize more than just the crucifix in the pieces listed in this document. If, for
a treasury like Saint-Denis, much energy has successfully been spent on matching
up objects and written sources, for San Isidoro I would instead propose that we
ask new questions of both the treasury and its beloved charter, interrogating the
goals behind the creation of the collection in the eleventh century while assess-
ing the magnitude of its development in the twelfth century, and thereafter.[56]

4   The Treasury in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries

Despite the fact that the foundational donation as it has come down to us can-
not be taken at face value, it is safe to say that Fernando and Sancha would have

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    Moyen Âge, ed. Laurent Feller and Ana Rodríguez (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne,
    2013), 63–89.

56   On other "thereafters," see *The Long Lives of Medieval Art and Architecture*, ed. Jennifer
    M. Feltman and Sarah Thompson, AVISTA Studies in the History of Medieval Science,
    Technology, and Art (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019).

given generously to the church attached to their royal palace, both at the time of construction a decade earlier and in 1063 when Isidore was added to its titular saints. Further evidence of their artistic commissions can be seen in four books bearing their names: a Beatus Commentary on the Apocalypse, which is discussed by Pamela Patton in her contribution to this volume, two prayerbooks, and a miscellanea.[57] Their eldest daughter Urraca can also be confirmed as a patron of this church, most likely after 1067, the year of Sancha's death, when the infanta became head in her mother's place of the infantazgo of San Pelayo and San Isidoro.[58] At least one magnificent gift on the infanta's part is attested by the surviving chalice made of two Antique sardonyx cups encircled by a gold-filigreed inscription that reads IN NOMINE D[OMI]NI VRRACA FREDINA[N]DI (Figure 2.5). In the eighteenth century, a now lost crucifix naming Urraca was also seen at San Isidoro by two viewers who described it as a monumental bejeweled gold cross bearing an ivory corpus, at the foot of which was a high-relief representation of the infanta.[59] Manuel Risco's 1792 publication details her depiction:

> At the foot of the crucifix one reads the word MERCY and then, URRACA, DAUGHTER OF KING FERNANDO AND QUEEN SANCHA. On the lower part of the cross the same doña Urraca is shown kneeling, her hands together, raised and extended, and her name repeated in letters that begin above her head and go down before her, extending almost the full length of the figure.[60]

Concerning the infanta Urraca, the so-called *Historia Silense* (ca. 1118–1130) echoes her gifts of luxury items such as the chalice and cross, stating in general terms that "all of her life she followed her desire to adorn sacred altars and the

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57   See Chpt. 7, Pamela Patton, "Demons and Diversity in León." See also Martin, "Fuentes de potestad para reinas e infantas," 103–111.

58   On the infantazgo, see note 49 and recently Lucy Pick, *Her Father's Daughter: Gender, Power and Religion in the Early Spanish Kingdoms* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2017).

59   José Manzano, *Vida y portentosos milagros del glorioso San Isidro, arzobispo de Sevilla, con una breve descripción de su magnífico templo y real casa del mismo señor San Isidro en la muy noble ciudad de León* (Salamanca: Imprenta Real, 1732), 352 and 383. He records the inscription as "Urraca, Regis Ferdinandi filia & Sanchiae Reginae donavit" and gives the height as "dos varas y media y lo ancho de los brazos de vara y media."

60   Manuel Risco, *Iglesia de Leon, y monasterios antiguos y modernos de la misma ciudad* (Madrid: En la oficina de Don Blas Román, 1792), 146–147. "Debaxo de los pies del crucifixo se lee esta palabra: MISERICORDIA, y luego: VRRACCA FREDINANDI REGIS ET SANCIA REGINA FILIA; y en la parte inferior de la Cruz se representa la misma Doña Urraca arrodillada, juntas, elevadas, y extendidas las manos, repitiéndose su nombre, cuyas letras comienzan sobre su cabeza, y baxan por delante, extendiéndose casi tanto como la figura."

FIGURE 2.5
Chalice of Urraca, ca. 1067–1101 (Museo de la Real Colegiata de San Isidoro de León).
PHOTO: THERESE MARTIN

vestments of the clergy with gold, silver, and precious stones."[61] In the early thirteenth century, it is the infanta and her parents to whom Lucas of Tuy, in his *Liber miraculorum beatissimi Isidori*, gives credit for the establishment of the treasury: "… the treasures that were in the church of the confessor San Isidoro, which is in León; these had been gathered there by King Fernando and Queen Sancha and their daughter the venerable Urraca[62] for the beauty of the

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61　"ac omni vite sue tempore in ornandis auro argentoue pretiosisque gemmis sacris altaribus sacerdotalibusque vestimentis desideratum exercitium peregit," ed. Justo Pérez de Urbel and Atilano González Ruiz-Zorrilla, *Historia Silense. Edición crítica e introducción* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1959), 122–123. This chronicle is now more commonly referred to as the Legionensis. See the special issue *Historia legionensis* (*llamada silensis*). *Écriture de l'histoire*, e-Spania 14 (Dec. 2012), http://journals.openedition.org/e-spania/21568. For a Spanish edition, see Manuel Gómez-Moreno, *Introducción a la Historia Silense con versión castellana de la misma y de la crónica de Sampiro* (Madrid: Junta para Ampliación de Estudios e Investigaciones Científicas, Centro de Estudios Históricos, 1921), LXXI. For an English edition, see Simon Barton and Richard Fletcher, *The World of El Cid: Chronicles of the Spanish Reconquest* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 9–64.

62　It is also worth noting, however, that in the *Chronicon mundi*, which Lucas of Tuy completed after the miracles and which he wrote for a royal rather than ecclesiastical audience, he ascribes the treasures to kings Fernando and Alfonso VI, eliminating all reference to the contributions of Sancha and Urraca. Here also Alfonso el Batallador is cast as the despoiler of the church, following the counsel of his cousin Henry of Burgundy, Count of Portugal, together with his wife, Queen Urraca. See *Lucas Tudensis. Chronicon Mundi*, ed. Emma Falque Rey, Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis, 74 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), 4:72. See also Beatriz Antón,

divine cult and the honor of San Isidoro."[63] Lucas's mention of the treasure occurs in reference to the moment when Queen Urraca allowed her husband Alfonso I of Aragón to plunder the church of San Isidoro in order to pay his troops. Because of its importance for the evolving history of the treasury, the full section bears quoting:

> And since all of Queen Urraca's treasures had been completely exhausted and King Pedro [sic, Alfonso el Batallador] could not pay his soldiers what he had promised them, through sacrilegious counsel he advised the queen that, in order to pay the salaries of the soldiers, he should take by force the treasures that were in the church of the confessor Saint Isidore, which is in León; these had been gathered there by King Fernando and Queen Sancha and their daughter the venerable Urraca for the beauty of the divine cult and the honor of Saint Isidore. To this diabolical counsel and persuasion Queen Urraca gave consent, and those abominable invaders, irreverently putting aside both fear of God and the abject shame of man, with the queen's permission, pestiferously entered the church and looted the treasures consecrated to God. Those workers of hell, satellites of the devil, infernal hammerers broke everything into pieces, reserving it to their lords' and their own wanton and villainous uses: crosses of Our Lord, chalices with Christ's consecrated body and blood, images of Holy Mary Mother of God and of other saints, candelabra, thuribles, plates [*fialas*], crowns, caskets with holy relics, aquamaniles, and many other objects [*ynsignia*] from that

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"Argumentos medievales como fuente de los *Emblemata centum regio politica* (Madrid, 1653) de J. de Solórzano: la muerte de la Reina Urraca de Castilla," in *IV Congreso Internacional de Latim Medieval Hispânico, Lisboa, 12–15 de Outubro de 2005, Actas*, ed. Aires A. Nascimento and Paulo F. Alberto (Lisbon: Centro de Estudos Clásicos, 2006), 167–181, esp. 175–177.

63   Biblioteca de la Real Colegiata de San Isidoro, ms. 61, cap. xxv: "thesauri qui erant in ecclesia beati Ysidori confessoris, que sita est in Legione, quos ibi rex Fredenandus et Sanctia regina necnon et uenerabilis Urraca utriusque filia ad diuini cultus decorem et beati Ysidori honorem aggregauerant." I am grateful to Patrick Henriet for providing me the corrected Latin text from the critical edition he currently has underway. The only published edition of the miracles is Julio Pérez Llamazares, ed., *Milagros de San Isidoro* (León [1947]; Universidad de León, facs. ed. 1992), which is itself a re-edition of the first Romance translation of 1525 by Juan de Robles. For Lucas de Tuy, see the studies in *Cahiers de Linguistique et de Civilisation Hispanique Médiévales* 24 (2001): Patrick Henriet, "*Sanctissima patria:* Points et themes communs aux trois oeuvres de Lucas de Tuy," 249–277; Peter Linehan, "Dates and Doubts about Don Lucas," 201–217.

church, and all were of gold and silver, with precious stones of diverse colors and great brilliance, and with this those most impudent dogs in their ignorance were satiated.[64]

Lucas records a terrible event in the history of the monastery at which he spent most of his ecclesiastical career before going on to become bishop of Tuy. In fact, this incident was so traumatic that it is still the story told at San Isidoro today. How, then, can we explain the fact that there continues to be a magnificent treasury at the Leonese monastery? Here Lucas of Tuy also provides an answer, but this chapter of the Miracles, by contrast with the former, has not been assimilated into common lore: Lucas names Queen Urraca and her eldest daughter Sancha as the restorers of San Isidoro. In reference to the queen, the chronicler's tone throughout both the Miracles and his *Chronicon mundi* was extremely disapproving, which lends weight to this single instance in which he spoke highly of her actions:

> Queen Urraca, in order to expiate the aforementioned great crime [of having permitted her husband to despoil the church], together with her most prudent daughter Sancha, who from childhood affirmed that she had taken Saint Isidore as her spouse, refusing a husband's carnal coupling, with great zeal they desired to restore to the church of the holy confessor that which had been removed. In addition the queen repeatedly proceeded to have many relics of saints zealously gathered from diverse parts of the world, and she had them placed with honor in caskets of silver and ivory. With royal munificence she conferred many properties

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64   Biblioteca de la Real Colegiata de San Isidoro, ms. 61, cap. XXV: "... cum omnes thesauri regine Urrache essent exausti penitus, et rex Petrus quod promiserat suis militibus unde tribueret non haberet, consilio ductus sacrilego suggesit regine ut thesauri qui erant in ecclesia beati Ysidori confessoris, que sita est in Legione, quos ibi rex Fredenandus et Sanctia regina necnon et uenerabilis Urraca utriusque filia ad diuini cultus decorem et beati Ysidori honorem aggregauerant, inuaderet ad stipendia militibus conferenda. Diabolicis cuius suasionibus assensum prebuit regina Urraca, et orriferi inuassores, Dei timore postposito et hominum irreuerenter abiecta uerecundia, regine accepta licencia, pestilenter ingrediuntur ecclesiam et thesauros consecratos Deo diripiunt, et fabri gehennales, satellites diaboli, malleatores inferni, dominicas cruces, calices Christi corpore et sanguine consecratos, sancte Dei genitricis Marie et aliorum sanctorum ymagines, candelabra, turibula, fialas, coronas, sanctarum reliquiarum arcellas, aquemanilia et alia multa ynsignia eiusden ecclesie que omnia erant aurea uel argentea, in quibus erant lapides preciosi diuerso colore fulgentes, canes inpudentissimi, saturitatem nescientes, uniuersa dissoluunt et confringunt, dominorum suorum et suis lasciuis usibus et sceleribus reseruantes."

on the church, and during her lifetime she had a burial place prepared for herself in that church with her forebears.[65]

So, can we believe either of these two accounts by Lucas of Tuy? I would argue that we can; in fact, we can believe both of them. It would not be at all surprising that a ransacking of the church took place around 1110–1112 during the tumultuous commencement of Queen Urraca's reign. And perhaps she even allowed it, taking for granted her right as ruler to make use of—or to bestow on another—the objects within her dynastic church, these gifts to San Isidoro given by members of her family.[66] Although not all the earlier treasury would have been taken, it seems probable that some of the most highly valuable gold pieces were appropriated and that some reliquaries were profaned. As noted above, Urraca made a very generous donation to San Isidoro in 1117, and as Lucas himself would recount in the *Chronicon mundi*, she was indeed buried with honor at San Isidoro. Thus, his reference in the miracle to the conferring of properties on San Isidoro by Urraca and the preparation for her burial there are both verifiable facts.

Why, then, should the chronicler's identification of Urraca as the donor of "caskets of silver and ivory" to the same institution be dismissed out of hand, especially given the continued presence of twelfth-century objects of the type Lucas recognizes as having originated in "diverse parts of the world"? Despite Urraca's infamous reputation for requisitioning liturgical metalworks to pay her troops, this stigma was well deserved only in the first part of her reign.[67] In the contribution by Julie Harris to this volume, the author contextualizes two

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65   Cap. XXX: "Regina ectiam Urraca, tanti supradicti piaculi gratia expiandi, vna cum prudentissima filia sua Santia, que beatum Ysidorum sponsum suum a puericia testabatur, carnali sponso renuens copulari, sumo studio que fuerant ab ecclesia sancti confessoris ablata restaurare cupiebant, et toto cognamine his exsequendis dabant operam eficacem. Preterea regina sepe facta multorum sanctorum reliquias de diuersis mundi partibus fecit studiossisime congregari, et in capssis argenteis et eburneis fecit honorifice collocari. Eidem ecclesie regali munificencia multa contulit predia, et in ipsa ecclesia cum patribus suis sibi fecit parari, dum adhuc viueret, sepulturam."

66   I am grateful to Jitske Jasperse for this suggestion. For the ties between gift-giving and violence, see Andrew Cowell, *The Medieval Warrior Aristocracy: Gifts, Violence, Performance and the Sacred* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2007).

67   Pascual Martínez Sopena, "La circulation des objets en temps de guerre. Les années de la reine Urraca (León et Castille, vers 1110–1130)," in *Objets sous contraintes: Circulation des richesses et valeur des choses au Moyen Âge*, ed. Laurent Feller and Ana Rodríguez (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2013), 257–282. Of the twenty-two cases studied by the author, sixteen occurred before 1117, none that year, and only six from 1118 until the queen's death in 1126. If a similar assessment has been carried out for the reigns of Alfonso VI or Alfonso VII, I am unfamiliar with it.

moments in which the queen requisitioned church goods as disposable wealth in the presence of members of the Jewish community.[68] But Urraca is also recorded by her contemporaries for donating relics and gifts to ecclesiastical institutions, such as the head of Saint James to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela.

> When [Queen Urraca] realized that Bishop Mauricio had brought the head of Saint James from Jerusalem and that it was in San Zoilo [Carrión de los Condes], she herself took it from there together with the rest of the relics and brought it to León, placing it at San Isidoro. And thus she made a gift of such a great treasure to the bishop of Santiago, that is: the head of Saint James, a fragment of the sepulcher of the Lord, a bone of Saint Stephen, and other relics with a silver container.[69]

The gifts to San Isidoro at the behest of women from four generations of the ruling dynasty bespeak an interest in the highest quality materials to honor the saint while representing the donors, but we also catch glimpses of additional elements that made these gifts so exalted, like the antiquity of the sardonyx cups put together to create the infanta's chalice, or the purple of the Byzantine silk in the "1063 charter." In the queen's case, Lucas recognizes the importance of possessions from discernibly distant shores when he portrays her ordering the gathering of relics from diverse lands. Such trappings of far-off lands bespeak an ambitious ruler, eager to extend her dominion and to make her aspirations visible at the heart of her family's dynastic church. This type of appreciable geography, however, could also be used to evoke local prestige, as it does for a coherent group of ivories from León.

5   The Treasury in the Fourteenth Century: Evidence of the Beatitudes Casket

Although an analysis of the Leonese ivory workshop is beyond the purview of the present article, one object originating from this center serves here as a

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68   See Chpt. 8, Julie A. Harris, "Jews, Real and Imagined, at San Isidoro and Beyond."

69   *Historia Compostellana,* ed. Emma Falque Rey, Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis 70 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1988), Book 1, 112, 267–8: "Que ut nouit caput beati Iacobi, quod M. episcopus Iherosolimis attulerat, in ecclesia sancti Zoyli esse, ipsamet illud cum ceteris reliquiis abhinc abstraxit et asportauit Legionem collocans in ecclesia sancti Isidori. Tantum igitur thesaurum, scilicet apud beati Iacobi et frustum Dominici sepulcri et quoddam os sancti Stephani ceterasque reliquias cum uase argenteo contulit predicto beati Iacobi episcopo."

case study for examining assumptions about the larger group and their place at San Isidoro. Looking closely at a single work in the light of finely tuned scientific scrutiny offers evidence alongside archival work for a greater understanding of the treasury as a whole. If, as John Williams has argued, the Cross of Fernando and Sancha represents the first product of a newly established ivory workshop in León,[70] this masterpiece stands as a precedent for a series of objects created through the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries. Among the most important pieces assigned to the royally sponsored ivory workshop founded by Fernando and Sancha are two elaborate reliquaries composed of multiple plaques of ivory. The Casket of Saints John the Baptist and Pelayo, which has lost the golden ornamentation that once covered the wooden core, is still at San Isidoro; its exquisite silk lining is addressed and illustrated in the present volume in the studies by Ana Cabrera and María Judith Feliciano. The second reliquary, densely covered by a profusion of ivory, is today held by the Museo Arqueológico Nacional, one of the objects requisitioned in 1869 (Figure 2.6; inv. no. 52092). Called the Beatitudes Casket, this box serves as a metaphor for our larger research project due to its visual mixing of cultures and to the new history of its place in the medieval treasury that is the result of technical analysis together with historical and art historical research carried out by members of the Treasury project.

The name by which the reliquary is now known comes from the casket's unconventional imagery of winged figures paired with lively, gesticulating personifications of the Beatitudes, identified by abbreviated inscriptions from the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:3–12 (Figure 2.7). The casket's current configuration, however, cannot be original: as scholars have long recognized, some of the Beatitudes are missing; the ivories on the fourth side are unrelated to the other three; and the plaques were secured to the surface of the wooden core by nails rather than inset within the framework. Yet in the historiography, this reliquary is consistently associated with the donation by Fernando and Sancha, providing an apparently firm date for the style of the plaques bearing Christian imagery.[71]

The three sides with figural imagery have received sustained iconographic analysis by scholars, foremost among them Julie Harris; she situates these images within the context of the Hispanic liturgy, which was being replaced by

70   John Williams, "León: The Iconography of a Capital," in *Cultures of Power: Lordship, Status, and Process in Twelfth-Century Europe*, ed. Thomas N. Bisson (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), 231–258.

71   See recently, with extensive previous bibliography, Noemi Álvarez da Silva, "The Beatitudes Casket. A New Reconstructive Hypothesis," *Imago Temporis. Medium Aevum* 8 (2014): 109–134.

FIGURE 2.6   Beatitudes Casket, oblique view, ivories from the late eleventh century (?) on
             fourteenth-century wooden box (Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Inv.
             No. 52092). See also Fig. 1.1.
             PHOTO: THERESE MARTIN

the Roman rite at the end of the eleventh century.[72] And yet, the casket's fourth
side, which bears a series of smaller ivory fragments with animal and foliate
forms as well as Arabic inscriptions, has yet to be fully understood, much less
integrated into a study of the object as a whole. These fragmentary plaques
have generally been separated from studies of the existing casket because they
were clearly manufactured in Islamic lands and hence belong to the category
of "Islamic art" (Figure 2.8). But their integration with the Beatitudes plaques
on this casket carries deep resonance for the history of the treasury of San
Isidoro more broadly as they further attest to the continued importance of ob-
jects from exotic lands.

72   Julie A. Harris, "The Beatitudes Casket in Madrid's Museo Arqueológico: Its Iconography
      in Context," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 53/1 (1990): 134–139. See also María Concepción
      Cosmen, "La Arqueta de las Bienaventuranzas: fuentes iconográficas," *De Arte* 1
      (2002): 21–30.

FIGURE 2.7   Beatitudes Casket, Christian imagery, late eleventh century? (Madrid, Museo
             Arqueológico Nacional, Inv. No. 52092). See also Fig. 1.1.
             PHOTO: THERESE MARTIN

In order to understand the complicated history of the fourth side of the Be-
atitudes casket, together with its relevance for the later history of the treasury,
the epigraphic expertise of María Antonia Martínez Núñez is essential. She is
currently deciphering the partial Arabic inscriptions and her work has already
begun to shed light on the pieces' complicated chronologies. The smallest in-
scription, appearing in the upper right corner of the box, belongs stylistically
with the two centrally placed plaques that display animals in a paradisiacal
landscape, despite their different orientations. It is the only inscription that
had previously been understood, giving us the name "Ismail, son of al-Maʾmūn,

FIGURE 2.8   Beatitudes Casket, Arabic plaques, late eleventh century? (Madrid, Museo
                  Arqueológico Nacional, Inv. No. 52092). See also Fig. 1.1.
                  PHOTO: THERESE MARTIN

he of the two glories."[73] Al-Ma'mūn was the ruler of the taifa kingdom of Tole-
do from 1043 to 1075. The three fragments must once have belonged to a single
luxury box made for the emir's son; this object, therefore, can be easily contex-
tualized through both style and inscription with similar objects produced in
Cuenca around the year 1050.[74]

The rest of the pieces on the fourth side of the Beatitudes Casket, forming
the upper and lower bands, apparently all come from another single box. The

73   [اسـم]عيل ابن المامون ذي [المجدين...] ... [*Isma*]*'īl ibn al-Màmūn Dhī* [*al-Majdayn*]...This and
        the following transcriptions and translations are all by María Antonia Martínez Núñez,
        epigrapher extraordinaire. I am most grateful for her collaboration and for allowing me to
        present her preliminary results here. Previous partial readings are summarized by Ángel
        Galán y Galindo, *Marfiles medievales del Islam* (Córdoba: Publicaciones Obra Social y
        Cultural Cajasur, 2005), 1:393–395; 2:82–84.
74   See recently Noelia Silva Santa-Cruz, *La eboraria andalusí del califato omeya a la Granada
        nazarí*, BAR International Series, vol. 2522 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2013).

scale of the script indicates a casket larger than the one that can be reconstructed from the Cuenca fragments, but these are much more complicated to set within a specific historical context. If fact, the second set of inscriptions has often been taken for pseudo-script rather than the highly ornamental but true Arabic that they are. Now, thanks to Martínez Núñez's reading, we can begin to situate the plaques in their original place and time. From this second ivory box, two sides have been preserved on the Beatitudes Casket, installed upside-down in order to take deliberate advantage of the vegetal border as a framing device for the new setting. In this particularly ornate Kufic, Martínez Núñez recognizes graphic features that are present in some Andalusi inscriptions from the eleventh century. She has been able to discern the following parts of phrases:

> in the upper plaque, "with glory was;"[75]
> below, as two separate words, "joy" and "blessing;"[76]
> in the smallest fragment, "happiness;"[77]
> and finally lower right, "for its owner. The gratitude …"[78]

These last references are to an unnamed owner, and they would have been located on the lid of the original ivory box. On the basis of the types of script on the plaques, Martínez Núñez confirms that two different workshops produced the taifa-era boxes reused in the making of the Beatitudes Casket. One was certainly from the well-known Cuenca workshop, but in her opinion the variety of Kufic on the other box is only comparable to the highly ornamental epigraphic lettering on buildings in Toledo under the Banū Ḏī l-Nūn, who ruled 1032–1085, or in Zaragoza during the time of the Banū Hūd (1039–1110).[79] Further research is needed to pin down these ivory fragments to their source. What is clear is that the full complement of ivories on the Beatitudes Casket derives from three different objects made in León, Cuenca, and Toledo or Zaragoza with dates that would appear to coalesce around the latter part of the eleventh century.

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75 (؟)منه (؟)بعز كان جود (؟)، اسياد (؟) *bi-ʿizz kāna.*

76 (سـ[ـرور به (له ؟)، بركن (؟)ركة) *(su)rūr* and *baraka.*

77 ... الغ[ـ]طة[......] *al-ghibṭa ....*

78 . … / *li-ṣāḥibi-hi al-Shukr* / ...الصـاحبه الشكر /

79 On the larger context of the taifa kingdoms that arose after the end of the caliphate in 1031, see David Wasserstein, *The Rise and Fall of the Party-Kings: Politics and Society in Islamic Spain, 1002–1086* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985); Pierre Guichard and Bruna Soravia, *Les royaumes de taifas: apogée culturel et déclin politique des émirats andalous du XIe siècle* (Paris: Geuthner, 2007).

FIGURE 2.9   Silver Andalusi casket, turn of the twelfth century? (Madrid, Museo Arqueológico
             Nacional, Inv. No. 50867).
             PHOTO: THERESE MARTIN

The phrasing on the larger taifa box is typical of the sorts of generic benefi-
cent wishes for an unspecified recipient that appear on luxury goods of Islam-
ic manufacture made on spec, such as a silver niello Andalusi box from San
Isidoro, now at the Museo Arqueológico Nacional (Figure 2.9; inv. no. 50867).
Susana Calvo Capilla dates the object to the early twelfth century; if she is
correct, this chronology situates it as one more work from the treasury at San
Isidoro that would not have been part of the 1063 donation.[80] According to
Stefano Carboni, the inscription reads:

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80   Susana Calvo Capilla, "Arqueta," in *Maravillas de la España medieval. Tesoro sagrado
        y monarquía*, ed. Isidro Bango Torviso (Valladolid: Junta de Castilla y León, 2001), 1:113.
        However, in a March 2018 personal communication, Julian Raby stated that he does not
        think that the casket was made well into the twelfth century, nor that it was it necessar-
        ily produced before 1063. He locates this box in the late eleventh century on epigraphic
        forms. For the larger context of Andalusi metalwork, see Julian Raby, "The Inscriptions
        on the Pisa Griffin and the Mari-Cha Lion: From Banal Blessings to Indices of Origin,"
        in *The Pisa Griffin and the Mari-Cha Lion. Metalwork, Art, and Technology in the Medieval
        Islamicate Mediterranean*, ed. Anna Contadini (Pisa: Pacini Editore, 2018), 305–360 +
        addendum to n.73. I am grateful to Julian for sharing his ideas about Andalusi metalwork
        with me.

Lid: Entire blessing and continuous well-being and complete health and perfect bounty and […]

Body: Entire blessing from God and continuous well-being [and] complete [heal]th and perfect favor and perpetual happiness and […] well-being to its owner.[81]

Objects with this type of non-individualized dedication are evidence of elite production due to the costliness of their materials, but they were not made under official state control, as was the case with the caliphal ivory workshop that flourished at the Cordoban palace of Madīnat al-Zahrāʾ from around 960 through the early eleventh century.[82]

While ongoing research on the ivory plaques of the Beatitudes Casket adds nuanced chronology and geography for the object as a whole, the inner wooden core too has provided dramatic new evidence for the history of this piece. Before technical analysis, it was assumed that the wood was either from the eleventh century, to fit with the donation by Fernando and Sancha, or from the nineteenth century, when the object entered the museum in Madrid. Instead, carbon-14 analysis revealed that the wood dates firmly to the fourteenth century, with a 95% probability that it falls within the years CE 1295–1415.[83] This date was completely unexpected. Instead of focusing on the years around either 1063 or 1869, it became necessary to consider what the fourteenth century had to offer in the context of San Isidro's treasury. A further surprise awaited our delighted discovery: documentary evidence from 1331 at the archive at San Isidoro accords perfectly with the carbon-14 date. Indeed, in looking at the late medieval context of the treasury, the Beatitudes Casket emerges as a part of a larger story about lay benefactors' donations to ecclesiastical institutions, along with the evolving interests of religious communities. Based on technical analysis and the following written source, I would argue that the casket must have taken its present form at this key moment in the institution's fourteenth-century history.

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81   Stefano Carboni, "Casket," in *The Art of Medieval Spain, AD 500–1200*, exh. cat. (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1993), 98. He dates the casket to the first half of the eleventh century.

82   For an excellent study that brings scholarship on the caliphal ivories up to date, see Glaire D. Anderson and Mariam Rosser-Owen, "Great Ladies and Noble Daughters: Ivories and Women in the Umayyad Court at Córdoba," in *Pearls on a String: Art in the Age of Great Islamic Empires*, ed. Amy Landau (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2015), 28–51.

83   Beta Analytic no. 442369, 590 BP +/-30; in the calibrated result two moments within this range stand out: 1310–1360 and 1385–1405. My thanks go to Mónica Ruiz for carrying out the delicate task of sampling the wood.

In order to encourage donations to San Isidoro for reconstruction needed
on the church building, an itemization was undertaken in 1331 of all the relics
and indulgences possessed by the monastery.[84] This same charter formalized
the benefits of becoming a contributing member of the institution's confrater-
nity, under the Pendón, or Pennant, of San Isidoro.[85] The editor of the sacred
inventory, Santiago Domínguez Sánchez, notes that the document was writ-
ten in ocher ink with many red majuscules, in a hand that imitates the Gothic
script used for privileges, without being particularly elegant.[86] The opening
line of this fund-raising effort directs the document, "To all the faithful of God,
whether clerics or knights, and good men and good ladies of whatever places
in which this letter might be seen …"[87] The list of major relics naturally begins
with Isidore himself, and it includes a ten-line summation of the many cures
and other types of miracles wrought by the saint since his relics were translated
from Sevilla to León. Isidoro is followed in importance by Vincent, along with
his sisters Sabina and Cristeta. These four holy figures are highlighted because,
as stated, their *full bodies* rest at San Isidoro, whereas the other holy remains
were partial, summarily noted as relics from, bones of, dress of, and so on.

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84   Santiago Domínguez Sánchez, *Patrimonio cultural de San Isidoro de León. Documentos
        del siglo XIV* (León: Universidad de León, 1994), 178–181, Archivo de San Isidoro de León,
        no. 103. This 1331 inventory was repeated in the last decade of the fourteenth century,
        dated 1393 with additions shortly thereafter, stating that this time it was done in the pres-
        ence of Alfonso Fernández de Cuevas and Gonzalo Ruiz de Villalón, scribes and notaries
        to the king. There are some minor changes in the list of relics—Malachi, companion of
        Bernard, becomes Matthias—but on the whole it is the same list of relics and indul-
        gences. See Domínguez Sánchez, *Patrimonio cultural de San Isidoro de León. Documentos
        del siglo XIV,* 494–497, Archivo de San Isidoro de León, no. 104.

85   Gregoria Cavero Domínguez, "La instrumentalización de la ayuda isidoriana en la
        Reconquista: La Cofradía del Pendón de Baeza en San Isidoro de León," *Homenaje a la
        profesora María Isabel Falcón*, special issue, *Aragón en la Edad Media* 19 (2006): 113–124, in
        which the author proposes that the Pendón was made in conjunction with the 1331 inven-
        tory. See also Alberto Montaner Frutos, "El Pendón de San Isidoro o de Baeza: sustento
        legendario y constitución emblemática," *Emblemata* 15 (2009): 29–70 at 32: "el Pendón
        de San Isidoro se elaboró en el período comprendido entre dicho año de 1331 y el de
        1360, aunque más cerca del segundo que del primero, como un efecto secundario de la
        restauración de dicha cofradía." In the opinion of Etelvina Fernández González, "Héroes
        y arquetipos en la iconografía medieval," *Cuadernos del CEMYR* 1 (1993): 13–52, at 36, the
        Pennant "no es anterior al siglo XIV."

86   Domínguez Sánchez, *Patrimonio cultural de San Isidoro de León. Documentos del siglo XIV,*
        178–181.

87   "A todos los fieles de Dios, así clérigos commo caualleros et ommes bonos et bonas
        duennas de qualesquier lugares que esta carta vierdes …" For examples of similar efforts
        at other sites, see W.H. Vroom, *Financing Cathedral Building in the Middle Ages: The
        Generosity of the Faithful* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010), 219–229.

The remaining relics are briefly enumerated, from multiple scenes of Christ's Passion to Mary's milk, along with bones from Anna, Peter, Paul, James, Andrew, Bartholomew, Matthew; from the head of John the Baptist; the relatives Laurence and Vincent; bones from the Massacre of the Innocents and "a good amount" (*bona quantía*) of their blood as well; gold and myrrh and incense offered by the Three Kings; bones from the martyrs Claudius, Lupercius, and Victorius; vestments and bones from Martino, Nicholas, Augustine, Thomas of Canterbury, Iustus and Pastor, the prophet Samuel; the oak of Mamre under which Abraham dwelt;[88] Catherine and the oil that flowed from under her tomb on Mount Sinai; an unnamed "cardinal who was martyred in Constantinople;" Malachi, bishop and companion of Bernard; bones and vestments from Margaret, Speratus, Marina, Agnes, Dorothy, and Engracia; and water that flowed before the altar of San Isidoro. The scribe ends his impressive list of Christological relics and martyrs' remains with the catch-all phrase, "and there is still more, other bodies of saints that are not recounted here."

Following the multiplicity of relics, the charter's next major selling point is that San Isidoro is the site of royal burial, "thirty-two kings and queens and infantes," along with many counts and rich men who offered their bodies and souls to the blessed confessor San Isidoro, understanding that through his prayer they could gain a place in Paradise. And then comes the scribe's request: because of the church's great antiquity, it is in danger, and the canons cannot undertake a major renovation of the building without the help of good men and good women. Therefore, the canons "looked into the coffer of the treasury (*catemos la archa del tesoro*) and found the indulgences and the pardons that the Holy Apostolic Fathers in Rome and cardinals and archbishops and bishops gave and bestowed on those who did well for this monastery, that is: Pope Innocent, one year and 100 days of pardon …" and an extensive etcetera of the indulgences granted by many ecclesiastical authorities. After noting the length of time in each indulgence, our scribe totals it all up: 500 years from popes and other major players, and 500 forty-day periods from the archbishops and bishops. He then explains the origins of the confraternity following the miraculous appearance by San Isidoro, who rode into the battle of Baeza to save Emperor Alfonso VII. The charter concludes: "And so we order that all those men and those women who join this confraternity and give an amount for construction work or for a laborer, we will receive them as siblings in the said holy confraternity and in the said pardons," explaining the prayers, vigils,

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88   For a comparison with other Old Testament relics, see Chpt. 8 in this volume, Julie A. Harris, "Jews, Real and Imagined, at San Isidoro and Beyond."

and sacrifices, songs, processions, and ringing of bells that would be done on the donors' behalf, especially if they leave their best clothes to San Isidoro upon their deaths. This moment, in which the institution's holy treasures were inventoried and publicized, would have been the perfect opportunity to make use of the precious remains of old ivory caskets for a new display of relics.

Reading this 1331 document together with the results of the carbon-14 testing, I argue that it is most likely that the Beatitudes Casket was put together in the fourteenth century when the canons of San Isidoro decided to publicize their relics and indulgences in order to seek new donations. In creating the Beatitudes Casket as we see it today, the canons of San Isidoro gave new life to the remnants of three cherished boxes—two of Islamic provenance and one with Christian imagery—whose broken fragments of valuable ivory had been carefully stored away in the past. Joining together local Leonese production with Arabic script that by this time bespoke both distant past and far-removed lands, the canons refreshed and updated their own history. What is more, they assembled a regenerated piece based on a common sumptuous material rather than a coherent iconography to enhance the prestige of the institution's many relics and to frame their newly public display. Carrying an aura of antiquity, even sacrality from their renewed use in contact with relics, the disparate ivory pieces reconstructed on a single casket demonstrated a continued alliance with monastery's past patrons, both royal and saintly.

Yet, as essential as the 1331 document has been in establishing the historical context for the fashioning of the casket, from an art historical perspective the narrative is sadly wanting, for the canons of San Isidoro were not interested in inventorying the containers holding all their treasured relics. Regarding the physical repositories, they tell us only that "among the other things, there are also eight small caskets filled with relics and with holy bodies which, as we learned from our ancestors, they never dared to open."[89] Curiously missing from the lineup of saints detailed above are the remains of Pelayo, who, together with John the Baptist, was one of the site's original patrons before the arrival of Isidore. Was Pelayo's prestige so diminished by the fourteenth century that there was no point in even mentioning him? Or, given that Pelayo had been the patron of the female half of the mixed community, might it be that his relics left León in 1148 with the nuns when they were removed to Carbajal? In either case, the silence surrounding Pelayo in the 1331 inventory serves as

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89   Domínguez Sánchez, *Patrimonio cultural de San Isidoro de León. Documentos del siglo XIV,* 178–181: "Et entre las otras cosas remaneçen ocho arquetas lenas de reliquias et de cuerpos santos que segundo aprendimos de nuestros antescesores que nunca fueron hosados de los [abrir]."

a useful reminder that interests and emphases shift over time in a long-lived institution like San Isidoro.

6   Conclusions

The articles in this volume center on a single Iberian monument in order to highlight issues of wider relevance for research concerning medieval treasuries. Foremost among these is the necessity of bringing different types of evidence to bear in order to put long-held assumptions to the test. Our studies demonstrate that collaboration among scholars with a range of interdisciplinary methods and approaches—textual, visual, and technical—successfully opens new windows onto the past. In taking San Isidoro de León as a case study, we apply a healthy dose of skepticism about accepting the written record at face value while carefully mining documents, chronicles, and hagiographies to extract historical facts from medieval narratives. Written sources are further evaluated against art historical and scientific evidence to determine how much weight should be accorded to each in the final balance. For San Isidoro, a critical reading of the "1063 charter" contributes to an understanding of royal aspirations, first those evident in the treasury's foundation by Fernando and Sancha, and later through its restoration in the twelfth century by Queen Urraca. The founders sought to establish a long-lasting legacy in León, which was upheld by their granddaughter as she fought to rule independently over the largest Christian kingdom in Iberia. I accept the truth behind the tales told by Lucas of Tuy, both that the beleaguered queen allowed the pillaging of her family's church and later that, in an ambitious public performance of rulership, Urraca reestablished its treasury, possibly with some of the twelfth-century ivory and silver caskets that can still be seen today. It seems likely that members of her lineage, especially the infanta Sancha and Alfonso VII, would have continued the dynastic tradition of offering precious goods to San Isidoro, as they must have done when the church was re-consecrated in 1149.[90] Yet the preponderance of treasury objects dated to the early twelfth century or before suggests that this practice waned throughout that century, with the casket from Limoges marking an end to the era of large-scale royal sponsorship.

The history of an institution does not halt, however, simply because the rulers' attention turns elsewhere. For San Isidoro's treasury, the first-ever

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[90]   For this event, documented by a surviving inscription, see Martin, *Queen as King*, 153–154, fig. 106.

application of technical analyses to a range of objects has led to new questions and altogether unexpected answers. Carbon-14 testing pushed our investigation further and, together with archival research, revealed an underappreciated yet key moment in the history of the monument. The fourteenth century was shown to be a time of reaching out to non-elite donors, men and women who were encouraged to join the confraternity with an eye to the hereafter. Through the construction of the reliquary now known as the Beatitudes Casket, precious ivory fragments from San Isidoro's past played a role in ensuring the institution's survival into the future.

As this volume makes clear, the Iberian material is ripe for incorporation into comparative studies of medieval treasuries. Caskets of silver, ivory, bone, or antler made their way to León from Scandinavia and al-Andalus, from across the Pyrenees or beyond the Mediterranean, while textiles came from as far east as Central Asia. Each transfer of a luxury object embodies a long-distance connection; each object in León indicates that some form of contact existed, suggesting a future avenue of research at the objects' points of origin as well as their destination. Aspirational rulership, through such networks and relationships, are made manifest in this treasury, where the malleable meanings of individual pieces were completed by their new dispositions within the larger collection. At San Isidoro, geography resonates through both surviving works and written sources for the four generations of women who were the driving force behind the treasury's development in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Whether women played such central roles at treasuries outside León is another question ripe for future comparative research.

Acknowledgments

Narrating the Treasury: What Medieval Iberian Chronicles Choose to Recount about Luxury Objects

Ana Rodríguez

Abstract

Chronicles written in the Kingdoms of Castile and León between the reigns of Alfonso VI and Fernando III, the period of greatest expansion against al-Andalus, assert the importance of the spoils of battle and the circulation of objects between Christian and Muslim lands, and between rival Christian institutions. The chronicles' accounts of the looting of churches by monarchs and nobles in the context of repeated internecine conflict give few details about pillaged objects. Rather, they define these pieces by materials without making note of individual characteristics; although certain objects did spark their interest, in most cases, the tales respond to the need to identify a given piece in order to construct a narrative. Their value comes not only from precious materials or the specialized work of their manufacture, but also from their ability to exemplify personal and collective virtues or defects, along with individual and family identities.

Keywords

Iberia – chronicles – narrative sources – Christian objects – Islamic objects

1 Introduction[1]

Some well-known lines from the Poem of Fernán González, written towards the mid-thirteenth century, are dedicated to the defeat of Almanzor

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(Muḥammad ibn Abī ʿĀmir al-Manṣūr, d. 1002) at the battle of Lara—a battle that never took place, nor did the reported encounter between the Muslim ruler and the count of Castile Fernán González (d. 970).[2] This section of the poem recounts the enormous spoils taken by the Christians from the Muslims: goblets and vessels of gold, cases full of gold and silver coins, silk fabrics, swords, armor, and ivory caskets, the latter donated to the monastery of San Pedro de Arlanza:

> With al-Mansur now a good distance away,
> the field was left well peopled with Christians;
> they gathered their possessions, granted them by God,
> and found such great wealth as to be beyond tally.
> They found in the tents an abundant treasure:
> many cups and goblets made of fine gold;
> such riches as no Christian or Moor had ever seen,
> —it would have sufficed Alexander and Porus.
> Many cases they found there, along with many bags,
> filled with gold and silver—no sign of copper coins—,
> many silken pavilions and many tents of war,
> breastplates and swords and a great mass of armor.
> They found caskets of ivory, very great in value,
> with other noble objects impossible to count;
> to San Pedro de Arlanza were most of them given,
> where to this day they are displayed upon its altar.[3]

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2 See *Libro de Fernán Gonçalez*, ed. Itzíar López Guil (Madrid: CSIC, 2001), 125.

3 *The Poem of Fernán González*, trans. Peter Such and Richard Ramone (Liverpool: Aris & Phillips Hispanic Classics, 2015), verses 275–278: 175. "Quando fue Almançor / grand tiera alexado, finco de los cristianos / el canpo bien poblado; cojieron sus averes / que Dios les avie dado; tan grand aver fallaron / que non serie contado. Fallaron en las tiendas / sobejano tesoro, muchas copas e vasos / que eran d'un fino oro: nunca vio atal riqueza / nin cristiano nin moro, serien ende abondados / Alexander e Poro. Fallaron y maletas / e muchos de çurrones llenos d'oro e de plata, / que non de pepiones, muchas tiendas de seda / e muchos tendejones, espadas e lorigas / e muchas guarniçiones. Fallaron de marfil arquetas muy preçiadas,/ con tantas de noblezas que non serien contadas;/ fueron pora San Pedro las mas d'aquellas dadas,/ estan todas oy dia en su altar asentadas." On the objects and booty described in this fragment of the poem, see Juan Carlos Ruíz Souza, "Botín de guerra y tesoro sagrado," in *Maravillas de la España Medieval: tesoro sagrado y monarquía*, ed. Isidro Bango, 2 vols. (Valladolid: Junta de Castilla y León, 2001), 1:31–40.

Just as it is easy for us to imagine what these ivory boxes from al-Andalus would have looked like, since some of them, converted into reliquaries, have been preserved in the treasuries of Christian churches, it is also easy to imagine the extent of the circulation of wealth represented by war and its spoils in Iberia throughout the central Middle Ages. Some of these objects, still held today in ecclesiastical institutions and museums, give evidence of such circulation. Written sources, particularly chronicles, offer a complementary view from the perspective of medieval scribes, which reveals the place of such luxury objects in the rulership strategies of Iberian kings and queens.

Chronicles written in the kingdoms of Castile and León between the reigns of Alfonso VI and Fernando III, the period of great expansion by the Christian kingdoms against al-Andalus beginning with the conquest of Toledo in 1085 and culminating in that of Sevilla in 1248, also assert the importance of the spoils of battle and the circulation of objects between Christian and Muslim lands as a result of war. The chronicle known as the *Historia Silense* or *Historia Legionense* (first third of the twelfth century), the *Chronica Adefonsi Imperatoris* (ca. 1145–1150), which centered on the reign of Alfonso VII, and the *Chronica Najerense* (last quarter of the twelfth century) all make copious references to wealth, gold and silver, precious fabrics and silks, as well as horses, coming from the booty obtained in battle.[4] The opulence of the defeated Muslims and the great spoils acquired by the Christians is a constant presence in the multiple narratives of military campaigns. After the Christian victory at Las Navas de Tolosa in 1212, the archbishop of Toledo Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada, author of *De Rebus Hispaniae* (ca. 1240), eye-witness to the event, notes that:

> Those who wished to loot found many things in the field, that is, gold, silver, rich garments, silk harnesses and many other valuable ornaments, as well as much money and precious vessels.[5]

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4 *Historia Silense*, ed. Justo Pérez de Urbel and Atilano González (Madrid: CSIC, 1959); *Chronica Adefonsi Imperatoris* ed. Antonio Maya Sánchez, in *Chronica hispana saeculi XII, Pars I*, Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevaelis, 71 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1990), 109–248; *Chronica Naierensis*, ed. Juan A. Estévez Sola, Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevaelis, 72A (Turnhout: Brepols, 1995), 3–181. The discourse on spoliation is heavily represented in contemporary Arabic chronicles. See ʿAbd al-Malik Ibn al-Kardabūs: *Kitāb al-iktifāʾ fī akhbār al-khulafāʾ*, ed. Felipe Maíllo Salgado, in *Historia de Al-Andalus* (Barcelona: Akal, 1986), 64–68; 134–137.

5 "In campo autem qui uoluerunt rapere plurima inuenerunt aurum, scilicet, argentum, uestes preciosas, suppellectilia serica et multa alia preciosissima ornamenta, necnon et pecunias multas et uasa preciosa." *Roderici Ximenii de Rada, Historia de Rebus Hispaniae*, ed. Juan Fernández Valverde, Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevaelis 72 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1987), 275.

The loot described in the chronicles proceeds not only from the war in al-Andalus, although it does feature in the majority of references. In the so-called *Latin Chronicle of the Kings of Castile*, attributed to Juan de Soria, Chancellor of Fernando III (written 1230s–1240s), the chronicler makes a generic mention of the famous sack of Constantinople by the Crusaders in 1204, when gold, silver, precious stones, and Syrian cloths of various kinds were wrested from its churches.[6] Beyond looting, however, gifts, treaties, rewards, ransoms, theft, and commerce were also means of transfer of objects between Christians and Muslims. In general, we have only vague references in the chronicles to any of these means. For example, the *De Rebus Hispaniae* reports that an unnamed Muslim ruler of Toledo, who was planning to marry Teresa, the sister of Alfonso V of León (ca. 1008), changed his mind when struck by an angel after Teresa rejected his embrace, threatening him with the wrath of God. The king of Toledo then returned her to León accompanied by camels loaded with gold, silver, rich fabrics, and magnificent works of gold.[7]

The chronicles' accounts of the looting of churches by monarchs and nobles in the context of recurring conflicts among Christians offer regrettably few details of the objects pillaged, defining them by the material of which they are made rather than by any individual characteristic. Alfonso el Batallador, king of Aragon, was said to sacrilegiously steal gold, silver, and precious stones from places of worship in the Tierra de Campos because, according to *De Rebus Hispaniae*, he had no money to pay the army in his wars first against his estranged wife Queen Urraca and then her son, King Alfonso VII.[8] Curiously, the archbishop-chronicler says nothing about what is highlighted by the documents from Urraca's reign, that is, the contributions of ecclesiastical institutions to the queen's demands to finance her war against Alfonso el Batallador. A charter from the Cathedral of Oviedo, for example, includes the gift of a valuable cup to the queen in 1112; a decade later, she received from the monasteries of León various objects of gold and silver, including chalices and

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6   *Crónica Latina de los Reyes de Castilla*, ed. and trans. Luis Charlo Brea (Cádiz: Universidad de Cádiz, 1984), 46.

7   *Roderici Ximenii de Rada, Historia de rebus Hispaniae*, 167. The chronicle puts the following words into the mouth of the sister of the king of León: "I am a Christian and I loathe associating with strangers: do not touch me, lest the Lord Jesus Christ, whom I adore, strike you down." See also Simon Barton, "Marriage across Frontiers: Sexual Mixing, Power and Identity in Medieval Iberia," *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* 3/1 (2011): 1–25.

8   *Roderici Ximenii de Rada, Historia de rebus Hispaniae*: 222, "unde et rex Aragonum ad sanctuaria misit manum et thesauros auri et argenti et preciosorum palidum, quos regum et reginarum deuotio dedicarat, manu sacrilega usurpauit et etiam possessiones oblatas a regibus infiscauit."

cups, cutlery and tableware, sacred rings, crosses, and an altar frontal.[9] At the beginning of 1115, the queen ordered that the "silver" of the monastery of Valcabado, described as three vessels, a salt-cellar, and a *cithara*, be handed over to her officers; and at the end of 1116, she ordered the dismantling of a cross from the same monastery, which her aunt the Infanta Elvira had had made.[10] Although such use of church treasuries must have been quite common at moments of crisis in all medieval Christian kingdoms, the extensive coverage of Urraca's pillaging in contemporary sources is directly related to her gender. Female power was seen as lacking legitimacy, a lack especially felt in the first half of Urraca's seventeen-year reign, and then again during the rocky first decade of the reign of her son Alfonso VII. At the death of Queen Urraca, ecclesiastical institutions such as the abbey of Sahagún rushed to claim from her son the return of the sacred objects appropriated by the queen, or at least compensation for the plunder.[11]

In these chronicles, the imprecise and generic nature of references to precious objects is striking. Also striking is the very scarcity of movable goods, compared to the constant references to property—land, churches, buildings of all types—in the narrative sources, and this despite the fact that the world of their authors—archbishops, bishops, clergymen and monks—was undoubtedly full of valuable objects. As the documentation makes clear, churches and

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9   Irene Ruíz Albi, ed., *La Reina Doña Urraca (1109–1126). Cancillería y colección diplomática*, Fuentes y Estudios de Historia Leonesa, 102 (León: Centro de Estudios e Investigación San Isidoro, 2003), doc. 29, pp. 534–536: "est una copa argentea et deaurata, centum quinquaginta solidos ponderata, purissimo argento et opere obtimo fabricata;" doc. 125, pp. 761–764: "Et quia de proprio habere non potuit, per meam licenciam et canonicorum suorum tabulam altaris constantem nonaginta septem marcis argenti, et quamdam capsam continentem LX uncias auri, ab ecclesia sua comodatim accepit et mihi contulit, tali pacto, ut constituto tempore ecclesie sue restitueret."

10   Ruíz Albi, *La Reina Doña Urraca,* doc. 62, pp. 606–607. See Pascual Martínez Sopena, "La circulation des objets en temps de guerre. Les années de la reine Urraca (Leon et Castille, vers 1100–1130)," in *Objets sous contrainte. Circulation des richesses et valeur des choses au Moyen Âge*, ed. Laurent Feller and Ana Rodríguez (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2013), 257–282.

11   The idea that the kingdom had been devastated by Urraca's actions is found in some documents from the early months of her son's reign. Such is the case of the acknowledgment of goods received by the monastery of Sahagún from Alfonso VII in August 1126, where the twenty-one year old king presents himself as a child, ignorant, disturbed by adolescence, and corrupted by his mother and by her supporters (*ubi a matre* [...] *infestatus*). José Antonio Fernández Florez, ed., *Colección diplomática del monasterio de Sahagún* (León: Centro de Estudios e Investigación San Isidoro, 1991), IV:103–107. See also Ana Rodríguez, *La estirpe de Leonor de Aquitania. Mujeres y poder en los siglos XII y XIII* (Barcelona: Editorial Crítica, 2014), 216–217.

monasteries received copious endowments of the goods needed to begin their institutional journey. These precious liturgical objects are listed in foundational documents, and it is logical to assume that they formed part of the daily life of monks, nuns, and clerics.[12] In other words, the chroniclers were likely surrounded by objects, but in their writings they only chose to detail a few special pieces on particularly meaningful occasions.

Some examples are especially significant. Lucas de Tuy, author of the *Chronicon Mundi* and canon at the basilica of San Isidoro in León until the 1240s, must have encountered precious objects throughout his long ecclesiastical life at the royal church, many of which proceeded from the endowment of San Isidoro by King Fernando I and Queen Sancha in 1063, after the remains of the Visigothic bishop were translated from Sevilla. The surviving charter may not reflect a single document but rather a twelfth-century recasting of the juridical content of several royal documents, as has been discussed recently.[13] The lengthy catalogue of possessions received by the church begins with a list of liturgical ornaments, gold- and silverwork, textiles, and tableware. It includes three golden crowns, one of them belonging to the king himself (or to the queen?):

> one [of the crowns] with six *alphas* around it; another with pearls hanging within, and another golden one with pearls (amethysts? *annemates*) and enamels: in fact, the third one is the golden diadem from my own head …[14]

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12   For examples of monastic endowments with an abundance of precious objects and fine cloth from al-Andalus, see Ana Rodríguez, "A propos des objets nécessaires. Dotations monastiques et circulation d'objets dans le royaume de León dans le Haut Moyen Âge," in *Objets sous contrainte. Circulation des richesses et valeur des choses au Moyen Âge*, ed. Laurent Feller and Ana Rodríguez (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2013), 63–90.

13   María Encarnación Martín López, "Un documento de Fernando I de 1063: ¿Falso diplomático?," in *Monarquía y sociedad en el Reino de León: de Alfonso III a Alfonso VII*, ed. José María Fernández Catón (León: Centro de Estudios e Investigación San Isidoro, 2007), 513–540. See also the discussion in Chpt. 2 of this volume by Therese Martin, "Caskets of Silver and Ivory from Diverse Parts of the World: Strategic Collecting for an Iberian Treasury."

14   "Offerimus [...] ornamenta altarium id est frontale ex auro puro opere digno cum lapidibus zmaragdiis saffiris et omni genere preciosis et olouitreis. Alios similiter tres frontales argenteos singulis altaribus. Corronas [sic] tres aureas, una ex his cum sex alfas et corona de alaules intus in ea pendens alia est de annemates cum olouitreo atque tercia uero est diadema capitis mihi aureum et arcellina de cristallo auro cooperta, crucem auream cum lapidibus conpertam olouitream et aliam eburneam et similitudinem nostri redemptoris crucifixi, turibulos duos auris cum inferturia aurea et alium turibulum argenteum magno podere conflatum et calicem et patenam ex auro olouitreo, stolas aureas cum amoxerce argenteo et opera ex aureo et aliud argenteo ad amorcere habet opera olouitrea et capsam

The richness of these crowns and other metalworks, as well as the gold and ivory crosses, the objects of silver and enamel—not to mention the precious emeralds, sapphires, and amethysts set within—is extraordinary, as befitted the place that would shortly become the royal pantheon, the center of both dynastic and symbolic power of the rulers of León until the kingdom's union with Castile in 1230.[15]

Of all the gifts given to San Isidoro, only an ivory cross, currently in the Museo Arqueológico Nacional (Madrid), can with reasonable certainty be identified as part of that endowment because it bears the names of the royal donors.[16] Although other objects from the list cannot be clearly identified with pieces still kept in the treasury of San Isidoro, what does seem clear is that this rich holding of liturgical goods made of gold and silver, precious stones, and ivory, must in some way have been viewed by those who lived inside the walls of San Isidoro. One of these inhabitants would have been Lucas de Tuy, whose chronicle lacks any description of the objects with which he was surely familiar. When his *Chronicon Mundi* relates the construction of the church of San Isidoro it simply mentions its decoration with gold, silver, precious stones, and silks.[17] Clearly, the works that adorned the church in which he was canon for most of his life were not a priority in his account. It seems likely that, in the early thirteenth century when the canon of San Isidoro was writing, these objects no longer figured as important elements for the story of the future of the monarchy of León, despite their significance for rulers in the past.

Lucas de Tuy also refers, with the same lack of precision, to the riches—gold, silver, and precious stones—presented by Fernando I to the Cathedral of San Salvador in Oviedo, although he had described in at least some detail the cross *ex auro puro preciosisque gemmis* ("a golden cross with precious gems") given by Alfonso III to that church.[18] For his part, the Archbishop of Toledo,

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eburneam operatam cum auro et alias eburneas argento laboratas: in una ex eis sedent intus tres alie capselle [...]." Ermine robes, liturgical vestments, Greek and Islamic textiles (*alvexi*) are also listed further on. The table service is made of silver. Also: "Omnia haec uasa argentea dearauta cum predicta arrotoma binas habent ansas." The *arrotomas* could be objects of rock crystal. *Patrimonio cultural de San Isidoro de León: Documentos de los siglos X–XIII*, ed. María Encarnación Martín López (León: Universidad de León, 1995), 26–29, doc. 6. The date on the document is 22 December 1063.

15 Therese Martin, *Queen as King: Politics and Architectural Propaganda in Twelfth-Century Spain* (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2006).

16 Ángela Franco Mata, "El tesoro de San Isidoro y la monarquía leonesa," *Boletín del Museo Arqueológico Nacional* 9 (1991): 35–68. In the present volume, see Figures 2.4a-b and 6.6.

17 "… plurime pulcritudinis auro et argento lapidibusque preciosis et cortinis sericis decorauit," *Lucas Tudensis, Chronicon Mundi*, ed. Emma Falque Rey, Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis 74 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), 293.

18 Falque, *Lucas Tudensis, Chronicon Mundi*, 248.

Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada, attributes particular value to objects given by kings to Oviedo as a source of the legitimacy of Toledo. When he speaks of the transfer to Asturias of the ark containing relics, sacred books, and the tunic of the Virgin in the eighth century, after the Islamic conquest, Rodrigo indicates that all this comes from Toledo and not from Sevilla as a way of reaffirming the metropolitan primacy of the see of Toledo in the face of the threat of the restoration of the old Visigothic sees.[19] This was an imminent danger at the time of writing of *De Rebus Hispaniae*, just at the moment of the conquest of Cordoba (1236) and before that of Sevilla (1248):

> It is said that the ark of the relics was built in Jerusalem and was transported by sea to Sevilla at the time of the persecution of the impostor Muḥammed, and from there carried to Toledo, and that, finally, it was said, it was placed in Asturias.

And further on:

> Whereupon, when the king (Alfonso II) was personally examining some precious stones, he thought of making a cross with gold and with those stones; and when he went from the church to the palace, two angels appeared before him under the guise of pilgrims saying that they were goldsmiths. Then the king, in addition to giving them gold and stones, provided them with a house where they could work in peace. And having sat down to eat, he sent some of his people to the goldsmiths, asking them who they were. When they arrived, they found an admirably finished cross that illuminated with its dazzling brilliance all the corners of the house [...] the king ... carried the glorious cross to the altar of the Savior; and, relating this to Leo III, who occupied the Apostolic See, he obtained from him permission for an archbishop to be created in the church of Oviedo.[20]

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19   On this topic and its impact on the writing of chronicles, see Peter Linehan, *History and the Historians of Medieval Spain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993).

20   *Roderici Ximenii de Rada, Historia de Rebus Hispaniae*, 125–126. "Ad hec cum rex preciosos lapides coram aspiceret, cogitauit crucem de auro et eisdem lapidibus fabricare, ipsique ab ecclesia ad palacium uenienti occurrerunt duo angeli in effigie peregrina se ese aurifices asserentes. Rex autem datis auro et lapidibus etiam dedit domum in qua possent secrecius operari. Cumque in prandio consedisset, misit nuncios ad aurifices sollicitans quinam essent. Cumque nuncii accessissent, inuenerunt crucem miro opere consumatam et corusco splendore tocius domus penetralia illustrantem, adeo ut non possent tantum splendorem intuencium oculi tolerare. Quod rex audiens festinauit, et tanto splendore

This cross has been identified with the Cross of the Angels, preserved in the Cathedral of Oviedo, although very much transformed—almost converted into a replica—after the damage suffered in the Civil War of the 1930s, its theft in 1977, and its later recovery in a very bad state of disrepair.[21]

Certain objects, however, did arouse the interest of the authors of the twelfth- and thirteenth-century Latin chronicles. In some cases discussed below, it is very possible that the chroniclers had seen the pieces, as they themselves affirmed; in others, their interest stems from a tradition coming from older accounts; and in almost all, the recounting of objects responds to the need to identify and to individualize in order to construct a particular narrative. A few objects emerge as fundamental narrative elements of the accounts in which they are included. And it is this that allows them to be individualized because their value is not only in the precious materials of which they are made or the specialized work needed for their manufacture, but even more in their ability to be bearers of—or to exemplify—personal and collective virtues or defects, and individual or family memories.

The *Chronica Adefonsi Imperatoris* offers a unique opportunity to discern the objects and relics that, as part of the sacred treasure, a monarch took along on military campaigns, a very common practice at the time. These liturgical goods were presumably used on portable altars, carried by clerics accompanying the royal armies, for the celebration of rites and ceremonies. According to this chronicle, Alfonso el Batallador, king of Aragon, always took with him on campaign a chest of pure gold adorned with precious stones inside and out; within was a cross made from fragments of the True Cross, which he had stolen in times of war from the monastery of Sahagún.[22] He also had ivory containers

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comperto, agens gracias Saluatori, conuocato clero et populo et pontifice gloriosam crucem altare optulit Saluatoris, et ista referens Leoni tercio, qui sedi apostolice presidebat, optinuit ut in Ouetensi ecclesia archiepiscopus crearetur."

21   See Raquel Alonso Álvarez, "The *Cruces Gemmatae* of Oviedo between the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries," *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* 9/1 (2017): 52–71.

22   "Habebat autem rex Aragonensium semper secum quandam archam factam ex auro mundo, ornatam intus et foris lapidibus pretiosis, in qua erat crux salutaris ligni, reliquiis veneranda, quo Dominus noster Ihesus Christus, Dei filius, ut nos redimeret suspensus est. In diebus autem bellorum rapuerat illam de Domo sanctorum martyrum Facundi et Primitivi, quae est in terra Legionis, circa flumen Ceiae. Et habebat pariter alias pixides eburneas coopertas auri, argento et lapidibus pretiosis, plenas reliquiis sancte Marie, el ligni Domini, apostolorum, martirum et confessorum, uirginum, patriarcharum et prophetarum; erantque reposite in tentoriis, ubi erat capella que semper iuxta tentoria regis adiacebat, easque cotidie uigilantes sacerdotes et leuite et magna pars clericorum obseruabant semperque offerebant super eas sacrificium Domino Deo ..." *Chronica Adefonsi Imperatoris*, 174. Note that the chronicles state that the theft was by Alfonso, not Urraca.

covered with gold, silver, and precious stones that were filled with relics of the Virgin, more fragments of the True Cross, and relics of apostles, martyrs, and confessors, virgins, patriarchs, and prophets. This treasure was guarded in the tents containing the king's chapel, which was always situated next to the royal apartments; his priests, deacons, and clergy watched over them and used them for the celebration of mass.

But at the battle of Fraga of 1134 as punishment for his sins (among which, one imagines, was the robbery of relics from Sahagún), the Muslims took possession of the king's golden chest and the ivory containers with all the riches and relics they contained, knocking down the royal tents and storming the chapel. Alfonso el Batallador fled the battlefield with some of his faithful men and, sick at heart—says the chronicle—he died a few days later.[23] Subsequently, the *Estoria de España* of Alfonso X, which repeatedly presents the king of Aragon as the instigator of unbearable violence, tells in one of its chapters how the king deceived the sacristans of the monastery of Sahagún in order to steal the True Cross, the most important of their relics. In another we read how he further planned to rob within the monastic enclosure, using his own brother Ramiro, "a false and evil monk," say the authors of this Alfonsine historiographical work:

> Ramiro had the whole wealth of the monastery brought before him [...], to wit, carpets, pillows, blankets, quilts, sheets, gold and silver vessels, reliquaries full of holy relics, and church ornaments of great riches [...], among which things he took a finger of Mary Magdalene, some crosses of gold, and precious stones, and in their place put plaster and dog bones.[24]

As noted above, portable altars and relics accompanied rulers on their journeys and military campaigns. Jaime I of Aragon entered Mallorca in 1229 accompanied by the relics that he had hoarded; a reliquary in the shape of a silver book, which has traditionally been identified with the portable altar used during Jaime's campaigns, is still preserved in the cathedral of Palma. Composed of two

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23   *Chronica Adefonsi Imperatoris*, 176–177.
24   "Ramiro hizo traer a su presencia toda la sustancia del monasterio ..., conviene a saber tapetes, almohadas, cobertores, cocedras, savanas, vasos de oro e de plata, custodias llenas de reliquias santas, e ornamientos de la Iglesia de muchas riquezas [...] Entre las cuales cosas tomó un dedo de la Magdalena, llevó unas cruces de oro, llevó piedras preciosas e en su lugar puso yeso y hueso de perro." *Primera Crónica General de España que mandó componer Alfonso el Sabio y se continuaba bajo Sancho IV*, ed. Ramón Menéndez Pidal (Madrid: Gredos, 1955), 313. Ramiro II el Monje succeeded his brother Alfonso I as king of Aragon in 1134.

leaves divided into twenty-four squares containing twenty-four relics of Christ, the Virgin, and saints, this diptych may indeed be from that period with additions from the early years of the fourteenth century.[25]

Certain objects appear in chronicles because they have special importance for the rituals of medieval Christian monarchies. Despite the very scarce evidence for coronation ceremonies in Castilla-León during the central Middle Ages, a fact that has given rise to an intense debate in the historiography on rituality and sacred elements in the mediaeval Hispanic monarchy, references to the crowns themselves are fairly abundant in the chronicles.[26] The crown is a central element in the account in *De Rebus Hispaniae* concerning the legitimacy of Visigothic power, a legitimacy that the archbishop of Toledo, Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada, sought to elide with that of the Castilian monarchy—so-called neogothicism—ignoring the dynastic break caused by the end of the Visigothic kingdom in 711. After the rebellion of Duke Paul in Narbonne in 673 and his defeat by King Wamba, the rebel returned the sacred objects that had been stolen:

> For the traitor Paul, fearful of being deprived of the funds which he had received from the king, increased them by robbery in sacred places, and sacrilegiously seized as many vessels of gold and silver as he could obtain from the treasuries of the Lord. In his madness, he even wore on his head the golden crown that the very devout King Recaredo had offered in Gerona to the altar of Saint Felix. Thereupon, King Wamba stipulated that the sacred vessels he was able to find should be returned to their respective churches.[27]

The crown of Recaredo has not survived, but it cannot have been very different from those in the treasure of Guarrazar displayed today in the Museo Arqueológico Nacional in Madrid.[28] The cruel punishment meted out to Paul and

25   José Miralles Sbert, *Las reliquias y relicarios de la Catedral de Mallorca* (Palma de Mallorca: Monumenta Maioricensia, 1961).

26   The two opposing positions in the debate are developed by José Manuel Nieto Soria, "Origen divino, espíritu laico y poder real en la Castilla del siglo XIII," *Anuario de Estudios Medievales* 27 (1997): 43–102; Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos del poder real en Castilla* (*siglos XIII–XVI*) (Madrid: Eudema, 1988); Teófilo Ruiz, "Une royauté sans sacré: la monarchie castillane du Bas Moyen Âge," *Annales E. S. C.* 39 (1984): 429–453; Peter Linehan, "Frontier Kingship. Castile 1250–1350," in *La royauté sacrée dans le monde chrétien. Colloque de Royaumont, mars 1989* (Paris: École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 1992), 71–79.

27   *Roderici Ximenii de Rada, Historia de rebus Hispaniae*, 88.

28   See Alicia Perea, ed., *El tesoro visigodo de Guarrazar* (Madrid: CSIC, 2001).

his companions for their betrayal was accompanied in the duke's case by a symbolic crown; the account says that they were imprisoned in Toledo, making their entry into the city:

> ... after having their heads shaved, their beards shaved off, barefoot, clothed in sackcloth, mounted on camels, and Paul, for greater dishonor, crowned with a fish spine, following the long line of his men whom he had pushed into blindness [literally; they were imprisoned after being mocked with the humiliation of having their heads shaved—anyone suffering this punishment could not be king, according to canon XVII of the IV Council of Toledo—and their eyes put out] and treason, becoming the general object of derision, jest, and mockery.[29]

The archbishop of Toledo later describes other crowns, as at the battle of Guadalete in 711. King Rodrigo

> with a crown of gold and a garment embroidered with the same metal was carried on a bed of ivory drawn by two mules, as required by the protocol of the Gothic kings.[30]

In the course of the battle where Almanzor confronted the Christian kings in Rueda or Roa (983–984), he "took off a gold cap that he wore as a crown, rose from his chair and sat on the ground, according to the custom of the princes of his people."[31] Fernando I, at the time of his death, stripped himself of crown and royal tunic before the reliquary of Saint Isidore in León.[32] Elsewhere, the *Chronica Adefonsi Imperatoris* relates the imperial coronation of Alfonso VII in 1135: the king, dressed in a splendid cloak woven with admirable craftsmanship, received on his head a crown of pure gold and precious stones.[33]

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29 *Roderici Ximenii de Rada, Historia de Rebus Hispaniae*, 90: "decaluatis capitibus, rasis barbis, pedibus denudatis, induti saccis, camelis impositi, et Paulus confusionis pocior corona picea coronatus, sequente longa deductione suorum quos cecitas et proditio producebat, facti omnibus in ludibrium et derisum, in obprobium et cachinnum."

30 *Roderici Ximenii de Rada, Historia de Rebus Hispaniae*, 102–103: "cum corona aurea et uestibus deauratis a duobus mulis in lecto eburneo ferebatur, ut Gothorum regum dignitas exigebat."

31 *Roderici Ximenii de Rada, Historia de Rebus Hispaniae*, 163: "deposito aureo pilleo quem pro corona gestabat, humi resedit iuxta morem principum gentis suis."

32 *Roderici Ximenii de Rada, Historia de Rebus Hispaniae*, 194: "et imposito capiti diademate et indutus regalibus indumentis coram sarcofago sancti Ysidori."

33 *Chronica Adefonsi Imperatoris*, 182.

In spite of all these written references, it is striking that the only crown to have survived as a material object from the central Middle Ages in the kingdoms of Castile and León is that from the tomb of King Sancho IV, who had been crowned and later buried in Toledo cathedral. Sancho's coronation was featured in the first lines of the chronicle of his reign.[34] The crown consists of eight rectangular metalwork plates or links joined by hinges and bordered by a simple molding. Each segment is surmounted by a castle. It is completed with four sapphires and four cameos, two Roman and two Staufen.[35] We find evidence of the existence of crowns with cameos in the will of Alfonso X, written in Sevilla in January 1284: "and the crowns with stones and cameos [....] may be held by anyone who rightfully inherits our greater lordship of Castile and León," from which we can recognize the presence of more than a single crown with cameos among this monarch's treasures. In terms of its technical manufacture, Sancho's crown is a minor example of metalworking, which may indicate that when arranging funeral goods an effort was made to avoid burying works of high quality or special significance. Thus, it would be appropriate for a dead king to wear a crown that, for its lower material quality, was of lesser use for the public acts of a living monarch.[36]

In the chronicles, objects generally appear linked to specific places, but they may circulate in very different ways. A revealing example of what Arjun Appadurai called "the social life of things"[37] centers on the travels of an object that was initially owned by Zafadola—a linguistic corruption of Sayf al-Dawla, "Sword of the Dynasty"—who was to be the last king of the taifa of Zaragoza, vassal of Alfonso VII, and one of the participants in the latter's imperial coronation of 1135. Lucas de Tuy's *Chronicon Mundi* (and also Jiménez de Rada's *De Rebus Hispaniae*, although with some variations, as we shall see below) attributed the motive of the pilgrimage to Santiago by King Louis VII of France,

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34 "É luego fuese para Toledo, é fízose coronar á él é a la reina doña María, su mujer; e coronáronlo cuatro obispos ..." ("And then he went to Toledo, and had himself and Queen María crowned, and four bishops crowned him ...") *Crónica del Rey Don Sancho, el Bravo, fijo del Rey Don Alfonso X*, in *Crónicas de los reyes de Castilla, desde Don Alfonso el Sabio hasta los católicos Don Fernando y Doña Isabel*, ed. Cayetano Rosell, 3 vols. (Madrid: BAE, 1961), 1:69; Isidro G. Bango "La llamada corona de Sancho IV y los emblemas de poder real," *Alcanate* 9 (2014–2015): 261–283.

35 Wilhelm Grünhagen, "Bemerkungen zu den Kameen in der Krone des Königs Sancho IV von Kastilien," *Madrider Mitteilungen* 29 (1988): 245–253.

36 Bango, "La llamada corona de Sancho IV y los emblemas de poder real," 280. The author's contention that the crown of Sancho IV was "a minor example of metalworking" has not received complete acceptance in the bibliography.

37 *The Social Life of Things. Commodities in Cultural Perspectives*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

married in 1154 to Constanza, daughter of Alfonso VII, to his desire to verify whether his wife was the daughter of the ruler's concubine, as had been insinuated. The two monarchs met in Burgos. Alfonso VII made a show of all his power and wealth, and he offered Louis VII "a profusion of gifts, each more valuable than the last; but Louis would only accept a great emerald (*zmaracdum magnum*) that King Zafadola had given to his lord Alfonso VII."[38] Lucas de Tuy then notes that when Louis returned to France, he presented this precious jewel to the abbey of Saint Denis.

Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada's account makes the same point as Lucas de Tuy about the motivation that led Louis to make his pilgrimage to Santiago and to meet with his Castilian counterpart, and it also coincides in pointing out the abundance of wealth offered by Alfonso. However, it adds some significant details while omitting others:

> The emperor [Alfonso VII] offered him a profusion of gifts, each more valuable than the last; but Louis would only accept a carbuncle, which he placed in the crown of thorns in Saint-Denis, which I remember seeing.[39]

De Rebus Hispaniae omits any reference to Zafadola, the first owner of the gem, while disagreeing with the *Chronicon Mundi* about what type of gemstone it was: a green emerald according to Lucas de Tuy, a carbuncle or red ruby according to the Archbishop of Toledo. It seems likely that Jiménez de Rada would have been able to distinguish between a ruby and an emerald: a chapter later he recounts the conquest of Almería by the Genoese, who received all the regal booty including a container of emeralds.[40] Two new pieces

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38   Falque, *Lucas Tudensis, Chronicon Mundi*, 315. "Multa donaria oblata fuerunt tunc nobilissimo Lodoico regi Francorum, sed nichil inde accipere uoluit, nisi quendam zmaracdum magnum [lapidem preciosum] cogente imperatore Adefonso, quem rex Zafadola detulerat. Reuersus est itaque rex Lodoicus in Franciam cum honore et leticia magna et hunc preciosum lapidem, quem detulerat ab Yspania monasterio beati Dionisii contulit." Georges Martin, "L'escarboucle de Saint-Denis, le roi de France et l'empereur des Espagnes," in *Saint-Denis et la Royauté. Études offertes à Bernard Guenée,* ed. Françoise Autrand, Claude Gauvard, and Jean-Marie Moeglin (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1999), 439–462, tracks the transmission of the story through the different narrative sources of the thirteenth century. As Martin rightly points out, the *Chronica Adefonsi Imperatoris*, begun in the lifetime of Alfonso VII, and which inspired Lucas de Tuy for certain details, does not contain this episode.

39   *Roderici Ximenii de Rada, Historia de Rebus Hispaniae*, 230: "Optulit eadem imperator infinita donaria, que sui ualore numerum excedebant; set nil eorum uoluit recipere Lodouicus, nisi quondam carbunculum, quem in corona spine Dominice apud Sanctum Dionisium collocauit, quem etiam memini me uidisse."

40   *Roderici Ximenii de Rada, Historia de Rebus Hispaniae*, 232.

of information, however, are of particular interest: first, this is the personal testimony of Jiménez de Rada—one of several in his chronicle—who tells us that he remembers seeing the gem in Paris, where he received training in theology before assuming the archbishopric of Toledo. Secondly, the mounting of the jewel in the Holy Crown, a magnificent work of gold destined to house the relics of Christ's crown of thorns; this reliquary was melted down in April 1794, although drawings were made prior to its destruction.[41] Of the stones that were extracted before the crown-reliquary was dismantled, there is only mention of a Syrian garnet that had belonged to Anne of Kiev, wife of King Henry I of France.[42]

Zafadola, who probably gave the gem to Alfonso VII as proof of his vassalage, was in turn the son of 'Imād al-Dawla, "Supporter of the Dynasty," an ally against the Almoravids of the king of Aragon, Alfonso el Batallador, with whom he took part in the Battle of Cutanda in 1120. 'Imād al-Dawla is almost certainly the *Mitadolus* whose name appears inscribed on the silver-gilt foot of a rock crystal vase, which itself probably had come from the sacking of the Fatimid palaces of Cairo in the 1060s. Now known as the Eleanor Vase, this luxurious object was also part of the treasury of Saint Denis, and it is currently held by the Musée du Louvre.[43] The well-known inscription on the base reads, "As a bride, Eleanor gave this vase to King Louis, Mitadolus to her grandfather, the king to me, and Suger to the saints." This text traces the route of the object: Mitadolus, ruler of Zaragoza, gave it to William IX of Aquitaine, probably when both were in the service of Alfonso el Batallador, king of Aragon; William of Aquitaine gave it to his granddaughter Eleanor, perhaps as a baptismal gift, who in turn gave it to her husband, Louis VII; and he gave it to Abbot Suger of Saint Denis, in whose treasury it would long be held. *De Rebus in*

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41 The old drawings of the crown and the descriptions of the precious objects that were part of the treasure of Saint-Denis were published in the catalogue of the exhibition that took place in the Musée du Louvre in 1991. See Daniel Alcouffe et al., *Catalogue de l'Exposition: Le trésor de Saint Denis* (Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1991). The crown of St. Louis is also mentioned in the 1634 inventory of the goods at the church of Saint Denis: Marie-Madeleine Gauthier, "Le trésor de Saint-Denis. Inventaire de 1634," *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale* 18 (1975): 149–156.

42 Georges Martin suggests that, as a way of enhancing royal prestige, Jiménez de Rada identifies one of the garnets of the Crown of Thorns he saw at Saint-Denis—perhaps that of Anna of Kiev?—with the precious stone given by Alfonso VII. This episode, with some additions, is repeated in the *Historia de España* of Alfonso X.

43 George T. Beech, "The Eleanor of Aquitaine Vase, William IX of Aquitaine, and Muslim Spain," *Gesta* 32 (1993): 3–10; Beech, "The Eleanor of Aquitaine Vase," in *Eleanor of Aquitaine. Lord and Lady,* ed. Bonnie Wheeler and John Carmi Parsons (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 369–373. See also Rodríguez, *La Estirpe de Leonor de Aquitania*, 133–188.

administratione sua gestis, a work composed by Abbot Suger between 1144 and 1148, which describes the enlargement of Saint-Denis and the way in which the abbey's treasure had been accumulated, makes reference to several ewers, some donated by the magnates of the kingdom, and others acquired. Notable among them was the Eleanor Vase:

> Also a vessel, a kind of carafe of beryl or crystal with the capacity of a pint, which the newly married Queen of Aquitaine had given to our Lord King Louis on his first voyage, and the present King to us as an index of his affection, we offered it in turn to our masters the holy martyrs for the sacrifice of the table of God. We ordered the story of the donation to be engraved on the vessel itself, once it had been adorned with gold and precious stones, in these few lines: Eleanor, the bride, gave this vessel to King Louis, Mitadolus to her grandfather, the King to me, and Suger to the saints.[44]

Surprisingly—and unlike the colorful jewel of the Crown of Thorns reliquary—there is no trace of the Eleanor Vase in chronicles from Spanish lands, despite its prominence in French accounts. Perhaps the reason for this absence lies in the fact that there was no royal intermediation in the transmission of the precious object and that it was therefore not possible to construct a narrative about the power of the Castilian kings and the obligations of their vassals, as reflected in gifts of material goods of great value. Nevertheless, both objects, the gem of Zafadola and the Fatimid rock crystal ewer of Mitadolus ended up in the treasury of the great Parisian abbey of Saint Denis. It is also significant that both had been presented by King Louis VII of France after receiving them from his two wives: the vase from the first, Eleanor; the gem from the second, Constanza.

As we have seen, most of the objects described in any detail in the chronicles of the kingdoms of Castile and León during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries have an intrinsic value derived from the precious materials of which they are made, the production techniques, the function for which they are conceived or that they acquire as symbols of power and, on many occasions, the long journey from their places of origin to the ecclesiastical or royal treasuries where they end up. We read of Syrian textiles, Andalusi silks, Fatimid rock crystal, ivory, and gold- and silverwork on various liturgical implements.

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44   *Abbot Suger and the Abbey Church of St Denis and Its Art Treasures*, ed. Erwin Panofsky (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946), chapter XXXII: "Hoc vas sponsa dedit Aanor regi Ludovico / Mitadolus avo, mihi rex, sanctisque Suger."

Demand, as the basis of real or imaginary exchange, also endowed the objects with value by setting the parameters of utility and scarcity. In this sense, few objects were more in demand at that time than relics, whose circulation in the Middle Ages reflects an essential element in the construction of an ecclesiastical community's identity and prestige, both local and on a larger scale. The movement of relics also shows the rivalries between different institutions as they sought to garner the power of objects whose value was determined by their written or oral history and by the verification of that history, as well as by forms of exchange outside the paths established for non-sacred goods. Given these specific conditions of demand for medieval relics, it is not surprising that their transfer from place to place often came about through theft.[45]

Castilian chronicles deal with the circulation of relics and sacred goods by way of theft in two different ways. In the first case, when the individual who has taken the holy spoils by force is secular: as we have already seen, during the reign of Wamba the traitor Paul committed sacrilege, which eventually led to him being paraded around Toledo crowned with a fish spine. Sacrilegious, too, were the actions of Alfonso el Batallador, whose defeat at Fraga against the Muslims is interpreted as a divine punishment for having stolen the True Cross and other relics from the monastery of Sahagún, leaving—in the addition found in the *Estoria de España*—plaster and dog bones in their place. These laymen who steal church treasures and relics, even if they make use of the liturgical goods on their own portable altars, are roundly condemned in the medieval narrative sources.

In the second case, when those who resort to theft are archbishops, bishops, or abbots, the assessment of the situation by other ecclesiastics who wrote the Castilian chronicles is quite different. In contrast to the castigation of Christian kings and nobles who took sacred goods by force, the ecclesiastics' acquisition by theft of relics that they considered necessary to endow their own houses with legitimacy and prestige is presented as a valid form of exchange. These are the *furta sacra* studied by Patrick Geary, a way of obtaining relics that was as desirable as donation and rather moreso than the commercial trade for other types of precious objects:[46] it was more representative, in short, of their real value and effectiveness. In general, the narrative sources analyzed in the present article are not specific when dealing with the acquisition of relics by

45   Patrick Geary, "Sacred Commodities: The Circulation of Medieval Relics," in *The Social Life of Things. Commodities in Cultural Perspectives*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 169–191.

46   Patrick Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

the great episcopal sees, rather incorporating discourses found elsewhere. On some occasions, however, they may explain how a given ecclesiastical institution acquired its relics, and theft provides some of the most detailed accounts.

The *Historia Compostellana*, written between 1107 and 1149 to the greater glory of Archbishop Gelmírez of Santiago de Compostela, is particularly voluble in this respect when it narrates, for example, the *traslatio* of Saints Fructuoso, Silvestre, and Cucufate in 1102 from Braga to Santiago. The author of this part of the chronicle directly admits that the acquisition was "pious larceny" (*pio latrocinio*).

> And because San Fructuoso was the defender and patron of that region, he took him most fearfully and silently, with pious larceny, from the church that he had built when he was still alive, and when he had done so, he handed him over to the care of his faithful guardians [...] Once dawn broke and he knew that what he had done had not become known, he returned as quickly as if in flight, and full of joy and happiness carried his hidden treasure to a town of Santiago called Cornelhá.[47]

The account takes a similar form when it traces the itinerary of the head of Santiago (St. James), stolen in Jerusalem by Bishop Mauricio de Braga: the envoys of the bishop approached the altar with mattocks, dug deep, and found a vessel of ivory and inside it another silver one full of relics. Then they fled. This pious larceny, as it were, reached Iberia and was deposited in San Zoilo de Carrión de los Condes; from there Queen Urraca took it and other relics—among them a fragment of the Holy Sepulcher and a bone of Saint Stephen—to San Isidoro de León. Then the queen gave the head of St. James to Archbishop Gelmírez, who solemnly entered the town of Santiago with it in 1116.[48] In the second book of the *Historia Compostellana* there is an inventory of everything

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47   *Historia Compostellana*, ed. Emma Falque Rey, Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevaelis, 70 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1988), 34: "Sed quoniam sanctus Fructuosus regionis illius defensor et patronus erat, cum maiore timore et silentio de ecclesia sua, quam ipse adhuc uiuens in carne fecerat, eum pio latrocinio sustulit et sublatum fidelibus suis custodibus seruandum commisit [...]." The author of this story refers to the theft of the relics by Gelmírez from Braga in 1102 and their subsequent secret transfer to Santiago as "*traslatio*." Other narrative sources tell the same kind of stories; as Geary notes in "Sacred commodities," 183–184: "The usual target of the isolated theft was a distant monastery or church visited by a cleric who, judging that the saints whose relics were there were not receiving proper veneration, entered the church at night, broke open the shrine, and fled with the remains."

48   Falque, *Historia Compostellana*, 193–194: "Quedam denique nocte tempestiua ceteris absentibus, clauso ecclesie hostio, aggrediuntur altare ligonibus, quos secum furtim attulerant, et fodientes in altum sub altari, sicut audierant, inueniunt uas quoddam eburneum

the archbishop acquired for his church: from liturgical garments to silver and gold gospel books, gold and silver boxes with crystal inlay, a silver *Lignum Crucis* given to him by Queen Urraca, and a silver casket that is distinguished from the rest because it is said to hold the head of Santiago.[49]

The rivalry between the archiepiscopal sees of Santiago and Toledo had important consequences for the organization of the Hispanic church and for the hierarchy among the dioceses after the union of the kingdoms of Castile and León in 1230. This conflict had previously been embodied in the tale of the robbery of a precious object disguised as a forced donation. During Gelmírez's rule as archbishop, the author of the third book of the *Historia Compostellana* recounts the obtaining by Santiago of a gold chalice for which the archbishop paid, through his treasurer, a hundred marks of pure silver to King Alfonso VII, who in turn had bought it from the archbishop of Toledo "at a time when he was in need."[50] Gelmírez's treasurer then stayed in the royal court before departing on pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The court was probably in residence in Toledo at that time because it was in the Cathedral of Toledo that the treasurer saw a valuable ewer of beautifully worked crystal. As he knew that the archbishop of Toledo was very fond of this object, and he feared that he would refuse to give it as a gift, the treasurer secretly whispered in the ear of the king to ask the archbishop for it, and then to give it to him. And the king did so, says the *Compostellana*, because this treasurer was also the king's chancellor, thanks to the influence exerted by Gelmírez. Once he had acquired the ewer, he carried it off to the church of Santiago.

In sum, accounts of objects of daily use exchanged for others of greater value; transfers of luxury goods from Islamic to Christian contexts, and in the course of that process become sanctified, like chalices or reliquaries; gems and rock crystals whose intrinsic value is enhanced by the prestige of their former

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et intus aliud argenteum plenum reliquiis. Quod accipientes discedunt cum episcopo suo noctu et adeunt ciuitatem sanctam Iherosolimam fugientes …".

49   Falque, *Historia Compostellana*, 333. The inventory testifies to the enormous wealth of the archbishop's seat. The long list includes a gospel book of purple, two of silver and one of gold, a silver missal, a silver epistolary, a gold belt, "two silver caskets, in one of which is said to be the head of Santiago (*capsas II argenteas, in una quarum perhibetur esse caput beati Iacobi*), another ivory casket, another of gilded metal sculpted with admirable artifice with inlaid crystal, another precious gold casket which the archbishop bought for three thousand *sueldos* and then gave to the Holy Father Pope Callixtus, a silver *Lignum Crucis*, given by Queen Urraca, daughter of King Alfonso."

50   Falque, *Historia Compostellana*, 433: "quendam calicem aureum honorabilem et pretiosum, in quo septigenti morabitini continebantur, quem ipse rex A. toletano archiepiscopo imminente sibi necessitate acquisierat."

owners; sacred objects whose value lies not in their beauty but in being essential elements in the construction of identity and sources of power: all of these appear in the Castilian and Leonese chronicles written during the central Middle Ages. These forms of exchange—donation, purchase, theft—allow us to establish ideas about their nature and inalienable character, while the details in some descriptions bring us closer to a real world of objects that were seen and remembered, if only rarely set down in writing.

These textual accounts deal in diverse ways with the objects that formed part of the daily ritual life of the chronicles' authors, all of whom were clerics. As we can conclude from the present discussion about what the texts say— and what they silence—the authors' criteria when individualizing certain objects in the recounting of their tales was not necessarily related to familiarity, as evidenced particularly by the meager interest of Lucas de Tuy in the treasury of San Isidoro de León, where he was canon and within whose walls he wrote his *Chronicon Mundi*. Nor, in the majority of cases, was it related to the idea of extolling the victories against the Muslims of al-Andalus. Rather, the enormous wealth and extravagance of what could be obtained as booty, for example, was measured by the quantity of goods and by the value of their materials—gold, silver, rich textiles from Andalusi workshops—and not in the specificity of a given object that might deserve a detailed description. Only as partial fragments of larger texts, whose main purpose was to elaborate a narrative linked to the construction of royal power, is a more detailed sketch considered necessary. What made such objects deserving of inclusion in a story was not, therefore, their intrinsic value. It was rather their ability to evoke deeds and circumstances whose protagonists were not the things themselves but, fundamentally, the content and form of the multiple relationships forged in a process of exchange. In this way, a precious few objects were able to become, in the histories in which they were featured, essential elements of the narrative.

Acknowledgments

Textiles from the Museum of San Isidoro (León): New Evidence for Re-Evaluating Their Chronology and Provenance

Ana Cabrera Lafuente

Abstract

This paper presents the first in-depth analysis of the textiles held by the Museo de la Real Colegiata de San Isidoro de León, providing a careful investigation of textile features and raw materials, in addition to carbon-14 dating and archival research. These new data have allowed us to redate the fabrics, placing them within their tenth-through early thirteenth-century Mediterranean and European contexts. The result is a more complex image than was previously assumed, and it offers a significant starting point for further research into the roles played by textiles in medieval Iberia.

Keywords

al-Andalus – Byzantium – carbon-14 dating – Central Asia – embroidery – Kufic inscriptions – metal threads – silk

1 Introduction[1]

Textiles as a form of evidence continue to be insufficiently incorporated into larger studies of medieval history, though they have been gaining visibility in recent years. Yet the textiles from the museum of the Real Colegiata de San Isidoro de León have been known in Iberian art history since the study by Manuel Gómez-Moreno in the early 1900s.[2] His discussion of the textiles from

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1   Ana Cabrera's work received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Grant Agreement No. 703711, *Interwoven*.

2   Gómez-Moreno prepared the documentation in 1905 and 1906, though the publication did not appear for another two decades. Manuel Gómez-Moreno, *Catálogo monumental de España. Provincia de León* (Madrid: Ministerio de Instrucción Pública y Bellas Artes,

San Isidoro, as part of the *Catálogo Monumental de León*, while brief, is the only one that presents the complete set, most of them classified as "telas árabes" (Arabic or Islamic fabrics). Following Gómez-Moreno, the textiles are mentioned partially by Kendrick,[3] in May´s book about medieval silks from Spain,[4] and in Partearroyo's articles on silk textiles of al-Andalus.[5] In addition, these textiles have appeared in several exhibition catalogues, from the International Exhibition of Barcelona in 1929 (Figure 4.1)[6] to the *Maravillas de la España Medieval* in 2000, yet they have not been the subject of in-depth research until now.[7]

In 2017, a research project combining an interdisciplinary team under the direction of Therese Martin[8] carried out on-site research on the treasury of San Isidoro and its context.[9] During three days in March 2017, we had full access to the collection, allowing us to document the textiles with macro photographs of the weaves and taking samples for radiocarbon analyses and for characterization of the fibers, dyes, and metal threads.[10] The textiles were documented through digital photography, recording their dimensions, size of the patterns, technical details such as selvedges, thread twist, and loom mistakes (Figures 4.2a-b). This documentation of the techniques together with careful study of how the textiles were applied to the caskets took most of our time during this intensive campaign. Due to the restoration carried out around 2000 in preparation for the *Maravillas* exhibition, most of the textile fragments are

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  1925–1926). The original is available at http://biblioteca.cchs.csic.es/digitalizacion_tnt/index_interior_leon.html.

3 Alfred Kendrick and Ruvon Guest, "A Silk Fabric Woven in Baghdad," *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 49/285 (1926): 261–267.

4 Florence Lewis May, *Silk Textiles of Spain. Eighth to Fifteenth Century* (New York: Hispanic Society of America, 1957), 24–27, figs. 14–16.

5 Cristina Partearroyo, "Los tejidos en Al-Andalus entre los siglos IX al XV," and "Las colecciones de seda y los archivos," in *España y Portugal en las rutas de la seda. Diez siglos de producción y comercio entre Oriente y Occidente* (Barcelona: Universitat Autònoma, 1996), 58–73 and 317–328.

6 Manuel Gómez-Moreno, *El Arte en España. Guía del Museo del Palacio Nacional. Exposición Internacional de Barcelona* (Barcelona: Imprenta de Eugenio Subirana, 1929), rooms 7 and 13.

7 Isidro Bango, ed., *Maravillas de la España Medieval* (Valladolid: Junta de Castilla y León, 2001).

8 *The Medieval Treasury across Frontiers and Generations: The Kingdom of León-Castilla in the Context of Muslim-Christian Interchange, c. 1050–1200*, National Excellence in Research Grant, Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitivity, HAR2015-68614-P. I would like to thank Therese Martin for her support and assistance during the article preparation and English edition of the text.

9 Special thanks to Raquel Jaén and the museum staff for their support.

10 For the purposes of this article, I have had access to the preliminary results of the analyses, which will be published fully by Laura Rodríguez Peinado.

FIGURE 4.1   Room 13, *Arte de España*, at the International Exhibition of Barcelona in 1929. The
showcase displayed some of the textiles and artworks from San Isidoro.
PHOTO: ARXIU FOTOGRÀFIC DE BARCELONA, AFM12461

now lined, with a small window left open at the back to reveal the reverse of
the fabric (Figures 4.3a-b); however, these openings are not sufficient to study
fully all details of the techniques on the reverse of each textile.

Written sources concerning these textiles from the medieval and early mod-
ern period are very scant. Among them, the one naturally highlighted by schol-
ars is the donation made by King Fernando and Queen Sancha in the "1063
charter" that includes golden stoles with luxury silver fabric (*amoxerce*) worked
with gold, a luxury silver fabric (*adamorcece*) with enamel or glass appliqué
worked with crystal or enamel (*olouitrea*),[11] three altar frontals embroidered
with gold (*aurifriso*), a large brocaded veil (*lotzori*) and two small ones with
ermine fur, two gold embroidered (*aurifriso*) mantles, one gold embroidered
textile (*alguexi*), and one purple textile from a Byzantine workshop (*grizis-
co*, Greek), a chasuble embroidered in gold and two dalmatics made with the

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11   *Olovitrea* is related to the enamel work, here perhaps referring to the enamel or glass
beads applied to the fabric, in a similar way to *Opus Anglicanum* embroidery.
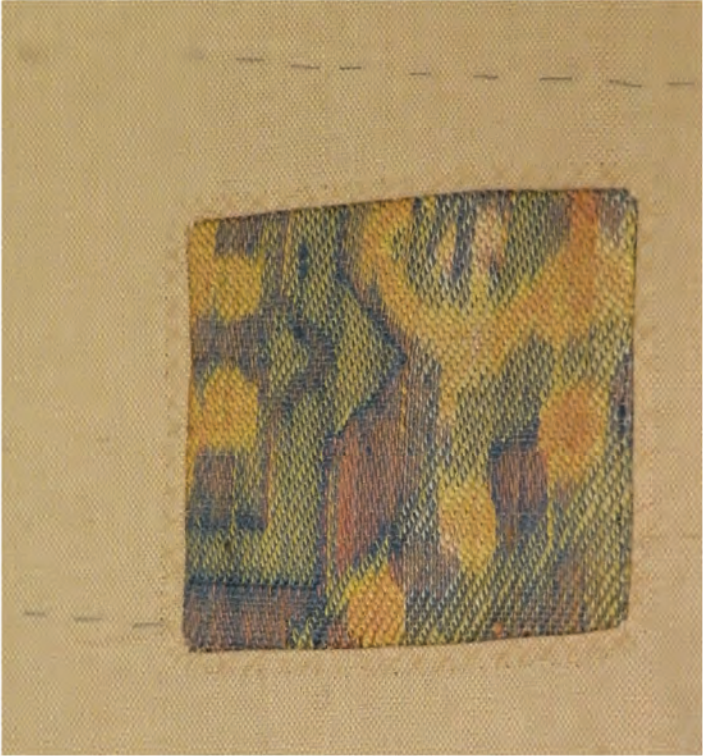
FIGURES 4.3A, B   Textile no. 11 in Table 4.1 showing faded front view and window at the back with multicolored wefts of the same textile (Museo de la Real Colegiata de San Isidoro de León, Inv. No. IIC-3-089-002-0027).

PHOTOS: ANA CABRERA LAFUENTE

same technique.[12] Regarding these written sources, most of the textiles from San Isidoro, especially those in the caskets, are assumed in the historiography to be the same ones described in the "1063 charter," despite the fact that none of the surviving pieces can easily be matched to the above list.

Concerning the different tests and analyses now available to characterize the materials of historical artworks overall and textiles specifically, the last twenty years have seen great advances. These new types of studies have been very useful in recent investigation especially of Late Antique textiles from Egypt, among other materials.[13] Such studies have a close link to those using archaeometric techniques, whose objectives can be summarized as the application of scientific analysis to archaeological material.[14] Such techniques help us to contextualize these artworks, as most of the objects are held in museums or church treasuries, with no clear or known original context.

This methodology allows us to comprehend the material reality of each textile, using carbon-14 analysis to provide data about the moment the raw materials were collected. It also informs us about the fibers, dyes, metal threads, weaves, and looms used in their manufacture, along with a possible primary function of the cloths. Historical textiles are a fragile remnant of the past; this evidence needs to be assessed carefully as a partial source towards a complex, rich, and varied reality, as reflected by the written record. To reach a complete understanding of medieval textiles in context, a combination of efforts among specialists and scholars from different fields of study is needed.

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12   The references to textiles in the "1063 charter" are "stolas aureas cum amoxerce argenteo et opera ex auro, et aliud argenteum adamorcece habet opera olouitrea … frontales tres aurifrisos, uelum templo lotzori maiore cum alios duos minores arminios, mantos duos aurifrisos alio alguexi auro texto cum alio grizisco in dimisso cardeno, casula aurifrisa cum dalmaticis duabus aurofrisis et alia aluexi auro texta." According to Pérez Rodríguez, *algexi* or *alguexi* is "a silk cloth embroidered with gold" and *lotzori* "a brocaded fabric." See Estrella Pérez Rodríguez, "El léxico de los textos asturleoneses (s. VIII–1230): Valoración," in *Estudios de latín medieval hispánico: Actas del V Congreso Hispánico de Latín Medieval*, ed. José Martínez Gázquez, Óscar de la Cruz Palma, and Cándida Ferrero Hernández (Florence: SISMEL, 2012), 950. For the "1063 charter," see María Encarnación Martín López, "Un documento de Fernando I de 1063: ¿Falso diplomático?" in *Monarquía y sociedad en el reino de León. De Alfonso III a Alfonso VII*, II, Fuentes y Estudios de Historia Leonesa 118 (León: Centro de Estudios e Investigación San Isidoro, 2007), 513–540. See also the discussion by Therese Martin in Chpt. 2 of this volume, "Caskets of Silver and Ivory from Diverse Parts of the World: Strategic Collecting for an Iberian Treasury."

13   Laura Rodríguez Peinado and Ana Cabrera Lafuente, *La investigación textil y nuevos métodos de estudio* (Madrid: Museo Lázaro Galdiano, 2014: http://www.flg.es/images/publicaciones/investigacion-textil-nuevos-metodos.pdf). See also the *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* 8/2 (2016) for a special issue focused on cultural heritage.

14   These include dating methods, artifact studies, mathematical methods, remote sensing techniques, conservation science, and the study of humans and their environment.

Due to the large amount of data pertaining to each textile held by the museum of San Isidoro, I have provided a compressed summary of their characteristics in Table 4.1, which appears at the end of this chapter.[15] These features are used to present our ideas[16] about the biography of some of the textiles, from their commencement as raw materials through their installation at San Isidoro.[17]

2 The Textile Materiality: Raw Materials, Color, and Weaves

The textiles at San Isidoro include eleven fragments (numbered 1 to 11 in Table 4.1), as well as a stole and maniple set and a covered box (numbers 12 to 14).[18] In the following pages, I will present these fabrics, highlighting the similarities and differences both within the Isidoran group and among textiles from the same period across a broad geographical range from Byzantium, the Near East, Europe, and al-Andalus. Here I offer a fresh understanding of the textiles based on technological, iconographical, and chronological approaches, adding heretofore unknown information about materials, textile techniques, and provenance to create a more complete picture of these works in context.

Silk is the common thread connecting all the textiles at San Isidoro. This raw material is a very well-known Chinese fiber, with qualities such as a continuous filament, resistance, and ease of dyeing that facilitated the development of textiles with rich decorations. These fabrics spread from China to Central Asia and the Mediterranean in Antiquity; the cultivation of silk arrived in Iberia some time after the third quarter of the eighth century,[19] according to the

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15   The data summarized here represent preliminary conclusions for which a second phase of study is still needed to confirm or modify these ideas. Funding for the analyses of carbon-14 and raw materials was generously provided by the research project *Las manufacturas textiles andalusíes: caracterización y estudio interdisciplinar* (HAR2014-54918-P), led by Laura Rodríguez Peinado.

16   This article owes a debt of gratitude to the comments from the speakers and attendees at *The Medieval Iberian Treasury in the Context of Muslim-Christian Interchange,* a conference held at the Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies at Princeton University and organized by Pamela Patton and Therese Martin.

17   For the importance of the study of an object's materiality, see Michael Yonan, "Toward a Fusion of Art History and Material Culture Studies," *West 86th. A Journal of Decorative Arts, Design History, and Material Culture*, 18/2 (2011): 232–248, esp. 233–234.

18   The late medieval embroidery known as the Pendón de San Isidoro was not included in this campaign.

19   For a recent overview of silk in al-Andalus, see David Jacoby, "The Production and Diffusion of Andalusi Silk and Silk Textiles, Mid-Eighth to Mid-Thirteenth Century," in *The Chasuble of Thomas Becket: A Biography*, ed. Avinoam Shalem (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), 142–153.

Liber Pontificalis that mentions silk textiles from Hispania in the first half of the ninth century.[20] This fiber was highly appreciated and was part of tax payments, diplomatic gifts, and *khila'* or robes of honor.[21] A product of state monopolies or royal workshops in Iberia and the Byzantine Empire,[22] silk could not be cultivated beyond the 40th parallel north.[23]

A second fiber used on just one of the textiles at San Isidoro is linen, known in Europe and North Africa since prehistory and cultivated in the south of the Iberian Peninsula. Egypt and Iberia were the most renowned places of linen production during the Middle Ages.[24]

Both fibers require different processes to obtain the material for spinning and dyeing. These processes were carried out by specialized workers, as Shatzmiller has shown in her publication on labor in medieval Islam; the Arabic textile vocabulary is very rich and speaks of its specialization.[25]

A third type of fiber that is found in five of the textiles in the collection at San Isidoro are metal threads. These have enriched textiles since Antiquity, but it was during the medieval period that metal threads witnessed a great development, related to improvements in metallurgy.[26] During our initial investigation of the embroidery (Table 4.1, no. 2; see Figs. 4.4, 4.7), we seemed to detect two types of metal threads: a flat metal sheet glued to an organic material (such as parchment) then wrapped around a silk thread,[27] and a flat metal

20   In the *Liber Pontificalis*, silks are described as "*vela spanisca*," "*vela de spanisco*," or "*vestes de spaniscu*," Louis Duchesne, *Le Liber Pontificalis. Texte, introduction et commentaire par L. Duchesne* (Paris: Ernest Thorin, 1892), 2:75, 107, 122, 132; cit. May, *Silk Textiles*, 3, note 5.

21   Lisa Golombek, "The Draped Universe of Islam," in *Content and Context of Visual Arts in Islam*, ed. Priscilla Soucek (State College, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1988), 25–34; Louise Mackie, *Symbols of Power: Luxury Textiles from Islamic Lands, 7th–21st Century* (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 2016), 7–30, at 28–29.

22   Anna Muthesius, "Essential Processes, Looms, and Technical Aspects of the Production of Silk Textiles" in *The Economic History of Byzantium: From the Seventh through the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Angeliki E. Laiou (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2002), 147–168.

23   Maurice Lombard, *Les textiles dans le monde musulman, VIIe–XIIe siècle* (Paris-La Haye-New York: Mouton, 1978). The northeasternmost area of Europe where silk cultivation is possible is the south of France.

24   Lombard, *Les textiles dans le monde musulman*, 51–53.

25   Maya Shatzmiller, *Labour in the Medieval Islamic World* (Leiden: Brill, 1994).

26   Márta Járó, "Gold Embroidery and Fabrics in Europe: XI–XIV Centuries," *Gold Bulletin* 23/2 (1990):40–57; Anna Karatzani, "Metal Threads: The Historical Development," (https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Metal-threads-%3A-the-historical-development-Karatzani/c8bae8f979160a06ad18a2e5ab2feea7087f41d1).

27   Our preliminary conclusions about the metal threads from the embroidery had suggested that they could be identified as so-called "Cyprus gold" or organic metal threads, which are made by gilding an organic material, such as leather, parchment, or paper, then cutting it

sheet wrapped ectly around a silk thread (Figure 4.4). However, after detailed review of the photos and our preliminary analysis, we identified all the metal threads in the embroidered textile and in the tablet weaves as being made from a flat metal sheet--without the use of an organic material base--wrapped around a silk thread (Figure 4.5). This type of metal thread is very unusual for such an early chronology (discussed below), but threads similar to these have been recognized in some Fatimid textiles at the Royal Ontario Museum;[28] we are now awaiting confirmation of their relationship through further technical analyses.

The type of metal threads made with strips of metal alone is generally considered a twelfth-century development, for which we have written sources that explain the complex process involved in creating these threads.[29] In our case they consist of gilt-silver metal strips wrapped around a yellow silk thread, as can be seen on the tablet-woven stole and maniple set, as well as the small textile-covered container (see Figure 4.8; Table 4.1, nos. 12–14). This manner of producing metal threads appears from the twelfth century onwards, and it was common in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, just at the time that organic metal threads disappeared.

The other raw materials used in all but one of the San Isidoro textiles are the dyes to color the fibers. We were able to document that these textiles were dyed before spinning, which can be detected by close observation of the threads. When threads are dyed, some parts remain undyed or are left with a lighter color. We have assumed that the colors were obtained from naturals dyes made from plants or animals (insects or molluscs) as they were the only sources of dyes in the medieval period.[30]

The current colors visible on the textiles need to be taken with a degree of caution; to avoid misunderstandings about the different colors and hues,

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into narrow strips to wrap around a silk or linen thread (see Járó, "Gold Embroidery," 50). These threads are common in early tapestries and embroideries from Iberia, Egypt, and Sicily. After a second review of the macro photographs, however, it seems that no organic material (leather or parchment) was used. We are waiting for the SEM (scanning electronic microscopy) images and results to confirm the exact materials used in the textiles at San Isidoro.

28   I thank J. Poulin of the Canadian Conservation Institute for drawing my attention to this type of metal thread during my visit to the museum in November 2017.

29   Ana Cabrera Lafuente, "Materias preciosas textiles: el caso del bordado con posible escena de Pentecostés del Museo Nacional de Artes Decorativas," *Anales de Historia del Arte* 21 (2014): 27–37.

30   The complete results of the dyes analyses will be published by Laura Rodríguez Peinado. For a summary with initial results, see Enrique Parra Grego, "Caracterización de materiales de tejidos medievales," in *Arte y producción textil en el Mediterráneo medieval*, ed. Laura Rodríguez Peinado and Francisco de Asís García García (Madrid: Polifemo, 2019), 347-366, esp. Tables 1 and 3, pp. 353 and 359.

FIGURE 4.4   Detail of the embroidery (Table 4.1, no. 2) with gold metal threads, scale 1.5 cms
            (Museo de la Real Colegiata de San Isidoro de León, Inv. No. IIC-3-089-002-0001).
            See also Figs. 4.7, 5.2.
            PHOTO: ANA CABRERA LAFUENTE

FIGURE 4.5
Detail of the gilt-silver metal thread of tablet
weave (Table 4.1, no. 13) (Museo de la Real
Colegiata de San Isidoro de León, Inv. No.
IIC-3-089-002-0025). See also Fig. 4.8.
PHOTO: ANA CABRERA LAFUENTE

we have used descriptors in the basic range: red, blue, green, yellow, brown,
pink, black, orange, and violet. This precaution is because natural dyes fade
as time passes. The best examples of this phenomenon are textiles no. 11 (see
Figs. 4.3a-b) and no. 7 (see Figs. 5.11, 5.12). The former, which at first sight
should apparently be classified as bicolored (blue and cream or white), is, in
fact, made up of pink, green, yellow, and blue threads; these are still visible

on the reverse, which has been protected from exposure to light. The second textile has the same issue: despite its seemingly bicolored surface, the threads were originally green, blue, and cream. This issue of fading is particularly evident in yellows, greens, and blues.

Color is an essential aspect of the textiles, not only due to the cost of the dyes but also for its significance, as is the case with purple. This color related to imperial and royal garments has a long history, especially from the Roman Empire and the Middle Ages. One of the San Isidoro fragments has a brilliant violet color (Table 4.1, no. 5); we had hoped that dye analysis would reveal it to be "true purple," that is, made from murex shellfish, but the results showed instead a combination of plant dyes: blue from indigotine plants, such as indigo or woad,[31] and red from madder.[32]

To a large extent we were able to identify the textile weaves, most of which are compound weaves, through a thread-by-thread study.[33] This consists first of differentiating the warps (longitudinal and fixed threads in the length of the fabric) from the wefts (transverse threads that cross over and under the warps in the width of fabric) (Figure 4.6).[34] Second, the twist or spinning direction of the warps and wefts is documented and defined as either "Z" or "S" in direction, that is, either clockwise or counter-clockwise during the spinning process, as a defining characteristic of textiles that helps to identify geographical traditions (see Figure 4.2b). Finally, we studied how the warps and wefts work together to create the pattern.

Compound textiles, such as most of those at San Isidoro, have two sets of warps (that is, lengthwise threads), one for the ground, usually hidden beneath the textile surface, and a second for binding the patterning wefts. Compound textiles have also at least two sets of wefts, one for the ground and one or more for the decoration, known as patterning wefts. In general, compound weaves from this period were the products of invention by Chinese weavers. The first compound weaves arrived in the Mediterranean basin in Late Antiquity, and

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31 Indigo and woad share the main component of indigotine; as yet a differentiation between these two plants is not possible.

32 This combination of plant dyes has been documented in Byzantine silks; see Muthesius, "Essential Processes," 167.

33 Further study is needed to confirm certain technical questions that arose after the on-site campaign in March 2017. We hope to carry this out in the near future.

34 The textile terms used in this article follow the terminology of the CIETA (Centre International d'Étude des Textiles Anciens) with a multilingual dictionary. Other resources are Gale Owen-Crocker, Elizabeth Coatsworth, and Maria Hayward, *Encyclopedia of Medieval Dress and Textiles of the British Isles, c. 450–1450* (Leiden: Brill, 2012) and Annemarie Seiler-Baldinger, *Textiles. A Classification of Techniques* (Bathurst: Crawford House Press, 1994). See also Cabrera Lafuente, "Materias preciosas textiles."
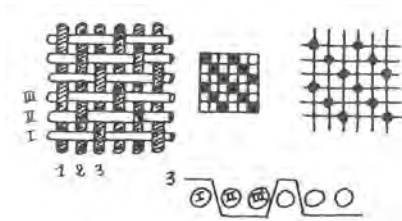
they have been found in the necropolises of Egypt and in archaeological sites of the Near East. A later date saw the development of the lampas weave, discussed below, but its origin is still an open question.[35]

At San Isidoro, we have identified seven of the textiles as samites, also known as compound twills,[36] with two to four wefts each (Table 4.1, nos. 1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10). The name samite has a Greek origin from *hexamitoi* or six threads, the minimum number of threads for this weave. Despite its Chinese roots, there is one modification that helps to differentiate Chinese from Mediterranean samites. The Chinese fabrics are warp-faced compound-twills, in which the warp threads are more visible on the front side of the textile; by contrast the Near Eastern and Mediterranean examples, including the textiles studied here, are weft-faced. According to Otavski, the advantages of this innovation, which appeared around the seventh century, are the reduced number of warps threads needed and the labor-saving system of cords to produce the pattern.[37]

One of the textiles at San Isidoro—that with a motif of stars worked in cream and green silk threads—has a geometrical design that sets it apart from the rest of the textile decorations (Table 4.1, no. 10). Despite its plain pattern, the weave is a complex one: in the entire collection, this is the only double-faced samite,

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35   Its origins, whether Western or Eastern, have been studied by Sophie Desrosiers, *Soieries et autres textiles de l´Antiquité au XVIe siècle* (Paris: Reunion des Musees Nationaux, 2004), 14–28, and Mackie, *Symbols of Power*, 148–151. While Desrosiers stated that further study was required on the weave, noting the possibility of a Western Mediterranean origin, Mackie claimed that the lampas weave was of Eastern provenance. A third suggestion was made by Phipps, who added Iberia as a place in which lampas was first developed. Elena Phipps, *Looking at Textiles: A Guide to Technical Terms* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2011), 47.

36   As the name indicates it is a derivation of twill, which is based on a unit of three or more picks (individual wefts) that pass through two or more adjacent ends (individual warps) and under them, forming a pattern of diagonal lines.

37   Karel Otavski and Anne Wardwell, *Mittelalterliche Textilien. II. Zwischen Europa und China* (Riggisberg: Abegg-Stiftung, 2011), 329.

a cloth meant to be seen from both front and back. This textile shows the high technical level of a workshop that is capable of developing different solutions using the same weave, depending on the primary function of the fabric.

The second type of compound weave found in some of the textiles at San Isidoro is known as lampas, in which the warps appear on the front side of the textile (Table 4.1, nos. 7, 8, and possibly 11). One feature of this weave is that it juxtaposes two faces: the warp-faced weave for the ground and a weft-faced weave for the decorative patterning.[38] One of these lampas (Table 4.1, no. 8) has a notable additional feature that can be seen in the surviving selvedge, or weft border: it is formed by three cords of cellulosic threads, possibly linen, which that helps us to suggest a possible place of production (see Figure 4.2a).

Standing out even among the remarkable textiles in this collection, the embroidery now lining the lid of the Arca de San Isidoro is truly extraordinary, in fact, unique (see Figures 4.4 and 4.7; Table 4.1, no. 2). The decoration is worked in freestyle embroidery, with silk and metal threads, on a background of linen tabby or plain weave. Certain of the animals, such as the eagles and wild goats, are drawn with a sense of naturalistic treatment, unlike the peacocks and the possible phoenix; the partial nature of the latter makes a definitive identification difficult. For the ground of each square, the threads are worked from the center outwards, creating an optical effect of perspective.

The final technique seen in three of the textiles at San Isidoro—the stole and maniple set, and the textile covering a bone or wooden cylindrical box—is a tablet-weave, with three patterning wefts (Table 4.1, nos. 12, 13, and 14). To create this weave, known since prehistory, the warps are laid out through tablets or cards pierced by holes, and the weaving is then done through the rotation of the tablets, which gives rise to the characteristic twist of the warp threads with the pass of the shuttle (Figure 4.8).[39] This weave was used especially for stoles and maniples, as well as the bands and ribbons that decorated the borders of robes and bags. It was produced by a significant number of workshops in medieval Europe and was common on the continent, the British Islands, Sicily, and Iberia.

One further method of analyzing weaves that has been carried out for the pieces at San Isidoro is that concerning thread density, or counting by centimeter, which gives information about the quality of the textile. This important fact is related to the weave and thread thickness; the textiles in our study range from approximately 45 to 90 threads per centimeter, with the lampas having

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38   Phipps, *Looking at Textiles*, 47.

39   Nancy Spies, *Ecclesiastical Pomp and Aristocratic Circumstance: A Thousand Years of Brocaded Tabletwoven Bands* (Jarrettsville, MD: Arelate Studio, 2000), 108–110, fig. 113.

FIGURE 4.7 Full view of the embroidery, Table 4.1, no. 2 (Museo de la Real Colegiata de San Isidoro de León, Inv. No. IIC-3-089-002-0001). See also Figs. 4.4, 5.2.

PHOTO: THERESE MARTIN

FIGURE 4.8
Detail of the re-twisted warps from the
maniple (Table 4.1, no. 13) (Museo de la Real
Colegiata de San Isidoro de León, Inv. No.
IIC-3-089-002-0025). See also Fig. 4.5.
PHOTO: ANA CABRERA LAFUENTE

the highest number of threads, followed by the samites. We noted that most of
the wefts of these fabrics run from one side to the other of the textile's width;
this technical feature increases the number of silk threads and therefore the
overall cost of the cloth.

3   The Chronology of San Isidoro's Textiles

To contextualize the textiles at San Isidoro, we first looked to other textiles
whose chronologies are certain, thanks to their well-known contexts such as
burials, documented church treasuries, archaeological sites, or radiocarbon
dating. Further, we searched for artworks with similar decoration, especially
but not exclusively textiles, while keeping in mind the features of fibers and
weave. The most closely related pieces we found in other collections are sum-
marized for each entry in Table 4.1.

We were fortunate to be able to carry out the first-ever carbon-14 analysis on
four of the textiles at San Isidoro, the two lining the Arca de San Isidoro, Table 4.1,
nos. 1 and 2, along with fragments no. 7 and 10. These were deemed the most
suitable for radiocarbon testing for several reasons: their loose threads meant
easy access for sampling without risk of damaging the whole; there was no
sign of organic contamination that could affect the results of the testing; and
the lack of well-dated comparative examples meant that chronology would be
difficult to establish by other methods. The rest of the textiles in this collec-
tion were not apt for precise spot sampling due to the intervention carried out
for the exhibition in 2000, in which the fragments were sewn onto supporting
grounds for display.

The results of radiocarbon analysis give us the first solid idea of the time
frame of these textiles, which ranges across four centuries, from the ninth to
the thirteenth. These dates have been used as a starting point to contextualize
the other fabrics from San Isidoro and to begin to re-evaluate them in light of

our new data. Both radiocarbon dates and the comparison with works in other collections would ascribe the textiles at San Isidoro to three chronological groups: the early ones from the ninth to tenth centuries; a second group in the eleventh century; and a third in the twelfth to early thirteenth centuries (see Table 4.1).

The early textiles account for most of the samites or compound-twills, as well as the embroidery and one early lampas (Table 4.1, no. 7). Our samites are comparable to textiles from other European church treasuries, notably Sens (France)[40] and St. Servatius in Maastricht (The Netherlands),[41] apart from those held in museums and collections. The textiles related to our fragments are summarized in Table 4.1, some of which are highlighted below.

The textiles lining the San Isidoro casket belong to the oldest group. In the case of Table 4.1, no. 1 (see Fig. 5.1), this weaving decorated with a pattern of pearl medallions and garlands pertains to an identified group of early silks. Although the pearl medallion pattern is very well known, of Sassanian origin,[42] few of the existing examples share this same composition of completely separate medallions. Surprisingly, the closest parallel is in the Cathedral of Leon (Figure 4.9), with another closely related example at the Musée de Cluny (Paris), along with the Marwan silk (now in several collections).[43] These textiles have been classified as the production of Central Asian workshops,[44] and some have been radiocarbon dated with similar chronologies to our textile, ranging from the end of the eighth century through the third quarter of the tenth.[45] It is therefore of

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40   Eugene Chartraire, *Les tissues anciens du trésor de la Cathedrale de Sens* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1911). I offer my thanks to Dorothée Censier and Virginie Garret of Musees CEREP, Ville de Sens for their help with the study of the textiles in October 2017.

41   The medieval textiles collection at the Basilica of St. Servatius is one of the most important in Europe, with a large number of woven silks from the seventh century onwards. See Annemarie Stauffer, *Die mittelalterlichen Textilien von St. Servatius in Maastricht* (Riggisberg: Abegg-Stiftung, 1991).

42   Dorothy Shepherd and Walter Henning, "Zandanījī Identified?" in *Aus der Welt der islamischen Kunst: Festschrift für Ernst Kühnel zum 75. Geburtstag am 26.10.1957* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1959), 15–40; Regula Schorta, ed., *Central Asian Textiles and Their Contexts in the Early Middle Ages* (Riggisberg: Abegg-Stiftung, 2006).

43   Several fragments of one large silk have been dated thanks to a Kufic inscription naming the caliph Marwan II, reigned 744–750. See Mariam Rosser-Owen and Mina Moritau, "Marwan Silk Fragments," in *Byzantium and Islam. Age of Transition*, ed. Helen Evans (New York: Metropolitan Museum of New York, 2012), 238–240.

44   Regula Schorta, "Central Asian Silks in the East and West during the Second Half of the First Millennium," in *Oriental Silks in Medieval Europe*, ed. Juliane von Fircks and Regula Schorta (Riggisberg: Abegg-Stiftung, 2016), 47–63.

45   Nicholas Sims-Williams and Gregory Khan, "Zandanījī Misidentified," *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 22 (2011): 207–213. Some of them are complete, giving us an idea of size

FIGURE 4.9   Silk samite from León Cathedral (Museo Catedralicio de León).
PHOTO: ANA CABRERA LAFUENTE

real significance that the dyes analysis for our textile has shown that kermes was used for the bright red color; this dye is usually associated with Andalusi and Iberian silks.[46] This result is similar to that of another samite silk dyed with kermes, which has previously been classified as Central Asian and fragments of which are held by the Royal Museum of Brussels and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.[47] Whether Central Asian or Iberian, it is clear that kermes alone is not enough to identify the location of the textile workshop; further dyes analysis and comparisons with other documented textiles are therefore needed to support or discard Central Asia as the place of production of the Isidoran silk.

The remarkable embroidery lining the lid of the Arca de San Isidoro (Table 4.1, no. 2; see Fig. 4.7) has some features that may help us to identify its possible place of production. An unexpectedly early chronology was established by carbon-14 testing of the linen tabby used for the background,[48] locating this

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and functionality as hangings, for example, the St. Mengold shroud (Notre-Dame Church treasury at Huy, Belgium) or the silk textile at the treasury of Liège Cathedral. See Table 4.1 for further references.

46   Parra, "Caracterización de materiales," 361-363, fig. 7. For kermes in Iberia see Ana Cabrera Lafuente, "Caracterización de las producciones textiles en Al-Andalus (siglos IX al XIV): estudios sobre tintes," in *Tejer y vestir: De la Antigüedad al Islam*, ed. Manuela Marín (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigationes Científicas, 2001), 395–415; María Dolores Gayo and Ángela Arteaga, "Análisis de colorantes de un grupo de tejidos hispano-musulmanes," *Bienes Culturales* 5 (2005): 123–147 http://es.calameo.com/read/000075335d30d779d0ea7.

47   Mieke van Raemdonck, *En Harmonie. Art du monde islamique au Musée du Cinquantenaire* (Brussels: Racine, 2015), 228. Kermes is also found in Byzantine silks of the early period, and it was restricted to the royal workshops. See Leslie Brubaker, "The Elephant and the Ark: Cultural and Material Interchange across the Mediterranean in the 8th and 9th Centuries," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 58 (2004): 175–195, at 191, note 86.

48   We decided to sample the linen ground rather than the silk threads because of the possibility that the embroidery might have been restored or re-embroidered in the past.

textile between the end of the ninth and the beginning of the eleventh cen-
turies; we can therefore confidently consider the embroidery a tenth-century
work. For this extraordinary textile, we have identified a few visual parallels in
other media for the pattern of animals within a squared framework (see Ta-
ble 4.1). A similar design can be found, for example, on a sculpted pulpit brought
from Constantinople to Ravenna in the later sixth century and on marble panels
from the Old Cathedral of Sorrento, dated to the late tenth and early eleventh
centuries.[49] None of them, however, has a close connection with the embroi-
dery, although certain Fatimid tapestries and some embroideries from the Sel-
juq period have a certain resemblance.[50] The parallels would suggest for our
embroidery a Near Eastern workshop,[51] but this is still an open question, due
to the paucity of medieval embroideries as comparative material. The design
on the piece is altogether unlike the contemporaneous embroideries produced
in European workshops, whether Anglo-Saxon, Italian, French, or German.
Moreover, the metal threads are not from European or Anglo-Saxon workshops,
which generally used linen as the core for metal threads, by contrast with the
silk used here (see Fig. 4.4).

The rest of the fragments from the early group at San Isidoro could have orig-
inated from Byzantine workshops due to the samite weave as well as patterns
and colors characteristic of workshops from this Eastern Mediterranean area,
such as the heart-shaped leaves and the bird (possibly a peacock) of textile
no. 3, and the scrolls and violet color of no. 5 (see Table 4.1 for detailed referenc-
es). Textile no. 5 is similar to fabrics held at other ecclesiastical sites in Iberia,
among them the Cathedral of Urgel and the monastic church at Covarrubias.[52]

Among the samites, one fragmentary textile (Table 4.1, no. 4), presents
particular difficulties for establishing its workshop. The partial decoration is
hard to identify; we can make out an animal's tail, branches that terminate in
snake heads, and a border with wings. The tail has similar patterns to a now
lost fragment from the reliquary casket of Santa Eulalia at the Cathedral of
Oviedo (Figure 4.10). The depiction of snake heads recalls that on a ninth- to

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49   Emma May Edwards, "Reception and Reorientation: The Impact of Internationally Traded
        Objects in Italian Art and Architecture (950–1150)," PhD diss., Courtauld Institute of Art,
        University of London, 2016, 99–100, figs. 1.35–37.

50   In some of the animals and motifs (Mackie, *Symbols of Power*, 157).

51   As was previously suggested by Manuel Gómez-Moreno, "El arca de las reliquias de San
        Isidoro," *Archivo Español de Arte y Arqueología* 15 (1932): 205–212, esp. 209–210.

52   Laia Monge, "Els teixits produïts i comercializats al mediterrani: el cas de teixits bizantins
        a la Seu d'Urgell," *Síntesi. Quaderns dels Seminaris de Besalú* 2 (2014): 55–74. I thank M.J.
        Feliciano and L. Rodríguez Peinado for drawing my attention to the Covarrubias fragment.

FIGURE 4.10   Textile (now lost), originally lined Santa Eulalia's casket from the Cathedral
of Oviedo.
PHOTO: ARXIU MAS

tenth-century silk samite from St. Servatius (Maastricht).[53] The Servatian frag-
ment has been considered of either Byzantine or Iberian origin, depending on
the scholar; the reason for the latter possibility, according to Stauffer, is its sim-
ilarity to illuminations in Iberian manuscripts.[54] However, the Isidoran fabric
has metal threads not seen in any of the parallels, and the colors and weave
features are different from the Iberian samites.[55]

    This early group also includes a lampas, another remarkable piece, unique
among Iberian textile collections, which has, unfortunately, been cut into six
fragments (Figure 4.11; Table 4.1, no. 7). The rich decoration features interlinked
pearl bands around medallions with figures as well as epigraphic bands in Ku-
fic script[56] alternating with star-shaped medallions and small dragons. Both
male and female figures are depicted;[57] the former wears a kaftan and holds a
short dagger in his hand, with a lion positioned behind him. The female figure,
wearing an elaborate headdress, rides a horse side-saddle and holds a flowering
branch in her left hand. The composition, which fills the surface, may be linked to

53   Identified as a fragment of a bag from an Iberian workshop of the tenth century. See
      Dominique Cardon, *Fils renoués. Trésors textiles du Moyen-âge en Languedoc-Roussillon*
      (Carcassonne: Musée des Beaux-Arts, 1993), 116, no. 35.

54   Stauffer, *Die mittelalterlichen Textilien von St. Servatius,* 128–129.

55   For the features of Iberian samites, see Cardon*, Fils renoués*, 100–101 and 106.

56   For the inscription, see Chpt. 5 by María Judith Feliciano in this volume.

57   See Figs. 5.11 and 5.12 in María Judith Feliciano's contribution in this volume.
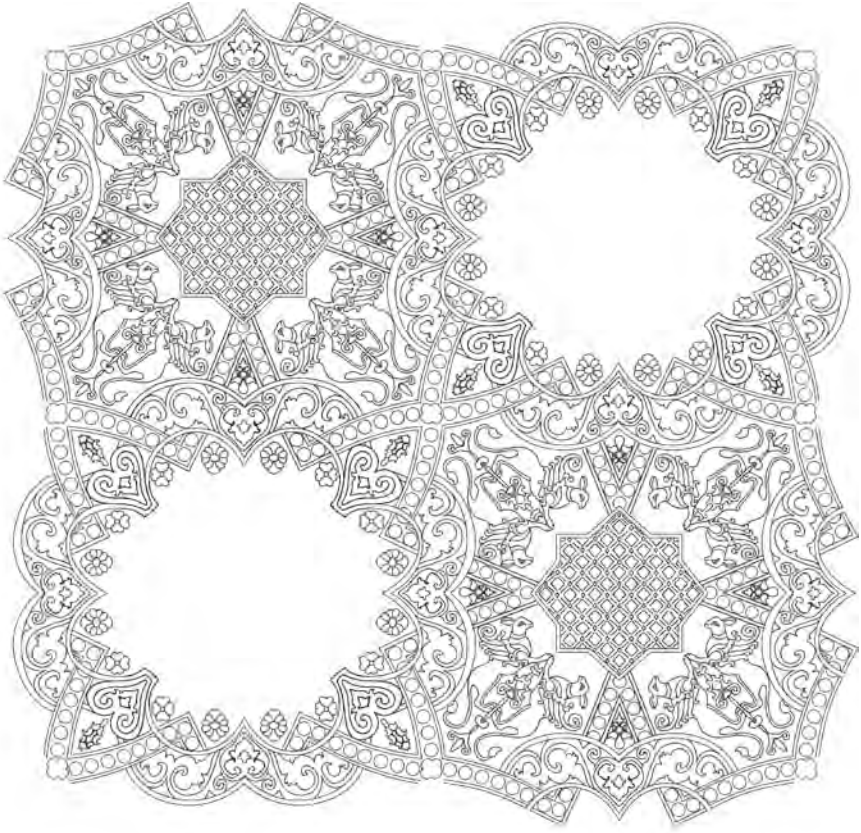
FIGURE 4.11   Drawing of the complex decoration of silk textile no. 7 in Table 4.1. The blank
                spaces represent the medallions with figures that need further photographs to
                be reproduced accurately (Museo de la Real Colegiata de San Isidoro de León,
                Inv. Nos. 3-089-002-0025, 0026, 0033, 0034, 0035, 0036, drawing: Ayelet Shats).
                See also Figs. 4.13, 5.10-5.12.

Buyid and early Seljuq workshops,[58] but such an early chronology raises
questions about the beginnings of lampas weave. Further studies and a careful
restoration are urgently needed.

    The second San Isidoro group comprises textiles in Table 4.1 nos. 8, 9,
10, and 11, which include two samites and two lampas dated from the ear-
ly eleventh to early twelfth centuries. One of the samites is the textile that

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58   Mackie, *Symbols of Power,* 145–148.

lines the casket of Saints John the Baptist and Pelayo (Table 4.1, no. 9).[59] The decoration is organized in bands with vine scrolls enclosing different animals (griffins and possibly hawks), paired animals (hares on one side, and ducks and birds on the other), and between them a narrow epigraphic band (Figure 4.12a),[60] and a wider red band, which at first sight appears to be undecorated but in fact has medallions and vegetal motifs (Figure 4.12b).[61] This broad red band, with its patterning known as *soie incisée,* or incised silk, provides a heretofore unnoticed clue to the textile's chronology. The term was coined by Martiniani-Reber to refer to a specific type of silks dated from the eleventh century onwards.[62] This feature further allows us to identify the Isidoran silk with those described as *khimha* in Arabic (also known as *kamochas* in Byzantine texts or *camocas* in Italian). It is interesting to note that the Arabic expression "*al harir al afum*" (literally, one-eye silk) indicates the feature of such decoration, which sometimes is visible and others not.[63]

We are currently working on a reconstruction of this textile according to its patterns; these suggest that, with a width of 82 cm, it is the widest textile in the Isidoran collection.[64] The decoration is organized in bands in which the predators appear above their prey, as Jerrilynn Dodds rightly noted during our March 2017 campaign. One further detail that we observed, which may be related to the design and the loom, is that the width of one of the bands is narrower than the others (see Figs. 4.12a, b). A similar feature (or error) has been identified in other textiles, such as the so-called Witches Pallium (Museu Episcopal de Vic) or the blue silk with double-headed eagles at San Zoilo de Carrión de los Condes,[65] caused by a loom wider than usual which required two weavers to manufacture the textile.

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59   For a summary of this textile, see Noemi Álvarez da Silva, *El trabajo en marfil en la España del siglo XI*, PhD diss., Universidad de León, 2014, 170–173.

60   Dokmak and Sayed have recently read the inscription as "*izz limawbdnā almalk*," repeated along the band. According to the authors this is an incorrect phrasing of "*'izz limawlānā almalk*" (Glory to our Lord, the King). See Ahmed Mahmoud Dokmak and Zeinab Shawky Sayed, "Aportaciones de la epigrafía árabe en el arte románico español. Una faceta de la cultura árabe-islámica medieval," *Un Mundo, Muchas Miradas* 4 (2015): 109–133, esp. 115–116, n. 32. For further information on the inscription see Chpt. 5 by María Judith Feliciano in this volume.

61   In fact, the decoration of this red band had gone unnoticed until January 2017, our first on-site visit to study the artworks of San Isidoro.

62   Marielle Martiniani-Reber, *Musée Historique des Tissus—Soieries sassanides, coptes et byzantines, Vème – Xlème siècles* (Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1986), 118–123.

63   Lombard, *Les tissus dans le monde musulman*, 242–243.

64   May, *Silk Textiles of Spain,* 27, also noted the possibility of unusual width.

65   Pilar Borrego, Silvia Saladrigas, and Miguel Ángel Andrés-Toledo, "Technical and Symbolic Study of Two Complete Mediaeval Cloths Found in Carrión de los Condes, Spain," in

FIGURES 4.12A, B   Detail of the silk samite that lines the Casket of Saints John the Baptist
and Pelayo (Table 4.1, no. 9). One band has oval rather than round
medallions (Museo de la Real Colegiata de San Isidoro de León, Inv. No.
IIC-3-089-002-0023). See also Figs. 1.8, 5.6, 5.9, 6.7a, 6.7b.
PHOTOS: ANA CABRERA LAFUENTE AND THERESE MARTIN

Unfortunately, the Isidoran textile had an intervention around the year 2000, during which it was removed from the reliquary casket, "restored," lined with another fabric, and placed again in the casket. These actions precluded the sampling of fibers, testing of dyes, or analysis of carbon-14. For its chronology, therefore, we depend on the red incised band to date this textile from the mid-eleventh to mid-twelfth centuries.

The so-called Baghdad silk (Table 4.1, no. 4; see Figs. 4.2a, 4.2b, 5.7) is one of the best-known textiles in the collection, due to the presence of a Kufic inscription that names this city as the place it was produced. The inscription reads: "Blessing from God and prosperity" (in the upper circle) and "to its owner Abu Bakr. Made in Baghdad" (in the lower circle).[66] Its decoration compares closely to other silk textiles with griffins and birds, such as the shroud of St. Potentian at Sens Cathedral,[67] the Syon silk, and the elephant silks from Aachen[68] and from the Sancta Sanctorum of Rome, all of them considered to be from the Near East or Central Asia. However, our textile has certain features that suggest another option. First, the selvedge of three linen cords is similar to those from Iberian workshops (see Figure 4.2a). Second, the lampas weave has technical characteristics documented in lampas from Andalusi workshops:[69] the grouping of the main warp-end pairs for the warp step seems to coincide with the grouping of the same threads for the tabby ground.[70] And finally, the yellow wefts used for the heads and claws of the lions, along with the interlinking medallions, could be an imitation of the metal threads that appear in some of the eleventh- and twelfth-century textiles from Iberian workshops, such as those at Santa Librada.[71] These elements together allow us to suggest that the fragment is from an eleventh-century fabric possibly produced in an Andalusi workshop, despite the inscription that boldly states otherwise.

Purpureae Vestes, V, *Textiles, Basketry and Dyes in the Ancient Mediterranean World,* ed. Jónatan Ortiz, Carmen Alfaro, Luis Turell, and Julia Martínez (Valencia: Universitat de València, 2016), 163–170.

66   See Kendrick and Guest, "A Silk Fabric Woven in Baghdad," 267. As Feliciano notes in Chpt. 5 of this volume, the name in the inscription was wrongly read as Abu Nasr by Guest.

67   Desrosiers, *Soieries et autres textiles*, 242–243.

68   Kendrick and Guest, "A Silk Fabric Woven in Baghdad," 267.

69   To confirm this feature, however, we would need to make a close study of the textile from both sides, which is not currently possible as the back is lined, leaving visible only a small window of approx. 15 × 15 mm. Karel Otavsky, "Remarques techniques concernant des tissus égyptiennes, perses et ibériques de la Fondation Abegg," in *Islamische Textilkunst des Mittelalters: Aktuelle Probleme* (Riggisberg: Abegg-Stiftung, 1997), 147–156.

70   I thank Dr. R. Schorta for drawing my attention to this possibility.

71   Karel Otavski and Muhammad 'Abbas, *Mittelalterliche Textilien. Ägypten, Persien und Mesopotamien. Spanien und Nordafrika* (Riggisberg: Abegg-Stiftung, 1995), 145–160.

In contrast to the so-called Baghdad silk, textile fragment no. 11 of Table 4.1 still has many unanswered questions. It is decorated with the head of a fierce animal that bares its teeth within an elaborate medallion made up of vegetal and decorative motifs, along with griffins in roundels. The large animal's head may perhaps be identified as that of a simurgh (or senmurv).[72] During the early Islamic period this mythical creature combining a lion and an eagle appears on textiles (see Table 4.1). However, the use of the simurgh would seem to indicate for this piece an early chronology that does not agree with its weave, which is a lampas. Further research is needed to confirm the weave features of this textile.

Finally, the third group of textiles at San Isidoro dates from the late twelfth to early thirteenth century (Table 4.1, nos. 12, 13, and 14). They are all tablet weaves and have many known technical parallels, most of them from England, Germany, and other areas of continental Europe. Sicily and Spain, according to Spies, have a "distinctive style" related to geometrical patterns and heraldry motifs.[73] The epigraphical decoration seen on the stole and maniple is not common. Again according to Spies, this type of brocaded tablet-weave[74] dates from the eleventh to thirteenth centuries.[75]

4   Tracing the Textiles' Biographies

Our research demonstrates that the overall chronological framework of the textiles in the treasury of San Isidoro de León can be established between the ninth century and the turn of the thirteenth, with pieces produced in a wide variety of workshops from Central Asia, the Near East, Byzantium, and different parts of Europe; curiously, the least common here are those originating in Iberian workshops. This array of textile fragments and liturgical vestments

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72   For this creature and its depiction in textiles see Van Raemdonck, *En Harmonie*, 30–35. There is a silk samite with a simurgh that has been dated by carbon-14 to 890–1002 AD. For the name, see Matteo Compareti, "The So-Called Senmurv in Iranian Art: A Reconsideration of an Old Theory," in *Loquentes linguis. Studi Linguistici e Orientali in onore di Fabrizio A. Pennacchietti,* ed. P.G. Borbone, A. Mengozzi, and M. Tosco (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2006), 185–200.

73   Spies, *Ecclesiatical Pomp*, 79–80.

74   "Brocaded" implies a decorative weft, including the metal thread. This term is often confused with "brocado," a Spanish term that means literally "decorated textile" without reference to any technical feature.

75   Spies, *Ecclesiastical Pomp*, 77–81. For a discussion of the stole and maniple in context, see Jitske Jasperse, "Matilda, Leonor and Joanna: The Plantagenet Sisters and the Display of Dynastic Connections through Material Culture," *Journal of Medieval History* 43/5 (2017): 523–547.

is a prime example, among Iberian textile collections, of the extent of trade
and wide-ranging communications during the central Middle Ages. The early
date of some of the fragments, prior to San Isidoro's "1063 charter," leads us
to ask how, when, and why these textiles arrived in León. Before presenting
some hypotheses, we need to look at what was happening across the medie-
val West with silks like these and to consider the multiple meanings of silk it-
self, which was held in high consideration for more than its precious nature.[76]
As Fircks and Schorta explain, woven silks played an important role in Euro-
pean culture from the end of Antiquity to the early modern period. The high
esteem for silk fabrics is documented both in a multitude of written sources
and through their careful preservation in church treasuries, relic shrines, and
royal, papal, and aristocratic burials. From as early as the Merovingian period
these textiles came from Byzantium, Persia, Islamic Egypt, Central Asia, and
Iberia.[77]

   We would suggest that the gathering of textiles at San Isidoro was part of
the "thesaurization"[78] phenomenon that included the acquisition of decorated
silks at medieval Christian shrines, such as St. Servatius in Maastricht, and at
royal foundations and papal and episcopal seats, among them the cathedrals of
Sens, Aachen, and Bamberg.[79] According to Leslie Brubaker, during the central
Middle Ages there was an international court culture that shared values and
appreciated the portability of high-status objects, which included textiles and
metalworks.[80] The possibility that the Leonese dynasty brought some textiles
from the former royal capital in Oviedo needs to be taken into consideration
because the oldest of these fabrics, including the embroidery and the weaving

76   Lombard, *Les tissus dans le monde musulman*, 197, explains that the textiles and their "the-
     saurization" can be compared with the "thesaurisation metallique et traites comme une
     veritable monnaie."

77   Juliane von Fircks and Regula Schorta, eds., *Oriental Silks in Medieval Europe* (Riggisberg:
     Abegg-Stiftung, 2016), 7.

78   For church treasuries overall, see Joseph Salvatore Ackley, "Re-approaching the Western
     Medieval Church Treasury Inventory, c. 800–1250," *Journal of Art Historiography* 11
     (2014): 4–37.

79   The Cathedral of Saint Stephen of Sens was the seat of the Primate of Gaul. For other trea-
     suries in Europe linked to royal houses like Chelles and St. Denis in France and Bamberg
     in Germany, see Maureen Miller, *Clothing the Clergy. Virtue and Power in Medieval Europe,
     c. 800–1200* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014).

80   Brubaker, "The Elephant and the Ark," 177. Concerning this international culture, see
     Anna Contadini, "Sharing a Taste? Material Culture and Intellectual Curiosity around
     the Mediterranean, from the Eleventh to the Sixteenth Century," in *The Renaissance and
     the Ottoman World*, ed. Anna Contadini and Claire Norton (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013),
     23–61. In relation to written sources and luxury objects, see Chpt. 3 by Ana Rodríguez in
     this volume.

lining the Casket of San Isidoro, could have formed part of that earlier royal treasury. We should also consider the possibilities that the early textiles might have been acquired on the market in León[81] or as part of diplomatic gifts from Andalusi, Byzantine, or European courts after the establishment of the court in León by Ordoño II (d. 924).[82]

For these reasons, knowing the object's biography is important because, to quote Brubaker, "moving an object changes its meaning."[83] Till now, little has been done to trace the biographies of the textiles at San Isidoro, which show evidence of heavy use, re-use, and manipulation[84] from the medieval period until the most recent intervention at the turn of the twenty-first century. The fragmentary form of most of them speaks to their adaptation as linings for reliquary caskets and boxes, and as bags and relic wrappings (see Fig. 5.5). Some of the textiles are therefore likely to have been acquired as part of the extensive international movements of relics.[85] According to Michael McCormick, the trade in relics ran from early in the fifth to sixth centuries through the late Middle Ages, showing again the importance and extension of trade routes, whether for sacred or mundane objects.[86]

On the manipulation of textiles, nos. 7 and 10 in Table 4.1 serve as useful case studies.[87] At some point during its long life, textile no. 7 was divided into six fragments; due to their varying reuses and resulting states of conservation, the pieces had been taken as different textiles rather than the remnants of one large silk, as our work demonstrates. Traditionally, one section of this textile

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81   Bernard Reilly, "Medieval Spain," in *The Art of Medieval Spain. AD 500–1200* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1993), 7. The city had an important market, and Jews there were trading textiles from Byzantium, the Near East, and al-Andalus, according to the sources studied by Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz, *Una ciudad de la España cristiana hace mil años* (Madrid: Ediciones Rialp, 2014; first ed. 1924), 41–42, notes 4–9. For the Jewish community in León, see Chpt. 8 by Julie Harris in this volume.

82   See Chpt. 5 by María Judith Feliciano in this volume.

83   Brubaker, "The Elephant and the Ark," 175.

84   For the use and re-use of textiles and the formation (and misleading) of traditions on silks provenance, see Donald Bullough, *Carolingian Renewal: Sources and Heritage* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), 75, and María Judith Feliciano', Chpt. 5 in this volume.

85   On this matter, see Mariam Rosser-Owen, "Islamic Objects in Christian Contexts: Relic Translation and Modes of Transfer in Medieval Iberia," *Translating Cultures in the Hispanic World*, special issue, *Art in Translation* 7/1 (2015): 39–64, and Chpt. 5 by María Judith Feliciano in this volume.

86   Michael McCormick*, Origins of the European Economy. Communications and Commerce, AD 300–900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 283–318, map at 298.

87   For further discussion of these textiles, see the article by María Judith Feliciano in this volume.

FIGURE 4.13   San Marcelo casket, early twentieth-century photograph, with textiles no. 7 and
no. 11 of Table 4.1 still in situ (Museo de la Real Colegiata de San Isidoro de León,
Inv. Nos. 3-089-002-0025, 0026, 0033, 0034, 0035, 0036, 0037, 0038). See also
Figs. 4.11, 5.10-5.12.
SOURCE: ARCHIVO GÓMEZ-MORENO, CSIC

had been identified as al-Mansur's horse blanket, acquired (somehow) during
his sacking of Leon in 997,[88] an idea that can no longer be sustained. Further,
early twentieth-century photographs, possibly related to Gómez-Moreno's re-
search campaigns for the *Catálogo Monumental*, show textiles nos. 7 and 10
of Table 4.1 still in situ lining the casket of San Marcelo (Figure 4.13).[89] San
Isidoro's records have no information about this provenance[90] nor about the
removal of the textiles from the casket, an action that stripped the objects of
their context and should draw our attention to the ways in which these assem-
blies of fabrics have been studied from the nineteenth century onwards.

Fircks and Schorta discuss early practices of collecting and documenting
textiles, noting that it was focused on the history of silk weaving, not on the

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88   Described as "a horse blanket, of blue color, decorated with Islamic motifs" in Eloy
Díaz-Jiménez, *Historia del Real Monasterio Benedictino de San Claudio, de León*
(Madrid: Imprenta de Ramona Velasco, 1930), 263.

89   Photograph held by the former Archivo Fotográfico del Departamento de Historia del
Arte, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Madrid. I thank Rosa Villalón and
Pilar Martínez for their support of my research at this valuable archive.

90   A note in the museum's inventory lists no. 10 of Table 4.1 only as "textile lining from the lid
of San Claudio's casket."

function of the textiles or the context of the ensembles. This interest made it permissible to cut samples from textiles, as Franz Bock did, and to separate textiles from relics, labels, or remains, thereby losing their context. Such practices are the foundation of many textile collections in Europe and America,[91] and they can also be traced to objects at San Isidoro. The textiles in the Casket of San Isidoro, for example, are fixed with modern nails, and the separate parts of the weaving lining the casket's body have been sewn together using modern thread. An important detail is that this fitting has been done carefully in an attempt to follow the design of the fabric, by contrast with the linings of the San Pelayo and San Marcelo caskets, in which each textile has been cut to fit the different parts of the casket. Further research is needed to establish when each of these interventions took place.

The results of our analysis demonstrate that some of the textiles in the treasury at San Isidoro, including those in the titular saint's reliquary, are older than the generally accepted chronology of mid-eleventh century, the standard date assigned to them in the scholarship in order to fit the "1063 charter" of King Fernando and Queen Sancha. In establishing new dates for these textiles we are cognizant of the need to strengthen research in the field of medieval textiles from Iberia overall and to apply these results to other collections that have been dated on the basis of stylistic analysis. At San Isidoro, one unexpected element of interest is the paucity of Iberian textiles within this heterogeneous assemblage, as few as four out of a total of fourteen. The ownership of silks from a range of provenances links León with the same phenomenon at other important Christian shrines and royal seats outside Iberia, as we have noted. These data provide insight into the degree of consideration in which Iberian textiles were held in the context of the most important Christian court of the Peninsula, suggesting that local fabrics, despite being luxury items, were considered of lesser importance by the Leonese rulers than textiles from Byzantium, Central Asia, or the Near East.[92] It seems that these monarchs deliberately sought textiles of exotic provenance for their most treasured objects and relics.

To support our suggestion about the intentionality behind the acquisition of textiles for San Isidoro from distant lands, this collection needs to be situated within its larger context. Further research is also needed to determine the exact number of medieval textiles from Iberia here and at other peninsular

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91   Fircks and Schorta, *Oriental Silks*, 7.

92   María Judith Feliciano, "Medieval Textiles in Iberia: Studies for New Approaches," in *Envisioning Islamic Art and Architecture: Essays in Honor of Renata Holod*, ed. D. Roxburgh (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 46–65.

sites, putting the spotlight on the lack of a comprehensive catalogue for all these fabrics. Updated information on raw materials and weaving techniques is urgently needed, along with detailed historical documentation, including the nineteenth- and twentieth-century sources. Our preliminary work on the Isidoran collection offers a model for tracing textile provenance, a key factor in the study of historical textiles in church treasuries. This collection exempifies the far-reaching interest of the field of textiles research for the larger area of medieval history, demonstrating that it is possible to go well beyond the possibilities and ideas envisaged till now in the historiography of the San Isidoro treasury.

Acknowledgments

TABLE 4.1 Textiles of the San Isidoro treasury (dimensions in warp direction)[a]

Fragment (and Museum catalogue number)	Materials and dimensions	Weave	Chronology[b]	References and similar pieces	Comments
  SI 1 (3-0089-002-0001)	Silk 65 × 47 cms.	Z weft-faced samite or compound twill. Warps: Main: cream (with some pink) silk, Z-spun. Patterning: white silk, Z-spun. Proportion: 2/1. Wefts: Main: red silk. Patterning wefts: yellow, white, green and dark blue, patterning wefts. All untwisted. Some irregularities on the ground weft.	Central Asia or Near East. ^{14}C: 773–960 cal. AD. 9th–early 10th centuries (Beta—46233 1:1160 ± 30 BP).	Schorta, "Central Asian Silks," 52–54: Shroud of Saint Lambert, ^{14}C: 667–872 AD. Shroud of St. Mengold (^{14}C: between 780 and 980 AD, 95.4% probability). Stauffer, *Die mittelalterlichen Textilien*, 52–54: silk samite, Byzantine, 10th century?; 78–79: silk samite, Byzantine, 9th–10th centuries. Otavsky and Wardwell, *Mittelalterliche Textilien*, pp. 34–35 (with fragments in Musée du Cluny and Cleveland Museum of Art): Central Asian, 8th century.	There are 4 fragments, stitched together, following the pattern. The sewing threads are modern, and one side is fixed with a nail similar to one fixing the embroidery. The modern threads could be related to the restoration in the early 20th century by Gómez-Moreno. No other restorations have been done (as far as we know).

TABLE 4.1 Textiles of the San Isidoro treasury (dimensions in warp direction[a]) (cont.)

Fragment (and Museum catalogue number)	Materials and dimensions	Weave	Chronology[b]	References and similar pieces	Comments
  SI 2 (3-0089-002-0001)	Linen, silk, and metal thread 16 × 59,3 cms. max.	Ground: Linen tabby. Warp: linen, S spun. Weft: linen, S spun. Embroidery: silk and metal threads (gold sheet wrapped around a yellow silk thread, S spun). Embroidery: couched and split stitches with silk threads, untwisted. Free style embroidery.	[14]C: 878 – 1013 cal. AD 10th century (Beta—462330: 1110 ± 30 BP).	Mackie, *Symbols of Power*, 156–158 and 161: Embroideries with animals (Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 37.7103 and Cleveland Museum of Art, 1952.257 and 1938.300), Iraq, Baghdad, Seljuq period, 11th–12th centuries. Printed textile, lions in square medallions, Seljuq period, 11th–12th centuries (Cleveland Museum of Art, 1950-558). Otavsky and Wardwell, *Mittelalterliche Textilien*, 21–23: embroidery in silk, China 7th–8th centuries.	Two fragments, cut to fit in the lid of the casket. Fixed by modern nail and sewing thread (further analysis needed). The modern threads are said by the museum to be related to the restoration in the early 20th century by Gómez-Moreno. No other restorations have been done (as far as we know), according to the Museum information.

TABLE 4.1 Textiles of the San Isidoro treasury (dimensions in warp direction^a) (cont.)

Fragment (and Museum catalogue number)	Materials and dimensions	Weave	Chronology^b	References and similar pieces	Comments
 SI 3 (03-089-002-0030)	Silk 17,5 × 12,7 cms.	S weft-faced compound twill or samite. Warps: main: white/cream silk, Z spun. Patterning: cream/white silk, Z spun. Proportion 2/1. Some irregularities in the main warps, sometimes grouped by 3. Wefts: Ground: red silk, untwisted thread. Patterning: blue, white and yellow, untwisted threads.	Byzantine. 9th–10th centuries.	Anna Muthesius, *Byzantine Silk Weaving, AD 400 to AD 1200* (Vienna: Verlag Fassbaender, 1997), 192: lampas, Byzantine, 10th–11th centuries; 214, fig. 34A: M375: peacock with columns, from Aachen Treasury. Stauffer, *Die mittelalterlichen Textilien*, 75–77: silk samite 8th–9th centuries, Byzantine. Chartraire, *Les tissues anciens*, 12, fig. 3 and 32–33, fig. 32: Coptic textile and Byzantine, 10th century.	

TABLE 4.1   Textiles of the San Isidoro treasury (dimensions in warp direction[a]) (*cont.*)

Fragment (and Museum catalogue number)	Materials and dimensions	Weave	Chronology[b]	References and similar pieces	Comments
SI 4 (3-089-002-0031)	Silk and metal threads 16 × 21 cms.	Weft compound twill. Warps: Main: red or orange silk, Z-spun. Patterning: white or cream silk, Z-spun. Proportion 1/2. Wefts: Ground: yellow silk, untwisted. Patterning: blue, white, green and metal threads. Metal threads: gold wrapped, S-spun, around a yellow silk thread, S-spun.	Byzantine or Near East. 9th century.	Stauffer, *Die mittelalterlichen Textilien*, 56–57: silk samite, Central Asian, 10th –11th centuries (lion tail); 128–129: silk samite, Spain, 10th century (snake head and composition). Muthesius, *Byzantine Silks*, 180–182: M52-M57, silk samites with lions, Byzantine, 10th century.	The warps threads are a red-orange color, even when these threads are hidden by the wefts. This is an unusual combination that we need to consider as related to a particular workshop practice.[c]
SI 5 (3-089-002-0029)	Silk 30,3 × 25 cms.	S weft-faced compound twill or samite. Warps: brown silk, Z-spun. Patterning: brown silk, Z-spun. Proportion 2/1 Wefts: Ground: violet silk, untwisted threads; patterning: blue, yellow, green, white. Interesting effect of darkening ground with the brown warps.	Byzantine or Near East. Late 9th–10th century?	Muthesius, *Byzantine Silk*, 170: M19, Byzantine, 6th–7th centuries. Schmedding, *Mittelalterliche Textilien*, 244–245: silk samites, Syrian or Byzantine, 9th century.	

TABLE 4.1　Textiles of the San Isidoro treasury (dimensions in warp direction[a]) (cont.)

Fragment (and Museum catalogue number)	Materials and dimensions	Weave	Chronology[b]	References and similar pieces	Comments
  SI 6 (3-089-022-0032)	Silk 18,7 × 20,9 cms.	S weft-faced compound twill or samite? (further study needed) Warps: Main cream silk, S-spun. Patterning: cream silk, S-spun. Proportion: 1/1. Wefts: Ground: yellow silk, untwisted. Patterning: orange/brown, blue, untwisted. Warps very thin: similar to draps de l'Arrest or late samites	Byzantine. 10th century.	Muthesius, *Byzantine Silk*, 171, M20, fig. 81a–b: silk samite, Coptic/Byzantine, 6th–7th centuries from the Victoria and Albert Museum (no. T93-1937).	Difficulties in studying the weave due to the conservation treatment. The shape of the fragment recalls the shape of some caskets.
  SI 7 (3-089-002-0026, 0033 to 0036)	Silk 54 × 56,5 cms. (reconstructed)	Lampas, tabby/tabby with 3 wefts. Warps: Main: blue silk, Z-twisted, paired. Binding: white or cream silk, Z-spun. Proportion 4/1. Wefts: Ground: cream silk, untwisted. Patterning: yellow, cream and green, untwisted.	Near East or Persia. 14C 968–1046 cal. AD (Beta 462332: 1020 +/- 30 BP). Textile glued to the blue and white textile: 14C 1050–1260 cal. AD (RICH-24296: 849±30BP).	Otavski and 'Abbas, *Mittelalterliche Textilien*, 132–134: 137–138: n. 79 and n. 81, Persian or Mesopotamian, 11th–12th centuries; Byzantine or Eastern Mediterranean. 11th century.	Textile in 6 fragments, not all restored. One of them has a second textile glued to the back.

TABLE 4.1   Textiles of the San Isidoro treasury (dimensions in warp direction[a]) (cont.)

Fragment (and Museum catalogue number)	Materials and dimensions	Weave	Chronology[b]	References and similar pieces	Comments
 SI 8 (3-089-002-0028)	Silk 26,8 × 25,5 cms.	Lampas, tabby/tabby, with 3 wefts. Z spun 2 Warps: black (ground) and white silk (patterning). Proportion: 2/1. Wefts: ground black silk. Patterning: red, yellow, white. Some black warps grouped in 4 threads. Has a selvedge of three linen cords and some mistakes.	Iberia. 11th century.	Muthesius, *Byzantine Silk*, 195: M96: Silk samite, Sogdian, 12th century. Otavski and 'Abbas, *Mittelalterliche Textilien*, 166–167: n 91, Silk lampas, Spain, 12th century.	The yellow wefts may be in imitation of metal threads.
 SI 9 (3-089-002-0023)	Silk 82 × 43 cms (further studied is needed)	S weft-faced compound twill or samite of 5 wefts. Warps: main: white/cream silk thread, Z-spun. Patterning: white/cream, Z-spun. Proportion 2/1. Some irregularities on the main warps, sometimes grouped by 3. Wefts: Ground: red silk, untwisted threads. Patterning wefts: yellow, blue, green, white and brownish (or orange), untwisted threads.	Iberia? 11th century (from late 10th or early 11th to early 12th).	Otavsky and Wardwell, *Mittelalterliche Textilien*: 136–137, no. 44, incised silk, Mesopotamia, 11th century.	Restored and put back in the casket. One fragment in the lid, plus three in the casket. Lined during the 2000 intervention.

TABLE 4.1 Textiles of the San Isidoro treasury (dimensions in warp direction[a]) (cont.)

Fragment (and Museum catalogue number)	Materials and dimensions	Weave	Chronology[b]	References and similar pieces	Comments
 SI 10 (3-089-002-0037 and 38)	Silk 28,6 × 40 cms.	Double faced compound twill or samite. Warps: cream silk, S-spun. Irregular thickness. Proportion 1/1. Wefts: cream and green (blue?) silk, untwisted.	Central Asia or Near East. ^{14}C 1040–1250 cal. AD (RICH-24297: 867±28BP).	Sens Cathedral, doubled-faced silk with crescent moon, B189. Muthesius, *Byzantine Silk*, 170.	
 SI 11(3-089-002-0027)	Silk Red threads: Brazil wood. 20,2 × 14,3 cms.	Lampas, twill/twill (?) (further study is needed) Warps: Main: blue silk, Z spun. Patterning white silk, Z-spun, irregular thickness Wefts: ground weft: blue silk, untwisted. Patterning wefts: white, yellow, pink, untwisted.	Near East? 11th century.	Van Raemdock, *En Harmonie*, silk samite with senmurvs (^{14}C 860–1030 AD). Silver dish with senmurv, 6th –8th centuries (British museum M124065). Parra, "Caracterización," 362.	

TABLE 4.1 Textiles of the San Isidoro treasury (dimensions in warp direction[a]) (cont.)

Fragment (and Museum catalogue number)	Materials and dimensions	Weave	Chronology[b]	References and similar pieces	Comments
SI 12 and 13 (3-089-002-0024 and 0025)	Silk and metal threads Stole 277 x 7,0 cms Maniple 154,4 x 7,0 cms	One stole and one maniple. Tablet weave. Warp: green and yellow silk; Patterning wefts: White, red, blue and silver threads. Silver threads: silver sheet wrapped around a yellow silk thread.	England or Iberia. End of 12th century.	Spies, *Ecclesiastical Pomp*, 88, fig. 97. Weave study at 265.	Inscription on each: ERA: MCCXXXV: ANNOS (1197)
SI 14	Silk and metal threads 5 × 4,1 cms	Box wrapped in tablet weave and silk tabby. Tablet weave: Warp: green and yellow silk; Patterning wefts: White, red, blue, and silver threads. Silver threads: silver sheet wrapped around a yellow silk thread.	Iberia or Sicily. 13th century.	Spies, *Ecclesiastical Pomp*, 127. Band, silk and silver threads, 13th –14th centuries.	

[a] I am grateful to Silvia Saladrigas, Museu Textil de Tarrasa, for her comments regarding the direction of the compound twills. This detail could reinforce the identification of Western vs. Central Asian workshops.

[b] The radiocarbon analyses were carried out by Beta Analytic (Miami) and IRPHA (Brussels) laboratories.

[c] There is a group of Late Antique textiles with red warps in wool that Trilling considers to be from Syrian workshops, J. Trilling, *The Roman Heritage. Textiles from Egypt and the Eastern Mediterranean, 300 to 600 AD* (Washington: Textile Museum, 1982), 16–44, cat. n° 16–22.

Sovereign, Saint, and City: Honor and Reuse of Textiles in the Treasury of San Isidoro (León)

María Judith Feliciano

Abstract

The textiles currently housed in the treasury of the collegiate church of San Isidoro de León are part of a centuries-long process of collecting relics at the heart of an emblematic royal mausoleum. Instead of studying them through the prism of the "charter of 1063," this investigation proposes a wider look at the place of luxurious textiles in Castile and León before and after the arrival of Saint Isidore's relics. What emerges is an intricate relationship between the mythification of the city of León as a *civitas regia*, the Leonese monarchy's concept of antiquity in legitimizing their rule, and the refinement associated with the royal court and its sacred performance of the cults of saints.

Keywords

A study of the textile collection associated with the treasury of the Collegiate Church of San Isidoro de León presents extraordinary challenges to historians.[1]

From the common notion of the present-day treasury as the exclusive repository of a single royal donation by Fernando I and Sancha of León in 1063 to the deceptive and largely undocumented impact of nineteenth- and early-twentieth century interventions and collecting practices, the history of the treasury has been anchored by incomplete evidence and unverified oral histories.[2] Its collection—which at fourteen extant textiles is uniquely diverse if relatively small—has not been the focus of scientific or comprehensive historical analyses until now. Instead, formal descriptions have tied the textiles to an Andalusi periodization that is difficult to substantiate. Yet, a methodical review of historical documentation, together with scientific analyses of the fibers and structural examination of the cloths, reveals a new chronology of materials that both precede and post-date the 1063 donation to San Isidoro.[3] A commercial map that links the Kingdom of León with woven goods fashioned far beyond the frontiers of al-Andalus and the Mediterranean, expanding into Central Asia, also unfolds. Ultimately, the present-day assembly of textile objects at the Museo de la Real Colegiata de San Isidoro emerges not as *the* treasury of Fernando and Sancha, but rather as a far more elaborate collection of medieval objects that was essential in the construction of majesty and sanctity in a city founded as a *civitas regia*.[4] The textiles at San Isidoro were part of an evolving compendium of sacred objects at the service of the Church, the monarchy, and the city of León.[5]

Indeed, recognizing the relationship between the enduring royal, sacred, and historic sources of local identity is essential to an understanding of the wide range of dates—from the ninth through the thirteenth centuries—represented by the treasury's extant textiles. As Monsalvo Antón has argued, it was not too long after 910–914, when the court of the Astur-Leonese

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2 On the debate surrounding the 1063 donation, see María Encarnación Martín López, *Patrimonio cultural de San Isidoro de León: Documentos de los siglos X–XIII.* (León: Universidad de León, 1995), 38–39. See also Chpt. 2 by Therese Martin in this volume.

3 For a detailed analysis of the technical approaches to dating and characterizing the textiles at San Isidoro, see Chpt. 4 by Ana Cabrera in this volume.

4 On León as a royal city, see Peter Linehan, "León, ciudad regia, y sus obispos en los siglos X–XIII," in *El Reino de León en la Alta Edad Media*, 12 vols. (León: Centro de Estudios e Investigaciones "San Isidoro" (CSIC-CECEL), Caja de Ahorros y Monte de Piedad, Archivo Histórico Diocesano, 1994), 6: 409–457. See also Carlos Reglero de la Fuente, "Restauración diocesana y memoria regia en León y Castilla," in *La construcción medieval de la memoria regia*, ed. Pascual Martínez Sopena and Ana Rodríguez (Valencia: Universidad de Valencia, 2011), 87–106.

5 This expansive reading of the textile evidence well into the early modern period echoes Therese Martin's conclusions, based on the new radiocarbon dating of the Beatitudes Casket, in Chpt. 2 of this volume.

kingdom was transferred from Oviedo to León, that a deliberate process of mythification—of cultural and doctrinal construction—of the city began to take place.[6] Central to the ideological creation of the royal capital was the physical presence of the reigning monarchs, as well as high-ranking nobility and clergy, at symbolically charged moments that reaffirmed the centrality of the city in the life of the kingdom, such as coronations and royal funerary ceremonies, victorious returns after battles, and the public humiliation of adversaries, among others.[7] Of course, these displays required an illustrious backdrop, an urban environment complete with palaces, churches, monasteries, and an imposing cathedral that dignified royal pageantry.[8] The ultimate reiteration of royal power in a ritualized medieval capital where the bodies of kings were anointed, exalted, and eventually entombed, was the presence of the bodies of the saints in the form of powerful relics.[9] Welcome ceremonies for the arrival of relics invigorated all aspects of urban, royal, and religious display mentioned above: the city became the theater, its most important buildings and temples the stages, and large assemblies of powerful civil and ecclesiastical elites and enthralled inhabitants joined in as actors and spectators. The yearly celebration in commemoration of the martyrdom or arrival of the relics cyclically reactivated the original performance and reaffirmed its historical legacy.[10]

Prior to 1063, when the welcome ceremony and royal endowment for the arrival of the remains of Saint Isidore took place in León, the city's churches

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6   He refers to this myth as "la capitalidad de León." José María Monsalvo Antón, "La imagen de las ciudades y regiones altomedievales de León y de Castilla en las crónicas generales (de Sampiro a la *Estoria de España*)," *Studia Historica. Historia medieval* 28 (2010): 83–123, esp. 86.

7   Monsalvo Antón, "La imagen de las ciudades," 87–93. An example of this process of mythification is the symbolic weight placed by contemporary and later chroniclers on the continuation of the Visigothic coronation ritual in the cathedral of León, whereby the head of the just-crowned king underwent a ceremonial anointment. See Antonio Viñayo González, *Fernando I, el Magno 1035–1065* (Burgos: Editorial La Olmeda, 1999), 59–62.

8   Monsalvo Antón, "La imagen de las ciudades," 93. For a concise history of the use of relics in royal circles up to the reign of Fernando I and Sancha, see Raquel Alonso Álvarez, "La Cámara Santa de Oviedo. De thesaurus a relicario," in *La Cámara Santa de Oviedo y su relicario*, ed. Raquel Alonso Álvarez (Oviedo: Real Instituto de Estudios Asturianos, 2017), 59–82, esp. 65–66.

9   Monsalvo Antón, "La imagen de las ciudades," 95.

10   Peter Brown suggests "a double preoccupation with concord [between regions and within communities (my aside)] and the exercise of power" in the welcome ceremonies for saints' relics and the yearly reenactments of their arrival. Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015; first ed. 1980), 97–98.

had already been in possession of a renowned collection of relics of local and foreign saints. Among the most venerated were the mandible of John the Baptist, the remains of Pelayo (a Leonese child martyred in Córdoba (in 925), as well as relics of saints Claudio, Vicente Abad, Froylán, Facundo, and Primitivo, among others.[11] The impending siege and ultimate destruction of the city of León by the troops of the Cordoban vizier al-Mansur in the 990s prompted the safekeeping of the relics.[12] Some, like those of Saints Pelayo and Vicente Abad, a sixth-century martyr, were taken north to Oviedo to escape desecration. Others were hidden or buried, while still others survived untouched.[13] In 1053, sixteen years after becoming monarchs of the kingdom of León, Fernando and Sancha traveled to Asturias with a coterie of court members and prelates to ceremonially and triumphantly retrieve some of the relics of Saint Pelayo and return them to their home in León.[14] The remains of saints like Pelayo, which reemerged untouched from the caliphal raids, carried the weight of victorious Christianity as their symbolic store. The translation of the relics of Saint Isidore from Muslim-controlled Sevilla in 1063 undoubtedly carried a similar association of success in returning exalted Christian remains to Christian lands, as was the case a year later when the rulers brought the body of Saint Vicente de Ávila to León "because the city of Ávila had seen great destruction by the Muslims."[15]

The saintly remains mentioned above shared two common attributes: while some of the relics were laden with anti-Islamic sentiment, others were steeped in early Christian antiquity. The ways in which the Astur-Leonese kingdom conceived of its relationship to an Iberian concept of Christian antiquity—and therefore legitimacy—in their contested soil are fundamental to our understanding of the textiles that wrapped the saintly remains. For instance, the remains of the child martyr Pelayo, killed in defense of his faith and virtue (he

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11   For an exhaustive and detailed list of saints in the see of León, see Manuel Risco, *España Sagrada* (Madrid: Imprenta de Pedro Marín, 1784), 34:312–389.

12   Al-Mansur's historic raids on the region of León had begun around the year 982. For a detailed account of al-Mansur's military engagements in the north, see Ana Echevarría Arsuaga, *Almanzor, un califa en la sombra* (Madrid: Sílex, 2011), 119–178.

13   Risco, *España Sagrada*, 34:312–389.

14   For details of the event, see Francisco Javier Fernández Conde, Isabel Torrente Fernández, and Guadalupe de la Noval, *El Monasterio de San Pelayo de Oviedo: Historia y fuentes*, 3 vols. (Oviedo: Monasterio de San Pelayo, 1978), I:23–25.

15   For a detailed account of the search for, invention, and return of the relics of Saint Isidore, see Viñayo, *Fernando I*, 173–207; citing Lucas de Tuy on San Vicente de Ávila, 208. For Vicente, see also Daniel Rico Camps, "San Vicente de Ávila en el siglo XII: La restauración de un *locus sanctus*," *Hortus Artium Medievalium* 15/2 (2009): 291–305.

is said to have resisted the religious and sexual advances of 'Abd al-Rahman III, who had become infatuated with his beauty, incurring the caliph's wrath)[16] likely echoed the widely circulating stories commemorating the mid-ninth century Martyrs of Córdoba championed by Eulogius and Albarus. The martyrs had upheld an uncompromising attitude towards assimilation and integration into Islamic society, viewing it as a fatal step towards corruption and the ultimate destruction of Iberian Christianity.[17] The cult of their relics quickly spread to the Christian north, where trade in their remains fueled diplomatic exchanges well into the tenth century.[18] Possessing and venerating the remains of Isidore of Sevilla, perhaps the best known Iberian saint and a recognized Father of the Church, connected the Leonese monarchy and faithful to an already mythologized Visigothic history. The symbolic charge of the royal custody of such celebrated remains also reaffirmed the promise of Christian reunification of the Iberian Peninsula, a theme alive in the courtly circles of the Astur-Leonese monarchy since the late ninth century.[19] As Manuel Castiñeiras suggests, the *traslatio* of Isidore's remains to León transformed the confessor into a physical symbol of Visigothic greatness at the heart of the city.[20] Similarly, saving from Muslim desecration the remains of Saint Vicente de Ávila, a Roman martyr of the Iberian church, tied these associations deeper into the history of

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16   Jeffrey A. Bowman, "Beauty and Passion in Tenth-century Córdoba," in *The Boswell Thesis: Essays on Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*, ed. Mathew Kuefler (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 236–253.

17   Jamie Wood, "Persecution, Past and Present: Memorialising Martyrdom in Late Antique and Early Medieval Córdoba," *Al-Masāq. Journal of the Medieval Mediterranean* 27/1 (2015): 41–60, esp. 59.

18   Wood, "Persecution, Past and Present," 58, argues that Eulogius was "acutely aware of the potential of Cordoban relics to generate connections with outsiders." Mariam Rosser-Owen argues persuasively for the importance of Iberian relic translations within and outside of Islamic territory in the dissemination of Andalusi luxury objects. Mariam Rosser-Owen, "Islamic Objects in Christian Contexts: Relic Translation and Modes of Transfer in Medieval Iberia," *Art in Translation* 7/1 (2015): 39–64, esp. 50–52. See also Roger Collins, *Caliphs and Kings: Spain 796–1031* (Chichester, UK and Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 108. On the Martyrs of Córdoba, see Kenneth Baxter Wolf, *Christian Martyrs in Muslim Spain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Jessica A. Coope, *The Martyrs of Cordoba: Community and Family Conflict in an Age of Mass Conversion* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995).

19   Jerrilynn D. Dodds, *Architecture and Ideology in Early Medieval Spain* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990), 77–81.

20   A similar phenomenon took place upon the return of Saint Pelayo's remains to León. Manuel A. Castiñeiras González, "El *labora*: los trabajos y los días en la iconografía románica," in *Vida y muerte en el monasterio románico,* ed. José Ángel García de Cortázar (Aguilar de Campoo: Fundación Santa María la Real, 2004), 63–84, esp. 79–80.

Christianity in Iberia.[21] By 1053, the concepts of antiquity, both real and imaginary, were fundamental to the construction and veneration of the assembled relics as a sort of heavenly court in León.

The extant textiles in the treasury of San Isidoro speak directly of this sense of antiquity and legitimacy channeled through relics. The early dating revealed by carbon-14 tests for the two textiles lining the reliquary of San Isidoro— 800–960 for the weaving, 878–1013 for the embroidery[22]—may seem surprising to us today because these silks are almost always associated with the royal gift of 1063 (Figures 5.1 and 5.2). Shortly after the miraculous appearance in a dream of Saint Isidore to Bishop Alvito in Sevilla, we are told that Isidore's relics traveled to their resting place in León in a spectacular fashion.[23] The *Historia Silense* tells us that al-Mu'taḍid of Sevilla (r. 1042–1069) shrouded the reliquary in a magnificent textile ("*ecce Rex Sarracenorum supradictus Abenhabet cortinam miro opera contextam super sacrcophagum Beati Confessoris iactavit …*").[24] In the post-industrial age, we are conditioned to think that the textiles used for such a symbolically freighted purpose as a saint's journey and ceremonial entry into a city would have been newly purchased because culturally we are expected neither to gift old things nor to wear old clothes at important public acts. It is an incontrovertible fact, however, that the reuse of fine textiles, especially those that had undergone ritual consecration for the ornament of sacred spaces or to facilitate liturgical ritual, was the medieval norm.[25] In

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21   Beyond patterning "the Cordoban martyrs on earlier (Roman) saints," Wood argues for Eulogius' further manipulation of the relics of the Martyrs of Córdoba by tying them directly to sites of Roman martyria in al-Andalus (Wood, "Persecution," 51–55).

22   For technical dating details, see Ana Cabrera's contribution to this volume.

23   For the translation, see José Carlos Martín, "La *Translatio S. Isidori Legionem Anno 1063* (BHL 4488): Introducción, estudio y edición crítica," *Exemplaria Classica. Journal of Classical Philology* 15 (2011): 225–253.

24   Henrique Flórez, *España Sagrada. Theatro geographico-histórico de la Iglesia de España* (Madrid: Oficina de Pedro Marín, 1789), 17:319. Spanish edition: *Introducción a la Historia Silense*, ed. Manuel Gómez-Moreno (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Históricos, 1921), 131: "Echó una cortina, tejida con admirable labor sobre el sarcófago del confesor bienaventurado."

25   In medieval Islamic societies, rituals of investiture highlighted the imposition of the honorific *khil'a*—which is essentially what al-Mu'taḍid did upon ritually clothing Saint Isidore's casket before its departure from his realm. As Sanders explained, "at its most literal, a *khil'a* (pl. *khila'*) is a garment that has been taken off (*khala'a*) by one person and given to another … While earlier rulers certainly bestowed such 'castoff' garments as honorific robes, the term *khil'a* came into usage in the 'Abbasid period (750–1258). In time, it was used to designate any garment bestowed by the ruler upon an official … [in Fatimid Egypt] castoff *khila'* were especially prized as funeral shrouds, and they might be given in response to a specific request." It is unclear, however, what the protocol was in the
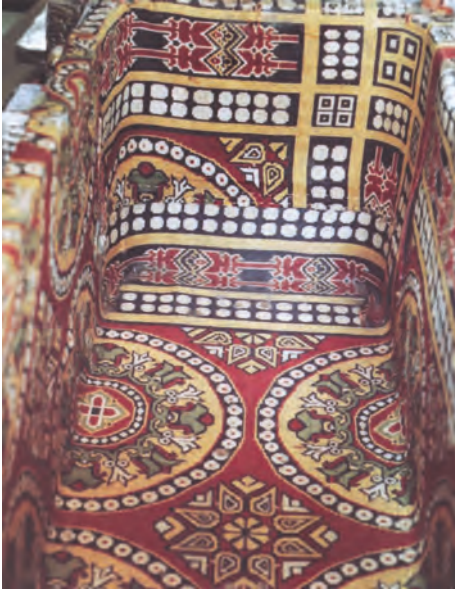
FIGURE 5.1
Textile lining the reliquary of San Isidoro
(Museo de la Real Colegiata de San Isidoro
de León, Inv. No. IIC-3-089-002-0001).
PHOTO: ANA CABRERA

FIGURE 5.2   Embroidery lining the lid of the reliquary of San Isidoro (Museo de la Real Colegiata
de San Isidoro de León, Inv. No. IIC-3-089-002-0001). See also Figs. 4.4, 4.7.
PHOTO: THERESE MARTIN

fact, we can trace the presence of luxury textiles in the Christian kingdoms of
the Iberian Peninsula from at least the ninth century.

The history of early acquisitions of luxury textiles in the northern Iberian
kingdoms is rich, indeed. Ninth-century documents mention textile gifts by

eleventh-century Taifa court of Sevilla. On the *khil'a*, see Paula Sanders, "Robes of Honor
in Fatimid Egypt," in *Robes and Honor. The Medieval World of Investiture*, ed. Stewart
Gordon (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 225–239, esp. 226–227. See also N. E. Stillman, "Khil'a"
in *The Encyclopedia of Islam, 12 Volumes*. 2nd ed., ed. H. A. R. Gribb et al. (Leiden: Brill,
1960), 5:6–7.

Bishop Frunimio I to Santa Eulalia de Vinagio (Valle del Duero, 873) and from King Alfonso III to San Adriano de Tuñón (Asturias, 891).[26] At the monastery of Abeliare (Asturias), the 927 testament of its founder, Bishop Cixila, itemized more than seventy fine textiles in his personal possession.[27] In the neighboring county, the documentation tells us, for instance, that in 978 the ruling count and countess of Castile, García and Ava, founded the monastery of Covarrubias for their daughter Urraca, donating to the new institution a series of textiles including Byzantine silks (*greciscos*).[28] This charter is particularly noteworthy because it details the role of textile gifts to ornament and dignify the cult in a newly established temple; such foundational objects would themselves eventually become a type of relic.

Currently housed in the Museo de la Colegiata de Covarrubias, a *ṭirāz*-like white linen textile with borders of colorful tapestry weave depicting waterfowl was retrieved from a lipsanotheca in the nearby monastery of San Pedro de Arlanza.[29] Lipsanothecas were small wooden boxes containing relics and/or

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26 In León, an early surviving document dated 874 details a donation of tapestry-weave (*palleos*) altar frontals, curtains or long lengths of textiles with birds and eagles, and "greciscos" or Byzantine silks, given by Bishop Frunimio I to the Cathedral of León. Sánchez-Albornoz consulted and recorded the document, but it does not appear among the Cathedral documents subsequently published for this period. Document 1326 of the Archivo de la Catedral de León, cited by Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz, *Una ciudad de la España cristiana hace mil años* (Madrid: Ediciones Rialp, 2014; first ed. 1924), 136, n. 68. Cited from Manuel Risco, *España Sagrada* (Madrid: Oficina de Blas Román, 1784), XXXIV: 427; and Manuel Risco, *España Sagrada* (Madrid: Oficina de Blas Román, 1789), XXXVII: 339.

27 It includes sheets, table (altar?) covers, handkerchiefs, tunics, albs, tapestries, and many other objects. As cited from the Becerro I de la Catedral de León, f. 385 by Manuel Gómez-Moreno, *Iglesias mozárabes. Arte español de los siglos IX–XI.* Edición facsímil. Estudio preliminar por Isidro Bango Torviso (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1998; first ed. 1919), 326–327.

28 From the Cartulario de Covarrubias, as cited by Sánchez-Albornoz, *Una ciudad*, 43. "Et donavit tibi XX. lectos cum suos tapetes et almocallas de palleo et de greciscos et suos plumacos palleos et greciscos et suas savanas litteratas et fateles alfaneges in pannos greciscos …" *Cartulario del Infantado de Covarrubias*, ed. Luciano Serrano (Madrid: Gregorio del Amo, 1907), II:22. See also thirteen documentary references to *greciscos*, especially in relation to ecclesiastical vestments (chasubles, dalmatics, stoles, etc.) and ritual objects (table covers, altar frontals, etc.) in Sánchez-Albornoz, *Una ciudad,* 42, n. 5.

29 Technically, the term *ṭirāz* refers to an "inscription band in Islamic textiles, or fabric with an inscription band added in a technique different from the ground weave … *ṭirāz* also refers to the workshop in which these textiles were made." The category also includes woven textiles with a tapestry band decoration in linen, silk, or *mulḥam* (a cotton-silk combination) even without inscription. See *The Grove Encyclopedia of Islamic Art and Architecture*, ed. Jonathan A. Bloom and Sheila S. Blair, 3 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), I:337–340. Carmen Bernis, "Tapicería hispano-musulmana (siglos XIII—XIV)," *Archivo Español de Arte* 29 (1956): 189–211, esp. 98, 202; Florence May, *Silk Textiles of*

small folded texts detailing important events in the history of an early medie-
val institution, such as the consecration of a new church or the expansion of a
pre-existing temple.[30] Common from the tenth to the thirteenth centuries in
the Iberian Peninsula, lipsanothecas could be placed in a hole in a wall or the
floor of the apse, in an altar, or within a larger reliquary. A single church could
have multiple such commemorative objects throughout its history. The famous
ṭirāz from Colls (Museo de Huesca), found in 1978 in the Aragonese Pyrenees
and generally thought to be a caliphal work, was discovered wrapping a lip-
sanotheca ("una caja de reliquias") within the altar of a ruined twelfth-century
church (Figure 5.3).[31] As for the aforementioned textile from San Pedro de
Arlanza, this very early piece, likely of Egyptian Fatimid manufacture, must
already have been seen as a relic of the monastery's past at the time of its inser-
tion into the lipsanotheca.[32] It bears mentioning that Covarrubias and Arlanza
constitute the spiritual and symbolic seats of the county of Castile. Covarru-
bias is the mausoleum of the counts of Castile, while San Pedro de Arlanza,
known as the "cradle of Castile," is associated with a foundation, or perhaps
reedification, in 912 by Count Fernán González.[33] Together with Oña, Arlanza

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Spain. Eighth to Fifteenth Century (New York: Hispanic Society of America, 1957), 18. For a discussion of the painted representation of a *ṭirāz* textile in the frescoes at San Isidoro de León, see Chpt. 7 by Pamela Patton in this volume.

30   The Museo Diocesano de Barbastro-Monzón is currently undertaking a study of the twenty-two lipsanothecas in its collection. While the objects come from churches in Alto Aragón, we expect that this pioneering study will shed light on this widespread Iberian practice. I am grateful to María Puértolas, Assistant Director of the Museo Diocesano de Barbastro-Monzón, for sharing preliminary information with me.

31   Juan Francisco Esteban Lorente and Manuel Santiago García Guatas, "Noticias sobre el hallazgo de un tejido musulmán," *Artigrama* 3 (1986): 29–34; Cristina Partearroyo Lacaba, "Estudio histórico-artístico de los tejidos de al-Andalus y afines," *Bienes Culturales. Revista del Instituto del Patrimonio Cultural Español* 5 (2005): 37–74, esp. 50; Cristina Partearroyo Lacaba, "Textile Fragment," in *Al-Andalus: The Art of Islamic Spain* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1992), 226–228.

32   The textile from Arlanza is one of the earliest extant medieval textile objects found in the Iberian Peninsula, yet it is one of the least known and remains all but unstudied. There is a real possibility that this object is of Egyptian manufacture, although Carmen Bernis sees an "inspiración copta" and Florence May suggests that, while it shows "much dependence on Egyptian motifs, forms current at Córdoba had already been incorporated into the decorative scheme of textiles." Bernis, "Tapicerías hispano-musulmanas," 202; May, *Silk Textiles*, 18.

33   On the debate and possible falsification in the eleventh century of the foundational doc-
uments of San Pedro de Arlanza, see Manuel Zabalza Duque, *Colección diplomática de los Condes de Castilla. Edición y comentario de los documentos de los condes Fernán González, García Fernández, Sancho García y García Sánchez* (Salamanca: Junta de Castilla y León, 1998), 114–130. See also María del Carmen León-Sotelo Casado, "Formación y

remained the most powerful Castilian monastery throughout the central Middle Ages. Not coincidentally, the status of the monastery at Arlanza guaranteed multiple visits and donations from Fernando I of León-Castilla, who had initially chosen it for his burial place before agreeing to Sancha's request that they both be buried at San Isidoro in León.[34]

To successfully locate the wealth of cult objects that circulated around the city of León and in the monastery of San Isidoro in the late eleventh century, it is necessary to cast a far wider net than the fated year 1063. We must think of the city of León starting in the mid-tenth century, at the time of repopulation that followed its establishment as the capital of Astur-León by Ordoño II (d. 924), when it was busy rebuilding itself as a Christian city and royal capital, constructing and endowing temples and monasteries, and filling them with textiles and objects associated with foundational treasures in the manner outlined above.[35] The church at which the relics of Isidore were deposited was not the first temple to be built on the site.[36] Perhaps in the late tenth century, a monastery consecrated to Saint John the Baptist had been erected over Roman remains. In the 1050s Fernando I began a building campaign there to accommodate royal burial. Like the relics, the liturgical objects that pre-dated the reconstruction of the temple and the royal gift of 1063 may have simply been stored and reincorporated to fill the ritual needs of the renovated space.[37]

During the tenth century, there is increasing documentary evidence for textile gifts and woven goods in church inventories throughout northern Iberia, from Asturias to León and Castile to Galicia. In the eleventh century, textile

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primera expansión del dominio monástico de San Pedro de Arlanza. Siglo X," *En la España Medieval* 1 (1980): 223–236; Julio Escalona Monge, Pilar Azcárate Aguilar-Amat, and Miguel Larrañaga Zulueta, "De la crítica diplomática a la ideología política. Los diplomas fundacionales de San Pedro de Arlanza y la construcción de una identidad para la Castilla medieval," in *Actas del VI Congreso Internacional de Historia de la Cultura Escrita* (Libros y documentos en la Alta Edad Media. Los libros de derecho. Los archivos familiares), ed. C. Sáez Sánchez (Madrid: Calambur Editorial, 2002), 2:159–206.

34   Viñayo González, *Fernando I*, 85.

35   On this topic, see Ana Rodríguez, "À propos des objets nécessaires. Dotations monastiques et circulation d'objets au royaume de León dans le haut Moyen Age," in *Objets sous contrainte. Circulation et valeur des choses au Moyen Âge*, ed. Laurent Feller and Ana Rodríguez (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2013), 63–89.

36   For the history of the site prior to the construction of the Romanesque church, see Therese Martin, *Queen as King: Politics and Architectural Propaganda in Twelfth-Century Spain* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), esp. 34–49.

37   In Chpt. 4 of this volume, Ana Cabrera also suggests the possibility of the movement of precious textiles from Asturias to León in the eleventh century. This is a provocative idea that requires archival corroboration.

FIGURE 5.3   Textile fragment from Colls, 11th century. Silk and gold thread, 51.8 × 58.5 cm.
                      (Inv. No. 1542, Museo de Huesca).

donations reach an apogee.[38] The written record offers evidence of geographic
distribution that dovetails with the possible origins of the extant textiles at San

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38   The foundational texts focused on documentary evidence pertaining to material culture
       are Sánchez-Albornoz, *Una ciudad*; Sánchez-Albornoz, "El precio de la vida en el reino
       asturleonés hace mil años," *Logos* 3 (1944): 225–264; Gómez-Moreno, *Iglesias mozárabes*;

Isidoro. In addition to the frequent references to Byzantine textiles (*greciscos*), the allusions to Persian goods are notable. There were *duzuríes*, an unidentified descriptor that may be geographic, perhaps referring to the Persian term *douzī*, or embroidery.[39] The term *ferucí/ferucíes* in conjunction with textiles confounded earlier historians, although it closely recalls the word *farsi*, or Persian.[40] Interestingly, the texts use this word to refer to a type of cape (*manto*) or large length of cloth that can be associated with the products of medieval Persian *zilu* looms, whose considerable size required two weavers working side by side. The best-preserved evidence of the circulation of these products in medieval Iberia is the spectacular blue silk with white double-headed eagles or griffins, found at the monastery of San Zoilo in Carrión de los Condes: this cloth measures an impressive 2.75 × 2.08 m.[41] Of course, there were also *maurescos*, textiles from al-Andalus or possibly from the looms of Mozarabic *ṭirāz* weaving communities that cropped up after the dissolution of caliphal power in the early eleventh century. The town of Pajareros at the southernmost frontier between León and al-Andalus had a community of "*muzarabes del rex tiraceros.*"[42]

Manuel Gómez-Moreno, *Catálogo monumental de España. Provincia de León*, 2 vols. (Madrid: Ministerio de Instrucción Pública y Bellas Artes, 1906–1908); Luis García de Valdeavellano, "El mercado. Apuntes para su estudio en León y Castilla durante la Edad Media," *Anuario de Historia del Derecho Español* 8 (1931): 201–403. The appendix in Manuel Risco's pioneering work on León also contains important references to eleventh-century textiles in the churches of León. Manuel Risco, *España Sagrada. Memorias de la Santa Iglesia de León,* Tomo XXXVI (Madrid: Oficina de Blas Román, 1787).

39   Serrano-Piedecasas conflates the terms *loztou, doztoní,* and *ducerí,* identifying them as a geographical type from "la provincia de Juzistán, de la ciudad de Dastuwa. Tela listada." However, the term *ducerí,* closer to *douzī,* might also refer to a Persian embroidery. The term دوزی is still used all over the Persianate world to generically designate an embroidery. *Malileh douzī,* for instance, is a highly desirable embroidery made with metallic thread, which has a long history in the Persian world. *Zardozi,* or *zar douzī,* is a gold embroidery technique practiced in Iran, Pakistan, and India. Regardless, a clear allusion to Persian textiles is evident here. Luis María Serrano-Piedecasas Fernández, "Elementos para una historia de la manufactura textil andalusí (siglos IX–XII)," *Studia Historica. Historia Medieval* 4 (1986): 205–227, esp. 225.

40   Sánchez-Albornoz, *Una ciudad,* 101, n. 94.

41   This piece was identified recently as the product of a *zilu* loom. See Pilar Borrego, Silvia Saladrigas, and Miguel Ángel Andrés Toledo, "Technical and Symbolic Study of Two Complete Medieval Cloths Found in Carrión de los Condes, Spain," in *Purpureae Vestes* V: *Textiles, Basketry, and Dyes in the Ancient Mediterranean World,* ed. J. Ortiz et al. (Valencia: Universidad de Valencia, 2016), 163–170. See also José Luis Senra, "Dos telas islámicas encontradas en el monasterio de San Zoilo de Carrión de los Condes," *Goya* 203 (2004): 332–340.

42   As cited from Catedral de León, Tumbo I, fol. 154 in Gómez-Moreno, *Iglesias mozárabes,* 117. See also Richard Hitchcock, *Mozarabs in Medieval and Early Modern Spain: Identities and*

While Pajareros is the only such town of which we have written notice, it is not far-fetched to think that other skilled weavers also made their way north.

Returning to the theme of reuse, a document dated 1073 from the Cathedral of León details an inventory of goods that Bishop Pelayo acquired during his tenure as part of the restoration and consecration of the temple.[43] According to Bishop Pelayo, after the destruction of the city of León and the profanation of its churches during the *razzias* of al-Mansur in the late tenth century, it took almost a century for the cathedral to regain the dignity of its episcopal stature.[44] The cathedral was rebuilt, refurbished, and re-consecrated. The 1073 document lists a great number of newly purchased textiles: multiple *greciscos*, other cloths embroidered or tapestry woven, perhaps in gold (*morgomes*),[45] made of scarlet (*ciclatun*), linen (*bissino*), and striped textiles of various kinds.[46] However, the most revealing information comes from the Bishop's declaration: "And I restored many garments that had been worn out due to their age, on which more was spent than on those which I [had] made from

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Influences (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 69–74; María Judith Feliciano, "Medieval Textiles in Iberia, Studies for a New Approach," in *Envisioning Islamic Art and Architecture. Essays in Honor of Renata Holod,* ed. David Roxburgh (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 46–65, esp. 55, n. 37.

43   See José Manuel Ruíz Asencio, *Colección documental del Archivo de la Catedral de León*, 19 vols. (León: Centro de Estudios e Investigaciones San Isidoro, 1990), 4:439–447. I am grateful to Lucy Pick for sharing this document with me. For the Romanesque cathedral, see Gerardo Boto, *La memoria perdida: la catedral de León (917–1255)* (León: Diputación Provincial de León, 1995).

44   "Post cuius mortem, non paucis annis transactis, gens perfida hismahelitarum et pene similis antiquis cultoribus idolorum insurrexit contra christicolas, destruxit ecclesias, subuertit altaria, contaminauit sancta; depopulata est et redegit in suum ius totam provintiam; interea cotingit hanc sedem deprauari et contaminari et fuit sine honore multis annis, id est, usque ad tempora regis Adefonsi et regis Santii, patris dompni Fredenandi superius nominati, qui me ibidem preposuit ... sedem non ualuerunt ad perfectum mundare sancta que polluta fuerant neque diem consecrationis siue restaurationis institutere, sicut mos est pre multitudine bellorum, usque ad presens tempus." José Manuel Ruiz Asencio, *Colección documental del Archivo de la Catedral de León (775–1230)* (León: Centro de Estudios e Investigación "San Isidoro", 1990) IV:442.

45   Jaime Varela Sieiro, "Tejidos y vestimenta de procedencia árabe en la documentación altomedieval gallega," in *Tejer y vestir: De la antigüedad al islam*, ed. Manuela Marín (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2001), 255–286, esp. 279.

46   "... et duas stolas argenteas et aliam auro fresam, quibus inieci manipulos greciscos, et duas dalmaticas greciscas et unam ciquilatonem et duos morgomes, et unum frontalem dolceri et concam iragam et tunicam cardinam cum suis listis et casullam bissinam et duas stolas albas cum suis manipulis et unum amictum morgome et viii mantos lineos et xii alvas lineas et tres casullas cum suis tunicis et amictis et unum corporale de bisso et omnia uestimenta linea ad altaria operienda." Ruiz Asencio, *Colección documental*, 443.

scratch."[47] The description of these old textiles suggests that these were items that likely survived the *razzias*. As discussed above, relics and cult objects were routinely hidden away during violent times. Their tales of survival only added to the reputation of the object as essential to the local geography of the sacred.[48]

Because of the price and preciousness of luxury textiles, in addition to their association with ritual and antiquity, once sacralized, they were used until they were simply too damaged and indecorous to be ritually appropriate. Even then, as an image from the early twentieth century taken by the photographer Adolf Mas in Serradui (Huesca) demonstrates, a sliver of an ancient textile would still be kept as a shard of sanctity (Figure 5.4). That notion helps to explain the small and fragmentary state of several textiles at San Isidoro. For instance, a photograph taken around 1931 seems to suggest—we cannot be sure—that the objects might have been found inside the Limoges-style enamelwork casket (Figure 5.5). Today the large textile visible on the right survives only as a minuscule sliver (perhaps the rest has been put back into the now-locked casket?), while the one sewn into a bag, which can be seen on the left, has since been taken apart and laid out for display.[49] Nevertheless, we can see that the final chapter in the ritual life of these two textiles was as relic wrappers. In their previous lives they were likely curtains, antependia, or vestments.

The treasury of San Isidoro has representative pieces of nearly every type of woven good mentioned above. Of the Andalusi or Mozarabic manufactures, it holds at least two possible samples, the lining of the Casket of Saints John the Baptist and Pelayo (Figure 5.6) and the well-known fragment with elephants surmounted by lions and birds (Figure 5.7). The prominent inscription in the fragment of the elephants would appear to indicate a foreign manufacture, reading on the top circle البركة من الله واليمن (*al-baraka min Allah wa al-yumn*) and on the bottom لصاحبه أبو بكر مما عمل في بغداد (*li ṣāḥibihi Abū Bakr mimma ʿumila fī Baghdād*); that is, "blessings from God and prosperity to the owner Abu Bakr, from those [objects] made in Baghdad."[50] Yet the inscription

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47   "Et restauraui plurima indumenta que erant uetustate consumpta, in quibus maior expensa est quam in his que de nouo operatus sum ..." Ruiz Asencio, *Colección documental,* 443. I am grateful to Therese Martin, Eduardo Fernández, Kenneth Baxter Wolf, and Lucy Pick for revising and correcting the translation.

48   Conversely, the powerful presence of Leonese relics in Oviedo became embedded in the myth of the city as a refuge of sanctity for generations. See Alonso Álvarez, *La Cámara Santa,* 75–77.

49   See Table 1, no. 4 in Chpt. 4 by Ana Cabrera in this volume.

50   Rhuvon Guest read "Abu Naṣr" instead of "Abū Bakr." Like Gómez-Moreno, I discern a clear kāf, instead of a ṣād. My thanks to Nourane Ben Azzouna for corroborating the epigraphic

FIGURE 5.4   An assortment of liturgical treasures from Serradui, Huesca.
PHOTO: ADOLF MAS, © ARXIU MAS/INSTITUT AMATLLER D'ART HISPÀNIC

appears to be misleading, as the technical aspects of the textile indicate that it may have been woven in the Iberian Peninsula.[51] At El Burgo de Osma, another Iberian textile with a similar inscription, which has been associated with the burial of San Pedro de Osma (1040–1109), is perhaps the best-known example of *baldaquíes*, or Baghdadi textiles. The inscription from El Burgo de Osma famously reads هاذا ممّا عمل في بغداد حرسه الله (*hādhā mimmā ʿumila fī Baghdād ḥarasaha Allāh*), or "this is from those [objects] made in Baghdad, may God protect her" (Figure 5.8). Because both textiles refer to Baghdad directly, rather than to Madīnat as-Salām as did early ʿAbbasid sources, we can also ascertain that they are not dated before the eleventh century. Unlike in ceramics, metalwork, and other media from medieval Islamic periods, it is not common to find a textile inscription that mentions no more than the name of a non-elite

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reading. See Albert Frank Kendrick and Rhuvon Guest, "A Silk Fabric Woven at Baghdad," *Burlington Magazine* 49 (1926): 261–267; Gómez-Moreno, *Catálogo monumental,* 1:166.

51   See Ana Cabrera's contribution to this volume, Chpt. 4.

FIGURE 5.5   Textiles with enamel casket, photographed ca. 1931 (Museo de la Real Colegiata
de San Isidoro de León, Inv. No. IIC-3-089-002-0003). See also Fig. 1.2.
PHOTO: ADOLF MAS, © ARXIU MAS/INSTITUT AMATLLER D'ART HISPÀNIC

"owner" (in the case of the Isidoran fragment, an untitled man named Abū Bakr). Usually, when textiles bear names, they are also inscribed with the titles of rulers, and the royal manufacture (*dar al-ṭirāz*) may be identified and a date given. Can we think of Abu Bakr, then, as the weaver, the cartoon designer, or the owner of the workshop?[52] Or was the inscription copied blindly from an existing cartoon in the workshop? Another problem for determining the origin of the textile is the fact that no archaeological examples survive from 'Abbasid Baghdad. Given the different types of textiles that claim to be Baghdadi goods, it is also difficult to identify with precision exactly what the Iberian workshops that produced these silks were attempting not just to imitate but indeed to pass off as the real thing. The *baldaquíes*, therefore, emerge as an exceptionally unstable category.

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52   Guest suggested that the name might refer to the weaver, but there are various possibilities. Kendrick and Guest, "A Silk Fabric," 267.

FIGURE 5.6   Lining of the Casket of Saints John the Baptist and Pelayo (Museo de la Real
Colegiata de San Isidoro de León, Inv. No. IIC-3-089-002-0023). See also 1.8, 4.12a,
4.12b, 5.9, 6.7a, 6.7b.
PHOTO: ANA CABRERA

The second textile of possible Iberian manufacture at the treasury of San
Isidoro is the lining in the reliquary casket said to have held the remains of
John the Baptist and Pelayo. Like the *baldaquíes* mentioned above, this silk
weaving presents technical similarities with Andalusi products.[53] Epigraphi-
cally, the Arabic is difficult to ascertain because it is riddled with spelling mis-
takes (Figures 5.6 and 5.9). It reads ازز لموبد ٱا الملك(*ʿizz li mawabdnā al malik*)
in an attempt to write عزلمولاٱا الملك(*ʿiz li mawlānā al-malik*) or "glory to our
lord the king."[54] The technical aspects of the weave, the imperfect Arabic, and
the variation on the traditional "ʿiz li mawlānā as-sulṭān" (glory to our lord the
sultan) or "ʿiz li mawlānā as-sulṭān al-malik" (glory to our lord the reigning
sultan) should make us receptive to the idea that this textile may be a local

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53   See the contribution by Ana Cabrera to this volume, Chpt. 4.
54   Ahmed Mahmoud Dokmak and Zeinab Shawky Sayed, "Aportaciones de la epigrafía
      árabe en el arte románico español. Una faceta de la cultura árabe-islámica medieval," *Un
      Mundo, Muchas Miradas* 4 (2015): 109–133, esp. 115–116.

FIGURE 5.7   Elephant fragment or so-called Baghdad Silk (Museo de la Real Colegiata de San
             Isidoro de León, Inv. No. IIC-3-089-002-0028). See also Figs. 4.2a, 4.2b.
             PHOTO: THERESE MARTIN

product, possibly made by Mozarabic weavers.[55] While there is no evidence
to affirm that the term Mozarab was widely used in the twelfth century, its
earliest documented use in 1024 ("muzarabes de rex tiraceros") suggests a royal
effort to recruit highly skilled Christian weavers from Córdoba of various levels
of cultural and linguistic affinity with the dominant Caliphal society.[56] Such
degrees of acculturation (and, thus, of Arabic language literacy) might explain
the poor written Arabic on the textile.

   Yet, there is a crucial lack of reliable comparanda against which to measure the
possible Mozarabic textile that lines the reliquary of John the Baptist and Pelayo.

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55   More than a century ago, Gómez-Moreno maintained that this textile "se haría
     aquí, en España, y aún acaso por tiraceros mozárabes." Gómez-Moreno, *Catálogo
     monumental*, 1:166.

56   As Hitchock argues, "these tiraceros may, then, have been called muzaraves simply to
     indicate their provenance. That they were so called is neither an indicator of their religion
     nor necessarily of their Arabization. It was nothing more than a pointer to their place of
     origin." Hitchcock, *Mozarabs in Medieval and Early Modern Spain*, 69–75.

FIGURE 5.8   Textile fragment with wrestling lions and harpies from the tomb of Pedro
                      de Osma. Spain, probably Almería, early 12th century. Silk lampas with
                      supplementary discontinuous metal-wrapped patterning wefts, 50 × 43 cm.
                      (Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 33.371. Ellen Page Hall Fund).
                      PHOTO: © MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON

For instance, although the combination of elements in this silk seem to indicate
that Gómez-Moreno was right to identify it as Mozarabic, his assignment of a
veil from San Pedro de Montes in El Bierzo to Mozarabic manufacture on stylis-
tic grounds alone is more arbitrary: "a beautiful cloth where there are segments
woven in tapestry technique, in linen and in silk, and in the geometric decoration
there is a combination of whites and blues, yellow, greens and reds."[57] We simply
do not know how a textile produced in a Mozarabic *ṭirāz* workshop differed aes-
thetically from any other produced elsewhere on the Iberian Peninsula.

57   Gómez-Moreno, *Iglesias mozárabes*, 395.

FIGURE 5.9   Detail, textile from the reliquary of Saints John the Baptist and Pelayo (Museo de la Real Colegiata de San Isidoro de León, Inv. No. IIC-3-089-002-0023). See also 1.8, 4.12a, 4.12b, 5.6, 6.7a, 6.7b.
PHOTO: ANA CABRERA

At the treasury of San Isidoro, no textile exemplifies the themes of use, reuse, antiquity, and royal and historic memory in the medieval *urbe regia* of León better than the enigmatic cloth popularly associated with the reliquary of San Marcelo/San Claudio (Figure 5.10). Despite the poor conservation state of this exceptionally rich textile, it is evident that the fragments of the blue and white silk once functioned as the lining of a large reliquary.[58] In its elaborate and detailed pattern, at least two human figures can be made out: first, an elegantly dressed male standing in front of an animal, knife in hand, inside a roundel surrounded by an inscription in Arabic (Figure 5.11). It is difficult to determine the complete epigraphic content because of the loss of material, but the word بركة (baraka), or *blessing*, is clearly distinguishable inverted in mirror effect. The seeming assortment of meem and lām consonants might suggest a formulaic بركة من الله (*baraka min Allah*), "blessing from God," or perhaps بركة كاملة (*baraka kāmila*), "perfect/total blessing." The second figure is an elegant lady

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58   For dimensions and detailed technical analyses, including dating, see Chpt. 4 by Ana Cabrera in this volume.
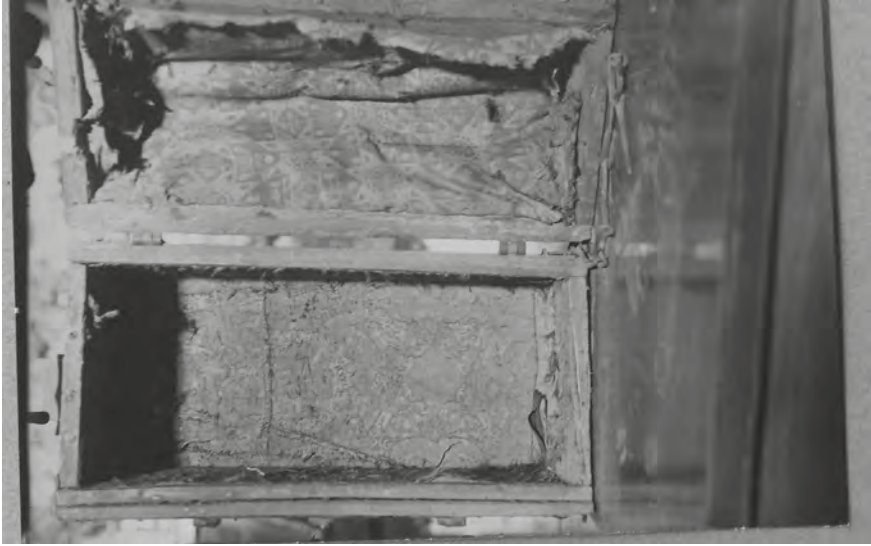
FIGURE 5.10   Reliquary of San Marcelo/San Claudio, early twentieth-century photograph,
with textiles still in situ (Museo de la Real Colegiata de San Isidoro de León, Inv.
Nos. 3-089-002-0025, 0026, 0033, 0034, 0035, 0036, 0037, 0038). See also Figs.
4.11, 4.13, 5.11, 5.12.
PHOTO: ARCHIVO GÓMEZ-MORENO, CSIC

wearing a crown and long pearl earrings while riding side-saddle on a beast
(a lion or a horse), also within a roundel surrounded by an Arabic inscription
that is yet more difficult to discern (Figure 5.12). The words و بركة / من بركة (*bara-
ka min /baraka wa*), or "blessings from / blessings and" are faintly legible.[59]
The exceedingly complex decorative patterns surrounding the figures include
interlocking polylobed medallions, seven-pointed stars, flowers, pearl strings,
geometric fillers, and small griffins, making it one of the most technically ad-
vanced and intricate textiles in the treasury. Carbon-14 analysis dates this silk
between AD 968–1046, predating the royal endowment of 1063 at San Isidoro,
and it may indicate a Persian or Eastern Mediterranean manufacture.[60]

59   Gómez-Moreno rightly recognized the word *baraka* in this textile, but he suggested as a
possible reading the unpersuasive "bendición saludable" or "healthful blessing." Gómez-
Moreno, *Catálogo monumental*, 169.
60   See Table 1 at the end of Chpt. 4 by Ana Cabrera in this volume. For his part, Gómez-
Moreno, *Catálogo monumental*, 169, was stunned by the beauty of the object: "La perfec-
ción y habilidad de esta obra y su belleza sorprenden." He suggested a twelfth-century
date and a Persian origin.

FIGURE 5.11   Detail of San Marcelo/San Claudio silk, showing a standing male figure with a
                knife (Museo de la Real Colegiata de San Isidoro de León, Inv. Nos. 3-089-002-
                0025, 0026, 0033, 0034, 0035, 0036). See also Figs. 4.11, 4.13, 5.10, 5.12.
                PHOTO: THERESE MARTIN

At the turn of the twentieth century, Manuel Gómez-Moreno saw the frag-
ments of this textile still attached to an unremarkable pine wood reliquary that
he identified as "perhaps having contained in the Monastery of San Claudio
the relics of the saint himself and of his brothers Lupercio and Victorio, donat-
ed by Cardinal Jacinto, Papal Legate, in 1173."[61] This identification is still in use
at the Museo de San Isidoro. Yet, our research unearthed an early twentieth-
century photograph of the reliquary's bottom panel that identifies it clearly as
"San Marcelo" (see Figure 5.10).[62] The path to clarify the proper identification
of the one of the most sophisticated textiles in the treasury of San Isidoro takes
us beyond the Colegiata itself, the city of León, and even the medieval period.

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61   The attribution is found in Gómez-Moreno, although the author did not document or
      explain how he reached this conclusion: "Arqueta que contuvo reliquias en el Monasterio
      de San Claudio, acaso los de este mismo santo y de sus hermanos Lupercio y Victorio,
      donados por el Cardenal Jacinto, Legado Pontificio, en 1173." Gómez-Moreno, *Catálogo
      monumental*, 169.
62   My thanks to Ana Cabrera for sharing the image with me.

FIGURE 5.12   Detail of San Marcelo/San Claudio silk, showing a female figure on a beast
(Museo de la Real Colegiata de San Isidoro de León, Inv. Nos. 3-089-002-0025,
0026, 0033, 0034, 0035, 0036). See also Figs. 4.11, 4.13, 5.10, 5.11.
PHOTO: THERESE MARTIN

Father and son, Marcelo and Claudio are Leonese saints long venerated in
the city. San Marcelo was a Roman centurion beheaded in the third century
in present-day Tangiers for publicly refusing to bear arms and military insig-
nia, following Christian dogma.[63] Towards the beginning of the ninth century,
there was already a church of San Marcelo in León, built on the site of his
confession, which was subsequently rebuilt in 1096 along with the Hospital
of San Marcelo, one of the earliest medieval pilgrims' hospitals in León.[64] The
remains of his son Claudio, martyred by the sword in the year 303 as a result of
Diocletian's persecution of Christians, remained in León at the monastery of

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63   Michael Kulikowski, *Late Roman Spain and Its Cities* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University
      Press, 2004), 218; Alfonso García Gallo, "El proceso de San Marcelo de León," in *Estudios
      en Homenaje a Don Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz en sus 90 Años* (Buenos Aires: Instituto de
      Historia de España, 1983), 1:281–290; Giuliana Lanata, "Gli atti del proceso contro il centu-
      rione Marcello," *Byzantion* 42 (1972): 509–522.

64   José González, *Vida de San Marcelo* (Madrid: Blass SA Tipográfica, 1943), 90–91.

San Claudio, built on the site of his martyrium.[65] In the year 1173, his body was translated from the crypt of the church to the high altar. The earliest extant document that includes an inventory of the relics at San Isidoro, dated 1331, bears witness to the presence of relic fragments of San Claudio and his brothers in the treasury. Perhaps small remains were translated to San Isidoro when the relics were moved in the twelfth century.[66]

Unlike San Claudio's remains, San Marcelo's relics were absent from León for more than a thousand years. It was during the conquest of Tangier in 1471 by Alonso de Portugal that the remains of the Leonese centurion were located, and in 1493 they were sent to León, escorted by Diego Diez de Isla, a member of the cathedral chapter and abbot of San Marcelo.[67] In the same year on 29 March, León briefly became an *urbe regia* again, a status it had lost following the death of Alfonso IX in 1230. More than two hundred years later, King Ferdinand of Aragon traveled to the city to receive the relics of Marcelo, escorted by his soldiers and surrounded by members of the highest echelons of Iberian aristocracy, which included the Constable and Admiral of Castile, the Count of Luna, and the Viceroy of Galicia, among others. The relics of the saint were carried in a palanquin covered by "un brocado muy rico"—a rich brocade—through the streets of León, pausing at the church of San Claudio where father and son were briefly reunited while the procession waited for the king to finish mass in the cathedral. Lastly, the king himself saw the body of the saint safely to its home in the church of San Marcelo.[68]

The year 1493 was enormously important in the consolidation of the sovereignty of the Catholic Monarchs, Ferdinand and Isabella. In fact, King Ferdinand stopped in León en route to Tordesillas from Barcelona, where he had met Christopher Columbus after his return from the second voyage to the Americas. After León, the king continued to Tordesillas, where the *Bulas Alejandrinas* were being negotiated with Portugal and the Papacy. The Americas and North Africa, the land where San Marcelo was martyred and from where his body was recovered, played a crucial role in the post-Granada geopolitical game of

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65   Risco, *España Sagrada,* XXXIV:353–359.

66   For a detailed description of the inventory of indulgences and relics at San Isidoro, see Chpt. 2 by Therese Martin in this volume. I thank her for sharing this information with me.

67   Juan Croiset, *Suplemento á la última edición del Año Christiano* (Madrid: Imprenta de Joseph García, 1796), II:302–303; José García de la Foz, *Crónica General de España. Crónica de la Provincia de León* (Madrid: Rubio y Co., 1867), 71–72; González, *San Marcelo*, 95; Risco, *España Sagrada*, 256–260.

68   García de la Foz, *Crónica General*, 71.

the Spanish monarchy.[69] Twenty-two years had by then passed between the discovery of the relics in Tangiers and their translation to León. At this time, a large-scale reformation of the Iberian Church after the conquest of Granada occupied the sovereigns' attention. The spiritual and architectural landscape of the Iberian Peninsula was transformed under the Catholic Monarchs, and the theatrical setting of León as an *urbs regia* that imbued the monarchy with a link to the past by way of the cult of saints was activated, once again.[70]

By the end of the sixteenth century, the church of San Marcelo had fallen into disrepair. The temple underwent a major rebuilding campaign in 1586 and the relics were taken to the cathedral for safekeeping, against the wishes of the abbot of San Claudio, who felt strongly that the relics of father and son should be kept together. The work finished in 1628 and the relics returned to their home.[71] In the nineteenth century, the history of the relics of San Marcelo and San Claudio became entangled almost beyond recognition. The political instability that defined the century caused a near constant movement of relics for safekeeping. First, the Napoleonic invasion of 1808 required that the relics be secured. In 1821, revolutionary violence prompted the return of the relics of San Claudio to the church of San Marcelo. In 1834, Claudio's relics were moved to San Marcelo permanently when the monastery of San Claudio was destroyed.[72] The final blow seems to have come in 1868 when, at the insistence of José Amador de los Ríos, director of the newly founded Museo Arqueológico Nacional in Madrid, the parish priest of San Marcelo "donated" the Nasrid sword that had adorned the figure of the saint by the renowned sculptor Gregorio Fernández.[73] The sword was popularly believed to have been a gift to San Marcelo from Ferdinand of Aragon, although the historical sources do not corroborate it. Of the reliquaries and the textiles nothing is heard again until Gómez-Moreno's publications in the early twentieth century, by which time yet one more step of displacement—from San Marcelo to San Isidoro—had taken place. Perhaps the move to San Isidoro was an attempt at safekeeping objects of artistic interest after losing the Nasrid sword to Madrid? Or perhaps the new

69   Álvaro Fernández de Córdova Miralles, "El 'Rey Católico' de las Primeras Guerras de Italia. Imagen de Fernando II de Aragón y V de Castilla entre la expectación profética y la tensión internacional (1493–1499)," *Medievalismo* 25 (2015): 197–232, esp. 218.

70   Álvaro Fernández de Córdova Miralles, "El 'otro príncipe': Piedad y carisma de Fernando el Católico en su entorno cortesano," *Anuario de Historia de la Iglesia* 26 (2017): 15–70, esp. 26–29.

71   González, *Vida de San Marcelo*, 11–13.

72   González, *Vida de San Marcelo*, 131.

73   José Ferrandis Torres, "Espadas granadinas de la jineta," *Archivo Español de Arte* 16 (1943): 142–166, esp. 154–155.

silver reliquary of San Marcelo rendered the old box obsolete and so it was sent to the treasury. It may be that the pine box with its silk lining once held San Claudio's remains and that the label identifying it as San Marcelo refers to the church of origin rather than the saint within. It is certain, however, that the reliquary of San Marcelo/San Claudio was not part of the royal donation of 1063.

There is a last and important question to sort out in the tangled story of these relics: why would a tenth- or eleventh-century textile be used in the translation of relics of 1493? It is possible that, just as in medieval times, the recognizable antiquity of this textile, which may have either been present at the church or donated for the occasion, was deemed suitable for the purpose of honoring the Roman martyr. Perhaps the imagery on the textile of a figure with a weapon in hand was chosen to evoke San Marcelo, the Legionnaire, who both lived and was killed by the sword? Or perhaps it is more feasible to associate this silk either with San Claudio's ceremonial translation to the altar of his church in 1173 or with the arrival of his fragments in San Isidoro between then and 1331. In any case, the early modern and more recent history of the reliquary of San Claudio/San Marcelo further underscores the deep-rooted relationship between monarchy, *urbe regia*, and memory in the geographies of the sacred.

Scholarship on the material and spiritual workings of medieval reliquaries tends to overlook the textiles that almost always came in most direct contact with the sacred. A careful consideration of the role of textiles in the creation and recreation of the medieval treasury of San Isidoro de León should make us reconsider this approach, asking instead "what do textiles do for relics?"[74] As Cynthia Hahn argues,

> A reliquary offers more than confinement: it implicates an array of practices such as ritual, storytelling, and collecting ... through a reliquary, its construction and its display of precious materials, it asserts that the relic is by nature valuable, eternal, and has existed from a designated and pregnant historical moment worthy of remembrance ... a reliquary's mission is the support of memory.[75]

Only the most desirable luxury textiles imported from trading centers that connected Europe to Africa and Asia were selected to honor the relics of the saints that rest at the heart of the treasury and mausoleum of San Isidoro. Indeed,

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74   Cynthia Hahn, "What Do Reliquaries Do for Relics?" *Numen* 57 (2010): 284–316.

75   Cynthia Hahn, *The Reliquary Effect: Enshrining the Sacred Object* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), 20.

luxury silks were among the "gemmis et auro"[76]—the objects of highest value—upon which the dazzling performance of the sacred relied. They offered a literal physical veil, and often a series of veils, in the rituals that concealed and revealed, protected and exposed the relics at the moments of activation.[77] As powerful material capable of temporal and geographic evocation, textiles were fundamental in the process of the visualization of the holy and the mirroring of majesty.

As a result, fine textiles that had undergone ritual consecration and become cult objects had long useful lives and served myriad purposes at León's most emblematic royal foundation, the Basilica of San Isidoro. In direct contact with the remains of Iberian saints of Roman, Visigothic, and Caliphal periods—and throughout a millennium-long process of use, restoration, adaptation, and reuse—the textiles at San Isidoro echoed the notion of antiquity and triumphant Christianity that legitimized royal claims to the Iberian territory. There is much work left to untangle the intricate web of changes and movement of relics and their textile covers—not least a careful archival study of nineteenth- and twentieth-century translations within the institution itself and the city of León at large. The evidence is clear, however, that such a dynamic ritual environment made the present-day treasury of San Isidoro a vastly transformed collection of objects that is far more complex than traditionally conceived.

Acknowledgments

76   Cynthia Hahn, *Strange Beauty: Issues in the Making and Meaning of Reliquaries, 400–circa 1204* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012), 26.
77   Hahn, *The Reliquary Effect,* 13–14; Massimo Leone, "Wrapping Transcendence: The Semiotics of Reliquaries," *Signs and Society* 2/S1 (2014): S49-S83.

Between León and the Levant: The Infanta Sancha's Altar as Material Evidence for Medieval History

Jitske Jasperse

Abstract

In the Museo de la Real Colegiata de San Isidoro in León, Spain, an intriguing portable altar is on display. Its multicolored stone and long inscription detailing the material objects enshrined within invite an analysis of the artwork in terms of materiality and mobility. This article addresses the multiple questions raised by the altar, shifting away from a straightforward interpretation of patronage by Sancha of León-Castilla (ca. 1095–1159), whose name is inscribed on its face. Conceptualizing the altar as a multilayered object that can be placed within Sancha's network of connections facilitates our understanding of this exotic artifact between León and the Levant.

Keywords

Infanta Sancha – portable altar – materiality – exoticism – León – Levant

1   Introduction[1]

"Queen Sancha, [daughter] of Raimundo, silvered me." So begins the inscription on a portable altar that is kept at the Museo de la Real Colegiata de San

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Isidoro de León (Figure 6.1).[2] The "queen" is Sancha of León-Castilla (ca. 1095–1159), daughter of Queen Urraca of León-Castilla (r. 1109–1126) and Count Raimundo of Burgundy (d. 1107), and the elder sister of King Alfonso VII of León-Castilla (r. 1126–1157).[3] Her altar has a long inscription detailing its date of consecration, the name of the bishop who blessed it, and an extensive list of relics. For medievalists, the story told by this altar is assumed to be a familiar one: the patron, Sancha, appears to have commissioned a personal portable altar that she eventually gave to her favored institution, San Isidoro de León. According to the *Liber miraculorum beatissimi Isidori*, written by Lucas of Tuy between 1221/24 and 1239, she presented vessels and vestments from her chapel to San Isidoro when she felt her death was near.[4] Indeed, in this the earliest

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2   Portable Altar, 1144, 26.5 × 17.2 × 2.2 cm, silver and gilded silver, engraved with niello, breccia di Aleppo. León, Real Colegiata de San Isidoro, Inv. No. IIC-3-089-002-0008. In Spanish publications this object is usually discussed in connection to Sancha and/or the treasure at San Isidoro. See Julio Pérez Llamazares, *El tesoro de la Real Colegiata de San Isidoro de León. Reliquias, relicarios y joyas artísticas* (León: Imprenta y Librería Religiosa, 1925), 175–180; Manuel Gómez-Moreno, *Catálogo monumental de España: Provincia de León (1909–1908)*, 2 vols. (Madrid: Ministerio de Instrucción Pública y Bellas Artes, 1925), 1:206–207; Ángela Franco Mata, "El tesoro de San Isidoro y la monarquía leonesa," *Boletín del Museo Arqueológico Nacional* 9/1–2 (1991): 35–68 at 67; Clara Bango García, "Ara de San Isidoro (León)," in *Maravillas de la España medieval. Tesoro sagrado y monarquía*, 2 vols., ed. Isidro G. Bango Torviso (Valladolid: Junta de Castilla y León, 2001), 1:352–353; and Eduardo Álvarez Aller, "El ara de la infanta doña Sancha en el tesoro de San Isidoro de León" (unpublished MA thesis, Universidad de Oviedo, 2010), 1–17. See also Michael Budde, *Altare Portatile: Kompendium der Tragaltäre des Mittelalters 600–1600*, 2 vols. (Münster/Westf.: Werne a.d. Lippe, 1998), 2:cat. 98; and Gregoria Cavero, "Sancha Raimúndez: An Infanta in the Exercise of Her Power," *Imago Temporis. Medium Aevum* 7 (2013): 271–297, at 285.

3   For Sancha, see Luisa García Calles, *Doña Sancha, hermana del Emperador* (León: Centro de Estudios e Investigación San Isidoro, CSIC, 1972); María Encarnación Martín López, "Colección documental de la Infanta Doña Sancha (1118–1159): Estudio crítico," in *León y su historia: Miscelánea histórica VIII* (León: Centro de Estudios e Investigación San Isidoro. Caja España de Inversiones y Archivo Histórico Diocesano, 2003); Therese Martin, *Queen as King: Politics and Architectural Propaganda in Twelfth-Century Spain* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 153–176; and Cavero, "Sancha Raimúndez," 271–297.

4   "Y al tiempo de su muerte la dió a la dicha iglesia […] con todo el aparato, y ornamentos muy ricos de su capilla y con muchas y grandes reliquias de santos, que tenía." Lucas de Tuy, *Milagros de San Isidoro*, traducción Juan de Robles (1525), transcripción, prólogo y notas Julio Pérez Llamazares (1947) (León: Universidad de León y Cátedra de San Isidoro, 1992), chapter XXXVI, 65. There is no Latin edition of the Miracles; Patrick Henriet is currently preparing one for Brepols. See also Chpt. 2 by Therese Martin, "Caskets of Silver and Ivory from Diverse

extensive narrative text about the monastery, Sancha is presented as a devout donor who divided a piece of the True Cross among four crosses newly made of silver and gold. The largest of these, decorated with fragments of the Holy Sepulchre as if they were pearls, she gave to San Isidoro.[5]

Yet, closer analysis of the portable altar suggests a much more complicated history than the clear-cut patronage story outlined above. The present article addresses questions raised by a close examination of the altar's inscription, iconography, style, and exotic altar stone. Rather than claiming to provide definitive answers, the responses to these questions seek to deepen our understanding of the complexity of medieval objects by analyzing the altar's multilayered meanings.[6] This moveable artifact is studied within the context of a network of actors who crossed regional boundaries to favor their chosen institutions.

Before locating Sancha and the altar within a web of persons and places, first the seemingly simple altar itself needs to be complicated. This object is less straightforward than it seems, a composite work in which inscription, iconography, and materiality function together. I begin by analyzing each element as separate though interconnected pieces of the puzzle. This approach to an

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Parts of the World: Strategic Collecting for an Iberian Treasury," in this volume. On the *Liber miraculorum beatissimi Isidori*, see Patrick Henriet, "Hagiographie et politique à León au début du XIIIe siècle. Les chanoines réguliers de Saint-Isidore et la prise de Baeza," *Revue Mabillon. Revue internationale d'histoire et de littérature religieuses, nouvelle série* 8 (1997): 53–82, at 58–59. For an example of a chapel, its use, and its importance to a ruler, see Chpt. 3 in this volume by Ana Rodríguez, "Narrating the Treasury: What Medieval Iberian Chronicles Choose to Recount about Luxury Objects."

5   "Y así, habida a dicha reliquia muy preciosa de Ligno Domini, mandó hacer la bienaventurada reina cuatro cruces de oro, y de plata, e hizo partir por partes y asentar en las dichas cruces aquella gran reliquia del madero del Señor, el cual, no solamente los hombres, más los ángeles adoran con mucha reverencia [...] Dió a la dicha iglesia de San Isidro, su esposo, la mayor de aquellas santas cruces, en la cual, demás y allende el Ligno Domini, había hecho ingerir muchos pedazos del sepulcro de Nuestro Señor y están engastados en ella a manera de perlas; la segunda cruz dió a la iglesia de la siempre Virgen Santa María, que es la iglesia catedral de la ciudad de León, y allí hace Nuestro Señor por aquella su santa cruz muchos y espesos milagros; la tercera cruz dió al monasterio de los gloriosos mártires San Facundo y San Primitivo; la cuarta cruz y menor, conviene a saber, aquella que había sido probada por el fuego en la manera susodicha, guardóla para sí en su tesoro." *Milagros de San Isidoro*, chapter XXXVI, 63 and 65. Sancha's pieces of the True Cross are not catalogued in A. Frolow, *La relique de la Vraie Croix: recherches sur le développement d'un culte* (Paris: Institut Français d'Etudes Byzantines, 1961).

6   Elina Gertsman and Asa Simon Mittman, "Rocks of Jerusalem: Bringing the Holy Land Home," in *Natural Materials of the Holy Land and the Visual Translation of Place, 500–1500*, ed. Renana Bartal, Neta Bodner, and Bianca Kühnel (London and New York: Routledge, 2017), 157–171.

FIGURE 6.1   Portable Altar of the Infanta Sancha, 1144, 17.2 × 26.5 × 2.2 cm, silver and gilded
              silver, niello, breccia di Aleppo (Museo de la Real Colegiata de San Isidoro de
              León, Inv. No. IIC-3-089-002-0008).
              PHOTO: THERESE MARTIN

artwork is part of the art historian's traditional métier; although not the only
way to study medieval artifacts, it helps to illuminate why iconography, style,
and material should matter to all medievalists.

2   A Written Testimony in Silver: Whodunit?

Inscribed artifacts hold a special place in the heart of the (art) historian.[7] They
seem to promise that the text can tell us all we need to know, often providing
names of artists, patrons, and recipients, and highlighting, for example, that
women played important roles in the creation of artworks in Middle Ages.[8]
Some inscriptions contain dates referring to manufacture, donation, or conse-
cration, which support a geographical and chronological analysis and help us to
recognize developments in ideas and cultural tastes. A number of inscriptions

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7   For an analysis of medieval inscriptions, see Robert Favreau, *Épigraphie médiévale*. L'Atelier
     du Médiéviste 5 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1997); and Robert Favreau, "Les autels portatif et leurs
     inscriptions," *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale* 46/184 (2003): 327–352.
8   See the studies in Therese Martin, ed., *Reassessing the Roles of Women as "Makers" of Medieval
     Art and Architecture* (Leiden: Brill, 2015 [first ed. 2012]).

reveal why they were commissioned, offering an insight into the patrons' (and the artists') preoccupations, thus shedding light on medieval mentalities.[9] Reliquaries may be inscribed with lists enumerating the holy remains enshrined within, serving as inventories. In many cases, the inscriptions lend authority to the artworks, since they confirm in writing both making and existence.[10] In fact, inscriptions can be such rich treasure troves of information that it is easy to forget that they are not necessarily reliable testimonials. It is important to keep in mind that these inscribed words were visually presented to their audience in a deliberate way.[11] The portable altar of Sancha offers a case in point.

The commencement of the niello inscription is positioned on the altar's face, above and below the stone, in relatively large Caroline lettering on silver ground:

> + REGINA: SANCIA: RAIMVNDI: ME: DEARGENTAVIT: ANNO: DNICE: ĪCARNACIONIS: M: C: XL: IIII: Ī DICTIONE:
> + VII: CCURRENTE: VI: VIII: KA: AVG: DEDICATV: Ē: HOC: ALTARE: AVENE/RABILI: EPO: SCE: BETHLLEE: ANSELMO: ĪNOME: SCE: ET: IDIVIDVE: /[12]

> Queen Sancha, [daughter] of Raimundo, silvered me. In the year 1144 since the Incarnation of the Lord, seventh indiction, sixth concurrent, on the eighth day before the Kalends of August [25 July], this altar was dedicated by the venerable Anselm, bishop of Holy Bethlehem, in the name of the holy and undivided [Trinity].

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9   Budde, *Altare portatile*, 1:773–774.

10   Vicente García Lobo and María Encarnación Martín López (with Santiago Domínguez Sánchez and Ana Isabel Suárez González), *De epigrafía medieval: Introducción y album* (León: Universidad de León, 1995).

11   This is stressed in *Viewing Inscriptions in the Late Antique and Medieval World*, ed. Antony Eastmond (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

12   With some minor alterations, the inscription is taken from Bango García, "Ara de San Isidoro (León)," 1:352–353. I want to thank Ilse Slot and Eduardo Fernández Guerrero for helping me with the inscription and its transcription. Julio Pérez Llamazares, abbot of San Isidoro in the 1920s, was the first to publish the full inscription on Sancha's altar, which he refers to as "el ara de San Isidoro." See Llamazares, *El tesoro de la Real Colegiata*, 180. A good reproduction of the inscription can be found in García Lobo and Martín López, *De epigrafía medieval*, plate XXI; see 103 for an analysis of the Caroline script. Manuel Gómez-Moreno identifies the script as Spanish in his *Catálogo monumental de España*, 1:206 and 2:fig. 225. Bango García follows this analysis ("Ara de San Isidoro [León]," 353), but it is unclear what either of them means by "tipo español," perhaps the "Spanish character" of this Caroline script?

It is significant that Sancha is not styled infanta but *regina*, an honorary title that can be found in her charters from 1147–1148 onwards.[13] This makes the portable altar the earliest surviving testimony to the use of the queenly title by the ruler's unmarried sister, which would transfer just a few years later from silver to parchment. The inscription associates "Regina Sancia" with Raimundo of Burgundy, her father, who held jurisdiction as count over parts of Portugal and Leonese Extremadura through his marriage to Urraca, the eldest daughter of King Alfonso VI (r. 1065–1109).[14] The choice to include only the count's name on Sancha's altar is unusual; in the contemporary documents issued by the infanta, she is routinely connected to both her father and mother, or to her brother the emperor, or to all three of them together. With the exception of a single charter,[15] she is never styled the daughter just of Queen Urraca or of Count Raimundo, nor are her parents ever presented without their titles. Would a royal princess, who habitually displays such emphatic dynastic self-awareness in her charters, choose to refer to her only non-royal family member on her portable altar? I will return to this question below in the context of the remainder of the inscription and the question of the origins of the altar.

If we were to accept at face value the statement connecting Sancha to the altar as the person who had it made of silver, our story could end here. However, as Elizabeth Carson Pastan and others have emphasized, scholarship on patronage entails more than a straightforward search for the person commissioning or donating artworks; rather, it includes the dynamics among all parties involved.[16] In fact, the very inscription suggests a more complicated history. The use of the word "silvered" (like gilded or *deauratus*) appears in several medieval inventories of treasuries, but I have found no other example where the

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13   Martín López, "Colección documental de la Infanta," nos. 38, 42, 52, 54, 59, 61, 64, 65, 67, 68, 73, 76, 86, 88, 90, and 94. The introduction of *regina* has been connected by Martín López (182–183) to the arrival of a new scribe, Gudesteo, whose name first appears in an 1147 charter.

14   Bernard Reilly, "Count Raimundo of Burgundy and French Influence in León-Castilla (1087–1107)," in *Church, State, Vellum, and Stone: Essays on Medieval Spain in Honor of John Williams*, ed. Therese Martin and Julie A. Harris (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 85–109.

15   This charter was issued in 1158: "Ego, igitur, regina domna Sancia Raemundi." The phrase is repeated in the closing statement of the document. See Santiago Domínguez, *Colección documental medieval de los monasterios de San Claudio de León, monasterio de Vega y San Pedro de Dueñas* (León: Centro de Estudios e Investigación San Isidoro, 2001), no. 17.

16   Elizabeth Carson Pastan, "Patronage: A Useful Category of Art Historical Analysis," in *The Routledge Companion to Medieval Iconography*, ed. Colum Hourihane (London, New York: Routledge, 2017), 340–355, with discussion of recent approaches to patronage issues.

object describes itself as being silvered.[17] Through its inscription this object explicitly acted as a participant in the creation of a network of relationships that included the artist, Sancha, her chaplain, God, the canons of San Isidoro, and their treasury.[18]

After the altar speaks in its own voice in the opening phrase, the rest of the inscription shifts to third person: "this altar was dedicated by the venerable Anselm, bishop of Holy Bethlehem in the name of the holy and undivided [Trinity]." The ending of this first part of the inscription is noteworthy since the final word, trinity, does not appear on the face of the altar; rather, it is the first word on the front edge, pulling the reader along to the continuation of the passage (Figure 6.2).[19] Did the designer of the text know that there would be no space on the front for this word, or was its placement left to the silversmith? Perhaps the author favored the rhythm of "bethllee" and "idividue." Or it may have been that the specific word that had to follow "holy and undivided" was so evident to the reader that nothing was thought of relegating "trinity" to the next plane. What is clear, however, is that in order to actually read the word trinity and complete the dedicatory sentence, the altar needed to be held and manipulated.

Beyond this verbal displacement that gives evidence of manual movement, the most intriguing elements in the first section of the inscription are its dating and its consecrator. In Iberia the Hispanic era is the most commonly employed dating system until the thirteenth century for both inscriptions and charters, including those at San Isidoro, making the "Anno Domini Incarnationis" stand out for an object that has been assumed to be of Spanish manufacture.[20] Even rarer is the presence of the indiction—referring to a fifteen-year cycle used in

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17   For *deargentus* in medieval inventories, see Bernhard Bischoff, *Mittelalterliche Schatzverzeichnisse. Von der Zeit Karls des Grossen bis zur Mitte des 13. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Florentine Mütherich (Munich: Prestel-Verlag, 1967), 36,14f; 48,22; 73,18f; and 92,12f.

18   For an analysis of inscriptions as agents, see Olga Bush, "Poetic Inscriptions and Gift Exchange in the Medieval Islamic World," *Gesta* 56/2 (2017): 179–197.

19   Beate Fricke suggested in a personal communication that the unusual placement of the word "trinity" is reason to investigate the composition of the silver/niello. A technical analysis of the portable altar would not only contribute to a better understanding of its making, but also to corroborating its date and to determining whether the altar might still contain relics and/or textiles. For the importance of material and technical analyses, see Chpt. 4 in this volume by Ana Cabrera on the treasury's textiles. According to the *Codex Calixtinus*, a depiction of the Trinity appeared on the baldachin (1105–1106) above the main altar in the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela. See Manuel Castiñeiras, "El altar románico y su mobiliario litúrgico: frontales, vigas y baldaquinos," in *Mobiliario y ajuar litúrgico en las iglesias románicas*, coord. Pedro L. Huerta (Aguilar de Campoo: Fundación Santa María la Real, 2011), 11–75, at 28.

20   For the dating systems employed in inscriptions and the rarity of indiction in Iberia, see Favreau, *Épigraphie Médiévale*, 171–183, esp. 178. See also Mark A. Handley, "Tiempo e

FIGURE 6.2   Portable Altar of the Infanta Sancha, front edge (Museo de la Real Colegiata de
            San Isidoro de León, Inv. No. IIC-3-089-002-0008).
            PHOTO: THERESE MARTIN

the dating of documents—of which only three examples from the Leonese-
Castilian area are known from the first quarter of the twelfth century.[21] Two
relevant examples, both connected to San Isidoro, deserve mention. The first
is found in the eleventh-century *Translatio S. Isidori Legionem an. 1063*, written
in León-Castilla, possibly by a Cistercian monk from France.[22] In it both the
indiction and concurrent are given, as they appear on the portable altar. The
second indiction reference manifests itself in a document concerning Queen
Urraca's donation of the Leonese monastery of San Salvador to San Isidoro,
which was penned by a certain Ordoño who presents himself as "reginae no-
tarius."[23] This scribe may have been trained in France, where the indiction dat-
ing system was employed.[24] The rarity of this type of dating in the Leonese

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identidad: La datación por la era en las inscripciones de la España tardorromana y visi-
    goda," *Iberia* 2 (1999): 191–201, at 192. For León, see Martín López, "Colección documental
    de la Infanta," 207; and Irene Ruiz Albi, *La Reina doña Urraca (1109–1126): Cancillería y
    colección diplomática* (León: Centro de Estudios e Investigación San Isidoro, 2003), 314–315.

21   Ruiz Albi, *La Reina doña Urraca*, 315.

22   "Relique uero beati confessoris ab Hyspalensi urbe translata atque Legionem sunt
    delata anno ab incarnatione domini nostri Ihesu Christi, Iº.LX.III., indictione.I., con-
    currente.III." See José Carlos Martín, "La Translatio S. Isidori Legionem Anno 1063 (BHL
    4488): Introducción, estudio y edición crítica," *Exemplaria Classica. Journal of Classical
    Philology* 15 (2011): 225–253, at 252. I would like to thank Julio Escalona Monge for bringing
    this reference to my attention.

23   "Facta testament series era MCLV, VIII idus septembris, anno ab Incarnatione Domini
    MCXVII, inditione decima." See Ruiz Albi, *La Reina doña Urraca*, no. 89, and 188–189.

24   For the use of indiction, see Reginald Lane Poole, *Lectures on the History of the Papal
    Chancery down to the Time of Innocent III* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,

context, by contrast with the ubiquitous use of the Hispanic era, suggests that the designer of the altar's inscription hailed from elsewhere.

The specific date in 1144 that is commemorated on the portable altar is 25 July, and it is most unlikely that this was chosen at random as it is the feast day of St. James the Great, whose shrine at Santiago of Compostela attracted many pilgrims in this period. The connections between Compostela and the rulers of León-Castilla were tight, though not unproblematic.[25] It remains unclear, however, whether this specific feast was chosen because St. James was the most prestigious saint on the Iberian Peninsula, or because the patron or owner felt a special veneration for him. The feast day combined with the *Anno Domini* and indiction may indicate that the maker of Sancha's altar was unfamiliar with the Hispanic era but well informed about the greatest saint in Spain.

Further, the name of the bishop who consecrated the altar also supports the idea that the object was not necessarily a Leonese or even an Iberian product. In order for altars, including portable ones, to be used during mass, they needed to be consecrated by a bishop.[26] Sancha's altar was blessed not by a local Iberian bishop but by the "venerable Anselm, bishop of holy Bethlehem." In

1915); and Giles Constable, *The Abbey of Cluny: A Collection of Essays to Mark the Eleven-Hundredth Anniversary of Its Foundation* (Berlin: Lit. Verlag, 2010). In French inscriptions, however, the use of indiction appears to be less common than in documents, according to Robert Favreau, "La datation dans les inscriptions médiévales françaises," *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes* 157/1 (1999): 11–39, esp. 21–24. For French cultural impact on Iberia in this period, see Mercedes López-Mayán, "Culto y cultura en la catedral compostelana en el siglo XI," in *En el principio: Génesis de la catedral románica de Santiago de Compostela. Contexto, construcción y programa iconográfico*, ed. José Luis Senra (Santiago de Compostela: Teófilo Edicións, 2014), 31–56; José Luis Senra, "Cluny et l'Espagne," in *Cluny (910–2010). Onze siècles de rayonnement*, ed. N. Stratford (Paris: Éditions de Patrimoine, 2010), 354–363; and Reilly, "Count Raimundo of Burgundy," 85–109.

25   Carlos M. Reglero de la Fuente, "Reyes y obispos en los reinos de León y Castilla," in *Reyes y prelados. La creación artística en los reinos de León y Castilla (1050–1500)*, ed. María Dolores Teijeira, María Victoria Herráez, and María Concepción Cosmen (Madrid: Silex Ediciones, 2014), 45–66.

26   Joseph Braun, *Der christliche Altar in seiner geschichtlichen Entwicklung (Band 1): Arten, Bestandteile, Altargrab, Weihe, Symbolik* (Munich: Alte Meister Guenther Koch & Co., 1924), 426; Barbara Drake Boehm "Altar, Portable," in *The Grove Encyclopedia of Medieval Art and Architecture*, 6 vols., ed. Colum Hourihane (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 1:40–44, at 43; James Robinson, "From Altar to Amulet: Relics, Portability, and Devotion," in *Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics and Devotion in Medieval Europe*, ed. Martina Bagnoli, Holger A. Klein, C. Griffith Mann, and James Robinson (London: The British Museum Press, 2010), 111–116, at 112; and Éric Palazzo, *L'espace rituel et le sacré dans le christianisme: la liturgie de l'autel portatif dans l'Antiquité et au Moyen Âge* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008), chapter 4 for a detailed analysis of the consecration rite. None of these publications mentions Sancha's altar.

1107, at the request of Baldwin I, Pope Paschal II established Bethlehem as a bishopric.[27] The see's second bishop, Anselm (fl. 1130–1142, d. ca. 1147), remains a sketchy figure.[28] He wrote a letter to Leo, dean of Reims, thanking him for the magnificent psalter the latter had sent him.[29] Anselm also briefly figures in William of Tyre's *History of Deeds Done beyond the Sea* (ca. 1171–1184), where the bishop accompanied Geoffrey, the first abbot of the Templum Domini, and Rohard the Elder, viscount of Jerusalem, on a mission to Emperor John II Comnenus in Cilicia in 1142.[30] There is, however, nothing to suggest that Bishop Anselm ever went to Spain, nor can he otherwise be connected to Sancha, her family, or to the Iberian Peninsula at all. One explanation may be that Anselm consecrated the altar (that is, the wooden box and stone) in Bethlehem and then sent it off to Sancha, who made sure that it was decorated properly. Whether Anselm made an undocumented journey to León or dispatched the altar from Bethlehem, both options place Sancha within a wider web of connections. Sancha and her altar are part of a larger history of interactions beyond the borders of her *infantazgo*; this is corroborated by her correspondence with Bernard of Clairvaux, discussed below, as it is by the remainder of the inscription.

From the word "Trinity," the silver niello text continues in small lettering along the front edge (see Figure 6.2). The epigraph as a whole, engraved in four separate strips nailed onto the narrow sides of the altar, must be read by first following the upper line on all sides (Figure 6.3, red arrows) and then the lower one (Figure 6.3, yellow arrows). This means that the inscription cannot be understood unless the altar is held in one's hand and turned around and around, an indication that it was designed to be handled intimately by a single individual.[31]

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27 Jochen Burgtorf, "Bethlehem," in *The Crusades: An Encyclopedia*, 4 vols., ed. Alan V. Murray (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO Inc, 2006), 1:166–167, without mentioning Anselm.

28 Also known as Anseau, his death has been dated around 1142–1147, based on the first mention of the next bishop, Giraud, in 1147. See Charles du Fresne, Seigneur du Cange, *Les familes d'outre-mer* (Paris: Impr. Nationale, 1869), 784–785. Given the evidence of the portable altar, I would suggest that the range of dates for Anselm's death can be narrowed to 1144–1147.

29 *Letters from the East: Crusaders, Pilgrims and Settlers in the 12th–13th Centuries*, trans. Malcolm Barber and Keith Bate (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), no. 14.

30 Rudolf Hiestand, "Gaudefridus abbas Templi Domini: An Underestimated Figure in the Early History of the Kingdom of Jerusalem," in *The Experience of Crusading*, 2 vols., ed. Peter Edbury and Jonathan Philips (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 1:48–59, esp. 50 for references to Anselm.

31 That shrines and their relics were handled is also highlighted by María Judith Feliciano in Chpt. 5 of this volume. She remarks that textiles function as veils in the rituals that concealed, revealed, protected, and exposed the relics at the moment of activation.

FIGURE 6.3   Portable Altar of the Infanta Sancha, inscription on the edges (Museo de la Real
Colegiata de San Isidoro de León, Inv. No. IIC-3-089-002-0008).
PHOTO: THERESE MARTIN; DESIGN: JITSKE JASPERSE

The two lines of text read:

TRINITATIS: ETS: ET: SCE: CRVCIS: SCCEQ: I: DI: GENITRICIS: MARIE: ET:
INHONORE: EORU: QORV: SCA: HIC: CONTINETUR: BTI: PATRIARC/ HE:
ABRAE: PELAGIE:VR: DE: ANNVNCIONE: SC: MAR: ET: HELISABET: E:
PE/TRA: SALVTACIONS: S: M: DE: NATIVITE: DNI: DE: PSEPIO: DNI: DE:
LOCO: TNSFIGVRATIOS: I: MOTE:T ABOR: DE: S: PRT/D : TABVLA: DNICE:
CENE: DE: MOTE: CALVARIE: D: PETQ: DR: GETHSAMANI: VI: DNS:/

COMPREHES': E: D: PET: SUP: QVA: CORONAT: E: IPRETORIO: D: CRVCE:
DNI: D: SEPVLCRO: DNI: DTABVLA: SVP: QM: /DNS: COMEDIT: PISCF:
ASSV: ET: FAVV: MELLIS: D: PET: ASSCESSIO/NIS: DNI:I : MOTE: OLIVE-
TI: D: PET: COFESSIONIS: I:TEMPLO: DNI: D: IVETIONE: S:CRUCIS: I:
MOTE: CALVARIE:D: MONTE SINAI: /D: LECTO: S: MARIE: I: MONTE:
SION: D: SEPULCRO: SM: I: IOSAPHAT:

> [...] Trinity and [in the name of] of the sacred cross and of the most
> holy immaculate (?) mother of God, Mary, and in honor of those
> whose relics are contained here: of the blessed Patriarch Abraham, of
> the Virgin Pelagia, of the Annunciation to holy Mary and Elizabeth,
> of the stone of the greeting to holy Mary, of the birth of the Lord, of
> the crib of the Lord, of the location of the Transfiguration on Mount

Tabor, of the Holy Spirit, of the table of the Last Supper, of Mount Calvary, of the rock called Gethsemane where the Lord was taken, of the stone where he was crowned at the fortress, of the Cross of the Lord, of the sepulcher of the Lord, of the table where the Lord ate fish, roast, and honeycomb, of the rock of the ascension of the Lord on the Mount of Olives, of the tomb stone in the temple of the Lord, of the finding of the Holy Cross on Mount Calvary, of Mount Sinai, of the bed of holy Mary on Mount Zion, of the sepulcher of Holy Mary in the valley of Jehoshaphat.

The two references to revered individuals (Abraham[32] and Pelagia),[33] together with the nineteen allusions to holy places, suggest that the portable altar once contained some twenty-one pieces of saintly material. Just three of the references—to Abraham, St. Pelagia, and Mount Sinai—are from something other than the lives of Christ and Mary, beginning with the Annunciation to the Virgin, through Jesus's childhood and ministry, and until the death of each. It should also be noted that it is not only a fragment of the True Cross that is included here, but also a relic of the *finding* of the Cross on Calvary, thus memorializing the holy actions of St. Helena, who was regarded as an exemplary model of queenship.[34]

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32   For Abraham and other historical Jews in the treasury of San Isidoro, see Chpt. 8 by Julie Harris, "Jews, Real and Imagined, at San Isidoro de León and Beyond," in this volume. She also discusses Old Testament relics in the Arca Santa at the Cámara Santa of San Salvador de Oviedo, as well as León Cathedral's connections with Jews.

33   Pelagia was a "holy harlot," a reformed prostitute from Antioch who became a hermit living in a cave on the Mount of Olives where she was later buried. The Piacenza pilgrim, who visited the Holy Land before 570, is the first to report the site as a holy place, and it remained popular throughout the Middle Ages. See Ora Limor, "Sharing Sacred Space: Holy Places in Jerusalem between Christianity, Judaism, and Islam," in *In Laudem Hierosolymitani: Studies in Crusades and Medieval Culture in Honour of Benjamin Z. Kedar*, ed. Iris Shagrir, Ronnie Ellenblum, and Jonathan Riley-Smith (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 219–231, esp. 227–228. As a female saint, Pelagia balances the presence of Abraham and, together with Helena (who is represented through the finding of the True Cross), Mary, and Elizabeth, Pelagia illustrates the significance of saintly women and their sites in the Holy Land.

34   The importance of Helena to the image of medieval queenship is underscored by Jo Ann McNamara, "*Imitatio Helenae*: Sainthood as an Attribute of Queenship," in *Saints: Studies in Hagiography*, ed. Sandro Sticca (Binghamton, NY: State University of New York Press, 1996), 51–80. An explicit connection between an elite woman and Empress Helena is found on the so-called Gunhild Cross (ca. 1075?) in its inscription: QUI IN CHRISTUM CRUCIFIXUM CREDUNT LIUTGERI MEMORIAM ORANDO FACIANT QUI ME SCULPSERAT ROGA TU HELENE QUE ET GUNHILD VOCATUR (Those who believe in the crucified

Sancha's altar, then, does not contain the usual suspects, such as the apostles, martyrs, and bishops inscribed on the Hildesheim portable altar (Figures 6.4a–b); rather, it has more in common with the types of relics mentioned on the lid of the outsized Arca Santa in Oviedo (Figure 6.5).[35] In much more detail than the Arca Santa, however, the collection of relics mentioned on Sancha's altar makes it possible to follow closely in the footsteps of Christ and Mary and to visit sacred places, as pilgrims did when they traveled to the Holy Land, in person or in the mind.[36]

The inscription presents a chronology starting with Mary's role as mother, then enumerating all the key moments in Christ's life along with the ordeals he had to suffer; it ends with the Virgin's death and the tomb left empty at her assumption. To make these events and places more real, references are made to stones and other tangible objects such as cribs and tables, beds and graves, even roast and honeycomb. They act as signifiers of locations and occurrences, helping to bring them to life and to place the reader at those specific sites. For that very reason, remarks about rocks, tombstones, and stone altars often feature in pilgrims' travel accounts.[37]

As is well known, this same impulse gave rise to the collecting of stones, sand, textiles, and fluids (tertiary relics or *eulogia*, blessed objects) that were

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Christ shall in their prayers remember Liutgerus, who carved me at the behest of Helena, who is also called Gunhild). See Favreau, *Épigraphie Médiévale*, 122.

35   For the content of the Hildesheim article, see Maickel van Bellegem and Lloyd de Beer, "The Construction and Conversion History of the Hildesheim Portable Altar," in *Matter of Faith: An Interdisciplinary Study of Relics and Relic Veneration*, ed. James Robinson and Lloyd de Beer, with Anna Harnden (London: The British Museum, 2014), 126–136. For the Arca Santa, see Julie A. Harris, "Redating the Arca Santa of Oviedo," *Art Bulletin* 77 (1995): 82–93; César García de Castro Valdés, "Datos y observaciones sobre el Arca Santa de la Cámara Santa de la Catedral de Oviedo," *Nailos: Estudios Interdisciplinares de Arqueología* 3 (2016): 121–163, inscription at 143–144; and César García de Castro Valdés, *El Arca Santa de la catedral de Oviedo* (Aguilar de Campoo: Fundación Santa María la Real, Centro de Estudios del Románico, 2017).

36   The literature on virtual pilgrimages is vast. See, for example, Yamit Rachman-Schrire, "Sinai Stones on Mount Zion: Mary's Pilgrimage in Jerusalem," in *Between Jerusalem and Europe: Essays in Honour of Bianca Kühnel*, ed. Renana Bartal and Hanna Vorholt (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 57–73; *Visual Constructs of Jerusalem*, ed. Bianca Kühnel, Galit Noga-Banai, and Hanna Vorholt (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014); and Gertsman and Mittman, "Rocks of Jerusalem," 157–171.

37   Daniel the Abbot mentions Christ's tomb, its cave, the stone where the crucifixion took place, the cave in the rock beneath the altar in the house of Joachim and Anna, the stone where Jacob had his dream, the tomb of the Virgin in a cave cut from rock, and the stone from which Christ ascended to heaven and beneath which is a marble altar slab. See John Wilkinson (with Joyce Hill and W. F. Ryan), *Jerusalem Pilgrimage 1099–1185* (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1988), 128, 132, 134, and 135.

FIGURES 6.4A, B   Portable Altar from Hildesheim, 1190–1200, 25.1 × 35.4 cm, engraved
with vernis brun, red stone, gilt-copper, ivory, vellum under rock crystal
(London, British Museum, museum number 1902,0625.1.).

FIGURE 6.5   Lid of the Arca Santa, early twelfth century. Cámara Santa, Oviedo Cathedral,
93 × 119.8 × 9.5 cm.
PHOTO: CÉSAR GARCÍA DE CASTRO VALDÉS

connected to these sacred locations.[38] In fact, Sancha's portable altar has more in common with reliquaries that contain stones, wood, or oil than with other portable altars, which usually hold body-part relics from holy individuals. Thus more than merely an inventory, this altar's inscription provides a biblical narrative by presenting materials, especially stones, which had the potential to transport the user from a physical site in Iberia to virtual yet real places in the Holy Land.

3   The Lamb of God Attacked: Between León and the Levant?

My analysis of the silver-niello inscription—with its unusual dating system, the presence of Bishop Anselm of Bethlehem, and the long list of site relics— has raised doubts about whether the altar was made in León, as has traditionally been assumed, suggesting instead that we should look to the Levant. In the twelfth century and beyond, "made in" labels are the exception rather than the rule. Places of manufacture, be it monastic environments or court workshops, have preoccupied art historians (and sometimes tormented historians) with discussions that tend to focus on style and iconography, which some scholars consider to be limited approaches. However, relationships between style and location do have implications for our understanding of places, people, and the movements of ideas and artworks.[39] Whether Sancha's altar was made in León or the Levant might not necessarily impact our appreciation of the object as a portable altar. Yet it obliges us to rethink assumptions about Leonese courtly production and about the connections between Iberia and the Holy Land.

Art historians have taken a keen interest in royally sponsored workshops, such as those at Aachen under Charlemagne, at Palermo producing textiles

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38   Katja Boertjes, "The Reconquered Jerusalem Represented: Tradition and Renewal on Pilgrimage Ampullae from the Crusader Period," in *The Imagined and Real Jerusalem in Art and Architecture*, ed. Jeroen Goudeau, Mariëtte Verhoeven, and Wouter Weijers (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014), 169–189, at 170; and Cristina Pantanella, "Reliquary Box with Stones from the Holy Land," in *Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics and Devotion in Medieval Europe*, ed. Martina Bagnoli, Holger A. Klein, C. Griffith Mann, and James Robinson (London: The British Museum Press, 2010), 36.

39   Meyer Schapiro famously argued that a specific style (an artistic ideal) was interwoven with historical events and could therefore reflect social changes and tensions. See Meyer Schapiro, "From Mozarabic to Romanesque in Silos," *The Art Bulletin* 21/4 (1939): 313–374; and John Williams, "Meyer Schapiro in Silos: Pursuing an Iconography of Style," *The Art Bulletin* 85 (2003): 442–468. See also Elizabeth Sears, "Style and Ideology," in *Reading Medieval Images: The Art Historian and The Object*, ed. Elizabeth Sears and Thelma K. Thomas (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2002), 126–127.

under Islamic and Christian rulers, and at Córdoba creating ivories during the caliphate.[40] Through these workshops the patronage and ideologies of rulership were promoted. For León, John Williams has argued that the ivory cross of Fernando and Sancha, the gold and ivory casket of Saints John the Baptist and Pelayo, the ivory Beatitudes casket, and an ivory *Traditio Legis* plaque (now in the Louvre) "are so homogeneous stylistically that a Leonese ivory workshop of royal sponsorship must be assumed."[41] Following this argument, although ignoring the significant shift in materials, scholars have assumed that Sancha's portable altar was made in León as well. Before addressing their reasoning, let us first examine the altar's decoration to see what clues it may provide.[42]

On the gilded face of the altar, the symbols of the evangelists are depicted in the four corners (see Figure 6.1). Each holds a book representing his respective gospel. By pairs, they turn their attention to the scenes they flank: at the top, Matthew and John witness two beasts that, with wide-open jaws, roar in frustration at the *Agnus Dei* protected by a clipeus. Below, Mark and Luke look on as a stretched-out animal that swallows two birds (roosters?) is in turn bitten by two fierce animals with long tails.[43] The evangelists and Lamb of God are

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40   For the court school in Aachen, see Wilhelm Köhler, *Die karolingische Miniaturen 2: Die Hofschule Karls des Großen* (Berlin: Deutscher Verein für Kunstwissenschaft, 1958). For a critical analysis of the concept of this court school, see Dieter Hägermann, "Der Dagulf-Psalter. Ein Zeugnis fränkischer Orthodoxie," in *Von Sacerdotum und Regnum. Geistliche und weltliche Gewalt im frühen und hohen Mittelalter. Festschrift für Egon Boshof zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Franz-Reiner Erkens and Hartmut Wolff (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2002), 183–201, esp. 187–190. For Palermo, see Isabelle Dolezalek, *Arabic Script on Christian Kings: Textile Inscriptions on Royal Garments from Norman Sicily* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017), 84–86. For Córdoba, see Noelia Silva Santa-Cruz, "Ivory Gifts for Women in Caliphal Córdoba: Marriage, Maternity and Sensuality," *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* 6/1 (2014): 103–125; Glaire D. Anderson and Mariam Rosser-Owen, "Great Ladies and Noble Daughters: Ivories and Court Women in the Umayyad Court at Córdoba," in *Pearls on a String: Art in the Age of Great Islamic Empires*, ed. Amy Landau (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2015), 28–51.

41   John Williams, "León: The Iconography of a Capital," in *Cultures of Power*, ed. T. Bisson (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), 231–258, at 237. For the Cross and the Beatitudes Casket, see Chpt. 2 by Therese Martin in this volume. For León as a cosmopolitan Iberian capital in a globally-oriented world, see Chpt. 7 by Pamela A. Patton, "Demons and Diversity in León" in the present volume.

42   For a detailed analysis of the iconography of other portable altars as well as their function in defining ritual space, see Palazzo, *L'espace rituel*, esp. Chpt. 6.

43   In personal communications, both Jessica Boon and Ittai Weinryb suggested to me that the stretched-out animal could be a hyena, a deceptive, filthy, and bisexual animal that has been connected to the Jews for its traitorous nature. See Debra Hassig, *Medieval Bestiaries: Text, Image, Ideology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 144–145. As Jessica Boon pointed out, perhaps Psalm 21:17 inspired the iconography: *quoniam*

certainly not unusual on portable altars; however, these composite creatures that appear to be made up of different animals are unique. The roaring ones that threaten the Lamb have the tails of lions, the snouts of dragons or wolves, and the pelts of other animals altogether, while below, one of the beasts has the spotted fur of a leopard but not its head or tail. The creature under attack has a ridge of hair running from head to tail, like that of a hyena, but it lacks the large ears typical of this animal, and its tail is unlike any real creature's. By depicting hybrid monsters that were even more terrible than recognizable wild animals, the artist emphasized the beastly nature of would-be attackers of Christ. When the altar is held vertically, the *Agnus Dei* tramples the beasts below, symbolizing Christ's sacrificial triumph over death, which is also commemorated and celebrated on the altar. The altar was evidently conceived as an object in motion not only in the inscription around the edges, but also in surface ornamentation that must be viewed horizontally as well as vertically. This design must have been intentional because inscription and images are engraved in the same sheet of silver that holds the stone in place.

Parallels have been sought for this imagery at San Isidoro beginning in 1925 with Manuel Gómez-Moreno, who connected the style of the *Agnus Dei*, the symbols of the four evangelists, and the fantastic animals to the Bible made in 1162 at San Isidoro by itinerant manuscript illuminators.[44] His idea was seconded by Ángela Franco Mata, but it has recently been convincingly contested by Ana Hernández, who sees no clear stylistic connections between the tetramorph in the 1162 Bible and the evangelist symbols depicted in the corners of the altar.[45] Eduardo Álvarez Aller found a different Leonese referent in the symbols of the evangelists on the Fernando and Sancha Cross, the Saints John the Baptist and

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circumdederunt me canes multi concilium malignantium obsedit me foderunt manus meas et pedes meos (For many dogs have encompassed me: the council of the malignant hath besieged me. They have made holes in my hands and feet). The dogs mentioned in the Psalm have been identified with the Jews' tormenting of Christ. See Irven M. Resnick, *Marks of Distinction: Christian Perception of Jews in the High Middle Ages* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2012), 148–150. The animal imagery on Sancha's altar, however, is too ambiguous to be interpreted as explicitly anti-Jewish.

44   Archivo de la Real Colegiata de San Isidoro de León, Códice III. See Gómez-Moreno, *Catálogo monumental*, 1:206.

45   Franco Mata, "El tesoro de San Isidoro," 67; Ana Hernández, "Nuevas aproximaciones en torno a la *Maiestas* de la Biblia de 1162 de San Isidoro de León en el Museo Arqueológico Nacional (Madrid)," *Archivo Español de Arte* 90/358 (2017): 183–190. Michael Budde insisted on a León production for the altar because he considered the Infanta its patron and San Isidoro its recipient, see Budde, *Altare portatile*, 2:cat. 98, 229–232, at 231. For a brief description of the Bible of 1162, see John Williams, "Bible," in *The Art of Medieval Spain. AD 500–1200* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1993), cat. 150.

Pelayo Casket, and the *Traditio Legis* ivory at the Louvre.[46] While it is true that the arms of the ivory cross are decorated with the symbols of the four evangelists, there is neither stylistic nor pictorial affinity with those represented on the altar (Figure 6.6). And while the tetramorph and *Agnus Dei* from the lid of the reliquary casket and on the *Traditio Legis* ivory reveal an interest in the execution of furs, feathers, and hair, here too the styles differ too much to argue any direct connection between the ivories and the metalwork (Figures 6.7a, b).[47] In fact, I can see no stylistic evidence for locating the manufacture of Sancha's altar in León.

Rather, given Anselm's episcopal seat in Bethlehem, it seems reasonable to suggest that artists working in the Levant may have made the altar. Although there is scant evidence of goldsmiths working at Bethlehem in the first half of the twelfth century, in Jerusalem, by contrast, a street was named for the goldsmiths whose workshops clustered there.[48] Quite a number of True Cross reliquaries were made in Jerusalem; they generally take the form of a double-armed cross of wood decorated with gilded silver and precious stones. Many were brought back to European lands by elite pilgrims, crusaders, and settlers, while others were presented by the ecclesiastical foundations of the crusader states to affiliated monastic institutions in the west.[49] Some Iberian donations of these *staurothekai* are known, testifying to ties across the Mediterranean.[50] And yet, it is not easy to connect the style and technique in which the figures on Sancha's altar have been executed to metalwork produced in Jerusalem. The latter are dominated by medallions in high relief, flower patterns, and pearl motifs, whereas the altar's decoration is incised in gilt silver with niello, resulting in clear contours and crisp details.

In sum, an analysis of the altar's style and iconography cannot by itself solve the riddle of the place of manufacture, nor does it offer any support for the presumed Leonese origin. Rather, it is the unusual aspects of the inscription

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46   Álvarez Aller, "El ara de la infanta," 9.

47   For an image of the *Traditio Legis* ivory, see John Williams, "Christ in Majesty with Saints Peter and Paul," in *The Art of Medieval Spain*, cat. 112.

48   Jaroslav Folda, *The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land, 1098–1187* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 99–100 and 290. When art from the crusader states is addressed, the focus is mostly on sculpture, architecture, and (manuscript) painting; there seems to be less evidence for locally made minor arts, despite the street of goldsmiths in Jerusalem. See T.S.R. Boase, "Ecclesiastical Art in the Crusader States in Palestine and Syria," in *A History of the Crusades*, vol. IV: *The Arts and Architecture of the Crusader States*, ed. Harry W. Hazard (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1977), 69–139, at 139.

49   Folda, *The Art of the Crusaders*, 290–294 on reliquaries of the True Cross; and Nikolas Jaspert, "The True Cross of Jerusalem in the Latin West: Mediterranean Connections and Institutional Agency," in *Visual Constructs of Jerusalem*, 207–221.

50   Jaspert, "The True Cross of Jerusalem," 221.

FIGURE 6.6 Cross of Fernando and Sancha (reverse), ca. 1063, 54.2 × 34 cm. (Madrid, Museo
            Arqueológico Nacional, Inv. No. 52340). See also Figs. 2.4a, 2.4b.
            PHOTO: THERESE MARTIN

FIGURES 6.7A, B   A., Casket of Saints John the Baptist and Pelayo; B., detail of lid, late
                  eleventh century, 31 × 48 × 26 cm. (Museo de la Real Colegiata de San Isidoro
                  de León, Inv. No. IIC-3-089-002-0023). See also Figs. 1.8, 4.12a, 4.12b, 5.6, 5.9.
                  PHOTOS: THERESE MARTIN

that suggest that the work was done under the orders of someone far from the politics of early twelfth-century León. Distance would both account for its unusual dating and also offer an explanation for the individual presence of Count Raimundo. According to a general patrilineal logic, Sancha's father would have been the obvious family member to select for inclusion in the inscription. Based on the oddities in the inscription together with its consecration by Anselm of Bethlehem, we can therefore speculate that the altar's maker was from the Levant. If a definitive setting for the origins of the altar must remain an open question for now, it is hoped that bringing this piece to wider scholarly attention will contribute to its future resolution.

4   Material Matters: Stones Narrating the Life of Christ

The altar's contents, as listed in the inscription, contribute to the exotic nature of this object from a distant land, a spirit also imbued by its multicolored stone slab. Thinking of artworks in terms of their material presence, beyond their function and patronage, reflects a current in scholarship that is attuned to a nuanced understanding of the essential and tangible qualities of objects. These are understood not as resulting from solely artistic or functional processes, but as holding an active potential; that is, materials are recognized as having the ability to affect the beholder's actions and imagination.[51]

Most surviving portable altars have precious slabs made of porphyry, jasper, alabaster, white marble, or rock crystal. From descriptions in chronicles and in the inventories of church treasuries, the attention paid to altar slabs is evident, due to their association with the body of Christ.[52] Comparing the evidence from visual and written sources with the stone in Sancha's altar shows how truly extraordinary its multicolored slab is. This stone has been identified either as red marble or limestone, with the dominant color being read symbolically as though it were porphyry, and thus an affirmation of royal ties.[53] Although the reddish color certainly is present, a variety of greens, yellows, and greys are easily visible as well. In fact, the slab is a natural composite of multicolored

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51   Karen Overbey, "Materiality and Place in a Medieval Scottish Pendant Reliquary," *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 65/66 (2014/2015): 242–258, esp. 243–244 with references.

52   Braun, *Der christliche Altar*, 428 and 430–433.

53   Laura Rodríguez Peinado, "Pýrpura. Materialidad y simbolismo en la Edad Media," *Anales de Historia del Arte* 24 (2014): 471–495, at 480. The stone was previously identified as red marble by Llamazares, *El tesoro*, 175, and by Bango García, "Ara de San Isidoro (León)," 352. A reddish limestone was put forward by Gómez-Moreno, *Catálogo monumental*, 1:206, and by Franco Mata, "El tesoro de San Isidoro," 67.

stones known as breccia di Aleppo, which was quarried under the Romans on the Greek Island of Chios.[54] Breccia is uncommon on the Iberian Peninsula, underscoring the probable origin of this object from elsewhere, and it may offer an example of the re-use of valued materials.[55] Like other marbles, this colorful and unusual stone was appreciated for its ability to shine brightly after being polished, yet its selection for this altar, with its remarkable collection of relics from places rather than persons, invites a reading of the stone's composite nature in connection to the different holy locations named in the inscription. The conglomerate, exotic appearance of the slab visually reiterates the story told on the altar's edges of many stones and multiple sites, thus serving as an "active agent of meaning" while triggering the beholder's senses.[56] The sensorial nature of holy stones is evidenced by a sixth-century pilgrim's account that tells of a deformed stone placed in position by Jesus when he visited Mount Zion. This stone was treated by pilgrims as a relic that could be held, touched, and even listened to because it produced a sound.[57]

Taking into consideration that some altar slabs were appreciated not just for their costliness or rarity, but because of their unique history, I would argue that the multicolored slab in Sancha's altar was deliberately chosen because it resembles a natural collection of stones encapsulating all the rocks, mountains, and other concrete locations mentioned in the inscription. In this way, the exotic altar stone functioned as a guide to the viewer's imagination by making tangible the inscribed holy sites that were geographically far away yet materially close at hand.[58]

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54   I owe the identification of this stone to Ignacio Montero Ruiz and Sergio Vidal. The Russian pilgrim Daniel the Abbot mentions Chios as part of his route from Kiev to Jerusalem. Chios is where the holy martyr St. Isidoro (d. 252) is buried and where "mastic and good wine and every kind of vegetable" are produced. See Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrimage*, 122.

55   Ana Gutiérrez García-Moreno pointed out to me that breccia di Aleppo was also uncommon in the Western Mediterranean in ancient times and therefore it rarely surfaced in the Middle Ages in places where previous Roman objects were reused.

56   See Alicia Walker, *The Emperor and the World: Exotic Elements and the Imagining of Middle Byzantine Imperial Power, Ninth to Thirteenth Centuries C.E.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), xx. Despite being a postmedieval concept, scholars have addressed exoticism as an aesthetic mode from a medieval perspective. See, for example, Shayne Aaron Legassie's idea of "the prestige of long-distance knowledge" in *The Medieval Invention of Travel* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2017), 22.

57   This account is in the *Itinerarium* by (Pseudo-)Antonius Placentinus. See Thomas O'Loughlin, " 'Remembering Sion:' Early Medieval Latin Recollections of the Basilica on Mount Sion and the Interplay of Relics, Tradition, and Images," in *Visual Constructs of Jerusalem*, 1–11, esp. 4–5.

58   For the role of material culture in bridging space and time, see Gertsman and Mittman, "Rocks of Jerusalem," 163.

5 The Altar and the Circulation of People

The altar's remarkable inscription, curious iconography, exotic materiality, and essential mobility work together to evoke both earthly and spiritual Jerusalem, which would have aided Sancha's devotions during her lifetime. But the altar's biography does not stop there. In the early modern period, a legend arose—perhaps sparked by this very object—that Sancha had traveled to the Holy Land. After all, the altar's inscription might lead one to assume that a pilgrimage had taken place during which the material remains of holy sites and persons were collected, and it would have been there and then that Bishop Anselm consecrated the multicolored stone that was enshrined in silver in 1144. Yet nothing in the medieval written record, whether Sancha's charters or the twelfth- or thirteenth-century chronicles that make reference to the infanta, indicates her absence from León-Castilla, much less a trip to the Holy Land.[59] Nor is any mention made of a pilgrimage in Lucas of Tuy's *Liber miraculorum beatissimi Isidori*, which is the most detailed, almost hagiographic, narrative source about Sancha. It seems extremely unlikely that Lucas would have ignored such a significant journey in his fulsome praise of the infanta.[60]

In fact, it is not until the sixteenth century that a textual source first bears witness to this tale. Ambrosio de Morales's trip of 1572–1573 through northern Spain at the order of King Felipe II is the earliest surviving source mentioning Sancha's travels to the Holy Land, although he does so not in his discussion of San Isidoro but rather in his narrative of the monastery of San Pedro de la Espina. Sancha had granted to Bernard of Clairvaux various inheritances belonging to Espina so that he could build a monastery, of which Morales knew because at Espina he read "the foundational charter" (*la Escritura de la fundacion*), for which he gives no date.[61] The focus in Morales's story is on Bernard

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59 García Calles, *Doña Sancha*, 60.

60 *Liber miraculorum beatissimi Isidori*, esp. cap. XXXV, 60–63. For an analysis of Sancha's portrayal in the *Liber miraculorum*, see Henriet, "Hagiographie et politique à León," 70–71.

61 Ambrosio de Morales, *Viage de Ambrosio de Morales por orden del Rey D. Phelipe II a los Reynos de León, y Galicia y Principado de Asturias*, ed. Enrique Flórez (Madrid, 1765 [ca. 1572]), 186. The earliest transcription of the Espina charter was made in the seventeenth century by Ángel Manrique, who gives 1143 as the monastery's foundation, and he too mentions Sancha's travels, although in less detail than Morales; Manrique clearly had some doubts, stating that it was a "traditione quam scripto magis accipimus." See Ángel Manrique, *Annales cistercienses*, 4 vols. (Lyon, 1642), 2:86. See also José Luis Rodríguez de Diego, *El tumbo del monasterio cisterciense de la Espina* (Valladolid: Universidad de Valladolid, Secretario de Publicaciones, 1982), 48 (on Manrique), 53 (the cartulary accepts Sancha's pilgrimage), and 186 (the text of the privilege). Rodríguez de Diego

of Clairvaux and on the French royal abbey of St. Denis because they help to understand both the foundation of Espina and its relic collection. Although Morales's reference is rather vague and the tale of Sancha's pilgrimage must be legendary, her connection to the abbot of Clairvaux did, in fact, exist: the infanta donated to Bernard certain possessions of the Cistercian monasteries of San Pedro de Espina and Santa María de Aborridos. She also placed the monastery of Toldanus under his protection, concerning which Bernard wrote two letters to Sancha, an indication of direct personal communication between the two.[62]

This Iberian-French connection, already suggested by the use of indiction in the inscription, invites a positioning of the altar within Sancha's wider dynastic network. Here we might consider other "pathways of portability" for the object's exotic character: perhaps the infanta's interest in the Christian East was part of her father's legacy.[63] Although Count Raimundo never went overseas, his cousin Odo of Burgundy, with whom Raimundo originally had arrived in Iberia, took part in the Holy Land Crusade of 1101. This was just two years after the liberation of Jerusalem and the finding of a part of the True Cross, events that not only led to a more fervent veneration of the Cross, but also made the Holy Land itself a relic to be visited.[64] The crusades also directly impacted the Leonese-Castilian royal family, as Elvira, a half-sister of Sancha's mother Urraca, had accompanied her husband Raymond of Toulouse on the First Crusade in 1096, and she gave birth in the Holy Land to Alfonso Jordan, as his sobriquet indicates.[65]

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did not include a transcript of the text that narrates Sancha's voyage on fols. 47r–50v. For a brief overview of the foundation of Espina, see Artemio Manuel Martínez Tejera, "Castromonte," in *Enciclopedia del Románico en Castilla y León: Valladolid*, dir. Miguel Ángel García Guinea and José María Pérez González (Aguilar de Campoo: Fundación Santa María la Real, Centro de Estudios del Románico, 2002), 143–156, at 143.

62   Martín López, "Colección documental de la Infanta," nos. 38 and 53; García Calles, *Doña Sancha*, 88–90. For the letters, see https://epistolae.ctl.columbia.edu/woman/164.html. For the larger context of Cistercian monasticism in twelfth-century Iberia and women's patronage in particular, see James D'Emilio, "Widows and Communities: Cistercian Nunneries and Their Architecture in the Kingdom of León (1150–1300)," *Cîteaux. Commentarii Cistercienses* 66/3–4 (2015): 223–302.

63   Eva Hoffman, "Pathways of Portability: Islamic and Christian Interchange from the Tenth to the Twelfth Century," *Art History* 24/1 (2001): 17–50.

64   Jaspert, "The True Cross," 207–221; William J. Purkis, *Crusading Spirituality in the Holy Land and Iberia, c. 1095–1187* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2008), 64–65.

65   For Iberian crusaders journeying to the Holy Land and their dynastic ties, see Margarita C. Torres Sevilla-Quiñones de León, "Cruzados y peregrinos leoneses y castellanos en Tierra Santa ss. XI–XII," *Medievalismo* 9 (1999): 63–82; and Ana Rodríguez, "Remembering the Crusades while Living the Reconquest: Iberia, Twelfth to Fourteenth Centuries," in *Remembering the Crusades and Crusading*, ed. Megan Cassidy-Welch (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), 202–215. For Galicia, see Carlos Andrés González-Paz,

Sancha's lifetime saw her father's brother, Guy of Vienne, elected pope at the Abbey of Cluny in 1119, where he took the name Calixtus II (d. 1124).[66] At the First Lateran Council in 1123 the pontiff proclaimed that those who had promised to take the cross should fulfill their vow before Easter 1124 by going either to the Holy Land or to Spain.[67] Even though there is no reference to Calixtus in Sancha's charters,[68] she must have been familiar with his proclamation, especially since the pope also offered an indulgence to those fighting in Hispania for the Christian cause. One of these *miles Christi* was King Alfonso I of Aragón (d. 1134), Queen Urraca's second husband, who considered himself to be as much a crusader as those going to the Levant.[69] All this makes it likely that Sancha would have been aware of the attractions of the Latin East through members of her elite network, such as Bernard of Clairvaux, including her kinship groups. Instead of viewing the relics in her altar as the result of a pilgrimage, it is more fruitful to consider them as reflecting Sancha's interests in a holy landscape that allowed her to remain in her temporal holdings in Iberia while simultaneously making the spiritual *iter* to Jerusalem.

6   Conclusion

In the end, Sancha's portable altar, with its seemingly straightforward record of an elite woman's patronage, raises more questions than it answers. In this article I have applied a range of historical and art historical methodologies to the analysis of a twelfth-century object, demonstrating its connections to both León and the Levant and suggesting its impact on later history. This container, made of silver, gold, and a multicolored stone covering holy fragments of multiple materials, offers evidence of the importance of materiality to Sancha and other medieval beholders. A moveable item that encapsulated transportable saintly remains, this artifact invites an assessment of its place within Sancha's web of connections. While the genesis of her altar cannot yet be definitively

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"Guncina González volens ire Iherusalem," in *Women and Pilgrimage in Medieval Galicia*, ed. Carlos Andrés González-Paz (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), 51–64. For a Catalonian example, see Nikolas Jaspert, "Un vestigio desconocido de Tierra Santa: La vera creu d'Anglesola," *Anuario de Estudios Medievales* 29 (1999): 447–475.

66   Purkis, *Crusading Spirituality*, 131.

67   Patrick J. O'Banion, "What Has Iberia to Do with Jerusalem? Crusade and the Spanish Route to the Holy Land in the Twelfth Century," *Journal of Medieval History* 34/4 (2008): 383–395, at 387.

68   Cavero, "Sancha Raimúndez," 275.

69   Purkis, *Crusading Spirituality*, 133–137.

resolved, my reading shows that the altar's exotic content, together with exoticism as its aesthetic mode, can be understood in relation to the significance of the Holy Land for the elite circles of which Sancha was a part. Yet, for as much as we now know about this object, the altar as a multilayered artifact still fits only too well with Oleg Grabar's assessment that the "most remarkable works of art are those that remain meaningful and intriguing, because somewhat mysterious, to all those who deal with them."[70] I can only hope that the venerable scholar would agree.

Acknowledgments

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70   Oleg Grabar, "About a Bronze Bird," in *Reading Medieval Images: The Art Historian and the Object*, ed. Elizabeth Sears and Thelma K. Thomas (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2002), 117–125, at 124.

Demons and Diversity in León

Pamela A. Patton

Abstract

This article examines a wall painting of the temptation of Saint Martin in the so-called Panteón de los Reyes of San Isidoro in León, focusing on its unorthodox portrayal of Satan as an Ethiopianized, dark-skinned figure wearing a robe reflective of Fatimid textile traditions. Tracing the scene's divergent sources within the complex network of images, texts, and ideas then circulating in León, it argues that the unusually configured image constituted an innovative, intervisual response to the concerns of a palatine viewership that in the first decades of the twelfth century remained preoccupied with its own dynastic and political position, both within the Leonese kingdom and with reference to its wider European sphere.

Keywords

San Isidoro – León – Panteón de los Reyes – Satan – blackness – skin color – Saint Martin – *ṭirāz*

Objects are at their most eloquent when studied intimately, and those in the San Isidoro treasury are no exception. Many essays in this volume demonstrate how the caskets, vessels, textiles, and other precious works at the center of the Treasury project reward close scholarly scrutiny with vivid, often surprising testimony about their origins, their movements, and above all, the messages that they carried among patrons, makers, and viewers in the Leonese capital. The objects may not always be so forthcoming, however, about the nature and outlook of those who viewed them, nor about the wider web of ideas, values and aspirations within which the treasury took shape. The present article aims to remedy this by considering how an exceptional painted portrayal of the Temptation of Saint Martin, still in situ in the so-called "Panteón de los Reyes" of San Isidoro, sheds new light on the cultural sophistication and international ambitions that led the patrons of San Isidoro to bestow upon their church the costly, transculturally resonant objects that survive in the treasury today.

The work in question is a small but lively scene located on a soffit within the extensive ensemble of vault paintings that were added to the Panteón in the early twelfth century, very likely, as Therese Martin has argued, after 1109, when Queen Urraca (d. 1126) ascended to power (Figure 7.1).[1] It depicts the nimbed saint Martin, seated and with book in hand, confronted by a richly garbed figure whose profile face displays brown skin, a large whitened eye, and a rounded, low-bridged nose. The figure's small size and wavy hair give it a childlike, even androgynous appearance; the collar and borders of its long white robe are ornately patterned; its feet are bare. With its right hand, the figure points downward while the left, today damaged but still visible in situ, points toward Martin. The bold inscription, S[AN]C[TU]S MARTINUS DIXI[T] VADE SATANAS (Saint Martin said "Go [away], Satan"), reveals that this is the devil, who, according to Martin's late fourth-century biographer Sulpicius Severus, once interrupted the saint at prayers, presenting himself in royal dress and claiming to be Christ.[2]

The scene constitutes just a minor element of an elaborate painted program that centers on the life of Christ, set out in eight Infancy and three Passion scenes, and two imposing vault compositions of Christ in Majesty and the Vision of Saint John. Subsidiary imagery on the soffits includes the Labors

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1 This article was first presented under the auspices of the interdisciplinary conference "The Medieval Iberian Treasury in the Context of Muslim-Christian Interchange" as part of the research grant *The Medieval Treasury across Frontiers and Generations: The Kingdom of León-Castilla in the Context of Muslim-Christian Interchange, c. 1050–1200* (PI Therese Martin), supported by a National Excellence in Research Grant, Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitivity (HAR2015-68614-P) and the Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies at Princeton University. I thank Therese Martin for inviting me to be a part of this stimulating project.

   Therese Martin, *Queen as King: Politics and Architectural Propaganda in Twelfth-Century Spain* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 132–152. Joan Sureda in *La pintura románica en España* (*Aragón, Navarra, Castilla-León y Galicia*) (Barcelona: Alianza Forma, 1985), 329, likewise attributed the frescoes to the period of Queen Urraca's reign, although a number of other scholars have dated them earlier, assuming their patron to have been Alfonso VI. The latter group includes Antonio Viñayo González, *San Isidoro de León: Panteón de los Reyes. Albores románicos: arquitectura, escultura, pintura* (León: Edilesa, 1995), 34; and Rose Walker, "The Wall Paintings in the Panteón de los Reyes at León: A Cycle of Intercession," *The Art Bulletin* 82/2 (2000): 200–225, at 209–210. For a concise overview of the scholarship, see Miguel Cortés Arrese, "Pinceladas bizantinas: pintura románica en el Panteón Real," in *Real Colegiata de San Isidoro: Relicario de la monarquía leonesa*, ed. Constantino Robles García and Fernando Llamazares Rodríguez (León: Edilesa, 2007), 146–167; esp. 147.

2 For the Latin, see Sulpicius Severus, *Vie de Saint Martin*, ed. J. Fontaine (Paris, 1967), 1:307–308 (24:4–8); a recent English translation appears in *Sulpicius Severus: The Complete Works*, intro., trans., and notes by Richard J. Goodrich (New York: The Newman Press, 2016), 50–51.

FIGURE 7.1   Temptation of St. Martin, Panteón de los Reyes, San Isidoro, León.
PHOTO: JAMES D'EMILIO

of the Months, the Zodiac, the archangels Raphael and Gabriel, the prophets Enoch and Elijah, and three other saints—Gregory, George, and Eloy—along with Martin. The presence of the French St. Martin here, although hardly the most puzzling aspect of the Panteón's painted decoration, is often ascribed to his reputation as an adversary of the devil, which may explain the unusual decision to depict his temptation at prayer rather than the far more popular episode of the saint sharing his cloak with a poor man.[3]

More exceptional than the subject of the scene at León is its manner of presentation. Although most scholars have identified Sulpicius Severus's *Vita Sancti Martini* as its source, the image diverges significantly from this textual account.[4] According to Sulpicius, as Martin was at prayer in his cell one day, the devil appeared, preceded by a purple light, smiling calmly, and wearing a royal robe, a jeweled crown, and golden shoes in an effort to persuade Martin that he was Christ. Martin remained undeceived, retorting, "The Lord Jesus did not predict that he would come dressed in purple or wearing a shining crown. I will not believe that Christ has come unless I see him in the same clothing and form in which he suffered, and unless he displays the marks of the cross."[5] At this, the devil vanished "like smoke" (*ut fumus*), leaving behind a disgusting smell that confirmed his true nature.[6]

The León painting differs most obviously from this account in its portrayal of the devil. Satan's painted robe here is white, rather than the purple referred to in the text; he wears no crown; and his feet are bare, not shod in gold. Moreover, his undersized body, dark brown skin, and exaggerated physiognomy,

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3   See, for example, Walker, "Wall Paintings," 209–210. On the iconography of Saint Martin, see Yossi Maurey, *Medieval Music, Legend, and the Cult of Saint Martin* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 207–215; Etelvina Fernández González, "San Martín de Tours en el Camino de Santiago: culto, advocación e iconografía en la Edad Media," in *El Camí de Sant Jaume i Catalunya: actes del Congrés Internacional celebrat a Barcelona, Cervera i Lleida, els dies 16, 17 i 18 d'octubre de 2003* (Abadia de Montserrat: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2007), 221–238, esp. 228–238; and Agustín Gómez Gómez and Miguel Ángel Asiáin Yárnoz, "Caritas y diabolus en la iconografía de San Martín: el caso de San Martín de Unx (Navarra)," *Príncipe de Viana* 56/205 (1995): 283–310.

4   Among the first to explore the link to Sulpicius was John Williams, "Marcialis Pincerna and the Provincial in Spanish Medieval Art," in *Hortus Imaginum: Essays in Western Art*, ed. Robert Enggass and Marilyn Stokstad (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas, 1974), 29–36, at 36 n.24.

5   Goodrich, *Sulpicius Severus*, 50; "Non se, inquit, Iesus dominus purpuratum nec diademate renidentem uenturum esse predixit; ego Christum, nisi in eo habitu formaque qua passus est, nisi crucis stigmata praeferentem, uenisse non credam." Fontaine, *Vie de Saint Martin*, 1:308 (24:7).

6   Fontaine, *Vie de Saint Martin,* 1:308.

which call to mind western medieval conventions for sub-Saharan Africans, sit oddly beside Sulpicius's assertion that Satan's appearance was unexceptional— that "there was nothing he resembled less than the devil."[7] None of this is easily explained by reference to established visual conventions either in Iberia or elsewhere in western Europe, and few scholars have gone further than to note them.[8] The questions that they raise, however, remain essential to understanding the culture and world view that surrounded San Isidoro in this moment. Why did the unknown artist choose to depict Satan as a human with African-looking features? On what visual traditions did this image draw, and what meanings would its viewers have found in it? Finally, what implications would such meanings have held in the context of a Leonese rulership that, as the treasury objects themselves also indicate, was preoccupied in both positive and negative ways with the heterogenous peoples and cultures it envisioned beyond its borders?

The present essay approaches these questions in two stages: first by excavating the visual and textual traditions on which the artist drew, and then by considering their reception by those who frequented the vaulted lower level of the Leonese palace. It will argue that, far from a simple deviation from a presumed source text, the Martin scene at León was deliberately and quite inventively concocted from multiple, unrelated iconographic traditions, the complementary valences of which contributed critically to its meaning for viewers steeped in the world view of an ambitious and increasingly cosmopolitan Iberian capital. Eschewing the flat analysis of bygone iconographic study, it will pursue an intervisual model that recognizes the artist's engagement with a wide network of images, texts, and ideas circulating in early twelfth-century León while also exploring the polyvalency with which the image itself could speak to its viewers.[9] To do so, as we shall see, offers a deeper understanding of how both artist

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7   "… ut nihil minus quam diabolus putaretur …;" Fontaine, *Vie de Saint Martin,* 1:308 (24:4). Translation by Evan White; Goodrich's "no one would believe he was the devil" (*Sulpicius Severus*, 50) fails to convey the centrality of Satan's visual appearance to the deception.

8   The figure rarely earned more than passing comment by scholars before 1990, when Yarza described what he called the "negroid" features of the figure as drawing on their negative medieval associations; see Joaquín Yarza Luaces, "La présence du diable dans l'art espagnole: forme, déguisement, role," in *Démons et merveilles au moyen âge: actes du IVe Colloque international*, ed. Denis Menjot and Benoît Cursente (Nice: Université de Nice-Sophia Antipolis, 1990), 195–241, at 204. Gómez and Asiáin ("Caritas et diabolus," 297) also explained the figure's small size and color as generically negative features. Walker's and Martin's analyses are discussed below.

9   On intervisuality, see Michael Camille, "Gothic Signs and the Surplus: The Kiss on the Cathedral," *Yale French Studies*, special issue, *Contexts: Style and Values in Medieval Art and Literature* (1991): 151–170, at 151.

and viewers construed their world and the great cultural project of which the paintings were just one part.

1   Satan's Blackness

Satan's physical appearance stands at the crux of this inquiry. He is not simply black in hue, as were many medieval depictions of the devil, nor does he conform to the monstrous, often hybridized physical convention typically employed for such figures at this time. Instead, his brown skin, low-bridged nose, full lips, and enlarged white eye invoke a specifically human type, one that a western medieval viewer might have called an *Aethiops*, or Ethiopian. Already well developed in ancient art to represent the Africans of various origin with whom Greek and Roman communities came into contact through trade and travel,[10] the Ethiopian *topos* as it emerged in the medieval west would distill the features traditionally perceived as characteristic of Africans into a stereotype featuring dark brown, black, or blue skin; curly hair; full lips; a rounded or low-bridged nose; oversized eyes; and occasionally a short goatee (Figure 7.2).[11]

The medieval stereotype of the Ethiopian was not merely more abstract than its forerunners: its signification was more expansive, in that it could refer to virtually any dark-skinned, foreign, or exotic people hailing from multiple locations outside Europe, including India, Egypt, and other parts of Africa.[12] These also included several kinds of Ethiopians located there by Classical texts, including the "four-eyed Ethiopians" (*Maritimi* or *Nisitae*) reported there by Pliny the Elder, the barbaric "Ethiopians" described by Hanno farther to the

10   For an overview of this tradition and its checkered historiography, see Jeremy Tanner, "Introduction to the New Edition. Race and Representation in Ancient Art: *Black Athena* and After," in *The Image of the Black in Western Art, Volume I: From the Pharaohs to the Fall of the Roman Empire,* ed. David Bindman and Henry Louis Gates (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2010), 1–39.

11   On medieval visual stereotypes of the Ethiopian, see Dorothy Hoogland Verkerk, "Black Servant, Black Demon: Color Ideology in the Ashburnham Pentateuch," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 31/1 (2001): 57–77; Debra Strickland, *Saracens, Demons, and Jews: Making Monsters in Medieval Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 37–39, and Strickland, "Monstrosity and Race in the Late Middle Ages," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Monsters and the Monstrous*, ed. Asa Simon Mittmann and Peter Dendle (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2012), 363–386.

12   This idea was already incipient in ancient literature, as noted by J.W. Gardner, "Blameless Ethiopians and Others," *Greece & Rome* 24/2 (1977): 185–193.

FIGURE 7.2 Detail: Flagellation of Christ, Winchester Psalter (London, British Library, Cotton MS Nero C IV), fol. 21r.

west, and a host of still more fantastical beings.[13] Their relative independence from the realities of the medieval world endowed these figures with broad symbolic potential that drew heavily on the negative connotations attached to the *topos* by ancient authors, which included sensuality, primitivism, cowardliness, and aggression.[14] In monastic writing in particular, these properties

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13 In addition to the *Maritimi,* Pliny also assigned many so-called Monstrous Races to Ethiopia; see John Block Friedman*, The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2000), 8. On Hanno, see Gardner, "Blameless Ethiopians," 185.

14 Strickland, *Saracens, Demons, and Jews,* 79–93; Friedman, *Monstrous Races,* 54–55, 64–65; on specifically religious applications of the stereotype, see Jean Devisse, "Christians and Black," in *The Image of the Black in Western Art. 2. From the Early Christian Era to the "Age of Discovery." Part 1. From the Demonic Threat to the Incarnation of Sainthood,* ed. David Bindman and Henry Louis Gates (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2010)*,* 46–55. The occasional "positive" black figures of medieval culture, such as the Queen of Sheba and St.

contributed to a generalized tradition in which sinful Ethiopian blackness could only be "whitened" by conversion to a Christian life.[15]

From such foundations, it was only a short leap to describing Satan and his representatives as Ethiopian themselves, a strategy exemplified by Athanasius's well-known fourth-century *Life* of Saint Anthony, which describes how, after failing to tempt the saint in other forms, the devil took the form of an Ethiopian boy and identified himself as the spirit of fornication.[16] Other early monastic writers reported similar encounters: Gregory the Great's *Dialogues*, for example, describe a certain monk's inability to get through his prayers because the devil, disguised as a small black boy, kept tugging on his cloak.[17] The same trope persisted in later medieval texts: Rodulfus Glaber's many references to demons include "black Ethiopians" whose appearance signaled the presence of false relics, while Peter the Venerable attributed a monk's distraction during prayer to a small Ethiopian who was shooting arrows at him in his cell.[18] Such accounts substantiate Peter Brown's crisp observation that "there is hardly a saint in medieval Europe whose temptations are not modeled on those first described in connection with Anthony on the outskirts of an Egyptian village."[19]

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Maurice, seem to have been seen as exceptions proving the rule; on these, see Madeline Caviness, "(Ex)changing Colors: Queens of Sheba and Black Madonnas," *Architektur und Monumentalskulptur des 12–14 Jahrhunderts: Produktion und Rezeption. Festschrift für Peter Kurmann zum 65. Geburtstag* (New York: Peter Lang, 2006), 553–570; Gude Sukale-Redlefsen, *Mauritius: Der heilige Mohr. The Black Saint Maurice* (Houston: Menil Foundation, 1987); and Jean Devisse, "A Sanctified Black: Maurice," in *The Image of the Black. 2. From the Early Christian Era to the "Age of Discovery." Part 1. From the Demonic Threat to the Incarnation of Sainthood*, ed. David Bindman and Henry Louis Gates (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2010), 139–194.

15   See Jean-Marie Courtès, "The Theme of 'Ethiopia' and 'Ethiopians' in Patristic Literature," in *The Image of the Black. 2. From the Early Christian Era to the "Age of Discovery." Part 1. From the Demonic Threat to the Incarnation of Sainthood*, ed. David Bindman and Henry Louis Gates (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2010), 199–214; Gay L. Byron, *Symbolic Blackness and Ethnic Difference in Early Christian Literature* (London: Routledge, 2002), 55–76.

16   Athanasius, *The Life of Anthony and the Letter to Marcellinus*, trans. Robert Gregg (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), 33–35.

17   *The Dialogues of Gregory the Great. Book Two: Saint Benedict*, trans., intro., and notes by Myra L. Uhlfelder (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1967), 10–12.

18   Rodulfus Glaber, *The Five Books of the Histories*, 4:3:7–8, ed. and trans. John France (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 184–185; Petri Cluniacensis Abbatis, *De miraculis Libri Duo*, ed. Dyonisia Bouthillier (Turnhout: Brepols, 1988), 32–33 (I, 8).

19   Peter Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity, A.D. 150–750* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971), 99–100. See also Gregorio Penco, "Sopravvivenze della demonologia antica nel monachesimo medievale," *Studia Monastica* 13/1 (1971): 31–36.

In light of this long tradition, the Leonese artist's choice of a small "Ethiopian" Satan to tempt St. Martin would seem a natural choice, as perhaps already had occurred to San Isidoro's longtime historian, Antonio Viñayo González, when he described the devil's form as that of a "black dwarf" (*un enano negro*).[20] Yet this representation remains an *unicum* in Martin's textual and visual hagiography to this point. None of Martin's surviving *vitae* from the fifth to twelfth centuries makes reference to Satan as either black or Ethiopian, and visual narratives of the saint's life offer few useful comparanda.[21] Nor does Iberian art more generally: beyond the rare exceptions to be discussed below, Iberian images of the devil in this period tended to adhere to the monstrous, hybrid type traditional elsewhere in western Europe.[22] Several such figures appear in the Hell scene produced for the Silos Beatus circa 1109 (London, BL, MS Add. 11695, fol. 2r), a work close in date and provenience to the León image: their light-colored, oddly spotted faces top dark bodies with claw feet, horns or flamelike (in one case curly) hair, and sometimes a tail (Figure 7.3).[23]

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20   Viñayo, *Panteón de los Reyes*, 47.

21   A review of the *vitae* from the fifth to twelfth centuries reveals no references to the devil in this episode as appearing as a black man. A sixth-century account by Venantius Fortunatus briefly cites the role of "the black devil's art" in the attempted deception of the young monk Clarus that just precedes the Satan episode, but this reference seems more metaphorical than literal and does not extend into Fortunatus' account of Martin's temptation. See Venantius Fortunatus, *De vita Sancti Martini* (PL 88:363–426). For other *vitae*, see Clare Stancliffe, *St. Martin and His Hagiographer: History and Miracle in Sulpicius Severus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984)*,* 235–236, and the online Société des Bollandistes *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina Manuscripta* (http://bhlms.fltr.ucl.ac.be/; accessed 01/15/19). Visual depictions of Martin's temptation at prayer remain elusive in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and even more common scenes featuring the saint's encounter with the devil, such as his meeting with the devil in the road or the devil's appearance at his deathbed, offer little precedent for the black devil at León.

22   Joaquín Yarza has published extensively on the general iconography of the devil in Iberian art: see in particular Joaquín Yarza Luaces, "Del ángel caído al diablo medieval," *Boletín del Seminario de Estudios de Arte y Arqueología* 45 (1979): 299–316; Yarza, "La présence du diable dans l'art espagnole," 195–241; and Yarza, "El diablo en los manuscritos monásticos medievales," *Codex Aquilarensis: Cuadernos de Investigación del Monasterio de Santa María la Real* 11 (1994): 103–130. See also Esperanza Aragonés Estella, *La imagen del mal en el románico navarro* (Pamplona: Gobierno de Navarra, 1996), 36–38.

23   On this manuscript, see John Williams, *The Illustrated Beatus: A Corpus of Illustrations of the Commentary on the Apocalypse,* 5 vols. (London: Harvey Miller, 1994–2003), 4:31–40; *Visions of the End in Medieval Spain: Catalogue of Illustrated Beatus Commentaries on the Apocalypse and Study of the Geneva Beatus*, ed. Therese Martin (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2017), 112–115. On the Hell scene, see Meyer Schapiro, "From Mozarabic to Romanesque in Silos," *Art Bulletin* 21 (1939): 313–374.

FIGURE 7.3
Hell, Silos Beatus (London, BL,
Add. MS 11695), fol. 2r.
SOURCE: PHOTO DEDICATED
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Confronted with this well-established tradition, one might well ask what
led the Leonese painter instead to adapt the distant textual convention of the
Ethiopian Satan to this apparently new iconographic context, and what mean-
ings would it have conveyed here. Addressing these questions requires a closer
look at the visual roots of the St. Martin scene as a whole. As we shall see, these
lay not in any one single model for the composition per se, but in a distinctive
combination of elements from several largely unrelated visual traditions, the
combination of which was tailored uniquely to the painting's cultural setting.

2   Satan as Tempter and Adversary from the Gospels to End Times

Satan's posture and gestures in the León scene are nearly as distinctive as his
physical appearance (see Figure 7.1). Looking intently toward St. Martin, he

points sharply downward with his right hand while the left crosses his body to point upward toward the saint. Nothing in Martin's *vitae* or visual tradition explains his chiastic gesture, but parallels do appear in a largely unrelated context: eleventh- and twelfth-century European depictions of the three Temptations of Christ. In such images, which draw upon Byzantine traditions of somewhat earlier date, Satan often makes a similar gesture when he addresses the savior, usually in the second Temptation when, on the pinnacle of the Temple, he offers the riches of the world in exchange for Christ's adoration of him.[24] Widely dispersed throughout western Europe after 1100, this variant had certainly reached north-central Iberia by the second quarter of the twelfth century, since it appears in a fresco of the Temptations of Christ from San Baudelio de Berlanga (Soria), now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Figure 7.4). Here, in a scene conflating the second and third Temptations, the centrally-placed, dark, goat-headed Satan points toward Christ with his left hand as his right gestures downward.[25]

The León figure compares well with that from San Baudelio, even preserving Satan's pointing gesture with his "sinister" hand despite the pair's reversed positions. However, its link with the Christological tradition is made still clearer by its inscription, s[an]c[tu]s martinus dixi[t] vade satanas. This command, although lacking from Martin's surviving *vitae*, echoes Christ's response to Satan after he is tempted for the third time (Mt. 4:10): "Tunc dicit ei Jesus: Vade Satana" (Then Jesus saith to him: Begone, Satan).[26] The Gospel passage itself is sometimes paired with Satan's pointing gesture in other Romanesque scenes of the Temptation, such as the late eleventh-century Gospels of Matilda of Tuscany (Pierpont Morgan Library, MS M. 492, fol. 43v; Figure 7.5).[27] Its near-repetition at León implies not only an awareness of this prior tradition, but a sensitivity to its symbolic potential: in setting the frontal, Christ-like

24   I thank Jaroslav Folda for his insights on this point. Exemplifying the Byzantine formula in migration are the Temptation scenes in the south vault of San Marco in Venice; see Otto Demus, *The Mosaic Decoration of San Marco*, ed. Herbert Kessler (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 43 and pl. 9b.

25   Milagros Guàrdia Pons, *San Baudelio de Berlanga, una encrucijada* (Bellaterra: Universitat Autónoma de Barcelona, 2011), 330–338 and pl. 19. For another Iberian example, see Vasanti Kupfer, "The Iconography of the Tympanum of the Temptation of Christ at The Cloisters," *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 12 (1977): 21–31.

26   Biblical Latin quotations are taken from the Vulgate: *Biblia sacra iuxta vulgatam Clementinam. Nova editio logicis partitionibus aliisque subsidiis ornata a Alberto Colunga et Laurentio Turrado*, 6th ed. Biblioteca de autores cristianos, 14 (Madrid: Ed. Católica, 1982). English passages are from the Douay-Rheims Bible.

27   Robert H. Rough, *The Reformist Illuminations in the Gospels of Matilda, Countess of Tuscany* (*A Study in the Art of the Age of Gregory VII*) (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1973).

FIGURE 7.4   Temptations of Christ from San Baudelio de Berlanga (New York, Metropolitan
            Museum of Art, 61.248).
            SOURCE: PHOTO DEDICATED TO THE PUBLIC DOMAIN AND REPRODUCED
            UNDER A CC0 1.0 UNIVERSAL LICENSE

FIGURE 7.5   Second Temptation of Christ, Gospels of Matilda of Tuscany (New York,
            J. Pierpont Morgan Library & Museum, MS M. 492), fol. 43v.
            PHOTO: THE PIERPONT MORGAN LIBRARY, NEW YORK

Martin, with his pale, serene visage and blessing hand, in opposition to a dark, stereotyped adversary, the artist associates the saint's forbearance with that of his divine exemplar.

If this compositional model helps to clarify some elements of the León imagery, it does little to explain its most notable feature: the portrayal of Satan with Ethiopian features. For this, the most promising visual precedent is a local one: that most Iberian of genres, the illustrated Beatus. Composed around 776 in Asturias, Beatus of Liebana's original Commentary on the Apocalypse was copied repeatedly between the tenth and thirteenth centuries, forming a closely related series of manuscripts with over 100 canonical illustrations each;[28] several of these, all produced in or near León during the tenth and eleventh centuries, contain images relevant to the Panteón devil. They include the Morgan Beatus (Morgan Library and Museum, MS M. 644), produced by Maius circa 940, likely in Tábara;[29] the Beatus of Fernando I and Sancha (Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS vitr. 14/2), made in León in 1047 and sometimes called the Facundus Beatus after the scribe who signed it on that date;[30] and the Burgo de Osma Beatus (Burgo de Osma Cathedral, MS. 1), signed in 1086 by Martinus and most likely made at the royally sponsored Leonese monastery of Sahagún.[31]

Satan is central to three of the canonical illustrations shared by these manuscripts. That for Apoc. 12:1–18, depicting the Woman Clothed in the Sun, shows him bound in hell with his followers; that for Apoc. 20:1–3 depicts him chained in the abyss; and that for Apoc. 20:9–10 portrays him in the Lake of Fire. In all of these he takes the form not of a monstrous hybrid, but of a black human male. In the Morgan Beatus illustration of Apoc. 12:1–18, he is coal-black and humanoid, sharing the somatotype and extremities of the pale-skinned figures that surround him in hell; and despite abrasion to the face, several rounded curls and the tip of a pointed beard suggest an Ethiopian stereotype (Figure 7.6).[32] In the illustration of Apoc. 12:1–18 (fol. 187r) in the Beatus of Fernando and Sancha,

28 For background and bibliography on each manuscript, see Williams, *Corpus;* a cogent introduction to the Beatus tradition and more recent bibliography are found in Williams, *Visions of the End,* esp. 21–66 and 273–284.

29 Williams, *Corpus*, 2:21–33; Williams, *Visions of the End*, 69–72. See also *A Spanish Apocalypse: The Morgan Beatus Manuscript*, intro. and commentaries by John Williams; codicological analysis by Barbara A. Shailor (New York: Braziller, 1991).

30 Williams, *Corpus*, 3:34–40; Williams, *Visions of the End*, 96–99; see also *Beato de Fernando I y Sancha* (Barcelona: Moleiro, 2006).

31 Williams, *Corpus*, 4:17–25; Williams, *Visions of the End*, 105–109. A new facsimile has recently appeared: Peter K. Klein, *El Beato de Burgo de Osma, s. XI* (Valencia: Scriptorium, 2016).

32 Yarza early connected the introduction of dark color and humanoid elements to Maius in the Morgan Beatus but did not connect them specifically with the Ethiopian topos.

the type is better preserved: Satan's black body is outlined in red and stretched long, its naturalistic hands and feet curled slightly as they struggle against their bonds; his face, shown in profile, displays a large eye and flat-bridged nose, while his hair falls behind him in wiry locks (Figure 7.7).[33]

The illustrations of the Fernando and Sancha Beatus are particularly relevant to the painting at León, where the manuscript seems to have remained after its royal patrons' deaths and might still have been accessible to the painter of the Panteón de los Reyes over half a century later. In fact, the presence of several inscriptions shared in common between this Beatus and the Panteón's painting of the Vision of Saint John led John Williams to suggest that the artist might have copied them directly from the manuscript, while Rose Walker identified several formal elements in the same scene as traceable to the Beatus tradition.[34] If the manuscript was in fact available to the later artist, it is possible to imagine its stereotyped devils inspiring the Ethiopianized Satan of the St. Martin scene.

Access to this specific manuscript was perhaps not necessary, however, since by the end of the eleventh century, an Ethiopianized Satan had begun to appear in other Beatus manuscripts in the same region. The most notable of these is the Burgo de Osma Beatus, produced in the monastery of Sahagún, a favorite residence of King Alfonso VI (r. 1065–Jan 1072; Oct 1072–1109), which lay two days' journey from the capital itself.[35] The Osma codex shares with the earlier Beatuses the inclusion of an Ethiopian devil in the three scenes already mentioned, but it also inserts such figures into two further illustrations: Apoc. 20: 7–8, in which Satan tempts Gog and Magog, and Apoc. 20: 11–15, where two Ethiopian demons with gaping mouths

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See Joaquín Yarza Luaces, "Diablo e infierno en la miniatura de los Beatos," *Actas del Simposio para el estudio de los códices del "Comentario al Apocalipsis" de Beato de Liébana* (Madrid: Joyas Bibliográficas, 1976), 2:231–255, esp. 239. As observed by Gómez and Asiáin ("Caritas y diabolus," 297), such figures resemble late Antique types and likely were derived from these.

33   The Satan figures in Apoc. XX, 1–3 and 9–10 (fols. 243v and 249v) display a similar physiognomy, although with more claw-like hands and feet.

34   Williams, *Corpus*, 1:99–100, and Williams, "León: The Iconography of a Capital," in *Cultures of Power: Lordship, Status, and Process in Twelfth-Century Europe*, ed. Thomas N. Bisson (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), 231–258, esp. 254; Walker, "Panteón de los Reyes," 217.

35   On the localization to Sahagún, see Barbara Shailor, "The Beatus of Burgo de Osma: A Paleographical and Codicological Study," in *Apocalipsis Beati Liebanensis: Burgo Oxomensis. 2. El Beato de Osma: Estudios* (Valencia: Vicent García, 1992), 29–52. See also Williams, *Corpus* 4:21–23.

FIGURE 7.6   Detail of Satan, from the illustration of Apoc. xii:1–18, Morgan Beatus (New York,
              J. Pierpont Morgan Library & Museum, ms M. 644) fol. 153r.
              PHOTO: THE PIERPONT MORGAN LIBRARY, NEW YORK

FIGURE 7.7
Detail of Satan, from the illustration of
Apoc. xii: 1–18, Beatus of Fernando i and
Sancha (Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de
España, ms vitr. 14/2), fol. 187r.
PHOTO: HAMID SHAMS

project their heads into a scene of the Last Judgment.[36] Most notable is the
Gog and Magog scene, where the traditional seven-headed beast represent-
ing Satan has been replaced by the most fully conceived Ethiopian figure
of the entire Beatus tradition (Figure 7.8). His coal-black body is carefully

36   Yarza ("Diablo e infierno," 240–241) connects the proliferation of devils in Beatus illustra-
      tions at this time to an increased monastic concern with figures of evil. The inscription in
      the margin is from the Apocalypse (20:13): "mors et infernus dederunt mortuos suos."

FIGURE 7.8　Temptation of Gog and Magog, from the illustration of Apoc. xx, 7–8, Burgo de
　　　　　　 Osma Beatus (Burgo de Osma Cathedral, ms 1), fol. 155v.
　　　　　　 PHOTO: HAMID SHAMS

proportioned, his shoulders and hands turned gracefully in space, and his profile face, with its snub nose, spiky hair, and large eye, effectively prefigures that of the León painting.

The Osma figure confirms that the Ethiopian stereotype enjoyed at least some dissemination within the environs of León by the end of the eleventh century. Moreover, it also suggests the additional meanings that such a figure might have accrued. In replacing the traditional seven-headed beast of the Gog and Magog scene with an Ethiopian, Martinus chose to emphasize the theme of temptation inherent in this stereotype, highlighting its suitability to a new context in which Satan, freshly loosed from his bonds, would "go forth, and seduce the nations, which are over the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog" (Apoc. 20:7). Presenting Satan in this form recalled his well-worn habit of disguising himself to tempt the faithful. However, it also drew slyly on this strategy's transparency, since in many monastic narratives, it was the very sight of an Ethiopian, whether tugging at a monk's clothing or clambering out of a reliquary, that alerted Satan's victims to his presence and intent. By replacing the beast with the Ethiopian in the Burgo de Osma image, Martinus forged a double entendre that simultaneously revealed the very identity that it purported to conceal.[37]

A similar visual strategy animates the Temptation at León: Satan's small stature and dark, foreign countenance play dramatically against the royal robes with which he aims to deceive St. Martin, alerting the viewer to his identity even before it is acknowledged by the saint. Satan's failure in this case is, of course, critical to the success of the narrative, which centers on Martin's adeptness at seeing through the ploy. As Sulpicius Severus pointed out, recognizing the devil in all his disguises was one of the saint's most remarkable abilities: "… the devil was always visible and apparent to his eyes, so that, whether he confined himself to his proper substance or whether he transformed himself into various figures of spiritual wickedness, Martin always perceived him, no matter what form he took."[38] Like the foul smell in Martin's *vitae*, an effect with no visual translation, Satan's Ethiopian disguise offered a signpost in the narrative that few medieval viewers were likely to miss.

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37   On the value of this strategy in similar contexts, see Béla Zsolt Szakács, "Supernatural Figures Incognito," in *Angels, Devils. The Supernatural and Its Visual Representation*, ed. Gerhard Jahritz (Budapest: CEU Press, 2011), 75–91, esp. 90.

38   Goodrich, *Sulpicius Severus*, 46; "Diabolum vero ita conspictabilem et subjectum oculis habebat ut, sive se in propria substantia contineret, sive in diversas figuras nequitiae transtulisset, qualibet ab eo sub imagine videretur." Fontaine, 1:298 (21:1).

3   Visualizing the World and Its Others

The iconographic strands central to St. Martin's Temptation at León clear-
ly offered meanings at multiple levels. Echoing the familiar compositions of
Christ's own Temptation, they revealed the divine exemplar on whom the saint
modeled his patient resistance; evoking the Ethiopian devils of both monastic
legend and the Beatus tradition, they exhorted the viewer to guard against Sa-
tan's penchant for disguise. Yet for a twelfth-century Iberian viewer in the cap-
ital of what was then the Iberian peninsula's most ambitious Christian-ruled
kingdom, the devil's unusual appearance also might have raised other, less tra-
ditionally rooted associations. The most intriguing has previously been raised
by Rose Walker and Therese Martin, who in separate publications suggested
that Satan figure's brown skin and distinctive facial features would have raised
associations with Iberian Muslims. Walker saw the dark skin and unusual dress
of the Satan figure as calling to mind the Almoravid Muslims who held power
to the south of León's borders at this date; Martin proposed that it alluded to a
specific Muslim individual: Zaida, the concubine and eventual wife of Queen
Urraca's father Alfonso VI, to whom she had borne Urraca's half-brother and
erstwhile rival Sancho.[39]

   Both scholars are correct in identifying an increased concern with Muslims
in León at this time. Following King Fernando I's consolidation of the kingdom
between 1037–1065, King Alfonso VI had adopted an aggressive stance toward
the disorganized *taifas* to his south, first enforcing the payment of tribute by,
and then attacking, key Muslim-ruled cities, among them Toledo, conquered
on 6 May 1085. This last victory prompted the *taifa* rulers of Sevilla, Grana-
da, and Badajoz to request aid from the Almoravid emir in Morocco, Yusuf
ibn Tashufin, who stopped Alfonso's conquests in their tracks, annexing the

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[39]   On Zaida, see Bernard Reilly, *The Kingdom of León-Castilla under Queen Urraca (1109–1126)*
        (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 25–26, and Alberto Montaner Frutos, "La
        mora Zaida, entre historia y leyenda (con una reflexión sobre la técnica historiográ-
        fica alfonsí)," in *Historicist Essays on Hispano-Medieval Narrative. In Memory of Roger
        M. Walker*, ed. Barry Taylor and Geoffrey West (London: Maney, 2005), 272–352. Walker
        ("Wall Paintings," 209) identified Satan's dark skin and "Arab dress" as key Muslim signi-
        fiers, while Martin (*Queen as King*, 149) read the figure as female, a possibility also hinted
        at by Yarza ("Presence du diable," 204) when he referred to it as "travesti." I have not found
        iconographic support for a reading of the figure as female: the robe is not gender-specific
        in design, and its straight fall lacks the fluidity of feminine garments elsewhere in the
        Panteón, while uncovered hair is quite rare in any female figure in Iberian art of this
        date. Since beardlessness and long hair were common signs of youthful masculinity, as
        exemplified by images of John the Evangelist above all, the figure is logically read as an
        Ethiopian boy consistent with those in the monastic texts.

remaining *taifas* into a single, Muslim-ruled empire that, by 1102, stretched across the south of the Iberian peninsula from Badajoz to Valencia.[40]

The consolidation of Almoravid power just beyond Leonese borders certainly might have rendered a painted figure of Satan—or indeed of any biblical or legendary antagonist—ripe for negative references to Muslim culture. Yet the León figure's somatotype was likely not the main trigger for this. During the first decades of the twelfth century, the eventually familiar tradition of portraying Muslims with dark skin and African features was still unknown in northern Spain; very few such images can be identified unequivocally before the end of that same century.[41] It is therefore unlikely that the stereotyped Ethiopian features of the figure at León would have provoked their original viewers to see the figure specifically as Muslim when, on the basis of skin color and facial type alone, they had reason to see it simply as an *Aethiops*.

This is not to suggest that the figure did not refer to Islamic culture at all, but to indicate that such references were effected in other, more subtle ways. One such signal is Satan's unconventional white robe, which so perplexingly contradicts its description in St. Martin's *vitae*. As has been noted, Martin's biographers concur in identifying the devil's robe as purple, a color entirely appropriate to a royal disguise. By contrast, the garment at León is not merely white, but distinctive in both cut and ornament. A straight, narrow robe with sleeves that widen at the ends, it is bordered at the neck, cuffs, and hem, as well as in a vertical strip down the front, by colored bands of ornament comprised of rounded, framed medallions between narrow borders of alternating circles. The result is a hybrid garment, consistent in shape with the elegant *brial* worn by elites of both genders in the twelfth-century Christian-ruled Iberian kingdoms, but of a color and ornament resembling the fine *ṭirāz* stuffs produced in Fatimid Egypt from the tenth through twelfth centuries.[42]

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40   José María Mínguez Fernández, *Alfonso VI: Poder, expansion y reorganización interior* (Hondarribia: Nerea, 2000), esp. 87–107 and 131–177; Amira K. Bennison, *The Almoravid and Almohad Empires* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 40–48; see also Bernard Reilly, *The Kingdom of León-Castilla under Alfonso VI (1065–1109)* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 161–184, and Reilly, *Kingdom of León-Castilla under Urraca*, 12–32.

41   The Iberian examples cited by Inés Monteira are not always clearly Muslim rather than generically Africanized, and they cluster at the end of the twelfth century; see Inés Monteira Arías, *El enemigo imaginado: la escultura románica hispana y la lucha contra el Islam* (Toulouse: CNRS- Université de Toulouse-Le Mirail-Framespa, 2012), 482–484. On the late medieval tradition of depicting Muslims with dark skin, see Strickland, *Saracens, Demons, and Jews*, 173–182.

42   The garment was characterized simply as "Arab" by Walker ("Panteón de los Reyes," 209); its western cut was not noted. On the *brial*, see Carmen Bernis Madrazo, *Indumentaria medieval española* (Madrid: CSIC, 1956), 15–16. I am indebted to my Treasury Project

Ṭirāz in its most conventional sense refers to textiles made of finely woven white cotton or linen, and in the most expensive cases linen and silk, ornamented with embroidered lines of Arabic inscription.[43] Although ṭirāz textiles were produced in many Islamic centers, including al-Andalus, an especially strong tradition emerged in Cairo in the second half of the tenth century, and its more luxurious variations became a sartorial staple at the Fatimid court.[44] The earliest Fatimid examples generally were white robes bearing simple bands of inscription, originally pious but often including the name of a ruler or his agents; by the end of the eleventh century, they might be embellished with tapestry-woven bands, sometimes worked with gilt thread, comprised of ornamental medallions within narrow lines of inscription.[45] Especially comparable with the León image are the white linen exemplars produced in Cairo and Fustat in this period, best exemplified by the so-called "Veil of St. Anne," made in Damietta in 1097 and bearing the name of the caliph al-Mustaʿlī (Figure 7.9).[46] The tapestry-woven compound bands of this textile's center and borders, formed of serial medallions within ornamental bands, compare well in form with those of Satan's painted robe.

For those who recognized the painted garment as a representation of ṭirāz, its connotations would have been quite nuanced, for this was not an everyday garment. Although in actual practice ṭirāz textiles were not always produced under royal auspices, their inscriptions often referred to the monarch, provoking association with him.[47] At the Fatimid court, where white was the imperial

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colleagues Ana Cabrera and María Judith Feliciano for prompting me to examine this garment more closely and for their guidance as I did so.

43 The term "ṭirāz" originally referred to a variety of embroidered textiles, but it quickly came to refer to those inscribed with honorific text and sometimes referred by extension to the factories where such works were produced. I follow common practice here in applying it to the inscribed examples. See Louise W. Mackie, *Symbols of Power: Luxury Textiles from Islamic Lands, 7th–21st Centuries* (Cleveland, OH: Cleveland Museum of Art, 2015), 85; see also Yedida K. Stillman, Paula Sanders, and Nasser Rabbat, "Ṭirāz," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam. New Edition*, 10 vols. ed. P. Bearman et al. (Leiden: Brill, 1986–2004), 10:534–538.

44 For examples and general background, see Mackie, *Symbols of Power*, 82–127, and Maurice Lombard, *Les textiles dans le monde musulman: VII–XII siècles* (Paris: Mouton, 1978), 219–221. For the uses of textiles at the court, see Paula Sanders, "Robes of Honor in Fatimid Egypt," in *Robes and Honor: The Medieval World of Investiture*, ed. Stewart Gordon (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 225–240.

45 Mackie, *Symbols of Power*, 85–86 and 96–98.

46 Béatrice Girault-Kurtzemann, "Le voile de sainte-Anne d'Apt," *Bulletin du CIETA* 75 (1998): 37–47; see also Mackie, *Symbols of Power,* 113–116.

47 Sanders, "Robes of Honor," 226–227.

FIGURE 7.9   Ṭirāz dated 1097 and known as the "Veil of Ste.-Anne" (Apt, Cathedral of Ste.-Anne).
PHOTO: GRAND ANGLE/PHILLIPPE GROMELLE

color, such textiles were both worn by the caliph and his elites and given as robes of honor to favored courtiers or visiting dignitaries. This practice was familiar in Iberia as well: the golden tunic and *bornus* (a hooded mantle) given to Ordoño IV by the Cordoban caliph al-Ḥakam II in 962, when the Asturian king visited his court, constitutes an early example.[48] The circulation of ṭirāz and other textiles through such gifts, as well as outright purchases, persisted for centuries among elite Iberians, who sometimes cut them into garments reflecting local fashion.[49] The narrowly-cut western style of Satan's robe at León, which differs notably from the loose tunic or untailored drape into which a ṭirāz textile would have been shaped for wear in Islamic lands, might have

48   Following Ibn-Hayyān, al-Maqqarī reports that the caliph bestowed on Ordoño "a tunic of gold tissue, and a *bornús* of the same material, with a belt of the purest gold, set with pearls and rubies of such magnitude and beauty that the eyes of the barbarian rested complacently on them. ..." See Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Maqqarī, Ibn al-Khaṭīb, and Pascual de Gayangos, *The History of the Mohammedan Dynasties in Spain; Extracted from the Nafhu-t-tíb min ghosni-l-Andalusi-r-rattíb wa táríkh Lisánu-d-Dín Ibni-l-Khattíb* (London: Oriental Translation Fund of Great Britain and Ireland; W. H. Allen and Co., 1840), 2:165.

49   For surviving, if somewhat later, examples of this practice, see María Judith Feliciano, "Muslim Shrouds for Christian Kings? A Reassessment of Andalusi Textiles in Thirteenth-Century Castilian Life and Ritual," in *Under the Influence: Questioning the Comparative in Medieval Castile*, ed. Cynthia Robinson and Leyla Rouhi (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 101–132, at 112–113.

been understood as such a transformed, high-status garment.[50] Its costly materials, especially the tapestry-woven band falling down its center in a manner reminiscent of a Byzantine imperial *loros*, would have suited it well for Satan's kingly disguise.[51]

Beyond its references to kingship, the luxurious qualities of this garment, with its diaphanous weave and gold-wrapped thread, also had potential to raise more complex associations by evoking the sensuality often attributed to Islamic culture by western Europeans. This suggestion deserves some caution, since stereotypes concerning Muslim luxury and sensuality developed most fully in the post-medieval west.[52] However, lasciviousness was among the charges leveled by the ninth-century Cordobans who sought "martyrdom" through public attacks on Islam, and it threads through other texts of that century, including a surprising account of St. Pelagius's martyrdom that attributes the saint's execution not merely to his refusal to convert to Islam but to his rejection of the physical advances of the caliph Abd al-Rahman III.[53] The theme became more muted in anti-Muslim polemics of the early twelfth century, which tended instead toward the dissection of Islamic doctrine and its potential to qualify as heresy.[54] Nonetheless, combined with the devil's youthful appearance, which resonated with early monastic images of Ethiopian boys whose temptation of

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50   On the ways in which such textiles were worn in Islamic lands, see Lisa Golombek, "The Draped Universe of Islam," in *Content and Context of Visual Arts in the Islamic World*, ed. Priscilla P. Soucek (New York: CAA and The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1988), 25–49, at 27–29.

51   The loros-like band is relatively rare in twelfth-century Iberian images, but when it appears, it usually worn by royal figures, whether good or evil. In the abovementioned Silos Beatus, for example, it is shared by Christ (fols. 18 v and 21r), Nebuchadnezzar (fols. 228v, 232v), and the Whore of Babylon and the Kings of the Earth (fol. 182v). The practice was not limited to Iberia; see Janet Snyder, "Cloth from the Promised Land: Appropriated Tiraz Textile in Twelfth-Century French Sculpture," in *Fabrications: Dress, Textiles, Clothwork, and Other Cultural Imaginings*, ed. E. Jane Burns (New York: Palgrave McMillan, 2004), 145–164.

52   As classically articulated by Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978).

53   On ninth-century anti-Muslim polemics as motivated partly by the appeal of Umayyad culture, see John Tolan, *Saracens: Islam in the Medieval European Imagination* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 85–104. On the Pelayo tale, see Maribel Fierro, "Hostages and the Danger of Cultural Contact: Two Cases from Umayyad Cordoba," in *Acteurs des transferts culturels en Méditerranée médiévale*, ed. Rania Abdellatif et al. (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2012), 73–83, esp. 79–82, and Jeffrey A. Bowman, "Beauty and Passion in Tenth-Century Córdoba," in *The Boswell Thesis: Essays on Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*, ed. Matthew Kuefler (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 236–253.

54   Tolan, *Saracens*, 147–155.

the desert fathers was at times implicitly or overtly sexual, the opulent garment conceivably could have lent such a meaning.[55]

The probability that St. Martin's robe was understood as commenting on Islamic culture at some level is bolstered by a second hagiographical scene in the Panteón, located on a soffit to the south of St. Martin. Here, the equestrian St. George wages his own battle against the devil, striking downward with his spear into a struggling Satanic figure. Despite damage to the face, this devil preserves features of the conventionally monstrous type, with flame-like hair and horns still visible (Figure 7.10). However, he also carries a round shield of a type found frequently, although not exclusively, in Umayyad imagery.[56] Although this detail's association with Andalusi culture cannot be guaranteed, if such an association were intended here, it would have amplified that made by Satan's robe in the neighboring bay.

The fairly literal references to Andalusi culture made by these visual elements offer a richer context within which to understand the iconographic work done by the devil's Ethiopian likeness, and especially by the connotations of exoticism and distance it projected. Since the time of Pliny the Elder, the Ethiopian had been the paradigmatic foreigner, signifying a very wide range of Others which included many of the real and imagined outsiders of whom the early twelfth-century Leonese kingdom was becoming increasingly aware. For those in León, as for Europeans generally at this time, the boundaries of the known world had expanded rapidly as globally oriented phenomena such as pilgrimage, crusading, and eastern trade introduced western Europeans to the unfamiliar peoples who lived—or were imagined to live—beyond familiar borders.[57] One result of this awareness was a proliferation of stereotypes aimed at setting these foreign peoples into graspable relation to the known European world, an effort intimately related to interest in the

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[55] On the sexual dimensions of these tales, see David Brakke, *Demons and the Making of the Monk: Spiritual Combat in Early Christianity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 166–181.

[56] Martin (*Queen as King*, 147), identifies this shield as Muslim; similarly, Juan Zozaya has compared the shield held by a soldier in a fresco painted in San Baudelio de Berlanga (now Museo del Prado, P07266) to Umayyad examples; see Juan Zozaya, "Algunas observaciones en torno a la ermita de San Baudelio de Casillas de Berlanga," *Cuadernos de la Alhambra* 12 (1976): 307–338, at 324. However, Milagros Guardia (*San Baudelio*, 374–376) cites manuscript examples employing the form in a Christian context and notes that round shields were also used by Christian soldiers throughout the twelfth century.

[57] My use of the term "global" follows that of Janet Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony: The World System A.D. 1250–1350* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), esp. 3–20 and 32–40. See also Alicia Walker, "Globalism," *Studies in Iconography* 33 (2012): 183–196.

FIGURE 7.10   St. George battling the devil, Panteón de los Reyes, San Isidoro, León.

so-called Monstrous Races, originally described by Classical authors as liv-
ing beyond the known Mediterranean world, often in Ethiopia, where human
populations shared space with fantastical figures such as headless Blemmyae
and one-footed Sciopods.[58]

58   Friedman, *Monstrous Races*; Strickland, *Saracens, Demons, and Jews*, 29–59. For an admi-
       rably nuanced view of such encounters, see Shirin Khanmohamadi, *In Light of Another's
       Word: European Ethnography in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania
       Press, 2014), esp. 11–36.

The northern Iberian kingdoms are often omitted from discussions of this changing world view, perhaps because, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries particularly, they are assumed to have been preoccupied with their own internal confrontations. Yet much of the Classical information on which medieval knowledge of the world was based was readily available in Iberia through early medieval compilations, above all the *Etymologies* of the Visigothic scholar Isidore of Sevilla, who was, of course, the dedicatee of the church of San Isidoro in León. Isidore's work includes a discussion of the Monstrous Races that relies closely on Classical sources, especially Pliny's *Natural History*; it also provides the prototype for the world map found in numerous Beatus manuscripts to illustrate the apostles' evangelization routes.[59] Several such maps locate the Races on a mysterious fourth continent located just beyond Ethiopia, illustrated particularly neatly in the Burgo de Osma Beatus, which depicts a gigantic Sciopod in its most characteristic pose, resting on its back with its single foot raised above its head, in this zone (Figure 7.11).[60]

The Sciopod's geographical proximity to Ethiopia in this image is explained by an inscription drawn from Isidore: "This region is unknown to us due to the heat of the sun and is uninhabitable. They say that the sciopods who have one foot and extraordinary speed live there, who, because of this aspect, are called sciopods by the Greeks because during the summer, lying down with their backs upon the ground, they shade themselves with the great size of their feet."[61] Drawing on a conceptual elision as old as Pliny's text, which identified Sciopods and several other Monstrous Races as literally inhabiting Ethiopia, the conflation also reflects a tendency, common in both Classical and medieval writing, to combine or exchange the characteristics attributed to one peripheral group freely with another, as if allowing their shared distance from the familiar cultural center to dissolve the distinctions among them.[62] If the

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59 Isidore's treatment of the Monstrous Races appears in *Etymologies* 11.3.12–29; see *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, ed. Stephen A. Barney et al. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 244–246. The Beatus map follows passages adopted from Isidore's *De apostolis* (VII, 9, 1–4) and *De ortu et obitu partum*; see Sandra Sáenz-López Pérez, *The Beatus Maps: The Revelation of the World in the Middle Ages*, trans. Peter Krakenberger and Gerry Coldham (Burgos: Siloé, 2014), 180–182.

60 Sáenz-López, *Revelation of the World*, 196–198 and 212–222; Williams, *Visions of the End*, 23.

61 Sáenz-López, *Revelation of the World*, 217–218.

62 Monique Mund-Dopchle, "Autour des sciopodes: la péripherie dans l'Antiquité," in *Mythe et litterature: Études réunies et presentées*, ed. Ernst Leonardy (Louvain la Neuve: Collége Erasme, 1994), 41–52, esp. 50–51. See also Serafín Moralejo Álvarez, "World and Time in the Map of the Osma Beatus," *Apocalipsis Beati Liebanensis,* 2:145–174.

FIGURE 7.11   Mappamundi, Burgo de Osma Beatus (Burgo de Osma Cathedral, MS 1)
fols. 34v–35r.
PHOTO: HAMID SHAMS

Sciopod in the Osma map is presented, as Serafín Moralejo described it, "*pars pro todo* [sic], as the outermost limit of human diversity into which all the rest of humanity would fit,"[63] it also entwines Ethiopia firmly within this cosmological view, rendering it just one more of the array of unfamiliar foreign cultures to be encountered by the apostles as they bore the Word to the edges of the earth. From this perspective, the dark-skinned Satan at San Isidoro extended its signification to include all manner of Others, opening a space as well for proximate foreigners like the Almoravids in the zones beyond Leonese lands.

4   Satan's Viewers

I have proposed that the St. Martin scene at León, with its distinctive Satan figure, had potential to inspire an unusually wide range of associations in its viewers: with the beleaguered saints and deceptive devils of early Christianity, with the exemplary fortitude of the tempted Christ, and with the

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63   Moralejo, "World and Time," 152.

appealing yet dangerous difference of the Almoravid foe. But which of these
resonated with the viewers who actually stood before the image in the early
twelfth century? Although there is always some peril in speculation about the
makeup of medieval viewing communities, doing so in this case is facilitated
by the nature of the structure in which the painting appears, the so-called
"Panteón de los Reyes." As its nickname reflects, this structure, built circa
1080 as the lower story of a royal palace, has long been understood and ana-
lyzed primarily as a mausoleum.[64] This was certainly among its predominant
functions after the middle of the twelfth century, but as Therese Martin in
particular has pointed out, there is only limited material evidence that burial
was its primary role when the paintings now under discussion were added.[65]
While this, of course, does not rule out the possibility of earlier funerary use,
it should encourage the recognition that in the first decades of the twelfth
century, the space also hosted a range of activities by the living. As a palatial
lower story that facilitated royal passage into the church, it served as a gath-
ering point and a transitional zone between royal and sacred spaces; like sim-
ilar palace structures in Iberia and throughout much of Europe, it was suited
to a number of functions, from the reception of visitors to court gatherings
and ritual celebrations.[66] Beyond the royal family itself, participants in these
functions might have included courtiers, foreign visitors, and clergy, the last
drawn from both San Isidoro and foundations throughout the kingdom. The
viewers of the Panteón, then, were a select population whose literacy and
cosmopolitanism well exceeded that of the more diverse public beyond its
walls and likely predisposed them to appreciate complex or esoteric visual
imagery.

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64   Key scholarship on the structure's date includes John Williams, "San Isidoro in León,
      Evidence for a New History," *Art Bulletin* 55 (1973): 171–184, and Martin, *Queen as King*,
      74–95. The persistence of scholarship analyzing it as a consistently funerary space is
      exemplified by Gerardo Boto Varela, "Arquitectura medieval. Configuración espacial y
      aptitudes funcionales," in *Real Colegiata de San Isidoro. Relicario de la monarquía leonesa,*
      ed. Constantino Robles García and Fernando Llamazares Rodríguez (León: Edilesa, 2007),
      51–103, esp. 71.

65   Therese Martin, "Vie et mort dans le Panthéon de San Isidoro de León," *Cahiers de Saint-
      Michel de Cuxa* 42 (2011): 153–164; see also Martin, *Queen as King*, 74–78. The fact that
      Alfonso VI established his own mausoleum at Sahagún rather than San Isidoro reinforces
      the tenuousness of a dynastic burial tradition there prior to Urraca's reign; on Sahagún,
      see José Luis Senra, "En torno a un espacio de evocación: las *res gesta domini Adefonsi*
      y la iglesia monástica de Sahagún," in *La construcción medieval de la memoria regia*, ed.
      Pascual Martínez Sopena and Ana Rodríguez (Valencia: Publicacions Universitat de
      València, 2011), 243–292.

66   Martin, "Vie et mort," 162–164; Martin, *Queen as King*, 132.

The programmatic sophistication of this imagery, with its elaborate Christological cycle, theophanic vaults, diverse secondary figures, and extensive inscriptions, answered well to such an audience. Thematically diffuse and lacking the coherent focus on either funerary or palatial themes that might be expected in a painted program of this scale, it must have presented a complex read for even the most educated viewer.[67] This complexity is reflected in its analyses by modern scholars, whom the paintings' thematic obscurity, and the lack of surviving comparanda, have left free to craft an unusually wide range of arguments about the space and its reception.[68] A detailed review of this scholarship is not possible here, but recent interpretations can be clustered loosely into two groups, one leaning toward the paintings' commemorative and funerary significance and the other toward their relevance to temporal concerns. The former includes Antonio Viñayo González, who, unlike many other scholars, assumed the paintings to have been accessible to a wide and often unlettered public, for whom they would have formed a coherent catechetical Christological program structured in keeping with the recently abolished Hispanic liturgy; María Soledad de Silva y Verástegui, who interpreted both the paintings and the sculpture of the Panteón as fundamentally penitential; Manuel Castiñeiras González, who interpreted the two main Christological and Apocalyptic cycles as preparing the viewer to pass from a funerary space into the heavenly Jerusalem of the church; and Rose Walker and Miguel Cortés Arrese, who both emphasized the paintings' intercessory potential, citing redemptive themes in the paintings themselves and comparing the Panteón's architecture with cryptlike western structures found in other churches of the era.[69]

A considerably more temporal reading of the ensemble, by contrast, was made in the course of several publications by John Williams, who initially identified the presence of the French saint Martial in the Last Supper vault

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67   An absence of obviously funerary themes is remarked upon, for example, by Peter K. Klein, "Entre paradis présent et Jugement dernier: Les programmes apocalyptiques et eschatologiques dans les porches du haut Moyen Age," in *Avant-nefs et espaces d'accueil dans l'église entre le IVe et le XIIe siècle: Actes du colloque international du CNRS, Auxerre 17–20 Juin 1999*, ed. Christian Sapin (Paris: Ed. du CTHS, 2002), 464–483.

68   The literature up to 1985 is concisely summarized by Sureda, *Pintura románica en España*, 65–68; some more recent arguments are highlighted below.

69   Antonio Viñayo González, *San Isidoro in León: The Royal Pantheon; The Advent of Romanesque Architecture, Sculpture, Painting* (León: Edilesa, 1995), 35–47; María Soledad de Silva y Verástegui, "Espacios para la penitencia pública y sus programas iconográficos en el románico hispano," *Clio & Crimen* 7 (2010): 111–135, esp. 127–135; Manuel A. Castiñeiras González, "El programa enciclopédico de la Puerta del cielo en San Isidoro de León," *Compostellanum* 45/3–4 (2000): 657–694; Walker, "Panteón de los Reyes;" and Cortés, "Pinceladas bizantinas," 145–167.

as a mark of the paintings' internationalism; he subsequently extended this view by arguing that the Panteón's decoration, in terms of both iconography and style, contributed to a concerted effort by Fernando I and his successors to commission cosmopolitan artistic programs that helped to communicate the authority of the Leonese capital.[70] Therese Martin adopted a similarly temporal frame for her analysis of the paintings, interpreting multiple iconographic details, including elements of the hagiographical scenes, as specifically asserting the legitimacy of the recently crowned Queen Urraca to the Panteón's elite viewership.[71]

Emphasized by the latter two authors but shared at some level by almost all others is the conviction that the viewership of the Panteón was a selective one, limited primarily to an elite circle of courtiers and visitors with significant relationships to the ruling family. They also concur in assuming that the paintings were designed to speak in some way to this viewership, often in the service of the royal family's authoritative agenda, a conclusion supported by the paintings' decisive blending of ruler portraits, calendrical imagery, and favored local saints into a complex Christological program that in its own right supports the case for universal, God-given rule. To these claims, I would add a third: that the sophistication of the viewers whom this program addressed would have prepared them to recognize most, if not always all, of the various signs of difference and danger confronted by St. Martin, whether the tempting Ethiopian youth of monastic legend, the supernatural Adversary of the Gospels and Apocalypse, the desirably deceptive Fatimid ṭirāz, or the foreign face and form of a being from beyond León's own borders. Their worldly self-awareness must have played a role as well in the community's ongoing donation of expensive treasury objects, the international origins and complex cultural valences of which are so richly highlighted by other authors in the present volume. Taken together, both objects and imagery well affirm John Williams's claim that "the true context for these paintings … was the cultural revolution initiated by Fernando's contacts with centers north of the Pyrenees and advanced by his son, Alfonso VI"—and, one might justifiably add, by his granddaughter Urraca.[72]

With its curious concoction of multiple iconographic strands, the Temptation of St. Martin at León both argues for and speaks to the concerns of its

70   Williams, "Marcialis Pincerna," 29–36; Williams, "León: Iconography of a Capital," 252–256.

71   Martin, *Queen as King*, 132–152.

72   John Williams, "Review of Constantino Robles García and Fernando Llamazares Rodríguez, *Real Colegiata de San Isidoro: Relicario de la monarquía leonesa*," *Speculum* 84/2 (Apr., 2009): 488–490, at 489.

palatine viewership. As such, it manifests a tension between tradition and in-novation, and between foreign and familiar, that speaks eloquently of its com-munity's understanding of the world surrounding the complex at San Isidoro. In its multilayered invocation of both an ancient, supernatural enemy and the actual and imaginary foes that loomed beyond León, it offers a tempting glimpse into the rich strata of images, objects, texts, and ideas that contributed to the emergence of both treasury and church as lasting material witnesses to Leonese royal and cultural ambition.

Acknowledgments

Jews, Real and Imagined, at San Isidoro de León and Beyond

Julie A. Harris

Abstract

From the tenth to the fifteenth centuries, medieval León possessed a thriving Jewish community whose presence can be traced via archaeological and documentary remains. As regards the treasury of San Isidoro de León, however, there is no evidence for the involvement of living Jews with its luxury objects—an involvement that has been documented in comparable centers elsewhere in Iberia and Europe. Apart from a possible but unproven relationship to its textiles, a Jewish connection to the treasury of San Isidoro remains ideological and limited to the presence of Abraham's relics in a single object. However, both living and ideological Jews can be associated with León's cathedral, where a portion of the Jewish community's annual taxes was earmarked to light its altars and where the sculptural program featured the blind Synagogue.

Keywords

San Isidoro (León) – Jews – León – synagogue of León – Urraca – Toledo – textiles – relics

1   The Living Jews of León

Almost nothing of the built environment of León today bears witness to what was once its vibrant Jewish community. A solitary street marker with the name Calle Prado de los Judíos marks the area near the walls in which León's Jews once tended their gardens and grazed their flocks. Unlike Toledo or Córdoba, cities whose extant synagogues and mosques attract visitors in search of a multi-cultural landscape, León's face is that of Christian Spain. Her primary tourist attractions—the royal pantheon at San Isidoro and the Cathedral of Santa María de la Regla—offer magnificent examples of Romanesque and Gothic architecture. Their sculptural programs, painted decor, and deluxe

liturgical objects proclaim a confident theology from which living Jews were excluded—save in their role, as set forth by Augustine, as witnesses to the truth and triumph of Christianity.[1]

Yet, there is plenty of evidence for the presence of Jews in and around León in the Middle Ages: epigraphic evidence on surviving gravestones, documentary evidence preserved in the archives of the Cathedral, archaeological evidence yielded by recent exploration of the adjacent area known as the Castrum iudeorum or Puente Castro. All attest to a thriving Jewish community in the region from perhaps as early as the tenth century.[2] The content of Alfonso v's 1017 fuero for the city of León suggests that there was already an established Jewish community at that time.[3] The archive of the Cathedral contains seven documents, written in Hebrew by Jewish scribes, recording sales of vineyards

1 This research was funded by *The Medieval Treasury across Frontiers and Generations: The Kingdom of León-Castilla in the Context of Muslim-Christian Interchange, c. 1050–1200* (PI, Therese Martin, Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitivity, HAR2015-68614-P), and the Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies at Princeton University. There is a lengthy bibliography on Augustine and the Jews. Especially helpful is Jeremy Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law: Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

2 The most comprehensive and interdisciplinary treatment of León's Jewish community is Justiniano Rodríguez Fernández, *La judería de la ciudad de León* (León: Centro de Estudios e Investigación San Isidoro, 1969). The earliest document included in this volume dates from 905 and refers to a convert: "Nabaz quondam iudeus, postea vero christianus et monachus," document 1, 165. See also Francisco Cantera Burgos, "Juderías medievales de la provincia de León," *Archivos Leoneses* 55–56 (1974): 85–155. Additional gravestones from the Puente Castro cemetery were discovered after the publication of Rodríguez Fernández's book. The group was discussed most recently in Jordi Casanovas Miró, *Las inscripciones funerarias hebraicas medievales de España* (Monumenta Palaeographica Medii Aevi: Series Hebraica) (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), 152–162. Isolated examples are discussed elsewhere, for example: Javier Castaño and José Luis Avello, "Dos nuevos epitafios hebreos de la necrópolis del Castro de los Judíos (Puente del Castro, León)," *Sefarad* 61/2 (2001): 299–318; and in *Memoria de Sefarad* (Toledo: Centro Cultural San Marcos, 2002), cats. 164–165, pp. 214–217, for a description of the excavations with additional bibliography. For the archives of the Cathedral, see *Colección documental del archivo de la catedral de León*, 17 vols. (León: Centro de Estudios e Investigación San Isidoro, 1987–1997). For archaeology, there is the work of Raquel Martínez Peñín, especially "La Judería altomedieval de la ciudad de León: Fuentes documentales y datos arqueológicos," *Miscelánea Medieval Murciana* 31 (2007): 123–138.

3 The fuero, or city law code, required that a free tenant wishing to sell a house built on land owned by another secure assessments of its value by two Christians and two Jews. Baer interpreted the fuero as implying that Jews living on rural properties had the same interests and rights as Christians in similar circumstances. Yitzhak Baer, *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1992), 1:44: see also Maya Soifer Irish, *Jews and Christians in Medieval Castile: Tradition, Coexistence, and Change* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University Press, 2016), 54–55.

by Jews of the "castle" to Christians—both lay people and clergy.[4] This particular community located on the outskirts of León, however, suffered a major setback in July of 1196 when the castrum was destroyed by followers of Alfonso VIII of Castilla and Pedro II of Aragon who were unified in battle again the Leonese.[5] In 1197, a year after the attack, property that once belonged to Jews was given by Alfonso IX, king of León, to the city's Cathedral.[6] The surviving members of the community relocated to León proper, settling in highest numbers on the south side of town in the area around what is today known as the Plaza de San Martín. Documentary evidence has revealed at least one synagogue located on the Calle de la Misericordia (then known as the Cal de Moros).[7] According to historian Maya Soifer Irish, however, surviving documents from the judería of León reveal a robust real estate market characterized by Jews and Christians living in integrated neighborhoods.[8] By the late fifteenth century, the Jews of León were subject to legislation that sought to restrict their use of public space.[9] The final securely dated document published in Justiniano

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4   Javier Castaño, "Los documentos hebreos de León en su contexto prenotarial," in *Judaismo hispano: Estudios en memoria de José Luis Lacave Riaño*, ed. Elena Romero (Madrid: Junta de Castilla y León, 2002), 2:459–481.

5   Rodríguez Fernández, *La judería de la ciudad de León*, 33–36, discusses the destruction of the Castro de los Judíos and its treatment in various narrative sources. According to Abraham Zacuto (*Sefer Yuhasin*, 1504) the famed—and possibly legendary—Hilleli Bible was taken by raiders at this time. Part of the bible was copied in Toledo in 1241 and is believed to have been the model for a manuscript of the Pentateuch in the Jewish Theological Seminary (MS L44a). See David Stern, "The Hebrew Bible in Sepharad: An Introduction," in *Biblias de Sefarad*, ed. Esperanza Alfonso, Javier del Barco, María Teresa Ortega Monasterio, and Arturo Prats (Madrid: Biblioteca Nacional de España, 2012), 49–86 at 62, who incorrectly connects the raid to the Almohades. See also B. Pick, "Lost Hebrew Manuscripts," *Journal of the Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis* 2/2 (1882): 122–127.

6   Rodríguez Fernández, *La judería de la ciudad de León*, 192, doc. 59. Soifer Irish, *Jews and Christians*, 62, n.48.

7   Rodríguez Fernández, *La judería de la ciudad de León,* Chpt. 3 provides a history of the relocated aljama in the city proper. Evidence for the synagogue's location is presented, 104–112. The author also discusses the possibility that the Puente Castro survivors joined an already extant community within León, 61. For the fate of the synagogue after the Expulsion, see Yolanda Moreno Koch, "El destino de la sinagoga mayor de León después de la Expulsión," in *Homenaje al Profesor J. Cantera* (Madrid: Universidad Complutense, 1997), 63–66; and Ricardo Muñoz Solla, "Nuevas noticias sobre la sinagoga mayor de León," *Estudios Mirandeses* 25 (2005): 131–149, presents scholarly arguments (with additional bibliography) regarding the synagogue's putative location.

8   Soifer Irish, *Jews and Christians*, 71.

9   An act issued by the Cathedral on July 20, 1481 (*Sobre la mudanza de los Judíos*) sought to move León's Jewish community to a less centralized quarter of the city so they would not frequent the streets on which Christian processions occurred. Rodríguez Fernández, *La judería de la ciudad de León*, 102.

Rodríguez Fernández's study of Leon's judería mentions no living Jews. Dated to 1488, the document records the sale of an orchard near a house that was once a synagogue.[10]

Thus, the narrative of Jewish life in León, constructed by written documents and material culture, reveals a community whose fate is similar in many ways to others in Iberia: there are moments of peace and prosperity under a tolerant ruler, there are moments when the community bears the brunt of social discord or civil war, there is recovery followed by decline. There is, of course, the expulsion.

Despite a familiar trajectory and a relatively rich cache of information regarding Jewish León, one looks in vain for examples of the sort of involvement of Jews with luxury objects found elsewhere in Iberia and Europe. This involvement has been carefully documented by Joseph Shatzmiller and other historians whose archival research has revealed the interactions between Jewish moneylenders and church authorities in need of currency.[11] In Iberia, the activities of Jewish moneylenders took literary form as a story line in the Poem of El Cid.[12] They took visual form, too, generating imagery such as that found in the late thirteenth-century manuscript of Aragonese feudal customs known as the Vidal Mayor.[13] Of the four miniatures featuring Jewish figures, three depict their commercial involvement with precious metal objects (fols. 114r, 180r, 175v) while the fourth depicts Jews as metalworkers (fol. 243v).[14] As

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10   Rodríguez Fernández, *La judería de la ciudad de León*, 252, doc. 143. In his book's epilogue, the author discusses the sources pertaining to León's Jewish community in the late fifteenth century. It is estimated that between four hundred and six hundred Jews were living in the city of León at the time of the expulsion: see Isidoro González Gallego, "Los últimos años de las aljamas leonesas," *Archivos Leoneses* 42 (1967): 372–407.

11   Joseph Shatzmiller, *Cultural Exchange: Jews, Christians, and Art in the Medieval Marketplace* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013). Jacob Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance: Studies in Jewish-Gentile Relations in Medieval and Modern Times* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), 27–34 and 38–47, discussed how medieval Ashkenazi communities creatively managed their contact with Christian liturgical objects within the bounds of Jewish law.

12   In the first Cantar, El Cid dupes the Jewish moneylenders Raquel and Vidas of Burgos. Rita Hamilton and Janet Perry, trans., *The Poem of the Cid* (London: Penguin Books, reprint 1987), 27–33.

13   J. Paul Getty Museum, Ms. Ludwig XIV 6, 83.MQ.165. The most comprehensive publication of this manuscript is A. Ubieto Arteta, J. Delgado Echeverría, J.A. Frago Gracia, and M. del C. Lacarra Ducay, *Vidal Mayor: Estudios* (Huesca: Instituto de Estudios Altoaragoneses, 1984).

14   Vivian Mann, Thomas Glick, and Jerrilynn D. Dodds, eds., *Convivencia: Jews, Muslims, and Christians in Medieval Spain* (New York: George Braziller and The Jewish Museum, 1992), 194–195, cat. 24.

discussed by Pamela Patton, the illumination on folio 175v which introduces a chapter "On Usury," features the exchange of a golden chalice for a bag of coins between a Jew and a Christian (Figure 8.1).[15] Another miniature with outwardly similar iconography appears on folio 180r marking the chapter entitled "On Trickery;" in this case the narrative involves a less straightforward exchange.[16] Sentiments regarding Jews, their access to and familiarity with Christian liturgical vessels, may also have infiltrated a scene in the fourteenth-century Golden Haggadah, which depicts the Spoiling of the Egyptians during the Israelites' Exodus. In the miniature, the spoils taken by the fleeing Israelites (Exodus 12:36) bear a striking resemblance to objects in contemporary church treasuries (Figure 8.2).[17]

From León, however, there is none of this. No documentary or visual evidence presents Jews acting as recipients of church treasures pawned in return for more disposable wealth.[18] The closest we come to this scenario is the presence of local Jews, who—along with their Christian neighbors—witness two instances of Queen Urraca's confiscation of liturgical vessels from the monastery of Valcavado. In the first, dated 1115, Urraca enlists the help of a local magnate and his wife to obtain a number of silver objects to be exchanged for a quantity of money. In the second instance, dated 1116, Urraca demands the cross that her aunt the Infanta Elvira had donated to the monastery.[19] The

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15   Pamela A. Patton, *Art of Estrangement: Redefining Jews in Reconquest Spain* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012), 57–59.

16   Patton, *Art of Estrangement*, 61. See also Shatzmiller, *Cultural Exchange*, 38–40, for discussion of the miniature on folio 114.

17   Julie Harris, "Polemical Images in the Golden Haggadah, BL, Add. MS 27210," *Medieval Encounters* 8 (2002): 105–122; Shatzmiller, *Cultural Exchange*, 40–41.

18   However, a Hebrew grave marker from Puente Castro, dated to 1100, has been translated as naming the deceased as Joseph, son of Aziz the silversmith. Rodríguez Fernández, *La judería de la ciudad de León*, gravestone number 3, 51 and n.39. In his review of Rodríguez Fernández, Joseph Shatzmiller remarks on the absence of documentary evidence concerning pawnbrokers and moneylenders active in León, *Jewish Social Studies* 42 (1980): 361–362.

19   Irene Ruiz Albi, ed., *La Reina Doña Urraca (1109–1126): cancellería y colección diplomática* (León: Centro de Estudios e Investigación San Isidoro, 2003), doc. 62, pp. 453–454, doc. 81, p. 483. See also Pascual Martínez Sopena, "La circulation des objets en temps de guerre. Les années de la reine Urraca (León et Castille, vers 1110–1130)," in *Objets sous contrainte: Circulation des objets et valeur des choses au Moyen Âge*, ed. Laurent Feller and Ana Rodríguez (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2013), 257–281. Urraca's reputation as a despoiler is taken up by John Williams, "León and the Beginnings of the Spanish Romanesque," in *The Art of Medieval Spain: A.D. 500–1200* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1993), 173; and Therese Martin, *Queen as King: Politics and Architectural Propaganda in Twelfth-Century Spain* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 12–16.

FIGURE 8.1   The Vidal Mayor, J. Paul Getty Museum, Ms. Ludwig XIV 6, 83.MQ.165., fol. 175v.
DIGITAL IMAGE COURTESY OF THE GETTY'S OPEN CONTENT PROGRAM

nine marks of silver yielded by the cross were then paid to Pedro Peláez for the purchase of a war horse. Perhaps these local Jews—of Saldaña and Santa Olaja de la Vega respectively—were metalworkers or moneychangers active in the exchange, but perhaps not. The surviving documents merely record their presence ("presentibus christianis et iudeis de Saldania" and "et christianos de Barrio et iudeos de Ueiga"); they say nothing about their actions or professions.[20] Furthermore, for León proper, Jewish loan agreements of any kind are rare—a situation remarked upon by Manuel Carriedo Tejedo in his

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20   Ruiz Albi, *La Reina Doña Urraca,* doc. 62, pp. 453–454; doc. 81, p. 483.

FIGURE 8.2   The Golden Haggadah, folio 13r. Bottom left: "The Spoiling of the Egyptians and the Plague of Darkness."
SOURCE: © BRITISH LIBRARY BOARD, MS ADD. 27210

comprehensive 2012 study of documents dating from the years 1055–1230.[21] Given the lack of evidence, the treasury of San Isidoro as a topic of inquiry

21   Manuel Carriedo Tejedo, "Los judíos en el reino de León (1055–1230). Documentos y testimonios," in *El mundo judío en la Península Ibérica: sociedad y economía*, ed. Jorge Sánchez-Lafuente Pérez and José Luis Avello Álvarez, 2nd ed. (Cuenca: Editorial Alfonsípolis, 2012), 20–151. Doc. 180, p. 69, dated to June 13, 1162 is a donation by Fernando II to the bishop

defies expectations for predictable involvement of living Jews based on other comparable centers.

2   Historical Jews in the Church Treasury

A second expectation with regard to San Isidoro is that one might find relics of historical Jews contained within its treasury. This expectation stems from the understanding that in assembling a treasury, Christian royalty in Iberia was laying claim to other faith traditions and declaring itself superior to them. By collecting Old Testament and Holy Land relics, Christianity could be understood as connecting to but also superceding and correcting a flawed Judaism—the faith of its origin.[22] Collection of these relics is not new to the eleventh century; precedent can be observed already in Pope Leo III's Sancta Sanctorum of Rome's Lateran Palace, which was named after the Tabernacle of Solomon's Temple.[23] The collection of objects associated with King Solomon was particularly long-lived and geographically diverse, but relics associated with other revered Old Testament people and places were also collected.[24] In the eleventh century, the Rod of Aaron and relics of Mt. Sinai were present in Eichstätt Cathedral and the Church of Saints Mary and Peter in Exeter.[25] Possession of objects associated with the Holy Land or with biblically significant events may even have had special resonance in Iberia during the "Reconquest" which was thought to mirror contemporary efforts

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of León. Among other goods, the king donates a loan which was obtained by the Jew Abolphazan, "Illud prestimonium quod ille iudeus Abolphazan obtinuit." The author notes the rarity of such activity in León.

22   Philippe Buc, "Conversion of Objects," *Viator* 28 (1997): 99–143, esp. 108–09, has made this point regarding a horn of Islamic design which was turned into a reliquary containing the relics of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Sarah.

23   Holger Klein, "Sacred Things and Holy Bodies: Collecting Relics from Late Antiquity to the Early Renaissance," in *Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics, and Devotion in Medieval Europe*, ed. Martina Bagnoli, Holger Klein, C. Griffith Mann, and James Robinson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 55–67, esp. 58. See also Herbert Kessler, "Sacred Light from Shadowy Things," *Codex Aquilarensis* 32 (2016): 237–270, who discusses the influence of Old Testament *realia*—including objects such as the Ark of the Covenant—on Christian thought and art.

24   Allegra Iafrate, "*Opus Salomonis*: Sorting Out Solomon's Scattered Treasure," *Medieval Encounters* 22 (2016): 326–378.

25   Julia M. H. Smith, "Eleventh-century Relics Collection and the Holy Land," in *Natural Materials of the Holy Land and the Visual Translation of Place, 500–1500*, ed. Renana Bartal, Neta Bodner, and Bianca Kühnel (Routledge: London and New York, 2017), 19–35.

to reclaim Christian holy sites during the Crusades.[26] Years ago, John Williams interpreted particular iconographic features of San Isidoro's Romanesque Portal of the Lamb as conveying a similar theological message by proclaiming Christianity's rightful inheritance of its Abrahamic legacy against Islamic claims to the contrary.[27]

In fact, Abraham—whom the Church Fathers believed to be the first Christian—may have experienced increased devotion after 1100 when the Crusaders captured Hebron where he, his wife Sarah, and their son Isaac were believed to have been buried. The site had been in Muslim hands since approximately the year 638, and the tomb of the patriarch had been converted to a mosque. In the tenth and eleventh centuries, it remained a pilgrimage site for both Jews and Christians; the Muslim leadership even permitted a synagogue to be constructed there.[28] The relics of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Sarah were elevated by the clergy of Hebron in 1119.[29] As Brett Whalen has pointed out, the appropriation of the patriarch's actual remains marked the culmination of a long-term theological Christian appropriation of the patriarchs.[30]

26   R.A. Fletcher, "Reconquest and Crusade in Spain c. 1050–1150," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* ser. 5, 37 (1987): 31–48. According to C. Erdmann, *The Origin of the Idea of the Crusade* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 289, Pope Urban II regarded the Muslim-Christian conflict in Iberia to be similar to the First Crusade. Earlier, Pope Alexander II had announced an indulgence for troops participating in the Barbastro campaign. Erdmann, 137–138, points out that this is the earliest extant crusading indulgence. More recently, Xenia Bonch-Bruevich, "Ideologies of the Spanish Reconquest and Isidore's Political Thought," *Mediterranean Studies* 17 (2008): 27–45, gives a useful historiographic treatment of the subject including mention of Joseph O'Callaghan, *Reconquest and Crusade in Medieval Spain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), who argues for a Reconquest ideology that is fueled primarily by religious rather than secular motivations.

27   John Williams, "*Generationes Abrahae*: Reconquest Iconography in León," *Gesta* 16/2 (1977): 3–14. An updated version was published as "*Generationes Abrahae*: Iconografía de la Reconquista en León," in *El Tímpano románico: imágenes, estructuras y audiencias*, ed. R. Sánchez Ameijeiras and J. L. Senra Gabriel y Galán (Santiago de Compostela: Xunta de Galicia, 2003), 155–180. For the development of the church's transepts and portals, see Therese Martin, "Recasting the Concept of the 'Pilgrimage Church:' The Case of San Isidoro de León," *La Corónica* 36/2 (2008): 165–189; José Luis Senra, "La paix durant la guerre: la conjoncture politico-religieuse et les espaces sacrés dans le royaume de León et Castille, ca. 1110–1127," *Viator* 47/2 (2016): 137–182.

28   Brett Whalen, "The Discovery of the Holy Patriarchs: Relics, Ecclesiastical Politics and Sacred History in Twelfth-Century Crusader Palestine," *Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historiques* 27 (2001): 139–176.

29   Buc, "Conversion of Objects," 108.

30   Whalen, "The Discovery of the Holy Patriarchs," 152.

Contemporary interest in the Holy Land, the Holy Sepulcher, and the Hospitallers is evident in the patronage of Queen Urraca (r. 1109–1126).[31] Such interests are also reflected in the treasury of San Isidoro in the arresting object known as the Portable Altar of the Infanta Sancha, dated 1144, which contains a long inscription naming the relics of individuals and sites from the Holy Land.[32] The third item listed, after the relics of the Trinity and Mary, are those of the Blessed Patriarch Abraham. Two additional Old Testament figures are mentioned in the fourteenth-century inventory of the relics and indulgences at San Isidoro: "the bones of Samuel the prophet," and some "of the oak of Mamre under which Abraham dwelt."[33]

Despite this evidence, which in the case of the fourteenth-century inventory is documentary rather than physical, the treasury of San Isidoro contains relatively few objects connected with Jews or with the Old Testament, given their growing popularity in comparable centers. Contrast, for a moment, the Cámara Santa of San Salvador de Oviedo whose famed reliquary the Arca Santa (see Chpt. 6, Figure 6.5) doubles down on its Old Testament references.[34] First, there is

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31 William R. Moore, "Religious Language and the Construction of Royal Power: León, 1037–1126," PhD diss., Columbia University, 2010, 18. See also Martin, "Recasting the Concept of the 'Pilgrimage Church.'"

32 The full inscription appears in Jitske Jasperse, "Between León and the Levant: The Infanta Sancha's Altar as Material Evidence for Medieval History," in the present volume.

33 Santiago Domínguez Sánchez, *Patrimonio cultural de San Isidoro de León*. Documentos del siglo XIV, II.1 (León: Univers dad de León, 1994), 178–181, esp. 179. The inventory is document 90, dated 10 August 1331: "los huesos de Samuel propheta; de la enzina (Manbré so que moró Abrahan)." My thanks to Therese Martin for her help with the inventory. For early Christian sources on the oak of Mamre and its cult, see Elizabeth Key Fowden, "Sharing Holy Places," *Common Knowledge* 8/1 (2002): 124–146, esp. 126, n.8.

34 Julie A. Harris, "Redating the Arca Santa of Oviedo," *The Art Bulletin* 77 (1995): 83–93. There has been much recent work on the reliquary comprising scholarship that features historical, art historical, and theological perspectives. The following have been helpful to me: Raquel Alonso, "El Obispo Arias y la apertura del Arca Santa de Oviedo: la reforma litúrgica antes del Concilio de Burgos (1080)," *Medievalia* 17 (2014): 79–102; Alonso, "El Corpus Pelagianum y el Liber Testamentorum Ecclesiae Ovetensis: las 'reliquias del pasado' de la Catedral del Oviedo y su uso propagandístico en la obra del Obispo Pelayo de Oviedo (1101–1153)," in *Texte et Contexte. Littérature et Historie de l'Europe médiévale*, ed. M.F. Álamichel and R. Braid (Paris: Michel Houdiard, 2011), 519–549; and Alonso, "Patria uallata asperitate moncium. Pelayo de Oviedo, el archa de las reliquias y la creación de una topografía regia," *Locus Amoenus* 9 (2007–2008): 17–29. See also Rose Walker, "Becoming Alfonso VI: The King, His Sister and the Arca Santa Reliquary," in *Alfonso VI y el arte de su época*, ed. Javier Martínez de Aguirre and Marta Poza Yagüe, *Anales de Historia del Arte*, vol. extra. 2 (2011): 391–412; Isidro Bango Torviso, "La renovación del tesoro sagrado a partir del Concilio de Coyanza y el taller real de orfebrería de León. El Arca Santa de Oviedo (1072)," in *Alfonso VI y el arte* de su época, 11–67, and Flora Thomas Ward, "Constructing

its physical resemblance to the biblical Ark of the Covenant; second, there are its contents which include the rod of Moses which parted the Red Sea and manna supplied from Heaven during the Exodus; finally, there is the powerful attendant narrative of the Arca's own flight from the Holy Land to Spain.[35]

The treasury of Toledo Cathedral offers yet another comparison. The Cathedral's inventory of 1338 mentions many objects in the treasury said to be of Jewish origin or manufacture.[36] Some of the descriptive vocabulary used in the inventory refers to methods of decoration that were apparently associated with Jews: for example, a gospel cover is said to be ornamented with Jewish diaper work (*diasper judio*).[37] Still other terms describe materials associated with or possibly made by Jews: the term *çendal judio* appears several times when describing the treasury's liturgical vestments, as do other textiles called *xamete judio* and *seda judia*.[38] Further references to particular objects of clothing may imply that their appearance in some way characterized them as Jewish, for example, *capas judias*.[39]

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the Cámara Santa: Architecture, History, and Authority in Medieval Oviedo," PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2014.

35 Recent conservation efforts in the Cámara Santa have allowed for a closer examination of the Arca Santa. See María Antonia Martínez Núñez, "Inscripciones árabes en la Catedral de Oviedo: El Arca Santa, la Arqueta del Obispo Arias y la Arqueta de Santa Eulalia," *Territorio, Sociedad y Poder* 11 (2016): 23–62; César García de Castro Valdés, "Datos y observaciones sobre el Arca Santa de la Cámara Santa de la catedral de Oviedo," *Nailos* 3 (2016): 121–163; and García de Castro Valdés, *El Arca Santa de la Catedral de Oviedo* (Aguilar de Campoo: Fundación Santa María la Real, Centro de Estudios del Románico, 2017). Lucy Pick uses the inscription on its lid, among other factors, to connect it to Urraca Fernández in *Her Father's Daughter: Gender, Power, and Religion in the Early Spanish Kingdoms* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2017), 188–192.

36 Luis Pérez de Guzmán, "Un inventario del siglo XIV de la catedral de Toledo (La Biblia de San Luis)," *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia* 89 (1926): 373–419. The inventory is a paper document in the Archivo Histórico Nacional. My thanks to Tom Nickson for providing me with a copy. Nickson discusses the contents of Toledo's treasury in *Toledo Cathedral: Building Histories in Medieval Castile* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2015), esp. 116, 124–130.

37 Pérez de Guzmán, "Un inventario del siglo XIV," "ítem un euangelistero muy fermoso con cubiertas de diasper judio," 389.

38 Pérez de Guzmán, "Un inventario del siglo XIV," "Item una casulla de xamete prieta orofresada con orofresada con orofres angostos afforrada de çendal judio," 383; "Item una estola e un manipulo estoriado con oro aforado en çendal judio," 384; "Item casulla túnica dalmática de xamete judio con orofres anchos de londres," 403; "Item una casulla de xamete judio con orofres viejo," 405; "Item una toca de sseda judia con oro" and "Item otra toca de sseda judia con llaures de oro," 413.

39 Pérez de Guzmán, "Un inventario del siglo XIV," "Item dos capas judias la una a rrosas e la otra ssin lauores. Item una capa judia afforada en cendal amariello con orofreses de monpesler," 392.

No less significant to this topic is a mysterious small brass container in Toledo Cathedral's sacristy.[40] It is generally believed to have once held phylacteries—*tefillin*—due to its similarity to surviving phylactery cases from North Africa.[41] The case's lid is inscribed with the name Isaac Caro written in Hebrew letters. Caro was a noted Jewish scholar and teacher, although his ownership of the case, in my opinion, is a matter for further debate. The provenance is complicated by the fact that the object is thought on stylistic grounds to date from the thirteenth or fourteenth century; Caro himself was born in Toledo in 1458 and left Spain for Lisbon in 1492. Is it possible that the name was inscribed when Caro received the case from an earlier owner? Or was it added later to increase the case's value by associating it with a local Jewish luminary? Nothing tells us when and under what circumstances the case entered the Toledan treasury. Nor do we know what viewers, many of whom may have been Toledo's "new Christians," were meant to think when they saw this Jewish liturgical object—inscribed with the name of a prominent member of the community—displayed in the Cathedral treasury.

If, as Therese Martin asserts the creation of a medieval treasury provides a material witness that reveals the interests, possibilities, and aspirations of those who established it,[42] one might interpret the collection, adaptation, and display, for example, of Islamic goods as generated by triumphalist motives during a time of war—or by a simple delight in their magnificence. What meaning is conveyed by these objects' recognizably Islamic forms or decorations? The same complexity surrounds the use of recognizably Islamic architectural motifs in Christian buildings. Martin initially interpreted the polylobed arches within the church of San Isidoro as referring to the Great Mosque of Toledo, which had been converted to a cathedral shortly after the city was taken in 1085 by Queen Urraca's father, Alfonso VI. More recently, she suggested that "rather than representing triumphalism or conquest, the polylobed arches speak the language of rulership, expressing a concept that encompasses all the inhabitants of the Iberian

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40   Catalogue entry by G. Pik, in *Ysabel, la reina católica. Una mirada desde la Catedral Primada*, ed. Ángel Ballesteros Gallardo (Toledo: Instituto Teológico San Ildefonso, 2005), 322–323, and catalogue entry by Clara Bango García in *Memoria de Sefarad* (Toledo, Centro Cultural San Marcos, 2004), 180. The box measures 11 × 9 × 2.5 cm.

41   Tefillin, containers for parchment verses from the Torah, are traditionally bound to the forehead and arm by observant Jewish men while saying their weekday morning prayers. Wearing tefillin is a ritual to remind the individual of God's deliverance of the Jews from Egypt.

42   Therese Martin, "Caskets of Silver and Ivory from Diverse Parts of the World: Strategic Collecting for an Iberian Treasury," in Chpt. 2 of this volume.

Peninsula."[43] In concert with Martin's efforts to extend this language of ruler-ship to the treasury of San Isidoro, I pose the following questions: could there be a visual equivalent to the polylobed arches for the Peninsula's Jews? Might the collection and display of objects with a Jewish connection—either visu-al or intrinsic—confer some particular status on the institution which holds them? Is the collection and display of such objects done deliberately, or is it simply of question of what is available at the time of assembly? In the treasury at San Isidoro, living Jews are superseded by biblical prototypes as a few Old Testament relics are collected and colonized by the Christian present.

There is one remaining wild card in all of this: the numerous textiles used to line and even, in some instances, to cover reliquaries and other containers in the treasury. We must consider the possibility that some of the precious fabrics in San Isidoro may be of Jewish manufacture. There are, as discussed above, several references to Jewish fabrics in the 1338 inventory of Toledo Cathedral. Among the sources that attest to Jewish mastery of this art and dominance in the silk trade, we have the *Book of Tradition* by Abraham ibn Daud (ca. 1160). He writes the following about the ibn Jau brothers, Jews from al-Andalus at the turn of the eleventh century:

> They became successful in the silk business, making clothing of high quality and pennants that are placed at the tops of standards of such high quality as was not duplicated in all of Spain. They brought presents to King Hisham and to King al-Mansur ibn Abi 'Amir, his guardian, with the result that King al-Mansur became very fond of Jacob b. Jau.[44]

In the past, art historians have tended to see the silks lining the reliquaries in church treasuries through the lens of conquest and appropriation, characteriz-ing them as Islamic in manufacture but enlisted to serve a Christian purpose.[45]

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43   Therese Martin, "The 'Unthinkable' Patronage of a Code-Switching Queen," unpublished paper delivered at the 104th Annual Conference, College Art Association, Washington, D.C., 4 February 2016.

44   For Jacob ibn Jau and his brother Joseph, merchants and manufacturers of silk, see Gerson Cohen, *A Critical Edition with a Translation and Notes of the Book of Tradition* (*Sefer ha-qabbalah*) *by Abraham Ibn Daud* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 2010), 68–69.

45   Julie Harris, "Muslim Ivories in Christian Hands," *Art History* 18/2 (1995): 213–221, and Avinoam Shalem, *Islam Christianized: Islamic Portable Objects in the Medieval Church Treasuries of the Latin West* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1996) examined the question of re-use of Islamic objects in light of Muslim-Christian relations. For a different approach, see Glaire Anderson, "Sign of the Cross: Contexts for the Ivory Cross of San Millán de la Cogolla," *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* 6/1 (2014): 15–41; and Mariam Rosser-Owen,

In recent years, however, our thinking about these luxury textiles has taken a more nuanced approach.[46] If some of these textiles were known to be of Jewish, rather than of Muslim or Christian manufacture, would this change our understanding of them?

3   The Intersection between Real Jews and Imaginary Jews in León

It has become commonplace in academic writing in a range of fields, including medieval Art History, to make a distinction between real Jews and hermeneutical Jews—the latter a term coined by Jeremy Cohen to describe a constructed notion of Jews based on theological dogma rather than on lived experience.[47] This discourse and its implications inform recent studies by Pamela Patton, Nina Rowe, and others; Cohen's distinction is useful because it helps to explain the overtly anti-Jewish iconographies that appear even when relations between living Jews and Christians are relatively peaceful and cooperative.[48]

In this paper, I suggest the term imaginary Jews rather than hermeneutical because not everyone interacting with Jews or thinking about their Jewish neighbors in medieval León would have maintained so rigid a dichotomy between what they observed and what theology had taught them. For example, some of what medieval Iberians thought about Jews may have been an amalgam of hermeneutics and folklore or literary motifs, which may or may not have developed alongside institutionally sanctioned biblical interpretation. Imaginary therefore works better as a term because it takes into account majority religious doctrine on Judaism together with other notions that may have informed people's perceptions of what Jews and Judaism were all about. Further, it is a useful concept for dealing with figures of Jewish origin, like

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"Islamic Objects in Christian Contexts: Relic Translation and Modes of Transfer in Medieval Iberia," *Art in Translation* 7/1 (2015): 39–64.

46   María Judith Feliciano, "Medieval Textiles in Iberia: Studies for a New Approach," in *Envisioning Islamic Art and Architecture: Essays in Honor of Renata Holod*, ed. David J. Roxburgh (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 46–65.

47   Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law*, 3–6.

48   Nina Rowe credits Jeremy Cohen for providing a model for her art historical research in *The Jew, the Cathedral and the Medieval City: Synagoga and Ecclesia in the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 7. Pamela Patton also acknowledges the usefulness of Cohen's conceptual image of the "hermeneutical Jew" in *Art of Estrangement*, 12. Another historian working with a similar dichotomy (and credited by Rowe, 7) is David Nirenberg, who uses the terms "figures of thought" and "figures of flesh" in his "Figures of Thought and Figures of Flesh: 'Jews' and 'Judaism' in Late-Medieval Spanish Poetry and Politics," *Speculum* 81/2 (2006): 398–426.

Abraham or Moses, about whom legends, liturgy, and even relics accrued to their historical reality.

Regardless of the term employed, one finds medieval León to be a place where the contradiction between theologically sanctioned notions of Judaism and interactions with real Jews is readily apparent. In her recent book, Maya Soifer Irish illustrates this contradiction by contrasting the words of Santo Martino of León, written in the late twelfth century from his cell in San Isidoro, "O, Jews, it is for the sake of your own salvation that I admonish you time and again, for I wish you to become part of the body of Jesus Christ," to the words of Abbot Gutierre of the nearby monastery of Sahagún who, concerned about finding additional burial space for the local Jewish community under his jurisdiction wrote: "All men are our neighbors, whether Jews or pagans; for one should not act wrongfully with anyone ..."[49]

Soifer Irish points out that Martino's statement was not directed to his actual Jewish neighbors in León but was instead a theological abstraction.[50] She writes, "This apparent absence of convergence between the theoretical discourse and the lived experience was perhaps the most salient characteristic of the relations between *Synagoga* and *Ecclesia* in Spain not only during the twelfth century, but also in the 1200s, and even beyond."[51]

My charge for the Treasury project was to investigate the connection between Jews and the treasury of San Isidoro of León. What I learned is the following: if you seek "real" Jews connected to a religious institution in León you will not find them at San Isidoro but at the Cathedral. This connection was initially forged during the reign of Fernando I (1037–1065), the figure who, in partnership with his wife Sancha, is generally credited with assembling the core of San Isidoro's treasury.[52] Although the original document no longer exists, a letter of 1074 written by Bishop Pelayo of León states that Fernando granted 500 sueldos of pure silver to the Cathedral.[53] This grant was said to

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49   Soifer Irish, *Jews and Christians,* 77–78.

50   Soifer Irish, *Jews and Christians*, 77, n.1.

51   Soifer Irish, *Jews and Christians*, 79.

52   Fernando and Sancha's patronage of the treasury, based on the twelfth-century document recording their 1063 donation, is now being reassessed, following the pioneering article by María Encarnación Martín López, "Un documento de Fernando I de 1063: ¿Falso diplomático?" in *Monarquía y sociedad en el reino de León. De Alfonso III a Alfonso VII*, II, Fuentes y Estudios de Historia Leonesa, 118 (León: Centro de Estudios e Investigación San Isidoro, 2007), 513–540. See Therese Martin's discussion in Chpt. 2 of in this volume, "Caskets of Silver and Ivory."

53   Rodríguez Fernández, *La judería de la ciudad de León*, 181–182, doc. 49; Soifer Irish, *Jews and Christians*, 94–95.

have originated during the episcopate of Bishop Alvito, Pelayo's predecessor, and was to have come from the Jews' rent—*de censu iudeorum*. Bishop Alvito reserved 300 sueldos of pure silver from this Jewish rent for the use of the episcopal see, while the remainder was granted to the clerics of the Cathedral.[54] Thus, the Crown shared income gathered from its resident Jewish community with ecclesiastical institutions in the realm. According to Soifer Irish, who has written extensively on the subject, Fernando's action, taken in the mid-eleventh century, would become standard procedure among Castilian and Leonese monarchs in later years.[55]

To my mind, the grant *de censu iudeorum* initiated by Fernando I was significant for reasons beyond the financial boost it offered its recipients; ultimately, the assignation of funds was also symbolic in nature. During the next fifty years, it became customary for bishops of León to assign a portion of their share of Jewish taxes for one particular purpose: the nocturnal illumination of several altars in the Cathedral.[56] We can clearly trace this allocation in the documents. In 1092, Bishop Pedro designated an additional twenty sueldos for the same purpose.[57] In 1120, Bishop Diego allocated fifty of the 500 sueldos paid to the church by the Jews of Puente Castro for lighting the altars of St. Mary, St. Salvador, and St. John the Baptist. Soifer Irish points out that the community funding these candles was not named until this particular document in which Bishop Diego mentions the customary tribute paid by the "Jews of the Castle"—that is, Puente Castro—annually on the feast of St. Martin.[58] The land these Jews inhabited was royal property; their rent was owed the monarch. By the end of the twelfth century, in addition to 500 sueldos of Jewish rent, the bishop of León was also receiving deluxe products likely made by Jewish artisans living in the fortress.[59]

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54   Soifer Irish, *Jews and Christians*, 21 and 94–95; and Soifer Irish, "The Castilian Monarchy and the Jews (Eleventh to Thirteenth Centuries)," in *Center and Periphery: Studies on Power in the Medieval World in Honor of William Chester Jordan*, ed. Katherine Jansen, G. Geltner, and Anne Lester (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 39–49, at 41.

55   Soifer Irish, "The Castilian Monarchy and the Jews," 42.

56   Soifer Irish, *Jews and Christians*, 95, n.70.

57   Rodríguez Fernández, *La judería de la ciudad de León*, doc. 52, 186–188.

58   Soifer Irish, *Jews and Christians*, 95. Rodríguez Fernández, *La judería de la ciudad de León,* doc. 55, 189–191, "et quinquaginta solidos de quingentis quos reddunt nobis iudei de Castro in festivitate beati Martini, more antiquo." The document was witnessed by Archbishop Bernard of Toledo and Queen Urraca (*Hiberie imperatrix*), among others.

59   Soifer Irish, *Jews and Christians*, 95, n.71. Rodríguez Fernández, *La judería de la ciudad de León,* doc. 59, 192–194, "quingentos solidos regie monete et unam pellem optimam et duos godomecios percipere consuevit." *Godomecios* are generally understood to be embossed leather hangings.

As stated previously, beyond the financial specifics of the annual alloca-
tion of Jewish rent, its apparently symbolic nature is also highly significant.
As Soifer Irish recently pointed out, the Jews of Genoa, Italy were also paying
an annual tribute for the illumination of the high altar in the church of San
Lorenzo. She reasonably asks whether the allocation of Jewish money for the
illumination of church altars is coincidence or a deliberately symbolic act re-
peated elsewhere in Mediterranean settings.[60]

An art historical perspective answers in the affirmative, and it is also useful in
reminding us of the theological principles underlying these donations; such ideas
gave rise to numerous sculpted figures of the defeated Blind Synagogue—paired
with her triumphant counterpart Ecclesia—in churches across Europe beginning
in the thirteenth century. This iconography, carefully analyzed by Nina Rowe and
other art historians, embodies the church's official view of the Jews, who refuse
or are unable to see the truth in Christianity.[61] Rowe's monograph, which focuses
on the sculptural programs of the cathedrals of Reims, Bamberg, and Strasbourg,
also treats the iconography in other media before its development as a theme in
Gothic portal sculpture. No longer embodying an ancient theological abstraction,
these sculptural *Synagoga* and *Ecclesia* figures become all the more powerful,
given the aesthetic possibilities inherent in Gothic naturalism. Moreover, Rowe's
work reveals these *Synagoga* and *Ecclesia* figures to be representatives of a long-
lived iconography; the reformulation and activation of this imagery was depen-
dent on the close proximity of living Jews, whose visible creativity and relative
prosperity were viewed with suspicion by those in power.

Although largely a northern European phenomenon, the Blind Synagogue
also appears as part of the sculptural program of the western facade of León Ca-
thedral, the most French of all Gothic buildings in Spain.[62] The figure appears

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60   Soifer Irish, *Jews and Christians*, n.70.

61   Rowe, *The Jew, the Cathedral and the Medieval City* is the most comprehensive study of the
      Synagoga and *Ecclesia* sculptures in their theological, art historical, and political contexts.
      A central preoccupation of Sara Lipton's scholarship has been exploring the connections
      between Jews and vision that medieval Christendom found useful both in text and image.
      See, for example, Lipton, "Unfeigned Witness: Jews, Matter, and Vision in Twelfth-Century
      Christian Art," in *Judaism and Christian Art: Aesthetic Anxieties from the Catacombs
      to Colonialism*, ed. Herbert Kessler and David Nirenberg (Philadelphia: University of
      Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 45–73; and Lipton, *Dark Mirror: The Medieval Origins of Anti-
      Jewish Iconography* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2014).

62   For the Cathedral of León and its decoration, see the studies in *La Catedral de León en
      la Edad Media: Actas, León, 7–11 de abril de 2003*, ed. Joaquín Yarza Luaces, María Victoria
      Herráez Ortega, and Gerardo Boto Varela (León: University of León, 2004). For archi-
      tectural issues, see Henrik Karge, "La arquitectura de la Catedral de León en el contexto
      del gótico europeo," 113–144. Two essays address the sculpture in particular: Willibald

on the Portal of St. John the Baptist, which was carved between 1255–1275. While the figure of Ecclesia stands triumphant within the protection of the porch, *Synagoga* appears on its outer edge—abraded by time but still visible as one who is rendered blind and deaf by a pair of demonic dragons (Figure 8.3). Rowe's recognition of the social realities—as much as theological underpinnings—addressed by this iconography in Northern Europe also informs the pair's inclusion in León's sculptural program: it is not merely a question of importing a French cathedral with sculpture attached. These *Synagoga* and *Ecclesia* figures respond to the presence of real Jews in the city of León; the portal's complex iconographical program is characterized by art historian Rocío Sánchez Ameijeiras as persuasive visual rhetoric directed toward the Jews.[63] Though its sculpture was implemented after the destruction of the Puente Castro community mentioned in the census documents, the cathedral remains an ideological locus in which Jews were paying to illuminate its altars and, by extension, to shine a light on the triumphal truth of Christianity.[64] A theological discussion regarding the true inheritance of Abraham's covenant with the Lord was begun on San Isidoro's Portal of the Lamb; over a hundred years later it was continued at the Cathedral of Santa María. In both cases, an iconography based on theological abstractions was enlivened by the presence of living Muslims and Jews whose faiths embraced alternative readings of sacred history.

San Isidoro's architectural language, its decoration, and the numerous objects in its treasury were supplemented by a series of miracles performed by its patron saint Isidore which reinforced notions of patrimony over the Kingdom of León's non-Christian residents. In his lifetime, Isidore (d. 636) was known as a scholar, theologian, and Archbishop of Sevilla whose tract *De fide catholica contra Iudaeos* laid the groundwork for some anti-Jewish elements of canon

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Sauerländer, "La escultura de la sede leonesa a la luz de los grandes talleres europeos," 177–202, and Rocío Sánchez Ameijeiras, "Discursos y poéticas en la escultura gótica leonesa del siglo XIII," 203–240.

63   Rocío Sánchez, "The Faces of the Words: Aesthetic Notions and Artistic Practice in the Thirteenth Century," in *Gothic Art and Thought in the Later Medieval Period: Essays in Honor of Willibald Sauerländer,* ed. Colum Hourihane (Princeton: Princeton University and The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011), 100, n.38.

64   In this vein, one might also consider the seven-branched candlestick (menorah) donated in 1099 to San Pedro de Eslonza by Urraca Fernández, eldest daughter of Sancha and Fernando. Pick, *Her Father's Daughter*, 184, writes that this candlestick and earlier examples such as that in Essen were "created with the idea of showing that the Christian Church was the true heir to the Temple of Solomon."

FIGURE 8.3   Blind Synagogue, west facade, Portal of St. John the Baptist, Cathedral of Santa
            María de la Regla, León.
            PHOTO: PAMELA A. PATTON

law.[65] However, this facet of Isidore's *ouevre* does not seem to have been high-lighted during the period in question. The Miracles of St. Isidore, written in the early thirteenth century by Lucas of Tuy (d. 1249), reveals how Isidore's char-acter transformed as his cult responded to the political, social, and theological realities of the Middle Ages. About one hundred years before Lucas's Miracles, Bishop Pelayo of Oviedo's Chronicle of the Leonese Kings (*Chronicon regum Legionensium*) described a miracle in which water flowed through the stones in front of the altar of St. Isidore for three days following the death of Alfonso VI. Pelayo tells us that "This was seen by all the citizens, both by the nobles and by those not of noble birth …" and that the clergy went in procession from the Cathedral to the altar of St. Isidore "accompanied by all the citizens—men and women …"[66] In Lucas's account, Isidore has expanded his audience and diversified his works; in the Miracles he emerges as healer, Reconquest war-rior, supporter of worthy rulers, as well as becoming a saintly persona for all of León's inhabitants: rich and poor, but also Christian, Muslim, and Jewish.[67]

Jews figure in the narratives of several of these miracles. For example, in Chapter XIV a rich and rebellious Jew hiding out in the church of San Isidoro witnesses the healing of a paralyzed man. In Lucas's account, the building it-self plays a significant role; the Jew chose it as his hiding place because he feared King Alfonso and felt that the only way to escape his wrath was to hide in the church dedicated to his special patron Isidore.[68] After witnessing the paralytic's miraculous healing, the Jew and his family were baptized. Lucas

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65   For Isidore's stance on the Jews including a discussion of the relevant historiography, see Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law*, 95–122. See also Bat-sheva Albert, "Isidore of Seville: His Attitude towards Judaism and His Impact on Early Medieval Canon Law," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 80/3–4 (1990): 207–220.

66   Simon Barton and Richard Fletcher, *The World of El Cid: Chronicles of the Spanish Reconquest* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 86.

67   *Lucas de Tuy, Milagros de San Isidoro*, ed. José Manuel Martínez Rodríguez (León: Universidad de León and Cátedra de San Isidoro, 1992). Patrick Henriet is currently working on a scholarly edition of the miracles. For his preliminary work, see Henriet, "Lucas of Tuy," in *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History*, vol. 4 (1200–1350), ed. David Thomas and Alex Mallet (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 271–279; and Henriet, "Rex, lex, plebs. Les miracles d'Isidore de Séville à León (xi–xiii siècles)," in *Mirakel im Mittelalter: Konzeptionen Erscheinungsformen, Deutungen*, ed. Martin Heinzelmann, Klaus Herbers, and Dieter Bauer (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2002), 334–350. See also Javier Pérez-Embid Wamba, "Hagiografía y mentalidades en el siglo XII: los 'milagros de San Isidoro de León'," in *Las Fiestas de Sevilla en el siglo XV: otros estudios* (Madrid: Deimos, 1991), 413–444. Pérez-Embid, 422 and 425, discusses Lucas's attitude toward miracles con-cerning Muslims and Jews.

68   Martin, "Recasting the Concept of the 'Pilgrimage Church'," 179–181, discusses the promi-nence given to the building in Lucas's Miracles.

tells us that he then made many donations to the church of San Isidoro and, for the rest of his life, preached in the kingdom's synagogues. Many additional Jews were converted due to his efforts.

Chapter xv of the Miracles of Saint Isidore recounts another miracle with cross-cultural implications. In his account, Lucas tells us that Christians, Jews, and Muslims celebrated together when Isidore healed a mute youth who, while hopelessly lost in the city, somehow found himself in the church of San Isidoro.[69]

Patrick Henriet has observed that St. Isidore's actions here take on a civic dimension in which members of all religions participate in celebrating the miracle.[70] A similar collective display appears in the mid twelfth-century *Chronica Adefonsi Imperatoris* when Christian nobles, Saracens, and Jews went out of Toledo to greet Alfonso VII, carrying drums, harps, and psalteries.[71] These accounts, whether they be religious or secular in origin, display the superiority of Christianity over other faiths as they depict the realm's Jews, Muslims, and Christians united in celebration. Whether a similar message might have been conveyed solely by the objects in San Isidoro's treasury remains a matter for further study.

4   Postscript

An unexpected coda to the story of San Isidoro and the Jews is revealed by a document in the Archivo General of Simancas dated 14 September 1495. Three years after the last Jews were expelled from the territories ruled by the Catholic Monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella, the *sinagoga mayor* of León's resident Jewish community was donated to the Monastery of San Isidoro by royal decree.[72]

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69   Chapter XVII describes visits by Muslims and Jews to the empty tomb of Isidore in Sevilla after miracles occurred there.

70   Henriet, "Lucas of Tuy," 274.

71   Cited by Nickson, *Toledo Cathedral*, 180, *Chronica Adefonsi Imperatoris*, Book Two, chapter 62: "When all the people heard that the emperor was coming to Toledo, all the nobles among the Christians, Saracens, and Jews and all the people of the city went far out of the city to greet him with drums, *harps, psalteries, and all kinds of musick*, each one of them in their own language praising and glorifying God. …" The italicized words come from Daniel 11:5, 7, 10, and 15. Barton and Fletcher, *The World of El Cid*, 229.

72   The document is Archivo General de Simancas, Registro General de Sellos, fol. 269. See Moreno Koch, "El destino de la sinagoga mayor," 66; and Justiniano Rodríguez Fernández, *Las juderias de la provincia de León* (León: Centro de Estudios e Investigación San Isidoro, 1976), 428–429, n.1. Muñoz Solla, "Nuevas noticias sobre la sinagoga mayor de León," found a document in the Royal Chancellory of Valladolid which was issued as a result of a legal dispute between the Monastery of San Isidoro and an individual regarding ownership of the synagogue's portal.

There were no longer any real Jews living in the city. And with the concession of their former synagogue to San Isidoro, León's Jews finally became the theological abstraction addressed by its treasury some four hundred years earlier.

Acknowledgments

The Scandinavian Container at San Isidoro, León, in the Context of Viking Art and Society

Nancy L. Wicker

Abstract

A cylindrical container at San Isidoro in León is the only Viking object known from the Iberian Peninsula. Here the León piece is compared to other Viking artifacts of similar style and similar materials to place it in its context. The cylinder most probably is red-deer antler, and the carving is executed in the late-tenth and early-eleventh-century Viking style called Mammen. The motif on the box is a bird of prey with splayed-out wings and with its head carved three dimensionally looking downward from the top of the cylinder like a gargoyle. The antler body of the object as well as the metal top and bottom are pierced, suggesting that the function of the box may have been to hold aromatic scents. Although Vikings harried the coast of the Iberian Peninsula from the mid-ninth through the twelfth centuries, it is not likely that the piece was a casual loss by a hostile invader. More likely, it was a marriage gift associated with a northern woman who came to Iberia as a bride, a hybrid object made to order for someone who could appreciate the Viking animal style of the ornamentation combined with the exotic use of aromatics unknown in the north.

Keywords

gifts – hybridization – Iberia – ivory – Vikings – women

1   Introduction

A 4.4-cm-high perforated cylindrical container sits among reliquaries of diverse geographic origins in the treasury of the collegiate church of San Isidoro in León, Spain (Figure 9.1). This now empty box differs from the other reliquaries in the collection since its style is recognizably Scandinavian. In fact, it is the only attested Viking object discovered in the Iberian Peninsula.[1] The piece

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1   Else Roesdahl, "From Scandinavia to Spain: A Viking-Age Reliquary in León and Its Meaning," in *The Viking Age: Ireland and the West. Proceedings of the Fifteenth Viking Congress*, ed. John Sheehan and Donnchadh Ó Corráin (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2010), 353–360, esp. 353.

has been discussed several times by Danish archaeologist Else Roesdahl and is the subject of a recent master's thesis at the University of Oslo by Rebeca Franco Valle.[2] To place the box in its context, I will review the work done by these scholars and others—as well as bring attention to certain details—as I compare the León box to other Viking artifacts made of related materials and of similar style and form. Finally, I will propose how the object could have reached San Isidoro and how it may have been used.

Before examining the León piece in detail, let us consider how it has been described since it was first published in 1925–26 by Manuel Gómez-Moreno as a little ivory box in reference to the San Isidoro treasury.[3] Some authors simply call it a *small cylinder*.[4] Others refer to it as a *casket*, which means a small chest or *box*, often a rectangular container for either jewelry or Christian relics. We have no evidence that the cylindrical León object was originally made for either of these purposes, only Gómez-Moreno's brief note that mentions it might hold relics—presumably physical remains or personal effects of a saint or venerated person. Adolph Goldschmidt turns Gómez-Moreno's conditional statement into an assertion that the box held a relic.[5] Subsequently, both Signe Horn Fuglesang and Roesdahl designate the León box a *reliquary casket*.[6] The eventual use of the piece at San Isidoro may have been as a container for relics, yet it is unlikely that this Viking-style work was intended for that purpose. Christian use of the item has apparently been assumed because it was housed in a church. If it were used to house relics such as bones, the fragments may have been either larger than the perforations in the box or wrapped in cloth

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2 Else Roesdahl, "Cammin—Bamberg—Prague—Léon [sic]: Four Scandinavian Objects d'Art in Europe," in *Studien zur Archäologie des Ostseeraumes. Von der Eisenzeit zum Mittelalter. Festschrift für Michael Müller-Wille*, ed. Anke Wesse (Neumünster: Wachholtz Verlag, 1998), 547–554; Roesdahl, "From Scandinavia to Spain;" Roesdahl, "Viking Art in European Churches (Cammin—Bamberg—Prague—Léon)" in *Viking Trade and Settlement in Continental Western Europe*, ed. Iben Skibsted Klæsøe (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum, University of Copenhagen Press, 2010), 149–164; and Rebeca Franco Valle, "Viking Art in the Church: A Scandinavian Casket in San Isidoro de León, Spain," unpublished MPhil thesis, University of Oslo, 2016.

3 Manuel Gómez-Moreno, *Catálogo monumental de España: Provincia de León (1906–1908)*, 2 vols. (Madrid: Ministerio de Instrucción Pública y Bellas Artes, 1925–26), 1:195.

4 Jan Skamby Madsen, *The Danish Vikings* (Copenhagen: Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1992), 19.

5 Adolph Goldschmidt, *Die Elfenbeinskulpturen aus der romanischen Zeit XI.–XIII. Jahrhundert*. Die Elfenbeinskulpturen, 4 (Berlin: Verlag Bruno Cassirer, 1926. Reprint, Berlin: Deutscher Verlag für Kunstwissenschaft, 1975), 57.

6 Signe Horn Fuglesang, "Animal Ornament: The Late Viking Period," in *Tiere, Menschen, Götter: Wikingerzeitliche Kunststile und ihre neuzeitliche Rezeption*, ed. Michael Müller-Wille and Lars Olof Larsson. Veröffentlichung Joachim Jungius-Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften Hamburg, 90 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001), 157–194; and Roesdahl, "From Scandinavia to Spain," where the term *reliquary* appears in the title of her essay.

FIGURE 9.1   León cylinder (upside-down). Red deer antler and gilt copper alloy, 4.4 cm.
(Museo de la Real Colegiata de San Isidoro de León, Inv. No. IIC-3-089-002-0009).
See also Figs. 2.1a, 2.1b.
PHOTO: THERESE MARTIN

before being placed inside the container.[7] Roesdahl suggests that instead of containing relics, the León piece may have been a Christian pyx to hold the

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7   Wrapping relics has been addressed recently by Martina Bagnoli, "Dressing the Relics: Some Thoughts on the Custom of Relic Wrapping in Medieval Christianity" in *Matter of Faith: An Interdisciplinary Study of Relics and Relic Veneration in the Medieval Period*, ed. James Robinson and Lloyd de Beer (London: British Museum, 2014), 100–109; Visa Immonen and Jussi-Pekka Taavitsainen, "Finger of a Saint, Thumb of a Priest: Medieval Relics in the Diocese of Turku, and the Archaeology of Lived Bodies," in *Religion and the Body: Based on Papers Read at the Symposium on Religion and the Body Held at Åbo, Finland on 16–18 June 2010*, ed. Tore Ahlbäck, Scripta Instituti Donneriani Aboensis, 23 (Turku: Donner Institute, 2011), 141–173; and Massimo Leone, "Wrapping Transcendence: The Semiotics of Reliquaries," *Signs and Society* 2/S1 (2014): S49–S83.

FIGURE 9.2   León cylinder. View into interior with projecting tine at right. Red deer antler and
             gilt copper alloy, 4.4 cm. (Museo de la Real Colegiata de San Isidoro de León, Inv.
             No. IIC-3-089-002-0009). See also Figs. 2.1a, 2.1b.
             PHOTO: THERESE MARTIN

consecrated host, and Danielle Gaborit-Chopin also lists it as a *pyxis* without
specifying whether she intends the classical meaning as any small cylindrical
box with a lid or the explicitly Christian use of a pyx.[8] Wendy Davies calls the
piece the *León idol*, but there is no reason to believe that a small box would be
considered an idol by Vikings or anyone else.[9] I prefer to describe the piece in
a neutral way as a *cylinder* or a *box*.

2   What is the Material of the León Box?

The material of the box has been referred to as various osseous materials: ivo-
ry, walrus ivory, bone, whalebone, and antler (of both red deer and reindeer),

8   Roesdahl, "Cammin—Bamberg—Prague—Léon [sic]," 553; Danielle Gaborit-Chopin, *Elfen-
     beinkunst im Mittelalter*, trans. Gisela Bloch and Roswitha Beyer (first ed., *Ivoires du Moyen
     Âge* [Fribourg, Switz.: Office du Livre, 1978], Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1978), 195, no. 84. Therese
     Martin, in a personal e-mail message to the author of 7 August 2018, noted that the León
     piece is too small to be used as a pyx.
9   Wendy Davies, "Treasure—A View from the South," in *Early Medieval Art and Archaeology in
     the Northern World: Studies in Honour of James Graham-Campbell*, ed. Andrew Reynolds and
     Leslie Webster (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 540–557, esp. 541.

and it has also been compared to objects made of horn. In his 1925 discussion of the treasury of San Isidoro, Gómez-Moreno referred to the León box as ivory.[10] Ivory normally denotes elephant ivory unless another specific animal from which it derives is identified. In medieval Europe, elephant ivory was scarce, and walrus ivory obtained from Scandinavia, especially Iceland and Greenland, was also used.[11] In the 1993 catalogue of the exhibition *The Art of Medieval Spain, A.D. 500–1200* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Charles T. Little lists the material as walrus ivory, as does Gaborit-Chopin in her catalogue of medieval ivories.[12] Although Gómez-Moreno and his followers assumed the León piece was made of ivory, Goldschmidt in his 1926 catalogue of ivories and similar materials listed the León box as bone.[13] Through the years, many scholars have depended upon his appraisal. Fuglesang, a Norwegian art historian of the Viking Age, specifies that the material is whalebone, an assertion that is repeated by Ann Christys in 2015.[14] Ivory is dentine material—teeth or tusks—covered with a smooth enamel layer, whereas bone is grainy and coarse. The difference between ivory and bone could be ascertained by physical examination of the León artifact, but very few researchers have been allowed to handle the object, and no samples may be taken. Roesdahl reports that Jan Skamby Madsen, who personally examined the casket in July 1999, referred to it as bone;[15] nevertheless, I caution that he was a museum director and a Viking ship scholar, not a specialist in the study of bone and ivory.

Many scholars seem to have merely conjectured about the raw material of the León box. For instance, Antonio Viñayo reports that the little León cylinder is made of reindeer antler, perhaps assuming that since the style is Scandinavian, it must necessarily be made of a distinctly northern material.[16] In 1990, a zoologist cited by Roesdahl examined photographs of the piece and determined that it is made of antler from the red deer (*Cervus elaphus*), although he

10   Gómez-Moreno, *Catálogo monumental de España*, 1:195; vol. 2, figs. 195–196.

11   Xavier Dectot, "Quand l'ivoire venait de la mer. De quelques aspects du commerce de l'ivoire des mammifères marins brut et sculpté au Moyen Âge. When Ivory Came from the Seas. On Some Traits of the Trade of Raw and Carved Sea-mammal Ivories in the Middle Ages," *Anthropozoologica* 53/1 (2018): 1–28, esp. 3–7.

12   *The Art of Medieval Spain. AD 500–1200* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1993), 256, no. 121; Gaborit-Chopin, *Elfenbeinkunst im Mittelalter*, 195, no. 84.

13   Goldschmidt, *Die Elfenbeinskulpturen aus der romanischen Zeit*, 57, no. 298; Roesdahl, "From Scandinavia to Spain," 354. Roesdahl notes Goldschmidt published the León piece in a volume devoted to Romanesque works because he became aware of it too late to include it in his two volumes on Carolingian and Ottonian ivory sculpture.

14   Fuglesang, "Animal Ornament," 165; and Ann Christys, *Vikings in the South: Voyages to Iberia and the Mediterranean* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015), 7.

15   Roesdahl, "From Scandinavia to Spain," 354.

16   Antonio Viñayo González, *Colegiata de San Isidoro* (León: Edilesa, 1998), 46.

admitted that it is difficult to distinguish red deer antler from reindeer antler.[17] Several writers now refer to the material as *deer-antler* or only *antler* without stipulating the particular species of animal from which it comes.[18] Antlers are the tough outgrowth of bone on cervids (animals of the deer family) that are shed every year, whereas horns on bovines (that is, cattle), sheep, and goats are permanent modified skin tissue.[19] Horn, in particular, can be worked into very thin, flexible sheets and is often used for decorative work, such as panels placed over a wooden base. Some confusion between antler and horn may result because the word for *antler* in some languages is essentially *deer horn*,[20] although Arthur MacGregor notes that the hollow structure of horn has "nothing in common with the material of deer antler," which although porous in the core is solid throughout.[21] Furthermore, only antler has points or *tines*, extensions that bifurcate from the major branches of antlers. Although scholars have proposed various raw materials as candidates for the body of the León box, the argument that it was made of antler is clinched by the fact a projecting animal-head on the piece was carved from a small tine of an antler that jutted out from its main branch (see Figure 9.2).

3   Why Is the Box Considered Scandinavian?

The León object is linked with Scandinavia because the carvings on it are executed in one of the Nordic animal styles of the Viking Age that is known as the Mammen style, named after the inlaid design on a ceremonial axe from the site of Mammen on the Jutland peninsula of Denmark.[22] The Viking Age dates from ca. A.D. 750 through ca. 1100, and the Mammen phase is dated by James Graham-Campbell from ca. 960 until ca. 1000/1025.[23] The León piece also exhibits some characteristics that may be identified with the following style, Ringerike, which gradually replaces the earlier Mammen style around

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17   Roesdahl, "From Scandinavia to Spain," 354.

18   Including James Graham-Campbell, *Viking Art* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2013), 114.

19   Arthur MacGregor, *Bone, Antler, Ivory and Horn. The Technology of Skeletal Materials since the Roman Period.* (London: Croom Helm, 1985), 1–22.

20   For instance, Polish *róg* = horn; *róg jelenia* = antler (deer horn); and Spanish *asta de ciervo*, *asta* = horn, *ciervo* = deer; also, *cuerno de ciervo* = hart's horn.

21   MacGregor, *Bone, Antler, Ivory and Horn*, 20–21, 187.

22   Lennart Karlsson, *Nordisk Form om Djurornamentik*, Studies, 3 (Stockholm: Statens Historiska Museum, 1983), 123–125, relates the history of the use of this style name, initiated by Sune Lindqvist, "Yngre vikingastilar," in *Konst*, ed. Haakon Shetelig, Nordisk Kultur, 27 (Stockholm: Albert Bonniers Förlag, 1931), 144–179, esp. 148.

23   Graham-Campbell, *Viking Art*, 9.

FIGURE 9.3   Mammen axe. From Mammen (Bjerringhøj), Jutland, Denmark. Iron with silver
and gold inlay, 17.5 cm. (Nationalmuseum, Copenhagen, Denmark, Inv. No. C133).
PHOTO: LENNART LARSEN. CREATIVE COMMONS LICENSE CC-BY-SA

A.D. 1000.[24] The chronology is based on typological distinctions, sometimes
supported by stratigraphic data from excavated finds.

The main motif of the Mammen style, seen prominently on the epon-
ymous axe from northern Jutland in Denmark (Figure 9.3) and the Jelling
stone (Figure 9.4)—a large stone inscribed with Scandinavian runic writing

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24   Fuglesang, "Animal Ornament," 166.

FIGURE 9.4   Jelling stone, great beast face. At Jelling, Jutland, Denmark. Red-veined gray
                    granite, 2.4 m. high × 2.9 m. wide.
                    PHOTO: CREATIVE COMMONS LICENSE CC-BY-SA

at Jelling in southern Jutland—is a relatively large animal or bird that has
a rather small head, a round eye, and spirals marking shoulder, hip, and
bird-wing joints.[25] The animal's legs end in claws, and elongated tendril-
like offshoots called *lappets* extend from the head and limbs and terminate
in circular lobes. Contours are often doubled, and the internal spaces are
filled with a texture of circular flat discs by convention called *pelleting* in
Viking-Age art.[26] The large animal or bird interlaces with one or more narrow

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25   David M. Wilson, "Part II," in *Viking Art*, ed. David M. Wilson and Ole Klindt-Jensen
          (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1980), 85–160, esp. 119–120.
26   Description of pelleting in Wilson, *Viking Art*, 112 and 125.

snake-like creatures; some interstices between snakes are cut through the antler to form perforations. To those who are not familiar with animal-style art, the design carved on the León cylinder may look utterly confusing. To those who are familiar with the Scandinavian Viking-Age styles, the motif can be recognized as a bird. The specific vocabulary used to describe Viking styles, including lappets, pelleting, offshoots, and transversal branching, has been systematized through decades of refinement, especially by Fuglesang and David M. Wilson,[27] and these details enable recognition of the style of the León piece.

4   What Is Carved on the León Box?

The composition carved on the León box can be discerned most clearly when the three-dimensional projecting part—which is carved from one of the antler tines—is positioned at the top, although most images of the work are published with the head at the bottom and are thus shown in what appears to be an upside-down position, considering the upright orientation of three-dimensional bird and animal heads that project from other Viking-Age objects (discussed below). With the protuberance at the top, the viewer may be able to recognize a bird's head projecting from the top of the cylinder like a gargoyle (Figure 9.5). Roesdahl consistently illustrates the bird head of the León piece at the top; however, sometimes she refers to it as a *handle* and other times as an *ear*, which is unnecessarily confusing.[28] Eduardo Morales Romero, who has brought the Viking piece to the attention of both Spanish and Danish readers, includes several images of the box from various viewpoints featuring the head at the top.[29] Fuglesang and Davies display the León box on its side, viewed obliquely from the bottom and with the current lid open, in a compromise position also shown by Roesdahl, who presents a right-side-up

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27   Signe Horn Fuglesang, *Some Aspects of the Ringerike Style: A Phase of 11th-Century Scandinavian Art*, Mediaeval Scandinavia Supplements, 1 (Odense: Odense University Press, 1980); Wilson, *Viking Art*.

28   Roesdahl, "Cammin—Bamberg—Prague—Léon [sic]," 550–552, Fig. 8 (p. 552 refers to the projection as a *handle*); Roesdahl, "Viking Art in European Churches," 157–158, Figs 7–8 (p. 158 refers to the *ear*); and Roesdahl "From Scandinavia to Spain," 353, figs 33.2–33.3 (p. 355 refers to the *ear*).

29   Eduardo Morales Romero, "Arte vikingo. La cajita de San Isidoro de León," *Revista de Arqueología* 121 (1991): 40–47; Eduardo Morales Romero, "San Isidoro-æsken i León," in *Vikingerne på Den Iberiske Halvø*, ed. Christopher Bo Bramsen (Madrid: Dronning Isabella Fonden, 2004), 118–125.

FIGURE 9.5   León cylinder, detail. Bird head facing downward. Red deer antler and gilt copper
             alloy, 4.4 cm. (Museo de la Real Colegiata de San Isidoro de León, Inv. No. IIC-3-
             089-002-0009). See also Figs. 2.1a, 2.1b.
             PHOTO: THERESE MARTIN

view.[30] Both Goldschmidt and Graham-Campbell are aware that they illustrate
it upside-down.[31] Other authors seem oblivious to the motif represented on
the casket and show the bird's head at the bottom. Most conspicuously per-
petuating this misleading view are the photographs on the cover of the book
by Christys and accompanying the entry for the 1993 Metropolitan Museum
exhibition catalogue.[32]

   With the carved, three-dimensional head placed at the top of the León com-
position, the primary figure of a bird of prey with splayed-out wings and tail
feathers becomes visible. In addition to the major motif of the bird, additional
serpentine creatures, usually referred to as snakes, interlace with the large bird.
Five of the snakes fill the rectangular field that encircles the cylinder and two

30   Fuglesang, "Animal Ornament," 166, Fig. 7; Davies, "Treasure—A View from the South,"
     542, Fig. 1; and Roesdahl, "From Scandinavia to Spain," 356, fig. 33.4.
31   Goldschmidt, *Die Elfenbeinskulpturen aus der romanischen Zeit*, Plate 74, nos. 298 a, b.; and
     Graham-Campbell, *Viking Art*, 114.
32   Christys, *Vikings in the South*; and *Art of Medieval Spain*, 256, no. 121.

FIGURE 9.6   León cylinder.
           SOURCE: COLORED DRAWING BY NANCY L. WICKER, ADAPTED FROM
           DRAWING BY LOUISE HILMER, IN ROESDAHL, "FROM SCANDINAVIA TO
           SPAIN: THE LEÓN RELIQUARY," 357, FIGURE 33.5

small ones that are difficult to see in a flat drawing nestle on either side of the
three-dimensional bird head. In my drawing, I follow the standard for repre-
senting Scandinavian animal-style art—with the eyes red, heads green, body
orange, and limbs blue—established by Bengt Händel to help modern viewers
recognize the various parts (Figure 9.6).[33] However, I add additional colors to
make a more discriminating palette with the body of the major bird in orange
but the bodies of the snakes in yellow. I also distinguish the bird's wings from
its legs with dark blue and light blue, respectively. The motifs on the León box
are recognizably similar to designs on other Viking-Age objects. In fact, many
objects are comparable to this piece in one way or another, reflecting similarity
of shape or function, motifs and styles, and materials.

5   What Objects Are Comparable to the León Box?

Only a few Viking-style objects can be compared to the 4.4-cm León piece on
the basis of its cylindrical shape and its possible function. Comparable objects
may include knife handles, needle cases, and salt reservoirs, as well as uniden-
tifiable cylinders, from the Viking homeland and its diaspora, stretching from

33   Colors used by Bengt Händel have become standard since Wilhelm Holmqvist, *Vår Tidiga
      Konst* (Stockholm: LTs förlag, 1977), 125–128. I adapted my diagram from a drawing by
      Louise Hilmar in Roesdahl, "From Scandinavia to Spain," 357, fig. 33.5.

FIGURE 9.7
Bone sleeve. From Årnes, Møre og
Romsdal, Norway. Bone, 6 cm. (NTNU
Vitenskapsmuseet, Trondheim, Norway.
Inv. No. T18308).
SOURCE: CREATIVE COMMONS LICENSE
CC-BY-SA 4.0.

Norway and Sweden to England, Scotland, and Poland. Graham-Campbell
calls a similar 6-cm carved bone found at Årnes in Norway a *cylindrical mount*,
Wilson refers to this object as a *sleeve*, and Fuglesang proposes it is a bone
mount for a knife sheath (Figure 9.7).[34] Other related objects include a 5.1-
cm-high cylinder of deer antler found in a settlement area at the mouth of the
Oder River at Wolin in Poland and a 7.7-cm bone cylinder found at Bornais
on South Uist in the Hebrides, Scotland.[35] The piece from Wolin resembles
the Årnes sleeve as both approximate true cylinders, while the sides of the

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34   James Graham-Campbell, *Viking Artefacts: A Select Catalogue* (London: British Museum,
      1980), 147, no. 495; Wilson, *Viking Art*, 128; and Fuglesang, *Some Aspects of the Ringerike
      Style*, 127.

35   For Wolin, see Błażej M. Stanisławski, *Jómswikinowie z Wolina-Jómsborg—studium arche-
      ologiczne przenikania kultury skandynawskiej na zeimie polskie* (Wroclaw: Institute of
      Archaeology and Ethnology, Polish Academy of Sciences, 2013), 146–148, 334, fig. 49c.
      For Bornais, see Niall Sharples, "A Find of Ringerike Art from Bornais in the Outer
      Hebrides," in *Land, Sea and Home*, ed. John Hines, Alan Lane, and Mark Redknap, Society
      for Medieval Archaeology Monograph 20 (Leeds: Maney, 2004), 255–272, esp. 265; and
      Sharples, "Telling the Story of the Hebridean Norsemen," *Stornoway Gazette*, 16 June 2017,
      color photograph.

Bornais object slope inward forming a squat, wide container. Fragments of an 8-cm-long bone object from Å, Snillfjord, Trøndelag, Norway, formed a cylinder smaller in diameter than the Årnes, Bornais, and León pieces, and Oddmun Farbregd and Fuglesang identify it as a needle-case.[36] Sten Tesch tentatively proposes that the León box as well as other cylinders and T-shaped containers made of antler and found in England, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and Ukraine, all held salt.[37] He admits that his interpretation of the pierced León container as a salt vessel may seem speculative, but he suggests that its contents could have been wrapped in linen. The Årnes, Å, and Bornais pieces were found in female graves that were most likely not Christian, and the Wolin object was found without context. None of the comparable cylindrical items of osseous materials are documented to have been used as reliquaries, and none are executed in openwork technique like the León box. Thus, it seems unlikely that this container now housed in Spain was intended to be reliquary.

5.1   *Comparable Motifs and Styles on Other Objects*

The motifs and styles seen on the León piece resemble those on objects as diverse as small cylinders, large jewelry caskets, ceremonial axes, and monumental raised stones, distributed from Scandinavia to the British Isles and Eastern Europe. The comparable cylindrical objects described above are of the Mammen style and the subsequent animal-art style known as Ringerike, named for carved stones in the district by that name in Norway.[38] The fragmentary cylinder from Å, Snillfjord, displays the Mammen style and is stylistically similar to the León container.[39] The carving on the Wolin cylinder is difficult to comprehend but seems to be of Mammen style and probably contemporary with the closely related León example. Spiral joints, and pelleting are visible

36   Oddmun Farbregd, "Litt vikingkunst i to nye gravfunn frå Tröndelag," *Nicolay* 9 (1971): 9–13, esp. 11, fig. 4; Fuglesang, *Some Aspects of the Ringerike Style*, 127–128; and Signe Horn Fuglesang, "The Axehead from Mammen and the Mammen Style," in *Mammen. Grav, kunst og samfund i Vikingetid*. Jysk Arkæologisk Selskabs Skrifter, 28 (Århus: Aarhus Universitetsforlag, 1991), 91, no. 18.

37   Sten Tesch, "Cum grano salis—Salt and Prestige: Late Viking Age and Early Medieval T-Shaped and Cylindrical Salt Containers," in *Cultural Interaction between East and West: Archaeology, Artefacts and Human Contacts in Northern Europe during the Pre- and Early History*, ed. Ulf Fransson, Marie Svedin, Sophie Bergerbrant, and Fedir Androshchuk (Stockholm Studies in Archaeology, 44. Stockholm: Stockholm University, 2007), 227–235, esp. 230.

38   Wilson, *Viking Art,* 134; Fuglesang, *Some Aspects of the Ringerike Style*, 14. Fuglesang notes that the two styles have much in common, and she describes their similarities and differences.

39   Farbregd, "Litt vikingkunst i to nye gravfunn;" Fuglesang, *Some Aspects of the Ringerike Style*, 18, 127–28, pl. 107D; and Fuglesang, "Axehead from Mammen," 91, no. 18.

on it, as well as some smaller, snake-like elements that interlace with larger double-contoured animals; however, the entire composition cannot be seen clearly because of poor preservation of the artifact.[40] The decoration on the Årnes cylinder—three interlaced animals with round eyes, spiral hips, and a pelleted texture that fills the space between double contours—also resembles the León box, as recognized by Sverre Marstrander.[41] Wilson identified its style as primarily Mammen, yet transitional to the later Ringerike style because of the tautness of the animals' elongated vegetal extensions.[42] Thus, it is typologically dated somewhat later than the León object. Although the Bornais object is comparable to the León container in its girth, the carving with long, vegetal extensions with spiral terminals that emanate from the animal's head is of the Ringerike rather than Mammen style. Therefore, it too was most likely made later than the León container.[43] The T-shaped and cylindrical containers discussed by Tesch include geometric, figurative, and animal-style motifs; of his examples, only the Årnes piece and one from St. Martin-le-Grand in London display Mammen or Ringerike animal styles and resemble the León carving.[44] The 4.7-cm bone cylinder from St.-Martin-le-Grand resembles the León piece in its proportions, but its style is classic-phase Ringerike, markedly different from the León Mammen style.[45] Of all the small cylindrical objects under consideration here, the Årnes, Å, and Wolin pieces are the most similar stylistically to the León container. Although these diminutive cylindrical artifacts bear both stylistic and formal affinities with it, the most commonly cited comparisons to the little box are motifs on sizable objects of a different character.

The Bamberg and Cammin caskets, two large containers that were formerly used as reliquaries and preserved in church treasuries, are the objects that are most commonly associated with the León box. Both pieces were published by Goldschmidt in 1918 and studied in detail by Arnold Muhl.[46] The Bamberg casket was kept in St. Stephen's church in Bamberg, Germany, where it is assumed

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40   Stanisławski, *Jómswikinowie z Wolina*, 146–48, 334, fig. 49c; and Błażej M. Stanisławski, "Sztuka wikińska z Wolina," *Średniowiecze Polskie i Powszechne* 4 (2007): 28–50, fig. 19, and English summary 49–50.

41   Sverre Marstrander, "Funn av beinholk med dekor i Jellingestil," *Viking* 27 (1964): 169–171.

42   Wilson, *Viking Art*, 128.

43   Sharples, "Find of Ringerike Art from Bornais;" and Sharples, "Telling the Story of the Hebridean Norsemen," color photograph.

44   Tesch, "Cum grano salis;" Graham-Campbell, *Viking Artefacts*, 302, no. 500, illustrates the St.-Martin-le-Grand cylinder.

45   Graham-Campbell, *Viking Artefacts*, 148, no. 500.

46   Adolph Goldschmidt, *Die Elfenbeinskulpturen aus der Zeit der karolingischen und sächsischen Kaiser VIII.–XI. Jahrhundert*, Die Elfenbeinskulpturen, 2 (Berlin: Verlag Bruno Cassirer, 1918. Reprint, Berlin: Deutscher Verlag für Kunstwissenschaft, 1970), 2:58–59,

to have been a reliquary casket through the medieval period, although the lock on its cover hints that it may have come to Bamberg as a secular jewelry box. The 26-cm-square Bamberg box has an oak frame covered with walrus ivory panels bound by copper-alloy mounts.[47] The panels show a profuse texture of pelleting that fills the double-contours of Mammen-style birds and quadruped animals. The 62-cm-long Cammin casket was housed in the cathedral at Kamień Pomorski, Poland (formerly Cammin, in Prussian Germany), near the shore of the Baltic Sea, until it was destroyed by bombing at the end of World War II. Fortunately, Goldschmidt had published numerous detailed photographs in 1926, and copies of the object had been made before its destruction. The Cammin casket, with a lock on its side, probably consisted of elk antler panels that covered a wooden frame, anchored by gilt copper-alloy straps.[48] Its motifs of fantastic animals, birds, and masks are quite similar to those on the Bamberg casket, and the birds closely resemble the one on the León box. Wilson proposes that the Cammin and Bamberg caskets were made in the same workshop, although there are minor differences between the carving on the Bamberg walrus ivory and the Cammin elk antler panels that may result from the disparity in materials.[49] Notably, the panels on both caskets are solid rather than carved in openwork like the León piece.

5.2   Comparable Styles on Metal and Stone

Mammen-style motifs comparable to those on the León box also embellish objects made from non-osseous materials, namely, metal and stone, as on the 17.5-cm style-namesake Mammen axe of iron with silver inlay and the large (2.4 m. high × 2.9 m. wide) granite stone raised at Jelling. The rune-inscribed stone is remarkable as a historic monument raised by King Harald Bluetooth (r. 940–985) and also for its display of the iconic representation of the major four-footed beast depicted in Mammen style.[50] The style is also visible on Norse runic stones

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nos. 189 and 192; Arnold Muhl, "Der Bamberger und der Camminer Schrein. Zwei im Mammenstil verzierte Prunkkästchen der Wikingerzeit," *Offa* 47 (1990): 241–420.

47   Wilson, *Viking Art*, 125, states that the Bamberg panels are of walrus ivory. Muhl, "Der Bamberger und der Kamminer Schrein," 259–261, asserts that only microscopic or scientific analysis can determine the raw material, not visual inspection.

48   Muhl, "Der Bamberger und der Kamminer Schrein," 304–305, cites early 20th-century scholars who examined Cammin panels and concluded that they were elk antler since the material was coarser than ivory. Wilson, *Viking Art*, 128, states that it was "elk-horn."

49   Wilson, *Viking Art*, 126.

50   Erik Moltke, *Runerne i Danmark og dere oprindelse* (Copenhagen: Forum, 1976), 166–178; and Moltke, *Runes and Their Origins: Denmark and Elsewhere* (Copenhagen: Nationalmuseets Forlag, 1985), 202–220.

erected on the Isle of Man in the Irish Sea, where Scandinavian Vikings raided in the early ninth century and settled by the next century.[51] In addition, the León bird motif with nearly symmetrical outspread wings is similar to a Mammen-style bird depicted at the top of one side of a 2.7-m tall rune stone at Alstad in the Ringerike district of Norway.[52] These conspicuous monuments are witnesses to the wide distribution of the Mammen style as carved on various two-dimensional media—from stationary stones to easily transportable small craft objects—yet the style can also be conceived in three dimensions.

The projecting head made from the antler tine at the top of the León box can be compared to numerous small three-dimensional metal mounts on other Viking-Age objects decorated in the Mammen style and found in Denmark, Germany, and Poland. The León bird head especially resembles numerous metal bird and animal heads that jut out as protomes from the Cammin and Bamberg caskets, while a 4.2-cm gilt bronze strap slide from Jelling (Figure 9.8) shows a fully sculptural version of a bird with wings folded over itself.[53] The sculptural quality of these pieces with prominent eyes and beak can also be observed on a 5.1-cm silver so-called Thor's hammer amulet from Scania in Sweden (Figure 9.9) and a fragment of a gold filigree pendant found at the Fyrkat fortress in Denmark, both illustrated by Morales Romero, as well as on a small gilt copper-alloy bird found at Tissø in Zealand, Denmark.[54] A complete specimen of the type from Fyrkat is known from Sigtuna, Sweden, as well as numerous similar examples also in gold from Hiddensee Island near Rügen on the Baltic coast of Germany.[55] Roesdahl points out that comparable three-dimensional birds also decorate Viking-Age horse collars from Mammen, Møllemosegård, and Søllested.[56] Even though the bird's head on the León piece is made of antler, its design is similar to numerous heads in metal that serve as terminals or protomes on various Viking-Age objects.

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51 David M. Wilson, *Manx Crosses: A Handbook of Stone Sculpture 500–1040 in the Isle of Man* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2018), 79–124.

52 Wilson, *Viking Art*, 131, fig. 59. The other side of the stone displays the Ringerike style.

53 Else Roesdahl, "The Northern Mound: Burial Chamber and Grave Goods," *Mediaeval Scandinavia* 7 (1974): 208–223, esp. 218 and fig. 8.

54 Morales Romero, "Arte Vikingo," 42. For the Scanian Thor's hammer, see Graham-Campbell, *Viking Art*, 169. For the Fyrkat fragment, see Barbara Armbruster and Heidemarie Eilbracht, *Wikingergold auf Hiddensee,* Archäologie in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, 6 (Rostock: Hinstorff, 2010), 162. For the Tissø bird, see Michaela Helmbrecht, "A Winged Figure from Uppåkra," *Fornvännen* 107/3 (2012): 171–178, esp. 174.

55 For Sigtuna, see Graham-Campbell, *Viking Art*, 75. For Hiddensee, see Armbruster and Eilbracht, *Wikingergold auf Hiddensee*, 94–97.

56 Roesdahl, "The Northern Mound," 217.

FIGURE 9.8
Jelling strap slide. Jelling, Jutland,
Denmark. Gilt bronze, 4.2 cm.
(Nationalmuseum, Copenhagen,
Denmark, Inv. No. CCCLXXIII).
PHOTO: ROBERTO FORTUNA
AND KIRA URSEM. CREATIVE
COMMONS LICENSE CC-BY-SA

Besides parallels to the carving on the León antler cylinder, its openwork metal lid and base of gilt copper-alloy also have affinities with Mammen-style metalwork in Scandinavia. Roesdahl brings attention to three metal hinges found at Jelling that provide evidence of a square casket perhaps similar to the one from Bamberg, and a locking mechanism and other metal fittings found at Haldum near Aarhus in eastern Jutland suggest another casket of similar construction.[57] Greta Arwidsson and Håkan Thorberg note a casket found at Birka in Sweden with metal hasps that terminate in animal heads.[58] The metal lid and base of the León box are similar in design to small circular brooches found in Scandinavia, as illustrated by Ingmar Jansson.[59] Openwork metal was commonly used for Viking brooches, and works that are deeply layered and undercut rather than completely pierced are displayed in metal as well as wood—not

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57   For Jelling, see Roesdahl, "The Northern Mound;" and Roesdahl, "A Forgotten Casket Hinge from the Burial Chamber at Jelling," *Mediæval Scandinavia* 8 (1975): 21–26. For Haldum, see Jens Jeppesen and Marianne Schwartz, "Fornemt skrin—i en kvindegrav fra vikingetid," *Kuml: Årbog for Jysk Arkæologisk Selskab* 56 (2007): 123–147.

58   Greta Arwidsson and Håkan Thorberg, "Kästchen und Schachteln," in *Birka II:3. Systematische Analysen der Gräberfunde*, ed. Greta Arwidsson, Birka Untersuchungen und Studien, 2, no. 3 (Stockholm: Kungliga Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien, 1989), 113–121, esp. 114, fig. 23:3.

59   Ingmar Jansson, "Kleine Rundspangen," in *Birka II, 1. Systematische Analysen der Gräberfunde*, ed. Greta Arwidsson, Birka Untersuchungen und Studien, 2, no. 1 (Stockholm: Kungliga Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien, 1984), 58–74, esp. 61, fig. 8:2.

FIGURE 9.9   Thor's hammer. Scania, Sweden. Silver, 5.1 cm. (SHM 9822:810).
            PHOTO: GABRIEL HILDEBRAND SHM 2011-11-08. CREATIVE COMMONS
            LICENSE CC-BY-SA 4.0

least in the wood-carvings on the Viking ship from Oseberg in Norway.[60] Although several caskets resemble the León work by combining ivory or antler carving with metal fittings, the piercing in both the metal and the antler portions of the little box in Spain is unparalleled. However, there is nothing about the technology of its construction that would indicate where it was produced.

6   Where Was the León Box Made?

The Mammen style has often been considered a specifically Danish style, so one might conclude that the León box was made in Denmark; however,

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60   Ole Klindt-Jensen, "Part I," in *Viking Art*, ed. David M. Wilson and Ole Klindt-Jensen (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1980), 25–83, esp. 49, 54, 56, and 61. Klindt-Jensen writes about the plastic spatial effects of the early Viking styles.

Wilson demonstrates that many works in this style have been found outside Scandinavia—in England, Germany, Poland, Russia, Scotland, and Ukraine.[61] Portable objects including ivory and antler-work as well as metalwork could have been made anywhere across the Viking world from Russia to the British Isles by an itinerant or settled craftworker. Only the large raised Viking-style stones can be assumed to have been carved in place, whether in Scandinavia or the Isle of Man, where many monumental Viking carved stones still stand. P. M. C. Kermode suggested that the easily portable León box could have been made by an itinerant Scandinavian craftworker in a Manx workshop, due to its similarities in style to those carvings, particularly those at Kirk Michael and Kirk Braddan.[62] However, until remains of Viking antler-working are discovered on the Isle of Man, it is more straightforward to propose that the León piece was made in one of the well-known craft centers such as at Ribe (Denmark), Birka (Sweden), Hedeby (Germany), Wolin (Poland) and sites in the Nordic-colonized British Isles including York and Dublin, where workshop debris has been excavated. Kristina Ambrosiani was able to distinguish red deer antler from elk antler at Birka and Ribe by microscopic analysis, and her work on the workshops there laid the groundwork for future studies.[63] The range of red deer stretched from North Africa to southern Scandinavia,[64] and pieces of antler could be transported easily; nevertheless, sourcing raw materials may some day offer a way to trace the origin of the León box.

Steven Ashby notes that "in the Viking Age the preferred material was deer antler" for comb-making,[65] and it also was used to craft other artifacts. Although there are minor technical differences between carving antler, walrus ivory, and bone, all of these materials could be worked in the same workshop, depending upon which raw materials were available and what objects were to be made. At a twelfth-century bone and antler workshop in Lund, Sweden, a fragmentary chess piece of walrus ivory was found with comb-making

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61   Wilson, *Viking Art*, 132.
62   P.M.C. Kermode, *Manx Crosses* (London: Bemrose and Sons, 1907. Reprinted with an introduction by D. M. Wilson [Balgavies, Angus, Scotland: Pinkfoot Press, 1994]), 57, no. 105 for Kirk Michael, and nos. 108–9 for Kirk Braddan See also Wilson, *Manx Crosses*, 90–93, especially the stones now numbered 135 and 136 for Kirk Braddan.
63   Kristina Ambrosiani, *Viking Age Combs, Comb Making and Comb Makers in the Light of Finds from Birka and Ribe*, Stockholm Studies in Archaeology, 2 (Stockholm: Stockholms Universitet, 1981), 36.
64   Steven P. Ashby, *A Viking Way of Life: Combs and Communities in Early Medieval Britain* (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Amberley, 2014), 23–24.
65   Ashby, *Viking Way of Life*, 21.

debris.[66] In a recent study, Johnny Karlsson traces the changing use of various osseous materials—red deer antler, reindeer antler, elk antler, walrus ivory, and bone—in middle Sweden from the Viking Age into the medieval period according to the availability of resources through time and space, and he offers the following observations:[67] in general, red deer was imported during the Viking Age into the trading center at Birka from the south, especially Frisia and the west Slavic region, whereas reindeer antler was connected to the fur trade with the Sami in the North; the early eleventh century at Sigtuna is marked by red deer debris, but by the twelfth century, ties to the Atlantic via Norway were strengthened and walrus ivory became more common; and finally, according to Karlsson, bone became prominent when the raw material source changed from hunted and collected antler to the use of bones of butchered domestic animals in urban environments. Although we cannot localize the place of production of the León box, its use of red deer is consistent with Karlsson's findings for Viking Age Birka and Sigtuna in Sweden and also with Ashby's comment on its popularity during this period in the British Isles and Scandinavia. The chronology of working deer antler in these areas agrees with the stylistic assessment of an approximate date of around A.D. 1000 for the Mammen style box. If we assume that the little Viking-style object was made in the Viking homeland or areas they colonized, we must ask how it reached Iberia.

7　　How Did the León Box Reach the Iberian Peninsula?

Although Viking raids into Iberia are documented from the mid-ninth century onwards,[68] it seems unlikely that the little box in the San Isidoro treasury was a trifle misplaced by a marauding invader. If small-scale attacks continued as late as the twelfth century even in northern parts of the peninsula, the Vikings' contacts with other Europeans also took various forms. In fact, exotic goods were exchanged across Europe for diverse reasons, and the León box may be an

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66　Else Roesdahl and David M. Wilson, eds., *From Viking to Crusader: Scandinavia and Europe 800–1200* (New York: Rizzoli, 1992), 390, no. 613.

67　Johnny Karlsson, *Spill—om djur, hantwerk och nätverk i Mälarområdet under vikingatid och medeltid.* Theses and Papers in Osteoarchaeology, 8 (Stockholm: Stockholms Universitet, 2016), 196–200 (English summary, 211–215).

68　Christys, *Vikings in the South*, 1; Iván Curto Adrados, *Los vikingos y sus expediciones a la Península Ibérica*, Sine Qva Non. Monografías de Historia Medieval, 2 (Madrid: Ediciones de La Ergástula, 2017); Arne Melvinger, *Les premières incursions des Vikings en Occident d'après les sources arabes* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1955); Helio Pires, "Viking Attacks in Western Iberia: An Overview," *Viking and Medieval Scandinavia* 9 (2013): 155–172.

example of nonviolent interactions. Roesdahl proposes that this object, as well as the Cammin and Bamberg caskets, were "diplomatic gifts, presented by a king to kings or princes in various parts of Europe."[69] However, not all the traffic in precious goods depended upon dignitaries. Davies discusses how both elite and commonplace goods were used as gifts and counter-gifts.[70] Franco Valle traces pilgrims who brought gifts from afar to northern Iberia, especially to Santiago de Compostela but also to León, which was located on that important pilgrimage route.[71] The exploits of Vikings in the early eleventh century also took various forms. A Viking demand for ransom to return three daughters they had captured in 1015 was documented, and repayment of another ransom a few years later was accompanied by a list of the items that were handed over, including "a cloak, a sword, a shirt, three pieces of linen, a cow, and some salt."[72] The little León box is precisely the kind of small item that could be handled easily in such an exchange—a package made of a prized, exotic material and presumably containing desired goods, perhaps even salt as proposed above by Tesch, although I will suggest solid aromatics as a more likely substance. The little container may have changed hands several times before reaching San Isidoro.

Fuglesang assumes that the León box was originally a reliquary and states that it "strengthens the possibility that the Bamberg and Cammin caskets were originally reliquaries rather than secular boxes for jewelry or the like."[73] However, this circular reasoning depends upon her assumption that the León cylinder was a reliquary, a position for which there is no solid evidence. In fact, the León container likely had an alternate function before it was given by a royal or aristocratic donor, perhaps in 1063 by King Fernando of León (r. 1037–1065) and Queen Sancha (d. 1067), who exerted royal authority alongside her husband, when the church was rededicated in St. Isidore's honor, or in the early twelfth century by Queen Urraca (r. 1109–1126), whose donation of relics collected from abroad to the church of San Isidoro in León has been studied by Therese Martin and is discussed in Chapter 2 of this volume.[74] Roesdahl purports that the cylinder "may well have been in royal possession for some time before it came to San Isidoro, and it may first have been in another royal chapel or church in the region."[75] Eventually relics of St. Nicholas were associated with the box,

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69   Roesdahl, "Viking Art in European Churches," 159.
70   Davies, "Treasure—A View from the South," 554.
71   Franco Valle, "Viking Art in the Church," 32.
72   Christys, *Vikings in the South*, 96.
73   Fuglesang, "Animal Ornament," 165–166.
74   Therese Martin, *Queen as King: Politics and Architectural Propaganda in Twelfth-Century Spain* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 15; Martin, "Caskets of Silver and Ivory."
75   Roesdahl, "Viking Art in European Churches," 159.

as documented by a small label mentioned by Ambrosio de Morales in 1565.[76] Since the manufacture of the box ca. A.D. 1000 predates its alleged use as a reliquary container, how was it originally used and what were its contents?

8   What Were the Original Use and Contents of the León Box?

As noted earlier, Roesdahl proposes that precious Viking objects reached European royalty as diplomatic gifts. The precise movements of the León box as well as the Cammin and Bamberg caskets are undocumented, but Roesdahl repeats long-established explanations for how the two large caskets reached their destinations. The Cammin casket may have reached Kamień due to its proximity to Viking Wolin (also known as Jumne), where the Danish King Harald Bluetooth established a residence after defeat, according to Adam of Bremen.[77] The Bamberg casket has traditionally been known as "Kunigunde's box," associated with Kunigunde, the daughter of Knut (Canute) the Great of Denmark, Norway, and England, who married the future Emperor Henry III in 1036.[78] We have no such specific details pertaining to the León piece, but it may also have been a rich dowry item—with diplomatic contacts—reflecting a marriage between a Scandinavian woman and an Iberian ruler or aristocrat. I have previously discussed early medieval long-distance marriages for earlier periods.[79] For example, the sixth-century writer Gregory of Tours (ca. 538–594) in his *History of the Franks* discussed how Rigunth, daughter of the Frankish King Chilperic, was to be given in marriage to a Visigothic prince in Spain.[80] Paul the Deacon (ca. 720–799) reported that the sixth-century Lombard King Waccho (r. 510–540) strengthened his position through a series of strategic marriage alliances: "His first wife was a Thuringian princess, subsequently dropped in favour of his second wife, daughter of the Gepid king, who bore

76   Franco Valle, "Viking Art in the Church," 38.

77   Adam of Bremen, *History of the Archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen*, trans. Francis J. Tschan, intro. Timothy Reuter, Records of Western Civilization, 53 (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 67; Roesdahl, "Viking Art in European Churches," 152.

78   Roesdahl, "Viking Art in European Churches," 153.

79   Nancy L. Wicker, "Scandinavian Migration Period Bracteates Found Outside the Nordic Area: Import or Imitation?" in *Import and Imitation in Archaeology*, ed. Peter F. Biehl and Yuri Y. Rassamakin. Schriften des Zentrums für Archäologie und Kulturgeschichte des Schwarzmeerraumes, 11 (Langenweißbach, Germany: Beier & Beran, 2008), 243–252, esp. 246.

80   Gregory, *The History of the Franks*, trans. Lewis Thorpe (New York: Penguin Books, 1974), 6.45.

him two daughters, who in time were married off to Frankish kings, while his third spouse was daughter of the subjugated Herul king."[81] European royalty continued to undertake such matrimonial schemes for centuries. A later example is the thirteenth-century "Norwegian-Castilian alliance" discussed by Bruce Gelsinger and Ángel Gordo Molina, when Kristina, the only daughter of King Håkon IV of Norway, married Felipe, a brother of King Alfonso X of Castile in 1258.[82] The military and diplomatic expediency of such a partnership may have overshadowed the mundane aspects of the goods exchanged to cement this relationship, but we can imagine that the Norwegian woman Kristina brought exotic Scandinavian items with her, some 150 years after the late Viking Age. Similarly, the León box could have been given to a Nordic woman who was matched with an elite man in northern Iberia at any time after the end of the tenth or early eleventh century, when the Mammen style was the mode. What did the box contain? It could have held a material of sentimental significance to a northerner, or upon its arrival in Spain it could have been filled with a substance characteristic of the region that was new to her.

8.1   *The Container and Its Contents*

Franco Valle notes that the León box itself must have been an exotic treasure in northern Spain, comparable in its strangeness to Islamic caskets known there.[83] If its contents were also exclusive, it would be even more prized. The box and its contents were not necessarily connected—the cylinder, perhaps made in a Scandinavian workshop (anywhere in the Viking diaspora from the British Isles to Russia)—could have later been packed with a luxurious substance such as ambergris, musk, or camphor after it reached Iberia.[84] Eventually the precious relics of a saint may have been placed in the box when it was reworked with the current lid—which looks rather different from the openwork bottom plate with its interlaced Viking animal style—and nailed into place to sit in the treasury of San Isidoro for many decades.[85]

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81   Paul the Deacon, *History of the Lombards*, trans. William Dudley Foulke, ed. Edward Peters (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1974 [first ed. 1907]), 1.21.

82   Bruce Gelsinger, "A Thirteenth-Century Norwegian-Castilian Alliance," *Medievalia et humanistica* 10 (1981): 55–80; and Ángel Gordo Molina, "La princesa Kristina de Noruega en la corte del rey Alfonso X de Castilla y León. La persecución de objetivos políticos e ideológicos por la vía de las alianzas matrimoniales," *Intus-Legere Historia* 1/1–2 (2007): 175–190.

83   Franco Valle, "Viking Art in the Church," 40.

84   Jerrilynn D. Dodds, *Al-Andalus, The Art of Islamic Spain* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1992), 42–43.

85   Christys, *Vikings in the South*, 7.

I have discussed the possible functions of carved antler, bone, and walrus ivory objects that resemble the León box in some respect, including jewelry and reliquary caskets, pyxides for the host, needle-cases, knife handles, and salt vessels. However, the León piece differs in a significant respect from other Viking objects because of its openwork technique. How did the openings in the container affect its use? The holes through the wall, lid, and base are too small to allow successful visual inspection of the contents, as might be desired for relics, yet the voids are large enough that it could not hold salt or other herbs unless the contents were wrapped in cloth (most likely silk, a precious, luxurious material) and then packed inside the box. In a discussion of early Islamic precious containers, Lawrence Nees reminds us to consider their contents; he also cites Anthony Cutler's assertion that "pyxides were not designed with specific functions in mind but were for the most part versatile receptacles."[86] However, the León object could have been commissioned for a specific, pre-determined use that would exploit the exposure of the contents through the openwork antler and metal parts.[87] A key feature of this small box is that whatever was contained inside it was supposed to be encountered with at least one of the senses—if not sight, then perhaps smell.

Martin and Morales Romero both suggest that the box could have held a solid perfume, for instance, myrrh, whose scent would waft through the perforations, especially as the ingredient could be heated slightly as the small cylinder was held in the hand.[88] This suggestion is consistent with Islamic exotica, but perfume was not a typical Viking commodity, especially if we depend upon Ibn Fadlan's accounts of how filthy Vikings were.[89] Why would a Scandinavian container be used for such a purpose, and how did it get to Spain? The box may signify a hybrid entity produced by someone who appreciated an Iberian interest in exotic sensuous substances yet was also knowledgeable about Viking styles, negotiating processes of multicultural adjustments in a

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86   Lawrence Nees, "What's in the Box? Remarks on Some Early Medieval and Early Islamic Precious Containers," *Notes in the History of Art* 33 (2014): 67–77, esp. 67.

87   Dodds, *Al-Andalus*, 43, mentions that some exotic substances were presented in filigree gold nets.

88   Therese Martin, "Caskets of Silver and Ivory from Diverse Parts of the World: Strategic Collecting for an Iberian Treasury," in *The Medieval Iberian Treasury in the Context of Cultural Interchange*, ed. T. Martin, special issue, *Medieval Encounters* 25/1–2 (2019): 1–38, esp. 6; and Morales Romero, "Arte Vikingo," 124.

89   Ahmad ibn Fadlan, *Mission to the Volga*, ed. and trans. James E. Montgomery, in *Two Arabic Travel Books*, ed. and trans. Tim Mackintosh-Smith and James E. Montgomery (New York: New York University Press, 2014), 76.

"creolized" environment, as discussed by Jane Webster.[90] It might have been commissioned by someone who comprehended an intended use of the object in a warm climate. From the ninth through the twelfth centuries, Vikings attacked the coast of Iberia, engaging with Muslim forces in Seville and other locations,[91] where they could have encountered Andalusi ivory pyxides as containers for highly valued scented substances.[92] Even though the ingredients were unfamiliar in the North, the type of object could have been known to Scandinavians who returned home after years of raiding al-Andalus. The material of red deer antler could have been obtained anywhere from North Africa to southern Scandinavia, and a traveling Viking craftsman might have been commissioned to make something special for a young princess being sent to marry—and thus cement diplomatic ties—in southern lands where ways of life would be foreign to her.

9   Conclusion

The Mammen-style pierced box in León is Scandinavian in style, similar in certain ways to other examples of Viking art, but it is a hybrid piece that does not match the function of any known Scandinavian item of this period. Instead it reflects a fusion of various cultural references. Even today, it is an object that is read differently by those who understand Viking art and recognize the projecting bird's head versus by those who do not perceive the representation of a bird. Details of the artifact's biography are unknown, but threads of its life can be woven together to tell a story that hypothetically can inform us about patronage, diplomacy, cultural exchange, and women's roles across long-distance contacts.

Acknowledgments

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90   Jane Webster, "Creolizing the Roman Provinces," *American Journal of Archaeology* 105/2 (2001): 209–225.
91   Jesús Riosalido, "Los Vikingos en al-Andalus," *Al-Andalus Magreb: Estudios Árabes e Islámicos* 5 (1997): 335–344.
92   Dodds, *Al-Andalus*, 43.

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