RECASTING THE CONCEPT OF THE “PILGRIMAGE CHURCH”: THE CASE OF SAN ISIDORO DE LEÓN

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What makes a building a “pilgrimage church”? When Kenneth John Conant codified the “great churches of the pilgrimage roads” in 1959 (fig. 1), the definition applied exclusively to five Romanesque basilicas with continuous aisles leading from the west entrance that navigated through a projecting transept with absidioles and around an ambulatory at the east end with additional radiating chapels, continuing along the opposite aisle and terminating at the point of departure, the west facade.¹

¹ Regarding these buildings (Saint-Martin de Tours, Saint-Marcial de Limoges, Sainte-Foy de Conques, Saint-Sernin de Toulouse, Santiago de Compostela), José Carlos Valle Pérez noted correctly that, “El prototipo, sin embargo, dada su acusada complejidad y su alto coste, tuvo una difusión muy reducida.... No es la única fórmula diseñada en la época para resolver los escollos con que se tenía que enfrentar un santuario con reliquias, receptor o meta, por tal motivo, de masas de fieles” (129). As John Williams (“La arquitectura del camino de Santiago”) reminds us, the idea of linking the phenomenon of pilgrimage to architecture began in the 1920s with Emile Mâle and Arthur Kingsley Porter. For the historiography of an association of pilgrimage on the Camino de Santiago with architecture, see Williams (“La arquitectura del camino de Santiago”) and Isidro Gonzalo Bango Torviso (“Las llamadas ‘Iglesias de peregrinación’”). The present study does not

Fig. 1. Comparative ground plans of the great pilgrimage churches: 1. Saint-Martin de Tours; 2. Saint-Martial de Limoges; 3. Saint-Foy de Conques; 4. Saint-Sernin de Toulouse; 5. Santiago de Compostela (from Kenneth John Conant, *Carolingian and Romanesque Architecture, 800 to 1200*).

The same uninterrupted space was repeated at the gallery level, where a second-story aisle duplicated the layout of the lower one. The spaces were covered throughout by stone vaulting. Such a design was lauded for allowing the free circulation of pilgrims, but, as a singling out of just five buildings implies, most churches of the period that we now call Romanesque did not display all of these characteristics.² In fact, as John Williams ("La arquitectura del camino de Santiago", 283) notes, none of these elements appeared in Spanish Romanesque architecture before the construction of the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela (c. 1075-1130).³ We know that many churches built in the eleventh and twelfth centuries held important relics and attracted great numbers of pilgrims. I will use the basilica of San Isidoro in León (fig. 2) to examine the modern construct of the medieval "pilgrimage church" and to make the case that the reality was more flexible than our desire for neat categories generally allows.

Far from originating as a site that sought to attract pilgrims, San Isidoro was initially the private chapel of the Leonese royal family. The church built in the middle of the eleventh century under the patronage of Fernando I (ruled 1037-1065) and his wife Sancha (died 1067) was first

address the separate issue of sculpture associated with pilgrimage churches, as epitomized by the work of Marcel Durliat.

² In fact, at Conques and Limoges the aisles are not continuous through the transept, which means that, if we were to apply these standards rigorously, our sampling of "true" pilgrimage churches would be reduced to just three. I do not doubt that all five basilicas were conceived with pilgrims in mind; their locations on the major roads described in the ca. 1135 *Pilgrim's Guide* in the Codex Calixtinus (Paula Gerson, et al.) confirm the architectural evidence. Bango Torviso ("El camino jacobeo y los espacios sagrados" and "Las llamadas 'Iglesias de peregrinación'") breaks down these churches into their component parts to argue that neither this group of buildings nor any other should be conceived of as "pilgrimage churches". He sees them rather as simply responding to the rich vocabulary of Romanesque architecture and the necessities of a complex liturgy.

³ While some ninth-century Asturian structures may have included a small, single-bay projecting transept or stone vaulting over a reduced space, these are not the same as the fully developed elements of eleventh- and twelfth-century architecture.

Fig. 2. South facade, San Isidoro de León (Photo © Therese Martin).

dedicated to San Juan Bautista, and it served both the royal court and the double monastery of San Juan Bautista and San Pelayo.⁴ A small building, fewer than fifteen meters long, it was not designed to accommodate a large and ever-changing transient audience of pilgrims but rather the limited community of the royal circle and the religious who served there (fig. 3). When the relics of San Isidoro were brought to León from Sevilla in 1063, the advocacy of the church changed (Antonio Viñayo González, “Cuestiones histórico-críticas”; Geoffrey West; Juan A. Estévez Sola). In the late eleventh century, a much larger church, some forty meters long, began to be built that would eventually replace the tiny structure. It was based on the new style, referred to today as Romanesque, that had recently begun to appear in the peninsula, brought there from regions of the land that is now France. The most likely patron of this phase of construction, as scholars have long recognized, was the infanta Urraca (died 1101), first-born of Sancha and Fernando (Williams, “San Isidoro in León”; Viñayo González, “Reinas e Infantas de León”; Caldwell,

⁴ Antonio Viñayo González, *L'Ancien royaume de León roman*; Williams, “León: The Iconography of a Capital”; Susan Havens Caldwell, “Queen Sancha’s ‘Persuasion’”; Therese Martin, *Queen as King* 30-61. While I agree with her about the importance of Sancha’s patronage, I find Caldwell’s early dates for Romanesque structures unsustainable.

"Urraca of Zamora and San Isidoro in León"; Therese Martin, *Queen as King* 62-95). Her choice of a modern, foreign style paralleled the politics of her brother, Alfonso VI (ruled 1072-1109), who forged connections with the French through his donations to the prestigious Burgundian monastery of Cluny, as well as his marriages: four of his six queens hailed from north of the Pyrenees.⁵ Alfonso was also the person who imposed the Roman liturgy in León-Castilla in 1080 at the behest of the papacy, supplanting the Hispanic (sometimes referred to as Mozarabic) rite that had separated Spanish Christianity from the rest of Europe (Reilly, *Santiago, Saint-Denis, and Saint Peter*). The new church of San Isidoro would accommodate the Roman rite and continue to serve the Leonese royal family, whose palace was attached to the west end of the basilica.

In this first phase of Romanesque construction, however, what the church still seems *not* to have been intended to do was attract pilgrims. It remained a royal monastic church and would likely have continued as such if it had been completed before the infanta Urraca died in 1101. Her design for the building was likely carried on by her brother, but at his death in 1109, a great change took place. The new patron, Queen Urraca (ruled 1109-1126), radically altered the design of the building, reflecting a further function that was added to the site (Therese Martin, "The Art of a Reigning Queen"; "De 'gran prudencia'"; *Queen as King* 96-131). For the first time, a conscious awareness of pilgrims and a desire to attract them can be detected at San Isidoro. A strongly projecting transept with two additional portals (fig. 4) was built to accommodate the flow of a large and varied public;⁶ two piers were suppressed in order to create an ample crossing in front of the triple apses; the recently built lateral absidioles were torn down and enlarged; and the wooden roofing was replaced by stone vaulting throughout the building.⁷

⁵ Nor were Alfonso's other wives local girls (one was from Italy and the other from al-Andalus), although he did have a concubine from northern Spain. For the consorts of Alfonso VI, see Bernard F. Reilly, *The Kingdom of León-Castilla*. For his connections with Cluny, see Williams, "Cluny and Spain".

⁶ Only the south transept portal survives. For my reconstruction of the north portal, see "Una reconstrucción hipotética".

⁷ The excavations and restoration done at the beginning of twentieth century by the architect Juan Crisóstomo Torbado were published in summary

Fig. 3. Groundplan with phases of construction, San Isidoro de León (drawing © Therese Martin).

Fig. 4. South transept, San Isidoro de León (photo © Therese Martin).

Of all the changes that can be made out in an archaeological reading of the building, the insertion of a projecting transept is the most telling piece of physical evidence for the beginning of the shift from private palatine chapel to public pilgrimage site. As Serafín Moralejo pointed out, the architectural organization in the archetypical pilgrimage churches was both functional and symbolic (9). We see that duality in the transept at San Isidoro, which would not have been absolutely necessary, had the church continued to serve only the restricted audience of royalty and religious, for a grand public entrance had already been built on the south facade. Now known as the Lamb Portal, this door would have provided access to visitors from outside, while the royalty had a private entrance from their palace on the west, and the religious of San Isidoro had their own direct access from the monastic complex to the north. The addition of two monumental doorways is evidence of an attempt to open up the once private church to a larger and ever changing audience. Pilgrims,

form by Juan Eloy Díaz Jimenez. See also Williams, “San Isidoro in León”.

supplicants and other visitors would be accommodated both physically, being able to move in and around the church without interrupting the liturgy, and symbolically, through a space that must have been inspired by the recently constructed transept at Santiago de Compostela.⁸

I would suggest that the addition of a transept around 1115-1120 was both a response to pilgrimage and a desire to foment it. We learn from the anonymous author of the so-called *Historia Silense*, who was writing ca. 1118, that many miracles were already taking place in León after the translation of Isidoro's relics.

In that place [the church of San Isidoro] where the relics of the blessed body are venerated by the faithful people, our Lord has deigned to show forth so many and so great miracles to the honor and glory of his name that if any skilled person were to commit them to writing he would fill no small number of books. But my only purpose is to write of the deeds of kings: it is not my intention for the present to relate how many and how frequent miracles have been wrought upon the bodies of those diverse sufferers who sought his intercession, through the merits of that confessor, by the divine Maker.⁹

Without using the word "pilgrims", the authors refer to them as people who came to the church for the express purpose of praying to the saint for his intercession. Perhaps they were not originally coming from far away, but by ca. 1135 when the *Pilgrim's Guide* to Santiago was written, there is no doubt that long-distance pilgrimage to San Isidoro was occurring (Gerson et al.; Annie Shaver-Crandell et al.; Alison Stones

⁸ I have argued elsewhere ("Reading the Walls") that San Isidoro's transept was also built by the same workshop that produced the transept at Santiago.

⁹ Translation by Simon Barton and Richard Fletcher, 60. "In eo autem loco, quo beati corporis reliquie a fideli populo venerantur, tanta et talia miracula Dominus noster ad honorem et gloriam nominis sui dignatus est ostendere, quod sy aliquis perytus ea menbranis traderet, non minima librorum uolumina conficeret. Sed michi, qui regum gesta tantummodo scribere proposui, non est intencio in presentiharum euoluere, quanta et quam crebra miracula, per confessoris merita, in diuersorum languentium corporibus eiusdem sufragia querentium, a diuino opifice sunt percepta" (Justo Pérez de Urbel 204; cited in Barton, "Patrons, Pilgrims and the Cult of Saints" 63-64).

and Jeanne Krochalis). León had become an essential stop on the route to Santiago de Compostela because of its connection to the royalty ("León, capital city of king and court, full of all good things"),¹⁰ and because of the pilgrimage cult site of San Isidoro.

In the city of León, you should visit the venerable body of the blessed Isidoro, bishop, confessor and doctor, who established for the clerics of the church a most pious Rule and imbued the Spanish people with his teachings and adorned the entire Holy Church with his books of florilegia.¹¹

Although the writer tell us nothing of the building within which the relics were held, there can be no doubt that the flow of pilgrims to San Isidoro was encouraged by the structural accommodations made in the early twelfth century. It is also significant that in León, only San Isidoro was singled out as a site to be visited. Neither the Cathedral nor any of the city's other churches possessed relics that merited mention, which underlines the importance of having relics that were substantial enough to attract attention. In fact, San Isidoro was named by the writer of the *Pilgrim's Guide* as the last site that must be visited before seeing the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela itself, some three hundred kilometers away.

Isidoro was a curious choice of saint around whom to develop a pilgrimage cult for he was a bishop-encyclopedist and confessor, not a martyr. Even so, as author of the *Etymologies*, he had greater international appeal than one of the church's previous titular saints, Pelayo (Mark D. Jordan). And Isidoro's complete relics could be found exclusively in León, as opposed to those of the other original patron of the site, John the Baptist, which were scattered throughout Europe and

¹⁰ Translation into English by Gerson et al. (14-15): "Legio urbs regalis et curialis, cunctisque felicitatibus plena."

¹¹ Translation into English by Gerson et al. (64-65): "Inde apud urbem Legionem uisitandum est corpus uenerandum Beati Ysidori episcopi et confessoris siue doctoris, qui regulam piisimam clericis ecclesiasticis instituit, et gentem Yspanicam suis doctrinis imbuat, totamque sanctam aeccliam codicibus suis florigeris decorauit".

the East.¹² Still, Isidoro's cult had to be manufactured in León, a city far from any setting that could be associated with the saint's life in Sevilla. The structural changes made to the church of San Isidoro during the reign of Queen Urraca played a significant role in developing the cult of San Isidoro.¹³ Through her royal munificence, Urraca encouraged urban development in León by creating a pilgrimage destination in the city. Pilgrims brought wealth to León and took away tales of miracles that would draw more pilgrims (Esther Cohen; Conrad Rudolph; Barbara Abou-el-Haj). She took advantage of the fact that León happened to be on the pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela in order to link her church with that famous site. The transept gave San Isidoro a more dominating urban presence, and it enhanced the accessibility of Isidoro's relics. Of Spanish Romanesque churches, only Santiago had a transept earlier than San Isidoro,¹⁴ and it appears that Urraca intended her church to make reference to that most famous of pilgrimage sites. My argument follows the lines of Otto Karl Werckmeister's, who held that the similarities between Cluny III and the plan of pilgrimage churches meant that the Burgundian basilica "was designed either in order to serve in some way as a starting sanctuary for rites connected with the send-off on the pilgrimage, or in order to attract a mass audience to the monastic office on its own terms" (103). This is not to imply that all churches with transepts were destined for pilgrimage, but to recognize that this architectural element functioned as such for Cluny and, as I argue, for San Isidoro. At both sites, the designers and patrons of the buildings would have determined that the transepts were devoted to pilgrims. While the projecting transept and its portals adapted the Leonese church for pilgrimage and linked it visually to Santiago, San

¹² Concerning the authenticity of the relics of John the Baptist at San Isidoro, see Isaac Saenz de la Calzada and Luis Saenz de la Calzada. For the reliquaries of Isidoro, John the Baptist and Pelayo, see *Art of Medieval Spain*, 98-99, 236-44; *Maravillas de la España Medieval*, 115, 228-29.

¹³ The essential historical study of Urraca's reign, Bernard F. Reilly, *The Kingdom of León-Castilla under Queen Urraca 1109-1126*, does not address issues of patronage, nor does it consider art historical evidence.

¹⁴ The date of the transepted church at Santo Domingo de Silos has been a source of scholarly contention, but José Luis Senra argues convincingly that the upper church and the transept were built in the 1130s.

Isidoro also maintained its special status as a royal church in the heart of the capital city.

Further evidence for the dramatic change made by Queen Urraca in opening her family church to the outside world is provided by the pilgrim's hospital that was established at San Isidoro in the twelfth century, perhaps after the arrival in 1148 of Augustinian canons. Replacing the previous clerics and nuns, the canons were installed at San Isidoro by Urraca's children, Alfonso VII (ruled 1126-1157) and the infanta Sancha (died 1159) (Therese Martin, *Queen as King* 153-76). At the hospital of San Isidoro, pilgrims and the sick received food and lodging before continuing on to Santiago.¹⁵ The location of the hospital is clear from a document of 1166 in which the abbot of San Isidoro exchanged lands outside the walls of León owned by the monastery for property next to the hospital:

And we accept from you all that is below the walls and is next to the hospital of San Isidoro and is thus determined: from the first part situated by the aforesaid hospital; from the second of the city; from the third those towers; from the fourth the street that goes from the castle to San Isidoro.¹⁶

That is, the hospital was located near the northwestern corner of the city, just far enough removed from the church to separate the tumult of pilgrims from the royal and religious quarters. A charter dated 1601 further specified that the hospital was located "next to this royal convent and across from its gates" (*junto a este rreal conbento y enfrente de su porteria*). This document also provides a glimpse into how the hospital functioned, at least by the early modern period, with reference to age-old traditions:

¹⁵ Studies by Ana Suárez González have brought to light documents that establish the presence of the hospital from at least the 1160s. Suárez located the terms "infirmorum procurator" and "ospitalarius" around 1160 and "hospitalarius" in 1163 ("Hospitalidad y beneficencia" 307-308).

¹⁶ "Et accepimus a te alium tamtum quod est infra murum et est iuxta illum hospitem Sancti Ysidori et sic determinatur: de prima parte iacet illum predictum hospitem, de Ila ciuitatis de IIIa illas turres; de IIIa karrera que vadit de Casteu ad Sanctum Ysidorum" (Encarnación Martín López 111-12).

...where we and our predecessor canons in olden times arranged to give public charity in a specific form of hospitality, which was to bring in, at night in the winter and in the five coldest months, twelve poor people and give them a pound of bread for dinner and fire and four or five beds. That is how [the hospital] was always used from time immemorial...

The same document makes a donation of the hospital to the Franciscan order because “between the secular hospitallers and the poor people who stayed there, there were some improper goings-on and offenses against God of note and public scandal”.¹⁷

Although the earliest surviving documentation for the hospital at San Isidoro is from 1160, Queen Urraca’s interest in encouraging pilgrimage can be established by donations she made in the first quarter of the twelfth century to several other hospitals or hospices. These charitable religious organizations arose mainly in the later eleventh century as a direct response to the increasingly popular pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, which brought with it the need to care for pilgrims and others who were without shelter.¹⁸ In 1113 the queen gave a tenth of the royal income obtained from tolls and the “zavazoque” or judge of the market (from the Arabic term *Sahib-al-suq*; Carlos Estepa Díez, *Estructura social de la ciudad de León* 427) to the hospital of San Marcelo in León (Cristina Monterde Albiac 100-01; Irene Ruiz Albi 426-27). Her donation specified that the money was to be used “for work with pilgrims and the needy” (ad

¹⁷ “... donde nos e nuestros predeçesores canonigos antiguamente hordenaron se hiçiese limosna publica en çierta forma de ospitalidad que era rrecoxer de noche en el ynbierno y en los çinco meses mas frios doçe pobres e darles para çenar una libra de pan y lunbre y quatro o çinco camas y ansi se uso e acostunbro de tienpo ynmemorial....” “[E]ntre los hospitaleros seglares de el y la xente pobre que alli se acoxia abia algunos ynconbinientes y ofensas de dios con nota y escandalo publicos” (Santiago Domínguez Sánchez, Apéndice 7).

¹⁸ According to Juan Uría Ríu, there were at least seventeen hospitals in medieval León, which he considers an indicator of the strong presence of pilgrims in the city (2: 254-55). For studies of hospitals in medieval Spain, see María Elida García García; Luis Martínez García; Carlos Barquero Goñi; Laura Good Morelli.

opus peregrinorum uel egentium). Some time before 1122 Urraca had ordered the construction of a church in León dedicated to the Holy Sepulchre and destined for the burial of pilgrims and others who asked to be interred there (Monterde Albiac 257). It was located at the south end of the city where travelers arriving by the pilgrimage road would enter León. Other sites patronized by Queen Urraca on the Camino de Santiago were the hospitals of Foncebadón (Monterde Albiac 267; Ruiz Albi 566) and Valdetallada (Monterde Albiac 282); the latter's charter states that it was built to protect pilgrims from thieves. The donation Urraca made to the hospital of Santa María del Puerto de Arbas in 1117 specified that it was for traveling pilgrims (Monterde Albiac 163), and her charter of 1118 to the monastery and hostel (albergarium) of Santa María del Monte Sispiazo listed those who would benefit as the poor, pilgrims, and the hospice (Monterde Albiac 193; Ruiz Albi 506). The hospital of the Holy Sepulchre, built by the monks of Pardomino in the mountain pass of San Isidoro del Puerto, also benefited from the queen's generosity in December of 1118. The charter stated that the hospital had been built "because in that pass many pilgrims and travelers would die of cold" (quoniam in illo portu multi peregrini et uiatores moriebantur frigore, Monterde Albiac 203-204; Ruiz Albi 514-15). Such extensive evidence of care for pilgrims speaks clearly of Urraca's awareness of travelers and their needs, but also of her recognition of how useful pilgrims could be. Travelers brought trade to León and, when they left, carried away stories that could not fail to attract more visitors. Perhaps they even talked of the magnificent building that housed the relics of Isidoro. While modern historians cannot prove medieval word of mouth, oral traditions should not be discounted as a way by which information was passed in the Middle Ages.

The queen's patronage of San Isidoro would have a lasting effect on the urban development of the city of León.¹⁹ In 1152, her daughter, the

¹⁹ A number of good studies have been done on the urban history of León, among the best of which are by Carlos Estepa Díez. See also Jean Gautier Dalché; Amando Represa; Eloy Benito Ruano; Jean Passini; Fernando Miguel Hernández.

infanta Sancha, donated the land to found a pilgrim's hospital on the route to Santiago de Compostela, just outside the walls northwest of the city and next to the bridge over the river Bernesga. The Hospital of San Marcos would achieve importance as the head of the Order of the Knights of Santiago in the kingdom of León when the order was founded in 1170 (Estepa Díez, *Estructura social de la ciudad de León* 131; José Luis Martín). Urraca's grandson, Fernando II (ruled 1157-1188), issued a charter in 1168 that confirmed the success of previous generation's efforts to attract pilgrims to San Isidoro. The king shifted the road by which pilgrims entered and exited the city so that it would pass directly by San Isidoro (Viñayo González "Santiago, el Camino y los peregrinos"; Concepción Cosmen and María Victoria Herráez). Fernando II also broke through the northwest corner of the Roman city walls, within San Isidoro's property, so that travelers could leave León straightaway after having visited the relics of the Visigothic bishop.

...I, Lord Fernando, King of the Spains by the grace of God, wanting to provide usefully for the church of San Isidoro, known and distinguished for the body of this most glorious saint, transfer the public road, commonly called the Camino, which used to go in front of the church of San Marcelo, and I set it through the Cauriense gate and then in front of the church of the said confessor San Isidoro, and from there, through the gate that I ordered to be opened in the city wall, and then through the field of the said monastery all the way to the Bernesga bridge.²⁰

This charter would seem to indicate that the increase in the number of pilgrims at San Isidoro in the forty years since Urraca's death required a more specific accommodation through the streets of León. It also points to a continuing struggle among the religious sites in the city to attract

²⁰ Martín López 119-21: "...ego domnus Fernandus, Dei gratia Hispaniarum rex, ecclesie Beati Ysidori quae ipsius gloriosissimi corpore insignita esse dinoscitur utiliter prouidere uolens, transfero stratam publicam, que vulgo dicitur caminum, quod solebat ire ante ecclesiam Beati Marcelli et pono eam per portam cauriensem et, deinde, ante ecclesiam predicti confessoris Beati Ysidori et inde per portam quam ego mandauit in muro aperiri, deinde per senram predicti monasterii usque ad pontem Uernesge...."

pilgrims. When Fernando set the road to pass in front of San Isidoro, he shifted it away from the church of San Marcelo. The latter was located outside the walls near the Cauriense gate, the western entrance to the city. San Marcelo had a hospital founded by the bishop in 1096, among the earliest pilgrim's hospices in León after that of the Cathedral itself, founded in 1084 (Gregorio del Ser Quijano).

The clearest picture we have of San Isidoro as a pilgrimage site was drawn in the early thirteenth century by Lucas of Tuy, a canon at San Isidoro before going on to become bishop of Tuy.²¹ The miracles he compiled ca. 1220-1235 occurred mainly in León after the translation of Isidoro's relics from Sevilla. Through these tales, we get a glimpse of how the Romanesque church functioned within the city from the perspective of one who lived there a century after it was built. The first miracle to take place within the basilica of San Isidoro was copied from the chronicle of Bishop Pelayo of Oviedo.²² Before 1132, Pelayo wrote of a miraculous flow of water from the very stones at the foot of the main altar; according to the Oviedan bishop, this occurred at the time of Alfonso VI's death in 1109. Lucas, however, shifted the miracle back in time so that it took place during Alfonso's reign. In either case, the phenomenon was placed during a period when it must have occurred within the new church, not in the tiny chapel from the days of Fernando and Sancha. The rest of the Leonese miracles can also be placed chronologically later by internal evidence, which puts them all with the grand basilica. It seems that, for the miracles to multiply, a proper setting such as the imposing Romanesque building was the necessary framework. In fact, following

²¹ Lucas de Tuy, *Liber de miraculis Sancti Isidori*, Archivo de la Colegiata de San Isidoro de León, Cod. 61. A critical edition is underway by Patrick Henriët. Citations here are from Julio Pérez Llamazares's re-edition of the 1525 Romance translation by Juan de Robles. For Lucas of Tuy, see Francisco Javier Fernández Conde; Patrick Henriët; Peter Linehan. Few scholars have made thorough use of the miracles of San Isidoro; an exception is Ariel Guiance, esp. 150, 394-404. Guiance astutely recognized that the miracles were written as an assertion of the power of León against Toledo and Compostela in the early thirteenth century, and he emphasized the importance that was accorded to León, and more specifically to the church of San Isidoro, as the resting place of Isidoro's relics. See also Javier Pérez-Embid Wamba.

²² A. Huici Miranda 331-36; B. Sánchez Alonso; Barton & Fletcher 65-89.

a healing within the basilica at Isidoro's altar, the Tudense even locates a miracle in front of the door of the church, which we may identify as the transept portal because of the reference to the saints (Peter and Paul appear on the south transept, John and James may originally have been on the north, while Isidoro and Pelayo are on the Lamb Portal [Therese Martin, "Una reconstrucción hipotética"]):

And the curing of one caused the healing of the infirmities of many sick souls. The two principal apostles of Our Lord Jesus Christ, that is, Saint Peter and Saint John, present at the beautiful door of the church, healed a lame man, and they made his legs and members healthy and strong, which shocked all who saw it (Pérez Llamazares 24).

It is highly significant that Lucas of Tuy chose to make the church doors a backdrop for the miraculous healing, converting the spectators into an audience. Even more telling for my argument is that the setting is not the Lamb Portal, with the figure of Isidoro himself, but rather the entrance to the transept with its representations of the princes of the Church. This seems to indicate that, one hundred years after its construction, the transept continued to serve successfully the purpose for which it had been built: drawing in pilgrims.

Lucas of Tuy's miracles tell of the presence at San Isidoro of travelers from different lands. One of the tales concerned the location of a certain burial in the cloister of San Isidoro. In order to settle an argument, an agreement was made

to call a boy from among the foreign pilgrims who were going to Santiago by the French Route that goes by the church of San Isidoro because, being a foreigner, the child would not know the Spanish language and could not be swayed by any person. ... They went out to the street and they saw certain pilgrims from the land of the Teutons, which is in Germany, and among them was a boy of the same people, so they took him into the church [of San Isidoro]. (Pérez Llamazares 70)

The presence of foreign pilgrims in León attests to the increasing international stature of the cult of San Isidoro and to the functional

and symbolic success of the adaptations made to the basilica. Another miracle tells of an exiled Portuguese nobleman living in León who

came one day to pray in the church of San Isidoro at the time when Mass was being said, and he knelt down next to the gate of the main apse of San Isidoro, near the door through which they enter that chapel. (Pérez Llamazares 89)

This description of a gate, presumably an iron grill that separated the liturgical space of the main apse from the public areas of the church, makes clear that access by the laity to San Isidoro's relics was limited to the area outside the apse, while a door in the gate allowed the religious to pass through.²³ This separation allowed the building to be open continuously; pilgrims were said to enter at night and to pray (or fall asleep, as the case may have been) before Isidoro's altar while the canons said Matins.

Healings of both men and women took place at or near the altar of San Isidoro, such as the curing of a woman with a crippled hand.

And she thought of San Isidoro, through whose prayers and merits she believed she might be freed from that paralysis, and so, shouting and crying out, she made them take her to the church of San Isidoro. When she arrived and touched the reliquary in which the holy body of San Isidoro lies guarded, in that moment she suddenly recovered, and her paralyzed hand was healed. Many people were present there, clergy and lay, men and women, and all marveled to see such a clear miracle. (Pérez Llamazares 120)

The tales repeatedly emphasize the variety of petitioners who were helped after praying to the saint in his church. They were peasants and nobles, merchants and clerics, women and men, adults and children. Some of the cured were from the city of León, others had traveled great

²³ Thomas Lyman noted that, at the pilgrimage church of Sainte-Foy in Conques, the relics were in "the sanctuary space raised on a platform and surrounded by a grill" (85). See also Pamela Sheingorn for the miracles that occurred in the church of Sainte-Foy.

distances to seek out the assistance of the Visigothic bishop. But nearly all had in common one thing: their prayers were answered at his basilica in León. The end result of so many miracles is stated quite baldly by their chronicler:

And from that day forward, the Lord God increased the wealth of the church of San Isidoro through the alms and offerings of the faithful Christians to such a degree that not a single thing is lacking to those who want to undertake anything in the offices or the works of the church and monastery. (Pérez Llamazares 95)

The church of San Isidoro responded to the changing needs of its patrons through the central Middle Ages. With each new patron, the building underwent a transformation, and its functions shifted and overlapped, drawing a new audience and adding a further layer of meaning to the site. Where once only the royal court worshipped, later pilgrims would be welcomed. The traditional double monastery was replaced by Augustinians, who served pilgrims and the poor in their hospital. With its decorated portals, the church's projecting transept served as a visual marker that invited travelers in and facilitated their movement through the sacred space. While continuous aisles and upper galleries may have been advantageous in some settings, their lack at San Isidoro did not hinder the growth of Isidoro's cult, which expanded throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.²⁴ The case of San Isidoro allows us to see that a "pilgrimage church" does not need to have been built as such originally in order to be adapted for use by pilgrims if a cult arose. It is my contention, therefore, that we must broaden the category of "pilgrimage church" to include all those that successfully made structural accommodations for the pilgrims they sought to attract.

²⁴ Along a similar vein, Lyman pointed out that the designers of the early twelfth-century reconstructions of the churches at Vézelay and Moissac, which were expressly laid out to receive pilgrims, did not choose to include either ambulatory or radiating chapels (88-89).

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