The Crusades and church art in the era of Las Navas de Tolosa

Las Cruzadas y el arte sacro en la época de Las Navas de Tolosa

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Abstract: The art and architecture of Romanesque churches provided for fascinating manifestations of «crusade ideology» in the Iberian Peninsula during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Scenes of combat, imitations of the Holy Sepulcher, and grand eschatological visions of Christian triumph all appeared in church décor. This phenomenon is beautifully exhibited in two churches in the city of Toledo, in which the victory of Las Navas de Tolosa (1212) is celebrated with vivid apocalyptic imagery and inscriptions. However, the same churches incorporate Islamic artistic styles as well, indicating the complexity of holy war in the cultural world of medieval Spain.

Keywords: Navas de Tolosa, Romanesque art, Islam, medieval Spain

Resumen: El arte y la arquitectura de las iglesias románicas están llenos de manifestaciones fascinantes de la «ideología de la cruzada» en la Península Ibérica durante los siglos XII y XIII. Las escenas de combate, imitaciones del Santo Sepulcro y las grandes visiones escatológicas de la victoria cristiana aparecieron en las decoraciones de iglesias. Este fenómeno está muy bien expuesto en dos iglesias de la ciudad de Toledo, en que la victoria de las Navas de Tolosa (1212) se celebra con vívidas imágenes apocalípticas e inscripciones latinas. Sin embargo, las mismas iglesias incorporan estilos artísticos del mundo Islámico, lo que indica la complejidad de la guerra santa en el mundo cultural de la España medieval.

Palabras clave: Navas de Tolosa, arte románico, Islam, España medieval

The phenomenon of crusading was one of the most powerful cultural forces of the European Middle Ages. The sacralization and eventual institutionalization of the expansionistic tendencies of the warrior aristocracy by the Church led to some of the most spectacular and startling events of the medieval era. The crusades shaped and dominated the conflicts between Christendom and the Muslim world from the later eleventh century onward, and while the enthusiasm for crusading was perhaps strongest amongst the French and Norman nobility, the appeal of the religiously sanctioned warfare reached every part of Europe.

However, all crusading activity in Iberia took place against the backdrop of the religious plurality of the Iberian Peninsula. While few parts of European society approached real homogeneity, the large minorities of Jewish and Muslim people living in the Christian kingdoms of Spain, along with the sizeable populations of Mozarabic Christians, created a complex cultural atmosphere. Predictably, this cultural landscape complicated the interpretation and implementation of crusade ideology during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Nowhere was this clearer than during the campaign of the year 1212 which culminated in the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa[1]. This campaign was explicitly planned and executed as an international crusade, yet in many instances the various participants were not at all in agreement over what exactly it was they were supposed to be doing while on crusade. The French crusaders began to arrive in Toledo very early in the spring of 1212, starting on Quinquagesima Sunday (50 days before Easter)[2]. Sometime thereafter, in all likelihood around Good Friday, some of the foreign soldiers took it upon themselves to attack the Jewish population of the city[3]. The (Christian) urban militia had to turn-out to restore order, and the situation was apparently rectified quickly, but one suspects that there must have been lingering hard feelings. Clearly the expectations and intentions of the French crusaders were at odds with those of their Spanish hosts.

Yet it must be remembered that many of the Spanish Christians also considered themselves crusaders, and were responding to the same crusading practices and

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[1] The best studies of the battle are Francisco GARCIA FITZ, *Las Navas De Tolosa*, Barcelona, Editorial Ariel, 2005 and Martín ALVIRA CABRER, *Guerra e Ideología En La España Medieval: Cultura y Actitudes Históricas Ante El Giro De Principios Del Siglo XIII*, doctoral thesis, Universidad Complutense, 2000.

[2] *Annales Toledanos I*, in *España Sagrada*, Enrique Florez (ed.), Madrid, 1754-191, 39 vol.; here, vol. 23, p. 396.

[3] Attacks, symbolic or real, against the Jewish populations were a regular occurrence on Good Friday. David Nirenberg discusses this phenomenon at length, suggesting that typically such violence was ritual in nature, and little actual harm was done; see *Communities of Violence*, Princeton, 1996, pp. 200-230. In this case, the attacks apparently led to many deaths. One is reminded, of course, of the Rhineland massacres which preceded the First Crusade. Studies by Robert Chazan have suggested that the Rhineland massacres may best be understood as an attempt by socially marginal crusaders to establish legitimacy and control over the campaign, and it is likely that a similar dynamic was at work in Toledo. See Robert CHAZAN, *European Jewry and the First Crusade*, Berkley, University of California Press, 1987.

traditions as their northern neighbors. Spain was not a peripheral hinterland, outside the broader European currents of the era, but was rather a central to the development and evolution of the phenomenon of the crusades. The influence of these ideas manifested themselves in many forms, from the regular influx of foreign crusaders, to the foundation of the native military orders. And while the most significant impact of the crusades in Spain may have been as an impetus to the clash of arms between Christians and Muslims, this the sacralized violence could become objectified far from the battlefield. The goal of this study is to examine the manifestations of this crusade ideology in church art of the Iberian Peninsula. We will examine a number of instances in which crusade themes and inspirations appear in the decorative and architectural schemes of various late-twelfth and early thirteenth century churches, with special focus on the Romanesque wall murals in two Toledan churches, San Román and Santa Cruz. These murals, created in the years immediately after Las Navas, use apocalyptic imagery to depict themes of Christian triumph, reflective of the battle and the impetus to express the religious message perceived in the victory over the Almohads. However, these expressions of triumph were created within the local *mudéjar* style, and thus include far more Islamic elements than might be expected in crusader art. By examining this apparent paradox between an apocalyptic portrayal of military conflict with Islam and the enthusiastic adoption of elements of Islamic culture, a clearer picture of how Spanish Christians understood crusading within their own cultural context emerges. Local cultural diffusion and daily coexistence shaped, and limited the shape of the holy war in the Iberian Peninsula.

The appearance of crusade ideology in various artistic expressions during the twelfth and thirteenth century has been studied in a variety of contexts. Much of this corpus focuses either explicitly on architecture in the Holy Land, with few surveys focusing on crusader art in Europe[4]. The best studies on crusade-oriented art tend to be examinations of specific buildings or artistic programs[5]. Most of the artwork

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[4] Jaroslav FOLDA, *Crusader Art*, Burlington, 2008 or *The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land* Cambridge, 1995; Kenneth SETTON (ed.), *A History of the Crusades IV: The Art and Architecture of the Crusader States*, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1977. The later is an excellent example of the preoccupation with architecture in such surveys. Bianca KÜHNEL, in her *Crusader Art of the Twelfth Century*, Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 1994, attempts to take a broader approach by including monumental and minor arts from the Latin East and Europe. Colin MORRIS also provides a useful survey in his *Picturing the Crusades: The Uses of Visual Propaganda, 1095-1250*, in John FRANCE and William G. ZANG (eds.), *The Crusades and their Sources, Essays Presented to Bernard Hamilton*, Brookfield, Vt., Ashgate Press, 1998, pp. 195-216.

[5] Linda SEIDEL, *Images of the Crusade in Western Art: Models and Metaphors*, in V. P. Goss and C. V. Bornstein (eds.), *The Meeting of Two Worlds: Cultural Exchange Between East and West During the Period of the Crusades*, Kalamazoo, 1986, pp. 377-91; Nurith KENAAN-KEDAR and Benjamin Z. KEDAR, *The Significance of a Twelfth Century Sculptural Group*: «Le Retour de Crosié», in Michael BALARD (ed.), *Dei gesta per Francos: Crusade Studies in Honour of Jean Richard*, Aldershot, Ashgate Press, 2001, pp. 29-44; Stefanie DATHE, *Die Kirche La Vera Cruz in Segovia. Untersuchungen zur Bedeutung des romanischen Zentralbaus*, in *Mitteilungen der Carl Justi* (1993), pp. 91-121.

associated with the crusades takes its place beside the larger corpus of Medieval Christian pictorial art, which, in the words of Gregory the Great, was «used in churches so that those who are ignorant of letters may at least read by seeing on the walls what they cannot read in books». Though it seems clear that most church art, including the examples considered here, were far more than communication to the illiterate masses, the power of imagery as a reinforcement of the Christian message was unmistakable[6]. Crusading themes received a wide spectrum of treatments in church art, from the highly allegorical use of the Book of Daniel in the church of Santa Maria in Cosmedin (Rome) to the unabashedly direct mosaic of Franks assaulting Constantinople in the church of San Giovanni Evangelista (Ravenna)[7].

There are a variety of examples of church art within the Iberian Peninsula which feature crusade-inspired themes. It is, of course, difficult to tell whether artistic programs that reflect conflicts with the forces of Islam were inspired by the crusades to the Holy Land or by the local conflicts within Spain, but by the mid-twelfth century, such distinctions may have been unimportant. As the Medieval Church channeled and institutionalized the warrior ethos of the aristocracy, the conflict between Christians and Muslims in Spain was inextricably linked with crusading activity directed towards the Holy Land. As early as 1096, Urban II was discouraging Catalan participation in the First Crusade, suggesting that their efforts were best applied locally[8]. By 1123, the First Lateran Council explicitly associated the campaigns in Spain with those directed toward the Holy Land[9]. Northern European crusaders traveling to the Holy Land for the Second Crusade assisted in the conquest of Lisbon and Almería in 1147 and 1148[10]. The same pattern was repeated in

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[6] L. G. DUGGAN, *Was Art Really 'the Book of the Illiterate'?*, in *Word and Image*, 5 (1989), p. 227. Duggan actually goes on to insist that pictures alone cannot be «read» by the illiterate, and that as a means of communication, they require clarification in the form of words, written or spoken.

[7] Anne DERBES, in her *Crusading Ideology and the Frescoes of S. Maria in Cosmedin*, in *The Art Bulletin*, 77 (Sept. 1995), pp. 460-478, suggests that the images of drawn from Daniel are specifically meant to invoke notions of idol worship and the idea of the «abomination of desolation», a metaphorical reference to Muslim occupation of the Holy Land. The Ravenna mosaic of French knights assaulting unarmed Greek priests under the label «Constantinopolim» needs no metaphorical explanation.

[8] For a discussion of the importation of crusading ideology in the twelfth century, see William J. PURKIS, *Crusading Spirituality in the Holy Land and Iberia, 1095-1187*, Rochester, Boydell Press, 2008. Purkis quotes the letter on pp. 123-124.

[9] P. JAFFÉ (ed.), *Regesta Pontificum Romanorum*, Leipzig, 1851, #5119. See José GOÑI GAZTAMBIDE, *Historia de la bula de la cruzada en España*, Vitoria, Editorial Seminario, 1958, pp. 76-77; Joseph O'CALLAGHAN, *Reconquest and Crusade in Medieval Spain*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003, p. 38.

[10] For the siege of Lisbon, see Charles Wendell DAVID, *The Conquest of Lisbon: De expugnatione Lyxbonensi*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2001; for Almería see Bernard F. REILLY, *The Kingdon of León-Castilla Under Alfonso VII, 1126-1157*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998; see also the Emma FALQUE, Juan GIL et Antonio MAYA (eds.), *Chronicon Aldefonsi Imperatoris* in *Chronica Hispana saeculi XII, Coprus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis*, vol. 71, Turnhout, Brepols, 1990.

1189 during the siege and capture of Silves[11]. Whether the Spanish participants in these campaigns considered themselves crusaders is not entirely certain, but by the early thirteenth century some Spanish Christians were explicitly referring to their campaigns with the term «crozada»[12].

The appearance of crusade-related themes in Spanish religious art during the second half of the twelfth and into the thirteenth century is none the less uneven. Although it was in this era that Saint James became explicitly associated with war against Islam, as exhibited by the creation of the Order of Santiago in 1170, almost all of the extant depictions of «*Santiago Matamoros*» date to the fourteenth century or later[13]. The only nearly contemporary militaristic image of Santiago is found in the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela itself. This relief carving, which likely dates to the mid-thirteenth century depicts a mounted Saint James with a drawn sword, surrounded by praying admirers, rather than the down-trodden Muslim soldiers common in later versions[14].

Other examples of art which seems to incorporate an ambiguous crusade-inspired element include the numerous depictions of knights, often in combat, in the Romanesque churches of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries[15]. Most of these depictions show mounted knights combating other warriors or monstrous beasts. Several interpretations have been applied to these sculptures. In a thorough survey of such images, Margarita Ruiz Maldonado suggested that, at the most basic level, these carved combatants are meant as an allegorical representation of the struggle

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[11] Joseph O'CALLAGHAN, pp. 58-59.

[12] The reference comes from a land transaction by the Order of the Hospital of Saint John in the city of Pamplona, dated «era MCCL (AD 1212) mense Octobris in anno quo Rex Sancius (i.e. Sancho VII of Navarra) fuit super Sarracenos cum illa crozada», Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, sección Órdenes Militares [= AHN, OOMM], carpeta 875, 41. As to whether or not the Iberian Christians considered themselves crusaders, there is some debate. Some historians, such as Joseph O'CALLAGHAN in his *Reconquest and Crusade in Medieval Spain* and José GOÑI GAZTAMBIDE, *Historia de la bula de la cruzada en España* have emphasized the influence of crusading themes in the Peninsula. Others, such as Bernard F. REILLY (see note 10) or Derek LOMAX, in his *The Reconquest of Spain*, London: Longman Press, 1978, have suggested rather less of an impact of crusading themes from beyond Spain. The debate is succinctly summarized in James W. BRODMAN's review of O'Callaghan in the *Catholic Historical Review*, 89 (Oct. 2003), pp. 753-754.

[13] For the Order of Santiago, see Derek LOMAX, *La Orden de Santiago*, Madrid, CSIC, 1965; Alan FOREY, *The Military Orders from the twelfth to the early fourteenth centuries*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1992; Enrique RODRÍGUEZ-PICAVEA, *Los monjes guerreros en los reinos hispánicos: las órdenes militares en la Península Ibérica durante la Edad Media*, Madrid, La Esfera de los Libros, 2008. For discussion of Santiago Matamoros, see Richard FLETCHER, *Saint James's Catapult: The Life and Times of Diego Gelmírez*, Oxford, 1984, particularly pp. 293-300.

[14] See, for example, the sculptural depictions of Santiago Matamoros in the cathedrals of Ávila, Burgos, and Toledo. All date from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

[15] Catalogued and examined by Margarita RUIZ MALDONADO, *El Caballero en la Escultura Romanica de Castilla y León*, Salamanca: Universidad de Salamanca, 1986. See also R. CROZET, *Le théme du Cavalier Victorieux dans l'art roman de France et d'Espagne*, Paris, 1971.

of good versus evil, pride versus humility, and Christianity versus paganism. She found the inspiration for some of this art in the *Psychomachia* of Prudentius, which itself is connected with several other examples of crusade-inspired art[16]. In some cases, the knights and their opponents are differentiated by the use of round versus kite (or Norman) shields, and Maldonado suggests that these images depict Christians in combat with Muslims. Rather than a simple Christian-Muslim dichotomy, it seems likely that the appearance of the kite shield may rather signify Franco-Norman influence (whether on the artist or his warrior subject). Whether or not a round shield is a reliable ethnic or confessional marker also seems debatable, given the wide-spread cultural borrowing across the religious frontier. Other historians have suggested that the scenes of combat between knights and mythological creatures are a direct representation of the struggle with Islam, not merely allegories of good and evil[17].

Beyond these common and ambiguous carvings, images of warriors also appear in some Romanesque murals and paintings. The apse of the church of San Justo in Segovia is decorated with a massive Romanesque mural which dates to the late twelfth century[18]. In addition to a large image of Christ Pantokrator, the mural contains several vivid scenes from the Bible. The most interesting feature, for our present purposes, is the depiction of three armed and armored knights painted in a high niche of the apse on the right side (from the viewer's perspective) of Christ. In other Romanesque churches, for example San Román in Toledo, similar niches are decorated with angels. It has been suggested that the warriors are supposed to be part of the arresting force in the nearby mural depicting the seizure of Christ before the crucifixion[19]. This interpretation seems unlikely, as the three knights in no way resemble other figures in the mural. A more plausible suggestion is that the knights are part of a somewhat deteriorated section of the painting depicting the visit of the Marys to the tomb of Christ. A very similar image appears in the preserved frescoes of the church of San Baudelio de Berlanga in the Museum of Boston[20]. In this

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[16] See MORRIS, «Picturing the Crusades: The Uses of Visual Propaganda, 1095-1250», p. 201 and KÜHNEL, p. 92.

[17] Inés MONTEIRA ARIAS, *Encenas en la Lucha Contra el Islam en la Iconografía Romaníca: El Centauro Arquero. Su Estudio a Través de los Cantares de Gesta*, in *Codex Aquilarensis*, 22 (2006), pp. 148-171. See also Claudio LANGE, *La Clave Anti-Islámica. Ideas Sobre Marginación Icónica y Semántica*, in *Relegados al margen: marginalidad y espacios marginales en la cultura medieval*, CSIC, Madrid, 2009, pp. 115-127. Dr. Lange goes further in his internet gallery, where he suggests that nearly every example of unusual risqué or ribald (pornographic, in his words) image in Romanesque church art is a jab at Islam: Claudio LANGE, *Islam in Kathedralen*, http://viadrina.euv-frankfurt-o.de/~lange/claudio/romanik.html.

[18] The most recent study of these murals is Matilde AZCÁRATE LUXÁN, *Las pinturas murales de las iglesias de San Justo y San Clemente de Segovia*, Segovia, Caja Segovia, 2002.

[19] Marqués de LOZOYA, *Las pinturas románicas en la iglesia de San Justo de Segovia*, Segovia: Publicaciones de la Caja de Ahorros y Monte de Piedad Segovia, 1966, p. 11.

[20] Matilde AZCÁRATE LUXÁN, pp. 80-82.

scenario, the soldiers would be the Roman guards at the tomb mentioned in the Gospels[21]. In both images the soldiers appear anachronistically as twelfth century knights. This was clearly not a case of the artists simply drawing soldiers as he knew them in his own time: other soldiers in the San Justo murals appear in similar garb to other biblical characters. The intentional decision to place the images of contemporary warriors in this key scene suggests a deeper message. The original Roman guards were among the first witnesses of Christ's empty tomb. Contemporary crusaders were of course especially fascinated with Holy Sepulcher[22]. By placing contemporary knights at the very moment in which the Holy Sepulcher became the site of one of the central miracles of Christianity, the theme of sacralized, penitential warfare for the Holy Land is confirmed. While the images are not explicitly related to any specific campaign or event, the portrayal nonetheless speaks to the acceptance of crusade ideology.
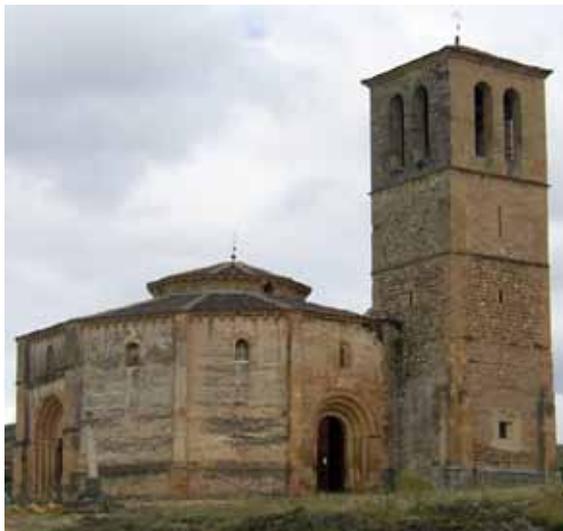
Other examples of crusade-inspired art (or in this case architecture) in Spain show a similar sort of stimulation. Several round churches were constructed in the northern regions of the Peninsula in the later twelfth and early thirteenth century by the military orders under apparent inspiration from the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem[23]. All four of these churches, essentially Romanesque in their architecture, have a round or polygonal design[24]. The church of Vera Cruz in Segovia inclu-

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[21] Matthew 28:2

[22] See Colin MORRIS, *The Sepulchre of Christ and the Medieval West*, Oxford, 2005.

[23] Heribert SUTTER, *Form und Ikonologie spanischer Zentralbauten: Torres del Rio, Segovia, Eunate*, Weimar, VDG, 1997; Dathe (see note 5); Santos SAN CRISTÓBAL SEBASTIÁN, *Iglesia de La Vera Cruz de la Orden de Malta de Segovia*, Segovia, 2005; Javier MARTÍNEZ DE AGUIRRE and Leopoldo GIL CORNET, *Torres del Río: Iglesia del Santo Sepulcro*, Pamplona, Colección Panorama, 2004; Colin MORRIS, *The Sepulchre of Christ and the Medieval West*, p. 234.

[24] It has been noted that churches inspired by the Holy Sepulcher typically are either eight or twelve sided polygons, and relate to the twelve columns or eight piers which support the Dome of the Anas-

des a two-story, twelve-sided chapel at its center, complete with a stone bench, meant to imitate the edicule and stone-slab of Christ's tomb[25]. At least two of these churches, Torres del Río in Navarre and Vera Cruz in Segovia, were built by the Canons of the Holy Sepulcher in the late twelfth and very early thirteenth century[26]. Another Navarrese church, Santa María de Eunate, is very similar in design to the others, but is without clear documentary evidence related to its foundation. As a result, it is still the subject of a legendary Templar foundation, as were the churches in Segovia and Torres del Río prior to more recent investigations that demonstrated their true provenance. A fourth round church, the Convento de Cristo in Tomar, Portugal, is indeed a Templar foundation, which dates to 1160[27]. Together, these churches offer powerful evidence of a strong fascination with the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem. Colin Morris has convincingly argued that fascination with the Holy Land, and especially the Holy Sepulcher, was a strong influence on the formation of crusade ideology. Not only did it loom large in the minds of those original crusaders who captured Jerusalem in 1099, it also remained an object of inspiration and awe to western Christians throughout the twelfth century[28]. These four

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tasis in the exemplar. Either pattern can serve as an allegorical reference to Jerusalem. See Calvin B. KENDALL, *The Allegory of the Church*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1998, p. 8.

[25] The two sided chapel may also (or alternately) represent the chapel of Calvary, positioned above the tomb of Adam, as in the original church in Jerusalem. See Heribert SUTTER, pp. 96-97.

[26] Both appear in multiple property lists of the Canons of the Holy Sepulcher by 1215, see Javier MARTÍNEZ DE AGUIRRE and Leopoldo GIL CORNET, p. 30. The dedicatory stone in Segovia dates the church to the year 1208, though it is worth noting that a property list of the Canons of the Holy Sepulcher from 1128 notes that they owned «in episcopate Secoviano, ecclesiam Sancti Sepulcri», document # 6 in Geneviéve BRESC-BAUTIER (ed.), *Le Cartulaire du Chapitre du Saint-Sépulcre de Jérusalem*, Paris, L'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, 1984, p. 42. Of course churches were often rebuilt, and the dedicatory stone securely dates the current church in Segovia to 1208.

[27] Paulo PEREIRA, *The Convent of Christ, Tomar*, London, Scala, 2009.

[28] Colin MORRIS, *The Sepulchre of Christ and the Medieval West*, 219-253.

Spanish churches, which are but a few of the dozens of similar churches built throughout Europe during this period, demonstrate a strong fascination with the Jerusalem and, by extension, crusading. This was certainly true of the crusaders taking part in the campaign of Las Navas de Tolosa, as evidenced by the will of Aranaldo de Alascun[29]. Arranging for the disposal of his property in the event of his death on the eve of battle, this Aragonese knight requested that, as a condition of a grant to the Order of the Hospital, that the brothers should convey his arms and his horse to the Holy Land after his death. Even while they were on crusade in Spain, the image of Jerusalem still help a place of utmost importance in the mind of Spanish Christians.

That Spanish Christians were expressing their reactions to the ideas and inspirations of the crusades in much the same way as the rest of Europe is clear in the case of the round churches. But, as we have seen, not all artistic expressions of crusade-themes were so direct. As mentioned above, scenes drawn from the Bible could be used as allegorical treatments of issues associated with crusading. The decorative schemes of the two churches at the center of this study are of this variety: crusade-related themes and events are commemorated though metaphorical uses of Biblical scenes. The Scriptural images and text of these artistic programs, and the newly constructed buildings themselves, reflect the triumphant mood of the Church, especially in Toledo, in the years immediately after the victory of Las Navas.

In the early years of the thirteenth century, the city of Toledo experienced a considerable improvement in its fortunes after the military and economic instability of the twelfth century. From its capture by Alfonso VI of Castile in 1085, the ancient Visigothic capital, and the valley of the Tajo River, served as the effective southern frontier of the kingdom, and was the scene of much of the military struggle between the Christian kingdoms and their Muslim neighbors to the south. As late as 1197, the armies of the Almohad caliph had besieged the city and ravaged its hinterlands[30]. In the summer 1211, with the collapse of the defensive positions of the Knights of Calatrava in the southern Meseta, Toledo was once again on the military frontier between Castile and Al-Andalus. In the following year, however, the combined armies of the Christian kingdoms of northern Iberia decisively defeated the Almohads at the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa. In the aftermath of this victory, the Castilian frontier was pushed more than one hundred miles south to the Sierra Morena.

One of the principle figures in the organization and execution of the victory which so enhanced the security of Toledo was its new archbishop, Rodrigo Ximénez de Rada. Rodrigo had been elected to his see in 1208, and in the course of his

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[29] AHN OOMM, Hospital de San Juan, Carpeta 584, 83.
[30] *Annales Toledanos I*, 393. Luis Charlo Brea (ed.), *Chronica Latina Regum Castellae*, in *Chronica Hispana saeculi XIII, Coprus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis*, vol. 73, Turnhout, Brepols, 1997, pp. 14-15.

forty year career he was one of the chief promoters of crusading activity in Castile. He also became one of Toledo's greatest boosters. To Rodrigo, his city was the *urbs regia*, the once and future capital of a united Spain, and the primatial see of the entire Peninsula[31]. Under his leadership, the city experienced a significant rebuilding program, including the commencement of construction on the kingdom of Castile's first cathedral built in the French Gothic style in 1225[32].

But the new Gothic cathedral was but one of a number of churches built or renovated in Toledo during the years following the victory of Las Navas. Many parish churches of the so-called *mudéjar* architectural style also date to the same period[33]. Two of these churches, San Román and Santa Cruz, are of particular interest due to the survival of extensive Romanesque murals and inscriptions from the early thirteenth century. These artistic programs, a confusing combination of biblical verses and apocalyptic imagery, reveal a coherent message of Christian triumph when viewed within their proper historical context.

The church of San Román was consecrated by the Archbishop Rodrigo in the year 1221[34]. There are records of an earlier parish church of the same name, which may have been a mosque in the more distant past, but the existing structure is securely dated to the early thirteenth century[35]. The church is built on a typical basilica plan with a central nave and two aisles, divided by horseshoe arches supported on marble columns[36]. The eastern end of the church is dominated by a sixteenth century plateresque altar. Fortunately for the medievalist, this is the only major renovation to the thirteenth century church.

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[31] Rodrigo XIMÉNEZ DE RADA, *Historia de Rebus Hispanie*, in Juan FERNÁNDEZ VALVERDE (ed.), *Roderici Ximenii de Rada opera omnia, Coprus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis,*vol. 72, Turnhout, Brepols, 1987, p. 259; Lucy PICK, *Conflict and Coexistence*, Ann Arbor, 2004, p. 69.

[32] Rodrigo XIMÉNEZ DE RADA, *Historia de Rebus Hispanie*, p. 294; See also Elie LAMBERT, *El arte gótico en España en los siglos XII y XIII*, Madrid, Ediciones Catédra, 1977.

[33] For the dating of *mudéjar* church construction to the early thirteenth century, see David RAIZMAN, *The Church of Santa Cruz and the Beginnings of Mudéjar Architecture in Toledo*, in *Gesta*, 38 (1999), p. 141. For the conception of the term *mudéjar* and its application to architecture, see José AMADOR DE LOS RÍOS, *El estilo mudéjar en arquitectura*, Paris, 1965. I generally tend to favor the view that the *mudéjar* style, especially in the thirteenth century, is best seen as a local modification of Romanesque architecture. See David SIMON, *Late Romanesque Art in Spain*, in *The Art of Medieval Spain, A.D. 500-1200*, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1993, p. 204.

[34] *Annales Toledanos II*, 406. Sisto RAMON PARRO, *Toledo en el Mano*, vol. 2, Toledo, 1857, p. 231. Parro says that there was also a dedicatory stone above the entrance to the church confirming the dedication by Rodrigo on the 20th of June, 1221.

[35] Sisto RAMON PARRO, pp. 228-229; José CAMÓN AZNAR, *La Iglesia de San Román de Toledo*, in *Al-Andalus*, 6, 1941, p. 451.

[36] It is very difficult to tell which San Román the church is dedicated to. One saint by this name was apparently a companion of Saint Lawrence, who also has a church in Toledo. Other San Román appear to have been early French or Italian monks, but none of them have any obvious connection with this church.

The main attraction of San Román is its impressive collection of Romanesque murals, which date to the 1221 reconstruction[37]. Though much of it is deteriorated, this ambitious artistic program once must have covered nearly every inch of wall space[38]. The upper portions of the central nave are decorated with patterned Islamic motifs, including repetitious Arabic inscriptions in a highly-stylized calligraphic script[39]. The arches of the nave are decorated with images of important saints and prophets, among them Saints Benedict and Bernard and the prophets Ezekiel and Daniel. Surrounding these images on each arch are extensive Latin inscriptions, which include fragments of five Marian hymns and the Song of Songs[40].

The murals decorating the south aisle are among the best preserved. The eastern wall of the aisle is topped with large images of the Four Evangelists as tetramorphs, seated at lecterns writing[41]. Beneath them stand more saints and confessors, among them Isidore of Seville. On the southern wall there is a huge mural depicting the resurrection of the dead, a scene from the Book of Revelation[42]. Beside it stands a very faded mural in which only a robed figure holding a palm branch is visible, possibly a scene from the seventh chapter of the Book of Revelation[43]. The end of the south nave holds an image of Eve being directed to avoid the tree of knowledge in Eden. The south aisle arches preserve much larger portions of their inscriptions as well. Each arch is decorated with the opening of the stanzas of, from east to west,

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[37] David RAIZMAN, *The Church of Santa Cruz and the Beginnings of Mudéjar Architecture in Toledo*, p. 134; B. PAVÓN MALDONADO, *Arte Toledano*, Madrid, 1973, p. 62. José CAMÓN AZNAR, *Pinturas murales de San Román de Toledo*, in *Archivo Español de Arte*, 49 (1942), p. 51.

[38] Otto Demus noted that typically Romanesque artists tended to decorate the entirety of basilica churches, from the apse to the western wall, as well as the aisles themselves. Symmetry was important, and the architectural features of the building were typically used to frame individual narrative scenes. The churches under consideration here essentially adhere to this model. Otto DEMUS, *Romanesque Mural Painting*, New York, 1970, p. 22.

[39] It has been plausibly suggested by Jerrilynn DODDS, María Rosa MENOCAL, and Abigail BALBALE, *The Arts of Intimacy: Christians, Jews, and Muslims in the Making of Castilian Culture*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2008, that the Arabic inscriptions are the generic and repetitive blessing «prosperity and good fortune», though they are very difficult to read. Antonio FERNÁNDEZ-PUERTAS offers a general discussion of Arabic calligraphy during the Almohad period: *Calligraphy in Al-Andalus*, in Salma Khadra JAYYUSI (ed.), *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, Leiden, Brill, 1992, pp. 658-663.

[40] The hymns are *Speciosa Facta Est*, *Alma Mater Redemptoris*, *Ave Maris Stella*, *Ave Virgo Sanctissima*, and *Santa Maria Virgo Piissima*. The excerpts from the Song of Songs are from 2:11 and 4:10.

[41] The tetramorphs, the «four living creatures» of the Apocalypse and Ezekiel, were very common in Romanesque murals, though usually surrounding Christ in the apse of churches. See Thomas DALE and John MITCHELL (eds.), *Shaping Sacred Space and Institutional Identity in Romanesque Mural Painting*, London, Pindar Press, 2004, p. 4.

[42] Rev. 11:15-18. Otto DEMUS, p. 16, notes that Revelations was one of the most prevalent subjects of Romanesque artists.

[43] Rev. 7:9, which describes a multitude of people standing before the throne of God wearing white robes and holding palms.

Psalm 142, Psalm 6, and Psalm 129. There were extensive inscriptions on the outer south wall, beneath the Resurrection of the Dead mural, but only isolated words survive today.

The murals of the northern aisle are largely deteriorated. Above the only door to the church there is a circular image of Christ in majesty, flanked by the tetramorph symbols of the Evangelists. There is also a partial image of a building or city, which resembles the cityscapes found in a contemporary illustrated manuscript of Beatus of Liebana's *Commentary on the Apocalypse*[44]. It has been plausibly suggested by several scholars that the same school of artists created both the murals of San Román and the miniatures of this Beatus manuscript (Morgan M. 429), which is dated to 1220[45]. These images are depictions of the seven churches of Asia, enumerated in the beginning of the Book of Revelations, but are also, on an allegorical level, images of the celestial Jerusalem[46]. The domed-building superficially resembles the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, though given its regional, contemporary popularity, the resemblance is worth noting. The western end of the aisle is decorated with an image of a large dragon battling two angels, yet another scene from the Apocalypse[47]. The inscriptions that must have decorated the north wall arches are lost.

The western wall of the central nave is decorated with a floor to ceiling depiction of heaven as described by John in the Book of Revelation. The twenty four elders sit beneath trees, while above more angels sound trumpets. The center of the wall is dominated by three windows, circled by more repetitive Arabic calligraphy.

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[44] John WILLIAMS, *The Illustrated Beatus*, London, vol. 5.
[45] José CAMÓN AZNAR, *Pinturas*, p. 52; David RAIZMAN, *The Church of Santa Cruz and the Beginnings of Mudéjar Architecture in Toledo*, p. 135.
[46] See Calvin B. KENDALL, p. 14, for the notion that the rounded arches of Romanesque architecture were a typological reference to the Heavenly Jerusalem.
[47] Rev. 12:7.

High on the western wall, amongst several other undecipherable textual fragments, is an isolated line from Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews.

To a thirteenth century observer this extensive and varied blending of image and text could convey a variety of meanings. The murals and inscriptions of Romanesque decoration were designed to work together as a cohesive system. These churches were allegorical expressions of the Christian message, which could operate on a number of different levels[48]. The message expressed in the art and architecture of these buildings was simultaneously literal, typological, and tropological. Individual elements might literally correspond to certain parts of scripture, or offer basic didactic lessons, but the whole also functioned to convey a coherent moral message. In the case of San Román all of these themes coalesce into a message of imminent Christian triumph, which can be associated with the military successes of the city and kingdom[49].

The lyrics of a series of Marian hymns which decorate the arches of the central nave celebrate the Virgin for her own virtues and as an intercessor between humans and God. These Marian themes are a recurring subject in the career of the artist or artists responsible for the church murals. As noted above, the same artist or artists possibly worked on the illustrations of a Beatus manuscript, Morgan M.429. In the colophon of this manuscript, the scribe asks «all readers, who in this volume read, that you extend thanks to the lady who gave a generous hand to the blessed Virgin and the blessed John the Evangelist and to the other saints who are pictured in this book»[50]. More significantly, the same school of artists may also be the illustrators of a contemporary copy of *De Virginitate Beatae Mariae*, which chronicles the miraculous relations between the Virgin and the author, Saint Ildefonsus, a seventh century Archbishop of Toledo[51]. This devotional focus on Mary in the church of San Román is not surprising, as by the early thirteenth century Toledo was becoming the center of Marian devotion in Castile[52]. At the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa, the Archbishop

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[48] See Calvin B. KENDALL, pp. 1-18, for a detailed description of the allegorical function of the Romanesque church. Thomas Dale, in his introduction to Thomas DALE and John MITCHELL (eds.), *Shaping Sacred Space and Institutional Identity in Romanesque Mural Painting*, further notes the allegorical meaning of Romanesque art, 7-16. He quotes Sicard of Cremona, who explained that «Images in churches represent things of the past, such as histories and visions; things of the present, such as virtues and vices; things of the future, such as penalties and rewards». Sicard wrote these words in the late twelfth or early thirteenth centuries, and was essentially a contemporary of the artworks considered here.

[49] See the discussion of San Román in Jerrilynn DODDS, María Rosa MENOCAL, and Abigail BALBALE, pp. 181-183. These authors too explicitly relate the apocalyptic imagery with the victory of Las Navas de Tolosa.

[50] John WILLIAMS, *The Illustrated Beatus*, London, 2003, p. 38.

[51] David RAIZMAN, *A Rediscovered Illuminated Manuscript of St. Ildefonsus's De Virginitate Beatae Mariae in the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid*, in *Gesta*, 26 (1987), pp. 37-46.

[52] Joseph O'CALLAGHAN, p. 191.

Rodrigo fought under a banner bearing Mary's image[53]. In fact, it has been shown that Mary, as a defender of Christian faith, was frequently invoked as a patroness of the *Reconquista*[54]. It is this contemporary facet of Marian devotion that connects most closely with the other elements of the church's decoration.

When one turns to the southern nave of the church, the message of the inscriptions gains greater depth. Here, the arches are inscribed with the opening lines of three of the so-called Penitential Psalms, 6, 129, and 142[55]. In each case the opening verse of the Psalm is found on the walls. Each Psalm opens with a penitential prayer, for example «Lord, rebuke me not in thy indignation nor chastise me in thy wrath», from Psalm 6[56]. A similar sentiment of supplication starts Psalm 129, «Out of the depths I have cried to thee, O, Lord; Lord hear my voice»[57]. The final Psalm, 142, begins simply «Hear, O Lord, my prayer»[58].

On the surface, the inclusion of these penitential prayers serves a useful didactic purpose. Including these specific lines of text in a church seems to be a straightforward encouragement for introspective prayer for God's forgiveness on the part of the audience. Whether these lines were read by an educated individual, deciphered for an illiterate audience, or used as a guide and reinforcement of a spoken sermon, these opening lines were meant as an invocation of the entire psalm. Reading (or hearing read) the opening lines would encourage the reader to recall the entire psalm, and it is when we turn to the rest of the text that the deeper layer of meaning becomes clear[59].

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[53] Rodrigo XIMÉNEZ DE RADA, *Historia de Rebus Hispanie*, p. 274.

[54] See Kathleen Anne STEWART, «*Domina Misericordiae*»: *Miracle Narratives and the Virgin Mary, 1130-1230*, doctoral thesis, University of California at Berkley, 2006, particularly pp. 155-202.

[55] The special recognition of six of the Psalms (6, 31, 37, 50, 101, 129, and 142) as fitting for penitential prayer dates to the sixth century, from Cassiodorus's *Commentary on the Psalms*. See CASSIODORUS, *Explanation of the Psalms*, New York, Paulist Press, 1991, p. 13.

[56] The inscription originally included the lines «Domine ne in furore tuo arguas me neque in ira tua corripias me. miserere mei Domine quoniam infirmus sum sana me Domine quoniam conturbata sunt ossa mea», though many words and individual letters are now faded.

[57] On this arch, nearly the entire inscription is intact, and reads «De profundis clamavi ad te Domine. Domine exaudi vocem meam fiant aures tuae intendentes ad vocem deprecationis meae. si iniquitates observabis Domine Domine quis sustinebit».

[58] This inscription is also nearly complete, and includes the lines «Exaudi orationem meam ausculta deprecationem meam in veritate tua exaudi me in iustitia tua et non venias ad iudicandum cum servo tuo quia non iustificabitur in conspectu tuo omnes vivens».

[59] Duggan, as noted above (note 6), suggests that images and decoration were meant to invoke what one already knew, or to be used in conjunction with verbal instruction, such as a sermon. Similarly, Thomas Dale notes that «mural painting continued to be perceived in the terms of Gregory the Great's *dictum* as a pictorial reminder and reinforcement of scriptural narratives recited orally in church», in *Shaping Sacred Spance and Institutional Identity in Romanesque Mural Painting*, p. 8. See also Vincent DEBIAIS, *Messages de pierre: La lecture des inscriptions dans la communication medieval*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2009. Debiais notes that «The importance of introducing an inscribed object is not only valuable in terms of a limited group of readers, but must instead be measured across the extended context

Each Psalm ends with a triumphant and militant theme: «In your mercy, you will destroy my enemies»; «He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities»; «Let all my enemies be confounded and be very much troubled; Let them be turned back and ashamed very speedily»[60]. The invocation of the militant aspects of the Psalms was common place in the thirteenth century. Two of the ecclesiastical historians of the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa tell us that Psalms were sung on the battlefield in celebration of the victory. According to the *Chronica Latina*, «Cantare potuerunt Christiani cum psalmista: Dominus, Dominus Deus meus, qui docet manus meas ad bellum et digitos meos ad prelium; misericodria mea et refugium meum, susceptor meus et liberator meus et cetera»[61]. The Archbishop Rodrigo similarly led the clerics present in a singing of *Te Deum Laudamus* hymn, which is largely composed of lines drawn from the Psalms[62]. Moreover, Psalm 142 was a common component in late twelfth and early thirteenth century rites for pilgrims and crusaders elsewhere in Europe[63]. To a biblically literate audience, the opening lines of the psalms were meant to invoke the entire text, and with it the clear message which each conveys: a penitent David received God's aid against his enemies. A penitent Christian kingdom receives divine help in its military endeavors. In the Toledo of the early thirteenth century, those enemies would be understood to be the Almohades and their Andalusian allies.

This triumphant theme is carried further in the apocalyptic imagery which decorates the church. As noted above, the large mural of the awakening of the dead with angels blowing trumpets overhead depicts the opening of the Seventh Seal in the Book of Revelations[64]. This action, signaling an end to the tribulations of the Apocalypse and the ushering in of God's kingdom, provides a vivid and powerful image of the triumphant end-times, which works in synergy with

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of reception», p. 390. He notes that the significance of the inscribed word in reinforcing order and memory was not lost on the illiterate, who understood the function of words and their symbolic importance, even if they could not read the language. Moreover, viewing inscriptions affects the way in which the audience (again literate or otherwise) perceived physical space, and in this way worked with the murals to capture and focus the attention of church-goers on the messages of the whole program.

[60] These three Psalms, 6, 129, and 142 also formed a part of the daily liturgy at Cluny. Barbara ROSEN-WEIN discussed the militancy of the themes, and described the entire liturgy as an eschatological combat, good against evil, the monks against the devil. Barbara ROSENWEIN, *Feudal War and Monastic Peace: Cluniac Liturgy as Ritual Aggression*, in *Viator*, 2 (1971), pp. 127-157.

[61] *Chronica Latina Regum Castellae*, p. 62.

[62] Rodrigo XIMÉNEZ DE RADA, *Historia de Rebus Hispanie*, p. 274.

[63] See James BRUNDAGE, *Cruce Signari: The Rite for Taking the Cross in England*, in *Traditio*, 22 (1962), pp. 289-310.

[64] Archbishop Rodrigo himself makes references to this episode of the Apocalypse in his polemical work, *Dialogus libri vite*, specifically in Book 5, chapter 19, and again in book 8, chapter 3. Rodrigo XIMÉNEZ DE RADA, *Dialogus Libri Vite*, Juan FERNÁNDEZ VALVERDE and Juan Antonio ESTÉVEZ SOLA (eds.), in *Coprus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis*, vol. 72, Turnhout, Brepols, 1999.

the Psalms written on the arches of the same aisle. After reading David's self-confident assurances of God's aid against one's enemies, the observer can then contemplate the literal rewards for the faithful, including the resurrection of the dead. The *Pantokrator* above the door, and the twenty-four elders in heaven depicted on the western wall all invoke images of the coming celestial kingdom. On a higher level of allegory, the image invokes a simple message of the triumph of Christendom associated with the Apocalypse. Such a view certainly had currency in 1220s Toledo.

The most powerful expression of this triumphant, apocalyptic theme is found in the northern corner of the western wall of the church. Here the partially faded depiction of Revelation chapter 12, verse 7, in which two angels battle Satan as a dragon, depicts the triumph of the Church with starkly violent imagery. One of the angels, the Archangel Michael, thrusts his spear into the mouth of the dragon, which has its head thrown back in agony. The scene is, of course, one of the most popular in Christian art. In San Román, the message conveyed is clear:good wins, evil loses, in patently military terms[65].

A short distance to the north along Toledo's winding streets sits an architecturally very different but artistically closely related church. The church of Santa Cruz was originally the Bad-al-Mardum mosque, one of the few structures surviving from the era when the city was the center of northern Al-Andalus. Medieval legend suggests that the mosque was originally a Christian church, appropriated by the Muslims after their conquest of the city in the eighth century. The true identity of the church was revealed to the conquering Christian forces in 1085, when the hero El Cid's horse was said to have caused a commotion leading to the discovery of a crucifix illuminated by a miraculous Visigothic lamp enclosed in one of the walls[66]. Mythology aside, recent excavations on the site have revealed the existence of an older structure that included an apse beneath the mosque, and which seems to be contemporaneous with nearby Roman ruins.

Regardless of this, the mosque which exists today was built in the year 1000 according to the unusual Arabic inscription written in brick on the building's façade. It appears to have been in private hands until 1183, when it was gifted to the Order of the Hospital of Saint John of Jerusalem. The charter recording the transfer of ownership referred to the building as «a house which is called Santa Cruz», and there seems to have been an understanding that the Hospitallers would convert it into a proper

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[65] Sicard of Cremona specifically addressed the meaning of this image, noting that the tropological meaning is «the confirmation of good and the ruin of the wicked, and also then, in the present Church as the persecution of the faithful» Quoted by Thomas DALE, in *Shaping Sacred Spance and Institutional Identity in Romanesque Mural Painting*, p. 13.

[66] Sixto RAMON PARRO, p. 228

church[67]. The building was known as the «church of Santa Cruz», in an 1186 charter from Archbishop Gonzalo of Toledo, confirming the Hospitaller ownership on the condition that they not infringe on the rights and income of the city's parish churches. At some point thereafter, a new apse was added to the existing structure, which stylistically appears to be part of the boom in church construction of the so-called *mudéjar* architectural style, much of which dates to the first quarter of the thirteenth century[68].

The interior of this new construction was decorated with Romanesque murals, almost certainly by the same artist or team of artists who worked on the church of San Román[69]. Given the similarity of the painting cycles, and the secure date of 1221 for the consecration of San Román, it seems certain that the renovation of Santa Cruz must have occurred in roughly the same period. The apse itself is decorated by a very large Jesus *Pantokrator* image against a blue sky, surrounded by at two of the tetramorphs (the other two were almost certainly present on the now damaged left side of the mural)[70]. The arch of the apse contains the images of two saints, depicted in the identical fashion to the saints in the arches of San Román. Outside the apse, on the new eastern wall, a series of niches are also decorated with the images of saints. Architectural schematics created by the Ministerio de Fomento as part of their «Monumentos Arquitectónicos de España» series in the late nineteenth century show two of these niche portraits with labels identifying their subjects as Saint Eulalia and Saint Martha, two early Spanish martyrs[71].

The apse also contains a number of inscriptions, both Latin and Arabic. A lion-like figure representing the Evangelist Mark holds a banner identifying him

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[67] The charters of 1183 and 1186 are published, along with a succinct analysis, by Susana CALVO CAPILLA, *La Mezquita de Bab Al-Mardum y el Proceso de Consagración de Pequeñas Mezquitas en Toledo (s.XI-XIII)*, in *Al-Qantara*, 20 (1999), pp. 299-330.

[68] For the dating of *mudéjar* church construction to the early thirteenth century, see David RAIZMAN and AMADOR DE LOS RÍOS (see note 33). The blending of (Christian) Romanesque and (Muslim) *mudejar* as part of a living local architectural tradition is well discussed by both Raizman and also Jerrilynn DODDS, María Rosa MENOCAL, and Abigail BALBALE, pp. 121-122. It should be noted that Calvo Capilla (see note 67) argues that the construction took place between 1183 and 1186, based on her reading of the charter of the Archbishop Gonzalo's charter as a consecration of the new church. Regardless of the date of the construction, the murals must be from around 1220.

[69] David RAIZMAN, *The Church of Santa Cruz and the Beginnings of Mudéjar Architecture in Toledo*, p. 140.

[70] The apse painting is very similar to folio 2 of the Las Huelgas Beatus manuscript. Demus noted that the apse painting was among the most formal elements of Romanesque style, with the *Pantokrator* or Christ-in-Majesty image, usually drawn from the Apocalypse, as the most common theme. The choice of blue for the background is also very common. Otto DEMUS, 14-20.

[71] R. MALAGÓN, M. SÁINZ, C. DELGADO, T. PÉREZ, and M. FRANCO MATA, *Arquitecturas de Toledo*, Toledo, 1991, p. 328. These labels are not clearly visible today, though given that the two images in question are high up on the wall in a poorly lit part of the church, they may still exist. Saint Eulalia, martyred in the early fourth century, was made famous by her inclusion in the *Peristephanon* by PRUDENTIUS, Cambridge, 1953, pp. 143-157. Saint Marta was a third century martyr from the city of Astorga.
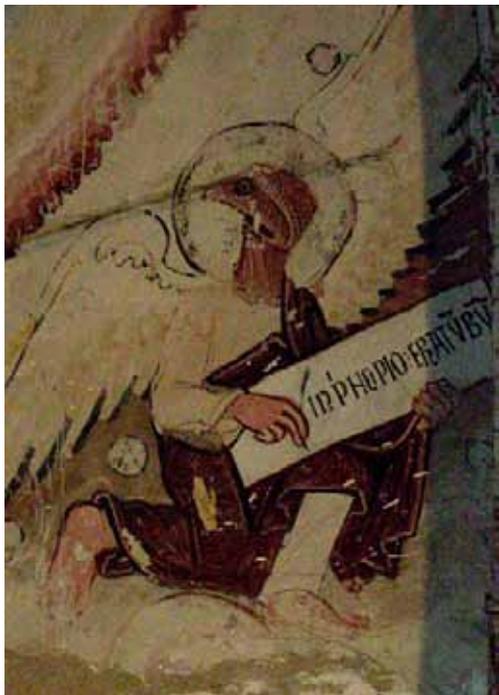
as one of the «quattuor animalia» of the Book of Revelation. The eagle-headed Saint John holds a banner with the opening words of his gospel, «In principio erat verbum». Around the bottom of the apse are the remnants of two deteriorated Latin inscriptions. The left inscription is the opening line of Psalm 148, «Laudate Dominum de caelis, laudate eum in excelsis». The right hand inscription is from Matthew 25:34. The final inscription, found on the outer arch of the apse and written in Arabic, appears to repeat the phrase «prosperity» and «good fortune», much like the similar inscriptions in the church of San Román[72].

The message of Christian victory and triumph is relatively simpler in the smaller, less complex decorations of Santa Cruz, than in the larger cycle of San Román. The focus of the church is on the imposing image of Christ in Majesty which fills the apse. The image, of course, comes from the Book of Revelations, and while it was a common motif in Romanesque painting, the power and the message of the image was not necessarily lost in the repetition[73]. For the Medieval audience, this last book of the Bible was a «revelation of the beginning of the eternal kingdom of God, and as such allows glimpses of the gloriously triumphant church»[74]. The larger than life image of Christ, surrounded by the symbols of the Evangelists conveyed a strong message of authority and confidence, and

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[72] Jerrilynn DODDS, María Rosa MENOCAL, and Abigail BALBALE, p. 159.

[73] The *majestas* or *pantokrator* image of Christ was a common decorative motif drawn from the Apocalypse, starting as far back as the sixth century. In the Latin West, the *majestas* image was almost always associated with the tetramorphs, unlike the Byzantine *pantokrator*. See Peter KLEIN, *The Apocalypse in Medieval Art*, in Richard K. EMMERSON and Bernard MCGINN (eds.), *The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1992, p. 161; Otto DEMUS, p. 14; Yves CHRISTE, *The Apocalypse in Monumental Art*, also in *The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages*, pp. 251-255. Christe sees the «*majestas domini* to be an image of a present and actualized Christ in all his divinity, not an image of the Second Coming». This interpretation fits well with a message of present triumphalism.

[74] John WILLIAMS, *A Spanish Apocalypse*, New York, 1991, p. 11.

the awesome power of the Christianity and the Church. On the eastern wall outside the apse, the saints, including local Spanish figures Eulalia of Merida and Marta of Astorga look on, encouraging the viewer to see the vitality and strength of the image of Christ at work in their immediate surroundings, not only in the distant story of the Apocalypse.

The Latin inscriptions in Santa Cruz reinforce this message of power and add a triumphant element. The left hand inscription, Psalm 148, conveys the most straight-forward message, with its repetitive encouragement to praise the lord throughout creation. The second inscription conveys a somewhat richer meaning. The text is Matthew chapter 25, verse 34, «Then shall the king say to them that shall be on his right hand: Come, you blessed of my Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world». This part of the Book of Matthew, often called the «Mini-Apocalypse», discusses the reward of the faithful upon the return of Christ. Despite the tribulations associated with the end times, the «wars and rumors of war» which Jesus discusses in Gospels, this was the ultimate, glorious moment in Christian eschatology. The message is clear when the surrounding passages from the gospel are included: God will separate the faithful sheep from the iniquitous goats. The Christians will inherit God's kingdom. The contemporary analogy is almost insistent. The message of triumph conveyed by the artists who decorated this small chapel for the Order of the Hospital, whose knights had recently participated in a great crusading victory of Las Navas de Tolosa, would be clear to any observer with knowledge of Scripture.

Alongside this deployment of apocalyptic text and imagery, one finds the most striking features of the artistic program of Santa Cruz, the elaborate Arabic inscription which decorates the outer arch of the apse. The generic blessing, «*al-yumn, al-iqbal*», essentially prosperity and good luck, is a testimony to the strong Arabic cultural influence still very much alive in early thirteenth century Toledo. The intentional use of such Islamic motifs in what can best be described as a crusader church is certainly, on the surface at least, paradoxical. The use of these images of eschatological Christian victory in the context of the political and military developments of the thirteenth century necessarily places Islam in a negative role within the larger political and religious narrative. We are therefore left to try to answer a question posed by the other major element in the decorative programs in our churches: why those tasked with decorating these buildings decided to include extensive Islamic decorative themes and Arabic inscriptions?

The usual explanation for the inclusion of Arabic inscriptions within a Christian context in the art and architecture of the Middle Ages is to label such writing as «pseudo-Kufic». This explanation builds on the fact that the world of Islam was rightly perceived by contemporaries as a culture marked by a high degree of sophistication, education, and prosperity. Christian rulers governing formerly Muslim territory, whether in Spain, Sicily, or Palestine, often wished to control and possess

this culture rather than simply to destroy it[75]. Often, the result was the incorporation of seemingly random Islamic decorative motifs, especially inscriptions, into Christian art. Whether or not these inscriptions actually meant anything was of secondary importance, and it is often assumed that the Christian artists were ignorantly imitating Arabic writing[76]. The decorative use of Arabic calligraphy was itself enough to lend the patina of power and prosperity, whether or not it meant anything[77]. While it is certainly true that the Spanish Christian rulers did intend to take possession of the sophisticated cultural world of Al-Andalus, it is clear that they typically did not do so as ignorant imitators, but as conscious conquerors. Nowhere was this more obvious than in Toledo.

There is relatively little mystery involving the continuity of the brick architectural style of Toledo from the Islamic to the Christian periods. Artisans, techniques, materials, and the traditions of the city did not automatically transform into something all together new with the peaceful transfer of ownership in 1085. *Mudéjar* architecture represents a relatively seamless continuation of the «local, living urban architecture», in the words of David Raizman[78]. Beyond the realm of church décor, the persistence of Islamic cultural aesthetics can be clearly seen in the high fashion of the day. The Castilian royal family all wore clothes of Muslim make and design, complete with Arabic, even Quranic text[79]. The most striking example of this comes from the tomb of the crown-prince of Castile, Fernando, who died in October of 1211. By all accounts he was the most eager advocate of crusade at the Castilian court, and was eagerly looking forward to the coming conflict with the Almohads. When he died from a sudden illness, he was buried in Burgos, wearing a coif of

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[75] Jerrilynn DODDS notes that «for many northern Christians, the sumptuous quality of the material culture of Al-Andalus supersedes any undermining political or religious associations with Islam». Jerrilynn DODDS, *Islam, Christianity, and the Problem of Religious Art*, in *The Art of Medieval Spain A.D. 500-1200*, p. 32.

[76] A classic example is the dinar-like coin struck by the Saxon King Offa in the eighth century. The Arabic text on the coins is largely illegible, presumably because the minter simply wanted to maintain the appearance of a valuable Islamic coin, but was ignorant of the actual text. See Philip GRIERSON, *Medieval European Coinage*, Cambridge, 2007, p. 330. More generally, see R. ETTINGHAUSEN, *Muslim Decorative Arts and Painting-Their Nature and Impact on the Medieval West*, in Stanley FERBER (ed.), *Islam and the Medieval West*, Binghamton, State University of New York, 1975, p. 14.

[77] Vincent DEBIAIS (see note 59) discussed the decorative value of inscriptions at length, and how it could convey messages beyond the actual written words: «The aesthetic dimension of the inscription text is given a key to know the rules of perception and understanding of the inscription. The ornament of characters or support made it a sculptural object, often endowed with aesthetic qualities facilitating the identification of the inscription in space: it draws the eye of the viewer in order to take note of the message contained in the text. Meanwhile, the inscription, by its ornamental value, participates in the beatification of its context», p. 161.

[78] David RAIZMAN, *The Church of Santa Cruz and the Beginnings of Mudéjar Architecture in Toledo*, p. 133.

[79] Concha HERRERO CARRETERO, *Museo de Telas Medievales: monasterio de Santa Maria la Real de Huelgas*, Madrid, Patrimonio Nacional, 1988.

Islamic manufacture, decorated with Arabic text which reads «The Lord is the Re-newer of solace»[80]. Archbishop Rodrigo himself was buried in a bishop's chasuble decorated with Arabic calligraphy repeating the word «prosperity»[81]. Clearly what is good for the churchman is good for the church. In the early thirteenth century, Toledo was culturally still very much an Islamic city. One is reminded of Thomas Glick's characterization of early Muslim rule in the Iberian Peninsula, where he re-marked that the Arabs and Berbers were living in something of a «garrison state», as conquerors immersed in the cultural world of the conquered[82].

The fusion of Christian and Islamic culture reached even deeper than fashion and architecture. The ostensible goal of the complex murals and decoration of these churches was, as with all church decoration, the glorification of God. Even in this context, the blend of Christian and Islamic styles makes sense. Lucy Pick has sugges-ted that the Archbishop Rodrigo was at the center of a Toledan intellectual school which promoted, among other things, what she calls a «theology of unity»[83]. In this scheme, Muslims and Islam were a fractious, entropic force, but nonetheless part of God's creation. Even they could occasionally express an element of truth which could be rightly appropriated into a Christian understanding of the world.

The theology of unity seems to leave rather little room for holy war. But the message contained in some of the apocalyptic analogy depicted in these churches is fairly direct: the dragon from the wall of San Román is meant to represent the Almo-had enemy with whom the Christian Castilians were contending for control of the Peninsula. This deployment of apocalyptic language and imagery was hardly new, as the struggle between Christianity and Islam created, back in the ninth century, some of the first associations between Muhammad and the Antichrist in the works of Eulogius of Toledo and Paul Alvarus[84]. Moreover, the *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, created in the eighth century by Beatus of Liebana, and copied over and over again over the course of the Middle Ages, has been labeled by John Williams as the «Book of the Reconquest»[85]. As mentioned above, at least some of the artists who created

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[80] For Fernando's crusading zeal, see *Chronica Latina Regum Castellae*, p. 53 and Rodrigo XIMÉNEZ DE RADA, *Historia de Rebus Hispanie*, p. 257. For the coif, see Concha HERRERO CARRETERO, p. 61. Other scholars have noted the Arabic *haute couture* without trying to explain the phenomenon, not-ing only that the use of Islamic motifs and inscriptions did not really imply «islamisation»; Antonio FERNÁNDEZ-PUERTAS, 662.

[81] Jerrilynn DODDS, *Al-Andalus: The Art of Islamic Spain*, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1992, p. 331.

[82] Thomas GLICK, *Islamic and Christian Spain in the Early Middle Ages*, Boston, 2005, p. 29.

[83] Lucy PICK, pp. 71-126.

[84] Richard SOUTHERN, *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1962, pp. 22. For the lives and works of Eulogius and Paul Alvarus, see Kenneth Baxter WOLF, *Chris-tian Martyrs in Muslim Spain*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991.

[85] John WILLIAMS, *A Spanish Apocalypse*, p. 12.

the murals of Santa Cruz and San Román also worked on the illuminations of a contemporary Beatus manuscript.

But given the adoption and use of Islamic styles and Arabic inscriptions, we must further examine the ways in which the apocalyptic narrative is deployed. It is very easy to imagine, as some historians have done, that the events of 711 and the protracted military confrontation with Islam «created in Spain an eschatological environment in which the end was perceived to be near»[86]. However, it was the Archbishop Rodrigo who, even when indulging in his most liberal discussion of the end of the world, concludes that «set quia ut ueritas protestastur de die illa nemo scit nisi filius et cui uoluit filius reuelare»[87]. And despite the many contemporary (twelfth and thirteenth century) copies of illustrated Beatus manuscripts, it is difficult to see many of the images as depicting a consistent association with Islam[88]. Sometimes the architectural elements of these illustrations appear to be inspired by Islamic architecture, though it is difficult to apply a polemic meaning to this[89]. Occasionally soldiers appear in Muslim garb, or armed with Muslim weapons, but they just as frequently appear as more typically European. Sometimes the Antichrist is portrayed in ambiguously Muslim garb, but so are other friendly characters[90].

It is worth noting that the most influential apocalyptic thinker of the period, Joachim of Fiore, believed that the Antichrist would appear within the Church, and be elected Pope[91]. Moreover, the apocalyptic imagery found on the walls of the churches considered here tend to depict the positive, triumphant aspects of the Book of Revelation, not the tribulations and actions of the Antichrist. In fact, the «prima-

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[86] Kevin R. POOLE, *Beatus of Liébana: Medieval Spain and the Othering of Islam*, in Karolyn KINANE and Michael A. RYAN (eds.), *End of Days: Essays on the Apocalypse from Antiquity to Modernity*, Jefferson, North Carolina, McFarland and Company, 2009, p. 61.

[87] Rodrigo XIMÉNEZ DE RADA, *Dialogus Libri Vite*, p. 387. Lucy PICK, 163. It is worth noting that BEATUS himself came to the same conclusion. After stating that the sixth age ought to end in the year 800, he notes «Residuum saeculi tempus humanae investigationis incertum est». Henry A. SANDERS (ed.), *Beati in Apocalipsin*, Rome, American Academy in Rome, 1930, p. 368.

[88] John WILLIAMS, *The Illustrated Beatus*, London, 2003. Williams examines and documents the illustrated manuscripts of Beatus of Liebana's *Commentary on the Apocalypse*. The fifth volume of the set deals with eight copies dating to the later twelfth and early thirteenth century, all of which appear to be Iberian creations. None of the illustrations appear to consistently depict figures meant to appear as Muslims. In some copies, a few members of the «army of horsemen» from Revelations 9:16 are depicted with turbans, but this is the extent of any deliberate use of Muslim characters as models.

[89] This difficulty has not stopped people from trying to do so. See especially Kevin R. POOLE (note 86). Others, such as D. F. RUGGLES, *Representation and Identity in Medieval Spain*, in Ross BRANN (9ed.), *Languages of Power in Islamic Spain*, Bethesda, Maryland, CDL Press, 1997, pp. 76-106, are more cautious. Still, it is commonplace to interpret Beatus as a «narrative about an external enemy's palpable threat», as does Linda SEIDEL, *Apocalypse and Apocalypticism in Western Medieval Art*, in Bernard McGINN (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism* Vol. 2, New York, Continuum, 1999, p. 470.

[90] Rosemary Muir WRIGHT, *Art and the Antichrist in Medieval Europe*, Manchester, 1995, p. 54.

[91] Bernard MCGINN, *Angel Pope and Papal Antichrist*, in *Church History*, 47 (1978), p. 159.

rily timeless and triumphant character of these (apocalyptic) motifs» as allegories seems to have been the norm in the period in question, rather than a literal expectation of impending end-times[92].

But if, in practice, the polemical or propagandistic use of apocalyptic images and texts does not require a certainty about the impending end of the world, surely it requires a certainty about who the enemy is. After all, the church triumphant must prevail over an external enemy, and in the years immediately following the victory at Las Navas, that enemy was certainly Islam. However, this apocalyptic explication of the conflict between Christendom and Islam, which was a common interpretation of crusading activity, was clearly not the only possible reaction to the Andalusian culture which still predominated in Toledo. If Iberian Islam could play the metaphorical role of Anti-Christ in an eschatological vision of current events, clearly it could also represent an admired, emulated culture.

The fact that a crusade could be waged against the Almohads and memorialized with apocalyptic images by the same society which enjoyed Muslim-made luxuries, and integrated Islamic decor into Christian churches immediately alerts us to the fact that an easy dichotomy between intolerance and tolerance, of religious violence and *convivencia* cannot provide an adequate picture of the people and events discussed here. Holy war was but one possible reaction to the Islamic culture which surrounded, inspired, and threatened the Christians of Spain. The deployment of various interpretations was a process subject to political, military, and economic forces and events[93]. Extraordinary events, such as the military conflict which preceded the momentous victory in 1212, might lend themselves to dramatic and exuberant visions of the confrontation between good and evil. But these excited outbursts were in competition with the more prosaic process of daily coexistence. The enemy was a Muslim, to be sure, but so were the neighbors. In the early thirteenth century, Islamic culture still predominated in the Iberian Peninsula. Spanish Christians lived in this culture, and with Muslims, Mozarabs, and Arabicized Jewish communities. It is

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[92] Peter KLEIN, p. 161. See also Yves CHRISTE, note 73. Bernard Mcginn, however, cautions that this «ecclesiological» interpretation of the Apocalypse «never completely overcame the sense that the book also contained a message about the coming end of time». Bernard MCGINN, *Symbols of the Apocalypse in medieval culture*, in *Michigan Quarterly Review*, 22 (1983), p. 270. In the same essay, he notes that the symbolic use of the Apocalypse «is deliberately polyvalent insofar as it attempts to manifest diverse aspects of a reality that by definition cannot be grasped by the human intellect», 266. This works well with Kendall's description of the allegory of the Romanesque church (see note 48). The best recent discussion of Christian apocalypticism as a historical vision, not necessarily tied to an imminent millennial vision, is Brett WHALEN, *The Dominion of God: Christendom and Apocalypse in the Middle Ages*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2009.

[93] Here I generally am following David Nirenberg (note 3), and his insistence that the interaction between different religious communities in the Middle Ages was governed by the negotiation of competing claims in their local and temporal context and not the monolithic influence of a persecuting discourse.

not surprising, therefore, that their reaction to a crusading tradition, which necessarily imagined a black and white relationship with the Muslim world, was ambivalent and often contingent upon local concerns.

Here again it is worth remembering another observation made by Professor Glick, who pointed out that too often Spanish historiography assumes that «ethnic conflict and cultural diffusion are mutually exclusive phenomena»[94]. Conflict between religiously coterminous societies does not necessarily interrupt the natural cultural processes which happen when two groups occupy the same geographic space. This observation helps remind us of the complexity of Spanish and Medieval culture. It is both singularly fascinating and intellectually challenging to think of these processes taking place within the walls of a church constructed by the Order of the Hospital in celebration of a triumphant crusade victory.

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[94] Thomas GLICK, p. 184. For a similar sentiment, see D. F. RUGGLES, p. 92 or Jerrilynn DODDS, *Islam, Christianity, and the Problem of Religious Art*, p. 30.