

on the road: the camino de santiago

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The cultural transformations that occurred in the western kingdoms of Spain during the last third of the eleventh century are comparable to those undergone in Great Britain during the same period, that is, in the time following the Norman conquest. We could even say that Spain came close to having its own 1066, if we accept the declaration in the *Historia Compostellana* that Bishop Diego Peláez was dismissed in 1088 because Alfonso VI suspected him of wanting to surrender Galicia to the Normans. We know from Wace's *Roman de Brut* that the horse William the Conqueror rode at Hastings had been bred in Santiago, but we shall never know whether the monarch had it in mind personally to return the steed to its homeland.

The year 1088 also saw the beginning of construction on the third church at Cluny, an event with manifold significance in Spanish history. The enormous cultural and artistic debt Spain owed to Cluny was in a sense paid with interest through financial contributions made by the kings of León toward the maintenance of the Burgundian abbey. It has been calculated that half of the cost of building the church of Saint Hugh was met by Spanish gold. Whatever such economic bloodletting meant for the treasury of León, it seems to have had its effect on the architectural enterprises undertaken by Alfonso VI (d. 1109) in his own kingdom. It is significant that the beginning of Cluny III in 1088 coincided with an interruption or reduction in the flow of funds for the construction of the cathedral at Santiago de Compostela, following the discharge and incarceration of its prelate. While the revenues of the vacant see of Compostela were confiscated by Alfonso VI, Cluny received a single gift of ten thousand dinars from the monarch, and one of its monks, Bernard d'Auch, was elevated to the metropolitan see of Toledo, newly restored to its former primacy over all the churches of Spain. It is far from accurate to present Cluny as the principal promoter of the cult of Saint James and of pilgrimages to Santiago—at least during the period that concerns us here.

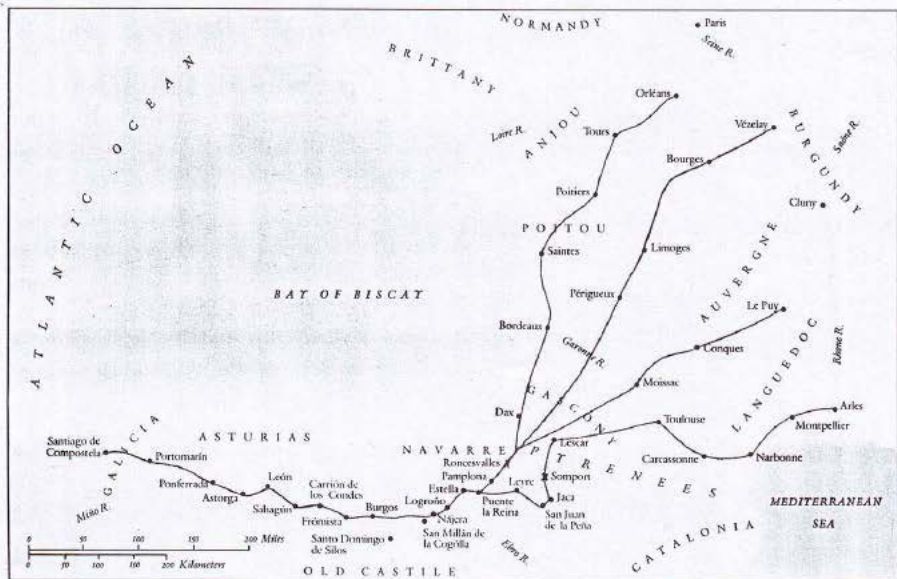
Alfonso's attitude toward Compostela had been very different during the early years of his reign. His first official act after the recovery of his kingdom in 1072 was to abolish the toll levied on pilgrims and merchants in Santa María de Autares at the gateway to Galicia. The monarch's patronage of the new cathedral of Santiago, probably begun in 1075, is well corrob-

orated. Bernard F. Reilly and Fernando López Alsina have called our attention to a document that records that Alfonso was in Compostela in December 1074 and January 1075 to preside over a great council attended by eight bishops and the principal magnates of his kingdom.¹ The decision to reconstruct the cathedral of Santiago was probably made at this solemn gathering, as suggested by the document and by the inscriptions accompanying images of Alfonso VI and Bishop Diego Peláez carved on two of the capitals in the cathedral's Chapel of the Savior.²

The council's purpose, according to the document, was "the restoration of the faith of the church," suggesting that the council was concerned with Gregorian reform, particularly the imposition of the Roman liturgy on the peninsular kingdoms. The most recent instruction from Rome on this subject would have been the letter sent by Gregory VII to Alfonso VI in the spring of 1074 in which the pope pressed the king to forsake the ancient Spanish rite and replace it with the Roman liturgy. This demand was preceded by a short version of the history of Spain that could not have pleased Alfonso. The letter stated that Spain was evangelized by Saint Paul and by seven envoys from Rome but that its faith and its rites had subsequently been tarnished by the Priscillian and Arian heresies as well as by invasions of Goths and Muslims. A return to the original communion between Rome and the Spanish churches required the abandonment of a liturgy suspected of heresy.

Ecclesiastical and architectural history have often traveled divergent roads. At the same time that it was decided to reconstruct the church of Santiago with a grandeur rare for its time, Rome was preparing to disavow, with eloquent silence, traditions regarding the role Saint James played in the evangelization of Spain and regarding the discovery of his body at Compostela. One is tempted to believe that the undertaking of a new cathedral was part of the response of the king and his court to the papal exhortation. The "restoration of the faith of the church" required by the pope would be rooted in Spain in the sepulcher of Saint James. This enterprise was directed toward tradition and purity but was manifested in an architecture that was both exotic and novel.

A possible reflection of the decision taken at the council of 1074–75 is suggested in the *Historia Turpini*, included in the



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compilation *Liber Sancti Jacobi*. This fabulous account in epic form of Charlemagne's campaigns in Spain often appropriated and transformed historical events in which the real royal protagonist was Alfonso VI. Such seems to be the case with the emperor's visits to Compostela, which are narrated in chapters 5 and 19. In both instances Charlemagne is presented as restorer of the church of Santiago, generously contributing some of the booty won from the Saracens. As Bernard Reilly has pointed out,³ it is very likely that during his visit to Compostela in 1074–75 Alfonso VI made an offering to the apostle of part of the thirty thousand gold dinars he had just received as tribute from the Muslim king of Granada and that the gold was used to finance the construction of the new cathedral. Moreover, the *Historia Turpinii* refers to the consecration of the cathedral by Archbishop Turpin, at the behest of Charlemagne, on the occasion of a "council of bishops and princes" celebrated there.⁴ The resolutions of this assembly led to the de facto recognition of Compostela as the apostolic and primatial see of Spain.

It is therefore possible that at the great council of 1074–75 Alfonso VI encouraged the apostolic ambitions of the church of Santiago. No direct record remains of accords that might have proven embarrassing after the resolution of the liturgical question, which took place in 1080, and the restoration of the primacy of Toledo. The information that is available, how-



Capital bearing the inscription **REGNANTE PRINCIPE ADEPONSO CONSTRUCTUM OPUS** (This work was constructed by the reigning king, Alfonso). Santiago de Compostela. Photo: Photo Zodiaque

lamic invasion, and ironically both churches found their ambitions frustrated by the advance of a reconquest whose spiritual goals they fervently supported.

In any case, Compostela already had a significance that placed it somewhat above the peninsula's complex ecclesiastical politics. The council of 1074–75 provided the opportunity to rebuild its church, but in fact that undertaking was already necessitated by an ever greater influx of pilgrims from western Europe. Moreover, it does not seem coincidental that the existence of the Arca Santa was revealed at the same time that construction was beginning on a new cathedral for Saint James. The Oviedo church wanted not only to establish itself as the legitimate heir to Toledo but also to emulate Compostela and become an international center for pilgrimages. It appears that even before the end of the eleventh century the list of relics contained in the Arca was circulating in northern France.

Another royal endeavor of 1075 was the initiation of work on the Romanesque cathedral of Burgos, constructed on the grounds of a palace, donated by Alfonso VI, which stood on the road already known as the Camino de Santiago.⁶ The mention in 1092 of altars dedicated to Saint James and to Saint Nicholas, patron saint of travelers, confirms a deliberate intention to link the Burgos Cathedral with pilgrimages to the shrine of Saint James.

In the 1073 act of consecration for the León Cathedral he himself restored, another Pelayo, the bishop of León, proudly proclaimed that he had been a student at the church of Santiago. Pelayo's loyal defense of the interests of Compostela and of pilgrimages to the church there is noted in important documents of Ferdinand I and Alfonso VI; the prelate also founded a hostel for pilgrims in León in 1084.⁷

Pelayo's predecessor, Alvito, may have harbored higher ambitions for his church. Sent to Seville by Ferdinand I in 1063 to bring back the relics of Saint Justa, he was unable to find them and had to content himself with the remains of Saint Isidore, who revealed their location to him in a dream. This use of the scholar of Seville as an impromptu replacement for an unavailable candidate expresses an important hagiographic belief: it is the saints, not their devotees, who decide the destiny of their relics. In choosing León, Isidore transferred to it the prestige of the see of Seville, which, because of his unrivaled authority, might be regarded as having superseded Toledo. Alvito died before returning to León; perhaps lost with him was a glorification of his city not unlike that attempted in Compostela and Oviedo years later.

The resting place of the relics of Saint Isidore was not León's cathedral of Santa María but its church of San Juan Bautista, recently rebuilt by Ferdinand I (1018–1065) and now named for the saint of Seville. There Ferdinand had established the pantheon that would legitimize his dynasty—intruders in the kingdom of León—and there the monarch died as a penitent, an event commemorated in the vast iconographical program of the narthex his daughter Urraca added to the church between

1072 and 1101. This establishment of a royal pantheon was a form of *translatio imperii*, one that was more effective than futile efforts to inherit Toledo's ecclesiastical primacy. León had displaced Oviedo in the tenth century, and then under Ferdinand I—Navarrese by paternal lineage and Castilian on his mother's side—had itself been on the verge of being supplanted by the monasteries of San Salvador de Oña and San Pedro de Arlanza in Castile. León's ultimate victory in the contest for spiritual leadership was not, however, definitive. In the same years that the narthex of San Isidoro de León was being built, one of his sons, Alfonso VI, chose the Leonese abbey of Sahagún for his family pantheon and made it the head of a broad monastic empire reformed along French lines. In 1080 the Cluniac monk Bernard d'Auch (later archbishop of Toledo) was put in charge of Sahagún itself, which became the Saint-Denis and Cluny of the kingdoms of León and Castile. With these arrangements Alfonso paid a double debt: to



Pillar showing the Apostle Thomas touching the wound in the side of the risen Christ. Santo Domingo de Silos (Burgos). Photo: Joseph Martin

the Leonese abbey and to the Burgundian ones whose intercession had secured his freedom after his defeat at the hands of his brother, Sancho II of Castile, in the battle of Golpejera (1072). That is, at any rate, the Cluniac version of events, and Alfonso's generosity to Cluny after he recovered his kingdom seems to bear it out.

The gift of San Isidro de Dueñas, made to the Cluniac order in 1073, was followed by an additional half-dozen monasteries, among them Santa María la Real de Nájera (1079); the latter gifts were made after Alfonso had added a portion of Navarre to the kingdoms already in his possession—León, Galicia, and Castile. The fact that the greater number of these monasteries, like Sahagún, were located along the Camino de Santiago is not as significant as it might first appear to be. If Cluny and other institutions sought proximity to the bustle of the camino, the camino itself had earlier been laid out so that it passed through the most powerful centers in the Hispanic kingdoms, both urban and monastic. All the royal cities—Jaca, Pamplona, Nájera, Burgos, and León—were on that route, and most of the royal pantheons were either on it or nearby: San Juan de la Peña, San Salvador de Leyre, Santa María de Nájera, Las Huelgas de Burgos, Sahagún, San Isidoro de León, and Santiago. In founding a hostel in León, Bishop Pelayo had been

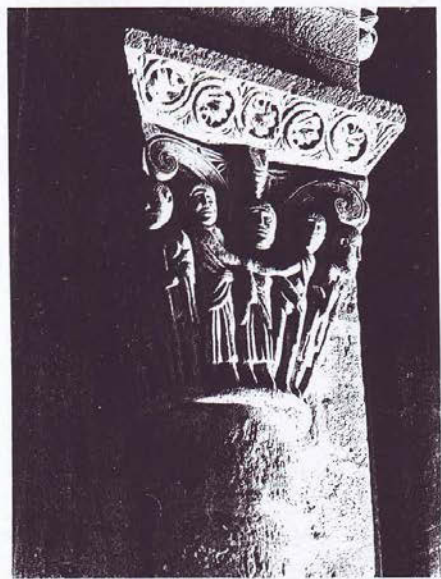
conscious that the pilgrims offered the prayers "for the king, for the bishop, for all the clergy."

Proximity to the camino did not, however, always mean unconditional adherence to the cause of Saint James. A Gascon cripple on his way to Compostela was said to have been healed in Carrión through the intercession of Saint Zoilus, whose relics were venerated there. The healed man was thus able to return home without a further pilgrimage to Compostela. This disloyal competition came out of a monastery donated to Cluny in 1076 by Condesa Teresa Díaz, who also bequeathed to the abbey a hostel and a bridge on the camino.

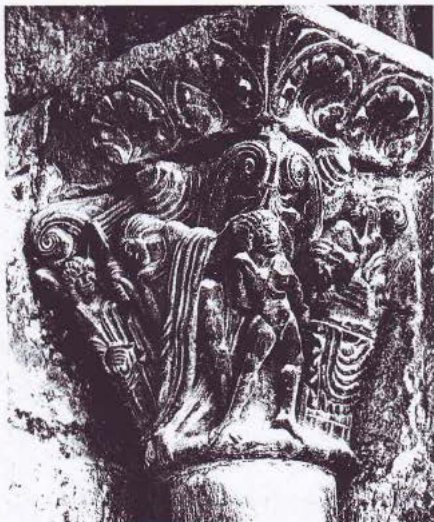
Interestingly Gascony was the home of Bernard d'Auch, and in that province are found the closest parallels to the sculpture at San Martín de Frómista—a structure related in turn to what remains of the monasteries and priories in Tierra de Campos that were sympathetic to or dependent upon Cluny: Carrión, Sahagún, San Salvador de Nogal, and San Isidro de Dueñas. Although the first two are on the Camino de Santiago, Nogal and Dueñas are not. Artistic development along the camino, erroneously thought to be the key to the origins of monumental sculpture in the western kingdoms of Spain, does not seem as pertinent here as the network of relationships within the monastic empire of Cluny. It is in the coveted mesopotamia of the Cea and Pisuerga rivers that Charles J. Bishko sets the *praeparatio* for Cluny, dating from the time of the intervention of Sancho III, el Mayor, of Navarre (r. 1000–1035) into the affairs of Castile and León.⁸

We may more properly speak of a "Camino de Santiago art" beginning on the day that the principal sculptor of Frómista abandoned the workshop of that Castilian church and transferred his attention to Jaca in Aragon. While the traces of his passage through Nájera testify to his connection with Cluny, his production was prolific at the cathedral in Jaca and then extended as far as Toulouse and, retracing the camino, back to León and Compostela. At that time the camino was not only a channel for artistic interchange, it was an industry. The cities on the road were taking on the monumental character that still defines them, and an intense demand for construction concentrated in a limited period of time resulted in a large group of homogenous works that allow us to speak of a "Camino de Santiago" architecture and sculpture.

It is true that in some respects the churches of León and Compostela anticipated Frómista and Jaca. The narthex of San Isidoro in León is, however, more an exercise of dynastic affirmation than a sanctuary on the camino, and the declared Francophilia of Alfonso VI and his court shaped this pioneering Romanesque version of the traditional Hispanic pantheon. As for the cathedral at Compostela, in its inception it is better understood as a pilgrimage church than as the fruit of an art of the camino. The sculptural enrichment of its first campaign, with roots in Conques, Auvergne, and the southwest of France, uses some basic features of the *jaqués* capital; in general, however, the architectural style would long be an exotic import in



Capital. San Martín de Frómista. Photo: Photo Zodiaque



Capital showing the Sacrifice of Isaac. Cathedral of Jaca (Huesca). Photo: Photo Zodiaque



Capital showing Balaam, who rides an ass, being confronted by an angel with a drawn sword. Cathedral of Jaca (Huesca). Photo: Photo Zodiaque

Spain. Only in the cathedral of Braga, consecrated in 1089, may a similar style have been attempted, although Braga is closer to Sainte-Foy-de-Conques, according to Manuel L. Real. The rivalry between the metropolitan see of Braga and its sister at Compostela had then an architectural prologue.

Jaca, on the other hand, owed everything to the camino or, more accurately, to the roads that intersected it. Jaca was situated at the foot of the Somport Pass, where the trade route began that linked the kingdoms beyond the Pyrenees with the rich Spanish *taifas* and that the merchants and pilgrims followed toward Navarre, Castile, León, and Galicia. Once a simple defensive castle, by 1077 Jaca was a flourishing city and episcopal see. The kingdom of Navarre had by then disappeared; King Sancho Ramírez thus found himself in possession of the two doorways to the camino through the Pyrenees, emblems of the double function—trade and pilgrimage—that made the road so important. The battle of Roncesvalles, which was lost by the French under Charlemagne's commander Roland, was transformed in legend into a victory over the Saracens, and the Reconquest was glorified, in the French interest, as an exploit of Charlemagne. (We have seen how tribute from the king of Granada that Alfonso VI donated to help finance construction of the cathedral at Compostela was transformed in the *Historia Turpinii* into booty Charlemagne had exacted from the Muslims.) Jaca, in contrast, offers exemplary testimony to

the significance of the Camino de Santiago, which served as the hub of the commercial revolution and renaissance in Spanish cities. According to a document that is suspect in form and context but perhaps has a basis of truth, the cathedral at Jaca was financed by the very prosaic rental income from the customs office at Canfranc in the Somport region.

In the end the continuing progress of the Reconquest left Jaca an urban backwater. After the recapture of Huesca in 1096 and of Saragossa in 1118, Romanesque art had for all practical purposes reached its southern boundaries in Aragon, the same outcome that had occurred in Castile with the recovery of Toledo in 1085. As was the case when Rome confronted Greece, in Spain the conquered ended by defeating their conquerors, who were captivated by the culture and arts of those they had vanquished.

In the north Pamplona and Compostela were to succeed Jaca. It is documented that in 1101 one master Esteban worked on the Pamplona Cathedral, the same Esteban who also was—or had been—partly responsible for the cathedral in Compostela. Aside from the doubtful sculpting career that has been claimed for him, our knowledge of Esteban's movements from place to place seems to substantiate our observation of a common style in the monumental decoration of churches along the camino during the first decades of the twelfth century, from Jaca and Toulouse to Compostela and passing through

Pamplona and León. Along with other names of French, Aragonese, and Leonese derivation, an Esteban appears on the list of wayfarers (*viatores*)—roadworkers and travelers alike—who, according to the guidebook *Liber Sancti Jacobi*, were engaged in maintaining the camino.⁹

A similar mobility is found among the patrons who employed these artisans. Pedro de Rodez, the prelate who commissioned Esteban to work at Pamplona, had come from Saint-Pons-de-Thomières and had been a novice at Sainte-Foy-de-Conques. His presence in Compostela was recorded in 1105 when his friend Bishop Diego Gelmírez allowed him to consecrate the chapel dedicated to the martyr of Conques in the cathedral at Compostela. About 1110 Pedro de Rodez made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and five years later he died during a popular uprising in Toulouse, the city of his birth. The interest this prelate evidenced in Roncesvalles has prompted speculation that he played some role in elaborating and localizing the epic of Roland. Taken together, the names of the places that mark out his career compose a vast geography of the pilgrimage culture.

Just as Cluny had been involved in Compostela's fall from favor in 1088, so too was it behind the spectacular resurgence of Compostela during the last years of the eleventh century. Bishop Dalmacio had come from Cluny, and during his brief tenure he was responsible for the de jure establishment of the see of Iria-Compostela in the city of Compostela (1095) and its exemption from dependence on any authority other than Rome, which at that time was governed by another Cluniac, Pope Urban II. Dalmacio consecrated the altar of Saint James in Cluny, and Diego Gelmírez, his successor at Compostela, knew very well that the arduous road between Rome and Compostela was paradoxically shortened by a detour through the great Burgundian abbey. Gelmírez arrived there about 1104, seeking the support and counsel of Abbot Hugh before he made his appearance at the papal court to apply for the privileges of the pallium (a vestment worn by an archbishop). In his personal journey the stations on the caminos leading toward Santiago become indistinguishable from the most important Cluniac establishments of southern and central France: Saint-Mont, Auch, Toulouse, Moissac, Limoges. Gelmírez thus could be said to have reconciled, *avant la lettre*, the opposing theses proposed by Arthur Kingsley Porter and Jean Hubert to explain the diffusion of French Romanesque sculpture: along the pilgrimage routes, according to the American scholar, and through channels that linked Cluny with its southern priories, according to the French one.¹⁰

Twenty years later Gelmírez would evoke the designs of monasteries and cathedrals he knew "beyond the pass" to justify his intention of donating a cloister with attached chapter rooms to the cathedral in Compostela. His experiences as a traveler bore immediate fruit for the work in Compostela, however, beginning with his first visit to Rome in 1099. From Rome he carried ideas and models, and he found artisans to carry out his

designs in the many lively workshops along the camino. The ciborium and the confessio he donated to the sanctuary of Santiago and the *paradusius*, or atrium, that extended across its north facade were explicit quotations from Saint Peter's in Rome. The ornate decoration of the two facades of Santiago's transept combined the handiwork of artists and workshops from Conques, Toulouse, Moissac, Frómista, Jaca, and Loarre; some of the artisans subsequently took the road to León and Pamplona. Compostela thus anthologized the art of the routes that led to it, conferring on all the distinctive stamp of a Camino de Santiago art.

The pilgrimages to Compostela were not, of course, the only factor in the artistic flowering along the camino. Even without pilgrimages, the road that linked all the Hispanic kingdoms from Aragon to Galicia to the rest of Europe would hardly have been without importance. The dynasties ruling those kingdoms would still have expressed their power through ambitious architectural undertakings, and tribute paid by Islamic kingdoms would still have financed building programs. Cluny would still have sought the generosity of Leonese monarchs, and those monarchs would have pursued the spiritual and worldly influence of the Burgundian monastic empire. Rome would still have imposed its discipline upon the Spanish church, which for its part would still have been noted for innovative architectural and iconographic programs. French merchants, crusaders, and colonists would still have made their way through the passes of the Pyrenees, drawn by prospects of commerce or conquest. With the frontier of Toledo not yet secure, the economic spine of the Christian kingdoms could only have been this road which, even without the pilgrims, would have been called "French."

These remarks are not intended to diminish the immense cultural and civilizing impact of the pilgrimages honoring Saint James; rather I want to acknowledge the pilgrimages' catalytic effect on other important phenomena. Reconquest, repopulation, commerce, urban rebirth, the consolidation of the peninsula's monarchies, and Gregorian and Cluniac reforms all found their stimulus in the pilgrimages, but even beyond that the pilgrimages created an audience, a clientele, a sphere of powerful resonance. The camino represented a privileged means of communication in the traffic not only of goods and peoples but also of information. Everything that was said, preached, sung, recounted, sculpted, or painted along the camino—called the *strata publica*, or public way—reached many people and traveled great distances. Without the pilgrimages Spain would still have witnessed the production of Romanesque art, but that art would have lacked the integrity, monumentality, and consistency that came from its origins on the long and prosperous camino.

The *Historia Silense* attributes the laying out of the Camino de Santiago to a single man, Sancho III, el Mayor, of Navarre, although it misstates the historical circumstances that generated such an enterprise. Closer to fact is the version in the *Crónica*

Najerense, where the establishment of the camino is mentioned after an account of the expansion of Sancho's power beyond Navarre to Castile and León. It is logical that, for reasons of strategy and government, the monarch would have wanted to create an artery for travel and communication throughout his domains. The existence of a single Camino de Santiago helped achieve an ephemeral political unity, and later in the century the consciousness of the road's unique character fostered the monumental urban character that still defines it. The five kingdoms that resulted from the legacy of Sancho III, el Mayor, and his sons would by the time of Alfonso VI and Sancho Ramírez be reduced to two. These latter monarchs and their

followers provided the impulse for an art that had as its territory a camino without frontiers.

NOTES

1. Reilly 1988, p. 84; López Alsina 1988, pp. 410-11.
2. Moralejo 1992a, pp. 212-13.
3. Reilly 1988, p. 84.
4. Moralejo, Torres, and Feo 1951, p. 456.
5. Pelayo refers to Solomon and to the protection of the mountains in his *Liber testamentorum*; see García Larragueta 1962, pp. 511-12.
6. Karge 1989, pp. 27-28.
7. Vázquez de Parga, Lacarra, and Uria 1948-49, vol. 2, pp. 254-55.
8. Bishko 1980.
9. Moralejo, Torres, and Feo 1951, p. 509.
10. Porter 1923, vol. 1, pp. 171ff.; Hubert 1977, pp. 41-77, 79-86.