

THE HAGIOGRAPHICAL LEGEND: SPREAD, SURVIVAL AND INFLUENCE ON THE RELIGIOUS TRADITION OF THE MIDDLE AND MODERN AGES

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to show the diffusion, survival and influence of the Christian medieval legendary in a corpus of historiographic sources. In this case, it is about how the tales of the Sevillian Saints Justa and Rufina, included in the *Pasionario Hispánico*, the most important hagiographic-liturgical collection in Spain and widely known in the Visigoth and Mozarab epochs, became ecclesiastical and urban stories, adapted and updated in function of the lay and ecclesiastical values and ideals. Thus, we consider that the religious and cultural tradition that grew up around the above-mentioned saints from the late antiquity was kept alive through written works. These served a clearly edifying purposes for faithful and devout Christians, with narrations that served to exalt their hometown, the city of Seville, ennobled by the illustrious patrons who, with their “tangible presence” demonstrated through their relics and miracles, sacralised it and protected its inhabitants during the Reconquest and everyday necessities.

KEY WORDS

Legendary, Hagiography, Sevillian Saints, Miracles, Relics.

CAPITALIA VERBA

Fabulae, Hagiographia, Sancti Hispalenses, Miracula, Reliquiae.

Hagiography is the literary genre of Christian culture which, born in Late Antiquity, evokes the lives of saints in order to perpetuate their memory, indoctrinate and edify the faithful with the emulation of virtues and paradigmatic acts which offer behavioural models or *exemplum*, and spread their cult throughout the community.¹ In the midst of this type of literary constructions inspired by religious devotions and beliefs, we find the *legendarios* [legends] which were texts that, intended for liturgical reading, celebrated a saint's *dies natales*, that is, the day of death or martyrdom which was seen as the birth into "true life".²

This paper will relate the religious and cultural valuation of one of the most important hagiographical and liturgical collections in Spain, the *Pasionario Hispánico* [Hispanic Passionary] which, formed during the seventh century with the impulse of saint worshiping and the fourth Council of Toledo, continued to be expanded over the following centuries and can be deemed one of the main sources for the knowledge of *medieval legends*. In our case, we will address one of the martyr stories (known as *passions*) about the Sevillian virgins, Saint Justa and Saint Ruffina, in order to analyse the distribution of a text which was part of Visigothic or Mozarabic liturgy and later incorporated into other texts of a historiographical nature. Therefore, in the following pages we will try to demonstrate this text's survival and influence as well as the objectives it acquired in the culture and religious tradition of

1. Interest in hagiographical studies has proven so fructiferous that we felt the need to cite some of the most representative works about Late Antiquity and the Medieval and Modern periods: Brown, Peter. "The rise and function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity". *Journal of Roman Studies*, 61 (1971); Brown, Peter. *The cults of saints. Its rise and function in Latin Christianity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981; Golinelli, Paolo. *Città e culto dei santi nel medioevo italiano*. Bologna: Clueb, 1991; Coelho, Geraldo. *Legendae, vitae, flores: formas e conteúdos da hagiografia em Portugal na Epoca Moderna*. Porto: Centro Inter-Universitário de Historia da Espiritualidade e do Instituto de Cultura Portuguesa, 1996; *Liturgia e agiographia tra Roma e Constantinopoli, Atti del I, II Seminario di studio*. Roma-Grotta: Monastero Esarchico, 2007; Baños, Fernando. *La hagiografía como género literario en la Edad Media*. Oviedo: Universidad de Oviedo, 1989; Baños, Fernando. *Las vidas de santos en la literatura medieval española*. Madrid: Ediciones del Laberinto, 2003; García, Carmen. *El culto de los santos en la España romana y visigoda*. Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas-Instituto Enrique García Flórez, 1966; García, María Ángeles. "La hagiografía medieval. Una particular historiografía. Balance del caso hispano". *Hispania Sacra*, 51/104 (1999); García, María Ángeles. *La praesentia y la virtus. La imagen y la función del santo a partir de la hagiografía castellano-leonesa del siglo XIII*. Burgos: Abadía de Santo Domingo de Silos, 2002; Pérez-Embid, Javier. *Hagiología y sociedad en la España Medieval. Castilla y León (s. XI-XIII)*. Huelva: Universidad de Huelva, 2002; *La hagiografía entre la historia y la literatura en la España de la Edad Media y del Siglo de Oro*, Marc Vitse, Henri Guerreiro, coords. Pamplona-Madrid-Frankfurt am Main: Universidad de Navarra-Iberoamericana-Vervuert, 2006; *La leyenda. Antropología, historia, literatura. Actas del Coloquio celebrado en la Casa de Velázquez 1986*, Jean-Pierre Etienne, ed. Madrid: Casa de Velázquez-Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 1989.

2. The term comes from the Latin "*legenda*" and means "what must be read". Notably, however, research into hagiographical literature has raised different perspectives on the points which the *Passionario* and *Legendarios* share and those which differentiate them. Fábrega Grau specifies that in Spanish liturgical-hagiographical literature, these are "two substantially diverse units". The first is defined as an essentially liturgical book, while the second is exclusively destined for pious reading. In the same way: Philippart, Guy. *Les legendiers latins et autres manuscrits hagiographiques*. Turnhout: Brepols, 1977, explains that they are compilations of stories destined for spiritual or pious reading by an individual or to a group. In a similar way Isabel Vázquez believes that not all old passionaries had a liturgical purpose, and that they could have been designed and composed for other forms of public reading.



the Middle and Modern Ages. To this end we will examine ecclesiastical and urban³ stories because they constitute a corpus of interesting sources for the study of the beliefs, conceptions and values that the Church and communities held sacred and holy. As sources that have come into direct contact with hagiographical narrative, they will enable us to approach the knowledge of official and ecclesiastical discourse as well as religious practises and the popular cult of saints.

1. The hagiographic legend

The *Pasionaries* constitute the most abundant type of *legends* and the most important hagiographical collection.⁴ As regards our case, the *Passio* of Saint Justa and Saint Ruffina was composed after the events it narrates, towards the end of the sixth century or beginning of the seventh, from a short version believed to be written by an eye-witness.⁵ Therefore, the tale in the *Hispanic Pasionary* is a modified later compilation, which gained prominence after their cult had become widespread due to the distribution of their relics in Andalucía and the southern part of the Carthaginian Province.⁶

The stories included in the *Hispanic Pasionary* are chronologically listed by the day and month in which the liturgical calendar commemorated a martyrs' anniversary. That of Justa and Ruffina is July 17th, which Fábrega Grau finds significant because the fact that it was held on the first day of the Adonia festivities indicates that Christians wished to counterpose a Pagan celebration with one dedicated to the martyrs. With this the Church aimed to guide memories and thoughts and channel piety towards the new heroines of the Christian faith.

3. de Morales, Ambrosio. *Las antigüedades de las ciudades de España*. Alcalá de Henares: Casa de Juan Iñiguez de Lequerica, 1575; de Morgado, Alonso. *Historia de Sevilla en la qual se contienen sus antigüedades, grandezas y cosas memorables, en ella acontecidas, desde su fundación hasta nuestros tiempos*. Sevilla: Imprenta de Andrea Pescioni y Juan de León, 1587; de Marieta, Juan. *Historia eclesiástica de todos los santos de España*. Cuenca: Casa de Pedro del Valle Impresor, 1596; Espinosa, Pablo. *Segunda parte de la Historia y grandezas de la ciudad de Sevilla*. Sevilla: Oficina de Iván de Cabrera, 1630; Caro, Rodrigo. *Antigüedades y Principado de la Ilustrísima ciudad de Sevilla y chorographia de su Convento Jurídico o Antigua Chancillería*. Sevilla: Andrés Grande, 1634; de Quintanadueñas, Antonio. *Santos de la ciudad de Sevilla y su arzobispado: fiestas que su santa iglesia metropolitana celebra al ilustrísimo Señor Deán y cabildo de la misma Santa Iglesia*. Sevilla: Francisco de Lyra, 1637; Flórez, Enrique. *España Sagrada. Teatro geográfico-histórico de la Iglesia de España. De las Iglesias sufragáneas antiguas de Sevilla: Abdera, Asido, Astigi y Córdoba*. Madrid: Antonio Marín, 1775: vol. X.

4. Philippart, Guy. "Les Légendiers Latins et autres manuscrits hagiographiques", *Typologie des sources du Moyen Age Occidental*, Léopold Genicot, dir. Turnhout: Brepols, 1977; Castillo, Pedro. "El Pasionario Hispánico como fuente de los mártires hispanorromanos". *Revista de la Facultad de Humanidades de Jaén*, 2/4-5 (1995-1996); Vázquez, Isabel. *Hagiografía y culto a los santos en la Hispania visigoda. Aproximación a sus manifestaciones literarias*. Mérida: Museo Nacional de Arte Romano, 2002: 104.

5. Fábrega, Ángel. *Pasionario Hispánico (siglos VII-XI)*. Madrid-Barcelona: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas-Instituto P. Enrique Flórez, 1953: I, 254. Another study is that of: Riesco, Pilar. *Pasionario Hispánico*, Introducción, edición crítica y traducción. Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla, 1995.

6. Fábrega, Ángel. *Pasionario Hispánico...: I*, 131.



The text's title contains the names of the Saints, that of the judge who inflicted the martyrdom upon them and the city where they were subjected to it.⁷ Moreover, formally the text is subdivided into numbered paragraphs to be distributed according to Divine Office and the time of reading, and includes formulas which prove its liturgical nature —such as the answers listeners gave at the beginning and the end of the tale.

2. Distribution of a model of virtue

In order to promote the cult and veneration of martyrs, every *Passio* contained the formulation of *exemplum*.⁸ To this end, the tale's hagiographer highlighted large contrasts between martyrs and their persecutors, which clearly reflected that stereotypes —typical of the genre— had been created by underlining the contrast between both sides' actions. Therefore, this systematization of the differences between Pagans and Christians was well suited to the tale's didactic purpose, guaranteed all listeners would understand without exception, and was also useful for extracting models of virtue from the saints and martyrs.⁹

With the inclusion of hagiography in the Divine Offices, worshipers easily noticed the dichotomies in the lives of the biographee: the “erring Gentiles”; the perversity (*malignitas*) and cruelty (*crudelitas*) of governor Diogenianus —who embodied the devil— and the compendium of virtues incarnated in Saint Justa and Saint Ruffina: faith (*credulitas*, *fides*, *fiducia*) and love and fraternal charity (*karitas*, *dilectio*, *affectus*, *misericordia*, *unanimitas*, *humanitas*), as expressed in the *Hispanic Passionary*.¹⁰

In the description of the martyrs we notice the edifying intention of the *Passion's* author who tells us that their parents, although poor in worldly goods, were rich in eternal ones; that they were zealous Christians among the Gentile people of Seville and that they lived in the perseverance of virtue and honesty, qualities which he emphasises as tokens of greater esteem.¹¹ As noble and humble pottery makers, the damsels remedied the poverty of others by selling earthenware vessels, vases and bowls. They were recognised for their exemplary and pious life since they only

7. Fábrega, Ángel. *Pasionario Hispánico...*: II, 296.

8. Castellanos, Santiago. *Hagiografía visigoda. Dominio social y proyección cultural*. Logroño: Fundación S. Millán de la Cogolla, 2004; Castillo, Pedro. *Cristianos y hagiógrafos. Estudio de las propuestas de excelencia cristiana en la Antigüedad Tardía*. Madrid: Signifer, 2003; Castillo, Pedro. *Los mártires hispanorromanos y su culto en la Antigüedad Tardía*. Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1999; Castillo, Pedro. “El valor representativo, ejemplar y didáctico de mártires y santos en la Antigüedad Tardía”, *Santos, obispos y reliquias. Actas del III Encuentro Hispania en la Antigüedad Tardía*, Luís García et alii, eds. Alcalá de Henares: Universidad de Alcalá-Servicio de publicaciones, 1998.

9. Fábrega, Ángel. *Pasionario Hispánico...*: 296.

10. Fábrega, Ángel. *Pasionario Hispánico...*: 296.

11. Fábrega, Ángel. *Pasionario Hispánico...*: 296.



kept what was necessary for their sustenance and clothing, giving the rest of their earnings to the needy.¹²

In addition, the hagiographer highlighted another important virtue: the Saints' strength (*fortitudo*) and unbreakable constancy when facing the horrors of torture, which evidences the pedagogical function of religious literature, developed in the context of persecution, at a time when the Christian Church was threatened by the Pagans. Justa and Ruffina refused to worship Salammô (the goddess Venus) whose statue the Gentile were carrying through the streets and the squares and accompanying with dances and rejoicing.

Therefore, they were indicted for refusing to give alms and for knocking down and breaking the processional idol which they rejected as a false god. With this they were stating that their doctrine is "there is only one true God".¹³

Their similar reaction to the aforementioned honour rites being carried out was publicly interpreted as a criminal act of hostility and disruption to the Pagan religion, which first lead to their confinement and later their punishment: they were hung, torn with hooks and deprived of food and drink. What is more, Diogenianus imposed they forcibly take part in the ritual acts —by walking barefoot on the rough Sierra Morena road— in a bold and vain attempt to get them to worship the Pagan idols and renounce their Christian faith by becoming apostates. However, the Saints stood firm in the conviction they were "God's servants" by preaching the Gospel.¹⁴

By contrasting their gentleness and beatitude with the cruelty and anger of their judges and executioners, the hagiographer highlighted how Justa and Ruffina fought for God with pious devotion:¹⁵

Sed, quia semper aduersarius uerteustissimus inimicus in seruos et ancillas Dei emulationis et inuidie sue flamas obiectat, grauissimas penas indicit, ut tormentis seuientibus bene fixas mentes euertat, ungulas et gladios conminatur, ut animas terreat inocentes et dicata Deo corda contubert. Sed quipus debebatur in tanto certamine seuissima pena, simul aderat et parata victoria. Iam tempus certaminis gloriosi ferbebat, et diuinum examen pugne celestes urguebat et spiritualis agonis stadium parabatur nec diutius differri poterant spectacula Dei.

The distribution of this *gesta* [song of heroic deeds] garnered great interest. The tale of their "heroicities", known through the narration of the details of their martyrdom, hardships and sufferings, was meant to encourage devotion, the remembrance of the Passion of Christ. In this way, the *passio* acquired an apologetic tone:¹⁶ *Magna est et plurimum laudabilis constantia uirtutis, que passionis tolerantia coronatur.*

The author's testimony of faith exalted the *imitatio Christi*. With his *exemplum* he presented the victory of Christianity over Paganism, the irreducibility of the

12. Fábrega, Ángel. *Pasionario Hispánico...*: 296. See also the importance of the concept of *charitas* in Christian religion in: Homet, Raquel. "Formas de la caridad en la España visigoda". *Estudios de Historia de España*, 3 (1990).

13. Homet, Raquel. "Formas de la caridad en la España...": 297.

14. Homet, Raquel. "Formas de la caridad en la España...": 297-298.

15. Homet, Raquel. "Formas de la caridad en la España...": 296-297.

16. Homet, Raquel. "Formas de la caridad en la España...": 296.



martyrs who overcame physical and moral suffering without fear and with the help (*auxilium*) of Heaven. Saint Justa and Saint Rufina courageously overcame all the trials of the “fight against evil” and assumed a destiny ordained by God, thus becoming laudably worthy of the celestial crown and, for this reason, worthy of veneration and glorious to be in the “bosom of Abraham”.¹⁷ Thus, their cardinal and theological virtues—the axis around which the others revolved—were used to highlight central figures from the early days of Christianity, who died in the year 287 of Diocletian and Maximian's Empire, a key period when the Hispanic Church was looking for religious and institutional affirmation.

It is known that Late Antiquity bequeathed archetypes of holiness and, among them, those of the martyrs to the Middle Ages. However, in the hagiographical texts these models did not remain stationary, but adapted to the changes suffered by the society for which they were intended, and became mirrors of the values and concerns of the Church and the faithful. Each period has born witness to models of holiness which the literary tradition has passed on, and although the cult of martyrs in the Iberian Peninsula was renewed in Mozarabic writings and became apologetic in the ninth century with the Muslim persecution of Christians—which especially increased the examples in the Andalusian calendar of saints' days—, hagiographical interest did not decisively shift towards new models of Christian perfection such as bishops, confessors and members of monastic and secular orders until the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. For this reason, since Late Antiquity's liturgical and hagiographical source was passed on to other works of a religious, pious and historiographical nature written later on, it is interesting to analyse how this period influenced the historical and cultural future. What models of virtue could the saints-martyrs' *vitae* offer to societies which lived in times of religious intolerance to Christianity? What scope would they have in a world which was so different from the one which produced their model of holiness? How would literature and historiography distribute the message to the faithful and make it comparable to the ideals of society, without it appearing unusual and difficult to imitate?

The large quantity of texts produced in Latin and vernacular in the Peninsula during the Middle Ages, leaves us with no doubts that hagiography was the most prolific genre of the time and that it became general reading over the following centuries. These texts gained enormous popularity in the sixteenth century, since religious and historiographical works captured the Church's concerns for spreading Catholic principles and the cult and devotion of saints, driven by the intense impact of the Protestant Reformation in Europe. By using the *Hispanic Passionary* and its hagiographical tales, the Church aimed to instruct, teach and transmit doctrines and ethical-moral principles, highlight a range of values needed to guide Christians, weigh up virtues that offer examples and indicate the road to perfection so that people would imitate the saints. Therefore, *exemplum* and *imitatio* formed the main binomial of secular and ecclesiastical author's discourses.¹⁸ Who but the saints

17. Homet, Raquel. “Formas de la caridad en la España...”: 298-299.

18. Arizaleta, Amaia; Cazal, Françoise; González, Luís; Güell, Monique; Rodríguez, Teresa. *Pratiques hagiographiques dans l'Espagne du Moyen Age et du Siècle d'Or*. Toulouse: Centre National de la Recherche



constituted, in a religious sense, mirrors where everyone should look? So the Church tried to decisively influence the spirituality and way of living of the faithful, by turning the saints' virtues into the "aim of everybody's actions".¹⁹

However, we ask ourselves, which were the dissemination means used to make contact with models of holiness, or the channels for transmitting stereotypes? What chance had society of accessing them to know them? It should be noted that religious experiences differed according to the membership to a particular stratum of society, and that only some could access the knowledge of the hagiographies through the written word. The majority of Christians established this contact through the spoken word, during mass, predictions and sermons. Although the dissemination of saints' lives written in vernacular brought society closer to them, sermons and the spoken word were safer channels for popular dissemination when we take into account that the majority of the population was illiterate. Moreover, religious Councils recommended the advantages of public exposure, processions and imagery worshipping through the city streets when celebrating Saint's Days, because the figures might be seen, known and revered by people who did not attend church.

Nonetheless, hagiographies received new impetus in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries because they were distributed in broadsheets, ballads, poems and romances, devotion manuals and stories, mainly aimed at those who had access to reading. As a result, these texts constituted a means of spiritual formation for privileged classes such as the nobility or urban oligarchy —which showed an interest in culture, knowledge and moral, religious and intellectual perfection. Moreover, they served as rules for life which helped their readers and the faithful to complete the guidance received from the clergy. Studies about readers, books and libraries lead us to think that they were also an external sign of devotion at a time when "to be or appear to be a good Christian", especially for the converts, was extremely important, in a sense that possession of such texts could be evidence of one's religiousness. Furthermore, they have highlighted the role of major lineages and noblewomen that, due to their link with churches and religious orders and being founders or exercising patronage, are seen as the main recipients and transmission agents of models of religiousness.

What is more, hagiographical tales were included in chronicles and stories, which were the most characteristic and representative genre in stately and noble libraries, because they were believed to have a teaching use —given that they taught positive behaviours to be followed and negative ones to be avoided— and they discussed saints' intervention in large enterprises during the Reconquest that, in turn, contributed to the building of a National identity in which the nobility had taken part. Therefore, these books were valued as they helped to preserve the historical memory of this stratum's antecedents and to justify its dominance as a privileged class.²⁰

Scientifique-Université de Toulouse-Le Mirail, 2007.

19. de Marieta, Juan. *Historia eclesiástica de todos los santos...*

20. Beceiro, Isabel. *Libros, lectores y bibliotecas en la España Medieval*, Murcia: Nausícaä, 2007.



This distribution was further made possible with the development of the printing press, which played a key role as the spoken tradition of transmitting the essential Christian values gave way to the intensification of communication through the written tradition, intended for a literate sector of society. As a result, hagiographic tales in their various forms had multiple recipients: Kings, clerics, prelates, monks, nuns, laic men and women and nobility. In this varied audience lay the widespread success of editorial distribution because the reading of religious themes played an essential role in the configuration of private and communitary devotion.

Besides extolling the Church, awakening sensitivity and spirituality and demonstrating religious and moral values, books were a way of displaying examples, teaching virtues and influencing behaviours and individual and collective attitudes. This idea, which refers to one of the aims of the hagiographical genre we are studying, was based on the fact that to know and read about the laudable and glorious deeds of saints should inspire and awaken the same qualities in society. This rhetorical religious tradition, which humanists used to weigh up their own *vitae*, was also used to exalt cities and their inhabitants because “loor” or praise was applied to “eminent citizens”: the local saints and martyrs who, with their glorious actions, eternized the popularity of cities and their dioceses, ennobled their “homeland” with their heavenly crowns and enriched their churches with their virtues and relics.

A fragment from Saint Chrysostom collected by Antonio Quintanadueñas, a Spanish monk from the Society of Jesus, well illustrates the meaning saints had when considered “egregious examples for the different stratum”:

*Esclarecida gloria de las Iglesias, superior lustre de las ciudades, crecida honra de sus ciudadanos... con su sangre derramada por christo ennoblecieron sus patrias, fertilizándolas con tal riego, para que diessen sagrados frutos.*²¹

In his work he demonstrates that the Church —the ideological system's main configurating institution, generated archetypes of perfection which constituted true frameworks.

Antonio Quintanadueñas asked himself, how can we imitate what we do not know? How do we follow what we cannot see? What impact can examples that cannot be heard have? Hence this interest to present an account of Saint's lives, the story of their exploits, to weigh up their virtues, to be aware of their examples and to know the story of their martyrdom.

The inhabitants of a city could come to identify with those who protected them, that is, with their saints and martyrs, to the extent that they could assimilate and implement their qualities and virtues. Just as Saint Justa and Saint Ruffina had dressed poor like Christ, accommodated pilgrims, fed the hungry and gave a drink to the thirsty, the Sevillans found in these Saints —as in many others— examples

21. *Illustrious glory of the Churches, superior luster of cities, high honour of its citizens... with the blood shed for Christ they ennobled their homeland, fertilizing it with such a flow so that it could give sacred fruits.* De Quintanadueñas, Antonio. *Santos de la ciudad de Sevilla y su arzobispado...*: 46, cap. X.



which were “so close, so close to home, so close to the heart” that they effectively moved them to imitation.²²

Friar Juan de Marieta also discussed a similar idea about the lesson offered by the “good books”, because through examples God spoke to the soul, ignited the heart, moved the will, and by reading the lives of saints the faithful would find a “cure for all illnesses”.²³

In accordance with these premises, the transmission of the hagiographical tale about the Saints could not omit the imitable aspect of their lives, and, for this reason, it revalued their pious role so that, by rescuing an image which was closer and more accessible, it would serve as an example to the faithful. Therefore, the distribution of the cult of Saint Justa and Saint Ruffina fed feelings of Christian piety which, in turn, became paradigms of individual and collective behaviour that, in Sevillian society, crystallised in the foundation of guilds, churches, chapels and hospitals placed under their patronage.²⁴

Ecclesiastical and urban stories dedicated to Seville strived to prove that the city where the Saints had been born and suffered martyrdom and where they exerted their patronage surpassed other places in terms of devotion, with many pious and religious institutions having been founded in their memory.²⁵ Evidence of this can be seen in the temples dedicated to them: one of the first was carved by Saint Leander as a tomb for himself and his brothers and is located next to the Cordoba door on the site of a chapel; a hospital with its guild (reduced in size in 1584 and closed in 1590) —erected close to the Guadalquivir river, in front of the old Triana door where the Saints had lived and sold their vessels and where they first started fighting for the faith that led to martyrdom—; a hospital in Cestería Street; a hospital in the surroundings of the Church of Magdalena; the church and convent of Conceptionist nuns called “Las Vírgenes” [The Virgins] which is next to Saint Nicholas and was founded in 1588 by Alonso Fajardo de Villalobos, who was archdeacon and canon of the Church of Seville and bishop of that of Esquilache; the convent of Saint Justa and Saint Ruffina of Capuchin monks founded in 1627 on the site left by the nuns of Saint Leander of Shoe-wearing Agustinians; two chapels dedicated to the Saints, one in the convent of the Holy Trinity, —where the

22. de Quintanadueñas, Antonio. *Santos de la ciudad de Sevilla y su arzobispado...*; de Morales, Ambrosio. *Las antigüedades de las ciudades de España...*: 367.

23. de Marieta, Juan. *Historia eclesiástica de todos los santos...*: 900, cap. II.

24. Delaruelle, Etienne. *La piété populaire au Moyen Age*. Turin: Bottega d'Erasmo, 1975.

25. de Quintanadueñas, Antonio. *Santos de la ciudad de Sevilla y su arzobispado...*: 80-81. See also: Cordero, Juan. “Asociacionismo popular: gremios, cofradías, hermandades y hospitales”, *VIII Semana de Estudios Medievales. Vida cotidiana en la Baja Edad Media*, José Ignacio de la Iglesia, coord. Nájera: Instituto de Estudios Riojanos, 1997; Franco, Alfonso. “La religiosidad popular en la Baja Edad Media”, *Actas de los VII Encuentros de Historia y Arqueología. Gremios, Hermandades y Cofradías. Una aproximación científica al asociacionismo profesional en la Historia de Andalucía*, San Fernando: Ayuntamiento de San Fernando, 1991; *CXIX Reglas de Hermandades y cofradías andaluzas, siglos XIV, XV y XVI*, José Sánchez, ed. Huelva: Universidad de Huelva, 2002; Sánchez, José; Moreno, Isidoro; Bernal, Jorge. *Las cofradías de Sevilla. Historia, antropología y arte*. Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla-Ayuntamiento de Sevilla, 1999; Moreno, Isidoro. *Cofradías y hermandades andaluzas. Estructura, simbolismo e identidad*. Sevilla: Editoriales Andaluzas Unidas, 1985; Pérez, Silvia María. *Los laicos en la Sevilla bajomedieval. Sus devociones y cofradías*. Huelva: Universidad de Huelva, 2005.



martyrs were imprisoned—which was built in 1249 with the monks from this order who accompanied King Ferdinand III in the conquest of Seville, and another in the Prado [Meadow]—which was their tomb—.

3. Legitimization of relics and places of worship

According to the *Hispanic Passionary*, after the martyrdom of Saint Justa, governor Diogenianus ordered her lifeless body be thrown into a deep well from which archbishop Sabino rescued it in order to give it a Christian burial “with honours” in a cemetery close to the city of *Hispalis* (Seville). The archbishop did the same with Saint Ruffina who was burnt to death in the amphitheatre; he deposited her ashes and bones in the same place as her sister: a meadow that stretched from the Osario to the Córdoba Door which, since the Middle Ages, has been known as the “Field of the Virgins or Meadow of Saint Justa”.²⁶

Therefore, at the time of its writing, one of the aims of hagiographical literature was to legitimise holy relics and places of worship or martyrdom (*loca sanctorum*)²⁷, because, early on, the recovery of bodily relics and the whereabouts of these Saint's tombs was of great interest to their cult.

As is known, relic worshipping in the West was more moderate than in the East, and the custom of dividing and moving martyr's remains was not introduced until a later date. Nonetheless, the building and consecration of churches boosted the need to obtain revered relics and initiated their multiplication all over the ecclesiastical geography. In this sense, there are many references to the destination of the Saints.

The first evidence we have of the dissemination of saint worshipping through the depositing of relics is from after the episcopate of Saint Isidore and appears in the inscriptions of the Conventus Hispalensis: Salpensa in 648, Alcalá de Gazules in 662, in the Gaditano (referring to Cádiz) and the Carthaginian, in the Guadix Basilica in 652; and in the Conventus Cordubensis, in Torredonjimeno, old Osaria, next to Tucci (Martos) where there was a sanctuary from the Visigothic period.²⁸

Note that in the spread of the cult of saints, which was a result of the *translatio*, geographical, historical, political and religious reasons played a role, as did the importance of Roman roads in unifying the land, the influence of major cities, population migration and the relations between monasteries which propitiated

26. Fábrega, Ángel. *Pasionario Hispánico...*: II, p. 298.

27. García, Luís. “La cristianización de la topografía de las ciudades de la Península Ibérica durante la Antigüedad Tardía”. *Archivo Español de Arqueología*, 50-51 (1977-1978); Guance, Ariel. “Hagiografía y culto de las reliquias en la Hispania romana y visigoda: testimonios y mensajes”, *Sociedad y memoria en la Edad Media*, Ariel Guance, Pablo Ubierna, Nilda Guglielmi, eds. Buenos Aires: Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas-Instituto Multidisciplinario de Historia y Ciencias Humanas, 2005.

28. García, Carmen. *El culto de los santos en la España romana...*: 231-232.



communication and exchanges.²⁹ A city like Seville, which possessed several of these conditions, had ample opportunity for the cult of its martyrs to spread quickly.

It should also be remembered that, after the Muslim invasion, believing Visigoths subdivided their territory and moved body-relics or their parts to the different places to which they emigrated for fear of desecration and to avoid persecution, taking them to safer places, particularly Toledo and Leon, which were important religious centres where Monarchs were buried, and Navarre, Catalonia and Aragon, for their safekeeping.³⁰

From 1063 dates the news that King Ferdinand I ordered the translation of relics to the church dedicated to Saint John and Saint Pelagius he had instructed be built in Leon. Stories from the eleventh century speak of this pious work and of the request made to the Sevillian King Benabeth (Ibn Abbad) to remove the body of the virgin and martyr Saint Justa from the city. To effectuate the translation, this Christian King sent Alvito, the bishop of Leon and Ordoño, the bishop of Astorga, but their mission came across impediments because the Muslims did not want to show them the body. In order to identify it, the bishops asked God to show them the body through a revelation, and this is how they learnt through a vision Alvito had—in which he saw a venerable old man, Saint Isidore, dressed as a Pontiff—that God's will was another because the message said that they should not strip Seville of such valuable gifts, but that they could take the body, as they finally did.³¹ In this case, the *translatio* constituted an event with strong political connotations because Saint Justa's relics were not really very profitable for the religious tradition and Hispanic-Gothic politics which were trying to be restored in Leon.

Alonso Morgado—an Extremaduran writer who was a priest in Seville—also referred to “the journey of the Saints” to places where Christian dominance had been consolidated:

...como los de Toledo quisieron guarecer sus sanctas reliquias, y riquezas, en las Montañas y Asturias, los de Sevilla (entrándose la tierra adentro) se tuvieron por mas seguros la derrota de los Montes Pyreneos, y en aquellas partes de Navarra, y Cataluña, llevando consigo solamente las cabeças de aquellas santas, y sancto Príncipe Patronos suyos, y otras reliquias de otro tanto, o menos peso, dexando los sanctos cuerpos en sepulcros los mas escondidos, que ellos pudiesen, por no ir tan embaraçados, yendo como yvan huyendo inciertos del lugar, adonde la fortuna les echaría. Y como mucho de los Pueblos de los Reynos de Aragón no fueron entrados de los moros, mas antes después de averse defendido, se dieron a partido, y señaladamente Barcelona, y Zaragoza, y pudieron los cristianos de Sevilla, conservar, y

29. Castillo, Pedro. *Los mártires hispanorromanos y su culto en la Antigüedad Tardía*. Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1999: 316.

30. Giordano, Oronzo. *Religiosidad popular en la Alta Edad Media*. Madrid: Gredos, 1983; Sánchez, José. “Algunos elementos de la religiosidad cristiana popular andaluza durante la Edad Media”, *La religiosidad popular. Antropología e Historia*. Barcelona-Sevilla: Anthropos-Fundación Machado, 1989: vol. 1; Fernández, Francisco Javier. *La religiosidad medieval en España. Alta Edad Media (s. VII-X)*. Oviedo: Universidad de Oviedo, 2008; Fernández, Francisco Javier. *La religiosidad medieval en España. Plena Edad Media (s. XI-XIII)*. Oviedo: Universidad de Oviedo, 2008.

31. Anonymous. “Historia translationis corporis Sancti Isidori”, *Patrologiae. Cursus completus*. Paris: Jacques Paul Migne editorem, 1862, LXXXI, col. 945-68.



*esconder bien las sanctas reliquias de los sanctos, como escondieron, y guardaron los Tesoros, y otras cosas de mucha menor consideración.*³²

In turn, Ambrosio de Morales added other opinions about the depositing of these relics in his work: some believed they had been placed in a church in Asturias because it offered the best conditions for the Christians to hide them; while others say they were moved to the Carthusian monastery called Aniago, close to Simancas.³³

Antonio Quintanadueñas gathered information to this respect in his “Libro de la comprobación de reliquias” (Book of the verification of relics), in which it is stated that when the Muslims took over Seville, the Catholics took the head of Saint Justa and the bone or armbone of Saint Ruffina to Liège (Belgium) to a parish church, from where the Solicitor General of the convent of the Holy Trinity brought them back to Seville. Once acknowledged by archbishop D. Fernando Niño, the relics were received and revered, and deposited at the sanctuary which had been the Saint's prison and was a place Sevillians visited and revered with great devotion.³⁴

In his opinion, the archbishop of Toledo, Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada's claim that these bodies were in the Monastery de las Huelgas in Burgos, where Pedro Fernández de Castro, nicknamed “el castellano” (the Castillian) took them, was unfounded. He was also sceptical about the stories which state that they were half a mile from Santillana, whose inhabitants advertised “they kept the bodies”; and doubtful of those who wrote that their heads were revered in Aragon, in the convent of Nuestra Señora de Sigena [Our Lady of Sigena] of the Sisters of Saint John of Jerusalem, which was established by King Alfonso II. In his opinion this presumption was impossible because the body of Saint Ruffina was consumed by fire and turned into ashes, although he admits that her head and some bones were saved.³⁵

All these references to the “moving of relics” might be indicative of the friendship between ecclesiastical headquarters, and cities and towns, but also of the existence of dependency or rivalry between different religious centres. It should be remembered that saints and martyrs' relics conferred prestige to cities and that, for Christians, a place's splendour lay in the possession of these “rich treasures”. So, in order to prove civic pride local historiography included in its works veritable inventories. Associated with relics was a significant transference because the ennoblement of bodily remains or of objects of daily use which retained divine favour and a thaumaturgic character, also ennobled the various places in which they were

32. ...because those from Toledo wanted to protect their holy relics, and riches, in the Mountains and Asturias, those from Seville (when going inland), fearful of the defeat of the Pyrenean Mountains and of the parts of Navarre and Catalonia to where they fled, felt safer taking with them only the heads of those saints and their holy Patron Prince, and other lesser or lighter relics, leaving the holy bodies in well hidden tombs, so as to not travel so laden to where fate sent them. Because many of the cities of the Aragon Kingdom, and most importantly Barcelona and Zaragoza, were not penetrated by Muslims and, if they were, these fled after the cities had defended the attack, the Christians from Seville were able to preserve and well hide the holy relics of their saints, as they hid and safeguarded their Treasures, and many other things of lesser worth. De Morgado, Alonso. *Historia de Sevilla en la qual se contienen...*: 114.

33. de Morales, Ambrosio. *Las antigüedades de las ciudades de España...*: 367, lib. X, cap. XVI.

34. de Quintanadueñas, Antonio. *Santos de la ciudad de Sevilla y su arzobispado...*: 79.

35. de Quintanadueñas, Antonio. *Santos de la ciudad de Sevilla y su arzobispado...*: 79.



deposited, in a sense that, with their “presence” or through their contact, these places became holy.³⁶

Is it possible that the “disputes” between cities for the possession of relics have been influenced by organicist conceptions based on the bodily metaphors which used parts of the body to highlight the importance of their role and significance in society? That is to say, was a city's hierarchy measured not only by the quantity of relics it owned, but also by these relic's nature and symbolic meaning? Was it not logical for the supporters of “Sevillian patriotism” to reject those relics attributed to other cities? If so, we know that in Christian imagery saint's feet, legs, arms, fingers and tongues were prized as relics. However, among these, the head and the heart were the most valuable because of their leading role: the first was the realm of thoughts, which was identified with the principle of cohesion and essential unity of limbs and, the second, was a vital organ and realm of feelings, which referred to the idea of centrality.³⁷ Therefore, urban and ecclesiastical stories from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries proposed many conjectures about the “journeys of holy relics” from city to city, addressing the large circulation and *translatio* that occurred after the Muslim occupation and the “loss of Spain”.

However, if cities and society exalted their pride in possessing holy relics, how did Seville resolve the question of the “ennoblement of urban soil” faced with the *translatio* practise?³⁸

In spite of all this controversy, works of a religious and historiographical nature continued to remind Christians of the content of the *Hispanic Passionary*: that in

36. Delehay, Hippolyte. *Loca sanctorum*. Bruxelles: Bureaux de la Société des Bollandistes, 1930; García, Ángeles. “La materialidad eterna de los santos sepulcros, reliquias y peregrinaciones en la hagiografía castellano-leonesa (siglo XIII)”. *Medievalismo*, 11/11 (2001); Vauchez, André. “El santo”, *El hombre medieval*, Jacques Le Goff, ed. Madrid: Alianza, 1995; *Les reliques. Objets. Cultes. Symboles. Actes du Colloque International de l'Université du Littoral-Côte d'Opale (Boulogne sur Mer)*, 4-6 September 1997, Edina Bozoky, Anne-Marie Helvétius, eds. Turnhout: Brepols, 1999; Belting, Hans. *Imagen y culto: una historia de la imagen anterior a la edad del arte*. Madrid: Akal, 2009; Boison, Stéphane. *La controverse née de la querelle des reliques à l'époque du concile de Trente (1500-1640)*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1989.

37. See: Le Goff, Jacques; Troung, Nicolas. *Una historia del cuerpo en la Edad Media*. Buenos Aires: Paidós, 2005; Schmitt, Jean-Claude. *Le corps, les rêves, le temps. Essais d'anthropologie médiévale*. Paris: Gallimard, 2001; Schmitt, Jean-Claude. “La noción de lo sagrado y su aplicación a la historia del cristianismo medieval”. *Temas Medievales*, 3 (1993); Vigarello, George. *Historia del cuerpo. Del Renacimiento a la Ilustración*. Madrid: Santillana, 2005; Castillo, Pedro. “¿Rivalidades ciudadanas en textos hagiográficos hispanos?”, *Florentina iliberritana. Revista de Estudios de Antigüedad Clásica*, 10 (1999).

38. The practise of translating [*translatio*] martyrs and saints' relics helped form cultural centres, pilgrimage routes and to connect distant cities and towns as well as to rank them according to possessions. This intense movement, both in the East and the West, and from the south to the north of Spain, which in the Middle Ages was driven by the Crusades and the Christian Reconquest, was studied by historians who were interested in rebuilding spiritual and religious connexions through the movement of holy remains and the journeys saints made while alive as well as their after life, appearances and the dissemination of their devotion through invocations. In the case of Spain, for example, this issue has been updated and addressed brilliantly by: García, José Ángel. “El ‘Sanctus Viator’, Los viajes de los santos (venidas del más allá, difusión de advocaciones, traslado de reliquias)”, *Viajar en la Edad Media. XIX Semana de Estudios Medievales*, José Ignacio de la Iglesia, ed. Logroño: Instituto de Estudios Riojanos, 2008; McCormick, Michael. *Orígenes de la economía europea. Viajeros y comerciantes en la Alta Edad Media*. Barcelona: Crítica, 2005.



Seville there was “an extremely privileged place” with a special ability for religious evocation, due to the fact that it was where the Saints left the worldly earth for eternal glory, and because it possessed their relics, thus becoming an essential centre for their cult.³⁹ According to Antonio Quintanadueñas, the religious tradition revealed *el sagrado culto que le dan nuestros sevillanos, las luces, resplandores, visiones, y prodigios innumerables que en él se han visto*.⁴⁰

Note that the Church and popular Christian culture's religious beliefs diversified and multiplied the possibility of contact between the faithful and saints, and elevated the status and dignity of different places which preserved their “tangible presence”.⁴¹ Important enclaves were where saints were buried, but also where they were born and lived, where they suffered and “illustrated the ground with their blood” and died martyrs, and where they performed miracles.⁴²

Although the Pagans tried to make the bodies of Saint Justa and Saint Rufina disappear in the third century, “to erase their memory and prevent their veneration”, the *Hispanic Passionary* did not cease to highlight holy topography based on the routes followed by these Saints up to their death. Their *passio* indicates places of martyrdom, in and outside the walls of *Hispalis* (Seville): the prison where they were held, Sierra Morena where they paraded, and the well or cave and the amphitheatre where they died.⁴³ The hagiographical genre transmitted orally and in writing provided information about these places and, by giving them a historical, symbolical and religious value, made sure they remained in the memory of the inhabitants who, having been made aware of them, visited them.

Consistent with this story and in reference to this source, subsequent religious and historiographical works compiled a detailed account of the whereabouts of the main pious places and turned them into *loca sanctorum*, thus promoting them and stating the high quantity of them in Seville and its surroundings. Although throughout history there have been assumptions and additions to this issue, literature and historiography have delved into the *loca sanctorum* line of legitimacy possessed by cities.

Secular and religious authors mention, for example, the outskirts of the city, next to the wall, where it is believed the house of the Saints could have been; the convent of the Holy Trinity, where the prison in which they were held was, close to

39. The desire to indicate the exactness of the place, to make it prestigious with the existence of relics was already obvious in Prudentius' Hymn of the martyrs. Peristephanon. *Obras Completas de Aurelio Prudencio*, ed. Alfonso Ortega, Isidoro Rodríguez. Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1981.

40. “The sacred cult offered by the Sevillian people; the many lights, glows, visions and wonders which we have seen in it”. De Quintanadueñas, Antonio. *Santos de la ciudad de Sevilla y su arzobispado...*: 78.

41. *Historia de las diócesis españolas. Iglesias de Sevilla, Huelva, Jerez, Cádiz y Ceuta*, José Sánchez, coord. Córdoba: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 2002.

42. See: Castillo, Pedro. “Reliquias y lugares santos: una propuesta de clasificación jerárquica”. *Florentina Iliberritana. Revista de Estudios de Antigüedad Clásica*, 8 (1997); *La religiosidad popular. Vida y Muerte: la imaginación religiosa*, Carlos Álvarez, María Jesús Beixo, Salvador Rodríguez, coords. Barcelona: Anthropos, 1989: vol II.

43. Fábrega, Ángel. *Pasionario Hispánico...*: II, 297- 298.



the Córdoba Door, where a chapel had been erected, although some believe it was a cave, close to the Sol (Sun) Door; the well where Saint Justa was thrown, whose water it is said the sisters drank and that they made so miraculously ascend as to be able to gather it with their hands, which believers used with great devotion to cure illness and recover health; the place was even visited by the Kings Philip II in 1570 and Philip IV in 1620, and enriched by Pope Gregory XIII. Also mentioned was the amphitheatre where Saint Ruffina died, site upon which a chapel was erected under the Saint's patronage and neighbours placed various wooden crosses; and a place close to the river where the Saints sold their vessels and where a hospital, a temple and a convent for nuns were built.⁴⁴

Pious imagination made the urban space and its immediate surroundings appear almost completely sacred with various holy sites ranging from the outskirts to the inside of the civic area. This repertoire of places proves the symbolic and religious meaning the Sevillians gave to their city.

It is undeniable that this special interest in displaying and classifying these places in a "privileged" category contributed to increase Seville's prestige and situate it on the map of religious devotions. Due to the controversy which might be raised by the *translatio* of their patron Saints' relics, Seville's soil was promoted and classified in another way. Even though the Muslim invasion affected the Andalusian region by depriving it of many of its bodily relics until the conflict had ended and the cities could recover them, nothing seemed to have altered the protection and help the devote Sevillians found at the aforementioned places.

It is true that, just as there were categories of relics (bodily and representative), there were also categories of *loca sanctorum*, and some were of greater esteem than others. Although the Saint's tomb located outside the city—in accordance with old custom—was the most privileged place, sources show there were various epicentres of cult, resulting from Christian religiosity.

Therefore, it must be said that these places were a key component of the Sevillian landscape. Well documented topographical references were accredited and authenticated by miracles, which were a sign of the contact between Heaven and Earth, and saints and communities.⁴⁵

If there were sacred places (some certain and others probable), and the first type were explicated in the *Hispanic Passionary*, the second could be a result of beliefs, suppositions, imaginations or be founded on miracles. In this sense, subsequent works aimed to legitimise cultural places by registering "wonders" which the Saints did *post mortem*. Such news shows how cult and devotions had evolved: as the cities' Saints, they "had taken possession of the Sevillian soil", ennobling it and protecting it with their patronage.

44. de Quintanadueñas, Antonio. *Santos de la ciudad de Sevilla y su arzobispado...*: 77.

45. Castellanos, Santiago M. "Las reliquias de santos y su papel social: cohesión comunitaria y control episcopal en Hispania (ss. V-VII)". *Polis. Revista de ideas y formas políticas de la Antigüedad Clásica*, 8 (1996).



4. The miracles

When constructing the image of the holy, an affiliation with “marvellous things” was fundamental and necessary for the Church because it was a visible sign of the manifestation of God, a guarantee of holiness and promoter of the piety of the faithful. In the *Hispanic Passionary* there are not any explicit references to the miracles of Saint Justa and Saint Ruffina, although the author was willing to display the “miraculous resistance” with which they resisted trials and suffering. Nonetheless, hagiographical and historiographical discourse became reoriented toward the telling of miracles and wonders, subjects which were equally developed throughout the Middle and Modern Ages.

A record had to be made of miracles or they would be lost in oblivion; this is why the sources disseminated how the Saints and their relics became visible and effective signs which ensured communication between Heaven and Earth and how they managed to override the physical and temporal separation, by emphasizing their “permanent presence” in society.⁴⁶

The writing of “hagiographical wonders” referred to the Saint’s intervention in the Reconquest of cities occupied the main place at a key time of the political and military venture in al-Andalus in the thirteenth century. The miracles they worked were reflected in the help and assistance offered to Christians, whom they protected from the enemy, the Muslims. It is said that in Lisbon, for example, the Mozarabic dedicated temples with the Saint’s names because King D. Alfonso Enríquez, one of their devotees, thanked them for having freed —on the day of their feast— the city which was surrounded. Orihuela also dedicated a parish church to them after having been recovered on the day of their martyrdom. The city of Huete gave them equal recognition in 1172, since the reign of Alfonso VIII was freed from the siege imposed by the King of Morocco: when they were just about to surrender through thirst, Heaven sent such an abundant rainfall that it quenched the Christians’ thirst and destroyed the tents of the enemies who fled, beaten by the powerful hand of God and the intercession of the Saints.⁴⁷

As can be seen, the martyrs were not static figures. Recorded in hagiographic narrative as followers of a faith or belief, and as dying and “being born” with martyrdom when defending that belief so that Christianity would triumph, they were revitalised with the passage of time in epical stories about the fight against the Saracenes. In this new religious combat they reacquired a special relevance for the history of Spain. During the Reconquest, the Saints intervened to ensure the triumph of Christianity in the confrontation, which was no longer with Paganism but against Islam. This feeling of victory found its most appropriate and legitimate representation in the martyrs.

What is more, the virtue derived from the holiness of these “illustrious citizens from Seville” —which was acknowledged by God who welcomed them into

46. Guiance, Ariel. “Hagiografía y culto a las reliquias en la Hispania romana y visigoda: testimonios y mensajes”, *Sociedad y memoria en la Edad Media...*

47. de Quintanadueñas, Antonio. *Santos de la ciudad de Sevilla y su arzobispado...*: 80.



Paradise—, had an enormous repercussion on those societies who experienced how the ability to work miracles emanated from their relics and holy places (site of martyrdom or burial and other *loca sanctorum* with which they had come into contact).

Saint Justa and Saint Ruffina were defenders of *civitates*, who exercised their *patrocinium* in Seville which is where they assumed an important role because, under their special protection and assistance its inhabitants felt safe. For this reason, the miracles worked in this city were included in historiographical reviews. The texts say that miraculous events shined in Seville under the sovereign patronage of Justa and Ruffina, “paradigms of the integrity of faith in Spain”. For example, Alonso Morgado wrote about the transcendence of their beneficent actions in Seville:

*Por ellas goza Sevilla de eterna excelencia y singular Prerrogativa del cielo como quiera que fueron naturales della, y las primeras vírgenes canonizadas que (conforme a mi saber) regaron el suelo sevillano... Y siendo como son Patronas suyas son también infinitas las misericordias, que Nuestro Señor obra en esta ciudad por su intercesión y patrocinio. Por lo qual se confiesan todos sus vezinos por muy obligados a estas gloriosas hermanas. Y al tanto los Reyes Cathólicos, que lo han sido en España, por quanto por sus méritos han recibido de Dios ellos también grandes misericordias dándoles victoria contra sus enemigos en la recuperación de España.*⁴⁸

Also worth mentioning is the compilation of miracles by Antonio Quintanadueñas. He relates that a knight from Seville asked the Pope if he could bring some relics to the city; the Pope agreed but in exchange requested first a bit of earth from the Saints’ Meadow. In compliance, the knight placed the soil in his hands and, when the Pope squeezed it, it started to ooze blood. After this “wondrous” supernatural event, the Pope asked: “Why are the Sevilians seeking relics when they possess the Meadow of Saint Justa and Saint Ruffina.”⁴⁹

Other reports compiled by this author testify that the “treasurer” of the Holy relics was the tower of the Metropolitan Church. To better secure them in the city, the Arabs decided to put them in the tower's foundations whose construction was began with the placing of their urns or graves. This pious tradition confirms the event stated by faithful witnesses. One day strong winds were threatening to demolish the building, as they had done with other buildings in the city. At the storm's strongest, the frightful voices of demons crying “Demolish it, demolish it” were heard, to which the others replied: “We can’t because here lie the beheaded Justa and Ruffina”. With the dissemination of these episodes, the Church capitalised

48. *Thanks to them, Seville enjoys eternal excellence and the unique Prerrogative of Heaven inasmuch as they were born here and they were the first canonised virgins (according to my knowledge) who irrigated the Sevillian soil... Since they are its Patrons, Our Lord has worked infinite mercy in this city through their intercession and patronage. For this reason all their neighbours acknowledge their close bind to these glorious sisters, as do the Catholic Monarchs of Spain that, due to their merits, have received great mercy from God who has given them victory against their enemies in the recovery of Spain.* de Morgado, Alonso. *Historia de Sevilla en la qual se contienen...* 10.

49. de Quintanadueñas, Antonio. *Santos de la ciudad de Sevilla y su arzobispado...* 78.



on and resolved in its favour places consecrated by relics and miracles, by putting them under its control in the ecclesiastical domain.

Likewise the Saints' miracles were witnessed in processions and masses during the crisis caused by plagues and epidemics, when prayers were made while the images were being taken round the city. So, under their patronage, Seville was the protagonist of miraculous events: for example, during the 1568 plague, the Municipal and Cathedral Chapters agreed to take the images of the Saints to the convent of Nuestra Señora de la Trinidad [Our Lady of the Trinity]. There was a solemn procession with the participation of guilds, clergy, religious people, nobility and the metropolitan Church, and the Divine Offices were held. The stories say that on July 17th when their martyrdom is commemorated, the plague stopped "with those touched, improving, and without touching any others".⁵⁰

Other accounts state that around 1571 there was a notable lack of water in Seville, and that to remedy it a procession with the images of Saint Justa and Saint Ruffina was held. From the moment they left the church, it rained for many days, the fields recovered from their losses and the city again had abundant resources and fruits "which were given to it".⁵¹

Years later, in 1626, Seville suffered a major flood; the water covered two thirds of the city, Triana and the suburbs of Saint Bernard and Saint Roch, as well as those adjacent to the wall. From the Cuesta de Castilleja [Castilleja Slope] for more than a mile to the east and the field of Tablada and Saint Justa Meadow, it covered trees and houses causing large losses in goods, livestock and crops, as well as damage to various farms and demolishing buildings —among them the convent of the Holy Trinity— and putting in danger the life of its inhabitants. To slow the momentum of the water, the church and the faithful took the relics of the Saints out and, after they had been seen by the entire city, placed them opposite the violent current and, like the "Jordan to the Ark of the Covenant", the water turned back defeated by such superior powers.⁵²

The Saints' mediating and protecting role can also be seen in iconographical works of a religious nature.⁵³ Although the city was essentially identified with Ferdinand III the Saint, who was represented in its stamp and coat of arms, sitting in court between Saint Leander and Saint Isidore, his patrons and prelates, with an unsheathed sword raised in his right hand and a globe in his left; there are other examples which should be highlighted because they show the identification of Seville with Saint Justa and Saint Ruffina. The *Book of Privileges* of the council of

50. de Quintanadueñas, Antonio. *Santos de la ciudad de Sevilla y su arzobispado...*: 82.

51. de Quintanadueñas, Antonio. *Santos de la ciudad de Sevilla y su arzobispado...*: 82.

52. de Quintanadueñas, Antonio. *Santos de la ciudad de Sevilla y su arzobispado...*: 82.

53. Burke, Peter. *Visto y no visto. El uso de la imagen como documento histórico*. Barcelona: Crítica, 2001: 59-73; Ferrando, Juan. *Iconografía de los santos*. Barcelona, 1991; Reau, Louis. *Iconografía del arte cristiano. Iconografía de los santos*. Barcelona: Ediciones Serbal, 2000-2002: vol. II; Azcarate, José María. "El arte al servicio de las devociones despueblo cristiano", *II Semana Nacional de Arte Sacro*. León: Junta Nacional Asesora de Arte Sacro, 1965; Carmona, Juan. *Iconografía de los santos*. Madrid: Istmo, 2003; Revilla, Federico. *Diccionario de iconografía y simbología*. Madrid: Cátedra, 2007.



Seville, which gathered the city's documents from 1251 to the period of the Catholic Monarchs (1475), incorporated in its edition a view of the city (a model taken from the south) with the image of the patron Saints which dates from the beginning of the sixteenth century. This book seems significant because it is a collection that was ordered in 1492 which belongs to a period when documents referring to the historical and archival memory of cities were recopied on a general and local scale. This process which started in 1502 and continued with bylaws, in the case of Seville began between 1515 and 1519 and ended in 1527.⁵⁴

The Saints were usually represented with the following elements: ceramic vessels (which was there trade), and the palm and iron hooks —attributes of martyrdom; the *Gospel Book*, with the broken idol at its feet and the lion— symbols of the strength of faith against idolatry —to which were added, in the sixteenth century, the protective aspect of Seville that turned the urban landscape into an image seen constantly between the “heavenly ambassadors”.⁵⁵ The city's most important and representative buildings were placed under the protection of its patrons and, after 1504, the images of Saint Justa and Saint Ruffina depicted with the Giralda became well known and spread as the result of an earthquake, when —according to Luis de Peraza— canon Don Pedro de Mendoza wrote in the *Libro de la Regla Vieja del Coro* that the virgin Saints had been seen supporting the tower. To commemorate the miracle and avoid subsequent earthquakes demolishing the Giralda, the Cathedral Chapter ordered that the Holy Church and its tower be painted with the Saints embracing it.

On the Cathedral altarpiece, carved between 1511 and 1518 by Jorge Fernández, we also find Saint Leander and Saint Isidore on both sides of the building's model and Saint Justa and Saint Ruffina on opposite sides of Seville. In this case, civil and religious protection was combined in the image, where the protection of the Saints was over the Cathedral, the symbol of spiritual life, and that of the city's patrons over Seville. Furthermore, in a royal charter granted by Charles V to Seville in 1549, the Saints figure on either side of the city. What is more, on the title page of the *Reglas del Cabildo y del coro* [Rules of the Chapter and Choir] of the metropolitan Cathedral, published in 1658, the holy Kings Hermenegild and Ferdinand, as well as the holy bishops, Leander and Isidore, and the patrons of the city, Saint Justa and Saint Ruffina, can be seen inserted as sculptures in the niches of the reredos: the panoramic view of Seville was placed between the Kings; the title of the book between the Bishops and, between the patron Saints, the Chapter's crest centred around the Giralda.⁵⁶

Therefore, the artists represented a “sacralised city”, an idealised image of Seville that was the result of its people's popular beliefs and devotions. Surrounded by

54. *Libro de Privilegios de la ciudad de Sevilla*, ed. Marcos Fernández, Pilar Ostos, María Luisa Pardo. Sevilla: Ayuntamiento de Sevilla, 1993: 15v.

55. Portús, Javier. “Algunas expresiones del orgullo local en la Sevilla del Siglo de Oro”. *Espacio. Tiempo y Forma Serie VII. Historia del Arte*, 4 (1991).

56. *Iconografía de Sevilla 1650-1790*. Juan Miguel Serrera, Alberto Oliver Javier Portús. Madrid: El Viso, 1989: 43; 49-50.



saints who protected and blessed it, to all its onlookers Seville seemed like “the city of God”, an “earthly branch of Heaven”.

5. Final considerations

The themes discussed in this paper —the model of virtue and the legitimization of relics and places of worship— were present in early hagiographical works such as the *Hispanic Passionary*. The hagiographical legend of the Saints and martyrs Justa and Ruffina was incorporated into other works which, written during the Middle and Modern Ages, resumed their tales and religious traditions.

As noted, the themes mentioned continued to be of current interest to authors of ecclesiastical and urban stories, and it is these tales which offer clear proof that the concept of what was sacred and its relationship with Christians in the medieval world, was kept alive in the Modern Age. In their literary and historiographical conception these texts offer an account of the crucial importance of popular religious sensibilities and practises in the same way that they show the influence of the Church that endorsed them.

Firstly, we see that hagiographical texts are in contact with a society that is transforming and changing and that, although the main figures of the primitive Church had been worshipped since the beginning of Christianity, their devotion continued to spread during the ecclesiastical and religious restoration in the thirteenth century after the Reconquest of the Andalucian cities. The model of feminine and secular holiness and the image of the Sevillian Saints which the historiographical texts of the Counter-Reformation emphasised was founded on the strength these women represented, their defence of the faith and their suffering as martyrs, and aimed to spread the more human side of an idealised model, seeking to make their example less distant, more accessible and imitable by illustrating how the faithful citizens should act in specific situations of daily life.

In the same way that piety and *charitas* were at the top of values at the time of writing the *Hispanic Passionary*—and other works of its period, like the *Reglas* [Rules] of Saint Leander and the *Ethimologies* and *Sentences* of Isidore of Seville—, they were also prominent in medieval and modern historiography which echoed them and was aware of their key social standing. In order to illustrate them, religious and secular people made the martyr Saints their referent and, as “good devotees”, imitated them by placing under their advocacy institutions with two aims: one spiritual, through the foundation of churches and monasteries, and the other material, through the foundation of hospitals. Although the Church wanted to encourage every citizen to follow this discourse forged around pious and charitable actions, it was especially aimed at women and based on the hope they were “holy occupied”.

Secondly, the cult of these Saints further developed and increased in popularity with the existence of specific places where devotion materialised. As we have seen, the wide variety of sites with a supernatural capacity exceeded ecclesiastical control,



and were not only to be found in Church, convent and monastery graves, but in collective beliefs and sensibilities which placed them in different areas of the cities.

The enumeration of *loca sanctorum* in the sources examined had more than one meaning: as well as proving how the cult of these Saints grew, it had an advertising intention based on well-established “urban patriotism”.

Although the *Hispanic Passionary* already illustrated the geography of holiness, the stories extolled the greatness of Seville in accordance with the possession of relics and the “tangible presence” of its Saints, by sacralising their areas. Furthermore, because this “home” or local “pride” was linked to the possession of relics, a struggle between cities to claim such sacred treasures became inevitable.

Perhaps in light of these urban rivalries or disputes, in the historiographical sources of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries authors suggested a strong tie between these Saints and a certain place whose epicentre was Seville, from where they exercised a wide radius of action. These writers sought to strengthen this association with their homeland, by comparing the number of churches, shrines, guilds and hospitals with those of other religious centres who were also trying to consecrate and legitimise their sacred areas through relics and institutions placed under these Saints’ advocacy and by holding festivities dedicated to them. So, for example, in accordance with Saint Isidore and the Mozarabic missal and breviary, it is said that the “solemnísima” was the celebration the Sevillians had held for Justa and Ruffina since Gothic times. What is more, after the Christians had recovered the city, they continued to celebrate this day, however with greater honour and cult, by holding famous processions and carrying the Saints’ images. The Sevillians, who turned these Saints into their most emblematic symbols undoubtedly extolled their city as their “temporal and spiritual homeland”, as proven by a wide range of iconographical representations.

Thirdly, this discourse about hagiographical wonders which was added to the historiographical genre has been used to consolidate and perpetuate the memory of how these Saints protected Seville, and to record their *gestas* [songs of heroic deeds]. It has been effective in strengthening the bond the Saints have had with Sevillians since the past and continue to have in the present, as well as guaranteeing their identity in the future because they have become associated with community cohesion. It also played an essential role because, through the knowledge of supernatural events transmitted orally and in writing, piety and devotion were encouraged giving new impetus to the Christian faith.

This association between relics, images and aid —demonstrated through miracles— has been studied in depth by historiographical sources in which we can distinguish three areas where the Saints acted or intervened: illness, danger and fear. This recopilation of stories, which displays their protection and updates their mediating and active role as patrons of Seville, shows us that all Sevillian hope was deposited in them and that the miracles were proof of God’s solicitous and continuous care of this urban community.

Hagiography has contributed the origins of cities’ greatness and excellence and that of their communities’ pious actions to medieval, modern and, more specifically,



urban historiography. In our case—as in many others—the martyr Saints decisively contributed to the construction of the symbolic and religious image of Seville. As leading “daughters and citizens” of the city, and the first martyrs of the Roman period, they took on a first class historical role because they did not only make Christianity triumph in their “homeland”, but placed Seville in the Sacred History and gave examples of pious actions which flourished amongst its devote inhabitants and became essential arguments of Sevillian pride.

