

Ianua Coeli: Monumental Romanesque doorways on the Iberian Peninsula **International Congress. Barcelona-Ripoll 24-27 November 2010**

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Studying monumental Romanesque doorways was the theme of the international congress organised by the Amics de l'Art Romànic (Friends of Romanesque Art), an affiliate of the Institut d'Estudis Catalans. The congress was held last November in Barcelona at the IEC headquarters and in Ripoll, which hosted the closing event and where the participants were treated to the superb facade of the monastery. For the first time in Spain, the scientific gathering aimed to study the large doorways that emerged in the Christian territories in the west and east of the Iberian Peninsula in the 12th century and the early years of the 13th century. The Romanesque visually translated the symbolic value that Christianity attributed to its buildings of worship and certain sectors and elements that represent them, one of which is the entrance doorway. Repeatedly glossed in texts as the doorway to heaven, *Ianua Coeli*, the iconographic programmes and liturgical uses linked to this threshold between the sacred and profane underscore this dimension. The congress wanted to examine this issue from different, mutually complementary vantage points: by analysing the iconographic programmes derived from the Romanesque doorway and the intentions of its promoters, the style of its sculpture and the connections derived from it, the uniqueness of the typology adopted and the liturgical functions it accommodated. The goal was for the expert debate to shed light on all of these issues, addressed generally for the first time at this congress, and at the same time open up the session to university students and amateurs. The congress was a huge success. It attracted around 100 people including speakers and participants, including students from a number of universities in Spain, Germany, England, France and Italy. The sessions were officially opened by Salvador Giner, President of the IEC, Daniel Solé, Deputy General Director of the Generalitat de Catalunya's department of Cultural Heritage, and Francesca Español, President of Amics de l'Art Romànic and scientific director of the congress.

Prestigious Hispanists were on hand for the lectures. Dr Peter Klein, Professor at the Universität Tübingen,

gave the keynote speech ("Marginal Images on the Romanesque Doorways of Spain") in which he surveyed a number of monuments which feature profane (and heterodox) subjects and evaluated their function as the antithesis or complement to the sacred subjects that predominate inside these buildings. American Professor Elizabeth Valdez del Alamo (Montclair State University) presented a new iconographic interpretation of the doorway to the cloister at Silos monastery in a talk entitled "Acrobats at the Doorway to Heaven, Where the Sacred and Profane Meet". An iconographic analysis was also the main theme in the talk by Dr Therese Martin (Spanish National Research Council, Madrid), who focused on one of the most emblematic Romanesque buildings in the northwest Iberian Peninsula, "Eloquent Forms in the Three Doorways of San Isidoro of León".

Doctor José Luis Senra (Universidade de Santiago) focused his talk ("*Angeli ad portas*: On Some of the Vanished Doorways in Monasteries in Castillo-León") on a subject on which he has become an indisputable expert: the western massif of such emblematic buildings as Frómista and Carrión de los Condes. He evaluated their architectural layout, their funerary use and the traits of the doorways that lead into the church. The crux of the talk by Dr M. Victoria Herráez and Dr Concepción Cosmen, professors at the Universidad de León, was the typological and ornamental similarities among numerous doorways located in the vast northeast region of the Iberian Peninsula along the Way of Saint James. The talk by Dr José Luis Hernando Garrido (Ethnographic Museum of Castilla-León, Zamora), examined the resonance of the compositional recipes and stylistic motifs present on one of the most representative doorways in the cathedral of Zamora, the Bishop's Doorway. In her talk "Romanesque Doorways in Navarra", Dr Clara Fernández-Ladreda (Universidad de Pamplona) traced the characteristic features of the most important examples conserved in Navarra, including the Sangüesa doorway which is one of the latest among all the monuments on the Iberian Peninsula.

The Catalan doorways analysed at the congress preside over the entrances to monastery churches (Santa Maria de Ripoll, Sant Pere de Rodes and Covet) and cathedrals (La Seu d'Urgell, Girona, Vic and Perpignan), and the

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Figure 1. Official poster of the International Congress “*Ianua Coeli*: Monumental Romanesque Doorways on the Iberian Peninsula”

talks that examined them primarily stressed stylistic and compositional issues. This was the interpretation put forth by Dr Marc Sureda Jubany (Episcopal Museum of Vic) regarding the elements that still survive on the lost doorways in Perpignan, Girona and Vic. Dr Gerardo Boto Varela (Universitat de Girona), also examined the same issues regarding La Seu d’Urgell in his talk “Agentivity and Interaction of the Discourse of Romanesque Doorways: The Images on the Thresholds of Santa Maria of La Seu d’Urgell”. Dr Joaquín Yarza Luaces (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona) surveyed the typological forerunners of the doorway in Covet, and he complemented that with a review of its iconographic programme in his talk entitled “The Doorway of Santa Maria of Covet: Astrology, Fall and Redemption”.

The unique formulas on monumental doorways wrought by the figure known as the Master of Cabestany was the focal point of the talk by Dr Imma Lorés Otzet (Universitat de Lleida) in her talk “*Membra disjecta*: The Images on the Doorways by the Master of Cabestany”. The pictorial subjects present on the outer doorways and decorating the border elements inside the church (the triumphal arch was a boundary marker between the area for the faithful and the presbytery, for example) were examined in the talk by Drs Milagros Guardia and Carles Man-

cho (Universitat de Barcelona). The functions linked to the space presided over by the *Ianua Coeli* in cathedrals or monastery churches (such as the penitential and funerary liturgies) were outlined in the talk by Dr Francesca Español (Universitat de Barcelona) entitled “The Romanesque Doorway and its Liturgical Uses”.

The extraordinary design in Ripoll was addressed in two talks. The one by Pere Rovira (Centre for the Restoration of Movable Goods of Catalonia) examined the successive restorations that the monument has undergone in the talk “From Degradation to Conservation of the Romanesque Stone: Preventative Actions, Material Analysis and Project to Safeguard the Doorway in Ripoll”. Dr Xavier Barral Altet (Université de Rennes), who closed the congress, spoke about “Reflections on the Commission of the Romanesque Doorway in Ripoll and its Artistic Consequences”, surveying the historiography of the monument and the most recent studies’ contribution to our knowledge about it.

After these lectures, numerous brief reports were read on doorways in Catalonia, Aragon and Bearn: Dr José Alberto Morais (Universidad de Extremadura): “Open Doorways: Outlining Problems and Clarifying Concepts on the Antiquating Legacy and its Presence in Hispanic Romanesque Doorways”; Dr Ilaria Sgrigna (Universitat

de Barcelona): “Comparative Analysis of the Doorway in Santa Maria of Covet: Observations on the Provenance and Dissemination of its Models”; Antoni Llagostera (Centre of Regional Studies of El Ripollès): “An 1846 Drawing by Pau Milà i Fontanals in the Cardenera Collection”; Dr Esther Lozano (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona): “Figurative Repertoires and Stylistic Connections in the Doorways of Navarra and Aragon: The

Role of the Masters in the Chancel of the Zaragoza Cathedral”; Juan Antonio Olañeta (Universitat de Barcelona): “The Doorway of the Parish Church of San Salvador de Agüero (Huesca) and its ‘Borrowed’ Tympanum”; and Maritxu Echeverri (Université de Toulouse-Le Mirail): “Earthly Spiritual Meals? The Quest for Salvation on the Romanesque Doorways between Bearn and Aragon”.