

Gonzalo de Berceo and the Latin
Miracles of the Virgin

A Translation and a Study

Edited by
Patricia Timmons
and
Robert Boenig



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Preface

In this volume we offer the first translation into English of a twelfth-century Latin version of miracles of the Virgin Mary that Gonzalo de Berceo, first named poet in the Spanish language, used as the source for his *Milagros de Nuestra Señora*. The version we have chosen is that contained in MS Thott 128, one of two, discussed below, whose affinity to Berceo's poem have convinced scholars that Berceo was working from a version that must have resembled them closely. We not only translate the Latin *Miracles* but also provide analysis of two kinds. First, we introduce the Latin *Miracles* as a work worthy of study in and of itself, suggesting ways it was used as a sacred text, placing it within the history of Christians' evolving understanding of the Virgin's role in their lives, and providing hopefully helpful explanatory notes. But we are also interested in Berceo's reaction to the Latin *Miracles*. That is, we are convinced that Berceo reacted creatively to his source text and also that changes in Church culture and governance that occurred between the composition of the Latin *Miracles* and Berceo's own thirteenth century helped form those reactions. The analyses of several of Berceo's versions of the miracles that conclude our volume are offered not as exhaustive treatments of his work with his source but rather as guides to further work, further discoveries. Our thesis is that Berceo took an intrinsically interesting and skillfully wrought original and turned it into Spanish poetry of high quality.

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PART 1
The Latin *Miracles*

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Gonzalo de Berceo's *Milagros de Nuestra Señora* and His Latin Sources

In the first half of the thirteenth century, Gonzalo de Berceo, the first Spanish poet we know by name, translated a series of miracles attributed to the Virgin Mary from Latin into Spanish. Berceo's *Milagros de Nuestra Señora* (1246)¹ represents the first collection in Castilian of the miracle tales of the Virgin. The Latin *Miracles* that caught Berceo's attention were originally produced in the twelfth century for a monastic, possibly Cistercian audience and survive in two related versions, MS Thott 128 (Royal Library of Copenhagen) and MS 110 (Spanish National Library), both close to the source Berceo must have used. His efforts involved more than translating from one language to another,² for his chosen audience was lay rather than strictly clerical, and evidence from Berceo's original Introduction suggests oral delivery involving music.³ In other words, he translated from one culture into another, one discourse community into another, as well as from Latin into Spanish. Berceo moreover functions as an interpreter of the texts he translates by supplying for the reader emotive responses that are left implicit in the Latin texts.⁴

¹ Quotations from both Berceo's Spanish and MS Thott's Latin are taken from Brian Dutton, ed., *Gonzalo de Berceo: Obras completas II: Los Milagros de Nuestra Señora*, 2nd ed. (London: Tamesis, 1980). Dutton's commentaries on the Latin versions refer to MS Thott 128. All translations of the Latin are ours. All translations of Berceo's Spanish *Milagros* are from Richard Terry Mount and Annette Grant Cash, *Miracles of Our Lady* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1997).

² Translation theorists rightly emphasize that there are cultural as well as lexical and syntactical aspects of translation. See, for instance, A. L. Becker's concept of "linguaging," or reshaping texts into new cultural contexts in *Beyond Translation: Essays toward a Modern Philology* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), pp. 8–12. Consequently, human agency is essential in all acts of translation, for machines lack the intuitive cultural facility to produce viably nuanced texts. For the intricacies of machine translation, see Bonnie Jean Dorr, *Machine Translation: A View from the Lexicon* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1993).

³ Both Alfonso X and Gautier de Coincy collected songs as well as words for their Miracles of the Virgin; both collections have attracted numerous performances and are available on compact disk. See, for instance, Ensemble Unicorn, *Alfonso X "El Sabio": Cantigas de Santa Maria* (Naxos DDD 8.553133, 1995); and The Harp Consort, dir. Andrew Lawrence-King, *Gautier de Coincy: Miracles of Notre-Dame* (Harmonia Mundi 907317, 2003). Though Berceo's collection begins with clear references to music, no musical settings survive.

⁴ For translation as an act of personal response, see James Boyd White, *Justice as Translation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), p. 230.

In doing so he participates in the widespread medieval practice, described so well by Rita Copeland,⁵ of using translation as an occasion for developing rhetorical and hermeneutical gestures not always encountered in the original text.

The Thott *Miracula Beate Marie Virginia* contains a total of 53 miracles of the Virgin, and represents an anthology of selections copied from other sources or collections. Many scholars consider Thott 128 one of the oldest and most important surviving manuscripts of the miracles of the Virgin.⁶ The Latin collections of *miracula* circulated widely throughout Europe during the twelfth century. Noteworthy compilations from this time period include those from the Englishman William of Malmesbury (1090–1143), *Miracula Sanctae Mariae Virginis*, the *Dialogus miraculorum* from the German Cistercian Caesar of Heisterbach (12th–13th centuries), the Italian Juan de Gobi's collection of *Scola coeli*, Jean Mielot's *Miracles de Notre-Dame*, and two anonymous collections, *Libellus de Miraculis beatae Virginis*, and *Mariale Magnum*. Unlike the Latin stories of saints' lives that also proliferated during this time, the miracle tales of the Virgin were compiled and presented in "catalogue" style, imparting one story after another of the miracles that Mary performed on behalf of her devotees. While hagiography aimed to illustrate its subject's worthiness of sainthood and, most importantly, to inspire imitation of the saint's life, the recounting of *miracula* set out to inspire praise, admiration, and devotion for the Virgin Mary, whose saintliness was already a foregone conclusion (*imitatio* vs. *laudatio*, respectively). Such vernacular collections, modeled on the Latin versions, flourished in the thirteenth century, the "Century of Mary," so named because during this time devotion to the Virgin reached its fullest flowering.⁷ Two well-known vernacular compilations include the *Cantigas de Santa María*, of Alfonso X (The Wise), and the *Miracles de Nostre Dame* of Gautier de Coincy. Until the twentieth century, scholars believed Gautier's collection, which was written more than a decade earlier than the *Milagros* and is similar in presentation, had been Berceo's source. In 1910, however, Richard Becker discovered that the Latin manuscript Thott 128 corresponded very closely to Berceo's *Milagros de Nuestra Señora*, and that either

⁵ For translation theory in a medieval context, see Rita Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics and Translation in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

⁶ Thott 128 is missing the colophon; thus we do not know the information that normally is contained there, such as the name of the scribe, the dates and place of transcription. An analysis of writing style and miracle content orients the timeframe of the manuscript as twelfth century, and leads to the conclusion that the scribe possibly was a monk from the region north of Paris, from a monastery near the cities of Beauvais, Soissons, or Laon, cities where other collections have come from, like those of Bicente de Beauvais, Hugo Farsito, and Herman de Tournai (or de Laon), or those of Gautier de Coincy (in French). See Fátima Carrera de la Red and Avelina Carrera de la Red, *Miracula Beate Marie Virginia (Ms. Thott 128 de Copenhague): Una fuente paralela a Los Milagros de Nuestra Señora de Gonzalo de Berceo* (Logroño: Centro de Estudios Gonzalo de Berceo, 2000), p. 32.

⁷ The thirteenth century also sees the role of the Virgin in the Church evolve so that she is included in the liturgy.

the exact manuscript or a copy very similar to it must have served as Berceo's model. Spanish collections of the Latin *miracula* similar to the ones circulating in other parts of Europe in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries include the MS Alcobacense 149 (National Library of Lisbon), *Liber Mariae* of Gil de Zamora (National Library of Madrid, fourteenth century), the MS 110 (National Library of Madrid),⁸ and the Codex 879 (Archives of the Cathedral See of Zaragoza).⁹ In 1971, Richard Kinkade suggested the MS 110 archived in Madrid as a more probable source for Berceo's *Milagros*. While Berceo's more carefree and uninhibited tone in the miracle of the Pregnant Abbess corresponds more to the Madrid MS 110 than to Thott 128, current consensus nonetheless finds that in general the MS Thott 128 most closely matches the Latin source that Berceo must have used.¹⁰ We have thus chosen to translate the Thott version and use it as the basis for our analysis of Berceo's creative response to his source.

Berceo's twenty-five *Milagros* include twenty-four of the first twenty-eight miracles of Thott 128. In addition, they not only correspond in content, but also appear in the same order as those in the Latin manuscript. Berceo omitted only Thott miracles 16, 22, 25, and 26. The twenty-fifth miracle of Berceo, "The Robbed Church," has an unknown source and possibly Berceo himself first composed or transcribed it. MS Thott 128 contains three groups of miracles derived from three distinct collections. The first group, miracles 1–28 (the ones that correspond to Berceo's Latin source) comprise a universal set that circulated in Italy, Great Britain, Spain, Central Europe, and the Middle East, that is, throughout the Latin world. The second group, miracles 29–34, consists of *miracula* composed in rhymed verse, and thus appears to have come from a poetic collection quite distinct from the first twenty-eight. The third set, 35–53, contains only local miracles that occurred in France, eighteen of the nineteen in Soissons. A considerable number of manuscripts—Pez (*Liber de Maraculis Sanctae Dei Genitricis Mariae*, ed. B. Pez [Vienna, 1731]), Berceo, MS 110 (Madrid), for example—contain most or all of the kernel twenty-eight miracles of the Virgin contained in Thott 128. We can therefore infer that there existed one single collection of this group of miracles that circulated throughout Europe. Berceo must have had as his source either Thott 128 or a manuscript very close to it containing all or most of the twenty-eight. Brian Dutton believes that Berceo's manuscript probably was not Thott 128, but a compilation based on Thott that was made at his monastery, San Millán de la Cogolla. He notes that a monk named Fernando who lived at San Millán at the same time as Berceo mentions in his writings a work of miracles of the Virgin at San Millán. In their analysis of Thott 128, Avelina Carrera de la Red and Fátima Carrera de la Red compare it with MS 110, Alcobacense 149 (Lisbon), and Codex 879 (Cathedral of Zaragoza), and concur that what does appear most probable and

⁸ Fernando Baños, ed., *Gonzalo de Berceo: Milagros de Nuestra Señora* (Barcelona: Crítica, 1997), includes the text of this Latin manuscript corresponding to Berceo's Castilian renditions.

⁹ Carrera de la Red, *Miracula*, pp. 29–30, provide a translation into Spanish of the entire MS Thott 128 in their critical study and edition.

¹⁰ See Carrera de la Red, *Miracula*, p. 57.

plausible is that Berceo indeed had a copy of the first block of miracles included in Thott 128, or a copy of one of the collections used in Thott.¹¹

Berceo wrote in the learned verse form of *cuaderna vía* (quatrains of 14 syllables with a caesura in the middle and consonantal mono-rhyme), which in the thirteenth century was the most favored poetic style of the *mester de clerecía*, the cleric's or scholar's art. Generally learned and/or religious, the *mester de clerecía* employs, however, many "well-proven techniques" of the minstrel's art, or the *mester de juglaría*, such as "oral presentation, direct address, picturesque details and digressions, and the use of popular speech and proverbs."¹² The nature of the *mester de clerecía* implies that its authors were knowledgeable in law, grammar, and rhetoric, thus linking them to an urban world and an education in the universities or cathedral schools of the region. Berceo's works reveal that his rhetorical skills encompassed considerable musical, biblical, doctrinal, and juridical knowledge. "*Mester de clerecía*" as a concept comprises more than one single verse form and refers to the learned style and literary development of the medieval European clergy up through the fourteenth century.¹³ While it is impossible to restrict the study of the poetic production of the *mester de clerecía* to only that poetry composed in *cuaderna vía*, we can nonetheless apply the term to Berceo, and to the poems in *cuaderna vía* of the thirteenth century.¹⁴ Some of the best examples of *mester de clerecía* from Berceo's day, all of which were written in *cuaderna vía*, include the *Libro de Alexandre*, about the life and adventures of Alexander the Great, the *Libro de Apolonio*, an account of a Greek romance about Apollonius of Tyre, and the *Poema de Fernán González*, a narration of the heroic military accomplishments of the first count of Castile.

Notwithstanding the cultured verse form and quantity of learned themes of the *mester de clerecía*, its employment of the popular poetic formulas and use of the vernacular language instead of Latin suggest that its audience was not

¹¹ See Carrera de la Red, *Miracula*, pp. 32–57; Dutton, *Obras II*, p. 13.

¹² "Minstrel's art" and "scholar's art" are the translations for *mester de juglaría* and *mester de clerecía* provided by Richard Terry Mount and Annette Grant Cash, *Miracles of Our Lady* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1997), pp. 1–2.

¹³ See Francisco López Estrada, "Mester de clerecía: las palabras y el concepto," *Journal of Hispanic Philology* 3 (1978): 165–74, and Francisco Rico, "La clerecía del mester," *Hispanic Review* 53, no. 2 (1985): 127–50.

¹⁴ Alan Deyermond, *Historia de la literatura española 1: La Edad Media* (Barcelona: Ariel, 1973), p. 109; see the discussion of *cuaderna vía* and thirteenth-century Spain in Deyermond, pp. 104–9. For a social reading of the thirteenth-century poems in *cuaderna vía* within the broader context of clerical narrative and other verse forms, see Julian Weiss, *The "Mester de Clerecía": Intellectuals and Ideologies in Thirteenth-Century Castile* (Woodbridge, UK: Tamesis, 2006). For connections of the *mester de clerecía* to the Lateran reforms, a theme to which we return later in this work, see Derek Lomax, "The Lateran Reforms and Spanish Literature," *Iberoromania* 4 (1969): 299–300. Not all scholars take the view that the *mester de clerecía* encompasses more than the *cuaderna vía* production; see Isabel Uría Maqua, *Panorama crítico del "mester de clerecía"* (Madrid: Castalia, 2000).

limited to clerics. Clues to the audience Berceo must have had in mind as he composed his *Milagros* can be found in the allegorical Introduction that precedes the 25 poeticized miracles that comprise the collection. The source for Berceo's Introduction remains a mystery, assuming it is not original to Berceo himself. Michael Gerli finds that Berceo's Introduction, as allegory, tells the story of humankind's Fall and Redemption "[p]or medio de imágenes que evocan el Paraíso del Génesis, y a través de alusiones a las profecías del Antiguo Testamento que anunciaban a la Virgen María."¹⁵ The image of the *peregrinatio vitae* "que informa toda la Introducción de la obra es la tipología más reconocible del texto y se deriva directamente de la Biblia."¹⁶ This pilgrimage is that of "el hombre caído que anda en busca de la gracia perdida," and Berceo himself alludes to his own pilgrimage.¹⁷ The fundamental metaphor of the Virgin Mary as a "perpetually green meadow where the pilgrim can rest and enjoy spiritual delights" mirrors the *locus amoenus* motif of the Middle Ages.¹⁸ This meadow, however, "es mucho más ... que la evocación de un simple *locus amoenus*: representa el retorno del narrador ejemplar, el *everyman* y yo poético, al Paraíso perdido. ... por medio de su devoción mariana."¹⁹ By viewing Berceo's Introduction in light of the story of "Fall and Redemption," we can visualize it as a narrative frame in which the miracles that follow "reflejan metonímicamente el mismo concepto en su plano individual. Estos últimos narran no el drama de la Caída y Salvación del hombre arquetípico, sino el de los hombres, nuestros vecinos y nuestros contemporáneos."²⁰ Thus Berceo's introductory narrative frame casts both himself and his audiences as pilgrims on the journey to grace who as auditory witnesses to the miracle tales, and as potential witnesses to future miracles, also become protagonists in the stories that they hear.²¹

¹⁵ E. Michael Gerli, "La tipología bíblica y la introducción a los *Milagros de Nuestra Señora*," *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 62 (1985): 7-14, p. 13: "by means of images that evoke the Paradise of Genesis, and through allusions to the prophecies of the Old Testament that heralded the Virgin Mary." All translations of critical references are ours.

¹⁶ Gerli, "La tipología," p. 9: "that informs the whole Introduction of the work is the most recognizable typology of the text."

¹⁷ Gerli, "La tipología," p. 9: "fallen man who travels in search of the lost grace."

¹⁸ Mount and Cash, *Miracles*, p. 7.

¹⁹ Gerli, "La tipología," p. 9: "is much more than the evocation of a simple *locus amoenus*: it represents the return of the exemplary narrator, 'everyman' and poetic 'I', to the lost Paradise. ... by way of their Marian devotion."

²⁰ Gerli, "La tipología," 13: "metonymically reflect the same concept on an individual plane. They narrate the drama of the Fall and Redemption not of an archetypical man, but of [individual] men, our neighbors and our contemporaries."

²¹ E. Michael Gerli, "Poet and Pilgrim: Discourse, Language, Imagery, and Audience in Berceo's *Milagros de Nuestra Señora*," in *Hispanic Medieval Studies in Honor of Samuel G. Armistead*, ed. E. Michael Gerli and Harvey L. Sharrer (Madison: Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies, 1992), p. 144.

In the Middle Ages, the *mester de clerecía* became a didactic instrument designed to instruct and attract followers of the Church, and entailed an effort toward establishing the authority of Church doctrine.²² Berceo's illustration of the "Fall and Redemption" paradigm by means of Old Testament events and figures that prophesy Mary firmly establishes the Christian doctrine of prefiguration in which Mary (and Christ) appear as the fulfillment of what Marina Warner describes as "one unbroken chain of prophecy."²³ The miracles themselves communicate dogmas of the Church, whose authority rests securely on the foundation of prefiguration, by means of playful, grotesque, poignant, and violent narratives that have broad audience appeal. While this is also true of the Latin miracles, Berceo embellishes his own versions with extensive dialogue, direct address of the audience, expressions of folk speech, colloquial and regional phrases, and insertion of rustic or primitive vocabulary. Thus he enriches with drama, vivid images, and humor the Latin miracles in which the Virgin Mary's interventions save a pregnant abbess from scandal, encourage mob violence against Jews, enable the repayment of debts, trap some thieves and rescue others, bring a self-castrated pilgrim back to life, retrieve contracts made with the devil, and chase away a drunken monk's frightening hallucinations.

In his detailed comparison of the Latin version and Berceo's version of the Miracle of Saint Ildefonso, Joseph T. Snow shows that the modifications, amplifications, and dramatizations that Berceo brings to his poetized tale are not random, but rather "transcend, clearly, the normal adjustments demanded by simple conversion of Latin prose into vernacular verse."²⁴ Snow demonstrates that Berceo's artistic gift and poetic instinct can be fully appreciated only by tracing carefully

the true differences between the Latin prose and Berceo's Castilian verse reflection of it, with its differing disposition of the materials, the *amplificatio* undertaken, the magnification of events, personalities and the language itself used in their description, and the unique concern for structural balance and narrative shape. All of these together reveal the hand of an experienced artist and are evidence of an aesthetic vision which constantly demands our closest attention.²⁵

In one important change to the Latin miracle, for example, Berceo changes the number of times that Mary makes an appearance in honor of Saint Ildefonso from two to one, focusing on the new Feast date that Ildefonso has instituted for the celebration of the Annunciation, and omitting the occasion of the Virgin's appearance upon the completion of Ildefonso's book in her honor. With this

²² E. Michael Gerli, ed., *Gonzalo de Berceo: Milagros de Nuestra Señora* (Madrid: Cátedra, 1992), p. 17.

²³ Marina Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (New York: Knopf, 1976), p. 62.

²⁴ Joseph T. Snow, "Gonzalo de Berceo and the Miracle of Saint Ildefonso: Portrait of the Medieval Artist at Work," *Hispania* 65 (1982): 1–11, p. 5

²⁵ Snow, "Saint Ildefonso," p. 8.

change, the “Feast date takes on a new structural role in that it becomes a frame for the entire central episode (Mary’s visit)”²⁶ The Virgin honors Ildefonso by presenting him with a chasuble that only he will be worthy to wear. When Siagrio has the audacity to consider himself equal to Ildefonso and to don the chasuble, the forbidden garment chokes him to death. As Snow demonstrates, to have only two main events, the Virgin’s appearance and Siagrio’s disobedience, creates more dramatic balance in the tale, and better intensifies the didactic message.²⁷

In addition to presenting doctrinal themes artistically rendered in an entertaining manner, Berceo’s poetry reflects his relationship to the monastery of San Millán. It is known, for example, that the devotional objective of hagiography generally encompassed a promotional motive as well: to attract financial support to often struggling monasteries. Berceo composed saints’ lives as well as miracles of the Virgin, and these all had some direct connection with San Millán. In the thirteenth century, a general state of monastery decline corresponds to the proliferation of hagiographic works, and San Millán de la Cogolla was no exception to the tides of history. Early in the century, its bishopric, Calahorra, had fallen into debt and disarray. Disputes among the parishes and religious houses ensued over claims to financial endowments. Thus Berceo’s poems about saints’ lives can be viewed as propaganda, as publicity destined to attract pilgrims to his convent in order to increase the income of the San Millán monastery. The miracle tales of the Virgin do not necessarily directly participate in this propagandistic aspect of hagiography production; however, thanks to Brian Dutton’s research we have documentation that a shrine of the Virgin at the chapel of San Millán existed at least 38 years before

²⁶ Snow, “Saint Ildefonso,” p. 7.

²⁷ Snow, “Saint Ildefonso,” p. 6. Following Snow, Matthew A. Wyszynski’s study of the same miracle (“Berceo’s ‘La casulla de San Ildefonso’: Thematic Transformation Through Rhetoric,” *Romance Notes* 46, no. 3 [2006]: 287–95) establishes how Berceo strategically employs specific rhetorical rules from Cicero’s *De Inventione*—Circumstances of Person and Circumstances of Action—to amplify or deemphasize different parts of the Latin tale in order to create new thematic foci. Berceo’s tale focuses on “the dangers and power of language, and the tangible benefits one accrues as a devoted servant of the Blessed Mother” (p. 288), whereas the Latin’s primary thematic focus is to honor Saint Ildefonso, and the Virgin Mary’s apparitions bolster that honor. Ryan D. Giles (“The Liberties of December and Gonzalo de Berceo’s Miracle of St. Ildefonsus,” *Hispanofila* 156 [2009]: 1–12) indicates that the context for Wyszynski’s observation that “the dangers of misusing language” are absent in the Latin points to *Libertate Decembris* and the *festum stultorum*, which were raucous carnivalesque revelries that took place during Yuletide season both inside and outside of medieval churches (p. 7). The demands of Siagrio to don Saint Ildefonso’s chasuble reflect the “inversions of ecclesiastical hierarchy” characteristic of the high/low aesthetic of carnival outlined by Mikhail Bakhtin (p. 3). In 1207, “Innocent III ordered clergymen to stop participating in obscene rituals inside their churches during the Yuletide season” (p. 3). Thus, as Giles shows, we can see that in Berceo’s version of the miracle Siagrio represents a model of what the clergy and laity alike should quit doing inside the churches. The miracle speaks to audiences both lay and clerical.

an altar was even dedicated to the chapel's patron saint.²⁸ He concludes that the *Milagros*, like the saints' lives, probably also served as publicity for San Millán.²⁹

As part of his argument, Dutton refers to a passage from the opening quatrain of the miracle of "The Pregnant Abbess" that does not appear in the Latin versions of this miracle.³⁰ We quote the verses here in order to convey the compelling effect of this miracle's introductory lines:

Sennores e amigos, companna de prestar,
deqe Dios se vos quiso traer a est logar,
aún si me quissiéssedes un poco esperar,
en un otro miraclo vos querría fablar. (500)

[Gentlefolk and friends, excellent company,
since God wished to bring you to this place,
should you still like to wait on me a little,
I would like to tell you of another miracle.]³¹

Even without knowing about Dutton's discovery, we cannot deny that the verses address an audience who has actively "arrived" to the place of miracle recitation. The monastery of San Millán not only had its own local cult of the Virgin, but also was located near the famous pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela. In the eleventh century, San Millán had acquired the inn of Azofra, located on the French road to Santiago close to Nájera, along with its church, where pilgrims who died on the route were buried. Nájera was not far from San Millán.³² One can assume that pilgrims en route to Santiago, at least the ones who spoke Spanish, also could have been entertained and edified by the *Milagros*, and/or encouraged to visit the shrine of the Virgin at San Millán.³³ Certainly recitations of the miracles would have accrued fame, if not financial support as well, to Azofra. Of course, recognition of the propagandistic value of poetizing in the vernacular the Latin miracles of the Virgin in no way detracts from the religious sincerity of the endeavor or from Berceo's unambiguous commitment to the Church. Rather, it broadens our perspective on the potential audiences for which the miracles were intended and the purposes for disseminating them to these audiences.

²⁸ Brian Dutton, "Berceo's *Milagros de Nuestra Señora* and the Virgin of Yuso," *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 44 (1967): 81–7, pp. 83–4.

²⁹ Dutton, "Virgin of Yuso," pp. 86–7.

³⁰ Dutton, *Obras II*, p. 174.

³¹ Translations of Berceo's *Milagros* are taken from Mount and Cash, *Miracles*.

³² Dutton, *Obras II*, p. 9.

³³ Gerli, "Poet and Pilgrim," concurs with Dutton's theory that the *Milagros'* audience is one of pilgrims on the road to Compostela, and that the recitation of the miracles surely served to attract pilgrims to the shrine of the Virgin of San Millán de Yuso (p. 141). His study reveals that the *Milagros* "are shot through with imagery, language, and allusions which help to reinforce the notion that it was a text destined to be read aloud to an audience of pilgrims" (p. 141).

The Latin *Miracles* and the History of the Virgin Mary

Readers of Marina Warner's *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary*¹ or Jaroslav Pelikan's *Mary Through the Centuries: Her Place in the History of Culture*² know that the history of the Virgin Mary's reception and the development of doctrine about her is complex, resistant to generalizations. She has meant many different things at many different times, and representations of her in diverse genres and media can be divergent. That said, there are still discernible currents in the sea of her reception by European culture, a general movement in the way she has been meaningful to Christians. The time spanning the compilation of the Latin *Miracles* and Berceo's adaptation of them in his *Los Milagros de Nuestra Señora*, moreover, is by most accounts crucial in the history of how the Virgin signifies meaning. In the earlier twelfth century and before, she tends to be remote and magisterial, while in the later thirteenth century and after she tends to be accessible and increasingly human, morphing into the loving young mother holding her baby that so dominates her modern persona. In both the Latin *Miracles* and Berceo's *Milagros* she is between these two poles yet in a state of transition from one to the other. The movement—perhaps in feet rather than miles—is moreover discernible as we move from the Latin *Miracles* to Berceo.

A walk through the famous Cloisters Museum in New York City can make this movement visible. Visual art tends to show it in broader strokes than those of doctrinal development or even imaginative literature. The rooms in the Cloisters are arranged so that the visitor can move from the early twelfth century to the early sixteenth sequentially; those interested in the history of the Virgin can watch her gradually change. The earliest exhibit is the apse from the Spanish Church of San Martín de Fuentidueña, a late Romanesque structure on which a large fresco from the Church of San Juan de Tredós has been mounted. Contemporaneous to the apse, it is dated circa 1130–1150. In it the Virgin is enthroned in a mandorla with the Christ Child on her lap; they are worshipped by the Three Magi and the archangels Michael and Gabriel. Christ is no baby but a miniature adult who holds up his right hand in benediction. Mary looks at us, full face front, with no emotion other than calm and regal austerity. She is *Theotokos* (“God Bearer”), a term used in early doctrinal speculation about her; she is Queen of Heaven. By the time we reach the statue of the Virgin that was originally part of a choir screen from Strasbourg Cathedral and dated from 1252, she has changed. She stands straight,

¹ Marina Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (New York: Knopf, 1976).

² Jaroslav Pelikan, *Mary Through the Centuries: Her Place in the History of Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996).