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"The reception of Gothic Architecture in the Kingdom of Castile: the Cathedrals of Burgos, Toledo and León".

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Seminarstraße 4

The movement of the frontier with Al-Andalus further to the south, and, specially, Alfonso VIII's victory over the Almohads at the battle of the Navas de Tolosa (1212) brought about a relative calm in the kingdoms of Christian Spain. The subsequent political tranquillity and expansion were accompanied by a period of prosperity which would echo in the field of art. In the territories of Castile and León there were numerous stone workshops functioning at the end of the 12th century and many others were started in the first decades of the next century. But within the building landscape of this period, historiography has stressed the commencement of three great buildings where the "*opus francigenum*" was used from the beginning: the Burgos cathedral, started in about 1221, the Toledo one, in about 1222, and that of León, probably in the 30's.

The factors that came together so that such ambitious projects were carried out are various. Among them we can recall the personality of the bishops, learned personages trained in theology in Paris and well aware of the character of the capital of their respective sees; the political role they played as courtiers of the king Fernando III; and the familial relation between Castilian and French monarchy.