



Theses and Dissertations

2005-05-09

The Artistic and Architectural Patronage of Countess Urraca of Santa Mar a de Ca as: A Powerful Aristocrat, Abbess, and Advocate

Julia Alice Jardine McMullin
Brigham Young University - Provo

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/etd>



Part of the [Art Practice Commons](#)

BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

McMullin, Julia Alice Jardine, "The Artistic and Architectural Patronage of Countess Urraca of Santa Mar a de Ca as: A Powerful Aristocrat, Abbess, and Advocate" (2005). *Theses and Dissertations*. 423. <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/etd/423>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@byu.edu, ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.

THE ARTISTIC AND ARCHITECTURAL PATRONAGE OF COUNTESS
URRACA OF SANTA MARÍA DE CAÑAS:
A POWERFUL ARISTOCRAT, ABBESS, AND ADVOCATE

by

Julia Alice Jardine McMullin

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

Department of Visual Arts

Brigham Young University

August 2005

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE COMMITTEE APPROVAL

of a thesis submitted by

Julia Alice Jardine McMullin

This thesis has been read by each member of the following graduate committee and by majority vote has been found to be satisfactory.

Date

Mark Johnson, Chair

Date

Mark Hamilton

Date

Martha Peacock

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

As chair of the candidate's graduate committee, I have read the dissertation of Julia Alice Jardine McMullin in its final form and have found that (1) its format, citations, and bibliographical style are consistent and acceptable and fulfill university and department style requirements; (2) its illustrative materials including figures, tables, and charts are in place; and (3) the final manuscript is satisfactory to the graduate committee and is ready for submission to the university library.

Date

Mark Johnson
Chair, Graduate Committee

Accepted for the Department

Martha Peacock
Graduate Coordinator

Accepted for the College

Rory Scanlon
Associate Dean, College of Fine Arts
and Communications

ABSTRACT

THE ARTISTIC AND ARCHITECTURAL PATRONAGE OF COUNTESS URRACA LOPE HARO DE LARA OF SANTA MARÍA DE CAÑAS: A POWERFUL ARISTOCRAT, ABBESS, AND ADVOCATE

Julia Alice Jardine McMullin

Department of Visual Arts

Master of Arts

Countess Urraca Lope de Haro was the daughter of the noble Lord Diego Lope de Haro, friend and advisor to King Alfonso VIII of Castilla-León and granddaughter of Lord Lope Díaz de Haro and Lady Aldonza Ruiz de Castro, aristocratic courtiers as well as popular monastic patrons. As a young and wealthy widow, Countess Urraca took monastic vows at the Cistercian nunnery of Santa María de Cañas founded by her grandparents. Within a short time of uniting herself to this monastery, she was chosen as its fourth abbess in 1225, a position she held for thirty-seven years until her death in 1262. Following the tradition of monastic patronage established by her noble family members, Countess Urraca expanded the monastery's small real estate holdings, oversaw extensive building projects to create

permanent structures for the nunnery, and patronized artistic projects including statuettes of the Virgin Mary and St. Peter in addition to her own decorative stone sarcophagus during her term as abbess.

This thesis examines the artistic decoration and architectural patronage of this powerful woman and the influences she incorporated into the monastic structures at Cañas as she oversaw their construction. In dating the original buildings of the monastery at Cañas to the period of Countess Urraca's leadership, the predominant architectural features and decorative details of female Cistercian foundations in northern Spain are discussed. Comparisons with additional thirteenth-century Cistercian monasteries from the same region in northern Spain are offered to demonstrate the artistic connections with the structures Countess Urraca patronized.

In addition, this thesis examines Countess Urraca's obvious devotion to the Virgin Mary and St. Peter by considering the medieval monastic world in which she lived and the strong emphasis the Cistercian Order placed on such worship practices. The potent spiritual connections Countess Urraca made by commissioning images of essential, holy intercessors testifies to her devotion to them and the powerful salvatory role she herself played in the lives of the nuns for whom she was responsible. As a nun and abbess, Countess Urraca was urged to emulate Mary's mothering, nurturing qualities, and, as she did so was simultaneously empowered by the Virgin's heavenly authority as administrator of mercy. Indeed, through studying her art it is clear that she saw herself as an intercessor on behalf of the nuns for whom she was responsible.

Furthermore, discussion of the imagery displayed on Countess Urraca's decorative stone sarcophagus demonstrates not only a similar message of salvation through intercessors such as Peter and Mary, but also testifies of Abbess Urraca's aristocratic lineage. Through this artistic commission, the Abbess creates another direct, personal link between herself and the Virgin by including the symbol of the rosary throughout the iconography of her tomb. Such a symbol represents her devotion to Mary as Queen of Heaven and simultaneously empowers Countess Urraca as an intercessor herself. All of these architectural and artistic commissions confirm that she was a powerful woman who wielded a great deal of influence.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, I thank the members of my graduate committee for their support of this research project. Dr. Mark Johnson's seminar on patronage inspired me to seek after uncharted research territory in medieval Spain, and there began my interest in Countess Urraca and her artistic and architectural commissions. I also extend my appreciation to Dr. Martha Peacock for attracting me to art history in the first place, and her continuing support of my interest in women's contributions in several art historical periods. Her seminar on feminism in art history and the many other insights she has offered have been invaluable to me.

In addition, I thank the Office of Graduate Studies at Brigham Young University for the Graduate Research Fellowship I was awarded. The fellowship facilitated my research in Spain, including at the monastery, in the National Archives and in various libraries in Madrid. I also acknowledge the Brigham Young University Women's Research Institute for its financial support through the gift of the Women's Research Institute Student Research Grant. The grant was particularly beneficial to the latter stages of my research and preparation of the final versions of my thesis. These research opportunities were further enhanced by the knowledge and direction of Spanish scholar Elena Casas Castells, who I thank for her continuing insights, support, and correspondence.

Finally, I express gratitude to the members of my family for their ongoing encouragement. I thank my mom, who was my travel companion and advocate during part of my trip in Spain. I further thank my husband James for his patience and consistent support throughout my graduate studies and research endeavors.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	List of Figures.....	x
II.	Introduction.....	1
III.	Chapter One: Who was Countess (Abbess) Urraca?.....	9
IV.	Chapter Two: The Thirteenth Century Architecture of the Monastery of Cañas.....	19
V.	Chapter Three: Abbess Urraca’s Patronage of Statuettes of the Virgin and the Role of Mary in the Cistercian Order.....	31
VI.	Chapter Four: Abbess Urraca’s Royal Sarcophagus and further Marian Devotion through the Rosary.....	51
VII.	Conclusion/ Epilogue	69
VIII.	Bibliography.....	79
IX.	Figures.....	87

LIST OF FIGURES

1. Monastery of Santa María de Cañas, La Rioja, Spain
2. Donation Document of Lord Lope Díaz de Haro and his wife, Doña Aldonza Ruíz de Castro, 1169
3. Valley of Cañas and Canillas donated to the Monastery of Santa María de Cañas by Lord Lope Díaz de Haro and Doña Aldonza Ruíz de Castro, 1170
4. Detail of Sarcophagus of Doña Blanca, Lord Lope Díaz de Haro stands next to the tree; c. 1156, Santa María la Real, Nájera
5. Plan of the Monastic Complex at Cañas, including time table for construction
6. View of foundation stones of the monastery, 12th century, with 13th century completed construction above
7. Pointed arches of the mid-13th century within the Monastery of Cañas, c. 1236
8. Quatrefoil shaped window openings in the apse of the chapel at the Monastery of Cañas, c. 1236
9. Vaulted ceiling in the monastery chapel at Cañas, c. 1236
10. View of the Chapter House at Santa María de Cañas, with the sarcophagus of Abbess Urraca, c. 1250
11. Medieval storage room in the Monastery at Cañas, c. 1236
12. Chapel of St. John the Baptist, Monastery of Las Huelgas at Burgos, Spain, c. 13th century

13. Outside wall of the Monastery of Cañas: unfinished transept
14. Plan of the Monastery of Tulebras, c. 12th-13th century
15. Plan of the Monastery of Santa María la Real of Las Huelgas at Burgos, c. late 12th- early 13th century
16. Pantocrator, Monastic Church at Santa María de Cañas, c. 13th century
17. Restored doors, Chapter House, Santa María de Cañas, c. 13th century
18. Romanesque window décor, Santa María de Oseira, c. 12th century
19. Detail of foliate ornamentation and gothic arch over the sarcophagus of Infante Fernando de la Cerda, Santa María la Real of Las Huelgas at Burgos, c. 13th century
20. Entrance into the monastic church at Santa María de Cañas, dog-tooth decoration, c. 13th century
21. Detail of dog-tooth ornamentation over doorways, Santa María la Real of Las Huelgas at Burgos, c. 13th century
22. Detail of dog-tooth decoration over doorway, Santa María la Real de Grafedes, c. 13th century
23. Detail of dog-tooth décor over doorway into Chapter House, Nuestra Señora de Rueda, Zaragoza, c. 13th century
24. Detail of dog-tooth detailing around doorway, Nuestra Señora de Piedra, Aragón, c. 1218
25. Entrance to Cilla, main storage room at Santa María de Cañas, c. 13th century
26. Former entrance to Refectory and Kitchen from Cloister, Santa María de Cañas, c. 13th century

27. Interior of Cilla, main storage room, Santa María de Cañas, c. 13th century
28. Cross-section of Cilla, main storage room at Santa María la Real of Las Huelgas at Burgos, c. 13th century
29. Statuette of the Virgin and Child, Cañas, c. 13th century
30. Statuette of St. Anne with the Virgin and Child, Cañas, c. 13th century
31. Statuette of St. Peter, Cañas, c. 13th century
32. Detail of family crest symbol of the wolf with sheep at the feet of the statuette of the Virgin and Child, Cañas, c. 13th century
33. Statuette of the Virgin and Child, Santa María la Real of Las Huelgas at Burgos, c. 1250
34. Statuette of the Virgin and Child, Santa María la Real de Grafedes, 13th century
35. Statuette of the Virgin and Child, Santo Domingo de la Calzada, 14th century
36. Santa María de Hayuela, c. 12th century
37. “Royal woman prays to the Virgin and is protected,” *Cantigas de Santa María*, Alfonso X of Castilla-León, c. 13th century
38. “Nun prays to the Virgin for protection,” *Cantigas de Santa María*, Alfonso X of Castilla-León, c. 13th century
39. Master IAM van Zwoll, *Lactation of St. Bernard*, ca. 1480-85, Engraving, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum
40. Detail of north transept of Santa María de Cañas, small face, c. 13th century
41. Sarcophagus of Abbess Urraca in the Chapter House of the Monastery of Cañas, latter half of the 13th century

42. Other abbess' tombs in the Chapter House at Cañas next to the sarcophagus of Countess Urraca
43. Detail, wolf supporting sarcophagus of Countess Urraca, latter half of the 13th century
44. Detail, sarcophagus of Countess Urraca with prayer beads, latter half of the 13th century
45. Detail, Sarcophagus of Countess Urraca, Angel with Incense, latter half of the 13th century
46. Detail, Sarcophagus of Dona Mayor Guillén de Guzmán, Angels with Incense, Convento de Religiosas Clarisas, Guadalajara, Spain, c. 1262-7
47. Detail, Sarcophagus of Countess Urraca, Three Nuns at Urraca's feet, latter half of the 13th century
48. Detail, Sarcophagus of Countess Urraca, Two angels lifting Abbess Urraca's soul to heaven, latter half of the 13th century
49. Detail, Sarcophagus of Countess Urraca, Funerary scene, latter half of the 13th century
50. Detail, Sarcophagus of Countess Urraca, Professional Mourners, latter half of the 13th century
51. Detail, Sarcophagus of Countess Urraca, Nuns in mourning procession, latter half of the 13th century
52. Detail, Sarcophagus of Countess Urraca, Flirting monk and nun, latter half of the 13th century

53. Detail, Sarcophagus of Countess Urraca, Heavenly scene with St. Peter and several Cistercian nuns, latter half of the 13th century
54. Sarcophagus of Queen Urraca, c. 1250
55. Detail, Sarcophagus of Queen Urraca, Funerary scene, c. 1250
56. Inscription, Sarcophagus of Queen Urraca, c. 1250
57. Detail of Queen Urraca's nun's habit on her sarcophagus, c. 1250
58. Detail of incense-bearing angel, Sarcophagus of Queen Urraca, c. 1250
59. Detail of the *Annunciation*, Sarcophagus of Queen Urraca, c. 1250
60. Detail of the *Adoration*, Sarcophagus of Queen Urraca, c. 1250
61. Sarcophagi of Don Diego López de Haro and his wife, Doña Toda Pérez de Lara, Santa María la Real, Nájera, c. 1215
62. Detail, Funerary Procession, Sarcophagus of Don Diego López de Haro, Santa María la Real, Nájera, c. 1215
63. Detail, Funerary Procession, Sarcophagus of Don Diego López de Haro, Santa María la Real, Nájera, c. 1215
64. Detail, Funerary Procession, Sarcophagus of Doña Toda Pérez de Lara, Santa María la Real, Nájera, c. 1215
65. Detail, Funerary Procession, Sarcophagus of Doña Toda Pérez de Lara, Santa María la Real, Nájera, c. 1215
66. Detail, Funerary Procession, Sarcophagus of Doña Toda Pérez de Lara, Santa María la Real, Nájera, c. 1215
67. Geertgen tot Sint Jans, *The Legend of St. Dominic*, c. 1480

68. Detail, Marian psalter beads, Sarcophagus of Countess Urraca, latter half of the 13th century
69. Detail, Nun with Rosary, Sarcophagus of Countess Urraca, latter half of the 13th century
70. Detail, Nun with Rosary, Sarcophagus of Countess Urraca, latter half of the 13th century
71. Detail, Nun with Rosary, Sarcophagus of Countess Urraca, latter half of the 13th century

INTRODUCTION:

The role of nuns—particularly Cistercian nuns—in medieval society as vehicles of salvation and wielders of great power and influence has been frequently neglected by historians of the Middle Ages.¹ In spite of much existing documentation pertaining to several female monastic groups patterned after Cîteaux during the twelfth century, for some time there was a scholarly denial of the very existence of Cistercian female institutions during this period—or at least an attempt to minimize their role and/or discredit their claim to affiliation with the Order.² Ironically, while it is clear that the monastery of Santa María la Real of Las Huelgas in Burgos, the most powerful Spanish Cistercian female monastery,³ opened the way for other female foundations belonging to the Order across Europe to become officially recognized by Cîteaux, very little research has been done concerning medieval Cistercian nuns in Spain.⁴ Indeed scholarship pertaining to the Cistercian monastery of Santa Maria de Cañas, one of the earliest

¹ Constance H. Berman, *Women and Monasticism in Medieval Europe: Sisters and Patrons of the Cistercian Reform* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2002), 2.

² Sally Thompson, “The Problem of the Cistercian Nuns in the Twelfth and Early Thirteenth Centuries,” *Medieval Women*, ed. Derek Baker, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1978), 227-29. See also Constance H. Berman, *The Cistercian Evolution: The Invention of a Religious Order in Twelfth-Century Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), preface. The author explains: “...I became aware of a series of dissonances in our traditional understanding of the early Cistercians that have led me step by step to a reconceptualization of early Cistercian history. I discovered that historians employed a ‘double standard’ of proof with regard to Cistercian nuns. For women’s houses to be deemed Cistercian, they had to be mentioned in the published statutes of the Order, but the same tests were not applied to men’s houses. When I applied the same standards of proof to women’s and men’s houses, the required references in the early Cistercian records were found *neither* for houses of Cistercian monks *nor* for those of Cistercian nuns for any years before 1190....”

³ It is imperative to define the word “monastery” as used throughout this thesis. Originally, all Cistercian foundations were organized as monasteries—meaning away from the cities and towns in late medieval Europe. A convent, by definition, was a female foundation based in the city. Therefore this thesis will only use the term monastery because Santa María de Cañas was founded as such and continues to be referred-to as such in contemporary literature.

⁴ Roger de Ganck, “The Integration of Nuns in the Cistercian Order, Particularly in Belgium,” *Cîteaux: Commentarii Cistercienses* 35 (1984), 240. The author writes that when Alfonso VIII obtained authority for his and his wife Eleanor’s foundation at Las Huelgas in 1187, he “set in motion a movement that would indeed result in the full juridical integration of the nuns into the Order of Cîteaux.”

nunneries founded prior to Las Huelgas under the Cistercian order for women in Spain in 1169, is nearly non-existent (Fig. 1).

Santa Maria de Cañas reached the height of its power during the thirteenth century under the leadership of Abbess Urraca who ruled the monastery for some thirty-seven years.⁵ This was a period during which Cistercian abbesses in Spain looked to the examples of the powerful, influential, aristocratic abbesses at Las Huelgas as sources of inspiration.⁶ In addition, at this time it became increasingly common for widowed aristocratic women to found, patronize, and/or participate in religious life.⁷ Abbess Urraca of Cañas participated in all three of these activities, entering the convent as a widow and, soon after, being elected abbess of the monastery, most likely due to her familial connection to the founders of Santa María de Cañas who were her grandparents.

Throughout her term as abbess and controller of all of the monastery's resources, Urraca supervised the construction of several monastic buildings for the foundation of Santa María de Cañas, including the church, and was the patron of painted wooden images for worship of the Virgin and other important saints. Most importantly, she commissioned her own stone sarcophagus after the aristocratic style employed by her dignified family members and other Spanish nobles.⁸ Curiously, these works of art were created despite Bernard of Clairvaux's writings regarding the need for total simplicity

⁵ Sebastian Andrés Valero and Carmen Jiménez Martínez, "El Monasterio Cisterciense de Santa María de Cañas (Cañas, La Rioja)," *El Císter: Órdenes Religiosas Zaragozanas* (1987), 232.

⁶ M.P. Millaruelo, "Reseña histórica del nacimiento de los monasterios femeninos del Cister en España hasta el Concilio de Trento," *Schola Caritatis: Cuadernos de Vida Monástica* 92 (1981): 84.

⁷ Penelope D. Johnson, *Equal in Monastic Profession: Religious Women in Medieval France* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), 34, 37.

⁸ José Gabriel Moy Valgañón, *Inventario Artístico de Logroño y su Provincia, vol. I (Abalos-Cellorigo)*, (Madrid: Servicio Nacional de Información Artística Arqueológica y Etnológica, 1975), 281, 284. Although the author writes that the sarcophagus dates from the early 14th century, and several other authors claim that it was made at the end of the 13th century after her death, this paper will argue that Urraca oversaw the creation of her sarcophagus during her life due to the iconography present in its decoration.

and forbidding use of human imagery in Cistercian monastic buildings.⁹ Proper worship and dedication to the Virgin, the patron of all Cistercian foundations, in addition to expressing power through the commissioning of monumental artworks, took precedence over following Bernard's decrees.

Abbess Urraca's historic role as a Spanish aristocratic nun who controlled extensive properties and patronized much artistic production must be viewed as part of a larger phenomenon that took place in western Europe during the Middle Ages that allowed assertive, mature women to choose to participate in the religious orders of late-medieval reformers.¹⁰ Nuns and their religious houses played a significant role in the society of this period, not only through commissioning art and architecture, but in serving their communities and acting as powerful mediators for their patrons.¹¹ Contrary to earlier scholarship, it is now better understood that nuns even carried out business transactions and resisted abdicating rights of any kind to their male counterparts.

Constance Berman explains:

[S]ubservience to men by these religious women is far from apparent in most cases, given the restraints of medieval society; even if they had lay-brothers to take care of business outside the enclosure, nuns...certainly did not give up control over property.¹²

⁹ Rudolph, Conrad. "The 'Principal Founders' and the Early Artistic Legislations of Cîteaux." *Studies in Cistercian Art and Architecture, vol. III*. Cistercian Studies Series, no. 89. Kalamazoo, Michigan, 1987), 6. Statute 20 in Bernard's *Apologia ad Guillelmum Abbatem*, he writes, "We forbid sculptures or paintings in either our churches or in any of the rooms of the monastery, because when attention is turned to such things the advantage of good meditation or the discipline of religious gravity is often neglected."

¹⁰ Caroline Walker Bynum, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 142. "The percentage of monks and nuns who had been married before their conversion appears to have become much higher [during the 12th century]."

¹¹ Penelope D. Johnson, "The Cloistering of Medieval Nuns: Release or Repression, Reality or Fantasy?" In *Gendered Domains: Rethinking Public and Private in Women's History*, Dorothy O. Helly and Susan M. Reverby, Editors (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), 33.

¹² Berman, *Women and Monasticism*, 7.

Abbess Urraca's actions as abbess at Cañas perfectly illustrate this concept as she exercised jurisdiction over real estate and directed artistic and economic activities for the growth and expansion of power for her monastery.

Concurrent with this trend, the cult of Mary and devotions to the Virgin as Queen of Heaven also increased throughout Europe, not only among lay worshipers, but especially among monastic communities.¹³ Although Mary was venerated from the early days of the Christian era, during the later medieval period she came to be revered as Our Lady, the Queen of Heaven and a more humane, motherly source of salvation independent from her son, rather than as the subservient “handmaid of the Lord whose key relationship was with Christ.”¹⁴ The Virgin's power to intercede and save souls as a loving mother and powerful intercessor was emphasized extensively throughout Cistercian doctrine as she was their patron. Devoted monastics, both male and female, were admonished to contemplate and emulate her virtues.

As previously mentioned, all Cistercian foundations were dedicated to Mary, regardless of the gender of the individuals living within the walls of the monastery. However, this association would have been held in special regard by Cistercian nuns, as all nuns—of any order—were admonished to imitate the Virgin.¹⁵ Along with this worship of Mary, the practice of the Marian psalter—an early form of the rosary—

¹³ Elizabeth A. Johnson, “Marian Devotion in the Western Church,” In *Christian Spirituality II: High Middle Ages and Reformation*, ed. Jill Raitt (New York: Crossroad, 1987), 392. “The fact remains, however, that in a way unprecedented in previous Christian centuries the cult of the figure of Mary, beautiful Virgin, merciful Mother, and powerful Queen, became an intimate and pervasive element in the religious life of Western Christians at this time—scholars, monks, mystics, preachers, bishops, and folk alike.... Although folk at large were drawn into this aspect of devotion through attendance at monastery festivities connected with Marian feasts, it remained primarily the monopoly of the cloister.” She was especially critical to the practices and foundation of the Cistercian Order.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 394.

¹⁵ Penelope D. Johnson, “*Mulier et Monialis*: The Medieval Nun's Self-Image,” *Thought: A Review of Culture and Idea* 64:254 (September 1989): 243.

developed in monastic communities during the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries, specifically among Cistercian nuns.¹⁶ The overwhelming popularity of Marian devotion and prayers among these sisters indicates how essential the Virgin's role in salvation became throughout thirteenth-century monastic society. Abbess Urraca, as spiritual leader of the monastery at Cañas through much of the thirteenth century, would have seen herself as responsible for the spiritual welfare of her nuns. Thus instilling religious practices that pointed them to the Virgin's motherly care and feminine saving power would have seemed not only logical to her, but essential to her own salvation as well.

Due to increased focus on feminist studies over the past three decades, investigations of medieval women—nuns in particular—have become increasingly popular since the late 1970s. Nevertheless, different academic disciplines with their varying agendas have tended to come to conflicting conclusions regarding the roles of medieval women. By the late 1980s, Caroline Walker Bynum critically described the state of research regarding religious women in the Middle Ages as being tied too often to male experience:

Feminist scholarship has tended to concentrate on the negative stereotyping of women's sexuality and on women's lack of worldly power and sacerdotal authority. It has done so because these issues are of such pressing modern concern. The work of traditional medievalists, although attempting to start from the vantage point of medieval people themselves, has tended in fact to use male religiosity as a model. When studying women, it has tended to look simply for women's answers to the questions we have always asked about men—questions that were generated in the first place by observing male religiosity.¹⁷

¹⁶ Anne Winston-Allen, *Stories of the Rose: The Making of the Rosary in the Middle Ages* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), 16-17.

¹⁷ Caroline Walker Bynum, "Religious Women in the Later Middle Ages," In *Christian Spirituality II: High Middle Ages and Reformation*, ed. Jill Raitt (New York: Crossroad, 1987), 137.

After Bynum published the above conclusions, more recent scholarship has attempted to incorporate a broader definition of gender in defining women's experience in the Middle Ages. As a result, the former division between scholars who attempt to de-gender the medieval period and those who tend to emphasize gender above all other factors in this society has narrowed.

Bringing these views in harmony has allowed for greater scholarly understanding of and insight into women's lives, roles, and power in a medieval context. Ultimately, to adequately evaluate and correctly interpret nuns' experience in the middle ages, gender is a critical factor that must be considered. Therefore, this thesis will examine medieval female religious experience in the context of the convent—specifically Abbess Urraca in the female Cistercian monastery of Santa María de Cañas—and will take into account not only the gender of its leaders and participants, but also that of the artistic subjects portrayed.

In examining and analyzing these ideas, this thesis will first examine the identity of Countess Urraca and those of her parents and grandparents, the founders of the monastery of Santa María de Cañas. Because of incorrect assumptions and the perpetuation of unreliable histories, Countess Urraca has been repeatedly and mistakenly identified as the daughter of the monastery's founders. Therefore, a discussion of who she was is pertinent to identifying her as a member of a powerful, aristocratic family of monastic patrons and will serve to eliminate confusion regarding her connection to another influential Urraca—her aunt—who was also a monastic patron. Furthermore, Countess Urraca's acquisition of her title that she proudly maintained throughout her life will be revealed through her marriage to Count Álvarez Núñez de Lara. Finally, her

decision to take vows as a nun at the monastery at Cañas, where she quickly rose to the position of abbess, will be explored and contextualized.

Chapter 2 will examine Countess Urraca's overseeing of the construction of the monastic buildings at Cañas. Such buildings were begun but never completed prior to her arrival, and therefore she took upon herself the responsibility of ensuring that permanent structures were built during her term as Abbess. A comparison to other contemporary Spanish Cistercian foundations will be offered, especially in relation to the monastery of Santa María la Real de Las Huelgas, the mother monastery to Santa María de Cañas. The discussion of her architectural patronage will testify to the power and influence Countess Urraca was able to manipulate due to her lineage and wealth.

Chapter 3 will investigate Countess Urraca's commissioning of wooden statuettes of the Virgin Mary and St. Peter, Cistercian thought concerning the roles of these saintly intercessors, and the place for such images within the monastic dwelling according to the writings of St. Bernard of Clairvaux. Mary was considered to be the perfect example for female monastics and held ultimate power over salvation during the thirteenth century; therefore devotion to and emulation of her was of utmost importance for nuns. In spite of this, statues of any kind were prohibited—theoretically—in the monastic setting by Bernard. However, the presence of such statuettes is not uncommon in Spain during this period. Thus it will be argued that the patronage of these statuettes to venerate holy figures, especially the Virgin Mary who was considered necessary for salvation and was revered by Cistercians as the patroness of the Order, indicates Countess Urraca's desire to connect herself with them. By doing so, she essentially empowered herself as an intercessory figure for her nuns.

The final chapter will focus on the personal culmination of Countess Urraca's artistic patronage: her figural stone sarcophagus. During this period in Spanish history, such tomb design was reserved for those of the upper echelons of society, basically the aristocracy and royalty, and rarely was executed for a monastic individual. Thus this chapter will deal with the noble precedent for a commission of this magnitude and the iconography of the carved panels. Specifically, a discussion of Countess Urraca's further linking of herself with the Virgin Mary and St. Peter will reveal that her sarcophagus served as another avenue of empowerment. An examination of this early depiction of the rosary as it appears on her tomb will testify further to Countess Urraca's personal devotion to Mary and the fact that Urraca clearly saw herself as an intercessory figure for salvation as she emulated and venerated the Virgin.

Ultimately, this thesis will highlight Countess Urraca's ability as a woman and a mothering figure to create, maintain, and exercise great power that is exhibited today through extant art, architecture, and records of other economic activities in which she was engaged. All of this discussion will consider her place in history as a nun in late medieval Spain when the Cistercian Order was most popular and powerful, due to the influence of the royal monastery of Las Huelgas at Burgos and its influential abbess. These connections to a royal monastic founding enabled Countess Urraca to claim a high level of autonomy. Then she was able to enhance her authority through the emulation and worship of Mary, the pre-eminent example of female power through purity in the medieval Christian world.

CHAPTER 1: Who was Countess (Abbess) Urraca?

In the year AD 1169, the noble and wealthy Lord Lope Díaz de Haro, accompanied by his wife, Lady Aldonza Ruiz de Castro, re-founded the female monastery of Hayuela by transferring the local nuns' affiliation to the popular reforming Cistercian Order for the good of his soul and those of his parents, and for a remission of his and their sins (Fig. 2).¹⁸ Lord Lope Díaz made this donation as he neared the end of his life, a typical action for a wealthy courtier and monastic patron during the late Middle Ages. Also in anticipation of his death, he signed over all rights of ownership and control of property to Lady Aldonza, who was his second wife and young enough to be his daughter.¹⁹ Within a year, the couple made further provisions for their female monastery, endowing it with a new location to build a rural monastic dwelling in Cañas (Fig. 3).²⁰ This donation included two towns and a vineyard, creating a wider economic base to ensure the monastery's success. It was probably initiated by Aldonza since it is apparent that Lord Lope Díaz was already in poor health—he died only a few months later.

¹⁸ Andrés Valero, 222. There is some evidence that there was an organization of female monastics living in Hayuela under the Order of Cluny prior to this period. It seems likely that as the Cistercian movement gained favor among reformers that it was the most appealing for a Lord and Lady seeking refuge for their souls. See also, Felipe Abad León, *Real Monasterio de Canas: Nueve Siglos de Fidelidad* (Logroño: Talleres Gráficos de Editorial Ochoa, 1984), 63-4. “Yo el conde Lope concedo y confirmo la escritura de esta carta con mi propia mano por mi alma y la de mis padres para que el Señor me conceda a mí y a ellos la remisión de los pecados. Amén.”

¹⁹ Abad León, 55. The opening lines of this document, in which he adopts her as his daughter to legalize his actions, read: “Very important is the title of daughter, that no human force can break it. And for that reason, I, the Count don Lope, of my own and spontaneous will and with the advice of good men, I write thee, my dear loving wife, the Countess Aldonza, a letter of profiliation.”

²⁰ Fray Félix García Fernández, et. al. *Guía del Monasterio de Cañas*, (Logroño: Fundación Caja Rioja, 1996), 24. The author claims that the women desired to move “because of the annoyances and afflictions that the religious women were forced to bear in the place of Hayuela, and so that in this place of Cañas they may be better and more protected from such bothersome surroundings.” It seems that due to the distractions associated with being close to a large pilgrim site (Santo Domingo de la Calzada) these monastic women desired a more secluded, private location for worship, away from the pilgrimage road.

Upon the death of her husband in June 1170, Lady Aldonza, now a young widow, decided to live out her remaining years within the walls of the monastery she had helped found.²¹ This was not an uncommon decision for a wealthy, widowed patron of monasteries at this time. She entered Santa María de Cañas in 1171 where she continued as an active monastic patron of Cañas and other Cistercian foundations until her death in c. 1207.²² Along with her pledge to lead a pious life, Lady Aldonza donated more lands for the monastery's sustenance, requested specific provisions for herself, and delineated the responsibilities of the monastery and its abbess.²³ In doing this, Lady Aldonza exercised the authority frequently afforded to and wielded by wealthy, aristocratic women throughout the medieval period, especially those who were widowed and/or entered convents.²⁴ Furthermore, she was setting an influential example that was to be emulated not only by her daughter, who would make a royal marriage and then take vows as a widow at another Cistercian monastery in Castilla, but also by her granddaughter Countess Urraca, who would ultimately take charge as fourth abbess of the monastery of her beloved nunnery at Cañas.

²¹ Ibid., 25-6.

²² Simon Barton, *The Aristocracy in Twelfth-Century León and Castile* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 202. The author states that Countess Aldonza resided at Cañas for more than 30 years, and she was still alive in 1207 when she made a grant to the hospital of San Marcos in León. "Although she never adopted the title and duties of abbess of the convent, the *de facto* control she exercised over the affairs of Cañas is all too clear from the various documents of the house which were drawn up at her behest."

²³ Andrés Valero, 223. It is clear when examining the documents of the monastery that Lady Aldonza remained extremely active in the political affairs of the monastery's growth, but also in the politics of the Spanish aristocracy at this time. She not only participated in the documentation of the expansion of the monastery (see Ildefonso Rodríguez de Lama, *Colección Diplomática Medieval de la Rioja (923-1223)*, Vol. III (Logroño: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Patronato "José María Quadrado" Instituto de Estudios Riojanos, 1979), 175), but also made sure that her 11 children were suitably married to prominent and wealthy families outside the monastery.

²⁴ Johnson, *Equal in Monastic Profession*, 37, 41. Widows were quite influential patrons of monastic life. Clearly Lady Aldonza understood that, "the patron's responsibility did not end once a nunnery was founded. It behooved all the people associated with it to see that the institution flourished. The greater the holdings and influence of a house, the more beautiful its buildings, the holier its inhabitants, the more reflected glory the patrons enjoyed."

In his history of the Order, the Cistercian chronicler Lord Ángel Manrique determined and recorded—nearly four centuries after her death—that the fourth abbess of the monastery of Cañas was the daughter of the founders Lord Lope Díaz and Lady Aldonza. He wrote, without reference to primary sources, of her life:

The beatified Urraca opened her eyes and began life in this sacred precinct of piety and virtue, and as she was nurtured there [at the monastery of Cañas], she breathed in a pure environment of faith and sanctity along with the healthy sustenance of religious observance and practice, and received excellent examples of the latter.²⁵

Because of this, traditional scholarship—including all of the official scholarship and guidebooks sponsored by the province of La Rioja and the monastery itself—has never questioned Abbess Urraca’s lineage as the daughter of the founders of the monastery. That legend continues to be disseminated today by the nuns and priest at the monastery. Upon questioning, they are unable and unwilling to think of Countess Abbess Urraca as anyone but the daughter of Lord Lope Díaz de Haro and Lady Aldonza.

A more in-depth study reveals, however, that this Abbess Urraca was most likely their granddaughter, born to Diego Lope Díaz de Haro, son of Lord Lope Díaz and Lady Aldonza Ruiz, and his second wife, Toda Pérez de Lara.²⁶ Lord Diego Lope de Haro was the youngest of eleven children born to the founders of Santa María de Cañas and became an important monastic donor, particularly to the monastery of Santa María la Real in Nájera.²⁷ He was a close friend to King Alfonso VIII of Castilla, who was himself a

²⁵ Abad León, 98.

²⁶ See Margarita Ruiz Maldonado, “Escultura Funeraria del siglo XIII: Los Sepulcros de los López de Haro,” *Boletín del Museo e Instituto “Camón Aznar”* 66 (1996): 115; and José María de Canal Sanchez-Pagin, “La Casa de Haro en León y Castilla de 1150-1250: Cuestiones Histórico-Genéalogicas en Torno a Cuatro Nobles Damas,” *Archivos Leoneses* 85-6 (1989): 81-88, 96.

²⁷ Maldonado, 95.

devoted monastic patron, and led military campaigns for the King in important battles against the Moors.

Thus Urraca's lineage is a subject of some debate, although it probably has not been questioned as much as it should have been to this point simply because of the inhabitants of the monastery at Cañas' opposition to such investigation. However, the young guide who currently works at the monastery admits that research suggests strongly that Abbess Urraca was the granddaughter—not the daughter—of the founders. He reasons, logically, that if Urraca had actually grown up in the monastery alongside Lady Aldonza, as the guidebook authors would have visitors believe, she should have become the *third* abbess of the community, for she would have been old enough to lead it at that time had she actually been born in 1170.²⁸ However, it is even more obvious that the abbess could not have been the youngest daughter of the founders when one examines her mother's donation document giving herself and most of her wealth to the monastery of Cañas, in which Lady Aldonza's youngest daughter is named "Maria."²⁹

One writer during the first half of the twentieth century, Sáenz y Andrés seems to have discovered the discrepancy between the seventeenth century record of Manrique and the actual medieval documentation. However, rather than acknowledge it and search for other genealogical information, he instead arbitrarily assigned other first and middle names to the older daughter Urraca and the younger daughter María in order to perpetuate the legend that the fourth abbess at Cañas was indeed the daughter of the founders.³⁰

²⁸ Carlos Javier Ruíz López, Interview, Guide of Santa María del San Salvador de Cañas and student of history and humanities, Universidad de La Rioja, 22-23 July, 2004. This is the latest possible date for her to be born, allowing for Lord Lope Díaz de Haro to have still sired another son, Diego, younger than the future abbess before he died.

²⁹ Sanchez-Pagin, 92.

³⁰ Felicito Sáenz y Andrés, "Real Monasterio de Santa María de San Salvador de Canas: Fundación de los Señores de Vizcaya," *Cistercium* 13: 77, (1961): 250-51. The author claims that the older daughter's full

Only recently have scholars questioned such claims due to the improbability of a family naming two daughters “Urraca” when the older daughter’s life is clearly documented, and the further unlikelihood—even near impossibility—of the abbess living to age 92 or 93.

In addition, recently analyzed genealogical charts reveal that Urraca, the daughter of Diego Lope de Haro, the youngest son of the founders of the monastery of Cañas, married Count Álvaro Núñez de Lara, from whom she received the title “Countess.”³¹ This Urraca is most likely the Urraca who became the fourth Abbess of the monastery of Cañas in 1225 because of her family’s relationship to the nunnery, the death of her husband in 1219 that would have caused her to consider entering the monastic life during the period just prior to 1225. Furthermore, Urraca consistently utilized the title “Countess” in all her official documents as Abbess of the monastery, probably in an effort to maintain her noble identity and powerful connections. In addition, the couple—Count Álvaro Núñez de Lara and Countess Urraca—apparently had no children which the Countess would have had to care for following her entrance into the monastery.³²

Countess Urraca, wife of Count Álvaro Núñez de Lara, would have enjoyed an aristocratic lifestyle of great wealth and luxury at court in Nájera because of her favorable lineage and marriage. The fact that Urraca was Don Diego’s daughter probably explains

name was actually “Apollonia Urraca” and that the younger daughter’s name was María Urraca. However, he is unable to cite sources for these names and all other contemporary medieval documentation of the life of Queen Urraca, the older sister, never mentions that her name was “Apollonia Urraca.” See also Dom Jesús Alvarez, Abad de Cardena, *Reina y Fundadora: Apuntes Históricos sobre el Monasterio Cisterciense de Vileña* (Burgos: La Excma. Diputación Provincial de Burgos, 1954).

³¹ Sánchez-Pagin, 82-4 and 87. See also Maldonado, 115. These two authors make it clear that the title of Countess was not one handed down through Don Lópe Díaz and Doña Aldonza because it was not an inheritable title, but one of appointment that could only be received by a woman through marriage.

³² Sánchez-Pagin, 82-4. See Salazar y Castro, *Índice de las Glorias de la Casa Farnese, Que Consagra a la Augusta Reyna de las Españas Dona Isabel Farnese, 2 vols (Reprint of Madrid: Imprenta de Francisco del Hierro, 1719)* (Madrid: Wilson Editorial, 1997), 571: “El Conde D. Álvaro Núñez Señor de Lara, Tutor de Don Enrique I y Regente de Castilla, falleció 1219. Caso con Dona Urraca de Haro, hija de Don Diego X. Señor de Vizcaya, sin sucesión.” Although the sources agree that they had no children, it seems that Count Álvaro did have children out of wedlock.

the presence at the monastery of Cañas of the relic of the tools of the horse belonging to the mythic warrior Santiago Matamoros who supposedly appeared at the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa to aid Christian fighters in their efforts to expel the Moors from their territories. Her father had participated in this battle under the instruction of King Alfonso VIII of Castilla-León. Don Diego had died in 1214 and was buried in Nájera, where Countess Urraca attended court as a noblewoman.³³ Thus when she later would decide to enter the monastery of Cañas as a nun, she brought this important relic of Christian triumph with her as well as her family tradition of monastic patronage.

Thus, Urraca was not only a cultured, noble courtier as a Countess, but also an heiress to a tradition of monastic patrons, including her influential grandmother, and would have been intimately familiar with the power and prestige associated with supporting monastic construction and artistic decoration.³⁴ Further, she would have observed some of the results of this sponsorship in the Royal Pantheon at Nájera, such as the decorative sarcophagi belonging to her parents placed in the cloister to honor their patronage, and her grandfather's portrait in attendance at the royal funeral procession depicted on the sarcophagus of Queen "Lady" Blanca, wife of Sancho III el Deseado of Castile, now located inside the church (Fig. 4).³⁵ Artistic patronage for monasteries by members of her well-known family is omnipresent at Santa María la Real in Nájera, where Countess Urraca would have resided.

When her husband, Count Álvaro Núñez de Lara, died unexpectedly in 1219, Countess Urraca, similar to many other aristocratic women during the Middle Ages, did

³³ Antonio Cea Gutiérrez, *El Tesoro de las Reliquias: Colección de la Abadía Cisterciense de Cañas: Exposición, Centro cultural Caja de La Rioja del 15 de enero al 5 de febrero, Logroño, 1999* (Logroño: Graficas Quintana S.L., 1999), 148.

³⁴ Johnson, *Equal in Monastic Profession*, 37, 41. See also Maldonado, 91.

³⁵ Abad León, 50.

not choose to remarry. It is also probable that the Count's obvious illicit relationships left her with little inclination to do so. At this juncture Urraca may have seen entrance into a monastery as an outlet to gain independence. Indeed, as the genealogical record indicates, she became known as "Countess Urraca Díaz of Cañas," indicating that sometime between 1219 and 1225 she entered her family's Cistercian monastery there, as she was not born in Cañas.³⁶ The title of "countess" is also significant, as it was received only by marriage to a Count—her late husband—and Urraca clearly thought it was worthwhile to maintain such a title of power even after entering the monastic life.³⁷ It would have been a logical decision for the youthful, widowed Countess Urraca; her grandmother, Lady Aldonza, had entered the monastery soon after her husband's death as well, and it is probable that she would have known Lady Aldonza, as she lived at the monastery of Cañas until at least 1205 and was active as a monastic patron after that date.

It is also certainly pertinent that during this period Countess Urraca's aunt, Queen Urraca, third wife of Fernando II of León, took monastic vows at another Cistercian female foundation in Castilla, the monastery of Vileña, in approximately 1222.³⁸ Such familial examples of monastic profession and patronage—especially from powerful women—were often critical factors in determining actions of potential nuns from the same family line; explains Johnson: "There is a very high probability that professed women found themselves inside the cloister because of their families' wishes and perhaps

³⁶ Sanchez-Pagin, 85.

³⁷ Ghislain Baury, *Étude Socio-Economique du Monastère de Cañas 1169-1300* (Université Paris VIII, 1996), 82. The author records seven documents signed by Urraca during her period as Abbess of Cañas, dated 1231, 1239, 1245, 1252, 1256, 1257, and 1262. Each one is signed "Countess Urraca." This illustrates the importance of and power associated with such titles that, during this period, could not be inherited.

³⁸ Maldonado, 92. Queen Urraca died sometime around 1226-30 at Vileña, where she had founded her own Cistercian monastery on lands given her by King Alfonso VIII. For more information, see: I. Cardíñanos Bardeci, *El Monasterio de Santa Maria la Real de Vileña, Su Museo y Cartulario* (Villarcayo, 1990).

their own desire to be with other relatives or at least in a nunnery patronized by their kinfolk.”³⁹ Clearly, patronage of and participation in female Cistercian monasteries was an integral and essential part of Urraca’s family heritage. She may have felt pride in the fact that she was perpetuating family traditions as well as endowing a still undeveloped monastery with economic hope and stability with her dowry and the political influence she could exert as a countess.

Upon becoming a nun, Countess Urraca would have anticipated an interesting life involving political and business maneuvering from within and without the walls of the monastery at Cañas. In spite of traditional research that viewed their roles and opportunities in a negative light, it is now clear that nuns occupied a specialized, privileged office in the medieval Church that afforded great prospects for expression and wielding of influence, particularly for aristocratic women who actually sought-after such opportunities.⁴⁰ In former scholarship, researchers contended that the cloistering of nuns restricted their ability to negotiate successfully their interests in business and other economic and spiritual matters. However, although there did exist stricter cloistering regulations for nuns than for their male counterparts, Johnson investigates the factuality of such claims and concludes that,

Nuns . . . treated their enclosures as permeable membranes, crossing over the private/ public ecclesiastic barrier in search of their own and society’s well-being. Thus cloistering existed in theory but was modified in practice

³⁹ Johnson, *Equal in Monastic Profession*, 33.

⁴⁰ Bynum, “Religious Women in the Later Middle Ages,” 121-22 and 126. The author goes on to explain that this power is directly linked in many ways to celibacy: “Although there were unquestionably young women who desired to leave monasteries to which they had been given, there were also many daughters forced into marriage or threatened with it who saw the convent as an escape. The dangers of childbirth and the brutality of many marriages—disadvantages pointed out by medieval moralists—led some women to prefer celibacy. But, more than this, virginity was seen by both men and women as a positive and compelling religious ideal. Set apart from the world by intact boundaries, her flesh untouched by ordinary flesh, the virgin (like Christ’s mother, the perpetual virgin) was also a bride, destined for a higher consummation.”

when nuns bent rules, resisting social control to make their convents more functional for themselves and society at large.⁴¹

Understanding the realities of medieval cloistering of nuns enables one to see that the Countess Urraca would not have been deterred from choosing the monastic life because of its apparent “restrictions”; in reality, she likely gained a level of freedom that she had not previously enjoyed, even in the local court at Nájera.

In addition, because of the original economic endowment to the monastery of Cañas provided by her grandparents and the legacy of her grandmother, Countess Urraca would have anticipated being well received at the monastery of Santa María in Cañas.⁴² Indeed, it is clear that her lineage allowed her to expect a high position of leadership and control over resources, which she promptly received upon the death of the monastery of Cañas’ third abbess. Johnson further expounds on this idea, explaining that nunneries represented the only establishment in the medieval world in which women exercised full control over their own lives by choosing their leaders and managing both administrative and legal responsibilities:

If we posit that medieval women in general accepted their role in patriarchal society, religious women still often challenged the authority of their male superiors. The high birth of some nuns . . . helped create a climate in which assertive behavior seemed natural When women joined regular communities, they shed many of the attitudes and much of

⁴¹ Johnson, “The Cloistering of Medieval Nuns: Release or Repression, Reality or Fantasy?,” 39.

⁴² Johnson, “*Mulier et Monialis: The Medieval Nun’s Self-Image*,” 243. “[Nuns’] religious status was reinforced by the high social class of some nuns, particularly of the superiors in many nunneries, whose birth imbued them with immense self-confidence. . . . Elevated birth empowered noble nuns to feel worthy of respect, and the presence of high-born nuns lent an aura of aristocratic power to the institutions in which they were housed.” See also Elisabeth van Houts, *Memory and Gender in Medieval Europe, 900-1200* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 9. The author writes: “. . .the gap between monastic life and lay life was perhaps not as great as we once thought. Recent research into the economic and financial affairs of monasteries illustrates the profound interdependence of the lay and religious worlds, and the close association between monastery and its lay patrons and servants. Such linkage was clearly a pre-condition for the collaboration between men and women, lay and ecclesiastical, to preserve the collective memories of their society. Neither monks nor nuns forgot their past or their family’s connections. Indeed, most of our information points in the opposite direction and shows how very much of the knowledge of the past was kept alive by the very people who were supposed to forget about this past.”

the customary behavior of secular women. Professed women became part of a new corporate persona. No longer were they individual females defined primarily through the men to whom they were related or attached; instead they became brides of Christ who were part of the ecclesiastical establishment. By becoming participants in the church's liturgy and life, by belonging to the church more completely than was possible for any secular person—female or male—nuns collectively were empowered by their communal privileges and status to think and act with self-confidence.⁴³

It follows, then, that Countess Urraca would have been excited about the prospect of entering the monastic life and enjoying such autonomy. In so doing, she probably desired to link herself with female family members, both dead and alive, to allow herself greater prestige upon entering the monastery. In addition, the fact that Countess Urraca was named fourth abbess of the nuns' community of Cañas by 1225 indicates that she was not only welcomed with open arms by the nuns who lived there—because of the prestige and wealth she brought with her—but that her family connections were a key factor in her rapid elevation through the echelons of monastic power.

⁴³ Johnson, *Equal in Monastic Profession*, 99-100, 206.

CHAPTER 2: The Thirteenth-century Architecture of the Monastery of Cañas

When her term as abbess at the monastery of Santa María de Cañas commenced, Countess Urraca assumed the demanding and daunting responsibility of managing and expanding the property holdings of her monastery, a role she fulfilled so well that the monastery's prominence grew faster than at any other time.⁴⁴ As the widow of a Count and the daughter of a powerful family with a strong tradition of monastic patronage, Urraca was well equipped to fulfill this responsibility effectively, delineated by Morton and Browne:

[Abbesses] commanded large estates and complex institutions and had to be prepared to defend their house's rights and revenues against encroachments from the crown, from other magnates, and sometimes from bishops or abbots. For such duties, women who had been married and were accustomed to managerial roles were often preferred: many upper-class medieval widows entered convents, sometimes convents of their own foundation, and such women were often important patronesses or associates of female communities.⁴⁵

Countess Urraca indeed embodied this description of the ambitious abbess with strong familial connections to manipulate to her advantage. She demonstrated these skills by undertaking the project of constructing monastic buildings at Cañas that had never been completed (Figs. 5, 6).

When the nuns were given the lands in the valleys of Cañas and Canillas in 1170 and Lady Aldonza joined them in 1171, it is assumed that some temporary structures were built out of wood for their dormitories and celebration of the liturgy somewhere in

⁴⁴ Abad León, 192-216. Urraca added the towns of Alesanco, Azofra, Ibrillos, Matute, Sotillo de Rioja, and Valleúrcanes during her time as abbess, greatly expanding the sphere of influence of the monastery as well as augmenting its wealth and economic power.

⁴⁵ Vera Morton and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, *Guidance for Women in 12th-Century Convents* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2003), 7-8.

the community of these two adjoining villages.⁴⁶ Soon after, foundation stones were laid for a monastic complex—or at least a large monastic church and part of the Chapter House—in Cañas. Some of the original foundation is still visible because the original plan for the nave of the church was never fully executed for lack of funds. Ultimately, however, wars resulting from the succession of Alfonso IX to the throne of Castilla-León and the involvement of Queen Urraca López, daughter of the founders of Santa María de Cañas, and her children in the conflict, caused plans for the monastic buildings' completion to come to a halt. In 1191 the abbess Lady Toda, Lady Aldonza, and the other nuns associated with the fledgling foundation were forced to flee to the nearby monastery of San Millán de la Cogolla for protection.⁴⁷ Perhaps not only momentum for the project was lost, but funds for construction were likely depleted as the nuns of Cañas fled and sought asylum elsewhere and were forced to pay political bribes to guarantee their protection. Thus the abandoned project of constructing a proper church, cloister, and other permanent monastic structures awaited Countess Urraca when she ascended to the position of Abbess in 1225.

Since the seventeenth century, historical chroniclers as well as guidebook writers have consistently attributed the construction of the nunnery at Cañas to the period of Urraca's reign largely because of the supposed presence of an inscription that is no longer extant on the wall of the refectory. It reportedly stated: "In the era of 1274, year of the incarnation of the Lord 1236, was built this Monastery on behalf of the Countess Doña

⁴⁶ Although I have not found a published reference for this idea, the guide and friar at Cañas agree that this is the most likely suggestion, as it seems most fledgling monasteries began with such structures while their formal accommodations were planned and built, a process that was often never fully completed or was accomplished over a long period of time.

⁴⁷ García Fernández, *Guía del Monasterio de Cañas*, 27.

Urraca, in honor of Santa María de Cañas and, in that same year Cordoba was taken.”⁴⁸

Manrique probably took the description of this inscription directly from the historical volume that was begun in 1626 at the monastery of Cañas by an unknown author, recording the nunnery’s history, as Manrique began his general history about twenty years later.⁴⁹

Obviously it is not reliable to attribute this accomplishment to the period of Countess Urraca’s leadership solely on an inscription that is lost—and it is not clear that such an inscription was even extant when the author of the volume in the monastery recorded it in the seventeenth century. Indeed, the existence of such an inscription at any time seems debatable, as the unknown author may have relied on both actual and legendary sources. Fortunately, it is not the only evidence available. The Gothic architectural style displayed in the pointed arches (Fig. 7), quatrefoil-shaped window openings (Fig. 8), vaulted ceilings (Fig. 9), and startling amount of light all testify that the building dates from the first half of the thirteenth century.

It is also quite probable that Countess Urraca’s wealth allowed for the carrying out of this project, due to the fact that the original founding monies were probably much depleted by the time of her arrival.⁵⁰ Thus the construction of several monastic buildings

⁴⁸ Felicito Sáenz y Andrés, *La Beata Doña María Urraca y su Sepulcro en Cañas, second edition* (San Millán: Gráficas San Millán, 1994), 34. “Era Millessima ducentessima quarta ab incarnatione Domini millessima ducentessima trigessima sexta aedificatum est hoc Monasterium a Comitissa Doña M.^a Urraca, in honores Sanctae Mariae Cañas, et ipso anno capta fuit Corduba.” Sáenz y Andrés, 28, records that Manrique’s history of the monastery does not continue beyond 1236, however, due to the fact that he was elected Bishop of Badajoz and never finished his history of the Cistercian Order beyond that date.

⁴⁹ *Tombo y Memorial Perpetivo de Ste. Insigne y Real Monasterio de San Salvador de Cannas. En que seda. Racon, y verdadera Relación de S.V. Fundación Abadías, Privilegios, Donaciones, Juridiciones, Decisiones, Seniorios, Rentas, Juros, Censores, Pleitos, y Otras Cossas Sacado Todo de el Archivo de Esta Real Cassa Anno de 1626.* Unpublished tome belonging to the Monastery of Santa María de San Salvador de Cañas.

⁵⁰ Abad León, 98-99. It should be noted that, similar to many other Spanish monasteries founded during this period, Cañas’ chapel was never completed as planned because monetary resources were exhausted before the entire structure could be edified

at Cañas is attributed to Countess Urraca and to approximately the first half of the thirteenth century, including the polygonal apse and transept of the church (Fig. 5), the honored Chapter House, a room to the north of the chapel used to house sarcophagi of beloved past abbesses (Fig. 10), the refectory, the kitchen area, and the medieval storage room for food that has been recently converted into a museum (Fig. 11).⁵¹

Abbess Urraca's wealth was not without limits, however. Although in many instances it is clear that her architectural choices were influenced by the styles utilized at the mother monastery of Cañas in the thirteenth century, Santa María la Real at Burgos, she was certainly not able to endow her small nunnery with the riches and wealth granted to Las Huelgas through its royal patronage by the Queen. Nevertheless, as will be discussed, Urraca desired her monastic buildings to reflect the Cistercian style of her day, which in large part was set by Las Huelgas, as it had only been founded in 1187 and was under construction throughout the thirteenth century.⁵² This architectural connection is particularly evident in the fact that the monastic church at Cañas strongly resembles the small chapel of St. John the Baptist at Las Huelgas, especially the window design in Cañas' apse (Fig. 8, 12). Obviously, Urraca had certain priorities to meet within her budget: not only did she need a monastic church, but also buildings for practical purposes such as living and eating quarters, space for storage and preparation of food, and provisions for maintaining the economic welfare of the monastery.

Therefore, Urraca's allocation of resources to ensure the completion of these essential structures is impressive and further testifies to her astuteness as a

⁵¹ The nave of the monastery at Cañas was completed much later without the originally-planned side aisles.

⁵² While this thesis examines the architectural similarities between these two monasteries, it does not deal with possible connections with English Gothic architecture. However, the author acknowledges that such comparisons probably exist, due to the founding of Santa María la Real of Las Huelgas at Burgos under the vigilance and direction of Stephen Harding's Cîteaux, as well as Queen Eleanor's obvious English heritage.

businesswoman and economic leader of her fledgling monastery. She began the building project of the church with the apse and continued it only to the transept so that the necessary ecclesiastical ceremonies and duties would be properly observed while still reserving needed monies for the construction of the monastery's practical structures. This is observed on both the interior and exterior of the monastery, where the central nave was ultimately completed several centuries later but the "unessential" side aisles were never constructed for lack of funds and the wall was instead filled in with brick (Fig. 13). It seems that Abbess Urraca was aware that the necessities of the nunnery should be met on all levels, spiritually, physically, and economically. That meant not only providing for its success during the thirteenth century while she was alive, but also ensuring its economic stability in the future as well.

Analysis of Architecture at Cañas

As the construction of the majority of Cañas' monastic buildings has been attributed to the period of Abbess Urraca's leadership of the monastery, it is worthwhile to examine both the nunnery's overall layout as well as the specific architectural and decorative motifs that definitely date Santa María de Cañas to the thirteenth century. Such an analysis will be accomplished through comparison of the monastery's structure and decoration with that of other Cistercian monastic construction throughout northern Spain dating from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Particular attention will be paid to the monastery of Santa María la Real in Burgos, the mother monastery to all female Cistercian foundations in Spain after 1199, when the second abbess of Cañas ceded its

loyalty to the Abbess of Burgos.⁵³ However, additional examples of architectural features and decorative themes utilized in Cistercian architecture from both male and female foundations will also be employed.

First, the plan of the monastery of Cañas appears to conform perfectly to standard monastic building plans of its period. It echoes that of Santa María de la Caridad de Tulebras, the first female Cistercian foundation in Spain organized in 1147 (Fig. 14). This plan displays what scholars believe to be the thirteenth-century layout of this important monastery, later remodeled, which displays many similarities to that of Santa María de Cañas. Tulebras is considered the original mother monastery of all female Cistercian foundations in northern Spain prior to the foundation of Santa María la Real of Las Huelgas at Burgos, the large, royal monastery whose power was backed by the great wealth of Emperor Alfonso VIII of Castilla-León and his wife Eleanor.⁵⁴ Indeed, it is probable that not only was the plan for Cañas' monastic buildings made after Tulebras, but also that of Las Huelgas itself was probably borrowed directly from the standard laid out by the first female monastery of the Cistercian order in Spain (Fig.15).

Such influence is particularly noted in the lack of a second story around the cloister, which was utilized in Cistercian male monasteries for dormitories. In fact, the

⁵³ García M. Colombas, *Monasterio de Tulebras* (Pamplona: Departamento de Educación y Cultura del Gobierno de Navarra, 1987), 96. It is interesting that Tulebras does not mention the monastery of Cañas in its early documents even though it is sure that Cañas was a daughter monastery of Tulebras because its second abbess, doña Toda García, would not submit to the rule of Santa María la Real de Burgos, claiming to belong to Tulebras. The document recording this transfer of allegiance reads: "Item con piadoso celo y sincero afecto ordenamos que [...] cuatro de nosotras, esto es, la abadesa de Perales, la abadesa de Gradefes, la abadesa de Canas y la abadesa de San Andrés [de Arroyo] , las actuales y las que en adelante ocupen su lugar y gobierno, vengán una vez cada año, sin poner excusa alguna, a visitar el monasterio de Santa María la Real junto a Burgos el día que entre sí determinaren, y visitarán dicho monasterio, abadesa y convento con el mismo orden y modo con que el monasterio, abad y convento de Cîteaux son visitados todos los años por los abades de La Ferté, Pontigny, Clairvaux y Morimond. Y si sucediere que la abadesa de Tulebras se sujetare en el modo susodicho al monasterio de Santa María la Real, sea ella, de las cuatro, la primera y principal visitadora del mencionado monasterio de Santa María La Real y de su abadesa y convento" (See 103).

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 107-8.

ceiling of the Chapter House is raised at Tulebras, Cañas, and Las Huelgas, indicating that no second story ever existed above it. Rather, it is assumed that the dormitories for Cistercian nuns at these monasteries were placed to the south of the Chapter House on the same level as the chapel.⁵⁵ Although no specific archaeological evidence has proven such a theory, it seems the most probable solution to the question of dormitory placement at these nunneries, particularly Tulebras and Cañas.

All of the medieval spaces at Cañas dating from the mid thirteenth century—the period of Countess Urraca’s presence as abbess—surround the cloister, which was completed in the late Renaissance or early Baroque period.⁵⁶ As they were constructed during the same period and probably by several of the same stonemasons, the relationship between the monasteries of Cañas and Las Huelgas is immediately visible when one enters the chapel. As previously mentioned, this humble church bears a strong resemblance to the small side chapel of Saint John the Baptist at Las Huelgas (Figs. 8, 12). Although not identical, particularly striking is the similarity of the three large sets of windows that allow white light to flood the plain, stone interior space with the tiny image of the Pantocrator that presides from above where the ribs intersect (Figs. 16, 12).

All other rooms dating from Urraca’s term as abbess have been sealed off due to remodeling or continuing restoration efforts. However, some of the doors into these parts of the monastery that face onto the cloister have been carefully restored, even if access to

⁵⁵ Ibid., 87. However, the plan of Las Huelgas does not seem to accommodate such placement in the same way the plans of Tulebras and Cañas do. In fact, an interview of Elena Casas Castells, Spanish female Cistercian expert, revealed that the question of dormitory placement is ongoing yet and has not been satisfactorily answered. See Elena Casas Castells, Doctoral Candidate in Art History, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid; Dissertation on Female Cistercian Architecture defended successfully September 10, 2004, Interview, Tuesday, July 27 and Thursday, July 29, 2004.

⁵⁶ Several sections have been restored since 1936 when the monastery of Cañas was named a National Monument by the Spanish Government. Visitors today are admitted only into the east end of the church—the transept and apse areas, the Chapter House, the museum (formerly the *cilla*, or main storage room), and the cloister.

spaces beyond is prohibited. This is important because the decorative motifs and overall style of these door frames is comparable to those of other Spanish Cistercian portals dating from the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries in Spain.

For example, the doors at Cañas through which one enters the Chapter House from the cloister have been restored to their original thirteenth-century design and ornamentation. They are highly decorative, employing French foliate and floral motifs along the pointed arches and leafy capitals placed on top of multiple short, smooth columns that frame the bases of each of the openings (Fig. 17). This design is similar to that of several other Cistercian monasteries, both male and female, demonstrating that the construction at Cañas conformed to expected norms for Cistercian architecture during the thirteenth century. The decorative style surrounding the rounded, Romanesque window arches at Santa María de Oseira demonstrate an earlier, more rudimentary style of the mid-to-late twelfth century (Fig. 18).⁵⁷ The carving is lower relief and the designs simplified in comparison to that of Cañas, which was clearly done later, as demonstrated by its more sophisticated carving along pointed arches.

An additional example of decorative arches contemporary to those at Cañas demonstrates that its construction indeed dates from the thirteenth century. The monastery of Santa María la Real in Burgos' architecture dates almost entirely to the thirteenth century and significantly influenced the styles employed at Cañas. It set an important standard that most of its daughter monasteries could not fully adopt for lack of funding, but many borrowed decorative features and details. It is known through

⁵⁷ This was probably the first Cistercian monastery built in Galicia, begun by four monks who solicited the support of King Alfonso VII of Castille in 1137 to open a new monastery. However, evidence suggests that the buildings were actually constructed throughout the latter half of the twelfth century, as the monastery was not acknowledged in the records of Cîteaux until 1199. See José Carlos Valle Pérez, *La Arquitectura Cisterciense en Galicia, Tomos I* (La Coruña: Fundación Pedro Barrié de la Maza, 1982), 99.

documentation that Abbess Urraca would have visited the monastery of Las Huelgas at least every year due to her obligation to honor her mother monastery, and she seems to have borrowed several decorative motifs from Las Huelgas.⁵⁸

The careful decisions she made regarding ornamentation for her monastery can be seen as an example of medieval copying as she desired Santa María de Cañas to reflect current architectural styles she observed at Las Huelgas. Since the Abbess of Las Huelgas was such a powerful and influential individual, Countess Urraca would have desired to emulate her and incorporate the architectural motifs of Las Huelgas at Cañas as much as possible by employing the same stonemasons and copying such details. For example, the more deeply-carved plant and flower motifs, columns, and leafy capitals seen in the pointed arches of Cañas' Chapter House seem to copy directly the wall decoration over the tomb of the Infante Fernando de la Cerda at Las Huelgas (Fig. 19). This is especially important considering that Countess Urraca's sarcophagus—which she also commissioned—is located within the Chapter House.

Another decorative motif utilized at Cañas that appears elsewhere is the so-called “dog-tooth” design surrounding pointed archways and doors, such as the interior door from the cloister into the monastic church at Cañas (Fig. 20). This feature was apparently common in Cistercian architecture throughout the thirteenth century at both male and female foundations. Such detail work is noted at the female monasteries of Las Huelgas in Burgos and Santa María la Real of Gradefes, founded in 1168 under the direction of the monastery of Tulebras (Figs. 21, 22). Comparable decorative stonework appears at two male Cistercian foundations: the monastery of Nuestra Señora de Ruedra in the province of Zaragoza organized in the thirteenth century and at the monastery of Nuestra

⁵⁸ See note 53.

Señora de Piedra in Aragón, begun in approximately 1218 (Figs. 23, 24).⁵⁹ Such motifs were apparently popular in Cistercian architecture throughout Spain during the thirteenth century when Abbess Urraca was overseeing the building project at Cañas and regularly visiting Las Huelgas, and perhaps other Cistercian monasteries as well.

Not every door and arch at Cañas was originally decorated with stone carving, however. It seems clear that the greater ornamentation—and thus greater expense—was reserved for the Chapter House and the Church entrances from the cloister. Otherwise, the doors that open into spaces built during Abbess Urraca’s reign at Cañas are rather plain (Figs. 25, 26). They still incorporate the pointed arches as an indication of a thirteenth-century construction period when such gothic motifs began to become more accepted in Spanish architecture. They also have short, decorative columns with leafy capitals on the sides of the arches, but the arches themselves are not carved or otherwise decorated. For a monastery built on a smaller scale and with a limited budget such as this one, it is logical that the doors to the Chapter House that housed the tombs of honored monastic leaders and the church itself—the most important building within the entire structure—would receive special ornamental treatment, while those marking entrances to dormitories, kitchen and eating facilities, or storage spaces would not merit such expensive decorative detail work at Cañas and elsewhere.

In addition to designs for doorway décor, it is pertinent to compare the architectural plan for the main storage room at Cañas with that of Santa María la Real de Las Huelgas because it represents another example of the royal monastery’s influence on its daughter nunnery (Figs. 27, 28). The *cilla*, or food storage room built under the

⁵⁹ Federico Torralba Soriano, *Monasterios Cistercienses de la Provincia de Zaragoza: Veruela, Rueda, Piedra*. León: Editorial Everest, 1975), 22.

direction of Abbess Urraca has the same structural layout as that of Cañas, with a row of heavy, low, wide pointed arches running down the center of the room. At Las Huelgas the arches are supported by large rounded columns while at Las Huelgas they sit on large piers. Nevertheless, the overall effect of this architecture is virtually identical, creating a dark, low-ceilinged room that would help protect the food storage from the elements. Naturally, many other monasteries adopted similar plans for their storage rooms, although the use of one row of arches down the center is not universal in Spanish Cistercian monastic construction, indicating again a strong connection between Las Huelgas and Santa María de Cañas. Expensive decoration was logically kept to a minimum in these storage spaces, built for purely functional purposes, even at the royal monastery of Las Huelgas.

Ultimately, the architecture dating to the period of Abbess Urraca's reign over the monastery of Cañas testifies of multiple thirteenth-century influences, especially those of the Cistercian nunneries at Tulebras and Las Huelgas in addition to other contemporary Cistercian structures in northern Spain. It demonstrates a strong connection between Cañas and its "mothers" in floor plan and detail work. Furthermore, Cañas' architecture exists as a bold statement of Abbess Urraca's wealth and ambition. She undertook and successfully oversaw the completion of the basic structures needed for the monastery to begin to function properly for the first time since its founding. Clearly, the architectural evidence testifies that Urraca was a strong-willed, dominant woman whose role as abbess came to her with some ease due to her noble lineage and having spent her entire life at court among powerful patrons of monasteries.

CHAPTER 3: Abbess Urraca's Patronage of Statuettes of the Virgin and the Role of Mary in the Cistercian Order

In addition to overseeing the building of multiple monastic buildings, Abbess-Countess Urraca also patronized devotional statuettes. This seems to have been instinctive for her, particularly considering she spent her upbringing and married life in court, surrounded by valuable art objects patronized by her family for the royal monastery at nearby Nájera. Abbess Urraca continued her family's tradition by commissioning the production of three extant polychromed wooden statues of the Virgin and Child (Fig. 29), Saint Anne with the Virgin and Child (Fig. 30), as well as St. Peter (Fig. 31). Some paint has been restored. It is clear that these belong to the period of Countess Urraca's reign because of their style and the repetitive appearance of a wolf and sheep in its fangs, the most prominent symbol from her family crest (Fig. 32). The Virgin and Child statuette is the largest of the three and may have influenced—or been influenced by—the production of similar statues at other monasteries in Burgos (Fig. 33), Grafedes (Fig. 34), Santo Domingo de la Calzada (Fig. 35) Átava, Navarra, and throughout La Rioja.⁶⁰ It is a large carving that currently occupies the south apse of the chapel at Cañas. Such prominent placement testifies to visitors today of the importance of the nuns' continuing religious devotion to the Virgin at Cañas, of Mary's essential place in general Cistercian worship, as well as of Abbess Urraca's continuing legacy.

In addition to this large statuette, Countess Urraca commissioned a smaller statuette of St. Anne holding the Virgin and Child. These works date from the thirteenth

⁶⁰ García Fernández, *Guía del Monasterio de Cañas*, 44. See also Miguel Ibáñez Rodríguez, *Monasterio de Cañas: El Monasterio de la Luz* (León: Edileasa, 2000), 48.

century.⁶¹ Both of these works reflect a desire to honor the Virgin Mary through artwork that can be traced prior to the founding of the monastery of Cañas by Lord Lope Díaz de Haro and Lady Aldonza. A twelfth-century statuette of the Virgin belonged to the nuns of Hayuela previous to their relocation to Cañas, and legendarily is the originally-worshipped “Santa María,” carved and painted in honor of the dedication of the monastery to the Virgin, the patron of all Cistercian foundations (Fig. 36).⁶² Clearly the tradition of Marian devotion was already essential to liturgical practices at Cañas as a proper Cistercian monastery.

With her patronage of these statuettes, Abbess Urraca further contributed to this Marian tradition. Indeed, by the thirteenth century, Mary was considered a necessary figure to aid one’s search for redemption, and was also regarded as the example for nuns to follow. Johnson further expounds on the Virgin’s essential role in offering comfort, salvation, and a model to medieval monastic women:

For the people of the Middle Ages, devotion to the Blessed Virgin offered an experience of a female figure intrinsically related to God, along with an experience of the power of love to blot away sin and the power of mercy to ameliorate deserved justice, experiences that were not otherwise readily available to the situation of the times.⁶³

It is evident that Countess Urraca quickly learned to appreciate the importance of honoring and performing prayers and tributes to Mary at her monastery and expressed that devotion through commissioning statuettes of the Virgin. Perhaps she even brought her own, personal devotion to the Virgin with her as she entered the cloister at Cañas.

The Virgin played an important role not only as the ultimate example for nuns, a powerful means of salvation, and inspiration for devotional worship, but she also was

⁶¹ Moya Valgoñón, *Inventario*, 284.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ Johnson, “Marian Devotion in the Western Church,” 412.

revered as the Mother of God who continued to mother His followers of both genders. In this same way, Countess Urraca became the primary mothering figure over her nuns when she was appointed abbess of the monastery at Cañas. She became responsible for their temporal and spiritual welfare and, as a good mother, would most likely have done everything in her power to ensure the economic and political stability of her nunnery in order to secure the future for her nuns. Thus the statuettes of the Virgin and Child and St. Anne with the Virgin and Child can be seen as visual reminders of the nurturing mothering exemplified by Abbess Urraca as she emulated mother Mary.

In such a context, the statuette Countess Urraca patronized of St. Peter must be considered as well since her devotion to him was such that she commissioned this work with her family crest symbol decorating the hem of his robe down the front, thus indicating some kind of special connection (Fig. 31). Peter acted as the primary spiritual nurturer who watched over the early Christian converts after Christ's death. His role as the shepherd of the fledgling Christian flock was probably inspiring to the Countess because he served in this role as a type of mothering figure as well. Just as Mary was considered to have sacrificed and suffered with Christ as a mother, Peter gave his life as a martyr—like Christ—and prepared the way for early converts to obtain salvation.

Although the cult importance of Peter could not have competed with that of the Virgin during the late medieval period, he was nevertheless considered an important intercessor, particularly for male monastic taught to emulate him. Indeed, St. Bernard even refers to Peter and his other favorite male saints with some of the same exalting language he utilizes in reference to the Virgin Mary: “Thanks to their mediation, I will be able to ascend to this Mediator who came to make peace by his blood between what is on

earth and what is in heaven.”⁶⁴ Bernard especially considered Peter and Paul as critical saintly figures because they were friends to Christ, and he urged his followers in his sermons to follow their examples by developing, “wisdom, understanding, and prudence.”⁶⁵ He further admonished monks, especially abbots, to be friends to Christ these two early apostles, Peter and Paul, who became powerful mediators: “Let us pray to them, so that they may win for us the favor of their friend, who is our Judge.”⁶⁶ Through studying these and St. Bernard’s other ideas regarding salvation through intermediaries, it is clear that Peter was considered an important intercessor in the medieval monastery. Certainly Peter’s power over salvation would not have been insignificant in Countess Urraca’s mind.

Therefore, the fact that Peter appears at Cañas in an artistic rendering made for worship relates to a theme of mothering and authority over instruction and salvation for monastic worshippers that arose also out of the expanding cult of the Virgin. Furthermore, one writer claims—without surviving documentary evidence—that Urraca’s grandmother, Lady Aldonza, had been particularly devoted to St. Peter. For this reason, Urraca supposedly dedicated the founding stones of the monastic chapel at Cañas to the senior apostle.⁶⁷ Thus Peter still acted as a principal caregiver and shepherd to salvation at the same time the Virgin’s salvatory role was increasing. These two mothering,

⁶⁴ St. Bernard’s *Sermo in festo Ss. Apostolorum Petri et Pauli*, quoted in Charles Dumont OCSO, Monk of Scourmont, *Pathway of Peace: Cistercian Wisdom according to Saint Bernard* (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1999), 104.

⁶⁵ Beverly Mayne Kienzle, “Verbum Dei Verba Bernardi: The Function of Language in Bernard’s Second Sermon for Peter and Paul,” In *Bernardus Magister: Papers Presented at the Nonacentenary Celebration of the Birth of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, Kalamazoo, Michigan*, Western Michigan University Institute of Cistercian Studies, 10-13 May 1990, ed. John R. Sommerfeldt (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1992), 152.

⁶⁶ *Sermo in vigilia apostolorum Petri et Pauli*, quoted in Dumont, 104.

⁶⁷ Juan Manuel Aguado Grijalva, *Guía: Abadía Cisterciense de Cañas* (La Rioja: Quintana S.A., 2001), 46. The author further claims that Lady Aldonza founded at Cañas a sisterhood devoted to St. Peter.

nurturing figureheads providing redemption would have been important exemplars in Abbess Urraca's mind as she patronized statuettes depicting them. Her devotion to both Mary and Peter is further emphasized through the decorative sculptural program of her sarcophagus, to be discussed later.

Mary was a particularly important source of salvation and exemplary figure throughout religious communities in Europe. Marian worship was increasing throughout Europe and especially among monastic peoples in the thirteenth century, including the monastery at Cañas. As previously mentioned, other Spanish monasteries copied the statuettes of the Virgin and Child and St. Anne with the Virgin and Child which were patronized by Urraca during her reign as abbess. Johnson explains that Marian worship increased dramatically, especially in monasteries, with devotions, meditative texts, hymns, and poetry that expounded upon her life, lineage, beauty, creative power, and ability to save human souls.⁶⁸ Indeed, in some texts she was actually revered above her son, being called the "Blessed Virgin who chose the better part, because she was made Queen of Mercy, while her Son remained King of Justice: and mercy is better than justice."⁶⁹ These texts developed alongside many images of the Virgin in the visual arts, including portal sculptures on tympana that displayed her life history, such as that of Chartres' Cathedral.

All such depictions—written and visual—focused not only on Mary's queenly status and overarching power to save the souls of all those who properly honored her, but also on her motherly love that endowed her with such power. Johnson further elaborates

⁶⁸ Johnson, "Marian Devotion in the Western Church," 396.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 402-3.

on the authority wielded by the Virgin in the face of harsh justice, an attribute that was associated with her Son:

There was nothing not subject to her through her Son. God himself was subject to her as a Son to his mother, to whom he could refuse nothing. The Blessed Virgin powerfully balanced his justice with her mercy, placing back into its sheath his naked sword, which was raging against humankind.... In some ways, Mary was even equated with the Father, who gave her only begotten son for the world.⁷⁰

Indeed, the Virgin became the intercessor between God (or Christ) and men/ women.

Thus as Marian devotion exploded, the monastery of Cañas played out its part in its own relatively small community as the nuns developed religious practices in honor of Mary as the Mother and Queen of Heaven and their Mediatrix with Christ, or the embodiment of Mercy in contrast to Justice. Such devotionism is evident when one considers Urraca's commissioning of two Virgin and Child statues, one of which also venerated the Virgin's lineage through the inclusion of St. Anne, whose medieval cult status was directly linked to that of her daughter. Thus, in commissioning these statuettes, Abbess Urraca was making a heavenly connection with the most essential female wielder of power over salvation for the sake of her monastic sisters and also for her own soul.

The urgency for making such a connection to salvation was not unique to monastic life, however. An illustrative example of Spanish royal devotion to the Queen of Heaven demonstrates that her power was considered necessary, even—and especially—for the wisest and most learned of men. Alfonso X, King of Castilla-León from 1252-1284, was called the “Rey Sabio” or “Wise King” during his reign because he was a great student of literature, law, military genius, and science who gathered scholars

⁷⁰ Ibid., 406-8.

to his court in an effort to be instructed as well as sponsor the production of fine poetry, literature, and art.⁷¹

One of the most famous of these literary and artistic creations patronized by this learned king was the *Cantigas de Santa María*, or *Songs to (of) Holy Mary*, a compilation of over four hundred poems describing miracles provided through the intervention of the Virgin, including songs of adoration to pay tribute to her.⁷² All of these poems and songs were written in the language of medieval Portugal and Galicia and many were lavishly illustrated with full-page miniatures (Figs. 37, 38). O'Callaghan, a scholar of the *Cantigas de Santa María*, describes Alfonso X's personal devotion to the Virgin in patronizing such a work as both remarkable but also typical of the era in which he lived.⁷³ King Alfonso X responded to the Virgin's popularity as he became her devotee. Such a commitment complimented his military prowess and other scholarly pursuits, and was also necessary to his salvation. Such public commissioning of a work to honor and worship the Virgin is further significant considering the fact that he made a royal visit to the monastery of Santa María de Cañas during the period when Countess Urraca was abbess.⁷⁴ The Marian themes evident in this king's patronage as well as at most

⁷¹ Joseph F. O'Callaghan, *Alfonso X and the 'Cantigas de Santa María': A Poetic Biography* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 1.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 1-2.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 14. "Proclaiming himself Mary's troubadour, Alfonso X sang her praises and recounted her miraculous deeds in the *Cantigas de Santa María*. His exaltation of Mary, in the words of Américo Castro, was 'in accord with the new European sensibility of the thirteenth century.'"

⁷⁴ Sáenz y Andrés, *La Beata Doña María Urraca y su Sepulcro en Cañas*, 38, 116. The visit of King Alfonso X is recorded in a medieval document from Cañas, now located in the National Archives of Spain, dated February 2, 1256 in which he conceded to Abbess Urraca and the monastery of Cañas dominion over the town of Matute. "E por honrra de la condesa dona M.^a Urraca que es señora de este mismo monesterio.... Porque ellas fazen para siempre por ellos e por Remission de mis pecados. E por esto do e otorgo al abadesa e al convento del monasterio de Cannas a las que agora ay son e a las que seran de aquí adelante para siempre la villa de Matut que la hayan libre e quita por juro de heredad para siempre jamás...."

Cistercian monasteries surrounding Cañas testify to her importance in medieval monastic Spanish devotional practices.

Historians have considered this trend of increased Marian devotion from various perspectives. Some religious historians describe the dominance of the Virgin in worship practices during the later medieval period as, “the reemergence of the suppressed mother-goddess of the prehistoric European tribes.”⁷⁵ In a broader analysis, anthropologists prefer to interpret it as, “folk appreciation of the feminine element in the world, which involves compassion, tenderness, a little capriciousness, vulnerability to suffering, and the inclination to grieve rather than punish offense.”⁷⁶ However, feminist scholars have examined the essential medieval practice of Marian worship from a, gendered perspective and contend that, “the whole phenomenon was possible only because of the projection of the patriarchal family structure into heaven, with the harsh male authority figure being tempered by the intercession of the mother, who feels loving kindness for the wayward child.”⁷⁷

None of these assessments, however, considers the essential fact that the writings, devotions, and art constructing and venerating the Queen of Heaven allowed her to become the manipulator of ultimate power for the medieval mind: the power to save souls. Mary embodied the omnipotent, female goddess-type whose ability to intervene on behalf of those loyal to her was ever stronger during the later middle ages. Therefore, when she was made the example for all nuns to emulate, her power would have been not only admirable, but also extremely desirable for these brides of Christ, especially leaders such as Countess Urraca.

⁷⁵ Elizabeth A. Johnson, “Marian Devotion in the Western Church,” 411.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 411-12.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 412.

Marian Devotion and the Cistercians

In addition, as previously mentioned, Mary was a most highly revered heavenly figure for Cistercians, especially nuns who were supposed to imitate her. Kieckhefer offers one explanation for why she became the primary benefactress of this influential reforming order: “The Cistercians, not wishing to link themselves too closely with any one part of Christendom, had made Mary their special patroness, dedicated all their monasteries to her, and named many of them in her honor.”⁷⁸ However, it seems more likely that Cistercian reformers responded to her popularity by giving her a prominent role so that their new order would be successful, a decision which probably attracted many of their followers. Thus the Cistercians utilized mothering and Marian allusions throughout the organization of their new Order.

Marian worship was certainly not exclusive to the Cistercians, and perhaps Cistercian theologians responded to the growth of the cult of Mary while simultaneously contributing to its growth. Indeed, Bernard of Clairvaux, considered one of the most influential early founders and theologians of the Order due to his extensive writings, relished the experience of meditating on the Virgin and wrote extensively on her beauty and virtues. He commended her worship to all devotees to the Cistercian Order, especially males who must cultivate female attributes of nurturing and love in order to access the salvatory power of the Virgin. Ultimately, this devoted and ardent admirer of Mary was privileged with a vision in which he was honored to partake of her milk, just like Christ (Fig. 39). Van Os elaborates on the significance of such an episode in light of

⁷⁸ Richard Kieckhefer, “Major Currents in Late Medieval Devotion,” In *Christian Spirituality II: High Middle Ages and Reformation*, ed. Jill Raitt (New York: Crossroad, 1987), 90.

the growing popularity of mystical visions and experiences reported and documented in medieval monasteries among both male and female monastics:

Bernard had evidently come to identify so closely with the Christ Child in his devotions that he now benefited from Mary's nourishing care. This story was held up as an example, and Bernard's emotional spirituality became a source of inspiration for many monastics. He played a crucial role in the development of the mystical devotion of women. They eagerly identified with the nourishing Virgin, whereas men felt more affinity with the nourished Child. Lactation, or the miraculous appearance of the Virgin's milk, became a not uncommon event in mystical circles....⁷⁹

Indeed, mystical experiences were sought after more than ever in the centuries following Bernard's writings.

All Cistercian monastics, male and female, were admonished to strive through meditations to be nursed by Mary in this same fashion because the Virgin was considered, "allegorically as the mother of all those redeemed in Christ. As she nurtured the young Jesus, so she succors all who turn to Christ and become living members of his body, the Church, of which she is herself the type."⁸⁰ Nuns, especially wealthy, aristocratic nuns such as Countess Urraca and others like her who had, in many cases, experienced the role of nurturing and mothering a child prior to entering the monastic life, would have well understood this doctrine and would have been eager indeed to emulate the nurturing Virgin's motherly qualities.

Furthermore, in light of Bernard's mystical experience in which he partook of the Virgin's milk, it is important to note that, in medieval theology, it was generally believed that the substance of breast milk was processed blood, which was equated to a symbol of

⁷⁹ Henk van Os, *The Art of Devotion: 1300-1500*, translated from Dutch by Michael Hoyle (Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 1994), 52.

⁸⁰ *Mary Most Holy: Meditating with the Early Cistercians*. Cistercian Fathers Series: Number Sixty-Five. Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 2003), xi.

Christ who gave his blood as a sacrifice.⁸¹ Bynum explains, “What writers in the high Middle Ages wished to say about Christ the savior who feeds the individual with his own blood was precisely and concisely said in the image of the nursing mother whose milk *is* her blood, offered to the child.”⁸² Mary is that mother who gives her milk, or her blood, as a sacrifice to save her children such as Bernard and those who adopted and lived his teachings, honoring the Virgin. Consequently, early Cistercians dwelling within monastic complexes dedicated to Mary sought after such experiences as they read the homilies and sermons composed by Bernard and devoutly followed instructions to meditate on her, the saintly Queen of Heaven and nurturing Mother of God.⁸³ She was the nuns’ source of motherly love, their pathway to mercy, their ultimate example as an exalted bride of Christ, and ultimately, their intercessor in Heaven. Such doctrine is perfectly illustrated through Abbess Urraca’s and other local monasteries’ patronage of wooden statuettes of the Virgin and Child.

Thus the flowering of the Cistercian Order is intimately connected with the growth of the cult of Mary. This religious environment not only greatly encouraged St. Bernard’s devotion to the Virgin, but he also contributed much Marian devotive fervor to the movement as he composed eloquent praises and poetry in her honor, some of which continue to be utilized. By the eleventh century when the Cistercian Order was organized, no fewer than six annual feast days honored the Virgin and she was venerated in mass on

⁸¹ Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*, 132.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 133.

⁸³ *Mary Most Holy: Meditating with the Early Cistercians*, xxix-xxx. See also Jean Leclercq, *Women and St. Bernard of Clairvaux* (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1989), 93. cites a poem written by Bernard to honor Mary: “Our Lady,/ our mediatrix,/ our advocate,/ to your Son, reconcile us,/ to your Son, commend us,/ to your Son, present us./ Obtain,/ O Blessed lady,/ by the grace found in you,/ by the privilege deserved by you,/ by the Mercy born of you,/ that he who,/ by your mediation,/ designed to share our infirmity,/ and our miser,/ may, by your intercession,/ let us also share his glory/ and his blessedness,/ he, Jesus Christ,/ your Son,/ our Lord,/ blessed above all/ for ever and ever.”

every Saturday that was not reserved for another celebration, “because God rested on the sixth day, and Mary is the ‘home which Wisdom built and in it... as in an utterly sacred bed, He took his rest.’”⁸⁴ Although he referred to Mary’s perfection as the model woman in his sermons, Bernard actually demonstrated relatively high regard for actual, everyday women as well because he admired their spiritual abilities and their enthusiastic devotion to worship.⁸⁵ Thus, in spite of numerous misogynistic references in Bernard’s writings highlighted by medieval scholars, it is increasingly clear that St. Bernard, through his admiration of Mary’s feminine virtues, was much more open to the idea of female monastic “equality”—to some degree—than other contemporary theologians. This is evidenced through his personal encouragement—and that of a few additional male Cistercian leaders—of the foundation of the first Cistercian nunneries.

Female Cistercian Foundations and Feminine Attributes

It seems that the first monastic community that allowed female Cistercian nuns was Cîteaux itself, although Thompson suggests that most of the early nuns there were actually the wives and dependents of the monks rather than truly independent nuns who

⁸⁴ Peter Damian, *De bono suffragiorum* 4; PL 145:565-566: ...quia sapientia domum aedificavit atque in ea...velut in sacratissimo lectulo requievit.” In *Mary Most Holy: Meditating with the Early Cistercians*. Cistercian Fathers Series: Number Sixty-Five, xxii.

⁸⁵ Leclercq, 85-6. The author explains that Bernard only used the term “weaker sex” to refer to the fact that women are physically not as strong as men. However, women were not spiritually inferior and salvation was available equally to men and women. However, in David Damrosch, “*Non Alia Sed Aliter*: The Hermeneutics of Gender in Bernard of Clairvaux,” In *Images of Sainthood in Medieval Europe*, Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski and Tímea Szell, Editors (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 191-2, the author contends that women were only partially allowed to participate in salvation: “Women’s weakness as well as their modesty requires a carefully delimited companionship with Christ: as Bernard pictures the church saying, ‘I know quite well that girls are delicate and tender, ill-equipped to endure temptations; so I want them to run in my company, but not to be drawn in my company.’ By this distinction Bernard indicates a partial but not complete sharing in the church’s companionship with Christ: ‘I will have them as companions in hours of consolation, but not in times of trial. Why so? Because they are frail, and I fear they may tire and lag behind.’ In this way, Bernard presents our limited participation in the experience of God as an outgrowth of God’s tender concern for our feminine frailty: by his mercy, we are granted the hours of consolation, and spared the times of trial.”

desired to initiate their own foundation.⁸⁶ Actually, it was not unusual for new orders to allow male and female monastics to live under the same roof for a time before sufficient numbers could be gathered to form new foundations. Eventually, these women became either numerous or demanding enough to merit their own establishment at Jully in 1118, granted by Robert of Molesme, mentor of St. Bernard.⁸⁷ The first abbess at Jully was Elizabeth, Bernard's sister-in-law and later, Bernard's sister, Humbelina, joined the nunnery and became its prioress.

Due to these family connections with the influential Bernard, Jully appears to have been the strongest female foundation associated with the Cistercian order for its first few years, although it cannot be said that the nuns at this earliest female community of Cistercians enjoyed any degree of autonomy as it was regulated by Clairvaux.⁸⁸ Ultimately, the power of Jully faded when Tart, the second female monastery of the Cistercian Order, was founded by Stephen Harding in 1125 and developed under the watchful eye of Cîteaux.⁸⁹ Today it is the memory of Tart's power rather than that of Jully—even though both nunneries no longer exist—that adorns a banner hanging from the chapel wall at Santa María de Cañas.

Scholars of the medieval period have read the motivations behind these early female foundations differently due to some apparent hesitancy among medieval male Cistercian leaders to allow female communities to label themselves under the Cistercian Order. However, regardless of official recognition, it is clear that they were popular among aspiring women monastics from the beginning. In this context of early female

⁸⁶ Thompson, 229.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 230.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

foundations, it is notable that members of Bernard's family played such pivotal leadership roles in establishing and promoting the first Cistercian nunnery, something they would most likely not have done if not for his consent and encouragement. Furthermore, Bernard's admiration for feminine attributes likely resulted from contact with these pious sisters.

Such genuine regard for womanly traits becomes obvious through study of the extensive feminine imagery St. Bernard employed throughout his writings, including those that bear no direct reference to the Virgin. In fact, he continually feminized the figures of deity by endowing them with womanly and motherly attributes, which, according to Bynum, was not necessarily unusual for the Middle Ages, especially in the setting of the cloister.⁹⁰ Damrosch argues that such feminine imagery and language used by Bernard embodies his effort to "feminize the idea of authority within the monastic community" and therefore reveals his political aspirations to avoid traditional, authoritarian rule in his monastic communities.⁹¹ This feminization of God adopted by Bernard and perpetuated by later monastic theologians demonstrates an important phenomenon at a time when the number of nuns entering convents—particularly Cistercian convents—was increasing and devotion to the Virgin Mary and female saints who emulated her was on the rise. Since Mary was the ultimate authority to whom one could appeal for salvation, and Countess Urraca would have seen herself as the ultimate authority over her nuns' salvation, it would have been only logical for her to identify with Mary, not only on grounds of gender, but also through her common role as intercessor.

⁹⁰ Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*, 112-13. The author explains: "Thus we must locate the Cistercian devotion to mother Jesus not merely against the background of the growing affective spirituality of the high Middle Ages but also in the context of a Cistercian ambivalence about authority and a Cistercian conception of community."

⁹¹ Damrosch, 181.

Countess Urraca's devotion to the Virgin through the patronage of statuettes demonstrates this process of emulation and identification.

Writings by Bernard's contemporaries and those who succeeded him as monastic theologians perpetuated the feminine attributes he associated with deity. In his writings he refers to male authority figures within Cistercian monasteries such as abbots and bishops as mothers and describes them as nurturing, nursing, conceiving and even giving birth to devoted followers of Christ.⁹² For example, in his writings, the medieval monk Gueric of Igny vividly described the soul of the Christian as the Mother of Christ:

Brethren, this name of mother is not restricted to prelates, although they are charged in a special way with maternal solicitude and devotion: it is shared by you too who do the Lord's will. Yes, you too are mothers of the Child who has been born for you and in you, that is, since you conceived from the fear of the Lord and gave birth to the spirit of salvation. Keep watch, holy mother, keep watching your care for the new-born child until Christ is formed in you who was born for you.... So you, brethren, in whom the faith that works through love has been born of the Holy Spirit, preserve it, feed it, nourish it like the little Jesus until there is formed in you the Child who is born for us; who not only by being formed and born, but also by living and dying gave us a form to be the model of our formation.⁹³

It is writings like these that have led religious and anthropological scholars to determine that the growth of the cult of Mary represents the resurgence of a mother earth goddess who nurtures and saves mankind. For Christians, Mary embodied the feminine source of salvation and appears as the ultimate mother figure in these medieval texts because she first mothered Christ, whether she is present through direct reference or simply understood to embody the qualities of virtue, humility, sacrifice, nurture, and love toward her children—or all believers in Her Son.

⁹² Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*, 147.

⁹³ Colman O'Dell, OCSO, "On Eagles' Wings: Symbols of Spiritual Motherhood in the Writings of the Early Cistercian Fathers," In *Hidden Springs: Cistercian Monastic Women, Medieval Religious Women, volume three, book two* (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, Inc., 1995), 790.

Thus Bernard's expressions of motherly love towards his fellow monks and the feminine attributes he desired all monks and nuns to emulate were drawn from the Virgin's example as well as from nuns with whom he had contact.⁹⁴ She is the source of all admirable feminine virtues that must be adopted by males and females. Consequently, she was fashioned to appeal to all professed members of the Cistercian Order and, for strong and ambitious abbesses like Countess Urraca, Mary was the ultimate wielder of power and giver of salvation to be imitated and worshiped through statuary and prayers to honor her.

Bernard and Imagery

Due to Bernard's overarching love for Mary and resulting Cistercian devotion to her, images of the Virgin patronized in Cistercian monasteries such as the statuettes patronized by Countess Abbess Urraca would seem to represent logical, obedient commissions to promote meditative worship of the Queen of Heaven, Her Son, and Her holy mother Anne. However, in addition to his poetry and hymns to worship Mary, Bernard composed additional theories regarding the production and adoration of manufactured art objects such as statues, sculptural decoration, and paintings. Such ideals focused on the vow of poverty taken by monks and nuns and the resulting bareness that should prevail in monastic decoration.⁹⁵ This stark, simple design dominates much of

⁹⁴ Ibid., 793-4. See also Damrosch, 186, in which the author argues that although Bernard wished his followers to acquire feminine attributes, he also insisted that monks avoid contact with women: "To be always in a woman's company without having carnal knowledge of her—is this not a greater miracle than raising the dead? You cannot perform the lesser feat; do you expect me to believe that you can do the greater? Every day your side touches the girl's side at table, your bed touches hers in your room, your eyes meet hers in conversation, your hands meet hers at work—do you expect to be thought chaste? It may be that you are, but I have my suspicions. To me you are an object of scandal" (sermon 65.4).

⁹⁵ Anselmo Dimier, *Stones Laid before the Lord: A History of Monastic Architecture*, translated by Gilchrist Lavigne, Cistercian Studies Series, no. 152 (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publications, 1999), 137. In examining the writings on art and architecture by Bernard, the author emphasizes that

Santa María de Cañas' medieval architectural layout, but rare exceptions do appear dating from the medieval period, including the statuettes. After the death of Bernard, his regulations concerning monastic architecture seem to have been less and less observed, especially in monasteries located far from southern France.

Although no one specific style of Cistercian architecture existed in northern Spain during this period, Bernard's theories regarding monastic structures and decoration were extremely influential wherever the Order expanded—though more strictly, of course, in France.⁹⁶ The saint was obviously concerned with overall aesthetic beauty; but he also felt that there must be a spiritual difference between the architecture and artistic decoration of a cathedral and the buildings constructed for monastic dwellings. He wrote: “We monks are differently situated than bishops; they have a duty to their people, not all of whom are spiritual, and they must try to stir up their devotion by material things.”⁹⁷ On the other hand, monks'—and nuns'—spirits could be impeded in their spiritual progress if they did not “discipline the eyes” by avoiding such images as sculptures and paintings in the monastery.⁹⁸ Art was acceptable for the uneducated and spiritually-lacking lay population but was morally distracting for the serious, monastic devotee.

Bernard would be surprised to discover that he had “laid the principles of a new style of art” by recording his ideas.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 148.

⁹⁷ Elisabeth Melczer and Eileen Soldwedel. “Monastic Goals in the Aesthetics of Saint Bernard.” *Studies in Cistercian Art and Architecture, vol. I*, Lillich, Meredith P., editor, Cistercian Studies Series, no.66 (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publications, 1982), 32.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 32-34. In writings about escaping the influence of sensory objects, Bernard wrote: “Let my soul die the death of the angels also so that, escaping from the memory of all present things, she may strip herself, not alone of the desires, but even of the images of inferior and corporeal objects and may converse spiritually with those whom she resembles in spirituality... to be able to contemplate truth without the help of material or sensible images is the characteristic of angelic purity.... Blessed is the soul which can say in this sense: ‘Lo, I have gone far off, flying away: and I abode in the wilderness.’ But you have not flown far, unless, by the purity of your mind, you are able to rise above the images of sensible objects, which are constantly rushing in upon you from every side.”—cited from Bernard of Clairvaux, SC 52.5; *Sermons on the Song of Songs III*, Sommerfeldt, *Studies in Medieval Culture I* (1964) 54, (PL 183 col. 1031).

Theoretically, therefore, Urraca's statuettes of the Virgin and Child, St. Anne with the Virgin and Child, and St. Peter were commissioned in violation of Cistercian ideals put forth by Bernard, and which, according to contemporary scholar Casas Castelles, is not unique to the monastery at Cañas. She explains that many of Bernard's writings about art and architecture in the monastery, although they are assumed to have been present in all Spanish female Cistercian monasteries during the medieval period, were not followed with much exactness in medieval Spain.⁹⁹ Another scholar, Bango Torviso, comments that the Cistercian Order in general grew more lax regarding St. Bernard's instructions on monastic artistic decoration with the passage of time.¹⁰⁰ Cañas, therefore, is not really an exception; rather it seems to follow the Spanish Cistercian Order fairly well. Further medieval evidence of this greater laxness regarding figural imagery in Spain is noted in the small image of the Pantocrator placed at the intersection of rib vaults in the nave of Cañas' monastic church (Fig. 16) or the tiny face appearing in its north transept (fig. 40). In addition, as mentioned previously, Cistercian devotion to Mary promoted meditations on the Virgin's life and attributes, and the production of artworks to honor her embodied a visible reminder of her example and important role in salvation.

Obviously, art was a potent medium through which to encourage the medieval worshipper to participate in such devotions. The desire to physically manifest one's commitment to the Virgin Mary consistently superseded St. Bernard's suggestions for monastic decoration—or lack thereof—in Cistercian Spain. Hence Abbess Urraca patronized these painted wooden statuettes that highlight the Virgin even as she and her nuns followed the example of Bernard. As obedient devotees to Mary they read his

⁹⁹ Casas Castelles.

¹⁰⁰ Isidro G. Bango Torviso, director, *Monjes y Monasterios: El Cister en el Medievo de Castilla y León* (Valladolid: Junta de Castilla y León, 1998), 448-9.

meditations, sermons, and homilies on the life of Mary that, in reality, promoted such worshipful activity and patronage. Countess Urraca was a powerful, aristocratic woman who would have viewed Mary as a most worthy and necessary exemplar. Thus Abbess Urraca adopted Bernard's teachings to honor the queenly Mother of Heaven so far as she deemed appropriate; and that feeling translated into artistic production of statuettes at her monastery.

CHAPTER 4: Abbess Urraca's Royal Sarcophagus and further Marian Devotion through the Rosary

In addition to patronizing smaller works of art in the form of statuettes, Abbess Urraca also made powerful spiritual connections with the Virgin Mary through the commissioning of her own decorative stone sarcophagus. This was the largest artwork produced in honor of Countess Urraca and it stands today at the center of the Chapter House next to the monastic chapel in Cañas (Fig. 41). It is a large tomb measuring 2.83 m in length by 0.88 m in width by 0.52 m in height. The sarcophagus has been opened four different times, in 1898, 1899, 1933, and 1938.¹⁰¹ Each time it was opened, onlookers observed her mummified frame housed within and declared the unusually-tall, 1.7 m female body “uncorrupted.”¹⁰² Thus Urraca’s sepulcher has been and continues to be a holy shrine for the nuns of Santa María de Cañas and the community at large, where miracles have occurred in abundance and the presence of her preserved corpse has legendarily preserved the annual harvest of the surrounding valleys for nearly nine centuries.¹⁰³ She is considered in every way the continual patroness of the monastery.

Each visible surface of Abbess Urraca’s sepulcher is decorated with carved stonework and stands out as a remarkable piece, especially in comparison with the undecorated tombs of other early abbesses of Cañas that surround it (Fig. 42). It was designed and decorated in the aristocratic style of the day and clearly references her relationship to powerful noble families, reminding viewers that she was first and foremost a countess and that she was thus worthy of such an aristocratic burial. The

¹⁰¹ Abad León, 149.

¹⁰² Ibid., 145. In addition, one witness, Saenz Andrés, claimed that the body smelled sweet as well, another indication of her incorruption.

¹⁰³ Fray Félix García Fernández, *Live Interview*, Thursday and Friday, July 22-23, 2004 in Cañas.

whole tomb was originally painted, which would have been quite brilliant for medieval onlookers, and some traces of paint survive. Three pairs of polychromed, stone wolves on either side support it and reference Urraca's lineage just like the wolves painted on the statuettes discussed previously (Fig. 43). She is portrayed lying on the top of the sarcophagus in her nun's habit, fingering her prayer beads (Fig. 44). Two angels swing incense on either side of her shoulders in honor of her piety (Fig. 45). This motif is also included on at least two other sarcophagi made during the thirteenth century to honor contemporary women living in monasteries. These include Abbess Urraca's aunt, Queen Urraca, as well as the tomb of the noble Lady Mayor Guillén de Guzmán, whose sepulcher is located nearby at the Convento de Religiosas Clarisas in Guadalajara (Fig. 46).¹⁰⁴ Finally, three small mourning nuns appear kneeling at her feet (Fig. 47).

On the panel below her feet, the Countess Urraca's naked, childlike soul is raised up to heaven by two angelic figures (Fig. 48). On the Abbess's right side a mourning scene in her honor is depicted (Fig. 49). Reading the scene left-to-right, one sees the following: three monks, three bishops and four acolytes who pray and officiate over the Abbess's royal funeral. At the end of her tomb six mourning figures writhe in grief and pull out their hair (Fig. 50). Four aristocratically dressed women hold their hands to their cheeks in grief and, finally, six praying friars, two of which are dressed in Franciscan monks' robes are depicted as participants at the funeral.

¹⁰⁴ Ricardo de Orueta y Duarte, *La Escultura Funeraria en España: Provincias de Ciudad Real, Cuenca, Guadalajara* (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Históricos, 1919), 7-9. Lady Guillén de Guzmán was Alfonso X, el Sabio, king of Castilla-León's lover sometime prior to 1246 and benefited thereafter from royal donations and privileges affirmed in documents belonging to the monastery where she is buried. The author explains that Lady Guillén de Guzmán probably died between 1262 and 1267 and therefore her sarcophagus is certainly contemporary to that of Abbess Urraca.

On the panel to Urraca's left side, eleven nuns dressed in their Cistercian habits file down the rectangular stone slab in mourning (Fig. 51). Some hold books, others count Ave Maria prayers on prayer beads, and others cover their eyes in sorrow or their hands in piety with their long-sleeved robes. The parade of nuns is led by a monk who receives the mourning nuns with outstretched arms at the front while the monk at the end of the procession flirts with the last nun in line by stepping on her robes and grinning mischievously (Fig. 52). The young novice smiles back at him, impiously neglecting her prayer beads and adding a bit of life and humor to the panel. Finally, the scene on the surface below Urraca's head contains five figures. Reading left-to-right, the first figure is St. Peter holding keys, probably acting as the gatekeeper to heaven, then a nun kneeling in reverence or prayer to him followed by a nun carrying a book. After her, a childlike, novice-figure holds the hand of another nun (Fig. 53). All four women are dressed in the Cistercian habit. The debated iconography of this panel will be discussed below.

Various writers have examined the choice of symbolism and subject matter on Urraca's sarcophagus, coming to differing conclusions. The funerary procession, the lineup of nuns, and the raising of Urraca's soul to heaven seem fairly straightforward in their meaning and are not typically questioned, although the presence of the male figures carved at the beginning and end of the funeral parade of nuns has not been satisfactorily explained. Also, the activities performed by the nuns in mourning, although certainly interesting and worthy of note, are clearly portrayed and thus have not been debated. The wolves are also obvious symbols borrowed from the Lópe de Haro family crest to indicate the lineage of she who lies within the sarcophagus. The presence of the three nuns at Urraca's feet (Fig. 47) and the scene above her head of St. Peter with four

Cistercian nuns (Fig. 53), however, are not as clearly understood and have been interpreted in a number of ways.

Maldonado is the only scholar who has undertaken to explain the presence of the three nuns who kneel at the feet of Urraca's body on top of her sepulcher. She argues that they were copied from similar figures that appear in funerary sculpture at San Millán de la Cogolla, a nearby monastery belonging to Cluny and that they demonstrate different actions associated with the practice of the rosary, such as praying and meditating.¹⁰⁵ However, as will be discussed further, the modern rosary that includes specific actions and meditations such as those suggested by Maldonado was not fully developed during Urraca's lifetime. Nevertheless, it is not unlikely that the three nuns at Urraca's feet represent pious actions such as prayer to and meditation on the Virgin, which Abbess Urraca would have encouraged among her nuns.

A different but still intriguing suggestion for the meaning of these kneeling figures is proffered by Father Félix García Fernández, who oversees liturgical duties at Cañas. He theorizes that they may represent the ladies-in-waiting who moved into the monastery with Countess Urraca, their noble mistress, who would have been waited-on by such individuals throughout her life.¹⁰⁶ According to his theory, aristocratic women could expect to be attended to throughout their lives, in spite of their monastic residence or whatever vows of poverty they adopted.

Although these suggestions have some compelling aspects, it is most likely that the three figures at Urraca's feet are mourning and caring for the well being of her body and spirit. This is probable because the subject of the sarcophagus almost entirely deals

¹⁰⁵ Maldonado, 119. In her article, Maldonado expounds upon the legend of the creation of the rosary by Santo Domingo de Guzmán, who was born in the town of Caleruega, not far from Cañas.

¹⁰⁶ García Fernández, *Live Interview*.

with Countess Urraca's funeral and the mourning activities associated with it. The center figure appears to attend to her burial while the nun on the right prays for the Abbess's soul—and probably for Urraca's intercession on behalf of her *own* soul—and the nun on the left embodies the mourning of the entire monastery at the loss of their great patroness. This is shown by the figure raising her hand to her cheek in grief, echoing the gesture of sadness displayed by the aristocratic women in the funerary procession. It is notable that this figure adopts the gesture not of the professional, lower-class mourners, but rather that of the aristocratic ladies in attendance at Countess Urraca's funeral, indicating the typical lineage of most participants in religious reforming orders during the middle ages.

The episode carved underneath Countess Urraca's head has also been debated by various writers (Fig. 53). Although the figure of St. Peter holding the keys to heaven appears on other sarcophagi from this period, the grouping of four Cistercian nuns in various poses and activities with him is unique.¹⁰⁷ Moya Valgañón proposes two possible readings of this scene. One interpretation suggests that the figures correspond to three stages of Urraca's life: her dedication to the monastery, her regency as abbess, and her arrival in heaven.¹⁰⁸ His second explanation reads the figure with the book as Lady Aldonza who pleads Urraca's case before St. Peter as Countess Urraca kneels, while the novice wipes away her tears representing the nuns' grief when Urraca dies and is reassured by the next abbess who took Urraca's place.¹⁰⁹

Another scholar, Maldonado, suggests two readings as well, adopting Moya Valgañón's first interpretation but also theorizing that the scene may instead represent a

¹⁰⁷ Maldonado, 118-19.

¹⁰⁸ José Gabriel Moya Valgañón, *El Monasterio de Cañas y su Museo* (Logroño: Unidad de Cultura de la Excma. Diputación de Logroño, 1979), 81.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

unified, heavenly view of several Cistercian nuns arriving together to meet St. Peter.¹¹⁰ This final interpretation seems most probable since it is now clear that Countess Urraca was not introduced as a novice in Cañas when she was a child and that she was not Lady Aldonza's daughter. Therefore, the purpose of the novice remains undecipherable if one assumes that the scene represents three stages of Urraca's personal life experience. Also, Maldonado notes that the rest of the sarcophagus' panels display unified scenes, and thus this panel should probably also be regarded as a unified image.

The kneeling nun may represent Countess Urraca in heaven, pleading not only for her own soul, but also interceding on behalf of the nuns who followed her in life and for whom she had spiritual responsibility. St. Peter, the shepherding figure for the saints and the keeper of the gates of heaven, can further be seen as a nurturing, mothering-type in this context because he leads worthy souls into Heaven. He is not only the gatekeeper, but also acted as an important mediator in heaven. Honoring him and his function in salvation through artistic representation was certainly a conscious decision on the part of Countess Urraca as she emulated his intercessory role. Indeed, this image declares that Urraca's mothering role does not end on earth, but continues into a heavenly sphere where she becomes a Marian figure who intercedes on behalf of her prelates as their mother before Peter, and perhaps receives aid from him as well.

In addition to debate over these two panels, there are a variety of opinions regarding the date of Countess Urraca's sarcophagus. She died in 1262 but several writers date the tomb's creation to the period after her death. Moya Valgañón assigns it the latest date, arguing that it was produced at the beginning of the fourteenth century due to the

¹¹⁰ Maldonado, 122. She argues that this scene is unified because all of the other sculptural panels on the sarcophagus are unified.

presence of the angels with incense that indicate her beatified status, which occurred after her death.¹¹¹ However, as previously mentioned two other sarcophagi dating from the mid-thirteenth century in northern Spain bear this motif. In addition, all other scholars date its fabrication to the thirteenth century. Ibáñez Rodríguez states that the sarcophagus was probably produced around 1270 or later.¹¹² He bases this opinion on comparisons with other sarcophagi from nearby monasteries, including San Millán de la Cogolla and Santo Domingo de la Calzada, even though such monasteries were not Cistercian and do not contain other sarcophagi belonging to members of Abbess Urraca's family. Ironically, he does not compare it to the styles at the royal monastery of Nájera, where other members of the Countess' family were buried in similar, decorative tombs.

On the other hand, research by Maldonado suggests that the sarcophagus may have been made—or at least begun—during Countess Urraca's lifetime. She explains that although not many angels with incense were utilized in sarcophagus decoration in Spain at this time, the motif was popular in France from the beginning of the thirteenth century.¹¹³ Also, she further proposes that Roy Martínez de Burueva y Bame may have been the artist who worked on this sarcophagus, as he signed his name on a sarcophagus in the Cistercian monastery of Santa María de Benavides in 1256 and on the sepulcher of Santa María de la Vega in 1274.¹¹⁴ She considers his carving style on these works most similar in comparison with Urraca's sarcophagus. Her analysis of Countess Urraca's

¹¹¹ Moya Valgañón, *Inventario Artístico de Logroño*, 284. It is important to understand, however, that the date of Urraca's beatification is not clear and such an assessment is therefore faulty. Moya Valgañón further argues that there is an inscription on the sarcophagus that indicates that it belongs to Abbess Urraca and that she was the daughter of the founders. No such inscription exists, however. Furthermore, it is pertinent that the sarcophagus of Abbess Urraca's aunt, Queen Urraca, also contains such angels swinging incense, and she was never beatified. Thus Moya Valgañón's argument is proved faulty again.

¹¹² Ibáñez Rodríguez, 18.

¹¹³ Maldonado, 121.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 123.

sarcophagus in relation to other sarcophagi produced during this period in Spain—including other tombs belonging to the Countess' family—thus appears most careful and convincing.

If Countess Urraca's tomb was in fact carved by Roy Martínez de Burueva y Bame, the commission most likely corresponds to Maldonado's earlier comparative example which was carved during the Abbess's lifetime, allowing her to have seen it. Countess Urraca's sepulcher was probably commissioned concurrently with or slightly later than her Aunt Urraca's sarcophagus at the monastery of Vileña, which is similar in style and composition and has been dated around 1230-1250 (Fig. 54).¹¹⁵ Queen Urraca's sarcophagus contains a similar mourning and funerary scene to that of Abbess Urraca's, including religious and political dignitaries (Fig. 55). Maldonado suggests that they were ordered at or near the same period because the two monasteries would probably have had extensive contact as they were founded by members of the same noble family.

Items such as figural sarcophagi were highly prized for their cost, beauty, and indication of noble patronage in addition to serving as attractions for visitors or donors. The two monasteries would have competed with each other to ensure the presence of similarly valuable art objects to honor their aristocratic and wealthy patrons.¹¹⁶ In fact, the inscription on Queen Urraca's ensured that medieval visitors and potential donors understood her noble and royal connections: "Dona huRaca hija del Co[n]De don lope diAz mujer del Rey do[n] ferna[n]do de Leon" (Fig. 56).¹¹⁷ The wolves depicted decorating her tomb further reference her aristocratic familial connections and provide a strong link between her sarcophagus and that of Abbess Urraca at Cañas as well.

¹¹⁵ Cadiñanos Bardeci, 56.

¹¹⁶ Maldonado, 147.

¹¹⁷ Álvarez, 63-4.

Therefore, a comparison between these two women's tombs seems pertinent to dating them accurately, even though it is somewhat difficult because the condition of the sarcophagus for Queen Urraca at Vileña is not as good as that of the Countess Urraca. Nevertheless some significant similarities can nevertheless be noted between the two.

Queen Urraca, similar to Abbess Urraca, is displayed in her nun's habit (Fig. 57). In addition, the angels swinging incense burners noted previously on Abbess Urraca's tomb are repeated on Queen Urraca's sepulcher, although only one is extant due to mutilation (Fig. 58). Importantly, both sarcophagi display obvious references to the Virgin Mary: Abbess Urraca's contains multiple images of early rosary beads and Queen Urraca's portrays the *Annunciation* and the *Adoration* as well as other scenes from the life of the Virgin to honor her (Figs. 59, 60). These two richly decorated tombs testify of not only the essential role of the Virgin in medieval monastic worship, but also of the power and wealth these women were able to wield as they attempted to imitate the Queen of Heaven's salvatory role. Furthermore, the style and thematic similarities noted among these two sepulchers substantiates the argument that they were likely completed by the same sculptor.¹¹⁸

Clearly the more advanced style of both sarcophagi—at Cañas and at Vileña—indicates a production date of at least mid-century when compared to those of Countess Urraca's parents which lay in the cloister at Santa María la Real in Nájera. The sarcophagi of Don Diego Lópe de Haro and his wife Toda Pérez de Lara, containing almost identical funerary/mourning images to that of the two Urracas' tombs, were carved in the first quarter of the century (Fig. 61). Indeed, except for the subject matter of

¹¹⁸ Ministro de Educación Nacional: Dirección General de Bellas Artes, Cuerpo Facultativo de Archiveros, Bibliotecarios y Arqueólogos: Inspección General de Museos Arqueológicos, *Memorias de los Museos Arqueológicos Provinciales, 1943, Volumen IV* (Madrid: Aldus SA, 1944), 202.

the panel below Abbess Urraca's head, the other episodes were commonly depicted on funerary sculpture during this period in northern Spain, and Countess Urraca would have observed the funerary scene and added her own touches in the commission, such as the nuns at her feet and the lineup of nuns at her funeral.

The subject matter of the sarcophagus indicates that Countess Urraca likely commissioned the work during her lifetime, even if it was not completed until after her death. She clearly borrowed the funerary procession from sarcophagi from the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries in the Royal Pantheon of Nájera, including the tombs of her parents (Figs. 62-66). Maldonado further points out that the three little figures at Abbess Urraca's feet were already utilized in funerary sculpture at nearby San Millán de la Cogolla, which she probably would have seen.¹¹⁹ The image of the nuns in heaven with St. Peter is one of hoped-for salvation relating to the statuette Abbess Urraca had commissioned of him. Just as Peter shepherded the flock of early Christian followers after Christ ascended to heaven, Abbess Urraca mothers and shepherds her own flock of nuns to heaven, as she pleads for their souls at his feet. Clearly, the Abbess held Peter in high regard as she could relate intimately with his shepherding role. Additionally, if her grandmother did indeed found the Confraternity of St. Peter at Cañas, as has been suggested, devotion to him would have been a common practice at her monastery.¹²⁰

The Countess also ordered the portrayal of her nuns in procession, working on tasks that would enhance their piety, such as studying the scriptures or the rule book of St. Benedict, counting Hail Mary praises on prayer beads, and following the direction of the new abbess who took charge of the monastery after her death. She had herself

¹¹⁹ Maldonado, 119.

¹²⁰ Aguado Grijalva, 46.

portrayed on top of her sepulcher, engaged in the righteous activity of the Marian psalter, the precursor to the rosary. Thus she desired to be depicted as a perpetual example to the nuns she loved and a reminder that frivolous activities, such as flirtations, should be carefully and piously avoided. They should attend diligently to their devotions to the Virgin Mary, as Countess Abbess Urraca demonstrates quite didactically to the nuns at her monastery in Cañas, both during her lifetime and continuing today.

Finally, the wealth required to commission such a work as a stone sarcophagus in a relatively small monastery is further indication that Abbess Urraca patronized this work during her lifetime. She was a woman of noble lineage and she clearly desired a properly dignified funeral monument like those of her family members she observed at Nájera and elsewhere. As a wealthy patroness, she desired not only to link herself to the Queen of Heaven through the actions visually represented in her portrait, but also to her family's tradition of aristocratic burial within a monastery on earth.

The Marian Psalter: Precursor to the Rosary

Many scholars state in cursory language that Countess Urraca prays the rosary on top of her sarcophagus. This conclusion fits nicely for those scholars within the context of the legend of Santo Domingo de Guzmán inventing the rosary, especially since he was born not far from Cañas into a noble family and would have been naturally connected with the extended aristocracy of Christian Spain from whom Urraca was a descendant (Fig. 67).¹²¹ Even the most recent investigations regarding the history of the monastery at

¹²¹ The modern rosary consists of repeating ten Hail Mary prayers while meditating on various mysteries, or events from the lives of Christ and Mary. Between each mystery, the worshipper must repeat one Our Father. Until two years ago, the rosary as canonized in the nineteenth century consisted of fifteen mysteries divided into joyous, sorrowful, and glorious mysteries. In 2002 Pope John Paul II added five new mysteries, called the mysteries of light. See also Pope John Paul II, *Apostolic Letter 'Rosarium Virginis*

Cañas—and Urraca’s sarcophagus in particular—perpetuate these ideas.¹²² However, such a connection dissolves in light of scholarship revealing that Santo Domingo de Guzmán could not have possibly “invented” the rosary, as its creation took place over a long period of time and culminated earliest in northern Europe—specifically German speaking regions—a process that had only just begun when Urraca became abbess at Cañas.¹²³

It is, however, quite plausible that nuns at Cañas, similar to other Cistercian nuns elsewhere in Europe, had adopted the practice of praying what was referred to as the Marian psalter, a key ritual that contributed to the development of the modern rosary. The importance of this devotion is evident not only in the prominent gesture of Urraca, fingering her prayer beads on top of the sarcophagus, but also is repeated with three additional nuns in the funerary procession who also count prayers, probably devotions to the Virgin, on beads (Figs. 68-71).

Indeed, the history of the rosary’s formation and ultimate adoption into the Catholic Church is both complex and incomplete. Winston-Allen, a scholar on the subject, points out: “[T]he rosary cannot be regarded, in the way it traditionally has been, as having had an independent integrity throughout its history, but rather as a text that was packaged and repackaged to appeal to the needs of users by groups with differing spiritual agendas.”¹²⁴ Furthermore, the rosary did not originate as a prayer text with reference to specific “mysteries” of the Virgin’s experience upon which the worshipper

Mariae’ of the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II to the Bishops, Clergy and Faithful on the Most Holy Rosary, 16 October 2002.

¹²² Maldonado, 121.

¹²³ Anne Winston, “Tracing the Origins of the Rosary: German Vernacular Texts,” *Speculum* 68 1993, 619-36.

¹²⁴ Winston-Allen, 12. See Pope John Paul II, *Apostolic Letter*.

should contemplate throughout her devotions. Rather, medieval disciples of the Virgin, such as Urraca and her nuns in Cañas, employed prayer beads to enumerate repetitions of the Hail Mary prayer, a device not unique to Christianity that had been in use since the early Christian period to count Our Fathers.¹²⁵

Winston elaborates upon the development of this Marian devotion that became so essential to medieval worship:

The earliest form of ‘rosary’ is the Latin Ave prayer (Hail Mary), which dates back in popular use at least to the twelfth century. It is composed of two salutations: the Angel Gabriel’s greeting to Mary in Luke 1.28 [sic] and her cousin Elizabeth’s greeting in Luke 1.42 [sic]. In the West, the earliest linking together of these two salutations occurs in the seventh-century antiphon of the offertory of the mass for the fourth Sunday of Advent that was traditionally attributed to Gregory the Great. By the eleventh century, the two greetings had become well known because of their inclusion in the extremely popular Little Office of the Blessed Virgin, where the words, ‘Ave Maria’ were invoked repeatedly. As a result, the salutation became a frequent way of greeting images of the Virgin. Marian legends of the twelfth century tell of pious individuals being rewarded by her for the practice. It was believed that hearing these words brought Mary delight by recalling to her the joy of the Incarnation.... Originally, the term *rosarium* had been used to designate a garden, an anthology of texts, or a rose wreath. Ultimately, it came to refer to fifty salutations to the Virgin.¹²⁶

Cistercians appear in countless medieval texts as those who experience miraculous visitations or pardons for sins by devoting themselves to repeating these rosariums of Ave Marias. As far as can be discerned through photographs and drawings, it appears that there are, notably, fifty prayer beads on the band worn around Abbess Urraca’s neck on her sarcophagus, indicating that she, too, was probably an avid devotee to Mary and this prayerful practice of rosarium recitations. Through this artistic rendition it is evident how

¹²⁵ Michael P. Carroll, “Praying the Rosary: The Anal-Erotic Origins of A Popular Catholic Devotion.” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 26:4 (1987): 488.

¹²⁶ Winston, 620.

essential the Virgin became to nuns such as Countess Urraca, a dedication not unusual in light of her previously-discussed patronage of statuettes of the Virgin.

In addition, another scholar of the history of the rosary, Hilda Graef, cites an interesting example of a Cistercian monk contemporary to Abbess Urraca whose devotions to Mary were remarkably similar to the rosary Winston-Allen claims did not come into being until the late fourteenth century. The Yorkshire Cistercian Stephen of Salley (d. 1252) devised a system of fifteen meditations on the joys of the Virgin divided into groups of five. Graef explains:

The meditations are touchingly simple, without the exaggerations so frequent at that time, and Mary is seen almost entirely in her function as Mother of Christ. The meditations end with the bodily assumption and glorification of Mary at the side of her Son, where she rules as the mistress of the world, the empress of the angels and the hope and propitiation of sinners, 'a faithful mediatrix for the salvation of those who belong to her'.¹²⁷

Through examining these various facts and legends, it is clear that the rosary's history is much more complex than was previously thought. Nevertheless, it is increasingly evident that devotion to the Virgin through prayers—especially enumerated prayers—was a widespread practice among members of the Cistercian Order. As she popularized this practice among her nuns and commissioned her own sarcophagus with multiple images of prayer beads used to count repetitions of Hail Marys, Abbess Urraca was showing a potent visual example by connecting herself to the Virgin.

Indeed, further evidence testifies that by 1300, written Marian psalters in both Latin and the German vernacular were in use and at least one Marian psalter including

¹²⁷ See See A. Wilmart, *Auteurs spirituels et textes dévots du moyen-âge latin : Études d'Histoire Littéraire*, Paris: Librairie Bloud et Gay (1932), 356, quoted in : Hilda Graef, *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion*, vol. I: *From the Beginnings to the Eve of the Reformation* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1963), 264.

episodes from the life of Christ to be meditated on while the devotee prayed the Ave Marias has been discovered to have belonged to Cistercian nuns at the monastery of Saint Thomas on the Kyll.¹²⁸ Ultimately, in the latter half of the fifteenth century, more popular rosary books began to be published and circulated in greater numbers; however, this evolved practice depended less and less on the ability of the worshipper to know how to read.¹²⁹ Thus early Marian psalters particularly catered to an audience of nuns because they represented one of the only consistently literate female contingencies throughout the medieval period.¹³⁰ Judging by the attractiveness of this Marian devotion of reciting Hail Marys in groups of fifty for nuns and the extant texts that testify of its importance—and at the same time make it a rather exclusive activity for a literate, Cistercian female audience—it is most probable that Urraca’s “portrait” on the lid of the sarcophagus captured a familiar image of her with her prayer beads as she counted repetitions of the Hail Mary.

Even the name of the rosary—or rosarium—was carefully endowed with meaning. The Ave Maria salutation and prayer were called a rose, a name-symbol that referenced Mary’s suffering in the red rose, her purity in the white rose, and her association with other female goddess types from antiquity, such as Aphrodite, whose sign was the rose.¹³¹ Therefore the rose as a symbol for erotic love encounters through Aphrodite adopted from antiquity was probably the source for the allusions to sexual

¹²⁸ Winston-Allen, 17-18. This text, found in this female Cistercian monastery, predates all other written life-of-Christ meditative texts that had previously been studied in association with the development of the modern rosary that focuses on episodes in the lives of Christ and Mary.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 22-5.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 20.

¹³¹ Ibid., 100, 98-99, 82. The author explains, “In Greek tradition the red rose was associated with the blood of a god. It was said to have originated when a thorn pierced Aphrodite’s foot. As the flower of Aphrodite, it became associated with the Roman cult of Venus, particularly with the bower of Venus, archetype of the paradisiacal love garden.”

encounter from the enclosed rose garden in the Song of Solomon. Ultimately, as the Virgin grew in importance due to her salvatory powers, these connotations gained spiritual potency when adapted to reference Mary's virginity, virtues, and suffering.

Early allusions to Mary as the rose began with St. Ambrose (AD 339-97), and by the twelfth century she had been given many names associated with the rose.¹³² Therefore the term *rosarium* incorporated well-understood imagery of Mary as the "rose without thorns" whose power to offer salvation was considered absolute. Such numerology arose out of the recitation of the Psalter—or 150 psalms—in personal worship which supplanted conventional canonical hours texts as Mary became an increasingly essential figure in medieval devotion, coming to be known as Marian psalters.¹³³ The importance of worshipping the Virgin and the prevalence of utilizing the Marian psalter to do so is illustrated through numerous medieval examples of individuals who recited rosariums of Hail Marys and received special gifts, visions, absolutions, and other indulgences from the Virgin.¹³⁴ It is evident that demonstrating devotion to Mary through repeating praises to her was a potent source of redemptive power.

¹³² Ibid., 89. Such titles include but are not limited to: "rose of modesty" "rose among thorns" "noble rose" "fragrant rose" "chaste rose" "rose of heaven" "rose of love" "never-wilting rose" "pure rose" "bright rose" "summer rose" "rose of virtue" "Rose of Jesse" "rose in heavenly dew" "Rose of Jericho" "God's rose garden" "pleasant rose garden."

¹³³ Winston, 621. "In 'Marian psalters,' which originated around 1130, the antiphons that preceded each Psalm and announced its theme were replaced by verses that interpreted each of the 150 Psalms as a reference to Christ or Mary. Gradually the devotion was shortened to recitation of the antiphons and, in place of the Psalms, either Pater Nosters or Ave Marias. Without the Psalms, the connection that the antiphons had to a specific theme was lost. As a result the antiphons themselves came to be replaced by rhymed free paraphrases or simply by 150 verses in praise of the Virgin. Partly for ease of recitation, the Marian psalters were subdivided into three sets of 50 stanzas...."

¹³⁴ Winston-Allen, 14, 15. "Marian legends and anecdotes of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries tell of pious individuals reciting chains of 50, 60, 100, or 150 repetitions of the prayer as a religious exercise or gesture of devotion to the Virgin." She cites several examples as recorded in various medieval sources: "Caesarius of Heisterbach (1180-1240) reports the case of a matron who regularly recited fifty Hail Marys and experienced a taste of wonderful sweetness in her mouth (Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogues*, book 7, no. 49, 1:533.). Two Marian miracle stories of the twelfth century tell of a knight who prayed on hundred Hail Marys a day in order to rid himself of an unhappy passion for his master's wife and of 'a wife' who succeeded in ridding her husband of his mistress (Mussafia, *Marienlegenden* 115 (1887), 60; Thomas

All of this evidence regarding the design of Countess Urraca's sarcophagus in the accepted aristocratic style of the thirteenth century and the numerous allusions to worship of the Virgin on it testify of the Abbess's desire to make a compelling, visual connection with authorities over both earthly and heavenly power. Her large, decorative tomb patterned after those of other Spanish nobles—particularly her family—represents her wealth and aristocratic influence that provided for the monastery of Cañas' unparalleled growth during her reign as abbess. The presence of the rosary in no less than four places on the sepulcher further speaks of her devotion to the Queen of Heaven, her desire to emulate Mary in her intercessory role as well as receive divine intervention from her as well as the strong influence Countess Urraca had over religious practices at her nunnery. All of this provides evidence that the Abbess empowered herself through commissioning of her portrait in the act of worshipping Mary, whose presence is referenced through the rosary. The stunning image of Abbess Urraca praying to the Virgin on the sarcophagus lid, perhaps the earliest extant sculptural representation available of the primitive rosary, is indeed a potent image designed by a powerful woman.

Frederick Crane, *The Exempla or Illustrative Stories from the "Sermones vulgares"* of Jacques de Vitry, Folk-lore Society London 26 (London: Nutt, 1890), 223). Other legends tell of people reciting the Hail Mary 150 times over (Mussafia, *Marienlegenden* 113 (1886), 942, 115 (1887), 62; "The Monk and Our Lady's Sleeves," in *The Middle English Miracles of the Virgin*, ed. Beverly Boyd (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 1964), 50-55, 119-22).

CONCLUSION/ EPILOGUE

In addition to architecture, statuettes, and her sarcophagus, Countess Urraca was an outstanding economic advocate for her monastic community. As previously mentioned, she added and obtained through royal and noble donations new lands that contributed wealth and power to Santa María de Cañas. In addition, in 1250 Urraca founded, with her own funds, a hospital nearby to serve and care for the poor and sick of her region.¹³⁵ Although nothing remains of the hospital, it is evident through extant documentation that it functioned for at least five centuries, and is assumed to have been located approximately 150 meters from the parochial church in Cañas.¹³⁶

Obviously, she considered the future economic security of her monastery to be of utmost importance and she understood that donations and support from the surrounding community had everything to do with that success. Thus a hospital foundation to meet the needs of the public clearly allowed the nuns to serve outside the cloister and therefore maintain contact with local patrons. Without the assistance of the public, the nuns would suffer in times of unrest, which occurred frequently during this period in Spain as illustrated by the experience of her grandmother who was forced to flee Cañas during wartime.¹³⁷ Thus Countess Urraca apparently used her political clout and spiritual prowess to attempt to ensure both spiritual and economic success for the nuns she mothered and the monastery she loved.

In doing so, Urraca was able to attract royal attention and noble donations for Santa María de Cañas and helped raise the status and self esteem of the nuns over which

¹³⁵ Abad León, 163-4.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 165.

¹³⁷ Johnson, *Equal in Monastic Profession*, 57.

she ruled.¹³⁸ Johnson describes the motivation for the nuns at Cañas to devotedly follow and desire to emulate Countess Urraca:

Their religious status was reinforced by the high social class of some nuns, particularly the superiors in many nunneries, whose birth imbued them with immense self-confidence.... Although only a few nuns in a given house might be from ducal or comital families, all their sister nuns benefited from the reflected social status of these great ladies. Elevated birth made nuns feel worthy of respect, and the presence of highborn nuns lent an aura of aristocratic power to the institutions where they were housed. Birth and its prerequisites of power and prestige helped religious women form strong identities.¹³⁹

Urraca was one of these powerful, wealthy women who brought honor to her fellow nuns and who could attract royal donations and other forms of economic benefit, especially real estate that would yield economic benefit for centuries to come. Her strong familial connections enabled her to negotiate important economic exchanges and endowed her with both an aristocratic and a motherly desire to further the monastery's success, as well as providing her a sense of her position as the wielder of ultimate authority over those for whom she was responsible.

The Role of Gender in Female Spanish Monastic Life

Scholarship concerning the history of medieval nuns has argued that, “[n]uns did not ground their identity in an affirmation or denial of their gender, since the realities of their lives in a nunnery called on them to integrate their gender into the roles of religious persons and family members.”¹⁴⁰ Nevertheless, it is arguable that society's admiration of religious females may have sent a message of affirmation and a sense of empowerment to

¹³⁸ Abad León, 99-100. For example, donations dating from 1229 by the bishop of Calahorra and her brother, don Lope Díaz de Haro and in 1244 attracted visits from the bishop of Calahorra and the head monk at San Millán de la Cogolla. In addition, King Alfonso X the Wise was an essential donor to Cañas as well; he granted Countess Urraca control over the town of Matute, an important production center for grains that strengthened the monastery over several centuries with its output.

¹³⁹ Johnson, *Equal in Monastic Profession*, 231.

¹⁴⁰ Johnson, “*Mulier et Monialis...*,” 242.

nuns due to their having to overcome significant obstacles considered unique to their gender. Such a concept is described by Johnson:

Nuns inspired an inflated esteem because they were believed to be overcoming greater natural odds than were their male counterparts. Since women were seen as lesser than men in the order of nature, female monastic profession made nuns better than men in the order of grace.¹⁴¹

Any nun living in the medieval period would have been keenly aware of such distinctions between men and women. Therefore, it is quite absurd to deny the influence of gender when examining the choice of a widowed noble woman to enter a monastery during a period when adults were recruited by reforming monastic orders.

Furthermore, gender certainly shaped the nature of such a powerful woman's artistic patronage as well as her patterns and practices of worship. The importance of gender is noted in Countess Urraca's commissioning of artwork to honor and promote worship of the Virgin, the Virgin's mother, and even St. Peter who shepherded the saints just as an Abbess shepherds her saintly nuns within a monastic community. Countess Urraca's own sarcophagus includes her personal depiction in devotive action to Mary and illustrates not only Urraca's powerful role but also emphasizes her gender; as she repeats Hail Marys, she connects with the female power source in heaven through this practice and urges her nuns to do the same.

Urraca's vast patronage may seem extraordinary for a female of her time; but her participation in overseeing the building of a monastery, commissioning artworks to inspire piety and worshipful behavior among the nuns for which she was accountable, endowing the nunnery with lands to ensure its economic stability for the future, and contributing to the community at large were responsibilities carried out by hundreds of

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 245.

Cistercian abbesses in Spain and the rest of Europe throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.¹⁴² Ironically, however, during much of the epoch surrounding the founding and building-up of the monastery at Cañas, the Cistercian monks at Cîteaux continued to be reluctant to allow for or acknowledge the presence of nuns in the Order.¹⁴³ Indeed, as Thompson and others have emphasized, just because Jully and Tart, the earliest female Cistercian foundations in France, both enjoyed specific historical links to the Cistercian Order and its male leadership, “that did not mean they formed a feminine branch of the order or were fully incorporated into it.”¹⁴⁴ There was a strong resistance to the incorporation of female monastics into this Order.

As a result, explains Berman, historians since that period have, “had trouble accommodating the role of women in [the Cistercian Order]. This is ironic given that the abbeys of Cistercian women may have constituted the largest group of new religious houses for women founded in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.”¹⁴⁵ The reasons proffered to explain such behavior by Cistercian monks in leadership positions vary according to the agenda of the scholar who studies the issues surrounding female participation in the Order. Overall, though, a primary motivation seems to have been

¹⁴² Constance H. Berman argues convincingly that the number of Cistercian female monasteries during this period is impossible to know due to lack of documentation. However, Millaruelo, 66-97, records that there were at least thirty-three such foundings during the twelfth century and at least an additional twenty-eight during the thirteenth century in Spain.

¹⁴³ Thompson, 227-8. The author explains that, “The early Cistercians were remarkable for their hostility to the feminine sex.” She continues on to explain that their presence as a whole was denied in the sense that Cistercian documents do not even deal with Cistercian convents until 1213. See also, Degler-Spengler, Brigitte. “The Incorporation of Cistercian Nuns Into the Order in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Century,” In *Hidden Springs: Cistercian Monastic Women, Medieval Religious Women, volume three, book one* (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, Inc., 1995), 85-6. She writes that the early period of the Cistercian order records multiple episodes of female monasteries being deprived admittance even though it is evident that women’s nunneries developed next to men’s monasteries quite frequently.

¹⁴⁴ Thompson, 230

¹⁴⁵ Berman, *Women and Monasticism in Medieval Europe*, 5. She writes, “Cistercian historians, falling back on a narrow reading of the juridical situation of women within the Order, generally have denied or minimized the role of nuns.”

economic: it was much more costly for any new Order to sustain a female foundation than a male foundation because of the fact that priesthood authority was reserved solely for males. Ultimately, however, through sheer numbers and powerful royal donations—often provided by authoritative women—female devotees living the Cistercian rule were embraced as such.

In fact, by the time Countess Urraca was elected Abbess at Cañas the Order had adapted to the idea of organizing nuns in communities and had sanctioned multiple foundations for women.¹⁴⁶ McGuire theorizes that two possible reasons may account for the Cistercian Order’s eventual embracing—after much struggle—of Cistercian nuns and their communities: 1) they were present and demanded recognition and accommodation; and 2) Cistercian focus on the Virgin allowed women to become more accepted and respected.¹⁴⁷ Clearly Abbess Urraca was fortunate in her timing as well as savvy in her use of resources. The Countess obviously emphasized Mary in her worship practices and meditative devotions. Furthermore, the geographic separation of Spain from Cîteaux seems to have provided Cistercian female foundations on the Iberian Peninsula a certain level of autonomy as well.

Although it may be argued that the ultimate acceptance of nuns into the Cistercian Order was a process instigated by a male figure—King Alfonso VIII of Castilla-León—who requested that his Cistercian female founding at Santa María la Real at Las Huelgas be officially recognized by Cîteaux in 1187, it truly was the female authority figures associated with him that continued to patronize and support the cause of female

¹⁴⁶ Thompson, 228. She explains that, “the Cistercians, who at first seem to have thought a Cistercian nun was a contradiction in terms, eventually sheltered and organized a large number of nunneries.

¹⁴⁷ Brian Patrick McGuire, *Friendship and Faith: Cistercian Men, Women, and their Stories, 1100-1250* (Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk: St Edmundsbury Press, 2002), 57, 59.

Cistercians.¹⁴⁸ By decree from the King, the abbess at the monastery of Las Huelgas enjoyed a great deal of autonomy and power in spite of being officially ruled by the male monastics at Cîteaux. As Connor explains:

She was also allowed to appoint chaplains and parish priests for the villages over which she had control, to establish new parishes, give faculties to priests to hear confessions and to preach, confirm the election of abbesses in monasteries dependent on Las Huelgas, establish censures, decide matrimonial cases, confer benefices, hear civil cases, punish priests teaching heresy, and finally convene a synod.¹⁴⁹

At one point, however, the overarching power enjoyed by the third abbess at Las Huelgas, who had taken it upon herself to bless novices and hear confessions, was brought to the attention of Pope Innocent III and he reprimanded the monastery.¹⁵⁰ Nevertheless, with vast wealth and a legacy of authority backed by the monarchy, abbesses at Las Huelgas continued to attract royal patronage, expanding their community's authority to encompass all female Cistercian foundations in Spain by 1199, even the reluctant monastery at Cañas. Thus Countess Urraca was initiated into monastic life and served her term as abbess in a climate that not only allowed for but also

¹⁴⁸ Thompson, 237; and Berman, *Women and Monasticism in Medieval Europe*, 17-18. Alfonso's wife, Eleanor, was the daughter of Eleanor of Aquitaine, and the two made numerous donations together. In addition, their daughter, Blanche of Castile, married the king of France and became mother to Louis IX. She eventually founded her own Cistercian female nunnery in France in the thirteenth century that became a very powerful and influential monastery.

¹⁴⁹ Elizabeth Connor, OCSO. "The Abbeys of Las Huelgas and Tart and Their Filiations," *Hidden Springs: Cistercian Monastic Women, Medieval Religious Women, volume three, book one* (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, Inc., 1995), 30-1 and 36. This thesis does not argue, however, that Countess Urraca ever attempted to take upon herself priesthood roles as did the Abbess of Las Huelgas at Burgos. The imagery of the funerary scene on Countess Urraca's sarcophagus indicates clearly that male priesthood authorities were present and therefore the author assumes that the monastery at Cañas adhered to Cistercian policies dictating the necessity of a male priesthood authority in effecting all official liturgical practices.

¹⁵⁰ Thompson, 238. The author says that in his reprimand, Innocent III "pointed out the unworthiness of women for such offices in spite of the virtues of the Virgin Mary." See also Berman, *Women and Monasticism in Medieval Europe*, 18, where the author comments, "Las Huelgas would be particularly famous for the power and authority of its abbesses, who were treated on a par with powerful bishops in Spain.... The extensive power and wealth of the extremely aristocratic women of Las Huelgas is clear in the grants made by the royal family when the abbey was founded."

encouraged female monastic patronage as well as strong, noble, female figures as abbesses and expansion of Cistercian nunneries.

In addition to having other Cistercian abbesses and noble familial figures as examples of assertiveness and industry, Countess Urraca responded to a religious environment that privileged the Virgin Mary over all other figures. In her monastic context, it is likely that the Countess closely identified with many of the Virgin's responsibilities and roles. Kieckhefer describes this era in which Urraca ruled and Marian devotion was vital to monastic life:

Alongside devotion to the passion, and often linked with it, Marian themes were ubiquitous in late medieval Christianity. Relics, shrines, and pilgrimages, feast days, hymns, motets, legends, plays, paintings and statues, patronage of churches and monasteries, sermons, devotional treatises, visions, theology—in all these areas Mary was not merely present but vitally important.¹⁵¹

As a powerful woman on earth, responsible for the well being and salvation of her nuns, Urraca would have identified intimately with several of Mary's roles.

Finally, the greater humanization of Mary allowed Christ to become more approachable through her intercessory power, a role that the Cistercians both responded and contributed to with the practices of Marian psalters and devotions encouraged by Bernard's example and writings.¹⁵² Thus Urraca not only fulfilled her position as a follower of the founders of the Cistercian order, but she expressed her own devotions openly through art, which stands today as a testimony of the power she enjoyed as Abbess of Santa María de Cañas. It is clear that she did everything within her power to provide for the secure future of her monastery, including overseeing building projects,

¹⁵¹ Kieckhefer, 89.

¹⁵² Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*, 136-7. She further elaborates on this concept as she describes Bernard's use of maternal imagery as applied to male scriptural figures on page 115.

purchasing real estate, founding hospitals, and attending annual conferences at Las Huelgas. Ultimately, her commissioning of statuettes of the Virgin and Child, St. Anne and the Virgin and Child, and St. Peter, in addition to her use of prayer beads to number her Ave Maria prayers testify to her identifying herself with the Mother of Heaven, a shepherd figure for her nuns who provided for their salvation on earth as well as in heaven.

Scholarship on the life of Countess Urraca and her contribution as the fourth abbess of the monastery of Santa María de Cañas has not, to this point, considered the totality of her artistic patronage in the context of her role as a noblewoman and a nun. Therefore, this thesis has examined the artistic decoration and architectural patronage of this powerful woman and the influences she incorporated into the monastic structures at Cañas as she oversaw their building, particularly the numerous architectural connections between her monastery and that of powerful and dominating Las Huelgas. In addition, this paper has discussed Urraca's devotion to the Virgin Mary and St. Peter by considering the medieval monastic world in which she lived and the strong influence of the Cistercian Order on such worship practices. The potent spiritual connections Countess Urraca made by commissioning images of these essential, holy intercessors testifies to her devotion to them and the powerful salvatory role she herself played in the lives of the nuns for whom she was responsible.

Furthermore, the imagery displayed on Urraca's sarcophagus demonstrates not only a similar message of salvation through intercessors such as Peter and Mary, but also testifies of Abbess Urraca's aristocratic lineage while demonstrating a direct, personal link between herself and the Virgin. This thesis has also examined the Countess's artistic

patronage along with the medieval society that allowed nuns—particularly Spanish Cistercian nuns during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries such as Countess Urraca—a high degree of autonomy, power and privilege. All of these architectural and artistic commissions confirm that she was a powerful woman who wielded a great deal of influence that continues to be revered at Cañas today.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abad León, Felipe. *Real Monasterio de Cañas: Nueve Siglos de Fidelidad*. Logroño: Talleres Gráficos de Editorial Ochoa, 1984.
- Agapito y Revilla, Don Juan. *El Real Monasterio de Las Huelgas de Burgos: Apuntes para un Estudio Histórico-Artístico*. Valladolid: Imprenta La Nueva Pincia, 1903.
- Aguado Grijalva, Juan Manuel. *Guía: Abadía Cisterciense de Cañas*. La Rioja: Quintana S.A., 2001.
- Álvarez, Dom Jesús, Abad de Cardeña. *Reina y Fundadora: Apuntes Históricas sobre el Monasterio Cisterciense de Vileña*. Burgos: La Excma. Diputación Provincial de Burgos, 1954.
- Andrés Valero, Sebastian and Cármen Jiménez Martínez. "El Monasterio Cisterciense de Santa María de Cañas (Cañas, La Rioja)." *El Císter: Órdenes Religiosas Zaragozanas*. Actas 1985. Zaragoza: Institución Fernando el Católico, 1987, 221-32.
- Bango Torviso, Isidro G., director. *Monjes y Monasterios: El Cister en el Medievo de Castilla y León*. Valladolid: Junta de Castilla y León, 1998.
- Barton, Simon. *The Aristocracy in Twelfth-Century León and Castile*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Baury, Ghislain. *Étude Socio-Economique du Monastère de Cañas 1169-1300*. Université Paris VIII, 1996.
- _____. *Les Religieuses en Castille, XIIe-XIIIe siècles Ordre Cistercien et Patronales Aristocratiques, 2 vols*. Thèse pour obtenir le grade de Docteur de L'Université Paris VIII, History, 1999.
- Berman, Constance Hoffman. *The Cistercian Evolution: The Invention of a Religious Order in Twelfth-Century Europe*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999.
- _____. "Men's Houses, Women's Houses: The Relationship Between the Sexes in Twelfth-Century Monasticism." *The Medieval Monastery*, ed. Andrew MadLeish. St. Cloud, Minnesota: North Star Press of St. Cloud, 1988, 43-52.
- _____. "Were There Twelfth-Century Cistercian Nuns?" *Church History* 68:4 December 1999, 824-64.
- _____. *Women and Monasticism in Medieval Europe: Sisters and Patrons of the Cistercian Reform*. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2002.

- _____. "Women as Donors and Patrons to Southern French Monasteries in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries." In *The Worlds of Medieval Women: Creativity, Influence, Imagination*. Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 1985, 53-68.
- Bouton, Jean de la Croix. *Les Moniales Cisterciennes*, vol. I-IV. Grignan (Drôme): Abbaye N.D. d'Aiguebelle, 1986-1989.
- Bynum, Caroline Walker. *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982.
- _____. "Religious Women in the Later Middle Ages." In *Christian Spirituality II: High Middle Ages and Reformation*, ed. Jill Raitt. New York: Crossroad, 1987, 121-39.
- Cadiñanos Bardeci, I. *El Monasterio de Santa Maria la Real de Vileña, Su Museo y Cartulario*. Villarcayo, 1990.
- Carroll, Michael P. "Praying the Rosary: The Anal-Erotic Origins of a Popular Catholic Devotion." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 26:4 1987, 486-98.
- Casas Castells, Elena. Doctoral Candidate in Art History, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid; Dissertation on Female Cistercian Architecture. Interview. Tuesday, July 27 and Thursday, July 29, 2004.
- Casimiro de Govantes, Don Angel. *Diccionario Geográfico-Histórico de España, por la Real Academia de la Historia, Madrid, Sección II: Comprende La Rioja ó Toda la Provincia de Logroño y Algunos Pueblos de la de Burgos*. Madrid: Imprenta de los Señores Viuda de Jordan e Hijos, 1846.
- Cea Gutiérrez, Antonio. *El Tesoro de las Reliquias: Colección de la Abadía Cisterciense de Cañas: Exposición, Centro Cultural Caja de La Rioja del 15 de enero al 5 de febrero, Logroño, 1999*. Logroño: Graficas Quintana S.L., 1999.
- Cocheril, M. "L'implantation des abbayes cisterciennes dans la Peninsule Iberique." *Anuario de Estudios Medievales* 1 (1964): 217-87.
- Colombas, García, M. *Monasterio de Tulebras*. Pamplona: Departamento de Educación y Cultura del Gobierno de Navarra, 1987.
- Connor, Elizabeth, OCSO. "The Abbeys of Las Huelgas and Tart and Their Filiations." *Hidden Springs: Cistercian Monastic Women, Medieval Religious Women, volume three, book one*. Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, Inc., 1995, 29-48.

- Damrosch, David. "Non Alia Sed Aliter: The Hermeneutics of Gender in Bernard of Clairvaux." In *Images of Sainthood in Medieval Europe*, Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski and Timea Szell, Editors. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991, 181-195.
- Degler-Spengler, Brigitte. "The Incorporation of Cistercian Nuns Into the Order in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Century." *Hidden Springs: Cistercian Monastic Women, Medieval Religious Women, volume three, book one*. Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, Inc., 1995, 85-134.
- Dimier, Anselmo. *Stones Laid before the Lord: A History of Monastic Architecture*, translated by Gilchrist Lavigne. Cistercian Studies Series, no. 152. Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publications, 1999.
- Dumont, Charles, OSCO, Monk of Scourmont. *Pathway of Peace: Cistercian Wisdom according to Saint Bernard*. Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1999.
- Escrivá, José María. *La Abadesa de Las Huelgas*. Madrid: Editorial Luz, 1944.
- Fernández Gonzalez, E. *El Arte Cisterciense en León*. León: Universidad de León, 1988.
- Franco, Angela. « Caracteres islamiques et mudjars dans l'architecture des monastères cisterciens de femmes en Castille et León. » In *Cîteaux et les Femmes*. Paris : Éditions Créaphis, 2001, 83-98.
- Ganck, Roger de. "The Integration of Nuns in the Cistercian Order, Particularly in Belgium." *Cîteaux: Commentarii Cistercienses* 35 1984, 235-47.
- García Fernández, Fray Félix, et. al. *Guía del Monasterio de Cañas*. Logroño: Fundación Caja Rioja, 1996.
- _____. Interview, Thursday and Friday, July 22-23, 2004 in Cañas.
- González, Julio. *El Reino de Castilla en la Época de Alfonso VIII, vol. I-III*. Madrid: Escuela de Estudios Medievales, 1960.
- González Vázquez, Marta. "Mujeres peregrinas: formas de participación y devoción." In *Vida y Peregrinación: Claustro de la Iglesia Catedral de Santo Domingo de la Calzada, La Rioja 9 julio -26 septiembre 1993*. Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura, 1993, 87-103.
- Graef, Hilda. *The Devotion to Our Lady*. New York: Hawthorn Books, 1963.
- _____. *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion, vol. I: From the Beginnings to the Eve of the Reformation*. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1963.

Hufgard, M. Filian, O.S.U. *Saint Bernard of Clairvaux: A Theory of Art Formulated From His Writings and Illustrated in Twelfth-Century Works of Art*. Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1989.

Ibáñez Rodríguez, Miguel. *Monasterio de Cañas: El Monasterio de la Luz*. León: Edilesa, 2000.

John Paul II, Pope. *Apostolic Letter 'Rosarium Virginis Mariae' of the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II to the Bishops, Clergy and Faithful on the Most Holy Rosary*. 16 October 2002.

Johnson, Elizabeth A. "Marian Devotion in the Western Church." In *Christian Spirituality II: High Middle Ages and Reformation*, ed. Jill Raitt. New York: Crossroad, 1987, 392-414.

Johnson, Penelope D. "The Cloistering of Medieval Nuns: Release or Repression, Reality or Fantasy?" *Gendered Domains: Rethinking Public and Private in Women's History*, Dorothy O. Helly and Susan M. Reverby, Editors. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987.

_____. *Equal in Monastic Profession: Religious Women in Medieval France*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991.

_____. "Mulier et Monialis: The Medieval Nun's Self-Image." *Thought: A Review of Culture and Idea* 64:254 September 1989, 242-253.

Kieckhefer, Richard. "Major Currents in Late Medieval Devotion." In *Christian Spirituality II: High Middle Ages and Reformation*, ed. Jill Raitt. New York: Crossroad, 1987, 75-108.

Kienzle, Beverly Mayne. "Verbum Dei Verba Bernardi: The Function of Language in Bernard's Second Sermon for Peter and Paul." In *Bernardus Magister: Papers Presented at the Nonacentenary Celebration of the Birth of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, Kalamazoo, Michigan*, Western Michigan University Institute of Cistercian Studies, 10-13 May 1990, ed. John R. Sommerfeldt. Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1992, 149-59.

Leclercq, Jean. *Women and St. Bernard of Clairvaux*. Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1989.

Leza, Jesús de. *Los López de Haro, Señores de Vizcaya, y los Señores de Cameros, en el Gobierno de La Rioja durante la Edad Media (1016-1334)*. Logroño: Librado Notario, 1954. Microfilm.

Lovasik, Reverend Lawrence G., S.V.D. *The Holy Rosary (According to the Liturgy)*. St. Paul: Radio Replies Press, 1949.

- Luddy, Ailbe J. *The Cistercian Nuns: A Brief Sketch of the History of the Order from its Foundation to the Present Day*. Dublin: M.H. Gill & Son, LTD., 1931.
- Maldonado, Margarita Ruíz. “Escultura Funeraria del siglo XIII: Los Sepulcros de los López de Haro.” *Boletín del Museo e Instituto “Camón Aznar”* 66 1996, 91-170.
- Manrique, R.P. Angeli. *Annales Cistercienses, vol. II, [Cisterciensivm sev verivs ecclesiasticorvm annalivm a condito Cistercio, tomvs primvs-qvartvs ..., 1642-59.]* Reprint: Westmead, Farnborough, Hants., England: Gregg International Publishers Ltd., 1970.
- Mary Most Holy: Meditating with the Early Cistercians*. Cistercian Fathers Series: Number Sixty-Five. Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 2003.
- McGuire, Brian Patrick. *Friendship and Faith: Cistercian Men, Women, and their Stories, 1100-1250*. Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk: St Edmundsbury Press, 2002.
- McNamara, Jo Ann. “The Need to Give: Suffering and Female Sanctity in the Middle Ages.” *Images of Sainthood in Medieval Europe*, Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski and Timea Szell, Editors. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991, 199-121.
- Melczer, Elisabeth and Eileen Soldwedel. “Monastic Goals in the Aesthetics of Saint Bernard.” *Studies in Cistercian Art and Architecture, vol. I*, Lillich, Meredith P., editor. Cistercian Studies Series, no. 66. Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publications, 1982, 31-44.
- Millaruelo, M.P. “Reseña histórica del nacimiento de los monasterios femeninos del Cister en España hasta el Concilio de Trento.” *Schola Caritatis: Cuadernos de Vida Monástica* 92 1981: 66-97.
- Ministro de Educación Nacional: Dirección General de Bellas Artes, Cuerpo Facultativo de Archiveros, Bibliotecarios y Arqueólogos: Inspección General de Museos Arqueológicos. *Memorias de los Museos Arqueológicos Provinciales, 1943, Volumen IV*. Madrid: Aldus SA, 1944.
- Morales y Velasco, Don Diego. *Bullarium Equestris Ordinis S. Iacobi de Spatha per Annorum Seriem Nonnullis Donationum, & alijs interiestis Scripturis*, Madrid, 1719.
- Morton, Vera and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne. *Guidance for Women in 12th-Century Convents*. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2003.
- Moya Valgañón, José Gabriel. *El Arte en La Rioja, I: La Edad Media*. Logroño: Diputación de La Rioja, Unidad de Cultura, 1982.

- _____. *El Camino de Santiago a su Paso por la Provincia de Logroño*. Zaragoza, Aragón, y Rioja: Caja de Ahorros y Monte de Piedad.
- _____. *Inventario Artístico de Logroño y su Provincia, vol. I (Abalos-Cellorigo)*. Madrid: Servicio Nacional de Información Artística Arqueológica y Etnológica, 1975.
- _____. *El Monasterio de Cañas y su Museo*. Logroño: Unidad de Cultura de la Excma Diputación de Logroño, 1979.
- _____. *El Monasterio de Cañas y su Museo: Colección de Diapositivas* (photographs taken by, José Manuel and Jesús María Ramírez Martínez). Logroño: Gráficas Quintana, 1987.
- _____. “Un Nuevo Museo Monasterial: Él de Cañas (Logroño).” *Bellas Artes* 9: 59 Primer Trimestre 1978, 51-56.
- _____. “Santa María de Cañas y su Museo.” *Becero: Boletín del Instituto de Estudios Riojanos* 84, 1973, 171-85.
- O’Callaghan, Joseph F. *Alfonso X and the ‘Cantigas de Santa María’: A Poetic Biography*. Leiden: Brill, 1998.
- O’Dell, Colman, OCSO. “On Eagles’ Wings: Symbols of Spiritual Motherhood in the Writings of the Early Cistercian Fathers.” *Hidden Springs: Cistercian Monastic Women, Medieval Religious Women, volume three, book two*. Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, Inc., 1995, 787-806.
- Ortíz, Fr. Dalmacio. *La Orden del Cister en La Rioja*. Burgos: san Pedro de Cardena, 1998.
- Orueta y Duarte, Ricardo de. *La Escultura Funeraria en España: Provincias de Ciudad Real, Cuenca, Guadalajara*. Madrid: Centro de Estudios Históricos, 1919.
- Pelikan, Jaroslav. *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine, vol. 3: The Growth of Medieval Theology (600-1300)*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978.
- Raymond, Reveren M., O.C.S.O. *The Saga of Cîteaux, Third Epoch: These Women Walked with God*. Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1956.
- Rodríguez, Patricia Bastida. *Santas Improbables: Re/Visiones de Mitología Cristiana en Autoras Contemporáneas*. Oviedo: Grafinsa, 1999.

- Rodríguez de Lama, Ildefonso. *Colección Diplomática Medieval de la Rioja (923-1223), Vol. I-III*. Logroño: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Patronato “José María Quadrado” Instituto de Estudios Riojanos, 1979.
- Roisin, Simona, I.E.J. “L’Efflorescence Cistercienne et le Courant Féminin de Piété au XIIIe Siècle.” *Revue d’Histoire Ecclesiastique* 39 1943, 342-78.
- Rudolph, Conrad. “The ‘Principal Founders’ and the Early Artistic Legislations of Cîteaux.” *Studies in Cistercian Art and Architecture, vol. III. Cistercian Studies Series, no. 89*. Kalamazoo, Michigan, 1987, 1-45.
- Ruether, Rosemary Radford. *Mary: The Feminine Face of the Church*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1977.
- Ruíz López, Carlos Javier. Interview. Guide of Santa María del San Salvador de Cañas and student of history and humanities, Universidad de La Rioja, 22-23 July, 2004.
- Sáenz y Andrés, Felicito. *La Beata Doña María Urraca y su Sepulcro en Cañas, second edition*. San Millán: Gráficas San Millán, 1994.
- _____. “Real Monasterio de Santa María de San Salvador de Canas: Fundación de los Señores de Vizcaya.” *Cistercium* 13-19: 75-107 1961-1967, various pages.
- Salazar y Castro. *Índice de las Glorias de la Casa Farnese, Que Consagra a la Augusta Reyna de las Españas Dona Isabel Farnese, 2 vols (Reprint of Madrid: Imprenta de Francisco del Hierro, 1719)*. Madrid: Wilson Editorial, 1997.
- Sánchez-Pagin, José María de Canal. “La Casa de Haro en León y Castilla de 1150-1250: Cuestiones Histórico-Genealogicas en Torno a Cuatro Nobles Damas.” *Archivos Leoneses* 85-6 1989, 55-98.
- Shaw, J.G. *The Story of the Rosary*. Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1954.
- Soriano, Federico Torralba. *Monasterios Cistercienses de la Provincia de Zaragoza: Veruela, Rueda, Piedra*. León: Editorial Everest, 1975
- Swanson, R.N. *Religion and Devotion in Europe: c. 1215-c. 1515*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Thompson, Sally. “The Problem of the Cistercian Nuns in the Twelfth and Early Thirteenth Centuries.” *Medieval Women*, ed. Derek Baker. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1978, 227-52.
- Tombo y Memorial Perpetivo de Ste. Insigne y Real Monasterio de San Salvador de Cannas. En que seda. Racon, y verdadera Relación de S.V. Fundación Abadías, Privilegios, Donaciones, Juridiciones, Decisiones, Seniorios, Rentas, Juros,*

Censores, Pleitos, y Otras Cossas Sacado Todo de el Archivo de Esta Real Cassa Anno de 1626. Unpublished tome belonging to the Monastery of Santa María de San Salvador de Cañas.

Valle Pérez, José Carlos. *La Arquitectura Cisterciense en Galicia, Tomos I and II.* La Coruña: Fundación Pedro Barrié de la Maza, 1982

van Houts, Elisabeth. *Memory and Gender in Medieval Europe, 900-1200.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999.

van Os, Henk. *The Art of Devotion: 1300-1500*, translated from Dutch by Michael Hoyle. Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 1994.

Velarde, Bruce L. *Women's Monasticism and Medieval Society: Nunneries in France and England, 890-1215.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997.

Walker, Rose. "Images of royal and aristocratic burial in northern Spain, c. 950- c. 1250." *Medieval Memories*, Van Houts, Elisabeth, Ed. Edinburgh Gate: Pearson Education Limited, 2001, 150-72.

Ward, Maisie. *The Splendor of the Rosary with Prayers by Caryll Houselander with pictures by Fra Angelico.* New York: Sheed and Ward, 1945.

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

Wilkins, Eithne. *The Rose-Garden Game: A Tradition of Beads and Flowers.* New York: Herder and Herder, 1969.

Winston, Anne. "Tracing the Origins of the Rosary: German Vernacular Texts." *Speculum* 68 1993, 619-36.

Winston-Allen, Anne. *Stories of the Rose: The Making of the Rosary in the Middle Ages.* University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997.



Fig. 1. Monastery of Santa María de Cañas, La Rioja, Spain

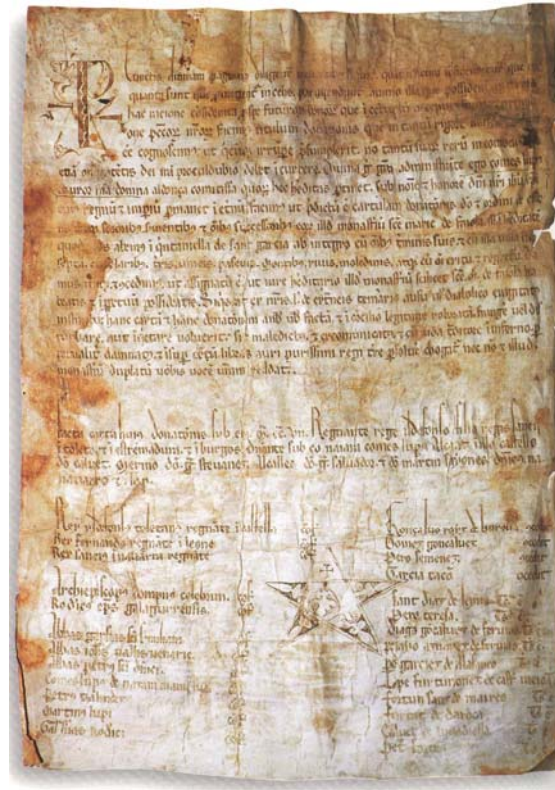


Fig. 2. Donation Document of Lord Lope Díaz de Haro and his wife, Doña Aldonza Ruíz de Castro, 1169.



Fig. 3. Valley of Cañas and Canillas donated to the Monastery of Santa María de Cañas by Lord Lope Díaz de Haro and Doña Aldonza Ruíz de Castro, 1170.



Fig. 4. Detail of Sarcophagus of Doña Blanca, Lord Lope Díaz de Haro stands next to the tree; c. 1156, Santa María la Real, Nájera.

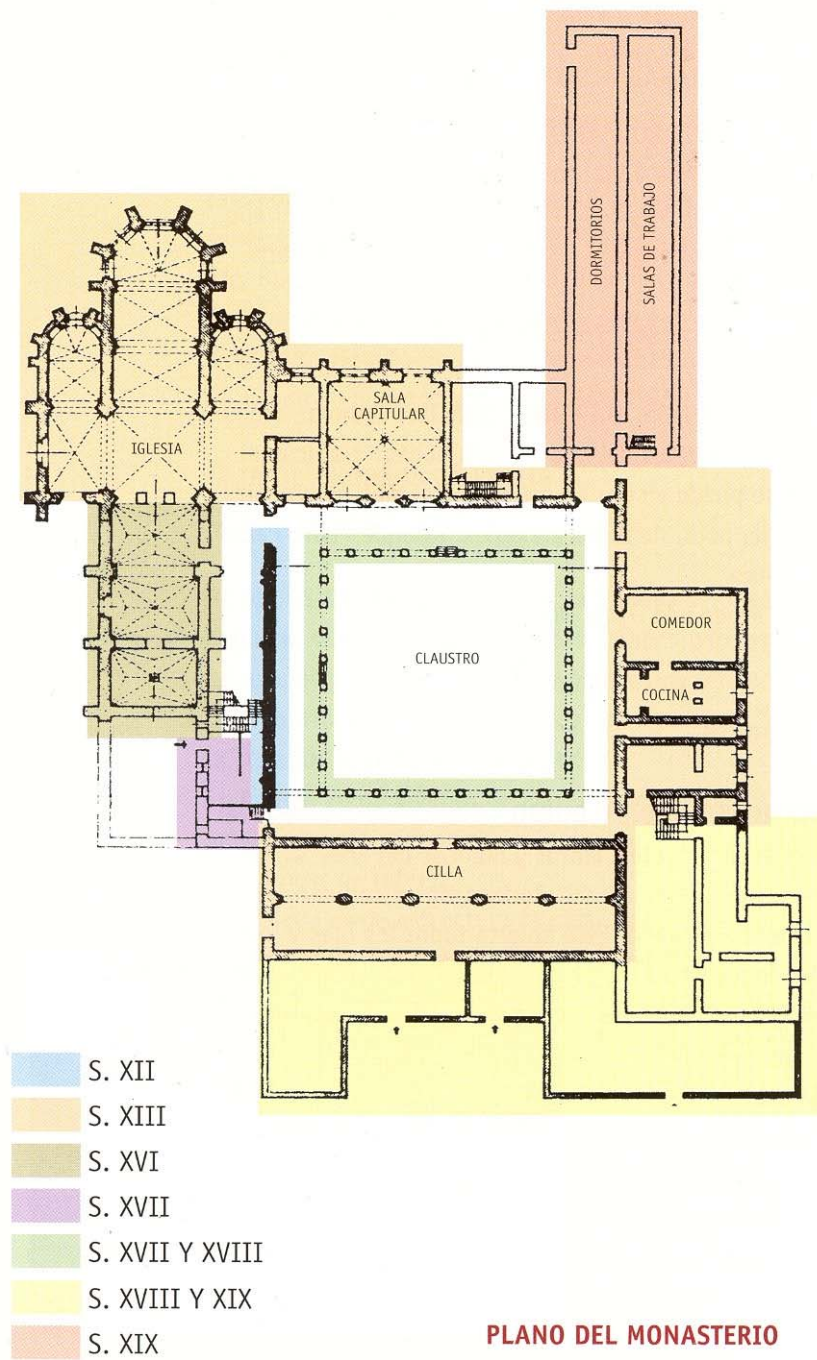


Fig. 5. Plan of the Monastic Complex at Cañas, including time table for construction.



Fig. 6. View of foundation stones of the monastery, 12th century, with 13th century completed construction above.



Fig. 7. Pointed arches of the mid-13th century within the Monastery of Cañas, c. 1236.

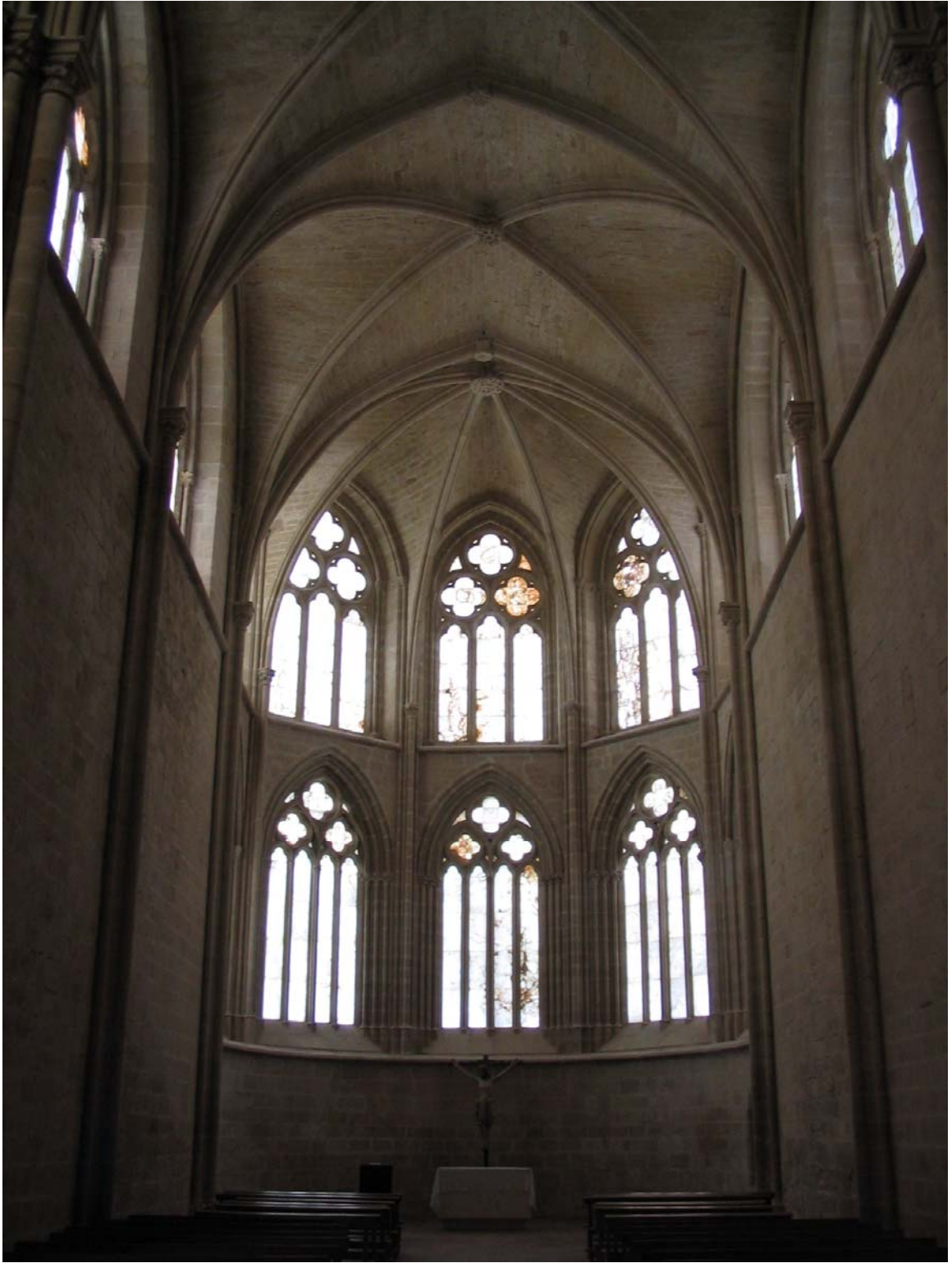


Fig. 8. Quatrefoil shaped window openings in the apse of the chapel at the Monastery of Cañas, c. 1236.



Fig. 9. Vaulted ceiling in the monastery chapel at Cañas, c. 1236.



Fig. 10. View of the Chapter House at Santa María de Cañas with the sarcophagus of Abbess Urraca, c. 1250.



Fig. 11. Medieval storage room in the Monastery at Cañas, c. 1236.



Fig. 12. Chapel of St. John the Baptist, Monastery of Las Huelgas at Burgos, Spain, c. 13th century.



Fig. 13. Outside wall of the Monastery of Cañas: unfinished transept.

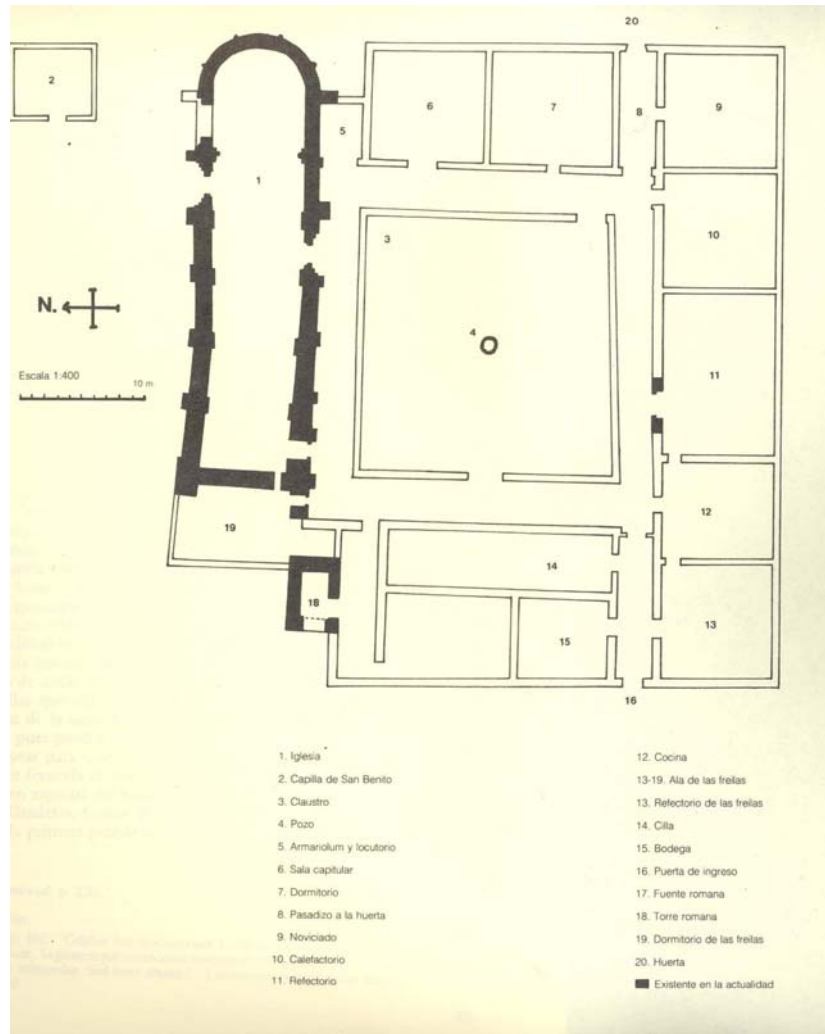


Fig. 14. Plan of the Monastery of Tulebras, c. 12th-13th century.

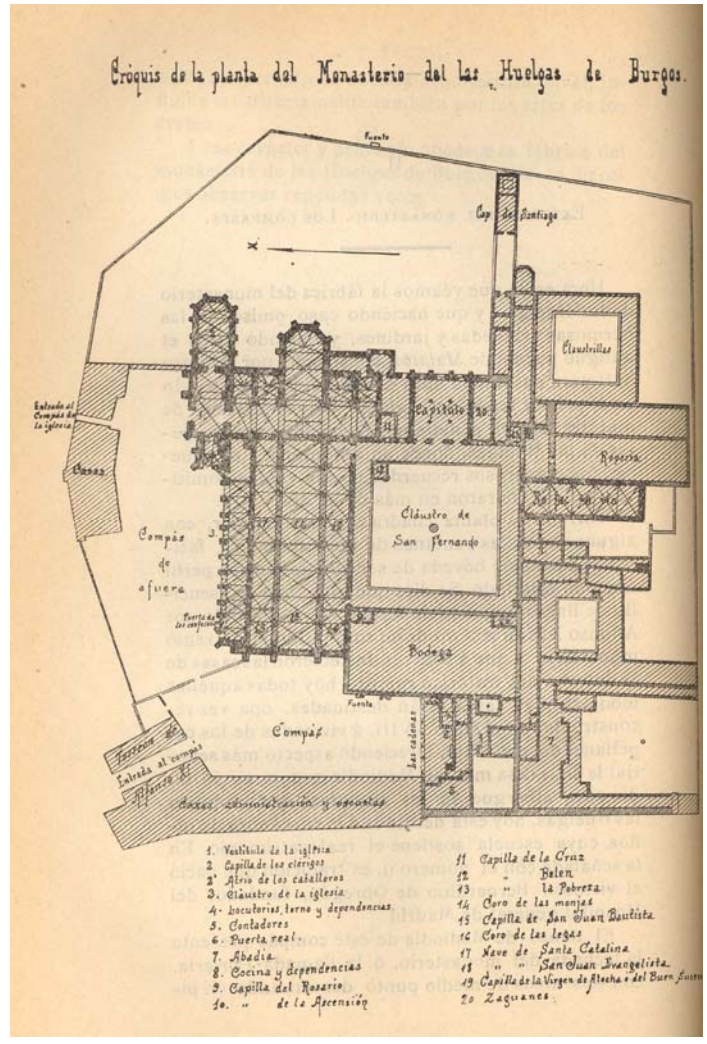


Fig. 15. Plan of the Monastery of Santa María la Real of Las Huelgas at Burgos, c. late 12th-early 13th century.



Fig. 16. Pantocrator, Monastic Church at Santa María de Cañas, c. 13th century.



Fig. 17. Restored doors, Chapter House, Santa María de Cañas, c. 13th century.

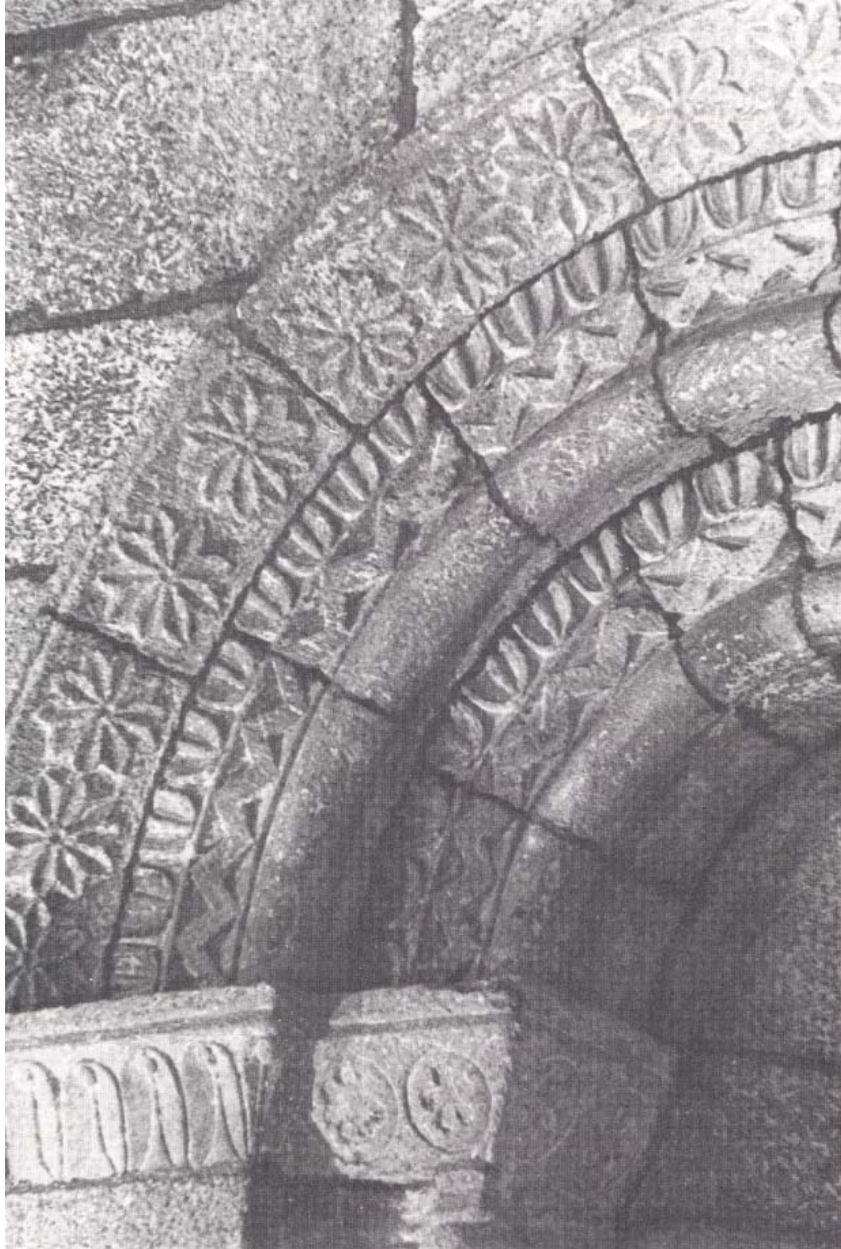


Fig. 18. Romanesque window décor, Santa María de Oseira, c. 12th century.

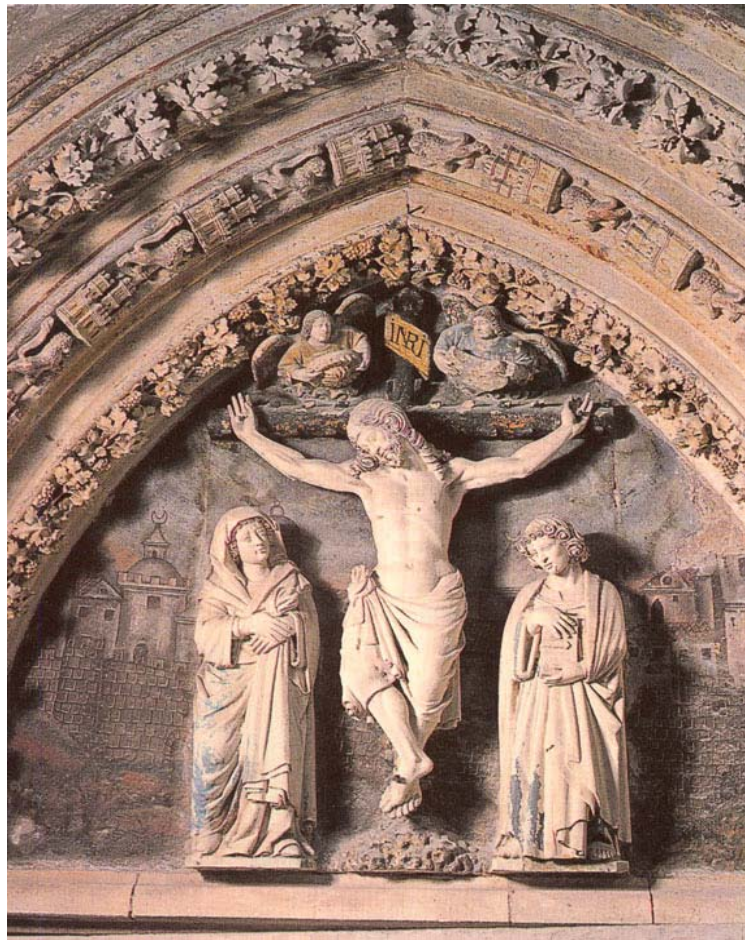


Fig. 19. Detail of foliate ornamentation and gothic arch over the sarcophagus of Infante Fernando de la Cerda, Santa María la Real of Las Huelgas at Burgos, c. 13th century.



Fig. 20. Entrance into the monastic church at Santa María de Cañas, dog-tooth decoration, c. 13th century.

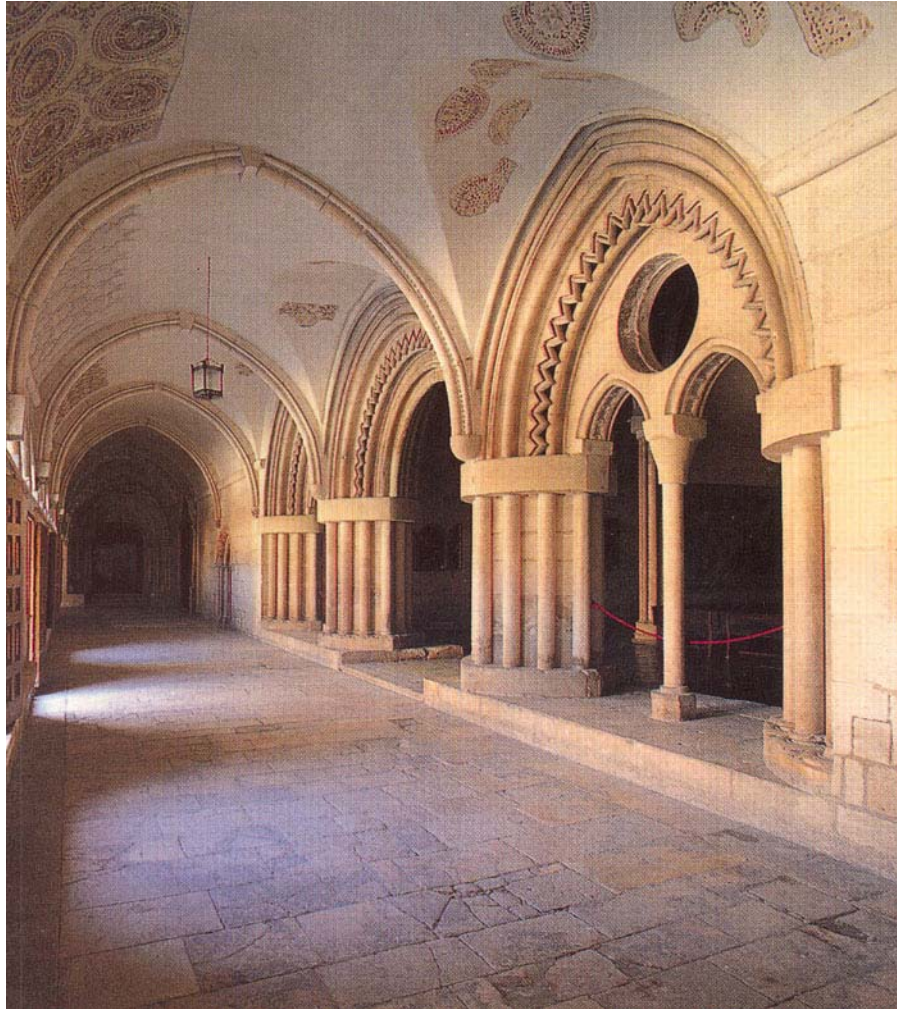


Fig. 21. Detail of dog-tooth ornamentation over doorways, Santa María la Real, Las Huelgas at Burgos, c. 13th century.

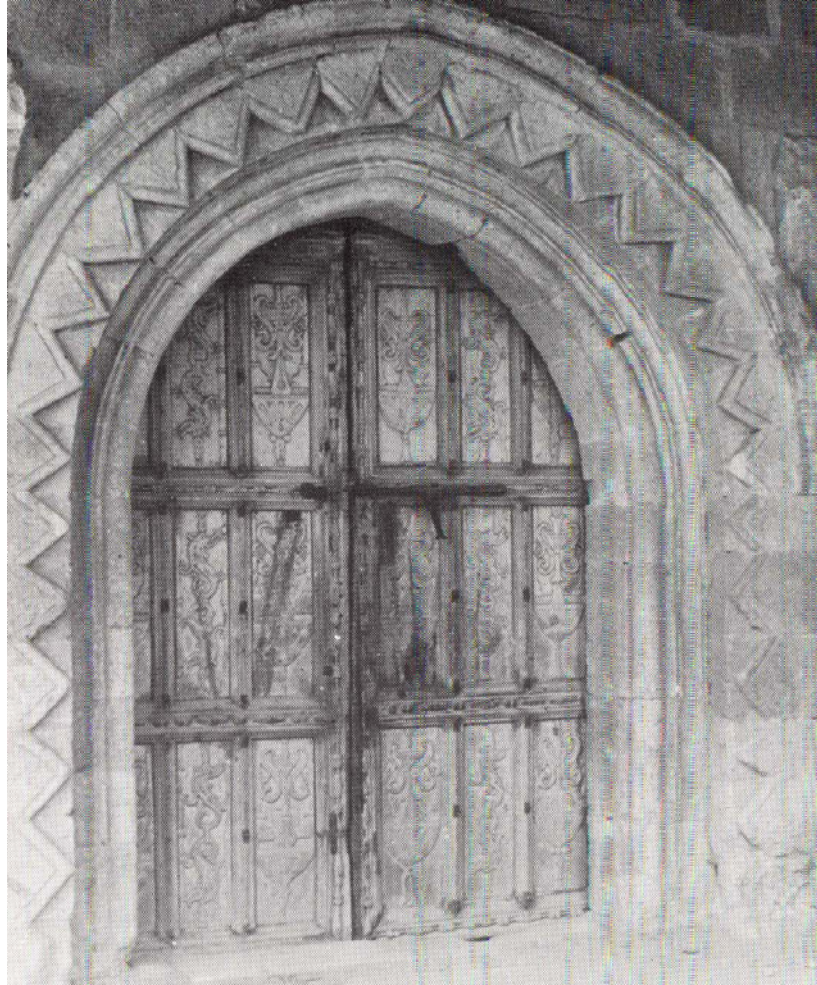


Fig. 22. Detail of dog-tooth decoration over doorway, Santa María la Real de Grafedes, c. 13th century.

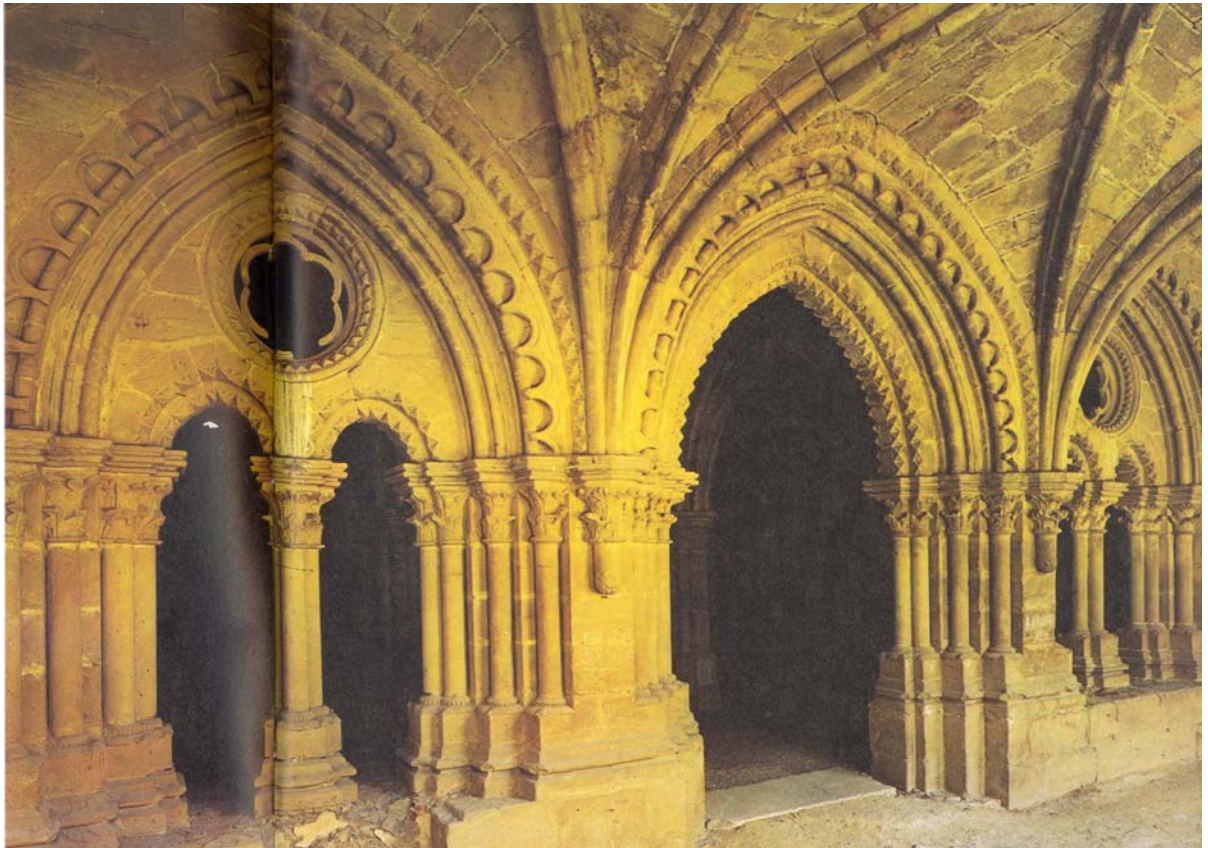


Fig. 23. Detail of dog-tooth décor over doorway into Chapter House, Nuestra Senora de Rueda, Zaragoza, c. 13th century.



Fig. 24. Detail of dog-tooth detailing around doorway, Nuestra Señora de Piedra, Aragón, c. 1218.



Fig. 25. Entrance to Cilla, main storage room at Santa María de Cañas, c. 13th century.



Fig. 26. Former entrance to Refectory and Kitchen from Cloister, Santa María de Cañas, c. 13th century.



Fig. 27. Interior of Cilla, main storage room, Santa María de Cañas, c. 13th century.

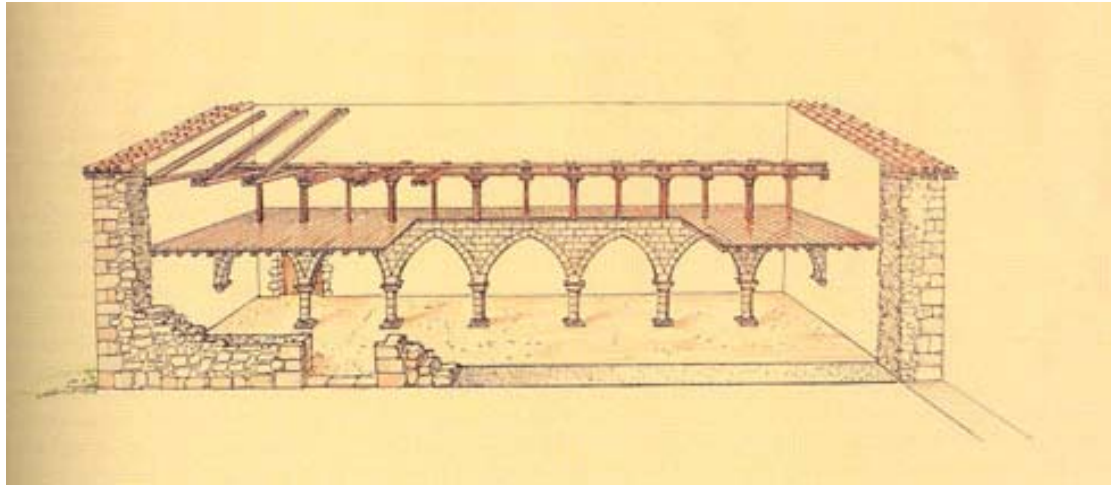


Fig. 28. Cross-section of Cilla, main storage room at Santa María la Real of Las Huelgas at Burgos, c. 13th century.



Fig. 29. Statuette of the Virgin and Child, Cañas, c. 13th century.



Fig. 30. Statuette of St. Anne with the Virgin and Child, Cañas, c. 13th century.



Fig. 31. Statuette of St. Peter, Cañas, c. 13th century



Fig. 32. Detail of family crest symbol of the wolf with sheep at the feet of the statuette of the Virgin and Child, Cañas, c. 13th century.



Fig. 33. Statuette of the Virgin and Child, Santa María la Real of Las Huelgas at Burgos, c. 1250



Fig. 34. Statuette of the Virgin and Child, Santa María la Real de Grafedes, 13th century.



Fig. 35. Statuette of the Virgin and Child, Santo Domingo de la Calzada, 14th century.



Fig. 36. Santa María de Hayuela, c. 12th century.



Fig. 37. "Royal woman prays to the Virgin and is protected," *Cantigas de Santa María*, Alfonso X of Castilla-León, c. 13th century.

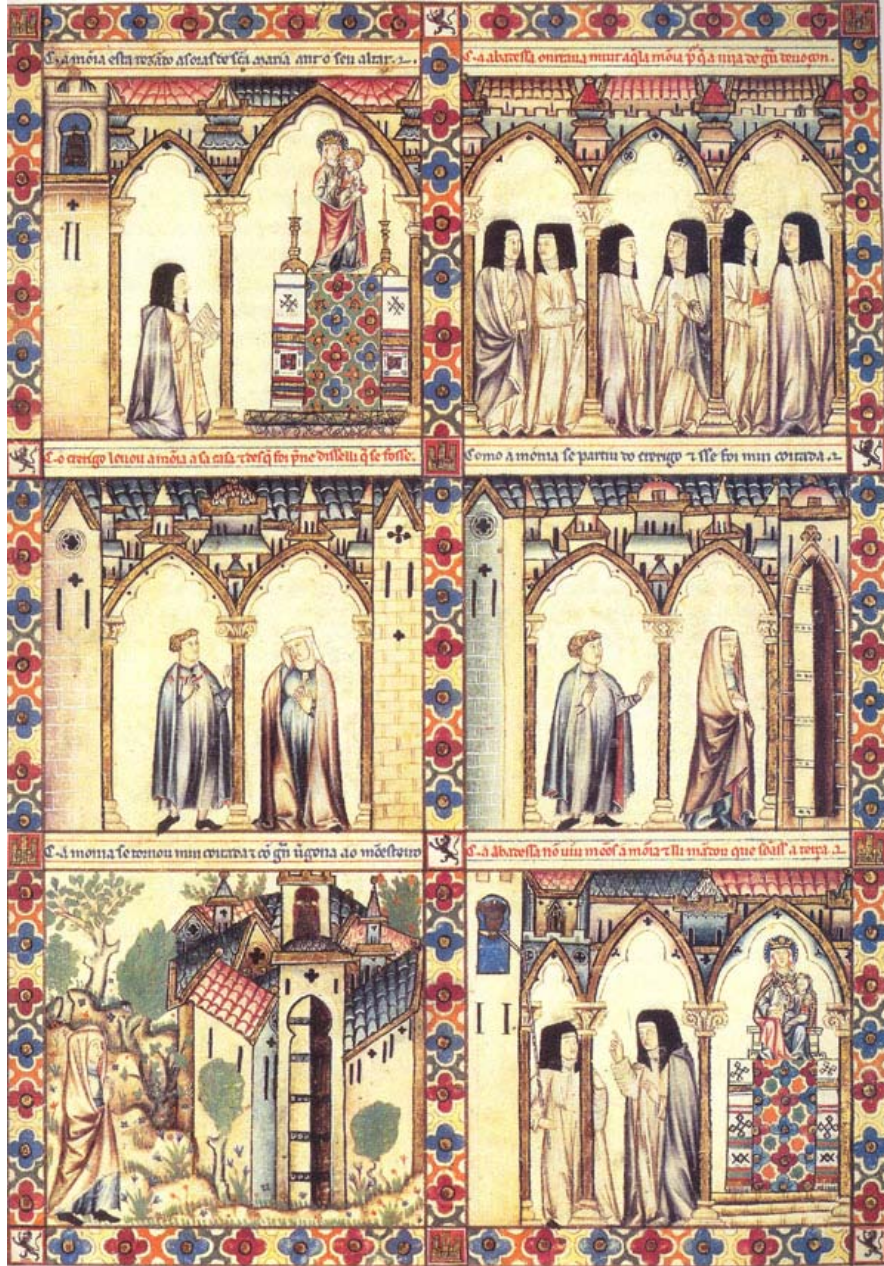


Fig. 38. "Nun prays to the Virgin for protection," *Cantigas de Santa María*, Alfonso X of Castilla-León, c. 13th century.



Fig. 39. Master IAM van Zwoll, *Lactation of St. Bernard*, ca. 1480-85, Engraving, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.

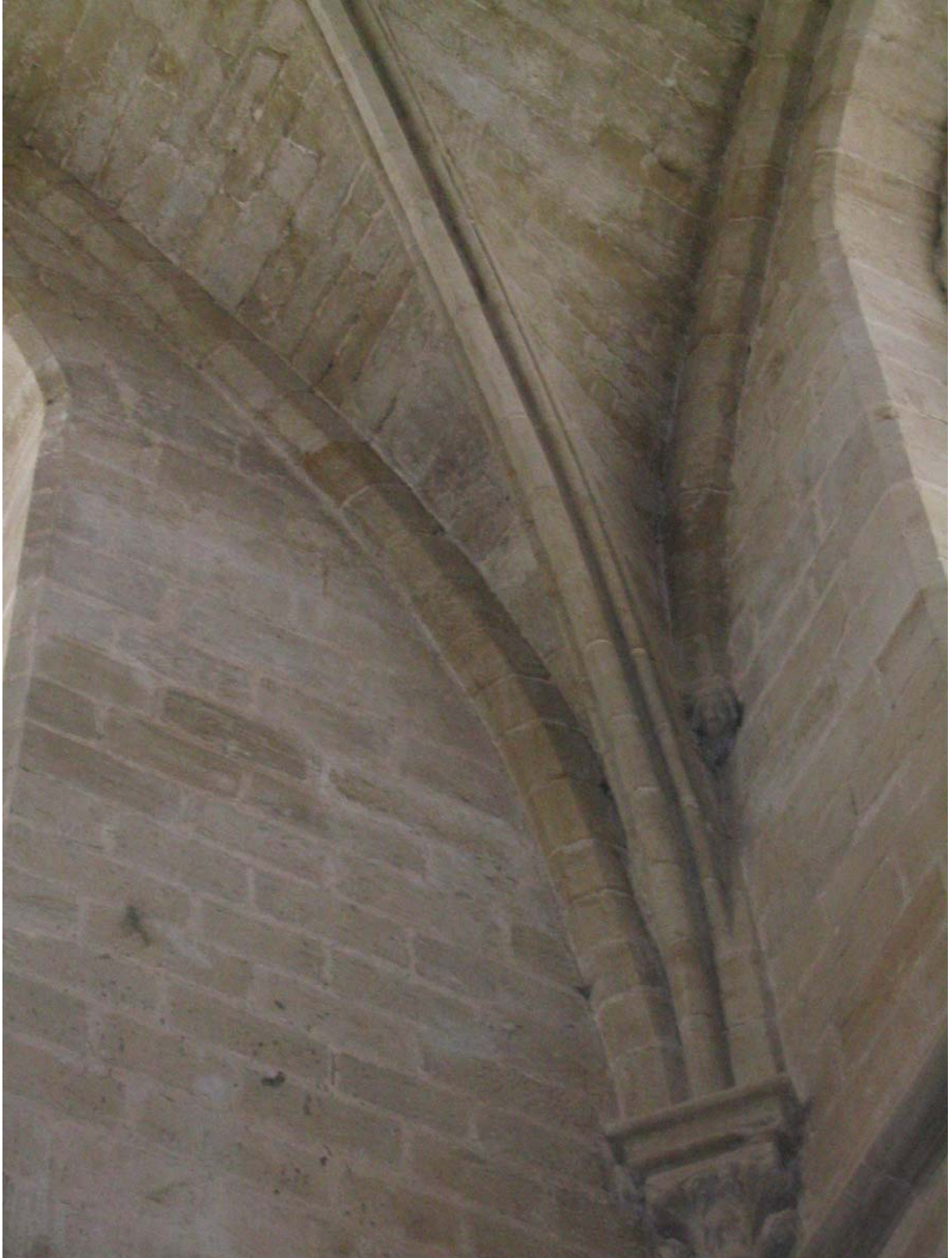


Fig. 40. Detail of north transept of Santa María de Cañas, small face, c. 13th century.



Fig. 41. Sarcophagus of Abbess Urraca in the Chapter House of the Monastery of Cañas, latter half of the 13th century.

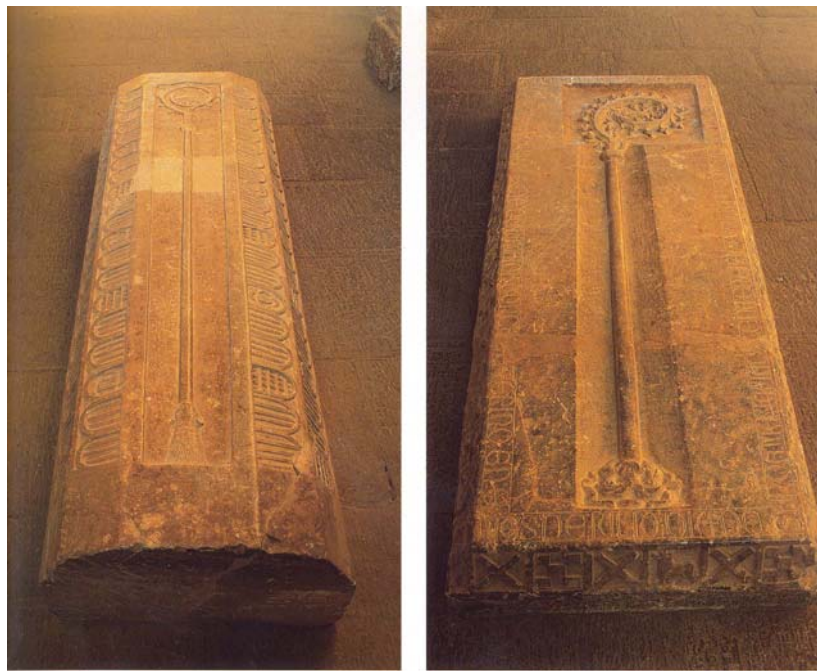


Fig. 42. Other abbess' tombs in the Chapter House at Cañas next to the sarcophagus of Countess Urraca.



Fig. 43. Detail, wolf supporting sarcophagus of Countess Urraca, latter half of the 13th century.



Fig. 44. Detail, sarcophagus of Countess Urraca with prayer beads, latter half of the 13th century.



Fig. 45. Detail, Sarcophagus of Countess Urraca, Angel with Incense, latter half of the 13th century.



Fig. 46. Detail, Sarcophagus of Dona Mayor Guillén de Guzmán, Angels with Incense, Convento de Religiosas Clarisas, Guadalajara, Spain, c. 1262-7.



Fig. 47. Detail, Sarcophagus of Countess Urraca, Three Nuns at Urraca's feet, latter half of the 13th century.



Fig. 48. Detail, Sarcophagus of Countess Urraca, Two angels lifting Abbess Urraca's soul to heaven, latter half of the 13th century.



Fig. 49. Detail, Sarcophagus of Countess Urraca, Funerary scene, latter half of the 13th century.



Fig. 50. Detail, Sarcophagus of Countess Urraca, Professional Mourners, latter half of the 13th century.



Fig. 51. Detail, Sarcophagus of Countess Urraca, Nuns in mourning procession, latter half of the 13th century.



Fig. 52. Detail, Sarcophagus of Countess Urraca, Flirting monk and nun, latter half of the 13th century.



Fig. 53. Detail, Sarcophagus of Countess Urraca, Heavenly scene with St. Peter and several Cistercian nuns, latter half of the 13th century.



Fig. 54. Sarcophagus of Queen Urraca, c. 1250.



Fig. 55. Detail, Sarcophagus of Queen Urraca, Funerary scene, c. 1250.



Fig. 56. Inscription, Sarcophagus of Queen Urraca, c. 1250.



Fig. 57. Detail of Queen Urraca's nun's habit on her sarcophagus, c. 1250.



Fig. 58. Detail of incense-bearing angel, Sarcophagus of Queen Urraca, c. 1250.



Fig. 59. Detail of the *Annunciation*, Sarcophagus of Queen Urraca, c. 1250.



Fig. 60. Detail of the *Adoration*, Sarcophagus of Queen Urraca, c. 1250.



Fig. 61. Sarcophagi of Don Diego López de Haro and his wife, Doña Toda Pérez de Lara, Santa María la Real, Nájera, c. 1215.



Fig. 62. Detail, Funerary Procession, Sarcophagus of Don Diego López de Haro, Santa María la Real, Nájera, c. 1215.



Fig. 63. Detail, Funerary Procession, Sarcophagus of Don Diego López de Haro, Santa María la Real, Nájera, c. 1215.



Fig. 64. Detail, Funerary Procession, Sarcophagus of Doña Toda Pérez de Lara, Santa María la Real, Nájera, c. 1215.



Fig. 65. Detail, Funerary Procession, Sarcophagus of Doña Toda Pérez de Lara, Santa María la Real, Nájera, c. 1215.



Fig. 66. Detail, Funerary Procession, Sarcophagus of Doña Toda Pérez de Lara, Santa María la Real, Nájera, c. 1215.



Fig. 67. Geertgen tot Sint Jans, *The Legend of St. Dominic*, c. 1480.



Fig. 68. Detail, Marian psalter beads, Sarcophagus of Countess Urraca, latter half of the 13th century.



Fig. 69. Detail, Nun with Rosary, Sarcophagus of Countess Urraca, latter half of the 13th century.



Fig. 70. Detail, Nun with Rosary, Sarcophagus of Countess Urraca, latter half of the 13th century.



Fig. 71. Detail, Nun with Rosary, Sarcophagus of Countess Urraca, latter half of the 13th century.