

WIDOWS AND COMMUNITIES: CISTERCIAN NUNNERIES AND THEIR ARCHITECTURE IN THE KINGDOM OF LEÓN (1150-1300)*

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For Meredith Parsons Lillich

The royal convent of Las Huelgas has dominated the history of Cistercian nuns in Iberia.¹ The creation of its congregation and its affiliation as a “special daughter”

* I am pleased to dedicate this study to Meredith Parsons Lillich in honor of her scholarship on the Cistercians, and in gratitude for her encouragement of my work on Cistercian nunneries. I also warmly thank the abbesses and communities at Ferreira de Pantón, Carrizo, and Gradefes for special access to their buildings and permission to photograph. The Edilia and François-Auguste de Montéquin Senior Fellowship from the Society of Architectural Historians and grants from the Graham Foundation and the University of South Florida Research Council and College of Arts and Sciences generously funded research in Spain. A timely award from the USF Humanities Institute supported completion of the article, which is a contribution to the research project: *Libros, memoria y archivos: cultura escrita en monasterios cistercienses del noroeste peninsular (ss. XII-XIII)*. LEMACIST (REF. HAR2013-40410-P), supported by the Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad of Spain.

I use “León” for the region centered on the dioceses of Astorga, León, and Zamora; I use “kingdom of León” for the entire realm, including Galicia and Asturias. I have standardized Spanish personal names and used Galician for place-names in Galicia. When I refer to “witness lists” of charters, I do not assume the physical presence of the signatories.

¹ For Las Huelgas: James D'EMILIO, “The Royal Convent of Las Huelgas: Dynastic Politics, Religious Reform and Artistic Change in Medieval Castile,” *Studies in Cistercian Art and Architecture*, vol. 6 (*Cistercian Nuns and Their World*), ed. Meredith Parsons LILICH, (Cistercian Studies Series; 194), Kalamazoo 2005, p. 191-282, with earlier bibliography; Gema PALOMO FERNÁNDEZ and Juan Carlos RUIZ SOUZA, “Nuevas hipótesis sobre Las Huelgas de Burgos. Escenografía funeraria de Alfonso X para un proyecto inacabado de Alfonso VIII y Leonor Plantagenêt,” *Goya*, no. 316/317, 2007, p. 21-44; Rose WALKER, “The Poetics of Defeat: Cistercians and Frontier Gothic at the Abbey of Las Huelgas,” *Spanish Medieval Art: Recent Studies*, ed. Colum HOURIHANE, Tempe 2007, p. 187-213; Pablo ABELLA VILLAR, “Nuevas pesquisas sobre los orígenes constructivos del monasterio de Santa María la Real de Las Huelgas de Burgos,” *Codex Aquilarensis: Cuadernos de Investigación del Monasterio de Santa María la Real*, vol. 24, 2008, p. 32-61; Ghislain BAURY, *Les religieuses de Castille. Patronage aristocratique et ordre cistercien XIIIe-XIIIe siècles*, Rennes 2012, p. 137-159; Raquel ALONSO ÁLVAREZ, “La memoria de Alfonso VIII de Castilla en Las Huelgas de Burgos: arquitectura y liturgia funeraria,” *1212, un año, un reinado, un tiempo de despegue: XXIII Semana de Estudios Medievales, Nájera, del 30 de julio al 3 de agosto de 2012*, ed. Esther LÓPEZ OJEDA, Logroño 2013, p. 349-376; Eduardo CARRERO SANTAMARÍA, “Epigrafía y liturgia estacional entre el locutorio y el pasaje a la enfermería de la abadía de Santa María la Real de las Huelgas, en Burgos,” *Territorio, Sociedad y Poder*, vol. 9, 2014, p. 115-132; *id.*, “The Creation and Use of Space in the Abbey of Santa María la Real de Las Huelgas, Burgos: Architecture, Liturgy, and Paraliturg in a Female Cistercian Monastery,” *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies*, vol. 6, 2014, 169-191; Carmen Julia GUTIÉRREZ GONZÁLEZ, “Señoras y abadesas en torno al código de Las Huelgas,” *Allegro cum laude: estudios musicológicos en homenaje a Emilio Casares*, ed. María NAGORE FERRER and Víctor SÁNCHEZ SÁNCHEZ, Madrid 2014, p. 273-282. Las Huelgas has earned passing mention—unlike most Iberian houses—in recent general studies: Janet BURTON and Julie KERR, *The Cistercians in the Middle Ages*, Woodbridge

Cîteaux – Commentarii cistercienses, t. 66, fasc. 3-4 (2015)

of Cîteaux marked steps towards institutionalizing religious women within the Cistercian order. The precocious architecture of its church and dependencies heralded the reception of the Gothic style in Iberia and its adaptation to the Cistercian aesthetic. The keen royal interest in a house that would be a residence for family members, a stage for pageantry, and a dynastic pantheon has been inscribed within the Leonese tradition of the *infantazgo*, by which royal women governed large territories through monastic foundations.² In fact, the strength of Iberian traditions at the nunnery tested the boundaries of Cistercian practice through novel administrative arrangements, the privileges of patrons, and the peculiar office of the “lady” of Las Huelgas.

Las Huelgas, however, did not arise *ex nihilo*. The royal initiative crowned two generations of intensive Cistercian settlement in Iberia, and the new congregation responded specifically to the success of aristocratic women in establishing Cistercian nunneries.³ Their pioneering efforts extended the pattern of noble patronage of early houses of Cistercian men in the kingdom of León-Castile.⁴ Nonetheless,

2011, p. 52; Peter KING, “The Cistercian Order 1200-1600,” *The Cambridge Companion to the Cistercian Order*, ed. Mette BIRKEDAL BRUUN, Cambridge 2013, p. 38-49 (p. 42); Elizabeth FREEMAN, “Nuns,” *ibid.*, p. 100-111 (p. 102); Emilia JAMROZIAK, *The Cistercian Order in Medieval Europe*, London 2013, p. 133-134, 145.

² For the *infantazgo*: Patrick HENRIET, “‘Deo votas’. L’‘Infantado’ et la fonction des infantes dans la Castille et le León des Xe-XIIe siècles,” *Au cloître et dans le monde: femmes, hommes et sociétés (IXe-XVe siècle). Mélanges en l’honneur de Paulette L’Hermitte-Leclercq*, Paris 2000, p. 189-203; Rose WALKER, “Leon of England, Plantagenet Queen of King Alfonso VIII of Castile, and Her Foundation of the Cistercian Abbey of Las Huelgas. In Imitation of Fontevraud?,” *Journal of Medieval History*, vol. 31, 2005, p. 346-368, esp. p. 357-362; Therese MARTIN, “Hacia una clarificación del infantazgo en tiempos de la reina Urraca y su hija la infanta Sancha (ca. 1107-1159),” *E-Spania*, vol. 5, 2008; Georges MARTIN, “Reforma litúrgica, infantazgo y protagonismo femenino bajo el reinado de Alfonso VI,” *Alfonso VI y su legado: actas del congreso internacional, Sahagún, 29 de octubre al 1 de noviembre de 2009, IX centenario de Alfonso VI (1109-2009)*, León 2012, p. 115-120.

³ On the royal struggle to control aristocratic nunneries: D’EMILIO, “The Royal Convent,” p. 195-196; BAURY, *Les religieuses*, p. 137-138, 142-145, 152-159. For the Cistercians’ establishment in Iberia: Jose Carlos VALLE PÉREZ, “La introducción de la orden del Cister en los reinos de Castilla y León,” *La introducción del Cister en España y Portugal*, Santa María de Bujedo 1991, p. 133-161; Adeline RUCQUOI, “Les cisterciens dans la péninsule ibérique,” *Unanimité et diversité cisterciennes: filiations - réseaux - relectures du XIIe au XVIIe siècle. Actes du Quatrième Colloque International du C.E.R.C.O.R. Dijon, 23-25 Septembre 1998*, Saint-Étienne 2000, p. 487-524, esp. p. 487-502; Nikolas JASPERS, “Der Zisterzienserorden in der iberischen Reichen des Hochmittelalters: ein Sonderweg?,” *Norm und Realität. Kontinuität und Wandel der Zisterzienser im Mittelalter*, Berlin 2009, p. 441-474, esp. p. 446-451; Antonio GARCÍA FLORES, *Arquitectura de la orden del Cister en la provincia de Valladolid (1147-1515)*, Valladolid 2010, p. 17-50. For the Iberian nunneries: Gregoria CAVERO DOMÍNGUEZ, “Implantación y difusión del Cister femenino hispano en el siglo XII,” *Cistercium*, no. 217, 1999, p. 791-812; María Filomena COELHO, *Expresiones del poder feudal: el Cister femenino en León (siglos XII y XIII)*, León 2006; Dolores MARIÑO VEIRAS, “La influencia espiritual, fiscal y financiera en la economía de los monasterios de la rama femenina del Cister en los reinos de León y Castilla (1160-1260),” *Monasterios cistercienses en la España medieval*, ed. José Ángel GARCÍA DE CORTÁZAR and Ramón TEJA CASUSO, Aguilar de Campoo 2008, p. 115-135; BAURY, *Les religieuses*.

⁴ On patronage: Raquel ALONSO ÁLVAREZ, “Los promotores de la orden del Cister en los reinos de Castilla y León: familias aristocráticas y damas nobles,” *Anuario de Estudios Medievales*, vol. 37/2, 2007, p. 653-710; and, more generally, Simon BARTON, *The Aristocracy in Twelfth-Century León and Castile*, Cambridge 1997, p. 194-210.

these nunneries and their buildings have been largely ignored in international literature, despite the surge of interest—and debate—surrounding Cistercian women. Partly, this reflects inattention to Iberia in Cistercian scholarship, but it also stems from the circumstances of communities founded before the order developed formal structures and legislation for women's convents. As among nunneries of all kinds, a number proved short-lived. Those that endured typically built smaller churches than those of men's communities, and their design and decoration exhibit some independence from Cistercian oversight. Finally, their diverse origins and histories have been obscured by the splendor of Las Huelgas and their incorporation in the congregation it led. If one aim of its royal founders was to displace the protagonism of aristocratic rivals, they have certainly scored a belated victory in modern scholarship.

In the kingdom of León, prominent widows founded or reformed three nunneries as Cistercian convents between 1158 and 1176. Each retains the choir of an ambitious church begun in the late twelfth century. The richly articulated Romanesque apse at Ferreira de Pantón, the three parallel apses at Carrizo, and the ambulatory and radiating chapels at Gradefes (Fig. 1-3) defy easy classification or simple accommodation within Cistercian artistic history.⁵ Carlos Valle, for example, set aside the church at Pantón, seeing its figural sculpture and local Romanesque flavor as evidence that construction preceded formal ties to the order.⁶ The singular design at Gradefes has hardly fared better, as it has vexed modern scholars straining to relate it to the Leonese men's houses of Morerueta and Sandoval.⁷

In this article, I offer an integrated examination of the churches, founders, and communities of Pantón, Gradefes, and Carrizo. Each is fascinating in its own right. Together, they challenge us to set aside notions of Cistercian exceptionalism and contextualize the Cistercian nuns of León and their churches in a wider landscape of religious and artistic change. These three cases do not conform to one pattern,

⁵ For Cistercian architecture in medieval Iberia: *Monjes y monasterios. El Cister en el medioevo de Castilla y León*, ed. Isidro G. BANGO TORVISO, Valladolid 1998; *Arte de Cister em Portugal e Galiza / Arte del Cister en Galicia y Portugal*, ed. Jorge RODRIGUES and Xośé Carlos VALLE PÉREZ, Lisbon 1998; James D'EMILIO, "Cistercian Architecture on the Iberian Peninsula," *The Cistercian Arts from the 12th to the 21st Century*, ed. Teryl N. KINDER and Roberto CASSANELLI, Montreal 2014, p. 125-144, 418-420. For architecture at an Iberian nunnery: Raquel ALONSO ÁLVAREZ, *El monasterio cisterciense de Santa María de Cañas (La Rioja): arquitectura gótica, patrocinio aristocrático y protección real*, Logroño 2004. For Cistercian nunneries generally: *Studies in Cistercian Art and Architecture*, vol. 6 (*Cistercian Nuns and Their World*), ed. Meredith Parsons LILLICH, (Cistercian Studies Series; 194), Kalamazoo 2005.

⁶ José Carlos VALLE PÉREZ, *La arquitectura cisterciense en Galicia*, 2 vols., La Coruña 1982, vol. 1, p. 16; *id.*, "La implantación de la orden del Cister en Galicia y su reflejo monumental durante la Edad Media," *Arte de Cister em Portugal e Galiza*, p. 2-39 (p. 13).

⁷ See the comments on the three churches in José Carlos VALLE PÉREZ, "La arquitectura en el reino de León en tiempos de Fernando II y Alfonso IX: las construcciones de la orden del Cister," *Actas. Simposio internacional sobre "O Pórtico da Gloria e a arte do seu tempo". Santiago de Compostela, 3-8 de Outubro de 1988*, La Coruña 1991, p. 149-179 (p. 168, n. 80); or the assumption that such plans in nunneries derive from nearby men's houses in Matthias UNTERMANN, *Forma Ordinis. Die mittelalterliche Baukunst der Zisterzienser*, Munich 2001, p. 624.



Fig. 1. San Salvador de Ferreira de Pantón, apse, c. 1160s. (photo: author)



Fig. 2. Santa María de Carrizo, apses, c. 1190-1210. (photo: author)

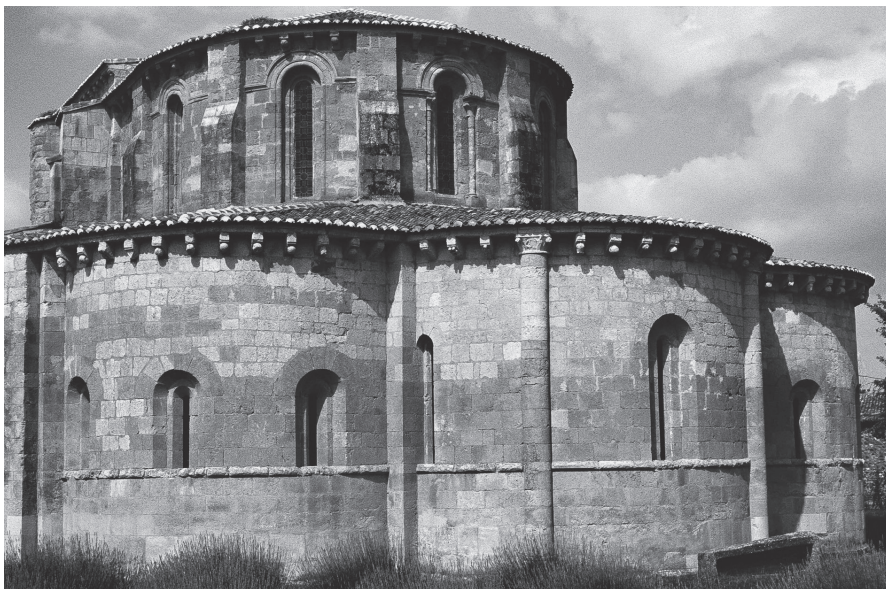


Fig. 3. Santa María de Gradefes, ambulatory chapels from southeast, c. 1177-1190s; choir clerestory, c. 1200-1220. (photo: author)

but the distinctive architecture of each church finds an explanation in the circumstances and history of each community, its founders and patrons, and its ties to other religious houses.

These three nunneries do yield lessons for students of the Cistercians and their architecture, Cistercian nuns, Iberian religious culture, and women's religious patronage. First, their buildings do not fit widespread views of Cistercian art that revolve around an austere aesthetic, well-known groundplans, normative prescriptions, and the foreignness of the order's architecture in farflung lands. They do, however, invite us into a creative borderland of exchanges between the innovative projects of Cistercian men's houses and the variety of artistic forms circulating in late twelfth-century Iberia. Secondly, this approach to the churches demands that we consider the Cistercian reform alongside other religious options for Iberian patrons who did not always draw the sharper distinctions made in the homelands of new congregations or, at times, in modern scholarship. Thirdly, the women who founded, endowed, directed, and populated these nunneries deserve greater attention for their wide-ranging patronage and their fashioning of multigenerational female networks whose complexity has made them less visible than the neatly diagrammed patrilineal lineages dear to traditional genealogical study. Finally, these goals can only be achieved, methodologically, by blending fields normally kept separate: one must apply the tools of art history to a large repertory of local and

Iberian buildings, and thoroughly mine charter evidence, far beyond its familiar use in Iberian scholarship for tallying, mapping, and classifying transactions that shaped monastic domains. Only in this way can we reconstruct the history of communities of Cistercian nuns; the social, family, and religious networks of their patrons and members; and the full context for their building projects.

I. FERREIRA DE PANTÓN, THE CISTERCIANS, AND GALICIAN NUNS

Historians have focused on the subjection of Ferreira de Pantón to the men's abbey of Meira in 1175, but the Galician nunnery's earlier history and local context, the patronage of Countess Fronilde Fernández, and the network of aristocratic women and convents in which she participated are crucial for a reassessment of the profusely sculpted Romanesque apse and its relationship to the Cistercian reform.⁸ The nunnery was an ancient establishment, closely tied to the local nobility, in a district densely settled with monasteries.⁹ The illustrious figures who confirmed a gift to the convent in 1108 demonstrate the importance of the community, while the naming of two abbesses and four abbots of nearby houses hints at the persistence of the monastic congregations of early medieval Galicia.¹⁰ This fertile

⁸ On Ferreira de Pantón: James D'EMILIO, *Romanesque Architectural Sculpture in the Diocese of Lugo, East of the Miño*, Ph.D dissertation, Courtauld Institute of Art (University of London) 1988, p. 103-110; Ramón YZQUIERDO PERRIN, "La iglesia del monasterio cisterciense de Ferreira de Pantón," *Actas. Congreso internacional sobre San Bernardo e o Cister en Galicia e Portugal, 17-20 Outubro 1991, Ourense-Oseira*, 2 vols., Ourense 1992, vol. 2, p. 859-875; *Colección diplomática del monasterio de Santa María de Ferreira de Pantón*, ed. José Ignacio FERNÁNDEZ DE VIANA Y VIEITES, Lugo 1994; Miguel Ángel GONZÁLEZ GARCÍA and Eduardo CARRERO SANTAMARÍA, "Las dependencias monásticas de San Salvador y Santa María de Ferreira de Pantón (Lugo)," *Cistercium*, no. 217, 1999, p. 1133-1160; Teresa C. MOURE PENA, "Precisiones históricas sobre el monasterio cisterciense de San Salvador de Ferreira de Pantón (Lugo) a partir de nuevos testimonios documentales y arqueológicos," *Cistercium*, no. 231, 2003, p. 365-390; *ead.*, "El programa iconográfico de la cabecera románica de San Salvador de Ferreira (Ferreira de Pantón, Lugo)," *Goya*, no. 304, 2005, p. 4-20; Enriqueta LÓPEZ MORÁN, "El monacato femenino gallego en la alta Edad Media (Lugo y Ourense)," *Nalgures*, vol. 2, 2005, p. 49-142 (p. 87-96); James D'EMILIO, "Inscriptions and the Romanesque Church: Patrons, Prelates, and Craftsmen in Romanesque Galicia," *Spanish Medieval Art* (see n. 1), p. 1-33 (p. 24-25).

⁹ The earliest known document of the convent's archive is from the tenth century, but it is a gift to a double monastery dedicated to St. Michael, most likely nearby San Miguel de Eiré: *Colección... Pantón*, doc. 1, p. 19; José FREIRE CAMANIEL, *El monacato gallego en la alta Edad Media*, 2 vols., La Coruña 1998, vol. 2, p. 720-721. The convent preserves two late eleventh-century epitaphs: Elías VALIÑA SAMPEDRO *et al.*, *Inventario artístico de Lugo y su provincia*, vol. 3, Madrid 1980, p. 41-42; MOURE, "Precisiones históricas," p. 369-376.

¹⁰ *Colección... Pantón*, doc. 5, p. 22-23. The document (Archivo de Ferreira de Pantón, perg. no. 4) is a thirteenth-century copy. Abbesses of Ferreira and Eiré, *domina Visclavara* of San Fiz de Cangas, abbot *Aigulfo*, and abbots of Santo Estevo de Ribas de Sil, Pombeiro, and Pino are listed, as well as King Alfonso VI, the bishops of Lugo and Ourense, and *Petrus archidiaconus*, probably of Oviedo where Archdeacons Pedro Menéndez and Pedro Anaia are cited between 1100 and 1120 (*Colección de documentos de la catedral de Oviedo*, ed. Santos Agustín GARCÍA LARRAGUETA, Oviedo 1962, doc. 117, 121, 124, 128, 134, 137, 141, p. 318, 328, 333, 341, 351, 356, 365), while no Archdeacon Pedro appears in Lugo or Ourense at this time. Diplomatic formulas preserve tenth-century traditions: James D'EMILIO, "The Charter of Theodenandus: Writing, Ecclesiastical Culture, and Monastic Reform in Tenth-Century Galicia," *Culture and Society in Medieval Galicia: A Cultural Crossroads at the Edge*

environment was one of few in Galicia to welcome Cluniac monks: Count Fernán Fernández and his wife Elvira Alfónsez, half-sister of Queen Urraca, gave Cluny one quarter of the familial monastery at Pantón in 1117. Whether other relatives balked at the concession is unclear, but it seems never to have taken hold.¹¹

1. Countess Fronilde Fernández and Ferreira de Pantón: Monastic Reform and Lay Patronage

The community nearly disappears from the documentation until 1158 when, according to the seventeenth-century Benedictine historian Antonio de Yepes, Countess Fronilde Fernández built the church of Ferreira de Pantón.¹² Later writers have largely ignored this report and focused upon a set of documents of 1175 in which the countess led other noble proprietors in transferring rights and properties to a community of nuns under the tutelage of Abbot Vidal, the first abbot of the Cistercian monastery of Meira. As a result, 1175 has been widely accepted as the date of the community's restoration, and the affiliation with Meira cast as the pivotal moment in that process. This view must be revised. New evidence concerning the charters of 1175, more careful attention to the conflicts plaguing the nunnery in the thirteenth century, and a look at the career of Countess Fronilde and her social and religious networks all compel us to highlight her agency—more than that of Meira—in the convent's reform, and to link the building of its church in 1158 to her initiatives and a wider movement of religious renewal.

The charters of 1175 are typically cited from references and extracts published by Angel Manrique and Manuel Risco, but the most complete versions—still unpublished—expose an error in Manrique's account that has misled modern scholars.¹³ The eighteenth-century canon of Lugo, José Vicente Piñeiro y Cancio, included transcriptions of two documents dated December 17, 1175 in his *Colección diplomática*.¹⁴ In the first, Countess Fronilde led the nine noble proprietors of

of Europe, ed. *id.*, Leiden 2015 p. 281-342 (p. 291). On such monastic congregations: José ORLANDIS, "Las congregaciones monásticas en la tradición suevo-góticas," *id.*, *Estudios sobre instituciones monásticas medievales*, Pamplona 1971, p. 97-123.

¹¹ The timing and sponsorship of Galician affiliations were tied to efforts to win Cluny's support for Queen Urraca's succession and the accords with her son Alfonso Raimunde: Charles J. BISHKO, "The Cluniac Priors of Galicia and Portugal: Their Acquisition and Administration, 1075-ca. 1230," *Studia Monastica*, vol. 7, 1965, p. 305-356 (p. 316-338 for the Galician priories; p. 324-326 for Ferreira de Pantón).

¹² Antonio de YEPES, *Crónica general de la Orden de San Benito...*, vol. 7, Valladolid 1621, p. 328: *San Salvador de Ferreyra, fábrica de la Condesa doña Froyla Fernández por la Era de 1196* [1158 AD]. MOURE, "El programa iconográfico," p. 4, notes the reference, but delays the apse's construction—without explanation—to 1170-1175. In 1129, Abbess Mariña purchased lands from Princess Sancha Enríquez of Portugal and her husband Sancho Núñez: *Colección...Pantón*, doc. 6, p. 23-24.

¹³ Angel MANRIQUE, *Cisterciensivm sev verivm ecclesiasticorum annalivm a condito cistercio...*, vol. 3, Lyon 1649, p. 28-29; Manuel RISCO, *España Sagrada*, vol. 41 (*De la santa iglesia de Lugo...*), Madrid 1798, p. 31-32.

¹⁴ José Vicente PIÑEIRO Y CANCIO, *Colección diplomática y memorias para la historia de la ciudad e iglesia de Lugo...*, 5 vols. (ms., Archivo de la Catedral de Lugo), vol. 3, fol. 424r-426v. He described

San Salvador de Ferreira who ceded the small district around the convent to Abbot Vidal, the order of St. Benedict, and the Cistercian order. Three Galician bishops, two counts, three Cistercian abbots, and a fourth abbot witnessed this important donation.¹⁵ In the second document, the countess gave the nunnery those of its properties which she had inherited.¹⁶ The list includes part or all of sixteen churches and it is followed by a notice that Abbess María Sánchez of Sobrado de Trives added her shares of those churches that belonged to Ferreira. The sanction is framed by clauses in which the gift is directed to the Cistercian order (*ordini de Cistel*) and Abbot Vidal. Most important, Piñeiro's text makes clear that Manrique substituted *fundamentum* for *testamentum*, thereby turning the charters of 1175, incorrectly, into foundational documents, and further magnifying their importance and that of Meira.¹⁷ Piñeiro's version is corroborated by an undated parchment from the archive of Meira which appears to be an incomplete copy of one or more charters—or a draft to aid in their preparation.¹⁸

both as copied from parchments, as distinct from a cartulary. Neither these transcriptions nor the one related parchment (Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional [henceforth AHN], Clero, carp. 1142, no. 7) are cited in *Colección...Pantón*.

¹⁵ PIÑEIRO, vol. 3, fol. 424r-425v, asserts that there were two copies: *Es de advertir que hai dos tantos en pergamino desta donacion al pie de la letra; y el uno dice assi: 'Ego comitissa Donna Maria...roboro', y el otro dice assi: 'Ego Abatissa Donna Maria...roboro...' y discrepen en otra cosa alguna.* The key clauses are: *Nos ad quos locum ille Santi Saluatoris de Ferraria pertinet...damus et concedimus ipsi Domino Saluatori et Sanctae Mariae...et ordini beatissimi confesoris Benedicti ipsum arum de Ferraria... [the boundaries are described] ...Omnes nos damus et concedimus predictum arum...per autoritatem domini Ioannis Lucensis episcopi, et in manibus domini Vitalis abatis de Meira, et ordinis Cisterciensi, salua in omnibus canonica iusticia, ut ex hoc nunc et usque in saecula nullus nostrum, uel posteritas nostra, praesumat partitionem facere, aut dominium quaerere, sed soli Deo sit, et soli Deo remaneat et predicto Cisterciensium ordini in perpetuum....* The term *arum*, rare in Galician documents, may reflect the role of Abbot Vidal, a foreigner, cf., J.F. NIERMEYER, *Mediae Latinitatis Lexicon Minus*, Leiden 1984, p. 62.

¹⁶ PIÑEIRO, vol. 3, fol. 426rv. The key clauses are: *...ego Comitissa Donna Fronili Fernandiz facio testamentum scripturae firmissimum Monasterio de Ferraria de Lemabus de hereditate, quae fuit de ipso monasterio, quam ego habui ab auis et atauis meis. Do et concedo illam...illis monialibus, quae in religione sancta uoluerint perseuerare iuxta consuetudinem Cisterciensium monachorum, per manum abatis uocabulo Vitalis de Meira, et conuentui eiusdem...et per consensum et preceptum Ioannis Lucensis episcopi...Et ego Maria Sancici Abatissa de Superado do et concedo...Monasterio de Ferraria omnem portionem ecclesiarum, quam habeo in ecclesiis, quae pertinent ad Ferraria. Nos ergo ambas damus omnes has hereditates ordini de Cistel...Ego Donna Fronili una cum Maria Sancici, et omnis uox nostra uobis Domino Uitali primus abas de Meira, et omnis sucesoribus uestris hanc cartam, quam iusimus fieri propriis manibus roboramus et confirmamus...*

¹⁷ *ego Comitissa Fronilla Ferdinandi facio fundamentum scripturae firmissimum Monasterio de Ferreyra....*, in MANRIQUE, vol. 3, p. 28. The modern edition repeats the error: *Colección...Pantón*, doc. 7, p. 24. Piñeiro's *testamentum scripturae firmissimum* makes sense and is well attested in other charters.

¹⁸ AHN Clero, 1142/7: *ego comitissa Fronili Fernandiz facio testamentum scripture firmisimum. monasterio de ferraria...* The parchment is of poor quality (an observation confirmed by Ana Suárez González), and the normal trappings of a charter are missing: a chrismon or invocation; the sanction, corroboration, and date—each included in Piñeiro's version; and a scribal signature. The open, irregular hand retains several archaic ligatures, abbreviation marks, and letter forms of the Visigothic script that lingered in late twelfth-century Galicia. The final clause of Countess Fronilde's gift is in a different hand and shifts to the third person, *...et Sanctam Eulaliam in cauto de Coea in ripa de mare dat*

The convent prospered during Countess Fronilde's lifetime. King Fernando II cited her service and devotion to him in a gift to the nuns in February 1180, the very month in which Queen Teresa Fernández de Traba—Fronilde's niece by marriage and founder of a Cistercian nunnery in Castile—died in childbirth.¹⁹ Two years later, Countess Elvira Osóriz ceded her right of patronage to Countess Fronilde.²⁰ In 1196, Fronilde's daughter, Guiomar, confirmed the Cistercian observance and affiliation with Meira; the following year, Countess Elvira repeated her own concession.²¹ Meira's authority, however, was challenged after Fronilde's death; a generation later, the abbey was struggling to fend off the intrusions of lay proprietors. Countess Elvira's son, Fernando Gutiérrez, aggressively pressed his family's claims. In 1238, the powerful magnate settled a dispute with Meira before a large assembly, including Bishop Miguel of Lugo, Archdeacon Martín Rodríguez, three canons, local knights, the nuns, and several monks of Meira.²² The nobleman returned the keys of the convent after both parties agreed that the abbot would govern the house's spiritual affairs while Fernando's wife, doña Milia, administered its temporalities. Between 1242 and 1264, doña Milia, once titled *custos et domina monasterii de Ferraria*, issued leases for several properties of the convent.²³ Finally, in 1263, Abbot Aymeric of Meira renewed the settlement of 1238 by recognizing that the rights and tenure doña Milia had held would be retained by her son, Andrés Fernández; his wife, Mencía González; and their

comitissa pro piscaria, et Sanctam Marinam de Caprariis in Clamosa. One sentence mentions the gift of Abbess María Sánchez and concludes the text.

¹⁹ Julio GONZÁLEZ, *Regesta de Fernando II*, Madrid 1943, p. 129-130, 466. The privilege is known from short excerpts: *Colección...Pantón*, doc. 8, p. 25. Teresa Fernández had founded the nunnery of Perales with her first husband, Count Nuño Pérez de Lara (see n. 65).

²⁰ Countess Elvira was a granddaughter of those who had given the house to Cluny: Margarita TORRES SEVILLA-QUIÑONES, *Linajes nobiliarios de León y Castilla (siglos IX-XIII)*, Valladolid 1999, p. 151-152. Her privilege is registered—from Piñeiro's notice—in *Colección...Pantón*, doc. 9, p. 25-26.

²¹ *Colección...Pantón*, doc. 10, p. 26. Abbot Menendo, named in Manrique's transcription, is not otherwise recorded as an abbot of Meira: *Monasticon cisterciense gallego*, 2 vols., ed. M^a Damián YÁÑEZ NEIRA, León 2000, vol. 2, p. 93. María Osóriz joined Countess Elvira in the gift of 1197: AHN Códices, 114B (*Tombo de Meira*), fol. 335r.

²² AHN Clero, 1132/21. Fernando Gutiérrez belonged to the Castro family, served as *pertigueiro* of Santiago (1223-1238), and held the tenancy of Lemos (1208-1217, 1221-1230, 1238) and other Galician tenancies. In the conflicts over the succession of Fernando III of Castile, he joined the Castilian king's court (1217-1221) and last appeared there in 1240: Salvador de Moxó, "De la nobleza vieja a la nobleza nueva," *Cuadernos de Historia*, vol. 3, 1969, p. 1-210 (p. 60, 63); Marta GONZÁLEZ VÁZQUEZ, *El arzobispo de Santiago: una instancia de poder en la Edad Media (1150-1400)*, La Coruña 1996, p. 211-214; Julio GONZÁLEZ, *Alfonso IX*, 2 vols., Madrid 1944, vol. 1, p. 350, 354-359; vol. 2, doc. 352, p. 460-462; *id.*, *Reinado y diplomas de Fernando III*, vol. 3 (*Documentos [1233-1253]*), Córdoba 1986, doc. 664, p. 205-206. Other lay persons held stakes as well: "mindful of the abundance of his excesses and sins" (*ad cor rediens et ad mentem reuocans meorum excessuum et peccatorum habundanciam*), the knight Sancho Pérez ceded rights in the convent and churches in its possession to the bishop of Lugo—not to Meira: AHN Clero, 1327D/21 (1230).

²³ *Colección...Pantón*, doc. 12-13, 15-17, 19-21, p. 27-35. The title is used in doc. 15, p. 30 (1247.11).

daughter, doña Milia.²⁴ Evidently, the effort to free the convent from its lay proprietors had foundered by the mid-thirteenth century, and the formalization of the rights of the *custos et domina* parallels the institutionalized power of the “lady” (*donna*) of other Cistercian nunneries in Iberia, including Las Huelgas.²⁵

Countess Fronilde had led the reform of the nunnery and, as Yepes indicates, her work preceded the agreements of 1175. Fronilde’s extensive religious patronage provides the context for the Cistercian affiliation and the character of the church. Like the earlier attempt to introduce the Cluniac reform, the countess’s efforts occurred against a backdrop of monastic reform and dynastic conflict. Between 1155 and 1187, Fronilde showered gifts on monasteries across Galicia, including several new Cistercian houses.²⁶ In December 1155, she and her husband, Count Rodrigo Pérez de Traba, made a sizeable donation to the Premonstratensians.²⁷ The charter was written up in the Galician church of Amoeiro by Abbot Vidal of the new community of San Leonardo at Alba de Tormes in the diocese of Salamanca.²⁸ Its unusually elaborate calendar clause anticipates the division of Castile-León.²⁹ The abbot’s presence suggests that plans were afoot to set up a Premonstratensian community in Galicia and the prospective separation of the kingdoms may have hastened efforts to extend their network there.

Circumstances in 1155 were certainly propitious for the canons’ settlement in Galicia. A year earlier, King Louis VII of France had made a pilgrimage to Santiago, while the papal legate, Cardinal Hyacinth, visited Galicia after placing two Portuguese houses of Augustinian canons under papal protection.³⁰ The

²⁴ *Ibid.*, doc. 20, p. 34. The document is known from a notice in Piñeiro who described it as a chirograph.

²⁵ See Andrea GAYOSO, “The Lady of Las Huelgas. A Royal Abbey and Its Patronage,” *Cîteaux*, vol. 51, 2000, p. 91-116; BAURY, *Les religieuses* (see n. 1), p. 46-48.

²⁶ Fronilde was the daughter of Fernando Núñez and Mayor Rodríguez, and niece of Count Gómez Núñez, a family with ties to the new Portuguese monarchs: BARTON, *Aristocracy* (see n. 4), p. 297, with a list of the charters (Ferreira de Pantón is conflated with Ferreira de Pallares, a Benedictine men’s house to which the countess also donated). She endowed an anniversary at Lugo Cathedral and gave to the Hospitallers as well: Santiago JIMÉNEZ GÓMEZ, “O ‘Memorial de Aniversarios’ da catedral de Lugo como fonte para o estudo da sociedade medieval,” *Jubilatio: Homenaje de la Facultad de Geografía e Historia a los Profesores D. Manuel Lucas Alvarez y D. Angel Rodriguez González*, 2 vols., Santiago de Compostela 1987, vol. 1, p. 161-227 (p. 223); Carlos BARQUERO GOÑI, “Los hospitalarios en el reino de León (siglos XII y XIII),” *El reino de León en la alta Edad Media*, vol. 9, León 1997, p. 219-634 (p. 560-561).

²⁷ *Colección diplomática do mosteiro cisterciense de Sta. María de Oseira (Ourense), 1025-1310*, 2 vols., ed. Miguel ROMANÍ MARTÍNEZ, Santiago de Compostela 1989, vol. 1, doc. 31, p. 36-37.

²⁸ The abbot—surely a foreigner—is not to be confused with Abbot Vidal of Meira; for the foundation at Alba de Tormes in 1154: María Teresa LÓPEZ DE GUEREÑO SANZ, *Monasterios medievales premonstratenses: reinos de Castilla y León*, 2 vols., Valladolid 1997, vol. 2, p. 611-612.

²⁹ The two sons of Alfonso VII are titled as kings (*Rege Santio filio eius in Castella...Rege Fernando altero filio in Legionem et in Galletia...*) and members of their entourages are named. On plans for dividing the kingdom: Bernard REILLY, *The Kingdom of León-Castilla under King Alfonso VII, 1126-1157*, Philadelphia 1998, p. 119, 128, and the register of documents (p. 377-398) for the introduction of both sons as titled kings in royal diplomatic in 1154-1155.

³⁰ Damian J. SMITH, “The Iberian Legations of Cardinal Hyacinth Bobone,” *Pope Celestine III (1191-1198): Diplomat and Pastor*, ed. John DORAN and Damian J. SMITH, Farnham 2008, p. 81-111

cardinal likely met with Abbots Gil and Giraldo—surely foreigners—of the recently established Cistercian houses of Sobrado and Melón.³¹ On his Iberian journey, the legate grappled with the prickly relationships among the metropolitan sees and the primate of Toledo. Strengthening the unity of the Iberian church was one way of surmounting divisions among the Christian kingdoms and encouraging a united front against the infidels. Religious reform, crusading zeal, and political calculation were all served by promoting the new monastic orders and the wave of foreign clerics they brought to Iberia.

Count Rodrigo was well placed to introduce the Premonstratensians to Galicia. In 1142, his elder brother, Fernando Pérez, had founded the first Cistercian monastery in Iberia at Sobrado, and the Traba family remained major benefactors of that house.³² Moreover, the count had only recently regained the favor of Alfonso VII after his role in the Portuguese invasion of Galicia in 1137.³³ Sponsoring an order that had established itself in the heartland of León and Castile with royal support was one way to restore his place in the realm.³⁴ Countess Fronilde's role, however, was no formality, for she was absent from her husband's gift to Sobrado earlier that year.³⁵ In 1161, the widowed noblewoman Sancha Ponce—sister-in-law of Fronilde's daughter—gave the Premonstratensians shares of the same churches and estates.³⁶ It is tempting to link the women's interest in the canons with their accommodation of women's religious life in double houses. Political events, however, thwarted the project. Once Alfonso VII died in 1157, Castile and Leon were separated and the Premonstratensians concentrated on Castile, leaving Galicia to Clairvaux and the Cistercians.³⁷

(p. 84). The legate was in Galicia in November and December and may have coincided with the French king in Santiago at Christmas: REILLY, *Alfonso VII*, p. 122-127.

³¹ The legate's presence is recorded on November 15, 1154 in the calendar clause of a private donation to Abbot Gil and Sobrado, written at Tui by Abbot Giraldo of Melón: *Tumbos del monasterio de Sobrado de los Monjes*, 2 vols., ed. Pilar LOSCERTALES DE G. DE VALDEAVELLANO, Madrid 1976, vol. 2, doc. 50, p. 80.

³² María del Carmen PALLARES MÉNDEZ, *El monasterio de Sobrado: un ejemplo del protagonismo monástico en la Galicia medieval*, La Coruña 1979, p. 223-224; BARTON, *Aristocracy*, p. 196-197, 241-242; ALONSO, "Los promotores" (see n. 4), 663-665; Francesco RENZI, "Aristocrazia e monachesimo in Galizia nei secoli XII e XIII: la famiglia Froilaz-Traba e i cistercensi. Ipotesi di ricerca," *Bullettino dell'Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo*, vol. 115, 2013, p. 209-223. For the priority of Sobrado in Iberia: VALLE, "La introducción" (see n. 3).

³³ BARTON, *Aristocracy*, p. 130; *id.*, "Sobre el conde Rodrigo Pérez el Velloso," *Estudios Mindonienses*, vol. 5, 1989, p. 653-661.

³⁴ REILLY, *Alfonso VII*, p. 272, counts eight donations of Alfonso VII to Premonstratensian houses. Dubious notices credit him the foundation at Alba de Tormes: LÓPEZ DE GUEREÑO, *Monasterios premonstratenses*, vol. 2, p. 611.

³⁵ AHN Clero, 527/11.

³⁶ *Colección...Oseira*, vol. 1, doc. 38, p. 45-46. Sancha Ponce was the daughter of Count Ponce de Cabrera; her brother Fernando Ponce had married Guiomar, Countess Fronilde's daughter, by 1162: BARTON, *Aristocracy*, p. 243; AHN Clero, 1750/13.

³⁷ Castilian houses dominate the list in LÓPEZ DE GUEREÑO, *Monasterios premonstratenses*, vol. 1, p. 51. The final settlement likely came at Santiago in 1162 when the Premonstratensians traded the Galician properties with the monastery of Oseira for estates in León: *Colección...Oseira*, vol. 1, doc. 38, 39, p. 45-48.

Countess Fronilde was turning her support towards the Cistercians, making gifts to Melón in 1158 and 1162, and Armenteira in 1162.³⁸ Meanwhile, her husband died in 1158, and that explains—and validates—Yepes's reference to her construction of the church of Ferreira de Pantón in that year.³⁹ With this, the widowed countess was surely making provisions for herself and, eventually, her daughter Guiomar who would later govern the house, in a pattern that would be repeated in other Cistercian nunneries of Iberia.⁴⁰

2. "By Citation of Diverse Birds and Animals...": The Convent Church of Ferreira de Pantón and Its Iconographic Program

Despite Fronilde's embrace of the Cistercians, the richly carved chancel at Pantón and its Romanesque repertory have nothing to do with the austere aspect and foreign vocabulary of the Cistercian churches that rose across late twelfth-century Galicia. As a result, the monument has been excluded from the study of Cistercian buildings. Moreover, the artistic rupture between the exuberant apse and spare nave—like the focus on the affiliation of 1175—has been tacitly accepted as proof that the Cistercians' arrival was a religious and artistic watershed in Galicia.⁴¹ Upon closer inspection, the architecture, sculpture, and iconography of the splendid apse signal the vitality of local monastic networks and, particularly, women's communities; the wide cultural horizons of their patrons; and the creativity and adaptability of the craftsmen who served them. In short, the Cistercians did not colonize a wilderness in Galicia: they were summoned and welcomed into a well-prepared environment of fervid religious and artistic activity.

Like many Galician Romanesque churches, the church at Pantón consists of a roofed nave and vaulted chancel with an apse preceded by a short presbytery. Figured corbels line the eave of the apse and four coursed columns mark off three segments, each pierced by a shafted window (Fig. 1). Inside, tall responds carry a chancel arch framed by three thickly moulded orders and a billeted hood (Fig. 4). At the threshold of the apse, an arch of two moulded orders springs from responds

³⁸ The gift to Armenteira may well coincide with its affiliation to the Cistercians: VALLE, *Arquitectura cisterciense* (see n. 6), vol. 1, p. 245-246.

³⁹ The last known reference to the count is in 1158 in the cartulary of San Martín de Castañeda: BARTON, *Aristocracy*, p. 297. Claims that he lived until 1166 (Jaime de SALAZAR ACHA, "Los descendientes del Conde Ero Fernández, fundador del monasterio de Santa María de Ferreira de Pallares," *Museo de Pontevedra*, vol. 43, 1989, p. 67-86 [p. 77]; TORRES SEVILLA [see n. 20], p. 340) rest on a document of Alfonso VII, mistakenly published—and repeatedly cited—with a date of 1165, eight years after the king's death: *Tumbos...Sobrado*, vol. 2, doc. 76, p. 105; for the correct date of 1154: REILLY, *Alfonso VII*, doc. 855, p. 389.

⁴⁰ For Guiomar: SALAZAR ACHA, "Los descendientes," p. 76-78. He sometimes confuses Ferreira de Pantón with Ferreira de Pallares, a men's monastery with no affiliation with the Cistercians.

⁴¹ VALLE, *Arquitectura cisterciense*, vol. 1, p. 16. Rocío SÁNCHEZ AMEIJERAS included it in her discussion of the iconography of Cistercian churches in Galicia, but divorced the decoration from the order, attributing its richness either to lax oversight or incorporation of a preexisting church: "Las artes figurativas en los monasterios cistercienses medievales gallegos," *Arte de Cister* (see n. 5), p. 99-139 (p. 99-104).



Fig. 4. San Salvador de Ferreira de Pantón, north side of the chancel arch and apse.
(photo: author)

and rolled jambs. Within, a billeted stringcourse accents the sills of the shafted windows and divides the supports of the two ribs of the semidome into superposed shafts on their own bases and plinths. By comparison, the buttressed single-cell nave seems starkly unadorned: foliage and abstract motifs dominate the corbels; moulded oculi light the east and west walls; and a modest two-column west portal (Fig. 13, 14) leads to the Renaissance cloister.

The lavish sculpture of the chancel distinguishes the church. A forest of columns and mouldings model the apse with exceptional plasticity, and the number and variety of figural capitals stand out. The shafted windows rise above projecting sills enlivened with sculpture; their openings, rounded at top and bottom, are lined by roll mouldings.⁴² Beneath the ribbed semidome, the undulating pattern of responds and window shafts is enhanced by monolithic columns, decorated impostes, the billeted stringcourse and shaft rings, and bold capitals whose figures and foliage spill from their baskets (Fig. 5). Rings, cable mouldings, foliate scrolls, and animals' heads adorn the round and rectangular plinths, while impostes and stringcourses exhibit interlace, floral designs, and even an occasional animal. The ambitious decoration must have been planned from the start, for a fine-grained whitish granite was procured for some sculpture, instead of the coarser type that sufficed for construction.⁴³

Pantón shares common elements of the Compostelan repertory with many twelfth-century Galician churches, but certain pieces point to privileged channels linking the site to the cathedral and its artistic world.⁴⁴ On one exterior respond capital, the youths lying on the backs of lions simplify the odd design of a fine early twelfth-century capital showcased just inside the north transept entrance of Santiago Cathedral.⁴⁵ A family of related capitals appears in late eleventh- and early twelfth-century churches across northern Spain.⁴⁶ Although variations traveled far at the highest level of production, they rarely found their way to rural craftsmen.

⁴² Among Galician Romanesque churches, windows with rounded bottoms or openings lined with roll mouldings are rare. The apse windows of San Xulián de Astureses—with doubled shafts—offer one parallel for both.

⁴³ Later, important nearby churches at Diomondi and Santo Estevo de Ribas de Miño, held by the bishop and chapter of Lugo respectively, used this stone for sculpture. For the links among these churches: James D'EMILIO, "Working Practices and the Language of Architectural Decoration in Romanesque Galicia: Santa María de Camporramiro and Its Sources," *Arte Medievale*, II serie, vol. 10, 1996, p. 69-90 (p. 69-72).

⁴⁴ Compostelan elements include the alternately round and rectangular plinths on the chancel arches at Pantón and the foliage of capitals: D'EMILIO, *Romanesque Architectural Sculpture* (see n. 8), p. 104.

⁴⁵ Marcel DURLIAT, *La sculpture romane de la Route de Saint-Jacques. De Conques à Compostelle*, Mont-de-Marsan 1990, p. 323. YZQUIERDO, "Ferreira de Pantón" (see n. 8), p. 866, noted the link.

⁴⁶ The closest parallel is at San Martín de Elines, one of many Cantabrian churches which draw heavily upon traditions established at Frómista and Santillana del Mar: Miguel Angel GARCÍA GUINEA, *El románico en Santander*, 2 vols., Santander 1979, vol. 2, p. 539, fig. 1093. At Frómista, Jaca, Loarre, and Santa Cruz de Castañeda, birds or lion-tamers tumble from masks onto the backs of lions: DURLIAT, p. 234, fig. 213; p. 280, fig. 278; p. 284-285, fig. 282-283; GARCÍA GUINEA, vol. 2, p. 288-289, fig. 431, 435. The motif was reproduced as far afield as Venosa (Apulia) where it accompanied the imported plan for a church with an ambulatory and radiating chapels to serve as the Hauteville family pantheon:



Fig. 5. San Salvador de Ferreira de Pantón, interior capitals of the apse, including a capital decorated with birds to the right of the central window, c. 1160s. (photo: author)

Such a singular quotation of earlier work at Compostela hints at the role of a pattern book. This would help explain the unusually varied stringcourses and imposts, for their designs could easily be transferred from drawings. Even the lone animal on an exterior stringcourse is traced in low relief with no modeling. Other pieces at Pantón illustrate the challenges facing a large workshop that relied partly on drawings for the complex compositions of capitals. On a window capital, three leaves end in lions' heads, a rare rendition of the common image of lions crouching in foliage, like that on the inner chancel arch. More perplexing are the wings behind a man with a book who raises his right hand in blessing, as lions bow to lick his feet. Surely, this is meant to be Daniel, but the wings could have replaced the paired volutes in a sketched model.⁴⁷

At the nearby monastic churches of San Miguel de Eiré and San Salvador de Asma, inscriptions identify several carved figures, adding weight to the hypothesis that titled drawings circulated among local religious communities and the craftsmen who served them.⁴⁸ Some sculpture at Asma is closely related to Pantón and

Arthur Kingsley PORTER, *Romanesque Sculpture of the Pilgrimage Roads*, 10 vols., Boston 1923, vol. 3, pl. 170.

⁴⁷ For the identification of Daniel on the south capital of the inner chancel arch and the image's popularity in Galicia: MOURE, "El programa iconográfico" (see n. 8), 9-11; *ead.*, "La fortuna del ciclo de 'Daniel en el foso de los leones' en los programas escultóricos románicos de Galicia," *Archivo Español de Arte*, vol. 79, 2006, p. 279-298. One may compare a capital at San Pedro de Castro de Cabras (Lalín) where volutes are carved behind a blessing figure: Isidro G. BANGO TORVISO, *Arquitectura románica en Pontevedra*, La Coruña 1979, pl. 9c.

⁴⁸ For such titles and links with drawings and manuscript painting: D'EMILIO, "Inscriptions" (see n. 8), p. 24-31; for their rarity: Gerardo BOTO VARELA, *Ornamento sin delito. Los seres imaginarios del claustro de Silos y sus ecos en la escultura románica peninsular* (Studia Silensia, Series Maior; 3), Santo Domingo de Silos 2000, p. 115-116. The suggestion of José Manuel GONZÁLEZ SUÁREZ, "Los



Fig. 6. San Salvador de Asma, apse corbels – including Samson and the lion – with inscriptions, c. 1160s-1170s. (photo: author)

an inscribed corbel with Samson and the lion is particularly significant (Fig. 6).⁴⁹ This was a popular subject on a series of Galician tympana in the Compostelan tradition (Fig. 7)—several at churches related to Pantón—along with other low relief carvings of animals whose forms lent themselves to graphic transmission.⁵⁰ At Asma, itself, the tympanum of the south portal displays a pair of dragons with long, intertwined necks chasing their own tails (Fig. 8). The symmetrical design could easily be adapted to—or from—a two-sided capital, but it also resembles the beasts that lurk in painted initials.

encomenderos del monasterio de San Miguel de Eiré,” *Museo de Pontevedra*, vol. 43, 1989, p. 265-275 (p. 265), that Alfonso VII gave the Cistercians the nunnery of Eiré—four kilometers from Pantón—must be rejected. Late eleventh-century documents identify Asma (San Salvador de *Plantata*) as a double monastery and beneficiary of aristocratic largesse: José Ignacio FERNÁNDEZ DE VIANA Y VIEITES, “Los dos primeros documentos del monasterio de San Salvador de Chantada,” *Compostellanum*, vol. 13, 1968, p. 339-352. King Alfonso IX visited in 1199 and 1208, and issued privileges in 1208 and 1221: GONZÁLEZ, *Alfonso IX* (see n. 22), vol. 2, doc. 133, 230, 233, p. 191-192, 317-318, 321-322; AHN Clero, leg. 3528 (*Chantada: memoriales de propiedad*) (1221.3.22).

⁴⁹ For Asma’s links with Pantón: D’EMILIO, *Romanesque Architectural Sculpture*, p. 106-107; Ramón YZQUIERDO PERRÍN, *La arquitectura románica en Lugo*, vol. 1 (*Parroquias al oeste del Miño*), La Coruña 1983, p. 46-49.

⁵⁰ For an illustration of the Samson corbel at Asma and an appreciation of its links with the tympana: Ramón YZQUIERDO PERRÍN, *Arte Medieval (I)* (Galicia. Arte; 10), La Coruña 1995, p. 378-383. For the tympana and earlier bibliography: Carlos SASTRE VÁZQUEZ, “Os sete tímpanos galegos coa loita de Sansón e o león: a propósito da posible recuperación dunha peza do noso patrimonio,” *Anuario Brigantino*, vol. 26, 2003, p. 321-338; José Carlos VALLE PÉREZ, “El tímpano de Palmou,” *El Museo de Pontevedra*, vol. 60, 2006, p. 231-240. Animals decorate tympana at Santa Baia de Beiro and San Martiño de Moldes where a second tympanum displays Samson. The Lamb of God appears at Santa María de Amoeiro—the very church, dedicated in 1162, where Countess Fronilde and her husband had made their gift to the Premonstratensians. At Sobrado de Trives—most closely connected to Pantón (see below), the chancel metopes are decorated, unusually, with a centaur and quadrupeds.



Fig. 7. Turei (Ourense), tympanum of Samson and the lion (now in a house), probably from the south portal of San Miguel de Bóveda facing the cloister, late 12th century. (photo: author)



Fig. 8. San Salvador de Asma, south portal, tympanum with intertwined dragons, c. 1160s-1170s. (photo: author)

Together, these traces of graphic sources add up to more than a pattern book or miscellany of architectural ornament. Rocío Sánchez has invoked the medieval bestiaries to explain the original depiction of griffins attacking oxen on the north capital of the chancel arch at Pantón, while Teresa Moure's thorough exegesis of the sculptural ensemble frequently cites the illustrated *Physiologus* and bestiaries.⁵¹ Their work makes plain that a learned tradition as well as graphic sources holds the key to several novel compositions at the nunnery. Moreover, the proliferation of animals and scenes of violent struggle urged the kind of moralizing reflection whose place in monastic meditation Conrad Rudolph so deftly analyzed in the earliest Cistercian manuscripts.⁵²

One piece at Pantón invites a closer look. No fewer than ten birds perch upon branches and peck at fruit on a delightful capital inside the central window of the apse (Fig. 5). Teresa Moure and Carlos Sastre have related this capital and its local progeny to the description and illustrations of the *Peridexion* tree in the *Physiologus*.⁵³ Drawn by its sweet fruit, doves gather in its branches for rest and refreshment. There, they find safety from a dragon which fears even the tree's shadow. The *Physiologus* and bestiaries offer various allegorizing interpretations of the tree, its fruit and shadow, the doves, and the dragon. Version B of the *Physiologus* casts the doves as "all faithful people," implicitly identifies the tree with the church, and closes the chapter with verses from Psalms 67 (68) and 132 (133) that were regularly used to praise the cenobitic life in a tradition going back to Augustine, Cassiodorus, and the earliest monastic rules:

Be vigilant, O man of God, remain in the Catholic faith, continue in it, abide in it, dwell in it, and persevere in our faith of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and in one Catholic Church as the Psalmist said, 'Behold how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity' [Ps. 132 (133):1]. And elsewhere, 'God makes the harmonious dwell in one house' [Ps. 67 (68):6]⁵⁴

⁵¹ SÁNCHEZ AMEIJERAS, "Las artes figurativas" (see n. 41), p. 99-104; MOURE, "El programa iconográfico." The composition of the capital with griffins and oxen is closely related to two by the same workshop at Sobrado de Trives, one with a pair of oxen, the other with two griffins pecking at a human head—reminders that graphic models could inspire "variations on a theme" through the collaboration of patrons and artists.

⁵² Conrad RUDOLPH, *Violence and Daily Life: Reading, Art and Polemics in the Cîteaux 'Moralia in Job'*, Princeton 1997, esp. p. 42-62. Precedents may lie in the earliest Romanesque sculpture of Galicia, the choir capitals at Compostela Cathedral: José Luis SENRA, "La iconografía del primer proyecto catedralicio: un tránsito de perfección hacia el hombre espiritual," *En el principio: génesis de la catedral románica de Santiago de Compostela. Contexto, construcción y programa iconográfico*, ed. *id.*, Santiago de Compostela 2014, p. 164-200.

⁵³ MOURE, "El programa iconográfico," p. 11; Carlos SASTRE VÁZQUEZ discusses a related capital and its context at Maside, "Un eco del *Fisiólogo* en Santo Tomé Vello de Maside," *Anuario Brigantino*, vol. 27, 2004, p. 405-414.

⁵⁴ *Physiologus. A Medieval Book of Nature Lore*, trans. Michael J. CURLEY, 2nd ed., Chicago 2009, p. 29. For Psalm 132 (133), see AUGUSTINUS, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* (CCSL; 38-40), ed. Eligius DEKKERS and Jean FRAIPONT, Turnhout 1956, Ps. 132, par. 3-4, p. 1928; CASSIODORUS, *Expositio Psalmodum* (CCSL; 97-98), ed. Marc ADRIAEN, Turnhout 1958, Ps. 132, vers. 1, vol. 2, p. 1206.

Hugh of Fouilloy pursued this monastic interpretation in his *Aviaryum*, a work likely written in the late 1130s or 1140s as a teaching text for lay brothers in canons.⁵⁵ In it, he adapted the description and image of the *Peridexion* tree for that of sparrows nesting in the cedar as a figure of the repose of the cloistered community, a recurrent theme in Hugh's work.⁵⁶ Hugh draws upon commentaries on Psalm 103 (104):16-17 ("The trees of the forest shall be filled, and the cedars of Libanus which thou hast planted. There the sparrows shall make their nest"). When he writes that "the sparrows nest in these cedars, because teachers of souls situate monasteries in the lands of the rich," the allusion to Cassiodorus's popular commentary on the Psalms would have guided knowledgeable monastic readers to the sixth-century writer's more ample reflection.⁵⁷

Cassiodorus idealized the monastic life and acknowledged its dependence on the generosity of wealthy patrons:

The sparrow is a tiny, exceedingly watchful bird which denotes the lowliness of monks, who in the cedars of Libanus, that is, on land bequeathed by Christian potentates, are known to build monasteries for themselves like nests, so to say, in the branches; and sustained by their resources they twitter away like sparrows with unceasing voices, hymning the Lord's praises. This is the life of heaven on earth, the imitation of the faithful angels, living the life of the spirit in the flesh and declining to love the vices of the world...⁵⁸

Indeed, the next passages in Cassiodorus's commentary are particularly apt in relation to the sculptural program at Pantón: he lauds the monks' spiritual struggles, describes the hart (Ps. 103 [104]:18)—assailed by lions at Pantón—as "the faithful who devour the devil when they transform his wicked ways into the Lord's praise and glory," and concludes that "by citation of diverse birds and animals, the varying lives of Christians are signified to us."⁵⁹

This current of monastic interpretation supplies the key to the unusual capital crowded with birds, justifies the liberal use of animal imagery based on moralizing texts, and pays homage to the crucial role of the patron, Countess Fronilde, in reforming the community and sponsoring its church.⁶⁰ Cassiodorus's commentary

⁵⁵ For the date and purpose: *The Medieval Book of Birds. Hugh of Fouilloy's Aviaryum*, edition, translation and commentary by Willene B. CLARK, Binghamton 1992, p. 9, 13-17.

⁵⁶ For the adaptation of the image: MOURE, "El programa iconográfico," p. 11. "In this cedar nest those who, by living quietly, hope for eternal bliss," *The Medieval Book of Birds*, c. 30, p. 159; see also Willene B. CLARK, "The Illustrated Medieval Aviary and the Lay Brotherhood," *Gesta*, vol. 21, 1982, p. 63-74 (p. 67).

⁵⁷ *The Medieval Book of Birds*, c. 30, p. 159; CLARK, "The Illustrated Medieval Aviary," p. 67.

⁵⁸ CASSIODORUS, *Explanation of the Psalms*, 3 vols. (Ancient Christian Writers; 51-53), translated and annotated by P. G. WALSH, vol. 3, p. 39 (Ps. 103, vers. 17).

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 40-41 (Ps. 103, vers. 18). On the symbolism of the hart or stag at Pantón: MOURE, "El programa iconográfico," p. 8.

⁶⁰ Within the aristocratic framework of a program that allegorizes animals and their violence, one wonders whether a moralizing commentary on hunting (see, for example, SENRA, "La iconografía," p. 175-180) lies behind the enigmatic scene on a respond capital where two collared dogs bite at the hindquarters of a large hooved animal with antlers and a beard, before which a squatting man gestures



Map 1. Galicia: sites mentioned in the text. (© James D'Emilio, 2016)

- ★ Diocesan seat
- CISTERCIAN HOUSE
- *Nunnery*
- Other churches

was known in the early medieval monastic culture of Galicia, so deeply rooted around Pantón.⁶¹ For its part, Hugh's *Aviarium* was eagerly received in monastic circles of northwest Iberia: three illuminated copies, the oldest dated 1183, survive from Portuguese monasteries.⁶² Though too late to be sources, they do attest to its early appeal among canons, nuns, and Cistercians of the region—the religious communities at the heart of Countess Fronilde's efforts to reform her convent.

3. The Nuns' Church at Ferreira de Pantón in Its Galician Context

Countess Fronilde's work was not isolated, for the main sculptors at Pantón served a network of aristocratic nunneries across a sizeable area of Galicia. These artists decorated the chancel arches, nave, and portal of the nuns' church at Sobrado de Trives (Fig. 9) in eastern Galicia as well as the small chancel of Santo Estevo de Carboentes in central Galicia.⁶³ Abbess María Sánchez of Sobrado was one of the proprietors who ceded her share of Pantón to Meira in 1175 and the nuns of Dozón received the church of Carboentes in 1156.⁶⁴ At the nunnery of Bóveda,

dramatically. That might be more plausible than MOURE's effort—ignoring the dogs—to see an allusion to the Jews' avarice, with an iconography she concedes is rare: "El programa iconográfico," p. 13-14, fig. 13-17.

⁶¹ See D'EMILIO, "The Charter of Theodenandus" (see n. 10), p. 312, and, for possible examples in ninth- and tenth-century book lists, M. Rubén GARCÍA ÁLVAREZ, "Los libros en la documentación gallega de la alta Edad Media," *Cuadernos de Estudios Gallegos*, vol. 20, 1965, p. 292-329 (p. 325); see also Manuel C. DÍAZ Y DÍAZ, *Códices visigóticos en la monarquía leonesa* (Fuentes y Estudios de Historia Leonesa; 31), León 1983, p. 198.

⁶² Besides the Lorrão manuscript of 1183 (Lisbon, Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, Casa Forte, no. 90), one from Alcobça (Lisbon, Bibl. Nac., Alcobça, no. 238) is closely related to an early thirteenth-century manuscript from Clairvaux (Troyes, Bibl. Municipale, ms. 177); a third comes from the Augustinian canonry of Santa Cruz de Coimbra (Porto, Bibl. Pública Municipal do Porto, Sta. Cruz, no. 34): Maria Adelaida MIRANDA, "Imagens do mundo nos manuscritos Alcobacenses—O Bestiário," *Actas... Cister en Galicia e Portugal* (see n. 8), vol. 2, p. 805-812, 13 figures (p. 810-812, fig. 10-13). For the cedar and sparrows in these manuscripts: *ead.*, "Imagens do sagrado na iluminura e ourivesaria românicas em Portugal," *El arte románico en Galicia y Portugal / A arte românica em Portugal e Galiza*, ed. Jorge RODRIGUES and Xosé Carlos VALLE PÉREZ, Lisbon 2001, p. 184-213 (p. 194-195). For a well-documented discussion of manuscript sources for birds in Galician Romanesque sculpture: Rocío SÁNCHEZ AMEJEIRAS, "Monjes y pájaros: sobre algunas representaciones animales en las iglesias medievales gallegas," *Memoria artis. Homenaje a la Profesora María Dolores Vila Jato*, 3 vols., ed. María Carmen FOLGAR DE LA CALLE, Ana GOY DIZ, and José Manuel B. LÓPEZ VÁZQUEZ, Santiago de Compostela 2003, vol. 1, p. 105-122.

⁶³ For Sobrado de Trives, Carboentes, and Pantón: YZQUIERDO, *Lugo* (see n. 49), p. 46; *id.*, "Ferreira de Pantón" (see n. 8); *id.*, *Arte medieval (1)* (see n. 50), p. 301-305, 320-324; Teresa MOURE PEÑA, "El proceso constructivo de la iglesia románica de San Salvador de Sobrado (Pobra de Trives)," *XXVI ruta cicloturística del románico internacional*, Pontevedra 2008, p. 229-239; Ana María POUSA FERNÁNDEZ, "Carboentes: iglesia de Santo Estevo," *Enciclopedia del románico en Galicia: Pontevedra*, 2 vols., ed. Isidro G. BANGÓ TORVISO and José Carlos VALLE PÉREZ, Aguilar de Campoo 2012, vol. 1, p. 435-443.

⁶⁴ For the history of Sobrado de Trives: Emilio DURO PEÑA, "El monasterio de San Salvador de Sobrado de Trives," *Archivos Leoneses*, vol. 21, 1967, p. 1-80; Antonio MARTÍNEZ SÁEZ, "Reconstrucción del archivo monástico de San Salvador de Sobrado de Trives en la Edad Media," *Boletín do Museo Provincial de Lugo*, vol. 5, 1992, p. 207-232; LÓPEZ MORÁN, "Lugo y Ourense" (see n. 8), p. 119-131; Miguel GARCÍA FERNÁNDEZ, "La proyección del monasterio femenino de San Salvador sobre su



Fig. 9. San Salvador de Sobrado de Trives, west portal and corbel table, right side, c. 1160s-1170s. (photo: author)

the ruined church—originally with three apses—belongs to this artistic group, and its aristocratic patron, Gudina Oduariz, was associated with the nunnery of Santo André de Órrea, once chosen as the burial place of Nuño Pérez, guardian of King Fernando II in his youth and founder in 1160—with his wife, Teresa Fernández de Traba—of the Cistercian nunnery of Perales in Castile.⁶⁵

These sites further elucidate the artistic program at Pantón, and, in this sense, the church at Carboentes stands out, despite its modest size. The sculpture at Carboentes is closely related to that at San Xoán de Palmou, the source for the most accomplished—and probably the first—of the surviving Samson tympana.⁶⁶ At Pantón, of course, the builders of the apse did not proceed far enough to execute a portal, but there could have been no better image than Samson and the lion (Fig. 7) to complete an allegorizing program of conflict, mastery, and harmony among animals or between man and beast as a reflection of the trials and triumphs of the Christian soul.

Other features of the church at Pantón confirm the importance of Countess Fronilde's investment and the dynamism of the religious and artistic milieu to which the community belonged. The original plans included a crossing tower. The unusually tall and robust chancel arch of four orders is awkwardly cut on both sides by the walls of a nave narrower than planned (Fig. 4). Only a few stones of

entorno: relaciones sociales, económicas, y de poder," *Paisagens y poderes no medievo ibérico. Actas do I Encontro Ibérico de Jovens Investigadores em Estudos Medievais. Arqueologia, história e património*, ed. Ana CUNHA, Olímpia PINTO, and Raquel de Oliveira MARTINS, Braga 2014, p. 307-335. The church of Carboentes was ceded by the priest and his sister, but it was also named in a privilege of King Alfonso VII a few months earlier: *Colección diplomática do mosteiro de San Pedro de Vilanova de Dozón*, ed. José Ignacio FERNÁNDEZ DE VIANA Y VIEITES, Santiago de Compostela 2009, doc. 18, 20, p. 42-45. Two years before, the ample endowment (doc. 15, p. 37-40) of the founder of Dozón, the widowed Guntrode Suárez, had included her estates in the parish, from her maternal inheritance and her own acquisitions; see also doc. 13, p. 36-37 for an earlier transaction.

⁶⁵ Manrique's listing of Bóveda as a Cistercian nunnery has been refuted: Emilio DURO PEÑA, "El monasterio de San Miguel de Bóveda," *Archivos Leoneses*, vol. 31, 1977, p. 107-180 (p. 108-109); see also LÓPEZ MORÁN, "Lugo y Ourense," p. 110-119. In 1168, Gudina Oduariz and her husband endowed the monastery which her parents had received from Queen Urraca. In 1169, her brother, Fernando Oduariz, left a bequest *ad opus ecclesie* and was buried there with a dated epitaph. His will links his sister (*Goína Oduariz de Vrria*) with the nunnery of Órrea, to which he made a gift (*Ad Orria XX modios de pane*) immediately after his bequest to her: M. Rubén GARCÍA ALVAREZ, "Sobre la fundación del monasterio orensano de Bóveda," *Bracara Augusta*, vol. 29, 1975, p. 111-143 (p. 111-118, 132-139); *Colección documental del archivo de la catedral de Ourense*, vol. 1 (888-1230) (Fuentes y Estudios de Historia Leonesa; 131), ed. M^a Beatriz VAQUERO DÍAZ and Francisco J. PÉREZ RODRÍGUEZ, León 2010, doc. 36, p. 113-114; Afonso VÁZQUEZ-MONXARDÍN FERNÁNDEZ, "Aportación a historia do convento de San Miguel de Bóveda," *Anexo: VIII Xornadas de Historia de Galicia. Aspectos históricos de Ourense*, ed. Jesús de JUANA and Xavier CASTRO, Ourense 1995, p. 69-99 (p. 85-86, 94-96); for Órrea: *Tumbos... Sobrado* (see n. 31), vol. 2, doc. 82, p. 111; José Ignacio FERNÁNDEZ DE VIANA Y VIEITES, "Santo Andrés de Órrea, monasterio beneditino," *Yermo*, vol. 15, 1977, p. 5-33 (p. 28); for Perales: *Monjes y monasterios* (see n. 5), p. 484, with bibliography.

⁶⁶ One tympanum, now in a house in the hamlet of Turei, has plausibly been traced to the destroyed south portal at Bóveda, facing the nun's cloister: VÁZQUEZ-MONXARDÍN, p. 88-89, 99. For the artistic relationships between Carboentes and Pantón: D'EMILIO, *Romanesque Architectural Sculpture* (see n. 8), p. 103-110.

the east wall are bonded with the lateral walls. Apparently, these formed part of massive composite piers meant to mark the corners of a crossing bay and support the tower: that explains the truncated, clustered columns on the outside at the corners of the east wall of the nave. Such towers are rare in Galicia, but one does crown the neighboring church of San Miguel de Eiré (Fig. 10), where, significantly, the chancel arch of four orders is one of few to rival that at Pantón.⁶⁷ In fact, crossing bays also precede the apses in the monastic churches of San Paio de Abeleda and Santa Cristina de Ribas de Sil, both, like Sobrado de Trives, in the area of eastern Galicia near the Miño and Sil Rivers, dubbed the Ribeira Sacra.⁶⁸ More than general features of design or scale link these churches. At San Paio de Abeleda, splendid capitals with huge menacing beasts squatting at the corners spawned tamer offspring at several sites including the Cluniac monastery of Valverde where an inscription of 1124 names the patrons and dates the start of construction (Fig. 11, 12).⁶⁹

The compartmentalized spaces of these buildings may look back to early medieval monastic traditions of the Ribeira Sacra, but some details point to Castile where Romanesque crossing towers were common.⁷⁰ At Abeleda, for example, rosettes decorate the arch of the portal of the parish church of Santa Tegra; the motif, ubiquitous in Avila and Segovia, appears—unusually in Galicia—at Eiré as well.⁷¹ Castilian connections complete the context for the decorated

⁶⁷ Just south of Pantón, the Romanesque church of the nunnery of San Fiz de Cangas has a high transept and sculpture related to Eiré: ELIAS VALIÑA SAMPEDRO *et al.*, *Inventario artístico de Lugo y su provincia*, vol. 2, Madrid 1975, p. 35-39; YZQUIERDO, *Arte medieval (1)*, p. 330-334.

⁶⁸ For Santa Cristina de Ribas de Sil: MANUEL CHAMOSO LAMAS, "El monasterio de Santa Cristina de Ribas de Sil," *Cuadernos de Estudios Gallegos*, vol. 17, 1962, p. 202-208; Yolanda BARRIOCANAL, *El monasterio de Santa Cristina de Ribas de Sil*, Ourense 1990; Ramón YZQUIERDO PERRÍN, *Arte medieval (2)* (Galicia. Arte; 11), La Coruña 1995, p. 208-211; Victor RODRIGUEZ MUÑIZ, *O mosteiro de Santa Cristina de Ribas de Sil na Idade Media (Boletín Auriense, Anexo; 32)*, Ourense 2010; for San Paio de Abeleda: EMILIO DURO PEÑA, "El monasterio-parroquia de San Payo de Aveleda," *Anuario de Estudios Medievales*, vol. 19, 1989, p. 137-153. Isidro G. BANGO TORVISO, *Galicia románica*, Vigo 1987, p. 91-93, suggested the relationship between Abeleda and Eiré. At Santa Cristina, the tall crossing rises above the transept arms, and a low western arch screens it from a nave which, eventually, surpassed its height. For monastic life in the Ribeira Sacra: *La Ribeira Sacra. Esencia de espiritualidad de Galicia*, ed. José Manuel GARCÍA IGLESIAS, Santiago de Compostela 2004.

⁶⁹ Examples are at Santa Cristina de Ribas de Sil, San Fiz de Cangas, San Salvador de Asma, and Eiré. For Valverde: YZQUIERDO, *Arte medieval (1)*, p. 248-249. The badly worn capital is one of two large, three-sided capitals, probably from the rebuilt chancel arch, reset on the small columns of a Gothic door: D'EMILIO, *Romanesque Architectural Sculpture*, p. 96-97. The epigraph is consistent with the patrons' gift to Cluny in 1125 (BISHKO [see n. 11], p. 326-327), but its connection with the sculpture has generally escaped notice, see D'EMILIO, "Inscriptions" (see n. 8), p. 15, 19-20. A privilege of 1127 records the concession of immunities by Alfonso VII to the lay patrons of San Paio de Abeleda: DURO PEÑA, "Aveleda," p. 138-139; it has been rejected as a forgery for formal reasons, but it has been transmitted through a fourteenth-century royal confirmation: REILLY, *Alfonso VII* (see n. 29), no. 67, p. 328.

⁷⁰ VALLE PÉREZ noted the Castilian pedigree of the design at Eiré: "La expansión de la arquitectura románica en Galicia: tipologías, fuentes y desarrollo," *A arte románica* (see n. 62), p. 112-131 (p. 118).

⁷¹ For the arches decorated with rosettes in Avila and Segovia, and other Galician examples: María Margarita VILA DA VILA, *Ávila románica: talleres escultóricos de filiación hispano-languedociana*, Avila 1999, p. 437-457.



Fig. 10. San Miguel de Eiré, north side, third quarter of the 12th century. (photo: author)



Fig. 11.

Fig. 11. San Paio de Abeleda, capital, north side of entry to crossing, second quarter of the 12th century. (photo: author)



Fig. 12.

Fig. 12. San Pedro de Valverde, capital probably from the original chancel arch, reused on the north portal, second quarter of the 12th century. (photo: author)

imposts, certain capital designs, and the wealth of figural sculpture at Pantón. In several smaller churches in its orbit, capitals ringed with griffins match a type that was standard in Avila and Segovia.⁷² Though not exactly reproduced at Pantón, similar griffins inhabit more complex capitals there and at Carboentes. The appearance of such a capital near the west end of Santiago Cathedral attests to the role of Castilian artists in mid-century preparations for closing the nave and constructing the west porch.⁷³ For Pantón, links to contemporary activity at Compostela explain the most modern feature of the church: the decorative use of moulded ribs—unprecedented in the Galician countryside—in the semidome of the apse (Fig. 4).⁷⁴

A learned iconographic program, craftsmen with commissions for a vibrant network of aristocratic nunneries, a church of unusual scale and sophistication, and a combination of strong local artistic traditions with echoes of major buildings further afield: these are the features of the church Countess Fronilde began at Pantón in 1158. It was both a worthy heir to the monastic congregations of the Ribeira Sacra and a harbinger of the new Cistercian reforms. The religious vitality of the district can be glimpsed in the list of abbots and abbesses who confirmed a donation to Pantón in 1108. Although Cluny did not secure its foothold at Pantón, the early twelfth-century affiliation of nearby communities at Pombeiro and Valverde was one sign of a renovation of monastic life that accelerated with the initiation, in the 1120s and 1130s, of ambitious buildings at San Paio de Abeleda, Valverde, and Santa Cristina de Ribas de Sil.⁷⁵ By the 1150s, a large church was begun for the nuns of Sobrado de Trives with a sculptor whose imprint is plain on a more distant, but well-networked, monastery, the ancient house of Santiago de Barbadelo, a priory of Samos on the pilgrimage road to Compostela.⁷⁶ The chancel

⁷² Notable examples include those at Santa Comba do Trevoedo and Santa Baia de Beiro, and the exaggerated forms at San Salvador de Brigos, San Cristobo de Fornas, and San Paio de Muradelle: YZQUIERDO, *Lugo*, p. 55-58, 268-272. A related capital of uncertain provenance is in the Museo Arqueológico Provincial de Ourense. For those in Avila and Segovia: VILA DA VILA, p. 257-261, 317-321.

⁷³ James D'EMILIO, "The Building and the Pilgrim's Guide," *The Codex Calixtinus and the Shrine of St. James* (Jakobus Studien; 3), ed. John WILLIAMS and Alison STONES, Tübingen 1992, p. 185-206 (p. 192, 206).

⁷⁴ The rib-vaulted west crypt at Santiago was underway in the 1160s and a ribbed apse appears at Santa Baia de Losón, a Galician church with inscriptions of 1166 and 1171 and independent connections to the crypt and western bays of the nave at Santiago: *ibid.*, p. 191; YZQUIERDO, *Arte medieval* (1), p. 336-340. At Pantón, arched window openings penetrate the apse vault in contrast with earlier Galician apses of similar height, like that at Nogueira, dated by an inscription of 1150: BANGO, *Pontevedra* (see n. 47), p. 191-192, pl. 71.

⁷⁵ For the affiliation of San Vicente de Pombeiro with Cluny in 1109: BISHKO, p. 316-319. The early date of the apse and west portal of Santa Cristina de Ribas de Sil has been overlooked and overshadowed by later work in the upper parts of the nave and cloister linked to the Matean style of Ourense Cathedral.

⁷⁶ For the tenth- and eleventh-century documentation of Barbadelo: FREIRE (see n. 9), vol. 2, p. 627-629. For the Romanesque church: D'EMILIO, *Romanesque Architectural Sculpture*, p. 99-101; YZQUIERDO, *Arte medieval* (1), p. 366-369. The mention of the locality in the *Pilgrim's Guide* of c. 1140, the recovery of the monastery by Samos from King Alfonso VII in 1127, and the quotation of

arches at Sobrado are unmistakably the work of the sculptors of the chancel at Ferreira de Pantón, even if their relative chronology is obscured by the size and diversity of a workforce that surely included specialized, itinerant sculptors not bound to the vagaries of building campaigns.

At Pantón, a large, differentiated atelier brought together architects expert enough to design and erect towers, sculptors who traveled widely in Galicia, and numerous masons. The projected tower at Pantón was the legacy of the monastic traditions of the Ribeira Sacra where wealthy patrons were able to secure skilled craftsmen with ties to Castile. The rich figural sculpture at Pantón and Sobrado de Trives evidences continuing contacts with Castile—probably mediated through Compostela and the use of drawings. Moreover, such drawings gave these craftsmen access to the learned iconography of illuminated manuscripts. Nearby monasteries at Asma, Eiré, and Cangas benefited from the architectural expertise and iconographic sophistication of the artists at Pantón, and the masons employed there would contribute to the building of parish churches in central Galicia for decades.⁷⁷ In this way, distinctive features, like the rounded bottoms of windows or the capital covered with birds, enjoyed a long afterlife.⁷⁸ In fact, the vigorous sculpture at Pantón was to be tamed and translated into a more acceptable idiom when local craftsmen worked at the Cistercian monastery of Oseira, the Hospitalers' church at Incio, and other sites where the sober norms of the Cistercians finally prevailed.⁷⁹

the Flagellation from the early twelfth-century Puerta de Platerías in Santiago all tend to a date in the second quarter of the twelfth century, despite a prevailing consensus for a later date, e.g., Manuel Antonio CASTIÑEIRAS GONZÁLEZ, "La persuasión como motivo central del discurso: la boca del infierno de Santiago de Barbadelo y el Cristo enseñando las llagas del Pórtico de la Gloria," *El tímpano románico. Imágenes, estructuras y audiencias*, ed. Rocío SÁNCHEZ AMEJEIRAS and José Luis SENRA GABRIEL Y GALÁN, Santiago de Compostela 2003, p. 231-258 (p. 235, n. 8).

⁷⁷ Several nearby churches were almost wholly dependent on Pantón, though these modest projects reproduced only a few more crudely rendered formulas, e.g., Santiago de Pradeda—ceded, in part, to Pantón by Countess Fronilde, Santiago de Requeixo, and Santiago de Lousada: YZQUIERDO, *Lugo*, p. 41-42, 49-54.

⁷⁸ Masons who worked nearby at Santo Estevo de Ribas de Miño adopted the rounded window bottoms used at Pantón in churches at Camporramiro, Cova, Pesqueiras, Pescoso, and Goiás: James D'EMILIO, "Working Practices" (see n. 43), p. 72, 76-78, 89-90. There is a good example of the capital with birds at Santo Tomé de Maside and cruder ones at Santo André de Castro de Beiro and Bóveda: SASTRE, "Un eco del *Fisiólogo*" (see n. 53); José RAMÓN Y FERNÁNDEZ OXEA and Emilio DURO PEÑA, "Las iglesias románicas de la tierra de Beiro," *Compostellanum*, vol. 12, 1967, p. 505-561.

⁷⁹ James D'EMILIO, "The Romanesque Churches of Galicia: The Making of a Provincial Art," *Proceedings of the 4th International Conference on Galician Studies*, vol. 2: *Literature and History*, ed. Benigno FERNÁNDEZ SALGADO, Oxford 1997, p. 547-572 (p. 564-567). Builders at Incio had more than a passing acquaintance with Pantón, for they reproduced the unusual rounded bottoms of windows and ribbed semidome of the apse. The patrons, Gutierre Rodríguez and Countess Elvira Osoriz, had interests in the nunnery at Pantón. See above (p. 231) and James D'EMILIO, "The Cistercians and the Romanesque Churches of Galicia: Compostela or Clairvaux?," *Perspectives for an Architecture of Solitude. Essays on Cistercians, Art and Architecture in Honour of Peter Fergusson* (Cîteaux: Studia et Documenta; 13), ed. Terry KINDER, Turnhout 2004, p. 313-327 (p. 319-326).



Fig. 13.



Fig. 14.

Fig. 13. San Salvador de Ferreira de Pantón, west portal, left capital, c. 1200.
(photo: author)

Fig. 14. San Salvador de Ferreira de Pantón, west portal, right capital, c. 1200.
(photo: author)

At Pantón itself, the abandonment of the projected tower and completion of the bare nave followed the subjection of the convent to the Cistercians of Meira in 1175; the simple capitals of the west portal are of a kind popularized in Galicia by the order (Fig. 13, 14).⁸⁰ This striking change, however, is deceptive, for the rich artistic history of the sumptuous chancel at Pantón says much about the artistic, religious, and social matrix that was ready to receive the Cistercians in mid-twelfth century Galicia.⁸¹ The artistic and cultural vitality of strong local monastic traditions and a network of noblewomen paved the way for acceptance of Cistercian practices by religious women and diminished the role of the tutelage of men's houses. For the Cistercian nuns of Pantón, the magnificent apse was neither awkward nor expedient, but an enduring reminder of how the Cistercian reform was successfully grafted onto deep and flourishing roots of local devotion and artistic achievement, and how patrons like Countess Fronilde skillfully navigated the turbulent waters of religious change.

⁸⁰ Compare examples at Meira: VALLE, *Arquitectura cisterciense* (see n. 6), vol. 2, p. 116-117, 120.

⁸¹ The insights of Ermelindo PORTELA SILVA on Galicia's "preparation" for the Cistercians remain apropos: *La colonización cisterciense en Galicia (1142-1250)*, Santiago de Compostela 1981, p. 43-52.

4. Epilogue: The Cistercians and Religious Women in Galicia in the Shadow of Las Huelgas

Within Galicia, Ferreira de Pantón begins and ends the story of the architecture of Cistercian nunneries. A second convent affiliated with Meira, that of Moreira, has disappeared without architectural traces, unless more thorough examination of the parish church on the site one day yields fruit.⁸² It seems puzzling that the flowering of Cistercian nunneries was cut short so abruptly in Galicia. After all, Cistercian colonization of Iberia had begun there; the men's establishments enjoyed remarkable success with the support of the local nobility; and Cistercian nunneries closely tied to the monarchy flourished in neighboring Portugal in the thirteenth century.⁸³ Moreover, the artistic connections of the church at Pantón disclosed a network of religious communities, including several nunneries. In the third quarter of the twelfth century, nunneries at Dozón, Bóveda, and Pantón in central Galicia were richly endowed, and, across Galicia, women's communities won generous privileges and built new churches.⁸⁴ Nonetheless, Pantón and Moreira remain the only ones known to have observed Cistercian customs.

⁸² In 1174, Countess Sancia Fernández—one of Meira's founders—gave Moreira to doña Urraca, an anchorite, placed her under the obedience of Meira, and stipulated the transfer of the site to Meira after her death. In 1229, Aldara García took the habit at Moreira and made her profession to Abbot Fernando of Meira. The papacy arbitrated a dispute between Meira and Bishop Miguel of Lugo (1226-1270) over the nunnery: AHN Códices, no. 114B (*Tombo de Meira*), fol. 197rv, 200v, 280r. The nunnery is cited as late as 1503, but was replaced by a men's priory soon after: AHN Clero, Libros, no. 6431, fol. 102r. See also LÓPEZ MORÁN, "Lugo y Ourense" (see n. 8), p. 77-79. For the parish church: ELIAS VALIÑA SAMPEDRO *et al.*, *Inventario artístico de Lugo y su provincia*, vol. 4, Madrid 1980, p. 274-276.

⁸³ PORTELA, *La colonización cisterciense*. For the royal Portuguese nunneries: MAUR COCHERIL, "Les infantes Teresa, Sancha, Mafalda et l'Ordre de Cîteaux au Portugal," *Revista Portuguesa de Historia*, vol. 16, 1976, p. 33-46; MARIA ALEGRIA FERNANDES MARQUES, "Les premières nonnes cisterciennes au Portugal. Le rôle des femmes de la famille royale," *Cîteaux et les femmes*, ed. Bernadette BARRIÈRE and Marie-Elizabeth HENNEAU, Paris 2001, p. 213-226. Recent studies with extensive bibliography on the Cistercian nuns in Portugal include: MARIA ALEGRIA FERNANDES MARQUES, "O cister feminino em português," *Cistercium*, no. 217, 1999, p. 841-852; FRANCISCO TEIXEIRA, "Les monastères cisterciens féminins au Portugal," *Unanimité et diversité* (see n. 3), p. 557-566; LUÍS MIGUEL RÉPAS, "Os mosteiros cistercienses femininos em Portugal: a herança medieval. Fundações e fundadores," *Fundadores, fundaciones y espacios de vida conventual: nuevas aportaciones al monacato femenino*, ed. María Isabel VIFORCOS MARINAS and María Dolores CAMPOS SÁNCHEZ-BORDONA, León 2005, p. 51-78.

⁸⁴ Besides those of Bóveda, Cangas, Eiré, Órrea, and Sobrado de Trives, cited above, important Romanesque churches still stand from the nunneries of San Salvador de Albeos, San Pedro de Ansemil, Santo Estevo de Chouzán, San Xurxo de Codexeda, San Xoán da Cova, San Cristobal de Dormeá, Santa Baía de Donas, San Pedro de Lobás, San Xiao de Lobios, Santo Estevo de Morás, Santa María de Pesqueiras, and Santa María de Tomiño: BANGO, *Pontevedra*, p. 96-98, 137-138, 171-172, 214, 226-227, 237-239; YZQUIERDO, *Arte Medieval (2)* (see n. 68), 240-242; *id.*, *Lugo*, p. 140-151, 182-186; *Enciclopedia...Pontevedra* (see n. 63), vol. 1, p. 148-152, 183-195, 513-520, 551-558; vol. 2, p. 855-862, 1127-1138. For the convents: FRANCISCO PÉREZ RODRÍGUEZ, "San Jorge de Codexeda: un monasterio femenino bajomedieval," *Studia Monastica*, vol. 33, 1991, p. 51-85; EMILIO DURO PEÑA, "El monasterio de San Pedro de Lobanes," *Compostellanum*, vol. 13, 1968, p. 287-335. For useful catalogs: ENRIQUETA LÓPEZ MORÁN, "El monacato femenino gallego en la alta Edad Media (La Coruña y Pontevedra)," *Nalgures*, vol. 1, 2004, p. 119-174; *ead.*, "Lugo y Ourense"; FRANCISCO JAVIER PÉREZ RODRÍGUEZ, *Mosteiros de Galicia na Idade Media (séculos XII-XV)*. *Guía histórica*, Ourense 2008, p. 127-167, 188-191.



Fig. 15. San Pedro de Vilanova de Dozón, apse, c. 1190s. (photo: author)

The architecture at the nunneries of Dozón and Ramirás hints that the Cistercians had a wider reach than the formal incorporation of only Pantón and Moreira suggests.⁸⁵ At both sites, large Romanesque churches with traditional plans remain intact: a single-cell nave and apse at Dozón (Fig. 15); an aisled nave and three apses at Ramirás.⁸⁶ Despite their extensive carved ornament, the figural decor of Pantón is conspicuously absent. Even routine Compostelan elements, whether billetes or standard foliage, were marginalized at these sites. Instead, their builders relied almost entirely upon foliate and geometric forms disseminated by the Cistercians in the late twelfth century, and there are precise connections to the abbeys of Melón and Oseira.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Dozón: Emilio DURO PEÑA, "El monasterio de San Pedro de Vilanova de Dozón," *Archivos Leoneses*, vol. 22, 1968, p. 7-62; José Ignacio FERNÁNDEZ DE VIANA Y VIEITES, "Problemas en torno al monasterio de San Pedro de Dozón," *Cuadernos de Estudios Gallegos*, vol. 35, 1984-1985, p. 117-123; *Colección...Dozón* (see n. 64). Ramirás: Manuel LUCAS ALVAREZ and Pedro LUCAS DOMÍNGUEZ, *San Pedro de Ramirás: un monasterio femenino en la Edad Media. Colección diplomática*, Santiago de Compostela 1988.

⁸⁶ Dozón: BANGO, *Pontevedra*, p. 120-123; José Carlos VALLE PÉREZ, *La iglesia del monasterio de San Pedro de Vilanova de Dozón*, Lalin 1983; YZQUIERDO, *Arte Medieval (1)*, p. 287-288; Ana María POUSA FERNÁNDEZ, "Monasterio de San Pedro de Vilanova," in *Enciclopedia...Pontevedra*, vol. 1, p. 576-590. Ramirás: YZQUIERDO, *Arte Medieval (1)*, p. 433-435.

⁸⁷ VALLE, *Dozón*, p. 10, 19-21; *id.*, "La implantación de la orden del Cister en Galicia," *Museo de Pontevedra*, vol. 43, 1989, p. 138; D'EMILIO, "The Romanesque Churches," p. 549-551. One capital

At Dozón, at least, the documentary record has also suggested elusive links with Oseira, leading some historians to speak of the monastery's oversight of the nunnery.⁸⁸ Fortuitously perhaps, a transaction with the Cistercians of Sobrado supplied the nuns of Dozón with the wherewithal to finance their church's dedication in 1217.⁸⁹ One must be cautious about inferring institutional links from artistic connections, for the sheer scale of building at Cistercian monasteries in Galicia ensured their dominance of the architectural landscape. Nonetheless, at some male establishments like San Clodio or Xunqueira de Espadañedo, architectural exchanges were one step in wooing new affiliates, and other cases may conceal similar efforts that failed.⁹⁰ For the nunneries of Dozón and Ramirás, they hint at institutional relationships never formalized.

The real impediment to the foundation or affiliation of Cistercian nunneries in Galicia lay in the creation of the congregation of Las Huelgas. This closed the road which Fronilde Fernandez had taken by binding Pantón to the men's house at Meira. Galician aristocrats were evidently loath to subject nunneries to the royal Castilian house.⁹¹ When Fronilde's daughter, Guiomar, confirmed the Cistercian observance and affiliation of Pantón with Meira in 1196, she may well have been preempting the threat of its incorporation in the new congregation.

with birds at Dozón reproduces a type used at Oseira and discussed in SÁNCHEZ AMEJEIRAS, "Monjes y pájaros" (see n. 62), p. 117-122.

⁸⁸ E.g., the testament of Abbess Urraca Gómez (1226): *Colección...Dozón*, doc. 45, p. 67-69; VALLE, "Dozón," p. 4.

⁸⁹ *Colección...Dozón*, doc. 42, p. 64-65.

⁹⁰ The affiliations of San Clodio and Xunqueira de Espadañedo to the Galician abbeys of Melón and Montederramo remain obscure. For Xunqueira, see most recently: Ana GORDÍN VELEIRO and Luisa A. PEÑA PÉREZ, "O mosteiro de Santa María de Xunqueira de Espadañedo nos séculos XII-XVI," *Boletín Auriense*, vol. 38-39, 2008-2009, p. 29-90 (p. 70-73). Francisco Javier PÉREZ RODRÍGUEZ has deferred San Clodio's formal affiliation with Melón (traditionally dated c. 1225) to the fifteenth century: "El éxito historiográfico del Cister en Galicia: una valoración," *Actas. III Congreso internacional sobre el Cister en Galicia y Portugal, Ourense y Oseira, 2005*, 2 vols., Zamora 2006, vol. 1, p. 15-36 (p. 29-31). For the imprint of Cistercian art: SÁNCHEZ AMEJEIRAS, "Las artes figurativas" (see n. 41), p. 107; *ead.*, "Monjes y pájaros," p. 111-116; VALLE, "La implantación" (see n. 6), in *Arte del Cister*, p. 29.

⁹¹ Las Huelgas met resistance elsewhere in the kingdom of León as well, and the new arrangements halted or slowed the affiliation of nunneries with the Cistercians throughout Castile-León. See D'EMILIO, "The Royal Convent" (see n. 1), p. 196-199; for more ample discussion of the strategies used to avoid subjection to Las Huelgas: BAURY, *Les religieuses* (see n. 1), p. 137-145, 152-154. Queen Teresa, the Portuguese *infanta* and first wife of King Alfonso IX, founded a Cistercian nunnery at Villabuena in the Leonese Bierzo, bordering Galicia, but made it subject to nearby Carracedo, like another nunnery in the district, San Miguel de las Dueñas: *Monjes y monasterios* (see n. 5), p. 494 with bibliography; Gregoria CAVERO DOMÍNGUEZ, "Poder y sumisión: las abadesas del monasterio cisterciense de Santa María de Gradefes (ss. XII-XIII)," *Mosteiros cistercienses: história, arte, espiritualidade e património. Actas do congresso realizado em Alcobaça, nos dias 14 a 17 de Junho de 2012*, ed. José Albuquerque CARREIRAS, 3 vols., Alcobaça 2013, vol. 3, p. 67-86 (p. 77); Gregoria CAVERO DOMÍNGUEZ and Miguel Angel GONZÁLEZ GARCÍA, *El monasterio cisterciense de San Miguel de las Dueñas*, León 2000. Teresa later introduced Cistercian observance to the Portuguese nunnery of Lorrvão, see bibliography in n. 83.

II. THE LEONESE NUNNERIES OF CARRIZO AND GRADEFES: PATRONAGE, NUNS, AND CHURCH ARCHITECTURE

Las Huelgas did extend its sway to the heartland of the kingdom of León. There, the nunneries of Carrizo and Gradefes preserve impressive choirs of churches (Fig. 2, 3) begun in the late twelfth century for new communities identifying themselves as Cistercian.⁹² Unlike the apse at Pantón, both choirs have manifold connections with architecture at Cistercian men's houses. For different reasons, each has been overshadowed by the larger buildings of those monasteries and seen as artistically dependent on them for their design and decoration. The unusual ambulatory and radiating chapels at Gradefes—very rare at a Cistercian nunnery—have been too readily grouped with those of Moreruela and other men's churches in Iberia, obscuring their originality.⁹³ By contrast, the three apses at Carrizo have been tied to Romanesque traditions and deemed a simplification of the more ornate apses at Sandoval.

Both nunneries deserve a fresh look. The structure of each community and the background and role of founders and family members differed, reflecting and shaping each nunnery's place in political, social, and religious networks.⁹⁴ In different ways, each maintained a degree of independence from the men's houses, the congregation of Las Huelgas, and the male aristocratic lineages that dominated the region. Instead, more elusive networks of aristocratic women wove a thread of continuity that protected the wealth and status of the two convents and brought them together over the thirteenth century. Revising the history of these communities and their patrons is essential for reassessing their churches and appreciating the originality and inventiveness of their interpretations of Cistercian architecture.

⁹² Studies of the buildings include J.M. LUENGO Y MARTÍNEZ, "Monasterio de Santa María de Carrizo (León)," *Archivo Español de Arte*, vol. 17, 1944, p. 171-178; María Concepción CASADO LOBATO and Antonio CEA GUTIÉRREZ, *Los monasterios de Santa María de Carrizo y Santa María de Sandoval*, León 1986; *id.*, *El monasterio de Santa María de Gradefes*, León 1987; Etelevina FERNÁNDEZ GONZÁLEZ, María Concepción COSMEN ALONSO, and María Victoria HERRÁEZ, *El arte cisterciense en León*, León 1988; VALLE, "La arquitectura en...León" (see n. 7), p. 155-157, 168-170; *Monjes y monasterios*, p. 125-126, 142-144, 479-480, 495-496 with additional bibliography; Artemio Manuel MARTÍNEZ TEJERA, "Carrizo de la Ribera" and "Gradefes de Rueda," *Enciclopedia del románico en Castilla y León. León*, ed. Miguel Ángel GARCÍA GUINEA, José María PÉREZ GONZÁLEZ, and José Manuel RODRÍGUEZ MONTAÑÉS, Aguilar de Campoo 2002, p. 507-532.

⁹³ See n. 7. A fourteenth-century example at Flines and other exceptional choirs are described by Anselme DIMIER, "L'architecture des églises de moniales cisterciennes: essai de classement des différents types de plans," *Cîteaux*, vol. 25, 1974, p. 8-23 (p. 14-15, 22-23); for a recent discussion of choir design in Cistercian nunneries: Raquel ALONSO ÁLVAREZ, "La cabecera de las iglesias cistercienses femeninas en la Corona de Castilla: clausura, cura monialium y representación aristocrática y regia," *Hortus Artium Medievalium*, vol. 15, 2009, p. 341-353.

⁹⁴ For documents: José M. CANAL SÁNCHEZ-PAGÍN, "Documentos del monasterio de Carrizo de la Ribera (León) en la colección Salazar de la Real Academia de la Historia," *Archivos Leoneses*, vol. 32, 1978, p. 381-403; *Colección diplomática del monasterio de Carrizo*, 2 vols. (Fuentes y Estudios de Historia Leonesa; 28, 29), ed. María Concepción CASADO LOBATO, León 1983; *Colección documental del monasterio de Gradefes*, vol. 1 (1054-1299) (Fuentes y Estudios de Historia Leonesa; 71), ed. Taurino BURÓN CASTRO, León 1998.

By combining a thorough reading of charters with a careful comparative analysis of their architecture and decoration, I will propose a comprehensive chronology of their construction and define their relationship to contemporary churches of the Cistercians and other Iberian religious communities.

1. Carrizo and Gradefes: Founders, Abbesses, Communities

Carrizo and Gradefes were both founded by noblewomen shortly after they were widowed. Countess Estefanía Ramírez offered the Cistercians the vill at Carrizo and other estates for the establishment of a nunnery in 1176, the year after her husband, Count Ponce de Minerva, died.⁹⁵ For Gradefes, no foundation charter survives, but a notice in the cartulary of 1594 cites a gift in 1168.⁹⁶ Two original parchments of 1170 record donations to Abbess Teresa and the nuns, supplying surer evidence for the nunnery's existence.⁹⁷ Teresa Pérez, the founder and first abbess, had been widowed in 1164, and the monastic archives preserve a long series of earlier deeds concerning properties she held with her husband, García Pérez.⁹⁸

Like many nunneries, Carrizo was initially governed by a daughter of the founder. In the foundation charter, Countess Estefanía had stipulated that her daughter could decide the convent's affiliation, if the Cistercians declined to accept it.⁹⁹ After her mother's death, María Ponce served as abbess from 1184 until at least 1192.¹⁰⁰ By 1194, Teresa Ramírez was abbess, and, a decade later, she had been succeeded by Teresa Ovárez who would rule until at least 1243.¹⁰¹ Neither

⁹⁵ *Colección...Carrizo*, vol. 1, doc. 38, p. 43-45: *Do et concedo...hordini d [sic]Cistelsensi tali conuentione ut sit abbatia sanctimonialium in Karrizu*. For Ponce de Minerva: Simon BARTON, "Two Catalan Magnates in the Courts of the Kings of León-Castile: the Careers of Ponce de Cabrera and Ponce de Minerva Re-examined," *Journal of Medieval History*, vol. 18, 1992, p. 233-266; *id.*, *Aristocracy* (see n. 4), p. 286-287.

⁹⁶ *Colección...Gradefes*, doc. 104, p. 141. For the cartulary (AHN Clero, Libros, no. 4984): p. xliii-xlviii. More problematic is a charter of 1161 in which Pedro Díez exchanges a property, *in uilla que uocatur Gradephas...in predicta uilla, in monasterio...*, with Teresa Pérez—the future abbess—and her husband: doc. 92, p. 126-127. With no other hint of a community or church, the place name may preserve the memory of an earlier house, thereby explaining the choice of the site for the new foundation a few years later. MANRIQUE, *Cisterciensivm...annalivm*, vol. 2, Lyon, 1642, p. 471-472, dated the foundation to 1166.

⁹⁷ *Colección...Gradefes*, doc. 106-107, p. 143-146.

⁹⁸ A document of Sept. 20, 1164 mentions García's death and the calendar clause names Teresa Pérez as holding half of his former tenancy in Cea: *ibid.*, vol. 1, doc. 97, p. 133-134.

⁹⁹ *Colección...Carrizo*, vol. 1, doc. 38, p. 43-45: *Quod si ordini Cistelcensium non placuerit abbatiam sanctimonialium in Karrizo construere, sit in potestate et prouidentia comitisse domne Marie, filie mee, faciendi ibi abbatiam sub quocumque ordine Deo seruientium sibi placuerit*.

¹⁰⁰ Doña María is titled as countess and abbess in several donations between 1184 and 1191: *ibid.*, vol. 1, doc. 40-42, 44-45, p. 46-53. The early seventeenth-century *Tumbo Antiguo* cites a notice of her death in 1192 from the convent's obituaries, but she donated her bridegift to the nunnery and received a royal grant in 1193, according to documents known from early modern cartularies: p. xix-xx.

¹⁰¹ Relevant documents are indexed in *Colección...Carrizo*, vol. 2, p. 466-467. MANRIQUE (see n. 13), vol. 3, p. 38, mentions a tradition that Abbess Teresa Ramírez was from a noble family of Salamanca. Her patronymic is used in 1194 and 1200: *Colección...Carrizo*, vol. 1, doc. 51, 62, p. 58-59,

appears to have been related to Countess Estefanía whose family's direct authority was evidently short-lived.¹⁰² This is reflected, too, in the number of nuns named in documents, often as dignitaries, from an early date.¹⁰³ In 1191, the prioress, cellarer, and porter confirmed a sale, and, in 1212, witnesses to two leases include the abbess and twelve nuns, eight of them dignitaries.¹⁰⁴ In 1205 and 1207, even calendar clauses of private land sales in the village of Carrizo cite the prioress and cellarer as well as the abbess.¹⁰⁵ The protagonism of these nuns within a well-articulated community is consistent with the looser authority of the founder's family. It suggests that the nunnery recruited successfully from prominent local families and offered paths—a *cursus honorum*—for advancement, at least in the early years.¹⁰⁶

By the mid-thirteenth century, the roles of the abbess and nuns were shifting. Little is known of the origins of Sancha Muñiz (c. 1245-1264) or Estefanía Díez (c. 1265-1284), and neither had distinguished herself at Carrizo before becoming abbess.¹⁰⁷ Under their rule, however, María Fernández served as subprioress, then

68-69. Abbess Teresa Ovárez is first cited with her patronymic in 1203 (doc. 69, p. 77) and it appears regularly thereafter. Either or both women may have first served as prioress: a prioress Teresa confirmed a document of 1191 (doc. 44, p. 50-51) issued by Abbess María; the prioress Teresa named with Abbess Teresa in 1194 (doc. 48, 49, p. 55-57) was likely her successor, Teresa Ovárez. By 1206, the prioress was María García (doc. 78, p. 89-90), possibly the woman listed as cellarer and, with the abbess and prioress, as a witness in the cited documents of 1191 and 1194.

¹⁰² COELHO's speculative effort to link Abbess Teresa Ramírez with the founder is based partly on her own repeated references (*Expresiones del poder* [see n. 3], p. 53, 55) to Abbess María Ponce as "María Ramírez," though she is not, in fact, documented with this patronymic, associated with her maternal grandfather, Count Ramiro Froilaz.

¹⁰³ For charts of the dignitaries of the nunneries of Castile-León: Javier PÉREZ-EMBIWAMBA, "El Císter femenino en Castilla y León. Fundación y organización de las comunidades monásticas (s. XII-XIII)," *Actas das II Jornadas Luso-Espanholas de História Medieval*, 3 vols., Porto 1989, vol. 3, p. 1077-1125 (p. 1114-1125); for Carrizo, see also COELHO, *Expresiones del poder*, p. 166-170, with some discrepancies in both charts.

¹⁰⁴ *Colección...Carrizo*, vol. 1, doc. 44, 88-89, p. 50-51, 101-103. Witnesses of a pact of 1200 include the subprioress, cellarer, and porter; four dignitaries subscribed an agreement with the town council of Astorga in 1208: doc. 62, 83, p. 68-69, 95-96. A document of 1180, known from a copy, names the choirmistress (*cantora*) and cellarer in the corroboration: CANAL, "Carrizo," doc. 9, p. 398.

¹⁰⁵ *Colección...Carrizo*, vol. 1, doc. 73, 78, p. 85, 89-90.

¹⁰⁶ There are examples of such ascent to the office of prioress in Castilian nunneries, but the designation of abbesses remained more directly under the control of patrons: BAURY, *Les religieuses* (see n. 1), p. 58, 69.

¹⁰⁷ No Sancha had appeared among seventeen nuns named in 1235, but Sancha Muñiz was a witness, with no office, among the dignitaries in 1237, and abbess in 1245: *Colección...Carrizo*, vol. 1, doc. 200, 208, 235, p. 219, 226-227, 256-257. Her origins in a knightly Leonese family are confirmed by an undated document (vol. 2, doc. 581, p. 256-257) tallying compensation she paid to numerous residents of Cisneros for damages inflicted by her brother, Pedro Muñiz. There is no sign of Estefanía Díez before she appeared as abbess in 1265: *ibid.*, doc. 409, p. 47. It is tempting to identify her with the cellarer, doña Estefanía, documented at Las Huelgas from 1242 to 1244 and in 1262: *Documentación del monasterio de Las Huelgas de Burgos (1231-1262)* (Fuentes Medievales Castellano-Leonesas; 31), ed. José Manuel LIZOAIN GARRIDO, Burgos 1985, e.g., doc. 330, 339-340, 523, 527, p. 110, 122-124, 361-362, 366-368. By the end of 1265, María Rinalt, formerly porter, was cellarer at Las Huelgas: *Documentación del monasterio de Las Huelgas de Burgos (1263-1283)* (Fuentes Medievales Castellano-Leonesas; 32), ed. José Manuel LIZOAIN GARRIDO, Burgos 1987, doc. 543, p. 21-22.

prioress, for about forty years.¹⁰⁸ Over these decades, the dignitaries largely vanished from the documents, while men of the abbess's household began to appear.¹⁰⁹ In 1252, a testament distinguishes specifically between the abbess and convent as recipients of a bequest.¹¹⁰ In what had likely become a more cloistered convent, the prestige and public role of the abbess grew distant from the everyday management and internal affairs of the community.¹¹¹ That is the background for the naming of María González, daughter of the powerful aristocrats, Gonzalo Morán and Elvira Rodríguez, as abbess in 1289.¹¹²

Two generations earlier, the long tenure of Teresa Ovárez as abbess had paved the way for this family's involvement with the monastery.¹¹³ One half-sister, Marina Arias, had served Teresa as prioress; another, Elvira Arias, married Morán Pérez, a client of Queen Berenguela.¹¹⁴ Morán Pérez rose through royal service initiating a "domestic dynasty," as his son, Gonzalo, followed his example, accumulating high offices under King Alfonso X.¹¹⁵ By 1250, Gonzalo had married

¹⁰⁸ Two nuns named María Fernández appeared in a witness list of 1235; one purchased properties in 1242; by 1245, María Fernández was subprioress and, in 1253, she went from subprioress to prioress: *Colección... Carrizo*, vol. 1, doc. 200, 228-229, 235, 292, 294, p. 219, 249-250, 256-257, 316-319. After 1259, she is only mentioned in 1277 and 1284: doc. 340, p. 365-366; vol. 2, doc. 483, 526, p. 129-131, 188-190.

¹⁰⁹ In 1266, the administrator (*casero*) of the abbess's household pledged to settle a debt; in 1273, a cleric of the abbess witnessed a charter; in 1277, her *casero* and two clerics witnessed one; and two chaplains and three "men" of the abbess witnessed a property exchange in 1284: *ibid.*, doc. 413, 444, 486, 536, p. 52, 83-84, 134, 203-205.

¹¹⁰ *Colección... Carrizo*, vol. 1, doc. 285, p. 307-308, cited by MARIÑO (see n. 3), p. 133, n. 54.

¹¹¹ The General Chapter's legislation on nunneries peaked from the 1220s through the 1250s and reiterated the rigid imposition of claustration in the statutes of 1213 and 1218: Ghislain BAURY, "Émules puis sujettes de l'ordre cistercien. Les cisterciennes de Castille et d'ailleurs face au chapitre général aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles," *Cîteaux*, vol. 52, 2001, p. 27-60, esp. p. 44-48, 56-57; Anne E. LESTER, *Creating Cistercian Nuns. The Women's Religious Movement and Its Reform in Thirteenth-Century Champagne*, Ithaca 2011, p. 87-96. This may have had an effect, even if Carrizo and other Iberian houses resisted the order's mandates in other areas. See the discussion of the nuns' personal properties, for example, in Maria Filomena COELHO NASCIMENTO, "Casadas con Dios. Linajes femeninos y monacato en los siglos XII y XIII," *Historia de las mujeres en España y América Latina*, vol. 1 (*De la Prehistoria a la Edad Media*), ed. María Ángeles QUEROL *et al.*, 2nd ed., Madrid 2006, p. 693-711 (p. 706-709).

¹¹² For her first appearance as abbess: *Colección... Carrizo*, vol. 2, doc. 551, p. 221-222. She is last cited as abbess in 1297 and Aldara Fernández—the former prioress—was abbess by 1299: doc. 570, 573, p. 242, 245-246.

¹¹³ On the prominence of the Morán family in the documents of Carrizo: *ibid.*, vol. 1, p. xxii-xxiii, xxix-xxxii; for thorough discussion of the family: María Filomena DA COSTA C. NASCIMENTO, "Los Morán: un linaje nobiliario en León (siglo XIII)," *Astórica*, vol. 8, 1990, p. 75-142, and vol. 9, 1991, p. 11-64.

¹¹⁴ Prioress Marina Arias is identified as the abbess's sister in 1223 (*Colección... Carrizo*, vol. 1, doc. 128, p. 146) and cited between 1220 and 1226: doc. 109, 150, p. 126-127, 168-169. No prioress was among the dignitaries in 1229; Aldara Peláiz held the office by 1234: doc. 175, 195, p. 192, 212. Elvira's bridegift (*carta de arras*), preserved at Carrizo (doc. 104, p. 118-119), is dated 1218, the year Morán first appears as a tenant of the queen.

¹¹⁵ For a brief summary of Morán's career in the service of Queen Berenguela and King Alfonso IX, his son's ascent, and their characterization as a "domestic dynasty": Janna BIANCHINI, *The Queen's Hand. Power and Authority in the Reign of Berenguela of Castile*, Philadelphia 2012, p. 152-153; for

Elvira Rodríguez, a Leonese noblewoman believed by some to have been a lover of Alfonso X and mother of his illegitimate son, Alfonso Fernández.¹¹⁶ Elvira's sister had professed at Gradefes by 1251, her daughters later governed Carrizo and Gradefes, and she and her husband forged relationships with a dizzying array of religious communities before their deaths in the last decades of the century.¹¹⁷ Evidently, such bonds cemented the power and status of a new nobility who owed their meteoric ascent to their ties to the crown.

María Filomena Coelho has suggested that Morán Pérez had a distant kinship with the Froilaz family to which Countess Estefanía belonged.¹¹⁸ In other Iberian religious houses, collateral branches of a founder's line or lesser families took over in their own rise to prominence.¹¹⁹ It would be a mistake, though, to see the installation of Gonzalo Morán's daughters as abbesses of Carrizo and Gradefes simply as signs that a male lineage had made the nunneries instruments of their power.¹²⁰ For one thing, the placement of three of Gonzalo's offspring in ecclesiastical offices proved a bad bet: his only remaining son, Gonzalo Morán the younger, died prematurely in 1292 in the battle for Tarifa, cutting off a promising secular career and ending the lineage.¹²¹ More to the point, a loose sisterhood of powerful

more detailed documentation of their royal service and that of Gonzalo Morán the younger: DA COSTA C. NASCIMENTO, "Los Morán," p. 34-47.

¹¹⁶ For the claims that Elvira Rodríguez bore a son to Alfonso X: *ibid.*, p. 92-94; for evidence that Gonzalo and Elvira were married by 1250: *Colección...Carrizo*, vol. 1, doc. 266, p. 287-288. In 1256, Gonzalo transferred properties and rents to Elvira in return for two thousand maravedis that had been his bridegift to her—the document (doc. 312, p. 336-337) is not the *carta de arras* as sometimes said, e.g., DA COSTA C. NASCIMENTO, "Los Morán," p. 109-110.

¹¹⁷ For Elvira's sister, Mari Rodríguez: *Colección...Gradefes* (see n. 94), doc. 486, p. 557-558. Abbess María González of Carrizo and Abbess Marina González of Gradefes (1286-1305) were sisters: *ibid.*, doc. 550, p. 626-628; *Colección...Carrizo*, vol. 2, doc. 573, p. 245-246. Their brother, Alfonso González, was abbot of Santa Marta de Tera: *ibid.*, doc. 570, p. 242. The family's archives at Carrizo and other records document the remarkable religious patronage and connections of Gonzalo Morán and Elvira Rodríguez, including their lifetime tenure over properties of diverse religious communities—from bishops and cathedral chapters to monasteries and military orders (examples are listed in vol. 1, p. xxvii-xxix; vol. 2, p. 261); the installation of parish priests (e.g., vol. 2, doc. 442, 543, p. 81, 212); their inclusion by the Franciscan Minister-General in the order's prayers and the concession of burial privileges to Elvira (doc. 438, 439, p. 78); the naming of the widowed Elvira as a canoness of San Isidoro de León (doc. 556, p. 226-227); and her endowment of a family chapel in 1284 in the cloister of Astorga Cathedral where her husband was buried (*Colección documental de la catedral de Astorga*, vol. 2 [1126-1299] [Fuentes y Estudios de Historia Leonesa; 78], ed. Gregoria CAVERO DOMÍNGUEZ and Encarnación MARTÍN LÓPEZ, León 2000, doc. 1412, p. 523). The family used Carrizo not only as a repository for their archives, but also as a treasury where Teresa Morán (Gonzalo's sister) had deposited cushions, gold rings, sleeves embroidered with pearls and gold filigree, and other objects of value according to her will of 1269: *Colección...Carrizo*, vol. 2, doc. 428, p. 66-70.

¹¹⁸ Among other options (DA COSTA C. NASCIMENTO, "Los Morán," p. 88-90), she posits a relationship to the Froilaz because Ramiro (Froilaz?) and Diego Frolez were among *nostros parentes propincos* [sic] charged to enforce an agreement between Morán Pérez and Elvira Arias in 1218: *Colección...Carrizo*, vol. 2, doc. 576, p. 248-250.

¹¹⁹ BAURY, *Les religieuses* (see n. 1), p. 63, notes the rise of the Rojas at the nunnery of Vileña, a foundation of the Haro family, by the early fourteenth century.

¹²⁰ See, for example, the discussion in DA COSTA C. NASCIMENTO, "Los Morán," p. 100-101.

¹²¹ Gonzalo Morán the younger served King Sancho IV: *Colección...Carrizo*, vol. 2, doc. 552, p. 222-223; for his career and death: DA COSTA C. NASCIMENTO, "Los Morán," p. 91, 43-44. The

women—not a tight patrilineal family—wove the thread of continuity in Carrizo’s governance for a century: some were already connected with the convent, some belonged to the Morán family, others married into it. One way these women advanced their own positions—and that of the nunnery—was by using strategic liaisons to partner with men who could furnish resources, protection, and connections, and whose female kin could enrich and administer the house. One wonders if Queen Berenguela herself—so intimately tied to Las Huelgas—had a hand in the marriage of her loyal tenant, Morán Pérez, to a woman whose sisters governed Carrizo.¹²² At the end of the thirteenth century, María Ramírez, widow of Gonzalo Morán the younger, gave Carrizo bountiful gifts, and her sister, Juana Ramírez, ruled the nunnery in the early fourteenth century.¹²³ From the abbacies of Teresa Ovárez through that of Juana Ramírez, a chain of women exercised power, anchored the life and prosperity of the convent, and outlived the lineage of the Morán.

The fortunes of Carrizo and Gradefes converged in the late thirteenth century, but earlier documents of Gradefes sketch a very different community. Most notably, they are far more reticent about individual nuns.¹²⁴ In 1198, the agreement with the men’s house at Sandoval probably demanded the naming of the prioress alongside the abbess.¹²⁵ Likewise, the settlement of a dispute with the monastery of Eslonza in 1207 motivated the inclusion of several nuns among the witnesses, but, significantly, none of the five who accompany the abbess—including the founder’s granddaughter, doña Aldonza—are titled as dignitaries.¹²⁶ Only in the second quarter of the thirteenth century did dignitaries enter the documents periodically, as the rule of Abbess Aldonza López—and with it, that of the founder’s family—drew to a close.¹²⁷

survival of the family archive at Carrizo may say more about the untimely extinction of the line than about their control over the nunnery.

¹²² The queen’s majordomo, García Fernández de Villamayor, was the key patron of the nunnery of Villamayor de los Montes: he took sole possession of the convent in 1223, received royal privileges for it as a Cistercian nunnery, ceded it to Las Huelgas in his endowment of 1228, and sponsored construction of a magnificent choir for his family burial place: D’EMILIO, “The Royal Convent” (see n. 1), p. 243-247.

¹²³ *Colección...Carrizo*, vol. 1, p. xxiii; vol. 2, p. 235; DA COSTA C. NASCIMENTO, “Los Morán,” p. 101.

¹²⁴ One may also contrast the Leonese nunnery of Carbajal where several nuns and dignitaries, witnessed late twelfth- and early thirteenth-century documents: *Colección documental del monasterio de Santa María de Carbajal (1093-1461)* (Fuentes y Estudios de la Historia Leonesa; 87), ed. Santiago DOMÍNGUEZ SANCHEZ, León 2000, doc. 29, 56, 58, 80, 84, 99, 109, 113, 120, p. 90-91, 122-125, 149-150, 155-156, 173-175, 187-189, 193-194, 200-201.

¹²⁵ *Colección...Gradefes*, doc. 243, p. 300-301.

¹²⁶ The settlement was reached at Sandoval: *ibid.*, doc. 297, p. 364-365. Doña Aldonza followed the abbess in the list. When Eslonza sold Gradefes its half of the disputed properties two months later (doc. 299, p. 367-368), at least eight witnesses were monks, but no nuns appeared. In 1199, five nuns and Prioress María Rodríguez witnessed a transaction (doc. 257, p. 319-320) involving properties from the bridegifts of two nuns, a mother and daughter.

¹²⁷ Eight nuns—six of them dignitaries—and the abbess confirmed a large sale to the cathedral chapter of León in 1224: *Colección documental del archivo de la catedral de León (775-1230)*, vol. 6 (1188-1230) (Fuentes y Estudios de Historia Leonesa; 46), ed. José María FERNÁNDEZ CATÓN, León

The descendants of Teresa Pérez had retained a firm grip at Gradefes for three generations—nearly seventy years. In 1184 and 1185, Abbess Teresa sold properties to Guntrude García and Tello Pérez—her daughter and son-in-law—and she was accompanied each time by the prioress, María García.¹²⁸ Her unusual participation and her patronymic suggest that she was the daughter of the abbess, joining a transaction among family members.¹²⁹ Teresa was succeeded a few months later by Abbess María—once referred to as María García—and it is plausible that she was the former prioress.¹³⁰ Moreover, Abbess María of Gradefes witnessed a gift of Alfonso Téllez to Sahagún in 1201.¹³¹ Again, her appearance makes sense if she was the aunt of Alfonso Téllez and his brothers, Tello and Suero Téllez, whose names come after hers.¹³² In 1223, María was followed as abbess by Aldonza López, presumably the nun mentioned in 1207 and the woman cited earlier as the founder's granddaughter.¹³³ She would serve until 1233 and, for the next decade, the prioress was María Téllez, whose patronymic or surname suggests a relationship to the lineage of Tello Pérez, by now quite influential in the region's religious life.¹³⁴

1991, doc. 1917, p. 411-414. In 1225, the prioress, cellarer, sacristan, and porter are named: *Colección...Gradefes*, doc. 419, p. 491. Various dignitaries witnessed documents of 1233, 1240, 1242, 1244, 1253, 1257, 1262, and 1265, and eight are named in 1268: doc. 444, 470, 473, 478, 483, 489, 498, 507, 509-511, p. 513-515, 539-540, 542-543, 548-549, 554-555, 561-562, 571-572, 581-587.

¹²⁸ *Colección diplomática del monasterio de Sahagún (857-1300)*, vol. 4 (1110-1199) (Fuentes y Estudios de Historia Leonesa; 38), ed. José Antonio FERNÁNDEZ FLÓREZ, León 1991, doc. 1410, p. 390-391; *Colección...Gradefes*, doc. 186, p. 235-236. Elsewhere, Abbess Teresa identifies the children of Tello Pérez as her grandchildren and the cousins of another granddaughter, Aldonza López (*filiis Telli Petri, meis neptis et primis de me Eslonza Lopez*): doc. 198, p. 249-250 (The appearance of Abbess Teresa suggests that the date [1187] should be 1186, a date consistent with all of the prelates and officers in the calendar clause). Aldonza López's father was Lope Didaz, so her mother—identified as doña Azenda in a document of 1218 (doc. 370, p. 442-443; see also doc. 397, 399, p. 469-470, 472)—must have been another daughter of Teresa Pérez: doc. 160, p. 204-205. The bridegift of Tello Pérez to Guntrude García (1161) was preserved at Gradefes: doc. 91, p. 124-126.

¹²⁹ For the family: José CANAL, "Doña Teresa Pérez, fundadora del monasterio de Gradefes, su familia, su vida," *Cistercium*, no. 175, 1988, p. 569-586 (p. 580-584). COELHO, *Expresiones del poder* (see n. 3), p. 35, 48, and CAVERO, "Poder y sumisión" (see n. 91), 69, are more circumspect about the identification of María García.

¹³⁰ Abbess Teresa last appears on April 18, 1186 and María was abbess by May 21, 1186: *Colección...Gradefes*, doc. 190-191, p. 240-242. This is consistent with the entry of Abbess Teresa's death on May 10 in a Cistercian calendar: Modesto SALCEDO TAPIA, "Vida de don Tello Téllez de Meneses, Obispo de Palencia," *Publicaciones de la Institución Tello Téllez de Meneses*, no. 53, 1985, p. 79-266 (p. 105, n. 24). Her successor was cited as María G. in 1207 at Sandoval and as María García in 1221: *Colección...Gradefes*, doc. 297, 391, p. 364-365, 463-464.

¹³¹ *Colección diplomática del monasterio de Sahagún (857-1300)*, vol. 5 (1200-1300) (Fuentes y Estudios de Historia Leonesa; 39), ed. José Antonio FERNÁNDEZ FLÓREZ, León 1994, doc. 1545, p. 20-22.

¹³² SALCEDO, p. 94, 104, recognizes that Guntrude García and Abbess María were sisters, but he relies unconvincingly on early modern genealogies to make both the daughters of a García Ordóñez, the protagonist in a document of 1177: *Colección...Gradefes*, doc. 136, p. 178-179.

¹³³ For her first appearance (1223) and Marina Suárez's succession (1234): *ibid.*, doc. 408, 450, p. 480-481, 518-520.

¹³⁴ She is cited as prioress between 1233 and 1242: *ibid.*, doc. 444, 457-458, 463, 470, 473, 478, p. 513-515, 526-527, 532-534, 539-540, 542-543, 548-549. COELHO, *Expresiones del poder*, p. 48,

With the ending of the rule of the founder's descendants, more nuns enter the record, but documents themselves dwindle and there are signs of an increase in outside intervention at the house. In 1244, a donor looked to the abbess of Las Huelgas to ensure, in her visitations, that income from her gifts was spent on the nuns' garments.¹³⁵ Two decades later, Abbess Orfresa (1261-1262) likely had come from Carrizo.¹³⁶ In the second half of the thirteenth century, monks and dignitaries of the Cistercian abbeys of Sandoval, Matallana, and Benavides witnessed documents of Gradefes, perhaps signaling greater oversight of the convent's affairs.¹³⁷

By contrast, Carrizo stood within a wider network of religious houses from its earliest days, due to the status and patronage of its founder. Countess Estefanía belonged to one of the most powerful lineages in the kingdom of León, and her daughter, Abbess María Ponce, had been wed to the Galician count Rodrigo Álvarez of Sarria, founder of the military order of Montegaudio, and son of the founders of the Cistercian house at Meira.¹³⁸ Countess Estefanía and Count Ponce

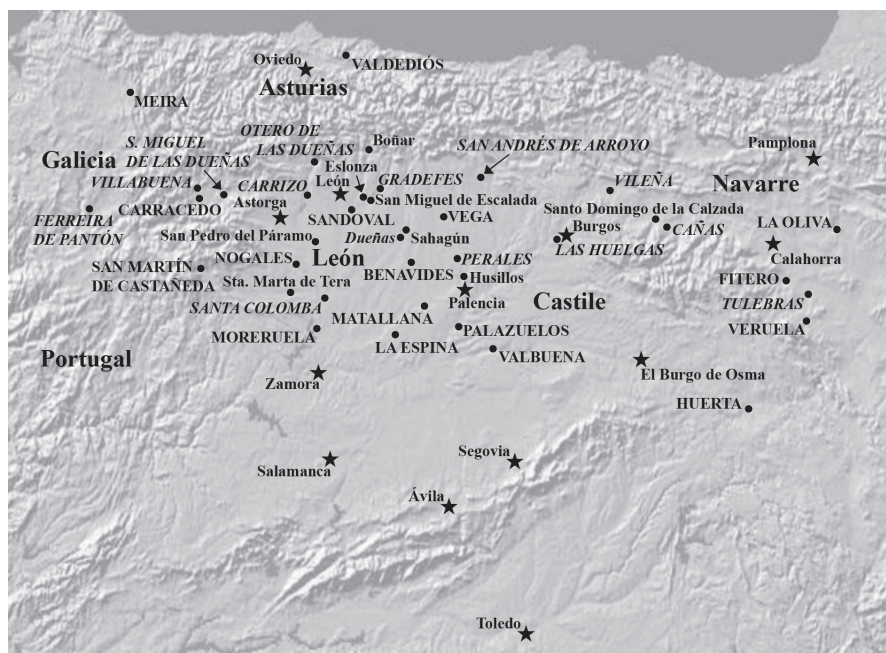
suggested the family tie. Tello Pérez and Guntrude García founded the Cistercian abbey of Matallana in 1185 and one son, Tello Téllez, was bishop of Palencia (1208-1246): GARCÍA FLORES, *Valladolid*, p. 370-373 (see n. 3); SALCEDO. Another member of the lineage, María Alfonso, appeared briefly as abbess in two documents of 1253 (*Colección...Gradefes*, doc. 489-490, p. 561-563), but was later a nun of Arouca in Portugal where she may have accompanied her brothers in 1256. I thank Luis RÊPAS for sharing his discovery of the later career of the abbess and her place in the Téllez lineage, a part of his forthcoming dissertation, *Esposas de Cristo. As comunidades cistercienses femininas na Idade Média*, Universidade Nova de Lisboa.

¹³⁵ *Colección...Gradefes*, doc. 482, p. 553-554.

¹³⁶ Abbess Orfresa: *ibid.*, doc. 504, 506-507, p. 577-578, 580-582. I identify her with the nun, Orfresa Fernández, who left Carrizo extensive properties in 1260 (*Colección...Carrizo*, vol. 2, doc. 378, p. 9-11; see also doc. 465, p. 108-110), was named there—with her sister Elvira at times—between 1251 and 1260 (vol. 1, doc. 281, 294, 302, p. 303-304, 318-319, 325-326), and whose status was indicated by the honorific *doña* and her place alongside Abbess Sancha Muñiz (doc. 315-316, 318, p. 339-343). In 1288, Abbess Urraca López of Cañas left 200 maravedis to her niece Mencia López of Gradefes and her teacher: BAURY, *Les religieuses* (see n. 1), p. 81.

¹³⁷ The sacristan and cellarer of Matallana witnessed a document of 1257; gifts by two novices in 1265 were sealed by the abbots of Sandoval and Benavides and witnessed by dignitaries of both houses; the porter of Sandoval witnessed charters of 1277 and 1279: *Colección...Gradefes*, doc. 498, 509, 510, 523, 527, p. 571-572, 583-585, 598-599, 601-602. A monk of La Espina, don Diago, residing at Gradefes (*que mora en Gradefes*), witnessed a private document of 1251 (*Colección...Carrizo*, vol. 1, doc. 267, p. 288-289) and is likely the *Don Diego el frade* who led the witnesses to a gift to the nuns in 1242 (*Colección...Gradefes*, doc. 476, p. 545-546). The professions of obedience of Abbesses María González (1255) and Ónega (1269) to Bishop Martín of León are recorded: *Colección documental del archivo de la catedral de León (775-1230)*, vol. 8 (1230-1269) (Fuentes y Estudios de Historia Leonesa; 54), ed. José Manuel RUIZ ASENCIO, León 1993, doc. 2158, 2282, p. 265, 491; see CAVERO, "Poder y sumisión," p. 70-73.

¹³⁸ Her father was Count Ramiro Froilaz. On the family: *Colección...Carrizo*, vol. 1, p. xvii-xviii; FRANCISCO de CADENAS ALLENDE, "Los Flagínez: una familia leonesa de hace mil años," *Estudios genealógicos, heráldicos y nobiliarios en honor de Vicente de Cadenas y Vicent*, 2 vols., Madrid 1978, vol. 1, p. 177-211 (p. 190-197); BARTON, *Aristocracy* (see n. 4), p. 247-248, 288-289. For Rodrigo Álvarez and María Ponce: JOSÉ M. SÁNCHEZ-PAGÍN, "El conde don Rodrigo Álvarez de Sarria, fundador de la orden militar de Monte Gaudio," *Compostellanum*, vol. 28, 1983, p. 373-397 (p. 386-392); BARTON, *Aristocracy*, p. 158-159, 290. Documents cited in these sources refute the contrary view (e.g., COELHO, *Expresiones del poder*, p. 49, n. 68) of a marriage to Diego Martínez de Villamayor.



Map 2. León, Castile, and Navarre: Diocesan seats and sites mentioned in the text.

- ★ Diocesan seat
- CISTERCIAN HOUSE
- Nunnery
- Other churches

de Minerva had founded the Cistercian abbey at Sandoval in 1167.¹³⁹ Shortly after her husband's death, she summoned monks from Sobrado to set up another Cistercian house at Benavides in his memory.¹⁴⁰ Sandoval and Carrizo were brought together by their common stake in the patrimony of their founders. In 1189, a monk of Sandoval wrote up an agreement between Abbess María Ponce and her sister over the division of their father's estates.¹⁴¹ The abbot of Sandoval witnessed documents of Carrizo in 1194, and, by 1214, the two houses shared jurisdiction

¹³⁹ The foundation charter, known from MANRIQUE (see n. 96), vol. 2, p. 451-452, is reproduced in *Documentos del monasterio de Villaverde de Sandoval (siglos XII-XV)*, ed. Guillermo CASTAN LANASPA, Salamanca 1981, doc. 4, p. 45-46.

¹⁴⁰ *Tumbos...Sobrado* (see n. 31), vol. 2, doc. 40, p. 68-69. For bibliography: *Monjes y monasterios* (see n. 5), p. 477.

¹⁴¹ *Documentos...Sandoval*, doc. 25, p. 70-71. María Ponce is titled only as countess, but the nunnery of Carrizo is cited in the document. As countess, she made a gift to Sandoval in 1185: *ibid.*, doc. 21-22, p. 66-68.

over Molinaseca with the bishop of Astorga.¹⁴² The long reach of the founder's family linked the nunnery to other houses as well: in 1199, it received a gift from Gonzalo Pérez, abbot of Husillos and grandson of Countess Estefanía.¹⁴³

Countess Estefanía's foundation at Carrizo followed her establishment of men's houses at Sandoval and Benavides, and it was validated by a distinguished assembly of ecclesiastics. Seven bishops, five abbots, and seven dignitaries of the cathedral chapter of León confirmed the charter of September 10, 1176 granting Carrizo to the Cistercians.¹⁴⁴ The charter—exceptionally at this early date—refers specifically to the prospect of the Cistercian order establishing and accepting the new nunnery.¹⁴⁵ In December 1175, a similar gathering had approved the affiliation of Ferreira de Pantón with Meira, and, in February 1175, the archbishop of Toledo had accepted the petition of King Alfonso VIII and Queen Leonor of Castile to license the affiliation of the nunnery of San Clemente with the Cistercians.¹⁴⁶ The creation of three Cistercian nunneries within two years, with the blessing of the ecclesiastical hierarchy and the patronage of the crown and the highest nobility, points to a directed effort to organize the life of religious women, perhaps as a result of the visit of the papal legate, Cardinal Hyacinth, in 1173.¹⁴⁷ Countess Estefanía was well placed to further such reforms, for she would certainly have been aware of the recent affiliations in Galicia and Toledo. In February 1176, she had turned to Abbot Gil of the Galician house of Sobrado—one of the signatories to Pantón's affiliation with Meira—for her new abbey at Benavides. King Alfonso VIII and Queen Leonor, sponsors of the nunnery of San Clemente, witnessed the countess's foundation of Benavides and, three years later, offered possessions and immunities to the house.¹⁴⁸

Initially, Gradefes and its abbesses remained at the margin of these networks. In 1157, Teresa Pérez and her husband had pledged that the surviving spouse would finance the making of a tomb at Sahagún, but there is no further evidence for close ties between the great abbey and Gradefes.¹⁴⁹ As abbess, Teresa Pérez made a gift in 1184 to San Martín de Castañeda, a Benedictine monastery in Sanabria, quite

¹⁴² *Colección...Carrizo*, vol. 1, doc. 48, 50, 94, p. 55-58, 108-109.

¹⁴³ CANAL, "Carrizo" (see n. 94), doc. 12, p. 400-401. Abbot Gonzalo was also present in 1221 when the prioress and choirmistress went to San Marcos in León, headquarters of the Order of Santiago, to retrieve a wayward nun: *Colección...Carrizo*, vol. 1, doc. 121, p. 139-140.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, doc. 38, p. 43-45. The parchment is reproduced in Gregoria CAVERO DOMÍNGUEZ, *El esplendor del Cister en León (siglos XII-XIII)*, León 2007, p. 94-95.

¹⁴⁵ See n. 95, 99. BAURY, "Émules" (see n. 111), p. 37-38, notes the precocious provisions for a formal tie.

¹⁴⁶ MANRIQUE (see n. 13), vol. 3, p. 27. See José Carlos VIZUETE MENDOZA, "El monasterio de San Clemente en la Edad Media: los documentos reales, estudio y regesta," *Anales Toledanos*, vol. 30, 1993, p. 7-57 (p. 12-15, 37); *id.*, "El Cister en Toledo: fundación y exención del monasterio de San Clemente," *Cistercium*, no. 192, 1993, p. 155-161.

¹⁴⁷ One might add the placement of the anchorite doña Urraca under the obedience of Meira in 1174, see n. 82.

¹⁴⁸ *Tumbos...Sobrado*, vol. 2, doc. 40-41, p. 68-70.

¹⁴⁹ *...des de nostro auere ad illa sepultura de Sancti Facundi facere ad nos C^m morabetinos de auro...*: *Colección...Gradefes*, doc. 84, p. 115-116.

a distance away, where her brother, Rodrigo Pérez, was buried.¹⁵⁰ Relations with local Cistercian houses, however, were not frequent in the first decades of the convent's history. Among its original parchments, the Cistercians are not mentioned until 1181 when Isidoro Nicolás arranged for his eventual burial at the monastery.¹⁵¹ The community was involved in various property settlements with men's houses.¹⁵² Not surprisingly, the neighboring men's community of San Miguel de Escalada occasionally appears in early documents of Gradefes.¹⁵³ That institution was itself something of an oddity, for the old Mozarabic foundation had been affiliated with the canons of Saint-Ruf in Avignon by Emperor Alfonso VII and his sister, the *Infanta* Sancha, in 1156.¹⁵⁴

The most important reason for the early isolation of Gradefes and the tight control of its founder's descendants may lie in the origins of Teresa Pérez and her nuns. José Canal strove valiantly to defend her Leonese pedigree as a descendant of the counts of Carrión. The crucial connection must be that between Teresa and her alleged father, Count Pedro López, the son of Count Lope Díaz. Here, however, the author relies on circumstantial evidence and wisely admits that the weak proofs afford only a "twenty-five percent probability."¹⁵⁵ There is an explanation for the difficulties in tracing Teresa's family: she was not of local origin. In a field

¹⁵⁰ *El Tumbo del monasterio de San Martín de Castañeda*, ed. Ángel RODRÍGUEZ GONZÁLEZ, León 1973, doc. 77, p. 124-125.

¹⁵¹ *Colección... Gradefes*, doc. 148, p. 192-193: *...do et concedo corpus meum sepulture christiane, post mortem, monasterio beate Marie de Gradephes, cisterciensis ordinis...* There is no evidence that this reflects a late adoption of Cistercian observance as implied by MARINO (see n. 3), p. 118. Isidoro's close association with the nunnery, his status, and the motive for his gift could explain the specific reference. He witnessed several charters of the nunnery and is named until at least 1191 when several prelates and counts confirmed his bridegift to María Pérez—preserved at Gradefes (*Colección... Gradefes*, doc. 214, p. 266-267), underlining his status and suggesting his presence at the royal court. The nun, María Pérez, who witnessed the settlement with Eslonza in 1207 may have been his widow. Charters occasionally mention the rule or order of St. Benedict (doc. 138, 293, 311, p. 180-182, 359-360, 381-382) and the scribe Gil referred to the Cistercian order specifically in charters (1215-1216) of the *do et offero... meum corpus et animam* type: doc. 343, 346-347, 353, 407, p. 413-414, 416-419, 424-425, 479-480.

¹⁵² The disputes with Sandoval (1198) and Eslonza (1207)—the latter not a Cistercian house—are cited above, n. 125-126. With shared interests in Quintanilla del Páramo, monks of Sandoval witnessed documents of Gradefes regarding properties there, e.g., *ibid.*, doc. 250-252, p. 309-314. In 1233, the convent issued a lease to Miguel Fernández and his wife, and the terms included Miguel's assistance in cases at the royal court and in disputes with San Isidoro de León and the Asturian monastery of Cornellana. In 1236, the abbots of La Espina, Matallana, and Sandoval investigated and resolved a dispute between Gradefes and Valdediós after a hearing before the abbots of Carracedo, Moreruela, and Sandoval; in 1253, dignitaries of the cathedral chapter of León heard and resolved a dispute with Sandoval over possession of a church: doc. 444, 452, 488, p. 513-515, 521-522, 560-561.

¹⁵³ The monks of Escalada sold a property to Gradefes in 1198: *ibid.*, doc. 245, p. 303-304. Private transactions involving the monks also found their way into the archive of Gradefes: doc. 123, 208, p. 165-166, 259-260.

¹⁵⁴ In 1198, it had eleven canons named in the sale to Gradefes. Ursula VONES-LIEBENSTEIN, *Saint-Ruf und Spanien. Studien zur Verbreitung und zum Wirken der Regularkanoniker von Saint-Ruf in Avignon auf der iberischen Halbinsel (11. und 12. Jahrhundert)*, 2 vols. (Bibliotheca Victorina; 6), Turnhout 1996, vol. 2, p. 695-697.

¹⁵⁵ CANAL, "Teresa Pérez" (see n. 129), p. 574-575.

where genealogical speculation runs riot, historians have shown remarkable restraint in wholly rejecting the report from the cartulary of 1594 that she pertained to the lineage of the royal house of Aragon.¹⁵⁶ She first enters the documentary record, however, in 1130 when she and her husband received a gift from Alfonso VII and Queen Berenguela.¹⁵⁷ It is possible that she had accompanied the Catalan princess, like the knights who were to attain positions of status at the Leonese court.¹⁵⁸

By the time the widowed Teresa Pérez founded Gradefes, she clearly commanded substantial resources. The nunnery's estates grew in the first generations with a high proportion of purchases.¹⁵⁹ While numbers of transactions can be misleading, the large outlay of cash markedly exceeded known expenditures for lands at other Cistercian houses—male or female—of the region.¹⁶⁰ Moreover, the convent also distinguished itself from Carrizo and other houses by advancing sizeable mortgages—once setting provisions for higher repayment.¹⁶¹ Although Gradefes did attract numerous donations in its first sixty years, these were, for the most part,

¹⁵⁶ The notice is repeated in MANRIQUE (see n. 96), vol. 2, p. 471. For discussion: Justiniano RODRÍGUEZ, "Los fundadores del monasterio de Gradefes," *Archivos Leoneses*, vol. 24, 1970, p. 209-212; CANAL, "Teresa Pérez," p. 569.

¹⁵⁷ *Colección... Gradefes*, doc. 28, p. 43-45.

¹⁵⁸ Count Ponce de Minerva, husband of the founder of Carrizo, arrived at the Leonese court with the Catalan princess in 1127, and Alfonso VII had sponsored their marriage and provided part of the bridegift (the royal property in Carrizo): *Colección... Carrizo*, vol. 1, doc. 79, p. 90-92; BARTON, "Two Catalan Magnates" (see n. 95), p. 248-250. Interestingly, the only certain information about Teresa's family concerns a brother, Rodrigo Pérez, who served Count Ponce de Cabrera and Alfonso VII, and was a benefactor of San Martín de Castañeda where he was buried: COELHO, *Expresiones del poder* (see n. 3), p. 34-35. In 1157, Teresa Pérez and her husband provided for disposition of their properties after either spouse's death, but references to the family inheritance (*de parte abolorum meorum uel parentorum meorum*) are formulaic: *Colección... Gradefes*, doc. 84, p. 115-116.

¹⁵⁹ During its first fifty years, the number of purchases recorded at Gradefes was nearly double the number—also substantial—of donations; at Carrizo, only nine purchases, compared with thirty-one donations, are recorded in its first fifty years: COELHO, *Expresiones del poder*, p. 69. Still higher proportions of purchases appear at Las Huelgas and Vileña, both wealthy houses with huge endowments: JAVIER PÉREZ-EMBED WAMBA, "El Cister femenino en Castilla y León. La formación de los dominios (siglos XII-XIII)," *En la España Medieval*, vol. 5, 1986, p. 761-796 (p. 769). By contrast, men's houses in León had lower proportions of purchases—particularly in their early years (*id.*, *El Cister en Castilla y León: monacato y dominios rurales [siglos XII-XV]*, Valladolid 1986, p. 60, 62, 72-73), though smaller numbers of transactions raise questions about whether surviving documents are representative.

¹⁶⁰ BAURY, *Les religieuses* (see n. 1), p. 197-199, rightly warns against using aggregate numbers when transactions vary widely in value and are distributed unevenly in the periods considered. From surviving documents, COELHO, *Expresiones del poder*, p. 69-74, calculated that Gradefes spent 3480 maravedis on lands between 1168 and 1225, while Carrizo spent merely 20 maravedis in that period and another 387 by 1300. A higher figure—602 maravedis—is calculated in PÉREZ-EMBED, "La formación," p. 782. Through 1250, Sandoval spent 1921 maravedis on lands and Moreruela spent 2259: PÉREZ-EMBED, *El Cister*, p. 85.

¹⁶¹ COELHO, *Expresiones del poder*, p. 77-78; mortgages are discussed—with nearly all the examples from Gradefes—in MARIÑO, p. 127-129, 134-135, n. 82-91, and one in 1190 (*Colección... Gradefes*, doc. 210, p. 261-262) was for the very large sum of 300 maravedis; for examples from Carracedo and Castañeda, houses with a long history before their Cistercian affiliation: PÉREZ-EMBED, *El Cister*, p. 67-68.

small cessions from donors of modest status.¹⁶² Some donors turned over properties and became vassals and tenants of the convent, while some other gifts could reasonably be viewed as disguised sales for which the nuns paid far more than token compensation.¹⁶³ Overall, Gradefes deployed its wealth and power to acquire prime real estate: far more mills, vineyards, and churches are mentioned in the deeds of Gradefes than among those of Carrizo.¹⁶⁴

In short, Gradefes had a very large endowment as the sole focus of patronage for its founder. The nunnery had the ability to fund the ambitious and innovative building campaign begun—according to an inscription—in 1177. It did not, however, have extensive social ties in its vicinity. To build its estates, it tapped income from the family patrimony and a large store of liquid assets, among which were surely the well-attested spoils of García Pérez's military successes in the service of King Alfonso VII.¹⁶⁵ The gifts it collected say more about its coercive powers than about its place within networks of powerful landowners and knightly families. This is consistent with the low profile of the nuns during the rule of the founder and her descendants. Gradefes was slower to recruit members successfully from local gentry who might have claimed a larger role in governing the house and more prominence in charters concerning its estates.

If Gradefes was founded with nuns from the Navarrese nunnery of Tulebras, this, too, would help explain the women's absence from deeds for surrounding properties. This tradition has been inferred from Gradefes's assertion of obedience to Tulebras to resist incorporation into the congregation of Las Huelgas in 1189.¹⁶⁶ Ghislain Baury contends, however, that the supposed dependence on Tulebras—like that of the nunnery of Perales, founded in 1160 and linked with the Lara family—was a tactical fiction inspired by affiliations among men's monasteries to prevent its subjection to the royal house.¹⁶⁷ Though it rests partly on the silence of earlier sources, Baury's argument that a juridical bond between Gradefes and Tulebras was forged retrospectively as a counterweight to Las Huelgas has much merit. Nonetheless, the plausibility of even a false claim of this sort surely rests upon the underlying truth of some role for the Navarrese house in a foundation

¹⁶² COELHO, *Expresiones del poder*, p. 64-65.

¹⁶³ For several examples: *ibid.*, p. 66-68.

¹⁶⁴ For the overall comparison and specific examples: *ibid.*, p. 82-86.

¹⁶⁵ In the agreement of Teresa Pérez and her husband for disposition of their properties (see n. 149), there is a decided emphasis on liquid properties—treasure, herds, slaves, and weaponry (*de illa plata et de auro et de lictera, de mulos, de cauallos, de equas, de vakas, de moros, de loricas, de elmos, de brofoneras, de spatas, de totas armas*)—some of which must have been from the campaigns, particularly at Baeza, for which García Pérez was rewarded with three privileges from King Alfonso VII (*pro bono ac fideli seruicio quod michi multociens tam in terra christianorum quam paganorum multociens fecisti*): *Colección...Sahagún*, vol. 4 (see n. 128), doc. 1294, p. 202-203; *Colección... Gradefes*, doc. 69, 83, p. 96-97, 113-114.

¹⁶⁶ *Documentación del monasterio de Las Huelgas de Burgos (1116-1230)* (Fuentes Medievales Castellano-Leonesas; 30), ed. José Manuel LIZOAIN GARRIDO, Burgos 1985, doc. 24-25, p. 46-51.

¹⁶⁷ BAURY, *Les religieuses*, p. 122-125.

that had taken place just twenty-five years earlier under the mother of the abbess invoking the ties.¹⁶⁸

The contrasting histories of Carrizo and Gradefes suggest explanations for key aspects of the buildings launched in the late twelfth century. The unusual design at Gradefes and its artistic sources are more evidence of the foreignness—and relative isolation—of the community and its founder in the Leonese landscape, but the ambitious choir attests to the ample resources of Teresa Pérez and her descendants. The church of Carrizo is more firmly grounded in local traditions and its details are more easily linked with other Cistercian houses. At the same time, a closer look reveals it to be a more innovative and resourceful project than it seems.

2. The Nuns' Church at Carrizo: A Scarcity of Stone, an Abundance of Art

At the east end of the church at Carrizo, a large apse dwarfs two lateral ones (Fig. 2). It rises to nearly twice their height and spreads to more than double their width. The bare exterior walls of each lateral apse are relieved only by a tiny window and the projecting wall of the presbytery bay. By contrast, six slender buttresses surround the main apse and, in the central segments, three shafted windows open above a moulded sill that rings the apse. Two pairs of columns carry the moulded arches of each window, while additional mouldings hood the windows and line the opening itself. The design was meticulously thought out, for the builders dispensed with the impostes that normally top the capitals of shafted windows.¹⁶⁹ The impostes might have marred the effect of the uninterrupted series of shafts and mouldings that accentuate the splayed windows. Nor did the proportions of the windows leave enough room for impostes to enter the wall alongside the buttresses; instead, the designer simply flipped the end of the hood moulding to bring that framing arch to rest.

Inside, the contrast between the articulation of the central and lateral apses is less marked. Today, a retable completely covers the center of the main apse.¹⁷⁰ Through it, however, one may glimpse the responds beneath the four ribs of the semidome and, more remarkably, the splendidly decorated apse windows. Here, too, paired shafts flank the windows and the responds between them create a tapestry of shafts and mouldings circling the apse. In addition, finely carved

¹⁶⁸ By contrast, the often alleged role of nuns from Gradefes in populating the convent of Santa Colomba (Zamora) in 1181 (e.g., Damián YÁÑEZ NEIRA, “Los monasterios de Santa Colomba y El Salvador de Benavente,” *Archivos Leoneses*, vol. 48, 1994, p. 229-274 [p. 232-236]; CAVERO, “Implantación y difusión” [see n. 3], p. 799; *Monjes y monasterios* [see n. 5], p. 476) derives only from early modern notices (CAVERO, “Poder y sumisión” [see n. 91], p. 78) and MANRIQUE’S assertion (see n. 13, vol. 3, p. 116-117), based on the preservation of the foundational charter of Santa Colomba at Gradefes and his view of the process of affiliation.

¹⁶⁹ This is extremely unusual among Romanesque buildings in León-Castile. At San Martín de Castañeda (illustrated in *Monjes y monasterios*, p. 122), the exaggerated abaci of the capitals replace the impostes.

¹⁷⁰ When the retable was installed in 1676, windows were opened in the lateral segments of the main apse to compensate for the obstruction of the three large windows.

dogtooth ornament enlivens the hood arches.¹⁷¹ Though hardly more than shallow niches, the diminutive spaces of the lateral apses are handled with a surprising plasticity. Four ribs springing from consoles once decorated each semidome, and short corbeled shafts with capitals carry the entry arches of these apses and the ribs of the rectangular bay of the chancel (Fig. 16, 17).

Documents help date the church at Carrizo and explain its character. The early seventeenth-century cartulary, the *Tumbo Antiguo*, attributed construction of the church and the greater part of the monastery to Count Ponce de Minerva and Countess Estefanía Ramírez in the years before the count's death.¹⁷² Betraying a desire to credit the renowned count with the foundation—and a blindness to the protagonism of his widow and daughter, this notice could hardly refer to the existing apses with their dogtooth ornament, corbeled supports, ribbed vaults, and foliate capitals of characteristically Cistercian design.¹⁷³ The account does, however, include a revealing detail, for it explains that the monastery was built in the counts' own house and palace. References to the palace persisted in medieval descriptions of properties and, to this day, in the local toponymy.¹⁷⁴ According to a royal inquiry in 1207, the vill of Carrizo had been part of Countess Estefanía's dowry and bridegift.¹⁷⁵ An existing residence would have justified the founder's choice of the site and ensured temporary quarters for the nuns before the church and dependencies were ready.¹⁷⁶

In the 1190s, a series of texts yields firm evidence of a building campaign. In 1191, the convent acquired a quarry at Villarrodrigo and assigned it to the works

¹⁷¹ I am most grateful to the abbess of Carrizo for enabling me to view the apse interior through the retable and see the decoration which, to my knowledge, has received no attention beyond the general remarks of Manuel GÓMEZ MORENO, *Catálogo monumental de España. Provincia de León*, 2 vols., Madrid 1925, vol. 1, p. 427.

¹⁷² *teniendo los dichos Condes...labrada y fabricada la yglesia y la mayor parte del edificio y cassa del Monasterio, aunque sin monjas, que no se hauian traydo, en su propia cassa y palacio que tenian en esta villa de Carrizo en el sitio donde oy esta el Monasterio, cuyo nombre de Palacio hasta oy le dura, a cierta parte del que quedo de fuera de la porteria vieja, a la mano derecha donde se bee la puerta antigua...* CASADO quotes the extended notice from the *Tumbo Antiguo*, fol. 61: *Colección... Carrizo* (see n. 94), vol. 1, p. xvi. It mistakenly dated the count's death to 1174 rather than 1175, see n. 95. For the composition of the *Tumbo Antiguo*: p. xxi-xxii.

¹⁷³ Etlvina Fernández accepted the notice as an explanation of the church's Romanesque character and independence from Cistercian models, but, in her citation of the *Tumbo*, she followed LUENGO (see n. 92), p. 171-172, and referred only to completion of the principal apse: FERNÁNDEZ GONZÁLEZ et al. (see n. 92), p. 62-63. This confuses the description of Carrizo with a subsequent account of the count's alleged construction of the monastery and main apse at Sandoval (...*dejando acabado el Monasterio de Sandoval y la Capilla mayor de la yglesia...*), quoted from the *Tumbo Antiguo*, fol. 61-62 in *Colección...Carrizo*, vol. 1, p. xvii. VALLE, "La arquitectura en...León" (see n. 7), p. 169, n. 86, rejects the attribution of the church to the count.

¹⁷⁴ *Colección...Carrizo*, vol. 1, p. xvii.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, doc. 79, p. 90-92.

¹⁷⁶ With scant evidence, art historians have imagined a prior royal palace on the site of the nunnery of Las Huelgas (Isidro G. BANGO TORVISO, "El claustro y su topografía," *Monjes y monasterios*, p. 157-165 [p.161]; María Teresa LÓPEZ DE GUEREÑO SANZ, "Las dependencias extraclaustrales," *ibid.*, p. 265-279 [p. 266, 276]). For a sceptical view: CARRERO SANTAMARÍA, "The Creation and Use of Space" (see n. 1), p. 172-176.



Fig. 16. Santa María de Carrizo, south apse, north side of vault, c. 1210. (photo: author)



Fig. 17. Santa María de Carrizo, north apse, corbeled supports on north side of vault, c. 1210. (photo: author)

in what was obviously a purposeful exchange of properties with the brother of a nun.¹⁷⁷ Two years later, according to the cartulary (*Tumbo Nuevo*) of 1769, the abbess, Countess María Ponce, donated her bridegift for the works.¹⁷⁸ Other documents add supporting evidence for a building campaign underway in the 1190s and the following decade. A property purchased in 1202 was earmarked for the works and Domingo *de opera* witnessed documents of 1194 and 1207.¹⁷⁹ In this context, the receipt of at least two privileges from King Alfonso IX between 1191 and 1193 gains special significance.¹⁸⁰ The Leonese king's exceptional generosity towards the Cistercians in these years was aimed at securing their support in his conflicts with Castile and the papacy.¹⁸¹ For Carrizo, however, the timely gifts came just as the community was marshaling its resources for construction of the church and permanent dependencies. In 1198, the king contributed to the works at the bridge of Carrizo: the gathering of materials and labor for both projects surely went hand in hand.¹⁸²

Thirteenth-century documents refer to craftsmen and the works, but the most remarkable testimony is the funerary inscription in the north wall (Fig. 18) recording the death in 1277, of Martín Domínguez, a cleric the text credits with finishing the church.¹⁸³ For no particular reason, José María Luengo associated the date of

¹⁷⁷ ...*hanc petriariam...damus et concedimus uobis et monasterio uestro...ut semper sit ad opus uestri cenobii et habeant licenciam seruientes uestri cenobii qui illuc perrexerint scindendi ligna et pascendi et adaquandi boues et deferendi omnes res que necesse fuerint ad opus uestri monasterii...: Colección...Carrizo, vol. 1, doc. 45, p. 52-53.*

¹⁷⁸ *ai una donacion de la Condesa Doña Maria primera Abadesa de este Monasterio de todas sus arras para la obra del Monasterio, era de 1231 (=1193 AD).* This is quoted from fol. 9 of the *Tumbo Nuevo* and a fuller description of the gift (fol. 36) is also summarized: *ibid.*, p. xix, n. 26. For the date of the *Tumbo Nuevo*: p. xxiii. The countess had given other properties from her bridegift to the Order of Santiago in 1190: José Luis MARTÍN, *Origenes de la orden militar de Santiago (1170-1195)*, Barcelona 1974, doc. 271, p. 442-443.

¹⁷⁹ *uendimus uobis ipso corral...ad ecclesia ad quantum opus fuerit. Colección...Carrizo, vol. 1, doc. 65, p. 71-72. Dominicus de opera: doc. 50, 80, p. 57-58, 92-93.* A carpenter, *D. Iohannes carpentarius*, witnessed documents of 1200, 1203, and 1205: doc. 62, 69, 76, p. 68-69, 76-78, 87-88.

¹⁸⁰ The gift of 1193 is only known from the cartularies; a privilege of June 24, 1201 (sometimes dated to 1203) is included in later royal confirmations and addressed to Countess María who was dead by 1194: *ibid.*, p. xx, xxvi; GONZÁLEZ, *Alfonso IX* (see n. 22), vol. 2, doc. 153, p. 216. The privilege ascribed to 1201 was likely issued in 1191 or 1193; a copyist could have added an X to the original date (Era MCCXXIX or MCCXXXI). 1191 would coincide with the king's gift to Simón Sánchez, a benefactor of Carrizo; the dispatching of the privilege in Benavente fits the royal itinerary either year: *ibid.*, vol. 2, doc. 45, p. 73-74. MANRIQUE, vol. 3, p. 38, cites privileges issued by Alfonso IX on April 22, 1192 and May 25, 1193 in Benavente.

¹⁸¹ For the political context and relationship with the creation of the congregation of Las Huelgas by the Castilian king: D'EMILIO, "The Royal Convent" (see n. 1), p. 200-204.

¹⁸² GONZÁLEZ, *Alfonso IX*, vol. 2, doc. 117, p. 168-169; CANAL, "Carrizo" (see n. 94), doc. 11, p. 399-400.

¹⁸³ *Hic requiescit famulus Dei Martinus Dominici quondam clericus infantisse dompne Dulcie qui obit Era CCC XV eisdem perfecit hanc ecclesiam et plantauit hunc pinum. Pater Noster pro eo.* The inscription is repeatedly dated—incorrectly—to 1272 (Era 1310), because GÓMEZ MORENO, vol. 1, p. 428, omitted the final *V* (an error noted in *Colección...Carrizo*, vol. 2, p. 255, n. 2), e.g., *Monjes y monasterios*, p. 60-61; MARTÍNEZ TEJERA, "Carrizo de la Ribera" (see n. 92), p. 514; CAVERO, *El esplendor* (see n. 144), p. 263 (with a photograph).

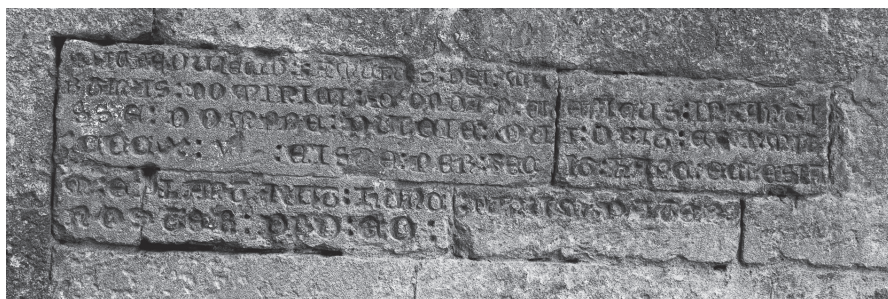


Fig. 18. Santa María de Carrizo, north wall of nave, funerary inscription of Martín Domínguez, 1277. (photo: author)

his death with completion of the church, and others fell in line.¹⁸⁴ In fact, Martín Domínguez was placed in charge of the works for life in 1230, and documents citing him in this capacity are concentrated in the next twelve years.¹⁸⁵ Apparently, he succeeded his brother, Gonzalo Domínguez, who held the office in 1224.¹⁸⁶ In 1226 and 1229, a stonemason (*petrero*), Pedro Peláez, was among a select group of witnesses. His connection to the works was made explicit in 1237 when he was among seven men who received a gift for the works from Martín Domínguez.¹⁸⁷ The rarity of such references by the 1240s suggests that the nave was finished in the second quarter of the thirteenth century, long before Martín's death and the retrospective reference in his epitaph to completing the church.¹⁸⁸

The documents concerning Gonzalo and Martín Domínguez do more than mark the rhythm of building. The brothers were priests whose careers underscore the nunnery's close ties to the Leonese church and court. They were probably sons of D. Domingo, the man associated with the works in 1194 and 1207 and, in all

¹⁸⁴ LUENGO, p. 175. Most recently, he has been followed by Antonio GARCÍA FLORES, "Iglesia. Santa María de Carrizo (León)," *Monjes y monasterios*, p. 125.

¹⁸⁵ For the contract of 1230: *Colección...Carrizo*, vol. 1, doc. 181, p. 197-198; documents mentioning his office or recording his property transactions for the works include: doc. 195 (1234), 208 (1237), 212 (1238/*Martín Domínguez capelan de Carrizo que tien el obra*), 232 (1242?), 292 (1252), p. 212, 226-227, 231-232, 253-254, 316-317. He was still in charge in 1275, when he sued Isidro Yáñez for damages incurred when he made an armed attack on his houses by night and cut off his maid's ears: vol. 2, doc. 467-468, p. 111-113, and, for commentary, 254-255.

¹⁸⁶ *Don Gonzaluo tenente ela obra* followed the abbess, prioress, and two dignitaries among witnesses to a pact with the nunnery: *ibid.*, vol. 1, doc. 133, p. 151.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, doc. 150, 175, 208, p. 168-169, 192, 226-227.

¹⁸⁸ An undated document lists several of the cleric's transactions on behalf of the works and the debts of the abbesses to him. This is a sign of a time when less income from the *obra* was required for construction: *ibid.*, vol. 2, doc. 579, p. 253-254. At the petition of Abbess María González, King Sancho IV prohibited local authorities in 1291 from taking lumber from the convent for construction of the bridge over the Órbigo because it was needed for the cloister and chapter house (*esta madera que la tien pora la Claustra et el Cabildo de su monesterio*): doc. 555, p. 225, cited in COELHO, *Expresiones del poder* (see n. 3), p. 41.

likelihood, the priest who prominently confirmed numerous documents between 1207 and 1228.¹⁸⁹ Gonzalo Domínguez bought several vineyards, probably on behalf of the nuns, in 1203 and 1205 and, as priest or chaplain of Carrizo, he, too, regularly confirmed documents of the nunnery between 1204 and 1225.¹⁹⁰ After 1225, his disappearance from the documents was likely due to his death, and this led to the appointment of his brother, Martín, as master of the works in 1230.¹⁹¹

The relationship between Gonzalo and Martín Domínguez and their ties to the nunnery are made clear in 1212 when Gonzalo gave the nuns houses in León and they leased them—and another property—to his brother, Martín.¹⁹² The nuns described Martín as their pupil (*alumno nostro*). Apparently, he had been raised and educated in the convent, and was now being sent to León to complete his training in the cathedral school.¹⁹³ In 1216, he was one of four *bacallarii* who

¹⁸⁹ See n. 179. As *presbítero*: *Colección...Carrizo*, vol. 1, doc. 79 (1207), 82 (1208), 100 (1217), 103 (1218), 112-114 (1221), 147-149 (1226), 153-155, 160-161 (1227), 164-167 (1228), p. 90-92, 94-95, 103-104, 114-115, 117-118, 130-132, 165-167, 171-173, 178-79, 182-185. As *clericus*: doc. 94 (1214), 107 (1219), and, possibly, 127 (1223), p. 108-109, 122-123, 145-146. The lack of a patronymic and the overlapping careers of other figures named Domingo obscure the beginning, end, and full extent of his appearances. For my list, I considered his prominence among recurring witnesses and his association with the *obra*, Gonzalo and Martín, or the localities of Carrizo and San Pedro de Páramo. He may have been the priest who wrote (*notuit*) charters in 1203 and 1205 concerning San Pedro de Páramo where Gonzalo managed the nuns' estates: doc. 69-70, 74, 76, p. 76-80, 86-88. A privilege of the *Infanta* Dulcia (doc. 204, p. 223) implies that Martín Domínguez's father and mother were alive in 1235, but I doubt that he is the *clericus* in a low position in a witness list of 1229 including three chaplains, or the priest named after a long silence in Martín's gift to the *obra* in 1237 (doc. 175, 208, p. 192, 226-227). By the 1230s, the priests Domingo González (vol. 1, doc. 208 [1237], p. 226-227; vol. 2, doc. 580 [1239/40], p. 255-256) and Domingo Centeno (*capelan de Carrizo*, vol. 1, doc. 212 [1238], p. 231-232) appear; one or more priests named Domingo wrote charters concerning properties in Carrizo between 1238 and 1260 (doc. 210, 214, 216, 300, 357, 359-370, p. 228-229, 233-234, 236, 323-324, 392, 395-407).

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, doc. 68-70, 74, 76, p. 74-81, 86-88. The purchases were in San Pedro del Páramo, an early possession of the nunnery, and he is likely the *Frero Gonzaluo tenente ipsa casa de Sancto Petro* named in calendar clauses. He confirmed several documents as *presbítero* or *presbítero de Carrizo*: doc. 72 (1204), 91 (1214), 100 (1217), 116 (1221), 139 (1225), p. 84, 104-105, 114-115, 134-135, 157-158; CANAL, "Carrizo," doc. 13 (1205), p. 401-402. He also appeared titled only as *clericus* (*Colección... Carrizo*, vol. 1, doc. 94 [1214], 107-108 [1219], p. 108-109, 122-123, 125-126); or, with no title, prominently among the witnesses (doc. 82 [1208], 108 [1219], 132 [1224], p. 94-95, 125, 150-151) or with the nuns in the text (doc. 106 [1218], p. 121-122); and as *capellanus de Carrizo* with no patronymic (doc. 85 [1210], p. 97-98). He is likely the *Domnus Gundisalvus* who already confirmed documents in 1194 and 1198 (doc. 50, 53, p. 57-58, 60-61) and the *Domnus Gundisalvus de Carrizo* who did so in 1200, 1211, and 1214: doc. 62, 86, 93, p. 98-100, 106-108.

¹⁹¹ Just months after the last appearance of Gonzalo Domínguez (1225.2.23), another priest, Juan, was titled *capellanus de Carrizo* (1225.9): *ibid.*, doc. 145, p. 163-164.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, doc. 87-89, p. 100-103. The houses were in the *barrio Sancte Marie* near the cathedral.

¹⁹³ On the importance of schools—particularly, but not exclusively, for girls—in the Cistercian nunneries of Iberia, despite the General Chapter's prohibition of 1206 on the education of children in Cistercian nunneries: BAURY, *Les religieuses* (see n. 1), p. 81-83. At Gradefes, Marina Alfonso *maestra de las nouiças* was among several nuns who witnessed a document of 1262; in 1265, two novices made gifts to Gradefes for the upbringing they had received (...*dolo en donación por crianza e por mercet mucha que me facen...*): *Colección...Gradefes* (see n. 94), doc. 507, 509-510, p. 581-585. Other Leonese nunneries supply evidence for schools as well, e.g., Marina Martínez *magistra infantularum* was one of the nuns at San Pedro de las Dueñas—along with two *infantulae*—to confirm an agreement with Sahagún in 1210: *Colección...Sahagún*, vol. 5 (see n. 131), doc. 1576, p. 62-66.

witnessed a sale to an archdeacon of León; in 1224, he was listed among the clerics of the choir in the assignment of benefices that accompanied the issuance of new statutes for the cathedral chapter.¹⁹⁴ That same year, the houses he had held in León were leased by the nuns to Nicolás Rodríguez with Martín's consent. His departure likely coincided with his entry into the service of the *Infanta* Dulcia, daughter of King Alfonso IX.¹⁹⁵

Martín Domínguez's epitaph celebrates a long life of service to the nunnery. A member of a local family of clerics, closely tied to the convent, he was educated there as the first step on a clerical career that would take him from the cathedral school at León to the chapel of a royal princess. As administrator of the works, he succeeded his older brother and oversaw the church's completion. Next to these achievements, the final note—that he planted a pine tree—seems puzzling. Is it to be understood as a metaphorical reference to his education or the church and community to which he ministered, or literally as a nostalgic memory of the aged cleric's boyhood at the nunnery and the span of his service?

The documents of Carrizo attest to a continued effort on the church and its dependencies from the 1190s through the 1240s. In the face of the epitaph of Martín Domínguez, it is misleading to describe the church as unfinished.¹⁹⁶ That the nave was built of rubble masonry is not a sign of an interruption or waning interest. Rather, it speaks to the fundamental challenge which dogged the project from the start: a dearth of stone nearby.¹⁹⁷ It is no coincidence that the first documents of a constructional campaign in the 1190s include acquisition of a quarry, for this was vital to a community in a zone where suitable stone was scarce.¹⁹⁸ An awareness of these material constraints is essential for a better appreciation of the scale of effort needed to construct what—elsewhere—might be rated a modest enterprise for a community of such status.

The shortage of stone had already constrained the builders of the choir. In the apses, the prevalence of just two masons' marks (*P*, *V*) indicates a small workforce and slow progress. Moreover, *P* dominates the principal apse, while the lateral apses are linked by the appearance of *V*. Thus, building commenced with the central apse,

¹⁹⁴ *Colección...León*, vol. 6 (see n. 127), doc. 1854, 1919, p. 317-318, 415-416. He may be the Martín Domínguez who confirmed a gift to Carrizo—with the priest Gonzalo Domínguez—as a canon of San Isidoro de León in 1214: *Colección...Carrizo*, vol. 1, doc. 91, p. 204.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, doc. 132, p. 150-151. In 1235, the *Infanta* Dulcia and her sister, Sancia, freed *nostro clerico* Martín Domínguez and his parents from rents or other obligations: doc. 204, p. 223. By then, the *infantas* had likely entered the Cistercian nunnery of Villabuena, founded by their mother, Queen Teresa; Dulcia is said to have been buried there: COELHO, *Expresiones del poder*, p. 50; CAVERO, *El esplendor*, p. 81-84; see n. 91.

¹⁹⁶ GÓMEZ MORENO, vol. 1, p. 427, followed by VALLE, "La arquitectura en...León" (see n. 7), p. 156.

¹⁹⁷ Churches of cut stone are unusual in the region, as the distribution of Romanesque churches in the province of León makes clear: Isidro G. BANGO TORVISO, *El arte románico en Castilla y León*, Madrid 1997, p. 134.

¹⁹⁸ The quarry at Villarrodrigo is fourteen kilometers north of Carrizo. It was likely exhausted quickly, for there is little evidence today of quarried stone in the village, and the nearest quarries are considerably further north.

undoubtedly in the 1190s, when references to the works begin and major donations were received. Construction continued with the two lateral apses. That is consistent with the declining quality of the masonry, for the sandstone of the main apse is plainly superior to the coarser masonry of the lateral apses (Fig. 19), a sign that the community was already having trouble procuring stone. That partly explains the unusually small proportions of the lateral apses—hardly more than niches—in relation to the principal apse.

Distinctive architectural details reveal specific contacts with Sandoval and other Cistercian houses of León, as one might expect from the nunnery's network of noble patronage and its need to look further afield for skilled masons. Morerueta (Fig. 20) and—through its influence—Sandoval offer parallels for the sharply tapered pyramidal consoles used at Carrizo beneath the false ribs of the lateral apses (Fig. 17) and on later sections of the corbel table.¹⁹⁹ The interlacing ribbons on corbels or the broad leaves and deeply channeled abaci of capitals appear at Sandoval and Gradefes.²⁰⁰ More surprisingly, builders at Carrizo profited from the convent's place in the congregation of Las Huelgas. The contemporary choir of the royal nunnery, underway in the 1190s, is a likely inspiration for the precisely carved dogtooth inside the apse windows, the slender corbeled shafts carrying the ribs of the presbytery bays of the lateral chapels (Fig. 17), and the flattened toruses of respond bases throughout the choir.²⁰¹

Gómez Moreno went beyond such workshop exchanges and judged the choir at Carrizo a simplified version of that at the men's house at Sandoval, an assessment seconded by others.²⁰² At both sites, the principal apses are divided into multiple segments—seven at Sandoval, five at Carrizo—and a triplet of windows with two pairs of columns pierce the central segments (Fig. 2, 21). Beyond that, however, differences are inescapable. At Sandoval, bundled responds ring all three apses, and clustered shafts and mouldings proliferate inside the church. Outside, the choir struggles to resolve a complex articulation of masses, as the apses, their gabled presbyteries, and the projecting transepts rise to different heights and present a bewildering patchwork of windows (Fig. 22). Together, the slender responds, tall windows, and ascending volumes of the chapels and transepts strive for verticality, but the end result seems cluttered and confused.²⁰³

¹⁹⁹ For other evidence of the dependence of the first campaign at Sandoval on Morerueta: VALLE, "La arquitectura en...León," p. 155, 167, n. 73; *id.*, "Las primeras construcciones de la orden del Cister en el reino de León," *Arte Medieval*, vol. 8, 1994, p. 21-44 (p. 33-34, 40-41).

²⁰⁰ VALLE rightly compares the north portal capitals at Carrizo with examples at Sandoval and Gradefes: "La arquitectura en...León," p. 156 and figures on p. 178-179.

²⁰¹ For the fullest arguments for this "early" chronology for the choir at Las Huelgas: D'EMILIO, "The Royal Convent" (see n. 1); see also PALOMO and RUIZ SOUZA (see n. 1).

²⁰² GÓMEZ MORENO, vol. 1, p. 427-428; ÉLIE LAMBERT, *L'art gothique en Espagne aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles*, Paris 1931, p. 82; VALLE, "La arquitectura en...León," p. 156.

²⁰³ One may contrast the more successful effect of the stepped volumes and restrained architectural vocabulary of the apses, presbyteries, transepts, and crossing at the Cistercian church of Armenteira. VALLE, "Las primeras construcciones," p. 23-24, rightly called attention to this innovative treatment of a traditional three-apsed plan.



Fig. 19. Santa María de Carrizo, south apse and main apse, c. 1190-1210. (photo: author)



Fig. 20. Santa María de Moreruela, ambulatory, c. 1162-1180s. (photo: author)



Fig. 21. Santa María de Sandoval, windows of the main apse, c. 1170-1190. (photo: author)



Fig. 22. Santa María de Sandoval, south apse and main apse, c. 1170-1200. (photo: author)

The builders at Carrizo committed themselves to three stone apses to signal the status of the convent and satisfy the liturgical needs of a community typically served by three or four chaplains.²⁰⁴ Confronting material constraints, they turned adversity to advantage, and achieved a different aesthetic effect with a simpler design and more economical decoration. The bundled responds at Sandoval were replaced at Carrizo by plain buttresses on the principal apse and dispensed with entirely on the side apses. The three shafted windows, neatly separated by the flat buttresses, create one focal point for the exterior decoration, effectively framed by the bare expanse of the surrounding walls and plain volumes of the lateral apses. Inside, flourishes were reserved for key points in the smaller building. False ribs once turned the simple vaults of the diminutive apses into ornate canopies, raised aloft by elegantly corbeled supports (Fig. 16, 17).

²⁰⁴ Three chaplains (*capellani*) confirm documents of Carrizo in 1229 (Bernaldo, Mateo, Maestro Pedro), 1238 (Martín Domínguez, Bernaldo, Domingo Centeno), and 1254 (Domingo González, Bernaldo, Juan Aparizio): *Colección...Carrizo*, vol. 1, doc. 175, 212, 302, p. 192, 231-232, 325-326. Some of these appear individually, as *capellanus*, in other documents: Bernaldo (doc. 150 [1226], 208 [1237], p. 168-169, 226-227), also cited as *presbiter* in 1221, 1224, and 1239 (doc. 116, 132, 216, p. 134-135, 150-151, 236), and as *clerigo* in 1248 (doc. 247, p. 268-269); Domingo González (doc. 241, 246 [1247], 281 [1251], p. 262-264, 267-268, 303-304), also documented as *presbiter*, *clerigo*, or an untitled witness among the nuns between 1237 and 1258 (doc. 208, 247, 294, 319, p. 226-227, 268-269, 318-319, 343-344); and Juan (vol. 2, doc. 389 [1262], p. 22-23), probably Juan Aparizio (doc. 412 [1265], p. 50-52), also documented between 1250 and 1264 as a prominent witness without title, a *presbiter*, the *personero de la abadessa & del conuento*, and a scribe (doc. 262, 321, 361, 397, 403, vol. 1, p. 283-284, 345-346, 397-398, vol. 2, p. 30-32, 40). Other clerics individually described as *capellanus* are: Isidoro (vol. 1, doc. 62 [1200], p. 69); Gonzalo Domínguez (1210, see n. 190); Juan (doc. 145 [1225], p. 163-164), documented as *presbiter* between 1217 and 1227 (e.g., doc. 100, 160, p. 114-115, 178) and possibly the *Iohannes Isidori presbiter* listed in 1207 (doc. 79, p. 90-92); and Fernán Abril (vol. 2, doc. 399 [1263], p. 34-35, *capellan del monesterio de Carrizo...clerigo de missa & beneficiado*). Determining the precise number and identity of the chaplains is complicated by the irregular distribution of documents, the varying comprehensiveness of witness lists, and the recurrence of common names (some without patronymics). Chaplains identified here are more often titled simply as *presbiter* or *clerigo* or given no title, so one may infer that additional chaplains—never titled as such—may be among the clerics regularly named with the nuns or known chaplains in the convent's charters, e.g., Pelayo, named as *presbiter* or *clerigo* between 1207 and 1227 (vol. 1, doc. 79, 107-108, 147-149, 160-161, p. 90-92, 122-125, 165-168, 178-179) or the priests named Domingo (see n. 189). Other clerics in charters, however, may be priests of nearby parishes or men who served the nuns in other capacities, e.g., Gregorio, titled *auangelistero* or *diacono* in 1257 and 1258 (doc. 314, 321, p. 338-339, 345-346), or the scribe Vivian who wrote numerous charters for the nuns between 1243 (doc. 231, p. 252-253) and 1258 (doc. 321, p. 345-346), and was grouped with three chaplains (Domingo González, Bernaldo, Juan Aparizio) in 1253 (doc. 292, p. 316-317). In the 1260s, men titled as clerics or chaplains of the abbess appear (see n. 109). In 1277, one document (vol. 2, doc. 483, p. 129-131) mentions four *capellanes del monesterio de Carrizo* (Martín Domínguez, Alfonso, Juan, Martín Domínguez [sic]); another (doc. 486, p. 134) mentions one *capellan de Carizo* (Tomás Pérez) and two *clerigos de la abadessa* (Alfonso Yuaes and Pedro Ramos), each of whom are titled *capellan de Carrizo* in later charters (doc. 487 [1278], 521 [1283], 526 [1284], p. 135-136, 182-184, 188-190). By 1295 (*Colección...Gradefes*, doc. 594, p. 618-620), the abbess had three chaplains (Juan, Juan Domínguez, and Juan Andrés), and by 1297 (*Colección...Carrizo*, vol. 2, doc. 569, p. 241-242) Pedro Ramos joined them as a fourth chaplain of the abbess. One may conclude that there were at least three chaplains at Carrizo by the early thirteenth century; that some enjoyed long tenures or belonged to families who staffed other offices; that additional clerics were attached to the convent; and that the number grew with the consolidation of the abbess's household in the late thirteenth century.

The choir at Carrizo is neither a tired repetition of Romanesque forms nor a pale reflection of the larger church at Sandoval. If anything, it is at Sandoval that a triple-apsed Romanesque sanctuary was unhappily wed to the architectural vocabulary introduced at Moreruela and a new canon of tall and slender proportions. In contrast with the busy decoration and jumbled amalgam of volumes at Sandoval, the sheer walls of the broad central apse at Carrizo flanked by its two lateral apses offer a lucid distribution of well-proportioned volumes. Arguably, builders at Carrizo took their own lessons from Moreruela and ingeniously made the most of their limitations: the three apses bear more resemblance to the proportions of an ample choir ringed by small radiating chapels than to the parallel apses of aisled Romanesque churches.

3. The Ambulatory and Radiating Chapels in Cistercian Iberia: The Architectural Context for Gradefes

It might be surprising to tease out a creative response to the grand choir at Moreruela from the seemingly conservative design at Carrizo. After all, the patent originality of the nuns' church at Gradefes has been downplayed by casting it as a junior partner among the seven Iberian churches with ambulatories and radiating chapels at monasteries of Cistercian men: Alcobaça in Portugal, Melón and Oseira in Galicia, Moreruela in León, Fitero in Navarre, Veruela in Aragón, and Poblet in Catalonia. Most were initiated in the 1160s and 1170s, making Gradefes (Fig. 23), begun in 1177, one of the later projects.²⁰⁵ At this time, such choirs were rare among Cistercian abbeys and—what is less often appreciated—exceptional in Iberia as well. The cathedral of Compostela, begun c. 1075, stands as an early, distinguished—and solitary—prototype. The plan was hardly taken up again on a monumental scale until the Castilian collegiate church of Santo Domingo de la Calzada was started in the late 1150s.²⁰⁶ Beyond Cistercian monasteries, it remained unusual until Gothic designs, exemplified by the double ambulatory and tall choir of Ávila Cathedral at the end of the twelfth century, inspired new experiments.

²⁰⁵ Twelfth-century examples in Spain—Cistercian or not—are discussed in relation to the choir of the collegiate church of Santo Domingo de la Calzada in Isidro G. BANGO TORVISO, "La cabecera de la catedral calceatense y la arquitectura hispana de su época," *La cabecera de la catedral calceatense y el tardorrománico hispano. Actas del simposio en Santo Domingo de la Calzada, 29 al 31 de enero de 1998*, Santo Domingo de la Calzada 2000, p. 11-150, esp. p. 85-96. For insightful observations on these choirs: Claude ANDRAULT-SCHMITT, "Loin de Clairvaux: trois enquêtes sur les filiations artistiques, de la Gartempe à la Galice," *Espace et territoire au moyen âge: hommages à Bernadette Barrière*, Bordeaux 2012, p. 63-83 (p. 63-64, 75-82). For an overview of such Cistercian choirs with an eye on thirteenth-century developments: UNTERMANN (see n. 7), p. 616-626.

²⁰⁶ Based on excavated foundations, Manuel Luis REAL has argued that the plan of the Romanesque choir of Braga Cathedral at the end of the eleventh century resembled Ste. Foy at Conques with an ambulatory, three radiating chapels, and transept chapels: "O projecto da catedral de Braga, nos finais do século XI, e as origens do românico português," *IX centénario da dedicação da Sé de Braga. Congresso internacional. Actas*, 3 vols., Braga 1990, vol. 1 (*O bispo D. Pedro e o ambiente político-religioso do século XI*), p. 435-511, esp. p. 455-477, 504-507.

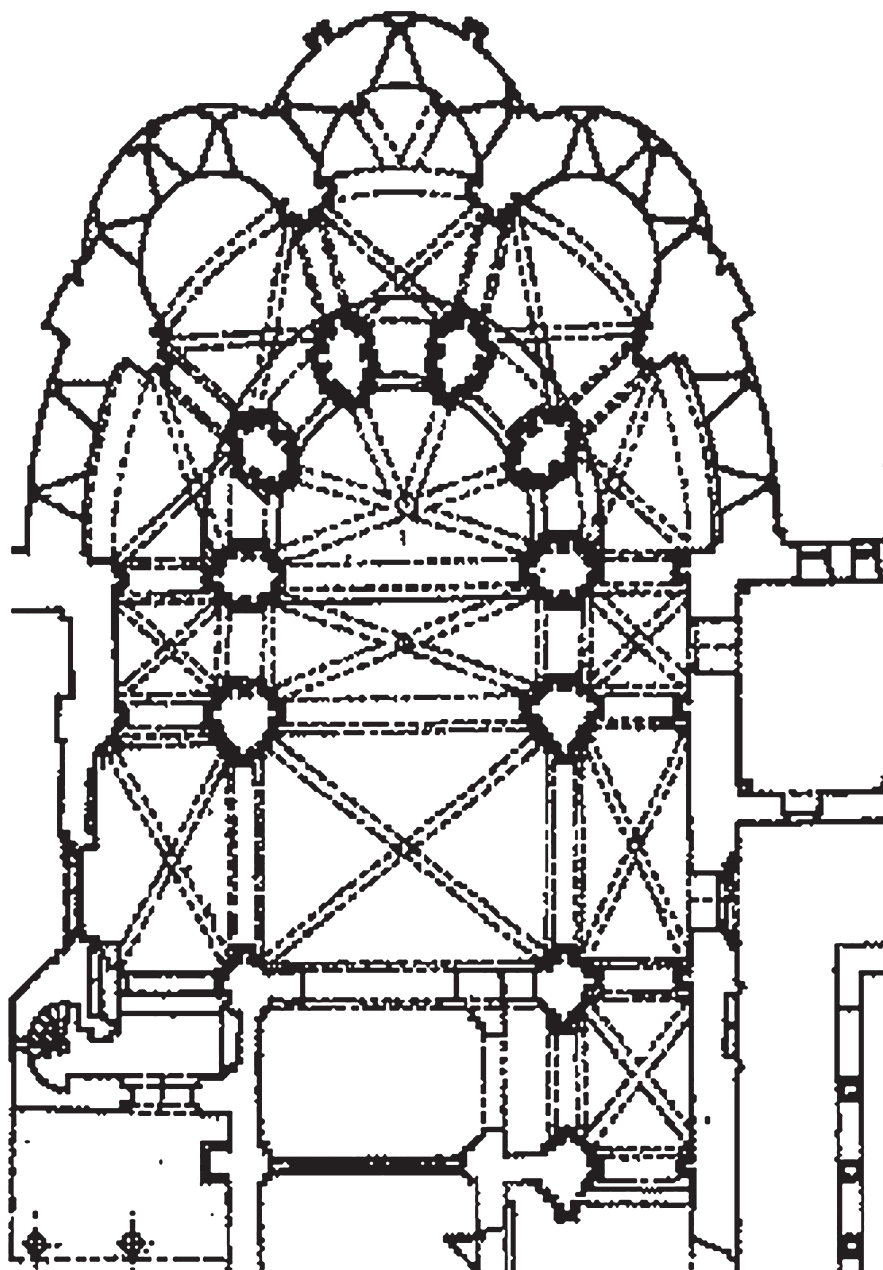


Fig. 23. Santa María de Gradefes, plan, c. 1177-1200. (after *Corpus de Arquitectura Monástica Española*, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid)

Thus, there was no Iberian tradition—apart from Compostela—to recommend such a choir to the Cistercians. More to the point, the implicit notion that these eight churches constitute a meaningful group historically or artistically demands scrutiny. From the outside, it is too easy to view the Christian realms of Iberia as a unified cultural space. In addition, the work of the General Chapters of the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries has sometimes led Cistercian historians to assume more coordination and oversight than actually existed among the farflung mid-twelfth century foundations. The spell of chains of affiliation in Cistercian historiography has only aggravated the inclination of medieval architectural historians to overemphasize families of groundplans and match models and copies.²⁰⁷

In fact, these eight buildings were spread among five kingdoms which squabbled over the territories ruled by Christians during the two generations when the Cistercians were at their zenith.²⁰⁸ Their benefactors included rival monarchs as well as nobles for whom such patronage might seal alliances with the crown or bolster their independence. New establishments ran the gamut from foundations *ex nihilo* or restored monasteries to affiliations of existing communities or the gradual institutionalization of those that gravitated to charismatic figures. Finally, different houses outside the peninsula intervened in different regions: Clairvaux dominated the west and was the mother house for Alcobaca, Melón, Oseira, and Morerueta; Fitero and Veruela were linked with l'Escale Dieu, one of the daughters of Morimond active in Castile, Navarre, and Aragón; the Catalan abbey of Poblet was established from Fontfroide in the family of Clairvaux.

The three Cistercian churches in Galicia and Portugal with ambulatories and radiating chapels illustrate the sharp formal and historical differences within this "group." The Portuguese abbey of Alcobaca, founded in 1153, stands alone. Its church, begun in 1178 with a Gothic vocabulary and canon of proportions, is an early example of a choir based on Clairvaux III with a semicircular wall enclosing the ambulatory chapels.²⁰⁹ In Galicia, Compostela has been invoked as a source for the closely related choirs at Melón and Oseira to explain shared features like the bays between chapels lit with superposed windows. The cathedral's local prestige is underscored by the ambulatories and chapels at the nearby monastic church of Carboeiro, begun in 1171, and the lesser church at Cambre; the design was even

²⁰⁷ Groundplans have weighed heavily in studies of Cistercian architecture, partly due to the ease of comparing them, as a common denominator within an international order, using the typologies and repertories of Marcel AUBERT, *L'architecture cistercienne en France*, 2 vols., 2nd ed., Paris 1943, esp. vol. 1, p. 107-227, and Anselme DIMIER, *Recueil des plans d'églises cisterciennes*, 2 vols., Grignan 1949; *Recueil des plans d'églises cisterciennes. Supplément*, Paris 1967; and "L'architecture des églises de moniales" (see n. 93). They remain an organizing principle in UNTERMANN, p. 285-575. See the astute comments in ANDRAULT-SCHMITT, p. 63.

²⁰⁸ For a recent overview: D'EMILIO, "Cistercian Architecture" (see n. 5), esp. p. 140-141.

²⁰⁹ For a summary "state of the question" and bibliography on the church at Alcobaca, see James D'EMILIO, "The Art of the Cistercians in Galicia and Portugal: A Review Article," *Cîteaux*, vol. 58, 2007, p. 305-327 (p. 311-313). For its complex historical and artistic relationships to Clairvaux: ANDRAULT-SCHMITT, p. 76-77.

miniaturized with niches in the main apses of the west crypt at Compostela, Ourense Cathedral, the monastery of Santo Estevo de Ribas de Sil, and several Galician rural churches.²¹⁰ For the Cistercian examples, however, the weight of Compostela has rested partly on the belief that the large church at Oseira—where local features are prominent—preceded the smaller one at Melón.²¹¹ If one grants priority instead to Melón, with its wholly foreign repertory, slender proportions, and elegant details, the choir can be seen as part of an imported design, enriched by purposeful references to the apostolic shrine. In this way, Cistercian planners expressed their understanding of the choir of Clairvaux III as a fitting setting for honoring their new saint and claiming the heritage of Christian antiquity.²¹²

Claude Andrault-Schmitt has recently advocated for the importance of Cluny's architecture, alongside Compostela and Clairvaux III, as an inspiration for these Cistercian choirs.²¹³ As Cistercian institutions and the powers of the mother abbeys were consolidated, Cluny stood as a compelling point of reference for a monumental monastic church leading an international congregation. Within Iberia, there was a paradoxical mix of affinity and contrast in the successive roles of Cluny and the Cistercians. Royal ties to Cluny became a model for the privileged position of the Cistercians, even as Cistercian successes challenged struggling Cluniac houses in the late twelfth century.²¹⁴ Arguably, the arts were deployed in a wider monastic

²¹⁰ For Carboeiro and Cambre: BANGO, "La cabecera," p. 87-89; for Ourense: *id.*, *Galicie románica* (see n. 68), p. 232-235; for Santo Estevo de Ribas de Sil: Manuel CASTIÑEIRAS, "Topographie sacrée, liturgie pascale et reliques dans les grands centres de pèlerinage: Saint-Jacques-de-Compostelle, Saint-Isidore-de-Léon et Saint-Étienne-de-Ribas-de-Sil," *Les Cahiers de Saint-Michel de Cuxa*, vol. 34, 2003, p. 26-49 (p. 44-46). Henrik KARGE has linked the west crypt at Santiago with the redesign of the axial chapel of the Savior in cathedral choir: "Die Kathedrale von Santiago de Compostela. Neue Forschungen zur Baugeschichte der romanischen Jakobuskirche," *Hispaniens Norden im 11. Jahrhundert. Christliche Kunst im Umbruch / El norte hispano en el siglo XI. Un cambio radical en el arte cristiano*, ed. Achim ARBEITER, Christiane KOTHE, and Bettina MARTIN, Petersberg 2009, p. 183-199 (p. 185-186, 193). Local examples include apses at Santo Estevo de Ribas de Miño, Pesqueiras, Louredo, and Augas Santas: D'EMILIO, "Working Practices" (see n. 43), p. 71, 89.

²¹¹ Leopoldo TORRES BALBÁS, *Arquitectura gótica* (Ars Hispaniae; 7), Madrid 1952, p. 19-20, asserted Oseira's priority. It is best argued in VALLE, *Arquitectura cisterciense* (see n. 6), vol. 1, p. 210-212, 218-222, 226-229.

²¹² D'EMILIO, "Compostela or Clairvaux?" (see n. 79), p. 326-327, proposed this, based on the interpretation of the choir of Clairvaux III by Peter FERGUSSON, "Programmatic Factors in the East Extension of Clairvaux," *Arte Medievale*, vol. 8, 1994, p. 87-101.

²¹³ ANDRAULT-SCHMITT, p. 78. Her vision of Cluny's importance markedly differs from claims (UNTERMANN, p. 617) that these buildings simply reflect "conventional" Benedictine types. The importance of Cluniac architecture for these choirs had been noted by Caroline Astrid BRUZELIUS, "Cistercian High Gothic: The Abbey Church of Longpont and the Architecture of the Cistercians in the Early Thirteenth Century," *Analecta Sacri Ordinis Cisterciensis*, vol. 35, 1979, p. 3-204 (p. 56-57).

²¹⁴ For Castilian and Leonese grants to Cîteaux and comparison with earlier gifts to Cluny: D'EMILIO, "The Royal Convent," p. 203-206, 221-222; for a thorough state of the question and revised view on early ties between Cluny and Castile-León: Lucy PICK, "Rethinking Cluny in Spain," *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies*, vol. 5, 2013, p. 1-17. For Cluny in late twelfth-century Iberia, see BISHKO (see n. 11), p. 338-356; the summary in José Luis SENRA GABRIEL Y GALÁN, "Alfonso XI y Cluny. La restauración de un vínculo tradicional en la primera mitad del siglo XIV," *Hispania Sacra*, vol. 47, 1995, p. 537-558 (p. 539-543); and the comprehensive study of Carlos M. REGLERO DE LA FUENTE,

contest, as the austerity of Cistercian decoration was met with a blizzard of programmatic narratives and moralizing imagery in the cloisters and churches of other Benedictine houses and communities of canons.²¹⁵ Sharp as such rivalries were, the differences between Cluniacs and Cistercians were sometimes obscured, for benefactors and writers of charters, by the common element of the Benedictine rule—still novel in Iberia as an exclusive observance—and the foreign origins of both congregations.²¹⁶ In smaller local communities, the loose and gradually evolving ties with either Cluny or the Cistercians further blurred the lines between them.

Architecturally, Cluny and its Burgundian legacy are especially relevant for the sadly ruined church of Moreruela (Fig. 20), a daughter of Clairvaux. Its design had once been ascribed to an older Benedictine house, but Carlos Valle refuted this with careful examination of the campaigns at the east end.²¹⁷ He argued for the choir's dependence in design and decoration on contemporary models from Burgundy and northern France, rejecting any compromise with indigenous forms.²¹⁸ Happily, the discovery in 1994 of an inscription of 1162 on the central chapel matched, as Valle has noted, the earliest sure evidence for a Cistercian affiliation, making this perhaps the first Cistercian church in Iberia with an ambulatory and chapels.²¹⁹ One need not, however, accept his postulate of one prototype—though lost and unknown—for the choir at Moreruela. Rather, Andrault-Schmitt offers Cluny, not as a precise model, but as a catalyst for debates—pursued at sites like Paray-le-Monial, Langres Cathedral, and, ultimately, Clairvaux—on the form of a great church. Beyond the groundplan, these discussions necessarily

Cluny en España: los prioratos de la provincia y sus redes sociales: 1073-ca.1270 (Fuentes y Estudios de Historia Leonesa; 122), León 2008.

²¹⁵ See the remarks in D'EMILIO, "Cistercian Architecture," p. 138. Abbot Peter the Venerable's visit in 1142 and the brief affiliation of San Pedro de Cardeña with Cluny (1142-1146) were conduits for the arrival of Burgundian art: José Luis SENRA GABRIEL Y GALÁN, "La irrupción borgoñona en la escultura castellana de mediados del siglo XII," *Anuario del Departamento de Historia y Teoría del Arte (U.A.M.)*, vol. 4, 1992, p. 35-51.

²¹⁶ See, for example, the remarks on contemporary understanding of Cistercian observance and the language of documents in María Alegria F. MARQUES, "A introdução da Ordem de Cister em Portugal," *Estudios sobre a Ordem de Cister em Portugal*, Lisbon 1998, p. 29-74.

²¹⁷ VALLE, "Las primeras construcciones" (see n. 199), p. 24-33; for a summary: *id.*, "La significación de la iglesia abacial de Moreruela en el panorama histórico-constructivo de la orden del Cister," *Moreruela: un monasterio en la historia del Cister*, ed. Hortensia LARRÉN IZQUIERDO, Valladolid 2008, p. 217-233.

²¹⁸ ANDRAULT-SCHMITT, p. 80, n. 64, has underscored the connections with Burgundian buildings like Paray-le-Monial, while rightly dismissing the cited parallels with buildings of the Île-de-France like Saint-Denis and Noyon Cathedral as foreign to the overall design and aesthetic of the choir at Moreruela.

²¹⁹ It is reproduced in María Encarnación MARTÍN LÓPEZ and Vicente GARCÍA LOBO, "La publicidad en el Cister: las inscripciones de Santa María de Moreruela," *Moreruela: un monasterio*, p. 98-115 (p. 112). It could be read as Era 1205 (1167 AD), but I am not persuaded by the date of Era 1214 (1176 AD): María de la GRANJA ALONSO, "Nuevos datos a la entrada del Cister en España," *Actas. II Congreso internacional sobre el Cister en Galicia y Portugal (IX centenario de la fundación del Cister)*, Ourense, 1998, 4 vols., Zamora 1999, vol. 1, p. 461-479 (p. 475, n. 2).

encompassed the disposition of volumes, the elevations and illumination, the vaults and supports, and the relationship of the choir and naves.

Recognizing the diversity of these choirs and understanding architectural models more flexibly as stimuli for problem-solving makes it even less convincing—or necessary—to posit one source for the other Iberian buildings—Fitero, Veruela, and Poblet—with ambulatories and chapels.²²⁰ Instead of hunting for a prototype, it makes more sense to identify the architectural know-how and repertory that builders commanded and the problems of vaulting, illumination, and space to which they applied those tools with more or less success. In this way, one may better appreciate the distinctiveness, originality, and independence of the church at Gradefes.

4. The Nuns' Church at Gradefes

In the choir at Gradefes, an ambulatory of five bays rings the main chapel. The ambulatory is suffused with light from three deeply splayed windows (Fig. 24) in each of its three shallow chapels (Fig. 3, 23) and two windows in the gently curved wall of each western bay. The desire to illuminate the ambulatory makes sense of what seems, from outside (Fig. 3), a startling displacement of the lateral windows of the axial chapel, pressed flush against the buttresses.²²¹ The central chapel received taller windows and more articulation: two responds mark off three segments inside and outside, and two thick strap-like ribs support and divide the slightly concave sections of the vault. This emphasis is echoed in the choir windows above the ambulatory roof. The central window has a horseshoe arch and a pair of columns with carved capitals; the adjacent ones are round-arched and framed by a roll moulding; those to the west are similar but smaller.

Six composite piers with cruciform cores separate the main chapel from the ambulatory (Fig. 25, 26). The inner four—facing the chapels—display six responds on the main faces and six colonnettes in the corners. The bundles of coursed pillars and colonnettes were conceived to carry the hemicycle arcade, its moulded outer orders, and the ribs of the vaults of the ambulatory and main chapel. The capitals and imposts are all at the same height, except for the tall responds rising to the high vault of the main chapel. The arches of the arcade are supported by robust double columns and framed on each face by a moulded arch resting on colonnettes. Large columns bear the transverse pointed arches of the ambulatory and rise to the ribs of the deeply webbed main vault. Two more colonnettes on each pier carry the ribs of the ambulatory vault. At the north and south entrances to the

²²⁰ VALLE, "Moruela," p. 232-233, floated this possibility, while recognizing that direct connections among these diverse buildings are largely limited to the nearby sites of Fitero and Veruela.

²²¹ On the lateral chapels, the outer windows are flush against the buttresses of the curving wall of the western bay, while a section of wall separates the inner windows from the axial chapel. This asymmetry—not evident on all published plans—is a result of the bowed width of the western bays and the shallow depth of the chapels.

ambulatory, the piers that begin the hemicycle have only four colonnettes: on the ambulatory side, the imposts of the colonnettes supporting the framing arch of the arcade have been widened to accommodate the vault rib (Fig. 25).

The decoration of the ribs in the ambulatory alternates from bay to bay. Above the axial bay and the wide western bays, two roll mouldings line a band of beveled eight-petalled flowers with large buttons (Fig. 27). Deeply drilled holes separate the flowers and create a bold contrast. In the bays in front of the lateral chapels and flanking the presbytery, the ribs simply have a roll between concave mouldings. On the outer wall, the ribs rest on an impost or stringcourse, except for those over the bay in front of the northeast chapel which spring from colonnettes (Fig. 24).

Throughout the ambulatory and chapels, moderately sized ashlar blocks of yellowish or cream-colored limestone are laid in largely regular courses and skillfully shaped for arches, splays, and the smoothly curving perimeter walls. The number and diversity of masons' marks, even on single piers or small stretches of the chapel walls, indicate a large workforce for a building of this size advancing efficiently without major interruptions. In the southeast chapel, for example, the walls and window splays yield at least sixteen different marks with as many as six in one course.²²² Many are letters of the alphabet (*A, B, E* or *M, G, I, P, S, T*), but unusually complex signs include a neatly drawn bird's head, a quadruped, and one resembling a stick figure.²²³ Five of these marks recur with at least five others in just the lowest five courses of one pier facing this chapel. Their prominence and variety on carved capitals (Fig. 28), bases, ribs, and moulded arches, as well as on variously shaped blocks of the composite piers, show that skills for relatively complex stonecutting were widely available within the workforce. At the same time, the occasional appearance of two marks on one stone may indicate a layering of responsibilities within the atelier or the roles of separate teams at the quarry, masons' yard, or building site.

Inside the church, sculpture is crisply cut and mouldings are well executed. On many capitals, broad leaves in low relief with sharp outlines and plain surfaces ring a clearly delineated bell. Small buds, blossoms, fleurs-de-lis, or pine cones at

²²² By comparison, nearly thirty different marks appear in the ambulatory and chapels among ninety-five counted throughout the Cistercian church at Fitero: Carlos J. MARTÍNEZ ÁLAVA, *Del románico al gótico en la arquitectura de Navarra. Monasterios, iglesias y palacios*, Pamplona 2007, p. 102. Therese MARTIN, *Queen as King. Politics and Architectural Propaganda in Twelfth-Century Spain*, Leiden 2006, p. 121-131, 232-236, counts over forty in the entire twelfth-century church of San Isidoro de León—a royal enterprise. Javier MARTÍNEZ DE AGUIRRE, "Investigaciones sobre arquitectos y talleres de construcción en la España medieval cristiana," *Anales de Historia del Arte*, vol. Extra 1: *Cien años de investigación sobre arquitectura medieval española*, 2009, p. 127-164 (p. 156-157), cites royal privileges of the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries for the masons of the cathedrals of Salamanca, León, and Cuenca and suggests that their numbers—in the 20s and 30s—correspond with those of masons' marks in large-scale campaigns like that at the Cistercian monastery of La Oliva.

²²³ A bird's head appears as a mark in the 1150s in the upper stages of the tower of San Isidoro de León: MARTIN, *Queen as King*, p. 236 and fig. 113-114.



Fig. 24. Santa María de Gradefes, ambulatory, northeast and east chapels, c. 1177-1190s.
(photo: author)



Fig. 25. Santa María de Gradefes, ambulatory viewed from northeast chapel, first two hemicycle piers on the north side, c. 1177-1190s. (photo: author)



Fig. 26. Santa María de Gradefes, plinths and lower courses of hemicycle piers in front of southeast chapel, c. 1177-1190s. (photo: author)

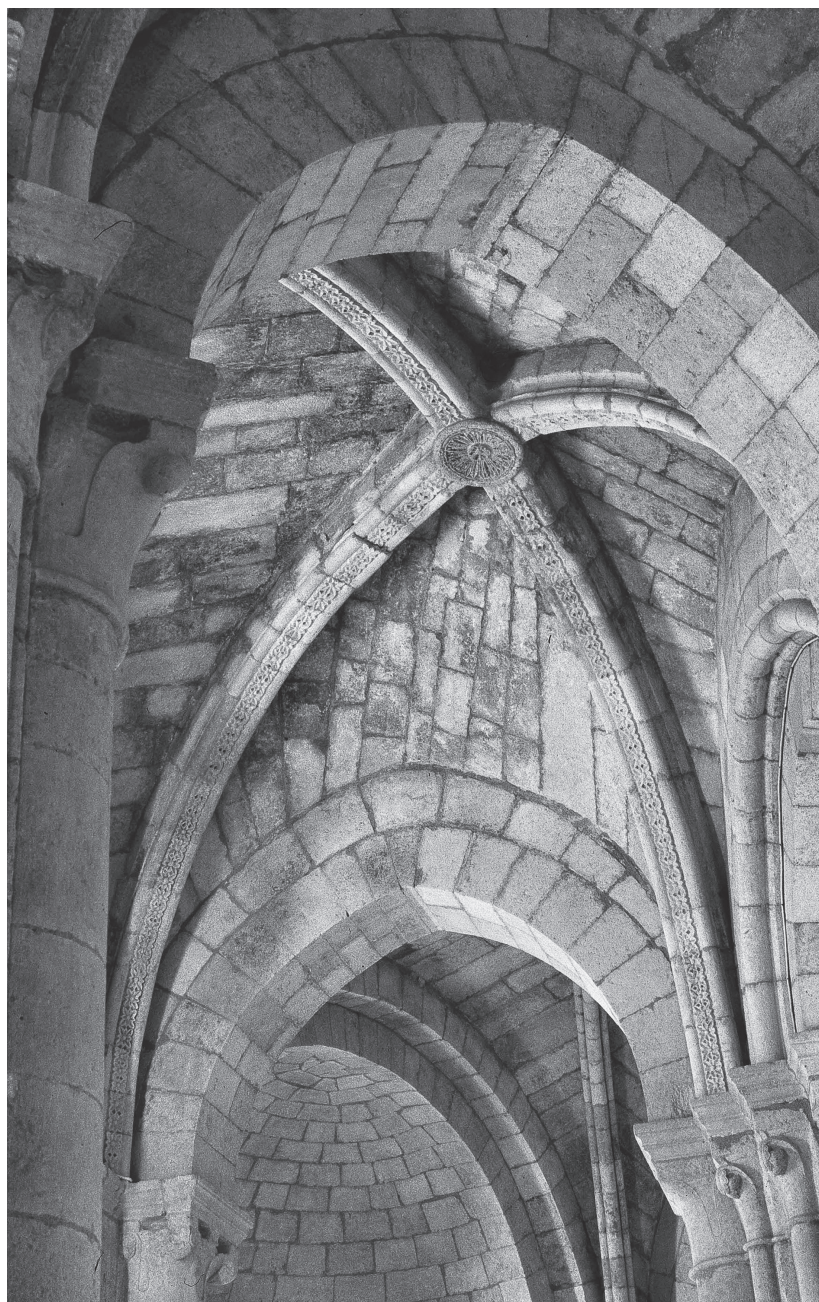


Fig. 27. Santa María de Gradefes, ambulatory vault facing the axial chapel, c. 1177-1190s. (photo: author)

the leaf tips may be intricately detailed, sometimes with ornamental drilling (Fig. 24, 25, 28). Some large rectangular abaci are deeply indented, as if crenellated. The spare architectural forms and foliage conform with pieces in Cistercian buildings across Iberia (Fig. 29). More unusual are the figural capitals, concentrated on the hemicycle piers or beneath the high vault. These exhibit birds, masks, a caryatid, winged hybrids with human heads and serpentine tails (Fig. 28), and a few enigmatic compositions. Animal heads guard some plinths as spurs (Fig. 26), but foliage is more common. On the bosses of the ambulatory vaults, a centaur, the Lamb of God, and St. Michael and the dragon (Fig. 30) complement crosses, foliage, and abstract patterns. Outside, low reliefs on the two respond capitals of the axial chapel are less accomplished—beyond any weathering. On one, a devil meddles with the weighing of souls; the other may depict the Flight into Egypt. Corbels present figures and motifs rendered with more plasticity and technical skill.

The earliest investigators were stumped by the architectural pedigree of the church. In his magisterial work, Vicente Lampérez admired the structure and dated it to the 1190s, but confessed that its architectural school seemed to him “somewhat vague and uncertain.”²²⁴ For his part, Gómez Moreno compared features of the piers with Tarragona Cathedral, buildings of Navarre, and, most of all, Santo Domingo de la Calzada. He proposed, too, that the architect went on to design the church of Sandoval in the 1190s.²²⁵ Endorsing the comparison with Santo Domingo de la Calzada, Élie Lambert extended it to the ribbed vaults of the ambulatories where keystones are off center and set closer to the hemicycles.²²⁶ Leopoldo Torres Balbás postulated delays after the project was launched in 1177: that explained how the hemicycle piers were prepared for vaults that, in his view, were closer to work of c. 1200.²²⁷

More recent authors have largely confined themselves to descriptions and modest refinements of these suggestions.²²⁸ Building on Gómez Moreno’s hypothetical link with Sandoval, Concha Casado and Antonio Cea matched masons’ marks and sculpture.²²⁹ Valle added examples, but, crucially, he distinguished between a shared workforce and the profoundly different conception of each building, ruling out their design by a single architect.²³⁰ Accepting Torres Balbás’s view of a slow project, he dated Gradefes after the initial campaign at Sandoval—contrary to Gómez Moreno. There has been no further precision, however, about the sequence

²²⁴ VICENTE LAMPÉREZ Y ROMEA, *Historia de la arquitectura cristiana española en la Edad Media*, 2nd ed., 3 vols., Madrid 1930, vol. 2, p. 342-344.

²²⁵ GÓMEZ MORENO (see n. 171), vol. 1, p. 418-422. He praised the tall proportions and clarity of Sandoval by comparison with the more complicated structure at Gradefes.

²²⁶ LAMBERT (see n. 202), p. 87.

²²⁷ TORRES BALBÁS, *Arquitectura gótica* (see n. 211), p. 23.

²²⁸ E.g., FERNÁNDEZ GONZÁLEZ et al. (see n. 92), p. 75-80. Lampérez and Gómez Moreno are cited (p. 25) in the extended description in CASADO and CEA, *Gradefes* (see n. 92), p. 23-33.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 25-26.

²³⁰ VALLE, “La arquitectura en...León” (see n. 7), p. 156, 168, n. 79, 80.



Fig. 28. Santa María de Gradefes, second pier of the ambulatory, north side, capitals with hybrid animals and foliage decoration, c. 1177-1190s. (photo: author)



Fig. 29. Santa María de La Oliva, foliate capital in northernmost chapel, late 12th century. (photo: author)



Fig. 30. Santa María de Gradefes, vault boss of south presbytery with St. Michael and the dragon, c. 1190-1200. (photo: author)

or phases of construction and disagreements remain—though without detailed argument—over whether the hemicycle piers were conceived for the ribbed vaults.²³¹

Certainly, the most conservative architectural forms and most limited repertory of sculpture appear in the three chapels and along the perimeter of the ambulatory. It is reasonable to suppose that the outer wall and chapels were laid out and raised first. On that wall, the ribs of the ambulatory vault would generally rest on the imposta of the responds carrying the transverse arches: colonnettes were only prepared for the ribs in the bay before the northeast chapel. If this refinement means that construction had proceeded from the south—next to the monastic complex, the large number of masons' marks in the southeast chapel gains significance as a sign of the size of the workforce mobilized from the start.²³²

Within the central chapel, the broad unadorned ribs (Fig. 24) find parallels in several contemporary buildings in or near Navarre.²³³ Besides the often cited choir

²³¹ María del Carmen MUÑOZ PÁRRAGA, "La iglesia," *Monjes y monasterios* (see n. 5), p. 107-118 (p. 116), states that Gothic vaults were adapted during construction to piers designed for "Romanesque vaults."

²³² GARCÍA FLORES, *Valladolid* (see n. 3), p. 275, has argued that construction commenced from the south side of the choir at the Castilian monasteries of Valbuena and Bujedo de Juarros.

²³³ Such ribs also remained common—with notable examples in Burgos and Soria in eastern Castile—in late twelfth-century vaults in the architectural traditions of Islamic Spain: Antonio E. MOMPLET

at Santo Domingo de la Calzada, one may compare those in two Cistercian churches: the axial chapel—as at Gradefes—at Fitero and the majestic ribs of the main chapel at La Oliva where the wide splays of the windows and the gentle undulation of their hood arches have affinities with the arrangement at Gradefes.²³⁴ La Oliva may have been started by 1164, with a plausible notice of a consecration of 1198 a likely *terminus ante quem* for at least the eastern chapels. Carlos Martínez Álava has dated the commencement of Fitero to the 1170s, but there are no obstacles to a starting date in the early 1160s for a community established since the early 1140s. An earlier date would sensibly clarify the relationship between the choirs of Fitero and Veruela, two filials of l'Escale Dieu, separated by only forty kilometers. At Veruela, consecrations of chapels are recorded intermittently from 1168 through 1182, and the more complex vaulting and two-storey elevation of its ambulatory seems a critical response to Fitero.²³⁵

Compared with Gradefes, the tunnel-like ambulatory at Fitero and its supports are squat and heavily proportioned. Its cavernous darkness is not just due to the closing of the hemicycle arcades for installation of a retable. The builders at Gradefes strove for a different effect from the outset by heightening the chapels and using their shallow depth expansively to open and illuminate the ambulatory.²³⁶ This aesthetic vision was realized in the plans for a rib-vaulted ambulatory with a taller vault, more delicately proportioned ribs, and composite piers. There is no reason to posit a significant delay in the design of the piers, for the masons' marks document a large workforce throughout the ambulatory. Moreover, bases on both sides of the ambulatory have similar profiles, while foliate capitals like those of the outer wall and chapels recur on several piers in various sizes tailored to their placement. In fact, the doubled responds beneath the hemicycle arcade point back to Navarre and surrounding districts where widespread examples include those in the ambulatory of Santo Domingo de la Calzada and beneath the entry arch of the main chapel at La Oliva.²³⁷ To the west, they were used in the choir and nave at

MÍNGUEZ, "Filiación hispano-musulmana de abovedamientos románicos y del entorno de 1200 en Castilla y León," *Alfonso VIII y su época: I Curso de Cultura Medieval, Aguilar de Campoo. 1-6 Octubre 1990*, Aguilar de Campoo 1992, p. 295-306.

²³⁴ For Fitero and La Oliva: MARTÍNEZ ÁLAVA (see n. 222), p. 70-141, and for other examples of such ribs, p. 49-50. For La Oliva: JAVIER MARTÍNEZ DE AGUIRRE ALDAZ, "Carcastillo. Monasterio de Santa María la Real de la Oliva," *Enciclopedia del románico en Navarra*, 3 vols., ed. *id.*, Aguilar de Campoo 2008, vol. 1, p. 368-394.

²³⁵ For Veruela: IGNACIO MARTÍNEZ BUENAGA, *La arquitectura cisterciense en Aragón (1150-1350)*, Zaragoza 1998, p. 91-180; *id.*, "Los edificios medievales del monasterio de Veruela," *Tesoros de Veruela: legado de un monasterio cisterciense*, ed. JAVIER LAMBÁN MONTAÑES and CRISTINA PALACÍN CANFRANC, Zaragoza 2006, p. 91-114.

²³⁶ MARTÍNEZ ÁLAVA, p. 93-94, suggests that the outer walls of the chapels at Fitero were heightened after their initial construction; he also compares the conception of the chapels to Gradefes.

²³⁷ For the importance of these paired responds in Navarre: *ibid.*, p. 53-55; and the useful repertory—with sections—in LEOPOLDO TORRES BALBÁS, "Iglesias del siglo XII al XIII con columnas gemelas en sus pilares," *Archivo Español de Arte*, vol. 19, 1946, p. 274-308, where, curiously, the author denied (p. 308) that those at Gradefes were related to other Spanish examples.

Valbuena, a Cistercian church with its own architectural debt to Santo Domingo de la Calzada and Navarre.²³⁸

Within León, these architectural features isolate Gradefes. This is plain from even a cursory comparison (Fig. 20, 24, 27) with the choir at Morerueta to which it is sometimes related.²³⁹ These choirs differ in almost every way: the details of groundplans, the supports, their relationship to the vaults, the elevations, the handling of volumes, the illumination, and the architectural sculpture. This contrasts sharply with the first campaign at Sandoval where Valle rightly traced specific details to Morerueta despite the more conservative design.²⁴⁰ The huge enterprise at Morerueta, underway in the 1160s, supplied models and talent for the church at Sandoval, probably launched before Count Ponce de Minerva died in 1175, but the most characteristic elements the two churches share—like the triple roll mouldings or colonnettes—do not recur at Gradefes.

At Sandoval, capitals and vault bosses in the upper zones of the crossing and transepts bear the strongest links with Gradefes. Among these related pieces, those at Gradefes are markedly superior in draughtmanship, detail, and execution. That is true, for example, of the vault boss of St. Michael (Fig. 30, 31), a capital with a complex pattern of interlacing stems and palmettes, and another with an arcade.²⁴¹ Moreover, the boss with St. Michael is showcased at Gradefes above the south presbytery bay that opened onto the cloister. The archangel—patron of nearby San Miguel de Escalada—may have had special meaning at the nunnery where his image recurs on an exterior capital of the axial chapel. The superior carving at Gradefes suggests that craftsmen from the large team there joined a second phase of work at Sandoval, perhaps as construction at the nuns' church—limited to the choir—flagged in the early thirteenth century.

To the extent that the singular choir at Gradefes has ties with other Cistercian buildings in León, there is no reason to tag it as derivative. Its most emblematic features are foreign to the region. Though of complex design, the nuns' choir was small and the sizeable workforce evidenced by the masons' marks could have built it quickly.²⁴² The convent's wealth in liquid assets, its likely possession of slaves from the family patrimony, the availability of stone nearby, and its more distant

²³⁸ For Valbuena: GARCÍA FLORES, *Valladolid*, p. 189-300. Contending that construction of the choir there spanned the last third of the twelfth century, he highlights links with the collegiate church of Tudela, La Oliva, and Santo Domingo de la Calzada and recognizes the importance of buildings in that region for Gradefes, p. 277-278.

²³⁹ Even a recent study of the nunnery notes in passing that the ambulatory at Morerueta preceded that at Gradefes by half a century (1132), a date with no support in the literature: MARTÍNEZ TEJERA, "Gradefes" (see n. 92), p. 518.

²⁴⁰ See n. 199.

²⁴¹ For the capitals: Antonio GARCÍA FLORES, "El Maestro Gualterio y Valdediós: notas sobre un maestro itinerante por los monasterios cistercienses del reino de León durante el siglo XIII," *Mosteiros cistercienses* (see n. 91), vol. 2, p. 205-234 (p. 226-227 and figs. 16 and 17).

²⁴² I see no evidence of slow construction *pace* Isidro Gonzalo BANGO TORVISO, "Monasterio de Santa María de Morerueta," *Arte Medieval en Zamora (Studia Zamorensia: Anejos; 1)*, Zamora 1988, p. 61-102 (p. 90, n. 133).



Fig. 31. Santa María de Sandoval, north transept, vault boss with St. Michael and the dragon, c. 1200-1220. (photo: author)

holdings in Boñar, a district blessed with major limestone quarries, all favored construction and made the nunnery a ready source of skilled labor for Sandoval.

The stylistic comparisons with other churches and internal evidence of an efficient campaign explain the genesis of the choir, suggest an outline for its chronology, and help us find and interpret clues to construction among the convent's documents.²⁴³ An architect likely came to Gradefes from the region of Navarre by

²⁴³ There have not been archaeological or technical examinations of the church, convent, and site of Gradefes (or of Carrizo) that might complement documents or internal and comparative stylistic



Fig. 32. Santa María de Gradefes, foundational inscription, 1177 (ERA 1215).
(photo: author)

1177 when an inscription (Fig. 32) recorded Abbess Teresa Pérez's foundation of the church. He would have known some of the interrelated projects—underway for at least a decade—on the choirs of Santo Domingo de la Calzada and the Cistercian monasteries of Fitero, La Oliva, and Veruela. His arrival at Gradefes was hardly fortuitous. Just as the Navarrese nunnery of Tulebras was said to have sent

analysis in charting the history of their buildings: Fernando Miguel HERNÁNDEZ and Hortensia LARRÉN IZQUIERDO, “Los monasterios cistercienses medievales del reino de León a la luz de la arqueología,” *Mosteiros cistercienses* (see n. 91), vol. 1, p. 201-228.

nuns to Gradefes, it was surely an agent for dispatch of an architect familiar with Cistercian buildings in a region in the midst of a construction boom. Tulebras stands midway between Fitero and Veruela and the nunnery had been transferred there from Tudela by 1157. Its modest late twelfth-century church is of traditional Romanesque type, but foliate capitals with pinecones and leaves covered with incisions and finely beveled details resemble several in the choir and chapterhouse at Fitero, suggesting at least some workshop exchanges by the 1160s or 1170s.²⁴⁴

The architect responsible for the design of the church at Gradefes need not have remained at the isolated site. A team of skilled masons could easily have produced the diverse pieces required for this novel building with designs, directions, and periodic supervision from an experienced architect.²⁴⁵ The earliest and most prevalent foliate capitals (Fig. 24, 25, 28) follow patterns with close parallels at Santo Domingo de la Calzada, La Oliva (Fig. 29), and Valbuena, but the more original and varied figural capitals are harder to pin down. Unlike those at the Galician convent of Pantón, for example, they do not belong to a large school of sculpture, nor are they easily understood as variations on similarly structured capitals.²⁴⁶ Moreover, the Cistercian men's houses which inspired other features at Gradefes adhered strictly to a non-figural repertoire in their choirs. Free from oversight by any men's house, the nuns may have commissioned pieces based upon *ad hoc* drawings applied to the simple baskets of the capitals and—as at Pantón—reflecting programmatic aims that time has obscured.

At Gradefes, the noblewoman who, with her husband, had agreed to spend a hundred gold maravedis on a tomb at Sahagún embarked upon a greater monument.²⁴⁷ Abbess Teresa commanded the wealth, materials, and manpower for an ambitious and innovative building. Her daughter, Abbess María García, oversaw completion of the choir and closely related chapterhouse during her nearly forty-year rule. With its favored location and resources, the nunnery became a training ground for stonecutters and sculptors, some of whom joined the project at Sandoval in the early thirteenth century. By then, the congregation of Las Huelgas had offered access to a new generation of architectural expertise. While the impact of Las Huelgas was manifest at Carrizo in ornament and architectural detailing, it left

²⁴⁴ The church at Tulebras has a single nave divided into bays by pilasters with engaged columns and an apse with a chancel arch on semicolumns, three round-arched windows shafted on the interior and exterior, four responds on the exterior, and a simple corbel table. For the church and the community's establishment at Tulebras: María Josefa TARIFA CASTILLA, *El monasterio cisterciense de Tulebras*, Pamplona 2012, p. 11, 39-51.

²⁴⁵ MARTÍNEZ DE AGUIRRE, "Carcastillo...la Oliva," p. 372-373, has suggested that Master Garsion of Santo Domingo de la Calzada was the architect of the first campaign at La Oliva, but did not remain for long periods.

²⁴⁶ Fifteen kilometers away, figured capitals and corbels at Villarmún follow more traditional Leonese designs and are more crudely carved than the interior capitals at Gradefes: Artemio Manuel MARTÍNEZ TEJERA, "Villarmún: Iglesia de Nuestra Señora de La Asunción," *Enciclopedia del románico...León* (see n. 92), p. 639-644.

²⁴⁷ See n. 149.

a more profound mark at Gradefes on the tall proportions, deeply webbed vaults, and delicate window shafts and mouldings of the clerestory and high vault of the choir. Making allowance for the earlier date and different pedigree of the ambulatory and piers, one might consider the upper choir as a rendering in a local idiom of an early Gothic elevation like that of the upper chapel of the north transept at Laon Cathedral—a milieu familiar to the builders at Las Huelgas.²⁴⁸ By the second quarter of the thirteenth century, the ending of the founding family's rule, the lack of attention from the powerful Téllez line, the loss of powerful and wealthy patrons, and the order's increasing oversight of nunneries all contributed to a scaling down of the project. At the same time, an ample corps of chaplains served the nuns throughout the thirteenth century and would have made good use of the chapels that were a legacy of the original design.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁸ Architecture of 1170-1190 in the Île-de-France centered on the cathedrals of Noyon, Soissons, and Laon was crucial to the formation of the builders of the church at Las Huelgas, begun in the 1190s: D'EMILIO, "The Royal Convent" (see n. 1), p. 258-262. The chapel elevation at Laon is illustrated in Dieter KIMPEL and Robert SUCKALE, *Die gotische Architektur in Frankreich, 1130-1270*, Munich 1995, p. 202, fig. 204.

²⁴⁹ ALONSO, "La cabecera" (see n. 93), p. 347, related the design to the number of chaplains at Gradefes, counting twelve between 1240 and 1287 (though without specific references). This explanation is questionable. First, the four chapels barely exceed the three at Carrizo, hardly justifying the complex design. Second, Gradefes may have had twelve different chaplains during those forty-eight years, but likely had no more than five at once, not unlike Carrizo in the late thirteenth century. Before 1260, the charters of Gradefes say even less about the office than those of Carrizo, and their witness lists pose the same methodological problems (see n. 204). Apart from an isolated appearance in 1210 (*Colección...Gradefes* [see n. 94], doc. 310, p. 380-381) of an Andrés titled as *el capellan* (not necessarily of Gradefes) and a reference to the *capellani abbatisse* in the witness list of a document of 1221 prepared in Burgos (doc. 391, p. 463-465), the first named and titled chaplains appear in 1237 (Vicente, doc. 458, p. 527, possibly the priest who witnessed a charter at Gradefes in 1226, doc. 423, p. 495-496) and 1238 (Juan Peláez, doc. 460, p. 529, possibly the priest documented between 1222 and 1244, doc. 401, 423 [an untitled witness], 436-437, 478 [*clérigo*], 483 [*clérigo*], p. 474-475, 495-496, 508-509, 548-549, 554-555; and Domingo Abad, doc. 460, p. 529, possibly the *clérigo* who signed with dignitaries in 1233, doc. 444, p. 513-515, and among those *de Gradefes* in 1243, doc. 479, p. 549-550). Five chaplains confirm a document of 1262; four reappear with a new chaplain (Domingo Pérez) in 1265; three of these reappear in 1270 with a fourth (Lázaro): doc. 507, 509, 512, p. 581-584, 587-588. Some chaplains can be traced back among witnesses, untitled or titled only as *presbiter* or *clérigo*, closely associated with the convent, e.g., Martín Ysidrez, documented between 1242 and 1262 (doc. 477, 489, 498, 507, p. 546-548, 561-562, 571-572, 581-582). Since titled chaplains so rarely appear in charters at Gradefes before 1260, one must look to frequently recurring witnesses to determine which—or how many—named clerics served as chaplains. Among individuals, likely candidates include Juan, titled *presbiter de Gradefes*, in 1207 (doc. 300, p. 368-370) and possibly the priest with that common name who appears in local charters of the nunnery between at least 1198 and 1208 (e.g., doc. 243, 253, 303, p. 300-301, 314-316, 372-373); Juan Domínguez, titled *clérigo de Sancta Maria de Gradefes* in 1251 (*Colección...Carrizo* [see n. 94], vol. 1, doc. 267, p. 288-289), and documented from 1240 to 1257 (*Colección...Gradefes*, doc. 470-471, 479, 483, 489, 498, p. 539-541, 549-550, 554-555, 561-562, 571-572). Several priests who witness numerous charters of Gradefes were attached to neighboring parishes, but these may well have served the nuns as chaplains, most notably Miguel, priest of Villahibiera, just two kilometers from the convent. Miguel is documented as a priest from 1198 (doc. 243, 245, p. 300-301, 303-304), often led the witnesses, was frequently referred to as *el prior* between 1214 and 1226 (doc. 335, 354, 358-359, 363-365, 368, 385, 392, 417, 427, p. 404-405, 426-427, 429-431, 434-437, 440-441, 456-458, 465-466, 489-490, 499-500), and died by 1228 when one of his sons (*Pelagius filius prioris*, doc. 417, p. 489-490) made a gift in his memory (doc. 434, p. 506-507). His title of prior and his appearance with two priests of neighboring parishes, Pedro Yáñez and Rodrigo, in those years suggest that he headed a group of clerics, serving the nuns.

The convent's history underscores its resources, local isolation, and possible ties—through Tulebras or even the origins of Abbess Teresa Pérez—to Navarre and neighboring regions, but documents yield few explicit notices to fill in the outlines of this building campaign. The first firm record is a neatly ruled and elegantly lettered inscription in the sunken and bordered panel of a stone plaque (Fig. 32). It credits Abbess Teresa with the foundation of the church on March 1, 1177.²⁵⁰ A donation of 1199 granted rights to extract stone (*pedreram secare*) from the donors' estates at Valdealiso, within five kilometers of Gradefes.²⁵¹ Three years later, *Domnus Galterius magister pontis de Gradefes* witnessed a private charter concerning a nearby property.²⁵² If this master supervised construction of the bridge at Gradefes, this may have been linked with the church, as at Carrizo. Indeed, some have identified him—because of his unusual and foreign name—with the Master Galterio in an inscription of 1218 at the Cistercian church of Valdedios in the Asturias.²⁵³ Like the impact of Gradefes on the crossing and vaults at Sandoval in the early thirteenth century, this artist's departure would signal the slowing of the project at the nunnery. In fact, references to the works disappear until 1240 when a donor gave the convent rights to transport stone across her property from an adjacent quarry.²⁵⁴ Fray Sancho of the works (*Fre Sancho que tenie la obra*) witnessed the gift, the first explicit mention of this office among the convent's charters. Presumably a monk or lay brother, he prominently confirmed several documents over the next three years.²⁵⁵ Between 1262 and 1270, D. Juan *de la obra* witnessed charters, sometimes following the convent's chaplains.²⁵⁶

²⁵⁰ ERA: M^o: CC^o: XV^o: K(a)L(enda)S: MARCII: FUNDATA: E(st): ECCL(esi)A: S(an)C(t)E: MARIE: DE: GRADEFES: AB: ABBATISSA: TARESLA. It is no longer *in situ*.

²⁵¹ *Colección...Gradefes*, doc. 249, p. 308-309.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, doc. 281, p. 345-346. Given the local rarity of the name, he may be the *Don Galter* who had confirmed an agreement between Gradefes and Sandoval at the nunnery in 1198: doc. 243, p. 300-301.

²⁵³ See VALLE, "La arquitectura en...León" (see n. 7), p. 156-157, 169-170. GARCÍA FLORES, "El maestro Gualterio," has recently studied his work there and possible career. There is a photograph of the inscription on p. 215.

²⁵⁴ ...*que aades entrada e salida pe la nuestra tierra por la Pedrera de Ual de Fanne, que entredes con bues ye con carros ye con omes ye con aquellas cosas que menester uos furen pora seruiros de la Pedrera; e si hi axardes piedra que aades mester que la tomedes, e nenguno non uola contrare...: Colección...Gradefes*, doc. 473, p. 542-543. In 1233, a painter (*Pedro Martínez pintor*) was among witnesses closely associated with the convent (doc. 444, p. 513-515); COELHO, *Expresiones del poder* (see n. 3), p. 172, read this as *presbiter*, identifying him as a chaplain, though he left no other trace in the convent's charters unless he is the Pedro Martínez, once titled scribe of the abbess, who wrote documents between 1240 and 1270 (*Colección...Gradefes*, doc. 473, 509-510, 512, p. 542-543, 583-585, 587-588).

²⁵⁵ He followed *Don Diego el frade* at the head of the witnesses to a donation of 1242; he leads the witnesses to a gift, prepared before the chapter of Gradefes; and he appeared, after six nuns and dignitaries, in a third charter that year; in 1243, he was among the witnesses *de Gradefes* to a gift: *ibid.*, doc. 476-479, p. 545-550. He could be the Fray Sancho who represented Matallana in a property exchange with Gradefes in 1237 and witnessed a donation to Gradefes in 1239: doc. 454, 463, p. 523-524, 532-534.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, doc. 507, 511, 512, p. 581-582, 586-588. He is likely the *don I. de la obra* who witnessed a private charter of 1251 in the Carrizo archive (*Colección...Carrizo*, vol. 1, doc. 267, p. 288-289) with clerics of Gradefes.

Of course, these passing references of the mid-thirteenth century have little relevance to the earlier choir and attest only to the ongoing administrative office which, like those of the convent's dignitaries, grew more visible later in the century. Oddly enough, surviving documents offer a fuller picture of construction at Carrizo than of the more ambitious undertaking at Gradefes. Like Carrizo, though, Gradefes benefited from royal privileges in the final decades of the twelfth century when struggles between Castile and León and the creation of the congregation of Las Huelgas led the rival monarchs to woo the Cistercians. The earliest privileges from Fernando II of León were relatively modest ones concerning the convent's rights over an existing property and exempting some houses in the town of Leon from royal dues.²⁵⁷ These would hardly have sustained a building campaign, but the second came just days after the foundational inscription when the king—then in León—could well have attended—or learned of—the ceremony for the widow of a knight who had served his father well. In 1187, King Alfonso VIII of Castile granted protection across his realm to the herds of Gradefes, while King Alfonso IX of León gave exemptions to vassals of Gradefes and donated estates to the nuns in 1189.²⁵⁸

Together, such royal concessions may have facilitated the project, but other tantalizing hints of its impact and character emerge from scribal practices. The scribe Guillermo wrote numerous charters for the convent between 1172 and 1193.²⁵⁹ At first, he occasionally referred to the church of Gradefes in formulas, but in 1181 he introduced the phrase, *in monasterio ecclesie Sancte Marie de Gradefes*, which he used regularly thereafter in gifts and sales.²⁶⁰ His successors abandoned it, but one wonders if the redundant emphasis on the church—beginning just four years after its foundation—reflected the visibility and impact of a remarkable project. Later, another scribe, Gil, who was active for a short period, designed elaborate notarial signs and marks for clients.²⁶¹ Such penned drawings give a glimpse of the sort of designs, likely produced by the convent's scribes, behind the unusual capitals of the choir.

These are but hints and scraps of evidence for a church whose grandeur and originality must speak for themselves. The documents remain nearly mute and the local isolation of the project limits our ability to chart its course with reference to

²⁵⁷ *Colección...Gradefes*, doc. 115 (1173), 134 (1177), p. 154-155, 175-177. The dating clause of the second is garbled or incomplete (*Facta carta apud apud [sic] nonas mense marcii, era M CC XV...*), but it was issued between March 2 and 7.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, doc. 195, 205-206, p. 246-247, 255-258.

²⁵⁹ His earliest charter, known from a copy, was issued in July 1172 and his last surviving one is dated May 21, 1193 (*ibid.*, doc. 114, 217, p. 153-154, 269-270), after which Domingo, later joined by Gonzalo, became the lead scribe.

²⁶⁰ For the earliest example (1181.3.6): *ibid.*, doc. 143, p. 186-187.

²⁶¹ On charters between 1215 and 1217, these included fantastic animals of different kinds (*ibid.*, doc. 339, 353, 354, 362, p. 408-409, 424-427, 433-434) and a woman's face (doc. 343, 359, p. 413-414, 430-431). Not all of these are signed by Gil, but the common formulas and short-lived use of the drawings suggest his authorship.

other buildings. A thorough monograph, with a systematic recording of masons' marks, wallwork, and careful correlation of the profiles of mouldings might yield a more refined picture of the campaign to build the choir. What is clear, however, is that the choir at Gradefes is more than a footnote to those with ambulatories and radiating chapels at the men's monasteries—buildings which are themselves more varied than the literature has sometimes acknowledged. The church at Gradefes attests to the vision of a patron and her descendants, to the reach of the earliest Cistercian nuns in Iberia, and to their ability to draw upon artistic innovations at the men's abbeys while preserving their independence.

CONCLUSION

The three surviving twelfth- and thirteenth-century churches of Cistercian nunneries in the kingdom of León and the histories of the communities that built them significantly enhance our understanding of Cistercian architecture, the relationship of religious women to the order, the role of aristocratic founders and families, and the internal organization of nuns' communities. For each convent, a careful and thorough reading of charters and an ample view of the church's artistic context revise conventional wisdom. Together, the three case studies raise larger questions about architecture, patronage, and the meaning of the Cistercian reform for religious women, while my methodology and findings open avenues for further efforts to recognize the religious and artistic protagonism of powerful noblewomen, and to situate Cistercian settlement in Iberia within the religious and artistic revolution of the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries.

At Pantón, Countess Fronilde Fernández's cession of the convent to the men's house of Meira in 1175 and the jarring contrast between the ornate Romanesque apse and spare nave have suggested—deceptively—that this affiliation marked a watershed for the community and launched the reform of its religious life. In fact, the architectural, sculptural, and iconographic complexity of the church the countess planned years before attests to the artistic and spiritual vitality of a thriving network of nunneries and the deep roots of a more diffuse reform movement with which she was deeply involved. This fertile environment prepared and shaped Fronilde's eventual turn to the Cistercians. After her death, the nuns did not fare so well under Meira, as the distant monastery proved no match for lay patrons who reasserted their control over the convent.

At Carrizo, the church has often been neglected due to its modest size and seemingly conservative design, but the project reveals greater ambition and sophistication in the light of the scarcity of stone, the thoughtful response to larger buildings at Moreruela and Sandoval, and the sustained effort to complete it under the direction of a well-documented family of clerics with ties to León and the royal court. In the history of the Cistercians in Iberia, Carrizo's founder, Countess Estefanía Ramírez, and her daughter María Ponce have sometimes been overshadowed by their husbands, Ponce de Minerva and Rodrigo Álvarez, while the lineage of the

Morán has received more notice than abbesses and nuns in accounts of the convent's later development. Like Fronilde Fernández, the countess and her daughter belonged to the highest circles of the aristocracy, well-connected to the crown, other noble families, and leading ecclesiastical institutions. Their patronage, wealth, and social ties created a precocious community of Cistercian nuns in which diverse nuns collaborated in its governance and a network of powerful women parlayed their ties to noblemen and clergy to protect the convent's position, advance its interests, and ensure stability over several generations.

Lastly, the church at Gradefes stands as one of the most original buildings of its time in León and a tribute to the initiative, wealth, and farflung ties of the widowed founder, Teresa Pérez. The building's debt to a wave of innovative projects in and around Navarre in the 1160s and 1170s is valuable evidence of the bonds among the earliest convents of Cistercian nuns in Iberia, and the creativity with which religious women approached the order's new architecture. The church's foreign character, however, also attests to the relative isolation, locally, of a convent tightly controlled by Teresa Pérez and her descendants for nearly seventy years. The end of their rule brought more oversight from men's houses and curtailment of the building project.

Though they follow different paths, these three case studies underscore several key points about the Cistercians in Iberia, their architecture, their relationship to religious women, and the communities these women built. First, the aristocracy was crucial in the establishment of Cistercian nunneries, and, evidently, Iberian noblewomen saw the Cistercians as offering a religious life attractive to women as early as the 1170s. The widows who founded these three nunneries guided their development, and their own background and social networks, patterns of patronage, and vision of religious reform shaped the new communities. As a result, the convents maintained considerable independence as they negotiated their relations with the monarchy, the later congregation of Las Huelgas, and the monasteries of Cistercian men.

Second, the architecture of each church was strongly influenced by the founders' circumstances, local conditions and traditions, and a selective approach to the new buildings at Cistercian men's houses. The idiosyncrasies of these buildings should neither exclude them from the study of Cistercian architecture nor marginalize them as traditional or derivative. Instead, they invite a more inclusive, flexible, and less normative view of Cistercian art, particularly in lands like Iberia where the novelties of Cistercian architecture and aesthetics were one current in a flood of foreign forms that fueled a vigorous artistic dialogue throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

Thirdly, the architecture of these churches—alongwith the patterns of patronage of the convents' founders and the nuns' relationships with diverse religious communities—reminds us that Cistercian settlement in Iberia must be understood within a larger reform movement that encompassed new and old monastic congregations, cathedral chapters, and, eventually, the mendicants. The distinctiveness

and specific appeal of the Cistercians to Iberian patrons must be balanced with their place within this reform movement oriented towards the reception of foreign religious and cultural practices. Too rigid a view of Cistercian exceptionalism runs the risk, paradoxically, of diminishing the creativity and adaptability that contributed to the order's astonishing success.

More remains to be done to complete the history of these convents and their churches, and to apply lessons from this study to larger narratives of Cistercian settlement, women's religious life, church reform, and artistic change in late twelfth- and early thirteenth-century Iberia. Specifically, the history of these communities could be refined by archaeological investigations, particularly of their dependencies and precincts where major renovations of later periods have obscured the original arrangements. Equally important would be more thorough scrutiny of the fabrics, paying close attention to the rich repertory of masons' marks at Grade-fes, the hidden interior of the apse at Carrizo, and the details of architectural sculpture—sometimes given short shrift in Cistercian houses—in the nunneries and related buildings. Lastly, charters remain the most abundant and informative sources for the history of religious establishments across Iberia in this period. These have been used primarily to tally and chart the transactions at the heart of the monastic economy, but there has been far less investigation of the rich insights they provide into the texture of local society; the background and family connections of nuns, monks, and secular clergy; the internal organization of the religious houses; and the culture and education of the scribes that served them. Of particular importance here are the female networks that women forged through kinship, marriage, friendship, and participation in religious communities, for these have been less visible than the genealogies of noble lineages anchored by their leading men. More work of this kind would bring to life the religious women and men of these communities, those who supported them, and the profound impact they had—beyond the gathering up of rents and offerings—on surrounding villages and towns.

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Veuves et communautés: les monastères de moniales cisterciennes et leur architecture dans le royaume de León (1150-1300)

Fondés par de nobles veuves dans le royaume de León, trois monastères de moniales cisterciennes conservent des églises commencées à la fin du XII^e siècle. Les magnifiques sculptures de Ferreira de Pantón, les absides romanes de Carrizo et le déambulatoire imposant de Gradefes sont typiquement cités, si tant est qu'ils le soient, comme des anomalies dans les travaux sur l'art cistercien. Les moniales ont à peine connu un meilleur sort avant l'autorisation de la congrégation royale de Las Huelgas (Burgos). Appuyé sur des chartes et des comparaisons de style, cet article retrace l'histoire des églises, de leurs fondateurs et de leurs communautés. Leur diversité architecturale et leur développement historique situent ces monastères cisterciens dans le cadre des mouvements de réforme contemporains sur la péninsule ibérique et montrent en même temps comment ils s'ancrent dans les politiques religieuses ambitieuses d'un groupe de sœurs, de puissantes dames soutenant la réforme et les arts, accordant leur patronage et promouvant leurs parentes.

Widows and Communities: Cistercian Nunneries and their Architecture in the Kingdom of León (1150-1300)

Three Cistercian nunneries founded by aristocratic widows in the kingdom of León retain churches begun in the late 12th century. The rich carvings at Ferreira de Pantón, Romanesque apses at Carrizo, and rare ambulatory at Gradefes are typically cited—if at all—as anomalies in studies of Cistercian art. The nuns hardly fared better before the creation of the royal congregation of Las Huelgas (Burgos). Using charters and stylistic comparisons, this article reconstructs the history of the churches, their founders, and their communities. Their architectural diversity and historical development situate these Cistercian convents within contemporary reform movements in Iberia, while demonstrating how they anchored the ambitious religious politics of a sisterhood of powerful women who promoted reform and the arts, distributed their patronage, and advanced their female kin.

Witwen und Gemeinschaften: Zisterziensische Nonnenklöster und ihre Architektur im Königreich León (1150-1300)

Drei zisterziensische Nonnenklöster, die durch aristokratische Witwen im Königreich León gegründet wurden, hielten Kirchen bei, die im späten 12. Jahrhundert begonnen worden waren. Die reichen Schnitzarbeiten in Ferreira de Pantón, romanischen Apsiden in Carrizo und ein einmaliger Chorumgang in Gradefes werden in Untersuchungen zur zisterziensischen Kunst – wenn überhaupt – üblicherweise als Ausnahmen angeführt. Vor der Gründung der königlichen Kongregation von Las Huelgas (Burgos) hatten die Nonnen schwerlich ein besseres Schicksal. Unter Verwendung von Urkunden und stilistischen Vergleichen zeichnet dieser Artikel die Geschichte der Kirchen, ihrer Gründer und ihrer Gemeinschaften nach. Ihre architektonische Verschiedenheit und historische Entwicklung stellt diese Zisterzienserkonvente in die zeitgenössischen Reformbewegungen Spaniens hinein, indem sie deutlich machen, wie diese die ambitionierte religiöse Politik einer Schwesterngemeinschaft mächtiger Frauen verankerten, die die Reform und die Künste vorantrieben, wie sie ihre Schirmherrschaft verteilten und ihre weiblichen Verwandten förderten.