

THE ROYAL CONVENT OF LAS HUELGAS:
DYNASTIC POLITICS, RELIGIOUS REFORM
AND ARTISTIC CHANGE IN MEDIEVAL CASTILE

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FOR LAWRENCE R. HOEY: IN MEMORIAM

IN THE HISTORY OF CISTERCIAN NUNNERIES and of their architecture, the royal convent of Las Huelgas merits a privileged place.¹ Its designation as a special daughter of Cîteaux in 1199 profoundly altered the Order's relationship with women's religious communities; its congregation created a new institutional framework for them; and its selection as a dynastic burial place and setting for royal ceremony gave rise to a remarkable ensemble of buildings. While the role of Las Huelgas

1. For the history of the community, buildings and royal cemetery of Las Huelgas: Vicente Lampérez y Romea, *Historia de la arquitectura cristiana española en la edad media*, 2nd ed. (Madrid, 1930) 3:334–341; Élie Lambert, *L'art gothique en Espagne aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles* (Paris, 1931) 195–201; Leopoldo Torres Balbás, 'Las yeserías descubiertas recientemente en Las Huelgas de Burgos', *Al-Andalus* 8 (1943) 209–257; Manuel Gómez Moreno, *El Panteón Real de Las Huelgas de Burgos* (Madrid, 1946); Leopoldo Torres Balbás, *Arquitectura gótica, Ars hispaniae* 7 (Madrid, 1952) 97–103; Tomás Moral, 'Hacia una historia de Las Huelgas de Burgos', *Yermo* 3 (1965) 153–170; Elizabeth Connor, 'The Royal Abbey of Las Huelgas and the Jurisdiction of its Abbesses', *Cistercian Studies* 23 (1988) 128–155; José Manuel Lizoain and Juan José García, *El Monasterio de Las Huelgas de Burgos: historia de un señorío cisterciense burgalés (siglos XII y XIII)*, Monografías de historia medieval castellano-leonesa, 2 (Burgos, 1988);

in the history of Cistercian nuns has long been acknowledged, the historical setting for the royal foundation and its affiliation with Cîteaux remains poorly understood, and the architectural importance of its buildings insufficiently appreciated.

Historians have cited the acceptance of Las Huelgas as an example of the mounting pressures on Cîteaux to accommodate women's religious communities, and a milestone in the Order's changing relationship with them.² At the same time, the endowment of Las Huelgas in 1187, the determined effort to make it the head of a congregation, and the remarkably successful campaign to win its formal affiliation with Cîteaux were bound up with the

José Carlos Valle Pérez, 'Significación de la iglesia en el panorama de la arquitectura de la orden del Cister', *Reales sitios* no. 105 (1990) 49–56; José Luis Hernando Garrido, 'Las Claustrillas de Las Huelgas, San Andrés de Arroyo y Aguilar de Campoo: los repertorios ornamentales y su eclecticismo en la escultura del tardorrománico castellano', *Anuario del Departamento de historia y teoría del arte (U.A.M.)* 4 (1992) 53–74; Rocío Sánchez Ameijeiras, 'El "cementerio real" de Alfonso VIII en Las Huelgas de Burgos', *Semata* 10: *Cultura, poder y mecenazgo*, ed. Alfredo Vigo Trasancos (Santiago de Compostela, 1998) 77–109; Henrik Karge, 'Die königliche Zisterzienserinnenabtei Las Huelgas de Burgos und die Anfänge der gotischen Architektur in Spanien', *Gotische Architektur in Spanien*, Akten des Kolloquiums der ... Universität Göttingen, 1994, ed. Christian Freigang (Vervuert, 1999) 13–40, 373–376. For a comprehensive bibliography: Isidro G. Bango Torviso, ed., *Monjes y monasterios. El Cister en el medievo de Castilla y León* (Valladolid, 1998) 496–498.

For the documents of the convent: José Manuel Lizoain Garrido, *Documentación del monasterio de Las Huelgas de Burgos (1116–1230)*, Fuentes medievales castellano-leonesas, 30 (Burgos, 1985); *Idem*, *Documentación del monasterio de Las Huelgas de Burgos (1231–1262)*, Fuentes medievales castellano-leonesas, 31 (Burgos, 1985); *Idem*, *Documentación del monasterio de Las Huelgas de Burgos (1263–1283)*, *Índices (1116–1283)*, Fuentes medievales castellano-leonesas, 32 (Burgos, 1987); *Idem*, *Documentación del monasterio de Las Huelgas de Burgos (1284–1306)*, Fuentes medievales castellano-leonesas, 33 (Burgos, 1987).

2. Willibrord Tyburg, 'Los orígenes de las monjas cistercienses', *Cistercium* 17 (1965) 39–46; Louis Lekai, *The Cistercians, Ideals and Reality* (Kent, Ohio, 1977) 348–350; Sally Thompson, 'The Problem of the Cistercian Nuns in the Twelfth and Early Thirteenth Centuries', *Medieval Women*, ed. Derek Baker (Oxford, 1978) 228–229, 236–238. Roger de Ganck, 'The Integration of Nuns in the Cistercian Order, Particularly in Belgium', *Cîteaux* 35 (1984) 239–241; Jean de la Croix Bouton, *Les Moniales cisterciennes*, 1: *Histoire externe jusqu'à la fin du XV^e siècle* (Aiguebelle, 1986) 47–51, 65–68; Karge, 'Zisterzienserinnenabtei', 20–25.

forging of Castilian hegemony in the peninsula, and they highlight the pivotal role of the Cistercians in the shifting relations among the Iberian kingdoms. This Iberian context also helps to explain the early and rapid construction of the convent church in a thoroughly foreign style, and it invites us to reassess its architectural significance. In fact, the church of Las Huelgas pioneered the reception of the gothic style in Castile and anticipated its adaptation to cistercian tastes in the Ile de France.

THE POLITICAL SETTING FOR THE CONGREGATION OF LAS HUELGAS AND ITS AFFILIATION WITH CÎTEAUX

The 1190s were fraught with strife between Castile and her Christian neighbors, even as the papacy urged a united front against Islam in the wake of the fall of Jerusalem and the failure of the Third Crusade (Fig. 1).³ Well acquainted with Iberia from his legatine visits, the aged pope Celestine III sought to mediate among the kingdoms and promote a crusade that the Castilians were keen to lead. The long rivalry between Castile and León did reach a fragile solution with the marriage of Princess Berenguela of Castile to King Alfonso IX of León in 1197. The union, however, fell within the prohibited degrees and the implacable opposition of Pope Innocent III finally forced its dissolution in 1204. From its beginnings, the royal convent was drawn into these struggles as an instrument of Castilian power, and these contests chart a path

3. For accounts of the struggles among the kingdoms, the papal efforts to mediate among them, and the diplomacy surrounding the marriage of Berenguela and Alfonso IX, see Julio González, *Alfonso IX* (Madrid, 1944) 1:63–120; *Idem*, *El Reino de Castilla en la época de Alfonso VIII* (Madrid, 1960) 1:381–385, 387–391, 705–735, 826–864; Demetrio Mansilla, 'Inocencio III y los reinos hispanos', *Anthologica annua* 2 (1954) 9–49; Juan Francisco Rivera Recio, *La Iglesia de Toledo en el siglo XII (1086–1208)* (Rome, 1966) 221–241; Richard Fletcher, *The Episcopate in the Kingdom of León in the Twelfth Century* (Oxford, 1978) 211, 218–220; Peter Linehan, *History and the Historians of Medieval Spain* (Oxford, 1993) 255–259; Joseph F. O'Callaghan, 'Innocent III and the Kingdoms of Castile and León', in John C. Moore, ed., *Pope Innocent III and His World* (Aldershot, 1999) 317–327.



Figure 1. Map: Iberian peninsula at the death of Alfonso VIII (1214); Las Huelgas and its first seven affiliates (*)

through the labored negotiations surrounding the creation of its congregation and its eventual affiliation with Cîteaux.

After the lavish endowment of Las Huelgas by King Alfonso VIII and Queen Leonor on 1 June 1187, Bishop Martin of Sigüenza, formerly abbot of the Cistercian monastery of Huerta, conveyed a request from the king and the abbesses of Castile and León for the Order to approve the celebration of annual chapters at the royal nunnery and to permit Cistercian abbots to instruct the nuns in the Cistercian observance.⁴ Abbot William II of Cîteaux endorsed this, and in April 1189, his letter was read to eight abbesses who gathered at Las Huelgas before an assembly

4. Lizoain Garrido, *Documentación... (1116-1230)*, doc. 11, pp. 19-23.

of bishops and abbots.⁵ Designating the royal convent as head of a congregation asserted royal control over aristocratic nunneries and encroached on neighboring León and Navarre. The new congregation incorporated the Leonese houses of Carrizo and Gradefes, and the king lobbied to free several nunneries from allegiance to their mother-house, Tulebras, in Navarre (Fig. 1).

The king's political aims are highlighted by the circumstances surrounding the endowment of June 1187 and his petition to the Order. In May, Alfonso VIII had issued charters to the men of Sto Domingo de la Calzada and Haro in the border district, as his Aragonese allies invaded Navarre.⁶ The Castilians and Aragonese had long plotted to partition their neighbor, and the small kingdom had been squeezed by the Angevin alliance that resulted from the marriage of Alfonso VIII and Leonor.⁷ Now, however, ominous events in León fueled Castilian anxieties about the eastern frontier. Javier Pérez-Embid Wamba has linked the creation of the congregation of Las Huelgas, in part, to the liaison between King Ferdinand II of León and the Castilian noblewoman, Urraca López.⁸ She belonged to the powerful Haro family which

5. The letter of Abbot William II of Cîteaux is preserved in an authorized copy of the second half of the thirteenth century: Lizoain Garrido, *Documentación... (1116-1230)* document 16, pp. 30-32. A shorter letter, known only from eighteenth-century manuscripts, may be a modern paraphrase of the longer version: *Ibid.*, doc. 13, pp. 25-26. The decision of 1187 is not among the surviving statutes of the General Chapter, but the letter of Abbot William II mentions the role of Bishop Martin and describes the circumstances of the request. For the reading of the letter at Las Huelgas in 1189: *Ibid.*, doc. 24, pp. 47-48.

6. González, *El Reino*, 1:824-825, 2:802-807, docs. 469-470. The Castilians and Aragonese had sealed a treaty against Navarre in October 1186: *Ibid.*, 2:786-790, doc. 460.

7. For the original agreement in 1140 to partition Navarre: Bernard Reilly, *The Kingdom of León-Castilla under King Alfonso VII, 1126-1157* (Philadelphia, 1998) 66-68; O'Callaghan, 'Innocent III', 326. In 1177, Henry II of England, had arbitrated—in favor of Castile—a territorial dispute between Navarre and Castile over part of Leonor's dower: González, *El Reino*, 1:802-811; Theresa M. Vann, 'The Theory and Practice of Medieval Castilian Queenship', in *Queens, Regents and Potentates*, ed. Theresa M. Vann (Dallas, 1993) 130.

8. Javier Pérez-Embid Wamba, 'El Cister femenino en Castilla y León. Fundación y organización de las comunidades monásticas (s. XII-XIII)', *Actas das II jornadas luso-espanholas de história medieval* (Porto, 1989) 3:1088-1090.

wielded influence at the Leonese court and dominated strategic lands on Castile's eastern frontier, where her parents had founded the Cistercian nunnery of Cañas.⁹ In the spring of 1187, the king married his mistress, raising the prospect that their four-year old son, Sancho, would be legitimized and replace Prince Alfonso as heir.¹⁰ Such a move threatened to join León, the Haro family, and Navarre in an alliance against Castile. In the face of this, the subjection of Cañas to Las Huelgas helped secure the eastern border regions for Alfonso VIII, and the new congregation countered his neighbors' ties with the Cistercians.

Bitter experience fed the king's fears about the allegiance of his nobles and their readiness to side with his enemies. During his minority, Castile had been torn by struggles between the Lara family who protected him and the Castro family who championed his Leonese adversary, Ferdinand II.¹¹ For Alfonso VIII, controlling his nobles and ensuring their loyalty were therefore key steps towards dominating neighboring León and Navarre. In fact, the king's effort to subject the aristocratic foundations succeeded in a peculiar way, for it slowed—and possibly halted—the establishment of new cistercian nunneries for a generation.¹² Evidently, the imposition of royal control made such family foundations less attractive to the nobility.

As it turned out, a grand coalition against Castile did not materialize immediately. Prince Alfonso successfully defended his

9. *Ibid.*, 1084; Julio González, *Regesta de Fernando II* (Madrid, 1943) 150–156; González, *El Reino*, 1:700–703.

10. Urraca López de Haro is first titled as queen in June 1187: González, *Regesta*, pp. 154–156; José María Fernández Catón, *Colección documental del Archivo de la Catedral de León (775–1230)*, 5: (1109–1187), Fuentes y estudios de historia leonesa, 45 (León, 1990) pp. 594–595, doc. 1674. Prince Alfonso was the son of Urraca Alfonso of Portugal whose consanguineous marriage with Ferdinand II had been dissolved in 1175: *Regesta*, pp. 69–70, 95, 111–112.

11. For a detailed account: González, *El Reino*, 1:149–179, 671–685, 785–791.

12. The next foundation appears to have been that of Vileña in 1222 by Urraca López de Haro herself, the former Leonese queen: Pérez-Embid Wamba, 1088; Lizoain and García (as in n. 1), p. 91.

rights and ascended the Leonese throne as Alfonso IX in 1188, leading the Haro family to look to the Castilian king to protect their interests in León. That summer, the young king was armed by his elder cousin, Alfonso VIII, and did homage to him in a ceremony that underscored Castilian aspirations to lordship over León.¹³ In September 1190, however, the kings of Aragón and Navarre formed an alliance against Castile, and, after the marriage of King Alfonso IX and Teresa of Portugal in February, the kings of Aragón, Portugal and León reached an agreement on 12 May 1191, to provide mutual support against Castile.¹⁴ The same day, King Richard of England married Berenguela, the daughter of Sancho VI of Navarre, and, with this, the king of Navarre neutralized the Plantagenet allies of Castile.¹⁵

These conflicts and the consequent isolation of Castile in 1191 help to explain the resistance to the congregation and the reluctance of the Cistercians to force the issue. The letter issued by William of Cîteaux in 1187 was not presented to the abbesses until 1189, and it is possible that a second letter had to be dispatched in 1188.¹⁶ Although William's letter cited a petition from the king and the abbesses, the hesitant response of the abbesses of Perales and Gradefes to the new affiliation in 1189 suggests that the initiative came from the king.¹⁷ The king had anticipated opposition from nunneries concerned to preserve their autonomy and maintain their links

13. González, *El Reino*, 1:703–708; O'Callaghan, 'Innocent III', 319.

14. González, *El Reino*, 1:709–712, 828–832.

15. *Ibid.*, 1:830.

16. A version of William's letter, known from Manrique, was dated 1188 and mistakenly ascribed to Abbot Guy of Cîteaux: Lizoain Garrido, *Documentación... (1116–1230)* (as in n. 1), pp. 35–36, doc. 19. The reference to Ferdinand II casts doubt on its authenticity for the king had died on 22 January 1188. The issuance of a second letter in 1188 would suggest opposition from some convents: Pérez-Embid Wamba, pp. 1078–1079.

17. The request was only one part of the king's overtures to the General Chapter of 1187, for the master of the Order of Calatrava presented a royal letter in support of the military order's union with the Cistercians, a move that also provoked some opposition within that order: Joseph F. O'Callaghan, 'The Affiliation of the Order of Calatrava with the Order of Cîteaux', *Analecta Sacri Ordinis Cisterciensis* 15 (1959) 189–190.

with the neighboring kingdoms. Four weeks after the endowment of Las Huelgas, Alfonso VIII extended protection to the herds of the Leonese house of Gradefes, a hint of the negotiations that gave rise to the new congregation.¹⁸ Significantly, Gradefes won a privilege from Alfonso IX of León in August 1189, just months after the abbess had balked at the affiliation to Las Huelgas.¹⁹

Although the prelates assembled at Las Huelgas in April 1189 secured the release of the convents of Perales and Gradefes from their obedience to Tulebras, the relationship of Tulebras itself to the new congregation remained uncertain and resistance apparently continued.²⁰ Two years later, in response to another letter from Alfonso VIII, the Cistercian General Chapter declared that it could only advise—not compel—the abbesses to take part in the meetings.²¹ The decision has been viewed as a sign of the abbots' unwillingness to involve themselves in the government of women's religious communities.²² In fact, the timing of the king's second petition suggests that the outbreak of war between Castile and

18. González, *El Reino*, 2:831, doc. 482.

19. González, *Alfonso IX* (as in n. 3), 2:49–51, docs. 28, 29. A second privilege issued the same day is suspect: Taurino Burón Castro, *Colección documental del monasterio de Gradefes*, 1: (1054–1299), Fuentes y estudios de historia leonesa, 71 (León, 1998) pp. 257–258, doc. 206.

20. Lizoain Garrido, *Documentación... (1116–1230)*, pp. 46–51, docs. 24, 25: *Prefate, igitur, due abbatisse adierunt abbatissam de Tolobres matrem suam et ab ea potuerunt sane et salubriter impetrare quod ipsamet ad capitulum Sancte Marie Regalis, prope Burgis, pariter cum prescriptis abbatissis annuatim pro voluntate et posse suo tanquam ad matrem accederet, et, si id ei forte non liceret, eas ab omni illo debito et nexu quo ei tenebantur penitus emancipatur.* The chief place among the abbesses designated as visitors of Las Huelgas was reserved for Tulebras if it joined the congregation: ... *si contigerit abbatissam de Tolobres, preformato modo, monasterio Sancte Marie Regalis subiacere, ipsa prima et precipua sit de quatuor sepedicti monasterii Sancte Marie Regalis et abbatisse et conuentus uisitatrix.* For the negotiations with Tulebras: Tyburg (as in n. 2), pp. 43–46.

21. *Statuta capitulorum generalium ordinis cisterciensis ab anno 1116 ad annum 1786*, ed. Josephus-Marie Canivez (Louvain, 1933–1941) 1:139 (1191:27): *Domino regi Castellae, scribatur, quia non possumus cogere abbatissas ire ad Capitulum de quo scripsit, et si uellent ire, sicut eis iam consulimus, multum nobis placeret.*

22. For discussion of the decision: Thompson (as in n. 2), 229, 237; Richard W. Southern, *Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages* (Harmondsworth, 1970) 316.

her neighbors had encouraged convents to resist integration into the new congregation. For their part, the Cistercians hesitated to appear partisan in a conflict that endangered their own position in the peninsula and their long-established role as mediators there.

The Cistercians were no strangers to Iberian politics. The monasteries of Veruela and Fitero and the nunnery of Tulebras straddled the hotly contested borders where Castile, Aragón and Navarre met, while La Oliva kept vigil over the border of Navarre and Aragón.²³ Hostilities left these establishments and their estates particularly vulnerable to unchecked violence, and their own interests made them key protagonists in mediating disputes and maintaining peace among the kingdoms. For this role, these houses earned privileges from rival monarchs competing to win their support and safeguard their frontiers.²⁴ At Fitero, for example, the early privileges of Alfonso VII serve as markers of his tortuous negotiations with Navarre, and, in 1167, Alfonso VIII

23. This placement followed a practice—anticipated by the four daughter-houses of Cîteaux—of establishing monasteries in the jurisdictional wasteland of political and ecclesiastical boundaries: Terryl Kinder, 'Architecture of the Cistercian Abbey of Pontigny: the Twelfth-Century Church', Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1982, p. 13.

24. Fitero received privileges from Sancho VI of Navarre in 1157 and 1164 at moments of potential or actual conflict with Castile: Cristina Monterde Albiac, *Colección diplomática del monasterio de Fitero (1140–1210)* (Zaragoza, 1978), pp. 430–431, 463–464, docs. 91, 134. The Aragonese house of Veruela received a privilege from Sancho III of Castile in 1156: González, *El Reino*, 2:46–48, doc. 24. Huerta earned concessions from Alfonso II of Aragón in 1166 and 1180, and from Pedro II of Aragón in 1197: José Antonio García Luján, ed., *Cartulario del monasterio de Santa María de Huerta* (Sta María de Huerta, 1981), pp. 14–15, 62–64, 99–101, docs. 6, 39, 61. The foundation of La Oliva in 1149–1150 likely represented an effort to guarantee the peace treaty of 1149 between García Ramírez of Navarre and Ramón Berenguer IV of Barcelona: 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* (Sta María de Bujeo, 1991) 152–153; *El Reino*, 1:773–774. In his will of 1204, Alfonso VIII specifically earmarked monies for the cistercian monasteries bordering his realm: *El Reino*, 3:344, doc. 769.

of Castile and Sancho VI of Navarre made peace at the abbey.²⁵ Later in the century, Huerta occupied a similar position on the Castilian frontier with Aragón. It is no coincidence that Alfonso VIII laid the first stone of the monastic church and provided a handsome grant for its construction on the day he signed a treaty with the king of Aragón at the nearby border.²⁶

In the 1170s, Castilian patronage of the Order became enmeshed in the politics of their eastern frontier as they reclaimed territories seized by Sancho VI of Navarre during the minority of Alfonso VIII.²⁷ This effort helps explain the foundation of Bujedo in 1172, the translation of the community of Sajazarra to Herrera (c.1176), and the resettlement of the monks of Quintanajuar at Montes de Oca (c. 1184) in territory claimed by Navarre, after a decade of royal pressure to move to what was pointedly termed Old Castile (*Castella ueteri*).²⁸ In May 1189, Alfonso VIII formally gave the Cistercians the monastery at Montes de Oca, just weeks after the assembly at Las Huelgas had laid down the guidelines for the congregation of nunneries.²⁹ As in the spring of 1187, this was one of a cluster of privileges to frontier establishments that indicate that the king was anticipating conflict.³⁰

This prospect became real in 1191, when an unprecedented coalition isolated Castile. As the General Chapter considered the

25. The king's diploma of 1140 mentioned a peace agreement with Navarre, sealed by a marriage alliance. In 1146, the two courts met at Niecebas, the earlier site of the community of Fitero, and Alfonso VII issued a privilege to the community during this visit to his daughter, Urraca, queen of Navarre. Alfonso VII's privilege of 1153 mentions the peace treaty with Navarre, the marriage of his daughter to Sancho VI, and his arming of the young king: Monterde Albiac, pp. 355–357, 360–361, 381–382, docs. 1, 7, 27. For the peace of 1167: González, *El Reino*, 2:169–170, doc. 99.

26. 20 March 1179: *Ibid.*, 2:526–532, docs. 318–320.

27. Linehan, *History* (as in n. 3), p. 261.

28. Vicente-Angel Alvarez Palenzuela, *Monasterios cistercienses en Castilla (siglos XII–XIII)* (Valladolid, 1978). 89–91, 100–103, 124–132. Navarre's claim was asserted in the suit before Henry II in 1177: González, *El Reino*, 2:457–458, doc. 278. For *Castella ueteri*: *Ibid.*, 2:358–359, doc. 216.

29. *Ibid.*, 2:909–911, doc. 531.

30. These include gifts to the monastery of Albelda and the town council of Logroño: *Ibid.*, 2:897–899, docs. 524–525.

petition of Alfonso VIII that they enforce their earlier recommendations to the nuns, the abbots had to weigh the dangers of aligning themselves too closely with the Castilians at a moment when mediation was desperately needed. Certainly, the king had sweetened his request with a timely privilege to the recent foundation at Ovila, but other business warned the assembly of how the Iberian conflicts imperiled their own foundations.³¹ Charges were leveled against the conduct of the abbots of Monte de Oca and Fitero—two Castilian establishments on the critical frontier with Navarre.³² Of course, such matters of discipline routinely arose for houses across Europe. One wonders, though, if rivals were sowing controversy about the Castilian houses, or if royal oversight and political entanglements were themselves eroding discipline.³³

Cistercian concerns likely focused on protecting their privileged place in the kingdom of León, where their earliest peninsular foundation, Sobrado, was the first of several daughter-houses of Clairvaux in the realm.³⁴ In the summer of 1191, as war broke out, Alfonso IX made a gift to the Cistercian abbey at Meira, and, over the next two years, he issued eight more privileges, including support for building campaigns, to Meira, Melón, Morerueta and Sobrado.³⁵ The timing of these generous concessions betrays a purposeful effort by Alfonso IX to secure his alliance with Clair-

31. *Ibid.*, 3:21–24, doc. 572. For its earlier history: 2:649–651, 784–786, docs. 375, 459; Alvarez Palenzuela, pp. 114–118.

32. Canivez (as in n. 21), 1:140–141 (1191:35). The abbot of Fitero was accused of consulting a soothsayer, concealing debts and dismissing the cellarer who disclosed them. He failed to appear the following year, and the internal affairs of this strategic abbey would demand the chapter's attention throughout the decade: *Ibid.*, 1:168, 218, 226–227 (1193:53; 1197:42; 1198:24); Monterde Albiac (as in n. 24), pp. 332–334.

33. False or malicious accusations by one abbot of another's conduct were not unknown. In 1200, the abbot of the Leonese house of Sandoval was called to answer accusations before the chapter, and, when he was acquitted the following year, the abbot of the Castilian house of Palazuelos was disciplined for speaking against him: Canivez, 1:260, 269 (1200:59, 1201:30–31).

34. For the priority of Sobrado: Valle Pérez, 'La introducción' (as in n. 24), pp. 135–161.

35. González, *Alfonso IX* (as in n. 3), 2:74–75, 82–83, 95–98, 102–103, 107–110 (docs. 46, 50, 61–63, 67, 71–73).

vaux in the face of conflict with Castile and papal condemnation of both his incestuous marriage and his agreements with the infidels. Once the Portuguese marriage was dissolved and peace concluded with the Castilians in 1194, the king's largesse ended, and the Leonese houses endured a five-year drought before political contingencies again recommended them to his attention. In 1191, however, the Cistercian General Chapter surely had in mind Clairvaux's longstanding relationship with León when they responded cautiously to the renewed petition of Alfonso VIII and thereby stood aloof from the conflicts rending the peninsula.³⁶

When the Castilians finally won the direct intervention of Cîteaux in freeing several nunneries from their dependence on the Navarrese nunnery of Tulebras, it was against the backdrop of Navarre's alliance with the Muslim Almohades and the marriage of Princess Berenguela of Castile to King Alfonso IX of León. Sancho VII of Navarre incurred the wrath of Pope Celestine III for this alliance, and, in 1196 and 1197, the pope urged him instead to join the Castilians and Aragonese in their wars against the Muslims.³⁷ At the same time, the pope began to address him as king, and this recognition threatened Castilian pretensions.³⁸ In 1197, the marriage alliance between León and Castile freed the Castilians to turn their attention eastwards where their ambitions extended beyond Navarre to the Gascon territories promised to Leonor as her dowry.³⁹ Sancho VII ignored papal pressure to cease hostilities and,

36. The dominant position of the filials of Clairvaux at the General Chapters made them particularly effective allies and advocates: Lekai (as in n. 2), p. 69.

37. Paul Kehr, ed., *Papsturkunden in Spanien Vorarbeiten zur Hispania Pontificia*, 2: *Navarra und Aragon*, 2: *Urkunden und Regesten* (Berlin, 1928) pp. 576–578, 588–593; docs. 221, 228, 230. Francisco Ruíz Gómez, 'La guerra y los pactos. A propósito de la batalla de Alarcos', *Alarcos 1195. Actas del Congreso internacional conmemorativo del VIII centenario de la batalla de Alarcos* (Ciudad Real), edd. Ricardo Izquierdo Benito and Francisco Ruíz Gómez (Cuenca, 1996) 152. For a narrative of the conflict between Castile and Navarre: González, *El Reino*, 1:834–854.

38. The title is first used in papal documents in Celestine III's letter to his legate on 28 May 1196: Kehr, 2:2, pp. 588–590, doc. 228. Cp. the pope's exhortations on the responsibilities of kings in his letter of the following February: *Ibid.*, pp. 591–593, doc. 230.

39. Vann, 'The Theory' (as in n. 7), pp. 138–139.

by 1199, he had fled to the court of his Moroccan allies.⁴⁰ With the king in exile among the infidels and Castilian forces holding the field, Abbot Guy II of Cîteaux intervened personally to obtain the consent of Abbess Urraca of Tulebras to the earlier agreement releasing her daughter houses to submit to Las Huelgas.⁴¹

The marriage alliance with León in 1197 had offered the Castilians an opportunity to enhance their own relationship with the Cistercians without compromising the Order's long-established ties to León. The men's houses of Castile were filials of Morimond through L'Escale-Dieu and other communities in southern France.⁴² With Las Huelgas, however, the Castilians made a direct link to Cîteaux, trumping the Leonese relationship with Clairvaux. Moreover, the Order accepted the affiliation and recognized the new congregation only in 1199, at a delicate moment of rapprochement between the two kingdoms. Just days before Abbot Guy II accepted the nunnery as a special daughter (*specialis filia*) of Cîteaux in Burgos, the terms of the marriage of Alfonso IX and Berenguela were formalized in Palencia, after two years of negotiations, and the abbot was likely involved in the diplomacy that sealed the agreement.⁴³

For their part, the Leonese were not slow to respond to the new relationship between Castile and Cîteaux. Between July 1200 and February 1202, the Cistercian monasteries of León reaped

40. For Innocent III's bull of 11 February 1199: González, *El Reino*, 1:385. For the flight of Sancho VII: Juan Fernández Valverde, ed., *Roderici Ximemii de Rada. Historia de rebus hispanie sive historia gothica*, VII:xxxii, *Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis* 72 (Turnhout, 1987) 254; Achille Luchaire, *Innocent III: les royautés vassales du Saint-Siège* (Paris, 1908) 41–42.

41. Lizoain Garrido, *Documentación... (1116–1230)* (as in n. 1), pp. 83–85, docs. 47, 48; Tyburg (as in n. 2), pp. 44–46.

42. For a list of the filiations of the Iberian houses: Maur Cocheril, 'Implantation et localisation des abbayes dans la péninsule ibérique', *Études sur le monachisme en Espagne et au Portugal* (Lisbon, 1966) 344–345. The dates need revision in the light of more recent scholarship.

43. For the marriage agreement (8 December 1199) and the formal concession to Abbot Guy (14 December 1199): Lizoain Garrido, *Documentación... (1116–1230)*, pp. 89–94, docs. 51, 52; González, *Alfonso IX* (as in n. 3), 1:92–95.

a bountiful harvest of privileges.⁴⁴ What is more, the statutes of the General Chapters of 1200 and 1201 indicate that efforts to join the Leonese monastery of Carracedo and its ample congregation to the Order were underway and involved the king.⁴⁵ Only in November 1203, however, did the affiliation of Carracedo—with Cîteaux—finally earn papal approval. The delay may reasonably be attributed to the standoff between the papacy and the Leonese king over the marriage, and it suggests that the Cistercians had been drawn into this diplomatic maelstrom as well.⁴⁶

The kings of Castile and León and their bishops had worked feverishly to soften papal intransigence. From the account of the English chronicler Roger of Howden and the documents of Innocent III, it is clear that the king of León had been prepared to pay liberally to overcome the opposition of the pope, but an embassy of distinguished Iberian prelates returned with only a furious rebuke.⁴⁷ In these critical years, each king's generosity to the Cistercians surely aimed to persuade the influential order to back the marriage or, in the event of its failure, to ensure his kingdom's alli-

44. This represented the greatest concentration of privileges from Alfonso IX to the Cistercians, and they included a gift to Sobrado in November 1200 for the establishment of a new daughter house in the Asturias and generous donations to the new house: *Ibid.*, 2:198–199, 202–205, 208–221, 232–233, 235; docs. 137, 141, 143, 147–149, 151–152, 154–157, 164, 166.

45. Canivez (as in n. 21), 1:256 (1200:41), 267 (1201:21). For the history of the relationship between the Cistercians and the congregation of Carracedo: Etienne Goutagny, 'L'abbaye de Carracedo et son affiliation à l'ordre de Cîteaux', *Cîteaux: Commentarii Cistercienses* 14 (1963) 150–153; Augusto Quintana Prieto, 'Carracedo, Congregación autónoma durante más de medio siglo', *Temas Bercianos, 2: Los monasterios de El Bierzo Bajo* (Ponferrada, 1983) 299–317; Mercedes Durany Castrillo, *La región del Bierzo en los siglos centrales de la edad media 1070–1250* (Santiago, 1989) 61–69; José Antonio Balboa de Paz, *El Monasterio de Carracedo* (León, 1991) 47–53.

46. Four papal bulls concerning Carracedo were issued in November 1203: Martín Martínez Martínez, *Cartulario de Santa María de Carracedo (992–1500)*, I. 992–1274 (Ponferrada, 1997) pp. 130, 148–154, docs. 156, 186–189.

47. The references are cited and discussed in Linehan, *History* (as in n. 3), pp. 255–258. The mission is referred to in a papal bull (25 May 1199) mandating that the Leonese bishops observe the interdict on the kingdom: Demetrio Mansilla, *La documentación pontificia hasta Inocencio III (965–1216)*, Monumenta hispaniae vaticana, sección : registros, 1 (Rome, 1955) pp. 209–215, doc. 196.

ance with the order. It was likely in 1199, during the negotiations concerning Las Huelgas, that King Alfonso VIII made the gift of twenty-five hundred gold pieces cited in a privilege he granted to Cîteaux on 28 June 1203.⁴⁸ This privilege came just weeks after Pope Innocent III dispatched a sharp letter to the Castilian king. In it, he chastised the monarch for misleading him about his own attitude to the alliance, censured him for manipulating the king of León, and accused him of delaying the dissolution of the marriage to achieve his own political ends.⁴⁹ The next month, the king promised to end his longstanding practice of extorting contributions from the Cistercians and despoiling their houses to finance the wars against the Muslims and defend himself from his Christian neighbors.⁵⁰ As hopes for papal approval faded, these important concessions would have secured the new arrangement for Las Huelgas and the Castilian alliance with Cîteaux.⁵¹

Although the marriage of Alfonso IX and Berenguela was dissolved in the spring of 1204 at papal insistence, royal efforts to enlist Cistercian support may not have been entirely fruitless. Abbot Guy II of Cîteaux had proceeded to Rome with other Cistercian abbots shortly after accepting Las Huelgas as a daughter of Cîteaux on his visit to Iberia in December 1199. In the spring of 1200, he was elevated to the college of cardinals and served as

48. González, *El Reino* (as in n. 3), 3:308–309, doc. 746; Lizoain Garrido, *Documentación... (1116–1230)*, pp. 120–122, doc. 72.

49. The letter is dated 5 June 1203: Mansilla, *La documentación*, pp. 305–306, doc. 276. It is discussed in Mansilla, 'Inocencio III' (as in n. 3), p. 24; O'Callaghan, 'Innocent III' (as in n. 3), 323–324.

50. The remarkable privilege in which the king justifies the earlier actions (*licet predictis rationibus atque necessitatibus nos apud Deum excusari crederemus*) because of the wars and because the houses had been endowed by the kings, was issued on 24 July 1203: González, *El Reino*, 3:312–313, doc. 749.

51. On 8 December 1204, the will of Alfonso VIII underscored the privileged place of the Order with a large bequest for the waterworks at Cîteaux itself, gifts to Las Huelgas and other Cistercian monasteries, a gift of church plate to Las Huelgas matched only by that to Toledo cathedral and the placement of the Cistercian houses before the Premonstratensians, Benedictines and other monasteries in the distribution of the remaining church plate: González, *El Reino*, 3:341–347, doc. 769.

cardinal-bishop of Preneste until his appointment as archbishop of Reims in 1204.⁵² There is no direct evidence that he lobbied for papal acceptance of the marriage, but, for the next three years, the pope appears to have ignored Iberian defiance of his earlier condemnation of the marriage.⁵³ The report of Roger of Howden is instructive in this regard, for he alleged that the Leonese king sought, at the very least, to buy time—literally—by allowing the couple to remain together until Berenguela might bear an heir or for at least three years.⁵⁴ Although the chronicler asserts that the pope utterly refused to sanction this, it is, in effect, precisely what happened after the agreements of the winter of 1199.⁵⁵ Prince Ferdinand was born in August 1201, and recognized as heir to the Leonese throne the next year; only in 1203 did Innocent III revive his campaign to end the incestuous marriage.⁵⁶

THE ROLE OF QUEEN LEONOR: FAMILY CONVENT AND DYNASTIC CEMETERY

The political rivalries of the Iberian kingdoms and the history of Cistercian involvement in the peninsula cast new light on the creation of the congregation of Las Huelgas and the affiliation of the royal foundation with Cîteaux. To understand the distinctive character of the community itself, its role as a royal burial place,

52. Werner Maleczek places this visit, reported by Alberic de Trois-Fontaines, in early 1200: *Papst und Kardinalkolleg von 1191 bis 1216. Die Kardinäle unter Coelestin III. und Innocenz III* (Vienna, 1984) p. 133, n. 51. For Abbot Guy's career as cardinal: *Ibid.*, pp. 133–134, 289, 380–383.

53. In a register of documents of Innocent III compiled in the late fourteenth century, there is a brief rubric of a letter sent to four Iberian bishops concerning the excommunication of Alfonso IX as a result of the marriage. This is assigned to May 1201 by Mansilla, *La documentación*, pp. xvii–xviii, p. 276, doc. 251.

54. *The Annals of Roger de Howden A.D. 1199*, trans. Henry T. Riley (London, 1853) 449–450.

55. There is a hint of this as well in the account of Alberic of Trois Fontaines, cited by O'Callaghan who dismisses it: O'Callaghan, 'Innocent III', p. 320, n. 7.

56. *Ibid.*, pp. 323–324. The arrangement for Prince Ferdinand's succession was sealed by the Treaty of Cabreros in 1206: González, *El Reino*, 3:365–374, doc. 782.

and the radically foreign architecture of its church, one must look to the role of Queen Leonor, daughter of Henry II of England, and the ties between Castile and the Plantagenet and Capetian courts. The diplomatic of the royal chancery has obscured the initiatives of the queen and her keen interest in the establishment of the nunnery.⁵⁷ Archbishop Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada, however, credited her with the foundation, and, in 1188, the convent's first papal privilege had pointedly mentioned the queen—alongside the king—three times.⁵⁸

Modern scholars have followed these leads, and cited Fontevraud and its Order as the inspiration for the aristocratic nunnery, the powers of its abbesses, the organization of its congregation, and the addition of a hospital in the early thirteenth century.⁵⁹ Within Iberia, the Order of Fontevraud had found modest favor among aristocratic patrons of women's religious houses whose endowments and subsequent fortunes suggest that their patrons

57. Vann, 'The Theory' (as in n. 7), 133–136.

58. Fernández Valverde (as in n. 40), VII:xxxiii, p. 255 (quoted below, n. 104); Lizoain Garrido, *Documentación ... (1116–1230)* (as in n. 1), p. 39, doc. 21. In 1204, the queen's role was singled out in a royal privilege (*monasterio Sancte Marie Regalis, quod ego et iam dicta regina de nouo construximus*), and in the king's will (*monasterio Burgensis Sancte Marie Regalis, quod ego et regina uxor mea construximus*). *Ibid.*, p. 131, doc. 79; González, *El Reino*, 3:345, doc. 769.

59. Thompson (as in n. 2), p. 237, n. 69; Luis Martínez García, *El Hospital del Rey de Burgos. Un señorío medieval en la expansión y en la crisis (siglos XIII y XIV)*, Monografías de historia medieval castellano-leonesas, 1 (Burgos, 1986) 56–57; Pérez-Embuid Wamba (as in n. 8), 1087–1088; Vann, 'The Theory', 135–136; Miriam Shadis, 'Piety, Politics, and Power: the Patronage of Leonor of England and Her Daughters Berenguela of León and Blanche of Castile', *The Cultural Patronage of Medieval Women*, ed. June McCash (Athens, Ga., 1996) 203–205; Dulce Ocón Alonso, 'El papel artístico de las reinas hispanas en la segunda mitad del siglo XII: Leonor de Castilla y Sancha de Aragón', *VII Jornadas de arte: La mujer en el arte español* (Madrid, 1997) 28–29; Karge, 'Zisterzienscrinnenabtei' (as in n. 1), pp. 16–17. On Fontevraud: Penny Schine Gold, *The Lady and the Virgin: Image, Attitude and Experience in Twelfth-Century France* (Chicago, 1985) 93–113; Michel Parisse, 'Fontevraud, monastère double', *Doppelklöster und andere Formen der Symbiose männlicher und weiblicher Religionen im Mittelalter*, edd. Kaspar Elm and Michel Parisse (Berlin, 1992) 135–148.

sought to maintain tight family control over them.⁶⁰ Nonetheless, the political importance of the Cistercians in Iberia recommended that affiliation for the royal foundation, and a growing number of Cistercian nunneries, founded and governed by aristocratic widows, supplied models for preserving the authority of noblewomen of the founders' families as well.⁶¹

Queen Leonor surely expected that her own foundation would likewise provide a retreat if she outlived her husband. From the beginning, the house was closely tied to the queen and her household, and princesses would later exercise special prerogatives there.⁶² The chronicler, Bishop Lucas of Tui, reported that a royal palace was constructed alongside the nunnery, and Burgos headed the list of sites in Leonor's own dower.⁶³ The second abbess, María Gutiérrez, was the widow of the queen's mayordomo, Martín González, and their son, García Martínez, held that office as well.⁶⁴ After the abbacy of Sancha Garsie, Princess Constanza, the daughter of Queen Leonor, assumed prominence in the gov-

60. For the nunneries of Sta María de Vega in Oviedo or a proposed foundation by Leonese nobles at Gema near Zamora: Simon Barton, *The Aristocracy in Twelfth-Century León and Castile* (Cambridge, 1997) 201–203.

61. Shadis, 204–207, argues that the Order's reluctance to assume responsibility for the nunneries enhanced their patrons' authority over them.

62. For transactions involving members of the queen's household: Vann, 'The Theory', 136.

63. Julio Puyol, ed., *Crónica de España por Lucas, obispo de Tuy* (Madrid, 1926) 409: *Post haec coepit excogitare de salute animae suae, et construxit de nouo nobile monasterium Sanctae Mariae in Olgis burgensis ciuitatis. Hoc monasterium multis praediis ditauit, et mirae pulchritudinis auri, argenti, pretiosorum lapidum, olosericarum cortinarum decorauit. Alter nostris temporibus Salomon idem rex iuxta praedictam domum Domini aedificauit palatium regis... Iam praedictum monasterium quam palatium suum regale, quam etiam hospitale cum capella sua de lapidibus uel laterculis coctis et calce constructa sunt, et auro ac uariis coloribus depicta.* For the dower: González, *El Reino*, 1: following p. 192; Vann, 'The Theory', 129.

64. González, *El Reino*, 1:253–255. For the abbess's children: Lizoain Garrido, *Documentación...* (1116–1230) p. 81, doc. 45.

ernment of the house during a two-year vacancy (1231–1232).⁶⁵ What began as interim authority soon became recognized lordship over the monastery by resident princesses.⁶⁶ Princess Berenguela, the daughter of Ferdinand III, accompanied the abbesses with increasing frequency in the convent's documents following the death of her grandmother, Queen Berenguela of León, in 1246. In 1255 her brother, King Alfonso X, described her as *sennora e mayor del monesterio*, and, for the next quarter century, she clearly overshadowed the abbesses in the direction of the house.⁶⁷ The abbesses themselves had wielded extraordinary powers from the earliest days of the foundation, and, in 1212, were placed in charge of the neighboring royal hospital.⁶⁸

The closest parallels between Las Huelgas and Fontevraud lie

65. Princess Constanza ordered an inventory of the abbey's properties in 1232, and her exercise of authority was reflected by continuing references to her and Princess Constanza of León in 1233, the first year of the abbacy of María Pérez de Guzmán: Lizoain Garrido, *Documentación... (1231–1262)* (as in n. 1) pp. 21–26, 31–33, 35–38, docs. 269, 271, 273, 274. The princesses were next mentioned in 1240, again in the first year of tenure of a new abbess (Agnes), and the timing indicates that the princesses initially governed the convent during such vacancies: *Ibid.*, pp. 98–100, docs. 320, 321. The charter evidence contradicts Manrique's claim—often repeated—that Princess Constanza was an abbess: Angel Manrique, *Cisterciensium seu verius ecclesiasticorum annalium a condito cistercio* (Lyon, 1649) 3, app. ('Series abbatissarum S. Mariae Regalis prope Burgos'), p. 4. He cited a note of 1243 that was added to a manuscript of the nunnery to mark her anniversary.

66. Pérez-Embid Wamba, 1108–1109; Shadis, 207–210. A recent study deals with this institution: Andrea Gayoso, 'The Lady of Las Huelgas: A Royal Abbey and its Patronage', *Cîteaux: Commentarii Cistercienses* 51 (2000) 91–116.

67. Pérez-Embid Wamba, 1109–1110; Lizoain Garrido, *Documentación... (1231–1262)*, p. 298, doc. 480.

68. In 1210 Innocent III wrote to the abbot of Morimond and the bishops of Burgos and Palencia to order an end to the practice of abbesses blessing nuns, hearing their confessions, and preaching the Gospel publicly: Lizoain Garrido, *Documentación... (1116–1230)* (as in n. 1), pp. 168–169, doc. 104. This bull has generally been referred to Las Huelgas: Pérez-Embid Wamba, pp. 1110–1111. It came three years after the election of Sancha Garsie whose previous service as choirmistress (*cantora*) for nearly twenty years had prepared her to assert such liturgical and sacramental prerogatives. For the royal concession of authority over the Hospital del Rey: Lizoain Garrido, *Documentación... (1116–1230)* pp. 177–179, doc. 110. It was also closely tied to Queen Leonor from its beginnings: Martínez García (as in n. 59) pp. 54–55.

in their role as burial places of royal families. It is far too simple, however, to imagine Fontevraud as a blueprint for Las Huelgas, for the conception of both cemeteries evolved gradually in response to events that befell the two families. After all, the burial of Leonor's father, Henry II, at Fontevraud in 1189 was partly fortuitous, arising from the pitiful circumstances of his death, besieged and betrayed by his sons.⁶⁹ Over the next fifteen years, Eleanor of Aquitaine's retirement to the abbey in 1194, the burial of Richard the Lion-Hearted and Queen Joan of Sicily there in 1199, Eleanor's choice of the site as her own resting place, and her patronage of the tombs and effigies of her family members, together conferred a new distinction on the abbey as a family pantheon in the very years when Leonor and Alfonso VIII were shaping a similar future for Las Huelgas.⁷⁰

During the 1180s, as Las Huelgas was established, Queen Leonor bore at least four daughters and two sons, and lost two of these children in infancy.⁷¹ In 1190, she and her husband made a gift to Fontevraud, marking the first anniversary of the death of Henry II.⁷² As the decade wore on, her mother's example may have inspired both the commemoration of the dead and an affirmation of her own dynastic role as the mother of queens, as her daughters, Berenguela and Blanca, were married off to other royal houses.⁷³ The naming of Las Huelgas as the royal burial place came in the year when Leonor's brother and sister were buried

69. Charles T. Wood, 'La mort et les funérailles d'Henri II', *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 37 (1994) 119–123; Jean-Marc Bienvenu, 'Henri II Plantagenêt et Fontevraud', *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 37 (1994) 31–32.

70. Jean-Marc Bienvenu, 'Aliénor d'Aquitaine et Fontevraud', *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 29 (1986) 23–27; Alain Erlande-Brandenburg, 'Le cimetière des rois à Fontevrauld', *Congrès archéologique* 122 (1964) 482–492.

71. The best discussion of the documentary evidence for the children of Leonor and Alfonso VIII is González, *El Reino* (as in n. 3), 1:194–212.

72. *Ibid.*, 2:945–947, doc. 551.

73. Shadis, 202–203. Archbishop Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada stressed her role in the marriage of Berenguela and Alfonso IX: Fernández Valverde (as in n. 40), VII:xxxi, p. 253; González, *Alfonso IX* (as in n. 3), 1:89; Linehan, *History* (as in n. 3), pp. 257–258.

at Fontevraud, and the queen herself likely was involved in both the negotiations for the marriage of her daughter, Blanca, to the future king Louis VIII, and the arrangements for the journey of the aged Eleanor of Aquitaine to Castile to accompany the young princess to France.⁷⁴ It is fitting that Leonor's protagonism in the foundation of the convent, its designation as a family burial place, and the accompanying assertion of the dynasty were so aptly commemorated by the unusual double tomb that eventually enshrined the royal couple's remains.⁷⁵

The original setting for the tombs at Las Huelgas and the circumstances of their translation to the church are less clear than the modern bibliography might have one believe.⁷⁶ For the earliest burials, trustworthy sources are scarce. That the abbey soon housed a cemetery of some importance is evidenced by dated and decorated sarcophagi of 1194 and 1196, but burials are first mentioned only in the charter of 1199 granting the nunnery to Cîteaux and pledging that the royal couple and their children would be buried there.⁷⁷ The king repeated this commitment in his will of 1204, and in 1211 he made a substantial donation following the interment of Prince Ferdinand.⁷⁸ Later traditions—and the exhumation of children's remains in the sarcophagi of the church—would make

74. Vann, 'The Theory' (as in n. 7), 137–138. In fact, Leonor's role paralleled that of her mother in the negotiations at Bordeaux in 1170 that had led to her own marriage to Alfonso VIII: *Ibid.*, pp. 128–129.

75. María Jesus Gómez Barcena, *Escultura gótica funeraria en Burgos* (Burgos, 1988) 194–196; Ramón de Grado Manchado, 'Sepulcro de Alfonso VIII y Leonor de Plantagenet', in *Monjes y monasterios* (as in n. 1), p. 381.

76. Gómez Moreno (as in n. 1); Ricardo del Arco, *Sepulcros de la Casa Real de Castilla* (Madrid, 1954) 92–98, 241–250; Sánchez Ameijeiras (as in n. 1), pp. 77–109.

77. Gómez Moreno, pp. 9–11; Lizoain Garrido, *Documentación... (1116–1230)* (as in n. 1), pp. 92–94, doc. 52. The earliest provisions for burial in a private charter appear in 1207: *Ibid.*, pp. 150–151, doc. 92.

78. This gift, including a perpetual rent of five hundred gold pieces from the saltworks, is often described as providing for the decoration of the tomb or tomb chapel, but the language is not quite as explicit as that: ... *ea propter, pro eius anima et optinenda sibi uenia... monasterium Sancte Marie Regalis burgensis, ubi ipse optinet sepulturam, donacione nostra ad hornamndum duximus. Ibid.*, pp. 174–176, doc. 109.

Las Huelgas the burial place for as many as four children of the royal couple said to have died in infancy, but contemporary documents, including the royal charters of 1199 and 1211, are silent about these burials.⁷⁹

Modern scholars generally have identified the Capilla de la Asunción at the northeast corner (Fig. 2) of the earliest cloister, Las Claustillas, as the original site of the royal cemetery, based on the report of the eighteenth-century writer, Fr José Moreno Curiel.⁸⁰ The decoration of this centralized structure of brick and rubble masonry resembles that of contemporary Almohade buildings; it is smartly adorned with lobed arches and stucco ornament and covered by an octagonal vault with crisscrossing ribs.⁸¹ Rocío Sánchez has charted the evolution of its design and function through two successive campaigns.⁸² At the end of the twelfth century, the chapel was erected with a polygonal apse and a nave of one rectangular bay. Soon afterwards, the nave was partitioned to join part of it with the apse and create a centralized, domed chamber, leaving a small vestibule as the only vestige of the original nave. In its Muslim character, Sánchez detects the evocation

79. The silence of the royal charters is somewhat puzzling, as Alfonso VIII had earlier honored the tombs of his infant siblings at San Pedro de Soria: González, *El Reino*, 1:145, n. 37; 2:137–139, doc. 81, cited by Elizabeth Valdez del Alamo, 'Lament for a Lost Queen: the Sarcophagus of Doña Blanca in Nájera', *Art Bulletin* 78 (1996) 313. The burials of four royal children are alleged by Gómez Moreno, p. 24; del Arco, pp. 94–95. The small sarcophagus of 1194 has been commonly attributed to one of the royal children—perhaps Sancho, who died in 1181: Gómez Moreno, pp. 9–10; *El Reino*, 1:202–203; Sánchez Ameijeiras, 89, 91; Ramón de Grado Manchado, 'Sepulcro de don Sancho (?)', *Monjes y monasterios*, 382. There is no particular support for this in its inscription, iconography, or date.

80. José Moreno Curiel's account is in the prologue to his edition of the work of Juan de Saracho, *Jardín de Flores de Gracia, escuela de la mejor doctrina. Vida y virtudes de la prodigiosa y venerable Doña Antonia Jacinta de Navarra y de la Cueva, abadesa del Ilustrísimo Real Monasterio de Las Huelgas* (Burgos, 1736). For citations of it: Torres Balbás, 'Las yeserías' (as in n. 1), p. 250; Sánchez Ameijeiras, 84. For a critical view of the author: Lizoain and García (as in n. 1), pp. 32–33.

81. Torres Balbás, 'Las yeserías', 239–243. He considered it part of the royal palace attached to the convent. Other views of its origins are cited in Sánchez Ameijeiras, p. 80, n. 10.

82. Sánchez Ameijeiras, pp. 79–80, 83, 89–91.

of the burial place of the king's ancestors, Alfonso VII and Sancho III, in the former mosque of Toledo, and she contends that the architectural transformation responded to a tradition of centrally planned funerary structures, marking the consolidation of the chapel's role as a burial place for the royal family.⁸³

More problematic is Moreno Curiel's claim that the translation of the cemetery to the nuns' choir, the nave of the church, took place under King Ferdinand III and Abbess Sancha. After all, the abbess died in 1230, the heraldry of the nave vaults dates them after the unification of Castile and León under Ferdinand III that year, and the tombs would hardly have been set up before the vaulting of the nave.⁸⁴ Moreover, Moreno Curiel added the apparently contradictory note that the king's remains were in the chapel nearly forty years. Relying only on this, Gómez Moreno lent his authority to a date of 1251, while other authors have associated the translation of the royal tombs with the dedication of the royal cemetery and consecration of the church in 1279.⁸⁵

The widely cited notice of 1279—of which the earliest extant copy is in the eighteenth-century account of Moreno Curiel—raises more questions than it answers.⁸⁶ As Karge has observed, there is no more reason to link the dedication of the cemetery with the translation of the tombs than to link that of the altars with the construction of the choir, surely achieved many years ear-

83. For the date of this second campaign, she has proposed the king's choice of the convent as his burial place in 1199, or the donation following the burial of Prince Ferdinand in 1211: *Ibid.*, pp. 91, 102.

84. Torres Balbás, 'Las yeserías', p. 250.

85. Gómez Moreno, 9; de Grado Manchado (as in n. 75), p. 381. Advocates of the later date include: Lambert (as in n. 1), p. 200; Sánchez Ameijeiras, 84; Eduardo Carrero Santamaria and Marta Poza Yagüe, 'Sta. María la Real de las Huelgas', *Monjes y monasterios*, p. 496. Karge pointed out the lack of firm evidence for any of these dates in 'Zisterzienserinnenabtei' (as in n. 1), p. 27.

86. In 1833, the text was cited in an effort to change the feast of the church's dedication from July 20 to September 2, the date of the alleged consecration of the main altar, five additional altars and the nuns' cemetery. The existence of the earlier dedicatory feast raises further questions about the meaning of the text of 1279: Lizoain Garrido, *Documentación... (1263–1283)* (as in n. 1), pp. 112–113, doc. 596.

lier.⁸⁷ More remarkably, the notice would credit the dedication of ten altars, four cemeteries, and the chapterhouse on four separate days to Bishop Miguel Sánchez of the obscure see of Segorbe! Why such a prelate ought to have been entrusted with a ceremony as solemn as the alleged translation of the founders' tombs in a church so often the scene of royal pageantry is a question that begs response from those who would attach such importance to this dubious notice.

Moreno Curiel's ascription of the translation to Abbess Sancha and Ferdinand III deserves a second look. Considerable construction—including the closing of the first campaign with a temporary roof—had taken place under Abbess Sancha. She had led the choir of nuns for nearly two decades before becoming abbess in 1207, and her prominence at the convent for forty years makes plausible that she was closely involved in plans to prepare the church to receive the royal sarcophagi. It is singularly appropriate that, soon after the completion of the vaults whose heraldic decoration commemorated the unification of the two kingdoms, the installation of the tomb of the grandparents of Ferdinand III would have celebrated the abbey's founders as progenitors of the new dynasty as well.⁸⁸

Dedicating a burial place for the royal family in a house of one of the reforming religious orders was in line with the tendencies of the Capetian and Plantagenet courts in the late twelfth century.⁸⁹ King Louis VII had bypassed Saint-Denis and elected the Cistercian monastery of Barbeau as his resting place in 1180, and the Cistercians responded by modifying their own provisions for secular burials and commemoration of the deceased.⁹⁰ Before his

death and burial at Fontevraud, King Henry II had looked to the austere order of Grandmont to care for his remains.⁹¹ Within Iberia, the Castilians were not alone in bestowing such a privilege on the Cistercians, for the Cistercian houses of Poblet and Alcobaça were assuming the role of dynastic pantheons in Catalonia and Portugal as well.⁹²

The role of Queen Leonor and the wider European context for the designation of Las Huelgas as a dynastic cemetery help explain its innovative architecture as well. At the end of the twelfth century, Castile enjoyed new prominence on the European stage, and Queen Leonor played an important part in this. She was likely to have been involved personally in the diplomacy surrounding the treaty of Guleton between the kings of France and England, the consequent marriage of her daughter Blanca to the future king Louis VIII, and the efforts of her husband to take possession of her Gascon dowry for Castile during the troubled reign of John.⁹³ In 1206, she received a safe-conduct to travel to Poitiers to meet with her brother, King John of England, in negotiations concerning both the Gascon dowry and the inclusion of her husband, Alfonso VIII, in the two-year truce agreed between John and Philip Augustus.⁹⁴ Such diplomatic contacts provided both the motivation for emulating the new architecture of the Capetian and Plantagenet domains and the opportunities for arranging the coming of craftsmen for the building of the nunnery that would be the setting for the most important royal ceremonies of the first quarter of the thirteenth century.

87. Karge, 'Zisterzienserinnenabtei', p. 27.

88. If this took place in the early 1230s, it could explain Moreno Curiel's comment that the king's remains had been in the chapel of Las Claustrillas for nearly forty years, for this could simply refer to the time that the chapel—probably constructed in the 1190s—had served as a family cemetery.

89. Elizabeth M. Hallam, 'Royal Burial and the Cult of Kingship in France and England, 1060–1330', *Journal of Medieval History* 8 (1982) 369.

90. Alain Erlande-Brandenburg, *Le Roi est mort* (Geneva, 1975) 76–77, 87–88; Canivez (as in n. 21), 1:87 (1180 5), 91–92 (1183:1).

91. Elizabeth M. Hallam, 'Henry II, Richard I and the Order of Grandmont', *Journal of Medieval History* 1 (1975) 165–186.

92. Alfonso II of Aragón (1196) and Jaime I (1276) were buried at Poblet, and the arrangement of the tombs as a dynastic pantheon is attributable to Pedro IV in the mid-fourteenth century: Isidro G. Bango Torviso, 'El espacio para enterramientos privilegiados en la arquitectura medieval española', *Anuario del Departamento de historia y teoría del arte (U.A.M.)*, 4 (1992), p. 119, n. 149.

93. Vann, 'The Theory' (as in n. 7), 137–139.

94. González, *El Reino* (as in n. 3), 1:872–873; Vann, 'The Theory', p. 139.

Chancery documents, chronicles and laconic clauses in charters do not favor the effort to recover Queen Leonor's role in establishing the abbey, creating a family burial place, and inspiring the reception of a new architectural language and its adaptation to the monastic environment.⁹⁵ It is, however, the singular misfortune of Leonor in historiography to have been more the grandmother than the mother of kings, and this has obscured her critical place, not only in the royal lineages of Europe, but in the artistic lineage of the convent of Las Huelgas with which she was so intimately involved. Sadly, she has even faded into the background in the explanations of the foundation of Maubuisson by her daughter Blanca (Blanche of Castile), and the designation of Royaumont as a burial place for the French royal children.⁹⁶

The political circumstances surrounding the foundation of Las Huelgas, the creation of its congregation, and its affiliation with Cîteaux underscore the importance of the house to the royal couple in the last years of the twelfth century. Those, too, were the years in which the establishment of the dynastic pantheon and the queen's own contacts with her family most favored the prosecution of an ambitious building program and the embrace of a thoroughly foreign architectural style. It is surprising, then, that, until recently, a scholarly consensus has delayed the commencement of the church of Las Huelgas until the 1220s.

95. The strong connections with English illumination evident in the recently published early manuscripts of Las Huelgas may represent another aspect of the queen's artistic patronage: Sonsoles Herrero González, *Códices miniados en el real monasterio de Las Huelgas* (Barcelona, 1988); Ocón Alonso (as in n. 59), 32–35; Joaquin Yarza, 'Manuscritos iluminados en el Cister', *Monjes y monasterios* (as in n. 1), pp. 400–403.

96. Robert Branner, *St Louis and the Court Style in Gothic Architecture* (London, 1965) pp. 32–33; Terryl N. Kinder, 'Blanche of Castile and the Cistercians: An Architectural Re-evaluation of Maubuisson Abbey', *Cîteaux. Commentarii Cistercienses* 27 (1976) 164–165; 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* 35 (1979) 93–96; Lindy Grant, 'Le patronage architectural d'Henri II et de son entourage' *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 37 (1994) 84. By contrast, there is an effort to trace cultural patronage from mother to daughter in Shadis (as in n. 59), pp. 202–227.

THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE CHURCH OF LAS HUELGAS: DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Today, Las Huelgas preserves a remarkable group of buildings from the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries (Fig. 2). To the southeast lies the spacious romanesque cloister known as Las Claustrillas. On the paired columns of its round-arched arcades, tall capitals are intricately carved with lavishly detailed lobed leaves and foliate scrolls (Figs. 5, 14). A pier flanked by paired columns marks the center of each gallery, and, on two of the four piers, the reliefs and capitals bear elaborate architectural motifs (Fig. 3). The Mudéjar chapel—la Capilla de la Asunción, generally regarded as the original site of the royal cemetery—stands at the northeast corner of Las Claustrillas. The northwest corner abuts the dependencies along the east gallery of the gothic cloister dubbed the Claustro de San Fernando, through its supposed association with King Ferdinand III. Only traces remain of the rich Mudéjar stucco work that once graced the barrel vaults of its galleries, and the colonnades themselves were largely blocked by a wall added to reinforce support for the seventeenth-century upper cloister.⁹⁷ Around this cloister, the most notable—and best preserved—of the original dependencies are the rib-vaulted sacristy of three bays, adjacent to the south transept of the church, and, next to it, the square, rib-vaulted chapterhouse with nine bays separated by tall, round piers, each ringed by eight en-délit shafts.⁹⁸

The church adjoins the north side of the Claustro de San Fernando. On the exterior, its polygonal apse, ringed by wall buttresses, displays a two-storey elevation with superposed lancets; slender shafts carrying molded arches flank the upper ones, while finely tooled dogtooth lines the lower ones. On the interior, the rib-vaulted apse is preceded by a deep choir with a double bay

97. María del Carmen Muñoz Párraga, 'Claustro de San Fernando. Santa María la Real de Las Huelgas (Burgos)', *Monjes y monasterios*, 180.

98. María del Carmen Muñoz Párraga, 'Sacristía. Santa María la Real de Las Huelgas (Burgos)', *Monjes y monasterios*, 155; Concepción Abad Castro, 'Sala capitular. Santa María la Real de las Huelgas (Burgos)', *Ibid.*, 213–214.

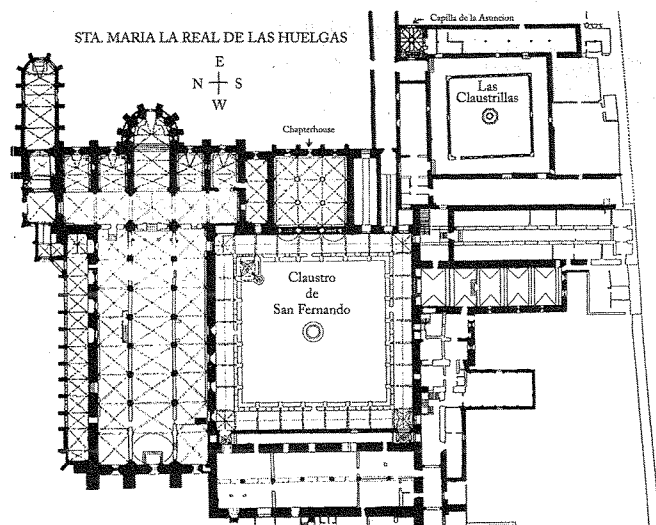


Figure 2. Plan of Sta Maria la Real de Las Huelgas (Adapted from Monjes y monasterios)



Figure 3. Las Huelgas, Las Claustillas, east gallery, central pier (Photo: author; copyright: Patrimonio Nacional)

covered by a sexpartite vault (Fig. 21), and, at the entrance to the crossing, a single bay with a quadripartite vault. Two rectangular chapels with delicate ribbed vaults (Fig. 38) rising from consoles and corbeled columns open into each arm of the transept. Quadripartite vaults cover the two bays of each arm of the two-storey transepts (Fig. 40), while an eight-part vault tops the crossing. Its ribs spring from consoles decorated with grotesque heads, and oculi pierce each web. Each transept has a tall, gabled screen facade, lit by a single lancet. The eight bays of the nave and aisles are separated by octagonal piers, and covered by quadripartite vaults. The clerestory windows of the two-storey nave resemble those of the apse, while round windows light the aisles. A porch, the *Pórtico de los Caballeros*, was added to the north flank of the church for burials, and a private funerary chapel, the *Capilla de San Juan*, was built to the northeast of the north transept.⁹⁹

Given the status of its founders, the importance of Las Huelgas in the history of Cistercian nuns, and the remarkable preservation of its church and dependencies, it is astonishing, as Henrik Karge has recently pointed out, that its buildings have not received systematic study outside of broad surveys of gothic architecture in Spain. With a coordinated examination of the fabric and a variety of texts, Karge has sought to remedy that, and his revision of the architectural history of the abbey provides a point of departure for a re-assessment of the church's relationships with Spanish and French buildings, and its place in the history of the gothic style in Spain.¹⁰⁰

Karge starts from the widely accepted position that the earliest surviving construction, Las Claustillas, formed part of the monastery referred to in documents of 1180 and 1185, and in the

99. Isidro G. Bango Torviso, 'El ámbito de la muerte', *Monjes y monasterios*, pp. 321–324.

100. Henrik Karge, *La Catedral de Burgos y la arquitectura del siglo XIII en Francia y España* (Valladolid, 1995) pp. 163–167, pls. 164–170; *Idem*, 'Zisterzienserinnenabtei' (as in n. 1), 13–40, 373–376.

endowment of 1187.¹⁰¹ This would have furnished a suitable setting for the first meeting of a General Chapter of nunneries in 1189. Turning to the church, Karge breaks with prevailing opinion by challenging the dating of its commencement to the 1220s, as proposed by Lambert, seconded by Torres Balbás, and subsequently canonized in the literature.¹⁰² Instead, he revives the earlier view of Lampérez that the choir and transepts were completed before the deaths of Alfonso VIII and Leonor in 1214.¹⁰³ Karge describes a rapid campaign already in the planning stages in 1203, and far enough advanced by 1214 to justify the universal attribution of the church to the royal couple's patronage in early sources, including the thirteenth-century chronicles of Archbishop Rodrigo Jiménez

101. Karge, 'Zisterzienserinnenabtei', 20–21. In fact, the 1180 'document' is merely a brief notice of the date of foundation in a late eighteenth-century manuscript, *Noticias de la fundación de este real Monasterio...*, published by Santiago Sebastián, 'Sobre Las Huelgas de Burgos', *Archivo español de arte* 31 (1958) 69–70. The notice raises some questions for it mentions the royal couple's daughters, Berenguela and Urraca, though Urraca was not born until c. 1186–1187: González, *El Reino* (as in n. 3), 1:195–197, 203–204; Vann, 'The Theory' (as in n. 7), 131. For a critical assessment of the manuscript: Lizoain and García (as in n. 1), 76–77. The 1185 text is more reliable: Lizoain Garrido, *Documentación... (1116–1230)* (as in n. 1), p. 18, doc. 10: ... *monasterio quod fabricatur nostris largitionibus et sumptibus iuxta burgensem ciuitatem*. Las Claustrillas has also been considered as part of a palace of Alfonso VIII: Isidro G. Bango Torviso, 'El claustro y su topografía', *Monjes y monasterios*, 161; María Teresa López de Guereño Sanz, 'Las dependencias extraclaustrales', *Ibid.*, 266, 276.

102. Lambert (as in n. 1), p. 200; Torres Balbás, 'Las yeserías' (as in n. 1), pp. 237–251; *Idem*, *Arquitectura*, 97–101. This view has been adopted most recently by Valle Pérez, 'Significación' (as in n. 1), p. 51; *Idem*, 'La implantación cisterciense en los reinos de Castilla y León y su reflejo monumental durante la edad media (siglos XII y XIII)', *Monjes y monasterios*, 41.

103. Lampérez y Romea (as in n. 1), 3:334–341. It was also supported in González, *El Reino*, 1:652–655; and Francisco Anton, *Monasterios medievales de la provincia de Valladolid*, 2nd ed. (Valladolid, 1942) 181–182.

de Rada and Bishop Lucas of Tui.¹⁰⁴ Thus, the present church, with a temporary roof over the nave, would have been the scene for the crowning of King Henry I in 1214, mentioned in a later chronicle, and the arming of King Ferdinand III at the high altar in 1219, described in a royal document of the same year.¹⁰⁵

Karge stresses the importance of the acceptance of Las Huelgas as a filial of Cîteaux and its designation as a royal burial place in 1199, but he assigns particular significance to a document of 1203, a royal gift of an annual rent of three hundred gold pieces from the saltworks at Atienza to the abbot of Cîteaux for completion of the *domus conversorum*, and, after that, for construction of the church, monastic buildings and, finally, granges.¹⁰⁶ Karge refers this diploma, now in the archive of Las Huelgas, to the nunnery itself.¹⁰⁷ In fact, the donation is given to Cîteaux (*domui cisterciensi*) to supplement an earlier gift of twenty-five hundred gold pieces for construction of the lay brothers' building there (*quos iam dudum pro edificanda domu conuersorum in cisterciensi monasterio contulimus*). Nowhere is the nunnery mentioned, in sharp contrast to the numerous royal privileges conceded directly to the house and its abbesses. Nor is there any record in the surviving privileges of Las Huelgas of an earlier gift of twenty-five hundred gold pieces, nor any trace, today,

104. Fernández Valverde (as in n. 40), VII:xxxiii, p. 255: *Set ut Altissimo complaceret, prope Burgis ad instantiam serenissime uxoris sue Alienor regine monasterium dominarum Cisterciensis ordinis hedicauit et nobilissimis fabricis exaltauit et multis redditibus et possessionibus uariis sic dotauit, ut uirgines sancte Deo dicat, que ibi die ac nocte laudabiliter Deo psallunt, nec inopiam sentiant nec defectum, set structuris, claustro et ecclesia et ceteris hedicis regaliter consumatis expertes sollicitudinis in contemplatione et laudibus iugiter delectantur*. The account of Lucas de Tui is quoted above, n. 63.

105. Karge, 'Zisterzienserinnenabtei', 29. Lizoain Garrido, *Documentación... (1116–1230)*, pp. 226–228, doc. 147.

106. Karge, 'Zisterzienserinnenabtei', 23–25.

107. González, *El Reino*, 3:308–309, doc. 746; Lizoain Garrido, *Documentación... (1116–1230)*, pp. 120–122, doc. 72. Both editors consider the diploma at Las Huelgas to be an original.

of the *domus conversorum*.¹⁰⁸ In short, the diploma of 1203 is best understood to mean what it says; it is a royal gift to Cîteaux.¹⁰⁹ The following year, the king's will included separate bequests for Las Huelgas and Cîteaux, and the latter referred to a previous sealed privilege conceding the monks of Cîteaux an annual stipend of three hundred *maravedis*, possibly the gift of 1203.¹¹⁰ Earlier royal stipends for Cluny supplied precedents for such an endowment, and, significantly, this one was matched by King Alfonso IX of León in 1211, when he offered Abbot Arnald of Cîteaux an annual rent of 300 *maravedis* from the saltworks of Villafáfila.¹¹¹

While the royal gift to Cîteaux cannot be admitted as direct evidence of construction at Las Huelgas, another charter does hint

108. In 1192, the nunnery had received an annual rent of four hundred gold pieces from the saltworks as part of an exchange with Alfonso VIII and Leonor: *Ibid.*, pp. 55–57, doc. 30. In 1211, the king granted the nunnery an annual rent of 500 *maravedis* from the saltworks as part of a memorial for his deceased son, Ferdinand, but this privilege is silent about earlier concessions: *Ibid.*, pp. 174–176, doc. 109.

109. One might object that construction of a church was surely not envisioned at Cîteaux so soon after the consecration of 1193, but the most specific reference to the disposition of the rents is to the construction of the *domus conuersorum*; subsequent use was to be governed by a long generic list of priorities:... *deinde in construenda ecclesia et domibus sui monasterii expendantur; Peractis uero, operibus monasterii et domorum, in grangiarum suarum operibus expendantur; deinde in eis que abbas spectare nouerit ad maiorem utilitatem sui monasterii*. *Ibid.*, p. 121, doc. 72. Later royal confirmations were also clearly directed at Cîteaux alone, and that of Ferdinand III dropped any references to construction, a point Karge tries to relate to the completion of the church at Las Huelgas: 'Zisterzienserinnenabtei', 27–28; Lizoain Garrido, *Documentación... (1116–1230)*, pp. 190–192, 275–276, docs. 121, 183. For the building and consecration of the church at Cîteaux: Marcel Aubert, *L'architecture cistercienne en France* (Paris, 1947) 1:191–193.

110. González, *El Reino*, 3:341–347, doc. 769: *Pateat etiam cunctis quod in redditibus meis Toleti dedi eidem monasterio Cisterciensi trecentos morabetinos unoquoque anno perbenniter precipiendos, unde monachi eiusdem monasterii meum habent priuilegium bullatum, et omnimode uolo et mando quod perbenniter eos habeant et annuatim percipiant sine contradictione et diminutione aliqua*.

111. For the comparison with the larger gifts to Cluny: Linehan, *History* (as in n. 3), 262. For the Leonese grant: Lizoain Garrido, *Documentación... (1116–1230)*, pp. 169–170, doc. 105. Alfonso X confirmed it in 1255, a day after he had confirmed his father's confirmation of the privilege of 1203, demonstrating the relationship between both concessions to Cîteaux: Lizoain Garrido, *Documentación... (1231–1262)* (as in n. 1), pp. 306–310, docs. 484, 485.

that a building campaign accompanied the affiliation of the nunnery. Eleven days after the royal gift, King Alfonso VIII gave an estate to Magister Ricardus and his wife Alda, for his service in the construction of the monastery of Las Huelgas.¹¹² Karge has proposed that he was rewarded, in part, for contributing to the design of the new church.¹¹³ The craftsman's foreign name had already encouraged a widespread view that he was a native of the Plantagenet domains brought to Castile by Queen Leonor's patronage. In addition, the location of the estate, his sale of it to the monastery of Aguilar de Campoo in 1226, and his supposed artistic activity there had been adduced to explain the manifold links between successive campaigns at Las Huelgas and the ample school centered on Aguilar and the Cistercian nunnery of San Andrés de Arroyo.¹¹⁴

It is certainly dangerous to spin an artistic biography from spare references to one craftsman whose precise role at any site remains undocumented. Nonetheless, Karge's hypothesis has the merit of tying the king's compensation in 1203 to a building of demonstrably foreign character. The later dating of the church had led others to postulate a role for the craftsman in Las Claustrillas or to postpone his work on the church to the 1220s.¹¹⁵ The documentary references to the monastery in the 1180s and stylistic parallels between the decoration of Las Claustrillas and dated sarcophagi at

112. Lizoain Garrido, *Documentación... (1116–1230)*, pp. 122–123, doc. 73.

113. Karge, 'Zisterzienserinnenabtei', 26.

114. *Ibid.*, p. 34. For the documents concerning Magister Ricardus and the artistic connections among Las Huelgas, Aguilar de Campoo and San Andrés de Arroyo: Julio González, 'Un arquitecto de Las Huelgas de Burgos', *Revista de archivos, bibliotecas y museos* 53 (1947) 47–50; José Luis Hernando Garrido, *Escultura tardorrománica en el monasterio de Santa María la Real en Aguilar de Campoo (Palencia)* (Aguilar de Campoo, 1995) 123–133.

115. For the link between Magister Ricardus and Las Claustrillas: J. Pérez Carmona, *Arquitectura y escultura románicas en la provincia de Burgos* (Burgos, 1959) 300–301; María Teresa López de Guereño Sanz, *Monasterios medievales premonstratenses. Reinos de Castilla y León* (Valladolid, 1997) 2:405–407. For the ascription of his work on the church to the 1220s: Isidro G. Bango Torviso, 'Burgos: Las Huelgas Abbey', *The Dictionary of Art*, ed. J. Turner (London, 1996) 5:205.

the nunnery do place the construction of the romanesque cloister in the last two decades of the twelfth century.¹¹⁶ There is little reason, however, to link it with a foreigner, for its foliate capitals (Figs. 5, 6, 14) had diverse connections with Castilian sculpture of the third quarter of the twelfth century and, in some details, may be compared with the remains of stucco and wood decoration from the cloister and adjacent Capilla de la Asunción.¹¹⁷ On the other hand, it is odd, at the very least, to highlight the payment of a foreign craftsman in 1203 while recognizing no evidence of his contribution until the 1220s.

Karge is right to enlist the donation to Magister Ricardus as testimony that the church was underway by 1203, but his misinterpretation of the privilege to Cîteaux discouraged him from going further.¹¹⁸ In fact, one may tie the beginning of the church to the promotion of the foundation in the 1190s, culminating in its affiliation to Cîteaux and designation as a royal burial place in 1199. More than idle speculation about Magister Ricardus warrants such a date. Artistic evidence and inscriptions from Aguilar de Campoo, San Andrés de Arroyo and other sites support the early chronology, and it is consistent with the foreign sources for the design and decoration of the church.¹¹⁹ This, in turn, forces a re-evaluation of the traditional view of the subordinate place of Las Huelgas in an early gothic school centered on the Castilian cathedrals (Fig. 4).

116. For the sarcophagi of 1194 and 1196: Gómez Moreno (as in n. 1), pp. 9–11, pls. III–VI; Pérez Carmona, pp. 47–50, 267–268; Gómez Barcena (as in n. 75), 187–190.

117. On the Castilian connections: Hernando Garrido, *Escultura*, 129–132. The same author, p. 71, hints at the comparison with stucco work when he describes the decoration of the foliage ‘as if it were modelled in a malleable material’. Analysis of the sculpture at Las Claustrillas is complicated by twentieth-century restorations that included the extensive recutting or replacement of capitals and bases (Fig. 3).

118. Recently it has been suggested that property transactions of 1203 and 1204 represented efforts to buy up adjacent lands for new constructions, but the estates border only on others owned by the abbey, not on the monastery itself. Sánchez Ameijeiras (as in n. 1), p. 78, n. 3.

119. Karge, ‘Zisterzienserrinnenabtei’, 34.

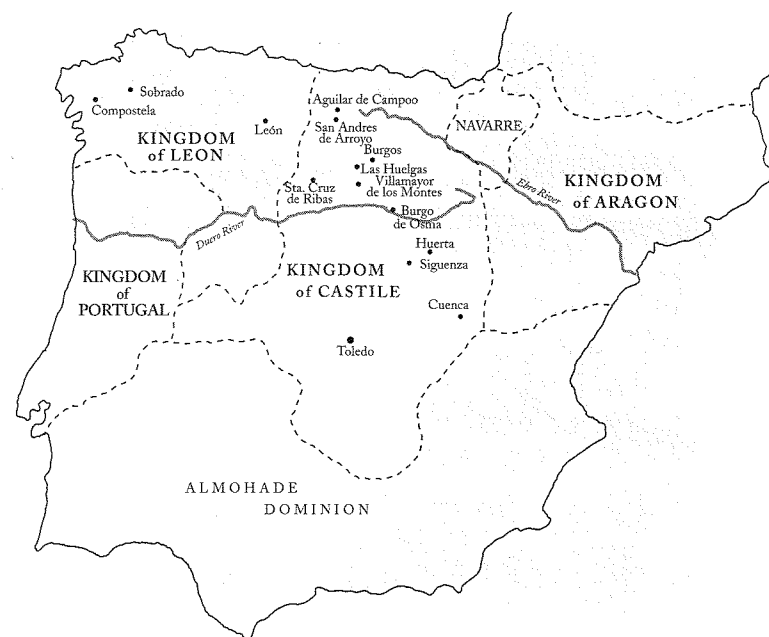


Figure 4. Map of the principal Iberian monuments cited in the text

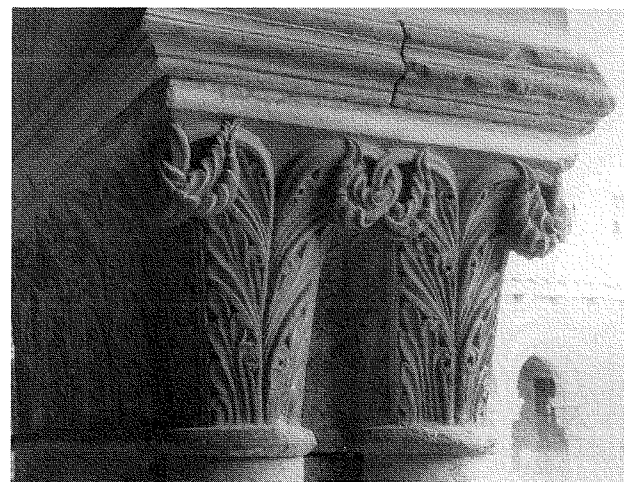


Figure 5. Las Huelgas, Las Claustrillas, west gallery, central pier, capital (Photo: author; copyright: Patrimonio Nacional)



Figure 6. Las Huelgas, Las Claustrillas, west gallery, capital (Photo: author; copyright: Patrimonio Nacional)

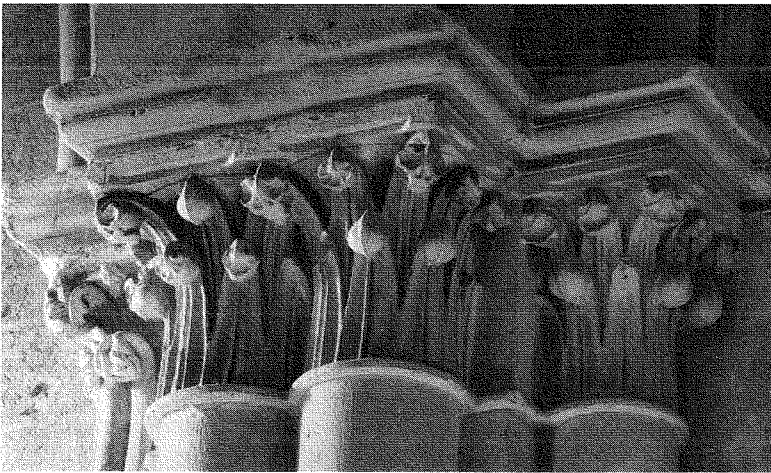


Figure 7. Aguilar de Campoo, Santa María la Real, respond capitals, westernmost bay of north aisle (Photo: author)



Figure 8. Las Huelgas, Santa María la Real, entry arch of south transept chapel adjacent to main apse, capital of north respond (Photo: author; copyright: Patrimonio Nacional)

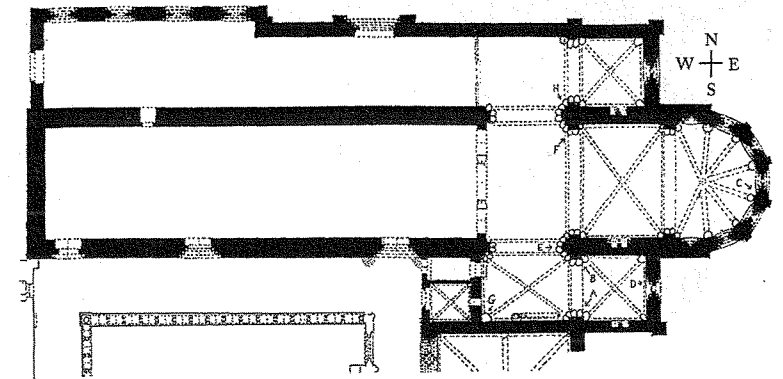


Figure 9. Plan of San Andrés de Arroyo (Adapted from *Monjes y monasterios*)

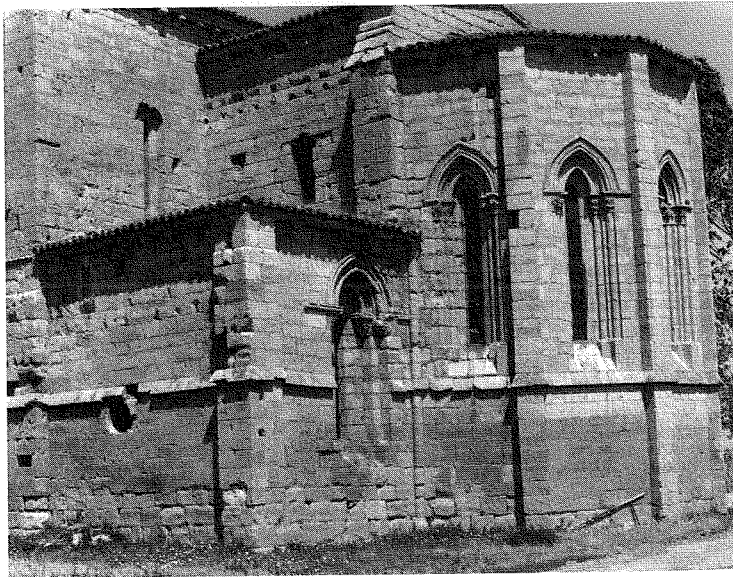


Figure 10. Santa Cruz de Ribas, choir (Photo: author)



Figure 11. San Andrés de Arroyo, entry arch of south chapel, capitals (A on plan)
(Photo: author)



Figure 12. San Andrés de Arroyo, entry arch of south chapel, capitals (B on plan)
(Photo: author)

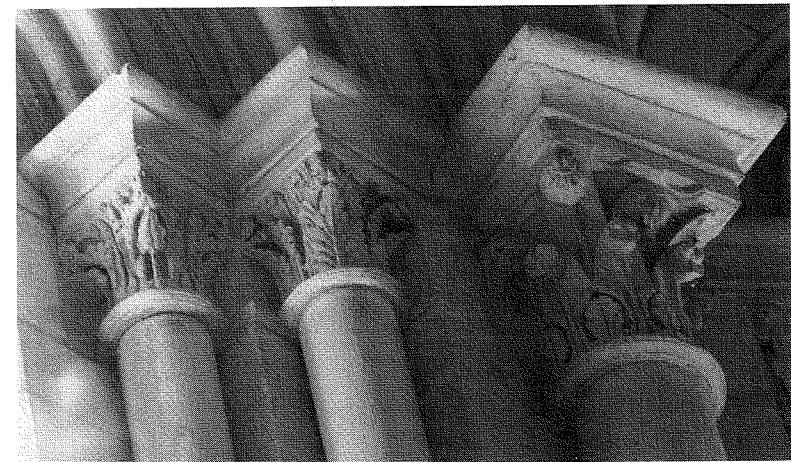


Figure 13. San Andrés de Arroyo, apse, respond and window capitals (C on plan)
(Photo: author)



Figure 14. Las Huelgas, Las Claustillas, south gallery, capital (Photo: author; copyright: Patrimonio Nacional)

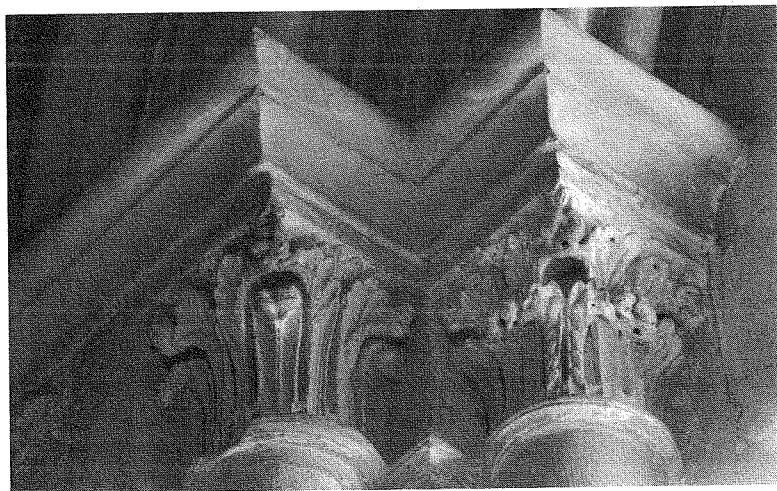


Figure 15. San Andrés de Arroyo, south chapel, window capitals (D on plan) (Photo: author)



Figure 16 (left). Las Huelgas, Capilla de la Asunción, capital (Photo: author; copyright: Patrimonio Nacional)

Figure 17 (below). Las Huelgas, Santa María la Real, entry arch of outer chapel of north transept, capital of north respond (Photo: author; copyright: Patrimonio Nacional)

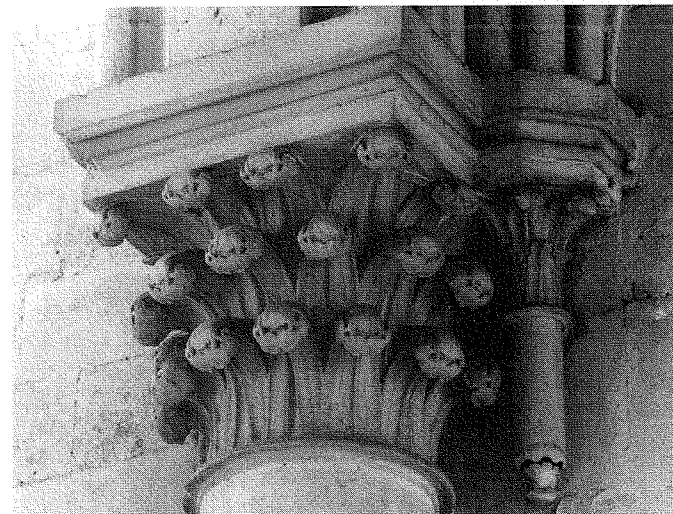




Figure 18. San Andrés de Arroyo, south transept, respond capitals (E on plan)
(Photo: author)

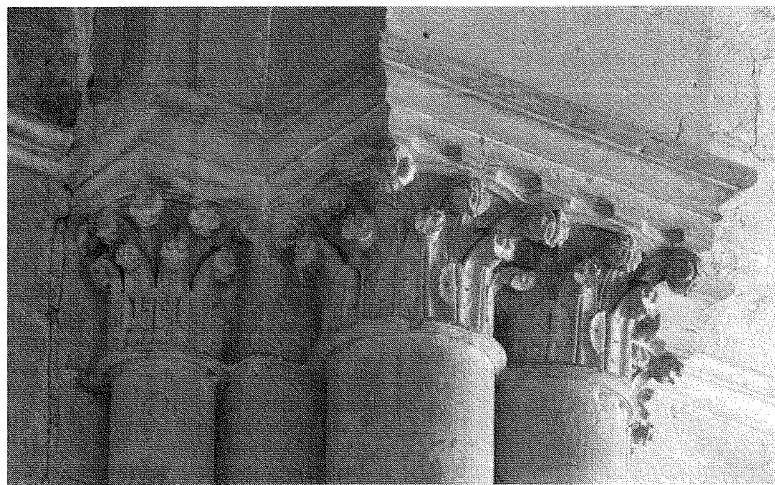


Figure 19. San Andrés de Arroyo, crossing, respond capitals (F on plan) (Photo: author)

THE DATING OF LAS HUELGAS:
EVIDENCE FROM AGUILAR DE CAMPOO,
SAN ANDRÉS DE ARROYO,
AND VILLAMAYOR DE LOS MONTES

Successive building campaigns in the church and dependencies of the Premonstratensian house at Aguilar present vexed problems of chronology complicated by the removal of numerous capitals to the Museo Arqueológico Nacional in Madrid.¹²⁰ Recent excavations have unearthed the foundations of three apses.¹²¹ That romanesque choir was transformed by the construction of a polygonal apse flanked by two deeper rectangular chapels, but significant parts of the earlier fabric were preserved as the choir and transept were enlarged and heightened.¹²² With this effort, the present nave and aisles were built and covered with ribbed vaults. Several of the historiated capitals now in Madrid came from the romanesque choir of the first church, where they were glossed by descriptive or liturgical inscriptions on the impostos which remain *in situ*.¹²³ These pieces apparently formed part of an extensive and learned program of decoration that included capitals, reliefs and additional inscriptions in the cloister and early dependencies.¹²⁴

120. Lampérez y Romea (as in n. 1), 3:405–410; Miguel Angel García Guinea, *El arte románico en Palencia*, 2nd ed. (Palencia, 1975) 185–195; María Isabel Bravo Juega and Pedro Matesanz Vera, *Los capiteles del monasterio de Santa María la Real de Aguilar de Campoo (Palencia) en el Museo Arqueológico Nacional* (Salamanca, 1986); María Estela González de Fauve, *La orden premonstratense en España: el monasterio de Santa María de Aguilar de Campoo (siglos XI–XV)*, 2 vols (Aguilar de Campoo, 1991); Hernando Garrido, *Escultura*, López de Guereño Sanz, *Monasterios*, 2:341–438.

121. The discovery was reported in Bravo Juega and Matesanz Vera, p. 146. For a fuller reconstruction of the first campaign: López de Guereño Sanz, *Monasterios*, 2:392–397.

122. For a discussion of the phases of construction, the re-use of sculpture and the evidence of masons' marks and moldings: Hernando Garrido, *Escultura*, 35–40.

123. For the localization of the capitals in the original fabric and the description of the impostos: Bravo Juega and Matesanz Vera, 117–122, 135, 145–147; Hernando Garrido, *Escultura*, 50–53.

124. Hernando Garrido, *Escultura*, 36–37, 54–68.

Some of this material was re-used when the cloister was expanded and the existing dependencies constructed.¹²⁵

For the history of these buildings, the most relevant texts are documents concerning the affiliation with the Premonstratensians between 1169 and 1173, and inscriptions of the early thirteenth century. From 1039 through the middle of the twelfth century, several gifts attest to the patronage of Castilian nobles and the importance of the monastery of Aguilar as a burial place.¹²⁶ In 1169, Alfonso VIII granted the monastery to Abbot Miguel of the Premonstratensian house of Herrera, and the lay proprietors, including several prominent members of the Lara family, ceded their rights as well.¹²⁷ On the advice of the Premonstratensian abbots, the king ordered the community to move from Herrera to Aguilar, but the abbot and monks of Aguilar objected. In 1173, their appeal reached the papal legate, Cardinal Hyacinth, who approved the transfer but arranged for the earlier abbot and members of his community to occupy another church and retain certain rights at Aguilar.

The dispute over the installation of the Premonstratensians likely explains the falsification of key documents of the 1160s and raises doubts about the degree of royal and noble support for the initiative that the interpolated documents allege.¹²⁸ What is clear is that a well-established community, long supported by the nobility, was important enough to take its case to the papal legate and win at least a modest compromise. Recent studies have credited that community with the earliest surviving construction and decoration, including the historiated capitals from the choir.¹²⁹ Scholars argue that the rigor of the Premonstratensians and the affinity of

125. For the re-use of capitals in the cloister and their distribution: Bravo Juega and Matesanz Vera, 149; Hernando Garrido, *Escultura*, 68–77.

126. López de Guereño Sanz, *Monasterios*, 2:343.

127. González, *El Reino* (as in n. 3), 2:216–220, docs. 127–128; González de Fauve, 2:188–190, docs. 27–28. For summaries of these events and the subsequent litigation: *El Reino*, 1:544–547; Barton (as in n. 60), 198; Guereño Sanz, *Monasterios*, 2:345–347.

128. For the falsification of the documents: González, *El Reino*, 1:544.

129. Bravo Juega and Matesanz Vera, 166–169; Hernando Garrido, *Escultura*, 145.

their art with that of the Cistercians make it unlikely that they would have initiated this elaborate program.¹³⁰ The decoration of late twelfth-century Premonstratensian churches at Retuerta, Arenillas de San Pelayo, and Sta Cruz de Ribas—like the continuing work at Aguilar itself—cautions against overemphasizing the Order's artistic austerity.¹³¹ Nonetheless, the status of the earlier community at Aguilar and the echoes of its sculpture throughout the region during the last third of the twelfth century make plausible an extensive program of decoration there by the 1160s.

The school of sculpture centered upon Aguilar represents one of the Castilian sources for foliate decoration at Las Claustrillas.¹³² The preference for figural capitals at Aguilar itself and the re-use of material of different dates in the cloister makes it hard to trace and date precisely its connections with Las Claustrillas where figural sculpture evidently was suppressed.¹³³ Nearby churches supply more reliable testimony. At Gama, for example, foliate capitals of the portal of the south porch, dated by an inscription of 1190 on an impost, share characteristics that appear at Las Claustrillas: the tall compound leaves with delicately pointed lobes (Fig. 5) and the double curves of the drooping leaves that flip upwards at the corners of the capital (Fig. 6).¹³⁴ The use of these forms at the modest church suggests that this decorative vocabulary was already well-established in the neighborhood of Aguilar when construction of Las Claustrillas was launched in the 1180s.

130. Bravo Juega and Matesanz Vera, 149–153, 162–164.

131. For these churches: López de Guereño Sanz, *Monasterios*, 2:439–453, 477–530, 555–599.

132. Garrido, 'Las Claustrillas' (as in n. 1), 53–56, 59–61.

133. Several foliate capitals from the cloister at Aguilar have affinities with some in Las Claustrillas (Fig. 5, 13): Hernando Garrido, *Escultura*, pp. 71–73. One, for example (now in the Museo Arqueológico Nacional), exhibits tall compound leaves set diagonally and volutes terminating in delicately detailed leaves that slip through the coils: García Guinea (as in n. 120), lam. 213; another, still *in situ*, presents tall, branched foliage with interlaced tips curling downward and upwards to form volutes: Hernando Garrido, *Escultura*, 55, 71. For similarities in the measurements and proportions of some of the cloister capitals at Aguilar and those in Las Claustrillas: *Ibid.*, p. 130.

134. García Guinea, pp. 157–161, lam. 132–133.

The relationship of early thirteenth-century work at Aguilar with the church of Las Huelgas can be charted more accurately. Throughout the last quarter of the twelfth century and the first decade of the thirteenth century, the Premonstratensian house benefited from ample royal privileges and the continuing support of the Lara family and other Castilian nobles.¹³⁵ Evidently, this patronage sustained building campaigns, for inscriptions of 1209 and 1218 date the chapterhouse, and others of 1213 and 1222 record the completion and consecration of the church.¹³⁶ In fact, if the royal grant of a nearby estate to Magister Ricardus is to be viewed as a sign of his employment at Aguilar, the arrival of a foreign craftsman in the service of the king could well represent another facet of royal patronage of the monastery.

The chapterhouse at Aguilar presents a new vocabulary of design and decoration related to that of the church at Las Huelgas.¹³⁷ Beneath the ribbed vaults of the six-bay chamber, the two central supports are cylindrical piers with en-délit shafts on the four cardinal points. These contrast markedly with the typical columns

135. González, *El Reino*, 1:546–547; Barton (as in n. 60), 239–240.

136. The inscription of 1209 (*Era MCCXLVII fuit factum hoc opus. D(omi)nicus*) on a shaft, reportedly from the entrance to the chapterhouse, is now in the Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Madrid. Those of 1213 and 1222 are lost, though a fragment of another inscription preserved at Aguilar records the consecration by Bishop Maurice of Burgos. The clearest accounts of these inscriptions are: Bravo Juega and Matesanz Vera, pp. 154–155; López de Guereño Sanz, *Monasterios*, 2:388, 410–411. There is also a tomb of 1183 in the cloister and the date 1218 is carved on an exterior buttress of the chapterhouse: Hernando Garrido, *Escultura*, pp. 70–71, 82, 168.

137. For the chapter house: López de Guereño Sanz, *Monasterios*, 2:374–377, 411–412; Hernando Garrido, *Escultura*, 64, 82. López de Guereño Sanz attributes the vaulting and supports to a second campaign dated by the inscription of 1218.

of late twelfth-century Spanish chapterhouses and anticipate the pillars ringed by eight en-délit shafts at Las Huelgas.¹³⁸ Such elaborate supports found no place in the church of Las Huelgas, but there is good reason to suppose they were part of the repertory of its builders. At Cuenca cathedral, a building often related to the royal nunnery and its northern French sources, a variety of piers ringed with en-délit shafts stand in the choir and transepts (Fig. 41).¹³⁹ At Aguilar, some of the shafts in the chapterhouse bear crocket capitals. These reappear in the church and dominate the western bays of the nave and aisles (Fig. 7); their tall, angular blades cling to the basket and almost conceal the thinly marked bell of the capital, just as on similar pieces in the choir and transepts at Las Huelgas (Fig. 8).¹⁴⁰ Together, these features demonstrate that the work of the first two decades of the thirteenth century at Aguilar was intimately connected with the church at Las Huelgas. At the same time, variations in the structure of the crocket capitals

138. One also may compare the monolithic pillars, designed as bundles of eight shafts, in the chapterhouses of Sobrado and Carracedo, dated c. 1200–1210: José Carlos Valle Pérez, 'The Chapterhouse of the Monastery of Carracedo', *Studies in Cistercian Art and Architecture* 5, ed. Meredith Lillich (Kalamazoo, 1998) pp. 168–169, 176–178. The supports at Las Huelgas, in turn, are generally viewed as the inspiration of those at Piedra. Despite a variety of documents suggesting construction there between 1194 and 1218, their date has been pushed to the second quarter of the thirteenth century because of the late dating of Las Huelgas: Ignacio Martínez Buenaga, *Arquitectura cisterciense en Aragón (1150–1350)* (Zaragoza, 1998) 273–277, 308–313, 332–333. For Cistercian and Premonstratensian chapterhouses in Castile and León: López de Guereño Sanz, *Monasterios*, 1:115–118; Concepción Abad Castro, 'El pabellón de monjes', *Monjes y monasterios* (as in n. 1), 189–195. Columns were used in the late twelfth-century chapterhouse at Veruela as well: Martínez Buenaga, 143–147.

139. Lambert (as in n. 1), 166–168.

140. The pressed tips of these crockets at Aguilar may be compared with those on the west side of the crossing at Las Huelgas (Fig. 40). A particularly notable example is on the south side of the entry arch to the south chapel of the choir at Aguilar. Relatively isolated at the east end, it suggests some later alteration in conjunction with the work on the adjacent cloister: López de Guereño Sanz, *Monasterios*, 2:399, 401. Lambert, 124, noted the similarities between foliate capitals at Aguilar and Las Huelgas. Karge, *Burgos* (as in n. 100), 166, compared the long ashlar blocks in the ribbed vaults of the church and dependencies at Aguilar with the similar technique at Las Huelgas.

at Aguilar and in the detailing of their foliage are attributable to the persistent traditions of the earlier generation of craftsmen who had joined in the decoration of Las Claustrillas.

Fifteen kilometers southwest of Aguilar, the Cistercian nunnery of San Andrés de Arroyo, another establishment associated with the Lara family, exhibits more thoroughgoing connections with Las Huelgas and helps clarify the relationship between the two phases of work there.¹⁴¹ The date of the foundation is unknown but, by 1181, the abbess, Doña Mencía, was the beneficiary of private and royal gifts.¹⁴² In the first of a series of important royal donations, the king refers to the abbess as countess, and his gift compensates her for two thousand gold pieces he owed her.¹⁴³ This is some indication of the wealth and status of the woman who would govern the nunnery for nearly half a century and serve as an executor of the king's testament.¹⁴⁴ Texts, however, provide only circumstantial evidence for dating the buildings. A widely cited date of 1222 was based on the erroneous reading of a badly eroded

141. Lampérez y Romea (as in n. 1), 3:352–355; Lambert, 278; García Guinea, pp. 196–201, lám. 227–241; María Teresa Gutiérrez Pajares, *El Monasterio cisterciense de San Andrés de Arroyo* (Palencia, 1993). A royal document of 1410 describes the founder, Doña Mencía, as a member of the Lara family: *Ibid.*, p. 26. For a summary of the family's connections with the nunnery: Hernando Garrido, *Escultura*, p. 124. The Lara family was responsible for the earliest Cistercian nunnery in Castile, that of Perales, of which there are no architectural remains: Antonio García Flores, 'Santa María de la Consolación de Perales', *Monjes y monasterios*, 484.

142. A register of the documents of the nunnery is provided in Gutiérrez Pajares, 105–120.

143. González, *El Reino* (as in n. 3), 2:631–633, doc. 366.

144. Doña Mencía is mentioned in this role in several documents issued by Henry I in 1214 and 1215, e.g. *Ibid.*, 3:672–678, 683–684, docs. 969–971, 976. She is documented as abbess at least through 1226: Julio González, *Reinado y diplomas de Fernando III, 2: Colección diplomática* (Cordoba, 1980) pp. 246–247, 255–256, docs. 204, 211. She has been claimed to be the daughter of Rodrigo González de Lara and Princess Sancha, the daughter of Alfonso VII: Salvador de Moxò Ortiz de Villajos, 'De la nobleza vieja a la nobleza nueva', *Cuadernos de historia* 3 (1969) 34. More plausibly, she may have been the daughter of Countess Aldonza and Count Lope Díaz de Haro, and the sister of the abbesses of the Cistercian nunneries of Cañas and Vileña: José M. Canal Sánchez-Pagín, 'La Casa de Haro en León y Castilla de 1150 a 1250', *Archivos leoneses* 43 (1989) 55–96.

inscription in the north porch which has now been correctly assigned to the fourteenth century.¹⁴⁵ In 1203, the sale of a vineyard by Doña Mencía to Las Huelgas for the large sum of four hundred *maravedis* hints at efforts to finance a building campaign, and it is suggestive that, the next month, the king made the gift to Magister Ricardus that, it is alleged, may have led to his participation in building there.¹⁴⁶ In 1210, the convent won an important royal exemption from tolls and, before 1211, King Alfonso VIII had approved a sizeable purchase of lands by the nuns '*ad opus uestri monasteri*'.¹⁴⁷ Finally, the heraldic emblems of Castile and León that once crowned the buttresses in the cloister recall the iconography of the nave vaults at Las Huelgas and tie its completion to the reunion of the kingdoms in 1230.¹⁴⁸

The only hard evidence for construction at San Andrés can come from the fabric itself (Fig. 9).¹⁴⁹ The choir is made up of a polygonal apse preceded by a rectangular bay flanked, in turn, by two rectangular chapels. Ribbed vaults cover all four spaces.¹⁵⁰

145. María Encarnación Martín López, 'De epigrafía cisterciense: las inscripciones de San Andrés de Arroyo', *Cistercium* no. 208 (1997) 500–503. The inscription is also reproduced in Gutiérrez Pajares, p. 175. For the numerous fourteenth-century inscriptions of the porch: Vicente García Lobo and María Encarnación Martín López, 'La publicidad en el Cister', *Monjes y monasterios*, 54–55, 61–62.

146. Lizoain Garrido, *Documentación... (1116–1230)* (as in n. 1), pp. 119–120, doc. 71.

147. González, *El Reino*, 3:524–525, 633, docs. 870, 941. The undated document mentions Prince Ferdinand who died in 1211.

148. Lampérez y Romea (as in n. 1), 3:354–355. These buttresses were entirely removed in the restorations of the 1940s and 1950s when the blocked arcades of the cloister were reopened. At that time, newly carved capitals were added to the cloister, and many of the original capitals were rearranged: Gutiérrez Pajares, 103–105.

149. Access to the cloister and chapter house remains limited to guided tourist visits and no photography is permitted. Nor was I able to view the exterior of the choir and transept within the walled precinct of the convent. For these areas, I have had to rely wholly on published photographs, few of which offer sculptural details.

150. In the transept, only the south arm has an original rib vault: Lampérez y Romea, 3:354; Gutiérrez Pajares, 49.

West of the crossing, the single nave is occupied by the nun's choir, while the public entrance to the church leads through the north porch into the north transept. At the west end of this porch, four tall gothic windows light a spacious vestibule adorned with elegant carving. Though characterized as a reduced version of that of Las Huelgas, the choir is more aptly compared to buildings of similar scale like the Premonstratensian church of Sta Cruz de Ribas (Fig. 10).¹⁵¹ The north porch and vestibule, however, can rightly be seen as modeled upon the Pórtico de los Caballeros along the north flank of the church of Las Huelgas.

San Andrés de Arroyo is justly famed for the splendid foliate capitals of the church and cloister. In the church, those at the entrances of the lateral chapels proclaim their sculptors' technical mastery (Figs. 11, 12). From one massive block, they carved the large paired capitals of the double columns of the entry arch and the smaller flanking ones beneath the outer arch and vault rib. Several of these share the most characteristic shape of capitals at San Andrés (Fig. 21): much of the basket is nearly cylindrical, while the upper third retains its blocklike form despite the intricate detail, deep undercutting and complex design of the foliage. In this way, the solid functionality of the architectural element is affirmed. At the same time, the delicate detailing of the foliage with tiny drilled holes and lightly traced ribbing, the virtuoso undercutting of the curling tips of leaves, the latticework arrangement of foliate sprays, and the delightful adornment of the neckings and abaci with beads, drilled holes and fine moldings rival the precision of the miniaturist's art.

Throughout the choir and transepts at San Andrés, capitals related to Las Claustrillas are set alongside others related to the church at Las Huelgas, and individual capitals combine elements kept separate in the successive campaigns at the royal nunnery. In the apse, for example, small window capitals (Fig. 13) display tall

151. Torres Balbás, *Arquitectura* (as in n. 1), 110. The links with Sta Cruz de Ribas and Sta Eufemia de Cozuelos, a women's convent of the Order of Santiago, were already noted by Lampérez y Romea, 3:355.

compound leaves, shaped and detailed like some at Las Claustrillas (Fig. 14). On the adjacent respond capital, upright crockets circle the convex bell and bundles of simple lobed leaves roll over their tips. Like some crocket capitals at Aguilar, this piece is a curious hybrid, unthinkable at Las Huelgas itself. Enframed palmettes stand above the necking, a throwback to earlier Castilian traditions, and, at the top, the convex bell supports an abacus punctuated by concave slots.¹⁵² On other pieces (Fig. 15), the tall lobed leaves with knotted and upturned terminals quote the foliate vocabulary of Las Claustrillas (Fig. 16), but they frame flat, grooved bands, like those of crocket capitals (Fig. 17) in the church of Las Huelgas.

The sculptors at San Andrés reproduced the crocket capitals themselves, but freely varied their structure. Those at the entrance to the south transept (Fig. 18) lack the characteristic bell of those at Las Huelgas and the upper leaves are set two rows deep. Similar ones (Fig. 19) on the north side of the entrance to the presbytery present the upper leaves in a single row around a bell, the normal arrangement in the choir and transepts at Las Huelgas. Here, however, the sculptors added a grooved and indented abacus. By contrast, at Las Huelgas itself, the decorative vocabulary of Las Claustrillas was abandoned in the church, and the crocket capitals of the choir and transepts were more rigorously uniform in their overall structure.

In short, two successive and clearly differentiated phases of work at Las Huelgas were inextricably mixed in the church of San Andrés from the very start of construction. For Las Huelgas, this mitigates against a long delay between the decoration of Las Claustrillas in the last two decades of the twelfth century and the commencement of the existing church. At San Andrés, the consistently high quality of carving argues for a rapid and well-

152. The upper cloister of Silos and the so-called Sepulcro de Mudarra from San Pedro de Arlanza offer other Castilian examples of this archaizing use of enframed palmettes c. 1200: José Luis Senra Gabriel y Galán, 'La escultura románica y sus problemas de interpretación: el llamado sepulcro «de Mudarra» procedente del monasterio de San Pedro de Arlanza', *Archivo español de arte* no. 285 (1999) 34–38.

organized effort. The long tenure of Doña Mencía as abbess, her close relationship with King Alfonso VIII, and the participation of craftsmen familiar with the church of Las Huelgas at nearby Aguilar place construction of the choir and transepts in the first two decades of the thirteenth century. The close connections between the sculpture of San Andrés and numerous churches in the surrounding countryside indicate that most of these craftsmen originated in this area; some had gone to work at Las Claustrillas and eventually returned with a new vocabulary of decoration acquired from the foreign craftsmen responsible for the church at Las Huelgas.¹⁵³

The mutual relationship of San Andrés and Las Huelgas is too complex to permit the easy characterization of San Andrés as a derivative of the royal nunnery. Architecturally, for example, the builders at San Andrés remained quite conservative in their choice of paired responds and in their timid handling of the choir vault (Fig. 20) whose slightly scalloped profile contrasts with the deeply webbed vaults at Las Huelgas (Fig. 21).¹⁵⁴ Sculpturally, these masons drew upon a generation of experience in the districts around Aguilar, and creatively adapted the new vocabulary of crocket capitals and latticework bosses and *culs-de-lampe* from the church of Las Huelgas. They developed, in turn, a simpler foliate capital (Fig. 22) widely used in the cloister, popularized in nearby churches, and adopted at more distant sites of importance like the Premon-

153. The most notable examples are the north portal of Revilla de Santullán, parts of the church and loose sculpture from the cloister of Sta Eufemia de Cozuelos, and the west portals of Zorita del Páramo and Sta María de Mave. At each of these sites, capitals like those of San Andrés are accompanied by the chevron moldings that also appear in the nunnery, and in several instances a rich repertory of figural sculpture, barred from Las Claustrillas and San Andrés de Arroyo, resurfaces: García Guinea (as in n. 120), pp. 131–148, 176–185, 248–253, lám. 110, 175–177, 182–183, 295–298; José Luis Hernando Garrido, 'Nuevas esculturas tardorrománicas en el norte de Palencia', *Codex Aquilarensis: Cuadernos de investigación del monasterio de Santa María la Real* 9 (1993) 30–34, 43–56.

154. For the paired columns: Leopoldo Torres Balbás, 'Iglesias del siglo XII al XIII con columnas gemelas en sus pilares', *Archivo español de arte* 19 (1946) 283–284.

stratensian chapterhouse at Sta Cruz de Ribas (Fig. 23), the choir of the Cistercian monastery at Palazuelos and the cloister of the Cistercian monastery at Valbuena.¹⁵⁵ Thus, the artistic impact of the church of Las Huelgas on San Andrés de Arroyo should not overshadow the earlier contribution of these Castilian craftsmen to the decoration of Las Claustrillas and the continuing vitality of their independent traditions of decoration. If Magister Ricardus actually was a foreigner involved in the design of the church of Las Huelgas and responsible for the acceptance of its new artistic vocabulary at Aguilar and San Andrés, his connections with this district first may have been forged by its importance as a reservoir of talented masons.

Other buildings, like the churches of the Cistercian abbey of Matallana or the Benedictine monastery of Oña, buttress the early chronology of the church of Las Huelgas.¹⁵⁶ Less connected to Las Huelgas is the church of the Cistercian nunnery of Villamayor de los Montes, but its independence is itself a telling clue to the pace of work at the royal nunnery.¹⁵⁷ The founder, Garcí Fernández, served four generations of Castilian royalty. He was mayordomo

155. For examples at Valbuena and Palazuelos: Hernando Garrido, *Escultura* (as in n. 114), pp. 43–44, lám. 38, 40.

156. The close links between the crossing piers and capitals at Las Huelgas and those at Oña were discussed by José Luis Senra Gabriel y Galán, 'El monasterio de San Salvador de Oña (Burgos): del románico pleno al tardorrománico', *Alfonso VIII y su época*, II Curso de Cultura medieval (1990) (Aguilar de Campoo, 1992) pp. 340–342, 345, figs. 3–5. For the links between Matallana and Las Huelgas: Lambert (as in n. 1), 278–280; Anton (as in n. 103), 181–186; Karge, 'Zisterzienserinnenabtei' (as in n. 1), 35. The church was begun by Queen Beatrice in 1228 according to an inscription known to Manrique in the seventeenth century: Anton, 172.

157. Salvador Andrés Ordax, 'El monasterio cisterciense de Villamayor de los Montes (Burgos)', *Boletín del Seminario de estudios de arte y arqueología* 58 (1992) 281–296; Rosa Cardero Losada, 'La iglesia del monasterio cisterciense de Villamayor de los Montes (Burgos) y su relación con la catedral y Las Huelgas de Burgos', *Boletín de la Institución Fernán González* 73 (1994) 125–139.

of Queen Leonor, of her daughter, Queen Berenguela, and of Berenguela's son, King Ferdinand III.¹⁵⁸ Finally, he raised Ferdinand's son in his household, and, as king, Alfonso X honored the noble's own sons with offices at court and generous allotments of Andalusian properties.¹⁵⁹ One of several noble proprietors of an earlier monastery at Villamayor, Garcí Fernández gained sole possession in 1223, and won royal concessions in 1227 for what was then first described as a Cistercian nunnery.¹⁶⁰ The following year, his endowment ceded the community to Las Huelgas, but the house remained closely tied to the noble's family whose members governed the community for some time and chose it as their burial place.¹⁶¹

Traditionally, the building of the church has been associated with the endowment of 1228, and its plan compared with those of Las Huelgas and San Andrés de Arroyo.¹⁶² An earlier monastery, however, had long occupied the site, so the new community likely found a suitable church already there.¹⁶³ What is more, the

158. For a comprehensive biography and account of his patronage of the nunnery: Luciano Serrano, 'El mayordomo mayor de Doña Berenguela', *Boletín de la real academia de la historia* 104 (1934) 101–198. He is cited as Queen Leonor's mayordomo in 1213 (*Ibid.*, 110), and documented as *maiordomus curie regis* from February 1232 through July 1238: González, *Reinado y diplomas* (as in n. 144), 2:454, doc. 396; 3:162, doc. 627.

159. Joseph F. O'Callaghan, *The Learned King. The Reign of Alfonso X of Castile* (Philadelphia, 1993) 8, 70–71.

160. Serrano, 106–107, 117–118, 176–178; González, *Reinado y diplomas*, 2:265, doc. 221.

161. Serrano, 119–120, 126–137, 178–181; Lizoain Garrido, *Documentación... (1116–1230)* (as in n. 1), pp. 321–324, doc. 221; González, *El Reino* (as in n. 3), 1:540. The wooden tomb of the founder's son, Diego García, is now in the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University: Dorothy Gillerman, ed., *Gothic Sculpture in America, 1: The New England Museums* (New York, 1989) 174–175.

162. For the links with Las Huelgas: Lambert (as in n. 1), 280; Andrés Ordax, 290–292; Karge, 'Zisterzienserinnenabtei' (as in n. 1), 35.

163. A monastery dedicated to San Vicente is documented throughout the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, and three twelfth-century epitaphs remain in the cloister: Andrés Ordax, pp. 283–284, 289. In the endowment of 1228, the nunnery preserved the joint dedication, *monasterio Sancte Marie et Sancti Vincentii de Villamaiori*: Lizoain Garrido, *Documentación... (1116–1230)*, p. 321, doc. 221.

alleged relationships with Las Huelgas and San Andrés are largely limited to the superficial resemblance of a polygonal apse flanked by rectangular chapels. As Rosa Cardero has recently argued, the cathedral of Burgos, in fact, inspired various elements including the ridge rib of the choir vault, the small bosses on the crowns of transverse arches and wall ribs, the circular impostes of the four responds of the apse, the foliate decoration of capitals and the profiles of moldings.¹⁶⁴ More specifically, Cardero observed that the pedestals at Villamayor (Fig. 24) adopt the profile introduced in the transepts and used in the nave of the cathedral.¹⁶⁵ Finally, she compared the design of the apse windows and the decoration of the cornice at Villamayor with work in the western bays of the nave, the upper zones of the facades and the cloister of the cathedral in the third quarter of the thirteenth century.¹⁶⁶ She concluded that the church was not begun until c. 1250 and that its builders also took part in the addition of the north porch, the Pórtico de los Caballeros, to the church of Las Huelgas.

In fact, the connections with Burgos cathedral allow a date earlier than 1250 for construction at Villamayor, since the campaigns of the 1220s and 1230s on the choir and transepts of the cathedral already account for the most precise connections with the nunnery.¹⁶⁷ The new form of pedestal appeared in the transepts in the 1230s, and the foliate capitals at Villamayor still resemble

164. Cardero Losada, 129–139.

165. *Ibid.*, pp. 131, 137. The pedestals at Burgos are discussed in Karge, *Burgos* (as in n. 100), 74–76, 79.

166. For these campaigns at Burgos: Karge, 106–110, 220–234, 256–262. See also Christopher Welander, 'The Architecture of the Cloister of Burgos Cathedral', *Medieval Architecture and its Intellectual Context: Studies in Honour of Peter Kidson*, edd. Eric Fernie and Paul Crossley (London, 1990) 159–168.

167. Karge accepted a date of 1223–1227 for Villamayor: *Burgos*, p. 166. According to the Chronicle of Cardeña, cited in the eighteenth century by Flórez,

those of the 1220s in the cathedral choir and the decoration of *c.* 1230 of the lower arcade of the Puerta del Sarmental.¹⁶⁸ The vaults and clerestory of the choir (*c.* 1230) anticipate the ridge ribs, circular imposts and quatrefoil oculi at Villamayor as well.¹⁶⁹ The eight-part vault over the presbytery bay could reflect plans for the original crossing vault—replaced in the sixteenth century—at Burgos, for it can be compared with the crossing vault at Cuenca executed in a campaign related to mid-century work at Burgos.¹⁷⁰ At Villamayor, one type of foliate capital decorated with alternating crockets and trilobate leaves (Fig. 25) also has close counterparts on the crossing piers and in the nave galleries at Cuenca (Fig. 26). Significantly, those at the nunnery are accompanied by far more accomplished carving, suggesting a closer connection to their sources at Burgos itself. The proximity of the convent to Burgos, the status of its patrons and the high quality of the masonry and carving suggest that the community availed itself of experienced workmen from the ongoing project at Burgos for the building of the modestly proportioned choir of their church.

and a notice copied in a medieval calendar, the first stone of the cathedral was laid on 20 July 1221. Statutes issued by Bishop Maurice in 1230 specified the seating arrangements of the canons in the choir and referred specifically to the *nouam fabricam*. Papal bulls of 1243 and 1260 anticipate a seemingly imminent consecration, and various late medieval texts date it to 20 July 1260: *Ibid.*, pp. 39–50. The coincidence of the dates for the consecration and the laying of the first stone, and the correspondence of 1260 in the Spanish Era with 1222 AD—an alternative date in some accounts of the commencement of the cathedral—demand that a closer look be taken at the alleged date of the consecration and status of these notices.

168. For the capitals: *Ibid.*, pp. 104–106, 214–125, especially láms. 23, 24, 34, 47–49. For the introduction of the new types of pedestals in the transepts: *Ibid.*, pp. 74–76, 79, 106.

169. For the date of the clerestory and vault of the choir: *Ibid.*, pp. 106, 219, láms. 6, 35, 36.

170. The date of the crossing vault at Cuenca (Lambert [as in n. 1], p. 170) and the upper parts of the transepts and crossing are uncertain, but Christopher Welander compared the profiles of its ribs with those of the nave vaults: 'Cuenca: cathedral', *The Dictionary of Art*, ed. J. Turner (London, 1996) 8:252–254. For the connections between the nave at Cuenca and mid-century work at Burgos: Karge, *Burgos*, pp. 184–187.

Placing construction of the choir at Villamayor in the second quarter of the thirteenth century would credit it to the founder, Garcí Fernández, whose will of 1240 mandated a stipend for a cleric to offer masses for his soul at its altar.¹⁷¹ This dating also carries important implications for construction at Las Huelgas. It seems unimaginable that the new and remarkably refined vocabulary of forms used in the cathedral would be adopted at Villamayor but ignored at Las Huelgas itself if these buildings were contemporary. Conversely, the artistic independence of Villamayor from Las Huelgas is easier to understand, if the church of the royal nunnery had been completed well before the project at the daughter house was launched.

The artistic dependence of Villamayor upon the cathedral of Burgos raises questions about the relationship between Las Huelgas and the cathedral. By the 1220s, the work at Burgos cathedral would have made the church of the royal abbey oddly archaic if, in fact, it were a contemporary project. Instead, as Karge intimated, the novelty of Las Huelgas at the turn of the century—and its incipient rivalry with the see—may well have found its response in 1221 when bishop Maurice laid the first stone of a cathedral conceived to be still more modern.¹⁷² At the same time, the remarkable rapidity of the cathedral's construction was surely facilitated by the organization of quarrying and stonecutting and the assembling of a skilled workforce for construction at Las Huelgas during the previous forty years. In a larger context, both churches heralded the changing centers of gravity in the peninsula on the eve of the reunification of Castile and Leon and the conquest of Andalucía.¹⁷³

171. Serrano (as in n. 158), pp. 186–189. Defending a later date for the building, Cardero Losada (as in n. 157) stressed that only the altar of Sta María was mentioned with no specific reference in the testament to the church, construction or the site of burial: pp. 127–128.

172. Karge, *Burgos*, 166–167.

173. For a brilliant discussion of the waning of Toledo's aspirations and the growing importance of Burgos and Old Castile within the kingdom of Alfonso VIII in the last quarter of the twelfth century: Linehan, *History* (as in n. 3), 287–312. Karge's remarks on the assertion of Burgos' place on the pilgrimage road through the design of the large transept and north entrance of the Gothic cathedral are suggestive in this context as well: *Burgos*, p. 161.

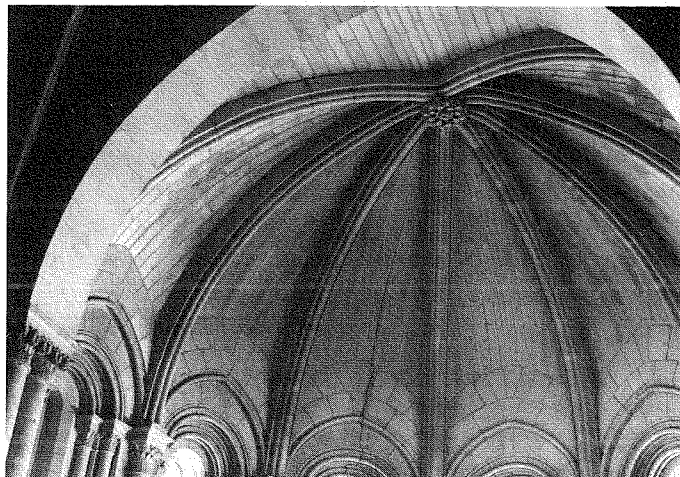


Figure 20. San Andrés de Arroyo, apse vault (Photo: author)

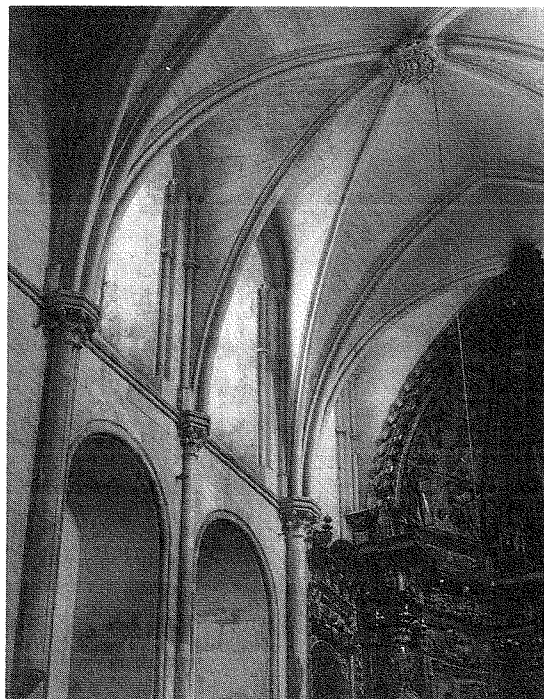


Figure 21. Las Huelgas, Santa María la Real, chancel vault (Photo: author; copyright: Patrimonio Nacional)



Figure 22. San Andrés de Arroyo, south transept, respond capital (G on plan) (Photo: author)



Figure 23. Sta Cruz de Ribas, chapterhouse, capital (Photo: author)



Figure 24. Villamayor de los Montes, Sta María la Real, northeast corner of crossing, pedestal and bases (Photo: author)



Figure 25. Villamayor de los Montes, Sta María la Real, entry arch of south chapel, capitals of north responds (Photo: author)



Figure 26. Cuenca cathedral, northeast crossing pier, capital frieze (Photo: author)



Figure 27. Braine, Saint-Yved, east side of south transept, pillar capital (Photo: author)

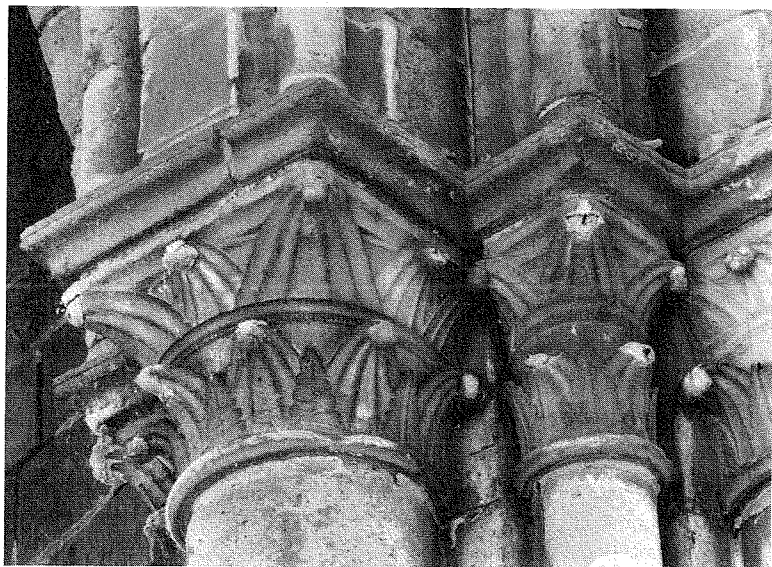


Figure 28. Braine, Saint-Yved, respond capitals between north chapels (Photo: author)

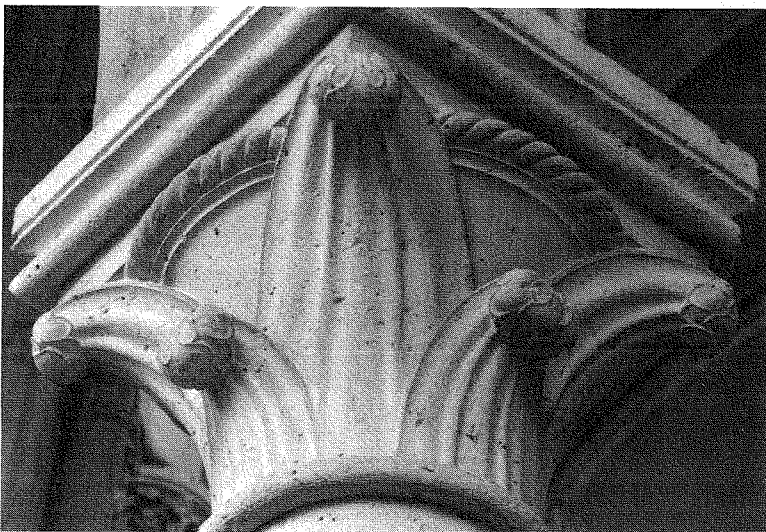


Figure 29. Soissons cathedral, west side of south transept, column capital (Photo: author)



Figure 30. Las Huelgas, Santa María la Real, entry arch of south transept chapel adjacent to main apse, capital of south respond (Photo: author; copyright: Patrimonio Nacional)



Figure 31. Las Huelgas, Santa María la Real, outer chapel of north transept, capital of corbeled respond on south wall (Photo: author; copyright: Patrimonio Nacional)



Figure 32. Saint-Leu-d'Esserent, ambulatory, pillar capital (Photo: author)



Figure 33. Noyon cathedral, north transept portal (Portail Saint-Pierre), left capitals (Photo: author)



Figure 34. Noyon cathedral, entry arch to north transept from north aisle of nave, north side, respond capitals (Photo: author)



Figure 35. Noyon cathedral, entry arch to north transept from north aisle of nave, south side, pier capitals (Photo: author)



Figure 36. Laon cathedral, interior of north transept facade, capitals of central cluster of responds (Photo: author)

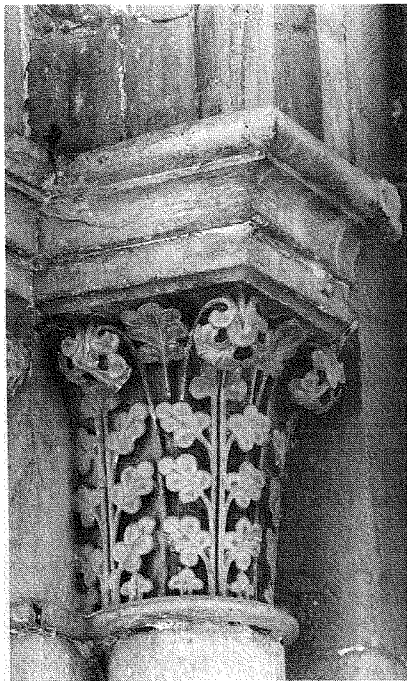


Figure 37. San Andrés de Arroyo, north chapel, respond capital (H on plan) (Photo: author)

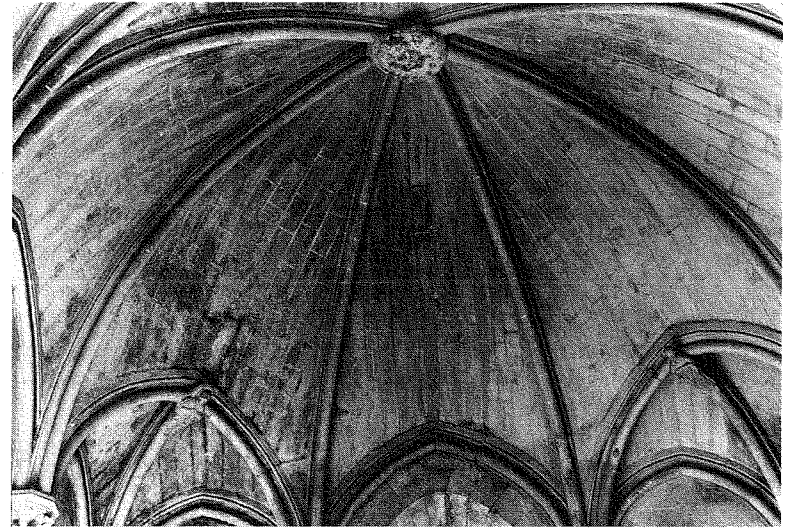
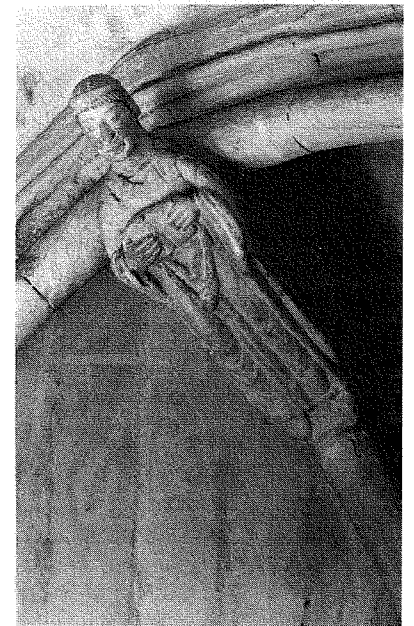


Figure 38. Las Huelgas, Santa María la Real, outer chapel of north transept, vault (Photo: author; copyright: Patrimonio Nacional)

Figure 39. Las Huelgas, Santa María la Real, outer chapel of north transept, southeast corner, figure carved on keystone of rib (Photo: author; copyright: Patrimonio Nacional)



THE CHURCH OF LAS HUELGAS AND ITS FOREIGN SOURCES

The place of Burgos cathedral in the history of high gothic architecture in Spain is well known, but the late dating of the church of Las Huelgas has obscured its creative role in the reception of an earlier generation of gothic forms and their adaptation to a Cistercian aesthetic. These foreign sources corroborate the early date of the church, and shift its place in the history of gothic art in Castile. The foreign character of the church had been recognized since Street sought to ascribe the Angevin vaults of the transept chapels (Fig. 38) to the patronage of Queen Leonor.¹⁷⁴ Lambert acknowledged their pedigree but stressed their isolation in a building that he assigned to a 'Franco-Burgundian' school whose roots lay in Laon, Soissons, and surrounding districts. To defend this filiation, he cited the sexpartite vault and alternating supports in the choir (Fig. 21), compared the crocket capitals with those of Saint-Yved at Braine (Figs. 27, 28), and likened the crossing vault to those of Braine and Laon cathedral.¹⁷⁵ For his part, Karge has added several features to relate the church and chapterhouse to Notre-Dame of Paris and buildings in its orbit.¹⁷⁶

The exterior elevation of the seven-sided apse, with its wall buttresses and two tiers of lancets, was a novelty in Castile and Leon, and it bears a startling resemblance to the choirs of Braine and several related buildings of the last quarter of the twelfth century.¹⁷⁷

174. George Edmund Street, *Some Account of Gothic Architecture in Spain*, ed. Georgiana Goddard King (London, 1914) 1:39.

175. Lambert, 197–198.

176. These features include the two-storied arrangement of the windows of the apse and choir which he compares with Larchant; the round windows in the clerestory of the nave; and the design of the chapterhouse piers with eight shafts ringing a round core as in the aisles of Notre-Dame: Karge, *Burgos*, 165.

177. These churches include Mons-en-Laonnois, Saint-Léger at Soissons and Saint-Michel-en-Thiérache, and the transept chapels (c. 1170–1185) at Laon cathedral: Jean-Pierre Ravaux, 'L'église de Mons-en-Laonnois', *Congrès archéologique (Aisne méridionale 1990)* 148 (1994) 2:457–476; Dany Sandron, *La cathédrale de Soissons* (Paris, 1998) 200–204; Pierre Hélot, 'L'abbatiale de Saint-Michel-en-Thiérache, modèle de Saint-Yved de Braine, et l'architecture gothique des 12e et 13e siècles', *Bulletin de la Commission royale des monuments et des sites*

In one of the earliest of these, the church of Mons-en-Laonnois, the two-storey interior of the semicircular apse and the sexpartite vault over the double bay of the choir tighten the links with Las Huelgas.¹⁷⁸ The builders at the nunnery, however, simplified the exterior elevation: the buttresses lack the clerestory passage and diminishing profile used at Braine and some related sites, and their moldings have been nearly eliminated.¹⁷⁹ More important, the overall plan of the choir and transepts bowed to Cistercian precedents, ultimately derived from the so-called bernardine plan, and gave little scope for the interpenetration of spaces or delightful variety of pillars and clustered shafts that characterized projects like the south transept of Soissons cathedral or the choir at Braine.¹⁸⁰

2 (1972) 15–43; Bruno Klein, *Saint-Yved in Braine und die Anfänge der hochgotischen Architektur in Frankreich* (Cologne, 1984) 92–106; William Clark, *Laon Cathedral. Architecture*, 1, Courtauld Institute Illustration Archives, Companion Text, 1 (London, 1983) 38–44, 52; William Clark, *Laon Cathedral. Architecture*, 2, *The Aesthetics of Space, Plan and Structure*, Courtauld Institute Illustration Archives, Companion Text, 2 (London, 1987) 45–49. The relative chronology and precise date of these buildings are still debated. Saint-Yved at Braine was completed by 1208, and Madeline H. Caviness argued that it was begun soon after 1176: 'Saint-Yved of Braine: the Primary Sources for Dating the Gothic Church', *Speculum* 59 (1984) 524–548. Anne Prache would delay the start at Braine to c. 1190, but accepts that it was preceded by the choir of Mons-en-Laonnois: 'Saint-Yved de Braine', *Congrès archéologique (Aisne méridionale 1990)* 148 (1994) 1:105–118.

178. John James has suggested that a two-storey interior elevation may have been intended at Braine and Saint-Léger at Soissons, and the choir of the latter also received a sexpartite vault: *The Template-Makers of the Paris Basin* (Leura, 1989) pp. 140, n. 44, and 167, n. 57.

179. For these buttresses: Sandron, *La cathédrale*, p. 196; Klein, 100–102.

180. Iberian abbeys offer several variations on the design of a deep, central chapel flanked on each side by a pair of smaller chapels enclosed by a continuous wall and opening onto a projecting transept. Huerta (begun in 1179), La Oliva (Navarre) and the Galician abbey of Meira, each have a semicircular apse and pairs of flanking rectangular chapels, while at Valbuena the inner pair of chapels flanking the semicircular apse were semicircular. The original choirs at Sobrado and La Espina adhered most closely to the bernardine plan, for all of their eastern chapels were rectangular: María del Carmen Muñoz Párraga, 'La iglesia', in

Decorative elements at Las Huelgas confirm the importance of these late twelfth-century French sources. The crocket capitals of the east end are distinguished by their tall proportions and the three or even four rows of leaves covering their baskets (Fig. 8). The unusual design recalls the two-tiered capitals of the pillars at Braine (Fig. 27), but there are fundamental differences.¹⁸¹ On capitals at Braine (Fig. 28) and their closest relatives in the south transept at Soissons (Fig. 29), a smaller number of leaves typically trace broad triangles, highlighting the flared profile of the piece. Sometimes, the carvers underscored the horizontal elements by adorning the necking of the capital, the rim of its bell, or a ridge between the tiers of foliage.¹⁸² At Las Huelgas, the upright leaves multiply and conceal the basket, and their sharp ridges and crisp outlines accentuate the vertical thrust of the capital (Fig. 17). On the finest ones, the intricately detailed tips display minutely carved layers of tiny lobed leaves, tumbling, turning and crisscrossing over the tightly curled buds (Fig. 30). On smaller capitals (Fig. 31), consoles and vault bosses, sprigs of these five-lobed leaves weave delicate rinceaux and latticework patterns. These resemble foliate scrolls on cornices and stringcourses at Braine and the cathedral of Soissons, but the fine detailing is rarer among capitals at those sites.¹⁸³

For comparable foliage on capitals, one must turn to other work of the 1170s and 1180s, such as the choir capitals of Canterbury cathedral and Saint-Leu-d'Esserent (Fig. 32) with their elaborate foliate globes, or the exquisitely carved foliate sprays of the north transept portal (Fig. 33), the Portail Saint-Pierre, of Noyon cathe-

Monjes y monasterios (as in n. 1), 113–115; Jose Carlos Valle Pérez, *La arquitectura cisterciense en Galicia* (La Coruña, 1982) 1:67–69, 154–155.

181. The exceptional character of the four rows of foliage at Braine was noted in Klein, pp. 50–51. The two-tiered capitals reappear at Longpont as well: Bruniel (as in n. 96), 68.

182. For examples and discussion of the relationships between Soissons and Braine: Sandron, *La cathédrale*, 74–78, 197–199; Klein, 80–81.

183. For the spiralling rinceaux: Caviness, pp. 530 (fig. 4), 543–544.

dral.¹⁸⁴ While these capitals differ in shape and design from the crocket capitals at Las Huelgas, their sculptors employed a similar foliate vocabulary and shared a taste for cloaking the entire basket with a mantle of foliage in contrast with the bare surfaces and prominent bells of simpler crocket capitals. The portal capitals at Noyon are particularly significant. Carved in clusters from huge blocks of stone, they are closely akin to capitals (Fig. 34) inside the cathedral, near the junction of the north aisle of the nave and the north transept. There, they stand alongside crocket capitals (Fig. 35) with terminals like those at Las Huelgas. Similar pieces dot the north transept (Fig. 36) and westernmost bays of the nave of Laon cathedral where the neighboring crocket capitals also boast unusually detailed terminals. Such a juxtaposition recurs at Las Huelgas where the rich decoration of the smaller carved elements (Fig. 31) resembles that on the Portail Saint-Pierre at Noyon and betrays the presence of highly skilled sculptors whose sophisticated treatment of foliage left its mark on the crocket capitals and would blossom in the exuberant decoration of San Andrés de Arroyo (Figs. 12, 37).

Together, the exterior elevation of the choir, its sexpartite vault, the crocket capitals and the more ornate forms of smaller capitals, bosses, and consoles all point towards works of c. 1170–1190 in an area to the north and east of Paris, centered on Noyon, Soissons, and Laon. These sources account as well for another distinctive

184. For the Canterbury capitals and their relationship with Saint-Leu-d'Esserent and Laon cathedral: Roslin Mair, 'The Choir Capitals of Canterbury Cathedral', *Medieval Art and Architecture at Canterbury before 1220*, *Transactions of the British Archaeological Association* 5 (1982) 56–66. These details in the precisely dated capitals of 1175–1178 at Canterbury have been compared with motifs on capitals of the choir arcade at Saint-Remi in Reims: Jean Bony, 'French Influences on the Origins of English Architecture', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 12 (1949) 8; James, pp. 46–47, 52–53. For Saint-Leu-d'Esserent: Dieter Kimpel and Robert Suckale, *Die gotische Architektur in Frankreich 1130–1270* (Munich, 1985) 144–145; Maryse Bideault and Claudine Lautier, *Ile-de-France gothique 1: Les églises de la vallée de l'Oise et du Beauvaisis* (Paris, 1987) 318–331. The pillar capitals certainly appear to have been recut during Selmersheim's restoration. On the Portail Saint-Pierre at Noyon: Charles Seymour Jr., *Notre-Dame of Noyon in the Twelfth Century. A Study in the Early Development of Gothic Architecture* (New York, 1968) p. 170, fig. 111.

feature of the choir of Las Huelgas: the fine dogtooth ornament that hoods the lower windows of the apse and lines several of the responds of the choir. Although more characteristic of English monuments, it adorns a molded arch of the north transept portal at Laon, studs the ribs of the choir vaults at Mons-en-Laonnois, and appears in other churches whose decoration relates them to the cathedrals of Laon and Noyon.

The cited monuments offer further support for placing the commencement of the church at Las Huelgas in the 1190s. The Angevin vaults of the transept chapels (Fig. 38) are consistent with this dating, and they illuminate the complexities of the relationship between the church and its foreign sources.¹⁸⁵ Gracefully proportioned arches with figures gliding upon their keystones (Fig. 39) span the eastern corners of the rectangular chapels, acting as squinches beneath the polygonal canopies above. Without the figured keystones, such arches were employed before 1203 beneath the octagonal vault of the square bay of the west porch of the abbey church of Saint-Florent-lès-Saumur, and the same method was used in the pilgrims' chapel there—now the parish church of Saint-Barthélemy—to erect a polygonal vault over a rectangular chapel.¹⁸⁶ By the 1220s, this simple device was subsumed by the elaborate vaults with multiple ribs that became a hallmark of Angevin buildings.¹⁸⁷ One of the most refined and complex examples, the choir of the abbey church of Saint-Serge, is often named as the key model for this family of buildings.¹⁸⁸ Proposed dates for its construction

185. For some of the parallels: Ludwig Schreiner, 'Die iberische Rezeption des Style Plantagenet', *Kunstchronik* 21 (1968) 374.

186. Yves Blomme, *Anjou gothique* (Paris, 1998) 328–332; for the attribution of the galilee to Abbot Maynerius (1176–1203): André Mussat, *Le style gothique de l'ouest de la France (xiie–xiiiie siècles)* (Paris, 1963) 194–195, 225–227. For Saint-Barthélémy: Mussat, p. 340; Blomme, pp. 332–333. There, figured keystones decorate some of the principal arches and ribs.

187. For the development of these vaults: Mussat, 331–365; Blomme, 16–19.

188. Saint-Serge: Mussat, 223–232; Blomme, 16, 86–92.

range over the first quarter of the thirteenth century, and a precise chronology for other members of the group remains elusive.¹⁸⁹

The vaults at Las Huelgas adhere to the simple pattern of the early vaults of the porch at Saint-Florent-lès-Saumur.¹⁹⁰ Only one rib, springing from the corner of the chapel, joins the diagonal arch at the figured keystone, and no additional ribs spring from these keystones. At Saint-Serge and related buildings, three ribs, two of which rise from the figured keystones of wall ribs, typically converge upon the figured keystone, and that keystone, in turn, supports another rib.¹⁹¹ In addition, the arches spanning the corners of the chapels normally meet at the center of the end wall, and their junction marks the springing of the ridge rib that is crucial to the overall design of the more complex vaults.¹⁹² By contrast, the diagonal arches at Las Huelgas do not meet, but frame two of the three eastern sides of a polygonal vault.

Of course, the simple formula at Las Huelgas could be merely a concession to cistercian austerity or an adaptation to the limited setting offered by the two-bay chapels opening onto the taller transept. Karge, however, observed that the vaults most closely resemble those of the Hospitallers' chapel at Amboise, which served pilgrims to Compostela, and he added the chapels of other hospices in the region as evidence of the continuing vitality of the pilgrimage

189. For a date in the first decade of the thirteenth century: Jane Hayward, 'The Choir Windows of Saint-Serge and their Glazing Atelier', *Gesta* 15 (1976) 257–258. For the traditional date of 1215–1225: Mussat, 229–232.

190. Octagonal vaults, like those of Saint-Florent, appear in several towers as well as in the cemetery chapel of Sainte-Catherine at Fontevraud and the chapter house of Sainte-Radegonde at Poitiers, perhaps of 1210–1220: Mussat, 265–266, 349–352.

191. Examples include the abbeys of Asnières and La Boissière, the churches of Crosnières, Fougeré, Juigné-sur-Loire, Mouliherne, Pontigné, Précigné, Resigné, Seiches-sur-le-Loir, and the Hospitallers' chapels of Saulgé-l'Hôpital and Saumur: Blomme, pp. 134–141, 145–153, 188–192, 211–217, 247–251, 259–262, 277–285, 308–315.

192. *Ibid.*, 16–17.

road as a conduit for artistic exchange.¹⁹³ Most recently, he has underscored the uncertain date of the Angevin chapels and proposed that they could represent parallel experiments within the Angevin school.¹⁹⁴ Their significance grows when one recalls the close ties between Las Huelgas and the adjacent Hospital del Rey. One can only guess at the character of its architecture, but thirteenth-century writers lavished praise on its buildings and linked their construction to that of the nunnery that held authority over it.¹⁹⁵ If Angevin artists directed the nearby project, it would explain their availability to intervene in a single phase of the construction of the church, and it casts light on the use of similar designs in the Angevin hospices.

From this standpoint, the mystery surrounding the genesis of the remarkably innovative design of Saint-Serge becomes particularly intriguing. Mussat acknowledged the absence of local precedents for this highly original work, and he looked to the earlier porch at Saint-Florent and the choir of Saint-Maurice de Chinon, though conceding that the latter might be contemporary with Saint-Serge.¹⁹⁶ Might the experiences of Angevin craftsmen at a site as prestigious as Las Huelgas—and perhaps at the Hospital del Rey itself—have catalyzed the development of these vaults in the very lands from which they came?¹⁹⁷ After all, the strapwork

193. Mussat (pp. 337, 340) had noted that this design of the vaults at Amboise was unusual among the Angevin examples. Karge also mentioned the more complex vaults of the chapels at Saumur and Saulgé-l'Hôpital: *Burgos* (as in n. 100), pp. 152–153, 159–161, láms. 169–170.

194. Karge, 'Zisterzienserinnenabtei' (as in n. 1), p. 33.

195. Fernández Valverde (as in n. 40), VII:xxxiii, p. 256; Puyol (as in n. 63), 409–410. For some references to the remains still visible in the nineteenth century: Torres Balbás, 'Las yeserías' (as in n. 1), p. 231. A recent dissertation which I have not been able to consult deals with the remains of the architecture of the Hospital del Rey: Laura Good Morelli, 'Medieval Pilgrims' Hospices on the Road to Santiago de Compostela', Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1998.

196. Mussat, 225–229.

197. The issue of the reciprocal impact of developments and experiences in Spain on France and northern Europe in the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries remains uncharted territory. For some observations on Spanish features in the architectural decoration of the western bays of Senlis Cathedral: James (as in n. 178), pp. 58–59.

and lobed squinches of the vaults of the Capilla de la Asunción attest to the kinds of Mudejar works that foreign craftsmen would have encountered at this remarkable complex of royal buildings, and the decorators of that chapel had themselves transformed a rectangular space to support the octagonal cupola.¹⁹⁸ It possibly is farfetched, and certainly speculative, to imagine that such Mudejar works inspired experiments that ultimately gave rise to Saint-Serge and its family of buildings, but the suggestion itself is a salutary reminder that Las Huelgas must be understood less as the product of a variety of French influences than as an important building in its own right and an international center integrated into the highest circles of European patronage and artistic exchange.

Ongoing exchanges with French craftsmen and the continuing arrival of new talent would account for Karge's astute observations of changes in the design of the choir in the course of construction, for nothing at Las Huelgas suggests a dilatory effort.¹⁹⁹ Within the overall homogeneity of the decoration, the simplification of the capitals on the west piers of the crossing, and the failure to carve those of the nave or to complete the moldings of the crossing arches attest to a rapid—even pressured—drive to ready the building for at least a temporary roof. The interruption that did take place before the vaulting of the nave and aisles in the 1230s

198. The octagonal vault of the Capilla de la Asunción has been compared with that of the cemetery chapel of Sainte-Catherine at Fontevraud: Sánchez Ameijeiras (as in n. 1), p. 95. Generally dated c. 1215–1225, it is one of the Angevin examples whose vaults are related to Saint-Florent and closely connected to those of the transept chapels at Las Huelgas: Mussat, 227, 351–352; Blomme, pp. 186–187.

199. He points out the blocking of the windows of the western bays of the choir by the flanking chapels, and the addition of shafts beneath the ribs of the sexpartite vault over the double bay preceding the apse: Karge, 'Zisterzienserinnenabtei', 30. The foliate decoration of the crocket capitals beneath the corbeled supports of the choir vault (Fig. 21) suggests a somewhat later date within the first campaign.

makes most sense if the first campaign were concentrated in the first decade of the century and, perhaps, brought hastily to an end with the deaths of its royal founders in 1214.²⁰⁰ The minor changes at Las Huelgas and the blending of Angevin features with others of northern France have little of the tentative, patchwork quality of other Spanish buildings of the period. Here, there is no question of foreign craftsmen awkwardly grafting gothic forms onto an earlier structure, turning matters over to a local workforce unfamiliar with their designs, or struggling to solve problems in isolation from centers of ongoing experimentation.²⁰¹ Instead, the creative synthesis of forms is underscored by their subtle accommodation to the sober canons of the Order's aesthetic.

The elegance of decorative details like the figured keystones of the delicate vaults of the transept chapels (Figs. 38, 39) has been adduced as a measure of the building's departure from cistercian norms.²⁰² This, however, ignores the more widespread and visible tendency to suppress the moldings of arches, to simplify those of ribs, and to substitute corbeled supports for responds, all within the context of a design that put aside the bold, spatial experiments dear to its builders, and embraced the clearly defined spaces and mural boundaries of Cistercian churches.²⁰³ The resulting plainness of the sheer walls of the tall, narrow transept (Fig. 40) bears more comparison with cistercian elevations like that of Poblet, for example, than with the rich articulation of the arcades and piers of the early gothic choir and transepts of Cuenca cathedral (Fig. 41).

200. From photographs of the aisles, Lambert had assigned the vaults of the nave and aisles to a second campaign on the basis of their misalignment with the transverse arches: Lambert (as in n. 1), 199; Karge, *Burgos* (as in n. 100), 165. The rapid pace proposed is consistent with the comments of Bruzelius (as in n. 96) on the speed of construction at sites well financed by powerful patrons: p. 40, n. 175.

201. One thinks of the relationship between the choirs at Avila cathedral and Vezelay, or the layering of campaigns in the romanesque cathedral of Sigüenza: Lambert, 54–55, 183–195.

202. Torres Balbás, *Arquitectura* (as in n. 1), p. 103; Muñoz Párraga, 'Iglesia' (as in n. 180), p. 144.

203. Cp. the observations of Bruzelius, p. 14–15.

Even the earliest work at Las Huelgas, the opulent decoration of Las Claustrillas, acknowledged Cistercian traditions by rigorously barring the ample figural repertoire of its accomplished sculptors. Indeed, it went further, for it asserted its aniconic character through the architectural motifs conspicuously displayed on piers (Fig. 3) where the figural programs of earlier cloisters, like that at Silos, had been anchored. Such concern is all the more noteworthy in a project begun outside of the formal structures of the Order, and it attests to the patrons' determination to establish an affiliation, and their understanding of what that entailed. The result was a remarkable ensemble of buildings that brought into harmony the magnificence of royal patronage, the austere ideals of a reforming Order, and the exciting novelty of a new architectural style. For there must be no mistake: in Castile at the end of the twelfth century, the tall and slender canon of proportions used throughout the east end, the luminosity of the tiered lancets of the apse, the delicate lines of the canopies of the transept chapels, and the deeply webbed vaults of the choir announced the dawn of a new style.

LAS HUEL GAS AND THE EARLY GOTHIC CATHEDRALS OF CASTILE

Restoring Las Huelgas to its place as a creative center of international importance calls for a fresh look at its relationships with the cathedrals of Old Castile and their implications for dating the church.²⁰⁴ After all, these were the buildings that led Torres Balbás, a staunch advocate of the late chronology, to declare the texts concerning Las Huelgas to be completely at odds with the artistic evidence.²⁰⁵ But what was that artistic evidence? Lambert had assigned Las Huelgas to what he termed a Franco-Burgundian school; in Castile, this group included Cuenca cathedral, the upper parts of the choir and transepts of Sigüenza cathedral, the

204. Cp. Karge's remarks on the historiography of Castilian gothic, 'Zisterzienserinnenabtei' (as in n. 1), 13–14.

205. Torres Balbás, *Arquitectura*, 97–98.

Cistercian refectory at Huerta, and the later work on the choir and dependencies of the cathedral of Burgo de Osma.²⁰⁶ For the French author, a tight network of ecclesiastical patronage and family ties bound these buildings together, and he charted the itineraries and careers of prelates like the archbishop of Toledo, Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada, or the abbot of Huerta and bishop of Sigüenza, Martín de Finojosa. Indeed, in the opening pages of his study, he presented this cast of characters and laid out his argument for the dominant role of such clerics in spreading a gothic style that, at first, contrasted sharply with what he characterized as the royal and aristocratic taste for the luxuriant forms of Islamic art.²⁰⁷ In many respects, it is an image of clerical protagonism lifted right from the chronicle of Bishop Lucas of Tui himself.²⁰⁸

Given his view of the centrality of ecclesiastical—not royal—patronage and his vision of a fraternity of university-educated prelates renewing and modernizing the architecture of the Spanish church, it is not surprising that the royal nunnery of Las Huelgas faded to the background of Lambert's narrative. In fact, he cited its Mudéjar chapels as evidence of royal preferences for the courtly luxury of Islamic art, and, within his chapter on the 'Franco-Burgundian' group, he turned to the church and convent only after discussing the cathedral of Cuenca, the refectory at Huerta and even the desultory efforts to complete and vault the cathedral of Sigüenza after numberless campaigns.²⁰⁹ It is hard to avoid concluding that Lambert's very limited access to Las Huelgas prevented him—lit-

206. Lambert, 159–201, 259–266.

207. *Ibid.*, pp. 17–26.

208. In the more readily available romance version: Puyol (as in n. 63), cap. 86–87, pp. 419–420. He prefaces his account of the bishops' building activities with a schematic view of the duties of kings, prelates and peasants: *Pelean los reyes de España por la fee, y en cada parte vençen; los obispos y los abbades y clerezia hedifican monesterios, y los labradores, syn miedo, labran los campos, crian ganados y gozan de paz y no ha quién los espante.*

209. Lambert, p. 19: *La faveur des rois et des grands met à la mode une autre sorte d'art mudéjar, art de cour et de luxe celui-là, et importé de toutes pièces d'Andalousie A Burgos, au coeur de la Vieille Castille, on construit au monastère royal de Las Huelgas plusieurs chapelles qui sont des oeuvres purement arabes.*

erally—from seeing its central importance and properly assessing its relationship to the Castilian cathedrals.

Even a cursory review of these buildings suggests that Lambert's notion of the place of Las Huelgas within this group needs revision. To the extent that the cathedrals of Sigüenza and Burgo de Osma have any relationship with the nunnery, they are plainly derivative. The royal chancellor, Bishop Juan Domínguez (1231–1240), is credited with beginning the gothic cathedral of Burgo de Osma, and Lambert cited Cuenca and Las Huelgas as sources for the two-storey elevation and the choir flanked by two chapels on each transept arm.²¹⁰ Rather than betoken a workshop connection, however, these ought to be seen as the pragmatic choices of a provincial see that foresaw the financial pressures that would soon frustrate completion of the project.²¹¹ For a more accurate understanding of the artistic context for the campaign, one may examine the earliest intact section of the cathedral, the northernmost chapel of the transept and the remains of the chancel arch of the neighboring chapel.²¹² The shape of the capitals, their mantle of spiky foliage and the rich complexity of their angled impostes (Fig. 42) look to Burgos cathedral.²¹³ At Osma, at least, Las Huelgas provided at most a distant model by the 1230s.

210. *Ibid.*, 262–264. The attribution to Bishop Juan is based on the contemporary chronicle of Lucas of Tui; Torres Balbás also pointed out connections between the piers at Burgo de Osma and those of the crossing and nave at Cuenca: *Arquitectura* (as in n. 1), 77–78. How actively involved this courtier on the rise—a candidate for the see of León in 1237 and elevated to that of Burgos in 1240—was in the construction of the provincial cathedral is another matter. For his career and engagement at court: Peter Linehan, *The Spanish Church and the Papacy in the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1971) 108–109, 194–195; Karge, *Burgos* (as in n. 100), p. 28.

211. By 1275, the diocese sought to raise money for the cathedral by preaching the cult of Bishop Pedro of Osma in the neighboring dioceses: Lambert, 261.

212. This was reportedly dedicated in 1235, following the canonization of Saint Dominic: Lambert, 261; Torres Balbás, *Arquitectura*, 78. The remaining chapels of the transepts fell victim to the eighteenth-century expansion of the choir.

213. There are close comparisons with capitals of the eastern piers and responds of the nave and aisles at Burgos executed under Bishop Juan in the 1240s: Karge, *Burgos*, pp. 106–109, figs. 70, 71.

In a different way, the cathedral of Sigüenza points to a similar conclusion. Building began with construction of the lower parts of the eastern chapels and transepts between 1156 and 1169, but the enormously complex fabric presents several superposed campaigns that attest to the chronic difficulties that beset the ambitiously conceived enterprise.²¹⁴ Lambert related the clerestory elevation, sexpartite vaults and corbeled supports of the choir and transepts to the refectory at Huerta, and Torres Balbás stressed the importance of Cuenca as a model as well.²¹⁵ To date this effort, Lambert cited a papal bull of 1226, referring to the recent reconstruction of the church and the need for funds to continue the work.²¹⁶ This dating, however, would simply make the work at Sigüenza a derivative of the refectory at Huerta without any direct implications for Las Huelgas.

Recently, María del Carmen Muñoz has argued plausibly that the vaulting of the choir was underway in 1271 when a letter concerning the chapter's election of Bishop Gonzalo Pérez reported that it was held in the cloister since construction was underway in the church.²¹⁷ The later dates merit serious consideration. After all, the spacious refectory at nearby Huerta would have remained a suggestive model for the vaulting of the ample bays of the transept and choir at Sigüenza long after its construction, and the squat crocket capitals with their thick bulbous terminals seem the tired

214. Dates for the first campaign are provided by an episcopal donation to the canons in 1156 that reserved revenues for the fabric until the completion of the chapels and crossing, and an inscription of 1169 or 1170 on a doorway in the southeast corner of the transept: Lambert, 192; María del Carmen Muñoz Párraga, 'Sigüenza: catedral', *España gótica* 13: *Castilla-La Mancha* 2: *Toledo, Guadalajara y Madrid*, edd. Aurea de la Morena Bartolomé, María del Carmen Muñoz Párraga et al. (Madrid, 1998) 181–182. I have not been able to consult the fuller study on which this article is based: María del Carmen Muñoz Párraga, *La catedral de Sigüenza (Las fábricas románicas y góticas)* (Guadalajara, 1987).

215. Lambert, 182, 194; Torres Balbás, *Arquitectura*, 59.

216. Lambert, 194.

217. By 1282, documents indicate that the choir was in use again: Muñoz Párraga, 'Sigüenza', 196.

repetition of what had become a standard type.²¹⁸ In the clerestory of the choir, they accompany capitals decorated with a later generation of foliate and figural sculpture (Fig. 43), and the erratic pace of work may have delayed the placement of sculpture. In fact, the character of this layered building, constructed in fits and starts for well over a century, makes it likely that it was periodically on the receiving end of developments at other sites where resources were marshaled more purposefully.

The most important connections with Las Huelgas are in the splendid refectory at Huerta and the cathedral of Cuenca. Lambert observed that the refectory was erected in two campaigns, the second of which raised its height and covered it with sexpartite ribbed vaults. He associated each with successive donations for construction in 1215 and 1223.²¹⁹ Thus, its artistic relationship with Las Huelgas—most evident in the sexpartite vaults, corbeled supports and decorative sculpture of the second campaign—would be entirely consistent with a campaign at the nunnery that concluded in

218. The refectory was imitated at the Cistercian monastery of Iranzu in Navarre c. 1270: Artemio Martínez, Gema Palomo, and José Luis Senra, 'Refectorio y cocina de Santa María la Real de Iranzu. Un modelo tipológico original', *Principio de Viana* 56 (1995) 275–283. The crocket capitals at Sigüenza differ in shape and structure from those at Las Huelgas and lack their detailing; they have more in common with the numerous pieces in the refectory and cloister at Huerta.

219. Lambert, 175–182; Torres Balbás, *Arquitectura*, 103–104; Martínez et al., 'Refectorio y cocina', 278. The gifts by Martín Muñoz and his son Diego Martínez, prominent members of the Finojosa family, are known from an eighteenth-century manuscript history of the abbey, *Cronología de los Abades de Huerta*, by Córdón. It also reports a sizeable gift of Archbishop Rodrigo Jiménez of Toledo for construction of the dormitory in 1223, confirming extensive works on the dependencies at that time: Concepción Abad Castro, 'Dormitorio: Santa María de Huerta (Soria)', *Monjes y monasterios* (as in n. 1), 235. Before his death in 1206, Nuño Sánchez, Martín Muñoz's father, had made a large gift for the construction of the north wing of the cloister where he was buried in front of the refectory: Carlos de la Casa Martínez and Elías Terés Navarro, *Monasterio cisterciense de Santa María de Huerta* (Santa María de Huerta, 1982) 92. Recently, Concepción Abad Castro has suggested that the refectory was not vaulted until later in the century, arguing only that such a project was unlikely to be undertaken before the completion of the church: 'La panda del refectorio', *Monjes y monasterios*, 243–244.

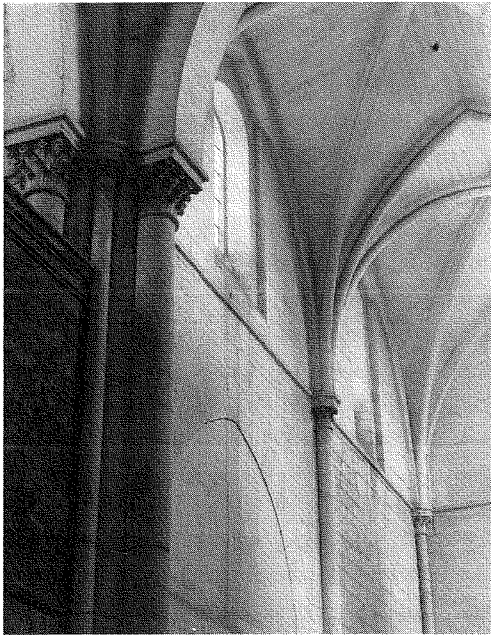


Figure 40. Las Huelgas, Santa María la Real, west elevation of north transept (Photo: author; copyright: Patrimonio Nacional)

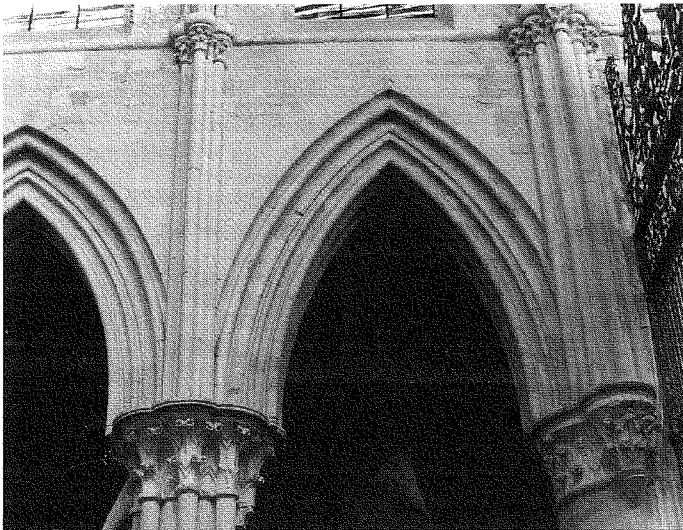


Figure 41. Cuenca cathedral, north arcade of choir (Photo: author)



Figure 42. Burgo de Osma, cathedral, ambulatory, formerly entry arch of north chapel of choir, south side, capitals (Photo: author; rights reserved: Cathedral of Burgo de Osma)

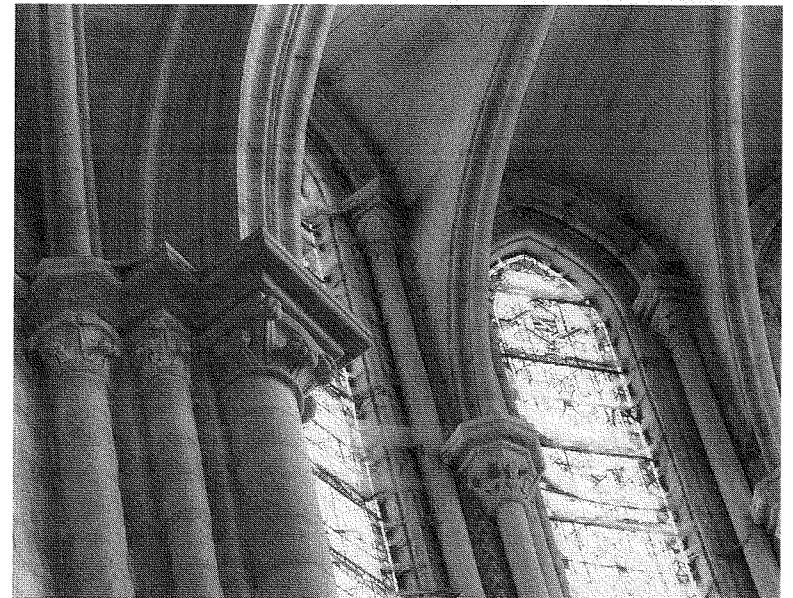


Figure 43. Sigüenza cathedral, clerestory of apse (Photo: author)



Figure 44. Cuenca cathedral, interior of south transept facade, southeast corner (Photo: author)

the second decade of the thirteenth century. The decoration of the refectory actually has the greatest affinity with that of the aisles at Las Huelgas, although the Cistercian builders at Huerta may have simply eschewed the more finely detailed forms of the capitals of the crossing and eastern chapels at Las Huelgas.

Cuenca cathedral presents the most complex problems.²²⁰ Changes in design and decoration mark several successive campaigns. The first saw achievement of a polygonal apse with wall buttresses; an echelon of eastern chapels; a choir with two double bays, alternating supports (Fig. 41), sexpartite vaults, a two-storey elevation and round-arched clerestory windows; and projecting transepts with facades pierced by rose windows and lancets. Next, the transepts received compressed sexpartite vaults, and the lower storey of the nave and the aisles, lit by round windows, was constructed. Subsequently, the nave was completed with flying buttresses and round clerestory windows behind a traceried passageway, elaborately adorned with standing angels and lavish decorative sculpture. Erection of the west facade and crossing tower concluded the project.

The history of the site provides a framework for dating the building. Alfonso VIII conquered the stronghold in 1177, and is said to have dedicated a church to the Virgin in the former mosque.²²¹ The conquest was celebrated in the calendar clauses of chancery documents for more than five years, and, in the prologue of its royal charter or *fuero*, the town was called Alphonsopolis

220. Lampérez y Romea (as in n. 1), 3:38–42; Lambert, 159–174; Torres Balbás, *Arquitectura*, 50, 53–54, 57–58; Karge, *Burgos* (as in n. 100), 165, 184–187; Welander, 'Cuenca' (as in n. 170), 252–254; María Angeles Monedero Bermejo, 'Cuenca: Catedral', *España gótica 12: Castilla-La Mancha 1: Cuenca, Ciudad Real y Albacete*, edd. Aurea de la Morena Bartolomé and José María de Azcárate Ristori (Madrid, 1997) 95–111.

221. For a thirteenth-century account of the conquest: Fernández Valverde (as in n. 40), VII:xxvi, pp. 248–249. Lambert, 160 and 294, cites the eighteenth-century writer, Ascensio de Morales (Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, MSS 13.071, 13.072), for the rededication of the mosque. These sources, like the documents and manuscripts of the cathedral archive, remain almost wholly unpublished except for the royal charters.

and described as his preferred city.²²² Pope Lucius III approved the restoration of the see and the constitution of the cathedral chapter with a set of bulls in 1182 and 1183.²²³ Throughout his reign, Alfonso VIII was generous with the see, praising the new establishment in unusually warm terms.²²⁴ By the second decade of the thirteenth century, the schemes of the archbishop of Toledo, Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada, and his allies to dismember the diocese and seize some of its income show that its wealth had grown rapidly, and disputes over rents between the bishop and the diocesan clergy could reflect the pressures of a building campaign.²²⁵

The royal diplomas and other contemporary documents are silent about construction of the cathedral until the town council made a ten-year grant of tithe revenues to the bishop in 1231.²²⁶ Modern authors, however, have relied upon questionable accounts of earlier consecrations. Julio González quoted the annals of García Sánchez for a notice of the dedication of the main altar on 15 August 1196, and there are shadowy reports of a consecration during the brief tenure of Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada as bishop of

222. As an example of these calendar clauses, '*anno quinto ex quo serenissimus rex prefatus Adefonsus Concham a crucis Christi inimicis uiriliter liberauit, et eam fidei christiane subiugauit*': González, *El Reino* (as in n. 3), 2:632, doc. 366. The latest is a document of 7 November 1182, one of the first of the new chancellor, Gutierre Fernández, who subsequently dropped the reference: *Ibid.*, pp. 682–683, doc. 395. For the town charter, the defining role of the conquest of Cuenca in the reign of Alfonso VIII and the consequent development of his image as defender of Christianity: Linehan, *History* (as in n. 3), pp. 290–295.

223. Philippus Jaffé, *Regesta pontificum romanorum* (Leipzig, 1888) 2:448–449, 456; nos. 14774, 14796, 14797, 14895.

224. A royal diploma of 1183 described the newly approved see thus: '*... pontificali ecclesie beate Marie in Concensi ciuitate de nouo fundate, quam, cum post diuturnam obsessionem et laboriosum et anuum certamen, Domino tandem miserante et operante, ab infidelibus adquisierim, in specialem et matrem et filiam inter ceteras regni mei ecclesias elegi, et specialiter dotare intendo*', González, *El Reino*, 2:713, doc. 411.

225. For these affairs: Linehan, *The Spanish Church* (as in n. 210), pp. 12–15.

226. Welander, 'Cuenca', 252–254; González, *El Reino*, 1:651.

Osma in 1208.²²⁷ Later documents demonstrate that the project continued well past the middle of the thirteenth century. In 1271, King Alfonso X confirmed an earlier privilege of Ferdinand III to the masons who quarried stone and transported it to the cathedral.²²⁸ In 1284, Sancho IV specified the number of masons under the exemption and Monedero has interpreted this plausibly as a response to the completion of the cathedral and the prosecution of more modest efforts on its dependencies.²²⁹

With such uncertainty in the documentary record, it is not surprising that there is no consensus about the date of a building whose architecture was so utterly new in Castile. Proposed dates for its start range from the last two decades of the twelfth century to the 1220s.²³⁰ Most authors have assigned the changes in the upper parts of the transept and the aisles of the nave to the 1220s, while opinions have varied on the pace of later work on the clerestory of the nave, the west facade and the crossing tower. For these, the clear connections with late campaigns in Burgos cathedral—consecrated in 1260—and with the cathedral of Burgo de Osma provide key points of reference, although the precise rela-

227. *Ibid.*, 1:650. Claims of a consecration by Bishop Julian likely were deduced from the mistaken assertion in the annals of García Sánchez that he was elevated to the see in 1196. In fact, he became bishop between August 1197 and April 1198, and last appeared in royal documents in January 1208: *Ibid.*, 1:650, 3:172, 174–175, 433–434, docs. 662, 664, 816. For Bishop Rodrigo's alleged role: Lampérez y Romea (as in n. 1), 3:38; Lambert (as in n. 1), 160–161. Rodrigo appears briefly as bishop elect of Osma in the autumn of 1208 before his elevation to the see of Toledo in January 1209: González, *El Reino*, 3:446–448, 462–463, docs. 824, 834.

228. Lambert, 162; Welander, 'Cuenca', 252–254.

229. Monedero Bermejo (as in n. 220), p. 97.

230. The reported consecration of 1196 has been accepted as evidence that the choir was ready for use (Monedero Bermejo, pp. 96–97, 103) or at least well underway (Karge, 'Zisterzienserinnenabtei' [as in n. 1], pp. 33–34, n. 69). Welander rejected all the references to consecrations as untrustworthy and postponed the start of the project to the 1220s: 'Cuenca', pp. 252–254. Others have placed the construction of the choir in the first two decades of the thirteenth century: Lampérez y Romea, 3:38–39; Lambert, p. 161; Torres Balbás, *Arquitectura* (as in n. 1), pp. 53–54.

tionship among these buildings has yet to be determined.²³¹

Cuenca cathedral's links with Las Huelgas frequently have been asserted but never argued in detail. Lambert was most specific in postulating the arrival of a new architect in the 1220s whose work in the upper parts of the transept and the lower storey of the nave and aisles linked Cuenca with Huerta, Sigüenza, and Las Huelgas.²³² In fact, the first campaign at Cuenca and the church at Las Huelgas share a common vocabulary of dogtooth ornament, shaft rings, impost profiles and capitals with three tiers of crockets. One odd detail hints at a closer connection: fine nook shafts flank the lancets of the transept facade at Cuenca (Fig. 44) and the clerestory windows of the choir of Las Huelgas (Fig. 21); their capitals neither bear imposts nor carry a molded or recessed arch. An outer order frames each window with a molded arch, springing from a second pair of shafts at Las Huelgas and from consoles in the form of capitals at Cuenca.

More pervasive than such elusive hints of an exchange of craftsmen is the evidence that the builders of the choir and transepts at Cuenca, like those at Las Huelgas, were familiar with the architecture of Laon, Soissons, and related buildings of the late twelfth century.²³³ The choir of Soissons cathedral, for example, supplies one source for the diminution of the wall buttresses and for the pillars with a single engaged column beneath the bundled colonnettes that carry the ribs and formerets. For its part, Laon cathedral provides models for the round-arched windows of the clerestory, the alternating supports and bundled shafts

231. Karge, *Burgos* (as in n. 100), pp. 184–187. Lambert, p. 161, stressed the connections between the bishops of Cuenca and Burgos but of the three prelates—Gonzalo Ibáñez Palomeque, Mateo Reinal and Gonzalo Gudiel—whom he named, only Bishop Mateo Reinal (1247–1257) served as bishop of Burgos (1257–1259) and the significance of his translation to Burgos remains unclear: Karge, *Burgos*, pp. 28–29. Lampérez y Romea, 3:39, dated the completion of the building to 1250. The latest date, c. 1280, is offered by Welander, 'Cuenca', pp. 252–244. The suggestion that the entire nave, except for the west facade was completed by the 1220s cannot be sustained: Monedero Bermejo, pp. 97–98.

232. Lambert, p. 161.

233. *Ibid.*, pp. 164–170, identified and discussed the comparisons with Soissons, Laon and Braine.

in the choir, and the arrangement of the rose and lancets of the transept facades. On the interior facade of the north transept at Saint-Michel-en-Thiérache, the recessed lancets are hooded by molded arches springing from consoles, as in the south transept at Cuenca.²³⁴ In addition, the clerestory of the choir at Saint-Michel shares a curious detail with Cuenca: one side of the wall ribs rests on consoles carved with human heads.²³⁵

This architectural pedigree suggests that the choir at Cuenca was underway by the turn of the century, and it substantiates the circumstantial evidence of the generous patronage of Alfonso VIII and his manifest interest in the newly established see of the city whose reconquest was so celebrated. The distance between Cuenca and Las Huelgas precluded the sharing of a workforce and limited the artistic exchanges between them in the earliest stages of work. This helps to explain why, for instance, the fine detailing of capitals, consoles, and bosses at Las Huelgas has no counterparts in the choir at Cuenca. For their part, the builders at Las Huelgas imbued their church with the spirit of cistercian austerity, allowing the exquisite detailing of minor sculptural elements, but rejecting the more ostentatious display of the richly articulated supports and moldings that delighted the builders at Cuenca.

Common sources—more than direct connections—can explain the perceived similarities between the two buildings, but the evident differences between them do not rule out the possibility that a single architect in the king's service provided some direction at both sites. Royal documents of the late twelfth century from both Castile and León yield circumstantial evidence of royal support for foreign craftsmen responsible for some of the most innovative projects of the period: Garsion at Sto Domingo de la Calzada, Mateo

234. Klein (as in n. 177), pp. 136–140, figs. 36–37, 39.

235. *Ibid.*, fig. 35. Curiously, the arrangement seems more natural at Cuenca where it conforms with the asymmetrical webbing of the sexpartite vaults.

at Santiago, Fruchel at Avila.²³⁶ The shadowy figure of Magister Ricardus may not sustain such weight, but what is most important is that Cuenca and Las Huelgas are bound together less by this or that molding, than by their intimate association with the crown at a time when a new vision of Castile's place in Iberia and Europe was taking shape, and a new dynasty of European importance was, literally, being born. Both buildings were highly original projects, novel in their settings and realized at new sites—unconstrained by earlier churches—of special significance to the monarchy of King Alfonso VIII and Queen Leonor. In a way, their innovative and foreign architecture expresses a coming of age in the reign of these monarchs. The conquest of Cuenca was emblematic of the king's assumption of leadership in the struggle with the Muslims and his consequent pretensions to hegemony over the Iberian kingdoms. The queen's interest in Las Huelgas and the establishment of a dynastic pantheon there made that foundation emblematic as well of the assertion of a place for Castile in Europe through the dynastic politics in which the queen and the couple's children played a crucial role.

Lambert's neat notion of the central place of the cathedrals of Old Castile and their prelates in the introduction of the gothic style must be set aside. Cuenca cathedral and the nunnery of Las Huelgas stand out for their singularity as purposeful projects that could count on royal support for efforts to express the new aspirations of the monarchy and the dynasty. The turbulent politics of the Iberian peninsula at the end of the twelfth century provides the context for the foundation of the nunnery, the creation of its congregation, its affiliation with Cîteaux, and the royal investment in its buildings. The earlier date for the church at Las Huelgas restores it to its rightful place as a seminal monument in the intro-

236. For Garsion: José Gabriel Moya Valgañón, *Etapas de construcción de la catedral de Sto Domingo de la Calzada* (Logroño, 1991) pp. 14, 51. For Mateo: Carmen Manso Porto, 'El documento de 1161 relativo a la supuesta intervención del Maestro Mateo en la construcción del Puente de Cesures', in *Actas. Simposio internacional, O Pórtico da Gloria e a arte do seu tempo, 1988* (Santiago, 1991) 103–115; for Fruchel: Miguel Angel García Guinea, 'Las huellas de Fruchel en Palencia y los capiteles de Aguilar de Campoo', *Goya* no. 43–45 (1961) 158–167.

duction of the gothic style into the Iberian peninsula and overturns its relationship with the Castilian cathedrals that have traditionally been regarded as points of entry for the new style. In a larger framework, the achievement of its builders heralds the translation of the gothic style into the language of a monastic architecture.²³⁷

I am grateful to the Patrimonio Nacional for permission to take photographs at Las Huelgas, to the communities of San Andrés de Arroyo and Villamayor de los Montes for access to the public parts of their churches, to the cathedral chapters of Cuenca, Sigüenza and Burgo de Osma for permission to photograph those cathedrals, and to the authorities responsible for the cathedrals of Noyon, Laon and Soissons for their efforts to facilitate their study. The Edilia and François-Auguste de Montêquin Senior Fellowship in Iberian and Latin American Architecture awarded by the Society of Architectural Historians, a grant from the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, and grants from the College of Arts and Sciences and the Research Council of the University of South Florida generously supported research in Spain. There, Carmen Manso, Angela Franco Mata, Jose Luis Senra, Gema Palomo Fernández, Pedro Luis Huerta and the Centro de Estudios del Románico at Aguilar de Campoo kindly provided assistance.

AFTERWORD

Since writing this article in 1999–2000, I have circulated it, presented my findings at conferences, and benefited particularly from discussions with David Raizman, Rocío Sánchez Ameijeiras, and Rose Walker. Their forthcoming work considerably expands our understanding of the history of Las Huelgas:

- David Raizman, 'Prayer, Patronage, and Piety at Las Huelgas: New Observations on the Later Morgan Beatus (M. 429)', *Church, State, Vellum, and Stone: Essays on Medieval Spain in Honor of John Williams* (Leiden, forthcoming 2005). Raizman demonstrates the book's commemorative purpose honoring the memory of the founders of Las Huelgas, King Alfonso VIII and Queen Leonor, and suggests more strongly the identity of the unnamed donor as their daughter, Queen Berenguela. A facsimile of the manuscript has been published by Scriptorium, SA (Valencia), and an accompanying study volume, with contributions by Peter Klein, David Raizman, and William Voelkle, is in press.

- Rocío Sánchez Ameijeiras, 'La memoria de un rey victorioso: Alfonso VIII y la Fiesta del Triunfo de la Santa Cruz', *Aktes des Kolloquium Grabkunst und Sepulkalkultur in Spanien und Portugal... Dresden, 16–19 Marzo, 2003* (Dresden, forthcoming 2005). Rocío Sánchez Ameijeiras explains how the iconography of the cross on the double sarcophagus of Alfonso VIII and Leonor reshaped the

237. The classic study of this remains Bruzelius (as in n. 96), pp. 3–204.

memory of the nunnery's history and its relationship to the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa (1212) in the later Middle Ages. Redating that sarcophagus to the 1320s or 1330s, she identifies the original sarcophagi of the royal couple with fragments of tombs, now in the north porch, that display ornate baldaquins with miniature Angevin vaults and column statues. She dates these to the 1220s, highlights their use of the iconography of the exaltation of the cross, and compares the canopied tomb of King Louis VII at the Cistercian abbey of Barbeau and that in the church of La Magdalena (Zamora) attributed to Queen Urraca of León (died c. 1209). In a second article in preparation ('La coronación de Alfonso XI y la renovación de los cementerios de Las Huelgas'), she relates the carving and installation of the double tomb to the reorganization of the royal cemetery in the 1320s and 1330s when a second deluxe Obituary was produced, the pantheon of the abbesses was remodeled, and the nunnery was readied for the coronation of King Alfonso XI.

• Rose Walker, 'Leonor of England, Plantagenet Queen of King Alfonso VIII of Castile, and her foundation of the Cistercian abbey of Las Huelgas in imitation of Fontevraud?', forthcoming in *Journal of Medieval History* 31 (2005).

For the most recent bibliography on Las Huelgas, one may also consult the exhibition catalogue:

• Joaquin Yarza, ed. *Vestiduras ricas. El Monasterio de Las Huelgas y su época 1170–1340*. Madrid, 2005.

Other recent publications of relevance include an edition of the Chronicle of Lucas de Tui, monographs on the architecture of Cuenca cathedral and the Cistercian nunnery of Cañas, and a collection of essays on Spanish romanesque cloisters:

• Emma Falque, ed. *Lucae Tudensis Chronicon Mundi*. Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis 74 (Turnhout, 2003).

• Gema Palomo Fernández. *La catedral de Cuenca en el contexto de las grandes canterías catedralicias castellanas en la baja edad media*. 2 vols. Cuenca, 2002.

• Raquel Alonso Álvarez. *El monasterio cisterciense de Santa María de Cañas (La Rioja)*. *Arquitectura gótica, patrocinio aristocrático y protección real*. Logroño, 2004.

• Joaquin Yarza, Gerardo Boto Varela, and Francesca Español, edd. *Claustros románicos hispanos*. León, 2003.

Studies in Cistercian Art and Architecture 6. Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 2005.

THE CISTERCIAN NUNS' ABBEY OF SS. JACOBI ET BURCHARDI: AN INTRODUCTION TO ITS HISTORY AND ARCHITECTURE

Cornelia Oefelein

After the Premonstratensian Order decreed to cease receiving women into their monasteries, the number of Cistercian nunneries grew immensely; they multiplied like the stars in the sky. Women's convents were founded, nunneries built, cloisters filled, virgins flocked together, widows gathered in haste, and married women as well, who, with their husbands' consent, exchanged their carnal marriage for a spiritual one.¹

THESE FREQUENTLY QUOTED WORDS of Jacques de Vitry's *Historia occidentalis*, written c. 1220, mark the major break in the history of the female branch of the Cistercian Order. They vividly describe the dramatic rise in the

This article is based on a paper that was presented to the Cistercian Conference at the Thirty-first International Congress on Medieval Studies in Kalamazoo, Michigan in May 1996. A fuller treatment may be found in Cornelia Oefelein, *Das Nonnenkloster St. Jacobi und seine Tochterklöster im Bistum Halberstadt*, *Studien zur Geschichte, Kunst und Kultur der Zisterzienser*, 20 (Berlin: Lukas Verlag, 2004).

1. Jacques de Vitry, *Historia occidentalis*, cap. 15:4–13, in: *The Historia Occidentalis of Jacques de Vitry. A Critical Edition*, ed. Frederick Hinnebusch OP, *Spicilegium Friburgense* 17 (Fribourg, 1972) 117.