

SANCHA RAIMÚNDEZ: AN *INFANTA* IN THE EXERCISE OF HER POWER

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ABSTRACT

In mid-12th century, *Infanta* Sancha Raimúndez played an important role both in the political life of Alfonso VII's reign and in the ecclesiastical scene in general, and monastic in particular, using the *infantado* as a base of her power. We study that kind of power from three angles: the political scene at the wedding of her niece, *Infanta* Urraca, with García, king of Navarre; the transformation of the female monastery of Saint Isidore of León into a male one, which became the home of a community of Canons Regular; and her support to the monastic federation which arose around abbot Florencio and the renewed monastery of Saint Saviour of Carracedo.

KEY WORDS

Infantado, Kingdom of Leon and Castile, Sancha Raimúndez, Saint Isidore of Leon, Alfonso VII of Leon and Castile.

CAPITALIA VERBA

Fili Regis Patrimonium, Regnum Legionis et Castellae, Sancha Raimúndez, Sanctus Isidorus Legionensis; Alfonsus VII, Rex Legionis et Castellae.



The documentary collection of *Infanta*¹ (or *Infanta-Queen*) Sancha Raimúndez has been studied on two occasions, with a difference of 30 years. A comprehensive introductory study was conducted in both cases. The diploma collection of Sancha is the base for this paper.² Some other documentary sources have also been used as a supplement. They come mainly from the archives of the Collegiate Church of Saint Isidore of Leon,³ the cathedral of Leon,⁴ and some other institutions in Leon and Castile.⁵ To them we must add some chronicles, like the *Historia Silense*,⁶ the *Chronicle of Alfonso VII*,⁷ Lucas de Tuy's work,⁸ and some other chronicles.⁹

Historians have devoted abundant works to Sancha Raimúndez. Classical historiography starts with the very abbots of the Collegiate Church of Saint Isidore (Julio Pérez Llamazares and Antonio Viñayo)¹⁰ and, following the traditional line of that collegiate, has always considered the *Infanta* as the great patroness of this institution; and even, in the words of Lucas de Tuy (the Tudense), the "spiritual wife" of Saint Isidore himself.¹¹ The Tudense was a canon at the collegiate; then the

1. The term "*infanta*" means daughter of a king and consequently could be translated as "princess". Below it is explained further.

2. García, María Luisa. *Doña Sancha, hermana del Emperador*. León-Barcelona: Centro de Estudios e Investigación San Isidoro-Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas-Patronato José María Quadrado, 1972; Martín, María Encarnación. "Colección documental de la infanta doña Sancha (1118-1159). Estudio crítico", *León y su Historia, Miscelánea Histórica*. León: Centro de Estudios e Investigación San Isidoro, 2003: VIII, 139-345. There is an introductory study in both cases.

3. Martín, María Encarnación. *Patrimonio cultural de San Isidoro de León. Documentos de los siglos X-XIII. Colección Diplomática*. León: Universidad de Leon-Cátedra de San Isidoro, 1995.

4. Ruiz, José Manuel. *Colección documental del archivo de la Catedral de León (775-1230)*. Leon: Centro de Estudios e Investigación San Isidoro-Caja de Ahorros y Monte de Piedad-Archivo Histórico Diocesano, 1990: IV; Fernández, José M. *Colección documental del archivo de la Catedral de León (775-1230)*. Leon: Centro de Estudios e Investigación San Isidoro-Caja de Ahorros y Monte de Piedad-Archivo Histórico Diocesano, 1990: V.

5. Fernández, José Antonio. *Colección Diplomática del monasterio de Sahagún (857-1300)*. Leon: Centro de Estudios e Investigación San Isidoro-Caja de Ahorros y Monte de Piedad-Archivo Histórico Diocesano, 1991: IV; Garrido, José Manuel. *Documentación de la Catedral de Burgos (804-1183)*. Burgos: José Manuel Garrido, 1983; Gamba, Andrés. *Alfonso VI. Cancillería, curia e imperio*, 2 vols. Leon: Centro de Estudios e Investigación San Isidoro: Caja de España de Inversiones : Caja de Ahorros y Monte de Piedad, 1997.

6. *Historia Silense*, ed. Justo Pérez, Atilano González. Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1959.

7. *Crónica del emperador Alfonso VII*, ed. Maurilio Pérez. Leon: Universidad de León, 1977. There is an introduction, translation, notes and index.

8. de Tuy, Lucas. *Chronicon Mundi*, ed. Julio Puyol. Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 1926; *De miraculis Sancti Isidori*. We use the edition: de Tuy, Lucas. *Milagros de san Isidoro*, eds. Julio Pérez, Antonio Viñayo, José Manuel Martínez. León: Universidad de León-Cátedra de San Isidoro, 1992.

9. Falque, Emma, ed. *Historia compostelana*. Madrid: Akal, 1994.

10. Pérez, Julio. *Historia de la real Colegiata de San Isidoro de León*. León: Imprenta Moderna, 1927; Viñayo, Antonio. "Reinas e infantas de León, abadesas y monjas del monasterio de San Pelayo y San Isidoro", *Actas de la Semana de Historia del Monacato cántabro-astur-leonés*. Oviedo: Monasterio de San Pelayo, 1982: 123-135; Viñayo, Antonio. *L'Ancien royaume de León roman*. Paris: Zodiaque, 1972.

11. The miracle in chapter XXXV states: *Cómo San Isidro apareció a la reina Doña Sancha, su esposa espiritual, y la certificó de su bienaventuranza, y de cómo y por qué la dicha Doña Sancha se llamó reina, no siéndolo, y de cuántas y cuáles son las Españas*. ("How St. Isidore appeared to Queen Doña Sancha, his spiritual wife, and assured



bishop of Tuy, in Galicia; and, no doubt, an outstanding figure in the first half of the 13th century. More recently the *Infanta* has been especially studied in relation with her role in the *Infantado*,¹² all kinds of works associated with the Collegiate of Saint Isidore,¹³ and her political functions beside Alfonso VII.

1. Infanta Sancha

Generally the birth of Sancha has been established in the last decade of the 11th century, ca. 1095, in the Leonese and Castilian court of Alfonso VI, the conqueror of Toledo and the son of the Navarrese Fernando I (1037-65) and the Leonese Sancha, the first monarchs who unified Leon and Castile under the same crown. She was the daughter of Raymond of Burgundy and Queen Urraca (1109-26). Alfonso, who reigned as Alfonso VII (1126-57), and who is known as Alfonso VII the Emperor, was her brother.

If we read the will of Infanta Elvira, daughter of Fernando I and Sancha, dated at Tábara (Zamora) on 11th November, 1099, we find out that Sancha was brought up by her at least until Sancha was four: *Et mando a mea nepta Sancia, que crio, Tauara et Bamba et Sancto Micael cum adiuntionibus suis de Scalata*.¹⁴ We do not know where she was educated after the death of Elvira. It has been suggested that it was in Galicia, next to her parents, to whom Alfonso VI had entrusted the government of the Galicia county.¹⁵

Her activities were rather scarce during her early years but her role became more and more prominent through the reign of her brother, Alfonso VII.¹⁶ An analysis of the *intitulatio* on the diplomas from her own chancellery gives us the base to confirm not only the evolving process of her activities but especially to establish her power in

her that she would go to heaven, and how and why the aforesaid Doña Sancha was called queen, as she was not one, and how many Spains there are.”) de Tuy, Lucas. *Milagros de san Isidoro...*: 60.

12. For more information about this, see: Henriët, Patrick. “Deovotas: L’Infantado et la fonction des infantes dans la Castille et León des Xe-XIIe siècles”, *Au cloître et dans le monde: Femmes, hommes et sociétés (IXe-XVe. siècles)*, *Mélanges en l’honneur de Paulette L’Hermite-Leclercq*, Patrick Henriët, Anne-Marie Legras, eds. Paris: Presses de l’Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 2000: 189-203.

13. The following are also relevant: Martin, Thérèse. “Hacia una clarificación del infantazgo en tiempos de la reina Urraca y su hija la infanta Sancha (ca. 1107-1159)”. *e-Spania*, 5 (2008); Klinka, Emmanuelle. “L’affirmation d’une nouvelle dynastie. Le panthéon royal de Saint-Isidore de León”. *e-Spania*, 3 (2007); Walker, Rose. “Sancha, Urraca and Elvira: the Virtues and Vices of Spanish Royal Women ‘dedicated to God’”, *Reading Medieval Studies: annual proceedings of the Graduate Centre for Medieval Studies in the University of Reading* (1998): 113-138.

14. The latest edition of her will has been studied and published by: Martin, Georges. “Le testament d’Elvire (Tábara, 1099)”. *e-Spania*, 5 (2008).

15. See: Gamba, Andrés. *Alfonso VI. Cancillería...*: I, 480-481.

16. Until the year 1126, when Queen Urraca died, the documentary collection of Sancha only registers seven diplomas (1118-26). Between 1126 and 1159, the year of the death of Sancha, there are 89. See: Martín, María Encarnación. “Colección documental de la infanta doña Sancha...”.



the formulas themselves —she is progressively called *infanta*, *infantísima* and *queen*,¹⁷ alluding to her background,¹⁸ and, particularly, to her brother, the king.¹⁹ These formulas also appear in Alfonso's diplomas, though, obviously, after his name.²⁰ We could interpret this procedure in the sense that she was imitating the role of other *infantas*, her predecessors, like Urraca of Zamora next to Alfonso VI.²¹

Her role of *Infanta* (princess) gave her the honour of the *Infantado* —the basis for her power. That is why on diplomas associated to the *Infantado* her name preceded those of the rest of the family, excepting, obviously, the king's name:

*ego Adefonsus imperator Hispaniae et ego Sancia, Infanta germana imperatoris, quae omnem de infatadgo teneo, ego quoque Berengaria imperatrix, imperatoris uxor, una cum nostris filiis Sancio et Fredenando et Constanca, filia nostra...*²²

We could infer that, after the death of Alfonso VII, in 1157, the *intitulatio* of the *Infanta* would change. Certainly the political circumstances did change, as Alfonso's kingdom was divided between his two sons: Sancho inherited Castile and Fernando inherited Leon. But the *Infanta* continued to live in Leonese lands and, curiously enough, continued to use her treatment of *regina* until her death.²³ Furthermore,

17. Here are some instances picked up from original diplomas: 1120. *Ego infan dona Sansia filia comite Reimondus et Regina dona Urraka...* Martín, María Encarnación. "Colección documental de la infanta doña Sancha...": 236 (doc. n° 3); 1127: *Ego infans donna Sancia, una cum germano meo rege domno Adefonso...* Martín, María Encarnación. "Colección documental de la infanta doña Sancha...": 243 (doc. n° 12), from Saint Isidore archives.

18. 1143: *Sancia infanta, uenerabilis Raimundi comitis et domine Vrracha regine Hispaniae filia, nobilis quoque Adefonsi Hispaniae imperatoris germana.* Martín, María Encarnación. "Colección documental de la infanta doña Sancha...": 269 (doc. n° 33).

19. 1131: *Ego Adefonsus rex gratia Dei totius Yspaniae una cum sorore mea infantissa Sancia.* Martín, María Encarnación. "Colección documental de la infanta doña Sancha...": 249 (doc. n° 17); 1150: *Ego Sancia Regina, comitis Reimundi et Urrace regine regia proles, cum auctoritate et asensu germani nostri dompni Adefonsi totius Yspaniae imperatoris...* Martín, María Encarnación. "Colección documental de la infanta doña Sancha...": 295 and 304 (docs. n° 54 and 64).

20. *Adefonsus totius Hispaniae imperator una cum sorore mea regina dompna Sancia...* Martín, María Encarnación. "Colección documental de la infanta doña Sancha...": 310-311 (doc. n° 69).

21. Caldwell, Susan Havens. "Urraca of Zamora". *Woman's Art Journal*, 7/1 (1986): 21. The author points out the role played by the *Infanta* in the death of Sancho and her support of Alfonso VI. Likewise, Caldwell notices that Queen Sancha must have transmitted to her daughters, particularly to *Infanta* Urraca, her admiration for the Leonese monarchy and what it meant as far as power and reputation were concerned.

22. Year 1148. Martín, María Encarnación. "Colección documental de la infanta doña Sancha...": 282-285 (doc. n° 44). It is the document by which Pedro Arias, prior, and his Canons Regular of Saint Augustine are transferred to Saint Pelagius' and the nuns inhabiting Saint Pelaigius' are conveyed to Carbajal.

23. Year 1158. *Ego regina domna Sancia, germana nobilissimi imperatoris...*, being *rex Fernandus, filius Adefonsi imperatoris, regnante...* Martín, María Encarnación. "Colección documental de la infanta doña Sancha...": 325 (doc. n° 88).



we find out that on some occasions she still used her patronymic Raimúndez, adding it to her title of queen: *regina domna Sancia Raemundi*.²⁴

Infanta, *infantísima* and queen define her origin as daughter of Queen Urraca and Count Raymond, but never beyond that —not as granddaughter of Alfonso VI and Queen Constanza. She never refers either to her uncle, Pope Callixtus II, brother of Raymond of Burgundy.

Although her presence is detected in Asturias, especially in relation with the *Infantado* of Saint Pelagius²⁵ and in Castile —*Infantado* of Covarrubias—, her habitual residence was the city of Leon, where she had a palace next to the Collegiate Church of Saint Isidore.²⁶ Her dwellings were integrated in the canonical compound.²⁷ Their description is quite vivid in the *Chronica Adefonsi Imperatoris*, when it narrates the wedding of Urraca, the daughter of Alfonso VII, and García, the king of Navarre, which we hear of more later on.

Sancha's activities were rather limited until 1118 and, in general, during the reign of her mother, Queen Urraca. The time period when her activities were at their peak, according to the number of diplomas she issued, was concentrated in the reign of Alfonso VII and particularly between 1145 and 1159, when she got involved more thoroughly in the administration and governance.

The diploma which Sancha herself defines as *carta mandacionis mearum hereditatum et rerum* has been considered as her last will and testament and is known through a contemporary copy of an incomplete document from the cathedral archives of Segovia, which apparently dates back to ca. 1140-1148.²⁸ The fact that it comes

24. Year 1158, Saint Claudius of León. Domínguez, Santiago. *Colección documental medieval de los monasterios de San Claudio de León, monasterio de Vega y San Pedro de Dueñas*. Leon: Centro de Estudios e Investigación San Isidoro-Caja España de Inversiones-Archivo Histórico Diocesano, 2001: 35 (doc. n° 17).

25. As Francisco Javier Fernández points out, the *Infanta* must have enjoyed a very good reputation in Asturias and in the monasteries of that *infantado*, particularly in those of Saint Vincent and Saint Pelagius. *En este último debió tener gran influencia, hasta el punto de intervenir notablemente en asuntos internos del mismo. Es probable que viviera incluso en él las temporadas que pasaba en Oviedo, continuando en esto la vieja tradición de la nobleza regia de la corte o caída en desgracia, tradición que dio a San Pelayo el conocido calificativo de 'conventus dominarum'*. ("In the latter she must have exerted great influence, to the extent that she intervened notably in its internal affairs. It is likely that she stayed there in the seasons she spent in Oviedo, so following the old tradition of the nobility closely related to the royal court or who had fallen in disgrace. This tradition had earned the monastery of Saint Pelagius the well known definition of *conventus dominarum*".). Fernández, Francisco Javier. "La reina Urraca 'la asturiana'". *Asturiansia Medievalia*, 2 (1975): 71.

26. The *Infanta* donates to the monastery of Saint Mary of Carbajal the monastery of *Sancti Iohannis del Grezisco, quod habeo in ciuitate legionensi, infra muros, non longe ab ecclesia Sancti Ysidori, scilicet, circa illum meum palatium*. Domínguez, Santiago. *Colección Documental del monasterio de Santa María de Carbajal (1093-1461)*. León: Centro de Estudios e Investigación San Isidoro-Caja España de Inversiones-Archivo Histórico Diocesano, 2000: 81 (doc. n° 21), dated in 1151.

27. We refer the reader to two studies published in the same year: Martin, Thérèse. *Queen as King: Politics and Architectural Propaganda in Twelfth-Century Spain*. Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2006; Campos, María Dolores; Pérez, Javier. *El Palacio Real de León*. Leon: Edileasa, 2006.

28. Martín, María Encarnación. "Colección documental de la infanta doña Sancha...": 290 (doc. n° 50). The editor points out the possibility —which she is inclined to believe is true— that it "might be the original document unfinished".



from Segovia is accounted for because the bishop of that diocese was Peter of Angen, who is thought to have been Sancha's teacher. There may have been a later will, nearer to her death, but certainly this *carta mandacionis* is interesting because of the distribution of her tenures and properties among her dearest and nearest—those persons belonging to her own family as well as other nobles, prelates and even institutions. The rest would return to the royal heritage itself. However, when the time came, that is, in 1159, after Alfonso VII had also died, it was his son, Fernando II of Leon, who executed the *Infanta's* final wishes. This fact was of great significance as it was the end of the *Infantado* institution. As María Encarnación Martín emphasises, a great many of the properties which made it up were distributed by the monarch among some of his noblemen.²⁹

Sancha maintained intense activity until her death, in 1159. She was buried in the royal pantheon of Saint Isidore.³⁰ An epigraph reminds us of it.³¹ She remained celibate but always in a lay position—that is, she was never integrated in a community of any of the monasteries belonging to the *infantado*. She was always well related particularly with the nunnery of Saint Pelagius of Oviedo and, above all, with that of Saint Isidore of Leon.

As Encarnación Martín has pointed out, the activities Sancha carried out, especially those related to the *Infantado*, entailed the organisation of a *curia* of her own, with officials, appointed by herself, who carried out the jobs of steward, notary and chaplain. Next to these officials there appear abbots, bishops and other palatial jobs, to which we can add *tenentes*, local magistrates, and other local magnates and nobles. Out of all of them comes Count Suero Vermúdez, who had developed special activities already during the reign of her mother, Urraca.³²

29. Martín, María Encarnación. "Colección documental de la infanta doña Sancha...": 222.

30. We can read in the Infanta's will (1140-1148): *Ubi corpus meum sepultum fuit [sic] mando Sanctum Michaellem Descalada cum omne hereditate sua, excepta ecclesia Sancti Michael que est extra urbem de Zamora*. Martín, María Encarnación. "Colección documental de la infanta doña Sancha...": 290 (doc. n° 50). However, as the editor indicates, this clause was not fulfilled, as Saint Michael of Escalada was given to the Canons of Saint Rufus of Avignon on 16th December, 1156. Martín, María Encarnación. "Colección documental de la infanta doña Sancha...": 316 (doc. n° 78). The *Historia Compostelana*, in chapter LXXXVIII, registers the fact that the emperor's sister chose her burial in Santiago: Falque, Emma, ed. *Historia compostelana...*: 480-481 (chapter 88). This notice is also recorded in: Martín, María Encarnación. "Colección documental de la infanta doña Sancha...": 244 (doc. n° 13). It might also be relevant to point out that in the following chapter, 89, the *Historia Compostelana* records the "promise of Teresa, queen of Portugal, of choosing her burial in the church of Compostela. Obviously, in either case, we can detect the interest of Diego Gelmírez, the archbishop, to attract members of the royal family to be buried in his church.": Falque, Emma, ed. *Historia compostelana...*: 482 (chapter 89).

31. On this, see also: García, Vicente. "Las inscripciones medievales de San Isidoro de León: un ensayo de paleografía epigráfica medieval", *Santo Martino de León: Ponencias del I Congreso Internacional sobre santo Martino en el VIII centenario de su obra literaria (1185-1985)*. Leon: Isidoriana editorial, 1987: 373-398; Martín, María Encarnación. "Las inscripciones del Panteón de San Isidoro de León. Particularidades epigráficas", *Estudios dedicados a José María Fernández Catón*, Manuel C. Díaz, Mercedes Díaz, Manuela Domínguez, eds. León: Centro de Estudios e Investigación San Isidoro, 2004: II, 941-972.

32. See: Martín, María Encarnación. "Colección documental de la infanta doña Sancha...": 211, where the editor quotes: Calleja, Miguel. *El conde Suero Vermúdez, su parentela y su entorno social. La aristocracia asturleonense en los siglos XI y XII*. Oviedo: KRK Ediciones, 2001.



2. *Infantado* and Monasticism, a Platform of Power

The *Infantado* institution, questioned and questionable, has been in Spanish historiography an establishment which fixed comprehensive territorial properties (country estates, monasteries, churches) that were in the hands of the female members of the royalty, *infantas*, who received them as a dowry. They would remain celibate and that heritage would always return to the monarchy. Likewise, it has been pointed out that there is a relation, even a link, between *infantados* and monasteries, particularly those that were their heads—Saint Pelagius in León, Saint Pelagius (also) in Oviedo, and Covarrubias and Oña in Castile. Therefore there was not an only *infantado*—we can speak of *infantados*.

Recently Patrick Henriët has approached this issue in several papers. In his article on *Deo votas*, published in 2000, Henriët suggests that the definition of *infantado* given by Luisa García comes from the early 13th century chronicles, especially those by Lucas de Tuy and Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada. Henriët pays attention mainly to Urraca and Elvira, the daughters of Fernando I and Sancha and emphasises the need for a monographic study on the *Infantado* in general, and gives a revision to it from Ramiro II and Palat de Rey—next to which he had a monastery built for his daughter Elvira—to Teresa Ansúrez and to the above-mentioned Fernando I's daughters. He also studies the Castilian *Infantado* of Covarrubias and Oña. According to him, two elements describe this institution, particularly in the time of Sancha Raimúndez: celibacy and the proximity to the monarch.

But Henriët himself suggests that in the second half of the 12th century there were *infantas* who enjoyed and ruled the *Infantado* and were not celibate—they were widows and even queens, but not *infantas*—that is, princesses.³³

More recently, in 2008, Henriët has dealt with the *Infantado* again and points out that *difícilmente se puede calificar de 'institución', no se nos presenta de manera totalmente clara antes de las crónicas de principios del XIII, momento en el cual desaparece como tal*³⁴

He also says that Lucas de Tuy and Jiménez de Rada describe an *infantado* which corresponds to a reality belonging to the past, and as a hypothesis he explains

*que l'Infantado fonctionna dans un premier temps comme une sorte d'institution royale qui permettait à la fois de sacraliser la famille royale (comtale pour la Castille) et de tenir une partie de l'Eglise régulière. Puis, dans un contexte plus "européen", il aurait continué à exister en nom alors qu'il était largement vidé de sa substance et que le premier modèle d'infanta, Deo vota, disparaissait.*³⁵

33. Henriët, Patrick. "Deovotas: L'Infantado et la fonction des infantes...": 197-200.

34. "[The *Infantado*] can hardly be called 'institution' as it does not present itself in a very clear way before the early 13th-century chronicles, the time when it disappeared as such." Henriët, Patrick. "Infantes, infantaticum. Remarques introductives". *e-Spania*, 5 (2008), initial abstract.

35. That the *infantado* worked at first as a Kind of royal institution that allowed both to sacralise royal family (early family in Castile) and to hold a part of the regular church. Then, in a context more 'European', he would have continued to exist in name while it was largely gutted of contents, and the first model of 'Infanta, Deo Vota', disappeared. Henriët, Patrick. "Infantes, infantaticum...": 7.



And he adds that there is a clear dichotomy between the 10th century *Infantado* and the 12th century one. Spanish historiography is greatly indebted especially to the 13th century chronicles when establishing a general definition of the *Infantado*, which was formerly in the hands of *Deo votas*, and after that of *infantas* or queens (single, married or widowed), but who, above all, conducted lay lives rather than monastic ones.

Following a similar line, but within artistic frames, Thérèse Martin infers that

*el infantazgo no fue una institución monolítica como a veces se ha pretendido. Más bien se planteaba compartida y dividida entre todas las mujeres de la familia real, quienes aparentemente tenían bastante autonomía para repartir ingresos y donar sus propiedades, incluso enajenarlas.*³⁶

Emmanuelle Klinka and Georges Martin have also studied the *Infantado*, but concentrating on certain models mainly from the 11th century, particularly on Fernando I and Sancha and their daughters. Klinka points out that it is likely that Sancha *diera origen a la adaptación de la estructura del Infantazgo al dominio político o por lo menos que laborara para conseguirlo, dando así paso a sus hijas y a las infantas que les sucedieran*.³⁷ It must have been, thus, an institution linked to the royal power, but, at the same time, autonomous, and it would stand for religious continuity but with an economic and legal independence.

Let us now consider what we can deduce from the documentation. The term *infantado* always appears linked to the *infantas*, daughters of Fernando I and Sancha, in the last third of the 11th century.³⁸ But its use became general in the central years of the 12th century in relation with Sancha Raimúndez.³⁹ The most common lexicon is *infantago, infantadgo, infantaticum, infantadigo, infantagii honore, infantago et*

36. "the *infantazgo* was not a monolithic institution, as sometimes has been thought. Rather it was shared and divided among all the women of the Royal family, who apparently were autonomous enough to distribute their income and donate their properties, or dispose of them at will". Martin, Thérèse. "Hacia una clarificación del infantazgo en tiempos de la reina Urraca...": 26.

37. "would have given origin to the adaptation of the structure of the *Infatazgo* to the political power or at least she must have worked to get that, paving the way to her daughters and the *infantas* that might come after them". Klinka, Emmanuelle. "Sancha, infanta y reina de León". *e-Spania*, 5 (2008): 25, and also, 26-27.

38. See: Ruiz, José Manuel. *Colección documental del archivo de la Catedral de León...*: 529-531 (doc. n° 1,244), dated in 1089. It deals with a legal dispute between Infanta Urraca and the bishop of León which reached the *Curia Regia* held by Alfonso VI in Villalpando. The problem with this document is that it is a 12th century copy.

39. See: Fernández, José M. *Colección documental del archivo de la Catedral de León...*: 214 (doc. n° 1, 440), dated in 1143, an Alfonso VII's original diploma, 241 (doc. n° 1,454), from 1148, which is again a royal diploma, 245 (doc. n° 1,455), a confirmation of the precedent one by Eugenius III: 201 (doc. n° 1,431), from 1140-1157; Fernández, José Antonio. *Colección Diplomática del monasterio de Sahagún...*: 268-269 (doc. n° 1,327), from 1157 (*Sancia infantissa tenente Graliare et Infantaticum*); Fernández, José A.; Herrero, Marta. *Colección documental del monasterio de Santa María de Otero de las Dueñas*. Madrid: Centro de Estudios e Investigación San Isidoro, 2006: II, 102-104 (doc. n° 362), dated in 1171.



honorem Sancti Pelagii. Therefore the diplomas certainly used this terminology before the chroniclers used it.

The *Infantado* and *honor* was obtained by managing the institution itself —a position which was held for life— and thanks to the abundant income originated by that management, as the income was ascribed to the corresponding patron saint, generally Saint Pelagius, the institution recognised as the main head of the *Infantado* in the Leonese and Castilian kingdom. It entailed the domain over a set of ecclesiastical institutions (monasteries and churches), landed properties and various kinds of buildings, all of which yielded important benefits.

In effect, if we consider the *Infantado* as a power frame in the Leonese sphere, we must start from the 10th century itself. That is, if we had to go back to the origins of the activities carried out by Sancha Raimúndez, we could stop at certain precise cases: for the 10th century, we would have to mention Elvira Ramírez (d. ca. 986) and in the 11th century we have Alfonso VI's daughters, Urraca and Elvira.

In the first case, we are dealing with Infanta Elvira Ramírez, daughter of Ramiro II (931-51) and the Navarrese princess Urraca —that is, the second marriage of the Leonese monarch.⁴⁰ Ramiro founded for Elvira, *deovota* and *deodicata*, the monastery of Saint Saviour of Palat de Rey. This monastery is considered to have been the origin of the *Infantado*. Elvira Ramírez's activities developed especially after the access to the throne of her brother Sancho I (935-966), married to Teresa Ansúrez. Elvira managed to make the new king build a monastery dedicated to the Cordovan martyr child Saint Pelagius, whose relics had been brought to Leon by the *Infanta* herself and Teresa Ansúrez. After the death of the king, in 966, Elvira became quite important politically, as she took over the governance of the kingdom during the minority of Ramiro III (960-985). Elvira entitled herself queen and acted as such. Her ruling activities ended when the king became of age, in 980. Until then Elvira held all the power in the realm, but then she returned to her cloister of Palat de Rey. After all, the palace and the monastery were joined together.

A century later, the archaic *deovotas* idea from the 10th century disappeared and gave way to the new concept of *Infantado* afforded by Fernando I and his wife, Sancha —particularly by the latter. This Leonese queen created for her daughters a space of power which was more definite, and inculcated in them the responsibility for transmitting and keeping the Leonese dynastic memory. We do not see Fernando I's daughters calling themselves *deovotas*, and her lives were more like lay models.

Where was the change? In the first place, there is evidence that the *infantas deovotas* who, like Elvira in the 10th century, had a strong political influence and importance, were bound to their monastery —they were integrated in it. On the contrary, the 11th century *infantas* left the monastic life aside, became established in a lay life, did not go away from the royal court itself and, of course, continued to take direct part in the political and ecclesiastical life of the realm.

40. On this subject, the reader is referred to: Rodríguez, Justiniano. *Ramiro II, rey de León*. Leon: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1965; Viñayo, Antonio. "Reinas e infantas de León...": 123-135; Colombás, García M. *San Pelayo de León y Santa María de Carbajal: biografía de una comunidad femenina*. León: Monasterio de Santa María de Carbajal, 1982.



Alfonso VI's sisters —Urraca, called the Zamoran owing to the city which was her inheritance, and Elvira, who got Toro from his father— developed intense political activities and took a very active part in the royal familial problems and in affairs dealing with the ruling of the kingdom. Urraca played a decisive role in the clash among Fernando I and Sancha's sons —Sancho, García and Alfonso. The eventual restoration of Alfonso shows, according to Georges Martin, that “then Urraca played a role almost of a regent”.⁴¹

At the end of the 11th century and through the 12th century there was another changing factor —the *Infantado* was not enjoyed only by celibate *infantas*. Already in 1974 Francisco Javier Fernández Conde established that fact on studying the role played by Queen Urraca of Pamplona —known as Urraca the Asturian— and showing that her father, Alfonso VII, had created an *infantado* for her. She was the bastard daughter of the Emperor and married García Ramírez of Navarre. She was the queen consort for six years. When her husband died, she returned to her Asturian landed estates, where she stayed, as *regina* and co-regent, during the reigns of Fernando II of Galicia and Leon, and Sancho III of Castile.⁴²

We can approach the use of the *Infantado* which Infanta Sancha Raimúndez made as a platform of power, as well as her involvement in the power —in the royal court— and the social sphere around her. She was —like Urraca Fernández was for Alfonso VI— a model of *Infanta* and of power, outside the cloister, with a life of her own and a great participation in the institutions of the Leonese and Castilian kingdom ruled by Alfonso VII.

A study of the *Infanta's* documentary collection shows that over 60% of her diplomas refer to monasteries.⁴³ Some of these monasteries were of great consequence because of their importance in the *Infantado* —Saint Pelagius of Oviedo, Saint Isidore of Leon, Carracedo and Covarrubias. Others, because they just belonged to the *Infantado* itself, like Saint Michael of Almázcara, Saint Michael of Escalada, Saint John of Abañón and Saint John of Greisco. And many others —more than 20—, because the *Infanta* interfered in affairs related to them: foundations, donations, legal questions. The monasteries that appear the most times are Saint Michael of Escalada, Saint Peter of the Dueñas, Saint Peter of Eslonza, Saint Pelagius of Oviedo, and, of course, Saint Isidore of Leon.

All of this shows that monasteries, both male and female, were quite important within the *Infantado*. The *Infanta's* role was not limited to only a mere control over

41. Martin, Georges. “Hilando un reinado. Alfonso VI y las mujeres”. *e-Spania*, 10 (2010): 7.

42. Fernández, Francisco Javier. “La reina Urraca...”: 65-92. Other works by the same author are also relevant, particularly: Fernández, Francisco Javier. “La regencia de Urraca la asturiana, ¿un primer capítulo de regionalismo secesionista en Asturias?”, *Historia de Asturias*, Eloy Benito, ed. Salinas: Ayalga, 1979: 239-243; Fernández, Francisco Javier. “El papel de la monarquía en la consolidación señorial del obispo de Oviedo”. *Studia Historica. Historia Medieval*, 25 (2007): 84-85.

43. The documents in: Martín, María Encarnación. “Colección documental de la infanta doña Sancha...”, are 94 in number, out of which the following refer to monasteries: 1, 2, 4, 6-8, 10, 12-14, 16-19, 23-27, 30-32, 34-39, 43, 44, 46, 50, 53-55, 57, 58, 61, 63, 64, 66-68, 69, 71, 73, 74, 77, 78, 81, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 93, 94.



them.⁴⁴ Occasionally she granted properties to found them, donated one monastery to another for its exploitation and control, intervened in its administration, and was concerned about its well-being, daily life and needs. The following instance reflects how important it was for a monastery to have enough fish supply for the seasons when monks and nuns had to abstain from eating meat: in 1147 the Infanta Sancha donated to the Leonese monastery of Eslonza another monastery, that of Saint Michael of Berbebedo or of the Sea, in Asturias, as well as *unum piscatorem in Lames, Pelagius Iohannis*.⁴⁵

If we also add other ecclesiastical institutions like military orders (Temple, Saint John of Jerusalem, Saint Mark of Leon), diocesan sees together with their prelates and churches, we can infer that the *Infantado* rested, in great part, on heritage and income belonging to ecclesiastical institutions and consisted, precisely, of that set of organisations—an ecclesiastical heritage that she ruled herself or through her personal collaborators.⁴⁶ Sancha would grant charters⁴⁷ or confirm them,⁴⁸ exempt from *mañería* (a kind of feudal right) the churches in the *infantado* of Saint Pelagius—in one word: she ruled her domains.⁴⁹ This also shows that she would intervene in the ecclesiastical affairs of the realm to safeguard her interests. Such intervention is apparent, for example, in disputes between sees and in trying to keep two prelates in peace.⁵⁰ She also issued sentences and administered justice in civil cases.⁵¹

The *Infantado* also consisted of *villas* (villages, towns), numerous country estates and vineyards—landed properties all over the kingdom.⁵² It was also made up of

44. For example, in 1154 she gave the monastery of Ayoo to that of Nogales. Martín, María Encarnación. “Colección documental de la infanta doña Sancha.....”: 312 (doc. n° 71). In 1151, she delivered Saint John of Grecisco, already a female one, to Saint Mary of Carbajal. Martín, María Encarnación. “Colección documental de la infanta doña Sancha...”: 298 (doc. n° 57).

45. “a certain fisherman from Lames, called Pelagius Iohannis”. It states precisely: *ut sit semper in servitium et refectonem de piscato monachis tam presentibus quam futuris Deo servientibus in ecclesia Sancti Petri de Eslonza tali thenore et pacto ut sub eorum maneat dominio perpetum iure hereditario*. Martín, María Encarnación. “Colección documental de la infanta doña Sancha...”: 277 (doc. n° 39).

46. For example, in 1158 she gave Gonzalo Menéndez a life usufruct over the monastery of Saint John of Aboño. After his death, the monastery should return to Saint Pelagius of Oviedo. Martín, María Encarnación. “Colección documental de la infanta doña Sancha...”: 325 (doc. n° 88).

47. See: Martín, María Encarnación. “Colección documental de la infanta doña Sancha...”: 286-288 (doc. n° 46), from 1148, when Sancha, together with abbot Martín, granted a charter to the *villa* of Covarrubias.

48. See: Martín, María Encarnación. “Colección documental de la infanta doña Sancha...”: 295 (doc. n° 54). Alfonso VII and Sancha confirm the charter of Avilés in 1155.

49. See: Martín, María Encarnación. “Colección documental de la infanta doña Sancha...”: 289 (doc. n° 48).

50. See: Martín, María Encarnación. “Colección documental de la infanta doña Sancha...”: 262 and 311 (docs. n° 28 and 70).

51. See: Martín, María Encarnación. “Colección documental de la infanta doña Sancha...”: 307 (doc. n° 66). In 1152 she issues a sentence concerning the lawsuit between the monastery of Sahagún and the council of Grajal over some water mills and an irrigation ditch.

52. See, for example, the interesting agreement in: Martín, María Encarnación. “Colección documental de la infanta doña Sancha...”: 293-294 (doc. n° 52), from the year 1149, with which she collaborates to the extension of vineyard exploitation in the area of Toledo.



heritage related to bread ovens, mills and water resources, both urban and rural. She also got revenue, particularly ecclesiastical revenue, and especially the tithe.⁵³ There were other kinds of taxes; for example, in 1151 she granted the nuns of Carbajal, for their sustenance, half of the *humazga* (a tax on every hearth and chimney) due to her from sites in Leon.⁵⁴

In the 12th century, the *Infantado* ruled by Sancha was a plural economic unit based on a changing political strategy with a great patrimonial potential and a strong social endowment: lands, persons, churches and monasteries, properties, furniture, and taxes. It was rather scattered, dismembered, depending on the proximity to the monarch, and was frequently used to grant power over certain areas.

But as far as its organisation is concerned, it was subdivided, fragmented into small lots: Infantado of Saint Pelagius of Oviedo, Infantado de Covarrubias, Infantado del Bierzo, Infantado of Campos, Infantado of Saint Isidore. These particular *infantados* were not always ascribed to the same person—they might be ascribed independently to different *infantas* or concentrated according to political and familial circumstances. Each one of such *infantados* used to have a monastery as its head and form a small autonomous and independent unit.

There is no doubt that Infanta Sancha Raimúndez concentrated on herself a great part of the Leonese and Castilian *infantados*, but shared the Oviedo *infantado* with her niece, Urraca the Asturian. Not even did the death of Alfonso VII fragment her territories, for example, in the *infantado* of Campos. But neither did she intervene much when her nephew Sancho, king of Castile, died, in 1158, and the Crown Prince, Alfonso VIII, was only three years old and would have a long minority. It is true, though, that she would die herself a little later and that she had kept her residence in the Leonese territories.

Where were the means and resources of her power anchored and what were her instruments? Let us see their projection through various fields of analysis.

2.1. Propriety or Dominium

The diplomas coming from Sancha Raimúndez's "chancellery" offer various evidence, especially her personal links of influence.⁵⁵ When she alludes to her heritage, she usually refers to the patrimony she had received from her parents; which fully justified her ownership and management, even before the death of her mother, Queen Urraca. In fact, when, in 1124, she donated to Peter the Venerable,

53. See also: Martín, María Encarnación. "Colección documental de la infanta doña Sancha...": 310-311 (doc. n° 69), from 1153, by which Alfonso VII and Sancha confirm several properties to the monastery of Saint Pelagius of Oviedo and grant it *decimum totius navigi Oveti in perpetuum habiturum*.

54. See: Martín, María Encarnación. "Colección documental de la infanta doña Sancha...": 297 (doc. n° 57).

55. Concerning the *curia-palatium* and the *chancellery*, the reader is referred to María Encarnación Martín's study in: Martín, María Encarnación. "Colección documental de la infanta doña Sancha...": 175 and following.



abbot of Cluny, an estate of hers, she is quite specific: *dono quandam hereditatem meam propriam, quae habeo de parentorum meorum*.⁵⁶ It is frequent that, when referring to some precise properties, she adds the ascription to a specific *infantado* —*Infantado* of the Bierzo, Saint Pelagius of Leon, Saint Pelagius of Oviedo.⁵⁷ Hers was an *infantado* which was defined as an “honor”: *Sancia, infanta, germana imperatoris, quae omnem honorem de infantazgo teneo*.⁵⁸ Curiously enough, she describes the properties of the *infantado* as her own. This is what happens with the monastery of Saint John of Aboño handed over to St. Pelagius of Oviedo.⁵⁹ In some cases she even alludes to the *infantas* who have managed and owned the properties which were under transaction, like her great-aunts the *infantas* Urraca and Elvira, daughters of Fernando I.⁶⁰

In other words, from a patrimonial viewpoint, Sancha always exerted full power, disposing of her properties and managing a substantial manorial patrimony: there was not a clear difference between the possessions that belonged to the *Infantado* and those which might be considered as personal property. The management, use and manorial organization granted her, within the structures of the kingdom, a strong power which was usually guaranteed by the monarchy in a constant and precise way, ratifying donations, purchases and sales, issuing sentences or applying reforms. She also had the jurisdictional domain.

2.2. Proximity to the King

A second power point rested on the proximity to the monarch, his court and institutions. Infanta Sancha used to subscribe and confirm every document together with Alfonso VII, and also on many an occasion she acted together with him.

She was present at both the celebratory moments of the royal family, of which she was a part —the weddings of *infantes* and *infantas*— and the grievous mourning moments of the death of any member of the family.⁶¹ She also fulfilled a decisive role within the family with the upbringing and education of the *infantas*.

56. Martín, María Encarnación. “Colección documental de la infanta doña Sancha...”: 239-240 (doc. n° 6).

57. See: Martín, María Encarnación. “Colección documental de la infanta doña Sancha...”: 246 and 325 (docs. 15 and 88); Fernández, José M. *Colección documental del archivo de la Catedral de León...*: 213 and 235 (docs. 1,440 and 1,450).

58. Martín, María Encarnación. “Colección documental de la infanta doña Sancha...”: 289 (doc. n° 48), in 1148; Fernández, José M. *Colección documental del archivo de la Catedral de León...*: 241-243 (doc. n° 1,454) —it refers to the *Infantado* of Saint Pelagius of Oviedo.

59. See: Martín, María Encarnación. “Colección documental de la infanta doña Sancha...”: 324-326 (doc. n° 88).

60. See: Fernández, José M. *Colección documental del archivo de la Catedral de León...*: 213-215 (doc. n° 1,440).

61. *Mas el emperador Alfonso, con grand honrra, y la Infanta doña Sancha, hermana del emperador y fija desta Reyna Orraca, enterraronla con sus padres en el monesterio de Sancto Ysidoro confessor, de la çibdat de León.* (“But



Her participation in the political affairs was paramount. The king trusted her and, as it is transmitted in the *Chronica Adefonsi Imperatoris*, she proved to be a good counsellor.⁶² After the Asturian rebellion of Count Gonzalo Peláez⁶³ and the later agreement-pact with Count Suero Vermúdez,⁶⁴ there was an approach of both nobles to the king. Count Gonzalo asked

*Luna al rey con muchos ruegos. Entonces el rey llamó a su hermana la Infanta doña Sancha, a su esposa doña Berenguela y a otros consejeros, que sabía que eran prudentes en tales asuntos, y, tras tomar con ellos una determinación, recibió del conde Proaza, Buanga y Alba de Quirós y mandó darle lo que había pedido, a saber, Luna. E hizo esto para que no se rebelase de nuevo, como se le había rebelado a la reina doña Urraca, que antes le había dado un señorío.*⁶⁵

Again we have another instance when

*en el año 1135 el rey fijó como fecha de celebración de un concilio en la ciudad regia de León el 2 de junio, festividad del Espíritu Santo, con los arzobispos, obispos, abades, condes, nobles, duques y jueces que había en su reino. En el día fijado llegó el rey, con él su esposa la reina doña Berenguela, y su hermana, la infanta doña Sancha, y con ellos el rey García de Pamplona; y, como el rey ordenó, todos se reunieron en León.*⁶⁶

Emperor Alfonso, with great honours, and Infanta doña Sancha, sister of the emperor and daughter of this Queen Urraca, buried her with her parents in the monastery of St. Isidore, confessor, in the city of León"). de Tuy, Lucas. *Crónica de España...*: 400.

62. *Y tenía el rey Alfonso muy noble hermana, que auía nombre Sancha, la qual, desde la hora que fue confirmado por rey de los leoneses y castellanos, hízola assentar consigo y mandola llamar Reyna. Esta muy sabia Reyna Sancha en quanto biuió quedó virgen y llamose esposa del muy sancto confessor Ysidro, afermosando con muchas noblezas las yglesias de Christo y hedificando monesterios y criando los pobres de Christo.* ("And King Alfonso had a very noble sister, by the name of Sancha, whom, from the moment when he was confirmed as king of the Leonese and the Castilians, he made sit by himself and be called queen. This very wise Queen Sancha remained a virgin all her life and was called wife of the St. Confessor Isidore, and embellished Christ's churches with many presents, and built a lot of monasteries and took care of Christ's poor.") de Tuy, Lucas. *Crónica de España...*: 391-392.

63. For further information on this count, see: García, María Élide. "El conde asturiano Gonzalo Peláez". *Asturiansia Medievalia*, 2 (1975): 39-64.

64. About Count Suero the relevant work is: Calleja, Miguel. *El conde Suero Vermúdez, su parentela y su entorno social: la aristocracia asturleonese en los siglos XI y XII*. Oviedo: KRK Ediciones, 2001.

65. "Luna from the king very entreatingly. Then the king called his sister the Infanta doña Sancha, his wife doña Berenguela and other counsellors who he knew were wise people for those affairs, and, after counselling with them, he received Proaza, Buanga and Alba de Quirós from the Count and ordered to give him what he had asked for, namely, Luna. And he did all this so that he did not rebel again, as he had already rebelled against Queen doña Urraca, who before that had given him a feudal estate". *Crónica del emperador Alfonso VII...*: I, 45.

66. "in the year 1135 the king fixed the date for holding a council in the royal city of León —on the second of June, the Holy Spirit festivity— with all the archbishops, bishops, abbots, counts, nobles, dukes and judges that there were in the kingdom. On the fixed day arrived the king; with him came his wife, Queen doña Berenguela, and his sister, Infanta doña Sancha, and with all of them King García of Pamplona; and, as the king had ordered, all of them assembled in León". *Crónica del emperador Alfonso VII...*: I, 69.



Her political importance is quite clear on seeing her as a member of the Royal Council.⁶⁷

2.3. *The Third Way —the Religious Control over the Church and its Institutions*

Several lines of analysis speak of how wide her range of power was in this respect. We refer, in the first place, to the control over the dead—that is, the lineage memory: the *Infanta's* control over the royal pantheons and its consequences. And here we must place the emphasis especially on the royal pantheon of Saint Isidore. Sancha used to reside in the adjoining palace. This pantheon had become prominent once the remains of Saint Isidore were transferred from Seville to León under Fernando I and Sancha in 1063. The latter, daughter of Alfonso V, succeeded in making the Isidorian pantheon the reference of her lineage, and it would be her daughters, *Infantas* Urraca and Elvira, the conveyors of the value of the royal Isidorian cemetery and who would instil into Sancha Raimúndez the necessity of preserving their legacy, their lineage memory. It would also be that her last dwelling.⁶⁸

In the second place, control over ecclesiastical institutions, especially over monasteries, churches and altars. A typical example is the altar of the Holy Trinity, the *Consecratio* of which says:

*Regina Sancia Raimundi me deargentavit anno Dominici incarnationis millesimo centesimo quadragesimo cuarto, indictione septima, concurrente sexto, octavo kalendas augusti, dedicatum est hoc altare a venerabili episcopo sancte Bethlleem Anselmo in nomine sancte et individve trinitatis ets (sic) et sancte Crucis Sancteque Dei genitricis Marie et in honore eorum quorum Sancta hic continentur beati patriarche Abrae Pelagie, vir de annuncione Sancte Marie et Helisabet, de petra salutacionis Sancte Marie de nativite Domini, de persepio Domini, de loco transfigurationis in monte Tabor, de Sancta Petra, de tabula Dominice cene, de monte Calvarie, de petra quei dicitur Gethsemani, vbi Dominius comprehensus est, de petra supra quam coronatus est in pretorio, de cruce Domini, de sepulcro Domini, de tabula supra quam Domnus comedit pisces adsum et favum mellis, de petra assensionis Dominice in monte Oliveti de petra confessionis in templo Domini, de inventione crucis in monte Calvarie, de monte Sinai, de lecto sancte marie in monte Sion, de sepulcro Sancte Marie in Iosaphat.*⁶⁹

67. For more information, see: Cerrada, Ana Isabel. "Tres generaciones de mujeres en el poder: Urraca de Zamora, Urraca de Castilla, Teresa de Portugal y Doña Sancha. Las mujeres en la construcción de las monarquías feudales hispánicas", *Las mujeres y el poder. Representaciones y prácticas de vida*, Ana Isabel Cerrada, Cristina Segura, eds. Madrid: Al-Mudayna, 2000: 105.

68. See: Cavero, Gregoria. "El discurso de la *Crónica Silense*: San Isidoro y el panteón real". *e-Spania*, 14 (2012), especially paragraphs 40-70.

69. 1144, July, 25. *Consecratio* of the altar of the Holy Trinity. A. San Isidoro Museum. Limestone altar stone covered with gilded silver. 26.6 x 17.2 x 2.1 cm. Caroline lettering. I owe this courtesy to Dr. Vicente García Lobo.



In the third place, control over cult spreading, relic transferring, and local and general devotions —she was diffusing her own religiosity. Furthermore, Sancha disseminated and maintained the memory of the Isidorian *translatio* carried out by her predecessors. Still in 1131, in the royal charter that she granted, together with Alfonso VII, and by which she donated to the Isidorian Collegiate the village Rioseco de Torío, we can read, *...pro amore sanctissimi confessoris Ysidori Yspalensis archiepiscopi cuius corpus translatum continetur urbe Legionense...*⁷⁰.

Finally, we must refer to the control over the monastic orders themselves and their spreading —Cistercians,⁷¹ Canons Regular,⁷² Benedictines⁷³— and over the military orders, particularly the Hospitallers of Saint John,⁷⁴ also over the secular church, sees and prelates. Quite revealing is her intervention in the confrontation between the sees of Segovia and Palencia derived from the restoration of the former in the first quarter of the 12th century —this confrontation would outlive the *Infanta* herself.⁷⁵

Consequently, Sancha Raimúndez was totally integrated in the court and the institutions of the realm, and fulfilled, beside Alfonso VII, an important role —she exerted a special power, developed an intense activity and implied a great influence.

3. Scenes of Power

We have chosen three settings in which Sancha acted and exerted her power in a direct and significant way. All three of them have the frame of the *Infantado* itself —the axis of her activities— and are related to palatial life and the control over the church, particularly the monasteries.

70. Martín, María Encarnación. “Colección documental de la infanta doña Sancha...”: 248-250 (doc. n° 17).

71. A suitable example would be the monastery of San Miguel de Almazara. See: Martín, María Encarnación. “Colección documental de la infanta doña Sancha...”: 300-301 (doc. n° 60). See also our work: Caveró, Gregoria. *El esplendor del Císter en León (siglos XII-XIII)*. León: Fundación Hullera Vasco Leonesa, 2007: 78-79.

72. In 1156, Sancha, together with Alfonso VII, granted the ancient and important monastery of San Miguel de Escalada to the abbey of St. Rufus of Avignon. See: Martín, María Encarnación. “Colección documental de la infanta doña Sancha...”: 316 (doc. n° 78).

73. In 1152, Sancha issued the sentence of the lawsuit between the monastery of Sahagún and the council of Grajal. See: Martín, María Encarnación. “Colección documental de la infanta doña Sancha...”: 307 (doc. n° 66).

74. See: Martín, María Encarnación. “Colección documental de la infanta doña Sancha...”: 314-316 (doc. n° 76).

75. *...pro pace et concordia ecclesie palentine et secobiensis et earum episcopis ut pacem habeant...* Martín, María Encarnación. “Colección documental de la infanta doña Sancha...”: 170-171. The documents of this *concordia* can be seen in: Herrero, Marta. “Los documentos sobre la concordia y compromiso entre las diócesis de Palencia y Segovia del año 1190”, *Actas del II Congreso de Palencia*. Palencia: Diputación Provincial de Palencia, 1990: 261-286. The Infanta intervened, also with Alfonso VII, in the confrontation between the sees of Lugo and Oviedo. See: Martín, María Encarnación. “Colección documental de la infanta doña Sancha...”: 311 (doc. n° 70).



3.1. From only *Infanta* to *Infanta/Queen*

If we read the first book of the *Chronica Adefonsi Imperatoris*, we shall infer that the chronicler was a person always in favour of the *Infanta* —he always refers to her as an excellent counsellor for the Emperor. Two years after the death of their mother, Queen Urraca, Alfonso VII married Berenguela, daughter of Count Ramón Berenguer III of Barcelona. Curiously enough, she travelled to Castile by sea. It was the year 1128. As Manuel Recuero Astray points out, Alfonso VII's approach to Catalonia strengthened him against Alfonso I of Aragon, the Warrior.⁷⁶ The chronicler says that she was

*doncella muy joven, extremadamente hermosa y sumamente decorosa, amante de la castidad, de la verdad y de todos los temerosos de Dios, con la que contrajo nupcias en Saldaña y de la que, gracias a Dios, tuvo hijos. Pues bien, todo lo que el rey hacía lo deliberaba en primer lugar con su esposa y con su hermana la infanta doña Sancha, que tenía abundante y saludable buen sentido: todos los consejos de ellas le resultaban bien al rey y muchos le prevenían. Y eran muy temerosas de Dios, promotoras de la construcción de iglesias de Dios y de monasterios de monjes, guías de los huérfanos y de los pobres y amantes de todos los temerosos de Dios.*⁷⁷

Sancha and Berenguela were, thus, considered as two pillars of Alfonso VII's kingdom. But, according to the same *Chronica Adefonsi Imperatoris*, the already mentioned rebellion of Gonzalo Pérez drove the king to Asturias and, in the year 1132,

*el rey tomó una concubina por nombre Gontroda, hija de Pedro Díaz y de María Ordóñez, muy hermosa y del muy noble linaje de los asturianos y tinianos; tuvo de ella una hija llamada Urraca que para quitarle el pecho y alimentarla se la entregó a la hermana del rey la infanta doña Sancha.*⁷⁸

76. Recuero, Manuel. *Alfonso VII el Emperador. El Imperio hispánico en el siglo XII*. Leon: Centro de Estudios e Investigación San Isidoro-Caja de Ahorros y Monte de Piedad-Archivo Histórico Diocesano, 1979: 95.

77. "a very young maid, extremely beautiful and exceedingly decorous, a lover of chastity, of truth and of all those who were full of the fear of God; with whom he contracted marriage in Saldaña and by whom he had offspring, thanks be to God. Well, the king discussed everything he intended to do first with his wife and his sister, Infanta Sancha, who had abundant and healthy good sense—all their counsel proved to be good to the king and some even warned him. And both of them were full of the fear of God and promoted the construction of God's churches and monasteries for monks; guided orphans and poor people; and loved all of those that were full of the fear of God". *Crónica del emperador Alfonso VII...*: I, 12, 67-68.

78. "the king took a concubine by name of Gontrodo, daughter of Pedro Díaz and María Ordóñez. She was very beautiful and was of the noble lineage of the Asturians and Tinians. By her he had a daughter named Urraca. In order to wean and feed the child, he delivered her to his sister, Infanta doña Sancha". *Crónica del emperador Alfonso VII...*: I, 32, 73-74. In a very interesting way, Georges Martin, when studying Infanta Elvira's will, in which there is a bequest for the little Infanta Sancha Raimúndez, who is being brought up by Elvira, asks himself: *L'infantazgo fut-il un des cadres de formation des filles de sang royal? Cette continuité de fait témoigne-t-elle de l'existence d'une préparation concertée à la seigneurie d'infantat?* Martin, Georges. "Le testament d'Elvire...": 25.



Infanta Urraca was, then, a bastard daughter of Alfonso VII. Now, it was customary that young infantas were delivered to the *Infantas* holding the *Infantado* for their upbringing and education. As mentioned before, Infanta Sancha herself had been brought up in Tábara by Infanta Elvira.

Alfonso VII's relationships with Navarre were rather unsteady. However, King García of Navarre was present at the council summoned by the Emperor in León, on 2nd June, 1135, the year when he was crowned in the cathedral of Leon.⁷⁹ But the definitive peace between the Leonese and Castilian kingdom and Navarre was signed in 1144, according to the chronicle.⁸⁰ The agreement stated that "King García would serve the Emperor honourably all through the days of the lives of both of them." On the other hand, Alfonso VII agreed to deliver her daughter the Infanta Urraca to be García's wife. "They set the 24th June as the appropriate day to hold the nuptials in the city of León."⁸¹ García had been married to Margarita, who died in 1141. Blanca was born from their marriage. Later on Blanca married Sancho III of Castile, Alfonso VII's first-born child.

The wedding of García and infanta Urraca (Urraca the Asturian)⁸² was an exercise of power at which Infanta Sancha was the main character. According to the *Chronica Adefonsi Imperatoris*, there were three levels in the picture of the wedding ceremony: on the first level were the Emperor and his wife, Empress Berenguela, surrounded by those who had been invited to the ceremony; on a second level was García of Navarre; and on the third one, the Most Serene Infanta doña Sancha, who entered the city "by the Cauriense gate and with her was her niece Infanta Urraca, the bride of King García, together with a quite numerous crowd of noble knights, clergy, women and maids who had been engendered by the nobles of the whole Spain".⁸³ We are before the *mis-en-scène* of the wedding ceremony, held in Leon. It proves Alfonso VII's superiority over García of Navarre, who was the former's vassal;⁸⁴ and, obviously, Sancha's importance within the whole setting of the wedding ceremony.

Sancha herself also organised other activities. It was she who "arranged the nuptial chamber in the royal palace, which is at Saint Pelagius, and around the

79. *Crónica del emperador Alfonso VII...*: I, 69.

80. Francisco Javier Fernández points out that the chronicler "is mistaken in making it coincide with the end of the Castilian-Navarrese war. After both contenders signed the peace agreement—in the year 1140, according to what is stated above, and not in 1144, as the chronicler suggests—, doña Margarita was still alive. She was the Navarrese king's first wife. She died in 1141 and, consequently, Urraca's engagement must have been later. The Imperial biographer is not mistaken, however, when fixing the wedding ceremony in 1144. The event, which must have caused a certain commotion at the time, was recorded as a referential date in the Asturian and Leonese documentation." Fernández, Francisco Javier. "La reina Urraca...": 73.

81. *Crónica del emperador Alfonso VII...*: I, 91.

82. About this infanta, the queen of Navarre for several years, we refer the reader to: Fernández, Francisco Javier. "La reina Urraca...": 65-92.

83. *Crónica del emperador Alfonso VII...*: I, 92.

84. About this vassalage relationship, it is interesting to quote: Martín, Thérèse. "Estancias palaciegas en recintos monásticos medievales (siglos X-XII)", *Monasterios y monarcas: fundación, presencia y memoria regia en los monasterios hispanos medievales*, José A. García, Ramón Teja, coords. Aguilar de Campoo: Fundación Santa María la Real-Centro de Estudios del Románico, 2012: 120-121.



nuptial chamber a very numerous crowd of buffoons, women and maids who played organs, flutes, zithers, psalteries and all kinds of musical instruments.” There is a description of where the authorities were: “The Emperor and King García were seated on the royal throne on an elevated position outside the Emperor’s palace gates, while the bishops, abbots, counts, nobles and dukes were on seats arranged around the Emperor and the King.”⁸⁵ Next the chronicler narrates all the other festive activities. Infanta Urraca was 12 years old at the time.

Sancha Raimúndez’s participation went beyond the nuptial organisation —she contributed the dowry of Infanta Urraca, to whom he gave “numerous gold and silver goblets and mules loaded with royal riches”, comparable —at least according to the chronicler’s simple description— to the presents delivered by the Emperor himself.⁸⁶

Urraca remained in Pamplona, as the queen of Navarre, for six years. But she never came off of her aunt’s tutelage. After the death of García Ramírez, she returned to Asturias, where “her father granted her a number of royal properties, creating, thus, for her an *infantado* similar to her aunt Sancha’s.”⁸⁷ When Sancha recounts the distribution of her properties for her last will and testament, possibly before 1150, indicates: *et filie imperatoris Urrace, quan ego creo [I brought up] mando illud quod habeo in Asturias de infantado. Si vero maritum acceperit uel in aliam terram ierit totum redeat ad Sanctum Pelagium.*⁸⁸ Both Sancha and Urraca shared the same *infantado* in Asturias, the head of which was the monastery of Saint Pelagius in Oviedo.

The truth is that Urraca, keeping her title of queen, was quite active in Asturias and was still guided by her “wise and faithful preceptress” when the 1157 documentation registers this subscription: *Imperante in tota Hyspania domno Adefonso... Regina Urraca et Regina Sancia dominantibus in Asturias.*⁸⁹ As a widow she still ruled the *Infantado*, which allowed her an intense political, social, economic and religious life. She would never be celibate or a nun, and, though lately, in 1163 she would marry Álvaro Roderici. She would die the next year, 1164, in Palencia. That is why she was buried in the cathedral dedicated to Saint Antoninus in that city. Did she forfeit her aunt Sancha’s legacy as was established in her will? We do not know for sure but certainly Urraca absented herself from the Asturian territory.

In Oviedo she kept her own court in the royal palace, from where she ruled the region and managed her own *Infantado*, following the patterns set by her aunt Sancha, whom she outlived scarcely by five years.

85. *Crónica del emperador Alfonso VII...*: I, 93. According to Manuel Recuero, the celebrations in Leon went on for over a month. Recuero, Manuel. *Alfonso VII el Emperador...*: 162 (doc. n° 134).

86. *Crónica del emperador Alfonso VII...*: I, 94.

87. Fernández, Francisco Javier. “La reina Urraca...”: 76.

88. Martín, María Encarnación. “Colección documental de la infanta doña Sancha...”: 290-291 (doc. n° 50).

89. Serrano, Luciano. *Cartulario de Monasterio de Vega con documentos de San Pelayo y Vega de Oviedo*. Madrid: Junta para Ampliación de Estudios e Investigaciones Científicas-Centro de Estudios Históricos, 1927: 174 (appendix 20); Fernández, Francisco Javier. “La reina Urraca...”: 77.



3.2. *The Collegiate Church of the Canons Regular of St. Isidore: the Loss of the Palatial Space and How the Religious Space Became a Male Space*

After Saint Pelagius' body was moved to Leon, it was placed in a small monastery dedicated to him and which had been united to another one dedicated to Saint John the Baptist. These two, already joined together, became, in Antonio Viñayo's words, a double monastery "and even a familial monastery since the *infantado* was established in the female one of Saint Pelagius, whose *domina* was a Leonese infanta who used to inherit that job".⁹⁰ From then onwards the monastery of St. Pelagius-St. John the Baptist would displace the monastery of Palat de Rey as the royal pantheon as a new Romanesque pantheon was built in the former.

Saint Pelagius' relics were conveyed to Oviedo later on, according to the version of the *Chronicle to Sebastian* attributed to the bishop Pelagius of Oviedo.⁹¹ Here Saint Pelagius shared the dedication, again, with Saint John the Baptist. Teresa Ansúrez, Sancho I's widow and Ramiro III's mother, was ruling this nunnery of Saint Pelagius at the end of the 10th century. The Tudense, in the 13th century, gives an account for all of this—the pressure exerted by Almanzor. The Leonese monastery must have been left very short of relics, as Fernando I ordered Alvitus and Ordoño—the respective bishops of León and Astorga—to bring Saint Justa's body from the Islamic south. The two prelates—apparently listening to Saint Isidore's "messages" to Alvitus—conveyed Saint Isidore's body instead. From then on, the monastery would be dedicated to Saint Isidore. In the mid-12th century, the female Benedictine community was displaced outside the city of León, to Carbajal de la Legua, in favour of the male Canons Regular, with the direct intervention of the *Infantado*—ruled at the time by Sancha Raimúndez—and the royalty—her brother, Alfonso VII.

A privileged document issued, on the 27th April, 1141, by Alfonso VII, together with his wife, Berenguela, and for the remedy of their souls and their parents', exempts the canons of the church of Saint Mary of León, who share their table with the canons of Saint Isidore, from the payment of royal taxes which the citizens of León have to pay. He also grants them immunity in their homes so that no bailiff, *alcaide* or any man could enter in them in the name of the king.⁹² If it refers to those that ate at a table in common, it means that there were some that did not attend the common refectory. It is evident that, to respond to both trends, the young prelate Juan Albertino founded the regular community of Saint Mary of Carbajal, on 25th February, 1144. That foundation was confirmed by Alfonso VII.⁹³ The Carbajal canons would follow the rule of the Canons Regular of Saint Augustine and would go on living in the homonymous village near to León, while trying to find a place within the city walls.

90. Viñayo, Antonio. "Reinas e infantas de León...": 123-135, especially 125 for the text quoted.

91. About this topic, see: Fernández, Francisco Javier. "Orígenes del monasterio de San Pelayo", *Semana de historia del monacato cántabro-astur-leonés*. Oviedo: Monasterio de San Pelayo, 1982: 99-121.

92. Fernández, José M. *Colección documental del archivo de la Catedral de León...*: 203-204 (doc. n° 1,433).

93. See: Martín, María Encarnación. *Patrimonio cultural de San Isidoro de León...*: 274-275 (doc. n° 38); Fernández, José M. *Colección documental del archivo de la Catedral de León...*: 225-227 (doc. n° 1,444).



In 1143, Infanta Sancha and Alfonso VII had donated Juan Albertino and his successors the tithes of all the churches located in the *infantado* of Saint Pelagius, except those of some monasteries which are stated in the document. Pope Eugenius III issued a *privilegium* confirming this donation in 1148.⁹⁴

This monastery of Saint Pelagius became the solution for the recently created community of canons. It was moved from Carbajal to within the city walls and became dedicated only to Saint Isidore.⁹⁵ In 1148, Alfonso VII, his wife, Berenguela, their children and his sister Sancha subscribed the change of the prior Pedro Arias and his canons of Saint Augustine to the compound of Saint Pelagius, and, at the same time, the nuns who had lived there so far were moved to Carbajal.⁹⁶ In other words, from 1148 onwards there were in León a community of cathedral canons, who followed their own dynamics, and another one of Canons Regular of Saint Augustine, called of Saint Isidore, who followed a monastic rule. The dedication of the new Isidorian church is registered in the *consecratio* which is kept inside the present church.⁹⁷ The decision for such a change of both communities seems to have been the *Infanta's* responsibility, aided by her brother, the Emperor.

As a consequence of the transformation from a female community into a male one, there was a new arrangement of the space, as the religious services were the top priority, with a special attention to the funerary aspects—that is, to the royal pantheon, which the *infanta* would always take care of.

This introduction of the canons into the city cannot have been in accordance with the episcopal power, whose rights were infringed upon. In effect, there broke out a confrontation between the bishop and the cathedral chapter on the one side and the community of Canons Regular of Saint Isidore on the other—a manifest and worrying conflict.⁹⁸ Because of that, in 1159, an agreement was signed by both parties over the rights that the church of León had on the church of Saint Isidore-

94. Domínguez, Santiago. *Documentos pontificios referentes a la diócesis de León (siglos XI-XIII)*. León: Universidad de León, 2003: 81-82 (doc. n° 21).

95. The presence of canons at Saint Isidore's, even though they were not regular Augustinian, is documented several years before. No doubt, they were associated to the male monastery, which should attend to the services in the church. See, for example: Martín, María Encarnación. "Colección documental de la infanta doña Sancha...": 243-244 (doc. n° 12), from the year 1127: *cum canonicis sancti Isidori et cum sanctimonialibus feminis Sancti Pelagii*.

96. Martín, María Encarnación. *Patrimonio cultural de San Isidoro de León...: 71-73* (doc. n° 44).

97. *Svb era millesima centesima octogesima septima et quodum pridie nonas marci. Facta est ecclesie Santi Isidoro consecratio per manus Raimvndi toletane sedis archiepiscopi et Iohannis legionensis episcopi et Martini ovetensis episcopi et Rammvndi pacensis episcopi is et aliis quoadivtoribus Petro compvstallane sedis archiepiscopo et Pelagio mindvniensi episcopo et Gvidone lvensi episcopo et Arnaldo avstvicenci episcopo et Bernardo sagontino episcopo et Bernardo zemorensi episcopo et Petro avilensi episcopo cum aliis octo abbatibus benedictis presente excellentissimo imperatore Adefonso et infanta Constancia domno Petro conventus Isidori priore*. 1149. *Consecratio* of the church of Saint Isidore. San Isidoro, church, inside, right arm of the transept, marble plaque, 124 x 56 cm. 55-cm module. Good condition. I owe this courtesy also to Dr. García Lobo.

98. About this conflict, see: Cavero, Gregoria. "El episcopado de la iglesia de León (1087-1205)", *Homenaje a José María Fernández Catón*. León: Colección de Fuentes y Estudios de Historia Leonesa, 2004: 199-226.



Saint Pelagius.⁹⁹ Once Sancha had died, the relationships between both sides cannot have improved in spite of the new agreement signed, in 1167, by both the bishop and the Isidorian abbot and concerning certain properties;¹⁰⁰ since, in about 1171, an executory document from Pope Alexander III ordered, under very serious canonical punishments, the abbot and the Isidorian chapter to comply with the agreement subscribed by the canons' community and the cathedral chapter and bishop of León, which had been sanctioned by the Holy See. The same pontiff points out that the abbot and chapter of Saint Isidore had to annually deliver honey and butter to the Leonese prelate, as well as accept the episcopal jurisdiction over the monastic centre.¹⁰¹ Once more in 1177 the same pope ordered the Isidorian canons to comply with the aforementioned agreement with the bishop and the cathedral chapter.¹⁰² One of Saint Isidore's alleged miracles mentioned by the Tudense, in the 13th century, is entitled:

*De cómo la reina doña Teresa y el obispo de León procuraron echar del monasterio de San Isidoro los canónigos reglares y meter los canónigos seculares, y no lo consintió Dios ni San Isidro, y mostró milagro sobre ellos.*¹⁰³

Infanta Sancha did not pay much attention to these rivalries and exerted her power determinedly. Between 1140 and 1159 such determination consolidated a profound change of the head of the Leonese *Infantado*, where her palace was and where she kept the memory of her ancestors. The community of the Canons Regular of Saint Isidore became the key point of the monastic and religious power, much to the regret of the Leonese prelates, and with the invaluable support of Alfonso VII.

There was one last step to be taken: the place should turn from a palatial space into an exclusively canonical space. According to the Tudense, a vision of the *Infanta* in the palatial Isidorian premises presents Saint Isidore addressing her to eulogise her qualities:

Hermana mía muy amada, y esposa mía muy dulce, este es el tálamo que el Señor tiene aparejado para ti, si procuras guardar la virginidad.... Y ahora porque este lugar donde estás es consagrado a Dios, y muy junto con la Iglesia, marcha de este palacio y edifica otro para ti, y da este a los mis canónigos, porque no conviene a persona alguna seglar morar en

99. Concerning this agreement, see: Fernández, José M. *Colección documental del archivo de la Catedral de León...*: 320-324 (doc. n° 1,510); Martín, María Encarnación. *Patrimonio cultural de San Isidoro de León...*: 93-94 (doc. n° 66).

100. About this new agreement, see: Fernández, José M. *Colección documental del archivo de la Catedral de León...*: 379-381 (doc.n° 1,540); Martín, María Encarnación. *Patrimonio cultural de San Isidoro de León...*: 115-117 (doc. n° 86).

101. More information about this can be obtained from: Domínguez, Santiago. *Documentos pontificios referentes a la diócesis de León...*: 112 (doc. n° 48).

102. Fernández, José M. *Colección documental del archivo de la Catedral de León...*: 483-484 (doc. n° 1,605).

103. "How Queen Doña Teresa and the bishop of León attempted to expel the Canons Regular from the monastery of St. Isidore and replace them with secular canons, and God and St. Isidore would not allow it, and a miracle was a sign over them." de Tuy, Lucas. *Milagros de san Isidoro...*: 82.



*él corporalmente o con osadía; y aunque tú te has ofrecido a Dios por el voto de virginidad, y yo amé siempre a las mujeres devotas mas nunca tuve por bien que ellas corporalmente residiesen cerca de mí por mucho tiempo.*¹⁰⁴

It belonged to Sancha but without Sancha. That is, first the canons had displaced the nuns and now they displaced Sancha. Saint Isidore wanted the monastery to be a totally male community and did not care to displace the *Infanta* despite the good relationships between both of them and how Sancha had benefited from them to obtain favours and even to persuade the saint.¹⁰⁵ Saint Isidore wanted the domain over the whole of the canonical space, including the aulic space¹⁰⁶ —whatever was monastic and spiritual would have priority to what was royal and temporal.

Once Sancha had died, in 1159, the Isidorian community would achieve great prestige during the following half century. It would be not only a religious centre but also the great cultural centre of the city. Santo Martino would write his works there.¹⁰⁷ It would also be a political centre —the first Leonese *Cortes* assembled in it during the first times of Alfonso IX's reign.¹⁰⁸ The copy of the *Fuero Juzgo*, or *Liber Iudiciorum*, was kept there before it was carried to the cathedral by that same monarch. The appeals lodged to the monarch were settled by the "Judge of the Book", appointed by the king himself, following the laws stated in that book.¹⁰⁹

104. "My dearest sister and sweetest wife, this is the nuptial bed that the Lord has prepared for you if you intend to keep your virginity... And now, as this place where you stay is consecrated to God and next to the church, go away from this palace and have another one built for you and give this one to my canons, because it is not proper for any lay person to dwell in it bodily or with audacity; and though you have offered yourself to God through the vow of virginity and I always loved devout women, I never considered it to be proper if they resided near to me for a long time". de Tuy, Lucas. *Milagros de san Isidoro...*: 60-61.

105. See miracle LI: *Cómo San Isidro milagrosamente proveyó del dinero que era necesario para acabar la obra de la presa de su monasterio, que la reina Doña Sancha, su esposa, le concedió y nunca más falta dinero para edificar en el dicho monasterio.* "How St. Isidore miraculously supplied the money necessary to finish the irrigation channel of his monastery, which Queen Doña Sancha, his wife, granted him; and never again the monastery was short of money to do any work." de Tuy, Lucas. *Milagros de san Isidoro...*: 94. See also miracle XLI: *Cómo el cuerpo de San Isidro fué sacado de su iglesia al campo en procesión, y después no le pudieron mover para tornarlo, hasta que la Reina Doña Sancha, su esposa, con todo el pueblo hicieron gran plegaria por causa de esto.* "How St. Isidore's body was taken out of his church into the countryside on a procession and then they could not move it to return it, until Queen Doña Sancha, his wife, and all the people prayed greatly because of this." de Tuy, Lucas. *Milagros de san Isidoro...*: 79.

106. About this, Thérèse Martin points out: "Thus the canon, Lucas de Tuy, was able to demonstrate in a retrospective way that the patronage of the royal family, both in the past and in the 13th century —when the compilation of the miracles was carried out— did not take any precedence over the rights of the present clergy." Martin, Thérèse. "Hacia una clarificación del infantazgo en tiempos de la reina Urraca...": 121.

107. There is plenty of bibliography about Santo Martino. The reader is referred mainly to: Viñayo, Antonio. *Santo Martino de León: vida y obras narradas por el tudense*. Madrid: Isidoriana Editorial, 1984; Viñayo, Antonio; Fernández, Etelvina. *Santo Martino de León*. León: Isidoriana Editorial, 1985.

108. An interesting work in which this is highlighted is: Kean, John. *The Life and Death of Democracy*. London: Simon & Schuster, 2009.

109. Concerning the *Liber Iudiciorum*, the reader is referred to: Cavero, Gregoria; Galván, Fernando; Fernández, Etelvina. "Imágenes reales, imágenes de justicia en la catedral de León". *e-Spania*, 3 (2007): art. 3.



3.3. The Federation of Carracedo

Carracedo and Villabuena are two places located in the Leonese region of the Bierzo. There the Leonese monarchy used to maintain *palatii* which appear continuously in the life of Infanta Sancha. The monastery of Saint Saviour was located in Carracedo and had been founded by Vermudo II. His remains used to rest in it.¹¹⁰ Carracedo was the key centre of the Bierzo *infantado* and recovered its monastic life in the first half of the 12th century, when, in 1138, Sancha donated it to abbot Florencio, who came from the nearby monastery of Saint Marina of Corullón, for him to dwell in it with his monks *sub regula Benedicti*.¹¹¹ This donation was also subscribed, as usual, by the Emperor, who is represented seated, next to abbot Florencio, on a wall of the Carracedo church itself. Some years later, Sancha included this institution in the list of donations of her last will and testament.¹¹²

Certainly Abbot Florencio was the great ally of Sancha and was the driving force of the monastic reformation as well as of the creation of a congregation which revolved around Carracedo, with numerous affiliate abbeys and priories. Really, the Cistercian dependence of Carracedo in the 12th century is not clear at all, being a difficult point to be clarified between the Cistercian historiography (Maur Cocheril) and that which, from the outside, has dealt with the great Bierzo monastery (Augusto Quintana).¹¹³ José Antonio Balboa points out “that Carracedo intended to become the leader of a new congregation is quite clear in the 1138 document in which there is the condition” expressed like this: *ut sit caput omnium monasteriorum quae habuerint*.¹¹⁴ By being their head Carracedo secured for itself a great spiritual and economic relevance in the monastic scene of northwest Spain.

The Carracedo abbey became the centre of a great monastic federation or confederation —the most important in northwest Spain, as said above— directly promoted by the *Infantado*.¹¹⁵ We are speaking of a Benedictine federation under

110. See: Martínez, Martín. *Cartulario de Santa María de Carracedo (992-1500)*. Ponferrada: Instituto de Estudios Bercianos, 1977: I, 21-25 (doc. n° 1), where all the problems with this document are dealt with, including the questionable date, which the editor fixes on 27 December, 992.

111. *Et quia locus eorum, videlicet, Sancte Mariae per nimium strictus et angustus est nec potest ferre maximam monachorum multitudinem, placuit domino Florentio abbati, fratribus, hoc nobis requirentibus, ut mutetur abbatia in Carracedo, tali conditione, ut aii omnium monasteriorum que habuerint*. Martín, María Encarnación. “Colección documental de la infanta doña Sancha...: 257-259 (doc. n° 24).

112. *Concedo etiam Carracedo cum omni hereditati sua quod iam dedi Florencio ceterisque dominis*. Martín, María Encarnación. “Colección documental de la infanta doña Sancha...: 291 (doc. n° 50).

113. About all this, we refer the reader to the following studies by: Quintana, Augusto. “Carracedo”, *Temas Bercianos*, Ponferrada: Bérgida, 1997: II, 177-200; Quintana, Augusto. “La reforma del Císter en El Bierzo”. *Temas Bercianos...: II*, 263-298; and especially: Quintana, Augusto. “Carracedo, congregación autónoma durante más de medio siglo”, *Temas Bercianos...: II*, 299-318.

114. Balboa, José A. *El monasterio de Carracedo*. León: Diputación de León, 2005: 45. The author adds: “That this congregation really existed and was recognised by the ecclesiastic hierarchy is confirmed by the fact that, in 1183, Pope Lucius III tells abbot Galterio of Carracedo about ‘your order’, granting him the authority to visit and correct his affiliates”.

115. Sancha granted the *villa* of Cacabelos (Martín, María Encarnación. “Colección documental de la infanta doña Sancha...”: 267 (doc. n° 32)) and the church of St. Martin of Villaverde (Martín, María



the control of Abbot Florencio of Carracedo which would draw together not only monasteries but also priories.

The affiliates spread all over the northwest within the territories of the Leonese kingdom: Galicia (Monfero, Penamaior, Castro de Rey, Covas), Asturias (Belmonte, Villanueva de Oscos), Zamora (Saint Martin of Castañeda,¹¹⁶ Toldanos), and obviously in the Bierzo. In fact, in 1152, the *Infanta* gave the congregation the monastery of Almázcara (or Saint Michael of the Dueñas),¹¹⁷ which had been a 10th century foundation, so that monastic life was restored there following Benedictine rules and under the obedience to abbot Florencio of Carracedo.¹¹⁸ Some time later, already in the 13th century, Queen Teresa of Portugal founded the monastery of Villabuena, which would also remain under the Carracedo influence.¹¹⁹

Other various members of the royalty joined their efforts to help this confederation. In the first place it was Alfonso VII's collaboration not only by confirming Sancha's donations but also by promoting monastic life, for example, in the case of the Carracedo affiliates in Asturias,¹²⁰ particularly Belmonte, named Lapedo before. Infanta Elvira was another one: in 1149 she delivered the monastery of Toldanos to, and placed it under the direct obedience of, Abbot Florencio of Carracedo.

This various support from different members of the royal family meant the recovery of old monasteries, where cenobitic living had been lost, like at Saint Saviour of Carracedo, and now were brought to life again. Lapedo, Saint Michael of Castañeda, Monfero and Saint Michael of Almázcara are good instances. In some cases there had been a previous foundation under the Benedictine rule.

This Benedictine confederation meant a refreshing observance not very different from what was the Cistercian reformation in the 12th century, but independent and autonomous. However, soon there arose problems with the dependence of the affiliates. The Galician community of Monfero, founded directly by monks sent by

Encarnación. "Colección documental de la infanta doña Sancha...": 271 (doc. n° 36) to the monastery.

116. About this monastery, the reader is referred to: Miguel, Fernando. *El monasterio de San Martín de Castañeda, Zamora. Análisis de su pasado para el futuro*. Zamora: Junta de Castilla y León, 2010.

117. This monastery had belonged to the *Infantado*, and Elvira, daughter of Fernando I, had given it to her abate *episcopum domnum Petrum Sancto Michael de Almascara cum adiunctionibus suis ab omni integritate ut teneat eum in sua vita et a morte illum det pro mea anima*. Martin, Georges. "Le testament d'Elvire...": 40.

118. About this monastery of Almázcara or Saint Michael of the Dueñas, we refer the reader to: Cavero, Gregoria. *Catálogo documental del monasterio de San Miguel de las Dueñas*. León: Universidad de León, 1994; Cavero, Gregoria; González, Miguel A. *El monasterio cisterciense de San Miguel de las Dueñas*. León: Universidad de León, 2000.

119. Concerning Teresa of Portugal and Villabuena, the reader can obtain further information from: Cavero, Gregoria. "Teresa de Portugal y el monasterio cisterciense de Villabuena". *Cistercium*, 208 (1997): 379-387. The documentation from this monastery, which does not exist now, is included in the first part of: Cavero, Gregoria. *Catálogo documental del monasterio de San Miguel...: 15-53*, quoted in the previous note. Its timeline corresponds to 1172-1527. This latter year is the date when the monastery of Villabuena disappeared and the nuns of its community were transferred to Saint Michael's.

120. About Villanueva de Oscos, see the two following studies by: Álvarez, José A. "El proceso de fundación del monasterio de Santa María de Villanueva de Oscos. Del establecimiento de la comunidad a la integración del Císter como señorío jurisdiccional", *El monacato en los reinos de León y Castilla (siglos VII-XIII)*. León: Fundación Sánchez-Albornoz, 2005: 547-567; Álvarez, José A. *Los Oscos en los siglos X-XIII. Un modelo de organización social en la Asturias medieval*. Oviedo: Ayuntamiento de Santa Eulalia de Oscos, 2001.



Abbot Florencio from the Bierzo, decided to cut themselves off from Carracedo and submit to the obedience of the Cistercian abbot of Sobrado.¹²¹ However hard Carracedo tried to recover that monastery, they never succeeded.

After the death of Florencio, he was succeeded by Diego Peláez as the abbot of Saint Saviour of Carracedo. In 1152, abbot Fernando, from another of the affiliate monasteries, Toldanos, rebelled and denied obedience to the new abbot. That was not only a lack of submission, as he immediately went to Clairvaux to place himself under their dependence.¹²² The conflict that arose had four main points: obviously Carracedo and Sancha were on one side and Toldanos and Clairvaux were on the other. Sancha's power was the response to her infringed rights: in 1149 she sent herself a letter to Bernard of Clairvaux in which she reproached him and his Cistercian order for accepting the obedience of the Toldanos monastery, the rebel abbey which had placed itself under Cistercian protection.¹²³ Certainly her rights had been clearly infringed upon.

She did not stop at confronting any person, order or institution which undermined her rights —on this occasion, those of a monastery which was the head of the *Infantado* in the Bierzo. She was persuaded that the rebel Abbot Fernando should not be supported by other institutions. Certainly, the conflict seems to have been more widespread, and Toldanos was not the first and only abbey to rebel. The problem was the Cistercians, who at the time were really successful in their spread over northern Spain. After all that, neither the Carracedo Abbot Diego nor Infanta Sancha nor their letters and reproaches succeeded in returning the Toldanos abbey to the obedience to Carracedo, which, curiously enough, at about that time, would change his dedication —forgetting Saint Saviour, it became Saint Mary, a frequent Cistercian dedication.¹²⁴

Traditionally it had been suggested that Infanta Sancha had been the great driving force of the spread of the Cistercian monasticism. However, she only founded the monastery of La Espina under that reform.¹²⁵ Her reproach to Saint Bernard has been valued as something episodic. But she always defended the rights of her great Carracedo confederation, which would not be Cistercian, at least *de iure*, until early 13th century.

121. There is a general recent outlook about Cister in Galicia in: Cendón, Marta; Chao, David. "El Císter en Galicia", *El Císter en el reino de León*, Gregoria Caveró, Jesús Celis, coords. León: Instituto Leonés de Cultura, 2012: 81-115. Monfero is particularly dealt with on page 91.

122. About the different readings of this confrontation, there is more information in: Balboa, José A. *El monasterio de Carracedo...*: 52-53.

123. Martín, María Encarnación. "Colección documental de la infanta doña Sancha...": 294 (doc. n° 53). The editor points out that this notice comes from: Manrique, Ángel. *Annales cistercienses*. Regensburg: Gedrukt bey J.C. Memmel, 1739-1742: I, 1149, chapter 8 (doc. n° 1).

124. For further information on this change and other details, we refer the reader to: Caveró, Gregoria. *El esplendor del Císter...*: 74-80.

125. Martín, María Encarnación. "Colección documental de la infanta doña Sancha...": 274-276 (doc. n° 38). About the Cister order in the province of Valladolid (and consequently, La Espina) there is a recent study: García, Antonio. *Arquitectura de la orden del Císter en la provincia de Valladolid (1147-1515)*. Valladolid: Junta de Castilla y León, 2010.



Here are, then, three examples of Sancha's direct intervention, in which she organised royal nuptials and participated in the politics of the kingdom, next to her brother, the Emperor; made the female community of Saint Pelagius into a male community of Canons Regular of Saint Augustine; and formed an outstanding monastic federation from Saint Saviour of Carracedo. In the three instances the thread was always Sancha's exercise of power within the *Infantado*. In the first case, Urraca was brought up by her aunt Infanta Sancha, married García of Navarre, and her nuptials were organised by Sancha, again; when she was already a widow, she became the manager of the Asturian *Infantado*. On its turn, the Isidorian collegiate rested on the main institution of the Leonese *Infantado*, formerly dedicated to Saint Pelagius-Saint John the Baptist; and, in the case of Carracedo, it was the monastery which was the head of the Bierzo *Infantado*. All these three scenes kept in perspective the lineage memory, with its corresponding royal pantheons, especially that of Saint Isidore. This one, located in the western end of the church, was a clear referent of the Navarrese dynasty, which was responsible, under Fernando I, of conveying the body of St. Isidore to León.

Sancha Raimúndez, like her predecessors Elvira Ramírez and Urraca Fernández, represented the powerful Leonese infantas, who exerted a great influence during their times and enjoyed extraordinary power. Under Infanta Sancha, the *Infantado* was a consolidated institution which seems to have reached its zenith, since her death, in 1159, would be the beginning of its decline.

The inscription on her tomb can serve as the colophon to this paper,

*Esperiae speculum, decus orbis, gloria regni, iustitiae culmen, et pietatis apex Sancia pro meritis immensum nota per orbem, pro dolor, exiguo clauderis in tumulo, soluis sex centos, demptis tribus egerat annos, cumpta subcubuit finis.*¹²⁶

126. Martín, María Encarnación. "Colección documental de la infanta doña Sancha...": 160.

