

*Mother Juana de la Cruz, 1481–1534:  
Visionary Sermons*



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## Introduction

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### *The Other Voice*

In 1508, Mother Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534) began a thirteen-year preaching career.<sup>1</sup> She was then abbess of a third order Franciscan convent in the Castilian village of Cubas, near Toledo. She went into visionary rapture each Sunday for five or more hours, during which periods Christ purportedly used her as a medium to preach to an audience that included at times bishops, army captains, and even the emperor Charles V. Her regal and religious audience heard a low-register voice issue forth from her unconscious, prone body, using the first person to narrate elaborate additions to biblical episodes. The voice then detailed the complex pageants and festivals the rapt Juana was observing in heaven during the many hours she lent her voice to Christ.<sup>2</sup> These ecstatic episodes were termed *sermones* by Juana's contemporaries, and seventy-two were transcribed in a manuscript called *El libro del conorte* [The Book of Consolation].

Here begins the book called *Conorte*, which was made through the voice of the Holy Spirit who spoke through a woman religious as she was enraptured in contemplation. This speech was made in the person of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who is he who enlightens our hearts and is wont to speak in parables and similes.<sup>3</sup>

1. The surviving manuscripts consist of the visionary sermons in *El libro del conorte* (Madrid, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio, El Escorial J-II-18, hereafter *Conorte*; a second copy in Archivo Segreto Vaticano, Congregazione Riti, MS 3074); a “semiautobiography” *Vida y fin de la bienaventurada virgen sancta Juana de la Cruz* (El Escorial, K-III-13, hereafter, *Vida y fin*); and a convent record book of devotions and visions, *Libro de la casa y monasterio de Nuestra Señora de la Cruz* (Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid, MS 9661, hereafter, *Libro de la casa*). Only the sermons have been published, and references to sermons not translated in this volume cite the sermon by volume, sermon number, section, and page as found in Juana de la Cruz, *El Conhorte: Sermones de una mujer; La Santa Juana (1481–1534)*, ed. Inocente García de Andrés, 2 vols. (Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española, 1999). We will refer to this work as *Conorte* in accordance with the title used in the Escorial manuscript, even when referring to pagination from the published edition.

2. Her raptures took the form of “the body as though dead and the eyes closed” [el cuerpo como muerto y los ojos cerrados] (*Vida y fin*, fol. 27v), the prominent members of the audience are listed on fol. 27v, and the duration of the raptures is described on fol. 28r.

3. “Comienza el libro que es llamado Conhorte, el cual es hecho por boca del Espíritu Santo que hablaba en una religiosa elevada en contemplación, la cual habla se hacía en persona de Nuestro Señor Jesucristo, el cual es el que alumbr a los corazones y acostumbra a hablar en figuras” (*Conorte* I, prologue, 227, translated in this volume, 35).

## 2 Introduction

In her lifetime and beyond, Juana was revered as a local saint.<sup>4</sup> The life story of “santa Juana” was extensively dramatized and embellished by those involved in compiling her semiautobiography (*Vida y fin*, co-composed by Juana and several amanuenses), as well as a late-sixteenth-century record book from her convent which includes her visions, a religious play, and devotions practiced by the nuns at Juana’s instigation (*Libro de la casa*). Further instances of her readership can be found in the marginal annotations of a century’s worth of Franciscan readers of the *Conorte* manuscript.<sup>5</sup> In the seventeenth century, Tirso de Molina and other playwrights staged her life and visions.<sup>6</sup> A case for her beatification was opened in 1621 but closed without result a century later for lack of original documentation.<sup>7</sup>

Little information is available about Juana’s life beyond the three manuscripts that document her sermons and visions, however. Born in 1481, Juana came from a family of modest means.<sup>8</sup> Her mother had an affinity for the Marian devotions (devotions to the Virgin) that occurred at the *beaterio* (house of devout women, *beatas*) of Santa María de la Cruz, one of about fifty *beatarios* founded in Castile between the late Middle Ages and the late sixteenth century.<sup>9</sup> This particular *beaterio* had been established in the village of Cubas in response to the 1449 series of Marian apparitions received by a young girl, Inés Martínez.<sup>10</sup>

4. In the late Middle Ages, “living saints” gained local and sometimes national credence based on their ability to work miracles and foretell historical events. In Italy at the turn of the sixteenth century, such women who had the ear of prominent politicians and ecclesiastics were generally devout laywomen; in Spain, they were more likely to be *beatas* (semi-religious women) or nuns. Gabriella Zarri, “Living Saints: A Typology of Female Sanctity in the Early Sixteenth Century,” in *Women and Religion in Medieval and Renaissance Italy*, ed. Daniel Bornstein and Roberto Rusconi (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 219–304; and María del Mar Graña Cid, “En torno a la fenomenología de las santas vivas (algunos ejemplos andaluces, siglos XV–XVI),” in *Responsabilidad y diálogo: Homenaje a José Joaquín Alemany Briz, S.J. (1937–2001)*, ed. Xavier Quinzá Lleó and Gabino Urizarri Bilbao (Madrid: Comillas, 2002), 415–53, at 448.

5. Both manuscripts of *Conorte* have a series of marginal annotations recording approbation and periodic censorship that was then disputed. See section three, Author’s Works, below.

6. The most famous play is the trilogy by Tirso de Molina, *La Santa Juana, trilogía hagiográfica, 1613–14*, ed. Agustín de Campo (Madrid: Editorial Castilla, 1948). Other plays remain unpublished in the modern era, for example, Bernaldo de Quirós, *La luna de la sagra y vida de Santa Juana de la Cruz* (1644), and José de Cañizares, *El prodigio de la sagra, Sor Juana de la Cruz* (1723).

7. See note 58 for bibliography. The beatification process was reopened in 1986.

8. Daza identifies her as Juana Vázquez Gutiérrez, born to peasant parents in the village of Azaña (now Numancia) near Toledo, presumably based on *Vida y fin*, fol. 5v. Antonio Daza, *Historia, vida y milagros, éxtasis, y revelaciones de la bienaventurada virgen Sor Juana de la Cruz* (Madrid: Luis Sánchez, 1613), fol. 67v.

9. Ángela Muñoz Fernández, *Beatas y santas neocastellanas: Ambivalencia de la religión y políticas correctoras del poder (ss XIV–XVII)* (Madrid: Comunidad de Madrid, 1994), 21.

10. The documents concerning the apparitions are translated in William A. Christian, Jr., *Apparitions in Late Medieval and Renaissance Spain* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), 57–86.

Although Juana's mother died when Juana was five and her father did not share his wife's piety, Juana selected the same *beaterio* as her destination when fleeing an arranged marriage, a flight she accomplished by donning men's clothing to travel safely through the countryside.<sup>11</sup> Professing in 1497, she was elected "abbess" in 1509, a year after she began preaching publicly and the year that the *beaterio* was enclosed under the secular Third Order Franciscans.<sup>12</sup> Juana held the post of abbess until her death, except for one year after accusations circulated that she had wasted conventual funds by seeking a papal bull to confirm her privilege to appoint the convent's chaplain, a post held at the time by her brother. The nun who brought the charges (the assistant superior, elected abbess in Juana's place) withdrew the accusation on her deathbed. Juana was restored to office, which she held the rest of her life despite suffering severe illnesses that kept her bedridden.<sup>13</sup> Buried in the convent after her death in 1534 and disinterred in 1541, her body reputedly remained uncorrupted and sweet-smelling, a sign of sanctity period-

11. A relatively common medieval hagiographical topos, but one affirmed by Juana in the *Vida y fin*, fols. 10v–12r. For discussion of cross-dressing in saints' lives, see among others, Vern L. Bullough, "Cross Dressing and Gender Role Change in the Middle Ages," in *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality*, ed. Vern L. Bullough and James Brundage (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2000), 223–42.

12. Ronald E. Surtz, *The Guitar of God: Gender, Power, and Authority in the Visionary World of Mother Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534)* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), 3. While Inocente García Andrés provides a useful five-page narrative timeline of Juana's life, reception, and beatification process ("Introduction," in *El Conhorte*, 64–69), the dates for Juana's profession are clearly almost a decade off, as otherwise she would have fled her arranged marriage at the age of five, whereas fifteen is much more likely. Those around her called her abbess, even though technically the term only applied to the leader of a Benedictine convent. All *beaterios* were enclosed and integrated into the second or third orders in Castile in the first decades of the sixteenth century, most often due to a growth in numbers. Ángela Muñoz Fernández, *Acciones e intenciones de mujeres en la vida religiosa de los siglos XV y XVI* (Madrid: Horas y Horas, 1995), 119; and *Beatas y santas neocastellanas*, 54, 68. For the origins of the Third Order Regular in Castile, see Salvador Cabot Rosselló, "Un marco para el estudio de la tercera orden regular de San Francisco en España," in *El franciscanismo en la península ibérica: Balance y perspectivas; I Congreso internacional, Madrid, 22–27 de septiembre de 2003*, ed. Felice Accrocca and María del Mar Graña Cid (Barcelona: Griselda Bonet Girabet, 2005), 349–72. Recently, hispanists have begun examining women's religious experience during this era, but either for provinces other than Juana's, or for Clarisan nuns rather than *beatas*. Most helpful are María del Mar Graña Cid, *Religiosas y ciudades: La espiritualidad femenina en la construcción sociopolítica urbana bajomedieval (Córdoba, siglos XIII–XVI)* (Cordoba, Spain: Asociación Hispánica de Estudios Franciscanos, 2010); Elizabeth A. Leheldt, *Religious Women in Golden-Age Spain: The Permeable Cloister* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005); and Susana Molina Domínguez, *Conventos de monjas franciscanas en Madrid en la Baja Edad Media*, vol. 5, *La querrela de las mujeres y las fundaciones religiosas femeninas* (Madrid: Almudayna, 2011).

13. Interestingly, the accusation intertwines profligacy and nepotism. The dating of this episode is difficult: the papal bulls have problematic dating—either 1514 or 1519—yet Daza's biography suggests this episode occurred in 1527. See Surtz, *Guitar of God*, 4, 11 n. 22. For Juana's visionary assurance about her right to appoint her brother, see *Vida y fin*, fols. 75v–76v; for her choice to pursue the issue by contacting Rome, see fols. 77v–78r.

cally reaffirmed over decades in the course of local devotion and as part of the official processes of beatification.<sup>14</sup>

Only a few brief documents survive that mention Mother Juana directly.<sup>15</sup> Two are letters from 1510 by Cardinal Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros, first granting and then ratifying the privilege to appoint the chaplain. Such authority was not entirely unique, as Cistercian abbesses had enjoyed similar privileges in earlier centuries and the abbess of Las Huelgas (Burgos) retained such rights up through the nineteenth century; yet to grant it to a newly incorporated Third Order convent was remarkable. The third surviving document testifies to Juana's local fame as preacher and holy woman, as well as to her own choice to position herself under obedience to the Franciscan order and to the church. In a letter dated 1512, Father Antonio de Pastraña records that a friar had written Juana asking her to be the mother of his child, as he believed that as parents they would produce the next Messiah. Juana responded by denouncing the friar for heresy. Her rejection of the messianic scheme not only indicates her loyalty to the church but also proves that she saw her role as vessel for the divine not in terms of maternity, but rather as mediator for Christ's voice through the sermons.

Given the scant archival record, the principal testimony to Juana's preaching career is thus the *Conorte*, which survives in two sixteenth-century manuscript copies and fills 1,250 pages in the first published edition (1999). This extraordinary record of seventy-two instances of a woman's public teaching is arranged to follow the liturgical year (purportedly that of 1509) like many late medieval sermon compilations.<sup>16</sup> Yet contemporary scholars consistently rename Juana's *sermones* as visions because the texts do not follow the classic medieval structure for sermons, that is, partitioned into strict subdivisions as in a scholastic dispute.<sup>17</sup> This recategorization ignores the broader definition of preaching applied to arenas beyond the church pulpit by medieval authors. To quote the twelfth-century theologian Alain of Lille, "Preaching is the public and open instruction in faith and morals or good conduct."<sup>18</sup> It was certainly much more common for women to evoke visionary experience rather than the charism of preaching, for this rhet-

14. For discussion of her incorrupt body, see Muñoz Fernández, *Acciones e intenciones*, 98.

15. These texts are documented and summarized in Surtz, *Guitar of God*, 4–5.

16. For an overview of genres from late medieval thematic sermons through humanist and Counter-Reformation sermons, see Thomas Worcester, "The Catholic Sermon," in *Preachers and People in the Reformations and Early Modern Period*, ed. Larissa Taylor (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 3–34.

17. The medieval subdivisions included *thema*, *invocatio et prothema*, *introitus thematis*, *thematis divisio*, *partium declaratio et confirmatio*, and *dilatatio*. Félix Herrero Salgado, *La oratoria sagrada en los siglos XVI y XVII* (Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española, 1996), 99–100.

18. "Summa de arte praedicatoria," *Patrologia Latina* 210, col. 111, quoted in Darleen Pryds, "Proclaiming Sanctity through Proscribed Acts: The Case of Rose of Viterbo," in *Women Preachers and Prophets through Two Millennia of Christianity*, ed. Beverly Mayne Kienzle and Pamela J. Walker (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 159–72, at 161.

oric allowed women to influence a male-dominated church by evoking “direct contact” with “the presence of God” rather than through the mediating presence of a priest.<sup>19</sup> Although Juana’s experiences do fulfill the classic understanding of visions, the scholarly reframing of her oral discourses as visions rather than sermons undermines the most distinctive aspect of Juana’s charismatic authority, for it transforms the public performativity of a sermon (and the immediate impact of its liturgical and theological implications) into a traditionally private visionary experience. While the other two manuscripts associated with Juana transcribe numerous visions not conveyed publicly, it is Juana’s many years as a preacher that make her unique in the history of Christianity.

Recent work on medieval preaching proposes that women, while prohibited from church pulpits, nevertheless had access to two acknowledged arenas in which they could exercise the charism of preaching, “sacred conversation” and “prophecy.”<sup>20</sup> Among enclosed nuns, abbesses regularly interpreted the *lectio divina* (spiritual readings) provided during refectory meals, termed sacred conversation. Outside the walls of the convent, the prophetic preaching conveyed during ecstasy or rapture of *beatas* and laywomen reached a more varied audience, including officials of the church and royalty.<sup>21</sup> Reputedly first preaching at the request of her guardian angel, Laruel, Juana’s thirteen years spent channeling Jesus’s voice combined the two acceptable forms of medieval female preaching that were usually differentiated by audience (nuns versus laity) and sources of authority (biblical reflection versus divinely induced ecstatic experience).<sup>22</sup> In the process, Juana went beyond scriptural interpretation to produce what might be termed “scriptural interpolation,” in which the voice of Jesus provided signifi-

19. These phrases echo McGinn’s influential 1991 definition of Christian mysticism: “the mystical element in Christianity is that part of its belief and practices that concerns the preparation for, the consciousness of, and the reaction to what can be described as the immediate or direct presence of God.” Bernard McGinn, *The Foundations of Mysticism*, vol. 1, *The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism* (New York: Crossroads, 1991), xvii. For a brief overview of the extensive scholarship on medieval women and visionary authority, see Amy Hollywood, “Gender, Agency, and the Divine in Religious Historiography,” *Journal of Religion* 84, no. 4 (2004): 514–28.

20. Gabriella Zarri, “Places and Gestures of Women’s Preaching in Quattro- and Cinquecento Italy,” in *Charisma and Religious Authority: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Preaching, 1200–1500*, ed. Katherine L. Jansen and Miri Rubin (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2010), 177–93, at 178.

21. María de Santo Domingo of the neighboring province of Avila was also known for her public, prophetic ecstasies, influential on Cisneros and King Fernando of Aragon. Jodi Bilinkoff, “Establishing Authority: A Peasant Visionary and Her Audience in Early Sixteenth-Century Spain,” *Studia Mystica* 18 (1997): 36–59. A recent book situates her in the broader European context of women visionaries: Rebeca Sanmartín Bastida, *La representación de las místicas: Sor María de Santo Domingo en su contexto europeo* (Santander, Spain: Propileo, 2012).

22. For Laruel’s request, see *Vida y fin*, fol. 20v. Note that the name Laruel seems to be unique to Juana—it is found nowhere in the biblical or imaginative traditions of Christianity, Judaism, or Islam before her.

cant expansions or alterations of known biblical episodes (such as the Fall or the Crucifixion).<sup>23</sup> It was the ecstatic aspect of Juana's preaching that authorized her explication of the biblical narrative, for only Jesus, not a woman, could so radically rewrite scriptural history.<sup>24</sup>

In addition to renarrating key biblical episodes, the voice of Jesus also provided extensive description of the events occurring in heaven that Juana witnessed while in rapture. In other words, Jesus *spoke* what Juana *saw*, transforming her visionary experience into an oral record seemingly authorized through the second person of the Trinity rather than through the abbess. These celestial events were termed *figuras* (allegorical pageants) whose symbolism Jesus then explicated detail by detail. In most of the sermons, the extensions of the biblical narrative were embedded in the midst of accounts of heavenly festivities occurring on that liturgical feast day; thus the sermons of *Conorte* are filled with scenarios of lengthy and luxurious meals capped off with games and dancing.<sup>25</sup> Jesus explicitly justifies this festive view of the afterlife: "all the entertainments and pleasures and dancing and music and songs that are being performed in heaven are without sin and for the great glory and praise of God."<sup>26</sup> The allegorical pageants not only add a theatrical element to the celebrations, but convey comprehensive information about the afterlife by depicting the everyday life and play of the Trinity, Mary, angels, devils, the beatified, and the damned. This combination of biblical narration and allegorical pageants in Juana's sermons results in a rich and expansive history of the daily life of the Trinity in the heavenly realm, while elaborating captivating new episodes about the lives of Jesus and various saints when on earth.

The sermons of *Conorte* form a fascinating window into Christian religiosity in the first decades of the sixteenth century in Castile, a window all the more critical for occurring just after the religious unification of the Iberian peninsula

23. It is worth noting that biblical commentary was available in the vernacular during Juana's preaching career. First Gonzalo García de Santa María (1493), then Ambrosio de Montesinos (1512) translated William of Paris's *Postillas super epistolas et evangelia*. Ronald E. Surtz, *Writing Women in Late Medieval and Early Modern Spain: The Mothers of Saint Teresa of Avila* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), 14.

24. In the final sermon, Jesus not only affirms that he is speaking through Juana by means of the Holy Spirit, but compares the process to that experienced by Solomon, i.e., the divine inspiration that produced the Song of Songs. *Conorte* II, 72.25, 1472. Juana defends the elaboration of the biblical narrative several times, see Ronald E. Surtz, "La Madre Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534) y la cuestión de la autoridad religiosa femenina," *Nueva Revista de Filología Hispánica* 33, no. 2 (1984): 483–91, at 489–90.

25. The centrality of feasting in heavenly life was more often elaborated in vernacular writings than in scholastic theology, as the latter limited heaven to a state of incorporeal bliss or defined it simply as including the orthodox while barring heretics. See the various articles in the collection by Carolyn Muessig and Ad Putter, *Envisaging Heaven in the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 2006).

26. "[L]os juegos y placeres y bailes y danzas y tañeres y canciones que se hacen en el cielo, todo es sin pecado y en gran gloria y alabanza de Dios." *Conorte* II, 72.18, 1470.

and during the first decades of the Inquisition. There is much to reap from these sermons concerning Spanish Renaissance culture, theology, mysticism, gender roles, and interreligious interactions.<sup>27</sup> However, the sermons remained unpublished until 1999, while two other manuscripts that collect private visions and information on devotional practices in her convent have never been edited. Only a handful of scholars have worked on Juana extensively; the only ones to publish full books and articles on her in English are the editors of this volume. The purpose of this translation is thus straightforward: to provide initial access to an extraordinary author for readers unfamiliar with Spanish, in the expectation that Juana as preacher, Juana as visionary, Juana as theologian will prove to be of especial interest for the study of Renaissance and Reformation Christianity, given that such studies so often relegate both Spain and the female gender to the sidelines.

Ronald E. Surtz and Nora Weinerth have translated six of the seventy-two sermons in *Conorte*, chosen as representative of Juana's combination of biblical narrative and allegorical pageantry. All six relate to principal episodes in Jesus's life and/or to major feast days: no. 1 Incarnation, no. 2 Nativity of Jesus, no. 13 losing Jesus in Jerusalem, no. 19 Good Friday, no. 20 Resurrection, and no. 22 discovery of the Holy Cross. This choice highlights Juana's contributions to ecclesial thought on some of the most essential liturgical and theological concerns addressed on a regular basis by preachers. Not included are the most titillating sermons, such as the retelling of Genesis 3 to place the blame on the serpent rather than Eve (no. 72) or the nude dance by Mary to prove her virtue (no. 50), which have been extensively summarized in the existing scholarship due to their implications for gender studies.<sup>28</sup> The ones provided in this volume are instead representative of the mix of orthodoxy and originality that pervades the majority of Juana's sermons.

27. "Spanish Renaissance" is a term used by a few scholars, but not with great abundance and with varying time frames, usually mid to late fifteenth century to mid to late sixteenth. It seems useful, however, to use the term primarily for the period between the end of the medieval pluri-religious era in 1492 and the strong movement of Catholic reform after the Council of Trent in 1563, as most of the principal developments characterizing the Italian Renaissance were imported during these seven decades but found themselves cheek by jowl with late medieval religious enthusiasms that would then be curbed by Tridentine decree. In other fields, literature scholars date the shift to Nebrija's 1492 publication of the first Spanish grammar as the beginning of the influence of humanism, while art historians designate the Spanish Renaissance as the era when Italian influence began competing with Hispano-Flemish influence in the early sixteenth century. Otis H. Green, *The Literary Mind of Medieval and Renaissance Spain: Essays* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1970), 99–100; Jonathan Brown, *Painting in Spain, 1500–1700* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 32–33.

28. Surtz opens his monograph on Juana with a chapter, "The Beard and the Apple," on the Genesis sermon (*Guitar of God*, 15–35). He focuses on the Nativity of Mary sermon in the chapter on Juana in *Writing Women*, 104–26.

This introduction addresses several audiences in an effort to make Mother Juana's sermons accessible to a wide range of scholars. It is our hope that this volume will expand the canon of medieval visionary literature currently centered on England (Julian of Norwich, Margery Kempe, Richard Rolle), Italy (Angela of Foligno, Catherine of Siena), and northern Europe (Mechthild of Magdeburg, Heinrich Suso, Hadewijch of Antwerp, Marguerite Porete) to include these Renaissance Castilian visionary sermons from the 1510s. In addition, this introduction proposes Juana as a preacher and theologian who was particularly creative and productive on topics such as Jesus's nature, Mariology (theological debates about Mary), and the afterlife. A main theme for exploration is the dual source of Juana's authority, as identified by the name of her convent, "María de la Cruz" (Mary of the Cross): Juana's local authority was related to Mary based on both her embodied and visionary engagement with the Virgin, while Juana's regional and national authority was related to Christomimesis (her embodiment imitating Jesus) due to her channeling of Jesus's voice through her sermons and her suffering.<sup>29</sup>

By giving Juana higher visibility among those who study the Spanish "Golden Age" of Christianity, it is hoped that her entire corpus—all seventy-two sermons and the two additional manuscripts concerning her life and visions—will become a critical resource for scholars whose understanding of Spanish "gender and religion" questions usually begins much later with Teresa of Avila rather than with this charismatic woman preacher, Mother Juana. In order to address these various constituencies, this introduction will first examine Spanish Renaissance religion as an era during which Castilians reimagined their Christian identity in a post-pluri-religious society, then consider the specific terrain Juana navigated as author and theologian. The complex production and dissemination history of the three texts attributed to Juana needs careful reconstruction, and only then can the three be mined in tandem to construct a coherent view of her doctrinal and devotional contributions to Renaissance religious thought and practice.

### *Religion during the Spanish Renaissance: Under the Influence of Cardinal Cisneros*

Shortly after ending political rule by Muslims internal to the peninsula and requiring that all Jews emigrate or convert in 1492, the monarchs Isabel and Fernando designated the Franciscan friar and newly appointed archbishop of

29. Such a double source of authority mirrors the founding narrative of her convent. During the 1449 apparitional experiences that confirmed Inés Martínez as a Marian seer, Mary both paralyzed Inés's hand into the form of a cross during the fourth apparition, then during the fifth apparition took a processional cross from Inés and planted it in the ground to indicate where she wanted a church to be built. See documents translated in Christian, *Apparitions*, 62–63.

Toledo, Cisneros, to reform the Spanish church.<sup>30</sup> He was asked to reconfigure the grassroots reform known as the Villacrecian movement that the Castilian Franciscan order had been undergoing since the 1420s and adapt it to the Spanish church as a whole.<sup>31</sup> Cisneros focused on bringing the ideals of the Observants (those who privileged poverty and asceticism above study) to all religious orders and clergy, as well as founding a number of *beaterios* and hermitages to promote sanctity.<sup>32</sup> Well-known for his commissioning of the first Polyglot Bible (published 1517–20), in the long term Cisneros's most effective institutional reform was the establishment of a new theological university, Alcalá de Henares (outside Madrid), for which he developed an innovative curriculum that integrated the separate scholastic theological approaches, Thomism, Scotism, and nominalism.<sup>33</sup> Although his concern with education was in the interests of producing a more adequately trained clergy, it seemed to some to run counter to the Villacrecian rejection of education in favor of a focus on spirituality and liturgy.

However, Cisneros's third reforming project contributed significantly to the availability of spiritual resources in the vernacular. Inspired by the Villacrecian

30. As noted in a recent review article, scholarship on the Observant trend in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries is scattered and unsystematic. James D. Mixson, "Religious Life and Observant Reform in the Fifteenth Century," *History Compass* 11, no. 3 (2013): 201–14. A recent book on Franciscan missionary spirituality in New Spain provides an important overview of their Spanish background. Steven E. Turley, *Franciscan Spirituality and Mission in New Spain, 1524–1599: Conflict beneath the Sycamore Tree (Luke 19:1–10)* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014), 11–28. Scholarship on the Observants in Spain most often focuses on Cisneros himself. The classic studies are José García Oro, *La reforma de los religiosos españoles en tiempo de los reyes católicos* (Valladolid: Instituto Isabel la Católica, 1969); Pedro Sáinz Rodríguez, *La siembra mística del Cardenal Cisneros y las reformas en la iglesia* (Madrid: Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca, 1979); and Erika Rummel, *Jiménez de Cisneros: On the Threshold of Spain's Golden Age* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1999).

31. Pedro de Villacreces (ca. 1362–1422) inaugurated the internal reform of the Spanish Franciscan order in the 1420s by founding a series of small hermitages known as *casas de retiro*. The movement's ideals were circulated through the writings of the friar Lope de Salinas y Salazar, collected in Fidel (de) Lejarza and Angel Uribe, eds., *Las reformas en los siglos XIV y XV: Introducción a los orígenes de la Observancia en España*, Archivo Ibero-Americano, vol. 17 (Madrid: J. Costa, 1957).

32. The bull *Exponi nobis* (1495) gave Cisneros the authority to reform existing convents. Molina Domínguez, *Conventos de monjas franciscanas*, 5, 46. For Cisneros's establishment of *beaterios*, see Muñoz Fernández, *Beatas y santas neocastellanas*, 58. For discussion of the Observants versus the Conventuals and the eventual ascendance of the Observants in Spain, see Turley, *Franciscan Spirituality and Mission*, 14–15. For discussion of the role of Isabel and Fernando in the reform of Spanish monasticism, see Elizabeth A. Leffeldt, "Gender, Order, and the Meaning of Monasticism during the Reign of Isabel and Ferdinand," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 93 (2002): 145–71.

33. Cisneros termed this approach "the three ways" (*las tres vías*), and unified them on the principle that if divine truth is unitary, then all three approaches must ultimately reveal the same truth. Melquíades Andrés, *La teología española en el siglo XVI*, 2 vols. (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1977), 1:35.

emphasis on mental prayer (silent, meditative) rather than standardized vocal prayers typical of monastic devotion, in 1502 Cisneros established a printing press in Alcalá that not only served the needs of the Franciscan Order but also a wide range of readers both monastic and lay.<sup>34</sup> This press in particular, and patronage by both Queen Isabel and Cisneros more generally, produced a great number of translations of church fathers and the classics of medieval spirituality from Italy and northern Europe, including women's visionary texts. With authors ranging from Gregory the Great and Ludolph of Saxony to Angela of Foligno and Catherine of Siena available in the vernacular for the first time, the Cisnerian reform provided access to an extensive range of spiritual models in very short order. The two imported genres that had the most impact on Spanish Christianity post-Reconquest were, on the one hand, the *Vita Christi* (*Life of Christ*) tradition, particularly its focus on Passion spirituality, and on the other hand, women's visionary literature.

In all of medieval Europe except Castile, imaginative meditation filling in the visual and visceral details of Jesus's life and death beyond those given in the Gospels, particularly concerning the extensive torture he suffered throughout Holy Week, reigned supreme in devotional practice.<sup>35</sup> Pedro Cátedra and Cynthia Robinson have argued persuasively that focus on Jesus and Mary's suffering did not gain currency in medieval Castile on the same timeline as the rest of Europe, due in large part to a greater need for instructive or polemical texts aimed at potential converts from Judaism or Islam rather than for devotional texts for practitioners.<sup>36</sup> Texts and artwork emphasizing Jesus's torture and death only began to be translated or commissioned in the mid-fifteenth century and only achieved wide circulation starting in the 1480s, both due to patronage by

34. For the extended devotions both external and internal recommended by Lope de Salinas y Salazar, see "Memorial de la vida y ritos de la Custodia de Santa María de los Menores," in *Las reformas en los siglos XIV y XV*, ed. Lejarza and Uribe, 727–29; for discussion, see Jessica A. Boon, *The Mystical Science of the Soul: Medieval Cognition in Bernardino de Laredo's Recollection Mysticism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 34–36. For Cisneros's printing press, see, among others, Anthony Levi, *Renaissance and Reformation: The Intellectual Genesis* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 226. For the impact of Cisneros's printing press on the readings available to women religious, see Elizabeth Teresa Howe, *Education and Women in the Early Modern Hispanic World* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008), 63–64.

35. Even Catalonia had a strong focus on the Passion, as seen in their extensive altarpiece and textual tradition. Judith Berg Sobré, *Behind the Altar Table: The Development of the Painted Retable in Spain, 1350–1500* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1989), 133–58, 167–80; and Albert G. Hauf i Valls, "La *Vita Christi* de Sor Isabel de Villena y la tradición de las *Vitae Christi* medievales," in *Studia in honorem prof. M. de Riquer II* (Barcelona: Quaderns Crema, 1987), 106–64.

36. Pedro M. Cátedra, *Poesía de pasión en la Edad Media: El Cancionero de Pero Gómez de Ferrol* (Salamanca: Seminario de Estudios Medievales y Renacentistas, 2001), 191–297; Cynthia Robinson, *Imagining the Passion in a Multiconfessional Castile: The Virgin, Christ, Devotions, and Images in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013).

