This book owes its inception to a suggestion made by Luis Sánchez Belda, Director of the Archivo Histórico Nacional in Madrid, in the spring of 1977. I was discussing with him my plans for a study of Urraca's chancery, and he observed that the time was probably ripe for a full history of her reign. My initial reaction was polite skepticism, but subsequent reflection led me to agree.

I had been working, at the time, for thirteen years with the documents of the Archivo and those of virtually all the cathedral archives of north central and western Spain, and the great eighteenth-century compilations of copies of documents reposing in the Biblioteca Nacional and the Real Academia de la Historia were familiar to me. In addition, a series of discrete studies on the chancery of Alfonso VII and on the chronicles of the twelfth century put me in a position to gauge realistically the work entailed and the likelihood of completing it successfully. Under these circumstances, Señor Belda's observation came, more and more, to make great good sense to me and to constitute a considerable challenge as well.

As all Spanish medievalists are aware, the one hundred twenty years spanning the reigns of Fernando I (1037-1065), Alfonso VI (1065-1109), Urraca (1109-1126), and Alfonso VII (1126-1157) in León-Castilla have been neglected. No one of the four has inspired a biography. With the exception of the incomplete work of Peter Rassow, the documents of none have been critically examined and edited. Yet in this period León-Castilla was incontestably the greatest Christian kingdom in the peninsula and leader of the Reconquista. From this context an independent Portugal was born, the kingdom of Aragón consolidated, and an additional quarter of the peninsula's land mass reclaimed from Islam.

The same century and a half saw the spread of Romanesque architecture and the Carolingian script from France to Spain. Both Cluniac monasticism and the Gregorian reform reworked the structures of the Spanish ecclesiastical world. The refoundation and rapid growth of towns and the reintroduction of the coinage of money gave evidence of a society ready to appropriate and channel these new techniques and concepts to its own purposes.

It is not that all of these phenomena have been neglected by Spanish medievalists. There have been valuable studies of individual cathedrals, editions of the documents of many cathedrals and monasteries, treatments of specific movements such as the Cluniac reform and of the revolts of the towns. What has not been done is the sort of synthetic, political history of a reign or reigns, that would supply the context in which these movements developed, against which they reacted, and with which they combined. General surveys aside, the sole modern attempt to provide a work of this sort has been Ramón Menéndez Pidal, La España del Cid, for the reign of Alfonso VI. In my opinion, however, the very considerable merit of that study is vitiated by its ideological baggage. There is too much reliance on the essential historical accuracy of a piece of imaginative literature, itself the product of a period when to be Castilian was to suspect the worth of all things Leonese. The Cid himself is made the protagonist not only of Castilian superiority but also of the Mozárabic liturgy, of Hispanic
distinctiveness in Europe, and of an antiaristocratic attitude, in a fashion that tells us more about the Spain of Alfonso XIII than that of Alfonso VI.

Given that the entire period was in need of a historian, I chose the reign of Urraca because it was the most crucial, least understood, and most easily managed of the four. It was most crucial because it was the only time during the Spanish medieval period that a woman ruled in her own right for some seventeen years. That unprecedented event opened the possibility of the union of León-Castilla and Aragón by a marriage, which eventually failed, and of the disintegration of the kingdom of León-Castilla, constructed so rapidly by Fernando I and Alfonso VI and subject to such enormous strains at the latter's death.

It is the most manageable because it is the shortest of the four reigns and the most restricted in terms of geographic extent. Neither recommendation is inconsiderable in a period for which the historian has most often to be his own archivist, paleographer, and diplomatist as well. If one cannot ignore the problems of the origin of an independent Portugal and of the dynamic growth of Aragón -- Queen Urraca was essentially on the defensive in regard to both developments -- they can at least be considered under the limited rubric of foreign policy.

The reign of Queen Urraca is perhaps the least understood because contemporary and subsequent historians alike have been so disappointed in it. On the whole, contemporaries disliked the marriage of Urraca and King Alfonso I of Aragón, but they disliked also the tumult and civil war that resulted from its disruption and regarded both as the natural products of sole rule by a woman. Modern historians have, by and large, been fascinated by the prospects the marriage seemed to offer and have regretted the loss of this early opportunity for the political unification of Spain. In either case, the prevailing tendency has been to consider Urraca's reign as a kind of interregnum to be discussed and dismissed as quickly as possible. The result has been unfortunate and fundamentally mistaken. Certainly Urraca's sex contributed a special dimension to the problems of the kingdom, but these problems were the logical result of policies and events during the reign of her father, Alfonso VI, and would have required resolution in any case. I do not see any grounds for insisting that a male heir would have found better solutions for them than Urraca did. Although her solutions were partial and pragmatic ones, they laid the basis for the brilliant reign of her son, Alfonso VII, who succeeded to the throne of a kingdom at peace at Urraca's death in 1126.

The resources for a history of León-Castilla under Urraca are considerable. I am aware of 118 charters and documents of the queen herself that survive in whole or part. Another 24 of her son, Alfonso, and her daughter, Sancha, date to Urraca's reign. I am familiar with at least 900 other private documents between 1109 and 1126 that furnish useful information about the queen and her government.

Four roughly contemporary literary accounts are of sufficient utility to merit brief comment here. The "Historia Compostelana" is the most important of these and covers the entire period from 1109 to 1126 and more. A very complex work of multiple authorship, it must be used with care, for it is essentially an episcopal gesta of Diego Gelmírez, bishop and then archbishop of Santiago de Compostela, and very partisan in its commentary. Because Gelmírez was by turns a chief supporter and antagonist of Urraca, his biography contains a mine of information on events in the period. Roughly similar in nature is "Las crónicas anónimas de Sahagún," an account of the fortunes and misfortunes of the most important royal abbey of León-Castilla from the beginning of Urraca's reign until 1117. Although its interest also is something else than the history of the reign as such, Sahagún was so central to the realm and its dynasty that again it supplies invaluable if erratic information. The Crónica del Obispo Don Pelayo ends with the death of Alfonso VI in 1109 but does illuminate the marital and succession policies of that monarch and so is useful for the circumstances of Urraca's accession. Finally, the Chronica Adefonsi Imperatoris treats the period of Urraca's son, Alfonso VII, but illustrates as well the
conditions of the last days of his mothers reign. Other chronicles and annals furnish sporadic but not unimportant notices.

After the first half of the twelfth century there is a hiatus in historical writing in León-Castilla. When it resumes in the thirteenth century, the "Chronicon Mundi" of Bishop Lucas of Túy is already badly informed concerning Urraca. The "De rebus Hispaniae" of Archbishop Jiménez de Rada of Toledo and the Primera crónica general, produced under the patronage of Alfonso X, are sometimes useful but are thoroughly colored by the literature of the vernacular epic and must be consulted with extreme caution.

During the modern period Queen Urraca has had no historian of her own. The great eighteenth-century Augustinian historian, Enrique Flórez, devoted a generally judicious chapter to her in Memorias de las reinas católicas de España. But the only English work on her, a chapter in E. L. Miron, The Queens of Aragon, is full of errors.

This book was undertaken, then, not only with a conviction that it is needed but also with a firm realization of its possibilities. What the circumstances seemed to require above all was a reliable regesta that would establish for the first time a firm chronology of the entire reign and make available notices of every known charter of Urraca, the pertinent private documents, and the contemporary literary sources. On the basis of these I have attempted cautiously to draw conclusions about the main outlines of her policies and to furnish a sketch of the main institutions of her government, of the church, and of the towns as they appear in the documents of her time. I have eschewed, as much as possible, drawing more sweeping conclusions about the general development of the latter in the kingdom of León-Castilla because of the dearth of detailed studies for the reigns of her grandfather, father, and son.

I have avoided for the most part the sort of inferences proper to biography because the materials vital to a biographical approach simply do not exist. I have also avoided social and economic history because the critical editing of documents necessary for such a task has scarcely more than well begun. Although this account may seem pedestrian to some, I will be well content if it provides a trustworthy foundation for the future, and more exciting, work of others.

Because of the scattered and sometimes obscure nature of the documents, when citing a document for the first time I have tried to include references to every copy and printing unless it has been properly edited. Subsequent notices are to the most reliable copy or to the most available published copy. After much pondering, I have decided to render every proper name of a Spanish person or place in the Spanish. That should cause little hardship, if some impatience, and it does have the modest virtue of consistency.

To thank everyone who helped in the production of a work of this sort is of course impossible. But I must acknowledge again, with thanks, that the original idea was Sr. Sánchez Beldá's. I am very grateful to Charles Julan Bishko for his kind help over many years and especially for his reading of the entire book in typescript and his helpful comments upon it. Lynn Nelson was so kind as to review Chapter Two for me. My son, Stephen Reilly, devoted much care to making the accompanying maps both accurate and intelligible. Finally, Elizabeth Polkowski has to be the world's fastest, most efficient, and pleasant typist.

Egregious errors, blatant omissions, and outrageous interpretations are entirely my own.

Bernard F. Reilly
Notes for the Preface

1. Manuel Recuero Astray, *Alfonso VII, Emperador* (León, 1979), is a beginning that depends, however, far too heavily on the *Chronica Adefonsi Imperatoris* for both information and interpretation and neglects the documentation.


3. *La España del Cid*, 2 vols., 5th ed. (Madrid, 1956). The number of editions through which this work has gone is testimony both to the intrinsic interest of the period and to the lack of other work bearing on it.

4. I find the recent redating of the *Cantar del mio Cid* to the early thirteenth century, in contrast with Menéndez Pidal's dating to the first half of the twelfth, convincing. See Colin Smith, *Poema de mio Cid* (Oxford, 1972), pp. xxxiii-xxxiv.

5. Luis García de Valdeavellano, *Historia de España de los origines a la baja Edad Media*, 2d ed. (Madrid, 1955), vol. 1, pt. 2, p. 387: "La muerte del conde Raimundo de Borgoña era, en realidad, el primero de los sucesos que, al acumularse en el breve espacio de dos años, han de iniciar uno de los periodos más agitados y confusos de la historia del Imperio hispánico leonés...."


8. Edited by Benito Sánchez Alonso (Madrid, 1924).

9. Edited by Luis Sánchez Belda (Madrid, 1950), with valuable notes.


11. Reprinted recently (Valencia, 1968) but innocent of study or critical apparatus.

13. (Madrid, 1761), pp. 311-357.