Contrary to common assumption the abbots of Cluny in the eleventh and twelfth centuries rarely crossed the Pyrenees to visit the Iberian Peninsula. Throughout this period of Cluniac greatness in medieval Spain only three abbots, Hugh the Great, Ponce de Melgueil and Peter the Venerable, made the arduous journey from Burgundy, and they each but once in a long abbatiate. Furthermore, these visits, although commonly attributed to the abbot's duty of inspecting Cluny's peninsular priories and his desire to make the pilgrimage to Compostella, unquestionably had a predominantly economic objective in two of the three cases. Abbot Hugh traveled to Burgos in 1090 for the express purpose of securing from King Alfonso VI of Leon and Castile the solemn imperial confirmation of that monarch's earlier lucrative grant to Cluny of an annual census of 2000 gold mithkals; and Peter the Venerable's celebrated traverse of 1142, as his negotiations with Alfonso VII at Salamanca prove, was likewise inspired by a crisis in the collection of the same prized Cluniac revenue. But if the principal motive of Hugh's and Peter's Spanish journeys is plain, the same cannot yet be said of that of Ponce de Melgueil, which, as regards its circumstances and accomplishments, still remains in the darkness that veils so much of this abbot's turbulent career. Only with the aid of unknown or hitherto improperly used evidence from the Spanish sources does it seem possible to restore this least known of the three abbatial crossings of the Pyrenees to its proper place in the history of Spanish-Cluniac relations.

The sole authority now cited for Abbot Ponce's peninsular trip is a brief passage in the Chartularium Sithiense of the French abbey of St. Bertin (Saint-Omer) stating that Ponce «post paucos annos ordinationis sue, peragratis superioribus monasteriis Hispanie, Burgundie, Francie, Abbatis Villam tandem devenit »[2]. Since Ponce was elected abbot of Cluny in 1109, and since he presumably reached Abbeville in the winter of 1111, it seems to follow that his Spanish journey occurred in 1110 or 1111, and was directed towards visitation of Cluny's major trans-Pyrenean subject-houses.[3] But this testimony of the St Bertin chronicle, although the basis of current statements about Ponce's visit to Spain, requires to be re-examined in the light of the Spanish documents.

First of all, in view of the fact that Hugh's and Peter's Spanish trips were directly inspired by crises in the payment of the Alfonsine census, it is of prime significance that total suspension of this important revenue by the Leonese-Castilian crown must have confronted Ponce de Melgueil from the very start of his abbatiate. The reasons for this are clear. In 1109, the year of Ponce's election, Alfonso VI had died and been succeeded on the throne by his daughter Queen Urraca, who almost immediately married her second cousin, King Alfonso I el Batallador of Aragon. This marriage, which might conceivably have foreshadowed by some four centuries the unification of the Spains under the Reyes Católicos, actually resulted in a series of violent quarrels and short-lived reconciliations between the two rulers,
accompanied by prolonged and bitterly destructive warfare in Castile, Leon and Galicia. Queen Urraca thus found herself involved in a costly and, for long, a losing struggle with the powerful Aragonese king and his supporters, a struggle in which she was constantly hampered by lack of funds for military and political purposes, as the sources show. Under such circumstances, although the evidence is indirect, it can be safely concluded that from 1111, on, if not as early as 1110 itself, the hard-pressed queen had been driven to halt the customary annual delivery of the 2000 gold mithkals into the hands of the Cluniac abbatial chamberlain then serving in Spain, Dalmace Geret.

So far as can be determined, from at least 1111 on, Urraca never again discharged the Cluniac census in gold. But, as has yet to be recognized, in mid-January 1114 for the first time the queen commenced making to Cluny almost annual donations of monasteries, churches and royal estates. This is proved by a group of hitherto unknown charters of this queen in the Madrid Academia de la Historia documents on the Cluniac priory of San Isidro de Dueñas in Leon. So regular are these Urracan cessions in their virtually annual sequence, [313] and so contradictory to the consistent policy of Alfonso VI who with his grant to Abbot Hugh of the doubled census completely reversed his earlier practice of monastic cessions to Cluny, and from 1081 made no further such grants for the remaining three decades of his reign that they can only be understood as demonstrating a conversion of the census from payment in gold, which the queen did not possess, to payment in kind from her realengo holdings of lands, churches and monasteries.

Now, so important a transformation in what Cluny regarded as her major source of external income in this period of growing financial difficulties, could hardly have been effected without personal negotiation between Urraca and Ponce. Just as in 1090 it was necessary for Hugh to travel to Burgos to consult with Alfonso VI on the perpetuation of the census, and in 1142 for Peter the Venerable to meet with Alfonso VII at Salamanca to arrange its final abolition, so it appears certain that a primary aim of Ponce's trip to Spain was inquiry into the queen's non-payment of the annual 2000 mithkals, resulting in the negotiation of an agreement in which Cluny, in view of prevailing conditions, agreed to accept property transfers in lieu of cash. Furthermore, since initiation of this new type of census settlement can logically be expected to commence immediately after the holding of such a conference, it seems to follow that queen and abbot met in the nearest preceding travel season for French visitors to the Peninsula. This is indirectly confirmed by several Spanish Cluniac charters. The diploma of 1 May 1112 by which Countess Aldouza and her daughter Elvira Moniz ceded Cluny and Abbot Ponce their monastery of San Salvador de Villaverde contains no overtones of a recent or immediately anticipated abbatial visit. On the other hand, three later charters suggest something of the kind: (1) that of 14 December 1113, by which Urraca's chief Gallegan supporter Count Pedro Froilaz de Traba gave Cluny his great family abbey of San Martin de Jubià; (2) that of 26 December 1113, in which the count's wife, Doña Gontruda Rodriguez, granted this new Cluniac priory of San Martin her villa of 'Coina'; and (3) Urraca's own already cited grant of mid-January 1114, transferring to San Isidro de Dueñas the royal monastery of San Millán de Soto as the first of the new series of annual cessions by the queen. The importance of these donations, and their chronological conjunction with one another and with the adoption of the new census payments in kind, both point to a recent visit of the abbot of Cluny in the preceding summer of 1113.

But the chronological question, as well as our whole understanding of the purpose of Ponce de Melgueil's Spanish journey, is further complicated by the probability that the abbot of Cluny also served on this occasion as the apostolic legate of Paschal II. That the pope intervened in the prolonged war between Urraca and Alfonso el Batallador in the hope of securing a negotiated peace settlement has long been known, chiefly through the pages of the Historia Compostellana. This remarkable work, composed in the first half of the twelfth century by four (or possibly five) canons of the cathedral church of Santiago, and published in 1765 by Padre Henrique Flórez as Tomo XX of España Sagrada,
twice refers to papal peace missions to the Peninsula under Paschal II.

The first passage, Book I, chapter 79, describes the activities of a papal envoy in Spain designated only (in Flórez' text) as *abbas Clusensis*. This abbot-legate visits in turn King Alfonso and Queen Urraca; he summons the bishops of Leon and Castile, as well as representatives of the warring *reyes*, to a peace council to be held in mid-August in the pope's presence; and at Compostella he consults with Bishop Diego Gelmiirez on the solution of the political crisis. Flórez placed this legation in the year 1112 and identified the apostolic envoy as the abbot (Helmengaud) of the Italian Benedictine abbey of San Michele della Chiusa, insisting (p. 139, n. 1) that the manuscript reading was « Clusensem, non Cluniacensen. Est autem Clusa Abbatia Taurinensis Dioecesis ». Flórez' identification has been repeated by López Ferreiro, Säbekow, Kehr, Ballesteros, Biggs, and other authorities, but the case against accepting this reading of the text and recognizing a minor Piedmontese abbot, relatively unknown in western Spain, as Paschal II's agent for resolving a major political and military crisis, is very strong. Flórez does not indicate whether the adjective *Clusensis* appears written out or abbreviated, or from which manuscript he obtained it. He used three inferior manuscripts for his edition, not the best and earliest at Santiago, and strongly emphasizes in his preface (paragraphs 17-18) that these must have been written by scribes ignorant of Latin, so teeming were they in errors of abbreviation and orthography. Under such conditions, confusion of abbreviated forms of *Cluniacensis* with *Clusensis* could easily occur. Throughout Book I of the *Compostellana* the only other references to the abbots of Cluny (cc. 16, 17) also omit the proper name and use the form *abbas Cluniacensis*. In view of this practice, it is difficult to believe that Pedro Anaya, the author of this portion of the work, would mention an Italian abbot without sufficient geographical information to distinguish him from the already mentioned abbot of Cluny.

Even more decisive are the general circumstances of the papal peace mission, which strongly suggest Ponce was the legate. Given the seriousness of the ecclesiastical no less than the political situation -- Alfonso I's destruction of churches and monasteries and his violent expulsion from their sees of Archbishop Bernard of Toledo and the bishops of Palencia, Osma, Burgos and Leon -- it is not likely that the papacy, which had hitherto on much less momentous occasions always employed cardinals or bishops as its peninsular envoys, would send an unknown legate, lacking acquaintance with, or prestige in, the Leonese-Castilian realm. It should be remembered further that this envoy superseded the permanent papal legate in Spain, the primate and archbishop of Toledo, and needed to be of high rank. Diego Gelmiirez' petitions for papal aid, to which the *Compostellana* (c. 79), with doubtless some justice, attributes Paschal II's decision to intervene in Spain, had called for a cardinal or churchman of comparable station. Anaya's warm approval of the legate sent is implicit, and his references to the abbot's long-standing knowledge of, and admiration for, that stout Cluniophile, the bishop of Compostella, once more suggest Ponce of Cluny. Finally, it should be recognized that the war between Urraca and her husband was regarded by the pope, the Leonese-Castilian hierarchy and the nobles as fundamentally a question of the legitimate succession to the throne, involving the hereditary rights of Urraca, Alfonso VI's daughter, and her young son by her first marriage, Alfonso Raimúndez, as against those that Alfonso of Aragon claimed to have acquired by his marriage with the queen. Leon-Castile, and especially Leon, was a state with which, under Ferdinand I, Alfonso VI and Urraca, Cluny had strong personal and political ties; and on two previous occasions the abbot of Cluny had been called upon to settle dynastic disputes. The first occasion was in 1072, when Abbot Hugh intervened to secure the liberation of Alfonso VI after his defeat and imprisonment by his brother Sancho II of Castile. Again in 1105-1107, the succession crisis involving Alfonso VI's two Burgundian sons-in-law, Count Raymond of Galicia and Count Henry of Portugal, was steered to a successful compromise by the same abbot, acting in this case through his able chamberlain in Spain, Dalmace Geret. Thus Abbot Ponce was the natural, not to say the inevitable, papal choice for the task of restoring peace to a troubled
Yet, if the abbot-legate of the *Historia Compostellana*, Book I, c. 79, is admitted to have been Ponce de Melgueil, a chronological difficulty immediately arises, since according to Flórez Paschal II's legation fell in 1112, whereas on other grounds, as we have seen, the summer of 1113 is indicated for Ponce's visit. Flórez' chronology, indeed, has won general acceptance -- Ballesteros alone dissents, although without stating his reasons -- so that it is now assumed that the envoy left Rome after the Lateran Council of March 1112 and, after reaching Spain, conferred with Alfonso and Urraca in the midst of the latter's siege of her husband at Carrión that same summer. But this seems quite unlikely. The very fact that Ponce met first with Alfonso proves the contrary, for at the siege of Carrión the prior interview would necessarily have been with the besieger, Urraca. It is true that at the start of c. 79, we hear of two years' having elapsed since Alfonso I's expulsion (in 1110) of Archbishop Bernard from his see of Toledo; but this is patently a quotation or paraphrase from Gelmírez' letter to the Pope, which must have been written before April 1113, and probably in the summer or fall of 1112. Certainly, it is suggestive that in the almost identical passage at the end of the chapter, where Gelmírez tells the legate at Santiago of the abuses committed by the *tyrannus Aragonensis*, the term *biennium* is omitted, undoubtedly because it was by that time more than two years since Bernard's loss of his see. The fact is, c. 79 of the *Compostellana* belongs to a group of chapters, cc. 74-82, on local Gallegan affairs, with which Anaya interrupts his main narrative, carried down to 1112 at c. 73. and resumed again at c. 83 sub anno 1113. Chapter 79 is one of several chapters in this Gallegan excursus vaguely dated interea and eodem tempore, and the internal evidence shows that it belongs in 1113.

The date of c. 79, however, cannot be satisfactorily determined without also relating the problem to a succeeding chapter of the *Compostellana*, c. 89 of Book I. Here there occurs the text of a letter of Paschal II quoted by Bishop Diego Gelmírez in the course of a sermon he delivered to the Urracan forces besieging Alfonso's troops at Burgos in late June of 1113. In this letter, dated only as of 14 April, and directed to Archbishop Bernard and the bishops and magnates of Leon-Castile, the pope urges those addressed to assemble together for consultation on the restoration of peace and declares that, at the earliest opportunity, he is sending an apostolic legate to Spain. The modern authorities regard this legate of c. 89 (who is never subsequently mentioned in the *Compostellana*) as a second peace envoy who was sent to the Peninsula after the failure of the *abbas Clusensis*.[14] But the whole tone of the epistle is one of initial, not renewed, papal action: nothing is said of a failure of a preceding mission or of collapse of the plans for an Italian synod in mid-August. There is thus [317] good reason to believe that -- whether Anaya realized it or not -- this is in fact the preliminary announcement of the abbot-legate's mission described out of chronological order in c. 79. This conclusion provides further confirmation of 1113 as the year of Paschal II's intervention.

To be sure, Diego Gelmírez might conceivably have quoted in June 1113 a papal missive of earlier date in order to strengthen his attack upon the royal marriage and the threat of a possible reconciliation of Alfonso and Urraca; but two facts prove the letter was actually written and received in 1113. First, Diego's strong pressure upon the primate to convocate immediately, even in the midst of the siege, the assembly of bishops and nobles ordered by the pope, shows that arrival of the promised legate was then regarded as imminent. Second, after the failure of this attempt at an immediate council, Bernard's summons of prelates and nobles to a council at Palencia on 25 October indicates by that late date alone that it was at that point thought necessary to postpone fulfilment of the pope's instructions until after the legate had completed his mission.[15]

On the basis of the foregoing reasoning, it now becomes possible to attempt a reconstruction of the general circumstances of Ponce's Spanish journey. It would appear that the assumption, based upon the St Bertin chronicle, that the trip occurred in 1110 or 1111, is to be rejected, unless we posit two crossings into the Peninsula, in 1110 or 1111 and in 1113. This is altogether unlikely. Either the
chronicle of St Bertin erred in its chronology, as it certainly did in assuming visitation of his priories was the abbot's chief objective; or, very possibly, the phrase « peragratis superioribus monasteriis etc. » must be taken to mean broadly that Abbeville was reached not at the conclusion of, but in the course of, Ponce's extended travels in Spain, Burgundy and France. The year 1112 is ruled out as well, since we know Ponce was at Cluny on 28 July of that year. It was then that he received the fragment of the True Cross that Archbishop Maurice of Braga sent to Cluny in the custody of the chamberlain Dalmace Geret. This precious relic would surely have been entrusted to Ponce himself if he had visited Spain that summer.(16)

With the Alfonsine census in default from at least 1111, the abbot of Cluny, we can be sure, envisaged, if he did not actually plan, a Spanish visit before 1113. It is however impossible to determine whether Paschal II, who, as his letter of 14 April shows, was then still undecided as to his choice of a Spanish envoy, took advantage of an announced abbatial visit to employ Ponce's services, or whether[318] he precipitated Ponce's decision to go to the Peninsula that year by naming him legate. In any case, it must be clear that the journey had a double purpose, on the one hand papal and diplomatic, on the other, Cluniac and financial; to these larger aims inspection of the peninsular dependencies and a pilgrimage to Compostella were largely incidental.

Ponce's route in Spain undoubtedly followed the line of the camín francés to Galicia. Since, as the Compostellana informs us, the abbot entered western Spain, he presumably crossed the Pyrenees at Roncesvalles and advanced towards Castile along the Navarro-Castilian stretch of the great highway, via Pamplona and Logroño. A halt can certainly be allowed for at Santa María de Nájera,, below Logroño, Cluny's great Riojan priory at which Peter the Venerable also stopped in 1142. The meeting with el Batallador, who was doubtless in Castile, belongs somewhere between Nájera and Burgos, perhaps even at the latter city, where Cluny's Castilian dependency of Santa Coloma was located, and where, with the siege of Burgos ended, Alfonso could again find entrance. The parallel conference with the queen can be set in Leon, either at Carrión de los Condes, site of the Cluniac priory of San Zoil, or at Astorga, another pilgrimage road center serving Urraca in this period as a major base of operations. Since the queen's ambulatory court then regularly included a number of the Leonese-Castilian bishops (especially those expelled from their sees by the king of Aragon), the papal summons to the Italian council of mid-August must have been published by the legate in the same place where he met the queen, although it must have been apparent, in view of the late date and Alfonso's hostile reception of the papal proposals, that this assembly would never meet.

Within the year 1113 the time of the trip can be fixed with some precision. The publication of the papal epistle of 14 April to the prelates and nobles at the siege of Burgos places Ponce's arrival, then regarded as imminent, after the last week of June. The suggestion here that the abbot-legate actually appeared in Castile-Leon in July finds support in the description of his meeting with Alfonso, Urraca and Gelmiirez, where emphasis is placed upon breaking up the reconciliation plans adopted by the two monarchs soon after the termination of the siege of Burgos in early July. Finally, Ponce would hardly publish the papal call to the Italian council after, or even too close to, mid-August. Thus July, and perhaps part of August also, the normal travel season for tourists in Spain, seems indicated as the period in which the abbatial journey occurred.

This is not the place to discuss the precise aims of papal policy as regards the settlement of the war in Leon and Castile, or the way in which the abbot-legate of 1113 carried out his diplomatic mission. [319] Obviously enough, the visit was a failure from the papal side, a relative success -- with the resumption of census payments on the new basis in kind -- from the standpoint of Cluny's financial interests. Much still remains to be done with the diplomatic aspects of Ponce's journey, but it will suffice for the moment if we have established the date, aims and approximate itinerary of what has been the most obscure of the three memorable crossings of the Pyrenees by the Cluniac abbots of the
eleventh and twelfth centuries.

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**Additional Notes**

[320A] Of the two principal mysteries surrounding Paschal II's mission to the warring spouses Urraca and Alfonso el Batallador, that of its timing is less crucial than the determination of the abbot-legate's identity. Due to the limited circulation, as Segl correctly observes, of the little paper above, my brief on behalf of Abbot Ponce (Pontius, Pons) has enjoyed relatively scant notice, particularly among Spanish historians. Despite several objections made against it, I still deem it the only satisfactory resolution of the enigma. Nothing further has been discovered which would support the still widely held belief that the papal emissary was Helmengaud of the Turinese abbey of San Michele della Chiusa, the view so successfully propagated in 1765 by Flórez (although it was not original with him since it had already appeared by 1721 in Berganza's *Antigüedades*). That there was a link between this Piedmontese house and Spain is clear from Hadrian IV's confirmation of San Michele's possessions on 9 April 1156, where two Catalan monastic dependencies are named: Santa María de Cervia (dioc. Gerona) and a "monasterium de Cruzillis". This however throws no light whatever upon why the unknown Helmengaud, rather than the customary prominent figure of cardinalitial or episcopal rank, was selected to head a highly important mission to the reigning monarchs of Leon-Castile and Aragon-Navarre. Such a choice, if ever made, remains almost inexplicable.

In contrast, the signs favoring Ponce can be further expanded. To the testimony of the Saint-Bertin chronicle concerning the Spanish visit, Urraca's resort from 1114 to cessions of monasteries and lands to Cluny in commutation of her father's promised annual census of 2000 gold dinars, the cluster of private benefactions made to the abbey in these same years, and the virtual certainty that for Leonese-Castilian scribes and their readers of the 12th century *Clusensis* could only have passed as a contraction for *Cluniacensis* and not for an Italian toponym unfamiliar in the Hispanic West-- should now be added two other considerations. Cowdrey, in his careful biographical study, remarks on this Cluniac administrator's known capabilities as a skilful diplomat; and allowance can be made for the natural reluctance in Cluniac-influenced circles to mention Ponce's name after he was deposed in disgrace in 1122, which would explain why it was omitted from *Historia Compostellana*, I, 79.

[321A] The general case for Ponce's legateship in 1113 has been favorably received by two able students of Hispano-Cluniac relations: Segl, who accepts it without reservation; and Cowdrey, who finds it "attractive" although not conclusive, and prefers to suspend judgment pending preparation of the needed critical edition of *H. C.* In contrast, B. F. Reilly's recent reconstruction of Urraca's troubled reign retains Helmengaud of Chiusa as Paschal II's envoy, and, pronouncing the year 1113 "impossible", espouses the mission's traditional ascription to 1112. In view of Reilly's earlier close studies of the MSS and multiple authorship of *H. C.*, it is regrettable-- not to say surprising--that in this connection he silently passes over the key question of the paleographical validity of *Clusensis-Cluniacensis* in *H. C*. On chronological grounds, he objects to 1113 because Urraca and Alfonso were then at war--but this is precisely the situation which Pascal II, and I, allowed for. He declares that in 1113 there would have been no necessity for the legate's going on to Compostela after interviewing
Urraca, since Gelmírez was then at the queen's side; but does this contradict my statement (318) that this interview took place at or near Carrión or Astorga? Without doubt, Cowdrey's deduction from two later letters of Gelmírez to Ponce that the two had never met should be given due consideration; I would not however regard this alone as sufficiently weighty to offset the generally strong indications supporting a Pontian legateship to Spain in the summer of 1113.

Notes for Study Ten

1. The peninsular visits of Abbots Hugh and Peter will be treated in my forthcoming paper on the history of Cluny's Spanish census.


7. A. Bernard and A. Bruel, Recueil des chartes de l'abbaye de Cluny (Paris, 1876-1903), V, 3900.


9. For understanding the papal and other documents of this period, it is essential to recognize that Hispania commonly designates only the kingdom of Leon and Castile; where Aragon is included the term Hispaniae is employed.


11. López Ferreiro, III, 387-389; Gerhard Säbekow, Die päpstlichen Legationen nach Spanien und Portugal bis zum Ausgang des XII. Jahrhunderts (Berlin, 1931), pp. 34-5; Paul Kehr, «El papado y los reinos de Navarra y Aragón hasta mediados del siglo XII», Estudios de edad media de la Corona de Aragón, II (1946), 149-150; Ballesteros, II, 343; Biggs, 89-90.

12. This episode is fully treated in my above-mentioned study.


14. López Ferreiro, III, 397-8; Säbekow, pp. 35-6; Biggs, pp. 95-6.


17. Peter Segl, Königstum und Klosterreform in Spanien (Kallmünz, 1974), 86.

18. Francisco de Berganza, Antigüedades de España (Madrid, 1719-21), II, 28, col. 1. Note that J.
Zurita simply follows without comment the manuscript reading: "el abad Clusense": *Anales de la Corona de Aragón*, I (Zaragoza, 1562), lib. I, xxxix (ed. A. Canallas López, Zaragoza, 1967, 1, 126:48).


