

THE MANUSCRIPT INSIDE THE TOMB

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Of all the Spanish manuscripts owned by the *Renaissance Center* there is one that is of extraordinary importance. I am referring to the manuscript that I catalogued three years ago in this *Newsletter* as “*Santa Clara de Alcocer*”, a document written by the Clarian nuns of the Royal Convent of Santa Clara de Alcocer in the 18th century. A lot has changed since then, for what I believed to be just one more of the legal documents (of considerable length, nonetheless) in this collection is, in fact, a long-sought manuscript that local historians of Guadalajara (Spain) have been trying to find for more than seventy years.

The last person to see the manuscript was don Juan Catalina García (1845-1911), the Official Chronicler of the Province of Guadalajara. Don Juan was fortunate enough to visit the convent in the early twentieth century, well before the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) forced the nuns to flee the convent forever. In 1903 he wrote a book entitled *Additions to the topographical relations sent to king Philip II*, in which he describes this very same manuscript as a copy made in 1720 by the priest Gregorio de Heredia from a 1656 original. What is even more interesting is that don Juan claims the manuscript was found *inside* the tomb of doña Mayor Guillén de Guzmán, the founder of the convent in the 13th century, and the lover of king Alfonso X the Wise.

As a matter of fact, in 1936 both doña Mayor’s tomb and the manuscript disappeared, and it was not until 2007 that local historians of Alcocer discovered the manuscript had been found

at the *Renaissance Center*. In a recent article, Jaime Illanes Cortés writes that “we cannot know how the manuscript ended up there”, but after some research it is possible to track the manuscript’s journey. It seems that the manuscript’s owner had been José María Huarte de Jáuregui, Marquis of Valdeterrazo, who was born in Pamplona in 1898 and died in Madrid in 1969. The Marquis occupied the position of chief archivist of the Royal and General Archive of Navarra from 1921 to 1936, a position that allowed him to collect numerous manuscripts and works of art. After his death, his brother decided to sell the entire collection, and while part of it was auctioned in Madrid, the rest was bought by an antiquarian bookshop in the Basque Country. This is where the antiquarian bookstore in Oviedo purchased the manuscript, which was later to be acquired there by the Renaissance Center.



The Marquis of Valdeterrazo

Since the “reappearance” of the manuscript, some local historians of Spain have taken interest in it. The first of them is Jaime Illanes, who found the manuscript in the pages of my catalogue and broke the news to his peers, but I am told that both don Antonio Herrera Casado, Official Chronicler of Guadalajara, and professor José Luis García de Paz, from the *Universidad Autónoma* (Madrid) are thrilled about the discovery. Professor de Paz has provided some of the information that appears in this article, and is now planning to include the manuscript in the second edition of his book about Guadalajara’s lost works of art. By the way, doña Mayor’s sepulchre has not been found yet, so if you have seen it somewhere, make sure to let us now.



Don Juan Catalina García

Tomb of doña Mayor Guillén de Guzmán (now lost)

