

◆ CHAPTER TWO

The Prayer of the Walled-Up Woman: Devotion and Superstition in Spain (1450–1550)

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A study of religious catechesis in medieval Spain leads us, even within some consolidated mysticism, to the development of repetitive prayers, frequently transmitted orally from original written texts and based fundamentally on a reiterative praxis that was underpinned on insistence and routine. Their oral transmission gave rise to numerous variants. In many cases, they originated in the translation process itself from Latin to the Romance language and continued with a vernacular version, which was more widely disseminated and popularizing.

In the Christian world of the late medieval centuries, those repetitive prayer traits were reinforced, mainly from the late twelfth-century mendicant friars, who were allied with city dwellers: lay people demanding spiritual practices of their own, adapted to their new devotional claims, the so-called *vita apostolica*.¹ The popularization of such prayers, often without license from the ecclesiastical hierarchy, led to the corruption of these texts, especially in the hands of disseminators and professional worshipers who vocalized prayers and whose message intermingled with deeply rooted superstitions that became the target of the Inquisition, owing to their doubtful orthodoxy.

The New Mysticism: Read, Spoken, and Repeated Prayers

The view of repetitive prayers possessing a significant value was not something new in medieval Spain. The liturgy of the Christian world was, and remains, replete with such reiterative prayers: the *kyrie* during mass is a practical and useful example of just such a prayer. Also, we must consider that this is not an exclusively Christian practice: repetitive prayer is likewise quite

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common among other religions. The word *mantra* can be found as an entry in many dictionaries meaning a sacred word or formula repeated as an incantation in Buddhism and Hinduism. Additionally, Sufism, known as Islamic mysticism, likewise includes a development of this practice of repetition.²

This religious commonality aids in the development of a worldview on repetitive prayer and contextualizes the “Prayer of the Walled-Up Woman.” Our referential analysis starts in the Central Middle Ages, particularly in the thirteenth century. At this time, the so-called *devotio moderna* (modern devotion) had an impact on lay people’s behavior, changing their manner of prayer and giving way to a new mysticism consisting of a variety of issues inseparable from the life of Jesus, in many dimensions, above all in his being the Redeemer of mankind. The little book *De Imitatione Christi* (The Imitation of Christ), associated with the *devotio moderna* (modern devotion), revealed the values of a different or changing behavior relating to the exaltation of Christ.

Before this time period, prayer had mostly been reserved to an ecclesiastical setting, both secular and regular, since common people were predominantly illiterate. In general, a cleric, who was viewed as a mediator between God and men, exercised effective spiritual and pastoral control over his faithful and was also in control of the transmission of prayer. To this end, convents and monasteries became the places *par excellence* for prayer. By the tenth century, Cluny had generated an appropriate pious framework for the *viator* (traveller, wayfarer) to work his or her way to heaven while cloistered, as well as using the system of *fraternitas*, a model of association for prayer.³

It would be the mendicants, though, who would put a new hallmark on the role model of the *homo religiosus* (religious man / woman) from the early thirteenth century, by creating a new model of convent and of interaction between the Church and people. Francis of Assisi and Dominic of Guzmán established a conventual system that adequately connected with city dwellers and lay people inhabiting boroughs: powerful late medieval burgesses. The mendicants promoted a pious framework which was widely disseminated in this society. Within their reforming lay movement, man wanted to address God directly and control the mechanisms of his condition as *viator*, that is, he wanted to develop his own course toward salvation.

Mendicants were not alone while working in this duality of *devotio moderna* and lay people, and neither was their catechesis the only noteworthy and innovative pedagogy. Mendicant devotional models went hand-in-hand with other heretic movements. The Poor Men of Lyons or Waldensians movement originated within this same European space of the late twelfth century; they were a group organized by Peter Waldo and functioned in a way similar to that of the people of Francis of Assisi. Both mendicants and Waldensians were “pauperistic” movements seeking new devotional experiences; they found

their space somewhere between orthodoxy and heterodoxy, between approval and rejection. The third (1179) and fourth (1215–1216) Councils of the Lateran set the foundations for the training of clergy and the education of people in the faith. On the other hand, the ecclesiastical hierarchy was greatly interested in controlling texts and ideologies to safeguard their function within society.⁴

Two quite relevant events apropos this discussion that occurred in Spain about this time should be underscored: the translation of the Bible into the Romance language and the encouragement of rote learning of passages from the Bible by lay people (Guijarro Ramos). Within this framework, the laity consolidated new systems of association, either autonomously or dependently, from which confraternities arose. Lay people soon affiliated themselves with the confraternities, aiming to set out some basic principles to establish their path for salvation by practicing piety and charity (Cavero, “Las cofradías” 21).

The female religious awakening in the medieval world was even more daring than that of men, but it circulated among women more cautiously. Women entered confraternal affiliations (which were not always exclusively female) with the intent of controlling certain spiritual courses, which led them to impressive models of a more intimate spirituality. It is noteworthy to mention here the movements led by walled-up or immured women, anchorites, and members of *beaterios*, something similar to what happened in the Low Countries with the Beguine sisterhoods. Bridget of Sweden, Julian of Norwich, Angela of Foligno, Teresa of Cartagena, and many others consolidated models of spirituality that had a great impact in the Late Middle Ages.⁵ Nonetheless, within the cloister there existed women who found it quite difficult to leave their enclosed monastery or convent, and others who did not dwell within conventual walls, called tertiaries. Tertiaries belonged to the third order, particularly of St. Dominic or St. Francis, and sought new models of spirituality. Many tertiaries generated a great respect and acceptance among their contemporaries. Catherine of Siena (1347–1380), a theologian, mystic, writer, preacher, and mediator, is illustrative of this type of tertiary nun. A Dominican tertiary, Catherine set a path of greater personal interiorization marked by spiritual self-awareness.

What were the keys and bastions supporting this change and adaptation of female religious awakening in the medieval period? The role of the mendicants, already mentioned, was essential. They managed to achieve a deep change in the male model of spiritual activity and integrated this system into the female field. They popularized the late-medieval models, which would continue until the council of Trent and beyond.

St. Dominic of Guzmán and his preachers propagated the cult of the Virgin.⁶ One of the particularly relevant aspects of this cult was the praying

of the Rosary, popularized by the Dominicans themselves.⁷ The Rosary is a very repetitive Marian prayer that focuses on Mary and Christ the Redeemer—otherwise known as Mysteries. The Rosary prayer recalls and reviews the main events in Christ's life through his mother, Mary. In its present format, one Our Father and ten Hail Marys are repeated between two Mysteries, each session usually consisting of five Mysteries. The Our Father and Hail Mary prayers are learned and memorized by the faithful from childhood. Repetition and memorization has habitually been a catechetical technique of indoctrination. St. Dominic availed himself of this pedagogy in his catechesis, which found great acceptance among confraternities that were born out of this technique of repetition. The interaction between mendicants and lay people repeating prayer consolidated this technique, ultimately further disseminating prayers. This form of mental/silent, as well as vocal, prayer has successfully continued uninterrupted to this day, some eight hundred years later, and had spread over the whole of medieval Christian Europe. It was especially associated with Christological and Marian devotions.⁸

The piety brought about by this kind of praxis was successful due to its ability to consolidate a personalized devotion enabling an illiterate society to directly address God in prayer without the intermediary of reading. This truth was perfectly understood by the mendicants, particularly the tertiaries, who were in close contact with the common people.

Prayer, then, was recited both inside and outside the convent, especially by women. Among the various ruling texts of the female branch of the Franciscans that configured the movement of the Poor Clares or Poor Sisters is the *Urbanite Rule*, dated on October 18, 1263, and composed by Cardinal Gaetano (later Pope Nicholas III), and approved by Pope Urban IV.⁹ This rule was intended to unify the different branches of the Poor Sisters and create bonds with an urban society that was more readily adapted to religious models of the thirteenth-century woman. Interestingly, because of its intentional unifying aim, the *Urbanite Rule* was ideal for all the various categories of women who wished to enter into conventual life: literate women and those who knew how to read and sing would carry out these activities during choir, reciting the Divine Office; and those who could neither read nor sing would instead recite twenty-four Our Fathers for Matins, five for Lauds, Prime, Terce, Sext, and None, twelve for Vespers, and seven for Compline. Should they not wish to exchange the reading of the Divine Office for the aforementioned alternatives, they would receive training in the skills required to perform their duties. Namely, those novices who were gifted in the area of these practices would be instructed in the reading and singing of the Divine Office under the direction of a competent mistress.¹⁰

So, what can be deduced from all this? Principally that, in some way, repetitive prayer was actually settled or deep-seated in the cloister. But mendicant women were not limited to conventual spaces. The tertiarist movement presented a substantial means of dissemination for the *devotio moderna* outside convent walls, both in the male and female arenas, as well as in all social classes. Late medieval society closely followed these new spiritual tendencies, continuously taking into consideration the charitable and, obviously, the spiritual benefits that could be garnered from the new channels offered to secure one's own salvation, whether from within Church hierarchy or outside.¹¹ Nonetheless, these spiritual tendencies were especially connected with female religious models: these were living women saints devoted to praying and, in many cases, closely related to the mendicants. For this reason, Queen María of Aragon had obtained a copy of The Prayer of the Walled-Up Woman and aspired to own certain objects of St. Bridget, who, incidentally, was considered to be the author of this prayer.¹² There arose individual orisons and compendiums of prayers that were widely disseminated and very rapidly became popular. From Latin, the prayers were translated into vernacular languages and mixed or enhanced with successful legends and traditions.¹³

Traditionally, people of the late medieval period quantified prayer and bestowed upon it a specific equivalence, a numeric value that erased offences for both the literate and illiterate. Salvation was linked to faith and the quantification of good deeds. Such quantification was applied to outlying behaviors typical of the time and was common throughout the various sectors of society. In some cases, quantified prayer was quite popular, particularly with reference to repetitive praxis used in all kinds of prayers, including, obviously, the Our Father and Hail Mary. In the development of such practices there were objectives to achieve that were linked to a specific quantification, above all in very difficult cases. Just such a case, that of the noblewoman Leonor López de Córdoba, is illustrative of this form of repetitive practice.¹⁴ In her *Memoirs*, Leonor mentions that she prayed three hundred Hail Marys for thirty nights, supplicating the Virgin to aid in convincing her aunt to open a wicket in the house where she and her husband lived—a house that belonged to the aunt. Through this wicket, they would gain access to the aunt's house whereby they could lunch, unseen by the many gentlemen who frequented the streets of Cordova.¹⁵ One of Leonor's goals was also to obtain a house of her own. To achieve this, the symbolism of the number of prayers seems to have been indispensable once again.¹⁶ It is clear that Leonor certainly believed that through this quantitative method she would gain what she most desired, sometimes even material things—a house in this case (Ayerbe Chaux 21). Her use of prayer implies an attitude oriented toward a specific manipulation of

the orison to attain her objectives. In this particular instance, Leonor's focus is placed on an aristocrat, but there are cases of other women, including urban elite women or (although less frequently) women from rural areas, following these same dynamics (Cavero Domínguez, *Inclusa* 230–44).

Reclusion, a radical culmination of eremitism, is a confinement that aroused popular fervor owing to its social vocation. It was first and foremost an urban practice and coexisted with varying religious forms, such as beguineage, *vita beata* and other formulas derived from mendicant tertiarism (Cavero Domínguez, *Inclusa* 123–38). Throughout history, it has been practiced by both men and women, but in the Late Middle Ages, reclusion was particularly common among women. These women prepared themselves with continuous prayer and, at the same time, were very close to many people of their surroundings, connecting exceptionally well with their milieu, where they often acted as intercessors. The walled-up women of the Late Middle Ages were either greatly admired or questioned and condemned. Information from chronicles and literary sources of this time is ambivalent toward them, and this attitude increased as the Renaissance approached.¹⁷ We should recognize that social criticism was sometimes merciless against these women and, at other times, they were thought to be *mulieres sanctae* (holy women), but they were always visionary and virtuous and enjoyed great popularity.¹⁸

Like many of their contemporaries, most recluses lacked a solid intellectual formation. Their use of the vernacular language was decisive. It gave them frequent access to the Bible and specific Christological subjects (such as the Passion) and to popular prayers (such as the Prayer of the Walled-Up Woman). Reclusion did not follow the model of prayer of the Rosary, but it did generate stereotypes of its own, always connected with the repetitive value of prayer and its quantitative consideration. Reclusion was thought of as a means to achieve certain goals, namely, goods and health (spiritual or corporal) for the recluse's own benefit or that of others, on request or as a testimony. Praying in the vernacular was implemented around this time when the 1322 Council of Valladolid issued the obligation for parish priests to implement the essentials of beliefs and practice in both Latin and Spanish and use them with their faithful.¹⁹ To this end, it was the prayer in the common language, away from traditional models associated with the clergy; prayer adapted to common people and all social classes; the prayer, understandable and “tangible,” that offered specific benefits if it was recited a certain number of times; prayer to be said anywhere with a marked rhythm.

Elasticity and adaptability are one of the keys to prayer's success. Prayer could be recited personally without provocation or on request. That is, one could request that someone else recite it on their behalf, thus avoiding the clergy. The value of the prayer fluctuated according to the person who “commissioned” it.

Among literary examples of prayer found in Barcarrota, the 1554 edition of *El Lazarillo de Tormes*, printed in Alcalá de Henares, contains interpolations that witness the exclusion of ecclesiastical hierarchies upon the recitation of prayer. In the first part of the *Lazarillo*, among the prayers the blind man knew, he says he “recited The Prayer of the Walled-Up Woman for (or on behalf of) the innkeeper woman” (García de Enterría xiii–ixv).²⁰ The commissioning of prayer recital indicates a clear alternative: if you cannot do it yourself, you can always buy or commission it to be done, as it was supposed that the value of the recitation would not be altered in any way. This same theory could be applied to pious practices of any kind. For example, it was rather common that if someone were unable to embark upon a pilgrimage, they would entrust another to go in his or her stead, many times with an economic exchange involved.²¹

This system of exchange or commissioning functioned outside the ecclesiastical hierarchy. One did not rely upon the parish priest: it was an agreement between equals, lay people, which allowed for delegation. There was a transposition to this lay system wherein it became a sort of “professionalization,” particularly in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Professional praying people (sometimes blind persons, like the blind man in the *Lazarillo*) recited or read what their “customers” required from them. The system became more agile in a dual manner: new models of prayer became popular and, by the sixteenth century, printing ensured the rapid distribution of such textual materials. Therefore, these models of prayer, as was the case of the Prayer of the Walled-Up Woman, developed some specific characteristics:

1. They were printed in small formats, easy to carry about.²²
2. These prayers follow a narrative line that increases their attraction and facilitates their memorization. Their outline typically conforms to the following pattern: after a long justifying foreword, the reader comes upon the prayer itself in a rhythmical system with peaks and valleys, being the peaks the most interesting parts, obviously. Ultimately, the pamphlet would end with a variety of comments and experiences.²³
3. Their tone is querulous with vibrant rhythm, alternating a sense of pain and sorrow, a sense of poignancy and a sense of plaintiveness, a sense of pain and a sense of pleading.²⁴
4. Another quite important issue is that these prayers, as mentioned above, were written in the vernacular, thereby securing their understanding, value, and repetitive contents.
5. They were recited outside churches, on the street, in the market place, in the house, in public or in private, loudly or quietly, personally or professionally.
6. They contained specific elements intending to ensure their veracity.

The popularization of these prayers was part of their success, but, at the same time, they were known to be phased out of vernacular circulation and into vulgar literary models. Since they circulated beyond the control of ecclesiastical institutions, and in their oral mode they evolved, transformed themselves, and were altered due to an inconsistency in the repetition of verse, their dissemination was fluctuating and deteriorated. In a society that mingled on the edge of an inquisitorial environment or from within it, these prayers clashed openly with the established power, with a clergy and convent system very sensitive to orthodoxy and the purity of morals. These pre-Tridentine people were easy to confront persecution and then go into hiding, and in practice flee from public spaces and concentrate themselves into everything that was private, into religious models that could also be questioned. We should remember here how popular Bridget of Sweden became, but also that at a certain point in her life, she was on the verge of being accused of heresy.

This kind of prayer was attractive to not only the “poor blind man,” but also to those who became heroes of the new popular mysticism, to people living nearby, as well as to hermits, recluses, walled-up women, and members of *beaterios* and *beguinages*. Prayer became personalized in a specific orison dictated by God himself and transmitted to an individual and specific walled-up woman, a woman from the class of commoners. Accordingly, spiritual prestige was secured among her neighbors. The recitation of this kind of prayer is remarkable because the special combination its content and form generated signified great creativity, which attracted its listeners. These prayers also had great appeal due to the frequency with which they could be recited or sung.

A Prayer with a Known, Accepted, and Persecuted Value: Prospects of the Prayer of the Walled-Up Woman

Given its prestige in all sectors of society, walling-up or immurement became an effective means to request spiritual security. Walled-up women were considered to be efficient praying women and intercessors of divine favor. The Prayer of the Walled-Up Woman, which was extensively circulated in the Late Middle Ages, seems to have been born in this intercessional framework. Its origins appear to have been in an Italian book of hours, and, as well as other kinds of prayers for lay people, it created a great echo in Castile and Portugal.²⁵ In truth, the Prayer of the Walled-Up Woman enjoyed fantastic popularity in contemporary literature and in all social classes at the turn of the sixteenth century.²⁶

Since it was found in Barcarrota, the Prayer of the Walled-Up Woman has undergone several editions and academic studies. Arthur Askins, among

others, has demonstrated the prayer's importance in other northern areas, beyond the Pyrenees and even in England, detailing its reach beyond Castile and Portugal. As noted above, the Prayer of the Walled-Up Woman formed part of a group or collection of prayers and has been connected to St. Bridget.²⁷ The religious atmosphere of the Prayer is undoubtedly Christological and Marian. Its central subject is the Passion of Christ and it was ostensibly given by Christ himself to a walled-up woman (in certain accounts, to St. Bridget herself) in Rome ("en la tierra de Roma") (Carrasco González 29).²⁸ From her solitary confinement she had asked Him how many his wounds had been after the Passion. He replied, informing her that they had been 6,676 and subsequently revealed to her how powerful the prayer was:²⁹

Que por espacio de un año entero, cualquier persona que rece o recite esta oración con quince veces el Pater Noster y quince veces el Ave María una vez cada día, o la mande rezar si no sabe leer, o la traiga consigo rezando estos quince Pater Noster con quince Ave María, y las ofrezca a la honra y reverencia de mi Pasión, Yo le concedo que al final del año sean libradas de las Penas del Purgatorio quince almas de su misma generación y de su mismo linaje, aquellas que él quiera y me pida. Y otros quince más, de entre sus parientes, que sean traídos en estado de gracia y confirmados en buenas obras.

Y el que la rece o la mande rezar o la traiga consigo rezando los quince Pater Noster con quince Ave María como se ha dicho, alcanzará el primer grado de la perfección, y obtendrá el conocimiento y contrición de sus pecados. (Carrasco González 29–34)

(For the space of one year's time, any person that prays or recites this orison along with fifteen paternosters and fifteen Hail Marys, and offers them to the honor and reverence of my Passion, I will concede unto him that at year's end fifteen souls of his same generation and lineage be liberated from Purgatory, those souls he wishes and requests of me. And fifteen more from his family will be brought to a state of grace and confirmed in good works. And he who prays or orders prayer of or brings with him prayer of the fifteen paternosters with fifteen Hail Marys, as has been said, will achieve the first grade of perfection, and obtain the knowledge and contrition of his sins.)

This introduction provides a glimpse of the great power and influence recluses possessed in the Late Middle Ages as spiritual intercessors among the people of their time. This explains, in part, why kings and queens, town and city councils, the nobility and the bourgeoisie included them in the group of souls that in this world could reach, with their prayers, a closeness to the Virgin and to God (Cavero Domínguez, *Inclusa* 219–30).³⁰ Indeed, Christ also used a walled-up woman as transmitter of his wishes: a woman from Rome, where there were a great many recluses. The subject of the Passion, central in the Prayer of the Walled-Up Woman, is perfectly linked to the mystique of this kind of confined women. Let us remember that, in the thirteenth century, the exegetic tradition had accredited this theme in relation to the water and blood that poured out of Jesus's side, his wounds, and his suffering. And to this was added his mother's pain and sorrow.

The Prayer of the Walled-Up Woman, then, found an already very fertile soil, especially with the dissemination of St. Bridget's cult throughout Europe (supported by the Franciscans, as she was herself a tertiary). Moreover, the *Revelations* of Julian of Norwich, the *Book of Margery Kempe*, and *Arboleda de los enfermos* by Teresa of Cartagena also attributed to the prayer's promulgation. The mystique of Jesus's Passion and wounds, his suffering and also his exaltation was easily accepted and awakened certain sensibilities: the lance and the wound in his side, along with his other wounds and their fluid (blood and water) were important parts of Redemption (Giles 38–40).

Another important issue for the dissemination of this prayer is the connection between anchoritism and immurement. The Prayer of the Walled-Up Woman was transmitted by a hermit, who reported its discovery to the abbess and the nuns of a monastery in order to awaken their devotion and reverence, and for them to subsequently disseminate it.³¹ Additionally, immurement also frequently occurred away from monasteries and convents at the end of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth centuries, outside the control of ecclesiastical authorities and, on many occasions, in contact with the mendicants (Cavero Domínguez, "Obispos" 57–74).

Although other editions of the Prayer of the Walled-Up Woman have been found, the fact that it was originally encountered in a "walled-up library" (in Barcarrota) has always been shocking and revealingly noncoincidental for the type of stalwart religious devotee it was intended for. In point of fact, the Prayer of the Walled-Up Woman found its way to inclusion on the list of books of the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*, in a manner of walling-in of its own right. In effect, it was already in the *Index* of the Inquisitor General Fernando de Valdés published in 1554, and had previously been forbidden in Portugal (Londoño 138–40).³²

Why did this prayer appear in the *Index*? What are its dangerous errors that pushed the barriers of orthodoxy? Research carried out in these areas has shown that the Prayer of the Walled-Up Woman itself was not a primary concern, but rather the other additional components of the book were what caused alarm: that is, the preliminary introduction, in the discourse of the hermit's story, and, obviously, in the alleged acknowledgment of Pope Nicholas V—indulgences and pardons.³³ But, as Marcela Londoño points out, the problems are in the last two parts of the text: the hermit's narrative and the generous pontifical recognition, which was indispensable, as suggested above, to give true evidence and credibility regarding the Prayer.³⁴ The necessity for Papal support can be explained owing to the fact that in the Late Middle Ages and early modern era, the ecclesiastical hierarchy was suspect of anything that fell outside their immediate control. This was especially true if it were in the field of very deeply rooted popular devotions, and in the context of the margins of tolerance laid out (manuals for confessors) to detect superstitious clues that might surface in the dissemination and recitation of those prayers. Obviously, the creation of the *Index* facilitated the increase of prohibited books and, as a consequence, some of them were put under lock and key or “walled-up” like the Prayer of the Walled-Up Woman. However, as Askins points out, its prohibition was not very successful, as it has been copied and published from its point of discovery to the present-day (Askins 246).

A prayer repeated at regular intervals, specified in advance, was decisive not only if it was recited, but also if a person touched it, or took it with them, or if it were circulated throughout the community. It was understood as something along the lines of an amulet, and it was frequently associated with female settings, in which an immured woman was considered to be an intercessor. María Cruz García de Enterría points out that these types of prayers evolved and ended up connoting spells (xxv–xxvii).³⁵ People used it to get rid of illnesses, sudden death, storms, and other climatic ills or similar evils. It was the benefits and indulgences attributed to them and their thaumaturgic powers that gave these prayers their appeal and wide circulation. Thus, people bought them and recited them or ordered to have them prayed in their name and on their behalf.

The relationship of walled-up women with death, through their power as intercessors and their mediator spirit, led people who were in the process of making their will and testament to choose as their final resting place as one that was intended for a walled-up woman. Such is the case of Mari López, from Cordova, who requested to be buried in her parish church, San Hipólito, in a grave intended for just such a woman (Archivo histórico).³⁶

A final consideration: some walled-up women who were thought to be saint women became prominent counselors and indispensable intercessors

because of their edifying life and spectacular thaumaturgic power. As noted above, they were saintly lay women, separated from traditional monasteries and convents and originating from new forms of religious life that had proliferated in contact with the mendicants.³⁷

NOTES

1. For more information see Vauchez, *Les laïcs au Moyen Âge*.
2. “Within world religions the role of prayer is particularly important in Islam. Ritual prayer (*salat*), performed five times a day, belongs to the fundamental obligations of all Muslims. In addition to this, there is another type of prayer, associated with mystical orders in all Islamic countries. It is a type of repetitive prayer similar to, for example, the Jesus prayer within Orthodox Christianity, Nembutsy within Japanese Buddhism, or Japa in Hinduism. . . . Repetitive prayer (*dhikr*) in mystical Islam (*Sufism*) belongs to the most central activities of the orders” (Geels 53).
3. Concerning the system of *fraternitas*, see Schmid and Wollasch, “*Societas et Fraternitas*.”
4. See also Lambert, *Medieval Heresy*.
5. Among Anna Benvenuti’s works dealing with these religious models, see “*Velut in sepulchro*.” On Teresa of Cartagena, see Rivera Garretas, “Los dos infinitos en Teresa de Cartagena” and “Teresa de Cartagena vivía en 1478.”
6. In the case of St. Dominic himself, he began propagating the cult of the Virgin very early in his life in the vicinity of his immediate surroundings, at Our Lady of Gumiel de Izán and Our Lady of the Fuente; but also with his admiration of St. Bernard. See Aniz Iriarte, “Espiritualidad de santo Domingo.” See also Galmés Mas, “Espiritualidad benedictina a través de Cluny y del Cister,” especially pp. 109 on St. Dominic’s admiration for St. Bernard.
7. “Aunque en el proceso de conformación del rosario han intervenido de manera decisiva distintos monjes benedictinos y cartujos (por ejemplo, Enrique de Kalkar o Domingo de Prusia, creador del rosario con cláusulas), lo cierto es que ha sido la Orden de Predicadores quien no sólo ha fomentado la devoción avemariana desde muy temprana época, sino también un asociacionismo laico rosariano en torno a los conventos de la Orden con la fundación de hermandades o congregaciones de Nuestra Señora y Santo Domingo ya desde el siglo XIII en torno a San Pedro Mártir” (Romero Mensaque 39) (Although varying Benedictine and Carthusian monks decisively intervened in the process of rosary composition [for example, Enrique de Kalkar or Domingo de Prusia, creator of the rosary with clausulae], what can be certain is that it was the Order of Preachers that, not only promoted devotion to the Ave Maria from an early period, but also sanctioned rosary lay associations throughout the Order’s convents, founding

- religious brotherhoods or congregations of Our Lady and St. Dominic from the thirteenth century, about the time of St. Peter Martyr).
8. Apart from the works mentioned in the two previous notes, there is much more bibliography on the origin of the Rosary. The reader is especially referred to the following: Alonso Getino, *Origen del Rosario*; Huerga, *El Rosario*; Duval, “Rosaire;” and Winston-Allen, *Stories of the Rose*.
 9. On the legislation of the Poor Clares, see García y García, “La legislación de las clarisas.”
 10. For more concerning this issue, see Imprenta Real, 1642, chap. 6.
 11. In connection with this, see *litterae graciosae* of Clement V, dated in Livron-sur-Drôme on September 22, 1311, by which the pope grants Esclaramunda of Foix, queen of Majorca, license to build an oratory, and a nearby house, for repentant sinner women. R. AHV, *Reg. Vat. 58*, f. 219, ep. no. 870.
 12. Bridget of Sweden (1303–1373), closely linked to the Franciscan environment, has been attributed authorship of *Fifteen Prayers* focused on the pain and suffering of Christ on the cross, called the *Fifteen O's*. See *Las quinze devotísimas oraciones de Santa Brígida*. Especially revealing is the study comparing St. Teresa of Ávila and St. Bridget, by Giles, “‘Mira mis llagas.’” See also Andrade Cernadas, “Santa Brígida y las mujeres místicas en el mundo bajomedieval.”
 13. For more on the origin of the Prayer of the Walled-Up Woman, see Askins, “Notes on Three Prayers in Late 15th Century Portuguese.”
 14. Leonor López de Córdoba, or López Carrillo, was born ca. 1362 and was obliged to spend nine years in prison during the reign of Enrique II. Her father, Martín López de Córdoba, had been a staunch supporter of Pedro I, thereby inciting the imprisonment of Leonor. She was an influential politician, became a lady-in-waiting and counsellor (among other jobs) of the Queen of Castile, Catherine of Lancaster, the daughter of John of Gaunt. She was also a writer. Her personality and *Memoirs* have been the subject of abundant bibliography. The reader is referred particularly to Gómez Sierra, “La experiencia femenina de la amargura como sustento de un discurso histórico alternativo.” The last pages of this essay contain a short biography of Leonor, which may be of interest. Leonor’s *Memoirs* are available at *Vida y tragedias de Leonor López de Córdoba. Memorias. Dictadas en Córdoba entre 1401 y 1404*.
 15. “Y, como nos veía con poco descanso, le hice durante treinta días una *oración* a la *Virgen Santa María* de Belén: cada noche rezaba de rodillas trescientas *avemarías* para que pusiera en el *corazón* de mi *señora* el darme permiso para abrir un postigo por el que ir a sus casas. Y, dos días antes de acabar la *oración*, le pedí a mi *señora tía* que me dejase abrir ese postigo, para que no fuéramos vistos por la *calle* a comer a su mesa entre tantos caballeros como había en *Córdoba*. Y su merced me respondió que le agradaba” (L. López de Córdoba 3r) (And, since we were very little rested, I prayed to Our Lady St. Mary of Bethlehem: I kneeled every night praying three hundred Hail Marys so that my aunt would find it in her heart to grant me the permission of a wicket to gain access to her house. And, two days before finishing the prayer, I pleaded

with my aunt to allow me to install the wicket so that we might pass unseen by the gentlemen of Córdoba while walking the street to eat at her table. And her worship responded favorably).

16. Here is another quantifiable text from the same *Memoirs*: “Y antes de todo esto, yo había ido treinta días a maitines, con aguas y con vientos y descalza, ante *Santa María* la Amortecida, que está en la Orden de San Pablo de Córdoba; y le rezaba sesenta y tres veces, con sesenta y seis *avemarías*, la *oración* que sigue, en reverencia de los sesenta y seis años que Ella vivió con amargura en este mundo, para que Ella me diese *casa*. Y ella me dio casa y casas, por su misericordia mejores que las que yo merecía. Comienza la oración. ‘*Madre Santa María*, / de vos gran *dolor* tenía: / vuestro *hijo bien* criado / lo viste atormentado. / Con su gran tribulación, / se os amorteció el *corazón*; / después de su tribulación / os dio consolación: / dádmela vos a mí, *Señora*, / que sabéis de mi dolor” (L. López de Córdoba 3v–4r) (And before all of this, I had gone to matins for thirty days, through rain and wind and barefoot, before Sta. María Amortecida, who is in the religious order of St. Paul of Cordova; and I prayed to her sixty-three times, sixty-three Hail Marys, the orison that follows, so that She would grant me a house. And she granted me a house and houses, by her mercy, better than what I deserved. The orison begins. ‘*Mother Saint Mary*, / you suffered great pain: / your well raised son / you saw him tormented. / With his great tribulation, / he soothed your heart; / after his tribulation / he gave you consolation: / grant it to me, My Lady, / you who knows my pain”). See also Ayerbe Chaux, “Las memorias de doña Leonor López de Córdoba.”
17. See the introduction to the Spanish translation of the work by Marguerite Porete: *El espejo de las almas simples*. There is also an English translation of Porete’s work: *The Mirror of Simple Souls*.
18. See Santonja, “Mujeres religiosas.”
19. Parish priests should have “en escripto en latyn e en romance los artículos de la fe e los mandamientos de la ley e los sacramentos de santa iglesia; e el entendimiento dellos, e de los pecados, e de las uirtudes; e que lean todo esto quatro vegadas” (Sáenz de Aguirre 242) (in writing in Latin and in Romance the articles of faith and the Ten Commandments and the sacraments of the Holy Church; and the understanding of these, and of sin and of virtue). Concerning this see the comments by L. Resines in “La formación catequética en la época de Santo Domingo” (67–102).
20. “Y como yua tentando si era allí el mesón, adonde él rezaua cada día por la mesonera la oración de la emparedada” (García de Enterría xiii–ixv) (And since I was going to see if it was around there where the tavern was, where he prayed prayer of the walled-up woman for the barkeep).
21. The reader is referred to the classic work on the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela by Luis López de Parga, José M^a Lacarra, and Juan Uría Riu, *Las peregrinaciones a Santiago de Compostela*, especially t. I, pp. 120: “the reasons why people go on pilgrimage.”

22. The copy of this prayer in Portuguese is a “pequeño folleto de 16 hojillas, de 9,4 por 7 centímetros” (García de Enterría X) (a small pamphlet of 16 pages, 9.4 by 7 centimeters). Askins calls it “pamphlet printing” (236). We must remember, though, that its origins lay in books of hours, which cannot have been so small and light, and their editions must have been rather expensive.
23. These finalizing parts of the pamphlets are confirmed in the Portuguese edition of the “Prayer of the Walled-Up Woman.” Firstly, and in story form, Christ appears to a walled-up woman; subsequently the pamphlet displays the prayer itself; and finally, the illustrative incident of a hermit, nuns and the devil, including a good devil, bad devil, and deception. Indulgences and pardons granted supposedly by the Pope Nicholas V are registered at the end of the pamphlet (Carrasco González 10).
24. Concerning these particular characteristics, see Medina Granda, “La repetición sinonímica en la Chansó cortés occitana.”
25. See García de Enterría, “Una devoción prohibida,” particularly, xi–xix.
26. See Londoño, “Devoción supersticiosa en el Índice de Valdés,” particularly, pp. 140–43.
27. See Askins, “Notes on Three Prayers,” particularly pp. 238–40.
28. Let us remember here that the Passion was one of the favorite devotional themes amongst late medieval recluses, walled-up women and mystics. This was the case, for instance, with Julian of Norwich, Margery Kempe, and notably Bridget of Sweden.
29. There is another number mentioned in other accounts, 5,480 wounds in total, that is, 365 days of the year multiplied by fifteen, which was the number of times the prayer should be said every day. See Puskorius, *Magnificent Prayers, Yes-Magnificent Promises, No*, cmri.org
30. See also Cavero Domínguez “Anchorites in the Spanish Tradition,” particularly pp. 103–104.
31. “Y cuando hubo oído esto, el ermitaño se fue enseguida al monasterio y se lo contó a la abadesa y a las monjas. Y cuando todas oyeron esto, de ahí en adelante con mucha devoción y reverencia cumplieron y rezaron esta santa oración con firme esperanza de obtener por ella gran galardón. Y obtuvieron de Dios todo lo que quisieron. Y acabaron sus días muy santamente” (Carrasco González 53–54) (And when he had heard this, the hermit left immediately for the monastery and related it to the abbess and nuns. And when all had heard this, from this point forward, with much devotion and reverence, they carried out the prayer of this saintly orison with the firm hope of gaining great reward. And they received from God all that they desired. And they ended their days very saintly).
32. For more on the different prayers discovered, see Alves Dias, *Rezar em português*; and Leite de Faria, “O primeiro livro em português impresso na França.”
33. “Empezaré con el comentario de la oración propiamente dicha, no solamente porque la corrección de la plegaria la aleja temáticamente del carácter supersticioso del texto preliminar, así como del relato del ermitaño y las monjas, y de las indulgencias y perdones que cierran el texto (apartados [a], [c] y [d]), sino también porque la evidente

ortodoxia de este apartado con respecto a los restantes permitirá observar cómo en una misma oración se mezclaban elementos de devoción lícita junto a contenido supersticioso y, por tanto, condenable. Este último se encontraba en las partes añadidas, es decir, aquellas de las que se podía prescindir sin afectar al sentido de la plegaria, aunque quizás sí a su éxito. De esta forma, resulta comprensible el peligro que a los ojos de los inquisidores representaba este tipo de textos, al reunir, sin distinción y bajo el rótulo de oración devota, contenido ortodoxo y heterodoxo. Cabe suponer que para evitar la confusión que esta combinación debía de provocar, la opción más adecuada fue prohibirla en su totalidad” (Londoño 144) (I will bring with comment on the exact prayer, not only because the correction of this orison distances it from the text’s preliminary superstitious thematic character, as in the case of the account of the hermit and nuns, and the indulgences and pardons that close out the text (partitions [a], [c] and [d]), but also because the evident orthodoxy of this partition, with respect to the remaining partitions, permits an observation on just how in one single prayer licit devotional elements were mixed with superstitious and, thus, reprehensible content. This latter content, peculiarity, was found in the augmented parts of the text. That is, those parts that would have no effect on the meaning of the prayer if they were not present, even though, perhaps, they would affect the prayer’s success. In this manner, the danger represented by this text in the eyes of the inquisitors is comprehensible, upon piecing together without distinction and under the label of devout orison, orthodox and heterodox content. It should be taken into consideration that in order to avoid the confusion that this combination might have provoked, the most adequate option was to prohibit it in its totality). Concerning the heretical nature of pardons and indulgences, see also Cruz, “The Walled-In Woman in Medieval and Early Modern Spain.”

34. “El caso de la oración de la Emparedada conduce a plantear la cuestión acerca de cuáles eran los criterios que seguían los censores a la hora de calificar una oración como supersticiosa. Detrás de la introducción de promesas e indulgencias desmedidas se encontraba el sustento teórico del que derivaba la idea de superstición” (Londoño 150) (The case of the “Prayer of the Walled-Up Woman” leads us to consider the question of what criteria the censors followed upon qualifying a prayer as superstitious. At the source of the introduction of excessive promises and indulgences was found the theoretical sustenance from which came the idea of superstition). Subsequently, the author suggests that the explanation could be found in two kinds of sources: manuals for confessors and books of hours.
35. See also Askins, “Notes on Three Prayers,” 237.
36. See Del Pino García, “Muerte y ritos funerarios en Córdoba a fines de la Edad Media,” 259.
37. See the comments of Vauchez, “La sainteté féminine au XIIIe siècle entre vie pénitentielle et expérience visionnaire.”

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