



RHODES-CONSUEGRA CONNECTION

THE ORDER OF SAINT JOHN

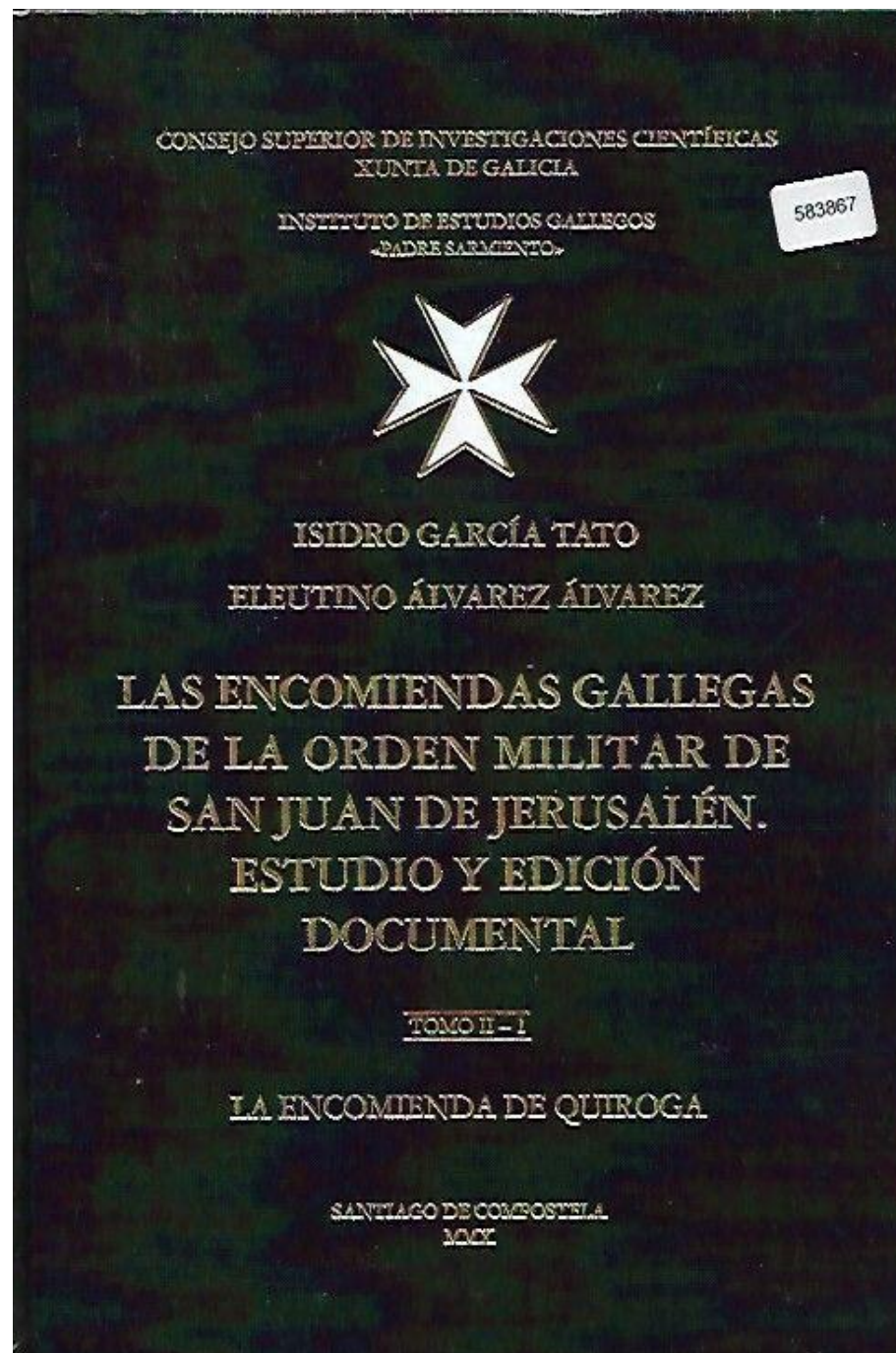
In 1113 from the hand of Blessed Gerardo and in a distant hospital in Jerusalem next to the Holy Sepulchre, the Order of Saint John was born with the aim of helping others, the poor and pilgrims. The Spanish kings immediately supported the young Order due to the immense fame that the Hospital had achieved. The order soon became a military power, which in its development in the West reached the Iberian Peninsula and Castile. It arrived in Consuegra due to the donation of the castle made by Alfonso VIII in 1183 in order to defend that line of Reconquest. From that moment and practically until the 19th century, the order exercised both civil and ecclesiastical jurisdiction in our territory.

The Prior of Consuegra depended on the Grand Master, who was first found in Jerusalem and later had to move to Acre. They stayed there for about 100 years, but were expelled again. The order wanted a seat and undertook the conquest of the island of Rhodes, which was carried out in 1310; there they remained about three hundred years; in which they developed an important navy and obtained dominance. During these centuries they added the name of Knights of Rhodes of the Military and Hospitaller Order of Saint John of Jerusalem.



MR. GONZALO DE QUIROGA

Prior of the Military Order of Saint John in Castile between 1440 and 1456, royal advisor. He belonged to a family of the Galician nobility, the Quirogas, whose members frequently entered the Order of Saint John and used to hold the position of commander of the Quiroga sanjuanista charge during the Late Middle Ages. Gonzalo de Quiroga acceded to the Order of Saint John in Catilla in 1440, at the request of King Juan II of Castile and his favorite, Álvaro de Luna. In the following years, Gonzalo de Quiroga manifested a political position constantly supporting them and providing them with continuous military services against their internal and external enemies. In 1445 the prior of San Juan fought on the royalist side in the battle of Olmedo against the noble side of the infantes of Aragon.



That same year, the Castilian monarch sent the prior to the Murcia region as a reaction to the threat of an imminent Muslim attack in that sector. Finally, in 1446 Gonzalo de Quiroga participated alongside San Juan II and Álvaro de Luna in the siege of the town of Atienza.

His administration of the priory of the Order of San Juan in Castile was very prominent. He took important measures for the development of the extensive lordship of the Order in La Mancha. Among them, it should be noted that in 1452 he granted an important privilege to the Council of Consuegra to stop the abuses committed by the governor of the Order's castle. Finally, in 1453 he founded a hospital in the same town of Consuegra.



WINDMILLS

Castilla-La Mancha is synonymous with dry land and the option of having water mills was unfeasible due to the absence of river currents. For this reason, it was a great success to build the windmills, which apart from fulfilling their function in the agricultural and consumer sector, were exclusively operated by the Priory of San Juan. References to windmills are constant in the orders of chivalry, Templars, Hospitallers, etc., which retreated from Antioch to the West through Cyprus, Rhodes, Crete and Malta.



GRAND PRIOR PALACES



PRIOR TOWER

The Torreón del Prior de Alcázar de San Juan was part of the old Muslim citadel; It is a square-plan building whose origin is found in an old Almohad palace from the 13th century, becoming part of what was the palace of the Grand Priors of Castile and León of the Hospitaller Order of Saint John of Jerusalem during the Reconquest, Rhodes and Malta.

CONSUEGRA CASTLE

The Castle of Consuegra rises, surrounded by windmills, on the Calderico hill. The town of Consuegra, with Celtiberian, Roman and Visigothic roots, was an important fortified front during the struggles between Toledo and the Caliphate of Córdoba, and would alternately pass through Christian and Arab hands. The castle was definitively recovered by the Christians in the middle of the 12th century, and rebuilt by the Knights Hospitaller between that century and the next, which explains its original European-style architecture. Alfonso VII handed over the fortress, the town and the surrounding lands to the Order of Saint John of Jerusalem in the year 1183, who built the current castle and established there the capital of his Priory of La Mancha, guarding the passage to the region of which is natural door.

PEÑARROYA CASTLE

Castle of Muslim origin, although it may have Roman antecedents, Peñarroya Castle is strategically located on a cliff, a rock from which it overlooks a gorge through which the Guadiana River flows.

Shortly after the conquest of the fortress by the coalition troops of the Knights of Santiago and Hospitallers (1198), it was definitively assigned to the latter Order in 1215, donated to the Order of Saint John by Alfonso VIII and confirmed by Enrique I, being already in the fourteenth century the most important charge of the Order of San Juan.

