



The Fabric of Marian Devotion in Isabel de Villena's *Vita Christi* (Monografías A)

Lesley K. Twomey

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Isabel de Villena (1430-1490) is one of the most fascinating women of the Spanish middle ages. Related to the royal family, she became abbess of the Poor Clare convent, the Santa Trinitat, in Valencia in 1462, a position she held for almost thirty years until her death. Her treatise on the religious life, Vita Christi, was the first book by a woman to be printed in the kingdom of Aragon. This is the first full-length survey in English of Isabel's life and literary works. The author pays particular attention to the way in which devotion to the Virgin Mary is manifested and described through material culture, on her rich fabrics, brocades, silks, shoes, and crown. The book thus highlights not only Isabel's distinctive contribution to the genre of the Vita Christi, but also reflects the status of Valencia as a centre for trade and producer of silks and velvets at the time, as well as its flourishing shoe-making industry. Lesley K. Twomey is Principal Lecturer, Hispanic Studies, Northumbria University.

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