

Who Ruled the World? (Madrid, 3–5 Mar 26)

Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Mar 3–05, 2026

Deadline: Apr 1, 2025

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Who Ruled the World? Queen Urraca and Her Contemporaries in the Early Twelfth Century / ¿Quién gobernó el mundo? La reina Urraca y sus contemporáneos a principios del siglo XII.

This international conference marks the 900th anniversary of the death of Queen Urraca of León-Castile (born 1079/80, r. 1109-1126) by investigating issues of ruling power and its material display in the early twelfth century. Previous historiography has tended either to downplay Urraca's seventeen-year reign or at best to compare it with that of other queens, especially Matilda of England (d. 1167), Melisende of Jerusalem (d. 1161), and to a lesser degree Petronila of Aragón (d. 1173). These reigning queens, while instructive comparisons, were born respectively in 1102, 1105, and 1136; they were from the generations after Urraca, more properly contemporaries of her son Alfonso VII (born 1105, r. 1126-1157). Therefore this conference seeks instead to call attention to rulers – male or female, of any religion – whose reigns were strictly contemporary to Urraca's in the first quarter of the twelfth century, in order to understand how her rule played out in its day, not in hindsight.

We welcome paper proposals investigating the artworks and material culture that can be associated with early twelfth-century rulership, including coins, seals, textiles, manuscripts, metalworks, sculptures, buildings, etc., as well as written evidence. Of particular interest are studies focused on objects and texts that demonstrate cross-cultural or long-distance networks, as well as analyses of the concepts of gender and religion in the construction of power and authority in the early twelfth century. We encourage both individual case studies and larger inquiries, for Europe and beyond, that consider figures whose rulership, like Urraca's, made an impact on the social and material culture of this period.

Paper proposals are sought on rulers and the display of rulership from Urraca's lifetime, especially those that will contribute to clarifying the larger framework of her reign.

The conference will be held at the Museo Arqueológico Nacional in Madrid on 3-5 March 2026. Therese Martin is organizing it within the research project *Intersections of Gender, Transculturalism, and Identity in Medieval Iberia: The Recycling and Long Life of Objects and Textiles* (Spanish Ministry of Science, Innovation, and Universities, PID2023-151143NA-I00, 2024-2027), PI: Verónica Carla Abenza Soria, Universidad Complutense, Madrid. To coincide with the conference, the Museo Arqueológico Nacional will host activities related to Urraca and her rule.

Send title with abstract and author bio, in English or Spanish (not more than 500 words each), and any queries, by 1 April 2025 to: Urraca2026@gmail.com

Reference:

CFP: Who Ruled the World? (Madrid, 3-5 Mar 26). In: ArtHist.net, Oct 18, 2024 (accessed Dec 17, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/42973>>.