

## The Monastery of Pedralbes

The monastery of Pedralbes was founded by Queen Elisenda de Montcada in 1326 with the support of her husband King James II , who decreed that the church should be devoted to Saint Mary.

The Queen wanted to build this monastery but the building has to be sumptuous to prove the importance of the church and in the same time of the Queen, in other words the Queen helped the building of the monastery and in the same time the church served the influence of the royalty. That was the politic at that time.

Pedralbes is the latin name for white rocks which were at the feet of the mountain. Those rocks has been used to build the monastery. That's why they call it the monastery of Pedralbes. She built it in three different levels. The first one, going upstairs, include the local of the church and the nuns' dormitory. The church and the dormitory are the first part of the monastery which was been built. So the nuns could consecrated the secret place and also could sleep. We found then, the central level which represent the most important building and the most important rooms of this monastery life. It's composed of the Chapterhouse, the Nursingwing, the infirmary and also the refectory.

### Symbols

Three majors shields dominate every decorations in this monastery.

The one with stripes represents the dynasty of Aragon. Those with half circles and half stripes represent the union between the family of the Montcada and the dynasty of Aragon.

### The Chapterhouse



This is where the nuns would meet under the direction of the abbess to discuss matters of the general interest to the community. It's the political center of the nunnery. In this space, the abbess and her council (the so-called *discretori*), formed by the nuns who held leading positions in the community, decided on certain important issues related to the organisation of the monastery and its internal order. The whole community formed by the nuns' choir, lay sisters, novices and postulants, only attended certain acts.

### The Nursingwing



From its very outset, Pedralbes Monastery had an area set aside from taking care of nuns who fell ill. It had four large rooms arranged along a corridor in addition to a chapel, kitchen and pantries allowing it to operate independently of the monastery.

### The Kitchen



The staple food was fish, fresh or salted, eaten especially during long periods of abstinence from all dairy products and eggs, such as during Advent and Lent. Another staple was white bread, baked at the monastery itself. Pulses, rice, olives, cereals, vegetables, nuts and fresh fruit, depending on the season, completed the nuns' diet. Honey, used for making confectionary, was also often consumed alone or mixed with cheese. Meat consumption, very restricted depending on the time of year, was limited to salted meat, blood and pork shoulders, with beef and mutton reserved for festivities. Lamb was eaten at Easter, as well as local pastries known as *flaons*.

### The Dormitory



In the dormitory the most important nun slept high in order to check if the other nuns were sleeping. If they misbehaved they were sent to the floor above which was considered as the Purgatory.

At this time it was a privilege to put his daughter in a monastery because she will be fed and protected for ever.

Boniteau Lou 2nd06  
Pelet Sophie 2nd09