

The Construction of a Cultural Legacy: Queen María de Molina of Castile and the
Political Discourses of Molinismo

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Abstract

This dissertation is a new historicist approach to studying the cultural legacy of the medieval queen María de Molina of Castile-León (1284-1321). In this study, works of literature are examined alongside historical accounts—such as chronicles and official documents—which are read as literature and analyzed for the political rhetoric which they contain. This study is focused on two things: First, understanding María de Molina’s exercise of queenship, with an emphasis on how that queenship is constructed and represented in texts, and second, evaluating the impact of her queenship and its connection to the so-called cultural movement of *molinismo* in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. In this study, Queen María’s queenship is understood as the combination of her exercise of power in the discursive space of the court, as well as her representation in royal documents and histories.

The first chapter explores the origins of what some literary critics have dubbed “molinismo” in thirteenth-century Castile-León, and the explanation of *molinismo* as a conservative movement back to orthodoxy, contained in literature produced in the court of Queen María’s husband, Sancho IV. This chapter provides an overview of Sancho’s cultural production, but it focuses on an analysis of the king’s cultural politics and the only work that Sancho claimed credit for as an author, *Castigos del rey don Sancho IV*.

Chapters two and three examine María de Molina’s queenship as it is constructed in the royal chronicles written by the archdeacon of Toledo, Jofré de Loaysa, and Alfonso XI’s chancellor, Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid, as well as in other official documentation, such as royal charters, privileges, and *ordenamientos* from the medieval

political institution of the *cortes*. These chapters consider the gendered construction of the queen's image, the extent of her participation in shaping that image, and the political motivations for her portrayal in these texts.

The last chapter returns to the topic of *molinismo* in Castilian literature produced in the first half of the fourteenth-century. Through an analysis of three works that are connected to the cultural movement of *molinismo* (*Libro del caballero Zifar*, *Poema de Alfonso XI*, and *Libro de buen amor*), this chapter attempts to measure the queen's influence on *molinismo* and poses the question of whether or not *molinismo* should be considered a unified cultural movement.

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Introduction

You know what “legacy” means? It’s what you pass down to your children, and your children’s children. It’s what remains of you when you’re gone.

—Tywin Lannister (character from HBO’s *Game of Thrones*)*

This study examines the cultural legacy of the medieval Castilian queen María de Molina (1284-1321) in an attempt to appreciate the impact of her rule on the cultural politics of Castile at the turn of the fourteenth century. We sometimes talk about historical figures as having a “cultural legacy” or even make reference to the “cultural legacy” of an entire civilization (as in “the cultural legacy of Ancient Greece”). When speaking of historical figures, the term usually indicates the way in which that person is remembered and what it is they are remembered for. It also often indicates the impact that an historical figure had on society or on certain culturally-held beliefs. As a queen regent of Castile-León, María de Molina had a significant impact on the society in which she lived and ruled. She exercised a considerable power and influence during her time as queen and she is remembered by history (if only in certain restricted disciplinary circles) as an exemplary Castilian queen who supported her family’s interests and managed to hold on to the crown for her son and her grandson. And yet, María’s cultural legacy is more than just the way in which she is remembered by history. Oxford English Dictionary defines the term “legacy” as “anything handed down by an ancestor or predecessor” and Merriam Webster defines it as “something transmitted by or received from an ancestor or predecessor or from the past.”¹ Besides the crown of Castile-León, Queen María was able to hand something more down to her descendants. By María’s

* David Benioff and D.B. Weiss, “A Man Without Honor,” *Game of Thrones*, season 2, episode 7, directed by David Nutter, aired May 13, 2012 (Burbank, CA: Warner Home Video, 2013), DVD.

1. *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed., s.v. “legacy.”; Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 10th ed., s.v. “legacy.” In both cases, these are secondary definitions.

cultural legacy, I mean the ways in which her rule as queen was perceived and represented by her contemporaries, how it was recorded for posterity, and above all how it was used—both by her supporters and by her descendants—to promote a political discourse and set of beliefs and ideas about monarchy that served the interests of the crown, and which some literary critics have come to describe as the “cultural movement” or the “cultural model” of “molinismo.”²

We all know something about the more famous Iberian queens like Isabel the Catholic and her daughter Juana the Mad. For many years I have been drawn to the historical figures of queens like these because they appeared to me to be saying something about the way in which all women—not just queens—were perceived by the society in which they lived. Some queens in Medieval and Early Modern Iberia were respected authorities who were able to wield power and others were not. Some were admired by their contemporaries and remembered as great monarchs in the royal chronicles; while others were vilified and belittled, or condemned to obscurity by the writers of history. Either way, the rule of these queens and the manner in which their rule was portrayed and understood had an impact on culturally-held beliefs about women and politics, including the nature of women and their aptitude for ruling. And this had larger repercussions regarding ideas about women in general—such as their place in the family and society, and even woman’s capacity for good or evil. As Theresa Earenfight argues, “the royal family was the framework for the transmission and exercise of lordship, as well as a model and source for attitudes and structures and behavior towards women in

2. Not to be confused with Molinism, the religious doctrine created by the sixteenth-century Jesuit priest Luis de Molina. José Luis Pérez López, *Temas del Libro de buen amor (El entorno catedralicio toledano)*. (Toledo: D.B.ediciones, 2007), 144.; Fernando Gómez Redondo, *Historia de la prosa medieval castellana*, vol. 1, *La creación del discurso prosístico: El entramado cortesano* (Madrid: Cátedra, 1998), 862.

general and queens in particular.”³ It is perhaps for these reasons that recent years have seen an increased interest across the disciplines in recovering the cultural legacies of queens. As we shall see, Queen María was like these queens in that she also influenced the ways in which queens and women were perceived and portrayed. Along with Earenfight, I work with the “assumption that by understanding queens within the context of monarchy, we can better understand the status and role of non-royal women in the political arena in pre-modern Europe.”⁴ By studying the queenship of María de Molina, I therefore hope to contribute both to our understanding of the intersections of gender and politics in general, and more specifically to our knowledge of the traditions and practices of queenship in Medieval Iberia.

In order to study María’s queenship, we must first understand that her rule did not exist in a vacuum, but rather it was influenced by when, where and with whom she ruled. In part, María’s rule was determined by the laws and traditions of Castile-León. As Earenfight explains, circumstances in Medieval and Early Modern Iberia (specifically the practices of conquest and territorial expansion) “led to a pragmatic form of monarchy that, for the most part, did not explicitly prohibit women from inheriting or ruling.”⁵ In the kingdoms of Castile and León women could inherit the throne in the absence of a male heir,⁶ and during the medieval and early modern eras a few women did inherit the crown (Urraca [1109-1126], Berenguela [1217-1246], Isabel [1474-1504], and Juana [1505-1555]). However, this was an uncommon occurrence, and among those queens

3. Theresa Earenfight, “Partners in Politics” in *Queenship and Political Power in Medieval and Early Modern Spain*, ed. Theresa Earenfight (Cornwall, Ashgate, 2005): xxii.

4. *Ibid*, xviii.

5. *Ibid*, xiv.

6. This is evident in practice but also it is also directly stated in Alfonso X’s *Siete Partidas*: “que si fijo varon non oviese, la fija mayor heredasse el Reyno.” Gregorio López de Tovar, ed. *Las siete partidas del Sabio Rey Don Alonso el Nono: Glosados por el licenciado Gregorio López de Tovar* (Madrid, Oficina de Benito Cano, 1789), 1:464.

who did inherit the throne, only two (Urraca and Isabel) ruled in their own right as queens regnant. Like the subject of our study, most Castilian queens came to their title through marriage to a king or his heir, although they could, and often did, rule as regents in the absence of the king or during a royal minority.⁷ Queen consorts (or in the case of Leonor de Guzmán, even royal mistresses) also exercised considerable influence in the private sphere and participated as partners in the monarchy alongside their husbands and other family members. As we shall observe throughout this study, María was empowered by the queenly tradition established in Medieval Castile-León, and the rule of her predecessors (who were notably also her ancestors, since she was the daughter of an infante) provided a model for the construction of Queen María's power.

Besides the mores of established tradition, the nature of María's rule was also shaped by the larger political circumstances of the kingdom and her personal relationships with the kings and other persons of authority with whom she shared power. María's rule as queen coincided with a lengthy period of political upheaval in Castile-León. Two generations after her grandmother Berenguela and her saintly uncle Fernando III ruled the kingdoms of Castile and León together;⁸ María de Molina married the new heir and de-facto king of those recently-united realms, Sancho IV (1284-1295). When they wed in 1282, María's husband was in open rebellion against his father, Alfonso X, and he had just been declared regent by a coalition of royal family members, nobles, town councils, military orders, and prelates. After two years of civil war Alfonso X died

7. According to the *Partidas* in the case of a royal minority: "si aueniesse que al Rey niño fincasse Madre, ella ha de ser el primero, e el Mayoral guardador sobre los otros: porque naturalmente ella le deve amar, mas que otra cosa, por la lazeria, e el affan que lleuo trayéndolo en su cuerpo, e de si criándolo." Ibid, 475.

8. Fernando III *el Santo* was popularly called a saint within Castile, though he would not be canonized by the Catholic Church until the seventeenth century. Peter Linehan, *History and the Historians of Medieval Spain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 517.; See Miriam Shadis for a discussion of the nature of Berenguela's co-rule with her son. Miriam Shadis, *Berenguela of Castile (1180-1246) and Political Women in the High Middle Ages* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 97-122.

and Sancho succeeded him, but it was not an easy transition. Sancho had to defend his rule against the claims of his nephew Alfonso de la Cerda and the powerful political players who backed him. It took several years of political maneuvering for Sancho to consolidate his power and establish his credibility as king. During this time, Queen María became a trusted collaborator in her husband's monarchy, and before his death in 1295, Sancho appointed her as regent for their nine-year-old son and heir, Fernando IV.

With her husband's death María became a more consequential partner in the monarchy as regent, though Fernando's grasp on power was even less secure than that of his father. Along with the disadvantage of his youth, Fernando faced the stigma of illegitimacy in the eyes of the Church (and therefore the other Christian kingdoms) because his parents had failed to obtain the necessary papal dispensation for marrying within a prohibited degree of relation. Throughout Fernando's minority (1295-1300) María defended her son's rights against a political coalition that included the king's cousin Alfonso de la Cerda and his uncle Infante Juan, who claimed rulership of the kingdoms of Castile and León after Sancho's death. Despite this continued opposition which meant years of civil war, María was able to see her son become king. Her relationship with Fernando after he came of age was complicated, but as the queen was an established figure in the monarchy (especially among the town councils with whom she had nurtured a political partnership during the minority), Fernando needed her support and María continued to co-rule with her son into his majority.

When Fernando died in 1312, María de Molina ("tres veces reina," as her biographer Mercedes Gaibrois Ballesteros calls her)⁹ again served as regent for her one-

9. Mercedes Gaibrois de Ballesteros, *María de Molina: Tres veces reina*. (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1967).

year-old grandson, Alfonso XI, and co-ruled with her sons and other prominent noblemen until her death in 1321. Though she was forced to share power with other princes and magnates during these two royal minorities, María de Molina wielded considerable power and influence as coregent of what was a large and politically important kingdom. She became a force to be reckoned with in the politics of Medieval Iberia, and foreign kings and other powerful men came to respect her authority. Though her influence appears to have waned somewhat during the last years of Alfonso's tumultuous minority, she is remembered in the chronicles as a great monarch and modern historians credit her with managing to hold the kingdom of Castile-León together and securing the succession of her son and her grandson.

Besides safeguarding the royal patrimony and ensuring her family's dominance as the rulers of Castile-León, Queen María is also considered by some literary critics to have had a significant influence in shaping the political and moral discourses of Castilian literature in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Fernando Gómez Redondo is the critic who has done the most to further the study of the queen's influence in cultural production. In his multi-volume study on the history of medieval Castilian prose he proposes that Queen María is the "verdadera instigadora del pensamiento cultural de las tres décadas que van de 1285 a 1315," which he defines as a "modelo cultural" called "molinismo."¹⁰ He explains that, "con el término de 'molinismo,' se ha querido resaltar la especial contribución de la reina doña María de Molina en la construcción y fijación de un modelo cultural, apoyado en la escuela catedralicia de Toledo (con la figura relevante del arzobispo don Gonzalo Pérez Gudiel), que corrigiera por una parte las líneas maestras del marco de convivencia clerical...y que definiera, por otra, un nuevo pensamiento

10. Fernando Gómez Redondo, *Historia de la prosa*, 1: 961.

religioso y político con el que amparar la figura de Sancho IV, justificar su rebeldía y apoyar la legitimidad de su linaje.”¹¹ Although Gómez Redondo initially defines molinismo as the product of Sancho’s political alliance with the archbishop Gónzalo Pérez and the king’s patronage of the clerical authors of the cathedral school of Toledo, he later expands upon this definition to argue that after Sancho’s death the queen continued to promote the same political ideals as her husband, eventually passing the model of molinismo on to her grandson, Alfonso XI. Gómez Redondo also asserts that the queen’s rule as regent serves as the basis for establishing the tenets of molinismo, and that the image of the queen in the royal chronicles patronized by her grandson stands as a “garante de un orden social y político que logrará definir en una concreta producción literaria, hábilmente conectada con los valores con que ya había significado a Sancho IV.”¹² While I believe that he is correct in asserting that Queen María participated in the creation and promotion of a political discourse about chivalry and monarchy during her time as regent, Gómez Redondo conflates the figure of the queen in the royal chronicles with the queen herself, and thereby mischaracterizes the nature of her participation in that discourse. He also uses the term “molinismo” to refer to a large group of literary texts that span a long period of time (roughly from 1292 to 1350), and therefore fails to appreciate the diverse perspectives and different ideological beliefs contained within those individual works. In this study, I attempt to redefine the “model” of molinismo and to uncover the queen’s actual influence in creating and advocating a set of political and moral beliefs about the nature of monarchy and chivalry. I also seek to describe and define the ways in which the queen participated in shaping her own image as it is

11. Fernando Gómez Redondo, “El Zifar y la *Crónica de Fernando IV*,” *La corónica* 27, no. 3 (1999): 105.

12. Gómez Redondo, *Historia de la prosa medieval castellana*, vol. 2, *El desarrollo de los géneros: La ficción caballeresca y el orden religioso* (Madrid: Cátedra, 1998), 1225.

portrayed in the royal chronicles, thereby contributing to the creation of her cultural legacy.

Traditionally speaking, the queens of Castile-León are represented in the royal chronicles in a way that reflects the important role they played in the government. As George Martin observes:

Al lector de las crónicas castellano-leonesas medievales debería llamarle la atención—extrañamente no ha sido así hasta ahora—la importancia que cobra en ellas la mujer. Importancia cuantitativa—pocos son los reinados en que, bajo uno u otro aspecto, no se manifieste una presencia femenina en la esfera del poder—pero sobre todo importancia cualitativa: en este género entre todos político, la intervención de la mujer en las actividades de gobierno es frecuente, variada y no pocas veces decisiva.¹³

This is especially true of María de Molina, who figures prominently in the royal chronicles of her husband, son, and grandson. And yet, while some queens of Castile patronized royal chronicles, this does not appear to have been the case with Queen María. Part of Gómez Redondo's theory about the queen's role in influencing and promoting the model of *molinismo* is based on the assumption—first suggested by Diego Catalán (who also appears to have been the first to use the term “*molinismo*”)—that the queen had a hand in authoring a lost history that served as a primary source for one of the royal chronicles that covers her reign.¹⁴ Whether or not this is true, it is apparent that María's

13. George Martin, “Reinar sin reinar: Berenguela de Castilla en el espejo de la historiografía de su época (1214-1246),” *e-Spania: Revue interdisciplinaire d'études hispaniques médiévales et modernes* 1(2006): paragraph 1, doi: 10.4000.

14. Diego Catalán, *La Estoria de España de Alfonso X: Creación y evolución* (Madrid: Artes Gráficas Soler, 1992), 13.; Fernando Gómez Redondo, “De la crónica general a la real: Transformaciones ideológicas en *Crónica de tres reyes*,” in *La historia alfonsí: el modelo y sus destinos (siglos XIII-XV)*, ed. George Martin (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2000), 102.

reputation and her legacy as a great and wise queen who safeguarded the realm for her descendants is intimately related to her portrayal in the royal chronicles. In this study, we will consider the multiple avenues through which the queen may have influenced both her portrayal in the chronicles as well as the political discourse of these texts, which form the basis for her legacy as well as the basis for *molinismo*. We will also consider how the queen's self-representation and political rhetoric may have had a broader impact on other discourses, which include the political discourses of the royal court and the literary production of Castile-León at the turn of the fourteenth century.

As Earenfight observes, “the power and authority that constitutes politics is everywhere and in everything that touches the governance of the realm. Politics can, therefore, be observed, measured, and analyzed in many places—in public and in private, in fiscal account books and official chronicles, in self-conscious representations, in parliamentary assemblies, in the royal palace, in political treatises, in church, and in works of art.”¹⁵ In order to understand how María's legacy was created, I explore the queen's real participation as a co-ruler in the monarchy and analyze the rhetoric of royal documents, keeping in mind the fact that “structures and ideologies used to describe kingship and queenship both influence and mask realities of power.”¹⁶ Alongside the royal chronicles, I also analyze the political rhetoric of documents such as the *ordenamientos* of the cortes, royal privileges and donations, founding charters for military guilds, wills, and personal letters in order to understand the ways in which María's rule was perceived, as well as the ways in which the authors of these documents wanted her rule to be perceived.

15. Earenfight, “Partners in Politics,” xviii.

16. *Ibid.*, xviii.

In order to facilitate the study of molinismo, I begin by exploring the origins of molinismo in Sancho IV's cultural politics in chapter one. Bearing in mind that monarchy is a family affair, I describe the challenges faced by the new monarchs and how they met them. Among these challenges were the consolidation of Sancho's power as king, the suppression of the increasingly frequent noble rebellions, and the defense of their descendants against other pretenders to the throne. Alongside his queen—who as his wife was an important part of his legitimizing discourses—Sancho responded to these challenges with political actions (including patronage and the formation of alliances), public ceremonies, and the creation of a political discourse that together constitute the king's cultural politics. In chapter one, I explore the nature of Sancho's alliance with the then-archbishop of Toledo, Gónzalo Pérez Gudiel, and the king's patronage of clerical authors from the cathedral school of Toledo. I provide a broad survey of the political discourse that Sancho created in his cultural production as a whole, but the primary focus of my textual analysis is a political treatise that is the only work that names the king as its author, *Castigos del rey don Sancho IV*. In this chapter I explore how Sancho and his allies used the power of textual discourse and political actions in order to portray his rule as return to a righteous model of monarchy that is intimately related to the way in which the rule of his grandfather, Fernando III *el Santo*, was remembered. To this end, the political discourse that Sancho promotes in *Castigos* advances a semi-sacral conceptualization of the monarch of Castile-León as God's chosen representative and the enforcer of His justice on earth. As we shall see, the political discourse that Sancho promoted was greatly influenced by his alliance with the prelates of Toledo, whom he employed as authors, and therefore Sancho's molinismo promotes values that serve the

political aspirations of the Church of Toledo alongside other values that serve the king's political needs.

Chapters two and three form a cohesive unit whose subject is the rule of Queen María. In these chapters I explore the nature of the queen's rule as well as the representation of the same through a close reading of the royal chronicles and other historical documents. The examination of these texts provides us with a glimpse into how María's power was constructed by her supporters and how her rule was perceived by her contemporaries. As María participated in the creation of some of these texts, it also gives us insight into the queen's self-representation and how she participated in creating and promoting a political discourse about the nature of monarchy. In these chapters I also explore the gendered construction of María's queenship in the chronicles and how she and her supporters circumvented the obstacles posed by her gender and sometimes even used it to her advantage. I also consider the perspectives and political motives of the queen's chroniclers and their patrons in choosing to represent her the way that they do, as well as the queen's personal relationships with her chroniclers and how that may have affected the way that she is portrayed. One of the chronicles examined here is the product of royal patronage, commissioned by Alfonso XI and written by the king's lay chancellor, Sánchez de Valladolid. The other is a product of the cathedral school of Toledo, which was written by the archdeacon of Toledo Jofré de Loaysa. Together, these chronicles cover the reigns of Alfonso X, Sancho, Fernando IV, and Alfonso XI, though the focus of my analysis will be on the period of time when María ruled as queen consort and queen regent.

I begin chapter two with a definition of queenship that provides a context for María's rule in Castile-León. Chapter two encompasses the period from 1282 to 1300 and describes the nature of María's involvement in governance both as Sancho's consort and as coregent during Fernando's minority. In this chapter, I consider how María's relationships with the male members of her family allowed her to lay claim to power and to act as an intercessor between the crown and the other noble clans to which she was related. I explore the development of her political partnership with Sancho during his reign, as well as the other relationships that the queen fostered in order to hold on to power during her son's minority. Through my literary analysis of the chronicles, I describe the function of Queen María's rule in these texts, particularly how her portrayal becomes an example of both model rulership and vassalage that provides the basis for a model of righteous monarchy and a moral code of chivalry. I observe how this model draws from Sancho's cultural politics, and yet is also shaped by the new political circumstances of Fernando's minority.

Chapter three covers the period from 1301 to 1321, during which time María co-ruled with her son and served as regent for her grandson. In this chapter I continue to discuss the changing nature of the queen's participation in government and to analyze her representation in the chronicles as well as in other historic documents. I evaluate the claims of literary critics who assert that Queen María had a hand in creating a lost history that serves as the basis for Sánchez de Valladolid's chronicle and I consider what this theory may or may not tell us about the queen's representation in his chronicles. I also explore more closely the queen's self-representation in other documents and her role in creating a tri-part set of values that include the service of God, the king, and the good of

the kingdom. I demonstrate how this rhetorical motif begins to appear in royal documents during María's tenure as regent and later permeates other forms of political discourse, including the royal chronicles, where it comes to define Queen Maria's rule. I conclude this section with an examination of the political motives that inform the royal chronicles, and I consider the perspectives of the authors and their patrons, as well as the very real relationships that these men had with the queen. I draw conclusions about how the queen's self-representation and the political rhetoric that she employed in the government of the kingdom influenced both her portrayal in the chronicles, as well as the values about monarchy and chivalry that are promoted in those texts.

Chapter four examines later manifestations of the so-called model of *molinismo* and addresses the task of redefining the term as it is explained by Gómez Redondo. In this chapter I analyze how the moral and political values that literary critics have identified as *molinista* are promoted in three fourteenth-century works, two of which are believed to have been authored by clerics of the cathedral school of Toledo (*Libro del caballero Zifar* and *Libro de buen amor*) and another that was royally-patronized and written by a nobleman (*Poema de Alfonso Onceno*). In this chapter I observe how in each case, the authors draw from the principles of *molinismo*, and yet they do not replicate an identical cultural model. In this way, we come to a new definition of *molinismo* that separates out the clerical prerogatives from the royal ones and recognizes the diverse and changing nature of this model as it is assumed and adapted by different authors and patrons.

With this study about a particular queen, I hope to contribute to emerging scholarship on medieval and early modern queenship in the specific context of the Iberian

Peninsula. As stated above, the study of queenship is important because by understanding the political realities of queens and their role in the monarchy, we can better understand the experiences of all women within the political sphere. The topic of this study is Queen María's cultural legacy, which is how she was remembered and what she left behind once she was gone. It is the sum of the impact of her rule on political discourses, including moralizing discourses about chivalry and beliefs about women and queens. Queen María's cultural legacy is what she passed down to her descendants (particularly Alfonso XI) and to her successors (i.e. future queens of Castile). In the present study I seek to uncover that legacy and to measure the ways in which the queen, along with her chroniclers and their patrons, contributed to the construction of that legacy.

Chapter One

Culture Wars: Sancho IV and the Politics of Medieval Spain

In this chapter I will give an overview the political and historical context of Sancho IV's reign and analyze the king's cultural politics. By cultural politics I mean the combination of the king's discursive political actions (ceremonies, policies, political decisions, alliances, etc.) and his textual discourse (patronage and "authorship" of written works). While it may seem obvious that staged ceremonies constitute discursive performance, given the public and political nature of the royal court, all actions within that space can also be considered discursive performances. For this purpose, I will use some historical documents and material from the royal chronicles, but I will rely mainly on the work of modern historians who have used the various medieval chronicles and existing documentation to reconstruct, as far as such is possible, the events of this period. I will also address Sancho's textual discourse, his patronage and authorship, and in particular his political writings. Like his father, Sancho recognized that textual production was a useful political tool. It could be used to promote one's ideas about monarchy, government, and the rest of the world, and for King Sancho it was vital to forging a cultural politics with the end of self-legitimization. With Sancho's accession to the throne, there was a marked change in the cultural politics of the kingdom that would influence textual production until the 1350s. In this chapter, I will examine this shift primarily through the only work that Sancho "authored," *Castigos del rey don Sancho IV*, a treatise on kingship and good governance.

Sancho's reign was affected by political and economic crisis, both which preceded his succession in 1284. The economic crisis was brought on by many factors, among them a recent boom in southward territorial expansion and the depopulation that

resulted from the efforts to colonize those newly-conquered territories.¹ The political crisis arguably began with the unified rebellion of the high nobility against Alfonso X in the 1270s and then reemerged in the form of the rebellion of Alfonso's second son, Sancho, in 1282. Sancho's succession was contentious and his marriage was deemed illegitimate by the pope. During his brief reign (1284-1295) he faced continued (and more often than not, armed) opposition to his rule. For these reasons we might characterize Sancho's particular political difficulties as a "crisis of legitimacy." At the same time we should be aware that the particulars regarding legitimacy and the exercise of power in the monarchy of medieval Castile were constantly being re-negotiated, and therefore one might also say that the state of the monarchy was perpetually in flux. In any given society, government is an institution created through negotiation and agreement between the various institutions of power—agreements as to who is to wield that power, when, where, how, and under what circumstances.² Isabel Alfonso and Julio Escalona affirm that periods where the king's right to rule is contested—such as the period under discussion here—are particularly apt for making observations about how and by what means a monarch's legitimacy is achieved.³ I therefore use the word "crisis" here to speak of the challenges to the monarch's right to power (what Alfonso and Escalona would call the delegitimizing discourses or de-legitimization) that plagued the reign of King Sancho, and that continued to present challenges well into the reigns of his son and

1. On this subject, see Teofilo Ruiz, *Crisis and Continuity: Land and Town in Late Medieval Castile* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994).

2. Isabel Alfonso and Julio Escalona, introduction to *Building Legitimacy: Political Discourses and Forms of Legitimacy in Medieval Studies*, eds. Isabel Alfonso et al (Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 2004), xi-iii.

3. Ibid. "Situations in which royal succession is uncertain can be seen as moments of crisis, even if dynasty itself is not formally at stake....Conflict and competition on royal succession are recurrent situations in medieval monarchies, and a privileged ground for exploring the subtle relations between norms and processes, as well as between political institutionalization and the pursuit of legitimation" (xiv).

grandson. In order to combat the delegitimizing discourses and actions mounted against him, King Sancho responded with words and deeds that defended his legitimacy and sought to achieve consensus and support from among the various institutions of power in the kingdom and beyond, including the papacy.

The Rebellion and Succession of Sancho IV *el Bravo* (1282-1295)

Sancho proclaimed himself heir after his brother the Infante Fernando de la Cerda died during the Benemerine invasion of 1275 in Castile.⁴ At the time, Alfonso X was in France meeting with the pope in a last-ditch effort to obtain the title of Holy Roman Emperor. After his brother's death, Sancho—the *segundón* and therefore a principal contender for the crown⁵—took his brother's place as regent and managed the defense of the territories. From the account of events by modern historians, it does not seem that Sancho was without ambition. He had previously refused to be knighted by his brother, a ritual which might have secured the place of Fernando de la Cerda's children above him in the line of succession.⁶ During his father's absence, Sancho began to solicit support for his claim to the throne, so that when the king returned to Castile he was met by a group of nobles in support of the infante, headed by the magnate Lope Díaz de Haro. They called on the king to summon a Cortes where Sancho could swear fealty and be officially proclaimed heir. The process was delayed for three years, but in 1278 Sancho did eventually become the official heir of Castile-León. However, his mother, Queen Violante, opposed this infringement on the rights of the children of her first-born son and

4. According to the *Crónica del rey don Alfonso Décimo*, it does not appear that Fernando died in battle: "adolescíó de grand dolencia." *Crónica del rey Alfonso Décimo*, in *Crónicas de los reyes de Castilla: Desde don Alfonso el Sabio, hasta los católicos don Fernando y doña Isabel*, ed. Cayetano Rosell y Lopez, (Madrid: Cárlos Bailly-Baillier, 1875), 51 (hereafter cited in text as *CAX*).

5. The lines of descent were not clearly fixed and there was a long tradition in Castile of partible inheritance. See Teofilo Ruiz, *From Heaven to Earth: The Reordering of Castilian Society* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2004), 102-9.

6. José Manuel Nieto Soria, *Sancho IV: 1284-1295* (Palencia: Editorial La Olmeda, 1994), 19-20.

so left Castile for Aragón, taking her young grandsons Alfonso and Fernando (known as the Infantes de la Cerda) with her.⁷ She went there seeking protection and support from her brother, King Pere III, but the Aragonese king was also Sancho's uncle, and he took the latter's side. He agreed to hold the infantes as political prisoners in order to keep them from becoming the pawns of the king of France—who was their maternal grandfather, and who supported their claim to the throne of Castile-León. In this way, Pere could keep France from gaining influence in the powerful kingdom to the south, while increasing his own clout in that realm. With this show of support, Pere indebted Sancho to him and won his loyalty by physically controlling the potential challengers to Sancho's rule.⁸

Whether or not he was influenced by pressure from the king of France, in 1282 Alfonso X proposed to his new heir that Alfonso de la Cerda should inherit the realm of Jaén.⁹ Although Sancho's nephew would technically remain his vassal, Alfonso would be king of that realm. It was a loss of territory and prestige that Sancho was not willing to endure. This disagreement between the king and his heir led to open confrontation and to Sancho's formal rebellion against his father. Alfonso in turn disinherited his son and designated his grandson Alfonso de la Cerda as his new and sole heir.¹⁰ But Sancho

7. Violante later supported her son, as she was present at the meeting in Valladolid in 1282 where Sancho was declared regent in his father's stead. María Antonia Carmona Ruiz, *María de Molina*, ed. Isabel Belmonte López (Barcelona: Random House Mondadori, 2005), 42.

8. Later, Sancho would reward his uncle's loyalty by promising him the territory of Ágreda-Campillo in the 1281 Treaty of Requena. Julio Valdeón Baroque, *Alfonso X el Sabio: La forja de la España moderna* (Madrid: Temas de Hoy, 2003), 213.

9. While it has been suggested that this was done to appease Philip, the king of France wanted nothing less than for Alfonso de la Cerda to be the heir of Castile and León, and in fact rejected this proposal. *Ibid.*, 212-3; According to Linehan, Alfonso X's own hold on power had been somewhat tenuous, and it was the marriage alliance between Fernando de la Cerda and Louis IV's daughter Blanche in 1269 that secured it. Furthermore, he tells us of a rumor that circulated at the time claiming that Alfonso's grandmother, Berenguela was not the oldest daughter of Alfonso VIII, and that the rightful heir to Castile was in reality the king of France. Peter Linehan, *History and the Historians*, 456-7.

10. In his testament in 1283, Alfonso also designates the king of France as a possible heir, if the Infantes de la Cerda should die without children. Manuel González Jiménez ed., *Diplomatario andaluz de Alfonso X* (Sevilla: El Monte Caja de Huelva y Sevilla, 1991), 554.

believed that the realms of Castile and León did not belong to the king in the sense that he could dispense with them as he willed. According to the *Castigos del rey don Sancho IV*:¹¹ “Non cae al rey de menguar su regno, nin partirlo entre sus fijos para después de sus días, nin le cae bien de anajenar, nin de malparar los bienes del su regno. El regno que es partido e menguado couiene que sea desollado por rayz, segund que dixo Ihesu Christo en el Euangelio” (150). In *Castigos*, Sancho also justifies his rebellion with the claim that God had chosen him as heir, since it was His will that the first-born son of the king should be killed before being crowned himself.¹² According to this line of logic, since Infante Fernando was never crowned, his children could not be considered heirs to the throne.

In 1282, the same year that Sancho initiated his rebellion against his father, he also married María Alfonso de Meneses, daughter of Infante Alfonso de Molina, who was purportedly the favorite brother of Fernando III *el Santo* and a great leader among the warriors of the reconquest.¹³ María’s family connections were likely an important factor in the infante’s choice of her as his wife. Besides being a descendant of the royal family of Burgundy, María was also supposedly on very good terms with her cousin, King Alfonso.¹⁴ Her mother was Mayor Alfonso de Meneses, making her a member of the powerful Téllez de Meneses clan. She also had ties to the even more powerful Lara family through her father’s first two marriages, and it was through these connections that she would eventually inherit the title of Señora of Molina. This marriage that took place

11. Hugo Oscar Bizzarri, ed. *Castigos del rey don Sancho IV* (Madrid: Iberoamericana, 2001), 150. *Castigos* is a mirror of princes or conduct book “authored” by King Sancho. All subsequent citations refer to this edition.

12. Ibid, 166.

13. Joseph O’Callaghan, *Reconquest and Crusade in Medieval Spain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 109-22.

14. Rafael del Valle Curieses, *María de Molina: El soberano ejercicio de la concordia* (Madrid: Aldebarán Ediciones, 2000), 41.

in 1282—the same year that Sancho openly rebelled against his father—was in itself an act of rebellion, since Alfonso had already arranged for his son to be married to Guillerma de Montcada.¹⁵ Through this marriage that he chose for himself, Sancho defied the wishes of his father and made a political alliance with those noble clans that were dissatisfied with the king's policies and who hoped that the new heir would better support their interests.

Alfonso X had made great efforts towards the empowerment of the monarch in medieval Castile—often at the expense of the powers of the high nobility—and it was this fact that eventually provoked the nobles to rebel against him. In 1272 members of the high nobility, along with Alfonso's brother Infante Felipe and a handful of representatives from the urban *concejos* (councils) united in a common front to rebel against the king. They complained of Alfonso's imposition of the *Fuero real* and of the high-handed actions of the king's royal agents. They also complained about the king's expenditures in his bid for the title of Holy Roman Emperor, which they blamed for the monetary devaluation and increased fiscal pressure felt throughout the kingdom. In general it seems that the demands of those rebellious nobles, as they are reproduced in the *CAX*, demonstrate nostalgia for the policies of Fernando III, Alfonso's father, since they require that the king return things to the way they were under Fernando.¹⁶ Although

15. Guillerma de Moncada, the daughter of the Viscount Gastón de Bearne, was already considered Sancho's legal wife before 1282. The marriage was probably negotiated between the king and the powerful magnate don Lope de Haro at a time when the nobility was up in arms against the king and he was in need of support. Sancho and Guillerma were married by proxy in 1270, although the union was never consummated. Sancho's marriage was an object of international interest, and the king of Aragón even went so far as to advise Sancho against the match, since it might result in the alienation of some of Pere III's territory. Carmona Ruiz, *María de Molina*, 36; Nieto Soria, *Sancho IV*, 23.

16. *CAXI*, 30-1. Most of the rebellious nobles' demands concern the collection of taxes. They call for the king to return the fiscal policies and law codes to how they were "en tiempo de su padre" (30). In this relatively short list of demands (about eight items), the nobles refer to Fernando III and his ancestors five

Alfonso negotiated an end to this particular rebellion, he was unable to stamp out all the embers of discontent, and it is therefore not surprising that some of these same complaints reignited the rebellion that supported Sancho ten years later (1282). These discontents viewed Alfonso's policies as a deviation from the "normal" order of things, and they believed that by substituting the current king with Sancho, all could be put right.

The infantes don Pedro and don Juan initially supported their brother in his rebellion, as did Sancho's uncle Infante Manuel and many other important Castilian magnates. Sancho had the support of the kings of Aragón, Portugal, and Granada and he travelled around the territory forging allegiances with the military orders, the urban concejos (except Seville and Murcia, which remained loyal to Alfonso), the monastic orders, and even some of the Castilian bishops. In order to institutionalize their support, Sancho's allies formed *hermandades* (confraternities or guilds). The most common reason given by these confraternities for pledging their loyalties to Sancho against his father was that they felt that their traditional rights and privileges were not being properly respected by the current king; they all seemed to all believe that Sancho would better respect their *fueros* (law codes) and *privilegios* (privileges). Accordingly, Sancho presented himself as a reformer who would restore the kingdom that his father had corrupted. He promised a return to the economic and military policies of his grandfather, Fernando III *el Santo*, who was made famous by his great military conquests and religious crusades.

Despite the initial support that he received in his rebellion, Sancho also faced considerable opposition from other institutions of power, in particular the papacy. While

times, which demonstrates that these rebels viewed Alfonso's policies as a wrongful deviation from tradition.

Sancho enjoyed the support of most of the Castilian Church, the pope (with whom the king of France had a close relationship) was opposed to Sancho's rebellion and to his marriage. In 1282 Martin IV excommunicated Sancho and his followers for their rebellion, declared the infante's marriage to be invalid and incestuous, and threatened the couple with excommunication if they did not separate.¹⁷ Over the next two years Sancho lost some of his most powerful supporters among the high nobility in Castile to death or betrayal. With the weakening of his position, he tried to come to an understanding with his father, but there would be no reconciliation. In 1284 Alfonso X expired, cursing and disinheriting his son in his will. Despite his father's malediction and his excommunication by the pope, most of the territories easily accepted Sancho as king of Castile and León and he was officially crowned in Toledo immediately following his father's death. Even so, intrigue and civil conflict were rampant in the politics of Medieval Iberia, and the claim of the Infantes de la Cerda, who had powerful backers, had yet to be suppressed. The consolidation of Sancho's power as monarch in such circumstances would not prove an easy task.

In addition to this, when Sancho became king he was immediately faced with a problem of international alliances, in which the Castilian infantes and other important magnates were also interested parties. Sancho needed alliances with Aragón and France, who were both potential supporters of the Infantes de la Cerda. The problem was that these two kingdoms were currently in contention over the kingdom of Sicily. While the king of Aragón had supported Sancho and continued to do so by holding the Infantes de

17. While the excommunication for Sancho's rebellion was carried out, there is no existing documentation that suggests that the couple were excommunicated for their marriage. E. Jaffé and H. Finke, "La dispensa de matrimonio falsificada para el rey Sancho IV y María de Molina," *Anuario de historia del derecho español* 4 (1927) 301; Carmona Ruíz, *María de Molina*, 44.

la Cerda prisoner, the king of France counted on his close ties to the papacy. If Philippe III could be convinced to give up his and his grandson's claims to Castile, he might also use his influence to facilitate the issue of a papal dispensation for Sancho's marriage. Meanwhile, within Castile, don Juan Núñez de Lara (who was under the protection of the king of France) continued to support the claim of the infantes, periodically stirring up trouble and running raids on Sancho's kingdom until 1289.¹⁸ Initially Sancho made an alliance with Aragon, though he put conditions on his promised military aid to Pere III against the French: Sancho would only help him so long as he wasn't already engaged in the defense of his own territories. The new king of Castile-León was faced with a difficult situation, since in many ways he needed to have the support of the papacy in order to be considered a legitimate king, and he needed a marriage that was recognized as legitimate in order to secure his dynasty against the pretensions of the Infantes de la Cerda.¹⁹ But though his relations with the pope would improve during his reign, the dispensation for his marriage to María was not forthcoming.

In 1286 Pope Honorius IV annulled the former order of excommunication for those who aided Sancho in his rebellion.²⁰ However, when Sancho tried to take advantage of his friendly relations with new pope and applied for the dispensation in 1289, Nicholas

18. On his deathbed the Infante Fernando extracted a promise from Juan Núñez de Lara to protect the rights of his son to the throne. According to *CAX*, not only did he commend his son to Juan Núñez, but also gave him the caretaking of the child: "[Fernando] rogóle mucho afincadamente que ayudase é ficiese en manera que don Alfonso, fijo desto don Fernando, heredase los reinos despues de dias del rey don Alfonso, su padre, é porque oviese mayor cuidado deste fecho, encomendóle la crianza de aquel don Alfonso, su fijo, é mandó que gelo diesen luégo para criar, é que oviese cuidado de su hacienda" *CAX*, 51. Although the chronicler does not use the word 'regent' or 'tutor', having the care of the child would entail an important role in the regency during the king's minority.

19. Fernando III's inheriting Castile and León despite the supposed illegitimacy of his parent's marriage (the pope forced them to separate because of consanguinity) was a helpful precedent that proved that the kings of Castile could go against papal wishes in regards to marriage.

20. Carmona Ruiz, *Maria de Molina*, 71.

IV told him it couldn't be accomplished at the present time.²¹ When Sancho sent an embassy to treat with King Philippe of France, the monarch suggested that Sancho separate from María and remarry in order to appease the pope (he conveniently suggested one of his own sisters for the position), and made it a condition to an alliance between the two countries. Sancho's vehement rejection of this proposal famously resulted in the removal from court of Sancho's first *privado* (favorite), the abbot Gómez García de Toledo, and the Castilian king's affirmation of his right to marry whom he chose:

que nunca Dios quisiese que tal casamiento él ficiese; que por tan bien casado se tenía él, que en el mundo non avie rey que mejor casado fuese que él era. É cuanto por la dispensación, pues la demandaba é non gelaba la Iglesia de Roma, dándola el Papa en tal grado commo este que él era casado á otros reyes de ménos estado que él...por embargo de otrie se movia la Iglesia á gelo non dar, que le non empescia, é que Dios, que era sobre todo, que lo juzgarie; ca otros reyes de la su casa onde él venía casaron en tal grado commo él casó sin dispencion, é que salieran ende muy buenos reyes, é mucho aventurados é conqueredores contra los enemigos de la fe, é ensanchadores é aprovechosos de sus reinos.²²

In the royal chronicle's version of events, Sancho reaffirms his commitment to his marriage (and the unmentioned corresponding alliances with powerful Castilian noble

21. Nieto Soria, 107; Domínguez Sánchez notes that Nicholas IV had promised the cardinals that he would not grant Sancho the bull of dispensation without their consent. He also explains that the main arguments against the dispensation were the third degree of relation between Sancho and María, the king's previous marriage, and the fact that María was the godmother of one of Sancho's illegitimate children. Santiago Domínguez Sánchez, "Falsificaciones medievales: Una 'bula' de Nicolás IV falsificada por el rey Sancho IV de Castilla," *Estudios humanísticos-Historia* 2 (2003): 18.

22. *Crónica del rey don Sancho IV el Bravo*, in *Crónicas de los reyes de Castilla: Desde don Alfonso el Sabio, hasta los católicos don Fernando y doña Isabel*, ed. Cayetano Rosell y Lopez, (Madrid: Cárlos Bailly-Baillier, 1875), 73 (hereafter cited in text as *CSIV*).

clans). Using indirect speech, the chronicle has the king asserting his right to choose a wife even against the pope's wishes. He cites historical precedent, making it clear that he expects all the major powers to accept his marriage and his offspring as legitimate. After all, his grandfather was the son of a marriage deemed illegitimate by the pope, and yet he became a monarch accounted among those kings who were “mucho aventurados é conqueridos” and “ensanchadores é aprovechosos de sus reinos.”²³ Despite the king's avowed confidence in the matter, the fabrication of a fake bull of dispensation for his marriage in 1292 belies his assurance and demonstrates the importance attached to papal recognition.²⁴

The question of legitimacy was an undeniably important issue in Sancho's consolidation of power as king. However, the situation that he was faced with was much more complicated, and the lack of a dispensation to legitimize his marriage was but one of several challenges to establishing his right to and control of the throne of Castile-León. The violent mode of his succession and the opposition of other parties—who supported the Infantes de la Cerda, or at times the Infante Juan against the king—made it difficult for Sancho to gain a firm hold on power. Throughout Sancho's reign noble uprisings abounded, sometimes backed by alliances with foreign powers. Furthermore, the flexibility of inheritance laws contributed to the precariousness of Sancho's claim to power, as royal succession by primogeniture was not yet firmly established in the Iberian Peninsula.²⁵ According to the *Siete Partidas*, the “omes Sabios et entendidos,” having

23. Ibid.

24. In 1297 Pope Boniface VIII found out about the false bull and in April of the same year, he ordered the Bishops of Tarragona and Braga and the Archdeacon of Valderas of the cathedral of León to publically proclaim the spuriousness of the document. Dominguez Sánchez, “Falsificaciones medievales,” 17.

25. “That Ferdinand united the kingdoms of Castile and León is unremarkable. That he willed them undivided to his oldest son, Alfonso, in 1252 is. In doing so, Ferdinand broke away from almost four

recognized the advantages of patrilineal inheritance, had decreed that in the case of the death of the first-born son, his children (if he should have any) should rule in his stead “et non otro ninguno.”²⁶ The validity of the claims against Sancho’s legitimacy was also supported by the fact that Alfonso X had cursed and disinherited his son in his will.

In his testament of 1283, the Wise King explains that Sancho had precedence over the children of his first-born son because their father died before being crowned king and “porque era más llegado por la linea derecha que los nuestros nietos, hijos de don Fernando.”²⁷ However, he also affirms that Sancho lost that right when he rose up in arms against his father. He therefore leaves the crown of both Castile and León to Alfonso de la Cerda, denouncing Sancho as a traitor.²⁸ In his testament, Alfonso also disinherits his other sons who supported Sancho, though he promises them forgiveness if they return to his service. His ploy to win their allegiance worked, and a year later in his codicil, Alfonso reaffirms his condemnation of Sancho and rewards his younger sons, don Juan and don Jaime, with the realms of Seville, Badajoz, and Murcia.²⁹ While after Alfonso’s death Infante Juan quickly submitted to his brother’s rule (if only temporarily), Alfonso de la Cerda did not, and the contention surrounding Sancho’s usurpation of his father’s power would be a problem for decades to come.

centuries of well established tradition of dividing the realms among male children, instead embracing primogeniture as the guiding criterion for royal succession.” Ruiz, *From Heaven to Earth*, 107.

26. López de Tovar, *Las Siete Partidas*, 1:465-70.

27. Alfonso says this was according to the will of God (“Dios quiso”), “derecho antiguo e la ley de razón” and “la ley de Espanna” González Jiménez ed., *Diplomatario andaluz*, 549.

28. *Ibid*, 550.

29. “Et porque es fuero antiguo e derecho que los reys puedan maldecir a los de su linage que erraren contra ellos de yerros descomunales, por ende dezimos que el que esto errare que sea maldito de Dios e de Sancta María e de toda la corte celestial, e que sea otrosí descomulgado de la Egleſia de Roma en cuyo poder nos dexamos nuestro testamento. E demás que sea por end tal traydor commo qui trae castiello e mata sennor, e que se non pueda ende saluar por ninguna manera nin por armas nin por uso nin por costumbre nin por fuero escripto, mas que sea maldito e yaga siempre en las penas del infierno con Judas el traydor.” *Ibid*, 562-3.

This brings us back to the topic of legitimacy and to the idea that all governments—based as they are on consensus and agreement from the participating power centers—necessitate legitimizing actions in order to achieve that agreement, and to the notion that moments in which royal succession are contested are fertile grounds for the study of legitimacy. Sancho certainly had a good deal of delegitimizing discourse to contend with, and his legitimizing discourse responded to the concerns raised by the former. He had to appeal to the active and rebellious nobility, the various power centers of the church, and also the representative bodies of the *concejos*, which had seen an increased participation in government in recent centuries. The particular form that Sancho’s legitimizing campaign would take was a reflection of the political mood of the times, and he drew from the dissatisfaction with his father’s political policies and cultural politics in order to style himself as the legitimate king.

Sancho’s court is considered to be somewhat of a return to the religious austerity that characterized the court of his grandfather, Fernando III. It was clear from the beginning of his reign that Sancho was eager to connect his kingship with the Christian faith and the Church. For example, the new king emulated his saintly grandfather by making a pilgrimage to Santiago in the third year of his reign (1286). The political importance of this act is evidenced by its inclusion in the royal chronicle, and by the commemorative *cantiga de romería* that depicts it: “A Sanyag[o] em rromaria ven.”³⁰ The new king even did one better than his grandfather in his coronation ceremony in Toledo, where instead of crowning himself (as was to become the jealously-guarded

30. *CSIV*, 73.; Only a small fragment of this *cantiga* has been preserved and it is reproduced in Ana María Mussons, “Los trovadores en los últimos años del siglo XIII: Ayras Nunez y la romería de Sancho IV,” in *Literatura en la época de Sancho IV*, ed. Carlos Alvar and José Manuel Lucía Megías (Alcalá: Universidad de Alcalá, 1996), 227.

custom of future Castilian kings), he allowed himself to be crowned by a group of four bishops. Sancho's pilgrimage and coronation were calculated in part to respond to the papacy's disapproval of his rebellion and marriage, and if the piety demonstrated in his pilgrimage would not win the pope's approval, it could still impress among the Castilian bishops and the people that their king was a servant of God. The coronation ceremony would also appeal to the Castilian bishops, who were allowed to participate in the ritual. Their inclusion can be read as symbolic of the increased role they would play in Sancho's administration.

Sancho's coronation ceremony was somewhat of an anomaly, since neither Fernando III nor his son had ever been crowned, much less by the hands of bishops.³¹ This was however, the tradition and practice of France, where kings derived their power from the sacred rituals of anointment and coronation, which provided evidence of their righteous rule. Sancho was never anointed, but his insistence on coronation—in spite of the lack of such ritual tradition in Castile and León—suggests a symbolic response to France, where Sancho was opposed. Although the monarchy in Castile was never a sacral one, it is likely that Sancho was willing to change that, or at least hoping to change the appearance of it.³² As Ruiz points out, “sacral kingship provided the very argument for regicide and for over-throwing an un-christian monarch.”³³ By incorporating elements of the traditions of other western European monarchies in this ceremony, Sancho was creating a new tradition that would affirm his right to rule and perhaps even invest him

31. Linehan says that Sancho's is the first coronation ceremony for any king of Castile and argues that it was “a public act intended to mitigate the effects of Alfonso X's dread sentence. It proclaimed that the new king had acquired his kingdom ‘con derecho’. It was calculated to legitimize his succession.” Linehan, *History and the Historians*, 439-48, 47.

32. For discussion on the non-sacral nature of the monarchy in Castile, see Linehan, 430-42; and Ruiz, *From Heaven to Earth*, 133-150.

33. *Ibid*, 145.

with a more sacral nature. In his royal chronicle, Jofré de Loaysa tells us that Sancho proclaimed that future monarchs of Castile-León should be crowned in that city, although there exists no documentation to support this claim.³⁴ In contrast to Alfonso X's views on the subject, in Sancho's *Castigos* it is explained that “por la consagraçión se fazen los sacerdotes e los obispos e los arçobispos e los reyes que son sagrados e coronados” and this practice is presented as being the custom of the time: “commo fazemos nos agora los christianos.”³⁵ Sancho's coronation and his attempt to establish coronation as tradition in Castile therefore can be interpreted as actions intended to invest his kingship with the approval of the church, and also to legitimize it in the eyes of France. Whether or not Sancho was fervently religious or simply wanted to appear to be so is a question that we cannot answer. What we can say with certainty is that these acts of apparent devotion were also political acts that achieved the end of legitimizing Sancho's kingship and of making the king appear to be as he described himself: a representative and vassal of God on earth. They were also calculated to appeal to two of Alfonso X's most powerful supporters—the king of France and the pope.

Accompanying the religious celebration where the king and queen were crowned in Toledo were other secular traditions that would serve to demonstrate Sancho's right to be king. These probably included the usual procession through the city, in this case Sancho's city of preference, Toledo. The royal chronicle of Jofré de Loaysa tells us that he was also “raised up” as king in the Visigothic tradition of raising the new king on a

34. Jofré de Loaysa, *Crónica de los reyes de Castilla: Fernando III, Alfonso X, Sancho IV, y Fernando IV (1248-1305)* trans. and ed. Antonio García Martínez (Murcia: Edición de la Academia Alfonso X el Sabio, 1982), 123. (All future citations refer to this edition.)

35. *Castigos*, 137.

shield.³⁶ Sancho then followed this up with another coronation ceremony in Seville, “símbolo de la lealtad proalfonsina,” where he went to be reconciled with his treacherous sibling, the infante don Juan.³⁷ When his uncle Pere III of Aragon died and was succeeded by Alfons III in 1285, Sancho lost the backing of the king of Aragón, as Alfons declared his support for the claim of the Infantes de la Cerda. Nieto Soria sees further evidence of the king’s preoccupation with the legitimacy of his marriage when, in 1286, Sancho summoned the high nobility, the military orders, and the city representatives to Zamora to swear fealty to the new heir, Fernando, upon his son’s birth. According to Nieto Soria, the *Fuero real* stipulated that this act should only take place after the king’s death, and Sancho’s rush to do so betrays the precariousness of his situation.³⁸ Regardless of whether or not this was tradition (it would seem that Alfonso X himself had been recognized as heir upon his birth),³⁹ it is clear that Sancho understood that given the on-going challenge to his rule by the Infantes de la Cerda—now backed by both Aragon and France—and the lack of papal dispensation for his marriage, there were many challenges to his new-born son’s succession.

As we have observed above, Sancho had made many promises to the various institutions of power in order to gain their support in his rebellion, including the military orders, the concejos and the nobility. However, once he became king he felt the need to negate some of the *cartas* (charters) and *privilegios* that he had granted. Before the end of his first year as king he had already disbanded the confraternities that had supported him.

36. Nieto Soria, *Sancho IV*, 56.

37. “Si hemos de creer el testimonio de ciertos embajadores del sultán mameluco, presentes por entonces en Sevilla, el domingo, 19 de junio de 1284, tuvo lugar un acto solemne en la catedral sevillana, en el que el rey fue entronizado y coronado de nuevo, saliendo a continuación una comitiva con atambores y banderas, participando estos embajadores mamelucos en el desfile.” Ibid, 57.

38. Ibid, 74.

39. Valdeón Baroque, *Alfonso X*, 20-21.

The union of these various political players into guilds gave them increased political power, which could result in the detriment of the power and autonomy of the monarch (as had been the case with Alfonso X). Furthermore, despite his promises to return the kingdom to its former glory during the reign of his grandfather, Fernando *el Santo*, once he was king Sancho discovered that a return to the old policies was untenable.

Some of the most important material differences between Sancho's reign and that of his grandfather was the lack of newly conquered territories and the low levels of population that were caused in part by that same territorial expansion. This was a problem especially in the territories of *realengo* (crown lands)—which meant less taxable units or *pecheros*, and fewer revenues for the crown. The migration of people of all classes to the south, and then quite often their subsequent return north, caused considerable economic instability as the kingdom continued to deal with the many challenges of populating the new territories. In order to hold on to these territories they had to be protected from outside invasions, which meant that they had to be well populated; but at the same time the kings of Castile and León were also aware that allowing the Moorish population to remain in their homes after the conquest increased the risk of their joining with outside forces to retake the land. In 1264, during Alfonso's reign, there was a large Mudejar⁴⁰ rebellion in Andalucia supported by the king of Granada, Ibn al-Ahmar, after which the defeated Muslim populations were largely expelled from Christian territories,⁴¹ a fact which contributed to the crisis of depopulation and food scarcity in the thirteenth century.⁴² In the end this meant less stability and more

40. *Mudéjares* are Islamic subjects who live under Christian rule.

41. Ibid, *Alfonso X*, 39-42.

42. Teofilo F. Ruiz, *Spain's Century of Crisis: 1300-1475* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 23; According to Linehan, Alfonso X dealt with the problem of depopulation by incentivizing migration to

competition over scarce resources between the crown, church, nobility and municipal councils.⁴³ It also meant that Sancho did not have the same wherewithal to carry out his military and cultural projects or to reward the loyalty and service of his vassals.

Furthermore, the gifts of *heredamientos* (entails) that Sancho had already made during his rebellion had resulted in the alienation of royal holdings and the further diminishment of the royal treasury.

Though Sancho continued to reward his vassals for their services after he became king, he did so less frequently due to his lack of means. In fact, once the king's position was more assured, he revoked many of the privileges that he had promised to the *concejos*, and those given to the nobility were also drastically reduced.⁴⁴ Upon assuming the throne the king continued (perhaps was *forced* to continue) what the Castilian church had previously denounced as Alfonso's excessive fiscal demands through the collection of the *tercias* and other extraordinary taxes.⁴⁵ However, what Sancho couldn't give the Castilian clergy in terms of monetary relief he made up for by restoring their former authority as the leaders in science and culture. As far as his relationship with the *concejos*, Sancho compensated for renegeing on promises to them by supporting the ambitions of the rising urban oligarchy, who were coming to control those representative bodies of *vecinos* (citizens), and by continuing his father's policies to exempt men who could keep a horse and arms from taxes. Sancho further impoverished the crown by

both newly conquered territories and old lands with low levels of population, even going so far as to encourage men of the cloth to procreate. Linehan, *History and Historians*, 417, 510.

43. Ruiz, *Crisis and Continuity*, 298.

44. Nieto Soria, *Sancho IV*, 191-92

45. *Ibid*, 215-18.

leasing the royal *rentas* (incomes), largely due to his need to remunerate the nobility for their military services.⁴⁶

Despite his best efforts to maintain order by rewarding all of his vassals according to their station, the decrease in privileges, especially those granted to the nobility, provoked rebellions from that sector of the population. In order to fully appreciate the significance of noble rebellions we should understand that they were not simply instances of disobedience on the part of one person, or even by the larger family clan to which that person belonged. Rather, noble rebellions were significant in their magnitude because the vassals of those sizable estates—which often comprised a large force—would follow and serve their lords in their rebellion against the king. Though most of the noble rebellions of Sancho’s reign were isolated in nature and not united in a common front,⁴⁷ they continued to plague him during much of his short reign as king and would become one of the most important challenges faced by his wife in her role as regent after his death.

Given this, and the fact that the power struggles between the nobility and the monarch certainly dominate a large part of the narration of the royal chronicles from Sancho’s reign onwards, we shall pay special attention to them here. Teofilo Ruiz observes that: “one could say...that the history of Castile is essentially that of the nobility’s resistance to royal power. The many conflicts and rebellions, especially in periods of royal minority, from the twelfth century until the reign of the Catholic Monarchs attest to the historical contradictions between a fairly centralized royal authority (by the standards of the age) and a perennially rebellious nobility.”⁴⁸ We have already observed that Fernando III was fairly popular among the nobility because of their

46. Ibid, 196.

47. Ibid, 190-92.

48. Ruiz, *Heaven to Earth*, 100-1.

enrichment through his many gains in the reconquest. As a result, at the start of Alfonso X's reign the relations between the high nobility and the king were fairly good and he had plenty of *heredamientos* to dole out after the conquests of Seville and Murcia. However, as that king pushed forward his legislative, fiscal, and even his imperial plans, a significant contingent of the high nobility rebelled. We have also observed that many of the same reasons that justified the rebellion in the 1270s were recycled and used again during Sancho's rebellion against his father. Though it might appear that Sancho was an ally of the powerful magnates and an advocate for their increased participation in the government of the kingdom, once he was more assured of his position as monarch, he would assert his power and position as king against them.

As is reflected in the royal chronicles, Sancho earned the epithet *el Bravo* for his supposedly irascible nature as well as for his energetic and violent suppression of members of the rebellious nobility. Jofré de Loaysa refers to Sancho as “un príncipe muy justiciero, hasta el punto que en vida suya condenó a la última pena a muchos poderosos nobles de su reino,” and *CSIV* gives a good amount of narratological space and attention to Sancho's application of royal justice among the nobility.⁴⁹ At the beginning of his reign, Sancho had to deal with the rebellion of the powerful magnates don Juan Núñez and don Nuño González de Lara, as well as the periodic rebellions of his own brother

49. Loaysa, *Crónicas*, 159.; A particularly colorful example of the king's temper and his dedication to justice in *CSIV* occurs when the king is informed by his Merino Mayor in León that Ferrand Pérez Ponce has been obstructing the king's justice in Asturias. Upon hearing this, one of the king's vassals who was with the king at the time, Juan Martínez Negrita, declares himself to be surprised by the audacity of the informant who says such things against Pérez Ponce in that man's presence. The chronicle relates here that “el Rey tomó muy grand saña por las palabras que dijera Juan Martinez, é mandólo que callase, é tomó un palo á un montero que estaba antél, é dióle grandes palos, en guisa que cayó de una mula en que estava por muerto á los piés del Rey; así que el infante D. Juan, é D. Lope, é D. Álvaro, é D. Fernand Perez Ponce non osaron decirlo nada, tan bravo estava, diciendo fuertes palabras contra todos aquellos que le embargasen la su justicia...é por esta razón escarmentaron en tal manera todos, que de allí adelante non se atrevió ninguno á embargar la justicia de los sus merinos” *CSIV*, 74.

Infante Juan, who had considerable support within the realm of León.⁵⁰ Medieval noble rebellions, much like other forms of medieval warfare, typically involved raiding and wreaking havoc on the king's lands, and even sometimes seizing his castles. Therefore it is hardly surprising that the king often responded to these acts of violence with his own application of force. He seized the rebel's lands and sometimes even had them killed, as was the case with the *bejaranos* who supported the Infantes de la Cerda. However, in some cases the king was compelled by need (or perhaps advised by his queen) to be more conciliatory—and to respond instead with promises of gifts and concessions, political appointments or marriage alliances—all of which were calculated to regain the nobles' loyalties without the expense of employing troops. Often, these overtures were successful. María de Molina was undoubtedly a valuable asset to her husband in these negotiations with the important noble clans of Castile—especially the Haro and Lara families with whom she was related—whenever their members rebelled and had to be reintroduced into the king's good graces. Although as king, Sancho had to deal with many rebellions, the two that receive the greatest attention in the chronicles are both centered on the powerful magnate who would become a *conde* (count), don Lope de Haro.

The Señor of Vizcaya, don Lope de Haro, was one of Sancho's most powerful supporters in his rebellion against his father, and when Sancho became king, Lope became one of his closest counselors. But it was in 1287 that Lope officially became the most powerful magnate in the kingdom. In the first days of that year, Sancho appointed Lope as his both his *mayordomo mayor* and *alférez mayor*, made him *teniente* (lieutenant) of all the king's castles, and gave him access to the royal seals. He also

50. Nieto Soria, *Sancho IV*, 193.

bequeathed to Lope the title of conde—a title that had long been in disuse in Castile-León and which was specifically revived on this occasion. Sancho further decreed that these positions and titles were to be inherited by Lope’s son, so long as the Haros kept up their end of the bargain.⁵¹ In return for this considerable increase in prestige and power, Lope was to remain loyal to the king, promote peace, and protect his realms. Perhaps more importantly (or at least more specifically), Lope was also charged with the task of increasing the holdings of the royal treasury each year.⁵² To this end, Sancho leased the royal *rentas* to Lope’s administrator, the Jew Abraham el Barchilón, who began an investigation of the taxes that were due to the crown.

These actions were viewed by some of the nobility as an attack on their own wealth and power. In retaliation, another member of the Lara clan, this time Alvar Núñez, declared his formal rebellion against the king—probably in part due to the long-standing feud between the Lara and Haro clans (which, it should be noted, were two of, if not *the* two most powerful Castilian noble families in the late thirteenth century). More importantly, these actions motivated a noble alliance against the king, led by the infante don Juan, and together those nobles went to Astorga in order to personally present their complaints to the king. Sancho had seen first-hand how dangerous noble alliances could be to a king and he refused to receive them personally, sending the bishop of Astorga to hear their complaints in his stead, while simultaneously sending word to don Lope to bring troops. It is difficult to penetrate the politically-motivated veil surrounding the

51. *CSIV* states that the king could kill him and his son and seize all of their property if he were to fail to fulfill their obligations (74). Whether or not this was in truth a condition of the agreement (it appears that no document exists today that can verify it), the inclusion of such a condition would clear Sancho for any blame in the tragedy of Alfaro and justify his seizure of Vizcaya.

52. Carmona Ruiz posits that “posiblemente la intención principal de don Lope era cubrir el déficit de las arcas reales y emprender reformas en la administración del Estado.” Carmona Ruiz, *María de Molina*, 79.

relation of these events in the royal chronicle, as the text almost always presents King Sancho in a favorable light. Perhaps the high nobility resented Lope's increased power, or even believed his promotion would be detrimental to the king (as the chronicles would have it). However, I think that given the circumstances it is likely that their primary concerns were monetary, namely the authorization given to Lope by the king to administer the distribution of *soldadas* (stipends given to nobles for military service) and to carry out an investigation of the royal *rentas* and collect back taxes.⁵³ Furthermore, while the chronicles relate that it was don Lope who asked the king for this promotion and for the authorization to carry out the investigation, it would not be difficult to imagine that the plan was in reality the result of the collaboration between the king and Lope, since it stood to benefit them both. Either way, many of the powerful *ricos omnes* ("rich men" or magnates) opposed these actions, and in the end the chronicles fit the blame squarely on the shoulders of don Lope and his Jewish administrator, Abraham el Barchilón.

Whatever his motivations for promoting his vassal in 1287—whether it was part of an attempt to enrich the crown or whether he was truly under the Conde's control—as time passed Sancho found that it was in his interest to bring his powerful *privado* to heel. Aside from the noble alliance that had threatened the king with rebellion, Sancho had other reasons to wish Lope gone. The Señor of Vizcaya had begun to obstruct his

53. The chronicle provides the following account of their written complaints: "lo primero que las contias que ellos tenían [del rey], que sirvieran é merescieran muy bien, que gelas menguára por el Conde; é otrosí, que aquel á quien él diera el poder para facer este ordenamiento, que les menguára estas contias, é les tirára las tierras que tenían, é que ellos...tenían que el Conde nin otro ninguno no los avia á ellos á librar ni ordenar ninguna cosa de las sus haciendas, e que pedían por merced que esto que gelo quisiese defacer, é que dende adelante que el Conde ni otro ninguno non les librase ninguna cosa de su haciendas, si non los sus oficiales é los omes de crizon, así como lo hicieron los otros reyes onde él venia; ca tenían que el libramiento del Conde para aver ellos de andar en pos dél, que era muy grand menguamiento de su señorío, é que era muy grand su deservicio, é que ellos non lo querían en ninguna manera, é que ántes se irían fuera de la tierra catar concejo en otra manera que sufrir esto." *CSIV*, 76.

political plans, specifically the king's desire to establish friendly relations with France. Lope and Infante Juan (who was very recently married to one of the Conde's daughters) supported the king's alliance with Aragón, while the queen and many of Sancho's other advisors—including the archbishop of Toledo, Gonzalo Pérez—extolled the benefits of an alliance with France. The chronicles also highlight the fact that don Lope worked against the queen, managing to have her most trusted friend and collaborator, doña María Fernández Coronel, dismissed from court.

When the king finally decided to break with Lope's influence and attempted to make an alliance with France in February of 1288,⁵⁴ the Conde allied himself with Aragón (as he had threatened to do in the past). He then began his own rebellion, aided by his cousin Diego López de Campos, Margarita de Narbona (widow of Infante Pedro) and the perennially treacherous Infante Juan. While a marriage was planned between the Conde and Margarita (despite his already being married to Queen María's half-sister, Juana), the infante and Diego López raided the king's lands in Salamanca and Ciudad Rodrigo. Upon the king's discovery of this treachery, the chronicles further vilify the Conde, presenting him as answering Sancho's questions about the matter in a most audacious manner that demonstrates his lack of respect for his natural lord.⁵⁵ In the chronicle's account, the king responds with uncharacteristic restraint, agreeing to meet

54. In the Treaty of Lyon (July 13, 1288) Philippe IV renounced his rights to the Castilian throne and promised to intervene with the pope to obtain the papal dispensation for Sancho's marriage and children. Sancho reconciled with Lara, and agreed to give Murcia and Ciudad Real to the Infantes de la Cerda (to rule with autonomy and inherit in perpetuity—unless they left no children). A marriage was arranged between Alfonso de la Cerda and the Infanta Isabel and if Sancho was to die without legitimate heirs, Alfonso de la Cerda would succeed him. The treaty was ratified in the treaty of Bayona (April 9, 1290), but without the consent of the Infantes de la Cerda, who were displeased with the proposal. Instead, Philippe promised to support Sancho IV against them. Carmona Ruiz, *María de Molina*, 96-103.

55. "É el Conde respondió: 'Señor, si el infante don Juan alguna cosa face, todo lo face por mi mandado, é si lo vos por bien toviéredes, todo se fará muy bien.' É el Rey entendió esta palabra porque le decía esto, que se ficiera por le espantar e por le tener mas apremiado, é que siempre fuese en poder del Conde." *CSIV*, 78.

with don Lope in Valladolid to come to a peaceful agreement, and even acceding to Lope's demand that the king attempt an alliance with Alfons III. When don Lope fails to get the Aragonese king to agree, Sancho calls him to another meeting in Alfaro in 1289, where he confronts don Lope and his conspirators, threatening to hold them prisoner until they return the king's castles to him. In the ensuing scuffle, don Lope is killed by the king's men in his defense (according to the chronicle, Lope attacked the king); although by right Sancho could have killed the Conde for his rebellion. The king himself killed Lope's cousin, and would have done the same with his brother Juan, if the queen—then pregnant with Sancho's third son, Enrique—had not intervened in the nick of time. Instead, Infante Juan's life was spared and he was imprisoned.⁵⁶ Soon after, the king called a meeting of the cortes in Haro, where among other things he revoked his controversial agreement to lease royal *rentas* to Abraham el Barchilón.

The alliance with France, signed soon after the tragedy of Alfaro, logically worsened relations with Aragón, which were not good to begin with. In September of 1288 Alfons III staged a celebration—with an audience that included Gastón de Bearn (father of the jilted Guillerma) and Diego López de Haro (son of the Conde)—in which Alfonso de la Cerda swore fealty as king of Castile. Both kings gathered armies, and in 1289 Castile and Aragón raided each others' territories. The hostile relations would continue until 1291 when Jaume II (the king of Sicily) succeeded his brother as king of Aragón and offered to make peace. Afterward, Castile became the mediator in the dispute between Aragón and France over Sicily, giving Sancho a level of "reconocimiento político entre los reinos occidentales en el que difícilmente se hubiera podido pensar unos

56. This episode and all of the chronicle's account of don Lope's controlling influence over the king and his dealings with María will be further examined in chapter two.

pocos años antes.”⁵⁷ Sancho hurried to reassure Philippe IV of the firmness of Castile’s allegiance with France and to inform him of the details of his negotiations with Aragón. Luckily, Philippe was pleased rather than incensed, and for the next few years Sancho would play an important (though not entirely successful) role in the negotiations between the two kingdoms. Perhaps most importantly for Sancho’s political policies, however, was the fact that as part of the alliance between Aragón and Castile-León, the two monarchs made a pact to collaborate against the Muslim kingdoms and to continue the southward conquest.

According to Nieto Soria, the war against the infidel was somewhat of an obsession for Sancho. In 1272, at the age of fourteen, he was already *alférez* and Admiral of his father’s new military order, Santa María de España.⁵⁸ He also led a successful (i.e. destructive and profitable) campaign in Granada in 1280-81, and managed the defense of the kingdom during the Benermerine invasion in 1275. On the other hand, Sancho delayed in the defense of his territories from the Moroccan invasion ten years later (1285). Although that confrontation ended with the withdrawal of the invading armies after months of destruction—probably due to a lack of supplies, which was a common occurrence in medieval warfare—the chronicle hails it as a victory for the new king, whose mere presence was apparently enough to frighten off the invaders.⁵⁹ The chronicle also cites this “successful defense” as the reason that Sancho promised to St. James that he would make the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela. In any case, one of the determining factors of Sancho’s self-representation, both in his rebellion and during his reign as king, was his military prowess and his dedication to continuing the reconquest,

57. Nieto Soria, *Sancho IV*, 118.

58. *Ibid*, 24.

59. *CSIV*, 71.

which he perceived as both as his destiny and one of his most important responsibilities as the king of Castile-León. Whether or not Sancho truly believed that it was his destiny to do so, the expansion of one's territories was also a matter of pride among the Catholic kings of Iberia. As such notable medieval scholars as Joseph O'Callaghan and Teofilo Ruiz have observed, Fernando III's admonition to his son—recorded in the *Primera crónica*—that Alfonso's kingship would be judged by his ability to first maintain and then increase his territories, reflects the importance that the reconquest played in kingly prestige in late medieval Iberia.⁶⁰ The effort of the reconquest was largely popular both with the papacy and the aristocracy, since it resulted in the extension of the borders of Christendom and the enrichment of the nobles through booty and land acquisition. It was also a way to unite the kingdom against a common enemy and to keep the various magnates from warring amongst each other or rebelling against the king. In the first years of Sancho's reign the turmoil surrounding his right to rule, the rebellions of the high nobility, and the difficult relations with other kingdoms had thoroughly occupied his attention. But now, with peace established among the neighboring Christian kingdoms (as well as with Granada and Tlemcen), he turned his kingly gaze to that enterprise that was so central to his politics and so necessary for establishing his legacy.

In 1291 Jaime II and Sancho IV signed the Pact of Monteagudo. This agreement set the Mouylouya River (Morroco) as the future boundary between Castile and Aragón in their projected expansion southwards. It also stipulated that Jaime would furnish Sancho with twenty galleys to defend himself from Abenjacob (the king of Morroco who was laying siege to Vejer), and more firmly established the union between the two kingdoms through the betrothal of King Jaime to Sancho's first-born child, Infanta

60. O'Callaghan, *Reconquest*, 8; Ruiz, *Heaven to Earth*, 106-107.

Isabel. While this marriage would also require a papal dispensation (which under the current circumstances would not be easy to obtain) the monarchs—most likely in anticipation of those difficulties—openly declared that the marriage was made for the defense of the Christian faith, which could only be achieved through the union of the Christian kingdoms.⁶¹ Sancho began preparing for war against the Moors that same year, soliciting monetary aid from every source he could (particularly from the church) and arming a fleet of ships. While the king of Portugal, don Dionís, declined Sancho's request for funds for this campaign, the king of Granada, who was Sancho's vassal at the time, provided supplies, and Aragón sent the promised galleys. Thus with a large and well-provisioned force, Sancho began the siege of Tarifa in June of 1292. A few months later, on September 21, Tarifa surrendered and on October 13 the terms of the surrender were signed and the king victoriously entered the garrison town. The mosque was blessed by the archbishop of Seville, don García, and Sancho charged the Maestre of the order of Calatrava, Rodrigo Ordóñez, with the defense of the city.⁶²

While the king was surely pleased with his victory, retaining the newly conquered land was another matter. In December, the king of Granada proposed to give Sancho some other territories in exchange for Tarifa. Sancho's refusal to oblige his then vassal led to a new alliance between Granada and Morocco against Castile. In order to retain his

61. "E con alguns se maravellassen con lo dit matrimoni del Senyor Rey en Jacme ab Dona Isabel filla del dit Rey Don Sanxo se faeya sens dispensació de la Esglesia de Roma, per ço cor eren en ters grau, sia memoria a tots aquels qui ho oyran quel nuyl temps la cristiandad no fo en maior peril que en est temps era, per la qual cosa lo Soldá avja ja presses les ciutats de Triple et de Acre lo dit any, et tots los castels mellors qui erren dellá mar, et entenia pendre Xipre per rao diversitat que era entre los Regnes Daragó et de Castella, los Moros Dafrica eren passats deça en Eespanya ben XV milia homens a caval o plus ab lo Rey de Marrocs, et conquerien la terra a gran poder, gitan dallen la fe catolica et meten hi la ley barbaric. E axi los dits Reys, en esperansa que de la Esglesia de Roma agessen dispenació, enantaren el dit matrimoni a restaurament de les dites coses." Real Academia de la Historia (Spain), *Memorial histórico español: Colección de documentos, opúsculos y antigüedades que publica la Real Academia de la Historia*, (Madrid: La Academia, 1851), 3:457. <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nyp.33433082321815;page=root;view=image;size=100;seq=507;num=457>.

62. Nieto Soria, *Sancho IV*, 121

newly-won territory Sancho solicited and received a bull of crusade from the pope in 1293, designating the archbishop of Seville to “predicar una campaña contra los musulmanes,” in order to raise funds for the defense of Tarifa.⁶³ Jaime II again lent him some ships. Still, in 1294 Sancho must have been struggling to obtain the necessary resources, since he had the bull of crusade granted by Pope Clement IV in 1265 copied for that purpose.⁶⁴ The actual confrontation took place between November 1293 and August of 1294. The defense of Tarifa would later become the stuff of legend and would earn Infante Juan the less-than-flattering epithet of *el Traidor de Tarifa*.⁶⁵ The *alcaide* of Tarifa at the time was Alfonso Pérez de Guzmán,⁶⁶ whom posterity would dub “Guzmán *el Bueno*.” During the siege of Tarifa, the infante don Juan, who fought against his brother alongside the king of Granada, had Pérez de Guzmán’s son in his power. The infante threatened to kill him if Guzmán did not surrender the fortress, but the Alcaide of Tarifa refused to betray his king’s orders, and according to the *Crónica de Sancho IV*, even threw down his own knife to the infante, who followed through on his threat and killed Guzmán’s son.⁶⁷

During the siege of Tarifa, the king—who had been battling with poor health for years—became gravely ill and never fully recovered.⁶⁸ Meanwhile, the considerable role that María had played as the king’s collaborator and advisor intensified as she took over

63. *Ibid*, 125.

64. *Ibid*, 126.

65. The Infante Juan was released from prison August 24, 1291 in order to quell noble rebellions started by Juan Alfonso de Albuquerque, who was married to one of Sancho’s illegitimate daughters.

66. Alfonso Pérez de Guzmán was the husband of María’s *aya* (guardian), María Fernández Coronel.

67. “É don Alfonso Perez le dijo que la villa que gela non darie; que cuanto por la muerte de su fijo, que él le daría el cuchillo con que lo matase; é alanzóles de encima del adarve un cuchillo, é dijo que ante quería que le matasen aquel fijo é otros cinco si los toviese, que non darle la villa del Rey su señor, de que él ficiera omenaje.” *CSIV*, 89.

68. Gaibrois de Ballesteros and Linehan both cite tuberculosis as the probable cause of Sancho’s death. Mercedes Gaibrois de Ballesteros, *Historia del reinado de Sancho IV de Castilla* (Madrid: Revista de archivos, bibliotecas y museos, 1922), 1:27.; Linehan, *Historia and the Historians*, 496.

many of the king's responsibilities. In the last few years of Sancho's short life, many important events transpired. In 1293 Sancho made a significant addition to his *realengo* when María's niece and don Juan Núñez de Lara *el Mozo*'s wife died childless and the king "inherited" Molina.⁶⁹ Almost immediately, the king gave the territory to his wife "por ffazer bien [y] onrra Ala Reyna donna María mj mujer."⁷⁰ But although Sancho increased his patrimony, in so much as Molina would be inherited by their children and become part of the king's *realengo*, his actions in this case inspired yet more rebellions from the Lara clan (this time supported by Infante Juan), who felt that they had been swindled.⁷¹ From his sickbed the king also had to contend with the rebellion of Diego López de Haro, who was still trying to recover the *señorío* (lordship) of Vizcaya that Sancho had given to his newborn son, the infante don Enrique, in 1288. The following year saw the return of the infamous Infante Enrique, Alfonso X's only surviving brother, who had been exiled due to his rebellious activities.⁷² Either Sancho truly loved and admired his long-absent uncle, or was aware of his approaching demise and hoped to win an ally for his wife and his young heir, because he welcomed Enrique with open arms and

69. Molina was a coveted territory because of its strategic position on the borders of Castile and Aragón. In 1286 María's half-sister and the Señora of Molina, doña Blanca, was planning to marry her only daughter, Isabel, to King Alfons III of Aragón. Fearing that this territory would be lost to Castile, Sancho imprisoned his sister-in-law for five months until she yielded, granting him the right to marry her daughter as he saw fit. When Isabel died childless in 1293, Sancho "requested" that Blanca will the territory to him, which she did. Soon after making this will she died, sparking rumors about the nature of her demise. In her will Blanca states: "Otro si revoco testamento y testamentos, si por ventura fué fecho o fueron fechos, algún o algunos, ante deste, y mando que este vala dende aquí adelante." Gaibrois de Ballesteros, *Historia del reinado de Sancho IV de Castilla*, vol. 3, *Colección diplomática* (Madrid: Revista de archivos, bibliotecas y museos, 1928), cccxviii. If Blanca was sound of mind, as this will states, the question arises of how is it that she did not know whether or not she had made any previous testaments. Perhaps the better question is whether or not it was she who ordered this new testament.

70. Ibid, cccxxix.

71. Carmona Ruiz, *María de Molina*, 108. María had arranged the match between Isabel and the younger don Juan Núñez in order to win the loyalty of his father in 1290. Although Isabel's survived her, it would not have been unreasonable to expect that her husband, *El Mozo*, would have inherited the territory.

72. After being expelled from Castile by Alfonso X, Infante Enrique had become a senator in Rome, to which he owed his epithet *el Senador*. While exiled in Rome, Enrique was imprisoned in 1268 and had only just been released in 1291.

set him up with new territories. The king also tried to keep up relations with France, prioritizing his ties with that kingdom over Portugal. In his last years he began negotiations to betroth his heir, Fernando, to a French princess, despite having already engaged his son to a Portuguese one. Meanwhile, Jaume II (perhaps also anticipating Sancho's death) began his own secret marriage negotiations with Charles II of Anjou, despite his previous promise to marry the Castilian princess Isabel.

In 1295 the *Rey Bravo* began his final journey to Toledo, the city that he had chosen as his final resting place. Pausing in Alcalá de Henares in January, the king made his will, which named his queen and trusted collaborator as tutor to the young heir and regent of Castile-León. According to the chronicle, Sancho made yet another effort to protect his young and vulnerable heir, extracting a promise from don Juan Núñez de Lara (who had recently been reconciled to the king, along with his father who had died in the king's service) that he would faithfully serve the queen and her son until Fernando came of age. However, unlike his brother Infante Fernando de la Cerda, who obtained a similar promise on his own deathbed, Sancho wasn't offering Lara the caretaking of the minor king's person and the power which such a charge entailed. Therefore the younger don Juan Núñez did not have the same incentive as his father to fulfill faithfully that promise. Undoubtedly Sancho was anxious to secure his son's position, given the fact that minorities were infamous for stirring the fires of anarchy and often resulted in the encroachment by the aristocracy on powers previously established as royal. Both the continued pressure of the Infantes de la Cerda—who had been unwilling to accept the terms offered to them in Sancho's treaty with France—and Sancho's failure to secure a papal dispensation for his marriage to María must have weighed heavily on his mind. On

his deathbed Sancho also took pains to secure his own legacy as king, granting a privilege to the inhabitants of Tarifa in February in the interest of attracting settlers to secure his one significant military achievement in the reconquest.⁷³ On April 25, 1295 the king finally expired, and the regency of Queen María de Molina began.

Before we enter into the political turbulence that was the minority of Fernando IV, we must take stock of Sancho's political and cultural projects, which, in addition to the political background, are the focus of this chapter. Despite his best intentions, Sancho's short life did not allow him to make great gains in the reconquest. Nor did he succeed in restoring Castile-León to its former glory under Fernando III. The crown was impoverished by his need both to reward the loyalties of some nobles and to put down the resistance of others. As we have seen, the king also continued many of his father's unpopular policies, exerting fiscal pressure on the church, asserting his control in the concejos by supporting the ambitions of the upwardly mobile urban knights, and to a lesser extent, defending the powers of the monarch against the encroachment of the nobility. The significance of the cultural politics of Sancho's reign are perhaps best understood in comparison with those of his father, since in many ways his rule was a reaction against Alfonso X. A comparison will also allow us to see that though he continued many of Alfonso X's political policies, Sancho did manage to deliver on the promised cultural reform.

The Cultural Politics of Alfonso *El Sabio*

The cultural project of Alfonso *El Sabio* is well known, and therefore I will limit myself to the briefest of summaries, highlighting those aspects that are most relevant to

73. Nieto Soria, *Sancho IV*, 129.

the purposes of this study. King Alfonso “made” many books by employing people to write them and he participated in their creation by directing their compilation. The specifics of this process are perhaps best described by the king himself: “El Rey faze un libro, non porque él escriba con sus manos, mas porque compone las razones d’él e yegua e endereça e muestra la manera de cómo se deven fazer, e desi escribelas qui él manda; pero dezimos por esta razón que el rey faze el libro.”⁷⁴ Alfonso believed that by making these works he was fulfilling his duty as king: “Onde el rey que despreciase de aprender los saberes, despreciaría a Dios de quien vienen todos, segund dixo el rey Salomón, que todos los saberes vienen de Dios, e con el son siempre. E et aun despreciaria a si mismo.”⁷⁵ However, Alfonso’s efforts had other ends besides serving God or achieving a more complete, encyclopedic knowledge. The literary works that the king “authored” were an integral part of his efforts to strengthen his power as king and to vouchsafe his ambitions to become Holy Roman Emperor. They served as a vehicle to project the model of monarchy that he wished to make a reality.

What separates Alfonso from his predecessors is that he made it the business of the king to create books and the knowledge contained therein, a task which had long been the domain of learned clerics. Perhaps more importantly, he took credit for the results, naming himself as the author of those texts. What Alfonso understood was that control over the production of knowledge implied political power. Furthermore he eschewed the learned language of the prelates in favor of Castilian—already the official language of the court since the reign of his father. This reflects the king’s intentions to create a royal monopolization of knowledge and to disseminate that knowledge among the king’s un-

74. Pedro Sánchez-Prieto Borja, ed., *General Estoria de Alfonso X el Sabio* (Madrid: 2002), 2:393.

75. López de Tovar ed., *Las Siete Partidas*, 1:391.

lettered vassals without the interference of the clergy that the use of Latin would imply. Castilian was Alfonso's Latin, in that he adopted its use in order to create an imperial language for the empire he was constructing for himself and which he sought to model upon ancient Rome.⁷⁶

With his legislative works (*Fuero real*, *Espéculo*, and *Las siete partidas*), the king sought to create a universal legal code written in Castilian that could be applied to all the realms, based on the Roman Imperial model. This would serve to more fully unite the kingdoms of Castile and León, which—though thanks to his brother Alfonso de Molina's abdication Fernando III was able to inherit together—had long been two distinct and separate kingdoms. The aristocracy objected to Alfonso's legislative efforts, namely his attempt to normalize the law codes of the kingdoms through the granting of the *Fuero real* to several urban centers in 1254, the production of the *Espéculo*, and later his great legislative accomplishment (if it can be called such, since it never had the force of law in his lifetime), *Las siete partidas*. These law codes sought to regulate the relationship between the king and his most powerful vassals, and *Siete partidas* contained philosophic reflections as well as laws.⁷⁷ These works—especially the latter of the three—also had the intention of prescribing a more subservient role for the high nobility, though given the noble revolt in 1272, the *Partidas* would not take effect as law until the Ordenamiento de Alcalá in 1348. If these legislative treatises worked to empower the king against the high nobility, Alfonso's patronage and direction of historical works empowered the king against the Church.

76. Francisco Márquez-Villanueva calls Alfonso's decisión to use Castilian "a conscious step toward strengthening his kingdoms through a new awareness of royal power." Francisco Márquez-Villanueva, "The Alfonsine Cultural Concept," *Harvard Studies in Romance Languages* 43 (1990): 77.

77. Valdeón Baroque, *Alfonso X el Sabio*, 163.

One of the great innovations of the Learned King was that he took the initiative to write about history—and not just natural history or theological history, but specifically royal history. Before Alfonso's reign royal historiography was written by ecclesiastics like Rodrigo Ximénez de Rada, archbishop of Toledo, who had their own strong personalities and political aspirations (such as attracting pilgrims to their churches, encouraging donations, and establishing the primacy of their cathedrals). This privileged role as the keepers of history afforded those clerical authors the opportunity to inform the king of his dynastic and territorial rights, which amounted to “nada menos que una enseñanza sobre el buen gobierno del reino.”⁷⁸ In writing his own version of history, Alfonso took control of the historical-political narrative and was able to bypass the meddling preaching of the clerics. The student became the teacher, and the king was able to affirm his own ideologies concerning the nature of the monarchy, of Iberia, and of Castile's dominance. Therefore Alfonso introduced an innovation in medieval Iberian historiography when he made it the business of the monarch to oversee the writing of an “official” history, and again by using Castilian he was able to reach his readers more directly.

Alfonso's two great historiographical works are the *Primera crónica de España* (more commonly known as the *Estoria de España*) and the *Estoria General*. His intended audience for these works was the political elite: future kings, Castilian princes, the high nobility, and the Castilian Church. Like the earlier histories written by prelates, these histories gave the king the opportunity to “instruct” his audience of the “truth” of his political ideologies, using the past as evidence. Of these ideologies, George Martin

78. George Martin, “El modelo historiográfico alfonsí y sus antecedentes,” in *La historia alfonsí: El modelo y sus destinos (siglos XIII-XV)*, ed. George Martin (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2000), 13.

observes: “En el terreno historiográfico, la enseñanza de Alfonso X (cuyo contenido político fundamental podría cifrase en un concepto monárquico del ‘señorío natural’ con vistas imperiales) quiso a la vez arraigarse en el reino, o, más ampliamente, en el suelo peninsular, primer círculo de las ambiciones políticas alfonsíes, y enmarcarse más extensamente en la totalidad de la historia humana concebida en parte como una marcha hacia el imperio y, luego, como una translación de éste.”⁷⁹ With these works, Alfonso sought to establish a model of monarchy that set him—as the ruler of Castile and León—above the other kings of the Iberian Peninsula, and also high above the *ricos omnes* who were his “natural” vassals. Whether it is rightly viewed in the context of Alfonso’s bid for the title of Holy Roman Emperor, his interest in highlighting his ancestor’s status as “Emperador de las Espannas,” or even in a new “Mediterranean Empire,” he sought to empower himself as a king of kings.⁸⁰

Besides writing his own official histories, Alfonso also explored new and different kinds of knowledge in his cultural project. As Julio Valdeón Baroque explains it: “El rey Sabio no se interesaba por las cuestiones metafísico-teológicas, propias de las universidades de la Europa Cristiana, sino por aquellas disciplinas más próximas al ser humano.”⁸¹ The king was especially interested in astrology, history, law, and medicine (*física*), and he even dabbled in the arts and music. Alfonso embraced classical sources of knowledge, often made available to him through Arabic texts, and especially the Eastern sciences.⁸² Unwilling to limit himself to the medieval Christian schools, he employed

79. Ibid, 15-6.

80. For a discussion of the different schools of thought in regards to Alfonso X and empire, see Valdeón Baroque, *Alfonso el Sabio*, 68-70.

81. Ibid, 17.

82. “Throughout the previous century, people from all over Europe had flocked to Toledo as the supreme source of Philosophy and Sciences. The prestige of its Oriental learning was self-evident to Spaniards and their culturally depressed and largely indifferent clergy. Alfonso’s efforts must be understood then as an

learned men of other religions, such as Jewish and Muslim scholars. He was also famous for his patronage of the Toledo school of translators where Christians collaborated with Jewish and Moorish translators to transfer knowledge from many varied sources to Castilian. While the king supported the university established by his ancestor Alfonso IX of León in Salamanca, he also supported the Moorish *madrasa* school of Ahmad ibn Abū Bakr al-Riqūṭī in the newly-conquered territory of Murcia and created the *escuelas generales* (universities) of Latin and Arabic in Seville.⁸³ His court became a place of pilgrimage for those wanting to learn about science, and even for those who interested in practicing the arts.

But if those interested in learning these “new” sciences happily flocked to the king’s court, there were also dissenters who saw Alfonso’s quest for knowledge as dangerous. Because of Alfonso’s royal appropriation of the production and dissemination of knowledge from the ecclesiastics as well as his demonstrated preference for scientific or “natural” over theological knowledge, a group of Castilian bishops denounced him to the pope in 1279. The Castilian episcopate complained that unlike the kings of old, Alfonso did not look to them for guidance and that he had replaced them with evil counselors who encouraged the king to commit heresy. According to Peter Linehan, “the Castilian episcopate’s complaint [was] that astronomers, augurs, and ‘aisperiti’ held sway at Alfonso X’s court, denying the existence of God (‘asserentes Deum non esse’) and concerning themselves not with the Godhead (*natura naturans*) but with the creation

attempt to turn this ‘Toledan’ ideal, which the Church never opposed and to a certain extent had even fostered, into a full-fledged cultural policy for his kingdoms. If Spaniards had to go to France to learn Theology and to Italy to learn Law, all Europe had to come to Spain to learn Natural Sciences.” Márquez-Villanueva, “Alfonso X of Castile,” 81.

83. Ibid, 84-6; Valdeón Baroque 190-193

(*natura ab ipso naturata*).”⁸⁴ And this is where Sancho’s cultural project comes into the picture, as a royal effort to reverse this trend. Although the pope supported Alfonso in sanctioning his rebellious son and his followers, most of the Castilian bishops supported Sancho’s rebellion. The infante was held up as “the champion of orthodoxy and as one to whom those sectors of Castilian society scandalized by such speculation could look for the maintenance of order and reverence for hierarchy.”⁸⁵ And while many of the promised reforms that Sancho’s supporters had hoped for never came to fruition, the cultural reform most certainly did.

The Cultural Politics of Sancho IV and the Model Called “Molinismo”

Although long regarded as a dark period of steep decline in literary production in contrast to the shining lights of science and culture in Alfonso’s court, recent years have witnessed a heightened interest in and increased appreciation for the cultural project of Sancho IV. Among others, critics such as Hugo Bizzarri, Fernando Gómez Redondo, and Richard Kinkade have begun to re-evaluate the king’s cultural legacy and have demonstrated that the works that came from the court of the Rey Bravo are also worthy of our attention. Sancho continued some of his father’s literary projects, and times it can even be a difficult business to sort out the patronage of some works, such as the *Libro del Tesoro*—a medieval translation of *Li Libres dou Tresor* by Brunetto Latini—which is attributed to both Sancho and his father in different manuscripts. During Sancho’s short reign as king, he patronized and ordered the compilation of many works on diverse subjects, including history, natural science, religious doctrine, hagiography, chivalry, and

84. Linehan, 435-6.

85. *Ibid*, 437.

mirrors of princes.⁸⁶ In regards to poetry, despite the pervasive belief that Sancho's court did not welcome troubadours, (a belief perhaps supported the king's warnings against the evils of "mal juglaría")⁸⁷ Vinceç Beltrán has ably demonstrated that the king also patronized a good number of *juglares*.⁸⁸ Although Sancho's reign was a relatively short one (eleven years) and he was more limited than his father in funds to invest in textual production, he recognized the centrality of texts and their production to the advancement of his cultural enterprise.

One of the key differences between Alfonso's and his son's respective cultural projects is that the latter is in many ways a reaction against the former. Those works whose creation is attributed to Sancho and his "científicos sabios" demonstrate a firm rejection of eastern sources of knowledge in favor of those both western and Catholic.⁸⁹ The scientific works produced in Sancho's court, such as the *Lucidario*, seek to correct the "errors" of the Wise King, whose pursuit of knowledge led him to ask inappropriate questions. The new king's intentions to correct his father's heterodox transgressions are made clear in the prologue to *Lucidario*:

E porque los entendimientos de los omnes se quieren estender a saber e demandar las cosas mas que les es dado e non les abona sauer las que son terrenales... ..e quien quiere obrar de otras mas altas que estas asi

86. For a summary of the works attributed to Sancho, see Fernando Gómez Redondo, "La corte de Sancho IV (1284-1295)," in *Historia de la prosa*, 1:853-1092.; and Carlos Alvar and José Manuel Lucía Megías eds, *La literatura en la época de Sancho IV*.

87. Chapter forty-seven of *Castigos* is titled: "De cómo se debe el hombre guardar que lo no metan con maldad los malos hombres a juglaría, ni se meta en solaz con ellos" and it describes (among other things) the difference between good and bad juglaría. *Castigos*, 314.

88. Vinceç Beltrán "Tipos y temas trovadorescos: La corte poética de Sancho IV," in *La literatura en la época de Sancho IV*, (Alcalá: Universidad de Alcalá, 1996): 121-40.

89. In particular, Bizzarri notes the king's preference for Latin and French sources. Hugo Oscar Bizzarri, *Los Castigos del rey don Sancho IV: Una reinterpretación*, (London: Queen Mary and Westfield College, 2004), 18-9.

faze(n) en ello gran atreuimiento, asi como muchos que quieren sauer que cosa es Dios e que figura ha en si, e quan grand es de luengo e de ancho, e si esta en pie o asentado, e en qual de los çielos esta, en el çielo mas alto, o en el medio, o en el fondon; e demandan que quando fizo el mundo el, a do estaba, e de qual guisa, que en el comienço quando Dios crio el çielo e la tierra, que todo era auguas e el espíritu de Dios que andaua(n) sobre ellas. E de aquí se toma vn rramo de vna pregunta que fazian los omnes de que nasçio gran eregia.⁹⁰

This statement appears to echo the Castilian bishops' earlier complaints about Alfonso's irreverence and audacity, and is doubtless an allusion to Averroism, condemned in 1270 by the university in Paris and rampant in Spain. Sancho also warns against the dangers of the study of astrology, a science that his father favored, and that was closely related to Averroism: "e quier[en] sauer las cosas çelestiales que son...e otrosi que cosa es el sol e la luna e las otras estrellas a que llaman planetas, e de que natura es cada vna, e que virtud ha en si, e que poder ha para fazer bien o mal en las criaturas del mundo...e van trauar con agudeza de grand entendimiento que an en si en lo que non les es dado e lo que Dios non quiso que sopiesen."⁹¹ Sancho's *Lucidario* thus condemns Alfonso's Averroistic tendencies and warns against asking questions that could put one's very salvation in jeopardy.⁹² The *Lucidario* prescribes which sciences are appropriate for men

90. Richard P. Kinkade, ed., *Los "Lucidarios" españoles* (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1968), 77-78.

91. Ibid, 77.; For a discussion on the tradition of Averroism in Medieval Iberia, see Francisco Márquez Villanueva, "Nasçer e morir como bestias (criptojudaísmo y criptoaverroísmo)," in *Los judaizantes en Europa y la literatura castellana del siglo de oro*, ed. Fernando Díaz Estebán (Madrid: Universidad Española, 1978): 273-93; For a discussion of Alfonso X's involvement with Averroism, see Márquez-Villanueva, "Alfonso X of Castile," 87-90.

92. In this, *Lucidario* coincides with Thomas of Aquinas's project (who was the pupil of Brunetto Latini, hence the interest in Latini's *Li Libres dou Tresor*). For more on *Lucidario*, see Ana Montero, "El *Lucidario* de Sancho IV: Redefinición de su relación textual con el *Elucidarius* de Honorius de

to pursue. It also seeks to harmonize doctrinal and scientific knowledge, while always taking care to prioritize the teachings of the church over those of “natural” scientists.

Given what we know of his reputation and self-representation, it is no surprise that Sancho greatly prized religious men as his counselors. He also appointed them to write his texts and patronized them as authors. Most of the critics who study the cultural production of the court of Sancho IV agree that it was largely the product of the cathedral school of Toledo.⁹³ The king demonstrated his preference for that city from the beginning of his reign, as he chose the cathedral of Toledo for his coronation. He also nurtured a close relationship with its archbishop, Gonzalo Pérez Gudiel, who had been away during Sancho’s rebellion and did not return to Castile until sometime after the king’s coronation in 1284.⁹⁴ Although the archbishop had not formally supported the infante against his father, upon his return he quickly became one of the king’s closest collaborators.⁹⁵ After Sancho’s first *privado*, the Abbot of Valladolid Gómez García, fell out of favor in 1286, Don Gonzalo Pérez emerged, alongside the queen, as one of the king’s most trusted advisors. According to *CSIV*, it was the queen and the archbishop who together finally persuaded Sancho to give up the alliance with Aragón in favor of one with France, causing him to break with his powerful *privado*, don Lope de Haro. In 1290 Gonzalo

Augustodunensis y el *Setenario* de Alfonso X,” in *The Theory and Practice of Translation in the Middle Ages*, ed. Rosalynn Voaden (Turnhout, Belgium, 2003): 49-59; and Gómez Redondo, *Historia de la prosa*, 1:890-912.

93. See Germán Orduna “La elite intelectual en la escuela catedralicia de Toledo y la literatura en la época de Sancho IV”, in *La literatura en la época de Sancho IV*, eds. Carlos Alvar and José Manuel Lucía Megías, *La literatura en la época de Sancho IV* (Alcalá: Universidad de Alcalá, 1996): 53-62.

94. See Linehan, *History and the Historians*, 481-503. As Linehan demonstrates the power and prestige of the archbishop are also reflected in the “elaborately illustrated privilege” of 1285 where the king made known his desire to be buried in Toledo. *Ibid*, 483.

95. Gonzalo Pérez had “contracted massive debts” and was the “virtual prisoner” of his creditors in Avignon. *Ibid*, 449. Linehan also says Alfonso called him a traitor in December 1283, but a fortnight later, counted him among his loyal subjects. *Ibid*, 476.

Pérez was also given the novel title of “Chancellor Mayor de todos nuestros reinos.”⁹⁶ It was also on the archbishop’s suggestion that Sancho established the *estudio general* (university) in Alcalá de Henares, which was within the see of Toledo’s jurisdiction. The historian Peter Linehan calls Sancho’s reign a “golden age” for the church and city of Toledo, and says that Gonzalo Pérez (the “*toledano* extraordinario,” as he calls him) “dominated national politics during the reign of Sancho IV as none of his predecessors since the 680s, not even D. Rodrigo himself, had done.”⁹⁷ The archbishop Gonzalo was influential in the government, but perhaps even more involved in the creation of Sancho’s cultural politics.

Literary critics often use the term *molinista* to refer to the ideological thrust of much of Sancho’s cultural production. To be sure, they are not using this term in the sense of the doctrine of the sixteenth-century Jesuit priest Luis de Molina, but rather in reference to literature produced in late thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century Castile. Gómez Redondo defines the term as: “[el] modelo cultural que *ella* inspira y promueve de una forma decidida.”⁹⁸ The “she” referred to here is none other than the queen María de Molina. Politically speaking, this model was likely a product of the collaboration between the cathedral school of Toledo and the monarchs. The queen and the archbishop were first united in their support of an alliance with France, which they hoped would induce Philippe IV to withdraw his support for the Infantes de la Cerda and create good relations with the pope, leading to a papal dispensation for the king’s marriage. This would accomplish the firm establishment of the legitimacy of the king’s marriage and his children, finally putting to rest the claims of Alfonso de la Cerda that motivated many a

96. *Ibid*, 476.

97. *Ibid*, 455,448.

98. Gómez Redondo, *Historia de la prosa*, 1:857 (emphasis mine).

noble uprising. The hope was that it would allow Sancho to legitimize his rule and secure his dynasty. Critics such as Germán Orduna and Gómez Redondo have also expressed their belief that this collaboration between the cathedral school of Toledo and the monarchs continued with María after Sancho's death,⁹⁹ and even after what some see as Gonzalo Pérez's devastating defeat in the Cortes of Valladolid in 1295.¹⁰⁰ So it would seem that the archbishop found an ally in the queen, and although the lack of a legitimate marriage was not the only challenge Sancho had to face, the king's counselors (including the queen and the archbishop) must have convinced him of its importance. As we know, the papal dispensation did not come with the alliance with France, and as we shall see, the monarchs and the archbishop would find other means to try to obtain it—namely by creating a cultural politics that would align the monarchy with the church and defend the legitimacy and powers of the king against the delegitimizing discourse of his opponents.

Some of the defining characteristics of molinismo can be observed in Sancho's re-writing of the *Estoria de España*—the *Versión amplificada de 1289*. While Alfonso had used this historical narrative in order to promote the *Imperium Hispanae*—of which he considered himself the rightful head—and to instill in his vassals the proper respect for the king by highlighting the great deeds of kings past, Sancho modified the narrative to suit his particular political needs and ideals. Inés Fernández Ordóñez observes that in Sancho's version: “ni el neogoticismo de la monarquía castellano-leonesa, ni la unión de

99. Gómez Redondo points to the fact that María manages to have don Gonzalo Pérez's nephew named as his successor as proof of their continued relationship. Ibid, 861; Hugo Bizzarri disagrees: “Lo curioso es la falta de indicios claros de la dirección de esa empresa cultural y, en el caso particular del ‘molinismo’, que luego de muerto el rey no se continuara con una labor más contundente.” Hugo Oscar Bizzarri, “Reflexiones sobre la empresa cultural del rey don Sancho IV de Castilla,” *Anuario de estudios medievales* 31, no. 1 (2001): 432.

100. In this first cortes after Sancho's death, ecclesiastics were expressly barred from participating in this cortes, and in the royal privilege that came from it, all of them were sent away from court except those “capellanes que [hayan menester] pa muestra capiella que ande con nusco” (A.H.N. Sección Nobleza, doc. 16, carpeta 318).

los señoríos bajo un único *imperium* ni el papel de la autoridad real frente a los estamentos parecen valorarse ya como durante el reinado de Alfonso el Sabio.”¹⁰¹ What Sancho adds to his father’s story are the great deeds of the “altos omnes” who laid down their lives in the service of God and king in the efforts of reconquest.¹⁰² Gómez Redondo makes similar observations on Sancho’s cultural project as a whole: “cuando Sancho se alza contra su padre, lo hace también contra un pensamiento político, contra una ideología regalista, que intentaba dominar con el ‘saber’ a la nobleza y sujetar a la alta clerecía. El mérito del ‘molinismo’ consiste en poder mantener parte de esa estructura de conocimiento—la historia, las leyes, los tratados sapienciales, los regimientos de príncipes—para intentar conformar un ‘regalismo aristocrático’ que permitiera, por fin, integrar a los clanes nobiliarios en el entramado de la corte.”¹⁰³ While the term *regalismo aristocrático* may seem to suggest a weakening of the monarch’s position in relation to that of the estates, Sancho was not willing to allow himself to be ruled by the nobility. Rather, what we see in Sancho’s attitude towards the estates might be more aptly described as a change of tactics. One might say that instead of trying to subordinate his vassals through a royal power achieved through *el saber* (learning), Sancho instead sought to recruit them to his cause—the cause of the religious crusades—through *el deber* (duty). This duty to continue the reconquest was framed as something that the nobles owed to their natural lord, the king, as well to their celestial father.

101. Fernández Ordóñez, “Variación en el modelo historiográfico alfonsí: Las versiones de la *Estoria de España*,” in *La historia alfonsí*, George Martin ed, 65.; Both Fernández Ordóñez and Linehan suggest that Gonzalo Pérez Gudiel was involved in the compilation of this text. Linehan points to Sancho’s addition of the “pseudo-coronation” of Alfonso VII in Toledo in 1135, which he sees as evidence of Gónzalo Pérez’s involvement and as a possible attempt to justify or provide a tradition for Sancho’s own coronation ceremony in 1284. Linehan, *History and the Historians*, 478-80.

102. “Esta ampliación de la nómina de personajes que fabrica la Historia se corresponde claramente con la situación política en tiempos de Sancho, cuyo poder era estrechamente dependiente de su pacto con los estamentos.” Fernández Ordóñez, “Variación en el modelo,” 62.

103. Gómez Redondo, *Historia de la prosa*, 1:863.

And yet, this explanation of Sancho's political maneuvering is still somewhat lacking. A more useful term comes to us through the literary critic Jesús Rodríguez-Velasco. In his book *Ciudadanía, soberanía monárquica y caballería*, Rodríguez-Velasco describes a "procedimiento mediante el cual la caballería se convierte en un útil político, jurídico e intelectual" and which he calls "la fábula caballeresca" (the chivalric narrative).¹⁰⁴ He explains that the chivalric narrative was first employed in earlier centuries by clerical authors who centered chivalric discourse in the social context of the nobility, transforming that violent social group into one: "controlada ahora por un comportamiento que viene determinado por la ley cristiana, con objeto de que pueda funcionar en beneficio de los demás grupos sociales. La aspiración o esperanza que se crea para ellos es...la de la salvación."¹⁰⁵ The chivalric narrative involves a narrative familiar to all medievalists—a knight of unknown or diminished lineage takes up his arms and makes a name and a fortune for himself and his posterity through the exercise of a virtuous and Christian chivalry. Besides the common good and salvation promoted by the clerical authors, the chivalric narrative also conveys the hope that by following a moral code of chivalry that is articulated in the text and usually performed by a character in the story, a knight may win social distinction and earn a position of authority. While on the surface the chivalric narrative promises the knight glory, renown, and salvation, on another level it also promises upward mobility and political stability.

Rodríguez-Velasco affirms that "diferentes clases, estados sociales o centros de poder invocan las esperanzas públicas de la caballería para reclamar prerrogativas muy

104. Jesús Rodríguez Velasco, *Ciudadanía, soberanía monárquica y caballería: Poética del orden de caballería* (Madrid: Ediciones Akal, 2009), 15.

105. *Ibid.*, 18.

diferentes y aun mutuamente excluyentes,” and this is the case with King Sancho.¹⁰⁶ By glorifying the *grandes fechos* of the *altos omnes* in the reconquest in *Estoria de España*, Sancho encourages chivalric behavior such as loyalty and the exercise of arms in the service of the king and God. It also offers the king’s men both a shared history and destiny, calling them to unite under the common banner of religious crusade. This social hope, or promise of the chivalric narrative was certainly aimed at the powerful Castilian magnates, but it could also equally apply to the upwardly mobile non-noble knights, who had reason to hope for advancement in their station. Politically speaking, the king had plenty of motives to promote the chivalric narrative in the context of territorial expansion. The successful continuation of the reconquest would create a legacy for his reign and hopefully achieve the approbation of the pope. It could also channel the violent energies of the high nobility, thereby restoring peace and order within the kingdom. Furthermore, by appealing to the non-noble knights (who we should remember, had recently received an economic and social boost when they were exempted from taxes by Alfonso X), Sancho could broaden his base of support and ensure his protection from the upper nobility. In works like this amended version of the *Estoria de España* and the large compilation of tales of crusade and chivalry, *Gran conquista de Ultramar*, Sancho and his clerical authors used the chivalric narrative to indirectly promise the king’s vassals that by serving their king they would serve God, and they would be materially and spiritually rewarded for their service.

A Father’s Advice to His Son: *Castigos del rey don Sancho IV* and the Righteous Model of Monarchy

106. Ibid, 19.

While a good number of works are attributed to Sancho's court and associated with the cultural project of molinismo, my literary analysis in this chapter will focus on the only work that names the king as its author, *Castigos del rey don Sancho IV*. I have chosen this text because it speaks directly to the focus of this study: the role of morality in medieval politics. *Castigos* was written sometime between 1292-1293, coinciding with the king's singular military achievement, the conquest and defense of Tarifa, the first of which he mentions in the prologue.¹⁰⁷ Bizzarri notes that this text, along with *Lucidario* and *Libro del Tesoro* are all related in one way or another to 1293, and that besides being a time when the king was engaged in textual production, it was also a time of renewed diplomatic efforts.¹⁰⁸ Citing the responsibility of all fathers to *castigar* (educate) their sons, the work takes the form of a mirror of princes addressed to the king's heir, though it is also offered to "todos aquellos que del algund bien quisieren tomar e aprender a seruiçio de Dios e de la virgin gloriosa María pro e bien de las almas e consolaçión e alegría de los cuerpos" (74). Written by the king "con ayuda de çientíficos sabios," the work treats many topics related to medieval kingship and uses *exempla* to illustrate the teachings that it seeks to impart to the intended audience: the future kings and magnates of Castile-León (73). In the very first chapter Sancho tells his son that this text will give him instruction in both in spiritual and earthly matters: "Para mientes a los castigos que te yo agora daré e verás en ellos que non son tan sola mente castigos para la tu carne, mas son castigos que te faze el tu padre celestial para la tu alma, e yo te los ensenno por Él"

107. The prologue dates the work to 1292, but the text cites the following year. Either way, it would seem that the date of the text may have been calculated to celebrate the king's achievement in Tarifa. See Bizzarri for a discussion on the date of composition of the earliest manuscript. Bizzarri, introduction to *Castigos del rey don Sancho IV* (Madrid: Iberoamericana, 2001), 7-62.

108. Bizzarri adds, "la toma de Tarifa le permitía al rey don Sancho proyectar su política interna...pero también lo afirmaba en el trono y le brindaba ante Francia, y especialmente ante la corte Papal, una posición más privilegiada para lograr la dispensa matrimonial." Bizzarri, "Reflexiones," 447-8.

(75). The king promises his son that by following the moral compass given to him in the pages of *Castigos*, he will achieve both kingly success *and* eternal salvation—which for Sancho are the two main goals of any Christian king. While the work does include practical advice on matters such as how to choose the best advisors and how to be successful in war, the bulk of the text delineates a correct and Christian morality.

Kingship and the Sacred in Castigos

Castigos expounds on the state of the king and on his responsibilities. In Sancho's conceptualization of the monarchy, the king "tiene lugar de Dios en la tierra" and he is appointed that place through the circumstances of his birth. Although describing the king as the *vicario de Dios* (vicar of God) is hardly original (Alfonso X had done it), explaining the place of the king through an analogy to God serves to legitimize the space the king occupies at the top of the political and social hierarchies. At the same time, Sancho insists that although the king has the divine right to rule in his kingdoms, this God-given right is also a God-given privilege, and as such it may be revoked. Ultimately, if the Almighty is dissatisfied with a monarch or his heir, he can support his enemies and ruin him—or as was the case with Sancho—he may decide to kill the eldest brother and allow the younger and more meritorious to rule in his stead.¹⁰⁹ By the same token, God can reward a king's good behavior by helping the king vanquish his enemies and giving him good fortune. Therefore being a devout monarch (attending mass, serving God through the patronage of churches and the holy orders and in the religious crusades against the infidel) is envisioned as a way to ensure success in the king's endeavors.

109. "Ca si él vn día visquiera más que nuestro padre, non ouiéramos nos ningund derecho en el regno. Mas ordenamiento fue de Dios que fuese así. E a lo que Él ordena non puede nin deue pasar ninguno contra ello, ca Él es aquel que sabe qué es lo que faz." *Castigos*, 166. Although this statement echoes the reasoning for Sancho's right to inherit as given by Alfonso X in his will, it also condemns Alfonso's decision to disinherit his son.

Sancho reinforces this conceptualization of the monarch as being appointed, rewarded, or punished by divine intervention with *exempla* from the history of kings and kingdoms past. In order to please God, the king must love and fear Him, follow His commandments, and set a good example for his vassals. The material point of this discourse on kingship is that political success is primarily achieved not through wisdom, but rather through moral uprightness.

If we accept that the *científicos sabios* who helped the king write this text were clerics and prelates of the cathedral school of Toledo, it should not surprise us that *Castigos* also contains arguments that enhance the political status of the men of the cloth. Chapters sixteen and seventeen are dedicated to explaining why prelates make the best advisors, and chapter eighteen warns against allowing apostates in the royal court, which can lead to the very destruction of a king—or at the very least—that of his reputation. *Castigos* also contains a few chapters that inform the reader/listener on topics of doctrinal import, such as the nature of the Holy Trinity and Purgatory (chapter eight). However, the most significant catechism—the one that is expounded on and returned to with the most regularity—is the discussion of the virtues of chastity and virginity. Chapter thirty-seven is dedicated to these virtues. Chastity is lauded as the sister of “bondad” and the daughter of “santidad,” and Sancho recommends that both the king and his vassals be chaste (174). Even so, Virginity is assigned a superior state than her “niece” Chastity in the family of virtues, for Virginity is the daughter of God and Chastity is only his granddaughter. Prelates are admonished to “seer muy casto e de muy linpia vida,” but it is also noted that the holiest saints were virgins and that the state of virginity puts holy men who possess it on the same level as the angels (174). While the Angel of God begs

Saint John not to bow before him “ca mío cormano e mío hermano eres,” when Saint Peter prostrates himself, the angel does not protest: “Por que Sant Juan era virgin e San Pedro non lo era, ca fuera casado” (270, 271). Without coming out and saying so directly, this hierarchy of virtuous states decidedly promotes virginal clerics over married laymen.

Even though this line of reasoning suggests the superiority of virgins, the *cientificos sabios* who write for Sancho are careful not to place the Church above the king. Instead, *Castigos* gives a variety of interesting explanations of the secular and the sacred. While the king has the place of God on earth, so do the prelates: “Mío fijo, págate de los perlados e ámalos que ofiçiales son de Dios e su logar tienen en lo espiritual” (171). And yet it does not follow that all clerics have authority equal to the king. *Castigos* offers an explanation of the Church’s hierarchy, wherein the pope is representative of Saint Peter and the prelates represent the apostles. A comparison of the pope and the monarch (a famously contentious issue in Castile) is not even attempted in these pages. Instead, *Castigos* defines their respective spheres of power as being exclusive and complementary. Moses and Aaron are given as examples that represent the secular and the sacred arms of government respectively. Sancho also cites Jesus’s admonition to give to Caesar what was Caesar’s, concluding “en esta respuesta dio a entender que las cosas spirituales son de la iglesia que las resçibe por Dios. Otrosí las cosas temporales son de los enperadores e tienen logar de Dios por guardar” (141). So while the king has the place of God in secular matters, holy men take His place in spiritual ones. The reason for the existence of these two separate but equal arms of government is explained by the two swords that the apostles showed to Jesus at the Last Supper: “E para vsar de cada vna déllas bien se deue aguzar e ayudar la vna con la otra, ca lo que la vna non puede conplir

cúnplelo la otra. Bien así commo quando el cuchillo que está boto e se aguza con el otro que está agudo por que taje mejor. El cuchillo spiritual deue obrar de su ofiçio en tanto quanto pudiere obrar déllo. E desde que al su poder fallesçiere, deue llamar al cuchillo tenporal que le ayude. E así se cunple todo mejor” (173). *Castigos* therefore promotes an ideal of shared governance and collaboration between Church and king and explains how the two institutions should mutually support one another. All of this gives us some insight into Sancho’s policies and political strategies, but it is also a reflection of the more general state of the relationship between medieval kings and the Church. As Alfonso and Escalona have affirmed, the process of legitimation is circular; and so the king and the Church legitimize each other through a process of recognizing and being recognized, each within their respective spheres of power.¹¹⁰

As to the foundations of the moral code promoted in these pages, from the beginning it is clear that one of the primary concepts is restraint: “E para mientes a todas aquellas cosas que son malas e feas e lixosas e dannosas para la carne e fallarás que todas son malas para el alma” (76). In the first chapter, Sancho informs his son that there are three things that make a man sin against God: “gran amor de muger...beudez de vyno...beudez de sanna a sin razón” (76). Although here it is only counted as one among three things that can drive a man to sin, the concept of *loco amor*¹¹¹ is central to this moral code, and in the same way as the related virtues of chastity and virginity, it is a topic that appears time and again throughout the text. *Loco amor* is cited as causing the fall of Spain, as well as for being the ruin of many a king throughout history, including

110. Alfonso and Escalona, introduction to *Building Legitimacy*, xxii.

111. Though the term “loco amor” does not actually appear anywhere in the text, it is a well-known medieval concept that denotes an obsession with women and sex as well as other forms of inappropriate fornication. I use it here because the text refers to the same concepts, and I believe it is much more useful to our discussion than any more specific term that would necessarily exclude some of these concepts.

the wise King Solomon.¹¹² In the prologue—which begins in the traditional manner of the *specula principum*, with the fall of man¹¹³—Original Sin is explained as Adam having allowed his wife to have “sennoría” over him: “Morando e turando por amor e deleyte carnal consentió a la muger que riendo por amor délla auer esperiençia del dulçor del fruto a [él] vedado, por tanto le dio Dios en pena de aquestos locos deleytes que todos tienpos comiese su pan en sudor de su carne e beuiese en dolor e en trabajo” (73). *Loco amor* in its various forms is the main subject of several chapters (chapters six, nineteen, twenty, and twenty-one) and the authors repeatedly warn against it throughout the rest of the work. We have already observed that prelates are admonished to be chaste and preferably virginal. For the king and his secular vassals, there are a different set of instructions. The text does not go so far as to demand that married men restrict themselves to sexual relations with their wives, but rather it forbids fornication with certain types and groups of women.¹¹⁴ Specifically, they are warned against intercourse with virgins, women who have taken religious vows, married women, and women of other *razas* and *linajes*, specifically Jewish and Moorish women. We will return to these restrictions and the reasons given to justify them later in this chapter.

Women in Castigos

Given the centrality of the cardinal sin of lust in *Castigos* it is not surprising that the text contains a good deal of misogynist discourse. However, Sancho and his

112. “Para mientes cuánto mal vno en Espanna por lo que fizo el rey don Rodrigo con la Caba, fija del conde Jullán.” *Castigos*, 106.; “Regnando Salamón, commo quier que era omne muy sabidor e muy entendido, el amor grande que aué a sus mugeres que eran de la creencia de los gentiles le fizieron errar contra Dios...E deste yerro que Salamón fizo ouo Dios grand sanna e quisiérola luego calonnar en él...mas calonnolo después en Roboán, su fijo.” *Ibid*, 135-6.

113. Bizzarri points out that “se medita sobre el pecado adánico, puesto que en la concepción política anterior a la irrupción de la *Política* aristotélica la politicidad tiene su origen en ese dato de la historia sagrada y no en la naturaleza como propugnaba Aristóteles.” Bizzarri, “Reflexiones,” 439.

114. Interestingly, later versions of this work (such as MS 6659 in the Biblioteca Nacional de España dated 1401) do encourage men, and especially kings, to only have relations with one woman.

coauthors identify idleness—not lustfulness—as the common characteristic of “bad” women. They aver that a man who allows his wife to be idle “es digno de ser priuado de todo regimiento e de toda honor, ca esenna que era para poco de bueno e mucho mujerial” (104). As with apostates, kings are warned against allowing idle women to live in the royal court, since they are contagious in nature and can bring the ruin of an entire kingdom:

Dize Tullio que muger ocçiosa es saco de luxuria, grande parlera, corrupción de muchos sin toda virtud, lazo de muchos mesquinos, confusión de su marido, vergüença de sus fijos, e destruyçión de su casa. Dize aquel que muger ocçiosa pierde finalmente toda la vergüença e non le plaze cosa de Dios. Todos quantos a ella se llegan fazen[se] semejantes a sí mesmo, e la mejor obra que fazer podría es que se muriese presta mente... E dize que dezía a tales palabras *que tan mala cosa era en muger ocçiosydad que vna muger de honor que fuese ocçiosa era bastante a corronper vna çibdat e avn todo un regno*. (103, my emphasis)

And yet, women are not considered to be bad by nature. The same prologue that narrates the fall of man as the result of *loco amor* also includes some praise of women: “Por tal dize Moysén en el primer libro de la ley que después que Nuestro Sennor ha criado el mundo, miró a todo lo que fecho auía e vido que todo era mucho bueno. E por consiguiente la muger, fecha por Nuestro Sennor Dios, era mucho buena” (71). He also says of female virgins that: “la muger virgin templo es de Dios en que Él mora e en que Él fuelga” (200). As it is with man, woman was created in a perfect state and it is only when a woman loses *vergüença* (shame) that she becomes bad.

Aside from being good simply because she is the work of God, more specifically God granted her particular traits that make her so:

Dios la crió doctada de bienes de natura e de fortuna e de graçia. E primera mente de bienes de natura, ca era sabia non tanto commo Adam...E a questo por tal commo auía menos seso, después era dotada de los dones que pertenesçen al ordenamiento natural, así commo buena voluntad, buenas inclinaciones, claro entendimiento, buena industria, buena conçiencia, franco arbitrio, ferosa de cuerpo e fortaleza conuenible, sabidoría conplida en todo lo que es menester en muger acabada. Asimesmo era inocente e puesta en regimiento de criaturas e le fueron obedientes... E le auía dado deleytes, honores, riquezas naturales en grand copia. (71-2)

The text also encourages men to cultivate some virtues that were traditionally considered feminine. Chastity is probably the greatest womanly virtue promoted in the text, but the king and his vassals are also encouraged to practice such virtues such as *caridad* (charity), *mesura* (restraint), and *paciencia* (patience). In chapter ten *Castigos* even goes so far as to gender the king and the church, describing the king as masculine and the church as feminine: like God, the king is terrible in his anger and his justice should be feared, while the clergy are the shepherds of God's flock and they raise people within his laws and care for them with works of charity. However, while the Church and the king are generally considered equals, this could never be the case between men and women.

Besides being man's intellectual inferior and despite her designation as the primary caretaker of children, woman is not man's equal in parenthood. In his

explanation of how a father's love for his son is "el más derecho amor que en el mundo ha e el más verdadero," Sancho juxtaposes paternal love with the love that a mother has for her son (97). Kings are admonished to honor both their father and mother "e beuirás luenga mente sobre la tierra" (97). However, since children are made from the "simiente" of their father, and not of their mother, fathers love their children more than mothers do (98). He reasons that since women suffer during the gestation, delivery, and upbringing of a child, they love their children less. This concept is illustrated by the story of the Great Flood, where fathers held their sons up on their shoulders to save them, while their mothers stood on top of them in order to save themselves (97-8). The Virgin Mary is the only notable exception to this rule: "non ha en el mundo muger carnal por grand amor nin por grand dolor que aya de su fijo que pudiese semejar nin remedar al amor e al dolor que Santa María houo por su fijo Ihesu Christo quando le vido estar en la cruz" (100). He also notes that women are more "piadosas" ("forgiving") with their children and that "quando el padre es sesudo e entendido tienen los omnes que el fijo deue semejar a su padre. E quando non sale atal tienen que es por maldad de la madre" (80). Perhaps if when this text was written Sancho had known that in a few years' time his wife would become the sole defender of his son's rights, he would have amended this discussion on parenthood. As it stands, the treatment of mothers in this text is decidedly negative.

The counterpart to the lazy woman who is threat to society is the industrious woman who applies herself to womanly tasks. In chapter six the king tells a story of such a woman, the empress of Rome, wife of Octavius. In this *exemplum* an idle woman who had convinced many of her friends to refrain from spinning comes to the palace and is invited by the empress to spin with her and her ladies. When the woman declines, the

empress orders her out of her presence, warning her and her friends to keep their distance and declaring that any woman who refuses to spin should be thrown out of the city “e colocada e puesta con aquellas que no filan que están en el burdel.”¹¹⁵ Other examples of good women in *Castigos* are the charitable Dacian queen who made clothes for the poor and Saint Elisabeth of Hungary, who was born a princess but gave up her riches to serve the needy as one of the first members of the Franciscan order. Despite their intellectual inferiority, some women are even accounted among the very wise, such as Simbiribus, wife of Nirio. Perhaps it is telling that most of the good women mentioned here are wives or daughters of kings and emperors; Sancho had every reason to promote the virtues of his own wife (a descendant of kings and the spouse of one), since the pope had not yet legitimized their marriage.

Castigos also makes a point of celebrating good wives as one of the greatest fortunes (“buena andanças”) that God can grant man: “La sesta buena andança te dará Dios en te casar con buena muger conplida de toda bondat, de la qual te dará Dios fijos e hijas de que ayas generación e con que tomes placer. E esta muger que sea tal que tu coraçón esté bien seguro e firme en la su bondat e sin themor e seyendo ella sin maldat, e por la qual seyendo tú casado con ella sea a honrra de ti e ayas por ella riquezas e todo bien e sea el casamiento e egualeza de ti lo más que se pueda fazer” (295).

Sancho also admonishes his son and his men to accord married and religious women (the latter of which are considered to be married to God) proper respect. In the social and political hierarchies men have rights according to their station, and though women are understood primarily as the property of their husband or father, noble women are also

115. Ibid, 104. Although we noted earlier that lust is not the primary reason for the existence of “bad” women, here we see proof that idleness and lasciviousness (both sins railed against in the text) are nevertheless related concepts in the authors’ mindset.

protected by their associations. Therefore a king's vassals are charged with serving and protecting their lord's wife and children, and the king himself must respect his friends and not fornicate with another man's wife. This is necessary in order to ensure the continuation of a family's line, but the king also evokes the golden rule—reasoning that you wouldn't like it if someone slept with your wife: “Mucho te pesaría a ti quien te quisiere toller tu mugger o te fiziese tuerto con ella” (189). Furthermore he warns that a bad counselor can make a man “perder con la muger con quien eres casado e que fagas contra ella cosas con que pese a Dios e a ella,” advice perhaps culled from the king's personal experience with don Lope de Haro (251). A good advisor, on the other hand, “consejarte ha que te abengas bien con tu muger e la honrres e la ames e la mantengas en buen estado e te non pierdas con ella faziendo obras de perdición de tu alma” (251-2).

Religious Minorities

Apart from its misogynistic tendencies, *Castigos* is even more derisive in its treatment of religious others. The word “linaje” (roughly: “lineage”) is sometimes used in the text to indicate family clans, but it also serves as a synonym to “raza” (“race”), which is used to refer to religious and ethnic associations. The discussion of religious others is very much a part of the discussion of *loco amor*—since aside from virgins, married, and religious women—these are the women that are forbidden to Christian men. Neither the king nor his vassals should lie with a Jewish woman, since she “es de linaje de los que mataron a Ihesu Christo, su Sennor” (148). Neither should he fornicate with a Moorish woman, since she belongs to the “linaje de la creencia” of those who fought against the Christians (148). The biblical king Solomon and the Castilian king Alfonso VIII are given as examples of the evil that can befall a king who has sexual relations with a

woman of a different *ley* (roughly translated as religion, though it also has ethnic overtones), and the loss in the battle of Alarcos is wholly attributed to Alfonso VIII's sexual folly. While the title of chapter twenty-one ("De quánd noble cosa es ante Dios la virginidat") suggests that it would extol the virtue of virginity, its true concern is to warn against forbidden fornication (200). As the chapter progress the discussion devolves into a firm condemnation of religious others. Here, the king warns against even bringing one's face close to a Jewish woman's, since the Jews spit in the face of Christ. He also suggests "non quieras contar la mora por muger, mas cuéntala por bestia, ca non ha ley ninguna" (202). In fact, the king tells us that Muslims have just the opposite values from those of Christians: "Todas aquellas cosas que la nuestra ley da por pecado e por mal vso es a ellos por saluación; e las que nos damos por saluación es a ellos por pecado" (203-4). Muslims happily indulge in the same pleasures that good Christians avoid, and if Christians strive to restrain their baser instincts, Muslims do nothing but indulge them: "E los moros non han otra creencia sinon aquel que más puede soltar la su carne a los sabores del mundo, aquel tienen por el más saluo" (204). He explains that both Moorish men and women are nothing but dogs and that "quien peca con mora por conplir su voluntad es tanto commo si pecase con perra o con bestia, pues que ley non ha nin creencia" (205). Although the hostile treatment of religious minorities in this text is hardly surprising, it is worth noting that these hateful statements serve a greater project for the king. By organizing people into Christian and non-Christian groups and highlighting the evils of those *linajes* and *leyes* that are different, *Castigos* creates unity amongst Christian peoples by setting them against the religious other. A line is drawn that allows the king to redirect violence that might otherwise occur between different

family clans or Christian kingdoms onto religious others and kingdoms that belong to a different religion. In the end, this divisive discourse encourages unity among Christians and fuels the fires of the Christian reconquest.

The King and His Men

Although we have observed that in comparison with his father Sancho relies less on the direct subjugation of his vassals and more heavily on the promises of the chivalric narrative, he still puts forth his own vision of the correct relationship between a king and his vassals. In the same way that all fathers should educate their sons, it is also the king's responsibility to instruct his vassals, and moreover they should rejoice and be glad of it: "Bien andante son las gentes que Dios da rey o sennor que los sepa castigar e mandar, e que estranne e escarmiente el mal en los malos e faga bien por el bien que fazen los buenos" (325). More than advice, this refers to the rewards and punishments that the king should give to his people to keep order and justice in the land. The correct exercise of royal justice is one of the king's primary responsibilities, and indeed it is his very reason for being. Sancho informs us that before the Great Flood there were no kings to make the people follow the laws of God, and it was their unchecked sinfulness that motivated God to destroy them. After the waters receded there was a great increase in wealth that motivated an increase in violence and contention over who should control that wealth. It was then that the people decided to elect a ruler to restore order and to keep the laws of Yahweh in the land (132-3). According to *Castigos*, the king should lead by example: he should be moderate, chaste and generous (among many other good qualities that a king should possess). But one of the most important things a king can do in order to win "buen fama" and bring order to his kingdom is to be fair and even-handed in his exercise of

justice. Royal justice is a matter of great import in *Castigos*, and Sancho gives his son much advice on how to wield it. The king should always love the truth and do his utmost to make sure he knows the whole of it before casting judgment. He should never allow that judgment to be clouded by anger or jealousy, but rather he should act with “clemençia ó deue e cómmo deue;” though at the same time he must never hesitate to punish those who deserve it (126). When in doubt, the king should make thorough inquiries and rely on advice from good and wise men that fear God and their king.

Advice is a very important element of governance, and Sancho warns his son that the court is always full of bad and greedy men. For this reason the king must also be a “buen lapidario en conocer los hombres” (169). He should choose his advisors and administrators carefully and never believe liars, traitors, flatterers, or drunkards. He should also beware of suspicious men, since a suspicious man in the house of a king is “like a torch lain upon straw” (213). The amusing tale of the “medio amigo” illustrates how the king should not trust in the loyalty of his friends until it is proven: “nunca fíes mucho en el amistad que te alguno prometa fasta que lo ayas prouado...nin fíes mucho en palabras fermosas nin apuestas que te digan fasta que las prueues por obras” (262-3). As to the promises that he himself should make, Sancho advises his son: “que non prometas nin des cosa por que de ti mismo que eres sennor ouieses a fazer sennorío e fizieses sennor de ti a aquel a quien pusieses el su pie sobre la tu garganta por que sienpre ouieses a beuir en su premia e en su voluntad,” which may very well be wisdom gained from the king’s promotion of the Conde de Haro (165). In short, the king must distinguish between the loyal and the treacherous, and he must reward the good and punish the bad. For if a king rewards liars or traitors he will cause his own undoing: “que busqueste cuchillo con

que te degollases” (302). By correctly rewarding and punishing the men of his kingdom, the king will be able to encourage his vassals to do good and to serve him.

In *Castigos*, Sancho says that just as men (and women) should have fear to keep them from erring against God, they should also fear their king and his justice: “Temiendo el omne a Dios, que es sennor sobre todo dél ayuso, ha de temer a su rey que tiene lugar de Dios en la tierra en aquel regno en que lo Él pone” (103). Sancho supports this mandate by citing Saint Peter and the church as commanding the same: “El apóstol Sant Pedro dixo en la su epístola suya: Teme a Dios e honrrad a vuestro rey...E aquellos que tienen los ofiçios de Dios demás luego declara aquella palabra ó dize ansí: Honrrad al rey” (130). The king further distinguishes “themor” from “miedo,” the former being preferable since it keeps a man from sinning in the first place, while the latter is a fear experienced after the fact. After all, he reasons, it is better to ask your king to reward your good works than to have to ask him to forgive your errors (132). The vassal who errs against his king is also compared to Adam, who hid in fear when God called him after he and his wife had committed the Original Sin. As Adam also felt the shame of being naked, fear of the king’s justice also begets shame in those who err: “El yerro del mal fecho que el omne faze lo mete en vergüença, viene el themor e el themor judga la pena que deue auer” (132). After fear, shame is also a useful social control.

What is probably most interesting about the discussion of *vergüença* in *Castigos* is Sancho’s explanation of its origins. According to *Castigos*, shame comes from the pride that a nobleman should take in his *linaje* (here denoting the family clan, but perhaps retaining in part the broader reference to the Christian peoples as a whole): “La vergüença faze conosçer a omne el linaje onde viene e que tome vergüença de su linaje e

de sí mesmo e de los que han de venir dél. Ca por fecho que faga omne contra su generación de vergüença él lo echará en vergüença” (105). This brings us back to the chivalric narrative. Aside from the wealth that they might gain, it is the promise of prestige and honor (or shame, as the case may be) which knights can bring to their house that motivates them to do great deeds in the service of their God, king, and kingdom. Furthermore Sancho seems to be very much aware that the order of chivalry was created as a social control for violence: “Por eso fue fecha la cauallería de los fijosdalgo, por que ouiesen vergüença. Lo primero del linaje onde viene. Lo segundo de sí mesmo. Lo tercero de aquellos que han de venir déellos. E guardando estas otras vergüenças fazen los fijosdalgo bien” (105). With an eye to the shame or honor that their actions can bring to the family clan, knights will strive to do good and win renown in order to secure their legacy and the position of their progeny.

Beyond the fear of the king’s justice and the promises of the chivalric narrative, Sancho also gives an account of the relationship that the vassals should have with their king, who is their “señor natural” (101). The three most important things that a vassal should do for his lord are: 1) “amarle bien e derecha mente, e guardarle fieldat e verdad e lealtad,” 2) “honrrar la su persona e en su muger e enn sus fijos e en su estado e en la su casa,” 3) “temerle más de lexos que de çerca, ca por este themor se guardan los omnes de errar contra él e se guardan de non errar en las otras cosas que deuen guardar para non caer en el mal” (131). Furthermore, Sancho states that the first loyalty of all men should be to their king, even above their own fathers: “si el fijo sabe mal o muerte de su [padre], derecho faze de gelo dezir e de le guardar de aquel mal, *saluo ende contra su sennor*” (255, my emphasis). The king also suggests that men ought to love the king’s heir even

more than their own sons, since in some cases it happens: “E en antes querríe la muerte para todos sus fijos e para sí mesmo que non para él por el gran amor que le ha,” a proclamation that might better apply to those nobles who are given the caretaking of a minor king, but equally seems to refer to the loyalty demonstrated by Guzmán *el Bueno* in the defense of Tarifa (100-1).

One of the primary functions of both prelates and laymen in the medieval government is to advise their king, and Sancho gives them plenty of instructions on how to best discharge that task. In chapter twenty-six the king warns that men should be careful in what they say and in the words that they choose, since words—like arrows—are powerful things, and once they have been said they cannot be taken back (217). It is also important to bear in mind, he tells us, the political and social status of the people involved. When giving advice, one should consider to whom they are speaking, of whom they are speaking, who makes up the audience, and their own station in relation to the aforementioned persons. In chapter thirty-two Sancho explains that advice should always be honest and rooted in goodwill and friendship and never be motivated by greed, hate, anger, fear, jealousy or given with the intent to deceive (243). He also warns that bad advice will be blamed upon the giver, and promises that good advice will lead to a good reputation and reward. Moreover, if someone knowingly gives bad or false advice, he should know that he is committing treason and sinning against God (243).

Conclusion

For some, Sancho’s difficulties in consolidating his power and securing the succession of his issue may not be dire enough to qualify as a true political “crisis.” Nevertheless, Sancho faced a barrage of noble rebellions over the course of his reign. Alfonso de la Cerda, who was often at the center of these rebellions, continued to title

himself king of Castile-León, and there were plenty of powerful people both within the realms and in the neighboring kingdoms—magnates, kings, and infantes alike—who were willing to support his claim against Sancho's. The papal dispensation that might have dispatched with the legitimacy of Alfonso's claims did not come during Sancho's life, and though his son did eventually succeed him, from this vantage point the future was all but certain. In response to the efforts to wrest the crown from his hands, Sancho replied with actions and with words that legitimized his claim to power. With his cultural politics, Sancho created a legitimizing discourse that sought to achieve consensus among the various power centers about the validity of his rule.

Sancho's political alliance with the Castilian clergy was central to this discourse, and the alliance was forged—at least in part—with the hope of overcoming the disapproval of the papacy. The texts that make up Sancho's cultural project give testimony to a sort of renewed religious fervor in Castile-León that sought to correct the “errors” of the Learned King, who had been led astray by wayward advisors. Sancho fashioned himself as a reformer, the “champion of orthodoxy,” and as a corrector of his father's mistakes. He greatly prized the counsel of the clerics in his court and employed their pens to author the works that would promote his—and inevitably to some degree their own—political and cultural ideologies.

Sancho also abandoned his father's failed approach to dominating the high nobility, instead promoting the chivalric narrative in the hopes that their loyalties could be won for his side. The chivalric narrative encouraged the social aspirations of the rising urban oligarchy with promises of great rewards of fame, increased political status, and wealth. Another related tool that presented itself to him was the religious crusade, which

could engage all men, both secular and religious, high and low, in a united effort under the direction of their king. To this same end, Sancho's works also aimed to stoke the opposition to the religious other and to redirect violent energies into the furthering of the reconquest.

In presenting himself as a fervently religious king, eager to renew the efforts of southward expansion that had been neglected by his father, Sancho also hoped to win the approval of the pope, and perhaps receive the dispensation that he had wanted badly enough to forge. It is evident that the king's use of religious and political rituals (pilgrimage and coronation) and his moralizing political discourse in *Castigos* were calculated to win the approval of the papacy. However, this cannot be his only political aim. In the end, consensus was needed from all of the parties involved in the medieval monarchy of Castile-León. Sancho played to the fact that they all considered themselves Christians, and one tried-and-true method of winning the political alliance of people is by appealing to their sense of morality. The ideas about government that Sancho espouses in *Castigos*—specifically the idea that the success or failure of a kingdom depends heavily upon the moral-uprightness of both its leader and its people—were shared by many of his subjects. This idea was in line with medieval thought about the body politic and it served to legitimize Sancho's righteous rule and to justify his rebellion against his father.¹¹⁶ Not only was he a more "saintly" king than Alfonso, Sancho also insisted that he had been chosen by God, and characterized his father's attempt to disinherit him as being against God's will. I do not argue that Sancho's monarchy was a sacral one, but it should be evident that he adopted some traditions of the sacral monarchies of France and England

116. For a discussion of medieval theories of the body politic, see Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957).

and used these to strengthen his claim to the throne of Castile-León. With his invention of a coronation tradition and his textual discourse, Sancho attempted to change Castilian ideas about the monarch in such a way as to legitimate his rule against the claims of his opponents. In the end this cultural model would come to be known not as *sanchismo* but as *molinismo*, named for María de Molina, the queen regent who would become famous and even popular for her promotion of this kind of cultural politics.

Chapter Two

Laying the Foundations for a Cultural Legacy: María de Molina as Queen Consort and Queen Mother (1282-1300)

Introduction

In 1296 with the kingdom under attack by Portugal and Aragón, the Infante Juan calling himself king of León and Alfonso de la Cerda titling himself king of Castile, Queen María called the high magnates, the concejos of Extremadura and her co-tutor, the Infante don Enrique, to meet with her in Valladolid. According to the royal chronicle, Infante Enrique came to María—who was in the chapel hearing mass—and told her that he knew how they could solve their problems. He explained that they were under attack because the king was so young, himself so old, and she a woman. He suggested that the queen should remarry, explaining that her new husband would be better able to protect the rights of her son. María's response, as recorded in the *Crónica de Fernando IV*,¹ reveals much about her politics:

É la noble Reina le respondió que [ella] se maravillaba mucho del commo le fabló él en aquella manera con ella aviendo el debdo que él avie con ella, é que non avie porque le dar ejemplo de las reinas que facien mal, ca non tomaria ella enjemplo si non de las que ficieron bien, que fueron muchas, señaladamente del su linaje, é que fincaron con sus fijos pequeños, é que las ayudára Dios, é dijo que si ella fuese cierta que por facer tal maldad, avria el rey su fijo los reinos sin contienda, é áun que le

1. *Crónica del rey don Fernando Cuarto*, in *Crónicas de los reyes de Castilla: Desde don Alfonso el Sabio, hasta los católicos don Fernando y doña Isabel*, ed. Cayetano Rosell y Lopez, (Madrid: Cárlos Bailly-Baillier, 1875) (Hereafter referred to in the text as *CFIV*).

faria cobrar otros tantos reinos como los que le dejára su padre, que ella non le faría. (103)

I have chosen to begin this chapter with the above citation because it serves as a good introduction to the strategies that Queen María used to gain access to power and the way that her queenship is constructed by the royal chroniclers.

In referring to those queens who had ruled with their young sons, María cites a precedent for her rule as regent and calls attention to the fact that she is herself a descendant of Castilian royalty. This serves to reinforce her authority by making clear her own status as a powerful member of the royal family and by highlighting the resemblance of circumstance that she shares with previous Castilian queens, whose “good example” she means to follow. María’s decision to remain a widow allowed her to retain her position as queen mother and regent and to maintain the control of her son. In this citation, the queen also reminds her cousin of the “debdo” that he owes her, which is symbolic of her use of gift-giving strategies. While these political strategies—family promotion, gift-giving, and widowhood—were widely used in medieval politics, it is the way in which they are employed in combination with a claim to real moral and religious superiority that would come to define the cultural legacy of María de Molina. In the above citation the queen is devoutly hearing mass when she refuses Enrique’s proposal. Remarriage was considered by the Church to be morally reprehensible,² and her decision not to follow the “bad example” of the widows that the infante mentions confirms her moral uprightness. The queen also claims to be the opposite of avaricious; she declares that she would not remarry—even if remarriage would result in the extension (by 100%)

2. Louise Mirrer, introduction to *Upon My Husband’s Death: Widows in the Literature and Histories of Medieval Europe*, ed. Louise Mirrer (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1992): 1.

of her son's kingdom. Her great wisdom too is evident, as she refuses to be lectured by her cousin and instead gives him some *exempla* to live by. Lastly, by declaring her faith in God's Providence and the surety of her reward, the queen makes a show of faith and piety, a sign of her righteous rule and moral superiority.³

It is nearly impossible to separate María's self-representation from her representation in the chronicles, as so few documents written in her own voice still exist.⁴ While María's modern biographers attempt to separate fact from fiction and affirm knowable truths about her life and rule as queen, the chronicles remain a primary source of information about her past. In the end, all of the modern histories seem to be so many modernized versions of the medieval histories. They present the queen as an unselfish and steadfast supporter of the good of the kingdom and the rights of her son and they praise her great political acumen and moral superiority. In this study, instead of trying to separate Queen María's efforts to construct an individual queenship for herself from the representation of her queenship by the chroniclers, I consider the former within the context of the latter. Over the next two chapters I will explore María's rule as it is depicted in the chronicles and other historic documents, such as the *ordenamientos* of the cortes and the charters of the military guilds formed in defense of the queen and her son. My purpose is to examine María's rule within the context of royal politics and queenly tradition in order to analyze how the construction of her queenship is influenced by

3. Gómez Redondo observes that María's patient and unwavering faith in God in the face of adversity (along with her use of "seso natural") is an important attribute of the queen's politics, and of what he calls the "modelo cultural" of molinismo. Fernando Gómez Redondo, "El Zifar y la *Crónica de Fernando IV*," 107-8.

4. Among these documents we have the queen's two testaments, a handful of donations, and a largely unpublished collection of letters she exchanged with Jaume II which are located at the Archivo de la Corona de Aragón, in Barcelona.

gender and to illuminate how her exercise of power and the attributes of her political persona promote certain ideas about rulership and the monarchy.

In this chapter I examine the image of the queen in the royal chronicles from her marriage to Sancho (1282) until her son Fernando comes into his majority (1300-1). As Theresa Earenfight explains, the discursive practices of the royal family (which are recorded in the chronicles) had an exemplary nature:

Just as monarchy is not, strictly speaking, the rule by just one person, it is not just a political structure. It is also a powerful kin group organized as a dynasty and therefore both husband and wife must be part of the discussion...The royal family was the framework for the transmission and exercise of lordship, as well as a model and source for attitudes and structures and behavior toward women in general and queens in particular. It furnished principles of order, and simultaneously adapted and molded those attitudes, structures, and behavior into the institutions of medieval government.⁵

As we established in the first chapter, royal chronicles often served as historical guides to ethical politics. In this chapter we shall observe how María's conduct in the royal chronicles stands as an example both of a good king and of a good liegeman—a model of both ethical rulership and vassalage. Through the medium of these texts, María's chroniclers used the historical figure of the queen to promote ideas about the monarchy and the social order that served their purposes and those of their patrons.

In order to study a queen, we must begin with a definition of “queenship.” In her introduction to a collection of essays on Medieval and Early Modern Iberian queens,

5. Earenfight, “Partners in Politics,” xxii.

Earenfight defines queenship as “a repertoire of collective norms, institutional structures, and strategies for participation within the public political sphere of monarchy that included, but was not limited to, governance.”⁶ She also argues that queenship is a political partnership best understood within the “corporate” institution of monarchy.⁷ Traditionally, the power and authority of the monarchy was shared among members of the royal family and even with powerful nobles and administrators. This practice of co-rulership was not an equal partnership by any means; the king was the head of the monarchy and queens did not necessarily have a large share in the governance of the realm.⁸ Nevertheless, traditions created by the queens that came before allowed royal women to enjoy influence and exercise power in many different ways. Queens were powerful players in the domestic sphere. They were wives of kings, mothers of heirs and the caretakers of their children. Royal women supported their family clans, helping to arrange marriages, protecting the honor of their houses, and honoring their dead. Queens and royal women were also important patrons of artists, religious institutions, and authors. Some queens even created a legacy for themselves and their families as patrons of history.

Queens had private access to the king and could be influential counselors and beloved wives. Tradition could allow an individual queen to lay claim to power, but the king and other political institutions had to sanction her authority to wield that power.

Kings could choose to empower or disenfranchise their wives and mothers—they could

6. Ibid, xvi.

7. Ibid, xvii.

8. Ibid, xvii. “Three factors determined whether or not a queen ruled, in what capacity, the duration of her rule, and the extent of her authority: first, a prevailing political ideology...that influenced the practice of rulership; second, institutions that were established legally in response to that ideology; and third, a particular set of family circumstances that left a vacancy that someone, man or woman, could fill.” Ibid, xvii.

travel with them and count them among their counselors, or spurn their advice and send them away from court. Indeed, the visible and public nature of the relationship between a king and queen was symbolic of the authority that the former invested in the latter.⁹ Queenship is therefore a “highly-individualized institution” that depends on the specific historical circumstances, as well as on the individual relationships fostered by the queen in question.¹⁰ The extent of a queen’s power could be influenced by her family relationships, her relationships with other powerful people and institutions, her patronage, and the conditions and context of the monarchy in which she participated. While the queen consorts of Castile often shared in the governance of the realm, only a few women ever inherited the crown in their own right.¹¹ However, some circumstances, such as a royal minority or the absence of the king, could allow queens to become temporary heads of state as regents.

The citation that opened this chapter has María referring to the queens who had preceded her in ruling as regents for their young sons. Despite the plurality of examples suggested in the quotation, there was only one queen in recent history who had governed as regent of Castile for a substantial amount of time, and that was Berenguela *la Grande* (the Great).¹² María’s grandmother and Sancho’s great grandmother, Berenguela, served as regent for her son, the “most saintly king,” Fernando III.¹³ As the eldest daughter of Alfonso VIII of Castile and Leonor of England, Berenguela had been their heir of Castile until the birth of her younger brother, Enrique. When Enrique died she inherited the

9. Earenfight argues that the interaction between the king and his queen in the public context of court constitutes a “discursive practice.” Ibid, xv.

10. Shadis, *Berenguela*, 165.

11. Even so, Earenfight argues that the traditions of inheritance in medieval and early modern Iberia allowed queens of those kingdoms to wield more power than their European counterparts. Ibid, xiii-iv.

12. Another possible example may be Berenguela’s sister Blanche of Castile, who served as queen regent in France for her son, Saint Louis IV.

13. Jofré de Loaysa refers to him as the “santísimo rey don Fernando.” Loaysa, *Crónicas*, 73.

throne, but immediately “abdicated” in favor of her son.¹⁴ While María and Berenguela’s relative situations were markedly different, there were many similarities in their circumstances that were useful in establishing a precedent for María’s righteous rule. Both queens shared the stigma of illegitimacy, as they married kings within the same prohibited degree of relation. As with María and Sancho, the pope pressured Berenguela and her cousin King Alfonso IX of León to separate.¹⁵ While they eventually did separate, they did so only after more than six years of marriage (1197-1204) and the birth of five children. Both María’s and Berenguela’s children were considered illegitimate by Rome. Berenguela did not remarry after the separation, but rather devoted herself to the promotion of the rights of her son. With much effort, she made him king of both Castile and León in spite of his supposed illegitimacy. As Miriam Shadis demonstrates in her book, Berenguela corruled with her son Fernando even into his majority, overshadowing both of her son’s two wives. María followed Berenguela’s example in choosing not to remarry and instead to devote her energies to supporting her son’s rights. More than dedication to family, this was a tactical decision that allowed the queen to retain her place as the guardian of her child and poised her to potentially use the authority connected to her position as queen mother. Shadis explains the risks of remarriage: “the consequences could have been severe, including loss of access to children with ensuing loss of political power, heightened friction among followers, and loss of personal status.”¹⁶ Remarriage would likely have diminished María’s control over her son, removing her from her position as a widowed mother of a king to the more restricted sphere of wife of a

14. Miriam Shadis argues that Berenguela’s “abdication” in favor of her son was in fact the way through which Berenguela legitimized and attained her power. Shadis, *Berenguela*, 14-5.

15. Alfonso IX was the first cousin of Berenguela’s father, Alfonso XIII of Castile.

16. Shadis, *Berenguela*, 13.

nobleman. It is therefore likely that María and her supporters would want to draw comparisons between her situation and Berenguela's corule with her son. As we see in the chronicles and other royal documents, María used her matrilineal inheritance to support her authority as queen regent.

The Royal Chronicles of Castile-León

Before commencing this examination of the construction of María's queenship in the chronicles, we must say something of the sources. The royal chronicles considered here are those written by Maestre Jofré de Loaysa, archdeacon of Toledo (1305) and the collection that is sometimes called the *Crónica de tres reyes* (ca. 1344), a later history attributed to Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid. Francisco Hernández and Antonio García Martínez provide us with the known particulars of the life and family of the first of María's chroniclers, Jofré de Loaysa.¹⁷ Maestre Jofré was the second son of a powerful nobleman of the same name.¹⁸ The elder Jofré de Loaysa had been appointed by Jaume I as *amo* (tutor) to the Aragonese princess Violante, whom Loaysa and his family accompanied to Castile when the princess travelled there to wed to Alfonso X.¹⁹ In Castile, the Loaysas participated in the conquest of Murcia and were rewarded with extensive land holdings in the subsequent *repartimiento* (partition) of that territory. Jofré de Loaysa later reprised his role of tutor for Violante's son and the Castilian heir, Fernando de la Cerda, and was named *copero mayor* (cupbearer) to the king. He was a prominent

17. Francisco J. Hernández, "Noticias sobre Jofré Loaysa y Ferrán Martínez," *Revista canadiense de estudios hispánicos* 4, no. 3 (1980): 281-309; Antonio García Martínez, introducción to *Crónica de los Reyes de Castilla: Fernando III, Alfonso X, Sancho IV, y Fernando IV (1248-1305)*, ed. and trans. Antonio García Martínez (Murcia: la Academia Alfonso X el Sabio, 1982), 13-69.

18. García Martínez suggests that the archdeacon might have been the nephew of the elder Jofré, based on the "Libro de Repartimiento" of Murcia. *Ibid.*, 52-3; However, in the text of the archdeacon's will, published in Hernández's article, the younger Jofré identifies the elder Jofré de Loaysa as "mi padre don Jufre" Hernández, "Noticias," 296.

19. García Martínez, "Introducción," 28-9.

noble in Castile, well-connected to the royal house and counted among Alfonso X's most trusted advisors.²⁰ The Loaysa who is the author of our chronicle was also named Jofré de Loaysa, and was the *segundón* of Alfonso X's *copero mayor*. While the younger Jofré may have received lands in the partition of Murcia, he chose to enter the priesthood instead, where he had a distinguished career.²¹ Maestre Jofré was named abbot of Santander in 1272 and eventually became archdeacon of Toledo in 1280.²² The maestre also had a close relationship with the same powerful archbishop as our queen, Gonzalo Pérez Gudiel. The same year in which Jofré was made archdeacon, he accompanied Gonzalo Pérez to Rome to obtain papal approval for the latter's recent appointment as archbishop of Toledo. The maestre's elder brother, García Jofré de Loaysa, would inherit his father's title of *copero mayor*. When Sancho rebelled against Alfonso X in 1282, the archdeacon joined the supporters of the son while his brother remained loyal to the father. After Alfonso's death, García Jofré swore fealty to the new king, along with other nobles who were led by the Infante don Juan. Both of the Loaysa brothers were rewarded after Sancho's succession, as he named García Jofré *adelantado mayor* in the kingdom of Murcia and granted three privileges to the archdeacon's subordinates.²³ It appears likely that Maestre Jofré was involved in the king's chancery, as his friend and superior—Gonzalo Pérez—became the king's *canciller mayor* in 1290. After Sancho's death Jofré de Loaysa probably continued to serve the royal family, as Hernández places him at the

20. Ibid, 28-32.

21. Juan Torres Fontes, ed., *Repartimiento de Murcia*, (Murcia: Academia Alfonso el Sabio, 1960), 1, <http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/obra/repartimiento-de-murcia--0/>.; García Martínez points out that Jofré lost those lands due to his extended absence from Murcia in 1272, the same year the future archdeacon of Toledo was named abbot of Santander. García Martínez, "Introducción," 53.

22. Ibid, 53.

23. Ibid, 38.

proclamation of the bull of dispensation that legitimized Fernando IV in April of 1302.²⁴

Maestre Loaysa died a few years after finishing his chronicle, probably in 1308.²⁵

Hernández and García Martínez agree that Loaysa's chronicle, which covers the years 1248-1305, was probably finished in 1305 or thereabouts. It was written in romance and was later translated into Latin at the archdeacon's request by the Italian canon Armando de Cremona.²⁶ The chronicle covers the reigns of Alfonso X, Sancho IV, and ends ten years into Fernando IV's reign. The translation into Latin, the numbering of the chapters, and the assertions of the preamble confirm that this text was intended as a continuation of Archbishop Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada's *De Rebus Hispaniae*, a history of Castilian kings written by the prelates of the Toledo cathedral. Hernández opines that the existing copy of the Latin translation, which is the source for the bilingual edition we use here,²⁷ probably dates to sometime after 1317. It seems likely that Archbishop Gonzalo Pérez had a hand in the commissioning and patronage of this work. Whether or not Jofré owed his position in Toledo to the archbishop,²⁸ our author favors Gonzalo Pérez with the highest praise and does not fail to remind us of the fact that Archbishop Gonzalo was later made a cardinal at every mention of the man's name.²⁹ While Loaysa does cast judgment on some of the actions of these kings, I generally agree with García Martínez's

24. Hernández, "Noticias," 292. It is interesting that although Loaysa was present at the proclamation of Fernando IV's legitimacy, he does not mention this ceremony in his chronicle.

25. Ibid, 293.; García Martínez places his death sometime between 1307 and 1310. García Martínez, "Introducción," 15.

26. The short prologue to Loaysa's chronicle confirms the authorship and translation of the text (73).

27. The text cited here is the modern Spanish translation of the Latin text, and is therefore a translation of a translation. There exists no copy of the original Spanish text. See chapter one, note 34 for publication information.

28. García Martínez argues that the archdeacon owed his position in Toledo to the archbishop, and that Loaysa writes: "con objeto de complacer y manifestar su gratitud a don Gonzalo." García Martínez, "Introduction," 58.

29. Loaysa refers to Gonzalo as "reverendo" and "reverendísimo." Loaysa, *Crónica*, 131, 139, 151, 161, 225.

characterization of Loaysa's style as concise and fairly impartial.³⁰ It should be noted however, that while the reign of Alfonso X is narrated in the briefest of manners, the rebellion of his son and the reigns of Sancho and Fernando receive a disproportionate amount of narratological space. This could be attributable in part to the fact that Loaysa was a child for much of Alfonso's reign, but we should not forget that chroniclers choose the actions and events that will be remembered—events that usually have some interest to them and their benefactors. While Loaysa does not betray a clear and firm bias toward either party in Sancho's rebellion, he is overtly enthusiastic in his support for the queen regent during Fernando's reign. García Martínez points out that when Loaysa narrates the period of Fernando's minority, the chronicler diverges from his usually neutral style and “se alza la personalidad del cronista con sus comentarios, reflexiones y sentido crítico de lo que escribe.”³¹ In Loaysa's chronicle God intervenes but seldom in the rule of kings, and yet during Fernando's minority He always takes the side of the queen mother and the “boy king.” When Fernando IV reaches his majority and rebels against his mother's influence, Loaysa firmly takes the queen's part against her ungrateful son.

The authorship of the second and more extensive chronicle has not been clearly proven, but overwhelmingly scholars have accepted as its author Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid. Little is known of this potential author's biography, despite his considerable status during the reign of Alfonso XI. According to Salvador de Moxó, Fernán Sánchez was a member of the class of urban knights from Valladolid.³² He first appears in royal

30. García Martínez, “Introducción,” 21-2.

31. *Ibid.*, 16.

32. Salvador de Moxó, “El auge de la nobleza urbana de Castilla y su proyección en el ámbito administrativo y rural a comienzos de la baja edad media (1270-1370),” *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia* 178, no. 3 (1981): 442-8.; Also see Julio Puyol Alonso, *El presunto cronista Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid*, (Madrid: Editorial Reus, 1920).

documents as *alcalde* to the young king Alfonso XI, and later he became the king's *notario mayor*, chancellor of Castile, and chancellor of the king's privy seal. He also served as a royal diplomat and a trusted advisor to María's grandson. Sánchez de Valladolid outlived Alfonso XI and after the king's death in 1350, he continued to serve in the court of Pedro I, becoming chancellor again in 1354. Though Sánchez de Valladolid was likely a witness to the many of the events he recorded, Gómez Redondo suggests that the chronicler would have had access to other written accounts of the history in the *cámara real*³³—stories written by the king's men, likely with the intention of eventually setting them all down in a history.

Antonio Benavides and Cayetano Rosell date the compilation of the *Crónica de tres reyes* between 1340-1352.³⁴ This later chronicle covers the same reigns as the first: Alfonso X, Sancho IV, and Fernando IV. According to the short prologue in *CAX*, the work was commissioned by Alfonso XI “porque acaescieron muchos fechos en los tiempos de reyes que fueron despues de aquel rey don Ferrando [III], los cuales no eran puestos en corónica.”³⁵ Of course, a chronicle that covered these reigns—while incomplete—did exist at the time. Whether or not Loaysa's chronicle was known outside of the cathedral school of Toledo, the material point for our chronicler was that there did

33. Gómez Redondo, “De la crónica general a la real,” 104, 112-3.

34. Antonio Benavides, *Memorias de don Fernando IV de Castilla* (Madrid: J. Rodríguez, 1860), 251; Cayetano Rosell, introduction to *Crónicas de los reyes de Castilla: Desde don Alfonso el Sabio, hasta los católicos don Fernando y doña Isabel*, ed. Cayetano Rosell, vol. 1 (Madrid: Carlos Bailly-Bailliere, 1875), vi.

35. *CAX*, 3. The prologue also states that this chronicle was written to serve as an instructive *exemplum* and to make a legacy for the Catholic kings of Castile and León: “Por muchas guisas é por muchas maneras los sabios que fueron en los tiempos pasados quisieron que las cosas que fueron falladas é pasaron, se pudiesen saber, é por nobleza de sí mesmos seyéndoles á los que eran de venir ejemplo, ficiéronlas escribir, entendiendo que por esta guisa las podrían mejor saber los que viniesen en pos dellos, é aquellos fechos fincarían guardados é durarían grandes tiempos...E conviene que los fechos de los reyes que tienen lugar de Dios en la tierra sean fallados en scripto. Señaladamente de los reyes de Castilla é de Leon, que por la ley de Dios é por acrescentamiento de la fe católica tomaron muchos trabajos é pusiéronse á grandes peligros en las lides que ovieron con los moros echándoles de España.” *CAX*, 3.

not yet exist an official history of those reigns set down by the king himself. Like his forbearers, Alfonso XI understood the advantages of writing his own history and the power of cultural production. Gómez Redondo argues that this chronicle legitimizes Sancho's descendants and provides Alfonso XI with a family legacy that suits his purposes.³⁶

While there exist many similarities between these two chronicles, *CTR* is written from a different perspective and has a significantly different form. It is a vastly more extensive and detailed chronicle that pays less attention to deeds and interests of the cathedral chapter of Toledo and gives more information about the actions of kings, the intrigues of nobles, and at times even provides copies of official documents within its pages. It also provides the first full account of the reign of Fernando IV, while Loaysa's chronicle ends before that king's death. The short prologue to *CTR* alludes to the *Estoria de España*, presenting itself as a continuation of the latter, a work begun by Alfonso X and continued under Sancho IV, a royal history written for and by the kings of Castile-León.³⁷ Besides being substantially longer, this chronicle is also more literary in nature, in that it narrates the history in a more novelesque manner. Alfonso XI's chronicler often depicts the interior thoughts of the political figures and dialogue that passed between them, sometimes going so far as to use direct speech in his representation of specific

36. Gómez Redondo says that "*CSIV* y *CFIV* constituyen los lógicos antecedentes del pensamiento de Alfonso XI; hay una homogeneidad de ideas entre abuelo, padre e hijo absoluta, sobre todo si se recuerda que la figura que cruza estos tres reinados no es otra que la de doña María de Molina, feliz inspiradora de la visión histórica que defiende Sánchez de Valladolid... parece claro que Sánchez de Valladolid lo que pretendía era legitimar la dinastía reinante, es decir ese linaje que nace del rebelde don Sancho y de la reina doña María de Molina, y sobre todo cortar las alas a una nobleza a la que se muestra como la gran culpable de los males políticos." Gómez Redondo, "De la crónica general a la real," 110; 111-2.

37. "E falló scripto por corónicos en los libros de su cámara los fechos de los reyes que fueron en los tiempos pasados, reyes godos hasta el rey Rodrigo. E desde el rey don Pelayo, que fue el primero rey de Leon, fasta el tiempo que finó el rey don Ferrando, que ganó á Sevilla é á Córdoba é las villas del obispado de Jahen é el regno de Murcia." *CAX*, 3.

events that transpired. Historians and literary critics alike have noted that this royal chronicle favors Sancho IV and especially María de Molina, while it is less than favorable towards Fernando IV.

Part One: Marriage and Co-rule with Sancho IV (1282-1295)

María first enters into the history of kings through her marriage to Sancho in 1282.³⁸ Loaysa refers to her as “la noble señora doña María, hija del ilustre infante don Alfonso de Molina, hermano del difunto rey Fernando” (117). In this pithy statement of fact we are reminded that her father was an infante, the Señor of Molina, and the brother of the late King Fernando—a king whose prestige as a great Catholic conqueror was of central importance to the construction of Sancho’s own image in his rebellion. Infante Alfonso was known for his participation in his brother’s reconquest efforts and furthermore, the infante had famously ceded his rights as king of León to his elder brother in order to maintain the unity of the kingdoms (another important part of Sancho’s politics). Sánchez de Valladolid goes so far as to refer to María as “la infanta doña María, fija del infante de Molina” (61). In truth, she was not really an infanta; however, her Castilian heritage would stand her in good stead, since as the daughter of a Castilian prince she could not be considered a foreigner.³⁹ A royal wedding such as theirs must have required some form of celebration, and yet there is not mention of such in the chronicles. The infante and his wife were married soon after Sancho had declared his rebellion against his father, and so it is possible that the circumstances of civil war prevented a large celebration.

38 Loaysa, *Crónicas*, 117; CAX 61.

39. Sánchez de Valladolid sometimes uses the word “infante” to refer to the children of princes, though he usually reserves the use of this term for sons and daughters of kings.

The fact that Sancho married her after rebelling is significant. Sancho had deposed his father in Valladolid, and so now he took over as the head of his house and could marry himself and his unwed sister according to his needs. Sancho negotiated two marriage agreements—his own and that of his sister, Infanta Violante—whom he gave in marriage to don Lope de Haro’s brother, don Diego.⁴⁰ The chronicles mention both marriages together, as they took place around the same time in Toledo. Despite the attempts of some authors (and perhaps even some historians) to portray María and Sancho’s marriage as a love match that began when the two met over the baptismal font of one of Sancho’s “natural” children—it was, like all royal marriages, a political alliance.⁴¹ In this case it was an alliance between the infante and some of the most powerful magnates in Castile, including the Haro clan and María’s family, who would encourage and support the king in his rebellion against his father.

It does not follow that there was no love in the marriage and a queen’s participation in governance was often directly related on her ability to command the love and respect of her king. As to what we can know of their relationship, the queen was rarely separated from her husband, except to give birth to their children and on a few other occasions when Sancho had to leave Castile. It appears that Sancho respected his wife and knew something of her abilities from the beginning of their relationship. According to *CAX*, Sancho sent his wife to meet “encubiertamente” with his half-sister Beatriz in an attempt to reconcile with his father, though in the end no agreement was

40. *CSIV*, 61; Loaysa, *Crónicas*, 117; Carmona Ruiz suggests that Sancho married Violante to Diego de Haro in order to appease Lope Díaz, since his cousin was Sancho’s jilted bride, Guillerma de Montcada. Carmona Ruiz, *María de Molina*, 43.

41. While Carmona Ruiz recognizes the political motivations for the match, she also speculates that María “se dejó llevar por su temperamental marido, posiblemente debido al amor que le profesaba y al hecho de verse en breve en el trono castellano.” *Ibid*, 43.

reached between the two parties (65). Despite her protagonism in this early mission, María is not presented as a powerful political player in either of the chronicles during the first years of her husband's reign, but rather as a mother of princes and a potential victim of her husband's enemies.⁴²

For the first few chapters of *CSIV*, the queen is most often mentioned on the occasions when her husband leaves her at some castle or another to give birth—events that are not even recorded in Loaysa's chronicle.⁴³ The fact that she is named each time she becomes a mother reflects the importance of motherhood to the role of queens. The first priority for a successful royal marriage was the production of heirs. In this capacity, theirs was a very successful marriage and María was a very successful queen. María gave Sancho seven children in ten years, including five boys.⁴⁴ Her position as Sancho's queen was quickly assured by the number of potential heirs that she produced. María's children constituted the basis of her power and stature as queen and she was a passionate defender of their interests.

Besides the intention of producing heirs to secure the family dynasty, the royal marriage was also intended to deter the king from illicit relations and to protect his heirs from illegitimate children that might threaten that dynasty. In most cases marriage did not deter kings from siring and sometimes even recognizing their natural children and giving them a share in the inheritance. Alfonso X had recognized his natural daughter, Beatriz,

42. On one of the few occasions when María does not accompany her husband in his travels, her safety is threatened by the advancement of King Alfonso's troops on the city of Córdoba, but in the end her husband comes to her defense. *CAX*, 62.

43. *CAX* 65, *CSIV*, 72, 75, 80, 83, 86, 88.

44. However, two of María's sons, Alfonso and Enrique, would not reach adulthood. Alfonso died in 1291 and Enrique in 1299.

for whom he obtained an advantageous match in marrying her to the king of Portugal.⁴⁵ As we saw in *Castigos*, Sancho did not condemn extramarital relations for kings, but it would seem that after his marriage to María he did not pursue them himself. As far as anyone can tell (and as far as the chroniclers were willing to say), the king did not father illegitimate children after his marriage.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, Sancho had a previous affair with María's cousin, María de Meneses de Ucera, that produced a child named Violante.⁴⁷ It is likely that as Violante's godmother, Queen María raised the child in her household and was able to instill in her a sense of loyalty and her place in the family hierarchy. Although it was possible for natural children to pose a serious threat to the continuation of a dynasty (as was the case with Alfonso XI's illegitimate son Enrique II), Sancho's natural children never troubled those he had by the queen.

The real threat against the succession of María's children was their illegitimacy in the eyes of the papacy, and consequently, in the eyes of other Christian kings and nobles. As we know, Sancho's right to the throne was contested by France and later Aragón, who supported Alfonso de la Cerda as king of Castile-León and sought to dethrone Sancho by force. Sancho's enemies and the rebellious nobles used the illegitimacy of his marriage and children as an excuse to attack him, and France in particular obstructed the king's efforts in to obtain the papal bull from Rome. Though the king undoubtedly had many

45. Alfonso also assigned Beatriz lands in his will, since in the Iberian Peninsula the traditions of partible inheritance allowed daughters to inherit their father's property. González Jiménez, ed., *Diplomatario andaluz*, 561.

46. It is interesting to observe that *el Rey Santo* had also been represented by his chroniclers as a faithful husband. Linehan tells us that, "according to Lucas of Toy, Fernando III was the first king of his line not to have indulged in extra-marital affairs." Peter Linehan, *Spain 1157-1300: A Partible Inheritance* (United Kingdom: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011) Kindle edition, chap. 3.; Shadis points to the insistence of Berenguela's parents that her betrothed, Alfonso IX of León, "observe a modicum of continence" and the fact that Alfonso VIII and Fernando III had no known illegitimate children as evidence that "the Castilians were deliberately campaigning to present their court as a chaste one." Shadis, *Berenguela*, 109.

47. Carmona Ruiz asserts that Sancho had lovers before marrying María, but she does not give details or references. Carmona Ruiz, *María de Molina*, 34. I have yet to find any sources that tell of other natural children besides Violante.

other preoccupations besides the legitimacy of his marriage, for María, guaranteeing her children's rights was paramount. This may have been due to motherly love, but her right to rule depended on the legitimacy of her children. María became queen through her marriage to Sancho, and a marriage unrecognized by the church could easily become a marriage set aside. It is therefore likely that María would have used whatever influence she had to demonstrate to the king the importance of obtaining a dispensation for their marriage, which would necessarily involve an alliance with France. We cannot know if the queen had a hand in Sancho's decision to have a coronation ceremony that echoed French traditions, though we can be sure that she was involved in planning it. In 1284, Sancho gave his wife 11,000 marvedís for just that purpose.⁴⁸ The king's coronation alongside his wife in Toledo was of considerable political importance to France and also to Toledo.⁴⁹ Whether or not María had any influence on her husband's decision to have a coronation, he honored her by including her in the ceremony and involving her in planning it.

The king also honored his wife on the occasion of the birth of their first child, Isabel, by giving her the territory of Toro.⁵⁰ It is still unknown if the queen had either an *arras* or a dowry agreement settled on her marriage,⁵¹ but Sancho's gift would have secured an income that would allow María to maintain herself and her household in accordance with her stature. The queen's incomes enabled her to make donations and

48. Ibid, 53; Mercedes Gailbrois de Ballesteros, *María de Molina*, 23.

49. The location demonstrated the king's support for the important cathedral chapter as the head of Spain and it may even be considered an overture to Archbishop Gonzalo, since it seems unsure whether or not Gonzalo supported Sancho in his rebellion. We should also recall that in his chronicle, the archdeacon Maestre Jofré asserts that the king decreed that Toledo should host all future coronations in Castile-León, thereby honoring the cathedral and establishing its future prominence. Loaysa, *Crónicas*, 123.

50. Besides Toro, Carmona Ruiz informs us that the queen "disfrutó también del gobierno de otras villas y ciudades, como Valladolid, Écija, Mesa, Zafra y Astudillo." Carmona Ruiz, *María de Molina*, 48.

51. The *arras* was a tradition in the Iberian Peninsula wherein the husband would set lands on his wife so that she should have an income, which she would continue to hold after his death.

other gifts, as well as to display a proper level of affluence in a society where the visible appearance of wealth mattered. Sánchez de Valladolid informs us that Isabel was recognized “por señora é por heredera de los reinos” unless Sancho should have sons (70). The birth of potential heirs helped legitimize the queen, but so did Sancho’s treatment of his wife. Near the end of his reign in 1293, the king would honor his wife with another and more significant gift of land, granting her the territory of Molina after he “inherited” it from the queen’s half-sister. The monarchs celebrated this event with ten days of festivities, a sign of the power that they had consolidated since they were married.⁵² With his gifts of territories and the recognition of her children as heirs to the throne, the king legitimized his queen while increasing her prestige and income. By legitimizing her, he also established the legitimacy of his dynasty.

As the king was perceived in some respects to rule alongside his family, Sancho followed Castilian tradition in naming his wife and his heir in many of his charters and privileges.⁵³ In these documents the king takes actions “en uno” (in one) with his wife and heir. As Shadis points out, the inclusion of wives and heirs in royal documents could serve the purpose of affirming their role as partners in the monarchy and it could also be used to provide legitimization of those partners through their public recognition as such.⁵⁴ Perhaps more telling of the participation of María during the first few years of Sancho’s reign are the donations that Sancho gave “por ruego de” (at the request of) the queen. In

52. Ibid, 122.

53. As early as August 20, 1284, María and Isabel are included in a *privilegio rodado* (royal privilege) that was granted to the monastery of Santa Clara. In exchange for gifts made to the monastery, the women were to pray for the souls of Fernando III, his wife Beatriz, his son Alfonso X, as well as Sancho and his descendants. It is interesting that Sancho’s mother Violante is excluded, perhaps because she supported Alfonso de la Cerda and don Juan against Sancho. Mercedes Gaibrois de Ballesteros, *Historia del reinado*, 3:viii-ix. We should note that only a fraction of Sancho’s charters and privileges that are published by Gaibrois de Ballesteros include the “en uno” clause. Those which do are *privilegios rodados*.

54. Shadis, *Berenguela*, 76.

these documents, María asks her husband to make donations to several monasteries—one where her mother is buried and another for an impoverished female religious order.⁵⁵ In this way the queen honored her heritage, and in return for her donations she received prayers for her husband and his family.

Rafael Del Valle Curieses reports that María founded a Dominican convent in her city of Toro and later made a large donation of land to the concejo that same city, which he says came to be known as the “Monte de la Reina.”⁵⁶ Like queens before her, María would continue to patronize the church throughout her life, and she would eventually found a monastery for the Cistercian order in Valladolid—the same order as her great-grandmother Eleanor’s convent in Burgos: Las Huelgas Reales. Despite her involvement in patronage, the documentation from Sancho’s reign suggests that María was a minor partner in her husband’s government and it does not appear that María ordered her own charters and privileges as queen consort.

María as a Victim of Intrigue in CSIV: The Abbot of Valladolid and the Conde of Haro

Both chronicles—but especially *CSIV*—style the queen as a victim of court intrigue. In the second year of Sancho’s reign (1285), the political landscape in Europe changed significantly with the deaths of Philippe III of France, Pere III of Aragón, and Pope Martin IV. In the same year Fernando was born and proclaimed heir of Castile-León and Pope Honourius IV lifted the order of excommunication on the followers of Sancho’s rebellion. According to *CSIV*, Sancho takes this opportunity to try to make an alliance with the new king of France, since it is France that has been using its influence to hold up the papal dispensation for Sancho’s marriage. The chronicle makes no mention of

55. Gaibrois de Ballesteros, *Historia del reinado de Sancho IV*, 1:xii-iii.

56. Del Valle Curieses, *María de Molina*, 47.

María's stance on the issue at this point in time. Instead, her role in this episode is that of an unfortunate victim of intrigue, where dishonest people—in particular the abbot of Valladolid—threaten her status as a legitimate queen.

For this mission of peace with France the king sent two of his most trusted advisors, don Martín, bishop of Calahorra and Gomez García, abbot of Valladolid. According to the chronicle, the latter ambassador dupes his king and conspires with the French, whom the chronicler vilifies as “*sotiles é pleyteosos é muy engañosos é dañosos á todos aquellos que an á pleytear con ellos, é todas las verdades posponen por facer su pro*” (75). According to the chronicler, Philippe IV wants the abbot to convince Sancho to separate from María and marry Philippe's sister, thereby reestablishing France's family connection in the Castilian monarchy. In exchange for this marriage, France would support Sancho against the Infantes de la Cerda and the abbot would be rewarded for his efforts with the archbishopric of the vacant see in Santiago de Compostela. We already know how Sancho's vehement defense of his family is recorded in *CSIV*. When the king informs his wife of the abbot's deception and betrayal, she is angered and hurt (“*pesóle ende*”) and she ceases to favor him as she once had (73). The abbot has lied to his king in concealing the terms of the French and betrayed the queen who was once his benefactor. If Gómez García is no longer in the king's graces, the chronicle informs us that the queen likes him even less: “[*El Rey*] *estava mal con [el abad] de su talante e peor la Reina*” (73). As for the abbot's competitors and enemies—who include Lope Díaz de Haro and Archbishop Gonzalo—his falling out of the queen's favor pleases them greatly and they begin to: “*le buscar mal con el Rey*” (73). The emphasis on the queen's reaction to Gómez García's betrayal and the order of the narration suggests that it is the queen's

disfavor and not the king's anger that encourages others in the court to work against the abbot (73). The chronicle reports that accounts are promptly demanded of Gómez García and it is found that the abbot has appropriated royal funds, including “grand cuantía de aver que recabdára para dar en la córte de Roma para la dispensacion” (73). Therefore, not only did Gómez García deceive his king and betray his queen, but he also stole funds earmarked for the dispensation, which further threatened the legitimacy of the queen and her children. While this episode highlights how France and Rome threaten Sancho's sovereignty (in his ability to choose his own wife), it is also especially concerned with the loyalty of the king's subjects and the legitimacy of the queen.

The second episode of intrigue that threatens the queen's legitimacy in *CSIV* involves the king's next *privado*, the conde and señor of Vizcaya, Lope Díaz de Haro. When Sancho leaves Castile to meet with the king of France, María averts a crisis at home with don Lope. Lope favored an alliance with Aragón over France, in part due to King Phillippe's protection of the Haro clan's principle enemy, the Laras. This concern for clan rivalry is reflected in *CSIV*: “[Lope] se recelaba del Rey, porque él se guiaba mucho por don Gomez García, Abad de Valladolid que era amigo mucho de don Alvaro [de Lara]... que lo arredraría del amor y merced del Rey quanto podía é que ayudaba á don Alvaro, que era su contrario” (72-3). In Sancho's absence, María promises Lope that his wealth and status will not be diminished in order to avoid the noble's allying himself with Aragón against the king. When Sancho returns the queen tells him what passed with Lope and the king is very pleased with her handling of the situation: “Plógole al Rey ende mucho” (73). María's intervention with don Lope confirms her value to her husband as an intercessor who can act on his behalf—while on the other hand Lope's threats and the

revelation of his interior thoughts characterize him as a self-serving and suspicious magnate.

Sánchez de Valladolid tells us that Lope is concerned with preserving his own status, but he also attributes other and more dangerous motivations to de Haro. The chronicler suggests that the real reason Lope was perturbed by the king's meeting with the king of France is that Lope fears that the king will grow more powerful through this alliance: "É desde don Lope...sopo que el rey don Sancho que se iba ver con el rey de Francia, tomó ende muy grand pesar, porque resceló que el Rey seria más poderoso, é non faria él tanto commo facia en la tierra" (72). Thus, the chronicler acquaints us with Lope's lust for power and his desire to control the king by giving us a look into his interior thought processes. After the death of Sancho's mayordomo mayor, *CSIV* tells us that Lope asked the king for the post, as well as for that of alférez mayor and the title of conde, offering to take charge of the king's castles and armies and to give the king wealth and peace. When the king considers this proposal with his counsel, the chronicler tells us that the wise queen María recognizes Lope's ulterior motives, which threaten her legitimacy as queen:

É la Reina entendia que esta demanda que D. Lope facia al Rey era para se apoderar dél é de los reinos, porque despues que él fuese apoderado ficiese al Rey que casase con doña Guillelma su prima deste D. Lope...é los fijos que della oviese que heredasen, é non los fijos que avie ya de [la Reina]; é rescelando esto, dijo al Rey que esta demanda que D. Lope facia que era muy dañosa para él, é toviéronse con ella algunos de los privados. (74)

The chronicler ties Lope's intention of separating the queen from her husband to his unholy desire to control the king; thus the conde simultaneously embodies both a threat to María's status as well as a threat to the king's sovereignty. Once he gains control over the king, Lope intends to replace the king's rightful family with another that will presumably better serve his own interests. According to our chronicler, the queen and her children are an obstacle to the conde's becoming more powerful than the king.⁵⁷

From the beginning the queen knows Lope's true intentions. However, some of the king's other counselors don't see the truth and they advise Sancho to accept Lope's proposal in order to put an end to the wars and rebellions that the kingdom is suffering. The wise queen does not protest Sancho's decision and she never reproaches her king: "E la reina doña María, commo era mujer de grande entendimiento, é que veia commo el Rey andava en poder del Conde é de aquellos sus privados, magüer que sabia ella de todas estas cosas por qué el Cónde lo facia, é que era amenguameinto del Rey é daño de ella é de sus hijos...nunca al Rey quiso fablar en este engaño que le traian porque no gelo creia, tan emaginado estaba en el Conde é en todos los suyos" (75). The queen "knows" that the conde does not truly serve the king or his family, but she does not presume to tell her husband what he should do. Furthermore, as the chronicler of *CSIV* informs us, the king is so wholly in the control of the conde that María does not believe he would listen to her.

57. While it is possible that Lope envisioned marrying the king to Guillerma de Montcada, thereby establishing an alliance with the king of Aragón and Lope's uncle, the Duke of Bearne, there is no documental evidence of such a plot. It is true that Lope had a hand in Sancho's original betrothal to Guillerma de Montcada, but Sancho may have compensated for his renegeing on that arrangement by marrying the infanta Violante to Diego de Haro and Lope later married María's half-sister Juana, connecting himself to María's family.

María's submissiveness to her king and husband is tested when the newly-named conde begins to work against her. First Lope convinces the king to dismiss María's friend and confidant María Fernández Coronel from court.⁵⁸ Despite this injustice done against her, the queen does not react: "É commo quier que la Reina entendiese la manera en commo lo mandaba, pero que era su daño, quísolo cumplir" (75). The queen is wise to Lope's intentions, but she is also wise in her restraint. María submits to her husband's orders without question and sends her friend to her city of Toro. She plays the part of a good wife and gives her husband no reason to complain of her loyalty or her obedience. On the other hand, Sancho—who up until now has defended his wife—has instead forsaken her as he fails to protect her from the conde's intrigues.⁵⁹

Equally important as her submission to her husband during these trials is María's trust in God's Providence. Sánchez de Valladolid tells us that "non ovo á quien se tornar, salvo á Dios...é sufriólo así hasta que Dios diese alguna carrera commo el Rey entendiese todo este engaño, así commo lo fizo Dios despues, según lo contará la estoria adelante" (75). In the duplicitous environment that is the royal court, the queen trusts only in God, who she knows will reward her and reestablish order in the monarchy. María's faith is evidence of her piety, but it also reflects the confidence of the queen in the righteousness of her cause. She knows the respect she is owed by her husband and his vassals, as she also knows that the king should rule freely and serve his own prerogatives, unfettered by powerful magnates. Unlike Lope, she does not aspire to control her king, but rather to serve him. If the king is God's chosen representative on this earth, then any

58. María Fernández Coronel was María's *ama* and later *ama* to her daughter Infanta Isabel.

59. While Sancho's *Castigos* asserts that "non cae al rey consentir que ninguno diga mal de su muger" (148), *CSIV* reports that Sancho allows Lope and his servants to "buscar mal á la Reina con el Rey por quantas maneras pudieron por mandado del Conde" (75).

intrusion upon his power must be an offense to God. The queen's idea of monarchy is far superior to Lope's, and the chronicler makes it clear that it is she—and not the conde—who truly serves the king's interests. It should also be noted that her trust in God's justice on earth is very much in line with the moral teachings and political ideologies of *Castigos*, where God rewards good kings and punishes wickedness among monarchs.

In *CSIV* it is King Dionís of Portugal and other Castilian nobles who make Sancho see his error in granting Lope so much power. Dionís points out to Sancho that Lope may very well ally himself with the treacherous Infante Juan, to whom Lope had recently married one of his daughters, María Díaz de Haro, and try to dethrone Sancho as they had done with King Alfonso: “Fabló el rey de Portugal con el rey don Sancho, é fizole entender commo ficiera mal recabdo en apoderar al Conde tanto, é commo era el desapoderado del poderío de los sus reinos, é lo que tenía el Conde...ca estando el Conde tan apoderado commo estava, si alguna cosa dél acaesciese, que era dubda si heredaria su fijo el infante don Fernando; ca veía luego estar al infante don Juan, su hermano, que era yerno del Conde, que si dél algo acaesciese, que ternia ojo por los reinos” (76). In this way, Sancho is enlightened as to the threat that Lope poses to his sovereignty and his family and he finally comes to understand what the queen already knows: that the king should not be ruled by lesser men, but he should be the head of his kingdom, free to follow his own prerogatives.

Tensions between the king and the conde come to a head with the question of a truce either with France or Aragón. The king gathers his counselors to ask their advice, and the manner in which the chronicle presents their advice is telling of the chronicler's objectives. The advice of his council is divided into two factions, each with two leaders:

1) Infante Juan and the conde don Lope for Aragón and 2) the queen and Archbishop Gonzalo for France. Given his past experience with the bad advice of the conde and previous betrayal of his younger brother, this time the king heeds the advice of his prudent wife, because he: “entendió que era mas sano el [concejo] que daba la Reina que el que daba el Conde.”⁶⁰ María’s protagonism as an advisor in this situation reflects her growing importance in the governance of the realm and her connection to the archbishop, with whom she shares the goal of allying with France. When Lope’s arrogance and rebellious actions finally lead to the tragedy of Alfaro in 1288, the queen begins to define her role as a mitigator of her husband’s fearful justice by sparing the life of Infante Juan.

María had previously acted as an intercessor for her husband; however, until this point in the narration of events, the queen only acts at her husband’s request and under his direction. Given María’s submissiveness to Sancho, it may seem surprising that the queen would take such a drastic action as to throw herself bodily between the king’s sword (which represents the king’s justice, as *Castigos* tells us) and his brother.⁶¹ Nevertheless, the role of an intercessor fell within the appropriate sphere of action for a queen, and furthermore the importance of respecting and valuing one’s family was an important part of the king’s cultural politics. As is evident in the chronicles, one of the ideas that Sancho promoted in order to encourage the magnates to rise up against his

60. *CSIV*, 77; According to *CSIV*, the new king of Aragón had declared his support for the Infantes de la Cerda, while the new king of France was offering to come over to Sancho’s side; Carmona Ruiz, on the other hand, says that both kingdoms had offered to establish peace with Sancho. Carmona Ruiz, *María de Molina*, 84.

61. *Castigos*, ed. Bizzarri, 78, 121; It is interesting to note that while historians affirm that the queen intervened physically, *CSIV* does not confirm this circumstance and Loaysa doesn’t even mention the queen’s intervention in the tragedy of Alfaro. According to *CSIV*: “la Reina...punó cuanto pudo de guardar al infante don Juan que non tomase muerte” (79).; Carmona Ruíz says that “doña María se interpuso entre los hermanos, rogando a su marido que no matase a don Juan.” Carmona Ruiz, *María de Molina*, 88; Del Valle Curieses asserts that María “se interpuso entre ambos hermanos y consiguió llevar al infante don Juan hasta su alcoba, donde esperó a que el rey se apaciguase.” Del Valle Curieses, *María de Molina*, 67.

father was that Alfonso was responsible for “many unjust deaths,” including that of the king’s brother the Infante Fadrique.⁶² The pervasive concern for protecting members of the royal family is also reflected in Sánchez de Valladolid’s narration of the tragedy of Alfaro, since it tells us that the king’s men refused to defend themselves against Infante Juan “porque era hermano del Rey” (79). Therefore, by preventing Sancho from killing his own brother, the queen helps her husband to adhere to the promises of his reform and keeps him from committing the same mistake as his father. This episode demonstrates the queen’s dedication to a mediated justice for members of the royal family, which she would later extend to other powerful magnates as her influence with the king grew.

After the tragedy of Alfaro, *CSIV* shows María in an increasingly important role, perhaps because she has proven herself to be a wise counselor and a submissive wife who serves her king and husband faithfully. The promotions of members of María’s family network are a good indicator of her own increased standing with the king. After the conde’s death, María’s brother, Alfonso Téllez de Meneses, was named *alferez mayor*, and he helped the king to put down the new rebellion against him.⁶³ Near the end of Sancho’s reign, in 1293, María Fernández Coronel’s husband, Alfonso Pérez de Guzmán, was named *alcalde* and *teniente* of Tarifa.⁶⁴ María’s family connections were also useful to the king in brokering agreements with the powerful Lara clan. After Lope’s death in *CSIV* the queen’s power and influence grows steadily and she emerges as the king’s most trusted collaborator in the monarchy.

62. Sancho’s supporters justify their rebellion in part “por muchas muertes é desaguizados que [el rey] fizo, señaladamente en que mató al infante don Fadrique, su hermano.” *CAX*, 62.; A further indication of the importance to family in Sancho’s reform is the fact that Sancho removed the remains of his uncle Fadrique and Fadrique’s daughter to tombs more befitting the infante’s station.

63. Carmona Ruiz, *María de Molina*, 95; It should be noted that María’s half-sister Juana (Lope’s widow) and her son Diego de Haro were part of the rebellion. Despite the queen’s efforts, they were not reconciled to Sancho after the conde’s death.

64. *Ibid*, 118.

When Juan Núñez de Lara is initially reconciled with the king after the Treaty of Bayona (1290), he entrusts the care of his daughter Juana to the queen as a guarantee of his loyalty.⁶⁵ Perhaps because of Sancho's history and reputation as the *Rey Bravo* who is not afraid to punish and kill his powerful enemies, Lara—who the chronicler tells us is “[un]ome muy sospechoso”—hears a rumor that the king is planning to kill him and he flees the court (85). Sancho asks his wife to intercede “porque sabia el Rey que la Reina ayudaba mucho á don Juan Nuñez é á sus hijos,” and Lara agrees to meet with her, though he mistrusts the king (83). While it is possible that Juan Núñez trusted in María because of their mutual family relations or because he felt he had nothing to fear from a woman, it also seems likely María had gained somewhat of a reputation from her brave defense of Infante Juan and that Lara looked to her to protect him. In any case, the fact that Lara values the queen's word over the king's points to a trend among magnates that will continue throughout the queen's life: they understand María to be honest and to be trustworthy, even if the kings and nobles with whom she rules are not.⁶⁶ After María helps reconcile Lara to the king, Juan Núñez is again warned that the king is planning to kill him (this time by a Jew Nuño González Churruchano). However, this time Lara's vassals encourage him to speak to the queen to learn the truth of the matter (84). The queen convinces Lara that this is a lie and again reconciles him to the king. Of course, Juan Núñez will change his alliances a few more times before dying in the king's service

65. *CSIV*, 82. It was a fairly common practice to give *rehenes* (hostages) as a guarantee of fealty.

66. According to *CSIV*, there was sufficient reason to doubt the king's honesty, since the king is capable of lying to his enemies in order to defeat them. When the maestros of the orders of Calatrava, Santiago, Alcántara, Temple, and the prior of the Hospital de San Juan are sent by the king to deal with the Bejaranos, who were rebelling and declaring their support for Alfonso de la Cerda: “los seguraban de parte del Rey que non les farian mal ninguno, é ellos por este aseguramiento dieron el castillo; é dado el castillo, mandó el Rey que matasen á todos aquellos que eran del linaje de los Bejaranos, é mataron entre omes é mujeres quatro mill é más.” *CSIV*, 82.

at Tarifa, but the chronicler made his point by styling María as a trusted intercessor and the queen of peace and conciliation.

While Sancho was famous for using force in his exercise of justice and chastising his vassals harshly, in the chronicles María advises her husband to be generous and merciful in some cases. As we know, Sancho's reign (especially in the early years) saw a constant barrage of noble rebellions, and so the king could not afford to dispossess, exile, or put to death all of the powerful magnates who rose up against him at one time or another. Both of the chronicles cite the queen as encouraging Sancho to release Infante Juan from prison, though only *CSIV* explains her tactical reasoning: Juan's release was intended to stop Lara and Juan Alfonso de Albuquerque from rebelling (85). Through her role as an intercessor, María allows Sancho to retain his reputation as a king to be feared, all while practicing a politics of conciliation with his rebellious vassals.

Another way to secure necessary political allegiances was through marriage. Although *CSIV* does not mention María as having a large role in the marriage negotiations for her children while her husband lived, brokering marriages for the heir and the other infantes was within the purview of the queen's duties and powers. Carmona Ruiz affirms that the queen accompanied the king to meet with King Dionís and Queen Isabel of Portugal in 1291 to arrange Fernando's betrothal to their daughter Constanza,⁶⁷ and Sánchez de Valladolid informs us she was involved in planning the marriage of her niece Juana to Juan Núñez *el Mozo* (84). In the same year, Jaime II became king of Aragón and agreed to marry Sancho's eldest daughter, the infanta Isabel, a match which was intended to secure peace between the kingdoms and to obtain military support for Sancho's reconquest efforts. At the same time, promises of marriages for the infantes to

67. Carmona Ruiz, *María de Molina*, 112.

members of other royal families secured the legitimacy of Sancho and María's family. Though the monarchs had not yet received the papal dispensation for their marriage, these betrothals confirmed their legitimacy as kings and their children as infantes, since other royal families were willing to make marriages with them.

By the end of Sancho's reign, the queen had become a fairly important co-ruler of Castile-León. Besides her role as a counselor and an intercessor, María was given additional responsibilities when Sancho began to pursue his crusade in the south. While the chronicles do not specify that María was appointed regent in his absence, María's biographers agree that while Sancho was occupied with the conquest of Tarifa his wife remained in Seville, taking charge of supplying the king's troops and handling other matters of government.⁶⁸ After the conquest of Tarifa was accomplished Sancho continued to delegate important tasks to his wife and he put her in charge of carrying out the preparations for the war against the Muslim kingdoms.⁶⁹ When the king became ill at the end of his reign, the queen took on even more responsibility in his stead. Carmona Ruiz informs us that María "tuvo un especial protagonismo" in the *vistas* celebrated between the Castilian monarchs, Jaume II, and Carlos II de Anjou in July of 1293 in Logroño.⁷⁰ In 1294 we see what are the first existing letters exchanged between Queen María and King Jaume,⁷¹ and in the same year a letter regarding the collection of taxes, ordered by the queen on her husband's behalf.⁷² Sancho's gradual entrusting of power to his wife is important. It was a common practice for kings to delegate powers to their heirs

68. Carmona Ruiz, *María de Molina*, 117.

69. Carmona Ruiz informs us that in the absence of the king, María was charged with the preparations for the war against the Muslim kingdoms, for which she had the help of the king's advisors Juan Maté de Luna, Fernán Pérez Maimón, and Alfonso Pérez de Guzmán (*el Bueno*). Ibid, 118.

70. Ibid, 122.

71. Gaibrois de Ballesteros, *Historia del reinado*, 3:cclvii-iii, ccclx, ccclxxxvi.

72. Ibid, ccclxxix.

before they were succeeded by them—an act that served as a sort of transition of power. While María was not his heir, given his frequent bouts of illness Sancho must have considered the possibility that he might not live to see his son become an adult, and the queen was the partner that he trusted the most. This power sharing with his queen culminated with Sancho's entrusting María with the full powers of the regency.

CSIV dedicates a short chapter to Sancho's decision to name the queen as regent, which provokes a change in the structure of the text. In *CTR*, chapters are usually organized by the year, beginning in the month that the king's reign started. This deviation from the normal structure demonstrates the importance of proving María's right as regent to the chronicler. While Sancho's testament in which he names María regent does not survive, historians seem to agree that the chronicle describes the terms correctly: "É porque el infante don Fernando, su fijo heredero...era muy pequeño de edad, é temiendo que desque él finase avria muy grand discordia en la su tierra por la guarda del mozo, consciendo este rey don Sancho en commo la reina doña María su mujer era de grand entendimiento, dióle la guarda de todos los sus reinos, que lo toviese todo fasta que oviese edad complida, é desto fizo facer pleito é omenaje á todos los de la tierra" (89). In the chronicle Sancho makes his wife regent because he trusts her judgment and he is wary of the ambitions of the other powerful nobles, some of whom are currently in rebellion against him. He trusts María above all others, including his brother the infante Juan, who if not for his perfidy might have had the best claim to be regent and tutor. In the hopes of guaranteeing her position (women regents had been forcibly replaced by powerful nobles in the past) the chronicle tells us that Sancho makes all of his vassals swear fealty to the queen. Sánchez de Valladolid uses direct speech to show the king

exhorting a solemn vow from the most powerful of his vassals, Juan Núñez de Lara *el Mozo*. In the text, Sancho reminds the young Lara that he is indebted to the queen and exhorts the magnate to serve her, naming God as the witness to his oath: “ca mucho vos lo meresció á vos é á vuestro linaje...é si lo así ficiéredes, Dios vos lo galardone, é sinon, él vos lo demande en el lugar do más menester lo oviéredes,” (89). Juan Núñez’s solemn oath as recorded in the chronicle proves the queen’s right to be regent, and serves to reinforce the young Lara’s treachery, as he later breaks this vow made before God.

In comparison with Sánchez de Valladolid’s chronicle, María is mentioned less frequently in Loaysa’s account of Sancho’s reign. The episodes of intrigue where María is the victim of untrustworthy *privados* are notably absent; Loaysa is either silent or ignorant of the abbot of Valladolid’s betrayal of the queen and he even has Gómez García returning from France years after his death according to Sánchez de Valladolid.⁷³ Nor does Loaysa give any indication that Lope wants to replace the queen and her children; rather, he simply states that Lope and Infante Juan “maquinaban algo siniestro contra [el rey]” (133). Instead, Loaysa appears to be more interested in the role of his benefactor, the archbishop of Toledo don Gonzalo.⁷⁴ He says nothing of the advice María and Gonzalo Pérez give the king on the question of an alliance with France or Aragón. Loaysa instead emphasizes the archbishop’s role in the renewed negotiations with France, which end in Sancho and Phillippe IV joining in “saltos y danzas de alegría, como parientes que eran.”⁷⁵ Neither does he report that the queen was named tutor and regent

73. Loaysa, *Crónicas*, 135; *CSIV*, 74.

74. The archbishop is named four times in Loaysa’s chronicle of Sancho’s reign (131, 139, 145, 153), while the queen is only mentioned twice (131, 155).

75. Loaysa, *Crónicas*, 147. It is interesting that while Archbishop Gonzalo is mentioned in *CSIV* as being a delegate sent to France, in Sánchez de Valladolid’s chronicle it is instead the bishop of Astorga, don Martín, who informs the king of the happy agreement.

by her husband before his death. María's lesser role in this chronicle suggests that Loaysa and his benefactor do not consider the queen as significant a political partner in Sancho's monarchy as Sánchez de Valladolid and Alfonso XI. However, Queen María's role increases dramatically in both chronicles during the reign of Fernando IV.

Part Two: The Minority of Fernando IV (1295-1300)

Like other medieval queens, María de Molina was most active in the government after she became a widow. Despite her illustrious ancestry (Loaysa frequently refers to her as "ilustrísima" and Sánchez de Valladolid as "muy noble"), her right to rule was based on her status as the king's wife and later on her status as the mother of the heirs that she produced. While both of these roles were important to the construction of her queenship, it was in her role as a mother that María wielded the greater power. Though she had been born years after the last royal minority in Castile had ended, she must have known a good deal about her grandmother's rule as regent and should have had some notion of the power that such a position commanded. Berenguela provided her with a precedent and a formula to be followed for the successful exercise as her power as queen mother. María's grandmother was remembered as an exceptional queen who was devoted to her son and who led him along the path of righteousness.⁷⁶ In the royal chronicles María would come to be recognized as being the same kind of queen mother—though the fame of her son would never compare to that of his grandfather and namesake.

In these specific circumstances, María's gender worked both for and against her. What Enrique tells her in *CFIV*—that the boldness of the nobles in attacking the king's lands can be attributed to her gender—is partly true. After all, the head of the Lara clan,

76. For a discussion of Berenguela's role in constructing a saintly image for her son, see Shadis, *Berenguela*, 97-147; and Linehan, *Spain (1157-1300)*, chap. 3.

Álvaro Núñez, had successfully wrested the title of regent from Queen Berenguela during her brother's minority.⁷⁷ María's gender should have probably excluded her from the world of warfare, which was traditionally the realm of men. However, her husband had already involved her to some degree, giving his wife a role in planning his reconquest efforts and putting her in charge of provisioning his armies. On the other hand, María's gender also worked to her advantage in dealing with a kingdom entrenched in civil war. As a woman, she could be more forgiving than a king and readmit to court those who had once betrayed her to her, while still retaining her respectability as a monarch. A king had to inspire fear, but a queen could be merciful. María's reputation as an honest and merciful queen must have worked to her advantage in reconciling rebellious nobles and restoring them to the king's obedience. Furthermore, a female regent may well have been viewed as less likely to usurp the minor king's place. While one of the young king's uncles (such as Infante Enrique, for example) might decide to replace his charge as king, this would be much less likely with a female regent—and altogether improbable when the regent in question was the king's mother. Though her gender was in many ways a hurdle to be overcome in order for her to successfully wield power, we shall see that María found many ways to use it to her advantage and to circumvent the obstacles to her rule posed by her gender.

María faced a difficult challenge in defending her son's right to the throne. She still did not have a papal dispensation for her marriage to Sancho, which gave other members of the royal family—particularly Infante Juan and Alfonso de la Cerda—reason to hope that they could successfully challenge the young king's claim. The queen also

77. However, even minorities headed by male tutors were often fraught with armed opposition. For a discussion on how Berenguela's gender may have figured in her loss of power to Álvaro Núñez, see Shadis, *Berenguela*, 86-96.

faced opposition from other powerful magnates—such as the Lara clan—and the neighboring kingdoms of Portugal and Aragón, who were allied with the pretenders.⁷⁸ While her cousin Infante Enrique (who both of the chronicles remind us, was recently freed from prison)⁷⁹ shared power with her as a coregent, the queen quickly learned that she could trust no one better than herself to protect her son's interests. In the royal chronicles, María and her son Fernando—"el rey niño," as Loaysa styles him—are taken advantage of by powerful men who display a lack of honor in their treatment of the same queen whom they have sworn to protect. These powerful men also cause chaos in the kingdom, raiding the king's lands and extracting unlawful taxes from the *pecheros*. The war made upon Fernando's lands by false and foreign kings disrupts life and commerce in the kingdom, exacerbating the economic problems and the suffering of the people.

According to the ideals of medieval chivalry, knights are supposed to protect the weak and kings exist to uphold justice. During Fernando's minority in the chronicles, the weak are abused by the powerful and there is no justice. In this time of great upheaval the queen is able to step forward into the void created by the absence of a strong, adult king. Through the narration of the events of Fernando's minority it becomes clear that María is the sole defender of the good of her son *and* his kingdom, a phrase often repeated throughout the chronicles. She is honest, loyal, and disinterested in her own gain, as opposed to the other powerful nobles and infantes, who are consistently characterized as duplicitous, avaricious, and almost entirely without scruples. While as Sancho's consort Queen María mitigated the king's justice, in the absence of any worthy male defenders the queen now begins to exercise his justice in the defense of the poor and the lower

78. For a discussion on the possible motives for these kingdoms' interference in the wars of Fernando's minority, see Carmona Ruiz, *María de Molina*, 15-26.

79. Loaysa, *Crónicas*, 90; *CFIV*, 161.

classes. The cause of the queen is just: the interests of the king (“bien del rey”) and the good of the kingdom and its people (“pro de la tierra”). She also serves the Lord and he rewards her faith with His favor. In the narration of these events in the chronicles it is possible to discern how the queen and her supporters constructed a political persona for her, and the characteristics of that persona that were key to bringing consensus as to her legitimacy as regent.

It seems likely that María was forced to accept the participation of her cousin Enrique in the regency. Loaysa informs us that the infante was elected tutor in the Cortes of Valladolid in 1295, without mentioning any details on how this came to be.⁸⁰ On the other hand, Sánchez de Valladolid reports that the infante schemed, lied, and threatened the queen in hopes of securing the regency for himself. At Fernando’s proclamation in Toledo, *CFIV* describes a ceremony that puts María and Enrique on unequal footing. While the queen takes the same oaths as the king, Infante Enrique kisses the king’s hand in a sign of vassalage and swears fealty to him: “besóle el mano [al rey] é tomólo por rey é por señor de todos los reinos de Castilla é de León” (93). After the king’s proclamation Sánchez de Valladolid tells how Enrique traveled the realm, trying to convince the concejos to support him as regent instead of the queen.⁸¹ When María hears of this, she calls a cortes for Valladolid in order to have all of the realms proclaim her son king “á una voz en concordia” (94). Enrique reportedly tries to prevent this cortes by spreading rumors that the queen is calling the estates together because “les queria echar muchos

80. Loaysa, *Crónicas*, 163; Carmona Ruiz posits that Enrique may have asked Sancho for the post as tutor before his nephew’s death, though it is not clear whether or not the king agreed to this. She also discusses an alternative narrative in the *Cronica Geral de Espanha de 1344* where Sancho entrusts the regency to his uncle and not his wife. Carmona Ruiz, *María de Molina*, 128, 290-1.

81. According to *CFIV*, Enrique makes the same promises as Sancho had during Alfonso’s reign, promising to return the state of the realm “á la manera que fuera en tiempo del rey don Ferrando, su padre” (94).

pechos,” including a tax for each newborn child (94). The people of Valladolid refuse to admit the queen and her son within the city walls, while from inside Enrique threatens that if she does not give up the regency willingly, “tomaria él otra carrera” (94). The misgivings of the queen’s counselors paint Enrique as selfish and self-serving: “le conocien que era gran bolliciador, é porque eran ciertos que más lo facia por lo suyo que non por lo del Rey nin de la tierra” (94). Nevertheless, they fear to openly oppose him and only counsel their queen to do “lo que [ella] entendia que era mejor” (94). María makes a concession in giving her cousin the “guarda de los reinos,” but she refuses point-blank to give up the guardianship of her child: “que la guarda del cuerpo del Rey e la crianza que la non daría á ninguna persona del mundo, que ella lo quería criar como á fijo suyo” (95). Sánchez de Valladolid has some of the city representatives balk at this arrangement and demand that the queen be the sole regent, as her husband decreed, but María convinces them that accepting these terms is best for the kingdom and the king. While Infante Enrique seizes power for his own selfish reasons, the queen (like her father Infante Alfonso) relinquishes it in order to prevent the “gran daño del Rey é de toda la tierra” that could result from Enrique’s defection (95).

During Fernando’s minority the documents of the royal chancery were written in the minor king’s voice. However, the king does not rule alone but rather acts with the *concejo* (advice), *acuerdo* (agreement), and *otorgamiento* (permission) of his mother and uncle. In Fernando’s letters and his privileges, María is always named as “my mother, the queen,” and Enrique as “my uncle and tutor, the prince.” The same phrase is found at the beginning of each of the *ordenamientos* of the cortes that took place during the minority and at times the regents’ names are followed by the names of other important nobles with

whom Fernando acts “in agreement.”⁸² Although in this formulaic phrase María always comes before Enrique, the documents suggest that she might have held less authority than her cousin. Infante Enrique is named as swearing to uphold the privileges and letters granted by the king, while the queen is not mentioned in this capacity. Additionally, the wording of the *ordenamientos* suggests that the queen is present in the cortes and takes part in the assembly (a fact confirmed by the chroniclers), but unlike her male counterparts the queen is never listed among the witness to these documents. The *ordenamientos* of the minority end with the scribe saying that the document was written by order of the king and his tutor together, not the queen.⁸³

If the royal documents suggest Enrique had a larger share of power in the regency, the chroniclers affirm that María is the preferred regent. Loaysa refers to her as: “la ilustre reina doña María madre del rey Fernando y señora de virtud digna de alabanza y, más aún, de admiración como mejor se verá en lo que después diremos” (163). His critique of Enrique is equally scathing as his praise of María is glowing: “nombraron a don Enrique tutor del rey Fernando y justicia y guardián mayor de sus reinos, aunque luego poca o ninguna justicia ejerciera, puesto que se dedicaba más bien a la caza y frecuentes comilonas que a otra ocupación y andaba a capricho de un lugar a otro” (163). Enrique is characterized by his excess, whereas María is all restraint. In the face of Enrique’s irresponsibility, Loaysa praises the queen for her “gran tacto y prudencia” and asserts that, “la reina, como señora muy prudente y circunspecta, gobernaba lo mejor que podía a su hijo el rey” (185, 165). The fact that María was a woman made Enrique a more

82. The *ordenamientos* from these cortes (1295, 1297, 1298, 1299, 1301) are reproduced in Real Academia de la Historia, *Cortes de los antiguos reinos de León y Castilla* (Madrid: Imprenta y Estereotipia de M. Rivadeneyra, 1861) vol. 1, 130-61.

83. The two *ordenamientos* from the first cortes in Valladolid in 1295 say that they were written at the order of the king only. *Ibid*, 133, 135.

suitable candidate as protector of the realm, but the fact that he does not take this responsibility seriously allows María to take a larger role in the war effort, as we shall see later on.

In the chronicles Enrique causes more trouble than he is worth. At times the infante helps the queen, but often he hinders her goals and conspires against her. Enrique's most treasured interest is always his own—and the wise queen understands his motivations. Therefore María often resorts to buying his support for her prerogatives. Sánchez de Valladolid paints Enrique as another Lope de Haro who wants to control the king and who doesn't care about the cost to the realm: “cuanto ménos el Rey oviese, é quanto más fuese en guerra é en queja, que tanto más era él seguro de la guarda de los reinos que tenía” (108). At times, Enrique takes an exorbitant share of the *servicios* granted by the cortes for himself, which further demonstrates his greed. *CFIV* details all of his treachery and the string of alliances that Enrique makes and breaks against the minor king he is supposed to be protecting, fomenting disorder instead of remedying it.⁸⁴ Once the queen realizes she cannot trust Enrique, she begins to keep an eye on him—often accompanying him herself or sending trusted knights with him to impede his wrongdoing and treachery. Enrique accepts María's terms in allowing her to have the care of her son, but his suggestion that María should remarry is an obvious attempt to get her out of the way. One of the more persistent topics on which Enrique and María differ is the territory of Tarifa. On multiple occasions Enrique schemes to sell or trade the territory to Granada, arguing to María that it will solve whatever problems they are facing at the time. Sánchez de Valladolid says Enrique hoped to benefit personally from the sale

84. According to *CFIV*, Enrique conspires with Juan at this early stage, advising him in his rebellion against María and her son. (101).

of Tarifa “ca cuidaba levar ende muy grand algo” (103). It is only the queen’s tenacity that prevents this sale: Enrique “nunca lo pudo guisar en ninguna manera, porque la noble reina doña María fue siempre muy embargada deste fecho” (111). Enrique is willing to sell the gains of the reconquest, but for the queen this is an invaluable territory that her husband bought with his life. In the Cortes of Cuellar in 1297, María reminds the representatives gathered there that many kings had tried to take Tarifa before Sancho and asserts that in her husband’s conquest “tan grand servicio ficiera [él] á Dios é tan grand pro de toda la tierra” (107). She also schools the procurators, explaining that Tarifa was the key to the Moorish conquest over the Visigoths and warning that by giving it up they may bring about another similar conquest.

The opposition to Fernando’s rule was quickly consolidated in a powerful alliance. The infante don Juan and don Alfonso de la Cerda claimed the kingdoms of León and Castile, respectively. With the support of powerful Castilian and Leonese nobles, as well as the kings of Portugal and Aragón, they raided the king’s lands and laid siege to his castles. Loaysa characterizes their actions as “cruel” and “inhumano” and he blames them for the disruptions of war:

Entonces—¡oh dolor!—ningún mercader ni hombre honrado transitaba por Castilla, ni el pastor guardaba sus ganados, ni el buey araba la tierra, sino que las llanuras estaban desiertas, los caminos solitarios, cubiertos de hierba y frecuentados por liebres más bien que por ganado, y los hombres no gustaban de otra cosa que de muertes, robos y despojos. Y muchos que antes solían ganarse el sustento como artesanos o agricultores, convertidos ahora en guerreros, despojaban a cuantos podían, robaban, pasaban a

fuego los poblados y ya no se respetaba lugar sagrado, sexo ni edad u orden. (177)

The “barones que se hacían llamar reyes” turn the life of the realm upside down and cause a great disorder that must be rectified (179). But Loaysa asserts that from the beginning God was firmly on the side of the “rey niño,” and while the false kings plotted to divide up the kingdom between them, “el Señor en el cielo dividía de otro modo, como se verá más adelante” (175).

After Sancho’s death the queen regent and her son suffer many defections, as many of their noble vassals “despidiéronse” from Fernando. Jaume II also reneges on his agreement to marry Infanta Isabel, returning his betrothed to Castile.⁸⁵ Both chroniclers depict María as a queen abandoned and betrayed by her husband’s former allies and Sánchez de Valladolid adds that some of those nobles who abandon her are men whom she saved from her husband’s wrath.⁸⁶ María honors those vassals who remain loyal to her and her son, and she uses gifts to attract other noble alliances, though many of the nobles prove to be dishonest. In *CFIV* magnates often promise to aid her in exchange for payment (*soldadas* and other gifts), only to desert her or refuse to fight when she calls on them to do so. She is treated in the same manner by King Dionís, who pledges his support, but reneges on more than one occasion. Despite the lack of honor shown by those who lie to the queen and desert her, María needs their support to secure the throne for her son, and therefore she is almost always willing to welcome them back into the fold when the opportunity arises.

The Queen’s Coalition

85. *CFIV*, 100; Loaysa, *Crónicas*, 179.

86. *CFIV*, 94. Among these nobles are Juan Alfonso de Albuquerque and Martín Gil, as well as Infante Juan.

In the chronicles, the queen immediately impresses all of her subjects with her “buen entendimiento.” María’s first address to the Cortes of Valladolid 1295 is recorded at length in *CFIV*:

Rogóles mucho homilldosamente que guardasen señorío del rey don Fernando su fijo, é que en esto farian lo que devian, é él é ella siempre gelo conoscerian; é dióles este ejemplo de lo que ficieran por el rey don Fernando su bisabuelo, é que así commo aquel fuera buen rey á quien Dios ficiera mucho bien, que bien fiaba ella de la merced de Dios que le semejarie éste, é que cual lo criasen, tal sería; é cuando por si non lo ficiesen, que lo devian facer lo uno por facer derecho, é lo otro por dar enjemplo bueno de sí a todos los del mundo, é por dejar buena fama á todos los que dellos viniesen, é lo otro por facer y su pro, ca todas las cosas en que les él pudiese facer merced, que gela faria. (95)

This argument, though it is not likely a faithful copy of the verbage of the queen’s speech, affords us a glimpse at the political discourse that the queen and her supporters might have introduced into the public political spaces of the court and the cortes. The queen promises to reward her son’s vassals and she asks those assembled to do what is “right,” by supporting the rightful heir. By recalling to mind the golden age of Fernando *el Santo*, the queen argues for her son’s legitimacy. While Fernando III was not strictly speaking a minor when he inherited the crown from his mother, he did face the same stigma of illegitimacy. The queen promises to raise her son to be like his great-grandfather, who, she reminds the people, became a great king whose reign had long been the object of nostalgia in Castile-León, a king who honored and enriched his vassals.

In the first year of the regency, the queen does more than make promises. According to Sánchez de Valladolid, the queen suggests relieving the *pecheros* through the abolishment of the *sisas*, a widely unpopular sales tax imposed by her late husband.⁸⁷ In the first cortes of the minority (1295 Valladolid), the queen also agrees to limit the tax known as *yantar*, where the cities were obliged to supply the royal court with lodging and what provisions they required.⁸⁸ The fact that she limits extraordinary taxes—instead of increasing them as Enrique had warned she would—may be in part attributable to the relatively weak position of the monarch at the time. However, it seems likely that these actions were also calculated to attract the adhesion of the tax-paying population, which included the rising urban oligarchy that controlled the urban *concejos*.⁸⁹ According to Sánchez de Valladolid, when the city representatives ask that the prelates—who serve on the queen’s provisional council—be sent away from court, María acquiesces and even convinces the prelates that this is for the good of the realm.⁹⁰ On the other hand Loaysa—a cleric of Toledo—reports that these demands were offensive to the prelates and noblemen, and Archbishop Gonzalo even published a document in protest.⁹¹ According to *CFIV*, the queen wins respect and even admiration in this cortes by granting audiences to all the city representatives. She demonstrates a great dedication in her attention to the procurators, listening to them for days on end “en guisa que los omes buenos se facian

87. *CFIV*, 93.

88. Teofilo Ruiz tells us that the queen “in dire need of municipal support, promised to pay for those provisions appropriated for the use of the royal court rather than to exercise her right of *yantar*. In 1298 the regent queen agreed to defer her claims of *yantar* until custom had been rightly established.” Ruiz, *Crisis and Continuity*, 304.

89. Carmona Ruiz asserts that: “Estas medidas tenían un carácter populista, con el fin de conseguir del pueblo llano la aceptación de la nueva situación política.” Carmona Ruiz, *María de Molina*, 134.

90. *CFIV* tells us that she spoke to the prelates “con su buen entendimiento,” asking them to do this for the good of the kingdom and that they conceded “veyendo que [ella] lo facia con bien.” *CFIV*, 96

91. Loaysa, *Crónicas*, 167; Benavides, *Memorias*, 2:40-1.

muy maravillados de commo lo podia sofrir, é ivan todos muy pagados della é del su muy buen entendimiento” (96). While Loaysa tells us that in this cortes Enrique is entrusted with the “justicia mayor” of the kingdom (163), in Sánchez de Valladolid’s chronicle it is clearly María who exercises the king’s justice, hearing and settling disputes in this first cortes.

The queen also protects the *omes buenos* (non-noble knights) from the greedy and lawless *ricos omes* and *infantes* (magnates and princes). This is demonstrated in an episode of *CFIV* where Enrique tries to deceive the queen, informing her that he plans to go to Zamora “á facer justicia” when he is really plotting to murder some unsuspecting *omes buenos* and seize their properties (114). The queen is not so easily duped, and she expresses her intention to accompany him, “é esto más lo decia ella por guardar á los omes buenos de muerte é peligro, así como lo fizo, que non por cobdicia” (114). Once in Zamora, she refuses to let Enrique seize the men, insisting that they are entitled to a fair hearing (“fuero é derecho”) (114). When Enrique refuses to give them a hearing, the queen takes the knights under her protection, sending them to her cities of Toro and Valladolid and frustrating the infante’s designs. Despite her efforts, Enrique takes some other men and puts them to death without a trial (“sin oirle”) (114). In this episode, the chronicler juxtaposes Enrique’s desire to use the king’s justice for his own benefit with María’s will to protect that justice and the people. She emerges as the champion of urban knights and the king’s justice for the people.

During Fernando’s minority, María developed a strong relationship with the non-noble knights in the urban concejos and she made great use of the cortes. During her tenure as coregent the queen called a cortes almost every year and it was from this

institution that she derived much of her power. The cortes was a gathering of the three estates (prelates, nobles, and procurators from the city concejos) that allowed the king to obtain the formal agreement of the whole realm. O'Callaghan says that: "when the king stood before the cortes, he believed that 'all the men of the realm'...were assembled before him and that their consent was tantamount to the consent of the entire kingdom."⁹²

The cortes were also an important source of income for paying the stipends that the nobility demanded in exchange for their military service, for the war against the infidel, and for the maintenance of the king's court. While cortes were held more frequently under Alfonso X and Sancho IV than they had been in the past, these kings only called the estates together when they were driven by need and often tried to establish tax payment plans so they could avoid calling it altogether.⁹³ While her husband had only summoned the cortes five times during the eleven years of his reign, the queen convened this assembly five times in only six years. As the king's power was shared between the two coregents during the minority, María was able to call on the cortes to cast a sort of tie-breaking vote, which allowed her to derail some of Infante Enrique's sinister plots. In order to assure the success of her plans, she often met with members of the three estates separately before meeting them in the general assembly of cortes together.⁹⁴ Sánchez de Valladolid tells us that in the end the queen always convinced everyone that what she did was for the good of the king and that of his realm, so that they are always "muy pagados de ella." In her use of the cortes, the queen offered the estates a greater say in the government of the realm in return for their support for her prerogatives.

92. Joseph O'Callaghan, *The Cortes of Castile-León: 1188-1350* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), 42.

93. *Ibid*, 21-30, 41-4.

94. *CFIV*, 107, 112.

At the start of Fernando's minority a council of twelve non-noble knights was elected to accompany the king and advise the regents.⁹⁵ In 1295 the concejos of Castile, León, and Galicia formed military guilds in support of the young king and soon after other concejos followed suit. These confraternities provided the queen and her son with military support, but in exchange the non-noble knights asserted their own rights. Their founding charters allow us to hear their concerns as they chose to articulate them.⁹⁶ These documents affirm the agreements made about taxation in the first cortes and are largely concerned with upholding justice and the ancient rights and customs of the concejos. Several of these charters begin by stating that they had received injustices from past kings, Alfonso and Sancho in particular.⁹⁷ In these documents the *omes buenos* of the concejos pledge their mutual support for one another against any future injustices done to them by kings, royal administrators, *ricos omes*, or anyone else who might wrong them. They pledge to serve King Fernando, and they share ideas and rhetoric with the *ordenamientos* from the cortes and the royal chronicles, as their charters mention the "servicio de Dios e del Rey," the "guarda de so señorío," and the "pro de toda la tierra" among their goals.⁹⁸ In the charters for the concejos of Cuenca, León, and Galicia, the *hermandades* also include the service of the queen mother.⁹⁹

Besides the fact that María was offering the non-noble knights an opportunity to increase their participation in government through the cortes, their support for the queen may have also been motivated by their desire to have peace, as only a strong king

95. Del Valle Curieses, *María de Molina*, 119.

96. The founding charters for the hermandades of various concejos are found in Benavides, *Memorias*, 2:3-12, 46-51, 75-7, 81-5.

97. *Ibid*, 3, 7-8.

98. *Ibid*, 7. All of the other charters use similar verbage.

99. *Ibid*, 8, 75-6.

accepted by all could bring peace and restore order to the kingdom. While the succession of the king was being contested, the people suffered from a war that the chroniclers blame on the pretenders and foreign powers. Not only did they raid the king's lands and sack his cities, but they also tried to extort unlawful taxes from the *pecheros* when they saw their own incomes diminish.¹⁰⁰ Through the cortes, the concejos sought to address the abuses of the nobles. In *CFIV* as her son neared the age of his majority, the queen heralds this event as the end of the people's troubles. Addressing the concejos separately, she convinces them that "lo más de la cuita que avian á pasar con él, que pasada la avian; que era de edad ya de trece años, é que tanto que llegase á aver quince años, que más fecho seria él de quince años que otro de veinte años, é que la su condición mejoraria cada dia de allí adelante é empeoraría la de sus enemigos" (112). On the other hand, the chroniclers depict the infantes and high nobility as wanting the strife to continue, since they benefit from the disorder in the kingdom. According to Sánchez de Valladolid, the news of Lara's capture and surrender—which signals a turning point in the war of the minority—makes the nobles who support Fernando deeply unhappy (116). While they were at war with the pretenders (with whom they sometimes conspired) the nobles were paid stipends and their continued loyalties were worth substantial gifts from the young king and his queen mother.

The Queen at War: Defending Fernando's Claim

Defending her son's claim was an expensive effort. Although the cortes granted María money in the form of *servicios*, Sánchez de Valladolid reports that the infantes and high nobility claimed most of this revenue for themselves: "[la reina] non aviendo ninguna renta de la tierra, ca todo lo tenía el infante don Enrique é don Diego é los otros

100. Carmona Ruiz, *María de Molina*,

ricos omes é caballeros que servian al Rey” (104). *CFIV* details the many expenses that the queen could not pay, and blames the nobles for the impoverished state of the crown: “é [la Reina] avia de dar cada dia á don Diego é á los otros ricos omes que estavan con él en Valladolid dos mill maravedis para que se mantoviesen é que se non partiesen del Rey” (104). The nobles take advantage of her situation, and the queen, “estando ella muy pobre” is forced to find new sources of revenue. The crown generates some money by minting new coins,¹⁰¹ but this is still not enough and so the queen solicits loans from noble clans such as the Lara family and the merchants in Burgos in order to pay the crown’s expenses.¹⁰²

Although she had scant resources and little command over the armies of the nobles, María had the guardianship of the king and the other infantes, which she used strategically in the defense of the realm. *CFIV* relates how during the war María often distributes her children and their retinues among loyal towns in order to encourage the people to fight for Fernando against the usurpers: “esto fizo ella porque los omes avrian mayor vergüenza é guardarian mejor las villas é las otras tierras enderredor” (103). She usually keeps Fernando with her, except on the few occasions where she leaves him with trusted vassals (usually in her city of Valladolid) to enter dangerous situations. The chronicler also relates how she uses the king’s person to enable her to lead his armies. According to Sánchez de Valladolid, after the reconciliation of Juan Núñez de Lara María asks Enrique and the *ricos omes* to go to the defense of Lorca. They make their excuses, but the queen refuses to allow them to disobey her. María shames the nobles into doing as

101. Since Fernando had collected the *moneda fuera* (a tax paid every seven years in exchange for the monarch’s promise not to change the currency) in 1295, the queen gets permission to mint new coins from the concejos, who are happy to oblige her: “Ellos veyendo commo lo facia con bien é con razon guisada, plógoles ende, é otorgáronlo.” *CFIV*, 104.

102. Carmona Ruiz, 142; *CFIV*, 108.

she bids by declaring that she and the king will go with or without them: “que ella queria ir con el Rey su fijo, é que fuesen con él los que quisiesen ir” (118). In the end they all follow her to protect their king. María also uses her children’s marriages to support her son’s claim to power and to forge alliances. While after Sancho’s death the king of Portugal was quick to lend his support to Infante Juan, the queen was able to use Fernando’s betrothal to Constanza and the promise of another marriage between Dionís’s heir and Infanta Beatriz of Castile in order to bring the king of Portugal back into Fernando’s camp. As a sign of good faith and in order that they should be brought up in the kingdoms where they would someday be queens, Queen María and Queen Isabel gave their daughters into each other’s custody in 1297.¹⁰³

In the chronicles the queen is depicted as a great orator and a courageous defender of her son’s rights as king. In *CFIV* the queen bravely defends her son’s claim and delivers speeches exhorting the people to fulfill their duties to their rightful king. In the first years of the minority, the monarchs and their court are denied entrance to cities on several occasions. When Segovia closes its gates to the king’s court in 1296, the queen valiantly enters the city alone, refusing to heed the warnings of her counselors, who tell her that she “entraria á gran peligro.”¹⁰⁴ Once inside, the queen chastises the people for forgetting their oaths and calls on them to set an example for the rest of the realm. When her speech is finished, the people are in agreement with her: “cuando vieron que la Reina tan bien fablaba con ellos, entendieron que lo erraban muy mal, é dijeron que querían acoger al Rey, así commo lo ella mandaba” (101). When her enemies attack the queen’s city of Valladolid, María consents to send her son to safety, but insists on remaining there

103. Del Valle Curieses, *María de Molina*, 121; *CFIV* 109.

104. Sánchez de Valladolid estimates that Segovia had close to two thousand armed men guarding the door. *Ibid*, 100.

herself: “la noble reina doña María respondió que...fincarie allí en Valladolid á lo que Dios quisiese, é que queria ella fincar en peligro si lo y oviese” (104). As we see from this citation, the queen’s bravery (which contradicts her feminine gender) is a product of her faith and her righteousness. Loaysa expresses the same sentiment even more clearly: “pero ella como señora firme y prudente, confiando y esperando mucho y sobre todo de la misericordia de Dios, no quiso en modo alguno moverse de aquel lugar” (181). The queen does not fear to be judged by the sword because her cause is just and she knows that God will protect her.

Both of the chroniclers report that the powerful magnates and infantes who served the king frustrated María’s efforts to defend his kingdom. In the chronicles the queen works diligently to supply her son’s armies and to make sure they are paid. The king and his mother accompany the troops and María participates in deciding when and how to deploy their armies.¹⁰⁵ She urges the nobles to attack her enemies, but Sánchez de Valladolid tells us that while the queen “lo avia...mucho á corazon,” the nobles do not share her enthusiasm.¹⁰⁶ *CFIV* tells us that during the long and unsuccessful siege of Paredes (1296) the queen “veía que podían acabar aquel fecho é non querían” (107). Loaysa—who claims to have witnessed the siege firsthand—reports that Enrique, the Haros and the other nobles: “poco o nada hicieron de provecho; porque, según se decía, los nobles y soldados del exterior se relacionaban con los enemigos interiores, no queriendo inferirles de buen grado los inconvenientes de la guerra” (187). According to Loaysa’s account, the nobles fraternize with the enemy instead of attacking them: “nunca

105. For example, in *CFIV* the queen sends men to take the *judería* of Nájara and charges Alfonso Pérez de Guzmán and Juan Fernández to raid the territories held by Infante Juan in León. Ibid, 108, 109.

106. Ibid, 104; “Mas los de la hueste, magüer que lo probaban, non lo avien mucho á corazón, e así lo mostraban en la obra.” Ibid, 105.

intentaron asaltar o invadir la ciudad sitiada a no ser con una sola máquina...no hubo ni un solo herido con flecha o espada ni mucho menos prisionero, de forma que más bien que ejército o asedio podía ser llamado con toda verosimilitud una feria o un mercado” (189). While sieges might fail for any number of reasons, the chroniclers consistently blame these failures on the disinterest and conflicted interests of the high nobility. In *CFIV*, Enrique and the other magnates often find excuses to avoid fighting and to lift or discourage sieges when it suits their needs.

María finds ways to overcome this obstacle as well. As she becomes increasingly aware of what is passing on the battlefield, she begins to take a larger hand in the war effort. *CFIV* informs us of the queen’s role in the siege of Ampudia in 1297, where the king’s forces trapped Juan Núñez de Lara: “la Reina enviaba de cada día á saber nuevas de lo que facian; é cuando vió que estaban y de balde, non faciendo sinon comer é estar quedos, salió una grand mañana en sus andas é fuese para allá” (109). The queen appears to take command of the troops, as she promises them that they will never leave until they have either taken Juan Núñez prisoner or killed him: “que nunca dende partiesen fasta que fuese don Juan Nuñez preso ó muerto” (109). She is fierce and her presence at the siege is enough to strike fear in Lara’s heart: “que mayor miedo avie della que de cuantos y estaban” (109). Sánchez de Valladolid emphasizes the queen’s capabilities as a military leader by reporting how her enemies eventually recognize her leadership: “vieron que la noble reina doña María traia la hacienda del Rey su fijo tan bien é tan cuerdamente é con tan gran recabdo, é que tan esforzadamente se paraba contra ellos” (110). Her role as a queen consort at war with King Sancho was the more traditional role as a helpmate who supplies the king’s armies, but with a minor son and an army full of slippery captains, she

is able to take on a leadership role and participate more directly in warfare. The queen's determination, bravery, and tactics are lauded by her chroniclers and by the end of the war the queen is widely respected for these kingly qualities.

Historians have generally observed that María's political strategy was to demonstrate to the nobility that they had more to gain by supporting the king than by opposing him. In contrast to her enemies, who do not honor their promises to pay *soldadas*, Loaysa reports that the queen "daba cuanto podía a cada uno en su grado y prometía cosas mayores a todos los que volvían, poco a poco se fueron reintegrando a la fidelidad y gracia del rey niño" (185). According to the chronicles, she buys the loyalties of the rebellious nobles, often offering them spoils that she expects to seize from other deserters, as she did with Lara's properties. Sometimes the nobles demand territories in exchange for their support, a trend that the queen is forced to accept; though Sánchez de Valladolid pointedly tells us that Queen María knows that is wrong of them to make such demands of their king (113, 114).

Another strategy deployed by the queen was to support the lower nobility and the emerging noble families (who had much to gain from a king's favor) against the older and more powerful ones. In *CFIV* this strategy is depicted in the episode where the queen successfully disrupts a cortes that Infante Juan was trying to call in León. As the most powerful noble in Segovia supports the infante, the queen calls on one who is not so powerful to help her. María asks him to support her and she supplies him with talking points with which to turn the people of that city against the infante. The chronicler uses direct speech to record how queen's man addresses the people of Segovia, arguing that they should not comply with the infante's requests since he is demanding unlawful and

excessive taxes from them (97-8). In the end the people of Segovia refuse to agree to the infante's many demands, having been convinced that the queen's man "queria su pro de todos ellos" (98). This member of the lower nobility thus serves as a mouthpiece for the queen, a means for her to get her message to the people and to win them for her side.

The two most powerful houses (or at least those with the greatest protagonism in the chronicles) continue to be the Haro and Lara clans. Although at the beginning of Fernando's minority the Haros and the Laras form an unlikely alliance against the king, María manages to play one off of the other, reigniting their traditional rivalry. In 1295 she gives the *señorío* of Vizcaya (confiscated by her husband in 1288) to Diego López de Haro and a year later offers Juan Alfonso de Haro the territory of Cameros.¹⁰⁷ While it appears her hand was forced in the matter of Vizcaya,¹⁰⁸ Loaysa paints this concession as a successful political strategy that allows the queen to win a powerful ally for her son: "en pocos días (la reina) consiguió volver a la gracia del rey al noble don Diego...a quien el rey y la reina y don Enrique y los demás recibieron con agrado y con honor, no tardando en devolverle toda su tierra y concediéndoles además la tierra de Vizcaya a título hereditario, por lo que don Diego sirvió muy fielmente en lo sucesivo a este rey estando con él en todos los lugares y peligros hasta que por causas que más adelante se dirán se apartó de él" (167). Eventually, Juan Alfonso de Haro defeats Juan Núñez and takes him prisoner in 1299. In the episode following Lara's capture in *CFIV* Juan Alfonso demonstrates his loyalty to the queen (and his distrust of Infante Enrique) by refusing to give his prisoner over to the infante. Juan Alfonso insists that he will deliver Lara only to "su señora," the queen (116). The narration of this episode continues to support the image

107. Carmona Ruiz, *María de Molina*, 155.

108. *Ibid.*, 137.

of María as an honest queen and a superior regent. If Sánchez de Valladolid's account of events is accurate, the fact that a powerful and influential noble like Juan Alfonso de Haro refused to give up his prisoner to anyone but the queen must have also bolstered the queen's authority as regent over Enrique in the public sphere of court.

The terms of Lara's surrender as recorded in the chronicles also strengthen the legitimacy of the queen and her son. In return for his release, Juan Núñez not only accepts Fernando's rule as king, but also acknowledges María's other children as heirs who would succeed him in the event that Fernando should die childless. Even Isabel and Beatriz were included in the line of succession, after their brothers.¹⁰⁹ Juan Núñez is forced to give up the castles he has taken from the king and to accede to Infante Enrique's demand that Juan Núñez give him his daughter in marriage. Furthermore, according to Sánchez de Valladolid's account, Lara's defeat and surrender are put on display in a public ceremony that demonstrates his respectful surrender and renewed obedience to Fernando (116-7). Queen María brings one of Lara's unconvinced vassals to bear witness to the event where Lara is released, given a horse, and allowed to leave the city. Once outside the city walls, Lara calls his liegemen to him and makes them swear that they will return the king's castles to him. María (or the chronicler if he is inventing this public ceremony) understands the advantages of using public ceremony and witnesses to confirm political realities.

With Lara's surrender, the coalition in support of Infante Juan was broken. King Dionís came back over to Fernando's side in 1300 after the rebellion of his brother

109. For pages 116 and 117, I am using a digital copy of the same edition of *CFIV. Crónica del rey don Fernando Cuarto*, in *Crónicas de los reyes de Castilla: Desde don Alfonso el Sabio, hasta los católicos don Fernando y doña Isabel*, ed. Cayetano Rosell y Lopez, (Madrid: Carlos Bailly-Baillier, 1875), 116. <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015014697331>.

Alfonso.¹¹⁰ During the cortes held in Valladolid later that same year, the queen receives word that Infante Juan was offering to make peace and he joins them there to pledge fealty to his nephew.¹¹¹ In the end, however, the king's new allies were almost as dangerous inside Fernando's court as when they were in open confrontation against him. As the chroniclers make clear, Dionís, Enrique, Juan, and Juan Núñez all continue to conspire, looking for ways to gain power and wealth for themselves and frustrating the queen's efforts at every turn. When María orders the siege of Almazán (Murcia) that same year, trapping King Jaume within the city, *CFIV* tells us that the infantes Enrique and Juan make a secret pact with Jaume and have the siege lifted (117-8). While they try to conceal their treachery from the queen, the queen realizes that the infantes have made an agreement with the king of Aragón in order to weaken Fernando's position (118). Sánchez de Valladolid also tells us that Enrique continues to work against the king in the hopes of making his appointment as protector of the realm permanent: "Su entincion era que si el Rey cobrase todos los lugares que él avia perdido, que luégo él perderia la guarda de los reynos que él tenía, é por esta razon todas las maneras que podia catar porque los enemigos del Rey fuesen mantenidos en la guerra, todo lo facia" (117). Fernando would be coming of age at the end of the year, after which Enrique's term as regent and protector of the realm would technically expire.

Before the Cortes of Valladolid in 1300, María receives the welcome news that Pope Boniface VIII has finally granted her the dispensation for her marriage to Sancho,

110. Dionís had previously reconciled with Fernando in 1297 and then broken off the alliance the following year. Carmona Ruiz, *María de Molina*, 166.

111. According to *CFIV*, the infante is made to accept the same line of succession as Juan Núñez de Lara and is granted some territories in exchange for giving up his wife's rights to Vizcaya. The chronicle emphasizes the solemnity of Juan's oath, which is witnessed by the court and taken by the archbishop of Toledo and sworn on the "santos evangelios é sobre la cruz, en que puso las manos corporalmente" (117).; On the other hand, Loaysa reports that Juan turned up unexpectedly during cortes "inesperadamente y contra toda sospecha" (203).

along with the dispensations for the Portuguese marriages. Fernando would be declared legitimate by the Church and would be given permission to marry the Portuguese infanta Constanza. However, they still have to pay for the dispensation. According to Sánchez de Valladolid, the representatives in the cortes are happy to grant the queen the necessary funds: “Todos los de la tierra lo otorgaron de buenamente porque entendían que era muy grand servicio del Rey é pro de toda la tierra” (117). However, the queen is forced to give most of the revenue earmarked for the dispensation to Infante Juan, who demands to be paid his stipends now that he had returned to the king’s obedience. The remainder (“lo al”) of the *servicio* is taken by Enrique, who wants to obstruct the king’s legitimation in order to hang on to power: “Esta legitimación para el Rey pesaba mucho á don Enrique, é teníalo por muy grand su daño si la el Rey oviese, ca tenía que non avria él luego el poderío que avia en los reinos” (117). Therefore, the queen is forced to wait until the next cortes in 1301 (held separately for Castile and León in the cities of Burgos and Zamora, respectively), where Sánchez de Valladolid tells us that despite the “grand fambre” and “mortandad” among the people, the cortes again agrees to grant *servicios* for the dispensation.¹¹²

Sánchez de Valladolid assures us while the infantes work against her, the queen and her son have the support of the people as well as that of the Church. He relates how the pope grants the dispensation in honor of the good queen, pledging his support for her and giving her permission to collect the *tercias* for three years: “Este papa Bonifacio amábala é presciábala mucho, é decía que señaladamente las gracias que él facia que las facia á la Reina, é que por ella las facia al Rey su fijo é á los otros sus fijos...é envió

112. *CFIV*, 119; According to Carmona Ruiz, even after receiving these extra *servicios*, the queen still has to ask for a loan from Guzmán *el Bueno* to pay for the dispensations. Carmona Ruiz, *María de Molina*, 172.

decir á la Reina que en quanto él fuese vivo, que punase en le demandar las gracias que quiesese, que cierta fuese que gelas daría; é la noble Reina gradescióselo mucho á Dios” (119). According to *CFIV*, Enrique starts to spread rumors that the bull was another forgery, but María quickly puts the issue to rest by staging yet another public ceremony. The queen calls on the high nobility and the people of Burgos to attend a mass in the cathedral, after which the papal bull is read aloud for all to hear and bear witness.¹¹³ The ceremony proclaiming the king’s legitimation was an important event as it weakened Alfonso de la Cerda’s claim to Castile and marked the end of Fernando’s minority (and therefore the end of the regency). Perhaps because of the fiscal difficulties and continued civil war, or maybe because he had been king for years, Fernando did not follow his father’s example and stage a coronation ceremony. In any case, neither chronicler makes mention of a coronation or formal ceremony for the king’s coming-of-age and Sánchez de Valladolid gives the proclamation of Fernando’s legitimization considerably more attention than the king’s wedding to Constanza in 1302.¹¹⁴

Conclusion: Queen María’s Image

The representation of Queen María in the chronicles is not unlike that of the great queens in *Castigos del rey don Sancho IV*, who are wise, devout, and industrious. Queen María has a superior understanding of human nature; she knows what motivates people and her intuition allows her to discover the secret plans of her enemies. As a queen consort she is a submissive and dutiful wife, who serves her king faithfully and capably. Her role in Sánchez de Valladolid’s chronicle is particularly significant. She advises

113. *CFIV* 119-20; Carmona Ruiz, *María de Molina*, 290.

114. Loaysa makes no mention of either of these ceremonies. Before Lara’s capture, the chronicler relates the queen’s success in formalizing the engagement between Constanza and Fernando and Dionís’s willingness to support him once the pope grants María the necessary dispensations (191-3).

Sancho, supplies his armies, and deals with family members, rebellious nobles, and even foreign dignitaries on his behalf. She also plays a part in constructing Sancho's legacy, by mitigating the king's fearful justice. At the same time her intervention in Sancho's administration also makes a reputation for her as an honest and merciful queen. She knows better than anyone what is best for the king and his kingdom—and as Sancho comes to trust her more, she leads him in the ways of a righteous monarch. Her submissive nature as a woman allows her to guide without dominating, and eventually the king recognizes her wisdom and abilities and entrusts the government of the realm to her upon his death.

María's wisdom and industriousness also make her an astute politician and a capable ruler during Fernando's minority. She works tirelessly for her son and on behalf of his people. The queen sagaciously steers her son's cause to victory, winning the war and securing the dispensation that legitimizes him. Sánchez de Valladolid demonstrates her political acumen by narrating at length some of her more brilliant maneuvers and supplying the arguments of her moving speeches, complete with *exempla*. Loaysa gives less detail, but he calls the queen "sapiéntisima" and describes her as a "señora muy prudente y circunspecta" (191). Loaysa also praises the queen for her grace and her resolve (185, 165). The queen is devout, but the aspect of María's piety that receives the most attention in the chronicles is not her patronage of the church or dedication to prayer, but rather her unwavering faith in God's Providence.¹¹⁵ María patiently endures many trials, all the while trusting that God will reward her. All of these attributes (wisdom, submissiveness, mercy, industriousness, and piety) are traditionally feminine virtues and

115. *CTR*, 102, 103, 112, 114, 115; Loaysa only mentions the queen's trust in God when she is in Valladolid, waiting for the attack of her enemies. Loaysa, *Crónicas*, 181.

the makings of a good queen. However, during the minority María de Molina demonstrates both kingly (masculine) and queenly (feminine) attributes.

In the chronicles, María is both a victim who is in need of rescuing and a protector of the weak and the wronged. In *CSIV* she is put upon unjustly by those who conspire against her and challenge the legitimacy of her children. Her only champion is God who protects her and helps her to secure Sancho's dynasty. During Fernando's minority the queen is presented in both chronicles as a victim of disloyalty and the sole defender of her son's rights as king. She is his mother and his protector, the only one who can save the boy king and his kingdom from the ambitions and violence of the usurpers and the rest of the high nobility. While she is known to be an honest, merciful, and open-handed monarch, she also inspires fear in her enemies, which is traditionally a masculine and kingly quality. The queen is also brave and she leads the king's armies during the minority. María's role as an aggressive military leader and protector of the king is a divergence from the usual order of gendered roles in the monarchy that is facilitated by the absence of an adult king and the presence of social disorder caused by the civil war.

As befits a champion of the king, the queen conducts herself in accordance with a chivalrous code of morality. Sánchez de Valladolid consistently refers to her as "la muy noble Reina," which is an adjective that demonstrates her high birth, but also one that points to the moral uprightness of the queen's governance and comportment. She demonstrates constancy, loyalty, and devotion to her king; and when compared with the other treacherous nobles, her conduct stands as an example for all the king's vassals to emulate. Besides being a model vassal María is also an example of a good monarch who is diligent in her service of the kingdom. She upholds the king's justice, hears the

petitions of his vassals, and protects them from wrongdoing.¹¹⁶ She fosters alliances with the non-noble knights and the emerging nobility and she comes to rely on their support, imposing her will through the cortes. Sánchez de Valladolid often reminds us that all of her subjects are “muy pagados de ella” and that they trust her rule.

In the same way that Sancho styled himself as chosen by God to be king of Castile-León, both of the chronicles assert that God supported Fernando’s claim and helped him win the war through divine intervention. Loaysa sees God’s hand in the smallest of the king’s victories and asserts that “el Señor de los ejércitos luchaba manifiestamente a favor del rey niño” (183). On two separate occasions in *CFIV* the king’s cities are saved from traitors by the intercession of God and the Virgin Mary and the support of the people.¹¹⁷ A significant miracle that appears in both chronicles is the plague that befalls the Aragonese invaders in 1296, forcing them to retreat.¹¹⁸ Sánchez de Valladolid tells us that the queen understands this to be her just reward from God, “con quien se ella tenía muy bien” and that the people agree (103). Seeing that God’s favor is with the young king and his mother and they are emboldened to serve the monarchs. Loaysa acknowledges the loyal service of: “los concejos...los prelados y órdenes militares de su reino [los cuales] le permanecieron fieles y constantes en grado máximo,

116. Sánchez de Valladolid tells us that the queen is never remiss in her duties and attends to matters of state even on several occasions when she is seriously ill. *CFIV* 105, 108, 109.

117. The miracle where the Virgin Maria saves the city of Sigüenza for King Fernando is a particularly entertaining story. A great many misfortunes and confusions befall the king’s enemies, who end up trapping themselves in the city’s alcazar. *CFIV*, 110; Another miracle in *CFIV* (though it is admittedly less miraculous) puts an end to the attempts of a traitor to deliver the city of Palencia into the hands of Alfonso de la Cerda and the Lara clan. *CFIV*, 113. It is interesting to note that in both of these miracles, the *pueblo* responds to the call to protect the city, and therefore works with God to support Fernando against the usurpers.

118. Loaysa, *Crónicas*, 183.; It is worth noting that according to Sánchez de Valladolid’s chronicle, the queen graciously agreed to let the Aragonese reclaim their dead, and in the manner of noble and gracious monarchs, she covers the coffins of her high-born enemies with rich cloths. This gesture demonstrates her magnanimity and her honor. *CFIV*, 104.

hasta el punto que por la fe y nombre del rey llegaron a ser casi mártires” (185). Like the queen, the people realize that the king’s service and the service of God are one and the same and they trust that God will make their righteous cause prevail: “persistiendo en su fe sólida y sin esperar ayuda de nadie más que de Dios” (183). What Gerald L. Gingras has observed about Sánchez de Valladolid’s chronicles also applies to Loaysa’s:

“narrations of divine intercession in human affairs correspond to an immediate political concern. They reaffirm the importance of a just monarchy as the basis of social order.”¹¹⁹ These miracles serve to prove the righteous rule of the queen and God’s favor for her and her son.

In the chronicles, María is the primary agent of the actions taken on behalf of her son during the minority and the chroniclers use her words, thoughts, and actions to construct a cultural politics. The politics that the queen promotes (and which are promoted by the representation of her rule) are similar to those we saw in Sancho’s *Castigos*. María follows the moral code of conduct laid out in *Castigos* and is both a good vassal to her king and a good monarch to her people. She champions the vision of a united kingdom of Castile-León under one king who is chosen by God.¹²⁰ As God’s representative on earth, the rightful king of Castile-León should be free of the control of ambitious magnates (like Lope de Haro and Infante Enrique) and the queen strives to protect her son’s powers and his incomes from the encroachment of the nobility.¹²¹

Castigos also asserts that it is the king’s responsibility to continue the reconquest. María

119. Gerald L. Gingras, “Sánchez’s *Tres corónicas*: An Alfonsine Legacy?” *Romance Quarterly* 33, no. 3 (1986): 293.

120. According to Sánchez de Valladolid, the queen says that allowing usurpers (in this case, Infante Juan) to take the king’s lands from him was “gran blasco para la tierra” and “carrera por que todo se podría perder.” *CFIV*, 112.

121. While the chroniclers often show the queen working to protect the king’s incomes, it is true that she made many and more concessions that contributed to the crown’s impoverishment.

helps Sancho to expand his kingdom southwards and while she is much too busy with civil war to pursue the religious crusades during Fernando's minority, she works diligently to protect the gains that her husband has made in that holy enterprise.

However, there is more to the queen's cultural politics in the chronicles than that which is promoted in Sancho's *Castigos*. While God helps Fernando to put down those who rebel against his rule in the chronicles, the young king is also beholden to the alliance that his mother forges with the military confraternities and the participants of the cortes. In Sánchez de Valladolid's chronicle in particular, we see the emergence of a three-part theme associated with the queen's rule that echoes official documents from Fernando's reign: the service of the king, the service of God, and the good of the kingdom. As we shall observe in the following chapter, the combination of "servicio del Rey," "servicio de Dios," and "pro y bien de la tierra," along with a superior Christian morality would come to define María's legacy as a saintly queen and make her the preferred ruler of the people.

Chapter Three

The Architecture and Architects of Queen María's Legacy: The Majority of Fernando IV and the Minority of Alfonso XI (1301-1321)

In this chapter I will continue the examination of Queen María's portrayal in the royal chronicles of Fernando IV and Alfonso XI. For Fernando's majority, I will use the same chronicles as in the last chapter, attributed Jofré de Loaysa and Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid. As we noted in the previous chapter, the former chronicle ends in 1305, so for the remaining seven years of Fernando's reign I will refer solely to *CFIV*. For the minority of Alfonso XI, I will focus my analysis on *Crónica del rey don Alfonso el Onceno*,¹ which according to Diego Catalán was written by the same Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid (chancellor of the king's privy seal) and was finished (or interrupted) in 1344. Catalán also informs us that one of the two manuscript families of *CAXI*—which he refers to as the “versión crítica”—was originally conceived of as a fourth part to *CTR*: “El arquetipo de la *Versión crítica* no era propiamente una crónica de Alfonso XI sino una *Crónica de cuatro reyes*, que abarcaba, sin soluciones de continuidad, los reinados de Alfonso X, Sancho IV, Fernando IV y Alfonso XI.”² In any case, *CAXI* and *CTR* are written by the same author who was commissioned to do so by the same king, and so we

1. *Crónica del rey don Alfonso el Onceno*, in *Crónicas de los reyes de Castilla: Desde don Alfonso el Sabio, hasta los católicos don Fernando y doña Isabel*, ed. Cayetano Rosell y Lopez, (Madrid: Carlos Bailly-Baillier, 1875) (All subsequent citations refer to this edition, except when otherwise noted. Hereafter referred to as *CAXI*).; According to Diego Catalán, this edition of *CAXI* is a reproduction of an earlier edition compiled by Francisco Cerdá y Rico in 1787, which in turn is based on the oldest surviving manuscript (Ms. E) that was commissioned by Alfonso XI's son Enrique II. Diego Catalán, “La *Gran Crónica* y la historiografía en prosa y verso sobre Alfonso XI,” in *Gran Crónica de Alfonso XI*, vol. 1 (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1977), 16.; For a discussion of the manuscript tradition of *CAXI* and its relation to the *Gran Crónica de Alfonso XI*, and the *Poema de Alfonso Onceno*, see *Ibid*, 13-24, 120-62 and Diego Catalán, *La tradición manuscrita en la Crónica de Alfonso XI*, (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1974), 15-278.

2. *Ibid*, 20

can observe a sort of continuity in the political discourse found in these chronicles and consider them to be part of one complete royal history.

Part One: The Majority of Fernando IV

When Fernando IV came into his majority, thanks to his mother's efforts he had been duly legitimized by the Church and he finally had the adhesion of most of the Castilian nobility. He made peace with Granada and shored up the alliance with Portugal through his marriage to Infanta Constanza in January 1302. Yet the king's power would continue to be challenged, as Fernando still faced opposition to his rule from Aragón and the Castilian noblemen would soon be at odds with one other, fighting for influence over the king. By the beginning of Fernando's majority, Castile-León had lost many territories to the neighboring kingdoms, which meant fewer revenues for the royal coffers. The crown had also been impoverished from the long years of civil war and the price of buying and retaining noble allegiances. The *pecheros* suffered most acutely the damaging effects of the minority, which were exacerbated by the abuses of the nobility and the crown.

During this period of relative instability and strife Fernando's power as king was poorly consolidated. While he briefly tried to assert himself against his mother's intervention in the government, María was a well-established member of the monarchy and he needed her support in order to rule. Although his majority should have begun in December of 1300, according to the language of his royal privileges it is not until after his marriage in 1302 that the king stops acting with his mother's permission and he begins to act "en uno" with his wife, Queen Constanza.³ Even after he begins to act

3. Benavides, *Memorias*, 2:236-73. In a few documents, Fernando acts "in one" with his wife *and* with the advice and permission of the regents. *Ibid*, 240, 273.

without her permission, Queen María continues to be named in these privileges as an advisor to the king and is featured prominently (she is often the first name on the list) among the other nobles and family members who participate in the king's cortes.⁴ In short, the queen continued to be an important collaborator in Fernando's administration and her co-rule with her son was essential to the construction of his power.

The royal chronicles depict Fernando's majority as a time in which the values of honesty and loyalty all but disappear from the monarchy, and sacred oaths lose all their sanctity as alliances are made and broken at an alarming rate. The noblemen, who are driven by greed, are portrayed as authors of chaos, who manipulate their king and betray him at every turn. Even the monarch himself engages in immoral and un-kingly behavior, which leads to division and unrest in his kingdom, as well as to his untimely death. While Fernando mismanages his kingdom and the members of the high nobility become increasingly unreliable, Queen María stands as a bulwark of honesty, loyalty, and prudent advice in the chronicles. Once her regency ends, the queen is no longer the primary protagonist of the narration of events, and the focus shifts to the deeds of her son. However in *CFIV*, she continues to play an important role as Fernando's constant champion—and perhaps more importantly—as the champion of a Catholic and chivalric code of morality. Through her words (*castigos*) and her actions (*exempla*), the queen continues to promote the same values as before, working for the good of the kingdom and the service of God and the king. As we observed in chapter two, the queen is often the person whose thoughts confirm what is true and right in *CFIV*, and even her enemies

4. *Cortes de los antiguos reinos*, 1:151-220.

recognize her righteousness.⁵ Her righteousness and the “truth” of her perception of events are also evident in the approval she has from God and from the people.⁶ The chivalric code of morality that the queen promotes in the chronicles is emphasized time and again through the continuous contrast between Queen María on one hand, and the nobles and Fernando IV on the other. In this way, the history of Fernando’s reign becomes a moral lesson for future kings, a negative *exemplum* of what a king should *not* do if he hopes to be a successful ruler.

Cutting the Apron Strings: Fernando’s Youthful Rebellion

While it is clear from the narration of the chronicles that Fernando needs his mother’s support in order to rule, his erstwhile enemies convince him that he ought to assert his independence from María. According to *CFIV*, Infante Enrique enlists Juan Núñez de Lara and Infante Juan in a plot to separate the king from his mother’s influence, thereby removing María (the main obstacle to all of their schemes) from the royal administration.⁷ They use a catspaw (a knight named Gómez de Caldelas, who the chronicler tells us owes everything he is to the queen) to propose a hunting trip to Fernando in order to put their plan into action.⁸ When María tries to recall her son from his pleasures in order to attend to important matters of state, Gómez de Caldelas detains

5. For example, in *CFIV*, the chronicler tells us a messenger of King Jaume “bien entendia que demandaba la Reina aguisado,” when she demands that Jaume return the lands he had taken from Fernando (122). Also, King Dionís agrees that the queen is right to insist that he do the same. *Ibid.*

6. God performs a miracle that proves the queen’s righteousness when Lorenzo Yañez dies in *CFIV* because he tells lies about her: “quiso Dios mostrar en él muy grande miraglo...dióle un dolor á este caballero que luégo perdió la fabla é el entendimiento, que nin pudo confesar nin comulgar, é asi murió. É todos los que eran con el Rey lo tomaron por muy grand miraglo, salvo aquellos que querían mal á la Reina, commo quier que lo entendían que era así, mas non dejaron por eso de la buscar mal quanto podían.” *CFIV*, 121.

7. Loaysa does not involve Enrique in this scheme to remove Fernando from his mother’s influence. Instead, Loaysa attributes Fernando’s separation from his mother wholly to Infante Juan and Juan Núñez. Loaysa, *Crónicas*, 207.

8. *CFIV*, 120. It should be noted that the merciful queen later protects this same nobleman who had betrayed her from Fernando’s advisors, who want to kill him. *Ibid.*, 125.

Fernando by convincing him that in order to be seen as a strong king, he must separate himself from her power. He warns Fernando that, “si siempre avedes á andar en pos de vuestra madre, nunca valdredes nada, é non vos presciarán los omes nin vos ternán que sodes para este lugar en que vos Dios puso, é andaredes siempre, commo andaste fasta aquí, muy pobre é muy menguado” (121). The knight then suggests that Fernando ally himself with Juan Núñez and the Infantes Enrique and Juan, who he promises will make the king very rich and powerful. This promise will of course be familiar to readers of *CSIV*, since Conde Lope de Haro made similar claims to King Sancho. Once he is in their power, Infante Juane and Juan Núñez encourage Fernando to neglect his duties as king, all the while feeding him lies to make him suspicious of his mother. They paint María’s actions on the king’s behalf as self-serving and they accuse her of plotting to dethrone Fernando and to replace him with Alfonso de la Cerda, whom she plans to marry to her daughter Isabel. In this way, Infante Juan and Juan Núñez come to control the credulous young Fernando, and like Lope de Haro before them, they work against María with the aim of separating her from the king. In an effort to provoke the queen to anger, they remove Infanta Isabel from the queen’s household, and they make Fernando ask his mother for the royal family’s jewels. Eventually, they call for an investigation into the royal accounts that the queen has been managing, a tactic that we saw used in *CSIV* in order to bring about the fall of the abbot of Valladolid, Gómez García.

The trials that María endures at the hands of her son’s new counselors prove her loyalty, her obedience, and her honesty, creating the saintly image of a queen martyr. When María realizes that her enemies are turning her son against her, she makes no effort to stop them. Instead of reacting to their provocations, the queen is submissive towards

her son and king, as she was with her husband. On the other hand, Sánchez de Valladolid tells us that the people of the realm are indignant at Fernando's mistreatment of the queen. The concejos distrust Infante Juan and Juan Núñez, and the people are both troubled and angered by the magnates' new-found influence with the king. In *CFIV*, various characters express their astonishment and displeasure at the king's actions, and the chronicler goes so far as to say that "todos los de las villas que sirvieran al Rey lo desamaban por lo que le veian facer en andar en poder de aquellos que lo desirvieran" (127). The people look to María to intervene, offering to support her against the king and his new counselors. However, the queen excuses her son's behavior as the folly of youth and inexperience and she insists to her subjects that they continue to serve and obey Fernando. María exhorts the concejos to obey her son in order to not undo the good that she has done and also because, "si lo así non ficiese, que toda cuanta buena obra ella ficiera fasta entónces, que seria juzgada de los omes en otra manera" (124).

When Fernando asks his mother to return the jewels that King Sancho gave to her, she is happy to comply with his wishes and she even offers him some of her own jewels—an action which underlines her generous spirit and her detachment to worldly goods. Sánchez de Valladolid also makes a point of demonstrating that she is not doing this for show, since she does not know why her son is asking for the jewels (124). When these intrigues fail to anger the queen, Infante Juan and Juan Núñez ask the queen's chancellor to provide them with the royal accounts, alleging to Fernando that the queen has been embezzling money. When they apply to María's chancellor, Nuño Pérez de Monroy, for the accounts the abbot is very pleased to inform them that to the contrary, the honest and generous queen has been taking out loans and selling her personal

possessions in order to support her son during the war of the minority: “todas cuantas donas de oro é plata ella tenía, todo lo vendió para mantener la guerra, así que non fincó con ella más de un vaso de plata con que bebia, é comia en escudillas de tierra” (125).

While the queen does not renounce worldly goods altogether like the pious princess from *Castigos* or the saintly prince in *Barlaam y Josafat*, her willingness to relinquish whatever she has and more for her son mark her as a devoted mother as well as a pious Christian. Indeed, the relative poverty of the queen who eats from earthen plates and retains only one silver cup for her personal use must have been quite striking to the medieval audience, given her position in society and the investment of the noble classes in displaying their wealth as a sign of power. In her austerity and in bearing these trials without complaint, María demonstrates the qualities of a good martyr and models the sort of non-attachment to the material world that the Church promotes.

*The Fight for Influence: Enrique’s Rebellion in CFIV*⁹

While according to *CFIV*, Enrique was the original author of the scheme to separate the king from his mother, he soon realizes that the Juanes (Infante Juan and Juan Núñez)¹⁰ are excluding him from their plans and are unwilling to defer to his authority—and so begins the fight for influence between the Infantes Enrique and Juan. Enrique continues to try to be more powerful than the king, and when Fernando gives the appointment of mayordomo mayor to Juan Nuñez, Enrique is angered by what he perceives to be his loss of power: “pues de mano del Rey lo tomaba [Juan Núñez] é non de la suya, que por esta manera era el desapoderado de la guarda e del poder de los reinos” (123). In retaliation, Enrique allies himself with Diego López de Haro and

9. Loaysa does not include Enrique’s rebellion in his chronicle.

10. I refer to Juan Núñez and Infante Juan thus for convenience, since they are often allied with each other throughout the tangled web of intrigue during Fernando’s reign.

threatens the queen with war if she does not name him protector of the realm for life. María manages to appease Enrique for a time by offering to give him additional incomes in exchange for his giving up the post. However, Enrique is not satisfied and he soon returns to propose that María make an alliance with him against the king's evil counselors. Sánchez de Valladolid tells us that the prudent queen treads carefully, "ca tan poderoso estava este infante don Enrique en toda la tierra...que si él contra el Rey fuese, que le faria perder el reino" (125). She pretends to be amenable to his proposal, but suggests to Enrique that he first ask the king to give him the post of mayordomo mayor, which Fernando does.

Although Fernando grants his request, Enrique is very displeased at how he is treated in the king's court and refuses to remain there. After his departure, the Juanes convince Fernando to make a pact against his mother and Infante Enrique. Though their alliance is carried out in secret, it is soon known to all. Enrique is incensed at this betrayal, and again he presses María for her support against her son, threatening to raise an army and claiming that the king's actions against them justifies rebellion: "Les daba...razon que sin vergüenza ninguna podrian ser contra el su cuerpo del Rey é para desheredarle" (126). The chronicler tells us that the queen is forced to agree to a temporary alliance in order to buy time to bring the other noblemen back into the obedience of the king. While Enrique meets with a large group of nobles in Valladolid to work out the details of the pact against the king, the queen meets with the same men in secret and carries out a silent coup, winning the allegiance of Enrique's potential conspirators: "É desde que la Reina sopo las entinciones de cada uno...díjoles en su poridad que su voluntad era que en estos pleitos que guardasen lo del Rey su fijo, é ellos

respondieron que faria quanto ella mandase...é [la Reina] guisó de commo dijesen á don Enrique que seria bien que de allí adelante que oviese sus acuerdos ante la Reina” (127). Thus the queen gains some control over Enrique’s rebellion by infiltrating it. Despite her being part of the group, Sánchez de Valladolid assures the reader/listener that the queen remains loyal to her son and that her involvement in Enrique’s scheme is a political stratagem that she uses in order to immobilize his rebellion.

When Fernando learns of this meeting, he tries to prevent it, but is powerless against the noble coalition. They refuse to tell him anything, but ask him to await their decision in Toledo and not to return to the Juanes. Before departing the queen’s city of Valladolid, Fernando goes to see his mother. When she confronts him about the pact he has made against her, the dishonest young king denies the accusation. In this episode of *CFIV*, the queen defends herself and chastizes her son for having given his vassals reason to rebel against him:

la Reina fabló con él en su poridad, é díjole que le rogaba que le dijese qué fuera lo que ella ficiera contra él, porque él pusiese tal pleito como el pusiera contra ella con el infante don Juan é con don Juan Nuñez, sabiendo el que la desamamban, é non por otra cosa ninguna si non porque los non sufrió ella que pasasen con la voz que tomáran contra el Rey, é que tenía que le ficiera muy grand tuerto...É la Reina díjole más, que si él parára bien mientes é catára cuál pleito le ficieran facer, que lo non ficiera, ca por aquel pleito que él ficiera daba él mesmo razon á todos los de su tierra que fuesen contra él con derecho, pues que él non guardaba lo suyo della como él debiera; pero que non pararía ella mientes á cuán grand mal él lo ficiera,

é que muy mejor guardaría ella la su hacienda dél en aquel ayuntamiento, é que más lo faria esto porque era su fijo, é por el rey don Sancho su padre é por guarda de la tierra, que non por los sus merescimientos dél, porque él non gelo merescia, pues conocia cuánta laceria por él levára. (127)

In the above citation, the queen is shown to emphasize her worth and neatly sum up how Fernando is mismanaging his kingdom and violating the code of chivalry by rewarding his enemies and by making enemies of his once loyal vassals. While María obeys and serves her king, she is still within her motherly rights to correct her son in private. After Fernando admits his guilt, the queen manages to keep the nobles in obedience to her son and she advises Fernando on how to treat with them, so that the rebellious nobles “fincaron pagados ende” (127). Sánchez de Valladolid insists that with her intervention, the queen has saved more than the crown for her son; she has also saved the realm from “muy grand guerra é muy grand daño” and the “omes buenos” from the “yerro” of violating the chivalric code of conduct and forsaking their loyalty to the king (127). After the queen corrects her son in this episode, Fernando begins to trust his mother again and to solicit her advice more often, though he doesn’t always follow it.

While the threat of noble rebellion in 1302 serves to return María to the king’s favor, *CFIV* informs us that the peaceful conclusion of the meeting in Valladolid does little to appease Infante Enrique, who cannot abide sharing power with his nephew Infante Juan and continues to foment rebellion. While Fernando meets with King Dionís in Badajoz in order to establish a truce with King Jaume,¹¹ Enrique also approaches Jaume, but with a proposal to dethrone Fernando. As part of this plan, Enrique and Diego

11. While there is no mention of a truce with Aragón in either chronicle, González Mínguez affirms that this was the primary purpose of the *vistas* of Badajoz. César González Mínguez, *Fernando IV de Castilla (1295-1312): La guerra civil y el predominio de la nobleza*, (Vitoria: Gráficas ESET, 1976) 149-54.

López de Haro (with the support of Juan Manuel) approach the queen. They offer to make her second son, Infante Pedro, the king of Castile, and to marry her daughter Isabel to Alfonso de la Cerda, who would be king of León. According to *CFIV*, although the queen does not break off her feigned alliance with Enrique, she resists agreeing to the marriages by alleging that her children are too young. She also insists that she will never accept that Alfonso de la Cerda be called king in any of her husband's realms. She corrects the rebellious nobles, telling them that what they are doing is wrong and declaring that she “se ternia con el Rey su fijo á vida ó á muerte ó á lo que Dios quisiese” (130). Still, the nobles need her support, as Jaume II seeks assurances from them that the queen will honor their pact.¹² So they ask her to accompany them to *vistas* in Ariza with King Jaume. At first the queen refuses, citing the great dishonor she has received from the King of Aragón—but when she sees that she cannot obstruct their meeting, the queen decides to accompany the nobles as far as Cuéllar, while still refusing to attend the *vistas*. According to Sánchez de Valladolid, in doing so the queen “escogió ella lo mejor” and she also demonstrates her great bravery by only taking two ladies with her to this meeting that her vassals are too afraid to attend (130). From Cuéllar, she sends messengers to remind the nobles gathered in Ariza of the allegiance that they owe their king:

Les enviaba decir que se les membrase commo eran naturales del Rey su
fijo é de los sus reinos, é que catasen commo nunca el Rey matára ni
desheredára nin desaforára á ninguno de los sus fijosdalgo de su tierra, é

12. *CFIV*, 131; In a letter dated June 24, 1303, Jaume II requests that Enrique communicate to him whether or not the queen and Diego López de Haro are willing to accept the terms of the Pact of Ariza. In another letter dated July 9, 1303, from Diego López de Haro to Jaume II, and in a subsequent letter from Jaume II to Juan Manuel, we are informed that Queen María is willing to accept the terms of the Pact of Ariza, except that Alfonso de la Cerda should not be called king and the marriages of her children should be approved first by Rome. Andrés Giménez Soler, *Don Juan Manuel: Biografía y estudio crítico*, (Zaragoza: Academia Española, 1932), 282, 285, 289.

commo heredára á ellos é á otros muchos é les ficiera otros bienes muchos é les cresciera en las soldadas, é otrosí que catasen la edad quel Rey avia, que si ellos algund enojo tomáran de lo que él ficiera, que ménos era de culpar que si fuese otro ome de mayor tiempo, é que fasta allí non avia fecho cosa ninguna por que ellos non deviesen guardar su honra é su señorío. (130)

The queen reminds the nobles that Fernando is their natural lord, and she insists that the king has never wronged them, but rather rewarded them. Sánchez de Valladolid reports that after hearing the queen's arguments the knights and nobles want to oblige her; however, they now fear for their lives if they do not make a pact. While the queen keeps them from dethroning her son, the nobles still sign a pact on June 20, 1303, the terms of which allow Jaume to retain most of the realm of Murcia and give extensive territories to the Infantes de la Cerda.¹³ Though the chronicler tells us that the queen does much to save her son in this case, it is only the sudden (and timely) death of Infante Enrique on August 11, 1303 in Roa that finally puts an end to his rebellions.

The story of the infante's agony and burial in *CFIV* highlight the queen's commitment to strengthening the position of the monarch and promoting chivalric values. When she hears that the seventy-year-old infante is gravely ill, María is anxious to have the childless Enrique promise to return the lands which he had been given by the king "para en su vida" (132). Upon inquiry, the queen finds that Enrique is planning to leave these lands to his nephew Juan Manuel and his niece's son Lope Díaz de Haro. María deplores this as "muy grand tuerto e muy grand pecado," and she enlists Enrique's confessor to convince the infante to return the lands to the king in his will (131). The

13. Benavides, *Memorias*, 2:351-3.

queen also sends letters to all of the towns in question, urging them to hold their castles and strongholds for the king, and as always Sánchez de Valladolid makes it very clear that the people are happy to do the queen's bidding.¹⁴ In the end the castles and towns are returned to the king and the queen recovers her territory of Écija, which she had used to bribe the infante. However, Fernando does not reward his mother for any of her actions on his behalf and he gives most of Enrique's territories away to his new advisors, so that the queen is forced to ask him to grant her additional incomes to discharge her many debts (135).

Enrique's funeral is a further testament to his character and to that of the queen. No one mourns his loss, as evidenced by the small turnout for his badly provisioned funeral and the fact that his vassals do not cut their horses' tails, as was custom on the death of one's lord. However, while Infante Juan and Juan Núñez celebrate the demise of their rival, the merciful and munificent queen honors her powerful family member by organizing and paying for his funeral. The queen orders all the men and women from the religious orders in Valladolid to join her and her children in their mourning, and "ficieron su llanto así como lo avian de facer ordenadamente" (133). Shadis asserts that "burial could be used by queens to demonstrate political power" and that "by taking charge of Enrique's burial and ensuring its proper decorum, María emphasized appropriate royal control over even rogue members of the royal family [and] she restored the Infante Enrique once and for all to his appropriate public place."¹⁵ In this episode, Maria

14. The chronicler uses the phrase "plugóles" three times in this episode to refer to the people's reaction to the queen's orders. *CFIV*, 132.

15. Shadis, *Berenguela*, 158. Shadis also suggests that Berenguela's legendary forgiveness and burial of her rival, Alvaro de Lara, was perhaps invented around the same time that María was doing this for Enrique.

demonstrates her forgiving nature, but perhaps more importantly, she upholds chivalric tradition and the honor of the royal family.

Jaume II and the Infantes de la Cerda: from the Vistas of Badajoz to Torrellas

After the infante's death the monarchs of Castile and Aragón returned to the negotiating table.¹⁶ A *vistas* was arranged in Torrellas in 1304, and a pact was signed in August that provided an end to the conflict. In early 1305, the monarchs made a solemn exchange of territories and Alfonso de la Cerda formally renounced his claim to Castile. While it was undoubtedly in Fernando's best interests to secure peace with Aragón and put an end to his cousin's challenge of his rule, the chroniclers present the arrangement in vastly different ways. Loaysa represents the negotiations in a largely positive and objective manner. He ends his chronicle with de la Cerda swearing fealty to Fernando and the establishment of a peace that is pleasing to both monarchs, who "regresaron a sus tierras alegres y conformes."¹⁷ However, in *CFIV* the agreement is presented as less than favorable to Fernando (an opinion generally agreed upon by María's biographers) and Sánchez de Valladolid puts great emphasis on the loss of Fernando's former territories.¹⁸

As María does not have an important role in these negotiations—which are largely handled by Infante Juan and King Dionís—she is able to stand as the champion of a policy of recovering the king's territories from his former enemies. Although the retention and expansion of the king's realms was widely understood to be an important

16. *CFIV*, 134. According to Sánchez de Valladolid, the Juanes advise Fernando to approach Jaume so that Juan Núñez can recover Albarracín, not so that Fernando can recover Murcia. In the end, Jaume keeps Albarracín and Juan Núñez is not happy.

17. Loaysa, *Crónicas*, 229. Loaysa's chronicle provides an unusual amount of details—first, about the territories of Castile-León that are taken by Jaume and the infantes de la Cerda, and second, about the territories exchanged in the fulfillment of this treaty. In a divergence from *CFIV*, Loaysa narrates the military occupation of Murcia by Jaume and the attacks of the infantes de la Cerda after Enrique's death in 1303 (211-5).

18. *CFIV*, 136.; Carmona Ruiz, *María de Molina*, 197-99.; Del Valle Curieses, *María de Molina*, 162.

duty of the king, in the chronicles the king and his counselors do little to recover the territories lost during the war of the minority. In fact, according to Sánchez de Valladolid, Infante Juan impedes the queen's efforts to have Dionís return Fernando's territories to him and the king's counselors do nothing when they learn that the king of Granada has taken Bedmar. The queen, on the other hand, shows great concern at the fall of Bedmar, which results in the captivity of a Christian noblewoman and her sons, "porque tenía [ella] que era grand quebranto de la cristiandad" (124). Loaysa adds that the king's lack of concern over reclaiming the lands taken from him by the king of Granada "a muchos pareció que redundaba en gran desprestigio más bien que en honra del rey castellano" (209). When Fernando—motivated by Infante Juan's promise that Dionís will give him "muy grand algo"—first informs his mother of his intentions to attend the *vistas* of Badajoz in *CFIV*, the queen argues that the king should be more concerned with recovering his territories than with gaining wealth and she suggests that his supposed ally, King Dionís, should help him to do so: "Si el rey de Portugal tan grand amor le avia commo él decia, que tenia ella que en al gelo devria mostrar, lo uno en le tornar muchas villas é muchos castillos é muy grand tierra que les avria tomado de los sus reinos con muy grand tuerto, segund lo sabían todos los de la su tierra, é lo otro en le ayudar á cobrar las villas é los castillos que el rey de Portugal le ayudara á facer perder, que le avia tomado el rey de Aragon é el rey de Granada é los otros sus enemigos" (128). A year later, when Fernando asks his mother to attend the *vistas* of Torrellas with Jaume and Dionís, the queen politely declines because she does not believe that the meeting will result in her son's honor: "la Reina entendió que non pleitearían a su pro nin á su honra" (135). The insightful queen understands that what Dionís and Jaume truly want is to

diminish the size of Fernando's kingdom: "toda cosa porque el Rey oviese ménos de lo que avia, placaría al rey de Aragon é al rey de Portugal" (135). Therefore, although she cannot prevent the loss of Fernando's territories, Sánchez de Valladolid uses this as yet another example of how the queen mother knows best—and how it is she who supports the strength of the monarch and the integrity of the kingdom of Castile-León.

The Dispute over Vizcaya and the Return of Civil War

At the same time that Fernando was negotiating a peace with Jaume, a territorial dispute emerged that would serve as a focal point for nobles to contest power and influence within the kingdom of Castile for years to come: the dispute over Vizcaya. We remember that the *señorío* of Vizcaya had formerly belonged to Lope de Haro, until Sancho confiscated it and settled the title on his son, Infante Enrique, in 1288.¹⁹ Then in the first year of Fernando's minority, Queen María was forced to give the territory to the late conde's brother, Diego López de Haro, in exchange for his fealty. And yet, Infante Juan's wife, María Díaz de Haro, still had a legitimate claim to Vizcaya as the sole surviving child of the late don Lope. When he was reconciled to Fernando in the Cortes of Zamora in 1301, Infante Juan made solemn vows to give up his wife's claim to Vizcaya in exchange for other territories. Despite the solemnity of these oaths recorded in *CFIV*, in 1303 María Díaz begins to insist that she never agreed to the arrangement, resulting in a new rift between the Castilian magnates. The dispute over Vizcaya would not be completely settled until 1308, and the issue dominates the next three years of Fernando's reign in the royal chronicle. It also eventually leads to another civil war.

The narration of the events surrounding the issue of Vizcaya in *CFIV* highlights the unconscionable behavior of the powerful Castilian magnates and the weakness of the

19. Carmona Ruiz, *María de Molina*, 308. María's son Infante Enrique died in 1299.

young king, whom the nobles manipulate like a piece in their game. Infante Juan, Juan Núñez, and Diego López all fight for control of this wealthy territory, as well as other territories that are brought into play during the successive negotiations. When Infante Juan first presses the king to breach the topic with Diego López, the latter allies himself with his son-in-law Juan Núñez against the infante, agreeing to leave Vizcaya to Lara's wife, who is also called María Díaz de Haro. Infante Juan's wife makes a formal claim to Vizcaya in the Cortes of Medina in 1305, and a lengthy and inconclusive trial ensues. On several occasions over the following years it seems that they have reached an acceptable agreement, only to have it frustrated by one or another of the interested parties. The nobles prove to be masters of deception, and Fernando is easily duped by their methods. At one point, Diego López convinces the king that it is in his best interests to promote discord among the powerful noble clans, even as the chronicler makes it clear that this division is indeed harmful to the king.²⁰ Fernando loses their respect and the noble clan in-fighting finally escalates over rumors that Juan Núñez has been heard to say "muchas cosas é muy feas en que denostava al Rey en el cuerpo" (141). Juan Núñez denies the charges, but Infante Juan takes advantage of this opportunity to turn Fernando against his new rival (and former ally) by urging the king to take military action against Lara. In the dispute over Viscaya it becomes clear that civil war is not a problem for the powerful *ricos omes* and *infanzones* in the chronicle, so long as they believe they can win.

20. Diego tells the king: "cierto sed que si nos todos avenidos somos...querremos nos ser señores é poderosos de todos los reinos, é querrémos que todos los fechos se libren por nos, é así se tornara toda esta avenencia en vuestro daño é en vuestro desapoderamiento." *CFIV*, 134.

Although much of the blame is cast upon the greed of the nobles, the return of civil war is also attributed to Fernando's inability to distinguish good advice from bad.²¹ In *CFIV* Queen María warns her son against becoming engaged in violent confrontations between the nobles. The wise queen knows that Infante Juan is going to advise Fernando to declare war on Diego López and Juan Núñez before he even does so, and she tries to prevent her son from committing this grave error. The queen addresses her son very solemnly, saying she wishes to speak to him "ante Dios" and "commo fablaria con el Rey su padre, si vivo fuese" (143). She asks Fernando to consider the state of the kingdom, which cannot endure another civil war and she urges her son to pardon Juan Núñez, promising him that God will reward him if he forgives the magnate's alleged offenses and punish him if he does not: "que parase mientes en commo la tierra sufriera por él mucho mal en la guerra pasada, é que estava toda astragada, é que mayor mal les sería en sofrir agora guerra que non fuera en la otra que ovieran...é que si esto ficiese, que Dios que le acrescentaria la su vida é la su honra, é que si así non lo ficiese, que astragara la tierra de balde, é que todo el daño fincaría con él, é que faria en ello grand deservicio á Dios" (143). Despite her intervention, Fernando is turned away from the queen's prudent advice by the same tired lies of Infante Juan, who again insists that the king's mother is allied with his enemies. As a result, Juan Núñez, Diego López, and the latter's son, Lope Díaz de Haro, all renounce their vassalage to the king and fighting ensues. By the time Fernando realizes the value of his mother's advice and repents his decision, it is too late to prevent the damage both to the kingdom and to his honor. The king's counselors advise him badly, and the people are made angry by the war: "é cada día iva [el Rey]

21. We recall that the idea that a king must be a "buen lapidario en conoscer los omnes" and choose his advisors wisely is one of the key concepts in Sancho's *Castigos* (168).

entendiendo de commo pesaba á todos de aquella guerra” (145). In the end, the Fernando sues for peace and appoints his mother to lead the negotiations. Despite the fact that he did not heed her advice in the first place and despite her failing health,²² the forgiving queen is eager to help her son achieve reconciliation between the nobles. She sets out at once to meet Fernando, convinced that it is “grand servicio de Dios é pro de la tierra é grand guarda del Rey,” a combination of values that is time and again represented as motivating all the queen’s actions in *CFIV* (145).

From this point in the chronicle, the queen takes on a larger role in her son’s administration and Sánchez de Valladolid continues to highlight how she advises Fernando on how to be a good king. When some of Fernando’s counselor’s “maliciosamente” advise him to resume the war rather than give an extension of the truce to continue negotiations, the queen gives her son another lesson in good kingship:

¿É cómmo, fijo señor, vos queredes partir tal pleito commo este por non dar tregua de tres días? Si lo vos por esto partides, acaescervos han tres cosas: la una ponedes vos en tuerto; la otra dades á ellos que ayan razón que digan á los omes que por truega de tres días que les non quisiste dar, partistes el pleito; é la otra, cuando los de la tierra lo sopieren todos vos lo ternán á grand mal; é por esto tengo yo que es bien que le dedes la tregua, é este consejo yo vos lo dó é me pararé a ello. (146)

The queen’s monologue again places her again in the role of teacher to her son. María explains that in order to rule, a king’s vassals must see him as trustworthy and steady monarch, one who is not capricious or bellicose, and therefore worthy of their loyalty and

22. The queen becomes more often ill from this point in *CFIV*, as does Fernando. She is often ill when her son calls upon her for support and yet she always answers.

service. Beyond the prudent advice that she imparts to Fernando, Queen María also embodies these characteristics of good kingship. She negotiates with the nobles, and brings them back into the king's service "muy cueradamente é con tal entendimiento" (146). With some pageantry, María presents the reconciled nobles to her son, declaring: "Guad aquí estos omes buenos, é de aquí adelante guardadlos, é ellos sirvan vos" (146). It is interesting to note that the queen calls them "omes buenos" here, putting emphasis on their knighthood and not in their special status as *ricos omes*.²³ María appears to be wholly in charge of the scene, as they and the king then follow her to her chambers, where they swear fealty and kiss the king's hand in a sign of renewed vassalage. While this reconciliation will be temporary, the queen's intervention here is emblematic of the increasingly important role the queen will play in her son's court, and of the sort of conciliatory kingship that she promotes.

In the case of Vizcaya it is interesting to observe that the queen manages to keep the peace through female channels. First, she appeals to Urraca Gutiérrez, the mother of Pero Ponce, to avoid hostilities with that noble family. Then she calls on her half-sister Juana (widow of Lope Díaz de Haro) in order to negotiate an end to the dispute over Vizcaya. After speaking with the queen in Valladolid, Juana meets with her daughter and Infante Juan's wife, María Díaz de Haro. Through the queen's use of her family network and with the mediation of noble women, it is eventually established that Vizcaya will go to Infante Juan's wife after Diego López's death, though the dispute will not be truly settled for another year.

23. Sánchez de Valladolid often distinguishes between *ricos omes*, *caballeros*, and *omes buenos*, though this latter term is sometimes ambiguous and is at times used to refer to both noble and non-noble knights; For a discussion on the semantic differences between these terms, see Rodríguez Velasco, *Ciudadanía, soberanía monárquica y caballería*, 61-9.

When *cartas* are made for this and subsequent agreements, the queen is appointed to hold these documents until the pacts are signed and carried out, events for which she is also called upon to bear witness.²⁴ The continuous contrast between the steady and honest queen and the unstable and untrustworthy nobles makes María a trusted figure throughout the kingdom. Deception prevails at court and loyalties and alliances are rearranged at such an alarming rate that Fernando can no longer trust any of the nobles, especially his uncle Infante Juan. Therefore he relies more heavily upon his mother and the queen is forced to intervene time and again to put right the damage caused by the ambitious nobles.

If the queen inspires trust among the powerful magnates of the kingdom, the same can be said for her reputation with the non-noble knights who represent the urban *concejos*. When Juan Núñez and Infante Juan make trouble for the king with the *concejos*, María intervenes on her son's behalf during the Cortes of Valladolid in 1307. In the end, the trust that the *concejos* have in the queen overcomes the efforts of the Juanes to create discord, since the procurators: “sabian é eran ciertos que ella era la que quería pro de toda la tierra, é que ficiera mucho por ella, é que avia tomado muy gran afán é gran laceria por facer reinar al Rey su fijo, é por guardar la tierra de daño é de mal lo más que ella pudo” (150). The queen works with the procurators in order to find solutions that will respect the honor of the king: “En aquello que la Reina entendía que era daño del Rey é del reino, tiróles dello con razones derechas que les dijo...é en las otras cosas ordenóles cómo las demandas guardando honra del Rey é del su señorío, é lo más a pró de la tierra” (150-1). She appeases the *concejos'* complaints and manages things so that all that is done is in the best interests of the king and his kingdom.

24. *CFIV*, 151, 152, 153.

Although María is undoubtedly a great proponent of peace in the kingdom, she also is also concerned with protecting of the king's honor. When Juan Núñez—displeased by the latest agreement over Vizcaya—begins to “decir sus palabras non guardadas en cuanto decía,” Infante Juan again tries to use this to his advantage. The infante lies to the king and to Juan Núñez, alleging to Fernando that Lara has been secretly supporting Alfonso de la Cerda against him, while assuring Juan Núñez that he is his true ally and that he is supporting his best interests with the king. In June of 1307, Juan Núñez de Lara, angry at the king's weak character in being controlled by Infante Juan, insults Fernando publically and again renounces his vassalage. The king takes this affront very seriously, and all of his noble counselors agree that “tal razon commo esta fallaban que nunca la dijera ningund rico ome á ningund Rey” (152). They advise the king to impose exile on Juan Núñez, and when the latter refuses to leave and to give back the lands he has received from the king, they plan to lay siege to Lara's stronghold in Tordehumos. Inexplicably, Infante Juan—who has been one of the principal advisors working to turn the king against Juan Núñez—now begins to advise Fernando against attacking him. Fernando is very concerned with getting out of this bind with his honor intact, and he looks to his mother for advice. At first the queen modestly tries to excuse herself from intervening in the matter, claiming that “este consejo non era para ella, ca era dueña é non avie ella á parar á ello” (153). However, when he continues to press her, the queen advises her son to impose his rule and defend his honor, even if he has to use force:

Pues el Rey enviára mandar á don Juan Nuñez por su consejo dellos que saliese de la tierra é el non lo quiso facer, que tenía que esto era grand mengua del Rey si lo non acabase, é que lo non decía por lo de don Juan

Nuñez solamente, mas que lo decía por él é por todos los otros omes poderosos de toda la su tierra que sabian muy bien que cada que los otros reyes onde él venía enviaban á decir á cualesquier ricos omes, por honrados que fuesen, que saliesen de la tierra, luego lo facian é non osaban y fincar en ninguna manera, é que por esto tenía que non era honra del Rey si más y non ficiese. (153)

In contrast to the previous situation with Juan Núñez, in this case the magnate's offenses are confirmed by reliable sources. Therefore, María urges her son to use force to protect his honor. In spite of the "weakness" of her gender, she recognizes that disobedience in the king's vassals must be punished and that sometimes force is the only appropriate action a monarch can take.

At this point in *CFIV*, it becomes apparent that while María humbly urges her son to defend his honor, Infante Juan does all he can to destroy it. The chronicler tells us that Fernando realizes that his uncle does not want him to be seen as a strong monarch, and that this is the reason that the infante has led the king down this path, only to now discourage him from following it to the end. According to Sánchez de Valladolid, Infante Juan worries that, "si el Rey acabase aquello que avia comenzado contra don Juan Nuñez, que nunca le menguaria algund achaque contra él, é si aquello acabase, quel daria grand esfuerzo para comenzar cualquier cosa que quisiese facer" (153). Fernando goes ahead with the siege, and continues it despite Infante Juan's repeated efforts to impede the king's success.²⁵ In the end, it is not Infante Juan, but rather Fernando who undoes his

25. Ibid, 155. According to Sánchez de Valladolid, Infante Juan tries to broker a deal with Juan Núñez, which he hopes will make the latter his ally. Then the infante tries to end the siege by encouraging the king to arrest some powerful nobles who he claims are planning to betray the king. Later, Juan tells these same nobles that the king is planning to kill them, prompting them to abandon the siege.

own plans. The king errs by giving way to his emotions and abandoning the siege when one of his good friends is killed. The queen tries to prevent her son from making this fatal mistake, but once again the king fails to heed her advice, and so brings about his own dishonor and the failure of the siege.

Infante Juan and the Noble Rebellion of 1308

By 1308, it is clear that Infante Juan has become the primary antagonist to the king's power in *CFIV*, and that like Conde Lope Díaz de Haro and Infante Enrique before him he imposes upon the king's sovereignty and rebels against him. Although Juan gave up his claim to the kingship of León seven years before, he still intends to rule—only through his nephew instead of in spite of him. When Fernando meets with his mother in Toro in February of 1308, the queen warns her son that Infante Juan and Juan Núñez are likely to ally themselves against him again, and her suspicions are soon confirmed as the Juanes convoke a large meeting of nobles in Palencia. According to the chronicle, Infante Juan and Juan Núñez have been falsely warned that the king is planning to arrest and kill them and they demand an audience with the queen. María meets with the nobles and expresses her astonishment at how easily they believe these rumors. She convinces many of them of the falseness of the accusations against her son: “E la Reina les dijo que...sabian ellos bien que nunca el Rey obrára en tal manera contra ningund ome de la su tierra...é que sabían ellos muy bien que nin era cruo nin matador, ni nunca lo fuera, é que se maravillaba dellos de lo creer así tan ligeramente, pero pues que el pleito á este lugar era llegado, que catasen ellos cuál cosa ellos quisiesen que viesen que el Rey pudiese é deviese facer que non fuese su mengua dél nin su deshonna, é que lo faria” (157). The chronicler tells us that while the nobles had intended to demand castles as

hostages to ensure their safety, after the queen speaks to them they are reassured and “con esta razon que les dijo la Reina partiéronse desta demanda” (157). Once again, Fernando is saved by his mother’s great abilities as an orator and an intercessor.

Still, Infante Juan claims that he fears for his life and tells the king that the nobles have business with him that is “muy grand vuestro servicio é pro de la tierra” (158). Recognizing the queen’s well-known dedication to her son’s cause (“la Reina vuestra madre es aquella que quiso siempre é querrá vuestra honra é vuestro servicio”), he asks that María serve as their mediator and so she meets with the nobles in Grijota (153). The nobles demand the dismissal of many of the king’s officials because, as they say, “el Rey trae su hacienda muy mal, é...los de la tierra están muy querellosos señaladamente por que trae malos omes en su consejo é en la su hacienda” (153). It is ironic that the Juanes should want to get rid of the king’s “bad advisors,” since the concejos made the same complaint about them in 1302. While the nobles refuse to make any accusations against the king’s officials, they provide a list of the knights and noblemen who should replace the officials that they want dismissed. The queen protests that she believes it is wrong of the nobles to make such a demand of their king, and that it is also wrong to dismiss his officials without giving just cause, but she relays their demands all the same. Fernando’s counselors advise him against setting such a dangerous precedent because it will cause further damage his honor, but the king is forced to comply with these demands in order to avoid further hostilities in his kingdom, and also because “por aventura podrian poner grand escándalo en toda la tierra con la voz que avian tomado, en que decian que lo facian por su servicio é por pro de la tierra” (159). Although Juan feigns concern for the state of the kingdom, the chronicler informs us that: “el más lo decia por querer aver el

poder de todos los reinos, que non porque se doliese de la tierra” (161). Even after the king cedes to their demands, his uncle continues to intrigue, claiming that Fernando plans to kill him and repeatedly telling anyone who will listen “que toda la tierra era perdida por la mengua del Rey” (161). This rebellion allows the nobles to encroach upon the king’s power, and Sánchez de Valladolid’s account of these events reinforces the image of Infante Juan as a dangerous magnate with an insatiable greed for power and wealth.

Since the noble coalition has co-opted the argument for the good of the king and his kingdom, the queen demands that they do more to promote these values: “que pues ellos avian comenzado de tomar voz para aderezar el estado de la tierra alguna cosa otra avian á mostrar en que era más menester” (159). María tries to defend the monarch from the growing power of the nobles by calling for an investigation into the revenues of the crown and the nobility.²⁶ Such an investigation should serve to demonstrate how the nobles are monopolizing the wealth of the kingdom, since the chronicler tells us that despite their constant demands for more *soldadas*, the nobles have actually been receiving far more money than they need, and the amount is much greater than what they received under past kings.²⁷ When the investigation is finally made in the Cortes of Burgos of 1308, it is revealed that the crown does not have sufficient income to pay all of its expenses. While the queen “é todos los más” advise Fernando to follow tradition and ask the concejos to give him additional *servicios* (which, according to the *ordenamiento* from the Cortes of 1307, he had agreed to do), Infante Juan convinces his nephew to

26. This investigation had already been promised by the king in the *ordenamiento* from the Cortes of Valladolid in 1307: “6. Otrossi alo que me pidieron...que quisiesse saber quanto rrendian los mios rregnos delas rrentas foreras e delos otros mios derechos, et que tomase ende para mi lo que por bien touviese. Et lo al quelo partiesse entre infantes e rricos omes e caualleros como la mi merçed fuesse, et por que non ouiesse de echar sseruiços nin pechos desafforados en la tierra. Aesto digo quelo tengo por bien, pero si acaesçiere que pechos ouiere mester algunos, pedir gelos he, et en otra manera no echaré pechos ningunos enlla tierra.” *Cortes de los antiguos reinos*, 185.

27. *CFIV*, 153, 159.

demand other taxes. This action doesn't even generate the necessary amount and only serves to offend and anger the representatives of the concejos (160). On another occasion in *CFIV*, Infante Juan gets Fernando to demand servicios without even calling cortes (145). The king continues to be dominated by his uncle, who advises the king to commit injustices against his people.

The Resumption of the Reconquest

It is possible that Fernando IV may have seen the enterprise of reconquest as an opportunity to resist the encroachment of the nobles on his powers as king and to gain honor. Making war against the infidel in a united effort under the king could provide a more suitable outlet for noble violence, as well as the promise of booty and land acquisition. It was a largely popular undertaking, and the expansion of the king's territories would redound upon his honor and provide him with a more favorable legacy. In *CFIV*, Fernando expresses his desire "de querer servir á Dios, señaladamente contra los moros de aquen mar," but he also voices his understanding that, "si esta Guerra de los moros non tomase, que era muy grand su daño, lo uno en que les avria á dar las soldadas, porque avrian á despechar la tierra, lo otro porque farian mucha malfetria é se facia cada dia en la tierra por todos los grandes omes é por los fijosdalgos" (161, 162). When Fernando meets with Jaume II in December of 1308 to plan the wedding of the Infanta Leonor to Infante Jaume and confirm the fulfillment of the agreement made four years earlier in Torrellas, he suggests to the Aragonese monarch that they join forces to make war on Muhammad III of Granada. That same month, the monarchs sign the Treaty of Alcalá de Henares. When the king brings this proposal to the powerful nobles in his court, Infante Juan tries to prevent the king from going to war with excuses, but Fernando

is able to get support for the endeavor from other nobles. In the 1309 Cortes of Madrid the king's project is approved and the *servicios* granted, “*todos veyendo que avia buena entencion é que queria comenzar buen fecho, é todo á servicio de Dios*” (162). Still, when they arrive in Cordoba the king meets resistance for his plans to set siege to Algeciras, as the nobles were hoping to make a brief invasion and run raids for their profit instead of committing to a lengthy siege effort. However, “*veyendo ellos commo el Rey lo avia mucho á corazon,*” they follow their king, arriving in Algeciras in July of 1309.²⁸

The first person to be informed of Fernando's plans to renew the reconquest in the chronicle is Queen María. María is very pleased with this decision, not just because her son “*tomaba carrera de querer servir á Dios,*” but also “*por cuán grand bien lo avia librado*” (161). In suggesting the projected conquest to King Jaime, Fernando is taking initiative for the first time, without the intervention of his treacherous counselors. By refusing to be swayed by Infante Juan's bad advice and insisting that the nobles fall in line behind him, Fernando also begins to show the firmness of character that he had so conspicuously lacked in the past. It appears that the king finally wants to free himself from his uncle's damaging influence and to impose his rule more energetically. At the same time that Fernando begins preparations for the war, Sánchez de Valladolid also tells us how he charges his mother with carrying out justice against the noble *malfechores* (evil-doers) in his kingdom. When he leaves for the frontier, Fernando appoints his mother as regent in his stead and she humbly accepts the appointment at his insistence: “*el Rey rogó á la Reina su madre que fíncase en todos sus reinos con su poder dél, porque los rigiese en cuanto él estoviese en la frontera...É commo quier que fué muy grave á la*

28. Ibid, 163. We recall that this is the same language that the chronicler uses to describe María's dedication to protecting her son's rights (and the noble's lack of interest in the same) during the war of the minority.

Reina de lo querer, pero tanto la afincó el Rey dello, que lo ovo á otorgar" (162, my emphasis). With these changes of attitude and action, it seems that Fernando is finally showing potential for becoming a good Castilian king, though he will not live long enough to repair his legacy.

Although Fernando's effort to extend his territories southward was largely a failure, Sánchez de Valladolid glorifies the king's success in Gibraltar and connects Fernando IV's reconquest efforts to the larger legacy of Castilian kings and conquest. When the king informs the representatives of his kingdom in the Cortes of Madrid in 1309 of his intention to serve God in the war against the Muslims, he refers to the reconquest tradition among the kings of Castile-León: "El Rey mostró a todos de commo era su voluntad de querer servir á Dios señaladamente contra los moros, así commo lo hicieron los reyes onde él venía" (162). He also orders all the nobles to meet him in Toledo, where his mother has prepared a ceremony to remove her husband's remains to a new tomb, which she has had constructed for him in the cathedral. Afterwards, Fernando sets out for Algeciras while Jaume attacks Almeria. Interestingly, the chronicle reports that while the Moors show a great respect for Fernando and refuse to meet him in pitched battle, they deplore the audacity of King Jaime and therefore do not hesitate to meet him in the field several times: "Vinieron á [el rey de Aragon] algunas veces...é quanto estudo el rey don Fernando en esta cerca, nunca se atrevieron los moros de venir á aquella parte do él estava nin lo tenían por derecho" (163). Sánchez de Valladolid explains that the Muslim soldiers "decían...que en cercarles el Rey de Castilla las sus villas que era derecho, mas que lo del rey de Aragon teníanlo por tuerto é por deshonra" (163). The Castilian nobles are of a similar opinion, and "veyendo que dando el Rey al rey de

Aragon parte en la conquista de Granada, que non era su pro nin su honra, non gelo querian consejar” (162). All of this points to the idea that the kingdom of Granada belonged “by right” to the king of Castile alone, and that therefore it was his responsibility to take it back from the “invaders.”

Fernando’s primary success occurs in September when an attack led by Alonso Pérez de Guzmán (*el Bueno*), Juan Núñez, and the archbishop of Seville leads to the capture of Gibraltar. When the king travels there to accept the formal surrender of the city, the chronicler inserts an anecdote that creates a sense of consistent progression in the reconquest since Fernando III. As the defeated inhabitants are departing the city, an elderly Moor stops to address the king, saying:

“Señor, ¿qué oviste conmigo en me echar de aquí? Ca tu bisabuelo el rey don Fernando quanto tomó a Sevilla me echó dende, é vine morar á Xerez, é despues el rey don Alfonso, tu abuelo quando tomó á Xerez echóme dende, é yo vine morar á Tarifa, é, cuidando que estava en lugar salvo, vino el rey don Sancho tu padre é tomó á Tarifa, é echóme dende, é yo vine morar aquí á Gibraltar, teniendo que en ningund lugar non estaria tan en salvo en toda la tierra de los moros de aquende la mar commo aquí; é pues veo que en ningund lugar destos non puedo fincar, yo iré allende la mar, é me porné en lugar do viva en salvo é acabe mis días.” É luego el Rey entró en la villa, é fizo su oración alzando las manos al cielo é dando gracias á Dios del bien é de la merced que le ficiera. (163)

With these words from the mouth of a Moor who is leaving the peninsula forever, the chronicler depicts Fernando as the new head of a long-standing and consistent effort that

will culminate in the eventual expulsion of the infidel from the peninsula. The king also appears pious in this episode, where he raises his hands to the sky and thanks God for this victory over the Moors (163).

During the war against the Moors, Fernando begins to resemble his parents in his determination. Like Sancho, Fernando resists time and again the advice of the nobles who press him to give up the siege of Algeciras, and in a sentence that echoes his mother's faith in God's Providence, Fernando declares that he "queria pararse á lo que Dios quisiese á vida ó á muerte [é] ante queria allí morir que non levantarse ende deshonorado" (164). According to *CFIV*, upon his return from Gibraltar King Fernando has a falling-out with his uncle which is provoked "por algunos omes que andaban metiendo mal entrellos" (163). Whether for this reason or because the nobles are demanding to be paid again,²⁹ Infante Juan abandons the siege in October, accompanied by his son Alfonso, Juan Manuel, and Fernán Ruiz de Saldaña. While the chronicle reports that Infante Juan took almost half of the king's forces with him, Fernando convinces his brother Infante Pedro, Diego López, and Juan Núñez to remain, and is soon reinforced by his youngest brother, Infante Felipe and the Archbishop of Santiago.

As he commits this lengthy offensive, the chronicler makes it clear that Fernando also has the support of God. In Castile Queen María orders masses to be said in order to stop the incessant rain that is plaguing the soldiers in Algeciras, but as Sánchez de Valladolid reveals, these rains are actually a miracle that protects the royal army from attack: "Commo quier que todos cuidaban que les facia daño, non fué así, ante les fizo

29. According to a letter from the Viscount of Castellnou to Jaume II, the real reason that Infante Juan and the king fell out with each other was a dispute over the stipends owed to the nobility. The nobles had already fulfilled the initial three months of military service for which they had been paid. Giménez Soler, *Juan Manuel*, 368.

grand pro, que si non por aquello los moros vinieran allí á ellos, é así quiso Dios que por aquel tiempo que facia, el Rey é los de la hueste fueron más guardados de peligro” (164). Despite having the favor of God, Fernando does not manage to take Algeciras. The king has trouble supplying his troops, Muhammad III allies himself with Morocco, and Diego López dies, forcing Fernando to lift the unsuccessful siege in January 1310. Nevertheless, the chronicler spins this defeat, highlighting what Fernando gains from this temporary truce: Muhammad returns the territories of Castile-León that were taken during the war of the minority and agrees to pay *parias* to Fernando. Sánchez de Valladolid also details Fernando’s preparations for future reconquest efforts. The king sends Juan Núñez to ask the pope for permission to collect the church tithes for the crusade and sends Infante Pedro back to the frontier.

The Attempt on Infante Juan’s Life and the Last Rebellion of the Nobility

While Fernando is putting down a rebellion in Cordoba, María sends to inform her son of the approaching nuptials of Infanta Isabel with John III, Duke of Brittany and to ask that the king honor his sister with his presence at the ceremony. En route to Burgos, Fernando appeals to Juan Núñez to help him arrest or kill Infante Juan because, “era cierto que cuanto [el infante don Juan] viviese, nunca podría acabar ninguna cosa de lo que quisiese, é señaladamente en lo de la guerra de los moros que tenía comenzada, é que tenía en buen lugar para lo acabar” (165). Infante Juan meets with the king on his way to the wedding, but when they arrive in the city the infante refuses to enter, fearing that his nephew is planning to murder him. Unwilling to trust the promises of his nephew, the infante asks Queen María to guarantee his safe conduct in Burgos, where he will meet with the king. After speaking with her son, María—unaware of her son’s true

intentions—gives Juan her word that the king is desirous of reconciliation and that no harm will come to him. However, during the night Fernando secretly posts soldiers in his wife’s chambers—which are located in Queen María’s palace—with the intent of surprising Juan when he comes to meet with the monarchs the following day.

Fortunately, God wills it (“Dios quiso”) that the queen’s loyal chancellor discovers the plot and alerts the queen immediately (166). María quickly informs Juan and urges him to flee the city, saving the infante’s life for a second time.

Although this botched attempt on Infante Juan’s life is somewhat reminiscent of the tragedy of Alfaro, there are some key differences. Lope de Haro provokes his own death by attacking King Sancho, and the chronicler does not suggest that Sancho planned the meeting with the intention of killing anyone. The reason for Queen María’s intervention is also different in this case. In Burgos, María doesn’t save Juan because he is member of the royal family, but rather because Fernando has lured him there with false promises, which she believes could cause the people to turn against their king: “[Ella] veia que era el fecho muy malo, é que era ocasion de perder el Rey el reino; que si tal ome commo el infante don Juan matase, viniendo seguro á la su casa commo avia venido, todos los omes buenos de la tierra tomarian ende dél grand miedo, porque avrian á facer lo peor que pudiesen contra el Rey” (166). While it seems doubtful that Alfonso XI would support the queen’s position on this issue, Sánchez de Valladolid demonstrates that María is right to believe that Fernando’s attempt to entrap Infante Juan will cause the nobles to lose confidence in their king.³⁰ The chronicler tells us although he encourages

30. Alfonso XI had a similar experience, where he lures Infante Juan’s son Juan into a meeting with false promises and then has him executed.

Fernando in this venture—Juan Núñez secretly fears that if the king kills Infante Juan while feigning friendship, then he might be next.³¹

The chronicle also confirms María's suspicion that Fernando's duplicity would threaten his grasp on power. Soon after Infante Juan's flight from Burgos, Juan Manuel and his men follow, slipping out of the city during the night to meet with the infante. Juan Alonso de Haro also comes to Juan's defense, along with the king's cousin don Sancho, the son of Sancho IV's brother the Infante Pedro. Eventually, Fernando realizes that he cannot continue persecuting his uncle, and not knowing what else to do, he turns to his mother to set things right again. Queen María manages the negotiations and encourages her son to reconcile the nobles—who are fighting amongst themselves as well as with their king—in order to return to the frontier “á servicio de Dios” (168). Eventually, Fernando and his uncle take solemn oaths of friendship in the presence of the queen—only for Juan to enter into a pact with a large group of nobles against the king the very next day: “É otro dia falleció don Juan el pleito, é fuese luégo dende á verse con el infante don Pedro é con don Juan Nuñez, é con don Lope, é fueron y con ellos don Fernand Ruiz é otros ricos omes, é pusieron todos su pleito muy fuerte contra el Rey.”³² The king manages to regain the allegiance of his brother Infante Pedro, Juan Manuel, and Juan Alfonso by offering them lands in exchange for fealty, but Infante Juan makes yet another pact against the king with Diego López and Juan Núñez. This noble coalition then approaches Queen María, trying to enlist her support to dethrone Fernando and

31. “É cuando don Juan Nuñez esta razon oyó, commo quier que desamaba al infante don Juan é le buscaba quanto mal podía con el Rey, con todo esto non le plugo con esta razon por lo suyo mesmo, ca bien tenía que si el Rey esto acabase, non era él por eso más seguro del Rey, ante tenía que estava en mayor peligro por ello.” *CFIV*, 165.

32. *Ibid*, 168.; Although the chronicle makes no mention of it, Giménez Soler has published several letters that suggest that Juan Núñez and the Infantes Juan and Pedro were also refusing to pledge fealty to Alfonso at this time. Giménez Soler, *Juan Manuel*, 393, 397.

replace him with his brother Pedro. The queen deplores their proposal as treason and an offense against God, and she warns them not to attempt it: “É la reina doña María...dijo que nunca Dios quisiese que en tal cosa ella fuese, mas que lo facian ellos muy mal en andar en tal cosa commo esta, que era tan grand traicion é tan grand deservicio de Dios...é commo quier que otras vegadas lo avian probado, que lo non probasen agora, que peor se fallaria ende” (168). Seeing that they cannot have the queen’s support, the nobles give up their plot, which María keeps secret from Fernando in order to avoid further difficulties. The chronicler informs us that all the nobles (except Juan Núñez, who becomes a vassal of the king of Portugal) are then reconciled to the king, while glossing over the unsavory terms of the agreement, according to which the king was forced to replace many of his officials yet again.³³ It is clear from the narration of these events that whatever the chronicler’s opinion is on entrapping and executing powerful magnates, Fernando’s attempt to kill Infante Juan almost cost him his crown. In the end, the king is only saved by the intervention of his mother, Queen María.

The Death of Fernando IV and the Legend of el Rey Emplazado

After the nobles are reconciled to the king, Fernando follows his mother’s advice and makes preparations to renew the war with Granada. To this end, Fernando meets with King Jaume in Calatayud in December of 1311. During these *vistas*, the monarchs renew their pledge to conquer Granada and the realms are finally united through marriage. Fernando’s three-year-old daughter, Leonor, is married to Jaume’s heir and sent to Aragón to be raised there, and Fernando’s brother Pedro is married to the Infanta María of Aragón. Despite Pedro’s involvement in the most recent noble alliance against the

33. Carmona Ruiz, *María de Molina* 221-2; Del Valle Curieses, *María de Molina*, 204; González Mínguez, *Fernando IV*, 313.

king, he is portrayed as being loyal to his brother, especially in the war against the infidel.³⁴ While Fernando calls a cortes in Valladolid to get funds for the war, his brother Pedro goes to the frontier ahead of him, attacking and eventually capturing Alcaudete in the name of the king. In contrast, when Fernando finally rides to war, Infante Juan stays behind, causing “alborozo” in the kingdom and continuing to allege that Fernando plans to kill him (169). When Fernando is at the siege of Alcaudete, the illness that has been plaguing him for years worsens, and he dies in Jaén on September 7, 1312, at the age of 26. Pedro mourns his brother’s passing (“fizo muy grand llanto por él”), then immediately proclaims Fernando’s son, Alfonso, as king (169).

According to *CFIV*, King Fernando’s illness and death are brought about in part by his lack of restraint and moderation in his diet. Sánchez de Valladolid says that Fernando “non se quiso guardar la boca de las viandas” and “era mancebo é se guardaba muy mal” (165, 167). On several occasions the chronicle tells us that the king exacerbates his illness by over-indulging in meat and wine, the latter of which is explicitly warned against in Sancho’s *Castigos*. On the occasion when Fernando becomes gravely ill as a result of his gluttony in his uncle Alfonso’s house, he sends for his mother to take him to her home in Valladolid. The queen is able to bring about a partial and temporary recovery by refusing to allow him meat: “[El Rey] demandaba todo el dia que le diesen á comer carne... é la Reina defendió que non gela diesen, e guardó que la non comiese fasta pasados los catorce días; é a los catorce días ovo mejoría é diéronle carne, commo quier que nunca le dejó la fiebre” (167). However, María cannot control her son, nor save him from himself. When Fernando falls ill again during the siege of Alcaudete, he retires to

34. This favorable treatment of Pedro is likely due to the fact that after Fernando’s death Pedro will become the queen’s loyal vassal and the primary protector of his nephew, Alfonso XI.

Jaén, but he continues to eat meat and drink wine with no concern for his health: “Non se quiso guardar, é comia cada dia carne é bebia vino” (169). The day that Fernando dies, he has a meal in the morning and meets with his brother Pedro to plan future attacks on the kingdom of Granada. The king then retires to his chamber, where he dies alone and in his sleep, without anyone noticing his passing: “Un poco despues de mediodía falláronle muerto en la cama, en guise que ningunos le vieron morir” (169). The chronicle highlights the connection between Fernando’s gluttony and his illness, in such a way that the king’s moral failings and lack of restraint are held up as the cause of his suffering and death.

The legend of *el Rey Emplazado*, where Fernando is called before God to answer for his wrongful execution of the Carvajales brothers, is mentioned in the chronicle—though the chronicler does not appear to give much credit to this miraculous version of the king’s death. However, he does inform us that after leaving the Cortes of Valladolid and before heading to the siege of Alcaudete Fernando travels to Martos, where he orders the death of two noblemen. According to the chronicle, these unnamed nobles “vinieran á rieto que les facian por muerte de un caballero que decian que matáran cuando el Rey era en Palencia, saliendo de casa del Rey una noche, que decian Juan Alfonso de Benavides” (169). In the chronicle, the nobles come to Martos to answer the challenge of their accusers, and are later executed; from this Antonio Benavides concludes that the Carvajales must have lost their challenge, and therefore there were proved guilty and executed according to the laws of the kingdom.³⁵ And yet, while the chronicler reports

35. Benavides surveys the sources of this legend and argues that the chronicler attributes the king’s death to his poor health and bad habits. Benavides also points to the fact that the king had pledged in the most recent cortes to execute anyone who committed murder in the city where the king was staying as proof that this was done in accordance with the law. Benavides, *Memorias*, 1:686-96.

that there was a challenge, he does not mention the outcome. Sánchez de Valladolid simply informs us that “estos caballeros, cuando el Rey los mandó matar, veyendo que los mataban con tuerto, dijeron que emplazaban al Rey que pareciese ante Dios con ellos á juicio sobre esta muerte que él les mandaba dar con tuerto, de aquel dia que ellos morian á treinta dias” and then reports that the king dies exactly thirty days later: “E este juéves se cumplieron los treinta dias del emplazamiento de los caballeros que mandó matar en Márto” (169). The inclusion of this information and the fact that the chronicler gives the condemned knights a voice suggest that he is not trying to discredit the legend. The chronicler’s report of the legend of *el Rey Emplazado* is therefore ambiguous; while he includes facts that support it, he does not confirm or deny its veracity.

Conclusion: Fernando’s Reign in the Chronicles

Even after Fernando came into his majority, his reign continued to be defined by political turmoil and economic difficulties. Fernando had lost many territories and sources of revenue, either to foreign enemies during the war of the minority, or as gifts to the Castilian nobility in exchange for their fealty. Fernando needed to dedicate much of his income towards defending his crown, and this—coupled with the diminished number of *pecheros* in the territories of *realengo*—resulted in fiscal deficits that the king was unable to correct.³⁶ Fernando’s efforts to bring about justice and fiscal order generally failed, as the *ordenamientos* issued from the cortes continue to make the same demands that he uphold the law and punish noble *malfechores*.³⁷ The *ordenamientos* and other documentation also reveal that the tax-paying population of Castile-León was suffering

36. O’Callaghan, *Cortes*, 32; Ruiz, *Crisis and Continuity*, 287-314.; Ruiz, *Spain’s Centuries of Crisis*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 31.

37. O’Callaghan says of the cortes of Fernando’s reign: “The persistent theme of all the *cuadernos* of this period is the default of justice and the breakdown of law and order.” O’Callaghan, *Cortes*, 31.

from excessive and illegal taxation both at the hands of the nobles and the king's administrators. Rebellions of noble factions continued, as powerful family clans fought for hegemony. On the few occasions that they were in alliance, the magnates managed to impose their will on the king. Fernando's early death and his constant struggle with the nobility had left the crown in a weakened state, with fiscal deficits and a one-year-old king.

It is an understatement to say that the portrayal of Fernando IV in the chronicles falls short of that of an ideal king as described in Sancho's *Castigos*. The representation of Fernando's majority in the chronicles suggests that he was unsuccessful as a ruler in part because he lacked certain kingly qualities, such as strength of character, good judgment, and restraint. Both chronicles depict Fernando as weak, ingenuous, and easily manipulated by the powerful and unscrupulous noblemen. Fernando is certainly culpable of choosing bad advisors, including the Jew Samuel, who works with the Juanes against the queen and the "muy disoluto" Sancho Ruíz de Escalante (137). Sánchez de Valladolid relates how Ruíz de Escalante has a great feast on Holy Thursday (when he should be fasting), then falls asleep in a bed with two other men, where he is stabbed in the middle of the night. Samuel dies soon after, and neither of these *privados* is mourned by anyone but the king. The king's advisors, especially Infante Juan and Juan Núñez, lead Fernando down a path of vice, encouraging him to be irresponsible and hedonistic. In *CFIV*, the king spends much of his time hunting and feasting, and on one occasion he stays up all night playing dice with Diego López de Haro.³⁸ Loaysa draws a connection between Fernando's idleness and his failures as a king when he says: "siendo su casi continua ocupación realizar juegos de niño y otras diversiones más bien que intentar recuperar su

38. *CFIV*, 128, 136, 141, 162, 148.

tierra que...habían tomado por la fuerza y tenían en su poder los reyes vecinos, y que es más enajenó, entregó y concedió a los barones y soldados y también a los reyes muchas partes de su reino” (207). While under the influence of the nobles, Fernando neglects his duties as king of Castile-León, failing to uphold justice and to maintain and expand his territories. The nobles also encourage the king to commit injustices against his loyal vassals, including the extortion of taxes without the consent of the cortes and wrongful execution.³⁹ Sánchez de Valladolid says of Fernando that “era ome á quien metien los omes á lo que querían de mal,” and the narration of events in this chronicle makes it apparent that a king controlled by the nobility is a kingdom in peril (165). By giving power and offices to his former enemies and neglecting to reward the loyalty of his supporters, Fernando mismanages his kingdom and angers his vassals. For his failure to reward and punish his vassals according to their merit, the king loses the respect of some the nobles—such as Diego López and Juan Núñez—who both insult the king publically. Fernando is made suspicious by the constant betrayals in the court, and he eventually becomes a character worthy of suspicion himself. In the chronicles, Fernando’s brief kingship is an example of excess, poor judgment, and weakness, and these attributes cause Fernando to lose territories, wealth, and eventually his life.

If Fernando is obtuse, weak, and capricious, his queen mother is wise, strong and abstemious.⁴⁰ María is an honest and trustworthy co-ruler, who is respected throughout the Iberian Peninsula by all classes of men. She advises her son well and tries to lead him in the service of God and the good of the kingdom, a theme that constantly characterizes

39. Sánchez de Valladolid informs us that Infante Juan exacts revenge on García Téllez by having Fernando execute him, despite the fact that Téllez had been loyal to the king during the minority. *Ibid.*, 123.
40. It should be noted that this depiction of the queen largely refers to *CFIV*, as the queen disappears from Loaysa’s chronicle after Fernando comes of age and betrays her.

her actions in *CFIV*. Though she is often tested, the queen never betrays her son, and even her enemies recognize that she always has (and always will) support the best interests of the king. In contrast to the hubris demonstrated by the *ricos omnes*, María serves her son with humility, never making demands for her own benefit or trying to control him. She regularly refuses power when offered it, and only assumes it when pressured to do so for the service her son and his kingdom. Over the years, Fernando trusts more in her advice and legitimizes her rule by naming her as regent when he heads to war with Granada. While she is often portrayed as a forgiving queen who promotes peace and reconciliation, Sánchez de Valladolid balances this portrait by including episodes that demonstrate that María is also a strong queen, who imposes justice and urges her son to defend his honor. For example, when the queen is charged by Fernando with carrying out justice against the noble *malfechores*, she leads troops against them, takes hostages, and refuses to negotiate (161-2). The queen's harsh (i.e. masculine) justice is also evident in the story of Juana, the wife of Sancho (son of Infante Pedro, Fernando IV's uncle). After Sancho's death his wife, Juana, claims that she has had a son by him in order to retain her husband's lands. When she is challenged to prove the truth of her statement by holding a hot iron, she agrees, hoping that Queen María will spare her the pain of this test. However, when Queen María does not intercede on her behalf, Juana confesses that the child is not really Sancho's heir and the lands are returned to the king (160). The queen's justice here shows that despite her gender the queen does not have a soft heart, which is an important attribute in a strong monarch. In *CFIV*, the royal chronicler continues to hold María up as the preferred ruler of the people and as the champion of many of the policies and moral positions espoused in Sancho's *Castigos*.

She stands in opposition to the nobles and the king as an example of a good noble vassal and of a good Christian monarch.

Loaysa's Crónicas: A Conclusion

As Loaysa's chronicle ends in the middle of Fernando's majority, I would like to make a few concluding remarks about this chronicle and its author before beginning the examination of Alfonso XI's minority. While the patronage of Loaysa's history of Castilian kings is not entirely clear, we can characterize his work as a product of the cathedral school of Toledo. And yet, Loaysa's chronicle has much in common with Sánchez de Valladolid's. God's Providence is cited as a controlling force in the political arena, though God intervenes most often during Fernando's minority. The queen and her son are also styled as victims of men without honor who upset the order of the kingdom and prey on the weak, threatening the integrity, security, and prosperity of the kingdom. Although in comparison with *CTR*, Queen María's role is somewhat minimized (she barely registers during Sancho's reign and disappears from sight after the initial betrayal of her son), she is also the monarch who receives the most praise in Loaysa's chronicle. He does not reproduce her words or offer any insight into her internal thought processes, but he characterizes the queen as wise, brave, and righteous and he praises her for her steadfast support of her son. This is likely due to the fact that this text was written during Fernando's reign and that its author was a political ally of the queen. As we observed at the beginning of chapter two, Loaysa continued as a presence in María's court despite the general expulsion of prelates from the king's court at the beginning of Fernando's minority. While the exact nature and extent of his involvement in her court is difficult to

determine, Loaysa's extremely positive depiction of the queen gives testament to her continued alliance with prelates of Toledo.

Part Two: The Minority of Alfonso XI

The early death of Fernando IV and the succession of his one-year-old son, Alfonso, brought about a long minority (thirteen years—from 1312-1325), in which Queen María played an important part. This lengthy royal minority contributed to the political and social turmoil in the kingdom. Violence, poverty, lawlessness, and the abuse of power continued to be important concerns for the *concejos* in the cortes during Alfonso's minority.⁴¹ For the second time in less than two decades, the absence of an adult king created a power void in the monarchy and the kingdom was left with no clear head of state. Though Fernando's relatives had challenged his legitimacy and vied for the title of king during his minority, this time they set their sights on what may have seemed a more attainable goal: the regency. Fernando had not designated a regent upon his death, and despite her reputation as a trusted partner in the monarchy, Queen María could not simply reassume this role. She was not the only queen in Castile and Alfonso's mother, Constanza, was the king's natural guardian. Furthermore, Fernando had entrusted the *tutoria* of his son to Infante Pedro, whatever the chronicler says of the king's desire to give the post to his mother.⁴² And yet, even with Constanza's support, neither was Pedro able to assert his claim as the sole regent and protector of the realm. Political schemes and tragic events would continue to reopen the dispute over the regency throughout Alfonso's minority, perpetuating division among the kingdom. The *concejos* of Castile

41. *Cortes de los antiguos reinos*, 221-47.

42. *CFIV*, 168. Sánchez de Valladolid asserts that Fernando had previously arranged for any son that he might have to be given into the care of his mother; but when Alfonso is born August 13, 1311, Queen Constanza insists on giving the guardianship of the heir to Infante Pedro.

and León elected different regents and attended separate cortes. They also imposed themselves on the regents through the creation minority councils made up of urban knights and once again formed new *hermandades* to protect their interests.⁴³

In *CAXI*, Queen María champions a policy of peace, consensus, and unity in order to protect her grandson's kingdom from destruction. In the first six chapters of *CAXI* the threat of civil war looms large as members of the powerful noble class struggle for hegemony. The chronicler details the political and military maneuvers of the nobles, who quickly form two factions: one group in support Infante Juan's candidacy as regent and the other for Infante Pedro. Pedro has the support of his mother and Queen Constanza, as well as the adhesion of Juan Alfonso de Haro and the Téllez clan. Meanwhile Infante Juan enjoys broad support among the noble class, including the wayward Infante Felipe. Both bands raise armies and narrowly avoid armed confrontation on several occasions during the first few months of Alfonso's reign.⁴⁴ According to the chronicle, after proclaiming Alfonso king in Jaén (while the one-year-old king is in Ávila) Infante Pedro does not take immediate action to protect his role as Alfonso's appointed tutor, and therefore regent and protector of the realm. Instead of hastening to Ávila to assume custody of Alfonso, Infante Pedro leaves Queen Constanza in Córdoba to bury her husband, makes a truce with the King of Granada, and fortifies the southern territories, all

43. O'Callaghan says that the frequency of the meetings of regional *hermandades* is "a measure of the disorder that prevailed throughout the kingdom" and "the widespread activity of the *hermandades* during this time testified to the regents' failure to correct abuses and punish evil-doers. In effect, the *hermandades* had to provide the protection that the government was unable to give; yet at the same time the very existence of the *hermandades* contributed to the general upset." O'Callaghan, *Cortes*, 34, 35.; For a discussion of the empowerment of the knightly classes during this period, see Rodríguez Velasco, *Ciudadanía, soberanía monárquica y caballería*, 61-139.

44. According to *CAXI*, their armies come close to confrontation when Pedro is returning from a meeting with his father-in-law, Juan II: "Venose...para Castiella a Rioja et á Burueva, et falló y gran asonada de caballeros, et partióla" (174). Pedro moves his troops to Infante Juan's pseudo cortes in Sahagún, but is persuaded to stop pursuing them by his brother, Felipe.

of which supports the idea that Pedro is putting duty before glory. Meanwhile, Infante Juan and Juan Núñez lose no time in commencing their scheme to take the regency from Pedro. First they appeal to Queen María, offering to make her regent instead of her son and threatening to make war against Pedro if he does not renounce the regency.

Unsurprisingly, María refuses to take power for herself, but at the same time she is careful not to openly oppose the Juanes. Instead she promises to mediate an agreement between the nobles and her son that will protect the kingdom from destruction and dissolution: “Et ella respondiolo, que lo non queria, porque era muy flaca, et que sabía muy bien quan grand peligro avia en ello; mas que ella enviaría por el Infante Don Pedro, et que fablaría con él, et que punaria de los aseogar á todos, porque lo que se ficiese fuese con consejo et acuerdo de todos: et si por aventura esto non se pudiese facer, que ante tomaria este afán por partir contienda entre ellos, et non oviese daño en la tierra” (173). The queen takes further measures to avoid confrontation by securing her grandson’s person in Ávila. Aware that both bands intend to take the king from Ávila, María sends orders to the bishop of that city to prevent anyone from taking custody of Alfonso until a cortes can be called to decide the *tutoria* and guardianship of the king.

When a plenary cortes is finally convened in Palencia in the spring of 1313, the queen, “que recelaba mucho la pelea,” insists on establishing a truce that limits the number of men that either party can bring with them into the city.⁴⁵ However, this agreement is not honored, and with thousands of armed knights in the city, tensions come to a head after the unexpected betrayal of Queen Constanza and Juan Manuel, who

45. “ca pues el Infante Don Pedro venía asonado, et ellos estaban allí asonados, que no podría ser sino que oviese pelea entre ellos, porque era menester que oviese tregua entre ellos: et la Reyna su madre que recelaba mucho la pelea, envio decir al Infante Don Pedro...Et movieron luego pleito que la Reyna saliese de Palencia, ó sino que veniesen todos y posar...et...que metiesen consigo por caballeros et oficiales mil et trecientos, et no más” Ibid, 175.

abandon María and Pedro in the middle of the cortes. The chronicler makes it clear that María has done nothing to deserve Constanza's betrayal, emphasizing that she treats her daughter-in-law with respect: "La Reyna Doña María recibióla mucho bien, et fízola mucha honra y mucho bien" (174). However Constanza repays her poorly, reneging on her word and refusing to even see the queen before abandoning her palace: "Estando la Reyna Doña María et la Reyna Doña Costanza en uno...et tiniendo amas un consejo de tener con el Infante Don Pedro, falleció el pleito la Reyna Doña Costanza, et fuése dende una tarde, et non la quiso ver, et fuése para el Infante Don Joan et para los otros que eran con él" (176). While María bears their defection with grace and composure, Pedro is incensed and the queen must intervene in order to prevent her son from retaliating with force: "el Infante Don Pedro...quisiera embaratarse con ellos, sino por la Reyna su madre que ge lo partió por muchas veces: et recelando la Reyna que si allí mucho estudiesen, que non podria ser sino que el pleito veniese á pelea entre ellos, et por guardar esto, acordó ella de salir dende" (176). Recognizing the danger, María gets everyone to agree to leave the city in order to avoid armed confrontation. With her words and her actions, the chronicler makes it clear that María is the only person of authority who truly puts the interests of the kingdom before her own. Though she never held the title of *guarda de los reinos*, the chronicler portrays the queen as the true protector of the realm, since it is she who protects her grandson's kingdom from civil war.

For the first two years of Alfonso's reign there is no real consensus as to who should be regent in the kingdom of Castile-León. When the prelates and procurators from the towns are left in Palencia to decide the regency, the plenary cortes devolves into regional cortes because they cannot come to a joint decision. According to the chronicler,

while the prelates and procurators who support the queen and her son as regents are anxious to make a joint decision in order to preserve the cohesion of the realm, those who support Infante Juan refuse to cooperate.⁴⁶ In the end, the procurators and prelates meet separately according to whose candidacy they support and they elect their own tutors. Afterwards, the infantes and the queen (María and Pedro are elected to serve jointly) convene separate, regional cortes where they agree to serve as regents and protectors of the realm in the territories where they have been elected. And yet, the regents make no agreements between each other and violent clashes between the two factions follow. In order to put an end to the division and war in the kingdom, María and Pedro try to establish a power-sharing agreement with Infante Juan, but the chronicler tells us that the nobles that support Infante Juan refuse to allow it.⁴⁷ In particular, the chronicler tells us that Juan Núñez opposes any meeting between the tutors because he hopes that if the fighting continues, he will be named regent instead: “Et nunca se quiso partir [del Infante Joan] por razon que non se viesse con la Reina: et esto facia él teniendo que por la desavenencia destos farian á él tutor del Rey” (174). The guardianship of the king is also an issue of contention.⁴⁸ At one point in the chronicle, both bands again try to take Alfonso from Ávila. However, the bishop and the knights of Ávila hold to the mandate that Queen María gave them at the beginning of the minority and refuse to deliver the

46. “E magüer Don Rodrigo, Arzobispo de Sanctiago, et los Perlados et los Procuradores de las villas, que eran de la parte del Infante Don Pedro, enviaron cometer por muchas veces á los de la parte del Infante Don Joan que se quisiese ver con ellos, porque si un tutor ó dos acordasen de facer lo que oviesen de facer, que fuese con acuerdo de todos, et non por discordia: et los de Castiella et de Leon non lo quisieron facer.” Ibid, 177.

47. According to the *ordenamientos* of the regional cortes of 1313, the concejos demand that the tutors not make any pacts to share the regency with anyone else, a fact that goes unmentioned in the chronicle. *Cortes de los antiguos reinos*, 232,237.

48. Ibid, 222, 234. In the regional cortes of 1313, Infante Juan asserts Constanza will have guardianship of her son, while Queen María and Infante Pedro insist that it should be decided in cortes two years hence, though they state that after the cortes, the custody will be given to Pedro, since Fernando had appointed him as Alfonso’s tutor.

king to either party until the regents can reach a consensus as to who should have the guardianship of Alfonso: “Ellos dixieron que lo non farian, á ménos de ser acordados ellos” (177). The death of Queen Constanza in November of 1313 is a heavy blow to Infante Juan’s claim, and a month later Juan finally signs a pact with Maria, which is ratified in the plenary Cortes of Burgos in 1315. Although the tutors agree to serve as regents in the regions where they are elected, the terms of the deal are most favorable to the queen and her son. According to the pact, Queen María is to have guardianship of her grandson, with whom the royal chancery will reside. The queen is also allowed to appoint Alfonso’s personal servants, although any other royal officials must be appointed jointly.⁴⁹

From the beginning of *CAXI*, Infante Pedro begins to distinguish himself as a worthy leader and a righteous regent, and Sánchez de Valladolid repeatedly contrasts Pedro’s positive qualities with Infante Juan. Like his father, King Sancho, Pedro evidences a determined character and an enthusiasm for the war against the Moors.⁵⁰ The chronicler emphasizes Pedro’s boldness in making increasingly deeper incursions into the territories of Granada and in taking Rute, “un castillo muy fuerte de los Moros [que] nunca el Rey Don Alfonso, ni el Rey Don Sancho osaron cometer...tan fuerte era” (178). Like his father, Pedro inspires fear among the knights of Granada, and on several occasions the Muslim knights flee before him and refuse to engage the infante in battle “por el recelo

49. *CAXI*, 178-9.; *Cortes de los antiguos reinos*, 272-6.

50. For an historical study on crusading activity during Alfonso’s minority (and into his majority), see O’Callaghan, *The Gibraltar Crusade: Castile and the Battle for the Strait*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 137-255.

que dél ovieron.”⁵¹ Pedro’s efforts result in the capture of a number of strongholds and castles, and it is significant that his victories cause “[muy] grand pesar et muy grand quebranto” not only for both the King of Granada, but also for Infante Juan (178, 182). When Pedro secures a papal bull for “la Cruzada para la guerra de los Moros,”⁵² Infante Juan convinces the other noble knights not to follow Pedro into war. However, even the defection of all of the *fijosdalgo* does not deter Pedro from his cause: “E veyendo el Infante Don Pedro que de aca ni de otra parte non avia acorro nenguno para la entrada de la vega de Granada, non dexó por eso de entrar allá” (181). Pedro leads the military orders on an invasion which proves to be quite timely, since they are needed to defend Gibraltar from the Muslims. The chronicler also discerns God’s hand in many of Pedro’s victories. When Pedro takes Rute, the chronicler comments that: “en lo tomar el Infante don Pedro en tres dias, tovieron que este fecho era de Dios” (178). Another miracle occurs in the episode where Pedro takes Tiscar, “la más fuerte cosa que tenian los Moros,” through the intervention of God and the help of “un ome muy pequeño, que decian Pedro Fidalgo” (183). The chronicle reports that this victory results in the expulsion of 4,500 Moors from that city. In this way, Pedro is portrayed as the coregent who does the most to further the legacy of reconquest in Castile.

Besides being the champion of reconquest efforts, Pedro also demonstrates other kingly qualities, such as good judgment and commitment to upholding the king’s justice.

51. *CAXI*, 181. On another occasion the king of Granada sends knights to break a siege that Pedro is leading but the Muslim knights refuse to fight him: “Nunca se atrevió á venir á lidiar con el Infante Don Pedro.” *Ibid*, 182.

52. *Ibid*, 181. This is the first time that the word *cruzada* is used to refer to what is usually called the “war against moors” in *CTR* and *CAXI*. In the chronicle, it is the pope’s designation of the bull of crusade that makes the war a crusade: “El Papa diera al Infante Don Pedro las tercias, et las décimas, et la Cruzada para la guerra de los Moros.” *Ibid*. The word *cruzada* also designates financial support in the chronicle. The chronicle later says the infantes “pusieron su pleyto...en como oviese su parte el Infante Don Joan en la Cruzada, et en las tercias, et en las décimas, et que fuesen amos á dos á la guerra de los Moros.” *Ibid*, 182.

Though the infante sometimes uses force to defend his honor, he is always willing to heed his mother's wise council and negotiate for the good of the kingdom. A good example of his restraint occurs when Pedro learns that Juan Manuel is raiding his territories during the plenary cortes of 1315 in Burgos. Pedro's first inclination is to rush to the defense of his lands, but the other tutors convince him that if he leaves the cortes will be dissolved, which will only lead to more division and violence. Pedro is able to recognize the wisdom of this counsel, and he remains in Burgos and does what is necessary to keep the king's peace: "El Infante Don Pedro óvolo á facer por guardar servicio del Rey, et porque non veniese daño á la tierra" (179). At the same time, Infante Pedro does not shirk from enforcing the king's justice on *nobles malfechores*, and when Juan Manuel wrongfully denaturalizes himself from the king and makes war on territories of *realengo*, Pedro does what he can to defend the kingdom. The infante tries to enlist his uncle's help to put an end to this destruction of the king's lands, but Infante Juan resists, "moviendole... algunas pleytesías porque ge lo partiese" (179). Juan even sends his eldest son Alfonso with Don Pero Ponce to attack Infante Felipe, with the express intention of keeping Felipe from aiding his brother in punishing Juan Manuel and carrying out the king's justice.

In contrast to Pedro's efforts to fulfill his duties as regent, Infante Juan continues to concentrate his energies on intrigue with the goal of making himself the sole regent. The chronicler suggests that Infante Juan is behind the formation of the Hermandad General of 1315, which was created in retaliation for Pedro's justice in killing certain noblemen and with the intention of removing Pedro as tutor: "Et todo esto facian ellos por tirar la tutoria al Infante Don Pedro" (180). While Infante Juan is engaged in this

scheme, the chronicler takes this opportunity to make a clear contrast between the infantes: “Et en esto era el Infante Don Joan en su poridad, como quier que lo non daba á entender en plaza: seyendo el Infante Don Pedro en la frontera en servicio de Dios et del Rey” (180). Juan then calls a cortes for Carrión in 1317, though Pedro is away at the frontier and the queen does not attend. The accounts demanded by the Hermandad General are presented and no wrongdoing is found on the part of the regents. With no legal basis to remove Pedro from the regency, Juan suggests that all three tutors should renounce the title in the hopes that he will be elected as the sole regent, but María and Pedro’s partisans refuse to allow this. After the 1317 cortes, Infante Juan continues to make problems for Pedro: “andaba bulliciendo quanto podia con los de la tierra contra él” (182). In *CAXI*, Sánchez de Valladolid continues to portray Infante Juan as an ambitious, unscrupulous, and greedy ruler, who is contrasted unfavorably with Pedro and the queen.

According to the chronicle, the impoverished state of the crown and the pervasive sin of greed among the knights of Castile-León leads to a dramatic breakdown of chivalry during the Cortes of Carrión in 1317. In this episode, fighting breaks out in the king’s palace where the knights have gathered to receive their stipends:

Et sobre la particion de los dineros, que se non avenian por la mengua que avia, comenzóse una pelea entre todos los Fijos-dalgo en los palacios del Rey á do posaba la Reyna, en su camera...que si no por el Infante Don Joan, que salió et lo partió, todos se matáran unos con otros, que fue muy grand maravilla adonde tantas armas fueron sacadas, estando todos tan á cerca unos de otros, como non fue ningund ferido ni muerto: et demás desto que la gente que estaba en la villa del Infante Don Joan, recudieron

todos armados á los palacios, diciendo que mataban al Infante Don Joan, et quiso Dios guardarlo: así que non ovo y muerte ni ferida nenguna. Et la Reyna, veyendo que non guardaban su honra, et que le perdieran vergüenza, et que pelearon en su palacio, salió luego otro dia dende. (181)

While God protects the queen and the people, it is clear that the tutors have begun to lose control over the noble knights, who are motivated by their greed. This behavior on the part of the knights is especially offensive, since previous cortes had decreed that the punishment for simply unsheathing a sword in the king's presence was death.⁵³ While Infante Juan puts a stop to the fighting, it is the queen who passes moral judgment upon the knights and she expresses her displeasure by abandoning the cortes.

The Death of María's Co-regents

The sudden deaths of the infantes Pedro and Juan in June of 1319 are surrounded by mystery in *CAXI*.⁵⁴ Neither of the tutors has been recently ill, and though they are at the frontier in the middle of a battle, neither do they die from wounds sustained in combat. After Pedro's victory at Tíscar the chronicle relates how in spite of advice to the contrary from the *maestres* of the military orders, the infante opts to join forces with his uncle, who is finally offering to join the crusade. Together they penetrate deep into the enemy's territory, and while Infante Pedro expresses his desire to press on even further, his uncle holds him back. While they are retreating, the rearguard—led by Infante Juan—

53. O'Callaghan, *Cortes*, 157.; *CAXI*, 181. It should be noted that according to the chronicle the queen had left her grandson in Valladolid before going to Carrión, so technically the king was not present.

54. Other versions of this history give conflicting reasons for their death. The *Gran Crónica de Alfonso XI* suggests that it was the will of God because Infante Pedro broke his truce with the King of Granada. Diego Catalán, ed. *Gran Crónica de Alfonso XI*, 1:317-8.; In his *Libro de los estados*, Juan Manuel blames their tactics (he asserts that the vanguard should not have turned back) and hints at their greed. He blames the fact that the Christian men continued to make excursions in search of booty: "ó dezir que una de las cosas que más empeció cuando en la Bega murieron el infante don Joán et don Peidro, fue las espolonadas que fizieron algunos, et después tornaban fuyendo al lugar do estaban los pendones." Juan Manuel, *Libro de los estados*, in *Obras completas*, ed. Carlos Alvar and Sarah Finci, (Madrid: Biblioteca Castro, 2007), 582.

comes under attack by forces from Granada, and Juan sends to his nephew for help. However, Pedro is unable to rally his troops, who are too dazed and disorganized to meet the Moorish knights in battle: “Et los caballeros fueron ese día tan mal mandados, et tan embazados, que non ovieron poder en las armas. Et el Infante Don Pedro metió mano á la espada por los acapdillar, et nunca pudo: et á golpes se tollió todo el cuerpo, et perdió la fabla, et cayó del caballo muerto en la tierra” (108). When Infante Juan learns that he nephew is dead, he immediately falls into a stupor: “Fueronlo luego decir al Infante Don Joan: et desde lo sopo...ovo ende muy grand pesar, et tan grande fué el pesar que ende tomó, que perdió luégo el entendimiento et la fabla, et toviéronlo así desde mediodía fasta hora de vísperas, que nin moria nin vivía” (108). When night falls, Juan finally expires. Meanwhile, the military orders are disheartened at Pedro’s death and they flee, while the Moorish troops, unaware of the demise of the infantes, attack the Christian troops and sack their camp, returning with their spoils to Granada.

While *CAXI* gives no further explanation of the infante’s deaths, the details surrounding the recovery and burial of Infante Juan’s body serve to reinforce the negative portrait of that infante. While Pedro’s body is transported to Burgos and buried in the royal mausoleum in Las Huelgas Reales, Infante Juan’s vassals lose his body when it falls from the horse that was bearing it and they leave it behind in the dark of night. Infante Juan’s surviving son, Juan, organizes a search and enlists the aid of the king of Granada to recover his father’s corpse. According to this chronicle, King Ismā’īl finds Infante Juan’s remains and returns them to Castile in a fine coffin, covered with gold cloth, surrounded by candles, and accompanied by an escort of Muslim knights and

Christian captives.⁵⁵ Although the honors bestowed on Juan by the king of Granada may appear to be nothing more than chivalry on the part of the Moorish king—Ismā’īl informs Juan’s son that he is happy to help him recover his father’s body, since “nunca dél recibiera enojo ni pesar” (184). In this way, Infante Juan (the once named *Traidor de Tarifa*), continues to be identified as a friend of the infidel, even after his death.

The Last Regency of Queen María

According to the agreements made between Alfonso XI’s tutors in 1315, Queen María should have been the sole and rightful regent of Castile-León after the deaths of the infantes.⁵⁶ However, in reality the situation was much more complicated, and the queen was forced to compete with other nobles who laid claim to the regency. Besides herself and her only surviving son, Infante Felipe, the principal contenders for the regency included the sometimes-titled “infante” Juan Manuel, Fernando de la Cerda, and don Juan de Borgoña,⁵⁷ the son of Infante Juan and María Díaz de Haro. With Pedro’s death, the queen had lost both the support of her son and his family connections to the crown of Aragón. After Pedro’s death María had a falling-out with his widow, Infanta María of Portugal,⁵⁸ and her relationship with Jaume II was further damaged when Jaume’s heir (who would later become archbishop of Toledo) chose to abdicate the throne and pursue a religious life, forcing King Jaume to return Infanta Leonor to her grandmother. María also felt the loss of Infante Juan, who carried with him the support of

55. “el Rey de Granada...fizolo poner en una morada muy buena, et pusieronlo en su ataúd cubierto de muy buenos paños de oro, et mandó y poner muchas candelas aderedor dél, et mandó y venir todos los Christianos cativos...et el Rey de Granada diógelos, et dióle caballeros que veniesen con el cuerpo fasta que llegasen á tierra de Christianos” *CAXI*, 184.

56. *Cortes de los antiguos reinos*, 273-4.

57. In the chronicle he is referred to as don Juan, son of Infante don Juan, in order to differentiate him from don Juan, son of Infante Manuel, but I use his family name here to save space. He is also often referred to by historians with the epithet *el Tuerto*.

58. Carmona Ruiz, *María de Molina*, 267-8.

a large coalition of nobles, prelates, and concejos. Despite having the guardianship of the king and a solid claim to the regency, the queen lost her control over the towns, which began to elect their own tutors separately. Once these magnates were empowered through these regional elections, the new tutors refused to give up their power, and civil war and division returned to Castile-León.

The chronicler emphasizes the just nature of the queen's claim to the regency while also making it clear that María's first concern is securing the peace and unity of the kingdom.⁵⁹ He tells us that after the deaths of her coregents, "la noble Reyna" is worried that "avria algunos movimientos en la tierra," and that the deaths of the infantes would bring "grand desamparo et daño...en la tierra" (184). Therefore, she immediately sends a message to all of the towns, ordering them not to make any pacts to the contrary and promising to bring the issue of the regency before a plenary cortes once the infantes have been buried:

Envióles decir...que como quier que toda la tutoria fincaba en ella asi como fuera puesto en las Cortes de Burgos, et según sabian que se contenia en los quadernos que cada uno de ellos levó en esta razón, que...luego enviaría por ellos, et por los preladados, et por los otros omes bonos de la tierra, que se ayuntasen con el Rey, et que allí acordaria con ellos lo que fuese más servicio de Dios et del Rey, et pró de la tierra. Et esto les enviaba decir, porque el su acuerdo della et de los Concejos fuese todo uno: ca desque ella et ellos fuesen de un acuerdo, non avria departimiento nenguno en la tierra. (184)

59. This part of the agreement from the 1315 Cortes is recorded in *CAXI*: "Otro sí fue y puesto que qualquier de los tres tutores que moriese, que fincase toda la tutoría en los otros; et si moriesen los dos, que fincase toda la tutoría en qualquier que fincase vivo de todos tres" (179).

While she reiterates her valid claim to the regency, the humble queen is more concerned with preventing war than wielding power. It is clear from this citation that the queen's priorities are the service of God, king, and the good of the people—which is the same as saying a peaceful and united Castile-León. The concejos are pleased with her actions, which the chronicler tells us they perceive to be just and right: “tenían que les enviaba mandar lo que complia á ellos” (184). Though the promised cortes would not materialize for almost two years, Sánchez de Valladolid presents Queen María as the primary proponent for using the cortes to settle the dispute over the regency. In order to keep the door to this option open, the queen initially refuses to make an agreement to share the regency with any of the noblemen who apply to her, including her only surviving son, Felipe.⁶⁰

The hubris of the high nobility continues to be an important theme in Sánchez de Valladolid's chronicle during the second part of Alfonso's minority. For instance, the chronicler relates how “estando el cuerpo de Don Joan, que non era aún enterrado,” the infante's widow, María Díaz de Haro, comes to Queen María to make demands on behalf of her son, Juan de Borgoña (184). Meanwhile, the arrogant Juan Manuel “tuvo ojo por la tutoria toda, teniendo que non avia y nenguno para ello sinon él” (184). He manages to get himself elected as tutor in several towns, with the understanding that he will share the regency with the queen. Soon after, Juan Manuel takes the city of Ávila by force, makes his own royal seal, and begins to assert his power against the queen: “Et por este sello comenzó a usar á dar oficios, et tierras, et librar pleitos, et tiró los pleitos que non

60. Although the chronicler says the queen remains neutral, in a letter to Jaume II (his father-in-law), Juan Manuel accuses the queen of trying to pact against him with her son Felipe, Juan de Borgoña, and Fernando de la Cerda in March of 1320: “la Reyna esto uio fiso quanto puedo por ajuntar amor del infante don Felipe su fijo del infante don Ferrando...et partida de otros homnes buenos de Castiella porque todos fuesen contra mi et non consentissen en la mi tutoria.” Giménez Soler, *Juan Manuel*, 484.

veniesen ante el Rey, nin á las alzadas, nin acogiesen al Rey nin á la Reina en las villas á do le tomaron por tutor, salvo ende con su amo et con su ama, et con oficiales et sin armas, et non con otro nenguno” (186). Juan Manuel’s actions constitute a grievous usurpation of María’s powers as regent, and the chronicler reports that they distress the prelates and the other knights and concejos of the kingdom: “Et cuando lo sopieron los Concejos et los Prelados, et los omes bonos de la tierra, extrañaronlo mucho, teniendo que non podía facer sello, aviendo el Rey su Chancilleria et sus sellos cumplidos” (186). When Juan Manuel and Infante Felipe make an alliance and agree to share the regency with the queen, Juan de Borgoña and Fernando de la Cerda react by forming a *hermandad* with the concejos of Castile to oppose them. The *Hermandad* of Castile also usurps María’s powers and its leaders begin to act as regents, making a seal, collecting taxes, and ordering the people not to obey orders that come from the king’s chancery: “Et enviaron luego por toda la tierra cartas de hermandat, en que non recudiesen con la tierra nin con los dineros al Rey, nin ficiesen nenguna cosa por sus cartas, nin veniesen los pleitos nin las alzadas á la casa del Rey” (186). While the chronicler assures us that “mas por eso non dexaron de venir [ante el Rey] los reptados,” it is clear that the queen has lost control over much of the kingdom (188).

And yet, Queen María’s authority is evident in the fact that both bands appeal to her to make an agreement to share the regency with her. According to the chronicler, in each case María politely declines and continues to defer to the power of the plenary cortes to elect the regents. As always, her reasoning is based on her desire to maintain the unity of the king’s territories:

Ca non queria ella dar ocasión que oviese departimiento en la tierra por lo levar más á la una parte que á la otra...Et que pues los Estremadanos avian tomado voz con Don Joan, fijo del Infante Don Manuel, et agora los castellanos la avian tomado por Don Fernando et por Don Joan, et era comenzada esta voz por culpa de las villas que tomaron estas voces, et veyendo el departimiento que era puesto en el regno, que non quería que oviese y otro departimiento: ca bien veia ella que quan grand mal era et vernia en la tierra por estos departimientos, et quan grand deservicio era de Dios et del Rey, et grand daño de toda la tierra. (187)

María reasons that if she chooses a side, this will only serve to widen the rift that the disobedient concejos have opened by electing their own tutors. While giving the tutors some share of the blame, the queen points to the disobedience that the towns have committed against her as the primary source of this new division. While this argument excuses María from having to choose a side on several occasions, when the Hermandad of Castile declares that they refuse to accept the queen as tutor, she is forced to pact with her son and Juan Manuel.

The contrast between the queens's disinterested humility and the egocentric arrogance of the nobles is further highlighted by the proposal that María makes to Juan Manuel. In order to promote the good of the kingdom, Queen María approaches Juan Manuel with an offer to renounce the regency if he does so as well:

Et la Reyna fabló con él, et dixole de como veía que se astragaba toda la tierra por razón de lo de la tutoria que él tomára, et que non quisiese que este fecho malo fuese adelante...et que tanto quería facer ella, que la

tutoria que ella avia con derecho, que la renunciara, tanto que la renunciase él, et que se ayuntasen todos los de la tierra, et que escogiesen por tutor á aquel que fue mas servicio de Dios et del Rey, et guarda et amparamiento de toda la tierra: et de mas que le aseguraria que si él esto ficiese, que le ayudaría quanto podiese porque le tomasen por tutor. (190)

Even though she promises to support his candidacy as regent in the cortes, Juan Manuel refuses to give up his power: “E él díxole, que lo non faria en ninguna manera del mundo, et que ante perderia el cuerpo, et cuanto oviese en el mundo, ante que nunca dexar la tutoria” (190). As we have seen time and again, the chronicler continues to present the queen as the only person of authority who truly puts the good of the kingdom before her own interests.

None of the noblemen who participate in the dispute over the regency are portrayed favorably in *CAXI* and they are all guilty of perpetuating violence and destruction in the kingdom. While Infante Felipe supports his mother’s claim, he does not enjoy the same heroic treatment as his brother Pedro—perhaps in part because he has less support among the nobility and little opportunity to win fame in the reconquest, given the divided state of the kingdom. However, Felipe also makes serious errors of judgment, such as agreeing to intervene with King Fernando on behalf of the knights of the Order of the Temple when the pope seeks to abolish their order and siding with his uncle Juan against his brother Pedro in the dispute over the regency (160, 175). On such occasions, Felipe’s mother and his brother are forced to reprimand him for his behavior. Another example of Felipe’s lack of good judgment occurs after Juan Manuel seizes Ávila. Having been sent by his mother to protect Ávila, Felipe arrives too late and the city has

already been taken. As he does not have the numbers to defeat Juan Manuel by laying siege to the city, Infante Felipe tries to challenge the magnate to leave his stronghold. When this ploy fails, the infante begins to raid the surrounding lands, hoping to provoke Juan Manuel to abandon the city in the defense of his new territory. According to the chronicler, Felipe “envióle decir que él andaria algunos dias comiendo et bebiendo por las aldeas de aquellas villas que le tomaron por tutor, et que veria si ge lo queria él veddar...et nunca Don Joan recudió a los amparar” (185). Although the chronicler describes Felipe’s actions in euphemistic terms, the queen is angered to learn that he is causing destruction in the king’s lands and immediately orders her son to desist and return to her in Valladolid: “enviole decir que non quería que ficiese nengun mal en la tierra del rey” (185). The infante obeys his mother’s commands, but he has nevertheless disgraced himself by his actions.

A similar situation occurs with Juan de Borgoña, though the chronicler paints the deeds and attitude of this magnate a few shades darker. When Juan and Fernando de la Cerda attack Felipe in Mayorga with a large contingent of noblemen and knights, Felipe does not have adequate forces and therefore refuses to meet his enemies on the field. While Felipe is holed up in the city, Juan and his men attack the surrounding area, first seizing some properties that Infante Pedro had previously donated to a monastery and then continuing to attack other towns. Instead of describing the destruction caused in this episode in terms of drinking and eating (as in the case with Infante Felipe in Ávila), the chronicler chooses more criminal terms to describe the behavior of Juan de Borgoña and his comrades. Besides causing “muy grand daño” in the king’s territories, they also take one of the king’s cities by force and steal everything in it: “Ellos combatieronla, et

entraronla por fuerza, et robaronla, et tomaron todo quanto fallaron á quantos moraban en ella” (189). Juan and his men abuse the people of the cities by stealing food and property, as well as by demanding unlawful taxes from them. When María Díaz reprimands her son for what she recognizes to be his “traicion,” he refuses to heed his mother’s advice and instead demonstrates his complete lack of concern for peace and the good of the kingdom: “[María Díaz] fabló con ellos, et dixoles que facian muy grand mal en astragar asi la tierra del Rey, et que otra manera avian ellos á catar para poner paz et sosiego en la tierra. Et ellos dixeronla, que en cada lugar que y fallasen lo farian así, *et les placiera de lo facer*” (189 my emphasis). Unlike Felipe, these men refuse to be governed by a female family member of authority who counsels restraint, and they even boast of the sadistic pleasure that they take in causing violence and abusing the people.

As the towns continue to elect separate tutors and the tutors refuse to give up the power that they have gained, the violence also escalates, “así que los unos et los otros astragaban la tierra de cada parte” (189). María finally finds herself between a rock and a hard place when her delicate alliance with Felipe and Juan Manuel falls apart over the regency of the frontier cities. Juan Manuel breaks a solemn oath that he and Felipe made to the queen by going to Córdoba in order to be elected tutor. In retaliation, Seville and Jaén elect Felipe as tutor, and the estrangement between the two provides an opportunity for the Hermandad of Castile (Juan de Borgoña’s band) to pressure the queen to support them. They offer to pact with the queen against her son and Juan Manuel, and threaten to pact with Juan Manuel against María and Felipe if she does not accept. While the queen believes that such an agreement will only cause further civil war (“veyendo esto que era

manera de discordia”) —she is careful not to reject their offer out of hand, and instead tries to buy time until the arrival of the papal legate, the cardinal Fray Guillén (191).

The papal legate provides support to the queen and lends his authority to her plan to have a plenary cortes decide the regency. After meeting with the queen in Valladolid where she gives him a full account of everything that has transpired since the passing of the infantes Pedro and Juan, the cardinal intervenes on her behalf with the Hermandad of Castile, who are pressing María every day for an answer to their proposal. The hermandad only agrees to give her a few extra days to decide, but the queen takes this opportunity to finally convoke all of the towns, prelates, nobles, and military orders to a cortes in Palencia. Meanwhile the papal legate takes leave of the queen to meet with Juan Manuel, whom he tries to convince to renounce the regency: “El Cardenal...dixole como ficiera entender al Papa que quanto mal et daño et escándalo avia en la tierra, que todo era por aquella voz que tomára por aquella partida de aquellos Concejos que le tomaron por tutor, non seyendo fecho por córtes, nin como debía, así como se ficiera ya otras vegadas” (192). At first, Juan Manuel resists, but eventually “*viendose afincando del fablo,*” he agrees to renounce the regency and let the cortes decide, so long as Infante Felipe does the same.⁶¹ The cardinal “*fue ende muy alegre por esta rrespuesta*” and immediately returns to the queen in Valladolid to give her the good news.⁶² The queen is ill, but believing that she will recover, the cardinal goes ahead of her to await the cortes in Palencia. However, before the queen can preside over this cortes that she has finally called, she dies.

61. For this section of *CAXI* I am using Catalán’s partial edition to fill the lacuna. “Los sucesos de 1321-1323 según la *Crónica de cuatro reyes,*” in *La tradición manuscrita en la ‘Crónica de Alfonso XI,’* ed. Diego Catalán (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1974), 344.

62. *Ibid.*

Death of the Queen in CAXI

The narration of Queen María's death and burial in *CAXI* serves to remind us of her saintly nature. The chronicler relates how the queen—realizing that she is about to die—receives the holy sacraments “*comme rreyna muy catolica,*” orders her burial in the monastery of Las Huelgas Reales in Valladolid (“*el monesterio que ella fizo*”) and dresses in the habit of the Dominican order before giving her soul over to God: “*tomo el avito de los freyres pedricadores en que morio e dio el alma a Dios.*”⁶³ Her funeral is honored by the presence of the papal legate, who presides over the ceremony. The chronicler also describes how the cardinal grants indulgences in tribute to the queen's long-standing patronage of the Church:

*E el Cardenal veyendo en commo esta reyna feziera muchos bienes en toda la tierra e en las ordenes e feziera los monesterios de los pedricadores de Valladolid e de Toro e el monesterio de Santa Agostin de Toledo e este monesterio en que se ella enterro, e que fizo muchas obras en otros monesterios en quales fizo los dormitorios e en otros los rrefetorios e en otros los cabildos en en otros las claustras, dio perdones a quantos dixiesen çinco Pater Noster e çinco Ave Maria con rrequien eterna vn año e çiento e çinquenta días de perdon cada dia que dixiesen esta oraçion por ella fasta vn año.*⁶⁴

This description of the queen's numerous charitable donations provides an additional proof of her piety. The fact that the cardinal grants these indulgences reinforces the

63. Ibid, 345.

64. Ibid, 346.

queen's saintly image and reminds the reader/listener once again of the support that Queen María enjoys within the Church.

Before her death, the queen takes one last measure to protect the king from his ambitious tutors by entrusting the guardianship of her grandson to the “*caualleros e omes buenos*” of Valladolid: “*E ante que finase mando llamar ante sy a todos los caualleros e omes buenos de Valladolid e dixoles commo ella estaua en la merced de Dios e que les dexaua al rey su nieto que lo tomasen e lo criasen en la villa e lo non diesen a ome del mundo fasta que el fuese de hedat e mandase por sy, e eso mesmo a la infanta doña Leonor su hermana.*”⁶⁵ As she had once done in Ávila, the queen calls on the knights of the urban centers to protect her grandson (and his sister). By ordering the knights of Valladolid to keep Alfonso in the city until he comes of age, she is able to prevent the minor king from becoming a pawn in the dispute over the regency—which will continue throughout the rest of the minority. Valladolid was one of the queen's cities and one in which she had spend much of her time as queen, so it is likely that she knew people there whom she felt she could count upon. The knights were likely also honored by the charge, which they would faithfully execute until Alfonso XI declared his majority in 1325. The great political import of María's passing is underscored by this detailed description of the event and the fact that her death occurs at the end of a chapter.

After the death of the queen, Sánchez de Valladolid's history continues to follow the actions the king's three tutors (Infante Felipe, Juan Manuel, and Juan de Borgoña) who fight amongst themselves and commit crimes against the people. Just before Alfonso declares his majority at the tender age of fourteen, the chronicler dedicates a chapter to describing the dire state of Castile-León:

65. Ibid, 345.

Las villas del Rey et todos los otros logares de su regno...eran destruidos: ca todos los Ricos-omes, et los Caballeros vivian de robos et de tomas que facian en la tierra, et los tutores consentíangelo por los aver cada unos de ellos en su ayuda...Otrosi todos los de las villas cada unos en sus logares eran partidos en bandos...Et en nenguna parte del regno non se facia justicia con derecho; et llegaron la tierra á tal estado, que non osaban andar los omes por los caminos sinon armados, et muchos en una compañía...Et demas desto los tutores echaban muchos pechos desaforados... ..Et quando el Rey ovo á salir de la tutoria, falló el regno muy despoblado, et muchos logares yermos: ca...muchas de las gentes del regno desamparaban heredades...et fueron á poblar á regnos de Aragon et de Portugal. (197)

The queen is not able to save the realm before she dies and the division and violence continue. The state of the realm is quite similar to what we have seen throughout the minorities, where the powerful prey upon the weak and the people flee their homes. While there are many causes for this destruction, as heads of the government, the tutors are primarily to blame for allowing the *malfechores* to act with impunity. At this point—when Alfonso is about to come into his majority—the chronicler reminds us that Castile-León is a kingdom in need of saving.

Conclusion: María de Molina, Alfonso XI, and Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid

In order to fully appreciate the image of Queen María in Alfonso XI's chronicles, we must consider the broader political purpose for which these chronicles were written and how the figure of the queen contributes to that purpose. As Gómez Redondo has

observed, *CTR* and *CAXI* were composed with an eye to supporting the actions and policies of the king who commissioned them.⁶⁶ Beyond completing Alfonso X's chronicle of the kings of the Iberian Peninsula (i.e. *Estoria de España*) and refining it to make it a chronicle about Castilian kings,⁶⁷ Sánchez de Valladolid's chronicles serve to contextualize Alfonso XI's rule within the recent history of Castile-León and to transform that monarch into a messianic figure who rescues a kingdom in chaos. This history—from the first noble rebellions of Alfonso X's reign until the utter anarchy of Alfonso's minority—is plagued by a disorder that, as we have observed, is the direct result of the base nature of the high nobility. In his evaluation of these chronicles Gómez Redondo argues that the vilification of powerful members of the noble class serves to promote a model of government that is spearheaded by the harsh justice and moral fortitude of a strong king: “mostrar lo que es el poder nobiliario, a descubrir el insondable fondo de bajezas, ruindades y traiciones a que la aristocracia es capaz de entregarse para defender sus derechos y privilegios; la intención no es otra que la de tornar deseable una recuperación efectiva del poder regalista.”⁶⁸ And so it is desired by all of the good people of Castile-León. In the chapter of *CAXI* that Sánchez de Valladolid dedicates to describing the lavish celebration that welcomes Alfonso XI in Seville (they cover the very streets that the king is to walk with gold silk), we are informed that “en todas las partes del regno [el Rey] era muy deseado,” and that all of the “ricos-omes, et caballeros, et ciudadanos avian grand placer con la venida del Rey, ca por él entendian ser salvos de

66. See Gómez Redondo, *Historia de la prosa*, 2:1248-84.; Fernando Gómez Redondo, “El Zifar y la *Crónica de Fernando IV*,” *La corónica*, 27, vol. 3 (1999): 104-23.; and Gomez Redondo, “De la crónica general a la real,” 95-124.

67. Gómez Redondo, “De la crónica general a la real,” 107.

68. Gómez Redondo, *Historia de la prosa*, 2:1268. Although in this particular citation Gómez Redondo is referring to *CAXI*, he makes this same argument about all four of Sánchez de Valladolid's chronicles.

todos los males en que avian seydo fasta allí” (204). Indeed, within a few years of declaring his majority Alfonso has transformed the realm from a dangerous place where the people fear to live into a peaceful and secure kingdom where they can feel safe: “Et por cierto tanta era la justicia en aquel tiempo en los logares dó el Rey estaba, que en aquellas Córtes, en que eran ayuntados muy grandes gentes, yacian de noche en las plazas todos los que traían las viandas á vender, et muchas viandas sin guardador, sinon solamente el temor de la justicia quel Rey mandaba facer en los malfechores” (223). According to Sánchez de Valladolid’s version of history, Alfonso XI earns the epithet of *el Rey Justiciero* because he restores peace, order, and unity to a kingdom that had been destroyed and torn asunder by egocentric members of the high nobility.

Throughout the first section of Alfonso’s majority in *CAXI* the chronicler relates how the king—by means of a fierce justice (i.e. lots of executions)—brings the nobles to heel and finally rectifies the disordered relationship that has existed between the king and his vassals in the Castilian court since at least 1295. As Gómez Redondo has observed, Alfonso’s grandfather—*el Rey Bravo*—provides a handy model for Alfonso to justify his use of executions in order to assert his place at the head of the nobility.⁶⁹ And yet, this narrative of the king’s justice only occupies about a fourth of Alfonso XI’s chronicle.⁷⁰ Once Alfonso has consolidated his power he continues to follow the blueprint of his grandfather’s example by engaging the nobles in the service of God in the pursuit of the reconquest, which will become the main topic of Alfonso’s chronicle beginning roughly with chapter 192. All of these actions and policies are exactly what the queen has been promoting with her words, deeds, and internal thought processes throughout Sánchez de

69. Gómez Redondo, *Historia de la prosa*, 1:979.

70. For a discussion of the narrative structure of *CAXI*, see Gómez Redondo, *Historia de la prosa*, 2:1264-7.

Valladolid's chronicle. After Sancho's death it is the queen who defends these ideals about monarchy by urging her son to defend his territories and his royal powers from foreign kings, *ricos omes* and infantes, modeling a dedication to justice and the good of the realm, and encouraging the crusading spirit among her children. As we have observed in these last two chapters, throughout the turmoil that follows Sancho's death in the chronicles, it is the queen that safeguards her husband's political model and passes it on to her grandson.

And so we return to María's promise that Fernando would "semejar a su visahuelo," Fernando III—no doubt because like her own grandmother (and Berenguela's sister Blanche, who was regent for her minor son Louis IX)—María was going to teach her son to be a saint. However, that didn't quite work out as she had planned it. While the foolish Fernando fails to internalize his mother's lessons on how to be a good king, the queen succeeds in instilling these virtues and values in her grandson. Without naming names, the chronicler makes it clear that the young Alfonso does not share his father's childish and capricious character: "non paró mientes á lo que le pedia la voluntad, asi como á ome que era en edat de mozo; mas cató á lo al que le convenia de facer con seso et cordura" (198). In fact, the chronicler's initial description of the fourteen-year-old king appears to respond directly to the accusations made against Fernando and sets the reader/listener up to understand that this new king is different:

El Rey, en sí de su condicion, era bien acostumbrado en comer, et bebia muy poco...et en todas las otras sus costumbres avia buenas condiciones: ca la palabra dél era bien castellana, et non dubdaba en lo que avia de decir... et amaba los que le servian cada uno en su manera, et fiaba bien et

complidamente de los que avia de fiar...Et amaba mucho todos los suyos, et sentiase del grand daño et grand mal que era en la tierra por mengua de justicia, et avia muy mal talante contra los mal fechores. (198)

Unlike his father (and like his grandmother), Alfonso is characterized by “buenas costumbres” and is wise beyond his years. He puts his trust in those who deserve it and above all he appreciates his responsibilities as king and directs his efforts toward achieving the good of the realm. Besides their shared values, the queen’s influence on Alfonso’s upbringing is evidenced in the chronicle by his retention of the servants that she had appointed to him during his minority, from whom the king learns “buenas costumbres” (198). When he comes into his majority, Alfonso also employs one of the queen’s oldest and most loyal vassals—the abbot of Santander Nuño Pérez (“Chancellor et Consejero que fué de la Reyna Doña María”)—in his royal council (199). Benefiting from the care that his erstwhile guardian took to see that he was raised well, Alfonso finally fulfills María’s promise by becoming the great Castilian king that his father was not. In Sánchez de Valladolid’s chronicles, María inherits these values from her (and her husband’s) forbearers and passes them on to her grandson. In this way, María serves as a conduit of political and ethical values and a placeholder of inherited virtue.

The question that emerges from this analysis of the queen’s character in the chronicles is: to what extent did the queen participate in the construction of her image as it is presented within those pages? Undoubtedly her political actions would have played a part in determining how she would be remembered by history, but we must not forget that it is ultimately the chronicler and his patron who determine which events to remember and how to interpret them. Unlike her grandmother Queen Berenguela, María did not

patronize an official royal chronicle. Even so, Fernando Gómez Redondo argues that alongside the other royal documents that Sánchez de Valladolid would have had access to in the royal chancery there existed written accounts of history that had been set down by the kings of Castile-León in order to provide material for the compilation of a chronicle.⁷¹ Gómez Redondo suggests that these histories that the chronicler used would have already contained a perspective on events that was favorable to the royal family and that promoted the values of the queen regent, whom he refers to as “[la] feliz inspiradora de la visión histórica que defiende Sánchez de Valladolid.”⁷² While there is some textual evidence to support Gómez Redondo’s claim that the chronicler was working with pre-existing royally-authored histories, it seems to me a jump in logic to conclude from this that the queen thereby helped to shape the construction of her portrait in Sánchez de Valladolid’s chronicle. María may have influenced or even sponsored the anonymous authors of these unofficial histories, but as they no longer exist we can only guess at the representation of the queen that was contained within them. While he calls her the “inspiration” for the political discourse of Sánchez de Valladolid’s royal chronicles, at times Gómez Redondo seems to conflate the representation of the queen with María’s self-representation. He is also somewhat vague on exactly how the queen participates in the creation of this political discourse—whether through her actions in the public context of court, through patronage, or through the medium of these unofficial histories. Without dismissing the value of Gómez Redondo’s contributions, what I am attempting to do here

71. Gómez Redondo, “De la crónica general a la real,” 102.

72. Ibid, 110.; Diego Catalán also proposes that Sánchez de Valladolid used a lost chronicle that was written “indudablemente en el entorno de doña María de Molina” in order to construct his own chronicle. Like Gómez Redondo, Catalán asserts that this history was the “hechura” of the queen. Diego Catalán, *La Estoria de España de Alfonso X*, 13.

is to determine exactly how the queen participated in the construction of her legacy—which owes so much to her portrayal in Sánchez de Valladolid’s royal chronicles.

What we can assert with confidence is that María had a hand in shaping contemporary political discourse, particularly in those royal documents that Sánchez de Valladolid would have used to write his history. Something that we touched upon briefly in chapter two is the way in which the chronicler associates María with the three-part theme of service of God, king, and good of the kingdom. As we have observed throughout the past two chapters, this rhetorical argument—championed by the figure of queen in the chronicles—is repeated with increasing frequency throughout *CFIV* and *CAXI*. And yet, before Sánchez de Valladolid employed this line of rhetoric in these royal histories it had already become an established tradition in royal documents—particularly the ordenamientos of the cortes—that began with the first regency of Queen María. While the service of God, king, and the good of the kingdom are not necessarily new ideas, Sancho IV did not use this particular combination of values in the ordenamientos that were issued during his reign. Instead, this three-part theme makes its debut in the first cortes of Fernando’s minority in 1295, where the king’s tutors assert that they act in support of these values: “Por que sabemos que es seruicio de Dios e nuestro é muy grand pro de todos los de nuestros rregnos, e meioramiento del estado de toda nuestra tierra, et auiendo voluntad de fazer bien e merçed a todos los conceios de nuestros rregnos...otorgamos les estas cosas para siempre iamas.”⁷³ This tri-part rhetorical theme continues to be repeated in the subsequent ordenamientos throughout Fernando IV’s

73. *Cortes de los antiguos reinos*, 131.

reign (including during his majority) and well into the minority of Alfonso XI.⁷⁴ It is also present in some of the queen's letters.⁷⁵ Therefore it seems likely that the queen regent was the primary architect of this political discourse, or at the very least that she was among those who first began to use this line of rhetoric in the royal court. Whether or not it was María who created this three-part theme of chivalric values, she undoubtedly promoted it herself—much in the way that she is represented as doing so by Alfonso XI's chancellor and royal chronicler.

Sánchez de Valladolid's portrait of the queen as an exemplary vassal that faithfully serves the king is clearly reflected in royal documents that the queen had a hand in composing. In the queen's first testament (1308) she speaks of the many trials she has suffered in order to make Fernando king and the obligation that he owes to her for it: "Et sobre todo fago mjo testamentario mayor al Rey don Ferrando mjo fijo que lo cunpla et lo faga conplir todo. Et ruegol yo, et pidol por merçet quelo faga et lo cunpla assi commo lo yo ordeno et lo yo fio dél que lo fará por que él aya conplidamjente la bendición de Dios et la mja. Ca tanta fue la lazeria que yo leué con él enle ayudar para lo fazer regnar. Et tan uerdaderamjente lo amé yo siempre, que so çierta dela su lealdat et de su buen entendimjento quelo fará assí."⁷⁶ In the queen's self-representation here we can see that she promoted an image of herself as a loyal vassal and a loving and protecting mother. She also emphasizes the trials that she suffered in order to make her son king, and the loyalty that Fernando must therefore have for her. While the queen's representation of her

74. Ibid, 92-273. There are multiple variations of this theme throughout these ordenamientos, but it always the three essential parts always remain.

75. Giménez Soler, *Juan Manuel*, 418.

76 Mercedes Gaibrois de Ballesteros, *Un episodio de la vida de María de Molina* (Madrid: Espasa-Calple, 1935), 72.

son is somewhat more positive than that found in the chronicles, her self-representation is consistent with what we have seen in those texts.

Similarly, the queen's reputation for service to God, king, and the realm is advanced by her political collaborators and even acknowledged by her sometimes rivals. This can be observed in the 1320 charter for the Hermandad of Toledo and Talavera, the alliance which was the basis of María's pact with Infante Felipe and Juan Manuel:

E porque nuestra señora la Reyna ahuela e tutora de nuestro señor el Rey fizo muchas mercedes e muchos bienes en todos los dichos regnos e en nos e partio muchas discordias e paso muchos trabajos e muchos enxecos por servicio de Dios e del Rey e por pro e guarda de la tierra e por quel prometimos en la nuestra hermandad que guardaremos su servicio pedimos a los tutores quel sea guardado el su servicio e toda su honra...e la ha e todos los fechos granados que oviere a faser e acordar e ordenar que lo fagan siempre con su mandado e con su conseio e su acuerdo porque somos ciertos que asi sera mejor guardado lo del Rey e de todos los regnos.⁷⁷

According to the terms of this agreement—which Juan Manuel agrees “es muy grand derecho e quell plase”⁷⁸—the queen has earned a place of authority in the monarchy by her service to God, the king, and the realm. She is also acknowledged as a great proponent of peace who has done much good throughout the kingdom, much in the same way as we see in the chronicles.

77. Giménez Soler, *Don Juan*, 485-6.

78. *Ibid*, 486.

These royal documents are representative of the type of political discourse that was being used in the public sphere of court in Castile-León during María de Molina's reign. In fact, it appears that the service of God, the king, and the good of the realm was a rhetorical phrase that was coming to dominate the political narrative, as it also appears in the epistolary exchange between Jaume II and Juan Manuel. Juan Manuel writes "E jo por guardar lo que uos me enuiastes mandar e aconsejar que este pleito que lo quisiese leuar sin guerra e sin bullicio porque Dios e el Rey fuesen seruido e la tierra guardada de danno."⁷⁹ While Sánchez de Valladolid's chronicle was undoubtedly influenced by the royal documents that were produced during María's time as regent, he was likely first introduced to these political ideas and narratives about the recent past within the context of María's court. Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid was a fairly prominent member of the class of urban knights that hailed from the queen's city of Valladolid. Though we do not know exactly when or how he entered the king's service, he first appears as the king's *alcalde* in a royal document dated 1320 that was ordered by the queen.⁸⁰ He is mentioned again as a witness to Queen María's last will in June 1321.⁸¹ He first appears in *CAXI* during the king's minority and after the death of the queen, at which point the chronicle reports he has been working in the king's service "desde luengo tiempo" (194). And yet he could not have been very old since he outlived the king. Although Sánchez de Valladolid was not an official of the queen's household, Salvador de Moxó locates him within "el círculo de la reina Doña María de Molina, donde pudo hallar buenos maestros de la tarea burocrática—uno de ellos debió ser el abad de Santander Nuño Pérez

79. Giménez Soler, *Juan Manuel*, 484.

80. Salvador de Moxó, "El auge de la nobleza urbana de Castilla," 434.

81. Benavides, *Memorias*, 1:685.

Monroy.”⁸² Whatever the nature and extent of their relationship, it is clear from her portrayal in the chronicles that Sánchez de Valladolid subscribed to the political ideologies that pervaded the queen’s court and envisioned her as the conduit through which the values of Sancho IV’s court could be transferred to Alfonso XI’s.

Molinismo and the Royal Chronicles

In conclusion, I would like to comment briefly on the relationship between Sánchez de Valladolid’s chronicles and what some literary critics call the “cultural model” of molinismo (the term is Gómez Redondo’s)—as we will be returning to the topic of molinismo in the next chapter. In chapter one, we saw the emergence of molinismo as a reaction against the political policies and cultural production of Alfonso X within the cathedral school of Toledo. The molinismo of Sancho’s court is manifested in a wide array of texts—such as historiography, hagiography, philosophical/doctrinal works, and mirrors of princes. However, in the case of these royal chronicles (which are primarily concerned with the secular matters of kings) the philosophical concerns of molinismo—such as the need to suppress the spread of Averroistic principles—are left to a side and what takes center stage is an exemplary historic narrative about kings and their vassals that provides lessons about the nature and practices of monarchy. Within the narrative context of this history, Alfonso XI internalizes these lessons and on the level of cultural production he promotes them by patronizing the chronicles. While the political discourse in these chronicles is undoubtedly engaging with the cultural politics of Sancho IV and molinismo, the political purpose of these texts is to justify Alfonso XI’s policies and to glorify his reign as a great period of restoration of the monarchy in Castile-León.

82. de Moxó, “El auge de la nobleza,” 438.

Chapter Four

Molinismo in the Literature of Fourteenth-Century Castile-León

Introduction

This chapter is concerned with exploring how the values of molinismo are reproduced, altered, and adapted in various works of literature from the fourteenth century. In order to do so we must begin with an examination of the term “molinismo” as it is used to describe a political and cultural phenomenon that is observable in texts from thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Castile-León. As far as I can tell, Germán Orduna was the first to signal the existence of what he describes as a “cultural program” which emerged from the political alliance between Sancho IV and Gonzalo Pérez Gudiel, the archbishop of Toledo.¹ Orduna observes that the texts produced by the cathedral school of Toledo during Sancho’s reign are characterized by the rejection of naturalist heterodox philosophy or heterodox Aristotelianism.² He also posits that the influence of the cultural production of the cathedral school of Toledo is so far-reaching as to inform the “fondo ideológico” of authors such as Juan Manuel and Juan Ruiz.³ Fernando Gómez Redondo builds on Orduna’s concept of a “cultural program” and redefines it as a “cultural model” which he dubs “molinismo” due to what he sees as Queen María’s influence in creating and later safeguarding this cultural model after King Sancho’s death.⁴ Like Orduna, Gómez Redondo sees manifestations of molinismo—which he describes as both political and religious—in a wide variety of texts, beginning with Sancho’s reign and continuing

1. Germán Orduna, “La elite intelectual,” 53-62.

2. It should be noted that the terms “Averroism,” “Heterodox Aristotelianism,” and “naturalist philosophy” are often used interchangeably by critics. For an overview of Averroism in Medieval Spain, see Márquez Villanueva, “Nasçer e morir como bestias,” 273-93.

3. Germán Orduna, “La elite intelectual,” 60.

4. See Fernando Gómez Redondo, *Historia de la prosa*, vol. 1, chap. 5; Gómez Redondo, *Historia de la prosa*, vol. 2, chap. 7.; and Gómez Redondo, “El Zifar y la *Crónica de Fernando IV*,” 105-23.

until the second half of the fourteenth century. In addition to the anti-Averroistic tendencies that Orduna observes within the cultural production of Sancho's court, Gómez Redondo also attributes other values to molinismo—values that are more concerned with political ethics and the practices of the monarchy than with philosophy and the dominance of the church in intellectual matters. I would argue that Gómez Redondo is pointing to something valid, but he uses terms like “marco de recepción” and “modelo cultural,” which seem ill-suited for our purposes.⁵ Essentially what he is describing is a political model or a set of shared beliefs about the nature of monarchy that has religious and moral overtones, and which evolves over time with the changing circumstances of the royal family. While he does much to begin a study of the topic, he doesn't seem truly to appreciate how this “cultural model” is adapted and by whom. In short, the definition that he provides for this new term is inadequate because it is too broad and I believe that he doesn't adequately consider the individual contexts in which all of these works that he classifies as *molinista* were written.

I seek to propose a new conceptualization of molinismo as a broad set of shared beliefs about the world—especially about monarchy and chivalry—which was promoted by Sancho, his wife, their descendants, and their supporters—often, but not always in conjunction with the cathedral school of Toledo. Molinismo departs significantly from the more secular forms of chivalry and monarchy espoused by Alfonso X and first takes shape in Sancho IV's cultural politics and in texts that were written by clerics from the cathedral school of Toledo. Drawing from earlier traditions in the monarchy of Castile-León, molinismo was initially created in order to legitimize Sancho's rule vis-à-vis his

5. Gómez Redondo, “El *Zifar* y la *Crónica de Fernando IV*,” 105.

rebellion and his illegitimate marriage.⁶ In large part, molinismo is a political discourse about the nature of monarchy and the monarch of Castile-León. This discourse defines the king of Castile's special relationship with God and his role as the Lord's crusading vassal and defender of the faith. This discourse also supports values such as the unity of the kingdom of Castile-León and the king's rightful domination of the nobility in the name of justice. The image of the king is increasingly sacral, and molinismo is characterized by the projection of an image of pious monarchs (both king and queen) who observe a mode of exemplary Christian conduct, which their vassals should observe and emulate. As we established in the first three chapters, this political discourse was promoted by Sancho in his cultural production (but more specifically in *Castigos*) and was later adapted by his grandson, Alfonso XI, in the royal chronicles. At the same time, we saw in royal documents that Queen María had a hand in promoting many of the same ideas about monarchy, and observed that Sánchez de Valladolid uses the historical figure of the queen as a conduit for these political values and virtues in the chronicles.

In this chapter I analyze three texts that—to varying degrees—interact with the values which we have identified as belonging to molinismo. However, as we shall see the perspectives from which these authors were writing were different, and this effects their treatment of molinista values. Two of these texts are likely written by clerics in association with the Cathedral of Toledo, and the third—like Sánchez de Valladolid's chronicles—is a royally sponsored work, written by a layman from Alfonso XI's royal administration. As a result of the different perspectives from which these works were written and the variance of the topics which they treat, each text promotes different values pertaining to molinismo to varying degrees.

6. Gómez Redondo, "El Zifar y la *Crónica de Fernando IV*," 105.

Libro de Caballero Zifar: The Model of Ideal Monarchy

*The Origins of Libro de Caballero Zifar*⁷

The authorship and initial date of composition of the *Libro de Caballero Zifar* continue to be a subject of contention among literary critics. Following the suggestion of Menéndez y Pelayo, Francisco J. Hernandez proposed as its author the same archdeacon who appears as an historical character in the prologue, Ferrán Martínez—an assessment which many critics have come to accept.⁸ According to Hernandez, Ferrán Martínez's successful career in the Toledo episcopate (which culminated in his appointment as archdeacon of Madrid in 1300) and his involvement as a scribe in the royal chancery from 1274 to 1295 coincides with the profile of the author of *LCZ*, who Hernandez argues was an educated clergyman with connections to Toledo and experience in the royal chancery. Hernández dates the work to sometime between 1304 and the death of the archdeacon in 1309 and he points to parallels between some of the stories contained in *LCZ* and historical events that occurred at the turn of the fourteenth century, arguing that these were likely recent events for the author. Hernández even places Martínez (who was a contemporary of Loaysa) at the proclamation of the papal bull that legitimized Fernando IV in 1302, a coincidence that suggests a more personal connection to Queen María, who arranged that ceremony.

On the other hand, there is a school of thought that dates the original compilation of *LCZ* to sometime after 1321, in part due to the past tense reference to Queen María in

7. All subsequent citations refer to J. González Muela's edition, which is based on Wagner's edition. J. González Muela, *Libro del Caballero Zifar* (Madrid: Editorial Castilia, 1982) (hereafter referred to as *LCZ*).

8. What follows is a summary of Hernández's findings on the subject. Francisco J. Hernandez, "Ferrán Martínez, 'escribano del rey,' canónigo de Toledo, y autor del *Libro del Cavallero Zifar*," *Revista de archivos, bibliotecas y museos* 81 (1978): 289-309.; and Hernandez, "Noticias."

the prologue as “reina de Castiella e de León que era a esa sazón” (54). Additionally, Mercedes Vaquero convincingly argues that many of the stories which Hernandez compares to historical events in the reign of Fernando IV correspond more closely to events that took place during the reign of Alfonso XI.⁹ Juan Manuel Cacho Blecua dates the original compilation to sometime between 1321 and 1350, and though he asserts that the potential author of *LCZ* has yet to be identified, he confirms the work’s connection to the cathedral school of Toledo and the identity of the author as a “clérigo, consejero y letrado.”¹⁰ Still, Orduna argues that an original version of the work may have been drafted by Ferrán Martínez, and then rewritten and updated by one of his colleagues.¹¹ It is not my intention here to engage in the debate over the authorship and date of *LCZ*, but rather to consider the possibilities and what they imply for the patronage and the political and moral ideology of the work. What are most important to our analysis are the connections of the work to the cathedral school of Toledo, to the general ethos of molinismo, and to the reign of Queen María, who provides a link between the reigns of her son and grandson.

The Prologue of LCZ

The prologue of *LCZ* is the key to understanding the relation of the figure of the queen to the moral and political ideas espoused within the work. The prologue begins with an historical account that relates how the archdeacon of Madrid, Ferrán Martínez,

9. Mercedes Vaquero, “Relectura del *Libro del Cavallero Çifar* a la luz de algunas de sus referencias históricas,” in *Actas Congreso Internacional de la Asociación Hispánica de Literatura Medieval*, eds. José Manuel Lucía Megías, Paloma Gracia Alonso, and Carmen Martín Daya (Madrid: Universidad de Alcalá, 1992), 2:857-69.

10. Juan Manuel Cacho Blecua, “Los problemas del *Zifar*,” *Libro del Caballero Zifar: Códice de Paris*, eds. Francisco Rico and Rafael Ramos (Barcelona: Moleiro, 1996), 57-68.; Also see Juan Manuel Cacho Blecua, “Del *Liber Consolationis et consilii* al *Libro del Cavallero Zifar*,” *La corónica: A Journal of Medieval Hispanic Languages, Literatures, and Cultures* 27, no. 3 (1999): 47.

11. Germán Orduna, “La elite intelectual,” 56.

fulfills his promise to his former benefactor, the late cardinal and archbishop of Toledo, Gonzalo Pérez Gudiel. The narrator informs us that when Ferrán Martínez goes to Rome for the first Christian Jubilee in 1300, the cardinal asks the archdeacon to see that when he dies his remains are returned to Spain and interred in the Cathedral of Santa María in Toledo, the see which the archbishop sought so hard to promote during his life.¹² Despite repeated refusals from the pope and great expense to the archdeacon, Ferrán Martínez, “[que] avía mucho a corazón este fecho,”¹³ persists in the task until it is accomplished. Because of his patient dedication, Spain and Toledo are honored to receive the remains of the cardinal, which are greeted with great pomp and veneration “así como a fiesta de cuerpo santo” (55). Everywhere, the procession is welcomed by people of all classes, including ethnic and religious minorities, and the final reception in Toledo is so well attended, that it is without historical precedent: “Que se non acordava ninguno, por ançiano que fuese, que oyese dezir que nin a rey nin a enperador nin a otro ninguno fuese fecha atan grande onra como a este cuerpo de este cardinal” (55). Besides providing an encomium of Gonzalo Pérez Gudiel, this brief historical narrative also reinforces the primacy of Toledo by reminding the reader that Santa María is the first cathedral in Spain to house the tomb of a cardinal.¹⁴ One thing that the inclusion of this historical story at

12. Cacho Bleuca points out that the cardinal Gonzalo Pérez died in 1299, and so his meeting with the archdeacon in 1300 seems to be historically inaccurate. This suggests that the prologue was either written significantly after the events, or that the meeting was a fictional creation used to illustrate a point about loyalty. José Manuel Cacho Bleuca, “El prólogo del *Libro del Cavallero Zifar*: El *exemplum* de Ferrán Martínez,” in *Literatura medieval*, eds. Aires A. Nascimento and Cristina Almeida Ribeiro (Lisboa: Ediçõs Cosmos, 1993): 3:230.

13. *LCZ*, 53. It is interesting to note that this is the same expression (“tener algo mucho a corazón”) that we have seen time and again in the royal chronicles of Fernando IV, in reference to his mother protecting his claim during the minority, the nobles not fighting for him, and the king pursuing the reconquest during his majority.

14. *LCZ*, 56. According to the prologue, the author’s purpose in including this story is to remind men of the date of the next jubilee and to inform them that Gonzalo Pérez Gudiel was the first cardinal to be buried in Spain.

the beginning of the prologue makes clear is that the author is interested in promoting the Toledo episcopate.

This story also introduces some of the main themes of *LCZ* through the actions of the archdeacon and his relationship with Gonzalo Pérez. These themes include loyalty, the patient endurance of trials in the service of God, and the advantages of being possessed of the honorable qualities of *mesura* (roughly: moderation/restraint) and *buen seso natural* (natural good sense). Ferrán Martínez performs an act of loyalty by repaying the *merced* (honor) he received from his former benefactor, and he demonstrates his *mesura* and *buen seso natural* by diligently pursuing this task and refusing to despair and give up, despite the many obstacles. In the prologue, the author explains *buen seso natural* as a form of divine wisdom derived from God that leads men to do great works in His service: “Ca entre todos los bienes que Dios quiso dar al ome e entre todas las otras çiençias que ome aprende, la candela que a todas estas alunbra seso natural es. Ca ninguna çiençia que ome aprenda non puede ser alunbrada ni enderesçada sin buen seso natural...Onde a quien Dios quiso buen seso dar, puede comenzar e acabar buenas obras e onestas a serviçio de Dios e aprovechamiento de aquellos que las oyeren e buen prez de sí mismo” (57-8). The virtue of *mesura* is intimately related to the concept of *buen seso natural* in *LCZ*, as they are both products of the presence of God. The author also distinguishes *buen seso natural* from *ciencia* and prioritizes the former over the latter. Later in the text, Zifar advises his sons to use *seso natural* with *letradura* (learning), but he warns them that: “la letradura faze al ome orgulloso e sobervio, é el buen seso fázelo omildoso e paçiente” (260-1). For the author of *LCZ*, there exists a hierarchy of knowledge where divinely-derived knowledge is held above that which can be learned

through the study of sciences, which is reminiscent of the anti-Averroistic epistemology promoted in Sancho IV's court and by the clerics of Toledo.

While the archdeacon of Madrid accomplishes his goal in part because of his exercise of these qualities, the narrator tells us that he is also aided by several powerful personages—among them Queen María de Molina—who joins her son Fernando in petitioning Pope Boniface VIII to permit the transfer of the cardinal's remains. Though the author does not mention it here, it is important to note that the “honrado padre Bonifacio VIII,” who proclaims the first jubilee in 1300, during which “fueron otorgados muy grandes perdones,” is the same pope who ultimately legitimated María's marriage, granting her the papal dispensation in that same year (51). The narrator informs us that it is the queen's appeal that finally motivates the pope's notary to intercede in the matter, after which we are presented with a portrait of the queen that lists her many great qualities:

otrosí por ruego de doña María, reina de Castiella e de León que era a esa sazón, que le enbió rogar, la qual fue muy buena dueña e de muy buena vida e de buen consejo e de buen seso natural e muy conplida en todas buenas costumbres e amadora de justicia e con piedat, non argullesçiendo con buena andança nin desesperando con mala andança quando le acaesçia, mas firme e estable en todos los sus fechos que entendíe que con Dios e con razón e con derecho eran, así como se cuenta en el libro de la estoria. (54)

Besides suggesting a connection with the queen (and maybe even hinting at patronage), this eulogy of Queen María also introduces additional chivalric moral values that are

promoted in *LCZ*. Besides the virtues of *mesura* and *buen seso natural* that are evidenced in the queen's unwavering faith and determination, she is also praised for her love of justice, her prudent advice, and her *buenas costumbres*. Although it is unclear from the reference whether the "libro de la historia" referred to here is Loaysa's or Sanchez de Valladolid's, at once we must recognize these chivalric values as the keys to a successful kingship according to Alfonso XI's chronicler. Therefore, I agree with Gómez Redondo's assessment that the author of *LCZ* is most likely referring to Sánchez de Valladolid's chronicles because of the important role that the queen plays in that history.¹⁵ At the same time, with his laudatory reference to the queen, the narrator is recalling to the reader/listener's mind what they probably already knew about the queen from experience, oral tradition, and perhaps through a reading of the chronicles: that Queen María was an exemplary monarch.

After the historical *exemplum* of the prologue reaches its conclusion, the author presents us with another portrait, this time of the fictional character Knight Zifar, which is striking in its resemblance to the previous description of the queen:

El qual cavallero ovo nonbre Zifar de bautismo; e después ovo nombre El Cavallero de Dios, porque se tovo él siempre con Dios e Dios con él en todos los fechos, así como adelante oiredes, podredes ver e entendredes por las sus obras...El qual cavallero era conplido de buen seso natural e de esforçar, de justicia e de buen consejo e de buena verdat, comoquier que la fortuna era contra él en lo traer a pobredat;... e de grant esfuerço, non se mudando nin orgullesçiendo por las buenas andanças, nin desesperando

15. Gómez Redondo, *Historia de la prosa*, 2:1248.

por las desaventuras fuertes quando le sobrevenían; e siempre dezía verdat e non mentira quando alguna demanda le fazían. (58, 60)

Like the queen, Zifar is noted for his *buen seso natural*, wise counsel, dedication to justice, humility, and his unwavering faith in God. In this description we also find that Zifar shares other attributes with the queen, such as honesty, which are not specifically attributed to her in the prologue. Though the trajectories of Zifar and María's stories—contained in *LCZ* and the “libro de la historia,” respectively—are decidedly different, both characters endure many trials and are brought to poverty through no fault of their own. Both the queen and Zifar are rewarded—at times miraculously—for their faith in God and their steadfast and selfless service to a higher cause. When we follow the comparison that the narrator is making between the two characters to the text of the royal chronicles, we find that Zifar's exemplary behavior promotes a very similar moral code to that which is advocated by the queen in the chronicles, and that in both cases these moral values are wrapped up in a discourse on kingship and chivalry.¹⁶

Although there is no broad critical consensus that says that *LCZ* belongs to one particular literary genre, it has long been recognized that the work is at least in part a mirror of princes and a treatise on kingship. In the section of the work sometimes titled “Castigos del rey de Mentón,”¹⁷ the knight Zifar, who has been raised into kingship and reunited with his family, sits down with his two sons and teaches them. This literary

16. Rodríguez Velasco asserts that during this period in Castile-León, “las ideas en torno a la caballería constituyen, en realidad, el plasma sobre el que circulan las ideas políticas generales, y en particular sobre la esencia de la nobleza.” Jesús Rodríguez Velasco, “Zifar en la edad de la virtud,” *La corónica: A Journal of Medieval Hispanic Languages, Literatures, and Cultures* 27, vol. 3 (1999): 168.

17. Cacho Bleuca informs us that although critics generally accept that *LCZ* admits a tri-part structure, the surviving manuscripts do not have these subtitles and are only separated into chapters. The first known separation of the text into its three parts comes from a printed edition from 1512. José Manuel Cacho Bleuca, “Los ‘Castigos’ y la educación de Garfín y Roboán en el *Libro del Cavallero Zifar*,” in *Nunca fue pena mayor: Estudios de literatura española en homenaje a Brian Dutton*, eds. Victoriano Roncero López and Ana Menéndez Collera (Cuenca: Ediciones de la Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, 1996): 117-136.

frame, in which a king fulfills his fatherly duty by schooling his sons on how to comport themselves, is strongly reminiscent of *Castigos del rey don Sancho IV*. Zifar's eldest son/pupil is destined to rule after him and the younger, Roboán, has recently waived his right to inherit a large part of his father's kingdom, preferring to go out in search of chivalric adventures through which to earn honor and glory.¹⁸ In this way, Zifar's advice is addressed both to future kings and noble knights.

Kingship and Justice

As we saw in Sancho's *Castigos*, in *LCZ* the ultimate purpose for which kings exist is the enforcement of justice and the maintenance of peace and order. As Luciana de Stefano points out, there are two kinds of kingdoms in *LCZ*: those which are governed by justice and those unfortunate places where this value is absent.¹⁹ In the former type of kingdom, peace and prosperity reign supreme, while in the latter, the social system is dominated by powerful men who grow rich through the systematic abuse of the lower classes. Stefano also asserts that: "justicia y paz no deben ser entendidas aquí como realizaciones a nivel inter-individual sino como funciones públicas del señor hacia todos sus vasallos—mayores y menores—cuyo fin es la realización del bien común."²⁰

The idea that a just king is essential to a peaceful realm is repeated frequently throughout the work, but the treatment of the topic in Grima's travels will serve to illustrate this point. When Grima comes to the kingdom of Ester, she inquires about the state of the kingdom before disembarking from her ship, asking if it is a "tierra de justicia

18. It is interesting to note that Roboán has this in common with Queen María's father, Infante Alfonso. Roboán's attitude in refusing a sizeable inheritance from his father both demonstrates a lack of greed and supports the still fairly newly establishment of primogeniture in Castile-León.

19. Luciana de Stefano, "El malhechor feudal en el *Libro del Cauallero Zifar*," *Anales de filología hispánica* 3 (1987): 25-35.

20. *Ibid*, 26.

do los omes podiesen bevir” (171). A solicitous *ome bueno* responds that it is not, and he tells her why: “Ca non ha en él buen comienço...porque non ha buen governador” (171). The king of Ester—who should be the cornerstone of a just kingdom—is in reality: “un rey muy sobervio e muy crúo e muy sin piedat e que desehereda muy de grado a los que son bien heredados e despecha sus pueblos sin razón...e mata los omes sin ser oídos e faze otros muchos males que serían luengos de contar” (171-2). This cruel and merciless king is guilty of injustices to his people in regards to their property rights, the collection of taxes, and criminal punishment. But more than that, the king of Ester is also filled with *soberbia* (arrogance), something that contrasts sharply with the portraits of María and Zifar in the prologue, who are humble even in their triumphs.

Following this good knight’s advice, Grima continues on to the kingdom of Mentón, a land that is ruled by a virtuous and just king, whom the people believe “fue enbiado de Dios” (172). When she arrives in Mentón, Grima repeats her inquiry and she is answered by another *ome bueno*, who corroborates the first knight’s favorable characterization of the king of Mentón:

E él le dixo que [el rey] era muy buen ome e de Dios e que parescía en las cosas que Dios fazía por él; ca nunca los de aquel regño tan ricos nin tan anparados fueron como después que él fue señor del regño; ca lo mantenía en justicia e en pas e en concordia...E ninguno, por poderoso nin por onrado que fuese, non osaría tomar a otro ome ninguno de lo suyo, sin su placer, valía de un dinero; e si gelo tomase, perdería la cabeza...pero que atan crúamente lo fizo a guardar el rey por todo el regño, que todos comunalmente se fezieron a ello e plógoles con el buen fuero ...[e a los

condes e todos los de la tierra] non les toma [el rey] ninguna cosa de lo que han nin les pasa contra sus fueros nin sus buenas costumbres, ante gelas confirma e les faze graçias a aquellos que entiende que puede fazer sin daño de su señorío. (174)

Unlike the king of Ester, the king of Mentón respects the laws, customs, and property of his people. If his justice is harsh, it is also effective in bringing peace, order and prosperity to all. King Zifar is also noted for his moral conduct (“fizo muy buena vida e muy santa”), which is to say that he respects the laws of God (174). As we can see from this description of Zifar, both a strict enforcement of justice and the presence of God’s favor are essential elements in the image of an ideal king.

As in Sancho’s *Castigos*, monarchy in Zifar’s world operates according to a system of divine reward and punishment. Though he is the descendant of kings, Zifar comes into his kingdom (which is notably different from that of his ancestors) through the performance of Christian chivalric values. With the advice of his wife, Zifar goes out in search of adventures to win fame by protecting widows and orphans. God is pleased with his exemplary conduct, and so Zifar’s fortunes are raised and he redeems his lineage. We can also see evidence that God chooses kings (which is yet another precept from *Castigos*) in the people’s belief that Zifar has been sent to them from God. In the last section of *LCZ Roboán* furthers his family’s fortunes by practicing what his father preaches and is raised even higher than Zifar when he becomes the emperor of Pandulfa. Roboán wins that empire by protecting that land from a neighboring king who is full of *soberbia*, but as he tells the people, such a king could never prosper, “ca Dios non sufre las sobervias, ante las quebranta e las abaxa a tierra, así como fará aqueste rey” (331). In

LCZ arrogant kings that mismanage their kingdoms (such as the kings of Ester and Guimalet) may lose their wealth or bring about the demise of their heirs; and when they persist in their wrongdoing, these kings are destined to lose their right to rule as well. Zifar's ancestor King Tared is the prime example of the culmination of this divine punishment, since he loses his kingdom due to his "malas costumbres" and his line falls into ruin (79). It is important to observe that individual virtue trumps inheritance in the chivalric narrative of *LCZ*. In some ways, this offers an apology for Fernando IV and his kin that is similar to that found in Sánchez de Valladolid's chronicle.

Mesura and Cobdiçia

While the author of *LCZ* makes use of many different virtues and sins to explain the fortunes of kings, Marilyn A. Olsen has suggested that they can be simplified into the opposing concepts of *mesura* and *cobdiçia*.²¹ According to Olsen: "Of all the themes stressed, the most essential is love of God. As a result of his presence, *mesura* 'moderation,' becomes the key to all other virtues: when, on the other hand, God's presence is absent, *cobdiçia*, 'greed,' takes over as the source of all vices."²² To demonstrate the controlling function of these opposing themes in relation to peace and order, Olsen analyzes all of the instances of what she describes as "political and personal confrontations" in manuscript P of *LCZ*.²³ She finds that in each case, conflict is caused

21. Marilyn A. Olsen, "Mesura and Cobdiçia: The Ideological Core of the *Cavallero Çifar*" in *Hispanic Studies in Honor of Alan D. Deyermond: A North American Tribute*, ed. John S. Miletich (Madison: Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies, 1986): 223-33. Olsen argues that in *LCZ* *mesura* is the source for "the four cardinal virtues...prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance" and the "three theological virtues...faith, hope, and charity." On the other hand, *cobdiçia* "is the source of all the vices...*soberbia, envidia, luxuria, ira, vanagloria, avariçia* and *glotonia*." Ibid 224.; Also see Marilyn A. Olsen, "The Prologue of the *Cavallero Çifar*: An Example of Medieval Creativity," *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 62, no. 1 (1985): 15-23.

22. Olsen, "Mesura and Cobdiçia," 223.

23. Ibid, 224.

by characters that are motivated by *cobdiçia*, and resolved by characters that perform *mesura*. Olsen concludes that:

This balanced arrangement of disputes emphasizing *cobdiçia* and *mesura* during the reign of Çifar and Roboan, with the two bound by means of an ideological series of lectures stressing the same concepts, may hardly be coincidental; it is obviously a deliberate attempt on the part of the author to illustrate the significance of *cobdiçia* as a source of conflict. He accomplishes this goal in three ways: through the specific use of the word *cobdicia*, through the related terms *mentira* and *soberbia*, and by illustrating that those rulers who counteract aggression are characterized by *mesura* or *sin cobdiçia*.²⁴

Therefore, order and peace are affected by the presence or absence of both justice and *mesura*. However, it is not the sole responsibility of the king to keep order in the kingdom. Zifar's grandfather teaches him that noble knights are also implicated in the state of the kingdom, since “con grant fuerça de maldat se desfaze [un rey] e con grant fuerça de bondat e de buenas costunbres se faze; e esta maldat o esta bondat viene tan bien de parte de aquel que es o á de ser rey, como de aquellos que la desfazen o lo fazen” (77).

Nobility and Chivalry

In *LCZ*, the discourse of chivalry creates a code of moral conduct for kings, noble knights, and lords—who make up the principal characters of the work. It may be useful to reflect here that the focus on chivalry as a code of conduct for both kings and noble lords is logical, since kings are themselves noble. In fact, according to the prologue the work is

24. *Ibid*, 230.

called “Libro de Cavallero de Dios,” a title which emphasizes Zifar’s knighthood over his kingship (58). Zifar is the knight of God, which is to say that he is a knight of the king of kings. His practice of chivalry both as a knight and as a king is aimed at serving God and enforcing His laws on earth. In this, we see the same hierarchy that is outlined in *Castigos*, where the king must be to God what the noble knight should be to the king: an obedient and loyal vassal.

This chivalric code, in all of its specificities, is roughly equal to the *fueros de Dios* (laws of God), and it is God, as king of the heavens, who enforces these laws. As we saw in *Castigos*, the moral code of *LCZ* above all prescribes *mesura* (restraint) against carnal desires and sins, though the primary focus of that restraint has shifted from the sin of *loco amor* to the vice of greed.²⁵ Through the episodes of conflict in *LCZ*, it is also apparent that this chivalric moral code is meant to operate as a restraint against violence, specifically noble violence. Not only are nobles discouraged from taking up arms against their natural lord or attacking his lands, but they are also charged with the responsibility of protecting the weak, especially widows and orphans. The enforcement of this moral code of chivalry comes from the king and from God. If the nobles rebel against their king without just cause or attack an unprotected woman or child (which they often do), they will have to face the king’s justice and the displeasure of God, who may very well send a righteous knight to put them down.

25. While there are some episodes that treat the sin of carnal lust, these are greatly outnumbered by the *exempla* and episodes that treat the sin of greed. Also, when Zifar tells his sons “que la primera e la presçiada de las buenas costumbres es castidad” it is clear that “castidad” does not necessarily denote chastity, but rather *mesura* (restraint): “quiere dezir tenperança...castidad es amansar e atemperar ome su talante en los viçios e en los deleites de la carne e otras cosas que son contrarias de la castidad e mantener su cuerpo e su alma.” *LCZ*, 240.

On the other hand, the work teaches its noble readers that that the justice of the world includes both reward and punishment. Therefore, if noble knights fulfill their obligations to God and king—like Knight Zifar and his son—they can expect to be rewarded, either in this life or in the next. While Rodríguez Velasco argues that the possibilities for upward mobility in *LCZ* are largely limited to those knights who are noble by birth,²⁶ Cacho Blecua asserts that nobility in *LCZ* is defined not by birth status, but by the actions and merits of individual knights.²⁷ Cacho Blecua points to the exceptional mobility of the nameless *ribaldo* (scoundrel), who eventually becomes *Caballero Amigo* (Friend Knight) and is later raised to the high status of conde (*Conde Amigo*-Count Friend) for his loyal service to Zifar and his son. The words of the infanta of Mentón are also relevant to the topic: “Muy mejor es casar con un cavallero fijodalgo e de buen entendimiento e buen cavallero de armas para poder e saber anparar el regño...que non casar con infante o con otro de grant lugar que non sopiese nin podiese defender a sí nin a mí” (160). Therefore, while nobility may still be the result of one’s birth, the definition is expanded to include the virtuous sum of one’s actions. Furthermore, the fact that the *ribaldo* receives the designation of “friend” as he is raised in his status highlights the important moral virtue of loyalty for the king’s vassals and the promise of material rewards that loyalty brings; it is because of his loyal service to his lord (and his lord’s family) that the *ribaldo* is able to better his situation and create an identity for himself. In this way, the author of *LCZ* attempts to influence the moral and ethical horizons of the nobility, even appealing to the ambitions of non-noble knights.

Connections to the Historical Context and the Crisis of Kingship and Vassalage

26. Rodríguez Velasco, “Zifar en la edad de la virtud,” 174-9.

27. Cacho Blecua, “Los problemas del Zifar,” 63-8.

Luciana de Stefano points to the description of frequent conflicts that involve *nobles malfechores* as evidence that the work was written after the turbulent minority of Fernando IV, when instances of noble violence had reached new levels. She also demonstrates how *LCZ* reflects other important issues in Castile-León at the turn of the fourteenth century, such as the depopulation of the king's territories, the respect for regional *fueros*, and the debate over the role of churchmen in the monarchy, especially within the context of the royal chancery.²⁸ However, as critics disagree on whether the work was written during Fernando IV or Alfonso XI's reign, these same stories have been associated with different historical events. For example, de Stefano sees an allusion to Fernando IV in the story of the dethroned emperor that opens the section where Zifar teaches his sons, which would imply that *LCZ* was written after that king reached his majority. On the other hand, Gómez Redondo and Hernández see a fictionalized version of Alfonso X, which might imply that the work was written during Fernando's minority.²⁹ Although (as stated previously) I do not mean to assert anything about the date of *LCZ* here, I would like to discuss more at length an episode that suggests that the work was written during Alfonso XI's majority: the story of the boy king Tabor of Syria.

Most critics see a parallel between the *exemplum* of the boy king Tabor and the end of the minority of Fernando IV. However, when we admit the possibility that *LCZ* may have been written during Alfonso XI's reign, we can see that the circumstances of this fictional story more closely resemble events surrounding the declaration of Alfonso's majority. The story of Tabor begins with God filling the young king's heart with the understanding that his realm is in disorder: "Dios...puso en corazón del rey Tabor,

28. Luciana de Stefano, "El malhechor feudal," 25-35.

29. Gómez Redondo, "El Zifar y la *Crónica de Fernando IV*," 109.; Hernández, "Ferrán Martínez," 290-5.

maguer moço, ca non avía más de quinze años, que parase mientes e viese e entendiese el mal e la traición en que le andavan aquellos que le devían guardar e defender” (244-5). Tabor realizes that besides being guilty of doing great damage in the king’s lands, his arrogant and greedy tutor, Rades, is secretly plotting to replace him as king. After receiving a vision where the Christ child urges him to put his plan into action,³⁰ Tabor enlists the help of his young friends to “poner las manos contra aquellos que le querían desheredar” (245). They trap Rades and his conspirator Joel in the king’s chambers, where they murder and behead the traitors with the help of the Christ child and a host of men dressed in white and armed with swords. The first clue that links this story to Alfonso XI is the relationship between Tabor and his “uncle” Rades. According to *LCZ*, Rades is the nephew of Tabor’s deceased father, King Fares. Therefore, Rades’ relation to the crown is more distant than that of Fernando IV’s tutor, Infante Enrique (son of Fernando III), and more like that of two of Alfonso XI’s tutors, Juan Manuel (nephew of Alfonso X) and Juan de Borgoña (nephew of Sancho IV). It is also curious that a fictionalization of Fernando IV’s minority should omit any representation of his queen mother. Indeed, it seems unlikely that the same author who makes little to no effort to praise the king in the prologue would exclude from this story the political personage upon whom he has heaped all of his praise. Unlike Fernando, Tabor is an orphan bereft of any true protectors, and is therefore more like Alfonso XI after the death of his grandmother. Furthermore, the fact that Tabor takes decisive action against Rades, and that he is successful in killing the traitor who threatens to usurp his power, again points to Alfonso

30. Hernández indicates that this is the Christ child, though Zifar does not explicitly state this in his story. *Ibid*, 324.

XI, who at the same age of fifteen, declared his majority and murdered the treacherous Juan de Borgoña.³¹

At the same time, there appears to be an allusion to Fernando IV's inability to free himself from the control of the nobility during his majority in Zifar's advice to his sons. The king of Mentón warns Garfín and Roboán that while they are still young and impressionable false men will try to take advantage of their youth and lack of experience. These men will pretend to serve their lord, while secretly working to gain control over him:

Non catarán sinon por fazer bien a sí e apoderarse de vos e de fazer e desapoderarvos, porque quando fuéredes grandes e oviéredes el entendimiento conplido, que los non podades de ligero desfazer, maguer fagan por qué, nin podades fazer justicia en aquellos que la merescen...E çertas, mientras de pequeña hedat fuéredes, non se trabajarían en al sinon en traervos a pobredat, falagándovos e consejándovos que usedes de mocedades en comer e en beber e en todas las otras cosas que plaze a los moços, metiéndovos a saña contra aquellos que quisieren vuestro servicio e vuestra onra; e buscarvos han achaques conbusco por que vos fagades mal en manera que los alonguedes de vos e non puedan consejar lo mejor, e ellos puedan conplir conbusco sus voluntades e fazer lo que quisieren.

(284)

In this *castigo*, Zifar appears to be warning his sons against making the same mistakes as Fernando IV, since this hypothetical situation coincides almost exactly with the representation of the first years of Fernando IV's majority in both Loaysa's and Sanchez

31. CAXI, 197-203.; *Poema de Alfonso Onceno*, ed. Juan Victorio, (Madrid: Cátedra, 1991): 77-93.

de Valladolid's chronicles. In the same section of *LCZ*, Zifar tells his sons a story about another king who is visited by men whom he killed unjustly. This is reminiscent of the legend of Fernando *el Emplazado*, although unlike King Fernando this fictional monarch is saved by his repentance, and he makes amends to God and to his people (320-1). While my reading of these *exempla* suggests the possibility that *LCZ* was written after Fernando's death and into Alfonso's majority, it does not constitute hard evidence. More importantly, the comments that the author is making about kingship and chivalry refer to a more generalized crisis in the monarchy that spans the reigns of both of these kings. With these allusions to the historical crisis in kingship, *LCZ* conflates the experiences of both Fernando and Alfonso, drawing from history in order to teach truths about the nature of monarchy and political ethics.

María and Political Women in LCZ

It appears likely that Queen María's rule as it is presented in the royal chronicles influenced the representation of political women in *LCZ*. While there is no particular *exemplum* in Zifar's advice or story in his adventures that provides a clear-cut fictional parallel to the story of Queen María, there are several situations involving political women that resemble that story. First, the Lady of Galapia shares similar circumstances with Queen María, as she is both a widow and the guardian of her young son. When Zifar arrives in Galapia, the *señora de la villa*, as she is most often called, is under attack from the greedy noble Rodán, who is trying to force her to marry his nephew. This calls to mind María's predicament in *CFIV*, where Infante Enrique tries to convince the queen to remarry in order to remove her from his path to power. In the end, the lady of Galapia is saved by "Dios poderoso e guardador e defendor de las buidas e los huérfanos," who she

declares sent the knight Zifar to protect her (99). The theme of a noble female ruler in distress is repeated in the case of Infanta Seringa, the orphan empress of Pandulfa who is beset by attacks from neighboring kings who all want to marry her in order to take control over her wealthy kingdom. We are again reminded of Enrique's words to María in *CFIV* when the narrator tells us that Seringa is under attack because she is a woman: "E porque era muger, los reys sus vezinos de enderredor fazíanle mucho mal e tomávanse su tierra, non catando mesura, la que todo ome deve catar contra las dueñas" (327).

Although the conclusions to these two conflicts both end in marriage, and therefore differ greatly from María's story,³² what they have in common is the promotion of the chivalric ideal of defending widows and orphans, instead of greedily taking advantage of their unprotected situations. In both of these examples, the author is playing out different variations on the theme of the damsel in distress who is put upon unjustly, in order to set her up to be saved by a champion sent by God.

LCZ stands apart from the tradition of chivalric literature in Medieval Castile because it represents noble women as sovereign rulers.³³ However, despite the presence of more than a few ruling women in *LCZ*, the power of these political women is limited. As in Medieval Castile-León, in the kingdoms of Mentón and Pandulfa women are able to inherit and rule their father's territory in the absence of a male heir. The author praises these women for their prudence and their piety—but although they are exemplary they are nevertheless incomplete without a man with whom to share their rule. The infanta of

32. It is interesting to observe that when the lady of Galapia marries Rodán's son, the size of her son's patrimony is greatly increased. *LCZ*, 106; This is in direct opposition to María's declaration in *CFIV* that she would not remarry, even if it would result in the extension of her son's territories.

33. In her analysis of the depiction of noble women in *Poema del mío Cid*, *Poema de Fernán Gonzalez*, and *Mocedades de Rodrigo*, M. E. Lacarra indicates that the authors exclude women from rulership, although as we know this was not the case in Medieval Spain. M. E. Lacarra, "La mujer ejemplar en tres textos épicos castellanos," *Cuadernos de la investigación filológica* 14 (1988): 5-20.

Mentón is overshadowed by her husband, who succeeds her despite the fact that they never consummate the marriage or have any children. As for Infanta Seringa, who has inherited the empire of Pandulfa and rules in her own right, she too ends up married and it is telling that she is never referred to as an empress until after she is wed (434). Despite the marriage trajectories of the ruling women in Zifar, they are not wholly unlike Queen María, who never ruled in her own right—but rather co-ruled with her husband, her son, and her grandson.

Women can rule in Zifar's world, but their gender is decidedly a disadvantage. Seringa bewails the weakness of her sex that prevents her from defending her kingdom: “¡Ay, nuestro señor Dios! ¿Por qué quesiste que yo naciese, pues que me yo non puedo defender de aquellos que mal me fazen? Çertas, mejor fuera en yo non ser nascida e ser este lugar de otro que sopiese pasar a los fechos e a lo defender” (330-1). As an exemplary female ruler (and like María in *CFIV*), Seringa acknowledges the limitations of her gender in warfare and entrusts the defense of her kingdom to her uncle and to her champion, Roboán, “Ca yo muger só e non he de meter las manos” (330). Good women are therefore humble and know their place. The appropriate female role in wartime is in prayer, and during times of armed conflict the female characters of *LCZ* closet themselves and pray fervently for God to bestow his favor upon their champions and protectors.³⁴ In regards to the subject of marriage, the virtuous ladies of *LCZ* subordinate themselves to the will of their families. While Wendell Smith indicates that according to canon law the consent of both the woman and the man is necessary in order to seal the sacred bond of marriage, the respectable noble women in *LCZ* expressly refuse to make any decisions about whom they are to marry, preferring to entrust the business of

34. *LCZ*, 99, 157, 344.

marriage to their male relatives.³⁵ Through their marriages Seringa, the infanta of Mentón, and the lady of Galapia give over control of their kingdoms to their husbands, and the only ruling women who remain unmarried exist in magical realms, where they are doomed to remain spouseless because of the faults of their husbands.³⁶ In *LCZ* unmarried women sovereigns represent a crisis in rulership that can only be resolved through the intervention of God, the practice of chivalry, and a successful marriage. The most appropriate role for these noble women lies in supporting the male members of their families. They exist to care for their children, to advise their husbands, and to pray for their protectors.

As was the case among noble women in Medieval Castile-León, one way in which women can serve their families is by providing an appropriate outlet for the expression of family grief.³⁷ When the knight Zifar is anguished at the loss of their eldest son, who has just been carried off by a lioness, his wife Grima helps him to maintain his composure by reminding him that: “non podemos aquí fazer sinon gradesçer a Dios quanto nos fas e tenérgelo por merçed” (114). However, when she loses her second son on the same day, Grima succumbs to grief. The sounds of her mourning are so loud that they attract sympathetic spectators, and the bereaved mother loses her senses in the expression of her emotion: “Era la dueña salida de seso, que andava como loca entre todas las otras, deziendo sus palabras muy estrañas con grant pesar que tenía de sus hijos” (115). In this episode, Grima is manifesting the tradition of women as chief mourners in

35. Wendell Smith, “Marital Canon-Law Dilemmas in *El libro del Cauallero Zifar*,” *La corónica: A Journal of Medieval Hispanic Languages, Literatures, and Cultures* 27, no. 3 (1999): 187-206.

36. For more on the two “fairy queens” of *LCZ*, see Harriet Goldberg, “Queen of Almost All She Surveys: The Sexual Dynamics of Female Sovereignty,” *La corónica: A Journal of Medieval Hispanic Languages, Literatures, and Cultures* 23, no. 2 (1995): 51-63.

37. For a discussion of the role of queens and other noble women in Castile as the primary mourners of the dead, see Shadis, *Berenguela*, 149-171.

the context of the family. Her passionate conduct also allows us to comprehend the extent of the trials that Zifar is enduring, while allowing him to maintain his dignity and his faith in God's Providence.

While Grima's effusive expression of grief is gender-appropriate and socially acceptable, her more sensitive nature does lead to inappropriate emotions that must be corrected. When Grima complains that "Dios que la quería fazer mucho mal," her husband reminds her that they must accept the will of God and be glad for it (115). Again, when faced with a second separation from her youngest son, Grima is gently rebuked for her excessive emotion. She begs her son to stay in Mentón because she fears for his safety, but Roboán makes her understand that he is right to go out in the world and earn honor (324-5). Therefore, women must be careful not to let their feminine emotion cloud their reason and lead them to say inappropriate things. However, it should be noted that Zifar tells his sons that as a rule, women are capable of speaking with the most acute intelligence and he recommends that both men and women take care to be moderate in their speech.³⁸

In general *LCZ* has more praise for its female characters than censure. These women are good wives and mothers and they conform to behavior that is appropriate to their role in the family structure. Among these women, Grima is the most complete model for exemplary female moral and political conduct. The narrator begins Zifar's story by informing us of his wife's many good qualities: "Fue muy buena dueña e de buena vida e muy mandada a su marido e mantenedora e guardadora de la su

38. Zifar tells his sons that women "son muy aperçebidas en parar mientes a lo que dizen e en escatimar las palabras; e cuando ellas fablan, dizen pocas palabras e muy afeitadas e con grant entendimiento, e a las vegadas con punto de escatima de reprehensión; e non es maravilla, ca non estudian en al." He also advises his sons that "mejor es al ome que sea mudo que non fable mal." *LCZ*, 257.

casa...obediente a su marido e...buena criança fazía en sus fijuelos e...buenos castigos
 les dava” (58). Her role in teaching her sons proves her intelligence, and she gives to her
 husband both obedience and good advice. Zifar respects his wife, whom he calls “friend”
 (“amiga señora”) and he chooses to confide in her, trusting in her loyalty and recognizing
 her *buen seso* (76). Zifar also remarks on the topic of taking council from women,
 reflecting that “comoquier que digan algunos que las mujeres non guardan bien poridad,
 tengo que fallesçe esta regla en algunas; ca Dios non fizo los omes iguales nin de un seso
 nin de un entendimiento, mas departidos tan bien varones como mujeres” (76). Knight
 Zifar’s musings on the virtues of women—though they do not constitute an argument for
 equality—do provide for exceptional women who can match, or even exceed men in their
 intelligence and in their trustworthiness.

In addition to her wisdom and obedience, Zifar’s wife is a pious woman who is
 favored by miracles. When she is abducted by dishonest and unchaste sailors, Grima is
 saved by divine intervention. The Virgin hears her prayers and sends the Christ child to
 guide the ship after clearing it of the lascivious sailors, who kill each other in a fight over
 who will be the one to ravage her. Like her husband, Grima is also praised as a “dueña de
 Dios” and an “amiga de Dios” (124, 127). The people of Orbín, where Grima stays for a
 time, believe that she brings them the favor of God, since their kingdom grows more
 prosperous with her presence (126). Grima is also like her husband in that she repays
 God’s favor with charity, founding monasteries in Orbín and in Mentón. She even
 understands the value of rewarding loyal service, and the men who accompany her from
 Orbín to Mentón are so pleased with what she gives them that they bless her name and
 pray that God should grant all of her petitions (173-4). Furthermore, Grima is a feminine

model of *mesura* and forbearance, as she does not react in anger or despair when she realizes that her husband is married to another woman, but rather waits patiently for the queen to die and her husband to reclaim her. Despite the fact that on a few occasions her emotion leads her to err in her thoughts and her words, Grima is a mirror of ideal female conduct and a worthy consort of the Knight of God.

Conclusion: The Influence of Queen María in LCZ

In *LCZ* we see reflected many of the same ideas about kingship, noble vassals, and political ethics that are found in Sancho's *Castigos* and in the royal chronicles. The model of kingship and vassalage is roughly the same, though in the fictional world of Zifar there are no neighboring Muslim kingdoms to conquer. At the same time, we also see in Knight/King Zifar many of the virtues promoted by the figure of Queen María in Sánchez de Valladolid's chronicles, such as piety, mercy, wisdom, good advice, and restraint. Besides his gender, the most significant difference between Zifar and the queen is his famous skill as a warrior. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that it is not so much Zifar's military prowess that ensures his success in combat, as it is his righteousness, his perseverance, and God's favor—all traits united in the character of Queen María in the royal chronicles. It therefore may be possible for us to think about King Zifar as a male version of Queen María, an idealized ruler who is able to balance his aggressive masculinity with more feminine traits such as mercy and obedience to God's laws and the Church.

It is also evident that Queen María's exemplary rule in the chronicles influenced the depiction of noble women in *LCZ*, who are prudent co-rulers and saintly wives like Grima who counsel their husbands, teach their children, reward their vassals, and honor

God by building monasteries. The stories of noble damsels (or queens and empresses) in distress also recalls María's role as a victim of the nobles throughout the royal chronicles. The attitude towards ruling women in *LCZ* suggests that although they are not complete without a king to protect them, queens are pious fonts of virtue and are dependable sources of advice and wisdom about kingship and chivalry. They can inherit and rule, so long as they are served well by their vassals and their family chooses them a virtuous husband to provide the kingdom with heirs. In this way it is evident that the "libro de la historia" and figure of the queen in that history have a great impact on the values and virtues promoted in *LCZ*.

What remains is to determine is how much influence Queen María had on this work and how can we trace that influence. Gómez Redondo argues that the identity of the author is not as important as the context in which the text was written, which is to say María's court and the cathedral school of Toledo: "El *Zifar* en suma, es el libro que construye doña María para atravesar la minoridad de su hijo, mantener su pensamiento a lo largo de ese turbulento reinado y entregar a su nieto un 'saber' cortesano y doctrinal del que surge el más efectivo de los modelos regalistas de la Edad Media, sólo comparable al de Isabel de Castilla, que por algo fue también lectora de este entramado político y religioso."³⁹ Gómez Redondo asserts that the queen created this work in order to pass on "her" model of monarchy (molinismo) to her grandson. This is quite possible. María could have ordered this work to be written with the intention of giving it to her grandson, or she might have even patronized an original version—perhaps sometime during Fernando's minority—and the work could have been re-written and expanded at a later date, with an updated prologue and new stories that reflect events of Fernando's

39. Gómez Redondo, *Historia*, 2:1459.

majority and the end of Alfonso's minority. My only reservations with such a hypothesis are the amount of speculation that is necessary to come to this conclusion and the striking similarity between the values, events (particularly the story of the boy king Tabor), and even the policies (such as respect for the local *fueros* and the application of a harsh justice) of *LCZ* and *CAXI*—which was not written until the 1340's, two decades after María's death. In any case it appears that the author of *LCZ* was aware of Sánchez de Valladolid's chronicle and that he wished to promote the same values and monarchical ethos that were contained in that work. We are left to speculate that either an original version of *LCZ* already contained many of these values and/or was later adapted to become even more similar, or that it was simply written after Sánchez de Valladolid's chronicles. If we accept that the queen's politics had a great impact the political discourse of those royal chronicles, then we can see her influence on the political discourse of *LCZ* in much the same way. However, it seems safer to me to assert that it is the representation of the queen in the chronicles, and not necessarily the queen herself, that has the greatest impact on the political discourse of *LCZ*.

Poema de Alfonso Onceno: Molinismo in Alfonso XI's Reconquest

Another fourteenth-century work that is concerned with molinista values on kingship and chivalry is *Poema de Alfonso Onceno*.⁴⁰ Written sometime between January and September of 1348 by Rodrigo Yáñez,⁴¹ *PAO* is an historical poem that glorifies Alfonso XI's person and his deeds. The work was most likely patronized by the king and it represents many of the same events as *CAXI*. Therefore, it is not surprising that this

40. Juan Victorio, ed., *Poema de Alfonso Onceno* (Madrid: Cátedra, 1991). All subsequent citations refer to this edition (hereafter referred to as *PAO*).

41. See Diego Catalán's edition for a discussion of the date and authorship. Diego Catalán, "Introducción," *Poema de Alfonso Onceno: Fuentes, dialecto, estilo* (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1953): 22-32.

verse history promotes similar values as those seen in the prose, such as the natural duty of noble vassals to serve their king and the king's obligation to maintain justice and continue the reconquest—all of which result in the service of God, the king, and the good of the realm. However, as we shall see the cultural politics of *PAO* differ significantly from what we observed in Sancho IV's *Castigos*, *LCZ*, and even from the royal chronicles. For this reason, *PAO* is perhaps more representative of the pervading ideas about what constitutes an ideal monarchy in Alfonso XI's court than those in Queen María's.

One significant difference between the prose chronicle and the romance appears to be the reduced and feminized role of Queen María. Though the queen is a kind of authoritative character in the poem, her only actions consist of invoking cortes in order to put an "end" to the conflict over the regency and then dying of grief over the continued destruction of the realm by the king's tutors.⁴² María is never mentioned again by the poet after her death and she is given no credit for her grandson's education. Since the first several folios of the poem are missing,⁴³ it is possible that the queen played a larger role in the opening section of *PAO*. Nevertheless, what remains suggests that her depiction in the poem is several degrees removed from that of the exemplary ruler of the royal chronicles. Firstly, most of the eighty-three stanzas that precede María's death are devoted to the actions of the infantes Pedro and Juan and their shocking demise in the frontier with Granada. Furthermore, the manner of the queen's death associates her with

42. This version of the queen's death coincides with that in the *Gran Crónica de Alfonso XI*, and according to Catalán this is because the poem was used as a source to fill the lacuna in the *Versión vulgata* on which the *Gran Crónica* is based. Diego Catalán, "La *Gran Crónica* y la historiografía en prosa y en verso sobre Alfonso XI," 170.

43. Catalán suggests that more than 100 stanzas at the beginning of the manuscript are missing. Diego Catalán, "Las estrofas mutiladas en el Ms. E del 'Poema de Alfonso XI,'" *Nueva revista de filología hispánica* 13, no. 3/4 (1959): 331-2.

woman's weak and emotional nature, belying her reputation as an exemplary ruler who never despairs, but rather perseveres with an unshakable faith in God's Providence.

On the other hand, *PAO* has much in common with the royal chronicles. In the first 673 stanzas of the poem, Yáñez demonstrates how Alfonso's kingly justice restores order to a disordered realm. After a brief introduction that lists the many virtues of the young Alfonso, the poet relates how the people ("labradores") approach the king to denounce the persecution of the lowly by the powerful tutors (93a). They ask the king to give them his protection so that they will not have to abandon the realm:

Mucho mal fuemos sofriendo
 e pas(s)ando mucha guerra
 por vos, señor, atendiendo
 que cobrás(s)edes la tierra,

 e nos diés(s)edes derecho,
 que pas(s)amos gran rancura.
 Señor, ved (aqu)este fecho,
 Por Dios e vuestra medida:

(97-8)

After the people have presented their complaints, we see the first of many comparisons between Alfonso and a "bravo león" as the young king is righteously angered to find that the kingdom of Castile-León "está para se perder" and that the fault lies with those who were charged with its protection (104d, 108d). As in the royal chronicles and *LCZ*, the order of chivalry is unbalanced because of a lack of justice, which allows noble knights to

disobey their natural lord and the powerful to prey on the weak. The people's injunction to the king to enforce his justice provides the impetus for Alfonso to assert his majority and to begin the task of punishing evildoers. The assertion of his power is resisted by the audacious nobles, who scheme to retain their power and rebel against the king. It is only through a combination of harsh justice, subterfuge, and mediated mercy that Alfonso is able to bring the rebellious nobles to heel and restore order to the realm, thereby proving his worthy kingship.

Once order has been duly restored by the presence of a strong and just monarch, Alfonso is able to turn his attention to his kingly duty to serve God through the continuation of the reconquest. The importance of this enterprise to the cultural politics of *PAO* is undeniable, as an overwhelming majority of the narration is dedicated to Alfonso's efforts to defend his territory from the Muslim kingdoms and to expand his kingdom southwards.⁴⁴ Reconquest in *PAO* is very much a religious crusade that is aimed at the defense and glorification of the Christian faith. Yáñez makes it abundantly clear that this is so, and that the Muslim kings—especially Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn Othman of Morocco—pose a very real threat to the Christian kingdoms and to the very survival of Christianity. Abu al-Hasan declares his intentions to restore the hegemony of Muslim rule to the Iberian Peninsula and beyond, threatening to kill or convert all Christians and even to capture the pope (909-44, 1079). Yáñez also uses religiously-charged discourse to depict the confrontations between the armies of these two *leyes*, describing the reconquest as “romería” (pilgrimage) and foreign knights who join Alfonso's crusade as

44. Catalán points out that out of the 2,459 stanzas that make up the poem, 1,787 deal with reconquest efforts. Catalán, “La *Gran Crónica* y la historiografía en prosa y en verso sobre Alfonso XI,” 163.; Victorio's edition includes only 2,456 stanzas and he assesses the number of stanzas dealing with the reconquest at 1,777. Victorio, Introduction to *Poema de Alfonso Onceno*, 24.

“romeros” (pilgrims) (1131, 2199). Masses are celebrated before and after battles and the results—good or bad—are consistently attributed to God’s Will. As the king of Castile, Alfonso is the captain of this great enterprise. He leads other Christian kings and nobles in the defense of the faith, and the pope himself refers to Alfonso as “nuestro escudo e nuestro manto, / braço mayor de la ley” (1918cd).

It is within this context of religious war that Alfonso’s piety is most heavily emphasized. For example, Yáñez describes at length (more than thirty stanzas) the religious rituals that Alfonso uses to prepare himself to enter battle in the defense of Tarifa (1503-38). Alfonso first prays for God’s favor and makes a confession, after which he hears mass and takes communion. The archbishop of Toledo Gil de Albornoz then blesses the king’s arms and gives a general benediction to the troops before accompanying the monarch into battle. The poet also tells us that Alfonso empties his royal coffers in the pursuit of this holy enterprise, thereby proving his pious intentions and his detachment to worldly goods (2165-8). Alfonso says something similar about his motives to serve God in his prayer in the siege of Algeciras:

Desanparé las mis tierras
 que yo podiera folgar,
 con los moros tomé guerras
 por tu fe acre(s)centar.

 E si tienes de mí saña
 ¡aquí me tira la vida!:
 ¡Castiella, la flor d’España,

Señor, non sea perdida!

(2256, 2260)

In these stanzas, the king declares the unselfish service that he is performing for God through the reconquest and (like his grandmother in the chronicles) he demonstrates his passive acceptance of God's will and his willingness to die for his kingdom.⁴⁵

God tests Alfonso, who (not unlike his grandmother) is rewarded with miracles for maintaining his faith in God's Providence. The poet tells us that in the siege of Algeciras: "Dios...provó al rey de Castiella / con (toda) la cristiandad" (2245). When supplies run short, Alfonso refuses to despair and give up, but instead puts his faith in God and prays for a miracle, which the poet tells us God grants him in the form of reinforcements and provisions (2261-2264). Once the troops are reinforced and fed, the king joyously returns his attention to attacking the city, but he runs into another snag: "Leña aver non podía / sinon de muy lengua tierra" (2265cd). Again the king prays to God for a miracle, and this time God answers him with something truly miraculous:

E Dios, como es poderoso,
que fue nado sin manciella,
miraglo fizo fermoso
por el buen rey de Castilla.

E luego por este fecho
un diluvio allegó:
toda la mar (del Estrecho)
en aquel logar cargó.

45. Alfonso makes a similar declaration earlier in the poem. *PAO*, 2260.

Las ondas llenas venían
 de leña para quemar:
 sierras grandes parecían
 que venían por la mar

 e en el real aportava.

(2268-2271a)

By bringing the very sea to the Christian encampment, God supplies the Christians with the firewood they need, and with it they build barriers in the sea to keep out the Muslim ships (2273-4). In *PAO* Alfonso is obviously a monarch favored by God, and this is primarily due his faithful service in the reconquest.

Chivalry is another important component of the reconquest in *PAO*. While nobles who disobey their king are punished, often times with execution and confiscation, those who serve the king in the reconquest are praised. Indeed, Yáñez dedicates a considerable amount of narrative space to recording the presence and the actions of *ricos omes* (along with foreign dignitaries, members of the military orders, and other knights) in the war against the Moors.⁴⁶ In many cases these men are only named briefly to give credit to their participation in this noble cause. This general pattern is observable in the poet's account of the defeat of Abd al-Malik Abd al-Wahid:

todos lidiavan sin miedo
 matando en(tre) los pagaons:

46. Ibid, 189-96, 709-34, 755-59, 823-8,1305-39, 1475-80, 1540-1, 1660-3, 1687-8, 1719-48, 1755, 1762, 1766, 1967, 2030, 2151, 2154, 2158-9, 2194, 2198, 2211-5, 2219-26, 2232, 2240, 2403-4, 2408-22, 2427-9.

Gonçal Martínez de Oviedo,
Cabdi(e)llo de castellanos,

Pero Ponce de León,
aqueel señor de Marchena,
— por do iva el su pendón
La pries(s)a non es pequeña—;

Juan Alfonso de Guzmán,
según natural bracero;
(don) Gonçalo de Almacán
y fue real cavallero;

(823-5)

However, in some cases the courageous deeds of these men are related in detail. For example, the poet dedicates twenty-six stanzas to describing the defense of Ubeda, which is led by the “maestre onrado” of Santiago Alfonso de Guzmán and his “Alférez de grand bondad” Ramiro Flórez de Guzmán (710c, 719a). These men lead others (who are also named) into battle and they manage to defeat a larger force than their own, no doubt because as Ramiro Flórez declares before engaging the enemy: “¡Dios ayude la verdad!” (718c).

Nobles who have wronged their king can even redeem themselves through the chivalrous exercise of arms in the reconquest, as is the case with the “penitent” Juan Manuel who addresses his king thus:

Por onrar el mi estado,
 en muchas cosas pequé:
 contra vos só muy culpado,
 conosco que vos erré.

.

Si entonce non es mi fin
 e me Dios dexar lograr,
 de lo de Benamarín
 vos convido a yantar.

Yo convusco a gran sabor
 y vos cuido bien servir:
 (que) Dios Padre vencedor
 me lo faga así conplir.

(1284, 1289-90)

In this way, the reconquest offers nobles a chance to redeem themselves with their king and with God. As the poet says of the death of one of the *ricos omes* in the siege of Algeciras:

¡Dios lo quiera perdonar,
 pues por Él la muerte priso,
 e le quiera dar logar
 en el Santo Paraíso!

(2224)

Besides the promise of salvation, for their service to their king noble knights can expect to receive material compensation through the acquisition of booty, territories, and through the payment of *soldadas*. Alfonso is depicted as being very generous with his knights and he even pays them twice what they are owed for their military service: “el rey con ellos partía / francamente sus tesoros / dándoles paga doblada / e soldada muy conplida” (2201cd-2202ab). These knights are further rewarded by being remembered for their service in the poem, which is proof of the often promised “fama” that this exercise of chivalry brings. If we consider the immediate political impact of this discourse on the crusades, it seems apparent—as Juan Victorio suggests—that this discourse is aimed at achieving a working relationship between the monarch and the high nobility by encouraging noble knights to continue participating in the king’s reconquest efforts.⁴⁷

Feminine Virtues and Political Women in PAO

The aggregate portrait of Alfonso in the poem is that of a *rey justiciero* and a *guerrero cristiano*: a noble and fierce *rey león* who enforces the laws of God and man and who leads the Christians in the defense and glorification of the faith:

Espejo fue de la ley
del Gran Criador vasallo:
éste fue el mejor rey
que estido en cavallo:

(275)

However, *PAO* promotes other molinista values that are related to successful and exemplary rulership, some of which are feminine virtues. For example in the *castigos* that Alfonso’s *ayo*, Martín Ferrández, imparts to the king just before he comes into his

47. Victorio, introduction to *PAO*, 24-5.

majority, Ferrández recommends that the king use piety, patience, and mercy (112-52). Although Alfonso successfully uses force with his enemies, he also demonstrates that he is capable of forgiving differences with other Christian kings and nobles, so long as the other parties admit their fault—which they always do in Yáñez’s poem.⁴⁸ It is also significant that Alfonso is encouraged to use mercy either by the intervention of the Church (630-66) or by a woman, as is the case with the unnamed *señora* who intervenes in Alfonso’s early conflicts with Juan Manuel and Juan Núñez de Lara (564-73, 589-98). In these situations, the pope and the *señora* both appeal to the king’s mercy, calling him “mesurado” and “paciente” (566b, 642c). However, in these instances the feminine virtue of mercy comes not from the king himself but from these intercessors, so that Alfonso simply grants their requests to be merciful and forgiving with those who have wronged him. The one exception occurs when Alfonso is “vencido por la piedad” and refrains from utterly destroying Portugal (624-625). In this way, the poet is able to depict Alfonso as using mercy to establish peace while maintaining a respectfully aggressive and masculine character for the king.

As might be expected in a history of Alfonso XI where the role of Queen María is minimized and the principal topic is the war against Muslims, the role of political women is very limited. Among the six historical Christian noble women who figure in the poem, only two—María de Molina and María de Portugal—are given any role in the government, or indeed take any action at all. With the exception of the unnamed *señora*,

48. This includes Alfons IV of Portugal, Juan Manuel and Juan Núñez de Lara. *PAO*, 666-9, 597-8, 575-82.

women do not advise the king, not even Alfonso's wife or his mistress.⁴⁹ Neither do these Christian noble women speak, apart from when María de Portugal asks her father to come to her husband's aid and then reports back to the king with his response. This representation of political women contrasts sharply with that found in *LCZ* and even *CAXI*, where many of these same women demonstrate increased agency as counselors and collaborators in Alfonso XI's government. This is particularly intriguing, given the fact that both of these histories (the prose and the poem) are believed to have been patronized by the king. While it is tempting to speculate about the reasons for this diminished role of women in Alfonso's government (which I suspect may have something to do with the practical uses for which the poem was intended and which are mentioned above), this sort of comparison would require a more complete analysis of Alfonso's majority in *CAXI*, which cannot be accommodated in the present study. Therefore I will limit myself to observing that the role of Christian noble women is limited in the poem, and that in *PAO* the primary function of these women is located in their utility for forging political alliances through marriage and in providing heirs (and illegitimate children).

Molinismo, Love, and Chastity in PAO

Besides what we have observed above, there are other indications that *PAO* borrows from the cultural politics of molinismo. For example, the king's *ayo* cautions Alfonso on the importance of advice and recommends that the king include prelates—those “sabedores antiguos”—among his counselors (136d). Alfonso often calls for counsel before making important decisions and he includes high-ranking clerics, such as

49. The only instance of advice-giving from a wife in *PAO* is Fátima, wife of Abu al-Hasan, who warns her husband (based on her knowledge of astrology) not to cross the sea and engage the Christian armies in battle (962-71).

the archbishop of Toledo, in his council. Along with the emphasis on the king's piety and his devotion—which we have discussed above—the poet repeatedly makes reference to Alfonso's *buenas costumbres*, which implies that the king obeys the laws of God. All of this reflects the religious priorities of molinismo, and yet there is a fundamental difference between the moral virtues promoted in *PAO* and in other molinista works, which is chastity.

The virtue of chastity—which is arguably the most important moral virtue in Sancho IV's *Castigos*—is basically avoided throughout the whole of *PAO*. The one possible exception seems to be in the description of María de Portugal as “onesta,” which is certainly a desirable trait for the mother of the king's heirs (406b). Sancho IV's emphasis on chastity is ill-suited for Alfonso XI's court for an obvious reason: the public nature of the king's adulterous relationship and cohabitation with his mistress, Leonor de Guzmán. To be sure, Alfonso's infidelity causes a problem for his representation as a pious king because it is in direct opposition to the laws of the Church. However, Alfonso's poet resolves this conflict in several ways: 1) by focusing on the king's other virtues, 2) by representing a respectful relationship between the king and his legitimate wife, 3) and by portraying the king's mistress as a virtuous and deserving woman.

There is no trace in *PAO* of the conflict that the king's concubinage caused with his wife or in his relations with Portugal.⁵⁰ In *PAO* the war with Portugal is brought about by Juan Manuel's scheming, and at no point does the poet infer that the king's adultery had anything to do with it. In fact, when Queen María calls on her father, Alfonso IV, to aid her husband in the reconquest, she declares to him that her husband is the best king in

50. For a discussion of the conflicts that Alfonso's relationship with Leonor de Guzmán created, see Diego Catalán, “Una antirreina en Castilla: 1330-1350,” *Clavileño* 8, no. 39 (1956): 24-31.

the world: “non sabe atal mejor / en el mundo, esto es verdad” (1185). María thanks her father for giving her to Alfonso XI in marriage and calls herself “bien casada,” because as she says, “dessí só la más onrada / reina que omne sabe” (1186a, cd). The poet also depicts María de Portugal as being honored in Alfonso’s coronation ceremony, where besides being crowned with the king she is praised as “la mejor / reina en el mundo nascida” by the *ricas damas* who dance and sing songs as part of the festivities (405cd). In addition, while Leonor de Guzmán provides the king with a long line of sons, they do not appear to pose a threat to the rights of the king’s surviving legitimate son, Infante Pedro.

As Catalán points out, Sánchez de Valladolid’s treatment of Leonor de Guzmán in *CAXI* is quite different than what we see in the poem: “La Crónica manifiesta una reserve prudente [ante el concubinato del rey]; pero el Poema echa las campanas a vuelo y hasta defiende el hecho mismo del concubinato como dependiente de la directa voluntad de Dios.”⁵¹ Yáñez extols Leonor’s many virtues, depicting her as a pious, intelligent, and exemplary woman (367-377). Although the poet tells us that God has blessed Leonor with both beauty *and* brains, she is an entirely passive character in *PAO*. Like Alfonso, Leonor is favored by God and also born “en planeta de ventura” (370d). He compares the beautiful Leonor to a “pure rose” and declares that she will forever be remembered as an “espejo” of “bondad e valor” (373, 374cd). Before introducing this laudatory portrait of the king’s mistress, the poet inserts a few stanzas that explain how God rewards men and women according to their merits:

E Dios Padre da ventura

51. Catalán, introduction to *Poema de Alfonso Onceno: Fuentes, dialecto, estilo* (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1953), 23.

a todos por su bondad,
 e pónelos en altura
 como es su piadad.

(368)

He then follows this line of logic to an end that implies God's approval of Leonor's relationship with the king:

E Dios Padre Criador
 su estado enolbe(s)ció,
 e cobró un tal señor,
 el mejor rey que nació:

que de ella fue muy pagado
 quiso Dios por su medida,
 e la puso en estado
 por Dios e (la) su ventura.

(375-6)

In this way, God has a direct hand in bringing about the relationship between Alfonso and Leonor and therefore sanctions it. In the few instances where she is mentioned, Leonor is described as a beautiful woman, a mother, and generally a source of joy and consolation for the king.

What follows Leonor's portrait in *PAO* is an apology on the virtues of love that further seeks to justify the king's adultery without saying so directly. Yáñez declares that God loves love "sobre quantas cosas son," and that for this reason He endowed love with

“muy gran nobleça” (383b, 382d). According to the poet, a man without love has no joy and “nunca puede bien fazer” (384b). On the other hand for a man who has it, love gives him courage, health, and pleasure. Love even serves to makes men pleasant, humble, and “mesurado” (387c). It gives solace specifically to kings and motivates them to “provar cavallería” in order to win “fama” and “prez” (386d, c). Although love of a woman is only developed in this short section and therefore does not constitute a very important theme in *PAO*, the poet seems to indirectly suggest that Alfonso’s love of Leonor is connected to the king’s desire to serve God in the reconquest by relating how the king, after the fashion of a heroic courtly lover, sends the Muslim princes who he captures in battle to his mistress as a present (1798).

This courtly conceptualization of love in *PAO* does not agree with the Church’s condemnation of adultery and the emphasis on chastity that is found in other molinista works. Furthermore, the poet’s apology of the virtues of love and his suggestion that God sanctioned this adulterous match must have been shocking and even offensive to those members of the cathedral school of Toledo who, like the author of the *LCZ*, considered chastity to be an important virtue that the king should promote in his own conduct. Although Yáñez does what he can to obscure the conflicts that the king’s adulterous relationship caused and instead to focus attention on Alfonso’s exemplary pursuit of the reconquest, in reality it was a very real problem with real consequences. The pope himself even tried to intervene in order separate the king from Leonor de Guzmán. Given the magnitude of this issue in the politics of fourteenth-century Iberia, we should not be

surprised to find echoes of this moral crisis in another fourteenth-century work that interacts with the values of molinismo: The archpriest of Hita's *Libro de buen amor*.⁵²

***Libro de buen amor* and the Context of Court and Church Politics in Fourteenth-Century Castile-León**

The so-called *Libro de buen amor* is a highly polemic and a highly sophisticated work. What at first glance appears to be a humorous relation of a goliardic priest's bawdy romp through old Medieval Spain, upon further examination reveals its true nature as an erudite treatise on the nature of both love and hermeneutics.⁵³ Critics continue to debate the authorship, date, and intentionality of the work, which are all key factors to contextualizing and interpreting it properly. However, this is not the place to enter into these debates. What I hope to accomplish here is to situate the work within the context of our topic and demonstrate the ways in which this work interacts with the previously established values of molinismo.

There now appears to be some general consensus that *LBA* was written during the first half of the fourteenth century, during the reign of Alfonso XI and after the death of the young king's grandmother. In the debate over the identity of the author who styles himself as Juan Ruiz, archpriest of Hita, Carmen Juan Lovera has claimed to have found evidence linking the historical author (whom she identifies as Juan Ruiz de Cisneros) to several members of the royal family, including Queen María.⁵⁴ However, by no means

52. All subsequent citations refer to Gybbon-Monypenny's edition. Arcipreste de Hita, *Libro de buen amor*, ed. G. B. Gybbon-Moneyenny (Madrid, Castalia, 1998). Hereafter referred to as *LBA*.

53. See E. Michael Gerli, "The Greeks, the Romans, and the Ambiguity of Signs: *De doctrina christiana*, the Fall, and the Hermeneutics of the *Libro de buen amor*," *Bulletin of Spanish Studies* 79, no. 4 (2002):411-28.

54. Carmen Juan Lovera claims that in 1321 Queen María urged Pope John XXII to allow Juan Ruiz de Cisneros (who was the bastard child of Arias González, Lord of Cisneros) to become a bishop. Juan Lovera also tries to prove the historical accuracy of Juan Ruiz's imprisonment by Archbishop Gil Álvarez de Albornoz based on a letter from Infanta María of Aragón (the widow of Infante Pedro) to Jaume II, in which the infanta explains to her father why she secured the release of imprisoned family members,

does the work appear to be the product of royal patronage nor does it focus on chivalry and political ethics. The satirical and humoristic elements of the text also distinguish it from the other works we have examined, so much so that José Luis Pérez López has denied the validity of classifying the work as molinista.⁵⁵ And yet, both Orduna and Gómez Redondo insist on the similarity of the ideologies espoused in *LBA* and other molinista works.⁵⁶ While Pérez López is correct in asserting that the jocular tone of *LBA* sets it apart from the more serious works of molinismo, as we shall see the work's conservative ideology is very much in line with the cultural politics of molinismo.

Over the years, several literary critics have observed similarities in themes, verbal coincidences, and *exempla* between *LBA* and *LCZ*, leading Jacques Joset to assert that the authors of these two roughly contemporary works share “una formación intelectual común” and that “a veces, se diría que fueron compañeros de aula.”⁵⁷ The fact that the authors of *LCZ* and *LBA* seem to have a similar educational background is likely due to their common connection to the cathedral school of Toledo in the first half of the fourteenth century. In addition, the knowledge demonstrated by these two authors of the workings of the ecclesiastical bureaucracy also suggests that they played a role in the

including Juan Ruiz de Cisneros. Carmen Juan Lovera, “Datos biográficos de Juan Ruiz de Cisneros y acontecimientos históricos reflejados en el *Libro de buen amor*,” in *Juan Ruiz, Arcipreste de Hita, y el Libro de buen amor*, eds. Francisco Torro Ceballos and Bienvenido Morros, Alcalá la Real: Clásicos Españoles, 2004.; For more on the possibility of a historical Juan Ruiz as the author of *LBA*, see Francisco J. Hernández, “The Venerable Juan Ruiz, Archpriest of Hita,” *La corónica: A Journal of Medieval Hispanic Languages, Literatures, and Cultures* 8, no. 1 (1984): 10-19.

55. José Luis Pérez López, “El código T de *Libro de buen amor* en su biblioteca: averroístas y goliardos,” *La corónica: A Journal of Medieval Hispanic Languages, Literatures, and Cultures*, 31, no. 1 (Fall 2002): 98-99; José Luis Pérez López, *Temas del Libro de buen amor: El entorno catedralicio toledano* (Toledo: d.b.ediciones, 2007), 156.

56. Orduna, “La élite intelectual,” 61.; Gómez Redondo, “El Zifar y la *Crónica de Fernando IV*,” 105-6.

57. Jaques Joset, “Del *Libro del Caballero Zifar* al *Libro de buen amor*,” *Boletín de la Real Academia Española* 73, no. 263 (1993) 16, 23.; Also on this subject see A. D. Deyermond and Roger M. Walker, “A Further Vernacular Source for the *Libro de buen amor*,” *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 46, no. 3 (1969): 193-200.

archbishop's administration, so they could have been colleagues as well as classmates.⁵⁸ Based on his analysis of the oldest surviving manuscript of *LBA* (MS. T) and its relation to other texts with which it was originally found in the eighteenth century, Pérez López argues that the work originated in Toledo and that it was likely used as part of the curriculum in the cathedral school.⁵⁹ In addition, there appear to be a few instances of textual evidence that suggest a connection between the author and Toledo. In their tome of glosses on *LBA*, Anthony N. Zahareas and Oscar Pereira interpret the reference to Toledo in stanza 1269 as an allusion to the city's role as a great center of cultural production: "En suma vos lo cuento por non vos detener: do todo se escriviese, en Toledo non ay papel."⁶⁰ However, this reference may also suggest the possibility that the author was writing either in that city or within the general diocese of Toledo. Another hint of that the author of *LBA* might be a "member" of the cathedral school of Toledo can be found in Don Amor's account of his reception in the cities of Seville and Toledo (1304-11). Don Amor relates to Juan Ruiz (the dramatized narrator of the work) how he was greeted in the city of Seville with great joy and reverence, but that when he continued on to Toledo he was slighted and eventually driven out of the city by the fervent prayers of the religious community. While the visit to Toledo that Don Amor is describing took place during the season of Lent, which may account for his ill-treatment there, the singularity of Toledo as the only city that does not welcome Don Amor with pleasure, and the fact that after being driven from Toledo don Amor passes the rest of the Lenten

58. José Luis Pérez López, *Temas del Libro de buen amor*, 39.

59. "Si un texto medieval aparece en una biblioteca como esta (como fue el caso del Ms. T del *LBA*) es muy probable, si no se señala otra procedencia, que haya sido compuesto en ese ámbito cultural o adquirido para cumplir una determinada función en ese entorno, o que haya pertenecido a alguna persona vinculada con la catedral, un arzobispo, un canónigo, un racionero, o un clérigo cualquiera." Ibid, 26.; also see José Luis Pérez López, "El código T de *Libro de buen amor*," 69-106.

60. Anthony N. Zahareas and Oscar Pereira, *Itinerario del Libro del Arcipreste: Glosas críticas al Libro de buen amor*, (Madison: Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies, 1990), 359.

season in the more hospitable town of Castro Urdiales suggests that the author wishes to depict the clerics and the religious orders of Toledo as superior in their devotion and in their chastity.

With the date of completion given in MS. T (1330) as a point of departure, Pérez López dates the original composition of *LBA* between 1322 and 1330.⁶¹ He comes to this conclusion by focusing on church documents concerning clerical concubinage, which is a central topic of the work. Based on constitutions on the subject from national and regional church councils in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Pérez López concludes that the terms of the 1322 national council in Valladolid coincide most closely with the depiction of the problem and its punishments in *LBA*. Pointing to the fact that in 1322 the papal legate Guillermo de Godin expanded on the previous list of sanctions to include the penalty of excommunication for adulterers,⁶² Pérez López argues that this indicates a *terminus a quo* for the work since *LBA* includes a *fabliaux* about a wolf who has been excommunicated for the sin of adultery:

Otrosí le opongo que es descomulgado,
de mayor descomuni3n por costituci3n de legado,
por que tiene barragana p3blica, e es casado
con su muger doña Loba, que mora en Vilofardo.

(337)

In a similar fashion, Pérez López establishes 1342 as the *terminus a quo* for the “Cántiga de los clérigos de Talavera” (stanzas 1690-1709, found only in MS. S). He bases this conclusion on a letter dated April 16 of that year from Archbishop Gil Albornoz to the

61. Jose Luis Pérez López, “La fecha del *Libro de buen amor*,” *Incipit* 22 (2002): 95-132.

62 *Ibid.*, 97-107.

diocese of Toledo (of which Talavera was a part) that renewed the penalties set forth in the national council of 1322.⁶³ Pérez López affirms is that this is the same letter alluded to in the “Cántiga,” which is received by the fictional clerics of Talavera from “[el] arzobispo don Gil” in “las calendas de abril” (1690ab).

If we follow Pérez López’s hypothesis on the date, we can infer that *LBA*—both the original compilation after 1322 and the re-writing after 1342 (represented in manuscripts T and S, respectively)—come out of a period of heightened concern within the Catholic Church over clerical concubinage in Medieval Castile. Since the establishment in the church council of Valladolid in 1228 of punishments ranging from the privation of benefices to excommunication for clerics who kept concubines, the Castilian Church had been lax in enforcing these sanctions.⁶⁴ Within the context of lay government, concubinage—clerical or otherwise—was an accepted legal institution that was regulated by regional *fueros*.⁶⁵ In fact, as Pérez López points out kings of Castile-León had previously granted privileges to encourage clerical concubinage with an eye to repopulating newly conquered territories.⁶⁶ For the Church, however, the prevalence of clerical concubinage in Castile was perceived as an urgent moral problem that threatened both the institution of marriage and the Church itself. In her recent book on *LBA*, Louise Haywood explains the threat that the sexual activities of priests posed to the institutions

63. Ibid 112-9.

64. Pérez López informs us that “desde las constituciones del legado Juan de Abbeville en el concilio nacional de Valladolid de 1228...hasta la época de don Pérez, los papas Inocencio IV y Alejandro IV habían suavizado la fuerza de la reforma. De tal manera que...Gonzálo Díaz Palomeque (1299-1310), cuando regula el concubinato de los clérigos en el concilio provincial de Peñafiel de 1302, ni se le ocurre hacer mención de la excomunión.” Ibid, 121. Although Pérez López uses the term “nacional,” the context is not the modern nation, but the kingdom of Castile.

65. Heath Dillard, *Daughters of the Reconquest: Women in Castilian Town Society (1100-1300)*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 127-32.

66. Pérez López, *Temas*, 43.

of the Catholic Church and marriage, and how the topic is manifested in the fictional identity of the archpriest as author:

In the context of the whole *Libro* the adoption of the identity of priest problematizes the representative status of the poetic I since the church as an institution was exercised by the need for probity and chastity in its priests, and because, if Dillard's evidence is taken into account, parishioners would have been aware of the widespread truancy of clerical conduct, and regardless of tolerance for clerical concubinage, would have been likely to be wary of priests who engaged in serial relationships. Since priests were a group, like panders, with privileged access to women, they posed a potential threat to the chastity of marriageable women and thus to the two institutions that shored up the symbolic order, marriage and religion.⁶⁷

Given the threat that sexually active priests posed to the reputation of the Church and the reputation of the parish women, the church took measures to stamp out the tolerance (and in the case of Alfonso X's privileges, even encouragement)⁶⁸ of this activity in Medieval Castile. The constitutions on the subject from the church council of Valladolid in 1322 and Archbishop Gil's letter to the diocese of Toledo in 1342 (which was prompted by the urging of the pope) represent a renewed effort from within the church to correct this perceived imbalance.

67. Louise Haywood, *Sex, Scandal, and Sermon in Fourteenth-Century Spain: Juan Ruiz's Libro de buen amor* (New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2008), 141.

68. Linehan points to some particular charters granted by Alfonso X that legitimized the offspring of priests so that they could inherit their father's property. Linehan, *History and the Historians*, 417, 510.

The other context in which we need to locate Juan Ruiz's work is within the long tradition of Heterodox Aristotelianism in Medieval Castile, and the reaction against it—which as we saw in chapter one is intimately connected to the cathedral school of Toledo and the cultural movement of molinismo. Besides the jocular tone of the work, the other reason that Pérez López resists locating *LBA* under the heading of molinismo is the fact that he interprets Juan Ruiz's text as a rejection of the church's position on clerical celibacy and classifies it as Averroistic.⁶⁹ Heterodox Aristotelian philosophy on love and sex—which was among the Averroistic theses censured by Bishop Tempier in Paris in 1277—holds that simple fornication (between an unmarried man and woman) is not a sin, but rather a virtue that ensures the survival of the species.⁷⁰ While it is certainly true that we see echoes of the tradition of naturalist heterodox philosophy in *LBA*, it does not necessarily follow that the work supports that philosophy. Juan Ruiz expounds upon Aristotle's theories on love and sex in stanzas 71-76 and he also uses Astrological Determinism as an excuse for his behavior, attributing his proclivity for chasing women to the fact that he was born under the sign of Venus (152-3). However, we should be careful not to confuse the author with the character, which are not one and the same.⁷¹ As Francisco Rico has indicated, it is the character Juan Ruiz and not the author who espouses these heterodox naturalist philosophies.⁷² Indeed, the idea that *LBA* endorses a

69. Pérez López, "El código T," 97-8.; Pérez López, *Temas*, 60.

70. John F. Wippel, "The Condemnations of 1270 and 1277 at Paris," *The Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 7, no. 2 (1977): 194.

71. For a discussion of the protagonist and his nature as an "Everyman" character, see Alfonso Rey, "Juan Ruiz, don Melón de la Huerta y el yo poético medieval," *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 56, no. 2 (1979): 103-16.; Also see Haywood, *Sex, Scandal, and Sermon*, 15, 130-1.

72. Francisco Rico, "'Por aver mantenencia:' el aristotelismo heterodoxo en el *Libro de buen amor*," *El Crotalón: Anuario de filología española* 2 (1985): 179. Rico also points out that the ideas about astrological determinism that are expounded by Juan Ruiz in *LBA* are not entirely heterodox, and are balanced with arguments for God's power over nature and the importance of free will. *Ibid* 192-4. Also see Jaques Joset, *Nuevas investigaciones sobre el Libro de buen amor* (Madrid: Cátedra, 1988), 61-3.

view of sex as a necessary and virtuous act seems untenable when we consider the fact that in the “debate” between the archpriest and Don Amor, after the former finishes expounding on the nature of love as the font of all vices, the latter in no way attempts to refute these assertions.⁷³ Haywood examines the exemplary fabliaux employed by the Archpriest and Don Amor in this episode and concludes that: “depictions of the body and its potential contagion is a dominant theme regardless of whether the Archpriest or Don Amor use the tale thus exposing the shared underlying ideology concerning the personally and socially destructive effects of desire.”⁷⁴ This theme of sexual desire as contagious and harmful is consistent with what we see in the prose prologue of *LBA* and in other anti-Averroistic treatises on love, found in works such as *Castigos* and *LCZ*.⁷⁵ Therefore, while the character/narrator Juan Ruiz espouses heterodox naturalist ideas about love, the ideology of the work as a whole is decidedly anti-Averroistic.

Although the tone and form of the work are very different from other works more readily accepted as molinista, ideologically *LBA* has much in common with molinismo. Like the other works examined here, *LBA* also emphasizes the virtue of restraint. While restraint from disordered carnal love is undoubtedly the main focus, we also see injunctions against overindulgence in both food and drink.⁷⁶ As the prologue informs us, man has the responsibility of free will, but he also has intellect and memory to help him to find and to follow the path to salvation. In order to do so, he must possess the fear of

73. *LBA*, 372-575; Haywood rightly observes that in his response “Amor does not counter in the expected scholastic manner by refuting the Archpriest’s proofs but rather offers a corrective to the Archpriest’s prior inappropriate conduct.” Haywood, *Sex, Scandal, and Sermon*, 68.

74. *Ibid.*, 71.

75. For a comparison of the treatment of chastity in *LBA* and *LCZ* see Walker, “Juan Ruiz’s Defence of Love,” *MLN* 84, no. 2 (1969): 294.

76. In stanzas 291-303 the Archpriest expounds upon the dangers of the sin of gluttony (including excess in drink) and interestingly, Don Amor repeats these warnings in his advice to Juan Ruiz in stanzas 523-548.

God, which is the root of all wisdom: “Iniçium sapience timor Domini,”⁷⁷ and he must choose the *buen amor* (good love) of God and avoid *loco amor* (crazy love), which is illicit sexual relations with women. The warnings against *loco amor* are accompanied by the usual misogynistic admonitions that we see highlighted in various episodes, such as the “duenas chicas” and the *serrana* episodes. While the misogynistic arguments against *loco amor* are somewhat reminiscent of Sancho’s *Castigos*, *LBA* does not contain the same defense of women—particularly political women—that we saw in *Castigos* and *LCZ*. So while we may assert that the work engages with and promotes some of the values attributed to molinismo, it does not appear that Queen María’s rule had the same positive influence on the depiction of political women as we observed in *LCZ*.

In the same way that *LBA* reflects the contemporary debates on clerical concubinage and naturalist heterodox philosophy on sexual love; to a lesser extent we also see reflections of the political debate on chivalry and comments on kingship and the state of the monarchy, mainly through the exemplary fabliaux. As George Martin demonstrates, Juan Ruiz’s view on chivalry and kingship is less than approbatory.⁷⁸ For instance, the noble knights are criticized by their squires in the episode everyone is fighting over who will host Don Amor:

“Señor, sey nuestro huésped”, dizién los cavalleros;

“Non lo fagas, señor”, dizenlos escuderos,

“dar te han dados plomados, perderás tus dineros;

al tomar vienen prestos, a la lid tardineros”

77. *LBA*, 105.

78. What follows is a summary of some of Martin’s arguments. George Martin, “Juan Ruiz político: La realeza en el *Libro de buen amor*,” *e-Spania: Revue interdisciplinaire d’études hispaniques médiévales et modernes* 4 (2007). doi: 10.4000/e-spania.1113.

“Tienden grandes alfámares, ponen luego tableros
 pintados de jaldetas como los tablajeros;
 para ir en frontera muchos ay costumeros.

(1253-1254)

According to their squires, the noble knights are deceitful, greedy hustlers who do not fulfill their chivalric duty to fight for the king and protect the realm. The nobles’ *cobdicia*—a sin which Juan Ruiz says is the daughter of Love and the root of all the vices—even gets some of them in trouble with their king, as is the case with the *lobo* that tries to keep the best meat for himself and rouses the wrath of the *rey león* (82-8). Therefore, Ruiz’s criticism of noble knights is not very different from what we have seen in the royal chronicles, *LCZ*, and *PAO*. But if the noble animals are deceitful towards their king, the monarch is no more trustworthy. On several occasions the *rey león* uses feigned pretenses to draw his subjects to them with the intention of killing them (298-302, 895-900). For this reason Martin, and more recently Carlos Heusch, have observed that the lion king in the exemplary fabliaux may in fact be an allusion to Alfonso XI, who was famous for doing the same with his subjects.⁷⁹

As Martin has demonstrated, there is another, more direct allusion to Alfonso XI in the “Cántiga de los clérigos de Talavera.” After receiving the letter from the archbishop don Gil that forbids adultery and clerical concubinage (“que clérigo nin cassado de toda Talavera, / que non toviessa mançeba, cassada nin soltera; qual quier que

79. Martin points out that around the time that *LBA* was written (ca 1322-1343) Alfonso XI ordered six executions, several of them powerful nobles or their emissaries. *Ibid.*, 11.; Carlos Heusch, “Juan Ruiz and the Heterodox Naturalism of Spain,” trans. Monique Dascha Inciarte, *The Romanic Review* 103, no. 1/2 (2012): 43-4.

la tovieste descomulgado era”)⁸⁰ the bitter *legos* (laymen) meet the next day, where the dean suggests that they take their case to the king:

Adó estaban juntados todos en la capilla,
 levantó se el deán a mostrar su manzilla,
 diz: “Amigos, yo querría que toda esta quadrilla
 apellásemos del papa antel rrey de Castilla.

“Que maguer que somos clérigos, somos sus naturales;
 servimos le muy bien, fuemos le siempre leales;
 demás, que sabe el rrey que todos somos carnales;
 querer se ha adolesçer de aquestos nuestros males.

(1696-1697)

The reference to Archbishop Gil de Albornoz in the “Cántiga” allows us to identify the king in question as Alfonso XI. The allusion to Alfonso’s knowledge that they are all carnal is ironic, as this criticism is aimed at a very carnal king. The idea that Alfonso should sympathize with the adulterous *legos* is undoubtedly due to the fact that the king was himself an adulterer, living publically in sin with his mistress. Martin suggests that along with criticizing the king’s conduct, the “Cántiga” also reprimands the archbishop of Toledo, who besides being one of the king’s counselors, was also one of Leonor de Guzman’s protectors.⁸¹ So while the then archbishop of Toledo was sanctioning Alfonso’s life of sin, there appears that there was some dissention from within the ranks of the cathedral school of Toledo. While I am convinced that Martin is correct in

80. *LBA*, 1694b-d.

81. Martin, “Juan Ruiz politico,” 23.

identifying the above reference to Alfonso XI as a criticism of the king's adultery, his hypotheses that Juan Ruiz was writing under the protection and patronage of Alfonso's wife, María de Portugal is nothing more than a supposition, unsupported by any documentary evidence.⁸²

Given the context of *LBA* and the ideas that it espouses, we might rightly view *LBA* as something of a reactionary work. The ideologies that it promotes are reactions against the spread of heterodox naturalist philosophy and the pervasive practice of clerical and lay concubinage in Medieval Castile. While it is usually taken for granted that clerical concubinage is the main concern of the work, Juan Ruiz's status as an Everyman suggests that the author was concerned with something more than the sexual habits of the Castilian clergy. Juan Ruiz's treatise on the nature of love instead points to a perceived disorder that is not restricted to the clergy, but rather is located in the very moral fibers of society. It is even possible, as Martin suggests, that the work was written in protest against Alfonso XI's adulterous relationship with Leonor de Guzmán. Indeed, the insistence on carnal love as pollution and contagion in *LBA* is certainly in direct opposition to the virtues of love expounded upon by Rodrigo Yáñez in *PAO*.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I want briefly to summarize the ways in which these works engage with the collective values of molinismo. Although the author of *LCZ* expresses an anti-Averroistic philosophy (which is likely influenced by the author's position as a cleric and a "member" of the cathedral school of Toledo), *LCZ* is largely concerned with the political model of molinismo. The story of Zifar and his sons serves as a mirror of princes

82. Ibid, 24-25. ; Also see Martin, "Urrique, Bon amour et autres petits noms charmants : Observations littéraires et historiques aux strophes 910 á 949 du Libro de buen amor," *Revue des langues néo-latines*, 335 (2006): 10-16.

and a chivalric narrative that espouse the same values about kingship and chivalry that we have seen in Sánchez de Valladolid's chronicles and Sancho's *Castigos*. A good king is a just vassal of God, and the king's vassals should serve God, uphold his laws, and obey their king. The author also compares Knight Zifar to the figure of Queen María in the chronicles, whose rule seems to have had an effect on the way in which women are portrayed in the work. Noble women and queens are invariably exemplary, but they can also serve as legitimate placeholders of power and capable advisors to their husbands and teachers of their sons. The fictional kingdoms and territories of *LCZ* are experiencing the same kind of crisis that the chronicler describes as taking place during the two recent minorities (and Fernando IV's brief reign) in Castile-León. In regards to the individual moral injunctions that the work provides to kings and nobles (and even noblewomen), *mesura* (restraint) is advised in speech, food, and drink. Chastity and piety are also enjoined, and above all noblemen and kings are warned not to fall prey to the sin of *soberbia* (arrogance) or the related sin of *cobdiçia* (greed), which are the polar opposites of *mesura* and can bring about the downfall of a lord or monarch. The moral values that *LCZ* promotes are strikingly similar to those which we have observed in *Castigos*, but even more so those which we see in Sánchez de Valladolid's chronicles. However, perhaps in part due to the fictional nature of the work, the reconquest narrative that is so central to molinismo's political model is notably absent.

Elements of molinismo can also be observed in works not previously classified as molinista, such as *PAO*. Like *LCZ*, this poem takes its values primarily from the model of monarchy that is part of molinismo. In the same way that we saw in *CAXI* (and similar to what we witnessed with Zifar, Roboán, and in the *exemplum* of the boy king Tabor in

LCZ), Alfonso XI is a messianic king who protects the weak from the powerful and saves the kingdom of Castile-León from destruction and desertion by the virtue of his kingly justice. However, the central topic of *PAO* is reconquest. As we saw in the royal chronicles, it is the duty of the king of Castile-León to protect Christendom and to serve God and glorify the faith by making war against the infidel. In part due to his crusading efforts, Alfonso XI is a king blessed with the favor of God and with miracles, not unlike his grandmother in the royal chronicles. The moral virtues of restraint and mercy are still present in the form of *mesura*, which the poet often reminds us is one of the characteristics of the king. However, the specific mandate to refrain from overindulgence in food, drink, and speech is reduced to *buenas costumbres*, a phrase which is often used by the author of *LCZ* and Sánchez de Valladolid. The injunction to chastity is altogether absent; although we should note that the virtue of chastity is not a prominent theme in the royal chronicles, or even in *LCZ*. And yet, in a marked change from many other molinista works, the virtues of courtly love are extolled in order to justify the king's concubinage. Rodrigo Yáñez gives Queen María a less important role than Sánchez de Valladolid, and women in *PAO* are primarily used as tools for making political alliances and providing heirs. Noble women and queens are exemplary and virtuous, but they do not serve as advisors (with the exception of the unnamed *señora* and Fátima, the tragically unheeded wife of Abu al-Hasan).

In *LBA* we see a return to the morally conservative ideology that was promoted in the early works of Sancho IV's court, such as *Lucidario*, which prioritizes the rejection of heterodox Aristotelianism. The clerical author of this work is concerned with the problem of clerical concubinage, as well as a perceived disorder in the values of society as a

whole. *Mesura* and *cobdiçia* are key concepts, and through the use of a negative example, the work vilifies overindulgence in food, drink, and speech, but above all in carnal love. Though the nature of monarchy is not a central issue of *LBA*, we see a fairly negative treatment of both the king and his noble vassals, primarily in the exemplary *fabliaux*. The author criticizes members of the nobility as greedy and dishonest (much like in the royal chronicles), but as we saw in the eager reception of Don Amor throughout Castile-León, virtually all of the people (including the clergy) participate in perpetuating the moral disorder of the kingdom through their lack of chastity. In the “Cantiga de los clérigos de Talavera,” the author takes aim at the king’s adultery and even hints at the ironic role that the then archbishop of Toledo, Gil de Albornoz, plays in abetting the king’s concubinage while admonishing members of the clergy to be chaste. While the tone of the work is comical and satirical, the author of *LBA* is promoting the same conservative ideology as his predecessors in the cathedral school of Toledo.

In regards to the influence of molinismo in fourteenth-century literature, Gómez Redondo asserts that, “tanto [don Juan Manuel] como Juan Ruiz, Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid o Ferrán Martínez (si es que le cupo parte en la redacción del *Zifar*) son escritores que comparten una idéntica visión cultural y que, por tanto, se interesan por los mismos asuntos y problemas, aunque, como es obvio, puedan diferenciarse en sus conclusiones.”⁸³ Given what we have observed in this chapter, this appears to be a mischaracterization of the way in which these works interact with each other and engage with the same shared set of values. In each of the works examined in this chapter, the authors do not express an identical cultural vision or replicate the values of an unchanging cultural model. Rather, each of the authors draws what he needs from the

83. Gómez Redondo, “El *Zifar* y la *Crónica de Fernando IV*,” 107-8.

broader ethos of molinismo, choosing to emphasize those values and virtues that best suit his purposes and to suppress or omit others that do not. Therefore, although they have much in common, the ideologies expressed in these works are not monolithic, and at times they even enter into conflict with one another, as is the case with *PAO* and *LBA*.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study has been to examine the process by which the legacy of Queen María was created and to evaluate the impact of her rule on the cultural politics of Medieval Castile-León. In these pages, I have examined the ways in which María, her supporters, and her successors constructed her queenship. I have also attempted to uncover how the queen helped shape political discourse during her lifetime and how the figure of the queen came to be held up by some medieval authors as the champion of a set of values about kingship and chivalry. As we have seen, María forged political alliances, created a patronage network, and promoted political rhetoric that had an impact on how she is remembered and what she is remembered for. Her practice of queenship and its representation also had a sizeable impact in the political sphere and more specifically on ideas and beliefs about chivalry and monarchy during the period in which she ruled. In conclusion I would like to make clear how our findings relate to existing scholarship on this topic and to draw some conclusions that lead to a re-evaluation of María's impact and involvement in the cultural politics of Medieval Castile-León.

Towards a New Definition of Molinismo?

As we observed in chapter four, the existing explanation of molinismo seems insufficient and reductive. The various ideologies espoused in Castilian literature during this period (roughly 1280s to 1340s) cannot be explained by a monolithic cultural model or even by a universally shared set of values. While it is possible to discern a multitude of commonalities in the values about kingship, chivalry, and anti-Averroistic tendencies between these texts, the different perspectives and contexts in which they were written result in a plurality of ideologies. I also take issue with the term "molinismo" itself, as it

is derived from the queen's name and implies her role as a leader and an inspiration for this movement.

In order to address the lack of uniformity in works previously classified as molinista, we might try to conceptualize molinismo as a cultural and political model that evolves over time with the changing circumstances of the monarchs. In this scenario we would break up the model into time periods and elaborate a scheme that traces the development of molinismo from Sancho's court to María's, and then again in Alfonso XI's court. But given the marked ideological differences among of these works, the changing role of the cathedral school of Toledo, and the limited nature of the queen's involvement as a literary patron, this would still be an inaccurate representation of the way in which these values are used and promoted in individual texts over this period of time. Instead, I would assert that while the broad gamut of works that have been labeled as molinista are influenced by each other and promote many of the same values and beliefs, the broad heading of molinismo is an impediment to understanding what is truly happening in the literary production of this period in Castile-León.

A brief review of the existing conceptualization of molinismo will help to demonstrate this point. While he describes each work in its specificities, Gómez Redondo basically characterizes all of the literature produced during Sancho's reign as molinista. He asserts that molinismo was created in alliance with the cathedral school of Toledo and with the end of justifying Sancho's rebellion and legitimizing his descendants. As such, it constitutes a part of Sancho IV's larger cultural politics and should therefore be considered in the context of Sancho's reign. The molinismo of Sancho's court is characterized by a return to orthodoxy, which includes a reaction against the spread of

Averroism, an increased religious fervor, and a renewed emphasis on Christian moral values that are also evidenced in Sancho's politics and his self-representation. The long list of literary works attributed to Sancho's patronage (and in the case of *Castigos*, the king's "authorship") includes a diverse array of texts, such as *Versión amplificada de 1289* of the *Estoria de España*, *Lucidario*, *Libro del Tesoro*, *Barlaam y Josafat*, *Castigos del rey don Sancho IV*, *Libro de concejo y consejeros*, and *La gran conquista de Ultramar*, among others.⁸⁴ Despite the similarities that Gómez Redondo observes in these texts, each is written with a different purpose and is derived from different sources. They also have varying subject matter. Two are medieval translations that treat philosophy, religious doctrine, natural and political science; where others are concerned with giving advice to princes and lords, exalting the religious life and the crusades, or relating the great and chivalrous deeds of noblemen and kings in the Iberian Peninsula. Furthermore, Bizzarri has demonstrated that there are even some differences in the treatment of Averroistic philosophies in *Castigos*, *Lucidario*, and *Libro del Tesoro*, which leads him to conclude that "las obras del período del rey don Sancho evidencian pertenecer a equipos de trabajos cuyas posturas ideológicas son divergentes."⁸⁵ So even in Sancho's court, the works of molinismo are not entirely uniform. As to the influence that Queen María purportedly had in the production of these thirteenth-century texts, it is impossible to discern how she might have done so. Some of the works mention King Sancho as the patron or the author, but none of them make direct allusions to his queen. While it is possible that María may have helped to direct Sancho's cultural production through her influence in the private sphere, or that she might have encouraged her husband to

84. See Fernando Gómez Redondo, "La corte de Sancho IV (1284-1295)" in *Historia de la prosa*, 1: 853-1092.

85. Hugo Oscar Bizzarri, "Reflexiones," 443.

patronize the clerics of Toledo as authors, this is entirely speculation for which there is no textual evidence.

After Sancho's death, the differences between the texts classified as molinista become even more apparent. As we saw in chapter four, later manifestations of this cultural model are extremely divergent in their values and beliefs, and though they borrow from Sancho's model, they also adapt it to suit their needs. It may therefore be useful to separate out the royal motivations for molinismo from the clerical ones. Indeed, within the boundaries of Sancho's molinismo it is possible to discern both a political model of monarchy (which is religious in nature) and another model, which serves the interests of the clergy in general and the Church of Toledo in particular. Among the priorities of the crown are bringing the nobility into the obedience of the king and justifying Sancho's rebellion and legitimizing his rule, the latter of which accomplished by investing the king with a semi-sacral nature and aligning the monarch with the Church. While the Church may have shared these values, the other interests of Sancho's clerical authors include affirming the primacy of Toledo, re-establishing the dominance of prelates as advisors and administrators in the monarchy, as well as squashing Averroistic tendencies in philosophy and confirming the dominant nature of theology over natural science. These religious and political goals are most clearly united in Sancho's cultural politics and the text that best demonstrates this alliance is *Castigos*.

Although the primary subject is not a refutation of Averroistic principles, *Castigos* is very much in line with Christian beliefs and it defines a model of monarchy that is extremely orthodox. Along with doctrinal lessons on the nature of the trinity and the superior state of virgins, divine providence occupies a central place in this model.

Kings are encouraged to be chaste, to hear mass, and to make donations in order to have God's favor in this life and to ensure their salvation in the next. They are also encouraged to take prelates as their advisors and warned against the dangers of employing heretics, who will ruin a king's reputation and serve him poorly. This mirror of princes also promotes concerns that are more purely political, such as establishing the practice of primogeniture, expressing the imperative to maintain the unity of the kingdoms of Castile and León, and warning the prince against allowing powerful members of the nobility to gain control over him.

This model of monarchy provides a basis for what we see in Sánchez de Valladolid's chronicles, *Libro del caballero Zifar*, and even Loaysa's chronicle and *Poema de Alfonso Onceno*. However, it is in the first two where the model of monarchy created in *Castigos* remains most intact. It is also in the political discourse of these two works that we see the greatest influence of Queen María's rule. We will return to a discussion of the queen's influence directly, but first I would like to conclude my discussion of molinismo by offering a few observations about the existing definition for that term.

The diversity of works previously labeled as molinista belies the unity that such a heading implies. Therefore, molinismo is not a uniform movement, program, or cultural model that spans half a century of Castilian literature. It may be possible to come up with a new term to describe a cultural movement or tendency that takes place during Sancho's reign within the confines of the cathedral school of Toledo. These works (which might include *Libro de buen amor* as a later addition, as well as other works that Pérez López

has identified as molinista in his investigations in the Toledo archives)⁸⁶ are more uniform in their beliefs and conservative ideology. However, when we try to make political discourses such as the royal chronicles fit under the same heading as *Lucidario* and *Barlaam y Josafat*, the model begins to fall apart. What is clear is that the current use of the term “molinismo” to describe the whole of Sancho IV’s literary production is inaccurate at best, since it implies a level of influence from the queen that is impossible to substantiate.

Queen María’s Legacy in Sánchez de Valladolid’s Chronicles and the Influence of her Rule in *Libro del Caballero Zifar*

As I asserted in the introduction to this study, the representation of Queen María’s rule in the chronicles is central to her cultural legacy. From our analysis of the chronicles it is apparent that although Jofré de Loaysa makes an important contribution to creating a positive image of the queen, it is Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid who truly provides the queen with a legacy. He follows Loaysa’s cue in representing the queen as a victim of greedy and dishonorable men and a constant but unappreciated champion of her son’s interests; also like Loaysa, he praises the queen for her great wisdom and her patient diligence. But Alfonso XI’s chancellor adds to this portrait in a way that shows María’s promotion of a set of political values about monarchy and chivalry which are reaffirmed by the narration of the chronicles. He makes the queen a protagonist of her husband’s history as well as her son’s, and she continues to be a central character into and beyond Fernando’s majority. During María’s rule, the righteous values of monarchy and the very definition of reality (i.e. the “truth” of things) are always evidenced in the queen’s person

86. See Pérez López, *Temas*, 41, 57, 144-80, 352-54.

and are expressed through her thoughts, words, and actions. In Sánchez de Valladolid's history, María shares the stage (by which I mean the focus of the narration) with the men with whom she shares rule, but while those men err the queen never falters. Queen María always knows which actions and policies will truly serve the king and God and she consistently advocates what is best for the good of the kingdom.

The political values that the queen promotes in Sánchez de Valladolid's chronicles are similar to those of Sancho IV's politics, though the emphasis on political and moral virtues is somewhat different than what we observed in *Castigos*. God's Providence and divine intervention continue to provide a basis for understanding the import of events in the kingdom and there is still an imperative to maintain the integrity of the king's patrimony and to expand it through conquest. In accordance with what Sancho says about kings in *Castigos*, a righteous monarch must not allow himself to be taken in by false friends or controlled by his vassals and he must also enforce a harsh justice in order to achieve the good of the realm. Piety, dedication to the responsibilities of ruling, and the wisdom to discern good advice from bad are the makings of a good king (or queen) in the chronicles, and the failure to practice these virtues has dire consequences. Restraint in food, drink, and other pleasures (such as the pursuit of leisure activities like hunting) is important, and *mesura* (most often embodied by the queen) as the opposite of *cobdiçia* (the most prominent characteristic of villainous nobles) is one of the most important political and moral virtues that the work promotes as a whole. The most notable difference from Sancho's *Castigos* is the lack of interest that Sánchez de Valladolid demonstrates in the virtue of chastity. While it is implied that Queen María is chaste (it could hardly be otherwise with the wife and mother of kings), the chronicler

makes no reference to this virtue in the queen beyond what can be inferred by her refusal to follow the “bad example” of widows who had remarried in *CFIV*. Neither the nobles nor King Fernando are portrayed as lustful men, and when it comes to explaining Alfonso XI’s special relationship with Leonor de Guzmán, the chronicler does not moralize, but rather seeks to justify the king’s notorious infidelity.⁸⁷

The striking similarity between the values about kingship and chivalry that are promoted in Sánchez de Valladolid’s chronicles and in *LCZ* makes a strong case for identifying the “libro de la historia” referred to in the prologue of *LCZ* as Sánchez de Valladolid’s. The stories of *LCZ* closely resemble events in Castile-León, where greedy nobles and unjust kings who do not respect local *fueros* threaten the peace and prosperity of the kingdom. All conflict is the result of the related vices of *soberbia* and *cobdiçia* and is resolved with the opposite virtue of *mesura*; while the justice of a king who is a true knight of God saves the weak and unprotected from the powerful and rapacious. It cannot be missed that Zifar’s story is similar Alfonso XI’s in that both men are knights of royal descent who redeem their fallen lineage and save their kingdoms with their just and righteous kingship.⁸⁸ We should also note that some of the values that the royal chronicles do not particularly share with *Castigos* are evident here, such as the recommendation to employ prelates as advisors, the injunctions to practice the virtues of chastity and charity, and the prioritization of *buen seso natural* over *letradura*. The particular influence of Queen María’s rule in *LCZ* is also evident in the proliferation of exemplary women rulers. While the women of *LCZ* are restricted from appearing on the

87. For a discussion of Sánchez de Valladolid’s treatment of Alfonso XI’s royal mistress, see Catalán, “Una antirreina en Castilla,” and Catalán, “La *Gran Crónica* y la historiografía en prosa y en verso sobre Alfonso XI,” 165.

88. For a discussion on the importance of chivalry and knighthood in Alfonso XI’s cultural politics, see Linehan, *History and the Historians*, 575-608; and Rodríguez Velasco, *Ciudadanía*, 141-85.

battlefield and obligated by their families to remarry, they still emulate María as pious wives and mothers who serve as wise counselors and legitimate placeholders.

Furthermore, many of María's honorable attributes in the chronicles are found in Knight Zifar, and the comparison of Zifar with Queen María in the prologue makes explicit her role as an inspiration for the work.

Queen María's Influence and the Role of Her Rule

A problem arises when we try to reconcile the influence of Queen María's rule as it is represented in the chronicles with the direct influence that the queen herself had on political discourse and literature. We must keep in mind that Sánchez de Valladolid's chronicle was written about twenty years after the queen's death and it is Alfonso XI and not María de Molina who is named as the patron of that work of historiography. It appears quite possible that the queen or her supporters would have taken the trouble to record the events of history in her favor, especially given the fact that as a ruler María took so many of her cues from her grandmother Queen Berenguela, who was herself a patron of chronicles. However, no such text exists today and so we can only guess at how it might have differed from the account that Sánchez de Valladolid gives. What we do know is that María had a connection to her chronicler, who appears as a witness to her last testament, and that Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid came into Alfonso's service while the king was a minor under the guardianship of his queen grandmother. More specifically, we can assert that elements of the queen's self-representation—such as the image of the queen as suffering many trials on behalf of her son, as well as the respect that she is due for the trials she has suffered in the service of the king, God, and the good of the kingdom—are evident in the chronicles. This tri-part values motif (the service of

king, God, and the good of the kingdom) that we have identified as being an integral part of the queen's political rhetoric is also a central theme in Sánchez de Valladolid's chronicle. So while the political discourse of the chronicles in general and the queen's representation in particular was ultimately created to serve Alfonso XI's political needs, they are also undeniably shaped by the political rhetoric that Queen María developed during her time as regent.

As to the queen's connection with *LCZ*, since the date, patronage, and authorship are still uncertain, we can only speculate as to her level of involvement and influence in that work. Given the laudatory reference to the queen in the prologue, it appears quite possible that the queen could have patronized the work or that one of her supporters and trusted collaborators might have done so, either before or after her death. It is also plausible that *LCZ* was written for the queen during or after Fernando's minority (perhaps even by the archdeacon Ferrán Martínez), and then was rewritten or expanded at a later date. All of this is educated guesswork of course, but what we do know is that *LCZ* is a product of the experience of the royal minorities and that María's rule is cited as a source of inspiration for the story of Knight Zifar.

Queen María is an understudied queen, especially given the importance of her rule and the extent of her influence on the cultural politics of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Castile-León. Her successful practice of queenship stands as testimony to the fact that noble women—particularly those who descended from the royal family—could govern and that they could do it well. It also demonstrates the advantages of female rule, which could serve to compliment and balance out the aggressively masculine character of the monarch as a military leader and an enforcer of justice. At the same time, María's rule

as it is represented in the chronicles advocates royal women's legitimate role as placeholders and advisors for kings, and it shows that in the absence of a male ruler, a woman can exercise kingly justice and can lead in his stead. After Berenguela, Queen María is probably one of the most successful queens to wield power as regent in Medieval Castile. Therefore, it is likely that her queenship provided a precedent for future queens and a model for successful female rulership. An area where I see potential for future studies is in examining how María's rule affected the tradition and the future practices of queenship in Castile. It is interesting to observe the many similarities between the ways in which María and other successful female rulers of Castile, such as Berenguela and Isabel I, are depicted. All of these women are noted for their piety, their intelligence, and their dedication to achieving the good (both the temporal and the spiritual good) of the realm. They are defined by these attributes, but also by their connections as wives and mothers of the men with whom they shared rule. As Isabel in particular was a potential recipient of the values of *LCZ* as well as the royal chronicles,⁸⁹ I believe that a study that compares the construction of their respective queenships would be illuminating. Also, contextualizing María's rule within the tradition of other queens—both those who were successful in having their authority accepted and those who were not—will be particularly helpful to achieving a better understanding of the ways in which ruling women were perceived and how they needed to be perceived in order to rule effectively. Other directions that literary criticism might take is to examine Queen María's relationship to other works that share the spirit of her rule, such as the *Crónica*

89. Isabel had the manuscript edition that was commissioned by her half-brother, Enrique IV, in her royal library. Ian Michael, "'From Her Shall Read the Perfect Ways of Honour': Isabel of Castile and Chivalric Romance," in *The Age of the Catholic Monarchs (1474-1516): Literary Studies in Memory of Keith Whinnom*, eds. Alan Deyermond and Ian Macpherson (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1989), 103-12.

particular de Fernando III in the *Estoria de España* and *Vida de San Ildefonso*.⁹⁰ With this study I hope to have contributed to the scholarship on Queen María's legacy in such a way as to provide a basis for future studies on queenship in general and to encourage studies on Queen María in particular.

Queen María had a definite and observable impact on political discourse and the values of monarchy in Medieval Castile-León. Circumstances (and perhaps a bit of ambition) thrust this queen consort into the political spotlight when her husband died, but it was only through her capable management of a difficult situation that she was able to assert her rule as queen regent during the turbulent minorities of her son and grandson. Through her patronage and her political actions María created alliances with her contemporaries, such as the Castilian prelates and the knights of the urban concejos, which helped her to rule as regent and to safeguard the succession of her son and grandson. María and her supporters created an image of the queen as a suffering mother and a diligent co-ruler who truly and unselfishly served her king, her God, and the realm. This image bolstered the queen's authority and provided a model for chivalrous behavior that encouraged all of the king's vassals (and even the king himself) to do the same. As we have seen, her rule and the way that it is represented in those chronicles was the source of inspiration for one of the classical works of medieval Castilian literature, *Libro del caballero Zifar*. We have also seen how the queen's political rhetoric shaped values about monarchy in such a way that some of the values which she championed came to be used even by her political rivals, such as Infante Juan and Juan Manuel. The queen's political alliances, rhetoric, and self-representation also influenced the way that she is

90. For a discussion of the values of these works and their relationship to "molinismo" as defined by Gómez Redondo, see Gómez Redondo, *Historia de la prosa*, 2:1238-45; and Pérez López, *Temas*, 352-54.

portrayed in the royal chronicles commissioned by her grandson, and therefore helped to determine the nature of her legacy. Queen María may not have had as much of a direct impact on cultural production as was previously theorized, but her involvement in creating a cultural legacy that influenced political discourse is undeniable.

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