

*Studies in Medieval History and Culture*

# **THE TRIUMPH OF AN ACCURSED LINEAGE**

**KINGSHIP IN CASTILE FROM ALFONSO X TO  
ALFONSO XI (1252–1350)**

Fernando Arias Guillén



# The Triumph of an Accursed Lineage

*The Triumph of an Accursed Lineage* analyses kingship in Castile between 1252 and 1350, with a particular focus on the pivotal reign of Alfonso XI (r. 1312–1350).

This century witnessed significant changes in the ways in which the Castilian monarchy constructed and represented its power in this period. The ideas and motifs used to extoll royal authority, the territorial conceptualisation of the kingdom, the role queens and the royal family played, and the interpersonal relationship between the kings and the nobility were all integral to this process. Ultimately, this book addresses how Alfonso XI, a member of an accursed lineage who rose to the throne when he was an infant, was able to end the internal turmoil which plagued Castile since the 1270s and become a paradigm of successful kingship.

This book will appeal to scholars and students of medieval Spain, as well as those interested in the history of kingship.

**Fernando Arias Guillén** is a Ramón y Cajal Fellow at the University of Valladolid, Spain. His research focuses on kingship in Castile, particularly during the reign of Alfonso XI (r. 1312–1350).

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Alfonso XI (1252–1350)

**Fernando Arias Guillén**

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# Abbreviations

ACB	Archivo de la Catedral de Burgos
AHN	Archivo Histórico Nacional
AHNOB	Archivo Histórico de la Nobleza
CAX	Crónica de Alfonso X
CAXI	Crónica de Alfonso XI
CEIII	Crónica de Enrique III
CFIV	Crónica de Fernando IV
Ch.	Chapter
CJI	Crónica de Juan I
CODOM.	Colección de documentos para la historia del Reino de Murcia
CSIV	Crónica de Sancho IV
Doc.	Document
f.	folio
GCAXI	Gran Crónica de Alfonso XI
Ms.	Manuscript
Par(s).	Paragraph(s)
RAH	Real Academia de la Historia

## Notes on names, places, and terms

Throughout the book, I use the modern Spanish version of the names of the kings and other individuals from Castile. Likewise, I use the modern English, Portuguese, and French names of the English, Portuguese, and French monarchs, respectively. In the case of the rulers of Granada and the Marinid Sultanate, I use their transliterated names. When referring to the Aragonese kings, I use their Catalan names and start counting from the union of Aragón and Catalonia under the same ruler. This numeration was acknowledged by the kings themselves at the time, and it is the one used in the Archivo de la Corona de Aragón in Barcelona. The dates of the monarch's reign are provided to avoid confusion.

Queens' names pose a difficult problem. In this case, I have opted to name them in the 'language' of the kingdom they moved to rather than the one they originally came from. Therefore, I use Leonor to refer to Alfonso VIII's wife and Eleanor when speaking about Alfonso X's sister who became queen of England.

In relation to places, I have used the English name in those Spanish locations which have an easily identifiable translation, such as Seville, Cordova, or Biscay. I have also decided to keep the accents in León and Aragón.

Lastly, I would like to make a clarification on certain terms. I use royal privileges as a synonym of *privilegios rodados* many times, especially in Chapter 7. Although royal privileges did not necessarily have to be written in the form of a *privilegio rodado*, most of them were. In consequence, I thought it was acceptable to alternate both terms in order to avoid repetition. Additionally, I use the term *retinue* to refer to the kings' or nobles' close military entourage, although this does not mean that these troops constituted a professional, standing army.



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# Introduction

Framing the reign of Alfonso XI (r. 1312–1350) as a successful version of his great-grandfather Alfonso X's (r. 1252–1284) is an old adage in the historiography of medieval Spain. Around 1345, Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid (d. c. 1362) wrote the cycle of chronicles, on the king's orders, which developed this narrative by contrasting Alfonso XI's successful kingship with the tumultuous reigns of his predecessors. The modern historiography shares this view. The prevailing interpretation is that it was during the reign of Alfonso XI when Alfonso X's ambitious reforms finally came to fruition, thanks to the former's realpolitik regarding the relationship between the Castilian monarchy and the kingdom's elite.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, Alfonso XI is emblematic of the 'strong king' archetype: a monarch who combined military prowess and ruling skills.<sup>2</sup>

Surprisingly, the reign of Alfonso XI remains an understudied period. Alfonso X has attracted much-deserved attention from scholars for decades, including two authoritative biographies on Alfonso X<sup>3</sup> and a biennial journal, *Alcanate*, devoted to Alfonsine studies.<sup>4</sup> More recently, monographs on his legal reforms and cultural endeavours have labelled the Wise King as the 'Justinian of his Age'<sup>5</sup> and a 'Renaissance Prince'.<sup>6</sup> By contrast, the reigns of Sancho IV (r. 1284–1295), Fernando IV (r. 1295–1312), and Alfonso XI had not received the same favour, which is particularly striking in the case of Alfonso XI's crucial rule. There are obviously some works devoted to these kings and aspects of their reigns, which will be explored below. For instance, my own research on Alfonso XI has discussed the importance warfare had in strengthening royal authority during his rule.<sup>7</sup> However, it is necessary to analyse Alfonso's impact in a wider context, both thematically and chronologically. There is a noticeable lack of general large-scale studies and monographs, especially in English, and those that do exist are substantially flawed, such as José Sánchez-Arcilla's biography of Alfonso XI, published in 1995,<sup>8</sup> which was accurately reviewed by Manuel González Jiménez as a 'missed opportunity'.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, César González Mínguez's recent monograph on royal authority and the nobility in Castile during this period provides a very outdated interpretation of kingship that ignores the substantial changes the field has experienced in the past three decades.<sup>10</sup>

This book, therefore, analyses the significant metamorphosis kingship experienced in Castile between 1252 and 1350, with a special focus on the pivotal reign of Alfonso XI. In doing so, it examines how royal power was constructed – by

## 2 Introduction

focusing on the interpersonal aspects of kingship, a facet of ruling which remained extremely important in the fourteenth century<sup>11</sup> – and, especially, represented in this period. Consequently, there are four main topics which will be discussed: the representation of royal power, territoriality and kingship, the role played by the royal family in the ruling of the kingdom, and the relationship between the king and the nobility. While Castile is the main focus of this book, there are comparisons drawn with other Western European kingdoms such as France, England, Aragón, or Portugal. Kingship in Castile was idiosyncratic, but there were also obvious similarities with other kingdoms which are worth highlighting. Underscoring these commonalities and/or studying the reasons behind these differences serves to both expand the understanding of the topic while also dispel the idea of Castile's exceptionalism. Ultimately, this book addresses how Alfonso XI, a member of an accursed lineage who rose to the throne when he was an infant, was able to restore royal authority and become a paradigm of successful kingship.

These changes in kingship occur in parallel with the jurisdictional and institutional development of royal authority, a subject which itself requires an in-depth study. The century between 1252 and 1350 was characterised by the expansion of royal government.<sup>12</sup> For instance, there were two major developments in royal taxation in this period: the creation of the *servicios* (direct tax) in 1269, and the generalisation of the *alcabalas* (tax on trade) in 1342. The latter became the major source of revenue for the Castilian monarchy in the Late Middle Ages.<sup>13</sup> Likewise, there was substantial administrative development at the central and local level, and a noticeable expansion of royal justice.<sup>14</sup> These topics have been widely studied, so they will only be addressed when it is pertinent to the argument; however, it is important to remember that the changes kingship experienced in Castile during this period occurred against the backdrop of the growth of the regnal state.<sup>15</sup> In a similar vein, the relationship between the Castilian monarchy and the Church will not be discussed. This topic has been covered extensively by Peter Linehan and José Manuel Nieto Soria, among others.<sup>16</sup>

The representation of kingship in Castile is a thematic thread woven throughout this work. Therefore, the examination of royal chronicles and the *privilegios rodados*, beautifully embellished privileges which were the ideal avenue for transmitting royal ideology because they were issued regularly by the royal chancery (see Images 0.1 and 0.2), are central to analysing how the Castilian monarchy understood and projected its power. More specifically, the motifs and ideas used by the kings to glorify their authority are at the centre of the argument in Chapter 1. This topic has received a lot of attention from scholars such as Peter Linehan,<sup>17</sup> José Manuel Nieto Soria,<sup>18</sup> and Jesús Rodríguez Velasco,<sup>19</sup> to name just a few. Providing an exhaustive look at all the works produced on the orders of the Castilian monarchy and the ideas they portrayed to communicate their power would need its own monograph. Therefore, I will focus on three key aspects: how was history written, especially the cycle of chronicles by Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid that were designed to be the 'official' version of the recent past; the ethos of the *Reconquista* and the chivalric ideal developed by the Castilian monarchy; and the debate regarding the sacred nature of kingship in Castile, especially its importance in law codes. In 1332, Alfonso XI

crowned himself after being knighted by a statue of the Apostle St James, an event which neatly summarises the overlapping ideas used to extol kingship in this period. At the same time, his coronation reflects Alfonso XI's desire to erase the 'original sin' of his family. Alfonso X cursed and disinherited his son Sancho for rebelling against him in 1282. Although he, as Sancho IV, acceded to the throne two years later, the continued existence of the sons of the infante Fernando de la Cerda (1255–1275), the Wise King's first-born (see Appendices 1), cast doubts on his and his accursed lineage's legitimacy to rule.

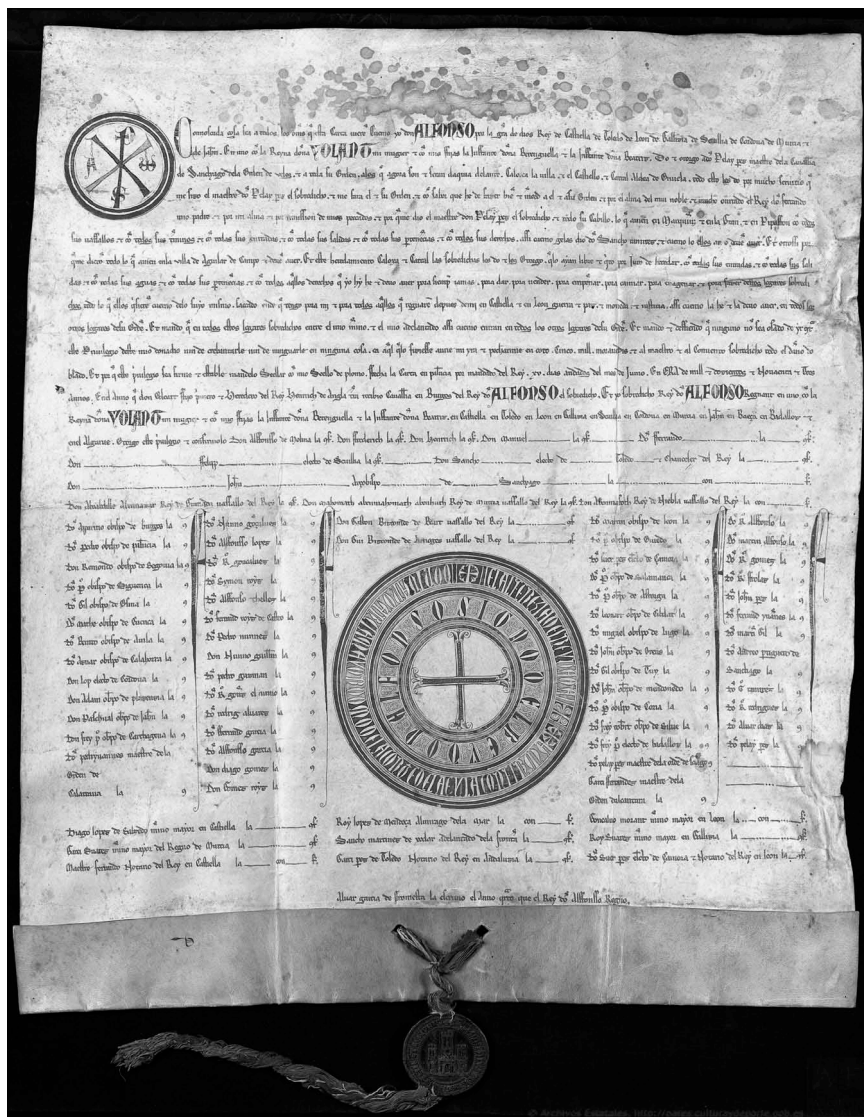


Image 0.1 *Privilegio rodado* issued by Alfonso X (15 June 1255) AHN, ORDENES MILITARES, Car. 1068, N. 6

Source: © Ministerio de Cultura y Deporte. Archivo Histórico Nacional (Madrid, Spain)

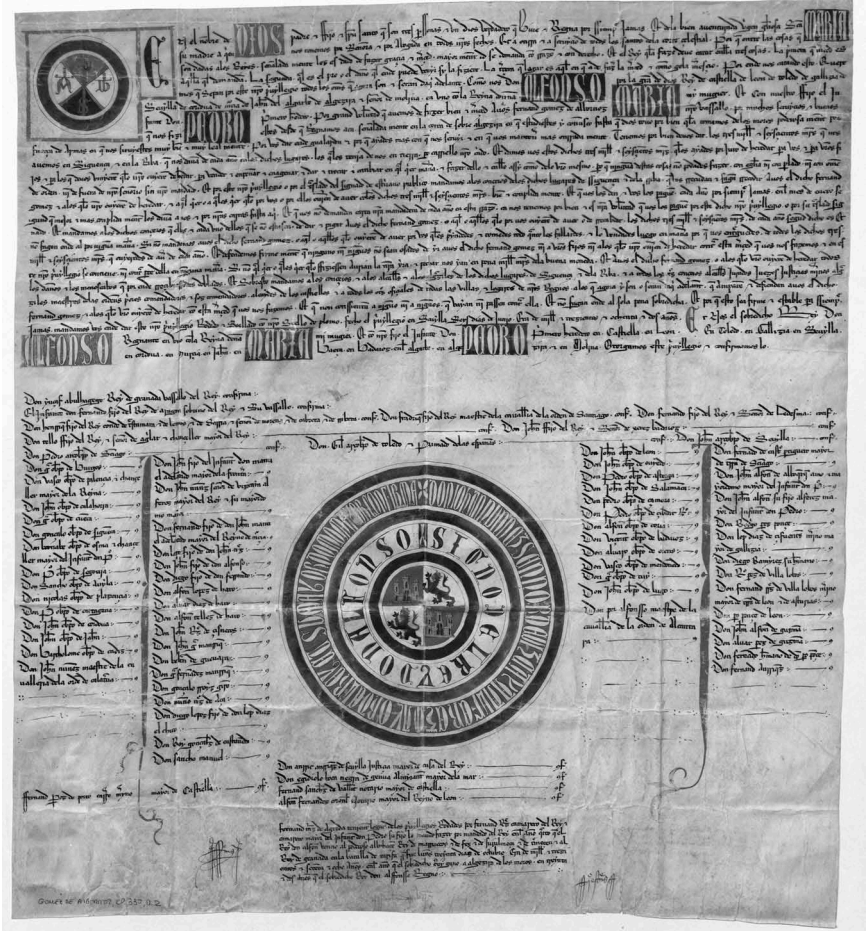


Image 0.2 Privilegio rodado issued by Alfonso XI (6 June 1344) AHNOB, GOMEZ DE ALBORNOZ, CP.330, D.2

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Chapters 2 and 3 are devoted to territoriality and kingship. First, it examines the different realms and territories which comprised the domains of the Castilian kings after the extensive conquests of Fernando III (r. 1217–1252). Despite their diversity, these lands were increasingly seen as a united and indivisible entity, its boundaries and identity defined by the kings’ rule, a concept reflected in the term ‘*la corona de sus regnos*’. Similarly, the Castilian monarchy developed the notion of ‘*naturaleza*’, which considered that all the inhabitants of the kingdom were automatically obliged to serve the king as their ‘natural’ lord. Chapter 3 analyses the kings’ itineraries between 1252 and 1350. Unlike in other European kingdoms, the Castilian royal chancery did not settle down in one place until the very end of the Middle Ages.

This chapter shows that royal itineration was not the result of administrative underdevelopment, but a response to the very nature of kingship, as royal mobility and the physical presence of the monarch continued to be of great importance. Additionally, I discuss how Seville, Burgos, and Valladolid all shared the title of 'capital' of the kingdom, and why the legitimacy problems experienced by the Castilian kings of this period prevented the establishment of an uncontested royal mausoleum comparable to Westminster, Saint Denis, Poblet, or Batalha.

Ruling was a corporate endeavour during the Middle Ages in which members of the royal family participated alongside the king. This is why Chapters 4 and 5 focus on the idea of 'plural monarchy'<sup>20</sup> by exploring the role played by queens and other royal relatives in the ruling of the kingdom. Queenship in Castile-León has become a vibrant field in the recent years; however, most of the studies have concentrated on either the twelfth and first half of the thirteenth centuries,<sup>21</sup> or on the fifteenth century.<sup>22</sup> There are noteworthy works about Queen Violante (1236–1300), Alfonso X's wife,<sup>23</sup> and Queen María de Molina (c. 1261–1321), such as the recent studies by Patricia Rochwert-Zuili and Ángela Muñoz.<sup>24</sup> However, there are no general works on queenship between 1252 and 1350. This chapter, therefore, analyses the ways in which queens participated in the kingdom's ruling, from acting as diplomats and mediators to the importance of the lordships they held. In doing so, it also shows how queens cannot be reduced to royal agents, as their personal interests did not always coincide with the king's. Queen María de Molina was a crucial player during the minorities of Fernando IV and Alfonso XI; however, she faced significant opposition when she tried to exercise powers which went beyond the scope usually associated with queenship, a theme which is examined at length in this chapter. Additionally, in opposition to the traditional view, I argue that Leonor de Guzmán (1310–1351), Alfonso XI's concubine, played a key role in the strengthening of royal power experienced during Alfonso XI's reign, as she was expected to act as a parallel queen in what was the king's *de facto* polygamy.

Chapter 5 discusses infantes, the kings' sons, and other male royal relatives such as Juan Manuel. As a whole, these individuals remain largely understudied, although there are some works related to Alfonso X's brothers<sup>25</sup> and Juan Manuel.<sup>26</sup> The large number of male members of the royal family during the reign of Alfonso X created an unprecedented situation. In consequence, the Wise King, despite his initial reluctance, had to endow his brothers and younger sons with lordships originating from the royal demesne. Due to their power and prestige, the infantes became important political operators, especially as regents during the minorities of Fernando IV and Alfonso XI. Royal chronicles present these individuals as either 'good' or 'bad', depending on the chroniclers' inclinations and their standing with the king; however, their political role was more complex than that due to the problems of the competing loyalties to the king and the pursuit of their own personal ambitions. Juan Manuel faced a similar dilemma. He was the son of the infante Manuel and grandson of Fernando III, and he became Alfonso XI's nemesis due to his decade-long semi-permanent rebellion. More interestingly, Juan Manuel continued his conflict with the king

in the realm of literature. The magnate's numerous writings provide a fascinating view into his ideas regarding royal power and present a dissident history to the 'official version' offered by royal chronicles. In these writings, Juan Manuel and his father are the 'true heirs' of Fernando III, not the royal dynasty. Finally, it is argued that Alfonso XI used the conspicuous absence of male royal relatives to create a 'new' royal family with the offspring he and Leonor de Guzmán had, which became a pillar of his success.

The last two chapters analyse the relationship between the king and the most prominent members of the nobility, the *ricosombres*. Instead of perpetuating the traditional view, which opposed royal authority to seigneurial power and considered that the nobility dreaded the expansion of royal government, I argue that the strengthening of royal power should be interpreted as occurring in parallel with the consolidation of the magnates' position. This process was obviously not exempt from tensions and conflicts: the nobles' competed to benefit from royal patronage which led to factionalism and internal turmoil.<sup>27</sup>

The penultimate chapter examines the different ways in which the nobles benefitted from royal favour, such as receiving a salary from the king's revenues, obtaining a royal office, and/or being granted a lordship. Although the lack of documentation makes it difficult to undertake an in-depth analysis, it is evident from the extant sources how the nobles benefitted from the expansion of royal government. The magnates were the main recipients of an increasingly growing royal taxation, sometimes exercising direct control over the revenues allocated to them. Additionally, the nobles' territorial power became more formalised, as lordships received from the king started to include jurisdictional rights over the transferred lands. The second half of the chapter focuses on the conflicts of this period. First, it analyses the ways in which the nobles expressed dissent and their opposition to the king, with special attention paid to the notion of '*desnaturarse*' (renunciation of personal ties to the king as one's natural lord), which became increasingly more formalised in this period. Another aspect which changed during this period was the Castilian monarchy's responses to rebel nobles. The *ricosombres* now feared that the king might order their assassination when they were in a disagreement.<sup>28</sup> However, I argue that, despite the occasional homicide, kings favoured negotiated solutions to these conflicts.<sup>29</sup> This chapter also explores the endemic nature of factionalism, which was exacerbated by nobles creating leagues to fight for control over royal patronage, and the rise of the *privados*;<sup>30</sup> royal favourites resented by the rest of the kingdom's elite for their proximity to the king. Lastly, I analyse Alfonso XI's successful kingship: by 1338, the king had temporarily ended the internal turmoil which had plagued Castile since the nobles' rebellion of 1272 against Alfonso X.

Chapter 7 delves into the idea that the process of strengthening of royal power was occurring in parallel to the nobles' by studying the list of confirmers in the *privilegios rodados*. These were individuals included by the royal chancery in these documents because of their position or status between 1252 and 1350. The enormous potential of these diplomas has not been fully

utilised by historians, as they have rarely been analysed systematically.<sup>31</sup> The *privilegios rodados* offer a vantage point from which to examine the Castilian monarchy's views on power and authority, as the wide dissemination of these documents made them perfect vehicles to transmit these ideas. Therefore, this chapter proposes an innovative approach to these diplomas: to study the annual evolution of the list of nobles who confirmed royal privileges between 1252 and 1350. Analysing all the confirmers in detail would require a monograph of its own; however, observing the changes in this list throughout this century, combined with a selection of representative case studies, offers meaningful results.

The position of confirmer was a privilege almost exclusive of the *ricosombres* – a sign of status within the kingdom's elite. Nevertheless, this group significantly increased its size during this period, as secondary lineages were 'promoted' by the Castilian monarchy for their service to the king. These 'new' families, however, encountered a 'glass ceiling': the top positions in the list of confirmers were the patrimony of the few most prestigious lineages such as the Lara, Haro, and Castro families. Moreover, it became increasingly more common that the sons of these powerful *ricosombres* were included in the *privilegios rodados* along with their parents. Since the 1280s, the frequent presence of young children among the list of confirmers indicates that, unlike before, personal and familial status were more important than the ability to serve the king personally as a requirement to be included in this group. Although these privileges were mostly concerned with extolling the king's authority, changes like this – together with the inclusion of the nobles' patronymic and the lordships they held from 1272 onwards – reflect the growing power of the Castilian *ricosombres* during this period. This idea is further developed by a brief account of the fortunes of the Lara family in this century informed by the royal chronicles and the *privilegios rodados*. Instead of presenting the history of this lineage as one of constant conflict with the Castilian monarchy until the line was extinguished, as Simon Doubleday's nonetheless insightful monograph on the Laras suggests,<sup>32</sup> a different interpretation is proposed. The Laras' support was fundamental to the Castilian monarchy throughout this period. Alfonso XI's successful kingship did not mean the decline of this family. On the contrary, by the end of Alfonso XI's reign, Juan Núñez III de Lara (d. 1350) was the kingdom's most powerful magnate and enjoyed a position which his ancestors could not fathom.

Between 1252 and 1350 the ways in which kingship was exercised and expressed underwent significant changes in Castile. In 1350, when Alfonso XI died of plague while laying siege to Gibraltar, the motifs used to glorify royal authority, the territorial conceptualisation of the kingdom, the definition and standing of the royal family, and the relationship between the king and the nobles were rather different than when Alfonso X was acclaimed king in the cathedral of Seville a century before. Some of these innovations might have been foreshadowed by the Wise King; however, it was his great-grandson who made them possible, reflecting the renewed power and confidence of the Castilian monarchy under Alfonso XI's rule.

## Notes

- 1 Monsalvo Antón, *La construcción del poder real*, ch. 4.
- 2 Watts, *La formación de los sistemas políticos*, 192.
- 3 O'Callaghan, *El Rey Sabio* and González Jiménez, *Alfonso X el Sabio*.
- 4 <https://editorial.us.es/es/revistas/alcanate-revista-de-estudios-alfonsies> (Accessed 17 April 2020).
- 5 O'Callaghan, *Alfonso X, the Justinian of his Age*.
- 6 Doubleday, *The Wise King*.
- 7 Arias Guillén, *Guerra y fortalecimiento del poder regio*.
- 8 Sánchez-Arcilla, *Alfonso XI*.
- 9 González Jiménez, 'Historia política', 183.
- 10 González Mínguez, *Poder real y poder nobiliar*.
- 11 Watts, *La formación de los sistemas políticos*, 274.
- 12 Monsalvo Antón, *La construcción del poder real*, 159–161.
- 13 Miguel Ángel Ladero Quesada, *Fiscalidad y poder real en Castilla*.
- 14 Estepa Díez, 'La monarquía castellana', 81–82.
- 15 Watts, *La formación de los sistemas políticos*, 43.
- 16 In his most recent monograph, Peter Linehan muses whether the clash between papal and royal authority in this period could have resulted in an early Reformation in Iberia: Linehan, *At the Edge of Reformation*. An analysis on the relationship between the bishops and the Castilian monarchy in this period in: Nieto Soria, *Iglesia y poder real en Castilla*.
- 17 Linehan, *History and the historians*.
- 18 Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*.
- 19 Rodríguez Velasco, *Ciudadanía, soberanía monárquica y caballería*.
- 20 'Plural monarchy' is used by Janna Bianchini in her discussion of the co-rule of Queen Berenguela and Fernando III, see: Bianchini, *The Queen's Hand*.
- 21 See: Bianchini, *The Queen's Hand*, Martin, *Queen as King*, Rodríguez, *La estirpe de Leonor de Aquitania*, and Shadis, *Berenguela of Castile*. Lucy Pick's recent work analyses the early medieval period: Pick, *Her Father's Daughter*.
- 22 See: Pelaz Flores, *Poder y representación de la reina*. Similarly, Aragonese queens have been the subject of monographs such as: Earenfight, *The King's Other Body* and Silleras-Fernández, *Power, Piety, and Patronage in Late Medieval Queenship*.
- 23 Fuente Pérez, *Violante de Aragón*.
- 24 See: Muñoz Fernández, 'La mediación femenina' and Rochwert-Zuili, 'La actuación pacificadora de María de Molina'. However, Paulette Lynn Pepin's recent biography does not provide new insights on the queen: Pepin, *María de Molina*.
- 25 Demontis, *Enrico di Castiglia Senatore di Roma*, González Jiménez, 'Alfonso X and His Brothers', and Kinkade, *Dawn of a Dynasty*.
- 26 Although there are several studies of Juan Manuel's works, Andrés Giménez Soler's monograph from 1932 remains the most recent biography: Giménez Soler, *Don Juan Manuel*.
- 27 Two insightful reflections on the topic can be found in Morsel, *La aristocracia medieval* and Taylor, *The Shape of the State*.
- 28 Foronda, 'El miedo al rey'.
- 29 See: Estepa Díez, 'The Strengthening of Royal Power'.
- 30 See: Foronda, *Privauté, Gouvernement et Souveraineté*.
- 31 The exception would be Carlos Estepa's work on the reign of Alfonso VIII: Estepa Díez, 'Los confirmantes en los diplomas de Alfonso VIII'.
- 32 Doubleday, *Los Lara*.

# 1 The representation of kingship in Castile (1252–1350)

## Sacred monarchy, the ethos of the *Reconquista*, and the legitimacy troubles of an accursed lineage

In the summer of 1332, Alfonso XI staged in two phases one of the most complex and fascinating ceremonies of the Middle Ages. According to the royal chronicle, the monarch first made a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, where he was knighted by the Apostle St James. Alfonso XI then returned to the Royal Monastery of Las Huelgas in Burgos, where he crowned himself king in the presence of Castile's elite.<sup>1</sup>

As is discussed over the course of this chapter, Alfonso XI's coronation has been studied in considerable depth and from diverse perspectives.<sup>2</sup> Such extensive scrutiny comes as no surprise, as the ceremony offers a singular case study to analyse the representation of kingship in Castile during the first half of the fourteenth century. The complex ritual held in 1332 was used by the monarch to articulate the fundamental ideas that underpinned his authority, and, furthermore, to make a forthright response to those who disputed the legitimacy of his lineage as successors to Alfonso X.

The principal account of this ceremony is to be found in the *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, which was intended to extol Alfonso's reign by focusing on recent events which eclipsed the historiographical *topoi* of the myths of the Visigothic past, the Arab conquest of 711, and the ancient history of Spain.<sup>3</sup> During this period the patronage of the Castilian monarchy led to a significant number of historical works being written, which were characterised by the concern to interpret the near past and serve as 'official' histories of Castile. Thereby, the Alfonsine historiography, with its broad historical scope, gave way to a new type of writing which was primarily focused on the defence of the dynastic rights of Alfonso X's 'accursed lineage': Sancho IV, Fernando IV, and Alfonso XI.

Alfonso XI's knighthood and coronation provide a perfect example to examine the range of ideas deployed by the Castilian kings to exalt their royal status. However, the traditional debate about whether kingship in Castile was of a fundamentally secular or religious nature needs to be rethought within a more complex context, one that explores the convergence of a range of motifs and ideas. Therefore, an analysis is undertaken of how the ethos of the *Reconquista* and the chivalric ideals coexisted with an idiosyncratic yet undeniably sacral concept of the monarchy. Furthermore, it will be shown how the sacred nature of the Castilian kings was underpinned by the formulation of legal codes,

ranging from the *Siete Partidas* (c. 1265) to the *Ordenamiento de Alcalá* (1348), which forged the idea of royal authority not being beholden to any other class of power.

### **Appropriating the past: Royal chronicles and historical writing in Castile (1252–1350)**

The court of Alfonso X was defined by an impressive range of literary creation, scientific enquiry, and legal codification. The Wise King's patronage and interests, together with its engagement with the scholarly culture of al-Andalus, led to the monarch being considered as a Renaissance prince.<sup>4</sup> Given that Simon Doubleday's study provides an insightful enquiry into Alfonso X's diverse scholarly activities, the works he commissioned, and the range of ideas he sought to transmit over the course of his reign, it is not my intention to analyse these themes in depth. Instead, the focus of this section is devoted, first, to the works of history written under Alfonso's patronage. Attention is then turned to how historical writing underwent significant changes in terms of its form and content during his successors' reigns.

Gabrielle Spiegel's seminal studies have demonstrated how the writing of chronicles in the vernacular made a major contribution to the consolidation of royal power, which became founded on the testimonies of the past by claiming a monopoly on truth.<sup>5</sup> While all medieval monarchies shared an interest in commissioning works of history, this general trend encompassed a complex variety of historical writing. However, England provides a notable exception. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* was begun in the ninth century and continued up until the mid-twelfth century. By contrast, the Angevin monarchs showed no interest in commissioning historical texts, although many of the monastic chronicles had a quasi-official nature.<sup>6</sup> It has been speculated that England's solid territorial unity, in contrast to the more complicated situation in France and the Iberian Peninsula, offers an explanation for this difference between England and other medieval monarchies.<sup>7</sup> It has also been proposed that the assassination of Thomas Beckett (1170), and the fact that the English monarchs never forged a lasting relationship with any single religious institution, like the Capetians and the royal monastery of Saint Denis, may also explain the Angevins' disregard for history. However, these hypotheses are yet to be convincingly demonstrated.<sup>8</sup>

In any case, the situation in Castile and León was wholly distinct to that of England: more than 60 extant chronicles were composed between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries, and the immense majority of these were written on instructions from the king.<sup>9</sup> The Castilian monarchy's untiring interest in constructing historical accounts of its deeds clearly reveals a genuine concern to appropriate the past and mould it to their liking in order to influence the present. By the second half of the twelfth century, the Castilian royal chancery had become well aware of how writing, including both fictional and historical texts, provided a valuable resource for the consolidation of royal power.<sup>10</sup> The reign

of Fernando III (r. 1217–1252), in particular, represents a magnificent example of how the writing of chronicles played an immensely important role in legitimatising the monarchy.<sup>11</sup>

The reign of Alfonso X was a major cultural watershed in many senses, and the writing of history was no exception. First, Castilian substituted Latin as the language of history, which signalled a clear wish that the works commissioned by the monarch were to be circulated amongst the kingdom's elite. Furthermore, historical writing ceased to be the exclusive task of members of the Church. The two principal historical texts created by the Alfonsine *scriptorium* were a history of Spain and a universal history, the *Estoria de Espanna* and the *General Estoria*. In these texts, Alfonso X essentially sought to justify both his 'overlordship' of all the Iberian kingdoms and his claim to the imperial throne, respectively. Although neither of these works were concluded during the reign of the Wise King, they proved to be very influential in the decades that followed, especially the *Estoria de Espanna*. Indeed, many of the works of history written during his successors' reigns were continuations of the *Estoria de Espanna*. However, there were significant developments in terms of style and 'authorial' intention.<sup>12</sup>

In this sense, it has been argued that the *Crónica particular de Fernando III* and the *Crónica de Castilla*, two distinctive continuations to the *Estoria de Espanna* written during the reign of Fernando IV, espoused an 'aristocratic' ideology, which was set against the 'official' discourse of the Castilian monarchy.<sup>13</sup> Patricia Rochwert-Zuili has convincingly demonstrated that Queen María de Molina (c. 1259–1321) exerted a clear influence over the creation of the *Crónica de Castilla*, which calls into question the claim for this text being a 'mouthpiece of the nobility'.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, the notion that there were two opposing visions of royal authority, one monarchical the other aristocratic, is overly simplistic. The ideals of the nobility and their deeds had already become an element of the thirteenth-century royal chronicles written in Latin. A trend which continued in the vernacular works written during following decades.<sup>15</sup> As it will be further explored in Chapter 6, the chronicles played a didactic role; they sought to transmit values that could be shared by all the kingdom's elite, and they tended to be composed at moments when there was a broad consensus between the king and the nobility.<sup>16</sup> A key issue that must be emphasised is that the consolidation of royal authority did not imply a decline in the nobles' power. Setting aside the conflicts that arose from time to time, both grew stronger in parallel. It is for this reason that the claim that there were antagonistic visions of royal authority, which were pitted against one another, is misleading. As will be discussed in Chapter 5, Juan Manuel pursued his conflict with Alfonso XI into the field of literature and history. However, he did not represent an 'aristocratic' voice against the Castilian monarchy; instead, he defended his own ambitions and his lineage's prestige.

In any case, the majority of the extant works concerning history written during this period were commissioned by the monarchs themselves. Fernando Gómez Redondo has developed the concept of '*molinismo*', which was first

coined by Diego Catalán in the mid-twentieth century, to encompass the historical texts commissioned by the Castilian monarchy during the reigns of Sancho IV, Fernando IV, and Alfonso XI. The term refers to Queen María de Molina, the wife, mother, and grandmother, respectively, of these three kings; she played a fundamental role in the creation of a propagandistic framework intended to defend the dynastic rights of her family, a concern that is explored in greater detail in the following section. ‘*Molinismo*’ was also characterised by its distance from the Alfonsine cultural models, in particular by the more pronounced religious position it took, which reflected the important role played by members of Toledo’s cathedral school and the archbishop Gonzalo Pérez Gudiel in the creation of this ideological discourse.<sup>17</sup>

Works such as the *Castigos del rey don Sancho IV*, a mirror of princes that King Sancho wrote for his son, the future Fernando IV, adjusted perfectly to the representation of royal power within a more clearly defined religious dimension.<sup>18</sup> However, the term ‘*molinismo*’ has become a catch-all category – ‘a factitious concept, a credo without a code’, in Peter Linehan’s harsh words<sup>19</sup> – which includes works directly overseen by María de Molina herself, as well as a broad range of writings composed between 1284 and 1350 that, more or less, share some of the same ideals, such as the cycle of chronicles composed by Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid. The providentialism of these chronicles is less apparent than in other ‘*molinist*’ works. On the other hand, they possess a number of features that places them within a broad notion of ‘*molinismo*’, above all, their defence of the dynastic rights of Sancho IV and his successors, and Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid’s scholarly education amidst Queen María de Molina’s circle, a point stressed by Catalán.<sup>20</sup> Consequently, I will refer to ‘*molinismo*’ as a very loose notion rather than a systematic ideological framework.

Amongst the numerous historical works written between 1284 and 1350, the cycle consisting of the *Crónica de Alfonso X*, the *Crónica de Sancho IV*, the *Crónica de Fernando IV*, and the *Crónica de Alfonso XI* undoubtedly represents the principal source of knowledge for this period. In the 1340s, Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid, royal chancellor and close aide to Alfonso XI,<sup>21</sup> was commissioned by the king to write an account linking the reign of Fernando III to the present. Sánchez de Valladolid’s work put to an end the attempts to continue the *Estoria de Espanna*, while also create a new genre, the royal chronicle, which both thematically and formally made a clear departure from the Alfonsine works. Thereby, Sánchez de Valladolid became the first ‘official’ chronicler of the Castilian monarchy. In the second half of the fourteenth century he would be succeeded by Pedro López de Ayala (1332–1407), who wrote the chronicles of the following four reigns (Pedro I, Enrique II, Juan I, and Enrique III), and then in the fifteenth century by other writers, such as Alvar García de Santamaría (c. 1373–1460).<sup>22</sup>

Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid continues to be considered the author of these chronicles. However, thanks to modern editions of the first three chronicles, it is increasingly clear that Sánchez de Valladolid took advantage of a range of earlier texts and sources which he was commissioned to edit and compile. Consequently,

it can only be affirmed with more or less certainty that he wrote the *Crónica de Alfonso XI*.<sup>23</sup> In this sense, his chronicles of Alfonso X, Sancho IV, and Fernando IV were clearly composed to create a preamble that served to extol the figure of Alfonso XI compared to his ancestors.

While the works of Alfonso X were focused on legitimising the political project he sought to establish, his great-grandson commissioned Sánchez de Valladolid to write his chronicles once he had unequivocally consolidated his power in Castile.<sup>24</sup> The message the monarch wanted to transmit was unmistakable: after decades of political instability, Alfonso XI had managed to restore order and peace. The internal turmoil that had begun in the 1270s had persisted during the reigns of Sancho IV and Fernando IV. Then, it reached a critical point at the time of the minority of Alfonso XI, when royal power plunged to its nadir. Thus, the *Crónica de Alfonso XI* presents the monarch's coming of age as a turning point in Castilian history. Sánchez de Valladolid describes the kingdom's apocalyptic panorama in 1325: a land afflicted by robbery and violence, where chaos reigned and justice was nowhere to be found.

In contrast, the beginning of Alfonso XI's personal rule, despite the king being only 14, is represented as a dramatic change.<sup>25</sup> In a celebrated line, the chronicler magisterially synthesised the two tasks that characterised the monarch's rule (*'Pero el non dexo por esto de poner en obra dos cosas las mas principales que Dios le encomendo en el rreyno, la una la justicia, e la otra la guerra contra los moros'*).<sup>26</sup> These were the king's two inextricably linked and fundamental tasks: Alfonso XI had to re-establish justice in Castile so as to be able to dedicate his energies to the war against the Muslims. Thereby, Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid's chronicles not only served to provide a chronological link between the reigns of Fernando III and Alfonso XI, but also demonstrate their ideological continuity. Alfonso XI was presented as the true heir of his venerated ancestor, Fernando III. He recovered the ethos of the *Reconquista*, which had been paralysed for decades due to the internal conflicts that wracked Castile.

Although all the Castilian monarchs, and in particular Alfonso X, were aware of the value of writing, especially historical writing, as a means to extol their authority, none achieved this with the same success as Alfonso XI. He appropriated the near past to his own advantage in order to glorify his rule. Through the cycle of chronicles created by Sánchez de Valladolid, Alfonso XI projected a triumphalist vision of his reign. A view which proves very difficult to question even today, although modern historians are conscious that it depends to a great extent on these chronicles. However, Alfonso XI's successful kingship seems all the more surprising when considered in the context of the shadows cast over the legitimacy of his lineage.

### The accursed lineage of Alfonso X

Alfonso X was an accursed king. According to legend, the monarch had once stated that if he had been present at the creation of the universe, he would have seen to it that many things that had been made incorrectly would have been

rectified. For such blasphemy, God condemned him to die alone and disinherited in his own lifetime.

The first account of this legend appears in the second draft of the Portuguese *Crónica de 1344*, which was written in the 1380s.<sup>27</sup> Historians have devoted considerable attention to the origin and transmission of this legend along with the various versions of it. It has been proposed that the legend was first circulated by word of mouth during Sancho's rebellion against his father, in 1282, in order to criticise the Wise King's pride, as well as justify efforts to depose him.<sup>28</sup> Perhaps this was the case. Notwithstanding, Alfonso X's response to the uprising against him was far more severe and had far more serious implications for Sancho than any rumour he might have circulated against his father. Following the infante's rebellion, the monarch disinherited and cursed his son both in public and in his will.<sup>29</sup>

With Sancho disinherited and cursed, the problematic issue of whom Alfonso's successor was to be arose once more, just as it had done so in 1275. That year, Fernando de la Cerda, Alfonso X's first-born son and heir, died in Ciudad Real while preparing to lead the Castilian army against the Marinid forces. According to the *Partidas* and the marriage agreement signed with France in 1269, the heirs to the throne were the sons of Fernando de la Cerda and Blanche of France, Alfonso and Fernando (see Appendices 1). However, Sancho had wide support in Castile, which enabled him to be proclaimed heir to the throne at the *Cortes* held in Burgos in 1276. The *Partidas* provide a valuable testimony to this dynastic change: the chapter dedicated to the royal succession was altered around this time in favour of Alfonso's second son. Additionally, the age of majority was reduced from 20 to 16, as Sancho was 17 at that time. However, the situation was by no means resolved. Queen Violante, Alfonso X's wife, fled to Aragón with Blanche of France and her two sons. Furthermore, Philippe III of France (r. 1270–1285) defended the rights of his nephews and sought, at the very least, some form of compensation for them.<sup>30</sup>

Alfonso X's will made clear that Sancho had fallen into disgrace and that it was the monarch's wish that his grandson Alfonso de la Cerda (1270–1333) should succeed him.<sup>31</sup> Nonetheless, Sancho managed to become king and held on to the crown throughout his life without facing any major challenges. However, he never completely dispelled the doubts over his legitimacy: they were a cause of conflict that could flare up at any time. For example, in 1288, Sancho IV had to capture a number of castles that had belonged to Lope Díaz III de Haro, who had recently fallen from grace and been assassinated on royal orders. While Sancho besieged the castle of Labastida (Álava), the defenders proclaimed their loyalty to Alfonso de la Cerda and flew the royal standard, with its castles and lions. According to the chronicle, Sancho's reaction was one of fury (*saña*), and he ordered his troops to redouble their efforts until they captured the fortress.<sup>32</sup>

His son, Fernando IV, found it more difficult to consolidate his hold on the throne. His legitimacy was even more questionable due to his father's marriage to María de Molina, which was not approved by the Church. Sancho had first

married Guillelma of Montcada, the daughter of Gaston VII of Béarn, in 1270, but the marriage was never consummated. Furthermore, he did not request papal dispensation for his consanguineous marriage to María de Molina (she was his first cousin once-removed).<sup>33</sup> Thereby, in 1296, Alfonso de la Cerda, supported by Jaime II of Aragón (r. 1291–1327), claimed the throne of Castile for himself, while the infante Juan (1262–1319), Fernando's uncle, self-proclaimed king of León. Fernando IV obtained a papal bull legitimising his rule in 1301, shortly after having managed to get Juan to renounce his claim on the Leonese throne. Three years later, as part of the Treaty of Torrellas signed with Jaime II, he agreed to pay Alfonso de la Cerda a generous compensation in exchange for his renunciation of any claim to the throne.<sup>34</sup> It would not be long before this part of the treaty was broken. Alfonso XI succeeded his father in 1312 without opposition, although the papacy asked him in 1325 to offer a compensation to the royal pretender along the lines agreed in Torrellas.<sup>35</sup> Finally, Alfonso de la Cerda definitively relinquish his claim in 1331 in exchange for a handsome sum and a series of estates such as the lordship of Gibraleón.<sup>36</sup>

Sancho and his successors, the accursed lineage of Alfonso X, had to make a considerable effort to defend their disputed rights to the throne. As soon as he learnt of his father's death, Sancho IV staged his coronation in Toledo. This type of ceremony was highly exceptional in Castile and León, where a coronation had not been held since 1135. It clearly reveals Sancho's concern that his father's curse should be forgotten, demonstrating his right to inherit the kingdom.<sup>37</sup>

Unsurprisingly, Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid's chronicles provided a fundamental instrument to vindicate the legitimacy of Alfonso X's successors. The *Crónica de Alfonso X* unequivocally took Sancho's side in the troubled succession to the throne. For this purpose, Sánchez de Valladolid invented a conversation between Alfonso X and his son in which Sancho dared to affirm that his elder brother's death had been God's will so that he could inherit the kingdom.

*Sennor. Non me fezistes vos, mas fizome Dios, et fizo mucho por me fazer, ca mató a vn hermano que era mayor que yo e era vuestro heredero destos regnos si él biuiera más que vos. En non lo mató por ál sy non porque lo heredase yo después de vuestros días.*<sup>38</sup>

The idea that the succession was an act of divine will had already been stated by Sancho himself in the *Castigos del rey don Sancho IV*.<sup>39</sup>

The *Crónica de Alfonso X* also addressed more practical matters. Sánchez de Valladolid made no mention of the fact that Sancho had been cursed and disinherited by his father for rebelling against him. Furthermore, the text argued that, on his deathbed, Alfonso X had pardoned Sancho, excusing his rebellion as youthful folly (*mancebía*).<sup>40</sup> Despite the chronicler's efforts to manipulate the past, Juan Manuel ensured that the curse placed on Sancho would not be

forgotten. In his *Libro de las Armas*, written during his conflict with Alfonso XI, the magnate invented a conversation that supposedly took place with Sancho on his deathbed. The monarch apparently acknowledged to a youthful Juan Manuel that he was going to die because of his sins, above all due to the well-deserved curse his parents had placed upon him (*'non es muerte de dolença mas es muerte que me dan mios pecados et señaladamente por la maldición que me dieron mio[s] padre[s] por los muchos merecimientos que les yo mereçi'*).<sup>41</sup>

The other issue that cast doubt on Fernando IV's right to the throne was Sancho IV's controversial marriage to María de Molina. In response to the papacy's opposition to the marriage, the royal chronicle played down the importance of Sancho not being granted papal dispensation, reaffirming the special tie between the spouses. According to the chronicler, it was Philippe IV (r. 1285–1314) who was above all responsible for the pope's refusal to recognise the marriage of Sancho IV and María de Molina. The French monarch defended the rights of Fernando de la Cerda's sons, but he was prepared to abandon this position if Sancho was willing to marry his sister – the royal chronicle does not specify whether it was Blanche or Margaret. Lope Díaz III de Haro and the Abbot of Valladolid, Gómez García, made the proposal to Sancho IV, who adamantly rejected it. The Castilian king said that he was happily married and that he did not care in the slightest if Rome did not recognise his marriage. Sancho IV reminded them that marriages such as his had been enormously beneficial for Castile: grand monarchs had been born to them, kings who had extended their lands by winning territory from the enemies of the faith.<sup>42</sup> Although it is not explicitly stated, it is evident the chronicler had Fernando III in mind; he was the offspring of the marriage between Alfonso IX of León and Berenguela, which was later annulled by the papacy. Once more, Fernando III provided an ideal model that his successors aspired to emulate. In this case, he offered a precedent to justify Sancho IV's marriage to María de Molina.

Lastly, the work of Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid recounted the end of this conflict. In 1331, Alfonso de la Cerda surrendered definitively, and renounced his rights to the Castilian throne. Sánchez de Valladolid's *Crónica de Alfonso XI* lists the generous conditions granted to Alfonso de la Cerda, yet there is no doubt that his surrender was a resounding triumph for Alfonso XI. The chronicler recalled all the ills that Castile had suffered for decades due to this conflict, while omitting any mention of its origin. Additionally, he stressed how Alfonso de la Cerda had been the principal enemy of the king's grandfather and father throughout their lives (*'el mayor contrario que los Reyes su avuelo et su padre ovieron en sus vidas'*).<sup>43</sup>

It was not by chance that Alfonso XI orchestrated his elaborate coronation shortly after the surrender of Alfonso de la Cerda. Amongst other messages, the ceremony was intended to dispel any doubt over his legitimacy to the throne. Alfonso de la Cerda, along with Pedro Fernández de Castro, were charged with fitting the monarch's spurs before Alfonso made his way on horseback to the monastery of Las Huelgas. The ceremonial role granted to

this ex-pretender to the throne highlighted his significant status as a member of the royal family. However, it was also intended to project an unequivocal image of him as a vanquished enemy who accepted his submission to Alfonso XI. The final touch was given inside the monastery, Fernando de la Cerda's burial place, where the tomb of Alfonso X's first-born son had been modified for the occasion. The tomb's heraldic device was changed so that it no longer represented the arms of an heir to the throne, the quadrant of the lions and castles. Instead, it had the bars of Aragón at its centre, around which were depicted an alternating pattern of interlocking octagons, lions, and castles.<sup>44</sup>

Alfonso XI made recourse to writing as well as ritual to efface his lineage's original sin in order to cast any shadow that might still persist about his legitimacy. Nonetheless, he did not manage to blot out the memory of Alfonso X's controversial succession. During the Castilian Civil War (1366–1369), new variants of Alfonso X's curse to Sancho were circulated by the supporters of Enrique II in order to legitimise his cause. According to these later versions, the curse would become effective in the fourth generation, which meant that Pedro I was condemned to lose the throne.<sup>45</sup>

Nor was the memory of the de la Cerda brothers completely erased. In 1350, Pedro I became ill shortly after becoming king. At that time, the court was divided into two factions over who should succeed him in the event that he died. Although the infante Fernando de Aragón, nephew of Alfonso XI, was the heir apparent, there were many who saw Juan Núñez III de Lara, Fernando de la Cerda's grandson (see Appendices 1), as the rightful heir to the throne.<sup>46</sup> The memory of this branch of the royal family was revived once more in 1386 in a still more surprising manner. Following the battle of Aljubarrota (1385), John of Gaunt, who had married Pedro I's daughter, Constanza, disputed the legitimacy of Juan I's (r. 1379–1390) right to the throne. In response, Juan I pointed out that he was a direct heir of the de la Cerda family (her mother, Juana Manuel, was the great-granddaughter of Fernando de la Cerda).<sup>47</sup> The accursed lineage of Alfonso X succeeded in holding onto the throne. A century later, however, the shadow of illegitimacy has not been completely removed despite Alfonso XI's relentless efforts.

### **Knighthood and the ethos of the *Reconquista* in the representation of kingship in Castile**

The two parts of the 1332 ceremony articulated a series of distinctive messages intended for a range of recipients. Peter Linehan has highlighted how Alfonso XI's knighting was given an undeniable primacy over the coronation held shortly afterwards at Las Huelgas. According to Linehan, in staging the ceremony in this way Alfonso XI sought to address an international audience. The king wanted to demonstrate to all Christendom how he, as King of Castile, led the fight against the Muslims. Alfonso XI wanted to attract knights for future campaigns and avoid Philippe VI of France (r. 1328–1350) assuming the exclusive role as the crusader king of medieval western Europe.<sup>48</sup>

From this perspective, the 1332 ceremony was a resounding success. The French monarch's crusading projects came to nothing, while Alfonso XI attained notable prestige across western Europe for his campaigns against the Muslims. French, Italian, Flemish, and Scottish chronicles would later recount his key achievements, the victory at the battle of Río Salado (1340) and the conquest of Algeciras (1344), and numerous European crusaders took part in these victories.<sup>49</sup> Such was the prestige that Alfonso's campaigns achieved beyond Castile that even fictional figures, such as Ruggieri de Figiovanni, one of the protagonists of the *Decameron*, and the knight of the *Canterbury Tales* boasted of having taken part in the siege of Algeciras.<sup>50</sup>

Chivalry and the waging of war against the Muslims were identified as two of the essential attributes of kingship in Castile, showed by the central role they played in the construction and transmission of royal memory. The ceremony of knighthood and the military triumphs won against Islam were memorable deeds the Castilian monarchy ensured should not be forgotten, as they conferred an immense prestige on the kings who took part in them.<sup>51</sup>

Although the chivalric ideal was developed in Castile during the reign of Alfonso VIII (r. 1158–1214), the first written source that described the ritual investiture of knights was the *Partidas*. In this sense, it may be said that Alfonso X reinvented knighthood and converted it into an instrument the monarchy could use to mould the kingdom's nobility. At his coronation ceremony, Alfonso XI put this notion of chivalry into practice. Having been made a knight by the Apostle, Alfonso then knighted various *ricos hombres*. He also created the *Orden de la Banda* (Order of the Band), which formally became a lay military order in around 1348, when its rules, the *Libro de la Banda*, were written. The king was evidently intent on using chivalry to forge a closer bond between him and the kingdom's nobles; for this reason, Juan Manuel and Juan Núñez III de Lara, the principal magnates who opposed Alfonso XI at that time, refused to take part in the 1332 ceremony.<sup>52</sup>

The knighting of Alfonso XI was undoubtedly an exceptional event, yet it combined two concerns that had become deeply engrained within the identity of the Castilian monarchy. First, the king's independence should be demonstrated through his ritual investiture as a knight. Second, the king gained prestige from knighting important individuals. For the person who underwent the investiture, it established a bond of undeniable dependence between him and the person who knighted him. In 1269, Fernando de la Cerda knighted two of his younger brothers, Juan and Pedro, prior to his wedding to Blanche of France. However, Sancho refused to be knighted by his brother.<sup>53</sup> It is most likely that the chronicler, looking ahead to Sancho's succession, underscored his refusal so as not to suggest he occupied an inferior position to his brother. In any case, it seems that this rebuttal really took place, as it is also mentioned in the *Llibre dels feyts*. The chronicle of Jaume I (r. 1213–1276) betrays a similar concern to the Castilian text. In this chronicle, however, it was the Aragonese king who advised Sancho that he should only be made a knight by his father and by nobody else.<sup>54</sup>

Due to the frequent absence of a paternal figure, it was commonplace that the Castilian monarchs had to knight themselves in order to highlight their autonomy. In 1169 a ceremony was held in the monastery of St Zoilo of Carrión at which the majority of Alfonso VIII was proclaimed. The royal diplomas stress how the monarch took the sword from the altar himself.<sup>55</sup> The same gesture was repeated at the marriage and investiture of Fernando III in 1219 in Burgos. Both the *De rebus Hispaniae*, by Jiménez de Rada, and the diplomas produced by the royal chancery stated that the king took the sword in person and buckled it on his arms' belt (*'manu propria me accinxi cingulo militari'*).<sup>56</sup>

Nonetheless, the examples of Alfonso VIII and Fernando III pale into comparison with the elaborate ceremony organised by Alfonso XI in 1332. Just like his ancestors, the monarch himself took the sword from the Santiago Cathedral's altar and then received the ritual *pescozada* (blow) from a statue of the Apostle St James.<sup>57</sup> In this way, the ceremony provided a highly ingenious solution to the core problem of the monarch's investiture: the fact that he could not receive knighthood from any human being without undermining his image. The knighting of Alfonso XI constitutes a controversial topic. Patrimonio Nacional and several historians, such as Peter Linehan and Rosa Rodríguez Porto, consider that the sculpture of Santiago which is conserved in the monastery of Las Huelgas (see Image 1.1) is the one used in the coronation – it has articulated arms, although it is not an automaton. The problems the ceremony entailed made that no subsequent Castilian king dared to imitate such an original and audacious rite.<sup>58</sup> By contrast, Eduardo Carrero argues that the extant sculpture of the Apostle in Las Huelgas could not be the one used in the ceremony of 1332, as it was likely a former statue of the Virgin transformed into St James in the seventeenth century. Consequently, he considers that the *pescozada* was symbolic, not literal,<sup>59</sup> an enticing idea which is, however, hard to prove – a different statue now lost could have been used at the ceremony. In any case, the complex ritual Alfonso XI staged in Santiago de Compostela illustrates the extent of his ambition.

Following Alfonso XI's investiture, a number of *ricos hombres* were knighted by the king himself, and they in turn knighted other nobles. Thereby the monarch was at the apex of an extensive network that linked the majority of the kingdom's elite to the Castilian monarchy with a personal bond. The *Crónica de Alfonso XI* gave such importance to this act that it even individually listed the more than 100 nobles who took part.<sup>60</sup> In 1337, after many years of rebellion, Juan Núñez III de Lara was also personally knighted by the king. The emphasis given to this particular ceremony in the chronicle indicates the importance the monarchy conferred on this ritual; it was a way of demonstrating to the whole kingdom that this magnate now loyally served Alfonso XI.<sup>61</sup> Juan Manuel, the other major figure who was absent from the 1332 ceremony, was later reconciled with Alfonso XI, but his high self-regard did not permit him to accept knighthood from the monarch's hands. Indeed, the magnate dared to compete with the king on this matter in the realm of literature. In his *Libro del cavallero et del escudero* he refers to chivalry as a sacrament that linked two people; however, in his *Libro de las armas*, Juan Manuel modified his thinking



*Image 1.1* Sculpture of *Santiago del Espaldarazo*. Monastery of Las Huelgas (Burgos, Spain)

Source: © Patrimonio Nacional (Spain)

about this institution. The magnate invented a complex genealogical justification in order to argue why he and his son could invest knights despite having never been knighted themselves. Furthermore, the magnate affirmed that he alone could be knighted in the same way as the kings, or, in other words, by a self-investiture.<sup>62</sup> Undoubtedly the 1332 ceremony had an enormous impact on Juan Manuel, who did not think twice about assuming the same privileges as Alfonso XI in order to defend his quasi-royal status.

Alfonso XI's wish to personally bind the kingdom's nobility to the monarch, going as far as to create a lay military order to do so, was unprecedented in the history of Castile. However, some of his ancestors had already used knighthood ceremonies to extol their power. One of the clauses of the Treaty of Selingenstadt

(1188), in which Alfonso VIII and Emperor Frederick I of Hohenstaufen agreed the marriage between their children Berenguela and Conrad, stipulated that the Castilian king should knight the young German prince. Thereby, at the *Cortes* held at Carrión that same year, Conrad Hohenstaufen and Alfonso IX of León were knighted by Alfonso VIII. This event was extensively recorded in the royal diplomas.<sup>63</sup> In a similar manner, the Treaty of Toledo (1254) signed by Alfonso X and Henry III of England stated that Prince Edward would marry Eleanor, the Castilian king's sister, and he would be knighted by the Wise King. Alfonso X commemorated this ceremony in a systematic manner. All the *privilegios rodados* issued by the royal chancery during the following year were dated as the year in which Edward, the king of England's first-born son and heir, was knighted in Burgos by King Alfonso ('*En el anno que don Odoart, fijo primero e heredero del rey Henrric de Anglaterra, recibio caualleria en Burgos del rey don Alfonso*').<sup>64</sup> Both events were above all staged for and disseminated to a Castilian audience. In this sense, they reveal how the kings considered that they gained immense prestige amongst their own elite by knightng members of European royal families.

If knighthood constituted an important element in the representation of kingship, the war against the Muslims may be understood as the *raison d'être* of the Castilian monarchy as an institution. The concept of *Reconquista* is highly controversial, as it tends to an oversimplification of complex events, and evokes very negative connotations associated with a nationalist, conservative, and essentialist view of Spanish history. Nonetheless, and despite the term being a historiographical invention, in my view it continues to be useful to discuss an ideological discourse which existed in the Middle Ages, not as a short-hand for the Iberian Christian kingdoms' military expansion. The Asturian monarchy and, later, the Leonese and Castilian monarchies developed an ethos centred around their fight against Islam, and this was used to justify the campaigns fought against the Muslim polities of the Iberian Peninsula to extend their territory, as well as to extol the kings' military prowess.<sup>65</sup> In addition, the ethos of the *Reconquista* coexisted with the crusading ideal that arose at the end of the eleventh century.<sup>66</sup>

The glorification of the martial attributes of the Castilian monarchs was an omnipresent feature. The seals of royal documents frequently represented an equestrian figure of the monarch (see Image 2.2),<sup>67</sup> while the accounts of the kings' reigns in the chronicles were inextricably bound up with their military feats. To give just one example, the work of Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid identified Fernando III as King Fernando who conquered Cordova and Seville ('*el rrey don Fernando que gano a Cordova y Sevilla*').<sup>68</sup>

However, to merely consider the representation of royal power in Castile in terms of the kings' leadership in the war against the Muslims would be overly reductionist. Indeed, the ethos of the *Reconquista* did not remain unchanged for centuries, and nor did all the monarchs solely make recourse to this idea to extol their authority. Nonetheless, even kings such as Alfonso X and Sancho IV, who invoked a variety of ideals to project their authority, did not pass up on the

opportunity to highlight their military merits when the occasion arose. For example, in the preambles to the privileges Alfonso X conceded to Seville, the Wise King recalled his personal bond with the city, as amongst other things he had taken part in its conquest alongside his father.<sup>69</sup> Likewise, Sancho IV, whose reign was characterised by the cultivation of a sacral idea of the monarchy, made sure that documents issued by his chancery in 1293 contributed to commemorate the recent conquest of Tarifa.<sup>70</sup> Yet, with regard to Alfonso XI, it is evident that the ethos of the *Reconquista* was converted into the foundational element of his rule. The monarch endeavoured to present himself as the worthy successor to his ancestors who had become most renowned for their military prowess: Alfonso VIII and Fernando III.

Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid's chronicles reveal this concern from the very beginning. In the introduction to his cycle of chronicles, the author states that the aim of his work was to recall past deeds, especially the history of the kings of Castile and León and the immense efforts they made and dangers they faced, in order to defend the Catholic faith and expel the Muslims from Spain (*'de los reyes de Castilla e de Leon, que por la ley de Dios é por acrescentamiento de la fe católica tomaron muchos trabajos é pusieron á grandes peligros en las lides que ovieron con los moros echándoles de España'*). Thereby, it comes as no surprise that Sánchez de Valladolid's chronicles highlight the role of Alfonso XI, who according to the author was known as the conqueror and defender of the faith (*'conqueridor e defensor de la fe'*) for his military feats against the Muslims.<sup>71</sup>

The royal chronicles lauded the martial virtues of Alfonso XI's predecessors, in particular those of Sancho IV; however, it was Alfonso who was singled out for the greatest eulogies. Throughout the *Crónica de Alfonso XI* there are frequent mentions of how from an early age the king sought to serve God by fighting against the Muslims (*'desde la su moçedad començo el perseguimiento de la guerra de los moros [...] por serviço de Dios e por acreçentamiento de la sancta fe catholica'*).<sup>72</sup> The king's great gifts as a ruler are extolled recurrently, and his military knowledge is singled out for special praise (*'el rey don Alfonso avia en si grand aperçibimiento de todos los fechos que avia de hazer, y espeçialmente quando era en las huestes'*).<sup>73</sup>

It was this prowess which enabled him to achieve military successes that surpassed the victories of his ancestors. For example, the chronicler recorded that neither his father, Fernando IV, nor his grandfather, Sancho IV, had had to confront such a serious threat, as the Marinids and Nasrids had set aside their differences to unite against him (*'que el rrey don Fernando su padre deste rey ni el rrey don Sancho su avuelo nunca lo ovieron con los moros desta guisa que lo el agora tenie'*).<sup>74</sup> The desire to compare Alfonso XI's deeds with those of earlier Castilian kings reached its climax in the account of the battle of Río Salado (1340), Alfonso XI's major triumph. Sánchez de Valladolid devoted a whole chapter of his chronicle to argue why the victory at Río Salado was of greater merit than that of Las Navas de Tolosa (1212). Without intending to belittle Alfonso VIII's victory, the chronicler stated that,

amongst other reasons, Alfonso XI's victory was superior as he fought without the assistance of troops from other kingdoms.<sup>75</sup> First, this claim was not true, as Afonso IV of Portugal (r. 1325–1357) came to his son-in-law's aide. Second, playing down the extent of 'foreign' troops' involvement in the campaigns led by the Castilian kings against the Muslims was a recurring leit-motif of their chroniclers' writing. Ironically, both the *De rebus Hispaniae* and the *Crónica latina de los reyes de Castilla* endeavoured to deny the importance of the role played by the crusader forces and the papal curia in the campaign fought at Las Navas.<sup>76</sup>

Sánchez de Valladolid's cycle of chronicles ends with the conquest of Algeciras in 1344,<sup>77</sup> a success heightened by the fact that all Alfonso X, Sancho IV, and Fernando IV had previously failed to take this town.<sup>78</sup> Following decades of internal instability, Alfonso XI had re-established order and peace to the kingdom in order to then take up the Castilian kings' fundamental duty: fight against the Muslims. A century after Fernando III's impressive conquests, Alfonso XI's military triumphs demonstrated that Castile was ruled by a true heir to the Saint King. The only one who was able to continue this endeavour. It was for this reason that the *Crónica de Alfonso XI* could be completed during the monarch's lifetime; there was no need for Sánchez de Valladolid to wait for the end of Alfonso XI's reign in order to finish his narration, he had already recounted the story he wanted to tell.

Alfonso XI also relied on royal privileges to glorify his military feats. The victory of Rio Salado and the conquest of Algeciras were used to date the privileges issued by the royal chancery up until the end of his reign. For example, a *privilegio rodado* from 1345 states that it was issued in the fifth year after King Alfonso defeated the powerful Abu l-Hasan, king of Morocco, Fez, Sijilmasa, and Tlemcen, and the king of Granada at the battle of Tarifa (Rio Salado), which took place on 30 October 1378 (1340); and in the second year since the aforementioned king captured Algeciras from the Muslims:

*en el año quinto que el rey don Alfonso vençio al poderoso Alobasen, rey de Marruecos e de Fes e de Surulmeça e de Tremeçen e al rey de Granada en la batalla de Tarifa que fue lunes treinta días de octubre de mil tresientos setenta e ocho años, en el año segundo que el sobredicho rey gano a Algesira de los moros.*<sup>79</sup>

Such privileges were widely disseminated and they contributed to glorifying the figure of Alfonso XI throughout the kingdom, ensuring that his military successes were remembered, as these diplomas served as constant reminders of Alfonso's deeds to those who received them.

Alfonso XI sought renown for his military prowess and he achieved it. Later royal chronicles emphasised his campaigns against the Muslims and for posterity King Alfonso became known for his victory at the battle of Tarifa (Rio Salado) (*'rey don Alfonso el que vençio la batalla de Tarifa'*).<sup>80</sup> However,

these chronicles were not the only testimonies to the feats of Alfonso XI: the monastery of Santa María de Guadalupe (Cáceres), which would become one of the principal ceremonial spaces of the Castilian monarchy in the Trastámara period, was always associated with the victory of Río Salado.<sup>81</sup>

### **Coronations and law codes: Sacred kingship in Castile (1252–1350)**

The second part of the double ceremony staged by Alfonso XI in 1332 was likewise an exceptional event. Held in the monastery of Las Huelgas in Burgos, Alfonso XI was anointed on his right shoulder by the archbishop of Santiago and a group of bishops from the kingdom – the chronicle does not specify how many, nor who they were. Then, the ecclesiastics blessed the royal crowns and withdrew from the altar. At that moment, the monarch placed the bejewelled golden crown on his own head, and then turned to crown his wife, María of Portugal.<sup>82</sup>

Coronations were by no means a frequent event in Castile. As mentioned above, Sancho IV was crowned in Toledo in 1284 to reinforce his disputed legitimacy to the throne, yet the royal chronicle does not state whether the monarch was anointed as part of the ritual.<sup>83</sup> The only other similar precedent was the imperial coronation of Alfonso VII in León, almost 200 years earlier. Indeed, this ceremony was so rare that it was not even described in a text as exhaustive as the *Partidas*. The only work devoted to royal coronations in Castile is the *Libro de la Coronación de los Reyes de Castilla*, written possibly by Bishop Ramón of Coimbra circa 1332 and today conserved in El Escorial. Eduardo Carrero, who suggests that the book could have been written a few years earlier, stresses the similarities between the codex' description of the ceremony and the royal chronicle's account of the 1332 coronation, with the exception of the change in its location (Burgos instead of Santiago de Compostela).<sup>84</sup> On the other hand, Peter Linehan considers that the orientations of the codex were not followed, underscoring that the actual ceremony included elements that the papacy had been trying to suppress for the last two centuries: Alfonso's act of crowning himself unequivocally transmitted the monarch's wish to display his independence of the Church.<sup>85</sup>

The importance of rituals such as the coronation of 1332 in the representation of kingship in Castile has been a contentious issue for decades. Essentially, it may be argued that there are two contrasting views of the nature of royal power in Castile. On one hand, Teófilo F. Ruiz proposed that the principal source of legitimacy for royal authority in Castile was the ethos of the *Reconquista*, which underscores the military dimension of the monarchy.<sup>86</sup> This view is shared by many authors, who highlight how the Castilian monarchs showed scant interest in using the anointment and coronation rituals to construct a sacred image of kingship. As Peter Linehan neatly summarised, 'All kings did God's work of course, but how many of them were able to demonstrate it as the strenuous king of Castile could by pointing to the map on the wall?'<sup>87</sup> The opposing view has been established by José Manuel

Nieto Soria, who has argued that, from the second half of the thirteenth century onwards, a fundamental element of the ideological discourse articulated by the Castilian monarchs was the divine origin of their authority. According to Nieto Soria, the idea of sacred kingship has to be analysed from a broader perspective than that of the anointment ritual. Thereby, in his view, the Castilian monarchy was essentially no different from its French or English counterparts.<sup>88</sup>

These views have been nuanced over the years. On one hand, as Joseph O'Callaghan has pointed out, to claim that the Castilian monarchy was primarily secular in nature does not imply it completely lacked a religious component.<sup>89</sup> While, on the other hand, more recent studies have identified the sacred dimension royal authority had in Castile while also noting its distinctive features.<sup>90</sup> Over time this debate has become less divisive. In short, researchers in Spain tend to accept the sacred nature of the Castilian monarchy, while the position defended by Teófilo Ruiz continues to hold sway in the anglophone academic world. This polarity likewise reflects the trend amongst Spanish medievalists who want to emphasise similarities between the Iberian Peninsula and other places in Europe, while many *hispanistas* had a traditional tendency to stress medieval Spain's exceptionality.<sup>91</sup>

In my view, the ethos of the *Reconquista* constituted a fundamental element of kingship in Castile. However, that does not exclude the fact that there was a sacred dimension of kingship, one that was not exclusively linked to the kings' military deeds. This sacred dimension was by no means omnipresent, nor was it constant: It varied from reign to reign and depended on the medium and the context in which it was used. In relation to this, legal texts became one of the principal instruments employed to represent the sacred nature of Castilian kingship. The idea that the monarch was the representative of God on Earth and, consequently, enjoyed the monopoly on legislation over his kingdom became the principal manifestation of this view. This notion was used by the Castilian monarchy to reassert the superiority of royal authority over any other power in the kingdom.

Unsurprisingly, the life of Fernando III was used by his successors to prove the intimate connection between the Castilian monarchy and God. Although the conqueror of Seville was not officially canonised until the seventeenth century,<sup>92</sup> in the *Crónica de los reyes de Castilla*, Jofré de Loaysa refers to him as *Sanctissimus rex Fernandus*.<sup>93</sup> Likewise, Sánchez de Valladolid describes him as '*el santo e mucho bien aventurado rey don Ferrando*' (the saint and most blessed King Don Fernando).<sup>94</sup> Alfonso X underscored his father's importance with the construction of the Royal Chapel in Seville Cathedral. Besides praising Fernando III as a model of good kingship, this architectural monument served to extol the prestige of the Castilian monarchy. However, the visual representations of the conqueror of Seville do not coincide with the literary ones, which reveals how Fernando III's sanctity was not fully acknowledged.<sup>95</sup> In this regard, Rocío Sánchez Ameijeiras has discussed how the Cantiga 292, in which Fernando III appeared in dreams to the goldsmith Pedro de Toledo, reveals Alfonso X's failed attempt to establish a devotional cult to the monarch.<sup>96</sup>

During the thirteenth century, the Castilian monarchs sought to identify their power through the promotion of the Marian cult. Accordingly, their displays of devotion to the Virgin and accounts of her acts of intercession on the kings' behalf became increasingly prevalent. For example, the cathedrals of Cordova, Jaén, Murcia, and Seville, the principal Muslim cities that had been captured during this period, were consecrated to different Marian devotions.<sup>97</sup> Devotion to the Virgin was not limited to a military context, as demonstrated in the *Cantigas de Santa María*, which were composed on Alfonso X's orders. In this work there are a wealth of examples that show how the Virgin interceded on behalf of Alfonso X and the royal family, which were meant to underscore the monarch's special relationship with the divine.<sup>98</sup> However, the *Cantigas de Santa María* provides a clear example of how the sacred nature of the Castilian monarchy was not represented in the same way as in France and England.

Cantiga 321 recounts the story of a woman who took her daughter to see the king, with the hope that he would cure her of an illness that afflicted her throat, which was perhaps scrofula, also known in English as the king's evil. Alfonso X told her that it was foolish to think that kings had healing powers. Instead, he advised the mother to take her sick daughter to pray before the Virgin. The woman followed the Wise King's instructions and her daughter was cured.<sup>99</sup> Efforts have been made to highlight how this story demonstrates the monarch's role as intercessor for the divine,<sup>100</sup> yet it is evident that it sought to project an image of the king that was wholly distinct from the thaumaturgical powers ascribed to monarchs in other realms.<sup>101</sup>

In Castile, the only example of similar thaumaturgical powers was attributed to Sancho IV by the bishop Álvaro Pelayo in his *Speculum Regum* (c. 1340). The bishop stated that Sancho had managed to expel a demon from the body of a woman by reading from the Bible while he placed his foot on her neck.<sup>102</sup> Besides being exceptional, this story is markedly different from the healing powers—the royal touch—that was traditionally attributed to the English and French monarchs. Peter Linehan has pointed out that this anecdote is a further demonstration of how Sancho IV's reign was afflicted by disputes over the legitimacy of his rule.<sup>103</sup> On the other hand, Frank Tang remarks how Álvaro Pelayo's *Speculum Regum* is devoted to praising the figure of Alfonso XI in contrast to the Valois kings. Therefore, this anecdote was fabricated in order to parallel the status of the Castilian kings with their French counterparts. It must also be stressed that the example given was a thaumaturgical practice approved by the Church, which accepted that kings could undertake exorcisms. In contrast, the papacy was opposed to kings practising other forms of healing.<sup>104</sup> The Castilian kings' lack of thaumaturgical powers best represents their complex relationship with the notion of sacred kingship.

As discussed above, Alfonso X's controversial succession encouraged Sancho IV to strengthen the religious dimension of royal authority. The *Castigos del rey don Sancho* adamantly reaffirmed the idea of the divine origin of royal power, which had previously been set out in the *Partidas* of Alfonso X.<sup>105</sup>

Indeed, it is the Alfonsine legal code which most unequivocally formulated the idea of sacred kingship in Castile.

*Las Siete Partidas* is a fascinating text, although its complex process of creation poses numerous problems. The dating of this work has prompted a lengthy debate, although at present the interpretation of Jerry Craddock is widely accepted. In 1255, Alfonso X wrote the *Espéculo*. Then, the following year, his ambition to become emperor of the Holy Roman Empire stimulated him to create a much more ambitious legal code: *Las Siete Partidas*, which he completed in 1265.<sup>106</sup> The precise date in which this text became law has also been the object of controversy. This code was not officially promulgated until 1348 as a complementary text to the *Ordenamiento de Alcalá*. However, numerous researchers have argued that it was already valid during the reign of Alfonso X as an extension of the *Espéculo*.<sup>107</sup>

Nonetheless, further difficulties arise. Between 1265 and 1348, the *Partidas* were constantly being rewritten: significant variations in the text are found in different manuscripts, as analysed above.<sup>108</sup> In 1348, Alfonso XI, aside from 'promulgating' the *Partidas*, edited the text on the basis of earlier versions. The majority of modern editions are based on manuscripts made in the mid-fourteenth century, and only a few older incomplete texts survive. As a result, it is very difficult to separate the parts originally composed by Alfonso X from those modified by his great-grandson.<sup>109</sup>

Therefore, the text must be used with caution. For example, Peter Linehan has pointed out how the law concerning baptism<sup>110</sup> states that question of royal anointment would be discussed later in the text, but no further mention is made of this, which raises a series of questions. Was it intended that this issue would be included in the 1265 text? Was it suppressed in the later fourteenth-century versions? Or perhaps Alfonso X never even elaborated this point?<sup>111</sup>

On the other hand, in my view whether the *Partidas* was promulgated as a law before 1348 or not is a secondary issue. Its main value comes from the insights it offers on kingship as well as many other issues. Whether it was rigorously applied is another matter which is almost impossible to solve. From this point of view, its resurgence in 1348 is highly significant, as it clearly indicates Alfonso XI's desire to reassert royal authority. Despite its complex creation, the *Partidas* constitutes the foundations for the theoretical representation of kingship in Castile during the Late Middle Ages.

The *Partidas* made it abundantly clear how the monarchs played a central role in the natural order. Kings were God's representatives on Earth, charged by Him to govern and exercise justice in their respective territories. The Alfonsine code illustrated this view by comparing the king to the soul, heart, and head of the people, stressing how all the members of the community had to serve and obey him.<sup>112</sup> The sacred vision of the monarchy transmitted in the text is omnipresent, although perhaps the most striking article is that which compares actions taken against the king to sacrilege.<sup>113</sup> Examples such as this reflect how the monarch was viewed as a sacred figure, whose existence came before that of the kingdom and whose status was clearly superior to that of any other individual.<sup>114</sup>

This vision of the superiority of royal power had further implications; it meant that the monarch monopolised control over the law and royal law could override any other legal text. These ideas were developed in greater detail in the 1348 *Ordenamiento de Alcalá*. In this text, Alfonso XI reaffirmed the pre-eminence of royal law and detailed the kingdom's legal hierarchy. While seigneurial jurisdiction and local *fueros* (charters) were acknowledged, royal law was established as being above both of them.<sup>115</sup> For example, the *Ordenamiento* listed which royal rights were inalienable, such as mining and minting coins. The oversight of royal justice over the nobles' jurisdictional rights was likewise emphasised.<sup>116</sup> The *Ordenamiento* revived the *Partidas* not only in spirit, but also in a more effective manner. Any form of litigation that was not covered by the ordinance, or any other charter, had to be judged in accordance with the Alfonsine code.<sup>117</sup>

Finally, the prominent position that the *Partidas* conferred on the king posed the question as to whether the monarch was also above the law. The legal code defined the concept of tyranny as opposed to the legitimate exercise of the king's power, but it did not indicate whether the kingdom (community) could do anything about it.<sup>118</sup> This absence has been interpreted as a form of proscribing any type of resistance to royal authority, in order to avoid the legitimisation of any kind of rebellion.<sup>119</sup> Although the argument of tyranny was used frequently over the following years, such as when Enrique II rose up against Pedro I ('*aquel malo tirano que se llamava Rey*' [that evil tyrant who called himself king]),<sup>120</sup> the Castilian monarchy nurtured the idea that kings were above the law. This view climaxed at the *Cortes* held in Olmedo in 1445. On the basis of a maximalist interpretation of the *Segunda Partida*, Juan II and his royal favourite, Álvaro de Luna, developed the idea of absolute royal power ('*poderio real absoluto*'), which implied that royal authority could not be bound by any legal restriction.<sup>121</sup> Subsequent editions of the *Partidas*, in 1491 and, above all, in 1555, reflect how this legal code provided the theoretical foundations to justify the monarch's authoritarian rule at the start of the Early Modern period.<sup>122</sup>

The concept of royal authority set out in these legal texts was essentially an ideal, and at the time of its formulation by Alfonso X it was far from being implemented and put into practice. Nonetheless, it enabled Alfonso XI to definitively consolidate the idea that royal law was above any other legal code or charter. Although Castilian legislation continued to be heterogeneous in nature, for a king who formed part of an accursed dynasty this was no small feat.

## Notes

- 1 *CAXI*, 234–235. Francisco Hernández has recently called into question the idea that Alfonso travelled to Santiago, and he has argued that both ceremonies took place at Las Huelgas de Burgos. However, his proposal, while undeniably thought-provoking, is hard to confirm. Hernández, 'Historiografía y propaganda', 409. Peter Linehan recently reaffirmed his idea that both ceremonies were held at different locations: Linehan, *At the Edge of Reformation*, 70–71.
- 2 For instance, the coronation of Alfonso XI holds a prominent place in Jaume Aurell's recent monograph on medieval self-coronations: Aurell, *Medieval Self-Coronations*, ch. 9.

- 3 Linehan, *History and the historians*, 619.
- 4 Doubleday, *The Wise King*.
- 5 Spiegel, *Romancing the Past*, 219–221.
- 6 Gransden, 'Propaganda in English Medieval Historiography', 363.
- 7 Given-Wilson, *Chronicles*, 154.
- 8 Vincent, 'The Strange Case of the Missing Biographies', 237 and 254–255.
- 9 Monsalvo Antón, *La construcción del poder real*, 259–261.
- 10 See: Arizaleta, *Les clercs au palais*.
- 11 Rodríguez, 'History and Topography'.
- 12 Linehan, *History and the historians*, 422 and Gómez Redondo, *Historia de la prosa medieval castellana. I*, 643–645. A detailed analysis of Alfonsine historiography and its later influence in Martin, *La historia alfonsí*. More recently, Aengus Ward has coordinated a digital edition of the *Estoria de Espanna*, which is accompanied by numerous studies on the text and its variants <https://blog.bham.ac.uk/estoriadigital/> (Accessed 8 May 2020).
- 13 Hijano Villegas, 'Crónica particular de San Fernando', 275–276 and Funes, 'Historiografía nobiliaria castellana', 10–12.
- 14 *Crónica de Castilla*, introd., pars. 26–29.
- 15 Bautista, 'Narrativas nobiliarias', 87–88.
- 16 Vones, 'L'Historiographie et politique', 187.
- 17 Gómez Redondo, *Historia de la prosa medieval castellana. I*, 920–925. A recent review on the concept in: Gómez Redondo, 'El molinismo'. On the archbishop see: Hernández and Linehan, *The Mozarabic Cardinal*.
- 18 Gómez Redondo, *Historia de la prosa medieval castellana. I*, 913–915.
- 19 Linehan, *At the Edge of Reformation*, 12.
- 20 Catalán, *La Estoria de España*, 13.
- 21 The classic study on Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid continues to be: Moxó, *El patrimonio dominical de un consejero*.
- 22 Gómez Redondo, *Historia de la prosa medieval castellana. I*, 963–965 and Ruiz García, 'Rex scribens', 419.
- 23 A detailed review of the authorship of these texts in: Benítez Guerrero, 'Un cronista en la corte de Alfonso XI'.
- 24 Martínez, 'La historia como vehículo político', 217–218.
- 25 *CAXI*, 197.
- 26 *CAXI*, 203.
- 27 Barros Dias, 'La blasfemia del rey Sabio', 749.
- 28 Funes, 'La leyenda de la blasfemia del Rey Sabio', pars. 24–25.
- 29 Martin, 'Alphonse maudit son fils', 155.
- 30 Craddock, 'Dynasty in dispute', 198–200.
- 31 *Diplomatario andaluz de Alfonso X*, doc. 521.
- 32 *CSIV*, 96–97.
- 33 Nieto Soria, *Sancho IV*, 21–24 and 47–48.
- 34 González Jiménez, 'La sucesión al trono de Castilla', 211–212.
- 35 Linehan, *At the Edge of Reformation*, 21.
- 36 *CAXI*, 228.
- 37 Linehan, *History and the Historians*, 446–447.
- 38 *CAX*, 219.
- 39 *Castigos del rey don Sancho*, 165–166.
- 40 *CAX*, 221–229 and 241. The veracity of Alfonso having pardoned Sancho has been extensively debated amongst historians. Manuel González Jiménez gives a summary of this issue in footnote 389 of his edition of the chronicle.
- 41 *Obras completas*, 994–995.
- 42 *CSIV*, 29–37.

- 43 *CAXI*, 228.
- 44 Hernández, 'Two Weddings and a Funeral', 424–426.
- 45 Martin, 'Alphonse maudit son fils', 169–176.
- 46 *Crónica del rey Don Pedro*, I, 25.
- 47 Arias Guillén, 'El linaje maldito de Alfonso X', 155–156.
- 48 Linehan, *History and the historians*, 597–598.
- 49 Arias Guillén, 'En servicio de Dios e nuestro'. 81–86.
- 50 Giovanni Boccaccio. *Il Decamerone*, 598 and *The Riverside Chaucer*, 24.
- 51 See: Arias Guillén, 'Algun fecho señalado'.
- 52 Rodríguez Velasco, *Ciudadanía, soberanía monárquica y caballería*, 30–43 and 163–189.
- 53 *CAX*, 50.
- 54 *Les quatre grans Cròniques*, I, ch. 495.
- 55 González, *El reino de Castilla*, II, doc. 124.
- 56 Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada. *Historia de los hechos de España*, 342 and *Reinado y diplomas de Fernando III*, II, doc. 106.
- 57 *CAXI*, 234.
- 58 Rodríguez Porto, 'Knighted by the Apostle Himself', 55–59 and Linehan, *At the Edge of Reformation*, 70–71.
- 59 Carrero Santamaría, 'La imagen de Santiago', 21 and 26–28.
- 60 *CAXI*, 235–236
- 61 Estepa Díez, 'The Strengthening of Royal Power', 212.
- 62 *Obras completas*, 380–381 and 985–992.
- 63 Estepa Díez, 'Memoria y poder real', 195.
- 64 *Sevilla, ciudad de privilegios*, doc. 13 (28 December 1254).
- 65 The most recent work to address this issue is: Ayala Martínez, Ferreira Fernandes and Palacios Ontalva, *La Reconquista*.
- 66 García Fitz, *La Reconquista*, 120–121.
- 67 Ruiz, 'L'image du pouvoir', 224.
- 68 *CAXI*, 181.
- 69 *Sevilla, ciudad de privilegios*, doc. 13 (28 December 1254).
- 70 *Colección diplomática del Concejo de Cuenca*, doc. 34 (20 May 1293).
- 71 *CAX*, 3.
- 72 *CAXI*, 331.
- 73 *CAXI*, 226.
- 74 *CAXI*, 247.
- 75 *CAXI*, ch. CCLII.
- 76 Rodríguez, 'Légitimé royale', 153–155.
- 77 *CAXI*, 390.
- 78 Arias Guillén, *Guerra y fortalecimiento del poder regio*, 100.
- 79 *Colección documental de Alfonso XI*, doc. 303.
- 80 *Crónica del rey don Pedro*, I.
- 81 Cañas Gálvez, 'Devoción mariana y poder regio', 431–432.
- 82 *CAXI*, 235.
- 83 *CSIV*, 5.
- 84 Carrero Santamaría, 'Architecture and Liturgical Space', 485.
- 85 Linehan, *History and the Historians*, 584–586 and 601–604.
- 86 Ruiz, 'Une royauté sans sacré', 429–431.
- 87 Linehan, *History and the historians*, 432.
- 88 Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*.
- 89 O'Callaghan, *Alfonso X and the Cantigas*, 72.
- 90 See: Kleine, 'Imágenes del poder real' and Fernández-Viagas Escudero, 'El Rey en las Partidas'. Nieto Soria has himself revised some of his claims, although he maintains his fundamental argument, in Nieto Soria, 'Origen divino'.

- 91 In order to challenge medieval Spain's 'exceptionalism', Jaume Aurell argues that there was a rich tradition of self-coronations in Europe, which placed the Iberian kingdoms at the centre rather than at the periphery of the continent. Aurell, *Medieval Self-Coronations*, 239.
- 92 See: Rodríguez, 'Fernando III el Santo'.
- 93 *Crónica de los reyes de Castilla*, 73.
- 94 *CAX*, 3.
- 95 Fernández Fernández, 'Muy noble, et mucho alto', 168.
- 96 Sánchez Ameijeiras, 'La fortuna sevillana', 263–264.
- 97 Mackay, 'Religion, Culture and Ideology', 230 and Remensnyder, 'The Colonization of Sacred Architecture', 195–196. See also: Remensnyder, 'Marian monarchy',
- 98 Nieto Soria, 'Origen divino', 68–69.
- 99 *Cantigas de Santa María*, III, Cantiga 321.
- 100 Nieto Soria, 'Origen divino', 68.
- 101 Bloch, *Les Rois thaumaturges*.
- 102 *Speculum Regum*, I, 54.
- 103 Linehan, 'Frontier kingship', 87.
- 104 Tang, 'El Rex Fidelissimus', 202–203.
- 105 Fournès, 'L'idéalité royale', 297–298.
- 106 See: Craddock, *Cronología de las obras legislativas*.
- 107 O'Callaghan, *Alfonso X, the Justinian of his Age*, 15.
- 108 José Manuel Fradejas is working on a digital edition of the *Partidas*, which will highlight the differences between the various extant manuscripts, see: <https://7partidas.hypotheses.org/author/fradejas> (Accessed 8 May 2020).
- 109 Rodríguez Velasco, 'La urgente presencia de *Las siete partidas*', 99–100.
- 110 *Las Siete Partidas*, Primera Partida, Título IV, Ley XIII.
- 111 Linehan, *History and the historians*, 440.
- 112 *Las Siete Partidas*, Segunda Partida, Título I, Ley V.
- 113 *Las Siete Partidas*, Primera Partida, Título XVIII, Ley XI.
- 114 Fernández-Viagas Escudero, 'El Rey en las Partidas', 73–74.
- 115 Monsalvo Antón, *La construcción del poder real*, 159–160 and 191–194.
- 116 *Ordenamiento*, Título XXVII, Leyes II–III and Título XXVIII, Ley II.
- 117 *Ordenamiento*, Título XXVIII, Ley I.
- 118 *Las Siete Partidas*, Segunda Partida, Título I, Ley X.
- 119 See: Nieto Soria, 'Rex inutilis y tiranía'.
- 120 *Cortes*, II, 145.
- 121 *Cortes*, III, 483.
- 122 Rodríguez Velasco, *La urgente presencia de Las siete partidas*, 127.

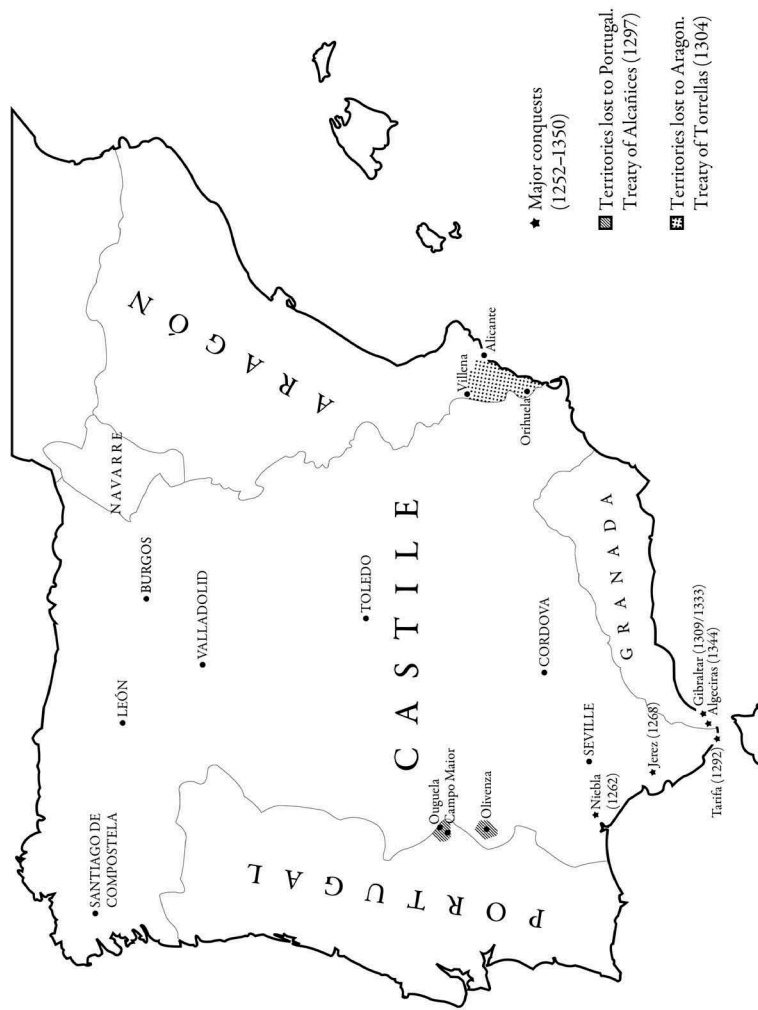
## 2 A kingdom comprising several realms

On assuming the throne in 1252, Alfonso X declared himself to be king of ‘*Castilla, de Toledo, de Leon, de Gallizia, de Seuilla, de Cordoua, de Murcia et de Jahen*’.<sup>1</sup> In the wake of Fernando III’s impressive conquests, the kingdom inherited by the Wise King had grown by more than a third. While Fernando left his heir a kingdom with a significant legal, as well as social and religious, disparity, his rule was defined not only by the territorial expansion he achieved, but for the increasing capillarity of royal authority throughout his lands.<sup>2</sup> Over the course of the following century, Alfonso X and his heirs added to the domains listed in the royal *intitulatio* (title) the Algarve (albeit in a more symbolic than effective sense), Molina, Biscay (solely on a temporary basis), and Algeciras. During the 100 years separating the reign of Alfonso X and that of Alfonso XI the kingdom’s dimensions did not undergo any radical change (see Map 2.1), but this period proved to be fundamental for the territorial conceptualisation of their kingship. Although these lands’ heterogeneity was not effaced, over the course of this century the Castilian monarchy developed the view of their dominions as a united and inalienable entity embodied by the term the ‘*corona de sus regnos*’ (crown of his kingdoms).

### Castile and Toledo: The core of the kingdom

In an exercise of metonymy, the royal chronicles identify the monarchs whose deeds they recount as the ‘*reyes de Castilla*’. In other words, Castile had become the principal territory associated with the monarchy. Royal diplomas reinforce this idea, as the royal *intitulatio* clearly demonstrated the hierarchy of the different territories that comprised the kingdom. Castile and Toledo headed the royal title, and the incorporation of the kingdom of León in 1230 did not alter this order, which underscores the status of the two territories as the core of royal power.

Around 1180, the royal *intitulatio* was finally established as *rex Castelle et Toleti*, a decision which reveals how Alfonso VIII’s chancery had refined its perception of the kingdom. Toledo’s imperial aspirations had faded and instead Castile was ascribed a fundamental role, as the territory which provided the foundation for royal power and the nobles that sustained it. The identification of



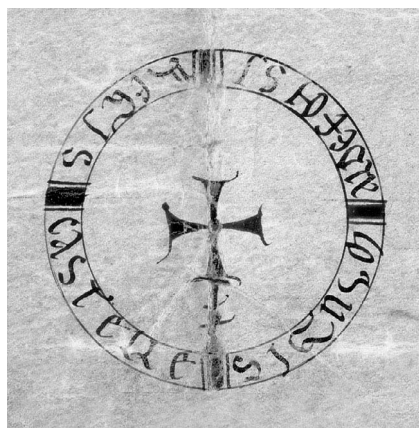
Map 2.1 Castile (1252–1350)

Source: © Rubén Cascado Montes and Fernando Arias Guillén

the monarchy with Castile was highlighted around this time by two further elements: the use of the castle as a heraldic symbol on the royal seals and the changes made to the ‘wheel’ (*rota*) of the royal sign, which from 1178 onwards changed from *SIGNVM ADEFONSI REGIS* to *SIGNVM ADEFONSI REGIS CASTELLE* (Image 2.1).<sup>3</sup>

Castile, therefore, became the heart of the kingdom, but this does not mean it was a homogeneous territory. The River Douro marked a dividing line between southern Castile, which was structured around the major royal towns, each of which had an extensive hinterland (*alfoz*), and the northern region characterised by a patchwork of small lordships. The royal demesne (*realengo*) amounted to barely 15–20% of northern Castile, which concentrated in Tierra de Campos, Burgos, and the coastal Cantabrian towns. The seigneurial estates belonging to the kingdom’s principal noble families and the most important ecclesiastical institutions were to be found in this region.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, between Cantabria and the Douro there were also the *behetrias*, territories that had their own singular regime in which two levels of lordship coexisted.<sup>5</sup>

The Kingdom of Toledo was likewise marked by its own particular heterogeneity. Royal authority, embodied in important locations such as Toledo, Cuenca, Guadalajara, and Madrid, coexisted alongside the extensive possessions of the Archbishopric of Toledo and the Military Orders. The predominance of the ecclesiastical estates was all too apparent in the south, and this explains the foundation of Ciudad Real in 1255,<sup>6</sup> an ‘island’ of *realengo* in La Mancha that served to connect Andalusia and Toledo.



*Image 2.1* Royal sign of Alfonso VIII (30 September 1182). [www.toledo.es/toledo-siempre/exposiciones-virtuales/los-signos-de-los-reyes-castellanos-en-los-privilegios-medievales-de-la-ciudad-de-toledo/](http://www.toledo.es/toledo-siempre/exposiciones-virtuales/los-signos-de-los-reyes-castellanos-en-los-privilegios-medievales-de-la-ciudad-de-toledo/)

Source: © Archivo Municipal de Toledo

## León and Galicia: The relegation of the historic kingdom of León

Rather than think of Fernando III as undertaking the unification of Castile and León in 1230, it seems more accurate to think of him incorporating the kingdom of León into his dominions. León was the junior partner of the union, both in symbolic terms and with regard to the effective aspects of kingship.

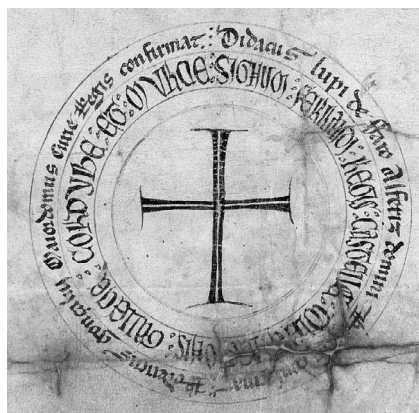
The *privilegios rodados* demonstrate León's secondary role in terms of the representation of royal authority; even though, over time the monarchs modified specific aspects of these diplomas in order to give greater visibility to this historic kingdom. For example, while the columns of confirmers distinguished between the bishops and nobles in each kingdom, a detailed analysis of these lists reveals the predominance of the Castilian nobility both in terms of number and rank, an issue explored in greater depth in Chapter 7. The dual Castilian-Leonese dimension of the monarchy is also represented in the royal seal, which from 1230 onwards consisted of a castle on one side and a lion on the other. Later both heraldic elements would be fused together in the renowned quadrant of castles and lions, with the former in a predominant position, as well as in the seal's equestrian figure, which rather unsurprisingly adopted the Castilian model (Image 2.2).<sup>7</sup> Nonetheless, Fernando III continued to use the 'Castilian' cross as his *signum regis* when signing *privilegios rodados*, even after 1230 (Image 2.3). Alfonso X tended to use this sign, although he began the practice of placing castles and lions above the cross, a habit that was taken up definitively by the chancery of Sancho IV (Image 2.4).<sup>8</sup>

The royal title is the element of the royal diplomas that best reflects the monarchs' 'disregard' for León, as well as the concern shown by the local elites to reaffirm León's status within the kingdom. From 1230 onwards, León and Galicia were placed after Castile and Toledo, but this decision prompted a response from León. Some missives sent by the infante Fernando de la Cerda to royal



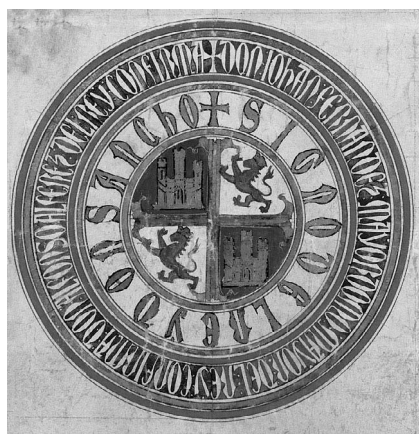
Image 2.2 Royal seal of Alfonso XI. Monastery of Las Huelgas (Valladolid, Spain). AMHVa, Car. 4, n. 1 (28 November 1340)

Source: © Francisco Molina and Mauricio Jiménez



*Image 2.3* Royal sign of Fernando III (4 January 1246). <https://www.toledo.es/toledo-siempre/exposiciones-virtuales/los-signos-de-los-reyes-castellanos-en-los-privilegios-medievales-de-la-ciudad-de-toledo/>

Source: © Archivo Municipal de Toledo



*Image 2.4* Royal sign of Sancho IV (20 December 1289). <https://www.toledo.es/toledo-siempre/exposiciones-virtuales/los-signos-de-los-reyes-castellanos-en-los-privilegios-medievales-de-la-ciudad-de-toledo/>

Source: © Archivo Municipal de Toledo

officials in León in April 1271 identified him as '*ffiy e heredero del muy noble don Alffonso, por la gracia de Dios, rrey de Castiella, de Tolledo, de León*' (son and heir of the most noble Alfonso, by the grace of God, king of Castile, of Toledo, of León). Then, in a letter to the local authorities of León, written no

later than March 1274, Alfonso X placed León above Toledo.<sup>9</sup> From then on, this deferential treatment took root. However, the royal chancery did not implement this change in a wholly systematic manner. It was only in December 1345 that Alfonso XI informed the city of Toledo that this change was to be official. The monarch stated that the prelates, nobles, and towns' representatives of León had requested that all documents sent to the kingdom of León or outside of our kingdoms (*'nuestros regnos'*) should place León before Toledo. Alfonso XI granted this petition, although he stressed that in the diplomas sent to Castile, Toledo, and Andalusia Toledo's pre-eminence was to be maintained.<sup>10</sup>

Aside from these symbolic issues, the secondary status of the kingdom of León is noted in the regular exercise of kingship. Only on rare occasions royal itineraries included Asturias and Galicia. The latter was a region characterised by its large monastic estates, as well as the control exerted by the bishops who resided in the principal urban centres. Nor was León a place frequented by the monarchs; although to compensate this absence, the apparent heir would often be actively implicated in the government of this territory. Alfonso X was lord of León from 1238 until he became king, and he spent extensive periods there in 1240–1241 and 1246–1247.<sup>11</sup> His first-born son, Fernando de la Cerda, had a still closer relationship with León. The majority of the documents issued by Alfonso X's heir were related to this kingdom, where he played a very active role.<sup>12</sup> After decades of royal absence, the infante's frequent presence there in the first half of the 1270s surely helped heal León's bruised pride. Fernando de la Cerda went even further, and he used a heraldic emblem in which two lions occupied the first and fourth quarterings, which thus gave them a predominant significance over that of the castle of Castile. The garments which he was buried in at Las Huelgas in 1275 reproduced this pattern.<sup>13</sup> The *Crónica de Alfonso X* likewise records how in 1280, while his father was in Andalusia, Sancho had to oversee the administration of justice in León.<sup>14</sup> However, he did not come to develop such a close relationship with this realm as his brother. Furthermore, for almost a century after Sancho IV came to the throne, no Castilian monarch had an heir who reached adulthood during his father's lifetime. In the absence of a son who could be delegated the ruling of León, the visits of the reigning dynasty to León became a still rarer event.

On the other hand, the kingdom of León had its own legal code, the *Fuero Juzgo*. In regard to this issue, it is symptomatic that from 1255 onwards Alfonso X would only implement the *Fuero Real* in the towns of Castile, Extremadura, Toledo, and also some towns in Andalusia which, like Úbeda and Baeza, were administered by the *fuero* granted to Cuenca. Historians have suggested that the absence of any prior royal legal code in these areas along with a concern to establish a degree of legal uniformity were the reasons underlying this aspect of the Wise King's legal policy.<sup>15</sup> Nonetheless, it is striking that the monarchy made no attempt to extend the *Fuero Real* to León. The implementation of Alfonso's *Fuero Real* was not a harmonious process, and from 1272 onwards various towns revived their historic *fueros* (charters). Therefore, it may

be speculated that Alfonso X did not dare to extend the *Fuero Real* to León because in this kingdom the reach of royal authority was not as strong as in Castile, whereby success was not insured. The zeal of the Leonese elite with regard to its legal status is recorded in the frequent petitions made to the *Cortes* on this issue. For example, at the 1293 meeting the towns' representatives of León insisted that *alcaldes* should be able to judge lawsuits and appeals in León solely on the basis of the *Fuero Juzgo*.<sup>16</sup>

Furthermore, this period witnessed León's swansong as an independent kingdom. As discussed in the previous chapter, in 1296, during the conflictive minority of Fernando IV, Alfonso de la Cerda and the monarch's uncle, the infante Juan, agreed to divide the kingdom in two. Thereby, the infante referred to himself as king of León, Galicia, and Seville until 1300, when he renounced to his claim and returned to Fernando IV's service.<sup>17</sup>

### **Seville, Cordova, Jaén, Murcia, and Algeciras: An ever-expanding kingdom**

In the preamble to the *fuero* granted to Seville, Fernando III highlighted both the magnitude of his conquests, which were unequalled in the history of humanity, and the special importance of the capture of Seville, the noblest city in Spain.<sup>18</sup> The addition of new territories, as listed in the increasingly longer royal title, was an unequivocal sign of a successful kingship. In that sense, no monarch favourably compared himself to Fernando III, nonetheless Alfonso XI sought to emulate him.

The century between 1252 and 1350 witnessed intense warfare amongst the Castilians, Nasrids, and Marinids, above all in the region of the Straits of Gibraltar. However, just a few towns in the area changed hands on a permanent basis. Sancho IV conquered Tarifa in 1292; Gibraltar was captured by Fernando IV, in 1309, and then recovered by the Marinids in 1333; then finally, Alfonso XI managed to take control of Algeciras after a lengthy siege ended in 1344 (see Map 2.1). In a somewhat surprising manner, Alfonso XI decided to incorporate this latter town into the royal *intitulatio* as soon as he conquered it.<sup>19</sup> The monarch's triumph, despite its importance, paled in comparison to the successes of Fernando III. Algeciras had never been an independent kingdom, not even in the era of the *taifas*. However, Alfonso XI sought to exalt his name, demonstrate his crusading zeal as a defender of Christianity, and underscore the efforts he made to continue the task began by his ancestors. In sum, the king wanted to show how he had revived the ethos of the *Reconquista* that had lain dormant for various decades.

Yet the fact that the list of territories that made up the monarchy could grow did not mean that in the mid-fourteenth century the kingdom's frontier was still conceived as a boundless open space. Over the course of the 100 years following Fernando III's conquests, royal authority was gradually implanted across the conquered territories, a process which conferred on Murcia and Andalusia an identity that was wholly distinctive to the rest of the kingdom. It was in these

southern regions that the Castilian kings were able to exercise their power with greater freedom and fewer restraints; and it was there that legal and fiscal innovations were implemented prior to being applied to the rest of the kingdom.

Moreover, this region had more populous cities than the Castilian monarchy's traditional homelands. Cities such as Cordova, the historic caliphal capital, Seville, the centre of the Almoravids and Almohads' power, and even Murcia were significantly bigger than the principal northern towns such as Burgos or Valladolid. The kings promoted a policy of repopulating these southern lands and encouraged settlers to move there by granting them properties and privileges. The suppression of the Mudejar revolt in 1264 led to the expulsion of numerous Muslims, which accelerated the Christianisation of these regions. In Murcia, the rebellion was only crushed thanks to the assistance provided by Jaime I of Aragón, which led to the arrival of settlers from his domains and a decline in the Mudejar population<sup>20</sup>. Furthermore, the northern region of the kingdom of Murcia, which included the towns of Elche, Orihuela, and Alicante, was incorporated into Aragonese territory following the Treaty of Torrellas (1304). Jaime II de Aragón obtained these possessions in exchange for relinquishing his support for Alfonso de la Cerda, the pretender to the Castilian throne. Despite the Mudejar exodus, a significant minority of Muslims continued to live in Andalusia and Murcia, which highlighted the distinctive character of these regions from the rest of the kingdom.

In addition to the distinctive features of these regions, from early on the Castilian monarchy had exploited its potential to intervene in the organisation of the newly conquered lands, resulting in the firm implantation of royal authority across Murcia and Andalusia. As will be addressed in the next chapter, after a first phase of intense royal activity, the physical presence of the monarchs became less and less frequent in Andalusia, and above all, Murcia. Yet the peripheral nature of these regions, especially in the case of Murcia, did not lead to monarch's power being undermined there.

First, the distribution of lands in these regions did not result in any major decline in royal power. During the fourteenth century lordships were granted to many members of the nobility, but the majority of these were located along the frontier, and no major seigneurial states were created. In any case, between 1345 and 1350 the royal demesne in these areas still made up 72.4% of the kingdom of Seville and more than 80% of the region of Cordova. In the case of Jaén the percentage was significantly lower, around 55%, but the region's lower population and economic significance must be considered. Additionally, Jaén and other important towns, such as Úbeda and Baeza, were all part of the royal demesne.<sup>21</sup>

The king's representatives in Andalusia and Murcia always used the title of *adelantados*. In addition to this titular distinction (in the north they were called *merinos*), this office had a number of distinctive characteristics, as it tended to be reserved for members of the higher nobility, who, besides being responsible for justice, had to undertake a military role.<sup>22</sup> At a local level, the kings granted the different Andalusian cities and towns the same *fuego* as Cuenca, as was the

case in the kingdom of Jaén, or else that of Toledo, which was more common in the regions of Seville and Cordova. Indeed, the *fuero* of Toledo was much more widely used, and its brevity allowed new laws to be developed, which facilitated regnal intervention at a municipal level. Thereby, the most important local offices (*alcalde mayor*, *alguacil*), were under royal supervision in the main Andalusian towns. Not surprisingly, Murcia was also granted the same *fuero* as Seville. During the reign of Alfonso XI, the monarch undertook a further drive to strengthen royal authority at a local level, although this intervention did not attempt to impose changes on the urban oligarchies, whose power was thereby also reaffirmed. Between 1337 and 1346, the monarch issued a series of ordinances in Seville in which he defined the functions of the various officials in the city and he created the position of *fieles ejecutores*. Their role was to supervise local ordinances, whereby they symbolised the exercise of royal oversight in Seville. This policy was developed firstly in the southern part of the kingdom, and, from there on, it was extended to the northern regions. For example, in 1345 Alfonso XI ensured royal control over the appointment of the *alcaldes* of Burgos.<sup>23</sup>

The formation of the *caballería de cuantía* is another feature that reflects the important differences between Andalusia and Murcia and the rest of the kingdom. It also shows how the Castilian monarchy was able to act with greater freedom in these regions.<sup>24</sup> In the 1348 *Cortes*, held in Alcalá, a figure was set for the level of income above which it was obligatory that the towns' *caballeros* (knights) had to maintain horses and weapons. In exchange for these military services, these men – who were not nobles – would be granted fiscal exemptions and social privileges, above all with regard to the garments they could wear. Unsurprisingly, in the frontier territories a lower tier of wealth was stipulated for this obligation. In Murcia it was set at 8,000 *maravedís*, in Seville 5,000, while in Cordova and Jaén it was necessary to maintain a horse and weapons if your income came to just 4,000 *maravedís* or over. As a comparison, it suffices to point out how in towns such as Zamora, Toro, Salamanca, Alba, and Ciudad Rodrigo this duty was required from those with an income of 10,000 *maravedís* or above, and in some cases, as in Soria and Ágreda, this limit was set at 16,000 *maravedís*, twice the income demanded in Murcia and four times higher than that of Cordova and Jaén.<sup>25</sup>

Furthermore, the process of setting these quantities also reveals Alfonso XI's ability to impose his views on the southern municipalities. In September 1333, the monarch wrote to the local authorities in Murcia in order to annul their previous decision on this issue. The town council had established 15,000 *maravedís* as the threshold above which the inhabitants would have to maintain horses and weapons; an excessively high figure as far as Alfonso XI was concerned. The king pointed out that in this case the municipality would only provide 80 knights to the royal army, a number which was clearly insufficient. Therefore, he fixed the limit at 12,000 *maravedís* in order to increase the number of available soldiers.<sup>26</sup> The Castilian monarchy's capacity to revoke municipal decisions is striking, as is the subsequent decision to lower still further the stipulated level of income in 1348.

The meetings of the *Cortes* also serve to illustrate the lesser sway exerted by the more recently conquered territories with regard to the kingdom's ruling. For this period there is only data referring to the towns which attended the meetings of 1295 and 1315, but the list of participants reveals a notable absence of Andalusian and Murcian municipalities. Although more than 100 locations are listed, only the local councils of Seville, Cordova, Écija, Niebla, Murcia, Mula, and Lorca were represented in these meetings.<sup>27</sup> Evidently, Andalusia and Murcia were not represented in accordance with their demographic weight in the meetings of the *Cortes*. Another aspect that points to their secondary role is the specific location of these events, which rarely took place in the southern part of the kingdom, which still further complicated the presence of the Andalusian and Murcian representatives of smaller localities. Map 2.2<sup>28</sup> shows the *Cortes* and *ayuntamientos* (meetings similar to the *Cortes* but slightly more informal) that were held during this period, and it clearly illustrates how they were concentrated in Castile. Almost half of them were held in Burgos and Valladolid, none in Murcia and only five in Andalusia. On the other hand, the map also demonstrates the neglect of the kingdom of León, where only four *Cortes* were held.



Map 2.2 *Cortes* and *Ayuntamientos* (1252–1350)

Source: © Rubén Cascado Montes and Fernando Arias Guillén

From a fiscal point of view, clear differences may be noted between the southern territories and the rest of the kingdom. While there is only scarce evidence for this period, it may be argued that higher taxes were levied by the king from the inhabitants of Murcia and Andalusia. For examples, the right to collect *portazgo* (an indirect tax on movable goods) had become an almost residual revenue in the north for the Castilian monarchy due to numerous exemptions and the transfer of this tax to the municipalities.<sup>29</sup> On the other hand, the *almojarifazgos* (customs taxes) levied in Toledo, Seville, Cordova, and Murcia continued to play a central role in royal taxation.<sup>30</sup> Yet not even the same tax was levied equally throughout the kingdom. In the *Cortes* of 1286 a privilege applied to the inhabitants of Galicia was extended to those of León, whereby those people with an income of over 60 *maravedís* had to pay the fixed sum of 6 *maravedís* every time a *servicio* or *moneda* was collected (direct taxes approved by the *Cortes*).<sup>31</sup> By contrast, in 1349, it was ruled that those who enjoyed the same level of wealth in the kingdom of Murcia had to pay 8 *maravedís*.<sup>32</sup> While these two isolated figures are registered decades apart, they might suggest that higher taxes were levied by the Castilian monarchy in the more recently conquered territories.

Finally, the implantation of the *alcabala* (tax on trade) clearly illustrates the marked contrast between the northern and southern parts of the kingdom. This tax began to be levied in 1333 in the *Frontera* (Andalusia) and Murcia, and it became the principal source of income for the Castilian monarchy in the following decades. However, the wider collection of this tax would not be free from complications. For example, in May 1334 the representative of Murcia obtained a commitment from Alfonso XI not to levy this tax until the truce recently signed with Granada and the Marinids had expired.<sup>33</sup> However, this tax was harvested intermittently in these territories throughout almost a decade. In 1342, Alfonso XI decided to extend it to the whole kingdom. The *Crónica de Alfonso XI* offers a detailed (and idealised) account of the implementation of this decision. The king had to deal with this matter in person by holding a series of meetings in Burgos, León, Zamora, and Ávila with prelates, nobles, and the towns' representatives in each kingdom to persuade them of the need to introduce this tax.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, this example shows the greater extent of royal authority in the southern regions, where the monarch faced fewer constraints to his power, and it was there that fiscal innovations were trialled prior to extending them to the northern regions, albeit not without difficulties.

### **Algarve: Claiming overlordship on Portugal**

In 1260, Alfonso X included the Algarve in the royal *intitulatio*.<sup>35</sup> On occasions an effort was made to link the Algarve with the *taifa* kingdom of Niebla, which was conquered definitively in 1262, but this attempt to forge an association between them seems rather far-fetched. In any case there is no straightforward explanation for the monarch's decision. On the one hand, it is hard to discern the type of control that the Wise King exercised over southern Portugal. It has

been debated whether the Castilian monarch wished to incorporate this territory into his dominions or he was seeking to persuade Portugal to acknowledge some type of dependence on Castile. Alfonso X maintained a degree of control over this area between 1252 and 1266 and he claimed his right of ecclesiastical patronage over this territory, thereby countering Afonso III's (r. 1248–1279) rule over the Algarve. However, in 1266 he renounced his rights over the region, and the following year he handed over the fortresses that were still in his power. Underpinning this decision was the Castilian king's desire to thank his son-in-law – Afonso was married to Beatriz (c. 1244–1303), one of the Wise King's daughters born out of wedlock (see Appendices 2) – for the military support he provided during the Mudejar revolt. From 1267 onwards, Afonso III used the title '*rex Portugalie et Algarbii*'.<sup>36</sup>

However, Alfonso X and his successors did not eliminate the Algarve from the royal title and the bishops of Silves continued to appear as confirmers of the *privilegios rodados*. It might be argued that the Castilian monarchs decided to maintain the title in case they ever wanted to revive their claim over this territory in the future. However, during the war fought between Castile and Portugal between 1336 and 1338, in which Alfonso XI led a campaign against the Algarve, the royal chronicle makes no such mention of this claim. So, perhaps it was maintained with the intention of preserving some form of Castilian overlordship or suzerainty over Portugal. The *Crónica de Alfonso XI* alludes to this idea in a reference made to the siege of Teba in 1330. Afonso IV of Portugal (r. 1325–1357) sent a contingent of 500 knights to support his son-in-law in this campaign against Granada. After three months of service, Alfonso XI tried to convince them, unsuccessfully, to extend their service. One of the arguments he used was that all the Portuguese had a *natural* bond with the kings of Castile. In other words, the Castilian monarchs were their 'natural' lords, whereby Alfonso XI urged them to continue serving under him.<sup>37</sup> In any case, aside from whatever it was that motivated the Castilian kings to lay claim to the Algarve as part of their dominions, the continued inclusion of this territory in the royal title did not give rise to any conflict with the neighbouring Portuguese kingdom.

### **Molina and Biscay: The incorporation of frontier lordships into the royal demesne**

The lordships of Molina and Biscay were of such importance and historic renown that they were the first to be acknowledged as territories with their own unique identity in the *privilegios rodados*. The infante Alfonso (1202–1272), younger brother of Fernando III, always appeared in the list of confirmers as 'Alfonso de Molina'. In 1272, following the infante's death, Alfonso Fernández *el Niño*, an extramarital son of Alfonso X, was listed in the royal diplomas as lord of Molina, which was due to his marriage to Blanca Alfonso, the infante's daughter. That same year, Lope Díaz III de Haro was for the first time identified as '*Lope Díaz de Vizcaya*', and by 1287 he was listed as lord of Biscay.<sup>38</sup> In

Chapter 7 the importance of the events of 1272 is analysed with regard to the representation of the nobility in royal diplomas and the progressive emergence of other seigneurial estates; for the present it is essential to underscore how the territorial identity of both lordships had already been explicitly acknowledged by the Castilian monarchy. On the other hand, the incorporation of these territories into the royal demesne was the culmination of the growing interest displayed by the Castilian kings on these frontier regions.

Manrique Pérez de Lara granted a charter to the town of Molina in 1154. At that time Molina was the head of an independent seigneurial estate, although its owners were vassals to the Castilian monarchs. This ambiguous situation, exacerbated by the rebellion of Gonzalo Pérez de Lara, led Fernando III to exert greater control over this territory from the 1220s onwards. Finally, Gonzalo Pérez submitted to the monarch and agreed to marry his daughter, Mafalda, to the infante Alfonso, the king's younger brother. Consequently, his son, Pedro González, was denied the family inheritance in favour of his sister, although it is not known exactly when. In any case, Molina passed into the hands of various royal relatives (Alfonso de Molina, Alfonso Fernández *el Niño*) until it was finally inherited by María de Molina, daughter of the infante and wife to Sancho IV. This succession was far from harmonious: Blanca Alfonso received 300,000 *maravedís* in return for transferring her rights to María de Molina, her younger sister. Furthermore, Juan Núñez II de Lara, married to the recently deceased Isabel Alfonso, Alfonso de Molina's granddaughter, rebelled against Sancho IV. Nonetheless, the lordship of Molina was incorporated into the royal demesne in 1293.<sup>39</sup>

Biscay was intimately associated with the Haro family since the mid-eleventh century, when Íñigo López was identified in royal documents as Count of Biscay and Durango. From then on, and up until the definitive incorporation of Biscay into Castile in 1200, the Haro family alternated their loyalty to the kings of Castile and Navarre in response to whoever controlled the territory. It is possible that Diego López II (c. 1152–1214) already held Biscay as his own lordship in the early thirteenth century. In the 1289 version of the *Estoria de España*, which recounts the confrontation between Diego López III (d. 1254) and Fernando III and his subsequent exile to Biscay, this area is referred to as if it was a territory independent of the rest of the kingdom.<sup>40</sup> To a certain extent, this situation might have been comparable to that of Molina, an independent seigneurial estate controlled by a royal vassal.

The Haros' zenith came with Lope Díaz III (c. 1245–1288), who wielded immense power, albeit briefly, during the reign of Sancho IV. His fall and assassination in 1288 gave rise to a long-drawn-out struggle over the succession to Biscay. Sancho IV conferred the lordship on one of his sons, the infante Enrique (see Appendices 1). However, Diego López V de Haro recovered it for his family in 1295, just when the precarious regency of the young Fernando IV was in dire need of support. This decision was later contested by María López de Haro, daughter of Lope Díaz III and wife of the infante Juan, who initiated a lawsuit that dragged on for most of Fernando IV's reign. In 1308 an agreement

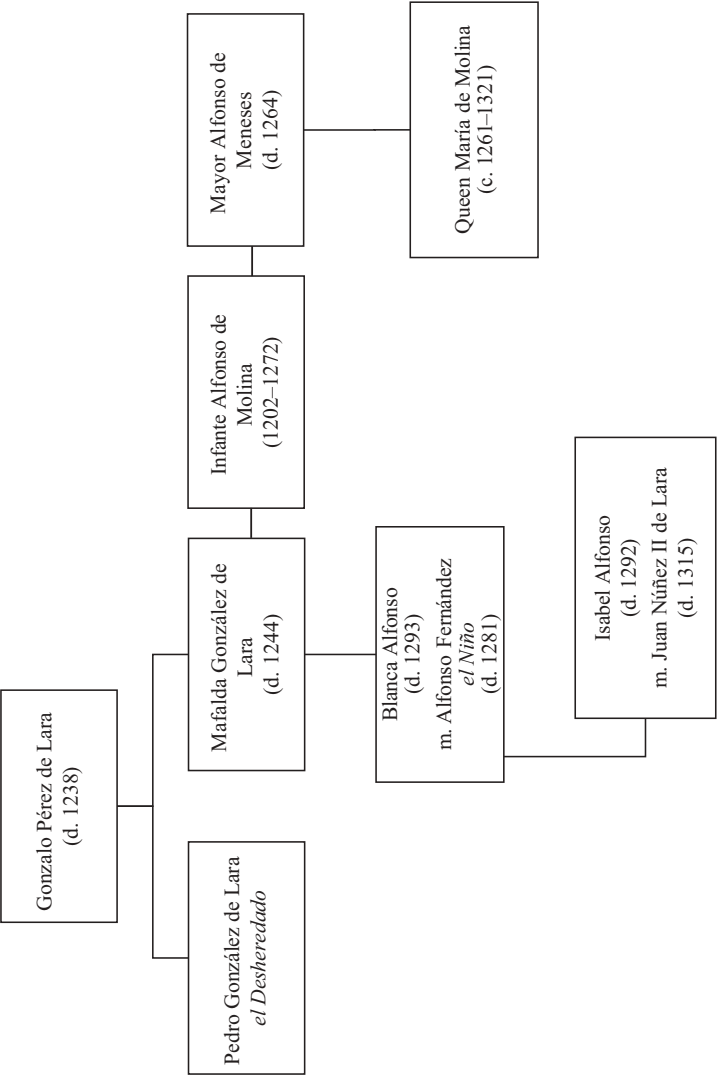


Figure 2.1 The Lordship of Molina (1238-1293)

was reached whereby María López de Haro would inherit Biscay from her uncle following his death, which happened two years later.<sup>41</sup> The Castilian monarchy's interest in bringing Biscay under royal influence is all too evident; the supporters of Diego López V accused Fernando IV of being a '*bandero*' (*partisan*) of the infante Juan.<sup>42</sup> Therefore, it comes as no surprise that the control over Biscay continued to be one of the most controversial issues in Castile for six decades until it was definitively incorporated into the royal demesne in 1370.

Following the death of the infante Juan in 1319, Biscay passed to his son, Juan de Haro *el Tuerto*. Seven years later, Alfonso XI ordered the murder of this noble, who was accused of treason, and the king took all of his possessions, including Biscay. Between 1327 and August 1334, the royal chancery included Biscay in the royal title, placing it before Molina, which clearly indicates its importance.<sup>43</sup> However, Juan Núñez III de Lara (c. 1313–1350) then laid claim to his rights to Biscay on the basis of his marriage to María de Haro, daughter of Juan *el Tuerto* and granddaughter of María López de Haro. The possession of this lordship led this noble, supported by Juan Manuel, to rebel against Alfonso XI. The king seized Biscay in 1334, but that same year he came to an agreement with Juan Núñez, whereby the territory was removed from the royal *intitulatio*. The conflict flared up again the following year, but in 1336 a definitive agreement was reached. Alfonso XI arranged the marriage of Juana, daughter of the noble, with Tello, one of the king's offspring born to Leonor de Guzmán, which reveals Alfonso XI's interest in maintaining his influence over this territory. Pedro I once more took control of Biscay. Finally, the successive deaths of Juan Núñez III, his sons Lope and Nuño, and Juana and Tello meant that the lordship was inherited in 1370 by Juana Manuel, wife of Enrique II, and thereby it definitively became part of the *realengo*.<sup>44</sup>

Molina and Biscay were two frontier lordships of strategic importance, a strong sense of territorial identity, as well as a relative degree of independence. Therefore, it is not surprising that the Castilian monarchy sought to formalise its control over both. When it came to placing these two territories under royal influence, women played immensely important roles as intermediaries for the transmission of rights. Thus, the kings' interest in establishing marriage ties between members of the royal family and the holders of these lordships, thereby creating a series of 'apanages' that would extend royal authority over these areas. Eventually, both Molina and Biscay ended up being absorbed into the royal demesne. It may be argued that this outcome was a logical consequence of the royal policy of controlling these territories, but it is undeniable that chance also played a role.

On the other hand, the territorial identity of both lordships persisted into the later fourteenth century. Juan I sought, unsuccessfully, to convert Lara, Biscay, and Molina into a lordship associated with the royal heir, similar to the arrangements made for the French Dauphiné and the Aragonese Duchy of Girona.<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, Biscay maintained a clearly distinct status even after its incorporation into the *realengo*. As a result, the Castilian monarchs had to travel there

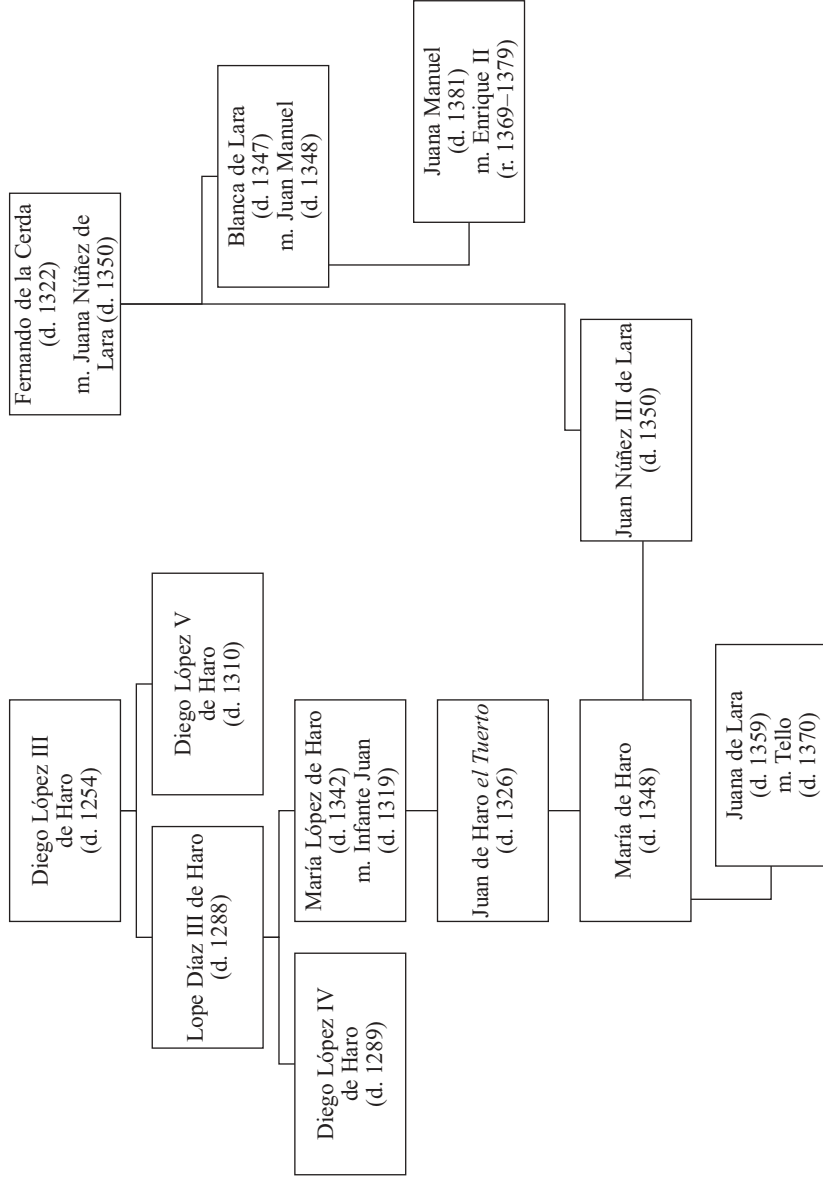


Figure 2.2 The Lordship of Biscay (1254–1370)

to swear the local *fueros* at the start of their reign. Following Enrique III's journey in 1393, when he came of age, the subsequent kings established a fixed route, with specific landmarks such as Guernica, in order to represent their acknowledgement of the local privileges and customs.<sup>46</sup>

### **'Corona de sus regnos': The kingdom as a united and indissoluble entity**

The reign of Alfonso VIII witnessed the emergence of a concept of the Kingdom of Castile as a distinct entity. Despite territorial diversity, a unifying idea of the kingdom was formed, that of the kingdom as a combination of places over which the monarch exercised his rule.<sup>47</sup> The immense territorial expansion that took place during the second quarter of the thirteenth century changed the kingdom's physiognomy, but during the reigns of Fernando III and Alfonso X the Castilian monarchy had already begun forming a territorial ideology that integrated the distinctive parts of their dominions.<sup>48</sup> Although the kingdom's distinctive regional features and identities did not disappear, notions such as the '*Señorío del Rey*', the idea of '*naturaleza*' or the term '*corona de sus regnos*' documents the culmination of this process of territorial configuration which took place between 1252 and 1350.

Throughout these 100 years of Castilian history, kings further extended their authority over the territory they ruled. Along with the incorporation of Molina, the implantation of royal government in Andalusia and Murcia or the growing royal influence exercised on Biscay, the self-dissolution of the Confraternity of Arriaga, in 1332, clearly illustrates the success achieved by the Castilian monarchy in affirming their power at a local level. The impossibility to compete against the royal towns of Vitoria and Salvatierra, which attracted an increasing number of settlers from nearby villages, led the hidalgos of Álava to renounce their jurisdiction over a large part of the region in favour of Alfonso XI in exchange for preserving their privileges and legal status.<sup>49</sup>

Aside from the extension of royal government, the notion of *Señorío del Rey* was of immense importance to develop the kingdom's identity. There was a series of rights that were deemed exclusive to the monarch, and which were exercised over the whole kingdom, and not solely over the royal demesne. According to the *Fuero Viejo de Castilla* (1356), these rights encompassed *Justicia*, *Moneda*, *Fonsadera*, and *Yantares*.<sup>50</sup> In other words, the monarchy's juridical, fiscal, and military capacity was exercised across the whole kingdom. On the other hand, the idea of *Señorío del Rey* did not result in the suppression of the existing legal and juridical diversity; instead, it underscored the superiority of royal law over all the others jurisdictions and the capacity of the king to oversee seigneurial justice. As discussed in the previous chapter, the 1348 *Ordenamiento de Alcalá* acknowledged other forms of jurisdiction despite stressing the primacy of royal law.<sup>51</sup>

The idea of *naturaleza* refers to the link between a territory's inhabitants (the *naturales*) and their *señor natural* (natural lord), the king. The idea of the

monarch as *señor natural* gained currency in the mid-twelfth century, above all in the treatises signed by the kings in the period 1157–1230. *Las Siete Partidas* were of key importance for the development of this notion. The law code underscores the double sense of the word nature: the monarch's authority over the inhabitants of the kingdom and their obligation towards the king. The fourteenth-century royal chronicles show how the concept of *naturaleza* was superimposed onto that of vassalage: although an individual could own loyalty to many lords, the personal ties with his *señor natural* held prominence over any other kind of obligation. Therefore, it may be argued that there were similarities between *naturaleza* and the idea of the 'liege lord' developed in France and England from the twelfth century onwards.<sup>52</sup> In parallel to this, the idea of *naturaleza* was also used by Alfonso XI to reject papal influence over Castile. For instance, in the *Cortes* of 1329 the monarch stated that the kingdom's ecclesiastical benefices would be held by *naturales* in exclusivity.<sup>53</sup>

The notions of *Señorío del Rey* and *naturaleza* reveal how there was a close connection between the kingdom and the monarch, as the exercise of kingship was the principal element that defined a territory and marked its limits. Furthermore, the Castilian monarchy also developed the idea that these territories, united under the mantle of the kings, constituted an inalienable and indivisible entity.

*Las Siete Partidas* indicates how primogeniture was a symbol of divine favour, whereby royal inheritance had to be fully transmitted to the eldest son. The legal code also pointed out that the partition of kingdoms led to their destruction.<sup>54</sup> However, the will and the codicil left by Alfonso X (1282 and 1284) challenged this view and proposed that the kingdom be shared out amongst the Wise King's descendants. The cursing and disinheritance of Sancho led the Castilian monarch to name his grandson, Alfonso de la Cerda, as his legitimate heir. However, he was only to receive Castile and León. The infantes Juan and Jaime (see Appendices 1) would, respectively, be left the kingdoms of Seville and Badajoz and of Murcia, although they were to be vassals of their nephew. Alfonso's daughter, Beatriz, was to have the right to rule Niebla during her lifetime, on the understanding it would be later reintegrated into Seville. Historians have explained this unprecedented decision in terms of Alfonso X's spite and bitterness at having been ousted from power by Sancho in 1282; they have even sought to justify the Wise King's decision through a far-fetched interpretation of the law, by stating that he transmitted Castile-León as a whole and only broke up the territories later conquered.<sup>55</sup>

In any case, Alfonso X's plans never came to fruition and the works commissioned by his successors continually show open hostility to any plan which involved a separation of the kingdoms or any territorial fragmentation. The *Castigos del rey don Sancho IV* sum this idea up clearly, recalling the sorry end that came to those kings who divided up their lands before their deaths and the wars and problems that were caused by such partitions ('*quánd mala çima*

*ouieron los reyes que partieron los regnos por los fijos que ouieron, e después de la su muerte las discordias e las guerras e las muertes e los males que déllos vienen por razón de la partiçión*').<sup>56</sup> The manuscript E2 of the *Estoria de España*, the 1289 version, offered specific examples from the history of Castile and León to indicate the outright rejection of the custom of dividing the royal inheritance. It states that when Fernando I (r. 1029/1037–1065) decided to divide his kingdom between his sons, the eldest son openly opposed him. Sancho II (r. 1065–1072) argued that the Visigoths had already agreed that the Empire of Spain should never be divided. Sancho concluded by stating that any such division went against the divine will that had gathered the majority of Spain's territory under his rule.<sup>57</sup> The intended parallels drawn by the chronicler between Sancho II and Sancho IV are hard to miss.

The reiteration of this idea in numerous texts reflects to what extent Castile was in danger of disintegration during this period. The *Crónica de Alfonso X* recounted how in 1280 Sancho refused to accept the agreement signed between his father and Philippe III of France, whereby Alfonso de la Cerda would receive the kingdom of Jaén in exchange for becoming Sancho's vassal when he inherited the throne.<sup>58</sup> Likewise, María de Molina was presented as the defender of the dynastic rights of her son, Fernando IV, and the kingdom's territorial integrity. During the confrontation against Alfonso de la Cerda and the infante Juan, she refused to accept any kind of agreement with the pretenders to the throne. For example, she steadfastly rejected the proposal, suggested by some nobles in order to appease the infante Juan, that she should grant him the kingdom of Galicia and the city of León as a lifetime possession. The queen considered that such a decision would be a dishonour for the whole land of Castile and León and their inhabitants.<sup>59</sup> In a similar vein, the *Crónica de Castilla*, commissioned by Queen María de Molina, recounts past histories in order to stress the importance of territorial unity in the present. Consequently, this work emphasised how, in 1230, Alfonso de Molina, Fernando III's younger brother, rejected the proposal from various Galician nobles to proclaim himself king of León.<sup>60</sup> It is evident that the positive example of Alfonso de Molina, the queen's father, was intended to provide a contrast to the contemporary ambition of the infante Juan.

This vision of the kingdom as a territory with an identity defined by the extension of royal authority was embodied by the term '*corona de sus regnos*', which appears throughout the *Crónica de Alfonso XI* and the *Cortes* proceedings of his reign. The term denotes a transpersonal conception of the kingdom as a set of indivisible territories.<sup>61</sup> In the *Cortes* meeting of 1329, Alfonso XI insisted that he would not alienate any part of the '*corona de sus regnos*', except the lands he might give to his new wife, Queen María of Portugal.<sup>62</sup> Although he did not fulfil this promise, the importance lies in the idea of the kingdom as a united and indivisible entity. In the royal chronicle, the term appears sporadically, but it clearly projects the idea of the kingdom as an institutional reality that was more than the sum of the territories it was made up of. The most evident example is offered, once again, by the account of the *Cortes*

held in Madrid in 1329. The chronicle points out that Alfonso XI met with the prelates, *ricosombres*, and representatives of the cities and towns of Castile, León, Galicia, Seville, Cordova, Murcia, Jaén, the Algarve, and the lordships of Molina and Biscay, which constituted the '*corona de sus regnos*'.<sup>63</sup> Despite the absence of Toledo, presumably an error of the author or copyists, this account shows how the union of all the territories listed in the royal title formed a superior entity with an identity on its own. This unitary conception of the kingdom reflects, once again, how the ideas developed by Alfonso X were recovered and expanded by his great-grandson. Yet the development of this notion did not completely rule out the distinctive regional aspects and differences discussed in the first part of this chapter. In this sense, the analysis of royal itineraries and the spaces of royal power underscores the distinctive hierarchical place conceded to each of the *corona de sus regnos*' constituent kingdoms and territories.

## Notes

- 1 *Sevilla, ciudad de privilegios*, doc. 3.
- 2 Rodríguez, *La consolidación territorial*, 313–315 and O'Callaghan, *El rey Sabio*, 32.
- 3 Estepa Díez, 'El reino de Castilla de Alfonso VIII', 35, 'Memoria y poder real bajo Alfonso VIII', 202–203, and 'Toledo-Castilla, Castilla-Toledo', 510–511.
- 4 Álvarez Borge, *Monarquía feudal y organización territorial*, 99–101 and 112–113 and *Poder y relaciones sociales*, 245–247, Bonachía Hernando, *El señorío de Burgos*, 21–32, Martínez Sopena, *La Tierra de Campos*, 147, and Monsalvo Antón, *La construcción del poder*, 251.
- 5 Estepa Díez, *Las behetrías castellanas*, I, 86.
- 6 AHNOB, FUENTE PELAYO, C. 9, D. 5.
- 7 López Gutiérrez, 'La cancellería de Fernando III', 78 and Francisco Olmos and Novoa Portela, *Historia y evolución del sello de plomo*, 69, 75–77, and 89–90.
- 8 Ostos Salcedo and Pardo Rodríguez, 'Signo y símbolo en el privilegio rodado', 20–22.
- 9 *Colección documental del archivo de la catedral de León. VIII*, docs. 2305, 2306, and 2336.
- 10 *Privilegios reales otorgados a Toledo*, doc. 62.
- 11 Estepa Díez, 'Las tenencias en Castilla y León', 67 and González Jiménez and Carmona Ruiz, *Documentación e Itinerario de Alfonso X*, XVIII.
- 12 González Jiménez, *Alfonso X el Sabio*, 224. See also: Pardo Rodríguez, *La cancellería de don Fernando de la Cerda*.
- 13 Hernández, 'Two Weddings and a Funeral', 422–423.
- 14 *CAX*, 205.
- 15 González Jiménez, *Alfonso X el Sabio*, 90–94 and O'Callaghan, *El rey Sabio*, 117–118.
- 16 *Cortes*, I, 123.
- 17 González Jiménez, 'Don Juan', 555.
- 18 *Sevilla, ciudad de privilegios*, doc. 1.
- 19 In the very document in which he agreed the city's surrender (25 March 1344), Algeciras is already included in the list of Alfonso XI's dominions. *Colección de documentos inéditos*, VII, doc. 31.
- 20 O'Callaghan, *El rey Sabio*, 36 and Catlos, *Kingdoms of Faith*, ch. 24.
- 21 The data is drawn from García Fernández, *El Reino de Sevilla*, 193–203.

- 22 See: Vázquez Campos, *Los adelantados mayores de la Frontera* and *Adelantados y lucha por el poder*.
- 23 Casado Alonso, 'Las relaciones poder real-ciudades', 215, Coria Colina, *Intervención regia en el ámbito municipal*, 221–222, García Fernández, *El Reino de Sevilla*, 122–129 and 139, and Ladero Quesada, 'Monarquía y ciudades de reallengo', 742–743.
- 24 On the implantation of the *caballería de cuantía* see: González Jiménez, 'La caballería popular'.
- 25 *Cortes*, I, 617–618.
- 26 *CODOM*. VI, doc. CCLIX.
- 27 O'Callaghan, *Las Cortes*, 69–70.
- 28 The absence of documentation makes it very hard to draw up an exact list of the meetings that were held between 1252 and 1350. This map is based on the meetings that are listed in O'Callaghan, *Las Cortes de Castilla y León*.
- 29 Ladero Quesada, *Fiscalidad y poder real*, 26.
- 30 González Arce, 'Las rentas del almojarifazgo de Sevilla', 210, 'Las rentas del almojarifazgo de Toledo', 43, and 'La evolución del almojarifazgo de Córdoba', 166.
- 31 *Cortes*, I, 97.
- 32 *CODOM*. VI, doc. CDXXXVI.
- 33 *CODOM*. VI, doc. CCLXVII.
- 34 *CAXI*, 336–338.
- 35 *Sevilla, ciudad de privilegios*, doc. 26.
- 36 González Jiménez, *Alfonso X el Sabio*, 52–58 and 187–190 and O'Callaghan, *El rey Sabio*, 199–206.
- 37 *CAXI*, 225 and 287–290.
- 38 *Sevilla, ciudad de privilegios*, docs. 3 (5 August 1252) and 31 (15 July 1272) and *Privilegios reales de la Catedral de Toledo*, doc. 86 (25 July 1287).
- 39 Doubleday, *Los Lara*, 107 and Estepa Díez, 'Frontera, nobleza y señoríos', 45–48, 71–72 and 83–86.
- 40 Baury, 'Los ricos hombres y el rey', 56 and 61–65.
- 41 *CSIV*, 88–89 and *CFIV*, chs. XIV and XV.
- 42 Estepa Díez, 'The Strengthening of Royal Power', 192.
- 43 *Colección documental de Alfonso XI*, doc. 118 (6 January 1327) and ACB, V-3. f. 21 (8 August 1334).
- 44 Arias Guillén, 'Family Matters', 298–299 and 307–311.
- 45 *CEIII*, 191.
- 46 Dacosta and Díaz de Durana, 'Los espacios del príncipe en la Vizcaya del siglo XIV', 366–371.
- 47 Estepa Díez, 'El reino de Castilla de Alfonso VIII', 57–59.
- 48 Rodríguez, 'Rico fincas de tierra', 252.
- 49 Díaz de Durana, *La otra nobleza*, 89.
- 50 Estepa Díez, 'El Rey como Señor', 407–408.
- 51 *Ordenamiento*, Título XXVIII, Ley I.
- 52 Estepa Díez, 'Naturaleza y poder real en Castilla', 163–173 and 178–179 and Martín, 'Le concept de *naturalité* (naturaleza)', 146–147.
- 53 Linehan, *At the Edge of Reformation*, 60–61.
- 54 *Las Siete Partidas*, Partida II, Título XV, Ley 2.
- 55 González Jiménez, *Alfonso X el Sabio*, 359–367 and O'Callaghan, *El rey Sabio*, 315–317.
- 56 *Castigos del rey don Sancho*, 165.
- 57 *Estoria de Espanna Digital*, ms E2, ch. 825, 139v. [online] <http://estoria.bham.ac.uk/edition/> (Accessed 6 February 2020).

- 58 *CAX*, 211.
- 59 *CFIV*, ch. V, par. 5.
- 60 *Crónica de Castilla*, Introd., pars. 26–29.
- 61 Estepa Díez, ‘La monarquía castellana’, 97.
- 62 Francisco J. Hernández highlights how the notion was developed after the wedding agreement with Portugal: Hernández, ‘Historiografía y propaganda’, 398–402.
- 63 *CAXI*, 222.

### 3 **Royal itineration and kingship in Castile (1252–1350)**

#### The kingdom's capitals and the absence of a dynastic mausoleum

Over the course of the century that elapsed between 1252 and 1350, kings continued to travel the length and breadth of Castile. These royal itineraries demonstrate the kingdom's acute territorial differences: the majority of these royal visits were made to a few select locations, while other places were rarely or never graced with the monarch's presence. The itinerant nature of the Castilian monarchy was by no means an exception in Europe, as elsewhere in Europe kings continued to travel throughout their dominions and beyond during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Nonetheless, it is striking that the Castilian royal chancery did not settle down in one place in this period. In this sense Castile is indeed an exceptional case: no city was given the status of the kingdom's capital, although Valladolid, Burgos, and Seville enjoyed a pre-eminent status. Furthermore, there was a ceremonial dimension to this idiosyncrasy: the Castilian monarchy was the only one in western Europe that did not establish a dynastic mausoleum during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. However, these distinctive features should not be interpreted as an indication that Castile was in any way lagging behind developments being taken up elsewhere; instead it reveals the kingdom's heterogeneity, a result of the military expansion achieved during the reign of Fernando III, and, on the other hand, the dynastic issues faced by the kings of this period, whose legitimacy was put into question.

#### **'Itinerant kingship' and royal government in Castile (1252–1350)**

Despite the notorious absence of the royal chancery's registers for this period, it has been possible to reconstruct the royal itineraries of Alfonso X, Fernando IV, and Alfonso XI.<sup>1</sup> In addition, a decade ago the journal *e-Spania* devoted a special issue to the theme of the *Itinérance des cours*, whereby it explored the issue of whether it was possible to identify an Iberian model of royal itinerance.<sup>2</sup> However, no attempt has been made to undertake an overarching analysis of the Castilian royal itineraries during this period, nor has the seminal issue of the king's physical presence been examined in the depth it deserves. What is more, the traditional, prevailing perception of royal itinerance views it as an inferior evolutionary stage of kingship that was gradually replaced by the

'modern' impersonal royal government being developed at that time. In other words, the Castilian monarchy underwent the same process as their European counterparts, but at a slower pace. As a result, during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the royal chancery maintained its itinerant practice while elsewhere in western Europe these institutions had settled down in fixed locations.<sup>3</sup>

Yet it is wrong to draw a distinction between an itinerant type of kingship and a bureaucratic one, as if they were two distinct forms of exercising power or different stages of an evolutionary process. On the one hand, an itinerant monarchy was structured, even in the Early Middle Ages, through the establishment of centres of power or 'capitals', while on the other, even in the most bureaucratic states of that period, the ruler's physical presence continued to play a fundamental role.<sup>4</sup> This is demonstrated by the models of kingship developed in western Europe between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries: the administrative development and settling down of chanceries did not lead to the end of royal mobility.<sup>5</sup> The monarch's physical presence continued to be of immense importance, above all at key moments when royal authority had to be reaffirmed in a specific territory. For example, it was political decisions that underpinned the mobility of the Angevin monarchs in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, as opposed to their being unable to establish a sedentary court. Furthermore, the establishment of the royal chancery in London in the mid-fourteenth century by no means led to the end of royal itinerance in England. For example, during Henry IV's troubled reign (r. 1399–1413) his ability to travel the length and breadth of his kingdom was fundamental to maintain control over his lands, and this is demonstrated by the royal itineraries of 1403 and 1405.<sup>6</sup>

A similar situation is noted elsewhere, such as France and Aragón. The itineraries of French kings such as Philippe VI (r. 1328–1350) or even Louis XI (r. 1461–1483) demonstrate how they were indefatigable travellers. Likewise, royal visits frequently took place in locations where there had been recent challenges to royal power. For example, Charles VI (r. 1380–1422) visited Rouen in 1382, following the Harelle revolt, and Charles VII (r. 1422–1461) travelled to Lyon for a similar purpose in 1436 in the wake of the Rebeyne uprising.<sup>7</sup> The example of Aragón, on the other hand, shows how a distinction cannot be drawn between itinerant and bureaucratic modes of kingship. The itinerary of Pere II (r. 1276–1285) in 1280 highlights the importance of the monarch's physical presence: he travelled to Balaguer in June in order to put an end to a rebellion of some Catalan nobles. Nonetheless, the documents issued by the royal chancery during May that same year reached the furthest corners of the kingdom.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, Jaume II's creation of the royal archive in 1318 evidently did not lead to the end of royal itinerance. For example, Pere III (r. 1336–1387) covered more than 1,800 kilometres over the course of 1363.<sup>9</sup>

In Castile, the fact that the royal administrative offices continued to be itinerant until a later date than other west European kingdoms does not mean that it was an 'itinerant monarchy' in which kingship was exercised in a radically distinct manner. The Castilian monarchs who reigned between the thirteenth and fifteenth (and even sixteenth) centuries continued to travel constantly, but these

itineraries, as will be seen below, were highly routine and included long stays in the main towns of the kingdom. More importantly, royal mobility was unrelated to the day-to-day exercise of justice or government, and was instead prompted by other motives, above all to assert royal authority wherever it had been questioned. Thereby, the Castilian kings' *modus operandi* was similar to that of their European counterparts, with the only difference being that the royal chancery accompanied them on their itineraries for a longer period.

The *Espéculo* and the *Partidas* testify to the considerable degree of bureaucratisation achieved by the Castilian royal chancery in the second half of the thirteenth century. Although these ordinances represent an idealisation of how royal government was intended to be like, it is evident that from the reign of Alfonso X onwards the staff who worked at the royal chancery increased its number and the roles they performed became increasingly specialised.<sup>10</sup> This process continued during his successors' reigns, during which time a number of different offices were established within the chancery, which undertook matters related to tax collection and justice. There was even a clerk's office that was exclusively devoted to issuing *privilegios rodados*.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, the *Audien-cia*, a high court of justice appointed by the king, was documented for the first time in the reign of Alfonso XI.<sup>12</sup>

Notwithstanding the major administrative developments that took place at that time, the royal chancery continued to accompany the monarch as he travelled across the kingdom as a standard practice. A detailed study of the chancery registers from 1292 to 1294, the only ones to survive from this period, show that the chancery was only separated from Sancho IV on exceptional occasions and then solely for a brief period of time.<sup>13</sup> When the monarch was undertaking a military campaign, the chancery would be stationed in a fixed place, although royal diplomas were frequently issued during sieges and other military operations, which suggests that this key element of government accompanied the king to the battlefield. It is also feasible that its offices were set up away in a safe place, but some of the chancery officials and the royal seals accompanied the army. In any case, it was exceptional that the royal chancery (or a part of it) did not travel with the king during the 100 years from 1252 to 1350.<sup>14</sup>

From 1379 onwards, the Castilian monarchy's various administrative and judicial offices were increasingly installed in Valladolid. Nonetheless, despite the *Cortes* having demanded in 1387 that the chancery be established in a set place, this did not happen until 1442.<sup>15</sup> Likewise, the Castilian monarchy did not create a royal archive until 1540, far later than other European kingdoms.<sup>16</sup> It is hard to explain why it took so much longer for Castile to settle down the chancery in a fixed location, as well as create a royal archive, compared to other European monarchies. In my opinion, this distinction is related to the uncertainty over which town should serve as the kingdom's capital, as opposed to any lack of development of the regnal state. The paradox between the southern lands, where kings were able to act more freely, and a northern area, in which the monarch's physical presence became a vital necessity at times of conflict, which frequently arose between 1272 and 1371, was not clearly resolved

in favour of Valladolid until the Trastámara era.<sup>17</sup> I will turn to address these issues briefly here before proceeding.

The chancery's mobility was unrelated to the day-to-day exercise of justice or government. One of the elements that indicated the growing strength of the regnal state during the thirteenth century was the configuration of administrative districts overseen by a series of officials, the *merinos* and *adelantados*, who represented the king across the kingdom.<sup>18</sup> The idea of a monarch who travelled through the kingdom in order to exercise justice in-person was, essentially, a literary *topos*, as these duties befell the king's territorial officials or else the court's clerks. On the other hand, royal itineraries combined lengthy stays in the kingdom's principal towns with considerable periods of travelling, whereby most administrative activity was undertaken in the major urban centres, which is where those seeking royal justice would gather. Although the monarchy issued documents from, at least, 268 different locations between 1252 and 1350, more than half of these were written in Toledo, Seville, Burgos, and Valladolid.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, royal itinerance in Castile, despite the king usually being accompanied by the royal chancery, was essentially no different to that of other monarchies.

There were many causes that impelled the kings to travel throughout their kingdom. The start of a reign tended to be a period marked by a burst of activity, such as the monarch's first visit to key cities, which was a motive for celebrations involving the organisation of a ritualised and complex ceremonial event, such as Alfonso XI's first visit to Seville in 1327.<sup>20</sup> Then, as the years went by, the royal itineraries responded to military, diplomatic, and devotional concerns as well as hunting, which was an activity that played a very significant role in defining where and when the Castilian monarchs travelled between 1252 and 1350.<sup>21</sup> Aside from these situations, the monarch's physical presence was most urgently required to tackle challenges to royal authority, an issue which, as was commented above, was common in all medieval kingdoms and was unrelated to whether the royal chancery was itinerant or sedentary.

In Castile, good government was closely associated with mobility. The *Crónica de Alfonso XI* emphasised the young monarch's firm intention that once he had come of age, he would leave Valladolid to '*andar por sus rreynos*', as it was only by him travelling throughout his kingdoms that order and justice could be re-established.<sup>22</sup> This idea recurs in various types of text, from the proceedings of the *Cortes* to the legal codes drawn up at that time. The idea of a monarch who exercised justice in-person in this period was essentially a literary *topos*. The constant promises made by the Castilian kings at the *Cortes* that they would personally mete out justice several days a week demonstrates their customary failure to fulfil what was an increasingly bureaucratised activity.<sup>23</sup> However, that does not undermine the fact that the figure of the king was key for the maintenance of peace. In relation to this, two issues require closer scrutiny: the Castilian monarchy's concern to control the kingdom's fortresses and the greater importance ascribed to the monarch's physical presence in the northern part of the kingdom.

The reigns of Alfonso X and, in particular, Alfonso XI were of immense importance for the definition of a notion of royal *superioritas* that affirmed royal control over all the kingdom's fortresses. The *Partidas* had already underscored the special status of the kingdom's fortifications and the severe punishments that were to be meted out to those who took control of them without the king's consent.<sup>24</sup> However, it was the ordinance issued in Burgos in 1338, and subsequently ratified in Alcalá in 1348, which stipulated that all the kingdom's strongholds, whether belonging to the nobility, the Church or the Military Orders fell under royal protection.<sup>25</sup> The ordinances of 1338 and 1348 repeat the same idea as a means to justify the monarchy's right to control the kingdom's fortresses: it was necessary to suppress crime (*malfetrías*) and stifle seigneurial violence.<sup>26</sup> Once more, an effort was made to project an image of the king as a guarantor of order and justice.

The royal chronicles present numerous examples of how this ideal was put into practice. Descriptions of how the Castilian monarchs travelled to the kingdom's fortresses in order to negotiate access to it and suppress any rebel nobles is a recurring motif in these texts. Such scenes reveal how important it was for the Castilian monarchy to take control of the kingdom's strongholds, and how the king's physical presence played a critical role to achieve this aim. An illustrative example is provided by the events of 1334, when Alfonso XI travelled to the fortress of Rojas in La Bureba (Burgos). The fortress belonged to Lope Díaz de Rojas, a vassal of Juan Manuel, who at that time was in the midst of a confrontation with the monarch. Lope Díaz appointed Diego Gil de Humada to act on his behalf as governor. Humada's refusal to grant access to the king led to an attack being launched by members of the royal retinue. After hours of combat, the noble agreed to surrender the fortress so long as his life and that of his supporters were pardoned, which Alfonso XI agreed to. However, once they had handed over the fortress, the monarch, in agreement with the nobles who accompanied him, accused the governor of treason for attacking the royal banner with stones and arrows, whereby it was ordered that he be executed along with 17 other men. The *Crónica de Alfonso XI* goes on to point out that from then on, the *fijosdalgo* (hidalgo) who paid homage to a *ricohombre*, *caballero* or other *fijodalgo* for ruling a castle on his behalf demanded the right to grant the king access to the fortress irrespective of any oaths and obligations he had made to its lord.<sup>27</sup> This final part of the royal chronicle's account most likely reveals the royal ideological discourse rather than the actual views of the *fijosdalgo*. In any case, Humadas' cruel fate reveals the zeal with which the Castilian monarchs were prepared to defend their right to control all the strongholds across their kingdom and how important the king's physical presence was to achieve this aim; it forced rebellious nobles to grant him access, or else suffer the consequences of being accused of treason.

The king's right to be granted access to a fortress is an explicit example of the power that imbued the personal figure of the monarch, but it was not the only one. The association between mobility and good government is a recurring theme in the royal chronicles, which indicates, for instance, that political crises

resulted from the king's absence. In a similar vein, it is constantly emphasised the need for the monarch to make his appearance in one place in order to resolve a problem. On the other hand, when considering the principal conflicts of this period, it may also be noted that the monarch's physical presence was considered to be vital in the northern region of the kingdom, yet it was not deemed essential in the southern territories. For example, the *Crónica de Alfonso X* links the monarch's absence to the outbreak of the noble rebellion in 1272. According to the chronicler, when the Wise King departed for Murcia, the infante Felipe and Nuño González de Lara began plotting along with the other nobles involved. The text also underscores how the magnates made haste to establish an alliance with Granada and Navarre before the king returned to Castile.<sup>28</sup>

The troubled beginning of Fernando IV's reign once more demonstrates the importance of the monarch's physical presence in the northern part of the kingdom. Between 1295 and 1296, the child king and his mother, María de Molina, had to travel in-person to Toro, Zamora, Salamanca, and Segovia in order to ensure these towns' loyalty to the king as opposed to the other pretenders to the throne. The royal chronicle recounts the problems they faced in the last three cities, although they eventually managed to overcome the initial local resistance and were welcomed by the municipal government. As was the case with the fortresses, the monarch's appearance in-person at the gates of a town undoubtedly constituted a key gesture that served to re-establish royal authority. In contrast, Fernando IV did not travel to Andalusia until 1303, which indicates his greater capacity to control the region without having to travel there.

Furthermore, the *Crónica de Fernando IV* expressed disapproval of the king's journey to Andalusia. His visit to Seville was described as a manoeuvre instigated by the infante Juan and Juan Núñez II de Lara to ensure they would maintain their ascendancy over the young monarch. Moreover, María de Molina, who always appears as the voice of reason in the royal chronicle, feared that her son's departure would lead to the revolts of the past flaring up again in Castile. According to the text, the queen wrote to her son, warning him that if he did not return as quickly as he could, the whole land would be in danger ('*sy el rey non viniese tan ayna, toda la tierra seria en peligro e en perdimiento*').<sup>29</sup>

The internal conflicts that Alfonso XI had to confront in the first years of his adult reign provide another example of this duality. In 1328, the monarch had to travel in-person to Valladolid to quell the uprising of various Castilian towns against the royal favourite (*privado*), Count Alvar Núñez. Valladolid opened its gates once the noble had fallen from grace. Immediately afterwards, representatives of Toro and Zamora wrote to the king, asking him to travel to their towns so they could welcome him and demonstrate their loyalty.<sup>30</sup> On the other hand, around the same time various other uprisings against royal authority broke out in Niebla and Murcia, but Alfonso XI managed to re-establish control over both areas simply by sending missives to his officials there.<sup>31</sup> The different values ascribed to the monarch's physical presence, which was deemed less necessary

in the more recently conquered zones, was reflected in the royal itineraries undertaken between 1252 and 1350. These itineraries were concentrated in the northern half of the kingdom while the monarchs would often spend long periods without visiting their southern lands.

### Royal itineraries between 1252 and 1350

During the century comprised between 1252 and 1350, the Castilian kings were accustomed to travel long distances. Only on rare occasions – besides military campaigns – did their journeys take them beyond the frontiers of their kingdom, but internal conflict and warfare in conjunction with the scale of Castile, which was considerable in European terms, meant that Alfonso X, Sancho IV, Fernando IV, and Alfonso XI travelled thousands of kilometres over the course of their reigns.

Table 3.1<sup>32</sup> lists the varying distances of the royal itineraries undertaken and calculates the distance covered annually by each of the four monarchs. It clearly shows that there was no progressive reduction in itinerance over this period. Despite his long journey to Beaucaire in 1274–1275 for the *fecho del imperio*, Alfonso X was the most sedentary of the monarchs of this period. The Wise King spent whole years in Seville (1253, 1263) and Toledo (1259), although his deposition in 1282 also contributed to this reduced mobility, and only during one-third of the years of his reign did he cover more than 1,500 kilometres. In contrast, his successors all travelled a far higher number of kilometres and only Alfonso XI, in 1343 and 1350, during the sieges of Algeciras and Gibraltar, respectively, spent a whole year of his adult life in the same place. The considerable political

*Table 3.1* Distances covered by royal itineraries per year and as a percentage of the total reign (1252–1350)

<i>Distance covered</i>	<i>Alfonso X (1252–1284)</i>	<i>Sancho IV (1284–1295)</i>	<i>Fernando IV (1295–1312)</i>	<i>Alfonso XI (1325–1350)</i>
No journeys made	5 (15.15%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (7.69%)
Less than 500 km	7 (21.21%)	1 (8.33%)	2 (11.11%)	1 (3.84%)
500–1,000 km	7 (21.21%)	0 (0%)	6 (33.33%)	5 (19.23%)
1,000–1,500 km	3 (9.09%)	1 (8.33%)	1 (5.55%)	3 (11.53%)
1,500–2,000 km	6 (18.18%)	5 (41.66%)	6 (33.33%)	7 (26.92%)
More than 2,000 km	5 (15.15%)	5 (41.66%)	3 (16.66%)	8 (30.76%)
Total number of years	33	12	18	26

instability of Sancho IV's reign and the numerous diplomatic journeys he had to undertake meant that he scarcely had a moment's rest. With regard to Fernando IV, he undertook some very short itineraries during his minority. Although he travelled on a regular basis, he did so within a very limited radius of distance. This situation, however, changed in the following years.

On three occasions (1293, 1334, and 1340) Castilian kings travelled over 3,000 kilometres in a single year. The years 1334 and 1340 were marked by Alfonso XI's unceasing military and political activity, and he travelled across his dominions from north to south. With regard to Sancho IV, the figure for 1293 is explained, amongst other reasons, by the survival of the chancery registers, which reveal the king's daily journeys. Thereby, the scarcity of documentation for the other years means that we lack information on the intermediary phases of itineraries, as well as additional journeys that would have been made by the Castilian kings during the period. As a result, the distances covered would have been even longer.

The Castilian monarchs could cover long distances annually, but their itineraries were very repetitive. Table 3.2<sup>33</sup> shows the marked concentration of their itinerance: although a king could visit a high number of different places throughout his reign, only a few received royal visits on a frequent basis. The total number of places visited is less relevant, as it is the result of the disparate extant information. If it were possible to reconstruct the royal itineraries on a day-to-day basis, the number of places visited would be far higher and very similar across all the reigns. Over the course of a journey, there were small populations where the royal party would spend the night *en route* to a large town or city, but no register of this is to be found in the extant documents. On the other hand, it may be noted that less than 20 places were visited on more than five occasions by each king and that only the main localities of the kingdom received the monarchs on a frequent basis. The itinerary of Sancho IV between 1292 and 1294 provides the clearest illustration of these issues. Of the 695 days that appear in the chancery registers, Sancho visited up to 142 different places, although 55% of the time he was in four locations: Valladolid, Burgos, Toro, and Palencia.<sup>34</sup> Once again, it becomes apparent that there is no

Table 3.2 Places visited by the Castilian kings (1252–1350)

<i>Places visited</i>	<i>Alfonso X (1252–1284)</i>	<i>Sancho IV (1284–1295)</i>	<i>Fernando IV (1295–1312)</i>	<i>Alfonso XI (1312–1350)</i>
Total number of places visited	153	176	90	205
Places visited once or twice	125 (81.69%)	137 (77.84%)	61 (67.77%)	167 (81.46%)
Places visited five times or more	6 (3.92%)	14 (7.95%)	15 (16.66%)	18 (8.78%)
Places visited ten times or more	4 (2.61%)	3 (1.70%)	5 (5.55%)	5 (2.43%)

correlation between the royal itineraries and the day-to-day business of the kingdom's administration despite the fact that the chancery continued to accompany the monarch.

### **Royal itineraries and capitals: A geography of kingship<sup>35</sup>**

The geographical concentration of the royal itineraries reveals how kings above all favoured a limited series of places. Through their officials or mis-sives, the monarchs could, with more or less difficulty, exercise their authority across the length and breadth of the kingdom, but only a few locations were granted the honour of the royal presence on a customary basis. These places exercised the functions of a capital. In other words, these towns were the administrative and ceremonial centres of the Castilian monarchy, as well as the places where royal memory was preserved.

The predilection for a series of places was a common characteristic of all the European monarchies. Pere II of Aragón drew up a set of ordinances in 1277 in which he sought to regulate the patterns of the court's movement. Thereby, he would reside in Valencia between the months of November and February, Aragón between March and June, and Catalonia from July to October. Unsurprisingly, this rigorous conception of royal mobility was not even respected by the king, as royal itineraries were conditioned by factors beyond his control.<sup>36</sup> Nonetheless, these ordinances highlight the importance of the king's physical presence and his intention to strike a balance between the different territories that made up the Crown of Aragón.

The Portuguese monarchs visited almost all the regions of their kingdom, except those that were scarcely populated, such as the coastal zone of the Alentejo and the frontier region of *Tras os Montes*. The most oft-visited regions were those in the central and coastal regions, and in particular Lisbon, Santarém, Évora, and Coimbra. During the fifteenth century Oporto was added to this list, and despite not being visited on a frequent basis, the Portuguese kings often stayed there for protracted periods.<sup>37</sup>

Aside from the renowned legal and linguistic differences between the north and south, in France there was also a marked contrast between east and west. The eastern region was closer to the heart of royal power in Paris, dominated by urban communes which supplied the staff of the royal administration. On the other hand, the western part of the country was home to the kingdom's most powerful and problematic vassals and, as was the case in Brittany, pronounced regional identities were formed in opposition to the monarch's 'central' authority.<sup>38</sup>

With regard to the journeys made by the English kings, their travels extended to Scotland, Wales, and the European continent; however, the majority of the royal itineraries concentrated in the London area, and this became more apparent over time. The itineraries of Edward I (r. 1272–1307) and Edward II (r. 1307–1326) show how the monarchs spent the greater part of their time in London, Westminster, and other places close to the English capital.<sup>39</sup> The drastic reduction of royal residences in the Late Middle Ages is

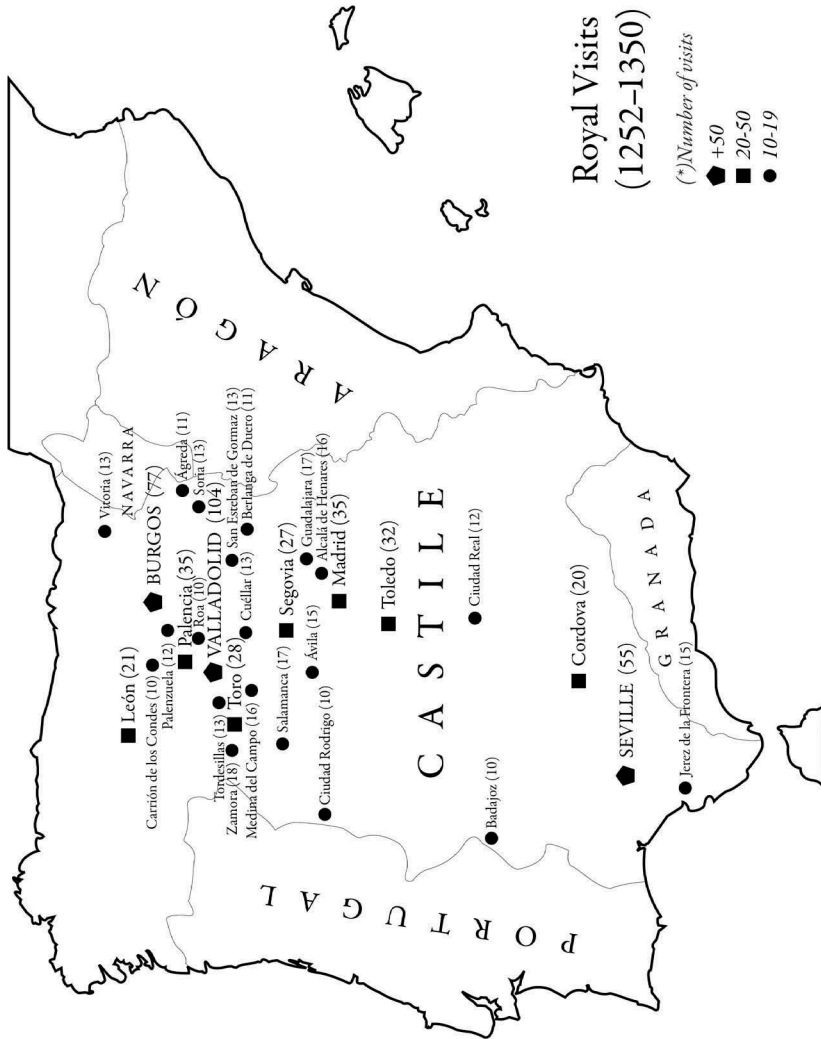
a further indication of London's primacy. Of the 20 houses that Edward I inherited in 1272, only six continued to be a royal property in 1485 (Clarendon, Clipstone, Havering, Windsor, Woodstock, and Westminster) and all of them were one day away from London.<sup>40</sup>

In Castile, the imbalance of royal visits to some places as opposed to others shows the monarch's perception of each territory's status within the kingdom. Map 3.1 shows 30 locations that received, at least, ten royal visits in the century between 1252 and 1350. It clearly depicts the marked contrast between the area comprised between the rivers Douro and Tagus, which concentrated the majority of the royal itineraries, and other regions that were completely marginalised from these visits, and where the sight of the monarch was an exceptional and even unusual occurrence. With regard to the places the monarchs chose to visit, the kingdom can be divided into four different categories: the centre, the core of royal power and where the majority of the monarchs' itinerant activity took place; the 'central periphery', an oxymoron which reflects royal authority's strength in these areas despite the king's visits being sporadic; stop-off and rendezvous locations, or, in other words, the places that the monarchs visited when travelling to other regions, or that were frontier locations used for diplomatic meetings; and the periphery, the parts of the kingdom that were on the margins of the royal itineraries and were of secondary interest to the kings.

### ***From the Douro to the Tagus: The centre of the kingdom***

The recurring presence of the Castilian kings in the area between the rivers Douro and Tagus indicates the fundamental importance of these territories. The great majority of the locations that were most often frequented by monarchs in this 100-year period were in this region. Valladolid stands out above any other place for its number of visits; its central role is also demonstrated by the fact that nearly 80% of the locations on the map are concentrated within a radius of 200 kilometres from this town.

Valladolid and Burgos established the fundamental axis around which kingship revolved in this period, although over the course of these 100 years there was a growing tendency to break with this dual status in favour of Valladolid. Alfonso X frequented Burgos and Seville much more assiduously than Valladolid, but from the reign of Sancho IV onwards and, especially, during the minority of Fernando IV, Valladolid was established as the nucleus of royal power in Castile. Although the town had been part of the royal demesne since the mid-eleventh century,<sup>41</sup> it was at this time when it achieved its pre-eminent position within the kingdom. Possibly the example that best symbolises this communion between the town and the Castilian monarchy was the distinction of '*bonos et leales*' (good and loyal) that Alfonso XI bestowed on its inhabitants in 1328. The privilege acknowledged the many services that Valladolid provided to his father and him, and the fact that he had been raised by the local council following the death of María de Molina in 1321.<sup>42</sup>



Map 3.1 Royal Visits (1252-1350)  
 Source: © Rubén Cascado Montes and Fernando Arias Guillén

From the 1180s onwards, Burgos was given the title of 'head of Castile' (*caput Castelle*), which indicates its privileged status and how it was considered the centre of the kingdom.<sup>43</sup> The special consideration bestowed upon the city was also demonstrated by the fact that it was the locality that enjoyed the right to speak first at the *Cortes* meetings, as is recalled by the chronicler Pedro López de Ayala in his account of the dispute with Toledo over this privilege, which took place in 1351.<sup>44</sup> Between 1252 and 1350, Burgos was the monarchs' second most visited location; nonetheless, it was still a significant way behind Valladolid. It could be said that the city was the kingdom's 'ceremonial capital': kings used it for key events that were intended to extoll their authority. It was also in Burgos that the most important meetings of the *Cortes* were held and where the most far-reaching decisions for the whole kingdom were announced. The 1301 reading of the papal bulls that legitimised Fernando IV, the 1332 coronation of Alfonso XI, the *Cortes* held in 1272 and 1276, in which Alfonso X sought to suppress the nobles' rebellion and proclaim Sancho IV as heir, and, finally, the meeting held in 1342 to agree on the collection of the *alcabala* across the whole kingdom all took place in Burgos. In other words, this city served as the kingdom's public arena: the privileged place where kings announced important decisions and celebrated their power.<sup>45</sup>

Map 3.1 also shows the monarchs' neglect of León. While Toro enjoyed an important status due to its being part of the queen's estates,<sup>46</sup> other locations such as Zamora or Salamanca, although visited from time to time, were by no means the kings' favourite locations. The inclusion of León itself is somewhat deceptive, as this above all reflects Fernando IV's passion for hunting and the influence exerted over him by the infante Juan. Of the 21 royal visits, 13 were undertaken by this monarch, while Sancho IV and Alfonso XI rarely visited this historic capital and, once he had become king, Alfonso X never did so. The *Crónica de Fernando IV* mentions, disapprovingly, how the young king liked to spend long stays in the kingdom of León, devoting himself to the chase under the nefarious influence of his uncle.<sup>47</sup>

Hunting also explains the immense importance attained by Madrid during the reign of Alfonso XI. Practically half of the hunting anecdotes recorded in the *Libro de la Montería* took place in Madrid, and numerous locations in the surrounding region were frequented by the monarch so that he could devote himself to this pursuit.<sup>48</sup> From the late 1330s onwards, Alfonso XI became accustomed almost on a routine basis to spend the final months of the year in this region. This habit was consolidated by Enrique III (r. 1390–1406) and was continued into the Early Modern (and Modern) period. Madrid offered a central geographical position between the territories of the northern *meseta* and the kingdom's southern regions and it was unencumbered by any dominant municipal and ecclesiastical authorities. Nevertheless, it is difficult to avoid drawing the conclusion that this location became the capital of the Hispanic monarchy and later of Spain on the basis of the good hunting to be found in its environs.

By contrast, Toledo underwent a marked decline in the first half of the fourteenth century. Alfonso X visited the historic Visigoth capital frequently and

even spent the whole of 1259 there. Likewise, Sancho IV added to the city's renown by choosing it as the site of his coronation and burial, although his ingenuous wish that all his successors would be crowned there too did not come to pass.<sup>49</sup> Toledo was not removed from the royal itineraries, but it lost importance to Madrid from the reign of Alfonso XI onwards. Although the city once more regained its fame under the Trastámara monarchs, it never attained a position of pre-eminence in the kingdom. Indeed, as Peter Linehan has noted, Toledo's symbolic decline could have been caused by the emergence of a Castilian territorial identity that rendered the legacy of the Visigoth kingdom increasingly less relevant.<sup>50</sup>

### *Andalusia and Murcia: A 'central periphery'*

Seville was the Castilian kings' third most visited city during the 100 years studied here. Seville, which the *Setenario* described as the noblest city in the world ('*es la mas noble et fue que todas las otras del mundo*'),<sup>51</sup> was of enormous symbolic value. Not surprisingly, it was Alfonso X's favourite place. The Wise King spent very long periods of time there: almost all of the first two years of his reign were lived there; later, between the end of the 1260 and September 1268 he resided there almost continually; and finally, he returned there during the last bitter years of his life, following his deposition in 1282.<sup>52</sup> However, Sancho IV and Fernando IV only travelled to Seville on a handful of occasions. In the 43 years between the death of Alfonso X and the triumphal entry of Alfonso XI in 1327, when the king visited the city for the first time, Seville only enjoyed nine royal visits. The city on the banks of the Guadalquivir recovered its importance during the reign of Alfonso XI, above all thanks to the monarch's frequent campaigns on the *Frontera* against Granada and the Marinids. His son, Pedro I, undertook important reforms to the splendid Islamic *alcázar* and established his residence there on an almost permanent basis.<sup>53</sup> Seville could perhaps have become the kingdom's capital.<sup>54</sup> However, the arrival of the Trastámaras changed the city's status, and Seville lost importance in the eyes of the Castilian monarchy to such an extent that Juan II (r. 1406–1454) never visited it once during his long reign.<sup>55</sup>

The rest of Andalusia and Murcia were scarcely visited by the Castilian monarchs, with the exception of Cordova and Jerez de la Frontera. The historic caliphal capital was a city of demographic importance, and above all, a customary stopping-off point *en route* to Seville. The significance of Jerez de la Frontera is explained by the intense military activity undertaken in the Strait of Gibraltar during this period. Lastly, Murcia provides an illustrative case of the Castilian monarchy's view of the southern regions. Between March 1271 and June of the following year, Alfonso X spent 15 months in the town in order to organise the region's administration,<sup>56</sup> but none of his immediate successors travelled there.<sup>57</sup>

The lack of attention the kings paid to these southern regions by no means resulted in the underdevelopment of royal government there. As discussed in

the previous chapter, the Castilian monarchy could act more freely in these regions and even exported the legal or fiscal innovations that it trialled there to its northern territories. The kingdom's fiscal geography, in so far as the existing data reveals, shows the enormous importance of the southern territories despite the fact that they were rarely granted the honour of beholding the monarch himself. In the fifteenth century, between 60 and 65% of the Castilian monarchy's income preceded from the double axis established by Burgos–Valladolid–Segovia and Toledo–Cordova–Seville.<sup>58</sup> In other words, although Andalusia was a peripheral place for the royal itineraries, it was of central importance for the Castilian monarchy.

### ***The north-eastern frontier and the 'islands' of realengo: Stop-offs and rendezvous places***

A number of the towns included among those most visited by the monarchs between 1252 and 1350 were of little importance. However, their location converted them into significant sites along the royal itineraries, as they were places of rendezvous or locations that had to be travelled through. In the north-eastern part of the kingdom, there is a remarkable concentration of this class of location: Soria, San Esteban de Gormaz, Berlanga de Duero, Roa, and Ágreda. In these places, diplomatic meetings were held between the Castilian kings with their Aragonese counterparts, or they were a stop-off between Valladolid and Aragón. Vitoria played a similar role, and Alfonso X and Sancho IV travelled there on various occasions to hold meetings with the French kings, above all in relation to the Wise King's controversial succession and the destiny of the sons of Fernando de la Cerda. Additionally, Vitoria's importance relied on being part of the royal demesne, an 'island' surrounded by seigneurial lordships from which Alfonso XI extended royal authority in the area, as analysed in Chapter 2.

Badajoz and Ciudad Real were also two islands of *realengo* in regions dominated by ecclesiastical estates, especially those of the Military Orders. Badajoz was converted into a stopping-off point on royal journeys, although it was common that the monarchs' presence there was linked to an interview with the Portuguese kings. With regard to Ciudad Real, this was a preferred stopping-off point on the travels the kings made to Andalusia, as it linked the southern territories to Toledo. Given its status as an intermediary location, few documents were issued from this town in La Mancha. Therefore, it is feasible that it would have received more visits from the monarchs, as it provided an almost obligatory stopping-off point on the journey to the *Frontera*, as the infante Fernando de la Cerda discovered all too tragically, when he died there in 1275 *en route* to confront the Marinid invasion.<sup>59</sup>

### ***The northern coast: The peripheral regions of the kingdom***

In the eyes of the Castilian monarchy, the northern coast was a peripheral place within their dominions. It was on just a few occasions that the royal itineraries

travelled across these lands, and decades (or even centuries) could pass without these locations being regaled with the presence of the monarch. The most extreme case is that of present Cantabria, which was never visited by the Castilian kings in this period.

The absence of the kings from these regions does not mean that they were completely forgotten by the Castilian monarchy. From the second half of the twelfth century, kings implemented an active policy of founding new towns in Cantabria. Generous fiscal exemptions, intended to encourage trade, led to the establishment of important royal towns in a region dominated by seigneurial lordships.<sup>60</sup> Therefore, royal authority was extended to these places, although the contribution in men and resources provided by this area was modest. The *Libro Becerro de las Behetrías* (1351) records Santander, Laredo, and Castro Urdiales' naval obligations; they each had to send ships to serve in the royal fleet when required, in return for which they enjoyed numerous tax franchises.<sup>61</sup> Likewise, a missive from Alfonso XI to the council of San Sebastián in 1345 documents the privileges it had been granted. The monarch apologised for obliging the town to supply ships and galleys for the siege of Algeciras (1342–1344) and reiterated that this demand would not become customary.<sup>62</sup> Unlike Cantabria, the northern Basque territories did receive a few royal visits during this period, although these were exceptional events.

The case of Asturias once more demonstrates how the peripheral nature of these regions did not result in the Castilian monarchy failing to demonstrate its authority over them. At the end of 1306, Fernando IV wanted to travel to Asturias in order to revoke the concessions he had given to Pedro Ponce de León, a local *ricohombre*. However, María de Molina dissuaded him from doing it on the basis of the region's harshness, the bad weather and the logistical problems he would encounter (*la tierra de Asturias era muy fuerte para entrar e de andar por ella, e otrosi que el tienpo era muy fuerte de nieues e de aguas e de yelos, e otrosi que non fallaria vianda, e que perderia los cauallos*). Finally, thanks to the queen mother's mediation, the monarch reached an agreement with the Asturian noble, who kept the lordship of Tineo, although he was forced to relinquish Allande.<sup>63</sup> Although the monarch managed to impose his authority, it is evident that Asturias was viewed as a remote and inhospitable region.

Throughout this period, the Castilian kings only made one visit to Asturias. In the summer of 1345, Alfonso XI travelled to Oviedo in order to celebrate the capture of Algeciras, to venerate the local relics, and, possibly, to demand the cathedral chapter the payment of a subsidy they owed since 1339. Although in 1359 the 40,000 *maravedís* that were owed had still not been paid, the journey must have served to re-establish the concord between the see of Oviedo and the king, who donated money for the building of the new cathedral.<sup>64</sup> Alfonso XI also managed to extend his influence in the region by persuading Rodrigo Álvarez de Asturias, lord of Noreña, to adopt Alfonso's son Enrique, who went on to become Count of Trastámara.<sup>65</sup> Once he rose to the throne, Enrique II granted these estates to his illegitimate son, Alfonso Enríquez, although his

property would be confiscated by Juan I following this noble's revolt. In 1388, the monarch created the Principality of Asturias, associating this territory to the heir to the throne.<sup>66</sup> Similarities may be drawn between the evolution of Asturias and Molina and Vizcaya, territories that also entered the royal orbit after being inherited by members of the royal family, prior to becoming part of the royal demesne.

Finally, Galicia was perhaps the kingdom's most recondite region and the most physically and administratively distant from the nucleus of royal power. The *Gran Crónica de Alfonso XI* described the inhabitants of the region in 1333 as people who lived in mountainous areas and needed to be granted money in order to make them leave their lands to join the royal army ('*los de Galizia eran omes de montañas, que era muy graue de los sacar de la tierra a menos de les dar algo*').<sup>67</sup> Once again, the kingdom's fiscal geography provides insights on the region's peripheric status: in the fifteenth century Galicia was characterised by the recurring non-payment of taxes.<sup>68</sup>

The principal motive that drove the Castilian kings to travel there was to visit the Apostle St James' tomb. Pilgrimage sites tend to be associated with remote places located on the limits of Christendom.<sup>69</sup> Santiago de Compostela more than lived up to this image. Alfonso X and Fernando IV never visited Galicia during their reigns, while Sancho IV and Alfonso XI did so twice each. In 1286, Sancho decided to travel to Santiago to thank the apostle for the divine aid he had received while fighting against the Marinids the year before. It has been nearly half a century after the last royal visit made to the apostolic see. Additionally, the *Crónica de Sancho IV* mentions that the monarch used the journey to mete out justice in the region. The combination of devotional and political motives also characterised the visit made in 1291, during which Sancho IV took advantage of his wish to commemorate the feast of St James to also appease Juan Alfonso de Alburquerque, a noble who was conspiring with Juan Núñez I de Lara against the king.<sup>70</sup>

As part of the triumphal *tournee* Alfonso XI staged following his military successes against the Muslims, the king visited Santiago de Compostela in 1345 following his visit to Asturias. However, the most celebrated journey was the one he made in 1332, when he travelled to Santiago in order to be knighted by the very apostle himself.<sup>71</sup> Over the course of the following reigns, Santiago de Compostela lost its pre-eminent status as a devotional centre to the monastery of Guadalupe in Extremadura. As discussed in Chapter 1, this institution became closely associated with the memory of Alfonso XI and the victory at the battle of Río Salado in 1340.<sup>72</sup>

### **A controversial royal memory: The absence of a dynastic mausoleum in Castile<sup>73</sup>**

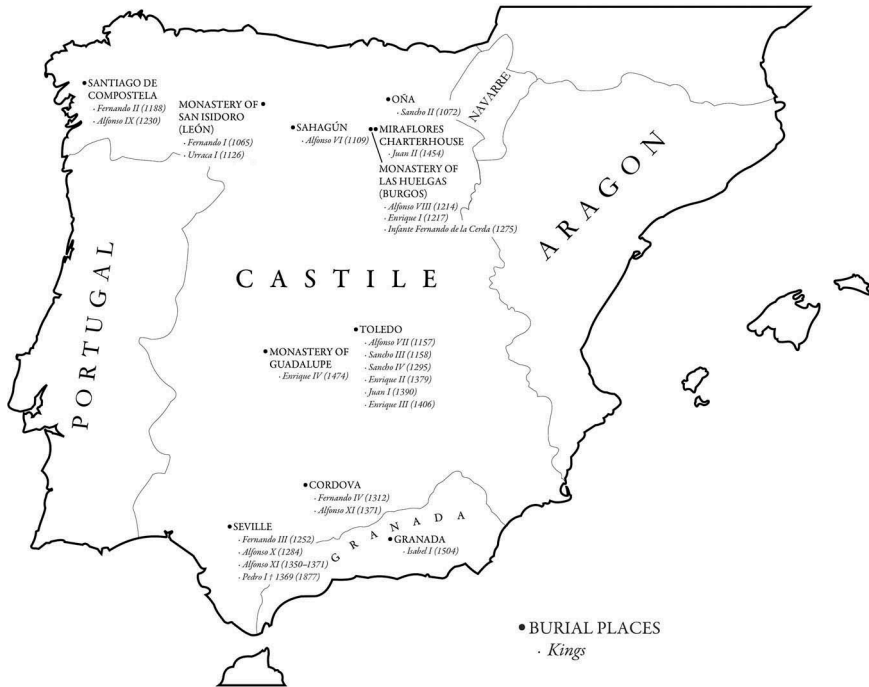
In addition to the monastery of Santa María la Real de Guadalupe, the Castilian kings also forged ties with a series of ecclesiastical institutions from across the kingdom by choosing them as burial sites. The locations selected by these

monarchs as their final resting places thus became spaces associated with the commemoration of the Castilian monarchy for posterity. However, in this regard Castile presented a notable difference compared to the rest of western Europe's medieval monarchies: its funerary sites were widely dispersed. This distinction has been played down by authors such as José Manuel Nieto,<sup>74</sup> while other researchers have proposed a range of interpretations to explain this disparate situation. Ariel Guance has attributed it to the lack of importance that the Castilian kings gave to sacred matters, given that their principal source of legitimation was the ethos of the *Reconquista*.<sup>75</sup> Along similar lines, Raquel Alonso has highlighted that this decision illustrates the Castilian monarchy's tactic of accumulating symbolic spaces in which the royal tombs served as evocative landmarks of its ever-expanding kingdom.<sup>76</sup>

First, it is important to point out that Castile was no different than other kingdoms until the second half of the thirteenth century. After a first phase during which early medieval monarchies began to create dynastic mausolea, papal reform prompted changes to burial customs which led to the development of familial pantheons, which were intended to commemorate the individual memory of the rulers buried there with their closest kin.<sup>77</sup> Likewise, all the European kingdoms underwent important territorial changes between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, which fostered the multiplication of the funerary spaces in England, France, Aragón, Navarre, and Portugal, not just in Castile. However, changes took place between the mid-thirteenth century and the last third of the fourteenth, and the other western monarchies created and consolidated dynastic mausolea which became the favoured burial sites for the majority of their kings.

Henry III (r. 1216–1272) chose Westminster as his place of eternal rest and Edward I (r. 1272–1307) followed in his father's footsteps. From that time on, the majority of English kings chose to do the same.<sup>78</sup> In France, Louis IX (r. 1226–1270) was the true artifice behind the creation of Saint Denis as the mausoleum of the French monarchy; he created tombs and effigies for all his ancestors since the Carolingian era in order to create an idea of uninterrupted continuity.<sup>79</sup> With regard to the Iberian monarchies, they developed their dynastic burial sites by the end of the fourteenth century. Pere III (r. 1336–1387) converted the Cistercian monastery of Poblet into the mausoleum of the kings of Aragón. Alfons I (r. 1164–1196) and Jaume I (r. 1213–1276) had previously chosen to rest in this place, but it was Pere who transformed it into the monarchy's mausoleum by leaving a written statement stipulating that his vassals could not swear loyalty to a new king until he had accepted to be buried in Poblet. The Trastámaras continued this practice during the fifteenth century, with the intention of projecting an idea of dynastic continuity.<sup>80</sup> In Portugal, the monastery of Batalha was converted into the royal mausoleum by João I of Avis (r. 1383–1433) in order to associate his new dynasty with their triumph at the battle of Aljubarrota (1385).<sup>81</sup> In the case of Navarre, the dynastic changes the kingdom underwent in this period interrupted the continuity of burials in the Cathedral of Pamplona, although the Evreux recovered this site as the final resting place for the kings of Navarre from the second half of the fourteenth century onwards.<sup>82</sup>

## Castilian and Leonese Kings' Burial Places (1065–1504)



Map 3.2 Royal Burial Sites (1065–1504)

Source: © Rubén Cascado Montes and Fernando Arias Guillén

It was, therefore, between the mid-thirteenth century and the end of the fourteenth century that Castile emerged as a distinctive case compared to the rest of the western medieval monarchies, and not before. While their Aragonese, Portuguese, Navarrese, French, and English counterparts promoted the creation of a dynastic mausoleum intended to house (almost) all the monarchs of their respective kingdoms, in the case of the Castilian monarchy its funerary spaces continued to be widely dispersed, and there was not a burial site that could claim to be the undisputed royal mausoleum.

In a missive sent to Innocent IV (r. 1243–1254), the Castilian prelates explained to the pontiff that Fernando III had decided to be buried in Seville in order to defend in the next life what he had conquered in this one.<sup>83</sup> In 1284, Alfonso X's mortal remains joined his father's in the Seville Cathedral. Although the Wise King had expressed his wish to be buried in Murcia, which

he had conquered in his youth, he granted his executors the possibility of opting for Seville if they considered it opportune. In the end, it was just the monarch's heart that was deposited in Murcia.<sup>84</sup>

Sancho IV's choice of burial site was governed by his controversial rise to power. His confrontation with his father meant that Seville was by no means ideal, although he commissioned many funerary monuments there, including the construction of Alfonso X's statue and tomb. Thereby, from the outset of his reign he had already decided to be buried in Toledo, where his coronation was held.<sup>85</sup> The possibility of choosing the monastery of Las Huelgas in Burgos, where Alfonso VIII and Enrique I were buried, was ruled out for the king and the rest of his accursed lineage, as his elder brother, Fernando de la Cerda, was also buried in the same place. As discussed in Chapter 1, the heraldic emblem of the infante's tomb was later modified in order to manipulate the memory of Alfonso X's first-born son, whose successors questioned the legitimacy of Sancho IV and his descendants.<sup>86</sup> Building on this strategy, efforts were made to convert the monastery in Burgos into a mausoleum intended for members of the royal family, but not the kings. The will left by the infante Pedro, son of Sancho IV and María de Molina, stipulated that it was his wish to be buried there along with his uncle<sup>87</sup>.

In contrast, his older brother, Fernando IV, kept his distance from the monastery. The royal chronicle indicates that the king's unexpected death while leading a military campaign meant that he had to be buried in Cordova hastily, because the heat made it impossible to transfer his corpse to Toledo or Seville.<sup>88</sup> The royal chronicle reveals that, although the monarch has not decided on his final resting place, the monastery of Las Huelgas was never seen as an option.

Alfonso XI wanted to be buried in Cordova along with his father. In 1343, he ordered the construction of the Church of San Hipólito, which was intended to commemorate his victory at the battle of Rio Salado, and also to serve as a mausoleum for him and Fernando IV. The building was not completed by the time of his death, in 1350, whereby his body was buried in Seville, alongside the other kings lain to rest there (*'do yazian otros rreyes sus antecesores'*). In 1371, Enrique II partially fulfilled his father's wishes and placed the mortal remains of Alfonso XI in the Cathedral of Córdoba.<sup>89</sup> Finally, the bodies of Fernando IV and Alfonso XI were transferred to the Church of San Hipólito in 1736.<sup>90</sup>

Why did none of the funerary spaces chosen by the Castilian kings during this period convert into a royal mausoleum comparable to Westminster, Saint Denis, Poblet, Batalha, or Santa María of Pamplona? The failure in creating a dynastic memory seems to provide the answer. The consolidation of an undisputed royal mausoleum was not a simple process, nor an inevitable outcome for a dynasty. For a burial site to be established as pre-eminent amongst the kingdom's funerary spaces, it had to achieve an indisputable prestige. In other words, it must offer an immense attraction for the kings whereby, instead of choosing their own distinctive burial places as a means to commemorate their individual lives, they would prefer that their burial served to associate themselves with their lineage's legacy.

The presence of a holy king, such as Edward the Confessor or Saint Louis, provided an element of great importance for the consolidation of a royal mausoleum, but it was not an essential prerequisite. On the other hand, the practice of double burial, in which the heart and entrails were deposited in a different place to the body, permitted the combination of dynastic and individual commemoration.<sup>91</sup> However, it is impossible to determine a perfect formula that ensured success for a funerary site, as Poblet, Batalha, and Pamplona have a number of distinctive features. However, what they had in common was that, from the end of the fourteenth century onwards, the Aragonese, Portuguese, and Navarrese monarchs preferred to commemorate their lives alongside those of their ancestors and highlight dynastic continuity instead of creating their personal funerary sites.

By contrast, the Castilian kings chose to focus on the commemoration of their individual lives for two reasons. Firstly, the ethos of the *Reconquista* fostered the idea that kings sought to link their burial place with their military feats so that these would endure over time. Fernando III was buried in Seville; Alfonso X thought of being buried in Murcia and, in any case, he had his heart buried there. With regard to Alfonso XI, he wanted himself and his father, Fernando IV, to be buried in the Church of San Hipólito in Cordova, which he ordered to be erected in order to celebrate his victory at the battle of Rio Salado (1340).

Yet the ideal of the *Reconquista* had an uneven impact over the course of the Middle Ages, and it was not the only reason that prompted Castilian monarchs to decide on their final resting place. The second factor that contributed to the failure in establishing a dynastic mausoleum in Castile was the disputes that arose over the legitimacy of some monarchs, which conditioned these kings' choice of a burial place, and led them to seek for new funerary sites. The most evident case was that of Sancho IV, who opted for Toledo as his final resting place to distance himself from the memory of his father in Seville and that of his brother in Burgos.

The conflicts over the legitimacy of some Castilian kings perhaps explains why Seville Cathedral never became the royal mausoleum for the Castilian monarchy. Fernando III was not canonised until the seventeenth century; however, as mentioned before, many chronicles of the period already considered him to be a saint and efforts were made to promote his cult. The anniversaries of his death were commemorated and, from 1258, the papacy conceded indulgences to whoever would pray for his soul. It thus comes as no surprise that Alfonso X ordered to represent his father as a paragon of kingship in the Royal Chapel of Seville.<sup>92</sup> Fernando III's prestige might well have been sufficient for Seville Cathedral to have been chosen as the privileged burial site for all his successors.

Although it was not exactly what he wanted, the burial of Alfonso X provided a sense of continuity when it came to favouring Seville as a dynastic mausoleum. However, the succession crisis that unfolded at the end of the Wise King's reign distanced Sancho from his father and Seville. Despite that, there was in fact another moment when it is plausible to propose that the Seville Cathedral was

close to becoming the royal mausoleum for the Castilian monarchy. Pedro I decided that the body of Alfonso XI should be placed in the Royal Chapel, and he showed little interest in transferring it to Cordova, as his father desired, because he himself had already made plans to be buried in Seville. He also had the remains of his mother, María of Portugal, who died in Évora in 1357, transferred there, and once the *Cortes* recognised the legitimacy of his marriage to María de Padilla in 1362, Pedro also had her body transferred to Seville, along with that of their deceased son and heir, Alfonso.<sup>93</sup> The deposition and assassination of Pedro I in 1369 frustrated these plans – his mortal remains were not buried in Seville until 1877 – and ended the possibility of Seville becoming the uncontested royal mausoleum of the Castilian monarchy.

The enthroning of the Trastámara meant the revival of Toledo Cathedral as a burial site: Enrique II (r. 1366–1379), Juan I (r. 1379–1390), and Enrique III (r. 1390–1406) were buried in what became known as the Chapel of the New Kings. However, Map 3.2 also shows how their successors went on to choose new burial places, such as the Miraflores Charterhouse in Burgos (Juan II, r. 1406–1454), Santa María la Real de Guadalupe (Enrique IV, r. 1454–1474) or Granada, Isabel the Catholic's (r. 1474–1504) choice, which highlights the rebirth of the ethos of the *Reconquista*.<sup>94</sup> Eventually, in a somewhat fortuitous way, the monastery of San Lorenzo in El Escorial became the dynastic mausoleum for the Hispanic monarchy during the second half of the sixteenth century.<sup>95</sup>

The failure to consolidate a dynastic mausoleum until the sixteenth century once more reflects the kingdom's territorial diversity and the lack of an undisputed capital. The ideal of the *Reconquista* and, especially, the questioned legitimacy of the accursed successors of Alfonso X contributed to the proliferation of burial sites. Nonetheless, the multiple funerary spaces that emerged were the result of the specific historical conditions of the period, not because the Castilian monarchy was inherently different from its European neighbours.

## Notes

- 1 González Jiménez and Carmona Ruiz, *Documentación e Itinerario de Alfonso X*, González Mínguez, *Itinerario y regesta de Fernando IV*, and Cañas Gálvez, *Itinerario de Alfonso XI*.
- 2 [Online] <https://journals.openedition.org/e-spania/18545> (Accessed 18 February 2020).
- 3 Nieto Soria, 'Conclusiones', par. 10.
- 4 MacLean, 'Palaces, Itineraries and Political Order', 313–318.
- 5 Costa Gomes, *The Making of Court Society*, 291–293.
- 6 Bartlett, *England Under the Norman and Angevin Kings*, 133, Tout, *Chapters in the Administrative History*, 2, 47–48, and 94–97 and Dunn, 'Henry IV and the Politics of Resistance', 16–17.
- 7 Small, *Late Medieval France*, 11 and 256.
- 8 Laliena Corbera, 'Cartografiando el poder real', 115–121.
- 9 López Rodríguez, 'Conservar y construir la memoria regia', 389 and Beauchamp, 'Gouverner en chemin'.
- 10 Kleine, *La cancellería real de Alfonso X*, 288–189 and 'Los orígenes de la burocracia regia', par. 3.

- 11 Ostolaza Elizondo, *Administración y documentación pública castellano-leonesa*, 1–3.
- 12 Monsalvo Antón, *La construcción del poder real*, 209.
- 13 Coussemacker, 'Nourrir et loger la cour', par. 14.
- 14 Arias Guillén, 'A Kingdom without a Capital?', 460.
- 15 Cañas Gálvez, 'La itinerancia de la corte de Castilla', pars. 9–12 and Pérez de la Canal, 'La justicia de la corte de Castilla', 415.
- 16 See: Rodríguez de Diego, 'El archivo real de la Corona de Castilla'.
- 17 Arias Guillén, 'A Kingdom without a Capital?', 476.
- 18 Jular Pérez-Alfaro, 'King's face on the territory', 111.
- 19 Arias Guillén, 'A Kingdom without a Capital?', 461–464 and 'El estado sobre ruedas', 187–193.
- 20 *CAXI*, 204. See: Ruiz, *A King Travels*.
- 21 See: Arias Guillén, 'El rey cazador'.
- 22 *CAXI*, 198.
- 23 *Cortes*, I, 93, 185, 198, and 402.
- 24 *Las Siete Partidas*, Partida II, Título XVII, Ley I.
- 25 Ayala Martínez, *Las órdenes militares hispánicas*, 562–572.
- 26 *Cortes*, I, 449 and 546–547 and *Ordenamiento*, Título XXX.
- 27 *CAXI*, 264.
- 28 *CAX*, 60.
- 29 *CFIV*, ch. I, pars. 20–21 and ch. XII, pars. 6–10.
- 30 *CAXI*, 215–220.
- 31 In 1327 and 1329, the monarch issued letters of pardon to those that had risen up against the king in Niebla: García Fernández, 'Regesto documental andaluz', docs. 130 (5 December 1327) and 151 (24 May 1329). In a series of letters sent in March 1328, Alfonso XI announced to various officials from Murcia that he had named Pedro López de Ayala *adelantado mayor* (king's representative) of Murcia as replacement of the rebel Juan Manuel, and he ordered them to take orders from him. Shortly afterwards, royal authority had been re-established in the region: *CODOM. VI*, docs. CI–CVIII.
- 32 The calculations have been made using Google Maps and the shortest distance between any two points has been chosen in each case. I have used the itineraries of Alfonso X, Fernando IV, and Alfonso XI and reconstructed those of Sancho IV in so far as has been possible. González Jiménez and Carmona Ruiz, *Documentación e Itinerario de Alfonso X*, González Mínguez, *Itinerario y regesta de Fernando IV*, and Cañas Gálvez, *Itinerario de Alfonso XI*.
- 33 The number of visits has been counted on the basis of the aforementioned itineraries. Previously, César González calculated the number of places visited by Fernando IV and the occasions on which the monarch was in each location. However, his results contain a number of errors with regard to his own reconstruction of the royal itinerary. The total number of places visited that he listed is also 90, but González forgot to count Alcañices and Campo Arañuelo, while he counted Almazán and Salamanca twice. On the other hand, when the monarch spent the end and beginning of the year in the same place, sometimes it was counted as two visits, as was the case with Valladolid (37, no 39) and Toledo (7, no 8). Furthermore, there are some locations in which a lower number of visits was recorded than should have been, such as Ciudad Rodrigo. César González Mínguez, *Itinerario y regesta de Fernando IV*.
- 34 Coussemacker, 'Nourrir et loger la cour', pars. 8 and 11–12.
- 35 I previously addressed some of these issues in: Arias Guillén, 'A Kingdom without a Capital?' and 'El estado sobre ruedas'.
- 36 Van Landingham, *Transforming the State*, 180 and 212.
- 37 Costa Gomes, *The Making of Court Society*, 299–307.
- 38 Daly, 'Centre, Power and Periphery', 126 and Small, *Late Medieval France*, 46–52.

- 39 *Itinerary of Edward I. Part I, Itinerary of Edward I. Part II and The Itinerary of Edward II.*
- 40 Colvin, Brown and Taylor, *The History of the King's Works*, 241–243.
- 41 Rucquoi, *Valladolid en la Edad Media*, 164.
- 42 *Catálogo de los pergaminos*, doc. 32.
- 43 Estepa Díez, 'El reino de Castilla de Alfonso VIII', 58.
- 44 *Crónica del rey don Pedro*, I, 54.
- 45 Arias Guillén, 'A Kingdom without a Capital?', 471–472.
- 46 Cañas Gálvez, *Itinerario de Alfonso XI*, 98.
- 47 *CFIV*, ch. XI, par. 30.
- 48 Andrés Martínez, *Las cacerías*, 293 and Cañas Gálvez, *Itinerario de Alfonso XI*, 88–89.
- 49 Linehan, *History and the historians*, 446–448.
- 50 Linehan, *Spain, 1157–1300*, 234.
- 51 *Setenario*, 19.
- 52 González Jiménez and Carmona Ruiz, *Documentación e Itinerario de Alfonso X*, 13–21, 38–59, and 86–91.
- 53 Almagro Gorbea, 'Investigación y restauración en el Alcázar', 97.
- 54 Arias Guillén, 'A Kingdom without a Capital?', 476.
- 55 See: Cañas Gálvez, *El itinerario de la corte de Juan II*.
- 56 González Jiménez and Carmona Ruiz, *Documentación e Itinerario de Alfonso X*, 66–70.
- 57 The *Crónica de Fernando IV* states that the monarch went there accompanied by an army in 1301 in order to defend the region from the king of Aragon. However, the veracity of this journey has to be considered with care, as there are no extant documents issued in the region or *en route* to Murcia: *CFIV*, c. VIII, pars. 9–10.
- 58 Carrasco Machado, 'Desplazamientos e intentos de estabilización', par. 28.
- 59 *CAX*, 184.
- 60 Solórzano Telechea, 'Integración económica, competencia y jerarquización', 218–221.
- 61 *Libro becerro de las behetrías*, II, 181 and 568–569.
- 62 *Colección de documentos medievales de las villas guipuzcoanas*, doc. 232.
- 63 *CFIV*, ch. XV, par. 35.
- 64 González Crespo León-Sotelo Casado, 'Notas para el itinerario de Alfonso XI', 580–581 and Cañas Gálvez, *Itinerario de Alfonso XI*, 78–79.
- 65 *CAXI*, 259.
- 66 Francisco de Olmos, *La Figura del Heredero del Trono*, 221.
- 67 *GCAXI*, II, 36.
- 68 Carrasco Machado, 'Desplazamientos e intentos de estabilización', par. 28.
- 69 Bartlett, *La formación de Europa*, 385–386.
- 70 *Crónica de Sancho IV*, 46 and 143.
- 71 *CAXI*, 234.
- 72 Cañas Gálvez, 'Devoción mariana y poder regio', 431–432.
- 73 I have addressed this subject in: Arias Guillén, 'Enterramientos regios en Castilla y León'.
- 74 Nieto Soria, 'Origen divino', 50–51.
- 75 Guance, *Los discursos sobre la muerte*, 306–324.
- 76 Alonso Álvarez, 'Los enterramientos de los reyes', pars. 1 and 36 and 'Enterramientos regios y panteones dinásticos', 223.
- 77 Hallam, 'Royal Burial and the Cult of Kingship', 371.
- 78 Carpenter, 'The Burial of King Henry III', 458–459, Duffy, *Royal Tombs*, 18, and Palliser, 'Royal Mausolea', 2–14.
- 79 Erlande-Brandenburg, *Le Roi est Mort*, 76–83.
- 80 Serrano Coll, 'Los espacios de la muerte en la Corona de Aragón', 492 and 514–515.

- 81 Mattoso, 'O poder e a morte', 404–405 and Vasconcelos Vilar, 'Lineage and Territory', 167–170.
- 82 Miranda García, 'Los lugares del rey muerto', 456 and 465–472.
- 83 Linehan, *History and the historians*, 451.
- 84 González Jiménez, *Alfonso X el Sabio*, 365.
- 85 Gutiérrez Baños, *Las empresas artísticas de Sancho IV*, 143–169.
- 86 Hernández, 'Two Weddings and a Funeral', 425–426.
- 87 AHNOB, OSUNA, C. 415, D. 2.
- 88 *CAXI*, 173.
- 89 *Crónica del rey don Pedro*, I, 6 and II, 320.
- 90 Ramírez y de las Casas Deza, *Indicador cordobés*, 208–209.
- 91 See: Warntjes, 'Programatic Double Burial',
- 92 Fernández, '*Muy noble, et mucho alto*'.
- 93 *Crónica del rey don Pedro*, II, 63 and Echevarría Arsuaga, 'Redes femeninas en la Corte castellana', 185.
- 94 See: Nogales Rincón, 'La memoria funeraria'.
- 95 Varela, *La muerte del rey*, 16–17.

## 4 A plural monarchy (I)

### Queenship and royal power in Castile (1252–1350)

The *Crónica de Fernando IV* records the political manoeuvres that accompanied the transfer of power from Sancho IV to his son, Fernando IV. In 1295, following his father's death, the 9-year-old Fernando was proclaimed king in Toledo. The queen dowager, María de Molina, sent out letters to the kingdoms' towns, prelates, and nobles in which she asked them to accept her son as their ruler. In exchange, Queen María confirmed their privileges and promised to stop collecting the *sisá*, a tax on movable goods. However, ominous news reached Toledo: the infante Juan sought to claim the throne for himself, and Diego López V de Haro was mustering an army to support his return from exile in Aragón and launch an attack on the kingdom. In response to this news, Queen María approached Juan Núñez II de Lara and his brother, Nuño González II, and urged them to serve their new king; on being assured of their loyalty, the queen entrusted them with the care of her son, the kingdom, and herself.<sup>1</sup>

Several ideas regarding queenship and royal authority in Castile during this period are illustrated by this episode from the *Crónica de Fernando IV*. First, it documents the importance of Queen María de Molina (c. 1261–1321), who was a central figure in Castilian politics between 1282 and her death, especially during the minorities of Fernando IV and Alfonso XI.<sup>2</sup> The royal chronicles, faithful to their '*molinist*' tendencies, offer an idealised representation of the queen, in which she is portrayed as an insightful ruler and the true defender of the Castilian monarchy during this critical period.<sup>3</sup> Nonetheless, Sánchez de Valladolid's text struggles to define Queen María's political attributes. The chronicle presents a somewhat contradictory view of the queen in which she had the authority – having been appointed regent by Sancho IV on his deathbed – to confirm privileges and abolish the *sisá* but, from then on, she is relegated to the role of mediator between the nobles and the young king. Indeed, in the second 'scene' of the chronicle the queen is shown as no longer having the authority (or power) to command the nobles to act, whereby she had to use her powers of persuasion to ensure they upheld their bonds of loyalty to Fernando IV and gave him their protection.

Royal chronicles provide a vantage point from which to examine the role played by queens in ruling the kingdom during this period. However, the image projected by these texts is riddled with literary *topoi*, which reveal contemporaneous

attitudes towards queenship, resulting in these texts focusing on the role played by queens as royal advisors or mediators. Yet, on the other hand, they overlook significant issues such as the major estates that were directly governed by queens during this period. The task of this chapter is to explore the complex and multifaceted role played by queens between 1252 and 1350.

During this period there were no queens regnant in Castile. Nonetheless, queens consort acted as key political operators. In the past, other female members of the royal family had also performed a prominent political role.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, some of them still continued to be influential in Castile during this period, especially those who became '*señoras*' of the royal monastery of Las Huelgas in Burgos. In that regard, it may be argued that Las Huelgas was a 'reinvention' of the Infantazgo, although its area of influence was not as extensive.<sup>5</sup> During this period a number of infantas also professed as nuns in this monastery, but it was more common for these women to be married off to the heirs and princes of other kingdoms to build alliances (see Appendices 2). For instance, Eleanor of Castile (1241–1290), Alfonso X's sister, wed the future Edward I of England (r. 1272–1307) in 1254.<sup>6</sup> Over the course of this chapter, a range of royal women such as these are briefly discussed, but its principal focus is on Castilian queens and attention is then turned to Leonor de Guzmán.

María de Molina was undoubtedly the most important queen of this period. She was Sancho IV's consort and played a vital role during the minorities of both her son and grandson. Nevertheless, Violante of Aragón (1236–1301), Alfonso X's wife, Constanza of Portugal (1290–1313), Fernando IV's spouse, and Queen María of Portugal (1313–1357), who married Alfonso XI, all occupied positions of power. Yet it should be noted that the perception of María de Molina's singular importance is both historical, as a result of her role as queen regent, and historiographical, thanks to the royal chroniclers' positive portrayal of her life and deeds. Leonor de Guzmán (1310–1351), an Andalusian noblewoman who was Alfonso XI's concubine for 20 years, also merits inclusion in this group. Traditionally, historians have considered her political role in negative terms; their analysis has focused on Alfonso XI's donations to Leonor and their offspring, which has been interpreted as laying the seeds for Pedro I's deposition in 1369 decades in advance.<sup>7</sup> However, a more searching analysis shows how Alfonso's relationship with Leonor de Guzmán helped strengthen the bonds between the king and the Andalusian nobility, an alliance which proved instrumental for the king's success in the late 1330s.<sup>8</sup> As will be discussed, Leonor de Guzmán exercised 'queenly' powers akin to those possessed by Queen María of Portugal, who, on the other hand, was never ostracised from the royal court.<sup>9</sup>

### **An Iberian model of queenship?**

It is difficult to ascertain the political role played by queens (and women in general) during the Middle Ages. In the eyes of medieval authors, their gender meant they were ill-suited for ruling: women lacked the *auctoritas* to rule, and

if they had any kind of *potestas*, this power was always temporary and needed constant legitimation.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, it was common practice for medieval texts to overlook or limit the power exercised by queens. For instance, the *Castigos del rey don Sancho* stressed the importance of the bond between the king and his son, while diminishing the role played by the mother or queen. Although on occasions this text did project 'pro-feminine' images, on the whole it is underscored by a 'structural misogyny'.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, in the *Partidas* queens were reduced to the role of wives and mothers except during a royal minority, as is discussed below.<sup>12</sup>

Drawing on Ernst Kantorowicz's notion of the Crown, historians have traditionally considered that the development of the royal administration led to queens being relegated from the public sphere. Nevertheless, while the expansion and bureaucratisation of the royal chancery meant queens were substituted by professional clerks who undertook the day-to-day business of ruling the kingdom, they retained a vital role as royal councillors, guardians of their children, and administrators of their households.<sup>13</sup> Scholars such as John C. Parsons have demonstrated how queens could extend their power through a range of acts and ceremonies, including coronations, royal births and the patronage of pious foundations.<sup>14</sup>

The queens' role as intercessors with the king has been considered as the most evident way in which queens were able to influence political decisions. As a result, many authors have stressed the 'informal' nature of queens' power, which depended on their proximity to the king, rather than their performing a role in the form of a public office. Not surprisingly, Queen Esther and the Virgin Mary provided role models that contributed to the definition of the ways that were considered acceptable for queens to intercede on political issues.<sup>15</sup> However, this does not mean that queens could only exercise power indirectly. For instance, Lisa B. St John has shown that the power of the English queens was not always defined by their gender in the fourteenth century. While she acknowledges that intercession remained the main mechanism used by these queens to exert influence, she highlights how they ruled their household and landholdings without external interferences, which made them some of the most powerful magnates of the kingdom. Furthermore, the queen was part of the Crown and, as the king's wife, she could represent royal authority in the same way as the king's ministers did.<sup>16</sup>

With regard to the Iberian Peninsula, historians working on queenship have consistently stressed the power exercised by queens throughout the Middle Ages.<sup>17</sup> The most noticeable aspect of queenship in Iberia is the high number of queens regnant who succeeded their fathers or brothers. The only place in medieval Europe where queens occupied the throne more frequently were the crusader states of Levant. The right to inherit the throne is one of the main reasons, certainly the most visible, behind scholars' enquiry into the existence of a Mediterranean model of queenship that granted queens significantly more power than their northern counterparts.<sup>18</sup>

In the last 20 years, numerous studies on queenship in the Iberian kingdoms have been undertaken, and they have examined, first, the three principal ways in which queens could exercise power – as regnant, consort, or regent – and, second, how their actions complemented masculine royal power. Nevertheless, it is challenging to characterise a specifically Iberian model of queenship.<sup>19</sup> For instance, there were stark differences between Aragonese and Portuguese queens during the Late Middle Ages. In the Crown of Aragón, queens frequently acted as *Lloctinent general* (lieutenant governor), which means that they ruled the kingdom in the absence of their husbands, and Theresa Earenfight has shown how Queen María of Castile (1401–1458) presided over the *Corts* and wielded legal and executive authority during her husband Alfons IV's (r. 1416–1458) frequent and long stays in Naples.<sup>20</sup> In contrast, in Portugal the situation was quite the opposite. Beatriz of Portugal was removed from power by João I in 1385, the regencies of Leonor Teles (1383–1385) and Leonor of Aragón (1438–1439) both failed bitterly, and the power exercised by queens consort was inextricably linked to the king's, which seriously limited their agency.<sup>21</sup>

With regard to Castile and León, a range of historical studies have explored the different ways in which queens and other female members of the royal family forged a role for themselves in the governance of the kingdom. Queens such as Sancha (1013–1067) and Urraca (r. 1109–1126) are some of the most visible links in a chain of powerful women which dated back to the Early Middle Ages.<sup>22</sup> Likewise, the *Infantazgo*, which was a heterogeneous and evolving lordship comprising a series of landholdings and monasteries centred around the Monastery of San Isidoro de León, was ruled by female members of the royal family.<sup>23</sup> Similarly, Queen Berenguela (c. 1179–1246) provides a further example of how the expansion of royal authority undertaken within the Castilian monarchy from the second half of the twelfth century onwards by no means relegated women from the exercise of power.<sup>24</sup>

Historians have stressed how medieval rulership may be defined as a collective endeavour undertaken by various members of the royal family. This notion of 'plural monarchy' is succinctly embodied by Castilian royal diplomas, in which queens and royal children were always represented granting privileges together with the king.<sup>25</sup> Evidently, any analysis of kingship and royal authority needs to examine queenship as a key facet of this and, although there are individual studies on the queens of the period under study, a broader examination of the different ways in which these women participated in the kingdom's governance between 1252 and 1350 is required.

Given their position as royal consorts, it was expected that queens should exercise power, but their role was defined by the established models of practice, not legal precedent. Nonetheless, over this period queens consort contributed to the glorification of the ruling dynasty and the commemoration of the royal family through donations to pious institutions. They also served as royal diplomats in other kingdoms and as intercessors between the local nobles and the kings. Queens also had their own household and chancery, and furthermore

ruled over part of the royal demesne.<sup>26</sup> In addition, Queen María de Molina acted as queen regent during the minorities of Fernando IV and Alfonso XI. Therefore, it may be stated that within the collective exercise of rulership queens' contribution was more evident in the following principal areas: religious patronage, diplomacy and intercessory roles, and the administration of royal estates. Yet this does not mean that their roles should be considered as equal to those performed by royal agents. While the chronicles tend to present the queen as an extension of the king, it must be underscored that they enjoyed great autonomy thanks to their considerable landholdings.<sup>27</sup> Consequently, it will be shown how queens had their own agendas, which did not always coincide with the king's interests.

### **Exalting the royal dynasty: Pious foundations and royal memory**

Queens were active participants in the ceremonies promoted by the Castilian monarchy to extoll its authority. Although royal coronations were quite exceptional in Castile, queens joined their husbands for these events, albeit playing a secondary role. For instance, Queen María of Portugal was crowned by Alfonso XI as part of the complex ceremony held in Burgos in 1332.<sup>28</sup> Likewise, given that queens frequently travelled with their husbands throughout the kingdom, they played a prominent part in the public display of royal power at court and in every town visited by the royal *iter*.

Besides ephemeral events, queens had an active role in extolling the royal dynasty through the use of royal patronage to fund religious institutions. Overseeing pious donations was a traditional task undertaken by royal women from the eleventh century onwards. As a result, queens became inextricably associated with the preservation of royal memory. It was above all the monarchy's funerary spaces that were administered by queens, and they provided key sites for queens to demonstrate their power while extolling the royal lineage. The creation of the royal mausoleums of San Isidoro of León and Las Huelgas in Burgos are the two most outstanding results of this policy.<sup>29</sup>

Sánchez de Valladolid's eulogy of Queen María de Molina in the *Crónica de Alfonso XI* celebrated her constant support for the Dominican order and the many monastic foundations she financed and supported, such as the Dominican monasteries of San Ildefonso of Toro and San Pablo of Valladolid, where her sons Enrique and Alfonso were buried. She also supervised the construction of the royal chapel in Toledo, in compliance with her late husband's wishes, and her will bequeathed an annuity of 500 *maravedís* to fund three chaplaincies dedicated to the memory of Sancho IV. However, it was the foundation of the monastery of Las Huelgas in Valladolid which became perpetually associated with the queen. In her second will, María de Molina changed her mind and decided to be buried there, and not in Toledo alongside her husband. She also provided the monastery with an annual subsidy of 50,000 *maravedís* from her revenues in Valladolid. It was specified that the money was to be used to pay for annual celebrations held in honour of Sancho IV, Fernando IV, and herself,

and also for prayers to be said for the life and good health of her grandson, King Alfonso XI. The *Crónica Real de Castilla*, which was composed c. 1300 by a member of Queen María's entourage, devoted special attention to the foundations and support given to the monasteries of San Isidoro of León and Las Huelgas in Burgos by the queens Sancha, Leonor, and Berenguela. Therefore, it seems likely that María's intention in founding a royal monastery in Valladolid was to present herself as the worthy successor of her most illustrious female forebears.<sup>30</sup>

The three other queens of this period also funded pious foundations and made donations to ecclesiastical institutions to commemorate the royal dynasty. Queen Violante founded the monastery of Santo Domingo el Real in Madrid and several houses of Poor Clares in Murcia, Santiago de Compostela, and Salamanca. Violante's most famous foundation was, however, the monastery of Poor Clares in Allariz, Galicia, which she undertook during the reign of Sancho IV. The last case demonstrates how queens dowager continued to participate in the representation of the Castilian monarchy.<sup>31</sup> In a similar way, Mayor Guillén de Guzmán (1205–1262), Alfonso X's lover and mother of Queen Beatriz (she married Afonso III of Portugal in 1253), founded the monastery of Santa María de San Miguel del Monte (currently Santa Clara de Alcocer) within the lordship she was granted by the king in this region.<sup>32</sup> This final example indicates how royal concubines could also contribute to the exaltation of royal authority by making pious donations originating from royal patronage.

Queen Constanza and Queen María emulated María de Molina's example and acted as guardians of royal memory as well. After 1312 Queen Constanza supplemented the funds paid to the cathedral of Córdoba to ensure annual commemorations were held to mark Fernando IV's death.<sup>33</sup> There are only a few extant documents pertaining to Constanza, and it seems very likely that she undertook many other pious projects during her short life, but these have gone unregistered. Similarly, in 1342 Queen María of Portugal donated 1,000 *maravedís* to the monastery of Santo Domingo el Real in Madrid, which had been founded by Queen Violante, so prayers could be said to ensure the good health of the royal family.<sup>34</sup> Six years before, Queen María had donated the revenue she received from the Priory of San Mancio to the Monastery of Sahagún, where Queen Constanza was buried, so that prayers would be said for the soul of the deceased queen and for the health of the royal couple and their heir, Pedro. Alfonso had granted her this revenue the year before, which suggests that he had already planned that this donation should be made, and the queen was acting as his proxy.<sup>35</sup> This final example is especially significant, as it shows that within the division of tasks encompassed by a 'plural monarchy', the preservation of royal memory was seen as a queenly prerogative.

### **Queenship and diplomacy: Castilian queens as royal ambassadors**

The Iberian monarchies' marriage strategy evolved over the course of the Middle Ages. The Asturian-Leonese monarchy sought its brides among the

local aristocracy, although in the tenth century it started to arrange marriages with other neighbouring royal families. Between the eleventh and the thirteenth century, the papacy's growing concern about consanguineous marriages led the Castilian monarchs to broaden their horizons and to marry European princesses from places as far afield as Poland or the Holy Roman Empire. However, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries Castile and Portugal favoured a policy of Iberian marriages which was subsequently emulated by Aragón and Navarre.<sup>36</sup>

Every kind of royal marriage presented advantages and shortcomings.<sup>37</sup> Alfonso X's lavish celebration of the marriage of his heir, Fernando de la Cerda, to Blanche of France in 1268<sup>38</sup> demonstrates how the Castilian monarchy coveted 'international' weddings due to the prestige it bestowed upon the king and his dynasty. On the other hand, this kind of marriage forged alliances that were of little practical value due to the physical distance between the respective kingdoms and the rulers' different agendas. Sancho IV's marriage to María de Molina and Alfonso XI's brief union with Constanza Manuel – the marriage was never consummated due to the bride's young age, and the king soon left her to marry María of Portugal – were a response to the domestic instability afflicting Castile; it was intended that his marriage to a Castilian noblewoman would strengthen the monarch's position within the kingdom. Finally, Iberian marriages contributed to the establishment of good relationships between neighbouring kingdoms and settling borders disputes. For instance, the wedding agreement drawn up between Alfonso XI and María of Portugal in 1328 highlighted the issue of which kingdom held control over a series of border fortresses.<sup>39</sup> However, the recurrence of Iberian weddings increasingly forced the Castilian monarchy to request papal dispensations for consanguinity. Despite the nuisance involved in negotiating a papal bull, the effort made was fully compensated by the political advantages provided by these marriages, which explains why they became so common from the second half of the thirteenth century onwards. With the exception of María de Molina, all the queens of this period came from one of Castile's neighbouring kingdoms. As a consequence, queens played a pivotal role in the diplomatic relationships between Castile and the other Iberian realms: family connections and personal ties played a more significant role than any institutional framework.

Queen Constanza and Queen María used their family connections in Portugal to assist their husbands. Following King Dinis of Portugal's (r. 1279–1325) agreement to stop supporting royal pretenders, Fernando IV's marriage to Queen Constanza made a fundamental contribution to strengthening his tenuous position.<sup>40</sup> The young queen's ties to Aragón were also particularly important. Between 1303 and 1305, Constanza wrote several letters to her uncle, Jaime II of Aragón, and also met Aragonese ambassadors in order to broker an agreement which guaranteed the end of Jaime II's support for Alfonso de la Cerda.<sup>41</sup> Likewise, María of Portugal played a key role in repairing the damaged relationship between Castile and Portugal following the war of 1336–1338. In 1340, María led a diplomatic mission to Portugal where she met her father, Afonso IV, and asked him for military assistance against the Marinids in the

name of Alfonso XI. Afonso acceded to his daughter's petition: a Portuguese fleet joined the Castilian navy in the Strait of Gibraltar, and the king in person led an army to support Alfonso XI's forces.<sup>42</sup> On 30 October 1340, the Portuguese and Castilian troops defeated the armies of the Marinid Sultanate and the Emirate of Granada in the battle of Río Salado.

Unlike the 'Portuguese queens', María de Molina lacked any family ties to the other Iberian kingdoms. However, this does not mean that she was isolated from diplomatic affairs. The abundant correspondence between María de Molina and María Fernández Coronel, the governess of her daughter, Isabel, who was betrothed to Jaume II, allowed her to receive regular news from the Aragonese court between 1292 and 1294. It was common for queens to develop a female network of connections which could be used to conduct negotiations of different kinds. For instance, in 1308 María de Molina wrote to María López de Haro's mother, Juana, in order to broker an agreement regarding the lordship of Biscay, which María claimed against her uncle, Diego López V de Haro.<sup>43</sup>

The example of Queen Violante illuminates the complexity of the queen's diplomatic powers, which were not limited to satisfying the king's orders. In 1264, Violante of Aragón wrote to her father, Jaume I, in order to request his military assistance: Alfonso X had to face a Mudejar revolt in the newly conquered areas of Andalusia and Murcia which was supported (and probably instigated) by the Emirate of Granada.<sup>44</sup> The Aragonese army played a key role in quashing the rebellion: it conquered Murcia and it crushed the uprising in the region while Alfonso X attacked Jerez de la Frontera in western Andalusia.<sup>45</sup>

Violante also used these family ties to promote her own agenda as well, which did not always coincide with the king's interests, as was the case with the succession crisis sparked off by the death of Fernando de la Cerda in 1275. After some uncertainty, Sancho was finally recognised as heir. Queen Violante, unhappy with the decision, asked her brother Pere II (r. 1276–1285) to support the claim of her grandsons, Alfonso and Fernando de la Cerda. The queen escaped to Aragón with both children and their mother, Blanche of France, but Pere chose not to support Violante's strategy. Instead, the Aragonese king kept the de la Cerda brothers in custody and Violante returned to Castile in 1279. From 1281 onwards, her name disappears from the royal diplomas (Alfonso X identified himself as the son of King Fernando and Queen Beatrix).<sup>46</sup> The following year, Violante joined Sancho's faction in the rebellion against Alfonso X. Then, in 1296 the queen dowager sided with Alfonso de la Cerda and the infante Juan against Fernando IV and María de Molina.<sup>47</sup> Richard Kinkade even speculated that the pilgrimage she made to Rome for the 1300 jubilee was actually intended to sabotage the papal legitimisation of Fernando IV.<sup>48</sup> Violante's actions clearly show how her interests were not always aligned with those of the king. It is hard to determine what reasons led Violante to switch sides during the succession crisis; nonetheless, it is evident that a queen's diplomatic powers were not limited to be the king's ambassador.

Finally, and despite the lack of extant letters issued by Leonor de Guzmán, the royal concubine's diplomatic role offers insights into both queenship and the

important political role played by this noblewoman. Her prominent position in Alfonso XI's court was well-known outside Castile: between 1335 and 1340 the Castilian king received several letters from the papacy in which he was urged to abandon his lover and return to his lawful wife. Benedict XII (r. 1334–1342) admonished Alfonso XI, declaring that Castile would suffer God's wrath unless the king reformed his attitude and followed the papacy's exhortation.<sup>49</sup> However, an indication of Leonor's status is provided by a series of letters sent by the English monarchy – the chancery's registers refer to her as the concubine of the king of Castile (*'concubinam regis castellae'*) – which in turn illustrates how her power was widely acknowledged. Furthermore, Leonor de Guzmán and Queen María of Portugal both received the same letters in August 1345 and January 1348 in which they were informed about the negotiations and travel arrangements regarding the marriage between Pedro, Alfonso XI's heir, and Princess Joan, Edward III's daughter. Leonor was then sent an additional missive in March 1346, in which the English king thanked her for her advocacy during the negotiations.<sup>50</sup> The English letter reflects Leonor de Guzmán's sway over Alfonso XI. It also demonstrates one of queens', as well as concubines', most evident forms of power: the ability to influence political decisions through their proximity to the king.

### **Advice, intercession, and mediation: Castilian queens as councillors and powerbrokers**

As part of a 'plural monarchy', queens participated in the decision-making process when an important issue was discussed at court. The extent of the queen's involvement depended on many factors and only rarely has any trace of their role been encountered in the extant documentation. On the other hand, Castilian royal chronicles repeated a series of literary *topoi* which reflect what medieval authors considered to be the three admissible roles that queens could play in this process, as royal advisors, intercessors, and mediators. Evidently, these texts present a reductive view of queenship, as they focus on the queens' 'informal' powers instead of showing their complex and multifaceted roles, yet the proliferation of these roles in the chronicles reflects how queens were expected to contribute to ruling the kingdom by influencing the king's decisions.

Queens were expected to act as royal advisors. Furthermore, the ability to give good advice was seen as a positive trait in a queen. Likewise, intercession became inextricably associated with queenship in medieval literature: it was considered acceptable for kings to change their minds as a result of a petition made by their wives.<sup>51</sup> The queen consort's role as intercessor and mediators has been emphasised by historians since the 1990s in order to challenge the idea that women were progressively excluded from power by the development and bureaucratisation of royal government.<sup>52</sup> In this sense, it has been stressed how frequently the 'Esther *topos*' was used as a rhetorical device in order to present the Old Testament queen as the paragon of queenship due to her 'intercessory' role.<sup>53</sup> However, it should be noted that Queen Esther was not used as

a model of queenship in Iberian literature until the end of the fourteenth century<sup>54</sup>.

Nonetheless, Sánchez de Valladolid's chronicles employed similar ideas to discuss Castilian queens, as in his chronicles their activity as mediators and intercessors predominated over other aspects of their role as queens. It may be inferred from these chronicles that their activity as mediators was interpreted as the most apparent form in which queens exercised their power. Admittedly, it is hard to distinguish between intercession and mediation without drawing seemingly arbitrary contrasts, but for the purpose of analysing this issue intercession will be interpreted as the queens' ability to appeal to the king's grace on behalf of an individual. For instance, the queens' capacity to influence royal justice through the rhetoric of royal mercy. By contrast, the analysis of mediation will focus on the importance of queens acting as intermediaries between the king and disaffected nobles. Royal chronicles stress the queens' capacity to persuade nobles to return to the king's service and they were frequently depicted performing a role as mediators between the monarch and rebel magnates.

The queens' proximity to the king allowed them to provide advice on different matters. It is impossible to discern to what extent the queens of this period were able to discuss political affairs, but it is clear that the influence queens exerted over the king relied on personal and shared circumstances. Nevertheless, royal chronicles ascribe considerable importance to the queen's role as a councillor and their authors viewed the ability of the queen to give sound advice in a wholly positive light. A recurring theme in the *Crónica de Fernando IV* is the difficulties faced by Queen María de Molina to ensure her son understood which was the right course of action in the face of a crisis. Queen María was depicted as an intelligent woman ('*asi como la fizo Dios de buen entendimiento en todo*')<sup>55</sup> who always gave the king good advice. By contrast, Fernando IV is presented as an easily influenced ruler who was manipulated by ambitious individuals such as the infante Juan and Juan Núñez II de Lara. For instance, Chapter XI focuses on how in 1302 these nobles tried to isolate the king from his mother, as well as the difficulties María de Molina faced in trying to free Fernando IV from their nefarious influence. Eventually, the young king realised the error of his ways and turned to his mother for advice on three issues: how to deal with the infante Juan and Juan Núñez II de Lara; how to respond to the threat of rebel nobles, such as Diego López V de Haro; and finally, how to handle his imminent meeting with Jaume II of Aragón. María de Molina provided him with guidance and the king, knowing that his mother was right, followed her advice.<sup>56</sup>

Leonor de Guzmán provides another example of how queens were expected to serve the king as advisors. The *Crónica de Alfonso XI* offers two main arguments, besides the noblewoman's astonishing beauty and impeccable lineage, to justify the king's adultery. First, the chronicler highlighted Alfonso XI's will to have children, a desire that Queen María had as yet not been able to satisfy. The second line of reasoning used to legitimise the king's relationship with Leonor was the political advantages obtained by the

king. The royal chronicle, as with María de Molina, stresses Leonor's intelligence, who we are told was '*bien entendida*', and it states that once she had become close to Alfonso XI, she always strove to serve him as well as she could. As a result, the chronicler continues, she was informed of every important decision taken in the kingdom because Alfonso XI placed a lot of trust in her ('*Et otrosí el Rey fiaba mucho della, ca todas las cosas que se avian á facer en el regno, pasaban sabiendolo ella, et non de otra manera, por la fianza que el Rey ponía en ella*').<sup>57</sup> This fragment of the chronicle documents how Leonor's had attained a prominent position at court. It also reflects a view of royal power as a partnership in which the queen – Leonor was a *de facto* queen – was expected to contribute to the task of ruling the kingdom by participating in the decision-making process.

Queens are also recorded acting as advisors at the meetings of the *Cortes*. To fully gauge the significance of the references made to the contributions that queens made to these meetings, it is important to highlight that the extant proceedings were not written according to a fixed formulaic model. A close reading of the language and structure of these documents reveals notable changes between the proceedings of different *Cortes*: sometimes there is a generic mention of the social groups who were present at the meeting while, on other occasions, some of the main participants are named individually. The documents can also record how on occasions these groups or individuals made a request to the king, or else on other occasions gave advice to the monarch. Similarly, they may merely be recorded as having been present. Therefore, the occasional references made to the queens was by no means formulaic. Instead, when they are cited in these documents it is because the queen actively participated in the meeting in question.

Once again, Queen María de Molina stands out among the queens of this period. Queen María de Molina participated in the *Cortes* of 1293 as queen consort. She also played a key role during the meetings held during Fernando IV's and Alfonso XI's minorities and continued to do so during her son's adult rule. Conversely, Queen Violante and Queen Constanza are only mentioned once each, at the *Cortes* of 1269 and 1305, respectively, while Queen María of Portugal is not cited in any of the *Cortes* proceedings from Alfonso XI's reign. Queen María de Molina's continuous presence in the *Cortes* meetings during Fernando IV's adult reign is very significant. Queen María participated in the meetings of 1302 and 1303, before Constanza married Fernando IV. In the *Cortes* held at Medina del Campo in 1305, both queens were present; however, only Queen María joined the king at the meeting held in Toledo the same year and at the one which took place in 1307.<sup>58</sup> Due to Constanza's young age (she was born in 1290), it is not surprising that Queen María de Molina continued to exercise 'queenly' functions after her son was married. However, the contrast between María de Molina's constant involvement in the *Cortes* and the other queens' exceptional presence underscores how Queen María de Molina was indeed a key royal advisor, whereby the discussion of her political sagacity cannot be reduced to a literary *topos*.

In the *Castigos del rey don Sancho*, the king righteously warned his son against bending justice because of a woman's plea.<sup>59</sup> However, acting as 'intercessors' was another 'informal' mode of exercising power that was available to queens. For instance, according to the *Crónica de Sancho IV*, in 1288 Queen María de Molina successfully interceded with Sancho IV to spare the infante Juan's life, and she saved the king's brother from the fate suffered by the rebel Lope Díaz III de Haro, who was murdered by Sancho's crossbowmen.<sup>60</sup> Works such as the *Castigos* present motifs such as the virtuosity of royal justice in absolute terms. By contrast, the conventions governing royal chronicles were more flexible because they used historic examples to underscore their ideas. In this case, the ideal of royal justice was contrasted with the very real concern of political convenience, as well as the potentially negative impact that would result from Sancho IV's reputation being tarnished by the act of slaying a member of his family. Therefore, the royal chronicler devised a rhetorical device to solve this conundrum: by making Queen María intercede on the infante Juan's behalf, the king now had a pretext to spare his brother's life without giving the impression that he was a weak ruler. It is impossible to know whether María de Molina actually interceded or not; however, this example shows that this kind of action was seen as a queenly prerogative, one of the ways in which it was acceptable for the queen to influence the ruling of the kingdom.

Castilian queens' frequent mediations between the king and rebel nobles may also be interpreted as a type of intercession. However, there is one main difference: while royal chronicles used the rhetorical device of queens appealing to royal mercy very sporadically, the queen's role as mediator is constantly repeated throughout these texts. The recurrence of this literary *topos* suggests it was above all as a mediator between the king and rebel nobles that queens participated in the kingdom's governance.

The conciliatory role played by Queen María de Molina is continuously stressed in Sánchez de Valladolid's royal chronicles and Jofré de Loaysa's *Crónica de los Reyes de Castilla*, a continuation of Jiménez de Rada's *De Rebus Hispaniae* written at the beginning of the fourteenth century. During the reigns of Sancho IV and Fernando IV the queen was constantly in charge of the negotiations with disaffected nobles. For instance, in 1290 she persuaded Juan Núñez I de Lara to end his estrangement and acknowledge Sancho IV's authority. Similarly, in 1295 she forged the agreement between Diego López V de Haro and Fernando IV that the former would return to the king's service in exchange for the lordship of Biscay.<sup>61</sup>

The first of these two examples merits closer scrutiny. According to the *Crónica de Sancho IV*, a number of individuals had turned Juan Núñez I against the king, and they warned the noble that if he travelled to the court, Sancho IV would have him killed. As a result, Queen María de Molina met Juan Núñez in order to soothe his misgivings: she guaranteed the noble's safety and vouched for Sancho IV's honest desire to settle their differences.<sup>62</sup> François Foronda has shown that in the second half of the thirteenth century rebel nobles raised the

argument of ‘fearing’ (*miedo*) the king as part of their negotiation strategy. In consequence, the danger of being assassinated forced them to avoid the court.<sup>63</sup> In this context, Castilian queens proved to be of enormous value. A pacific solution could be reached once the nobles were reassured that they had nothing to fear from the king.

The channel of communication offered by the queen could work both ways. For instance, in 1332 Juan Manuel sent emissaries to Leonor de Guzmán asking her to mediate between him and Alfonso XI. Juan Manuel feared that once Castile had signed a truce with Granada, the king’s anger (*saña*) would be directed towards him for his misdeeds.<sup>64</sup> After several years of intermittent conflict, the magnate and Alfonso XI were finally reconciled in 1338. The return of Juan Manuel to the king’s service was also achieved through a ‘queenly’ mediation. On this occasion, it was Queen Leonor of Castile, Alfonso XI’s sister and the wife of Alfons III of Aragón (r. 1327–1336), who persuaded Juan Manuel to return to the court.<sup>65</sup>

The most renowned example of queenly mediation in this period is provided by Queen Violante, who progressively became a central figure during the nobles’ rebellion of 1272–1273. Francisco Hernández’s analysis of the section of the *Crónica de Alfonso X* devoted to the rebellion led him to argue that this part was written immediately after the events. Hernández suggests that this fragment was most likely written by Jofré de Loaysa, Queen Violante’s chancellor, with the idea of exalting the figures of Fernando de la Cerda and the queen herself. This text was probably intended to function as the introduction to a prospective chronicle of Fernando de la Cerda’s reign, in which Queen Violante would be presented as a new Berenguela who mentored her son in the art of ruling. Fernando’s untimely death in 1275 turned the project into ashes. However, decades later, Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid included this fragment as part of ‘his’ royal chronicles. The narrative presents a sharp contrast between an old and ineffective Alfonso X and his dashing heir, who successfully put an end to the rebellion thanks to the sound advice of Queen Violante. The queen’s participation was a turning point, as she persuaded the nobles to return to the king’s service. The ineffectual exchange of letters between Alfonso X’s deputies (*mandaderos*) and the nobles radically changed once the queen became the king’s representative in the negotiations. The nobles trusted Queen Violante more than Alfonso X, who was seen as fickle by many of the magnates.

Furthermore, Queen Violante, despite receiving specific instructions from her husband, displayed considerable leeway in the negotiations and settled the agreement on her own terms.<sup>66</sup> Despite Loaysa’s obvious inclinations, Queen Violante’s role as an intermediary was fundamental to achieving an end to the nobles’ rebellion. Additionally, this example shows, once again, how queens had their own political agenda.

### **Queens as lords: The management of the royal demesne**

Royal chronicles commonly focus on the ‘informal’ powers of queenship, and thus neglect how Castilian queens’ also managed their numerous estates as well

as their households. The loss of the royal registers prevents an in-depth analysis of the Castilian queens' households in this period. However, the queen's purse sustained dozens of individuals who attended to their needs and managed their estates. Queens also had their own chancery, which indicates the high number of affairs that was usually conducted under the queens' direct orders. For instance, Jofré de Loaysa was Queen Violante's chancellor, as was mentioned above.

In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries queens consort were the main female landowners in the kingdom. The queens' patrimony mostly comprised the possessions or *arras* they received when they got married, which means that they personally ruled extensive tracts of land that were part of the *realengo* (royal demesne). Ana Rodríguez's analysis of the *arras* of Queen Leonor Plantagenet (1160–1214), Queen Berenguela (1179–1246), and Queen Beatriz of Swabia (1205–1235) demonstrated the importance of these queens' patrimony in the regions comprising the Camino de Santiago and Castile's borders. The border fortresses controlled by Queen Berenguela were of crucial importance in 1230 as they facilitated Fernando III's successful claim to the Leonese throne. In addition, a series of towns, such as Carrión, Castrojeriz, Belorado, Astudillo, Pancorbo, and Peñafiel, formed a continuous part of the Castilian queens' domains.<sup>67</sup>

Female members of the royal family had acted as rulers of parts of the royal demesne ever since the tenth century. However, the disappearance of the Infanzago in the twelfth century limited the options of the infantas,<sup>68</sup> who were either married off to the heirs or princes of other kingdoms or became nuns – and sometimes *señoras* – of the royal monastery of Las Huelgas (see Appendixes 2). This being said, it was not unusual for women of the royal family to maintain control over important lordships. For instance, the infanta Berenguela, Alfonso X's daughter, was granted the town of Guadalajara in 1274.<sup>69</sup>

It has been argued that the *arras* received by Castilian queens in the Late Middle Ages were significantly smaller than the lordships obtained by their predecessors in the twelfth century. However, as yet no satisfactory answer has been given as to why this happened and whether it was a progressive decline or a sudden change that took place at a specific moment.<sup>70</sup> In fairness, it is difficult to study the evolution of the Castilian queens' domains because it is almost impossible to fully reconstruct the lordships ruled over by every queen. The extant documentation provides information regarding certain towns and other landholdings which were part of the queen's domain at a certain point, but this is only a partial image of the full extent of their holdings. Even if it were possible to list every Castilian queen's possession, it would be difficult to compare them in-depth, as the revenues they produced have only rarely been traced.

Similarly, the development of royal government and the subsequent expansion of royal taxation would have changed the nature of these *arras*. As a result, it would have become common for queens to have the right to receive a share of the royal revenues in certain towns or regions, and this makes it harder to draw comparisons with previous queens' forms of lordship. In any case, Castilian

queens continued to rule over significant areas of the royal demesne in the period covered by this book.

Regrettably, there is no extant documentation for Queen Violante's *arras*; however, she undoubtedly accumulated a remarkable patrimony over the years. Violante's estates included Valladolid, Plasencia, Astudillo, San Esteban de Gormaz, Ayllón, Curiel, Béjar, and Valencia de Campos (later Valencia de don Juan). In the southern part of the kingdom, the queen possessed towns such as Écija, the villages of Alguazas and Alcantarilla in Murcia, and also a number of manors in Seville. After fleeing to Aragón in 1278, Violante returned to Castile in a precarious economic situation. However, Sancho helped her mother to pay the queen's considerable debts in Aragón and to recover part of her patrimony.<sup>71</sup>

The *arras* of Queen María de Molina consisted of the towns of Valladolid, Astudillo, Écija, Toro, and Zafra, some of which had previously belonged to Queen Violante. María de Molina increased her patrimony in the following years, especially once she inherited the lordship of Molina in 1293, which was integrated into the royal demesne. Queen María de Molina's will (1321) illustrates the extent of her domain. More than a dozen castles were controlled by María de Molina and these were later granted to Alfonso XI once the queen's executors paid her debts. Moreover, Queen María also administered the towns of Guadalajara, Hita, and Ayllón in the name of her daughter Isabel. These possessions would be returned to the king once the infanta received her dowry.<sup>72</sup>

There is much less information regarding the landholdings ruled by Queen Constanza of Portugal. She owned the important towns of Salamanca and Belorado and received part of the royal revenues levied in Roa,<sup>73</sup> although it is likely that her patrimony was substantially larger. Queen Maria of Portugal, by contrast, obtained a significant lordship as a result of her marriage to Alfonso XI. She obtained the towns of Guadalajara, Olmedo, Salamanca, and Talavera as *arras* and a dowry consisting of a series of landholdings in the area of Soria. These estates had previously belonged to Blanca, the king's cousin, who would later marry the Portuguese heir, Pedro (see Appendices 2). Years later Queen María also obtained the villages of Alguazas and Alcantarilla, which had been part of Queen María de Molina's domains, and, in 1351, she received a number of other possessions from her son Pedro I, such as the town of Palenzuela, which Alfonso XI had previously granted to Leonor de Guzmán.<sup>74</sup>

Leonor de Guzmán acquired an impressive patrimony thanks to her relationship with Alfonso XI. She obtained several border towns in Andalusia, such as Medina Sidonia, Alcalá de Guadaira, Aguilar de la Frontera, Cabra, and Lucena, and then, in the Madrid area, places such as Manzanares el Real. In Castile, the most significant lordships she was granted were Tordesillas, Palenzuela, Villaumbrales, and Paredes de Nava. Alfonso XI's generosity towards his concubine has traditionally been analysed in a very negative light. The king has been presented as an extravagant ruler and Leonor and his family as a greedy

and ambitious group who accumulated riches and power in order to assault the throne in the following generation.<sup>75</sup> Nevertheless, this interpretation must be challenged. The towns Leonor received in Andalusia did not generate much revenue – the Castilian monarchs had granted their inhabitants extensive fiscal privileges in order to attract population – although their strategic value was very high. Controlling these enclaves did contribute to the enhancement of the position of Leonor and her family in Andalusia, yet these donations also helped the king to strengthen his bonds with the local nobility, who became more closely involved in the management and defence of the kingdom's borders. The rest of Leonor de Guzmán's lordships varied greatly in size, including towns of great importance, such as Tordesillas, but any consideration that Alfonso XI alienated the royal demesne in his lover's favour is utterly exaggerated. This argument was raised in 1336 by Juan Manuel when he severed his ties with the king (*desnaturar*). In his letter, the magnate's rebellion was intended, among other things, to protect the interests of his lord, the infante Pedro, whose future inheritance was being drained away to the benefit of Leonor de Guzmán's offspring.<sup>76</sup> However, Juan Manuel's accusation should be understood as part of his propagandistic campaign against Alfonso XI. Royal patronage was a fundamental part of kingship, and Alfonso XI's donations should be interpreted as an instrument used by the king to strengthen his own position by creating a parallel family.

The king's relationship with Leonor lasted for 20 years – until Alfonso's death – and resulted in the birth of ten children, it was not a whim (see Figure 5.1). Accordingly, the royal chronicle underscores that Leonor de Guzmán was expected to serve the king (*'et desdeque llegó á la merced del Rey, trabajóse mucho de lo servir en todas las cosas que ella entendia que le podria facer servicio'* / *'since the moment she was in the king's grace she worked hard to serve him in all the ways she thought could be of help'*).<sup>77</sup> Pope Benedict XII constantly wrote to Alfonso XI, impelling him to abandon his concubine and return to his lawful wife, but to no avail.<sup>78</sup> Similarly, Afonso IV of Portugal accused his son-in-law of side-lining Queen María in favour of Leonor de Guzmán. He even sought to regain control of the castles he had given as guarantees in the 1328 wedding contract, and he justified this on the basis that Alfonso XI's extramarital relationship signified that the Castilian king had broken their agreement. Alfonso XI strongly denied such an accusation.<sup>79</sup> In the end, Alfonso XI was able to maintain his *de facto* polygamy without causing an insurmountable rift with either the papacy or the Portuguese monarchy. Benedict XII provided papal funds for the king's military endeavours against the Muslims and Afonso IV fought alongside the Castilian king at the battle of Río Salado thanks to Queen María's mediation.<sup>80</sup> In sum, by the 1340s it was widely accepted that Alfonso XI had two queens. The Andalusian noblewoman obviously had her own personal interests, as well as those of her family, but that does not make her any different from the rest of the Castilian queens. Moreover, the importance of Leonor de Guzmán in Alfonso XI's successful kingship will be explored further in the next chapter when discussing their offspring.

The Castilian queens of this period, therefore, continued to rule over a substantial territory. Although the domain of every queen could vary significantly, places such as Valladolid, Guadalajara, Astudillo, and Écija were intrinsically associated with the queens and royal women. The most relevant case was that of Valladolid, which, as was discussed in Chapter 3, was the kingdom's 'administrative capital'. Since the mid-eleventh century, it had become commonplace for queens consort to become 'lords' of Valladolid (*senior in Valleoliti*).<sup>81</sup>

There is only limited extant documentation that sheds light on the day-to-day ruling of these territories. However, it seems that the Castilian queens maintained a tight grasp over their domains. For instance, Queen Violante's documentation shows how she passed sentence on a jurisdictional dispute between Béjar and a village of its *alfoz* (hinterland).<sup>82</sup> Similarly, Queen María of Portugal appointed several agents in Talavera, Guadalajara, and Salamanca to oversee the local councils' activities.<sup>83</sup> Finally, exceptional documents such as María de Molina's will (1321) and the Treaty of Palazuelos (1314), an agreement signed by the queen and the infantes Juan and Pedro to organise Alfonso XI's regency, cast light on the power derived from controlling part of the royal demesne.

In her will, Queen María acknowledged that she owed 700,000 *maravedís* to several people (plus an outstanding debt of an additional 100,000 that she had inherited from her sister Blanca, but remained to be paid).<sup>84</sup> The queen's debts would be paid from the revenues generated by her estates and, in the meantime, Queen María's steward (*mayordomo*) would control a series of royal castles. These fortresses would be returned to King Alfonso XI once he came of age and the debts had been paid off. Queen María de Molina argued that it was her service to Fernando IV which caused her to incur those debts; it was for this reason that she had received several landholdings from her son.<sup>85</sup> This argument reinforces the idea of a 'plural monarchy'. María de Molina possessed and administered a series of landholdings and castles within the royal demesne. While these lordships would be returned to the monarch after the queen's death, during her lifetime they provided María de Molina with the money and power she needed to serve the king.

The control of a significant number of royal castles gave the queen remarkable power, which in turn permitted María de Molina to create her own clientele, consisting of the nobles who managed the castles on her behalf and those who benefited from her patronage. For instance, Queen María's will indicated that the castle of Castronuevo was currently under the control of Garcilaso de la Vega, a *caballero* who paid the queen 40,000 *maravedís* in exchange for the right to control the castle and its revenues.<sup>86</sup> The queen could use these fortresses for political bargaining as well. In 1314, Queen María de Molina and the infantes Pedro and Juan signed an agreement in which, after two years of political struggle, they devised Alfonso XI's regency. Queen María became the king's guardian and it was determined that the royal chancery would remain with the king, albeit with some conditions. This decision was the result of a tough negotiation in which the queen relinquished three of her castles,

Castro nuevo, Astudillo, and Fuentidueña, as a form of security. These fortresses would be held by three of the king's vassals who would pay homage to the infante Juan.<sup>87</sup>

The agreement reached at Palazuelos illustrates how queens could freely use their possessions. Additionally, it reflects that the queen's personal interests were sometimes hard to differentiate from the ideal of 'serving' the king. Being part of the regency was a way of protecting the king's interests, but it also fulfilled Queen María's own ambitions. The positive image projected by the royal chronicles presents María de Molina as a selfless individual who defended royal authority in the direst moments of Fernando IV and Alfonso XI's minorities, but it was obviously an idealisation. Queen María, like the rest of her predecessors and the queens who followed her, was a political operator with her own agenda, not a blind agent of the Castilian monarchy. Finally, the Treaty of Palazuelos demonstrates the important role queens played during royal minorities. Her position as queen mother gave María de Molina the authority to participate in the regency. However, the agreement set out in the treaty reveals that this authority was far from being automatically acknowledged, and Queen María de Molina struggled to assert her position.

### **Queen mother or queen regent? María de Molina and the royal minorities of Fernando IV and Alfonso XI**

Queen María de Molina played a key role during the minorities of Fernando IV (1295–1301) and Alfonso XI (1312–1325) in her capacity as guardian and regent. According to the royal chronicle, everyone in Castile knew that the queen always did what was best for the kingdom (*'entendiendo que andaba ella con bien e con verdad e que queria pro de la tierra'*).<sup>88</sup> However, the chronicles also show how problematic it was for Queen María de Molina to assert her authority as regent. Accordingly, Sánchez de Valladolid projects a somehow contradictory image of her, in which Queen María's role is sometimes limited to mediation and counselling, actions that fell within the traditional boundaries of queenship, while on other occasions she appears to have exercised her own authority to rule, albeit with only moderate success.

According to the *Partidas*, in the event of a royal minority, the king's mother should be both his guardian and one of his regents, as long as she did not remarry. In this regard, the *Partidas* was more detailed than the *Espéculo* (1255), which did not mention what role the queen should play.<sup>89</sup> Although the *Partidas* were not 'enacted' until 1348, as was discussed in Chapter 1, it can be argued that it reflected the Castilian monarchy's views on many issues, including the organisation of the regency during a royal minority. In consequence, Sancho IV, on his deathbed, appointed Queen María de Molina guardian and regent of their son, Fernando IV (*'diole la tutoria del infante don Ferrando, su fijo, et diole la guarda de todos los sus reinos, que lo toviessen todo fasta que oviesen edad conplida'*) 'gave her the guardianship of the infante don Fernando, his son, and gave her all of his kingdoms to protect, so that all would be transferred to him [the infante] when he came of age'.<sup>90</sup>

Being the king's guardian was considered the queen mother's 'natural' right, meaning that it was very difficult to challenge it. María de Molina eventually lost her position as regent during Fernando IV's minority; however, she continued to be the king's guardian.<sup>91</sup> On the contrary, the custody of Alfonso XI became a hotly contested issue. In 1312, María de Molina decided to leave the young king in Ávila, where the *concejo* (town council) promised to guard him until the issue of the regency was settled. The infante Juan was the leader of one of the opposing factions, which included Queen Constanza, Fernando IV's widow and Alfonso's mother, who was obviously seen as his rightful guardian. The other faction was led by María de Molina and the infante Pedro, her son, who wanted to postpone this issue until a regency was agreed. Constanza's claim was supported by the *Partidas* – despite technically not being in force – and tradition; however, the royal chronicle noted that in 1311 Fernando IV had stipulated that his young son should be raised by María de Molina.<sup>92</sup> The royal chronicle was completed in the 1340s; therefore, it is likely that Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid's obvious sympathy towards Queen María encouraged him to include this in order to justify Pedro's and María de Molina's actions *a posteriori*. The issue of the king's custody was ultimately resolved by the sudden death of Queen Constanza in 1313, after which the two factions reached a new agreement in Palazuelos the following year. María de Molina became Alfonso XI's guardian and the royal chancery remained at the king's side.<sup>93</sup>

The *Crónica de Alfonso XI* does not hide its support for the faction led by Queen María de Molina and the infante Pedro. However, it would be simplistic to identify the other faction as the one opposed to royal power. For instance, the *Gran Crónica de Alfonso XI*, an expanded version of the royal chronicle written in 1376, presents a more sympathetic view of Queen Constanza. The text narrates a dramatic scene that took place in Ávila in November 1312, where the king was being guarded. The town council denied access to the city to any of the opposing factions despite the desperate pleas of Queen Constanza to see her son. According to the chronicler, the despair of first losing her husband and then being unable to see her child was what caused Constanza's death just a few months later.<sup>94</sup> Juan Manuel's letters to Jaime II of Aragón also tell a different tale than that recounted in Sánchez de Valladolid's chronicle. In June 1313, the magnate broke his alliance with the infante Pedro, and argued that Pedro had lied to him and to Queen Constanza, while Juan Manuel accused Pedro of going against the king's interests (*'se trabaiaua en lo que no era seruiçio del rey'*).<sup>95</sup>

With regard to her role of queen regent, María de Molina experienced more difficulties during the reigns of both her son and grandson. Soon after Sancho IV's death, María de Molina had to surrender the regency to the infante Enrique, the king's great-uncle, who was supported by an important faction of the nobility, in order to consolidate Fernando IV's tenuous position. Queen María de Molina continued to be involved in governmental affairs, although it is difficult to discern in what capacity. It has been traditionally interpreted that the queen shared the regency with the infante Enrique and that they ruled

together.<sup>96</sup> However, it seems obvious that, in theory, Enrique was the sole regent. The *Crónica de Fernando IV* clearly differentiates between the king's guardianship, retained by Queen María, and the position of regent, which was transferred to Enrique.<sup>97</sup> Additionally, both the *Cortes* proceedings and royal privileges distinguish between both offices. For instance, at the meeting of 1295 Queen María is presented in an advisory role whereas Enrique appears as the only regent (*tutor*).<sup>98</sup> In a similar way, the royal privileges declare that they were granted by the king, following the queen's advice, and with the infante's permission.<sup>99</sup>

The extent of Queen María de Molina's power during the minority of Fernando IV is far from being clear. The queen is presented in the *Crónica de Fernando IV* as the counterpoint of Enrique's ambition, always struggling to prevent the infante's constant misdeeds. For instance, in 1296 Enrique wanted to sell the recently conquered Tarifa to the Marinids under the pretence of the regency's need for money. Queen María was able to thwart Enrique's plan, although she agreed to give the infante the towns of Gormaz and Calatañazor in order to appease him, so he would not try to find other ways of hurting the king's interests.<sup>100</sup> Therefore, it seems that the queen's powers went beyond her advisory role. However, the royal chronicle insists on how difficult it was for María de Molina to impose her will. The need to alienate the royal demesne in Enrique's favour in order to keep him in check is a recurring theme of the *Crónica de Fernando IV*.

Similarly, Queen María struggled to make the nobles comply with her decisions, especially in military matters. In 1295, Juan Núñez II de Lara and Nuño González II refused to fight against Diego López V de Haro despite having received a generous sum from the queen. Similarly, Queen María de Molina's presence at the siege of Paredes in 1297 proved insufficient to persuade the nobles to devote their full strength to the battle, and the army had to return to Valladolid shortly thereafter.<sup>101</sup>

By contrast, Queen María de Molina excelled when she herself was dedicated to the roles of mediator, intercessor, and counsellor, those traditionally associated with queenship. As was discussed above, the royal chronicle shows how successful María de Molina was at persuading the nobility to settle their differences with the king. The royal chronicler interpreted the minority of Fernando IV and the beginning of his adult reign in terms of a slow process in which the young king, thanks to the advice and mediation of María de Molina, was able to slowly regain control over the kingdom. Accordingly, the image of María de Molina portrayed by the royal chronicles presents certain similarities to the depiction of past female rulers such as Queen Berenguela, who was assigned 'female' tasks. Aspects of ruling such as war and lordship were left to the male members of the royal family, while women focused on preserving the royal memory and acting as mediators between the nobles and the king.<sup>102</sup> Therefore, it seems that even when Queen María de Molina acted as regent (or quasi-regent), her role was assimilated to that of a queen consort.

During the minority of Alfonso XI, María de Molina was irrefutably one of the king's regents. Accordingly, the *Cortes* proceedings and the royal diplomas,

indicate the queen's role as regent (*tutor*), which was not the case during Fernando IV's minority. For instance, royal privileges state that they were granted by Alfonso XI with the advice and permission of the queen and the infantes, regents and keepers of his kingdoms (*'con consejo et con otorgamiento de la reyna donna Maria, mi ahuela, et del infante don Juan et del infante don Pedro, mis tíos et mis tutores et guarda de los mis regnos'*).<sup>103</sup>

Nevertheless, Queen María also faced challenges to assert her authority as regent. The 1314 Treaty of Palazuelos divided the ruling of the kingdom among Queen María de Molina and the infantes Juan and Pedro. As was discussed above, Queen María de Molina had to relinquish three castles to Juan in order to reach an agreement. More importantly, the treaty stated that, in the event of the death of any of the regents, the surviving regent(s) would act as the sole ruler(s). Queen María, therefore, should have become the only regent after the death of both infantes in 1319 during a disastrous campaign in Granada; however, she was unable to assert her authority over the unruly Juan Manuel and other nobles. The queen did benefit from the support of some towns. For instance, in 1320 Baeza pledged that they would not accept anyone else as regent but her. She even sought to persuade Juan Manuel and the infante Felipe, the queen's younger son, to share the regency among the three of them; however, her attempt failed due to Juan Manuel and Felipe's antagonism and her death in 1321.<sup>104</sup> The demise of Queen María de Molina plunged the kingdom into chaos, allowing several magnates to speciously claim the title of regents. The first letter sent to Murcia by Alfonso XI the day after he came of age (14 August 1325) clearly shows the atomisation of royal authority. The young king ordered the local council to dismiss any diploma issued by the infante Felipe, Juan *el Tuerto* (the infante Juan's son), or Juan Manuel, who had gone as far as to forge the royal seal.<sup>105</sup>

In conclusion, queens could contribute in many ways to the ruling of the kingdom, thanks to their use of royal patronage, family connections, proximity to the king, prestige as mediators, and control over parts of the royal demesne. Queens also had their own interests and agendas, which did not always coincide with that of the king's. During a royal minority, the queen mother was expected to act as the king's guardian and form part of the regency. However, the example of Queen María de Molina shows the difficulties they faced when trying to assert their authority. Despite Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid's sympathetic account of María de Molina, the royal chronicles show that, in order to rule effectively, queens had to share the regency with other male members of the royal family. Therefore, in order to fully explore what was encompassed by 'plural monarchy', it is necessary to now turn to an analysis of the role played by other royal relatives.

## Notes

1 *CFIV*, ch. I, pars. 2–4.

2 The classical study on María de Molina is: Gaibrois, *María de Molina*. A recent, albeit far from innovative, work on her in English is: Pepin, *María de Molina*.

- 3 Gómez Redondo, *Historia de la prosa medieval castellana. II*, 1250–1254.
- 4 See: Pick, *Her Father's Daughter*.
- 5 Reglero de la Fuente, 'Las "señoras" de las Huelgas de Burgos', pars. 46–47. The idea of Las Huelgas as a reinvention of the Infantazgo is Rose Walker's: Walker, 'Leonor of England'.
- 6 On Queen Eleanor see: Parsons, *Eleanor of Castile*.
- 7 A view disseminated by Salvador de Moxó, 'Época de Alfonso XI', 321–322.
- 8 Arias Guillén, 'Family Matters'.
- 9 Echevarría Arsuaga, 'Redes femeninas en la Corte castellana', 168–169.
- 10 Rodríguez, *La estirpe de Leonor de Aquitania*, 286–291.
- 11 Martínez, '*Ca así como yo soy tu padre*', 113–114 and 123–129.
- 12 See: O' Callaghan, 'The Many Roles of the Medieval Queen' and Vann, 'The theory and practice of medieval Castilian queenship'.
- 13 Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe*, 250.
- 14 See the introduction of: Parsons (ed.), *Medieval Queenship*.
- 15 See: Huneycutt, 'Intercession and the High Medieval Queen' and Parsons, 'The Queen's Intercession'.
- 16 St John, *Three Medieval Queens*, 17.
- 17 Echevarría Arsuaga and Jaspert, 'El ejercicio del poder de las reinas ibéricas', 3–4.
- 18 See: Woodacre (ed.), *Queenship in the Mediterranean*.
- 19 Ana Echevarría and Nikolas Jaspert coordinated a special issue on Iberian Queenship in the *Anuario de Estudios Medievales* in 2016: <https://doi.org/10.3989/aem.2016.v46.i1> (Accessed 4 March 2020).
- 20 See: Earenfight, *The King's Other Body*.
- 21 Rodrigues, 'The Queen Consort in Late Medieval Portugal', 132–134 and 145.
- 22 See: Pick, *Her Father's Daughter* and Collins, 'Queens-Dowager and Queens-Regent'.
- 23 Therese Martin has worked extensively on these topics: 'Fuentes de potestad para reinas e infantas' and *Queen as King*.
- 24 See: Bianchini, *The Queen's Hand* and Shadis, *Berenguela of Castile*.
- 25 Bianchini, *The Queen's Hand*, 3, Earenfight, 'Partners in Politics', XIV–XVII, and Shadis, *Berenguela of Castile*, 14. The notion of 'plural monarchy' is used by Bianchini.
- 26 A general view on queens consort in: Pelaz Flores, *Reinas consortes*.
- 27 Rodríguez, 'Strategías matrimoniales', 169.
- 28 *CAXI*, 235.
- 29 Martin, 'Fuentes de potestad para reinas e infantas', 125, Rodríguez, *La estirpe de Leonor de Aquitania*, 236–237, and Shadis, *Berenguela of Castile*, 159.
- 30 Muñoz Fernández and García Herrero, 'Reginalidad y fundaciones monásticas', 19–21 and Rochwert-Zuili, 'El mecenazgo y patronazgo de María de Molina', pars. 1, 6–8, and 16–17. One of the copies of the Testament of Queen María de Molina is kept in: AHN, CÓDICES, L. 1068.
- 31 Fuente Pérez, *Violante de Aragón*, 173–185.
- 32 Graña Cid, '¿Favoritas de la corona?', 182.
- 33 Benavides, *Memorias de Don Fernando IV*, II, doc. DLXXXIV.
- 34 Martín Prieto, 'Notas sobre María de Portugal', doc. 1.
- 35 *Colección documental de Alfonso XI*, docs. 223 and 233 and Echevarría Arsuaga, 'Redes femeninas', 170.
- 36 Echevarría Arsuaga and Jaspert, 'El ejercicio del poder de las reinas ibéricas', 11–12.
- 37 Arias Guillén, 'Family Matters', 296–298.
- 38 See: Hernández, 'Two Weddings and a Funeral'.
- 39 *CAXI*, 218.

- 40 *CFIV*, ch. IV, pars. 1–8.
- 41 Rochwert-Zuili, 'La correspondencia de Constanza de Portugal', 57.
- 42 *CAXI*, 308–309 and Jardin, 'La reina María de Portugal', pars. 9–12.
- 43 Rochwert-Zuili, 'La actuación pacificadora de María de Molina', pars. 21 and 35–36.
- 44 Kinkade, 'Violante of Aragón', 4.
- 45 O'Callaghan, *The Gibraltar Crusade*, 38–47.
- 46 González Jiménez, *Alfonso X el Sabio*, 349.
- 47 Fuente Pérez, *Violante de Aragón*, 109, 142–143, and 161.
- 48 Kinkade, 'Violante of Aragón', 18.
- 49 *Benoît XII (1334–1342)*, docs. 184, 1846, and 2803.
- 50 *Foedera*, 3:1, 59, 73, and 147.
- 51 Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe*, 11–12.
- 52 See: Muñoz Fernández, 'La mediación femenina'.
- 53 See: Huneycutt, 'Intercession and the High Medieval Queen'.
- 54 Fuente Pérez, '¿Espejos de Esther?', par. 4.
- 55 *CFIV*, ch. XI, par. 1.
- 56 *CFIV*, ch. XI, pars. 35–36.
- 57 *CAXI*, 227.
- 58 *Cortes*, I, 85, 119, 162, 169, 173, 179, and 184.
- 59 *Castigos del rey don Sancho*, 122.
- 60 *CSIV*, 90–91.
- 61 Muñoz Fernández, 'La mediación femenina', pars. 6–8 and 17–18 and Rochwert-Zuili, 'La actuación pacificadora de María de Molina', par. 5.
- 62 *CSIV*, 123–126.
- 63 See: Foronda, 'El miedo al rey'.
- 64 *CAXI*, 230–231.
- 65 *CAXI*, 293–294.
- 66 See: Hernández, 'La reina Violante de Aragón'.
- 67 Rodríguez, *La estirpe de Leonor de Aquitania*, 170–171 and 'Stratégies matrimoniales', 170–171 and 181–182.
- 68 Martin, 'Fuentes de potestad para reinas e infantas', 99.
- 69 González Jiménez and Carmona Ruiz, *Documentación e Itinerario de Alfonso X*, doc. 2594.
- 70 Diana Pelaz contrasts the reduced lordship of Juana of Portugal, Enrique IV's second wife, with the rich patrimony obtained by Leonor Plantagenet, but she does not analyse the evolution of the Castilian queens' domains over those three centuries: Pelaz Flores, *Reinas consortes*, 125–126.
- 71 Fuente Pérez, *Violante de Aragón*, 77, 98, and 168–169.
- 72 AHN, CÓDICES, L. 1068.
- 73 González Mínguez, 'Constanza de Portugal', 501.
- 74 Echevarría Arsuaga, 'Redes femeninas', 171–172.
- 75 See: García Fernández, 'Doña Leonor de Guzmán' and González Crespo, 'El patrimonio dominical de Leonor de Guzmán'.
- 76 Letter edited in: Hernández, 'Historiografía y propaganda', 413–417.
- 77 *CAXI*, 227.
- 78 *Benoît XII (1334–1342)*, docs. 184, 1846, and 2803.
- 79 Hernández, 'Historiografía y propaganda', 388–396.
- 80 Arias Guillén, 'Family Matters', 309.
- 81 Rucquoi, *Valladolid en la Edad Media*, 152.
- 82 Fuente Pérez, 'Las cartas visibles e "invisibles" de una mujer política', 19–21.
- 83 Echevarría Arsuaga, 'Redes femeninas', 176.
- 84 Estepa Díez, 'Dos testamentos femeninos', 386.
- 85 AHN, CÓDICES, L. 1068.

- 86 AHN, CÓDICES, L. 1068.
- 87 ACB, V-17, f. 435 (1 August 1314).
- 88 *CFIV*, ch. I, par. 25.
- 89 *Las Siete Partidas*, Segunda Partida, Título XV, Ley III and *Espéculo*, Libro II, Título XVI, Ley V.
- 90 *CSIV*, 183.
- 91 *CFIV*, ch. I, par. 12.
- 92 *CFIV*, ch. XVIII, par. 1.
- 93 *CAXI*, 178–179 and ACB, V-17, f. 435 (1 August 1314).
- 94 *GCAXI*, I, 278.
- 95 Giménez Soler, *Don Juan Manuel*, doc. CCLXIX.
- 96 See, among many other works: González Mínguez, *Fernando IV* and Pepin, *María de Molina*.
- 97 *CFIV*, ch. I, par. 12.
- 98 *Cortes*, vol. I, 131.
- 99 For instance, *Catálogo de los pergaminos*, doc. 21 (2 August 1295) and *Sevilla, ciudad de privilegios*, doc. 51 (3 August 1295).
- 100 *CFIV*, ch. III, pars. 1–5.
- 101 *CFIV*, ch. I, par. 4 and ch. II, par. 22.
- 102 Rodríguez, ‘Sucesión regia’, 28–30 and Bianchini, *The Queen’s Hand*, 255–260.
- 103 *CODOM. VI*, doc. XVIII (25 July 1316).
- 104 *CAXI*, 184–186 and *Colección documental del Archivo Municipal de Baeza*, doc. 42.
- 105 *CODOM. VI*, doc. XLIX.

## 5 A plural monarchy (II)

### Defining the royal family in Castile (1252–1350)

Following the conquest of Seville in 1248 and the restoration of the city's archdiocese, Fernando III granted the cathedral chapter a number of privileges, such as the right to levy the *almojarifazgo* (a sales tax) in the archdiocese, and the responsibility of controlling the city's mosques. On 5 August 1252, Alfonso X, just over two months after having become king, confirmed the cathedral chapter's right to exercise these two privileges, and as was customary the royal chancery issued a *privilegio rodado*. These diplomas were the most formal and ceremonial documents issued by the Castilian monarchy, and they were confirmed by the kingdom's senior ecclesiastical and lay magnates (see Images 0.1 and 0.2). The names of these individuals were listed at the bottom of the document in four columns, two on either side of the royal sign, in order to demonstrate their acquiescence with the terms stipulated in the diploma. Above both the royal sign and the accompanying columns, there was a further space which was reserved for the names of the kingdom's most prestigious individuals; it had never included so many names as it did in the *privilegio rodado* issued in 1252. During the reign of Fernando III, this space had been occupied solely by the names of his brother, the infante Alfonso de Molina, and the archbishops of Toledo, Santiago (from 1230), and Seville (from 1248). However, Alfonso de Molina's name was now followed by those of Alfonso X's brothers: Fadrique, Enrique, Manuel, and Fernando. Moreover, the archbishops of Toledo and Seville were the king's siblings: Sancho and Felipe.<sup>1</sup>

The *privilegios rodados* were granted by the king and queen along with their children. Consequently, the *privilegios rodados* granted in 1253 listed Alfonso X and Violante along with their daughter and heir, Berenguela. The diplomas issued a year later included the name of the infanta Beatriz as well. However, in 1255 both Berenguela and Beatriz's names were replaced by the infante Fernando de la Cerda, the new heir. Subsequently, Fernando's brothers were named in later privileges as soon as they were born. By 1268, Alfonso X and Violante were accompanied by their five sons: Fernando, Sancho, Pedro, Juan, and Jaime (see Appendices 1).<sup>2</sup>

The royal privileges thus reflected how the Castilian royal family grew dramatically by the second half of the thirteenth century. The royal family had never been as large as it was during Alfonso X's reign. Needless to say, kings

had had families and relatives before. However, in León and Castile, the royal dynasty had always had a surprisingly limited number of male members. Since the tenth century, it had become common for kings to be survived by just one son (or none). On the rare occasions when there was more than one male heir, like in the cases of Fernando I (d. 1065) and Alfonso VII (d. 1157), the kingdom was divided between them. Once the idea of primogeniture had begun to prevail, which, as was discussed in Chapter 2, was linked to the idea of the kingdom as an inalienable entity, it became necessary to determine the role and status to be assigned to the other male royal relatives, and to decide on how they might contribute to the task of ruling the kingdom.

Across the monarchies of Western Europe, during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the position of the male members of the royal family became more clearly defined. In France, the will left by Louis VIII (r. 1223–1226) prompted the creation of the apanages, whereby, for the first time, there were princes of royal blood who ruled a significant area within the kingdom. In 1269, in order to guarantee royal overlordship across these territories, Louis IX (r. 1226–1270) introduced a number of changes to the model devised by his father. Additionally, the French monarch removed any ambiguity regarding the return of these lands to the royal demesne in the absence of a direct descendant. Royal princes actively participated in ruling the kingdom as councillors, military commanders, or regents. Moreover, they developed a keen sense of their status: they adopted the *fleur de lys* as their symbol, and they identified themselves as a ‘son of the king of France’ in documents; a title which was progressively substituted by the sobriquet ‘*de France*’ in the fourteenth century.<sup>3</sup>

The Aragonese infantes were granted comparable significant lordships in the fourteenth century. In 1322, Jaume II made his second son, Pere, Count of Ribagorza. Two years later, Ramón Berenguer, the king’s third son, received the newly created county of Prades.<sup>4</sup> This policy was continued by Alfons III (r. 1327–1336), whose open-handedness towards his younger sons, Ferran and Joan, was resented by his heir, the future Pere III, as well as several magnates of the kingdom.<sup>5</sup>

In England, many of the kingdom’s earls, a title whose special status included the right to receive a personal summon to the Parliament, were members of the royal family. Additionally, Edward I (r. 1272–1307) strengthened the ties between the English monarchy and this sector of the aristocracy through a series of marriages and other kinds of agreements, which allowed several earldoms to be absorbed into the royal demesne, or else to be granted to other members of the royal family, in the absence of an heir.<sup>6</sup> Edward III (r. 1326–1377) was traditionally accused of being excessively generous with his extensive family, and it has been argued that his prodigality sowed the seeds for Richard II’s deposition in 1399 and was, ultimately, the cause of the War of the Roses (1455–1487). However, Mark Ormrod has shown how Edward III acquired important earldoms for his younger children in key areas, such as the Ulster and the Scottish borders, which allowed him to consolidate royal authority in those regions without alienating the royal demesne. Thanks

to a shrewd marriage strategy, the king managed to combine the Crown's interests with his children's personal ambitions for over two decades.<sup>7</sup>

The conflict between serving the king and pursuing personal interests was the paradoxical situation faced by the male members of the royal families of Europe, and Castile was no exception. The infantes have traditionally been portrayed either as the leaders of an unruly nobility, whose greed and ambition hindered the consolidation of royal authority, or else as loyal servants of their brothers and nephews.<sup>8</sup> This simplistic view has to a large extent been shaped by the royal chronicles, which in turn reflect each chronicler's agenda and allegiances. However, a nuanced revision of this view is required. Between 1252 and 1350, the male members of the royal family played a key role in Castilian politics. They acted as royal agents yet also rebelled against the king, and on many occasions the same individual did both. Therefore, it is necessary to analyse the role of the infantes in the light of this duality instead of dividing them into 'good' and 'bad' infantes.

From 1252 onwards, it became apparent that these infantes formed a part of a 'plural monarchy'. However, Alfonso X's large family raised two issues. How could the infantes benefit from royal patronage without alienating the royal demesne? What role could they play in ruling the kingdom? Over the course of subsequent generations, this problem persisted, above all when the infantes themselves had descendants who had similar needs and ambitions. The conflict between Juan Manuel and Alfonso XI most clearly reveals the problems revolving around the status of royal family members within the kingdom. Then, somewhat surprisingly, by the 1330s the once extensive royal family had almost vanished. The conspicuous absence of any brothers, uncles, or cousins allowed Alfonso XI to create his own royal family, which proved key to his successful kingship.

### **Alfonso X's family conflicts: The infantes and the *realengo***

In the *Libro de los estados* (c. 1330), Juan Manuel analysed the different groups (*estados*) of fourteenth-century Castilian society, and he discussed how their members should act in order to save their souls. According to the magnate, the infantes – excluding the first-born son and heir – existed in a paradoxical situation: they benefitted from a highly privileged status ('*estado sea mucho onrado*'), yet were very much dependent on the king's generosity to maintain this position, as their only possessions were those they received from their father or elder brother. As a result, Juan Manuel considered that the souls of the infantes were in grave danger because it was excruciatingly hard for them to act in accordance with their high status.<sup>9</sup>

Juan Manuel's *Libro de los estados* reflects his personal experience and dissatisfaction, as will be discussed below. Nevertheless, his poignant remark about the infantes' dependence on royal favour is difficult to challenge. The king's first-born son was expected to inherit the whole kingdom after his father, but until then he had to serve the monarch in several ways. For example,

Fernando de la Cerda represented royal authority in León, as his father had done during the reign of Fernando III, and he then ruled the kingdom in Alfonso X's absence in 1274–1275. The documents issued by the infante's chancery illustrates how Fernando actively shared governmental responsibilities on reaching adulthood.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, the endowment of the rest of the infantes became a central issue after 1252, as the royal family continued to grow (see Appendices 1). The numerous family conflicts that mark this period can be interpreted as a clash between Alfonso X's idea of the role his family should play and his brothers' and sons' expectations.

Fernando III devised a way of satisfying his extensive offspring: Alfonso would reign in Castile; Fadrique would inherit his mother's rights over the duchy of Swabia; and Enrique would receive an extensive lordship in western Andalusia, centred around Morón and the towns of Arcos, Jerez, and Medina Sidonia once they came under Castilian control. Sancho and Felipe went on to become the archbishops of Toledo and Seville, respectively. The young infante Manuel was the only member whose future had not been decided by the time of Fernando's death. On the other hand, the sons of Fernando III born to Juana of Ponthieu were to inherit their mother's lands in France, as well as the Andalusian landholdings he had granted to her. However, on becoming king Alfonso showed a clear reluctance to comply with his father's provisions. For instance, he had many of the towns that Fernando had granted to Juana of Ponthieu in Andalusia, such as Carmona, returned to the royal demesne, which left her with a greatly reduced estate in the area of Marchena.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, it is evident that Alfonso X disliked the idea of granting extensive lordships to his brothers, and he showed a marked concern over the fragmentation of the royal demesne; instead, he thought that the infantes should be entitled to prominent positions at court and provided with royal revenues.

In 1253, Alfonso X literally tore apart the privileges in which Fernando III had granted the lordship of Morón to the infante Enrique. In compensation, the king gave Enrique a small manor in Seville and a royal stipend. The following year, Alfonso X pressed his brother Fadrique to transfer his rights over Swabia to himself so he could gain greater influence over the Holy Roman Empire. In exchange, Fadrique's possessions in Seville were extended, and the royal palace was added to them. Nevertheless, both infantes were evidently dissatisfied with their brother's lack of generosity. In 1255, Enrique rebelled against Alfonso X, but fled to Aragón after being defeated at Écija. During the following four decades, Enrique's fascinating journey included France, England, Tunisia, and, finally, Italy, where he was actively involved in Roman politics and spent 23 years imprisoned by Charles of Anjou for his support for Conradin Hohenstaufen. Enrique surprisingly returned to Castile in 1294, as is discussed below. Fadrique did not rebel against his brother, although in 1260 he left Castile without the king's permission and joined Enrique in Tunisia. Fadrique returned in 1271 and received some landholdings around Seville and the tenancy (*tenencia*) over Ciudad Real. However, in 1277 Alfonso X executed Fadrique and Simón Ruiz de los Cameros, a *ricohombre*, after accusing both of

treason. There has been plenty of speculation regarding the reasons behind Alfonso X's cruelty – they were burned alive – including an alleged homosexual relationship between them,<sup>12</sup> but the most likely hypothesis indicates that Fadrique was conspiring to replace Alfonso with his son Sancho, possibly without Sancho's knowledge.<sup>13</sup>

Alfonso X's reluctance to endow his brothers with important lordships was widely acknowledged by his contemporaries. In June 1256, Henry III of England (r. 1216–1272) wrote to his emissaries in Castile, who were negotiating the marriage between the infante Manuel, Alfonso X's youngest brother, and Princess Beatrice. The English king instructed his agents to cite the fact that Manuel did not own an estate as an argument to justify his refusal.<sup>14</sup> On the other hand, Alfonso X considered that the royal family should hold the most prominent positions of the kingdom. King Alfonso's brothers Sancho and Felipe held two of Castile's three archbishoprics from an early age. Similarly, the offices of *mayordomo mayor del rey* (steward) and *alférez* (standard-bearer) were reserved for the king's closest relatives. The *mayordomo* was in charge of the royal household, while the *alférez* led the royal army. Together, they were the court's two most important posts, as is revealed by the fact that the *privilegios rodados* include their confirmation as part of the royal sign (see Images 2.3 and 2.4). Appendices 3 and 4 show how both positions were held almost exclusively by royal relatives during the reign of Alfonso X. The infante Manuel served as *alférez*, between 1258 and 1274, and *mayordomo* from 1278 until 1282. Alfonso X's two eldest sons, Fernando de la Cerda and Sancho, succeeded one another as *mayordomo* between 1260 and 1277, while the infante Juan acted as *alférez* almost uninterruptedly between 1277 and 1284. Finally, Alfonso Fernández, the king's extramarital son, was briefly appointed as the king's steward in 1283.<sup>15</sup>

Therefore, it seems that Alfonso X's initial idea was to satisfy his extensive family with the provision of court appointments, royal revenues, and manors in the recently conquered cities, especially Seville. The infante Alfonso de Molina, the king's uncle, was the exception to this plan, although, as was discussed in Chapter 2, he did rule over this important frontier lordship thanks to his marriage to Mafalda de Lara. However, from the late 1250s Alfonso X started to change his mind, which indicates his acceptance that the Castilian monarchy needed to distribute landholdings from the royal demesne among the male members of the royal family in order to satisfy their ambitions.

In 1258, the infante Felipe decided to renounce his position as archbishop of Seville before being ordained as a priest and consecrated as a bishop – he was acting as the see's administrator due to his young age. Despite his initial opposition, Alfonso X finally accepted his brother's wishes, and Felipe was generously endowed to marry Christine of Norway. The *infante* obtained the royal revenues originating from Ávila, the *tercias* the Castilian monarchy collected in the archbishopric of Toledo, part of the *parias* paid by Granada, and, more importantly, the lordship of Valdecorneja.<sup>16</sup>

The infante Manuel likewise benefitted greatly from his elder brother's generosity thanks to his sustained loyalty. He combined his court positions with the title of *adelantado mayor de Murcia* (the king's representative in the region). At first, Manuel only possessed a hamlet in Seville, but over the decades that followed he accumulated an impressive array of estates. Indeed, as early as 1266, he owned a substantial lordship in the south-eastern corner of the kingdom which included towns such as Elche, Crevillente, Elda, or Villena, a territory which would become known as the 'Tierra de Don Manuel'. After serving Alfonso X for decades, Manuel broke his older brother's heart by supporting Sancho's rebellion against him in 1282. The infante showed a keen political instinct, as Sancho handsomely rewarded his support with lordships in the south-east, such as Chinchilla and Ves, and the important town of Peñafiel (Valladolid).<sup>17</sup>

Similarly, Alfonso X gave several landholdings to his younger children, who took advantage of his conflict with Sancho to advance their interests. The infante Pedro received Ledesma, Alba de Tormes, and Salvatierra. Juan obtained Valencia de Campos, Baena, Oropesa, Ponferrada, Bembibre, Castroverde, Valderas, and Dueñas. Finally, Jaime was granted the important lordship of Los Cameros (Rioja). According to Alfonso X's will, Juan and Jaime were supposed to inherit the kingdoms of Seville and Badajoz, and Murcia, respectively, as was discussed in Chapter 2. Although Alfonso X's final wishes did not come to fruition, his decision reveals a stark contrast between his initial reluctance to grant land to his brothers and his later plan to divide the kingdom among his sons and grandson.

Sancho refused any partition of his inheritance and was adamant that the whole kingdom would be inherited by his first-born son, Fernando IV. Nevertheless, Sancho IV endowed the rest of his sons (see Appendices 1) with important lordships. Pedro obtained Almazán, Monteagudo, Cifuentes, and Berlanga from his father, and his patrimony was further expanded during the reign of Fernando IV. Felipe became lord of Cabrera and Ribera, while Enrique was granted the lordship of Biscay, although it was returned to the Haro family in 1295.<sup>18</sup>

As a result, during the second half of the thirteenth century the Castilian kings progressively accepted that they were expected to distribute parts of the royal demesne to their brothers and younger sons. Thereby, male members of the royal family were entitled to rule over significant territories in addition to the royal revenues and court appointments they might receive from the king. Moreover, the *privilegios rodados* demonstrate how the identity attached to some of these territories evolved, and some were soon comparable to the more traditional lordships such as Molina and Vizcaya. For instance, from 1295 onwards the infante Felipe was identified as lord (*señor*) of Cabrera and Ribera in the royal privileges,<sup>19</sup> and this title continued to be used in royal diplomas after Felipe's death. Later, from 1333 onwards, it belonged to one of Alfonso XI's extramarital children, Sancho.<sup>20</sup>

The vast majority of the royal privileges issued to grant these lordships have not survived, which prevents a detailed knowledge of the rights included in

these donations. However, Carlos Estepa has shown that the beneficiaries of these donations typically enjoyed jurisdictional rights over the territories granted by the Castilian monarchy, which challenges the traditional view that this kind of donation only started in the second half of the fourteenth century, following the rise of the Trastámara dynasty.<sup>21</sup> For instance, in 1297 Fernando IV gave his cousin Sancho, son of the Infante Pedro (see Appendices 1), the towns and castles of Galisteo and Miranda de Castañar in exchange for Sabugal and Alfayate, two towns on the Portuguese border. The donation included every right that the king had over these towns, including the exercise of justice (*'e con todo sennorio real e juresdicion'*).<sup>22</sup>

The other major question was whether these donations would revert to the royal demesne in case the infante died without an heir. Once again, the lack of documentation prevents this issue from being examined in detail. Nevertheless, it seems that it was expected that these landholdings would be returned to the king in such circumstances; however, not every donation was made under the same conditions. For instance, the infante Pedro's will (Sancho IV's son), written in 1317, stated that the town of Santander would return to the king or his son in the event he did not have an heir. However, Pedro specified that he wanted to give Llanes and San Vicente de la Barquera to Alfonso XI as well, and he remarked that although he was free to do as he wished with these towns, he wanted to give them to the king because he had been Alfonso XI's regent (*tutor*).<sup>23</sup>

The latter document reflects the main problem regarding the need to endow the male members of the ruling dynasty: the danger of alienating the royal demesne. After two or three generations, the continuous growth and expansion of the royal family could have seriously affected the Castilian monarchy's revenues. However, that was not the case. As Appendices 1 shows, by the 1330s the royal family had almost completely disappeared: Juan Manuel was the only close relative Alfonso XI had, which, as will be analysed below, allowed the king to create a new generation of magnates. On the other hand, Pedro's will also reveals how the infantes played an important role in ruling the kingdom, especially in the event of a royal minority.

### **'Good' and 'bad' infantes: Royal minorities and the participation of the infantes in the ruling of the kingdom**

In 1282, the future Sancho IV summoned the nobles and representatives of the towns of Castile to a meeting in Valladolid. The infante accused his father of numerous faults, and especially of impoverishing the kingdom with excessive taxes, as well as overruling local liberties. As a result, Sancho deposed Alfonso X and took control of Castile, although he refused to use the title of king as long as his father lived. The infante Manuel, the senior male member of the royal family, was responsible for reading aloud this proclamation. Immediately after this, Sancho granted his uncle a series of landholdings and he became godfather to the infante's newly born son, Juan Manuel.<sup>24</sup>

The rewards Manuel obtained for his vocal support of Sancho's rebellion against Alfonso X are indicative of the importance given to his participation in the uprising. Due to their wealth and status, the infantes played a key role in Castilian politics between 1252 and 1350. In particular, they developed close ties with the kingdom's nobility, through marriages and political alliances, and actively participated in the court's factionalism in order to control (and benefit from) royal patronage.

The infantes' importance increased during royal minorities, as they became obvious candidates to oversee the regency. Although the *Espéculo* does not specify how the regency should be organised during a royal minority, the *Partidas* provides a detailed description. Regencies were to consist of one, three, or five regents, who had to meet certain criteria such as personal prestige and an honourable lineage, and they had to be both Castilian and a vassal of the king. Additionally, they had to swear an oath to protect the integrity of the *realengo* (royal demesne) until the king came of age.<sup>25</sup> In theory the *Partidas* did not limit the regency to members of the royal family; however, in practice, they were the only ones who wielded the necessary prestige and power to perform this role. During the conflictive minorities of Fernando IV (1295–1301) and Alfonso XI (1312–1325), queens and infantes became the regents of the two young monarchs.

Due to the limited number of extant royal diplomas, it is the royal chronicles that are the principal source for any analysis of the role played by the infantes, yet it is necessary to analyse these texts with caution. Castile's past provided positive and negative *exempla* for the kingdom's elite; examples which were used to define the court's political culture in the present.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, the interpretation of the infantes' (and any other individual's) actions depended on the royal chroniclers' sympathies and agendas, which in turn reflected the court's factionalism and political allegiances at the time when these texts were written. However, this does not detract from the relevance of these works. The infantes were presented in the royal chronicles as either positive or negative examples of how members of the royal family were expected to act. Therefore, an analysis of how these texts reflected the lives of some of the most notable individuals of the period, such as the infantes Enrique (1230–1303), Juan (1262–1319), and Pedro (1290–1319) (see Appendices 1), is extremely valuable as it reveals the role the infantes were expected to perform in the kingdom. On the other hand, contrasting royal chronicles with other kinds of documents, especially the letters that many of the infantes sent to the kings of Aragón, permits a more nuanced perspective on their political actions, one that goes beyond the traditional narrative of 'good' and 'bad' infantes.

The infante Enrique (1230–1303) returned to Castile in 1294, a few months before Sancho IV died. Enrique's position as the senior male member of the royal family made him an obvious candidate to act as regent during the minority of Fernando IV. Enrique's candidacy was supported by an important faction within the nobility, which made it difficult for María de Molina, who had been

appointed regent by Sancho IV, to rule effectively. Therefore, in order to pacify these nobles, she agreed to surrender the regency to Enrique.

The *Crónica de Fernando IV*, however, casts Enrique in a very negative light. One of the first decisions he took as regent was to grant himself the towns of Atienza, Almazán, Berlanga, and Talavera. The chronicler presents the infante as a terrible burden on the queen. Enrique was always conspiring with the king's enemies and María de Molina was only able to maintain his loyalty by allowing him to acquire more and more lands. For instance, in 1297, in order to prevent Enrique from selling the recently conquered Tarifa to the Muslims, the queen had no choice but to ensure that he received the towns of Gormaz and Calatañazor. Similarly, in 1299, Enrique was given Roa, Medellín, and Écija, which had belonged to the queen, in order to dissuade him from allying with the infante Juan, who claimed a right to rule over the kingdom of León.<sup>27</sup>

Royal chroniclers used the defence of the *realengo* (royal demesne) as a litmus test to assess how effectively regents ruled. According to the *Partidas*, the preservation of the royal demesne, leaving it intact until the king came of age, was the regents' main obligation, as was mentioned above. In consequence, the *Crónica de Fernando IV* constantly criticised Enrique's use of royal patronage. The author accused him of being very greedy (*'era mucho cobdicioso'*) and alienating the royal demesne in his favour (*'cada dia fazia en sy don Enrrique e desfazia en la fazienda del rey'*). The narration of the infante's death in 1303 succinctly summarises Sánchez de Valladolid's bitterness towards Enrique. The infante died heirless, but he wanted to distribute his landholdings among other members of the nobility who had been loyal to him instead of returning them to the *realengo*, as he should have done. Although Queen María managed to have these lordships returned to the king, the chronicler endeavoured to emphasise Enrique's alleged ingratitude, and reminded the reader that the infante's extensive estates had been obtained through his exploitation of royal patronage. Sánchez de Valladolid maliciously concluded his narration by remarking how Enrique's funeral was poorly attended and that his vassals refused to cut their horses' tails, which was a customary display of mourning used in Castile during this period.<sup>28</sup>

The royal chronicler's harsh judgement of Enrique stresses the importance of the preservation of the royal demesne and the need for a balanced use of royal patronage, issues which became more acute during royal minorities. Yet Sánchez de Valladolid's clear sympathy towards Queen María de Molina should not be overlooked, as it explains his negative portrayal of the queen's political rivals, such as the infante Enrique. Therefore, other documents offer a degree of redemption to Enrique by presenting a different account of his actions. For instance, in the first letter Enrique sent to Écija, he acknowledged that the town would revert to Fernando IV or to Queen María de Molina, if the king were still a child, after his death.<sup>29</sup> Similarly, the infante's will, written in 1303, stated that every landholding that the king gave him should revert to the royal demesne, and Écija should be returned to María de Molina. The queen, Fernando IV, and Juan Manuel were appointed executors of his will together

with Pedro Ruiz, his confessor, which indicates that their family bonds were stronger than any political rivalry. Finally, the will offers a different interpretation of Enrique's life: in his last wishes, the infante encouraged Fernando IV and Queen María de Molina to comply with his dispositions by reminding them about his loyal and truthful service to them ('*su servicio leal é verdadero que les yo fice*').<sup>30</sup>

The infante Juan (1262–1319) started to play a relevant role at the end of Alfonso X's reign, when he first supported Sancho's rebellion but later returned to his father's side. Juan continued to participate actively in ruling the kingdom, and in the court's factionalism, for the following four decades. The infante had an exceptionally long political career – he lived through the reigns of four kings of Castile. Nonetheless, Juan was recurrently portrayed as a 'villainous' character in the royal chronicles of the period.

According to the *Crónica de Sancho IV*, in 1288, it was only through Queen María de Molina's intercession to Sancho IV that Juan escaped death, as was discussed in the previous chapter. The infante rebelled against his brother again in 1292, and had to flee to Portugal. Two years later, Juan besieged Tarifa at the head of a Marinid army. The royal chronicler presents a sharp contrast between the heroism of Alfonso Pérez de Guzmán *el Bueno*, the governor of Tarifa, and Juan's vicious nature. The Marinids captured Guzmán's youngest son and Juan threatened to kill him unless the Castilian nobleman surrendered the town. Guzmán's answer was to throw his own knife from the town's walls and so impel Juan to kill his son with it, thereby emphasising that he would sacrifice his son, and five more if he had them, before surrendering the castle that he had pledged the king to protect. As a result, Juan had Guzmán's son executed.<sup>31</sup>

The infante was depicted in very negative terms in subsequent chronicles as well. For instance, the *Crónica de Fernando IV* criticised how, in 1295, Juan acknowledged then young Fernando as his king and natural lord ('*por su rey e por su sennor natural*') by kissing his hand in front of the court, but, shortly thereafter, he agreed to divide the kingdom with the pretender Alfonso de la Cerda, and he claimed the title of king of León, Galicia, and Seville for himself.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, the *Crónica de Alfonso XI* contrasts the loyalty of the infante Pedro with Juan's insidiousness. The royal chronicler claimed that while Pedro was 'serving God and the king' in the *Frontera*, Juan was plotting against him in order to become Alfonso XI's sole regent. The older infante was accused of trying to dissuade several nobles from participating in the forthcoming military campaign of 1317. The *Gran Crónica de Alfonso XI*, an expanded version of the original text which was written 30 years later, went as far as affirming that Pedro was forced to sign a truce with Granada in response to the constant threat that Juan posed for the kingdom's peace.<sup>33</sup>

The infante Juan conspired against Sancho IV, allied with the Marinids, and claimed the kingdom of León for himself. However, presenting him as an opponent of the Castilian monarchy is overly reductive. Once he renounced his claim to the Leonese throne in 1300, he played a relevant role in Fernando IV's

court. Admittedly, the royal chronicle, always sympathetic to María de Molina, presents him as a nefarious influence on the king, as discussed in the previous chapter. However, the infante also acted in the king's service. Between 1301 and 1304 Juan wrote several letters to Jaume II of Aragón, who was supporting Alfonso de la Cerda's claim to the throne, in order to reach an agreement on this issue. For instance, in December 1301, the infante promised the Aragonese king that he would act truthfully as a mediator.

Similarly, in May 1303 Juan asked Jaume II not to meet the infante Enrique and Diego López V de Haro, who were the king's enemies at the time.<sup>34</sup> In 1304, Fernando IV gave Juan full powers to sign a peace agreement with Jaume II and Alfonso de la Cerda, which demonstrates the king's trust in the infante.<sup>35</sup> Likewise, in a letter Juan Manuel wrote to Jaume II in 1308, the magnate recounted how several nobles, displeased with Fernando IV, asked for the infante's help to obtain their demands. According to Juan Manuel, Juan sided with Fernando IV, truthfully serving the king and protecting his honour ('*et guardo seruicio e onrra del Rey muy uerdaderamente*').<sup>36</sup> Even the royal chronicle affirmed that, during the long dispute over the lordship of Biscay, those who supported Diego López V de Haro's claim were afraid to be vocal about it, as they knew Fernando IV was clearly on the infante's side.<sup>37</sup>

Therefore, rather than considering Juan as an antagonist of the Castilian monarchy, it is more adequate to interpret his actions as part of the customary conflicts between courtly factions as they jostled to gain a position of power. In consequence, the occasions on which he rebelled against the king must be seen as his way of showing dissatisfaction with his role at the court, or else as a way of demanding a larger share of royal patronage in the form of royal revenues or landholdings. It is very telling that allying with the Muslims or claiming the Leonese throne did not disqualify him from later participating in ruling the kingdom. The royal chronicle judged Juan's actions in harsh terms, but it is undeniable that he did not do anything 'unforgivable' which might prevent a form of agreement or settlement with his rivals in the future.

The royal chronicler could harshly criticise the infante Juan but, in the end, he had to acknowledge that the infante inevitably had to play a relevant political role as a result of his status at court and the resources he had been given. On many occasions, the *Crónica de Fernando IV* mentions the infante's friends and vassals. This list included very powerful magnates, such as Juan Núñez II de Lara, or important *ricosombres* from León like Pedro Ponce de León, Fernán Ruiz de Saldaña, and Rodrigo Álvarez de Asturias.<sup>38</sup> During the minority of Alfonso XI, the infante enjoyed the support of several towns and noblemen who acknowledged him as regent (*tutor*). That is why in the Treaty of Palazuelos (1314) Queen María de Molina and the infantes Pedro and Juan all agreed to share the regency and that each would rule over the areas that had accepted them as regents.<sup>39</sup> Juan was the eldest living member of the royal family, and that went a long way. Decades later, the royal chronicler would take Queen María and Pedro's side by presenting Juan as the paradigm of treachery. Nevertheless, at the time, Juan, as the senior member of the royal family and the

leader of a powerful faction which comprised several *ricosombres*, was entitled to participate in the ruling of the kingdom.

Finally, in the *Crónica de Alfonso XI* Pedro (1290–1319) is presented as a positive example of how infantes were expected to act. The infante and Queen María worked in tandem: the queen acted as a mediator with the nobility while Pedro was a successful military leader who waged campaigns against the Muslims to ‘serve God and the king’ (*‘seyendo el Infante Don Pedro en la frontera en servicio de Dios et del Rey’*). This harmonic balance was only threatened by the infante Juan, who conspired against Pedro and sought to obtain a share of the revenues granted by the papacy to fund the war against Granada.<sup>40</sup> In opposition to Juan, Pedro was depicted as a paragon of loyalty. The *Crónica de Alfonso XI* recounted the king’s sincere interest in assuring that Blanca, the infante Pedro’s only child (see Appendices 2), would have an honourable marriage. The chronicler stresses Alfonso XI’s gratitude towards his uncle and regent, who served him loyally during his minority and sacrificed his life fighting against the Muslims.<sup>41</sup> It is no coincidence that, years later, Alfonso XI named his heir and two other illegitimate sons Pedro (see Figure 5.1).

Nevertheless, several letters received by Jaime II during the end of Fernando IV’s reign and the minority of Alfonso XI present a more nuanced view of Pedro. First, the infante’s service to the king was handsomely rewarded. Pedro ruled over an impressive array of lands which included strategic lordships, such as Almazán, on the border with Aragón, and Santander, an important trading town. The correspondence between the Castilian and the Aragonese chanceries discussing the marriage between Pedro and María of Aragón, Jaime II’s daughter, in 1311, clearly demonstrates Pedro’s imposing patrimony. One of the letters notes that no infante had ever been so generously endowed in the history of Castile as Pedro had been.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, there are other documents which cast some doubts on the alleged unbreakable loyalty of Pedro. In 1311, Gonzalo García, an Aragonese agent in the Castilian court, told Jaime II that the serious illness suffered by Fernando IV encouraged Pedro and the infante Juan to plan the division of the kingdom between them. Moreover, they were reluctant to recognise Alfonso XI as heir after he was born in August.<sup>43</sup> It is possible that Pedro cherished the ambition of becoming king of Castile; however, that was not a likely outcome even before the birth of Alfonso XI, since Fernando IV already had a living daughter, Leonor, who would have inherited the throne. In any case, Pedro remained loyal to his brother and accepted Alfonso XI as king without hesitation in 1312. Queen Constanza, Fernando IV’s widow, wrote to Jaime II to tell him how her husband had asked Pedro to take care of her and the young king on his deathbed, which shows Fernando IV’s trust in his brother.<sup>44</sup> Nevertheless, the infante’s support as regent was far from being unanimous. In a letter written in 1313, Juan Manuel accused Pedro of deceiving Queen Constanza and acting against the king’s interests (*‘se trabaiaua en lo que no era seruicio del rey’*).<sup>45</sup> Juan Manuel’s letter signals his personal animosity towards Pedro, but it also reflects that there were alternative views to the royal chronicle’s ‘official’ version.

Although the chronicles drew a contrast between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ infantes, there were obvious similarities between Enrique, Juan, and Pedro. The infantes benefitted enormously from their status and the possession of important landholdings, which entitled them to participate in ruling the kingdom; they were seen as natural leaders of the nobility’s factions. Rebel infantes did not want to hinder royal authority, as they were one of the main beneficiaries of royal patronage; however, they opposed the king when their expectations were not met. Juan Manuel, a key figure in the first half of the fourteenth century, most clearly embodied the resentment of the royal relatives who became dissatisfied with the Castilian monarchy. Furthermore, Juan Manuel’s struggle against Alfonso XI offers the clearest illustration of the creation of an alternative narrative that challenged the royal chronicles’ ‘official history’. Additionally, the conflict between Juan Manuel and the king reflects how the royal family was redefined in Castile during Alfonso XI’s reign.

### **Juan Manuel: The dissatisfaction of the royal relatives and the writing of a dissident history**

In a memorable passage of his *Libro enfenido*, Juan Manuel boasted that he could travel from Navarre to Granada and along the whole route stay overnight solely in towns and castles that belonged to him.<sup>46</sup> The magnate was not exaggerating: he had inherited a significant patrimony from his father, Manuel, which he further increased once he became an adult. He possessed important towns in the Castilian heartlands, such as Peñafiel and Cuéllar, and an impressive number of landholdings in the south-eastern corner of the kingdom. The Treaty of Torrellas (1304), which granted Jaime II of Aragón the northern half of Murcia, did not undermine his position, as he was generously compensated for the possessions he lost. Furthermore, his marriage to Constanza of Aragón strengthened his ties with the Aragonese royal family – his first marriage was to Isabel of Mallorca – and provided him with estates in the neighbouring kingdom, including the important lordship of Villena. Juan Manuel also inherited the office of *adelantado mayor de Murcia* from his father, which reinforced his prominent position in the region.<sup>47</sup> Juan Manuel’s will further illustrates the extent of his wealth. For instance, he bequeathed an extraordinary amount of money – 800,000 and 500,000 *maravedís*, respectively – to his two daughters, Constanza and Juana, while ensuring that his only son Fernando would still enjoy a splendid inheritance.<sup>48</sup>

Juan Manuel, nonetheless, was presented as a scheming and treacherous character in the royal chronicles. The magnate started his political career around the time Fernando IV came of age, and he was very close to the deceitful infante Enrique. Notwithstanding this affinity, the *Crónica de Fernando IV* affirms that, in 1303, Juan Manuel plundered Enrique’s silver and documents once he was certain the infante was about to die.<sup>49</sup> The *Crónica de Alfonso XI* delves into this negative vision of the magnate by presenting Juan Manuel as the king’s nemesis. During the royal minority, Juan Manuel benefitted from the

death of the infantes Pedro and Juan, in 1319, to proclaim himself as Alfonso XI's regent. Queen María's attempt to hold a meeting of the *Cortes* to decide upon a new regency government came to nothing; Juan Manuel refused to comply. The magnate forged the royal seal and started to rule in Alfonso XI's name in some parts of the kingdom.<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, once the king came of age, Juan Manuel rebelled against him on several occasions until their final reconciliation in 1337.

The magnate actively participated in Alfonso XI's successful military campaigns against the Muslims in the 1340s, yet Sánchez de Valladolid was relentless in his demonising of the Lord of Villena. The royal chronicler bitterly criticised Juan Manuel's alleged inaction during the battle of Rio Salado (1340). According to the royal chronicle, the magnate was hesitant to cross the river and join the *mêlée*. Juan Manuel did not change his mind despite his men's insistence, nor was he persuaded by Garci Jufre Tenorio, a squire sent by Alfonso XI to urge him to take part in the battle. Aside from reminding him of his duty as the king's vassal, Tenorio insisted that Juan Manuel, as the owner of the mythical sword *Lobera*, which had belonged to Fernando III, was expected to play a leading role on a day like this. The magnate's continued refusal to cross the river led many nobles to believe that he did not want to truthfully serve the king.<sup>51</sup> Subsequently, the *Gran Crónica de Alfonso XI*, written in 1376, once Juana Manuel, the magnate's daughter, had become queen of Castile, altered some fragments of Sánchez de Valladolid's work in order to present Juan Manuel in a better light and justify his misdemeanours.<sup>52</sup>

The royal chronicler's hostility to Juan Manuel does not come as a surprise, given he maintained a state of semi-permanent rebellion for a decade. Once Alfonso XI had effectively begun to rule, the king mistrusted the alliance between Juan Manuel and Juan de Haro *el Tuerto* (see Appendices 1), which he saw as a threat to his own power. In consequence, Alfonso XI decided to appeal to Juan Manuel's support by offering to marry his daughter, Constanza Manuel, and granting him the position of *adelantado mayor de la Frontera* (the king's representative in Andalusia) in addition to his office of *adelantado* in Murcia. Once the monarch had won the magnate's goodwill, he swiftly moved against Juan *el Tuerto*, whom he had executed. The king also confiscated Juan's possessions, including the lordship of Biscay. In 1327, however, Alfonso XI decided to annul his marriage to Constanza Manuel – the marriage was never consummated due to the bride's young age – and marry María of Portugal instead. Not surprisingly, Juan Manuel rebelled against the king in response to what he saw as a humiliation and a deception. Alfonso XI and Juan Manuel settled their differences the following year, but the magnate remained aloof from the court. For instance, Juan Manuel refused to participate in the splendid coronation orchestrated by Alfonso XI in 1332.<sup>53</sup> By that time, the magnate had forged an alliance with Juan Núñez III de Lara: he married the noble's sister, Blanca, and supported Lara's claim to the lordship of Biscay. Juan Manuel failed to join the royal army in the 1334 campaign, which unsuccessfully tried to prevent the Marinid conquest of Gibraltar, despite receiving a salary from the king,

and by 1336, he was in open rebellion. This time, Juan Manuel went as far as to break his ties with Alfonso XI (*desnaturarse*). The magnate justified his actions on the basis of his accusation that the king, among other things, had besieged Juan Núñez III de Lara in Lerma and prevented his daughter from travelling to Portugal to marry Afonso IV's son, Pedro. Juan Manuel sent a missive to Pere III in which he requested the Aragonese king to register his letter of '*desnaturación*' in his royal chancery, arguing that he feared Alfonso XI's reprisals against his daughter or his emissary if he sent the letter to the Castilian court.<sup>54</sup> Nevertheless, Alfonso XI defeated Juan Núñez III de Lara and his Portuguese allies, which forced Juan Manuel to flee to Aragón. In 1337, the magnate accepted to return to the king's favour, once Alfonso XI agreed to allow Constanza Manuel to marry Pedro, the heir to the Portuguese throne.<sup>55</sup> Juan Manuel remained in the king's service for the rest of his life, but he never stopped plotting, as the correspondence between him and Pere III shows.<sup>56</sup>

The conflict between Alfonso XI and Juan Manuel also had a propagandistic<sup>57</sup> and a literary front. The magnate's life pervades his numerous writings, which he used to justify his rebellion against Alfonso XI and extoll himself and his lineage by presenting themselves as the true heirs of Fernando III in opposition to the accursed ruling dynasty.<sup>58</sup> Some of Juan Manuel's works, such as the *Libro de las armas*, could be interpreted as a 'dissident history' opposed to the version of the royal chronicles written by Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid.<sup>59</sup>

Juan Manuel's most prolific period as writer coincided with the zenith of his conflict against Alfonso XI. In the decade comprised between 1328 and 1337, he wrote his most famous works: the *Libro de los estados*, *Conde Lucanor*, the *Libro enfenido*, and the *Libro de las armas*.<sup>60</sup> Sometimes, the magnate's stories are metaphors of his own experience. For instance, the exemplum XXI of *Conde Lucanor* tells the story of a young king who was raised by a philosopher. However, once the monarch became an adult, he stopped following the wise man's advice and only paid heed to unscrupulous advisors, which resulted in the kingdom falling into ruin. Eventually, the philosopher won the king's trust back and helped the monarch to re-establish peace and order.<sup>61</sup> It is easy to see how Juan Manuel saw himself as the ostracised philosopher, idealising his tenure as Alfonso XI's regent and resenting his demotion at court in favour of some of the king's ambitious advisors such as Count Alvar Núñez.

On other occasions, the text was absolutely explicit. In Chapter LXX of the *Libro de los estados*, Juan Manuel used his conflict with Alfonso XI to illustrate the evils derived from war. The magnate argued that war should be avoided at any cost except when it affected one's honour. Consequently, Juan Manuel justified his rebellion against Alfonso XI on the grounds of his being dishonoured by the king's annulment of his marriage with Constanza Manuel. Juan Manuel presented his actions as heroic, insisting that, with only his own forces to rely on, he had been able to resist the king's might and sign the most honourable peace agreement in the history of Spain ('*ovo paz con el rey, la más onrada que nunca se falla por ninguna fazaña que la oviese omne en España*').<sup>62</sup>

It has been argued that Juan Manuel represented an alternative 'aristocratic' view of royal authority to that defended by the royal chronicles. According to these authors, Juan Manuel was the paladin of the nobility's prerogatives, and he stressed how vital it was for the king to follow the magnates' advice and counsel. This view would come to be diametrically opposed to the strengthening of royal authority undertaken by Alfonso XI, which would be supported by the rise of the bureaucrats who undertook government roles. However, the deposing of Pedro I and the triumph of the Trastámara dynasty in 1369 meant the victory of this aristocratic view, which was embodied by the rehabilitation of the figure of Juan Manuel.<sup>63</sup>

Nonetheless, this interpretation is highly problematic. First, it is based on an oppositional – and simplistic – view of the relationship between the monarchy and the nobility. According to this view, the strengthening of royal authority was detrimental to the noble's interests. However, this was far from being true, as the magnates were the main beneficiaries of royal patronage and the expansion of the regnal state. Second, it is hard to find a radically different view of royal authority in Juan Manuel's writings in comparison to those produced by the royal scriptorium. Thereby, it is evident how Juan Manuel was deeply influenced by the works of Alfonso X, especially in his early writings.<sup>64</sup> However, in later works, such as the *Libro enfenido*, Juan Manuel still presents a view of the monarchy that is very similar to that of the *Partidas*. The magnate differentiated between kings and tyrants and, like Alfonso X's legal code, he refrained from justifying rebellion against the king on the grounds of tyranny. Juan Manuel exhorted his recently born son, Fernando, to serve the king and gave him several pieces of advice on how to act at court; this work was conceived as a mirror of princes and dedicated to his son. Likewise, the magnate insisted that the king was God's representative on Earth, whereby his son should abstain from causing any trouble in the kingdom. Furthermore, he should still serve the king as his natural lord (*señor natural*) even when the king was a tyrant. In that case, he should avoid angering the monarch and excuse his presence from the court if he feared the king was suspicious of his loyalty. Lastly, Juan Manuel warned his son that he should have his men and castles ready for any eventuality, although he should only start a war in defence of his honour, or else out of loyalty.<sup>65</sup>

Therefore, it is best to interpret Juan Manuel's writings as a more personal endeavour: they were the result of his desire to justify his actions and to extoll his figure. Juan Manuel wanted to present himself as the continuation of a prestigious lineage who had been unjustly deprived of the position they deserved by the unworthy dynasty of Alfonso X. In his eyes, Manuel was Fernando III's true heir, and he discussed this at length in the *Libro de las armas*,<sup>66</sup> but that does not mean Juan Manuel saw himself as the representative of an aristocratic voice opposed to royal authority; above all, because the magnate always considered that his status was superior to the rest of the nobility.

In the *Libro de los estados*, Juan Manuel identified the sons of the infantes as a specific group whose status lay between the infantes and the *ricoshombrés*. As was the case with the infantes, the souls of the sons of the infantes

were in grave danger due to the contradiction between their high position and the lack of means to maintain it.<sup>67</sup> Juan Manuel addressed this distinction more specifically in the *Libro enfenido*. In this work, the magnate reminded his son that no one in Spain, unless he was a king, possessed a higher status than him. Juan Manuel told his son about their exceptional position: the king and his first-born son were their lords, but no other man could be their friend, as nobody was equal to them. The magnate specifically warned his son against considering himself part of the nobility. Juan Manuel remarked that their status was closer to the royalty than to the *ricosombres*. Moreover, if his son was able to effectively manage his estates, he would have *ricosombres* as vassals. Juan Manuel ended by signalling their special affinity to the families of Lara and Haro, the two most prestigious lineages of the kingdom's nobility, which entailed the obligation of defending them from the king in the event that the monarch wronged them.<sup>68</sup>

Therefore, the conflicts between Juan Manuel and Alfonso XI can be interpreted as evidence of the magnate's frustration, as he considered that he deserved to be ruling the kingdom alongside the king. Juan Manuel considered himself to have been relegated to an inferior position in the court beneath individuals of a lesser status than his own. In the 1320s, it was the entourage of the infante Felipe, especially Count Alvar Núñez, who enjoyed Alfonso XI's favour. From the 1330s onwards, it was Leonor de Guzmán and the Andalusian nobles who became the king's closest allies. It was the aforementioned annulment of the marriage between Alfonso XI and Constanza Manuel that above all sparked Juan Manuel's rebellion. Constanza's subsequent imprisonment, which prevented her from marrying Pedro of Portugal, led to the magnate's continued conflict against the king. In the 1330s, Juan Manuel used Juan Núñez III's claim to the lordship of Biscay as an additional argument to justify his rebellion. The magnate forged closer bonds with the Lara family through his marriage to Juan Núñez's sister, Blanca. Yet on the basis of his aforementioned discussion of the relationship between his dynasty and the most prestigious lineages of the nobility in the *Libro enfenido*, it is more likely that rather than seeking an alliance between equals to oppose Alfonso XI, Juan Manuel wanted to present himself as Lara's benefactor – not his political partner – and thereby force the king to honour the nobleman's rights to the lordship of Biscay. A clear indication of his sense of superiority over the Lara family is provided by the will he wrote in 1339; Juan Manuel asked Alfonso XI to be the guardian of his youngest children, Juana and Fernando, and thereby made clear his wish that they were to be raised at court. Additionally, the magnate stipulated that no member of the Lara family should take charge of his son Fernando, and he went as far as ordering that until his son turned 20, and could rule by himself, his towns were not to accept him as their lord if he were accompanied by any member of the Lara family.<sup>69</sup>

Juan Manuel's elevated self-regard is also illustrated by his dream of turning his lands into a semi-independent territory. In 1333, during the negotiations between the magnate and Alfonso XI, Juan Manuel demanded two conditions to return to the king's fold. First, he was to receive a substantial increase in the

revenues he obtained from the Castilian monarchy. More importantly, the magnate wanted his estates to become a hereditary dukedom, exempt from any kind of royal taxation, and that he should have the right to mint his own coin.<sup>70</sup> This last demand was completely unprecedented and it was completely unacceptable for Alfonso XI, as the minting of coins had always been an exclusive right of the Castilian monarchy. In any case, Juan Manuel's efforts to acquire a quasi-regnal status for his lands reinforces the idea of the magnate as an exceptional figure, one who considered that he deserved a special position in the kingdom, yet not one who wanted to establish an 'aristocratic monarchy'.

On the other hand, this outlandish demand may be read as an invention made by the royal chronicler, who could have exaggerated Juan Manuel's demands in order to justify Alfonso XI's unwillingness to settle their differences. However, that does not seem to have been the case, as the Aragonese monarchs suspected he was ready to make similar demands to them. In March 1334, Juan Manuel wrote to Afons III of Aragón to reassure him that he did not plan to mint coins in the lands he possessed in his kingdom. This issue was raised again in 1336, when Pere III acceded to the Aragonese throne.<sup>71</sup> Additionally, Juan Manuel also addressed the idea of the quasi-regnal status of his lands in his literary works. In *Conde Lucanor* the borders with Granada are presented as a peripheral region where magnates could act more independently and new forms of lordship could be developed.<sup>72</sup> Juan Manuel was even more explicit in the *Libro de las armas*, where he created an alternative version of the conquest of Murcia to explain why the lands he inherited from his father had always constituted a lordship that was independent from royal authority.<sup>73</sup> Despite Juan Manuel's dreams of establishing an exceptional status for his lands, his hopes turned to ashes. Admittedly, by the first half of the fourteenth century, it was expected that male royal relatives possessed important estates within the kingdom, but the idea of creating semi-autonomous territories free from royal authority was completely unacceptable for the Castilian monarchy.

Juan Manuel's return to royal favour has been traditionally painted as a sad affair, in which the defeated and humiliated magnate had no other option than to surrender.<sup>74</sup> However, a more nuanced reading of the event is required: Juan Manuel enjoyed a prominent position until his death. In 1343, his son Fernando recovered the office of *adelantado de Murcia* for the family and, the following year, Juan Manuel himself was granted the position of *adelantado de la frontera*.<sup>75</sup> On the other hand, Alfonso XI did not share Juan Manuel's views regarding his special status, and this is indicated by the *privilegios rodados*, in which the position an individual was granted on these documents reflected their status within the kingdom's elite. From this point of view, the changes experienced by Juan Manuel in these singular documents are indicative of the magnate's changing fortunes and, to a greater extent, the ambiguous status conceded to the sons of the infantes. While the infantes were given a privileged position in the royal diplomas, being placed above the four columns of lay and ecclesiastical confirmers, their sons were relegated to the second and fourth columns, depending on whether their possessions lay in Castile, like Alfonso, the son of the infante Alfonso de Molina, or in León, like

Sancho, son of the infante Pedro (see Appendices 1).<sup>76</sup> However, some of these royal relatives alternated between the nobles' column and the more prestigious group. For instance, Fernando, son of the infante Fernando de la Cerda, was placed among the most prestigious group of confirmers in 1305 while, in 1320, he was listed in the second column.<sup>77</sup> In 1284, Juan Manuel appeared first in the second column, although he was promoted to the 'top' group during the reign of Alfonso XI.<sup>78</sup> Between 1326 and 1336, Juan Manuel was listed among the most prestigious confirmers when he was not in open rebellion against Alfonso XI. However, he did not recover this position when he finally returned to the king's service. In 1338, the magnate was ranked first in the second column. This position indicated his prominent status, yet signalled him as the most prestigious individual within the kingdom's *ricosombres*, and not as a member of the royal family. Despite Juan Manuel being the only male royal relative alive (see Appendices 1), Alfonso XI did not consider him deserving of a special status. By this time, the most prestigious group of confirmers had become the exclusive territory of the 'new' royal family that Alfonso XI had created: the children mothered by Leonor de Guzmán.

### **Alfonso XI and Leonor de Guzmán: The creation of a 'new' royal family<sup>79</sup>**

In 1333, Alfonso XI's extramarital sons, Pedro and Sancho, were included among the list of confirmers of royal privileges. Furthermore, they joined the prestigious first group of confirmers, a collection of individuals which included – besides the kingdom's three archbishops – Alfonso de la Cerda, the former royal pretender, the notorious Juan Manuel, and Muhammed IV of Granada (r. 1325–1333), who was the king's vassal at the time.<sup>80</sup> In the following years, the number of Alfonso XI's sons increased which, together with the death of Alfonso de la Cerda and the demotion of Juan Manuel, turned the first group of confirmers into a space almost exclusively reserved for the king and Leonor de Guzmán's offspring. By the end of the reign, the infante Fernando (or Ferran), son of Alfons III of Aragón and Alfonso XI's nephew, and Yusuf I of Granada (r. 1333–1354) were followed by the long list of the king's extramarital sons and their lordships.<sup>81</sup>

The kings of Castile sired several illegitimate children. On some occasions, these children attained an important position in the realm; however, they had never been elevated to the first group of confirmers of royal privileges before. For instance, Alfonso X's illegitimate son, Alfonso Fernández, was listed first in the fourth column of confirmers, in 1255, and never abandoned this place even after he received the lordship of Molina in 1272.<sup>82</sup> On the other hand, the fact that Alfonso XI produced such a large number of extramarital children – nine sons and one daughter – was exceptional. Furthermore, they all shared the same mother, which made them look like a cohesive family (see Figure 5.1).

The stark contrast between Queen Maria of Portugal's only child and heir, Pedro – her first-born son, Fernando, had died in 1332, shortly after he was born – and the growing number of male children begotten by Leonor de

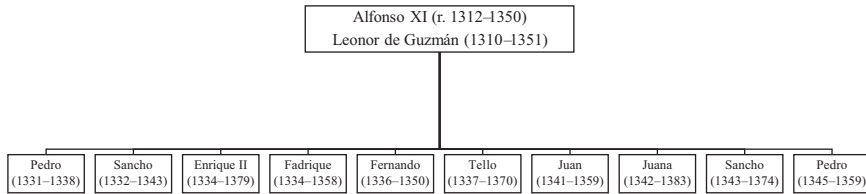


Figure 5.1 Alfonso XI and Leonor de Guzmán's offspring

Guzmán was criticised by some contemporaries, such as Juan Manuel. In 1345, the magnate wrote a letter to Pere III in which he pledged his service to the Aragonese monarch in case he was attacked by Alfonso XI. Juan Manuel told Pere III that, although he was not part of the king's private council, which included that 'evil woman' – referring to Leonor de Guzmán – he was informed of Alfonso XI's plans. According to the magnate, Alfonso XI was willing to sign a peace agreement with the Muslims in order to attack Navarre and Aragón: the king had exhausted the royal demesne in order to provide lordships for his children, so he was now looking for landholdings beyond his borders with which to endow his offspring.<sup>83</sup>

Modern historians have shared Juan Manuel's misgivings regarding the rise of Leonor de Guzmán and her offspring. Alfonso XI's extravagant favouritism for his children has traditionally been blamed for the Castilian Civil War (1366–1369) and the subsequent deposition of Pedro I. The king's excessive generosity to the children he had with Leonor de Guzmán left them ready to assault the throne in the following generation.<sup>84</sup>

However, this interpretation must be challenged. Although Alfonso XI granted important lordships to his sons, such as Aguilar, Haro, Cabrera and Ribera, Trastámara, Noreña, and Ledesma, this does not mean that the king alienated the royal demesne in order to endow his children with land. In essence, what Alfonso XI did was to redistribute estates which had traditionally been granted to members of the royal family and, by the 1330s, had returned to the Castilian monarchy due to the demise of the vast majority of the king's male relatives. For instance, Aguilar and Cabrera and Ribera had belonged to Alfonso XI's uncles, the infantes Pedro and Felipe, respectively. Similarly, Ledesma had been granted to Alfonso XI's son, Pedro, and reverted to the *realengo* after the demise of the infante's son Sancho. The king also acquired landholdings for his children by other means. Haro and Trastámara had been confiscated from rebel nobles, while Alfonso XI secured the lordship of Noreña for his son Enrique once he convinced Rodrigo Álvarez de Asturias to name him as his successor.<sup>85</sup> Additionally, Fadrique became Gran Master of Santiago in 1342. Fadrique was only 9 years old at the time, which clearly shows how Alfonso XI was seeking to secure control over the military order through this appointment.<sup>86</sup> It is undeniable that Alfonso XI endowed his children generously, but Juan Manuel's accusations are an exaggeration, fruit of his resentment towards the king.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the relationship between Alfonso XI and Leonor de Guzmán contributed to forging a stronger relationship between the king and the Andalusian nobility. As a result of this, the most important families in the region actively participated in the king's military campaigns against the Muslims and rebel nobles. The Andalusian *ricoshombr*es played a vital role in 1336, when they defeated the Portuguese army which had invaded Castile to support Juan Núñez III de Lara and Juan Manuel. The royal chronicle emphasised how Juan Alfonso de Guzmán, Pedro Ponce de León II, and Enrique Enríquez mobilised an army comprised of their retainers and vassals and the Andalusian towns' militias to put an end to the siege of Badajoz, and they did so before Alfonso XI had even had time to request their help.<sup>87</sup> Their victory was a turning point in the struggle between the king and the rebels: Juan Núñez III de Lara was left isolated and Juan Manuel fled to Aragón.

Alfonso and Leonor's offspring also helped the king to secure the loyalty of important noble families through marriage agreements. Enrique was betrothed to Juana de Castro, the daughter of the most powerful *ricohombre* in Galicia, Pedro Fernández de Castro. The Galician aristocrat had a notorious reputation as a military leader – he was known as '*Pedro de la guerra*' – and his help proved immensely valuable during the wars of 1336–1338.<sup>88</sup> Another of their sons, Tello, married Juana de Lara, Juan Núñez III's daughter, which helped forge a personal bond between the noble and Alfonso XI. Eventually, Tello became lord of Biscay and, in 1370, this territory was integrated into the *realengo*.<sup>89</sup> In addition, the creation of households for each of these children was used to reward knights and other members of the lower nobility with offices and salaries, which reinforced their loyalty to Alfonso XI. For instance, Garcilaso II de la Vega was appointed steward of one of the king's son, Sancho.<sup>90</sup>

The *Crónica de Alfonso XI* concludes with a powerful image which neatly embodies the importance of the king's offspring during Alfonso XI's successful reign. In 1344, before Palm Sunday, Algeciras finally surrendered to the Castilian army. The importance of the conquest of this Muslim town is illustrated by the inclusion of Algeciras in the royal title (*intitulatio*). The *Crónica* continues describing how the royal banner was hung from Algeciras' towers. The banners of Alfonso XI's heir, Pedro, and his other sons, Enrique, Fadrique, Fernando, Tello, and Juan (see Figure 5.1) were then placed next to the king's.<sup>91</sup> The conquest of Algeciras was the culmination of the remarkable reign of Alfonso XI, who, surrounded by his children, had restored his dynasty's former glory.

In conclusion, the royal family became a key agent from Alfonso X's reign onwards. The king's male relatives were expected to receive salaries, offices, and important landholdings from the Castilian monarchy. Accordingly, the *infantes*' status and prestige entitled them to participate in the ruling of the kingdom, as part of a 'plural monarchy'. It was difficult to reconcile the king's interests and the *infantes*' personal ambitions, which is why they actively participated in the court's factionalism, and as a result were harshly criticised in the royal chronicles for their opposition to the king. The progressive disappearance of Alfonso X's extensive family and descendants created a vacuum which

allowed Alfonso XI to create a 'new' royal family centred around the many children Leonor de Guzmán bore the king. By contrast, Juan Manuel, the only survivor of the older generation, was 'demoted' in the *privilegios rodados*, which illustrates how he was relegated in favour of Alfonso XI's children. Furthermore, it shows how, despite the magnate's high self-regard, the descendants of the infantes did not have the same status as the members of the royal family. Alfonso XI created a parallel family which, fuelled by royal patronage, developed into a cohesive group of alliances and familial connections. Therefore, the relationship between the king and Leonor de Guzmán, rather than presenting a threat to the future of the Castilian monarchy, played a vital role in strengthening royal authority during the 1330s. It was during this decade that Alfonso XI at long last successfully ended the factionalism and internal turmoil that had plagued Castile since the 1270s.

## Notes

- 1 *Sevilla, ciudad de privilegios*, doc. 3.
- 2 *Sevilla, ciudad de privilegios*, docs. 7 and 13 and *Diplomatario andaluz de Alfonso X*, doc. 354.
- 3 Lewis, *Le sang royal*, 202–236.
- 4 Sobrequés Vidal, 'La nobleza catalana en el siglo XIV', 517–522.
- 5 Lafuente Gómez, *Dos Coronas en guerra*, 24–25.
- 6 Prestwich, *Plantagenet England 1225–1360*, 354–362.
- 7 Ormrod, 'Edward III and His Family', 398–422.
- 8 For instance, see the opposing views of the infantes Juan and Pedro presented in: 'Moxó, La sociedad política castellana'.
- 9 *Obras completas*, 597–599.
- 10 See: Pardo Rodríguez, *La cancellería de don Fernando de la Cerda*.
- 11 González Jiménez, 'Alfonso X and His Brothers', 58–59.
- 12 Kinkade, 'Alfonso X, Cantiga 235', 313–318.
- 13 González Jiménez, 'Alfonso X and His Brothers', 140–141 and 232–234.
- 14 Kinkade, *Dawn of a Dynasty*, 48.
- 15 See: Salazar y Acha, *La Casa del Rey*.
- 16 González Jiménez, *Alfonso X el Sabio*, 401.
- 17 Kinkade, *Dawn of a Dynasty*, IX–X.
- 18 Beceiro Pita, 'Los dominios de la familia real castellana', 86 and Salazar y Acha, *La Casa del Rey*, 60.
- 19 *Sevilla, ciudad de privilegios*, doc. 51.
- 20 *Privilegios reales otorgados a Toledo*, doc. 50 (12 March 1333).
- 21 See: Estepa Díez, 'La monarquía castellana'.
- 22 Benavides, *Memorias de Don Fernando IV*, doc. IC.
- 23 Benavides, *Memorias de Don Fernando IV*, doc. DLXXXV.
- 24 *CAX*, 221–225.
- 25 *Las Siete Partidas*, Segunda Partida, Título XV, Ley III and *Espéculo*, Libro II, Título XVI, Ley V.
- 26 See: Spiegel, *The Past as Text*, especially ch. 1 and 3.
- 27 *CFIV*, ch. I, par. 22, ch. III, par. 5, and ch. V, par. 11.
- 28 *CFIV*, ch. III, par. 5, ch. V, par. 11, and ch. 12, pars. 15–16.
- 29 *Escrituras y concejo: Écija*, doc. 9 (13 August 1299).
- 30 Benavides, *Memorias de Don Fernando IV*, doc. CCXL.

- 31 *CSIV*, 90, 161–162, and 176–177.
- 32 *CFIV*, ch. 1 pars. 21–24.
- 33 *CAXI*, 180–181 and *GCAXI*, I, 304–305.
- 34 Giménez Soler, *Don Juan Manuel*, docs. XXXVI and XLVII.
- 35 Benavides, *Memorias de Don Fernando IV*, docs. CCLV and CCLXIV.
- 36 Giménez Soler, *Don Juan Manuel*, doc. CLXXXIII.
- 37 *CFIV*, ch. XIV, par. 13.
- 38 *CFIV*, ch. XVI, par. 35.
- 39 ACB, V-17, f. 435 (1 August 1314).
- 40 *CAXI*, 180–182.
- 41 *CAXI*, 209.
- 42 Giménez Soler, *Don Juan Manuel*, doc. CCXVII.
- 43 Giménez Soler, *Don Juan Manuel*, doc. CCXXIV.
- 44 Giménez Soler, *Don Juan Manuel*, doc. CCXLIV.
- 45 Giménez Soler, *Don Juan Manuel*, doc. CCLXIX.
- 46 *Obras completas*, 951–952.
- 47 Molina Molina, ‘Los dominios de don Juan Manuel’, 220–223.
- 48 Juan Manuel’s will was published by: Giménez Soler, *Don Juan Manuel*, 696–697.
- 49 *CFIV*, ch. XII, par. 13.
- 50 *CAXI*, 186.
- 51 *CAXI*, 325–326.
- 52 See: Martínez, ‘La Crónica y la Gran Crónica’.
- 53 *CAXI*, 200–203 and 233–234.
- 54 Letter edited in: Hernández, ‘Historiografía y propaganda’, 413–417.
- 55 *CAXI*, 287.
- 56 Giménez Soler, *Don Juan Manuel*, doc. DLXXVI.
- 57 See: Hernández, ‘Historiografía y propaganda’.
- 58 Gómez Redondo, *Historia de la prosa medieval castellana. I*, 1094–1121.
- 59 Funes and Qués, ‘La historia disidente’, 71–78.
- 60 *Obras completas*, XVI.
- 61 *Obras completas*, 775–778.
- 62 *Obras completas*, 565.
- 63 Gómez Redondo, *Historia de la prosa medieval castellana. I*, 1105 and 1171–1172 and ‘Don Juan Manuel, Trastámara’, and Martínez, ‘La Crónica y la Gran Crónica’.
- 64 Gómez Redondo, *Historia de la prosa medieval castellana. I*, 1093.
- 65 *Las Siete Partidas*, Segunda Partida, Título I, Ley X and *Obras completas*, 948–950.
- 66 *Obras completas*, 980–984 and 992–997.
- 67 *Obras completas*, 599–602.
- 68 *Obras completas*, 950–953.
- 69 Giménez Soler, *Don Juan Manuel*, 699–700.
- 70 *CAXI*, 241–242.
- 71 Giménez Soler, *Don Juan Manuel*, docs. DXVI and DXXXVIII.
- 72 Biaggini, ‘L’espace de la frontière’, pars. 36–37.
- 73 *Obras completas*, 985–992.
- 74 Gómez Redondo, *Historia de la prosa medieval castellana. I*, 1191.
- 75 Chancillería de Valladolid, PERGAMINOS, CARPETA, 7, 1 (30 April 1343) and AHNOB, GOMEZ DE ALBORNOZ, CP.330, D.2 (6 June 1344).
- 76 *Sevilla, ciudad de privilegios*, docs. 31 (15 July 1272) and 42 (7 August 1284).
- 77 AHN, SIGIL-SELLO, C.13, N.7 and *Catálogo de los pergaminos*, doc. 28.
- 78 *Sevilla, ciudad de privilegios*, doc. 42 (7 August 1284), ACB, V – 2 I. Fol. 18 (1 August 1314).
- 79 I analysed some of these ideas in: Arias Guillén, ‘Family Matters’.
- 80 *Privilegios reales otorgados a Toledo*, doc. 50 (12 March 1333).

- 81 *Colección documental de Alfonso XI*, doc. 334 (10 March 1348).
- 82 *Diplomatario andaluz de Alfonso X*, doc. 162 (October, 10, 1255) and *Sevilla, ciudad de privilegios*, doc. 31 (15 July 1272).
- 83 Giménez Soler, *Don Juan Manuel*, doc. DLXXVI.
- 84 Moxó, 'Época de Alfonso XI', 321–322, and González Crespo, 'El afianzamiento económico y social'.
- 85 *CAXI*, 259.
- 86 Ayala Martínez, *Las órdenes militares hispánicas*, 709–715.
- 87 *CAXI*, 281.
- 88 *CAXI*, 273 and 280.
- 89 *Crónica del rey don Pedro*, I, 9 and II, 313.
- 90 *CAXI*, 239.
- 91 *CAXI*, 389–390.

## 6 Nobles and kingship (I)

### The ‘conflictual cooperation’ between the *ricoshombr*es and the king in Castile (1252–1350)

In 1272, a group of Castilian nobles held a secret meeting at Lerma (near Burgos), the seat of Nuño González de Lara, the most powerful *ricohombre* in Castile and head of the most prestigious lineage within the kingdom’s nobility. According to the *Crónica de Alfonso X*, once the king found out about the meeting, he sent an emissary to persuade Nuño González to put an end to this conspiracy. Alfonso X reminded the magnate of how much he had benefitted from royal patronage (*‘auiéndole él fecho tanto bien commo le fiziera’*), and argued that if the noble was plotting against him in order to obtain a larger share of royal patronage, serving the king would be a much more efficient way to achieve this goal (*‘Et sy lo fizo por aver dél mas bien de quanto auía, que siruiéndolo podría ganar más ayna’*). Finally, the Wise King both pleaded with Nuño, as his friend, and ordered him, as his vassal, to dedicate his heart to serving him, as it was the duty of every nobleman to do (*‘le rogaua como amigo e le mandaua commo a vasallo que sosegase el coraçón en lo seruir, asy como era tenuto de lo fazer’*).<sup>1</sup>

Nuño González paid no heed to the king’s words and, despite having benefitted from royal favour for decades, he led an uprising of nobles against Alfonso X. The grievances – both personal and related to how the kingdom was ruled – that had led these noblemen to take this decision had been previously communicated to the king privately and, later, at a meeting of the *Cortes* held in Burgos. The king’s failure to come to any form of agreement with the nobles impelled them to leave the kingdom in order to force Alfonso X to accept their demands. The magnates’ voluntary exile in Granada did not last long: as was discussed in Chapter 4, thanks to Queen Violante’s successful negotiation, in 1274 they returned to Castile, and the king restored them all to their former positions in the court.<sup>2</sup>

The nobles’ rebellion of 1272 has been compared to the barons’ uprising against John I of England and the promulgation of the Magna Carta in 1215: both rebellions have been considered as the magnates’ response to the expansion of royal government.<sup>3</sup> Considered in this broader context, the Castilian case, although intimately associated to the nobility’s opposition to Alfonso X’s project of becoming Holy Roman Emperor – the *‘fecho del imperio’* – was far from being exceptional. Other European kingdoms witnessed similar conflicts,

such as the French leagues of 1314–1315, which reflected the nobles' discontent with the military obligations imposed upon them by the French monarchy, or the Aragonese 'War of the Union' (1347–1348), which ended with the abolition of the privileges granted to the nobility by Alfons II (r. 1285–1291) in 1287.<sup>4</sup>

Traditionally, these episodes have been interpreted as part of the long drawn out struggle between the kings and the nobility. The latter rejected the expansion of royal government and fought to preserve their 'feudal' power and authority, and this antipathy characterised the final centuries of the medieval era, up until the eventual triumph of the regnal state. However, in recent decades historians have dismissed this view, and demonstrated that, rather than opposing the expansion of royal government, nobles in fact sought to control its expansion in line with their own interests. This process was rife with conflicts and tensions, but these were the result of the competition between the noble factions as they sought to control the government and benefit from royal patronage. As a result, it may be argued that there was no specific opposition between the nobility and monarchy, and nor did the expansion of the regnal state mean the decline of the nobles' power and authority.<sup>5</sup> Valuable contributions to this view of the relationship between the nobility and monarch have been made in recent years, such as Alice Taylor's insightful monograph on the development of the state in Medieval Scotland. Taylor has demonstrated how it is necessary to transcend Weberian views of the medieval state, according to which 'public' royal justice existed in opposition to 'private' lordship. Instead, as Taylor convincingly argues, aristocratic power and royal power were two separate sources of power yet they were not antagonistic; indeed, the nobles became part of a 'symbolically centralized power structure based on royal authority' and, what is more, contributed to its expansion.<sup>6</sup>

In Spain, Luis Suárez's traditional interpretation of the Castilian Late Middle Ages as a period characterised by the struggle between monarchy and nobility has been revised and questioned over recent decades, although it still pervades a variety of contemporary historical publications.<sup>7</sup> Most recently, in 2017, the persistence of this historiographical view, which dominates textbooks and persists in some academic monographs,<sup>8</sup> led José María Monsalvo to write a lengthy essay in which he challenged the idea of a long-standing conflict between the monarchy and the nobility between 1369 and 1479.<sup>9</sup>

The analysis that follows addresses the social and political dynamics that shaped the relationship between the kings of Castile and their nobles between 1252 and 1350. It provides a further rejection of the notion that the rapport between the nobility and the Castilian monarchy was fundamentally antagonistic and it shows the key importance of the interpersonal aspects of kingship in affirming royal power. The expansion of the regnal state, particularly in terms of the growth of royal taxation, made royal patronage especially attractive to the nobles. The nobles were the main beneficiaries of the king's grace, receiving salaries, offices, and lordships in exchange for their loyalty and service. This symbiotic relationship underwent a number of changes during this period, the most notable being the substitution of the *tenencias* (tenancies) of royal lands

for other forms of reward (royal revenues or lordships). On the other hand, the nobles' strong dependence on royal favour encouraged the court's factionalism, which led the magnates to build alliances to control royal patronage, yet it also fostered resentment against any individual who benefitted from closer proximity to the king.

Similarly, the forms of showing dissent changed significantly during this period, partly as a consequence of the kings' increasingly common recourse to assassination as a means of disposing of some of their most vociferous opponents. Finally, Alfonso XI's drive to strengthen royal authority is discussed in the context of the internal conflicts which plagued Castile between 1252 and 1350. Alfonso's success is shown to be the result of his ability to develop a strong network of alliances with the kingdom's nobility in conjunction with his use of a combination of coercive and diplomatic measures to attract his opponents to renounce their opposition and give him their support.

### **Revenues, offices, and lordships: The nobles' dependence on royal patronage in Castile (1252–1350)**

The *Crónica de Alfonso X* devoted long passages to transcriptions of the conversations held and letters exchanged between the king's emissaries and the rebel nobles. During the confrontation, and in order to emphasise how their attitude was unjustified, Alfonso X sent individual missives to the main leaders in which he listed the numerous occasions on which these magnates had benefitted from royal patronage. Not surprisingly, it was Nuño González de Lara who received one of the bitterest reprimands from the king. Alfonso X reminded Nuño that he had always enjoyed his favour despite his family's fall from grace. Although the Laras rebelled against Fernando III at the beginning of his reign, Nuño was raised at court and Alfonso arranged a suitable marriage for him. Moreover, Alfonso showered him with many gifts, including royal revenues and appointments to important positions, such as the *tenencia* of Écija, as well as the lordship of Torrelobatón and a number of manors in Murcia and Andalusia.<sup>10</sup>

Royal largesse was a fundamental part of kingship. The importance of the monarch's *largitas* had been a recurrent theme in royal chronicles since the twelfth century.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, the *Ordenamiento de Alcalá* (1348) stated that it was the king's obligation to endow his subjects (*naturales*) and vassals with gifts so they could become honourable and rich ('*Pertenesçe a los rreyes e alos grandes príncipes dar grandes dones façiendo merçed a los sus naturales e asus vasallos por que sean onrrados e rricos*').<sup>12</sup> As a result, this section of the *Crónica de Alfonso X* was clearly intended to present Alfonso X in a favourable light, and underscore the injustice of the nobles' demands by contrasting their ingratitude to the king's generosity. Furthermore, the exchange between Alfonso X and Nuño González de Lara also illustrates the kind of rewards nobles could expect in return for their service to the king: royal revenues, positions at court or within the territorial administration, and lordships.

***Royal revenues: The dependence of the Castilian nobles on royal taxation***

The abrupt end of the economic growth of the High Middle Ages at the end of the thirteenth century has been considered as having had a deleterious effect on the income of members of the nobility. As a result, the only way the nobles could compensate their reduced seigneurial revenues was to try and take advantage of the opportunities offered by the expanding forms of royal taxation.<sup>13</sup> Recent studies on the so-called fourteenth-century crisis have drawn attention to the chronological differences between the Iberian kingdoms and northern Europe, whereby it is hard to identify some of the traditional features of economic decline in Castile at the time.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, the scarcity of documentation regarding the economic situation of the Castilian nobles makes it very hard to determine whether there really was a sharp decrease in the magnates' income during this period, or, as has been suggested, that there was no significant change.<sup>15</sup>

In any case, it is evident that the Castilian nobles were the main beneficiaries of royal revenues. The registers of the royal incomes for the period 1290–1292, the only extant documents of this kind in Castile before the fifteenth century, show how the bulk of the Castilian monarchy's traditional rights were destined to pay the salaries of the nobility.<sup>16</sup> For instance, Ignacio Álvarez Borge has recently estimated that almost 90% of the revenues recorded for the Burgos area were granted to *ricoshombrs* and *caballeros* (knights).<sup>17</sup> Moreover, the emerging forms of royal taxation were, in essence, collected for the benefit of the magnates. Royal chronicles are riddled with examples of this idea. For instance, in the 1273 meeting in Almagro, Alfonso X justified his demand for two *servicios* (a direct tax) on the towns' representatives in order to cover the salaries of the *ricoshombrs*.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, the *Cortes* agreed to collect five *servicios* in 1301: one was destined to pay the papacy for Fernando IV's legitimation and the other four were reserved to fund the nobles' wages.<sup>19</sup> The meeting of the *Cortes* in 1317 presents the clearest example of the connection between royal taxation and the nobles' salaries: Alfonso XI's regents were faced by the dire state of the royal finances – the regular income only amounted to 1.6 million *maravedís* – and they estimated that an additional 8 million had to be collected in order to pay the *ricoshombrs*' *libramientos* (salaries).<sup>20</sup>

The nobility was involved in administering royal taxation; indeed, it was common for them to even participate in the collection of the revenues assigned to them. For instance, the towns' representatives complained in 1301, 1305, and 1322 about these practices, and they repeatedly asked the monarch to forbid any *ricohombre*, *caballero*, or their vassals and dependents from collecting tributes.<sup>21</sup> The extant documentation, albeit scarce, reflects how widespread it was to see *ricoshombrs* collecting royal taxes for themselves. In 1304, the council of Burgos complained to Fernando IV that the *ricoshombrs* were collecting the *servicios* in the city and the nearby villages of Lara and Barbadillo. Furthermore, the local council said that the nobles extorted more money from the taxpayers than was due.<sup>22</sup> The archives of the Castilian monasteries reveal further examples of this practice. For instance, the Galician monastery of Santa María of Sobrado

(A Coruña) issued a protest against the royal tax collectors in 1338. According to the Cistercians monks, these men worked for Pedro Fernández de Castro, the most powerful magnate in the region, and they infringed the monastery's privileges by demanding unfair payments<sup>23</sup>. Similarly, in 1342, Alfonso XI ordered Juan Núñez III de Lara to forbid his agents to collect taxes on the lands in the regions of La Bureba and La Rioja which were owned by the royal monastery of Las Huelgas in Burgos. The king acknowledged that he had transferred these royal revenues to Juan Núñez, although he reminded the noble that the localities which belonged to the monastery were exempt of taxation. It does not seem that the king's demand was very successful: Pedro I had to repeat the same warning to the Laras in 1351.<sup>24</sup>

Not surprisingly, the nobles' dependence on royal revenues, and their close involvement in overseeing how they were managed, made this issue a constant source of tension. In the meeting of the *Cortes* held in 1317, the monarchy's financial problems made it impossible to find a solution that could satisfy everyone regarding the distribution of royal salaries. The chronicle describes how the nobles were on the verge of fighting among themselves over this issue; only the swift intervention of the infante Juan prevented any bloodshed.<sup>25</sup> Similarly, it was a common occurrence that the nobles accused the individuals in charge of distributing the salaries, like Count Alvar Núñez in 1328, of misappropriating royal revenues.<sup>26</sup> Controlling the magnates' salaries was a coveted albeit dangerous position, as is shown below.

Demanding higher salaries from the king was a habitual practice of the Castilian nobles, and they exploited moments of political turmoil to open negotiations. For instance, in 1295, Queen María de Molina had to raise the salaries of Diego López V de Haro, Juan Núñez II de Lara, and Nuño González II de Lara to 300,000 *maravedís* in order to ensure their loyalty at a time when Fernando IV's accession to the throne was far from being universally accepted.<sup>27</sup> However, the need to augment the nobles' salaries entailed other collateral effects, such as the towns' discontent due to the increased fiscal pressure this led to. According to the *Crónica de Alfonso X*, in 1272 the nobles demanded that the king collect a *servicio* in order to pay for their salaries, while knowing full well that this would cause a rift between the Castilian monarchy and the towns' representatives.<sup>28</sup> Likewise, a demand for an increased salary formed part of the political bargaining that ensued when a noble rebelled against the king. In 1333, Juan Núñez III de Lara urged Alfonso XI that, if he wanted him to return to the king's service, he should reinstate the lordship of Biscay and increase the royal revenues he received. Lara aspired to receive 600,000 *maravedís* as *libramiento* and 300,000 in *tierra*.<sup>29</sup>

The example of Juan Núñez III, while also stressing the nobles' dependence on royal revenue, highlights how the salaries received by the nobles were made up of two elements. The first element of the noble salary consisted of the *libramientos* which the magnates were paid in exchange for their military service. The conditions for this duty were set out for the first time by Alfonso XI in 1338 in the ordinances of Burgos, in which he stipulated the nobles' obligations

to the royal army. Essentially, the nobles had to provide one man-at-arms, accompanied by one spearman and one crossbowman, for every 1,100 *maravedís* they received from the king.<sup>30</sup> These ordinances reflect how royal authority was consolidated and strengthened during the reign of Alfonso XI. However, the lack of documentation prevents any detailed analysis of how these regulations were actually implemented. On the other hand, the salaries of the nobility were not exclusively conditioned by their martial responsibilities. To ensure their loyalty to the king, the *ricosombres* and *caballeros* received royal revenues (*tierra*) on a regular basis, and these were granted independently of their military obligations. The *Crónica de Fernando IV* presents this situation as a matter-of-fact issue. In 1309, the king overcame his initial doubts regarding the idea of launching a military campaign against Granada. Fernando IV was swayed by the fact that he would have to pay salaries to the nobles in any case, and it was better to pursue this military endeavour as it would put an end to the noblemen's idleness, which posed a far greater risk for internal instability.<sup>31</sup>

The second element of the nobleman's salary was the *tierra*, which meant that he was granted part of the royal revenues or taxes generated by a given location in reward for his loyalty to the king. By the second half of the thirteenth century, for the most important *ricosombres* this form of payment from the king was progressively becoming an inheritable 'right' rather than a gift dependent on royal favour. Royal chronicles offer a few examples of how the most important noble families in the kingdom were accumulating these revenues. For instance, in 1287, Sancho IV automatically gave Juan Núñez II de Lara the royal revenues that had belonged to his recently deceased brother, Álvaro Núñez.<sup>32</sup> The accusations with which Alfonso X reproached the rebel nobles in 1272 provide further examples of this trend. Fernando Ruiz de Castro was reminded that, years earlier, during Fernando III's reign, Alfonso had persuaded his father to give him the *tierra* that had been awarded to his father, Ruy Fernández, even though Fernando Ruiz was only 4 years old at the time. Alfonso X emphasised how uncommon this decision was, as royal revenues were reserved for those who could effectively serve the king. Not surprisingly, it was Nuño González who was once more the recipient of the king's harshest reproaches. Alfonso X pointed out to the noble that his two sons, Juan and Nuño, were also paid a royal salary. According to the king, the fact that several members of the same lineage received royal revenues was something unheard of. Finally, Alfonso X reminded Nuño González how his older son, Juan Núñez I, had not even lost his *tierra* despite the fact he went on a crusade with Louis IX, in 1270, without the king's permission.<sup>33</sup>

The *ricosombres*, as the most senior and respected members of the nobility, were the main beneficiaries of the royal revenues, but this was not an exclusive prerogative of the most prestigious lineages. The *Partidas* clearly state that a *tierra* was constituted by the *maravedís* derived from royal incomes that the king gives to *ricosombres* and knights ('*maravedíes que el rey pone a los Rico homes e a los caualleros en logares ciertos*').<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, nobles of lesser social status could receive higher salaries than individuals of ancient families

due to their proximity to the king. For instance, the *Crónica de Alfonso XI* describes how the *caballeros* Alvar Núñez and Garcilaso de la Vega were able to maintain an impressive retinue because they received a handsome sum of money from Alfonso XI.<sup>35</sup> Access to royal patronage was key to gaining a prominent position at court, which also meant that the desire to control royal revenues fuelled factionalism. The king could shape the kingdom's elite through the distribution of royal salaries; however, successful kingship was the result of maintaining a delicate balance that left no major magnate feeling blatantly relegated. It was this equilibrium that was achieved by Alfonso XI in the late 1330s as is shown below.

The example of Alvar Núñez and Garcilaso also points to the capillarity of royal revenues. The salaries given by the monarchy to the kingdom's most powerful magnates were distributed among other social groups, which permitted these nobles to create and keep important entourages and maintain their own network of vassals and dependents. The Castilian monarchy was fully aware of this situation, as the *Crónica de Alfonso X* clearly illustrates. During the negotiations of 1272, the king's emissaries not only addressed the *ricosombres*, but also the knights who participated in the rebellion. The emissaries reminded these *caballeros* that they only followed the *ricosombres* because of what they paid them. However, the king's messengers pointed out that everything they were given had previously been received from the king, thereby stressing that the *ricosombres* did not grant them anything from their own resources. The emissaries continued their speech by exposing the vassalage ties between the knights and the *ricosombres* as being exclusively built on this royal money, in the absence of any personal obligations or familial bonds between them. In consequence, it was advocated that these knights should serve the king, who was their natural lord.<sup>36</sup> Although this was not true, as there were well-known family ties among the rebels, the arguments raised by Alfonso X's emissaries reflect the nobles' strong dependence on royal patronage to maintain their prominent status.

The Lara family provides the best example of the social extension of the nobles' power. The distribution of the royal revenues they received from the kings, in addition to their own seigneurial rights, allowed them to develop an impressive network of vassals and servants. The *Crónica de Alfonso X* argued that Nuño González de Lara was, excluding the king, the most honourable and powerful man in Spain ('*el más poderoso omne que senyor ouiese e más honrado de Espanna*').<sup>37</sup> His sons, Juan and Nuño, commanded remarkable military forces. In 1276, they agreed to serve Philippe III of France with 300 and 106 men-at-arms, respectively.<sup>38</sup> Their descendant Juan Núñez III maintained an even more impressive army. According to the royal chronicle, 800 *hidalgos* followed this nobleman's orders during the siege of Lerma in 1336.<sup>39</sup> Besides their military might, the Laras had their own court, with its own officers such as chancellors or stewards, and many other agents, such as *merinos*, who carried out judicial and fiscal duties in their domains. They also delegated the exercise of some of the offices granted to them by the king to other relatives or nobles.<sup>40</sup>

***Alférez, mayordomo mayor, merinos, and adelantados: The coveted royal offices***

Royal appointments provided another way for nobles to benefit from the king's largesse. Being the holder of a royal office offered several perquisites to the nobles besides the salary attached to it: these positions elevated the noble's status within the court and reinforced their territorial power. Not surprisingly, the offices of *alférez* and *mayordomo mayor*, the two most prominent court positions, and that of *merino* or *adelantado*, which entailed judicial and administrative prerogatives over a territory, were coveted (and accumulated) by the most powerful families of the kingdom.

As was discussed above, Alfonso X reserved the offices of *alférez* and *mayordomo* for members of the royal family. However, after the 1280s this exclusivity was abandoned and, while there were several infantes and other royal relatives who were granted these positions, they shared them with the most powerful *ricosombres* of the kingdom. Prior to Alfonso X's reign, the office of *alférez* had been the 'patrimony' of the Lara and Haro families for almost a century: several members of these families alternated in this position during the reigns of Alfonso VIII, Enrique I, and Fernando III.<sup>41</sup> This trend reappeared during the final decades of the thirteenth century; the two branches of the Haro family accrued this office in the reigns of Sancho IV and Fernando IV, although they were replaced by the Laras once Alfonso XI came of age (see Appendices 4).

Appointments to the office of *mayordomo* were much more varied, as it was associated with the important role of controlling royal revenues. Appendices 3 shows the short tenure served by the *mayordomos* in the reigns of Sancho IV and Fernando IV, and also indicates how court factions competed for this office. For instance, in 1305, Fernando IV, following the infante Juan's suggestion, appointed Lope Díaz IV de Haro *mayordomo* in order to prevent his father, Diego López V, from signing an alliance with Juan Núñez II de Lara, who was at the time opposing the infante.<sup>42</sup> Similarly, in 1308, the dominant court faction, led by the infante Juan and Juan Núñez II, forced Fernando IV to dismiss all his officers – including territorial officials, such as *merinos*, and other court positions such as chancellor and notary – and grant these positions to whomever the infante and his supporters deemed suitable.<sup>43</sup> Once more the capillarity of royal patronage is revealed by this example. The offices of *alférez* and *mayordomo* were reserved for the most prestigious individuals, but there were also other positions which lesser *ricosombres* and *caballeros* could aspire to. In consequence, there was scope for vassalage or support for the most prominent magnates being rewarded so long as their faction enjoyed the king's favour.

The nobles also held territorial offices. This should not be interpreted as the kings relinquishing their authority in favour of local magnates but as a practice which was mutually beneficial. On the one hand, these nobles were an effective instrument to transmit royal authority at a local level. While, on the other, these individuals reinforced their local pre-eminence through these offices.<sup>44</sup>

By the end of the eleventh century, the Castilian monarchy had started to grant the office of '*tenente*' (tenant) to some of the most prominent members of the nobility. A *tenente* was the king's representative in a town or a region, who was assigned a wide assortment of judicial, administrative, and military prerogatives. In the thirteenth century, however, the '*tenencias*' were granted less frequently. References to this office in the royal diplomas became rarer and rarer and eventually completely disappeared. In Castile, Toledo, and the newly conquered southern territories very few mentions to *tenentes* are made in the second half of the thirteenth century. However, in regions such as León or the frontier areas of Calahorra, La Rioja, and La Bureba, the *tenencias* persisted until 1300, probably due to a greater necessity to stress the existence of a representative of royal authority in those lands.<sup>45</sup>

It is very telling that the *Partidas* do not discuss the role of *tenente* at all, which indicates that the position had become rare by the second half of the thirteenth century.<sup>46</sup> The expansion of the role of the *merinos* during the reign of Alfonso VIII<sup>47</sup> and the creation of the *adelantados* in the 1250s divested the *tenentes* of their administrative and judicial rights, so this position became, in essence, a source of steady income for the beneficiary without any further powers. An indication of this is provided by the royal registers from 1290 to 1292, which associate the surviving *tenencias* with the receipt of royal revenues (*tierra*) and not the role of the king's representatives over the territory.<sup>48</sup>

In any case, these new offices, the *merinos* and the *adelantados*, were also destined to reward the Castilian nobles. The *adelantados* of Murcia and Andalusia were frequently reserved for important *ricosombres* and royal relatives.<sup>49</sup> Juan Manuel was granted both positions during his life, as was discussed in the previous chapter. Similarly, several members of the Lara and Haro families served for periods of time as the king's *adelantado* in Andalusia. For instance, Nuño González de Lara was killed in 1275 while leading the royal army in Andalusia against the Marinids.<sup>50</sup> Likewise, Diego López V de Haro was appointed *adelantado de la Frontera* in 1286.<sup>51</sup>

In the northern regions, however, the positions of *merinos* or *adelantados* were given both to *ricosombres* and nobles of lesser status. The use of these different titles was most likely related to the individual's social status, as *ricosombres* were identified as *adelantados* while *caballeros* and other lesser nobles were referred to as *merinos mayores*. This distinction disappeared by the second half of the fourteenth century, and solely the title of *adelantado* prevailed. Nevertheless, it should not be thought that there was a sharp division between these two groups: many *merinos* used their position for social advancement: in León, Alvar Núñez obtained the title of count in 1327, and in Castile the Rojas and Velasco families were later promoted to the ranks of the *ricosombres*.<sup>52</sup> The case of Fernán González de Rojas, who was *merino mayor* of Castile between 1244 and 1254 and 1256 and 1258 demonstrates how this relationship between the king and local nobles could be mutually beneficial. In so far as we know Rojas served Fernando III and Alfonso X loyally for many years, and during this time he built up a remarkable patrimony for his family

around Burgos and extended his patronage over local religious institutions such as the Monastery of La Trinidad.<sup>53</sup>

Yet this relationship of mutual benefit between the king and nobility was far from idyllic. For the king, it could prove problematic to remove a noble from a territorial appointment if his family were very powerful in the corresponding region. For example, the Castros in Galicia were the former *tenentes* of Lemos and they practically monopolised the position of *adelantado of Galicia* and, later, that of *pertiguero de Santiago* for decades.<sup>54</sup> In a similar fashion, one of the petitions raised by the rebel nobles in 1272 was that the *merinos* should be dismissed and substituted by the *adelantados*. This complaint was the magnates' response to the way in which Alfonso X had remodelled this group of officers between 1268 and 1272, and appointed a series of individuals who were unpopular with many of the *ricos hombres*.<sup>55</sup> Powerful magnates could also challenge the authority of royal representatives if they showed an inclination to conserve their position (either for themselves or for their vassals or relatives), and also if they considered these officials as a threat to their local power. For instance, in 1286, in the presence of Sancho IV, the *merino mayor* of León and Asturias, Esteban Núñez Churrucano, formally accused Fernán Pérez Ponce, a *ricohombre* from Asturias, of having freed some prisoners he was transporting. Juan Martínez Negrita, a *caballero* who served Ponce, intervened to defend his lord, which provoked the king's rage; Sancho IV took a staff from one of his huntsmen and beat Martínez Negrita to death. After doing that, the king said that this was a cautionary tale to those who dare to challenge royal justice or hinder his officials' actions. The *Crónica de Sancho IV* concluded that, from then onwards, no one had the audacity to obstruct the king's justice again.<sup>56</sup>

The royal chronicler was being unabashedly propagandistic or, at least, very optimistic. Between 1252 and 1350, the *merinos* and *adelantados* succeeded in expanding royal authority at a local level.<sup>57</sup> However, this process did not mean a waning of the magnates' influence in their regions, especially in areas which, as was discussed in Chapter 3, were seen as 'peripheral', such as Galicia or Asturias. Furthermore, the local power of the nobility was further strengthened by the proliferation of lordships granted by the kings during this period.

### ***Lordship and seigneurial jurisdictions in Castile (1252–1350)***

Granting lands – manors, castles, hamlets, villages, or towns – to the nobles was a common act of royal patronage in the Late Middle Ages. However, these types of donations have traditionally been viewed in a dim light and seen as a sign of weak kings and even 're-feudalisation'. They have been interpreted as the monarchs surrendering part of their kingdom to the nobility, and these lordships have been identified as a partial 'privatisation' of the 'public' regnal estate. More recently this process has been interpreted in a different light. From the thirteenth century onwards, the size and number of seigneurial estates increased in parallel to the expansion of royal authority. Additionally, it has been highlighted how the creation of these estates served as a link between the

royal administration and the local powers. Yet this was by no means a process that was devoid of tensions; these donations helped the monarchies to involve the nobles in the expanding forms of royal government.<sup>58</sup>

In Castile, historians traditionally considered that lay lordships only became relevant in the last third of the fourteenth century. Enrique II's accession to the throne in 1369 initiated a policy of a steady transfer of royal lands to the noble families who supported the change of dynasty. At that time, the Castilian monarchy donated important towns and estates to the magnates, granting them the judicial rights over these territories. Needless to say, seigneurial power had existed before, but it was argued that the nobles only possessed a handful of small villages and castles scattered across the kingdom before the Trastámaras seized power.<sup>59</sup> Additionally, noble families started to favour male primogeniture instead of dividing their lands between all their offspring (women included): the *mayorazgo* right of succession began to be developed in the fourteenth century, although it only became widespread in the following century.<sup>60</sup>

The expansion of lay lordship in fact began at an earlier date, and this process should be dated to the second half of the thirteenth century. During this period, the Castilian monarchy started to grant significant lordships, and not just a few hamlets, to members of the royal family and *ricos hombres*. These donations were closely associated with the expansion of royal taxation, as the kings transferred to the nobles the royal revenues produced in these lands. From this point of view, it is important to remark, once again, how the expansion of the nobles' power evolved in parallel to that of royal authority, and it was not a source of antagonism to the latter.<sup>61</sup>

Furthermore, it was common for many of the donations made before 1369 to include judicial rights. In 1310, Fernán Gómez de Toledo and Diego García de Toledo sold the castle of Madroniz (near Cordova) for 6,000 *maravedís* to Pay Arias, Queen Constanza's cupbearer (*copero mayor*), and his wife, Urraca López. The diploma specified that they had previously received this castle from Juan Manuel, including the right to exercise all forms of justice ('*con la justicia civil y criminal y mero misto imperio*').<sup>62</sup> The same expression '*mero e misto imperio*' was added to the royal donation of Cubillas de Cerrato (Valladolid) that was made to the royal chronicler Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid, in 1345, and it stated that the grant included judicial rights over this village.<sup>63</sup> The concession of lordships with this '*mero e misto imperio*' clause multiplied after 1369, but there are also several examples of earlier donations that included it despite the reduced number of extant diplomas for this period. Consequently, the *Ordenamiento de Alcalá* (1348) devoted a number of laws concerning the judicial rights exercised by nobles, royal oversight of the nobles' judicial activities, and which royal prerogatives could not be alienated, such as mining rights and minting.<sup>64</sup>

The Haro family became lords of Biscay in the early thirteenth century having controlled the *tenencia* of this region for generations.<sup>65</sup> In consequence, it might be thought that there was a straightforward process in which Castilian nobles evolved from being royal representatives in a certain location to being

granted a lordship over the same region. There are a few examples of this evolution, although it was by no means an automatic procedure. For instance, in 1298 Fernán Ruiz de Saldaña obtained the lordship of Saldaña from Fernando IV, which is where several of his ancestors had acted as *tenentes* in the king's name.<sup>66</sup> Then, in 1296 and in 1298 Fernando Rodríguez I de Castro twice made a demand to be granted the lordship of Lemos, a *tenencia* traditionally controlled by his family, although his claims were not met with success. The king's continued refusal led the noble to rebel against Fernando IV in 1305. Lemos was then given to the infante Felipe, as was mentioned in the previous chapter, and later granted to Count Alvar Núñez. Finally, in 1332, Pedro Fernández de Castro was finally awarded the lordship of Lemos.<sup>67</sup> As this case shows, the king's role was not limited to acknowledging a *de facto* situation; on the contrary, the Castilian monarchy exercised a degree of control over these donations even during periods traditionally considered as eras of 'weak' kingship, such as the reign of Fernando IV. In a similar vein, in 1307, Pedro Ponce de León, the son of the Fernán Pérez who had obstructed royal justice in 1286, agreed to return Cangas and Allande (Asturias) to the royal demesne – although he retained the lordship of Tineo – in order to appease Fernando IV, who was determined to travel to Asturias and punish the noble for his rebellious attitude.<sup>68</sup>

From the second half of the thirteenth century onwards, the Castilian kings started to reward the nobility with lordships extracted from the royal demesne. Andalusia has customarily been cited as the region which most clearly represents this process of the expansion of seigniorial jurisdiction. Antonio Collantes' classic study estimated a 10% decrease of the royal lands between the reigns of Sancho IV and Alfonso XI, and he calculated that by 1350 almost 36% of Andalusia was comprised of ecclesiastical and lay lordships.<sup>69</sup> However, this figure, fails to consider notable local differences. For example, Manuel García Fernández's study on the kingdom of Seville showed that the royal demesne still constituted 72.4% of the land at the end of Alfonso XI's reign.<sup>70</sup>

The two most important Andalusian families of the Late Middle Ages (and beyond) were those of Guzmán and Ponce de León – a branch of this Asturian family had settled in this southern region – and they started to build their impressive patrimony in this period. For instance, Alfonso Pérez de Guzmán received Sanlúcar de Barrameda (Cádiz) in 1297, and his descendant, Alvar Pérez de Guzmán, bought Palma and Villalba (Niebla, Huelva) in 1350 for 130,000 *maravedís*.<sup>71</sup> Similarly, Fernando Ponce de León was granted the lordship of Marchena (Seville) in 1309, and his son, Pedro Ponce de León II, obtained Granja de la Oliva (Véjer de la Frontera, Cádiz), in 1337, Mairena del Alcor (Seville), in 1342, and Rota (Cádiz), in 1349. The same year he bought the town of Bailén (Jaén) from Alfonso XI for 150,000 *maravedís*.<sup>72</sup>

Nevertheless, these donations and sales should not be interpreted as a systematic alienation of the royal demesne in this region. The Castilian monarchy still maintained the bulk of the Andalusian lands and the most important towns in the area. Most of these lordships, excluding Bailén, were located in border areas and were not overly significant from an economic or demographic

point of view. Royal patronage was, in consequence, a way of rewarding these nobles for their military service, especially during the decades of 1330s and 1340s, while still maintaining their implication in the war effort.<sup>73</sup> On the other hand, the extant documentation conditions our current perception of the expansion of seigneurial jurisdiction in Castile. Andalusian families, such as the Guzmanes and Ponces de León, have perpetuated their power and influence in the region until the present day. Therefore, these lordships are better documented than those received by other noble families in other regions, and whose status waned over the subsequent centuries. In any case, royal privileges and royal chronicles provide information on the dozens of lordships that were granted by the Castilian monarchy, and they show how widespread this kind of royal patronage became from the second half of the thirteenth century onwards.

Once again, the Lara family provides an insightful example of the evolution of seigneurial power during this period. Nuño González de Lara (d. 1275) held the important *tenencias* of Écija, La Bureba, and La Rioja, yet his patrimony was not overly impressive, and was limited to a few villages such as Torrelobatón. By contrast, Juan Núñez I, Juan Núñez II, and, especially, Juan Núñez III possessed a significantly larger patrimony. They accumulated several lordships through strategic marriages, a trend that favoured the eldest male of the family – although they did not implement a primogeniture system of succession – and royal favour. For generations, the Laras tried to build a vast lordship along the borders between Castile and Aragón. Although they eventually lost the lordships of Molina and Albarracín, Juan Núñez III (d. 1350) possessed villages and towns distributed all over Castile and the lordship of Biscay.<sup>74</sup> Moreover, the Laras owned diverse seigneurial rights in the majority of the *behetrías* in northern Castile.<sup>75</sup>

In sum, the Castilian nobility, especially the *ricoshombrés*, benefitted greatly from the expansion of royal authority. In the twelfth century, service to the monarch allowed the nobility to transcend their 'provincial' horizons.<sup>76</sup> Likewise, royal patronage offered plenty of opportunities for the nobility between 1252 and 1350, although the rewards offered by kings had changed in comparison to earlier periods. As before, Castilian magnates continued to hold the most important court positions, those of *alférez* and *mayordomo mayor*. Similarly, once the *tenencias* waned, they strived to obtain and control the territorial offices of *merino* and *adelantado*. The nobles were also the main recipients of the increasing opportunities linked to the growth of royal taxation. In consequence, the distribution and control of royal revenues became a central issue in the relationships between the king and the magnates. Additionally, from the second half of the thirteenth century onwards the territorial power of the nobility increased thanks to the donation of important lordships that were extracted from the royal demesne. The royal rights included in these donations made these lordships a prized gift, one that was more attractive than other traditional forms of seigneurial power, such as the *behetrías*, whose importance declined in this period.<sup>77</sup> Moreover, the territorial power of the nobles also became increasingly formalised as royal grants progressively included the right to exercise justice in the territories that were awarded to them.

The parallel expansion of royal authority and the power of the nobility was not free from conflicts. In a letter Alfonso X sent to his heir, the infante Fernando de la Cerda, during the 1272 rebellion, the king identified Nuño González as the cleverest of the rebels. However, he also questioned how intelligent Lara really was, given that he was willing to risk his prominent position by taking part in this movement against the king. Alfonso X concluded, seemingly shrugging off these concerns, that Nuño González was merely continuing his family's tradition of losing everything they had due to their thoughtless ways.<sup>78</sup> For the Wise King, rebelling against the Castilian monarchy was in the Laras' blood, and indeed it is hard to disagree with his view: in the decades that followed several nobles, including many members of the Lara family, repeatedly showed their dissatisfaction with the way the kingdom was ruled by abandoning the king's service and rebelling against him.

### ***Desavenidos and desnaturados: The nobles' ways of challenging royal authority and the kings' responses between 1252 and 1350***

Alfonso X's letter to his son Fernando continued with a reflection on the reason for the nobles' rebellion in 1272. The king addressed the case of the most important magnates individually, while paying special attention to Nuño González, before drawing a general conclusion. According to Alfonso X, the nobles did not rebel because of their personal grudges against him, or because they sought the best interests of the kingdom. Instead, they were just doing what their ancestors had always done: harassing the king in order to obtain more benefits for themselves.<sup>79</sup>

The task of this section is to examine to Alfonso X's insightful and cynical analysis and consider the reasons behind the noble rebellions. However, the nobility was not merely replicating past practices: the mechanisms of showing dissent and royal responses to the nobles' opposition underwent a significant transformation in this period, and became more aggressive and brutal, whereby careful attention must be paid to how the nobles showed their opposition to their monarchs and how the kings responded to their challenges. In doing so, consideration is devoted to the fact that the nobles were not seeking to prevent the expansion of royal authority *per se*; instead, they wanted to express their dissatisfaction with the distribution of royal patronage. Their acts of rebellion were intended to obtain further benefits (salaries, offices, lands). Indeed, the nobles formed factions in order to compete for the king's favour and even to try to control him. Not surprisingly, royal favourites such as Lope Díaz III de Haro and Count Alvar Núñez, who benefitted from closer proximity to the king and even held the reins of government for short periods of time, were universally detested by the rest of the magnates and eventually came to tragic ends.

Alfonso X's interpretation of noble rebellions, as suggestive as it is, underscores our dependency on the royal chronicles for any interpretation of Castilian politics in this period. Unfortunately, it is only Juan Manuel's writings, as was discussed in the previous chapter, that present a coherent alternative view to

these texts. Royal chronicles were far from being innocent or objective. For instance, the account of the rebellion of 1272 is above all intended to demonstrate the nobles' intransigence and ingratitude, which contrasts with the measured demeanour displayed by Alfonso X, who was open to dialogue and willing to rectify any injustice despite his failure to appease the rebels. Nevertheless, these documents do provide an ideal vantage point from which to analyse the Castilian monarchy's view of royal authority. From this perspective, it is important to stress that the royal chronicles depicted a moral and normative code shared by the kings and nobles: love and favour were exchanged for love and service. The differences between the king and a noble or a faction of magnates were the result of the specific political context, not the result of opposing views on royal authority<sup>80</sup>.

Furthermore, royal chronicles had a didactic purpose, and presented views that had a wide consensus at court. As was discussed in Chapter 1, aristocratic ideals and images had already become an integral part of the royal chronicles written in Latin during the thirteenth century and this aristocratic flavour would become yet more important in the vernacular texts produced in the second half of the thirteenth century and in the early fourteenth century.<sup>81</sup> The cycle of chronicles composed by Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid illustrates how nobles manifested their dissatisfaction to the king and the ways in which they expressed dissent. Showing positive and negative examples of magnates from the recent past contributed to the 'education' of the current generation of nobles. In doing so, the chronicles transmitted ideas of legitimate and illegitimate forms of opposing royal authority and, more importantly, the 'fairness' with which royal justice was administered.

### *Desavenirse, deservir, and desnaturarse: Expressing dissent in three steps*

Rumours were usually the first indication that something had gone amiss between a noble and the king. In 1272, Alfonso X started to become concerned when he heard that Nuño González was pledging alliances with other *ricos hombres*, an accusation that the magnate denied to the king's emissaries.<sup>82</sup> Similarly, in 1291, Sancho IV received news that Juan Núñez I de Lara had encouraged Juan Alfonso de Alburquerque to stir up dissent in Galicia. On this occasion, however, the king travelled there and succeeded in appeasing (*sosegar*) the noble.<sup>83</sup>

Rumours could be indicative of a noble's discontent, but the conflict would only start in earnest when a magnate openly displayed his dissatisfaction with the king. Nobles divided their time between their lands and the court. In the *Libro enfenido*, Juan Manuel warned his son that he should frequent the court to regale the king with his presence, although he should know when to depart in order to be missed and leave everyone yearning for his return.<sup>84</sup> Therefore, nobles would show their disgruntlement by abandoning the court on bad terms with the king, or by showing their reluctance to go there. Royal chronicles used adjectives such as *desavenido* and *despagado* in order to reflect the degree to which a noble disagreed with the king. For instance, in 1304, the royal chronicle

explained Diego López V de Haro's estrangement from the court as due to him being very angry and dissatisfied with the king ('*muy sannudo e muy despagado del rey*'<sup>85</sup>). Similarly, in 1332 Juan Manuel and Juan Núñez III de Lara did not assist Alfonso XI's lavish coronation in order to make their rift with the king explicit.<sup>86</sup>

Moreover, there are countless examples in which nobles left the court to underscore their anger. In 1272, the rebel nobles expressed their desire to return to their lands while Alfonso X was futilely attempting to reach an agreement before they left Burgos.<sup>87</sup> In 1285, Lope Díaz III de Haro and the infante Juan showed their opposition to Sancho IV signing a truce with the Marinids by leaving the court.<sup>88</sup> Similarly, Juan Manuel and Juan de Haro *el Tuerto* distrusted Alvar Núñez and Garcilaso de la Vega, Alfonso XI's closest advisors when he came of age in 1325, whereby the magnates left Valladolid and openly proclaimed their disagreement (*desavenidos*) with Alfonso XI. The royal chronicler stressed how Juan Manuel and Haro left without formally bidding farewell to the king, which made him fear the destruction that these magnates would inflict on the kingdom.<sup>89</sup>

Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid's concern was well founded. Once a noble had shown his disagreement with the king, he would escalate the conflict by resorting to violence unless there was a prompt reconciliation. Royal chronicles use the term *deservir* (act against the king's service) to refer to a broad list of actions that rebel nobles pursued in order to challenge royal authority, and these ranged from usurping royal revenues to waging war. At times, these two actions were complementary. For instance, in 1272, Alfonso X accused Nuño González de Lara of collecting royal taxes without permission. Additionally, the royal chronicle reported a series of misdeeds (*malfetrías*) committed by the rebel nobles such as stealing and plundering.<sup>90</sup> Alternatively, in 1333, the royal chronicler accused Juan Alfonso de Haro of taking a royal salary (*libramiento*) but failing to join the royal army, he then ravaged Castile while Alfonso XI was campaigning in Andalusia. He also contacted the rebels Juan Manuel and Juan Núñez III and offered his help in fighting the king ('*que queria ser con ellos en deservicio del Rey, et que los ayudaria*').<sup>91</sup> A very common chain of events was that, once the noble abandoned the court, he used his estates as a base from which to attack neighbouring royal lands. For instance, in 1290, Juan Núñez I left Sancho IV's court and raided the area of Cuenca while using his lordship in Moya as a base.<sup>92</sup> Similarly, in 1333, the towns of Alarcón (Cuenca) and Lerma (Burgos) became the headquarters of Juan Manuel and Juan Núñez III, respectively, from where they pillaged the nearby areas.<sup>93</sup>

The final step open to a noble was to renounce his loyalty to the king and abandon his service. Royal chronicles used the verb '*desnaturarse*', which implied renouncing their obligations towards the monarch as their natural lord, a concept which had been implemented by the Castilian monarchy since the second half of the thirteenth century, as was discussed in Chapter 2. For example, in 1306, Diego López V de Haro and Juan Núñez II sent knights to the court to '*desnaturarse*' from Fernando IV. Both magnates soon returned to

the king's service, although they had to recognise Fernando IV as their natural lord and kiss his hand in order to renew their loyalty.<sup>94</sup>

During the central decades of the fourteenth century, the nobility's obligation to notify the king that they wanted to break their ties before waging war against him became a more formalised procedure. In 1333, Juan Núñez III sent an emissary to the court to '*desnaturarse*' from Alfonso XI. In response, the king ordered that the messenger's feet and hands be cut off before beheading him. Alfonso XI argued that the *ricohombre* had acted unlawfully: Juan Núñez had attacked royal lands before he broke his ties with the king.<sup>95</sup> It is very telling that, despite Alfonso XI's brutal response to Juan Núñez's '*desnaturación*', Juan Manuel felt the need to follow a similar procedure. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the magnate sent a letter to Pere III in 1336 in which he declared his will to sever his ties with Alfonso XI. Juan Manuel was afraid of reprisals his relatives or vassals might suffer because of his decision, which is why he sent the letter to Aragón.<sup>96</sup> However, he also thought that this letter could provide a 'legal' ground for his actions when the time came to face the king, so he wanted to be sure that his '*desnaturación*' had been properly announced. This final example illustrates that while the mechanisms for showing dissent against the king were becoming more formalised in this period, the king's response could be even more brutal than before and, in the eyes of the nobles, more arbitrary.

### ***Royal justice and the nobles' fear of the king***

After months of negotiations and an unsuccessful meeting of the *Cortes*, in 1272, the rebel nobles requested the king to grant them 42 days to settle their affairs before leaving the kingdom.<sup>97</sup> Exile from Castile had been the traditional outcome when a noble fell from grace or rebelled against the king since the twelfth century. Forced or voluntary banishment was simultaneously a punishment and a negotiation strategy. For instance, exiling himself to another Iberian kingdom was a key element of Diego López II de Haro's strategy of consolidating his prominent position at Alfonso VIII's court.<sup>98</sup> Likewise, the rebel nobles used their self-imposed exile in Granada as a way of forcing Alfonso X to meet their demands. It was the correct decision, as they were able to return to Castile just one year later. This case, however, was the last example of an exile of this kind. Magnates continued to flee to other kingdoms, as Juan Núñez I de Lara did to France in 1284 after the fall of Albarracín, and Juan Manuel to Aragón, in 1336, following Juan Núñez III's surrender to Alfonso XI.<sup>99</sup> Both aristocrats eventually returned to Castile; however, their exile was the result of military defeat rather than a move that formed part of a grander strategy.

In the final decades of the thirteenth century, the king began to develop new ways to display his anger: instead of resorting to ostracism and exile, Castilian kings started to assassinate rebel nobles.<sup>100</sup> This shift is reflected in legal codes: while the *Partidas* (c. 1265) punishes the *ricoshombrés*' *malfetrías* with exile, the *Ordenamiento de Alcalá* (1348) takes a harsher line. The law devoted to the

discussion of treason contemplated several actions which the Castilian monarchy deemed treasonous, such as waging war against the king or fortifying a stronghold without a royal permit; these actions were punished with the offender's death and the forfeiture of his possessions.<sup>101</sup>

The *Ordenamiento de Alcalá* was the culmination of a major shift in the relationship between the king and the nobles which started in the 1270s. François Foronda has set out intriguing arguments to claim that the Castilian monarchy began a 'policy of terror' (*política del espanto*), in which the kings could eliminate rebel nobles without legal guarantees. In response to this, the magnates argued that they were afraid of the king (*miedo al rey*) in order to avoid meeting with their monarch until negotiations were re-established. Foronda considers that this dynamic ended with the accession of the Trastámara dynasty, in the wake of Pedro I's tyrannical rule, which was rife with assassinations.<sup>102</sup>

Alfonso X, Sancho IV, and Alfonso XI ordered the assassination of prominent members of the Castilian nobility during their reigns, however, claiming they launched a 'policy of terror' is a bit of an overstatement. Between 1277 and 1340, seven magnates were murdered by the monarchs: the infante Fadrique and Simón Ruiz de los Cameros (1277), Lope Díaz III de Haro (1288), Juan de Haro *el Tuerto* (1326), Count Alvar Núñez (1328), Juan Alfonso de Haro (1334), and Gonzalo Martínez de Oviedo, Master of the Order of Alcántara (1340). Without being insensitive or trying to minimise the impact of their deaths, this number pales into comparison with Pedro I's victims. In the *Crónica de Juan I*, written around 1390, Pedro López de Ayala listed the dozens of magnates assassinated over the past 100 years in order to justify the king's leniency towards Count Alfonso Enríquez in 1385.<sup>103</sup> Foronda presents this as the best reflection of the widespread feeling of fear the nobles had suffered in Castile for decades. Nevertheless, it should be interpreted as a way of contrasting the crimes of a demonised past, i.e. the reign of Pedro I, with an idealised present dominated by legal guarantees and a much more cordial relationship between the king and the nobles. A point Foronda concedes when he alludes to the glasnost of the Trastámara era.<sup>104</sup>

Nonetheless, it is undeniable that fearing the king became a leitmotif in royal chronicles. In 1308, the infante Juan and Juan Núñez II accused Fernando IV of planning their deaths, a charge the king denied; he insisted that he never killed or disinherited any man in his kingdom, even those who deserved it (*'nunca yo mate nin deserede a ningund omme del mio sennorio, maguer me meresciese por que'*). Ironically, the royal chronicle affirms that, two years later, Fernando IV actually contemplated killing the infante Juan.<sup>105</sup> The nobles constantly used their fear of the king as an argument to avoid meeting the monarch. According to the *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, the failure of the negotiations between the king and Juan Manuel and Juan Núñez III in 1333 was primarily due to the magnates' fear of the monarch and their reluctance to meet him in person.<sup>106</sup> Scholars have speculated for decades whether Alfonso XI actually wanted to assassinate Juan Manuel or whether it was just an argument used by the magnate to justify his actions.<sup>107</sup> In any case, the possibility of being killed by the king, whether real or exaggerated, dominated the exchanges between the nobles and the king of this period.

Executing rebel nobles without a legitimate reason would be seen as symptomatic of the Castilian kings' arbitrariness, which is why the royal chronicles work very hard to dispel this idea. When a magnate was killed on the king's orders, the texts composed by Sánchez de Valladolid raised numerous arguments to justify this decision, in order to present it as a fair act of royal justice. The exceptions would be the executions of the infante Fadrique and Simón Ruiz de los Cameros, which were ordered by Alfonso X in 1277. However, this was framed within the royal chronicler's agenda of addressing the contentious succession of the Wise King, an issue in which the chronicle went to considerable lengths to justify Sancho's actions in the later years of his father's reign. In this particular case, Alfonso X's unfair decision to kill these two nobles was presented as one of the elements that triggered Sancho's controversial coup against Alfonso X in 1282.<sup>108</sup> Despite this exception, the royal chronicles' efforts to defend the assassination of members of the nobility are indicative of the kings' awareness of the gravity of such decisions. The chronicler's treatment of them also reveals a concern to present them as exceptional events, and not a regular feature of royal government. It is on this basis that I would argue against the idea of a conscious 'policy of terror' having been maintained by the Castilian monarchy for a long period of time.

A closer examination of two of these examples illustrates how acutely kings felt that they had to justify any such assassination. Lope Díaz III de Haro was killed in 1288. The royal chronicle depicts it as an accidental murder, not a planned execution. According to the text, Sancho IV ordered Count Lope to be put under arrest until he returned the royal castles he controlled. Haro refused to comply and took out a knife. In consequence, the king's crossbowmen attacked him, chopped off the noble's hand, and killed him with their maces. The royal chronicler underlined that they did it without the king ordering them to do so.<sup>109</sup> If this was not enough justification, the royal chronicler had already presented further arguments to defend Sancho IV two chapters before. When describing the agreement signed by Lope Díaz III and the king in 1286, the *Crónica de Sancho IV* highlighted that one of the clauses of the agreement stipulated that the monarch had the right to have Lope killed, and incorporate the lordship of Biscay into the royal demesne, if the count or his son Diego López IV acted against the king or his heir.<sup>110</sup> The royal chronicler, aware of Lope Díaz's fate, probably fabricated this part of the agreement in order to legitimise Sancho IV's future actions.

The death of Juan Alfonso de Haro in 1334 was, by contrast, an execution that was expressly ordered by Alfonso XI. On this occasion, the royal chronicle endeavoured to demonise the fallen noble in order to present his death as the result of royal justice taking its course, and not being merely carried out on the king's whim. The chronicler argued that Juan Alfonso had failed to participate in the campaigns of 1330 and 1333 despite having received a salary (*libramiento*) from the king. If this crime was not enough, in 1333 he ravaged royal lands and tried to orchestrate an alliance with the rebels Juan Manuel and Juan Núñez III while the king was on campaign in Andalusia. The noble went as far

as spreading defeatist rumours regarding the outcome of Alfonso XI's military endeavours, saying that the king was certain to lose his life in Gibraltar.<sup>111</sup> The *Gran Crónica de Alfonso XI*, written in 1376, added a few lines to the original text in which the chronicler emphasised the king's reasons for executing Juan Alfonso. Furthermore, he discharged Alfonso XI of any responsibility, and argued that it was the king's advisors who pushed for the death penalty.<sup>112</sup> This latter addition probably reflected a revisionist concern that arose during the Trastámara period to retouch the image of Alfonso XI for posterity, in order to stress how Enrique II's rule was a restoration of his father's successful kingship following the dark period of Pedro I's tyranny.

Castilian nobles were not the only ones who suffered stricter punishments under their monarchs in this period. In England, the kings started to impose more severe penalties on rebel nobles between the end of the thirteenth century and the 1320s. Executions became more frequent and the royal right of forfeiture became harsher during this period. Additionally, it became increasingly important to present the king's judicial decisions in the public arena, and this was not dissimilar to the Castilian royal chronicles' insistence on justifying the kings' actions, especially capital punishments. There were, on the other hand, significant differences between Castile and England, such as the more prominent role played by Parliament in the latter case.<sup>113</sup>

James Bothwell's suggestive monograph on this issue presents a series of ideas which help explain this change in the way the fallen nobles were treated in England, such as their contact with Celtic lands, the impossibility of disgraced nobles claiming exile in Normandy, and the development of Roman Law and the concept of treason.<sup>114</sup> Analysing the similarities between Castile and England, as captivating as it would be, would require an in-depth study of its own. However, it is important to point out that, besides the specificities of each kingdom, both monarchies underwent a similar evolution in the same period.

Foronda suggested that this change in the relationship between nobles and the king in Castile was the result of the expansion of royal authority in this period. In consequence, once the magnates became more powerful during the Trastámara period, the balance was restored and the terror-fear dynamic ended.<sup>115</sup> Yet this analysis echoes the traditional interpretation of the nobility and the monarchy as antagonistic forces, although this view has not been pursued in Foronda's more recent works.<sup>116</sup> Similarly, Foronda's suggestion reflects the traditional view of Enrique II's reign as a period in which the nobility reasserted its position against the Castilian monarchy. In contrast, I propose another interpretation. In my view, the kings' recourse to assassination in this period was a consequence of the expansion of the nobles' power, which occurred in parallel to the strengthening of royal authority, as was discussed above. Admittedly, this line of argument might seem controversial, and be considered as a form of 'victim blaming'. Nor is it my intention to minimise the violence and brutality of these murders. However, it may be argued that on occasions it might have proved more effective for the king to take the ruthless decision of killing a rebel noble, rather than solving the conflict between them. Yet it must

also be acknowledged that the strengthening of the *ricosombres*' position meant that the monarch could not implement a policy of terror even if he wanted to, as it would undermine the king's position in the long term. As a result, it was more common for rebellions to end through negotiation, rather than bloodshed.

From the end of the thirteenth century onwards, the most powerful magnates benefitted from a territorial base from which they could resist royal authority and wage war against royal lands; or at least for a period of time, until they reached an agreement with the king. The Castilian monarchy's obsession with guaranteeing its control over castles and fortresses throughout the kingdom is indicative of the nobles' capacity to wreak havoc, as will be shown below. In the twelfth century, a fallen noble would have had to exile himself to a neighbouring kingdom and become the vassal of a new monarch.<sup>117</sup> In this period, however, the most powerful magnates could oppose the monarch without leaving the kingdom and, at the same time, they could get 'international' support through their peninsular connections. In the 1334–1336 rebellion, Alfonso XI had to face the opposition of Juan Manuel, who enjoyed the support of Pere III of Aragón thanks to the magnate's familial bonds. Relationships such as this were not exclusive to members of the royal family such as Juan Manuel; other *ricosombres* had personal contacts with other Iberian monarchs too. Afonso IV of Portugal invaded Castile in 1336 in support of Juan Núñez III de Lara – he also hoped to obtain territorial gains – who had become his vassal after severing his ties with Alfonso XI.<sup>118</sup> In addition, the Portuguese king encouraged other important nobles such as Pedro Fernández de Castro, who was raised in the Portuguese court, and Juan Alfonso de Alburquerque, a descendant of the Portuguese royal family, to rebel against the Castilian monarch.<sup>119</sup> Alfonso XI eventually quelled this rebellion, and, what is more significant, none of the rebel nobles lost their lives. Moreover, they recovered their prominent position within the kingdom's elite and continued benefitting from royal patronage.

On some occasions, especially during Alfonso XI's reign, the Castilian monarchy resorted to assassination in order to deal with rebel nobles, but rather than being a recurring policy, each was motivated by specific contextual factors. On most occasions, the king and the rebel noble reached an agreement and overcame their differences. On the one hand, the increasing power of the aristocracy made it unsustainable for the kings to implement a 'terror policy' without losing the throne, as Pedro I experienced years later. On the other hand, benefitting from the support of the nobility was the most effective way of strengthening royal authority in the long term, which is why, despite the occasional spate of homicides, kings opted to settle their differences with rebel nobles peacefully.

### *Negotiated surrenders: Returning to the king's service*

The famous rebellion of 1272 had what could be considered as an anticlimactic ending. After two years of negotiations, scathing accusations, a meeting of the

*Cortes*, and the exile of many *ricos hombres* to Granada, the rebel magnates simply returned to Castile in 1274. Alfonso X appeased (*asosegó*) the nobles by agreeing to their demands, and they went back to receiving the same royal revenues as before, just as if nothing had happened.<sup>120</sup>

Nobles constantly showed their dissatisfaction towards the king, but the conflict did not always escalate. Indeed, it was common for a peaceful solution to be agreed upon before the magnate rebelled, or else an agreement was reached after months of fighting. As a result, the *ricohombre* returned to the king's favour without suffering negative consequences. Royal chronicles present this divisiveness as endemic or cyclical: a noble and the king would disagree over a certain issue, then settle their differences, before very soon fighting all over again, and then reconciling again, and so on.

There are abundant examples of this dynamic but focusing on the case of Juan Núñez I de Lara during the reign of Sancho IV suffices to illustrate this point. In 1284, Juan Núñez supported Alfonso de la Cerda's claim to the throne. Nevertheless, the magnate's lordship of Albarracín was conquered by Pere II of Aragón, in alliance with Sancho IV, so he had to go into exile to France. In 1289 he settled his differences with Sancho IV. The noble returned to Castile and received the lordships of Moya and Cañete from the king. However, one year later, Juan Núñez left the court, fearing that Sancho IV's advisors had persuaded the king to order his death. The noble and Sancho were reconciled soon after, but the peace did not last long. In 1291, the royal chronicle accused Juan Núñez of stirring up members of the nobility to rebel against the king, so Sancho had to appease (*asosegar*) him once more. This time by agreeing to marry his son Alfonso to Juan Núñez's daughter, Juana. This agreement did not last long either. Once Sancho IV saw that he was unable to placate Juan Núñez, he conquered Moya and Cañete, forcing Lara to flee to France again. In 1293, Juan Núñez returned to the king's service one last time, but he died the following year having joined the royal army, which was on campaign in Andalusia.<sup>121</sup>

The case of Juan Núñez I demonstrates how unstable a relationship between the king and a noble could be, while simultaneously showing the Castilian monarchy's predisposition to finding mutually acceptable solutions for restless magnates. The crisis of 1334–1336 also provides a valuable illustration of how the Castilian kings generally opted for peaceful resolutions when dealing with rebel nobles; these agreements usually meant the monarch's opponents were restored to their previous rank and titles, whereby they maintained their privileged position despite their actions. Further insight into this issue is provided by another Lara, Juan Núñez III, and his relationship with Alfonso XI.

Juan Manuel and Juan Núñez III de Lara did not attend Alfonso XI's coronation, in 1332. They also failed to join the royal army raised to defend Gibraltar the following year. Juan Alfonso de Haro also evaded his military responsibilities and tried to join forces with the two other rebel magnates. He paid for these actions with his life in 1334. Juan Núñez, however, did not receive the same treatment from the king despite the fact that he had broken his ties (*desnaturar*) with Alfonso XI and waged war against royal lands, as discussed

above. The same year that the king ordered the assassination of Juan Alfonso de Haro, he reached an agreement with Lara. Alfonso XI restored the lordship of Biscay to the noble and Juan Núñez returned to royal service. Nevertheless, the king took control of a number of castles belonging to the noble and ordered the demolition of the fortress of Ferrara, which also belonged to Juan Núñez.<sup>122</sup> Once more it is important to emphasise Alfonso XI's interest in controlling strongholds throughout the kingdom, which was a recurring element in this kind of negotiations.

Why did these two *ricosombres* receive different treatment? First, Juan Alfonso de Haro's failure to join the royal army made him an ideal scapegoat after Alfonso XI's fiasco in Gibraltar; the stronghold fell to the Marinids and the king was unable to retake it. More importantly, the noble was a powerful vassal – he owned the important lordship of Los Cameros (Rioja) – but he did not enjoy the same status and prestige as Juan Núñez III de Lara, which is demonstrated in the *privilegios rodados*. In 1333, Juan Núñez was the first confirmer of the Castilian column and the king's *alférez* while Juan Alfonso occupied the fourth position.<sup>123</sup> Consequently, Alfonso XI could 'afford' to assassinate Juan Alfonso de Haro in order to send the rest of the magnates a clear message of his implacability. Furthermore, the lordship of Los Cameros was divided between the *ricohombre's* younger brothers, Alvar Díaz and Alfonso Téllez, and the king only took a few castles for himself, which most likely helped to make the decision more palatable.<sup>124</sup> However, murdering Juan Núñez, the head of the most prestigious lineage within the Castilian nobility, would have been a much more controversial action. That is why assassinating rebel nobles could be resorted to on occasions, and it was not one that could be used systematically if the king wanted to retain the support of the nobility, which was indispensable.

In any case, the agreement between Alfonso XI and Juan Núñez III was short-lived. In 1335 the king asked Juan Núñez III to lead the royal army – he was the *alférez* – and offered him the lordships of Villalón, Moral, and Santa Gadea if he served him well. However, Juan Núñez, fearing that the king was setting a trap for him, refused to comply.<sup>125</sup> This decision sparked the conflict again, although future events would show the willingness of Alfonso XI to reach a peaceful solution.

Between 1336 and 1338, Alfonso XI combined military and diplomatic actions to reassert royal authority against the coalition of magnates who, supported by the Portuguese and Aragonese kings, opposed him. The Castilian king soon signed agreements with Pedro Fernández de Castro and Juan Alfonso de Alburquerque, whose rebellion had been instigated by Afonso IV. Alfonso XI offered them lordships and other rewards – Alburquerque briefly became the king's *alférez* – to recover their loyalty and both nobles agreed and added their troops to the royal army. While the Andalusian nobles and towns defeated the Portuguese forces in Badajoz, Alfonso XI laid siege to Lerma, Juan Núñez's main stronghold, which surrendered after five months of blockade. The chronicle depicts a compelling scene in which Lara and Alfonso XI met, both acting gallantly. The chronicle records how Juan Núñez asked for forgiveness and

acknowledged his misdeeds, while the king is presented as a merciful ruler who, instead of killing the noble, absolved him and spared him any form of humiliation; Alfonso XI even asked the noble not to dismount from his horse in order to stand before the king as was customary. Later, Juan Núñez was knighted by Alfonso XI, a ceremony which stressed the noble's return to royal favour.<sup>126</sup> The chronicle sought to exalt Alfonso XI's figure by depicting him as a merciful and fair king; however, the idea of royal forgiveness is a common *topos* in this kind of text, and was used to frame what was essentially a negotiated agreement as an act of royal mercy.<sup>127</sup>

The conditions of Juan Núñez's surrender were far from being excessive. The noble accepted to return to the king's service and, in order to guarantee his loyalty, agreed to tear down the walls of Lerma and of a number of other strongholds in his possession, as well as to cede to the king a number of his fortresses in Biscay. Once again, castles were a central part of a peace agreement, which reflects the Castilian monarchy's awareness of the key role these strongholds played during nobles' rebellions. In exchange for his renewed fidelity, Alfonso XI restored Juan Núñez to his position as *alférez*, gave him a royal salary to keep his household and a retinue and granted him the lordships of Villalón, Cigales, and Moral, which were almost the same lands the king had promised him in 1335.<sup>128</sup> Therefore, Juan Núñez's rebellion ended, as was the case with the revolt of 1274 among many other cases, with a return to the previous status quo; the noble maintained his prominent position and continued to benefit from royal favour. This situation improved for Juan Núñez in the following years: in 1344 he accumulated the offices of both *alférez* and *mayordomo*,<sup>129</sup> an indication of Alfonso XI's interest in maintaining his loyalty.

The other main opponent of Alfonso XI, Juan Manuel, also received similar conditions from the king. In 1337 the magnate agreed to return to Castile and serve Alfonso XI. Similarly, Juan Manuel agreed to demolish one of the two castles he had erected in Peñafiel and several other fortresses, and to cede the control of a few of his strongholds, whose castellans would become Alfonso XI's vassals.<sup>130</sup> The conditions imposed by the king limited the power of both magnates, and made it harder for them to wage war against royal lands and to maintain a rebellion for any protracted period. Nevertheless, Alfonso XI made sure that Juan Manuel and Juan Núñez enjoyed royal favour for the rest of their lives, which was the best way to guarantee their loyalty. As a result, the royal chronicler could confidently state that, once both magnates visited the court in 1338, they remained appeased (*'asosegados'*) from thereafter.<sup>131</sup> In 1338, Alfonso XI had successfully ended a period of intermittent albeit constant turmoil which dated back to 1272.

### Rebellions, factionalism, *privados*, and Alfonso XI's successful kingship

The letter Alfonso X sent to his son Fernando in 1273 was plagued with scathing comments about the rebel nobles; however, his missive exuded confidence

too. The king was certain that this opposing faction would be unable to act as a unified front for much longer. Alfonso X knew that many nobles would soon defect for two reasons: some of them would regret having offended the king, while others would crave the rewards they would obtain from returning to royal favour. Alfonso X reminded his son that Fernando Ruiz de Castro and Rodrigo Rodríguez de Saldaña had already returned to the king's side. Moreover, the monarchy had the support of more families of *ricosombres* than the rebels.<sup>132</sup>

As it turned out, Alfonso X's optimism was probably exaggerated. His instincts regarding the nobles' attitudes were, however, quite right. The rebellion of 1272 was different to any other challenge experienced by the Castilian monarchy in this period because it was followed by a high number of the kingdom's *ricosombres*, although not all of them. Additionally, the royal chronicle undertakes a comprehensive review of the arguments raised by both the king and the rebel magnates during the conflict, which make this rebellion even more exceptional. However, this coalition, rather than being based on ideological concerns, was built on the nobles' mutual interests. These interests could change rapidly, and the promise of royal patronage was a strong incentive to return to the king's favour. Although Alfonso X failed to put an end to the resistance of the exiled *ricosombres*, it is essential to analyse the rebellion of 1272 in detail to get a clearer idea of how this movement was not exactly the nobility's broader response to the growth of royal government during the thirteenth century.

### ***The rebellion of 1272 and Castile's factionalism***

First and foremost, the view that claims that the rebellion of 1272 was an extraordinary event that arose after decades of internal stability in Castile must be subjected to closer scrutiny. Perceptions of the military successes in Andalusia, along with analyses that depend heavily on the royal chronicles have projected the image of Fernando III's reign as a period of prolonged peace. However, the conflicts between the king and some members of the aristocracy were not exclusive to the early years of his rule.<sup>133</sup> Likewise, the beginning of Alfonso X's reign witnessed the rebellion of the infante Enrique and Lope Díaz III de Haro. The rise of the Lara family was viewed with concern by the Haros, who considered that they might be displaced from their prominent position. After their failed rebellion of 1255, Alfonso X removed Lope Díaz from the *tenencias* of La Rioja and La Bureba and granted the position to Nuño González de Lara; the king also took the lordships of Orduña and Valmaseda from the magnate.<sup>134</sup>

Nuño González and López Díaz overcame the traditional rivalry between their two families to ally against Alfonso X. The participation of the infante Felipe and many other *ricosombres* in the rebellion heightened the conflict to an unprecedented scale. The rebel magnates presented a list of general complaints to the king; however, they also had personal demands, which could prove still more important for the nobles. For instance, Lope Díaz's main objective was to recover Orduña and Valmaseda.<sup>135</sup> On the other hand, the

general complaints that Nuño González used to rally a substantial part of the kingdom's *ricosombres* were neither a response to a series of drastic innovations propelled by Alfonso X, nor a more general attack on the manner in which royal government was exercised. In relation to this, Julio Escalona speculates whether the decision of starting a rebellion at this exact moment might be connected to Alfonso X's dream of becoming Holy Roman Emperor and Nuño González's attempt to stop it.<sup>136</sup>

The three main complaints the nobles raised against the king were related to the creation of new royal towns (*pueblas*), the implementation of the *Fuero Real* in Castile, and the collection of royal taxes. However, these three issues were neither new problems nor particularly controversial issues. The creation of royal towns on the northern side of the Douro River, the area with the highest concentration of seigneurial lands, clashed with the nobles' interest, but this had been a recurring policy of the Castilian and Leonese monarchies since the twelfth century.<sup>137</sup> On the other hand, the nobles fully supported the extension of the network of royal towns in the southern part of the kingdom, an area in which they were the main beneficiaries of the expansion of royal government. Likewise, the creation of *tenencias* had presented the nobles with a similar dichotomy during the reign of Fernando III, and they had also taken a different attitude depending on the region affected by the king's decisions.<sup>138</sup> Similarly, the *Fuero Real* was not a novelty in 1272, as Alfonso X started to implement it in 1255. This legal code also had a clear geographical bias, mostly affecting the northern part of the kingdom. Finally, the nobles resented the frequent imposition of royal taxes, although they did not want to limit their collection, but simply to guarantee that their own vassals and dependents were exempt from these tributes.<sup>139</sup>

In sum, the rebellion of 1272 presented some exceptional features, such as the scale of the uprising and the detailed discussion of the arguments exchanged between the king and the nobles, which cannot be compared to other revolts between 1252 and 1350. However, it was far from being a display of the nobles' desire to halt the expansion of royal authority in this period. On the contrary, a most accurate interpretation is that this was one of the inevitable conflicts which arose as a result of this expansion, which was a process that was mutually beneficial for the king and the nobles, but also prone to generate tensions. Therefore, this rebellion must be considered as another manifestation of the systemic factionalism which characterised Castilian politics.<sup>140</sup> Nobles fought to control royal patronage by grouping themselves in opposing factions; the endemic nature of this factionalism contributed to an increase in the revenues and lands granted by the king to the nobles with the intention of securing their loyalty. Effective kingship, such as that witnessed in the final two decades of Alfonso XI's reign, could create a period of stability. However, these periods could not last for more than a generation. For instance, the accession of a new king to the throne or the substitution of a group of magnates for a younger generation were a guarantee of internal turmoil, which in turn reactivated the tense competition between court factions to control royal patronage.

One of the elements that shows the perennial nature of the court's factionalism is how volatile these factions were, with nobles constantly changing their alliances depending on the current situation. For instance, in 1328, following Count Alvar Núñez's fall from grace he sent letters to Juan Manuel asking him to join in a rebellion against Alfonso XI. Juan Manuel hated Alvar Núñez, as he thought the noble tried to have him killed while the count enjoyed the king's favour. Nonetheless, the magnate agreed to sign an alliance with Alvar Núñez.<sup>141</sup> Familial ties could give cohesion to some of these groups, but it was far from being a guarantee. Juan Manuel and Juan Núñez III de Lara cemented their alliance thanks to the marriage between the lord of Villena and Blanca de Lara in 1329. Nevertheless, Juan Manuel's will, written one decade later, reveals the magnate's bitterness towards the Laras.<sup>142</sup>

Members of the royal family, such as the infante Juan, other royal relatives, like Juan Manuel, and the dynasts of the Lara and the Haro families were the visible heads of the opposing factions due to their power and prestige. However, their shifting allegiances made it impossible to discern stable and differentiated factions over a long period of time. The fate of the Laras and Haros seemed to be inextricably linked and the rise of the head of one family normally meant the fall of the other. Yet that does not mean that they could not forge an alliance under certain circumstances, as was the case in 1272 or else during short periods of time in the reign of Fernando IV.

The period of Fernando IV's reign as an adult provides a vivid example of an era of rife factionalism in which the opposing groups were far from being cohesive compact blocks. In 1301, Juan Núñez II de Lara and Diego López V were still fighting over La Rioja and La Bureba – this time controlled by the latter – which encouraged Juan Núñez to ally with the infante Enrique. Once the infante Juan joined them, this alliance evolved into the most powerful faction of the kingdom. However, it did not last for long. In 1302 Enrique broke his alliance with Juan and Juan Núñez, once he realised they were monopolising royal favour: Juan Núñez had just been appointed *mayordomo mayor*. In consequence, Enrique forged his own alliance with Diego López and the young Juan Manuel, who started to become a relevant operator in Castilian politics in this period. Between 1302 and 1304 there were two opposing factions, one which enjoyed the king's proximity and the other which resented this state of affairs. In 1305, however, the situation changed. Juan Núñez II and Diego López V became allies, which sparked the infante Juan's mistrust. Both nobles broke their ties (*desnaturarse*) with Fernando IV the following year, although they soon returned to the king's service, which, in response, caused a rift between Fernando IV and the infante Juan, who now led a faction that included Juan Manuel and other *ricos hombres* such as Fernán Ruiz de Saldaña and Rodrigo Álvarez de Asturias. In 1308, however, the infante Juan and Juan Núñez were reconciled and won the king's trust again. After 1305 Fernando IV's favour oscillated between one group of magnates and another; the king was even able to achieve a certain sense of balance around 1309, which led to the successful campaign fought in Andalusia that resulted in the conquest of Gibraltar. Nevertheless, the instability returned shortly after.<sup>143</sup>

Admittedly, this short narration of events does not even touch on the controversial trial regarding the inheritance of the lordship of Biscay, which was probably one of the major causes of animosity during these years.<sup>144</sup> Nonetheless, it reveals the divisiveness of the reign of Fernando IV. Additionally, the shifting allegiances that took place reinforce the idea that this factionalism was caused by the nobles' desire to control and benefit from royal patronage, not by opposing ideological views on how royal government should work. It is for this reason that when an individual became especially close to the king, he became universally detested by the kingdom's magnates.

***Kings and factionalism: Rise and fall of privados and the creation of a 'royal' faction***

In 1308, Fernando IV confided to Jaume II of Aragón that the infante Juan and Juan Núñez II de Lara, supported by some other *ricos hombres*, had forced him to remove his *privados* (royal favourites) Sancho Sánchez de Velasco, Diego García, and Fernán Gómez from the court. The king confessed that he completely trusted these men; however, the magnates blackmailed him: they would leave his service unless he got rid of these advisors.<sup>145</sup>

*Privados* are recurring characters in royal chronicles from the reign of Sancho IV onwards. François Foronda's recent monograph on the topic shows the appearance of the concept in Castilian sources and the evolution of this 'institution' between the thirteenth and the fifteenth centuries. In essence, the rise of *privados* created a conflict between individuals who considered they had the right to participate in the kingdom's ruling due to their birth, and those raised to positions of power by the king.<sup>146</sup> Every king surrounded himself with a series of close advisors and confidants who were resented by the most powerful magnates of the kingdom, as they were suspicious of these men and, at the same time coveted their proximity and influence over the monarch. For instance, Lope Díaz III de Haro distrusted Gómez García, abbot of Valladolid, who was Sancho IV's close advisor. The noble suspected that García was a good friend of Álvaro Núñez de Lara and, more importantly, aspired to occupy his place at the king's side, something which he accomplished soon thereafter.<sup>147</sup> Similarly, in 1290, Juan Núñez I de Lara accused Sancho IV's *privados* of sowing discord between him and the king with the intention of looking for an excuse to have him killed at the earliest opportunity.<sup>148</sup>

Royal favourites were obviously not an exclusive element of Castilian politics, although it was in Castile where they became a long-standing institution in the Late Middle Ages.<sup>149</sup> For instance, the nobles' complaints against these individuals had become a common issue in England since the thirteenth century. The Magna Carta (1215) and the Oxford and Westminster Provisions (1258 and 1259) contained clauses to reduce the influence of royal favourites over the king, or else to expel them from the court. In a similar way, the king's reliance on the Despensers became a recurring source of criticism during the reign of Edward II (r. 1307–1326).<sup>150</sup>

The *ricosombres* resented being excluded by men of inferior rank from what they considered to be their natural role, serving as the king's advisor. That is why most of the *privados* were sooner or later removed from the court or else they slipped back into obscurity. In a similar way, when describing the special relationship between an individual and the king, the Castilian royal chronicles differentiated between *ricosombres* and men with a lesser status. Nuño González de Lara or Lope Díaz III de Haro enjoyed the king's proximity at some point of their lives but they were never depicted as '*privados*'.<sup>151</sup>

At the beginning of Alfonso XI's adult rule (1325), the royal chronicle identified two knights, Alvar Núñez and Garcilaso de la Vega, as the king's closest advisors. Both men actively participated in ruling the kingdom: they arranged the marriage between Alfonso XI and Juan Manuel's daughter, Constanza, and the monarch's acquisition of the rights to the lordship of Biscay from María López de Haro (see Figure 2.2). In 1327, the same year Garcilaso was killed in Soria by local knights who resisted royal authority, Alvar Núñez was promoted to the ranks of the *ricosombres*. The noble asked the king to grant him the use of a banner (*pendón*) – one of the emblems associated with this status – so he could use his newly acquired position to defend the kingdom against the Muslims and the rebel Juan Manuel. Additionally, Alfonso XI granted him the title of Count of Trastámara, Lemos, and Sarriá, and the lordships of Ribera and Cabrera, which had previously belonged to the recently deceased infante Felipe, Alvar Núñez's former benefactor. However, Alvar Núñez's star did not shine for long. In 1328, Fernando Rodríguez de Valbuena, the prior of the Order of St John, orchestrated a conspiracy with other nobles and courtiers against the royal favourite. The conspirators channelled widespread discontent among the kingdom's knights and *ricosombres*, who accused Alvar Núñez of monopolising royal revenues for himself and his vassals. The conspirators organised an uprising in Valladolid under the false pretext that Count Alvar was going to marry Infanta Leonor, Alfonso XI's sister, and thereby consolidate his control over royal government. The towns of Toro and Zamora rebelled as well, thereby putting further pressure on the king to remove Alvar Núñez from his position, which he finally did. Count Alvar immediately tried to join forces with the rebel Juan Manuel once he was banished from the court; however, Alfonso XI acted swiftly: he ordered his former *privado* to be killed on the grounds of treason and forfeited all his possessions.<sup>152</sup>

Alvar Núñez's sudden rise and fall parallels that of Lope Díaz III de Haro in 1287–1288, although the latter was never presented as a *privado*. Lope Díaz was also granted the title of count, and he was the target of criticism due to his management of royal revenues in his role of *mayordomo mayor*. The marriage of his brother, Diego López V, to Violante, Sancho IV's sister, also caused great controversy.<sup>153</sup> Both cases illustrate, once again, how the conflicts revolved around the control of royal patronage. Furthermore, the rise of *privados* reflected the kings' active participation in Castile's endemic factionalism. The monarchs were not mere mediators between the noble factions that aspired to control royal patronage, they were members of one of these factions. In the

letter Alfonso X sent to his son Fernando, the king contrasted the rebel *ricosombres* with the scores of nobles who were still loyal to them.<sup>154</sup>

Magnates created factions by forging alliances between themselves that in turn contributed to strengthening their position when negotiating their demands with the king or to oppose rival factions. For instance, the rebel nobles agreed in Lerma to help one another against the king and vowed to fight against him if he did not grant their demands (*'fizieron pleito et postura de se ayudar todos e ser contra el rey don Alfonso, destruyéndol en lo que pudiesen sy les non otorgase et cumpliese las cosas quel querían demandar'*).<sup>155</sup> Monarchs acted similarly too. The Castilian kings signed their own '*pleitos*' (agreements) with individual nobles, thereby creating their own factions. For instance, Sancho IV made an agreement with Lope Díaz III de Haro in 1286 to secure his service against external threats. In exchange, the noble received the title of count, royal revenues, and the keys of the royal chancery. In order to guarantee the fulfilment of the pact, both parties agreed to exchange castles which would act as a guarantee.<sup>156</sup> In a similar way, Fernando IV and the infante Juan signed a '*pleito*' between them, and swore in front of the Cross and the Holy Gospels to ensure they complied with it. In response, Juan Manuel, the infante Pedro, Juan Núñez II de Lara, and other *ricosombres* forged an alliance against them. Fernando IV persuaded his brother, the infante Pedro, to break away from this agreement, signing a '*pleito*' in which the king promised to give him the town of Santander. In consequence, Pedro changed sides and, then, due to the infante Juan's own misgivings regarding the new situation, both infantes signed their own separate agreement.<sup>157</sup>

Therefore, there was always a 'royal' faction which could be opposed by discontent *ricosombres* who, in turn, would create their own league to strengthen their position. The idea of a 'royal' side highlights how the king was part of that faction; although that does not mean that the opposing faction was against royal authority per se. The magnates' motivation was to control and benefit from royal patronage, which is why the *ricosombres* and royal relatives would change sides constantly, being either attracted by the king's promises or distanced from him if they thought they were not adequately rewarded for their service, or else if they were displaced by other individuals.

On occasions kings were part of a faction but not its leader. In the fifteenth century, it became common for rival factions to compete by 'seizing' control of the king and royal patronage.<sup>158</sup> Something similar happened during the reigns of Sancho IV and Fernando IV, in which there were periods when the kings were under the thumb of powerful magnates.

The *Crónica de Sancho IV* depicted an ominous situation in 1286, when Queen María was deeply concerned by the power accumulated by the Haro faction. Count Lope Díaz III was the *mayordomo mayor* and controlled several royal castles. Moreover, his daughter María was married to the infante Juan, and his brother, Diego López V, was the *adelantado mayor de la Frontera*. María de Molina feared that her husband was not conscious of the powerful grip the Haros had on royal government, which they could use to undermine

the king's position. Queen María managed to make Sancho IV realise the seriousness of the situation, whereby the king started manoeuvring to rid himself of Count Lope's nefarious influence. Finally, Lope Díaz was killed while resisting imprisonment at the king's orders.<sup>159</sup>

A similar situation took place during the adult rule of Fernando IV. The infante Juan and Juan Núñez II de Lara became the most prominent figures of the royal faction, something which was viewed with concern by the royal chronicler. According to the chronicle, the towns' representatives had gathered in Medina del Campo for the meeting of the *Cortes* in 1302, but they were concerned to see the king being controlled by the infante Juan and Juan Núñez, who were universally regarded as enemies due to the wrongdoings royal towns suffered from them in the previous war (*'se touieron por estranna cosa de andar el rey en poder del infante don Juan e de don Juan Nunnez, que tenian todos commo por enemigos por razón de los males que resçibieran dellos en la guerra'*).<sup>160</sup>

The infante Juan had allied with the royal pretender, Alfonso de la Cerda, against Fernando IV, and claimed the throne of León for himself. Although he returned to the king's service in 1300, it would have been understandably shocking for the royal towns' representatives to see him exerting such a powerful influence over the king. Nevertheless, despite occasional disagreements, the infante Juan enjoyed a very close relationship with Fernando IV during the monarch's adult years. The conflict regarding the controversial inheritance of the lordship of Biscay provides a vivid example of the infante Juan's influence over his nephew. Diego López V de Haro's supporters considered that Fernando IV was biased towards his uncle, who claimed this territory on the basis of his marriage to María López de Haro, and they went as far as accusing him of being a *'bandero'* of the infante Juan (a member of Juan's faction).<sup>161</sup>

Examples such as these, and especially the latter, in which a royal chronicle openly acknowledged the king as a member of a magnate's faction, suggest an inversion of the hierarchical order. They illustrate that, when participating in the court's factionalism, kings did not necessarily have to play the leading role. These examples, have another common feature: they reflect María de Molina's concerns regarding the influence certain magnates exerted over her husband and, later, her son. The royal chronicles are overtly sympathetic to Queen María,<sup>162</sup> so it could be argued their accusation of these individuals as manipulating the kings reflected the chronicler's concern to attack the queen's political rivals. As discussed in the previous chapter, the infante Juan faithfully represented Fernando IV's interests during the peace negotiations with Jaime II of Aragón. From this point of view, it should be noted that the nobles opposed to the infante Juan and Juan Núñez, that is Diego López V de Haro, Juan Manuel, and the infante Enrique, signed an alliance between them and tried to persuade Queen María to join them.<sup>163</sup> The royal chronicle presents Queen María as a mediator, emphasising that her main concern was to find a solution that was in the kingdom's best interests.<sup>164</sup> However, it might be argued that her role was not wholly disinterested, and she was actively trying to regain a position of

influence in the court. In a similar way, the *Crónica de Sancho IV* openly acknowledges that Lope Díaz III de Haro was trying to persuade Sancho IV to leave María de Molina for his lawful wife – in the eyes of the Church – Guilhelma of Montcada.<sup>165</sup> Therefore, considering what was at stake, it is not surprising that Queen María resented Lope Díaz.

In any case, it is hard to dispel the image of the reigns of Sancho IV and Fernando IV as moments of bitter factionalism and weak royal authority, and that they prolonged a period of internal strife which went back to the final decade of Alfonso X's reign. In consequence, attention must be paid to how Alfonso XI redressed this situation in the 1330s, and thereby inaugurated a period of strong kingship and military successes against the Muslims.

The traditional view depicts Alfonso XI as a ruthless monarch who was able to tame an unruly nobility. The late Carlos Estepa demonstrated the important role played by the king's diplomatic skills and his interest in building a wide consensus around himself in order to strengthen royal authority in Castile.<sup>166</sup> In regard to this, Alfonso XI's success must be interpreted as the result of the creation of a powerful faction led by the king. The king's faction progressively integrated the rebel nobles until it achieved an (albeit temporary) end to factionalism. The king resorted to the assassination of political opponents on specific occasions, although, as was discussed above, these murders must be considered an exceptional measure.

During the early years of Alfonso XI's adult reign, the king's closest advisors were Alvar Núñez and Garcilaso de la Vega, men who formed part of the infante Felipe's entourage, and this suggests the king's uncle held sway over royal affairs, which in turn explains Juan Manuel and Juan de Haro *el Tuerto's* early departure from the court. However, by 1329 Juan de Haro, the infante Felipe, Garcilaso, and Alvar Núñez were all dead. Juan Manuel and the king were also reconciled, but it was a tenuous agreement, as his alliance with Juan Núñez III de Lara, who claimed the lordship of Biscay to the king, proves. As a result, from around 1330 Alfonso XI started to build his own faction.

As has been discussed, Alfonso XI maintained an extramarital relationship with Leonor de Guzmán for two decades, and this allowed the king to forge closer bonds with the Andalusian nobility. However, the list of his supporters was far more extensive. The royal chronicle listed the magnates who attended Alfonso XI's coronation in 1332 in order to show that, despite the conspicuous absence of Juan Manuel and Juan Núñez, the king enjoyed overwhelming support across the kingdom. The chronicler listed 22 *ricoshombrs* who were present at the ceremony, including Alfonso de la Cerda, his family's nemesis, who had become the king's vassal. Additionally, the text identified up to 135 *caballeros* who were Alfonso XI's vassals.<sup>167</sup>

The king promoted a new circle of closer advisors, such as Juan Martínez Leyva, Fernán Rodríguez Pecha, Martín Fernández Portocarrero, and Alfonso Fernández Coronel. These men were rewarded with court appointments, although none of them acquired a position similar to Alvar Núñez, which would have been strongly opposed by the kingdom's magnates. Moreover, the chronicle records an

amiable relationship between these knights and the *ricoshombrs*. In 1335, Alfonso XI appointed Fernández Portocarrero as commander of the royal army in the war against Navarre, a position previously rejected by Juan Núñez III. Although there were senior *ricoshombrs* serving in the army, they accepted the king's orders and the campaign was a success.<sup>168</sup> This example contrasts with Sancho IV's military failure in 1289 against Aragón. The king appointed Ruy Páez de Sotomayor, a knight who had been promoted recently to the ranks of the *ricoshombr* ('*a quien él avía dado pendón et caldera et fecho rico omne*'), as leader of the army. However, many nobles resented this appointment and actively boycotted the campaign, which ended in disaster and resulted in the death of the unfortunate Ruy Páez.<sup>169</sup>

Alfonso XI's fiasco of 1333, in which he lost Gibraltar and was unable to retake it from the Marinids, led to a period of turmoil in which the king had to face the opposition of rebel nobles. As analysed above, the king was able to secure the loyalty of the wavering Pedro Fernández de Castro and Juan Alfonso de Alburquerque. Then, the royal army besieged Lerma, and this along with the defeat of the Portuguese army by the Andalusian nobles and towns, prompted the surrender of Juan Núñez III and Juan Manuel's flight to Aragón. However, Alfonso XI opted for a negotiated solution, and he persuaded the rebel nobles to return to his side. By 1338, Alfonso XI's position in Castile was stronger than ever, and this brought an end to factionalism for more than a decade.

The ordinances issued in Burgos that year can be interpreted as the legal climax of Alfonso XI's victory. For the first time, the Castilian monarchy listed the military obligations the nobles had to fulfil in exchange for the royal salaries (*libramientos*) they received. These ordinances stipulated that only the king's vassals could receive royal salaries, which stressed the importance of the interpersonal bonds between Alfonso XI and the nobles.<sup>170</sup> A similar principle defined the *Orden de la Banda*, the lay military order created by the monarch. Knighthood became an institution used by the king to strengthen his relationship with the nobles. Consequently, all the *caballeros* had to be either the king's or his heir's vassal.<sup>171</sup> As a result Alfonso XI had successfully turned Castile's elite into a complex network of interpersonal relationships in which the king enjoyed an uncontested dominant position.

The *Crónica de Alfonso XI* concludes in 1344 in the wake of the conquest of Algeciras. This victory was the culmination of a series of military triumphs won in the 1340s against the Muslims that illustrated Alfonso XI's successful kingship. The last two decades of his reign constituted a period in which royal power was consolidated after more than half a century of internal turmoil. However, in 1344, Juan Núñez III was lord of Biscay and he accumulated the two most important royal offices: he was the king's *alférez* and *mayordomo mayor*. Similarly, Juan Manuel was the *adelantado de la Frontera* and his son Fernando enjoyed the position of *adelantado de Murcia*.<sup>172</sup> These two magnates enjoyed a more prominent position than they did at the beginning of the reign despite being the king's most tenacious opponents for several years. The century between 1252 and 1350 witnessed a remarkable expansion of royal authority,

a process which reached its zenith during Alfonso XI's rule. Parallel to this, the Castilian nobility, especially the most prestigious families, increased their wealth and power: the list of confirmers of the *privilegios rodados* constitute a graphic embodiment of this process.

## Notes

- 1 CAX, 64
- 2 CAX, 79–89 and 170.
- 3 Doubleday, *Los Lara*, 74 and Bartlett, *England under the Norman and Angevin kings*, 51–67.
- 4 *Government and Political Life*, 49–50, and Sarasa Sánchez, *El Privilegio General de Aragón*, introd.
- 5 Watts, *La formación de los sistemas políticos*, 43 and Morsel, *La aristocracia medieval*, 316–327.
- 6 Taylor, *The Shape of the State*, 2–3 and 451–455.
- 7 Suárez Fernández, *Nobleza y monarquía*.
- 8 For instance, González Mínguez, *Poder real y poder nobiliar*.
- 9 See: Monsalvo Antón, 'El conflicto "nobleza frente a monarquía"'.
- 10 CAX, 99–100.
- 11 Rodríguez, 'History and Topography', 75.
- 12 *Cortes*, I, 538 (Ch. LXIII).
- 13 Monsalvo Antón, 'Poder político y aparatos de estado', 133.
- 14 See: Rodríguez, 'Spain'.
- 15 Clemente Ramos, *La economía campesina en la Corona de Castilla*, 181–187.
- 16 See: Hernández, *Las rentas del rey*.
- 17 Álvarez Borge, 'Sobre nobleza, rentas regias y señoríos', 36.
- 18 CAX, 134.
- 19 *CFIV*, ch. IX, par. 1.
- 20 *CAXI*, 181.
- 21 *Cortes*, I, 155–156, 176 and 342–343.
- 22 *Colección diplomática del Concejo de Burgos*, doc. 169.
- 23 *Colección documental de Alfonso XI*, doc. 260.
- 24 *Documentación del monasterio de las Huelgas de Burgos (1329–1348)*, doc. 93 and *Documentación del monasterio de las Huelgas de Burgos (1349–1376)*, doc. 167.
- 25 *CAXI*, 181.
- 26 *CAXI*, 217.
- 27 *CFIV*, ch. I, par. 20.
- 28 CAX, 65.
- 29 *CAXI*, 242.
- 30 *Cortes*, I, 450–453.
- 31 *CFIV*, ch. XVI, par. 63.
- 32 *CSIV*, ch. IV, 73–75.
- 33 CAX, 100–106.
- 34 *Las Siete Partidas*, Partida IV, Título XXVI, Ley II.
- 35 *CAXI*, 210–211.
- 36 CAX, 111.
- 37 CAX, 101.
- 38 Daumet, *Mémoire*, docs. VII and VIII.
- 39 *CAXI*, 274.
- 40 Álvarez Borge, 'Vasallos, oficiales, clientes y parientes', 362–367 and Doubleday, *Los Lara*, 98.

- 41 Rodríguez, 'Linajes nobiliarios', 844–845.
- 42 *CFIV*, ch. XIV, pars. 28–29.
- 43 *CFIV*, ch. XVI, par. 49.
- 44 Spencer, *Nobility and Kingship*, 264 and Taylor, *The Shape of the State*, 20.
- 45 Estepa Díez, 'Las tenencias en Castilla y León', 65.
- 46 I want to thank Álvaro Sanz for this observation.
- 47 See: Álvarez Borge, *Clientelismo regio y acción política*.
- 48 Estepa Díez, 'Las tenencias en Castilla y León', 67–71.
- 49 See: Vázquez Campos, *Los adelantados mayores de la Frontera* and *Adelantados y lucha por el poder*.
- 50 *CAX*, 172. The royal chronicle identifies him as *adelantado de la Frontera*. Although Manuel González Jiménez thinks that this could be a mistake, arguing that the position was vacant, there no is evidence to challenge the chronicler's information.
- 51 *CSIV*, ch. III, 51.
- 52 Álvarez Borge, *Monarquía feudal y organización territorial*, 175 and Jular Pérez-Alfaro, *Los Adelantados y Merinos Mayores de León*, 247.
- 53 Álvarez Borge, 'Poder local y poder central', 148–154.
- 54 Pardo de Guevara y Valdés, 'Los linajes y su afirmación social en el noroeste peninsular', 40.
- 55 Vázquez Campos, 'A los grandes debe poner en los grandes oficios', 251–255.
- 56 *CSIV*, 44–46.
- 57 See: Jular Pérez-Alfaro, 'King's face on the territory'.
- 58 Watts, *La formación de los sistemas políticos*, 271–272.
- 59 Valdeón Baroque, *Enrique II*, 113–120.
- 60 Clavero's classical study on the *mayorazgo* remains the most complete work on the topic: Clavero, *Mayorazgo*.
- 61 Álvarez Borge, 'Patrimonio, rentas y poder de la nobleza', 88–91 and 'Sobre nobleza, rentas regias y señoríos', 54.
- 62 Benavides, *Memorias de Don Fernando IV*, doc. DXVIII.
- 63 *Colección documental de Alfonso XI*, doc. 303.
- 64 *Ordenamiento*, Título XXVII, Leyes II–III and Título XXVIII, Ley II. See also: Estepa Díez, 'La monarquía castellana', 88–91 and Monsalvo Antón, *La construcción del poder real*, 191–194.
- 65 Baury, 'Los ricos hombres y el rey en Castilla', 61.
- 66 *CFIV*, ch. V, par. 17 and Estepa Díez, *Las behetrías castellanas*, I, 297.
- 67 Pardo de Guevara y Valdés, *De linajes, parentelas y grupos de poder*, 236.
- 68 *CFIV*, ch. XV, par. 35.
- 69 Collantes de Terán, 'Los señoríos andaluces', 94–95.
- 70 García Fernández, *El Reino de Sevilla en tiempos de Alfonso XI*, 190–198.
- 71 Benavides, *Memorias de Don Fernando IV*, doc. CII, and García Fernández, 'Regesto documental andaluz de Alfonso XI', doc. 474.
- 72 González Mínguez, *Fernando IV*, 222, García Fernández, 'Regesto documental andaluz de Alfonso XI', doc. 302, AHNOB, OSUNA, C.166, D.1–5, AHNOB, OSUNA, C.183, D.9, and RAH, Salazar y Castro, M-49, f. 79v-81 r.
- 73 Arias Guillén, *Guerra y fortalecimiento del poder regio*, 228–232.
- 74 Doubleday, *Los Lara*, 78–89, 97, and 123. Doubleday's maps in pages 79 and 123 illustrate the change in the Lara's seigneurial power in one century.
- 75 Estepa Díez, *Las behetrías castellanas*, I, 321–323.
- 76 Barton, *The aristocracy in twelfth-century León and Castille*, 223.
- 77 See: Estepa Díez, *Las behetrías castellanas*.
- 78 *CAX*, 148.
- 79 *CAX*, 145.

- 80 Alfonso, 'Desheredamiento y desafuero', 114–118 and 122–124.
- 81 Bautista, 'Narrativas nobiliarias', 87–88, and Vones, 'L'Historiographie et politique', 187.
- 82 *CAX*, 65.
- 83 *CSIV*, ch. VIII, 142.
- 84 *Obras completas*, 948–950.
- 85 *CFIV*, ch. XII, par. 24.
- 86 *CAXI*, 234.
- 87 *CAX*, 89.
- 88 *CSIV*, ch. II, 26.
- 89 *CAXI*, 199–200.
- 90 *CAX*, 92–93 and 101.
- 91 *CAXI*, 254.
- 92 *CSIV*, ch. VII, 129.
- 93 *CAXI*, 254.
- 94 *CFIV*, ch. XV, pars. 3, 7, and 17.
- 95 *CAXI*, 260.
- 96 Letter edited in: Hernández, 'Historiografía y propaganda', 413–417.
- 97 *CAX*, 92.
- 98 Baury, 'Los ricos hombres y el rey en Castilla', 62.
- 99 *CSIV*, ch. I, 6 and *CAXI*, 282.
- 100 François Foronda, 'S'emparer du roi', 214.
- 101 *Las Siete Partidas*, Partida IV, Título XXV, Ley X, and *Ordenamiento*, Título XXXII, Ley V.
- 102 See: Foronda, 'El miedo al rey'.
- 103 *CJI*, 1385, ch. V, 94–97.
- 104 Foronda, 'El miedo al rey', pars. 6 and 7.
- 105 *CFIV*, ch. XVI, pars. 40–41 and 86.
- 106 *CAXI*, 241.
- 107 Gautier-Dalche, 'Alphonse a-t-il voulu la mort de don Juan Manuel?'
- 108 *CAX*, 221 and Gómez Redondo, *Historia de la prosa medieval castellana. I*, 971–977.
- 109 *CSIV*, ch. V, 88–89.
- 110 *CSIV*, ch. III, 50–51.
- 111 *CAXI*, 254 and 263.
- 112 *GCAXI*, II, 88–89 and Janin, 'El rey y la nobleza', 13.
- 113 Bothwell, *Falling from Grace*, 38–39, 63, 78, and 98.
- 114 Bothwell, *Falling from Grace*, 78.
- 115 Foronda, 'El miedo al rey', par. 25.
- 116 Foronda, *Privauté, Gouvernement et Souveraineté*, 15.
- 117 See: Pascua, 'South of the Pyrenees'.
- 118 Hernández, 'Historiografía y propaganda', 389.
- 119 *CAXI*, 272 and 280.
- 120 *CAX*, 170.
- 121 *CSIV*, ch. I, 6, ch. VI, 118, ch. VIII, 123–124 and 137–139, ch. VIII, 147–151, and ch. X, 165–172.
- 122 *CAXI*, 264.
- 123 *Privilegios reales otorgados a Toledo*, doc. 50 (12 March 1333).
- 124 *CAXI*, 263.
- 125 *CAXI*, 267.
- 126 *CAXI*, 273–277, 283, and 296. The importance of the knighting ceremony was emphasised in Estepa Díez, 'The Strengthening of Royal Power', 212.
- 127 Escalona, 'Misericordia regia, es decir, negociemos', 149–151.

- 128 *CAXI*, 267 and 283.
- 129 Doubleday, *Los Lara*, 129.
- 130 *CAXI*, 287.
- 131 *CAXI*, 294.
- 132 *CAX*, 149.
- 133 Rodríguez, 'Rico fincas de tierra', 247.
- 134 González Jiménez, *Alfonso X el Sabio*, 81–87.
- 135 *CAX*, 88.
- 136 Escalona, 'Los nobles contra su rey', 160.
- 137 See: Martínez Sopena, 'Réorganisation de l'espace et conflits de pouvoir'.
- 138 Rodríguez, *La consolidación territorial*, 317.
- 139 Escalona, 'Los nobles contra su rey', 143–153.
- 140 I agree with José María Monsalvo's interpretation of Castile's perennial factionalism in the period 1369–1479, and I consider that it should be extended to the previous century as well. Monsalvo Antón, 'El conflicto "nobleza frente a monarquía"', 190–191.
- 141 *CAXI*, 218.
- 142 Giménez Soler, *Don Juan Manuel*, 699–700.
- 143 *CFIV*, ch. IX, par. 9, ch. X, par. 6, ch. XI, pars 14 and 17, ch. XII, par. 3, ch. XIV, pars. 28–29, ch. XV, pars. 4, 7, 17–18, and 21, ch. XVI, pars. 43, 69, and 72.
- 144 A narration of the long conflict regarding this issue in: González Mínguez, *Fernando IV*, 155–171.
- 145 Giménez Soler, *Don Juan Manuel*, doc. CLXXIX.
- 146 Foronda, *Privauté, Gouvernement et Souveraineté*.
- 147 *CSIV*, 33.
- 148 *CSIV*, 123–124.
- 149 Foronda, *Privauté, Gouvernement et Souveraineté*, 6–7.
- 150 Bothwell, *Falling from Grace*, 18.
- 151 Foronda, 'La privanza, entre monarquía y nobleza', 80.
- 152 *CAXI*, 199–203 and 210–219.
- 153 *CSIV*, 47 and 59–63.
- 154 *CAX*, 149.
- 155 *CAX*, 60.
- 156 *CSIV*, 50–51.
- 157 *CFIV*, ch. XVIII, pars. 2–4.
- 158 See: François Foronda, 'S'emparer du roi'.
- 159 *CSIV*, 53–54, 70–71, and 88–89.
- 160 *CFIV*, ch. XI, par. 3.
- 161 Estepa Díez, 'The Strengthening of Royal Power', 192.
- 162 Gómez Redondo, *Historia de la prosa medieval castellana. II*, 1250–1254.
- 163 *CFIV*, ch. XII, par. 3.
- 164 See: Muñoz Fernández, 'La mediación femenina' and Rochwert-Zuili, 'La actuación pacificadora de María de Molina'.
- 165 *CSIV*, ch. III, 53.
- 166 See: Estepa Díez, 'The Strengthening of Royal Power'.
- 167 *CAXI*, 235–236.
- 168 *CAXI*, 238 and 268.
- 169 *CSIV*, 114.
- 170 Arias Guillén, *Guerra y fortalecimiento del poder regio*, 116–119.
- 171 Rodríguez Velasco, *Ciudadanía, soberanía monárquica y caballería*, 65.
- 172 AHNOB, GOMEZ DE ALBORNOZ, CP.330, D.2 (6 June 1344).

## 7 Nobles and kingship (II)

### The representation of the Castilian nobility in the *privilegios rodados* (1252–1350)

In the *Libro de los Estados*, Juan Manuel noted with disparagement the numerous *caballeros* who were promoted to the ranks of the higher nobility by the Castilian monarchs. According to the magnate, the proximity (*privanza*) of some knights to the king enabled these men to become *ricosombres*. Furthermore, Juan Manuel also emphasised the disdain with which the long-established noble families viewed these newly elevated *ricosombres*. What is more, their children were never considered to have the same status (*‘seyendo cavalleros e infançones, por privanza que an de los reis, tienen los reis por bien de les dar vasallos et pendón, et llámanse ricos omnes [...] pieça d’ellos que fueran fechos ricos omnes de los reis, que nunca sus fijos fueron tenidos por ricos omnes’*).<sup>1</sup> Juan Manuel’s analysis, albeit exaggerated, was not far from the truth. The *privilegios rodados* issued by the royal chancery reveal that the number of *ricosombres* in Castile had increased significantly since the second half of the thirteenth century.

As was mentioned in previous chapters, the *privilegios rodados* were confirmed by the main lay and ecclesiastical individuals of the kingdom. In these documents the confirmation provided by the *alférez* and *mayordomo* formed part of the royal sign, which illustrates the important status of these two positions. As has been discussed, there were four columns of confirmers, in which were listed (from left to right) Castile’s bishops and nobles and León’s bishops and nobles, and then another – more prestigious – group of confirmers who were placed above these columns. In addition, a number of court officials, such as notaries, chancellors, and the admiral, also confirmed royal diplomas and they were listed at the bottom of the document (see Images 0.1 and 0.2). The individuals recorded in these royal privileges were not necessarily present on the date they were issued, but the inclusion of their name indicated that these magnates supported the content of the charter. The idea behind giving such a detailed list of confirmers was that it served to exalt the authority of the Castilian monarchy by showing how many powerful individuals served the king.

On the other hand, being listed as a confirmer was a mark of prestige for any Castilian noble, as it highlighted how they formed part of the kingdom’s elite. Furthermore, their position on the document also indicated their status within the kingdom’s nobility. Additionally, the list of confirmers was regularly updated, and

those who died or fell from grace were removed. Likewise, new members of the nobility were sporadically introduced and changes were also made to the positions given to magnates on the list. Together, these elements make the list of confirmers a valuable source for analysing the relationship between the Castilian kings and the nobility at any given period.

Surprisingly, there are almost no in-depth studies on this topic. Salvador de Moxó's classical work on the Castilian nobility used these documents very sporadically.<sup>2</sup> More recent studies have used the confirmers of the *privilegios rodados* to discuss specific individuals; however, the only systematic approach to this topic is Carlos Estepa's work on the confirmers of the royal diplomas during the reign of Alfonso VIII.<sup>3</sup>

In Chapter 5, the composition and fluctuations of the first group, which included the most prestigious individuals of the kingdom, such as the three archbishops and the members of the royal family, was briefly discussed.<sup>4</sup> The task of this chapter is to focus on the lists of confirmers in the second and fourth column – i.e. the Castilian and Leonese nobility – between 1252 and 1350. The columns for the Castilian and Leonese bishops remained very static and only minor changes were made to them, aside from noting the substitutions of bishops who passed away and the promotion of their peers to more prestigious bishoprics. In consequence, while the *privilegios rodados* help to identify every individual who held a bishopric over a given period, key aspects such as these individuals' appointments or social background cannot be discussed using these documents. In any case, an in-depth study of the Castilian bishops and their careers would obviously go beyond the analysis of royal privileges and be the subject of a wholly different monograph.<sup>5</sup>

Despite their high visual impact, this kind of document was commonly produced by the Castilian chancery. There are more than a thousand extant *privilegios rodados* which were issued during the reigns of Alfonso X, Sancho IV, Fernando IV, and Alfonso XI. On the other hand, most of these documents were written at the beginning of each monarch's reign. For instance, 612 out of the 3,351 extant diplomas (18.26%) produced by the Wise King were *privilegios rodados*, and 257 out of the total of 612 (41.99%) were issued in just two years: 1254 and 1255. By contrast, between 1261 and the end of the reign only occasionally were more than ten extant diplomas issued in a given year.<sup>6</sup> The number of extant *privilegios rodados* issued by Sancho IV, Fernando IV, and Alfonso XI is significantly smaller, although it follows a similar pattern. In consequence, analysing all these documents individually would be an excruciatingly long and tedious task which would not yield significant results due to the imbalance in the number of extant *privilegios rodados*. Therefore, I have endeavoured to select one privilege for each year of the 98-year period under study, which allows changes to be identified over time (the list of documents selected can be found in Appendices 5). Unfortunately, there are a few gaps due to the absence of documentation for a number of years. Above all, the final years of the minority of Alfonso XI presents the most noticeable of these gaps, which also illustrates the decline of royal authority during this period.

Hundreds of individuals are cited in these diplomas and an exhaustive study of them, and thereby of the Castilian nobility, cannot be undertaken here. Therefore, in this study just a selection of key cases is examined in order to explore broader historical trends. Consequently, the aim of this chapter is not to provide a detailed prosopography of the Castilian nobility between 1252 and 1350, instead it seeks to analyse how the relationship between kings and nobles underwent significant changes during this period. It will be shown how the list of confirmers grew significantly during this period, and this indicates how a range of individuals and families were promoted for the loyalty they showed to the king. Nonetheless, this does not mean that the senior nobles at the apex of the Castilian social hierarchy were gradually replaced. On the contrary, the gradual inclusion of the sons of the most powerful magnates in the list of confirmers illustrates how the most important families not only maintained their prominent position over the course of this period, but they also strengthened it.

### **The more the merrier? The increasing number of confirmers in the *privilegios rodados***

The first question which arises when analysing the list of confirmers of the *privilegios rodados* is: who has the right to be there? While the bishops are listed in these documents on the basis of their office, the inclusion of members of the nobility depended on the nature of their service to the king as well as their personal status. In other words, being listed as a confirmer indicated an individual's importance, as not all of the king's vassals were included as a confirmer on the royal privileges. In this sense, the group of nobles who were listed could be compared to the English peerage, the 60 to 70 nobles who received a personal summons to the Parliament during the fourteenth century, or else the earls, who were an exclusive elite of around twenty individuals whose privileges included being listed as witnesses to royal diplomas whenever they were present at court.<sup>7</sup>

Being a confirmer of the *privilegios rodados* was, in essence, a privilege restricted to the highest group of the Castilian nobility, the *ricoshombrés*. Salvador de Moxó identified 30 families of *ricoshombrés* for the period running from the twelfth to the fourteenth century, and he defined them as the 'old nobility' (*nobleza vieja*). According to Moxó, these families were the main beneficiaries of royal patronage and they played a highly relevant role in Castilian politics prior to the Trastámara period, when they were replaced by a new set of noble families.<sup>8</sup> While aspects of Moxó's work have been challenged or else revised in a more nuanced form over the last few decades, his list of noble families still provides a comprehensive panorama of Castile's highest nobility.<sup>9</sup> As a result, members of these families sooner or later became confirmers of the *privilegios rodados*. More importantly, it was extremely rare for individuals who did not belong to any of these families to be listed. Only under extraordinary circumstances, such as in 1283 as will be discussed below, were confirmers listed who were not *ricoshombrés*. Another example is offered by Alvar Núñez, who in

1326 was placed in the lowest group of confirmers, among the other court officials, despite his proximity to the king. It was only the following year, when he was elevated to the status of *ricohombre* by the king, that Alvar Núñez joined the ranks of the most prestigious confirmers.<sup>10</sup>

Nevertheless, this does not mean that every *ricohombre* had the privilege to confirm royal privileges. Coming back to Juan Manuel's views on this group, the magnate defined the *ricoshombrs* as those who could, and should, carry their own banner and have knights as vassals (*'a los que pueden [et] deven traer pendones et aver cavalleros por vasallos'*). However, Juan Manuel also identified several categories among the group of *ricoshombrs*, and he emphasised that the families who had royal blood or were married to royal relatives had a superior status.<sup>11</sup> As a result, it was not uncommon for individuals who were identified as *ricohombrs* in the royal chronicles to not be included in the list of confirmers of the royal privileges. One such example is Ramiro Flores de Guzmán, whose case introduces a number of concerns that are explored over the course of this chapter.

Ramiro Flores was the son of Juan Ramírez de Guzmán, a *ricohombre* who was listed as a confirmer in the column of the Leonese nobility almost continuously between 1303 and 1328.<sup>12</sup> Ramiro by no means went unnoticed, in 1329 he received the castle of Belver and the lordship of Cabreros from the king as a reward for killing the fallen *privado* Count Alvar Núñez. Additionally, the royal chronicle listed him among the 22 *ricoshombrs* who accompanied Alfonso XI during his coronation in 1332.<sup>13</sup> However, the noble only confirmed one *privilegio rodado* in 1343, which was a year when there was a significant, albeit temporary, rise in the number of confirmers.<sup>14</sup> The fact that Ramiro did not replace his father in the list of confirmers after his death in 1328 shows that not every *ricohombre* was automatically listed in these documents, as this was a privilege reserved for only a handful of families.

The confirmers of the *privilegios rodados* were, therefore, a reduced group among the Castilian nobility which included just the most prestigious *ricoshombrs* of the kingdom. However, the exclusivity of this group waned between 1252 and 1350. During the reign of Alfonso VIII (r. 1158–1214), the number of confirmers was commonly limited to seven or eight individuals. Only in 5 out of the 454 extant royal diplomas were there more than ten nobles in this elite group.<sup>15</sup> During the reign of Fernando III (r. 1217–1252), the Leonese nobles were added to the group of confirmers in 1230, but the size of the Castilian column remained the same as it had during his grandfather's reign (Figure 7.1). By contrast, between the reigns of Alfonso X and Alfonso XI (Figures 7.2 to 7.5) the number of nobles confirming royal privileges grew more than ever before. Table 7.1 summarises this data and presents the maximum, minimum, and average number of confirmers for each reign between 1230 and 1350. In comparison to his father's time, during Alfonso X's reign the number of confirmers doubled, and this figure increased still further over the last three decades of the thirteenth century, above all during the reign of Sancho IV. Although there were important oscillations in the number of confirmers between 1252 and 1350, this figure remained around twice as high (or more) as it had been during Fernando III's rule.

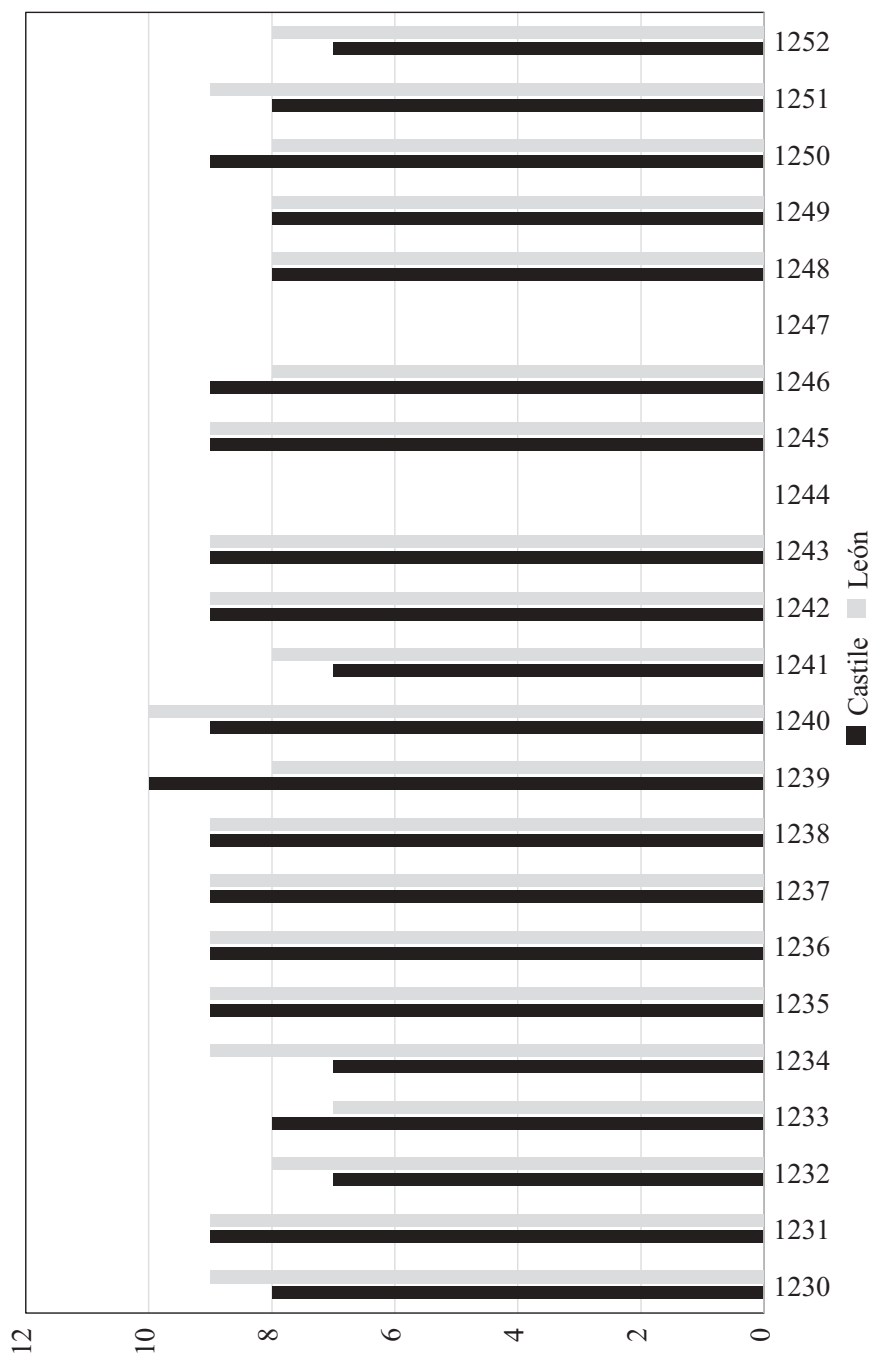


Figure 7.1 Number of nobles confirming *privilegios rodados* (1230–1252)

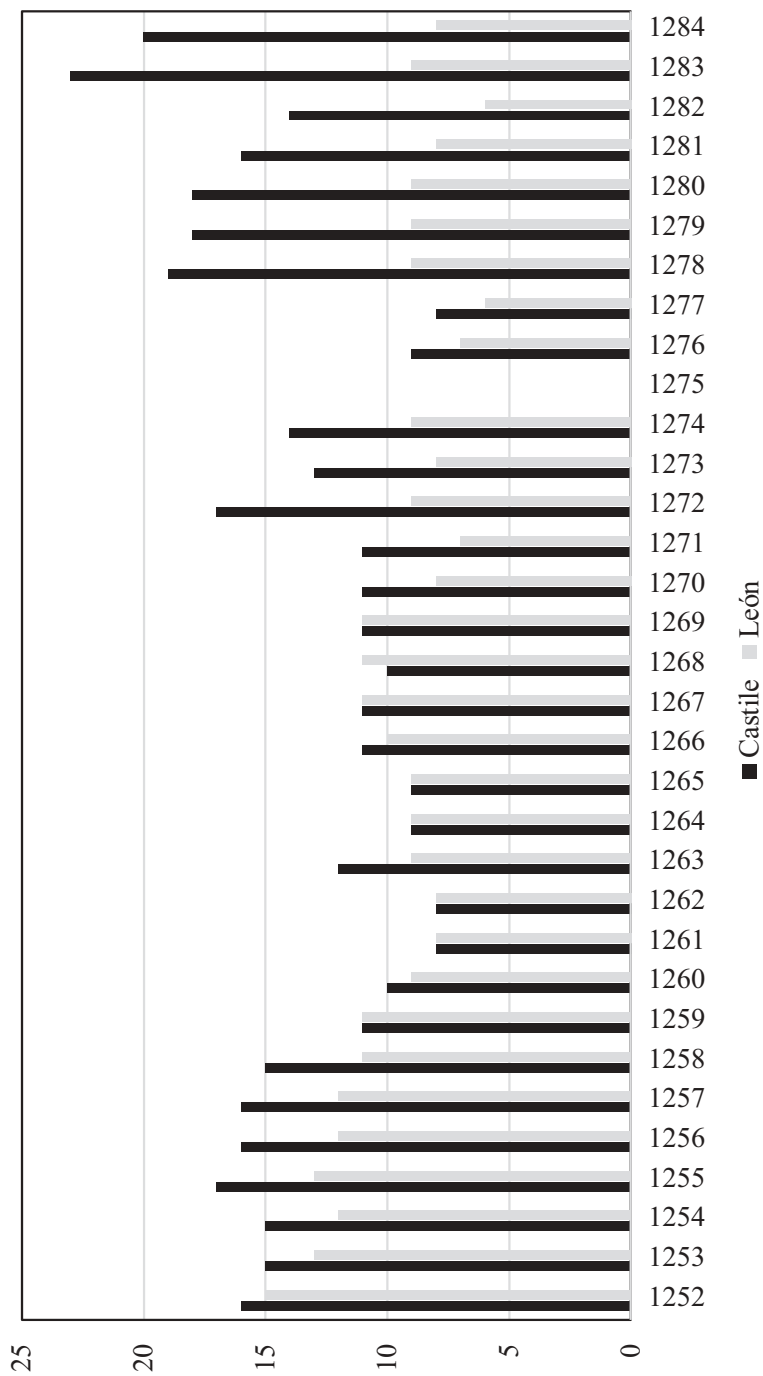


Figure 7.2 Number of nobles confirming *privilegios rodados* (1252-1284)

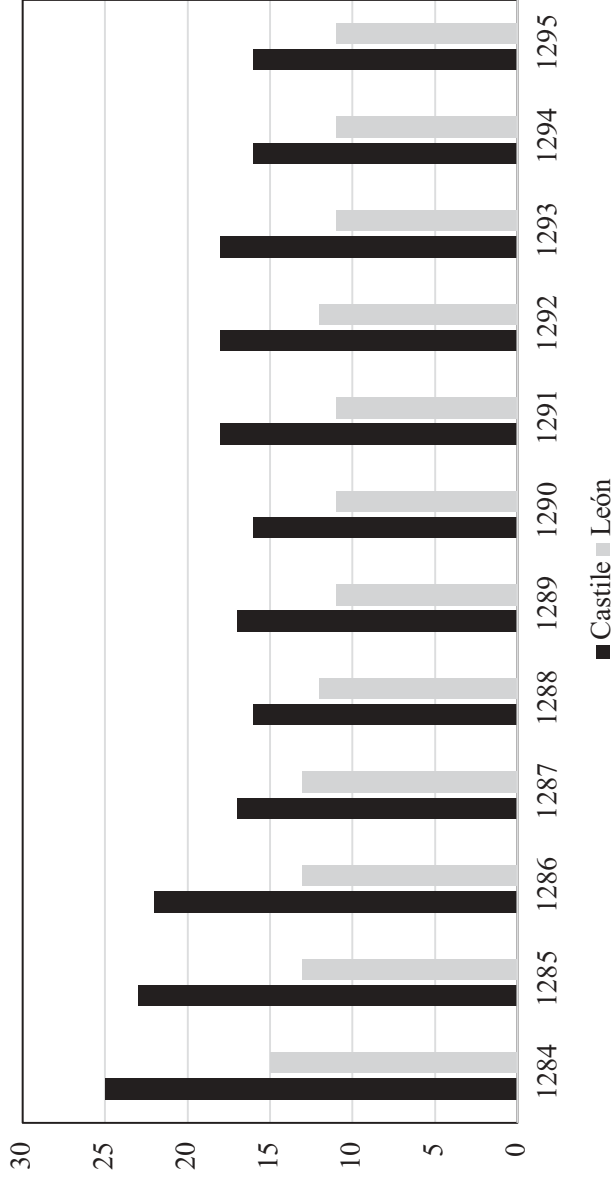


Figure 7.3 Number of nobles confirming *privilegios rodados* (1284–1295)

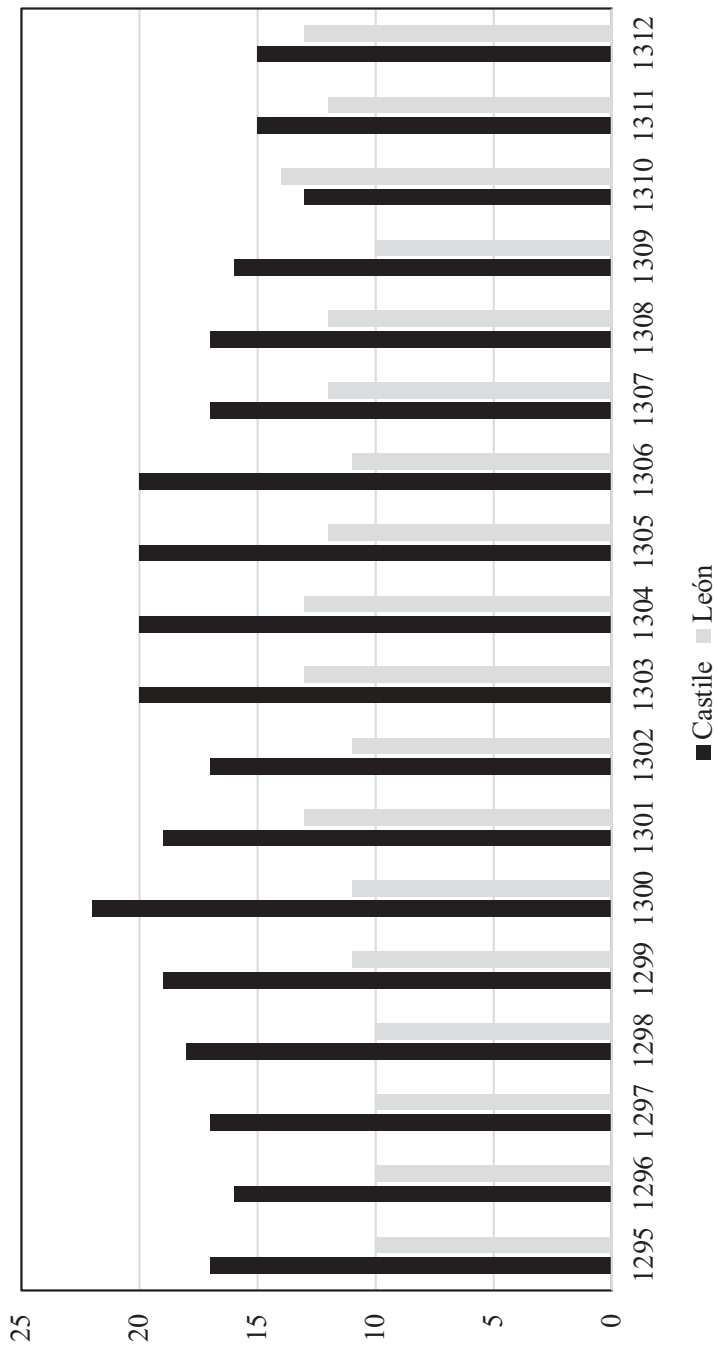


Figure 7.4 Number of nobles confirming *privilegios rodados* (1295–1312)

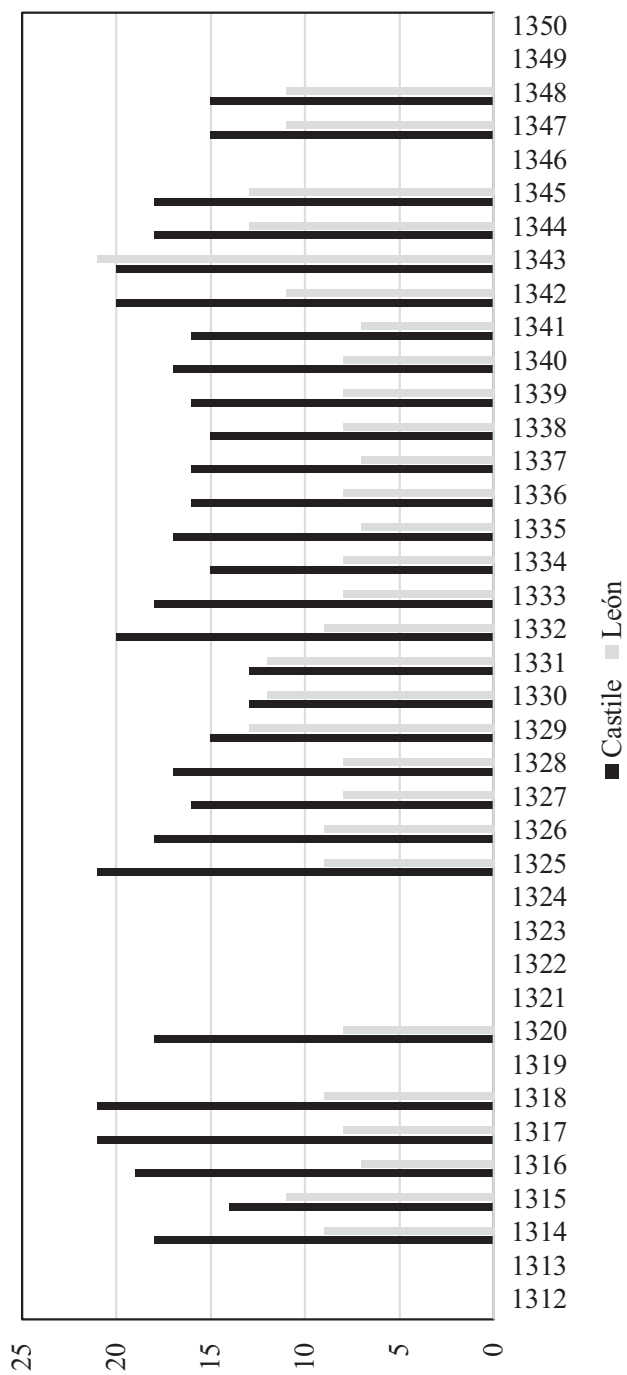


Figure 7.5 Number of nobles confirming *privilegios rodados* (1312–1350)

Table 7.1 Number of confirmers *privilegios rodados* (1252–1350)

<i>Reign</i>	<i>Oscillation in the number of confirmers (Castile)</i>	<i>Average number of confirmers (Castile)</i>	<i>Oscillation in the number of confirmers (León)</i>	<i>Average number of confirmers (León)</i>
Fernando III (1230–1252)	6–10	8.4	7–10	8.5
Alfonso X (1252–1284)	8–23	13.4	8–15	9.5
Sancho IV (1284–1295)	16–25	18.5	11–15	12
Fernando IV (1295–1312)	13–20	17.6	10–14	11.5
Alfonso XI (1312–1350)	13–21	17.1	7–13 (21)	9.6

The column of the Leonese nobles also increased its size but not as dramatically as the Castilian column did, which underscores how León was the junior partner in the 1230 territorial union: only a handful of families played a relevant role in terms of the exercise of royal power. The number of confirmers also reflects the sharp contrast between the stability signalled by the privileges issued by Fernando III and the frenetic variations that occurred during the reigns of his successors (see Table 7.1). Between 1230 and 1252, there were always between six and ten Castilian confirmers. However, over the next 100 years the Castilian column went on to rise to between 13 and 25 individuals. These dramatic changes responded to the incorporation of new individuals into the group of confirmers, which was usually done as a reward for their loyalty to the king.

A preliminary reading of these findings suggests that this higher number of confirmers reflects a period of stronger kingship. However, this was not always the case. Had the Castilian kings considered that a long list of nobles would automatically be perceived as a sign of their power, they would have kept this number as high as possible, and sought substitutes to immediately replace absent or deceased magnates. Notwithstanding, every reign shows periods of a sustained decrease in the number of confirmers. For instance, this trend is evident between 1255 and 1262 (Figure 7.2) and between 1284 and 1288 (Figure 7.3). In contrast, the reign of Fernando IV does not reveal any clear trend, although there were constant oscillations in the number of confirmers (Figure 7.4). Finally, Figure 7.5 shows how the list of nobles reached its zenith in momentous years, such as 1325 and 1332, but it was then followed by periods of progressive decline (1326–1331 and 1333–1341).

Consideration must also be given to the ways in which the nobility valued forming part of the list of confirmers. While listing the noble confirmers was used by the Castilian kings to exalt their power, those listed also gained an important veneer of prestige. Being a confirmer of royal privileges was an element of distinction as it signalled that these individuals belonged to the kingdom's elite. In this regard, it is important to remember that the royal chancery

issued thousands of *privilegios rodados* in the period between 1252 and 1350. Therefore, these diplomas' circulation made them an ideal medium for projecting ideas of power and status throughout the kingdom. Thereby the main institutions and magnates of Castile, as recipients of these documents, were periodically reminded of which individuals constituted the kingdom's elite. From this point of view, it is important to bear in mind the relational nature of these declarations of status: the status of each *ricohombre* was always defined in relation to the rest of the group.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, the Castilian monarchy would include new individuals in the list of confirmers as a way of stressing these men's senior status and, occasionally, to also indicate that they were in the king's grace because they had served him well. However, the systematic inclusion of a large number of nobles of lesser status entailed the risk of 'devaluing' the position of royal confirmer, which is why sudden increases in the number of confirmers are worth analysing. For example, the two occasions when the Castilian kings significantly increased the size of the columns of confirmers were at the beginning of their reigns and at times of special significance, when they wanted to project an image of strength, one that did always not match reality.

Royal successions, no matter how smooth they were, always entailed changes being made to Castile's elite. The accession of a king brought with it the ascent of the group of nobles closest to the newly enthroned monarch. As a result, changes were made to the highest positions on the list of confirmers which reflected shifts in the power dynamics of the court. For instance, Nuño González de Lara, who was ranked third in the Castilian column in April 1252, rose to the top of the list shortly after, when Alfonso X became king.<sup>17</sup> Yet the list of confirmers also reveals a great deal of continuity. For example, 11 out of the 14 Castilian nobles who confirmed *privilegios rodados* in 1282, before Alfonso X was deposed, continued to do so once Sancho IV had succeeded his father in 1284.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, 12 out of the 16 Castilian *ricosombres* who confirmed a privilege of Sancho IV in January 1295 were still present when Fernando IV succeeded his father a few months later.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, royal successions tended to result in an accumulation of confirmers rather than the substitution of individuals. The new king might bring new nobles with him and promote others already present. However, the most powerful *ricosombres* maintained their status as confirmers under the recently enthroned king,<sup>20</sup> which explains the high number of confirmers at the beginning of each reign.

When a noble died or rebelled against the king, he would be immediately removed from the *privilegios rodados*. Surprisingly, there was never an attempt to maintain a stable number of confirmers: the disappearance of a *ricohombre* did not mean that he was automatically replaced by another individual. In consequence, there was often a steady decrease in the number of confirmers over the course of a reign. This number could oscillate due to a series of reasons, some of which were beyond the monarch's control, such as the demise of a noble (unless he had given the order for him to be killed). On the other hand, sudden increases in the number of confirmers are more evident in the Castilian column than in the Leonese, and this was never random; it reflected the king's wish to include new individuals for a specific reason. A deeper insight into this issue is offered by a close examination of five occasions when such increases were made: 1272, 1278, 1283, 1332, and 1342–1343.

It is very telling that the three occasions on which a significant number of new confirmers was suddenly added to the Castilian column during the reign of Alfonso X were moments of political instability. A detailed look at the list of confirmers for these three years reveals the king's concern to project an image of strength at a time when his authority was being questioned. As a result, Alfonso X sought to compensate opposition from or the departure of some of the most prestigious *ricosombres* of the kingdom by presenting an exhaustive list which included the numerous nobles who remained by his side in these times of crisis.

The nobles' rebellion of 1272 can be traced through the *privilegios rodados* of those years. In 1272, a series of nobles, including Diego López V de Haro, Gutierre Suárez de Meneses, González de Cisneros, and Diego López de Salcedo, were listed in the column of the Castilian nobility for the first time.<sup>21</sup> These noblemen were either younger members of important families or else belonged to secondary branches of a leading lineage. Diego López de Haro was the younger brother of Lope Díaz III, the head of the Haro family and one of the leaders of the rebellion. Diego López de Salcedo was also a member of the Haro family: he was the extra-marital son of Lope Díaz II, the grandfather of the rebel magnate.<sup>22</sup> The Cisneros family descended from the formerly powerful Girón family, but they were not as prestigious.<sup>23</sup> Similarly, Gutierre Suárez belonged to the renowned Meneses family: he was the second son of Tello Gutiérrez, Alfonso X's former Justiciar (*justicia de la casa del rey*). However, Gutierre worked in the royal chancery, which was an unusual occupation for a *ricohombre*, and this indicates that he was not among the most powerful nobles in the kingdom.<sup>24</sup> Alfonso X's precaution of including new blood in the list of confirmers was well founded: the group shrank significantly the following year, once the rebel nobles were exiled to Granada.<sup>25</sup> The inclusion of these men in the list also responded to the king's desire to reward their service: Cisneros and Salcedo had acted as the king's representatives during the negotiations with the rebel nobles,<sup>26</sup> and Suárez de Meneses was one of Alfonso X's most trusted collaborators, as he would continue to demonstrate in the following years.

In the years that followed, the Castilian column shows a steady decline until 1278. The unexpected death of Fernando de la Cerda, in 1275, sparked a succession crisis which divided the kingdom's elite. As a result, the two most important *ricosombres*, Juan Núñez I de Lara – his father, Nuño González, had died fighting the Marinids shortly after de la Cerda's demise – and Lope Díaz III de Haro, left the kingdom and became vassals of Philippe III of France (r. 1270–1285).<sup>27</sup> Moreover, Simón Ruiz de los Cameros was executed in 1277, having been accused of conspiring against the king.<sup>28</sup>

These absences created a vacuum in the kingdom's elite which Alfonso X filled by increasing the number of confirmers. For instance, the *privilegios rodados* included two members of the Hinojosa family, Juan Díaz and Ruy Díaz, who appeared for the first time in the list of confirmers. Pedro Díaz de Castañeda and his brother Nuño were also included at this time. The status of the Castañeda family was on the rise due to their loyalty to the Castilian monarchy: they had been made *tenentes* of Asturias de Santillana (Cantabria) a couple of decades earlier as replacements for the Girón family, whose status was in decline.<sup>29</sup>

Similarly, the inclusion of Íñigo López de Mendoza embodied Alfonso X's wish to promote a new generation of *ricosombres*. Ruy López de Mendoza became Castile's admiral in 1253, and his son, Lope de Mendoza, participated in the rebellion of 1272. Although Lope was a *ricohombre*, his status was not as elevated as some of his fellow rebels, as is demonstrated by his absence from the list of confirmers.<sup>30</sup> The 'promotion' of Íñigo López, who belonged to a different branch of the family, reveals how the kingdom's elite was reshaped as a result of the internal conflicts Castile experienced in the 1270s. A final example reinforces this idea: in 1272 Suárez de Meneses and González de Cisneros were listed as confirmers in the tenth and twelfth positions in the Castilian column, then, in 1278, they were ranked third and fourth.<sup>31</sup>

The few *privilegios rodados* issued by Alfonso X in Seville during the last two years of his rule reflect his limited authority over the kingdom: he only controlled Murcia and parts of Andalusia after being deposed by his son Sancho. A royal privilege issued in September 1283 vividly expresses the Wise King's predicament. Before enumerating the list of confirmers, the diploma dramatically refers to them as those who remained truthful and loyal to the king ('*aquellos que se conusco touieron en verdad e en lealtad*'). The list is deceitfully long, including 23 confirmers in the Castilian column. However, a quick examination dispels the illusion. Only 2 out of the 23 individuals had confirmed *privilegios rodados* before: Juan Alfonso de Haro and the loyal Gutierre Suárez de Meneses. The list was completed with nobles of minor lineages, such as Gonzalo Ibáñez and his son<sup>32</sup>, and other minor officials, such as Garci Jofre, the king's cupbearer, or Diego Alfonso, the royal treasurer.<sup>33</sup> Most of these individuals were not *ricosombres*; however, in this context of extreme weakness, Alfonso X wanted to maintain the fiction that he was still in control of the kingdom by presenting a long list of confirmers.

The two occasions in which the list of confirmers experienced a significant increase during the reign of Alfonso XI were in the momentous years of 1332, the same year the king orchestrated his memorable coronation, and 1342–1343, during the siege of Algeciras. This was hardly a coincidence. Alfonso XI wanted to maximise the visual impact of these documents at times of special significance, and so make them more memorable.

Between 1331 and 1332, the number of magnates listed in the Castilian column rose from 13 to 20. Moreover, the first group of confirmers now included Alfonso de la Cerda, the former royal pretender who had challenged the rights of Sancho IV and Fernando IV.<sup>34</sup> The additions made to the Castilian column are not as 'suspicious' as those in 1283. Some of the new confirmers were members of long-established and prestigious lineages, such as Nuño Núñez de Aza or Gonzalo Ruiz Girón, whose families had lost, relatively speaking, their primacy in the second half of the thirteenth century.<sup>35</sup> Others belonged to families who had joined the Castilian column in the last decades of the previous century, such as Ruy González de Saldaña, Ruy González de Manzanedo, and the two Manriques, Juan García and Garci Fernández, although they were not consistently listed in these documents.<sup>36</sup> As a result, it may be argued that the *privilegios rodados* of 1332 sought to emphasise Alfonso XI's moment of

triumph. The inclusion of Alfonso de la Cerda and the addition of more nobles projected an image of unity and strength as did the account given of this same year in the royal chronicle. As has been discussed, the *Crónica de Alfonso XI* named all the *ricoshombrs* and knights who participated in the ceremony, those who were knighted by the king, and those who joined the newly created *Orden de la Banda*.<sup>37</sup> Likewise, the royal privileges aimed to present an image of a powerful king surrounded by his loyal vassals. From this point of view, it is important to highlight that in 1332 the number of *privilegios rodados* issued by the royal chancery was the second-highest annual amount from Alfonso XI's reign; more than two dozen extant diplomas were issued that year, which was only surpassed in 1326, the year after the king came of age.<sup>38</sup> Evidently, the wider dissemination of these documents meant it was of great importance to ensure that they projected an impressive image of Alfonso XI's power.

The *privilegios rodados* issued during the siege of Algeciras also document a surprisingly high number of confirmers. The Castilian column included 20 nobles in 1342 and 1343, while the Leonese column reached the spectacular figure of 21 confirmers in 1343, which was completely unprecedented.<sup>39</sup> There had never been more than 15 Leonese nobles confirming royal privileges before (see Table 7.1). Moreover, during the reign of Alfonso XI it had been common that only six or seven confirmers were listed in this column (see Figure 7.5).

The new confirmers of 1342–1343 included the children of powerful magnates, such as Lope Núñez de Lara and Sancho Manuel, and *ricoshombrs* who were actively participating in the military campaigns against the Muslims, such as Enrique Enríquez, who was accompanied by his son Alfonso and his brother Fernando, and the Guzmán family,<sup>40</sup> who were represented in the Leonese column by five of its members. In consequence, the inclusion of new confirmers was one of Alfonso XI's ways of rewarding these magnates for their service. Tellingly, most of these nobles disappeared from the *privilegios rodados* in June 1344 once Algeciras had fallen.<sup>41</sup> Another complementary reason for the addition of such a high number of new confirmers was the king's wish to maximise the visual impact of the royal privileges. In 1339, Alfonso XI appointed Fernando Martínez de Ágreda as 'lieutenant' ('*teniente logar*') of the *privilegios rodados*, a position which indicates the specialisation of the royal chancery and the importance these diplomas had for the Castilian monarchy. Then, after the battle of Río Salado (30 October 1340), the royal chancery started to use this victory to date the *privilegios rodados*. Therefore, extending the list of confirmers would have further contributed to reinforcing the idea of Alfonso XI's successful kingship, which is what these documents sought to project.

To sum up, the *privilegios rodados* issued between 1252 and 1350 demonstrate how the number of confirmers was increased as both a short-term and a long-term trend. Occasionally, the Castilian kings raised the number still further, depending on the political context, in order to exalt their power both at times of unrest and triumph. Notwithstanding, these punctual decisions do not fully underscore how there was a clear trend for the number of noble confirmers to grow. During the reign of Fernando III, the number of nobles who confirmed royal privileges never

rose above 20, including Castilian and Leonese magnates, while this figure became significantly higher over the second half of the thirteenth century. This growth was most evident in the Castilian column, which doubled in response to the social promotion of loyal families and nobles for their service to the king. In consequence, the augmentation of the group of confirmers also reflects how the expansion of royal authority experienced in this period ran parallel to the expansion of the Castilian nobility: by then the kingdom's elite included more individuals than before. On the other hand, the strengthening of the Castilian nobility was not only reflected by sheer numbers. The rise of new families did not result in any form of challenge to the traditional families. Instead, the *privilegios rodados* illustrate how the most prestigious nobles became increasingly more powerful.

### **Lineage and personal status: The position of confirmer as the 'patrimony' of the most powerful families**

The *privilegios rodados* issued in 1272 reveal a sharp increase in the number of confirmers. However, this is not the only novelty to be noted in the documents issued during that fateful year. From 1272 onwards, royal privileges began to include the patronymic of the noble confirmers; *ricoshombrés* who had previously been identified as Don Lope Díaz, Don Simón Ruiz, and Don Juan Alfonso, were now listed as Don Lope Díaz de Vizcaya, Don Simón Ruiz de los Cameros, and Don Juan Alfonso de Haro. Even nobles from secondary lineages received the same treatment: Don Juan Fernández or Don Ramiro Díaz became Don Juan Fernández Batissela and Don Ramiro Díaz de Cifuentes. One of the few exceptions was Nuño González de Lara, who continued to confirm documents simply as 'Don Nuño González'.<sup>42</sup> The reason for this is that the village of Lara was no longer a *tenencia* controlled by his family, as it now belonged to Burgos's *alfoz* (hinterland).<sup>43</sup> In any case, the late appearance of the Lara sobriquet in royal privileges will be discussed below. The other novelty to be found is that Alfonso Fernández, who was simply identified as the king's son before, was now listed as the king's son and lord of Molina ('*hijo del rey y señor de Molina*'). Although Molina was later incorporated into the royal demesne, other lordships such as Biscay (1287),<sup>44</sup> Cabrera and Ribera (1295),<sup>45</sup> Cameros (1299),<sup>46</sup> as well as Aguilar, Ledesma, and Noreña (1335),<sup>47</sup> among others, started to be regularly associated with their respective owners in royal privileges from this date onwards.

It is hard to believe that it was a coincidence that these two developments were implemented in 1272. The inclusion of the nobles' patronymic indicates the Castilian monarchy's intention to acknowledge the identity of the *ricoshombrés*' lineages, which on most occasions was closely associated with the ancestral lands controlled by the family. This change in the royal chancery's practice may be interpreted as evidence of Alfonso X's wish to satisfy the kingdom's nobility by exalting the status of their most conspicuous members, and this concern was clearly influenced by the context of political turmoil. Alternatively, it is worth considering how this decision would also have had positive implications for the Castilian monarchy. The emphasis given to the prestige of the royal confirmers in these documents also served to exalt the king's power, as he

was the lord of this formidable group. In addition, the progressive inclusion of a number of lordships was a way of stressing their owner's status and acknowledging how these territories had developed a particular identity within the kingdom. In relation to this, Alfonso's decision illustrated the Castilian monarchy's acceptance of the nobles' right to exercise justice in certain parts of the kingdom, and this was further developed in the *Ordenamiento de Alcalá* (1348).<sup>48</sup> In sum, these two novel changes to the *privilegios rodados* graphically embodied how the most important *ricos hombres* had strengthened their positions during this period. Closer scrutiny of the highest-ranking positions in the columns of the Castilian and Leonese nobility, and the way that certain confirmers were replaced after their demise, will confirm this view.

Between 1252 and 1350, the number of confirmers oscillated enormously and a score of new individuals joined this elite group. However, the nobles who occupied the highest positions on these lists tended to remain unchanged: the inclusion of new nobles very rarely affected those at the top of the columns of the Castilian and Leonese nobility. This stability shows how, even though new families were being promoted to the status of confirmers, only a small collection of these wielded enough prestige to occupy the most prominent positions of this list.

Table 7.2 shows how 14 individuals were listed at the head of the column of the Castilian nobility between 1252 and 1350. This figure, which could be

Table 7.2 First confirmers of the *privilegios rodados* (1252–1350)

<i>Second column (Castile)</i>	<i>Fourth column (León)</i>
Nuño González de Lara (1252–1272, 1274)	Rodrigo Alfonso (1252–1254)
Alfonso de Molina (1273, 1277–1282, 1311–1312)	Alfonso Fernández (son of Alfonso X) (1255–1277, 1279–1282)
Lope Díaz III de Haro (1276)	Infante Juan (1278)
Juan Alfonso I de Haro (1283–1284)	Fernando Pérez Ponce (1283)
Juan Manuel (1284–1287, 1291–1295, 1299–1305, 1307–1310, 1316–1318, 1325, 1338–1348)	Juan Fernández (nephew of Alfonso X) (1284)
Nuño González II de Lara (1288)	Sancho (son of the infante Pedro) (1284–1312)
Juan Núñez I de Lara (1289–1290)	Juan de Haro <i>el Tuerto</i> (son of the infante Juan) (1314–1315)
Diego López V de Haro (1295–1298)	Pedro Fernández de Castro (1316–1343)
Fernando de la Cerda (1306, 1320)	Fernando Rodríguez II de Castro (1345–1348)
Juan Núñez II de Lara (1314)	
Juan Alfonso II de Haro (1315)	
Juan Núñez III de Lara (1326–1333, 1335–1336)	
Fernando Díaz de Haro (1334)	
Juan Alfonso de Alburquerque (1337)	

considered quite high at first sight, reflects the 'stable mobility' of the kingdoms' elite. First, it is important to highlight how Nuño González de Lara and Juan Manuel monopolised this position for more than 50 years. Furthermore: first place on this list was exclusively held by individuals related to the royal family, such as Juan Manuel, Alfonso de Molina, and Fernando de la Cerda, and members of the Lara and Haro families. Juan Alfonso de Albuquerque is the only individual who does not fall into one of these two groups. However, he occupied this position very briefly, due to Juan Manuel's exile in Aragón and Juan Núñez III's position as *alférez*. Moreover, it is important to stress that he was related, albeit through illegitimate birth, to both the Portuguese and the Castilian royal families.<sup>49</sup>

The Leonese column shows even less variation. Only nine individuals held the first position of confirmer throughout this century. Three of them, Alfonso Fernández, Alfonso X's extramarital son, Sancho, son of the infante Pedro (see Appendices 1), and Pedro Fernández de Castro were listed in this position for around 75 years. The Leonese group was always headed by royal relatives – including extramarital children, such as Alfonso Fernández and Rodrigo Alfonso, Alfonso IX of León's illegitimate son – or else a member of the Castro family, the most powerful lineage in Galicia. Fernando Pérez Ponce occupied this position in 1283, although it was under very exceptional circumstances, as was discussed above. The stability of the Leonese column and the leading role assigned to secondary members of the royal family once more indicates the subordinate status of the ancient kingdom León.

The relative stability of the first position of confirmers also reflects an issue discussed in the previous chapter: the most common way of solving a conflict between the king and a noble was to return to the previous status quo. The *privilegios rodados* offer many examples in which rebel nobles recovered their prominent position once they returned to the king's service. For instance, in 1274 Nuño González de Lara recovered his place at the head of the column of the Castilian nobility on his return from Granada. In spite of the *Crónica de Alfonso X*'s bitterness towards him, Nuño González continued to be listed at the top of the list as if the rebellion had never happened.<sup>50</sup> In a similar vein, Juan Núñez I de Lara was placed at the head of the Castilian nobility immediately after he was reconciled with Sancho IV in 1289.<sup>51</sup> By doing so, the king recognised the magnate's status as the most prestigious *ricohombre* in the kingdom despite the fact that Juan Núñez had supported Alfonso de la Cerda's claim and challenged his authority for more than a decade. Additionally, it also reflects Sancho IV's interest in stressing the return of the head of the Lara family to the king's service, especially after the estrangement of the Haros as a result of the assassination of Lope Díaz III in 1288.

The immediate restoration or elevation of rebel nobles of prestigious lineages following their return to the king's service is also indicative of the 'glass ceiling' that prevented the ascent of the other *ricoshombres*. Remaining loyal to the king resulted in social advancement; however, the members of the second tier of the nobility could not realistically aspire to replace the most powerful

families of the kingdom. There are countless cases of this trend, but a series of key examples serve to illustrate this point.

Fernando Ruiz de Castro *el Castellano*, a member of a secondary branch of the Galician Castro family, was ranked sixth in the list of confirmers of the Castilian nobility at the beginning of Alfonso X's reign. The death or exile of various nobles allowed him to slowly ascend the list of Castilian noble confirmers: in 1256 he reached fifth place, fourth in 1264, and, finally, third in 1268. However, the return of Simón Ruiz de los Cameros from exile and the inclusion of younger nobles belonging to more prestigious families, such as Lope Díaz III de Haro and Alfonso de Molina, son of the infante Alfonso de Molina, meant he was relegated to a lower rank. By 1272, Fernando Ruiz was back to the sixth place he had occupied twenty years earlier.<sup>52</sup>

Fernán Ruiz de Saldaña, who confirmed royal privileges uninterruptedly between 1294 and 1327, presents a similar case. Saldaña started in the tenth position and, five years later, was ranked eighth. However, in 1300 he was demoted to the 12th position due to the incorporation of nobles from more prestigious families. From then on, he steadily climbed the list again until he reached third position in 1314. However, two years later, he was relegated to the sixth place. For the rest of his life, Saldaña oscillated between the seventh and fourth positions, which he held in 1327.<sup>53</sup> Fernán Ruiz de Saldaña benefited from royal patronage. In 1298, he received the lordship of Saldaña, which his family had long aspired to obtain as they had traditionally held the position of *tenentes* there.<sup>54</sup> Ten years later, he was appointed *adelantado mayor* in Castile.<sup>55</sup> Nevertheless, Saldaña, like many other *ricoshombres*, could not hope to reach the summit of the kingdom's elite. These positions were monopolised by a few lineages, who could rebel against the king and still recover their privileged status in the column of confirmers. Furthermore, these magnates started to be accompanied by their children in these lists, which reinforced their families' dominance.

The way families were represented in the *privilegios rodados* constitutes another element which reveals the sharp distinction between the most prestigious lineages and those of more junior *ricoshombres*. The younger members of the second tier of the nobility only joined the group of confirmers once their fathers had died. Although it was not uncommon for two siblings or cousins to confirm royal privileges together, fathers and sons from the junior noble families were never listed together as confirmers. For instance, Diego Gómez de Castañeda and his brother, Alfonso García, started to confirm *privilegios rodados* in 1301, once their father, Pedro Díaz de Castañeda, had died and been removed from the list.<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, not every *ricohombre* was automatically succeeded by his children. For example, Pedro Manrique died in 1281 and was removed from the list, but his son, Garci Fernández Manrique, was only added to the list of confirmers in 1298, following the death of his uncle, Rodrigo Rodríguez Manrique, who began to be listed as confirmer in 1278, at the same time as his brother Pedro.<sup>57</sup> There are many more examples of this type of 'hiatus' but the following two are especially indicative. Íñigo López de Mendoza confirmed privileges until 1287; however, his son, Lope de Mendoza,

did not make his debut on the list until 1297, which means that the Mendozas were completely absent from royal diplomas for a decade.<sup>58</sup> Similarly, Rodrigo Álvarez de Aza, who was a member of the Castilian column between 1298 and 1309, was only replaced by his son, Nuño Núñez, in 1318.<sup>59</sup> Therefore, it seems that, in the case of the junior families of *ricoshombrs*, sons only replaced their fathers once they had reached adulthood – so long as there was no senior member of his family already present on the list – or else when the king decided they should be added to the list. In consequence, their positions as confirmers relied primarily on their ability to serve the king effectively rather than their personal or familial status.

At the beginning of this period, the most important families followed the same pattern of succession as those of the junior *ricoshombrs*. Between 1252 and 1255, Rodrigo González and his son, Rodrigo González *el Niño*, confirmed *privilegios rodados* together.<sup>60</sup> Nevertheless, this was a unique exception which resulted from the importance granted to the Girón family during the reign of Fernando III and the proximity of the younger Rodrigo González to the newly enthroned Alfonso X.<sup>61</sup> For instance, Juan Núñez I de Lara only joined the list of confirmers in 1276, after the death of his father, Nuño González, although he had been a relevant political operator for almost a decade by then. It is also significant that he was placed in the third position, below Lope Díaz III de Haro and Simón Ruiz de los Cameros.<sup>62</sup> Although his family's prestige guaranteed him a relevant position, the seniority of other magnates from relevant lineages was considered paramount for the king. However, this would change very soon.

Juan Núñez I was immediately removed from the list of confirmers and did not return to the king's service until 1289. By then, the situation was very different: Juan Núñez was automatically listed in the first position of the Castilian column. Moreover, he was accompanied by many other members of the Lara family: his younger brother, Nuño González II; and his two sons: Juan Núñez II and Nuño González III. To underline their kinship, Juan Núñez II was listed as '*Juan, hijo de Juan Núñez*'.<sup>63</sup> This was the first time that one family monopolised the list of confirmers in such an evident way: the Laras were in the first, second, fifth, and sixth positions of the Castilian column. The other remarkable aspect was that Juan Núñez's sons were both children, as Juan Núñez II, the eldest, was probably 13 around then,<sup>64</sup> which points to an evident change in the criteria used to elaborate the list of confirmers.

From the 1280s onwards, it became common for young children to confirm *privilegios rodados*, although this honour was limited to the most prestigious lineages. In 1284, Juan Manuel was at the head of the Castilian column of confirmers despite being only 2 years old.<sup>65</sup> Similarly, his son, Fernando Manuel, joined this group in 1339 at a very young age.<sup>66</sup> In 1343, even Sancho Manuel, the magnate's illegitimate son, was also included in the list of confirmers although he was still not an adult.<sup>67</sup> Likewise, the children of important lineages such as the Haro, Albuquerque, Ponce de León, or Castro families started to proliferate in the royal privileges. The Castros represent another good example of the changes made to the list of

confirmers. Andrés de Castro confirmed *privilegios rodados* until 1255, when he died heirless.<sup>68</sup> His younger brother, Esteban Fernández de Castro, did not join the Leonese column of confirmers until 1272; however, in 1292 Esteban was joined by his son Fernando Rodríguez de Castro, who was still a child.<sup>69</sup> By 1305, a very young Pedro Fernández de Castro had replaced his deceased father. It is especially telling that the royal privilege listed him as '*Pedro Fernández, hijo de Fernando Rodríguez*'.<sup>70</sup> In 1342, Pedro Fernández was joined by his young son Fernando Rodríguez II.<sup>71</sup> Unlike other minor families, lineages like the Castros were granted a position in the list of confirmers which was not contingent on the holder's age.

By 1343, two generations of the Manuel, Lara, Haro, Castro, Alburquerque, and Enríquez lineages were listed as confirmers. Up to 11 of the 41 nobles who confirmed the *privilegio rodado* for this year were identified as 'son of' ('*hijo de*').<sup>72</sup> Therefore, it seems evident that while serving the king was a prerequisite for being listed as a confirmer of royal privileges at the beginning of this period, a change had taken place by the end of the thirteenth century. By then, the proliferation of young children, alone or along with their fathers, reflects that the individual and familial status of a *ricohombre* was sufficient to guarantee them a position in this elite group.

### **The list of confirmers in 1252 and 1348: The Castilian monarchy and the fortunes of the Lara family**

Tables 7.3 and 7.4 show the contrasting lists of confirmers included on the royal privileges for 1252 and 1348 (there are no extant *privilegios rodados* issued by Alfonso XI in 1349 or 1350).<sup>73</sup> While there are obvious continuities, it should be stressed that there are also significant changes. These differences highlight how the most important lineages of *ricoshombres* had strengthened their position over the course of these 96 years, and this was especially the case for the Lara family.

The number of confirmers was roughly similar in the Castilian column (16 and 15) but somewhat smaller for the Leonese one (15 and 11). As has been said, the size of this list oscillated significantly between 1252 and 1348, although it listed more nobles than during the reigns of Alfonso VIII and Fernando III, when there were no more than ten confirmers in total or per column, respectively. Therefore, it was from 1252 onwards when a higher number of *ricoshombres* began to be listed, which can be interpreted as a period during which the kingdom's elite grew.

Although the number of confirmers remained very similar, the way these individuals were identified underwent significant changes. Unlike in 1252, by 1348 all the *ricoshombres* were identified by their family name, which was very frequently a patronymic. In addition, the individual's lordships and offices were mentioned, a change which started in 1272 and reveals how the nobility held a much more solid position than before: the magnates monopolised the most important court positions and exercised jurisdictional rights over certain territories.

Table 7.3 List of confirmers of *privilegios rodados* in 1252 and 1348 (Castilian column)

1252	1348
Nuño González [de Lara]	Juan, <i>hijo del infante</i> Manuel, <i>adelantado de la Frontera</i>
Alfonso López [de Haro]	Juan Núñez, <i>señor de Vizcaya</i> , <i>alférez y mayordomo del rey</i>
Rodrigo González [Girón]	Fernando, <i>hijo de don Juan</i> [Manuel] <i>y adelantado de Murcia</i>
Simón Ruiz [de los Cameros]	Lope, <i>hijo de Juan Núñez</i>
Alfonso Téllez [de Meneses]	Diego, <i>hijo de don Fernando</i> [de Haro]
Fernando Ruiz de Castro [ <i>el Castellano</i> ]	Alfonso López de Haro
Pedro Núñez [de Guzmán]	Alvar Díaz de Haro
Nuño Guillén [de Guzmán]	Alfonso Téllez de Haro
Pedro Guzmán	Juan Rodríguez de Cisneros
Rodrigo González <i>el Niño</i> [Girón]	Juan García Manrique
Gómez Ruiz [de Manzanedo]	Garcí Fernández Manrique
Fernando García [de Villamayor]	Gonzalo Ruiz Girón
Alfonso García [de Villamayor]	Nuño Núñez de Aza
Rodrigo Álvarez [de Asturias]	Diego López, <i>hijo de Lope Díaz el Chico</i>
Diego Gómez	Ruy González de Castañeda
Pedro López de Arana	

Table 7.4 List of confirmers of *privilegios rodados* in 1252 and 1348 (Leonese column)

1252	1348
Rodrigo Alfonso	Fernando de Castro, <i>pertiguero mayor de Santiago</i>
Martín Alfonso	Juan Alfonso de Alburquerque
Rodrigo Gómez	Juan Alfonso de Alburquerque, <i>su hijo</i> , <i>alférez del infante</i> Pedro
Rodrigo Froilaz	Rodrigo Pérez Ponce
Fernando Yáñez	Lope Díaz de Cifuentes
Martín Gil	Rodrigo Pérez de Villalobos
Juan Pérez [Ponce]	Fernán Rodríguez de Villalobos, <i>merino de León y Asturias</i>
Andrés [de Castro], <i>pertiguero de Santiago</i>	Pedro Ponce de León
Gonzalo Ramírez	Juan Alfonso de Guzmán
Rodrigo Rodríguez	Alvar Pérez de Guzmán
Ramiro Rodríguez	Fernando Enríquez
Ramiro Díaz	
Alvar Díaz	
Pelayo Pérez	
Gonzalo Morante	

Not surprisingly, there are families who disappeared from these documents. Families who had held a prominent position during the reign of Fernando III and the beginning of Alfonso X's, such as the Meneses, Girón, and Villamayor, ceased to exist as such by the fourteenth century. On the other hand, new families joined this elite group during this period, especially during the tumultuous last quarter of the thirteenth century. However, with the exception of the Alburquerque, the new nobles who were included in the *privilegios rodados*, i.e. lineages like Cisneros or Castañeda, remained in the lower half of the column of confirmers. There was clearly a 'glass ceiling' which prevented these individuals from reaching higher positions on the list, a space which had become the exclusive patrimony of the most powerful families of the kingdom.

Families such as the Manuel, Lara, Haro, Castro, and Alburquerque monopolised the top places within the Castilian and Leonese columns. Furthermore, they were frequently joined by their children. It was not uncommon to see various members of the same family on the list of confirmers in 1252; however, it was much rarer to see a father and a son sharing this honour: only the Girón family enjoyed this privilege, albeit briefly. By contrast, in 1348 several members of the same family from different generations were often listed together. Moreover, while Rodrigo Girón *el Niño*, who was listed in 1252, was in fact an adult, the column of 1348 is filled with young children, such as Fernando Manuel and Lope Núñez. By the end of this period, individual and familial status played a greater role in ensuring entry to this elite group, more so than any personal service rendered to the king.

At the beginning of the reign of Alfonso X, Nuño González de Lara was the first confirmer of royal privileges listed in the Castilian column, which underscored his status as the most powerful *ricohombre* in the kingdom. A century later, his descendant, Juan Núñez III de Lara, had relinquished this position to Juan Manuel, needless to say a royal relative. However, Juan Núñez had by then accumulated the coveted offices of *alférez* and *mayordomo*. By 1348, Juan Núñez III de Lara held a prominent position which far excelled that held by his ancestors in the past two centuries; however, the Laras' star had not always shone as brightly during the period under study here.

In his insightful study of the Lara family, Simon Doubleday interprets the extinction of this family as the result of the conflict they waged against the Castilian monarchy from the end of the thirteenth century onwards. Although the Laras' cooperative attitude had resulted in benefits for this noble family, the reconciliation between Juan Núñez III and Alfonso XI was only superficial, as the Castilian kings would not tolerate the enormous power derived from the Lara family's vast estates and jurisdictional authority. In consequence, the fate of the Laras was sealed in the reign of Pedro I.<sup>74</sup> However, I would like to present an alternative interpretation, one in which the Laras were a pillar of royal authority, not an obstacle, and one which focuses on these nobles' 'final redemption' prior to their deaths. Although the four dynasts of the Lara family of this period

(Nuño González, Juan Núñez I, Juan Núñez II, and Juan Núñez III) rebelled against the Castilian monarchy, they all returned to the king's service.

From this point of view, it can be argued that between 1252 and 1350 the fortune of the Lara family ran parallel to that of the Castilian monarchy. The decades of political instability and the turmoil that unfolded between 1272–1275 and 1332–1338 – inaugurated by the nobles' rebellion and the succession crisis sparked by the death of Alfonso X's heir, Fernando de la Cerda, and concluded with Alfonso XI's lavish coronation and the final appeasement of his remaining opponents – were characterised by the intermittent yet sustained conflict between the Castilian kings and the Laras.

Nuño González was the leader of the nobles' rebellion in 1272. In 1274, Nuño returned to Alfonso X's service and recovered his prominent position: he died in the *Frontera* the following year fighting against the Marinids. His son, Juan Núñez I, supported Alfonso de la Cerda's claim and abandoned Castile once Sancho was accepted as heir. In the following decades, the Laras alternated periods of rebellion with brief periods of royal service. From this point of view, the prominent position held by some members of the Haro family, such as Lope Díaz III in 1287–1288 and Diego López V at the beginning of the reign of Fernando IV (see Table 7.2), can be explained by the notorious absence of the Laras.

Furthermore, when a member of the Lara family returned to royal service, he was warmly welcomed by the Castilian kings. As discussed above, when Juan Núñez ended his quarrel with Sancho IV, in 1289, he was immediately placed in the first position of the list of confirmers, which also included his younger brother and Juan Núñez's two children. Juan Núñez I rebelled again in 1292 but promptly returned to royal service. Like his father, Juan Núñez died in Andalusia in 1294 serving the king. The *Crónica de Sancho IV* exalts his military exploits, emphasising that while Juan Núñez was in the south, the Muslims did not dare to attack. Moreover, the royal chronicler affirms that when Sancho IV was informed of the noble's death, he showed great regret for this demise (*'cuando le llegó el mandado de la su muerte pesole ende mucho'*).<sup>75</sup> The financial records of the royal chancery in 1292–1294, one of the few extant documents of this kind to exist prior to the registries from the fifteenth century, also document Juan Núñez I's prominent position. He is mentioned on two occasions as the beneficiary of important sums of money (110,000 *maravedís* in total) granted by Abraham *el Barchilón*, Sancho IV's *almojarife* (responsible for tax collection).<sup>76</sup> Although the extant information is patchy, no other *ricohombre* benefited as much as Juan Núñez from the king's revenues in those registers.

Juan Núñez II supported the infante Juan's claim to the Leonese throne but returned to royal favour in 1301. By the end of the reign of Fernando IV, only royal relatives such as Juan Manuel and Alfonso de Molina were listed above him in the *privilegios rodados*. In 1314, Juan Núñez II finally reached the top of the list of Castilian confirmers.<sup>77</sup> However, he died childless the following year, whereby his nephew, Juan Núñez III, became the head of the family. From 1326, Juan Núñez was placed in the first position among the

Castilian nobility and, what is still more interesting, from 1328 onwards royal privileges identified him as Juan Núñez de Lara.<sup>78</sup> Before then, he was listed as '*Juan Núñez, hijo de don Fernando*', his father was Fernando de la Cerda, the second son of the infante Fernando de la Cerda (see Appendices 1). Why would the royal chancery decide to change his name? Simon Doubleday suggests that the inclusion of the Lara sobriquet responded to the growing interest of the Castilian nobility to stress their lineage.<sup>79</sup> However, as was shown above, the inclusion of the *ricosombres*' surnames in the *privilegios rodados* had started 50 years earlier, so it may be asked why the name Lara was used at this precise moment?

It is not surprising that the Castilian monarchy preferred to stress Juan Núñez's maternal family rather than his blood ties with the de la Cerdas, as they had questioned Sancho IV's, Fernando IV's, and Alfonso XI's rights to the throne. It is important to remember that Alfonso de la Cerda's definitive surrender only took place in 1331. Similarly, when Pedro I fell ill, in 1350, Juan Núñez III was considered as a contender to succeed him on the basis of his family.<sup>80</sup> On the other hand, it was also indicative of the prestige associated with the Lara name. Juan Núñez was undoubtedly conscious (and proud) of his Lara heritage, but it was the royal chancery which was in charge of issuing these diplomas.

In consequence, I think that Alfonso XI decided to identify Juan Núñez as a member of the Lara family in order to strengthen his own position. In 1328, Alvar Núñez fell from grace, and was later assassinated, while Juan Manuel had rebelled against the king (the magnate was conspicuously absent from the *privilegios rodados* at the time). In consequence, it may be argued that Alfonso XI wanted to emphasise that the head of the renowned Lara family was loyal to him. As discussed above, the display of prestigious vassals in these documents was also a way of extolling royal authority. Additionally, it must be taken into consideration that Juan Núñez III was still very young; he was probably 14 or 15 at the time. Therefore, the noble's prominent position – he was also the king's *alférez* – signals how Alfonso XI wanted to stress Juan Núñez's family prestige, irrespective of whether the magnate played an active role in the kingdom's politics.

The *Gran Crónica de Alfonso XI* recounts the death of Juan Núñez II and the succession of his nephew, Juan Núñez III, in 1315 in more detail than the *Crónica de Alfonso XI*. In an idiosyncratic passage, the chronicler emphasised the *hidalgos*' distress on learning that the lordship of Lara, one of the three primaeval territories of Castile, lacked an heir. Finally, it was decided that Juan Núñez should inherit his uncle's possessions. Moreover, the *hidalgos* decided to collect a tax in order to fund the acquisition of castles and lands to endow Juan Núñez III's lordship.<sup>81</sup>

Simon Doubleday has interpreted the creation of this obviously fictional passage as underpinned by a concern to show that many towns and nobles valued the Lara family as a counterweight to the Castilian monarchy.<sup>82</sup> However, I think that this story is another example of the Castilian monarchy using the

prestige derived from the Lara family to its own benefit. The *Gran Crónica de Alfonso XI* was composed in 1376, when the dynasty had disappeared and their possessions had been absorbed into the royal demesne. Since 1370, the future Juan I adopted the title of the heir of King Enrique (II) and lord of Lara and Biscay.<sup>83</sup> This new 'lordship of Lara' – the actual village of Lara belonged to Burgos – was not very extensive, but it was enormously prestigious. As a result, the lord of Lara enjoyed the privilege to speak first on behalf of the *fijosdalgo* (hidalgo) during meetings of the *Cortes*, which underscored the family's position as the head of the kingdom's nobility.<sup>84</sup> Therefore, the Trastámaras appropriated, and boosted, the prestige associated with the Lara name following the extinction of the family in a similar way as Alfonso XI had done when he 'resurrected' the family's memory in 1328 by identifying Juan Núñez III as a Lara.

Juan Núñez III rebelled against Alfonso XI and broke his ties with the king (*desnaturarse*); however, as was analysed in the previous chapter, the noble returned to royal service and recovered the monarch's favour. In hindsight, the reconciliation made in 1336 can be seen as a temporary agreement – akin to those of 1289, 1294, and 1334 – between the head of the Lara family and the Castilian monarchy, especially as it is known that the dynasty was going to disappear within a few years. However, the clash between the Laras and the Castilian kings was far from being inevitable. An alternative historical development, one in which the Lara family, despite sporadic conflicts and periods of estrangement, continued to enjoy royal favour under Pedro I and his successors was equally plausible. Alfonso XI died on March 1350 during the siege of Gibraltar and, months later, Juan Núñez III left Pedro I's court, in order to demonstrate his disagreement with the special favour granted to Juan Alfonso de Alburquerque by the new king; he died shortly after. By 1352, after the deaths of Juan Núñez III's two young sons, Lope and Nuño, the Lara family became extinct. However, it was impossible to foresee these events at the beginning of 1350. The drastic change in the Laras' fortune was not written in the stars. On the other hand, these future events did not undermine the fact that Juan Núñez III remained loyal to the king for more than a decade, a period which coincided with Alfonso XI's 'golden years'.

By the end of 1336, just immediately after Juan Núñez had surrendered Lerma, the *privilegios rodados* placed the magnate in the first place of the Castilian column of confirmers. Additionally, Juan Núñez recovered his position as *alférez*.<sup>85</sup> In the introduction to the famous ordinances issued by Alfonso XI in 1338 in Burgos – those that regulated the military obligations of the Castilian nobles who received a royal salary – the king included the name of a number of individuals who were part of his council and had advised him in the elaboration of this document. Juan Núñez was the first name of this select group, which indicates his proximity to the monarch and the active role he played in ruling the kingdom.<sup>86</sup>

Juan Núñez was also a key figure in Alfonso XI's two main military successes. At the battle of Río Salado (1340), the magnate was at the vanguard of the king's army; he was one of the first to cross the river on that propitious day.

Similarly, he was one of the first magnates who arrived at the siege of Algeciras; in October 1342, and his troops were placed in the first line of defence.<sup>87</sup> Juan Núñez was generously rewarded by Alfonso XI for his service: from 1344 onwards, the *privilegios rodados* show that Juan Núñez held the position of both *alférez* and *mayordomo*, a position previously held by Pedro Fernández de Castro, who had died during the siege of Algeciras.<sup>88</sup> The accumulation of the two most important appointments demonstrates the prominent position Juan Núñez achieved. The situation was not completely unprecedented: members of the same family had monopolised these offices in the past, such as Lopez Díaz III and Diego López V de Haro, in 1287, and the infante Juan and his son, Alfonso de Valencia, between 1315 and 1316.<sup>89</sup> Furthermore, Diego López V combined the position of *alférez* and *mayordomo* between 1308 and 1309.<sup>90</sup> However, the case of Juan Núñez III was exceptional. First, no one had held one of the highest court offices for such a long time. Juan Núñez was the *alférez* for 24 years, except for a brief parenthesis during his rebellion. Additionally, the noble accumulated the offices of *alférez* and *mayordomo* for six years. Considering how volatile these positions were between the late 1270s and the beginning of Alfonso XI's reign as an adult (see Appendices 3 and 4), the position acquired by Juan Núñez was also a symbol of political stability.

It is clear that the royal chancery was focused on transmitting an image of Alfonso XI's successful kingship. Nevertheless, the royal privileges reveal other facets of his rule. By the end of Alfonso XI's reign, Juan Manuel, the king's nemesis, was the *adelantado mayor de la Frontera* and his son, Fernando, the *adelantado mayor de Murcia*. Juan Núñez and his son, Lope, were listed below Juan Manuel and Fernando Manuel, respectively. However, Juan Núñez enjoyed a more prominent position: as the king's *alférez* and *mayordomo*, his confirmation of the royal diploma surrounded the royal sign (see Image 0.2).<sup>91</sup> Additionally, he was the lord of Biscay, the traditional lands of their rivals, the Haros, and of many other territories. In short, Juan Núñez III de Lara had achieved a position that his ancestor, Nuño González de Lara, would have never dreamt a century before.

## Notes

1 *Obras completas*, 612

2 See: Moxó, 'De la Nobleza vieja a la Nobleza nueva'.

3 Estepa Díez, 'Los confirmantes en los diplomas de Alfonso VIII'.

4 A complete analysis of the changes experienced within the first group of confirmers during the reign of Alfonso X in: Arias Guillén, 'The representation of royal authority'.

5 A general analysis on the relationship between the Church and the Castilian monarchy in this period in: Nieto Soria, *Iglesia y poder real en Castilla*.

6 I made this estimation using the documents compiled in González Jiménez and Carmona Ruiz, *Documentación e Itinerario de Alfonso X*.

7 Chris Given-Wilson, *The English Nobility*, 1 and 30 and Prestwich, *Plantagenet England*, 357.

8 Moxó, 'De la Nobleza vieja a la Nobleza nueva', 2–9 and 27.

- 9 For instance, María Quintanilla has recently identified 23 lineages of *ricos hombres* during the reign of Alfonso X, all of them, except the ephemeral Portuguese family of Vinnal, were listed in Moxó's work, Quintanilla Raso, 'La nobleza señorial en el reinado de Alfonso X', 154.
- 10 *Sevilla, ciudad de privilegios*, docs. 62 (28 July 1326) and 63 (27 October 1327).
- 11 *Obras completas*, 611–612.
- 12 *Sevilla, ciudad de privilegios*, doc. 53 (19 July 1303) and *Colección documental de Alfonso XI*, doc. 128 (27 October 1328).
- 13 *CAXI*, 219–220 and 235–236.
- 14 Chancillería de Valladolid, PERGAMINOS, CARPETA, 7, 1 (30 April 1343).
- 15 Estepa Díez, 'Los confirmantes en los diplomas de Alfonso VIII', 49.
- 16 A suggestive discussion on the relational nature of status assertion in Hammond, 'Contexts for assertions of "noble" status'.
- 17 González, *Reinado y diplomas de Fernando III*, III, doc. 843 (25 April 1252) and *Sevilla, ciudad de privilegios*, doc. 3 (5 August 1252).
- 18 *Sevilla, ciudad de privilegios*, docs. 39 (13 July 1282) and 42 (7 August 1284).
- 19 *CODOM. IV*, doc. CLIX (20 January 1295) and *Sevilla, ciudad de privilegios*, doc. 51 (3 August 1295).
- 20 For instance, in 1252: González Jiménez, *Alfonso X el Sabio*, 70–72.
- 21 *Sevilla, ciudad de privilegios*, doc. 31 (15 July 1272).
- 22 González Jiménez, *Alfonso X el Sabio*, 250.
- 23 Estepa Díez, *Las behetrías castellanas*, I, 297.
- 24 Moxó, 'De la Nobleza vieja a la Nobleza nueva', 68 and Kleine, *La cancillería real de Alfonso X*, 88–89.
- 25 *Sevilla, ciudad de privilegios*, doc. 32 (3 July 1273).
- 26 *CAX*, 91.
- 27 Daumet, *Mémoire*, docs. VII and XVII.
- 28 *CAX*, 193–194.
- 29 Estepa Díez, *Las behetrías castellanas*, I, 296.
- 30 González Jiménez, *Alfonso X el Sabio*, 60 and 257.
- 31 *Sevilla, ciudad de privilegios*, doc. 35 (26 April 1278).
- 32 The relationship between this Portuguese family and Alfonso X started in the 1240s: Quintanilla Raso, 'La nobleza señorial en el reinado de Alfonso X', 166–170.
- 33 *Sevilla, ciudad de privilegios*, doc. 40 (1 September 1283).
- 34 *Sevilla, ciudad de privilegios*, doc. 68 (6 March 1332).
- 35 On the Aza family see: García Izquierdo, 'El linaje de Aza'.
- 36 The Manzanedos and Manriques could trace back their common origin to the twelfth century. The Saldañas, on the other hand, derived from the Girón family like the Cisneros, Estepa Díez, *Las behetrías castellanas*, I, 296–297.
- 37 *CAXI*, 235–237.
- 38 So far, I have found 25 *privilegios rodados* issued in 1326 and 32 in 1332, although the royal chancery most definitively produced a higher number of these diplomas.
- 39 *Sevilla, ciudad de privilegios*, doc. 70 (1 April 1342) and Chancillería de Valladolid, PERGAMINOS, CARPETA, 7, 1 (30 April 1343).
- 40 Arias Guillén, *Guerra y fortalecimiento del poder regio*, 228–232.
- 41 AHNOB, GOMEZ DE ALBORNOZ, CP.330, D.2 (6 June 1344).
- 42 *Diplomatario andaluz de Alfonso X*, doc. 385 (9 September 1271) and *Sevilla, ciudad de privilegios*, doc. 31 (15 July 1272).
- 43 Alfonso X donated Lara to Burgos in 1255: *Colección diplomática del Concejo de Burgos*, doc. 30.
- 44 *Privilegios reales de la Catedral de Toledo (1086–1462)*, II, doc. 86 (25 July 1287).
- 45 *Sevilla, ciudad de privilegios*, doc. 51 (3 August 1295).
- 46 *Sevilla, ciudad de privilegios*, doc. 52 (25 August 1299).

- 47 *Sevilla, ciudad de privilegios*, doc. 69 (9 October 1335).
- 48 *Ordenamiento*, Título XXVII, Leyes II–III and Título XXVIII, Ley II. See also: Monsalvo Antón, *La construcción del poder real*, 191–194.
- 49 Echevarría Arsuaga, 'Redes femeninas en la Corte castellana', 172–173.
- 50 *Sevilla, ciudad de privilegios*, doc. 33 (6 June 1274).
- 51 *Catálogo de los pergaminos*, doc. 20 (13 December 1289).
- 52 *Sevilla, ciudad de privilegios*, docs. 3 (5 August 1252), 19 (16 September 1256) and 31 (15 July 1272) and *Diplomatario andaluz de Alfonso X*, docs. 295 (27 October 1264), and 354 (18 November 1268).
- 53 *Privilegios reales de la Catedral de Toledo (1086–1462)*, II, doc. 94 (12 November 1294), *Sevilla, ciudad de privilegios*, docs. 52 (25 August 1299) and 63 (27 October 1327), Benavides, *Memorias de Don Fernando IV*, doc. CLXI (28 June 1300), Archivo de la Catedral de Burgos, V – 2 1. Fol. 18 (1 August 1314) and *Colección documental de Alfonso XI*, doc. 49 (29 April 1316).
- 54 *CFIV*, ch. V, par. 17.
- 55 *Documentación del monasterio de las Huelgas de Burgos (1307–1321)*, doc. 210 (21 July 1308).
- 56 Benavides, *Memorias de Don Fernando IV*, doc. CLXI (28 June 1300) and *Colección diplomática del Concejo de Burgos*, doc. 162 (5 May 1301).
- 57 *Sevilla, ciudad de privilegios*, doc. 35 (26 April 1278), *Diplomatario andaluz de Alfonso X*, doc. 481 (14 May 1281), and *Documentación del Monasterio de San Juan de Burgos*, doc. 115 (24 November 1298).
- 58 *Privilegios reales de la Catedral de Toledo*, II, doc. 86 (25 July 1287) and *Colección diplomática del Concejo de Burgos*, doc. 156 (2 January 1297).
- 59 *Documentación del Monasterio de San Juan de Burgos*, doc. 115 (24 November 1298), *Colección diplomática medieval de la Orden de Alcántara*, doc. 453 (15 July 1309), and *Colección documental de Alfonso XI*, doc. 70 (2 August 1318).
- 60 *Sevilla, ciudad de privilegios*, docs. 3 (5 August 1252), 9 (8 December 1253), and 23 (28 December 1254) and *Diplomatario andaluz de Alfonso X*, doc. 162 (10 October 1255).
- 61 González Jiménez, *Alfonso X el Sabio*, 70–71.
- 62 *Diplomatario andaluz de Alfonso X*, doc. 429 (14 July 1276).
- 63 *Catálogo de los pergaminos*, doc. 20 (13 December 1289).
- 64 A genealogic tree of the Lara family can be found in: Doubleday, *Los Lara*, 231.
- 65 *Sevilla, ciudad de privilegios*, doc. 42 (7 August 1284).
- 66 *Catálogo de los pergaminos de la Edad Media*, doc. 44 (28 December 1339).
- 67 CHANCILLERÍA DE VALLADOLID, PERGAMINOS, Carpeta 7, 1 (30 April 1343).
- 68 *Sevilla, ciudad de privilegios*, docs. 3 (5 August 1252), 9 (8 December 1253), and 23 (28 December 1254) and *Diplomatario andaluz de Alfonso X*, doc. 162 (10 October 1255).
- 69 *Sevilla, ciudad de privilegios*, doc. 50 (22 November 1292).
- 70 AHN, SIGIL-SELLO, C.13.N.7 (1 May 1305).
- 71 *Sevilla, ciudad de privilegios*, doc. 70 (1 April 1342).
- 72 Chancillería de Valladolid, PERGAMINOS, CARPETA, 7, 1 (30 April 1343).
- 73 *Sevilla, ciudad de privilegios*, doc. 3 (5 August 1252) and *Colección documental de Alfonso XI*, doc. 334 (10 March 1348).
- 74 Doubleday, *Los Lara*, 128–138.
- 75 *CSIV*, 172.
- 76 López Dapena, *Cuentas y gastos*, 450 and 489.
- 77 ACB, V – 2 1. Fol. 18 (1 August 1314).
- 78 *Sevilla, ciudad de privilegios*, docs. 62 (28 July 1326) and *Colección documental de Alfonso XI*, doc. 128 (27 October 1328).
- 79 Simon Doubleday, *Los Lara*, 120–121.
- 80 *Crónica del rey don Pedro*, I, 25.

- 81 *GCAXI*, I, 380–385.
- 82 Doubleday, *Los Lara*, 120.
- 83 Suárez Fernández, *Historia del reinado de Juan I*, doc. 1.
- 84 Muñoz Gómez, 'El señorío de Lara después de los Lara', 380–385.
- 85 *CODOM*. VI, doc. CCCXXX (29 December 1336).
- 86 *Cortes*, I, 444.
- 87 *CAXI*, 326 and 348.
- 88 AHNOB, GOMEZ DE ALBORNOZ, CP.330, D.2 (6 June 1344).
- 89 *Privilegios reales de la Catedral de Toledo*, II, doc. 86 (25 July 1287), *Catálogo de los pergaminos*, doc. 24 (3 September 1315) and *Colección documental de Alfonso XI*, doc. 49 (29 April 1316).
- 90 *Documentación del monasterio de las Huelgas de Burgos (1307–1321)*, doc. 210 (21 July 1308) and *Colección diplomática medieval de la Orden de Alcántara*, doc. 453 (15 July 1309).
- 91 *Colección documental de Alfonso XI*, doc. 334 (10 March 1348).

# Conclusion

Alfonso XI unexpectedly died of plague in 1350 while laying siege to Gibraltar. The king was not even 39 years old, which has led many historians to wonder how different Castilian history could have been in the second half of the fourteenth century with a ruler still in his prime.<sup>1</sup> In the eyes of many, Alfonso XI's early demise truncated what would have been a golden age of strong kingship and internal peace. By contrast, the reign of Pedro I (r. 1350–1369) was beset by conflicts and assassinations which culminated in the Castilian Civil War (1366–1369). The enthronement of Enrique II (r. 1369–1379) led to the so-called Trastámara Revolution. Ironically, Alfonso XI had sown the seeds which would eventually destroy his reign's achievements. The children he had with Leonor de Guzmán deposed the rightful heir and favoured a 'weak' style of kingship which served to further the growing power of the nobility.<sup>2</sup>

I do not agree with this what-if scenario. First, it is impossible to know how the reign of Alfonso XI would have unfolded if the king had not died in 1350. The rule of Alfonso XI presents some parallels with that of Edward III (r. 1327–1377),<sup>3</sup> which makes it plausible that both reigns would have had a comparable gloomy end. Therefore, a period of strong kingship and military successes could have similarly devolved into internal turmoil, family infighting, and the 'impeachment' of the royal mistress, like in the case of the English monarch's later years.<sup>4</sup> Long reigns rarely end on a high note during the Middle Ages, as generational changes within the kingdom's elite normally lead to trouble.

On the other hand, the Castilian Civil War and Pedro I's deposition were the result of the king's short-sightedness, not his father's dalliances.<sup>5</sup> Shortly after ascending to the throne, Pedro I became very sick. The *Crónica del rey don Pedro*, despite being written decades after, once Enrique II had already become king, acknowledged that the count of Trastámara was never seen as an option to inherit the throne if Pedro I had died in 1350. Fernando of Aragón, Alfonso XI's nephew, was seen as the heir apparent, and the only other alternative was Juan Núñez III de Lara, because he was a descendant of the infante Fernando de la Cerda.<sup>6</sup> Alfonso XI's parallel family with Leonor de Guzmán was not a threat to Pedro I's crown in 1350; it only became one after the king alienated the vast majority of the Castilian nobility with his tyrannical rule. Additionally, Enrique II's reign would benefit greatly from a re-examination in order to

challenge the somewhat negative view of his kingship. From this point of view, it would be interesting to draw comparisons with Alfonso XI's rule, such as the ratification of the *Ordenamiento de Alcalá* in the *Cortes* of 1371<sup>7</sup> or the creation of a 'new' royal family with the illegitimate offspring he and his brothers produced, in order to interpret Enrique II's rule as a continuation of his father's after Pedro I's ruthless hiatus.

In any case, Alfonso XI's reign is an important topic on its own without the need of presenting alternative histories or speculating about its long-term consequences, which is often a teleological exercise. Instead of ruminating about the future, it is better to analyse Alfonso XI's rule in the light of its immediate past, particularly its connection to Alfonso X's reign, a period of great changes despite its bitter end.

Alfonso XI never matched his great-grandfather's ambitious cultural and legal projects. However, he made an effective, and sometimes innovative, use of Alfonso X's ideas to extoll his figure. The epic *Estoria de Espanna* was superseded by a cycle of chronicles composed by Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid which had a more immediate appeal, as they offered an 'official' view of the recent past. Similarly, Alfonso XI breathed new life into the *Partidas* and created his own legal code, the *Ordenamiento de Alcalá*, with a reduced albeit more precise scope. The Wise King 'reinvented' knighthood in Castile.<sup>8</sup> However, it was his great-grandson who elevated it to new heights with the creation of the *Orden de la Banda* and, especially, with his fascinating ceremony of coronation of 1332. Additionally, Alfonso XI strove to dispel the shadows regarding the legitimacy of his 'accursed lineage' and revive the ethos of the *Reconquista* by presenting himself as a true heir of Fernando III.

Despite Alfonso X's will, Sancho IV and his successors maintained the territorial unity of their domains, which was especially remarkable considering the conflictive minority of Fernando IV, a time when the possibility of a renewed separation between León and Castile was very real. The concept '*corona de sus regnos*' was created by Alfonso XI to indicate that, despite their diversity, his lands constituted a united and indivisible entity, the identity of which was defined by the king's rule. Therefore, the '*Señorío del Rey*' alludes to a series of royal rights which applied to the whole kingdom; they were not restricted to the royal demesne. In a similar way, Alfonso X's notion of '*naturaleza*', which bonded the king with all the inhabitants of the kingdom, was further developed in the first half of the fourteenth century, when the possibility of the magnates breaking their ties with the king (*desnaturarse*) became an increasingly formalised process.

Seville was a special place for the Wise King and continued to be in the times of his great-grandson. The *Crónica de Alfonso XI* underscores the king's memorable first visit to '*la muy noble çibdat de Sevilla*' in 1327,<sup>9</sup> where the monarch was lavishly welcomed in what became the blueprint for royal entries in Castile during the Late Middle Ages and beyond.<sup>10</sup> Both Alfonso X and Alfonso XI were buried in Seville, although the latter was moved to Cordova in 1371 by Enrique II. Had Pedro I not been deposed, the cathedral of Seville might have become Castile's uncontested royal mausoleum. Burgos, for its part, continued

to be the 'ceremonial capital' of the kingdom, which is evidenced by the coronation of 1332. It was Valladolid, however, which grew in importance throughout the period. Alfonso XI fondly recalled his special connection with this town, as he had been raised by the local council after the death of Queen María de Molina in 1321.<sup>11</sup> During this period, Valladolid was the most visited town by the royal itineraries; and, during the Trastámara period, it became the capital all but in name.

Alfonso X's wife, Queen Violante, played a vital role during the nobles' rebellion of 1272. However, she abandoned the Wise King in the midst of the succession crisis sparked by the death of Fernando de la Cerda, taking her grandsons to Aragón with her. Queen Violante eventually returned to Castile, but Alfonso X never forgot how she humiliated him, and removed her from the royal diplomas in the latter years of his reign.<sup>12</sup> By contrast, Alfonso XI found in Leonor de Guzmán a companion to help him rule who, like his grandmother Queen María de Molina, was an intelligent ('*bien entendida*') and talented political operator.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, the king was able to maintain a *de facto* polygamy while also benefitting from his wife's, María of Portugal, family connections. Despite previous conflicts, Alfonso IV of Portugal fought along with his son-in-law against the Marinids and Granada in the battle of Río Salado (1340).

The Wise King had a tempestuous relationship with his brothers. He executed Fadrique in 1277 for treason. Enrique, Felipe, and even his beloved Manuel rebelled against him. In the end, Alfonso X was deposed by his own son, Sancho, and died before he was able to reunite the royal family. Alfonso XI, on the other hand, benefitted from the conspicuous absence of royal relatives, thereby creating a 'new' family with the offspring he had with Leonor de Guzmán. The king also succeeded in curbing Juan Manuel's ambitions: The king's granduncle enjoyed a prominent position within the kingdom's elite once he returned to the royal service, but not the quasi-regnal status the magnate considered he deserved.

After the nobles' rebellion of 1272, Alfonso X relented and accepted their demands, so that the rebel *ricosombres* would return to Castile from their self-imposed exile in Granada. Alfonso XI had to deal with an important rebellion between 1334 and 1336 as well, although the outcome was quite different. Combining his diplomatic and military prowess, the king prevailed over his opponents, Juan Manuel and Juan Núñez III de Lara, who returned to the king's fold. Alfonso XI ended the factionalism which had plagued Castile since the 1270s, especially during the reigns of Sancho IV and Fernando IV. The ordinances of 1338, the first instance in which the king detailed the military obligations for those nobles who receive a royal salary, represent a landmark in the relationship between the magnates and the Castilian monarchy – a clear testament to Alfonso XI's successful kingship.

The *Crónica de Alfonso X* could not hide the king's resentment towards Nuño González de Lara. Alfonso X favoured the noble since the reign of his father, Fernando III, and restored the Laras' prominent position in the kingdom after decades of being relegated. Despite this, Nuño González betrayed the Wise King's confidence and rebelled against him. The reign of Alfonso XI, once again,

can be viewed in juxtaposition with his grandfather's. Juan Núñez III rebelled against the king and eventually returned to royal service, like his ancestor did. However, the optics were quite different. Juan Núñez III capitulated to Alfonso XI – although it was far from being an unconditional surrender – and accepted the honour of being knighted by the king to symbolise his loyalty.<sup>14</sup> He recovered royal favour and by 1344 he accumulated the two most important court offices, those of *alférez* and *mayordomo mayor*. Royal privileges provide visual evidence of Juan Núñez III's importance: his confirmation was part of the royal sign, reflecting the magnate's central position within the kingdom's elite (see Image 0.2).<sup>15</sup>

The *privilegios rodados* offer in a glimpse how the Castilian monarchy understood and represented its authority. The royal *intitulatio*, the document's date, and/or the list of confirmers provide insight into the different ideas and motifs used by the Castilian kings to glorify their authority. These documents also reveal other important aspects of how kingship was constructed and represented in medieval Castile. For instance, the changes in the columns of confirmers indicate the growth of the kingdom's elite and how the most prestigious lineages of the *ricosombres* were becoming more powerful. Nevertheless, the *privilegios rodados* were created by the royal chancery and the representation of the Castilian monarchy was, consequently, its *raison d'être*. The royal privileges issued by Alfonso X in his later years could not hide the bitter end of the Wise King's reign, abandoned by almost everyone and secluded in his beloved Seville. Conversely, the *privilegios rodados* from 1348 transmit a very different message. The diplomas evoke Alfonso XI's great military triumphs, the victory at the battle of Río Salado (1340) and the conquest of Algeciras (1344), to assure that they will be remembered by everyone in Castile. These documents also present the king surrounded by his family and his powerful vassals, a prestigious ensemble which included the emir of Granada, Yusuf I (r. 1333–1354), Juan Manuel, the king's old nemesis, and Juan Núñez III de Lara, the head of the most prestigious noble family in Castile and descendant of the infante Fernando de la Cerda.<sup>16</sup> This stunning visual display is perhaps the most succinct and eloquent way to transmit Alfonso XI's successful kingship and the triumph of his accursed lineage.

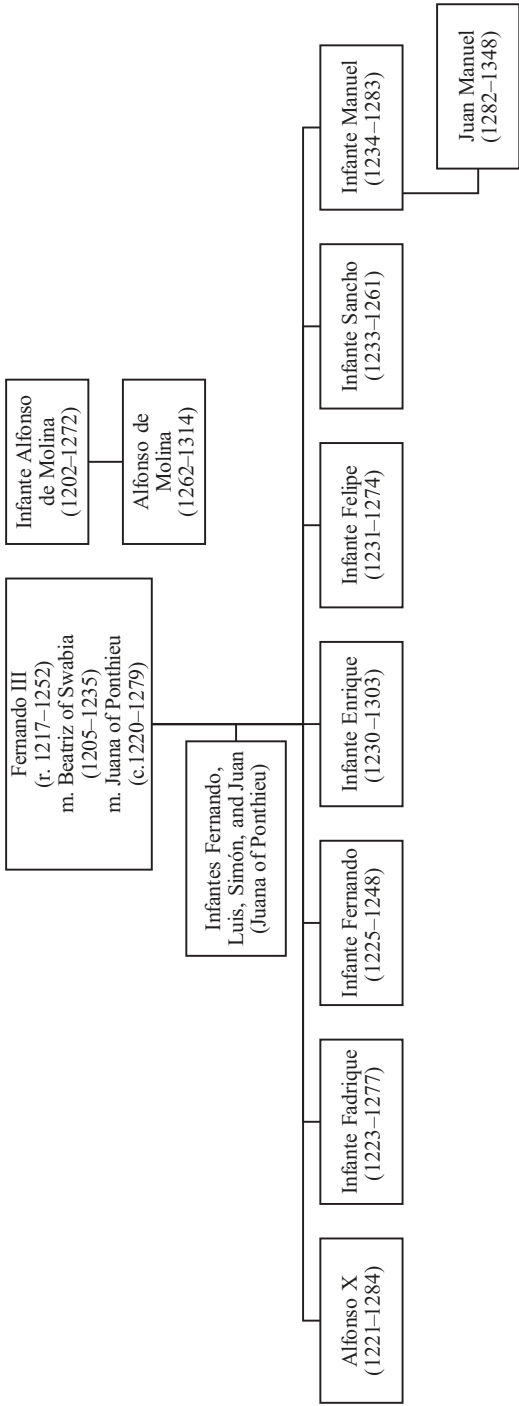
## Notes

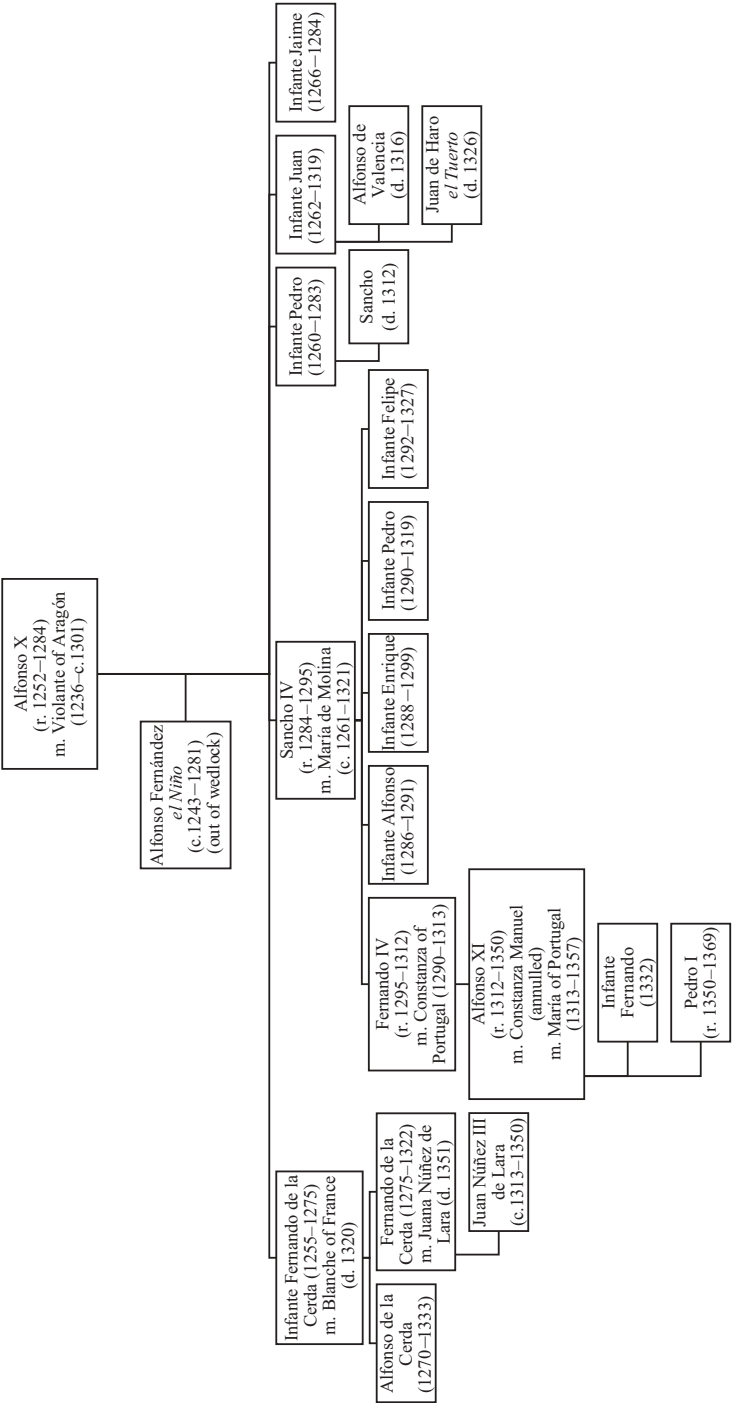
- 1 Linehan, *At the Edge of Reformation*, 147.
- 2 See: Valdeón Baroque, *Enrique II*.
- 3 Arias Guillén, 'La imagen del monarca en el siglo XIV'.
- 4 See: Ormrod, *Edward III*.
- 5 Carlos Estepa Díez, 'Rebelión y rey legítimo'.
- 6 *Crónica del rey don Pedro*, I, 22–25.
- 7 *Cortes*, II, 199–201.
- 8 Rodríguez Velasco, *Ciudadanía, soberanía monárquica y caballería*, 30–31.
- 9 *CAXI*, 204.
- 10 Ruiz, *A King Travels*, 68.

- 11 *Catálogo de los pergaminos*, doc. 32.
- 12 González Jiménez, *Alfonso X el Sabio*, 349.
- 13 *CAXI*, 227.
- 14 *CAXI*, 296.
- 15 AHNOB, GOMEZ DE ALBORNOZ, CP.330, D.2 (6 June 1344).
- 16 *Colección documental de Alfonso XI*, doc. 334 (10 March 1348).

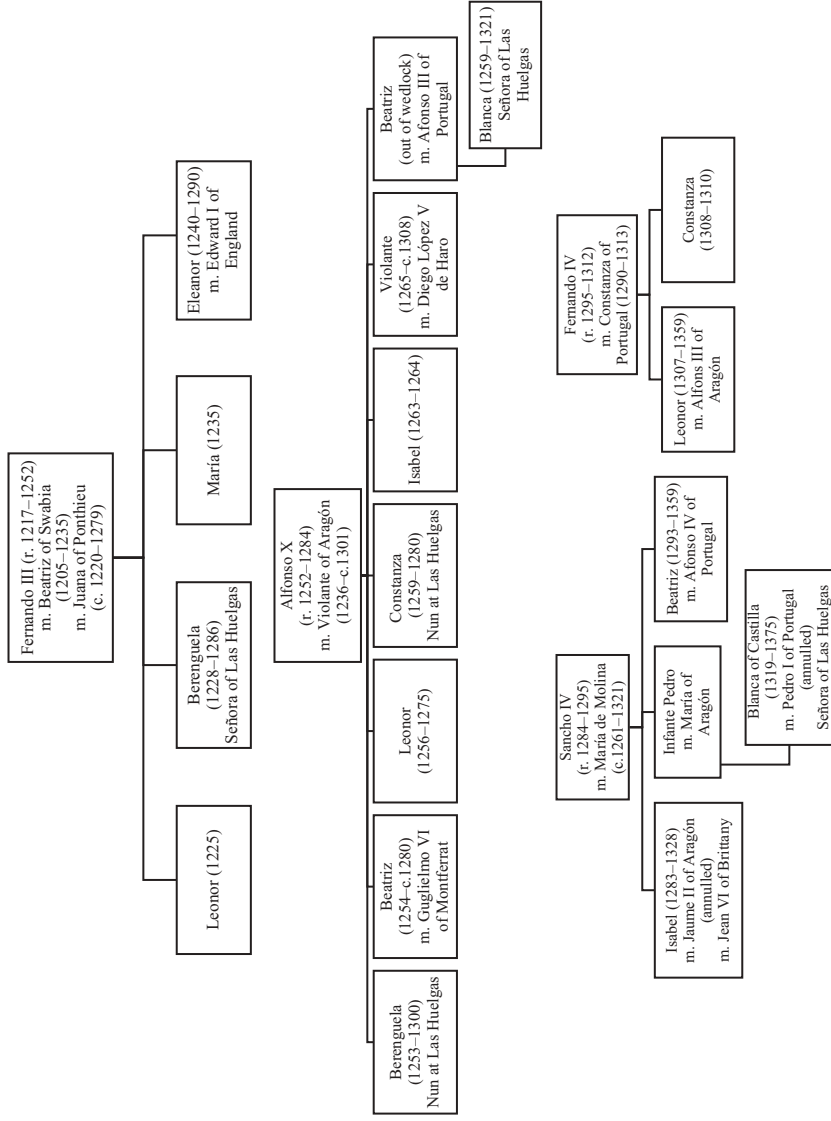
# Appendices

## 1 Kings, queens, and male members of the Castilian royal family (1252–1350)





## 2 Kings, queens, and female members of the Castilian royal family (1252–1350)



### **3    *Mayordomo mayor del rey*** **(1252–1350)**

#### **Alfonso X (r. 1252–1282)**

Juan García de Villamayor (1252–1260)  
Infante Fernando de la Cerda (1260–1274)  
Infante Sancho (1276–1277)  
Infante Manuel (1278–1282)  
Alfonso Fernández *el Niño* (1283)  
Fernán Pérez Ponce (1284)

#### **Sancho IV (r. 1284–1295)**

Infante Juan (1284)  
Pedro Álvarez de Asturias (1285–1286)  
Lope Díaz III de Haro (1286–1287)  
Juan Fernández (1288–1292)  
Ruy Pérez Ponce, Master of Calatrava (1293–1295)

#### **Fernando IV (r. 1295–1312)**

Pedro Ponce de León (1295, 1303–1306)  
Rodrigo Rodríguez Carrillo (1296)  
Juan Osórez, Master of Santiago (1297–1301)  
Juan Núñez II de Lara (1302)  
Diego López V de Haro (1307–1309)  
Infante Pedro (1310)  
Juan Manuel (1311–1312)

#### **Alfonso XI (r. 1312–1325)**

Juan Núñez II de Lara (1314)  
Alfonso de Valencia (1315–1316)  
Juan Manuel (1317–1318)  
Fernando de la Cerda (1320)  
Infante Felipe (1325–1326)  
Count Alvar Núñez (1327)  
Fernando Rodríguez de Valbuena, prior of the Order of St. John (1328–1332)  
Pedro Fernández de Castro (1333–1343)  
Juan Núñez III de Lara (1344–1350)

## 4 *Alfárez* (1252–1350)

### **Alfonso X (r. 1252–1282)**

Diego López II de Haro (1243–1254)

Vacant (1255–1257)

Infante Manuel (1258–1274)

Vacant (1276)

Infante Juan (1277–1284)

### **Sancho IV (r. 1284–1295)**

Diego López III de Haro (1284–1287)

Alfonso de Molina (1288–1295)

### **Fernando IV (r. 1295–1312)**

Nuño González II de Lara (1295)

Diego López V de Haro (1296–1309)

Lope Díaz IV de Haro (1310–1311)

Juan Alfonso de Haro (1312)

### **Alfonso XI (r. 1312–1350)**

Infante Juan (1314–1318)

Fernando de la Cerda (1320)

Juan de Haro *el Tuerto* (1325–1326)

Juan Núñez III de Lara (1327–1333, 1336–1350)

Sancho Alfonso (1334–1335)

## 5 List of *privilegios rodados* (Appendices 3 and 4, Figures 7.1–7.5, and Tables 7.1 and 7.2)

I have gathered around 1200 extant *privilegios rodados* issued between 1252 and 1350, including later copies held in the Salazar y Castro Collection of the Real Academia de la Historia in Madrid. It is likely the royal chancery issued many more of these documents. So far, I have been unable to find any extant *privilegio rodado* issued in the years 1275, 1313, 1319, 1321, 1322, 1323, 1324, 1349, and 1350. This might be the result of chance, in certain instances, although it is very likely that the royal chancery did not issue any privilege in some of these years, such as during the troubled end of Alfonso XI's minority. In cases where there were many documents issued in the same year, the criteria used to select a representative privilege were: that it was published, in order to make it easier for the reader to consult it; and, when possible, that there was a sufficient enough gap between the previous and following diploma in the series to highlight changes over time.

### *Fernando III*

González, *Reinado y diplomas de Fernando III*, docs. 272 (19 December 1230), 321 (23 April 1231), 434 (9 April 1232), 498 (10 October 1233), 527 (8 July 1234), 558 (20 August 1235), 576 (17 October 1236), 609 (2 September 1237), 624 (3 July 1238), 649 (20 June 1239), 666 (17 September 1240), 677 (8 April 1241), 701 (22 August 1242), 708 (6 April 1243), 730 (31 December 1245), doc. 745 (24 December 1246), 753 (11 January 1248), 774 (15 January 1249), 794 (4 June 1250), 825 (15 June 1251), and 839 (20 March 1252). There are no extant *privilegios rodados* issued in 1244 and 1247.

### *Alfonso X*

Sevilla, *ciudad de privilegios*, docs. 3 (5 August 1252), 9 (8 December 1253), 13 (28 December 1254), 19 (26 September 1256), 20 (7 October 1257), 21 (13 September 1258), 26 (22 November 1260), 29 (2 May 1261), 31 (15 July 1272), 32 (3 July 1273), 33 (6 June 1274), 34 (7 July 1277), 35 (26 April 1278), 36 (11 November 1279), 38 (11 January 1280), 39 (13 July 1282), 40 (1 September 1283), and 41 (10 January 1284); *Diplomatario andaluz de Alfonso X*, doc. 162 (10 October 1255), 295 (27 October 1264), 304 (12 March 1265), 314 (20 May 1266), 323 (8 April 1267), 354 (18 November 1268), 377 (29 October 1270), 385 (9 September 1271), 429 (14 July 1276), and 481 (14 May 1281);

*Documentación medieval de la catedral de Segovia*, doc. 170 (1 July 1259); Pretel Marín, *Almansa medieval*, doc. I (15 April 1262); *Catálogo de los pergaminos*, doc. 18 (30 July 1263); and AHN, CLERO, Secular-Regular, Carpeta 1334, n. 13 (8 August 1269). There are no extant *privilegios rodados* issued in 1275.

#### *Sancho IV*

*Sevilla, ciudad de privilegios*, docs. 42 (7 August 1284), 49 (26 September 1285), and 50 (22 November 1292); *CODOM. IV*, docs. LXVI (26 June 1286) and CLIX (20 January 1295); *Privilegios reales de la Catedral de Toledo*, II, docs. 86 (25 July 1287), 87 (26 May 1290), and 94 (12 November 1294); *Colección diplomática del monasterio de Sahagún*, doc. 1845 (10 December 1288); *Catálogo de los pergaminos*, doc. 20 (13 December 1289); Gaibrois, *Historia del reinado de Sancho IV*, III, doc. 329 (11 January 1291); and *Colección documental del archivo municipal de León*, doc. 46 (2 May 1293).

#### *Fernando IV*

*Sevilla, ciudad de privilegios*, docs. 51 (3 August 1295), 52 (25 August 1299), 53 (19 July 1303), 55 (13 April 1304), 56 (25 February 1310), and 60 (17 March 1312); *Colección diplomática del monasterio de Sahagún*, doc. 1886 (27 October 1296); *Colección diplomática del Concejo de Burgos*, docs. 156 (2 January 1297) and 162 (5 May 1301); *Documentación del Monasterio de San Juan de Burgos*, docs. 115 (24 November 1298); Benavides, *Memorias de Don Fernando IV*, doc. CLXI (28 June 1300); *Privilegios reales de la Catedral de Toledo*, II, docs. 90 (1 June 1302) and 95 (5 July 1311); AHN, SIGIL-SELLO, C.13, N.7 (1 May 1305); *Documentación del monasterio de las Huelgas de Burgos (1284–1306)*, doc. 195 (17 July 1306); *CODOM. V*, doc. LXXIII (14 December 1307); *Documentación del monasterio de las Huelgas de Burgos (1307–1321)*, doc. 210 (21 July 1308); and *Colección diplomática medieval de la Orden de Alcántara*, doc. 453 (15 July 1309).

#### *Alfonso XI*

ACB, V-21 f. 18 (1 August 1314) and V-3, f. 21 (28 August 1334); *Catálogo de los pergaminos*, docs. 24 (3 September 1315), 28 (20 March 1320), and 44 (28 December 1339); *Colección documental de Alfonso XI*, docs. 49 (29 April 1316), 70 (2 August 1318), 81 (27 December 1325), 128 (27 October 1328), 245 (21 March 1337), 250 (10 March 1338), 320 (10 January 1347), and 334 (10 March 1348); RAH, Salazar y Castro, N-8, f. 90v-93 (24 May 1317) and O-20, f. 137 (8 January 1341); *Sevilla, ciudad de privilegios*, docs. 62 (28 July 1326), 63 (27 October 1327), 65 (21 May 1329), 66 (22 November 1330), 67 (17 January 1331), 68 (5 March 1332), 69 (9 October 1335), 70 (1 April 1342), and 71 (15 August 1345); *Privilegios reales otorgados a Toledo*, doc. 50 (12 March 1333); *CODOM. VI*, doc. CCCXXX (29 December 1336); *Colección documental del archivo de la catedral de León*, doc. 3059 (14 March 1340); Chancillería de Valladolid, PERGAMINOS, Carpeta 7, 1 (30 April 1343); AHNOB, GOMEZ DE ALBORNOZ, CP.330, D.2 (6 June 1344). There are no extant *privilegios rodados* issued in 1312, 1313, 1319, 1321, 1322, 1323, 1324, 1349, and 1350. I found a privilege issued in 1346 (RAH, Salazar y Castro, M-27, f. 182-184), but the list of confirmers was incomplete.

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